

from time to time to climb in adverse conditions, conditions which might be sufficient to persuade any 'sane' person to stay off the hill-tops. Having motored the breadth of Scotland to climb a particular hill, he will not readily return empty-handed. The mountaineer who goes on a hill in bad weather will certainly have a completely different concept of its character from that of the fair-weather walker. In general, I feel that the former will have more respect for the hill concerned. For example, I climbed An Sgarsoch on a calm, warm, clear summer's day, with the result that it seems to me that it has little or no character, apart perhaps from its remoteness; but I am sure that if I were to re-visit this hill on a cold winter's day when the slopes were caked in ice, I would have more respect for it thereafter. On the other hand, Beinn Mhanach at the head of Loch Lyon I climbed on a misty, snowy day, but probably appreciated the hill more because of it.

Now that I have climbed all the Munros, I do not regret it one bit. Munro-bagging has introduced me to some very fascinating areas of Scotland – particularly Knoydart – and has given me a general concept of the topography of the Scottish mountains, thus enabling me to pick out my favourite areas and re-visit them. I would certainly support this form of mountaineering against anyone ready to condemn it, and I can recommend it to anyone prepared to try it.

III DONALD HAWKSWORTH

My last Munro was Culvain, climbed during a warm June traverse from Loch Arkaig to Loch Eil. There is no doubt of the sense of relief I felt on reaching this Ultima Thule. The daemon had been laid to rest, exorcised from the system! Now I can start to enjoy my climbing again! The question of 'What now?' arose. Some very energetic people have been round them all again – Hamish Brown three times. Then there are the 'Tops', and even the 'Deletions' – unfortunate hills eliminated on the revision of the Tables as being unworthy. No, I thought, I've been fanatical enough in climbing the 277 Munros – the 'Tops' don't interest me, the 'Deletions' even less.

I could, however, see more reason in polishing off the 3,000-foot tops 'Furth of Scotland', especially in view of the fact that I had climbed some of them already. The result of this decision was an unforgettable holiday in Ireland, where, in a week of exhilarating Easter weather, Patrick Scott and I made a whirlwind tour of the Irish 3,000-footers. These fall into four groups – Wicklow, Galtymore, Macgillicuddy's

Reeks, and Brandon Mountain in the Dingle Peninsula. The first two are gentle, rolling ranges; the Reeks rival our finest Scottish hills in majesty and spectacular rock scenery; Brandon, the most westerly 3,000-footer in the British Isles, looks out over the Atlantic, and is surely the only hill of this height to be graced ecclesiastically by having on its very summit the ruins of a small church – St Brendan's Oratory.

In my school days, I had climbed practically every Lake District fell except for Skiddaw. Perhaps the stern Baddely, whose famous guide book was my faithful companion during my boyish wanderings, had put me off, as he is rather severe in his criticism of this particular hill – unnecessarily so, I think, as I thoroughly enjoyed the climb one fine August day a couple of years ago.

Way back in 1947, I had traversed the Snowdon and Ogwen peaks of North Wales. I was glad to have the opportunity of revisiting this area to climb firstly the six Carnedd's, and then Y Garn and Elydir Fawr. The next milestone in my climbing career was reached when, in sweltering heat, I reached the cairn on the last named peak – all the hills 'Furth of Scotland' were in the bag!

I must confess that, on reaching the PM ('Post-Munro') stage, a certain incentive went out of my climbing – due to laziness? or old age? Whereas in my AM days, I would have gone to devilish lengths of ingenuity to fit in some remote, isolated peak, and would turn out in the most atrocious weather, achieving superhuman feats and epic walks just to tick one more off the list, nowadays, if the weather is not very promising, I feel inclined to have a rest day. I have also turned my attention to lower hills – Suilven, Cul Mor, Ben Resipol. Characteristic of my new attitude was the decision I recently made (encouraged by the author of part II of this trilogy) during a climbing excursion to Glen Dessary. The AM members of the party felt impelled to follow a most strenuous course round Sgurr Mhor, Sgurr nan Coireachan, and Sgurr na Ciche – Robin Grant and I (both revelling in the euphoria of the PM mentality) beheld a fine looking, sharp little peak up the glen (Sgurr na h'Aide), and felt a certain satisfaction in being able to ignore the Munros and climb another – but, no, I must avoid becoming consumed with the desire to start ticking off Corbetts! Perhaps I should finish off the 4,000-metre peaks in the Alps? You see, there's no end to it! Better rest content, and be grateful that I've been spared to finish the Munros, thus gaining an insight into some superb areas of Scotland, thereby immeasurably enriching my life.