

Mountaineering in New Zealand.

NEW ZEALAND ALPINE CLUB.

WINTER ASCENT OF MOUNT TORLESSE.

It is astonishing how great is the want of knowledge of the glaciers and Alps of the colony amongst those living in New Zealand. Many people do not seem to realise that we have mountains covered with perpetual snow and ice from 6,000 ft to their summits. Many are also under the impression that when Mounts Cook, Earnslaw, Tasman, and a few others are mentioned that they have named every peak worth naming. Instances can be shown of this in dealing with Earnslaw, of which mountain such expressions as the 'second mountain of New Zealand,' 'second only to Mount Cook,' and so on, are often used.

Now Mount Earnslaw is 9,200 feet high, and comes only twenty ninth on the list of great mountains, and it is a fact that we have many hundreds of unclimbed peaks covered with perpetual snow and ice. Our Alpine playground is nearly, if not quite, as large as that of Switzerland. We have larger glaciers, lower perpetual snow line, and peaks which are in every respect as difficult and grand as any in Europe.

even longer, merely part of an enjoyable day's work. It is true he will be looked on as a maniac or something of the kind for undergoing the hardships that are necessary in our Alps in pursuit of his idea of amusement, but why is he a greater fool than the man who knocks himself about at football, goes for hours together over bad ground for shooting, whips a stream day after day for fish, or for indulging in any other sport one can think of? All sports worthy of the name entail hard work. If they didn't where could the man be found who'd go in for them? It is this sporting instinct which has made the Englishman what he is, and given him the perseverance and pluck to overcome the hardships of real life.

Considerable work has been done in the way of opening up and exploring the large glaciers in the Southern Alps by the members of the New Zealand Alpine Club, but considering the splendid field for work and scenery to be found, there are very few men enthusiastic or energetic enough to go beyond the very limited number of beaten

discoveries worthy of note. In January, 1890, Messrs Mannering and Harper were the first to cross the southern spur of Mount Cook at the head of the Ball Glacier, thus finding a pass from the Tasman Valley to the Hooker Valley. This has been done several times since, and owing to its superb views will become a very popular expedition in the future. In the same month the same two climbers made the first exploration of the Murchison Glacier, which proved to be some 11 miles long by 1½ broad, and the second largest in New Zealand. On this trip they were three days without tents, and owing to the unexpected size of the glacier, run out of food, but they had the satisfaction of making extensive corrections in the existing maps.

In December of the same year Messrs Mannering and Dixon made the second almost complete ascent of Mount Cook by the route followed by Mr Green in his ascent in 1882, and Messrs Harper and Blakiston made the first complete traverse and exploration of the Hooker Glacier, reaching the divide at its head (8,688 ft). These two expeditions are notable for the fact that Mount Cook was found to be a spur of the main range, and sends no water down to the West Coast, being some distance to the East of the watershed.

In 1891 various expeditions on new ground may be mentioned. In February, the first recorded ascent on the Malte Brun Range was made by Messrs Johnson and Harper, of a pass to the Murchison Glacier, from the summit of which grand views were obtained, one of which accompanies this



WILD MAN'S RIDGE AND HEAD OF DOUGLAS GLAZIER MOUNT ARROWSMITH.

Yet in spite of this fact many, including even some who have been to the Hermitage, still continue to talk of Mount Cook as if it were our only great mountain, periodically bringing in Mount Earnslaw, as one of the few others of note whereas so far as can be ascertained at present, Mounts Tasman and Nefton are more difficult from a climbing point of view and as grand to look at as Mount Cook, and are not far short of it in height.

The ascending of such peaks as these with their immense snow and ice fields is a science in itself. Mountaineering is not, as some suppose, only a case of 'climbing hills,' but can only be safely indulged in after years of hard work and experience. It is as different from the hill climbing of the popular mind as riding to hounds in a difficult country is to donkey riding. The one requires an immense amount of experience, caution, and skill, the other mere muscle and perseverance. The average mountaineer looks on climbing a hill, which only requires walking, as a 'beastly grind,' but put him on to an ice-clad peak, and the excitement of avoiding dangers, overcoming great difficulties, and the glorious scenery, will make an eighteen hours' expedition, or

tracks. The Club was formed in July, 1891, with its headquarters at Christchurch, and is composed of about forty members from various parts of New Zealand, and some thirty five 'subscribers.' The former number includes old explorers who did pioneer work in the ranges whether above or below the snow line in the early days of the colony, and also those who have of later years done work on the glaciers and above the snow line, the object of the Club being amongst others to record old explorations which are fast being lost sight of, to encourage mountaineering proper, and generally to open up and explore the higher Alps. The latter number consists of persons who wish to help the club, but who do not necessarily take an active part in the climbing. They pay half subscription, and partake of the benefits of membership.

The club publishes a very interesting journal twice a year, issued gratis to members and subscribers, which contains articles on adventure, discoveries, and scientific work in the high Alps. Considerable work has been done by members of the club during the past three years in the Alps, and they have been instrumental in making one or two

articles, looking towards Mounts Cook and Tasman. Of the other work done in the year may be mentioned partial ascent of Mount Sealy (8,600 ft) and Mount de la Roche (10,020 ft) in the Tasman district, also the second ascent of Mount Earnslaw, and first ascent of the Remarkables at Wakitipu by Mr M. Ross and his brother, with Birley the guide. In December of the year Messrs Mannering and Lean crossed the divide at the head of the Godley Glacier, descending for the first time to the West Coast.

In 1892 may be mentioned an ascent of Mount Rolleston on the West Coast Road, and some explorations on the West Coast side of the Range up the Kellery River, when Messrs Park, of Hokitika, explored the Barton and Kellery Glaciers, making considerable corrections in the maps. This year, however, there was not so much work done, a partial ascent of Arrowsmith, a fine peak up the Ashburton river, and a second partial ascent of De la Roche being the only work recorded.

In addition to the above expeditions there have been several worthy of note taken by surveyors who also belong to the club, but the above represent the chief of those