

THE
ALPINE JOURNAL.

FEBRUARY 1890.

(No. 107.)

PREFATORY NOTE.

IT is probably known to every member of the Alpine Club that with the present number a change takes place in the Editorship of this Journal. Hitherto similar changes, when they have occurred, have been unannounced, save by the change of name on the cover ; but in the present instance there are some special circumstances which seem to render it desirable that the incoming Editor should introduce himself more directly to his fellow-members. In the first place, all his predecessors have been distinguished mountaineers ; every one of them bears a name eminent in the record of first ascents and early explorations ; Chamonix and Zermatt know them, they are honoured in Grindelwald and Pontresina. To him, on the other hand, from various causes, the 'centres' are almost totally unknown. His acquaintance with the chain of Mont Blanc is founded on dim schoolboy recollections of a walk round the lower cols, in days when the Alpine Club itself did not exist. Zermatt he has not seen for nearly a quarter of a century, while Grindelwald still remains to him merely a place on the map. In fact, his only qualifications for the duty he has, perhaps, rashly undertaken are a sincere love of the 'Alpine sport' and a fair acquaintance with Alpine literature. The mention of Alpine literature, again, cannot but remind him how sternly his work

VOL. XV.—NO. CVII.

B

has been 'cut out for him' by his immediate predecessor. Few people will be likely to contest Mr. Coolidge's distinction as a climber; no one, it may be supposed, who knows anything about the matter will question, not merely his distinction, but his rank as *facile princeps* in respect of acquaintance with everything that has been written about the Alps from the days of Josias Simler to the latest 'Zeitschrift' of the D.Oe.A.V. Here, however, the present Editor trusts that he may look for the co-operation of the Club at large to supply in some measure his own deficiencies. He has not the leisure, even if he had the knowledge, needed in order to enable him to gather from the mass of current Alpine literature all things which it is expedient that English readers should know; and he will be especially grateful to any members who may be kind enough to refer him to any information of interest in foreign journals or elsewhere which may come under their notice.

Lastly, he wishes to say that any variations in the established arrangement of the Journal which may be detected in the current number are not to be taken as indicative of any desire on his part to make a 'new departure.' Conditions which are not likely to recur have necessitated somewhat abnormal treatment; but in future he has every intention, so far as his capacities will allow, of following the lines upon which his predecessors have worked, and adhering to the methods by which they have maintained the 'Alpine Journal' in the position due to its rank as the *doyen* of Alpine periodical literature.

The May Number will contain a portrait of the late Mr. Ball, which is intended to form the frontispiece to Vol. XV. when bound.