

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

THE Twenty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Club was held on 20th December, 1912,—the Chairman, Mr. John Clarke, presiding. The

Treasurer's Accounts, of which the usual abstract was in the hands of the members, were passed. OUR TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING. His Excellency, the Right Hon. James Bryce, was re-elected President. Mr. Robert Anderson was re-elected Vice-President and Mr. John Clarke, the retiring Chairman, was elected Vice-President in room of the late Mr. Copland. Mr. T. R. Gillies was elected Chairman in place of Mr. John Clarke. Mr. Clarke was cordially thanked for his efficiency in the chair, and for his success in bringing to a satisfactory conclusion the Allt-na-Bienne Bridge project.

The following Committee was constituted for the current year :—

Mr. William Garden	Mr. George McIntyre
Mr. J. A. Hadden	Mr. W. M. McPherson
Dr. John R. Levack	Mr. A. P. Milne
Mr. John McGregor	Mr. William Porter
Mr. R. W. Mackie	Mr. Alexander Simpson

Mr. J. B. Gillies was re-elected Secretary, and was elected Interim Treasurer.

The Committee's suggested Programme for the year was submitted and approved.

The Chairman presented Mr. Parker with a handsome Silver Clock as a memento of his work in connection with the construction of the Allt-na-Bienne Bridge.

The following new members were admitted since last Annual Meeting :— Mr. E. W. Watt, Mr. J. A. Nicol, Mr. G. A. Smith, Mr. James Ellis, Dr. J. Crombie, Mr. J. W. Henderson, Miss Tarbet, Dr. J. L. McIntyre, Mr. J. C. Duffus, Mr. Charles Diack, Mr. McGregor Skene, Dr. A. W. Gibb, Dr. Ian Struthers Stewart and Mr. J. McCoss.

FOUR members of the Club made the ascent of Lochnagar on April 13th. Their route was over the Bealach or Meikle Pap, round the head of the loch, ascending the Black Spout, and descending by the LOCHNAGAR. ladder.

Hard frost prevailed, and they were able to walk on the top of the snow. In a bitter wind steps were cut throughout the entire gully, taking three and a half hours. The crags, half obliterated in blowing drift, were adorned with colossal icicles. Gloved hands stuck to the steel of the axes, eyebrows were frozen stiff, and the clothing was a mass of ice.

A descent was attempted by the north-east ridge, but was found impracticable in the fierce wind. The head of the west gully looked magnificent

with its impossible cornice. The party, half smothered in drift, traversed the lip of the corrie, and descended the ladder, where the rope was taken off. Inchnabobart was the base of the party. J. McC.

THE valley of the Dee is so largely associated with the excursions of the Club that we feel warranted in at least chronicling the extraordinary flooding of the river and its tributaries which occurred on

FLOODS ON Friday, May 9th. Heavy rains and strong winds on that
THE DEE. and the preceding three days produced a spate, largely contributed to, no doubt, by the rapid melting of the masses of snow on the mountains and hills on the upper reaches of the river. The Dee rose to an unwonted height, and the tremendous volume of water, combined with the velocity of the stream, did incalculable damage. Embankments were broken through and haugh lands inundated, and in many places the river valley assumed the appearance of a vast lake. Several bridges were imperilled, notably the suspension bridge at Cults, familiarly known as the "Shakkin' Briggie," the footway of which, at the height of the flood, was almost completely submerged. Some of the "records" were very interesting. At the intake of the Aberdeen water supply at Invercarnie, near Banchory, the gauge showed a rise of 11 feet over the average height of the stream, the height on the Friday being 17 feet 4 inches, while the ordinary height ranges from 6 to 7 feet. At Ardoe the water was 2 feet 9 inches above the level attained by a heavy spate on 12th November, 1905. It was ascertained that, while the flood was at its height, the speed of the river was $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, as contrasted with its ordinary flow of 5 miles an hour. For the four days, May 7—10, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches of rain were measured at Braemar; Friday's fall there was 1.41 inches. Between 7 a.m. on the Friday and 7 a.m. on the Saturday, 1.17 inch of rain fell in Aberdeen.

THREE excellent photographs, by Mr. W. B. Meff, of a climb of Lochnagar under wintry conditions in April, appeared in the *Graphic* on 10th May.

LOCHNAGAR IN SNOW AND ICE. The covering article, "On Lochnagar in April with Rope and Ice-Axe," was written by Mr. James McCoss. The pictures well illustrate the truly Alpine aspect that the Lochnagar region often presents in March and April, but we are somewhat sceptical of the statement that the mantle

of snow which annually covers the high plateaus and enormous corries of this section of the Grampians occasionally reaches a depth of 100 feet. There is an amusing blunder in the title of one of the illustrations—"On the Hip of the Precipice."

Under the title "A Western Outlet for Braemar," an article in the *Free Press* (January 9) suggested the construction of a driving road from Braemar to Kingussie through Glen Feshie, so as to link up

PROPOSED DRIVING ROAD THROUGH GLEN FESHIE. Deeside with Speyside by a direct and easy route. From the Linn of Dee, where the existing road on Deeside ends, to Glen Feshie Lodge, where the road begins on the other side, is a distance of some 17 miles; and the route lies up broad and open valleys, where the gradients are easy and where no engineering difficulties are encountered. The highest point is

at the Aberdeen and Inverness county march, on the watershed between the Dee and the Feshie, and the altitude here is 1830 feet, considerably below that of the Cairnwell (2100 feet). There is at present a walking road or track from the Linn of Dee to Geldie Lodge and from the Feshie to Glenfeshie Lodge, but the intermediate portion between Geldie Lodge and the Feshie, though indicated on the maps, is really non-existent. (See "Glen Feshie," *C.C.J.*, i., 348-56). The idea is that, as the proposed new road would be of great public utility and would stimulate the development of Deeside and Speyside, it should be constructed by the Development Commissioners or by the National Road Board. Such a road would be of more service to motorists than to mountaineers probably, but none the less mountaineers would rejoice to see it made as it would facilitate their access to Speyside from Deeside.

A party walking through Glen Feshie to Braemar, on the 25th May, found the bridge across the River Eidart to be non-existent, while the river was in full flood owing to the melting snow on the GLEN FESHIE. Braeriach plateau. The river was quite unfordable and the party had to follow it upwards for five miles before it could be crossed, and even then only by a snow bridge. A southeasterly course was then set for the Geldie Burn road, by the slopes of Monadh Mor and Beinn Bhrotain, which was struck about three miles below Geldie Lodge. A permanent bridge should be erected across the Eidart.

J. A. P.

Writing upon the proposed road in the *Glasgow Herald* (February 22), Mr. A. I. M'Connochie furnished a detailed description of Glen Feshie, making due mention of a rough fresco by Sir Edwin Landseer, the famous animal painter with which all who have traversed the glen will be familiar. A little south of Glenfeshie Lodge is a beautifully-wooded haugh alongside the river, many fine old pines being noticeable. "The haugh" (writes Mr. M'Connochie) "is cut into strips by former channels of the Feshie; hence the name here, 'The Islands.' There stood 'The Huts,' now represented by bits of gables, all that remain of a number of buildings erected by the Duchess of Bedford, a daughter of the celebrated Duchess of Gordon, when lessee of the forest. Among her guests was Landseer, who obtained in the locality sketches for many of his finest paintings. On the plaster above the fireplace of his hut Landseer drew a picture, part of which is still extant, showing three stags and a hind. In order to preserve this interesting and valuable memorial, The Mackintosh has erected a building over the ruins." A fuller account of this interesting "survival" is given by Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, C.E., Kingussie, in his recently-published, "Trees in the Highlands"—"The picture is painted on an ordinary slab of lime plaster about three-fourths of an inch thick. The plaster is smoothed over the fireplace or above the mantelpiece, and is placed on a very roughly-built chimney-stalk, which at one time formed the vent of one of the bothies. The scene depicted by the great painter is one of rare beauty. Three stags and two hinds are grouped around in various attitudes, all in perfect poise and form. Their positions are all different and beautifully portrayed in

faultless shape and colour. Much of the shading of the background is faded, and a small portion of the slab, through the effects of the weather, is broken away, but the picture is still wonderfully complete and beautiful." It is a little strange that the accounts should differ as to the number of animals depicted.

"A Cairngormer," writing to the *Free Press* (January 10) in support of the proposed road, presumed that the appeal for its construction must in

the main be based on its utility as a "through" route, but pointed out that "Glen Feshie is a most charming glen
 A
 GLEN FESHIE —in my opinion, much more picturesque than either of the
 INCIDENT. two Larigs; and this charm is largely due to the varying aspects of the river Feshie and its succession of linns, falls, rapids, and pools. A road through the glen would rapidly come into favour for its scenic beauties." He expressed himself, however, as not very sanguine of its realisation, the glen being a deer forest, and the project of constructing a driving road through it being likely to meet with strenuous opposition. "Possibly I am discouraged," he added, "by remembering that I was once 'held up' in Glen Feshie by an angry gamekeeper because I had made a diversion from the existing track (a right-of-way), crossed along some hill-tops, and regained the track by all unwittingly walking through a deer 'sanctuary'".

In an article titled "In the Corries of the Ptarmigan—Loch Mhorlich and the Larig Ghru," in the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* of May 2, Mr. Seton Gordon recounts the legend of this spectre, which is

THE SPECTRE associated with Loch Morlich, as follows:—

WITH THE "Countless storms from the west have piled up a high
 BLOODY HAND. and extensive ridge of sand at the eastern shores of the Loch Morlich, and, if ancient tradition be believed, these sands were the haunt of the Ladnh dhearg, the Spectre of the Bloody Hand. It is said that a certain chieftain's son, while hunting in Glen More, killed a hind and proceeded to gralloch it. He set down his 'sgian dubh' for the moment, and, to his surprise, could find no trace of the dagger a short time later. The same fate also befell the knife which he took from his dirk. He was at a loss to account for their disappearance until shortly afterwards he met on the shores of the Loch an old hillman wrapped close in a plaid, but with one hand exposed and covered with blood. The spirit, for such it was, remonstrated with the hunter for his lust for slaughter, and warned him that the hinds of Glen More were to be left in peace."

A spectre of the kind is mentioned by Sir David Lindsay of the Mount in "Marmion":—

And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
 With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
 And fingers red with gore,
 Is seen in Rothiemurchus glade,
 Or where the sable pine-tree shade
 Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnaslaid,
 Dromouchty, or Glenmore.

The explanatory legend is narrated in a note—

“The forest of Glenmore, in the North Highlands, is believed to be haunted by a spirit called Lham-dearg, in the array of an ancient warrior, having a bloody hand, from which he takes his name. He insists upon those whom he meets doing battle with him; and the clergyman who makes up an account of the district, extant in the Macfarlane MS. in the Advocates' Library, gravely assures us that in his time (1669) Lham-dearg fought with three brothers whom he met in his walk, none of whom long survived the ghostly conflict.” (See the precise passage, quoted from “The Sibbald Manuscripts,” in *C.C.J.* v., 198). Sir Walter Scott makes another allusion to the spectre in “The Bard's Incantation”—

The Forest of Glenmore is drear,
 It is all of black pine and the dark oak tree,
 And the midnight wind to a mountain deer
 Is whistling the forest lullaby.

* * * * *

The Spectre with the Bloody Hand
 Is wandering through the wild woodland;
 The owl and raven are mute for dread,
 And the time is meet to awake the dead!

GLEN DERRY, whose deep recesses were once known only to a few natives of Braemar, and a still fewer number of drovers, who, in the prosecution of their calling, found it sometimes necessary to traverse its

GLEN DERRY. lone solitudes, and brave the difficulties and dangers of the Larig Ghru, is now familiar to a host of tourists, who annually visit the wild scenery of Loch A'an or ascend the heights of Ben Muich Dhui. This glen is perhaps above all others on Deeside interesting to the geologist, containing as it does the most evident and probably most recent manifestations of glacial action to be found in Scotland. If the tourist has ever seen the Mer de Glace, he will have little difficulty in picturing to himself a miniature of it in Glen Derry; a great ice tributary with a grand cascade like the Talèfre flowing down from Loch Etchachan, uniting in the valley below with the greater arm, resembling the Glacier du Geant, from the summit of the Larig Ghru, and moving on its slow but resistless course as far as the mouth of the valley. It was probably this very glen that sheltered the last glacier in the British Isles; and certainly about a mile above its opening into Glen Lui are to be seen some very manifest and undisturbed specimens of terminal moraines. Here we may suppose the ice made its final stand as a glacier, here deposited its last burden, and here expired, bravely fighting against the forces of a hostile climate.—“Deeside Tales,” by the Rev. John Grant Michie, Dinnet.

GEORGE BORROW, the author of "Lavengro" and "The Romany Rye," was a noted pedestrian, and several specimens of his walking powers are mentioned in an article on "George Borrow in GEORGE BORROW Scotland," by Mr. Clement Shorter, which appeared in the April number of the "Fortnightly Review." He wound up a tour in Scotland in the autumn of 1858 by saying—"I have now seen the whole of Scotland that is worth seeing, and have walked 600 miles." On his homeward journey, he was obliged to go from Aberdeen to Inverness for his luggage, but, "rather than return again to Aberdeen," he sent on his things to Dunkeld and walked the 100 miles thither through the Highlands. He had made the same walk (or a similar one) at an earlier stage in his tour, describing it thus in a letter to his wife, written from Fort Augustus—

"Before leaving the Highlands I thought I would see a little more about me. So last week I set out on a four days' task, a walk of 100 miles. I returned here late last Thursday night. I walked that day forty-five miles; during the first twenty rain poured in torrents and the wind blew in my face. The last seventeen miles were in the dark. The first day I passed over Corryarrick, a mountain 3,000 feet high. I was nearly up to my middle in snow. As soon as I had passed it I was in Badenoch. The road on the farther side was horrible and I was obliged to wade several rivulets, one of which was very boisterous and nearly threw me down. I wandered through a wonderful country and picked up a great many strange legends from the people I met, but they were very few, the country being almost a desert, chiefly inhabited by deer. When amidst the lower mountains I frequently heard them blaring in the woods above me."

REVIEWS.

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS: THEIR MEANING AND USE. By Marion I. Newbigin, D.Sc. (London: W. & A. K. Johnston, Limited—1/- net).—

MAP-READING ON NEW LINES. To the average mountaineer, we suspect, just as to the average man, a map is mainly a route indicator, a guide to the roads to be taken to get to a contemplated destination or the direction to be followed when the roads fail. Even for this apparently simple purpose a map requires careful study—has, in fact, to be interpreted with some skill, as may be realised by a perusal of the article on "Map-Reading" in last July's number of the *C. C. J.*

The purely utilitarian conception of maps as indicating routes, distances, nature of ground, etc., however, has been superseded by the "newer geography" of which Dr. Newbigin is so able an exponent—or let us preferably say that now-a-days more stress is laid on the fact that maps serve other and higher purposes than to act merely as guides to travellers. As our author puts it, they "give a careful and detailed picture of country, with the facts of human occupation in their natural relations to the physical features." As a consequence, they have to be studied in an entirely new fashion, and instruction in maps and the mode of understanding them proceeds on quite different lines from those that formerly prevailed. How different is this other aspect of map-reading will be most readily realised by contrasting the chapter on "Methods of Studying the Maps" in this little book with our "Map-