

A great mountaineer

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A GREAT MOUNTAINEER.

"Mountain Paths" by H. E. G. Tyndale,
Eyre & Spottiswoode — 12/6.

Descriptions of mountains and of their conquest are always fascinating. They appeal not only to the enthusiastic mountaineer but also to the sedentary reader who, though he has never climbed a mountain in his life, yet derives a vicarious enjoyment from tales of the skill, courage and endurance displayed by an intrepid climber. The enjoyment is enhanced when the adventures and experiences of such a climber are gathered in an attractively-produced and beautifully illustrated volume and the story is well-written and told with originality, humour and modesty. A book of this kind has just been published: A. E. G. Tyndale's "Mountain Paths," the latest addition to the New Alpine Library of which Arnold Lunn is the Editor and first contributor.

Mr. Tyndale is a Master at Winchester College. An old Wykehamist himself and a brilliant Oxford Scholar, he belongs to that galaxy of intellectuals to whom mountaineering is more than a recreation, to whom, in fact, it is a noble cult and a life-long consecration, and who are endowed with the blessed gift of literary expression. This gift Mr. Tyndale possesses in no small measure. He produces page after page of exciting climbing adventures, entertaining accounts of human contacts and wonderful descriptions of mountain scenery with passages that transcend to heart-stirring, lyrical beauty. Through it all runs a rich vein of humour which makes the book most pleasurable and rescues it from being too pedantic. The occasional Latin and Greek quotations, though, especially the latter, are lost on the untutored, of whom, alas, the reviewer is one.

Climbing, writes Mr. Tyndale, like matrimony, is not lightly to be undertaken. What induced him to take it up was the chance discovery, in a Hampshire Pub, of a mid-Victorian Alpine tale from an old, tattered magazine. His imagination was fired but he was still a Public Schoolboy and lacked the opportunities for indulging his newly-found affection. He was allowed, however, to join a party in North Wales where, under the guidance of R. L. G. Irving, he served his apprenticeship as a mountaineer. But his passion craved for bigger things; he wanted to tackle the giants. Finally, he contrived to travel to Zermatt and, in the course of the ensuing years, to climb most

of the famous peaks in the Pennine range, in the Bernese Oberland and in Eastern Switzerland. He also explored the Graians in Northern Italy and the Eastern Julian Alps. His many ascents are vividly and admirably described. One chapter of the book is devoted to a journey to Greece, most amusingly related.

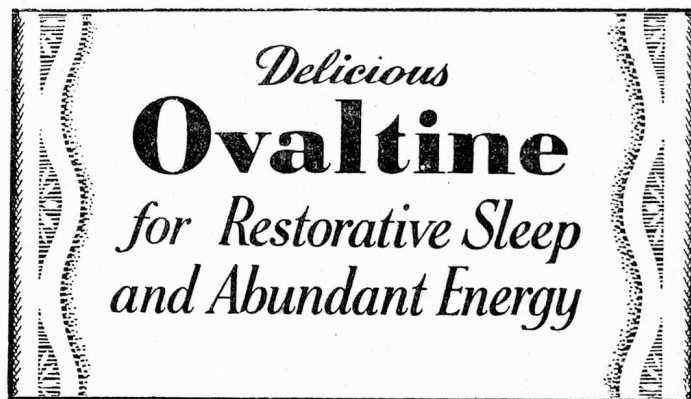
At the time of his first ascent of the Matterhorn, Mr. Tyndale was elected member of the Alpine Club, that exclusive body which, as a wit once said, does nothing in particular and does it very well. He also became the founder and first President of the Oxford University Mountaineering Club, the opening meeting of which was enlivened by a motion to inhibit the Secretary of the Church Union from issuing a printed prayer for "faith to remove mountains."

He met and formed friendships with many of the great figures of the Alpine world: Martin Conway, George Mallory who lost his life in the Hymalayas, Willy Merckl, also of Hymalaya-fame, Dr. Julius Kugy, the gigantic Austrian veteran, Rey and a host of others. Of his friend Girdlestone he writes that he was fond of exchanging banter with the Parish-priest of Arolla; "Here, my dear Abbé, is a good Protestant Cigar," to which the Abbé retorted neatly, "And that is precisely why I am going to burn it." —

A short introduction from the gifted pen of Arnold Lunn and a number of magnificent photographs add to the charm of the work.

The literature of mountaineering is undoubtedly the richer for Mr. Tyndale's contribution. It is a delightful book, beautifully written, and one that deserves to — and probably will — rank high among the Alpine classics.

J.J.F.S.



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