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TWO BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

"The Mountain World"

George Allen and Unwin Ltd. published "The Mountain World" (50/-) earlier this year. It is printed in Switzerland and is the ninth issue in a world-famous series. It has had an excellent Press both in Great Britain and U.S.A. It has been compiled by the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research who are the official publishers and hold the copyright. Hugh Merrick made the translations.

There are maps, 56 excellent photographs and 224 pages of text. It is, of course, not a book on Switzerland, but on alpine exploration of the world. The first article is by Federal Councillor Roger Bonvin and is in memory of the late Herman Geiger, the Glacier Pilot whose tragic death took place last year. There is a highly original article by Dougal Haston called "Reflections on the Eiger Direct"; shivers run down one's back when one reads the graphic account of how the Eiger lost its toughest battle. F. H. Schwarzenbach reflects on "For or Against Directissima Climbs". Bernhard Nievergelt writes on "The Steinbock in the Swiss Alps", and two first-class ibex pictures and some graphs illustrate his account.

Then we pass on to less familiar regions with a report of the 1965 Czech Hindu Kush Expedition to Koh-e-Uparisina, a magnificent peak in the main range of the Eastern Hindu Kush, a place *higher than the birds fly* — 6,260 metres. This is followed by Henry Edmundson's account of "Climbs in the Afghan Hindu Kush" and Markus Schmuck's description of the Salzburg first ascent of Darban Zom (7,220 metres).

"Khan Tengri, Lord of the Sky" is the title of an article by W. Omishtchenko on the 1964 Moscow Expedition to the "blood-red peak" whose great beauty exerts almost magical powers of attraction. The German Himalaya Expedition of 1965 and the Indian Everest venture of the same year hold the reader's attention for the next half hour or so. And just when he thinks he has been given his fill on the fascinating subject, from a woman's pen follows a graphic account on "Bhutan, Paradise of the Himalaya"; Blanche Christine Olschak describes the "Land of the Mystical Dragon with its *river fortresses and iron bridges, its rock temples and sunlit slopes*" and then adds some interesting information on the Bhutan population and its fifteen distinct dialects. Her article is followed by one on the hitherto unexplored region of Bhutan, an almost unknown medieval fairyland, by Dr. R. W. D. Turner, 16 pages of highly rewarding reading.

From there we go to Africa's finest peak, Mount Kenya, described by Walter Amstutz, a member of the Swiss Alpine Research Council. The following article is on "Climbing in the Arctic", describing the German Greenland Expedition in the Stauning Alps in 1966, by Karl M. Herrligkoffer. Erik Hoff follows it with an equally fascinating account of an "attempted survey" of the ascents of Greenland's Mountains including a list in chronological order.

"The Coastal Ranges of Brazil" by Malcolm Slesser and Iuiz Minchetti begins on page 146 and, in ten pages, introduces yet another world of mountains to the reader. Doelf Reist writes on the Solothurn Expedition to the Cordillera Blanca in 1965 and the experiences, failures and successes in *Peru, bounteous in its gifts and not only on its mountains*. Domingos Giobbi next writes on two more groups in the same range, and his article is followed by Walter Weibel's report on the International Andes Expedition of the "Friends of Nature". Twelve Austrians, three Germans and four Swiss undertook

"Journey to Aconcagua" early in 1966. However sober may be the title, description and photo tell the reader very soon that the undertaking was beset with mountaineering difficulties of no mean nature. The last article on the Andes deals with the "Exploration of the Southern Puna de Atacama, written by Anders Bolinder who himself (with Verena Bolinder) made the first ascent of Cerro Bertrand and other peaks in the extinct volcano group.

The last article in the book takes the reader to the mysterious world of Antarctica. Samuel Silverstein and Barry Corbet tell of the American exploits of the region whose highest peaks were not discovered until 1958, *at about the same time that Sputnik I heralded the exploration of space. The top of the bottom of the world was discovered and became accessible to mountaineers by virtue of the technological advances of the past decade.* The last sentence is *How fortunate we were, I thought, to know our debt to those who went before us, and have added in some small measure to the adventurous undertaking they began.* This expresses and summarises the thread which can be followed throughout the beautifully compiled book, that of the gratitude and humility of the great mountaineer.

What a present to any mountain lover!

Gottfried Keller: Life and Works

J. M. Lindsay attempts to fill in a gap, for in vain does the student of Gottfried Keller look for an introduction in English, whilst there is no dearth of books and articles in German. Oswald Wolff Ltd. published the book recently, and it costs 42/-. The book was supported financially by the "Pro Helvetia" Foundation, and the author acknowledges gratefully the help which has been given him by Dr. P. Stauffer, Cultural Attaché at the Swiss Embassy, as well as a number of Swiss and English writers and other experts.

On opening the volume, we meet the Swiss writer in old age in the familiar etching by Karl Stauffer, Berne 1887, with Keller sitting down, handkerchief in hand and lost in thought. But Lindsay begins with childhood and adolescence, evolution from art student in Munich (some reproductions of Keller's paintings are shown in the book) to writer and poet back in Zurich. The author manages well to present Keller's difficulties during his life of a *succession of grey, hopeless days, which often pass in dull idleness and disappear into the darkling past*, and the sudden poetic inspiration which was transforming his *drab, unsatisfying and unhappy life, giving it substance, direction and meaning*.

And thus the reader follows the famous Swiss author's experiences, his love life and friendships, his journeys, his financial fortunes, his work as Cantonal Secretary (*Staats-schreiber*) and above all, his successes as writer and poet. By the time one arrives at his death at the age of nearly 71, on 15th July 1890, one feels one knows the great man, an original in many ways, simple and direct, yet complex of nature, too. One will have realised that what he did was *with real conviction, good, and sound and durable*. He had lived *to the dictates of a lively artistic conscience*.

The second part of the book deals with the work of Gottfried Keller and ends with a conclusive chapter and selected bibliography. The author refers in particular to "der Grüne Heinrich", "Die Leute von Seldwyla", "Sieben Legenden", "Zürcher Novellen", "Das Sinngedicht" and "Martin Salander". This is where the student and admirer of Keller finds new aspects and emphases of interpretation. In a review in the "Tages-Anzeiger" L. Loeb says that German language literature was still the stepchild

of the British reading public, even though there were some translations into English and even into Welsh, and the Encyclopaedia Britannica gave 28 lines of praise in the 700-page "History of German Literature". Loeb refers to J. M. Lindsay's previous contribution on Keller in a collection of "German Men of Letters" and then goes on to praise his new effort. He says in spite of some shortcomings, the book is refreshingly free from pseudo-thoughtfulness, modern jargon and *Effekthascherei*. He refrains from accentuating his own originality and discernment, but presents clearly and distinctly Gottfried Keller's life and work. He is reliable regarding facts and sober in interpretation and criticism. It remains comprehensible throughout, not always the case in Germanistic works. The critic will perhaps miss a new orientation on Keller from the British view, but even for an admirer and student of Keller, it makes interesting reading, and serves as a valuable introduction to the novice.

A Christmas present well worth giving and receiving!
MM

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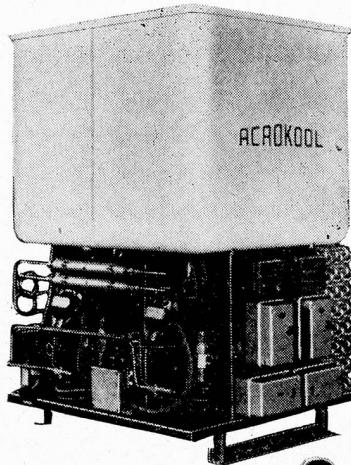
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Switzerland

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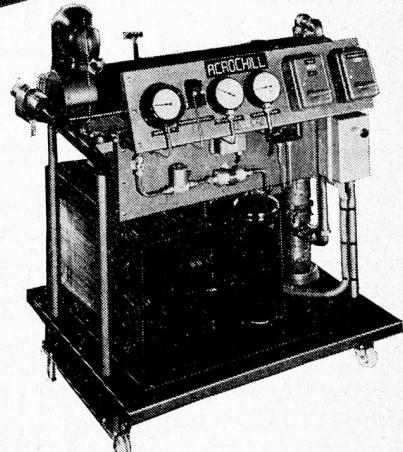
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