

years ago with a fellow member of the Cairngorm Club he visited the Alps, crossing the Col du Geant from Chamonix to Courmayeur, an arduous glacier expedition, and returning over the Theodule from the Val Tournanche to Zermatt.

No tribute to Robert Clarke would be complete without a reference to his literary gifts. It was only in his later years that he began writing anything about his mountain expeditions but what he wrote for the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* and for the *Cairngorm Club Journal* was of a quite exceptional quality, evincing deep appreciation of mountain scenery and rare descriptive power. His last contribution to these pages was the account of the inauguration of the Ben Macdhu indicator, published in last year's issue. Like everything he wrote, it breathed his profound and, if one may so put it, at the same time understanding and reverent devotion to the hills.

H. A.

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HAROLD RAEBURN.

BY WILLIAM GARDEN.

THOUGH Mr. Harold Raeburn was not a member of the Cairngorm Club, many of its members will have learned with deep regret of his passing, which occurred at Edinburgh, on 21st December, 1926.

Mr. Raeburn was undoubtedly one of the finest mountaineers of his day, and his premature demise, especially to his mountaineering friends, and to the climbing world generally, will cause a blank which even time itself will have difficulty in effacing. He was undoubtedly a man of mark. The merest amateur, and the tried climber alike, saw in him at once the all-round natural gifts of a great climber. He endeared himself to all who were truly interested in the craft, for he was ever

ready to take under his wing the most junior member of his Club—the Scottish Mountaineering Club—of which he had been a member since 1896. A day on the hills with Raeburn was a real education. His great self-assurance and determination, coupled at all times with a sound judgment, made him an ideal leader in a severe climbing expedition. His courage, and extraordinary skill, gave confidence and strength to every member of his party, with the result that each man gave of his best, and the expedition was usually crowned with success. He was a mountaineer in the wider sense, for, however much the exigencies of the actual climb on hand might demand his undivided mental attention, he had always an opportunity to note himself, and draw the attention of his friends to anything of interest which might present itself whether it was bird, plant, or rock, for he was no mean ornithologist, botanist, or geologist. Indeed, it was bird-nesting that first developed in him the fascination for rock-climbing, in which art he eventually so much excelled. He revelled in his perfect balance, whether it was on the ice-rink, or the old push-bike; and things which appeared well-nigh impossible to the average individual interested in these sports, were to him simplicity itself, but with all his natural gifts he never showed any superiority, for, like all other great men, he was the essence of humility in everything he did; and surely his record was an extraordinary one.

Trained on his Homeland Hills, where he had done all the first-class climbs—either north or south of the Tweed—he first crossed the Channel in 1900, and thus well-equipped, he attacked and conquered some of the best known and dizzy towers of the Dolomites. In subsequent years, he made numerous first ascents, both in Norway and in the Caucasus. Probably his greatest feats of daring were a first British guideless traverse of the Matterhorn, by the Zmutt Ridge, descending by the Italian Ridge; and the unique effort of a solitary complete traverse of all the peaks of the Meije.

Not satiated yet, however, with his conquests, he set

out in 1920 for the far-off Himalaya, to inspect the appalling south face of Kangchenjunga (28,150 ft.) on which he pitched his base-camp at a height of only some 8,150 ft. below the summit, and actually ascended some 1,000 feet above that camp, but avalanching snow prevented his further progress. Then, in 1921, came the first series of expeditions to Everest, arranged by the Alpine Club, of which he was a member, and the Royal Geographical Society. It was only natural that he should be chosen to captain the pure mountaineering section of that great effort. A bad break-down in health, however, when he reached India, but which he fought against with almost superhuman effort, prevented him reaching a height above 22,000 ft., and, on his return to this country, a complete collapse ensued, no doubt in great part due to what the effect of defeat must have had upon a nature such as his.

Mr. Raeburn had the gift of writing. The leaves of the *Journals* of the Alpine Club, and the Scottish Mountaineering Club, testify to that. His descriptions of climbs are always reliable and instructive to those attempting them.

The writer of these notes has already dealt in some detail in the pages of this *Journal* with Mr. Raeburn's Book on "Mountaineering Art," and, therefore, no further reference need now be made to it than to say that it is an all-round replica of the author—concise, correct in every detail, well thought out, exhaustive, practical, and never leaving the reader in any doubt about whatever he may desire information—a volume which should be on the book-shelf of every mountaineer, and fill him with gratitude and respect for the memory of one of the greatest exponents of that great and adorning Art for which he lived, and practically gave his life.

"Sic itur ad astra."