

REVIEWS.

THE HIGHLANDS WITH ROPE AND RUCKSACK. By Ernest A. Baker, D.Lit., M.A. London: H. F. and G. Witherby. Pp. 253.

12/6 net.—As may be gauged from its title, this CLIMBING work is descriptive of walks and climbs in the IN THE Scottish Highlands. It was in a sense begun, the HIGHLANDS. author says, more than twenty-five years ago, not long after his first visit to the Highlands, and it embodies “the fugitive records of rambles and climbs and haphazard holidays from that day to this.” All through the work Dr. Baker shows himself to be an ardent mountaineer. His early experiences are of sheer “tramping,” but he took to rock-climbing, and has evidently become a devotee of this higher form of mountaineering. “Rock-climbing,” he says, “is not a mere athletic sport appealing to animal sensibilities and the delight of struggle and accomplishment. It has a deeper attraction. To wrestle with the crags that frown on the cautious pedestrian, to force a way with body and limb up buttress, gully, and pinnacle, is to penetrate into the inmost sanctuary, to know the mountains as they really are, and to acquire a more profound sense of their beauty and simplicity.” The spirit of this passage animates the whole book. It is not a mere record of climbs made, with details of the unfavourable conditions and difficulties encountered—bad weather, precipitous rock-faces, uncouth gullies and chimneys, and so on. Incidents of the climbs such as these are narrated, and very graphically narrated, it is true, but Dr. Baker has an eye for scenic effect and mountain sublimity, and he can not only vividly describe the view from a mountain-top, but also visualise for us the impressions produced by the view. The volume is a fascinating one, and presents what is perhaps the most comprehensive survey of the Scottish Highlands as mountaineering ground extant.

The work consists of half a dozen chapters, exclusive of the introductory chapter, to which reference is made in our Notes. The first chapter, “From Lorne to Lochaber,” deals with ascents of Ben Cruachan, Ben Nevis, and Stob Dearg—Dr. Baker accompanied the brothers Abraham in the first complete ascent of the Crowberry Ridge, “often rated as the finest rock-climb north of the English

Lakes." The next chapter, "In the Cairngorms," is the longest in the book, and recounts various wanderings in the Cairngorm region. Dr. Baker, by the way, was a contributor to some of the early volumes of our *Journal*, and portions of his articles are incorporated in this chapter. In his preface he acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. A. I. McConnochie for useful information, and sundry allusions in the text plainly reveal that Mr. McConnochie was his companion on several occasions. Much of the descriptive matter in this Cairngorm chapter will be familiar to many members of the Club; perhaps the most novel and interesting item is the account of a climb of Sgor Ghaoith from Glen Eunach. "Across the Backbone of Scotland" deals with a walk from Beauly to Loch Duich and an ascent of Ben Fhada (Ben Attow it is more commonly called). The titles of the next two chapters, "In Western Ross" and "Footing it in Skye," sufficiently indicate their purport. We are inclined to think the Western Ross chapter the most graphic in the book; it certainly best reveals the equanimity of the author in mist and bad weather, of both of which he seems to have had a large share in all his excursions. The concluding chapter, "A Scramble in Arran," describes the climb of the Ben Nuis Chimney—most difficult and hazardous; even experienced mountaineers will be disposed to regard it as "fearsome." So far as can be ascertained, says Dr. Baker, this ascent has never been essayed by any other climbers.

We can heartily and confidently commend Dr. Baker's book to our readers and to all mountaineers.

R. A.

THE DEER AND DEER FORESTS of Scotland: Historical, Descriptive, Sporting. By Alexander Inkson McConnochie. London:

H. F. and G. Witherby. 25/- net.—Mr. McConnochie, the first secretary of the Cairngorm Club and first editor of the *Journal*, has devoted much attention and study during recent years to deer forests and

deer stalking, and his expert knowledge on these subjects is abundantly manifest in this handsome volume. It is a valuable addition to the literature of field sports, and must be classed besides as an authoritative book on deer forests. After a survey of the history of Scottish deer forests from the earliest times, Mr. McConnochie furnishes a detailed list of all the existing forests, with notes on their extent and character, including particulars about the yield of stags, their average weight, and the spread of their antlers. The deer forest area in Scotland, it seems, comprises $3\frac{1}{2}$ million acres—over a million acres more than at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which is due, of course, to the extraordinary revival of the sport of deer stalking that took place in that century. Mar

Forest is still the largest deer forest in the country, having an area of 87,196 acres, and it is followed by Reay, 76,000 acres, and Blackmount, 74,000 acres; the smallest forest is Amat, 768 acres. Mr. McConnochie writes with intimate personal knowledge, having visited nearly every forest mentioned and derived information from deer forest owners, stalkers, and gillies. A delightful chapter, "Days in the Forest," is devoted to personal experiences of the author and of stalkers and others, and is full of stories of exciting adventures and incidents; and the final chapter on "Poaching" is hardly less entertaining. The book is beautifully illustrated.

DOE CRAGS AND CLIMBS ROUND CONISTON: A Climber's Guide. By George S. Bower. Pp. 47. 2/3 (post free).—This is a

reprint of an article which appeared in the last number of the *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*, and is now published separately as the first of a series of climbers' guides which the Committee of the Club intends issuing—a series

which will eventually furnish a complete guide to the rock climbs in Lakeland, as far as that is practically possible. The Committee is to be congratulated on its enterprise. As an illustration of the detrimental effects of the present high prices for all publishing work, it may be mentioned that, owing to the very heavy cost of reproduction, the Committee was unable to carry out its intention to publish with this Guide a corrected map of the Coniston Climbing District.

IN the opening article of the April number of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* Mr. James A. Parker describes a

ridge on Beinn a' Bhuid to which he gives the name of "The Mitre Ridge" because, as seen from a certain point, it shows two peaks of nearly equal height. The ridge is 600 feet high, the east face consisting of great unclimbable slabs and the west face being a great and almost vertical precipice.

There are four well-defined pitches, however, and these are described in some detail. It is a question whether the ridge can be climbed, but Mr. Parker declares emphatically that it will be a magnificent climb—if ever accomplished. Mr. Walter A. Smith contributes an exceedingly pleasant account of "A Week-End Hill Tramp in Three Counties." The party consisted of four, and their route, starting from Ballinluig, was to cross, by hill paths, the comparatively low moorlands separating the valleys of the Tay, Strathardle, Glen Shee and Glen Isla, and from the head of Glen Isla find their way over the high mountains between that and Braemar, and finally to walk to Blair Atholl by the Dee and the Tilt. By this route they traversed the Monega Pass, a very ancient

path over the hills from the head of Glen Isla to Glen Clunie, which is believed, Mr. Smith says, to be the highest of the recognised hill paths in Scotland, as it crosses the heights at rather over the 3,300 feet level quite a short way east of the summit of Glas Maol, where the counties of Perth, Forfar and Aberdeen meet. Of the other articles in the number the most important is one on "The Relative Heights of the Cuillin Peaks."

THE number of the *Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club* for 1922 opens with a long and detailed account of "Doe Crags and Climbs around Coniston," by George S. Bower, the "FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB JOURNAL." publication of which as a separate pamphlet has just been mentioned. "Climbs are here in profusion, and of all degrees and types of difficulty," we are told, it being added that "the highest ideals of exponents of 'Scotch navigation' are realised in a certain gully of which it is unnecessary to give the name." The accompanying illustrations enable us to understand why so many of the climbs are labelled "severe," "excessively severe," and "very difficult." Other papers describe other climbs in the English Lake district, and there is a charming article on "Lake Country Inns and Innkeepers," the author of which, a lady, deplors the gradual effacement of the old-fashioned inns and the substitution of palatial hotels, these "traitorous inns" having sold their birthrights, "not for messes of pottage, but for six-course dinners and plush upholstered lounges." The wider range of climbing is represented by articles on "The Dolomites" and "The Puig Mayor, Majorca."

THE Rucksack Club (originally titled the Manchester Rucksack Club) was founded in October 1902, and it is only natural therefore that the volume of the Club's *Journal* for the present year should open with an article on "The Coming-of-Age of the Club." The Club started with a membership of 61, and 20 of these still remain members. The total membership is now 174. Professor Harold B. Dixon was the first President, and he is again President in this year of the coming-of-age. The Club is to be heartily congratulated on the work it has accomplished (duly recorded in the article) and on its continued vitality. This vitality is well manifested in the present number of the *Journal*, which has a large number of interesting and well-written articles. Scottish readers will be attracted by those on Ben Eighe and Misty Days on An Teallach; but there are accounts of walks and climbs in England and on the Continent as well. We may single out for special notice "A Long Circuit of the Fells" by Eustace Thomas, and "Dartmoor from North to South" by J. H. Entwisle.

JUDGING from the *Annual of the Mountain Club of South Africa* for 1922, the members of the Club find ample scope for their

energies and are ever discovering new climbs which yield plenty adventure and interesting results. An article on "Jan Dutoit's Kloof" describes how a party of mountaineers investigated a new route which was understood to be over almost entirely virgin ground, and coming on a rock at one point which looked as if it were to prove an insurmountable barrier, were surprised to find that a rude ladder had been fastened to the face of the rock—a sure indication, of course, that they were not the first who had ventured into the region. In "Groot Hoek Kloof and Surrounding Peaks" we have another account of an adventurous excursion into unfrequented parts, which involved more than one crossing through icy-cold water. A third article, "M'thlapetsi," deals with an excursion to the district of that name, situated in the Northern Drakensbergen, hitherto much neglected by mountaineers, but declared by the writer of this article to be the grandest and the most enchanting Alpine region within the confines of South Africa.

WE have received copy of a chart of the "Panorama seen from Falkland Hill (East Lomond)," executed by Mr. John S. Ramsay for the Kirkcaldy Naturalists' Society. Falkland Hill

FALKLAND HILL PANORAMA. is 1471 feet high, and an extensive view is obtained from its summit, particularly to west and north—a view which includes the Cairngorms and Lochnagar. Mr. Ramsay, we understand, has been studying for quarter of a century mountain views seen from Central Scotland, and has constructed many charts for his own pleasure. A number of these charts were exhibited for several months in the rooms in Edinburgh of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

THERE is an interesting article on "Scottish Canals and Waterways," by Mr. H. M. Cadell, in the April number of the

SCOTTISH CANALS AND WATERWAYS. *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, based on the recently-published work of Mr. Edwin A. Pratt on the subject. The chief canals are now the Caledonian Canal and the Crinan Canal, the Forth and Clyde Canal having been practically killed by the railways and the Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal having been a failure from the beginning. The Caledonian and Crinan Canals were projected with the idea that they would prove potent factors in the development of the Highlands, stem a rising tide of emigration and prevent the depopulation of the regions through which they were constructed. These hopes were not realised, and

the utility of the canals otherwise has always been open to criticism. The two waterways have proved exceedingly expensive both to make and to keep in operation, and they have been far from remunerative. The problem of their retention is raised periodically, particularly when proposals are made for their improvement, or even for the expenditure necessary to retain them as going concerns. Mr. Cadell thinks that the construction of a new and larger Crinan Canal is the most feasible of all the recent canal proposals in Scotland. It is of high importance to the poor inhabitants of the Outer Hebrides and the West Highlands, he says, to have a short and safe steamship connection with the Clyde; and the summer passenger and tourist traffic is also an important consideration. As to the Caledonian Canal, he thinks its reconstruction and enlargement are worthy of consideration, and he seems to favour a recent project for its reconstruction as a ship canal, a lower waterway being formed on the level of Loch Ness, which would save nearly all the locks. This scheme comes into rivalry with the proposed Forth and Clyde Ship Canal, and Mr. Cadell discusses this latter project in detail, along with the alternative Loch Lomond route, dealing also with the expenditure which would be involved and the probable revenue. His conclusion is that the proposed Forth and Clyde Ship Canal is absolutely impracticable, but of the two routes that by Loch Lomond is the least objectionable. The interest in his article, however, lies in his massing of facts and figures and arguments relative to the various canal projects, which makes it most serviceable for present and future reference.