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Review: The Geographer at High Altitudes

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The four following maps, Nos. 5 to 8, show the distribution of surface temperature for the months February, May, August, and November. Sheet 9 gives the mean annual temperature of the air, and sheet 10 the temperature for the four months, over the whole Atlantic basin. These last are particularly valuable, as they extend from long. 100° W. to 30° E., and include all South America, and parts of Europe, North America, and Africa. The next two sheets give the air-temperatures for each month over the oceanic area alone; all these maps are new, and depend largely on the "Zehn Grad-Quadratrabeit." Sheets 13 to 16 deal similarly with atmospheric pressure, the material being derived from the same sources. Next follows a series of charts illustrating the general meteorology of the Atlantic, the most complete and exhaustive series of its kind in existence, and one which will well repay the study of every teacher of geography, as well as of every student of special climatology. It is unnecessary to give the full list of the maps, and it is difficult to single out any as of special value, but without prejudice to the others we may mention the plate showing weather types, from Köppen and van Bebbber's well-known papers; the maps of duration and direction and mean change of wind-direction of storms, from the important paper published by E. Knipping in the *Annalen der Hydrographie* for August, 1901; the chart of mean frequency and tracks of cyclones in the North Atlantic; and the rainfall charts.

The last section of the atlas includes three maps showing the magnetic elements for 1902, two showing the chief routes for steamers and sailing vessels during the winter and summer months, and one by Dr. H. Bolan showing the distribution of the chief species of whales, with the fishing-grounds.

H. N. D.

GENERAL.

THE GEOGRAPHER AT HIGH ALTITUDES.

'Climbing on the Himalaya and Other Mountain Ranges.' By J. Norman Collie, F.R.S. Edinburgh: David Douglas. 1902.

In this volume Professor Collie has given us something of his mountaineering experiences in many lands. Portions of the book are not entirely new, having appeared in other guise, to wit in the pages of the *Alpine Journal* and in the publications of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.

Although nominally addressed to the mountaineer, the work is full of interest to the geographer, and is illustrated by some fine photogravures from the author's negatives. The most important portion of the book is undoubtedly that dealing with the Himalaya, which occupies the first half of the volume. After an introductory chapter on the history of mountaineering in India, the author carries us away to his own special district between the Astor river and the Indus, where the Diamirai, Rupal, and several minor glaciers cluster on either flank of the lofty Nanga Parbat range. In this introductory chapter we have an interesting epitome of the chief ascents and expeditions in various parts of the range. In this connection it is interesting to note that the author accepts Mr. Graham's account of his ascent of Kabru (24,015 feet) in the Kangchenjunga range, summing up the evidence in the following sentence: "Any one who will take the trouble to read his account of the ascent of Kabru, cannot fail to admit that he must have climbed the peak lying on the south-west of Kangchenjunga, viz. Kabru, for there is no other high peak there which he could have ascended from his starting-point except Kangchenjunga itself. . . . Now, if they climbed Kabru, they were at a height of 24,000 feet whether they had a barometer with them or not, for that is the height determined by the Ordnance Survey." In this conclusion he agrees

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with Mr. Freshfield, who visited the peak in 1899, and Kabru must in future be placed first in the catalogue of mountain ascents as the highest point on the Earth's surface yet attained by man. One of the chief arguments urged against this ascent was the assertion that Graham makes practically no reference to the pangs of mountain sickness, which it is assumed he must have felt acutely at this altitude. Our author's experience in this respect agrees with that of Sir M. Conway, Mr. Freshfield, and others who have visited the Himalayas of recent years. Only once did the party on Nanga Parbat experience any real ill effects from this cause, and that was, as in similar cases, at a height below 18,000 feet.

This expedition to Nanga Parbat, undertaken in 1895 with Mr. G. Hastings and the late Mr. A. F. Mummery, is a record of a very plucky attack, without the assistance of professional guides, on a difficult and isolated range. Between July 17 and August 24, the party ascended the Diamirai peak (19,000 feet) and crossed the Diamirai pass (18,000 feet) and other minor passes in the range, while a height of 20,000 feet was reached by Mummery and Ragobir on Nanga Parbat, and 21,000 on the rocks above the Mazeno pass by Mummery and Hastings. Altogether the climbing appears to have been of the severest kind, and the ascent of Nanga Parbat does not seem to be any nearer immediate realization than that of Kangchenjunga or K₂. The sad accident which brought this expedition to a sudden conclusion is now well known. In attempting to cross the Dima pass, Mummery, Ragobir, and Gorman Singh disappeared for ever, having most likely, it seems, been overwhelmed by an avalanche falling from the north face of Nanga Parbat. Thus perished the most brilliant amateur climber of his day, and one who had but few equals among professional mountaineers.

The chapter which follows on the Canadian Rocky mountains forms a charming introduction to the mountain geography of this little-known region. The nomenclature of peak and glacier on the accompanying map shows that here, as elsewhere, the English mountaineer is still to the fore, such names as Freshfield, Bryce, Dent, Stutfield, and Mummery speaking for the nationality of the explorer in no uncertain voice, while the fact that, with one sad exception, they are names of living and active mountaineers testifies to the recent date of their discovery. We have only one fault to find with this chapter, and that is that it is all too short. We feel that the reader has been mentally jilted; he has been led on to admire this fair country, the description of which has been clothed in most attractive garb, only to find himself excluded in the end from more intimate confidences. He would like to have heard more of that interesting group the Colombia range, discovered by the author and his party in 1898, of the characters of the group, and the nature of the climbing they afford. But perhaps, if rumour is to be trusted, the author, like a skilful cook, has merely whetted the appetite of his readers by an *hors-d'œuvre*, to be followed by a joint work dealing exclusively with this fascinating country.

In the chapter on the Lofoten islands, the author shows himself a master of terse analysis; thus, in speaking of the characteristic scenery produced by ice-erosion, he very happily describes the country as having been "worn to the bone"—that is, suffered the removal of its softer superficial covering: a truer description of ice-work than the author perhaps intends, for, in speaking of the Ofoten fjord, he mentions "valleys whose sides for miles are perpendicular walls of rock, sometimes a couple of thousand feet high, and which have undoubtedly been excavated and then polished by the power of ice." With due deference to the distinguished author, we would like to query the "undoubtedly," especially as we read in the same paragraph, "On Nanga Parbat I have seen a vast glacier turned to one side by its own moraine;" and we would like to recall the fact that the same phenomenon has

been frequently described recently from "an arctic ice-sheet such as that on Greenland" or Spitsbergen.

The remaining chapters are, perhaps, less geographical in their aim. The chapter on the Alps (giving incidentally an account of one of the author's most brilliant ascents with Mummery up the Brevina route of Mont Blanc) should be read by all who affect to despise this cradle of the mountaineering race. It contains some of the best-written pages in the book. In spite of modern innovation, the Alps will retain their splendid fascination for many a year to come. "The overhanging cornices high above, for ever on the point of breaking off, will still hang poised in unstable equilibrium. The storms will sweep as frequently as of old across that mountain land, holding for a brief space all in gloom; the lightning-flashes, the roar of the thunder, the driving snow, and the keen biting wind will hunt the too presumptuous climber back to lower altitudes, as they have done often before; and afterwards the sun will shine again, dissolving the clouds, drying the lower slopes, and showing how the old mountains have once more put on a clean garment, which, in magnificence, in glittering splendour, is as unmatched or unequalled as the deep glowing colour of that 'solitary handmaid of eternity,' the open ocean, or the glories of the heavens at dawn or at sunset."

The author's passion for sunsets is very marked, and gives rise to some of the finest passages in the book, and his feeling for scenery is evinced in every page. What could be more graphic than the following description of the Lofoten islands?—"For those who care to climb where great expanses of sky and clouds arch slowly down to the far-off horizon, and where lonely islands are set in open spaces of blue water, those remote Lofoten mountain fastnesses beyond the arctic circle are difficult to equal. The low circling sun making it for ever afternoon, flooding sky and mountain land in warm luminous colour, which deepens the distances, and adds perspective to ridge after ridge of serrated and barren peaks."

Though the description of actual mountain ascent is limited to a few portions of the book, every page breathes out the spirit of the everlasting hills, the attar of mountain memories distilled from the soul of one of Nature's truest worshippers. It is indeed a charming book.

E. J. G.

THE MONTHLY RECORD.

THE SOCIETY.

The Awards for 1903.—The Royal Medals and other premiums of the Society have been awarded this year as follows: The Founder's Medal has been assigned to Mr. Douglas W. Freshfield, in recognition of his valuable contributions to our knowledge of the Caucasus, both by his journeys and writings, and for his recent explorations round Mount Kangchenjunga. It is also intended as a mark of appreciation of his persistent efforts in behalf of the improvement of geographical education. The Patron's Medal will be given to Captain Otto Sverdrup, for his important discoveries in the Jones sound region during his recent arctic expedition, as well as for the important part which he played as captain of the *Fram* during Dr. Nansen's famous expedition. The award of the Special Victoria Medal, given for geographical

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