

SATURDAY AFTERNOON WALKS.

WHY GO TO SWITZERLAND?

THE recent snowstorm, with Alpine conditions called forth the remark "Why go to Switzerland?" Certainly it was most appropriate on Saturday, 12th November, for the conditions were unique. At the Blue Hill the snow showed a depth of 3" to 12"; it was crisp though not carrying; the sunshine was perfect; the temperature was round about freezing point; and there was a slight westerly wind of a kindly nature, especially for pedestrians. Ski-ing was enjoyed on the Hill of Fare, on the same day. For the time being Switzerland was in Aberdeenshire. But alas! one swallow does not make a summer: ski-ing on the Hill of Fare proved to be futile on the following day.

Switzerland, ay or no, the north of Scotland has unbeatable sunsets; and I have never seen an "Alpine glow" to have such a beautiful effect as many—very many—of our sunrises. On Saturday the 12th the sky was a picture. Almost to the zenith the western sky was one glorious blaze in colour. It was a picture. My companion is a master of the spectrum. It is not possible to describe that sunset at about 4 p.m. It was, or appeared to be, one extensive blaze of pink. Looking closer, there was a background of rich pale green, with an impression of orange here and there. For many years I have been connected with the manufacture of paints and colours, and I was not prepared for my learned companion's dictum that the pink was violet; I did get

a kind of admission however that vermilion is scarlet ; but I stuck to my version of pink stubbornly. I wonder if any of our members noticed the sky that afternoon. The study of colour in science, in medicine, in psychology, and in poetry, is full of charm ; but I cannot say that I quite followed President Parker's exposition of the Blue Ray. I have seen, in favourable conditions, a lunar rainbow, one at Durris, and another near Brechin ; and many of us have seen the "Spectre of the Brocken." Ex-President Levack's photo of the Spectre, from the summit of Sgurr Alister is memorable ; the photo has been seen by many members of the Club. An article on colour, from the hillman's standpoint, would be an attractive contribution to the pages of the *Journal*.

Of course we had a look of the damaged cairn on the Blue Hill. There was not a good far view. Aberdeen lay snug in the hollow by the sea, and to the east and west the view sea-wards and Lochnagar-wards was quite good. The foliage entirely breaks the view north and south. It is most gratifying that the laird of Banchory, Colonel Stewart, has resolved to restore the damaged cairn, maintaining the height of about six feet ; and so continuing to the public the valuable privilege of visiting the cairn at all times. The Blue Hill, by easy walking, is over an hour distant from the Brig o' Dee.

On Saturday, 19th November, the objective was Boswell's Monument, a mile or so behind Blairs College—say one-and-a-half hours from Milltimber station, and two from the Brig o' Dee. It is an interesting point, historically, horticulturally, agriculturally, and scenically. This is not a proper occasion for touching on these features ; but it may be amusing to read the glowing inscription on the monument. It is dedicated to the laird Boswell by his widow. It is verily a certificate of character, written evidently *after his death*—a certificate which should carry the deceased husband to the fourth Heaven. The walking to and from the monument for a quarter of a mile is rough, through rank

heather; but the approach to the monument presents no obstacle even to the fair sex, with their scanty, though unwoolly, attire of to-day.

Burns's condemnation of November is hardly defensible. In "man was made to mourn" there is only a fraction of truth in the sentiment, but it was written in August, which made the words quite out of place. The dirge was set to music, to the tune of Peggy Bawn, but no one now-a-days dares to call it song, or attempt to sing it. In November we have many dull days, with decay all round, but we have many compensations, the blithe blink often, the fruits of the earth in abundance, warm firesides, and warm hearts to start the converse cry, man was made to be cheery in spite of the worries and anxieties of life. The Club Dinner on the 26th, is one of the best witnesses that man can and does enjoy life to the full. Count on two Saturdays in any November for an afternoon walk. Such walks are suitable for beginners and for veterans, who need not go too far afield in the winter months.

W. A. R.