'On May 29 [? 28] we waited for the Sahib. As he did not return we left the camp at about 9 A.M., and came to No. 2 camp, where we left some food on the up journey. We reached there at about 5 P.M. For want of food we nearly lost our lives. I thought as the Sahib did not return for three days, he must have met his death.

'On May 29 we came to the base camp, where we met Sonam Chompe and Dam-du, and halted there. That night our food was exhausted, as we took food for only fourteen days.

'On May 30 Sonam Chompe went to a "Gote" [cowherd] and there exchanged his "Chupa" [Tibetan coat] for one pathi "Indian corn." With this food we came to the hill near Tse-ram, and halted there.

'On May 31 we camped near Kang La. June 1 we came to Chu-Kar-pang, and I sent Sonam Tangay to Jongri and told him to proceed at once to Mr. Wood-Johnson, and hand over the Cine camera, so that he may be able to develop the films and show the places visited by us and give information about the Sahib.

'When we reached camp No. 3, Mr. Farmer had for his food three bundles of pea soup and half a paper box of biscuits, about two spoonfuls of sugar. We took them as we had no food to eat.'

W. S. LADD.

[Lobsang, who gave the above statement, has been mentioned in the current despatches from the International Kangchenjunga expedition.—*Editor*, 'A.A.J.']

The Accident on Mt. Robson.

'The press reports the death of Mr. Newman D. Waffl[13] during the first week of August. We have no particulars as yet, but competent people were in the vicinity, and there is no doubt about the fact. He was climbing *alone* on the N. face, and the theory is that a section of the huge corniche from above broke off and started an avalanche that overwhelmed him. He was a very good climber, and there seems no excuse for this kind of thing in his case.'—*Communicated.*

REVIEWS.

Tableau littéraire du Massif du Mont Blanc. By Ch. Vallot and C. E. Engel. Librairie Dardel, Chambéry. 25 francs.

THE aim of this book—which is to rank as the first in order of the eleven volumes of M. Vallot's 'Description du . . . Mont Blanc'—is to give 'a complete inventory and critical study of the pages

[13] The name is given as Waffls in some American publications.

devoted to the most enchanting of mountain groups by French, Genevese and English writers.' M. Vallot is responsible for the larger part (some 250 pp.), treating of those who wrote in French, while Mlle. Engel contributes a separate section (77 pp.) dealing with English writers. It is a pleasure to commend their work as one of much interest and value to all lovers of mountain literature. Where it goes over well-trodden ground it always throws fresh light upon it, and it fills many gaps left by previous explorers.

M. Vallot has, of course, exceptional qualifications for his task. To a profound knowledge of the whole terrain, he adds the advantage of access to an unusual wealth of sources, not only in his own collections, but also in local archives and the great libraries of Paris and Versailles, with the expert aid, when needed, of their respective custodians. Not less important is the freedom from preconceived ideas with which he handles his theme, and his constant effort to realize the intellectual attitude and the mental and moral background of the writers considered. He shows much skill in defining the exact bearing and 'true inwardness' of the many passages quoted, and a refreshing frankness in pointing out the mistakes of other critics, from Coolidge and Durier [1] downwards.

In his opening chapter, 'le Mont-Blanc à l'horizon,' M. Vallot shows us the crowds of pilgrims flocking in mediaeval days to Rome, and as they crossed the Côte-d'Or catching sight of a snowy summit far away, which was called Mont St. Bernard, and marked 'the passage from Gaul into Italy.' This is, perhaps, the first recorded reference to Mont Blanc. He goes on to quote the well-known passage from Conrad Gesner ('I have made up my mind to climb some mountains, or at least one, every year . . .') in order to point out that the Zürich Professor must have come sometime into the neighbourhood of Mont Blanc, since he compares the lake on Pilatus to another he had seen 'in the country of the Bodiontii,' which M. Vallot (convicting Coolidge of a 'really surprising confusion') identifies as the Lac Bénit above Cluses.

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[1] The recent revival, in no little intensity, of the long-standing controversies about the first ascent of Mont Blanc, in the course of which Durier's fervent support of Balmat's claims seems to have stereotyped the opinion of French mountaineers in the latter's favour, lends point to the following outspoken verdicts pronounced on Durier's methods by such a distinguished French authority on mountaineering as M. Vallot. 'Durier based his [literary] estimates on an inadequate documentary apparatus, and allowed himself to be dominated by accepted opinions' (p. 7). 'Durier was carried away by his feelings, to which he too often subordinated his reasoning powers' (p. 17). The latter quotation refers to the belief entertained by Durier (and Coolidge) that in Count Aymon's charter of 1091 the 'rupes alba' mentioned as one of the boundaries of the Priory of Chamonix was Mont Blanc. M. Vallot shows that, as Freshfield suggested in 1906 (see *A.J.* **23**, 78), it was really a landmark near the confluence of the Diosaz with the Arve. He points out that (in 1730) the commune of Chamonix regarded their territory as bounded on the south by a line joining Mont Maudit to the Dôme du Goûter, and deliberately abandoned 'la Sommité' to Courmayeur.

It would be interesting to follow M. Vallot in his accounts of Fodéré (who in 1585 wrote of glaciers, crevasses, crampons, ropes, and medicinal drinks made of glacier-ice), and of St. François de Sales, Bishop of Annecy, and the letters in which he related his visitation of the remote parts of his diocese, including Sixt and Chamonix. We can only pause to quote one suggestive sentence. 'In Haut-Faucigny, four singularly different figures have preserved through the centuries an unfading aureole of fervent or jealous devotion—Béatrix de Faucigny, St. François de Sales, M. de Saussure, Jacques Balmat.'

Two widespread misconceptions are corrected by M. Vallot with insight and common sense. The omission by early travellers to mention great mountains where we should expect these to figure largely in their descriptions must not be supposed to prove that they did not see them as well as we do. 'It might as well be argued that the sea, which appeared in literature long after the mountain, had all that time remained unnoticed. . . . The truth is that the immensely detailed extension of mountain knowledge and nomenclature has endowed observers of a great chain with a "separating power" which formerly had neither any *raison d'être* nor even the possibility of expression.' A more serious error is the 'repulsion' against high mountains commonly supposed to have prevailed until Rousseau transformed it into something like worship. 'Durier rightly remarks that the word "affreux" so often used by early writers does not mean "hideous" but "exciting terror." So La Rochefoucauld speaks of "les montagnes *affreusement belles*." ' But 'Durier himself, by the very success of his *Mont Blanc*, became the chief propagator of the error' through his ill-grounded inferences from scattered phrases in seventeenth century authors. 'In an objective criticism of the reflections suggested to early writers by the vision and the crossing of mountain ranges, we must distinguish carefully between those which apply to the *site* and to the *obstacles* respectively. The latter have been so far smoothed away for us, that we tend to let ourselves be diverted by the lamentations of early writers—often well-enough grounded—from the plain indications of their real sensitiveness [to mountain scenery.'] As for Rousseau, M. Vallot prints a letter (of little interest in itself) which shows that he stayed at Cluses (for the whey-cure) as early as 1733, and he must surely have seen the glorious views of Mont Blanc obtainable within easy walking distance. But in all the mass of his writings there is no reference to high mountain scenery save one casual allusion to 'the Glaciers' and to the sunset glow on lofty peaks. How much he did (chiefly of course by the *Nouvelle Héloïse*) to rouse a love of the lower Alpine regions, and of nature generally, is explained in a later chapter, if not with Leslie Stephen's inimitable touch,[2] yet with characteristic care and precision.

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[2] *Playground of Europe*, pp. 39–46. Compare Freshfield's vigorous argument in his *Life of de Saussure*, pp. 21–30.

In his account of the 'First Caravans,' M. Vallot perhaps overdoes the denial of anything that could be called a 'discovery' of Chamonix by Windham. It is a little surprising that in describing the journey of the first French visitor to the valley (the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, in 1763) he should omit the significant sentences (quoted, *e.g.* by Mr. Gribble [3]) which prove that the Duke at least attributed to Windham the 'discovery of the glacières' and the inspiration of his own expedition. As the Duke, with his mother, was staying at Geneva for three months, and as they were intimate friends of Voltaire—to whose life at Ferney and appreciation of mountain scenery M. Vallot devotes a dozen pages—the young man may be presumed to have been familiar with the opinions prevailing in the city which was becoming—partly as a result of Windham's excursion—the 'portal' for visitors to Mont Blanc.

The chapters on 'the Naturalists' (*e.g.* Deluc and de Saussure) and 'the Amateurs' (especially Bourrit) are full and attractive. We may miss some of the personal touches that enliven the narratives of the Delucs and of Bourrit, but that, no doubt, is due to the theme of the book being literature rather than mountaineering. On the other hand we have some interesting pages on the two schools of inquirers who were striving to work out a 'theory of the globe'—the *a priori* (Buffon), and the observational and experimental (Deluc and de Saussure)—and on the instruments (barometer, hypsometer, hygrometer) improved or invented by the latter school. The sketches of de Saussure and Bourrit too are well rounded and sympathetic. They are followed by a chapter on 'the Tourist era,' which begins with an instructive analysis—unfortunately too long to quote—of the Alpine-literary position in the middle of the eighteenth century, and includes quotations from a 'mixed bag' of tourists, of whom Cambry and Mme. Roland are perhaps the most interesting. In one of his footnotes, M. Vallot explains the words *envers* and *endroit* (literally 'wrong side' and 'right side') as meaning 'facing north' and 'facing south' respectively, the 'right side' for vegetation being of course the sunny slope, and *vice versa*. The application to Montenvers and other mountain names is obvious.

Perhaps the most valuable portions of the book—especially to those who are not experts in French literature—are the chapters devoted to the poets (*e.g.* Chénier, Chênedollé), to the writers associated with Mme. de Staël at Coppet, and, above all, to the Romantics (Hugo, Lamartine, G. Sand, Michelet, Gautier). M. Vallot closes his survey with the year 1870. He notes the subsequent divorce in France of mountain writing from literature (in recent years 'the Mountain, if not absent from literature, has held but a minor rôle in comparison with the Sea and the Desert'), but hopes that among 'the specialists who feel in their hearts what they cannot express' some may arise to reveal the secret of their devotion, and thus inaugurate a new epoch in the literature of mountains.

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[3] *The Early Mountaineers*, p. 123. See also *A.J.* **17**, 288.

English readers will naturally turn with special interest to Mlle. Engel's pages. They will not be disappointed. Into her seven chapters she has packed a well-balanced, acutely realized, and happily expressed account of the reactions to mountain scenery of the chief English writers on this theme. A novel point to most of us will be the importance attributed to Ramond's translation of Coxe's 'Sketches.' 'Ramond [4] is the first romantic of the mountains—at least in France, for in England there had been Gray.' [5] Mlle. Engel shows a remarkable insight into the mind and thought even of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Ruskin—writers peculiarly difficult for the foreign student—and she illustrates her survey by translations of typical extracts which seem as nearly perfect as the genius of the French language allows, and which not seldom illumine the original for the English reader. Space must be found for an example. Speaking of 'the almost giddy heights to which Shelley's ode to Mont Blanc soars—a piece of work which no one either in France or England has even equalled,' she supports her verdict by quotations.

'*La solitude a un langage mystérieux qui enseigne un doute si terrible ou une foi si douce, si solennelle, si sereine, que l'homme, grâce á elle, peut être réconcilié avec la Nature. Tu as une voix, ô grande Montagne, qui anéantit bien des injustices, et des douleurs; elle n'est pas comprise de tous, mais les sages, les grands, les justes l'interprètent, la font sentir ou la sentent profondément.*' Note here the interpretation, probably correct, of the *crux* in the words 'but for such faith.' As for 'the voice . . . not understood by all,' we cannot forget Leslie Stephen's gentle raillery when he adds 'and, it is to be feared, not very clearly by the poet himself.'

'*La secrète force des choses qui gouverne l'esprit et qui, pour le dôme infini du ciel, est une loi, réside en toi! Et que serais-tu, que seraient la terre, les étoiles et la mer si, pour les rêves de l'esprit humain, le silence et la solitude n'étaient que le vide?* C'est la grande profession de foi panthéiste de l'œuvre entière de Shelley qui inspire ces vers.' That is so, but to many of us such magic lines as 'Mont Blanc yet gleams on high' give a keener thrill.

In her last chapter, Mlle. Engel sums up briefly but justly the characteristic qualities of Leslie Stephen, Tyndall, Whymper, and others, gives a striking translation of Mr. G. W. Young's 'The Treasure of Heights,' and concludes with Sir Francis Younghusband's call ('almost a manifesto') for painters and poets to interpret the mountains—even Mount Everest—to which the explorers, geographers and climbers have opened the way.

E. H. S.

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[4] There is a lively sketch of this engaging figure in Mr. Gribble's *Early Mountaineers*, pp. 218–232.

[5] Mlle. Engel mentions Gray's description of the Grande Chartreuse, but misses his 'the mountains are ecstatic,' curiously paralleled half a century later by Shelley's description of the approach to Chamonix: 'I never knew, I never imagined, what mountains were before. The immensity of these aerial summits excited . . . a sentiment of ecstatic wonder.'

Guide Vallot, IV. Groupes du Mont Blanc et de la Tour Ronde. By Jacques Lagarde. Pp. 269, with 34 sketches and 3 maps. Fischbacher, Paris. 1930.

M. LAGARDE is a great authority on the Mont Blanc Group and especially on Mont Blanc itself. This alone makes the work valuable. As is well known, the *Vallot* guides are not supposed to be actually carried in the pocket on a tour : they are works of reference and, as such, worthy of profound but leisured study. 'Mont Blanc' shows the most meticulous accuracy and preparation ; M. Lagarde when describing a pass gives us the ascent by *both* slopes of the said col. In this respect we believe the *Vallot* guides are quite unique. We venture to offer one slight criticism ; we should like to see the topographical situation of the passes described as follows : 'Col Émile Rey, *between Pointe Luigi Amedeo and Mont Brouillard ; from the Gamba to the Q. Sella Club hut*'—as in the 'Conway and Coolidge' or 'Kurz' series. With the extraordinary abundance of names, such a description appears to us almost a necessity—at any rate until *all* the sheets of the new *Vallot*, 1 : 20,000, map are issued. The outline-sketches are good.

The work is wonderfully up to date ; expeditions accomplished late in 1929 are described and even illustrated by marked routes. The nomenclature—every point and gap is measured and named—is mostly deplorable, but for this neither MM. Lagarde nor Vallot can be blamed, although they might have exercised authors' privileges and suppressed nine-tenths of the personal appellations. There is, however, no *Chauvinisme* : French, Swiss, German, Austrian, Italian and British names appear in all directions. Some of these belong to distinguished mountaineers ; others do not. We have not come across any nicknames such as have been given to points in other parts of the Mont Blanc Group. Is it too much to hope that *such*, at any rate, will not be perpetuated in the forthcoming guides ?

In conclusion, we must express to M. Lagarde the gratitude of all mountaineers, as well as our warm congratulations on a remarkable piece of work.

Climbs on Mont Blanc. By J. and T. de Lépiney, translated by Sydney Spencer. Pp. xii + 179, illustrated. Edward Arnold & Co., London. 1930. Price 10*s.* 6*d.*

THIS is the English translation of the MM. de Lépiney book, *Sur les crêtes du Mont Blanc*, reviewed in 'A.J.' **41,** 438–40. As stated in that notice, this highly interesting and well-written book describes some of the most difficult and dangerous climbs accomplished in the Mont Blanc Group. The text has lost but little in its English form : Mr. Spencer has done his work well and at the same time has kept as near the original French version as is possible. We can recommend the translation highly to all those unable to appreciate it as thoroughly as they would wish in its French and earlier edition.

The illustrations, the same as in the Chambéry production, seem to us even clearer in texture, and the book is very well got up in every way. It is certain to command a large and deserved sale.

E. L. S.

Yama Nikki. By Saburō Matsukata. $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$: pp. 480. Tokyo, 1930. Price 2*s.* 3*d.*

THIS Alpine pocket-book, or 'mountain diary' as its name literally signifies, is the work of a well-known young member of our Club, and bears eloquent testimony to the enthusiasm and thoroughness with which he has devoted himself not only to the practical pursuit of mountaineering but also to the study of mountaineering literature in various languages. Its exceedingly clearly printed 480 pages include topics of every kind likely to be of interest and of use to Japanese climbers both at home and abroad.

The fact that its first edition of 6000 copies was at once sold out is a tribute both to its own excellence and to the steadily increasing hold that mountaineering has upon the educated youth of the Japan of to-day.

Among its chief contents are hints on climbing, both general and for the winter season, which is now growing in popularity and imposes entirely new conditions on mountaineering in Japan; on outfit, first aid, and distress signals: here we have the latest information as to the altitudes of the principal peaks, mountain huts, and mountain guides, with suggested routes of varying degrees of difficulty.

There is an excellent glossary of mountaineering terms—a few of these need correction—to which in a later edition it is hoped to add the corresponding terms in various Japanese dialects, a very interesting feature of an unusual kind.

A full bibliography of books, dealing not only with Alpine 'travel and adventure' generally, but also with the exploration of the Japanese high mountain ranges, is followed by a list of the principal manuals treating of the practice of mountain craft, beginning with the well-known volume by our own revered President and including those by other distinguished members of the Club. A pleasing feature of this part of the work is its generous appreciation of the indebtedness of the young Japanese mountaineer to-day for the lessons to be learned both from the precepts and the example of those, especially of our own Club, who have been first in the field.

Much useful information in a necessarily condensed form is given on such topics as meteorology, botany, geology, etc., while quotations from classical Japanese poems and from other (non-Japanese) sources are provided with a view not only to inculcate the Japanese traditional spirit of climbing but also by way of deprecating certain new developments of 'stunt' ascents which the editor rightly holds to be inimical to the best interests of the pursuit of mountaineering in its highest form.

We feel that Mr. Matsukata deserves our warmest congratulations on a most admirable achievement, and we will only add that its scope and completeness would be the more readily apprehended in another edition, by his non-Japanese fellow-mountaineers, if he could give the table of contents in the English tongue as well as that with which it is already provided in Japanese.

The Alpine Club Library.

[Owing to the serious illness of Mr. Mackintosh, from which he is now happily recovering, publication of the *Alpine Club Library* is postponed till the next number.]

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A General Meeting of the Club was held in the Hall, 23 Savile Row, London, W. 1, on Tuesday, May 6, 1930, at 8.30 p.m., Dr. Claude Wilson, *President*, in the Chair.

Mr. Daniel Underhill was balloted for and elected a member of the Club.

The Winter Dinner Regulations were submitted to the Meeting and approved.

The President referred to the deaths of the Rev. Canon James E. Dawson, who was elected n 1908, and Monsieur le Baron F. Gabet, President of the French Alpine Club, who was elected an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club in 1920.

The President also made a statement with regard to the Appeal Fund and the Club Premises.

Mr. A. W. Andrews then read a Paper on 'The Drakensberg,' which was illustrated by lantern slides. Col. E. L. Strutt, Mr. Reginald Graham, Dr. Tom G. Longstaff and others took part in the discussion which followed. A cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Andrews closed the proceedings.

CORRIGENDA TO NO. 240.

Illustration facing p. 64, *read* title as 'Chafa Pupluks.'
P. 75, last line, *read* 'the difficulties were so.'
P. 92, line 25, *read* 'Kalbermatten.'
P. 116, line 11, *read* 'Schulze route.'
P. 123, line 23, *for* 'Venetian guide' *read* 'Gross Venediger guide, Johann Rainer of Krimml.'
P. 140, line 34, *read* 'De la Bèche.'

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