

REVIEWS.

INSPECTING a bookstall one day last summer for literature suitable for holiday reading, we espied a cheap reprint of Mr. Hilaire Belloc's "The Path to Rome." The title was not inviting, suggestive as MR. BELLOC'S it is of conversion to the Roman Catholic Church or of "PATH TO confirmation in what Mr. Belloc invariably terms "the ROME." Faith." But suddenly there came a recollection that the book was of quite a different nature and was really a narrative of a walk to Rome including therein accounts of mountain ascents, so it was purchased and was duly read—read very greatly to edification and with a good deal of pleasure as well. Mr. Belloc, it seems, made a vow to go on a pilgrimage from Toul, in Northern France, to Rome in something like a straight line, to walk all the way and take advantage of no wheeled thing, to "sleep rough" and cover 30 miles per diem; and "The Path to Rome" is the story of how the vow was accomplished. It consists of a series of lively incidents, told most vivaciously and with evident enjoyment of the "vagabondage" described. Mr. Belloc travelled down the valley of the Moselle, across the Vosges and the Jura, and so into Switzerland. He failed, however, to get into Italy by the Gries Pass owing to a snowstorm, and, turning back to his chagrin, he had to make a detour by the (to him) commonplace route of the Furka Pass and the St. Gothard. Descending the valley of the Ticino, he reached Como and then Milan, surmounted the Appenines, and arrived at Rome well within the time he had allotted himself. He walked all the way except on two occasions when he was obliged, mainly from fatigue and shortage of money, to have recourse to brief railway journeys, which he naively excuses on the plea of "taking discount" off a walk of over 700 miles: "may a man," he asks, "not cut off it, as his due, 25 miserable little miles in a train?" Mr. Belloc had many strange experiences on his adventurous way, and these he narrates with charming *abandon* and with a philosophy and humour never discouraged by untoward circumstances. The book otherwise is exceedingly and amusingly discursive. We are treated to innumerable digressions—piquant reflections on men and things, on life, society, and manners, on literature, politics, and religion; reflections which occurred to him as he plodded along or lay under the open sky and the stars, or were evoked by the kind of people he met and the varying reception accorded him. Many of these digressions are intensely droll, others are extremely caustic; the literary workmanship is always delightful. Mr. Belloc, too, has an eye to the picturesque, a keen appreciation of mountain scenery. As a sample we may quote the description of his first view of the Alps as seen from the heights of the Jura, 50 or 60 miles away—

"There, below me, thousands of feet below me, was what seemed an illimitable plain; at the end of that world was an horizon, and the dim bluish sky that overhangs an horizon. There was brume in it and thickness.

One saw the sky beyond the edge of the world getting purer as the vault rose. But right up—a belt in that empyrean—ran peak and field and needle of intense ice, remote, remote from the world. Sky beneath them and sky above them, a steadfast legion, they glittered as though with the armour of the immovable armies of Heaven. Two days' march, three days' march away, they stood up like the walls of Eden. I say it again, they stopped my breath. I had seen them Up there in the sky, to which only clouds belong and birds and the last trembling colours of pure light, they stood fast and hard; not moving as do the things of the sky. They were as distant as the little upper clouds of summer, as fine and tenuous; but in their reflection and in their quality as it were of weapons (like spears and shields of an unknown array) they occupied the sky with a sublime invasion: and the things proper to the sky were forgotten by me in their presence as I gazed." R. A.

THE October number of *The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* is largely reminiscent, the authors of most of the articles recalling walking and climbing experiences of former days; but it is none the less interesting for all that, and the articles themselves are such as to inspire on the part of the reader a desire to visit the scenes described—surely the best commendation of the success achieved by their writers. The veteran Sir Hugh Munro furnishes "Reminiscences of a Solitary Walk in Early Club Days"—a walk (in 1899) from Inverie in Knoidart to Loch Hourn, on to Glenquoich, Invergarry, and Fort Augustus; thence (by steamer to Drumnadrochit) through Glen Urquhart and Strath Glass to Glen Affric; and then across Scour Oran and a few other summits to Glenelg. Dr. Levack describes the excursions of himself, Mr. J. A. Parker, and Mr. William Garden during "A Weekend at Inchnadamph," in Sutherlandshire, in May 1913, in the course of which Ben More, Stac Polly, and Suilven were respectively "bagged." And Mr. J. G. Stott, in "A Chronicle of the Old Men," cleverly adopting the archaic style of the old chroniclers, recounts how a party of "ancients" in "bygone days" essayed the ascent of the "Mountain of the Fawns," a noble mountain on the marches of Lorn but "difficult and horrent of aspect," and failed in the attempt, to their great disappointment and disgust. Of the other contents of the number, it will suffice to specially mention an article on "Robert Browning," in which the Editor, Mr. F. S. Goggs, exhibits, by abundant and apposite quotation, the influence which mountains had upon Browning, as reflected in his poetry.

IN the September number of the *Alpine Journal* we have abundant evidence of the power and consolation of the mountains, which these last few years have made very real. The first article to which we turned on opening this number of the Journal was one entitled "ALPINE JOURNAL." "Mountaineering as a Religion." The author deals with a subject which has interested us for several years. A much deeper attraction than mere physical recreation draws us to the high places

of the earth. In parts the article reaches a level worthy of the theme, but "the large Religion of the Hills" produces emotions that cannot be expressed in words. Professor Norman Collie contributes a charming article on "The Island of Skye." Incidentally, he tells us that he was first drawn to climb by seeing two mountaineers scaling a rock face of one of the pinnacles of Sgurr nan Gillean. The article is supplemented by some exquisite illustrations, and altogether it is a delightful contribution to the ever-growing literature of the Coolin. Various other reminiscent and historical articles go to make a very interesting number of the journal. A particularly readable article is that telling of a "Roundabout Ramble from Champex to Chamonix." The number contains the almost universal but none the less pathetic notices of mountaineers who have fallen in the field of battle.

J. G. K.

THE number of the *Rucksack Club Journal* for 1918 deals with climbs in regions unfamiliar, we suspect, to members of the Cairngorm Club. There are articles, for example, on Laddow; Cwm Eigiau and "RUCKSACK Club JOURNAL." Carnedd Dafydd, in Wales; and the Skiddaw country, in Cumberland; and for mountaineers visiting and exploring these places much valuable information is afforded. Particularly useful to them must be the diagram of the hills visible from Carnedd Dafydd; and all of us can appreciate the remark of the author that he found the drawing of it "a pursuit of absorbing interest."

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF SCOTLAND. One-Inch Map, Sheet No. 74. 2/6.—Those members of the Club who take an interest in geology will welcome the appearance of this sheet, as it completes the geological map of the Cairngorms. It is colour-printed the same as Nos. 64 and 65, which were noticed in the *C.C.J.* for July 1913. Sheet No. 75, which deals with the Tomintoul district, is unfortunately one of the older hand-coloured sheets, the cost of which (19/3) is prohibitive. Sheet 74 includes the valley of the river Spey from Loch Insh to Grantown-on-Spey, the Dulnan, and about fifteen miles of the Findhorn. It contains Beinn Mheadhoin, Cairngorm, and parts of Ben Bynac, Braeriach, and Sgoran Dubh. We notice that two new surface signs have been introduced on this sheet, viz:—"Disintegrated rock in situ on mountain tops," and "Dry Valleys mainly of glacial origin."

THE GEOLOGY OF MID-STRATHSPEY, AND STRATHDEARN. By L. W. Hinxman and others. 2/6.—This is the Memoir of the Geological Survey of Scotland in explanation of Sheet No. 74 referred to above. Apart from the highly technical portions, it contains a very considerable amount of general information which should be of interest to those who are not experts in geological matters. Glacial phenomena are dealt with in great detail, a special feature of interest being the descriptions of the various dry valleys which were overflow or marginal channels through

which the waters held up along the retreating glaciers escaped. There are several very fine examples of such channels at the north end of the Mam Suim ridge of Cairngorm, by which the marginal water of the Glen More glacier escaped into Strath Nethy. The Memoir is illustrated with eight photographs and a number of diagrams and sketch maps.

A TEACHER, in a recent communication to the *Times Educational Supplement* on "The Psalms in School," contended that the one necessity

for Bible study is the belief that the words have a meaning, not a magic; that their virtue is in their thought, not in mere utterance. He cited as an illustration of his argument the familiar passage, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help," which he said he had heard hundreds of boys repeat, but had never yet found a schoolboy who could tell him why the psalmist looked to the hills for help. The teacher himself, however, seemed in a quandary as to what was the precise thought in the poet's mind. He first suggested the primitive idea that mountains were the great barriers which marked the ends of the earth, as in the myth that beyond Atlas the world ceased; and that, accordingly, the psalmist may have meant what Isaiah repeats, "Hast thou not known that the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not nor is weary?" But this interpretation, he found, did not satisfy Christina Rossetti, whose cry is

"The hills are crowned with glory, and the glow
Flows widening down apace,
Unto the sunny hill-tops I, set low,
Lift a tired face:
How tired a face, how tired a brain, how tired
A heart I lift, who long
For something never felt but still desired,
Sunshine and song."

"She thinks of the hills," was the comment of the teacher, "as the abode of sunshine, for the sun gleams on the peaks in the morning and lingers on the mountains as he sinks to rest. Such is the poet's explanation, and what one poet finds in another duller folk may well accept as truth." So far from accepting it, the writer went on to make other attempts at elucidating the poet-psalmist's meaning—such as, that in an Eastern country, where the far-stretching plains have many dangers, shelter or escape may be found in the hills; and that the cry for help—in the revised version, the phrase becomes "From whence shall my help come?"—"is the cry of a spirit whom the sight of the hills overwhelms. They are the eternal hills, and they remind man that he is but for a moment." This leads up, of course, to the declaration of the psalmist's faith in the verse that follows, "My help cometh from the Lord of Hosts that made heaven and earth"; and so, as our writer puts it, "the thought of the poet is then the same as that expressed in the psalm which Stevenson loved in the Scots version:—

“But yet the Lord that is on high
Is more of might by far
Than noise of many waters is
Or great sea-billows are.”

The article, notwithstanding its confused exegesis, was of a highly stimulating character; and there is certainly much to be said for the writer's ultimate conclusion—“What I urge is that there be explanation [of the meaning of the psalm]: the psalm should not be in the mind of your pupils as a tongue's murmur.”

NOTE may be taken of another interpretation of the poet-psalmist's aspiration. A section of a recently published volume of poems, “The Gutter and the Stars,” by Captain INTERPRETATION. Eliot Crawshay Williams, is devoted to “Desert Songs.” One of these is titled “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,” and is dated from Bir el Mazar, Egypt. It runs as follows:—

“My help cometh from the hills;
To them I turn as to a God-built shrine,
And this poor spirit of mine,
Famished and parched unto most sore distress
Bows done to bless
The everlasting hills.

“God reigneth in His hills,
Over the plains and sea a plague is spread,
Horror and ruin red
Possess man's dwellings, and his soul is stricken;
But ye stand there to quicken
All that is left of love and beauty and light
Calm and unchanging as the star-strewn night,
My wondrous hills.”

THERE was an interesting article, “Of a Map, and Walks,” by Mr. A. D. Godley, in the *Cornhill Magazine* for August. It described walks about Oxford, principally on the Downs, the Chilterns, and the Cotswolds, undertaken apparently in the 'seventies and 'eighties. Mr. Godley expresses regret that walking has gone out of fashion, “crowded out” by hockey, golf, and lawn tennis, and especially by the bicycle; he complains, too, that much of the attraction of the Oxford country has vanished past recall—some of the nearer country which was then rural is now suburban. Mr. Godley thinks it possible that walking may be revived, the cult of games meanwhile having fallen from its pride of place; but he is afraid that, with the threatened “return to the land” and more extensive cultivation, the country will lose something of its charm. Incidentally, the article contains the following entertaining sketch of a strenuous walker:—“C. dearly loved a long walk. I do not think that, traveller though he had been, he cared greatly for scenery and the common objects of the country: it is certain that he would

not stop merely to admire the picturesque. Always the motive uppermost seemed to be the carrying out of a preconceived plan. To walk with him therefore was strictly a business proposition. A certain distance must be covered, a certain route followed: certain sights, adjudged previously worthy of observation, must be duly seen, noted down with proper chronicle of time and place on an otherwise immaculate shirt-cuff, and the notes afterwards transferred to a manuscript volume known as the Book of Jasher, which is happily still extant. To walk with C. was like going by rail. You took a ticket, as it were, and thereafter had no option in the matter. You were then bound to a time-table: due—if return was actually by rail—to arrive at the station neither after the train nor yet before it, but simultaneously with its appearance; and if this exact coincidence involved a “double” of a mile or so at the end of a twenty-mile walk, why, “doubling” was regarded as a part of the game; not running, *bien entendu*—to run would have been a confession of miscalculation, and therefore absurd. Above all, the chosen route must be followed, without mutability or shadow of turning. If nature or art interposed obstacles, so much the worse for them. It is on record that C. and a friend of like temper, returning to Oxford from a distant excursion by a route supposed to cross the Thames by a bridge, found themselves confronted, in consequence more probably of the error of a map than of a convulsion of nature, by the unbridged river running bank-high. It was possible indeed to make a detour; but no such detour was in the prearranged scheme. Accoutred as they were, they plugged in; and I have no doubt that C. at least reached home, if not absolutely dry yet not visibly moistened by his enterprise.”

Two years ago we noted the initiation of the “Bulletin of the Associated Mountaineering Clubs of North America,” and a copy of last year’s Bulletin which has been sent us shows a considerable expansion of the Association and also of the Bulletin. The associated AMERICAN MOUNTAINEERING CLUBS—clubs and societies now number 22, comprising a total individual membership of over 20,000. The membership consists of two classes—active mountaineering and outdoor clubs, and those having common aims in the development and protection of the scenic regions of America and of their bird and animal life. Among the latter fall to be included the National Parks Service, the American Museum of Natural History, the National Association of Audubon Societies, and the American Game Protective Association. Of mountaineering clubs proper the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston has the largest membership—2001, but it is nearly approached by the Sierra Club of California, San Francisco (with a southern section at Los Angeles), the two sections having a combined membership of 1883. There is also a Hawaiian Trail and Mountain Club, which “constructs and maintains mountain trails, and conducts Sunday walks and climbing excursions on the various islands.” Saturday and Sunday walks and holiday excursions are the main purposes of most of the clubs, and many of them issue individual publications. A new and interesting feature of the Bulletin itself is “Notes on our Scenic Wonders,” a record of National Park extensions, made and desiderated, contributed by Mr. Le Roy Jeffers, the Secretary of the Bureau of Clubs.