

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

AN article on "Walking Tours" in the *Glasgow Herald* of August 26, initialed "W.P.," contained the following reminiscences of a walk through Glen Clova to Ballater and then up Deeside :—

REMINISCENCES which one could trace the progress of the lazy Sep-
OF A tember sun. Ten o'clock found us plodding drowsily
WALKING past Cortachy. Then the long dull glen of Clova
TOUR. received us, and drowsiness gave place to morose-
 ness as we measured off the monotonous miles. Sud-
denly, some time in the late afternoon, we were roused to interest by
the question—Where was the road? For the valley carse stopped as
suddenly as Cadogan Street at its eastern end, and we were looking into a
corrie whose sides were so steep and high that a shepherd's hut at the bottom
was already in darkness. Studying the map, we found our only way was up
the side of a burn that came dancing down in a hundred waterfalls from the
ridge on our right. This was the real thing now. Perspiring and joyful, we
leaped up from rock to rock, bounded like deer (this, ah! this was in the
olden time long ago) over the heather of the 2,000-foot-high tableland, and
paused at last, breathless with excitement, to gaze across a pine-clad valley
at the bare side and snow-tipped cone of Lochnagar. It was our first
glimpse of the Northern Highlands, and we gesticulated like Frenchmen,
pointing out to each other the shoulders of the Cairngorm peaks and, lying
athwart the foot of the valley beneath us, the Birks of Abergeldie, golden in
the evening sun. How our feet 'burned the road' down Glenmuick!
And how envious I feel of my former self when I remember that, after three
hours' sleep the night before, a thirty-mile tramp, and the very highest of
high teas, we came out of the Ballater hotel and basked in the moonlight
beauty of Deeside till after midnight!

"I had intended to speak of several walking tours, but this one will do
for the present. And I go on to relate—though it is really of no interest
except to myself and the other person concerned—how, next day, we walked
up Deeside at a steady and unconscious four-miles-an-hour, feeling as if our
'morning' at Ballater had been the elixir vitæ; how we lodged surreptitiously
for two nights (like hunted prophets) with a retainer of a nobleman who had
threatened with eviction any tenant who should let rooms to strangers; how
we supped on venison soup, chicken, and curds, and venison as tough as
india rubber; how we were lost in a snowstorm on Ben Muich Dhui, and
slid down somehow through the mist into upper Glen Dee, and ate venison
sandwiches under the eyes of two herds of live venison; how we saw the
Tilt in spate, and voted the Falls of Bruar the finest thing we had seen in
the Highlands—till we saw the Falls of Tummel and the Queen's View;

how, every night, we were lulled to sleep by the near roar of a flooded river; how for a whole week our clothes were wet by night, damp in the morning, and dry again during the day. But what is all this to those who have gone round the Horn in a sailing ship, or cut their way through Bolivian forests, or seen the sunrise from Kilimanjaro? Very small beer, I dare say. And yet no adventure I may be fated to experience—and who knoweth what is before him?—can ever possess half the charm and excitement and delightful expectancy of that modest little journey in my teens."

IT is only fitting that in a mountaineering journal mention at least should be made of the death of Mr. Edward Whymper, the famous mountain climber, which took place at Chamonix on 16th September. Mr. DEATH Whymper, who was 71 years of age, was the son of an OF engraver and water-colour painter, and he was himself MR. WHYMPER. trained as a draughtsman. It was in this capacity that he first visited the Alps in 1860. He had received a commission to draw the illustrations of an attempt by Professor Bonney to climb Mont Pelvoux, in the Dauphine Alps. The attempt failed, but Mr. Whymper had been so "bitten" by the sport of mountaineering that he returned next year and climbed the mountain. This was the first of many "first ascents," the most notable, of course, being that of the Matterhorn on 14th July 1865, which was so tragically marked by the fatal accident to Lord Francois Douglas and other two of Mr. Whymper's companions and one of the guides. In 1867 and in 1872, Mr. Whymper made expeditions to Greenland, and went some distance inland over the ice-cap. His next expedition was to the Andes in 1879-80, when he made the first ascent of Chimborazo (20,510 feet) and of half-a-dozen other great peaks. These ascents are duly recounted in an interesting volume, "Travels Amongst the Great Andes of the Equator." Mr. Whymper was the author, besides, of a well-known work, "Scrambles Among the Alps," and of guide-books to Chamonix and Mont Blanc, and to Zermatt and the Matterhorn.

Whymper was a pioneer not only in mountaineering, but in mountaineering literature. The "Scrambles Among the Alps," though not the earliest of Alpine books, was the first to be widely read by the general public. "Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers" may, perhaps, be taken for the first gospel of the new mountaineering spirit, but it was a collection of papers by Alpinists for Alpinists. The conquest of the Matterhorn—so immediately avenged by the spirit of the mountain, as the natives then believed, by the destruction of four of the climbing party—struck the imagination of the world, and the thrill was intensified by the unpleasant doubts about the breaking of the rope. So when Whymper's narrative appeared, the world turned to it eagerly. Nor can the interest of the story pass. Whymper's book, it may be noted, was among the first included in Messrs. Nelson's epoch-making cheap series of reprints. It holds, said the editor, in mountaineering literature the same place as the "Compleat Angler" in the library of the fisherman. Perhaps it does, but somehow the spirit of Whymper is not quite like the spirit of Izaak Walton. (See "The Best-Known Mountain Climber" in *C.C.J.*, vi., 268-9.)

THE coronation of George V. on Thursday, 22nd June, 1911, was celebrated by the lighting of bonfires on many hills and eminences in CORONATION Aberdeenshire and the northern counties; and following BONFIRES. the records of the bonfires on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 (*C.C.J.*, ii., 186-7), and of King Edward VII.'s coronation in 1902 (*C.C.J.*, iv., 117-18), we may enumerate the principal bonfires, as recorded in the local newspapers at the time. They may be classified as follows:—

DEESIDE.—Milltimber, Maryculter; Cairnshee, Durris; Torphins Hill; Aboyne (Green); Glentanar; Tam-na-very, Tarland; Migvie (Hopewell); Knocks Hill, Logie-Coldstone; Craigendarroch, Ballater; Garlot Hill, Glenmuick; Coyles of Muick, Glenmuick; Bridge of Gairn; Craig-na-Ban, Abergeldie; Craig Gowan, Balmoral; Craig Ghui, Crathie; Craig Choinnich, Braemar; Carr Hill, Mar Forest.

CENTRAL ABERDEENSHIRE.—Brimmond (35 ft. high); Balbithan Hill, Kintore; Bennachie; Johnstone Hill, Leslie; Lumsden Village; Dunningdeer, Inch; Collithie Hill, Gartly; Clashmach, Huntly; Drumblade; Cairnie (Newton farm); Gallowhill, Rothienorman; Fyvie (Pleasure Park); Hill of Bankhead, Auchterless; Turriff, (Hutcheon Park); Tryst Hill, Cuminstown.

DOONSIDE.—Boglouster, Tough; Balloch Hill, Alford; Syllavethie, Tullynessle (40 ft. high); Drumnahive, Kildrummy; Towie; Tom a Chaourinn, Stratlodon; Corgarff.

BUCHAN.—Hill of Dudwick, Ellon; Dovecot Hill, Auchmacoy, Logie-Buchan; Maud (Bulwark), Pitfour, Criehe, Hill of Kinknockie (Kinmundy), and Hill of Ludquharn—all five in Old Deer; Stirling Hill, Boddam; Culsh Hill, New Deer; Oldwhat, New Deer; Fraserburgh; Cairnhill, Rosehearty; and Hill of Knock-na-hare, Aberdour.

BANFFSHIRE.—Macduff (Viewmount); Knock o' Thunder, Boyndie; Botriphnie (Elfhillock); Balloch Hill, Keith; Cabrach (hill above Ardwell); Aberlour (Moorside); Fochabers (Deer park); Glenlivet (2)—the Braes and Knockancan; Hill of Troup, Gamrie.

MORAYSHIRE.—Advie, Archiestown, Grantown.

KINCARDINESHIRE.—Fettercairn, Glenbervie (Knock Hill), Johnshaven (Bogies Hill).

These lists are probably incomplete, owing to inadequate reports. Nineteen bonfires, it was stated, could be seen from the summit of Brimmond, including fires at Banchory-Devenick, Durris, Pittodrie, Kinmuck, Balmedie, and the Beauty Hill; while a dozen were visible from the Balloch Hill at Keith. The total number mentioned above is 68.

THE remarkably fine summer, and its no less remarkable prolongation, were followed by the advent of winter on the hills at a much earlier date than usual. The following paragraph appeared in the *Scotsman*

EARLY WINTER ON THE HILLS. "After a wonderful summer, signs were evident last week that the weather on the Cairngorm Mountains was undergoing a change. We happened to be on the hills through-
out the night of Wednesday the 14th, and it was then that the weather changed

for the worse. All next day heavy showers swept down Glen Derry, and on the following morning the whole aspect of the hills was changed. The snow-line extended to just below the 3000 feet level. The summit of the precipitous Devil's Point was powdered with white, as was also Cairn a Mhaim, but it was on Ben Muich Dhui that most traces of the recent storm were visible. The summit plateau was thickly covered, while a drift extending along the southern corrie a few hundred feet below the cairn was estimated as quite 4 feet in depth. During the day there was bright sunshine, and the snow disappeared to a certain extent, but the wreath on Ben Muich Dhui remained for several days. It is interesting to recall that a similar storm was experienced on the Cairngorms almost at the same time last year, the snow then falling on the 19th of September, and the effects of the storm remaining on the hills for some little time.—S. G.”

The night of Wednesday, 27th September, was very stormy all over the Highlands, with rain and sleet on the low grounds, and snow on the hills. On the Thursday morning, Ben Nevis and the principal Grampian heights were mantled in snow, well down the slopes, and the higher peaks of the Argyleshire hills were similarly covered with snow. Ben Lomond was capped with snow, and Ben Lawers, Schichallion, and the Glenlyon hills were covered to their base. Ben Wyvis, Ben Vaichart, and Scurr-a-Voulin were also covered with snow down to their bases.

A month later, the wintry conditions recurred, showers of sleet falling on the evening of Wednesday, 25th October, and the air being bitterly cold; and on the Thursday morning the Deeside hills were covered with a good coating of snow, “giving every indication,” a report said, “of the near approach of winter.”

PUBLIC feeling has been aroused in the Braemar district and elsewhere by a proposal of the Deeside District Committee to remove from the list of public roads maintained and managed by the Aberdeenshire road authorities, the portion of the northside Linn of Dee road from the Linn to the Allanmore Bridge at Allanaquoich. The road extends from the Linn to Invercauld Bridge, and is frequently used by visitors to Braemar as part of a picturesque circular drive, the route being by the south road, past Corriemulzie and Inverey to the Linn, then across the bridge and down the north road past Allanaquoich and Invercauld to Invercauld Bridge, and back to Braemar past Craig Cluny and the Lion's Face. It is used by cyclists and pedestrians as well, particularly in connection with excursions to the Falls of Quoich. The Linn-Allanmore section of the road was maintained by the Duke of Fife up till 1900, when it was taken over by the county authorities. Since then, it is alleged, the District Committee “studiously neglected the road and allowed it to get into an impassable condition;” and now the Committee has decided to have the road removed from the statutory list of highways, on the ground that the road is of little public importance. The County Road Board, however—with whom the ultimate decision rests—has advised reconsideration of the matter. The discontinuance of the road would be a serious drawback to Braemar, the amenities of which are not

excessively great ; and, moreover, it would involve a deplorable retrogression of policy. More roads are wanted ; not the abandonment of existing ones.

Since the above was written we are pleased to note that the Deeside District Committee agreed at their meeting on 23rd December to undertake the upkeep of this road and thus avoid the retrograde action above indicated.

ATTENTION is once more being called to the closing of Shiel Inn, at the head of Loch Duich, the loss of the accommodation it provided placing a practical prohibition on pedestrian exploration of Glen

THE CLOSING Affric, Glen Moriston, and other highly attractive routes OF THE in the region. A correspondent of the *Free Press*

SHIEL INN. (21st Sept.) has very properly pointed out that the result of converting the old-fashioned inn into a shooting-lodge and gamekeeper's residence has been "to deprive the public of a resting-place in one of the most picturesque districts in the Highlands, and to seriously interfere with the tourist development of this part of the country." To walkers, cyclists, and tourists, the Shiel Inn was a very convenient stopping-place. As the correspondent says, "the point is one where the traveller expects to find, and where there ought to be, hotel accommodation ;" and we entirely agree with him when he adds—"A hotel at the head of Loch Duich is a necessity if travellers are to enter the district at all or see it, and the result of the proprietor's action in closing the Shiel Inn and converting it into a shooting-lodge, is practically to shut up one of the finest districts in the whole of the Highlands."

IN so far as deer forests are inimical to afforestation, it is interesting and satisfactory to know that they are going out of fashion, and that there

is likely to be less trouble from this source in the future THE PASSING than there is at present. It is well known that in recent OF THE years deer forests have not been letting so well as they DEER FOREST. once did. The demand to-day is for shootings where one can entertain a larger number of guests and have more

sport at a cheaper rate than is possible in a deer forest, where the sport is solitary, and where a single shot may spoil a corrie for a week. Lord Lovat recognises this in his report, for he remarks that "deer forests more than any other form of sporting estate depend on fashion." He adds that there is a risk of the fashion changing, and it is in order to reduce this risk that he introduces precautions for the gradual afforestation of the low ground, the object being not to destroy the sporting value of an estate at any single moment. The change which Lord Lovat apprehends is actually taking place, and it will be watched with equanimity by the general public. It is to be welcomed for other reasons also. It is of the essence of a deer forest that it shall be kept as private as possible, and that the public, whether they be crofters or tourists, shall be kept out of it. A deer forest is in this respect the most selfish and anti-social institution that exists, and it is because the Highlands have been so largely given over to deer forests that their development as a tourist and holiday ground has been stifled and repressed. There may be a loss of sporting rents in the meantime, but if the country is planted and its tourist resources developed, there will be far more money in the long run.—*Aberdeen Free Press*, 29th July.

THE group of mountains lying immediately to the south of Crianlarich, in Perthshire, and to the west of Ben More and Stobinian, comprises six tops over three thousand feet, which tempt the hill climber bent

SOME on peak bagging. No real difficulty is met with on CRIANLARICH any of them, and on a fine day the walk along the TOPS. ridge of any one of them is a thing to remember.

On July 2nd this year, I left Crianlarich at 10.10 a.m., and lesiurely wandered up the ridge known as the Grey Height on the west side of Coire Ardrain and along to Cruach Ardrain (3429 ft.), the hill which towers so strikingly at the head of the corrie. The top was reached at 1 p.m., and, after a short rest, the route was continued southwards down the other side of the mountain and out along the ridge to Ben Tulachan (3099 ft.) which was reached at 2 p.m. Returning towards Cruach Ardrain, the east flank of this mountain was skirted to the col between it and Stob Garbh and the top of the latter (3148 ft.) was reached at 3.20. Following the ridge along the north side of Coire Ardrain the point called Stob Coire Bhuidhe (2784 ft.) was passed at 4 p.m., and Crianlarich was reached at 5.30.

The glen or corrie, immediately to the S.W., of Corrie Ardrain and the ridge of Grey Height and Cruach Ardrain, is on a bigger scale and more remote from Crianlarich. The head waters of the Falloch rise here and the mountain standing conspicuously at the far end of the glen is Beinn a Chroin (3104 ft.) whilst immediately to its right is another peak—An Caisteal (3265 ft.). Leaving Crianlarich at 10.30 a.m., on July 8th, I followed the true right bank of the Falloch burn up the corrie and so up the well defined ridge to the top of Beinn a Chroin at 2.5 p.m. Continuing westwards a little difficulty was met with in descending to the col between Beinn and Chroin and An Caisteal, the short rock pitches alternating with slippery grass slopes requiring careful handling. The one inch map does not indicate this rocky place properly. An easy walk took me from the col to the top of An Caisteal at 3.35, and then along the ridge of Twistin Hill and over Sron Gharbh (2322 ft.) reaching Crianlarich at 5.30.

On July 11th, I left Crianlarich at 10.30 a.m., cycling down the Glen Falloch road for three miles. Leaving my cycle at the roadside I struck round the shoulder of Stob Glas and into Coire a' Chuilinn, at the head of which is Beinn Chabhair (3053 ft.), the most remote hill in this group. The top was reached at 2.5 p.m., and the return journey was by the same route down the Corrie, Crianlarich being reached at 5 p.m.

On July 14th, I left, took train for Bridge of Orchy, arriving there at 10.10 a.m. and, by following the Allt Coire An Dothaidh, I reached the top of Beinn An Dothaidh (3283 ft.) at 12.20, and then, by way of the col between this mountain and Beinn Doireann (Ben Doran) I finally reached the cairn of the latter mountain (3523 ft.) at 1.30, and back to Bridge of Orchy at 3.30.

All these hill walks were done in superb weather, the only objection being that the heat was really very trying in the glens, so that the going was slow and often laborious. The times given are therefore ample for the slowest of slow walkers. The scenery is magnificent, and I only regret that, except on one occasion, I had to go on these expeditions alone. JOHN R. LEVACK.

ON 25th September I accomplished a climb which does not appear to have been done before. My companion—Mr. George Merchant—and I were

examining the huge walls of rock which guard the “infant Dee” in this great wilderness. The gully above mentioned is a prominent feature on the left as one walks up the corrie. Its height is about 500 feet above the scree. The quality of the rock, though moss-covered and wet, is not bad for the Cairngorms, and the climb is fairly “clean” throughout. The feature of the climb is the last pitch, which is blocked by a huge choke-stone; our attack on this obstacle consisted in working out to the right on to the wall and gaining the mastery by working upwards. The climb took about two and a quarter hours.

JAMES McCOSK.

THE twenty-first annual meeting of the Club was held in the treasurer’s office, 181 Union Street, Aberdeen, on 15th December. Mr.

ANNUAL MEETING. John Clarke, M.A., chairman of the club, presided. His Excellency the Right Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L., D.L.,

was re-elected president, and Messrs. Alexander Copland and Robert Anderson, vice-presidents; and Mr. John Clark was also re-elected chairman for another year. Mr. James Gray Kyd, secretary, having intimated his resignation in consequence of his removal to London, Mr. J. B. Gillies, advocate, was elected secretary. Mr. T. R. Gillies, advocate, was re-elected treasurer. The following committee was appointed—Messrs. William Garden, J. A. Hadden, James Gray Kyd, John R. Levack, John M’Gregor, R. W. Mackie, George M’Intyre, W. M. M’Pherson, William Porter, and Alexander Simpson.

The members agreed to the following excursions for the ensuing season:—Spring holiday—Mount Keen; Summer holiday—Ben y Gloe: an Easter meet, if a sufficient number of members express a desire to join; a Saturday afternoon excursion to Bennachie on April 20th; and another to Hill of Fare from Torphins, returning from Banchory, on the first or second Saturday in June. On the motion of Mr. Garden, it was agreed to have an excursion in the autumn to the Tap o’ North, the details being left to the committee.

On the motion of Mr. William Porter, the chairman was thanked heartily for his services in connection with the proposed new Allt na Bienne bridge at the north end of the Larig Pass, which the chairman announced was expected to be erected early next season.

The following new members have been admitted to the Club since the last issue of the Journal:—

Miss W. Alice Strong, 15 Victoria Crescent, Downhill, Glasgow.

H. P. Macmillan, 32 Moray Place, Edinburgh.