

NEW CLIMBING BOOKS

- “The Ascent of Rum Doodle,” by W. E. Bowman. (Max Parrish, 1956, 10s. 6d.)
 “White Fury,” by Raymond Lambert and Claude Kogan. (Hurst & Blackett, 1956, 18s.)
 “Give me the Hills,” by Miriam Underhill. (Methuen, 1956, 25s.)
 “The Ben Nevis Race,” by Charles Steel. (C. W. S. Steel, 1956, 1s.)

“The Ascent of Rum Doodle” is a satire on the many accounts of mountaineering exploits in the Himalaya which have appeared in recent years. It starts promisingly enough, but, to your reviewer at least, it did not quite maintain its early sparkle and laboured a little over the final 10,000·5 of the 40,000½ feet which Rum Doodle boasts. But we must accept the undoubted facts that the objects of the satire thoroughly deserve it in many instances, and that good humorous writing on mountaineering is uncommon, and therefore give this book the welcome it deserves. A few of the resurrected Victorian illustrations produce a chuckle, as do certain of the records of the commissariat with its 3,000 porters and 375 boys, later reduced to 153 porters and 19·125 boys, reminding one of another famous ascent—of the Riffelhorn.

“White Fury” is a translation by Showell Styles of “Record à l’Himalaya,” describing a Swiss-French expedition in 1954 which was rather beset by misfortunes. It succeeded neither on Gaurisankar nor Cho Oyu, its failure on the latter being all the more bitter because Tichy’s small Austrian party made the first ascent when they were encamped at the base. The book gives the impression of a party which never really got together, despite most praiseworthy efforts by the two authors. This impression may be fostered by the mode of presentation, in which the authors in turn give several overlapping accounts of the progress of the party. It is surprising, too, in view of the reports from various sources about the better Sherpa relations which exist in continental rather than British expeditions, to be left with the opposite impression. One never really seems to get to know the Sherpas here, as they are discussed very impersonally.

“Give me the Hills” is a mountain autobiography which seems even to have something of the Winthrop Young character about it. In the 1920’s and 1930’s Miriam O’Brian, with her guides Angelo Dimai and Adolf Rubi, or unguided with all-female parties, was making ascents in the Alps whose stories provide good reading. They include the first all-women ascents of the Grepon and the Matterhorn. In her native America, with her husband Robert Underhill, she reports exploratory climbing in Idaho and Montana, but somehow it is the unusual ascents in better-known places that hold the interest. There is, for instance, that first ski traverse from Gressoney to Zermatt *via* the Margherita and the Dufourspitze, despite the attentions of Italian frontier guards. This is one of the books where we find the proper relationship between guide and tourist—one which is barely possible now for most climbers, what with rota systems and brief holidays.

“The Ben Nevis Race” is a forty-page booklet which details the figures recorded in the numerous timed ascents since 1895. Climbing, or rather going up and down, against the clock scarcely comes within the limits of true mountaineering, but the men who make the summit of the Ben and get back again to Fort William within two hours, or for that matter the girls who do it in a little over

three, would obviously make reasonably good hill walkers with proper training! They might not raise the ire of the Meets Secretary as often as some of us do at present. It seems a pity that so fine a mountain as Ben Nevis should be subjected to record-breaking of this nature.

CLIMBING JOURNALS

- Alpine Journal*, Nos. 291-293.
Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, No. 147.
Climbers' Club Journal, No. 81.
Rucksack Club Journal, No. 49.
Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal, Nos. 49, 50.
Cambridge Mountaineering, 1956.
Oxford Mountaineering, 1956.
American Alpine Journal, 1956.
Iowa Climber, 1956.
Appalachia, Vol. XXX, No. 4; Vol. XXXI, Nos. 1, 2.
New Zealand Alpine Journal, 1955.
Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa, 1955.
Club Alpino Italiano, Sez. di Milano, Boll. Mensile, 1956.
Wierchy, 1955.

The Fell and Rock Climbing Club has just reached its jubilee, and celebrates the occasion with a number of its journal which does full justice to the event. One hundred and fifty pages of text and fifty plates serve to relate and illustrate the history of the Club and give some impression of its home ground, the English Lake District, an area which is, in fact, detailed in its full title. Apart from eminently readable reminiscence by F. H. F. Simpson, T. Howard Somervell, Dorothy Pilley Richards, and Lord Chorley, there is an excellent account of the Lakeland Landscape by F. J. Monkhouse and a note on some Lakeland trees. The fact that the journal is numbered 50 suggests an admirable regularity of publication for which all nine editors are to be commended, in view of the high standard which this journal maintains.

In No. 293 of the *Alpine Journal* pride of place is given to an account of the Swiss Himalayan expedition of 1956 which was so amazingly successful, making the first ascent of Lhotse and putting two parties on the top of Everest on successive days. They apparently found snow conditions better than in 1953 and had reasonable luck with the weather, well deserved in view of previous Swiss experience on Everest. In this number there is also J. M. Hartog's account of the ascent—or better, climbing—of the Mustagh Tower, Hamish McArthur's technical and topographical account of the Lahoul area, and an article on mountaineering in Russia. In the two earlier numbers of the *Alpine Journal* under review will be found George Band's description of the ascent of Kangchenjunga and Monica Jackson's account of the Scottish Women's Himalayan Expedition, to cite only two items which may interest our members particularly, as they have been described by other speakers at our own meetings.

Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, too, has reached its jubilee. The edition which it has produced to celebrate the event is more concerned with the present than the past, although there are a few commemorative notes, including