

A VETERAN GUIDE.

VISITORS to Braemar, especially those interested in mountain climbing, cannot fail to be familiar with the sturdy alert figure, with the weather-beaten face and cheery twinkling eyes, generally to be found standing opposite the Fife Arms, except when he is on a hill expedition with some more or less exacting patron. For many long years now Downie has acted as professional guide to any Braemar visitors desiring his services to conduct them up Lochnagar or some other of the high hills on Upper Deeside. His knowledge of these mountains is unsurpassed, and, by his help, many people, and especially ladies, who wished to climb one of these hills, have realised their ambition in comfort and safety, and been happy ever after. Many of the patrons are of the fussy and "fashious" type, whose desire for the mountains is greater than their strength, and to act as guide for such requires infinite patience and tact. Downie possesses those attributes in a marked degree, and many of his patrons whom I have met are loud in their praises of the old man's gentleness and patience with them when the way began to seem long and weary. The erection of the Lochnagar Indicator was, at first, at anyrate, not quite approved of by Downie. He was afraid that people would no longer require a guide to the hill. But of course that could not be so. On the contrary, the number of visitors to Cac Carn Beag is already greatly on the increase, and consequently more people than ever will require a guide to take them there. A chat with Downie is always interesting and informative,

for his knowledge of men and things is considerable, and he has an excellent sense of humour. May he long be spared to conduct visitors up his beloved hills.

J. R. L.

[The interesting snapshot which appears in this issue was taken early this year by Mr. J. A. Parker at Tomintoul, above Braemar, nearly 1,500 feet above sea level. It shows Downie standing near the "back house" in which he sometimes lives when the "front house" is let.]



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