



ROBERT CLARKE.

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In Memoriam :

ROBERT CLARKE.

By the death of Mr. Robert Clarke, which took place on 1st April, the Cairngorm Club and the circle of mountaineers in Aberdeen have lost an active member and a warm lover of the hills. His death came unexpectedly. He had entered a nursing home and had undergone an operation and was progressing satisfactorily when, about a week later, he collapsed suddenly. His passing was probably what he himself would have desired, for a man of his vigorous habit would ill have borne a long and tedious decline. He was 62 years of age.

A native of Stirling, Mr. Clarke came to Aberdeen in 1882 and his working life was spent in newspapers, the *Evening Gazette*, the *Free Press*, and latterly the *Fishing News*. When he first began going to Inverey for his holidays the present writer does not know but it must have been well on to forty years ago. He went up Deeside not only in summer but at brief week-ends snatched at any season and so familiar did he become with the district and its people that he had almost ceased to rank as an ordinary visitor and had rather grown to be one of the Braemar folk themselves. Nor was this surprising, for he was one of the cheeriest and most companionable of

men, ready and able to make friends wherever he went. He may have had moments of depression but, if he had, he never showed them, and the present writer cannot remember a single occasion when Robert Clarke was not bright, cheerful, interested in what was going on and happy. This buoyancy of spirit made him an admirable companion on the hills and pulled him and his companions through many a long and exhausting day.

He knew the Deeside side of the Cairngorms exceptionally well and to Ben Macdhui, the monarch of them all, he was particularly attached, for, while some men like to vary their climbs and tend to become weary of one hill, not so Robert Clarke. He ascended Ben Macdhui over a hundred times, in all weathers and at all seasons, summer and winter, and every time that I met him he spoke of his latest ascent with as much zest as a young boy making his first climb. He was no mere fine-weather walker. He knew the Cairngorms in their wilder, grander moods and loved them. A few years ago, when he was close on the sixties, he walked alone through the Lairig Ghru at the New Year from Speyside. The snow was soft and the expedition took much longer than he had expected. Darkness fell when he was still in Glen Dee and he had a hard fight to reach Derry Lodge before midnight. Only a man of great physical endurance and resolute spirit could have accomplished such a walk under these conditions. More recently and in less strenuous summer weather he made the crossing of the Lairig as one of the party that motored from Aberdeen to Coylum Bridge in the morning, walked through the Lairig and motored back to Aberdeen from Derry Lodge in the evening. Physically he was of average height but lightly built and the feature that struck one was a certain spring or elasticity in his step. It was noticeable even in Union Street. No wonder that he was a good goer on the hills.

While chiefly familiar with Deeside and the Cairngorms, Robert Clarke had made expeditions to other parts of the Highlands with Aberdeen friends, and two

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