

## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

MANY members of the Club will be interested in the following letter from Mrs. McCook, dated 21st May, to the Secretary: "We were very pleased

to get your letter. It was so kind of you to write and ask BENALDER for us. I am sorry not to have answered it sooner, but we COITAGE. only call at the Lodge once a fortnight now, so we did not get your letter till Friday last. McCook was very ill last winter; he was laid up for five weeks with influenza. Perhaps you heard that the Laggan doctor, who visited him on the 9th January, a very stormy day, received a medal from the Carnegie Hero Fund; his two guides, Mr. Clark, Benalder, and my brother, J. Bain, also received a silver watch with inscription, and £5. I was ill myself for about a week, but I am glad to say we are both quite well again. We are having fine weather here at present, but the winter was very stormy. . . . ."

MOST people, if asked to name the best known mountain-climber, would, Sir Martin Conway states in *Fry's Magazine*, select Mr. Edward Whymper.

THE Many other men have climbed more mountains and BEST-KNOWN bigger mountains than he, but in him is incorporated, the MOUNTAIN general public, the conquest of the Alps and the CLIMBER. popularisation of mountaineering as a first-class sport. It is now some fifty years since Edward Whymper began to climb. He was one of a band of pioneers who had the Alps almost to themselves when they first took to going there for an annual holiday. For every Alpine climber in 1859 there are perhaps in 1910 at least a hundred thousand tourists who spend the holiday season in the Alps.

Whymper, Sir Martin Conway adds, did not first visit the Alps as a tourist, but to make sketches of the mountains for a London publisher. One of the mountains selected was Mont Pelvoux, in Dauphiné. From sketching to an attempt at climbing was a natural transition for an active youth twenty years of age. The first attempt failed, but success was attained in the following year, and thenceforward Whymper was a mountaineer first and foremost, and came rapidly to the front among the small body of pioneers. His greatest triumph was to be first on the summit of the stupendous Matterhorn, and it is as conqueror of the Matterhorn that he will be remembered as long as people care to climb mountains.

After noticing Mr. Whymper's other feats on the Alps as well as on the Andes, and his books, Sir Martin Conway concludes his article by stating that Whymper has never been a hunter after conspicuity. There has been no pushing of himself into the newspapers, no search for advertisement of his great accomplishments. Only a paper in the *Alpine Journal* records his remarkable Greenland journeyings. "All his life long he has been a modest, steady, and efficient worker in the things he undertook to do. No

sentence in any of his books has had to be explained away. He enjoys, therefore, an enviable reputation as a serious writer, a bold explorer, and a man of iron will and nerve, who has worthily accomplished not merely feats of valour upon the mountains, but explorations and studies which have yielded valuable additions to human knowledge." It may be added that all Mr. Whymper's explorations have been carried out entirely at his own expense.—*The Westminster Gazette*.

OUR rendezvous was Beaulieu station, on a very unpromising day in the latter end of summer. We (three) were provided with cycles, and bed and sleeping-tent outfit, stove and cooking utensils, while each of us carries a rucksack, bulging out with blankets, rugs, etc. Our course is westward, the first halt being made at the Falls of Kilmorack. From a view-point overlooking the Falls the river Beaulieu is seen to great advantage as it issues from a narrow and deep gorge and plunges into the pool below. While we watch, we see numbers of salmon leap from this pool, but none of them then attempts the Falls, although that is quite a common feat to accomplish when moving up stream to the spawning grounds.

Resuming our journey, we pass Eilean Aigas, a rocky, wooded islet formed by the river, associated with the well-known Sobieski Stewarts, who claimed to be scions of the royal race. Just as a heavy shower threatens we come to a leafy grotto or bower in the wood by the roadside, and dismounting we find that it is a covered holy well, with a curious little cell behind it, surmounted by a wooden cross. The stone in front of the well is inscribed with many names of saints and dates, and a brass plate invites the visitor to pray for the repose of the soul of the holy father who built the well in bygone days. By the time we have deciphered all the inscriptions, the kettle is boiling, and presently, with a benison on the holy father, we are drinking tea and eating sandwiches. In a very short time the sky clears, and again we are a-wheel.

The Strath now opens out, and after a bit of welcome free-wheeling we reach the picturesque village of Struy. Beyond this point the road passes through scenery of a more pastoral character, and we are making good progress when bang goes a tyre! The repairing of this occupies some little time, and while it is being done we watch a hawk, poised on hovering wings. Suddenly he drops on his quarry like a bolt from the blue, and is hidden from view by some intervening trees, and as he does not reappear we know that another of nature's daily tragedies has been enacted. But the evening is wearing on, and we still have "some lang Scots miles" to go, so as soon as the tyre is right we resume our journey, passing Invercannich with its pretty little Roman Catholic Chapel, till we come to diverging roads, of which we take the one leading to the right and up the Chisholm's Pass to Glen Affric. Soon the gradient becomes too steep for our heavily-laden steeds, so we have to dismount and push. Upward and ever upward winds the road, displaying more effectively at every step the grandeur of the glen. We cordially endorse the opinion of Mr. Baddeley who says, "Glen Affric holds the first

position amongst the glens of Great Britain, as distinctly as Borrowdale stands at the head of her large, and the Derbyshire and Staffordshire Dovedale of her small, valleys." The hill-tops are shrouded in mist, and ever and anon great wisps of it come down to our level, and we begin to realise that we shall not be able to reach the head of the glen before darkness sets in. Suddenly, on turning a corner, we come face to face with a score of stags, which stare at us defiantly from a distance of about fifty yards, till at last one gives the signal, and they all bound away with exquisite grace, and are lost to view in the thick undergrowth. And now at every turn we come upon parcels of from two to six, some of them scampering away as soon as they see us, others gazing quietly at us till we are out of sight. We are in the saddle again and hurrying on, but we cannot pass the famous Dog Falls without dismounting. The road here comes close to the river, and the "bits" all about this point are exquisite in richness of colour and variety of rock contour. It is almost too dark to see anything now, except the notice boards warning visitors from going too near the edge of the undermined rocks; but we explored it more thoroughly on our return journey the following day.

Road and river have now reached the same level, and after a few miles we come in sight of Loch Beinn-a-Mheadhoin and begin to look around for a suitable camping ground. We are still passing through groves of native wood, and in the gathering dusk and mist the gnarled trunks of the fine old birches have a most weird and ghostly effect, while ever and anon we are startled by an antlered head appearing close to the roadside, or silhouetted for a moment against the sky as the mists disperse and close again. At the head of the loch we find an ideal pitch in the shelter of a "birkenshaw," and after a last look down the dark loch we turn in. Our tent is really "built for two," but it can accommodate three at a pinch, and if the couch would scarcely suit a sybarite, it feels quite luxurious to the weary trio who now woo the fickle goddess. The rain again comes down in earnest, and we began to worry about how we are to get home next day. At length, however, the rhythmic drip-drip on the canvas lulls us to sleep, and we do not wake till the sun was well up over the eastern hills, and streaming through the open flap of the tent. The sky is clear and the mists "folded their tents like the Arabs, and as silently stolen away." I would I had the pen of a William Black, or some such word artist, to paint the glories of that summer morning in the heart of the hills! The loch, which looked so black and uncanny last night, now laughs in a thousand ripples under the brilliant sunshine; the sweet-scented birches which a few hours ago looked like wraiths, now appear like white-robed brides adorned with countless gems, as the raindrops glisten on the tremulous leaves. Not a sound breaks the stillness, save the gentle lapping of the wavelets at the water's brim, while all around stand the everlasting, silent hills, some of them clad with verdure far up their slopes, while others stand stark and bare, their rugged outline sharply defined against the deep blue of the sky.

Leaving all our baggage in the heather on the roadside, after breakfast we mount and ride far into the mountain fastnesses. A few miles of

a fair road of a switchback nature brings us to our goal. The road ends at the approach to Affric Lodge, but we follow a footpath for about half a mile, then, taking to the heather, we climb a rocky eminence "until," to parody Scot, "an airy point we won, where gleaming in the summer sun, Loch Affric lay beneath us rolled, a burnished sheet of living gold!" What a magnificent scene! The clear sparkling waters of the loch stretch westward for miles, and are hemmed in on all sides by the giant hills, for here are grouped some of the highest mountains in Scotland. Immediately on our right, and dominating the point on which we stand, towers the fine peak of Sgurr-na-Lapaich, while over its shoulder we can see the snow-clad summits of Carn Eige (3877), and Mam Soul (3862). Other peaks equally fine, but less well known, extend to the westward, until away beyond the head of the loch, and seeming completely to block the top of the glen, stands the huge bulk of Beinn Fhada, while over its southern shoulder appears the fine, conical peak of Sgurr Fhuaran. The contours of the hills on the south shore of Loch Affric are not quite so striking, although in less grand surroundings they would look imposing, rising as they do to heights well over 3000 feet.

We reluctantly turn our backs on the loch and make a start for home. We are soon back at the spot where we had left our baggage, and after getting our loads firmly strapped, we get fairly under weigh. The conditions now are the opposite of those prevailing on the outward journey. Then everything was enveloped in mist; to-day everything is bathed in glorious sunshine. Yesterday we pushed our likes laboriously; to-day we merely sit in the saddle and steer, applying the brake when necessary; yesterday the glen seemed alive with deer; to-day scarce a sign of animal life is visible. In a very short space of time we are at the foot of the Pass and join the main highway again. Arriving at Invercannich, instead of taking the Beaully road, we strike off to the right, crossing the river and climbing the Kerrow hill for two or three miles. Then we have a splendid run down Glen Urquhart to Drumnadrochit, and thence by the side of Loch Ness to Inverness, where we arrive rather tired, but delighted with our little outing.—THOS. GEDDIE.

THOUGH in some respects the lecture on "The Highland Hills," delivered by Mr. William C. Smith, K.C., on 7th March, was "a new departure" in

the activities of the Club, it is by no means without precedent. Mr. Bryce, the President of the Club, gave an address on "The Preservation of Natural HIGHLAND HILLS. Scenery," in June, 1897; and, three years later, he lectured to the Club on "Types of Mountain Scenery." He also initiated the "Cairngorm Club Journal," started in July, 1893, with a paper entitled "Some Stray Thoughts on Mountain-Climbing."

Mr. Smith's lecture was an admirable one. As preliminary to a display of mountain views, it was at once concise and comprehensive; and it not only exhibited—what might have been expected from an ex-President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club—an extensive and intimate knowledge of Scottish mountains and a keen appreciation of their scenic beauties, but a no less remarkable acquaintance with their geological features. The easy

way in which Mr. Smith descanted on these last showed how familiar he was with that branch of the subject.

Nor was the saving grace of humour absent. It found many manifestations, particularly in the quotation of poetry of a serio-comic order. Here is a sample taken from the visitors' book at the Sligachan Hotel in Skye :—

Och ! the Coolin, that'll stand no foolin' !

The rocks at the bottom are terrible hard ;

The summits fine and airy, and the slopes contrairy,

Exhaust the vocabulary of an Irish bard.

Gabbro and granite, shure an earthquake began it,

They were pitched in wild confusion in these elegant nooks,

Rocks thrown at random, if you can't understand 'em,

You will find them all catalogued in the geology books.

Mr. Smith was perhaps just a trifle unfair to the memory of John Hill Burton in suggesting (if only figuratively) that he went down on his knees to the officers of the Ordnance Survey, imploring them to make Ben Nevis less high than Ben Muich Dhui. Burton tells the story himself in his little book on "The Cairngorm Mountains." He forgathered with the Survey officers on the summit of Ben Nevis at the time when the long disputed point as to which Ben was the higher was to be accurately determined ; "and before separating from these hermits of Her Majesty's Ordnance," he says, "I requested, if they had any influence in the matter, that they would 'find' for my favourite ; but duty is peremptory, and they were subsequently bound to reveal the fact that Ben Nevis had it by a few feet." Nevertheless, Burton continued to consider Ben Muich Dhui the superior mountain—in grandeur if not in height.

We left Aviemore at 5 a.m., on March 8th last, in promising weather.

ACROSS THE  
CAIRNGORMS  
IN MARCH.

Day broke as we entered Glen Eunach, which we found to be clear of snow, as were also Cadha Mhor and Carn Elrick. Few stags were seen, but hinds were numerous ; birds, with the exception of grouse, were scarce.

The Lower Bothy reached, we had a good look at Braeriach, and decided to follow the left ridge of Corrie Bennie. For three quarters of a mile the burn was open ; further up, the Corrie was well packed with snow. There had evidently been a considerable fall of snow overnight ; it was soft and holding. Sgoran Dubh now stood out boldly, clear of mist, with snow to the loch. On the flat at the head of Corrie Bennie we forced large wreaths of fine dry snow, which was raised in great clouds by a strong north-west wind, there blowing in all directions.

The snow deepened as the top of Braeriach was reached ; there was little or nothing of the cairn to be seen. We had grand views of Cairn Toul ; Lochan Uaine was of course covered with ice and snow. In the brilliant sunshine the precipices of Braeriach looked magnificent with their enormous snow cornices. The Falls of Dee were under ice and snow ; not a ripple to be heard—the roar of the wind overhead drowning all other sounds. The sharp razor-like ridge of the Angel's Peak looked

quite dazzling. The Gorchory Water was seen to be open a little below its confluence with the Lochan Uaine Burn. The Dee itself was open a quarter of a mile above the junction of the Larig Burn and the Gorchory Water—the latter appearing by far the larger.

Having descended into Glen Dee—it was considered prudent to give up the idea of visiting Cairn Toul—the temperature was found to be very warm, much more like June than March. We found no snow in the glen, only there were large wreaths in the gullies. We reached Luibeg at 6 p.m., and there learned that two Aberdeen men had climbed Ben Muich Dhui on New Year's Day.

It rained heavily overnight. In the morning we set out, up Glen Derry, for Ben Muich Dhui. In the beautiful sunshine Beinn Mheadhoin formed a pretty picture with its castle-like rocks. Near the Glas Allt, as we were remarking on the scarcity of birds, the song of the thrush was heard, the bird being seen on the top branch of an old fir about the furthest up the glen. The Glas Allt was covered with an enormous snow wreath; the Derry Burn was open for a few hundred yards above the confluence.

In Coire Etchachan snow lay deep, and numerous fox tracks were seen. Ptarmigan were so tame that we got within ten yards of them. They sat apparently quite unconcerned, dressing their feathers. Loch Etchachan was, of course, ice- and snow-bound. Dense mist now came down, but we diverged to the right, and had a glimpse of Loch Avon and the Shelter Stone Crag. As we made for the top of Ben Muich Dhui, the snow deepened and the wind was felt with increasing force. Some difficulty was found in locating the cairn, and we missed the Sappers' Kitchen altogether. Naturally in these circumstances there was no view from the summit. We descended by Sron Riach to Luibeg, which was reached in rain.

The following morning the barometer fell, but at 7 o'clock, despite the stormy outlook, we set out by the Larig Ghru for Aviemore. Deer were seen to be hurrying down for shelter, paying us scarcely any attention. Having crossed the Luibeg Water for the last time we got the full force of the wind, and were so blown about that we even contemplated a retreat and a return *via* Braemar. In the Larig walking was extremely heavy, sinking over the knees in soft snow. The Pools of Dee were reached at 1 p.m. After six hours' floundering it was curious to note that the two lower Pools had each an open strip on the Ben Muich Dhui side, about twelve feet by three. As we left the Pass, Carn Elrick was observed to be covered with snow to the base. Aviemore was reached at 6 o'clock in rain, but the outing on the whole was pleasant.—FINLAY MACKENZIE.

## REVIEWS.

Rev. Thomas Sinton, the minister of the parish of Dores, Inverness-shire, has already enriched the literature of the Highlands by a valuable work on

“The Poetry of Badenoch;” and he has just made a  
 LOCH LAGGAN worthy addition in “By Loch and River: Being  
 AND Memories of Loch Laggan and Upper Spey.” The  
 UPPER SPEYSIDE volume consists of a presentation of phases of life and  
 character in the Badenoch district in “the days that are  
 no more.” The author tells us that he has endeavoured to portray the  
 locality in which he was born and grew up, “as it gradually impressed itself  
 upon his mind, associated with human hearts and passing events, and teeming  
 with memories of the past.” Thus we have sketches in succession of Aber-  
 arder, Cor Arder, Ben Alder, the Braes of Laggan, and Kingussie; of “The  
 Township Well,” “The Fleecing Day,” “The Mountain Farm,” “The Muir-  
 land Burn,” and so on. Pleasant sketches they are, too—not merely descrip-  
 tive of the mountainous and romantic scenery evoked by the very mention of  
 the names, but embracing also much of legendary story and folk-lore and  
 reminiscences of individuals, some of them celebrated, and others having only  
 a local reputation. The sensations aroused by finding oneself lost on the hills  
 and suddenly confronted with unfamiliar scenery are well depicted in the  
 sketch, “A Spur of Drumalban;” while the walk in Cor Arder becomes  
 reminiscent of Prince Charlie, who passed down through the corrie on his  
 way to Ben Alder, where he remained in comparative security, enjoying the  
 hospitality of Cluny Macpherson. “How curious,” reflects Mr. Sinton,  
 “to know that this very footpath that we are now following was once  
 trodden, in anxious vigilance, by the royal fugitive and his guides! He,  
 like us, must have made his way over many a hoary old trunk, round many  
 a boulder, and across many a swampy dell and sparkling runnel—now low  
 down close to the burn, and anon scrambling up some rough bank.” Fancy  
 and imagination are thus skilfully employed to enhance legendary and  
 historical incident and give a flavour to personal recollections that are  
 wonderfully keen and extensive, as is exemplified in the “Annals of the  
 Village”—a charming picture of Kingussie in its early days. There are  
 abundant references also to Mrs. Grant of Laggan, the Dukes of Gordon,  
 the Cluny Macphersons, and other people associated with Badenoch. Alto-  
 gether, the volume is a delightful one, and cannot fail to be appreciated  
 by natives of the district depicted and by everybody interested in the pre-  
 servation of the ways and traits of bygone times.—R. A.

THE TRAMP is the expressive, if not over-dignified, name given to a new  
 monthly magazine evidently designed for mountaineers and pedestrians. It  
 calls itself “An Open Air Magazine,” and its contents

THE TRAMP. make a special appeal to all who cultivate the neglected  
 art of walking—though, happily, there are many signs of  
 a revival (or development at least) of this form of pleasant recreation.  
 There are articles dealing with the English Lakes, Donegal, Hitchin, the

New Forest, and Fontainebleau. Dr. E. A. Baker extols the Lake district as affording special attractions at Easter to walkers and climbers, and has something to say of the comparatively modern extension of mountaineering in Britain. The writer of the paper on Hitchin maintains that "A true tramp should love both town and country," and evidently addresses himself to the tramp "who dabbles in topographical antiquities." Lady Margaret Sackville outlines a long walking expedition through the New Forest, and incorporates a list of other suggested walks. The paper on "Donegal" is wholly irrelevant to a magazine of this sort. It is really a disquisition on Ireland and the Irish character, and particularly the native fondness for whisky. Next to nothing is said of Donegal, and all one learns of it is derivable from the accompanying illustrations. Contrast this paper with Mr. Arnold Bennet's delightful one, "Round the Forest of Fontainebleau," in which appreciation of the beauties of the forest and rural scenery is blended with gossip about the places to see and the places to avoid. Barbizon, he declares, to be utterly vulgarised, "like Stratford-on-Avon." "What," he asks, "would Rousseau, Daubigny, and Millet say if they could see it now? Curiosity shops, art exhibitions, and a very large cafe. An appalling light railway, and all over everything the sticky slime of sophistication!" *The Tramp* itself has fallen a victim to sophistication. It must needs have its quota of stories; and though they are good, one is impelled to ask why they should be here, and why there should be sections devoted to music and the play. A magazine of this kind ought to be "run" on its special merits, and keep to the purposes for which it is started. There is surely now a large enough constituency of "open air" devotees of all kinds to be content with papers on "The Art of Vagabondage," for instance, and willing to get its fiction elsewhere—if it wants it.—R. A.

THIS is the title of an interesting volume by George M. Reith, M.A., just published by T. N. Foulis, Edinburgh and London. Mr. Reith is surprised at Edinburgh being "wonderfully indifferent" to the "THE BREEZY priceless boon she possesses in having the Pentlands so PENTLANDS." near and so accessible, comparatively few of her citizens having ever set foot on their slopes; but there is nothing new in this complaint. Similar surprise is entertained by hill-climbers everywhere at the general neglect with which their favourite pastime is treated and at the lack of recreation and curtailment of human interest from which the "stay-at-home" suffer. Pedestrianism, however, is somewhat of a lost art, though there are, happily, indications of its revival; and, with all our modern talk of the charms of nature, there is immense room for their cultivation by personal perception. Every endeavour, therefore, to make people acquainted with what they are missing by their indifference and to instruct them in the matter of roads and routes, is to be appreciated; and a cordial welcome must accordingly be extended to Mr. Reith's volume. Its purpose, he says, "is to create and foster interest in Edinburgh's great natural playground by putting together, more or less discursively, notes and impressions, descriptive, historical, physiographical, anecdotal, collected in many a delightful ramble over the Pentlands during the last ten years." And with a modesty quite becoming, but altogether too depreciatory, he



adds that "it is to be regarded neither as a guide book to the hills, nor as an exhaustive treatise thereon, but simply as talk about them, reduced to something like order and system by following the main routes around and across the range." The "talk," however, would easily enough enable even a complete stranger to find his way, and this same stranger, unless he be a very dull fellow indeed, will discover Mr. Reith's very discursive discourse to be invariably entertaining and now and again mightily diverting. Like the Pentlands it eulogises, Mr. Reith's book is distinctly "breezy."—R. A.