

REVIEWS.

BRITISH SKI YEAR BOOK, VOL. VII., No. 14.

SKI NOTES AND QUERIES, Nos. 51 and 52, VOL. VI.

The mountaineer and the skier have much in common, and even those of us who have never been on skis cannot fail to find the British Ski Year Book of absorbing interest. As usual there is something for all, whether it is a description of a tour in some remote corner of the globe or a detailed study of snow or ice. There are also many useful hints to be picked up in the equipment section.

Although the descriptions of slaloms and races may not appeal to the ordinary mountaineer, many of us will know the ground covered by the Cambridge University M.C. on the glaciers of the Bernese Oberland last March. Their programme was ambitious, to say the least of it, particularly as several members of the party were putting on skis for the first time. But fortune favours the brave, and there is nothing like experience for teaching one the rules of the game.

Major A. S. Radcliff gives us some very useful information on the sport to be had in Sweden. The season would appear to be later than in Switzerland, and he recommends Storlien as the best all-round centre.

Mr. Seligman provides us with something to think about in his treatise on the different kinds of snow and frost. Too much cannot be known about this fascinating subject, if we would go out into the high Alps. So many townsmen in this country only think of snow in terms of slush and mud that it is interesting to study the subject from the technical side when an opportunity occurs.

When so many of our friends go out to Switzerland or Austria each year it is difficult to realise that skiing as a sport has really only developed within the last 30 years. In an article by Mr. W. F. Corfield we gain an amusing insight into the early days. None of the Amstutz or Berger ski sticks then, for apparently they carried a long pole around which they turned and twisted. This would be rather dangerous if it were still carried on some of our bigger races to-day.

Lt. Col. C. Dankes describes the country around Nanga Parbat from a ski-ing point of view. Until this country is properly opened up the obstacles of communication and transport would deter all but the most adventurous. On several occasions his nearest companions were over 50 miles away. He was held up in a blizzard for three days and nights in a hut at 12,000 feet, during which time provisions for the ponies ran out, and the only fodder procurable was the spare grass sandals belonging to the porters!

Although on a much smaller scale than the Year Book, the October and November, 1933, issues of Ski Notes and Queries are even more interesting than usual. The photographs are superb, and positively call us out to the snows. Coming as they do in the winter, when many of us are unable to take a holiday, these publications afford many a happy evening before the fireside, and will take our thoughts from the fogs of old England away into the everlasting snows and glaciers of mighty peaks.

R.H.

This Journal contains, in addition to matter relating to purely mountaineering expeditions, accounts of scientific exploration and surveys of some of the valleys and high passes of the Himalayan country, from which it is clear that, in the first place, there are, apart from innumerable snow peaks, large tracts of country which still await a complete exploration; and in the second place, this work is being carried on untiringly and continuously by the members of the Club. One receives an impression, on perusing these pages, of unbounded enthusiasm, resource and perseverance, which makes the reading of the various accounts absorbingly interesting.

The Journal opens with an account by Lt. Col. B. E. M. Gurdon of the incidents which led to the Chitral campaign of 1895. Hugh Ruttledge describes various attempts on Nanda Devi, including one by himself in 1932. The approaches to this mountain appear to be well guarded. Mr. Ruttledge records the general opinion that the chance of success is very small, but suggests that an attack by the south-west shoulder might be worth trying.

Helmut de Terra contributes a paper—mainly geographical and geological—on the exploration of the Eastern Karakorum, and a naturalist's Journey to the Sources of the Irrawaddy is described by F. Kingdon Ward.

One of the most important articles is that by Dr. Willy Merkl, on the attack on Nanga Parbat, in 1932. Strenuous attempts were made to reach the summit, but failed, after the main east ridge had been reached, owing to bad weather. There was trouble also with the porters, most of whom suffered, apparently, from mountain sickness.

G. A. R. Spence describes an attempt on Chomiomo, and Capt. G. C. Clark writes of some amusing legends current in Hunza. One of these concerns a terrifying monster which inhabited a local lake, and was only appeased by human sacrifice. The Loch Ness Monster thus appears to have been anticipated by a thousand years or so!

A note is given of a flight by the R.A.F. in 1932 from Risalpur to Gilgit. One of the illustrations accompanying this account—a view of Nanga Parbat from the north-west—is of great interest, as it shows Merkl's route by the Rakiot Glacier, and Mummery's route of 1895 by the Diamirai face.

The illustrations are numerous and of a very high quality. The view of "Rakaposhi from Camp 4" is a real gem. There are also some remarkable infra-red photographs taken of mountains at a distance of 70 miles.

E.W.S.