

scaled it after Qu Yinhua took off his shoes and socks and climbed the last part barefoot, and of their continuing to the summit by starlight. Of necessity, all the articles are very compressed and factual, but they provide valuable information for those interested in Chinese mountains or in mountaineering in China.

ROBERT H. BATES

Chamonix Mont-Blanc 1900. Gaston Rébuffat. Grands Vents, Genève, 1981. French text. 143 pages, 8½" × 11½", black-and-white and color illustrations. Paper.

Gaston Rébuffat has compiled a wonderful and evocative record of both a place and a time. Instead of producing yet another book on Chamonix and Mont Blanc, he has chosen to focus on the year 1900, the peak of the Art Nouveau movement, and to relate this artistic outburst to a flowering of interest in the area—a truly inspired idea.

Although the text, which covers such topics as the development of alpine sports and the rise of alpinism, is useful and informative, it is in the choice and arrangement of the illustrations that the book really shines. No aspect of life in Chamonix/Mont Blanc at the turn of the century has been overlooked and the reader is treated to a visual feast.

First come the eye-catching posters, designed to capture the scenic and sportive attractions of the region. Next are the postcards, both pictorial and photographic, that show everything from climbers in all manner of impractical and improbable garb and tourists viewing the glaciers to mountain railways and scenic vistas. As if all this were not enough, there are also pictures and paintings galore.

For those who still want more, there are examples of alpine music and hotel cards as well as a generous sampling of notices from the press of the day. The pleasures to be enjoyed at Chamonix and Mont Blanc are deliciously depicted on candy boxes, postage stamps, stationery, and on an incredible variety of souvenirs.

This is not a book to be gone through only once but is, rather, one that can be savored many times. Gaston Rébuffat is to be congratulated for his unique approach and for bringing new life to an old subject.

PATRICIA A. FLETCHER

In the Shadow of the Giants—Mountain Ascents Past and Present. Tom King. A. S. Barnes & Co., San Diego and New York, 1981. 262 pages, black and white photographs, sketch maps, glossary, bibliography. \$11.95.

If you are a mountaineering history buff and have a romantic taste in prose, then *In the Shadow of the Giants* could be a welcome addition

to your library. Tom King has made a commendable effort to compile and document a history of several peaks including: Mont Blanc, the Matterhorn, the Eiger, Mönch, Jungfrau, Everest and Fuji. There are chapters on "La Haute Route," the ski route from Chamonix to Zermatt and on the search for the highest summit in the continental United States, Mount Whitney. The author presents a picture of each peak or area in two ways. First he recaps the history. Second he invites the reader to share his personal climbing experiences on Mont Blanc, Fuji and the Matterhorn, his trek to the Everest Base Camp and his traverse of the Haute Route.

This book is best suited only to the confirmed armchair mountaineer. The experienced and seasoned climber is already familiar with much of its historical content and may want to be spared the elaborate and lush descriptions of the author's guided climbs and treks. Here is a sample of Tom King on Fuji:

"Despite its impressive size, Fuji is blessed with an astonishingly ephemeral quality. In its magical, blinking mutations—fading from tawny bronze to a fiery streaking crimson or purple, and to intermediate shades and hues the eyes cannot grasp—it occasionally seems to be more of a mirage than a mountain. In one instant it is brilliantly garbed in the crisp, trim splash of the gaudy sun, its cascading lines set boldly forth in every concave nuance and detail. Then, at the turn of the head, a veil descends, the scene is transformed, and another dramatic interplay unfolds: a dimly seen configuration, striated with an apricot or hazel complexion, dour and moody, a phantom half lost, half seen, sturdy yet elusive."

And so on. This type of language can only be caused by one of three things: drugs, a prolonged residence in Southern California, or a lawyer who has difficulty speaking in layman's terms.

The better parts of the book contain many quotes, poems and passages from famous mountaineers and writers: Goethe, Ruskin, Whympier, Mallory and Muir. It says something that of the 150 black and white photographs included, those reprinted by permission of The Alpine Club, the Swiss National Tourist Office and the Japan National Tourist Organization are of better quality than the author's. King has zero talent as a photographer.

The more charming parts of *In the Shadow of the Giants* concern little-known facts about some famous first ascents and stories about Clarence King, a geologist, explorer and forerunner of mountaineering in the Sierras. The author, quoting Henry Adams on King's escapades in the mountains, writes, "In the works like that of Mr. King the wonder always is that a day passes without accident. If he is not dragging or riding a mule up or down a perpendicular precipice, he is shooting at bears, getting struck by lightning, or catching a rattlesnake by the tail.

There is no end to the forms in which life or health is risked in these adventures."

Aside from the lack of quality photographs and a surplus of adjectives, Tom King has added a respectable piece of work to the world of mountaineering literature.

MICHAEL BROCHU

Climbers and Hikers Guide to the World's Mountains. Michael R. Kelsey, Kelsey Publishing Company (Springville, Utah), 679 pages, 318 maps. \$17.95.

I recall discussing with a climbing friend many years ago the relative merits of specialization versus generalization. Within a lifetime there are the extremes of restricting one's climbing to a single region and by so doing come to know nearly all of its secrets, or of travelling far and wide to sample the world by one or two climbs in as many ranges as time permits. Our discussion suggested that there are many benefits to be obtained from either of these extremes. In retrospect it now seems that there are many more examples of mountain specialization than the opposite extreme. Michael Kelsey, the author of this book, is perhaps one of the first genuine examples of a mountaineering generalist.

This thick little book covers 318 mountains or mountain regions located in every continent except Antarctica, and on a great many of the world's mountainous islands. This set of 318 peaks has a diversity which nearly escapes comprehension. One finds Mount Elbert alongside Mount Everest, Fitz Roy and Fuji, Asgard and Snowdon, Yerupajá and Ruapehu. Each mountain or region receives the same allotment of space: one page of text and one facing page of map. The descriptive page usually follows a simple format: the mountain type, location and elevation; round-trip time required for the hike or climb to or up the peak; types of transportation available; existence of huts if any; where to obtain food and local information; weather to be expected; and sometimes a mention of equipment needed. The maps provide no contour lines, but emphasize roads and trails of approach with a rough indication of the glaciation limits. All elevations are given in meters, which will be a distinct problem for those accustomed to feet.

Inevitably there is great danger in addressing too broad a topic within a single volume. A necessary result is a treatment of the subject without any substantial depth. Is there value in such a superficial treatment of each of the individual peaks or regions? In the case of the well-known regions, this book probably serves very little purpose other than to provide a quick survey, which does not appear to present the most important peaks of each region. It is more nearly a list of those mountains which have attracted the author's interest. Further, accuracy in details is not one of the book's strong points. Several of the maps showing regions