

THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS.*

THE S.M.C. "GUIDE."

MR. PARKER, ex-President of the Cairngorm Club, is a mountaineer of wide experience. He has climbed all the "Three Thousanders" in the British Isles, and not only in Europe, but in China, Japan, and North America he has made many ascents. Those who know him will probably agree that thoroughness is one of his outstanding characteristics. Anything slipshod is abhorrent to his orderly mind. With such qualifications he could not be better equipped for the task he has undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.

"The Western Highlands" is a notable addition to the S.M.C. "Guide." Three years ago we welcomed (*C.C.J.* Vol. XII, p. 13) "The Cairngorms," by Mr. Henry Alexander, and that excellent work, which we believe has proved to be a "best seller" and has now been re-printed, has stood the test of minute examination by numerous climbers. Mr. Parker's "Guide" will take a worthy place alongside it, and we should venture to prophesy with confidence that it will have an equally enthusiastic reception from the growing ranks of those who not only love and admire, but are eager to explore the mountains of Scotland.

This section of the "Guide" describes that part of the Mainland which lies west of the Great Glen, and south of a line drawn from the Cromarty Firth along the Valleys of the Rivers Conon, Bran, and Carron to the head of Loch Carron—an area which measures about 85 miles from north to south, and has an average width of about 30 miles.

No fewer than sixty of the mountains in the district exceed 3,000 feet in height. The number of mountains between 2,500 feet and 3,000 feet is slightly greater. All the former are described as well as many of the lower ones, several of which are of considerable importance.

The district, as Mr. Parker points out, is of great interest

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to the mountaineer, and it also has a strong appeal to the pedestrian.

It has, however, one drawback, which is that practically the whole of the mountains are devoted to sport, principally deer-stalking, and that, therefore, apart from the roads and right-of-way paths, large areas are "out of bounds" during the sporting season. In spring and early summer, the best periods of the year, one is, however, free to go anywhere.

The area dealt with in the book is divided into ten convenient districts, to each of which a section is devoted. These districts are very clearly marked on a key map which, especially to anyone not familiar with the ground, makes reference to the appropriate letterpress very easy. The key-map also shows the sheets of the One-Inch Popular Edition of the Ordnance Survey map, so that it is a simple matter to secure the right map for any district. The districts are as follows:—I, Morvern; II, Ardgour and Sunart; III, Ardnamurchan; IV, Moidart; V, Locheil and Morar; VI, Glen Garry and Knoydart; VII, Glen Moriston and Cuanie; VIII, Glen Sheil and Kintail; IX, Glen Cannich; X, Glen Strathfarrar, Monar, and Strathconon. A well-defined plan is followed in the treatment of each section. A list of the principal heights is given and references to maps. A brief description of the district follows, along with an account of the roads and of the centres from which the district can be explored. A detailed description is then given of the mountains and of the routes up and down, and the section ends with a full account of the paths and a valuable bibliography, including references to appropriate articles which have appeared in *The Cairngorm Club Journal* and *The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*. What impresses one in turning over the pages of this book is the wealth of detail that is compressed into little space. Words are not wasted—there are no "purple patches"—and the reader feels sure that he is in the hands of a leader who writes about what he knows from practical experience. We feel sure that Mr. Parker's "Guide" will emerge from the most severe expert scrutiny with flying colours. He may be charged with sins of omission, but certainly not with

the other kind. A notable feature of the book is the truly admirable full-page illustrations. The frontispiece is a charming view, in photogravure, of Loch Quoich, from a photograph by Rev. A. E. Robertson, whose camera is responsible for half of the pictures. There is not a weak illustration in the book, and the variegated detail of mountain, river, and loch scenery has been effectively secured.

The Western Highlands, of course, are the Prince Charlie country, and the district teems with details of the Prince's wanderings. To have dealt with these *passim* would have interfered with the continuity of the "Guide," and so the excellent plan has been adopted of inserting a special section on "The Wanderings of Prince Charlie." This is the work of the General Editor, Rev. A. E. Robertson, than whom there is no more competent authority on the subject. It is a brief and graphic narrative of the five months that followed Culloden until the Prince got safely on board a French ship.

The spellings and the meanings of the place-names are a sore trial to most of us, but in a final section we are given an authoritative list, based on notes supplied by Professor W. J. Watson, Edinburgh University, and Mr. John Macdonald, Reader in Celtic at Aberdeen University. A full index completes the volume which, tastefully printed and bound, and published at a modest price, should make a wide appeal. Mr. Parker is to be warmly congratulated on a fine bit of work of permanent value.

E. W. W.