mass of the mountain, and which was penetrated by the couloir we had just come up. The nearer to us of the other two might probably have been reached by us without much difficulty, in passing a narrow little arête, not unlike a col, if we had entertained any doubt of its being lower than our own; but the outermost one to the right of the couloir, and closest to the Seisser Alp, would, I am sure, prove much less accessible, and could, I think, only be attacked by the small couloir we saw on our left in coming up the great one. I should not be much surprised if this peak turned out to be the highest of all, although I am still inclined to accept Grohmann's measurement in giving the greatest elevation to the one we were upon. We now saw the ridge that we were first on considerably below us, separated from us by vertical precipices. What we were able to see of the general view was fine and varied. We caught occasional glimpses of the Oetzthal and Zillerthal ranges; the higher of the Dolomites in our neighbourhood—or comparatively speaking in our neighbourhood—were the Monte Pordoi, the Marmolata, Cimon della Pala, and Rosengarten; among more distant minute objects we saw very distinctly the great fort at the foot of the Brenner. But it was already 2·30, so we left the summit, supposed to be about 10,400 ft., and descended the couloir carefully backwards. This was not to the taste of our little porter, who could not at first be made to understand the danger of snow under certain conditions; notwithstanding, as the descent became steeper, instinct perhaps induced him to adopt our mode of progression as the best, and so satisfied was he with his experience of it, that he told Santo he had given him a lesson in climbing, and would, by way of return, treat him to a bottle of wine at Santa Maria, where we arrived soon after 8 o'clock. Kaslatter ought now to know the way up Langkofel; he is a cheery, courageous little man, although by no means a first-rate cragsman.

W. E. Utterson Kelso.

REVIEW.

THE MOUNTAINS OF SYRIA.*

Captain Burton is a type of the professional traveller, and he displays in many points the advantages that professionals usually have over amateurs. Long and varied experience has taught him both what and how to observe and collect, so that even from countries whence others return empty-handed he is sure to come back bringing his sheaves with him. 'Unexplored Syria,' the second sheaf we have had lately, is a tying-up of the facts collected by the author during his two years' consulship at Damascus, together with the results of some further explorations, partly planned by himself, but carried out, after his premature translation, by his friend Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake. As usual with Captain Burton, the bundle is pitched at our feet very much as it was gathered, and without any trouble having been taken to dress it up in the form most likely to be acceptable to that easily repelled if omni-

* *Unexplored Syria.* By R. V. Burton and C. V. Tyrwhitt Drake. London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872.

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vorous animal, the general reader. But those who take any interest in the antiquities or geography of Syria will gladly welcome volumes so full of fresh matter, as well as of corrections of the numerous mistakes into which early prejudices, inadvertence, or ignorance of Arabic, have led previous travellers. The book may be roughly divided into two sections, one—perhaps the most interesting, but with which we have here no concern—dealing with architectural remains; the other treating of the physical features of the country, and especially of mountain exploration.

An odd literalism of interpretation has too often blinded Syrian travellers to the facts before their eyes. If a scene is described in the Bible as beautiful, no matter how desolate it may since have become, it is extolled in phrases which, even applied to its past state, would have been exaggerated when flowing from the pen of a European acquainted with Italy and the Alps. Where, on the contrary, a prophet has foretold desolation, the 'Scripture spectacles' are powerful enough to reverse the miracle and turn bread into stones, acres of growing wheat into utter barrenness.

On the whole, however, Biblical enthusiasm has adorned and magnified rather than destroyed. There is a large balance of undeserved praise on the account of Syrian scenery. Captain Burton here points out, with perfect truth, that there is no real mountain peak in Syria; that Hermon is at best an enormous hogsback; and the much-vaunted Lebanon Range distinguished as a whole by 'insignificant lines, dull tintage, and a sterile surface.'

While it is thus easy to find reasons for the loose descriptions, and consequently inaccurate impressions, of Syrian landscape which are common amongst us, it is more difficult to account for the uncertainty as to the relative importance of the best-known summits of the country, which has prevailed since the day when the Psalmist first confused our ideas by coupling the button-shaped mound of Tabor with the bulk of Hermon, and Mount Moriah with the Hill of Bashan.

Even in the last edition of Murray's 'Handbook' (published in 1869), we still find ourselves in an atmosphere full of inaccuracy or vague speculation. 'The highest summit of Anti-Lebanon,' we are told, 'rises behind Bludan to the height of 7,000 ft.' 'El Kleib is the highest peak of Jebel Hauran.' 'Hermon is the second mountain in Syria, ranking next to the highest peak of Lebanon behind the Cedars, and probably not more than 300 or 400 ft. lower than it.' 'The elevation of Hermon may be estimated at about 10,000 ft.'

By the personal observations of Lieut. Warren and the authors of these volumes, the respective heights of the principal Syrian summits have now been ascertained with tolerable accuracy at the following figures:—Jebel Timarun (the highest point of Lebanon) rises to 10,500 ft.; Hermon, to 8,800 ft.; Anti-Libanus, to 8,740 ft.; and Jebel Dscheineh, the highest point of the Jebel Duruz Hauran, to 6,000 ft.

In his journeys through Anti-Libanus, Captain Burton has broken entirely new ground. We recommend this chain, which has been represented until recently in the most superficial manner, and is still far from completely explored, to any members of the Club who may find themselves in Syria. Five of its summits—of which the lowest num-

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bers 7,736 ft., the highest (Tal'at Musa) 8,740 ft.—have already, through Captain Burton, obtained a local habitation and a name on the map. The northern portion of the range, owing to the porousness of the rocks, and the consequent underground escape of the springs, is parched and barren; farther south it is said to surpass its better-known rival, the Lebanon proper, both in the form and colour of its rocks, and in the richness of its vegetation, 'which in places assumes the semblance of a thinned forest.' 'High praise for Syria,' Captain Burton adds, with truth. But he nowhere alludes to the romantic forest scenery contained in the winding glens of Jebel Kafkafka, behind Jerash, a range which still shares with Anti-Libanus the hard fate of being introduced to the world by cartographers disguised out of all knowledge as a conventional caterpillar, and which also deserves notice at the hands of those of our countrymen who are not content with the Palestine Exploration Fund to give up to American research all the Transjordanic territories.

Few traces of ancient glaciers have yet been found in Syria. The friable rocks of which the northern ranges for the most part consist are little likely to retain the gravings of the ice-plough, and no striæ have yet been observed in the country. Captain Burton believes, however, that in the mound on which Bludan (well known as the summer resort of European residents at Damascus) stands he has recognised an old moraine. Similar mounds are found in the Cedar Valley, near the Zahleh Gap, and in 'the heaps at the gorge-mouths to the east and north-east of Iskandarun.' In a review of a book of travels, the map ought to claim a share of notice. The contributions to geographical knowledge embodied in that attached to these volumes are very considerable, though, as the authors point out, there is plenty left to do before Syria can become a known country in the full sense of the term.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

Tuesday, February 4.—Mr. W. Longman, *President, in the Chair.*

Messrs. A. G. Barber, A. Fairbanks, J. Jardine, J. H. Peebles, J. H. Pratt, H. W. Primrose, and the Rev. C. Taylor, were elected members of the Club.

The Secretary submitted the accounts for the year 1872, which were passed, after some discussion as to the expediency of increasing the expenditure on the library, and the best means of making it more accessible to members.

Mr. Ball gave some details of the expedition made by him in 1871, in company with Dr. Hooker, to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, and of his ascent to the crest of the principal chain; adding, in response to Mr. Hawker, some interesting particulars with regard to the botany of the country, the most marked feature being the general absence of plants pre-eminently Alpine in character. His expectations of finding connecting links between the flora of the Peak of Teneriffe in the Canary Islands and that of the Mediterraneon coast had been disappointed. With regard to wild beasts, they were not so common as

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