

NOTES.

THE Scottish Rights of Way Society, which had become practically inoperative of recent years, has just been revived. It is the lineal descendant of a society formed seventy years ago, at the time of the dispute about the right of way through Glen Tilt. That society held its final meeting about 1883, when a new society (the present one) was formed, which was speedily engaged in the Glen Doll case. To this society we owe the definite mapping of many rights of way and their indication by sign-boards and guide posts. It was also instrumental in securing the insertion in the Scottish Local Government Act of 1894 of provisions empowering the local bodies created under that Act, under certain conditions, to keep open, protect, and maintain rights of way. Probably the public protection of rights of way thus secured has tended to lessen the activities of the private society, but these activities have been aroused within the past year or two by the fresh dangers arising from the development of electricity power in the Highlands. The Lochaber Water Power Bill and the Grampian Electricity Supply Bill contained clauses which would have closed rights of way, but the Rights of Way Society was instrumental in obtaining substitutes for the roads to be submerged. Other proposals for tapping Highland lochs and streams for electricity purposes are likely to be made, but as County and Parish Councils are not always sufficiently active in exercising their powers in relation to rights of way, the Society deems it necessary to keep a watchful eye upon all questions of rights of way in Scotland. Hence the virtual resuscitation of the Society and the appeal now being made for an accession of new members.

THE once familiar topic of "access to mountains" is recalled by the revival of the Rights of Way Society, which is a reminder that there are rights of way still to be maintained and defended. Advocacy of free access to mountains, however, is to-day less keen and strenuous and much less acrimonious than it was a generation ago. Probably the numerous meets of our own and other mountaineering clubs and the comparative readiness with which permission

to range over private territory is accorded by land-owners have had the effect of obscuring the fact that access to mountains in Scotland is yet very far from being a public right. Possibly also they have contributed to the disappearance—or, at least, to the greatly diminished manifestation—of the antagonistic and bitter feeling which the restrictions on public access formerly provoked. That this feeling is by no means extinct, however, and that the subject of access to mountains may yet become a “burning question” are very emphatically demonstrated in the introductory chapter to Dr. Baker’s work on “The Highlands with Rope and Rucksack” which is elsewhere noticed in this number of the *Journal*. Dr. Baker protests vigorously against the exclusive possession of the Highlands, “the wildest and most picturesque region in the British Isles,” by a few landed proprietors. “The Scottish Highlands,” he says, “are the Alpine region of Britain; but, while the Alps have in the natural course of events become the playground of Europe, the Highlands have been allowed to fall into the hands of a class who seem incompetent to appreciate their grandeur and beauty, and have done their best to shut out the remainder of the human race by turning them into a huge game preserve.” It is a strong indictment, but, unfortunately, it can be only too well established. The creation of deer forests—quite a modern proceeding—has shut out the public from the mountains, although, in the early decades of last century and before, the mountains and moorlands of Scotland were as free and open as the seashore. Dr. Baker cites numerous instances where this has occurred, one of the latest and most striking being the following:—“Buchaille Etive, on whose tremendous face is the best rock-climb in Scotland, has, since the fame of that climb reached the ears of its proprietor, been denied to the scrambler, like the neighbouring peaks of Black Mount Forest.” Dr. Baker discusses the deer forest question in its various aspects, quoting extensively from the reports of Commissions and Departmental Committees, and he also deals, though very briefly, with the economic issues of Highland depopulation. His whole introductory chapter is well worth careful perusal and study.

A NEW edition of the Ordnance Survey map of the Cairngorms (see *C.C.J.*, x, 229) has just been published. As the first issue of the

map was a fairly large one, it is evident that the publication of the map has been greatly appreciated by the public. The new edition contains a few alterations. The title is now spelled in one word; the Club bridge over the Beinne is named: and there should now be no risk of strangers going up to the “Stag Hotel” for rooms, etc., as it has been marked “Lodge.”

A CORRESPONDENT writes: Many hillmen are at the same time natural scientists and bring with them geological, botanical, and other records. One wonders whether some such

HOLLY ON THE HILLS. may have notes as to the occurrence and altitude of the Common Holly (*Ilex Aquifolium*) on our high grounds and an opinion as to its place as indigenous or not in the north-east. Hooker, who accepts it as a native "though often planted," says that it ascends 1000 ft. in the Highlands, and Dr. William Macgillivray, in his "Natural History of Deeside," speaks of a tree (not previously seen in that part of the country) on the precipice on the north side of Sgoran-Fhidich on Culblean. Dickie gives its range as from 200-1,500 ft., but he seems unwilling to consider it indigenous. "It has certainly never been planted near the head of Corrie Rath (north side of Mount Keen), yet it is easy to understand how it may have come there by the agency of birds." Dr. Francis Adams told Professor Dickie that "in the woods of Glassel thousands of young plants spring up naturally." Many who know the woods about Tilquhillie, Inchmarlo, Glassel, and Cairnton will testify to the abundance of holly in that area and to its natural dispersal and apparent nativeness.