

## AN EXCURSION TO BEINN A' BHUIRD.

BY MARSHALL J. ROBB.

DURING the past two years a small party, most of whom are members of the Club, have made several one-day excursions to the hills by motor-car, setting out from town (Aberdeen) fairly early in the morning and returning in the late evening. Lochnagar, both by the Ladder and by the Black Spout, has been done from Allt-naguibsaich. By driving to Derry Lodge, Cairntoul was visited in June; and on another occasion the Ben Muich Dhui-Derry Cairngorm round was accomplished in the same month. It is possible to get to the more distant hills, such as Beinn a' Ghlo, but the expedition to that hill was defeated by bad weather when the party were a few hundred feet below the cairn.

Perhaps the most unusual single day's effort was a walk from Tomintoul to Derry Lodge, which was managed by getting a friend to come along and drive the car from Tomintoul to Derry, *via* Strathdon and Braemar, while the walking party were "on the tramp." This walk, especially along the Ailnack, is a most interesting one, and is not at all difficult, despite the absence of a footpath in the middle portion.

An excursion to Beinn a' Bhuid was arranged for the Sunday before the Easter Meet of the Club. Leaving town at 7 a.m., the party reached Ballater in good time for breakfast at 8.45, and at 9.30 a start was made for the second portion of the journey. With the factor's permission, the Braemar road was left at Invercauld Bridge, and the car proceeded beyond Invercauld House as far as was practicable. The road ultimately becomes a narrow track, consisting of two deep ruts with grass between; a few hundred yards of this was deemed sufficient. The car was left at the end of a wood nearly



three miles below Slugan Lodge. There are quite a number of gates on this road and a little negotiation is required to turn the car at the end of it. At 10.15 the walk up the Slugan Glen was commenced in very pleasant weather conditions. It was quite summer-like in the more sheltered portions below the watershed.

On reaching the Quoich valley the footpath was followed. Regrets were soon expressed at the lack of a camera. Glimpses of sunlight threw shadows of the buttresses on the snow slopes, and some fine photographs were undoubtedly missed. The junction of the burns was reached at 12.30, when a sheltered spot was chosen for lunch as a snow shower had come on. Spindrift was blowing in clouds off the plateau, so woollen helmets, etc., were donned to meet the elements up aloft. Soon after setting out for the climb up to the Dubh Loch corrie, fairly deep snow was encountered, and the leader occasionally stepped over the knees, thereby helping the others to avoid such pitfalls. The gullies on the south side of the corrie offered some splendid snow climbs, but the cornices were exceptionally heavy in most, while even the easier ones might have taken more time than the party could afford. A shorter but promising climb towards the south-west was chosen, and the foot of it was gained at 1.45. This climb, however, proved disappointing as the snow, being soft, required no step-cutting; indeed, the rope was put on only for the last half of the ascent.

The plateau was reached at 2.30, and conditions there were found to be less severe than was anticipated. The wind had fallen considerably and the temperature was four degrees above freezing point. The north top was reached after a short walk over very hard snow and occasional ice. A number of small flies were discovered crawling about in a somewhat weak condition. The problem as to how they got there remained unsolved. Fine views were obtained of the distant hills to the south, and the cornices were examined at close quarters. After a short stay at the cairn, the south top was made

for, it being almost in the direct line of descent. This was reached at 3.30. Immediately on leaving it, the wind rose and spindrift commenced blowing, sometimes with more force than was pleasant. During the descent by the snowy corrie glissading was found impossible owing to the softness of the snow, so that the Quoich was not reached until 4.50. The walk down the glen was over at 6.30, when the car was boarded again for the run homeward. Tea at Ballater was much appreciated, and a moonlight run to town concluded the excursion.