

## A WEEK-END IN PERTHSHIRE.

ON the Aberdeen May Holiday, four men set out for two days' climbing in "the prettiest county of Scotland," all attracted by the mountains and ready to adopt the scientist's definition of a mountaineer, "he must be able to admire scenery from the point of view of the painter, the sculptor, and the physicist alike." Foregathering at Aberfeldy on Friday evening, we rested and laid plans for our first line of attack in the morning—Schiehallion. With a comfortably early start, we kept the road to Rannoch until reaching a shepherd's hut at Tigh-an't-Socaich, two miles from White Bridge. Here we left the road, skirting the plantation and going in a westerly direction over the green patches, with a gentle rise to the sky line (2500 feet), and then turning at right angles along the ridge which led to the top. There is a path for a part of the way, and the route was pleasant enough through heather or pasture until we got to the rocks on the summit. We could not trace the cone shape of the hill, for we were all along rising on a long ridge which narrows at the top, where it assumes majestic proportions with precipitous sides and offers a bold outlook to the west. The view of the surrounding country was grand. At that point we were just about the centre of Scotland; and though Schiehallion (3547 feet) is not as high as some of its neighbours, we beheld a magnificent panorama of mountains largely covered with snow, with soft sylvan scenery at our feet, looking on Lochs Rannoch and Tummel, and the rivers Tummel and Tay, with the rich timbering of the county around us. The near view was excellent, but the far view of the Cairngorms was not so good, owing to haze. Looking north-east over Blair Atholl we could distinctly see Glen Tilt with Beinn a' Ghlo on the right, while away to the north we could dimly make out the tops of the Cairngorm group—Ben Muich Dhui being some 32 miles distant. There was a good view to the south-east, for we

readily located the Lomonds of Fifeshire, distant about 45 miles. We descended to the shepherd's hut and made for Coshieville, to complete the "picnic" with tea and scones. That little Inn may have been once an attractive *couchez-ville*; however, we did not attempt to sleep there, but made for that charming little village, Kenmore.

Our objective on the following day was Ben Lawers, and it was new ground for some of us. We resolved to take the hill from Lawers Hotel, beautifully situated on Loch Tay. It was a beautiful morning, but it was misty on the high ground, and the top could not be seen. The direction was clear enough—north-west—but we resolved to ascend from the lonely Loch of the Wild Cat, Lochan-à-Chait (2250 feet), reaching the lochan by going round the eastern spur of the hill; thence we followed the burn coming from the great corrie on the eastern side of the Ben, hoping to get a good look of the corrie, and thence take the summit. In a thick mist and in varying temperature, the conditions varied considerably. With but glimpses of our surroundings we were pretty well confined to the varying conditions under foot, and lost a good deal of interest in consequence. Avoiding the straight route from the hotel, we had escaped long stretches of marshy ground, but we were in soft snow, frozen snow, and much soft ground caused by the rapidly melting snow higher up, and we had nasty bits of sloping ice on our way to the loch which required some engineering; it tried severely the boots of one of the party, for the nails were gradually dropping off, and locomotion became less easy. Turning from the loch upwards through a thick mist, and wading a foot or more in soft snow, we tried to get to the cairn by a bee line, making constant use of map and compass. We took a wrong turn, and instead of going direct up the nearest ridge, skirted the great corrie, and simply kept on quite content while we were still ascending, for the mist became thicker than ever. There was only one axe among the company, and it was requisitioned more than once to cut steps to facilitate progress. We had expected to see the great pyramid, whose apex is the cairn, but, alas, we got but

a feeble idea of its form or grandeur. On descending, we followed the narrow ridge closely, taking the general direction towards the hotel. Then as we were coming off the snow, still trusting entirely to our compass, in a moment we dropped below the mist (2500 feet), and there, three miles ahead, a glorious view of Loch Tay unfolded itself. The chief view was to the south and west, with, in the near foreground, Ben Vorlich and Ben More, and far west Ben Cruachan, which was remarkably clear at the time. There then remained an hour's trudge through the marshy pasture lands to the hotel. This is a centre for sheep farming, for we passed many sheep with lambs, and one sheep lying on its back and kicking its heels helplessly. The creature, of course, we set on its feet, realising proudly that the genuine mountaineer may be trusted to go anywhere, for he not only avoids doing harm but desires to be useful. The scene was charming, and recalled to us that Ben Lawers is declared to be high rather by the scooping out of the surrounding valleys than by upheavals, as with our Cairngorms. The height is officially stated at 3984 feet, but as the cairn is over sixteen feet the claim is made that Perthshire has a 4000 feet mountain—not to be behind Aberdeenshire. But the two hills visited do not bear comparison with, say, Lochnagar, in grandeur or in picturesqueness. All the same there is beauty in both, even though the contrast brings into greater relief the superior attractions of the glorious Cairngorms. A run through Fortingal and Glen Lyon by automobile completed a splendid outing, and we retain pleasing memories of the visit. We did not find Sir Donald Currie's grave at Fortingal, for it is unnamed, but we saw the old yew tree said to be 3000 years old.—J. B. M. and W. A. R.