

## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

It was in the month of August, and the morning mists were just rising on Ben Vrackie as I left Pitlochry about seven. The Tummel was crossed at Cluny Bridge, and the old-fashioned Highland road that runs along its right bank followed westwards up

PITLOCHRY TO the glen. The pleasantly situated Faskally House was  
ABERFELDY *via* next passed on the right, just below the confluence of  
SCHIEHALLION. the Tummel and the Garry; then with a peep up the valley of the latter stream, and five minutes at the "falls", the walk up stream was continued. The path now narrows considerably, and forms a fine specimen of a typical, Highland glen, certainly equalling, if not surpassing, its more popular neighbour, Killiecrankie. Cammoch is reached in about half an hour, but is now marked only by larachs, and high up on the opposite side of the valley we have Bonskeid House, guarding the entrance to Glen Fincastle.

The farther one proceeds along this straggling byeway the better it becomes, at least from a pedestrian's point of view; a regular switchback, up and down it goes, through a veritable ocean of the richest and most luxuriant vegetation, in which birches and bracken predominate: while keeping company with the turbulent stream, now climbing up the hillside, running through a burn, and again seeking the companionship of the river. Some more larachs were passed on the right, and then a rather primitive arrangement for crossing the stream was noticed, consisting of a steel cable stretched from tree to tree, along which travelled a roughly-made wooden cradle.

As Loch Tummel is approached the glen begins to widen out again, vegetation gets thinner, and there is a most peculiar and sudden change in the environment. Bracken and birch suddenly give place to rock and heather. But although the nearer surroundings are rather bare, this cannot be said of the prospect as a whole. About halfway along the lochside and a little short of Frenich House, an iron cross marking a well by the roadside was noticed, and then the road entered the woods again, the shade of which was gladly welcomed.

Foss House was next passed, and at 10.15 I reached the quiet little hamlet of the same name with its plain stone kirk and graveyard. Soon after this I struck the Tummel Bridge road at Dalost, just beside the Kynachan burn and following this stream upwards, a faintly marked track led me to the high level road between Aberfeldy and Rannoch, where it climbs over the base of Schiehallion (11-10). I rested here a few minutes, then crossing the shoulder of a lesser height, was soon on the slopes of the giant. The ascent was very easy, even after a fifteen mile tramp, but the luxuriant growth of mountain berries—blaeberries, cranberries, crowberries and cloudberry—offered a good excuse for frequent halts. However, the ridge was topped at 12.45, and half an hour sufficed for the walk—a most enjoyable one at that—along to the cairn (3547).

Unfortunately the view was very limited, owing to a heat haze—the day

being oppressively hot—though of course all the neighbouring hills were visible, and the village of Aberfeldy was well seen with the telescope. The white roads threading their way over the moorland in all directions contrasted strongly with the deep brown of the heather. Carn Maig looked very glum on the other side of the deep glen of the Allt Mor.

I left the summit at 1.45, and traversed the ridge eastwards to its very end, then dropping down to the Allt Mor, I had a rough tramp through the heather to a sheep track by the stream. This was followed till I spied the Aberfeldy road in the vicinity of the seventh milestone, the village being reached at 5.45, with just time for a cup of tea before the train left.

*Blackwood's Magazine* for August contained an interesting article on "The Alpine Club," which celebrated its jubilee last year, the article being written

THE ALPINE  
CLUB.

by Mr. H. Preston-Thomas, who tells us that he has missed only a couple of the annual dinners of the club in a good deal over a quarter of a century. He has much to say about the beginnings of the club, and the prejudices and misapprehensions about Alpine climbing that had to be overcome, and he discourses in exceedingly pleasant fashion about the more prominent members and their adventures, and about the transference of mountaineering feats to the Andes and the Himalayas. "It is worth remembering," he notes, "that Mr. Bryce, at present H.M. Ambassador at Washington, and lately President of the Alpine Club, was Noah's immediate successor in the ascent of Mount Ararat—from which he proudly brought down a piece of wood bearing evident traces, according to a distinguished Admiral, of exposure to sea water. So at least he once informed the club, though with a suspicious twinkle." Mr. Preston-Thomas says, it is curious that, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the mountains had as little charm for athletes as for artists. It was Ruskin who then set himself to show that the Alps were not, as they had been called, "ugly encrescences on the beautiful face of Nature;" and it was a small band of enthusiasts (of whom Mr. Justice Wills is one of the few survivors) who at about the same time invented mountaineering. They had to face an immense amount of ridicule. "But gradually people found that the men who devoted themselves most keenly to mountaineering were neither fanatics nor fools; that although, like most sports, it involved some risks, the notion of climbing a peak with its attendant excitement and adventures was not necessarily more insane than that of galloping across country after a fox; and, as a matter of fact, the hard-worked barristers, the men of science, the Cambridge tutors who were among the leaders of the new pastime, found in it the best possible recreation for mind and body."

THE secret of the Westmorland and Cumberland mountains is their perfect exemplification of proportion in design. Like the sculptor who is completely master of his art, Nature from end to end of this region has so cunningly balanced and contrasted even the smallest strokes from her chisel as to produce the greatest possible effect with the least possible expenditure of material. In such scenery as that of the Grasmere valley or of Borrowdale, there is not a single touch either too many or too few to produce the characteristic effect of grandeur in outline combined with delicate finish in detail. In this group of hills there are hardly ever those dull,

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LAKE MOUNTAINS.

unfinished intervals in the scenery which in Wales and Scotland, as in Switzerland, too often serve to lessen the effect of any but the finest points of view. The most sophisticated among appraisers of landscape would be hard put to it to suggest how the view up Windermere into Langdale could be improved by contracting a stream-gorge there or heightening the scarp of a precipice here. The result of this perfect harmony in proportion is that to the climber in the Alps or Rockies, who visits the Lake mountains for the first time, everything seems four or five times as high as it is. The Alpinist merely thinks you are joking when you suggest a walk to the top of Silver How before dinner, as you sit at tea, facing it, in the garden of the Grasmere Hotel. It looks to him a six or eight hours' excursion. And though the metric estimate soon lessens of Lakeland heights, their impressiveness remains unchanged. Partly their unique gift of making the most of themselves is due, of course, to the fact that, rising almost from sea-level, their whole height goes to mountain-making. The little church of Wastdale—that white fleck under the gloom of Scawfell and Great Gable—is less than three hundred feet above high-water mark on the sands of Irt below; but the surface of the Lake of Thun, to take a Swiss instance, is more than eighteen hundred feet. Yet this purely physical gain forms but a small part of the peculiar advantage of this mountain group over others. They lack, it is true, the supreme beauty and fascination of eternal snow; but this very absence of a snow-cap undoubtedly gives the rocky lines of all less lofty mountains a completeness of which they otherwise are robbed. The human traditions of the Lake country are as varied and individual as the sculpture and verdure of the hills. These English mountains need fear comparison with no greater range; they have a character and beauties of their own which can be paralleled on no other soil.—“*Outlook*” (21 September, 1907.)

ACCORDING to a telegram from Darjeeling, the world's climbing record has been beaten. Messrs. Robinson and M. Aas, Norwegian mountain climbers, have succeeded in climbing the north-east peak of Kabru, 24,020 ft. to within 50 feet of the summit. They were forced to return by the high wind and night approaching. They could easily have reached the top. One native died a natural death, and M. Aas had his toes frozen, but not seriously. The record therefore stands at 23,970 feet.—*Daily Telegraph*, 19th November, 1907.

THE WORLD'S  
CLIMBING RECORD.

THE Club revisited, as Saturday afternoon excursions, Tap o' Noth on 29th June and Ben Aigan on 31st August. The former was ascended from Gartly, the Club afterwards dining at the Gordon Arms Hotel, Rhyndale; the latter from Graigellachie, dinner being served in the Hotel—the chairman presiding on both occasions.

TAP O' NOTH  
AND BEN AIGAN.

THE Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Club was held on 20th December 1907, the Chairman, Mr. James A. Hadden, presiding. Office-bearers and Committee were elected as on page ix. The Excursions for the current year were fixed as follows:—Spring Holiday, Mount Battock; Summer Holiday, Cairngorm; and two or three Saturday afternoon excursions as may be arranged by the Committee. It was resolved to present the Alpine Club with a copy of the Club's publications.

OUR NINETEENTH  
ANNUAL MEETING.