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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inclined to differ from him in preferring English words to foreign where English words can be found equally expressive of their meaning, though some may plead guilty to an occasional forgetfulness of this canon.

But where there is no English equivalent, they will hardly agree with him in preferring an English word which means something else. 'Rift' and 'chasm' are words already conveying a definite meaning, and do not convey without circumlocutory addition the meaning expressed in one word by 'crevasse.' Moreover, the word *crevasse* is an augmentation of *crève*, used indifferently in French for large and small cracks; but 'crevice' has already in English its proper sense of a diminutive crack. But why should *crevasse*—write it 'crevass' if you please—be a worse English word than 'canvas,' 'mattrass,' or 'morass'? 'Scree' and 'clatter' may be English, but they are local and provincial English, probably less known to most of your readers than *geroll* or *clappei*. I defy 'A Reader of English' to Anglicise 'bergschrund' without circumlocution. 'The moat' means something else and 'the last chasm' anything or nothing. The suggestion of 'ice-stream' for 'glacier,' and 'earthbank' for 'moraine,' seem to imply a very limited acquaintance with the nature of either; 'a plateau' is not a plain or level; 'col' does not mean gap, and 'snow-rush' describes only one class of avalanche.

Your contributors will not sympathise with his lament for the adoption into the language of the words 'glacier,' 'moraine,' 'plateau,' 'col,' and 'avalanche.' Why not raise the same outcry over 'river,' 'mutton,' 'plate,' 'collar,' and 'intelligence'—I take the words almost at random—or any other half-dozen words of French origin by which our language has been enriched in the course of the last five centuries? Your correspondent would almost seem to have introduced this lament for the purpose of reducing the whole of his complaints to an absurdity.

By all means let us use English words as far as possible, but 'where no English substitutes exist,' it is either nonsense or indifferent English to insist that 'they can easily be found.' When this is the case we fail to see how 'a judicious process of translation from foreign tongues' is to help us, and are weak enough to prefer the adoption of a foreign word which really expresses the meaning of the writer to either 'the adaptation of old words to new uses,' or any 'touches of Transatlantic or Tennysonian invention.'—I am, Sir, &c., R. C. N.

Sir,—'R. C. N.' must excuse me if, taking him as your spokesman on behalf of your contributors, I endeavour to point out how, as it seems to me, his letter exactly reflects the frame of mind which has caused the corruption of Alpine literature. It shows, in the first place, the carelessness in the application of a rule rightly laid down—that a foreign word should never take the place of an equally suitable English one—which has brought into use *couloir*, *arête*, and *crevasse*; it shows also the distrust in the powers for natural development of our language which has given us *sérac* and *bergschrund*.

For instance, the use of 'crevasse' is justified on the ground that no English substitute exists. We need not now stop to inquire whether common usage has made English a word originally French, for that is

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beside 'R. C. N.'s' argument. He ought to have known that the best writers on Alpine subjects frequently employ 'chasm' in the place of 'crevasse' 'without circumlocutory addition,' and that there is no authority for his attempt to exclude ice from the substances with reference to which the former word can rightly be used.

In the next place, your correspondent fails to notice that there is a choice of sources from which we may seek enrichment for our language. In his eagerness to make his own the charms of some foreign phrase, he slights altogether the honest service of home-born compounds. It seems to him absurd to hope to find, without recourse to a foreign dictionary, an adequate expression for any phenomenon of nature unknown to our ancestors, and for which, therefore, they have not left us a word ready made. He has forgotten such happy inventions as 'icefall' and 'dirtband,' and can think of no means of enriching our vocabulary unless by importing into it uncongenial expressions, such as *geroll* and *clappei*, words not to be found in many dictionaries, but for which, I believe, the equivalent is 'rubbish.'

Easy answers might be found to many of 'R. C. N.'s' minor criticisms. But they are directed for the most part against that part of my former letter which was expressly stated not to be intended as a practical suggestion, and to which 'R. C. N.' gave the true value when he unconsciously suggested a comparison for it with Wamba's well-known lament over the conversion of Saxon sheep into Norman mutton. Both were expressions of a sentiment for which their authors could not expect universal sympathy.

My motive, a wish so to put before Alpine Clubmen the claims of plain English as to prevent them from abandoning it through simple thoughtlessness, must serve as an excuse for an intrusion on your space, which it is full time to cut short. I will only add that there is abundant authority for 'ice-stream' in the writings of Professor Tyndall, and that 'bergschrund,' which is, of course, a compound word, may be very literally translated 'mountain-moat;' or more scientifically, 'the snow-flaw.'—I am, Sir, &c., A READER OF ENGLISH.

Sir,—I cannot see that your correspondent has shown any foundation for the charges he makes against my letter. It is not beside my argument, but the substance of it, that 'crevasse,' and other words to which he objects have become English by adoption, and are practically beyond his protest. Many other foreign words are equally suited to enlarge our vocabulary. It is as unreasonable to allege that 'crevasse' is French as that 'chasm' is Greek. There has been no question about foreign phrases. I referred to *geroll* and *clappei* only as not more open to objection than *scree* and *clatter*. *Geroll* might be Anglicized into Roll. *Clappey* (as it should be written) makes as good and expressive an English word as 'clatter,' with the advantage of not having already another meaning. 'Geroll' and 'clappey' are not the same thing, and neither means 'rubbish.' Ice-stream may be used by Tyndall to describe one class of glacier, but not as a synonym for glacier. A moat is a ditch round a fortified place, not a crevasse. It, too, is French, though *motte* is properly the mound, not the ditch.

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The sentiment which objects to all words of foreign origin might be excusable in Wamba, but since the days of Chaucer is something more than an anachronism. R. C. N.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

Tuesday, May 6.—Mr. W. Longman, *President, in the Chair.*

The following gentlemen were balloted for and elected members of the Club:—Mr. W. R. Browne and Mr. A. D. Puckle.

Mr. F. T. P. Barlow read a paper on 'The Ascent of the Grand Paradis from Cogne.'

Mr. W. Matthews pointed out the importance of this route, lately discovered by the Italian Alpine Club, by which the long and tedious approach to the mountain through Val Savaranche is avoided, and Cogne made more than ever the centre for mountaineers in the Graians.

Tuesday, June 3.—Mr. W. Longman, *President, in the Chair.*

Mr. C. C. Tucker read a paper on 'The Rosengarten and Cima della Vezzana,' describing ascents made last summer of the Kessel Kogel, the northern summit of the Rosengarten range, and of the second in height of the peaks of Primiero.

Mr. T. Carson agreed with Mr. Tucker in recommending Campidello as head-quarters for several interesting expeditions at the head of Val Fassa. He thought many of the Tyrolese mountains might be safely climbed without professional guides. Mr. W. Longman's experience of the inn at Campidello was less favourable than Mr. Carson's. Mr. Lealie Stephen thought the dolomites rather grotesque than sublime, and not likely to afford so much enjoyment as the Bernese Oberland. The absence of guides at Primiero was a reason against mountaineers frequenting this district.

Mr. D. Freshfield pointed out that good rock-climbers, accustomed to act as guides, might be brought from Cortina or Caprile at very small expense. He and Mr. Tucker had been obliged to ascend the Cima della Vezzana alone, owing to an accidental failure in their arrangements. While holding that practised climbers were occasionally justified in doing without professional aid, he did not wish to take any share in the responsibility of inducing travellers to learn to mountaineer by themselves.

Mr. Macdonald observed that 'Mountaineering without Guides' had been recently fully considered by the Club, and the subject could not be reopened with profit, unless there was some prospect of reversing the adverse verdict then arrived at. The Club was not, he thought, likely to do this.

Wednesday, June 11.—The summer dinner took place at the Crystal Palace, when more than sixty members and their friends sat down; Mr. W. Longman, President, in the Chair. Among the guests of the Club was General Imboden, late of the Confederate Cavalry.

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