

Russia. The chief publications of the year on this subject were 'Untersuchungen am Hintereisferner,' issued by the German and Austrian Club as the second of the 'Wissenschaftliche Ergänzungshefte zur Zeitschrift,' and 'Observations dans les Alpes Dauphinoises organisées par la Soc. d. Touristes du Dauphiné sous la direction du Prof. W. Kilian;' and particulars of both these important works are to be found in this report.

Les variations d. glaciers dans les régions arctiques et boréales. Par C. Rabot. 8vo, pp. 86. (Genève; Georg. 1897.)

Like the previous pamphlet this also is published by the International Commission. It describes Greenland and Iceland. In the latter the glaciers have steadily progressed since the Norman colonisation—especially about the beginning of the eighteenth century—till within recent years, when a slight retrogression is to be noted, not at all comparable, however, in amount to that in the Alps between 1850 and 1880.

The Geographical Journal. January, 1901.

This number contains a paper, with illustrations, by Mr. J. E. S. Moore, descriptive of the country to the north of Lake Tanganyika, in central Africa, including the range of Ruwenzori, the summit of which is stated by Mr. Scott Elliot and Dr. Gregory to be about 16,500 ft. The first attempted ascent of this range was made by Mr. Stairs, a member of Mr. Stanley's party, who reached a height of about 10,000 ft. Mr. Moore, in 1899, made an attempt to reach the summit of Ngomwimbi, one of the highest peaks of the range. According to Sir Harry Johnston's calculation, made on visiting the region last year (a report of which visit is also contained in the above Journal), Mr. Moore would appear to have ascended to over 13,000 ft., which is just below the line of permanent snow; while Sir Harry Johnston himself ascended the range to 14,800 ft., the highest point yet reached.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall of the Club on Monday, December 17, at 8.30 p.m., the Right Hon. James Bryce, *President*, in the chair.

Messrs. O. J. Bainbridge, A. L. Clover, Gilbert Davidson, E. Freeman, T. H. Grose, C. E. Groves, Sir Charles B. Looock, Bart., Messrs. W. A. Mounsey, F. C. Squance, F. B. Stead, were balloted for and elected members of the Club.

On the motion of Mr. MORSE, seconded by Mr. HULTON, the Right Hon. James Bryce was re-elected President for the next year.

On the motion of Mr. HORACE WALKER, seconded by Mr. H. PASTEUR, the Vice-Presidents and other members of Committee, being eligible, were re-elected.

On the motion of Mr. WOOLLEY, seconded by Mr. LUTTMAN-

JOHNSON, Messrs. F. W. Newmarch and Sydney Spencer were unanimously elected members of Committee, in the places of Messrs. G. A. Solly and H. E. M. Stutfield, who retired by rotation.

On the motion of Mr. D. W. FRESHFIELD, seconded by Mr. WILLINK, Mr. A. L. Mumm was unanimously elected Hon. Secretary in the place of Dr. W. A. Wills, who did not offer himself for re-election.

On the motion of Mr. C. E. MATHEWS, seconded by Mr. F. O. SCHUSTER, a very hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Dr. Wills for his services as Hon. Secretary.

The PRESIDENT, in referring shortly to the events of the year, said that there had been fewer accidents than for some years past, and only three of those occurring among the high summits had been serious, those on the Weisshorn, the Ecrins, and the Matterhorn. Only one had proved fatal to an Englishman, but he was, unfortunately, also a member of the Club. Mr. Cockin was known to many personally, and known as one of the most zealous mountaineers. It was partly his natural confidence in his own great powers of endurance which brought about the unhappy catastrophe in which he perished. Two other deaths among old members had occurred in the year—the one of a man famous throughout the whole English-speaking world, Mr. Ruskin, who was not only a great imaginative genius and master of style, but also a man who had imbibed in a most extraordinary degree a passion for mountain scenery. No one had shown a more careful and close study of mountain form and a greater appreciation of its grandeur and beauty. The other loss had been that of Dr. Marcet, a very distinguished man of science and very warmly interested in all the objects of the Club.

The HON. SECRETARY then read the following statement :

‘In accordance with the circular sent out last week the Committee wish to lay before the general meeting the question of the publication of further volumes of Ball’s “Alpine Guide.”

‘They do this with the view of obtaining the opinion of the majority of the members on the question, and also of ascertaining whether the members of the Club are prepared, in the event of their deciding that they wish to continue the publication, to afford such literary assistance to the Committee as will justify them in making a further effort towards the publication of Vol. II.

‘It will be remembered that at the close of last year Mr. Coolidge resigned the office of Editor, which he had held during the publication of Vol. I. and the General Introduction.

‘The general meeting had in December, 1898, sanctioned the continuance of the work, on the understanding that this course would involve the employment of the general funds of the Club. As the amount standing to the credit of the Ball Fund was then 30*l.* 14*s.* 8*d.*, it was stated that 700*l.* would cover the whole cost of the publication of Vol. II.

‘Under these circumstances the Committee have during the past year endeavoured to find some member who would undertake the

difficult task of acting as general Editor, but so far they have been unable to find anyone who felt himself to be competent and willing to be nominated to this post, and the position of affairs at this moment is that, speaking generally, the Club has undertaken, in return for the money subscribed, to give to subscribers at least two volumes of the work and the General Introduction, but is so far unable to fulfil its pledge for want of an Editor. It appears, therefore, to the Committee that if the Club wish a further effort to be made, members must express their views decidedly, and must at the same time give practical proof of their interest in the matter by putting forward the names of those among them who may be willing and able to undertake the revision of the entire sections of the second volume in such a way that it will be possible for a supervising Editor or Editors to combine these corrected sections into a complete work. The districts to be treated in these sections have been sufficiently indicated in the circular referred to above.

'Appeals have already been made to the Club to suggest members among whom might be found one who was willing to act as Editor, but, except from members who are on the Committee, no suggestions have been received. Such suggestions as have been made have, unfortunately, led to no practical result. It is further felt that, if the work is to be continued, members who are willing to assist in the manner above described must undertake to do so definitely and specifically within the first three months of 1901.

'The sum now in hand on account of the Ball Fund may be put at about 136*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*, including an estimate of sales to date (Messrs. Longmans' account not being rendered till next spring). The continuance of the publication, should the literary side of the question be satisfactorily settled, would involve the Club in a further expenditure of at least 400*l.* to 500*l.*'

The PRESIDENT said that the Committee were anxious to have the opinion of the Club on a matter of so much importance.

Mr. C. PILKINGTON said that many members felt it strange that the Club should have so much difficulty in carrying out the work; still, it ought to be done. A small amount of money was in hand, and some of the map work had been done for the second volume. He thought it would be a mistake if the work were not carried to as good a conclusion as the first volume, which was in every way most excellent.

Mr. HORACE WALKER asked whether there was much work still to be done to complete the notes supplied by the last Editor.

Dr. WILLS replied that there was still much to be done.

Mr. WITHERS asked whether the work or only the names of helpers were wanted in the first three months of next year.

Dr. WILLS explained that it was names that were wanted, coupled with a definite undertaking that those members volunteering were prepared to give active literary assistance.

Mr. SHEA suggested that it would be well definitely to abandon now the idea of the third volume, as the district it would cover was

so very thoroughly treated by the German and Austrian Club. The efforts of the Alpine Club should be concentrated on the second volume.

Mr. L. PILKINGTON agreed about the third volume, and thought that the last four sections of the second volume might also be given up as not belonging to the Central Alps—a point to which Mr. Coolidge had himself drawn attention.

Mr. C. T. DENT spoke as one who was perhaps responsible for the republication of this work having been undertaken by the Club, as he was President at the time of Mr. Ball's death. He understood that the Committee had come to the Club to ascertain whether the Club really wished to go on with the work or not. He moved that the Club authorise the Committee to continue their efforts to find an Editor for the second volume during the first three months of 1901, and that if such an Editor and assistants be not found by that time, the work be then given up.

Mr. D. FRESHFIELD was prepared to second this resolution with certain restrictions. If the younger members of the Club wished the work to be continued, then they must put their shoulders to the wheel and work as their predecessors had done. On the other hand, if they thought that 'Baedeker' and the 'Climbers' Guides' were sufficient, it would be folly to spend the Club funds on a new 'Alpine Guide.' In that case, as we had received subscriptions from outsiders, the Club would have to return part of those subscriptions.

Dr. WILLS said that in the case of giving up the work and returning half the amount of these outside subscriptions (on the basis that the first volume and General Introduction represented half the work that had been promised to subscribers), the Club would have to pay about 78*l.*; and if the work were gone on with, a sum of about 500*l.* would have to be provided from the Club funds.

Mr. PUCKLE said that many members were afraid that the second volume might cost much more than was estimated, as had happened in the case of the first volume.

Dr. WILLS explained that the cost of the printing could be fairly accurately foretold, that there was little new map work to be done, as only two of the district maps were new, all the others being reproduced from the Alpine Club map. As this map belonged jointly to Messrs. Longmans and Messrs. Stanford, the latter would necessarily be employed in this part of the work.

Mr. MORSE thought that some of the districts mentioned in the circular could not be considered to be Alpine, and might, therefore, be omitted.

In reply to a question, Dr. WILLS replied that the sales of the 'Guide' as yet had produced about 90*l.*

The PRESIDENT said that the question of the third volume was not at present being considered. With regard to the 'Climbers' Guides,' there were no volumes for the Bernese Oberland or the Bernina, both of which districts would come into the second volume of Ball's 'Alpine Guide.' If the Club wished that the work should be continued, the Hon. Secretary would be very grateful to have,

within the next three months, names of any members who would be willing to assist.

Mr. DENT's motion was then carried unanimously.

A vote of thanks was proposed and carried to Mr. HASKETT SMITH for his management of the picture exhibition.

Mr. F. O. SCHUSTER, on behalf of Sir Martin Conway, who was absent in America, read a paper on 'The Future of the Alpine Club.'

Mr. D. FRESHFIELD then read a 'Note' on the same subject, suggested by Sir M. Conway's paper (see pp. 300-5).

Mr. C. E. MATHEWS said that he considered the suggestion of lowering the qualification was a monstrous one. He did not think that as it stood it was too high. He was well acquainted with all the Alpine clubs in Europe, and none of them had a mountaineering qualification; the Alpine Club was the only one which had this restriction, and he thought that it would be a sure sign of decadence if any change were made.

Mr. HORACE WALKER was much in sympathy with Mr. Freshfield's remarks, and did not think that the qualification ought to be lowered unless owing to an absolute necessity for getting more funds.

Mr. C. PILKINGTON thought that in some slight way the qualification might be reduced. When a man had been many years to the Alps the Committee did not expect that he should necessarily have done so much high climbing as a man who had been for a few seasons only. Any other reduction might form a club within a club, and therefore split up the Alpine Club.

Mr. WITHERS thought that if climbers were unable to take up Ball's 'Alpine Guide,' perhaps the lovers of mountains might be able to do it, which would be a reason for lowering the qualification.

Mr. WILLINK added his testimony to that of Mr. Pilkington as to the spirit which had of late years animated the Committee in deciding upon the qualifications of candidates, and in encouraging the knowledge and the love of the Alps rather than mere gymnastic feats upon them. Besides being lovers of mountains, the members were also proud to be members of the Alpine Club; and if anything were done to make the qualification a mere matter of subscription, it would strike at the root of the Club's very reason for existence. The Alpine Club differed from all other similar clubs, in that every one of its members (except those elected on special qualifications) was known to be a man who was practically acquainted with rock and glacier work on the mountains.

Mr. HEARD thought that it would be very useful to have some one from whom the members could get information as to special regions and special conditions, and with whom members could correspond and keep in touch.

Sir ALFRED WILLS, speaking as an original member of the Club, felt that there was much in Sir Martin Conway's paper with which he agreed. If it was practicable, however, to have a really

good man as paid secretary and editor of the 'Journal,' the increased expenditure would, he considered, be more than 200*l.*; but it would be an excellent thing, and would greatly improve the character of the publications of the Club. He thought that the remarks of Mr. Freshfield were admirable. It was unquestionable that somehow a spirit of rashness had crept into mountaineering. He had all his life preached and practised the gospel of prudence, and could point to the fact that he had taken many inexperienced people into high places and never had had an accident. A right spirit should be infused into the exploits entered into by the younger men. If only they felt the responsibility of climbing, accidents would be rare. It was impossible to read the records of the last ten years without seeing that nine-tenths of the accidents were due to want of precaution. Really, the only danger which could not be guarded against was that of bad weather. He did not think that any reduction of the qualification was advisable. Abroad, when one found the absolutely different position occupied by a member of the Alpine Club as compared with that occupied by the members of any of the other Alpine Clubs, one felt that it would be a great misfortune to lower the qualification.

Dr. KENNEDY hoped that it was recognised by the Club that if they adopted the suggestion and turned the 'Journal' into a record of geographical mountaineering, the cost would be nearer 700*l.* than 200*l.* He thought that it would be a great mistake to lower the qualification, as there had been few cases where a good man had been kept out who would have benefited the Club by being in it, and he hoped that it would be long before the Alpine Club ceased to be a *Club*, and became a mere Society.

Dr. WILLS was glad that the subject had been discussed, for it would make it widely known that the Committee were ready to consider qualifications, even though they did not contain a long list of big peaks. It should be remembered that no harm was ever done by a man's submitting his qualification to the Committee. Many men who have done a good deal of varied climbing, but few big peaks, thought that there was no use in putting themselves up as candidates, and therefore did not submit their names to the Committee. A man who had done many seasons' climbing among the lesser peaks was more likely to continue to take an interest in mountains for many years after he had joined the Club than the man who had done the minimum of Matterhorns and Monte Rosas, compressed into four or even three seasons' mountaineering, and thus would prove the more valuable member from the point of view of the vitality of the Club.

Mr. A. J. BUTLER agreed with Dr. Wills, and thought the Committee's power of discretion was already sufficient.

Mr. F. O. SCHUSTER thought that the discussion had rather wandered from the main point, and that the opinion of the Club on the point taken up was a foregone conclusion. It was clear the Club would not entertain a material lowering of the qualification. The main proposal was to raise the character and scope of the

'Alpine Journal.' With the present means at command it could not be expected that anyone with other duties in life could carry on the 'Journal' so satisfactorily as it might be done. The suggestion of the paper was to have an Editor who would bring before the notice of the Club all matters of mountaineering interest. Mr. Freshfield's estimate of 200*l.* extra expenditure was based on what was done at the Royal Geographical Society. The question was one which concerned the aims of the Club in the future, and it seemed that the Club must certainly go beyond the Alps for its climbing. The suggestion in the paper was to have an enlarged 'Journal,' and to include in it everything of interest to members who might wish to go beyond the Alps. If the aims of the Club were enlarged, the membership would be increased also. The test of qualification, he thought, came to this, that a man should know his way about the mountains and be able to judge of his own powers and those of his guides; this required a training of four or five years, and especially on snow and ice.

The PRESIDENT thought that there were three questions—the qualification, the attention to be given to the 'Journal,' and the question of having a permanent paid official. As regarded the first question, there was no desire to abolish the qualification, but only to point out that there was a supposition that the qualification was higher than the Committee really make it. The elasticity allowed ought to be more generally known. He should have thought that the probable increase of expenditure would be more than allowed for by Mr. Freshfield, and less than that by Dr. Kennedy, to make the 'Journal' throughout the world the recognised organ of mountain exploration. There would certainly be an advantage to the Club in having a permanent paid secretary, who would be a kind of referee on matters of interest to members.

The proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to Sir Martin Conway for his paper and to Mr. Schuster for having read it.

An Exhibition of Alpine Paintings was held in the Hall of the Club from December 1 to 22. Refreshments were provided on the afternoons of December 1 and 18. About 1,100 people attended the Exhibition.

The Winter Dinner was held in the Whitehall Rooms, Hôtel Métropole, on Tuesday evening, December 18, when 302 members and guests were present, the latter including Lord Justice Collins, his Honour Judge Wightman Wood, his Honour Judge Bacon, Major-General Wavell, Sir John Edge, Sir H. Trueman Wood, Sir Arthur Clay, Mr. Onslow Ford, R.A., Mr. Wells, R.A., Mr. F. Carruthers Gould, Rev. Canon Pelham Burn, Rev. Prebendary Eardley Wilmot, Sir Lauder Brunton, Dr. Whipham, Mr. J. H. Morgan, Dr. Donkin, Dr. J. Mitchell Bruce, Mr. A. A. Bowlby, Mr. Barry Pain, Mr. Grueber, Dr. E. Schuster, Prof. Miers, F.R.S., Mr. Ambrose Lee, Mr. J. E. S. Moore.