

NOTES.

THE Forestry Commissioners, who have acquired Glenmore from the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, have put a gate upon the Slugan entrance to the glen, which is locked during the height of the tourist season. Access is refused to motor-propelled vehicles, but other vehicles are freely admitted. At an interview, which took place in February, Mr. John Sutherland, one of the Commissioners, informed the Parish Council of Abernethy, that the Commissioners were quite prepared to admit that a right of way exists through the pass, and that the road was open to all traffic except motors and mechanical tractors. The cost of upholding the road, which extends to seven miles, and the bridges thereon, was heavy, and was entirely borne by the Forestry Commission. After dealing with the legal aspect of the question and the importance of an adequate return being obtained from the Glenmore shooting, he said the Commissioners were anxious to meet, so far as possible, the convenience of the people, especially the residents, who might desire to use the road. Members of the Council expressed satisfaction that a right of way was admitted, but they held that the maintenance of a locked gate was objectionable. Legitimate users of the road—*e.g.* passengers in horse-drawn vehicles, should not be under the necessity of having to apply to get the gate unlocked. Mr. Sutherland replied that the gate was unlocked for about nine months in the year, but he would consider the representations made.

A CORRESPONDENT of the London *Observer*, who contributed a series of articles in spring dealing with "Scotland To-day," devoted one paper to the Highlands and, after admitting the economic difficulties in the way of the development and repopulation of the Highlands, proceeded to discuss the deer forest and sporting problem which he described as the aching tooth in Scotland's head. Many patriotic Scotsmen, he said, reconcile themselves reluctantly to the sporting interest because it helps to pay the local rates and taxes. Yet "they know that it shuts out a whole nation from the natural playground which ought to be part of the spiritual cure for its social maladies. Their blood boils to think that, in the interests of strangers' brief recreation, inns should be closed, private hospitality forbidden, and everything short of

physical intimidation employed to keep the Caledonian from wandering on his native heath. The freezing out of the native holidaymaker from one of the most beautiful and romantic regions of the world is a weird survival in the days of universal suffrage. It is a degrading influence upon the unfortunate people who are compelled for a living to forget all the traditions of Highland hospitality and convert themselves into boors and bullies." The writer went on to suggest that the sporting rights should be bought up by the Government, lock, stock and barrel, and the Highlands thrown open to the recreation of Scotland and the world. The total assessed rental of deer forests was put at £119,543 by the Departmental Committee of 1921. Before the war it was £171,438. The total rental of grouse shootings is not available but the same Committee reported that it was less than that of deer forests. Salmon fishings are estimated at £80,000 a year. The writer suggests that it would be worth the while of the State to buy out these rights and so rid the Highlands of the "aching tooth" of game preserving and its attendant social evils.

On Sunday, January 3, Mr. James Evans, a member of the Manchester Ramblers, died from exhaustion during a walk in the Peak District, and the body was not found till

FATALITY TO the following Saturday. The incident gave rise
 A HILL to considerable discussion in the correspondence
 RAMBLER. columns of the *Manchester Guardian*. Evans,
 who was not an old man, or even middle-aged,

but still in the twenties and a strong walker, was one of a party of seven men who set out at 9.45 a.m. on a walk from Marsden to Edale. The distance is 17 miles in a straight line, but the actual walk is over moorland and rough ground all the way, it involves many detours and it entails two ascents to an elevation above 2,000 feet, and two others to above 1,750 feet, with correspondingly long and steep descents into "cloughs" or ravines, so that the expedition is an arduous and exhausting one, and particularly so in a short winter day. The party kept together until some five miles from Edale where they divided into two groups, three going ahead and four, including Evans, following in the rear. The latter group spread out with Evans in the rear, and the first three of this second group, after pausing for a few minutes in a shooting hut at the foot of Ashop Clough, went on to Edale. They believed that Evans, in order to save himself the steep drop into the clough and out again, was working round the head of the valley and, as he was a tenacious walker, no alarm was felt because of his non-arrival at Edale in time for the train to Manchester, it being assumed that he had possibly struck off the Kinder Plateau to some other station. The day had been dry but with a strong westerly wind. Next day

Evans' family reported that he had not returned and a search was begun in the district where Evans had disappeared. Only a few men were engaged in it and it was not until the following Saturday that a properly organised search was conducted by a large body of Ramblers, from Manchester, who covered the whole ground in systematic fashion. Evans' body was found lying at the side of Fair Brook, the next ravine south of Ashop Clough. At his side were his flash lamp and his rucksack but no food. His watch had stopped at 3.15. There were no broken bones or signs of injury beyond bruises on the knees, and the finding at the inquest was that he had died from exhaustion and exposure. No conclusion was possible as to whether Evans had died during the long mid-winter night of Sunday-Monday, or whether he had survived to the Monday daylight.

IN the discussion to which the above fatality gave rise, some interesting points emerged. It was remarked that if the lost

Rambler had been an escaped lunatic or convict, ARE CLIMBERS the whole countryside would have been roused and

MUTUALLY dozens of policemen put on to scour the moors RESPONSIBLE? for him, in which case he might conceivably have

been discovered in time to save his life. A more difficult question is that of the mutual responsibility of parties of hill walkers. Criticism having been expressed of the action of Evans' companions in proceeding without him, Mr. W. Walker, a well-known Manchester walker, wrote protesting against this view of the case, ridiculing the idea of "personally conducted parties with leaders and whippers-in," and declaring: "On a mountain walk every man has his own ideas of the best line to take, and it is the common practice for each to take his own, and if a man gets in a gully or grough during the descent, he may not see his comrades again until they meet for a meal at the farm or inn kitchen. Ourselves, our compass, our experience, our sense of direction must continue to be all we will accept, and if now and again one goes down in the struggle with Nature in her grimmest moods, so be it. The one who goes would be the first to scorn the plea to alter the conditions." This view of the relations between the members of a hill rambling party was sharply disputed by another correspondent who declared that it was certainly not that of the majority of the mountaineers whom he had met. "Mutual support is the recognised custom, and the men who are best at the game never deviate from that. All the members of a party are not equally able to keep up with the best, and it is for the leaders, therefore, to see that their rear members are supported before they decide to go on ahead. Besides, what is the object of joining a club at all if each member goes off on his own?" As a result of the incident the Ramblers' Federation in Manchester has arranged an emergency rescue plan

for the immediate searching of the Kinder area in the event of a man going missing. The scheme provides for breaking up the area into sixteen sections, each one to be scoured by a party under a leader who will answer for the thoroughness of the search and the safe return of his party. The Federation has no fewer than 56 affiliated clubs to call on, and it has also been promised help at any time from Sheffield Ramblers.

THE above fatality had a strange sequel in March in the Scottish hills, when a young climber, one of a party of three ascending

Ben Achallader (3399 ft.) near Bridge of Orchy in Perthshire, went off by himself and slipped and fell, sustaining fatal injuries, and his body not being recovered until three weeks later. Ben

Achallader is the northmost of the fine series of mountains including Ben Doran and Ben Dothaid along the base of which runs the West Highland railway and the corries of which form a commanding spectacle as seen from the train. March 22nd, when the accident occurred, was a fine winter day and the snow slopes on the hill were frozen hard. The party, which had come up for the week-end from Glasgow, set out from Inveroran Hotel at 5.30 and had reached a point some 2,000 feet up Ben Achallader when they breakfasted. Here one of the party, A. L. Henderson, set off by himself. The other two continued their way to the summit but, when they arrived there at 1.25, they found no trace of Henderson. They started at once searching the mountain-side and they also went into the great northern corrie but, though they kept up the search till darkness fell and blew a whistle repeatedly, they got no response and had at last reluctantly to set out for Tyndrum where they arrived at 3.45 a.m. During the following weeks the search was kept up by shepherds and ghillies and by parties of mountaineers from Edinburgh and Glasgow, but without result for heavy snow had fallen and it was assumed that the body was buried out of sight. Not until three weeks later, by which time a good deal of the snow had disappeared, was the body found. Henderson had apparently got within some 300 feet of the summit when he had slipped down a snow slope and been fatally injured against projecting rocks. The ice axe, which he carried, has not been recovered. The complete disappearance of the climber and the long search invested the incident with the nature of a mystery, and this aspect of the affair was intensified by the advent of anonymous letters from a spiritualist at Peterhead, who sent to the searchers at Achallader messages, purporting to come from mystic sources, giving directions as to the line of search and mentioning 3,060 feet as the height where the body was lying. The actual spot was within 30 feet of this.

THE theory that Benachie was used as a landmark not only by the ancient Britons but also by the Roman invaders is advanced by an anonymous writer in *Scottish Notes and Queries*, who has been discussing the traces of the ROMAN Romans in Aberdeenshire. He points out that all LANDMARK. sites (of camps) of whatever kind, from the Dee to Durn Hill near the Moray Firth, are based on Benachie as a chief outlook or signalling station, all of them being so placed as to command a view of this hill ; while the sea for many miles is also in touch with it, making it in truth the 'Mither Tap.' The Romans so planned their system of camps that it found a pivot in the British hill-fort of Benachie, while at the same time they made use, as suited their purpose, of certain of the British forts, seeing that these were already based on the same pivot. By this means of communication, any message from the sea base of Stonehaven, passed on by a signal post near Cookney, would be taken up at Benachie and transmitted to Durn Hill, and thence by some intermediate post to the sea-base at Burghead, and this within a remarkably short time.

IN *The Scottish Field* recently Sir Iain Colquhoun of Luss gave an interesting account of a pet stag which has become so tame and so devoted to him that it goes deerstalking with him.

A STAG GOES DEER-STALKING. The stag, a three days' old calf, was found in June, 1923, on Ben Voirlich near Loch Lomond and was brought up on milk from a bottle. It followed Sir Iain like a dog and invariably accompanied him on his early morning bathe in Loch Lomond, swimming out far beyond him but always returning when called. Since then Corrie, as he is called, has become a familiar personage on Loch Lomondside for, though he sometimes joins the deer on the hills, he always comes home again and, having no fear of man, he is known to everybody in the district. One day last September Sir Iain went stalking on Voirlich and Corrie insisted upon joining the party, though every attempt was made to drive him back. So all day he roamed the hill with the sportsmen and, when spying had to be done, Corrie and Sir Iain remained behind. A stag was shot and the strange party, pet stag and all, came home at night.