

All contributions to the January number of the Journal should be sent to the Editor, J. B. Gillies, 181 Union Street, Aberdeen, before 31st Oct., 1912.

Vol. VII.

July, 1912.

No. 39.

THE  
**Cairngorm Club Journal.**

EDITED BY

J. B. GILLIES.

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ISSUED TWICE A YEAR.

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PUBLISHED BY

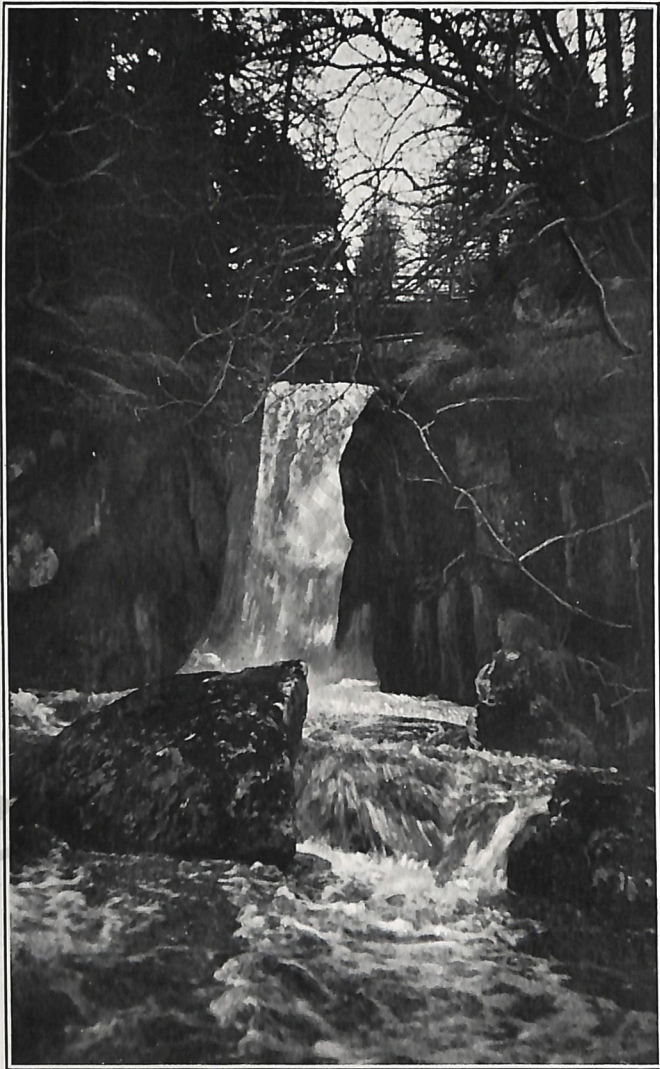
THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.

AGENTS:

ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.

**PRICE ONE SHILLING.**

*No. 1 out of print.*



*Photo by Mrs. R. M. Williamson, Aberdeen.*

THE LOWER FALL, BACHINAGAIRN, CLOVA.



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MY INTRODUCTION TO THE CAIRNGORMS.

BY ALEXANDER COPLAND.

PART II.

WE were early risers. On getting out of bed on the morning following our arrival at Ballater, the stiffness of our limbs indicated that a walk of about 24 miles plus diversions on a turnpike road, under a blazing sun, at midsummer, was a pretty stiff initiatory lesson in tramping for untrained pedestrians. We therefore determined to spend that day in recuperation at Ballater, and to profitably occupy the time by visits to the lead and silver mines at Abergairn, and the mineral wells at Pananich. As a substitute for Holloway's celebrated ointment—as much worth a guinea a box as certain pills which we could name but won't, because we decline to gratuitously advertise patented “droggeries” while newspaper proprietors are handsomely paid for doing so—we liberally lubricated the soles of our stockings with honest household soap, and felt so much refreshed thereby that we were induced to make for the Pass of Ballater before breakfast. We were much impressed by the features of this romantic pass, and, being dabblers in botany, we carefully searched among the rocks and screes for rarities in the fern world but failed to find any, though, two or three years afterwards, *Asplenium Septentrionale* was found among the rocks at the north side of the west end



of the Pass, as recorded by Dr. Dickie who obtained specimens from the lucky finder.

From the Pass we proceeded to the farm of Abergairn to inspect the lead mines said to exist there. Not far from the dwelling-house on the hillside we saw that several excavations or test-pits had been dug, but although a small quantity of lead had been got and silver sufficient to supply a set of buttons for a vest to a laird of Monaltrie, it was found, when a practical test was made by expert miners from Cornwall, that neither lead nor silver existed in sufficient quantity to pay anybody except company promoters floating but not working the mines. According to Dr. MacGillivray, the granular quartz containing the lead ore has dispersed in it small cavities containing crystals of fluor spar (fluoride of calcium), mostly of a beautiful wine yellow colour, but also of various tints of blue and purple.

Having exhausted the lead and silver mines, we made for the summit of Craigendarroch (Rock of the Oaks). The oaks were a disappointment, a delusion, and a snare. In place of patriarchal Anakims, girthed like the stump of an oak which, during the process of harbour improvement at Aberdeen, was resurrected from its peaceful bed near the site of the ducking stool for scolding wives, we saw nothing of the nature of oak except diminutive shrubs fit only for the manufacture of besoms or birch rods. We expected to see material suitable for building Dreadnoughts of the type of Nelson's "Victory." But Ichabod! Ichabod! Our reverence for the old stump mentioned, which now enjoys its *otium cum dignitate* in the Duthie Park, and still girths eighteen feet in circumference at four feet above ground, was therefore greatly increased by the comparison, and remains unabated. And we thankfully remember its providential preservation from cremation by the timely aid of a water engine when, to the consternation of a colony of Norwegian rats which abode therein serenely, it had caught fire from a conflagration in a neighbouring shipbuilding yard on the Inches.

The magnificent views obtained from the summit of



Craigendarroch, or Creag-an-daraich, compensated in some measure for our disappointment at the scraggy appearance of the oaks. To the south lay Glen Muick, bounded on the west by its picturesque serpentine Coyles, behind, above, and beyond which towered and stretched the serrated outline of "dark Lochnagar," splashed with snow in its precipitous north-eastern corrie above the lochs. A crowd of hill summits continued the range of the horizon west and by north, while east and west in the near foreground lay the valley of the Dee, its meandering stream glittering in the bright sunshine and smilingly reflecting the brilliant cerulean sky. The landscape was a revelation of Alpine grandeur and beauty. But revelling in admiration should always be done after a comfortable breakfast. We were recalled to a sense of our mortality by the circumstance that we had not had breakfast and the conviction that attention thereto must in no wise be neglected. We therefore hastened our descent from the summit of the Rock of the Oaks, and purposely dispensed with the formality of inspecting the guard of honour at the barracks, confident that that duty would not be neglected by some royal personage passing through Ballater on the way to Balmoral.

After breakfast, we strolled towards the celebrated Wells of Pananich. We crossed the Dee by the wooden bridge, successor to the bridge swept away by the flood of 1829. The road thence to the Wells was bordered by well-grown pines, which thickly clothed the steep rocky side of Pananich Hill on our right, and afforded a grateful shade from the too ardent rays of a midsummer sun. Among the rocks and pines a large flock of goats was feeding. These goats supplied milk for invalids who required recuperation, but the smell of the goat and the "wersh" taste of its milk perverted one of us into an unbeliever, and he became convinced that a draught of hot milk from a non-tuberculous cow, mixed with a dash of rum such as Powis imported from his West Indian plantations for the use of himself and his friends, is a morning libation fit for the gods and a perfect annihilator



of all the ills that flesh is heir to. It is fair to say, however, that Powis' rum was guarded like the golden apples of the Hesperides. The wooden floor of his entrance lobby was uncarpeted and polished to glacial perfection, and he maintained a pack of barking terriers who vociferously announced the entrance of the visitor and tried to sample his trousers or shins. Unless, therefore, the visitor had graduated in skating—as, fortunately, I had done on the Aberdeenshire canal—between the dogs and the slipperiness he ran some risk of getting floored.

At length we reached the Wells. These Wells were the creators of Ballater. According to "Chambers Gazetteer of Scotland" (1832), Ballater was the most fashionable watering-place in the northern part of the kingdom, and was at that time the resort, in the summer and autumn months, of an immense concourse of persons who flocked thither to enjoy the benefit of the mineral waters, to indulge in match-making and innocent flirtations, or to recuperate in pleasant country lodgings. We found that the Wells were four in number; and, although all near to one another, they were said to have some differences in their properties. They all, however, contained carbonates of iron and lime, which, of course, were believed to be efficacious in building up iron constitutions. We drank from each of the four wells, but, truth to say, did not detect any difference in the taste or quality of the water. It is fortunate that there are only four wells at Pananich, because if, like the famous black marble fountain to the Virgin at Einsiedeln, in Switzerland, there were fourteen spouts, and the pilgrim had to drink from each of the fourteen in a sort of merry-go-round perambulation, and if the water was peremptorily purgative, like that of Airthrey at Bridge of Allan, catastrophes might occur, as they are said sometimes to do at Airthrey.

Our good fortune, so far as regarded the weather, continued on Wednesday morning, when we made an early start for Braemar. There were then two public roads from Ballater to Braemar, one on each side of the river. We travelled by the road on the left bank of the



stream, via Creag-an-daraich; and, passing the Water of Gairn, skirted the long range of the Geallaig Hill, which extends from Bridge of Gairn to a point opposite to Balmoral. Between Bridge of Gairn and the inn at Coille-na-criche (Wood of the boundary)—misnamed in the Ordnance maps *Kylacreich*, but always recognised by coach horses and “drouths” travelling that way—the road appeared to have been cut through a succession of moraines. Beyond the inn for a mile or two the road runs through a birch wood which clothes the bottom of the valley, and the lower slope of the Geallaig range, above which, to the sky line, the steep slope is mantled by screes and heather, sparsely dotted with pines of perfect symmetry nature-planted. The lichens in variety of colour tinting the screes, the bloom on the heather, and now and then broad stripes of bright green grass and golden sphagnum, where water is trickling downward, delight the eye. The birches are well grown and most of them have pendulous foliage, the tresses swaying in the breeze and weeping when washed by the gentle shower or evening dew, but when kissed by the rising sun the tears sparkle like diamonds. “Weeping may for a night endure, at morn doth joy arise.” Here the river, glittering in blue and gold, winds along the bottom of the valley, and, circling widely, has formed two pine-clad islands, where the oyster-catcher enjoys unmolested connubial bliss and the otter makes his lair. Perchance you will observe, waist-deep in the river, an angler tempting the “monarch of the tide,” with a Jock Scott or other attractive lure. Some say

“The silver trout in speckled pride,  
The salmon, monarch of the tide,”

snap at the lure for fun, not for food, like a kitten playing with a feather or ball of worsted, but I “ha’e ma doots.” They say the salmon does not feed in fresh water. Again, I say, I am not quite sure of that. As an example, while dining with a well-known and generally successful angler on a fine Ythan-caught sea trout at Ellon, he told me



that one day fishing in the Don between the two bridges near Aberdeen he was very unsuccessful, while every now and then he heard flopping in the water and saw another angler landing fish. Curious to know what lure his rival was using and the cause of his success, he interviewed him, and found that the successful angler was a blind quarrier fishing with substantial bait, in which he was assisted by a boy. My angling friend, as anglers will do, told his experience and views, when he received this home-thrust: "Ach! some folk fush for fush, and ither folk fush for fun." The fisher for fun went home with an empty creel, but he got a wholesome practical lesson. Another incident. A young lad, a shepherd's son, lolling on the parapet of the Brig o' Turk, happened to see an unfortunate "gorblin," ejected from the nest of a sand martin, placed in a hole in the bank of the river, flutter and fall into the stream. Suddenly a lordly salmon arose and swallowed the unfortunate bird. That was a revelation to the boy. He immediately went for tackle and another young sand martin, which he fluttered on the stream, and forthwith he caught the gourmet, who evidently had acquired a taste for young sand martins.

Proceeding on our way, Abergeldie Castle and its cradle, suspended by and travelling on a wire rope attached to a tree on the south bank and to a strong post on the north side of the river, were objects of surpassing interest. There is a tradition that, by the breaking of the rope while the cradle was crossing the flooded stream with an exciseman of the name of Bruce in it, on the hunt for smugglers hereabout, he was dropped into the river and was carried off by the flood instead of by the "deil." The next edifice which attracted our attention was the old parish Kirk of Crathie, a building outwardly and inwardly as devoid of architectural beauty and ornament as our Chapel of Ease at Gilcomston was in the time of the renowned Dr. Kidd. In these backsliding days, however, the simple structure which we beheld has been demolished and replaced by a church which, although somewhat short of the glory of Solomon's Temple, has occasioned agony in



the mind of Parson Jacob Primmer. Jacob's righteous soul, aflame against altars, has compelled him to make a journey from a coal-mining district in Fifeshire to Kincardine O'Neil, to warn and purge the Presbytery thereof from participation in the iniquity of allowing to be placed in Crathie Kirk an ornate communion table of marble in place of timber in memory of our late sovereign King Edward VII.

We crossed the Dee at this point in order to look at the castellated building which then occupied part of the site of Balmoral Castle, and to proceed westward to Braemar through Ballochbuie Forest. When we reached Glen Gelder, however, the sight of Lochnagar was so attractive, and it was, seemingly, within such easy distance, that we determined to deviate and climb that mountain. As a preliminary, and as the water of the Gelder was so clear and sparkling and so refreshingly inviting, I stripped and had a delightful bath; my companion ought to have joined me, but refrained. Lochnagar, we supposed, was only two or three miles at the most south of us, so we confidently walked on, keeping along the east bank of the stream. By the time we had walked a couple of miles, however, we began to doubt the accuracy of our estimation of distances among "the Hielan' hills," as Lochnagar did not appear to be much nearer than when we set out for the top. But our ardour was still unabated, and we pushed on, and incidentally had the good fortune to see a large herd of red deer—although at some distance—in a valley trending westward between two high hills immediately to the north of Lochnagar. Shortly thereafter we heard a voice in the wilderness calling to us and we halted until the owner of the voice reached us. He proved to be one of Her Majesty's foresters; and having disclosed to him our intention, he very civilly directed us how to proceed. We were instructed to keep a track (pointed out to us) which runs along the west side of Conacheraig Hill till it is joined by a pony track from Alltnaguibhsaich Lodge in Glen Muick, and from that junction we were told we would have no difficulty in following a foot track westward,



passing on our right hand the Meikle Pap and so on to the summit of Lochnagar.

The track pointed out we reached and loyally followed for some time, but, tempted by what we supposed to be a near cut, we diverged from it to the right, crossed the Gelder, and landed in a hollow among large blocks of stones and too luxuriant heather struggling through which quite exhausted us. Here the conviction was borne in upon us that the Cac Carn Beag was beyond our reach, and that, perforce, we would be obliged to camp among the heather for a night, our only consolation being that the weather was dry and warm. Had rain or thick mist come down upon us, lightly clothed as we were, the consequences might have been serious, unless we had found our way back to Balmoral, for we were without map or compass. We lay among the heather for a considerable time, and, feeling refreshed, we resolved to try and reach the saddle between Creag Liath and Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe, and ultimately accomplished that. The sun by this time was declining in the west, but our course being now downward along the grassy bank of a burn which takes its rise near the summit of the hill last mentioned, and joins the burn from Lochan an Eoin of Lochnagar about a couple of miles above the Falls of Garbh Allt, we strictly kept along the course of these burns, in the hope that they would ultimately lead us to human habitations. The "snorl" in which we were landed by disregarding the instructions of the Glen Gelder forester gave us a never-to-be-forgotten lesson to avoid near cuts unless their terminations are visible from their beginnings.

By the time we reached the "Garrawalt"—the curiously corrupted Gaelic name of the Garbh Allt—(Rough Burn) and rough it is in all conscience—we were fagged out. Yet the picturesque falls and the enormous granitic boulders rolled down from Lochnagar in the channel of the stream attracted our attention, and we rested there sometime, admiring also the grand old pines in the forest of Ballochbuie. Strolling along the path from the Falls



towards the stately old bridge thrown across the Dee at Invercauld by General Roy and soothed by the silence and aroma of the forest and the gathering gloom of the aisles formed by the lofty pines bounding the path, whom should we meet but our touring Earl and his factor, apparently on their way to the Falls and both looking spick and span and as cool as cucumbers. Unfortunately for the temper of my companion, we attracted the attention of his lordship, who appeared to recognize us with a disdainful smile, which called forth from my fellow-tramp what I may term a democratic observation of the "Limehouse" order. His passion evaporated, however, when we came within view of the rocky promontory bristling with pines, called the Lion's Face, as mentally puzzling to us as was the skye terrier to the Englishman, who failed to make out which was the head and which was the tail of the animal. Similarly, we had to give up the problem of discovering the leonine likeness.

By the time we rounded Craig Coinnich the shades of evening were falling, and Braemar Castle looked an old grim fortalice of greater strength than it really is. Then, as now, there were two inns or hotels, the Invercauld Arms on the east bank of the Clunie, and the Fife Arms on the west or Auchindryne side of the stream; both then much smaller in size than the palatial buildings which now display the Farquharson and the Fife emblazonments respectively. We got shelter at the Invercauld Arms, then managed by Mrs. Clark, a most kindly, motherly lady, who at once put us at our ease and made us feel as if we had known her all our days. The dining-room, or at all events the room in which we had our tea—it was long past dinner-time—was upstairs. But such a high tea as we had!—chops from black-faced wedders, scones, cakes, honey, cranberry jam, "averin" jelly, and other accessories, and we dowered with appetites sharpened by keen mountain air! Never to be forgotten! Had anyone had the indiscretion to ask us then if life was worth living, we would have counted him a lunatic.

*(To be continued)*



## THE GRAMPIANS.

Lat gentry chieks and ne'er-do-weels  
 Gang owre the warld stravaigin',  
 Syne rave and write lang screeds o' styte  
 O' foreign kintras braigin'—  
 Het birstlin' clime, or realm o' rime—  
 O' drouthy lands, an' swampy anes ;  
 Here lat me bide, nor budge a stride  
 Frae Scotland and her Grampians !

Gae range the maps for towerin' taps,  
 Alps, Andes, Himalayas—  
 They're a' owre heigh, and cauld, and dreigh,  
 King Winter's gloomy dais.  
 They're nae the kin' to charm the min'—  
 Sae big, unshapely, lumpy anes ;  
 We winna swap for nae sic tap  
 Oor ain ticht, weel-made Grampians !

Norseman and Dane might scour the main  
 And ravage a' your braw lands,  
 And Roman tramps set up their camps  
 Far owre the feckless lawlands.  
 They ran like fillies owre England's hillies,  
 Her pair bit humpy-dumpy anes ;  
 But, man ! they shied, richt scare and fleyed  
 At Scotland's douchty Grampians !

Then here's three cheers for Scotland's muirs,  
 Her noble glens and passes,  
 Wi' whin and broom, and heather bloom,  
 Their ever-durin' basses !  
 But to the stars peal loud the bars,  
 The song be Scotland's champions !  
 Her foe-repellin', Olympus-scalin',  
 Eternal, glorious Grampians !

GAVIN GREIG.



A MOUNTAIN SCENE.

We started—and he led me toward the hills,  
Up through an ample vale, to higher hills  
Before us, mountains stern and desolate ;  
But, in the majesty of distance, now  
Set off, and to our ken appealing fair  
Of aspect, with aerial softness clad,  
And beautiful with morning's purple beams.

\* \* \* \* \*

We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,  
A steep ascent ; and reached a dreary plain,  
With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops  
Before us ; savage region ! which I paced  
Dispirited : when, all at once, behold !  
Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,  
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high  
Among the mountains ; even as if the spot  
Had been from eldest time by wish of theirs  
So placed, to be shut out from all the world !

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

—“The Excursion” (Book Second).



## MY SCHWARZWALDREISE.

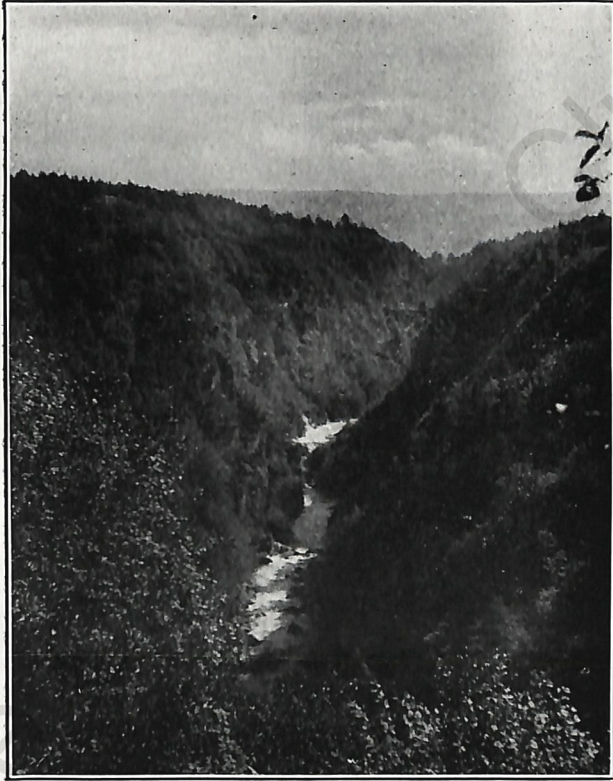
BY A. LANDSBOROUGH THOMSON, M.A.

AT German Universities the admirable custom obtains of breaking a rather long summer session by a whole week's holiday at Whitsuntide. And so it happened that the early morning of June 6th, four years ago, saw two mountain-loving students, Edouard Heimann and myself, taking train at Heidelberg *en route* for Freiburg. To both of us, North German and Scot, the Black Forest or Schwarzwald was new ground, and we were eagerly looking forward to a few day's tramping among its hills.

Freiburg was reached early in the forenoon, but we left an inspection of the town for our return journey, and, snatching a hasty lunch at the station, took the next train to the south-east by that well-known railway, the Höllenthalbahn. The Höllenthal is indeed a beautiful valley, and through its woods and fields the train wound steeply till it reached a lake, the Titisee, and the village which is called after it. Here we left the railway and took a motor-bus southward. At first we went along the lake-side, and then for some miles through fine woods till another lake, the Schluchsee (2950 feet) was reached. Here we thought ourselves near enough to our journey's end to walk the remainder in what was left of the afternoon; so, slinging on the rucksacks, we set off on our tramp, at first along a short-cut round the end of the lake, but afterwards along a highroad which was hot and dusty where the trees threw no shade.

We took things easily that afternoon, and found the ten miles quite enough for such a short first day. Towards the end of the walk the road crossed the watershed into the valley of the southward flowing Alb, at the head of which lies the health resort of St. Blasien. Our next day's route lay down the Albthal, but instead of descending to St. Blasien we preferred to leave the main road and spend the night at the inn of Höchenschwand,





*Photo by*

*L. N. G. Ramsay.*

A VIEW OF THE ALB VALLEY (BLACK FOREST).



a little village perched on a bare ridge on the eastern side of the valley.

Even in a hot South German summer an altitude of 3350 feet was sufficient to ensure a cold nip in the night air, and this we felt with enjoyment, suggesting as it did the distant Alpine snows which the haze stubbornly hid from us as twilight deepened into night. And gradually a thick mist rose in the surrounding valleys, appearing, as we looked down on its even surface, like a dead white moonlit sea lying calm and silent between the black walls of some long fjord. Then night closed down till the mist became a grey ghostly glimmer, and finally lost the last rays of light and was merged in the surrounding darkness.

Next day an unfortunate blunder turned our quiet walk down the Albthal into a rather uncomfortable race. The plan which we had drawn up for the day included a seventeen-mile walk down the Albthal to Albruck, where the tributary joins the Rhine, and a ten-mile walk from Wehr to Todtmoos up the parallel but more westerly valley of the Wehra: the comparatively uninteresting level portion between Albruck and Wehr was to be covered by train. It was while we were breakfasting that my companion discovered a miscalculation and announced that the only convenient train left Albruck, seventeen miles away, in rather less than four hours! Within a very few minutes, you may be sure, breakfast was over, the bill settled, the rucksacks on, and the way begun. At first we followed a rough path over open ground on the southward ridge of the hill, but soon we turned steeply to the right among the trees and joined the valley road some distance below St. Blasien.

The road was good and shady, and sloped gently southwards; we had it very much to ourselves, passing few houses and seeing few people. Almost the whole way the sides of the valley were splendidly wooded, and the route presented many picturesque turns and beautiful stretches. At first the road lay along the bottom of the valley, the Alb flowing noisily beside. But later the



road kept high up on the left slope and the stream became almost inaudible in a deep gorge. The valley proved exceptional in that, as we proceeded down it, the scenery became finer. The road became a terrace, the ground rising steeply on the left and falling abruptly to the right. The sides of the gorge were precipitous at places, and fine crags peeped out among the great trees. Several times rocky buttresses barred the way of the road and, being too steep on the face to be rounded, were pierced by tunnels.

At the end we caught our train with two minutes to spare, reached Wehr, lunched and rested. Late in the afternoon we started up the Wehrathal, taking things easily to make up for the forenoon's haste. The Wehr, too, in its lower course had a gorge with precipitous rocky sides, but the road followed the stream along the bottom, crossing it from time to time. At one place a pair of dippers was seen; they belong to a variety slightly different from that familiar to us on our Highland burns. The valley became more open higher up, and reaching the pleasant summer-resort of Todtmoos (2625 feet) we put up at one of its hotels, as yet almost empty.

The next day was to be a day of hills, just as its predecessor had been a day of valleys. It was also to be a day of tinkling cow-bells, for during that whole day we followed rough paths, through woods and across steep pastures, always with that pleasant Alpine sound in our ears, now loud and near, now faint and distant. There are indeed many points of resemblance between the higher levels of the Black Forest and the lower levels of the Alps, but few so striking as that wind-borne tinkle. So gentle a sound would seem incongruous heard among heather and crag, and would form a jarring note in the concert of the lusty Highland winds. But borne by soft breezes across the steep sun-warmed pastures of the Schwarzwald, Jura, or lower Alpine hills, it forms a part of the natural harmony; in some indescribable way it adds greatly to the beauty of those scenes, and is missed whenever we cross such ground without its soft accompaniment.





*Photo by*

*L. N. G. Ramsay.*

**A VIEW IN THE BLACK FOREST.**

From a hill on the western side of the Wehra Valley.

(The long ridge in the background, to the centre, is the Feldberg, 4,907 ft.)



To reach the higher levels, we struck up the western slope of the valley by a rough road directly behind Todtmoos. The ascent was rapidly made, through fields, past the large wooden Schwarzwald cottages with their steep roofs, past clumsy four-wheeled farm carts pulled by oxen. Various birds, too, were noted: an occasional carrion-crow, a more frequent redstart, or a white-wagtail, that lighter-hued continental cousin of our own familiar pied or water-wagtail.

The road soon crossed the ridge by a pass, and at the summit we struck off to the north on a rough track along the ridge itself, rising steeply towards our first top. Here we came in contact with the system of marked paths, the "blazed trails" of the German touring clubs. All the different routes are marked at intervals with some distinctive mark—say, a blue triangle, a yellow square, or a red circle. In the woods the marks are metal and are fixed to the trees a few feet from the ground; on the open pastures they are painted on large stones, and are sometimes difficult to find. When the path is distinct and unbranched the marks are at long intervals, but they are to be found in abundance wherever the path becomes indistinct, changes direction, or crosses another. So well do the Germans overdo this marking, that even the most obstinately stupid person could scarcely lose himself if he tried, except perhaps in the open pasture; for sometimes the route lies across the grass without any definite path, and the marks may be too obscure—for example, a blue square on a stone amongst a clump of blue flowers—leading to some slight trouble in finding the beginning of the path when the woods are reached again.

In parts of the Swiss Juras and in the Eastern Alps marked routes are also to be found. They are usually local excursions in the neighbourhood of some village in which an explanation is generally posted up. The Black Forest routes, however, have more method in them, and extend for great distances in many cases. Thus the red-diamond of the Basel-Pforzheim "highway" traverses the range from end to end, along its main ridges and over its



chief summits. It is frequently crossed by other routes, and numerous short local paths complete the network. An almost unlimited number of combinations of different routes can be made, and instructions for quite a complicated journey can be summed up in "Follow the yellow circle till it crosses the red triangle; follow the red triangle to the right till it crosses the blue square; follow the blue square to the left till you reach your destination: note that on the red triangle route there is a stretch of nearly four kilometers without a beer-garden." German civilisation is surely a "fearful and wonderful" thing! We have indeed heard a wish expressed at a late hour in the smoking-room at Sligachan that the main ridge of the Cuillin should be outlined in red and its branches in blue, but we hope that the day is distant when it will be part of Cairngorm routine to follow heliotrope hexagons across the Larig Ghru or to scrutinise the stones of Corrie Etchachan for purple paraboloids!

It was the red-diamond of the Basel-Pforzheim route that we had joined where the road crossed the ridge along which it ran, and it soon led us to our first summit, the Hochkopf (4154 feet). The hill, like most German hills, was wooded to the top, but a wooden ladder and platform afforded a fine view. Some swifts were wheeling in the air above us and must have been at least a thousand feet above the houses on which they nested; but the horizontal distance was small, for the slopes were steep.

From the Hochkopf the route led us along the ridge, and, after a slight dip, to the top of the Blössling (4301 feet). The actual summit was clear of trees and a bench replaced the more usual platform or tower. Here we lunched and rested a little before descending, for between us and our third hill there was a big dip down to where a road crossed a low pass, to which we now descended by a very steep path winding down the wooded face. The ascent on the other side partly through woods and partly over pasture was long, and it was late in the afternoon before we reached the summit of the Herzogenhorn (4789 feet), the second highest hill in the Black Forest. The summit



is unwooded, and the ground falls precipitously away on one side. On the top was a lingering snowdrift and a wooden refreshment-hut: the weather being fine and our rucksacks well-provisioned, we voted the latter a blot on the landscape. There must, however, be many who welcome its presence on this rather lonely route.

The Feldberg (4903 feet), the summit of the Schwarzwald, was now in plain view a few miles away, and to it—the dip between not being so great as the last—we proposed to go. The Feldberg is a long ridge rather than a peak. It has few trees on it, and cattle graze all over its grassy slopes. An easy driving road leads from the valley to the Hotel Feldberghof at one end of the ridge, and from there a path continues to the highest point, where there is an inn and a small stone tower. It struck me as strange that so ignoble a hill should be higher than Ben Nevis and all the Cairngorms. But truly the glory of a mountain does not lie in mathematical symbols!

The day was growing old and we pressed on, our route taking us direct to the summit, crossing the road instead of following it round by the Feldberghof. We crossed the grassy slopes on which the cattle were grazing, and which afford good skiing in winter, reaching the summit inn after a twenty-two-mile day of many ups and downs. The light was failing and we first of all climbed the little tower.

As is the case with most important view points in Germany, there is a fixed brass plate which shows the directions of the main summits and points of interest in the panorama. Hopefully we looked in the directions which bore the names of famous Alpine peaks, but the far horizon was dim, and it was not until two months later, from a summit of the Juras, that I got my first view of the great snow-clad ranges. Perforce we had to console ourselves with the nearer hills. To the north rose the summits of the northern part of the Black Forest; to the west, beyond the broad flat Rhine-plain, lay the twin range, the Vosges Mountains, with its highest point, the Belchen, and the marches of France; to the south-west was the Schwarzwald



Belchen, third summit of the range; to the south stretched the way by which we had come.

Next day we went down the slopes towards the Belchen, missing, as we did not then realise, the beautiful Feldsee, a little lake in a wooded hollow. Before us, still many hours' distant, rose our peak, and we thought it the most imposing of the hills of this region although inferior in altitude to both the Feldberg and the Herzogenhorn. For the first time we met other pedestrians in considerable numbers, for this part of the route is more frequented than that over which we had come on the previous day. After descending for about 700 feet we entered the forest; on the bare or sparsely-wooded slopes above, larks and tree-pipits had been the only noticeable birds, but now several species were to be heard, including the sweet-voiced song-thrush. It was interesting to meet with this familiar species at these levels, for it is a northern bird and almost unknown in summer in the plains of South Germany. I had noted a few above the 1000 feet contour in the Odenwald, and here they seemed fairly common at a little over 4000 feet.

In the depths of the forest we at last quitted the red diamond route, and began to follow a blue sign more directly towards the Belchen. Soon we crossed a small woodland stream, followed it upwards for some distance, and then emerged on an open hillside. For a while the route lay over open but fairly level ground, descending gradually to a road. Crossing this, we wound upward into woods again, and followed an undulating path through them till the mid-day halt was called in a pretty glade.

Afterwards the path led steeply upward, though still among trees, for some time. At length we reached the steep-sided dome which forms the summit of the Belchen, and the path became a zig-zag series of artificial terraces. When we reached the top (4642 feet), where a skylark was singing, our first glance was southward, but disappointment again awaited us, for the horizon was hazier than ever, and we had to acknowledge that our last chance of an Alpine view was gone.



The summit is a bare grassy ridge undisfigured by any refreshment hut, but a small hotel nestles unobtrusively a few hundred feet lower down on the southern slope. This slope is gentler than the others, and a road comes up as far as the hotel, but it was by a steep path through the woods on the north-western side that we descended, after a short interlude, to the base of the mountain. A few miles of trudging along a level highroad was pleasantly varied by short-cuts over riverside meadows, until we ended our pilgrimage at the branch-line terminus of Staufen, after a day's total of some twenty-eight miles.

The jolting train which bore us through the gathering dusk to Freiburg gave us ample time to discuss and formulate a verdict on the past few days. The well-marked paths of the Schwarzwald and its frequent hotels might soon pall on the devotee of trackless heather and impromptu bivouacs, but they certainly enable even a stranger to cover in a short time with ease and certainty a large stretch of most beautiful country. For a beautiful country the Black Forest undoubtedly is, and it has a character all its own, with its dark lakes and deep-cut gorges, its fine sweeps of woodland and steep stretches of sub-Alpine meadow.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next day my companion crossed the Rhine-plain to the Vosges range, that country of ruined castles perched on wooded peaks. But I, having already plans for a visit there later on, went northward. For three hours the express carried me along that level plain with its interminable fields and orchards, hop-gardens, and plantations, muddy roads and slow ox-carts, clustering villages and scorching heat. Then the wooded hills appeared ahead with the Neckar emerging from among them, old Heidelberg creeping irregularly up their flanks and modern Heidelberg straggling outward on the plain, and the ancient Schloss, now a ruined symbol, watching over all.

NOTE.—As the writer had no camera with him on his tour, he is indebted for the accompanying photographs to his friend Mr. Lewis N. G. Ramsay, M.A., who visited the district the following summer.



## ALLERMUIR.

BY FRED. R. COLES.

THE charge is often brought against the modern city dweller that he misses the beautiful that lies close to his very door. The globe-trotter, the motorist, the cyclist, go, or rather are borne, so far away now-a-days with all the speed of their respective machines, that they turn up the nose of scorn and raise the supercilious eyebrow of well-bred astonishment, if, haply, a plain pedestrian begins a tale of some little ramble within the absurd distance of five miles from our Scottish capital.

Yet, verily there were two of us, who, a few days ago, in the teeth of a damp sou' wester and in defiance of all well-intended counsels, rambled off to the—will the insignificant hill-name bear the publicity?—well, just the Pentlands; and saw sights such as I trow few of the globe-trotters ever saw (for they have no time for Nature's secrets) and none of the stay-at-homes, gossiping away the idle hours by the enervating asbestos-nook, could see, be their dreams never so romantic!

To follow the charmingly-winding declivitous path from near Comiston Drive to the farm and house of Comiston and so to the main road near Swanston Loaning is one of the many pleasant rambles evidently much in vogue on a Sunday afternoon in summer. But to keep your footing on the same path, when the snow lies frozen and then slightly thawed, and breasting all the while a full-bodied breeze that seems to rush out at you as if challenging your audacity—why, who would be such a fool as to call that pleasure.

We two did—and we meant a good deal more, and we did that, too. For diverging at the base of the Swanston Brae sharply to the right, we presently struck across the fields, assaulted the steep fort-like hillock beyond west of Stevenson's house, and then, setting foot on the brink of



the Hare Burn, tracked it up to its source in the very bosom—frozen and snowy, and unmaternal, as it looked amid the rocks and heather—of Allermuir.

The burn was in grand spate, and, rushing down clear and pellucid, strove its baby utmost to break asunder the sheeny bars which King Frost had bound, in all manner of fantastic forms, across its bed and for many feet on either bank. Even the first few score yards of this semi-frozen semi-rushing stream were replete with the most exquisite shapes in clear ice; here a row of separately-frozen rush-stems drooped over, kissing the little wavelets, some scimitar-curved, some straight and broad and pointed, like the dagger of Lady Macbeth, some serrated all along the under edge like a silver saw; at other places there stood up rows of miniature organ-pipes, "the mute inglorious Miltons" of this Arctic symphony! Again, in whole spaces of what, a few weeks ago, was the overtrickling of some tiny tributary, now great rounded bosses and muscle-like masses lay, glittering in the morning sunshine as if they were the petrified biceps and deltoids of some mighty Son of Anak chained below and struggling upwards into life!

All these, however, were the mere prelude to the Ice-Symphony King Frost had written a little higher up amid the dark recesses of this wonderful streamlet.

At a point so comparatively near the summit of our little Mid Lothian Alp that the air—less boisterous now—was perceptibly colder, a narrow cleft occurs, which, in the drought of summer, would scarcely be observed for any reason except that on a specially hot day its cliffy sides make for coolness and shade; its side, on the west, may be some seventy or eighty feet long as it flanks the stream, and in height some eighteen or twenty feet—an utterly insignificant precipice indeed. But, to-day, the jagged rocky front is glorified, fairer than the Queen of Sheba, in the bewilderingly fantastic splendour of the ice-fairyland clothing it from summit to base. You lean back on the eastern side of rock, your feet not too securely set on the fast dampening smooth frozen edge of the stream, and



almost within arm's reach there spreads out, above, and away on both sides, this magnificent frontage of frost-work. From the grassy edge aloft there hang long pendants of ice of the shape of a Swiss Horn, the mouth at the top and the whole body of them an amazing *diminuendo* in grey to the final tip which sparkles diamond-like and keen. Scores of such pendants fringed the brink. The broadest mass bulged outwards and receded inwards, just as the roughness of the rock beneath compelled the slow-dripping hill moisture when it was in emotion; and where the ice, everywhere all but solid, actually touched and lay encrusted upon the rock, it shone absolutely like the most brilliant silver ever imagined.

Still more strange was the sight to our unaccustomed eyes of the constant downward fall of bubbles and drops of water chasing each other every few seconds irregularly across the rock surface, six inches or more beneath this solid veil of ice, and having the appearance of little dark beetles scampering away in a harum-scarum flight. This particular phenomenon we don't remember seeing noticed any where. It was of course the result of a sudden thaw then rapidly proceeding during our ramble on the 17th. Had we confronted this rock on Saturday evening, the ice-masses alone—beautiful as they are—would have rewarded us; had we postponed our ramble till Monday, the underlying surface of the ice would all have been thawed into one continuous and therefore invisible flow. But, reaching our rocky fairyland just at the hour we did, our eyes were gladdened by the vision of one of these mysterious inner secrets of which Nature is so prolific, and yet into which so few of us, in those prosaic, whirligig days, ever get the chance of peeping.

It was hard to tear ourselves away from the fascination of those little drops of water sliding swiftly along beneath their icy roof; they seemed like messengers from a world just "beyond the veil," to tell poor plodding man that his little bubble-life, too, will soon be lost in the stream that flows ever seawards, and that he had better make the most of his career while he can.



After this, although there was a strenuous delight in treading the snow-drifted slopes of Allermuir and skidding down them on the return, in losing our bearings (for ten minutes) in a whirl of ghostly mist as we searched for Caerketton, and in plunging down the last steep hill near Swanston wood, no such treasure, so personal, so unimaginable, so novel as the above, remained as a gift from Nature herself to be kept and pictured for all the rest of memory and life.



## MAP-READING.

BY P. A. C.

I REMEMBER, years ago, a party of hill-climbers who were crossing a range of mountains situated in the Scottish Highlands. The day was wintry, and thick, rolling clouds of mist covered the slopes and dipped far down into the glens below. As the party ascended the hill, they passed a half-ruined bothy near which an old Highlander was stacking peats for the winter. As they approached, he ceased his work to turn and watch them. Seeing that they were bound for the heights above, he called to them to stop, and, hurrying across the heather, he begged them to go back, for he knew well the dangers of the treacherous mist. He was much relieved, however, when he saw that they carried a "sketch," as he called their map, and he sent them forward, but not without warning to "ca' canny." Of those travellers I know nothing, but I have met many mountaineers, climbers who have "bagged" thirty peaks, who yet know little or nothing of the country they have traversed, and are quite incapable of reading a map. Now, the first requisite for the city hillman is a thorough knowledge of map-reading. For his own comfort—it may be for his own safety—he must be able to set and keep a course over any country under any conditions. This he can only do with precision after years of practice, but much may be done to shorten this course of proficiency.

Before one can traverse unknown country with certainty and speed, one must be provided with an accurate map. A mounted map is, for all practical purposes, the most convenient for hill work. Folded back and bound between strong covers, it opens like a book at any particular spot, only exposing a surface of 7 by 7 inches. A map-case with a tale front is a most useful protection from wind and rain. The map is folded exposing the locality required, and placed inside. This greatly facilitates



application to the map on a wind-swept moor where the mountaineer so often finds himself.

INTERPRETING CONTOUR LINES.—Proficiency in map-reading is attained when the study of a good map enables

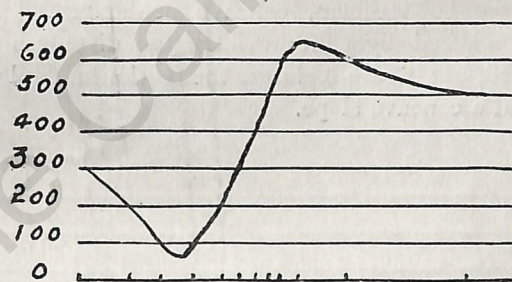
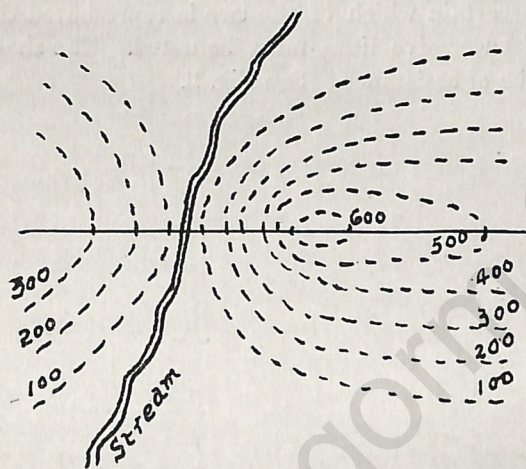


FIG. 1

the reader to picture in his mind the appearance of the country portrayed, but this standard of proficiency can only be reached after long and careful study of the subject and much practical experience. The first step is to learn the conventional signs. These are to be found at the bottom of every one-inch map. Then one must become familiar with the system of contours. One must recognise when an ascent is steep, and when gradual; distinguish a concave slope from a convex slope; and be able to pick out the easiest route from point to point. To do these it is necessary to have in one's mind a close connection between the actual ground and the map. A few points may be tabled as regards the information conveyed by contour lines.

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1. Where contours are close together, the slope is steeper than in places where the contours are further apart. See Fig. 1.

2. Where contours bend, they show either a spur or hollow. To ascertain which of the two is represented the numbering of successive lines must be noted. The shading, too, will be of assistance. See Fig. 2.

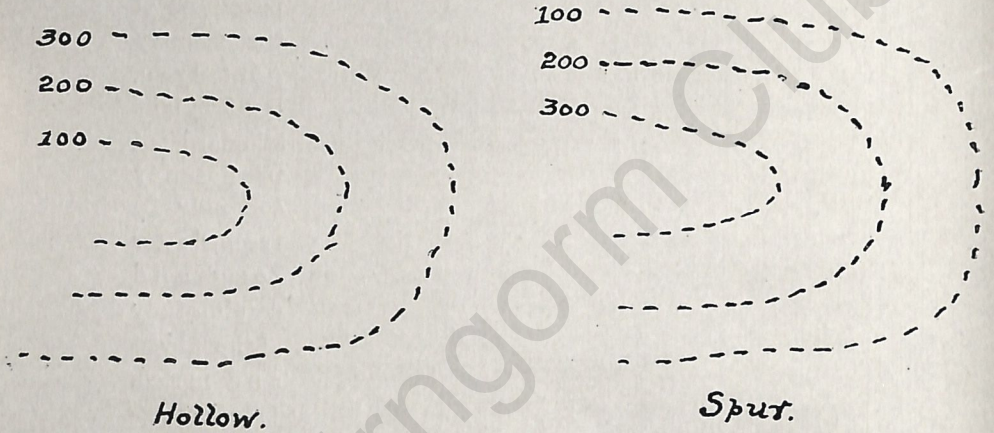


FIG. 2

3. Slopes may be uniform, concave or convex. A uniform slope marked by contours at equal distances is easily recognised, but figure 3 shows the section and plan of a convex and a concave slope.

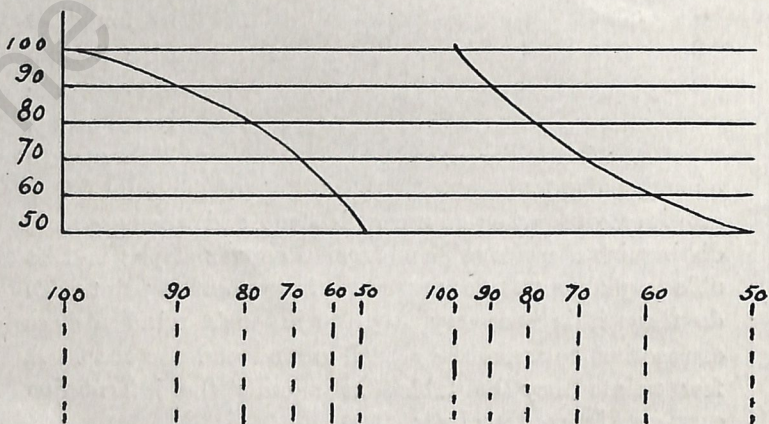


FIG. 3



All these must become familiar in the reader's mind, and to attain familiarity I have found the following exercises of the greatest service in learning and instructing in map-reading:—

1. Take your map to some high ground and examine it carefully. Try to imagine what the country before you looks like. Note every wood, road, and stream, the direction of each ridge and valley, the relative heights and the steepness of the slopes. Then, looking at the country, compare it bit by bit with the map. Note your errors and discover the cause of them. Careful use of a scale should be made when reading a map.

2. Reverse the process. Look at the country, study each feature, convert the distances to the scale of your map. When you have in your mind a fixed idea of what the map should look like turn to it and compare notes.

HOW TO USE A MAP.—The first thing one must do on taking out one's map is to observe the direction of north, then set the map, note the scale, and finally set a course. Methods of finding the north in broad daylight are as numerous as they are easy, and it is only necessary to mention a few.

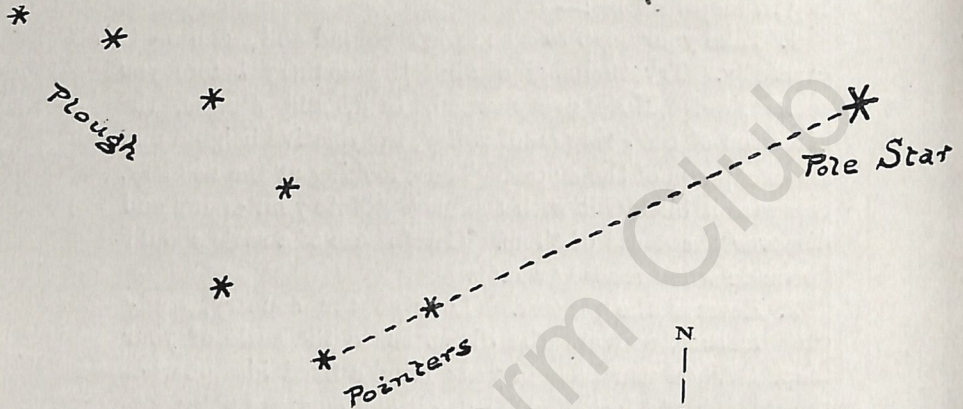
1. By compass, allowing for variation.
2. At the equinoxes, the sun rises due east and sets due west.
3. At apparent noon, the sun is on the meridian. Apparent noon may, however, differ from mean noon (12 o'clock by a watch) by as much as 16 minutes, and therefore this method can only be taken as approximate.
4. Hold your watch horizontally, the hour hand pointing to the sun. Then the south line passes from the centre of the watch exactly between the point of the hour hand and the figure XII.

Having ascertained the north, it is then an easy matter to find any other point of the compass and to set a course accordingly.

At night, as in daylight, the most convenient and accurate way to steer is by compass. Armed with a prismatic compass with illuminated dial, any one should,

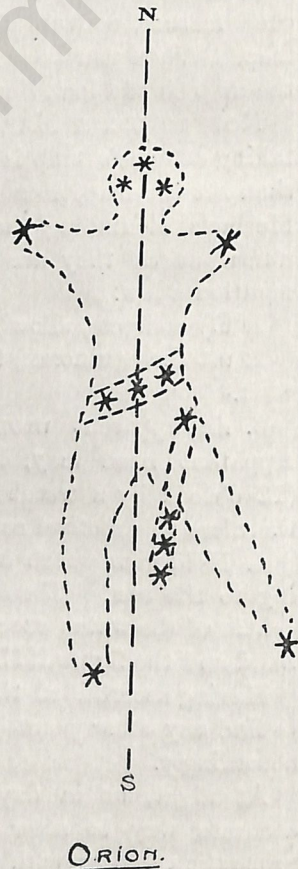


after a little practice, keep an exact course. It is just when you require your compass, however, that you find you have not got it and you have to fall back on something



else. After a compass, the Pole Star is the best guide at night ; and so you must first learn to find that star. The Pointers of the familiar constellation called the Great Bear or Plough give the line to the Pole Star (See fig. 4). This is always within 28 of the True North.

But the Plough may be obscured by cloud, and so it is well to be prepared for that contingency. A substitute is found in the group which makes up the mythical soldier, Orion. A line from the centre star of the Belt of Orion, passing through that warrior's head, points to the Pole Star. Having found the north, select a star low down on the horizon and steer for it ; and as it climbs higher in the sky or sinks from view select another.





It was by a method such as this that Sir Garnet (now Viscount) Wolseley led an army of 17,000 men for miles across the trackless desert through the black Egyptian night, guided only by the Pole Star and the stars dropping one by one below the western horizon. When dawn broke he was scarcely a dozen yards from his course on the battle field of Tel-el-Kebir. Yet more wonderful is the story of Captain Lee, of the United States Army in Mexico, who afterwards became the famous confederate General. Over unknown and broken country, in a terrific thunderstorm, this intrepid officer groped his way with despatches to the Commander-in-Chief, with no guide save the wind and the lightning flashes. General Winfield Scott, who commanded the army, characterised this perilous adventure as "the greatest feat of physical and moral courage performed by any individual during the entire campaign."

Other methods there are of finding direction at night; but these are all somewhat complicated, and under ordinary circumstances the methods I have described should suffice.

**HOW TO SET AND KEEP A COURSE.**—To set a course is one thing; to keep the course you have set is another and a much harder task. In setting a course, so many side issues may enter—the strength of the party, or the desire for picturesque views, for example—that each case must be decided on its own merits, and according to the lights and capabilities of the individual traveller. But having decided on a course, one must stick to it. Any one may see the peak of a mountain standing out before him and make a bee-line for it over hill and through bog; but this slap-dash style of going is exhausting for any one, and disastrous for ladies. The maxim that "The straight road is not always the shortest" is often true; and it holds good here, if anywhere. The road for some distance before you should be carefully studied on the map, and the following points should be borne in mind.

1. In small-scale maps much detail is often omitted, and therefore it is necessary to check one's progress by time.



For example, you may see that a branch road goes off to the right about a mile ahead. If, at the end of ten minutes, you encounter such a road, you may be sure that it is not the one for which you are looking, because, unless you are a remarkably fast walker, you will not travel more than four miles an hour on a good road, and much less on a bad one.

2. Remember that you are traversing the country at a much slower pace than you are studying the map, and so the objects you have marked do not appear so quickly as you expect them.

3. Don't jump to conclusions. Take a comprehensive view of your path, and do not become alarmed because the track suddenly bends off in an unexpected direction. If you have advanced carefully, it will come all right.

4. When you are tired take care. That is the time when you become careless and anticipate. Every road you meet looks like the right one, and a careless turn may cost you miles.

5. If you are on a path, stick to it unless you know the way; better the wrong path than no path.

6. Don't be afraid to look at your map too often. You may see that the light is fading fast, and that in a few minutes you will be in darkness. Nevertheless follow your map. It is not wasted time, however great your hurry.

7. And, lastly, if it is getting dark, or you feel you are getting lost, do not rush wildly on hoping to find a path. Stop; take a pull at yourself; find your bearings, and quietly think out the best way of getting right again.

IDENTIFYING MOUNTAINS.—Passing from the subject of map-reading proper, we may turn to one or two adjuncts, which, though they do not strictly come under the heading of this article, may be of interest to the mountaineer.

One of the many rewards of the climber, after a stiff pull to the summit, is to sit in the midst of an admiring circle of friends and point out the various peaks around (provided he knows them). But I have seen so many feeble attempts and such gross errors that a word on "spotting" and pointing out hills may not be out of place.



The method *par excellence* is the use of the prismatic compass, but, as this instrument is not common amongst mountaineers, I will suggest another.

By means of a protractor and map, it is easy to measure the bearing of a hill—i.e., the angle between it and the north, or between it and another hill, measured at the observer's eye. To measure the angle on the ground without instruments is equally easy if three simple numbers are remembered as shown in figure 6.

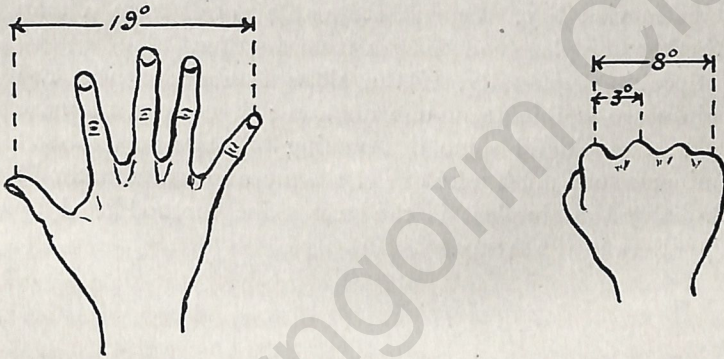


FIG. 6

1. The angle subtended by the thumb and fourth finger of a fully-extended hand at arm's length is  $19^\circ$ .
2. The knuckles of the first and second fingers of the clenched fist subtend an angle of  $3^\circ$ .
3. The angle subtended by the knuckles of the first and fourth fingers is 8.

Now, this may seem surprising at first sight, but after very little practice will be found quite accurate and most useful. I have often prepared diagrams giving the angles of the hills surrounding some vantage ground, and have thus been able to "spot" many peaks otherwise difficult to locate. And at other times, when application to a map was rendered impossible by a roaring hurricane, I have measured the angle to some unknown hill and spotted it later under the pleasanter conditions of a warm study and a broad map-table.

Yet another method of measuring degrees is by means of a watch. Holding the watch as in finding the south,

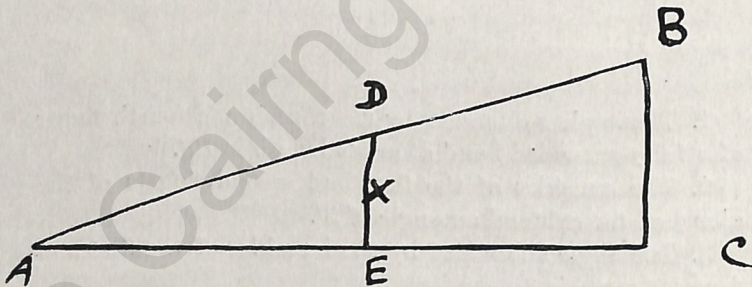


take XII as 0, and remember that each minute represents 6°. But this is neither so handy nor so accurate as the method described above.

A makeshift protractor may be constructed by taking the corner of a piece of paper and dividing the right angle by folding it three times. Each of the folds will then give  $11\frac{1}{4}$  degrees. If necessary, further folds will give more minute divisions.

**VISIBILITY.**—Closely connected with identifying mountains is visibility. One must be able to tell from a map whether one place can be seen from another.

Speaking generally, if the slope is concave, the two points are visible from one another; if convex, they are not. But should some intervening hill rise to doubtful eminence, one must take one of the more accurate methods. Probably the simplest is the proportion method used by signallers in the Army.



Suppose the mountaineer wishes to know if, when he reaches A, he will be able to see B. He looks at his map and notices that D comes between and may possibly obstruct his view. He takes from his map the distance from himself to B—i.e., A to C; and from himself to D—i.e., A to E. He sees from the contours the rise or fall to B—i.e., C B, and can find the rise and fall to D that would make D exactly in alignment with himself and B by the following proportion.  $AC : CB :: AE : X$ . He then consults his map to get the actual rise or fall to D, the possible obstruction, and, according as it is greater or less than X, knows whether B is visible or not.



The diagram, of course, shows merely the theory of the method, but it is possible to find on the map and work out examples on paper where you can say with certainty that, standing on a wall, or bridge parapet, or some such thing, the object would be visible while from the ground it would not. It is only a case of accurate measurement.

On the vast expanse of map-making I must not embark, for I would wander from plane-table to clinometer, and from traverse to triangulation. Careless of the advice I have given, I have already strayed far from the course I set at starting. Nevertheless, I shall feel satisfied if these few points prove helpful to any one of the ever increasing "leaderless legion" of mountaineers.



## A HIGHLAND TOUR IN POETRY.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

ONE day, I picked up on a Castlegate stall a sadly-battered copy of "The Highlands; the Scottish Martyrs; and Other Poems," by the Rev. James G. Small, Bervie. A glance at it showed me that the principal poem in the book was more or less a descriptive account of the Highlands, one page, for example, being headed "Glenmorriston—Glen-garry—Ben Nevis," so I handed over the small sum demanded and made myself its owner. The work and its author were alike unknown to me, but a reference to D. H. Edwards's invaluable "Modern Scottish Poets" furnished some information regarding both. Mr. Small was born in Edinburgh in 1817, was educated at the High School and University, and was licensed by the Presbytery as a probationer of the Church of Scotland. He was evidently still without a church when the Disruption occurred, and, throwing in his lot with the non-intrusionists, he occupied several preaching stations as a probationer, finally becoming minister of the Free Church at Bervie, in Kincardineshire, in 1846. He died in 1888.

Mr. Small displayed considerable poetical talent even in his student days, carrying off prizes for poetical compositions. The work already named was first published in 1843, and comprised, besides the poem on "The Highlands," a narrative poem, "The Scottish Martyrs," nearly as long; "The Liberation of Greece from the Turkish Yoke," a prize poem in 64 stanzas, written in 1835; "Imagination," a "tale" extending to 72 stanzas; and a few minor pieces. A second edition appeared in 1844, with "Notes" to "The Highlands" poem, intended as a guide to the itinerary followed, or, as the author phrased it, "to supplement, as concisely as possible, the musings which he has attempted to express in verse by the matters of fact which are more proper to prose." It was followed by a third



edition in 1852, containing a few more poems; and it is this edition that I now possess.

Of its contents the poem on "The Highlands" is the only one that need concern us here. At one time, I believe, it enjoyed considerable popularity. Contemporary reviewers praised it, one of them commending it as "an eminently beautiful piece of composition, exhibiting evident signs of the vivifying spirit which makes all nature 'beauty to the eye and music to the ear.'" And, according to the memoir of Small in "Edwards," Wordsworth had acknowledged that he found in it, both in sentiment and expression, "much, very much to admire." Without in any way disparaging these encomiums, the present-day reader would probably regard the poem as too long and diffuse, more fluent than virile. As a poetical picture of Highland scenery it is in a way reminiscent of descriptions given by Sir Walter Scott in "The Lord of the Isles," but no passage in it at all approaches the celebrated lines in which Scott delineates Loch Coruisk, in Skye—

The wildest glen, but this, can show  
Some touch of Nature's genial glow;  
On high Benmore green mosses grow,  
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,  
    And copse on Cruchan-Ben;  
But here—above, around, below  
    On mountain or in glen,  
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower.  
Nor ought of vegetative power,  
    The weary eye may ken.  
For all is rocks at random thrown,  
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,  
    As if were here denied  
The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,  
That clothe with many a varied hue  
    The bleakest mountain-side.

This, however, is an exceptionally high standard to attain; and, though falling far short of it, Mr. Small's work contains many passages of effective description. He manipulates the Spenserian stanza with considerable ease



and a certain degree of felicitous smoothness, but the poem is marked—not to say marred—by an excessive indulgence in imagery and rhapsody. Descriptive narrative, in short, is sacrificed to moral reflection—only it must be owned that the author frankly intimates that “his lay is meant rather as a reflective than as a descriptive one,” and expresses the hope that, while he has principally endeavoured to “interpret the voice of Nature,” he has at the same time given “sufficient intimations of what his eyes have actually seen, and his ears heard, to enable those who are conversant with such scenes to judge of the fidelity of his interpretations.” The reflective tone is pitched at the very outset, for the first canto—there are five cantos altogether—opens in this fashion :

Dull is the soul that e'er hath roamed along  
 'Mong Scotia's vales and hills, and hath not caught  
 The inspiring breath that prompts to pensive song ;  
 To whom, in seasons of sweet, silent thought,  
 The image of these scenes is never brought,  
 Nor fondly cherished as a precious dower ;  
 Upon whose breast their influence hath not wrought  
 As with a charm—whose gently soothing power  
 His heart hath gladly owned in many an after hour.

And I have felt that charm—and, not in vain,  
 Upon my soul unfadingly impressed,  
 These scenes in lively vision still remain ;  
 For never yet hath my delighted breast  
 Such calm, deep, purifying joy confessed,  
 As when 'mid these bright regions I have stood,  
 Or as when Memory my soul hath blessed,  
 And with her magic mirror hath renewed  
 To fancy's gladdened eye, lake, dell, and bosky wood.

After this, it is hardly surprising to find “the gladdening influence of a bright summer's day, succeeding to a threatening morning” expanded into eight stanzas, of which the following are two :—

The morn rose wrapt in clouds ; the murky sky  
 Deluged the earth ; and, for to-day, I deemed,  
 No smile from nature's face would cheer mine eye.  
 But soon from heaven a ray of promise beamed,



And the glad hills looked out, and brightly gleamed ;  
And forth I fared rejoicing, for I found  
That down the mountains now the torrents streamed  
With livelier mirth and more exulting bound,  
And a new beauty seemed diffused o'er all around.

And now the slowly rising clouds disclose  
A glorious scene. The sun, with struggling pride,  
Bursts forth, and in his beams the water glows.  
The distant islands scattered far and wide,  
The rugged mountains rising by my side,  
Trees fresh and fragrant from the recent rain,  
The long low heave of the returning tide,  
And all the glory of the boundless main,  
Invite me forth to muse—nor is their call in vain.

This "glorious scene," by the way, is on the coast of Moidart. We are supposed to have embarked at Oban, swept round Mull, and visited Iona and Staffa, the poet outlining the scenery *en route* and contributing also disquisitions on the ancient Caledonians, the mythology of Ossian, the introduction of Christianity, and the Culdees. Now, in the second canto, we make for Skye, "where the dark Coolins in wild glory tower." "'Twere well," our poet says :—

'Twere well to linger here, and silently  
To muse, till night's descending shades should throw  
A deep and solemn gloom across the sky,  
Congenial with the gloom that rests below,  
And mark the mountains as they seem to grow  
To wilder grandeur and more awful height.

But, instead, he "keeps his onward course," touching at Loch Duich and Kintail, and finally reaching Loch Torridon and Loch Maree :—

Away ! and let me wander where the hills  
Gird wild Loch Torridon, till now I stand  
Beside that cliff-encompassed lake, which fills  
Beyond all other in this teeming land,  
The musing soul with feelings of the grand  
And sternly glorious, not unmingled oft—  
And most when eve doth o'er the scene expand  
Her dewy wings, and rests serene aloft—  
With thoughts more sweetly calm, feelings more mild and soft.



Far let me wander down thy craggy shore,  
 With rocks and trees bestrewn, dark Loch Maree.

\* \* \* \* \*

In rugged grandeur by the placid lake,  
 Rise the bold mountain-cliffs sublimely rude,  
 A pleasing contrast, each with each, they make ;  
 And, when in such harmonious union viewed,  
 Each with more powerful charms appears imbued.

Our poetical cicerone must needs moralise, however, and find a comparison in "mingling hearts," just as, when, in the third canto, he reaches Ben Nevis by way of the great glen, he perceives the Scottish character typified in its "brooding tempests" and "ceaseless showers"—

Grieve not when tempests rave and darkly roll  
 Th' embattled clouds along the mountain's side,  
 These towering hills are like the dauntless soul  
 Of Caledonia, and when tempests chide  
 And winds assail them, then in strength and pride  
 They rise, and seem more glorious than before.  
 See ! down each rugged steep with foaming tide  
 Rush the retreating waters : so of yore  
 Fled the assailing foe from Scotia's rock-bound shore.

Another canto describes Scottish lakes ; and, after visiting Lochs Katrine, Achray, and Vennachar, the poet sees

The fair Loch Ard display  
 Her placid bosom, 'mid a rich array  
 Of skirting woods, and isles that calmly rest  
 On the bright waters, gleaming in the ray  
 On the descending sun ; while in the west  
 The dark Ben Lomond rears far off his snowy crest.

The last canto deals with a "return" journey to the Highlands :—

Again among the Highlands ! and again  
 Upon my sight these wondrous scenes arise.

But the route is a new one—through Glenfalloch and Strathfillan, along Loch Tay and down the river to Logierait, then "up" "by the Tummel and banks o' the Garry"



to Killiecrankie, Blair Atholl, and over the Perthshire border to Loch Laggan and Upper Strathspey—

While thus I muse where the wild Bruar rolls,  
Gazing across the northward moors, the thought  
Of dark Loch Garry with its verdant knolls.

\* \* \* \* \*

Of drear Loch Erich't's awful solitude,  
And lonely Laggan, to my soul is brought ;  
And I remember how, entranced, I stood  
Where Rothiemurchus spreads his wide and bristling wood.

This mention of Rothiemurchus is the solitary reference to any place within the immediate "region" of the Cairngorm Club, but the author in his preface furnishes a reason for not introducing "a few additional passages regarding some scenes which, since the publication of the second edition, he had an opportunity either of visiting for the first time or of more fully exploring"—Deeside in particular. He enumerates, however, the chief points of attraction which "this interesting district" presents, dilating on Balmoral, to which Queen Victoria had at that date only begun to resort. "Our loyal heart," he says, "rejoices to find that this retreat of our liege Lady and her Royal Consort contains all the elements of grandeur and of beauty;" and he gives a good reason for the confident opinion thus expressed—"Viewed from the north bank of the Dee, Balmoral presents a lordly aspect, and even wears, from the magnificence of its setting, an air of majesty which well comports with the royal associations which are now attached to it. This is especially felt on a fine autumnal evening, when the western clouds are suffused with a gorgeous glow, and the stately form of Lochnagar, wrapped in the solemn gloom of its own shadow, stands out, abrupt and bold, against the golden sky, which gives depth, by its contrasted brilliance, to the stern darkness of the precipitous mountain." With this facility for word-painting, Mr. Small might well have essayed fuller descriptions of Highland scenery. Had he done so, and curtailed his moralisings, his book would probably be better known to-day.



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

### MOUNT KEEN EXCURSION.

THE Club climbed Mount Keen on the May holiday.

Some thirty members left Aberdeen by the 8.45 train and drove from Aboyne to the stables, at the top of Glen Tana, kindly put at the disposal of the Club by Mr. Coats.

The day was misty, but the mist fortunately lifted as the top was reached, and a fairly good view was obtained. Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuid, with parts of Ben Muich Dhui were fairly distinct, and other points of interest were Lochnagar, Mount Battock, and the Glen Doll hills.

The majority of the party descended straight to the Tana, but a few members took the Braid Cairn on the way down.

The drive along Glen Tanar was most enjoyable, many trees being in blossom, and all showing their foliage to the very best advantage. The Club had dinner at Aboyne and returned to Aberdeen by the 7.53 train.

The following took part in the excursion:—Mr. and Mrs. Robert Anderson, Miss L. Anderson and Miss Hellen M. Anderson, Mr. John Clarke, Chairman of the Club; Mr. James Conner and Mr. F. Conner, Dr. and Mrs. W. F. Croll, Dr. W. J. Dilling, Mr. J. A. Hadden and Miss Hadden, Mr. and Miss Iverach, Mr. W. Macpherson, Mr. J. M. Gregor, Mr. George M'Intyre, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Nicol, Mr. J. Rennie, Mr. and Mrs. John Rust and Miss Rust, Mr. R. T. Sellar, Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Williamson and the Secretary.

A special interest attaches to Mount Keen as being the objective of the first Spring Excursion of the Club, on 5th May, 1890, two-and-twenty years ago. That excursion, besides, remains in a way "famous" in the annals of the Club for the number of those present—a number never since equalled, or even approached. The Club was practically newly-founded, having been in existence only a year, and mountaineering was then something of a novelty, so



that the excursion attracted a large concourse of members and their friends, female as well as male; and possibly the drive up and down Glentanner (designated Glen Tana in those days) proved an additional attraction. At any rate, the party numbered 162, of whom 45 were ladies. The local newspapers of the time had more elaborate reports of the outing than is now customary. Three of these reports at least, were contributed by members of the Club; and it may be of interest to reproduce an extract or two from them.

The ascent and descent were thus described in what was the most elaborate and detailed of the reports—

The ascent of Mount Keen was made from Coirebhruach, and was participated in by most of the company, from a boy of six to a man of seventy-six. The mountain, particularly graceful in outline, by the way, with a conical top, and a large, deep corrie on the northern side, is not very difficult of ascent, except towards the top; and for three-fourths of the ascent there is a fairly well-defined track. The summit is 3077 feet high, the mountain standing on the boundary-line between Aberdeenshire and Forfarshire—the track, in fact, is a public road to Brechin, and leads over the mountain by “the ladder” to Glenmark and Glenesk. The time taken in the ascent varied, of course, but it is perhaps worthy of note that one of the earliest arrivals at the cairn was a young lady. The day was unfortunately unfavourable for a fine view from the peak. Bennachie, Tap o’ Noth, the Buck of the Cabrach, Morven, and Lochnagar were readily observed from the lower slopes of the mountain, but haze and mist obscured the view from the summit and the various branches of the Cairngorm range—Ben Muich Dhui, Cairntoul, Braeriach, Ben Avon, and Beinn a’ Bhuird—were dimly indicated by members of the Club familiar with their whereabouts rather than distinctly observed by their “stranger friends”; the corries and precipices were draped in snow. The party having in various detachments, sometimes singly, reached the top, grouped themselves picturesquely on the west side of the cairn (the sheltered side, for it blew fiercely and bitterly on the east side), and were photographed. Then a formal meeting of the Club was held in close proximity to a suitable stone—Mr. Alexander Copland, the chairman, presiding—and Mr. Alexander Forbes, headmaster, Marywell Street School, was, on application, duly admitted a member and as duly “douted,” “as use and wont is.” This initiatory rite was then performed upon Mr. William Ronald, leather merchant, and ten other aspirants for membership of the Club, the ascent of 3000 feet being sufficient to qualify for admission. The party then straggled down the hill in the same happy, independent, “Go-as-you-please” fashion as that in which they straggled up, though in most cases with a slightly accelerated speed; a capital *al fresco* luncheon was served at Coirebhruach, comprising soup which some wag dubbed, “Bouilli *a la* Mount Keen”; and a pleasant drive down Glen Tana in the fading daylight brought a pleasant day’s outing to an end.



### According to another account—

On arriving at Coirebhruach, the party were served with sandwiches and milk, the better to fortify them for the climb that was before them. As the crow flies, the distance from this Lodge to the summit of Mount Keen is something under two miles. By the hill-path it is probably, however, nearer three miles. One hour and thirty-five minutes was the time estimated to overtake this part of the journey, and within that period the most laggard of the mountaineers had crossed the comparatively gentle slopes at the base of the mountain, passed the snow banks glistening in the sun half-way up, and used their last ounce of breath in taking the steep mound that leads abruptly to the top. There were cheers for the late-comers and the faint-hearted, and none were given more lustily than for Mr. William Ronald, leather merchant, the oldest member of the party, who, at four or five years past the threescore-and-ten, accomplished a physical feat that would not have shamed a man of younger years and good mettle.

About half-a-dozen gentlemen at the summit, we are told, were over seventy years of age. The boy of six already mentioned was a son of Mr. Alexander Taylor, manager of the coal department, Northern Co-operative Company; and two or three other young folks, it is said, did the climbing and descending without assistance. Among the party were (according to various of the reports)—

Mr. Alexander Copland, Mr. Robert Harvey, and Mr. A. I. M'Connochie, Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Club respectively; Baillies Lyon and Rust; Treasurer Morgan; the Rev. Robert Semple, Ruthrieston Free Church; the Rev. James Anderson, Dyce; Mr. J. S. Smith, Northern Agricultural Company; Mr. Thomas Kyd, Northern Assurance Company; Mr. John Fleming, wood merchant; Mr. Charles Shepherd, Aberdeen Steam Navigation Company; Mr. Thomas Jamieson, Fellow of the Institute of Chemistry; Mr. T. R. Gillies, advocate; Mr. Henry Peterkin, solicitor; Mr. A. Keith, grain merchant; Mr. G. R. Gowans, artist; Mr. W. J. Jamieson, "*Aberdeen Journal*"; Mr. Wilson, solicitor; Mr. Charles M'Hardy (Ellis and M'Hardy); Mr. Charles Stewart, Gordon's College; Mr. Arnold Christen; Mr. W. P. Robertson, dentist; Mr. James Rose, teacher; Mr. J. R. Grant, banker; Mr. Alexander Macphail.

The ceremony of initiation of members is thus elaborated in one of the reports—

One interesting event of the day's trip was not photographed—namely, the admission of several members to the Club by the time-honoured ceremony of "douping," well-known in Aberdeen through the records of burgess-making at the riding at the marches. In imitation of the methods adopted at the "marches," a candidate for membership presented a petition for admission, and the reading of the document, which was quaintly and humorously worded, caused as much amusement as did the manner in which its request was complied with.



Other incidents of the day's proceedings are thus narrated—

It has been objected that this [the outing] is "pic-nicking," not mountaineering; so it may be well to record the fact that two members of the Club, accompanied by a candidate for admission, started from Aboyne at half-past eight, scorned the delights of the Glen-Tana tea-table, and pushed steadily on for the head of the glen at a vigorous "four miles an hour" pace. They had the satisfaction of reaching Coirebhruach long before a vehicle hove in sight, and, along with an Aberdeen gentleman who crossed over from Dinnet and overtook them on the mountain slope, they were the first to reach the summit—a good twenty minutes before anybody else. (How did they get to Aboyne before the train? was freely asked in the course of the day. They belonged to a party of five who walked from Alford to Colquhony on Saturday and crossed over from Colquhony—on foot—to Aboyne on Sunday). Three of the four, it should be added, walked back to Aboyne in time to catch the train to Aberdeen. Near the summit of Mount Keen the pedestrians met a party of six Aberdonians who had come up from Tarfside by "the ladder"; and at the well at the top of the corrie they found a note recording the passage to Tarfside on Saturday of a different party of Aberdonians, who playfully designated themselves the "Junior Cairngorm Club." So long as incidents like these can be recorded, the proper function of the Cairngorm Club is not in danger of being neglected.

It should be explained, perhaps, that on their way up, the party halted at the mansion-house, the Forest of Glen Tana, on the special invitation of Sir William C. Brooks, Bart., and made a tour of inspection of the house and grounds, being also served with tea. Sir William himself, however, was not in residence at the time.

In connection with this excursion the Club issued a very complete monograph on Glen Tanner and Mount Keen, prepared by Mr. M'Connochie.

No fewer than four times since, the spring excursion of the Club has been to Mount Keen—on 7th May, 1894, 7th May, 1900, 7th May, 1906, and (now) 6th May, 1912. Seldom, however, has a good view been obtained. In 1894, according to the record in the "Excursions and Notes" in the "Journal," "the weather was propitious on the whole, but the atmospheric conditions did not permit of a distant view." In 1900, "mist had possession of the mountain-tops all morning, and as the summit of Mount Keen was neared, it became very dense, and rain fell; there was, of course, no view to be had." And in 1906, "haze prevented a good distant prospect, but never-



theless the view was good." On the first two of these excursions, the parties, on the return journey, were hospitably entertained at the mansion-house by Sir William and Lady Brooks, who in 1894 was elected an honorary member.

It may be added that at the recent excursion three members were present who were present at the first excursion in 1890—Messrs. Robert Anderson, John M'Gregor, and John Rust.

#### THE CLUB AT EASTER.

THE third official Easter Meet was held at Clova, on the upper waters of the South Esk, where the headquarters were the Ogilvy Arms at Milton of Clova.

There were present at the meet: Miss M. Angus, Mr. P. A. Cooper with guest, Mr. J. M. Ellis, Mr. D. R. Macdonald, Mr. A. P. Milne, Miss Tarbet, Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Williamson with two guests, Miss A. Wilson and guest, Mr. A. M. Wilson, and the Secretary.

The first party arrived on the evening of Thursday, 4th April, and had a full day on Friday. Leaving the hotel about 9, they made up the Glen to the junction of the White Water and the Esk, here they held up the White Water to the foot of Jock's Road, and from this point ascended Craig Mellon with the valuable assistance of a strong west wind in rear. A large number of deer were seen on the lower ground in Glen Doll. A descent was made down the steep eastern face of Craig Mellon to the river Esk, where lunch was enjoyed in the shelter of one of the immense boulders lying at the foot of the hill. The strong wind blowing down the Glen was raising small waterspouts from the surface of the river.

After lunch the more energetic members of the party decided to cross the Esk and climb Boustie Ley, taking Red Craig on the way. The small footbridge which at one time existed near this point having apparently disappeared, they had perforce to ford the river, and the remainder of the party were interested spectators of this performance. Having divested themselves of shoes and stockings and selected a promising spot, the waders gingerly



entered the icy water and progressed very well till within a yard or two of the farther bank where, taking an innocent looking eddy too boldly, they were all soaked well up to the waist. A sharp ascent of the long hillside beyond the river soon, however, put matters right; and passing over the long flat plateau beyond Red Craig, they duly reached Boustie Ley, from which a bird's-eye view was got of Loch Brandy 800 feet below.

Passing from Boustie Ley to Ben Reid on the way back to Clova, the full force of the wind was felt, and a boundary fence running between the two hills was of valuable assistance as an anchorage at the more exposed points. Finding themselves with ample time to do the short distance between Ben Reid and Clova, a long halt was made on the face of the hill. The view from this point down the valley of the Esk to the sea was magnificent, the higher ground being dotted with heather fires burning briskly in the strong breeze.

On arrival at Clova, it was found that the party had been increased by eleven, six of whom had arrived from Loch Muick *via* the Dubh Loch and Bachnagairn while the other five had motored from Dundee.

Saturday was the day of the strong gale. Two members left Clova for Tarfside while the programme for the remainder was the ascent of Dreish and Mayar, and a walk along the ridge *via* Hill of Strone to Cairn Inks and so down to Clova. The gale, however, caused a considerable curtailment of this programme.

The ridge north of Dreish was duly ascended by the Eilbo corrie above Glen Doll Lodge. In the corrie numerous deer and two foxes were seen. It was not till the party commenced the ascent of Dreish itself that the full force of the gale was felt. So strong was the wind that progress was impossible save in comparative lulls and, however ignominious it might be, members had to lie flat on the ground to prevent themselves being hurled over the precipices. Three members afforded considerable amusement by all hurriedly deciding—assisted by the wind—to cling simultaneously to the same spot on the hill.



The member who arrived there first, and who was accordingly at the foot of the pile, fared rather badly. Large pieces of snow crust, from some patches of old snow, hurling along at apparently anything from 60 to 80 miles per hour added to the general discomfort of the party, and ultimately a descent had with difficulty to be made by the Winter Corrie of Dreish.

On Sunday, as a result probably of the exertions of the previous day, it was a somewhat small party that made its way up to the top of Jock's Road, over the ridge north of Craig Mellon and down to the "Paradise o' Pines at Bachnagairn," a beautiful oasis in a waste of hills. The excellent photograph by Mrs. R. M. Williamson, appearing in this number, gives some idea of the beauty of this lonely spot. From here Macdonald and Ellis, who had come over the Capel in the dark the previous evening held north to the head of Loch Muick, while the rest of the party proceeded down the Esk past Moulzie to Clova.

The following day members reluctantly departed to their various homes. The meet was a most successful one, and though the greater number present came from Aberdeen, there were several members from Dundee and from England. The ladies who took part are to be congratulated on their performances, as the prevailing high wind rendered the conditions most unfavourable for them.

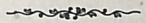
#### EXCURSION TO BENNACHIE.

On Saturday, 8th June, the Club climbed Bennachie. The party, which numbered about twelve, left Aberdeen at 1.37 p.m. for Oyne, from which point the hill was climbed. There was mist on the top of the hill, but otherwise the conditions were excellent, and a very enjoyable afternoon was spent. The party returned to Oyne where they had tea—Mr. John Clarke, the Chairman, presiding. The party returned by the 7.54 p.m. train for Aberdeen. Amongst those present were:—Messrs. C. T. Christie, John Clarke, Dr. McIntyre, George McIntyre and guest, J. A. Parker, William Porter, E. W. Watt and Theodore Watt.

J. B. G.



## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.



THE Club has been so greatly indebted to the late Duke of Fife for numerous privileges in connection with excursions that the *Journal* feels it incumbent, even at this late date, to add its quota to the expressions of

THE LATE regret which followed the announcement of his death (on  
DUKE OF January 29). As the proprietor of Mar Forest, his grace  
FIFE. was the "over-lord" of much of the region which constitutes  
the principal field of the Club's operations. Cairn Toul, the

Devil's Point, and Derry Cairngorm are wholly within the forest; Ben Muich Dhui, Beinn Mheadhoin, and Beinn a'Bhuird are on its boundaries; and the forest is intersected by the Larig Ghru and the Learg an Laoigh, the principal routes from Deeside to the Cairngorm mountains and Strathspey, while other tracks lead to Glen Feshie and Glen Tilt. Though certain rights of way through the forest exist and are regularly utilised, there were many occasions on which the Club, in the excursions it arranged, had to pass beyond the limits of recognised paths and routes, and had to secure, if only as a precautionary measure, freedom of access to territory reckoned private—had to secure, at any rate, immunity from molestation by game-keepers and foresters. The necessary permission to traverse unfrequented parts of the forest was invariably and courteously granted by the Duke; and it is only fitting that public recognition should now be made of his grace's readiness to oblige the Club in this way. Whatever the restrictions on the free movement of individuals in Upper Deeside and Mar Forest imposed by the Duke—restrictions that did not escape criticism and which occasionally evoked resentment—the Club never experienced any difficulty in obtaining the sanction of his grace to any projected "invasion" of his mountain wilds. There is therefore a very special reason for our concurring in the general regret with which the death of the Duke was regarded throughout the country; but, while deploring his loss, the hope may be cherished that the kindly relations he maintained with the Club will be continued by his successor.

So much has been said about the Loch-an-Eilein ospreys in our pages (See in particular two articles by Mr. C. G. Cash—"The Loch-an-Eilein

Ospreys," iv., 125, and "History of the Loch-an-Eilein  
THE Ospreys," v., 270; also the illustration of Loch-an-Eilein  
VANISHING Castle fronting p. 233 of vol v.) that readers could not fail  
OSPREE. to have been interested in the article on "The Vanishing  
Osprey," by "S. G." (initials that may be safely presumed  
to indicate Mr. Seton Gordon), which appeared in the *Scotsman* of January  
23rd. The writer, noting that in olden days a pair of ospreys had their  
summer home on nearly every Highland loch, expressed the fear that, even  
from its last mountain strongholds, the bird has been banished. "No more,"



he said, "will the hen bird brood on her nest of sticks on the ruined castle on Loch-an-Eilein, or will her mate, soaring down from dark Cairngorm, swoop like an arrow to the surface of the loch and soar aloft, bearing in his talons a captured fish. Even from Loch Arkaig—one of the last strongholds of the race—the fish hawk has vanished, and we fear it must be owned that one of our most interesting birds of prey has been lost to us as a nesting species."

The writer went on to remark that, in contrast to the disappearance of the osprey, the eagle, its near relative, is more than holding its own in the Highlands, and he attributed this to the fact that the eagle is a resident whereas the osprey is a migrant. He continued—"The migration of the mullet hawk—to use a local name—has always appealed to us as being a subject of some considerable interest. Why the osprey should travel south on the approach of winter, while the golden and white-tailed eagles remain in the north throughout the year, cannot easily be explained. At first sight the solution of the puzzle would appear to rest in the fact that the lochs are frozen over during a considerable part of winter, and thus the osprey is prevented from obtaining a necessary supply of fish. This argument would undoubtedly hold good if the osprey confined its fishing operations to fresh water lochs alone, but, as witnessed by its name, 'mullet hawk,' this is far from being the case, and one would have imagined that the sea lochs of Scotland would have yielded fish in plenty, even during the most severe weather. It would seem to be the case that this southern migration is undertaken not so much on account of considerations of food as to avoid the cold of winter, for Great Britain is near the northern limit of the osprey, and in Greenland and Iceland it is quite unknown." Anyhow, it is undoubtedly to a large extent owing to its migratory habits that the osprey has disappeared, mainly because "on the passage to and from its summer haunts it has to run the gauntlet of many unscrupulous gunners, who are ever on the lookout for a rare bird."

"S. G." noted that a few years ago a pair of ospreys were unfortunately shot in the New Forest. "Whether a coincidence or not, it is a fact that since that time the Loch-an-Eilein eyrie has been deserted, and it is more than likely that the two victims were on their way south from their Highland loch when they were shot." Mr. Cash recorded, however, (*C.C.J.*, v., 278), that only one osprey visited Loch-an-Eilein in 1901 and 1902, and seemed mateless, and he added that since 1902 no osprey has been seen at Rothiemurchus, but in September 1904, one was shot near Guildford, in Surrey.

In an interesting article in the "Science and Nature" column of the *Scotsman* of March 26th, the same writer treated of ancient mountain woodlands in Scotland. During his wanderings on the Upper Deeside mountains, and especially on the Cairngorm range, wrote "S. G.," he had constantly met with remains of ancient woodlands, comprised almost entirely of Scots fir, extending to a height far greater than that to which our present-day conifers penetrate. In early times, the great Caledonian forest spread over vast areas, and, as far as can be judged now, reached to a

ANCIENT  
WOODLANDS  
ON THE  
CAIRNGORMS.



height of close on 3000 feet above sea-level; but though undoubtedly large tracts of the forest were destroyed by fire, "S. G." rather inclines to the theory that the true cause of the disappearance of tree growth from elevations where it was formerly abundant is that the climate of our country is gradually becoming more arctic. As to the existing level of the woodlands on mountains, he said—"Nowadays the extreme limits of growth of the Scots fir may be put at 2000 feet above sea-level, and there is but one glen of our acquaintance—Glen Quoich, lying just south of Beinn a' Bhuird, in West Aberdeenshire—where well-grown trees are found above that level. That the famous Larig Pass was in olden days wooded almost up to the watershed between the valleys of the Spey and Dee is a fact obvious to every hillman, though it may not be equally well known that the remains of these ancient trees extend far up the Garbhchoire. It was in this corrie that we discovered, a few years ago, a small specimen of the Scots fir growing at a height of some 2700 feet above the level of the sea. This, of course, was an isolated specimen, but was of considerable interest as showing that in certain sheltered glens conifers might be planted to a height of over 2000 feet above sea level. The tree mentioned had reached a height of only a few feet, and it is not improbable that its height had been limited by the depth of snow obtaining during the winter months. Not far from the corrie is a small specimen of the larch, growing at a height of well on to 3000 feet, and on a rocky hillside. We have found a sapling of the rowan or mountain ash growing above Loch Avon, some 2600 feet above sea level, but in this instance the seed had probably been brought to the wild locality by some passing bird. In a certain corrie branching off Glen Derry we were interested in finding a few rowans and birches in a little glen lying south-west, and so—one would imagine—considerably exposed to the sou'-westerly gales which are so prevalent in the district. The highest of these trees we made out to be growing just upon the 2200 feet line, and was in quite a vigorous condition."

IN support of the contention that the lowering of the timber line in the Highlands is attributable to a gradual change in climatic conditions, "S. G." instanced the existence of moss plants

SNOWFIELD

ON

BRAERIACH.

under a snowfield on Braeriach. "In one of the eastern corries of Braeriach," he said, "there lies at a height of approximately 3600 feet above sea level, a snow-bed which has not been known to disappear, within living memory at all events, even during the hottest summer. During the winter of 1908-9, the prevailing winds were from a somewhat unusual quarter, with the result that the corrie held less snow than usual at the beginning of summer. We visited the snowfield during early October, when it is at its minimum, and found from unmistakable signs that the drift had dwindled more than had been the case for a considerable number of years. We were thus interested to find that moss plants extended right up to where the snow had melted only a day or two before, and even penetrated to under the snow cap itself. Where the moss had been uncovered for a number of days, we saw shoots of tenderest green being put forth, and every transitional stage was met with, from well-grown plants of a month old, to specimens on the edge of the snow-bed which as yet showed



no signs of vitality, but which we had every reason to believe, from the behaviour of the plants a few feet farther from the snow, were still capable of growth. The presence of moss plants extending right into a snow bed which now remains unmelted from year to year seems to us to be strong evidence in favour of the argument that our summers are now less warm than was the case in former times. One would certainly have imagined that the snowfield would have disappeared during the remarkable summer of 1911, especially as the preceding winter was, on the low grounds at all events, a remarkably mild one, but as a matter of fact the field at the end of summer was considerably greater in extent than after the cool summer of 1909."

IN the course of the water controversy a good deal has been said—by people who know nothing of the hills in winter—about the Avon being frozen solid and there being in consequence no water for Aberdeen. Streams like the Avon or the Dee never freeze solid, but go on running beneath a covering of snow with as large a volume as in summer. It may be of

interest to state that on Sunday last, three Aberdeen climbers visited Loch Avon from Nethy Bridge. They ascended Ben Bynac, the hill which lies to the east of Cairngorm and overlooks Glen Avon, and descended from it to the valley of the Avon. Just below the loch the river was flowing in full volume in the open. It then passed under a snow bridge, and at the spot where the Larig and Laoigh path crosses Glen Avon from Glen Derry, the stream was snowed over. It could be heard, however, running beneath the snow and ice, and a short distance to the east of the path it came out again and appeared to flow in the open as far eastward down Glen Avon as could be seen. The river, therefore, was not frozen solid, and it was not even frozen, but was flowing very much as it does in summer. And this was within a few days of the most severe frost that has been experienced for sixteen years. On Monday of last week the temperature fell at Braemar to 7 degrees below zero, that is there were 39 degrees of frost. Yet the river Avon was not frozen over, but was running as usual when seen on Sunday.—*Aberdeen Free Press*, February 15.

WHILE climbing Ben More, Perthshire, recently, Mr. Alastair C. McLaren came to a small chasm, which was almost imperceptible.

MOUNTAIN Pushing his way in, he saw a funnel-like opening, and by  
CAVE IN strenuous endeavours he got to the top, where he found a  
PERTSHIRE. large cave, which he thinks has never been explored before.

He then saw a ray of light, and succeeded in reaching the opening, he emerged on the side of the hill, about one-eighth of a mile from where he had entered.—*Evening Gazette* (Aberdeen), 10th February, 1912.

DR. A. M. KELLAS, an Aberdeen man (brother of Mr. Henry Kellas, a member of the Cairngorm Club), in a paper read to the

AN ABERDEEN Royal Geographical Society in London on 1st April,  
CLIMBER stated that he had made three journeys to the mountains of  
IN THE Northern Sikkim and Garwhal in 1907, 1909, and 1911.

HIMALAYAS. In last year's journey he ascended a peak 23,180 feet high—Mount Pawhurni. Dr. Kellas's paper dealt at considerable length with climbing capacity at great altitudes and with



mountain sickness, or what is more correctly designated mountain lassitude. Summing up the results of his experience on all three expeditions, Dr. Kellas (who was accompanied by two coolies) said that at any height up to 15,000—17,000 feet he could hold his own with the unloaded coolie and run away from the loaded man. Above 17,000 feet, however, their superiority was marked, an unloaded coolie climbing much quicker than he did, and even a moderately loaded coolie going up as fast as he cared to go up to elevations of 21,000 feet and 22,000 feet. Above that elevation a moderately loaded coolie could run away from him, and with an unloaded coolie he had not the slightest chance. None of Dr. Kellas's party was in the slightest degree sick at high altitudes, and the climbing powers of the strongest coolies seemed to be only slightly affected even at 23,000 feet. When the coolies were paid off at Darjeeling last year, after about three months of climbing at high altitudes, they were all in the best of health and spirits, and had all volunteered to stay on another month if they were wanted.

THE Alps have been the givers of peace, joy, health, and length of years to many climbers. You go full of cobwebs, worried by the world's rush and scurry for wealth, a physical and mental wreck, and come back full of vitality and strength. Amongst the mountains the climber seems as free as Nature itself. The rush of the mountain torrent into the glass-like lake, in its calm repose between the mountains; the pure snowfields and blue majestic glaciers which have crawled from the mysterious summits of the mountains; the ever-changing picture between the morning tint and evening glow and after-glow which form the most beautiful sky study; the impressions of the storm while one is conquering some great mountain; the fascination of difficulties overcome amidst such almost everlasting beauties, are things lovely enough to attract the most indifferent and unpoetical of men. The triumph over Nature, the training of man's faculties of endurance, judgment, skill, resource, patience, and many other qualities, enable a man to appreciate life, the world, and its beautiful wild and remote parts, so that life becomes fuller and more interesting, while the ever-changing scenes are stored up in the mind as picture galleries, which become a part of the climber's nature.—“My Climbing Adventures in Four Continents,” by Samuel Turner.

BEINN DOIREANN has not been neglected in the *C. C. J.*, but it is doubtful if many of its readers fully appreciate the peculiar attractions of this Argyleshire mountain apart from its associations with Duncan

BEINN Ban Macintyre. The first tourist, or traveller, who DOIREANN. makes particular mention of it is Iettice (“Tour in Scotland”), who in 1792 passed along its base and “admired” the Ben—and those were not the days of Englishmen “admiring” mountains. Ten years later Duncan Ban paid his last visit to his favourite mountain from Edinburgh. “A change had struck the very hill”; “sheep were all that I could see . . . there was not left one antlered stag.” He is said to have composed some of his finest verses in a



natural cave in the great east-facing corrie of the Ben. How the poet's spirit must rejoice at the recent re-introduction of deer in these parts!

After several defeats (owing mostly to weather) one day—23rd May—came, and was one of a thousand. To those who consider the Ladder of Lochnagar steep the slope of Ben Doran from the south or the south-west will be startling—1 in 1.76 an angle of 29°. The prospect from the cairn, under the best atmospheric conditions, is marvellous; to us the spectral-like Paps of Jura were the most impressive. There was comparatively little snow left on the highest mountains; the distant Cairngorms seemed to have more than their share. The ascent was made from Tyndrum the descent to Bridge of Orchy. The same day there were climbers on Beinn Dubh-chraige (3204 feet) and Beinn Laoigh (3708 feet). A. I. M.

IN view of Mr. Cooper's article in this number on "Map Reading," it may be of interest to record an excellent piece of practical map and compass work by Mr. J. A. Parker I had the privilege of witnessing this spring. We had gone to Braemar on the last week-end of March with the intention of doing Braeriach, but on the morning of the day on which we had intended to do the climb found the lower hills powdered with fresh snow, and every sign of snow falling higher up. Mr. Parker decided that Beinn a Bhuird would be sufficient for our energies in the conditions apparently prevailing aloft, and having found Mr. Rattray at the ferry near the village on the alert, we were soon on our way up the Slugan Glen. When we reached the top of the glen we found snow showers sweeping down from the hill over the flat upper valley of the Quoich. We made for Cairn Eas with the intention of climbing it, and then making along the top of the ridge to the Sneck. As snow was falling thickly when we reached Cairn Eas we decided not to waste time on it, but to make direct for the Sneck, round its base. On reaching the Sneck we found the lowest part of the dip clear, but snow drifting heavily a short distance up each side. The precipices to the north were particularly fine, their dark rocks looming through the drift at intervals, and the picture was complete when an eagle came intermittently into view, drifting calmly and magnificently round the edge of the hill through the driving snow. Probably this was the mate of the bird which was sitting on eggs at the time, and to enable us to find whose nest we had received detailed directions from the keeper.

Having donned our snow spectacles and all the garments we had with us, we tackled a long snow slope up to the North Top. We soon got into the drift and had at once to use map and compass, as we literally could not see twenty yards, and could not have seen at all without spectacles. The short bit to the North Top was simply a case of observing from the map the direction in which it lay from where we were—just above the Sneck—and checking the direction every thirty or fifty yards. We had the additional assurance that we were more or less right as long as we were ascending, and that there was no mistaking the Top when we did reach it.

The next part of the journey was not quite so simple. We wished to reach the South Top of the hill, some four miles away, taking the inspection of the sitting eagle on our way home. On our left, for nearly the whole way,





*Photo by*

*Dr. J. R. Levack.*

EARLY MORNING AT THE "SNECK" BEINN A' BHUIRD.



was a sheer drop into the corrie round the Dubh Loch; on our right, miles of flat hill upon which to stray, while covering everything and rendering it impossible to see more than, at the outside, fifty yards, was what is aptly called "blin' drift." Readers who know the hill will know that what we had to do was a mile and a half in a direction a little west of south, and then some two and a half miles in a direction almost south. The whole of that distance was done in fifty to eighty yard stretches, checking direction after each, and the whole distance was paced in order to know when to change direction after the first mile and a half, and when to expect to find the South Top after the other two miles and a half. The compass direction was taken over an ice axe stuck upright a yard or two in front, the compass-holder moving about behind the axe till he had it in the line in which he wished to go. Then a projecting boulder as distant as possible or some such thing was looked for in alignment with the ice axe, and when the stone or snow was reached the whole process was repeated, unless before reaching the stone or patch another stone or patch further on could be aligned on the original one. This happened once or twice, but usually we had to have recourse to the compass every fifty yards or so.

A mile and a half was silently counted off in this manner in a south-westerly direction, and then, in the middle of a featureless wilderness of drifting snow, and after a little conversation and the adjustment of head-gear to meet the new direction of the wind, we turned south, and two miles and a half in that direction were duly counted off. At the end of the count we found ourselves within some twenty yards of the South Top. We only once saw the cornice on the precipices to our left, though we must have been within a stone throw of it during the greater part of the four miles.

The descent from the South Top was uneventful. So hard were we plastered with snow that it was not till we reached the keeper's hut on the banks of the Dee and got the loan of a table-knife from his wife that we were able to get the frozen crust off our persons.

J. B. G.



## REVIEWS.

THE SELKIRK MOUNTAINS: a Guide for Mountain Climbers and Pilgrims. (Winnipeg, 1912).—Although the Selkirks and the Canadian Rockies are at

an almost prohibitive distance from Scottish climbers, yet THE SELKIRK opportunities sometimes present themselves, and those who MOUNTAINS. have visited Glacier House, or the Châlet Lac Louise, will not soon forget the forests of cedar, hemlock, spruce and fir; the luxuriant wild flowers (white rhododendron, yellow adder's tongue, scarlet painter's brush, etc.); the amusing wild beasts, such as small black bear, and porcupine, and whistling marmot; the graceful glaciers and steep icefalls; the strong, swift rivers; above all the magnificent peaks and ranges, many of them of limestone, holding a richer colour and a fuller vegetation than the Swiss Alps. This guide is produced under the authority of Mr. Arthur O. Wheeler, A.C., First President of the Canadian Alpine Club, from whose book "The Selkirk Range" (Ottawa, 1905) much of the information is derived. But the real authoress is Mrs. Elizabeth Parker, Winnipeg, known to many Scots climbers and tourists for her enthusiastic devotion to the Canadian mountains. She has here produced a mass of practical information about the district of Glacier House, a mountain hotel a little west of Rogers Pass, near the famous Illicillewaet Glacier, the Asulkan Pass, the Sir Donald Range, and the Hermit Range, and also about the less known districts of Golden, Windermere and Revelstoke. She also gives several maps and a number of photographs. Such veterans as Professor Macoun, the Dominion naturalist, and Professor Coleman, the geologist of Toronto, also contribute; and there is a charming note by Mrs. J. W. Henshaw, of Vancouver, on the mountain wild flowers. Although Glacier House is not yet so popular as the Châlet Lac Louise, many expeditions start from there; and Edouard Feuz, of Interlaken, and other Swiss guides have already made it their home. In order to retain some of these guides and their families permanently in Canada the C. P. R. Co. have just built a model Swiss Village called "Edelweiss," close to Golden. A photograph of these young men and their women folk may be seen in the *Canadian Gazette* of 30th May, 1912. The general geography of the Selkirks is of course rather distracting. This arises from the fact that they lie in the loop made by the Columbia River in the first 600 miles of its course. The Columbia flows north for 300 miles, and near the Athabasca Pass makes the Big Bend, and 300 miles further south joins the Kootenay River. On the other hand the Kootenay River rises on the western flank of the Rockies some miles north of the source of the Columbia, and the two rivers flow in almost parallel lines but opposite directions. A mile and a quarter of almost level land separates them near Columbia Lake. The Kootenay turns north west in Idaho, and the two rivers meet near the International boundary at Arrow Lakes. Writing with reference to these rivers, Mrs. Parker is therefore justified in describing the Selkirks as "practically a huge inland island of forest, rock, ice and snow." She has



the legitimate pride of recording the fact that two first ascents in this wonderful region were made by her daughter, Miss Jean Parker. E. W.

THE SPELL OF THE ROCKIES. By Enos A. Mills. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company).—The Rocky Mountains in Colorado

have their attractions, as indicated in a recent number of *C. C. J.*, in which allusion was made to a prior work on the subject by Mr. Mills, an expert climber of these mountains in all weathers. He calmly mentions having experienced 70 storms on the summit of Long's Peak (14,256 feet high), and jocularly refers to the title "Snow Man" which has been given him by the "upland-dwellers" in the range, owing to "numerous and wild accounts of my lone, unarmed camping-trips and winter adventures in the mountain snows." In this volume we have accounts of various experiences under exceptional conditions—heavy rains, snow-storms, and blizzards; encounters with avalanches and landslides, forest fires and "grizzlies." Many of the adventures were exciting and risky, yet they are all told modestly and unaffectedly, but at the same time reveal a pluck and resource and endurance of discomfort that compel admiration. Like all works on mountain-climbing, this one abundantly discloses the great secret of the art—"It's dogged as does it." R. A.

MY CLIMBING ADVENTURES IN FOUR CONTINENTS. By Samuel Turner, F.R.G.S. (London: T. Fisher Unwin—12/6).—This book is hardly for the

average member of the Cairngorm Club, the author deprecating the view that "walking up gradual slopes" is mountain mountaineering. To him, mountaineering "means more or less adventure"—such adventure as is involved in climbing steep rock-faces, jumping across chasms from one ledge of a precipice to another, tackling crevasses and couloirs, and cutting steps down ice-slopes "varying from 50 to 65 degrees of an angle, much steeper than the roof of a house." An experience of this last kind was gained in the traverse of Mount Cook, in New Zealand in 1906, briefly referred to in the *C. C. J.* of that year (v., 171), but more fully and much more graphically described in this volume. Mr. Turner and his three companions were the first to traverse the three summits of Mount Cook (12,349, 12,173, and 12,049 feet respectively. Other New Zealand mountains afforded Mr. Turner considerable adventures. To him the Alps are as mere playthings, and he goes much farther afield for his "sport." He has done winter exploration and climbing in the Altai Mountains in Siberia, reaching the summit of a hitherto unknown peak, 17,800 feet high; he attempted an ascent of Aconcagua, in South America, but had to beat a retreat when he had gained a height of 20,500 feet; and he hopes some day to climb Mount Everest, in the Himalayas (29,002 feet). It is not surprising to find him declaring the climbing of Mount Everest or K2 a greater feat than getting to the North or South Pole, and asserting that he who climbs mountains thereby lengthens his years at least by five. Mr. Turner has had many hair-breadth escapes. "I have," he says, "a lump on one of my ribs through wriggling up a crack in a precipice, another lump on the occiput of



my head from a piece of a rock-avalanche off Mount Cook, and rather weak eyes through being snow-blind on three occasions. I have five times had the skin off my ears, neck, and face." But with the exception of "these minor things," he bravely and finely adds—"I have gained everything and lost nothing in my encounter with the mountains." His book is in many ways an interesting one, and is particularly instructive to the climber as distinct from the walker; but one is impelled to concur with the regret of the *Spectator* that the "respectable achievements" recorded are "set out much in the same style as bicycle racing on a track might be described in a provincial paper."

R. A.

THE club apparently does not, as its title suggests, confine itself simply to Alpine climbing, but goes in for "Alpinism" in a very wide sense of the term. The contributions to the magazine, which are all GERMAN AND clearly and methodically written, are of varied interest, AUSTRIAN and something will be found to appeal to the taste of ALPINE CLUB almost everyone. Besides descriptions of individual expeditions, such as the first ascent of the high mountains of JOURNAL FOR Greenland by A. de Quervain and A. Stolberg, ski-ing in 1911. the Lower Taurus by J. Baumgärtner and Karl Sandtner, etc., we have articles on more general themes, which, however, gain rather than lose interest by the introduction of personal experiences. Among the latter, we might mention the article on "Ballooning in the Alps," by Margaret Grosse, who, though treating a subject which would seem to appeal only to a few, yet succeeds in making it of general interest. The same general interest is found to a greater or less degree in all the contributions. One drawback exists, which is mentioned in one of the articles—the contributions have to be handed in apparently about a year before the publication appears, and consequently are not absolutely up-to-date. As the journal is a yearly publication, this defect might be remedied by occupying, say, three months instead of twelve in its preparation.

The most striking feature of the journal, however, is its excellent illustration. Some of the photographs in it are magnificent, and all attain to a very high standard. They are, in themselves, sufficient to make the journal of value even to British devotees of mountaineering whose knowledge of the German tongue is nil.

E. W.

DR. FARQUHARSON, ex-M.P. for West Aberdeenshire, in his recently published volume of reminiscences, titled "In and Out of Parliament," expresses regret that he ever attempted to become a mountaineer, the regret arising out of what he terms "an unsuccessful attempt to break my neck by trying to go up the Wetterhorn." After furnishing details of the early part of the journey, he describes the futile ascent in this wise:—

"After some snow and ice work of no particular importance we came to a truly awe-inspiring place, a gigantic precipice of limestone rock, round which we had to skirt by footsteps cut in the rock; and as the weather had now broken up, or down, they were filled with water, and seemed to me to



give an uncertain and precarious tenure of continued existence. But there was no help for it: on we must go, with nothing to hold on to above, and a yawning and terrific precipice below. But nerved by grim despair and clutching desperately to our guide's hand, we safely got round the *mauvais pas* and reached the Gleckstein cave; and well-named it was, being nothing more than a sort of magnified slit between shelving rocks, sloping downwards to the infinite below and barely holding our little party. Here we were to pass the night—I will not write, to sleep, for what between the novelty of the situation, wet and chilly feet, a general atmosphere of damp, dark and depressing desolation, nothing particular to lie on, a cup of strong tea, and the vigorous snores of my companions, I barely closed an eye (metaphorically), and felt rather like the hero of Victor Hugo's terribly realistic *Dernier jour d'un condamné à mort*, as I saw the chill beams of the morning sun furtively stealing in upon us through the prevailing gloom. It soon became time to rise and decide what to do, for it was raining heavily, and the mist was beginning to settle down on the defending peak. And now the order came to pack up and return to civilisation, for it would not have been safe to go higher; and although I was assured that we had done the worst part of our journey, I could not help a feeling of relief, more especially when I found, to my delight, that we were to come down by a longer but an easier route. So I never became a member of the Alpine Club."

The laird of Finzean, however, is one of the original members of the Cairngorm Club. His book, by the way, contains a reference to his own casual remark in a debate on the Access to Mountains Bill that he "owned a mountain" (Peter Hill)—a remark that in its turn created some remark (See *C. C. J.*, i., 143).

QUITE different are the impressions of another ex-member of Parliament, the late Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, for twenty-four years the representative of the Elgin Burghs. A popular edition GRANT DUFF's has just appeared of his "Notes from a Diary, 1851-1872," IMPRESSIONS. which contains an account of a walk (in 1852) across the Weissthor, a glacier pass connecting Macugnaga, in the Val d'Anzasca, Italy, with Zermatt, in Switzerland, that "passed in those days for the most difficult glacier pass in all Switzerland." The "Notes" reproduce what Sir Mountstuart wrote about this walk some years afterwards—  
 "Who can forget the start before the little hamlet is awake—the stars fading out one by one over Italy—the mighty peaks flushing in the growing day—then the blaze of sunlight as we emerge from the valley shadows, and as the sound of the Alp horn comes up along the pastures to tell us that the world below is rising to its labour? Ere long we reach the snow-line, and see perhaps the chamois, which loves the debatable land between frost and flowers, playing above us till our constant advance makes it fear that harm is intended. Who can forget the hours of struggle over rock and snow-slope—hurrying here lest the avalanches should overwhelm us, there lying down exhausted, and careless, for the time, of avalanches and everything else? At last comes the joy of setting foot upon the topmost ridge, and looking down on another and different world. Then the dangers of the precipice are



exchanged for those of the glacier, and we descend slowly and tied together. The mountains, as we sink lower and lower, seem to grow in height, and as the day declines we see the clouds 'laying themselves down to sleep on their vast ledges.' At length the darkness begins to fall around, and it is night before we see the lights in the village to which we are bound, twinkling far down through the valley mist."

IN juxtaposition to these descriptions of Alpine adventures may be placed the account of an ascent of a mountain pass in Scotland—not so much by way of comparison or contrast, as because it describes experiences that must be familiar to all hill-climbers. The ascent (made partly on bicycles) occurred conjecturally in Ross-shire, there being references to the manse of Carron and to a well-known Spa ; and it is narrated in the course of an article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for March—

"The snow had vanished and the sun was warm, and although great white banks of cloud piled themselves on the horizon, there was enough blue sky to cheer the most faint-hearted. Cathal and I had the spirit of adventurers upon the road ; every turn of the way is a romance, every hill-top suggests an enchanted land beyond, and we rode with light hearts up the long glen, barred at the end by the great mountains, and leading on somewhere through and above the distant fir-woods to the formidable Pass. For the first couple of hours all went well, and it was not until after we had buried ourselves in odoriferous woods and the road turned sharply uphill that our troubles began. Great snowflakes began to fall till the air was thick with them, and we and the way grew white. We had to dismount and climb for miles up a wretched road that seemed as bent on going monotonously up as the devoted youth in the poem of 'Excelsior.' I remembered a weary friend who once toiled up a mountain-side with me. 'They say Life is a climb,' she remarked with a sigh, 'but, oh, I'm glad it's not like this.' The road twisted and turned ; we continually saw before us heights that promised to be the summit of the ridge and were not. We reached the top in the end, of course, and fickle Fortune smiled on us for a little from a clear sky as a reward for our endeavours. There was a delicious loneliness on the heights of the Pass. Great tracts of brown heather and bent stretched on either side of us to the mountain walls and shut us in ; little lochans looked up at the sky with cold-blue eyes and reflected the tall, scanty fir-trees that grew beside them ; deer fled at our approach with a soft stir and scampering that was pleasant to hear. Then in the course of time, our way began to drop downwards, and the wooded fertile straths beyond the watershed lay below us."

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL for February has an article with the somewhat fantastic title of "As Heaven's Water Dealeth," descriptive of a walking tour in Glen Affric and Glen Shiel, undertaken in June last year by the writer, Mr. William Anderton Brigg, along with Messrs. Greenwood, W. Garden, and J. A. Parker. The real objective of the trip was the ascent of Sgurr Fhuaran or Scour Ouran (3505 feet), the summit of which the writer regards as "surely one of the



finest, if not the finest view-points in Scotland." He is not alone in that opinion, Sheriff Scott Moncrieff Penny, for instance, declaring (*S. M. C. J.*, iii., 28) that such a prospect as that from the top of Scour Ouran one sees only twice or thrice in a lifetime. Here is how Mr. Brigg describes it—"We seemed to be set in the centre of Scotland's mountain districts, and could see them all—the Cairngorms in the east, the Coolins in the west, Ben Nevis in the south, and Torridon in the north; with all that lay, or rather rose, between Ben Screel in the south, our friends of yesterday and to-day [Tom a' Choinich, Carn Eige, Mam Sodhail, Sgurr nan Spainteach, and Ciste Duibhe] in the east, Rum and Eig in the offing, Sgurr nan Saighhead immediately at hand on the one side, and the range culminating in the saddle on the other, and at our feet Glen Shiel and the gleaming waters of Loch Duich . . . We have no such panorama like it in England, and in the Alps it is worthy of compare with that, say, from the Col du Géant looking southwards, saving of course the snow peaks."

Readers may be reminded of the reproduction of a fine photograph of Sgurr a Ciste Dubh and Sgurr Ouran by Mr. Garden which accompanied Mr. Emslie Smith's article on "A Westward Tramp in Ross-shire" in the January number of *C.C.J.* Another fine photograph by the same gentleman forms the frontispiece of this number of the *S.M.C.J.* It is the view from one of the hills on the north side of the Glen Shiel road looking over Loch Duich to its junction with Loch Long. Unfortunately the Skye hills are cloud-covered.





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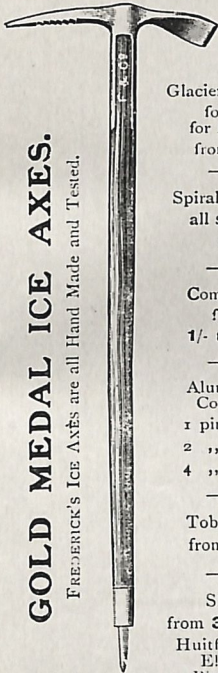


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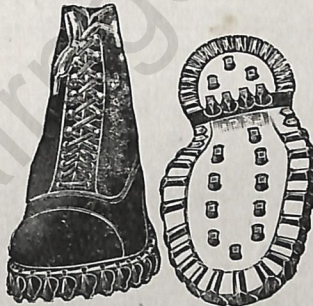


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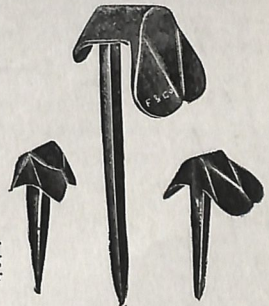
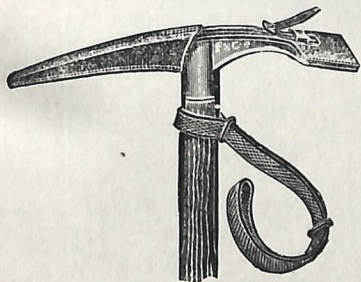
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