

## NOTES.

THE Allt-na-Beinne Moire Bridge in the Rothiemurchus Forest, we regret to say, was damaged somewhat seriously last summer. It appears that a number of horses—presumably Highland ponies—were allowed to graze in the vicinity of the bridge, and it is surmised that one or more of them, while in a frisky mood, galloped across the bridge, with the consequence that the iron steps at one end were broken. The Club, by subscriptions from its members and from friends and others interested, erected the bridge in 1912, and has since assumed a kind of oversight of it; and in 1919 it had the bridge repainted, expending on that work the small surplus left of the original fund and making a substantial contribution from the Club's funds to balance the accounts. The repair of the bridge after the accident just narrated became absolutely imperative in view of the utility of the bridge to members of the Club and other mountaineers, standing as it does on the direct route to and from the Làirig Dhrù; and the Committee of the Club at once undertook to have the necessary repair works executed. This was done, at a cost of about £18. It is impossible, however, for the Club to defray this sum out of its ordinary revenue. Resort was again had to voluntary contributions. An appeal was addressed to members of the Club, and subscription sheets were placed in the hotels and principal shops of Aviemore. These latter yielded small result, but, happily, a generous response was forthcoming from Club members, and the cost of the repairs was fully met and a small surplus left over. That is all right for the present; but the liability of the bridge to accidents of the kind that occurred last summer, and to damage by floods and otherwise, presents a serious problem as to its future maintenance. The Club, unaided, cannot undertake the burden of continually repairing it—that is obvious. The bridge, however, is available to and is used by others than members of the Club, and is of service to the whole district. It really becomes a question whether the bridge should not now be taken over by the Badenoch District Council.

THERE was an exceedingly heavy rainfall in the Dee Valley on Monday, 4th October, following heavy rain on the Saturday: a Ballater record gave the rainfall for the first four days of October as 5.590 ins., equal to the total fall for 1919. As a consequence, the Dee rose rapidly in the early hours of Tuesday, overflowed its banks in many places and caused enormous destruction, particularly in the lower reaches of the river. Adjacent fields were submerged, and as much of the crop, owing to the backwardness of the harvest, had not been gathered, an immense number of stooks were washed away by the raging flood. At Nether Balfour, Durriss, for instance, the crops of about 22 acres were swept down the Dee. Several farmers along the river bank lost the whole of their grain crops, while in many places the soil of turnips and potato fields was washed away as well as the

tubers and roots. According to a picturesque report of the disaster—"Ricks of hay and sheaves of corn, fencing, trees, hedging, poultry and flotsam of all descriptions were swirled along and borne out to sea or stranded on the banks." The monetary loss must have been very considerable. Seventeen Shetland ponies were grazing on the island opposite Drumduan, Banchory-Devenick, but it was found impossible to rescue them, and, except two which swam ashore, they were all drowned. The Maryculter Bridge was seriously affected, part of the road-way being swept away, and the bridge itself being undermined. The "Shakkin' Brig" at Cults was under water, and was considerably damaged, parts of the mason work of the piers being demolished; the cost of the repairs is estimated at £1450. The neighbouring banks were also greatly destroyed. The Bleachfield works at the Bridge of Dee, were encompassed by the flood and inundated as well, great damage being done, particularly to the electricity plant. At Aberdeen Harbour, owing partly to the impetuous current of the river and partly to heavy seas, several vessels broke from their moorings, and two drifters, the *Glen Shee* and the *Glen Garry*, were borne seaward—unperceived in the darkness: the former stranded on the beach, the latter sank.

In the Braemar region the flood on the Clunie was apparently more striking and more destructive than the flood on the Dee. The "oldest inhabitant" had never seen the Clunie in such spate, the water reaching the spring of the arch of the bridge at Braemar. Several bridges in Glen Clunie were washed away or rendered unsafe, and flooded streams swept through Glen Ey and Glen Callater with disastrous effects.

There was general agreement that this flood on the Dee was the biggest that has occurred since "The Muckle Spate o' '29," the spate associated with the memorable Moray floods of that year and immortalised in David Grant's graphic poem, but some people contended that it was even bigger. A stone near the Bridge of Dee indicates the floodmark of the 1829 spate, and the October flood only attained a height two feet below that mark, while the last big flood on the Dee—on 9th May 1913—was 3 feet 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches below the 1829 mark. The validity of such a comparison, however, was challenged on the ground that the channel of the river has widened and deepened since 1829, and that in that year there were no Aberdeen waterworks at Invercarnie, withdrawing thousands of gallons of water per hour from the river. Accordingly, it was maintained that last October's flood was characterised by a greater volume of water than was the flood of 1829, or, as it was expressed by a correspondent of the *Free Press* who discussed the question: "The Dee has certainly broadened in many parts and also deepened by the constant scourings; hence it is bound to follow that a much greater volume of water passed down than is merely to be measured by reference to marks well on to a century old."

MR. JOHN D. MUNRO, in the course of an article in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* of 10th August last, descriptive of a night ascent of Lochnagar to witness the sunrise, gave details of remarkable echoes which he and his party awakened on the way up the mountain. We quote his account in full:—

ECHOES  
ON  
LOCHNAGAR.

"By slow stages we reached 'The Well,' and lay on the lee side of a large boulder to the left that gave us ample shelter from the breeze that came down from the slope. Afoot again by two o'clock, we paused some two or three times on 'The Ladder,' and there we sought and found what seemed to us remarkable echoes thrown back from the Meikle Pap. From a point about midway up an echo, repeated probably ten times, came up to us. The sound was tossed among the roots of the Meikle Pap that lay in the shadows below, and was flung back to us again and again.

"We tried the echo freely. Three short, loud yelps were given, and instantly there seemed to be unloosed from the dark places underneath a pack of lean hounds that came howling, streaming up the hill as if in pursuit of us. Screeches called up in return a chorus of shrieking furies that seemed to shake the hill with the screams of their mirth, and died away, still howling, in ruin. The effect was awesome. In the spaces below and out abreast of us small white clouds from time to time formed suddenly in the mid-air, and as quickly vanished. The spaces seemed tremulous with unseen presences that were not of earth, and when just out beneath us there appeared a pale cloud in the form of a tent we felt that the spirits of the hill were encamped and abroad, and we turned shuddering up the hill to escape.

"From a point farther up 'The Ladder' we found a sevenfold echo with a quality that struck us as unusual. It grew instead of diminishing in intensity and volume as it repeated, so that the last was many times louder than the first."

"ONLOOKER," who contributes "Doings of the Week" to the *Aberdeen Free Press*, recently called attention to a myth prevalent SPECTRAL FIGURE in Upper Deeside to the effect that a big spectral figure ON THE CAIRNGORMS. has been seen at various times during the last five years walking about on the tops of the Cairngorms. When approached, so the story goes, the figure disappears. Moreover, it has got a name—"Ferlie More," to wit. Is it possible that this myth has originated in the incident narrated by Mr. James A. Parker in his article on "A High-Level Ascent on Ben Muich Dhui" in the *C. C. J.* for July, 1916?

BRIEF descriptions of Balmoral Castle and its neighbouring scenery were given by Lord Beaconsfield in letters to his wife in 1868, when (as plain LORD BEACONS- Mr. Disraeli) he was Minister in Attendance on Queen FIELD ON THE Victoria at Balmoral Castle (the letters are reproduced FALLS OF in the recently published volume of Mr. Buckle's GARRAWALT. biography). Among the descriptions is the following rather excessive laudation of the Falls of Garrawalt:—

"Yesterday, after a hard morning's work—for the messenger goes at 12 o'clock, and I rise exactly at seven; so I get four hours' work—Lord Bridport drove me to see some famous falls—of Garrawalt; and though the day was misty and the mountains veiled, the cataract was heightened by the rain. I never in my life saw anything more magnificent; much grander falls often, as in Switzerland, but none with

such lovely accessories ; such banks of birchen woods, and boulders of colossal granite."

SOME interesting facts about the Mar deer forest were brought out at the County of Aberdeen Valuation Court held in the autumn. The

MAR DEER FOREST. forest has never been let, and so it is difficult to fix its economic value. Prior to the war, the assessable value was fixed by the Assessor at £4000. The Fife Trustees protested from time to time, and in 1917 the valuation, by an arrangement with the Assessor, was reduced by £1000. A portion of the forest, at the request of the Food Control authorities, was let for sheep grazing in 1918 at a total rent of £530. The valuation of the forest was thereupon reduced to £1625. The Assessor now proposed to fix it at £3200, but offered, as the grazing was to be continued, to reduce that figure by £400. He contended that £1625 was not now a fair value. The Assessor of Inverness, Ross, and Cromarty, he said, based deer forests at £20 per head of stags, and at Mar, one of the largest deer forests in Scotland, with an area of 110,000 acres, 150 stags would not be out of the way. The proper valuation, therefore, would be somewhere about £3000, but he would accept £2500. It was argued for the Fife Trustees that, so long as sheep were on the forest, the basis of valuation should remain unaltered, and they proposed that the figure should be £1030. The Court fixed the valuation at £2000.

A REPORT by Mr. W. A. Tait, C.E., Edinburgh, to the Scottish Board of Agriculture, proposing certain works for the improvement of the channel of

IMPROVEMENT OF CHANNEL OF THE SPEY. the Spey, is of interest, if only for the suggestion that the Feshie should be diverted into the Geldie and so into the Dee. There is no doubt that the head-waters of the Feshie originally flowed to the Geldie, and it is curious to find a modern engineering project thus coinciding with what was once a natural feature. It is also proposed to divert flood water from the upper portions of the Spey into the Spean by means of an artificial channel about three miles long. The object in both cases is to reduce the volume of flood water in the Spey, which is so destructive to the low-lying haugh-lands in the middle reaches of the river. To aid in this, it is in contemplation to lower Loch Insh by nearly 10 feet, to widen the course of the river and lower its bed below Inverallan churchyard, and to carry out a variety of other works. The Nethy is as bothersome a tributary of the Spey as the Feshie, but Mr. Tait makes no proposal with regard to it beyond suggesting that something might be done in the way of checking its velocity by utilising the old dams formerly used for floating down timber.

A SCHEME for dealing with the Spey in quite another way was ventilated at a recent meeting of the Moray County Council. A member proposed

ELECTRICITY FROM THE SPEY. that a Committee be appointed "with the view of participating in the Government scheme of utilising the Spey or any other suitable waters for generating electrical and lighting power in this county." There is no such Government project, though a Royal

Commission has been investigating the utilisation of the water power of the Highlands, and schemes of the kind indicated are being talked about. The gentleman who initiated the idea at the Moray Council wisely suggested that, if it was deemed injudicious to start an installation for Moray alone, a combined scheme of installation with Banffshire might be considered. The Council, however, turned down the whole proposal by nine votes to seven. Meanwhile, the Banffshire people are taking steps to see whether the waters of the Spey, Avon, Fiddich, and Deveron cannot be made available for a supply of electricity for that county. Projects for "harnessing" lochs and rivers in the Central and Western Highlands for the production of electrical power are also being mooted, and are to be brought before Parliament shortly. One—known as the Lochaber Water Power Order—proposes to dam up Loch Laggan and Loch Treig, and take the water by a tunnel to Kinlochleven to be used in the aluminium works there; it would also divert the upper waters of the Spey into Loch Laggan. What is known as the Grampian Electric Supply Order is a very ambitious scheme, which aims at utilising Loch Ericht, Loch Garry, and other lochs and streams in Northern Perthshire for the supply of power to no fewer than six counties. This scheme would also provide electricity from Loch Rannoch and Loch Tummel for Dundee, Perth, and other municipalities.

THE "GALLOWS TREE"—a venerable pine on the road from Braemar to the Linn of Dee, a little west of Victoria Bridge—succumbed to a violent

<p>THE "GALLOWS TREE" AT BRAEMAR.</p>	<p>gale which raged on Friday, 3rd December, and was blown down into the gravel pit above which it has stood for so long. Tradition assigned it the reputation of being the tree on which unfortunates met their fate when the old Earls of Mar, like other barons, possessed the right of "pot and gallows" on their estates. It is supposed to</p>
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have been used for purposes of "summary justice" after the exercise of that right became obsolete, and the latest occasion on which it was so used is said to have been in 1538, when a Lamont of Inverey was hanged on it by the Farquharsons, on a trumped-up charge of cattle-raiding. One of the "Legends of the Braes o' Mar" is to the effect that Lamont's mother followed the hanging party and, finding all her prayers for her son's release unavailing, cursed the Farquharson clan and predicted their downfall in a Gaelic rhyme, one verse of which has been translated thus :—

This tree will flourish high and broad,  
Green as it grows to-day,  
When from the banks of bonnie Dee  
Clan Fhionnlaidh's all away.

The prophecy is regarded as now accomplished. All the minor Farquharson families on Deeside have passed away, and the root-family, the Farquharsons of Invercauld, became extinct in the male line.

COUNTING up the fatal accidents in the Swiss Alps alone this year, I

arrived at a total of 30 men and 7 women. Only one Englishman was among them, and he apparently died of heart failure, for he was quite elderly. It is interesting to compare ALPINE CLIMBING ACCIDENTS. these figures with those for 1919 (which, however, apply to all the Alps—French, Italian, Austrian, German, and Swiss)—57 accidents with 66 persons killed, or considerably more than in 1918. This year, taking Switzerland alone, only two accidents happened which were what might be called real mountaineering fatalities—that is, accidents to experienced climbers on difficult peaks, where anything in the nature of imprudence may be at once ruled out of court. Except one of these, all the other fatal mountain accidents were to guideless climbers.

Considering the number of tourists who attempted the ascent of the Matterhorn this summer, the wonder is not that there were so many accidents, but so few. Thus, on August 9th no fewer than 51 persons were on the Matterhorn summit at one time, which is said to be a record. Yet the mountain was not on the whole in remarkably good condition this summer. As for the seven women who lost their lives, it is extraordinary that in most cases it was due to their trying to take short cuts and insisting on departing from the path. Only in one instance, and that the case of a man, was an accident due to that formerly most frequent cause of Alpine mishap—too light or too inefficiently nailed boots. Every accident in the Bernese Oberland this summer seems to have happened to people who attempted difficult climbs without a guide and often without experience.—JULIAN GRANDE in the *Spectator*, 16th October.

THE rapid growth of facilities for road travel is viewed with a certain amount of misgiving by old-fashioned folk, who fear that it will spoil the sweet solitude of the countryside and make escape from SOLITUDE AND SOCIETY. the noise and bustle of town life increasingly difficult for everybody. As a matter of fact, there are greater opportunities now than ever for getting away from the crowd. However thronged the main roads may be at holiday times, we do not need to go very far from the beaten track to get all the solitude we want, and perhaps we appreciate it all the more for having to go a little out of our way to find it. The charms of solitude make their strongest appeal "to one that hath been long in city pent"; the jaded, restless town-dweller instinctively seeks happiness and contentment in a return to Nature. People who live in town are able by means of the motor 'bus to enjoy a quiet ramble in rural districts that were formerly inaccessible. The self-propelled road vehicle confers corresponding advantages on those who live remote from towns. A motor 'bus carries the shepherd's children from their lonely glen to the village school. A motor ambulance takes the victim of a colliery accident to a hospital no longer distant. Whether we live in town or country we are less at the mercy of our immediate environment, and the result is a freer, fuller and more varied life.—*The King's Highway*, for October.

THE poet, we are told, can find inspiration in the humblest thing, but even then one would hardly expect to come across a poem suggested by an Ordnance map. The versatile "Touchstone" of the *Daily Mail*, however, has contrived to sing the praises of the Ordnance Survey in the following verses :—

This is my country, good brown road,  
 Green park, blue stream, red-contoured hill,  
 For many a mile round my abode  
 Shy lanes where I may roam at will,  
 The path across the farmer's fields,  
 With all the rural joys it yields.

Here rises up the village spire,  
 And here the traveller may win,  
 After long toil, his heart's desire,  
 The cheerful shelter of an inn,  
 And here a long and turfy glade  
 Cuts through the pinewood's odorous shade.

This dotted road, unhedged and free,  
 Will lead me on across the down,  
 From whose high summit I shall see  
 Homestead and mansion, thorpe and town,  
 Here the last orchids linger still,  
 With ragwort gay and tormentil.

So let me rise and hie me forth,  
 By winding lanes or flowery meads,  
 By east or west, or south or north,  
 Whither an idle fancy leads,  
 Without a guide save this neat plan,  
 The Ordnance Survey's gift to man!