

THE CLUB AT SCHICHALLION.

THE excursion of the Club to Schichallion on 8th July last was probably unique as regards the number taking part. A scrutiny of the Visitors' Book at the Station Hotel, Aberfeldy, will reveal the fact that up to the previous evening four members had taken up their quarters with the view of joining the general body who, according to the official programme, would travel on Monday morning.

Having partaken of dinner, we four were seated outside enjoying the evening air—deliciously cool and refreshing after the almost tropical heat of the day—and our conversation naturally turned to thoughts of to-morrow. Would the weather be suitable, and what number of members and friends would probably join us? Our genial and interesting host gave us much cause for comfort as regarded the first part of the question, but he was evidently much exercised and troubled regarding the second. We however suggested that he might assume, not having any official intimation to the contrary, that his resources would not be in any way overtaxed, and we were pleased to note that this assurance eased his mind, as with a cheery "Good night" he retired to rest—an example we very soon followed.

Monday found us early astir. All anxiety so far as weather conditions were concerned seemed unnecessary. The morning was cloudless and bright, betokening a repetition of the heat of the preceding days. No communication having been sent from headquarters, we decided to have breakfast, and over that meal discussed the desirability of making a start ahead of official time as one of the party was anxious to return to Aberdeen that night if possible. No sooner had we signified our intentions than our good host proceeded, with characteristic courtesy, to enable us to carry them out, and soon we were

seated in a comfortable conveyance drawn by a pair of "spankers", *en route* for Schichallion.

The drive over the fine old Wade bridge, giving a glimpse of the massive memorial to the "Gallant Forty-twa", on through Weem, and past the grounds of Castle Menzies, containing magnificent and varied specimens of arboriculture, and on to Coshieville, with massive Ben Lawers standing out prominently in the west, is perhaps as fine as can be had in all Scotland. Apart from personal considerations, the sight of the perspiring horses suggested a rest at Coshieville before taking the steep hill leading at right angles from Glen Lyon, and we accordingly sheltered ourselves from the sun's rays under the roof of this fine old hostelry. Proceeding on our way, we reached Tigh an t-Socaich after a stiff drive. We now left our conveyance, arranging to rejoin it at White Bridge.

Schichallion has already been described in the *Journal* (Vol. I., pp. 100 and 393). We found the ascent—although it cannot be described as specially difficult—exceedingly trying under the scorching sun, and this, coupled with the fact that we were well ahead of official time, induced us to make our progress upwards as easy as possible. Keeping well to the south side of the ridge (which runs east and west), we ascended steadily till we reached the mass of boulders crowning the hill, but from this point our progress to the top was rather tedious. Suffice it to say that we duly reached the cairn, and first directed our gaze to the point where the vehicles bringing on the main body of the members from Aberfeldy might have been visible. No trace of "reinforcements", however, could be seen. Although we were bound to admit that the view from Schichallion (3547) was not "so fine as one would naturally expect", we certainly were fortunate in having perhaps as extensive a view in all directions as the average visitor is ever likely to get. One of our party, whose knowledge of topography is extensive and accurate, pointed out Ben Nevis, Buchaille Etive, and the hills of Blackmount Forest to the west, while northwards Ben Alder, the Sow of Athole and the Boar of Badenoch, the

Cairngorms, Beinn a' Ghlo, and others, were clearly visible. The principal summits to the east were the Farragon Hills. To the south Carn Mairg (3419) and Ben Lawers blocked the view.

There being no "business" to transact on the summit, we formally congratulated the Club on the success of the excursion, took a last look around, and began the descent—startling some ptarmigan, who, no doubt, had been watching with interest what members of the Cairngorm Club did on mountain-tops, for the purpose of comparing them, we hope kindly, with others who might visit them, "having guns in their possession", later on.

One member of the party preferred to descend by the south-west face and along the Allt Mor, while the others (the wiser, he admits) proceeded to return by the route by which they had ascended. The "single" reported that his descent was "rapid", and that he brought down with him a few cart-loads of loose material. He admitted that what, looked at from the summit, seemed a plain where good progress could be made, was really difficult and tiresome, and even dangerous, owing to the length of the heather and the many holes and other obstructions. The quartette, however, reached White Bridge within five minutes of each other—the "single" first. Descending, the trio met two hillmen, and gathered from them that they had journeyed—not from Aberdeen—to join the excursion party.

After a rest and refreshment under the hospitable roof (such a roof!) of White Bridge Inn, we re-entered our conveyance, and had a most delightfully cool and pleasant drive back to Aberfeldy. Here our troubled minds were set at rest on learning that we should not be censured for making a start in advance of the official time, as, bar the party of two who had journeyed as stated, we had the honour and glory of dubbing ourselves for the day—"The Cairngorm Club".

A Cairngormer from an outpost, with his son, lured to Aberfeldy by the Club's programme, arrived there expect-

ing to find a crowd and carriages labelled "For Schichallion". Our disappointment was great when informed that an advance guard had gone, and no others were likely to join. Not to be done out of our mountain climb, we started as a one-horse affair with light hearts and in perfect weather, winding our way along the Tay valley to Coshieville, where the road forks, to the left through Glen Lyon, to the right Strath Appin; we took the latter. Here commenced a long and steep ascent through lovely scenery. We passed the Falls of Kiltney, the old historic Castle of Garth, Glengoulandie and White Bridge Inn (where it may be mentioned are extensive limestone quarries and kilns), past Loch Kinardochy to Tigh an t-Socaich, some seven miles from Kinloch Rannoch. Following the directions of a native we commenced the ascent by crossing the flat, keeping well to the south of the ridge, and found it comparatively easy going; but a scorching sun and not a breath of wind made it uncomfortably warm work. We, however, caught a cool current of air about the 3000 feet level, which made the remainder of our scramble delightfully pleasant, and in due course we were perched on the "tapmost touring height" of majestic Schichallion, surveying the beauties around. The heat haze seemed to thicken, and dulled our view, but with compass and "Bartholomew" we were able to locate and name the surrounding "eternal giants", and at the same time we jointly and severally expressed our sympathy for every other member of the Club who lost this opportunity. While on the summit surveying the above and the beyond, we made the acquaintance of a clergyman intent with hammer and chisel on what lay beneath. We parted, and meeting his companion, whose wind had gone out well down the mountain, he asked, "Did you see So-and-so?" "Yes!" "What was he doing?" "Manufacturing road metal!"

The return drive was delightful. What with a hot bath, a sumptuous supper, good bed and perfect repose, we departed the following morning with kindly feelings and a sense of having thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.