

REVIEWS.

The Alpine Journal, No. 253 (November 1936).

Mount Everest still remains unconquered. The 1936 expedition was repulsed by the very worst weather, and it says a great deal for the able leadership of Mr Hugh Ruttledge and the tried climbers who took part in the venture with him, that the enterprise was carried through without accident. Mr Ruttledge opens the *Journal* with a most interesting paper, and it gives us more information to add to our somewhat scanty fund of knowledge relating to high altitude climbing.

Mr Claud Schuster, in his undulating discourse on whether the methods and climbs of the ultra-modern school of mountaineering are justifiable, gives us much food for thought. His outlook on the subject, even although he can scarcely be said to have arrived at any definite conclusions, is very wide and unbiased. With a wealth of apt quotation, his essay, "A May Fox and March Hares," presents the two sides of a fascinating question, and having done so, he leaves the reader to decide the answer for himself. If, however, one browses through this article in conjunction with the notes on "Accidents in 1936," one is almost certain to be struck with the anti-German attitude which runs through the number, erupting volcanic-like at various points. Surely the description of the disaster on the Eigerwand is one of the most terrible indictments ever penned in mountain literature, and its awfulness as a criticism depends largely on its obvious truth. "The Eiger had struck down three assailants and destroyed the fourth through cold, hunger, and exhaustion . . . desperadoes who, driven forward recklessly by irresponsible desire for notoriety, had fought to place in the temple of fame of their false gods the mightiest of Alpine faces. . . ." One is reminded of a Shakespearean tragedy.

Although this lashing criticism of the technique employed in modern mountaineering struck me as the outstanding character of this number, there is also a big selection of orthodox, well-written, and beautifully illustrated articles. Descriptions of mountains and countries ranging from Iceland to New Zealand and embracing both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. A. C. Roberts, in presenting his "Reminiscences of La Meije," produces a most readable essay. I like his story of the man who, having fallen into a crevasse, inquired of a member of the rescue party lowered down to him how many guides had come and what payment they expected. On hearing the answer, he produced another cigar, settled himself down and explained that he was quite happy where he was.

There is little that is dull in the pages of *The Alpine Journal*. Although the places described are often remote and unknown to the

average reader, still, by good writing, they are made familiar, and the action made to take place once more. When one picks up this Journal one expects good things, and so far as this number is concerned, they are provided.—G. R. S.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, No. 122 (November 1936); No. 123 (April 1937).

In No. 122 the second contribution on "Scottish Mountaineering and its Relation to Mountaineering Abroad" is made by G. G. Macphee, who deals more particularly with snow and ice conditions. "The Spell of Ben Lui" recalls the Tacitean dictum, *Ignotum pro magnifico est*. From being a votary, the writer graduates towards a more familiar attitude to this fine mountain, doubtful of the wisdom of tearing aside the veil which so often conceals the high tops from mortal eyes. Rock climbers will be attracted to John MacLennan's article on Beinn Mhor, South Uist, and to a racy account of a new climb on the Crowberry Wall, entitled "Agag's Groove," by A. C. D. Small. The activities of S.M.C. Abroad is possibly the most enjoyable section of a less interesting number than usual. The spirit of the J.M.C.S., which celebrated its tenth birthday at the New Year Meet, 1936, is reflected in the claim of a member to have started the J.M.C.S. (Pekin Branch), climbing in Upper Mongolia at week-ends!

Pride of place is given in No. 123 to the second half of "Benighted on the Moor of Rannoch," a lengthy but readable account of a chapter of accidents during a passage of that dreary waste of bog and loch. Geo. F. Todd concludes his description of the "North-west Renfrewshire Hills," the first part of which appeared in the previous number. If there is little to attract the climber, here is a happy running ground for skiers—if and when! In "Some Contrasts" G. A. Solly discourses empirically on Nights Out, Thunderstorms, and Food and Equipment Reserves. J. Gall Inglis has now reached 1882 in his charming series of retrospects, "Days that are Past," while the Editor has many wise things to say in "Initiative in Climbing." The considerable list of new climbs (including Eagle's Buttress, Lochnagar) gives evidence of the activity of the Club in this field. The photographs are good. Special mention must be made of B. H. Humble's "Sunset from A' Chioch," illustrative of his article, "High Coolin Dawn."—A. W. C.

The Rucksack Club Journal, Vol. VIII., No. 3, 1937.

This is a *Journal* which every one will enjoy reading. It has a style almost unique in climbing Journals, derived chiefly from the literary ability of its contributors and from the delightful vein of humour which comes to the surface at frequent intervals throughout the book. Quite different from the heavy-footed kind (*vide* G. W. Young—"the iron has

entered into his sole."—ED.) which so often clumps laboriously through a mountaineering periodical, the *Rucksack* brand sparkles and refreshes with its light but sure touch, and leads the reader irresistibly forward from one good thing to another. Not that the subject is treated flippantly; there are several admirable accounts of climbs, such as "Three Weeks in Lhonak" and "With the Bavarians," where full justice is done to accurate description.

The Rucksack Journal differs from, and to our mind improves upon, most other climbing Journals in that its appeal is to all classes of climbers and not merely to those enthusiasts whose lives are devoted to finding and conquering new spheres. The "Aiguille de Grépon" is written in such a graphic and intimate way that it could be read with pleasure by anyone, whether interested in climbing or not. "Of Bogs, Swamps and Quagmires" is a whimsical and humorous investigation of the lethal qualities of British bogs.

The *Journal* contains a warm and moving tribute to the memory of the late J. H. Doughty, who edited the *Journal* for eight years and whose genial personality did much to influence the tone of the present *Journal*. Long may it continue!—J. S. C.

The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, Nos. 30 and 31 (Lakeland Number).

This *Journal*, which covers the years 1936 and 1937, has been devoted entirely to Lakeland subjects to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the first ascent of the Napes Needle. The first article, "The Jubilee Ascent of the Needle," describes how about three hundred members of the Club gathered to see W. P. Haskett-Smith repeat his feat of fifty years ago. The hero of this remarkable achievement himself contributes an interesting article, "Half a Century on the Fells," which is packed with reminiscences of first ascents and witty comments on climbing friends.

Many of the articles go back a long way in the history of climbing, and the authors include such veterans as C. F. Holland, H. M. Kelly, and A. P. Abraham. Kelly and J. H. Doughty are jointly responsible for a very comprehensive but compact history of Lakeland climbing, which shows how the history of British climbing is really summarised in the history of the Lake District climbers.

Although the Lakeland number lacks the variety of subject-matter, to which we have become accustomed in climbing Journals, it certainly gives varied information about the Lake District in very readable form. Besides the historical features already mentioned, there are articles on "Lakeland Bird Life," by Bentley Beetham, "The Fell Flora," by Gertrude Bell, and on "The Lake District Geology," by E. B. Johnston.

The photographs, sixty in number, are all good, and two or three indeed excellent.—J. S. C.

The Moray Mountaineering Club Journal, Vol. I., No. 2.

This number reflects abounding vitality and outstrips No. 1, particularly in the photographs. We note that qualifications for membership was an item on the agenda at the A.G.M. and have the impression that an essential prerequisite is to be imbued with that spirit of enthusiasm which so patently permeates the Club.

We remember John Ewen in his student days and read with interest a posthumous unfinished article from his pen, "March Climbing on Beinn Tarsuinn." He was the contemplative climber. "After the solitude of the mountain day," he wrote, "the sing-song round the communal teapot is as much an anti-climax as the bridge and tittle-tattle of the Highland hotel." William Marshall deals comprehensively with "Scottish Hill Mammals from Deer, Red and Roe, to the Shrew and the rare Pine Marten." Other articles are concerned with the "Tower Ridge," "Ben Nevis," "Photography on the High Hills" ("I fear," writes the contributor of this article, "a large percentage of camera users release the shutter and expect the camera to perform the brain work"), "Hills and the Poets," and "An Ascent of the Aladdin Buttress of Cairngorm," which should attract members. The Club was fortunate in having N. E. Odell as its guest, and a small party had the enviable experience of a day on Braeriach with him in February. Among their abiding impressions was "the care he exercised all the time." Verses there are both serious and gay. R. F. Stobart's "The Moray Mountaineer" and E. F.'s "Soliloquy" are in the true G. W. Young tradition. One question. Is An Teallach (of which there is a fine panorama in this number) better known in print as The Challichs? We do not like to see the Gaelic names of mountains anglicised.

The Grampian Club Journal, Vol. I., No. 1.

It gives me much pleasure to welcome this volume, the first effort of the Grampian Club and the latest addition of its kind to the mountaineering literature of Scotland. It breathes the very atmosphere of the Highlands, and to anyone who for a variety of reasons finds that access to the hills is becoming more difficult, it brings them many leagues nearer. After reading this *Journal* I feel that I have been out on the high hills for an hour or two and have kept company with kindred spirits. I cannot, however, say much in praise of the illustrations. In general, they neither show a high standard of art nor are they well reproduced. Further, the horizontal pictures are in my opinion bound into the book the wrong way round.

In "Early Club Memories," by C. Smith, and in J. F. Chapman's "The Home Glens," we are introduced to a novel treatment of the recounting of Club outings and meets. How refreshing it is to pick up this *Journal* and find that a third of it is not devoted to lists of unknown persons who, by the grace of Providence, defiled certain mountains by their presence on certain dates. The first of the above articles took

me back to the days when it was a discovery to find how comfortable rucksacks were and that "haversacks were a bother." What pitying self-contempt, mingled with a touch of sadness that it is a thing of the past, is found in the description—"a miscellaneous collection of caps, hats, walking-sticks, and raincoats completed our outfit." E. Maxwell and T. P. Winton open up the rock-climbing possibilities of Glen Clova. I look forward to a visit and to further lucid "guide book" work from their pens in the future. An essay on "Sikkim," by G. A. R. Spence, starts well, but the writer commits the error of finishing on an unnecessary anti-climax. "Aonach Dubh," by A. A. B. Marten, is made of the stuff of which mountain essays should be made. "In the intervening months imagination had transformed that spectacle of drifting mist puffs and soaring rocks to a mere playground for amateur pioneers. Reality quickly destroyed these fancies." To the initiated, how much is conveyed by these brief sentences! Besides being a real adventure story, this article points a moral to the aspiring rock climber. Its encouragement is: Go and try; don't wait for some one to show you the way. Try an easy way first.

I could, however, use up space indefinitely on this production—it is full of good things. It has set the editor and future editors a standard.

G. R. S

The Northern Highlands: Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide, by W. N. Ling and J. Rooke Corbett.

This revised edition replaces the 1932 Guide to the mountains north of the Dingwall-Skye railway. To the original has been added a chapter on the geology of the district, a note on Morven, and some remarks on rock climbs in the Torridon group and elsewhere. And the chapter on the Fannichs has been rewritten.

The plates are, for the most part, good; Lamond Howie's "An Teallach," A. E. Robertson's "Beinn Eighe," and Hugh Gardner's "Suilven" remarkably good. But the tones in several cases are so dull and uninteresting that few would be attracted to the hills by these representations alone. The double image of A'Mhaighdean gives most offence, but there are one or two others to mar a good collection. The more popular and accessible hills are well illustrated, but readers would have appreciated better views of the lesser-known peaks.

Indeed, taking everything into consideration, there does not seem to have been a great deal of justification for this revision. While a number of errors have been rectified, the new matter included is inconsiderable. Some use might have been made of Mr Wilding's note in *The Rucksack Club Journal*, Vol. VIII., No. 2, pp. 208-209, on Liathach, and of his pointed comment on the Fasarinen pinnacles route, "I wondered how many ascents had been made since the first one."

Naturally, the present guide compares rather unfavourably with the

recent revision of Ben Nevis, as it would with a revision, say, of Skye, where again much valuable new matter is available. Still, readers in search of new peaks to conquer will find here adequate hunting ground.

W. A. E.

In addition to the above, we acknowledge with thanks receipt of:—

“A Short Guide to the Slovene Alps (Jugo-Slavia),” by F. S.

Copeland and M. Debelokova. (127 pp., 6 in. by 3 in.

Price, 2s. 6d. Kleinmayr and Bamberg, Ljubiana. 1936.)

The American Alpine Journal, Vol. III, 1937, No. 1.

The Mountaineering Journal, March-May 1937.

The Scottish Ski Club Journal, 1936.

Cambridge Mountaineering, 1936.

The Scottish Geographical Magazine, Vol. 53, Nos. 1-3.