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## REVIEWS.

THE MOUNTAIN CLUB ANNUAL. No. 9, 1904-5. Cape Town.

TWO years ago we briefly reviewed No. 7 of this enterprising periodical, and, finding that the fact was mentioned with a certain natural exultation in the Annual Report which followed, we, last year, devoted no less than three pages of our valuable space to an appreciative notice of No. 8. Now No. 9 has reached us, and, to our amazement, we find that the Annual Report for 1904, while mentioning a review of the previous number in the pages of another English periodical, makes no reference to ours. We hope this does not mean that the best literature is losing its hold on the reading and climbing public of Cape Town, and prefer to think that the General Post Office is in fault, and that Mr. Henniker Heaton ought to ask a few questions about it in the House of Commons.

The constitution of the Club puzzled us last year. It has now been amended in certain respects. The Worcester section apparently continues to exist, but in a painfully atrophied condition, being unable to name a single member. There are still "other sections," but we are left in cruel doubt whether our old friend "Stellenbosch" is still in being, for its name is not even mentioned.

For the rest the Club appears to be going on very well. One of its members has had the luck to be knighted, and others to be benighted; it possesses an actual mountain hut; it carries on the search-party business with great spirit; and lastly it has brought up to the round half-hundred the list of

routes up Table Mountain, of which only forty-five were known last year.

Mr. G. Travers-Jackson's catalogue of these routes is the most informing paper in this number, and, if the photograph of "A first Class Route" is not a "fake," some of the climbs are pretty stiff.

Is it simply by chance that Mr. R. Hymer's poem on the sleeping-bag faces a full-page picture shewing a young lady who has foolishly slept out on a hard boulder *without* a sleeping-sack, and holding out hopes that she may be cured of the consequent consumption by "SACCO," probably a form of "open-air treatment?"

May we end with a suggestion to Mr. Ford? Here in the Old Country these explorations would arouse far more interest if it were possible to find out where the places are. Ordinary maps know nothing of them, and a sketch, however rough, of the ranges dealt with, would add immensely to the pleasure and instruction of the reader.

W. P. H.-S.

THE CENTRAL ALPS OF THE DAUPHINY. By W. A. B. COOLIDGE, H. DUHAMEL and E. PERRIN. 2nd edition. London, 1905. Price 7/6 net.

THE appearance of a new Climbers' Guide in which Mr. Coolidge has any share, or a new edition of an old one, is hailed by all mountaineers with rapture. They are certain to find in it not only lucid arrangement and marvellous condensation, but practically an exhaustive index to all that has been written on the subject in each of at least four different languages.

The present work is one of the very best of its class. It has slightly altered the form of the first edition, but retains, we regret to see, a title which appears to us uncouth. "Dauphiny" is English right enough, and "*Le Dauphiné*" is quite free from objection, but "*The Dauphiny*" is neither the

one thing nor the other. In the preface it is explained that "the definite article is prefixed in order to bring home the fact that we deal here only with the best known of the two provinces, formerly ruled by Dauphins." If this argument is valid, let us apply it in another direction. When Switzerland is mentioned, no one thinks about the Saxon Switzerland, no one has any doubt what publishers are meant by "Murray," the name of Mr. Coolidge leaves all Coolidges but one out of sight; therefore, apparently, we ought to speak of "The Guide-book to the Switzerland, by the Mr. Coolidge, published by the Murray!"

However, we cannot linger over the outside of the book when there is such a feast within. The revision has been very thorough, and the book is wonderfully well up-to-date. Indeed, in one case, it would seem to be actually ahead of it in stating that "a small wooden hut has been built on the summit of the Tête de la Maye." A few weeks ago nothing of the kind was visible there.

Probably it is an intelligent anticipation of events similar to that by which the accurate Baedeker has carefully inserted in his map a refuge hut on the Bec de l'homme. The directions given for passing from the Tête de la Maye to the Tête de l'Aure do not agree with Mr. Duhamel's map, according to which, the latter peak is not, as Mr. Coolidge implies, on the main ridge running up to the Tête de Rouget, but on a side ridge branching to the S., and separated from the Maye by a deep ravine. The guides at La Bélarde are in agreement with Mr. Duhamel.

In a book so marvellously condensed it would seem impossible to find a superfluous word, but careful search reveals two. In order to reach the Col du Plaret we are told to take "the La Perra path"; now La Perra is not mentioned elsewhere in the book, and does not figure at all in the accompanying maps, so that the explanation seems to be a case of *ignotum per ignotius*.

In one or two cases the compass bearings given are not very intelligible. To reach the Col de Chéret from the E., we

are told that "the Baverjat glacier is ascended to the N.," but, as a glance at the map shows, the glacier slopes from W. to E., and if you go N. you pass along the foot or side of the glacier on the level.

Again, in ascending the Grand Aiguille *from the N.*, we are directed to bear N. W. to the N. W. *arête*. Should not the former "N. W." be "S. W.?"

After all, perhaps the best test of such a work as this is to turn to the description of the Meije, at once the most difficult mountain, and the most frequent subject of discussion. Here the authors have sifted their materials with wonderful skill. One sentence, however, seems to have gone astray, and presents a notable puzzle to any reader who knows but little of the localities.

After the narration of how the summit is reached by the W. *arête*, it proceeds, "Unless the mountain is in a very bad state, you ought always to be rather to the W. of and quite sheltered from icicles falling from the Glacier Carré." This would naturally be taken to refer either to the last bit of the ascent, or by way of summary to the whole of it, but, in reality, it refers only to a short stretch of the early part of the ascent near Castelnau's Camp, and usually called the "*Grande Muraille*." At the point dealt with where the sentence actually stands, the Glacier Carré is hundreds of feet below, and icicles falling from it need not cause the least concern.

The celebrated Pas du Chat is now usually avoided not by turning it on the Brèche side (W.), but by following a long ledge on the E. side ending in a steep chimney, from the upper part of which an iron peg on the left shows the way up a steep, unpromising slab, by which the *arête* is regained.

Of the Cheval Rouge it is perhaps too strong to say that "on it you must sit astraddle, while the leader is overcoming the Chapeau du Capucin," for beside the little ridge, and parallel to it on the N., is a regular gutter, which provides very steady footing, much more comfortable than a seat on the angular ridge.

The descent from the summit of the Grand Pic on the E.

into the Brèche Zsigmondy, is not given quite as it is now usually done. From the top cairn you make down a steep but easy gully towards the frightful abyss on the S. of the Brèche; before it becomes difficult an exit is seen on a shoulder to the left into the shallow gully where the pegs are fixed. After reaching the Brèche, the exit on the E. side, regarded by many as in itself the most difficult and dangerous bit on the whole expedition, is now facilitated by a stout cable secured to a solid bar at the top of the ridge above.

It would have been well to point out that in continuing the traverse to the E., the snow-slopes on the N. are sometimes quite impracticable, and there is then no alternative to the absolute ridge until the top of the Pic Central has been passed. In the same way "the easy Tabuchet glacier" is sometimes quite impassable. This year, for instance, probably not a single party has dared to descend it. Under these circumstances, the descent is much longer and not easy for a stranger to find. It takes a line E. of the Tabuchet by the edge of the Bec glacier, and so down to Villard d'arène.

In fact, a climber in Dauphiny using this book late in the season, or at a time of scanty snow, would meet with several surprises. This season, for instance, easy ascents such as that of Les Rouies required some hours more than usual; below the Col de Chéret on the W. the snow was practically gone, and only a thin sheet of smooth ice remained, down which stones shot with frightful velocity; to reach the Promontoire Hut a wide *détour* was necessary on the Etancons glacier, and on many mountains acres of sharp stones formed a very painful substitute for the snow-slopes described in the guide-book.

The heights of the mountains and passes are conveniently given both in metres and in feet, but the figures are not in every case trustworthy. For instance, the Col de Navettes is given as 2900 m., or 9215 ft., which seems to involve an error of about 300 ft. in one figure or the other.

The index is carefully made, though the Col de l'Encoula de Petit Pierre is given as "Col de l'Encoula de Pierre Pierre."

We cannot quit the book without calling attention to the

stern impartiality with which Mr. Coolidge sits in judgment on himself. In 1877, when, with the two Almers, he made the first ascent of that grand rock-peak, the southern Aiguille d'Arve, he described the greatest difficulty there as "une petite fente d'où descendait une véritable cascade pétrifiée." The present work says, coldly, of the same place, "In this cleft there are several rocky stalactites, which have been *somewhat fancifully compared to a petrified waterfall.*"

In brief the work is judicial, lucid and concise, worthy in every way of the authors, and if a climber should visit Dauphiny without it, no words could adequately describe his folly.

W. P. H.-S.

MOUNTAINEERING BALLADS. By A. C. DOWNER (Member of the Alpine Club). London, Charles Murray and Co. 1/- net.

SOMEHOW or other Alpine men seldom blossom out into poetry. Undoubtedly the mountains often touch chords which lurk unsuspected in many an unlikely bosom, but the poetry they find, or inspire, generally remains in a vague, amorphous state, and fails to crystallize out into actual metrical form. We therefore welcome the bard, who has at last arisen, and find some of his lines distinctly happy :—

"O sunlit hours upon the heights,  
Where pulse beat firm and eye was clear,  
Where sleep came bountiful o' nights,  
And all the world was dear!"

This is well ; but some of the most successful efforts are in a more majestic strain of rugged resonance, catching some echoes of the mighty Alps and some of Mr. Rudyard Kipling.

"Known of these are the gusts that whistle  
Adown the glistening ice-grey steep,

And where the stores of clustered crystal  
 In subterranean cracks lie deep,  
 And hissing avalanches wrestle  
 And slowly roar in their massy sweep."

Sensitive ears may object that of the three words, "whistle-crystal-wrestle," not one is a decent rhyme to either of the other two, and indeed it is clear that triple rhymes put an undue strain on our poet's resources, for elsewhere we find "faces-bases-glazes," "speaking-breaking-taking," "chosen-frozen-blows on," "laden-maiden-stayed in," and, while in one case, the necessity of providing a rhyme for "hearest," forces him to invent a morning period "when dawn is *blearest*," in another, similar metrical difficulties evolve an equally unusual period at nightfall, called the "gloom."

Nevertheless, in spite of these technical blemishes and a dash of bathos here and there, a rare gift of expression is undoubtedly conspicuous among these poems, and lines abound which carry the right music with them.

"Gazing on the mighty picture, as the golden sun is setting,  
 Here at last I reach fulfilment, more than all the wont of men,  
 Far above the fear and fretting, unforeboding, unforgetting,  
 While the radiance floods the pastures, and the shadows fill  
 the glen."

Ice and snow appeal to him very strongly; so strongly, indeed, that he can hardly spare a thought to lower and less dramatic elevations, such as satisfy our insular needs.

It is true that he lets fall a kind word for "the happy cliffs of Dover," but that is wholly on account of tender associations clustering round them. In this poem we find an illustration of the rule that true lyrics are ever apt to sound the personal note; the lyric poet is self-revealing, and here his candour is amazing:—

"Comes your message, O Beloved, inarticulate but scented  
 With the subtle breath of roses, sweet as sea-songs in  
 the south,  
 When we listen to the Siren making music unrepeated,  
 And the lightest lips of fancy rest a moment on my mouth."

Thus he tells the fair sender of an "inarticulate but scented" letter that it pleases him almost as much as listening to a certain Siren by the southern sea while singing songs she ought to be ashamed of (but isn't one bit)—songs for which his passing "fancy" is apparently rewarded by being generously permitted to "rest her lips a moment on his mouth." How this dubious and compromising compliment was received at Dover will, we hope, be recorded in another instalment of equally mellifluous verse. If the poet was prudent, he no doubt effected his return to England *via* Dieppe.

