



CAPTAIN J. B. GILLIES,
SECRETARY OF THE CLUB, 1911-16.

THE
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In Memoriam.

CAPTAIN J. B. GILLIES.

KILLED IN ACTION, 13th NOVEMBER 1916.

Ev'n as I thought of you your soul had sped,
Friend of old, happy, far off, ardent days,
And, as across the sea I turned my gaze,
The soil of France with your brave blood was red !
Blame not the shears that slit the thin yarn thread.
Though life be lost, immortal is the praise !

H. W. BLISS.

THE heavy toll of the nation's manhood which is being exacted by the war is making lamentable inroads on the membership of the Club, and it is our sorrowful duty in this issue of the *Journal* to record the loss of no fewer than four of our associates. Patriotically responding to their country's call and cheerfully enduring all the hardships and dangers of the prolonged campaign, they have now met an untimely death on the battlefield—to the extreme regret of all who knew them, and particularly of those with whom they were on terms of intimacy. All the four were keen mountaineers, good walkers and climbers, and imbued with a true love of the hills ; and each of them possessed distinctive personal qualities which endeared them to their friends and made their company always welcome.

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Prominent among the four—from his official position in the Club at anyrate—was Captain James Brown Gillies, who, five years ago, became Secretary of the Club and Editor of the *Journal*, and subsequently had the post of Treasurer added to his duties. He was the only son of our esteemed Chairman, Mr. T. R. Gillies, and being also, on the maternal side, a grandson of the late Mr. Alexander Copland, he may be said to have doubly inherited the mountaineering instinct. When a mere boy he participated in many of the Club excursions, and the taste for hill-climbing thus early nurtured was developed with the years. It remained to the end, and a pathetic interest now attaches to the longing he expressed in an article written from the trenches, which appeared in the last number of the *Journal*, for a week-end at "Maggie Gruer's." That favourite habitat of mountaineers in Inverey was frequently resorted to by Mr. Gillies and some of his motor-cycling companions; and from it he made many walking excursions to the Cairngorms, which in time became to him familiar ground. He was what may be termed—to use a colloquialism—"a splendid walker," and he was a no less "splendid" companion on a walk, full of interesting and diverting talk, which frequently had a dash of lively humour with it.

As Secretary of the Club he rendered very considerable service, revitalising it at a period of some staleness by an infusion of younger blood, securing a large addition to the membership of men of his own generation. He directed the various meets with characteristic energy, and of several of them he furnished accounts to the *Journal*. He co-operated most actively in the movement for the erection of the Bennie Bridge and was present at its opening, and he was one of the small party who subsequently walked through the Làirig Pass overnight and ascended Ben Muich Dhui in the early hours of the morning. His editorship of the *Journal*, was perhaps marked more by the judicious selection of contributors than by contributions from

his own pen; yet on occasion he could write well and interestingly, as witness his account of "Map-Reading on Beinn a' Bhuird" and his recent article, "In the Trench Lines."

To expatiate on the many admirable qualities by which Mr. Gillies was characterised would be as easy as it would be agreeable, particularly on the part of one who latterly was associated with him in the conduct of the *Journal* and who ever found working with him a pleasure. In a sense, however, the task of presenting a personal estimate of our departed colleague has been forestalled by the remark in a newspaper notice at the time of his death:—"He had a large circle of friends in Aberdeen and was greatly liked for his frankness and cordiality and unassuming and engaging manner." This eulogium could not well be improved upon, and it will, we are sure, be warmly endorsed by members of the Club.

The outbreak of war in August 1914 brought about a cessation of Mr. Gillies's activities both as secretary and editor—a cessation deemed at the time merely temporary, but which now, alas! to our great regret, has proved final. He had previously been a Captain in the 4th Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders (Territorial Force), but had retired; but he rejoined at once and received a commission in his old regiment. He was an exceedingly capable officer, and thoroughly efficient in all the details of military duty. Before going to the front he served as Adjutant and latterly as Major in the 2/4th Battalion, and for a considerable part of the time he was in the fighting line he acted as temporary Major in the 1/4th Battalion. He had seen a deal of active service, having been at the front in France continuously since March last. He was killed in action on 13th November, when in charge of a detachment clearing out a German trench.

ROBERT ANDERSON.