

REVIEWS.

MOUNTAINEERING ART. By Harold Raeburn. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd. Pp. 274. 16/- net.—This volume should be on the book-shelf of every true mountaineer. By its guidance even the MR. RAEURN'S veteran may amend his ways, and the novice, if he "MOUNTAIN- carefully attends to the advice given, will certainly be EERING ART." put on the direct line to become an exponent of his craft, and so, in the words of the author, "make his ascents in good style, with ease to himself and with safety to his companions." The volume is devoid of all padding. It is written by one who, from his inherent aptitude for the art, and wide experience among the principal mountain chains of the Eastern Hemisphere, makes it at once clear, to the merest tyro, that he knows his job inside out. No time is therefore wasted in getting the anxious enquirer up against the fundamental principles of the game, without a sound knowledge of which he must ever be an uncertain—if not dangerous—companion on the mountains.

It may interest readers to know that it was probably with no intention of becoming a cragsman, for its own sake only, that Mr. Raeburn first made his acquaintance with rocks. He has always been an ornithological authority, and in his quest after the birds and eggs of the British Isles he was, as a "Klimmer," naturally brought face to face with many a tricky rock problem. In 1896, however, he joined the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and in that Club he is now recognised as the leading authority and exponent of the technique of mountaineering. Let it also be added that Mr. Raeburn is a "yachtsman bold" and, as such, has had every opportunity of maturing that gift of balance and quick movement of which he is now a past master.

With the development of the craft, the author has, as is only to be expected, perverted, to some extent, many canons of the early mountaineers. We may find it difficult to advocate guideless climbing, climbing alone, two on a rope, etc.; but still we must have due respect for one who has more than justified his views by no less a feat than a traverse of the Meije *solus*. It is gratifying to note that Mr. Raeburn states that the British-trained mountaineer is fully deserving of that title, and need fear no difficulties likely to be met with on any mountain range in the world.

The author's advice on Equipment is exhaustive and practical. His Packing Lists are a *multum in parvo*, and, if adhered to, will prevent many a regret. The chapters on a stereotyped British Rock Climb and a British Snow Climb should form the ritual of every young climber, and might with advantage be substantially committed to memory for instant application when the novice is face to face with the conditions which the author brings out in these chapters, and which, needless to say, will occur—probably more than once—in every climb worthy of the name. The section set apart for Lady Mountaineers should make the volume attractive

among those Clubs which admit the fair sex. It is interesting to note that the author says if we take two complete novices on rocks—a youth and a girl of twenty—we shall find that the girl is quicker at picking up right methods and is safer at first than the boy. A remarkable instance is noted of a young girl of twelve making a successful ascent of Mont Blanc.

The chapters dealing with the Ethics and Rules and the use of the ice-axe and rope are particularly practical. The various rope-knot illustrations, too, deserve attention. How many professed mountaineers neglect the elementary rule by carrying their axes, when not in use, spike backwards, with the consequent risk to the follower—when the party goes single file—of being badly jabbed should he momentarily stumble! The author, however, overlooks nothing, and deals with details such as these. We agree *verbatim* with the remarks about Food and Drink. “Drink just as often as you like, provided you keep moving” is a sound maxim. The pure waters of the high hills are as nectar to the climber, and he appreciates them in a way quite unknown to the inhabitant of the valley. We perhaps question the propriety of drinking melted snow to any great extent.

For those meditating pastures new, a chapter on Exploration throws out valuable hints; and last, but not least, a full index, by which many gauge the true value of what may be considered a book of reference in the first instance, helps the reader to get at once what he is in search of.

We predict a wide-spread circulation for this delightful book among the mountaineering fraternity.

WILLIAM GARDEN.

THE LAND OF THE HILLS AND THE GLENS. By Seton Gordon, F.Z.S. London: Cassell and Co., Ltd. 15/- net.—The reputation as an accurate

observer of natural wild life and as an excellent exponent thereof, especially by the camera, which Mr. Seton Gordon has deservedly gained by his former books, is very considerably enhanced by this work. Serving as a Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during the war, Mr. Gordon was engaged as an Admiralty patrol officer on the west coast of Scotland, and in the course of his duties he acquired an exceptional knowledge of that rugged and picturesque seaboard, landing, for instance, on many rocks and islets that are accessible to very few. The opportunities thus afforded an ardent lover of nature of obtaining a very special insight into the wild life of the region were not neglected, and they have been augmented by subsequent visits paid since the patrol work terminated. The result is a book which carries on, in the same fascinating fashion, the attractive studies of natural history which the author gave us in *The Charm of the Hills* and *Hill of Birds of Scotland*, only this time we are introduced more to seabirds and seals than to eagles and deer. The subtitle of the book, indeed, is *Wild Life in Iona and the Inner Hebrides*, and Mr. Gordon's “sphere of interest,” naturally, is determined by the limitation thus implied. He furnishes us with capital studies of, among other wild sea-fowl, the arctic skua, the red-throated diver, the white-fronted goose, the red-necked phalarope, and wild swans, describing their peculiarities, their domestic life, and their migrations; and he also gives us

a highly interesting account of the breeding-grounds of the grey seals. His descriptions reveal anew what his former works amply demonstrated—his precise observation and his skill in delineation, and, by no means least, his inexhaustible patience and the simple methods he adopts. As a reviewer has remarked—“The camera and the spy-glass constitute Mr. Gordon’s equipment as a field naturalist. By all that we gather from these pages, he never carried gun or fishing-rod.”

To Mr. Gordon’s camera we are indebted for fifty-seven very fine photographs in the book—not wholly of birds or of the western seaboard, however. There are several admirable specimens of marvellous mist effects, notably as witnessed from the summit of Ben Nevis, and there are also pictures of mountain scenery. The book, it may thus be inferred, is not confined to zoological matter. The opening chapter, for example, deals with “Sunrise and Sunset on Ben Nevis,” another describes Iona, and in other chapters we have much first-hand information about the Hebridean people, their customs, folk-lore, and superstitions. Of special interest to us here in the north is the contrast Mr. Gordon frequently draws between the birds of the west and those of the Cairngorm range and their respective conditions. One instance, relating to the ptarmigan, will suffice. Says Mr. Gordon :—

“The most striking characteristics of these ptarmigan of the west is, I think, the silence of the cock birds during the nesting season. Whereas on the Cairngorms these birds almost invariably utter their snorting croak when the intruder disturbs them in the vicinity of their nests, I never once, on the Mull hills, on which the species breed, heard them utter one sound. Again, in the Central Scottish plateau, a ptarmigan when brooding her eggs—and even before incubation is far advanced—is an extraordinary close siter. Often she will allow one to approach within a foot or two of her without rising, and even when she does leave her eggs she flutters only a short distance and watches anxiously. But in Mull the birds whose nests I came across rose from their eggs in the same manner as grouse do, and vanished at top speed over the hillside, nor did I see them again.”

R. A.

MR. G. M. FRASER’S description of the “Mounth” Passes over the Grampians was continued in the July number of the *Scottish Geographical*

Magazine, the detailed account of the routes being supplemented by much interesting information of a “MOUNTH” historical nature. There is, for instance, a discussion as to the probable Mounth route taken by Edward I. in his journeys to and from Aberdeen, and it is clearly demonstrated that the inscription on the granite memorial erected by Sir William C. Brooks on the Fir Mounth road is quite erroneous. As in our last number, we quote the leading points of Mr. Fraser’s enumeration of the passes :—7. The Cairn-a’-Mounth Pass—from Fettercairn, over the Cairn-a’-Mounth, the Bridge of Dye, and the Bridge of Bogendreep, to Banchory and Durris. 8. The Forest of Birse Mounth—leaving the former road near Feughside Inn, striking over the Birse hills and passing through the village of Marywell, and so on to Birse Church and the bridge over the Dee at

Aboyne. Near the summit of this road is the Corse-Dardar stone. 9. Mounth Gammel or Fir Mounth—leading from Glen Esk to Glen Tanner. (This road was described by Mr. Walter A. Reid in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* for April, 1919). 10. Mounth Keen—from Glen Mark, over Mount Keen (at a height of 2,500 feet), into Glen Tanner, and then by the Pollagach road to the Bridge of Muick. 11. Capel Mounth—from Glen Clova to the Spital of Glenmuick. 12. The Tolmounth—from Glen Clova by Glen Doll and Jock's Road, over the Tolmount (3000 feet), and down into Glen Callater and Glen Clunie. 13. The Cairnwell Road—the well-known road from Perthshire to Aberdeenshire by Glenshee and Braemar. 14. The Glen Tilt route from Blair Atholl to Braemar. 15. The Glen Derry drove road from Braemar to Speyside.

THERE have been three editors of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*—Mr. Joseph Gibson Stott, Mr. William Douglas, and Mr. F. S.

Goggs, the present editor. They all contribute to the "SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN- EERING CLUB JOURNAL." October number. Mr. Stott reproduces an article on "Climbing in Dalness and Mamlorn," published over thirty years ago: it describes ascents of Buchaille Etive and Ben Doran in very snowy and tempestuous weather, albeit the month was May (1884). Mr. Douglas writes on "The Exploration of the Cave at Fastcastle," near St. Abb's Head, and, from a careful examination of the cave made in May last by Mr. Raeburn and Mr. Sang—who only gained access by swimming into it—he demolishes the tradition that there was a means of entering the castle from the sea. Mr. Goggs describes an ascent of the Observatory Ridge of Ben Nevis made during the Easter Meet of the S.M.C. at Fort William. Sheriff Scott Moncrieff Penney contributes a pleasant gossipy paper on "Moffat in the 'Seventies": "motors and bicycles were unknown in those days," he incidentally remarks, "but people had their feet and used them more." There is a notice of Mr. Harold Raeburn's new book on "Mountaineering Art," emphasis being laid on a number of Mr. Raeburn's maxims, which "upset many idols of popular climbing belief." Among other things, this mountaineering expert advocates the wearing of lighter boots and allows one to drink as much cold water as he likes when climbing.

MR. W. T. PALMER has been succeeded as editor of the *Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club* by Mr. R. S. T. Chorley, and the new editor is

to be congratulated on the general excellence of the 1919 issue. As the Club is associated with the English Lake District, it is only natural that articles dealing with that district should predominate. Conspicuous among these is the account of how, on Peace Day, a number of members of the Club ascended Scafell Pike, the highest mountain in England, and "demonstrated" by lighting beacon flares, which are declared to be much better than bonfires. Another notable article is "New Climbs in Wasdale," the accompanying illustrations serving to show what the Lake district can offer in the way of rock-climbing feats. In many ways, however, the most interesting article is that of Mr. G. M. Trevelyan

on "The High-Alpine Warfare." By the aid of half-a-dozen excellent photographs, Mr. Trevelyan explains how the Italian campaign in the high Alps was conducted, and enables us to appreciate what he rightly calls "the unique part of Italy's war achievement"—"to maintain a continuous line running for more than two hundred miles over the high Alps, and to keep it along its whole length manned and supplied, day in day out, for three live-long winters, to say nothing of four summers!" Mr. Palmer has a charming contribution on "Floating Mists," his laudation of them ending thus:—

"Perhaps I have more enthusiasm for the mists than for those brilliant, glaring days when every rib and storm scar on mountain near and far is limned into ghastly clearness; when the rocks are hot and there is a torrid air beating round every peat-hag; when shadow dies in the gullies and even the waterfalls seem less cool, less vivacious. But the mists serve the mountain lover well, and deserve his hearty homage. It is quite a mistake to study them entirely from below; up and at grips with the heights there is more freedom, more latitude, brighter colour, broader sweeps. Floating or still, the broken mists are the most intimate friends of the mountain lover, full of sympathy, breathing life and vigour for his delectation."

NOW that he could see whereto the last night's march had brought him, Æneas Macmaster was startled at the desolation of the scene. The inn

stood on a desert edge; behind rose up the scowling mountains of Glen Coe, so high and steep that even heather failed them, and their gullies sent down streams of stones instead of foam. Eastward, where the inn-front looked, the moor stretched flat and naked as a Sound; three days' march from end to end they said were on it—all untracked and desert-melancholy. Its nearer parts were green with boggy grass, on which the cannoch tuft—the cotton-sedge—was strewn like flakes of snow; distantly its hue was sombre—grey like ashes, blackened here and there with holes of peats. The end of it was lost in mist from which there jutted, like a skerry of the sea, Schiehallion. God-forgotten, man-forsworn, wild Rannoch, with the birds above it screaming, was, to Æneas, the oddest thing, the eeriest in nature, he had ever seen. It charmed and it repelled him. He thought no wonder that the tribes who dwelt beside it should be wild, and envious of Lowland meadows. The very sight of it, so bleak and monstrous, filled even him with feelings of revolt against the snug and comfortable world.—*The New Road*, by Neil Munro.

AND now you are at Petersgraat [a lofty snow-ridge in Switzerland, 10,515 feet high, the summit of the divide between the valley of the Rhone and the Oberland]. . . . Whosoever you are, I think you

will want to be silent. The ice-world is not a talkative one. The silence that Kipling heard at Mandalay may compare with the silence of the snow-fields, but I doubt it. In the heaviness of that other silence, you were conscious of living things holding their breath. Of what are you conscious

here? What is it, invisible, inaudible, but all-pervasive, of an utterance in the spiritual ear as distinct as those mountains opposite you? What is it that you meet here that you never have met before? And how does it affect you? What singular new emotions steal over you—quiet, deliberate, like the calm procession of the hours, like the trance indescribable of the lonely sunshine on the eternal snow? It is useless to try to forecast for you this experience. Words are powerless to convince you. If one were to tell you how strange, how enticing, how unforgettable, is the lure of this mighty silence, this trance of the only changelessness which earth contains, this something which is like the breathing of the old gods in their sleep—but it is useless! The moment one attempts it, words lead towards paradox, towards metaphor, towards the most reckless imagery. And they would not convince. The spell of the ice-world, the visions that are its tenants, are not to be known at second-hand. If you want to know them, the gods of the ice have permitted you a single easy road—the road to Petersgraat.—“On a Glacial Highway,” by Nathaniel Wright Stephenson, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for November.