

To the Untouched Mountain: The New Zealand Conquest of Molamenqing, Tibet. Warwick Anderson. Reed, Wellington and Alpenbooks, Seattle, 1983. 242 pages, 12 color plates, maps. \$18.00.

At 7703 meters, Molamenqing is the world's forty-fifth highest mountain and, in 1981, it was the third highest unclimbed peak. It is situated about one hundred kilometers northwest of Everest and is just a few kilometers east of its better-known neighbor, Xixabangma. The usual logistical and financial problems of an expedition were compounded by the total absence of useful maps or photographs of approaches.

Using what is becoming the well-documented approach via Beijing, Chengdu and Lhasa, the eleven-member team was abruptly deposited in the "dust bowl" when their truck could go no farther. After long days of humping loads across unpleasant moraines to establish their camps, they reluctantly accepted the fact that their direct-approach route was not reasonable. They then retreated to a relocated Advance Base Camp and began the much longer, but known, approach via the flanks of Xixabangma. Here, they encountered a Japanese women's expedition descending; later Reinhold Messner and team, also intent on Xixabangma, moved in and up behind them.

Their final route was nontechnical and the team's equipment modest; the author's low-key style is thus most appropriate. There are few desperate moments and only brief mentions of internal dissent. Of greater interest are the clever use of discarded Japanese food and equipment; their interactions with the Japanese, the Chinese and Messner; and the tantalizing glimpses of nearby unmapped peaks. The three successful summit efforts somehow seem less memorable than the ready compassion and assistance provided to those team members inflicted with frostbite and other assorted ailments.

While the expedition was a success and the narrative is well told, this book is not likely to ever become a mountaineering classic. But it does provide an enjoyable and illustrative example of how a modestly-financed and mutually cooperative group can reach an untouched summit.

JOHN POLLOCK

Cold Climbs. Ken Wilson, Dave Alcock and John Barry, compilers. Diadem Books, London, 1983. 280 pages, 181 black and white and 62 color photographs, 70 diagrams. £17.95.

Please answer the following statements truthfully:

1. I am an ice climber and proud of it. (True or False.)
2. I wish I was an ice climber and could be proud of it. (True or False.)
3. I hate ice climbing and think being outside in the snow and ice is a sign of sheer stupidity. (True or False.)

If you answered true to any of the above statements, I have a book for you. *Cold Climbs* is a fantastic collection of photographs and narratives of some of the best winter climbs in the world. Every modern climber has heard of the climbs this book describes—Zero Gully, the Cuillin Ridge, Point Five Gully.

Cold Climbs is a large-format, “best of” book on winter climbing in the British Isles. Having twice been across the mighty Atlantic to sample the delights (and miseries) of British winter climbing, I can testify that the large number of excellent photographs give one a very good idea of exactly what climbing on Ben Nevis or in the Cairngorms is like. The book also brings back many joyous and, sometimes, horrifying memories.

When I first opened this book, I was amazed at the number (and quality) of the photographs. In this day and age of the five-dollar paperback, this book is cheap. If you liked the photographs in *Climbing Ice*, you’ll love *Cold Climbs*. This is a great addition to anyone’s library and continues the fine tradition started with *Classic Rock* and *Hard Rock*.

TODD SWAIN

High Level: The Alps from End to End. David Brett. Victor Gollancz, North Pomfret (Vermont), 1983. 207 pages, black and white photographs, sketch maps. \$23.50.

In the summer of 1981, David Brett, an English writer, artist and climber, made a solo, high-level traverse of the Alps from La Bérarde in the Vanoise Alps to Heiligenblut in Austria, near the Gross Glockner. His declared intention was to do for the Alps as a whole what the traditional Haute Route does for the distance between Zermatt and Chamonix—take a very direct, high-level line linking major climbing centers.

The book is at once a detailed guide to the route he followed, doing his fast-paced, 42-day, 600-mile traverse, as well as to his personal reflections during this often lonely adventure. Unlike the Haute Route, which is done in discrete hut-to-hut stages, thus reducing the need to carry food and camping gear, Brett’s impecuniousness dictated avoiding huts: camping out and often foregoing decent meals were his lot. Because of the constraints of his heavy pack and the solo nature of the trip, he was unable to attempt any climbs of particular technical interest. Thus, the book will appeal primarily to the mountain walker rather than to the climber.

This is not a great odyssey book: Colin Fletcher’s *The Man Who Walked Through Time* or the *Thousand Mile Summer* provides a more interesting account of a voyage of discovery on the trail. Brett’s shyness and aloofness constantly keep him distanced from the few souls he does encounter on the journey.