

“AT A DINNER TO BE HELD IN GLEN GEUSACHAN.”

BY MEMBERS OF THE GRAMPIAN CLUB.

WITHOUT doubt many people have dined in the Cairngorms, but few, we expect, have enjoyed such an elaborate dinner as that held in Glen Geusachan one night last August.

This affair of ours arose from a wish to do honour to a friend who was about to go abroad for two years—a friend with whom we had had many climbs and hill-walks, and who had a keen love for, and appreciation of, the Cairngorms and all they mean to mountaineers.

To start the ball, invitations were issued—“ The pleasure of the company of So-and-so is requested at a Dinner, to be held in Gleann Guibhsachan of Mar, on Saturday, 8th August, 1931, at 8.30 p.m., in honour of Seumas Donnachaidh Maolmoire, B.Sc., Ph.D., prior to his departure to the United States of America. Feileachan-beaga.” The number of the party having been brought up to eight, the planning was begun and details were arranged. A chief cook, an assistant cook, a transport officer, a chairman, and sundry other officials were appointed, a menu drawn up, and all was put in process.

At last the great day arrived and, in three separate parties, we set off over the Cairnwell for the White Bridge, and then, with immense loads, we shanked up Glen Dee to Glen Geusachan. Strange that each one of us carried far more than all the others—next time a spring balance will be produced at the first boast!

Soon our four tents were pitched close to the burn, on a level, grass meadow, lying between The Devil's Point and Beinn Bhrotain, and the cooks, with their scullions, set to work. Punctually at 9.30 p.m.—only one hour late—dinner was served as twilight lingered on the ridges.

The menu, translated from the original Gaelic, was:—

Grape Fruit.
Kidney Soup.
Tay Salmon, Salad and Mayonnaise.
Loin Chops, French Beans and Potato Crisps.
Cold Silverside and Potatoes.
Fruit Salad and Cream.
Sardines on (almost) Toast.
Coffee.

Then, the dishes and cutlery having been thrown out of the door of the dining hall, we settled down to a convivial evening, whilst rain and wind rushed and roared down the Glen.

The loyal toast of Scotland was followed by the toast of the health of the guest, proposed in felicitous terms by the Chairman and responded to feelingly and gratefully by the Doctor. Then, with song and story, tobacco and drink, the time passed quickly, until Morpheus sent us to sleeping-bags at 3 a.m.

Alas, at 4 a.m. a great gust of wind—how it howled down from the west!—snapped the poles of the guest chamber and down flopped the tent. Despite the piteous appeals of the Cratur, the Lowlander unfeelingly and unhesitatingly refused to hold up the broken pole, and so the three unfortunate inhabitants had to turn out, hoping to spend the rest of the night in the cook-house—the renegades in the other tents lying low and saying nothing. But the cook-tent had also succumbed to the gale. The poles, however, were unbroken, and with them the guest-tent was re-erected, and sleep again settled on the weary diners.

Morning brought no improvement in the weather, and climbing being impossible, the first objective of the party, breakfast having been disposed of, was the provision of a fire to keep the midges at bay. The camp was struck, the stones which had helped to keep the tents up were collected into a cairn to mark the position of the dining-room, and, like a train of Kangchenjunga porters, off the party set for the White Bridge. But in spite of the great consumpt of food and drink, no diminution in the weight

of the baggage was noticeable. However, the car park at the White Bridge, now in great use, was finally reached, and from there, after an enjoyable ceilidh with the President of the Cairngorm Club and Miss McCoss, we returned to Bonnie Dundee.—MACSUAL.