

## REVIEWS.

WONDER TALES FROM SCOTTISH MYTH AND LEGEND. By Donald A. Mackenzie. Glasgow: Blackie and Son, Limited.—Much that is interesting in relation to the Highlands and to Highland mountains will be found in this volume, quite apart from the revelation it gives of Celtic mythology and the primitive beliefs of the Gael. Beira, the Queen of Winter, was, it seems, the mother of all the gods and goddesses in Scotland.

MOUNTAINS AND MYTH. She let loose many rivers and formed many lochs, sometimes willingly and sometimes against her will; and she also made the mountains, the only tool she used being a magic hammer. "When at work she carried on her back a great creel filled with rocks and earth. Sometimes as she leapt from hill to hill her creel tilted sideways, and rocks and earth fell from it into lochs and formed islands. Many islands are spoken of as 'spillings from the creel of the big old woman'." It was by some such upsetting of her creel that the mountain called Little Wyvis was formed. One of the reasons why Beira made the mountains was to use them as stepping-stones; another was to provide houses for her giant sons. They were very quarrelsome and were continually fighting with each other, and the old lady frequently shut them up in mountain houses; but this, somehow, did not prevent them fighting. "Every morning they climbed to the tops of their mountain houses and threw great boulders at one another. That is why so many big grey boulders now lie on steep slopes and are scattered through the valleys." "Myths," of this kind, it may be added, are more or less familiar in all the mountainous parts of Scotland, though the form of them varies, the spilling of creels and the chucking-about of boulders being generally attributed to the devil or his wife. Thus the "wart" on Clochnaben was thrown by the former at the latter (*C. C. J.*, I., 146).

To return to Beira, however. She forgot to cover a well on Ben Cruachan one night, and so the water streamed down the mountain-side, with the consequence that by morning Loch Awe was formed. One of her maids, named Nessa, who had charge of a well in Inverness-shire, was similarly neglectful—was, at any rate, late in going to put on the covering slab. When she drew near, the water was flowing so fast that she turned and ran for her life. Queen Beira, who was watching her from Ben Nevis, "her mountain throne," said that, as she had neglected her duty, she would run for ever and never leave water. "The maiden was at once changed into a river, and the loch and the river which runs from it towards the sea were named after her. That is why the loch is called Loch Ness and the river the river Ness."

R. A.

ONE of the minor effects of a European War is the restriction of Alpine climbing, and these restrictions were apparent in the October number of

the *Journal* of the premier mountaineering club of the world. In the first article, Dr. J. H. Chapman tells a simple tale of a fortnight's climbing on the rocky peaks around Slogen, Norway. The matter for the article is taken from the author's diary which he wrote when visiting the district eight years ago. The climbing seems to resemble that found in the English Lake district, with the added joy of pure glaciers unadulterated by the visitations of man. The charm of the climbing is enhanced by views of open sea and fjord, which must be much appreciated by those accustomed to climb amid the bewildering clusters of snowy peaks which sometimes tends to monotony on an Alpine holiday. "The Campaign in the Trentino," from the pen of Edgar Foa, is an account, from the mountaineer's point of view, of the 1916 campaign in this region. The writer draws a vivid picture of the insecurity of Italy from attack by Austria as a result of the frontiers fixed after the war of 1866. This article, read in conjunction with that on "The Southern Frontier of Austria," by Douglas W. Freshfield which appeared in the February (1916) number of the *Alpine Journal* gives one a clear and distinct conception of the country in which the Austro-Italian battles have been fought. Mr. Freshfield gives a pictorial description in his article of the Col di Lana, the scene of furious fighting—

"There were bays of red rhododendrons, pools of larger gentian, rivers of forget-me-nots, lilies tawny and white, brilliant arnica, fragrant nigritella. It recalled to me the description of the Valley of the Princes on Dante's Mountain of Purgatory. And now this Garden of Proserpine, the haunts of shepherds and peaceful herds, is being defaced by trenches and watered with blood. The pity of it! But the works of nature will recover more readily than the works of man. The ruins of Rheims will remain through the centuries the shame of Germany. Here a few years and flowers will cover the trenches and the graves, and there will only be an echo in the valley homes to tell of 'old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago.'"

Articles in a historical vein follow, dealing with the early attempts on Monte Rosa from the Zermatt side. The number closes with Notes, Reviews and obituary notices, including one of those alas! familiar notices dealing with a climber who has given his life for his country. J. G. K.

OF necessity in these days, the articles in the *Alpine Journal* are largely historical, but perhaps its pages are the more delightful reading on that account.

In the first article in the February number, "Days of Long Ago," Mr. J. P. Farrar brings together records of the Early Mountaineering Mountaineers, particular reference being made to Rev. Charles Hudson, who was killed in the first complete ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865. Such articles as this serve the purpose, so fittingly expressed by Mr. Freshfield, "in bringing back to many and revealing to some the pleasures of the heights, in forming a link between successive generations of mountain-lovers and keeping alive the memory of our founders and forerunners." In our own small way, our own *Journal* serves this purpose, and our members will find refreshment if they dip occasionally into some of its earlier numbers.

An article on "The Early Records of the Col de St. Theodule and Other Passes of the Zermatt District," by H. F. Montagnier, recalls personal memories of this once famous pass. Altho' the Alps are at present obviously outside the scope of the majority of British mountaineers, and therefore accounts of recent excursions are conspicuous by their absence, we have a thrilling account of a war-time ascent of Mount Louis (Canadian Rockies). One of the few advantages of a European war is to have an article by the Editor of the *Alpine Journal* on "Walks in Snowdonia." One's inclination on reading the article is to start forthwith at the first available opportunity and follow the routes so beautifully described.

The *Journal* contains its Roll of Honour of those members of the Alpine Club who have given their lives for their country since the last issue. Notes and reviews conclude a number which will retain its interest and delight for as long as man is attracted by the mountains.

J. G. K.

*The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, hitherto published three times a year, is henceforth—for the present at least—to be published half-yearly, in April and October. This change, which has been made

"SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN-EEERING CLUB JOURNAL." with extreme reluctance, is due to the increasing difficulty of getting suitable matter for publication, many of the younger and more energetic members of the Club being at the front, and is also due to the continually increasing cost of paper and printing. Suffering ourselves from similar conditions, we can understand and sympathise, but we sincerely hope that the *S.M.C. Journal*, and the *C.C.J.* as well, will be able to "carry on." The April number of the former, at any rate, shows no falling off. Sheriff Scott Moncrieff Penney has a delightful article, titled "From Dan to Beersheba; or Sampling Scotland," in which he describes a tour—mainly with the aid of a bicycle—that, beginning at the Gorge of the Ericht, took him as far south as Whithorn and as far north as Forsinard. The Sheriff praises much of what he saw, particularly the beech avenue at Achnacarry and the scenery in Glen Affric and Kintail. He has even a good word for our climate: "incredible as it may appear" (he says) "during seventeen short bicycling expeditions in the last eight years, extending two days or week-ends to a week, in all parts of Scotland and England, and in every time of year from March to October, I have never had one wet day!" The scoffer will be tempted to ejaculate "What, never?" As an offset to the Sheriff's exceptional experience, Mr. G. E. Howard recounts incidents of quite different days spent in the hills—days of "hurtling wind" and "an endless roar of rain," including "a fight" he and Seton Gordon once had to get up Corrie Etchachan in a blizzard: "the wind roared down Ben Muich Dhui in one staggering screaming blast of snow." Dr. Ernest A. Baker continues his "Scansorial Gleanings in Belles-Lettres," citing numerous amazing and amusing blunders made by novelists in their descriptions of mountaineering. Mr. Allan Arthur furnishes an interesting account of "The Island of the Stone" off the south end of Lismore.

LORD MORLEY lavishes praise on Kincaig (west of Aviemore) in his recently-published "Recollections." He spent much of August and September, 1897, there; and though his notes in the main.

LORD MORLEY'S are a record of the books he read—books of an excessively PRAISE OF "heavy" nature that very few of us would tackle on a KINCAIG. holiday—he has occasional observations on the scenery.

"View over the Loch extremely lovely." "Walked on to the moors behind us. One of the grandest panoramas I ever beheld. Not sure I would not call it *the* grandest, outside of Switzerland." "Such a divine vision on the bridge about 7 o'clock: water, wood, heather, crags, far-off hills, bathed in magic light. Italy cannot surpass it." And there is this record of a visit to the late Dr. James Martineau at Polchar:—"At noon we all went off on a picnic with the Murrays to Loch-an-Eilein. Most delightful in every way. Murray [Professor Gilbert Murray] and I called on old Dr. Martineau. Wonderful old fellow. Is 93; comes down soon after 8 and does not retire until midnight, but has plenty of dozing in the day. Can walk up a hill that would wind most of us."