

ENGLISH PEAK BAGGERS IN SCOTLAND.

THERE are seven mountains in Scotland over 4000 ft. in height and they have now all been climbed within twenty-four hours. This is the latest record in peak-bagging and it has been achieved by English climbers, who invaded Scotland last year at Whitsuntide by motor car, and having secured their peaks, rushed south again in the same fashion. What adds piquancy to the foray is that there were rival parties of raiders, one from the Rucksack Club in the person of its president, Mr. Eustace Thomas, and the other from the Fell and Rock Climbing Club in the person of Mr. R. S. T. Chorley, the editor of its *Journal*, and there is some uncertainty as to who actually won, the question being whether it is enough to climb one 4000 ft. point upon a hill in order to be able to say you have "done" the hill, or whether you must climb all the 4000 ft. points upon it. Upon the first reckoning Mr. Chorley won: upon the second Mr. Thomas won.

This is not the first race of the kind recorded in mountaineering annals. The classical instance is that of the struggle for the Matterhorn between Whymper and the Italians, in which Whymper won but at the cost of a tragic sequel, and numerous other cases have occurred where climbers have carefully nursed a first ascent, only to find their claim jumped by a rival.

The seven four-thousanders are Ben Nevis (4406) and its two eastern outliers, Carn Mor Dearg (4012) and Aonach Beag (4060), with the last of which is linked Aonach Mor (3999), and the four central Cairngorms, Ben Macdhui (4296) Braeriach (4248) Cairntoul (4241) and Cairngorm (4084).

Mr. Eustace Thomas is no novice in peak bagging. He has climbed all the 2500's in South Wales in twenty-four hours, involving over sixty map miles and 14,000 ft. of climbing; all the 3000's of Wales in twenty-four hours; and all the 3000's of England well within twenty-four hours. To this he has now added all the 4000's of Scotland. Leaving Borrowdale on 11th June, (Wednesday) he and his party motored leisurely up to Fort William, little dreaming of their rivals, and on the Saturday afternoon set out upon the climb, taking a car along the old road which runs by the north end of Aonach Mor and starting the actual walk at 3.2 p.m. They traversed Aonach Mor, Aonach Beag, Carn Mor Dearg and Ben Nevis, and walked into Fort William before 9 p.m. After supper they motored (Mr. Thomas driving) to Aviemore and up to Glenmore Lodge. Here they resumed walking at 3.55 a.m., and Cairngorm,

Ben Macdhui, Cairntoul and Braeriach were duly traversed, not only the highest summits but also the intermediate 4000 ft. points, the final cairn of Braeriach being reached at 1.40 p.m., well within the twenty-four hours. That night they slept at Pitlochry, and the following day, Monday, they reached Borrowdale. So much for Mr. Thomas's walk.

Now for Mr. Chorley's. He describes how he and a party of the "Fell and Rock Club" were sitting round the fire at Seatoller in Borrowdale on Whitsunday evening when the talk turned upon Mr. Thomas' project which it was known was to be attempted that week. It was decided that the "Rockefellers" must forestall the "Rucksackers" and at 6 a.m. on Monday morning Mr. Chorley and a companion set out in a motor for Fort William. A stop was made at Stirling to buy a half-inch map of the Cairngorms, a district which Mr. Chorley had never visited. This map proved his undoing, as will be told later. Fort William was reached at 9.30 p.m. and an hour later the party drove up Glen Nevis, Mr. Chorley having resolved to do the round of the Lochaber tops from that side. He supped on raw eggs and started climbing at 2 a.m., in rubbers which entailed a good deal of slipping on the wet grass. There was mist on the tops and he got back to the car at 8.20, only to find that it had been bogged in turning and by the time that it was extricated all thought of completing the 4000's that day had to be abandoned. Mr. Chorley spent the day resting, and started the round of Ben Nevis, Carn Mor Dearg and the Aonachs once more at 1.35 a.m. on Wednesday. Again there was mist on the tops. The car was regained at 7.40 a.m. and after a rest for breakfast the party set out for Speyside and Glenmore which was reached at 1.5 p.m.

Leaving the Lodge at 1.40 Mr. Chorley traversed Cairngorm and Ben Macdhui, but here he omitted to do the top over the Coire Sputan Dearg (4095 ft), thus technically invalidating his climb. This top was not marked on his map and in any case it was hidden by a blizzard of hail and snow. Cairntoul was reached at 8.5 p.m. and the last top of Braeriach at 9.55 and then followed a long and dreary trudge in the dark back to Loch Morlich, through ground quite unfamiliar to Mr. Chorley upon this his first visit to the district. He reached his car finally at 2 a.m. and motored into Seatoller at 10 that night—surely an extraordinary feat of endurance.

Mr. Chorley points out that Mr. Thomas drove his own car, an added exertion which he was spared. It has also to be observed that Mr. Thomas and his friends who accompanied him on his walk, having no idea that there was a rival in the field, did not force the pace but took things comparatively easy. In a private letter to the editor of the *Cairngorm Club Journal* Mr. Thomas says that he would have improved considerably upon his times had he thought it necessary.