

Mountaineering Ballads. By A. C. Downer (Member of the Alpine Club).
(London: Charles Murray & Co.) 1s. net.

In a brief preface to this unpretentious little book the author says, 'I suppose it is generally allowed that the mountains furnish the best of all good sport. That is, no other sport is anything like so good as mountaineering. It is no less true that they promote the best of all good fellowship. There is none that I know of equal to the comradeship at supper in a Club hut before a great ascent.'

This indicates the spirit in which these ballads have been written. Mr. Downer has known and appreciated the joys of mountaineering.

Crunch through the snow, caring not for wind or weather;
On through the sunshine and on through the rain.

Nor does he forget the dangers of it.

'Ware stones!' is the cry when the splinters fly,
and the great peak's guns have miss'd.

Mr. Downer is at times realistic, and the following stanza would no doubt be said by a really up to date reviewer to 'palpitate with actuality':—

All upon a sudden, swish! and then a flop;
Then a strain upon your waist, fit to cut you through;
For the snow had gone down to the bottom and
Abraham hung by the rope
And dangled about like a spider, and there
was a how-d'ye-do!

Mr. Downer is a worshipper of the great goddess Nicotine; and has the sense of fellowship which generally dominates supporters of the cult.

Lunching oft on bread and claret,
Sleeping in an Alpine hut;
All that's in the sack, we'll share it,
And a pouch of Navy Cut.

But the author can give us in a few words some of those memories which we all so deeply cherish.

Overhead the violet heaven, underfoot the waving grasses,
All around the silent cattle, browsing in a boundless park.

We reciprocate the last stanza of his ballad 'Ad Comitem':—

Life passes on, but, ere it goes,
One other summer may we taste
That bright free life upon the snows
We knew in summers past.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall on the evening of Tuesday, May 16, 1905, Mr. Walter Leaf, *Vice-President*, in the chair.

Mr. LEAF informed the Club that two members had recently died, Mr. Ruck and Mr. F. J. Stevens. He also announced that a kakemono by a modern Japanese artist, representing a mountain

scene with Alpine plants in the foreground, had been presented to the Club by the Rev. Walter Weston ; * and further he had great pleasure in stating that the Société de Topographie de France had bestowed a prize medal, offered by the French Minister of Commerce, on Dr. Workman for original topographical research in the Himalayas during his last two expeditions.

Dr. WORKMAN then read a paper on 'Some Obstacles to Himalayan Mountaineering, and the History of a Record Ascent,' which was illustrated by lantern slides.

Sir MARTIN CONWAY was very glad to have an opportunity of expressing his admiration for the work accomplished by Dr. Workman. He only knew from the other side the mountains that had been described. From there they appeared one of the most tangled masses of mountains and twisting glaciers he had ever seen, and he could not therefore realise the exact position of Dr. Workman's peak. He quite agreed with Dr. Workman's remark that any hope of higher ascents being accomplished must be based on the resolution to lay a regular siege to a particular peak. Not much would be done by a party hurrying out from England to organise a commissariat and making a rush for a peak. One of the great giants of the Himalayas would only be climbed by a party who would devote one year to selecting, drilling, and organising a set of coolies. A small regiment of coolies must be trained to reach at least a height of 23,000 ft. for a base camp, and at present no considerable number of natives were willing to go so high. When this had been done it would be time to talk of mountains of 26,000 ft. or over. It was Dr. Workman's two successive years of work that enabled him to reach the height he did. As for the weather, it was hopelessly bad in that part of the Himalayas. On his expedition they never had more than four consecutive fine days in five months.

Mr. D. FRESHFIELD, after congratulating Dr. Workman on the success that had attended his determined efforts to explore and attain great heights in the western Himalayas and on the beauty of the photographs he had secured, spoke as follows :—

'Until to-night I had been under the impression that the one great advantage of the western over the eastern Himalayas as a field for mountaineering was their climate. It appears, however, from Dr. Workman's experience that there is little to choose between them. This being so it seems to me that the east has many recommendations. The great peaks are nearer civilisation, their glaciers end much higher ; you can ride up to 13,000 ft., or in some places to 19,000 ft. ; you can camp on grass up to 17,000 ft. ; some of the peaks are obviously accessible, particularly those on

* Mr. Weston writes, 'The kakemono represents a group of Japanese Alpine flowers (naturally not actually growing together on one spot) found in the high ranges known as the Japanese Alps. It has been painted for me by the leading Japanese water-colour artist, Ioki Bunsai, who is himself an enthusiastic collector of Alpine plants, and who climbed for that purpose to be able to paint them. The peak in the background is the Northern Yurigatake.'

the frontier near Khambijong. I consider the next party who go out to this region, with fair luck in weather, are certain to reach 24,000 ft., or near it. It will be, in my opinion, less of a feat than that accomplished by Dr. and Mrs. Workman under what, judging from his description, were far less favourable conditions.

'The essential for success in attacking loftier peaks is a good staff of porters, and I do not think these will be easily secured, trained, and kept under discipline without the co-operation of the Indian Government. The Ghurkhas undoubtedly are good raw material; the performances of one or two of those with me at 20,000 ft. were remarkable. But in ordinary circumstances they do not like carrying. Tact, time, and perseverance will be needed by the assailants of any peak over 24,000 ft.'

Mr. EDMUND CANDLER, who was present, referred briefly to his experiences on the way to Lhasa.

The VICE-PRESIDENT was sure that members would most cordially thank Dr. Workman for his extraordinarily interesting paper. They could not but admire the perseverance and determination with which he had conquered difficulties and the modesty with which he had spoken of his remarkable achievements spread over four years.

The vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

Dr. WORKMAN said a few words in reply, and with reference to the effects of rarefied air at great heights mentioned that he had once ridden a yak over one of the higher passes, about 19,000 ft., and that it had been severely affected, in spite of the fact that its ordinary *habitat* was at a very great elevation.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Hall on the evening of Tuesday, June 6, at 8.30, the Bishop of Bristol, *President*, in the chair.

Messrs. W. Hooper and H. P. Ziemann were balloted for and elected members of the Club.

Mr. W. T. KIRKPATRICK read a paper entitled 'Ten Years without Guides.'

After a few remarks by Mr. HOPE, who had been Mr. Kirkpatrick's companion, Mr. READE asked how the times of the expeditions described compared with those given in the 'Climbers' Guides.' Mr. KIRKPATRICK said they had never paid much attention to times, and had never aimed at speed, preferring to spend all the time at their disposal on the mountains.

The PRESIDENT congratulated Mr. Kirkpatrick on his paper, which had been full of interest; he had begun by stating that he had nothing to say, but after three-quarters of an hour he had not succeeded in saying it.

A hearty vote of thanks for the paper brought the proceedings to a close.

Most of the articles of equipment referred to in the paper were on view, and were subsequently examined by many of those present.