

There is much in the book which in such a notice as this must be left untouched upon—discussions on Buddhism, on the complex nationalities and language affinities, on the race, characteristics, history, and political relations of all the countries visited. Then the geology and climate and meteorological phenomena of every kind are never left unnoticed. On one important point of interest, the rapid rise of the peaks surrounding the Indus gorge, where the summit of Nanga Parbat towers nearly 23,000 feet above the river bed, at a distance from it of scarcely thirty miles, I find no satisfactory information. Such an enormous difference of height in so short a distance can scarcely be paralleled elsewhere; but we shall perhaps have a description in the third volume, which is yet to come. Meantime, I can only hope that many of us will be induced to read the book for ourselves, and that real interest will be awakened, which may lead to definite glacier exploration of the whole country, and, it may be, to the ascent of many of the peaks. The knowledge that there are in the same world with us glaciers fifty or sixty miles long, as indeed there are in the Karakoram, surrounded with peaks of 25,000 to 28,000 feet and more, is enough to make us long for the unconditioned, and chafe against the barriers of time, space, and—must I add so sordid a check?—pocket, which keep us from their glories. We must hope better things for our children, or even for ourselves, if in another state of being we are ever permitted to fulfil some of the longings we have formed in this. J. STODON.

ALPINE NOTES.

THE PICO DI NAIQUATÁ, VENEZUELA.—Mr. J. Spence, a British resident in Venezuela, in company with several *savants*, accomplished in April last the first ascent of a mountain in the neighbourhood of Caracas, known as the Pico di Naiguatá. The expedition appears to be looked on in the country as a considerable feat. Not having as yet succeeded in obtaining a translation of the Spanish account, kindly forwarded by Mr. Spence, we must for the present content ourselves with a quotation from a letter, in which a member of H. B. M.'s Legation at Caracas expresses his opinion of the difficulties and importance of the ascent in the following remarkable terms:—

‘In again welcoming you back from the dizzy peak, and from the thickets amidst which the tiger prowls, and the rattlesnake, the scorpion, and many another hideous reptile lurks, I cannot but express to you my belief that it must have been most satisfactory to you, as it most certainly would have been to me, to behold the Venezuelan friends who accompanied you, devoting that intelligence, energy, power of endurance and other great qualities, which so eminently characterise their race, to the achievement of a really noble object and to the attainment of a useful end, amidst the invigorating, healthy allurements of nature’s handiwork—nowhere more successfully carried out than here—and forgetting, if but for a moment, the enervating, exhausting, poisonous allurements of civil warfare.’

MOUNTAIN EXPLORATION IN AFRICA.—Under this heading we hope soon to insert some account, from the pen of Mr. Ball, of the explorations in the Atlas range made by him, in company with Dr. Hooker, in the spring of last year. Our late President may naturally be indifferent to any increase of fame, but the Alpine Club can ill afford to lose the credit of his most recent exploit as a scientific explorer, and we have felt bound not to allow another three months to go by without putting on record so remarkable a journey. We prefer to effect this by a mere passing allusion, rather than by borrowing from letters of Dr. Hooker, which have appeared in the Proceedings of another society, since we do not doubt that, sooner or later, Mr. Ball will render to the Club the account of his doings, to which it has so long looked forward.

The following extracts describe how an adventurous missionary—the Rev. Charles New—has succeeded not only in approaching Kilima Njaro, but in ascending it to the lower limit of eternal snow.

‘Arrangements were made for ascending the mountain, but my first attempt was a failure, being driven back by the rain and fogs. A second attempt was made, and the weather being very fine, we made splendid progress. Next morning the clouds lay far beneath our feet, but at noon we were prevented from proceeding farther by the mists; we, however, made large fires to keep ourselves from freezing through the night. The next morning (the third day) we again started, but in half an hour after starting the men complained of benumbed feet and hands. In an hour we came to a stand; the Chaggas said they dared not go any farther. I left them, going forward with only Tofiki for a companion. Tofiki did very well for the first hour and a half, when he sank, scarcely being able to speak. He bid me go on—that he would wait there for me, and die if I did not return to him. I went on, reached the snow; I found it lying on ledges of rock in masses, like large sleeping sheep. I got Tofiki up to the point; the snow was frozen like rock. I broke off several large pieces and descended with them to the company below, at the sight of which they were amazed, especially when it melted in their mouths. Thus, despite all the wonderful things that have been said and believed, we know, from personal experience, that the top of Kilima Njaro is covered with snow! Yes, snow in Africa!

‘The various regions passed through on my way up the mountain’s side succeed each other as follows:—

‘1. The region of the banana, plantain, maize, &c. This is the inhabited district, or Chagga Proper. The thermometer ranges between a maximum of 85° Fah., and a minimum of 59° Fahr. Blackberries are abundant. The hills which are not cultivated are covered with a beautiful thick, close turf, exceedingly rich in clover.

‘2. Beyond this is a belt of thick jungle; it may have been cultivated in the past.

‘3. Above this is a vast forest of gigantic trees, with a dense undergrowth of great variety, all thickly covered with moss, which gives to the forest the appearance of great antiquity. Here I met with such old friends as the dock and common stinging-nettle. Vines abound in great variety. On the higher verge of this forest the thermometer descended

at night to 33° Fahr. In the morning a thick hoar-frost covered the leaves.

‘4. Higher still is a region of verdant hills, affording good pasturage for cattle. Clover plentiful.

‘5. Beyond this all is heath, which dwindles away, till you come to

‘6. The region of bare rocks, and sandy, wind-swept declivities, as clean and as smooth as a sea-beach; then you reach

‘7. The everlasting snows, which thickly cover a magnificent dome, as smooth in outline as the edge of the moon.’

The height of Kilima Njaro is, according to the most recent authority, 18,700 feet; Mr. New unfortunately does not tell us what elevation he reached. From a sketch of the mountain (lately published in the ‘Illustrated London News’) there can be little doubt that the peaks are of volcanic origin. The two summits seem to resemble, with curious exactness in their form and relative dimensions, the greater and lesser Ararat. The range, which appears to be rather a cluster of volcanoes than a continuous chain, is said to contain ‘a higher but less massive’ peak, situated further inland, and called the Doenzo Ngai.

A GUIDEBOOK TO THE SIERRA NEVADA.*—Readers who have had their interest in the mountains of California aroused by Mr. Clarence King,† will be glad to learn that Professor Whitney has condensed, and published in a popular form, much of the information contained in the ‘Report of the Geographical Survey,’ of which he was the head. ‘The Yosemite Guidebook’ is badly named, dealing as it does with a great deal more than the one valley, and being neither in form nor arrangement what is generally described as a guidebook. But it contains much valuable information, and deserves careful study from anyone intending to travel in, or even wishing to form a correct idea of, the Sierra Nevada. The volume is illustrated by a number of woodcuts. While those of the Yosemite valley itself answer to our expectations, the pictures of the higher peaks are singularly disappointing. They do not, either in size or boldness of outline, compare at all favourably with the giants of the Alps. This result, however, is probably owing, in part, to the cuts having been unskillfully engraved from photographs. The following passage deserves to be quoted entire.

‘A comparison of the Swiss and Californian mountain scenery is not easy. The much smaller quantity of snow and ice in the Sierra, as compared with regions of equal elevation in Switzerland, is the most striking feature of difference between the mountains of the two coun-

* *The Yosemite Guidebook.* A Description of the Yosemite Valley and the adjacent Region of the Sierra Nevada, and of the Big Trees of California; illustrated by maps and woodcuts. B. Westermann & Co., 471 Broadway, New York.

† By a misprint in the last number, the height of Mount Shasta was given as 11,000 instead of 14,000 feet. The reviewer was also, probably, incorrect in his explanation of Mr. King’s ‘mauvais pas’ on Mount Tyndall. On further perusal it seems clear that when the misleading word ‘iceile’ has been removed, the difficulty of the passage entirely vanishes, and the nature of the obstacle becomes sufficiently clear. It was simply a steep rock face in one of the recesses of which the snow lay piled up pyramidwise against the cliff, furnishing to the climber a natural ladder.

tries. In the Sierra we see almost exactly what would be presented to view in the Alps, if the larger portion of the ice and snowfields were melted away. The marks of the old glaciers are there, but the glaciers themselves are gone. The polished surfaces of the rocks, the moraines or long trains of detritus, and the striæ engraved on the walls of the cañons, these speak eloquently of such an icy covering once existing here as now clothes the summits of the Alps.

‘Another feature of the Sierra, as compared with the Alps, is the absence of the “Alpen,” or those grassy slopes which occur above the line of forest vegetation between that and the eternal snow, and which have given their names to the mountains themselves. In the place of these we have in the California mountains the forests extending quite up to the snowline in many places, and everywhere much higher than in the Alps. The forests of the Sierra, and especially at elevations of 5,000 to 7,000 feet, are magnificent, both in the size and beauty of the trees, and far beyond any in the Alps. They constitute one of the most attractive features in the scenery, and yet they are somewhat monotonous in their uniformity of type, and they give a sombre tone to the landscape as seen from the distance in their dark shades of green. The grassy valleys along the streams are extremely beautiful, but occupy only a small area; and, especially, they do not produce a marked effect in the distant views, since they are mostly concealed behind the ranges to one looking over the country from a high point.

‘The predominating features, then, of the High Sierra are sublimity and grandeur, rather than beauty and variety. The scenery will, perhaps, produce as much impression, at first sight, as that of the Alps, but will not invite so frequent visits, nor so long a delay among its hidden recesses.’ The climate, like that of the Alps, is bracing, and in summer even occasional storms are rare. ‘One may be reasonably sure, in setting out to climb a mountain peak, of a clear sky and a temperature which will make walking and riding a pleasure. One of the greatest drawbacks to the pleasure of travelling in the Alps is thus here almost entirely wanting.’ Yet, putting aside the loss of one of those elements of chance which conduce to the interest and variety of our favourite sport, we may fairly doubt whether a monotony of the finest weather can compensate the climber for the absence of the exquisite cloud-shapes and magic effects of light and shade, which give half its charm to Swiss scenery.

PANORAMA OF THE ALPS FROM TURIN.—Reproductions of panoramic views, the beauty of which depends in most instances rather on atmospheric effects, contrasts of light and shade, and delicate gradations of colour, than on the form or outline of the objects visible, must of necessity have more topographical than artistic interest. Whatever careful drawing and execution can do to render such a work pleasant to the eye, has been done in the case of the ‘Panorama delle Alpi viste dall’ osservatorio astronomico di Torino,’ published by the Italian Alpine Club.* Of its topographical value there can be no question. Every peak and pass within the range of vision has been most sedulously identified, and mountaineers who delight to recognise the exact spots of

* In England, by Messrs. Longman & Co., Paternoster Row.

bygone struggles and victories will gain great advantage from the possession of this sheet. When we remember that fifteen years ago the dwellers in Turin had never heard of the Grand Paradis, and were firm believers in Mont Iseran, we are rather astonished at the rapid growth of mountain knowledge than disposed to remark on the absence of a complete table of heights—an omission which the exertions of the Italian Alpine Club will, no doubt, soon supply.

A POCKET-BOOK FOR MOUNTAINEERS.—Herr Liebeskind, of Leipzig, has lately published a 'Pocket-book' for Alpine travellers. The volume, which will be republished annually, contains a diary for the summer months, with parallel columns for the entry of barometrical and other observations, followed by an attempt at a complete digest of the tariffs of Alpine guides, from Istria and Tyrol to Chamonix. Cogne and the whole of the south-western Alps are, for some unexplained reason, entirely omitted. Over the wide field which it embraces, however, the list of guides and of tariffs seems very complete, and great pains must have been taken to obtain at the first endeavour so satisfactory a result. Such a compilation will serve a useful end, if by placing the exorbitant prices of some Swiss tourist-centres in conspicuous contrast with the more modest requirements of Tyrolese guides, it leads to a reduction of the demands which threaten to render mountaineering an expensive pursuit.

The volume concludes with a sketch of the history of the five Alpine Clubs now in existence. The materials at hand for tracing the origin and rise of our own Club seem to have been meagre, and the writer in consequence has drawn rather largely on his imagination. It will be news to most of us to be told that 'this Society was originally founded under the name of "The Englishman's Playground" in 1860.'

The little volume is bound in a convenient form, but its dimensions might probably be easily and advantageously reduced by using smaller type, and omitting the rules of the various guide corporations, to which a traveller seldom needs to refer. If this is done, and any increase of bulk by means of advertisements sternly repressed, the book will become what it professes to be—a pocket-companion for mountaineers, and will, no doubt, be generally used.

THE 'COURONNE' AT AN DER LENK.—We have received from Sir R. G. Osborn the following letter, complaining of a want of honesty which used to be rare in Switzerland.

'Last summer, in the month of August, I inadvertently left behind, at the Hôtel de la Couronne, at An der Lenk, a rouleau of fifty Napoleons, the loss of which I did not discover till two hours after I had started for Thun. I immediately telegraphed from Weissenburg to the landlord, and sent back a trustworthy person to the 'Couronne,' in full conviction that the rouleau would be restored. On reaching Thun I narrated the story to Mons. Knechtenhofer, who most attentively and zealously gave me every assistance, and wrote by that post to the landlord of the 'Couronne' a polite letter to the effect that I should return to Lenk on the following day.

‘On my arrival there, instead of the landlord appearing, the landlady came out, and on my asking for her husband, coolly said that he was “not at home,” but had “gone to Kandersteg, and had left no message;” all this with the most indifferent air, no regrets being expressed for his unavoidable absence, or facilities tendered for enquiring about the lost property.

‘Finding fair means unavailing, I put the Préfet of the district on the track, but to this hour not one farthing of the money has been restored to me. The whole tone of the landlord during the correspondence I subsequently entered into was most offensive, and he ended by saying that he did not believe my story, and that I had invented it.’

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

Tuesday, May 7.—Mr. D. W. FRESHFIELD, *Senior Member of the Committee present, in the Chair.*

Lieut. E. Clayton and Mr. A. E. Scott were balloted for, and elected Members of the Club.

Mr. BLACKSTONE introduced to the meeting Mr. Wm. White, F.S.A., who exhibited a form of framework, invented by himself, and intended to enable mountaineers to carry a knapsack with the least possible strain and inconvenience.*

The Rev. W. H. HAWKER read a paper entitled ‘A Wolfhunt in the Maritime Alps,’ and at its conclusion displayed the skin of a fine wolf shot in the mountains behind Mentone. He subsequently added some particulars of an ascent of Monte Viso, made with local guides of Castel Delfino, of whose knowledge of the mountain he spoke highly; and gave a promise, which was warmly received, of several papers, historical and orographical, on the south-western extremity of the Alpine chain.

Mr. FRESHFIELD observed that the capabilities of various portions of the Alps for sporting purposes might, perhaps, in the dearth of new peaks, be more appreciated than hitherto by Members. In out-of-the-way districts chamois exist in far larger numbers than is popularly supposed. Bears are to be found in the wild mountains south of Zernetz, in the Lower Engadine, where a year seldom passes without one or more being killed by the hunters. Pinzolo, in the Lombard Alps, is also likely to prove good head-quarters. An old hunter of the neighbouring Val di Genova declares that he has killed with his own gun seventeen bears, besides over three hundred chamois.

A vote of thanks to Mr. HAWKER was carried unanimously.

Tuesday, June 4.—Mr. W. LONGMAN, *President, in the Chair.*

The PRESIDENT, before commencing the business of the evening, said that Members would share the sincere regret which he felt in announc-

* The ‘Alpine porto-knapsack’ may be seen at Charles Pricc’s, 33 Marylebone Street, W.