

EXCURSIONS.

NOTWITHSTANDING a very unpleasant experience of a first visit to and through the Larig Ghrumach, just six years ago to almost a day, when we were caught in the equinoxial gale of

THE 6th October, 1918, we have since cast, once a year, LARIG GHRU a "lure" by which we never fail to "hook" a member or members of the Club and a friend or friends IN OCTOBER. who love a week-end either hill-climbing or traversing a pass or glen. The result has been an annual visit to the Larig, and the following refers to our sixth, on Sunday, 5th October, 1924. A Sunday, I admit, was the day appointed for "the walk," to suit the convenience (if an excuse is needed) of two of the party who could only leave Aberdeen on the afternoon of the previous day.

H and I had gone to Boat of Garten on the Friday night. Saturday was a fine day and H and I filled in the time by walking to Dulnain Bridge, Carr Bridge, and on to Grantown on Spey where we joined the train on which our friends A and B were travelling up to Boat of Garten. Evidences of adverse weather conditions there were in abundance—stooks of fine height and colour, although the ground on which they stood showed the growth of many weeks since they had been set up—waters dark and swollen at parts to nearly the level of the road we walked on; but our eyes were diverted from sights so suggestive of loss to the grower of the country's food, by the extraordinary beauty and variety of the Autumn tints on tree and bush—never, except on the banks of the Gannochy at about the same time of the year, have I ever seen such colour.

But I started to relate a sixth "trip" through the Larig Ghrumach from Strathspey to Braemar! Well, having sent forward a change to Braemar we necessarily had to follow it and so we left for Coylum Bridge on Sunday morning about 8.30. Rain had been falling heavily during the previous night and early on the morning of our start. However we set off (per motor car) to Coylum and had barely left our car to foot the rest ere the first spit smote us. However I ventured to remark, "that's all right, we'll be clear of midges and flies going through the wood!" We were, but for my own part I should have welcomed even a midge if we could have had just a gentle breeze, but only the calm and the drizzle continued. Oh, that "path" through that wood. Wet and slimy and tedious, and so it continued to be even after we were in "the open." The

so called path was a running fairly wide stream and attempts to leave it only landed one in soft and treacherous ground. Just about the point where the last tree (or remnant of one) is passed our attention was diverted for the time being, from our feet, to a very fine specimen of the golden eagle skimming majestically in the direction of Carn Elrick. This, apart from numerous coveys of grouse and ptarmigan, was the only sign of animal life until we were well past "The Pools"—many pools there were. Rain fell continuously and handicapped movement owing to a clinging waterproof, added to which the knapsacks carried by two of the party increased in weight in spite of consumption of the contents.

When opposite the Devil's Point we distinctly heard from the slope of Ben Macdhuì the sound of falling stones, etc., as if someone was scrambling near the top, but we could see no one. However, from that point and for the rest of the way to Luibeg, we saw neither "beast nor body," but (for the first time in the experience of any of us) we heard the baying or barking of the stags from both sides—a sort of "You come over here" to which the reply came "You come over here." A hasty call on and handshake with Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald and family, and then on to Derry Lodge and into our awaiting trap for The Invercauld Arms where, needless to say, we met with the usual welcome and comforts.

J.C.

ON Easter Monday last year a friend and the writer starting from Dalnaspidal Station, crossed the hills on the east of the railway line to Edendon Lodge and then followed the old right-of-way track to Gaick; thence by Glen Tromie to Kingussie. As we started from an elevation of 1300 feet it required no great effort to reach the summit of Chaoruinn (3004 feet) in an hour, but many halts were called to admire the backward view down Loch Garry to Ben More and Stobinian and the other west Perthshire hills. The wind was bitterly cold so we moved off along the nearly flat table and to the next top Fuar Bheinn (3054 feet). In the north east the Gaick hills looked dark and forbidding as their steeply sloping outlines loomed up through the mist clouds. As my companion remarked "That's a wild looking region over there," "Yes," said I, "it's there we are going." We had now a trudge of a good mile to the eastward, with a slight descent through rapidly melting snow; then a sharp rise brought us to the summit of Glas Mheall Mor (3037 feet) (small cairn). This hill commands a good view to the south, but it was too cold for us to linger so we just followed the long ridge that runs down to the east. At its termination we sat down for a spy. At our feet lay Edendon Lodge in its clump of sheltering pine trees, and the driving road leading from it down to Dalnacardoch, but they were both on the wrong side of the river.

The glass, however, soon showed us a footbridge beside the lodge, and towards that we rapidly descended. The river Edendon was coming down in a roaring spate, and as only a narrow strip of boggy ground separates it from Loch an Duin very little would be required to cause that loch to empty its waters into the Tay instead of the Spey. We followed the track along the slope of An Duin and on past Loch Bhradain to Gaick Lodge, then in the warm afternoon wandered down Glen Tromie to Kingussie and our train. One of the most noticeable features of the district of Gaick is the steepness of the hillsides, which rise on all sides covered with heather to their summits, and the number of deep narrow glens that run off on either hand from the main valley.—W. B.

AN article appeared in the *Cairngorm Club Journal* in January, 1922 (Vol. X., p. 145) describing some climbs on the eastern face of the summit rock of Clochnaben. In it several gullies

NEW CLIMBS were mentioned, viz. :—Nos. 1, 2 and 3, and the ON S.E. gully. All these (except No. 3) were climbed, GLOCHNABEN. but help from a rope, held from above, was needed at times in all the climbs. A party of climbers investigated the cliff again in March this year. A short but very steep gully, lying a few yards north of No. 1 gully, was climbed without the help of a rope. The holds, partly rock and partly grass, gave no great trouble to the leader who climbed it. Then a long steep gully, or rather chimney, lying between gullies 2 and 3 was climbed. The only difficulty lay in two short pitches covered by grass and moss, but at least one young climber surmounted both without any help from the rope. The S.E. gully was climbed easily by one of the party, but the others had to be steadied by the rope, as they negotiated the slab. None of these climbs is easy, and, to avoid accidents, it is well to have a rope held from above, to give at least moral support. J.R.L.

THE fact that winter conditions vary enormously from day to day on the hills and that an ascent may be possible one day and quite impossible the next, is well known to all

VARIETY ON mountaineers, and it was illustrated anew in the LOCHNAGAR. early part of this year on Lochnagar. On Sunday, February 15th, two members of the Club, J. A. Parker and John Murray, essayed the ascent from Allt-nagiubhsaich but, owing to the high wind from the north and the intense cold, the snow slopes on the Ladder were found so difficult that the climb was abandoned. On March 1st a large party motored out from Aberdeen and Banchory consisting of W. Garden, J. R. Levack, D. P. Levack, J. W. Levack, D. S. P. Douglas, J. McCoss, G. S. Fraser, C. Robb, M. J. Robb, C. W. Walker, T. P. E. Murray, I. S. Stewart, Banchory, and I. D. Campbell, Banchory, and Dr.

Levack has supplied the following note on the expedition. "The fact of there being thirteen in the party was known only to me when they were actually assembled at The Invercauld, Ballater, for breakfast, when it was too late for any superstitious ones to turn back. Snow was encountered on the road just after passing the Falls of Muich, and midway between Inchnabobbar and Allnagiubhsaich the cars stuck in a wreath. Time was lost in turning them in readiness for the return journey and it was twelve noon when we left Allnagiubhsaich. The path beyond the wood was obliterated, and all landmarks were covered by an unbroken field of snow. We went on slowly as the snow was new and soft, and long before the "wilderness" was reached the mist was down and everything was blotted out. A compass course had to be set to find the "stick," but that landmark was quickly found. Progress after that was very slow as the snow was now knee-deep and more, and dense mist hid everything. Eventually, at 3 p.m. we were 3050 feet up on the side of Cuidhe Crom when it was decided that time did not permit of further progress. The return journey down to Allnagiubhsaich took nearly as long as the ascent, owing to the soft snow, so that we did not reach the motors till nearly 6 o'clock. A rapid run down to Ballater, bath and a change into dry clothes, dinner and a comfortable motor journey home completed a very jolly day." A week after this J. A. Parker and R. T. Medd were at the hill and, though they had not mist and soft snow to contend with, a bitterly cold wind from the north and icy conditions made the direct ascent of the Ladder out of the question. So they resorted to tactics and won. Instead of attempting the Ladder they went round by the Little Pap and climbed on the south side where they were in shelter most of the way to the top. They had a look at the indicator or, to be correct, at the snow and fog crystals which covered it completely, and then descended by the Glasallt Shiel.