about the "senseless murder of animals in a mountain environment." Among the other inclusions are D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (because Gerald Crich wanders to his death in the Austrian Alps) and Hemingway's unpleasant and inferior "An Alpine Idyll." That's the one in which the mountain peasant hangs his lantern all winter on the jaw of his wife's frozen corpse. (Hemingway's skiing story "Cross-Country Snow" is just as eligible under the broad guidelines, and much better, too.) Perhaps oddest of all is Matthew Arnold's 40-page dramatic poem "Empedocles on Etna," listed under novels.

Nevertheless, the bibliography is one of the most valuable features of the collection. Even without its marginal entries, it has more citations than most of us would have thought possible. Many sound very appealing. There are plenty of pieces that I had never heard of but now, thanks to Salkeld and Smith, want to read.

Surely, mountaineering still awaits its Melville: the writer who can both fully evoke and transcend the world of climbing. But even a few congenial selections would make this book worthwhile, and most of us will find many more. It is well produced and a tremendous bargain—costs less than a Friend and looks a lot sturdier. All those interested in the literature of our endeavor should get themselves a copy.

STEVEN JERVIS

Women Climbing: 200 Years of Achievement. Bill Birkett and Bill Peascod. A & C Black Publishers, Ltd., London, 1989 and The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1989.

Birkett's and Peascod's book on the climbing achievements of women during the last 200 years is in one word, "uneven." It is also sketchy.

At the outset this book promises much. Author Birkett writes in the introduction: "The story is related by selecting an important figure from each area of significant development and concentrating on her individually. There is much background information, and we have presented a complete, if brief, picture of the whole."

Some great stories are told. Climbing adventures make good tales: sometimes funny, sometimes tragic, but always there is energy, a joyous striving, a zest for life. Some of the important figures are finely handled, like Nea Morin whose largeness of spirit kept her climbing when physically she was so very ill; or Gwen Moffat who carved out a climbing life when women were thought pretty strange to want that sort of life; or Wanda Rutkiewicz who has overcome severe illness, injury, and two divorces to become a high mountain overachiever extraordinaire. But then there are others whose personalities just don't get off the page, like the American Miriam O'Brien, who was fascinatingly complex and intensely competitive, but whose story here is flat. Nor did I get a sense of what really drove Loulou Boulez or Yvette Vaucher.

Although this book does not claim explicitly to be a *history* of women's

climbing, it is claiming to relate "200 years of achievement." "This is the story of women in climbing and mountaineering," Birkett writes, "ranging from the first female ascent of Mont Blanc . . . to the incredible achievements of today's rock climbing superstars." Regretfully, it must be reported that this book certainly does not tell all that story. It couldn't be done in only 179 pages.

For instance, *all* the nineteenth century is told in Chapter 1, which is 11 pages long (counting pictures) and features the English alpinist Lucy Walker. Then Chapter 2 concentrates on Miriam O'Brien's alpine climbs of the 1920s and early 1930s. Quite a lot of climbing by women happened between the end of the nineteenth century and 1920, but it is not in this book. Completely left out are, for instance, Himalayan explorer Fanny Bullock Workman, Andes ascensionist Annie Smith Peck, Alaskan climber Dora Keen Handy, and New Zealand mountaineer Freda Du Faur. Isn't this nearly equivalent to leaving out the Renaissance if you're writing a history of art?

Himalayan climbers Junko Tabei and Wanda Rutkiewicz each have a chapter, and so here, one would expect, would be the place to talk about the climbing women have been doing in the Himalaya in the last, say, twenty years. Not so. It's just not there. Hardly mentioned is the landmark first ascent of an 8000-meter peak by an all-women party, Annapurna, led by Arlene Blum in 1978. So by this incompleteness the authors have established no context through which we can truly appreciate the climbs of the determined Junko and the amazing Wanda. To continue with our history-of-art analogy: left out are most of the Impressionists!

Three modern rock climbers were interviewed, but in light of what's gone before, their selection seems arbitrary. Catherine Destivelle, Jill Lawrence, and Louise Shepherd are most worthy. But where, to name the obvious one, is Lynn Hill? Then there are the many, many rock climbers who preceded them or are contemporaries. Very few are mentioned. Too many have been left out to list! (Sort of like leaving out everyone who painted after Picasso?)

So, reader, these are nice stories. But it is not a women's climbing history. *That* challenging book is yet to be written. Perhaps it is women who should take up their own tale.

LAURA WATERMAN

Eiger Dreams: Ventures Among Men and Mountains. Jon Krakauer. Lyons & Burford, New York, 1990. 186 pages. $17.95.

The sport of mountaineering, Jon Krakauer writes in his introduction, "is wrapped in tales of audacity and disaster, that make other sports out to be trivial games by comparison; as an idea, climbing strikes that chord in the public imagination most often associated with sharks and killer bees." His idea in *Eiger Dreams* is to "prune away some of this overgrown mystique—to let in a little light." He states quite clearly that his intention is not to address the question of why we climb head-on: "I circle the issue continually," he explains, ". . . but at no point do I jump right in the cage and wrestle with the beast directly, *mano a mano*."