NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

THE Est Spitze of Monte Rosa mentioned by Mr. Taylor is undoubtedly the summit above the Silber Sattel (the hollow between Monte Rosa proper and the Nord End) ascended in 1848 by Professor Ulrich's guides, and subsequently by other parties, who, without any sufficient reason, considered it impracticable to pass from it to the Dufour, or as it is more generally called, the Allerhöchste Spitze. After the reading of Mr. Taylor's paper, a discussion took place as to the relative height of the two peaks, and Mr. Moore suggested that the Allerhöchste Spitze may prove to be in reality the lower of the two. The difference in height between them is, as we can testify by experience, exceedingly small, and not easily determined by the eye. For, having climbed Monte Rosa by the ordinary route, but with guides strange to the mountain, at a time when the stone man on the Dufour Spitze was masked by a heavy fall of fresh snow, we walked over that summit, and began without a question the passage of the ridge leading on to the eastern peak. Some progress had been made, when one of the party, looking back, detected the stone man, to which we then returned.

Standing on the Dufour Spitze, it seemed to us impossible to assert with confidence its superior height. But, on the other hand, all those who have reached the eastern summit have, despite the natural bias they must have felt towards a contrary opinion, acquiesced in its inferiority. The question, now attention has been called to it, admits of easy decision, but we shall be surprised if the established verdict is reversed.

REVIEW.

THE LIFE OF PRINCIPAL FORBES.*

THE Life of Principal Forbes could not be passed over without a word of welcome in the pages of this Journal. It may be said, without exaggeration, that from his writings, more than from any other source, sprang the influences that created the taste for mountaineering exploit and enterprise of which the Alpine Club is a remarkable illustration. Later *opuscula* have popularised the subject, but they probably would never have been written save for his *opus magnum*; and it is impossible not to see in the extracts from his diaries and correspondence, which form the great attraction of the interesting volume before us, how intense, amidst all the deeper and soberer claims of scientific investigation, was his sense of beauty and grandeur, and how keen his enjoyment of mountain life and adventure. It would have been no matter of surprise if the father of all true and accurate knowledge of the phenomena

* *Life and Letters of James David Forbes, F.R.S.* By John Campbell Shairp, LL.D., Principal of the United College of the University of St. Andrews; Peter Guthrie Tait, M.A., Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh; and A. Adams-Reilly, F.R.G.S. London: Macmillan & Co., 1873.

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of glaciers had been so engrossed with his own great discoveries, and with the scientific discussions to which they gave rise, as to have had no care or attention left for the doings of the mere climber, and little sympathy with the youthful exuberance of animal spirits and physical vigour which have undoubtedly been the predominant characteristics of many of the narratives recorded in these pages, or in contemporaneous publications, in form, at any rate, less ephemeral, and have induced one of our most undaunted explorers (who might well have associated his own records of adventure with a less modest title) to designate the Alps as the Playground of Europe. No such bounds, however, confined the comprehensive sympathies of the late Principal. In that kindly and generous nature was a mixture of unaffected liking for the thoughts and ways of the young, and of admiration for the courage and enterprise displayed by the modern race of Alpine explorers, which made him to the very end of his life the keenest reader of stories of Alpine travel, and the most sympathetic listener to whom a tale of mountain difficulty or danger could be told. No sense of added years, or of increasing bodily infirmity, ever damped his interest in all that touched those mountains and glaciers that he loved so well; and the numerous friends he made amongst members of the Alpine Club—men much younger than himself, and often with no claims upon the attention or notice of so eminent and so busy a man—know well how true this statement is, how accessible and graceful he was in his intercourse with them, and how completely he could descend from the pinnacle of scientific distinction and throw himself into their less dignified and more popular interests. The forces of the Alpine Club have been largely recruited since the occasion of which we speak, but there are very many members who will still remember his presence at a meeting of the Club, many years ago, on a sultry evening in June, under circumstances of temperature and atmosphere which might well have daunted a man of much less delicate frame, and the pleasure with which he listened to the papers read, took part in the discussions which followed, and made the acquaintance of men with whose mountain exploits he was almost as familiar as they were themselves.

No man welcomed the formation of the Alpine Club more heartily than Principal, or, as he then was, Professor Forbes. He undoubtedly hoped at first, as did some of the founders of the Club, that more use for the ends of science might have been made of its organisation, and of the energies of its members, than has proved actually to be the case. He was well aware that the Club was not likely ever to be a scientific society, and that it must take its tone largely from the element of muscular vigour and physical activity, without which the greatest triumphs of Alpine adventure can hardly be won, and also in a considerable degree from that æsthetic love of the grandest order of scenery which tempts to the Alps, year after year, a considerable class of professional men whose laborious occupations during ten months of the year put out of the question any serious prosecution of scientific labour during the remaining two. He was well aware, too that the real work of science must be done by men trained to science, and devoted to little else. But he always entertained a strong view that educated and intelligent

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men might usefully observe and record facts where their speculations upon causes and theories might be of little use, and that such observations could hardly fail to be of some value, if sufficiently numerous, and if made with some degree of common purpose, and that they might, at all events, suggest from time to time to more trained observers subjects that might otherwise have passed unheeded, to which their more accurate investigations might be advantageously directed; and he strove hard to impress upon the founders of the Club the practicability of its becoming, within certain limits, a useful organisation for systematic observation. He found himself pretty well checkmated, so far as any organised work of this kind was concerned, by what he describes as the 'unbounded muscular exertion and unfettered freedom of range' which soon distinguished the proceedings of the Club. But he neither scolded those whom he could not reduce to his own ideas of work and usefulness, nor withdrew his sympathy from proceedings which he might well have treated as too irregular and undisciplined to interest a man of science, nor threw cold water upon the efforts of individual members to aid the progress of physical knowledge or geographical discovery. The truth was that he had the spirit of a thorough mountaineer, and even the wilder undertakings, which he sincerely and *ex animo* condemned as involving unjustifiable and purposeless risks to life and limb, went, after all, straight to his mountaineering heart, and found a response there more cordial than perhaps his sense of duty would have allowed him to avow, even to himself; and he was always of opinion that the taste for Alpine enterprise and glacial exploration which the Club at once symbolised and stimulated would be sure, from time to time, to be the parent of some good scientific or topographical work which otherwise might never have been undertaken. He was not destined to be disappointed. Amongst the acquaintances he formed through the Alpine Club, of which he had early been elected an honorary member, was Mr. Reilly, to whose careful and conscientious work we owe some of the most interesting chapters of the biography now before us. That acquaintanceship, like some others which originated in a similar manner, ripened before the close of the Principal's life into a warm and intimate friendship, and it is impossible that a labour of love should have been performed with greater fidelity and good taste than mark Mr. Reilly's contributions to the biography. But Mr. Reilly's modesty has kept back many details connected with the publication of his most beautiful and accurate map of Mont Blanc, which would have been as interesting to members of the Alpine Club, as they were eminently characteristic of Forbes.

The Principal had become aware of Mr. Reilly's great accomplishments as a draughtsman, as well as of his passion for mountain adventure; and true to his notion of getting good work done where he could, he urged upon Mr. Reilly to undertake the survey of Mont Blanc. We are not wrong, we think, in saying that the idea was first mooted at St. Andrews, where the Principal laid before Mr. Reilly a system of triangulation of his own, and illustrated it by experiments in his own garden. The seed was not sown in thankless soil. Mr. Reilly, qualifying the suggestions of his friend by the results of his own experience

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and the promptings of his own ingenuity, worked round Mont Blanc, first to the west and then to the east, starting in each case from Chamouni, and connecting his two systems of triangulation at the back of Mont Blanc, near the top of the Col Ferret, if we are not mistaken, and, at once aiding and testing the work of the theodolite by a most extensive series of sketches and drawings, executed, often under the most adverse and discouraging circumstances, with wonderful accuracy and untiring industry, succeeded at length, after very many months of unremitting labour, in producing a map which Forbes justly said 'would do credit to a bred engineer and draughtsman,' and pronounced, with equal truth, 'the first true delineation of the most interesting ground in Europe.' The interest he took in the publication of this map is evidenced by a letter to the then President of the Alpine Club, printed, in a chapter contributed by Principal Shairp, at p. 423 of the biography. But even this letter gives a very faint notion of his high appreciation of Mr. Reilly's work, or of the eagerness with which he pressed forward its publication. Mr. Reilly appeared satisfied with having satisfactorily accomplished his self-imposed task, and there was much delay in publishing the map, its publication being ultimately undertaken by the Alpine Club. Forbes thought the Club a little supine in the matter—unjustly, let us hope—but his numerous and urgent letters to the President, full of every argument and persuasion by which the views of the writer could be enforced, materially abridged the delay which would otherwise have taken place. They would have formed a goodly addition to the chapter in which one of the series is printed, and would have presented a very characteristic picture of the perseverance and tenacity of purpose which distinguished their author. The map of Mont Blanc did not long remain a solitary achievement, being followed in due course by a survey, probably much more difficult of accomplishment, and, if possible, much more urgently needed, of the districts of Monte Rosa and the Valpelline. How much our knowledge of the topography both of these regions and of the district of Mont Blanc has gained—what gross and time-honoured errors have been dispelled, and what assistance has been rendered to the mountaineer—by Mr. Reilly's labours, is too familiar to the readers of these pages to need more than a passing allusion. Not less hearty was Forbes's recognition of the topographical researches of Mr. Tuckett, who was amongst his Alpine friends and correspondents, nor of the various contributions of a lighter kind to Alpine discovery or literature for which the Alpine Club or its members have been responsible.

With strangers Forbes sometimes passed for a cold man. There was a certain dignity and reserve about him, which at first sight might be mistaken for a coolness of temperament. It was partly, perhaps, the result of education, which, owing to the circumstances of his early life, was with him a process of self-development such as is rarely seen, partly belonging to what he styles in a letter to a friend 'my Northern caution,' partly due to his long life of academical elevation, but to be attributed probably most of all to the necessity of self-restraint so early and so sternly imposed upon him by his broken health. A very

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slight degree of familiarity served to show what a depth and tenderness of heart lay beneath the calm exterior. We have alluded to several members of the Alpine Club who figure in the biography as amongst his correspondents. Without exception, they were men much younger than himself, and men who would never have ventured to intrude themselves upon his notice. It was he who, in every such instance, sought, or willingly afforded, the opportunity of becoming known to them, and nothing could have been more graceful or more gracious than the manner in which these introductions were brought about. He had no interests of his own to serve: from *their* positions in the world, there was little, indeed, that they could ever hope to do for him. But his heart and sympathies warmed towards those who had shown tastes with which he had so much in common, and it could have been no cold or calculating temperament that thus offered to them the opportunity of an intercourse which, in every such instance, as we have good reason to know, was soon prized by those to whom it was thus unexpectedly opened, as one of the most precious gifts that life had brought them. In more than one such case, the foundations were laid of a friendship which lasted, with increasing warmth of regard on both sides, until suspended, so far at least as intercourse is concerned, by the inexorable hand of death; and there are those who have survived him, whose acquaintance with him began in the manner to which we have alluded, who have experienced from him the tenderest and most affectionate sympathy, in their joys and their sorrows alike, and have felt all the inexpressible charm of unrestricted interchange of thought and feeling with a man at once great and good. There was no trait about him more characteristic or more interesting than his accessibility to young people, and few of a generation younger than himself came into contact with him without acknowledging the fascination of his manners, voice, and speech. To little children he was unspeakably tender, and when speaking to them his eye would light up with an expression of gentleness and love, difficult ever to forget. His conversation was of a very high order. He was a great reader of general literature, and was a keen observer of men and manners, and in talking with him you would forget entirely that science had all his life engrossed by far the greater part of his time and study. Habitually grave, and with the sobered tone of thought and utterance belonging to a constant invalid, he yet relished a joke or a good story, especially of the dry and quiet order, better than most men, and was never without a certain light and delicate play of humour, which gave an indescribable charm to his conversation. In his estimates of other people he was always generous. Perhaps the preponderating quality of his mind was justice. In this part of his nature there seemed a certain inflexibility. He revolted at untruth or injustice. He was very slow to suspect them, and always anxious to find some other explanation of a doubtful matter; but if he once came to the deliberate conclusion that an act of wilful dishonesty or injustice had been committed, he found it difficult to forget or overlook the offence.

One aspect of his character must be but lightly touched upon here. Principal Forbes was an eminently religious man; unostentatiously, sincerely, and devoutly so. It was impossible to know him well and

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not be aware of it, and yet you knew it not from anything that he said; for he never spoke upon such topics. Even in his own family he scrupulously avoided all direct reference to them; the very existence of the devotional exercises and self-examinations, from which extracts appear from time to time in the biography, and the fact that they largely absorbed his time and thoughts, were absolutely unknown to any member of his family during his life. Sunday at his house was a cheerful day, which calls up no impressions of a 'Scotch Sabbath.' He was a man of strongly marked and strongly held doctrinal opinions, but he was absolutely free from bigotry, and showed the greatest respect for the views of others. Differences upon such points did not, as so often is the case with men of very distinct dogmatic opinions and very earnestly attached to them, interfere with his friendships, or check the warm flow of his sympathies; but there was a quiet, unobtrusive devoutness of life and mind about him that could not escape those who knew him well, and displayed goodness and religious earnestness in their most beautiful and attractive form. In his love of the mountains there was a certain undercurrent of silent devotion. It was a *reverent* adoration of nature; and a very interesting passage in the biography is a letter in which he speaks to a friend of his 'deep sympathy with your quiet tone of reverential admiration of Alpine scenery.'

The form and features of Principal Forbes were such as are not easily forgotten. He was very tall, and slightly though strongly made; a frame capable of combining great activity with great endurance. In later years, and after he had suffered greatly from illness, he became extremely thin, and probably by most of his survivors his memory will be associated with the tall gaunt form, just a little bowed by sickness and suffering, and the thin, somewhat melancholy, countenance of his later years. But in youth he must have been a handsome man, despite a certain irregularity of feature, which gave a strongly marked character to his face. His forehead, at once broad and high, his resolute and well-set lips, his straight, finely cut, rather prominent nose indicated no commonplace intellect or character. But the great charm of his countenance was his eye—one of the most expressive with which mortal man was ever gifted. It had as many aspects as the sea, or the changing sky; now grey, cold, motionless, and quite impenetrable, now lighting up into life and fire, beaming with animation, sparkling with humour, or mellowing to softest blue and assuming the sweetest and tenderest expression. Almost the same might be said of his mouth. Habitually in late years it wore a somewhat fixed and rather saddened look, but as he warmed up in pleasant chat or serious discussion, it became full of flexibility and meaning, and his smile was like a message from a brighter world. None who have ever fallen beneath the influence of his graceful welcome can forget its fascination, and none who knew him intimately but would bear witness how truly it glowed with the sunshine of his gentle, true, and affectionate nature. There never was a man more simple and more natural, and with whom the words he uttered, and the way in which he uttered them, more genuinely and unaffectedly reflected what was passing in his inner self. In his younger days, his physical powers were great. He was at once active

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and enduring. His old guide, Auguste Balmat, used to speak of the summer they passed together on the Mer de Glace, in 1842, as the hardest time of his life; and himself a most moderate eater, and scarcely anything of a drinker, remembered with astonishment to the last hour of his existence the combination of long hours and scanty meals which marked the Professor's mountain life, and devoutly believed that his subsequent breakdown, a year later, was in no small measure due to a misplaced preference for cold tea over good red wine—a theory which will probably not be entirely without adherents amongst ourselves.

What place may be ultimately assigned to Forbes in the Pantheon of science, this is not the place, nor is the time yet come, nor is the writer of these pages competent, to discuss. Such questions are best decided by the judgment of posterity, which rarely fails to decide them justly. Names as great as that of Forbes can well afford to wait that verdict. The elements upon which the decision must be founded are apt to be distorted by a nearer view, and the judgment of contemporaries is too often warped by personal sympathies or antipathies. The name of Forbes is so prominent in connection with glacial discovery that we are liable to forget that his work in that department of scientific investigation, great as it undoubtedly was, constitutes neither his only, nor even his greatest, achievement. He was a zealous and original investigator in astronomy, in geology, and in physics, and his researches upon radiant heat, and his discovery of the polarization of heat, though much more abstruse, and therefore less easily appreciated by the general reader, will probably rank higher with posterity than even his labours in glacier science. The great peculiarity of the latter is that he began, as it were, at the very starting-point, the zero of the scale of knowledge. When he began to investigate the nature and phenomena of the glaciers, there was hardly a truth known about them which was not so mixed up with falsehood as to be almost worse than ignorance itself; and his first necessary and initial step was to discard and demolish most of the facts that were supposed to be known about the ice-world. Almost every notion with which he started he had to abandon, or to modify in some essential particular, and those only who have had thus to climb from a base which is continually yielding beneath their feet, can tell how painful and laborious is the process by which the shifting sand of error is at length distinguished from the solid rock of truth. His conclusions may or may not have been entirely right, but his methods and processes of investigation were eminently philosophical, and the history of his observations as to the phenomena and motion of glaciers will ever remain a remarkable monument of patient, faithful, and conscientious investigation. His theory has been assailed, and with no common assiduity and perseverance, but the facts he accumulated remain without material correction or development. They must long, perhaps always, form the foundation of any and every theory of glacier motion and activity, and it is not by a process which has been sometimes adopted in the glacier controversy, of exhibiting in exaggerated magnitude everything that anyone else has done or conjectured, and then, as it were, turning round the glass, and looking at his work through the wrong end, till it almost disappears from view,

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that his scientific reputation will be compromised with the calm tribunal of posterity, or the more sacred interests of truth and justice advanced.

Forbes was early warned that he must not expect to find the path of a discoverer strewn with roses. The moment he should have distinguished himself, wrote Sir David Brewster, in 1830, he would become the object of depreciation and attack. Indeed, Sir David's words give so melancholy a picture of the springs and motives of many a scientific controversy, that we, who have been used to sit with folded hands and gaze reverently on the sanctuaries of science, and suppose that there at least, in the sacred presence of Nature and of Truth, the unworthy passions of humanity must be hushed and stilled, turn sadly from the prospect, and, with sorrowing heart and averted eyes, exclaim, 'Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ!' and forbear to retrace the characters lest we should be thought to make an application of the passage which we emphatically repudiate. But it is a melancholy proof that science throws no ægis over her votaries, nor preserves them from bitter words and angry assaults, that a man like Forbes should have become involved, as we venture to think with no fault of his own, in two most painful controversies growing out of his theory of glaciers. The history of neither could be excluded from his life, for in both was his personal honour sharply attacked, and in both triumphantly vindicated. The first, now above thirty years old, arose out of an assertion by M. Agassiz, that *he*, and not Forbes, had discovered the veined structure of glacier-ice—a discovery which must give the key to any theory that may be adopted of the nature and *modus operandi* of glacier motion. It was promptly met and repelled with an accumulation of independent testimony and of cogent argument, such as can leave no doubt on any impartial mind that Forbes was entirely in the right, that the discovery was not only made by him, but at once communicated to M. Agassiz, who was so far from claiming it as his own, that he repudiated the *fact* and treated it as unworthy of serious notice. Forbes's paper on the subject, though M. Agassiz lived many years afterwards, received neither answer nor correction of any kind, and the authors of the biography would, as they tell us, have been well pleased to let the matter rest undisturbed, but for a recent work of Dr. Tyndall's, in which so great a prominence is given, at the expense of Forbes, to the labours and discoveries of Agassiz, that it was impossible, in justice to the subject of the memoir, to avoid reproducing the paper upon which his claims to priority and originality, so far as M. Agassiz is concerned, may be so safely rested.

The other controversy to which we allude originated in an attempt made by Dr. Tyndall, in his 'Glaciers of the Alps,' to show that Forbes's 'Viscous Theory' had been anticipated by Bishop Rendu, of Annecy, and to suggest that Forbes had suppressed the extent of his obligations to Rendu's pamphlet. This attack brought forth a reply equally prompt, equally cogent, and equally unanswered with that in the case of Agassiz. As a general rule, persons who can lay claim to scientific or other discoveries are not backward in doing so, nor slow to resent anything like poaching upon their manor, and it is curious to find that Bishop Rendu wrote in 1844, long after the publication of

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Forbes's great work, inviting Forbes to visit him at Annecy, and take up his abode under the episcopal roof, and congratulating him in the heartiest fashion upon his work and his theory; and that it was reserved for Dr. Tyndall to find out, some sixteen years later, that justice had not been rendered to that prelate by Forbes or by the scientific world. But the question of mere priority was a small one. It was one of those which might have been safely left to the judgment of posterity, and certainly would never have disturbed the repose of Forbes; but it was otherwise when the attempt was made to fasten upon him what he justly styles the 'odious' imputation of having suppressed his knowledge of antecedent labours, and whilst citing some facts or opinions from his predecessor, omitted others of more importance in order to enhance his own claims to originality. The paper in which this charge is met is, perhaps, one of the ablest productions that ever proceeded from Forbes's pen; calm, dignified, wholly devoid of rhetorical ornament, full of the closest reasoning, backed by a perpetual reference to facts and citations, without a word of passion or invective, betraying neither feeling nor annoyance, save once, where he deals with a quotation made from his own work, and used to fasten upon him the charge of scientific plagiarism, but itself extracted in a mutilated form and with the omission of its most significant passage; it is a perfect model of controversial writing, and conveys the highest idea of the power, judgment, and self-discipline of the writer. It was penned at a time of great pressure, shortly after his installation at St. Andrews, and when his new duties called for all his slender stock of health and strength; but there is no trace of feebleness or hesitation about it, nor could the most robust and vigorous health have added anything to its firm and masterly tone; and it showed with what resolution he was prepared to meet any attack upon his character or integrity. What it did not show —what was known but to a few intimate friends—was how deep were the wounds inflicted upon his upright and sensitive nature by such attacks; 'the moral imputation,' he writes to a friend, 'remains behind with something of a leaden weight.' It is difficult to suppose that imputations affecting personal honour would be so lightly made as they often are, if their authors realised the exquisite pain they are calculated to give to men of high and generous natures. It is a great mistake to suppose that the mere consciousness of innocence is, or ought to be, enough to render them innocuous. The more finely organised the moral nature, the more keenly sensitive it often is to undeserved reproach. A security, by no means the least, for the maintenance of high character is a jealous care for an unspotted reputation. It will be an ill day for the world, when names of discredit can be flung about and glide, like water from a duck's back, unheeded and unfelt by those at whom they are hurled, and when a sensitiveness to assaults upon personal integrity shall come to be regarded as a weakness, or held to imply a consciousness that they are in some degree deserved. To those who knew Forbes well, it seems a contradiction in terms to couple his name with the thought of scientific plagiarism, or anything else that is mean or dishonourable; but we lay no stress upon any such consideration in the present case; the position of Forbes is impregnable upon

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the merits and the evidence, and needs no aid from witnesses to character.

We have forborne to attempt any analysis of the Life itself. It has been for some months before the public, and has been reviewed in a host of publications. Few readers who begin it will lay it down till they reach the end, nor then will part from it without regret. Like every biography that is worth reading, it owes its best interest to the numerous and copious extracts from the diary and correspondence of the subject of the memoir. It has suffered in homogeneity (to borrow a term from the vocabulary of science) from an almost inevitable division of labour; but we certainly cannot regret a partition to which we are indebted for Mr. Reilly's admirably written chapters, which represent an amount of work and careful condensation rarely to be met with in these days, when men write at railroad speed, sacrifice style to haste, and either cannot, or will not, take time to write a short book. Principal Shairp has contributed by far the largest portion of the volume, and if we supplement his extracts from his predecessor's journals and correspondence by the fact we have already alluded to, that Forbes's religious exercises and meditations were with him matters of absolute privacy, imparted to, and known by, neither wife, nor child, nor friend, the picture he presents us is a just and faithful one; and the selection made from the immense mass of letters and papers with which he had to deal is, with few exceptions, judicious and in good taste. We could have wished that some of the slipshod English which from time to time appears in extracts from the journals had been kept in the background, as it tends to give an unfavourable and untrue impression of Forbes's powers of composition and command over the English tongue. He was fastidiously accurate in the use of language intended for publication, sometimes a little harsh and rugged in style, sometimes rising into a high vein of eloquence, but always grammatical and careful. It is impossible to say as much of many passages from journals never meant for any eye but his own, and we see no adequate advantage gained by the admission of such extracts. But the late Principal has found in Dr. Shairp a sympathetic and friendly biographer, intent upon making the subject of his memoir speak for himself, and retiring from the scene wherever the narrative can be adequately continued in the words of Forbes himself. Mr. Tait has written the two final chapters relating to Forbes's scientific work, the only fault we find with which is that we come too soon to the end of them. But our aim has been, not to criticise this interesting volume, but to add to its contents some imperfect traits drawn from the grateful recollections of a friendship of many years.

ALPINE SLANG.

The following letters have been received on this subject:—

To the Editor of the Alpine Journal.—Sir,—The letter of 'A Reader of English' in your last number contains a grain of wheat hid in a bushel of chaff. No one of your contributors will, I suppose, be

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