

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

was held on 27th February—the Chairman, Rev. Professor George Cameron, D.D., presiding. The Office-bearers and Committee for 1894-95 were re-elected—Mr. J. A. M'Hardy being added to the Committee in room of Dr. Roy deceased. The excursions for the current season were fixed as follows: Spring—Mount Keen; Summer—Ben Alder; Autumn—Kerloch.

It was resolved that members should be at liberty to bring one friend—a gentleman not permanently resident in Aberdeen, a lady, or one of their family—to the Spring or Autumn Excursions; and that the Summer Excursion should be, as formerly, confined to members and candidates for membership.

The Secretary was instructed to send an excerpt minute of the Club's sympathy to the family of the late Dr. Roy.

The following new members have been admitted:—Alexander Esslemont, Rev. F. R. Barry, John Grant, John Mitchell, J. F. K. Johnston, T. R. Buchanan, M.P., J. W. Crombie, M.P., and Professor Trail, M.A., M.D., F.R.S.

was revisited by the Club on 7th May last, and was one of our most successful excursions. Leaving Aberdeen at 8.0, Aboyne was reached at 9.20, where carriages were in waiting to convey the party up Glen Tanner to Coirebhruach. As the mansion-house of the Forest of Glen Tana was passed, Sir William and Lady Brooks wished us “a pleasant day on the hill” and invited a call on the way down the glen. Coirebhruach, at the intersection of the glen road with the Firmouth path, was reached at 11.15, and the ascent at once commenced. This path, one of the twelve “chieffe passages from the River Tay to the River Dee through the mountains”, leads right over Mount Keen, crossing it at an altitude of 2500 feet, about three furlongs west of the cairn. Keen is granitic, and is the most easterly mountain in Scotland over 3000 feet in height. The summit is a well-defined cone, rendering it readily recognisable from most points of the compass. It has a north-facing corrie, Corrach, immediately below the cone, rather symmetrically shaped. Some of the members made the ascent by the corrie, the upper part of which was picturesquely fringed with a broad semi-circular snow wreath. The snow lay at such an angle, 42°, and was so hard, that it was not without difficulty that steps were kicked, and a crevasse about twelve feet deep, near the upper edge, negotiated.

Leaving Coirebhruach for the ascent, the Tanner is crossed at an altitude of 1235 feet. The path, a wonderfully straight one, lies

between Cowie Burn on the east and Black Burn on the west, both these streams being tributaries of the Tanner. The former rises between the summit of Mount Keen and Braid Cairn (2907), a neighbouring height to the eastward. At an altitude of about 2150 feet, a convenient well is reached, close to the east side of the track. *Keen* is a corruption of *Ceann*, a head, and *Mount* is evidently a form of *Mounth*, a very old term. The *Mounth*, according to Skene's "Celtic Scotland", "extends in nearly a straight line across the island, from the Eastern Sea near Aberdeen, to the Western Sea at Fort William If the *Mounth* is now known as the range of hills which separates the more southern counties of Kincardine, Forfar, and Perth, from those of Aberdeen and Inverness on the north, it was not less known to the Venerable Bede in the eighth century, as the steep and rugged mountains which separate the provinces of the southern from those of the northern Picts".

Assembled at the cairn—which is situated on the Aberdeen-Forfar march, on a natural rocky outcrop, at an altitude of 3077 feet—the party was joined by several mountaineers who had made the ascent from Glen Esk, *via* Glen Mark and the Ladder. The weather was propitious, on the whole, but the atmospheric conditions did not permit of a distant view. The Benhinnans, streaked with snow, from Glas Maol to Loch-nagar, were well seen; indeed, one of the best views was that of the latter mountain in varying lights. Ben Avon, struggling with clouds, represented the Cairngorms, while the Buck, Tap o' Noth, and Bennachie were also seen at intervals. Morven, however, and Clochnaben were uninterruptedly in evidence.

A meeting of the Club was held on the summit—Mr. Robert Anderson presiding. Sir William Cunliffe Brooks, Bart., was, with acclamation, elected an honorary member.

The descent was leisurely made by the Firmouth road. A small section, however, proceeded westwards to Allt Deas, a burn which runs in a deep, narrow gorge a short distance to the west of Black Burn. On the right bank of the former stream, at a height of about 2000 feet, is a fine corrie locally known as the "Slate Quarry". The origin of this name cannot now be ascertained; it is as unlike a slate quarry as it possibly can be. Considerable portions of the sides of the corrie stand at a perpendicular height of over 300 feet, and are composed of pure white quartz, imbedded in which may be observed numerous specimens of crystals. Manganese, also, in some quantity is found by Allt Deas.

Luncheon was served at the little shieling above Coirebhruch, and thereafter the drive down the glen begun. The party, which numbered forty-one, was hospitably entertained (as on 5th May, 1890) by Sir William and Lady Brooks, who also described many of the art and other treasures with which the house is enriched. Nor were the natural and other features outside neglected—particularly the famous kennels—but the time at command was utterly inadequate even to glance at a fraction of the numerous tasteful internal adornments, or the great improvements which Sir William has made in the glen.

With three parting cheers for our kindly hosts, the drive to Aboyne was resumed, and Aberdeen reached in due time.

Keen, crossed by the Queen in 1861, in her "Second Great Expedition", is thus described by Her Majesty: "Mount Keen was in great beauty before us, and as we came down to Coirebhruach and looked down Glen Tanner, the scenery was grand and wild. Mount Keen is a curious conical-shaped hill, with a deep corrie in it . . . We came in sight of a new country, and looked down a very fine glen—Glen Mark. We descended by a very steep, but winding path, called the Ladder, very grand and wild".

Probably the two rarest plants on the route are *Calamagrostis Epigejos* and *Azalea procumbens*. Both are in very small quantity—the former about three miles below Coirebhruach, the latter on the cone. The *Azalea* is not known to occur to the east of Mount Keen, and it is not on Morven. The only Alpine species met with by Macgillivray were—*Luzula spicata*, *Gnaphalium supinum*, *Alchemilla alpina*, *Saxifraga stellaris*, and *Carex rigida*.

PROFESSOR A. MILNES MARSHALL, M.D., F.R.S., Owens
 FATAL College, Manchester, met his death on 31st December
 ACCIDENT last while climbing Scawfell. That morning Professor
 ON Marshall, with Dr. Collier, Professor H. B. Dixon, Mr.
 SCAWFELL. Otto Koecher, and a lady, formed a climbing party with
 the view of ascending this mountain. At the foot of
 the precipice the party divided, and Professor Marshall, with two
 others, ascended the face of Scawfell by Steep Ghyll and the chimney
 leading up to the Lom Man and Deep Ghyll Pinnacle. This accom-
 plished, the party of three descended by Lord's Rake, at the foot of
 which they stopped to take photographs. About 3 p.m., wishing to get
 a view into Deep Ghyll—up which the other party was climbing—they
 mounted the small pointed ridge to the west of Lord's Rake. Dr.
 Marshall went a few feet higher than the others, and called out, "Here
 is the best place for the camera". Immediately afterwards those below
 heard a noise as of a large stone falling. The nearest to Professor
 Marshall was Dr. Collier, and he, at once turning, saw a great stone
 roll by down the mountain, followed by the body of Professor Marshall.
 The body rolled a distance of about 150 feet on to the screes below.
 Probably the large stone on which Professor Marshall was standing
 gave way, and he must therefore have fallen clear backwards some 10
 or 15 feet from the ridge. Dr. Collier at once ran down to the spot
 where the body was lying, but it was found that Professor Marshall
 was quite dead. Those who were near were convinced that he was
 killed instantly at the first fall. The place where he stood was not in
 any way a difficult climb, no rope, of course, being used, and Professor
 Marshall was always a most careful climber. His tastes were varied,
 but of late years they had centred especially in mountain climbing.
 During the last summer his ascent of the Aiguille Dru and his crossing

of the Matterhorn from the Italian to the Swiss side were, under the circumstances, among the feats of the season. It was to keep himself in training for this favourite amusement that he delighted to spend a Christmas on the mountains near Wastdale, where a life full at once of achievement and of promise has been so prematurely closed. He was born in Birmingham in 1852.

IN 1883 the mountains had definitely laid their wonderful fascination over us after an ascent of Mount Keen. CAMPING OUT Among THE CAIRNGORMS. Though we had several times thereafter visited the Cairngorms, it was not till 1889 that we were able to add Braeriach to our list. On Monday, 29th July, that year we began a mountaineering holiday, walking from Ballater to Glen Derry, where we camped. Our impedimenta consisted of four rugs, two hammocks, six stout stakes hinged together in couples for slinging our hammocks in treeless districts, and provisions for about a week. The evening was beautiful as we slung our hammocks in < form between three pines, in order that our heads might be close together. We found ourselves so comfortable that we did not stir till eight o'clock next morning. After breakfast we made for the Shelter Stone, which we reached about 1 p.m., employing the remainder of the day in improving our temporary quarters. Unfortunately the next two days the weather proved very unsettled, so we had to content ourselves with once more exploring Ben Muich Dhui, Cairngorm, and other near summits. On Friday, however, we started for Aviemore by the Garbh Uisge with the mist scudding past about the 3250 feet level, tinged a magnificent pink by the rising sun, as yet invisible to us. The plateau reached, a hurricane was next encountered. Descending into the Larig, the two rival head-streams of the Dee were successively crossed—a simple matter, as they were in spate—and Lochan Uaine made for. Thence we held up the scree to our left, reaching the summit of Cairn Toul at 8 a.m. It was now clear all round except to the south-west, in the direction of the wind, which still blew with considerable force. After spending a couple of hours near the cairns, we wandered round to the sources of the Garchory, thence to the summit of Braeriach, and over to its northern corries. Then, making for the precipices above Loch Eunach, we rapidly descended to its north end, passing on the way down some of the finest tracts of white heather we have ever seen. Once off the ridge we were in a region of calm; in the glen the sun was glaring hot, and there was little wind. After having battled for hours against the hurricane, we lingered among the heather, gazing up at the magnificent east face of Sgòran Dubh, till a smart shower thoroughly roused and soaked us. The walk down the glen to Aviemore was very enjoyable. What struck us most was the beauty and luxuriance of the heather. We had never seen anything approaching it; the colours were unusually fine, and, besides the pure white on Braeriach, there was every tint from pink and red to the deepest crimson.

Returning from Aviemore we, after a passing visit to lovely Loch an Eilein, made for the Bennie and its tributary, the Allt na Leirg Gruamaich. We camped at 11:0 at the last pines by the side of this latter stream, which we could hear rushing some fifty feet below us. But, as sleep was a failure, we wandered about for two or three hours to keep ourselves warm, watching the sun-glow circling the horizon. The night was not to be called disagreeable, but it was very cold, and a drizzly rain fell at intervals. After a false start in the darkness, we were well into the Pass by 4 a.m., rain not adding to our comfort. The col was leisurely reached by 6:0, then, turning sharply to the left, we held direct to the Shelter Stone. The weather now settled down—to the bad, and we could only plan excursions. Lured by an apparent improvement, we emerged from beneath Clach Dhian, and again started for Ben Muich Dhui. But the threatening black clouds, having got us at a height of over 4000 feet, burst forth into a deluge. We made a hurried retreat Stone-wards, leaving the sole of a boot behind us, and thus putting a compulsory end to our mountaineering. We left our retreat early next morning, and by 5:0 were at Loch Etchachan. There the wind seemed to blow from every point of the compass, and mist held us till we crossed the Derry. This was followed by a steady downpour of rain all the way to Ballater.—ALEX. M. and HENRY KELLAS.

came into existence on the 1889 Aberdeen Midsummer
THE JUNIOR Holiday, when the name, originally accidentally applied,
CAIRNGORM was adopted. A party of seven (afterwards joined by
CLUB other five Aberdonians) then resolved to cross Ben
Muich Dhui and Cairngorm to Nethy Bridge. The
combined party started up Glen Derry about midnight on a cold,
drizzly, cheerless morning. A heavy rain succeeded a "Scottish mist",
and the wind blew with great force. At Loch Etchachan sleet was
encountered, followed, 500 feet higher, by hail, which mercilessly
punished our faces. Mist now closing in upon us we retraced our
steps to the loch and held down to the Shelter Stone. Here we were
not a little comforted by a fire and an early (6:0) breakfast. It was
apparent that rain was to be the order of the day, so we made for
Nethy Bridge by the Saddle, reaching our destination at 3 p.m., after a
"shower" which lasted for about ten hours. At the Abernethy Hotel
food was not to be had, as the Cairngorm Club had requisitioned every-
thing for their first excursion, and so we took train to Grantown.

The following Midsummer Holiday route was also across the Cairngorms, but from Boat of Garten. After wandering the greater part of the afternoon between the tops of Cairngorm and Ben Muich Dhui in a hurricane of wind and rain—mostly also in dense mist—we somehow dropped into the Learg Ghruamach, and unexpectedly, at 11 p.m., found shelter in a hut, where circumstances had driven other three mountaineers. Here the night was passed, not uncomfortably by any means—we were reduced to such a condition that a roof and a fire

made a palace—and early next morning we once more stepped out into the rain and found our way to the Linn of Dee, where Mrs. Christie gave six wet, weary, and hungry hillmen the reception their condition demanded.

Since then every holiday and many a “Saturday to Monday” have seen us on the tramp. Our wanderings have ranged over a considerable area, and embrace the more important summits of the Cairngorms, Lochnagar, Mount Keen, Morven, the Benchinnans, Ben Nevis, the Loch Maree district, Schichallion, &c. The original members were:—Alex. Cook, J. W. Davidson, G. J. Firth, George Garden, Alexander Gray, J. S. Preston, and Donald Sinclair; Firth and Garden have been replaced by George Nicol and Edward T. Smith. We are a close corporation, our motto being—“we are seven”; friends of members may indeed become “associates”, but these are allowed to join excursions only when our number falls below seven.—D. SINCLAIR.

AN ATTEMPT from Ballater to Derry Lodge. The result of the November storm was observable in the lower part of Glen ON Lui, whole stretches of trees being upturned, many BEN MUICH DHUI having boulders embedded in their roots. Derry Lodge was passed at noon, after which the track was much obstructed by fallen trees. Rain and hail also began to be troublesome, a state of matters which was not improved when Coire Etchachan was reached. The burn there was almost entirely concealed under snow, and the loch was covered with thick ice-floes, which, broken up in the genial spring, had again frozen together. Black threatening clouds now obscured the sun, the wind came sweeping down, and we were enveloped in a fierce storm that compelled us to huddle in the lee of a friendly boulder. This short storm past, we resumed our upward march over deep snow, the top coating of which was fresh and soft. But soon another storm came on, fiercer even than its predecessor, and prudence suggested a retreat, so we turned our backs on the Ben. In the course of the descent not a few involuntary disappearances were made in the snow. The foot of Coire Etchachan reached, falling snow was exchanged for sleet, and latterly rain kept us company to Derry Lodge. As we approached the Lodge we were joined by a brother mountaineer who had left Lynwilg that morning, crossing (as he thought) Braeriach on the way. We held on to the Linn of Dee, where we found comfortable quarters at Mrs. Christie's. Next day we cycled to Ballater, thoroughly satisfied with our early attack on the monarch of the Cairngorms.—W. M. BRECHIN.

REVIEWS.

referred to in our last Number, is a booklet issued by the
GUIDE Observatory authorities (Edinburgh : J. Menzies & Co.,
TO price 1/-), having a good map and illustrations. It
BEN NEVIS, gives an account of the foundation and work of the
Observatory. The latter will be best shown from the
extracts following, which will also give an idea of the interesting nature
of the hand-book. Gales, of course, are of frequent occurrence on the Ben.
"On the night of February 21, 1885, a terrific southerly gale blew with
hurricane force, and stopped all outside observing for fifteen hours.
. . . . This gale was the severest experienced in any winter. Oc-
casional similar conditions of wind and overpowering drift have
occurred, but only for an hour or two at a time, and long-continued
gales have not been accompanied by so much drift. During the months
of February and March, it is not uncommon to have south-easterly gales
blowing for three or four days continuously, at the rate of 80 to 100
miles an hour ; but, under these circumstances, the hill-top is usually
swept at once clear of all loose snow, and a hard surface of rough ice
left, which is not touched by the wind, and on which good footing may
be got".

Thunder-storms, it seems, "are rare on Ben Nevis ; on an average
there are only half-a-dozen in the year, mostly in autumn and
winter ; and there have been intervals of as long as two years without
either thunder or lightning being observed. Most of the ordinary
summer thunder-storms seem to pass below the hill-top, and even the
thunder is not heard. But when a storm does pass over the summit, it
is a most unpleasant experience. The cloud is seen approaching with
lightning flashing from it ; it then envelops the hill-top, during which
time no lightning is seen, but rain or snow falls heavily—as much as
one-third of an inch in ten minutes has been recorded ; and then as the
cloud moves off, a discharge takes place, not merely from the cloud,
but from all large metallic bodies in the Observatory ; a brilliant
flash springs out from the stoves, and a sharp crack like a pistol-shot is
heard. . . . The most severe of these storms was in January,
1890".

The question of the best time for a "view" from our mountain
tops is now set at rest. "The morning hours are not the time at which
the hill-top has most chance of being clear, as many believe. It has
been found that in the afternoon (1 to 5 p.m.) there are fewest foggy
hours, and in the early morning (1 to 6 a.m.) most ; but the proportion
is only about five to six, and, practically, when the top is clear it
remains clear all day long. The clearest month is June, with about
half its days clear, and the foggiest months are November and January,
with only one day in four clear".

There is little animal life, as might be expected, at the summit. "Snow buntings build their nests among the rocks of the northern cliff, and flit about on the top. Hawks and ravens, too, are frequently seen, but other birds are only occasional visitors. There are usually a pair or more of stoats somewhere about the summit. . . . Footmarks of hares and foxes may often be seen in the snow, and the red deer occasionally come up to within a few hundred feet of the summit".

The mean pressure for the year is 25.299; lowest mean monthly temperature, 22°·6, in March; highest, 40°·0, in July. The highest mean temperature of any month was 45°·6, in June, 1887; the lowest, 20°·0, in January, 1886, and March, 1891. The absolutely highest temperature hitherto recorded is 67°·0, on 24th June, 1887; and the lowest, 2°·7 on 27th March, 1892. The mean annual rainfall has been 142·34 inches (at Fort William, 75·79 inches), being the largest of any place in Scotland, so far as known. The maximum is 17·22 inches, in January, and the minimum, 5·53 inches, in April. Sunshine observations show that "in the West Highlands June is the brightest and driest month of the year".

It is well to state, on the authority of the Observatory officials, that Ben Muich Dhui "can be with difficulty distinguished" from the top.

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL in the first two numbers of Vol. III. keeps well up to its own high standard, under the editorship of Mr. William Douglas (we blundered into *David Douglas* at p. 114). No. 13 (January, 1894) opens with "Climbing near Wastdale Head", an article which must have been read with peculiar feelings owing to the fatal accident on Scawfell on the last day of the year. No. 14 begins with No. I. of a series of articles on the "Rise and Progress of Mountaineering in Scotland". There is excellent variety of subjects in these two numbers. In No. 14 Mr. Henry Sharpe discourses about Brocken Spectres and such-like phenomena, while Mr. R. T. Omond gives a supplementary note thereon.

CALLANDER and its neighbourhood are well described in a neat little volume (now in the second edition) by Malcolm Ferguson, author of "Rambles in Breadalbane" (Glasgow: T. Murray & Son, Limited). Mountaineers are indebted to Mr. Ferguson for the initiation of the erection of the Ben Ledi Jubilee Cairn, built on 14th June, 1887, but which came to grief at the hands of "a number of senseless and evil-disposed young scamps" on 10th July, 1889. It was rebuilt on 21st June, 1890, and now measures about 20 feet in height, and 45 feet round the base. A short chapter is devoted to an ascent of Ben Ledi from Callander. The book is prefixed by an excellent map.