REVIEWS.

Alpinismo acrobatico. By Guido Rey. With numerous illustrations. Pp. 314. Turin: 1914.

THIS is a book which every lover of the Alps *must* possess.

Written in the author's own charming and poetical style, it will more than bear comparison with any of the great Alpine Classics, and is a fit companion to *Il Monte Cervino*. No more perfect example of literature has ever appeared. Every page, whether of scenic description, the actual topography of some great climb, or the character study of an individual, is a truly flawless gem. No review of Cav. Guido Rey's great work can be adequately expressed in mere English, any more than the author's beautiful phrases and thoughts can be rendered into that language. *Alpinismo acrobatico* will stand for all time as an enduring monument to the most finished writer as well as one of the most experienced mountaineers the Alpine world can ever see.

The book is dedicated to Ugo de Amicis, worthy son of a famous father, the author's constant companion in the expeditions described. We quote these at full length: Grépon (traverse); Grands Charmoz (traverse); Requin; Petit Dru; Aiguille Verte (Moine arête); Winkler, Stabeler and Delago Türme (traverse); Catinaccio; Marmolada (S. face and traverse); Tschierspitze (traverse); Cima della Madonna (S. face and traverse); Cimon della Pala (traverse); Pala di San Martino (N.W. ridge). All these are illustrated by photographs, mostly by the author himself, although some are by his companions—all are admirable and of quite unusual interest.

The descriptions of these many ascents are remarkable for their versatility; the author succeeds in his own inimitable style in portraying the variety of characteristics of each individual mountain Thus we are able, perhaps for the first time in Alpine literature, to *fully* appreciate the differences between the Aiguille Verte and the Grépon, the Dru and the Requin, or the Marmolada S. face and the Vajolett Türme. No one but the author could give utterance to the artistic and eloquent lines dealing with the aspect of the great Dolomites such as are contained in the chapter *Sul Catinaccio*, pp. 151–61; he compels these wonderful peaks to rise before us here in England as marvellously as they do from their own Trentino. Reading Guido Rey's magic pages we unconsciously live over again the days we have spent in their strongholds; surely no other writer has ever attained similar literary heights?

There is a most interesting character study of a well-known mountain adventurer . . . *una creatura delle Dolomiti*; . . . who shall be nameless in this review—he is not so in the text; many will, however, recognise him. The numerous desperate enterprises of this climber are briefly recounted, among others his feat of attaining the tooth known as 'La Guglia Edmondo di Amicis,' the summit

of which was only reached by the unorthodox method of climbing a neighbouring higher tower, thence throwing a rope down and over the said Guglia, followed by a hand slide along the rope, through space, on to the summit . . . *una delle più belle follie dell'Alpinismo* (pp. 168–76). This extraordinary man . . . *possiede una bella palazzina in stile nuovo ed una motocicletta* . . . (!).

Adventures are not wanting in these stirring pages: the author's party are benighted on the Petit Dru (1905), the ascent of the great S. face of the Marmolada (1910) is accomplished under the most difficult, not to say dangerous, conditions; yet, thanks to the obvious security of Cav. Rey's party, to their caution and mountaineering experience, nothing of mere sensationalism—so pleasantly different from many of the hysterical accounts published of the same climbs—is ever permitted to creep into the text. We realise that we are dealing with a description given by a real Mountaineer as opposed to a common cliff or boulder scrambler.

The poetry, the deep-rooted love of the Alps that ring through every page, we have already dilated on; it remains only to add that no one could wish for better accounts of the actual topographical details of each climb. Where all is so far above criticism it is hard to find a particular preference, but the chapters on the ascent of the Grépon (pp. 15–64), the bivouac on the Petit Dru (pp. 123–38), the exquisite *Intermezzo* (pp. 229–35), or perhaps the breadth and power of feeling so touchingly expressed in the few lines where the author impresses on his Dolomite leader the glories of the greater Alps (pp. 196–8), the nobility of thought and of mind so eloquently enunciated in the last chapter, will perchance appeal most to the student of this truly remarkable work.

E. L. S.

The Conquest of Mount McKinley. By Belmore Browne. With 4 coloured and 96 other illustrations and maps, and Appendix by Herschel C. Parker. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1913. 15*s*.

SURELY no men more deserved the final success gained by their own persistent efforts and determination in the face of the greatest natural difficulties than the authors of this book and their companions.

That is the impression, mixed with the greatest admiration for that courage which compelled success, made on my mind by the perusal of this brilliant book.

The classic assaults which reduced our European mountains, the attacks made on other American mountains, even the work which up to the present has been done in attempting the conquest of any one of the Himalayan giants are not comparable to the three great systematic campaigns, as carefully organised as they were resolutely led, which resulted in the conquest of Mt. McKinley—the summit of the North American continent.

The first attack, to which the author was invited by Professor

Parker, was made in 1906 from the S. side. Dr. Cook, of subsequent North Pole fame, who had made a previous journey of reconnaissance in 1903, and Professor Parker were the organisers of the party, which included a pack-train of twenty horses, a motor-boat for use on the glacier rivers, and a full complement of packers, topographer, and photographer, all of them with experience of earlier journeys in the district.

Although a good pass over the Alaskan range was known to exist at the head of the Kichatna river, a tributary of the Yentna, Dr. Cook determined, for reasons that are still not clear, to attempt to find a new pass nearer to Mt. McKinley, the intention being to attack the mountain finally from the N. With this object in view the horse-party with light packs went westward to the headwaters of the Yentna river, a tributary of the Susitna, where they were to meet the launch-party, which carried most of the equipment and followed the river as far as possible, and then advance in force.

The start was made in May. The motor-boat was with great difficulty forced to the head of navigation on the Yentna river, the only people met with being prospectors—one of whom remarked 'If there were any gold on McKinley you'd find a camp there damn quick!' Another lone prospector drifting down stream was asked where Youngstown (the mining camp) was. Pointing to his boat he answered, 'Here in the boat with me—I'm takin' the burg down stream!'

The river was carefully mapped. The pack-train had not yet arrived, so Dr. Cook, Mr. Browne, and three others started off on foot up the W. fork of the river, leaving Professor Parker and another man in camp. They soon caught their first glimpse of Mt. McKinley.

After great hardships and difficulties—due to the icy water of the flooded river and to having constantly to traverse high up on the banks, where the river bed forbade progress—the party returned to camp after eight days' travel on three days' rations.

As soon as the pack-train arrived, having lost three horses en route, a new attempt was made to ascend the W. fork. The difficulties were again too great, and several times members of the party and horses were in great danger of drowning. The party accordingly returned to camp, and leaving the Yentna river they struck off to the N.E. Above the timber line the country changed to high rolling caribou hills, and after some days' hard travel they reached the Tokositna Glacier, on the E. side of Mt. McKinley. Climbing a high mountain W. of the Glacier, whence they had a magnificent view of the S.E., S.S.W., and part of the W. faces of Mt. McKinley, the explorers were compelled to admit that climbing Mt. McKinley from their camp—if feasible—would be a summer's task, since the intervening country was a tangled chaotic mass of rugged mountains and glaciers.

It would take too long here to follow the party on its adventurous return to the coast. Subsequently Dr. Cook, with the packer

Barrill and another man, ascended the Upper Susitna river and on his return claimed to have ascended Mt. McKinley. Mr. Belmore Browne's opinion of this claim is set out with great candour on pp. 70–73.

Their experiences had only whetted the appetites of Professor Parker and Mr. Belmore Browne for new attempts. They again decided to try the southern approach, first in order to test Dr. Cook's claim, and secondly in order to map that still unexplored side, whereas the N. side had already been mapped by Brooks. The starting point for the N. approach is Fairbanks, a considerable town on the Tanana river, 160 miles N.E. of Mt. McKinley, and from which place the mountain can be reached in winter with dog teams not without great trouble. This was the plan adopted by the party of stalwart miners under Thomas Lloyd, who in 1910 * succeeded in making the first ascent of the N. summit of the great mountain. I hope my friend Dr. Collie will remember my warning as to how far a gold prospector can be relied on to get when I once ventured to criticise his statement as to the inaccessibility of the Caribou mountains.

Accordingly, in 1910 the two explorers got together what was undoubtedly the best-equipped expedition from a mountaineering point of view ever organised in America. The party consisted of eight men, including Professor Cuntz, of Stevens Institute. Professor Parker advanced most of the expedition expenses, while Mr. Browne saw to the outfit and led the expedition in the field.

No horses were taken, reliance being placed on a more powerful motor-boat than on the 1906 expedition. After many difficulties, most graphically described, the boat carried them first up the Susitna and then up its main W. tributary, the Chulitna, until on May 31 a base camp was finally made on the Tokositna river, not very far from the farthest point of the 1906 expedition, about 37 miles from Mt. McKinley. A very interesting chapter follows, describing the arduous advance up the 'Big Glacier,' as many as twelve camps being necessary and over 1200 lb. of food and equipment being carried up.

Even with all this work they had only reached on July 7 the 'Big Basin' whence rose Mt. McKinley—15,000 feet of rock and ice.

After endless difficulties and dangers from avalanches and crevasses the explorers finally reached the 'Great Sérac' which leads to the only snow pass on the S.E. side of Mt. McKinley. They were, however, compelled to content themselves with the ascent of 'Explorers' Peak,' about 8000 feet.

On July 17 they returned to the 'Big Basin' preparatory to making an attack on the S.W. ridge of Mt. McKinley. But it was all no good, and after forty-two days on the ice retreat to civilisation once more was the order.

* Cf. *A.J.* xxv. 645.

But men like the author and Professor Parker take no denial, and they started immediately to plan a third attempt. It was obvious that the approach would have to be *finally* from the N. side, and doubtless the simplest way would have been to repeat the journey of the miners who ascended the N. summit in 1910. But our men were not simply peak-hunters, and stuck to their southern route so as to explore a magnificent mountain wilderness to the E. of Mt. McKinley that otherwise might remain unknown for years.

Their plan was to find a pass across the Alaskan range N.E. of Mt. McKinley, by which they could cross to the N. side for the final attack. One thing they decided to do was to make a winter journey with dog teams.

Accordingly two of their companions of 1910, Aten and La Voy, were commissioned to transport during the winter of 1911–1912 all the stores and outfit by sledge to a camp far up the Chulitna river and return to meet them at Knik. The two chapters on the episodes of the trail are among the best in the book.

Leaving Susitna Station, the last outpost of civilisation, on February 19, 1912, the party pushed on to their main camp. In place of the rushing waters of 1910 lay a smooth expanse of untrodden snow. I need not take the reader further, or tell how the gallant dog teams dragged their loads to a height of 11,000 feet; how the party made successive camps at 13,600, 15,000, 16,615 feet with the thermometer *inside* the tent at night 19° below zero! (so intense was the cold that none of the party could sleep over 15,000 feet); or how in one final desperate attack on the great ice summit dome—it was June 30, 1912—the party set the crown on their labours, reaching 20,300 feet. Beaten to the ground by the icy blizzard, they were finally compelled to turn close under the very highest point of the dome. Most men who ascend Mt. Blanc by the Dôme route or from the Grand Plateau imagine that they ascend the Dôme du Goûter. As a matter of fact they seldom do, as the actual summit of the great flat-topped Dôme is away to the N., although the difference of level is scarcely perceptible. I take it that the Browne-Parker party were as close to their goal as that, and I am strongly of opinion that they made a virtually complete ascent.

Has not Professor Herschel Parker told us the tale of their labours, their sufferings, their triumph in a paper in this Journal ('A.J.' xxvii. 189–195)?

No précis of mine can give an adequate idea of Mr. Belmore Browne's book. It is one of those rare books of travel that, if you have had ever so little experience of the wild, takes you along, makes you one of the party, till you share with its members their hopes, their fears, their hardships, their glories. One supreme virtue is the transparent candour of the tale. One great cause for satisfaction is that the work was all done by their own unaided efforts. When, as Mr. Browne relates, his 'waistline' decreased from 30 ins. to 23½ ins. in one month he must have hustled some.

The book is superbly illustrated by photographs by the author, Professor Parker, and Mr. La Voy, and by four reproductions of paintings in which the author shows himself as much the master with the brush as with the axe. The maps are good and make the routes very easy to follow—and so to Mr. Belmore Browne, author, artist, boatman, horse-master, dogteam-driver, hunter, explorer, mountaineer; to Professor Parker, your '"pardner" on many a rough wilderness trail,' to whose keen love of the mountains and indomitable resolution much of the initiation of these journeys and a full share in the success are due; and to your other staunch companions I respectfully raise my hat in warmest admiration of your deeds. You have indeed all played the man!

J. P. FARRAR.

Hannibal Once More. By Douglas W. Freshfield, M.A. London: Edwin Arnold. 1914. 5*s.* net.

THERE are some stories which age cannot wither nor custom stale. Of these is the story of Hannibal. In discussing the vexed and much-debated question as to the pass by which Hannibal crossed the Alps, Mr. Freshfield gives us the latest views which have approved themselves to him as a geographer and mountaineer.

We may say at once that Mr. Freshfield is not even now, after all the study which he has given to the subject, prepared to name a particular pass and say 'This is the pass of Hannibal.' He tells us in his preface: 'The following pages do not pretend to offer a summary, or analysis, of recent attempts to elucidate the historical episode they deal with. They are rather an endeavour to treat the classical texts relating to Hannibal's Passage of the Alps from the point of view of an Alpine traveller and topographer. In undertaking this task I have been impressed by the importance of a fragment of Varro which has come down to us, and by the curious way in which it has been either ignored, or what seems to me its plain meaning distorted and obscured, by most of my predecessors in this discussion. Incidentally I have been led to examine somewhat closely the arguments recently brought forward by several French military writers in their effort to prove that Hannibal crossed the Col du Clapier, a lofty and difficult by-pass near the Mont Cenis. I have been urged to do this by the fact that their theory has been adopted and put forward in this country by the Professor of Military History in the University of Oxford, Mr. Spenser Wilkinson.'

The fragment of Varro to which Mr. Freshfield refers is translated by him on p. 19: 'The Alps * can be crossed by five passes, one near the sea, through the Ligurians; the second, by which Hannibal crossed; the third, by which Pompey went to the Spanish war; the fourth, by which Hasdrubal came from Gaul into Italy; the fifth, which was formerly occupied by the Greeks and is hence called the Graian Alps.'

* Varro is speaking of the Gallic Alps.

We regret that space prevents us from discussing this quotation. Mr. Freshfield thinks that there can be 'no legitimate room for doubt about the first and fifth; they can only be the Coast-road and the Little St. Bernard.' Mr. Freshfield thinks that there are conclusive reasons for assigning the Mont Genèvre to Pompey. Can we assume that Varro, in his catalogue, took all the five passes in their geographical order, beginning from the sea? 'Is it not the only plausible assumption?' says Mr. Freshfield. And he then suggests that we must look for a pass south of the Mont Genèvre for Hannibal, and one north of it for Hasdrubal. *Quid plura?* Hannibal crossed the Col de l'Argentière, and Hasdrubal the Mont Cenis.

The account which our author gives in his third chapter of the Vars-Argentière route is very interesting: to say that it is absolutely convincing would be going too far—farther than the author goes himself.

The question of the power and position of the Taurini is carefully and profitably discussed by Mr. Freshfield. Perhaps the most interesting of the points discussed by Mr. Freshfield is that of the identification of Turin as the chief town of the Taurini. His remarks on this subject (p. 51) are convincing. We regret that we have not space to reproduce the whole page. He declines to accept the identification. 'Some town,' he writes (p. 52), 'like Cavour, lying close to the foothills, and described by Promis as a natural fortress * raised four hundred feet above the plain, is far more likely to have served as the city of refuge of the Taurini.'

Mr. Freshfield thinks that the Vars-Argentière route, as far as the nature of the ground goes, satisfies the requirements of the classical narratives at least as well as any other pass. 'But,' he continues, 'on its physical features alone, I might hesitate to prefer it definitely to the Mont Genèvre. The decisive consideration to my mind is that the evidence for the Mont Genèvre being Pompey's Pass is overwhelming.'

The book is beautifully printed and well furnished with maps, and has seven illustrations; but, as its author remarks of one of the books to which he frequently refers in its pages, it 'unluckily supplies no index.'

XVII. *Jahresbericht der Alpenvereinssektion Bayerland.* München. 1913.

THIS report of the most active section of the great German-Austrian Club is of the very greatest interest. With a membership of about 560 the Section has to its credit for the bad year 1912 the astounding number of 10,741 expeditions, as the sum total of its members' work. Of course many of these are small, and about two-fifths are winter tours, but it also covers expeditions of importance in Mexico, in the Caucasus—the latest adherent of the Section being Prince Sunschew of Bezingi—and in all parts of the Alps. Herr Oberamtsrichter Eugen Oertel is to be warmly congratulated on

* Such as Laon.

presiding over and leading this band of enthusiastic mountaineers, among whom are to be found names that are known in all European climbing circles. The systematic list of expeditions makes great reading. The stupendous Lalidererwand was climbed (second ascent) by O. Herzog and G. Sixt, jun. Naturally the Kaisergebirge claimed great attention, the Predigtstuhl being twice descended by its S. arête, while Hans Dülfer, who, with W. Schaarschmidt, appears to be the most daring of the present young climbers, with the very brilliant guide Hans Fiechtl and a lady made the direct ascent of the W. face of the N. summit. As to the Totenkirchl, 120 members record ascents and another new route was made up the notorious W. face. New routes were also made up the Fleischbank and the Lärcheck, the latter extremely hard. Six members are noted as having ascended the St. Bartolomä face of the Watzmann; the N. arête of the Ödstein was again overcome—probably the third ascent; the S. arête of the Thurnerkamp was twice done; the Guglia received four visits; in the Geisler group several new routes were made; in the Rosengarten the Delago, Stabeler and Winkler Thürme were each traversed by fifteen members; a new route was made direct up the W. face of the Rosengarten, and the hard climb up the E. face was done by nine members; in the Primiero, Sexten, and Cortina districts several new routes were invented, and in fact hardly a single district in the Eastern Alps has escaped the fearless tread of these redoubtable Müncheners. Then we come to the Western Alps, and here again the ascents recorded, though less numerous, are eminently respectable. Four members ascended the somewhat tiresome Lauteraarhorn, and two the little-visited Ochs. An old friend, the Bieshorn, has somehow got transported across the Rhone Valley into the Oberland, but appears to have been duly found and overcome. Herr Pfann made the first guideless traverse of part of the long Breithorn arête and the Col du Lion is mentioned as having been visited, but can scarcely have been crossed. The Section suffered no loss through accident, notwithstanding this tremendous activity. It may indeed be proud of the brilliant energies of its sons. J. P. F.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE TWIN SUMMITS OF ELBRUZ.

To the Editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

April 10, 1914.

SIR,—Mr. Raeburn informs me that in addition to the expeditions recorded in the last number of the JOURNAL his party climbed the eastern summit of Elbruz. This was (as far as I know) the second ascent, none having been made (or at any rate recorded in any western European publication) since that by my party (François