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COMMITTEE NOTICE.

THE Committee have unanimously decided that after the next issue of the *Journal* the price for all subsequent issues to non-members shall be 2/- per copy.

REVIEWS.

CRAG AND HOUND IN LAKELAND. By C. E. Benson. (Hurst and Blackett.) 1902.

THIS book falls naturally into three pretty equal divisions: Outfit and Training; Climbing; Fox-hunting. Of the central section one-third is devoted to a brief sketch of the climbs classed by O. G. Jones as "Easy," and the remainder to a loving study of minor problems on Castle Head, a small hill just outside Keswick. Perhaps this programme does not sound particularly promising; if so, it belies the real interest of the book, which, though an entirely unassuming collection of random notes, displays a breezy frankness, spontaneity and sound sense which make it very attractive. It is in just that vein of light-hearted and almost light-headed jollity which we have all experienced at one time or another at the beginning of a climbing holiday, and yet most people, when they begin to put pen to paper, find that the effort to

"recapture

The first fine careless rapture"

is not only painful to themselves, but painfully evident to their readers. Here, however, the right atmosphere seems to be produced without effort, and the writer at once gives the impression that he would be found, on acquaintance, to rattle on as cheerily as he writes, never failing to keep his eyes and ears wide open for everything that may affect the serious purposes of the expedition. He is evidently eager to learn, and grateful for instruction; but he thinks things out for himself, and bestows careful study on details which are often overlooked, such as the perils of strong winds and weak walls, and of grass rendered slippery by sun. To Giddiness (such is his philosophic thoroughness), he devotes eight pages, throwing into the shade Aristotle's five kinds of courage, for his

searching analysis reveals no less than six sorts of giddiness, and, in addition, an analogous ailment—horror of running water—to which it has so far been supposed that only witches, warlocks and mad dogs were subject. In one respect he has either bowed to the traditions of American humour or been unfortunate in his company, for he must allow me to assure him that climbing and bad language very seldom go together. Indeed, as a rule, the mountaineer *odit profanum vulgus* in every sense of the word. Mr. Benson's style may sometimes be called exuberant, at others he indulges in ellipse and mystery. When a writer uses the simple word "millions" to express "inevitable," it is at least "two" that some of his readers will be puzzled; and a novice, who finds himself "recommended to spend a few days in Langdale before visiting *his sterner relation* on the other side of Esk Hause," will possibly adapt Sheridan :

"Here may each novice hope, as chance directs,
To find relations where he least expects."

But the most kaleidoscopic effect arises out of a highly original device for attaining variety of treatment. The reader is called upon to start in a kind of vision for Zermatt. That fades away, and he finds himself making an expedition towards Wastdale Head and, *at the same time* (by way of side-show), climbing Mouse Gill in a kind of dream. The dream-climb is lucidly described, but the stages of it are punctuated with topographical details of the progress of the other expedition several miles away. It is to be feared that, as a result of this weird underplot, the reader will jumble together his two visions and his dream, and crown the confusion with a nightmare on his own account.

The section on Fox-hunting is delightful, and breaks ground hitherto almost untouched. My own experience of it has been comparatively slight, but enough to convince me that there is no truer sport. It needs no bolstering up with artificial conditions of any sort, and, above all, success in it depends entirely on a man's own qualities and training, and cannot be bought by the wealthy duffer.

His exploits in pursuit of bold Reynard have given Mr. Benson a minute knowledge of his fells (indeed, in one case he mentions a spot quite new to me—Cuddy Man), yet here and there he gives advice which, to anyone in less perfect training than himself, might be of questionable value. For instance, the route from Buttermere to the Pillar over the west shoulder of Red Pike is reasonable enough as a variation, but hardly as a standard route. It carries you as far to the west of a beeline as “the long round by Scarf Gap” takes you to the east of it, so that there is little or no gain in distance; moreover, you have to mount much higher, and cross the valley beyond at a lower point, besides losing all the benefit of several miles of good road and path. The directions for reaching Wind Gap from Wastdale are open to a similar objection. The route by Beckhead, the only one given, is certainly rather more direct; but the dip into Ennerdale far outweighs the extra half mile of the route by Sty Head. On the other hand, to reach Gable Napes from Sty Head, if you pass below Kern Knotts, you throw away height which formerly had to be recovered by a struggle up cruel screes. It was at that time far easier to rise some 400-500 feet along the watershed, and then traverse nearly on a level; but a fair track now reverses the conditions.

Our author keeps a sharp eye even upon the meanings of climbing terms. He is at some pains to prove that a “rake” is not a garden rake, and connects it quite rightly with “reach.” In fact, it is merely an older form of the same word, just as “whilk” is of “which,” “streak” of “stretch,” “rigg” of “ridge.” We use a parallel expression when we call a straight piece of a river a “reach.” On rocky ground, as in a river, progress must as a rule be tortuous, and therefore in either a straight passage is at once remarked. The *rake* of the clouds (at sea often called “the *rack* of the weather”) is the line of their drift. With a hay *rake* we lengthen our *reach*. A cannon ball taking a ship or rank of men lengthways *rakes* it. Men used to be stretched on the *rack*. In the North, any direct journey is a *rake*, and a long stride is a great *rake*. All these

phrases, like a *streak* of light, a *stretch* of level road, nay, even the word *straight* itself contain the idea of *stretching*. My definition, therefore, would differ but slightly from Mr. Benson's, and take the form of "a straight smooth passage through rocky ground." As to my spelling of "bield," it is simply that of the Ordnance Survey, and, indeed, I know of no authority which spells (say) Nan Bield or Pinnacle Bield in any other way. In Scotland, "beild" is common enough, though Scott and Burns both use "bield," but in England the ordinary rule, "I before E, except after C," applies. In early days both forms were used. If Gavyn Douglas wrote (1513):

"Hecuba thidder for *beild* ran all in vain,"

Henryson had written the best part of a century earlier :

"He ran restlesse for he wist of no *bield*,"

an expression of which a modern fox would thoroughly appreciate the force.

Many good photographs illustrate this pleasant book, and three of them, shewing Moss Gill, Eagle's Nest and Arrowhead Ridge, are particularly fine.

W. P. H.-S.

SAAS-FEE UND UMGEBUNG. By Dr. H. Dübi. Bern, 1902.
viii. and 164 pp., 53 illustrations, 1 panorama, 1 map.
Price, 4 francs.

THIS is an excellent little book, somewhat in the style of Mr. Whympers's guides, containing in a concise form everything the tourist and the climber may wish to know about the valley, the life and history of its people, the walks on the mountain-side and the routes to the peaks. Enough is given on folk-lore, industries, manners, customs and similar subjects to satisfy everybody who likes to take a near view of the locality he visits. The illustrations are plentiful and good. An English translation as a companion volume to Whympers's "Zermatt" ought to be well worth the trouble.

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