

## FATALITY ON SGURR NAN GILLEAN.

MR. JAMES FRASER, a member of the Club, and Mr. Alexander Whincup, advocate, Aberdeen, left Aberdeen on 10th August last for a week's hill-climbing in Skye. This was not the first occasion on which they had gone on holiday together, neither of them being without experience of Scottish mountains. They were favoured with unusually excellent weather for Skye, and, among other climbs, had made an ascent of Sgurr nan Gillean,\* Sligachan Hotel being their headquarters.

On Friday, the 16th, they set out from the Hotel for another climb of Sgurr nan Gillean, making the ascent from the Coire a' Bhastier side. The small scree plateau to the left of and below Nicolson's Chimney, about 200 feet below the summit, was reached without incident. Besides the Chimney several small gullies start off from this plateau, and run out on the main ridge below the summit, the one to the extreme left being the most conspicuous. The fatality occurred in a subsidiary gully between the one on the extreme left and the Chimney. A halt was made at 3:40 p.m. on this plateau to survey the surroundings and determine the precise line by which the summit was to be reached, though there was neither danger nor difficulty in the remaining portion of the climb. Hitherto Fraser had been leading; now Whincup started off by himself. He proceeded about fifteen yards, and, on reaching a point about sixty feet above the plateau, disappeared towards the right round a rock projecting from right to left across the gully. Directly after his disappearance he shouted to his companion to come along and assist him to get a hold for one of his feet. Fraser was about to respond, when he was startled by a loud shriek, and on looking up was horrified to see

---

\* See Vol. I., "Sgurr nan Gillean", p. 57; "Hill-Climbing in Skye", p. 181; also "Three Days in Skye", p. 272.—Ed.

Whincup in mid-air to the left. He fell with such violence on the scree plateau, near Fraser's feet, that he was precipitated over a steep rock face, and fell heavily on the great scree slope below, in all a distance of not less than 200 feet. Fraser immediately descended, and found his unfortunate companion unconscious. The injuries to the head and body were so manifestly serious that Fraser lost no time in setting out for assistance, and reached Sligachan in about an hour.

Willing helpers were found at the Hotel, and a start was made without delay. The party included a doctor who was fortunately resident at the Hotel and four others, besides Fraser. The body was reached about 6:40; death was certified to have been instantaneous. The party, having improvised a stretcher from materials which they had brought along with them, conveyed the body a short distance downwards. Such, however, was the steepness and roughness of the ground that further progress, without more help, was found to be impracticable. Accordingly one of the party descended to Sligachan, and at 2 a.m. ten men arrived, being guided to the spot by a lantern which the watchers kept alight. The cold was found rather uncomfortable, and there was besides a scarcity of food till the arrival of the second party.

A fresh start was made at dawn, about 3 o'clock, and the Hotel was reached in five hours, the descent in the circumstances being exceedingly difficult and toilsome. Nothing was wanting in the arrangements made by Mrs. Sharp, the hostess, and her staff in the sad circumstances; and all the neighbours were prompt in rendering what assistance they could. The unfortunate accident cast a profound gloom over the island, and much sympathy was expressed with the deceased's relatives.

Appearances indicated that the deceased had been seized by a fit, and that this led to the fatality. Mr. Whincup's constitutional tendency to such seizures, it is proper to say, was quite unknown to his mountaineering companion.