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Balloons for Mountaineers.—The following letter has been received:—

'Sir,—Will not some enterprising member of the Alpine Club test a plan of mine for climbing mountains which I elaborated some years ago, but have had no leisure or opportunity to put in practice? It is in brief as follows: When about to climb a mountain, having selected a still day, with what wind there is (if any) blowing at your back, attach to a strong leathern girdle, by a hook or other means, a small balloon, capable of supporting from 50 to 100 lbs., and thus reduce your weight by the same amount. The ease with which a man would make even a very steep ascent, when his weight is diminished by 80 or 90 lbs., and his muscular power unimpaired, needs no comment; and the risk of a false step in descending would be reduced to little or nothing. Moreover, if a party so provided got fairly fixed, by unhooking a balloon and applying two to each individual they might mount even perpendicular rocks, regulating the ascent by ropes in the hands of those below. Of course as the atmosphere became more rarefied the ascending power would diminish, but not to any great degree. It seems to me that a party of three or four, so equipped, might venture with impunity on the most dangerous ground; and by uniting their balloons, when necessary, even a precipice would not stop them.

'I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,

'C. W. Goodhart, M.A.'

The advantages here offered rather concern the general public than the Alpine Club, to whom 'nothing is impossible,' and who can have no wish to see 'climbing made easy.'

REVIEWS.

UNTRODDEN PEAKS AND UNFREQUENTED VALLEYS.*

Alpine writers—except, of course, those who reserve their confidences for the select readers of this journal—are either the most hypocritical or the most illogical of the human race. They utter perpetual professions of their delight in the existence of regions where every beautiful

* *Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys: A Midsummer Ramble in the Dolomites.* By Amelia B. Edwards. London, Longmans & Co., 1873.

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spot is not yet an anthill of their fellow-countrymen, where the morals of the peasantry have not yet been corrupted by couriers, or their manners spoilt by contact with British vulgarity. At the same moment, almost in the same breath with these professions, they do their best to destroy the silence and simplicity they pretend to love by directing a whole tide of tourists into the quiet waters they have themselves chanced to drop into. 'Apres moi le déluge' would have been, perhaps, the most appropriate motto for the handsome and lavishly illustrated volume now before us.

For Miss Edwards has little to tell which will be new to those who already possess or have read with care Messrs. Gilbert and Churchill's 'Dolomites,' and her object is not so much to increase as to render popular the knowledge of the Venetian Alps. She has, it is true, by ascending a secondary summit, which had escaped the attention of previous travellers, added one to the excursions from Caprile, and she has given us an interesting and novel sketch of the wood-carvers of the Grödnerthal. But for the rest she left her untrodden peaks in their natural state, while her valleys, though correctly called 'unfrequented,' had all been previously described to English readers.

In one respect, however, Miss Edwards has an advantage over Messrs. Gilbert and Churchill. Her book is the result of a single visit, and her route is consequently more easily followed on the map than the more complete but somewhat intricate rambles of her predecessors. She may fairly claim to have brought the Dolomites within the reach of those who either will not or cannot piece together from a map and guide book a tour for themselves, that is, of the mass of tourists.

A want of sympathy, which is we suppose selfish, with Miss Edwards's aim must not, however, influence our judgment of the use she makes of her means. Her descriptions of mountain landscapes are clear and unaffected, and the story of her personal adventures and intercourse with the people of the country is told with spirit and as little egotism as possible.

Moreover—a rare excellence—the difficulties of the way are seldom, we may say only once, exaggerated, and the information given is as a whole, considering the shortness of Miss Edwards's acquaintance with the country, singularly accurate. On this account it seems the more worth while to correct the few mistakes or omissions in detail into which the author has fallen.

The 'unknown mountains near Cortina' are surely the pinnacles of the Sasso di Bosco Nero, represented from another point of view in one of the illustrations to Mr. Gilbert's 'Cadore.' The Durren See, the waters of which are said to be always at the same level, was empty in Sept. 1872, and is, we were told, generally so at this season. The pass (Oberbacher Joch), from the upper valley of Auronzo to the Sexten Thal, is *not* 'dangerous' in any way. The general experience of the inn at Agordo is, we believe, the reverse of Miss Edwards's,—probably the cook was out for the day at the moment of her visit. Mr. Tuckett has strolled up alone the Cima di Fradusta spoken of in the preface as unascended and of the greatest difficulty. Of the length and difficulty of the frequented mule-path from Agordo to Primiero Miss Edwards has, we

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think, given a very exaggerated account. She also fails to notice the completion, accomplished only a few weeks after her visit, of an excellent carriage road the whole way from Primiero to Predazzo in Val Fassa. In conclusion we must protest against an outline sketch representing the peaks of Primiero in a reeling and disorderly condition as an insult to the weird grandeur of that noble group. But most of the illustrations are excellent and repay the pains bestowed on them, and the volume as a whole thoroughly deserves the popularity its publishers' liberality will doubtless secure for it.

PEAKS IN PEN AND PENCIL.*

Mr. Walton's Alpine drawings have long been familiar to mountaineers, and there is no occasion to dwell here on their many beauties. But we are anxious to repair an omission, and to call attention to the photographic reproductions of some of Mr. Walton's finest sketches lately published by Messrs. Longmans. The English painter has studied rocks and clouds with the same devotion which M. Loppé has given to snow and ice. In 'Peaks in Pen and Pencil' we find specimens of the best of his work; these photographs, the subjects of which are taken from all parts of the Alps, but chiefly from the Dolomites and Dauphiné, show us the strength and firmness with which he seizes the mountain outlines and the knowledge and skill with which he treats rock structure; while the mannerism in foreground, and the apparent want of solidity of the crags in some of his later works, are here happily absent. The introduction and hints to students are so good that we wish there had been more of them.

GERMAN ALPINE LITERATURE.

'Aus der Firnenwelt' † is a collection in two small volumes of the papers on Alpine subjects of a well-known Swiss mountaineer. Herr Weilenmann's exploits do not rank with those of Mr. Stephen or M. de Fellenberg; but if he has not measured himself against any of the more formidable giants of the central chains, he has done a good share of snow and icework, for the most part in very out-of the-way districts. His pages are consequently more than mere records of mountaineering adventure; they contain much valuable information and many amusing sketches of Alpine life and character in the remote corners of the mountains.

A large portion of the first volume is devoted to the snowfields and peaks at the head of Val d'Hérémence, the least visited valley in the Pennine Alps. In the second we are introduced to a region still less known to Englishmen, the Silvretta Alps, lying north of the Lower Engadine, with the primitive valleys which stretch down along their northern flanks towards the Rhine and the Inn. Herr Weilenmann

* *Peaks in Pen and Pencil, for Students of Alpine Scenery.* By Elijah Walton. Edited by T. G. Bonney, London. Longmans & Co.: 1872.

† *Aus der Firnenwelt.* Weilenmann. 2 vols., with maps and illustrations. Leipzig, A. G. Liebeskind.

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tells his story with great spirit and liveliness, to which a spice is here and there added by a good-humoured touch of Anglophobia.

In retort, we may be excused a remark which has often before occurred to us, and is again suggested by these volumes—How is it that the, on most points, minutely accurate information of Swiss mountaineers so seldom includes the doings of our own Club, brought within their notice though they are both in the Schweizerführer and Herr Studer's volumes? We find, for instance, Herr Weilenmann talking of the mountains of Val Masino as a 'fast jungfräulichen Tummelplatz,' and recommending them to such of his fellow-countrymen as thirst for new and noble conquests. It is fair to warn the first 'Klubist' who takes the advice, that where he has been led to expect a bevy of maiden peaks he will find himself surrounded by a fine family of stone-men of Anglo-Saxon parentage.

A Pocketbook for Mountaineers.*—We noticed last year Herr Liebeskind's 'Pocketbook for Mountaineers,' and ventured some suggestions for its improvement in one or two matters of detail. In this year's edition we have no longer any faults to find. The pocketbook, which is convenient in form, now consists of a diary, followed by a list of huts of shelter, yearly becoming more numerous in the German Alps, and a catalogue of the guides in every Alpine valley. Some information of secondary importance, such as the history of the Alpine Clubs and the rules of the various guide corporations, has been relegated to a supplement. The work may well be useful in future years to English as well as German climbers, and the publisher deserves great praise for the pains he must have taken to obtain such complete information from so many remote quarters.

Besides the volumes mentioned above, Herr Liebeskind advertises a work of high interest to readers of this Journal, 'Gesammelte Schriften von F. F. Tuckett,' two vols., with maps and illustrations.

We are asked to state that the principal portion of Mr. E. Whymper's 'Scrambles Amongst the Alps' will reappear next season under the title of the 'Ascent of the Matterhorn,' with numerous fresh illustrations, amongst which will be a new frontispiece by M. Gustave Doré, and some chamois subjects by Joseph Wolf. The work will not be reprinted in its original form.

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* *Kalender und Notizbuch für Alpenreisende.* 11ter Jahrgang, 1873. Leipzig, A. G. Liebeskind.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Communications to the Editor should be addressed 6 Stanhope Gardens, S.W. Notes for insertion in the forthcoming number should be forwarded by the 15th of the month preceding publication. All contributions should be written only on one side of each leaf.

ERRATUM.

Read Ostspitze for Estspitze throughout in the paper on 'Monte Rosa from Macugnaga,' in the last number.

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