

THE Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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ILLUSTRATIONS:

Portraits, the Junior Vice-President and William Gordon—The Observatory Tower, Ben Nevis—Stone Circles (3).

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The Cairngorm Club.

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| PRESIDENT, | - - | The Right Hon. JAMES BRYCE, D.C.L., LL.D., M.P. |
| CHAIRMAN, | - - - - - | JOHN M'GREGOR. |
| TREASURER, | - - - - - | T. R. GILLIES, 181a Union Street, Aberdeen. |
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RULES.

I.—The Club shall be called “THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.”

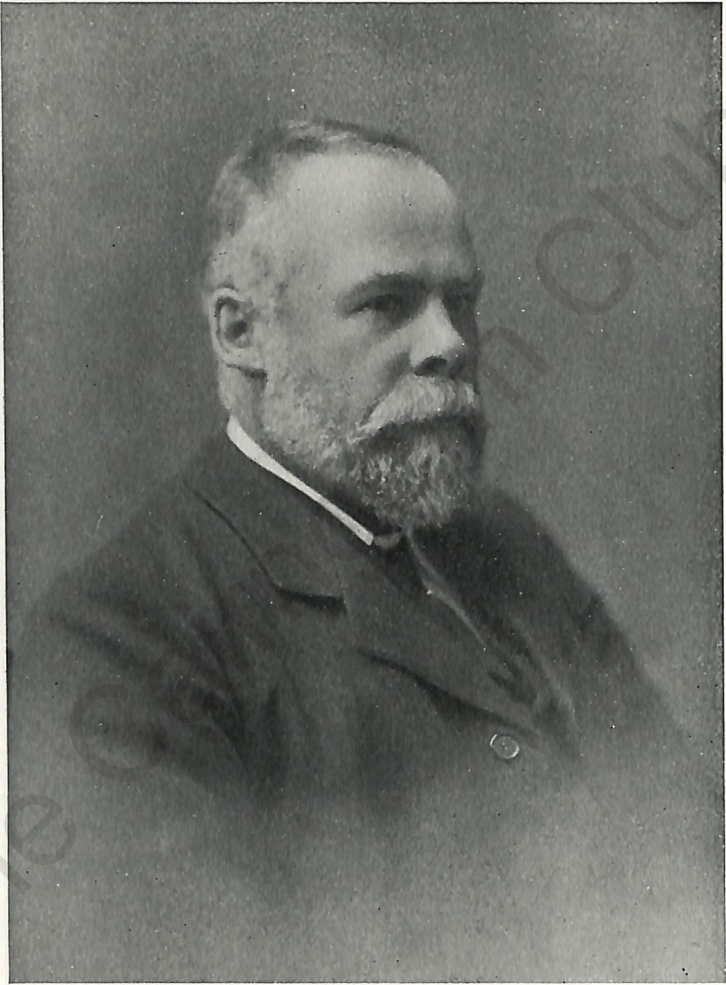
II.—The objects of the Club shall be: (1) to encourage mountain climbing in Scotland, with special reference to the Cairngorm group of mountains; (2) to procure and impart scientific, topographical, and historical information about the Scottish mountains, their superficial physical features, minerals, rocks, plants, animals, meteorology, ancient and modern public routes giving access to and across them, and the meaning of their local place names, literature, and legendary, or folk-lore; (3) to consider the right of access to Scottish mountains, and to adopt such measures in regard thereto as the Club may deem advisable; and (4) to issue a Journal or such other publications as may be considered advantageous to the Club.

III.—Candidates for admission as members of the Club must have ascended at least 3000 feet above the sea level on a Scottish mountain.

IV.—The management of the Club shall be vested in a Committee, consisting of ten members, in addition to the following Office-Bearers—a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer—five being a quorum.

V. The annual general meeting of the Club shall be

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Yours faithfully
Robert Anderson.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. V.

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No. 27.

THE WASHER.

(SPEYSIDE.)

When the sun has sunk from sight, when the breeze has
fallen still,
And the hooting of the owl wakes the fox upon the hill,
You may see her at her task, as she dips and beats and
wings,
See the Washer at her toil, and may hear the song she sings.

Very soft and low she sings, one unceasing song of woe,
A lament for Robin Og, who departed long ago,
Who departed long ago, and will never come again,
Pacing upward from the strath, speeding downward from the
glen.

Years ago he left the maid, years ago she pined and died,
Yet at even, when the mist o'er the burn begins to glide,
You may see her at her task, you may hear her mournful
lay,
Her lament for Robin Og, as the daylight fades away.

HENRY JOHNSTONE.

Edinburgh.

A STORMY AFTERNOON ON BEINN A' BHEITHIR.

BY HUGH STEWART.

"Six o'clock! Get up, you brutes," said the low-level man to the recumbent forms of the ultramontane and the salvationist. But the sleeping-bags moved not, so the low-level man, conscious of having done his duty, replaced his watch and returned to his slumbers. Silence reigned over the camp. About two hours later the salvationist was awakened by the furious patter of rain. Rolling on to the low-level man, he asked the time. "Six o'clock," said the latter unhesitatingly. But the knowledge gained by experience prompted the salvationist to consult his watch. Then he crawled from his sleeping-bag, and disrobed his wrathful companions, heedless of appeals, promises, execrations. The ultramontane glanced resignedly at the motionless pall of mist which enshrouded Aonach Dhu. "What a beast of a day!" said he; "I fear we can't do Beinn Fhionnlaidh and Beinn Sguliaird, after all." For the accomplishment of this expedition, the low-level man had been instructed to arouse the camp at six o'clock. But the ultramontane had never shown fervent enthusiasm to visit these little known mountains. They boasted not of rocks unscalable, of serrated ridge or spiry pinnacle. They offered not in corrie or precipice sport such as delighted the northern gods:—

The gods arose and took
Axes and ropes, and at their head came Thor ;
Forth went they and they drove their steeds before ;
And up the dewy mountain tracks they fared
To the deer-forests, in the early dawn,
And up and down, and side and slant they roamed.

Therefore the pessimistic bodings of the ultramontane were disregarded. Nevertheless, optimism was chilled by the sound of the rain falling, not with a pleasing music of tones and soft undertones made various by a freshening breeze, but exhibiting a form of that monotonous dogged deter-

mination which ever excites horror in all right-thinking breasts. Over Loch Triochatan brooded a thick darkness, and the glen was sombre as if morning yielded reluctantly to his lover night's entreaties, "Lie still, O Love, lie still." Unfavourable indeed were the weather conditions to attempts at exploration and photography. The party found consolation in a leisurely breakfast, to which succeeded the pleasures offered by tobacco, cards and light literature; and anon with praiseworthy energy they sought for wisdom in the pages of Plato and photographic manuals.

Thus the slow hours crept on; and the heavens spared not their tears. About noon, however, an east wind came moaning down the glen, and swept the rain-clouds out to sea. The day was still disagreeable, and the wind soon became a hurricane; but the low-level man had tried every imaginable position, and found all equally uncomfortable. Something, he thought, must be done; and he proposed that the party should bike down to Ballachulish, to recruit their fast diminishing larder. The salvationist greeted the plan enthusiastically; and, with a wild hope in his heart, he secretly gathered together map, flask and compass. The ultramontane, however, now reclining luxuriously on his back, his helmeted head pillowed on a rucksack, a cigarette poised daintily between his lips, his person swathed in the folds of three sleeping-bags, every fold emanating comfort and felicity, declined the proposal emphatically. Thus after lunch his friends left him in solitary possession of the camp.

Down the glen the wind bore them past lone Loch Triochatan, past Clachaig and the grim gully fronting it, whose blackness conjured up before the salvationist's mind certain unpleasant memories. Past the scene of the massacre they swept, and gaily encountered those dangers which in Glencoe village are produced by innumerable restful dogs, restless hens and half-clad children. Then, as they reached the slate bridge at the end of Ballachulish, a sudden vision of Beinn a' Bheithir recalled his sinister designs to the salvationist's heart. For framed in by the wet black sides of the bridge soared the stately sombre cone, toying with a

delicate veil of mist whose graceful folds fluttered in the wind. The mountain's glorious appearance from the Aonach Eagach ridge, from Kinlochewe, from Sgor na h' Ulaidh, came pressing the claim; and finally the salvationist chanced to recollect that it boasted of two Munroes. Resistance to the call of the mountain spirit was no longer possible.

He informed the low-level man of the amazing discovery that there were in his pocket a map, a compass, a flask. And he waxed poetical and said, "Yonder is a hill worthy of thy climb."* To Byron replied Wordsworth: "Mine is a soul whose master bias leans to home-felt pleasures and to gentle scenes. These Beinn a' Bheithir knoweth not; yet to shame the ultramontane shall I ascend." And thus on the salvationist's designs fortune smiled serenely.

Disposing of their bikes, they turn up Gleann a' Fhiodh, and make for the narrow pinnacled ridge to the south-east of Coire Raibhach which leads to Sgorr Ban. They begin to mount steadily, but the low-level man is evidently somewhat out of condition. His aesthetic admiration for the curves of Bidean increases as he ascends; yet it cannot be satisfied without stopping. Therefore he stops. On a few yards, and once more he fain would worship at the shrine of beauty. These halts become longer and more frequent; but the salvationist turns his eyes away and assumes a blissful ignorance. At last his friend stops dead, and suggests lunch. Lunch is taken. They advance once more. But the low-level man's countenance is troubled. Finally he intimates his wish to descend. The salvationist stoops to bribe. Black balls, tobacco, whisky are offered and accepted. But they change not the low-level man's design; and the defrauded donor is left solitary and lamenting.

He stifled his sorrow however by struggling up the slope, and soon emerged on the top of the ridge, where the wind with tempestuous buffetings stormed and howled defiance in the name of Beinn a' Bheithir. It summoned the witchery of mists to magnify ten feet rocks into hundred feet pitches of appalling steepness, to thrust the summit far into the lurid clouds, or bury it in darkness. Now with sudden

* cf. *The Giaour* l. 146. "Man was worthy of thy clime."

fierceness it blew, as the salvationist tackled a small pinnacle, swelling out his waterproof to balloon-like billows, and all but hurling the sacrilegious intruder into well-merited abysses; now with a vision of great cliffs blocking the way in front, it deluded him into descending on the treacherous scree in Coire Raibhach. But that was its last triumph. The entrapped salvationist found breath to hum—

Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
M' a rendu fou.

The ridge was regained without much difficulty, and easy scrambles led to the Sgorr Beinn top. A few minutes rest, then a cautious crawl on all fours along the narrow wind-swept eastern ridge, a rush up interminable misty scree, and hurrah! the top of Sgorr Dhearg.

What a magnificent view! Across the sun-kissed sea Garven flings itself defiantly into the blue sky; below smiles Loch Leven, radiant with silvery ripples; from every side the mountains and little hills clap their hands in welcome; here soaring solitary, there in close-knit clusters, round-shouldered and precipitous, of delicate subtle contours or fantastic mouldings that take the heart by storm, bathed each and all in wealth of harmonious colours with grey and purple predominating. All this and more was visible to the eye of faith; to the wretched human organ there were present but mist and scree; and mist and scree do not form an entirely satisfactory picture. Therefore, without delay, a descent was made to the col leading to Sgorr Dhonuill. Here shelter was sought on the lee side of a great boulder, and the sodden remains of lunch carefully consumed.

Overhead, Sgorr Dhonuill arose in awesome slopes through the mist, a perpendicular knife-edge separating an A.P. from an O.H. rock wall. Truly a distressful picture for a lonely salvationist! Nature had fashioned here her marvels with no trembling hand; yet the salvationist, no longer a victim of mist magic, was not dismayed. He lay listening to the roar of the wind which raged with furious choked mutterings through the gap between the mountains, with glance directed now on surf-broken Loch Leven, now on the mist racing along Sgorr Dhonuill. In that delightful book,

“Tess of the D' Urbervilles,” the heroine says somewhere, “I don't know about ghosts, but I do know that our souls can be made to go outside our bodies when we are alive. A very easy way to feel 'em go is to lie on the grass at night, and look straight up at some big bright star; and by fixing your mind upon it, you will soon find that you are hundreds and hundreds of miles away from your body, which you don't seem to need at all.” A certain similar mental experience may be gained by lying solitary on a silent hill-side, and gazing on mists and mountain fastnesses; but to get to the top of Sgorr Dhonuill the body was too obviously needed. So the soul was recalled to its cell. The salvationist arose with a shiver; and the precipitous knife-edge was found to be a broad slope rising at a fairly easy angle.

Mist, wind, and a violent shower of hail welcomed him effusively on the summit. He tore himself away, however, and once more made for the col. Then turning to the north down Gleann a' Chaolais, whose grassy carpet was most astonishingly wet, he trudged steadily along the road to Ballachulish quarries. At once he sought his bike, and amid gathering gloom groped his way up Glencoe. Mists hung motionless now, clasping the wet hillsides in a close embrace, the Coe sent a voice of wailing through the glen, and a soft drizzle came stealing down through the darkness. But in the salvationist's soul there rioted the hill-lover's exuberant joy, “Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet.”

As he reached Auchtriochatan the low-level man's voice was borne out on the night. “I hope you haven't forgotten the bread.”

“Oh!—!” said the salvationist.

[The cluster of mountains grouped under the name of Beinn a' Bheithir is set in the angle formed by Loch Linnhe and Loch Leven. A certain isolation lends an additional charm to their grandeur. Of the five peaks of the group, Creag Ghorm (2372), a long broad ridge, is set in the extreme N.W. corner overlooking Ballachulish pier. Its slopes are covered luxuriantly with trees and rise fairly steeply. It forms the usual route to the very fine top, Sgorr Dhonuill (3284), with which it is connected by one of those broad ridges so characteristic of the Cairngorm group, but not so frequently met with on the wilder western hills. Sgorr Dhonuill, the second highest peak of the group,

presents bold crags to the North, and looks extremely impressive from Gleann a' Chaolais. Into this glen, from its E. slope descending steeply to the col between itself and Sgorr Dhearg (3362), it thrusts a craggy buttress, Sgorr a' Chaolais, whose serrated ridge might possibly offer sport. Sgorr Dhearg, the highest peak, is not so precipitous as Sgorr Dhonuill—a sharp narrow peak covered with the most dreary quartzite screes imaginable. From it a long ridge stretches N. to Loch Leven, bounding Gleann a' Chaolais on the E. as Creag Ghorm does on the W. Another ridge connects it with the most easterly top, Sgorr Ban (3104); between the two peaks lies the remarkably impressive Coire Giubhsachain. Another corrie, Coire Raibhach, on the N.E. of Sgorr Ban, contains some cliffs, and is bounded on the S.E. by a ridge running down to the cart track in Gleann a' Fhiodh. This somewhat desolate glen, through which the river Laroch seeks Loch Leven, forms the Eastern boundary of the group. For a detailed account see *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. 7, No. 38, to which the foregoing remarks are much indebted.

The mountain is not a deer-forest, and hence can be climbed with a clear conscience at all periods of the year. As said above, the ordinary route starts up the steep slopes of Creag Ghorm; but its tediousness and tameness make it an altogether unworthy introduction to Beinn a' Bheithir. If a rock climb is not intended, possibly the most interesting route would be to go up the finely wooded Gleann a' Chaolais, scramble up the steep face of Sgorr a' Chaolais, and gain Sgorr Dhonuill by what as seen through mist looked an interesting castellated ridge. Thence turn E. to Sgorr Dhearg and Sgorr Ban, descending to Ballachulish quarries by the pinnacled ridge to the S.E. of Coire Raibhach, by which the ascent described above was made.]

CLUNY.

Hill, and dale, and woodland glade,
Cluny basks beneath the sun ;
Sylvan walks give summer shade,
Brooks in silver reaches run.

Wide the pine woods in the gale
Waft their balsam, stores of health,
And the hawthorn in the dale
Fills the air with fragrant wealth.

Gorse, and heath, and golden broom,
Primrose, daughter of the spring,
Tasselled lime, all honey bloom,
Round them sweetest incense fling.

See that pillar-circled space,
Spectre from long ages gone,
Of its purpose shows scant trace,
Pillars nine and one huge stone.

Time was when Tillycairn was gay,
Beauty lighted bower and hall ;
Hall and bower have passed away,
Ruin now is Lord of all.

Here's a castle old and grey,
Steeped in tales of days gone by ;
Yonder pile of modern day,
Granite may old Time defy.

Famed Corrennie on the west
Clangs with hammer all the day,
Night alone brings sleep and rest,
Labour comes with morning grey.

South, Barmakin, more famous still,
Holds a riddle yet unread ;
Silence sleeps upon the hill—
Man, the riddler, long has fled.

On the North, Don's winding stream,
Homeward bound, rolls to the sea ;
Of poet's dainty song the theme,
Over all reigns Bennachie.

From a dim and distant west
Eastward to the sounding sea,
Lie ten thousand landscapes traced
Under heaven's bright canopy.

Girdled by this goodly frame,
Cluny, beck, and tower, and tree,
Hills and wilds that well may claim
Fairest scenery that could be.

JAMES REID.

Backhill, Castle Fraser.

SOME UNADVENTUROUS RAMBLES.

BY REV. GEORGE C. WATT, B.D.

I CANNOT remember a time when I was not a lover of the hills. Although a town boy, I was much in the country in my early days, and the mere sight of a great, if even somewhat distant, summit always stirred my blood. And yet it was not till I was over thirty that I climbed any of our greatest hills. I had to be content with Cairn-mon-earn and Bennachie and the Tap-o'-Noth, and others of similar altitude, delightful all of them, but all of them only stirring longings for loftier heights. Speaking of the difficulty not seldom experienced in reaching foreign scenes which one fain would see, Professor Blackie quoted the quaint old lines :

“For want o’ the siller and the wee pickle cash
There’s mony a gallant lad must want his bonny lass.”

And even for mountain climbing the “wee pickle” (or “wee puckle” as being an Aberdonian I should say) “cash” is needed, unless one has the good fortune to be living beside the great hills. Now the “siller” was never very abundant with me, and I had to wait for the acquaintance of the big Bens till circumstances brought me near them. But no hill climbing is without its delights. The mere physical exertion is itself a pleasure, and the views to be had from many of our less lofty summits are often delightful. It is of some very unambitious and very unadventurous climbing that I would write now.

One hill that used to be familiar to me is the Clashmach, Huntly. This hill, which at its highest point is 1229 feet above the level of the sea, and thus of

CLASHMACH only moderate elevation, is still conspicu-
HILL. ous. A long brown ridge, it is well seen from the railway as one approaches Huntly from Gartly. It lies roughly north and south, or, to speak more accurately, from the west of north to the

east of south, its northern end skirted by the road from Huntly which is or used to be known as the Craighead road, and its southern termination near Edindaich, a farm not far from the Huntly and Gartly road. Perhaps the most convenient way to ascend it is from the Craighead road, at the point marked on Bacon's map as "Queels," but as a matter of fact I have climbed it from any point at which I happened to be when the desire to climb took possession of me. I have ascended it in summer and in winter, and even with the snow lying pretty deep upon it, I never found the ascent other than pleasing. That it is not too exacting may appear from this that the Huntly school children, or some of them at any rate, used to climb to the top on May-day. I remember seeing them there on the first of May, nearly forty years ago, and hearing them sing very heartily the May-day song,

"Spring's delights are all reviving"

The Clashmach is not in any part, so far as I can remember, rugged or rocky, and in parts at least it is cultivated to a considerable height. But it has fine heathery slopes, and the view from the top is capital. Looking northward and to the west of north one sees the Moray Firth spreading out its blue expanse, and if the weather is at all clear has the Caithness Morven and its neighbouring hills in sight. In whatever direction one turns he sees something of interest, well cultivated land, dark firwoods, fine hills, some of them like the neighbouring Bin, wooded to their summits. But, best of all, looking to the west of south, he sees Lochnagar, and still further to the west the grand masses of the Cairngorms. The last time I climbed the Clashmach was in 1877, a year in which the snows on the Grampians were very late in melting, and although it was about the end of June or the beginning of July that I crossed the hill I could see great patches of snow on the far off slopes. One can surely appreciate a hill which is neither very lofty nor very difficult to climb, when there is such a view from the summit to delight him.

Another hill which I climbed very long ago was in a quite different region. It was my lot to live for some ten years in the North of England, and the brief holi-

SIMONSIDE. days which I had from time to time during these years were mostly spent at the sea-side or on the continent. But once having a few days to spare I betook myself to the banks of the Coquet, in the neighbourhood of Rothbury, in the hope of enjoying a little trout fishing. The Coquet is a beautiful little river, and the trout fishing on it is generally regarded as good. I cannot say that I coaxed many fish out of the stream; probably the atmospheric conditions were unfavourable, as so often happens when one goes fishing! but it was exceedingly pleasant to loiter by the river banks. One day, however, I laid the rod aside and enjoyed a pleasant climb. The hill I climbed was Simonside, which lies two or three miles south-west from Rothbury. It is a heathery hill, neither very high nor very rugged nor very steep, but fairly isolated and commanding from its long flat top a wide and interesting prospect. Some twenty-five miles in a direct line from Newcastle, it cannot be seen, I think, from any point in the immediate vicinity of that city, but it is well seen from near Ponteland, a village some six or seven miles from Newcastle. I fancy that Simonside is geologically interesting. As is the case in many of our Scottish hills, the rock does not show much, but it has sufficient character of its own to bear the name of "Simonside grit," and belongs to the Bernician series of sandstone rocks in the Lower Carboniferous formation. From the nature of the underlying rocks, as is noted in Mr. H. G. Woodward's fine work on the Geology of England and Wales, wide heathy and boggy moorlands overspread the surface of that part of Northumberland from which Simonside raises itself. Yet at no great distance from Simonside one finds the beautiful house and grounds of Craggside, the residence of the late distinguished Lord Armstrong, better known to North of England folks as Sir William G. Armstrong. It is truly wonderful what skill and money judiciously used can do. I love moorland, however, especially when the heather is in bloom, and to a Scotsman there is always, wherever he

may be, something in the brown hills and the heather that speaks to him of home. It would burden this paper too much to tell of all that one can see from the summit of Simonside. I can mention only one magnificent sight, that of the Cheviots, some sixteen or eighteen miles away. It was a splendidly bright day when I made my ascent, no cloud in the sky, glorious sunshine everywhere. I think I like the great hills best when there are wisps of cloud drifting about their summits, but it is also something fine to see them when brilliant sunlight is revealing their every cleft and hollow. Once from the shores of the Solway Firth I saw Skiddaw, at a distance of nearly twenty miles, so splendidly irradiated by the golden light that there was not a feature of the mountain that was not as distinct as if one were looking to it, only across a narrow valley, from some neighbouring hill. And it was thus that I saw the Cheviots on that bright day so long ago. They were not the "Cheviots' mountains blue" of the sweet Scottish singer, for a golden light suffused them from summit to base. But there they rose before me in all their splendid sweep, and seemed so near that only a few hurried steps would bring me to them. I have never climbed Simonside since, but more than thirty years have not effaced the memory of that glorious vision. Even as I write it seems to rise before me once more.

The last of the little climbs which I would mention was a comparatively recent one, but far, not only from Central North-umberland, but even from Strathbogie.

WIDEFORD HILL. Early in March, 1903, I happened to be at Scapa pier in the Orkney Islands, seeing some of my folks who had been north with me sail for Scrabster. The weather was cold and rough, but for the time being it was fair, and having nothing particular to do, I sauntered across the beach to where the Scapa burn falls over shelving rocks into the bay. The fall is really a fine one, though it is not of great height. I had often noticed it when arriving at or leaving Scapa, but it is a mile away from the pier and it is worth crossing the sands to see it. After I had inspected the fall, I wandered on by farm roads and the edges of fields till I came to a road running from Kirkwall

to Firth past the south side of Wideford Hill. From this road I made the ascent of the hill. Wideford Hill is not lofty, its height is only 741 feet, but from its situation it commands an admirable view of the Orkney Islands. In sailing through the islands one seldom loses sight of it for any length of time, and as it is seen from so many points it must offer a very fine outlook. It stands just opposite Kirkwall, at a distance of two miles or so westward. It is a plain brown hill, shapely enough, and, as it stands well apart, looking a good deal higher than it really is. I climbed it of course quite easily, and was hopeful to get a fine view from its summit. But alas! the evil fortune which so often befalls one on the greater hills, the evil fortune which I have experienced on Ben Nevis, Ben Muich Dhui and Ben Wyvis, not to speak of others, overtook me on Wideford Hill. I was scarcely at the top when a fierce hail-storm assailed me and driving sea mist hid everything. I tried to get shelter on the lee side of some friendly big stones, but soon grew weary of my position, and hurried down the hill towards Kirkwall. There is on Wideford Hill a Pict's house which I had intended to visit, but it did not come in my way, and I did not search for it. I simply fled from the hail and the sleet, and arrived in Kirkwall in sorely draggled condition. But I was not at all sorry that I had made the not trying ascent. I only saw, as I climbed, hills with the sight of which I was fairly familiar, the neighbouring hills of Orphir, and the more distant but singularly fine hills of Hoy, one of these latter, the Ward or Wart hill being over 1500 feet. But although I saw little, nothing, indeed, which I had not seen before, I had at least made a beginning in the climbing of the Orcadian hills. The hills of Hoy, towering finely from the sea, and with their sides forming in part great bare precipices, I hope I may be able to ascend some future day.

AN APRIL ASCENT OF BEN NEVIS.

BY ALFRED D. SMITH.

THE weather at the beginning of April, this year, was phenomenally fine, so it was with high hopes, though tempered by a slightly falling barometer, that I set out on the afternoon of the 12th of that month, from the Waverley Station, Edinburgh, northward bound, to carry out a pre-arranged climb on Ben Nevis. The route down the West Highland line is unsurpassed among railway journeys in this country, so that the six and a half hours' run was full of interest and ever-increasing delight. In due course Fort William was reached, and glowing accounts were received of the glorious weather that had recently been experienced.

After such exceptional conditions it was somewhat disappointing, the next morning, to see the aspect overhead dull and threatening, but 7.50 a.m. saw us, a party of three, hoping for the best, set our faces to the well-known Ben, taking the advice of an old native, who, when consulted as to the state of the weather, remarked that we had better go—for it would be no better.

Bearing up Glen Nevis we passed Achintee at 8.30, taking the Tourist path a few yards further on to the left, and then commenced the ascent. After rising about 500 feet from this point a fine view of Glen Nevis is obtained, which was rendered more impressive by the considerable amount of snow on the hills in the background, forming part of the Mamore Forest. At about 1400 feet above sea level the path turns North-east by East, away from Glen Nevis, and at 1800 feet we were level with the first patch of snow, the atmosphere here becoming sensibly colder and the sky more overcast. After another 100 feet the path was discarded, and tracks were made for Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe, which was gained at 10 a.m., when, bearing in mind Whymper's recommendation as to eating every two or three

hours, a halt was called, and the not disagreeable task of lightening the weight of the knapsacks commenced, the keen air giving a fine relish to the jam sandwiches, raisins, chocolate, etc., contained therein.

At 10.30 we were skirting the western side of the loch, all the hills being by this time enveloped in heavy mist and rain beginning to fall. Rounding the loch's northern end the course was due East to the Allt a' Mhuilinn Glen, the driving mist and rain making the prospect a dismal one. Traversing the northern side of Carn Dearg, heavy patches of snow being now crossed, a descent of 150 feet or so was made into the Glen, up which we proceeded, following the burn side, our object being to gain the summit of the Ben by an ascent to the Carn Mor Dearg arête at the head of the Glen. With the exception of a halt and rest behind a big rock, when the wet was a little worse than usual, steady progress was made, and at 12 o'clock we were at the 2,500 feet level, where a second lunch was discussed. The snow here was lying everywhere, and, to our no small satisfaction, the descending rain turned to the same element. It got deeper and harder as we advanced, and the declivity steeper, and about 300 feet higher the ice axes came into play. At this point roping was advisable, and, after this operation, we pressed onward and upward, with the snow driving strongly from behind. Progress was now considerably slower. The surface of the snow was frozen hard and slippery, and for the next 1000 feet every step had to be cut with the axe. The situation was wild and Alpine in the extreme. Our coats froze stiff like boards, and the rocks, looming at intervals through the mist, gave a weird grandeur to the scene that one can realise only by experience. As we ascended, the mountain side descended sharply under our feet into the obscurity of the mist, and, looking upward, the sight of my companions, coated with the driving snow and cutting their steps with the ice axes, presented an appearance worthy of the Alps.

Being the last man on the rope, I had ample time to admire my industrious friends at work, only varied, occasionally, by a consignment of snow being transferred on to my

person from above. The view being so limited by the mist, I employed the delays by improving the steps already made by my predecessors, which, in fact, was somewhat necessary, for frequently the drifting snow had almost filled the cavities by the time I came to use them. The only watch possessed by the party stopped, presumably by the cold, but it must have been about two o'clock when our leader gallantly cut his way on to the top of the ridge and the slow task of step-cutting was over. The aneroid showed an altitude of 4000 feet, but something (probably about 200 feet) had to be allowed for changed weather conditions. We greatly regretted that the mist here prevented us from taking the photographs that we should have desired, for the surrounding views with the snow effects, could they have been seen, must have been superb. We spent a couple of plates at a partial temporary clearing, and one of them rewarded us, afterwards, with a fair representation of the scene.

Bearing now to the right we pressed on up the arête to the top, about 600 feet higher, and, as the snow was drifting here a good deal, we sank considerably at each step, making the going somewhat slow, but finally gained the summit, about three o'clock, as near as we could calculate, the aneroid registering 4600 feet, owing to the aforementioned cause. The views, of course, were non-existent under the circumstances, and photographs, except of ourselves and the Observatory Tower, were out of the question. It was with a sigh of regret that we thought of the cordial greeting, extended to all mountaineers by the late Observatory officials, that might have been ours had not that most regrettable event, the closing of the Observatory, taken place. The building itself lay beneath our feet, entirely submerged by the twelve feet or so of white covering. We could only sit down behind the tower, and, after I had thawed my moustache, which had frozen to the mountaineering hat, partake of what refreshment we had brought with us—minus the hot coffee, which "might have been."

The descent was made down the slope, following, as near as possible, the ordinary path route. Two thousand feet were descended before we emerged from the mist, when a fine

view, westward, was obtained of Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil, and we were able to take a few photographs with satisfactory results. Shortly afterwards the snow was left behind and the path rejoined a little below where it had been forsaken in the morning. Achintee was passed in due course, and at 7 p.m. we tramped into Fort William, wearing the air of conquerors and ready for a substantial meal.



THE OBSERVATORY TOWER, BEN NEVIS.

THE LITERATURE OF LANDSCAPE.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

THE works devoted to the description of scenery are not very numerous—always excepting, of course, works of a guide-book order—and the reason for their comparative paucity is not far to seek. The appreciation of scenery, especially scenery in its grander and awe-inspiring forms—the scenery of mountains—is of quite modern growth. There is, indeed, a general consensus of opinion that this appreciation only dates from the early years of the nineteenth century, and is almost wholly attributable to the poetry of Wordsworth and the poems and novels of Sir Walter Scott. Wordsworth revealed the beauties of the English Lake district, and taught us to realise the true character and import of the varied manifestations of Nature.

He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease ;
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sunlit fields again ;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.

Scott invested the Scottish Highlands with the magic charm of romance, and his scenic pictures entirely dispelled the notion that had theretofore prevailed that Scotland was a wild, barren, gloomy country. Dr. Johnson, for instance, travelling through some of the finest scenery in Western Inverness-shire, declared himself "astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility." "The appearance," he added, "is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by nature from her care and disinherited of her favours, left in its original elemental state, or quickened only by one sullen power of useless vegetation."

The delineation of landscape, so conspicuously initiated by Sir Walter Scott, has become a favourite device of modern novelists. William Black was in a way famous for his word-

pictures of "Hebridean sunsets and opalescent seas." The scenery of Wessex is depicted with remarkable fidelity and in a most graphic style by Thomas Hardy. Blackmore has vividly portrayed Exmoor for us, just as Eden Phillpotts is portraying Dartmoor to-day; and the novels of "Lucas Malet" abound in animated descriptions of woodlands and rural landscapes. But landscape is gradually acquiring a literature of its own—in other words, books are being written with the sole purpose of describing scenery. Probably Ruskin set the example in those magnificent "purple patches" of his in "Modern Painters," in which he extolled the beauty and grandeur of mountains; and the "exploitation" of the Alps and of other mountain ranges since his time has led to the publication of many works, partly descriptive of the ascents made, partly descriptive of the natural features observed. The advance in geological science, too, has been the means of adding to landscape literature, for some of our latter-day geologists take more note of scenic features than did their predecessors, and happily are much more disposed to present the results of their investigations with literary effectiveness.

One of the most interesting of recent additions to what we have ventured to term the literature of landscape is Sir Archibald Geikie's "Landscape in History."* Those who are familiar with the author's "Scenery of Scotland" will need no assurance of Sir Archibald's competence to deal with such a subject and to render his exposition attractive. His authority as a geologist is unquestioned, but he also possesses the faculty of clear and vigorous expression. He has been aptly described as "one of those rare men of science who possess imagination and a pleasant literary style," and both qualities are well exhibited in this work. One-half of it—the only portion with which we propose to concern ourselves—deals with "Scenery in its geological relations and in its influence on human progress." The theme is a large one—a

* *Landscape in History* and other Essays. By Sir Archibald Geikie, D.C.L., F.R.S. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited.

little ambitious, perhaps; but it is worked out skilfully, the extensive knowledge of the author forming an admirable basis for his conclusions. "The surface of every country," says Sir Archibald Geikie, "is like a palimpsest which has been written over again and again in different centuries." From a study of this "palimpsest," the most obvious deduction is that topographical conditions have produced "a series of influences which have unquestionably played a large part in the successive stages of human development." This deduction may be taken as the keynote of the portion of the book dealing with scenery.

It consists of the substance of four addresses. The first is titled "Landscape in History." Its basal proposition is that the landscapes of a country—the form, height, and trend of its mountain-ranges, the position and extent of its plains and valleys, and so on—"all these and other aspects of the scenery of the land have contributed their share to the moulding of national history and character." To follow the argument in detail is beyond our space, but the general conclusion may be quoted—

There can be no doubt that the larger features of the landscape of Britain have mainly determined the distribution of the several tribes of mankind out of which the present population of our islands has grown. It is hardly less obvious that the same features have continued during the times of history to influence the development and progress of these tribes. The Gael who long ages ago was pushed by the Briton into the mountain fastnesses of the North was left there to maintain, until only a few generations ago, his primitive habits as hunter and warrior, cattle-dealer and free-booter. While he remained comparatively unprogressive, the Norsemen, Danes, and Saxons, who took possession of the lowlands that lay between his glens and the sea, were able to advance in agriculture upon richer soil and in a less inhospitable climate, and to crowd the land with their homesteads, farms, villages, towns, and seaports. So, too, the Welshman, pushed in turn into his hills by successive Teutonic swarms from the other side of the North Sea, has preserved his pristine language, and with it much of that individuality of character which has kept him from cordially amalgamating with the invaders. And thus while the original Celtic people, restricted to less ample territories and less fertile land, have to a large extent retained the holdings and habits of their ancestors, building comparatively few towns, and engaging in few crafts, save farming and stock-raising, the Teutonic tribes, possessing themselves of the broad cultivated lowlands,

and the great repositories of coal and iron, have thrown across the islands a network of thoroughfares, have scattered everywhere villages and towns, have built many great cities, have developed the industrial resources of the land, and have mainly contributed to the commercial supremacy of the Empire.

The second address—"Landscape and Imagination"—deals with the various interpretations of nature and natural scenery that have been current at different times. Primitive myth and legend afford many illustrations of the way in which the physical aspects of the land impress their character on the religious beliefs and superstitions of a people. By the Greeks the mountain-tops were regarded as the abode of the gods and the Titans; the tortuous courses of rivers were attributed to fabulous performances by the respective river-gods; volcanoes represented the gasping of imprisoned monsters. The Teutonic myths and superstitions centred round giants, who were supposed to have a fondness for stones and rocks, and to have had much to do with altering the external aspects of nature. The pagan ideas of gods and giants were slowly exterminated by Christianity, only to be replaced by the assignment of a supernatural origin for striking natural features. In Catholic countries these were attributed to the Virgin and the saints; in our own country the Evil One generally got the credit—or the blame—

In Britain, and especially in Scotland, the devil of the Christian faith appears to have in large measure supplanted the warlocks and the carlines of the earlier beliefs, or at least to have worked in league with them as their chief. All over the country "devil's punch bowls," "devil's cauldrons," "devil's bridges," and other names mark how his prowess has been invoked to account for natural features which in those days were deemed to require some more than ordinary agency for their production.

Geological investigation has, of course, furnished the correct interpretation of the earth's surface, but it has still, occasionally, to encounter and overcome popular or traditional theories. This leads Sir Archibald Geikie to discuss how far the discoveries of science have affected the relation of scenery to the imagination. He maintains that "in dissipating the popular misconceptions which have grown up around the

question of the origin of scenery, science has put in their place a series of views of nature which appeal infinitely more to the imagination than anything which they supplant." The proposition is a little startling, and can hardly be accepted in its entirety without serious qualification; but Sir Archibald himself, at any rate, supplies a series of views which are marked by graphic description of the natural features presented, and by imaginative insight into the process by which these features were gradually produced. He takes "the man of literature" in fancy to the summit of Slieve League, and supposes him to demand what there is of note in the landscape observable therefrom which he, ignorant of science, misses. The answer of the geologist is simple. He is able to conjure up the working of the forces that have sculptured the whole landscape; to picture coal-fields spreading far and wide over the hills of Donegal; and to realise that the "woes of Ireland may be traced back to a very early time, when not even the most ardent patriot can lay blame on the invading Saxon.* Similar imaginative

* Mr. Alexander Mackie, of the Albyn Place School, Aberdeen, in his interesting little volume on "Nature Knowledge in Modern Poetry," cites, as showing Tennyson's fine geological instinct and knowledge, the two well-known stanzas in "In Memoriam" describing the changes that the earth's surface has undergone—the constant disintegration of the solid land, and the equally constant building up that follows—

There rolls the deep where grew the tree,
O earth what changes hast thou seen!
There, where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

Mr. Mackie adds—"This reads almost like a gloss upon a passage in Sir Archibald Geikie's recent work, 'Landscape in History'—a passage in which he tells how he 'found the splintered slabs of stone [on the wind-swept summit of Slieve League in Donegal] to be full of stems of fossil trees. Here, two thousand feet above the sea, lay a cake of the carboniferous rocks called millstone grit. This little remnant on the highest ground of the district demonstrated that a sheet of millstone-grit once stretched over that remote part of the island, and, may be, extended much farther westward over tracts where the Atlantic now rolls.'"

operations are executed with a landscape in the Isle of Wight, and with one at Loch Maree. The description of the latter may be quoted as an excellent illustration of Sir Archibald Geikie's felicitous style—

Let me conduct the reader in imagination to the far north-west of Scotland and place him on the craggy slopes above the upper end of Loch Maree as the sun, after a day of autumnal storm, is descending towards the distant Hebrides in a glory of crimson, green, and gold. Hardly anywhere within the compass of our islands can a landscape be beheld so varied in form and colour, so abounding in all that is noblest and fairest in our mountain scenery. To the right rises the huge mass of Slioch, catching on his terraced shoulders the full glow of sunset, and wreathing his summit with folds of delicate rose-coloured cloud. To the left, above the purple shadows that are now gathering round their base, tower the white crags and crest of Ben Eay, rising clear and sharp against the western sky. Down the centre, between these two giant buttresses, lies Loch Maree—the noblest sheet of water in the Scottish Highlands—now ablaze with the light of the sinking sun. Headland behind headland, and islet after islet rise as bars of deep violet out of that sea of gold. Yonder a group of pines, relics of the old Caledonian forest, stand boldly above the rocky knolls. Around us the naked rock undulates in endless bosses, dotted with boulders or half-buried in the deep heather that flames out with yet richer crimson in the ruddy light filling all the valley. Overhead, the banded cliffs of Craig Roy, draped with waterfalls and wet with the rains of the earlier part of the day, glow in the varying tints of sunset. We hear the scream of the eagles that still nest in these inaccessible crags; the hoarse outcry of the heron comes up from the lake; the whirr of the black-cock re-echoes down the hill-side. It might seem as if we were here out of sight and hearing of man, save that now and then the low of cattle, driven home to their stalls, falls faintly on the ear from the distant hamlet, which is fading into the gathering twilight of the glen.

The special geological feature of the landscape, which gives the scientist with imagination "the pull" over the mere literary man without the science, lies in the three distinct forms of rock which enter into the composition of the landscape, and thus record "the successive and early chapters in the long history by which the topography of the Scottish Highlands has been brought into its existing form"—

We can in imagination clothe the landscape with its ancient pine-forests, through which the early Celtic colonists hunted the urus,

the wild boar, the brown bear, and the reindeer. We then fill up the valley with the stately glacier which once stretched along its hollow and went out to sea. We can dimly conceive the passage of the long ages of persistent decay by which mountain and glen, corry and cliff were carved into the forms which now so delight our eye.

Allusion was made in the "Journal" to one of the addresses—"Landscape and Literature"—at the time of its delivery, and an exceedingly apposite quotation was given.* This address is very much an amplification of the thesis in the two that precede it, supplemented by the argument that if, during the later mental development of a people, the human imagination continued to be stimulated by the more impressive features of the outer world, "such potent causes would more or less make themselves felt in the growth of a national literature." Beginning first with the "placid scenery" of the lowlands, both of England and of Scotland, Sir Archibald Geikie shows how it inspired the writings of Cowper, Thomson, and Burns. Burns's descriptions of Nature, however—though accurate and characteristic—are singularly limited; they are mainly confined to rivers and streams, "banks and braes"—the sea is seldom mentioned, mountains never. As Sir Archibald well puts it, "his pictures are exquisite foregrounds, with seldom any distinct distance." The "uplands" or border country materially influenced the Border minstrelsy; and the scenery of the Highlands was first revealed to the modern world by the "Poems of Ossian," and then more fully by Sir Walter Scott, a similar service for the English lake district being rendered by Wordsworth. It was reserved for Tennyson, says Sir Archibald Geikie, to descry something of the wealth of new interest which "the landscape derives from a knowledge of the history of its several parts," and herein "remains a boundless field for some future poetic seer"—

The terrestrial revolutions of which each hill and dale is a witness; the contrasts presented between the present aspect and past history of every crag and peak; the slow, silent sculpturing that has carved out all this marvellous array of mountain-forms—appeal vividly to the imagination, and furnish themes that well deserve poetic treatment. That they will be seized upon by some Wordsworth of the future,

* See "C. C. J.", II., 317.

I cannot doubt. The bond between landscape and literature will thus be drawn closer than ever. Men will be taught that beneath and behind all the outward beauty of our lowlands, our uplands, and our highlands there lies an inner history which, when revealed, will give to that beauty a fuller significance and an added charm.

The remaining address, "The Origin of the Scenery of the British Islands," is purely geological, and need not detain us, not being pertinent to the subject of this article. Let us turn, therefore, for a moment, to another recent—and really very notable—contribution to the literature of landscape—Mr. James Outram's "In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies."* Mr. Outram—who ought really to be styled "Rev.", for he is a clergyman—has, by the way, a north-country connection. He is a grandson of the famous Sir James Outram, and his mother was a daughter of the late Mr. Patrick Davidson of Inchmarlo. Having collapsed from overwork, he was driven to the mountain heights for mental rest and physical recuperation. He chose the region of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, spent a part of three summers there, and acquired "an intimate acquaintance with almost all of the loftiest mountains and most lovely scenery along the chain of the Divide, from Mount Assiniboine to Mount Columbia, the highest peak in the Dominion as yet conquered by the mountaineer." He was the first to stand on the topmost pinnacle of Mount Assiniboine, "the Matterhorn of North America;"† and he made the first ascent of eighteen other mountains, ranging in height from 10,100 feet to 12,500 feet. Of these ascents he furnishes most graphic and thrilling accounts, with which are incorporated no less enthralling descriptions of the magnificent spectacles witnessed from such tremendous heights.

Mr. Outram has a keen eye for the scenic and the picturesque, and considerable facility in describing what he sees, combined with a quick perception and appreciation of the majestic and

* *In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies.* By James Outram. London: Macmillan & Co., Limited.

† See "Mount Assiniboine" in "C. C. J.", V., 18; see also "C. C. J.", IV., 308.

sublime. In many instances, however, the story of the ascent monopolises his attention to the sacrifice of "description," except by way of a generalised passage, summing up the features of a view in a few words. Here, for example, is how he depicts the view from the summit of Mount Temple—

The panorama is a truly glorious one, and as the climb is by no means difficult, it affords one of the best opportunities for the ordinary mortal to indulge in the sublime experience of looking down upon a world where myriads of peaks, far-reaching valleys, countless glaciers, streams and lakes go to make up a vast, bewildering whole, that voices with its thousand tongues the praise of Him who made it all, and speaks to us in tones that surely must uplift our souls and bring them into closer touch with the Creator.

But the book is not all about mountain-climbing and its toils, its difficulties and dangers, and its ultimate rewards in magnificent prospects and grand views. Mr. Outram has much to tell—and tells it charmingly—of the scenery of the Rocky Mountain region—of the valleys and lakes, as well as of snow ridges and glaciers. Even at the risk of unduly extending the length of this article, we are tempted to quote his description of Lake Louise, near Laggan on the Canadian Pacific Railway, the lake having been named after the Princess Louise when the Marquis of Lorne was Governor-General of the Dominion—

As a gem of composition and of colouring it is perhaps unrivalled anywhere. To those who have not seen it, words must fail to conjure up the glories of that

Haunted lake, among the pine-clad mountains,
Forever smiling upward to the skies.

A master's hand indeed has painted all its beauties; the turquoise surface, quivering with fleeting ripples, beyond the flower-strewn sweep of grassy shore; the darkening mass of tapering spruce and pine trees, mantling heavily the swiftly rising slopes, that culminate in rugged steeps and beetling precipices, soaring aloft into the sun-kissed air on either side; and there beyond the painted portals of the narrowing valley, rich with the hues of royal purple and of sunset reds, the enraptured gaze is lifted to a climax of superb effects, as the black walls of Mount Lefroy, surmounted by their dazzling canopy of hanging glaciers, and the wide gable-sweep of Mount Victoria, resplendent with its spotless covering of eternal snow, crown the matchless scene. The azure dome of heaven, flecked with bright, fleecy clouds like angels wings, completes the picture.

One of Mr. Outram's most sensational and thrilling narratives is that of the ascent—or, rather, the descent—of Mount Bryce (named after the President of the Cairngorm Club)*, he and his guide “descending practically in the dark a cliff which we had deemed so difficult by daylight as almost to be deterred from undertaking it at all” —

It will be long before I lose the recollection of those seventy feet of cliff. Drawn out for one long hour of concentrated tension were the successive experiences of helpless groping in the dark depths for something to rest a foot upon, of blind search all over the chilled rocky surface for a knob or tiny crack where the numbed fingers might find another hold, of agonising doubt as to their stability when found, of eerie thrill and sickening sensation when the long-sought support crumbled beneath the stress and hurtled downward into the blackness of space, whilst the hollow reverberations of its fall re-echoed through the silence.

Mention should not be omitted of the interesting fact that included in the series of reprints in Messrs. Dent's “Everyman's Library” is a volume embracing the first part of Professor Tyndall's “Glaciers of the Alps” and his “Mountaineering in 1861.”† These two works have passed into the classics of mountaineering literature, and their reproduction in a shilling volume is a testimony to their worth as well as to the judgment and enterprise of the publishers. The volume contains an introduction by Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock), who in the summer of 1861 spent a short holiday in Switzerland with Huxley and Tyndall, and again in 1865 spent a fortnight at Zermatt with Tyndall just after the terrible catastrophe on the Matterhorn. Lord Avebury only expresses a generally-accepted opinion when he says that Tyndall's descriptions of Alpine scenery contain many passages of vivid description and remarkable literary beauty, and that “among those who have described the splendid natural phenomena of the Alps and of the

* See “Mount Bryce” in “C. C. J.”, IV., 238.

† *The Glaciers of the Alps and Mountaineering in 1861.* By John Tyndall. (Everyman's Library). London: J. M. Dent & Co.

mountain heights with both imagination and science. Tyndall stands in the front rank."

Messrs. Black's series of "beautiful books" could not have been complete without a volume on "The Alps."* To many people, doubtless, its chief attraction lies in the splendid illustrations, of which there are no fewer than seventy; but the work, none the less, is a sensible addition to the literature of landscape. Sir Martin Conway is one of the most distinguished of contemporary workers in that limited field. So far as mountains are concerned, it may be said of him that he has gone everywhere and seen everything—and also described it, and described it vividly. He has ranged over the Himalayas and the Andes, and "done" Aconcagua and the Arctic glaciers of Spitzbergen, and he has given us books about them all. He has traversed the Alps "from end to end," and duly recounted his experiences and observations; and he was undoubtedly the most capable man to furnish the literary setting to Mr. McCormick's pictures. It is almost supererogatory to add that he has executed the task with all the vigour and vivacity that characterise his books of travel. Two chapters may be specially commended—"How to See Mountains," and "How Mountains are Made."

After the above article was in type, two books appeared that might have been appropriately included. One is "Months at the Lakes"—the English Lakes, that is—by Canon Rawnsley. A critic has said that "throughout the whole book there breathes the atmosphere of the hills and dales that speaks of a love for the subject, and which it is given to few to express so thoroughly." It is thus that the Canon describes "the purple and gold" of March—

For never are the contrasts of greys and greens so sure to bring the purples of the woodland into prominence. Dim purple of oak, dark purple of alder, rich purple of birch and sweet gale. . . .

* *The Alps*. Described by W. Martin Conway. Painted by A. D. McCormick. London: Adam and Charles Black.

Then, again, far off, the hills are purple blue, so purple blue that the great billows of cloud that are laid upon them seem almost to become, by reflection, purple-blue themselves. The vast stretches of what, last month, were rain-blanchéd miles of mountain grass and rushes upon the higher moors or fell tops, take on in March a golden stain, which in the level sun of morn and evening burns like amber, while in the plantation the larches become squirrel colour—lucent pyramids of feathery gold. . . .

The other book is "Rock Climbing in North Wales," by George and Ashley Abraham, though the work is perhaps more noticeable for its remarkably fine photographs.

Mention should also be made of an article, "In the Heart of the Coolins," in the June number of *Blackwood's Magazine*, although it is more descriptive of climbs than of scenery. Still, there is a very vivid account of a "most uncompromising gale" experienced on the top of the Inaccessible Pinnacle—"the whole rock shook with the violence of the storm . . . the whole world seeming to sway and echo in some fantastic movement." And here, at any rate, is the sound reflection of an accurate observer—"The essence of Skye climbing is the extraordinary feeling of space, of endless waters, and illimitable fields of air, and man himself set on a small rock looking out at immensity."

To the June number of *Chambers's Journal* Rev. Archibald G. Robertson, B.D., contributes an article "Alpine Mountaineering In Scotland;" but it is little more than an account of the facilities for climbing in a country which has no fewer than 283 separate hills over 3000 feet high, eight of them being over 4000 feet—

On the majority of these there is splendid Alpine climbing to be had in winter, but especially in spring. Our Highland hills in spring are just like the Swiss Alps, covered with snow, their north and north-east sides seamed in ice-gullies and snow-couloirs, and to climb them requires the same skill and the same tools, and you encounter much the same difficulties as in the Alps.

STONE CIRCLES NEAR AVIEMORE.

By C. G. CASH, F.R.S.G.S.

Of these circles no adequate account has yet been printed, nor any account in this Journal. During recent holidays, my wife and I have spent delightful days making the notes, measurements, and drawings from which this paper has developed.

This circle stands about $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles E.N.E. of Aviemore station, and about 350 yards east of the main road. Between the east side of the Monadhliath Carn Avie and the River Spey, there lies a stretch of uneven moorland a mile and a half wide. This is now mostly covered with heather and its associate plants, but was a pine wood some years ago, and there are still a few pines scattered over it. In one of the numerous hollows of this moorland, by no means its deepest hollow, lies a tiny lochan, Loch nan Carraigean, getting its name, The Loch of the Standing Stones, from the stone circle close to its southern shore. The Carr Bridge line of the Highland Railway passes within a few yards to the west of the circle, and crosses the lochan on an embankment; the old moorland path between Aviemore and Boat-of-Garten passes the circle at about the same distance on the east. At the side of the high road stands a cottage, where simple refreshments may be obtained. Looked at from this distance, the stone circle does not suggest its real character; it looks like a mere pile of stones cleared from the field, such a pile as may often be seen where the rougher ground is brought under cultivation. There is a slight foot-track leading across the moor towards the circle, and on a nearer approach the larger stones of the southern part of the circle give evidence of structure, but in the northern part the set stones are mostly hidden by loose piled stones and by heather.

The site of the circle seems destitute of any decided features; it is not the highest point of the moorland, nor indeed is it notably an elevation at all, though the ground to the south-east of it is at a lower level. It commands a less good view to the north-east, i.e., *down* the Spey, than some other standpoints quite near it, and its view to the south-west, i.e., *up* the Spey valley, is less extensive than that from a point not half-a-mile in that direction. Indeed, *down* the Spey valley, the main view is limited to less than a quarter of a mile of the featureless moor, over which appear the Cromdale hills. To the east the Kincardine hills bulk largely, Pityoulish Rock standing in the front with its little stone fort in full view. To the south-east is a fine panorama of the north face of the Cairngorms, including Ben Macdhu, Braeriach, and Cairngorm, with a notable view far into the Larig Ghru. Southwards, the northern aspect of the Sgoran Dubh ridge and the bold rock of Craigellachie bound on east and west respectively the narrow view *up* the Spey, which view is terminated some ten miles off by the rounded masses of the hills between the Feshie and the Tromie; but of this intervening ten miles of country, very little can be seen from the circle. Westward lies the somewhat tame ridge of the Monadhliaths. The most impressive part of the outlook, therefore, is undoubtedly that towards the Cairngorms. We are somewhat detailed as to this matter of outlook, because it has been stated that such circles as a rule command a specially wide outlook to the south-west, and this is certainly not the case here.

To the south-east of the stone circle, at a distance of 140 feet, centre to centre, is a low, almost structureless cairn. This is about three feet in height above the surrounding ground, has a diameter of about 22 feet, and looks as though it had been disturbed, for the middle part of it is sunk a little, and the stones there are much less covered with growth of heather and whortleberry than the rest of the mound. On the north side of the lochan is another cairn, showing even less structure, and indeed, not very easy to discover.

The stone circle consisted originally of three concentric circles; the outer one, of eleven or perhaps twelve megaliths,

The outer circle, as already said, consisted originally of either eleven or twelve megaliths. Of these but two remain, and they are prostrate. The south-westerly one (B) is just over nine feet long, and has a trapezoidal section with a major diameter of over three feet. The more westerly one (C) is seven feet long, and in section is an oblique parallelogram with a major diameter of three feet seven inches. These have fallen, the first one outward, and the second one inward. Sites may be seen for four more (D, E, F, G.), slight depressions in the ground, with small loose stones lying near, which were probably packing to fix and steady the megaliths. Nearly due east of the common centre there is no sign of the former presence of a megalith (H). The sites of four megaliths on the northern side cannot be determined because of the growth of long heather. To the north of east a site is doubtful (J), a block of stone rather suggesting a site is 60 feet from the common centre, and this is too far out. Nine, or possibly ten, of the megaliths, then, seem to have been removed, some of them apparently to be used in the building of the threshing mill at Aviemore House. In connection with the removal of another of these stones a curious story is told. It was carried off to be used as the lintel of the doorway of a byre. When the byre was finished, difficulty was found in getting the cattle to enter or stay in the byre; they seemed overcome with fear. The farmer sent for one of the "Men" of Duthil, and asked his advice. After religious "exercises," the "Man" informed the farmer that the cause of the terror of the cattle was the presence of this stone as the lintel, and ordered that it should be removed. The stone was removed, and an ordinary stone substituted, and thenceforward the cattle occupied the byre in peace!

The second ring consisted of about 70 stones, of which 66 are visible in their places, one (K) has slightly fallen from its place, and a few are hidden in the growth of turf. There are three well-marked gaps in the circle; one on each side of the south stone, and one a little to the east. The tallest and most regularly shaped stone of this circle (L) is the fifth one to the west of the south stone. This stone is a good, substantial slab of greyish granite, 3 feet 5 inches high, 4 feet 1

inch wide, 1 foot thick, and very regular in shape. No other stone of its circle quite equals it in appearance, but the stone next west from it is not much inferior to it, being 3 feet 3 inches high, 3 feet 4 inches wide, and 2 feet 4 inches thick, but less regularly shaped. In general, the stones diminish in size and shapeliness each way from these two largest ones. This decrease is not regular, but is sufficiently so to be obviously intentional.

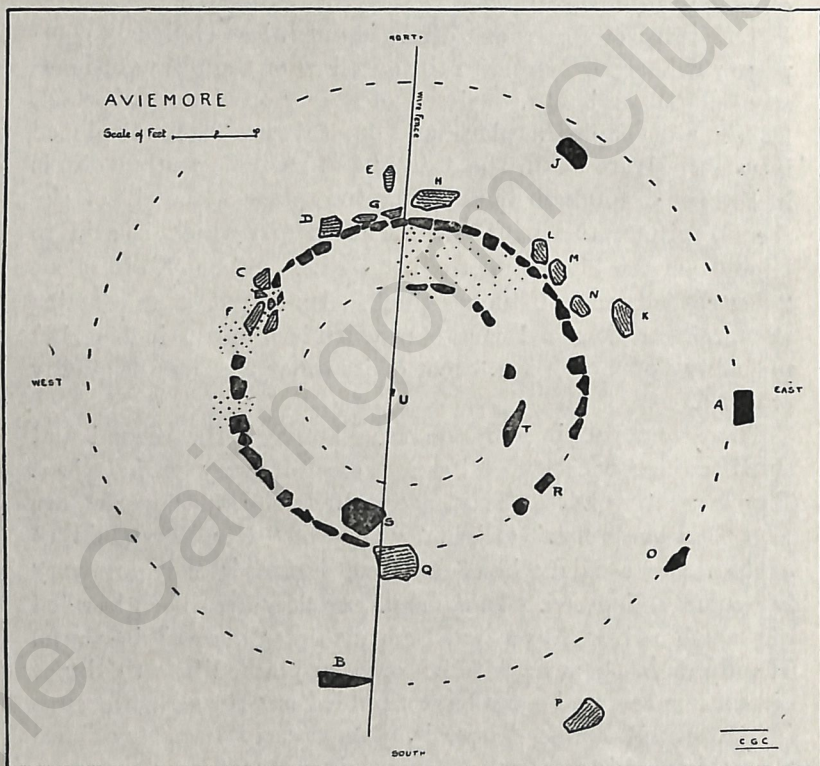
The third or innermost circle is much less obviously complete; this is partly due to the overflow of the piling of loose stones. It probably consisted of nearly 40 stones, of which 22 remain visible in place, and one (M) has been displaced inwards. Here again the tallest and shapeliest stone (N) is in the same common radius with the tallest stone (L) of the second circle, and with the megalith (B) which is said to have been the biggest of the megaliths. Stone (N) is about 2 feet broad, and 10 inches thick. Its height is uncertain; the greatest height I could measure is 3 feet 6 inches, but probably not more than 3 feet of its inner face was originally exposed.

The stone packing in the ring between the second and third circles consists of loose stones of very varied sizes. The largest weigh at least a hundredweight; the least are less than one's fist. Originally they may have been laid so as to make a fairly level surface, but now they are very irregularly disposed. In some places they have been howked out as though children had been making "houses" in them. Hundreds of them have fallen or been pitched into the inner circular space, and some have tumbled out through the gaps in the second circle. There is, of course, no actual evidence that this packing is part of the original structure.

The Aviemore stone circle stands about half-a-mile north of Aviemore railway station, and therefore rather more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the Grenish Stone Circle, THE AVIEMORE on the same stretch of moorland, which is STONE CIRCLE. here considerably narrower. The circle is not more than 60 yards from the high road, and is just behind the recently erected iron United Free

Church. It is easily seen from the high road, and can be approached through a gateway just south of the church.

As in the case of the Grenish circle, the site is not possessed of any notable features. It is certainly on higher ground than its immediate neighbourhood to the east and south-east, but the difference of level is unimportant. The view from this site is in the main the same as that from



the Grenish circle; but the fort on Pityoulish cannot be seen, and to the south-west the Craigellachie Rock on the west just overlaps the Creag Mhigeachaidh on the east, and so prevents any view up the Spey except that of the mere tops of the hills also seen from Grenish. Here, again, then, the widest and most striking outlook is to the south-east, to the Cairngorms, the view of which is perhaps slightly better than that from Grenish.

The circle is in some respects less complete than that at Grenish. Like that one, it consisted originally of three concentric circles; the outer one, of detached megaliths, had a diameter of about 75 feet; the second, of close set stones, a diameter of about 42 feet; and the inner, as to which the evidence is imperfect, a diameter of about 26 feet.

The outer circle probably consisted of twelve stones, as against the probable eleven in the Grenish circle; for in this case there was and still is a megalith (A) in the eastward place. The south stone (B), a massive granite block, stands 4 feet 10 inches high, and has a shape roughly suggestive of a cloaked human figure, for which it might be mistaken in the gloaming. Perhaps we have here a factor of the ghost stories and superstitious fears so generally associated with these so-called "Druid Stones." The rest of the southwest quadrant has no stone, nor any evidence of the former presence of one. The north-west quadrant has no megaliths now standing in their proper places; but there are some largish bouldery stones lying against the outside of the second circle, and it is easy to suppose that three of these (C, D, E) may be the somewhat shapeless megaliths rolled in upon the second circle for the convenience of the farmer. A farm steading was at one time close to the west side of the circle, between it and the road, and this displacement is almost sure to have taken place. There are also some other largish blocks of stone similarly placed, (F,G), which probably did not belong to the circle; their surfaces are not much weathered, and they may have been placed here when they were turned up by the plough, as have been also many smaller pebbles. In the north-east quadrant there are three stones that may have been megaliths (H, J, K), and three others that are probably intruders (L, M, N). The most northerly of the megaliths (H) lies close in to the second circle, and was moved into its present position recently. The second one (J) does not look as though it had been moved, though it does not stand as upright as it might; but it is only 13 feet from the second circle, whereas the south stone is 16 feet 8 inches, and the two easterly ones are 17 feet 3 inches. The third stone of this quadrant (K), a low flattish block, is

only 5 feet from the second circle, and has almost certainly been moved. In the south-east quadrant there are three stones, two (A, O) standing, and one (P) fallen. These are well-shaped, somewhat pyramidal blocks, 3 feet 10 inches, 4 feet 9 inches, and 4 feet 9 inches respectively in height, and the fallen one seems to have been shifted some distance outward, as its nearest point is 23 feet from the second circle.

The second or middle circle is fairly complete. It consists of probably 36 stones. There is a considerable gap to the east of the south stone (Q), for which no stones appear, and there is another gap still further round on that side. It may be noted that the stone to the south of this latter gap (R) is the handsomest of this circle, being 3 feet 3 inches high, fairly regular in shape, and light grey in colour. The tallest stone of this circle is the prostrate south stone (Q). This would be 4 feet high, if standing on its base, which is upon the line of the circle. The stones next west from it are also large stones, standing each 3 feet high, the one 3 feet 7 inches, and the other 3 feet 10 inches wide. No other stone equals either of these four in size, but it can scarcely be said that there is any grading of size round towards the north. Just behind the south stone, or rather behind its neighbour, is a large shapeless stone nearly a yard high. This suggests the "recumbent" stone that is normal in the stone-circles of the north-east of Scotland; but I believe "recumbent" stones do not commonly occur in triple circles. There is a slight and irregular embankment round the outer base of the middle circle.

The third circle, the innermost one, is extremely imperfect. Indeed, but five, or possibly six stones indicate its position, and only one of these (T) is at all elevated. It stands about two feet high, but the others barely show above the ground. It is not easy to suppose the former existence of a complete third circle, still less to suppose that there was a packing of stones here like that at Grenish. Indeed, loose stones are scarcely more numerous between these circles than in some neighbouring areas of the moorland; only in the north part of the ring are loose stones present in any notable quantity.

We searched the stones, and found what we took to be a veritable cupmark, in a loose stone (U), which had been used as a prop for one of the posts of a wire fence that cuts the circle; the cup is $3 \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

It is evident that this circle has suffered considerable disturbance. It is not easy to account for the removal of stones from the inner circle—if they ever were there—for anyone needing stones would scarcely lift those of the inner circle over those of the outer. The megaliths have in several cases obviously been moved, and some of those on the west side have been taken away. It may be noted, however, that while three stones are missing from the south-west quadrant, there are three intruders (L, M, N) in the north-east quadrant; it seems too much to suggest that they have been transferred.

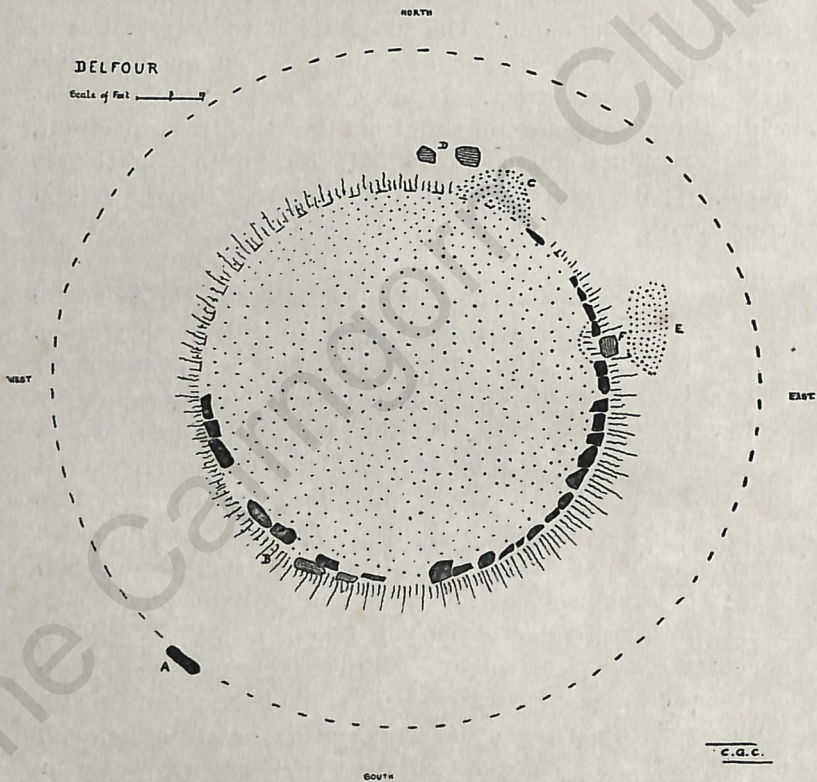
This circle stands about 4 miles south-west from Aviemore station, and 2 miles north-north-east from Kincaig station.

It is about half a mile westwards from THE DELFOUR the high road, and may be approached by STONE CIRCLE. a side road that leaves the high road a furlong south of the milestone marked "12 miles from Carrbridge, 8 miles from Kingussie." This side road passes through a plantation, and then leads across grazing fields to a small white house near some farm steadings; the circle is about 150 yards south of the cottage.

But for the presence of one standing stone (A) of striking appearance, the circle might easily be supposed a mere heap of stones cleared by the farmer from his fields; there is at a distance no appearance of arrangement or structure, and, indeed, only at close quarters are the set stones visible on the outer edge of the seeming heap. And a little examination shows there is much truth in this first impression. The grazing land around has quite obviously been cleared of loose stones, which are gathered into many old dykes and miscellaneous heaps. The "New Statistical Account" definitely speaks of an inner circle 25 feet in diameter, and there can be no doubt, therefore, that the clearings of the surrounding land have largely been piled on the site of the circle, and so

much of its characteristic appearance has been obliterated. On the other hand, for at least thirty-five years there has been neither addition to nor subtraction from the heap, and no interference in any way with what is there is permitted.

Before examining the circle in detail, let us look around, and notice the general character of its site. This is at once recognised as being a singularly fine one, beautiful in itself,



and commanding a wide and interesting view. Between the eastern base of the Creag a' Mhuilinn of An Sguabach and the River Spey, a breadth of about a mile and a half, there lie five parallel strips of country running north and south; first, the narrow glen of the Allt a' Fhearna, the stream supplying most of the water of Loch Alvie; second, a range of irregular mounds, doubtless old moraine heaps, some of them the sitheans or fairy hillocks of local folk-lore, prettily

topped with clumps of birch and rowan, and carrying the ruins and larachs of several small houses and steadings; third, a flattish gravel terrace, on which stands our stone circle; fourth, a wide hollow, marshy in its depths, and otherwise partly pasture and partly cropped; and fifth, the ridge running southward from Tor Alvie, carrying the high road and the railway, and varied with natural birch on its higher parts, and plantations of pine on its lower.

The stone circle, then, stands on the gravel terrace, close up to the fairy hillocks. From it the outlook to north-east and south-east is wide and free. To the north-east, down the Spey valley, the view extends across Loch Alvie to the Kincardine Hills, a beautiful, picturesque, and attractive landscape, Craigellachie closing in upon it to the left. More directly across the Spey, Tor Alvie rears its tree-clad heights, topped by the monument to the last Duke of Gordon. Further round still, Cairngorm lifts its cairn-crowned dome into the blue sky or into the clouds swept up by the rising south-west wind. Then all along the east tower up the varied irregularities of the Sgoran Dubh ridge, the Argyll Stone, Sgoran Dubh Beag, Sgoran Dubh Mor, the mere tip of Sgor Gaoith, and the water-torn gullies of Creag Mhigeachaidh, with the westerly steeps of Braeriach showing over the lower depressions. Up the Spey valley the gravel terrace itself hides the nearer parts, but over it rise the hills between Feshie and Tromie, dominated yet a little further west by the Meall na Cuaich. All along the west there is of course the ridge of the Monadhliath close in, but here well varied with tree and bare crag.

It is not possible to give of this circle so detailed an account as of the other two, because on the one hand, as has already been said, it is most likely that much of the original structure has been buried under a great pile of stones collected from the surrounding land and formed into a sort of cairn, and, on the other hand, of the outer circle of megaliths, if it ever existed, only one (A) remains. This stands at a distance of $22\frac{1}{2}$ feet to the south-west of the "middle circle." It is a singularly fine slab of quartzite, 9 feet 6 inches high, 1 foot 6 inches thick, 5 feet 6 inches wide at the base, and

tapering irregularly upwards, so as to present a rough resemblance to a cloaked human figure. We had made just exactly this description of it while sitting at its base writing our notes, and afterwards we strolled southwards along the "sitheans" gathering wild berries as we went. Nearly a quarter of a mile to the south we halted to look back at the circle and the standing stone, and we experienced an illusion that was almost startling. There stood, not a rough standing stone, but a fine statue group in dark grey, of a majestic, elderly man, with staff hand advanced, and by his near side a youth, who seemed to hold somewhat back; the old man's head was raised with firm and dignified gesture, as though his gaze were lifted to the high crag he faced; the suggestion was irresistible of Abraham and Isaac, as the father "lifted up his eyes and beheld the place afar off." We have never seen any other natural stone presenting so amazing an instance of mimic statuary.

The main or "middle" circle is 60 feet in diameter. Of its set stones only 29 or 30 are visible, constituting about five-eighths of the circumference. The entire north-west quadrant and about half of the north-east quadrant show no set stones, these being hidden by the loose stones, which in many places have been piled right over the retaining wall of set stones. Outside the stones there is a banking of earth, stones, and turf, at its widest about 9 feet wide. The highest part of the cairn reaches about 6 feet above the lowest outer base of this bank. As is usually the case, the largest stones of the circle are towards its south-west part, and there is a diminution each way around the circle. The tallest stone, the south-west one (B), stands scarcely $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the bank, and the diminution is carried so far that at about the north-east point the set stones actually disappear into the upper surface of the bank, which itself is here much less built up.

Further, the whole surface of the stone pile drops towards this point, and it is easy to suppose that this was a place of entry for barrows loaded with the collected stones. It would be natural that such entry should be at the previously lowest point of the circle, and stones so carried and thrown down would make a mound gradually rising from the point

of entry towards the remoter parts of the circle. Certainly the present appearance of the cairn almost irresistibly suggests such a procedure. Of course this would imply the complete burial of the third or inner circle mentioned in the *New Statistical Account*.

Outside the circle, on the west side of this "entrance," there is a considerable pile of loose stones (C), looking as old, weathered, and lichen-covered as those of the main pile, and against this there are two large blocks (D), whose relation to the general structure is not apparent. Near the east side of the "entrance" there is a pile of fresh-looking stones, (E). Just here one stone of the circle (F) has been forced outwards from its place, and lies on its side, and the loose stones behind it have been much disturbed as though some one had been howking.

LOCHNAGAR AND THE CAIRNGORMS IN SNOW.

BY JOHN R. LEVACK, M.B., C.M.

THE fascination of mountain-climbing is exercising its spell on a rapidly increasing number of people. Once let a man be persuaded to spend his holiday amongst the hills, and, in nine cases out of ten, he will return year after year to climb and scramble, and get fresh inspiration and health, amid the glories of rock and snow.

A party of three visited Lochnagar early in April last year, whilst staying at Ballater for a week-end. On the first day we encountered a blizzard of wind and snow, so no attempt was made to reach the top. We scrambled down along the foot of the cliffs, past the head of the loch, which was frozen over, and up over some ice-covered rocks and snow-covered scree to near the foot of the Black Spout. We had the good fortune to see and photograph a snow avalanche that came thundering down an adjoining gully. Next day we returned to the hill, and, as the mist had cleared, we had a surpassingly beautiful view of the whole corrie, decked in its winter garb. Some stiff climbing up a steep ridge of soft powdery snow, in the teeth of a driving gale filled with stinging particles of ice, brought us to the plateau leading to the top, from which an unimpeded view of all the surrounding hills was obtained. Wonderful effects of light and shade, sunshine and gloom, chased each other across the landscape. The steady, silent gale drove us before it, along to the cairn on the Cuidhe Crom, and from there an easy scramble down over soft snow and loose stones brought us to the head of Loch Muick.

Early in May, 1905, we climbed Braeriach, ascending from Loch Eunach. The snow reached down almost to the loch, so up we pounded, kicking steps almost all the way, a most tiresome and exhausting task. Dense mist had settled like a pall on everything over 3000 ft., and, as we wished to cross a corner of the plateau forming the top of the hill and reach

Coire an Lochan with its loch, we had now to steer by map and compass. As the plateau sloped gently towards the west, we had an irresistible tendency to edge away to the left. The mist lifted for a moment and revealed us far out of our course. We could see our goal about a mile away, so we simply raced for it, as fast as two feet of lightly frozen snow would allow us. Loch Coire an Lochan was frozen over, and the crags around it were almost buried in snow, great cornices overhanging them all round. We amused ourselves dislodging some of these snow masses and starting miniature avalanches, which thundered down to the loch. Then we edged round the cliff till we came to a good snow slope and down we went—a magnificent glissade—to the loch. Two of the party toiled up the slope again and had a second glissade.

The return journey towards Loch Eunach was made along the plateau till we came to a gully which was filled with snow right down to the foot of the hill. On to this we went for a final glissade, quickly dropping about a thousand feet.

On the previous day we made an utterly unsuccessful excursion from the Lurcher's Rock, which we ascended from the Larig. We wished to reach Loch Avon, the dense mist hiding everything, but, so sure were we of our direction, we did not think it necessary to use the compass. Instead of walking in a straight line, we actually completed a circle, and came on our footsteps of an hour before. Later on, we tried to reach the cairn of Cairngorm, and failed ignominiously. After that, we gave up in disgust, as it was now late in the afternoon. One member of the party now carried a compass in his hand, and steered the rest of us in front of him in the direction desired. Some rapid and joyous glissades landed us safely in Coire an t-Snechda, and Glenmore Lodge was soon reached.

On the same date the previous year we made an ascent of Cairngorm from Glenmore in shocking weather—a southerly gale with sleet and fog. The cairn was reached, but the roaring gale and swirling ice particles drove us down fast enough. Evidently a big storm was brewing. Occasionally the mist would lift a little, revealing enormous cloud masses,

black as night, crowding rapidly up over the corries from the southward, so we literally fled down the hill as fast as we could glissade. At intervals, the sun would attempt to peep out, only to accentuate the gloom of the storm-clouds that loomed ever nearer. The rain caught us as we were near the foot of the hill, and by the time we reached Aviemore we were drenched to the skin, cold and hungry, but altogether pleased with our day's outing. The luxury of a hot bath, a good dinner, and the pipe of peace, can be thoroughly appreciated only by those who have spent a day on the hills, and watched, from close quarters, the sublime spectacle of the birth of a mountain storm.

BY JAMES GRAY KYD.

WHEN 1905 was drawing near a close, a friend and I turned our faces westward to the Cairngorms. We had no special peaks we wished to climb, and no programme marked out: we merely wished to "bring-in" 1906 among the hills. Inverey was our head-quarters.

On 30th December, starting in the starlight of a crisp cold morning, we cycled, ere daybreak, to Derry Lodge. The roads were frozen hard, the very streams bridged over, and our ride, though cold, was enjoyable. The keeper at Derry was astonished to see two hill-men at this unusual season, and tried to dissuade us from attempting any climbing, as the hills were ice-bound; assuring him of our caution, we started up Glen Derry. Daylight was slowly coming on as we tramped through the firs in the lower part of the glen, and as we reached the open ground the rising sun lit up the snowy peaks of Derry Cairngorm and Beinn Mheadhoin with a faint hue of the most delicate pink. Corrie Etchachan was reached in full daylight. In summer the track along Glen Derry is soft and marshy, but in that bright winter morning it was slippery and hard. In Corrie Etchachan walking was dangerous, as the smooth ice which covered the track was coated with powdery snow, and several times when walking along what appeared to be the most innocent slope, we

instantly found ourselves "broad-side-on." We soon reached the top of the corrie, but on that day there was no loch to be seen, as it lay far beneath the surface of ice and snow. We crossed Loch Etchachan. The effect was as if we were walking on the sea, as we found that the waves had been frozen in the act of breaking. Crossing the col towards Loch Avon, we got an excellent view: Alpine Cairngorm stood stern and silent in the distance; its precipitous sides were decorated with the most wonderful icicles, the whole prospect was a fairyland of beauty. Dark Loch Avon, partially frozen over, formed an ideal contrast to the delicately fantastic pictures on the precipices opposite.

The last day of 1905 found us early at Derry, and soon on our way up the sides of the frozen Luibeg. We crossed the stream where it turns towards Ben Muich Dhui, and climbed up the skirts of Carn a' Mhaim. Most of us know the marshes that make the ascent of this interesting peak so damp in summer. Each of these marshy slopes was frozen hard into a miniature glacier. Climbing demanded caution, and at parts step-cutting was a necessity. The summit was reached in a little over an hour after leaving the glen, when we got a view which surpassed anything we had ever seen. The Devil's Point, Cairn Toul, and Braeriach stood wrapped in their silent winter sleep. Clouds chased each other along the sow's back of Ben Muich Dhui. Glen Geusachan seemed to cry out in its loneliness, and the bothy of Corroul down in the glen was a black patch in the desert of snow.

On the summit where we stood, the boulders were covered with most beautiful crystals of frozen mist. But with a thermometer near zero we must off. We disturbed the golden eagle on our descent, and soon reached Derry to cheer the keeper and his wife in their lonely hogmanay.

The clouds hung low on the hills as we walked up Glen Luibeg, in the early hours of the 6th of May. That was the first mild day of the season, and the streams were pouring down the hill-sides in torrents. Our first difficulty was met in the crossing of the Luibeg, two miles up the glen. The familiar bridge was lying half a mile from its proper place, beached

high on the heather. The path over the shoulder to Glen Dee was miserably wet, in fact a good sized burn flowed down each side. Even in summer the crossing of the Dee at the entrance to Glen Geusachan is no easy matter, but with the river thrice its usual size, the task was exceedingly dangerous. However, with the moral support of a rope round our waists, we had courage to leap from boulder to boulder over the raging river. The sun came out for half an hour and gave us time to look around. Glen Geusachan was actually looking gay in its spring garments. The forbidding sides of Beinn Bhrotain were softened with snow. Very little snow was melted above the 3000 feet line. Our intention was to climb the Devil's Point by the first gully in Geusachan; from the base the route looked quite practicable, so we scrambled up to the foot of the slabs which surround this wonderful little mountain. From the climber's point of view the strata here are quite a mistake—the upper belts of rock over-lapping the lower, and consequently making good holds few and far between. We crossed several very nasty slabs on our way to the gully, but as good hitches for the rope were scarce, the work was unpleasant. When we reached our gully we found that it formed the bed of a large torrent, and further progress by this route was impossible; so we got down to the glen, and walked up to the next gully—a much easier climb—and scrambled up to the 3000 feet line. As we climbed up we got a magnificent view of an avalanche, but unfortunately here the mist came on very thick, and rain came down in torrents. After a short wait for better conditions—which did not come—we crossed to the avalanche-swept gully, down which we glissaded to the glen. At the foot of the gully there was a miniature glacier, the huge blocks of ice from the rocks above had been hurled for months and formed together into real glacier shape. We walked down the glen to the Dee, where we had to perform the same gymnastic feats as in the morning. Soon the shoulder was crossed, the Luibeg forded, and our resting-place reached with mingled thoughts of sorrow and joy—sorrow at having been beaten, and joy in anticipation of future victory under more favourable conditions.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

ON 12th June, 1905, I spent a most delightful day among the many tops of Ben Cruachan. Beginning at Ben Vourie, at the eastern end of the chain, I gradually worked my way over the intervening summits to Ben Cruachan itself, then on to Stob Dearg, the most westerly peak, returning to lower levels, by way of Meall Cuanail, thus accomplishing the complete traverse of the range.

THE CRUACHAN GROUP.

Leaving the road just beyond Lochawe station at 11.20 a.m., I immediately "took to the hill," and struck up the slopes of Ben Vourie. The trees were soon left behind, and I emerged on the bare hillside. Then the heat of the sun began to be felt, but I indulged in very frequent halts—a state of things which the ever-increasing panorama behind seemed to demand—and consoled myself in the belief that it would be nice and cool on the ridges.

The slopes were easy, grass covered, and stony, and in a little over an hour's time I arrived at the summit (2936). The other tops—Stob Dearg excepted—were now spread out before me, and I could follow my route, right round the ridge to the main peak, which rose as a pyramid on the other side of the Coire Cruachan.

The northern face of Ben Vourie, steep and rocky, and in some parts precipitous, forms a striking contrast to the long and gradual slopes met with on the other sides. From the west cairn I was able easily to work my way down through the broken rocks to the col. It was then a fine easy walk up a long grassy slope, and over an intervening (nameless) top, to the next peak—Stob Garbh (3091). Continuing in the same direction, twelve minutes more brought me to the cairn of Stob Diamh (3272).

The view to the north now extended as far as Ben Nevis, but the most imposing hill of all was Ben Starav, only eight miles away. Half an hour was spent here for lunch, and then I bundled up and set off for the next point—Drochaid Ghlas. The main ridge here turns sharply to the west—a subsidiary one running east for a quarter of a mile to Sgor an Isean—and after a slight descent, rises over rough and stony ground to Drochaid Ghlas (3312). I only stopped here to take a photograph, and then set off for the main peak. In passing thus from point to point, I simply followed the edge of the precipices, and enjoyed many a fine peep into the depths. The part between Drochaid Ghlas and Ben Cruachan I found the most arduous, as the "going" was very rough, and the slope, particularly on the upper part of Cruachan, fairly steep. It was 3.30 when I arrived at the cairn (3689) and while resting here I was joined by a party of two ladies and a gentleman, who had come up from the Falls of Cruachan.

My next point of attack was Stob Dearg (3611)—the Taynuilt peak—and while crossing from the one to the other, I fell in with a party of keepers and their terriers, out after foxes. The passage between these two peaks is very easy, and I accomplished it in 15 minutes. Stob Dearg commands a fine view of the whole of Loch Etive, as well as a broad expanse of the ocean and isles in the west; but as it was getting rather dull and threatening I did not stay very long. There remained now only one other summit—Meall Cuanail—to be visited, and that I did on the way homeward.

From Stob Dearg, Meall Cuanail lies on the far side of Coire a' Bhachail, so I retraced my steps to the dip, and then traversed the side of Ben Cruachan to the col between that mountain and Meall Cuanail. This traverse is not particularly pleasant, as Cruachan, on this side, presents long, smooth, and at some parts wet slabs of rock, though by crossing at a lower level these may be avoided. There was now a short ascent to the summit of the Meall (3004), and here at 5.15, I sat down behind the cairn and finished the remainder of my lunch. Then when the bag was emptied, I descended to the Falls of Cruachan, and sauntered leisurely along to Lochawe station which was reached at 7.25.—WILLIAM BARCLAY, L. D. S.

Though the Southern Alps are visited each season by an ever-increasing stream of tourists (says the New Zealand correspondent of the "Times"),

STATE MOUN-
TAINERING IN
NEW ZEALAND.

it is only occasionally that a properly-equipped party is organised with a view to attempting the ascent of virgin peaks or the ascent of the higher mountains that have already been conquered. In conformity with the general trend of our Socialistic Government, the State

has now taken the Alpine climber as well as the ordinary tourist in hand. It feeds and houses him in a comfortable inn under the shadow of Mount Cook; it provides food and accommodation in huts far up the Great Tasman Glacier at 7s 6d a day; and there are State guides, State porters, and even State horses that can be hired at reasonable rates, according to the length or importance of the expeditions undertaken. The State even goes the length of hiring ice-axes and rope, boots and puttees, at so much a day to would-be climbers who come unprovided.

We were at Aviemore, April 12th—27th. The preceding fortnight had been fine, but during our stay the weather was utterly unreliable, and mostly cold and windy. Snow fell frequently, notably on the

CAIRNGORM
APRIL SNOW
NOTES.

17th, when it lay four inches deep at Inverdrue, and on the 21st, when many blinding showers blew across. Frost occurred on several nights, notably 17th, 18th, 22nd, and 23rd.

When we arrived and when we left, the crooked wreath of Cairngorm was well defined, but several times the whole of the hills down to Ord Ban were whitened, and during most of our stay the Netti Hills carried much snow. Apparently deep continuous snow lay only on the actual plateau, but as to this I could get no accurate account, as the only four visits I knew

of to these heights were made during snow showers that quite prevented any view.

Altogether I think the weather conditions were the unkindest I have experienced.—C. G. C.

The Club made another ascent of Mount Keen on 7th May last. Corrach was fringed with snow and patches were also to be found on other parts of the hill. Haze prevented a good distant prospect, but

MOUNT KEEN nevertheless the view was good. The Cairngorms
REVISITED. had large fields of snow and Lochnagar and Morven were also well coated. A lizard was seen on the

Mounth and an adder (22 in. long) captured near Coire-bhruach. Four new members were initiated at the cairn—Mr. James Smith presiding—a record being made on the occasion as two of them were father and son. The drive through Glen Tanner was very enjoyable. The party dined at the Huntly Arms Hotel, Aboyne, Mr. Alexander Copland in the chair.

The following gentlemen have been admitted members of the Club:—

NEW MEMBERS. Mr. Ian Malcolm McLaren,
Mr. Alexander Spark, and
Mr. Alexander Nicol.

The "Times" of 17th April had an interesting account, from its New Zealand correspondent, of the first complete ascent and crossing of Mount

THE FIRST Alps of New Zealand. This feat was accomplished by the
CROSSING OF correspondent (name not given), in company with two other
MOUNT COOK. New Zealanders (Messrs. T. C. Fyfe and P. Graham), and an English climber (Mr. S. Turner). Having spent a night

and a day at the bivouac 6,000 ft. above sea level, they started on the ascent of the mountain at 11.15 on the night of Tuesday, January 9th, gaining the summit in 13 hours and 45 minutes. The views from between 10,000 ft. and 12,600 ft. were magnificently grand, including Tasman, the second highest mountain in New Zealand, and the great Tasman Glacier. "Across the valley the rugged mass of Malte Brun towered grandly above all the other rocky peaks of the range, and still further away, towards the north-east, was the finest view of all, range succeeding range and mountain succeeding mountain for more than a hundred miles, or as far as the eye could reach. In the distance, to the north of the main range, we looked down on a sea of clouds upon which the sun was shining, the higher peaks piercing the billows of mist and looking like pointed islands."

After photographing and studying the "marvellous panorama" observable from the summit—they could see the South Island from shore to shore—the party commenced the descent on the other side from which they had ascended. They encountered unexpected difficulties, and made two sensational descents, each man being lowered down singly, the last man coming down with the rope doubled and hitched over a slightly projecting knob of rock. The time occupied, "from start to finish," was thirty-six hours, the last twelve devoted

to a ten or eleven miles' walk down the Hooker glacier and the valley at its termination.

A correspondent, writing to the "Aberdeen Daily Journal" some time ago, under the rather absurd heading, "The Terrors of Cairngorming," says—

Members of the Cairngorm Club may be interested in
FORMER DANGERS an incident which was reported in the "Aberdeen
OF THE Journal" of February 18, 1765, which had occurred on
CAIRN O' MONTH. the previous Friday se'n night. John Gordon a labour-
 ing man, on his way from the parish of Rothiemay, where
 he resided, to Edinburgh, was waylaid after sunset in the Cairn o' Month by
 two men whom he saw come from the water of Dee, and get into the road
 before him. As the snow was deep and new fallen, Gordon was glad he had
 got company to cross the cairn; but when they came to the place called the
 Thief's Bush, about the middle of the hill, one of them took hold of him and
 drew a side pistol from below his big coat, and threatened to blow out
 Gordon's brains if he did not deliver his money. The other fellow discovered
 a pistol under his great coat, searched Gordon's pockets (who had no arms
 and was unable to resist) and robbed him of nine shillings, which was all the
 money he had. They then desired him to proceed on his journey; and be
 thankful he met with no more mischief. The two fellows seemed to be
 young and sturdy men, dressed with coarse big coats, with large blue bonnets
 in the habit of countrymen, and spoke a little in the Erse accent.

Rev. Thomas Sinton, minister of Dores, Inverness-shire, has just collected
 the verses associated with the Valley of Spey, and published them in a
 handsome volume, entitled "The Poetry of Badenoch."

THE POETRY "Speyside," he says in his introduction, "would seem,
OF time out of mind, to have been a favourite haunt of
BADENOCH. the Muses. Very many of the place-names have been
 interwoven into song by gentle souls who pondered
 fondly over the well-loved localities where their lives had been spent. No event of
 any consequence was allowed to pass without being 'set to music' appropriate
 to its nature, in the ready verses of some neighbouring bard. There was
 always plenty of hero-worship, which found voice in song. Vocal tributes
 were constantly offered to members of leading families. No occurrence
 affecting any of them was left without such distinction." Most of the poems
 (all in Gaelic, of course) relate to Upper Speyside and Badenoch, but a few
 refer to the Rothiemurchus region. The translations are presumably literal,
 and therefore make poor poetry; but we may reproduce two. The first,
 supplied by Dr. Forsyth, Abernethy, is said to consist of "very pretty lines"
 —in the vernacular, doubtless—

Arise ere the sun doth rise,
 Travel fast ere comes the heat,
 Reach the top of Cairngorm,
 Where you'll see both near and far.
 I see the cauldron of Glenmore—
 I see the Mossy Bow and Little Glen—
 I see the Bountiful Glen of deer,
 Where the cattle will be at milking-time.

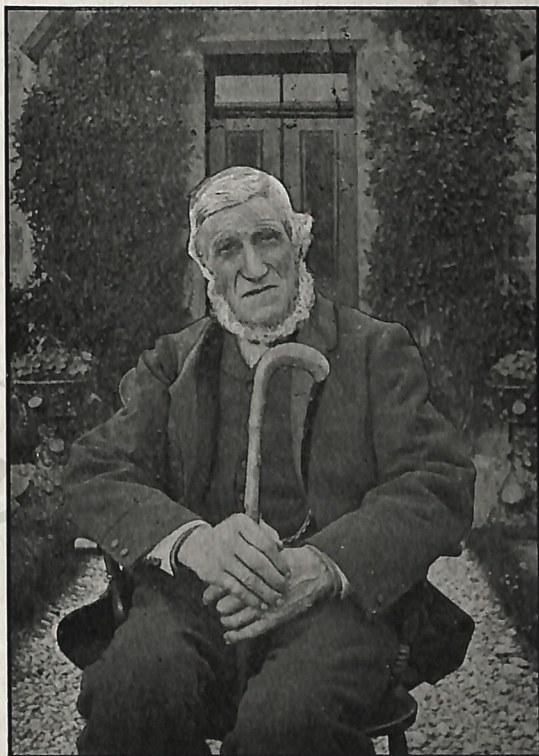
And many of us will appreciate the underlying sentiment of these lines at least, if we do not quite perceive their poetical flavour—

One day to me on English pavement,
Watching the action of the grey-ribbed horses—
Better to be on the top of Elrick,
Above the wood of Rothiemurchus.

On Sunday, May 27th, at Inverdrurie, Aviemore, died William Gordon, joiner, aged 79. He was one of the last of the old folk of Rothiemurchus,

DEATH OF
WILLIAM GORDON,
ROTHIEMURCHUS.

and was well known to frequenters, clubmen and others, of that district as a repository of its history, story, and tradition. Vividly would he tell tales of his experiences of second sight, in which he was a firm believer, though he denied the existence of fairies. He must be numbered among the early mountaineers, for several times had he



MR. WILLIAM GORDON.

crossed the Cairngorms, by pass and by plateau, and he spoke with graphic emphasis of his sweating terror when, lost in mist, he found himself all but

stepping off the precipice into the depths of what must have been the Coire an Lochan of Cairngorm.

The appearance of "The Washer" on the first page of this number recalls a statement made to a clubman by his now deceased friend. It is thus entered in his notebook: "I was sent with a mate to do some work at Gaick Lodge in preparation for the shooting season. Two women were at work in the inside cleaning the house. At mid-day, when we men knocked off for dinner, we were sitting having a smoke, when we saw a woman busy washing clothes at the bend of the burn above the Lodge. As I thought both the women were busy inside the house, I was somewhat surprised, and took occasion to pass the window and saw them both there. I went back again and saw the stranger woman still at the clothes washing. I then spoke to the older woman at the house about what I had seen; but she took it as a matter well-known to her, and simply remarked, 'Aye! is she washing there the day?'"

The Club held its seventh Saturday afternoon excursion on 2nd June last to Strathfinella Hill, near Auchinblae, train being taken to Fordoun. The name Strathfinella Hill really belongs to a ridge in the parish of Fordoun, about three miles long, the highest point of which has an altitude of 1358 feet.

It is a prominent feature in the landscape, particularly between Drumlithie and Laurencekirk. The smooth, rounded appearance clearly indicates that ice has had a great deal to do with its formation. On the north side, is the picturesque Glen of Drumtochty, now a popular holiday resort, through which flows Luther Water, which joins the North Esk near Marykirk. The Howe of the Mearns is on the south side, that slope being covered with characteristic heath while the opposite side is richly tree-clad.

The Lomonds of Fife can be seen from the top. Dr. Cramond in his excellent little work on the hill states that the Lammermuirs can also be observed, but the Club party was not so fortunate. However the Sidlaws were very distinctly seen and many other well-known hills, among which may be mentioned Mount Keen, Mount Battock and Clochnaben. A very fair view of the coast, despite a heat haze, was also obtained, the church spire of Montrose being a prominent object.

The descent was made to the glen in the neighbourhood of Drumtochty Castle, and the walk continued to Auchinblae, where the party dined, Mr. William Porter, J.P., in the chair, at the Kintore Arms Hotel.—SYDNEY C. COUPER.

Wednesday, 8 p.m. A grand day! Should have left Dingwall at 11.10, but the train was 40 minutes late. Just as it started a young couple were put into my compartment with heaps of luggage.

A LETTER FROM SHIEL INN. I gathered that they had been honeymooning; looking over their hotel bill appeared to give them intense pleasure. Seemed at times inclined to eat each other. They came off at Auchnasheen for Loch Maree.

Then came Strome Ferry, and our Coolins, and our loch. All was beautiful, though cold and brown. Reached Strome at 2.3, and off at once, the old familiar road. How few people I met in two hours' walk!—a woman, two small boys (who touched their caps), and a dog. The road was in perfect condition and so was I.

Those Coolins! and then the Five Sisters of Kintail! As the sun set they turned purple—at least I thought so for a time—I looked again and they seemed violet. Then the moon rose and a planet.

Reached Airdferry Inn at 4.20, but my knapsack lunch sufficed, so walked on to the Ferry (4.25). Waited there ten minutes for the boatman. The light was now failing, and the sea rising, and the tide was flowing. I was the only passenger: the voyage took ten minutes, and a sixpence. To tell the truth, I was glad when I set foot at Totaig, as the loch was decidedly choppy, and wanted into the boat, for there was no escaping "the trough of the sea."

Thus at 4.45 I started on the last stage, and got here at 6.40 in good form and hungry. On the way met a man with a loaded wheel-barrow, then a lost sheep—that was all. The wind blew cold, and the loch made a continuous noise—not a moan, something like *rush-sh-sh*, and ending with the water lap, lapping against the shore, just touching the road. And all the stars came out for me alone. Why, I was a King with a Wagner Opera of my very own.

Now to creature comforts. I am alone here, and the front door is just now a negligible quantity, so I had no small difficulty in making myself heard. Dinner? Oh, no, but a high tea would soon be forthcoming. A fire was laid in the little dining-room you know, but it took time and coaxing, though at last it could have roasted a pig. The banquet came up to, nay exceeded, specifications—four small but very good chops, a boiled egg, half a fowl, and a piece of corned beef. I confined myself to three chops and the egg, and three cups of tea. The jam and the bread I also left alone, the oatcakes and toast sufficing. A terrier found me out, also my chop bones.

Breakfast at Shiel Inn was of course another success, but details may be omitted. The half-fowl again making its appearance I had it nicely packed and dropped into my knapsack for lunch on the hills.

FOLLOWED BY ONE FROM LOCH HURN-HEAD. The sky was very red as I started up Glen Shiel, which was unusually crowded. I met a cyclist and when I had turned to my right and up the hill a bit, I saw two "machines" tearing past the battlefield.

Seems the hills here are now under deer, and so I had the benefit of a path not in the map. Away to the right was The Saddle—such a name for a peaked hill—and other mountains which gave me much joy. Then, looking back, there were the Sisters. I am afraid I made another record on this occasion—I simply loafed about, content merely to cross the water-parting without climbing any particular peak, just devouring the grand view, of which more at another time. It was after 3 p.m. before I reached Kinlochourn, though I did run down some of the steep zig-zag paths to the lodge, and here I remain for a time.

AN OPEN-AIR HYMN.

Not for rich gifts of gold or gems,
Not for the gauds but few afford,
But for Thy sunshine, pure and free,
I thank Thee, Lord.

For those deep draughts of air I quaff
When, shoulders squared and blood aglow,
I swing along the country road
Where daisies blow :

And in the sultry noonday heat,
For wayside rest, lulled by the breeze,
As, shaded by the sheltering oak,
I take my ease.

For every winding forest-path,
For every stretch of sedge and sea,
For every pebbly brook that rills
Its song of glee.

For that glad radiance when the sun
His crimson cloud of glory spills,
For every violet mist that veils
The distant hills.

For every bloom the summer brings,
For every sheaf the harvest binds,
For spring's first bud, for winter's snow,
And bracing winds,

For these Thy gifts—for earth and sky
Mingling their moods in sweet accord,
For health, and for the seeing eye,
I thank Thee, Lord.

BEATRICE HANSCOM.

(From *Scribner's Magazine*, July, 1904.)

Continued from page 2 of Cover.

held in December for the following business: (1) to receive the Treasurer's accounts for the year to 30th November; (2) to elect the Office-Bearers and Committee for the next year; (3) to fix the excursions for the ensuing year; and (4) to transact any other necessary business. Special general meetings shall be held whenever deemed necessary by the Chairman, or on a requisition by at least ten members of the Club. General meetings shall have power to deprive of membership of the Club any member who may, in the opinion of the Committee, have misconducted himself.

VI.—A Minute-Book shall be kept by the Secretary, in which all proceedings shall be duly entered.

VII.—The election of members of the Club shall be made by the Committee in such manner as they may determine.

VIII.—The entry money of members shall be 10s. 6d., and the annual subscription 5s. Members shall receive copies of all current issues of the Club publications.

IX.—The annual subscription shall be payable in January. Members not in arrear may retire from the Club at any time on sending notice in writing to the Secretary or Treasurer.

X.—The Committee shall have power to elect suitable persons to be Honorary Members of the Club. Honorary Members shall have no voice in the management of the Club, but otherwise shall have all the rights and benefits of ordinary members.

XI.—No change shall be made on the Rules except at a general meeting of the members, called on seven days' notice. Intimation of any proposed change must be made in the notice calling such meeting, and any alteration proposed shall only be adopted if voted for by at least three-fourths of the members present at the meeting.

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB

(1) The Club shall be a body of persons who are interested in the Cairngorms and who are desirous of promoting the interests of the mountains and the people who live in the neighbourhood thereof.

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The Cairngorm Club