

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

THE Club has at last added the monarch of British mountains to its official list of ascents. The climb, which was a record one for numbers, was made on Saturday, 21st July, and is thus described by Messrs. Christie and J. G. Kyd:—

A leisurely breakfast found us ready to start from the hotel at 10 a.m., and we spent an easy and profitable 2½ hours in reaching the top. This comparatively long time was occupied, principally on the advice of the writer (who had been there before), in taking advantage of every "coign of vantage" on the way to have a look through the glass at the clearly defined horizon, in case the summit might be crowned with its usual cloud-cap. The climb otherwise was devoid of interest, and after an hour or two spent on the almost level top, we descended in nearly as leisurely a manner, thoroughly enjoying the views and the fine day. Fort William was reached again about 7:30 p.m. The view from the top was clear from about S.S.W. to E.N.E., and a magnificent panorama it was, particularly towards the west, where a very fine view of the peaks on the distant islands was obtained. A sail up Loch Eil in the evening, after dinner, to get another view of the Ben, completed a very enjoyable day. We were exceptionally lucky in obtaining such a clear view, as the top was clouded above the 3000 feet line all day on Sunday and, as long as we had it in sight, on Monday.—C. T. CHRISTIE.

I journeyed by Inverness, intending to meet the Club party at Fort William Station on the evening of Friday. I arrived at Fort William at an early hour, so I spent rather a dreary day in that dreary little town. However, train time came at last. I studied carefully the face of every passenger, but, to my dismay, not one of my companions arrived. I offered a boy in the town a modest fee if he would take me up to the top of the "Ben" in the dark, but he would not rise to the bait, as he was busy fishing. At last I made up my mind to sleep at Fort William and ascend in the morning, with or without Club society. I therefore started at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday. Walking at a fair pace, I reached the top about twelve, keeping the Observatory path, but failing to discover the toll-man. The summit is about as bleak a place as could be imagined. The view was fair, but hazy towards the west. Leaving the summit, I got back to my starting place, rather disappointed with the ease of the ascent. Learning afterwards that those who should have been my companions had ascended on the same day, I was more puzzled at missing them than at escaping attentions at the receipt of custom.—J. G. KYD.

THE autumn excursion of the Club (24th September) Foudland was to Foudland, Dunnideer being also ascended. AND Dunnideer was taken first. Here Mr. William DUNNIDEER. Porter, the Chairman of the Club, read an interesting paper, in which was succinctly gathered up practically all that is known—or, rather, all that is averred—about the hill and the ruins on the top of it. Resuming their carriages, the party drove to Skirts of Foudland, and crossed the hill almost due south and north, descending on the Glen of Foudland at Bainshole. The day was fairly good, with a sharp autumnal air, and tolerably clear light; and an excellent view was obtained from the top of Foudland. The features of the view are described elsewhere. Now and again, portions of the landscape were obscured in cloud, but the rain showers quickly passed; in one of these brief showers the party were caught as they were leaving the top, but the disturbance was only trifling. The return drive to Inch by Kirktown of Culsalmond, Colpy, and Williamston was made in bright and exhilarating sunshine. The party dined comfortably in the Station Hotel, Mr. Porter presiding, and Provost Dawson, of Inch, being the Club's guest; and there being a comfortable allowance of time—all day through, in fact—a half-hour was devoted to a saunter through the pleasant little village of Inch before the train left for Aberdeen, which was reached—*mirabile dictu!*—before 8 p.m.—R.A.

MR. C. G. CASH thus writes to the Editor of the THE O.S. MAPS AND THE CAIRNGORMS. *C.C.J.*:—"You will perhaps allow me a little space in which to reply to four points in Colonel Sir John Farquharson's paper in your July issue. Of course, the Colonel and I are in the main in sympathy, but we are not in exact agreement on some points. First, as to the scale of the one-inch map. I wrote purely as a mountaineer. 'The O.S. and the Cairngorms' was my theme, and no cycles go to the mountains—though I have ridden Glen Eunach, and found it not so bad as I feared. The one-inch scale may be too large for a cyclist who covers many miles of road per day, but it is too small for a man who wishes to study somewhat minutely the topography of a mountain. So much has this been felt, that the Scottish Mountaineering Club issued in January, 1898, a revised O.S. map of the Coolins on the scale of 4 inches to the mile. (2) In the Colonel's list of maps I am surprised to find no mention of the new issue of the one-inch map of Scotland, with details and contours in black, and hachures in brown. This will be the hill-man's map *par excellence* until the larger scale is improved. (3) May I protest against the Colonel's use of 'England' and 'Great Britain' as terms inclusive of Ireland. This error is annoyingly frequent, but I did not expect to find an ex-Director-General of the O.S. making it. You, Mr. Editor, should not have passed it. (4) As to the British Association. The Committee of Section E. of the B.A. in 1891 recommended that the six-inch maps should be hachured, and its experts would scarcely recommend what is impossible. The Colonel's

difficulties seem to me to be purely imaginary. Surely a scale of graduated thickness could be arranged for the hachures; and they would not interfere with the legibility of the details of the map if they were printed in brown as on the new issue of the one-inch map. Finally, may I draw attention to two articles I wrote for the *Scotsman* of September 18 and 25, 1900? In them I urged a reform of what seems to me and many others the most serious defect of our O.S. service—that is, the short time its officers are connected with it. The responsible officers should hold their offices permanently, and with their responsibility should go some power of initiating”.

THE *Scotsman* of September 18 and 25 last contained two interesting articles on the Ordnance Survey, over the initials “C. G. C.”, which will be familiar to readers of this *Journal* as those of one of our own contributors. The earlier article dealt professedly with the recent Blue-Book Report of the Ordnance Survey, and also ably criticised some of the weaker features in the arrangements of the Survey Department. The later article gave a concise but fairly complete outline of the history of the Survey, and a necessarily short account of its methods. We extract a few passages of special interest. Speaking of the latest form of the one-inch maps of Scotland, the writer says:—

“In Scotland the hill features were engraved in hachures on the same plate as the outline, and there is also a separate outline plate showing elevation by contour-lines. It is only on these outline plates that the recent revision has been carried out. To carry it out on the hill plates in addition would not only have doubled the cost of engraving the revision, but would have entailed damaging and repairing the hill features on the plates. On the other hand, if these hill maps were to be published unrevised, they would gradually go out of use, the original cost of drawing and engraving the hills would be thrown away, and there would probably be complaints from the public. The hachured hill plates give such an exquisite and graphic representation of the surface features of the ground that it is quite out of the question to withdraw them. An endeavour has been made to get over this difficulty. Transfers from the hill plates have been taken, and have been laid down on zinc after removing all the detail except the hills; and transfers have also been taken from the revised outline plates and laid down on other zinc plates; and from these two sets of zinc plates a map containing both the hill features and the results of revision has been obtained by double printing, the outline being in black and the hill shading in brown. The printing of the hills in brown, while showing the features of the country in detail, enables the names and outline of the map to be clearly read. The map combines the beautiful orographical effect of the hachures with the precise mathematical information of the contour lines, and is thus a great improvement on the previous editions, in which these forms of information were separated. The cost of preparing revised hill sheets in this manner is very moderate, and the sheets are being sold, printed on somewhat thinner paper, at a slightly lower price than was previously charged, viz., 1s. 6d., instead of 1s. 9d. No doubt this is the form in which Ordnance Survey maps will most commend themselves to the public, as at once the most useful and the most beautiful. Sheets are now issued in this form for nearly all Scotland north of the latitude of Forfar, except the Outer Hebrides”.

In regard to the troublesome and difficult question of place-names, we read:—

“In the course of the revision of the larger scale maps of Wales, arrangements have been made for a revision of the place-names as written on the maps during the original survey. This revision has been carried out by Welsh-speaking revisers, who submit the names as ascertained to the best local authority who is willing to assist by examining the names. The names, with the remarks of the local authorities, are then examined by Welsh scholars, who have undertaken to examine the Welsh names in their respective counties. The names of these gentlemen are printed in the report. In Scotland the Gaelic names are also being examined during the revision of the Highland districts. The names are first locally inquired into by a Gaelic-speaking employee of the Survey, who submits them to the best local authority he can find, and all those which are doubtful are submitted to the Place-Names Committee of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, which, says the report, continues to render valuable assistance to the Survey in this matter. While the Gaelic-speaking member of the Survey is known to be very competent and zealous, it should be noted that the report does not name a band of Gaelic-speaking scholars comparable to the Welsh ones. The Place-Names Committee of the R.S.G.S. exercise some of the functions of such a body, but they are not all, it is to be feared, Gaelic scholars or even Gaelic speakers, and they revise only a few of the names. We should like to know that the Survey is assisted in this matter by such men as the Edinburgh University Professor of Celtic, who possesses and has displayed such trained fitness for the work. It should be further noted that the report mentions only Gaelic names in Scotland. Nothing is said of Norse names, though these constitute a serious difficulty”.

One serious defect of the six-inch maps of the Cairngorm District is thus pointed out:—

“It is not to be supposed that the work of the Survey is faultless. Indeed, the Survey itself welcomes and asks for helpful criticism, but it is to be feared gets far too little of it. Any error or omission in any of its maps should be pointed out by letter to the Director-General at the Southampton office, and much help might be rendered by people examining in detail maps of places they are intimately familiar with. We shall confine ourselves here to pointing out one defect on the six-inch map, a defect frequently complained of, and that is the wholly inadequate mapping of the higher ground. Up to a height of 1000 feet above sea-level the maps are admirably contoured; but above this all the more recently surveyed parts are without contours. This is very unsatisfactory to all who have occasion to use the maps, and Sir A. Geikie, whose general praise of the maps has been quoted, complained that his geological surveyors had the greatest difficulty in carrying on their work at altitudes above 1000 feet in the absence of contours on the six-inch maps; and a distinguished traveller said that, whether from the point of view of the geographer or of the mountaineer, it is ‘barbarous’ to stop contours half-way up a hill. The 1892 committee, already referred to, had this matter under consideration, and recommended that above the 1000 feet level contours should be interpolated at 250 feet intervals by water level, urging that the work should be carried out at as early a date as possible; for, said the committee, ‘it affects a comparatively small area of country, in which the map has not been completed in this particular as in other districts; it has been already done in part for Scotland; it is a feature required by the Geological Survey; and is of the greatest service for ascertaining the watersheds for high-level water supplies’—a matter of rapidly increasing importance—and occasionally for mining purposes; while at the same time it is a matter of general interest for the whole community’. The total cost of doing this work for Scotland the committee estimated at £5000. As far as we are aware, there is no reason for the continuance of this particular defect in the maps, beyond the

expense and the present over-weighted condition of the Survey. If public attention can be directed to the matter, sufficient pressure may be brought to bear on the proper authorities to secure that it shall be attended to, and that another step shall be taken towards the perfecting of the work of the Ordnance Survey in Scotland”.

The organisation of the Survey is thus criticised:—

“The Ordnance Survey, like so much of our public service, has suffered through lack of a dictator. It has been sat on by various Commissions, Royal and Parliamentary, and inquired into by committees, appointed by various departments, and it has had a series of Directors-General, no one of whom has had a free hand to do what he thought necessary. Hence it has come about that only quite recently has the Survey produced complete sets of maps on a uniform method, and that even yet these maps are far from satisfying those who have a critical sense of what modern cartography is capable of. And yet we must repeat that the excellence of the work of the Survey has often been matter of praise. But it is desirable and necessary that there should be more permanence about the responsible staff, and that the head of this staff should remain continuously in office. He should be an expert in surveying and cartography, and along with his responsibility should go some power of initiative. During the last ten years every responsible office of the Survey has been in the hands of at least three successive officers, and, though there can be no question of the efficiency and zeal of these officers, there can also be no question that, as the work itself is of a continuous nature, its performance can in no way be improved by such frequent changes in the men performing it. By way of contrast we may note that in the sister survey, the Geological, the same men are found holding the same offices for many years in succession. They are indeed permanent officials, and so useful and necessary is this arrangement found to be, that it has been asked whether the rule of retirement by age limit should not be set aside in certain cases so as to avoid the breach of continuity in the work that is more or less inevitable with a change of officer. We fail to understand why the arrangement that obtains in the Geological Survey should not apply also to the Ordnance Survey”.

Lastly, the general attitude of the public towards the maps of the Survey is thus described:—

“There remains yet one other matter that should be remarked on, and that is the comparative ignorance of the general public with regard to the Ordnance Survey and its maps. Scotland is visited annually by thousands of tourists and holiday makers, but we have so far failed to find more than a very small number of them using the Survey map, and our own copy usually provokes inquiry as to what map it is, and whether and where copies can be obtained. Bartholomew and Johnston produce reductions of the Survey maps, with modifications of their own; these are good maps, and, being largely advertised, and constantly brought under the notice of travellers, are purchased and used. Indeed, we have found that otherwise well-informed people call them ‘Ordnance’ maps, and are surprised when the real state of matters is made known to them. Something should be done more than has been hitherto attempted to make the Ordnance Survey maps known. They should be advertised, and should be more easily procurable. Schools Boards should see that every school possesses and displays the Survey maps on various scales of the district in which the school is situated. Every post-office might well display a one-inch and a six-inch Survey map of the surrounding neighbourhood. In these and such-like ways knowledge of the maps would be spread, and interest in the work awakened”.

It is much to be hoped that the publication of these and such-like articles may have the effect of drawing the attention of the public and the authorities to the excellencies and defects of the Ordnance

Survey, and so bring about those reforms that are needed to make its work thoroughly efficient and satisfactory.

THERE is on exhibition in the window of a Liverpool A RAID taxidermist a splendid specimen of the golden eagle, ON AN recently killed at Benula Forest, Glencannich, Beauly. EYRIE. The bird measures 7 feet 2 inches from tip to tip of the wings when expanded, and 3 feet 2 inches from beak to tail. It had built its eyrie in a small cave on the face of a high cliff, and a keeper, having noted the spot, watched until the return of the female bird one evening, and having fastened a rope round his waist and secured it round the stump of a tree, descended as soon as darkness had set in to the nest, situated many feet below. He was immediately attacked by the eagle, but after a short struggle succeeded in breaking its wing with a cudgel. He then waited until daylight, when he destroyed the bird, and took the only eaglet from the nest, and re-ascended the face of the cliff.—*Daily Free Press*, 25th July, 1900.

DONALD FORBES, better known as "Killiechassie", AN AGED who is in the 80th year of his age, created some MOUNTAINEER. diversion in Fort William on Saturday, 18th August last, by signifying his intention of climbing Ben Nevis. This he subsequently did, occupying a little over three hours in the ascent, and a like period in the return journey. On reaching the summit, he danced the Highland Fling on the Observatory roof, after which he returned to Fort William looking by no means exhausted. So far as is known, Donald is the oldest person who has tackled Ben Nevis.

THE following new members have been admitted:
NEW MEMBERS. —Messrs. Alexander Simpson, Robert William Mackie, John D. Bell, J. Mathieson, Alexander Emslie Smith, Jun., John Beaton, and James Fraser.

REVIEWS.

LAST year, Mr. Francis Gribble published an entertaining volume under this title—a collection of the earliest accounts of mountain ascents in their naivete. Some of these accounts are very amusing. Peter III. of Arragon, who flourished in the thirteenth century, decided to make an ascent of Pic Canigou, in the Pyrenees, in order to “ascertain what there was on the top of it”. He had to finish the ascent by himself, his companions being too tired and too frightened to go to the top; “and when he was on the top of the mountain he found a lake there, and when he threw a stone into the lake, a horrible dragon of enormous size came out of it, and began to fly about in the air, and to darken the air with its breath”. There are other stories of dragons on the mountain-tops, and due mention is made of the well-known legend about Mount Pilatus—that, if anyone threw a stone into the lake near the summit, Pilate (whose body lay in the lake) would avenge himself by stirring up a tempest. One of the earliest climbers of Pilatus sagely records that “the climbing of mountains takes one’s breath away, though it may be rendered less unpleasant by agreeable conversation”. And “the first of the early mountaineers who is something more than a name”, Professor Conrad Gesner, made the following notable declaration in 1543—“I have resolved for the future, so long as God suffers me to live, to climb mountains, or at all events to climb one mountain every year, at the season when vegetation is at its best, partly for the sake of studying botany, and partly for the delight of the mind and the proper exercise of the body. For what, think you, is the pleasure, what the joy of a mind, affected as it should be, to marvel at the spectacle of the mighty masses of the mountains, and lift up one’s head, as it were, among the clouds. The mind is strangely excited by the amazing altitude, and carried away to the contemplation of the great Architect of the Universe. . . . Cultivators of philosophy will proceed to contemplate the great spectacles of this earthly paradise; and by no means the least of these are the steep and broken mountain-tops, the unscaleable precipices, the vast slopes stretching towards the sky, the dark and shady forests”.

THE SPEY AND THE FESHIE. At a meeting of the Inverness Field Club on 10th April, Mr. Lionel W. Hinxman, of the Scottish Geological Survey, read a paper on “The River Spey”; and one part of this paper in particular—the whole of it, indeed, for that matter—is of interest to members of the Club more or less familiar with “the run o’ Spey”. The middle portion of the course of the river, according to Mr. Hinxman, consists largely of ancient lake basins. One of these extends from Kingussie to the foot of Loch Insh, this loch, however, representing but a small

remnant of the ancient lake, whose waters covered an area seven miles in length and nearly a mile in breadth. The barrier to this basin was formed by the Feshie, which flows into the Spey almost at right angles, and carries an extraordinary load of rock-waste, which is spread out in a large alluvial fan between Feshie Bridge and the foot of Loch Insh. The effect of this, at the present day, is to convert large areas of otherwise good land into useless swamp. Mr. Hinxman suggested that if the Feshie were made to enter the Spey by a more oblique channel half-a-mile further down, and if the channel of the Spey were deepened below the island of Kinncraig, the upper part of Loch Insh would be drained, and the marshy meadows above, that are now flooded for half the year, would be converted into fertile arable land. The upper course of the Feshie, Mr. Hinxman added, presents an excellent example of the shifting of a watershed, and the capture of the head waters of a stream belonging to another river-system. It is evident that the river Eidart, which joins the Feshie a mile below the bend, where it touches the boundary between the counties of Aberdeen and Inverness, was once the head stream of that river, but that the Feshie has gradually cut back its bed to the county march, and captured the upper part of the Geldie. Thus the former head waters of the Geldie are now those of the Feshie, and the watershed between the basins of the Spey and the Dee has been shifted more than six miles to the eastward.

MENTION of this catastrophe was made in last number THE GAICK (page 192), in connection with the publication of a CATASTROPHE. pamphlet by Mr. Alexander Macpherson, Kingussie. A curious version of the catastrophe is given in a work just published—"Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland", collected entirely from oral sources by Rev. John Gregorson Campbell, Tiree. The catastrophe, in fact, according to this version, is assigned to the direct agency of the devil, who made his appearance to "The Black Officer of Ballychroan" (Captain Macpherson) some time before. "Late at night strange noises were heard about the house, and the roof was like to be knocked in about the ears of the inmates. First came an unearthly slashing sound, and then a noise as if the roof were being violently struck with a fishing-rod. The dogs cowered in terror about the men's feet. The captain rose and went out, and one of his attendants overheard him speaking to something, or someone, that answered with the voice of a he-goat". The diabolical agency continued at work even after the occurrence of the catastrophe, which was caused by an avalanche, or whirlwind, "or some unusual and destructive agency". "When the melancholy procession with the dead bodies was on the way from the forest, even the elements were not at peace, but indicated the agency that had been at work. The day became exceedingly boisterous with wind and rain, so much so when the Black Officer's body was foremost, that the party was unable to move on, and the order had to be changed". The reason for associating Captain Macpherson with the Evil One will be found in Mr. Macpherson's pamphlet.