

REVIEWS

THE OLD DEESIDE ROAD (ABERDEEN TO BRAEMAR). By G. M. Fraser. Aberdeen: The University Press. Pp. xvi + 260. 12/6.—

In one of his "Essays of Travel" Robert Louis Stevenson remarks that from the subtle windings and changes of level of a road "there arises a keen and continuous interest that keeps the attention ever alert and cheerful." Mr. Fraser has certainly demonstrated the truth of the remark, in its applicability to the old Deeside road at any rate. He has given us an account of this road, of its course, history, and associations, the interest in which is unflagging, and the perusal of which is a continuous pleasure. The first portion of what is now known as the north Deeside road or turnpike—that from Aberdeen to Mills of Drum—was constructed in 1798. This road was extended to Aboyne in 1802, and the farther extension to Braemar was authorised in 1855. Of the 56½ miles of the old road—which may be fairly reckoned as having existed "from time immemorial"—25 miles were incorporated in the new road. The remainder fell more or less into desuetude, portions of it being absorbed in cultivation. Many bits of it still exist, however; for instance, Broomhill Road, the road up Kainhill to the Two-Mile Cross, the road through the Pass of Ballater, &c. Mr. Fraser, pursuing an investigation suggested by the Aberdeen Natural History and Antiquarian Society five years ago, has been successful in tracing the entire course of the old road. He has practically "recovered" many bits of it, and where the road has become obliterated, he has been able to describe its track. This is a very considerable public service, for it is highly desirable, for many reasons, that we should not lose sight of the course of this old and in its day very serviceable road. In addition, Mr. Fraser has furnished a mass of authoritative information regarding the history and associations of the road, the contiguous properties and their owners, the cross country roads to the north that were connected with the old highway, and so on. The two valuable articles on "The 'Mounth' Passes over the Grampians" which appeared in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* (from which we quoted extensively at the time) are incorporated in the work, and there are also detailed accounts of the ferries and fords on the Dee and the old toll-houses on the turnpike road. Altogether, the work is a most illuminating one, not merely as illustrating the interest that may attach to a road, but for the fresh light it throws on many incidents associated with the district this road traversed.

R. A.

THE BLACK COLONEL. By James Milne. London: John Lane. Pp. 240. 7/- net.—This is a spirited romance of love and adventure, the scenes of which are laid in Upper Donside and Upper Deeside, with Corgarff Castle when “THE BLACK COLONEL” garrisoned by Hanoverian troops after the '45 as the central *locus*. The characters, too, are Aberdeenshire. “The Black Colonel” is none other than the famous John Farquharson of Inverey, after whom the Colonel’s Bed in Glen Ey is named, he having often taken refuge there when pursued by “the red-coats.” A considerable liberty is taken, however, in making him figure in the last Jacobite rising, whereas he was implicated in the first, that of Claverhouse in 1689. The anachronism is perhaps excusable in the telling of a good, rattling story, just as is the final conception of Inverey as another “Pickle the Spy,” serving with Montcalm in Canada in order to convey information to Wolfe. We would fain hope that no Deeside Farquharson played this treacherous game, but the author—himself a Deeside man—bases his narrative on “scraps of talk” from his mother and his grandfather which might well be derived from contemporaneous sources. The hero is Captain Ian Gordon, a cadet of the Balmoral Gordons, in command of the Royalist forces at Corgarff, and the heroine is Margaret Forbes, heiress to the lands of Corgarff, forfeit for the Jacobite cause, and a kinswoman both of the “Black Colonel” and of the Hanoverian Captain. The solution of “the eternal triangle” can readily be divined by the practised novel-reader. It will suffice for us to say that Mr. Milne has admirably caught what he himself summarises as “the romantic colour, the dancing atmosphere, and the high spirit of those ancient years.” His pen-pictures of the wild country between the Don and the Dee, in particular, are effective and graphic, and specially noticeable is a very vivid description of a thunderstorm in the hills.

R. A.

THE SONGS OF THE MOUNTAINEERS. Collected and Edited by John Hirst, B.A. Cantab, M.I.E.E., for the Rucksack Club. Pp. 124. 3/-.—Here we have a collection of 110 mountaineering songs, 67 of them classified as songs of general interest, and 43 as club songs and personal ditties. Apart from the numerous individual contributions, many of the songs have already appeared in the *Fell and Rock Journal* or the *Climbers' Club Journal* or have been sung at Rucksack Club dinners, and these naturally refer to climbing in Lakeland or in Yorkshire. Half-a-dozen, however, are taken from the *S. M. C. Journal*, including the delicious “Och! the Coolin!”—

“Och! the Coolin, that'll stand no foolin'!
 The rocks at the bottom are terrible hard;
 The summit's fine and airy, and the slopes contrary
 Exhaust the vocabulary of an Irish bard.”

Two have appeared in our own pages—“The Three Climbers” and “Away to the Hills, Away;” and it is rather sad to note that of the fifteen “Cairngorm Boys” specifically named in the latter seven at least have passed away. The songs, in the main, reflect the gay and happy and the humorous aspects of mountain climbing, and are, of course, almost as a matter of necessity, metrical rather than poetical. Parody is freely resorted to, especially to fit a song to a popular air; “John Peel,” “The Hunting Day,” and “Off to Philadelphia” seem to be the airs most frequently adopted. Some of the parodies are exceedingly successful, like

“D'ye ken Wasdale with its lake so deep?
 Its cloud-capp'd hills, and their crags so steep?
 Dye ken those streams whose waters leap
 With a splash and a roar in the morning?”

or

“I am the Mountaineero,
 The demon Mountaineero;
 I roam the mountains and I climb
 And pose upon what comes my way.”

To others, however, the significant caution given in one particular instance is equally applicable—“Irregularities in the metre can be overcome by free use of ‘recitative.’” On the whole, the little volume is welcome not only as embodying a large number of excellent songs for use at meets and social gatherings, but as expressive of the buoyant spirits and happy disposition which characterise all true mountaineers.

R. A.

THE opening article in the November number of the *Alpine Journal* is a reprint of a paper presented at the *Congrès d'Alpinisme* held at Monaco in 1920 on “A History of the Alpine

“ALPINE Club” by A. L. Mumm. The writer traces the JOURNAL.” history of mountaineering by the British, and observes the well-defined epochs of (a) exploration, (b) guideless climbing, (c) new routes, up already conquered mountains, and (d) exploration outside Europe. The ups and downs of the Club are referred to, but the impression left upon the reader is the wonderful, dignified progression of the Club, where paltry things are left out of account—the members seem to have learned the secrets of the steadfastness of the mountains. Next follows a clear account of “The Horunger” by Raymond P. Bicknell, who gives some thrilling accounts of ascents in these Norwegian peaks. A very delightful description of a traverse of Mont Blanc is given by

George Finch. The party ascended from the Italian side, and the narrative graphically depicts the difficulties of this line of ascent. In this article, as indeed throughout the whole number, the illustrations are, as usual, superb.

Five articles on the Mount Everest expedition form the principal feature of the May number, and, taken altogether, they give a very full account of what is contemplated, what has been accomplished, and what has yet to be attained. The articles are accompanied by reproductions of photographs, many of which were shown by Mr. Mallory in his recent lecture.

J. G. K.

DR. INGLIS CLARK has a delightful paper on "Reminiscences of the Cairngorms" in the April number of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*. He made their acquaintance as a

"SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN- EERING CLUB JOURNAL." boy about fifty years ago, walking from Braemar to Ben Muich Dhui, spending (not sleeping) the night under the comfortless Shelter Stone, being refused food at Coylum Bridge next day because he and his companion were "breakin' the Sabbath," and

finally finding shelter and hospitality at the old Lynwilg Inn. Since those days, he has paid many visits to the Cairngorms, but gradually, as the love of rock-climbing grew, he began to under-value them. Apparently, however, he has now modified his opinion as the result of recent visits from the Aviemore side, and has discovered that, to attain "the secret of the Cairngorms" and fully realise their attractiveness, one "must not fly straight to their rocky plateaux by aeroplane, but must rather patiently enter the forest recesses and, from wooded gorges, view the mountain forms standing up in blue or purple haze behind the underlying forest-covered hills." Herr Lüscher, whom we take to be a Swiss, describes "A Summer Holiday in Scotland" in 1920, which began with experiences of wet weather in Skye. He managed to climb the Inaccessible Pinnacle and sent down his rope for "two young men who came perchance to the foot of the Pinnacle at the same time"—presumably two of the young men of whose adventures in Skye that year we have ourselves some record. There is an article on "Mountaineering in Iona" by Mr. Thomas Fraser Campbell.

THE number of the *Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club* for last year deals mainly, as is only natural, with climbing in the English Lake District. Two articles describe

"FELL AND ROCK CLIMB- ING CLUB JOURNAL." ascents of the central buttress of Scafell, and another gives a detailed account of more new climbs around Wasdale; there is a record of "Climbs Old and New" compiled from the Club

books and elsewhere, and Mrs. Rawnsley writes on the installation of the war memorial on Scafell Pike. Councillor

Isaac Hinchliffe of Manchester furnishes an interesting account of Mardale, a large area of which is threatened with submersion by a great water scheme which is in contemplation; he is hopeful that, if the scheme be properly carried out, the beauty of the valley will not be lost, but rather added to. It is interesting to note that the F. and R. C. Club are taking steps to produce a new and comprehensive map of the Lake District.

THE articles in this year's number of the *Rucksack Club Journal* are nearly equally divided between accounts of climbing in the Alps and of climbs at home. Among the former

“RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL.” is an interesting description of an ascent of the Wetterhorn, the writer of which, in excusing himself for not attempting to depict “the glories of the wonderful Alpine crags and snows,” very sensibly falls back on a sententious passage in “The Light of Asia—“Measure not with words the immeasurable, nor sink the string of thought into the fathomless.” The article “On Skye” is all too brief: the writer had an experience of what the island can do in the matter of rain, and then, by way of contrast, had a week of broiling weather. Mr. C. H. Pickstone has an article on the all too common but none the less nonsensical notice, “Trespassers will be Prosecuted,” and has no difficulty in showing that it is a mere *brutum fulmen*, “a wooden falsehood,” which may be disregarded with impunity. “Let there be no mistake about it,” he says; “you cannot legally be ‘prosecuted’ for a bare trespass, namely, one which does no harm except to the feelings of some feudally-minded owner. For such a trespass the owner’s only remedy is an action to recover such compensation as he can prove he has sustained.”

SOUTH AFRICA is a *terra incognita* to most of our readers, but it is a good field for mountaineering exploits, and the accounts of them furnished in the *Annual of the Mountain Club of South Africa* may be read and studied with profit. Some of the experiences are similar to our own—rock-faces that are unscaleable, chimneys that won’t “go,” ledges that afford a precarious foothold, and so on. But, judging from a lively article in last year’s number, difficulties have to be surmounted of which we have no cognisance. Thus a party of three (one of them a lady), in a trip to the Waaihoek range of Buffel’s Valley, “found the thorns vicious,” and shortly after, while struggling up a steep slope, “became surrounded by wacht-een-beetie bush.” Of the nature of this obstacle we in Scotland are cheerfully ignorant, but the writer of the article says

that "Anyone who has been surprised in a like manner will not require to be told of our harrowing experiences whilst disentangling ourselves prior to executing a flank movement." Next day, the party discovered that the kloof around them was on fire and had to make their way through it—once by beating out a path ; another time by a bold "rush." Incidentally, we are told that the combined heat of the sun and the fire was terrific. By way of contrast, the night was bitterly cold and sleep well-nigh impossible. There was trouble also with the food supplies. Water-bottles had to be carried owing to the uncertainty of finding water on the heights, and on one occasion a 2lb. "chunk" of mutton was purloined by baboons. Despite untoward incidents of this kind, vivaciously narrated, the "kloof-exploring" was found delightful, and the account of it is no less so. Mr. G. Londt contributes an article on the first complete ascent of Buffel's Dome, which is accompanied by a number of excellent photographs, and a lady describes a trip to the Mont-aux-Sources.

THE interest of mountaineers in India is centred, we suspect, in the great Himalayan range, and especially at present in the fortunes of the Mount Everest Expedition. But

"SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE." attention may be directed to a most interesting paper on "Geography and Progress in India" by Lord Meston, which appeared in the April number of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*. The title hardly does justice to the paper, which deals in a most masterly manner with the influence of geography on the evolution of India. The country, "as every schoolboy knows," is isolated on its landward side by the mass of lofty ranges known as the Pamirs, often described as the roof of the world, by the mountain ranges which enclose Tibet, and by the Himalaya, and for thousands of years it was accessible only through "a few perilous defiles in a nexus of wild hills." How, notwithstanding, India came to be penetrated and peopled by tribes from the north, and how the invaders pushed their way farther and farther south, is succinctly but very luminously told by Lord Meston, who also outlines the development of Hinduism and Buddhism and the inroad of Mohammedanism. Considering the limits imposed by the length of the paper (originally a lecture), the survey of Indian history is wonderfully comprehensive.