

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1922—BRAEMAR.

THE New Year (1922) Meet was held at Braemar, from Friday, 30th December, to Monday, 2nd January. The following members were present :—Dr. J. R. Levack (President), Dr. Struthers Stewart, Messrs. D. S. P. Douglas, G. Duncan, W. Garden, G. P. Geddes, J. L. Geddes, D. P. Levack, J. W. Levack, A. P. Milne, J. A. Parker, W. A. Reid, C. P. Robb, M. J. Robb, R. T. Sellar, and A. L. Thomson ; and as guests—Professor Macdonald, Dr. Sellar, and Mr. R. Dewar—a total of 19.

Six members and one of the guests arrived on Thursday evening and found the weather conditions at Braemar very different from those in town. Frost prevailed, while snow lay at a depth, according to the Meteorological Observatory, of 8 inches. The barometer had been very inconstant on the days preceding the meet, and late on Thursday another change seemed imminent. This began during the night and by the next day the thaw had set in properly. Heavy rain fell and the snow on the lower levels melted rapidly. Drs. Sellar and Stewart and Messrs. Sellar and Thomson ascended Morrone in sleety rain. The party chose a route near the gully which was full of soft snow. The climb was somewhat stiff work as the snow was very wet and in places knee-deep. On the summit the weather was so rough that no time was lost in commencing the descent. The remaining three members contented themselves with a walk.

During the afternoon the President, Messrs. Dewar, Douglas, G. P. Geddes, J. L. Geddes, D. P. Levack, J. W. Levack and A. P. Milne arrived. Towards evening the weather became worse, culminating in a violent gale from the north-west, which lasted until early on Saturday morning. Breakfast was accordingly postponed until 9 a.m. Soon afterwards the weather improved very much, and the entire party, accompanied by Sir John Seymour Lloyd, K.B.E., who was staying at Braemar, set out in a brake for Loch Callater, with the object of climbing either Cairn Taggart or one of the gullies in Corry Kander. On arriving at the Loch, a small party of three members followed the footpath which crosses in the direction of Glen Cluny Lodge and returned by the Glenshee road. The main party decided to go to Corry Kander and proceeded by the right hand side of Loch Callater. When the corrie was reached, it was at once seen that little snow remained in the gullies although

a good deal of blue ice was present. It was considered doubtful if any of the gullies would go, and the fact that the party was scarce of ice axes settled matters. An ascent was made on the north side of the corrie to the plateau on the shoulder of Carn Turk. When the party had got some distance up, over frozen turf for the most part, they came to a gentle snow slope which occupied some forty minutes, as the snow was in poor climbing condition and the going stiff. The plateau was reached at 3.30, about half an hour before sunset, and the members enjoyed a scene of surpassing beauty. The sun was shining all around on the snow-covered hills, every one of which, with the exception of Lochnagar, was visible. In the sky there was a magnificent play of colours, green to the east and all shades from deep blue to red in the west. Later, after sunset, there was a beautiful afterglow of red. Time was getting short, and, without visiting the summit of Carn Turk, the party followed the ridge and descended to Loch Callater, driving back to Braemar in the dusk.

On Saturday, the full complement of members was reached by the arrival of Messrs. Garden, Parker, C. P. Robb, and M. J. Robb. Late in the evening news came through that the road to Derry Lodge was blocked, so that Ben Muich Dhui was ruled out for Sunday's excursion. Beinn a' Bhuird was then proposed, but it was thought that the snow in the Slugan Glen, if not rendering the attempt impossible, would at least make it very tiresome. In these circumstances, it was decided to again drive to Callater with the object of climbing the Stui Buttress.

On Sunday morning the weather was milder, with occasional showers. It was observed that Ben Avon was quite clear, although the other hills were invisible. Two brakes were requisitioned and a party of 15 set out for Callater. In an hour or so the climb up the Lochnagar path was commenced, and it was soon found to be fairly warm work although a strong following wind rendered assistance. The footpath—which was very wet in places—was left at the north side of Cairn Taggart, where the party turned eastward. Several patches of deep snow were met with, and some of the members descended a small one in quite good condition. Dr. Sellar and Messrs. Parker, J. W. Levack and Sellar went higher up, with the intention of descending the buttress. On arrival at the top, however, this project had to be abandoned, as the very high wind precluded any possibility of making the descent in safety. After a short interval for lunch in a more or less sheltered spot, the four returned to Callater by crossing the summit of Cairn Taggart and walked back to Braemar.

The main party, on arriving at the edge of the plateau north-west of the buttress, divided into two sections. Messrs. Garden, G. P. Geddes, D. P. Levack, M. J. Robb, and Thomson descended the

snow slope and reached the foot of the buttress in 20 minutes, while the others walked round to the top. The climb up the buttress was completed in about 35 minutes, scarcely any ice being met with. It was considered advisable to use the rope at only one point, but the final stages had to be taken slowly owing to the very high wind. The climbers joined the others, who had had rather a cold wait, and the return journey was commenced by the path round Cairn Taggart. A good many patches of snow remained, and the wind, more especially in the col, was exceedingly strong but fortunately there was only a little rain. A good many deer were observed, one or two almost within shooting range, and also numerous ptarmigan. A single mountain hare in its winter coat of white was seen, and lower down a few grouse. No views whatever of distant hills were obtained. Loch Callater was reached at 4.10, nearly an hour after the other party.

Early on Monday morning it was raining heavily, but later the weather hardened and snow fell. Dr. Sellar and Messrs Parker, Sellar and Thomson made an early start at 8.15 for Derry Lodge, with the intention of climbing Ben Muich Dhui *via* Luibeg. The weather was pretty rough with a very strong north-west wind and occasional snow showers, but seemed to be improving as the top of Cairn Toul was visible although Ben Muich Dhui was completely clouded over. The party left Derry Lodge a little before 10. Half way up Glen Luibeg, the weather became very much worse, and the climbers met with both falling and drifting snow. Judging from the spindrift on the hills a hurricane was blowing up aloft. Under these conditions, it was evident that the forcing of the Sron Riach route would be very doubtful, not to speak of the fording of the Luibeg. It was therefore decided to follow the Luibeg Glen to the bealach overlooking Loch Etchachan, and, if that point were reached, to consider whether to attack the Ben from its lee side or to return by the Derry Cairngorm ridge. Although under the lee of the crags of Ben Muich Dhui, the walk up the Luibeg was very arduous, and it was with considerable thankfulness that a big boulder was espied through the drift near the source of the burn and a halt called for lunch. At this point it seemed hopeless to try to proceed farther, but there is nothing like perseverance and the struggle against the elements was resumed, the bealach being reached about one o'clock. The position was verified by a brief glimpse of the loch. Very possibly the remaining 800 feet of the Ben could have been climbed from this point, but there was not sufficient daylight left, and it was therefore decided to return by the Derry Cairngorm ridge. The struggle along this ridge even with a following wind was very trying, the drift being so heavy that at times it was impossible to see 15 yards ahead, and the reading of map, compass, and aneroid at rare intervals was a matter of great difficulty. The party, however, beat the elements and reached the top of Carn Crom shortly after three

o'clock, and Luibeg Cottage in another hour or so, returning to Braemar a little before six.

The Meet was quite successful in spite of the two days' unfavourable weather. On Saturday evening some of the members and a few friends had an informal dance, and afterwards the whole company celebrated Hogmanay. On Sunday evening the drawing-room contingent greatly enjoyed Mr. Sellar's pianoforte selections. The arrangements, as usual, were very successfully carried out by Mr. Nicol, who, unfortunately, could not be present. As on former occasions, the secretary had obtained *carte blanche* as regards routes. On the second day of the Meet it was noticeable that a good many members were minus ice axes. It is not necessary that everyone should bring a rope, but certainly all members attending New Year and Easter Meets should be provided with an ice axe.

MARSHALL J. ROBB.

EASTER MEET, 1922—AVIEMORE.

THE Easter Meet was held from Thursday, 13th April, to Monday, the 17th. The following members were present:—Dr. J. R. Levack (president), H. Alexander, D. S. P. Douglas, W. Garden, D. G. Levack, J. W. Levack, A. P. Milne, J. McCoss, Dr. J. L. McIntyre, G. McIntyre, J. A. Parker, M. J. Robb, R. T. Sellar, J. Watt, A. M. M. Williamson, and G. Wilson; Guest—C. Verley.—17. Nine of the above members are also members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and two are members of the Alpine Club.

The climbing conditions were rather unfortunate, there being a great deal of new snow on the hills, and walking and climbing were found to be very laborious.

On Friday forenoon the weather was comparatively good, but during the afternoon rain began, and it continued almost steadily throughout Saturday. The wind veered to north, and the rain turned into snow at night. On Sunday morning even the low ground was white, and an unusual depth of snow covered all the high hills. The weather on Monday was the best during the meet. The high hills were obscured by mist during the morning, but they all became clear as the day advanced.

On Friday all the club members at the meet (and a great many of the members of the S.M.C., who were also attending their meet at Aviemore) made the ascent of Sgoran Dubh by the north ridge and the gullies on the east face. A little above the lower bothy in Glen Eunach the driving road was completely closed to wheel traffic by a huge snow-wreath, about 15 feet high, which showed a vertical face at the edge of the stream. Up on the ridge the blinding spindrift hid most of the local features, but this by no means damped the spirits of the climbers, who seemed to glory in being caked with frozen drift.

Many excursions were planned for the remaining days of the meet, but owing to the bad weather these excursions did not mature, and various parties contented themselves by visiting Loch Morlich, Loch Eunach, Loch-an-Eilein, the Cairngorm Club Bridge, and Craigellachie Rock.

On Monday, Sellar along with Motherwell, S.M.C., and Valentine, went to Cairngorm. They found the going very laborious in the deep snow, and did not reach the summit till 4 p.m. They were well rewarded for their efforts, however, by an excellent view. All the higher summits were clear. Cairntoul and Sgoran Lochan Uaine looked magnificent with their Alpine mantle of snow. During the homeward journey the sunset over Loch Morlich and the afterglow on the Cairngorms were very grand. They reached Aviemore at 10 p.m.

Climbing notes :—

Friday, 14th—Sgoran Dubh.

Douglas, G. McIntyre, Verley and Watt climbed the gully to the North of No. 1 Buttress.

J. W. Levack, McCoss, Dr. J. L. McIntyre, Robb and Williamson climbed the Sput Seilich (Willow Spout). This is the well-defined gully which splits No. 1 Buttress into two. It was found to be a typical snow-gully, and can be recommended. The summit was capped by a bergschrund and cornice, and when the gully is free from snow, it probably carries a rock pitch near the middle of about 15 or 20 feet in height. The climb is about 600 feet high between the rock walls, and it does not appear to have been previously climbed.

Garden, Parker, and Wilson, and Alexander, D. P. Levack and Milne climbed (in two parties) the Great Gully between the Rose Ridge and No. 1 Buttress. The gully has variations and it is intersected by vertical ribs. Some loose rock had to be negotiated during the ascent, which is the longest of the three climbs mentioned.

The meet, as usual, was enjoyed by all those present, and the hotel arrangements made by Mr. J. A. Nicol were very much appreciated.

JAMES MCCOSS.

EXCURSION, MAY 1922—BUCK OF THE CABRACH AND TAP O' NOTH.

ON the May holiday (1st May), several members of the club travelled by train to Gartly and proceeded to the Buck of the Cabrach. The weather was somewhat threatening, but nevertheless the climb was thoroughly enjoyed. As the day wore on the weather improved, and the party went on to Tap o' Noth, from the summit of which a fine view of the surrounding hills was obtained. After dining at Rhynie, the members returned to Aberdeen in the evening.