

CORRESPONDENCE

Survey of Egypt,
Giza (Orman),
Egypt.
Jan. 10, 1951.

To the Editor of the Alpine Journal.

Dear Sir,

' I have been nettled for years by references to the late Mr. Mummery as the author of the remark that " all mountains appear doomed to pass through the three stages—An inaccessible peak—The most difficult ascent in the Alps—An easy day for a lady." The latest form of this heresy appears in *A.J.* 57. 569 ; and it goads me " to write to the papers."

' It is perfectly true that Mummery used those words in *My Climbs in the Alps and the Caucasus* in his chapter on " The Grépon." But he prefaced them with the statement ; " It has frequently been noticed that . . ." and, if pressed, might have revealed the source from which he borrowed them. They occur, for the first time so far as I know, in literature, in *The Playground of Europe*, in the chapter on " The Dangers of Mountaineering " in the form " inaccessible," " the most difficult point in the Alps," " a good hard climb, but nothing out of the way," " a perfectly straightforward bit of work " and, finally, " an easy day for a lady." Does nobody read Leslie Stephen nowadays ?'

Yours humbly,

G. W. MURRAY.

[NOTE.—Mr. Murray is of course right, and the credit for inventing the now well-worn description of a mountain's degradation (in the literal sense of the word) should be given to Leslie Stephen, and not to Mummery. Something must nevertheless be said in defence of the present generation, which *does* read Leslie Stephen. The section on ' The Dangers of Mountaineering ' appeared *only* in the first edition of *The Playground of Europe* (1871), and Leslie Stephen omitted it as obsolete in the second and third editions (1894, 1899). This was unfortunate, because there is much in the omitted section which is of value to-day ; and, in particular, Leslie Stephen's dictum to the effect that *any* mountain may be climbed safely under certain good conditions, and that there is *no* mountain which may not be dangerous under other bad conditions, deserves as wide a recognition as that given to his saying about climbing ' degradation.'

In any case, Leslie Stephen's saying is not available to the majority of present-day readers, and it is his own fault (as it were) if they quote from Mummery's paraphrase. There is, however, another fairly

common mistake by which Leslie Stephen has received compensation. 'The fleetest of foot of all the Alpine brotherhood' is a description which was not applied in the first place to Leslie Stephen, but, at least in its essence, to Charles Hudson, in a notice which appeared in the *Saturday Review* at the time of Charles Hudson's death on the Matterhorn. He was there said to have been 'the best, the bravest, the stoutest of foot of all the Alpine brotherhood.' It is curious that this was almost certainly written by Leslie Stephen himself, who was at that time a regular contributor to the *Saturday Review*, and was one of the few people who could write about Charles Hudson's climbing qualities from direct knowledge, as did the anonymous author of the notice.—T. G. B.]

Coming, H. K.
 Gask, G. E.
 Jones, J. H.
 Sedgwick, Walter
 Garden, William
 de Bussines, Count Albin
 Thomsen, J. W.

Editorial.—We congratulate Mr. G. W. Tabor on the issue of the *C.A.C.* in the *New York Herald*.
 In December last Mr. C. H. Pearson, perhaps the last of Mr. Pearson's climbing companions, completed the twenty year of his membership of the Alpine Club. At the Annual General Meeting on December 4, 1907, the President congratulated Mr. Pearson and expressed the Club's pleasure at seeing him again. Then on that occasion
 N.A.A.C.—The New Zealand Alpine Club attended its thirteenth meeting in May, 1907, and the Committee of the Alpine Club sent them a telegram of congratulation to mark the event.
 Lectures New Zealand.—In our review of the second edition of Mr. John Pearson's *Unfinished New Zealand* (A. J. 27-28) we stated that the description of Mr. Pearson as a "Member of the Alpine Club, London" on the dust cover was mistaken. Mr. Pearson had in fact been a member of the Club when his first edition was published before the late war, although he no longer is a member; and we have received a letter from his publisher, Messrs. George Allen and Unwin of London, which makes it clear that Mr. Pearson did his best to have the present mistake corrected when it came to his notice, but unfortunately too late for correction. We have much pleasure in stating that Mr. Pearson is in no way to blame for what was merely an inadvertence, and we may add that although Messrs. George Allen and Unwin finally accept full responsibility for it, we ourselves do not expect publishers to