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THE
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EDITED BY

J. B. GILLIES AND ROBERT ANDERSON.

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Sketch by

ACROSS THE ALBANIAN ALPS.

William Smith.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. VIII.

JULY, 1916.

No. 47

SCENIC PICTURES FROM THE WAR ZONES.

I.—IN THE TRENCH LINES.

BY MAJOR J. B. GILLIES.

[*Passed by the Press Bureau.*]

They say this kwintra's bonny, an' it's trowth I've seen a waur,
But fat's her vine-clad slopes to me, 'at stretch oot near an' far,
Aside my ain aul' Morven, an' my kingly Lochnagar
Takin' aff his kep i' the mornin'?

Rev. GEORGE ABEL.
(“Wylins Fae My Wallet”).

THE Acting Editor has invited me (among others, I believe) to furnish readers of the *Journal* with some particulars of the scenic features of the war zone where the military operations in which I am participating are being conducted, particularly as contrasted with the scenery with which members of the Club are more or less familiar. Well, the War Zone in France, so far as my acquaintance with it goes, has no “features”—at any rate no scenic ones. We are not in the famous spot my colleague imagined [“The Labyrinth”], but if it is any more of a labyrinth of trenches than our present position, then all I can say is—Heaven forbid

VIII. M

that I should ever be asked to take a company through it in the dark! This place is scarred with *boyaux* (trenches), and honey-combed with *abris* (dug-outs).

But it is "features" that are editorially demanded. Take one of our trips to the trenches. We had been in rest billets in a small and dirty village (about half the size of Braemar) for six days' "rest." "Rest," by the way, does not mean resting. During these six days, about 40 men were daily putting in a good day's work clearing the local middens and trying to make the place sanitary; other 200 or so were leaving about 7.30 a.m. daily, marching two to three miles, and then doing six to eight hours' work on communication trenches. At the end of our six days' rest we were due to relieve another battalion in the trenches.

You leave your rest billets in the late afternoon. The village has a dirty, "worse-for-wear" appearance. It has hardly been shelled, as it is a very unobtrusive little place, but it has been used by troops of one sort or another for months—and it looks it. You go down to a fair-sized stream, now a bathing-place for Tommies. Across the stream you turn along a road with the inevitable rows of trees, passing a small wood, nearly all the trees of which are ruined by being barked by the horses. On your right is an old man ploughing with a horse that looks about as old as himself. On your left you find a tree being pulled down: a shell had cut a neat bite out of the trunk and left it in a "rocky" condition. You proceed along the road till you reach a main road which takes you to the end of the communication trenches. This main road passes through several villages. They are all more or less damaged, and the farther you go the worse they are. Each is full of men and horses: the men in dug-outs under the houses; the horses anywhere out of sight from above—and everywhere, on men, horses, carts, walls and doors, is mud, mud, mud!

At last you come on the village where the communication trenches begin. The village green is a

cemetery, where the French had buried their dead. There are rows of wooden crosses, many of them with metal wreaths in purple and green and white hung on them. You pass the village church, which has been more or less knocked about like every other building in this village. One shell had struck the steeple without bringing it down, and had left a gap about the size of itself in the side. You turn up and slip into the end of the communication trench.

It is getting dusk—all reliefs are done by night—and you “plug up” this trench for about a mile in single file; and, after about a mile of this—and I think it will be admitted to be featureless—you see looming through the dark two rows of what were once trees along a road, but are now rows of splintered lopped-off stumps; and the trench bends to the left along this road. A little farther on you find bricks, stones and mortar in the side of the trench, and you know you are passing through the village of, or, rather, what was the village of ———. It had once been a pretty little place with a small wooded park. The daffodils are still growing thickly in the park, but the trees are hardly recognisable. There was once a church here, you are told. Well, there may have been; but no one looking at the place now for the first time could say where that church had been. And the Hun is not yet content. He still fires five or six shells daily, usually all together, about 11 or 11.15. The Hun is nothing if not methodical.

It is now quite dark and you proceed down the trench—sometimes in pitch darkness, and at other times you get in a small sprint when a light goes up, till eventually you reach the front of the trench and hear the bullets plopping on the other side of your parapet, and the ricochets whirring off into the dark. You relieve the company holding your bit of trench, and the men stumble off down the long road you have come up, and are lucky if they reach their rest billets by 2 a.m.

Well, I fear I have said very little about “scenic features.” The country is very flat and rolling. Looking

out from some healthy spot over the trench lines, which are generally on slightly rising ground, it seems as if a gigantic rake had been drawn across the ground, turning up lines of dirty white chalk and leaving little spaces of green between ; and this extends as far as one can see. Here and there a hay-stack or a clump of trees is visible, and the ruins of one or two villages show up amongst the line of trenches. But, after all, it is no scenery, and one feels an awful worm living between walls of earth ; and the value of a week-end at Maggie Gruer's goes up and up and up, and you decide to run up there for one day sure next leave—and then the leave comes and there is no time for it ! However, a day will come when one will return to the hills, and return with an increased appreciation of their splendour and of one's luck in getting to them.

Now, if you will allow me to stretch "scenic features" somewhat, I think the prettiest sight out here is an aeroplane being shelled on a sunny day. That sounds rather callous perhaps, but then they are so seldom brought down. If, in addition to the shelling, an enemy plane comes out, and the two planes in air have a little scrap with their machine guns, you feel you have had a good morning. You see the aeroplane sailing through the blue sky, its white wings and propeller flashing in the sun, with a trail of smoke from the exhaust following behind. It inclines out over your front line, and then you suddenly see a light fluffy ball of smoke appear beside it, and then six or eight more in rapid succession, and after a little you hear the bang-bang-bang ! very faint and far away ; and usually the airman sheers slowly and contemptuously off.

I am afraid there is little "scenic" about this. If "zoological features" had been asked, I could have enlarged *ad infinitum*. Of course, it's rats I refer to—not what many readers may suppose ; though had I been an American and been solicited for a description of these other "features," I should doubtless have responded—"Search *me*, stranger !"

II.—AN IMPRESSION OF GALLIPOLI.

BY W. J. STEPHENS, R.A.M.C.

GALLIPOLI is a mass of rocky ridges rising to a height of over 700 feet from the sea. The hills are so steep and sharply cut that to reach their tops in many places is a matter of sheer climbing. Most of the land is covered with a dense scrub from three to six feet high, with stunted forests in the hollows. . . .

JOHN BUCHAN.

(*"Nelson's History of the War."*)

. . . Further inland lie in a tangled knot the under features of Sari Bair, separated by deep ravines, which take a most confusing diversity of direction. Sharp spurs, covered with dense scrub, and falling away in many places in precipitous sandy cliffs, radiate from the principal mass of the mountain.

SIR IAN HAMILTON.

(*First Despatch, 20 May 1915.*)

"BUG-HUNTING" is an exciting recreation, but after stalking the agile flea along the seams and furrows of a regulation "greyback" for something like half-an-hour, I heaved a thankful sigh, yanked out my battered briar, and, gathering the remnants of my carcass into an attitude of comparative repose, inhaled the fragrant smoke, and sank into communion with the spirit of Gallipoli.

A strange, a moody being. His rugged, scarred, but mobile visage mirrors all the depths and shadows of his soul. I catch glimpses of dark dreariness and melancholy lightened by a spark of laughter; of rugged bitterness and strife softened by a touch of tenderness and repose; of rank ugliness, despair, and disappointment relieved by noble fortitude and hope.

To me, where I sit smoking, Gallipoli rises steeply from a narrow shingle beach. He does not, sprawling on his belly, stretch out his limbs reposefully to a slumbrous sea, but coldly, proudly, lifts his patchy head. Behind me, tier on tier, in irregular scrubby terraces, rise our cunningly constructed bivouacs—a mottled

wound on the bluff's steep, ragged flanks, alive with busy insects. Away to the left, through a gap in the rifted ridge, I gaze on broken undulations—large, irregular hard white patches glinting through a mangy coat of densely matted scrub. Here, old Gallipoli vainly aspires to attain a noble height; there, disappointed and disheartened, he sinks in depths of desolation, choked with arid sand or strangled with dense, patchy vegetation. Yet up he struggles again, stripping his glistening sides in dogged endeavour, proudly, steeply, defiantly flinging up his battered head.

Away on the right, with a melancholy sprawl, he creeps slowly from the strip of rubble beach away on and over into the purple-grey oblivion of the distant scarps and ridges. Sometimes, across his threadbare garment, run shoddy, long-drawn seams of lonely trees. Here and there the drabness and the dreariness of his cracked and furrowed mantle are relieved by pleasant splashes of bright colour. A many-tinted vineyard trails affectionately along a sunny wrinkle; laughing poppies float their merry heads above a waving sea of short-stalked corn; and the ragged bramble straggles along the meagre overflow of a quaint old well.

On the hither side, a vast escarpment, gouged and scored with deepening gullies, lifts its irregular, cliff-like face, and thrusts steep bluffs out on the barren plain—grim headlands jutting out into a sea of desolation. 'Tis here we glimpse the grand defiance of Gallipoli. Bludgeoned and battered, slashed with deep gashes, and jagged with lacerated wounds, but unbowed and unconquerable, he rises grandly from the rock-strewn, scrub-choked sand of rift and gully. Throwing out great rough spurs, piling up sheer craggy cliffs, invincible, he rises to the ridge.

The setting sun accentuates the hard-bitten sternness of his grand old features, touches with harsh light the points and spurs, deepens the shades and shadows of crag and fell, and throws sombre-pencilled patches on the plains. It intensifies the melancholy desolation

of barren stretches, and the pathetic struggle of the grim peninsula to push his stubborn heights above the mediocre.

Here is a scored and furrowed soul, seared with bitter struggles and disappointed aspirations, drooping here and there in sad and unkempt desolation, yet ever breaking forth in new endeavour—to toss his scraggy mane in grand defiance.

As the sun drops lower, remorsefully it spreads a garb of awesome splendour over the soul it has laid bare. Its rosy fingers steal softly through the tangled flora, spreading delicate tints with subtle skill; then, creeping slowly up the cold grey heights, soften and warm them with a purple glow. And with a last endearing caress it smoothes the wrinkles from the shaggy brow and gilds the ridges with a Midas touch before it sinks into the dancing Main.

Softly tapping the cold ashes from my pipe, I crawled into my dug-out.

III.—ACROSS THE NORTH ALBANIAN ALPS.

BY WILLIAM SMITH.

[Mr. Smith was in Serbia for twelve months, lived through the plague of typhus, watched the development of the crisis with Bulgaria, and marched with the women doctors and nurses of the Scottish Women's Hospital across the mountains when the enemy over-ran the country. The following is an account of part of the terrible march].

AFTER several weeks, we at last (December, 1915) reached Ipek. Here we were to leave our wagons and the splendid oxen that had worked for us so well, buy pack-ponies, and cross the mountains to Scutari, through what is, perhaps, one of the least-known regions in Europe. Every hour was now of value, for the first big storm of the winter was over-due, and we were hoping to get through the great pass before the snow came.

Ipek is largely inhabited by Albanians, and, until the Balkan War, had been really an Albanian town, though nominally part of the Turkish Empire. In normal times Ipek (Slavonic, "Pech,") might have a population of something like 15,000, but now the little town was overflowing with refugees. The retreating Serbian army was pouring in, and the population quickly doubled; then it trebled. Food was getting scarcer every day, and the sooner we got away the better. We were lucky in getting quarters in one of the military barracks, where we had at least a roof over our heads and beds to sleep in, if we cared. But, to quote the genial Pepys, "the beds were good, but lousy"; and I found greater comfort in an empty wagon in the barrack-yard.

Buying ponies and provisions took the better part of three days. Enough food had to be carried for the



Sketch by

NEGOTIATING AN AWKWARD CORNER.

William Smith.

journey, for we were going into a country where food, never plentiful, could not now be got for love or money. One comfort we had. The enemy was no longer at our heels, though we afterwards discovered that he was nearer than we imagined.

On the day of setting out, we were in the barrack-yard an hour before dawn, to find that the dreaded snow-storm had come during the night, and the ground was already several inches deep in snow. We were three days too late. The ponies were loaded up. A great art, loading a pack-pony. There is one, and only one, way of doing it; any other is sure to lead to disaster. Fortunately, our Serbian orderlies knew the trick, and we had few troubles with the baggage during the march.

We entered the pass an hour after we left Ipek. A long day's march was before us, for the only possible camping-ground was at a place far ahead, where the pass opened out. The farther in we got the narrower the pass became, until we seemed completely shut in by the great cliffs which towered above us, their summits lost in the clouds. The conditions were far from favourable for bringing away vivid impressions of a new country. The immediate job on hand—which happened to be leading a pony along a dangerous, icy path, where a slip might be fatal to both man and beast—occupied all my attention. Little remains but a confused picture of half-starved refugees and soldiers and a veritable chaos of snow-clad mountains and dark gorges, and the vague memory of the wild music of a rushing river racing to the sea.

The snow continued for hours, and with all the traffic (there were hundreds of refugees and horses ahead of us) the going became dangerous. Horses, unaccustomed to work of this kind, were constantly in difficulties, and the four days in the pass cost many a poor beast its life. But, fortunately, the ponies we got at Ipek were used to these mountain tracks in all sorts of weather. These ponies may not be much to

look at, but they are hardy and active and sure-footed, and it is best to let them take their own way at difficult places. Early on the march I had a difference of opinion with my pony about the best way of taking a steep descent, and insistence on my own way very nearly led to disaster. After that I gave him full liberty at awkward places. Before taking a steep descent, he would stop and look about him with a glassy eye, his expression suggesting that he was sick of the whole hopeless business. Then he would cautiously advance one foot and commence to slide and slither down the icy track, sometimes sitting on his tail, but nearly always arriving at the bottom without mishap. This pony had a disagreeable habit of walking on the dangerous outside edge of the path, seemingly for the sheer pleasure of making my flesh creep. In the end I got to know, but I cannot say to love, him. His nature was dour and unsympathetic, and affection would have been thrown away on him. In form he was anything but graceful, and his colour difficult to define—a sort of brownish-grey, neither the one nor the other; sometimes the brown seemed to get the upper hand, sometimes the grey, and it was difficult to pick him out from amongst a lot of other horses on a dark morning.

Delays, due to horses falling, were frequent, and night came down long before we were near our camping-ground. A difficult enough task in daylight, leading a horse through the darkness of the night over a narrow and icy track, with a cliff on one side and on the other a dark abyss (perhaps a couple of hundred feet deep, with a rushing river at the bottom) is not fun by any means. After more than two hours of this trying work, we came in sight of the camp fires. Trees had been felled for fuel, and great bonfires were blazing everywhere, lighting up the snowy landscape and the haggard faces of the weary travellers, many of whom were already asleep.

It was snowing hard and perishingly cold when we

again took the road at dawn. The outlook was rather serious. These mountain tracks often get completely blocked in a few hours, and a big storm then would, in all probability, have cost the lives of hundreds. Fortunately, the snow stopped an hour after we started, and a welcome sun shone for part of the day.



Sketch by

A TYPICAL ALBANIAN.

W. Smith.

During this part of the retreat we were often helped by Albanian peasants, who posted themselves at places where they knew that help would be needed with the horses. In appearance the Albanian is a keen, intelligent-looking fellow, with a more cheerful countenance than the Slav. Tall, lean, and as nimble

as a goat, he takes rather a pride in his personal adornment and generally goes armed to the teeth. With a rifle slung across his shoulder and a villainous-like yataghan and pistol stuck in his girdle, he looks what he is—a wild, lawless character. He loves his weapons, and his pistol or revolver, with a barrel about a foot long, is usually highly ornamented. Several times I was asked to show my little "Colt," but the Albanian, while admitting that it had some qualities, seemed to prefer his own more showy weapon. The Albanian claims (and with some reason) to be descended from the original settlers in the Balkan Peninsula. After the Balkan War, Albania was given her independence by the Great Powers in conference, but this doubtful boon was not granted for love of Albania. It emanated solely from the mutual distrust and jealousy of the Powers concerned, each thinking the other had its eye on the country—which was very likely the case. Unfortunately, the Albanian has never shown much capacity for self-government. The tribal system is still strong, very much as it was in the Highlands of Scotland before the "Forty-five"; and the different clans are still ruled by their Beys or Chiefs.

Fierce and lawless though they are, these mountaineers possess some not unworthy qualities. I was told by an English officer, whom I met there, and who knows the country and its people well, that once an Albanian makes a bargain to act as guide, he can be trusted, even to the death, for, rather than break his plighted word, he will give his life in your defence. This, however, might not prevent him robbing you a week after, provided that no bargain to the contrary had been made. The vendetta is still strong in Albania, and tribal and personal quarrels are frequent. Here, again, their strict code of honour comes in. A man who, in ordinary circumstances, would be shot at sight by the enemy with whom he had a blood-feud, can arrange a truce for a given time, and may then move freely about, conscious that his life is absolutely safe. Even a

member of a clan at war with another can, in these circumstances, visit the village of his deadly enemies without fear. Should he out-stay his time, however, even by one short hour, he will most assuredly be shot. In such a mountainous country, ideal for the sniper, defence is a comparatively easy matter, and the Albanian like his Montenegrin neighbour, has never been quite conquered by the Turk. But national unity seems impossible, and everything points to the Albanian being absorbed by the Slav in the course of time.

The country we were passing through is well-wooded, even on the higher hills. Beech and stunted oaks seem to be the prevailing trees, with pines on the higher altitudes. Bears are still to be found in these mountains, and wolves are said to be common. It may be that the long procession of travellers scared these animals off, or perhaps the appearance of the half-starved refugees was not tempting enough, but we saw no sign of either of them during our trek.

With the deep snow the going was slow, and darkness came long before we got to the little hamlet where we hoped to pass the night. Shelter was found in a mountain hut, but it was so crowded with travellers that sleep was next to impossible. We were grateful, however, for a roof of any kind over our heads. It was savagely cold, for we were by this time high up amongst the mountains.

The third day was very much like the others, but at night we had the great good fortune to find quarters in a stable with plenty of clean straw to sleep on. Andrievitza was reached the following night, and we decided to rest there for a day and try to buy some stores, for by this time our provisions were almost finished. After much seeking, we got some black bread from the authorities, but we got little else, for there was hardly any food left in the town. The long march and insufficient food were beginning to tell on the poor horses, and some of them were obviously getting worn out.

Though we were now out of the pass, our biggest

climb was yet ahead of us. This day's march was the least interesting, but perhaps the most trying of the whole journey. A thaw had set in during the night, and, to make matters worse, the fog came down, and little of the country could be seen. Everyone was tired out long before we reached the top, and one of the horses, completely done up, had to be left by the way-side, while several others were showing signs of distress. Night fell as we reached the summit, over 7000 feet above the sea. The hardest part of the journey was over, and we were leaving the hills at last. By noon the next day we were in an altogether different climate, and had left the snow behind. At Podgoritza, we had to wait three days for the steamer which was to take us to Scutari, across the lake of the same name.

I had heard so much about the beauties of Lake Scutari that I was quite prepared for the disappointment which duly came along. There is little or no vegetation on the great hills which surround the lake, and the day we crossed they were looking inky and colourless. Scutari itself is more interesting with its bazaars and polyglot population. It was captured by the Montenegrins from the Turk early in the Balkan War. At the settlement which followed, Montenegro (owing to the insistence of Austria) had to withdraw, and since then the town had been garrisoned by an international force, with an English Governor at the head of affairs. When the present war broke out, the Montenegrins once more captured the town, to the disgust of the inhabitants, who had enjoyed two years of good government and were beginning to prosper.

From Scutari we continued our march to San Giovanni di Medua, on the Adriatic, where, after three days of waiting, we got a ship which took us to Brindisi, and London was reached in time for Christmas. It was good to be back once more in a land of plenty, and very difficult to realise that we had been nearly starving and sleeping out under the stars but one short week before.



June, 1912.

CORRIE BHROCHAIN, BRAERIACH.

J. A. PARKER.

A HIGH-LEVEL ASCENT OF BEN MUICH DHUI.

BY JAMES A. PARKER.

THE ordinary ascent of Ben Muich Dhui from Derry Lodge *via* the Glen Derry and Corrie Etchachan path is essentially a low-level route, as out of a total distance, there and back, of fifteen miles the climber is only above the 2,500 feet level for about four miles. As a contrast to this, were the climber to make the ascent by the Carn a'Mhaim ridge and return by that of Cairngorm of Derry he would be above the 2,500 feet level for eight miles out of a total distance of twelve, and such a route may be termed a high-level one. The route described below keeps above the 2,500 feet level for twelve miles (of which eight are above 3,000 feet) out of a total distance of eighteen; but it is something more than a mere ascent of Ben Muich Dhui.

It was schemed out as an item for the Club Meet at Braemar at Easter, 1914, but bad weather prevented it, and a good many other plans, from being accomplished at that time; doubtless much to the disappointment of a certain keeper, who, when the plan was mentioned to him, said he would "like to see the man who did it."

A favourable opportunity occurred in the following August, when Duncan invited me up to Braemar for a week-end; and on Sunday, the 9th, we left that village in a dog-cart about eight o'clock in the morning nominally for the ascent of Ben Muich Dhui. I suggested to Duncan that it would be a good idea to go up from Derry Lodge over Carn a'Mhaim, and continue over Beinn Mheadhoin to the Làirig an Laoigh, as such a route would avoid the too familiar Corrie Etchachan path, and would give us a very fine high level route. He readily agreed, it being a very fine morning; but I did not tell him the

rest of the programme that was in my mind in case he might be discouraged.

In due course we reached Derry Lodge, and, leaving the trap there, we took to the Làirig path. After crossing the Luibeg Burn, we left the path about its highest point, and struck up the south-east slope of Carn a'Mhaim. The 1,400 feet climb up to the summit was soon accounted for, and on the way we crossed the 3,000 feet contour, below which we were not to descend, with the exception of three very slight dips, for the next eleven miles. Carn a'Mhaim is a fine view point for Glen Geusachan and the Devil's Point, and I had some little trouble in persuading Duncan that in a long hill expedition the attainment of a summit must, as a rule, be regarded only as a mere incident in the day's proceedings, and not as a reason for a prolonged halt. From the top of Carn a'Mhaim a fairly narrow ridge, rejoicing in the easily pronounced name of Ceann Crionn Carn a'Mhaim, runs in a north-westerly direction for nearly two miles to where it abuts against the south slope of Ben Muich Dhui. This gave us a most delightful walk, with magnificent views on both sides. On our right there was the rapidly-shallowing Glen Luibeg leading up to the slopes of Ben Muich Dhui, and on our left there was the deep trough of Glen Dee, on the other side of which Cairn Toul and Braeriach towered a thousand feet above us. The route is certainly a very attractive one for the ascent of Ben Muich Dhui, and it has the merit of being fully a mile shorter than the Glen Derry and Corrie Etchachan path. The south-west slopes of Ben Muich Dhui are covered with large scree, but we found the stones to be very firm, and with a strong following south-west wind we were fairly blown up the 1,750 feet that lay between us and the summit cairn.

The attainment of our highest point for the day had, of course, to be treated as something more than a mere incident, and we therefore rested at the cairn for about half an hour, during which we had a light lunch and

a somewhat indifferent view; and satisfied ourselves that no naval engagement was proceeding in the Moray Firth. We now made a bee-line for the top of Beinn Mheadhoin, which looked temptingly near. Our route lay down the rocky north-east slope of Ben Muich Dhui, in the recesses of which there still lay several large masses of snow, which gave this part of the mountain quite an Alpine appearance. The final slope down to the head of Loch Etchachan is pretty steep, and I think that our route to the outlet of the loch must have been considerably longer than the ordinary path, which, however, we were of course out to avoid. We crossed the burn at the outlet from the loch and climbed right up to the top of Beinn Mheadhoin, also climbing the summit tor, which is not difficult. I now suggested to my companion that the shortest way back to Derry Lodge was over the top of Beinn a'Chaorruinn. I do not remember now what were the arguments that I advanced—the principal one was probably the fact that I had never climbed it; but the proposition, as considered on a fine afternoon from a vantage point high up on the east slope of Beinn Mheadhoin, did not appear to be absolutely preposterous, and Duncan gave a verbal undertaking that he would do the trip. In a short time we were down at the pass, and I must admit that the steep west slope of Beinn a'Chaorruinn now looked very repulsive, and it may have been that I regretted having made the proposition, or that Duncan was sorry he had so readily agreed to it. In any case, neither of us said anything—I was, I think, keeping out of earshot by giving him a “good lead”; and we just steadily tackled the business in hand, which was a steep grass and rocky ascent of 1,100 feet to the summit. At the cairn we had our only touch of bad weather during the day, in the form of a cold shower of rain. When this was clearing off we had a remarkably fine view of Ben Muich Dhui, which was seen through a delicate veil of rain reaching across from Beinn Mheadhoin to Cairngorm of Derry. The

top of Beinn a'Chaorruinn is undoubtedly the best view point from which to see Ben Muich Dhui, and possibly the only one from which it can be seen to full advantage.

Having been successful in persuading Duncan that the shortest way from Beinn Mheadhoin to Derry Lodge lay over the top of Beinn a'Chaorruinn, there was now little trouble in getting him to agree that the shortest way from the latter hill to Derry was over the top of Beinn Bhreac ; and, after a short rest, we set out for the top of that somewhat uninteresting hill. Should anyone to desire to study a peat moss in a raw condition, I strongly recommend him to the Moine Bhealaidh, which lies between the two hills, the crossing of which was the one incident—a somewhat big one—in this stage of our journey. We did not find it very terrible, as we had clear dry weather and were able to dodge most of the soft places ; but the pass would be an appalling place to get into in thick slushy weather after a six-inch fall of new snow. The only interesting things about Beinn Bhreac were that it was our last summit and that it was an excellent point from which to view the whole course of our somewhat extensive walk, the seemingly vast extent of which rather impressed us. Leaving our last summit with regret, we ran down the south-west slope into Glen Derry. We soon reached the tree line ; and the final descent through the Scots firs to the Lodge was a fitting ending to what was one of the best big days that we had ever had in the Cairngorms, and we have had many. The total height climbed was about 6,000 feet, and we took about nine hours to the round.

During the foregoing excursion, Duncan told me that the Devil's Point was the only 3,000 feet Cairngorm summit that he had not yet climbed, and we therefore arranged that I would go up to Braemar three weeks later and climb the hill with him. This we duly did ; and in order to neutralise any evil influences that might exist on the Satanic peak, we included the ascent of the Angel's Peak in the day's programme. We began by

climbing Braeriach from the Làirig by the shoulder between Corrie Ruadh and Corrie Bhrochain, which is quite a good route, as it is sufficiently broken up to be interesting and higher up commands very fine views into Braeriach's finest corrie—Corrie Bhrochain. From the summit we walked round the edge of the Garachory to the top of the Angel's Peak, and from thence made our way direct to the Devil's Point. All these hills are well-known, and I only refer to the expedition as an excuse for making a few remarks on the somewhat diverse subjects of boots and devils.

To deal with the less profane subject first. The late Donald Fraser always maintained that the standard mountaineer's hob-nailers were far too heavy for ordinary hill excursions in the Cairngorms, and our experiences on the two excursions described establish his theory. Duncan and I are fairly well matched on a hill walk; and on the Ben Muich Dhui excursion, when we both wore our biggest boots, there was not much between us. On the second expedition, Duncan stole a march on me by putting on a much lighter pair of boots, with the result that he led me easily the whole day—so much so that, when coming across the path from Glen Dee to Derry in the evening, he set up a tremendous pace, and I thought I would never see him again as I laboriously trudged along the path fully quarter a mile behind and quite unable to reduce his lead. The conclusion that we came to, based on the experience of these two walks and of several previous ones, was that, while the "climbing boot" is excellent for rough work and snow climbs (and Alpine work, of course), it is far too heavy for ordinary summer ascents or hill walks on the Cairngorms.

So much for the boots and now for the devils.

The view from the top of the Devil's Point looking down into Glen Dee is very impressive and not suited for giddy people. Seen from near the top, the south-east corner of the hill appears to be fairly broken up, and it is possible that the descent would not be very

difficult; but, of course, appearances from above are deceptive, as one only sees the ledges and does not see the pitches. After we had rested some little time on the top, we decided to descend by the much easier route across the scree slope to the north-west of the summit, and down the path in the corrie to the bothy. The scree slope is quite a simple one and is set at a very moderate angle, but in crossing it each of us in turn stumbled rather badly, and on one occasion I actually fell. I would not like to go as far as to say that I was *tripped up*, but there is no getting over the fact that a moderately-sized stone got between my feet in some mysterious manner, and that I came a cropper in consequence. I did not attach any importance to these incidents at the time, nor afterwards to the fact that, when driving back from Derry Lodge to Braemar in the dog-cart, Duncan, who occupied the back seat, was strangely silent the whole way. It was only at dinner that evening that he told me that, when we were about a mile below Derry Lodge, he had looked up to the hillside on his right, and had seen the Devil about a quarter of a mile away, waving his arms to him! What it was that Duncan actually saw we cannot tell now, although we have both driven over the same road since then and kept our eyes glued to the hillside in hope of seeing His Majesty, but failed to see anything that could even suggest him. Yet Duncan must have seen *something*, as he was so scared that he did not speak for half an hour afterwards, and had not the presence of mind to stop the trap so that the driver and I might see the gentleman for ourselves. It is possible that the wearing of a light pair of boots is not the true explanation of his remarkably speedy retreat from the Devil's Point, and that the real reason is of too awful a nature to be divulged even now!

AN OCTOBER WEEK-END.

BY HUGH D. WELSH.

Thou, who hast given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee
And read Thee everywhere.

LATE one October I had an early morning call from a friend in Aberdeen, who asked if I could manage to arrange a week-end to take him through the Láirig Dhrù to Aviemore. He had spent a short time in the Aviemore district, but whenever he had attempted to negotiate the Láirig, mist had come down, and he had usually found himself in Glen Eunach or on the slopes of Carn Elrick. He suggested the next week-end for our trip, and matters were arranged accordingly. That evening a note was sent off to Derry Lodge, to the late Donald Fraser, whom I knew well, asking if he could put us up there on Saturday night, and saying that if we received no word from him we would assume that it was all right.

Saturday morning came, and no reply. Nevertheless, with light hearts and heavy rucksacks, we steamed out of Aberdeen station on the 10.10 a.m. train. The day was typical of October, dull, with mist low down on the hills, and a heavy dampness all around. By the time Ballater was reached, however, the sun had come out strongly, and everything was looking fresh and beautiful. The motor run to Braemar was delightful, and though so late in the year, the air was pleasantly warm. The trees all around were gorgeous in their autumn colouring, and presented a wonderful picture against the dark background of firs and distant hills. Lochnagar stood up free from snow, clear and sharp against a brilliant sky, and seemed such a short distance away.

We reached Braemar in due course, made a few purchases, and began an entrancing tramp along the firm, ringing road en route for Derry Lodge. Never shall we forget that tramp. The birches were clad in russet and gold, sprinkling the roadway and heather with colour. Right and left stretched a canopy of golden brown, supported by swaying columns of black and silver. Rabbits scurried here and there, and robins piped from the dykes and fences. Away down on our right the river ran by whispering and rustling as it sparkled in the sunlight, and, beyond, Beinn a Bhuid was loosely girdled with a fast disappearing band of mist. Here and there through openings between the swaying yellow larch sprays vistas of the river valley presented themselves. Darkly-clothed hills dipped down into billows of green, brown and gold, splashing the slopes with patches of colour. Wisps of blue smoke twisted here and there, denoting human habitation. The Linn of Dee thudded and rumbled through the rapidly gathering darkness, and we lingered a few minutes to enjoy the effect of the afterglow reflected on the rapids.

To shorten our tramp, we decided to cut through the wood between the Linn and the Black Bridge in Glen Lui, and as I was acquainted with the route, the responsibility of a safe journey through rested with me. Little difficulty was experienced in finding an opening in the fence, but once on the other side it was not so easy to keep to the path. However, with the exception of tripping over a few protruding roots, and rousing several deer, we emerged on the other side of the wood without going astray. Comparatively open ground lay between us and the Black Bridge, and this was easily negotiated. I had often been in the glen at night, but I do not think it had ever appeared so eerie and mysterious as it did now. Borne by the wind were the hoarse bellows of the stags as they called to one another on the hillsides. A rustle and a clatter near by betrayed the presence of a hind as she scuttled off, and

now and again came the plaintive piping of a sand-piper haunting the river-bed. Westward Carn a' Mhaim was sharply outlined against a brilliant star-studded sky, and farther to the right soared the cone of Derry Cairngorm. All around, clear-cut ridges shut us in.

Trees closed round again as we groped our way to Derry Lodge. Our knock was answered by Donald Fraser himself, who was more than surprised to see us. Our letter had not arrived and would not be received till Monday! However, we were welcomed in and made quite at home. Ever will we recollect that evening. Seated before the roaring fire, we exchanged the latest news and "swapped yarns," and it was well on to "the wee sma' oors" before we retired to rest.

At eight o'clock, after a good breakfast, and good wishes for a perfect day, we set off. Mist was low down on the hill-tops, and the air had an invigorating sting. How good it was to be alive, and how good once more to feel the spring of the grass and heather underfoot, and to be able to appreciate the sights and sounds of "the loneliness of the hills"! Rapid progress was made, and soon we were over The Sands and across the foot-bridge spanning the Luibeg. Up the glen Ben Muich Dhui was buried in cloud, but Carn a' Mhaim was uncovering. The only sign of animal life so far was a flock of fieldfares we disturbed and scattered just beyond the bridge. Gradually the ugly face of the Devil's Point lifted above the skyline, capped by a heavy cloud which broke into mist and eddied down into Glen Geusachan. Nine o'clock found us trudging over the debris of the cloudburst of 1895, which broke off a portion of the Devil's Point and Carn a' Mhaim. Glen Dee was most uninviting. Nothing was to be seen but the lower slopes of the surrounding mountains, dull and sodden. The track was practically a burn in places, but that counted as nothing. Mist surged out of the Garachory, bringing with it the faint bellows of stags near the entrance. Several fine specimens could be seen on the lower slopes of Braeriach, head outstretched and

antlers laid along their sides, sending out their hoarse roar.

The track was becoming more broken, and we therefore descended and followed up the river-bed. At 11.30 a.m., we halted at the foot of the bank of boulders from under which the Dee gushes forth. Proceeding onwards, we examined and sampled the three Pools of Dee within their setting of boulders and brilliant mosses. Breaking the impressive stillness was the soft swish of the March Burn leaping down from Ben Muich Dhui, burying itself in the chaos of boulders forming the floor of this part of the Làirig. On either side rose steeply the slopes of Ben Muich Dhui and Braeriach, disappearing in jagged pinnacles and crags into wreathing, curling mist. Repairing several of the "stone men" in this wilderness of granite blocks occupied some of our time, and in due course we topped the "water-shed" and looked away down upon Rothiemurchus bathed in sunlight, splashed here and there with brilliant autumn foliage. At the ford at Allt na Làirig a halt was called about 12.30, and a hot meal prepared. Soon after one o'clock we once more set off towards human habitation.

Already we experienced a change in temperature, and as we lowered our elevation the atmosphere became warmer and more oppressive on our entering the forest. The Allt na Làirig Dhrù, hidden at the bottom of its deep ravine, was marked by a brilliant edging of birch and rowan, with an alder here and there. The colourings were all the more noticeable against the surrounding velvety green of the firs and the deep brown of the heather. Deer were more numerous, and from every side came their hoarse call.

Rapidly following up the long and well-defined track threading its way through the forest we passed Alltdruie bothy, and crossed the then rotten wooden bridge spanning the Allt na Beinne Moire. Under the glorious autumn conditions we thought that a visit to Loch an Eilein would be worth the trouble. Accordingly, we followed up a cart track almost due west from the Beinne

Moire bridge, and, shortly before three, suddenly emerged through the trees upon the east bank of the loch. Without a word we sank down upon the heather, and gave ourselves up to a thorough enjoyment of the picture before us. Ord Bain, on the north-western shore, was ugly and scarred with outcrops of rock and fallen blackened trees. Round the loch shore the woods gathered close, mirroring their beautiful tints in the unruffled water. The gamekeeper's house, covered with brilliant creepers, peeped above the tree-tops, and added to the beauty by sending lazily aloft a spiral of blue smoke that hung above in a slight haze. The islet bearing the ruins of the castle floated on a bed of colour, the naked guardian-like trees outlined against the tinted woods beyond. The level rays of the setting sun glorified the whole scene. Lost in its contemplation for some time, we at last bestirred ourselves, and continuing our way through a fairyland of colour along paths strewn thick with shedded glories, arrived at Aviemore about four o'clock.

Here we did justice to a good meal, and got into conversation with a gentleman, who could hardly believe we had come through the Làirig. All day, he said, the Làirig had been black with mist, and the surrounding mountains swept with rain. Viewed from Aviemore, the Làirig certainly looked terribly grim and dark, but, nevertheless, our journey had been a most enjoyable one; performed as it was without a drop of rain.

Wishing to return to Aberdeen next morning with as early a train as possible, we decided to go on to Boat of Garten. The railway line was shorter than the road, so we climbed a fence and set off along the middle of the track. By this time it was pitch dark, but though the sleepers and ballast proved a vexation, fair progress was made, and at seven o'clock we scrambled over the signal wires just outside Boat of Garten station, and made for the neighbouring houses. I had at one time spent a night or two at one of the houses with some friends, and accordingly we thought we might be able

to get a bed there. Negotiations were conducted through a closed window, but the lady of the house either did not recognise me, or, more probably, took us to be tramps. We tried the police station, but despite the fact that a window was brilliantly illuminated, our efforts at knocking were of no avail. As a last resort, we approached the hotel, and rang the bell. After a time bolts were shot, and a maid appeared. On our informing her what we wanted, she retired to the back premises — after closing the door and leaving us standing outside. However, the manageress came and ushered us in. We were the only visitors in the hotel, but were made most comfortable in every way.

The train we had proposed to travel by left about 5.30 a.m., but the hotel people would not guarantee rousing us in time. We were awakened on Monday morning at eight o'clock, and the next train left at 9.30. Thinking over it, we decided that 5.30 was rather early, after our previous day's doings, and we were not sorry we had lost the first train.

LOCH AN EILEIN CASTLE.

(The ancient stronghold of the Shaws of Rothiemurchus.)

Loch an Eilein sad and lone,
 Long has thy day of pride been gone ;
 Rothiemurchus knows no more
 The race that dwelt upon thy shore ;
 Scattered now in every clime
 Waiting the appointed time,
 When they shall return to thee—
 "FIDE ET FORTITUDINE."

Yes, Loch an Eilein, to thy shore
 Shall the Shaws draw nigh once more,
 And with a joy-inspiring strain
 Behold the Shaws arise again.

—*Old Ballad.*

EARLY "GUIDES" TO THE CAIRNGORMS.

THE earliest work of the nature of a guide-book to the Cairngorm Mountains—from the Aberdeenshire side at least—is "A Guide to the Highlands of Deeside," professedly by "James Brown," published in 1831—a very small book, consisting of 32 pages only. The author contemplated a second edition, for which he solicited from his readers "any additional information which may be useful." No second edition ever was published, but shortly after the publication of the book there appeared another small work (77 pp.)—"The New Deeside Guide. By James Brown, author of 'The Guide to the Deeside Highlands.'" It is undated, but there is very good reason to believe that its actual date of publication was 1832. "The New Deeside Guide," however, can hardly be regarded as a second edition of Brown's original "Guide to the Highlands of Deeside," for it is an entirely different work, but presumably it supplanted its predecessor. It held the field at any rate, and continued to do so for many years, numerous editions being printed. It was expanded gradually, the edition of 1859, for instance, extending to 117 pages; and the work remained very much in the form then given to it until 1885, when it was superseded to some extent by the publication by Messrs. Lewis Smith & Son, the owners of the copyright, of "The Deeside Guide: Descriptive and Traditionary." Ten years later, "The Deeside Guide" itself disappeared, being incorporated in the second edition of "Deeside," by Alex. Inkson McConnochie, the first edition of which was published in 1893. (A third edition of Mr. McConnochie's work appeared in 1900).

The real author of "The New Deeside Guide" was Dr. Joseph Robertson, the well-known antiquarian of a past generation. James Brown, to whom the authorship was nominally assigned, was by no means a mythical

person, however. He was a driver of one of the Deeside coaches in the old stage-coaching days, and from him Dr. Robertson, who frequently visited Deeside and made pedestrian excursions to the mountains, gleaned a great deal of information in the course of his many journeyings up and down the valley. Brown was something of a "character," a man of shrewd observation and pawky speech; and Robertson, in compiling his "Guide," resorted to the ingenious expedient of adapting the phraseology employed to that of his informant, "whose colloquial peculiarities," as was pointed out by the writer of a biographical sketch of Robertson, "he humorously and successfully imitated in much racier style than the original." The better to maintain the illusion, the authorship of the "Guide" was credited to Brown, and latterly a preface was introduced, in which he was made to describe himself as "a plain, rude writer," seeking nothing more than "to set down what I have to say in a good homely style."* The book accordingly is rather quaintly written, and is attractive not only for the excellent matter furnished, but also for the naive manner in which that information is set forth. It is, in its way, a little masterpiece, so skilfully are the character of the professed narrator and his "homely style" maintained. He is made to embellish his story with not a little caustic comment and humorous reflection, and to constantly indulge in quizzical "asides." For example, he remarks of Aberdeen that "there is no town in Scotland more pleasant and agreeable, its inhabitants being allowed on all hands to be much more long-headed, discerning, and witty, than the inhabitants of any other town in Scotland"; while here is a rebuke not wholly undeserved—

The [mistaken] name of Rob Roy's Cave was given to the Burn of Vat by some idle readers of novels, romances, and other suchlike unprofitable books, who, after having crazed themselves with read-

* The history of the "Guide" and of its authorship is given in some detail by Mr. Robert Anderson, in *Scottish Notes and Queries*, VII. (2nd Series), 187-9 (June, 1906).

ing these books night and day, to the great misspending of their time and grievous hurt both of body and mind, come up here to the Highlands, and fancy that every cave, rock, or other curiosity, is Rob Roy's, or Roderick Dhu's, or Prince Charlie's.

The book, however, is more a guide to Deeside than to the Deeside Highlands, the information regarding these and the manner of reaching them being of the scantiest. Practically, this information is confined to the following two passages:—

Nearly opposite to Inverey, on the north side of the Dee, is the water of the Lui, and Glen Lui, a little up which there are several fine waterfalls. There is a foot-track which goes up Glen Lui, and joins the foot-track in Glen Derry, going to Speyside. Ben Muick Dhui and Cairngorm may also be visited by going up Glen Lui for about five miles, when the Glen branches into two; the eastmost being Glen Derry and the westmost Glen Luibeg; up which last Glen you must go till you come to its head, which is at the foot of Ben Muick Dhui. But this is the steepest side of Ben Muick Dhui, and therefore the most difficult to climb.

About four miles or so after you pass the Linn, the Dee, which has hitherto run almost always due east and west, makes a sudden turn to the north, and continues in this direction all the way to its source. . . . You now follow the course of the Dee northwards, and see the tops of Cairn Toul, Ben Muick Dhui, and Cairngorm right before you. Always as you go on, the glen becomes narrower, and the banks higher and more steep; of trees there are few far above the Linn, and these soon wholly disappear. At last, as you draw near the source, you find yourself in the bottom of a most immense glen, most silent, and very awful and gloomy, and the black rocks rising on all sides around you to a height almost inconceivable. The hill on the west side of the glen is Cairn Toul, and that on the east side Ben Muick Dhui, the latter of which is allowed to be the highest hill in Great Britain. From the sides of these two hills, but more particularly from Cairn Toul, various streams rush down and join the Dee. As you still advance into the bosom of this silent and awful valley, which is ever growing more gloomy, and the rocks of which appear as if they were soon to close upon you, you will observe the Dee growing less and less by degrees, till at last you perceive a huge heap of stones, stretching across the glen like an impassable and regularly built rampart. In a hollow behind this rampart is a large clear well, the source of the Dee, which rushes through below the rampart in a great stream. The easiest way of ascending Ben Muick Dhui is from this, from which you may climb to the top in about three hours.

Precise nomenclature is not a feature of "The New Deeside Guide," but then we must remember that it was written anterior to the Ordnance Survey. "The glen" just described is, of course, the pass familiar to modern mountaineers as the Làirig Dhrù, and nowadays we have learned to discriminate between the "Pools" of Dee in the Làirig and the "Wells" of Dee on the summit of Braeriach, and to regard the latter as the true source of the river. Tackling the steep climb up from the Pools of Dee is certainly not the easiest way of ascending Ben Muich Dhui, the route by Glen Derry being distinctly preferable—a route only indirectly indicated by "James Brown." And Ben Muich Dhui itself, as everybody knows, is no longer "allowed" to be the highest hill in Great Britain—that distinction has passed indisputably to Ben Nevis. But, considering the limited references to the Deeside Highlands in this Deeside Guide, there is no need for particularising their shortcomings. In a general way, the information afforded was fairly accurate, and besides, in all probability the "Guide" was not intended to be absolutely relied upon for personal direction. There occurs, at any rate, this suggestive sentence—"At Castletown of Braemar you may obtain steady men to guide you to Glentilt, the source of the Dee, Ben Muick Dhui, Cairngorm, Loch Avon, or Speyside, by applying at the inns." The class of men who thus acted as guides—and who also provided ponies, if required—has died out. Pedestrianism has come into its own, and the services of guides are now dispensed with.

What must be regarded as the first genuine guide to the Cairngorm region is a work titled "Braemar: Its Topography and Natural History: A Guide to the Deeside Highlands," by the Rev. James M. Crombie, published in Aberdeen in 1861. It consisted of three parts, describing successively the topography and the natural history of the district (including its geology, botany and zoology), and the scenery along the routes

of sundry projected excursions. The book is now very scarce. A new edition of it was issued in 1875.* The natural history section was omitted, Mr. Crombie having contemplated a larger work to which it would have been relegated along with the legendary lore of the district; but this larger work never appeared. Rev. James Morrison Crombie, by the way, was at the time in charge of the Church of Scotland Mission Station at Braemar (which was not constituted a *quoad sacra* parish till 1879). He was an Aberdonian, a brother of the late Baillie John Crombie; and he ultimately became a minister in London, and then an army chaplain. He was a botanist of some repute, a Fellow of the Linnæan Society, and the author of a work on "British Lichens."

The new edition, a work of 145 pages, was titled "Braemar and Balmoral: A Guide to the Deeside Highlands." It had a considerable vogue, and remained the principal—in fact, the only—guide to the region until the appearance, in 1885, of Mr. A. I. McConnochie's "Ben Muich Dhui and Its Neighbours," with its more comprehensive information and detailed routes. "Balmoral" was put in the title, we suspect, as a catch, for only half-a-dozen pages are devoted to it, and it does not even get the dignity of a separate section. Mr. Crombie gave a very liberal interpretation to the term "Braemar," making it include the whole district down to and even past Ballater, and furnishing a description of the village as well as of Braemar (invariably called Castleton). It is somewhat odd to read of Ballater that "the streets, if such they may be called, branch off at right angles from the main road, and contain nothing of interest except the parish church;" and of Braemar that "the houses a few years ago were, in general, but very commonplace affairs, presenting very little accommodation for strangers." The topographical

* John Hill Burton's "The Cairngorm Mountains" had appeared in the interval—in 1864; but it cannot be classified as a guide-book. An excellent appreciation of it, under the appropriate title of "A Cairngorm Classic," written by Mr. George Duncan, has appeared in the *C.C.J.* (IV., 322-7).

section also contains informative chapters on the mountains and glens, the streams and lochs, and the forests and moors.

It is the second part of the book, however, that is the most interesting—the part which describes the excursion routes. The first excursion is the common one from Braemar to Balmoral and Ballater, which in those days was ordinarily made by coach—a much more agreeable way of performing the journey than by the modern motor-bus, for, though the progress was slower, the fact of being seated outside enabled one to have a much better view of the scenery. The prominent features of the route are fairly well detailed—not, of course, in the racy style of the “Deeside Guide,” but still with an adequate regard to essential and interesting particulars. Accounts of the routes from Castleton to Lochnagar, the Linn of Dee, and to Ben Muich Dhui *via* Glen Derry follow. There is no need to examine them at length; the several routes are described with sufficient precision to be easily followed, and, if the present writer remembers aright, his first ascents of Lochnagar and Ben Muich Dhui were accomplished with the aid of Mr. Crombie’s book. Mr. Crombie made the mistake—common enough in his time—of saying that, if one were alone, he could never find his way to Ben Muich Dhui, and still less manage to climb it, without a guide (a personal one, that is), but his own work contributed largely to render the services of guides unnecessary. Assuming the rôle of cicerone, Mr. Crombie expatiates volubly and eloquently on the views from the summits of the two mountains to which he conducts us—a little too volubly sometimes, and with an irrepresible tendency now to drift into rhapsodical language, and then to indulge in reflections of a hortatory nature. His literary style is markedly rhetorical, and his rhetoric occasionally runs away with him, producing results that border on the foolish and the absurd. A sample of his style may be culled from his description of the view from the summit of Lochnagar, to which, however,

there is this rather grotesque prelude—"If you wish thoroughly to appreciate it [the view], you must first get your mind into proper trim by putting your stomach into proper order; so, out with the provisions, and as we feast our appetite with sandwiches and milk, let us also feast our eyes on beauty and magnificence." Then he goes on:—

It is indeed a glorious and extensive view that we have, and one which well repays the wearisome ascent, and makes us, as we gaze upon it, forget and no longer feel our fatigue. Extending as it does over cultivated fields and barren moors, over wide plains and mountain ranges, over populous cities and villages, too, though we cannot see them, from the Firth of Forth to the Moray Firth on the one hand, and from the German Ocean almost to the Atlantic Ocean on the other, it is no wonder that, apart from the charm which Byron's burning strains had thrown around it, Lochnagar should always have been so greatly admired for its noble outline, and should have attracted the feet of so many hundred tourists for the view which it affords.

* * * * *

If you take your telescope and look steadily through it on a clear day, you may perceive the Lammermoor Hills on the south, looming like a dim low cloud in the horizon which bounds your view; the higher peaks of Argyll and Inverness upon the west, through which, if you could pierce, you might detect the Atlantic; ridges and isolated hills meeting the sky on the north as far as the Moray Firth; and the green waters of the German Ocean upon the east, which are here and there visible, with the ships upon their bosom, through the openings in the lower tracts. Between these a sea of dark mountains, of all heights and forms, lies stretched out in Perth, Forfar and Aberdeen, whose billows are aye at rest, and whose wavy surface no wind can ever ruffle. Silence, deep and unbroken, is around us; and the loud sound of the world's pulse mingles not with the throbbings of our hearts. Beneath us we see enough to remind us that we are still human beings dwelling on earth with men of like passions with ourselves. For, even with the steep frowning glories of Lochnagar, there mingle the smiling beauties of green fields and waving oats planted by human hands, and the abodes of mankind, from that of royalty itself—which, however, is concealed from view by Craig-an-Gowan—down to the hut of the humble cottar, built by human labour; and Byron, could he now stand here, would perceive, a little beyond the cloud-encircled forms of his fathers' spirits, which in a clear day like this we vainly look for, the wreaths of smoke from an establishment where another kind of spirits are manu-

factured. It is a scene upon which we could gaze and meditate for hours, and hear the great Creator speaking to us in His marvellous works.

To be quite frank, this florid style becomes wearisome and the preaching tone rather palls, but both were perhaps more acceptable forty years ago than they are to-day. They do not, however, seriously detract from the merits of the book as a trustworthy guide and as a fount of information on some matters in which the author was a specialist. The excursion to Lochnagar, for instance, includes a diversion to the little-visited Loch Kandor, with an interesting account of the rare plants observable in the adjoining corrie, which, as Mr. Crombie says, is one of the richest botanical spots in the district. Nor is Mr. Crombie neglectful of the legendary, duly reminding us of the Priest's Well beside Loch Callater, "which arose in answer to the prayers of a priest at a time when the lochs and all the streams were for a long period frozen up, and the ice lay so thick that the inhabitants of the upper part of the glen could nowhere get the least supply of water." Mr. Crombie's "Braemar and Balmoral" has been out of print these many years, and has been superseded by other and more "up-to-date" works, but it is a pleasure to recall the excellent qualities it possessed and the services it once rendered to those engaged in penetrating the recesses of the Deeside Highlands.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE SGARSOCH MARKET.

TO THE EDITOR, "CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL."

SIR,—I was much interested in finding that, after many days, Mr. W. M. Alexander had revived this subject in our *Journal*. As you have been good enough to ask me for any remarks that strike me, I have much pleasure in responding.

My first excursion was made to Sgarsoch nearly a quarter of a century ago in company with the late Mr. William Brown. An account of it will be found in the first number of the *Journal*; I rather think I wrote it myself. The reference to the market may be quoted—"At one time a cattle market was held on Sgarsoch, and a right-of-way exists from the Falls of Tarf direct to Glen Feshie by the east shoulder of Sgarsoch." The following extract is from my "Deeside," the statement as to Sgarsoch not having been lightly made—"An Sgarsoch is a flat-topped hill, with grassy slopes, where formerly a cattle market was held. This 'Tryst' was the successor to a market previously held in Glen Feshie; latterly it was removed still farther south, till it ultimately become stationary at Falkirk."

My second climb of Sgarsoch was made with Mr. W. M. McPherson, of the Club, under the disadvantage of several feet of snow. Nevertheless the following extract from an account of the climb in the *Scotsman* (23rd November, 1909), has some bearing on the subject:—

Near the summit there are not a few cairns, which, according to some authorities, mark the site of a cattle market long before the birth of the Falkirk Trysts. There are similar puzzling cairns on the Knock of Braemoray. The north face of An Sgarsoch has two corries which may be mentioned. One is Coire Dhonnachaidh Taillear, but, unfortunately, the

tailor who gave it its name is himself forgotten ; the other is Coire an Tobair, the corrie of the well. This well shows signs of man's attention, and so should be remembered when the "market" idea is being considered. It must not be forgotten that the "market" was in the line of an old drove road between north and south. Knox's map of the Basin of the Tay (1836) indicates the ancient right-of way, though the Ordnance Survey is silent on the subject. Nevertheless, we have had talk with an old man who has seen sheep driven along it about 40 years ago.

I may add that when in company with McPherson I could (as I fancied), despite the snow, pick out indications of the site of the market.

It must now be over two score of years since, in my early Cairngorm wanderings, I first heard of the tradition, which latterly I found to be "very strong in Braemar" and in Glen Feshie as well. Many members of the Club will remember the late Mr. Donald McDonald, Ballochroick, Glen Feshie, who was a particularly well-informed Highlander. With him I have had many interesting conversations on local topographical and other subjects ; he regarded the Sgarsoch market not as a tradition but as a well-assured fact. In later years I have had the benefit of intercourse with Mr. James McHardy, now resident in Hamilton, but a native of Braemar, born at the Linn and partly brought up at the Bynack, which was originally known as Croclach. His father (Sandy) was at the Bynack upwards of thirty years and accordingly knew Sgarsoch well, more especially as he was gamekeeper to the Earl of Fife. James and I have often discussed the market tradition as well as numberless other Braemar tropics, but the sum of the particular matter in hand may be given in an extract from a letter which he wrote me last month—"My father believed in a market having been held on the top of Sgarsoch. All the stones are collected together on both sides of the Drove road, and the guide marks are to be seen to this day. . . . You can easily see the marks of the old road yet. The top [of Sgarsoch] is three-quarters of a mile long where the stones are gathered off."—I am, etc.,

ALEX. INKSON McCONNOCHE.

THE STRENGTH OF THE HILLS.

Afar in the west the great hills rose,
 Silent and steadfast and gloomy and gray :
I thought they were giants, and doomed to keep
Their watch while the world should wake or sleep,
 Till the trumpet should sound on the judgment day.

I used to wonder of what they dreamed
 As they brooded there in their silent might,
While March winds smote them, or June rains fell,
Or snows of winter their ghostly spell
 Wrought in the long and lonesome night.

They remembered a younger world than ours,
 Before the trees on their top were born,
When the old brown house was itself a tree,
And waste were the fields where now you see
 The winds astir in the tasselled corn.

But calm in the distance the great hills rose,
 Deaf unto rapture and dumb unto pain,
Since they knew that Joy is the mother of Grief,
And remembered a butterfly's life is brief,
 And the sun sets only to rise again.

They will brood and dream and be silent as now,
 When the youngest children alive to-day
Have grown to be women and men—grown old,
And gone from the world like a tale that is told,
 And even whose echo forgets to stay.

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

—“*In the Garden of Dreams.*”

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

THE past winter was noticeable for the severe weather that prevailed in the Aberdeenshire Highlands in common with the Scottish Highlands generally, and especially for the succession of snowstorms, the depth of snow that accumulated, and the long duration of wintry conditions. Not for the last forty years, it is said, has there been such a severe and prolonged snow spell on Upper Deeside; and even as late as the morning of 24th March about 2 inches of snow fell at Braemar, about 1½ inches on the hills round Ballater, and fully one inch at Balmoral and in the Crathie district. For eight miles round Braemar, and for a period of eight weeks, according to one report, snow lay from 12 to 24 inches deep, and during that period the bare ground was not visible. A special correspondent, in an article in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* of 25th March, wrote:—

“It is quite an Alpine scene which meets the eye of the traveller on a journey from Ballater to Braemar. Lochnagar can no longer justify Byron’s description of ‘dark,’ for even the ‘Black Spout’ is a white one for the nonce, filled in great measure, as it and the other ‘spouts’ are, with very deep wreaths of snow. Yet there remain, in striking contrast to the snow-covered landscape, those ‘steep frowning glories’ of high precipices above the mountain loch, rising sheer up so that there the snowflake cannot repose. But for those cliffs there is scarcely a dark spot to be seen on this mountain or on Ben Muich Dhui or Beinn a’ Bhuirid, or any of the giant hills of the neighbourhood. Here, undoubtedly, winter still reigneth over the land. The moors are covered with snow to a depth of several feet. Several of the roads in the district have been blocked for weeks, the snowdrifts in certain places being as deep as from nine to ten feet. A drift was cut on the Ballater to Braemar road at one place, where it was found that a horse’s ears were on a level with the top of the cutting.”

Deer suffered badly from the severe and prolonged snowstorm. Early in the season many of the herds left the higher parts of the mountains to seek shelter lower down, but even there the snow was so deep that they were little better off, and the problem of feeding them became a serious one. Grouse, too, left the higher altitudes and migrated east and south, where they could obtain food and shelter. Not for many seasons have white hares been so plentiful, but rabbits suffered greatly, many being found dead, practically smothered in the snow-drifts.

The conditions for ski-ing were of the most favourable kind. “Magnificent sport” was enjoyed, but the number of those who engaged in this pastime was somewhat limited owing to many devotees being otherwise employed “somewhere in France.”

It is long since pedestrians who walked through Glen Feshie asserted that the track marked on the Ordnance Map as leading from Geldie Lodge to

the Feshie had no real existence—acknowledged, at any rate, their inability to find it (See “Glen Feshie” by **GELDIE-FESHIE** Robert Anderson in *C.C.J.*, 1896; I., 349-50). The **TRACK.** track still seems to remain somewhat mysterious and elusive, for Mr. J. B. Nicol, in his article in our last number, said he failed to discern it. So far as he could discover, he wrote, no road exists, and various tracks he followed landed him in bogs or died out. Mr. John Croll was apparently more successful as a “path-finder.” Writing to the *Free Press* shortly after our January issue appeared, he said—

“It happened that about half-an-hour or so after Mr. Nicol started up the Geldie, I followed; and on arriving at Geldie Lodge I took a look at the ground, and found the bogs such as he describes. Concluding that I had not the length of shank to negotiate bogs with ease and comfort, I took the lie of the hill, and it seemed that along the ridge for about five miles there should be decent walking. I went straight north, and found a well-beaten track, with cairns at regular intervals, all the way to the Feshie.”

The apparent discrepancy between the two “investigators” was explained in a subsequent letter to the *Free Press* by Mr. James A. Parker.

“There should not be the slightest difficulty in walking from Geldie Lodge to the river Eidart” (wrote Mr. Parker) “if one keeps to the high ground on the north side of the glen. Mr. Nicol must, I think, have kept too close to the Geldie. The path mentioned by Mr. Croll is indicated on the one-inch Ordnance map, and a friend and I when going from Braemar to Feshie Bridge last September followed it for about two miles. It is, however, not much better than the moor, and is hardly worth searching for. It commences near the point where the driving road (*sic*) to Geldie Lodge turns down southward toward the lodge. The distance from the beginning of the path to the Eidart is three miles.”

Further testimony as to the actual existence of the track was subsequently given by Mr. John Clarke in an interesting letter recounting his experiences in traversing Glen Feshie. Walking from Kingussie to Braemar in the spring of 1876, he received instructions as to his route from one intimately acquainted with the glen, who warned him particularly about the crossing of the Eidart, the only real difficulty. “The bridge had just been swept away by the winter floods,” he said “the track beyond was lost for a bit, and the course must therefore be laid by a small cairn, the position of which he carefully described.”

“Everything turned out according to programme” (wrote Mr. Clarke). “The Eidart was very low, the day was gorgeous, and the walk one after all these years it is a delight to recall. As a matter of fact, after crossing the Eidart I steered a little to the left, and did not strike the path at all. After rounding the slope which runs down from Monadh Mor I got sight of the road—somewhere near Geldie Lodge, I fancy—and made a bee-line for it over the heather, which was at this portion of the hill quite good walking.”

On a later occasion—about 1895—Mr. Clarke explored the same region from Braemar, cycling as far as the White Bridge.

"I followed" (he wrote) "what by courtesy is termed the driving road up to Geldie Lodge, and then the track, which, as Mr. Croll has said, is here quite distinct. My pencil notes of the excursion say I kept it 'for two miles,' after which I had to diverge towards the left, as my first objective was the southern Meall Tionail abutting on the early course of the Feshie and right over the point of its 'capture' by Speyside. Of the existence of a track there is no doubt. Not, of course, always as well marked as one might desire. Of the lower ground to the left, into which Mr. Nicol seems to have deviated, I can speak feelingly. It is quite the worst walking I know in the whole of the Cairngorms, though the ridge from Mount Battock to Cloch-na-Ben is a close second, the difficulties being, however, of a different kind."

MR. PARKER, in the course of his letter, seized the opportunity to emphasise the suggestion he threw out at the last Annual Meeting of the Club about the need of a bridge over the Eidart. Regarding

FOOTBRIDGE this, there is no room for any difference of opinion. Mr. PARKER wrote:—

THE EIDART. "I am struck with the fact that neither Mr. Nicol nor Mr. Croll refers to the footbridge across the Eidart, and infer from their silence that they both found that river on its good behaviour. The bridge, as I found it last September, consisted of two spans resting on a rather slim-looking pier in the middle of the river. Each span consisted of two thin logs fastened together with cross spars, which acted for steps, the whole being garnished on the up river side by a thin and very flexible fencing wire, which did duty for a handrail. In good weather, when the river is low the crossing of the bridge forms merely a pleasant incident in the day's excursion: but when the weather is very bad, the wind high, and the Eidart in full flood, as my friend and I had it last September, the crossing of the bridge is decidedly sensational and not altogether devoid of danger. Should a party arrive at the river when it is in flood and find that the bridge has been washed away, as is not infrequently the case, they may find it necessary to walk five miles up Glen Eidart before a safe crossing can be found.

"Some years ago the Cairngorm Club erected a very useful footbridge across the Bennie near Coylum Bridge, on the Làirig Pass path, and at the recent annual meeting of the club I suggested that they should now take steps to erect a substantial footbridge across the Eidart on the Glen Feshie path, and I hope that this will be done before a serious accident occurs at the present bridge."

The footbridge here described is evidently the one mentioned in *C.C.J.*, VI., 328. A former experience of Mr. Parker at the Eidart bridge is noted at p. 290 of that volume.

Mr. Parker's suggestion was warmly supported in the following passage in Mr. Clarke's letter:—

"In 1913 I went up Glen Feshie again from the west in order to re-examine its possibilities as a route for a trunk road. The bridge which afforded such thrills to Mr. Parker was then new, and a frail enough structure if one imagined it with a raging torrent below; it is fit for summer

use only. There can be no doubt as to the necessity of a substantial and safe bridge at this point of the Eidart, which closely resembles the other point of exit from Upper Deeside at the Junction of the Tarf and Tilt, where the Bedford Memorial Bridge now stands."

BENNACHIE is not classified among the Bens. Yet it has a worthy place of its own. The Nor'-East knows it well. Its Mither Tap is both a landmark and a weather-gauge. From the far horizon the

BENNACHIE. sailors catch it and the fishermen take their bearings :

"Clochnaben and Benachie

Are twa landmarks far oot at sea."

Its noble head one never tires of looking at. The broad base, the long back, dark and pine-clad up to 1300 feet above sea-level, the shapely summit, clear cut against the sky (like a huge Aberdeenshire bullock reposing and holding his head up), all form a picture that wins universal admiration. Bennachie also is the poor man's barometer. When rain approaches he puts on his white nightcap and cloud. If snow threatens, he becomes prophetic and dons his white mantle long before it lies on the laighs of the Garioch. "He's a wise chief, that Bennachie," said a crofter to me; "He aye kens fat's comin.' I lippen mair tae him than tae ony wither-glass. The gless aften chates, but the Mither Tap hisna its marra'; it maks nae mistaks."

The mountain range runs east and west. Its southern sides slope down to Paradise and the lovely Vale of Alford. But it is the northern side, strange to say, that has become the region of poetry and story. The back of the hill is pine-clad at the highest ranges. But below the zone of fir come crofts and small farms innumerable. The poetry of the place is there. Who has not heard the lovely Scottish song?—

Oh ! gin I were where Gadie rins,
Where Gadie rins, where Gadie rins,
Oh ! gin I were where Gadie rins
At the back o' Bennachie !
Aince mair to hear the wild bird's sang,
To wander birks and braes amang,
Midst friends and favourites left sae lang,
At the back o' Bennachie.

The height of Bennachie is said to be 1889 feet. Every child born in 1889 was told he was just as old as the mountain was high. One day an inspector was visiting the public schools in the Garioch and asked a boy, who had answered well, how old he was. "I'm juist as aul' as Bennachie" was the reply. Much astonished, the Government officer said—"You must be very ancient, my little man." The teacher appeased the examiner by stating that he had always tried to utilise local facts of all kinds to assist the pupils' recollection of dates.—"The Nor'-East in the War Time," by Rev. W. S. Bruce, Banff, in the *Scotsman*, 8 January.

[It is ungracious, perhaps, to spoil a good story, but none of the four principal tops of Bennachie attains a height of 1,889 feet. The highest, Oxen Craig, is only 1,733 feet; the Mither Tap, 1,698 feet.—EDITOR.]

THE *Sphere* of 22 January gave an account of a picturesque adventure by motor-car—the ascent of Mount Glorious (2,400 feet high) by Lieutenant W. T. Forrest, R.F.A., in a Napier motor-car. Mount Glorious is the highest peak in the D'Aguiar range, which lies about twenty miles north of Brisbane. “Hitherto” (said the account) “this peak has been ascended only on foot, it having always been deemed impossible for any vehicle on wheels to make the ascent to the summit. No road or track exists. The view from the highest point is unsurpassed throughout the whole of Australia. Lieutenant Forrest undertook the trip partly with a view to proving that it would be possible to construct a road which would enable cars to make the ascent, and as a result of the success of his efforts this will now be taken in hand and a new tract of country will be opened up. Among the exciting incidents of the climb was a fall into a ‘wash-out’ caused by heavy rains descending from the mountain. This was 6 ft. deep and over 8 feet wide (V-shape), and Lieutenant Forrest believes that no other car but an extra-strong Colonial Napier could have withstood the strain put upon the vehicle by this sudden drop. The Napier climbed out from the crevice under its own power. The most dangerous spot of all was near the summit. Here the gradient was extreme and the track very rough. To the rear of the car was a sheer drop of 80 ft., so that if any mishap had occurred and the car started running backward a disaster would have happened. The descent of the mountain was undertaken in the dark with the aid of powerful headlights. A most uncanny element was supplied by the weird shadows reflected by bush fires. The total time occupied on the ascent and descent was $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The journey necessitated the fording of three rivers, and at one part Lieutenant Forrest had to rush through a bush fire.”

THE *Times* of 22 March recorded the death, in her 80th year, of Miss Catherine Martha Gardner, who was well known as an Alpine climber. She climbed Mont Blanc in 1886, and since then had made the ascent of every peak of consequence in the neighbourhood of Saas and Zermatt. On one occasion, on the Matterhorn, she was delayed for many hours by a violent storm. She also made a remarkable descent of the Pique d'Arolla, and finally ascended the Lyskman, in spite of its reputation for fatal accidents.

SIR OWEN SEAMAN'S versifying fertility and versatility were very effectively displayed in a recent poem in *Punch*, “The Kaiser on Kilimanjaro,” *a propos* of the story that on the delimitation of British East Africa, the mountain of Kilimanjaro (19,000 feet), situated in a district recently captured from the Germans by the British forces, was generously conceded to the Germans at the special desire of the Kaiser (at the time only Prince

William of Prussia), because he took a peculiar interest in the fauna and flora of the region. We quote the first two of the half-dozen verses:—

O mountain of the sounding name,
 Kilimanjaro !
 Almost as loud as my own fame,
 Kilimanjaro !
 Plucked from my Empire's jewelled hem
 I deemed you once the fairest gem
 In my Colonial diadem,
 Kilimanjaro !

Not for your height, though you are high,
 Kilimanjaro !
 And practically scrape the sky,
 Kilimanjaro !
 But for the beasts and birds and flowers
 That nestle in your snowy bowers
 I loved you best of all my dowers,
 Kilimanjaro !

WE have to add to the Club's "Roll of Honour":—

Second Lieutenant James Ellis, Gordon Highlanders—promoted in
 May last to be Lieutenant (temporary Captain).

THE CLUB AND William C. Welsh, schoolmaster, Crossroads, Keith—
 MILITARY in command of the Grange Volunteer Training Corps.

SERVICE. It is not easy to keep abreast of the various pro-
 motions. We note, however, that Major E. W. Watt,
 4th Gordon Highlanders, has been promoted Lieutenant-Colonel; Captain
 J. Dickson, 6th Gordon Highlanders, Major (temporary); Second Lieutenant
 Robert Lyon, 5th Gordon Highlanders, Lieutenant and Signalling Officer—
 subsequently Captain, in command of A company; and Second Lieutenant
 W. B. Meff, 7th Gordon Highlanders, Lieutenant.

WE regret having to intimate the death of one of the small remaining
 band of original members of the Club—Mr. John Carmichael Bennett,
 of Allathan, New Deer, advocate in Aberdeen and clerk.

OBITUARY. to the Income Tax Commissioners of Aberdeenshire.
 He died on 9th June, aged 57.

REVIEWS.

AMONG THE CANADIAN ALPS. By Lawrence J. Burpee, F.R.G.S.
London: John Lane.—Mr. William Garden's article on "Mount
Assiniboine" (*C.C.J.*, Vol. V.) and Miss Adam's two
articles on "A Summer Camp in the Canadian Rockies"
THE CANADIAN (Vol. VIII.) have given readers of the *Journal* some
ROCKIES. knowledge of the magnificent mountain ranges of the
Dominion. Mr. Burpee's book makes us better acquainted

with what he terms "the mighty snow-capped sea of mountains, whose stupendous waves tossed far into the heavens seem ever about to overwhelm the level wheat-fields of Western Canada." The Canadian Rockies stretch from the plateau of the North-West Territories to the Pacific coast, intersecting the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and are remarkable for their height and their Alpine features, their huge ice-fields being specially noticeable. The Selkirks constitute a minor, though not very much meaner, range, despite their elevation being somewhat lower than that of the Rockies, only two peaks over 11,000 feet being known. Both ranges are coming into recognition for the mountaineering climbs and adventures that they afford. The Canadian Pacific Railway has imported guides from Switzerland besides establishing hotels, and a Canadian Alpine Club was formed ten years ago. While mountaineering proper is thus cultivated, the noble scenery of the mountains is being brought within the cognisance of non-climbers by the Government forming large areas into national parks, and improving the existing trails or tracks and making new ones. The size of some of the parks is as prodigious as the heights of the mountains enclosed within them or situated on their borders. The park at Banff, hitherto the principal one, covers an area of 1800 square miles, but the dimensions of the lately-created Jasper Park were increased two years ago to 4400 square miles. Mr. Burpee expresses a hope—in which many will concur—that the policy of gradually developing the trails into carriage roads will not be carried too far. "The thought," he says, "of driving to the foot of Mount Assiniboine on a motor bus, and having its glories profaned by a professional guide, perhaps through a megaphone, is too painful to admit."

Mount Stephen (10,523 feet), in the neighbourhood of Field, and Mount Sir Donald (10,808 feet), rising 6,500 feet above the railroad track at Glacier station, are, it seems, the most "popular" mountains, in the sense of being those most frequently climbed, due doubtless to their proximity to the Canadian Pacific Railway and consequent easiness of access: they are named, of course, after the two great pioneers of the trans-continental railroad—Sir George Stephen (now Lord Mount Stephen), and Sir Donald

Smith (the late Lord Strathcona), whose Strathspey origin we in the north are not likely to forget. There are many other mountains more stupendous and presenting much more formidable obstacles to the climber—Mount Bryce (11,750 feet), named after the President of the Cairngorm Club; Mount Assiniboine, the Canadian Matterhorn (11,860 feet); besides “a great company of glittering giants as yet unnamed.” Mountains on this gigantic scale are distinctly attractive, and the region is otherwise alluring for its general picturesqueness, abounding as it does in glaciers, lakes, waterfalls, and woods. Many of the scenic features are presented to us in this volume in fifty admirable illustrations; and one has rather the impression that the book has been written round the pictures. The letterpress, with the exception of the last three chapters, is more of the nature of a general survey than of a detailed description, the result of personal experiences; and the accounts given of sensational climbs are quoted profusely from the works of previous writers. None the less, however, Mr. Burpee’s book is vivid and interesting, enabling us to realise something of the grandeur of the Canadian Alps and the fascination they must possess to mountaineers.

R. A.

In an article on “Nomenclature of the Cuillin,” in the February number of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, Mr. Colin B. Phillip complains of the difficulty of getting at the correct names of places in the Highlands. This, he says, arises partly from the varying pronunciation of Gaelic and also from “the extreme politeness of the Highlanders,” who will complacently assent to any pronunciation attempted by a stranger rather than be guilty of the rudeness of correcting him; and he furnishes an amusing illustration of the confusion that resulted in one particular instance from this excess of courtesy. He points out that the Cuillin are rather meagre in their nomenclature, which he attributes to place-names generally arising from the local requirements, sporting, pastoral, and agricultural, in all of which, of course, Skye is particularly deficient. Cuillin or Coolin itself is generally regarded as a variant of Cuchullin, the name of an ancient Irish prince. The proper name, however, would seem to be A’Chuillionn, having a meaning connected with hollies, though why the range should be so named is not quite obvious. As to Sgurr nan Gillean, Mr. Phillip is disposed to adopt a suggestion of Mr. Mackenzie, the Clerk of the Crofter Commission—that it means “the peak of the ghylls or gullies,” which squares at any rate with the topographical facts. Sgurr Alasdair was named after the late Sheriff Nicolson, who made the first ascent; and Knight’s Peak was similarly named from the first ascent being accomplished by the late Professor Knight, formerly of St. Andrews. Mr. Harker furnishes to this number of the *Journal* another interesting article on “Some Old Maps,” in the course of which he incidentally remarks that he does not know of any comprehensive account of the old roads of the Highlands, though, he adds, “a very interesting book might be written on the subject.” Mr. John Hirst describes some climbing in Skye, and Mr. James M’Coss contributes a brief article on “Cruachan, Glen Etive, and Glen Coe.”

OF all the contents of the February *Journal*, however, the most noticeable is a communication from Mr. A. Ernest Maylard, an ex-President of the

Club, protesting indignantly against the degradation of
 THE SUMMIT Ben Nevis perpetrated by the accumulation on the summit
 OF of an exceedingly unsightly mass of debris, waste and
 BEN NEVIS. refuse. Here are strewn about in chaotic confusion, says

Mr. Maylard, "old pots and pans, broken beams and planks, wood and iron of every description, bent, broken, and distorted into all sorts of shapes, smashed windows, stone walls tumbling to pieces, masses of rock piled up in irregular unsightly heaps, the whole appearance being one of rack and ruin." This disgraceful rubbish heap apparently originated in the dismantling of the former Observatory, and is steadily augmented by the litter of the Summit Hotel, for which part of the abandoned Observatory buildings was appropriated. Mr. Maylard's vigorous remonstrance against the majesty of the mountain being sullied in this way is backed up by several other members, and will be warmly endorsed by all mountaineers and by everybody with any instinct for the preservation of natural scenery from defilement. There is a twofold difficulty in instituting a reform however—how to remove the nuisance, and by whom it should be done. Mr. Maylard makes a practical suggestion. There is no cairn on Ben Nevis, so he proposes that so much of the debris as is available should be utilised in the construction of "something more impressive than an ordinary cairn," which would serve as a memorial of those members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club (and already there are several) who have fallen in the war. Such a memorial would be a fitting crown for our highest mountain.

IT was decidedly sensational on the part of the editor, Mr. William T. Palmer, to style the 1915 number of the *Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club*, "War Issue." The somewhat odd label is

"FELL AND not so incongruous as it looks, however, for the number is
 ROCK CLIMB- largely devoted to accounts of mountaineering adventures
 ING CLUB in the lands of our Allies. The French Chasseurs Alpains
 JOURNAL." and the Italian Alpini have contributed highly picturesque
 incidents to the war, conducting attacks which, as Mr.

John Buchan has said, "involved wonderful feats of cragsmanship"; and it was a happy idea of the editor to call on contributors to furnish articles descriptive of the mountains which have bred these hardy and venturesome soldiers and constitute the scenes of their remarkable exploits. These articles deal in turn with the Italian mountains, the Dolomites, the French Alps, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. The last is the slightest, for the writer and a friend, after a tour in Spain and the Mediterranean some years ago, were recalled to England when they "were just preparing an elaborate campaign in Serbia, Bulgaria, Roumania, &c."; but the thinness of the article is redeemed by an amusing story about an officer with a "gigantic nose," who is now no less a person than the Tsar of Bulgaria. Mr. Harold Raeburn, who is so well qualified for the task, contributes the article on the Caucasus, incidentally reminding us that the newspaper term, "The War in the Caucasus," was a misnomer, the fighting having taken place in Turkish Armenia, far to the south of the range of the Caucasus

mountains. In addition to these articles, there are letters from no fewer than ten members "at the front" or on military service in this country. The "homeland" is not neglected, for we have articles on Thirlmere, Coniston, the Bowland Fells, &c., and Mr. R. J. Porter describes a delightful walking tour "Through Glen Affrie to Skye."

THIS year's issue of the *Rucksack Club Journal* is slightly curtailed in size, which is humorously attributed by the Editor to the purchasing power of a shilling being no longer what it was. It contains, nevertheless, half-a-dozen good articles descriptive of walking and climbing, apart from a "hill" poem and a couple of sonnets, notes relating to the proceedings of the Club, etc., and a Roll of Honour, from which we learn that two of the members of the Club have won the Military Cross. One of the articles consists of "Extracts from a Skye Diary," recounting the experiences of a trio in the Glen Brittle region, but the opening article, "In and about the Pennines," is much more interesting. The author, Mr. R. B. Brierly, writes enthusiastically of this "glorious heritage" of fell and moor in Northumberland and Yorkshire—"180 miles of brown heath and shaggy wood, space and solitude in crowded England." Incidentally, he refers to the former "droving" customs, as related to him by a very old man, a shepherd, who had played a drum at Peterloo. "It seems that in the fall of the year it was a custom to bring flocks and sheep from Scotland for sale in the Midlands. The shepherds drove them by easy stages along the moors, feeding as they went, stopping at night and travelling by day. Only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did the mighty in the land seize the moors, along with the commons and many village greens. Happily the hand of the gamekeeper lies lightly from north to south in the Pennines. Very rarely is the fell-walker challenged."

A COUPLE of articles from the pen of Mr. Alex. Inkson McConnochie devoted to "The River Findhorn" appeared in the *Scottish Field* for January and February. They were descriptive of the

THE principal features of this most picturesque river, from FINDHORN its rise in the Monadhliaths to its debouchure into the AND THE SPEY. ocean at the village which bears its name; and a number of admirable photographs illustrated some of the more "romantic" spots alluded to in the letterpress. The beauties of the Findhorn have been extolled by many worshippers of Nature, and several specimens of the praises lavished on the stream were incorporated by Mr. McConnochie in his narrative. He mentioned that St. John, so well-known as sportsman, naturalist and writer, called it the "very perfection of a Highland river"; while Jowett, the celebrated Master of Balliol, characterised it as "the most beautiful river in Great Britain." A succession of artists have also borne testimony to the marvellous scenery of the Findhorn in its course between Daltulich Bridge and Forres, as well as to the beauties of the Divie, a well-known tributary. Mr. McConnochie followed up these articles with a series on the Spey, which appeared in the *Scottish Field* for April, May, and June.

WE are all familiar with the terribly poor jokes about the spelling and pronunciation of Scottish place-names in which "Sassenach" writers in newspapers and magazines so frequently indulge. Little THE MISTAKES do they know that the fun is all on the other side—that OF we Scots derive intense amusement from the blunders AUTHORS. they constantly make. Here, for example, was "The Wanderer" of the *C.T. Gazette*, in a recent number, descanting hypercritically on our "real tongue-twisters," and citing "Mealgourvonnie" and "Bothiemurchus" as "almost heathenish." Well, so they are—as spelt by the critic! What is merely comic in newspaper writers, however, becomes a little more objectionable in the case of authors—and authors of some repute too. One would expect a Canadian to be fairly familiar with Craigellachie, which, apart from its Scottish origin and its striking eulogy by Ruskin, is associated with a historic incident in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, yet Mr. Lawrence J. Burpee, in his work on the Canadian Alps, must needs make it "Craigillachie." Mr. Beckles Willson gives it correctly in his *Life of Lord Strathcona*, though he substitutes Bothes for Rothes—an offence quite venial, however, compared with his fearful transmogrification of the 11th Paraphrase. Then we have Mr. Clayton Hamilton, an American, who has just produced a book "On the Trail of Stevenson." He has followed "dear Louis" to all his homes and haunts, and so has been at the cottage where "Treasure Island" was written—only to make the startling discovery that "The river Dee roars rushing through Braemar"!

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