

THE ALPS OF NEW ZEALAND.

THE following letter has been transferred to us by the Editor of the 'Geographical Journal,' in order that, for public convenience, the discussion initiated in these columns might be concluded in the same place. Our readers will find Mr. Mannering's statements critically examined in a subsequent note by Mr. Douglas Freshfield, whose exhaustive summing-up must be considered as closing the discussion.

'SIR,—I was astonished to see in the May 1896 number of the "Geographical Journal" (p. 483) a paper by Mr. E. A. FitzGerald entitled "The First Crossing of the Southern Alps of New Zealand," and still more surprised, on perusing the report of the discussion which followed the reading of the paper, to find that no exception was taken to the extraordinary title of the paper.

'For Mr. FitzGerald's own information, and to enlighten those who may be interested, I append a list of passes of the Southern Alps, with reference to the discovery or existence of the same.

'To avoid any misunderstanding it would be well to define the limits of the "Southern Alps." Reference to Mr. FitzGerald's own locality plan on his map published with the paper (the source of which, by the way, is not acknowledged) will clearly show that his excursions were limited to a small part of the great chain, and that part by far the best known. The Southern Alps proper were defined by Von Haast thirty years ago as commencing at Arthur's Pass and extending southwards for a distance of 120 miles to Haast Pass. This definition has been generally accepted, *although it confines the Southern Alps to their narrowest limits.*

'The following is a list of known passes. It is possible that others may have been effected, but I can find no record of the fact:—

' LIST OF PASSES.

'*Arthur's Pass* (8,013 ft.), over which the coach road from Christchurch to Hokitika passes.

'*Harman's Pass* (8,980 ft.).—Situated at the heads of Waimakariri and Arahura Rivers. Discovered in 1865.

'*Browning's Pass* (4,752 ft.).—Situated at the head of the Wilberforce River. Discovered in 1865, and used during the gold rush to the West as a stock route.

'Particulars regarding these three will be found in Haast's "Geology of Canterbury and Westland."

'*Mathias Pass* (5,100 ft.).—At the head of Mathias River. See "Report of Lands and Survey Department of New Zealand, 1881 and 1882," p. 27, also "1882 and 1883," p. 41.

'*Whitcombe's Pass* (4,180 ft.).—Situated at the head of Rakaia and Hokitika Rivers; first crossed in 1863 ("Canterbury Provincial Government Gazette," July 1863).

'*Strachan's Pass* (5,651 ft.).—Crossed in 1881 by a member of a

survey party from Hokitika, connecting Wanganui and Rakaia Rivers.

'*Sealy's Pass* (5,800 ft.).—Connecting Godley Glacier and Perth River, and first crossed by New Zealand Alpine Club party ("New Zealand Alpine Journal," vol. i. No. 1, p. 59, and No. 2, p. 121).

'*Graham's Saddle* (about 8,500 ft.).—Connecting Tasman and Franz Josef Glaciers. First crossed by Mr. FitzGerald, Mr. Harper, and Zurbriggen on their return from West Coast. Approaches to which were well known ("New Zealand Alpine Journal," vol. i. No. 5, p. 280).

'*FitzGerald's Pass* (about 7,180 ft.).—Connecting Hooker Glacier and Copland River. First crossed by Mr. FitzGerald with Zurbriggen, and stated by Mr. FitzGerald as being the first crossing of the Southern Alps ("Geographical Journal," vol. vii. No. 5, p. 488; "Report of Department of Lands and Survey of New Zealand, 1894-1895").

'*Fyfe's Pass* (about 7,000 ft.).—Connecting Mueller and McKerrow Glaciers ("New Zealand Alpine Journal," vol. i. No. 5, p. 294).

'*Brodrick's Pass* (5,310 ft.).—Connecting Hopkins and Landsborough valleys ("Report of Department of Lands and Survey of New Zealand, 1889-1890," p. 16, and appendix A).

'*Haast Pass* (1,716 ft.).*—Frequently used as a route from Otago to Westland (Haast's "Geology of Canterbury and Westland").

'Most of these records, if not all, can doubtless be found in your Society's valuable library.

'In the face of these facts, of which Mr. FitzGerald does not seem to be aware, it must be admitted that his claim to the first passage of the Southern Alps falls to the ground.

'All New Zealand climbers have the greatest admiration for Mr. FitzGerald and his guide as peak-climbers, but he can lay no claim to exploration in this colony, and he has not added anything to previous topographical knowledge of the country, except in the most minor details. The pass he crossed (with the aid of the map published in the New Zealand Survey Report, 1892-1893, p. 42) has been since unfavourably reported on by the Government surveyors as being too high, difficult, and expensive a route to be of any practical value.

'The problem of finding a pass suitable for tourist and stock traffic still remains.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

G. E. MANNERING,

'Hon. Sec. New Zealand Alpine Club.

'Christchurch, New Zealand:
July 3, 1896.

'To the Editor of the "Geographical Journal."'

* This was Von Haast's determination. It has long since been corrected. 'In future the height of the pass must be accepted as 1,897 ft.' See 'Survey Report,' 1885-6, p. III.—D. W. Freshfield.