

REVIEWS.

HILL BIRDS OF SCOTLAND. By Seton Gordon, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.
London: Edward Arnold.—The author of "The Charm of the Hills" (See

C.C.J., vii., 246) displayed in that work, as in a previous one. "Birds of the Loch and Mountain," such an extensive knowledge of the wild life of the mountains that one is not surprised to find him writing a book which deals exclusively with the birds that are to be found in our high altitudes. It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Seton Gordon is a most patient observer—one who never grudges the time spent nor the trouble involved in obtaining first-hand, the most accurate information about birds and their habits. While he is indefatigable in the pursuit of an object for his note-book and his camera, he is also perfectly indifferent as to the fatigue and discomfort that may be entailed, and the lack of success that occasionally attends his efforts; and he writes of them with the most charming insouciance. Executing so much "tracking" of birds in the hills—and animals as well—he has had some remarkable experiences; and mountaineers will find much in the book to interest them quite apart from the fascinating details of bird life that are furnished. Here, for instance, is a sample of the hardships to which Mr. Gordon and a friend were subjected in the course of an expedition to study the ptarmigan in its home 2500 feet above sea-level:—

"Out in the open the wind was blowing with gale force, the drift and falling snow rendering progress difficult. . . . We reached our shelter before the full force of the gale swept the glen, and it was fortunate we did so. . . . Although the darkness had not yet closed in, the drift was so thick that there was a certain element of danger in venturing even a few yards from the door of the bothy; so a coin was tossed to decide who should make the journey to the well for a fresh supply of water. I succeeded in winning the toss, so my friend set out with a large pail to search for the well. It may be difficult to credit the fact, but so thick was the drift that, in the twenty-five yards which separated well from bothy, he several times lost his bearings, and returned five minutes later breathless and exhausted, just as I was debating whether it would be advisable to tune up my bagpipes to guide him back to shelter."

Incidents like these are strewn abundantly through the book, and render it exceedingly attractive to readers to whom mere accounts of bird life may not appeal. Mountaineers, however, can hardly be insensible to such accounts, for they must necessarily feel interested, more or less, in all creatures that have their habitation on the mountains. They will derive much instruction as well as pleasure from the perusal of Mr. Seton Gordon's delightful pages.

R. A.

NOBODY who walks through Glen Feshie can fail to notice the striking manner in which the Feshie, flowing apparently towards the Geldie valley, turns suddenly from east-north-east to north-north-west, with

THE FESHIE a very sharp bend or "elbow"—Mr. J. B. Nicol, for
AND THE example, refers to it in his article in this number. The
GELDIE. geological conclusion is that the Feshie "captured" the
headwaters of the Geldie; and the operation was de-

scribed by Mr. Lionel W. Hinxman, of H.M. Geological Survey, in a paper on "The River Spey," which he contributed to the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* in April, 1901 (See also *C.C.J.*, iii., 259). Mr. Alexander Bremner, D.Sc., deals much more fully with "The Capture of the Geldie by the Feshie" in the November number of the *S.G. Magazine*, contesting in particular Mr. Hinxman's conclusion that the capture took place in post-glacial times. He points out that where the Feshie wheels so suddenly it flows in a channel incised on a nearly flat platform of glacial debris raised 20 feet above the western extremity of the Geldie valley. A great spread of moraine stuff, he goes on to say, extends westward from three miles below the bend and cloaks both sides of the Feshie valley to beyond the mouth of the Eidart, forming to the north of the Geldie a rude, hummocky-topped terrace, which looks like the terminal moraine of glaciers descending in late glacial times from the corries of Carn an Fhithleir (Cairn Ealar) and An Sgarsoch. While the present upper Geldie valley was occupied by glacier ice, an overflow of melt-water was directed across, and cut a channel in the morainic deposits between the elbow and the mouth of the Eidart, and the present upper Feshie occupied the channel thus excavated, and has done remarkably little to deepen or otherwise modify it. "In other words, present conditions were established on a terrain of glacial deposits. The process, moreover, was not river capture, but river diversion. The upper Feshie was restrained from passing eastward by the barrier of moraine stuff at the head of the Geldie valley, or by the ice behind it, or by both; and, finding ready outlet by way of the overflow channel, took its course towards the north-north-west. Consequently diversion—it cannot be called capture—was not post-glacial in date but late glacial."

WHAT is claimed to be the first ascent of Mount Olympus, the famous mountain of Greek mythology, was made on 30th April, 1914, by Aristides

ASCENT E. Phoutrides and Francis P. Farquhar, and a joint
OF MOUNT account of the performance was contributed by them to
the November number of *Scribner's Magazine*. Mount
OLYMPUS. Olympus is in Thessaly but only became Greek territory
in 1912 as a result of the Balkan War. Its height is

generally given as 9794 feet, but the topmost summit is only one of many—an old Greek folk-song credits Olympus with having two-and-forty peaks. As the adventurous travellers "plodded on and up," they saw rounded peaks towering on either side of them, and as they mounted higher and higher other peaks began to come into view, "springing from the ground full-grown, like the armed men of Cadmus." They were successful in getting a number of excellent photographs which illustrate the article and convey admirable impressions of the classical mountain.

THE June number of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* opens with a pleasing sketch of a section of Speyside scenery—"Through Rothiemurchus to Rebhoan." Mr. E. P. Buchanan, the "SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN- EERING CLUB JOURNAL." writer, has found in this region "a fascination all-compelling and a charm which is unique;" and some of us to whom it is also familiar can endorse his raptures. He waxes particularly enthusiastic over the Green Loch. The accompanying four views have been exceedingly well chosen. Mr. Alfred Harker discourses interestingly on "Some Old Maps," his article being supplemented by reproductions of the maps of Richard of Cirencester and Ortelius. The principal "mountaineering" paper—in the climbing sense—is devoted to "The Eastern Faces of Blaven and Clach Glas."

The feature of the October number is a paper on "Dalwhinnie to Fort Augustus, over Corryarrick," by Mr. A. B. Noble, who gives a good account of the famous military road across the Pass of Corryarrick constructed by Marshal Wade, now in a sadly-neglected condition. Three excellent photographs accompany the paper, one of them being by Mr. J. G. Kyd. Mr. Walter A. Reid describes the summer meet. Those attending it were the guests of Sir Hugh Munro at Lindertis, and were conveyed in motor-cars to Glen Doll the first day, and to Glen Isla the second; hence the punning title of the article, "The S.M.C. in Clover Again." Mr. T. Fraser Campbell, in "Half-Hours in the Club Library," deals with three old accounts of tours in the Highlands, dated respectively 1786, 1792, and 1816.

THE October number also contains a further contribution by Mr. Harker on "Some Old Maps," with reproductions of a map of Scotland by N. Tindal, copied from Moll's map of 1714, and part of a map of Scotland taken from Faden's General Atlas, 1778. ABERDEEN AND THE HIGHLANDS. Incidentally, Mr. Harker alludes to the lack of an authoritative geographical definition of the Highlands; and referring to Sir Archibald Geikie's treatment of the Highland boundary as coinciding with the important geological line of the Highland border fault, and thus running nearly straight from the mouth of the Clyde to Stonehaven, he says—"From the Clyde to the western confines of Forfarshire the abrupt change of physical characters on crossing the fault is so marked that there is little room for difference of opinion; but I think it will be generally conceded, from the mountaineer's point of view at least, that the Highlands must be bounded eastward and northward as well as southward. Our Aberdeen friends will probably not claim to live in the Highlands. Will they be agreed as to where they cross the line in a journey up Deeside?" It is not easy to answer the question, but we take it there is a general tendency to accept as correct Thomas Pennant's description of the Pass of Ballater as "the eastern entrance into the Highlands," made in his "Tour in Scotland," 1769. Mr. Harker mentions the Highland line laid down by T. B. Johnston in his "Map of the Clans of Scotland" (1872 and 1885), and we find a reference to this line

in a former volume of the *C.C.J.* (III., 313). It is there stated that the boundary thus delineated touched the line of longitude 3° W., in the north-west corner of Forfarshire, "and followed that line due north across the Dee, just west of Craigendarroch, through Ballater, and along the watershed which separates Dee and Don; and then turned N.N.W., and W.N.W., south of Elgin and Findhorn, till it terminated on the Moray Firth, near Nairn. North and west of this line was all regarded as Highlands, with the exception of Caithness."

The Climbers' Club Journal, being now an annual production, has assumed considerable dimensions, the number for 1915 running to 144 pages. There

are interesting accounts of climbs in Scotland, Wales, the Val d' Isère in France, the Harz Mountains and the CLIMBERS' CLUB Alps, and—by no means least—in the Lofoten Islands and JOURNAL. and Arctic Norway. Dr. Edred M. Corner, one of our members and contributors, in an article titled "Long Days and Lonely Mountain Travel in Scotland," describes, very briefly, a number of walking excursions in Scotland, mostly made alone, including a round (in one day) of Cairntoul, Sgor an Lochain Uaine (generally designated the Angel's Peak), Braeriach, Cairngorm, Ben Muich Dhui, "and a host of lesser tops." "Suffice it," he parenthetically adds, "that a little after 10 p.m. I need travel no further." Fuller details of some of Dr. Corner's walks have appeared in our own pages (Vols. II., III. and IV.) Of the general articles, one of the most interesting is that on "The Love of Natural Scenery as Disclosed in English Literature," by Mr. H. Gale Gotch. Though the general love of scenery is comparatively modern, its exposition in literature being generally assigned as beginning with Wordsworth, Mr. Gotch harks back to earlier times, and shows by ample quotation that Shakespeare and Milton were by no means insensible to natural beauty and the feeling for space and brilliant landscape, and the appreciation of scenery is similarly observable in later writers who were antecedent to the Great Lake poet.

THE advisability of solitary walking in mountainous regions is a matter of some controversy, but the practice is stoutly defended by Dr. Corner, in the article in the *Climbers' Club Journal* to which reference MOUNTAINEERING has just been made. Mentioning that on one occasion ALONE. he started from Ballater and spent a long and most pleasurable day wandering about the summits of the Lochnagar group of hills, reaching Milton of Clova, "in the company of a curlew," at 10 p.m., he goes on to say—"Personally, I think that there are few greater pleasures for the mountaineer than travelling alone over a large wide stretch of country, untrammelled by care of time, fatigue, danger, or difficulty, choosing the way as the features of the journey suggest, answerable to none but himself for the character of the route, the length and frequency of the pauses, and the rate of progress. The practice of travelling alone is to be condemned where anything like serious climbing is done. But where walking only is done, the lonely wayfarer may be justified in taking on himself the risks of lonely travel for the many recompences it has. In no other way have I so quickly, surely and lastingly learned the

physical character and geography of a country. In no other way have I been taught to observe so much and so closely. Company in mountaineering, as in other ploys of life, detracts from the responsibility of the individual. The man who cannot be trusted to do a long day over easy ground had better give up mountaineering and take to spillikins. Travelling alone across the incidents of country, mountains and rivers, teaches a man a lot of the country, its people and himself, their uses and limits, as they can be learned in no other way. A man who can travel well and safely over a rough country in all weathers is a valuable addition to a party of serious climbers. Such is the use of mountaineering alone. It gives a training such as cannot be so quickly or so accurately acquired in any other way."

A WRITER in *T.P.'s Weekly* has been recommending Aviemore as a holiday, eulogising it as an ideal spot to those who love mountains and pine forests.

She—for the writer seems a woman—enthused particularly over the Larig Ghru, or the Làirig Dhru, as we ought now LAIRIG DHRU. to term it after Professor Watson's decisive pronouncement in the opening pages of this number. "For solitary grandeur," she wrote, "it is unsurpassed in Scotland. There are Braeriach and Cairntoul on the one side; on the other, Ben Muich Dhui, and Cairngorm beyond. If one does not aspire to climb to the top of any of the hills, to be at the foot of them even is a sublime thing. I have sat for hours here, and they have always had a message for me. One day stands out. It was a grey day; no sun, with great mists rolling about the hills. Nature was in one of her darker moods, and she can be very terrible here. The hills were purple black, and the sky lowering; there was a storm ahead. But I was not afraid of the storm, so I sat on. And how very, very small I felt, with this wonderful vastness about me. How petty and trivial all my worries seemed, and how my longings after the beautiful and good were renewed and strengthened. I needed to come here to have my perspective adjusted. But Nature is not always thus. She has her playful days, too, when she coquets. And how charmingly here! The colours are all softened and toned down; hills tender blue in the foreground to strong purple at the back and in the shadows. And the wonderful greens and the golden light from the sun!"