

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.

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The Cairngorm Club.

PRESIDENT,	-	H. E. The Right Hon. JAMES BRYCE, D.C.L., LL.D.
CHAIRMAN,	-	JAMES A. HADDEN.
TREASURER,	-	T. R. GILLIES, 181a Union Street, Aberdeen.
SECRETARY,	-	A. I. M'CONNOCHIE, 88 Devonshire Road, Aberdeen.

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

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VOL. VI.

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THE CAIRNGORM CLUB
1911

ABERDEEN

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The Cairngorm Club

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The Cairngorm Club.

PRESIDENT :

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JOHN CLARKE, M.A.

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CHARLES RUXTON, 1891-92.

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ROBERT ANDERSON, 1895-97.

Rev. ROBERT SEMPLE, 1898-99.

WILLIAM PORTER, 1900-01.

ROBERT HARVEY, 1902-03.

JOHN M'GREGOR, 1904-06.

JAMES A. HADDEN, 1907-09.

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John R. Findlay of Aberlour.
Rev. William Forsyth, D.D., Abernethy, Strathspey.
 Sir Arthur H. Grant, Bart. of Monymusk.
 Rev. Robert Lippe, LL.D.

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* Signifies an original member.

DATE.

- 1907 George Anderson, Osmington, Avenue Road, Wallington, Surrey.
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- * George Mollison, 201 Union Street, Aberdeen.
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- * John Rust, J.P., 224 Union Street, Aberdeen.

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- 1895 William H. Shepherd, 6 Bonaccord Crescent, Aberdeen.
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- 1900 Alex. Emslie Smith, Junr., 154 Union Street, Aberdeen.
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- 1895 James Smith, Denview Cottage, Bieldside, Aberdeen.
- * Walter A. Smith, Murrayfield, Midlothian.
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* Alexander Taylor, 30 Braemar Place, Aberdeen.

1894 James W. H. Trail, M.A., M.D., F.R.S., 71 High Street, Aberdeen.

1895 Alexander Troup, 101 King Street, Aberdeen.

1892 John Wallace, J.P., 85 George Street, Aberdeen.

1898 A. C. Waters, Moidart, Detillens Lane, Limpsfield, Surrey.

1908 Wm. C. Welsh, 7 Fotheringham Road, Ayr.

1908 Hugh D. Welsh, 1 Morningside Road, Aberdeen.

1903 John H. Will, M.B., C.M., Hospital for Consumption, etc.,
Brompton, London, S.W.

1892 Robert M. Williamson, 230 Union Street, Aberdeen.

1897 George Wood, 19 Burns Road, Aberdeen.

MINOR MEMBERS.

1910 Mrs. Simpson, 14 Osborne Place, Aberdeen.

1910 Alex. C. Simpson, 14 Osborne Place, Aberdeen.

1910 J. M. Rattray, 7 Chanonry, Aberdeen.

R U L E S.

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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 5s. 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 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. The Committee shall also have power to elect qualified Minor Members, belonging to the household of ordinary members. Minor Members shall pay an annual subscription of 2/6, but shall have no voice in the management of the Club, nor be entitled to receive copies of the Club's publications.

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.



Mr. WILLIAM PORTER, J.P.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. VI.

JULY, 1908.

No. 31.

WITH A RÜCKSACK ON THE PENNINE ALPS.

BY JAMES GRAY KYD.

THE sun was shining brightly as we two dusty club members stepped off the Simplon train at Vernayaz in the Rhone valley. We had left Aberdeen some forty hours before, and the longest pause was three hours in Paris. We made Vernayaz the starting point for our three weeks' tramp. There is a choice of several roads for those who wish to walk from the Rhone Valley over to the Valley of the Arve at Chamonix. We knew the Col de Balme and the Tête Noire: the Salvan had lost some of its original interest, as one could now go most of that way comfortably seated in a railway carriage. We noticed on our map a path which starts on the right side of the Gorge of the Trient, and comes out on the Tête Noire road near the Tête Noire Hotel. On reference to our invaluable Baedeker we found that this was an interesting path, but that a guide was advisable for novices. This is a common statement in his guide book, and somewhat irritating, as unless one knows exactly what is Herr Baedeker's idea of a novice, the phrase is meaningless. This was my second season out, and as I had done nothing more exciting than the Brévent by the Chimney route, I suppose I had to write myself down as a novice. However, my companion had pierced the clouds, and strutted about on the summit of

the monarch of the Alps; so we ignored the ominous warning of the friend of travellers.

The first part of the walk is a steep ascent up a zigzag path in the rocks, then through delightful woods of larch and fir, here and there crossing a clear stream hurrying to lose its beauty in the dirty glacier water of the Trient far down the gorge. On we walked, thankful for the shade of the luxurious trees, and soon descended to the side of the stream. Far above and across the water the pretty village of Salvan nestled at the foot of rocky peaks. After about three hours' walking we reached a group of chalets called La Crete. Here we got refreshment, and judging by the astonishment of the natives at seeing us, and the extreme frugality of the repast to which we were treated, few must pass this way.

The only part of the path that novices would have any difficulty with is that between our halting-place and the Tête Noire Hotel; for some little distance it is hewn out of a precipice, and as there is no railing or other means of support, it might be awkward for anyone troubled with giddiness. As we left the woods we saw the full beauty of the distant hills. Far behind, the Grand Moeveran frowned down on the Rhone, ahead of us the smiling snow peaks of Savoy were lit up by the evening sun. The well-known Tête Noire highway was soon reached, and an hour's walking brought us to the frontier village of Châtelard, romantically situated in the valley of the Eau-Noire. Here we rested and appreciated more than ever the luxury of a bed. There is all the difference in the world between a fresh pair of blankets and a grimy railway rug.

The road between Châtelard and La Poya was dusty as we leisurely tramped along, and the grasshoppers were whistling merrily in the heat of the noon-day sun. At La Poya the Val Bérard comes down. It was our intention to strike up this valley to climb Mont Buet, a mountain known to history as the scene of the first recorded fatal climbing accident. Its summit is one of the best view points in the western Alps.

The day was rather doubtful as we wended our way up

the bank of the cool Bérard stream in the early hours of the morning ; however, it cleared later. We reached the Pierre à Bérard shortly after seven, and had breakfast. Mr. Whymper in one of his books on Chamonix says of the Pierre, "Here there is an erection that can hardly be called either hotel, restaurant, or refuge ; it has beds, and a reputation for high charges." We found the place very clean and the cooking excellent, and as to the charges, we must confirm Mr. Whymper's information !

There is very little difficulty in the ascent ; the path—so long as it lasts—is over good rock debris, which affords a thoroughly trustworthy footing, then the last 2000 feet is mostly over gentle snow slopes with some incipient glacier about 9000 feet up. Three hours' climbing brought us to the summit. The view at every step of the ascent was superb. As we left the hut, the neat little Aiguilles Rouges with their miniature glaciers were the dominating feature, but as we rose they seemed to sink down to make room for the higher and grander Aiguilles of the Chamonix Valley. North-eastwards from the summit we saw the far distant Bernese Oberland appearing over the nearer Dent du Midi. Eastwards we gazed far over the Col de Balme towards the Pennine Alps. In this direction there were some clouds, but as we looked, the rocky Matterhorn reared its rampant form through a wisp of snow-white cloud ; the sight lasted but for a second or two, and then all was cloud, but again it reappeared only to be immediately swallowed up. This was our first view of the Matterhorn, one that we are not likely to forget. But nearer and clearer and more beautiful stretched the long range of the Chamonix peaks, with hardly a cloud from the Aiguille d'Argentière to the Dôme du Goûter. Altering Scott we might have said,

Each snowy peak, each flinty headed spire
Was bathed in floods of living fire,

but yet we could not stay long, for we were some 10,200 feet above the sea, and the cold was keen, so off we had unwillingly to go. An occasional glissade shortened the distance to the hut, and then the walk down by the clear

pools of the stream to La Poya brought us to the main road again; after a short pause at the Hotel Buet we mounted the Col des Montets on our way to Chamonix. We could not but rest awhile on the summit of the Col to drink in the beauty of the Aiguille d' Argentière. We do not know whether it needed Mr. A. E. W. Mason to tell us that this is a fine mountain, but there is no doubt that it is one of the grandest peaks of the Mont Blanc range. The walk down the valley of the Arve into Chamonix is too well known to need any description.

A few days of exploration at Chamonix was a pleasant interlude in our walk. However, we were bound for the south, so we started off one clear morning for Les Houches, a little village with a quaint church some five miles down the valley. Here we struck up the hillside and mounted the steep zigzag path to the well-named Pavillon Bellevue. From this point we descended to the Bionnassay valley, crossing the stream which flows from the glacier of that name. This valley is green and wooded, and the way was shortened by the company of a delightful Frenchman who was our companion that day. His views of life were very fresh, and his knowledge of the Savoy hills extensive; he was small of stature, and told us with a touch of sadness in his voice, that the Napoleonic wars had killed the best of the French race.

Our route lay over to Contamines, a quaint village nestling on the smiling slopes of Mont Joli. We kept on by this valley to the inn at Nant-Barrant, a quaint little resting-place, right under the huge Glacier de Trélatête of Mont Blanc. When we rose next morning we found the ground white with hoar frost, but the air clear and crisp. The stiff six miles to the summit of the Col du Bonhomme were finished before the hot August sun had peeped over the giant peaks that guard this pass. The view back down the Mont Joli valley is a striking testimony to the appropriateness of the French place-names. Our path still climbed up over the Col des Fours (8891) which was the highest point in our day's march. Here we descended rapidly over slate debris to the Torrent des Glaciers, and



SUMMIT OF COL DE LA SEIGNE.
WHERE FRANCE AND ITALY MEET.

reached the inn at Les Motets in time for lunch. Our path now led over the gentle slope of the Col de la Seigne. Just after leaving Les Motets we passed the Custom House, as Italy and France meet on the summit of this pass. We climbed steadily upwards, the steepness near the finish preventing us from paying much attention to the hills around, when suddenly we reached the summit, and the whole beauty of the Italian Alps burst upon us. 'Twas our first sight of Italy, but often had we pictured the colour of an Italian landscape, and on that bright summer afternoon our hopes were not disappointed. High above us the blue dome of Heaven; at our feet the green Allée Blanche valley trended down to the vineyards of Piedmont; to our left the huge range and precipices of Mont Blanc reared high and clear into the sky.

“ And soon our eyes had drunk her beauty up
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup—
And still the cup was full.”

This point of view has attracted the great explorers of the Alps. De Saussure has written of its magnificence, and Ritter, the German geographer, says “The view is unsurpassed in the Alps.” However, Courmayeur was six hours further on, and we were due to meet our companions there, so we could not spend too long by the cross where France and Italy meet. We descended over pasturage, passing some chalets 1000 feet from the summit, where we saw an ingenious churn, the motive power being a babbling brook that raced past the door. Green Lac Combal was reached, and the huge moraine of the Glacier de Miage passed before we came into the fir woods, where we saw a trespass-board, our first indication that we were in Italy, and had left the democracies of France and Switzerland behind. We had some light refreshment at an inn, but fared badly and were somewhat overcharged; however, on suggesting that we might be communicating with Herr Baedeker, we got a considerable percentage off our bill. Does the innkeeper desire more Aberdonian patronage?

The darkness came on about two hours before our day's march was done, yet although the distant scene was hidden,

we could see, or almost feel, the gigantic pinnacles of the Brenva ridge close on our left. Our path led us on through thick woods, high above the roaring torrent of the glacier stream. The scenery here is grand (so Baedeker says) yet we do not think that the walk by daylight could be much more interesting than it was to us that starlit evening. The feeling that we were in Italy, the eerie grandeur of the half-hidden peaks, the cheery villages we passed, and the hope of a merry meeting at Courmayeur, all helped to make this walk very sweet. We reached Courmayeur, found our friends, and spent the evening in talking over cols crossed and peaks climbed, till the grey morning was all but breaking.

The next day or two were pleasantly spent in the artistic, but evil smelling villages of Piedmont. Aosta, Ivrea, and Châtillon were visited by some of us, and each place had its own charm—some ancient arch, some imposing church, or some quaint, dirty, winding street.

One bright morning we found ourselves slowly driving up the vine-clad Val Tournanche to the village of that name. Here we engaged two guides to pilot us over the Théodule Pass into Switzerland. The sight of our party winding up the lower slopes of the pass was intensely amusing, and recalled Mark Twain's caravan of guides, porters, and other employees whom he took on his expeditions. However, we were going on to the glacier, and we had to endeavour to banish the humorous side, and think of the crevasses. Nothing exciting occurred, and we safely reached the refuge at the summit of the pass, which we found almost filled with Germans, Italians, French, and Dutch; in fact the small main room was a veritable Hall of Babel. But oh, it was cosmopolitan; the idea of sleeping on the hard boards of an Alpine hut between a stout German and a humorous Dutchman was rich; however, the realization was not quite up to the expectation, as sleep denied her balm.

At 3 a.m. our leading guide wakened us. His call was unnecessary for me, at least, as I had not slept. We drank some black mixture which they called coffee, and then in



BREITHORN FROM THEODULE HUT.

the dim light of that piercing cold morning we prepared to start. We were to ascend the Breithorn, which is some 13,800 feet high, but free from any special difficulty or danger. Shall we ever forget the feeling of keen anticipation and eerie pleasure experienced, as our first party roped up and led off to commence the ascent? The moon was full, so that lanterns were unnecessary. Hardly a word was spoken for long after we left the hut. It is on such an occasion that one understands the power of the mountains. It was all so strange, with not a sound but the chip of the ice-axes on the steep slope. Gradually the daylight crept in, and we saw where we were. Nothing but white virgin snow was around us for miles. The last 1000 feet of the climb is the only part that presents any difficulty, but here the ice slope is steep, and care has to be taken to prevent a slip. When nearing the summit of a peak, one is usually too much engaged with the difficulty of the ascent to notice the distant prospect, so that we were almost stunned by the panorama that met our gaze as we stepped out on to the ridge on the top. Far away to the East the Austrian Peaks were a perfect setting to the morning sun. A hundred miles to the south, away in the plains of Italy, Monte Viso reared up its lofty head. The range of the Alps from end to end simply lay at our feet. We cannot tell of all we saw.

On our return we "bagged" the graceful peak known as the Klein Matterhorn (12,750), from which the view seemed in some directions almost finer. The hut was reached about 10 a.m., and a short rest gave us strength for the long trying descent to Zermatt, where we arrived about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

We made but a short stay in this much-frequented village. The next morning found us wending our way towards the Rhone. We made for the quaint little watering place of Leukerbad, some ten miles to the north of the Valley. We shall not try to describe the mingled humour and pathos of the bath-houses in this modern Bethesda. They are already of world-wide fame, and for any who do not know the mystery—let them be enlightened by con-

sulting Baedeker, or still better, "A Tramp Abroad." It was with difficulty that we tore ourselves away from the fascinations of Leukerbad; however, we had to cross the Gemmi Pass over to the Lake of Thun.

We had a few hot, tiring walks on our holiday, but none more so than this, and could wish our worst enemy no greater trial than to climb the Gemmi under an August sun. There is no respite; it is simply a steady grind from the base to the summit; however, if one has not been surfeited with views, the panorama from the top is worth having a look at on a clear day. On the walk down to Kandersteg we were much refreshed by the sight of the cool Daubensee, and felt tempted to join some jolly young Germans who were bathing; however we had to press on. This Gemmi walk is well known to all Swiss tourists, but we lost some of the real charm which it has to those coming from the North towards the Rhone Valley, as they mount up the gradual slope for some fifteen miles, and then have the reward of the whole range of the Pennine Alps suddenly bursting upon them.

Our stay in the artistic village of Kandersteg was short; we followed the valley of the Kander to Spiez, where we took train to Interlaken. After a day or two's rest we found ourselves at Meiringen. Starting from there we walked on the Grimsel route to Innertkirchen, thence striking to the east up the Susten Pass. This route is seldom traversed, but yet it is one of the pleasantest walks in Switzerland. Such a combination of smiling pastureland, happy villages, rocky pinnacles, and stern glaciers is not to be found in any other Swiss walk. We walked in sunshine till late afternoon, lunching under the vine-covered balcony of a quaint little inn. Rain came on before we reached the Stein Inn, that charming resting-place, where the kindly host placed his ample wardrobe at our disposal.

The clouds had cleared before the night closed in, and the sky gave promise of a bright to-morrow. We reached the top of our last col—the summit of the Pass—before the sun met us. We wended our way down, leaving the hills and the glaciers behind, and came upon the rail-

way at Wassen, from where we took train to Flüelen. Here we joined the steamer and sailed down the lake to Lucerne. For nearly three weeks we had been on the tramp, high up, where we met but few. And those few belonged to the brotherhood of the Open Road; perhaps this is why Lucerne seemed garish, and we were not over sad to shake its dust from off our feet, and turn our faces homeward.

Railway travelling is undoubtedly one of the drawbacks of a Continental holiday, and we were glad to make our last change at King's Cross.

The daylight was creeping in as I steamed north through Forfarshire. Looking westward towards our own hills, of Aberdeenshire and the Mearns, wrapped in the mists of morning with the light of a new day on their summits perhaps I thought that although

“From the great Valais Mountain Peaks my gaze,
Hath seen the cross on Monte Viso plain,
Seen blue Maggiore grey with driving rain,
And white cathedral spires with flames of praise,
Yet now that spring is here, who doth not sigh
For showery morns, and grey skies sudden bright
And a dear land adream with shifting light,
Or in what clear-skied realm doth ever lie
Such glory as of gorse on Scottish Braes
Or the white hawthorn of these English Mays.”

A WINTER WEEK-END AT THE DERRY.

BY REV. R. M. CAIRNEY.

AN unexpected chance gave me a week-end free. I said, "I will spend it among the hills, in their mid-winter garment of snow!" With enthusiasm in my breast and knapsack on my back, and otherwise suitably accoutred, I set off by the first Deeside train and motor for Braemar and the Cairngorms.

I found Braemar regal in snow, and grander even than Braemar in the autumn. After dinner I there parted with two wood-merchants who were going over the hills to buy trees, and stepped out alone for the Linn of Dee. How still the snow-wreathed road! How graceful the trees and shrubs, festooned with the white benison of the sky! How fair the prospect revealed through the skirting of trees! How grand the hills backed by the mountain peaks which cleave the clear sky with their shafts and hatchets of ice! Their apparent height is mightily increased by the black bare crags which show grimly on their sides through the snow. The air is crisp and compact of oxygen; and walking, though in pretty deep snow, is a luxury. As evening drew in, the tall firs and the ghostly moonlit rocks gave an eerie sensation. The "Gallows-tree" swung its gaunt, frost laden arms out into the dark, over the lip of the gravel pit. A solitary crow cawed its hoarse raven-cry; and not another sound but the roar of the river, between its ice-bound banks, disturbed the dark solitude of my walk. Suddenly there was a distant tinkle, tinkle, of bells. It rapidly increased, and quickly came two fine long-stepping horses, tandem, careering down the hill with the carrier's sledge behind. The pretty spirited beasts seemed to enjoy the sledge much better than the cart with its wheels and trams. Quickly, as it had come, the merry sound died away in front. As I plod on, the snow on the road becomes

deeper and less trodden, and the tramping proportionally more laborious. Out of Inverey, and into the open where the road and river touch each other gently, then sweep apart again as if still shy and perturbed by their excess of modesty, though brought together, first, miles ago, then up the little rising ground, then a dive into the dark trees, and, in a trice, I stand on the substantial bridge across the Dee, with a streak of moonlit clouds above me. The Linn forced its disputed way between and under masses of ice. A fine stag of ten points glided cautiously out from the trees twenty yards off.

My way now lies over untrodden snow save for the occasional cross tracks of deer. A yawning gap in the fence, about which splintered wood is scattered and the snow is trodden brown with the hoof-prints of deer, indicates a hungry rush out of their confines. Here and there patches of heather and moss, cleared of snow, and nibbled, mark their browsing places and beds. The wind blows cold and free now, and doubtless there are fresh layers of snow being laid thick on the moory tops of the hills. On the left bank of the Lui I find myself often plunged up to the thighs in the ditch-rans which are hidden beneath snow-wreaths, but these little accidents, in their own way, enliven the walk. Patches of bright red blood seem to indicate the trail of some fox, which, having killed its quarry, has dragged it along the path to its lair. Now I notice a small well-shaped footprint, armed with stout tackets, descending the glen. I put on my Sherlock Holmes spectacles and pronounce it the foot-print of a long-striding youth. I was "far-out"; it proved to be the foot-print of my intended host. One of true Keltic blood, he has, though no youth, a very small springy foot—just the thing for negotiating the hills. There is little other sign of life in the glen, for the deer have gone over the hill for shelter from the cold winds. One solitary rabbit darts into the pine-wood; two crows, one a good mile behind the other, pass over my head; and by and by, a hovering hawk, after I had watched it for five minutes, sailed out of sight over the hill brow.

The little burn from the hill-side has made a risky cascade of ice at the ford, so I cross at the wooden bridge a few paces lower down, where the larch of the cottage add desolation to loneliness. Just below this are two striking mounds in the river course, which must originally have stretched right across the river bed. They are doubtless the remnants of moraines left by the glacier which scoured this glen in the glacial epoch. They are composed of gravel and some small boulders from the hills farther up. A mile up the Lui from here, just at Derry Lodge, there is another in much better preservation. It rises behind the house, quite forty feet high, and is more than a hundred and fifty yards long, with what might be continuations of it up the eastern hill side for as much again. The western end is abruptly cut off, no doubt by the erosion of the river in torrent, and by frosts. A sprinkling of pines of small and rather feeble growth covers this moraine. Still beyond—up Glen Derry—there are several others. One, well-preserved, is about a quarter of a mile up; a larger one, called "the dam", about two miles in the same direction. Like archaic old world Highlanders, in the reign of the Georges, disputing every yard of every haugh and meadow, up the straths and glens, to resist the invasion of lowland civilisation and lowland rule and supremacy, these glacial moraines mark the stages of the retreat of the glaciers before the inevitable advance of the sunnier times under which the lowlands had already been long smiling. Thus found the "Ice-age" lingering refuge in the mountains, stretching down to the cold upland glens in many a retreating ice-flow.

Carn Crom, shadowy white and speckled in the pale moonlight, and above it the conical peak of Cairngorm of Derry, show like celestial spectres; Carn a'Mhaim stands massive. The clouds have driven past; the sky is clear and the air sharp with keen frost; the wind has quite fallen; the moon is lambent with brilliance; the stars, despite her, are gleaming in their thousands with that peculiar brilliance which a frosty night

gives them. Venus, shining like a moon herself, was just about to set. So clear was the sky that I could, for a short time, make her rise and set at will, by just walking up or down the hill-side. A beautiful object she was—a great limpid eye glancing over the edge of the hills. Not far above her shone Saturn, and a little higher in the heavens, Mars flamed red. When I climbed up to the “lift” I found Jupiter forcing his steady light through the horizon haze in the east. Thus I had the rare fortune to have our four brightest planets in sight at once. A few more plunges in the deep snow brought me to the door of the cosy lodge, where I received a warm and hearty welcome. The evening was spent in music, in friendly chats, and in skimming over John Sobieski Stuart’s Notes on the “Lays of the Deer Forest.”

I rose betimes in the dark frosty morning and had a brisk walk before breakfast; and, after that important function, had leisurely worship with the family. How sweet is the Book and the time of communion when there is no feeling of hurry to mar it! As it was impossible to go to Church, and it was too cold to keep healthily warm sitting by the fire, I took my staff and deliberately exceeded the “Sabbath day’s journey” in a good climb up Carn Crom, with my pocket Bible in my breast. I was richly rewarded. Beginning my walk in the mood of a wanderer, I struck off away from the path and the foot-bridge, and had to cross the Derry by the help of a big pine that had fallen partially across it. I did this straddle-legged, as the coating of ice upon the tree trunk made it risky to attempt the Blondin step. Had I been quite sure of the river ice I might easily have leapt the water in the mid-stream, so narrow was it. The climbing over the dry snow was delightful, and only where the surface had been melted and frozen into ice, and where the live rock broke through, had I to betake myself to the undignified method of hands and knees and toe-points. As I climbed, the day steadily improved till all the sky was clear save where the creeping clouds clung around the top of Monadh Mor, Braeriach and Ben Muich Dhui.

Northward, Cairngorm of Derry shone white as a celestial throne, and hid Beinn Mheadhoin. Eastward, Beinn Bhreac presented an unbroken surface of white. Behind and further east Beinn a' Bhuird raised his mighty shoulders, his white mantle dotted with grey clochs. Far off Lochnagar lifted his head sharp and well defined, but not so white as the Cairngorms. Away south lay the glen and its ice-banked river, and over the lift the wooded south bank of the Dee at Inverey carried the eye up Glen Ey and over its Socach to the rounded summit of Glas Maol. Westward, Monadh Mor and its sheer crags led on to the top of the fierce precipices of the Devil's Point and the solid mass of Cairn Toul. It was a view to inspire the loftiest feelings, aye and the most sacred; for was not all clothed in that wonderful spotless garment that can come only from the heavens—type of the pure robe of righteousness, given, a free gift, of the grace of Heaven, to all men of good heart. Down below me the little forest of pines that protected the stalkers' cottages in this arctic winter looked snug amid the cold white mountains; and, as I looked, I thought that the kindly ingenious inmates therein were of more interest to the Father which is in Heaven, than all the mass of towering crags, cold and dead.

The glacial moraine already referred to, behind the lodge, forms a splendid look-out place and promenade, like the deck of an Atlantic liner. The view from it, too, is magnificent. Hither I came to sit and read in the gloaming, and, when cold, to promenade. Coming down I met a stag with only one horn, who seemed quite willing to have a chat with me. When I made my approaches, however, he began to lower that same one horn, and I glided quietly off towards the house. I was told that he was the most impudent beast in the forest, kept prowling about the house, apart from the rest, tried to enter by the doors, but would allow no approach to familiarity. The lady of the house had several times been threatened by him, and wished he might get shot in mistake for a hind.

My host having returned from Church, stories of wonderful events on the hills, of pleasant meetings with

well-known public men as well as aristocrats and royalty, affecting tales of exhaustion and mist-shrouded wanderings, interspersed with many an interesting fact about deer, made the time pass very fast. Nor were there wanting some shrewd moralizings, and uplifting meditations upon the Creator's handwork and the duties and privileges of the creature. The crunching of the one-horned stag's hoofs on the hard snow outside, and the whistling of the keen wind through the window sash, which I several times thought was the distant sound of bag-pipes—so mournfully musical was it—were the accompaniments to our reading the chapters before retiring for the night, after one of the pleasantest days of my life.

Refreshed in body and mind alike, I rose again betimes and wandered out, superfluously, to seek an appetite that I already had for breakfast. I seemed to hear the cheery chirp of the snow bunting, and was informed that it is often seen about the lodge in the winter. Reluctantly I must, this morning, bid farewell to the sweet solitudes and the Highland hospitality of the glen. My good host has three convoys which he gives to his guests, and each one implies a different "good-bye." To see a guest to the end of the lodge avenue is to treat him with just every-day common courtesy, as one who knows he is welcome and need not be fussed over. To go on with him to the point where the road rises to a view down the length of the glen (about half a mile), is to treat him in a special manner and indicate that a future visit would be very welcome, and is the convoy a new acquaintance gets if he has proved himself an agreeable guest. But to see a man as far as the burn, and to put him across it, is to see him so far that there is no fear of his returning, and to indicate quite plainly that he is not wanted back! When my host came beyond his own private road I suggested, having regard to his advancing years, that he had come far enough. "Nay," he said, "I am going to give you my best convoy, to yon hillock there, for I want you to feel that you will be very welcome to come back when you can." Down the glen I wended my way in the

stillness of the frosty morning. Up the glen shone the morning sun through the faint morning haze. The two moraines break the level of the haugh, and loom out, like fairy islands, from the delicate sun-bathed haze; the deer are down on the ice in scores to get at the water that flows in the narrow run in the centre; the sky above is blue, and the only sound is the crunch, crunch, of my hill-boots in the hard snow. It is a scene for a Turner to paint. I stoop to pick up a film of the medullary sheath of the pine tree, which some stag had been feeding on, and hold it up to let the sun shine through it, in colours amber and pink and brown, and lo! there is a stampede of the deer from the river bank up the hill—my movement has caught their eye and aroused their suspicions.

My walk was brisk, for the frosty air was exhilarating, and I soon reached the Fife Arms. Morrone, the pride of Braemar, looked well enough to-day for all the best things that have been said of him. A cap of solid white and a dash of snow down the crags do remarkably heighten the appearance of a bold hill. I waved a reluctant farewell to it, and to fair friends in Braemar; the motor ground its noisy way out; and I saw no more of Nature, save the auspicious sight of a splendid Magpie, until "Aberdeen awa'" was reached.

THE TOWNSHIP WELL.

Where the rowan tree extends its shade
Over moss and heather-bell,
By a storm-dwarf willow bush decayed,
You may see the township well.

The bracken waves on the lone hillside,
And the myrtle scents the dell,
And the moorland stretches dark and wide,
From beside the township well.

The white sheep will answer cry for cry,
And the wheeling peesweeps yell,
And the honey bee will humming fly
All around the township well.

O, dearly the moorfowl loves yon field,
As the shepherd lad can tell,
Where she'll leave her nestling young concealed,
And drink from the township well.

That winding dyke and the cairns of stone,
Seem lying beneath a spell—
And the slanting path, with thyme o'ergrown,
That led to the township well.

I hardly speak when I pass that way,
For the voice sounds like a knell,
And the merry noontide sunbeams stay
Their sport at the township well.

There's an eerie stillness brooding there
When the evening breezes swell—
When the mist creeps down its rocky stair,
To mantle the township well.

I might go to lands beyond the sea
Or live in a hermit's cell—
But a loneliness too deep for me
I feel by the township well.

THOMAS SINTON.

SOME EARLY NOTICES OF THE AVON
AND UPPER DEESIDE.

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

IN the January, 1907, number of this journal were printed some early notices of the Spey, etc., taken from some of the Sibbald Manuscripts in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. I did not then know the name of the writer of the two first passages—Rothiemurchus and Glen More—but I have since found that in his Repertory of Manuscripts, Adv. Lib. press-mark 33·3·16, Sir Robert Sibbald has this entry, "Mr. Geddes, minister, wrotte for me ane descriptione of Strathspey, a sheet," and this obviously refers to the description from which the two passages were taken.

Here I present some passages descriptive of the River Avon and the district of Upper Deeside, taken from the folio volume, press-mark 34·2·8, of the Sibbald Collections previously referred to. Among the documents contained in this volume are several in the script of Robert Gordon of Straloch, one of the Editors of the Scottish Volume of Blaeu's Atlas (see Scot. Geog. Mag., August, 1901), written in the course of his editorship. One of the articles is entitled "Adnotata ad Descriptionem duarum praefectararum Aberdoniae et Banfae in Scotia Ultramontana"; this, as its name signifies, is a draft of a description of these districts. Another article is entitled "Descriptio duarum praefectararum Aberdoniae et Banfae," and seems to be a further elaboration of the same material, though in the passages here dealt with the changes are rather small. The corresponding article as it was published appeared with the title "Praefectararum Aberdonensis et Banfiensis, in Scotia ultramontana, Nova Descriptio. Auctore Roberto Gordonio" in the second edition of the Scottish Volume of Blaeu's

Atlas, 1662, apparently not having been prepared in time for the first edition, which appeared in 1654.

The two manuscript articles, along with other contents of the volume, were copied into the second of the three volumes of the Macfarlane Geographical Collections, now also in the Advocates' Library. These volumes have recently been printed by the Scottish History Society, under the editorship of Sir Arthur Mitchell and Mr. J. T. Clark, and the Latin passages are there accompanied by English versions by Mr. Alexander Gow.

From the three forms of these early descriptions I have selected the passages that may be considered to come properly within the cognizance of the Cairngorm Club, and have made close translations into English. Some of the place-names used differ from their present forms:—Avin, Awen, Ballindallach, Scairsach, Scairsoch, Benivroden, Bini-vroden, Galdy, Galdi, Innerey, Innercald, Crag Gewis, Gardine, Abirgeldie, Abirzeldie, Abiryeldie. One word used in connection with the Dee is possibly of special interest: it is said that Innerey is "septem à scatebris milliaribus." The word "scatebra" is not a common Latin word; it means a place where water bubbles or gushes up, and I have ventured to translate it by "Wells," with a capital. Of course it is not correct to say that Innerey is only seven miles from the "Wells of Dee," even if one uses that name for the "Pools," the real distance being about double as far, and from the Braeriach "Wells" at least a mile more. In the manuscript descriptions Gordon makes much of Crag Gewis, but this does not appear in the account in Blaeu. The trees in the low ground there are said to be limes and birches, "tiliarum et betularum," but it may be questioned whether limes were common there; one would rather expect a reference to alders. Somewhat naturally, perhaps, the Avon is said to start "among the ridges of Binawen," and it is certainly interesting to have one of the earliest testimonies to the clearness and pureness of its waters from a man so widely travelled in Scotland as Timothy Pont.

Strath Avinia or Stra Down, from Robert Gordon's MS. "Adnotata ad Descriptionem duarum praefectararum Aberdoniae et Banfae in Scotia Ultramontana."

All this small inland district, the family estate of the Marquess of Huntly, lies along the valley of the River Avin, which Timothy Pont, who had surveyed all of it, told me is the clearest and of the purest waters of all in the whole of our kingdom. But in this there is no indication of a good soil, for it is extremely lean, the crop scanty and in some years scarcely ripening, so that the chief reliance of the inhabitants is always on pasture, which never fails them.

The Avin or Awen, flowing out of a small loch among the ridges of a very rugged and snow-clad mountain call Binawen,—for Bin in the ancient tongue signifies a high and rugged mountain—after a few miles receives on the right the Bulg Burn, issuing from a loch of the same name. Then, having been dashed like a torrent down a rocky and broken glen, receiving many tributaries from each side, it receives in the lowest part of the glen the river Liffet, again from the right hand, bringing with it many burns. And, flowing northwards in all its course except its headwaters, it mingles with the Spey at Ballindalloch Castle, beyond Strath Avin. At the junction of the Avin and the Liffet are the ruins of the ancient castle of Drimmin, and higher up the Liffet stands Blair Findie. Country cottages occupy the remaining sites here and there in the straths of these rivers, and although the ruggedness of the mountains may seem to forbid it, nevertheless below the junction of the Bulg Burn they are not few.

Strath Avinia or Stra-down, from Robert Gordon's MS. "Descriptio duarum praefectararum Aberdoniae et Banfae."

Strath Avin, a small inland district, now called Stra-down, the family estate of the Marquesses of Huntly, lies along the valley of the River Avin, which Timothy Pont, who surveyed all these parts, told me is the clearest and of the purest water of all the rivers of this kingdom. But in this there is no indication of a good soil, for it is extremely lean, the crop scanty and in some years scarcely ripening, so that the chief reliance of the inhabitants is always on pasture, which never fails them.

The Avin, flowing out of a small loch among the ridges of a very rugged and snow-clad mountain called Bin Awen, after a few miles of its course receives the Bulg Burn, issuing from a loch of the same name. Then it struggles rather than flows through rocky and broken places, receiving many tributaries from each side, until it receives the River Liffet, both this and that other from the right hand. Now increased in volume, flowing northwards in all its course, it discharges into the Spey. At the junction of the Avin with the Liffet are the ruins of the ancient castle of Drimmin, and a short distance thence . Country cottages occupy the remaining sites.

Strath Avinia or Strath Down, from "Praefectararum Aberdonensis et Banfiensis, in Scotia Ultramontana, Nova Descriptio. Auctore Roberto Gordonio," in Blaeu's Atlas, 1662.

All this small inland district, the family estate of the Marquesses of Huntly, lies along the valley of the River Avin, which Timothy Pont, who had surveyed all these parts, told me is the clearest and of the purest waters of all of our kingdom. But in this there is no indication of a good soil, for it is extremely lean, the crop scanty and in some years scarcely ripening, so that the chief reliance of the inhabitants is always on pasture, which never fails them.

The Avin or Awen, flowing out of a small loch among the ridges of Awen, after some miles receives on the right hand the Bulg Burn, from a loch of the same name. Then, having been dashed like a torrent through a rocky and broken glen, receiving many burns from each side, it receives in the lowest part of the glen, from the right hand, the River Liffet with its many tributary burns. And flowing northwards in all its course except in its headwaters, it mingles with the River Spey at Ballindalloch Castle, which is not reckoned in Strath Avin. At the junction of the Avin and the Liffet are the ruins of the ancient castle of Drimmin, and higher on the Liffet stands Blair-Findie. Country cottages occupy the remaining sites here and there throughout all these straths, and although the ruggedness of the mountains may seem to forbid it, nevertheless below the junction of the Bulg Burn they are not few.

Marria or Mar, from Robert Gordon's MS. "Adnotata ad Descriptionem duarum praefectararum Aberdoniae et Banfiae in Scotia Ultramontana."

The lower part of Mar near the sea is contracted by the rivers Dee and Don; in its upper parts it widens out beyond these rivers. It is notable for its length, but its width is variable. He who shall have described these two rivers and their tributary burns will have told almost all things that belong to it, so much do the interior parts abound in mountains and moors. For the Dee, cutting the Grampian Mountains from its sources to its mouth, where they sink down into hills, flows swiftly in its whole course among these mountains, so that the greatest part of this district is unsuitable for crops; but what it yields in harvests is of the best repute, and is always reaped in favourable autumns. These mountains are rich enough in herds of cattle, in flocks of sheep of the best breeds, yielding excellent mutton, in horses suitable for country service, and also in goats in the higher regions. The wool and fleeces are by far the best of all the districts described by me, being praised for whiteness, softness, and fineness of fibre, and are eagerly sought after. But these things do not compensate the evil of a useless soil. The air is wholesome, the inhabitants are vigorous, healthy, and temperate people. The dry soil, and, as I have said, its unfruitfulness in so many places quicken the intelligence of the inhabitants.

The Dee has its sources not far from the range of low mountains called Scairsach, which divide upper Mar from Badenoch, at the foot of a very lofty mountain called Beni-vroden, and, having received the Galdy Burn and flowing a little to the south-east, but turning immediately to the east, hindered by almost no windings, though shut in by lofty and rugged mountains on each side, swift, clear, free from mud, always over

gravelly bed, and crossed by a bridge at the second milestone above New Aberdeen, it mingles with the ocean close to the town.

At Innerey, the name of which comes from the Ey Burn, seven miles from its Wells, it first meets cultivation. Then, increased by waters that many and large streams supply from the neighbouring hills, it passes on the right hand Castletoun, the castle of the Earls of Mar, with the church of Kindrochit in the neighbourhood. On the opposite bank is Innercald, so named from the stream by which it stands. Then follows Crathly, a parochial village. A little lower, on the right hand, is Abirgeldie Castle, where this valley receives the name of Strathdee. After this comes Glengardine, to the north, whence flows the river Gardine, richer than the other streams. About these parts the river is shut in by mountains, but there are not lacking woods notable for tall pines. Here a very high mountain raises itself, as if cut off from the others, and entirely clothed on all sides by trees. A fine wood of huge evergreen pines covers its peaks, its crags, and the very summit, and the pleasant verdure of limes and birches covers the slopes of the mountain and the flats near the river. The name of the mountain is Crag-Gewis, crag signifying mountain, and gewis pine-tree. Among the very many woods through which the river passes, especially in the higher parts, this mountain is notably pleasant to see. Next follows Glen Muick, a narrow glen, getting its name from a stream, which, flowing out of a loch of the same name, after a few miles joins the Dee on the right hand bank, almost opposite to the Gardine.

Marria or Mar, from Robert Gordon's M3. "Descriptio duarum praefectararum Aberdoniae et Banflae."

Mar—of which name no one can give the origin—in its lower part near the sea is contracted by the rivers Dee and Don, on the south and north respectively; in its upper parts it widens out beyond either. It is notable for its length, but its width is very variable. He who shall have described these rivers and their tributary burns will have told almost all things, so much do the interior parts abound in mountains and moors. For the Dee, cutting the Grampian mountains from its sources to its mouth, where they sink down into hills, and leaving a wide tract of them on the right hand, renders this district mountainous and utterly unsuited for cultivation; nevertheless what it yields in harvests is of the best repute, and is always reaped in favourable autumns. These mountains are rich enough in herds of cattle, in flocks of sheep of the best breeds, yielding excellent mutton, in horses suitable for country service, and also in goats in the higher regions. The wool is by far the best of all the districts described by me, being praised for whiteness, softness, and fineness, and is eagerly sought after. But these things do not compensate the evil of a useless soil. The air is wholesome, the inhabitants are vigorous, healthy, and temperate people. The soil dry and insufficiently fruitful quickens their intelligence.

The Dee has its sources close to the range of low mountains called Scairsach, which divide upper Mar, Bra of Mar, from Badenoch, in a very lofty mountain called Beni-vroden, and, having received the Galdi burn, it flows a little to the south-east, turning immediately to the east, hindered by almost no windings, though shut in by rugged and lofty mountains on

each side, swift, clear, free from mud, always over a gravelly bed, passing under a bridge at New Aberdeen, it mingles with the ocean close to the town.

At Innerey, so called from the Ey Burn, seven miles from its Wells, it first meets cultivation. Then, increased by waters that many and large streams carry down from the mountains, it passes on the right Castletoun, the residence of the Earls of Mar, built in the form of a castle, with a church in the neighbourhood. On the opposite bank is Innercald House, and a little lower the church with the village of Crathy, whence still lower on the right hand is Abirzeldie Castle, where this valley receives the name of Strath Dee. Unless you include Glengardine, so named from the river on which it lies, the remaining sites are occupied by country cottages. Here the crop is scanty, the valley of the Dee being shut in by mountains, but there are not lacking woods of tall pines, which could be sold for much money in the lowlands. One mile below Abiryeldie there is a very high mountain on the bank of the river, attached to no other though very many are close to it, and clothed on all sides by trees. A fine wood of huge evergreen pines covers its peaks and its crags, and a wood of limes and birches covers the slopes and the flats down to the river, with trees so tall and close together that nothing of the whole mountain can be seen except the wood. The name of the mountain is Crag-Gewis, crag signifying mountain, and gewis pine-tree. Next to this is Glen Muick, a narrow glen, getting its name from a stream, which, arising from a loch of the same name, after a few miles enters the Dee, on the right bank almost opposite to the Gardine river.

Marria or Mar, from "Praefecturae Aberdonensis et Banfiensis, in Scotia ultra montana, Nova Descriptio. Auctore Roberto Gordonio," in Blaeu's Atlas, 1662.

The lower part of Mar which is nearer to the sea is contracted by the rivers Dee and Don; in its upper parts it widens out beyond them. It is notable for its length, but its width is variable. He who shall have described these two rivers and their tributary burns will have told almost all things that refer to this place, so much do the interior parts abound in mountains and moors. For the Dee, cutting the Grampian Mountains from its sources to its mouth, where these mountains sink down into hills, flows swiftly in its whole course among them, so that the greatest part of this district is unsuitable for crops; but what it yields in harvests is of the best repute, and is reaped seasonably enough. These mountains are rich enough in herds of cattle, in flocks of sheep of the best breeds, yielding excellent mutton, in horses suitable for country service, and also in goats in the higher regions. The wool is by far the best of all the districts hitherto described by me, being praised for whiteness, softness, and fineness, and is eagerly sought after. But these things do not compensate the evil of a useless soil. The air is wholesome, the inhabitants are vigorous, healthy, and temperate people. The dry soil and its unfruitfulness in so many places quicken the intelligence of the inhabitants.

The Dee has its sources not far from the range of low mountains called Scairsoch, which divide upper Mar from Badenoch, at the foot of a very

lofty mountain called Bini-vroden, and having received the Galdy burn, flowing a little to the south-east, but turning its course immediately to the east, hindered by almost no windings, though shut in by lofty and rugged mountains on each side, swift, clear, free from mud, always over a gravelly bed, it mingles with the ocean at Aberdeen.

At Innerey, the name of which comes from the Ey Burn, seven miles from its Wells, it first meets cultivation. Then, increased by many and frequent streams, it passes on the right hand Castell-toun, the castle of the Earl of Mar. On the opposite bank is Innercald, with the parochial village of Crathy. A little lower is Abirgeldie Castle, where this valley receives the name of Strath Dee. Below this, on the opposite bank, is the river Gardine, richer than the other streams. Here the Dee is shut in by mountains, but there are not lacking woods notable for tall pines, even from its very sources. Next follows Glen Muick, a narrow glen, getting its name from a stream flowing through it, which comes down to the river from a loch of the same name, after a few miles, a little below the mouth of the Gardine, but on the opposite bank.

LETTERS FROM THE GLENS AND THE BENS.

WHAT a day was yesterday! It looked well at first, so very well. Mac was to call for us at 8 a.m., and we were ready by that hour, but as a matter of fact it was 12.15 p.m. when we set out in his boat. The weather threatened to go to pieces, and did so ultimately. Mac had various boxes and bags of provisions for the season—so much indeed that he had to leave some things for another boat.

Well, we started for a row of thirteen miles *in a straight line*, but as we could not go right ahead, several miles were added to that distance. The voyage took us eleven hours, so you can fancy how rough we found the narrow loch. Mac had his boy with him. I mostly lay in the stern sheets on a bag of sugar; it was even said that I fell asleep! Mac and B. did the most of the pulling; they appeared to like it and I did not wish to seem selfish! The wind steadily rose and there were "white horses" on the loch, so we shipped some water. At times it was quite impossible to make any headway, we had even enough to do to prevent the boat losing ground—so now and again we went ashore and had rest and lunch, and occasionally baled out the water.

At such times I felt particularly jolly. We generally contrived to find shelter under the trees. We passed several boats with fishermen; one had the ladies with whom we had breakfasted. A big boat overtook us; it was loaded with furniture for a shooting-box. The last time we went ashore owing to the weather we landed at a shepherd's cottage. We had spoken to him as he walked along the loch side; he had three dogs. The little household seemed so pleased at our call, and the daughter gave us a welcome glass of milk. Then followed a characteristic Highland incident—the shepherd embarked with us and rowed for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Was not that hospitable?

His dogs walked by the loch-side, evidently not pleased at the arrangement.

When the shepherd left us, night began to fall, but there is no real darkness at this season. The water was now smooth and even. I took an occasional pull, but the last mile seemed so long! The mist was lying on the hill tops on both sides of us; we saw a few deer and a fox. At last came our little haven, so we took ashore the goods, leaving them to be carried up to the house the following morning. Madame had gone to bed!—the weather had been so rough that she thought we would not set out. What a supper we had! trout and fried eggs, followed by a single tumbler of punch and several stories of the hills.

Next day the weather was unsettled (to put it mildly); we had rain and mist. All the same we did the Ben by a new route, and generally had a good time up a gully, where we had to take shelter from rain and hail for an hour under a big boulder. We spent little time on the summit, as we had arranged for an early dinner. The *piece de resistance* was freshly caught trout. In the evening I put Mac through his catechism—as B. called it—on certain natural history points, so I had a pleasant time.

We climbed "Hell's Peak" (an appropriate name) the next day; it was a memorable ascent. There was no hurry, our base being so convenient; B. indulged in the luxury of a bath in the burn as I leisurely wrote up my notes. The outstanding non-climbing incident of the day was our happening on a fawn.

The third day was devoted to the "Hill of the Goat," but we saw none! The three children came with us, and though rain bothered us not a little we had a good time. The youngsters seemed delighted to get out with us; the boy is his father's son, and the girls see far more on a hill than I can.

How we have fed on trout since we came here!—eggs, bacon, milk, tea, but neither meat nor poultry, nor bread. I feel in the best of health now, quite recovered, and so is B. The burn in front of our little window never ceases to

brattle. The noise seemed so loud at first; now it is more of a lullaby *when we hear it at all*.

The last day came and we did not like the idea, and the household seemed in no hurry to part with us. The weather began badly, but we had a grand day on the mountains. Met two botanists, but they were too suspicious of us to be very communicative. After dinner we all (Madame excepted), went out in the boat and caught some trout.

Of course when we started for our long walk up the loch-side the weather was at its best; we lingered by the trees and made slow progress. I doubt if we enjoyed the elaborate hotel lunch half so well as the simple fare at Mac's.

* * * * *

“The stars in their courses fought against——” So says, I think, the Bible. They have certainly fought against me; I was wise enough not to contend with them—just slipped round the corner. When I left the train I made at once for the glen, making no halt till I came to my artist friend's. He must agree with the old saint who wailed (in Gaelic),

“Far is France from the head of Loch Long!”

The glen is brown and hard; no snow now. Grouse are beginning to pair, and a few oyster-catchers may be seen, also plovers. Heather was being burned, but not a soul did I meet. How solitary was the loch! The path became rough and there were burns to be crossed, but that was in the programme. When I came in sight of the historic valley I knew my tramp was nearly over, but I do not know that I rejoiced. I called at the lodge, but, alas, the old housekeeper had been buried the previous week. All I could do for the kindly old woman in temporary charge was to speak to her of her beloved Badenoch, and set her clock going.

My host had another visitor shortly after I reached his house. My host was just returned from the low country—as he called it—with two cart-loads of meal, but little makes a load for such roads and cattle. The

visitor was rather interesting to me, as you can understand, for she was an undoubted descendant of the Shaws. Many questions are asked when one has the good fortune to land at a house where the post only troubles once a week.

* * * * *

The loch reached, there are trees and I had their shelter. Lunch No. 1. was now eaten, and others followed when wanted. Oh, why did Jane forget the drinking cup? The hills looked magnificent, for at times the storm paused and there were blue bits of sky. Then there would be an inferno on the tops—big snow patches with clashing clouds of mist. Of course I had rain, the drops like hail, and even hail itself followed by and by. I had a good road, latterly a decent path, and minded these things not—in fact rather revelled in them. I was wet and dry over a score of times. One stream took me *an hour* to cross, and another landed me, first in a bog, then in a swamp. Seemed as I should never get there, but at 6.15 p.m. I did arrive. What a solitary place! yet it is kept in such style that the buildings looked to me as though I were coming down on an important village. My host had met Mac in the train and told him, among other things, that I could *not* cross the hills in such weather—and so Mac went on to Spean Bridge, where there is an hotel, to wait for a wire the following morning.

The loch surges continually, and all seems so strange and weird—even to me, accustomed to violent changes. After breakfast F. and I went by the steam yacht—everything is done by water here, though at last they have begun to make a road. I telephoned for Mac, and he duly arrived, and we went off in the yacht. Then came lunch, and we started over the hills to our old quarters at C.'s. The walk was no small matter—just four hours. The view of the loch as we first sighted it quite took my companion's fancy. Alas! I put my foot on a young chick of a grouse and killed it.

We were put up in a little wooden shanty, the walls covered with illustrated papers. One of the girls with whom B. and I did a hill three years ago is married in

D.; the other is at home, and her beautiful Highland accent is good to hear. The dog, a poor mongrel fellow, is rejoiced to see me, and evidently wants to go off with me to see the world—and so is tied by a string to the bed! The burn at the door—how ceaselessly musical it is; so accustomed to it have we already become, we hear it not unless listened for. We sit at breakfast with the door open, and rejoice in the bright sunshine and the snow patches on the mountains.

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M. showed me a motor-car rug, cost £20, for it was made of a dozen wild cat skins. Then I saw two wild cats in a big cage; what demons! A goods train is to pick me up.

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Here we are—in the “last” house in Inverness-shire; our nearest neighbour is in Ross-shire. Friday was a scorcher, yet we did thirty miles, knapsack on back. I know not when I did so much on a road, but then the scenery was nowhere tame, at least to our ideas. The house where we roosted has a charming position—looks up one loch and down another. The day promised well, but on the tops there was dense mist; indeed we were lost for ten minutes, but the compass put us right. The Mam was steep, and took it out of us with our knapsacks. I called to mind, “the earth brought forth frogs,” for the hill-side at one place seemed to swarm with young frogs. The descent was very steep and toilsome for a bit, but we came at last on a pony path, and so reached a house where we had hopes of quarters. But no, for it overflowed with road repairers, and so, refreshed with milk and scones, we were sent on to the “last” house.

Our cottage is not much to look at, but the little parlour with bed is all right, and our host and hostess are both likeable folks—young; she buxom, he smart. I have sent him away to catch trout for our breakfast. The pony recently caught a chill, so every night gets gruel, *coming half into the house for it*. I saw its head in the lobby a little ago and was quite startled.

I forgot to mention that on the hill I saw the remains of a fawn which an eagle had eaten up. Evidently from the hoofprints the hind had remained for some time at the fatal spot. The dogs sleep *above us*, in an attic, as happened when we were in Glen Roy. B. could not understand the noise in the morning!

* * * * *

We found a gillie waiting for us at the station—"Mr. B. sorry etc., etc., had just come from Skye fishing; was now fishing in one of his own lochs. So I am ordered to show you the glen." We had several hours of a competent guide; the scenery may be truthfully described as both picturesque and magnificent. By and by from afar we saw the boat cross the loch for our host. Dinner (though there was no meat), was perfect, and nicely served by a maid—soup, trout, chicken, sweets, cheese, fruit, coffee and cigarettes, followed by whisky and soda.

We had such a pleasant walk before breakfast; waterfalls seemed to be everywhere, and there was much rhododendron in bloom.

* * * * *

The mail cart started without me, for I waited at the station—as a porter told me—while it sneaked away direct from the P. O.! But little cared I for an extra ten miles; the scenery was wild and mostly new, and my host just imagined the train had been a little later than usual. Dinner that evening smacked of the traditional Highland character, for the salmon was his own catching, the mutton his own killing, and the rhubarb his own growing. The rookery is small, but the cawing never seems to cease. Hills all around; in front the river and the head of the loch, the latter with the white walls of several cottages reflected in the water.

* * * * *

A lovely drive, a dream; the loch sides are dotted with beautiful houses. The climb was steep, stiff and interesting; what views! Mountains and lochs were to be seen; two of the latter were being crossed by steamers. After descending we had such milk. Not the milk of commerce,

for the cows there are fed on natural grass, on untilled and so unmanured land. So the milk is rather cream, "double cream" as S. says our dairy people call it. It was exquisite; I have had nothing like it since I was in Shetland.

A pretty little cottage I have, all by itself, close to the "Water." Madame fixed 9 o'clock for breakfast, though I thought of 8. But I was by no means too late for D. and S. We duly climbed the Ben, in spite of the heat and the flies, and were of course delighted. Then down to the loch on which we spent two or three pleasant hours. I sat in the stern, the others were so anxious to pull. We all declared that these boating hours were the most enjoyable of the holiday. As in the morning, when we passed the hotel, many of the guests were sitting in the verandah, on the lawn, and under the trees; some lolled, others read, and not a few I fear were flirting. I took my two friends to the cottage for tea, for which they had been longing. Then I showed them past the hatstand, and led them forth to a point whence their road lay open like a book.

TO THE HILLS.

To the hills! to the hills come tramping go,
O'er the springy heath or the sparkling snow,
Where breezes kiss greetings of welcome good
From out of the realms of solitude.

Chorus—Then away to the hills! the heather hills!
Where heart-beats respond to the dancing rills
As newborn they well from their fountains free,
All homeward bound to the blue rolling sea.

To the hills! whose treasures may all enjoy;
To the hills! with pleasures without alloy,
Where the soul looks out till it seems to be
Wrapt up in a fringe of eternity.

A new life is pulsing in every vein,
For years fall away bringing youth again;
Youth, gleesome youth, with its gladsomeness,
Gay youth in its careless happiness.

To the bee and bird haunted hills let us hie,
For strength to the limbs and sight to the eye,
And health to the mind and dreams that remain
Through life's lower heights to be dreamed o'er again.

JAMES REID, M.A.

BACKHILL,
CASTLE FRASER.

AT DUBH GHLEANN BRIDGE.



DUBH LOCHAN, BEINN A' BHUIRD.



Photos by G. McIntyre.

NORTH TOP, BEINN A' BHUIRD.

CLACH AN T-SAIGHDEIR, BEN AVON.

A HIGH LEVEL TRAMP.

BY WM. BARCLAY AND A. E. MCKENZIE.

ONCE again the writers had arranged to spend a mountaineering holiday together, but in 1907 instead of climbing from a fixed base as had been our wont we decided to spend the time at our disposal in a high level tramp. By this means we were able to visit districts not very accessible to the average individual, and ascend mountains rather far removed from any of the so-called climbing centres. In addition, there is a greater charm, and one feels freer and more able to enter into the proper holiday spirit, in thus moving about from place to place, in all sorts of weathers, and with one's all on one's back.

Thus we started from Dalwhinnie and picked our way eastwards by Loch Eriicht and Ben Alder, Beinn Eibhinn and Geal Charn, and over the Corrour tops of Sgor Gaibhre and Carn Dearg to the "wide and wasted" Moor of Rannoch, on by Loch Treig and the Binneins to the deep and narrow Glen Nevis, across the great hog-backed Aonachs to Glen Spean and Fort William, and then by Ben Nevis and Carn Mor Darg to Creag Meaghaidh, which we ascended on the way home.

June of 1907 will long be remembered as one of the coldest and wettest "Months of Roses" on record, and of that the last ten or twelve days produced their own share of abnormalities, for on the mountains day after day we were subjected to the vilest of vile weather—rain and hail, snow and sleet and cold—a wicked combination, seasonable enough for April, but very much out of place in the middle of summer.

Many a time when travelling between Perth and Inverness have we enjoyed the peep down Loch Eriicht to "Lone Ben Alder," and as many times have we resolved within ourselves to set foot on that noble yet inaccessible mountain.

Yet once did we attempt a midnight assault on him ; breaking our journey at Dalwhinnie, we left that station in the "sma' hours," tramped along to the lodge and up to Loch Pattack ; but as the morning was so disappointing and our time was limited, we were forced to return. On this occasion it was in the cool of a beautiful evening in June that we left Dalwhinnie and turned our faces westwards.

Next day (Sunday) was spent on that great mountain just to the north-west of Ben Alder, separated from it by the Bealach Dubh and the glen of the Uisge Labhrach, and carrying the summits of Beinn Eibhinn, Aonach Beag and Geal Charn. We approached them from the west end of Loch Ericht, taking advantage of the path by the Alder Burn, as far as the Bealach between Ben Alder and Beinn

BEINN
EIBHINN,
AONACH BEAG
AND
GEAL CHARN.

Chumhann ; then we dropped down to the river and ascended the slopes of Beinn Eibhinn opposite. As this was our first ascent of the year we naturally took it easy and "enjoyed the view." However we ultimately struck the crest, and followed the edge of a north-facing corrie round to the cairn (3611), situated at the west end of a short ridge. The outlook to the west was immense, many noble heads appearing, but overtopping all was the exceedingly sharp cone of Binnan Mor, while to the north we had an uninterrupted view of Creag Meaghaidh with its great accumulations of snow. Up till now the weather had been excellent, but we could see that a change was approaching, for to the west peak after peak was suddenly disappearing, and "something" was coming our way. Well, we turned eastwards down the ridge to the dip, then up the short ascent to Aonach Beag (3646). This is a much flatter top than Beinn Eibhinn, and not such a well formed mountain, in fact it might very well be classed as a shoulder of the great hulk of Geal Charn. The highest point is marked with a stick and a few stones. The storm was now upon us, and a sharp shower of snow drove us along the great tableland to Geal Charn (3688). There was no shelter here, not even a cairn (only a few stones), so we simply crossed its grassy

surface and descended towards the Bealach Dubh. Some very extensive snow fields were passed, but as the wind was now bringing stinging showers of sleet with it, bitterly cold, we had no time for dallying, but made with all speed for shelter. This was not secured till we had descended about 1000 feet, when a large boulder presented itself. Here we had some lunch, and by then the worst of the storm had passed, so we dropped down to the path and dawdled away the rest of the day by the burnside.

The morrow broke wild and stormy, black and creeping mist and pouring rain keeping us indoors till well on in the afternoon. It was about 3 o'clock when the rain

BEN ALDER. stopped and the clouds began to lighten, so we started for Ben Alder. Our approach was by way of the stalker's house at Alder Bay and the burn coming down behind it, and so on to the south corner of the vast tableland comprising the summit. On the steepest part of the slope we were exposed to the full sweep of a fierce blizzard, which plastered us over and nearly blinded us, but when about half-way along to the cairn the snow ceased, and the mist cleared off. We struck the summit plateau at the southern end of the Garrachorries, just beside a small cairn, and then followed the heavily corniced edge right round to the summit cairn. A nice half hour was whiled away here, though the wind was very keen. The outlook was good, the horizon being clear all round. Of all mountains visible, Schiehallion impressed us the most, rising a veritable Matterhorn from beyond Loch Rannoch. Another rather lasting snowstorm forced us to leave the shelter of the Engineers' hut, so we raced along the summit level and down by Prince Charlie's Cave to the lochside and home.

The rain never ceased the whole night through, and when we peered out, about 6 a.m., it was a wild looking morning, just a repetition of the previous day.

LOCH ERICHT However, to Glen Nevis we must go, so
TO we breakfasted in silence. There was
GLEN NEVIS. little improvement when we left at 7.30
and made tracks for our first landmark—

Sgor Gaibhre. This little known peak lies pretty well back from Loch Ericht, and on the present occasion was separated by a good four miles of bog. Everything above 2000 feet was in mist, but by working our way westwards along the right bank of the Allt Tom a' Chogaidh, we knew that we should land just under the eastern slope of our mountain.

Long before we reached that spot there were indications of a change in the weather, and the morning began to improve, though very slowly; first the rain stopped, then the mists began to roll up, and there was revealed to us the sharp conical outline of the Sgor scarcely a mile away. Ben Alder also began to show his flanks, streaked with long silver threads, but to the north the outlook was still black. Here we made the acquaintance of a little brown lizard, which demonstrated to us the facility with which these reptiles can part with their members when in danger, in so much that, seeing he had fallen into the hands of monsters, he promptly dropped his tail and ran, leaving us with that appendage in our hand. It was now a short, though steep, pull up to the summit (3128) of Sgor Gaibhre, which was reached at 9.30, or two hours from Loch Erichtside. Leaving the very small cairn, we started down the long broad saddle towards Carn Dearg. There is a fall of 760 feet here, but we found it nothing more than a nice easy walk over short grass, and affording a fine view of Corroul Lodge, standing at the east end of Loch Ossian.

In 50 minutes' time we were on the top of Carn Dearg (3084), a triple cairned peak commanding a most impressive outlook to the west—from the wide Moor of Rannoch under our feet, with its hundred and one little lochans and bog pools, shimmering in the sun, to the vast amphitheatre of peaks circling round in one grand sweep from Beinn Creachan and Achallader, and the Black Mount tops, on by the Buchaille and Glencoe giants to the Binnans and the Aonachs. Aye, that slit between Binnan Mor and Aonach Beg still seems a long way off, but the day is young yet—and so are we.

On the morrow we were doubtful what to do, but as it was

a nice morning we made up our minds for a walk to the top of Carn Mor Dearg, in hopes of securing a few photos of the precipices of Ben Nevis. Following our footsteps of yesterday round Meall an t-Suie, and up by the Allt a' Mhuilinn to the base of the Carn Deargs, we diagonaled up the slope, and enjoyed to the full the awful impressiveness of the mighty cliffs of "The Ben" opposite. The mist was just playing about their crest, and we secured a characteristic photograph. Then we passed on to the summit (4012), crossing over a minor top first. There was a slight mist here, so we sat down and had lunch, hoping by the time we had finished all would be clear. But this was not to be, for a heavy shower of hail came on, and, although we sheltered for the best part of an hour and a half, there was no abatement, nor any signs of one; so we left the top in disgust, and descended to the valley of the Allt a' Mhuilinn. There was little to be seen of the precipices now, for the mist was round them, still there was no snow here, and it was warmer.

We caught the six o'clock train next morning for Tulloch, then walked along the Laggan road for nearly four miles. It was another very promising morning, though a bit squally, but of course it was early yet, and as the day wore on, things *might* improve. We left the road just where Allt-na-h-Uamha comes down in a fine spout, and struck over the moorland for the south-running spur of Creag Meaghaidh that comes down between two burns. Following this ridge upwards, we once again had to bow under the chastening hand of the weather. This time it was sleet—cold, biting sleet from the north-west. We sheltered for some time behind a dyke, but as the wind was veering round and finding us out, we thought it more profitable to move, so proceeded to grope our way along the very extensive flat of Meaghaidh towards the cairn. Passing a long line of heaped up cornices above the source of the Moy burn, we soon reached the large summit cairn (3700)—the last top on our High Level Tramp.

In Memoriam :

GEORGE SIM, A. L. S.

BORN 1835. DIED 1908.

MR. SIM, who was an original member of the Club, was born in Craigellachie. None of its founders was more imbued with the spirit of the mountains, and so to him all the objects of the Club were personal.

The author of several prize essays and brochures, he published in 1903 "The Vertebrate Fauna of Dee," a volume of 300 pages, the ichthyological portion including the fishes of the East Coast from Wick to the Firth of Forth. He was equally at home with mammals, birds, and fishes; peculiar finds, whether on land or sea, invariably found their way to his premises, and identification was generally immediate and always accurate. Not without much labour and lack of ease did he acquire his intimate knowledge of nature. There is a suggestion of this in his book, where speaking of Fowls-heugh he says ". . . the scene is a most animated and interesting one, and few places are better adapted for studying the habits of the various species mentioned. We have pitched our little tent upon the 'Heugh Heads,' and watched the birds so long as light remained, and listened to their midnight cries." Another quotation appeals more particularly to hillmen: "We have wandered on the mountain tops, and heard the familiar cry of the Snow Bunting, and watched the sun descend behind the mighty bens to the west; when the evening mists have circled round the mountain brow, and when the day shaded into night; when all was still, save that there came every now and again, echoing through the forest, the deep bellow of the rutting stag, to be instantly answered from some distant point."

Mr. Sim was an excellent example of a self-educated Scotsman. For him there was practically no parochial school, yet he ultimately acquired such knowledge, not only of natural history in its widest sense, but of general literature, that his society and correspondence were valued by distinguished literati and naturalists. A chat with him was always remunerative to his visitors, and many of us will miss the humble-minded and kindly genius, ever ready to open his stores of information to the seeker after truth.

OVER THE HILLS TO TORRIDON.

BY ERNEST A. BAKER, M.A., D.LIT.

“Oh, marvellous glen of Torridon,
With thy flanks of granite wall,
And noon-silence more than midnight grim
To overawe and appal!

Many a year I have wandered
A thousand corries and glens,
But never a one so awesome as thou,
'Mid thy grimness and terror of bens.”

—*Principal Shairp.*

TORRIDON is a name of power, to lovers of poetry and to lovers of mountains alike. Principal Shairp, who might have been called the Highland Robert Burns, a name he in his modesty bestowed on a more obscure singer, celebrated the glen and its incomparable mountains with as much ardour as that which inspired his praise of Knoydart and Lochaber. But a far more exalted poet, Swinburne himself, has made the name of Torridon glorious in imperishable verse. On the way across “the vague miles of moorland road,” to a spot so full of inspiration, the sensuous rhythm of his great impetuous canticle kept humming in one's ears, that sublime evocation of the splendours and the ineffable solemnities of night amid the mountains and the sea.

“The dawn of night more fair than morning rose,
Stars hurrying forth on stars, as snows on snows
Haste when the wind and winter bid them speed.

All night long, in the world of sleep,
Skies and waters were soft and deep;
Shadow clothed them, and silence made
Soundless music of dream and shade;
All above us, the livelong night,
Shadow kindled with sense of light;
All around us the brief night long
Silence laden with sense of song.

Stars and mountains without, we knew,
 Watched and waited the soft night through ;
 All unseen, but divined and dear,
 Thrilled the touch of the sea's breath near ;
 All unheard, but alive like sound,
 Throbbled the sense of the sea's life round ;
 Round us, near us, in depth and height,
 Soft as darkness, and keen as light."

Rash the man who thwarts the witcheries of verse and meddles with the spells of genius by daring to visit for himself the scenes made most sacred and most beloved by the powers of poetry. Henceforth, the picture on the memory that was once so splendid and thrilling will be confused and blurred; as in a palimpsest, the older and dearer recollection will show but feebly through the new, and neither gives the same keen pleasure any more, As Wordsworth sang:—

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown !
 It must, or we shall rue it :
 We have a vision of our own ;
 Ah ! why should we undo it ?

The treasured dreams of times long past,
 We'll keep them, winsome Marrow !
 For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
 'Twill be another Yarrow !"

Those who go on pilgrimage to Torridon will find it hard to follow Swinburne's actual footsteps, for the road he took is not to be recognized on any map. But, at all events, he came from the other side, from Loch Maree. The way I followed was across the moors between Strathcarron and Glen Torridon, the finest way of all, perhaps, for enjoying to the full the scenery of the glen. Looking back, one sees far down Loch Carron to the seaward hills, a confusion of violent contours; and then as we cross the watershed we have near views of the great peaks of Coulin Forest, Fuar Tholl and Sgùrr Ruadh, enclosing a deep and dark recess with a cirque of gloomy precipices. It had been my ambition to ascend those peaks on the way across to Torridon, but a stormy morning had put a stop to the project. All day there

were rapid and incessant changes in the weather : now, the limpid sky, the clear light on all the peaks, and their delusive look of nearness, made one long to be at them ; next moment they would be enveloped in wrathful cloud, and one thanked one's stars for the escape. These hills are composed of Torridon sandstone and quartzite ; their upper parts are bare of vegetation, and peculiarly desolate. So light is the hue of the rock, it is oftentimes hard to distinguish between the flash of a torrent and the gleaming of the quartzite. But now a still grander example of a quartzite mountain grows nearer and clearer across Glen Torridon.

“ Benyea, magnificent Alp,
Blanched bare, and bald, and white,
His forehead, like old sea-eagle's scalp,
Seen athwart the sunset light.”

Ben Eighe strikes one at first sight as the weirdest of mountain shapes, as something elusive and unsubstantial. It is not the shape, however, that is so singular, but the colour, whitish pink blending into pure white and grey. With vast sea mists passing swiftly over it, now completely hidden and now revealed, it looked unreal and phantasmal. Seen from this side of Glen Torridon, Ben Eighe exhibits one type of mountain contour in perfection, the aerial majesty, the bold, free curves, without ruggedness, and with no suggestion of mystery or latent terror. The eastern summits appear as one, the western are massed together ; their arêtes sweep up from the glen in one unbroken line of beauty, and between the tips of Sgurr Ban and Spidean Coire nan Clach the ridge dips low in a gracious curve. Of the splintered peaks, the ruined and devastated corries, and the tremendous precipices behind, there is no hint in this calm and stately front. But the bare white screes are so extraordinary of aspect that to look straight at them does not tell whether the face before us is an easy slope or a series of headlong precipices. One exquisite feature of this side that rivets the eye is a slender sandstone pinnacle, set like a graceful, curving tusk at the peak of a lofty buttress towards Torridon.

Easan Dorcha, a fine impetuous river, thunders down a wooded glen from the corries of Beinn Liath Mhor, high on our left, and, reinforced by a lusty burn, becomes the Coulin river. The road crosses at the water's-meet, and in another mile skirts the fir-clad shores of Loch Coulin. Another good road mounts the glen of Easan Dorcha, but a notice-board warns the mountaineer to "keep off the turf," an injunction that applies practically to all these ranges, for this is one of the regions where the climber, the tourist, and the naturalist are classed among the noxious animals. Beyond the shooting-lodge, a sumptuous establishment, with well-kept grounds and gardens, the road re-crosses the river, between Loch Coulin and Loch Clair, and then emerges in Glen Torridon. There were nine weary miles of it, I found, to the village, and a heavier storm was threatening. It was a godsend to me when the mail-gig trotted up. A few moments earlier I had witnessed a phenomenon of enchanting loveliness. One arm of a broad, low rainbow was thrown across the face of a heathy hill. Though broken, it was clear and brilliant: several furlongs of dark peatmoss burned in wide tremulous zones of living, effulgent colour, that waxed and waned against the dreary moor as vividly as if they had been flung across the sky.

A mile west of Ben Eighe rises a still more astonishing mountain, most astounding because of the prodigious contrast between such close neighbours.

"Liaguch, rising sheer
 From river-bed up to the sky,
 Grey courses of masonry, tier on tier,
 And pinnacles splintered on high !
 Splintered, contorted, and riven
 As though, from the topmost crown
 Some giant plougher his share had driven
 In a hundred furrows sheer down."

Liathach is built up mainly of purple Torridon sandstone, with a cap of white quartzite, which was not so conspicuous on this luring day. Tryfaen alone, among English and Welsh mountains, can be compared with its magnificent abruptness; but Liathach is bigger, higher, and steeper than

Tryfaen. Over Glen Torridon it hangs in four miles of precipices, and ends towards Ben Eighe in a great bluff that has been likened to "the stem of some mighty vessel plunging in a tempestuous sea." The mountain front is a huge succession of sandstone terraces, towering one over another, each faced with a far-extending wall of perpendicular cliff. When Liathach first came into view, the whole mountain was bare of mist, save for a few clouds swirling round Spidean a' Coire Leith, the central summit; the stark, beetling, triple-headed pyramid rising into the savage sky was an awe-inspiring sight. But a sea of mists came rolling up from Loch Torridon, and broke over Liathach and Ben Eighe. Both mountains were effaced, and we in the mail-gig pulled our waterproofs tightly round us to meet the onslaught of a furious squall. Then suddenly a blast came that rent to pieces the immense robe of mist enwrapping Liathach. In a moment, a million fragments of shattered cloud were eddying round the black colossus, and through them the giddy tiers of cliff, the cavernous hollows and gullies, and the beetling Fasarinen or pinnacles of Liathach, reft of all visible foundation, loomed in chaotic grandeur.

"Mysterious Glen Torridon,
What marvels, night and day,
Light, mist, and cloud will be working here
When we are far away!"

Lochan an Iasgaich lies at the foot of a steep valley over against Liathach, under the western slope of Sgurr Dubh, nearest of the Coulin Forest peaks. Behind the tarn, in the hollow of the valley, hundreds upon hundreds of conical hillocks cover the ground, and have given the spot the Gaelic name of Coire Ceud Croc, the Valley of the Hundred Hills. They seem like a vast assemblage of human graves or barrows; but behind the strange multitude one looks up into the lofty corries, whence the glaciers descended long ago, and recognises them for what they are, the burthen thrown down by ancient ice-streams. High above

“On the further flank of the glen,
Sweeping in wondrous line,
Scourdhu, Benlia, Bendamh
Their weirdly forms combine.”

We drove into Torridon in another stinging shower; night appeared to be descending on loch and glen before its time.

Under the threatening sides of Liathach, on a narrow strip between the mountain and the sea-loch, a line of miserable houses cowers, among them a few of slightly more comfortable appearance, one of which is the “Temperance Hotel,” a house seemingly of a single storey and two rooms, but rather more capacious inside. This modest house of entertainment was once an inn with a license, of which it was deprived some years ago, not so much in order to coerce the natives into sobriety, as to make the place as inhospitable as possible to tourists. One must run the risk of a good many discomforts and hardships to see Glen Torridon, unless one happens to own a yacht of moderate draught. I am unable to imagine where Swinburne found “the kindest of shelters” that he alludes to in his beautiful poem, the geography of which is rather perplexing, although, of course, one must be careful not to confound Upper Loch Torridon with the seaward portion of the loch. Entering the little hostel, I found myself in a large kitchen or hall, with old-fashioned furniture and a fine open fire-place. Though its glory must have departed with its license, it still appeared to be the resort of the males of the clan. Two or three men slouched out, and another came forward, and took me in charge. Soon my drenched clothes were steaming in front of the replenished fire; but it was not until the arrival of a tall Highland lassie, who had evidently been fetched in by one of the departed guests, that I was conducted into the other room, a modern one that contrasted curiously with the more primitive “ben.” There was yet another room in this compact little mansion, I discovered later, a tiny bedroom wedged into the wall-space between these just described. In what obscure corners of the structure the owners lived is the same

difficult question as often embarrasses one in the Highlands. However, I had been in far stranger lodgings, and was not in the least inclined to be critical. The kindness of the Highland landlady made up for all deficiencies.

“ Child of the far-off ocean flood !
What wayward mood hath made thee fain
To leave thy wide Atlantic main
For this hill-girdled solitude ?
To wind away through kyles and creeks,
Past island, cliff, and promontory,
And lose thyself 'mid grisly peaks
And precipices scarred and hoary ?

But thou hast all unweeting come
Where human joy hath long been dumb.
A land by some strange woe o'ertaken,
Of its own people nigh forsaken,
Where those who linger still retain
Dearth only, penury and pain,
And wear that uncomplaining mood
Which the too long continued stress
Of sore privation hath subdued,
Down to a hopeless passiveness.”

At Torridon, with the mountain wall behind, and the stormy loch before, stretching seaward into a night of tempest, one seems to have come to the end of the habitable world—“a grassless, fruitless, unsustaining shore!” Westward lies a shadowy Nifheim, so it seems, of perpetual mist, storm and darkness. Between the showers that swiftly followed each other, I made hurried excursions to the front door, to gaze seawards. The mountains of Shildaig Forest were vague and nebulous as storm-drift, one dim outline behind another, ending in great filmy shadows across the west. Storm pursuing storm up the length of the loch now erased and now intensified their lurking shapes. When I went to bed, the howling of the wind, the crash of rain on windows and roof, and the roar of waters from Liathach impending over us, a thousand fierce, barbaric voices, sounded in tumultuous chorus, whose mighty compass and immeasurable harmonies wrung the heart with awe and pity for this

forlorn home of humanity on the strip of earth between
the mountains and the melancholy sea.

“O region! full of power and change
Of aspect—boundless in thy range
Of gloom and glory.

Through these peaks when the thunder is rolled,
It were worth all the poems of men
To hear the discourse these brethren hold
As they shout over Torridon Glen

When the great Atlantic winds
Come blowing with rack and rain,
From its caves and crannies the glen unbinds
The peal of how grand a refrain!

And then, when the storms are o'er,
And relapse to the solemn sleep—
The mountain Sabbath that ever more
A sanctuary here doth keep!

With silence, sound, light and mist,
Labouring or lying still,
Painter or poet, or whate'er thou list,
What, compared with thine, their skill

To lift, or o'erawe the heart?
The power that dwells in thee,
Simple, sublime, and strong as thou art,
Is of Eternity.”

—*Principal Shairp.*

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

SOME correspondence on the derivation of "Lochnagar" appeared in the *Scotsman* in December, 1907. Various interpretations were given—

LOCHNAGAR. "the loch of the goat," "the loch of laughter," or "the laughing loch," "gander's loch," and "the loch of the cry." The old question was also revived

whether the name Lochnagar should not be confined to the loch.

IN a tempest of wind and rain, climbers representing all the principal clubs assembled at Pillar Rock, in the wild Ennerdale Valley, to witness

A CUMBERLAND late John Wilson Robinson, a famous Cumberland CLIMBER'S cragsman, who died last year, and who two years ago RECORD. made his hundredth ascent of the renowned Ennerdale

Cliff. Mr. Cecil Slingsby, ex-president of the Climbers' Club, performed the ceremony. The rock was ascended and a record deposited on the summit.—*Daily Mail*, 16th June, 1908.

A FEW of the members of our Club have shown that Ben Nevis can be ascended in a short week-end, and the following notes of the excursion

BEN NEVIS may be of interest to those who wish to visit the monarch of British Mountains, without interfering with their daily work.

IN A WEEK-END.

We took the Strathspey Excursion train to Kingussie on the 13th of June. The capital of Badenoch was reached shortly after four o'clock in the afternoon. A strong south-west wind was carrying the waters of the Atlantic over the whole country. The roads were heavy after their three days' soaking, which was a discouraging start to our journey; however, putting on our water-proofs we started to cycle to Lochaber. The road among the woods at Cluny was deplorable. Loch Laggan was reached at 6.30, where we found tea awaiting us; on we sped on our muddy race to catch the W. Highland train at Tulloch. Although the rain made cycling hard, it added beauty to the many waterfalls that we saw on the right hand and the left on our journey. The gorge of the Spean at Roy was superb. Fort William was reached at half-past nine. Our first errand was to replenish our wardrobes, as some of us were foolish enough to have carried no luggage. Shortly after midnight we started to cycle to the farm of Achintee. The rain had ceased by this time, and we were very hopeful. Starting on the usual track, we made fairly good progress with the aid of two acetylene gas lamps. By half past one the full moon shone clear, through a break in the clouds; as we reached the loch, the red glow of dawn rendered our lamps unnecessary. Passing the half-way hut at 2.15, we got into the clouds about 3300 feet up; the rest of the journey was made in thick mist. The first indication that we got of the increasing altitude was the frozen fog on the rocks; higher up we reached the snow, which completely covered the summit plateau. The Hotel on the top was standing in about four feet of snow. We were

glad that our early morning call was answered, and a cup of tea was cheering in the cold of the night. The frost was intense; our coats, wet with rain while cycling, were now frozen stiff around us. The descent to about 3400 feet was made in fog. At this height we reached the morning sunlight, and the change of scene from dull mist to smiling valleys, blue lochs, and dark hills was wonderful. Loch Eil tapered westward towards Prince Charlie's Monument, the winding river Lochy was traced far northward till it lost itself in its parent lochs. Glen Coe's sombre peaks frowned—even in that lovely morning. We reached the farm about 6 a.m., and started on our long cycle ride homewards. Happily the wind continued strong from the South-west, and now carried us along quickly—the milestones passing in extraordinarily quick succession.

Breakfast at Roy Bridge, lunch at Loch Laggan, and tea at Kingussie, shortened the run to Boat of Garten, where we arrived at six o'clock in the evening. We were early astir next morning. The first train took us to Aberdeen by ten o'clock—some 45 hours after our departure.

REVIEWS.

Longmans, Green and Co. have just published a handsome volume by Ashley P. Abraham on "Rock-Climbing in Skye." There are thirty full-page illustrations in collotype, nine diagrams of the chief routes, and a map, with over 350 pages of letterpress and an index. Primarily written for rock-climbers and mountaineers, in it they will find particulars of all they can possibly need with regard to a climbing holiday in Skye—the situation of the peaks; the best places from which to tackle them; accounts of all the climbs, with an amplification of detail where serious difficulties may be encountered; the history and items of interest in connection with the peaks and the climbs they present, together with a graduated list of the courses, in their order of difficulty, while the claims of non-climbers who read mountaineering literature have also been studied. The graduated list of courses is divided into "easy," "moderate," "difficult," and "exceptionally severe," and will be found of great service to novices in the Isle of Mist. Mr. Abraham is in every way a safe guide, possessing not only an ample knowledge of the mountains of Skye, but of climbing generally.

The author is a Cumbrian, so it is all the more pleasant to have his opinion as regards the rock-climbing in Skye, that it is "the finest in the British Isles." "In form and shapeliness, in rugged and lonely grandeur, in variety of colouring, and, above all, in their wonderful setting, they [the mountains of Skye] surpass all our home mountains. The views from their flanks and summits are such as cannot be seen elsewhere. The island-studded sea, stretching away to the infinite distance, and the contrasts between its ever-varying moods, and the stern black mountains are, to the lover of the beautiful in nature, a source of constant delight."

Sligichan, of course, is often mentioned, receiving ample justice. The address, however, according to the Post Office Guide, is "Sligichan, Portree," and not as given by the author.

Continued from page 2 of Cover.

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.

year; (c) to fix the expenses for the coming year; and
(d) to transact any other necessary business. Special
general meetings shall be held whenever and as often as
by the Club, or on a resolution by at least ten
members of the Club. General meetings shall have power
to dissolve or modify the Club and any member who
may in the opinion of the Committee have miscondacted
himself.

VII—The Club shall be kept by the Secretary, in
which all the books shall be duly entered.

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

VIII—The only officers of the Club shall be the Club
and the annual meeting shall be held on the first
of January. The annual meeting shall be held on the
first of January and shall elect a President, a Vice
President, a Secretary and a Treasurer for the year
ending on the 31st day of December next. The
President shall have the right to call special meetings
of the Club and to preside thereat. The Secretary
shall keep the books of the Club and shall have
charge of all the papers of the Club.

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in the no the meeting and shall be adopted by a
majority of the members present at the meeting.