

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

known to the reviewer contain errors, especially in nomenclature and orthography. One trusts that greater care was taken with the basic route information.

But the author's broad brush may well serve the purpose of stimulating a reader's interest in a mountain which he might not otherwise have visited. Much of the value of this book is to be found in the incredible variety of mountains off, and sometimes way off, the beaten track, which the author describes. Who has not travelled across the breadth of Nevada and wondered how the climbing of some of the desert peaks might go? Some nine such summits are among the 318 peaks of this book. Where else might one go for data on the two highest peaks of the Canary Islands? Or summits in Algeria, Sudan, Sri Lanka, or Taiwan? Or Trinidad, Martinique, Haiti, or the Dominican Republic? Such a variety of mountain locations provides a fascination not found in the usual guidebook for a single range. It is safe to say that few if any readers of the book will know first-hand as many as 100 of the 318 peaks described. The variety is too great, the world is too big for 99.9% of the mountaineers of the world. Author Kelsey is of this last 0.1% who are driven to know what all the world's mountains are like. In the introduction Kelsey admits to being short of his goal, but with experience in over 200 of these regions, he is very likely closer to global understanding of the world's mountains than anyone else. He lists over ten years spent on eleven trips which included over 100 countries. That is serious travelling.

It is important to appreciate the apparent viewpoint of the author, since not all readers will have the same background. Judging only from the book itself, it appears that the advice contained in it was acquired by a single male of considerable endurance, experience, and self-confidence, who has developed the skills required for inexpensive travelling. Almost all of the author's climbing experience has come from solo climbing; in the introduction he makes an apology for having departed from this purity on three occasions. These conditions make it easier to understand, but not condone, why it is that seldom, if ever, is such a decadent instrument as a rope mentioned in these hundreds of pages, while numerous references to axe and crampons are given. This reviewer has not read every page, but he has yet to find any indication of which peaks are reasonable for solo climbing by those who value life, and which peaks can be reasonably addressed only by a roped party. Some peaks are stated as being difficult, but the issue of equipment or party size was apparently not relevant to the author. Nor is there the slightest clue as to how a female traveller might fare in some of these remote locations.

Yet the book is a laudable effort to bring into a single volume an astonishing array of the world's mountains. For at least some of the peaks, Kelsey's descriptions are very likely unique and these are invaluable. The author's intention is "to get the climber or hiker, on the right side of the mountain in question, and to the top via the normal or easiest route pos-

sible." The level of information given in the book meets the first objective in most cases, but there is much less success in satisfying the second objective. A satisfactory route description is not always given, but to compensate, the author does provide four pages at the end of the book which list specialized guidebooks to individual ranges.

In summary it would seem that there are two ways to utilize this book. One is to skim through, learning about curious peaks in strange places where one will probably never go. Read in this manner, the book is truly fascinating. The second way would be to determine, prior to a trip anywhere—to Europe, Africa, South America, or Nevada—what manner of climbing or hiking might be done along the way. In some cases this book will provide sufficient information, but more likely a reader will wish to consult one of the more detailed guides listed in the bibliography.

LEIGH N. ORTENBURGER

*Southern Rock*. Chris Hall. East Woods Press, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1981. 143 pages, black and white photographs, maps, diagrams. \$7.95.

To call a climber's guidebook *Southern Rock* and to cover the rock climbs in a five-state area, one would expect quite a weighty volume. Such is not the case with this book. True, it is the only one in print at this time; but, unfortunately, too little effort went into updating the old guidebooks. Then, too, some very significant climbing areas have been intentionally left out because of the author's assumption that being privately owned, access to them is impossible because prohibited. This is not the case. The fact is that some of these very areas are where we are seeing some of the greatest route development in the south and where standards are being constantly pushed to higher levels.

Another criticism I have is that some climbing areas have received an unjust amount of space compared to the amount given other areas of equal or even greater stature. The most obvious example is the lack of attention given to Whitesides Mountain in North Carolina. A brief mention of the highest and most exposed rock face on the East Coast (1000 feet), does not do justice to the potential for future development that this area surely holds. Only a handful of routes have been completed on this most appealing face—equal in size to Cannon—and only a few of those are listed in *Southern Rock*. Much remains to be pushed up here and in many other fine areas in North Carolina and the surrounding states.

The book's strongest point is its organization. Most of the areas it covers appear to be as well-detailed as possible. The maps and photographs help in beginning one's quest for a particular route and most are of a good quality.