

Vol. V.

January, 1908.

No. 30.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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ISSUED TWICE A YEAR.

PUBLISHED BY

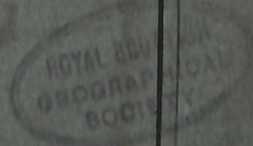
THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.

AGENTS:

ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Nos. 1, 20 and 25 are out of print.



THE
Cairngorm Club Journal

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EDITED BY
ALEX. INKSON McCONNOCHIE

VOL. V.

ABERDEEN
THE CAIRNGORM CLUB
1908

ABERDEEN

W. JOLLY & SONS

ALBANY PRESS

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xiii.

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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 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 may compound future annual subscriptions by payments as follows:—Members entered before 20th February, 1890, £1 1s.; Members of fifteen years and over, £1. 11s. 6d.; ten years and over, £2 2s.; five years and over, £3. 3s.; and new members £5 5s., including entry money. 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 TREASURER.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. V.

JANUARY, 1908.

No. 30.

SOME JOTTINGS FROM BEN NEVIS.

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

TWENTY-FIVE holidays had we spent near the Cairngorms, sixteen of them in the summer, and nine of them in the spring, and during those holidays the central and western Cairngorms had become somewhat familiar. Nor had familiarity bred contempt, but rather affection grew as knowledge increased. Then the fates intervened, and this last summer our steps were turned in another direction; Fort William was our holiday place, with Ben Nevis as a substitute for the Cairngorms.

The West Highland Railway, by which we travelled, undoubtedly gives the finest run of scenery that can be had in a railway journey in these islands. The whole ride from the western outskirts of Glasgow to the terminus at Mallaig is full of interest, and has been dealt with fully, in places perhaps exuberantly, in the official hand-book "Mountain, Moor, and Loch," though this catalogue title curiously omits reference to the superb river scenery of the Spean. I content myself here with saying that one sees in a half-day's journey much more than one can adequately cope with or remember in detail. Even with the help of good maps, so closely do things of interest follow each other, and so rapid is the change of view, that the mind gets almost bewildered in the effort to keep pace.

Baddeley describes Fort William as "not in itself a pre-

possessing town," and I agree with him. The railway has occupied what might possibly have been made a respectable fore-shore, and has cut off the site of the old fort, where a really pretty public promenade ground could have been made. The railway station is cramped, and the pier bald and mean. The High Street runs parallel with the railway; it is not high, it is narrow, it has walkable pavement on one side only, and there is no outlook from it. Inland from it the ground rises rapidly, and there are parallel roads along the hill-side; but these roads are inconvenient of access, and as they are in common use as cattle tracks they are usually in an undesirable condition; parts of them command a good outlook over the sea-lochs and to the opposite hills, and in places seats are provided. The pleasant part of Fort William is its southern suburb, Achintore. Here the main road runs along the shore, the detached houses are on one side only and have a free outlook over the loch. Fort William is abundantly supplied with hotels, and their porters and touts figure notably among the population. It seems as though the little old-fashioned town had been taken by surprise; the organisations that cater for tourists have discovered its convenience of position as a place "to get out of," and it has not yet been able to adjust itself to its new conditions.

Of course the immediate local object of interest is Ben Nevis, but this is quite out of sight from the town. The Cow Hill, less than a thousand feet high, rises behind the town, separating the shore-lands from Glen Nevis, and quite blocking the view towards the Ben. The mountain owes its fame among ordinary tourists to the fact that it is the highest summit in the British Isles, and among climbing men to its possession of probably our most notable crags. The mountain mass lies east and south-east from Fort William. It stretches about four and a half miles from N.W. to S.E., and has a breadth of scarcely two miles. Its summit plateau is of quite small extent, perhaps not more than forty acres, and contrasts thus in a notable manner with the great plateau between Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm, and the still greater one linking Braeriach and Cairn Toul. On the south and west, the mountain drops steeply in ridgy slopes and partially

developed corries into Glen Nevis. On the north-east, it drops in sheer ragged precipices into the glen of the Allt a Mhuilinn. The south side, Glen Nevis, is the one visited by ordinary tourists, and it well repays a visit. The north face is that beloved of rope- and-ice-axe men. The north-west portion of the mass, the Meall an t-Suidhe, reaches a height of only 2322 feet, and is somewhat definitely cut off from the main mass by a considerable hollow, in which at an elevation of about 1800 feet lies the lochan of the same name. The Meall rather blocks all ordinary views of the Ben itself from the west and north-west, and makes it somewhat difficult to get an adequate idea of its height and mass. The only satisfactory view we had was from the railway near Corrour; as seen from this direction the mountain towers up nobly, but the great precipice is only partly visible. Probably the most satisfactory view would be obtained from moderately high ground behind Banavie and Corpach.

In offering some impressions of Ben Nevis, I make no pretence to being an unbiassed witness. The Cairngorms have so long and so completely satisfied my sense of what mountains should offer, and I have become so accustomed to their varied attractions, that I am probably somewhat prejudiced against a fresh claimant for regard. Having thus discounted my opinions as merely opinions and merely my own, I nevertheless venture on a few points of contrast. First in regard to size. Ben Nevis is just a separate mountain, higher it is true by a hundred feet than anything in the Cairngorms, but otherwise smaller, smaller in bulk, and notably smaller in plateau area. And these plateaus of the Cairngorms are surely among their greatest charms; there is a special delight in wandering freely over such tracts of gravel and growth, among the lochans, and along the streams, all much above the 3000 foot level. On Ben Nevis no such stravaiging is possible; the small area of the top plateau is a savage wilderness of rough big blocks, over and among which walking is difficult and almost disagreeable. Secondly in regard to water. Briefly, Ben Nevis lacks water. True there are numerous burns running down its outer slopes, and one on the south face shows a notable cataract. But there is

nothing comparable to the falls of the Dee or those of the Garbh Uisge; there are no lochs to match against Avon and Einich, or even Etchachan, or the numerous lochans perched high in the corries. The Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe is as dull as a Highland loch can be, and it is the Ben's only one. Thirdly, in regard to corries. Ben Nevis has few corries; indeed the Coire Leis at the head of the Allt a' Mhuilinn and the Coire na Ciste in the great crags practically make up its list; the former is quite a typical little corrie, the latter is ugly and dull, though surrounded by mighty crags. The many fine corries of the Cairngorms, from the Garbh Coire downwards, are among their most notable and attractive features, and I believe the Garbh Coire itself is unequalled in Scotland. Lastly in regard to included valleys. The Ben Nevis mass includes but one valley, that up which the pony path ascends past the Meall, though it is bounded by two very good ones. The Cairngorms include numerous valleys—the upper Avon, the Lui Beg, the Derry, the Einich; and some of the high-lying ones are specially interesting, such as the flat and open valley of the first mile of the Dee, and the quite notably typical plateau valley of the Garbh Uisge.

Ben Nevis unquestionably has its merits, especially for rope- and-ice-axe men and for meteorologists, but for the holiday mountain wanderer it seems to me to be lacking in the features that make our Cairngorms so attractive. On the other hand the mere tourist finds three things that recommend it. Firstly, it is very near a town; a half-hour's easy stroll, or in less time a public conveyance, takes him from his hotel to the base of the mountain. Secondly, all the way right to the summit there is now a perfectly clear and rather well-made road. This was made in connection with the Meteorological Observatory, and was absolutely necessary for the construction and working of that institution. Alas! the observatory is closed, only for a time let us hope, but the path remains and is upheld, and tourists swarm on it in their thousands every year. Thirdly, there is a hotel on the summit!

The August of 1907 will, I expect, long remain in the memory of holiday-makers as the worst for many years.

Fort William suffered more than most places; its excess of rainfall and its deficit of heat were, I believe, the greatest recorded in the country. Thus during that month we were house-bound often, and our open-air days were few. Only three of them were given to Ben Nevis, one to Allt a' Mhuilinn, one to Glen Nevis, and one to the Ben itself. I had hopes that in the course of a month's holiday I might get in at least a dozen visits to the Ben, and I intentionally began with a visit to the glen of the Allt a' Mhuilinn, because that offered the best introduction to the great north-east crags, the Ben's outstanding feature. It was a relief to get out of the cramped narrowness of the little town, cross the Nevis Bridge, and step out on the good main road. This I held to the Lochy Suspension Bridge and the Ben Nevis Distillery, where the Allt a' Mhuilinn joins the Lochy. Passing through the distillery yard and crossing the railway line behind it, I had at once that feeling of space and freedom that comes with the open hill-side. In a few minutes I received the first pleasant surprise of the day. On the moorland are some low tumps, moraine heaps of the "sithean" type. From one of these rose at my approach several birds that I recognised at a glance as hoodie crows. But one bird attracted attention because, instead of rising as the others had done, it dropped stealthily down the slope of the tump with wide-stretched steady wings. The sunlight caught its back, and I saw that it was a golden eagle. At once I put the field-glass on it, and watched it rise, circle round, join its mate, and float away towards Glen Nevis. A pair of golden eagles so early in the walk was an unexpected delight.

At an elevation of some seven hundred feet, the tributary valley proper of the Allt a' Mhuilinn, a sort of "hanging valley," enters the wider valley of the Lochy, and as I looked up from below I saw the tributary stream suddenly appear with a rush that seemed to promise something worth visiting. Turning my back to my departing eagles, I trudged up the sloppy hill-side. There had been much rain in the preceding days, the burns were full, and the brae ran with water. But when I reached the place where the Allt a' Mhuilinn comes over the lip of its valley, I was more than recompensed. For

about a furlong the stream foamed and dashed through gorges and over cataracts. It had worn out great potholes, and thundered into them in great spouts. Probably these potholes are the "mills" that gave the burn its name, and I am surprised that so picturesque a spot is so little known and visited. But it is not readily accessible, there is no set tourist path to it, the guide-books do not direct attention to it, and so only an occasional wanderer enjoys it. Having stayed near it as long a time as I could spare, I followed the valley upwards throughout its whole length. It is a typical upland valley, reminding me much of the valley of the Little Bennie, which it resembles in many ways, though it is longer and has a rather larger stream with more of waterfall and cataract. When I got well up into the valley, the view of the great crags of Ben Nevis opened up, and I walked all along their base, carrying in my hand the S.M.C. special map, and noting carefully as I went all the visible detail. For nearly a mile and a half these crags tower up to a height varying from 1000 to 1500 feet above a steep slope of some 250 feet, sheer, ragged, pinnaced, cut into by deep gullies, standing out in vast ridges and buttresses, sombre, menacing, with almost no relief of verdure, and with their stern dead darkness emphasised by the masses of snow lying in their deeper recesses. The sky was overcast, so that no sunshine threw them into relief, and in the dull light it was sometimes not easy to separate a nearer mass projected on to a remoter one. I felt that such crags, seen under such conditions, did not attract; they were without beauty, they were uncompromisingly grim, and the close view of the fatal Slingsby's Chimney, near the base of which I passed, perhaps helped to strengthen my feeling. Quite in keeping with the picture was the frequent sight of eagles soaring over the Castle Ridge, over the lip of the Coire na Ciste, and over the great North-East Buttress.

At the extreme head of the glen, the final corrie curves round the North-East Buttress, below the sharp ridge that connects the Carn Deargs with the Ben. When I reached this little corrie, some hundred feet above its tiny lochan, I found a very comfortable couch among the fallen rocks, and

lay at rest to lunch, gazing upward at the great Buttress, about which three eagles floated, their melancholy sub-musical yelping call being quite audible. Had the day remained clear, I should probably have gone to the ridge, but, as mist began to gather heavily, I limited myself to visiting the base of the crag, and seeing where the underlying granite merged into the overlying porphyritic lava. Suddenly a pall of mist dropped right down over all the corrie and glen, and as I could see but a few yards I turned to descend. As I was carefully stepping down the steep, rough, loose screes, I saw a curious looking object lying among the rocks. "Meat-can? No; meat-cans don't have handles. Oil-can? No; thank goodness, people don't bring petrol cans up here." Then, a few more steps having brought me nearer, I uttered a shout of joy,—*"Hurrah, a rain gauge!"* and I turned to look up into the mist, behind which towered the great crag over which that rain gauge had been blown from the Observatory. The gauge is quite different from the normal pattern; indeed, one of my meteorological friends on first seeing it exclaimed, with cutting severity, *"Hullo! did you make that yourself?"* It is nine and a half inches high and five inches in diameter; it is made of galvanised sheet iron, with brass rim and iron wire handle; the cone was soldered half-way down, and has a small opening in its edge through which the collected rain-water could be poured out. Some fragments of thin wire attached to the loop of the handle suggest that it was anchored probably to a piece of rock. It was not very much battered by its fall, nor is it badly rusted. In the published Log of the Observatory there is the record that rain-gauges were blown away on the 8th and 11th of January, 1885, and that on the 15th gauges of a new pattern were introduced. Mr. R. T. Omond, the former Superintendent of the Observatory, writes me, "Several gauges were blown over the cliff to the northward while the B. N. Observatory was in use. The one you describe, was, I think, one of the earlier patterns that we tried. I remember we found some too light, and liable to be knocked over in strong winds, and the later patterns were made with the base weighted with lead. The ordinary gauge, which has a moveable rim fitting into

a fixed base, was quite unworkable on Ben Nevis; it got frozen fast on most days. So we had to devise gauges that could be carried in and out bodily, and the one you found is probably, as I said, an early experimental form."

Well, I strapped my find to my knapsack, and bore it triumphantly away. Then there remained the return journey through and under the pall of mist, which hid varying amounts of the crags, but made an effective revelation of the cultivated strath in the distance. I spent some more time at the "Mill," and then dropped down to the main road, well content with my first introduction to the Ben, and with the prize I had found.

The second expedition, several days later, was to Glen Nevis. This glen is of first class quality; no Cairngorm glen equals it, though Glen Feshie resembles it, and Glen Avon is wilder. Baddeley's account of its upper section is very confused; apparently he paid it but a single hurried visit. The glen has advantages and disadvantages. It is a recognised "thing to do," and Fort William has constructed and maintains a driving road for miles up it, a road of astonishingly good quality, on which a coach runs daily during the tourist season; this makes a visit extremely easy, but at the same time takes away some of the wildness appropriate to a Highland glen. The glen is inhabited, and in part under cultivation, so that houses and cattle are met with, and sheep are numerous; these cannot be said to increase the attractions of the wilderness except to the class of tourist that welcomes the sign "Refreshments" wherever he goes.

We left Fort William on our cycles in the forenoon of a promising day, a day that quite redeemed its promise by becoming brilliantly fine till late in the afternoon, and not breaking down into rain till after our return. The glen road turns off the main road at the south end of Nevis Bridge, and the entrance to the Glen, made to look pretty in photographs, is somewhat marred by the untidiness that seems almost inseparable from Highland cottages. But in a few minutes the varied beauties of the glen are evident: the pleasant woods that border the path, the river rushing through its

“Roaring Mill” or rippling over its shallows, the broad sweep of grassy hill-side, the more remote steeps of the Cow Hill, and the rugged torrent-scarred sides of Meall an t-Suidhe and the Ben. Near Nevis House the road degenerates into the customary unpleasantness of a farm road, but speedily recovers; the hill-sides steepen, we look up to the now immovable Rocking-Stone and the Vitriified Fort, and ahead to the bend of the glen at Achriach. Here three tributary glens converge, and the separating mountains are finely scarped at their summits, the western one showing red granite, and the eastern ones grey quartzite. The hills are grassed almost to their tops, and dotted with sheep, and trees are numerous, especially near the burns. At Achriach, acting on misleading information, we left our cycles; we should with advantage have ridden them more than a mile further. The new section of the glen is finer than the lower; the falls at Achriach are very striking, all appearance of cultivation is left behind, the steeps on either hand close in, and ahead the glen seems blocked by the converging hill-sides. On our left there rushed down from the south face of Ben Nevis a cataract probably nearly a thousand feet in fall, making in the bright sunshine an extremely pleasant picture. A little beyond this the driving road ends, and most visitors get no further; their terminus is marked by some of the usual debris of a favourite picnicking place. But the bit of the glen immediately beyond seemed to us the best, partly because it is wilder and less frequented. We are not yet at the true head of the glen, but the valley contracts to a mere gorge, through which the Nevis rushes in the most delightfully vigorous manner. Beyond the gorge, up stream, is a broad expanse of flat meadow-land, the site of an ancient lake, and over the precipitous brae at the head of this meadow leaps the Allt Coire a’ Mhoil in a splendid waterfall of some 250 feet. From the terminus of the driving road two foot-tracks lead forward, one right through the gorge, and the other higher on the brae, so as to take just the top of the gorge. We had been told that the lower track was in a dangerous condition, and so took the upper one, which proved to be a very interesting, rough, narrow

track, winding up the hill-side, crossing numerous burns, and opening up a widening view, especially into the depths of the gorge. Here we had increasingly good sight of the many superb examples of glaciated rock-surfaces with which the glen abounds. At the highest point of the path we came suddenly in view of the green meadow and the flashing waterfall. Here we rested awhile before turning back. On our return journey to the driving road we paid much attention to the wonderfully contorted condition of the rocks, which hereabouts are mainly schistose. The mountain sides showed the flexures on the grandest scale, nearly every weathered boulder showed minor crumplings, and from the beds of the burns we gathered many excellent pocket specimens. One, however, an extremely fine one, weighed over eight pounds, and it required something of an effort to decide on its annexation. However, it was carried off, and now reposes with other such mementos of geologic history and our pleasant wanderings, its cut and polished surfaces having a decorative value. By this time several vehicles had brought parties of visitors up the glen, and picnics were in full force; sauntering in the sunny afternoon down to our cycles, we had then the pleasant and easy ride down the glen and back to our quarters, with the entirely satisfactory feeling that we had seen one of the finest glens that Scotland can show, and that the weather had been on its best behaviour.

The almost continual bad weather had put the ascent of the Ben out of question, as there seemed no use in merely going up unless something were to be seen. Within two days of the close of our stay, therefore, I decided to go part of the way, even though I should not go far. So after sitting for more than an hour after breakfast watching the rain showers round about, I slung on my walking kit, and started for the Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe, leaving further proceedings to be determined later. The Ben Nevis road turns along the stream at the north end of the Nevis Bridge, and is a good driving road for a mile to the farm of Achintee. Here begins the pony path constructed in connection with the Observatory. And it must be said that the planning

of this road by Mr. C. Livingstone and its making by Mr. MacLean merit the highest praise. I think no improvement could be made on the line chosen, and its surface is as good as the conditions permit. Of course it varies greatly; in places, especially in its lower reach, it is smooth enough to cycle on; in parts it is actually paved with large blocks; well-constructed bridges lead it across the burns; but mostly it is made of smallish loose stones, like somewhat rounded road metal, rough under foot, and taking toll of not a few boot soles and heels from tourists that venture insufficiently shod. But throughout its whole length from Achintee right up to the Observatory, it is a perfectly clearly defined roadway, six feet wide, admitting absolutely no doubt as to the route, and, indeed, in its upper half, being the only part of the mountain on which walking in the ordinary sense of the word is at all possible. Of course the existence of this path immensely lessens the difficulty of the ascent, as there is no call for the functions of a path-finder; but at the same time it imposes a feeling of constraint: one is, as it were, thirled to a road, and debarred from stravaiging, though a glance around is enough to show that on Ben Nevis the greatest delight of a hill, that same stravaiging, is quite impossible, so intolerably rough is the loose, sterile, rocky surface.

Well, I jogged steadily up the path as it wound from Achintee round the Meall to the level of the Lochan, neither hasting nor slacking, passing two other visitors, and seeing in front heavy rain showers filling all the bend of the glen. Just above the loch is the Halfway House, a little wooden shanty for the use of the roadman. Here one ought to pay a shilling for the use of the road, but as no one sat at the receipt of custom I could not pay there, and had to satisfy my conscience at the summit. Looking back over the road I saw that I was the first of a procession of more than a dozen climbers.

So far the weather had been good, for the rain showers had sheered off westwards. Now began the rougher part of the walk, along the zig-zags whereby the path climbs the great west slope of the Ben. These zig-zags are readily seen

from neighbouring high ground, and I had previously taken careful note of them in fair blinks so as to know exactly how they lay. I had not gone far when the wind began to blow strongly and coldly, rain splashed loosely around, and a little higher the rain was mingled with scattered snow. But the mist, "sullen mist" as Keats well called it, was fairly high above me, the view opening around was interesting, and I went on. I was not incommoded by mist till I reached a height nearly 3000 feet, and even then, finding the mist rather dry, I judged it worth while to go yet higher on the chance that it might clear. Near the top zig-zag, I got a strong whiff of the odour of red-deer, but could see nothing of any. In due time I reached the lower plateau nearly 4000 feet up. Here I found two people, man and boy, walking somewhat leisurely. They proved to be Mr. Miller, the summit hotel proprietor, and his son, and they shared my opinion that the mist might clear. Up here the wind was indeed very cold, and I quitted the path, found a sheltering rock, and lay behind it to lunch. Then I finished the ascent, still in mist, through which gradually loomed the Hotel, the Cairn, and the Observatory. I asked that a cup of tea should be prepared for me at the Hotel [fancy such a luxury on the Cairngorms!] while I went to see the Observatory buildings at close quarters. Just as I finished my tea I felt the light suddenly increase. Stepping quickly into the open, and rejoining the Millers, I looked expectantly up the wind, and in a few minutes the mist broke, and all the southern view became clear. I had with me Mr. James Shearer's drawing of the view, and at once began to work through it. In a few minutes more the whole circle of view was absolutely clear, and remained so for more than an hour. I worked hard at my "Shearer," and had the great satisfaction of seeing in the actual view everything that is there represented in so thorough and minutely accurate a manner. I propose here to mention but two points in the view, for the panorama has often been described. Looking to the north-east I was much struck with some colour contrasts; the rock of the summit of the Ben itself is, as I have already said, of dull black-grey; across the glen

of the Allt a' Mhuilinn were the granite screes of the Carn Dearg ridge, looking as though they had been combed and brushed into smoothness, and glowing red in the sunlight; over them appeared sharply cut peaks topped with gleaming white quartzite. To escape from the bitter wind I took refuge in the lee of the Observatory tower; stepping round it, I was looking at my feet, lest I should trip over the struts; when I lifted my eyes to the north-east distance, my gaze was at once arrested by a bright bank of silver on the horizon,—the Cairngorms all in snow, the only mass of fresh snow in sight. The next day the *Scotsman* reported that the Cairngorms had been snow-covered down to 2000 feet. Ben Nevis itself bore no old snow on the plateau, but there were thousands of little flecks of fresh snow lying in the shelter of the stones, the remnants of a thin coating that had fallen early in the morning; of course every big gully bore its perennial wreath.

Having finished my "Shearer," I raced off to the east end of the great crag edge, and worked my way all along it, S.M.C. map in hand, peering down every gully, creeping cautiously out on the rocky projections, and having a most interesting and awesome series of views of the crags that I had previously gazed up at from below. I was much struck with the treacherous nature of the heads of the gullies. The rock had weathered down into a slippery, yellow clay, and this easily yielded to foot-pressure, and began to slide into the gully. Small avalanches were most readily started in this manner, and I heard stones clattering down gullies long after I had quitted them.

Just as I turned from the Observatory, a Snow-Bunting flew past me, uttering its pretty tinkling cry, and shortly after I heard a hoarse croak some furlong to the west of me and had a momentary glimpse of a large black bird, presumably a raven. I heard also what I took to be the bark of a fox in the corrie below. Turning to take a farewell look at the top plateau before beginning my descent, I saw a pair of eagles floating round the North-East buttress.

Then I descended to lower levels, partly following the line of cairns and posts that act as guides in snowy weather when

the path is hidden. In company with another visitor I made a leisurely descent, and we just reached the neighbourhood of Nevis Bridge when rain began. The evening was very wet, and I thought with commiseration of the score of people who still had to find their way down from the Ben.

THE HEATHER MOOR.

Come from the heart of the city
 To the Highland glens away,
 Where the heather sweeps like a purple sea
 O'er the splendid moors to-day.
 Climb up the steep of the winding lane,
 Leaving the world behind,
 Where the thyme smells sweet 'neath your passing feet,
 And there's dew on the edge of the wind.

Come from the grey of the city
 Up thro' the woodlands cool,
 By the pathway 'neath the pine trees
 To the lonely mountain pool.
 Where the rushes are waving greenly,
 And the curlew calls all day,
 And the hill-side sheep where the shadows are deep
 Go softly like ghosts of grey.

Come from the heart of the city
 Nearer the heart of God,
 Where the wind with its heav'n-brought message
 Comes o'er the cool green sod.
 Come to the heath'ry moorland,
 Blot out the past, and hope,
 Life leaps anew 'neath the heav'n of blue
 Over the purple slope.

—Augusta Hancock, in *The Gentlewoman*.

MOUNTAINEERING CLUBS,

1857—1907.

MR. A. J. MACKINTOSH, the Assistant Secretary of the Alpine Club, contributes to the *Alpine Journal* of August last an interesting list (29 pp.) of mountaineering clubs founded during the past half century. We reprint the English and Scottish section :—

Great Britain.

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1857. Alpine Club. | 1899. Kyndwr Club. |
| 1875. Oxford Alpine Club. | 1902. Rucksack Club. |
| 1879. Dundee Institution Club. | 1904. Alpine Association. |
| 1886. Dundee Rambling Club. | 1905. Winter Alpine Club. |
| 1889. Cairngorm Club. | 1906. Aberdeen Touring Club. |
| „ Scottish Mount. Club. | „ Yorkshire Speleological Assoc. |
| „ Manchester Zweigverein. | „ Wayfarers' Club, Liverpool. |
| 1892. Yorkshire Ramblers. | „ Fell and Rock Climbing Club. |
| 1894. Norwegian Club. | „ Derbyshire Pennine Club. |
| 1898. Climbers' Club. | |

Aberdeen Touring Club, 1 Feb., 1906.

To encourage excursions, including mountaineering in the district. 40 members. Secy., R. Murdoch-Lawrence, 71 Bon-Accord St., Aberdeen.

Alpine Association for Great Britain, London, 1904.

This is the Zweigverein England, affiliated to the D.u.Oe.A.-V. Members of this Association or of the Manchester Zweigverein (q.v.) obtain the advantages in connection with huts, &c. that are possessed by members of the D.u.Oe.A.-V. Address: M. Marks, 11 Southwood Mansions, Southwood Lane, Highgate.

Alpine Club, London, 22 December, 1857.

'The object of the Club shall be the promotion of good-fellowship among mountaineers, of mountain-climbing and mountain exploration throughout the world, and of better knowledge of the mountains through literature, science, and art.' 668 members; qualification, mountain expeditions, or contributions to Alpine literature, science or art.

Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers, 4 editions, 1859; 5th, knapsack, edition, 1860; Second Series, 2 vols, 1862; *Alpine Journal*, quarterly from 1864; *Index*, vols 1-15, 1892; Longman, *Suggestions for exploration of Iceland*, 1861; *Report on Ropes, Axes, and Alpenstocks*, 1864; *Report on equipment for mountaineers*, 1892; *Alpine Club map of Switzerland*, 4 sheets, 1874;

Catalogue of library, 1880, 1888, 1899; *Alpine Distress Signal*, 1894; *Catalogue of Mountain Paintings*, 1894; *Ball's Alpine Guide*, new edition, *Western Alps*, 1898; and *Central Alps*, pt. 1, 1907; *Introduction to*, new edition, 1899.

Address: 23 Savile Row, London.

Cairngorm Club, Aberdeen, 9 January, 1889.

'To encourage mountain-climbing in Scotland, with special reference to the Cairngorm group of mountains.' 155 members; qualification, ascent to 3,000 feet in Scotland.

Journal, twice yearly from 1893.

Address: Secretary, A. I. M'Connochie, 76 Devonshire Road, Aberdeen.

Climbers' Club, London, 25 March, 1898.

'To encourage mountaineering, particularly in England, Wales, and Ireland, and to serve as a bond of union amongst all lovers of mountain-climbing . . . The Committee shall decide on a candidate's climbing and general qualification.' 272 members.

Journal, quarterly from 1898.

Hon. Sec.: G. B. Bryant, 2 King William Street, London, E.C.

Derbyshire Pennine Club, Sheffield, 30 November, 1906.

'The organisation of the sports of rock-climbing, cave-exploring, and hill-walking, and the collection and dissemination among the members of information, literature, maps, etc., relating thereto.' 20 members.

Hon. Sec.: H. Bishop, Avon House, Fieldhead Road, Sheffield.

Dundee Institution Club, 1879-1889.

Incorporated with the Rambling Club in 1889.

Dundee Rambling Club, April, 1886.

'To encourage climbing on the Scottish hills.' 32 members; climbing qualification needed since 1889.

Secretary: T. H. B. Rorie, 33 Albert Square, Dundee.

Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District, Coniston, 11 November, 1906.

'To encourage rock-climbing and fell-walking in the Lake District, to serve as a bond of union for all lovers of mountain-climbing.' Over 100 members.

Hon. Sec.: E. Scantlebury, 11 Clarence Street, Ulverston.

Kyndwr Club, Derby, 28 November, 1899.

'To encourage rock-climbing and rambling in the wilder parts of Derbyshire, and mountaineering generally.' 22 members in 1907.

Address: Hon. Sec., H. F. Wightman, Chellaston, near Derby.

Manchester Zweigverein, 14 March, 1889.

This is affiliated to the D.u.Oe.A.-V. See note under Alpine Association.

Norwegian Club, London, 25 January, 1894.

'To unite those who are interested in or acquainted with Norway and Sweden, either as travellers, mountaineers, sportsmen, artists, etc., by providing them with opportunities of meeting in London.'

Yearbook, from 1896.

Address: 112 Strand, London. 125 members.

Oxford Alpine Club, 25 November, 1875.

'The Club shall consist of resident members of the University interested in the objects of the Alpine Club.' 37 resident members.

Hon. Sec., A. Zimmern, New College, Oxford.

Rucksack Club, Manchester, 13 October, 1902.

'The objects of the Club are to facilitate walking tours, cave exploration, and mountaineering in the British Isles and elsewhere.'

Annual Report, 1903—1906; *Journal*, annual, started in 1907.

Headquarters: Albion Hotel, Piccadilly, Manchester. 96 members.

Scottish Mountaineering Club, Edinburgh, 11 February, 1889.

'To encourage mountaineering in Scotland in winter as well as summer . . . and to further everything that will conduce to the convenience of those who take a pleasure in mountaineering and mountain scenery.'

170 members; qualification, ascents of, or contributions to science, art, or literature of Scottish mountains.

Journal, thrice a year from 1890.

Address: 20 George Street, Edinburgh.

Wayfarers' Club, Liverpool, November, 1906.

'To promote the pursuits of walking, climbing, and allied sports among its members, and to bring together persons who are desirous of making the same excursions or ascents.' 60 members.

Address: Hon. Sec., G. D. Ricketts, University of Liverpool.

Winter Alpine Club, Manchester, November, 1905.

'To enable winter visitors to the Alps to get information and travelling facilities.' 20 members.

Address: Hon. Sec. W. Coles, 77a Market Street, Manchester.

Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, Leeds, 6 October, 1892.

'To organise walking and mountaineering excursions and to gather and promote knowledge concerning natural history . . . and kindred subjects [till 1895, 'also to further the objects of the Commons Preservation Society']. Over 90 members; qualification required, but undefined.

Annual Report, 1892-1898; *Journal*, twice yearly from 1899.

Address: 10 Park Street, Leeds.

Yorkshire Speleological Association.

Hon. Sec., E. Simpson, 44 Sefton Terrace, Beeston.

BRAERIACH IN SEPTEMBER.

BY SETON P. GORDON, F.Z.S.

ARRIVING at Aviemore on 31st August, we found the outlook anything but promising, a heavy rain and bitter north-west wind shutting out all the hills completely, but as the glass had just commenced to rise, we had hopes that the morrow might turn out at least a possible day for our expedition. Next day we were early astir, and on going to the door of the hotel could scarcely believe our eyes. The Cairngorms were, it is true, free of mist, except for the highest tops, but we looked upon a scene resembling mid December, rather than the first day of September! From the 2500 feet line upwards, every hill was thickly covered with snow—not a slight covering, but a dense continuous coat—the dark tracks of the burns down the hillsides being very conspicuous against the surrounding whiteness. We noted that, even on the lowest ground, the heather was scarcely in full bloom, while above 1500 feet it presented a sorry spectacle indeed. For long stretches scarce a single sprig of blossom was seen, and what buds there were did not, in the writer's estimation, seem as though they would come into bloom this season, as the buds were very small and quite six weeks later than would have been the case in an ordinary summer. During our walk up the Larig, the mist was almost continuously on the summit of Braeriach, but as the sky was clear to the north-west, from which direction the wind was blowing, we had hopes of a fine day, and these hopes were more than justified. Soon we reached the snow—first in tiny patches, but as we gained the higher grounds we were walking in an average depth of quite two inches, with drifts in the sheltered parts of more than eighteen inches. Sron na Leirg drops precipitously down to the Larig; it really is distinct from Braeriach, as when after a stiff

climb we reached the plateau, and expected to find Braeriach quite near to us, we found that a considerable col had to be crossed ere Braeriach proper was gained. The air at this height was piercingly keen, and reminded one of a mid-winter's day, the more so as every blade of grass was covered on the windward side with nearly an inch of stiff frozen snow, and fog crystals were on almost every boulder. A lordly golden eagle came soaring over the Larig from Ben Muich Dhui, and was closely followed by its mate, who flew low over the plateau, evidently on the keen look-out for ptarmigan. The golden eagles seem to pair for life, and keep together both summer and winter. Looking down to the Larig beneath us, the snow was seen lying even around the Pools of Dee, but at that low level (2,700 feet) was melting fast. We noted the tracks of a fox on the frost-bound surface of the snow, and also the foot-marks of a deer, evidently made the day before, when the animal was seeking more sheltered quarters on account of the storm. At length the plateau of Braeriach proper was reached, and here, strange to say, there was scarce a breath of wind, though mist and snow could be seen swirling down the Garbh-coire. As we reached the summit cairn, a slight shower of dry snow came on, accompanied by a thin mist through which the sun-bathed valley of the Spey could be dimly seen. Cairngorm was free of mist, and the sun lit up its snow-clad slopes with wonderful effect, the beauty being enhanced because of the fact that we were looking at it through the mist. Cairn Toul and Sgor an Lochan Uaine stood out across the valley of the Garbh-coire, and the mist and snow swirling down from Cairn Toul looked magnificent in the extreme. Lochan Uaine's surface was rippled by the wind, which, although blowing from the west, struck the shoulder of Cairn Toul, and blew hard across the loch from an easterly direction. The cairn of Braeriach was plastered with snow and ice, and a snow cornice quite ten feet deep—evidently formed the night before—overhung the precipice, which is only a few yards from the cairn. A view of extraordinary grandeur was obtained in every direction, but especially to the westward, where hill upon hill stood out clearly; in fact there was

scarce a hill on the whole horizon that was obscured by mist, which was very extraordinary seeing that a short time previously mist had lain on all the surrounding hills. To the northwards a splendid view was obtained of the Moray Firth, on whose surface sun and shade alternated, and Morven stood out very prominently behind it. The valley of the Spey was bathed in sunshine, and Aviemore and Grantown were easily made out, while Lochindorb to the north-east of the latter village stood out very prominently. Loch Phitiulais was another loch to be seen on Speyside, while, to the north of east, Ben Rinnes and the Buck of the Cabrach were very clear. Due east the giant bulk of Ben Muich Dhui shut off the view, but Beinn a' Bhuid and Ben Avon could be seen just beyond, sprinkled with snow, and further to the south Lochnagar stood out. To the north, the Ross-shire hills were rather hazy, although earlier in the day they had been very clear, while west-north-west the Coolins in Skye were prominent by reason of their sharp peaks. It is very rare for these hills to be seen from Braeriach, as they are no less than 100 miles distant. Ben Nevis was also clearly visible, with mist at times on the summit, and Ben Cruachan, Ben More with its sharp conical peak, and Ben Lawers were other hills to be seen to the westwards. While at the cairn the ptarmigan—no doubt astonished at the arctic character of the weather—were croaking around us, and the tracks of a mountain hare were also visible. A pair of snow buntings came overhead, disturbed by our arrival, and seemed loth to leave the spot, so that possibly they had been nesting late on account of the very unfavourable summer, and had had their nest destroyed by the storm. The writer this summer had several unsuccessful hunts for their nest, but although without doubt a few birds breed on the Cairngorms, the weather we have had has been all against successful hatching, as snow has been falling on the higher hills throughout the whole summer. From Braeriach's summit we made for the Dee, where the infant river falls down the precipice an almost sheer 600 feet. The corrie here has been named the Fuar Garbh-coire, which means the "cold rough corrie,"

but in the writer's opinion, the Garbh-coire proper, which rises at the western end of Braeriach, where is the seat of eternal snows, should have the prefix "Fuar" in preference to the one which at present has this title, and which faces due south. Three weeks previously a bridge of winter's snow still crossed the Dee at the top of the precipice, but now has broken up, although its sides are still left. From here we followed up the Dee to the Wells—about a mile distant. There the Dee suddenly appears from a hollow a few feet deep, but nothing could be seen of the Wells, as the fresh snow completely hid them. Hereabouts the storm had been more severe than at any other point, and at places the Dee was actually running under a freshly formed snow bridge, while thick ice covered the pools. The average depth of snow here was not far short of six inches, and we could not help feeling sorry for the unlucky grass which was struggling for an existence on the banks of the Dee. A few minutes' walk brought us to where we obtained an excellent view of Loch Eunach. As we were crossing the plateau, a wailing cry was heard, and looking up we saw a solitary golden plover, coming at express speed from the bog to the west of Braeriach, and making apparently for the east. It is a rather rare occurrence to see the golden plover at these heights so late in the season, as usually by this date they have left the nesting grounds for the sea. Very few ptarmigan indeed were met with, only three or four during the whole day, as in the severe weather they seek the lower part of the hills.

From the plateau it is a very steep descent into the Larig, and great care had to be exercised, as a good deal of the winter's snow still lay in patches on the slopes and offered a very treacherous footing. At length, however, the path was regained, and none too soon, as the wind had backed round to the south-west, and the whole sky was looking ominously grey. Soon a very heavy shower of snow enveloped the hills, but in the pass we had practically none. The day was now drawing in, and as we had a long tramp before us, we pushed on as quickly as possible, and reached civilization once more as the evening was setting in.

CAMPING ON THE CAIRNGORMS.

BY WILLIAM C. WELSH.

FOR many years our Cairngorm rambles have had the Shelter Stone as headquarters, the excursions generally lasting for a fortnight. Last year we changed the programme somewhat—following the Dee to its source, instead of going up Glen Derry as had been our custom.

We were three, Alexander Reid, Hugh D. Welsh, and the writer. The first had his knapsack crammed with provisions, changes of socks, etc., small tubes for insects and spiders, and photographic plates. He carried also a blanket and a water-proof sheet, and a camera and stand. Hugh's load consisted of six dozen plates and a changing bag and camera, and some tent pegs. The writer carried the tent, the cooking utensils, and material for fire and light.

In due time on Saturday, 29th June, we reached the Linn of Dee, rain meantime falling in torrents. Crossing the bridge we turned to the left, and this confirmed the suspicions of a party we passed earlier in the afternoon, which were that we were members of the forces then skirmishing in Perthshire, and were spying out the land by descending on the scene of operations through Glen Tilt. By and by the rain ceased and we arrived at White Bridge.

One of the chief delights of such a holiday as ours is the study of animal life, of plant life, and of geology. A short distance from White Bridge is the Chest of Dee, overhanging one of the deep pools of which is a birch tree, with the nest of a hooded crow. There was one youngster in the nest, and it did not seem at all scared at our visit. It was too dark to obtain a photograph of the nest and its tenant, so we determined to return next day. A mile further on we camped by the side of a small stream, a spot the writer had camped on five years previously. The evening turned out fine, so when all was in readiness for bed we started to explore,

and, following up the course of the burn, collected enough dry and bleached heather to build a large fire.

SUNDAY.

The sun shone brilliantly on Sunday morning. After breakfast we retraced our steps to the Chest of Dee. We had difficulty in placing the cameras, but after some manœuvring they were tied to the branches about three or four feet from the nest. Thereafter we went to White Bridge and took a photograph of it.

It was pretty late in the day before we struck camp, and as soon as we started, down came the rain in torrents. Several times we came upon the remains of nests, with the empty egg shells in the heather.

As we were opposite the entrance of the valley leading to the Derry, we descried two figures on the sky-line just entering Glen Dee. They seemed to be doubtful as to what their next step should be, but as soon as they saw that we were making towards them they came down to meet us. Each had a slight limp which was caused by each having sprained an ankle some weeks previously.

Glen Geusachan by this time was filled with mist, while the Larig was belching forth black storm-clouds. The two wanderers resolved to come along with us for a few miles, so as to be able to say they had been in the Larig. All this time the rain came down, and well for us was it that we were supplied with ample waterproof covering. When we had passed the Devil's Point, our two new allies said "good-bye," and turned to go back to the Linn of Dee, where they had left their cycles. Our intention had been to reach the watershed in the Pass and there camp for the night, but so heavy had the storm become that we stopped where we were, and pitched the tent in a hollow by the river-side.

All through the night sleet came down and mist filled the valley, but how comfortable we were under the blankets! Our legs had been protected by strong leggings, so we were comparatively dry.

After some hot coffee, etc., we lit the candles and settled down to read Tyndal's "Glaciers of the Alps," and several

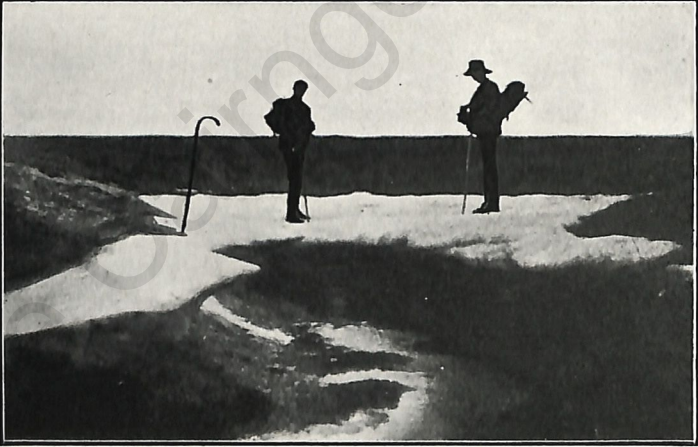
magazines, feeling very comfortable indeed. All night long the noise of the elements was deafening; the nature of the ground, however, prevented the spot we were camped on becoming water-logged.

MONDAY.

Morning came; suddenly we were awakened by a shout, a cry of surprise and relief. Anyone coming down the Pass would not be able to see our tent till he came up to it, hence the intonation of surprise in the shout. In a trice the writer was outside, to find two young men shivering with cold, for the hour was somewhere about four or five o'clock. Their waterproofs were soaked through, but overcoats underneath had kept their clothes moderately dry. Their faces were blue and pinched, and they looked what they indeed were—cold. They asked if we could supply them with spirits, as they were about to drop with cold and exhaustion. But we never carried any! However, in a short time we had the lamp burning and water boiling, while they gave an account of themselves. They had left Aviemore on Sunday evening about seven o'clock, with the intention of going through the Larig to Inverey, but they had no idea what was before them. When they arrived at the watershed the mist fell and they found themselves in darkness.

They got as far as the uppermost of the Pools of Dee, when down came sleet in blinding showers. Further progress was barred, so they lay down and spent the night as best they could. At the first glimmer of light they got up and continued their course, and when they were feeling at their worst our tent came in view. They spent some hours with us, and after being warmed up amongst the blankets they were able to proceed to their destination.

Shortly afterwards we caught sight of the Corour Bothy watcher, accompanied by another watcher on the back of a hill pony, coming over the shoulder of Carn a' Mhaim. We waited till they reached the Bothy, and then plunged across the river to renew our acquaintance. After obtaining photographs of the Bothy and the watchers, we said good-bye, and started for camp.



ON BRAERIACH, 3RD JULY, 1907.

(1) Our Tent. (2) At the Wells of Dee.

Rain began to fall again, and when we had arrived at the foot of the zigzag path leading up Braeriach we decided to pitch our tent. This was indeed a short day's work, but we intended climbing Braeriach next day, so a rest would do no harm. During the day snow fell; Braeriach, Cairn Toul, and Ben Muich Dhui were covered with freshly fallen snow. The precipices were magnificent—the black of the crags showing deep and sombre in contrast with the white of the snow in the crevices and gullies.

TUESDAY.

Tuesday turned out a fine day, so we commenced to climb Braeriach. The path was obliterated by huge snow-wreaths, which were too steep to ascend, so we had to strike up on a very steep edge. To leave us as little encumbered as possible we left some food and photographic plates where we had encamped in the Larig. On the way up we came across a fox chasing a pair of ptarmigan. No doubt the birds were leading the fox on a false scent away from their brood, which was hid among the boulders.

After a stiff climb we reached the top, and were rewarded with a magnificent view. Away to the south amid the multitudinous ranges of hills a storm was rising. Now and then the mist came swirling up from the corries like clouds of condensed steam from the funnel of a locomotive engine, while the roar of the wind among the precipices, combined with a peculiar swishing noise as it struck against the huge walls of ice and snow on the crags, fell on our ears continuously.

It was early in the day, but we pitched the tent a few yards from the cairn. The tent pegs would not hold in the gravelly ground, so we had to pile stones to keep down the pegs, and at the same time prevent the wind from getting under the flap and lifting the tent up in the air to be blown over into the corrie.

Sleet now began to fall, so we got under canvas and proceeded to cook some food. Just as we were preparing for sleep the wind rose, and soon we were in the midst of a roaring storm. Sleet fell, and the wind lashed the little tent till

we feared it would break its fastenings, but all through the night it stood the strain. Indeed this was one of the most comfortable nights we had ever spent among the hills.

WEDNESDAY.

Wednesday morning came, and still sleet fell, while at the same time the mist remained. When the mist had lifted, we struck camp and made for the Eunach Cairn, and on the way we photographed one of the Wells of Dee, and though it was covered by a snowfield we were able to see the water bubbling up through the gravel.

In a short time we struck down Coire Dhonndail into one of the most wild and picturesque glens in the country. Glen Eunach, especially near the loch, is rich in Alpine Flora, and for variety of plants is marvellous.

Without mishap other than a twisted ankle to the writer, we arrived at the lower Bothy in time to have a chat with Cameron the watcher. The floods of the past winter had swept away several of the bridges over the burns, and we had perforce to cross them bare-footed.

At Coylum Bridge we halted and had a square meal, for we had not tasted food since we had had breakfast on the summit of Braeriach. Later we visited the Dell of Rothiemurchus, and camped not far from the farm-house. We were pleased to locate Moonwort Ferns here. We had previously found them in Glens Dee, Lui, and Derry.

THURSDAY.

Next day we visited Aviemore and Loch an Eilein, but again rain spoilt the excursion.

FRIDAY.

After another night at the Dell, we struck camp and made for the Larig, carrying with us a supply of provisions for our "At Home," which was to take place next day at the Shelter Stone. The trek through the Larig was without incident, and in due time we arrived at the Pools of Dee. Last winter and spring must have been pretty severe in this neighbourhood, for the scree slopes were covered with fresh debris and the channels were pretty deep, giving a good idea

of the force of the storms. We had intended spending the night in our old Camp, at the foot of the Braeriach path, but having reached the Pools sooner than we expected, we decided to strike up Ben Muich Dhui and so land at the Stone.

The plateau reached, we found ourselves in a sleet storm coming from the right with blinding force; in a short time our capes were frozen hard on to our shoulders. A short trot brought us to the Feith Buidhe and the snowfields, and soon, wet through, we arrived at the Dairymaid's Field. We found at the Stone several messages from friends who had missed us, and we discovered also a supply of boiled ham, which had been kindly left for our "At Home."

The ground on which we were encamped was exceedingly wet, but the waterproof sheet protected us. After a warm drink and a meal we settled ourselves for sleep. All night the rain came down in torrents, and as the gale curled over the tops of the precipices, it dashed the rain against the canvas, and threatened every instant to lift the tent from the ground.

SATURDAY.

In the early hours of morning, we all became restless with a premonition of something wrong. We could hardly make ourselves heard amidst the noise of the elements and the tumbling of the water over the crags, but we could feel that not all was right, for trickling underneath our blankets were little streams of water, which increased in volume to such an extent that we had to get up and make a rush for the more solid, though cold, comfort of the Shelter Stone. We left the tent standing where we had pitched it, taking with us only the blankets and sheet. The ground was covered with water, and as we had camped on a slope, the water was swilling down it. All the holes and channels about the place were filled with water. At 2 a.m. we were under the Stone, but so draughty was it that we could hardly keep the candle alight. However, after some trouble we got everything arranged to our satisfaction, and in a short time we were enjoying the hottest coffee we could brew.

The weather still continued bad, and we gave up all hopes of seeing any of our guests. The forenoon passed, and early in the afternoon a shout came floating through the storm—our first, and as it turned out to be our only guests had arrived. They were Burnett of the Aberdeen Central Higher Grade School; Rennie of Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen; and Hartley of the Observatory, Trinity College, Cambridge. Under the circumstances they were rather doubtful as to enjoying a tramp in such weather, but where there is a will there is a way, and so they found themselves at the Stone. In a short time we got the fire going, for we had brought wood from Rothiemurchus, and water was soon ready. The Menu which had been decided on was as follows—

Menu.

Owing to the peculiarities in taste of each guest, and owing to the lack of transport service on the Cairngorms, it is expedient and desired that guests bring their own wines.

The following are recommended :

VINS.

SHERRY.

Gonzalez, Byass & Co.

Royal Pale.

CHAMPAGNE.

Heidsieck & Co.

Dry Monopole '98.

PORT.

Warre's Finest Old.

WATER.

Fresh from the snow always

to be got.

HORS D'OEUVRE.

Farine à l'eau

POTAGE.

Lemco.

POISSONS.

Darne de Saumon—Melangé.

ENTREES.

Farine au Lemco.

RELEVÉ.

Pain étendu du beurre sur.

ROTI.

Gateaux des avoines au fromage grillé.

Poudings farineuse.

LEGUMES.

Persil en branches.

ENTREMETS.

Farine à l'eau encore une fois.
Gateaux des avoines.

DESSERT.

Café au lait.

Thé à la S. S. Cocotier.

MUSIC.

During the Banquet the Wind will play Selections among the precipices, while the solitary Bee will play a Bugle Solo. Trains in Aviemore, if heard, will accompany now and again on their Whistles.

Such was the effusion we had sent to our guests. We did not stick to the Menu, for we had left a few odds and ends in the Larig.

While we were standing up toasting each other, we were astonished to see a bumble bee sailing up towards us, humming as it came. We had not bargained for this, even though we had put it down as part of the programme, and with incomprehensible unanimity we doffed our bonnets to the visitor, and gave it a welcome. It did not stay long, however, but flew off as though knowing that it had accomplished its mission.

In about an hour our guests were on their way to the Derry. There was little use in staying where we were when the weather was so bad, so we struck camp and followed them an hour later. The journey to Inverey was uneventful, and we put up for the night at Thistle Cottage. The next day (Sunday) promised well. The writer went off by himself to climb Ben Muich Dhui *en route* for the Larig, where some food and photographic plates had been left. There was nothing to impede progress, so the summit was soon reached. He crossed several snowfields, some of them very large and exceedingly soft, and occasionally he sank up to the knees. The surface of the snow was covered with dead flies. Several broods of ptarmigan scattered on his approach, and twice he could have captured the mother birds.

The cairn was one huge icicle, but the view was unobstructed. In a short time the Larig was reached, and a sleep indulged in, which was, however, disturbed by rain. No living creatures seemed to be about but deer, hundreds of which were feeding in the glens. Next day saw us in Aberdeen and home, ready for another mountain holiday, but desirous of better weather.

THE CLUB ON GLAS MAOL.

THIS article is to be like none other in or out of our *Journal*. Assembled in Castletown, (or was it at the precise moment in Auchendryne of Braemar) on the evening of 19th July, there seemed a general feeling in the minds of the zealous members then present that scant justice had hitherto been done to reports of the Club's outings. The present description of the last year's summer excursion is therefore a very composite contribution, and according to special promise—and the rules of good journalism—neither horses nor motors can ever draw from the editor the names of the authors of any gems, Cairngorms or otherwise, with which it sparkles.

Let us then start fair, at Aberdeen. The hour was 4.35 or thereby on the afternoon of 19th July, 1907, when the Deeside express, "the Husbands' train," was due to start. As it happened, however, more than one wife was left behind, and the platform was said by a certain confirmed bachelor to be damp with the ladies' tears!

Nothing eventful happened between Guild Street and Ballater. There were of course the usual demonstrations at each stopping station, and many tall stories—but none exceeding 3,502 feet—were told. A Tarnty Ha' dignitary, who unfortunately found himself temporarily squeezed into the Club's company, was glad to escape at Ballater—for sure such blood-curdling tales of mountain dangers cunningly evaded had never been equalled even at an Alpine Club symposium. At Ballater a choice was offered the daring hillmen by the G.N.S.R. Co., ever ready to encourage the Cairngorm Club to go north or west—but not south or east. There were two motors in waiting—in one suffocation was possible, but the dust fiend would not trouble! in the other there was the open life and dust *ad lib.* and even beyond. Both vehicles found victims, and it was certainly ominous that the conductor collected all the fares before he

approached the 42nd milestone. Yet nothing happened, though a dust was undoubtedly raised. No dogs lost the number of their kennel, and even the King's park stags stood at gaze. A squirrel boldly beheld the advance from its particular tree, but an adder on holiday on the road through the Muir of Inver gave one wriggle—and no more.

The well-known "Bridge over the Clunie" was ready for us, its widening a *fait accompli*, though even yet it is scarcely equal to that of the bridge over the Den Burn. Mrs. Macdonald welcomed us at the "Fife Arms," and a very comfortable room was found for each member, soon, however, deserted on the sound of the dinner "horn." There was no undue lingering over the walnuts and the wine, all longed for the road, the lounge, the smoking room, or the golf course that glorious evening. A novice discovered an ice-axe hidden among the numberless umbrellas and sticks in the hall, and enquiry was at once made as to the owner. He was soon found to be Mr. A. Ernest Maylard, a distinguished Alpinist, but better known in Scotland as an ex-president of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. He smilingly informed some of us that the implement was useful for picking up plants, etc., on the hill. It, however, was capable of other useful work, as was seen later on the "glacier" at Canlochan. Our chairman, Mr. James A. Hadden, welcomed him in the Club's name, and asked for the pleasure of his company the following day. Mr. Maylard was delighted, and said he quite expected to be associated for the day with the Cairngormers when he heard of their meet in Braemar. Early arrived members both in and out of the hotel next received attention. There was Veteran Smith, already at home in the smoking room, who warned the younger bloods that he was to take time as he climbed on the morrow. Visions of numerous delays at once vexed their impatient spirits, but he it here said the veteran quite disappointed them on Glas Maol, for the rearguard was brought up by a younger member. Then there was the other Mr. Smith, who confessed that he was to desert the Club when it should leave the summit "Where three Counties meet," having found two other spirits as adventurous as himself. One of these spirits had established himself as a regular

Braemar visitor and mountain explorer—in the Club (and we believe out of it) he is known as Dr. Levack. (At this point we intrude to explain that “spirits” in this paragraph has neither the popular nor the ghostly meaning.—Ed.) Dealing with spirits once for all, it may be mentioned that the other was Mr. George Duncan, then and for some time back in residence at the Spittal. He had been raiding the surrounding hills, with an occasional descent on Braemar itself. Another distinguished member sojourning in these parts was our friend Mr. Couper. True, he was not promptly recognised, for, as he confessed, he had parted with his dreadful alpenstock—an implement so long that its place in the train was on the foot-board of the longest corridor carriage of the Great North. There was, however, no mistaking Sidney: the geologist’s hammer was much in evidence, and he it said that he owed on the descent to having added not a few specimens to his collection. The novice recently referred to innocently asked the use of the hammer, only to receive the knock “to drive you up!”

Among other notabilities we met in the Square were our own Lord Provost on holiday at “Invercauld,” who on being questioned said that the Town House was locked up till Thursday. Sir Alexander was resting, and did not feel that he should join his fellow members on the morrow, but we might take his son and offer him as a sacrifice to “use and wont.” Another arrival was the Rev. Mr. Cairney, who had bridged the space between Ballater and Braemar on his bicycle. He complained of the dust the motor buses raised; when he saw one coming he promptly dismounted, taking shelter in a convenient field till the dust cloud ceased to trouble. Postmaster Chree, a candidate for honours on the Glas Maol, along with Mr. Robert Lyon, confirmed from personal experience the parson’s statement, so most probably it is true—no reflection, of course, on our reverend brother’s veracity, but hillmen are mortal!

“Our Clerk” has so far escaped notice here, but between his short pithy stories and the marvellous yarns of the Chairman and the interruptions of the Secretary dinner was no silent festival, nor was pleasant intercourse ever

allowed to flag. Honourable mention should also be made of McPherson's critical remarks on bread and bread-making which were much appreciated; but his repertoire was not confined to the staff of life. Much associated with him then and later was Mr. Macintyre—a couple with many minor differences but two particularly strong bonds. Speaking of bread and iron suggests education—we found that our Mr. John Clarke had been in possession of Braemar for some weeks, and on our meeting he promised to join us in the morning. He fully redeemed his pledge, and the Club rejoiced to see with him two daughters and a son, one of the ladies giving us a lesson in botany.

A call was made on a local medico with the view of securing his company next day. However, even the eloquence of our Chairman and Secretary failed to withdraw him from the field of duty; in other words the then health of the Highlanders, spite of the salubrity of Braemar, was such that Auchendryne dared not be left to itself!

All were promptly at the breakfast table the following morning. A very good meal was disposed of though mist lay low on the hills. However, hopes rose high as we set out about 8 o'clock, some on bicycles but the most of us in a waggonette. A start was hardly made when a halt had to be called—the Blairgowrie coach (which we had graciously allowed to start first) in turning the corner at the bridge had a difference with a cart. The coach did not overturn, though the pole snapped, and only the promptitude of the "Invercauld" host averted a serious catastrophe. The drive up Glen Clunie would have been more enjoyed but for the fact that the nearer we got to the county march the closer came the mist to us. Ere the top of the long brae was reached the substituted coach for Blairgowrie passed us after an accident, trifling as it happened. It was overtaken by a motor, which safely passed, but the chauffeur continued to hug the ditch on his right and there became fast. With some little help, the motor was lifted out and the journey resumed. This was thought to be the last of untoward events for the day—but no. One of our cyclists, allowing himself to be overtaken near the march, made a disparaging remark as to our speed;

and so momentarily forgot his machine and his "creed." The former apparently resented the inattention, and rider and bike had a little collapse on the bank—sufficient to create a laugh when Cairngormers go on holiday.

On dismounting we found Mr. Duncan in waiting, and truly his appearance bore ample evidence that he had been leading the open life. He was, however, recognised by those of the members best acquainted with him. A start for the Maol was made at once; it seems to come down to the road-side, but in the then dense mist it looked more bog than hill. A sheep fence leading eastward was said with authority to be the direct route to the summit, and very likely even the climbing experts were glad of its direction. Certain it is, however, that those who knew the hill least were on the top first, for once independent of the recognised leaders.

Glas Maol is an exceedingly easy climb by the route selected; moreover, as the mist never moved, no delays were experienced through enquiries as to the prospect. As for the mountain itself—what need is there for the present scribes to say anything? Did not *The Aberdeen Free Press* of that morning thoughtfully tell its story as follows:—

WHERE THREE COUNTIES MEET.

No great Scottish mountain has a better defined position than Glas Maol, which the Cairngorm Club visit to-day, nor is the prospect from it surpassed for interest by summits even 250 feet higher. The position is at the junction of three great counties—Aberdeen, Forfar, and Perth—the corresponding parishes being Crathie-Braemar, Glenisla, and Kirkmichael. While the height is only 3502 feet its commanding situation gave it preferment over higher mountains as a station during the "Great Triangulation" of the United Kingdom. Thus we have on official record the exact position and distances of a good few summits seen from its cairn. It would be uninteresting to give the entire Survey list, but the following deserve mention, and should delight the heart of the Laird of Kemnay—for if Edinburgh is not visible points are seen even beyond the Scottish capital—Benleuch (the Ochils), 50 miles off; Meikle Bin; Ben Lawers, 40 miles; Ben Alder; Mam Sodhail, 72 miles; Ben Muich Dhui, 18

miles; Corryhabbie Hill, 33 miles; Mount Battock, 24 miles; Says Law (the Lammermuirs), 76 miles; East Lomond, 44 miles; and Carnethy Hill (the Pentlands).

It is almost hopeless to expect such an extraordinary and distant prospect on any one particular visit. Moreover, the mountains named suggest that there are many omissions, for the Royal Engineers were content to note only such points as were necessary in the triangulation. The view of the Cairngorms is a remarkable one, including as it does Beinn Bhrotain, the Angel's Peak, Cairn Toul, Braeriach, Devil's Point, Cairngorm, Beinn Mheadhoin, and Beinn a' Bhuid. The great group of mountains known as Beinn a' Ghlo is well seen, and the more famous Schiehallion may also be observed. Nearer at hand are Cairn na Glasha, Tolmount, and Broad Cairn.

The prospect at one's feet is a remarkable one, for Canlochan and Canness, the head glens and head streams of the Isla, are scenic paradises. Botanists come to them from afar, and many a southern tourist seeks them out—all such visitors receiving, of course, little welcome from the deerstalkers. The mountaineering parson, Grierson, missed the Glas Maol, and these lovely glenlets on its eastern side, but several writers speak of them with much favour. Queen Victoria calls Canlochan (disguised as Cairn Lochan in "Leaves") "a bonnie place. . . . a narrow valley, the river Isla winding through it like a silver ribbon, with trees at the bottom. The hills are green and steep . . . there are fine precipices." Carl Haag's drawing of the royal luncheon on the occasion is familiar to many, but when are Her Majesty's (so-called) "hasty sketches" to see the light?

How often have readers of that now very rare local booklet "Our Tour," the production of "Dryas Octopetala and Thomas Twayblade," well-known veteran mountaineers, bemoaned the necessarily brief description of Glas Maol! The little party literally found themselves "under a cloud" when they reached the top. Yet they "got a fitful glimpse or two of the magnificent view towards the south," breakfasting near the place where the Queen and the Prince Consort had lunched. The variety and beauty of Canlochan glen and its surroundings have impressed everyone who has made a pilgrimage thither." How Macgillivray delighted in Canlochan, almost raving over its beauties and its many rare plants! Nor is Macmillan behind him in his charming "Holidays in High Lands." Glas Maol and its marvellous slopes are, alas, better known to those south of the Mounth than to

Aberdonians ; but let them thenceforth seek an occasional holiday at the head of Glen Isla.

Glas Maol, "the bald-headed hill," is easily reached from Braemar, the Cairnwell road landing one within two crow-fly miles of the top. The turnpike may be left at the county march at an altitude of about 2200 feet, then follows a short climb over Meall Odhar to the summit. An old right-of-way, an erstwhile favourite with smugglers, connects Glen Clunie with Glen Isla ; by it the "climb" is longer, but is ridiculously easy. The "sporting" route is up Glen Callater and over Carn an Tuirc and Cairn na Glasha, descending direct to the Cairnwell. It is to be observed that the three counties meet at a point marked "3483 feet," about $1\frac{1}{2}$ furlongs north-westward of the cairn : why it is so is by no means evident. The general appearance of the summit of Glas Maol quite entitles it to its name. When one is there, however, the abundance of the Least Willow, our smallest "tree," is most remarkable.

Little time was spent at the cairn, for there was no water there. Still business is business, and so the Chairman presided—chairmen generally do. Chree and Lyon were admitted *nem. con.*, and then and there initiated according to use and wont—and they are none the worse, indeed some say they are even the better. Then a Saturday afternoon climb of Ben Aigan was fixed, and the members made towards Canlochan where Duncan had a spring in waiting. It was duly found despite the mist, as was a great snow-field where glissades were indulged in, but the bottom of Canlochan had to be imagined. Luncheon and glissading over, the leaders were ordered to the front, and were directed to make a bee line to the gate in the fence where it crosses the old right-of-way from Glen Clunie to Glen Isla. Thence they were to proceed to Cairn na Glasha—an easy task, as a sheep fence gave no excuse for diverging from the route.

Ah! we forget—not all who lunched on the snowy slope of Canlochan proceeded to Cairn na Glasha. Several more adventurous members went in the direction to Creag Leagach, and we saw them no more that day.

From Cairn na Glasha a course was made for Carn an Tuirc, which reminds us of another omission in this veritable

narrative. Mr. Clarke and his family had followed us up Glen Clunie on bicycles, which they cached by the wayside. To reclaim them they descended to the road by the cairn of the Boar's Hill. We, the main body, were content with "doing" the shoulder, all the more so that the parson had to be in Aberdeen that evening, taking care however to have a peep at Loch Ceannmor. Very probably this was the most wild and picturesque sight we had viewed that pleasant day, a lone tarn, mountain-girt, at a height of 2,196 feet. Thereafter we came on a well, and refreshed the inner man. Loch Callater now lay before us, so the parson was directed to hurry down, meet the conveyance, and from it disinter his bicycle. That part of the programme panned out all right; as for the party, it sauntered leisurely to the loch. There not a few visitors were evidently spending a very quiet afternoon, the Lord Provost among them. Half an hour was given to the scenery, while Jock's Road and others were discussed. McConnochie (who at this point declined a guide) quietly disappeared; it was afterwards stated by some disappointed members that he had been drinking milk with a dairymaid, discussing grouse prospects with an old lady of 85, and talking forest "shop" with a stalker. Then came our conveyance, and we had a glorious run down the two glens. As we waited in our hotel for the sound of the great gong, a motor arrived, and added another clubman to dinner in the person of Mr. James Reid. It was suggested that he was a day late for the fair, but it turned out he was one of a quartette that had "something up their sleeve."

Then came dinner, our last formal sederunt at the "Fife Arms" for a season. Every one was in the best of form; certain it is that the Club never had a happier day together. After coffee some went to the golf course, their appetite for fresh air not even yet satiated, while others crossed the Clunie and visited their civic head.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN TREES.

BY HUGH BOYD WATT.

THE appended list (an amplification of that in Vol. iv., p 114), is the outcome of observations made chiefly in the Braemar district, and may be of value as giving the species of forest trees found growing at an elevation of 1,100 feet and upwards above sea-level. This height is named, not because any scientific importance attaches to it, but because it covers the village of Braemar (alt. 1,100 feet), which is taken as a base-level, and also Tomintoul, Banffshire (alt. 1,160) where some observations were made for me by Miss J. G. Watt.

At about the height of 1,500 feet above sea-level, the Abernethy and Rothiemurchus Scots pines die out, but in some Deeside glens the pines run to a considerably greater height, as noted in my list. It may, however, be accurately said that the limit of forest growth is reached at from 1,500 to 1,700 feet, and the list shows that but few species attain even this height. In exceptional situations or circumstances individual trees of the mountain-ash, birch, Scots pine, spruce fir and larch, occur at higher levels, but the highest common levels are those noted underneath.

LIST OF SPECIES OF FOREST TREES OCCURRING UPWARDS OF 1,100 FEET ABOVE SEA-LEVEL.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|------------------------------|-----|-------------------|
| Lime | ... | ... | <i>Tilia europæa</i> | ... | 1,100—1,200 feet. |
| Great Maple | ... | ... | <i>Acer Pseudoplatanus</i> | ... | " " " |
| Laburnum | ... | ... | <i>Cytisus Laburnum</i> | ... | " " " |
| Scots Laburnum | ... | ... | <i>C. alpinum</i> ... | ... | 1,200 " |
| Horse Chestnut | ... | ... | <i>Æsculus Hippocastanum</i> | ... | " " |
| Wild Cherry | ... | ... | <i>Prunus Avium</i> | ... | 1,100—1,200 " |
| Bird Cherry | ... | ... | <i>P. Padus</i> | ... | 1,300—1,400 " |
| Whitebeam | ... | ... | <i>Pyrus Aria</i> | ... | 1,200—1,300 " |
| Mountain Ash (Rowan) | ... | ... | <i>P. Aucuparia</i> | ... | 2,000 " |
| Hawthorn | ... | ... | <i>Crategus Oxyacantha</i> | ... | — 1,100 " |
| Ash | ... | ... | <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> | ... | 1,100—1,200 " |
| Elm | ... | ... | <i>Ulmus montana</i> | ... | " " " |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Birch | <i>Betula alba</i> | 1,800—2,000 feet. |
| Hazel | <i>Corylus Avellana</i> | 1,100—1,200 „ |
| Alder | <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> | 1,500 „ |
| Oak | <i>Quercus Robur</i> | 1,200 „ |
| Beech | <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> | 1,100 „ |
| Willows | <i>Salix</i> (two species at least) | 1,100—1,200 „ |
| White Poplar | <i>Populus alba</i> | 1,200 „ |
| Aspen | <i>P. tremula</i> | 1,500 „ |
| Spruce Fir | <i>Picea excelsa</i> | 2,000 „ |
| Larch | <i>Larix europæa</i> | 2,000 „ |
| <i>Abies hookeriana</i> (bearing many cones in July, 1903) | | 1,200 „ |
| Scots Pine | <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> | 2,000—2,100 „ |

Of the twenty-five species named the birch and the Scots pine far exceed all the others put together, in number, and at the higher levels the last named species is the predominant one. Considerable numbers of fairly well-grown pines run up to over 2,000 feet in Glens Quoich and Derry (Braemar), and with them are some spruces and larches. The larch is numerous in other places. At and above the village of Braemar is a very lovely and typical birch wood, many of the houses being built in clearings in this wood. By the side of the River Dee the birches are tall, and many of them are above the average size; but when 1,500 feet up is reached they have become beautifully small and well-proportioned. There are thousands not over six feet in height. They ascend the slopes of Morrone in almost unbroken numbers to about 1,700 feet, sweeping over its northern side. It is a characteristic Highland native wood, with an undergrowth of heather, juniper and bracken. Among the birches are occasional aspens, bird-cherry, and Scots pine.

Of the other species in the list, solitary examples of the mountain-ash occur in more than one place at 2,000 feet, and at lower levels it abounds. The alder is by all the stream sides; but the hazel is scarce. Only one small oak was noted; it is not till the 700-800 feet level is reached that oaks become prominent. In the neighbourhood of man's dwellings specimens of the other trees named above may be found, flourishing and well-grown in many cases, but not in any considerable numbers. Right in the village of Braemar a dark copper beech is a conspicuous object.

Of the earlier woodlands of the Cairngorm mountains evidence may be seen in the tree remains found in peat-mosses and on the bare hill-sides at an elevation where trees do not now seem able to maintain existence. Burnt wood frequently occurs underneath moss and tree-roots, and bears witness to the primitive and wasteful methods by which the earlier inhabitants cleared the land. The course of time has brought about the present-day demands for re-afforestation, but "that is another story."



EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

It was in the month of August, and the morning mists were just rising on Ben Vrackie as I left Pitlochry about seven. The Tummel was crossed at Cluny Bridge, and the old-fashioned Highland road that runs along its right bank followed westwards up

PITLOCHRY TO the glen. The pleasantly situated Faskally House was
ABERFELDY *via* next passed on the right, just below the confluence of
SCHIEHALLION. the Tummel and the Garry; then with a peep up the valley of the latter stream, and five minutes at the "falls", the walk up stream was continued. The path now narrows considerably, and forms a fine specimen of a typical, Highland glen, certainly equalling, if not surpassing, its more popular neighbour, Killiecrankie. Cammoch is reached in about half an hour, but is now marked only by larachs, and high up on the opposite side of the valley we have Bonskeid House, guarding the entrance to Glen Fincastle.

The farther one proceeds along this straggling byeway the better it becomes, at least from a pedestrian's point of view; a regular switchback, up and down it goes, through a veritable ocean of the richest and most luxuriant vegetation, in which birches and bracken predominate: while keeping company with the turbulent stream, now climbing up the hillside, running through a burn, and again seeking the companionship of the river. Some more larachs were passed on the right, and then a rather primitive arrangement for crossing the stream was noticed, consisting of a steel cable stretched from tree to tree, along which travelled a roughly-made wooden cradle.

As Loch Tummel is approached the glen begins to widen out again, vegetation gets thinner, and there is a most peculiar and sudden change in the environment. Bracken and birch suddenly give place to rock and heather. But although the nearer surroundings are rather bare, this cannot be said of the prospect as a whole. About halfway along the lochside and a little short of Frenich House, an iron cross marking a well by the roadside was noticed, and then the road entered the woods again, the shade of which was gladly welcomed.

Foss House was next passed, and at 10.15 I reached the quiet little hamlet of the same name with its plain stone kirk and graveyard. Soon after this I struck the Tummel Bridge road at Dalost, just beside the Kynachan burn and following this stream upwards, a faintly marked track led me to the high level road between Aberfeldy and Rannoch, where it climbs over the base of Schiehallion (11-10). I rested here a few minutes, then crossing the shoulder of a lesser height, was soon on the slopes of the giant. The ascent was very easy, even after a fifteen mile tramp, but the luxuriant growth of mountain berries—blaeberries, cranberries, crowberries and cloudberry—offered a good excuse for frequent halts. However, the ridge was topped at 12.45, and half an hour sufficed for the walk—a most enjoyable one at that—along to the cairn (3547).

Unfortunately the view was very limited, owing to a heat haze—the day

being oppressively hot—though of course all the neighbouring hills were visible, and the village of Aberfeldy was well seen with the telescope. The white roads threading their way over the moorland in all directions contrasted strongly with the deep brown of the heather. Carn Maig looked very glum on the other side of the deep glen of the Allt Mor.

I left the summit at 1.45, and traversed the ridge eastwards to its very end, then dropping down to the Allt Mor, I had a rough tramp through the heather to a sheep track by the stream. This was followed till I spied the Aberfeldy road in the vicinity of the seventh milestone, the village being reached at 5.45, with just time for a cup of tea before the train left.

Blackwood's Magazine for August contained an interesting article on "The Alpine Club," which celebrated its jubilee last year, the article being written

THE ALPINE
CLUB.

by Mr. H. Preston-Thomas, who tells us that he has missed only a couple of the annual dinners of the club in a good deal over a quarter of a century. He has much to say about the beginnings of the club, and the prejudices and misapprehensions about Alpine climbing that had to be overcome, and he discourses in exceedingly pleasant fashion about the more prominent members and their adventures, and about the transference of mountaineering feats to the Andes and the Himalayas. "It is worth remembering," he notes, "that Mr. Bryce, at present H.M. Ambassador at Washington, and lately President of the Alpine Club, was Noah's immediate successor in the ascent of Mount Ararat—from which he proudly brought down a piece of wood bearing evident traces, according to a distinguished Admiral, of exposure to sea water. So at least he once informed the club, though with a suspicious twinkle." Mr. Preston-Thomas says, it is curious that, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the mountains had as little charm for athletes as for artists. It was Ruskin who then set himself to show that the Alps were not, as they had been called, "ugly encrescences on the beautiful face of Nature;" and it was a small band of enthusiasts (of whom Mr. Justice Wills is one of the few survivors) who at about the same time invented mountaineering. They had to face an immense amount of ridicule. "But gradually people found that the men who devoted themselves most keenly to mountaineering were neither fanatics nor fools; that although, like most sports, it involved some risks, the notion of climbing a peak with its attendant excitement and adventures was not necessarily more insane than that of galloping across country after a fox; and, as a matter of fact, the hard-worked barristers, the men of science, the Cambridge tutors who were among the leaders of the new pastime, found in it the best possible recreation for mind and body."

THE secret of the Westmorland and Cumberland mountains is their perfect exemplification of proportion in design. Like the sculptor who is completely master of his art, Nature from end to end of this region has so cunningly balanced and contrasted even the smallest strokes from her chisel as to produce the greatest possible effect with the least possible expenditure of material. In such scenery as that of the Grasmere valley or of Borrowdale, there is not a single touch either too many or too few to produce the characteristic effect of grandeur in outline combined with delicate finish in detail. In this group of hills there are hardly ever those dull,

THE ENGLISH
LAKE MOUNTAINS.

unfinished intervals in the scenery which in Wales and Scotland, as in Switzerland, too often serve to lessen the effect of any but the finest points of view. The most sophisticated among appraisers of landscape would be hard put to it to suggest how the view up Windermere into Langdale could be improved by contracting a stream-gorge there or heightening the scarp of a precipice here. The result of this perfect harmony in proportion is that to the climber in the Alps or Rockies, who visits the Lake mountains for the first time, everything seems four or five times as high as it is. The Alpinist merely thinks you are joking when you suggest a walk to the top of Silver How before dinner, as you sit at tea, facing it, in the garden of the Grasmere Hotel. It looks to him a six or eight hours' excursion. And though the metric estimate soon lessens of Lakeland heights, their impressiveness remains unchanged. Partly their unique gift of making the most of themselves is due, of course, to the fact that, rising almost from sea-level, their whole height goes to mountain-making. The little church of Wastdale—that white fleck under the gloom of Scawfell and Great Gable—is less than three hundred feet above high-water mark on the sands of Irt below; but the surface of the Lake of Thun, to take a Swiss instance, is more than eighteen hundred feet. Yet this purely physical gain forms but a small part of the peculiar advantage of this mountain group over others. They lack, it is true, the supreme beauty and fascination of eternal snow; but this very absence, of a snow-cap undoubtedly gives the rocky lines of all less lofty mountains a completeness of which they otherwise are robbed. The human traditions of the Lake country are as varied and individual as the sculpture and verdure of the hills. These English mountains need fear comparison with no greater range; they have a character and beauties of their own which can be paralleled on no other soil.—“*Outlook*” (21 September, 1907.)

ACCORDING to a telegram from Darjeeling, the world's climbing record has been beaten. Messrs. Robinson and M. Aas, Norwegian mountain climbers, have succeeded in climbing the north-east peak of Kabru, 24,020 ft. to within 50 feet of the summit. They were forced to return by the high wind and night approaching. They could easily have reached the top. One native died a natural death, and M. Aas had his toes frozen, but not seriously. The record therefore stands at 23,970 feet.—*Daily Telegraph*, 19th November, 1907.

THE Club revisited, as Saturday afternoon excursions, Tap o' Noth on 29th June and Ben Aigan on 31st August. The former was ascended from Gartly, the Club afterwards dining at the Gordon Arms Hotel, Rhyndale; the latter from Graigellachie, dinner being served in the Hotel—the chairman presiding on both occasions.

THE Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Club was held on 20th December 1907, the Chairman, Mr. James A. Hadden, presiding. Office-bearers and Committee were elected as on page ix. The Excursions for the current year were fixed as follows:—Spring Holiday, Mount Battock; Summer Holiday, Cairngorm; and two or three Saturday afternoon excursions as may be arranged by the Committee. It was resolved to present the Alpine Club with a copy of the Club's publications.

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