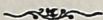


EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.



THE 8th September last was the fiftieth anniversary of THE QUEEN'S the Queen's first visit to Balmoral; and the fact at BALMORAL least may be recorded in our pages. Her Majesty JUBILEE. owns territory that has been included in the wanderings of the Club, and she has on more than one occasion—notably in the excursions to Lochnagar (by Glengelder) and to Broad Cairn—granted special facilities for the Club driving through her grounds. We may, therefore, even at this late date, join in the congratulations expressed on the occasion of her fifty years' residence on Deeside, and join also in the sincere wish that she may be long spared to visit her home in the Aberdeenshire Highlands. The occurrence of the "jubilee" was utilised by the Aberdeen newspapers to furnish descriptive sketches and historical accounts of Her Majesty's Deeside possessions. The subject, in some aspects, has been frequently treated, and is, perhaps, a trifle too familiar—at any rate, not much that is new was evolved. And yet there seems room for writing a fuller account of Balmoral than has yet appeared—there is more than one hiatus in its history susceptible of being filled up. We may, however, present the leading facts. Balmoral was originally part of the great earldom of Mar, but in the beginning of the seventeenth century it passed into the hands of a family of Farquharsons—a branch of the Farquharsons of Inverey. The last Farquharson of Balmoral was a Jacobite, and was indicted for high treason for his participation in the 1745 rising. He died without issue a few years after, and the estate of Balmoral fell to the Farquharsons of Auchindryne and Inverey, who sold it, along with these properties, to the second Earl of Fife in the end of last century. Somewhere about 1830 Balmoral was taken on lease by Sir Robert Gordon, at one time Ambassador at Vienna, a brother of the Premier Earl of Aberdeen; and he considerably extended the old Castle. He died in 1847, and the lease then fell into the hands of Lord Aberdeen, who assigned it to Prince Albert. Although the lease had several years to run (it was for 38 years from 1836, according to one authority), the Prince bought the estate in 1852, the purchase price being £31,500. At his death (in 1861) Balmoral became the property of the Queen; and in 1878 Her Majesty largely extended the estate by buying Ballochbuie Forest from the late Colonel James Ross Farquharson of Invercauld. The present Castle was built

in 1853-6. The Queen is also proprietor of Birkhall, in Glen Muick, and has a lease of Abergeldie. Her Deeside property comprises over 40,000 acres, and extends along the right bank of the Dee for half a dozen of miles, sweeping back to and including a portion of Lochnagar.

THE following excellent passage occurs in the
 MOUNTAINEERING introduction to "Rock-Climbing in the English
 AS A Lake District", by Owen Glynne Jones (Long-
 PASTIME. mans, 1897) :—"Mountaineering satisfies many
 needs ; the love of the beautiful in nature ; the

desire to exert oneself physically, which with strong men is a passionate craving that must find satisfaction somehow or other ; the joy of conquest without any woe to the conquered ; the prospect of continual increase in one's skill, and the hope that this skill may partially neutralise the failing in strength that may come with advancing age or ill health. Hunting and fishing enthrall many men, but mountaineering does not claim the sacrifice of beasts and fishes. Cricket and football are magnificent sports, yet there is something repulsive in the spectacle of five thousand inactive spectators of a struggling twenty-two, and the knowledge that the main interest of many players and observers is of a monetary character does not tend to convince one of the moral benefits that these sports can offer. The mountaineer does not reap any golden harvest by his exertions—even if he writes a book on his subject. He does not exhibit his skill to applauding thousands ; and his vanity is rarely tickled by the praise of many. He must be content with the sport itself and what it offers him directly. Probably the scientific mountaineer gains most. He is certain to acquire rare and valuable knowledge of facts in zoology, botany, or geology, if he starts with the necessary intellectual equipment. The physicist's mind is perpetually exercised by the natural phenomena he witnesses ; mist bows, Brocken spectres, frost haloes, electrical discharges of the queerest description, mirages, all these offer him problems of the most interesting kind. The man who knows something of geology is a useful member of an exploring party. The expert in mountain weather does not exist ; perhaps he does not dare to, or perhaps the subject is too complicated for a nineteenth-century scientist. However this may be, it is worth while paying a little attention to meteorology and noting the quality of weather that follows any definite condition of the wind, the barometer, or the atmospheric temperature".

was held on 19th December, 1898—the Chairman, Rev.
 OUR TENTH Robert Semple, presiding.

ANNUAL Office-bearers and Committee were elected as on page V.
 MEETING The excursions for the current year were fixed as
 follows : Spring Holiday—Corryhabbie Hill ; Summer
 Holiday—Cairngorm ; Autumn Holiday—Lochnagar.

The Club voted a guinea towards the funds of the Scottish Rights-
 of-Way Society.

REVIEWS.

THE Hon. Stuart Erskine, second son of Lord Erskine, BRAEMAR, a gentleman of literary proclivities and somewhat eccentric views—he favours a “Legitist Restoration”, or some nonsense of that kind—resides occasionally in Braemar. He thinks there is a lack of serviceable guide-books to the village, and he has accordingly favoured the world with a little brochure of 100 pages, entitled “Braemar: An Unconventional Guide Book and Literary Souvenir”. It is “unconventional” certainly, for it has no earthly claim to be called a guide book—it gives no information whatever as to what is to be seen in and around Braemar. Mr. Erskine, however, to judge from his preface, declines to tout for the mere tourist or mountaineer; he prefers to interest the summer visitor, and so serves up for the delectation of that rather frivolous person a *réchauffé* of the history of Braemar, drawn from all manner of sources—from the “View of the Diocese of Aberdeen”, mistakenly attributed to the pen of David Wedderburne, to the New Spalding Club volumes on “Historical Papers relating to the Jacobite Period”, the editorship of which by Colonel Allardyce is omitted to be mentioned. He dilates at some length on the Jacobite Rising of 1715. Everybody, of course, knows about the raising of the standard on the “Braes of Mar” and how the gilt ball at the top of it fell off, presaging disaster; and doubtless many people have seen the brass plate in the dining room of the Invercauld Arms Hotel which marks the spot where the standard was raised—a mound (Mr. Erskine calls it a “rocky eminence”!) removed a number of years ago when the hotel was enlarged. Perhaps, however, everybody is not so familiar with the fact that the Earl of Mar who raised the standard was a “collateral ancestor” of Mr. Stuart Erskine—a fact that may help to explain that gentleman’s enthusiasm for the cause of the Pretender. Mr. Erskine deplors the decadence of the Braemar Highlander, who wears the degrading trousers and speaks more English than Gaelic; and he prays Heaven to keep the railway away from the village and to prevent the village itself being modernised and “improved”. These are about the only “views” in this “unconventional” guide book, and they are far from original. The book, in fact, is only serviceable as a “literary souvenir”, bringing together what is at present buried in a number of books. The most interesting portion—far and away—is a chapter on the Topography and Antiquities of Braemar, contributed by Rev. John G. Michie, Dinnet—an acknowledged authority. Mr. Michie furnishes a story that we do not remember to have seen before:—“In one of the earliest trigonometrical surveys, Ben Macdhui was represented as being several yards higher than Ben Nevis, which so delighted the Earl of Fife (James, the fourth Earl) that he seriously contemplated building a tomb for himself on its highest point. But before he had time to carry this whim into execution, a more accurate survey had found that the

Braemar giant was some twenty feet lower than his Lochaber rival, at which the Earl was so provoked that he determined to put the matter beyond doubt by erecting a tower fifty feet high on the summit of his favourite mountain, so that when he chose he could retire thither and become the highest man in Great Britain. It is to this fancy that Saunders Laing, the author of the poem on the Dee, refers when, apostrophising the great Ben, he says or sings—

‘And dost thou think some future day
To entomb our Fife’s ennobled clay’?”

[See *C.C.J.*, Vol. I., p. 322. Ed.]

HILL-CLIMBING
NEAR ABERDEEN

is the title of an article in the November number of the *Grammar School Magazine* by a “Cairngorm Club F.P.” [Former Pupil is meant]. The author suggests—very sensibly—that walking should be begun when one is young, and he prescribes two preparatory courses prior to blossoming out as a “Cairngormer”—the first, a round of the heights near Aberdeen, the Baron’s Cairn, the Blue Hill, and Brimmond; and then, a wider radius, including Bennachie, the Tap o’ Noth, and the Buck of the Cabrach, and the lower Deeside hills—Cairn-mon-earn, Clochnaben, Mount Battock, and Mount Keen.

THE AVON AND
THE ABERDEEN
WATER SUPPLY.

MR. THOMAS JAMIESON (a member of the Club, by the way) has suggested that the Aberdeen folks—greatly perturbed at present by reports that the Dee is becoming contaminated by the sewage poured into it—should take their water supply from the Avon, tapping

the river at Inchroary and conducting the stream required to Corgarff, and then down Donside and Deskrieside, Towie and Cushnie, to Midmar, and so on to Aberdeen. The idea, first ridiculed as too ambitious, has “caught on” and been favourably received, but engineers have yet to report on its practicability. Everybody knows that

“The water o’ A’an, it rins sae clear,
’Twad beguile a man o’ a hunner year”,

and it is not surprising to learn that it is purer and more free of deleterious matter than the Dee at the Linn or even at the Pools, and than Loch Katrine or Thirlmere. The proposal has led some one to break out into poetry (in the *Daily Free Press*) in praise of “Sweet Avon”, in the style and to the tune of Burns’s “Afton Water”—*longo intervallo*, we are obliged to say. The opening lines are not bad—

“Dash briskly, sweet Avon, atween thy broon braes;
Dash briskly, I’ll sing thee a song in thy praise:
Thy water’s sae clear that ilk stane may be seen;
Dash briskly, they await thee in ‘braif’ Aberdeen”.

But in the subsequent verses the parody is not so well sustained—

“Loch Avon! we view thee with awe and delight—
Grandeur and beauty are joined in our sight;
Muich Dhui’s watch-towers, Cairngorm grim and grand,
Beinn Mheadhoin’s fearsome cliffs, all encircle thy strand”.