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back six thousand pounds before leaving London for Newmarket on Friday. . . .” Even his swart dishevelment, and the rapid extemporised character of his best speeches, seemed to betoken prodigious energy; and “when the ‘black animal’ (writes Mr. Hobhouse, describing the famous Westminster Election) mounted the hustings in Covent Garden Piazza, and launched forth into one of his nervous and intemperate harangues, ‘blowing, and sweltering, and scratching his black behind,’ why, there was no resisting him. . . .” A glimpse of Mr. Hobhouse’s admirable frontispiece makes the photograph of a modern statesman look oddly unreal.

PETER QUENNEL

## WHAT GREECE’S GLORY WAS

**A Biography of the Greek People.** By C. F. LAVELL. *Routledge*. 8s. 6d.

**Greek Geography.** By E. H. WARMINGTON. *Dent*. 5s.

There was an excellent reason for writing this new history of ancient Greece; there existed no book which explained what the Greeks had achieved and why they still mattered. Its predecessors were choked with irrelevant details of wars between one tiny State and another, to the detriment of such slight attempts at cultural history as their authors had seen fit to include. The new history (like most of them) virtually ends at Alexander, but more excusably: its purpose is to trace the growth of what made Greece unique; and the successes of the Greek genius in later times, after the loss of national independence, were largely won in different fields and may be regarded as another story. It is a commendably short book, but its brevity has cost too much. In the first place, the weaknesses of Greece have been passed over, with the exception of its political instability, as unimportant in what is admittedly a valuation of its strong points. This attitude is hard to justify, if any narrative history is to be included (and there are several chapters of it). The dependence upon imported slaves for labour, and upon foreign trade for their food, must explain the violence of politics in a barren country with “poor whites” and struggling cultivators, while the domesticity of the women and the resultant homosexual trend encouraged civic instead of home life.

The author himself remarks that his *Biography of the Greek People* has turned into an estimate of its great men, and this, too, has led to a one-sided outlook to a greater extent than might legitimately have been expected. The number of great men among the ancient Greeks is large enough for choice, and the choice in this book seems to me unjustifiable. It makes an admirable start in the consideration of Homer and Hesiod, and proceeds, after some uninspired narrative of important events, to show (again admirably) why Socrates became socially pernicious but immortal; and why Plato was driven, as a refuge from a politically imbecile world, to invent ideal States and find in day-dreams a new hope and goal for man. Nothing, however, is said of Aristophanes’ robust attitude of making the best of this world, which must, I should have thought, have been more general among decent Greeks, and was obviously more likely to encourage them to do their jobs. To reconstruct Athens as a city of Plato and no Aristophanes is as bad as to accept Mr. J. L. Garvin as a better representative of the English spirit than Mr. George Robey. But unhappily the book seems to have a bias for the more abstract forms of theological speculation. Aristotle appears in it mainly as a theologian, regardless of his invention of empirical science, of his investigation of the social and economic structure, of his analyses of the uses of speech. Mr. Lavell starts at the first classification of the gods and ends at the fade-out of the Deity into Duty, as though that were the greatest of the Greek achievements. It is great enough; but Buddha did as much. The Greek rationalism shows to better advantage, when compared with any other ancient people, in the scientific outlook. In sheer knowledge of facts, as, for example, in mathematics and astronomy, it took the Greeks a long time to catch up with the Egyptians and Babylonians, but their manner of approach to scientific questions was incomparably more advanced. The Babylonians forestalled them in learning to calculate lunar eclipses, but the Greeks never descended to the Babylonian habit of taking an eclipse to prognosticate something totally unconnected with the moon. The notion of causality apparently came naturally to Greeks, whereas for many centuries Asiatics of great learning stored up thousands of prognostications of the type: “If a black dog shall enter the temple, the king of that city shall die.” The world’s debt to Greece for abolishing that kind of obsessing nonsense is, to my mind, heavier than its debt for any theological abstractions, even on the supposition that these were responsible

for the features which made Christianity more generally acceptable than Judaism. As for the chapter on Greek artistic ideals, it is altogether inadequate; the views on sculpture and minor arts are borrowed from a publication of thirty years ago and do not answer the inquiries of a new generation, while no attempt is made to explain the architectural outlook. Worringer and Spengler have done so with considerable success, but to be understood their work requires a wider and deeper knowledge of antiquities in general than Mr. Lavell has displayed. Incidentally he might have put more life into his history if he had been (or had shown himself) familiar with modern Greece, for the physical conditions of the country have manifestly affected its population in the same way at all times. The disproportionate number of Greek millionaires, the career of M. Venizelos, the dispersal of modern Greek traders over vast areas of Africa, America and Asia, have a repetitive air to the classical scholar.

The enterprise of the ancient Greeks in exploring, trading with and settling in half the known world, meets with scarcely more recognition from Mr. Lavell than their scientific attainments. In each case the gap is largely filled by the volume on *Greek Geography*, one of a series, each of which contains an introduction and translations of representative passages from Greek authors. The method of the series suits the sections on cosmology and geographical theory but may confuse the reader of the topographical descriptions. A set of maps would have made it possible to realise fluctuations in the extent of geographical knowledge from time to time; as it is there are few notes, and those looking through the quotations have to depend largely on occasional identifications of places given in brackets. (A few more queries might have been added before the modern place-names; for example, the landmarks noted by the Carthaginian explorers of West Africa have been identified differently by persons familiar with the coast.) The translations are good and reliable, being all the work of the editor. He has, however, interpreted his subject rather strictly, cutting out accounts of the manner of life in each district as though it were not his business. Most people would have preferred the sacrifice of some passages descriptive of places (which are, of course, described more accurately in any modern encyclopaedia). It is always interesting to see how variously human life has adapted itself to geographical conditions, which are themselves practically invariable. At least, none of the evidence brought together here (and it is thoroughly representative) suggests that climatic changes have taken place in the last 2,500 years. While the only physical difference to be noted is a growth of alluvial plain at the mouths of certain rivers, the changes in human geography have been prodigious, and a companion volume on Greek Anthropology would be well worth while, even though it would involve reprinting some of the material contained in this.

A. W. LAWRENCE

## CLIMBING

**An Alpine Journey.** By F. S. SMYTHE. *Gollancz*. 16s.

Mr. Smythe is what the clap-trap journalists would call a lone climber. It is lucky for him that he is not feminine. For they would then go one better: lone girl climber. But fortunately the pursuit of even guideless and solitary mountaineering is not quite sensational enough to be even second-page news, except of course when it ends in death. Contrary to Shirley’s belief, death is no longer a leveller. It raises up—to the heights of the front page. Thus if Mr. Smythe had slipped off the Jungfrau he would have had the satisfaction, very doubtful for him, of knowing that he was about to be raised up—and far higher than ever his solitary attempt in the last 2,000 feet of Everest had taken him. (He must be the only man on earth who has slept alone at 28,000 feet: yet who hears of that?). As it is, he returns safely, writes a modest and charming account of his journey, and is lucky if he adds a millimetre to his stature. Truly the mountaineer’s text might be “the higher the fever.”

Mr. Smythe has two distinctions: he is an extremely fine mountaineer, and he is a good, though not superlatively good, writer. And it was almost as much as a writer as a mountaineer; I fancy, that he planned in the early spring of this year a journey across the Alps from Bludenz in Austria, to Montreux. Otherwise he would not have said: “It was a journey undertaken with the object of seeing as much as possible of Alpine Switzerland, its mountains, passes, alps, valleys, villages, towns and people, and of recapturing something of the charm of mountain travel so delightfully described by the pioneers of Alpine mountaineering and which breathes from the pages of *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*.”

Here one can plainly see the writer with his eye cocked for the good things. Unfortunately, when the good things appear, mountaineers are not always as good at describing them. On mountains of special magnificence the Deity, represented by the Divine Hand or the Divine Sculptor or even the Divine Engineer, keeps creeping in. In valleys, especially in spring valleys, with flowers, he makes an appearance as an artist: the Divine Artist, the Divine Brush. Almost all mountaineers are guilty of this. Even Mr. Smythe is guilty. He talks—true, without capitals—of a divine hand, a divine skill, a divine harmony. Yet he is, for the most part, a pedestrian writer, not at all given to purple flights. Fixed firmly on his feet, he writes very well: "It was a calm evening. There were no clouds in the sky and no wind in the pine-tops." He is also a pungent and witty observer of people—not excluding himself. He tells an excellent story of how, intent on regarding in a gasthof a picture of *The Man Who Left Without Paying For His Cigars*, he himself got up and left without paying for his beer. He weighs up the Swiss, especially the Sunday Swiss, very deftly. He never loses a chance of irony at the expense of war-mongers and peace-mongers. Flowers delight him; and children, and old towns, and tunnels in mountains. And always, above everything, the mountains themselves. There is much he can still learn about writing: but there is precious little, in my humble terrestrial opinion, that he can learn about heights. He possesses superlative technique, craft and craftiness, instinct, rhythm, courage, snow-knowledge and weather-knowledge. A hundred years ago he would have been locked up as a lunatic—if he had existed at all. To-day his journey, alone, over the backbone of the Alps, at a treacherous period of the year, excites no more comment than a flight to Paris. So, rightly, he has embodied it in a book—a book which, his publisher remarks, is probably the first of its kind. This is not quite true: there have been other mountain books, notably Lord Conway's, to which it may be likened. But this does not concern me. What I hope is that it will not by any means be the last of its kind.

Nor is it quite true to say that Mr. Smythe travelled alone. He took with him a camera; and judging from the forty-eight photographs he prints, it was as much alive as he was.

H. E. BATES

## THE ETERNAL SCHOOLBOY

**Make It New:** Essays by EZRA POUND. *Faber and Faber.* 12s. 6d.

Mr. Pound's readers must often have wished that he would contrive to make it a little newer, but they will be disappointed once again. He has not taken his own hint in this volume. It is a collection of essays mostly twenty-odd years old, and suitable, perhaps, for review articles, which they were originally, but rather absurd or even impertinent in book form. "French Poets," for instance, is nothing but the most haphazard, the scrappiest of anthologies, with occasional remarks by Mr. Pound, as that Moréas's poetry has a "Gothic" side, or that Jammes's *simplesse* can be irritating. One might suppose the critic had bent his faculties to the humble task of giving beginners a general introduction to these poets; perhaps he meant that, but he is psychologically incapable of achieving it—he cannot see any subject as a whole, and he cannot consider his audience for a page together. For instance, in the section on Moréas, he quotes a bit of "Gothic" poetry; compares it (a pointer dead in the wrong direction) to William Morris; compares modern Gothic poets (worse and worse) to Charles d'Orléans; rambles for a paragraph, and then sums up: "However, I believe Moréas was a real poet." The reader has been given hardly a glimpse of Moréas, and is left without the faintest idea what was good about him. Of Stuart Merrill he says: "I know that I have seen somewhere a beautiful and effective ballad of Merrill's." Then a couple of random quotations—three or four lines each—and that is all. But what are Mr. Pound's dim scraps of recollection to the reader—to any reader, however ignorant, however "general"? How can a critic so little interested in his subject expect the public to be so much interested in his conclusions?

The answer is that Mr. Pound remains a schoolboy. He is interested—a little in the subject, inordinately in any idea, however vague, that he may have had about it. He reminds one just a little of Bloch as a schoolboy—at the period when he and the hero were addressing each other as "cher maître." He even employs Bloch's idiom, or very nearly.

Further attempt to answer Mr. Eliot's indirect query as to "What Mr. P. believes," would be perhaps out of place at this juncture. I have, I think, at no time attempted to conceal my beliefs from my so eminent colleague. . . .

Book in the