

CLIMBING JOURNALS.

A NON-CLIMBING reader of mountaineering literature must be struck with the unbridled enthusiasm of the devotees of hill walking, rock climbing, and ski-ing. From the mere rambler on easy, rolling hills to the parties attempting the Himalaya, all seem fired with the same urge to go upwards. This obsession is the common factor in all climbing. One may soar above Everest in an aeroplane, but that is not enough for man, who wishes to pit his body against the snow, rock, ice, and wind.

In the *Alpine Journal* of November 1938 (No. 257) we have the humorous, mock-modest style of Cyril Bailey in the "Treasures of the Humble," the accurately informative articles on "Masherbrum" by J. Waller, and "Mount Cook, a New Route" by L. V. Bryant; the kindly sentiment of "A Winter's Day at Courmayeur" and the purely technical treatise on infra-red colour-film tele-photography. Add to these the excellent plates and lists of expeditions and even the uninitiated can read and enjoy.

J. R. Jenkins, in the *Rucksack Club Journal* of 1939, argues about mountaineering and war. It may be remembered by many that the retreat of the Allies in 1918 was a relief to the man in the front-line trenches, whose chief terror was his inability to counter the shells, bombs, and trench mortars by any effort of his own. Man to man offered some chance of success, like mountaineering, which is a challenge to one's powers. Trying conclusions with an H.E. shell can have only one result.

The articles range the world from the hills of Torridon to the mountains of Japan, where B. R. Goodfellow found much to enjoy and much to criticise. Among the excellent illustrations, G. S. Bower's stand out by virtue of fine composition. It is probably true that most people look first at the illustrations in any book or journal and yet most reviewers dismiss them with "the usual high standard of photography is maintained," or, "they are a mixed bag."

The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, 1939, considers we, in Scotland, should clarify the terms walking and climbing. Climbing south of the border means rock climbing, we are told, and the other thing is hill walking. This is probably good advice and, if acted on in their own magazine, may mean a change of name to, say, *The Journal of the Fell Walking and Climbing Club*. "Langdale Pikes," by W. H. Cooper, catches the eye with its fine form and colour and steals the thunder from even the Matterhorn and Mont Blanc. Marjorie S. Johnston pours forth her emotions in two poems, romantic in thought and scholarly in style. The list of new climbs must be a revelation to those who imagine that, in the Lake District, everything possible has already been done. Like some other journals, a list of accidents with causes, or probable causes, is given. This is all to the good when the great increase in the numbers taking up climbing is considered. M. M. Barker describes a whimsical walk along the border, a safe undertaking, nowadays, except for the bogs.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, No. 126, opens with an interesting and optimistic article on Ski-Running in Scotland. It is to be hoped that the predictions may come true. As early as November the corries north of Cairngorm have looked like perfect nursery slopes. The illustrations to this article are especially interesting to us in view of the fact that they are nearly all taken on our special terrain. The Editor gives useful information about Coire Ardair, and "Sea Mountaineering" with a 36-foot motor boat is a wonderful idea for good sailors and good climbers. The Jubilee issue (April 1939, No. 127) is, of course, mainly historical and reminiscent, the history mainly contained in descriptions of expeditions right from the beginnings of the Club up to the present day. How the Club has improved the knowledge of mountaineering in Scotland is clearly demonstrated in this number. The severity of the entrance qualification is probably the real strength of the Club.

After the ponderous quality of many of the publications controlled by mere man, *The Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club Journal* of December 1938 is lightsome reading, with even the most serious articles having an undercurrent of humour. The members have travelled far, sampling the Canadian Rockies as well as the Alps and Africa. Further humour is added with the dashing and clever pen-and-ink drawings.

The avowed objects of climbing clubs are various, and geology, botany, and many other interests may entice the traveller to venture on anything from simple rambles on the flat to breath-taking climbs on precipices. *The Scottish Geographical Magazine* provides information which must entice many to step out and investigate at first-hand. What about a walk from Findhorn village to the source of the Findhorn River? Or, instead of bagging a few more Munros, why not all the Indicators? The "Future Work of the Ordnance Survey" gives valuable information to those concerned about maps and map reading, especially the proposed innovation of a national grid or reference index, the unit for which would be the international metre.

"Rock Climbs," by Richard Frere, is a guide to the crags in the neighbourhood of Inverness. It is hard to believe that this is the work of a boy of sixteen, and with such an old head on young shoulders his future as a fine climber seems assured.

The additions to Sir Henry Alexander's second edition of what might be called his Cairngorm Bible deal mainly with rock climbs in the eastern corrie of Lochnagar. The unfolding maps and diagrams make study a very practical proposition. R. Gordon Nicol's calculations of sizes and weights reach almost astronomical dimensions. A record of recent fatalities in the Cairngorms, sounding a warning note, the Glen Tanner right-of-way decision, information about gates on roads, Youth Hostels and bibliography make up a useful appendix to this excellent guide book.

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