accompanying letterpress informs us that 'all the way there are, here and there, huts for the accommodation of the adventurous, for storms occur and sometimes a part if not the whole of a night must be spent in the ascent.' The writer further remarks, 'In looking at such objects of nature (as mountains) we must guard against that utilitarian spirit which in regard to everything asks "What end does it serve?"' He would doubtless equally object to the question, 'What end does writing nonsense serve?'

The hut near the Guggi Gl. was last year rebuilt; the Grünhornhütte and Pavillon Dollfuss were thoroughly put in order.

Cave-Dwelling on the Marmolata.—The Agordo section of the Italian Alpine Club are engaged in constructing a hut within an hour of the top of the Marmolata. 'It will not be,' writes Cav^e^ Antonio de Monzoni, 'a mere shelter more fit for beasts than men, like some of those too familiar to climbers, but a large chamber excavated by blasting out of the solid rock.' The work has already been commenced by miners of the neighbourhood. The cost with fitments is estimated at 120*l.*, two-thirds of which have already been subscribed. Contributions will be gladly received by Cav^e^ Monzoni, Agordo, Provincia di Belluno, Italy.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

'THE ABODE OF SNOW.'*

According to the 'Times' this volume is a record of 'systematic mountaineering,' such as is seldom undertaken or described by members of the Alpine Club. We are sorry to see the leading journal expose both its complete ignorance of the subject it is talking about, and of the meaning of the words it uses. As we understand the word—and its introducers have perhaps the best right to define its meaning—Mr. Wilson's book is not a record of 'mountaineering' at all. It is the story of a journey made, with but one or two exceptions of a few miles, on horseback or in a litter. This kind of mountain travel was the only sort known to our ancestors. The modern passion for foot-climbing as an athletic sport was felt to be so distinct that a new word 'mountaineering,' had to be invented for it. The tendency to use loosely words whose only value lies in their special significance requires checking. To give another instance: 'crevasse' for 'a crack in glacier ice,' was a convenient addition to our language; when used, as we have seen it lately, as an equivalent for crack, it becomes, except to rhymers, a worthless superfluity.

The assumption of the 'Times,' that true mountain-travel is not recognised or recorded in the literature of the Alpine Club, is of course

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* 'The Abode of Snow.' Observations on a Journey from Chinese Thibet to the Indian Caucasus through the Upper Valleys of the Himálaya. By Andrew Wilson. Blackwood and Sons, 1875.

unfounded. In fact, a more unfortunate opportunity for making it could scarcely have been chosen. Had its reviewer glanced at the last number of the 'Alpine Journal,' he would have found the itinerary of a route from Gangootre or Simla to Cashmere, corresponding in great part with Mr. Wilson's, coupled with references to five former papers, giving fuller descriptions of various portions of it.

We do not expect the 'Jupiter' of Printing House Square constantly to read the 'Alpine Journal.' But it would be prudent not to refer to Alpine subjects if he cannot do so without reminding us of the ignorance which a few years ago enabled an unscrupulous scribbler to palm off as genuine a narrative crowded with details incredible to anyone with an elementary knowledge of mountain phenomena, and describing the ascent of a peak long before proved to have no existence.

We are not, however, so foolish as to complain of Mr. Wilson, because his was not, in any current sense of the word, a mountaineering tour. That a solitary invalid, at one time almost at death's door, should have carried through such a journey as that described in these pages is, as a mere example of pluck, superior to any climbing exploit. Moreover, to home readers, who desire a picture of the Central Himálaya as a whole, Mr. Wilson's book probably gains from his necessary avoidance of ambitious ascents. A climber, particularly in a wild country, is more or less forced to work round a centre. Mr. Wilson's plan of constantly moving forward along tolerably known routes enables him to place before us in succession a variety of distinct regions, and to offer us varied information.

The journey here described, had Simla for its starting-point and Cashmere for its goal. It is by no means an unheard-of exploit for Anglo-Indians to pass between these two points across the complicated mountain-system, of which the great snow-crowned wall which girds India is only the outermost buttress. The photographer has penetrated as far as Spiti, and love of sport carries some of our officers from time to time into most of the trans-Himálayan provinces under British control. But the journey, although made before, had not been described before by a writer so well fitted to catch the public ear. Mr. Wilson has the power of rising out of the details of a diary and of giving a succession of sketches which leave a distinct impression on our recollection. His style is not always careful or polished, but it seldom wants vigour. The vivid and intense perceptions and widely-wandering thoughts of sickness are often reflected in his pages, and give them a colour which will secure many readers who might otherwise have been repelled by the necessary monotony of the incidents of mountain travel.

For the first seventeen stages (157 miles) as far as Pangay, we are taken along the 'great Thibet road,' a regularly cut horsepath, celebrated for the number of fatal accidents which have happened on it. Its danger seems to lie in its comparative easiness, which encourages indifferent riders to hurry along it on restive animals. Mr. Wilson's description of the scenery is a fair specimen of his style. 'The road up to Chini is picturesque in the highest degree, and presents wonderful combinations of beauty and grandeur. It certainly has sublime

heights above, and not less extraordinary depths below. Now we catch a glimpse of a snowy peak 20,000 ft. high, rising close above us, and the next minute we look down into a dark, precipitous gorge, thousands of feet deep. Then we have, below the snowy peaks, Himalayan hamlets with their flat roofs, placed on ridges of rock or on green sloping meadows; enormous deodars, clothed with veils of white flowering clematis; grey streaks of water, from whence comes the thundering sound of the imprisoned Sutlej, the classic Hesidrus; almost precipitous slopes of shingle and ridges of mountain fragments. Above these are green Alps with splendid trees traced out against the sky; the intense blue of the sky, and dark overshadowing precipices. Anon the path descends into almost tropical shade at the bottom of the great ravines, with ice-cold water falling round the dark roots of the vegetation, and an almost ice-cold air fanning the great leafy branches. The trees which meet us almost at every step in this upper Sutlej valley are worthy of the sublime scenery by which they are surrounded. . . . There was something very grand about these cedars of the Sutlej valley, sometimes 40 ft. in circumference, and rising almost to 200 ft. or half the height of St. Paul's, on nearly precipitous slopes and on the scantiest soil, yet losing no line of beauty in their stems and their graceful pendant branches, and with their tapering stems and green arrowy spikes covered by a clinging trelliswork of Virginia creepers and clematis still in white bloom.'

In approaching Pú, Mr. Wilson, who was suffering from dysentery, naturally wished to avoid the high passes of the ordinary route. In doing so he committed himself to the only serious piece of 'footmanship' in his whole tour. He had to follow for 10 miles a path across the face of steep slate cliffs overhanging the Indus, which was, at least for a sick man, exceedingly awkward, although the laden attendants seem to have got across without much difficulty. Pú appears to be quite the nastiest place in the Himálaya, inhabited by bears, Tibetan mastiffs, snakes, scorpions and sandflies. Fortunately for the sick man, he found a German missionary's wife who had managed to live for 10 years amongst all these unpleasant neighbours.

We have not space to follow in detail Mr. Wilson in his vain attempt to penetrate Chinese territory, or in his wanderings behind the Himálaya, through the enormously high valleys of Spiti, Lahaul, and Zanskar. The description of them is not, as a whole, inviting. We suspect that the scenery, unless viewed under the champagnelike influence of the air, would prove somewhat monotonous. Where villages lie from 11,000 to 13,000 ft. peaks averaging 20,000 ft. are for scenic purposes of no great height. In Spiti and Zanskar the valleys are, as a rule, treeless, there are no waterfalls and, in the districts described, no lakes. The snow and ice-scenery is, no doubt, of the greatest grandeur, and when he is forced to traverse some Himálayan St. Theodule the traveller is well repaid.

Lahaul sounds better. The average level of its villages is only 10,000 to 11,000 ft., the peaks run up to 22,000 ft. It is comparatively rich in trees, and celebrated for wild flowers: its valleys are more open, and afford clear views of the snowy ranges. Zanskar makes up for treelessness by rock scenery of the most fantastic order.

'Of all the mountains I have ever beheld,' writes Mr. Wilson, 'those of Zanskar were the most picturesque, weird, astounding and perplexing. . . . The precipices were not only of enormous height, but presented the most extraordinary forms, colours and combinations of rock. There were castles, spires, plateaus, domes, aiguilles of solid rock, and spires composed of the shattered fragments of some fallen mountains (?) . . . The predominant tints were green, purple, orange, brown, black, and whitish-yellow. . . . In certain lights the precipices appeared almost as if they were of chalcedony and jasper.'

A country cannot be said to be fit for climbers until it is tolerably open for ordinary travel. On this point Mr. Wilson's experience is reassuring. So little of a walker was he that he was glad even towards the end of his journey to ride at some risk over two miles of stony glacier rather than to walk. Yet he was able to penetrate the recesses of the chain, and cross pass after pass. Everywhere he found some system in force by which the provisionment of the traveller and his being forwarded to the next halting-place were secured. Fresh meat was generally procurable, and the porters proved on the whole willing and fairly subordinate. Though so much further from any centre of government the Central Himálaya is clearly a better place than the Caucasus in all these respects.

What scenery remains to be discovered in Nepaul we cannot say. The beauties of the upper glens of the valleys which run up from the Indian plains to the snow are not fully known. But popular fame has probably been right in awarding the palm of beauty to Cashmere. Nothing can be more inviting than Mr. Wilson's description of its lakes, and groves, and temples. But for this and many other matters we must refer our readers to his book, and to Mr. Drew's lately published 'Jummoo and Kashmir Territories.' Some interesting general remarks on Himálayan scenery, as compared with Alpine, will be found, and may be read together with Mr. Freshfield's comparison of the Alps and Caucasus. It would seem to result that the two Eastern ranges have more in common with each other than with the Alps.

The day will undoubtedly come when mountain-climbing will extend to the Himálaya, and our Club will have 'sections' at Simla and Calcutta. English Alpine climbers, blessed with time and money, would do well to reflect that Simla is now only 3½ days from Bombay, or 3 weeks from England. But it is to Anglo-Indians we look with hope for 'Mountaineering in the Himálaya.' Why it has not sooner come into fashion it is easy to understand. The approach to the mountains from the Indian side is through valleys which are, in fact, only immensely deep gorges, and a snow level of 16,200 ft. seems an unattainable height above them. The trans-Himálayan provinces are difficult of access, and the energy of most travellers is exhausted in reaching them. Where, however, men can go to shoot they can go to climb. Anglo-Indians will some day find out the power of glacier air in restoring health and vigour. They will have their Eggischhorn and Riffels at 10 or 12,000 ft.; the present hill stations are only Interlakens. Such bases once established, serious assaults on the snowy giants will soon follow.

We have lately had a pioneer of commerce. Mr. Wilson deserves to be the pioneer of climbing in Asia. The loftiest peaks may lie beyond the reach of human beings, although Mons. Bert's discovery suggests exciting possibilities.* But we shall be much surprised if the next generation of climbers are stopped at 20,000 ft. Our fathers panted away and enjoyed all sorts of odd sensations at 15,000 ft. They suffered on the St. Theodule from exhaustion, headache, and nose-bleeding. We have ourselves been made temporarily wretched by the change from London air and life to the air of 12,000 ft., and at other times felt only exhilarated by the thinner atmosphere of 15,000 ft. to 18,500 ft.

Mountain sickness is a reality; but it may, in many respects, be compared to sea sickness. It depends partly on the atmospheric conditions, a great deal also on our own constitution, state of health, and habit. It differs from sea sickness, we believe, in so far that though no roughness can upset some hardened sailors, the highest summits of the earth extend into a region of air the rarity of which must overcome all human beings. But where this limit for men forcing their own weight uphill is to be fixed remains to be proved. The experience of the Schlagintweits would be most encouraging if we could feel absolute confidence in their figures. They describe themselves as having been driven down at a height estimated at 22,259 ft., not by any impossibility of breathing, but by the general foe of climbers, an unsupportable wind.†

We wish there had been a few woodcut illustrations, for which the admirable Himálayan photographs would, in Mr. Whymper's hands, have furnished furnished good material. The frontispiece has either been spoilt by the chromolithographer or not very happily chosen. 'The Valley of Glaciers' appears as something very ugly in Dauphiné, and there is not a single glacier distinctly recognisable on its brown snow-spotted slopes. The map fulfills its purpose fairly well, though there are many names in the text for which we have in vain searched in it. Moreover, it is scarcely hypercriticism to suggest that a great river connecting the Chenab and the Indus can scarcely flow through or over the 16,684 ft. Schinkal Pass. While speaking of maps we must find space for one more quotation of practical use: 'Those who wish particularly to know what can be done from Simla will do well to examine the "Route-map for the Western Himálayas, Kashmir, Panjáb and Northern India," compiled by Major Montgomorie of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India. In the Appendix to this map he gives no less than sixty-three routes, &c.' (p. 83).

PUBLICATIONS OF FOREIGN ALPINE CLUBS.

'Annuaire du Club Alpin Français.'‡—The publications of the various foreign Alpine Clubs will soon fill a library. We have this

* See next page. † See *Alpine Journal*, vol. vi., p. 48.

‡ *Annuaire du Club Alpin Français*, Première Année, 1874. Paris, Hachette & Cie, 15 francs.

year to notice an important accession to their number in the first annual volume of the French Alpine Club. In style of production this handsome volume of 550 pages excels all its Continental rivals.

The larger portion of its bulk is naturally devoted to French mountains. The list of contributions is headed by 'Souvenir d'Auvergne, par George Sand, Membre du Club Alpin Francais.' Count H. Russell contributes a paper on the Pyrenees. Dauphiné also receives a large share of attention. Mons. Adolphe Joanne pays a compliment to our own mountains, by writing an 'Ascension du Scawfell Pike' in which he makes some deserved criticisms on the lake waterfalls.

Perhaps, however, the article most universally exciting to mountaineers is that by Mons. Paul Bert on Mountain Sickness. He has satisfied himself by experiment that the failure of oxygen in the air at high elevations is the cause of the discomfort suffered by human beings while in balloons or on high mountains. By carrying with us a bag of oxygen, instead of a bottle of champagne, he assures us we may defy our old enemy and arrive with comparative ease on the summit of Mount Everest. He has personally subjected his invention to severe tests, having by means of it found himself able to endure an atmosphere which killed animals. Balloonists also have made use of his apparatus with advantage.

It is often amusing to see ourselves as others see us. We read of our own Club (p. 527): 'Les membres sont tous de riches gentlemen, de véritables sportsmen, leurs excursions s'étendent sur la terre entière, et leur fière devise est, *Where is the will, here is the way.*'

The Swiss Jahrbuch for 1874.*—This is a volume of 660 pages divided into four parts. The first contains the excursions and ascents. The writers wander more than formerly outside Swiss territory. Herr Studer describes the Grandes Rousses in Dauphiné, Herr Gerber the great peaks of the Graians, Herr Baltzer takes us as far south as Etna. Mons. Déchy climbs again the Dent Blanche and Finsteraarhorn.

The second part contains valuable articles, topographical, geological, and botanical, on the Alps of Canton Ticino, by Professor Rütimeyer and Dr. Christ. Dr. Charles Coindet gives some medical advice to climbers.

The third part is made up of minor notices on various subjects; the fourth gives statistics as to the Club's constitution and finances chiefly interesting to its own members.

Illustrations, as usual, are lavishly furnished. Besides sixteen in the text there are several large and beautifully executed panoramas which are delivered in a separate roll.

L'Écho des Alpes.†—The French-speaking sections of the Swiss Club continue to publish a quarterly magazine, in form very similar to our own, which often contains interesting Articles and Notices. The small photograph of the Glacier du Géant in the last number is singularly successful.

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* *Jahrbuch des Schweizer Alpenklub*, 1874. Bern, 12 francs.

† *L'écho des Alpes.* S. Sullien, libraire, Genève, 3 francs 50 cent. par an.

GERMAN GUIDE-BOOKS.*

The last edition of Herr Tschudi's 'Swiss Guide' (the fourteenth) has evidently been revised with care. The book is a most extraordinarily compact mass of accurate information. If it is not absolutely faultless in its own way, it comes as near it as possible. The Punta Trubinesca has got among the excursions from Chiesa; the Gross Nesthorn amongst those from the Eggischhorn, instead of those from the Bell Alp. The excellent inn at Arolla is only mentioned as 'wirthschaft.' It deserves at least as much recommendation as Zinal or Zmeiden. Absurdly long 'times' are given for Pizzo Campo Tencca (or Tencia)—see 'Alpine Journal,' vol. vi. p. 301. The true descent from the Col de la Tour Ronde on the Savoy side does not go near the Aiguille du Midi hut. The Col d'Argentière is rather hyperbolically described as 'nur für unerschrockene Gletschermatadore.'

We mention these details to show the minute character of the corrections which remain to be made, and we have looked over a good many pages to make up even this trifling list. We should add, that in compliance with a suggestion made in our last notice of the book, an excellent general map has been inserted. We are not sure English travellers would think the railway maps worth the bulk they add. But Herr Tschudi doubtless knows his public best.

Herr Trautwein's 'Tyrolese Guide' has undergone greater changes than the 'Schweizerführer' since we last noticed them together, and may now be considered equally thorough in the field it covers. The new (fifth) edition embraces the southern dolomites irrespective of political boundaries. In this portion there are still a few deficiencies, which no doubt the next edition will see remedied. Sometimes there seems a tendency to use too discouraging adjectives. Pizzo Tresero, almost as much a ladies' mountain as the Cima di Jazzi, should not be called 'beschwerlich.' Nor is the ascent of the Presanella by the Nardis Glacier generally considered 'schwierig.' But this is only an occasional fault, and the book as a whole is thoroughly trustworthy and recommendable. The newly-added maps (e.g. the Orteler group) are not equal to those we formerly praised.

These books can never supplant Mr. Ball's volumes with English climbers, but they may well be used as supplements to them, since the most readable guide-book ever written does not seem to be in sufficient demand to encourage the issue of editions thoroughly revised to the present day. Alpine discovery is, in the merely topographical sense, so nearly come to an end that we hope before long to have a complete new edition of the 'Alpine Guide' which may last many years. Before this is taken in hand, we venture to make one practical suggestion which concerns our German authors as well. Why should not all handbook-framers follow M. Joanne's excellent example and place the information as to inns in an alphabetical index at the end? The conveniences of this course are too obvious to require pointing out.

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* *Tschudi's Tourist in der Schweiz*, Scheitlin and Zollikofer, St. Gall, 1875. *Trautwein's Südbaiern, Tirol, Salzburg*, Lindauer'sche Buchhandlung, Munich, 1875.