

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

THE arctic character of the winter that has just closed has given ample scope for the enjoyment of the Norwegian sport of ski-ing without leaving our own shores. On New Year's day, a friend and I

SKI-ING NOTES. ascended Bennachie from Oyne. We travelled from Aberdeen by the early morning train and managed to strap on our ski in Oyne station, and get through the village without any very great demonstration on the part of the inhabitants. The snow was in perfect condition until we got into the wood, but there it became somewhat heavy. We ascended Craig Shannoch, taking slightly longer than a fellow-clubman who was on foot, and struck over toward the Mither Tap.

Once on the crest of the hill we flew downwards, soon reaching the woods of Pittodrie, then dodging in and out among the fir trees, kept on at an immense speed till we reached a farm about two miles from Pitcaple station. The good farmer was struck almost dumb at the speed with which we came down his sloping pasture; and on our enquiring how long we should take to reach Pitcaple we were informed that it took "about half-an-oor tae walk, but ye'd gang in about twa meenuts on thae things!" However, he underestimated our time, as we found that the snow on the turnpike was not in very good condition, so our progress was slow. On reaching Pitcaple we kept on to Inveramsay, where we caught a suitable train home.

On the morning of the 3rd of February, four of us started from Ballater with our ski to ascend Morven. We wended our way up the Tullich Valley, and put on our ski about half-way up the glen. On reaching the head of the valley we found the snow too hard for ski-ing uphill, there having been a thaw the day before followed by a sharp frost through the night, so we unstrapped our ski and tramped up to the cairn. The view was superb in every direction, but we were too anxious to try our "Telemark" swings on the way down to spend long on the summit. We put on our ski about a hundred yards from the cairn, and got a most glorious run right down to the Lary Burn, about two miles below Morven Lodge. The run was so splendid that two of us reascended about 800 feet to enjoy the return flight. We ski-ed down to the junction of the Lary and the Gairn, and then walked home, down Glen Gairn so well known to us when the trees are green, yet in that calm winter's evening, with the daylight flickering, we found many a charm in the glen which she does not reveal to her summer visitor.—J. G. K.

THE Spring Excursion for 1907 was held on 6th May, when Morven was revisited. The ascent was made from Cambus o' May station, *via*

Tomnakiest, and the descent made *via* Lary to Glen

MORVEN. Gairn. The atmospheric conditions were not favourable for a wide prospect, but the Cairngorms and

Lochnagar—on which latter mountain were several club members—were seen. There was a good deal of snow in the upper gullies of Morven. The

members dined in the Invercauld Arms Hotel, Ballater, the chairman of the club, Mr. James A. Hadden, presiding. Mr. James A. Parker and Mr. George Anderson were admitted members of the Club.

THIS hostel has more than once been referred to in the *Journal*; the last occasion was in the present volume at page 174. Alas, there will be no

more mountain excursions from Shiel Inn, for the deer forest of Cluanie has crept down to the head of Loch Duich, and so the old house, much mentioned on mile-stones, has been shut up. It is decidedly hard on mountaineers and fishermen.

ON 15th March, along with two friends, the writer ascended Ben Muich Dhui with the aid of ski. We left Inverey about 6.30 a.m., and walked up to Derry Lodge, carrying our ski all the way—

BEN MUICH no light weight. As the bridge over the Derry
DHUI. was down, we struck up to the left, and, skiing along the shoulder of Carn Crom and Derry Cairngorm, ultimately with much toil reached the head of Loch Etchachan. Here we left our ski, and struggled on foot to the summit, which we reached about 2 p.m. The view was wonderfully clear. It was strange in the arctic conditions of our surroundings to gaze upon the brown and green of Strathspey.

The cold being intense, we gladly retraced our steps, and, after some excellent glissading (too rapid in places for my taste), soon regained our ski. Putting them on once more, we ski-ed down Coire Etchachan in great style, and, after tramping along the glen and wading through the icy Derry, gladly partook of a most welcome tea at Derry Lodge. Setting out again, we wended our way down Glen Lui, and arrived at Inverey somewhere about 10 p.m. We had been out for 15 hours, but came back rejoicing that we had made the first ascent for 1907.—IAN M. MCLAREN.

THE first day of June found the writer and nine other enthusiastic climbers at Boat of Garten. We had left Aberdeen with the intention of reaching the cairn of Braeriach, whatever the condition of the

BRAERIACH. weather might be. A fairly early start (7.30 a.m.) was made, and, though it had been raining heavily all night, the sun was then shining brilliantly. We drove along through Aviemore and up past Loch an Eilein, which was a beautiful sight in the morning sunshine. Here we had our first check—two trees had to be removed from the road. This was soon overcome, but when we reached the point where there should be a bridge over the Bennie, we looked for it in vain. Luckily we all got across safely, and soon arrived at the lower bothy.

Starting to climb at 10.30 a.m., the lower end of the ridge between Coire an Lochan and Coire Ruadh was reached in about an hour. Up till now we had been walking in sunshine, but at this point we entered a very dense but fairly dry mist with a great amount of snow under foot; fortunately the snow was not very soft. We saw Loch Coire an Lochan indistinctly below us to the right, apparently half-frozen over. On the left, round the edge of Coire Ruadh, was a magnificent snow cornice.

Pushing on slowly, and using map and compass, we reached the summit cairn at 12:45 p.m., which was quite good, considering the fact that latterly we had to proceed very cautiously. Surrounded by mist and snow we lunched in an eerie silence, with the precipices dimly opening up a few yards distant. It was too cold to remain long still, so we pushed on for the Wells of Dee, which we soon reached, thanks to the skilful guiding of two of our party. We heard the water running in a snow tunnel several feet below us, and, after some digging, managed to drink each other's health at the source of the Dee. The whole plateau was one vast snowfield, except here and there where there were one or two wind-swept ridges. At several points we thrust our sticks in as far as we could, and yet were unable to touch terra firma.

From the Wells we proceeded by the March Cairn for Coire Dhondail—at least this was our intention, but somehow we failed, owing to the mist, to see the cairn. At any rate we soon began to descend, even attempting in places some mild glissading, and before long Loch Eunach appeared far below us. After this we took it very easily, and reached our waggonette about 3 p.m. The waterfalls behind the upper bothy were exceptionally fine. We all enjoyed the day immensely. Though we had no view, still to most it was a new experience, and excellent practice for careful use of map and compass.—IAN M. McLAREN.

IN an article, "Scottish Mountaineering and its Dangers," in *The Scotsman* of 25th June last, there is the following reference to Mr. Copland and the

THE
CAIRNGORM CLUB
AND ITS
FIRST CHAIRMAN.

be given without offence. Mr. Alexander Copland, of Aberdeen, had taken up the pastime before these two gentlemen had laid it down, and has celebrated his jubilee as a hill-climber. His experiences, beginning with the Cairngorms, have induced many to follow in his steps, for, alike in newspaper, pamphlet, and book form, his mountain expeditions make agreeable reading. As one of the founders, and the first chairman of the Cairngorm Club, our oldest Scottish hill club, he has left his impress both on the literature and the practice of mountaineering. His own club has faithfully carried on its work in the spirit in which its founders inaugurated it, though more advanced ideas have prevailed in similar societies both in England and Scotland. The Scottish Mountaineering Club, with its headquarters in Edinburgh and Glasgow, is naturally, though the younger, the leading club on the north side of the Border, and so to it one must look for development in Scottish hill-climbing. Founded with the same ideas, but perhaps with more ambitions than the Aberdeen club, it gradually attracted members 'furth of Scotland' with Alpine experience."

THE Aberdeen Touring Club held its annual dinner in the County Hotel

Y. Z.

on 23rd February last, Mr. John T. Nicol presiding. In the course of the evening the Chairman, referring to the prosperity that THE ABERDEEN TOURING CLUB. the Club had already experienced, expressed his confidence that in the near future success would be even greater with the co-operation of the new committee. Vocal and instrumental music, interspersed with a few pawky stories, closed a pleasant evening.—ROBERT MURDOCH-LAWRANCE.

MESSRS. Thomas Graham, Accountant, and John W. Smiley, Commercial Traveller, both of Birkenhead, spent a June holiday in Fort William for the purpose of doing some climbing on Ben Nevis. On FATALITY ON BEN NEVIS. Friday, the 14th, having already scaled the Ben by other routes, they ascended by the bridle-path to the Lochan, crossed the flat and entered the gully at the foot of the north-east buttress. Before starting the climb proper, they roped themselves together. After getting up Slingsby's Chimney about 200 feet the rocks were found to be very dangerous owing to their rotten condition, so it was determined to discontinue the ascent by that route. In the act of turning, Smiley missed his hand-grip and almost immediately lost his footing. After a fall of about 40 feet he felt the rope jerk, and in a twinkling Graham shot past him. At that moment Smiley had secured a hand-hold, but lost it as the rope tightened, and fell, about a hundred feet lower, to a ledge where he found his companion was lying. Before, however, he reached him, Graham rolled down another dozen feet or so; he was unconscious, having sustained a severe scalp wound which had practically caused instantaneous death. Smiley, in great pain and weak from loss of blood, and with a useless arm, managed to descend to Achintee, where, after being kindly treated, he was driven to the hospital at Fort William. Strange to say, his injuries were not serious—a cut on the head, right hand gashed, bruised left shoulder, and a dislocated ankle.

A search party was at once organised. By 10 p.m. they had gained the level of the Lochan when rain fell and mist gathered. The party divided—one section following the bed of the valley, the other skirting the base of the precipice. The latter section had several acetylene lamps which were not altogether serviceable, as progress was slowly made in soaking rain and mist. Corrie Mhuilinn was reached at 1 a.m., and several hours were spent without result.

The Procurator Fiscal had previously wired to the Rev. A. E. Robertson, whose knowledge of Ben Nevis is unequalled, for his assistance. Mr. Robertson arrived on the Saturday morning, and Smiley being now in better condition, more precise details were available. Shortly before noon the body was discovered with a telescope, lying on a ledge of the Chimney, the altitude being 3000 feet. Mr. Robertson, accompanied by and roped with Alexander Hunter, John Buchanan and Lawrence McDougall, now cut steps with his ice-axe, and the body was ultimately lowered by the rope, and thereafter conveyed to Fort-William.

REVIEWS.

THE sketches of Rothiemurchus and the adjoining region which Dr. Hugh Macmillan contributed a few years ago to the *Art Journal* (See *C. C. J.*, IV., 59) have now been collected and published in a volume

DR. MACMILLAN'S under the title of "Rothiemurchus" (London: J. M. Dent & Co.) Two chapters are devoted to Rothiemurchus, two to Loch an Eilein, two to Glen Eunach,

and the remaining chapters deal successively with the Larig Ghru, Glenmore and Cairngorm, and Kinrara. Dr. Macmillan spent many a holiday season at the "Forest Cabin" on the borders of Loch an Eilein, a photograph of which forms the frontispiece to this pleasant little volume. He came to know the district well and to keenly appreciate its beauties; and in these sketches we have a series of graphic descriptions of the natural features of the locality, felicitous in style and elevated in sentiment. Dr. Macmillan had a facile pen, which could be employed to equal advantage in portraying grandeur of mountain scenery or the beauties of wood and water; and it is perhaps safe to say that the varied charms of the region of which Rothiemurchus forms the centre have never been so elaborately delineated, or withal so fully and lovingly. The writer is infused with enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm becomes contagious and affects the reader. Sometimes the style is a little overstrained, as where, describing the Larig Ghru opposite Carn Elrick, Dr. Macmillan says—"The sound of many waters comes up to you and seems to fill all the hushed listening air like the shout of a multitude." Objection might also be taken to such statements as that the Larig Ghru means "the savage pass," and that nothing can exceed its loneliness; and we are afraid that the Cairngorm Club is credited with "zealous efforts" for which an unattached hillman is entitled to honour. Not a few of the details, moreover, are susceptible of considerable revision. But these are trifling blemishes in a book which it is a delight to read, and which may be recommended for the indications of the routes that are given quite as much as for the glowing descriptions of what is to be seen along these routes.

WE welcome this recently issued guide (120 pp.) to the Highlands, published by Mr. R. W. Grant, of the Morayshire Game Farm, Forres. The

maps (by Bartholemew) show the road routes for motorists

THE HIGHLANDS throughout Scotland, as well as on the other side of the border as far as Penrith and Bishop Auckland. There

BY are also numerous illustrations, and intending tourists will find the advertisement pages useful. The reader

ROAD OR RAIL. is assured that "every tour given has been taken by the compiler himself during the last few years, either by motor car or cycle."

THE Highland Railway has this season published an "Official A. B. C.

Tourist Guide to the Highlands of Scotland." It is a well-printed booklet of 186 pages, with many illustrations and maps, and full of useful information to the tourist and mountaineer. THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND. The cover, which is in colours, is one of the most attractive—save for the face of the "Imperial"—we have seen.

MR. LAWRENCE of the Aviemore Post Office has just issued the second edition of a "Guide to Aviemore and Vicinity." There are five chapters—Aviemore and Rothiemurchus, Aviemore to Kincaig, Glen Feshie, Abernethy, and Aviemore to Carr Bridge. The author is Mr. Alex. Inkson McConnochie.

ONE of the sensations of the spring publishing season was a new novel by A. E. W. Mason, "Running Water," in which mountaineering in the Alps figures very prominently. The hero and heroine are brought into friendly relations by their climbing the Aiguille d' Argentiere together, and the denouement of the plot occurs in an attempt of the villain of the piece and his victim to ascend Mont Blanc by the "Brenva route," characterised by a thin ridge of ice, across which the adventurous climber has to straddle with a leg hanging down either precipice. A thrilling account is given of this climb, and there are capital descriptions besides of other ascents, a night on an ice-slope, mountain views, and the thoughts inspired by mountain scenery. Even the arch-plotter is subject to the influence of mountains. His daring scheme to bring about the death of his companion as by an accident, is frustrated by the hero, of course, and then we have this rather striking commentary—

"Garrett Skinner knew that his plan was not merely foiled, but also understood. He stood up and looked about him, and even to Chayne's eyes there was a dignity in his quiet manner, his patience under defeat. For Garrett Skinner, rogue though he was, the mountains had their message. All through that long night, while he sat by the side of his victim, they had been whispering it. Whether bound in frost beneath the stars, or sparkling to the sun, or grey under a sky of clouds, or buried deep in flakes of whirling snow, they spoke to him always of the grandeur of their indifference. They might be traversed and scaled, but they were unconquered always, because they were indifferent. The climber might lie in wait through the bad weather at the base of the peak, seize upon his chance, and stand upon the summit with a cry of triumph and derision. The mountains were indifferent. As they endured success, so they inflicted defeat—with a sublime indifference, lifting their foreheads to the stars as though wrapt in some high communion. Something of their patience had entered into Garrett Skinner. He did not deny his name, he asked no question, he accepted failure."