which is used. Measurements are given in the metric system, again, and quite rightly, to conform
with international usage. However as the glossary is intended for practical field use by English-
speaking mariners, it would have been kind and useful to have included equivalents in feet and
miles.

The authors are to be congratulated on an admirable piece of work, and the publication of the
longer glossary for scientific use will be eagerly awaited.

Moira Dunbar

Lawinen: Abenteuer und Erfahrung, Erlebnis und Lehre. 2te
Auflage. Walther Flög. Wiesbaden, F. A. Brockhaus, 1955. 251 pages, text-figures,
82 plates. 23 5 cm. Price D.M. 16.50.

No more comprehensive study of avalanches has been published than this the second and rewritten
edition of a book which made a great reputation on its first appearance.

The second chapter incidentally the chapters are not numbered, a tiresome innovation—
should have been the opening chapter for it is a little confusing to open with a brief review of the
terrible avalanches of 1951 and then to jump back into the Middle Ages, but this displaced chapter
is scholarly and interesting. The theoretical analysis of avalanches is very thorough, but of greater
interest, if not of greater value, is the detailed description of historic avalanches.

In my long experience of the avalanche in winter I can remember no avalanche catastrophies
more terrible than those described and illustrated in the chapters devoted to the avalanches of
1951 and 1954.

Of particular interest is Anton Stegmueller’s personal narrative of an avalanche. He regained
consciousness after being over three hours under the snow. “I had given up all hope of rescue and
was indifferent to my fate. I remember thinking that it would be best to fall asleep again and not
to wake.” My own experience of being buried in snow is that as the oxygen gets exhausted one
passes into a dreamy, comatose mood in which one is only half-conscious. It is rather like going
under an anaesthetic.

There is one point about avalanches which nobody has satisfactorily explained, and which is
not, so far as I can see, referred to in this book*. Many years ago I observed that on an afternoon
in the late spring, the moment of maximum danger was when the sun left the slope. I remember a
race against avalanches in the course of a ski descent from the Eiger on a May afternoon in 1924.
I watched the shadow creeping round from the Eiger and the avalanches sliding down when the
shadow touched the snow. And I knew that if we did not reach the bottom before the shadow
loosened the snow on the Mönch buttresses there would be no escape. We won that race with
about forty minutes to spare.

There are eighty-two full pages of illustrations, by far the finest collection of avalanche photo-
graphs which has yet appeared. The most striking is a photograph of the Airolo Church tower
emerging from above the tremendous avalanche of the fatal year, 1951.

Arnold Lunn

Praktische Schnee- und Lawinenkunde. Leo Handl. Obergurgl, Austria,
Alpinen Forschungstelle der Universität Innsbruck, 1955. 56 pages, 16 text-figures. 21 cm.
Price Sch. 28.00.

Published under the authority of the official Austrian Alpine Research Station at Obergurgl in
the Ötztal, this little book deals briefly but adequately with the minimum needs of the mountain-
goer in respect of the snow cover and avalanches. The author is a mountaineer and skier of long-
standing experience.

* This phenomenon is now being investigated by the Eidg. Institut für Schnee- und Lawinenforschung, Davos. Ed.