

REVIEWS.

THE SEARCHERS. By John Foster. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 7/- net.—As we mentioned in our last issue, Mr. Foster makes Speyside part of the “locus” in his new novel, “The Searchers.”

A
CAIRNGORM
NOVEL. There are scenes, thrilling enough scenes, in Edinburgh, Italy, and London, but the hero's home is in a glen—Gleann Ciuin, the Quiet Glen—which “hides near where three noble Scots counties join hands,” and from the uplands of which “the lonely corries that neighbour the high tops of the Cairngorms” are visible. Moreover, the final incidents of the story occur in the “Larig Ghru”—“The Forbidding Pass,” our author terms it. We are introduced to “the Chanter Corrie”—somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Gharb-choire evidently—named after an outstanding rock-pillar in the centre of the hollow, shaped not unlike the chanter of the bagpipe; and several sensational scenes are here enacted. The evil genius of the plot is endeavouring to escape by way of the Larig, but is trapped at the entrance to the Chanter Corrie, and an exciting chase ensues, ending, of course, in the scoundrel's capture, but only after he has killed a disgruntled “comrade,” who has tracked him, by toppling a boulder on him as the latter is climbing a rock-face. This *denouement* is followed by the recovery of the long-lost part of a mysterious document, which gives the clue to the whereabouts of a treasure hidden “among Greata Mountaines and Rockes Past Belief, a Toyle to encounter”—in the proximity of Sron na Leirg.

Such in brief is the story, which is capitably worked out, with much ingenuity and plenty of adventure; but the main interest in the book to mountaineers lies in the excellent delineations of the scenery of the Cairngorms, and particularly of the grim and desolate features of the “Forbidding Pass.” Mr. Foster exhibits remarkable felicity in his word-pictures, which are suffused with keen appreciation both of natural beauty and of the grandeur of mountains and wild places. We quoted two passages in our last number, and we may here give another, descriptive of a night scene in the Larig:—

“Great mountains now loomed up, tier upon tier, on every side, far as the eye could reach, the moonlight lending their misty masses a strange and spectral glamour. There was beauty and terror in the Pass as I beheld it that night—beauty in the moonbeams etherealising the stark masses of the mountains; terror when the icy brilliance of the night, suddenly tarnished by passing clouds, dissolved into a leaguer of inky shadows and the wild dark setting suggested Walpurgis Night on the Brocken. To me the mists seemed to be weaving and unweaving sombre alleys and hiding-places where evil, secret things and unspeakable creatures of eld could hide and linger. The Forbidding Pass earned its name. I peopled its recesses with a thousand lurking presences and things unutterable, deadly legacies of ancient peoples and their unholy primordial rites; and these fantasies were

aided by a Voice, the strange, steady, tireless harping of the wind, which is rarely still in the high places of the Cairngorms, now like a long sigh through swaying pines, now like the wash of seas on distant shingle; now pretending to die down, now rising again in a derisive halloo through the funnels of the ravines; never at rest." R. A.

MAP-READING MADE EASY. By Captain G. C. Esson and G. S. Philip, F.R.G.S. London: George Philip and Son, Ltd.—The excellent article on "Map-Reading," which appeared in the *C.C.J.* for July, 1912 (Vol. VII., 154-63) gave much practical advice

MAP-READING. on how to interpret and use maps—a matter of great importance to hill-men. The work before us is well calculated to serve the same purpose. It is of quite a simple character, being, indeed, primarily intended for schools, as a supplement to geographical instruction; but the information furnished, if in a sense elementary, is none the less essential. Here, children—and even "children of a larger growth"—may readily learn what contour lines are and what they represent, and become able to "visualise" concave and convex slopes, spurs, and salients, valleys and re-entrants, to calculate distances, and to determine the nature of the ground intervening between one point and another. A valuable section of the work is devoted to "Direction," in which instruction is given as to "setting the map," and ascertaining the relative position of places by making bearings. The authors state in their preface that "Map-Reading is a subject that has been strangely neglected in this country—a fact that was brought home forcibly by the war to thousands of men, who, in order to become officers or efficient N.C.O.'s or soldiers, had to be proficient in it." Some of the instruction in the latter portion of the work almost makes us think that they had an eye to the ultimate military training of a number of their pupils. Be that as it may, however, the work can be welcomed as an admirable manual on Map-Reading. R. A.

INVERA'AN: A STRATHSPEY PARISH. By Hamilton Dunnett, M.A., B.D., minister of the parish. Paisley: Alexander Gardner.—The parish of Inveraven, or Invera'an, as the name is locally pronounced, has a remarkable duality. It was described in a Presbyterian Commission two centuries ago as consisting of "the countries of Glenlivet and Inveraven"; and Mr. Dunnett has improved upon this by adding—"As it is a parish of two localities and two rivers, so it may be said to have exercised two loyalties, one to the King and one to the chieftain, to have included two ancient families, the Gordons and the Grants, to have professed two religions, and to have pursued two industries, the cultivation of the land and the making of whisky." The two rivers are, of course, the Spey and the Aven; a third river gives its name to Glenlivet. The parish is enclosed by hills, Benrinnes and Corryhabbie, for instance, being on its northern boundary; but Mr. Dunnett is apparently content to dismiss the hilly character of the region by simply remarking that among the main features of the parish are "one large hill and many smaller hills." His work is devoted to a historical account of the parish, particularly of the "troubled times," 1630-1648, the conflicts between the Catholics and the Reformers, the battle of Glenlivet, and so on. There are chapters, too, treating of the social life of the people, and these

are exceedingly interesting ; special mention may be made of those dealing with "The Speyside Freebooter" and wood-floating on the Spey. R. A.

BURROW'S GUIDE TO NORTH WALES. By Percy J. Piggott. Ed. J. Burrow and Co., Limited, Cheltenham and London.—Designated on the

title-page "A practical handbook for the tourist by railway or road," this work seems eminently suited to be a serviceable companion to anyone visiting North Wales, and

GUIDE TO NORTH WALES. making a tour of that exceedingly picturesque and interesting region. Information is furnished regarding all the

places worth seeing, how to get there, hotels, trains, etc. To mountaineers in particular the Guide may be recommended, for a section on "Mountain

Walks and Rock Climbs," by Mrs. Dora Benson, occupies a fourth of the little book. The various routes of ascending Snowdon, Cader Idris, etc.,

are carefully described, as are also the descents. The book is profusely illustrated.

To the November number of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* Dr. Alexander Bremner, of Aberdeen (author of "Physical Geology of the Dee

Valley"), contributed a note-worthy paper on "A Geographical Study of the High Plateau of the South-Eastern

PLATEAU OF THE S.-E. HIGHLANDS." This plateau extends from the ridge of Carn na Caim overlooking the Pass of Drumochter to beyond

HIGHLANDS. Mount Keen, a distance of fully fifty miles—a stretch of country, the greater part of which is contained within the

2000 feet contour line, and which forms in actual area (about 500 square miles) the most extensive mass of high ground in Britain. Physically,

the plateau falls into three divisions; and dealing first with the western section—stretching from Carn na Caim to the Tilt—Dr. Bremner discoursed

on the denudation that has taken place over plateau and valley alike, and the alteration in drainage caused by certain rivers "capturing" adjacent

streams. A well known instance is the capture of the Upper Geldie by the Feshie, and Dr. Bremner is of opinion that, similarly, the upper Tarf was

captured by the Tromie, and so the whole drainage of the area west of the Gaick lochs was diverted to the Spey. The capture by the Tilt of the

Tarf, or rather of the Tarf basin, he regards as "one of the clearest, most typical, and most impressive cases of river capture hitherto recorded—

certainly the most impressive in the British Isles." The geological features of the central section of the plateau—from Glen Tilt to the Glas Maol ridge

and the Callater burn—and of the eastern section—from the Glas Maol ridge to beyond Mount Keen—were then expounded, the remarkable

contrast between the two regions being emphasised. The ridges and all the highest summits of the central section are on the strong quartzites, and so

offer resistance to denuding agents. On the other hand, the well-opened valleys, low divides, and gentle slopes to the north-east of Glen Clova,

in the eastern section, indicate "an old land surface worn down to comparatively featureless uniformity by prolonged denudation." Dr.

Bremner proceeded to treat in detail of river encroachments in this area and of the "hanging valleys" which are a characteristic feature of the high

plateau, and concluded with some exceedingly interesting remarks on the "human geography" of the region, particularly the way in which it has

controlled communication. The chief lines of communication had, almost of necessity, to skirt the plateau area and converge on Perth and Aberdeen; "to this is due much of the importance of these towns, particularly of Aberdeen, as trade centres." On the matter of depopulation, note may be made of a sensible observation—"It would be interesting to have, not a jeremiad over the depopulation of our Highland glens, but an exact record of its causes and extent and of the stages by which it has taken place."

IN our last issue, Mr. J. H. Bell gave an account of "Three Days on Braeriach" spent in company with a friend, Rev. R. P. Dansey; and in the October number of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club*

"SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL" some others in an article titled "A Tramp between Lochaber and the Cairngorms." Among the accompanying illustrations is a fine one of Cairngorm from a point looking over Loch Avon. Mr. James A. Parker has an

article describing the ascent by him and Mr. William Garden and "an initiate" of Bidean Choire Sheasgaich, which he terms "one of the most un-get-at-able hills in Scotland"; it is situated on the watershed of Scotland, about five miles west from the head of Loch Monar, in Ross-shire, and boasts a height of 3,102 feet above sea-level. Among the other contents of the number is an introductory article in which various mountaineering experiences are dealt with in a "contemplative and reminiscent mood," and an appreciative notice of the late Sir Hugh T. Munro. Dr. Levack furnishes an account of the Easter Meet of the Club at Braemar last year, and Mr. Walter A. Smith, in a letter to the Editor, suggests that steps be taken (perhaps in conjunction with the Cairngorm Club) for the erection of a footbridge over the Eidart.

A CURSORY survey of the interesting features of Yorkshire scenery forms the introductory article to the *Rucksack Club Journal* for 1919, and its author,

"RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL" Mr. J. H. Entwisle, does ample justice to his subject. Yorkshire is hilly rather than mountainous, there being few conspicuous peaks, and its rivers are "the heart and source of its beauty." The county, moreover, challenges comparison with any other county in Britain in two respects—

the number, beauty, and variety of its waterfalls, and of the remains of its great religious houses. Mr. Ernest A. Baker, in an article on "An Eyrie in Cowal" (in Argyleshire), incidentally notes that "Eagles increased in numbers in this locality during the war, and so did buzzards, ravens, and other raptorial birds." Another incidental note in another article may be quoted:—"In the course of joyous trappings among the hills for years, I have noticed many changes, but in nothing perhaps so much as the drinking habits of mountaineers. Forty years ago it was rare to find a party of mountaineers without at least one spirit flask. Whisky was necessary to keep out the cold and fortify us for the rigour of the game." The abandonment of the carrying of spirits is equally noticeable here in the north. There is a complimentary allusion, by the way, to Mr. G. G. Jenkins's "Hill Views from Aberdeen," accompanied by an illustration of his method—a diagram showing the mountains visible from Carnedd Dafydd, in Wales.

WE are indebted to the courtesy of the French Alpine Club for several recent numbers of "La Montagne," the monthly journal of the Club. They demonstrate alike the activities of the Club and the excellence of the journal itself. The former are markedly manifest in the annual report, the report of the annual meeting, and the "Chronique" of the Club, all of which are conspicuous features of the May-June number. This number also contains an elaborate article on a map of Gavarnie and Mont Perdu, in the Pyrenees. From the July-August number we learn that the name "Aiguille Foch" has been given to a peak in the Alpes Cottiennes—"a name which will consecrate in the Alps the glorious success of our arms and will pay proper homage to the illustrious Generalissimo of the Allied Armies." One of the two peaks of L'Argentera, the highest mountain of the Alpes Maritimes, is also to be known in future as the Pointe Garibaldi, being so named after General Garibaldi. The mountain is visible from both France and Italy, and its new appellation will doubtless contribute to the concord between the two countries.

THE 1919 issue of "The Annual of the Mountain Club of South Africa" is, as usual, replete with articles dealing with mountain-climbing in South Africa, accompanied by numerous photographs and maps, excellently reproduced. The opening article, "New SOUTH AFRICA MOUNTAIN CLUB'S ANNUAL. Peaks and Old," deals principally with the Buffels Hoek Kloof, which, it appears, offers inducements alike "to the climber, and to the prowler who dislikes climbing"—for the former there are peaks of all sorts and sizes, easy, moderate, and difficult; for the latter there are kloofs, "some of them Liliputian and most beautiful, others rugged and on the grand scale." Other articles deal with the Zonder Einde Mountains, Snowdon (Cape Colony), and Birds of the Cape Peninsula. There is an interesting account of the Natal National Park, situated at Mont aux Sources, and embracing an area of 24 square miles and twelve peaks of heights between 4,680 feet and 11,050 feet.

DO any of our readers peruse—and, as an inevitable consequence, enjoy—the "Rural Talk" between "Mains" and "Hilly," written in the local dialect, which appears regularly in the "Weekly Free AN ABERDEEN- SHIRE HILL VIEW. Press"—has done so now for a great number of years? One day last summer, "Mains" appeared at Hillside to see if "Hilly" "wis ony on for a turn oot th' hull wye." The latter was nothing loth. "Richt owre th' tap o' th' hull, say ye?" he asked; and "Mains" replied—"Jist that, for we can see aboot's better there nor traikin' aboot th' fit o't." The two worthies duly reached the top of the hill, which we may readily surmise to be some eminence in the Ythan Wells region; and then this colloquy ensued:—

H.—Noo we'll sit doon here amo' th' hedder an' tak' a leuk aboot's. Th' hulls are winnerfu' clear the day, an' we can see them a' laid oot afore's like a pickter.

M.—We div that. Here's wir aul' freen' Bennachie, aye seen faur-ever ye gyang. An' there's th' hull o' Culsamon', an' Foudlan' an' a hantle idders.

H.—Ay, ay, an' there in th' wast ye can see th' Buck, th' Tap o' Noth, Benrinnes, an' mony anidder 'at I canna name. We wid need a map here, Mains.

M.—Fat raelly stricks me isna th' names o' th' hulls sae muckle's th' grandur o' th' scene. Th' hulls in th' backgrun': th' wids an' hedges, th' ribbon-like watters here an' there, an' th' green fiedles: th' hichts an' howes, th' heath an' th' moss, a' throu' idder, mak's a pickter sic as never a painter eud pit on paper. Man, it's gran', an' gin I hid edder th' skeel o' a drawer o' pickters, or o' a poet, I wid pit it a' doon for ye. Bit Aw'm jist Mains, an' I reckon Aw'll be een o' them 'at Gray speaks about, "Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest," for it'll never be my preevilege t' ley' ma thochts for th' gweed o' idders.

H.—Man, Mains, ye fair astonish ma. I never saw ye leukin' sae like a man o' eloquence as ye wis this meenit.

The Doric does lend itself — in capable hands — to effective description, doesn't it?