

REVIEWS.

Britain's Mountain Heritage. By Arthur Gardner, F.S.A.
(Batsford. 12s. 6d.)

A title of this nature implies a reasonably unbiased account of the mountains of Britain, but in this instance the performance falls rather short of the promise. It is essentially a plea for the establishment of National Parks and a glorification of the English Lake District, which receives 22 of the 40 pages of descriptive text and 63 of the 128 photographs. All Scotland is covered in 14 pages and 45 photographs. In our opinion this proportion is so far out of accord with the relative importance of the mountains in the two areas as to be ridiculous in a book bearing this title. The Cairngorms, it may be noted, receive six lines of disparagement and no photographs!

The photographs are printed on rather poor paper, unavoidable, perhaps, in these times, and reproduction suffers. We should have welcomed more snow scenes and winter views, as then more of the atmosphere and character of many of the hills can be conveyed in a photograph.

The author goes out of his way to attack the work of the Forestry Commission, often quite without justification so far as Scotland is concerned. One wonders, too, if the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland is really "fighting . . . to preserve what is left of England's green and pleasant land." This misstatement gives the key to the tone and object of the book, which is of less interest to hill-men than Batsford's other mountain publications.

R. L. M.

The Alpine Journal, Vol. LIII., Nos. 264, 265, 1942.

The Editor of *The Alpine Journal* may deplore the lack of material relating to great expeditions; he is still able to include accounts of recent visits to new mountains. Almost he could maintain interest and the issue on the footnotes to Alpine history, tales of famous guides, and recollections of the great days of Whymper and Mummery, although future editors may find it difficult to hark back to the well-documented modern expedition!

T. Graham Brown forsakes history and Mont Blanc for some very interesting climbs on the Nordend of Monte Rosa, but, so far as the Alps are concerned, the Editor has to fall back chiefly on reminiscence. G. A. Solly describes an ascent of the Alphubel with J. A. Parker in

1906, while E. L. Strutt writes of the Eastern Alps in the nineties. The Alps, however, are also the main theme of such articles as "First Affections," by the Editor, and "The Middle Land," by C. W. F. Noyce—two very enjoyable papers—and, less directly, in "Mountain Inns," by G. W. Bell, and "On Cairns," by Peter Lloyd.

Ranging farther afield, R. A. Hodgkin describes an attempt on Kenya Mountain in conditions that appear to have been no less than formidable, and a climb on Ruwenzori (Punta Margherita, Mt. Stanley), while Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton's account of his attempt on Kenya will be of special interest to those of our members who had the privilege of seeing the film of this expedition at the author's lecture to the Club in December last.

In "A Winter Expedition to the Zemu Glacier," John Hunt discusses the possibility of a post-monsoon attempt on Everest. Opinion among experts seems to be fairly evenly divided, but any post-war expedition would presumably stay on and put the matter to the test. Other Himalayan articles are R. L. Holdsworth's "Ascent of Mankial Tsukai" (18,750 feet), and "Kulu Revisited," by J. O. M. Roberts.

It is only on very rare occasions that any reference to the British hills is admitted to *The Alpine Journal*. In addition to occasional and brief references to British climbs there is an attractive sketch of Sligachan in 1873, by H. G. Willink.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, No. 133, April 1942.

There has inevitably been a reduction in climbing activities of late and much of the space in climbing journals has been occupied by reminiscence. It is therefore agreeable to find now the introduction of more concrete articles dealing with the evolution and development of the hills as we know them, with their vegetation and utilisation. This tendency is to be seen both in our own and in the *S.M.C. Journal*. In the only number of the latter issued since our last review, Dr G. K. Fraser deals at some length with the Forest History of the Highlands. He tells of the use of pollen grains preserved in peat to elucidate the forest history of a region since glacial times, and points out that the character and area of woodland in the Highlands has not varied appreciably for some 4,000 years. Stumps of pine forests which may be found buried in peat at up to 3,000 feet above sea-level date from a warmer climatic period and are no evidence of lack of enterprise in afforestation at the present time.

J. H. B. Bell deals with some variations of routes in the north-east corrie of Lochnagar and a new climb on Creag an Dubh Loch. The climbs are difficult or severe, often necessitating stocking-soles and pitons.

W. H. Murray describes an ascent of the Crowberry Gully early in

the winter, whilst the usual section on New Climbs includes notes on Buttresses 1 and 2 on Sgóran Dubh.

R. L. M.

The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, Nos. 35 and 36 (1941, 1942).

The Journal maintains its excellence, in spite of present difficulties, and if a trifle smaller is still beautifully produced and well illustrated. In the latter connection the camera work of F. H. F. Simpson and W. A. Poucher is especially good.

Of the two issues, the later I found the more interesting, although J. W. Haggas's contribution to the 1941 number—"The Gordian Knot"—is remarkable both for climb and description. Minute detail in description may sometimes be tedious but the effect here is almost of suspense. E. W. Hodge contributes a skiers' guide to Lakeland and continues the good work in the 1942 issue. Of the rest, the best reading was in S. B. Beck's account of a gully climb and F. H. F. Simpson's "Year with the Club."

The 1942 issue raises the very vexed question of pitons. Mr Bentley Beetham remarks on the apparently paradoxical position of allowing experts to use them while novices are debarred. But this is no paradox; as C. F. Holland later points out, there is danger in novices using them, arising from their inexpert application. Mr Beetham then proceeds to the very pertinent question: pitons are used only when further ascent becomes impossible—but, impossible for whom? There being no satisfactory answer, the author then makes the excellent suggestion that certain places of no interest to the pure rock-climber be set aside for the piton users. A very practical suggestion; the reviewer would go further and confine their use to pot-holes!

F. S. Smythe discusses adventitious aids to climbing, covering a wider field in "Mechanised Mountaineering." But Shelter Stone enthusiasts will find something still more to their taste in John Bechevaise's "Alpine Adventure in Lakeland," an account of a skating-cum-climbing camp near the top of the Styhead Pass. Adventure is the word!

Climbers' Club Journal, Vol. VII., No. 1, 1942.

Members serving with H.M. Forces have contributed much to the success of this issue. Robin A. Hodgkin describes the first ascent of Jebel Kassala (4,400 feet) during four days' leave. Motoring from Khartoum to Kassala—300 miles—with a Dongalawi servant and a demobilised Abyssinian patriot, they ascended the mountain in three and three-quarter hours and tasted of the leaves of the "Tree of Life" growing on the summit. The ascent had been attempted by Italians during one of their earlier occupations of the town.

Another member snatches a day or two on Syrian snow, and John Hunt describes a toughening school for one of our armoured formations. The number contains a guide to Clogwyn du'r Arddu, Notes on New Climbs, etc.

In addition to the above we have received

The Scottish Geographical Magazine, Vol. LVIII., No. 3,
December 1942.

This contains two articles that may be of special interest to members: Part III. of "The Origin of the Scottish River System," by Alex. Bremner, and "'Auld King Coil' and Scottish Place-Names," by James Meikle.