



*Photos by*

THE CLUB ON BEN AIGAN.

*A. R. Cumming.*

## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

THE rapid run of the Great North of Scotland Railway Company's Saturday excursion train to Strathspey—to Craigellachie without a stop, in something like an hour and a half—enabled the club to

BEN AIGAN  
REVISITED.

organise an "afternoon outing" to Ben Aigan on 1st July. This hill (1544 feet) "comparatively unimportant in itself, commands from its summit a most extensive and varied view—charming and picturesque too—comprising a long stretch of the Spey, the wide plain of the Laigh o' Moray, and the broad sweep of the Moray Firth." (See "Ben Aigan" in *C.C.J.*, II., 150). It was visited by the club in May, 1897, and on that occasion was crossed from the Orton side to the Craigellachie side (*C.C.J.*, II., 182). On the present occasion, the ascent was made from the Craigellachie side, by way of the farm of Balnacoul. The day was fine and warm, with a refreshingly cool easterly breeze on the hill-top; but the view was seriously impaired by the heat-haze. Nothing of the coast of the Moray Firth was discernible west or north of Lossiemouth, and, similarly, the range of mountains and hills visible was greatly restricted; Ben Avon, for instance, well seen on an ordinary day, being only dimly outlined. But the valleys of the Spey and the Fiddich were resplendent in the bright sunshine; Ben Rinnes and the Buck stood out dark and dominant, and Craigellachie and the Cromdale Hills conveyed some notion of the scenic features of Speyside; while the vision ranged from the ruins of Auchindoun Castle to the woods enclosing the "Bog o' Gight" (Gordon Castle), with their memories of

"Old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago."

The descent was made by a different route—a route landing the party on the public road near Arndilly. In the course of the descent, some good-natured fun was poked at the excessive zeal of the "advance guard" who heroically plunged through a ravine, down one side and up the other, without observing that there was a comfortable track round the head of it—a track leisurely followed by the more elderly (or should it be less "swack"?) members. Before joining the return train for Aberdeen, dinner was partaken of at the Craigellachie Hotel, Mr. John McGregor, the Chairman of the club, presiding, and Mr. William Porter being croupier.—ROBERT ANDERSON.

Ben Lawers was climbed on 17th July last, on the occasion of the annual summer holiday. The main party left Aberdeen that morning at 6.45, breakfast being served *en route*. Aberfeldy was reached (nominally!) at 10.50 a.m., whence the party

BEN LAWERS.

at once drove to Lawers Inn and tackled the big Ben. While the conditions were unpropitious for a distant view, the nearer prospect was a continual delight, Loch Tay and its immediate surroundings being seen to great advantage. The return drive from Lawers to Aberfeldy, as was the outward run, was much enjoyed, particularly as the district was new to many of the members. The party sat down to a late dinner in the Station Hotel, the chairman, Mr. John McGregor, presiding. The chairman, secretary and others gave expression to the club's good wishes to Mr. Harry Johnstone about to sail for South Africa. Members are referred to the *Journal*, Vol. II, and III., for information as to Ben Lawers.

Ben Rinnes was the goal of another Saturday afternoon excursion (19th August), thanks to the convenient special Speyside train of the Great North of Scotland Railway. The ascent was made from Aberlour station, where conveyances were in waiting to take the party as far as the Benrinnes distillery. A later train brought a contingent from Elgin, headed by the veteran hillman, Baillie Davie, and all met on the top of the Ben. The atmosphere was not clear enough to admit of an extended view, but that was a trifling matter, as most of the members had been more than once on the summit, and the outing was otherwise much enjoyed. The members, after the descent, dined in the Aberlour Hotel, the chairman, Mr. John McGregor, presiding.

**BEN RINNES  
REVISITED.**

My friend F.C. wished my company on a botanical search near Loch Etchachan, and so arranged with me that, as he was to visit Braemar during my holiday at Inverdrue, he would wire me on what day I should meet him at the Loch. Accordingly, one evening early in August, I received his wire appointing noon of the following day for the meeting. At "five o'clock in the morning" I looked out, and found it fine, quiet, and I thought well promising,

**A STORMY DAY ON  
A CAIRNGORM  
PLATEAU.**

especially as the barometer was rising. I breakfasted in easy comfort, slung on my already filled knapsack, and took the road by Coylum Bridge to Glenmore. By the time I reached the Allt Mor the fineness had gone from the morning, the sky was quite dull, and weather appearances were somewhat threatening. I was here interested to watch a heron that was beating the burn, a bird that I had previously noted as showing somewhat plainly the white markings of its plumage. I halted at the Allt Mor bridge to dig out some tacketts that had penetrated the sole of my shoe and hurt my foot.

As I had all the morning before me for my tramp to Etchachan, I took a somewhat leisurely stroll by the burn of Coire an t-Sneachda, a pleasant walk through the heather, and over steadily rising ground. The stream is in many parts a pretty one, the heather was fairly out, and in places sprays of white heather rewarded my search. But when I got on to the open part of the brae, and could see the corrie before me, the weather had gone to the bad, all the tops were enshrouded in mist, the wind was in my face, strong and chilly, and rain began to fall. I did not feel myself at liberty to desert my trust unless the day proved seriously stormy, so I pushed on right into the corrie. Here at about 10 a.m. I sat by some springs, and made a chilly second breakfast. Then I crossed the corrie to its south-west section, where several gullies can be ascended to the plateau, one indeed being a deer path. I took a much less easy one, and made a somewhat slow ascent, spending some time on the upper rocks in gathering alpine plants. The rain and wind continued till I was nearly at the top, and added to the difficulty of negotiating the gravel slides, which demand firm and steady footing, as a slip on them would have very disagreeable results. A few yards short of the tops the rain ceased, though this probably was simply because just here it was shot clear over the edge of the plateau. Anyway, I halted a few moments to button all tight and close before stepping out of the gully on to the plateau, and into the full rush of wind and mist that would there meet me. I reached the plateau, at 11 a.m., just at the head of Coire Domhain. At this moment the pall of mist lifted a few feet, and I looked down a tunnel, mist above and mountain below, to the edge of the Loch Avon corrie, and across it to the Shelter Stone Crag—a curious and strikingly wild picture. Keeping up along the west side of Coire Domhain, I reached in a quarter of an hour the top of "Hell's Lum," an amazing cleft in the rocks dropping down into the Loch Avon corrie. It has already been described in the *Journal*, vol. II., p. 123. The odour of fox was quite strong in the wind that came rushing and howling up.

Crossing the Feith Buidhe Burn, I held well back from the rough rocks where the plateau breaks down at the falls of the Feith Buidhe Burn and

the Garbh Uisge. All along here the views of Loch Avon and its enclosing crags are very fine. Between the Feith Buidhe and the Garbh Uisge Beag were several large snow patches, and I crossed one of these, as it gave the smoothest going. I crossed the two Garbh Uisges just above their junction, and then turned up along the east side of the greater one as far as the twin lochans. By this time the mist had lifted considerably, and the rain had ceased. This little upland glen is always interesting, even for its very wildness and desolateness, its numerous snow patches adding to its effect. Just beyond the lochans, I looked down a short, steep valley leading to the south-west corner of Loch Etchachan. I rounded the head of this, and went out on to the big shoulder of Ben Muich Dhui overlooking the Loch.

This was our trysting-place, but I was alone, though it was just noon. My friend came not, and so, having lunched in the shelter of a big rock, I prowled about till after 1 p.m., gathering plants, and keeping ever a watchful eye on the track that leads up from Coire Etchachan. The wind was cold, the mist hung around, rain fell at times, and my only visitors were three goats, two darker coloured and one light grey, that came from the loch and went up the short, steep valley to the glen of the Garbh Uisge.

To vary my return journey, I crossed this little valley at about its middle depth, and reascended to the Garbh Uisge near the twin lochans, crossed it and went to the Garbh Uisge Beag. Where I struck it, a large snow wreath overhung the far side of the burn, and I had to do some gymnastics to get up on to the snow without getting down into the water. I crossed the Feith Buidhe Burn, and ascended the little valley parallel to and next west from the Coire Domhain. This seems to have no name; it is beautifully turfied, and is a frequent resort of deer, though I saw none there this day. Probably the unkind weather had sent them to lower levels. I passed over the big dome of the plateau to the south of the Carn an Lochain, getting some very striking distant views of the Perthshire hills when the mist swung upwards.

At the source of the Allt Creag na Leacainn I rested awhile, glad of a respite from the heavy buffeting of the chill wind. Here I found some puff balls, almost the largest I have seen. I followed the stream downwards, and passed into the Laig Ghru by the Eag to the north of the Lurcher's Crags. Then came the usual tiresome trudge through slush and long heather. Once on the driving road, I settled down to a steady tramp in by Loch an Eilein, and by 7.15 p.m. was seated at what I felt to be a well-earned and very welcome tea-dinner. The next day I learned from F. C. that he had ventured as far as Derry Lodge in spite of unfavourable weather, but had there been fairly driven from the hills by the fierceness of the storm.—C. G. C.

To the Editor of the Caringorm Club Journal.—Keighley, 5th August, 1905.  
Dear Sir,—I never seem to have had time to tell you how we came off on our little excursion at Whitsuntide, although I feel we owe you a letter in return for your kind answers to our enquiries.

KEIGHLEY  
TO  
CAIRN TOUL,  
&c.

Well, we had no harrowing adventures or disagreeable incidents. All was plain sailing from beginning to ending. Of course we had the best of weather, bright, clear, cool. We rather missed cloud effects, as the tops were clear all the week. Never saw Ben Nevis observatory and refreshment house to greater perfection than we did from the top of the Devil's Staircase, before dropping down to Kingshouse Inn—but I am getting on.

To begin at the beginning, we were an hour late at Aviemore, 1.30 for 12.30; so it was a long ride from Keighley, 11 p.m. the night before. Saw a beautiful sunrise on the way at Mauchline at 3.45. We got to Glasgow at 4.50. Had breakfast and left by the Caledonian to Perth and Aviemore.

V. K

We left the Temperance Hotel, Aviemore, where we had baited, at 3.15 p.m., for Loch an Eilein. We had a cup of tea there and left at 5.45. We never saw a human being from then until 9 p.m. Sunday night, on approaching Kingussie—not that it mattered, deer and ptarmigan were sufficient company. We had a delightful walk through Rotheimurchus Forest “no flies”—(in every sense) and up Glen Eunach. We wandered by the Bennie side, we passed the lower bothy which was locked up, and arrived at the upper at 9.15, and found everything the heart could desire. Two good rooms and a dressing room with tables, chairs, bedstead, washing utensils, looking glass, and cups and saucers. We made a fire of wood, plenty about, in the fireplace, boiled our kettle and had an excellent supper. Then putting some boards on the iron bedstead, and using pieces of carpet for bed and coverlet, after a quiet smoke and drop of “use and wont” we retired to rest about 11. But first we sat on the chairs outside enjoying the sunset glow, some deer having quietly departed. However the night was cool, there was a pane of glass out of the window, and a cold wind blew in. My friend therefore turned out about 2 a.m. and went to watch the sunrise. I followed an hour later. It was a splendid morning; as the sun rose it lit up the rocks on the side of the Loch in a beautiful manner. We shall never forget that night, moonlight, and early morning—Oh! for a descriptive pen!—so calm and peaceful.

We boiled our kettle again; had breakfast and departed at 5.30—loath to leave. We went up the Coire Dhonnall, got to the top, seeing more deer on the ridge—after passing a rather nasty place, about 7. Then we made a mistake—instead of turning to the left we went straight on some distance—so we never got to the top of Braeriach after all, but found ourselves on the way to Cairn Toul! We reached the top about 10; stayed awhile, and had a splendid view across the Larig to Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm and down the Dee valley. It was very clear.

It was a very rough scramble from Cairn Toul round the head of Loch Eunach. But when we found the track, about 4 p.m., it was easy going, and thus we dropped into Glen Feshie about 5 o'clock. It was a lovely walk. We arrived at Kingussie at 10 p.m., the writer with a blistered heel, owing to ill-fitting boots—(first time that has occurred). In consequence of this, next morning we had to take the coach to Loch Laggan and Tulloch, then train to Fort William. Having to get my heel better for the return we did not do any more walking at Fort William, but went by steamer to Oban and back, and by rail to Mallaig.

On the Friday morning we left Fort William by Lundivra and Sleoch to Kinlochmore, the head of Loch Leven, then over the Devil's Staircase to Kingshouse.

On Saturday morning we had a lovely walk across Rannoch Moor, passing Loch Lydoch to Rannoch Station, then took train to Glasgow, whence my friend went forward, but I stayed at Bearsden until Sunday evening.

It was a splendid outing; we enjoyed it thoroughly. It just whetted our appetite for more of the Cairngorms. We should like another try at Braeriach, then cross over to Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm, staying at the Shelter Stone if necessary. We feel quite at home there now, but we had splendid weather.—FOR THOS. STEEL and SELF—G. G. ASPINALL.

Accompanied by a young lady from Cambridge, Massachusetts—a graduate of Harvard—and mainly to gratify her intense desire to climb a Scottish mountain, I ascended Cairngorm on Friday, 1st September. There is really nothing to record of the ascent—which was made by the ordinary route from Glenmore Lodge—except that a strong wind from the west, which we experienced on our way up and by which we benefited, developed into a gale or hurricane of extraordinary force at the summit. So violently did the wind blow that moving about was extremely uncomfortable, and at times we had difficulty in maintaining our equilibrium. We hurriedly sought the shelter of the outcrop of weathered

CAIRNGORM  
IN A WIND-STORM.



OUR YOUNGEST MEMBER—GRAHAM BOOTH.

rock that overlooks Loch Avon, and here we rested for an hour or so. The day was dull and overcast; in the early morning, the appearances betokened rain, which probably did not fall owing to the wind rising; and, on account of the prevailing dullness, our view was considerably circumscribed. Our plan of walking along the edge of the corries and descending into the Rothiemurchus Forest had perforce to be abandoned—the struggle against the wind would have speedily taken all the pleasure out of it—and we had to content ourselves by walking back the way we came.—ROBERT ANDERSON.

The Club held its first "At Home" on 19th December last, the Chairman, Mr. John McGregor, presiding. There was a large attendance of members and friends, over 120 being present. After tea and

coffee had been served the chairman gave a short opening address. The first part of a musical programme, got up by Mr. Alex. Emslie Smith, Junr., was then entered on and evidently gave much pleasure to the audience. Mr. G. Duncan followed with a very fine collection of slides of mountain scenery in Skye, Ross-shire, Glencoe and the Cairngorms. The most of the slides were lent by the Scottish Mountaineering Club, Mr. Lamond Howie and Mr. James Porter supplying the others. This exhibition was much appreciated and (like the musical programme) was given in two parts. Mr. Alexander Copland, J.P., the senior Vice-President of the Club, in moving a vote of thanks to the performers, congratulated the Committee on their new departure, referring at the same time to the natal morn of the Club on the Diarmaid's Field. A little dance, at which Mr. W. M. McPherson acted as M.C., closed a most successful function.

The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Club was held on 22nd December, 1905, the chairman, Mr. John McGregor, presiding. The office-bearers and members of committee were reappointed. The Spring Excursion was fixed for Mount Keen or Morven, the Summer for Beinn Iutharn Mor or Glas Maol. It was also resolved to have three Saturday afternoon excursions.

The following new members have been admitted:—  
OUR SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING.  
John R. Levack, M.B., C.M., John Forbes, Rev. R. M. Cairney, James Porter, Alfred D. Smith, Alexander Booth and Graham Booth. The last, our youngest member, is certainly a promising mountaineer. At the age of five he made his first unassisted climb, the ascent of Morven; last season, while only 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  years of age, he climbed Cairngorm and Ben Muich Dhui from Glenmore Lodge. It was thought that, the top of Cairngorm reached, he would be content with a peep of Loch Avon, but he insisted on continuing the excursion to Ben Muich Dhui. This was done accordingly, but his longing there for Braeriach was firmly repressed. It should be mentioned that the young hillman was not a penny the worse, indeed apparently all the better for his first day on the Cairngorms.

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## REVIEWS.

"The Voice of the Mountains" is a most welcome anthology of mountain literature, mostly verse, edited by Ernest A. Baker and Francis E. Ross, well-known contributors to our Journal. This dainty volume is published at 2/6 net by George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., and is a pleasure both to handle and to read; in it substantial justice has been rendered to a large number of writers, especially by copyright pieces reproduced by permission. Our only growl is a little one—some verses in our own volumes were surely worthy of a place in the otherwise faultless compilation! We learn from "The Voice" that the senior editor pleads guilty to verse, and from the *C. C. J.* that the junior does not

confine himself to prose. The editors deserve the thanks of all mountaineers who view mountaineering as something a great deal more than mere "record"-making, who regard hill-climbing in the way indicated by J. S. Blackie in the first sonnet in this collection—

"I love to leave my littleness behind  
In the low vale where little cares are great,  
And in the mighty map of things to find  
A sober measure of my scanty state,  
Taught by the vastness of God's pictured plan  
In the big world how small a thing is man!"

The average reader will probably be astonished at the extent of "mountain literature" made to pay toll in this modest collection. Its perusal may solace him while pent-up in town, or even when detained in mountain quarters by unfavourable weather; and, however often he turns to the book, he will probably find something new, or something, at all events, inspiring or refreshing. The wealth and diversity of the collection constitute its chief attractiveness—combined, of course, with the literary excellence of the passages selected.

Dr. James Martineau, the eminent theologian, as is well known, spent many a summer at Polchar, Rothiemurchus, not far from Loch an Eilein. The following "reminiscence" is given by Professor William Knight in his recently published volume of "Retrospects"—

DR. MARTINEAU  
AND  
BEN MUICH DHUI.

"It was planned one year that during my visit we should ascend Ben Muich Dhui; and as Mr. Seeley (the historian) and Mr. Oscar Browning were staying near at hand, that they should join our party. We drove so far through the pine forest of Rothiemurchus, and thereafter had an ascending walk of ten miles to the summit of the mountain, and a similar descent of ten miles to the forest. Martineau was approaching eighty years of age; but, as a young-old man, was now in a mood of inspired soliloquy, now discussing Hegel and Darwin, again rapt in silent sympathy with Nature, feeling the 'strength of the hills' around and the glory of the sky above him. He was the fleetest of foot amongst us, and was first at the summit of the mighty ben. Others of the party, though junior, took more frequent rests, and examined their aneroids, while he was treading the heather and facing the breeze. The views of Braeriach and Cairn Toul near at hand, of Beinn a' Ghlo to the south, of Ben Alder and the Ben Nevis range to the west, were magnificent that day, and he could name the majority of peaks and tell their heights. He used to delight to take his friends shorter walks into the Rothiemurchus district, to the top of Ord Ban (the white hill) which I ascended with him when he was eighty-five years of age, and round by Loch an Eilein (the island loch), a favourite stroll."

Hillmen will welcome this addition to pictorial descriptions of Highland Valleys. Strathspey is especially interesting to the Club

PORTER'S  
VIEWS OF  
SPEYSIDE.

and our fellow-member has seized upon not a few spots which recall pleasant holiday recollections, and also suggest future excursions. Loch Avon and other less remote Lochs are a particular feature. Mr. Porter has, we understand, a similar work in the press, "Inverness and District," which doubtless will also contain excellent specimens of mountain and river scenery. Avery & Co., Limited, are responsible for the production of these works which are a credit to them as well as to Mr. Porter, while another member of the Club has the lighter task of editing.