

THE  
**Cairngorm Club Journal.**

EDITED BY

ROBERT ANDERSON.

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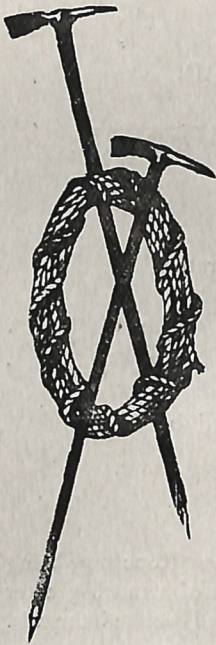
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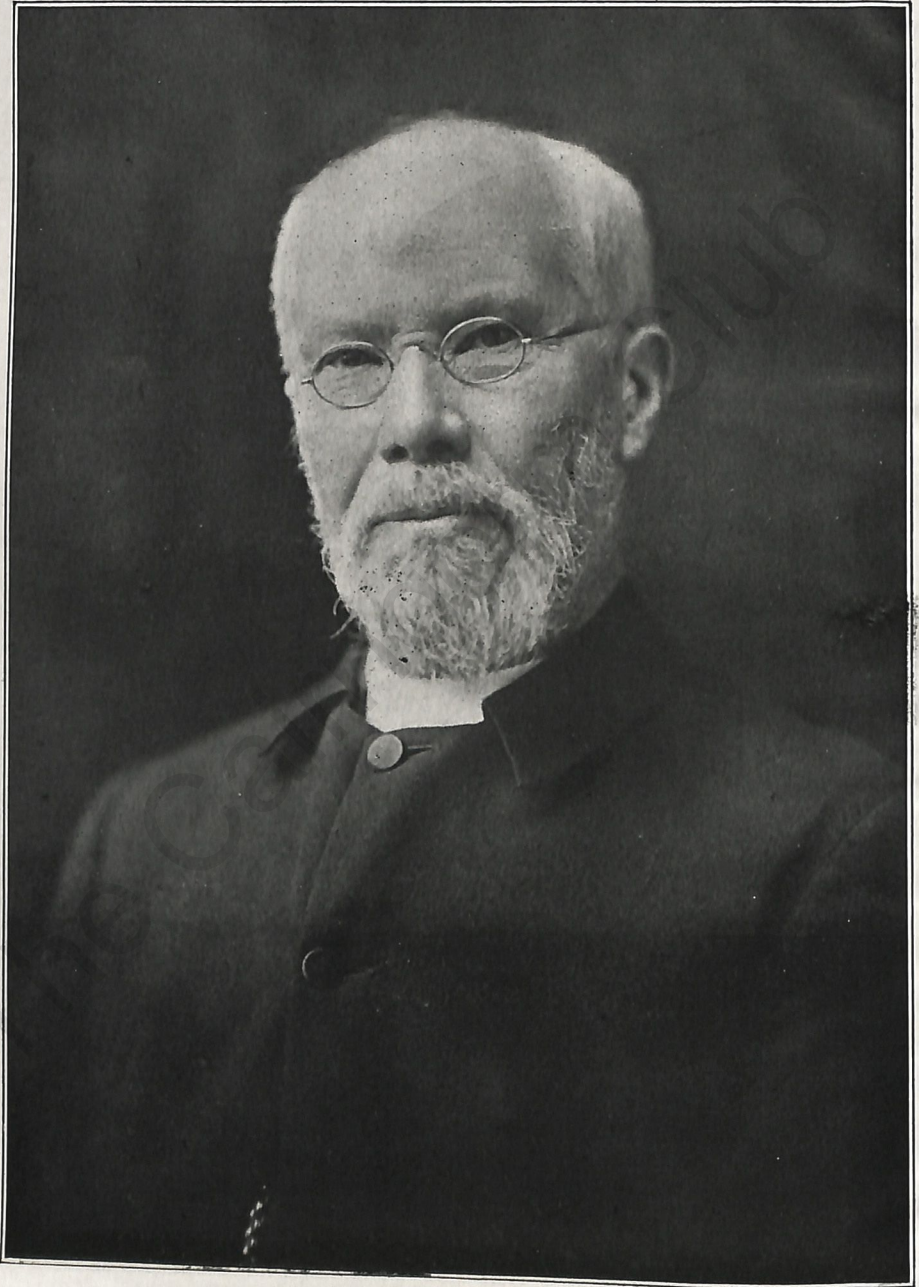


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THE MOUNTAINS IN LITERATURE—II.

BY JOHN CLARKE.

The development of the modern feeling for mountains may be said to have begun with Rousseau and to have culminated in Wordsworth. A few dates will render the connection more evident, and will at the same time serve to show the rapidity of the change in sentiment. "The New Heloïse" was published in 1761. Rousseau died in 1778: his "Confessions" appeared posthumously in 1782. Wordsworth was born in 1770, and published his first work in 1793. He was deeply influenced by the French Revolution, of which Rousseau's works were one of the chief causes. "The Excursion" appeared in 1814. The change of attitude was thus effected in a marvellously short time. From the first proclamation of the evangel to its complete acceptance is but half a century. The eighteenth century is characterised by a great upheaval in every department of thought. Its keynote is iconoclasm, or, to alter the metaphor, the old bottles could no longer contain the new wine. Old foundations were being scrapped, and if a new world was not immediately created from the remnants of the old, at any rate essential preparation was being made for the more constructive activities of the nineteenth century.

## FROM ROUSSEAU TO WORDSWORTH.

Two main sentiments seem to have animated Rousseau in his attitude toward Nature. One was his hatred of cities and all that they stood for; the other, his love of liberty. He was the natural man alike in his strength and his weakness. His golden age lay in the unsophisticated past,

When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

“Good-bye, Paris! We are in quest of love, happiness, innocence. We shall never be far enough from you.” Keats, “the English bee [which] sucked the honey and rejected the poison of Rousseau” has expressed the sentiment in a form that mountain-lovers have made their own:—

To one who has been long in city pent,  
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair  
And open face of heaven—to breathe a prayer  
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.

Byron, too, could say:—

High mountains are a feeling, but the hum  
Of human cities torture.

Under the spell of books like “The New Heloïse,” as H. G. Graham says in his “Rousseau” (Foreign Classics for English Readers), “people became artificially natural and ostentatiously simple;” though it may be hoped that they have now got past the artificiality and ostentation. The intensity of the passion for the open has greatly increased in this industrial age. Factories, foundries, and—must we add?—slums have rendered city life many times more intolerable than as Rousseau knew it. The rush “back to the country” may one day become as violent as that into the city has now for long been. We are re-discovering the meaning and charm of the open life, even amid the horrors of trench warfare. Now, the country is, *par excellence*, the mountains: whatever else of scene or occupation Nature may afford, the mountains must always be supreme.

With Rousseau, again, liberty was a consuming passion, one of the most deep-seated and genuine traits in his



versatile and elusive character. He may, as Lowell remarks; have seen in Nature, as Byron did, a reflection of himself, of his own wayward and ungovernable moods. But he saw much more. The beauties of Alpine scenery, in Graham's words (*o.c.*, 121), "instead of merely echoing his melancholy moods . . . raised him far above them all." As Rousseau himself tells us:—

It seems as if, being lifted above all the haunts of men, we had left every low, earthly feeling behind, and that, as we approach the ethereal regions, the soul imbibes something of their eternal purity. . . . In short, there is something magical in these mountainous prospects which ravishes both senses and mind: one forgets everything, one forgets one's self.

On the other hand, Byron could never "lose [his] own wretched identity in avalanche, torrent, glacier, forest or cloud: they never for a moment lightened the weight upon [his] heart." It was in something like Rousseau's spirit that Wordsworth felt himself affected by "that harmony which he found between the heart of man and nature."

In the sea and mountain we find the closest analogies to the restlessness, independence, and rebellion against restraint which have given birth to democracy. Rousseau was the sincere and determined foe to oppression. The solvent of his and similar ideas loosened such of the feudal bonds as still existed in the eighteenth century and gave birth to the French Revolution and the French Republic. The echo of the sentiments in Wordsworth is so familiar as hardly to bear repetition:—

Two voices are there; one is of the Sea,  
One of the Mountains; each a mighty voice:  
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,  
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!

Similarly Byron:—

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;  
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his home.

In becoming the pioneer of the movement "Back to Nature," Rousseau was probably not so much a solitary voice crying in the wilderness as an exponent of the spirit of his age. The time was ripe for emancipation from the dead medieval creeds and formulæ. He was

the first to interpret the aspirations of the day, and to give articulate expression to what lay deep in men's minds, still dormant but ready to break forth if once it could find utterance. His lead evoked an immediate response, and thus not many decades had passed before the Romantic reaction was in full swing. Thomas Davidson, in his chapter on the subject in his "Rousseau" (Great Educators series) says:—

Under the influence of Rousseau, the poets of Great Britain broke away from the monotonous aphoristic stiltedness of Pope and his school, and returned to "Nature" and simplicity. Burns, whose debt to Rousseau was very great, and Lady Nairne led the way. They were followed by Keats, Shelley, and Byron; Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth; Leigh Hunt and the Brownings; Carlyle and Ruskin; Clough and Tennyson; Morris and Swinburne; Dickens and Thackeray; George Eliot and Mrs. Ward. On the other side of the Atlantic they were followed by Longfellow and Lowell; Whittier and Emerson. Apart from American differences, the last is the most loyal disciple that Rousseau ever had (230-1).

#### WORDSWORTH AND COLERIDGE.

With the opening of the nineteenth century we are still at the very beginning of our subject. For it is in the writers, particularly the poets, of this century that we are to trace the growing interest in mountains, and the endless trains of thought and sentiment that they have suggested or inspired. But Davidson, by some strange oversight, has omitted from his list one of the greatest of these names—his countryman, Sir Walter Scott, the very prince of romancists.

Cowper, writing in 1785, has nothing more appreciative to say on the subject than that

Mountains interposed make enemies of nations who had else  
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.

A dozen years earlier, Johnson had asserted that "a tract, intersected by many ridges of mountains, naturally divides its inhabitants into petty nations, which are made by a thousand causes enemies to each other." The consequences we need not stay to discuss. Mountaineers for Johnson have a poor character, perhaps because he could never forget that his typical moun-

taineers dwelt in the Highlands of Scotland! From Cowper to Coleridge is an interval of but seventeen years. The French Revolution had come, if not quite gone. How great a change had come over men's minds may be judged by comparison. Though the allusion in "The Task" (1785) just quoted is merely incidental, the "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni" (1802) is none the less striking in its altered tone and spirit. The scene in its grandeur and sublimity—"sovrain BLANC," the "silent sea of pines," the "dread and silent Mount," the "five wild torrents"—is but the background to the praise and adoration which spring up unbidden and irrepressible in the poet's heart:—

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise  
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,  
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake  
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake  
Green vales and icy cliffs all join my Hymn.

.....  
Entranced in prayer  
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

The culmination is reached in the union of Earth and Heaven:—

Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills  
.....  
tell yon rising Sun  
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises GOD.

Wordsworth is a well of mountain and other nature lore. "The Excursion," with "The Prelude," must be studied in detail in order to appreciate the influence of mountain scenes and scenery in developing the poet's mind and in inspiring his thought. One of the earliest moulding forces was subservience

To presences of God's mysterious power  
Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty  
.....

And mountain liberty.

Up to the age of twenty-two man occupied in his scheme of things a position subordinate to nature:—

Her visible forms  
 And viewless agencies : a passion, she,  
 A rapture often, and immediate love  
 Ever at hand.

As he says elsewhere :—

The sounding cataract  
 Haunted me like a passion ; the tall rock,  
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me  
 An appetite.

Wallace and his deeds had been one of his themes of  
 meditation :—

They had remained  
 To people the sharp rocks and river banks,  
 Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul  
 Of independence and stern liberty.

“Our loved Helvellyn . . . our own domestic  
 mountain,” Skiddaw, and the hills of Scotland are  
 among the commonest objects of his notice. A higher  
 note than the biographical or topographical is struck in  
 passages like these :—

Beneath stern mountains many a soft vale lies,  
 And lofty springs give birth to lowly streams.

Even the motion of an Angel's wing  
 Would interrupt the intense tranquillity  
 Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.

The types and symbols of Eternity,  
 Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

The voice  
 Was Nature's, uttered from her Alpine throne :  
 “Your impious work forbear : perish what may,  
 Let this one temple last, be this one spot  
 Of earth devoted to eternity.”

Nature's self which is the breath of God,  
 Or His pure Word by miracle revealed.

SIR WALTER SCOTT—THE MOUNTAINS OF SCOTLAND.

The main interest of Scotchmen is in the mountains  
 of Scotland. If little can be said of them here in detail,

the loss is the less since the sources of information are open to all. Professor Veitch, in his admirable book, "The Feeling for Nature in Scottish Poetry," has traced the causes of the general movement with a completeness and an enthusiasm that leave but scant gleanings for workers who come after him. Mountains are, of course, only one factor in nature, and their treatment by Veitch is, to some extent, incidental. But, even with this qualification, one cannot do better than commend the study of his two volumes to all who wish to pursue the subject for themselves.

Scott is the first of our mountain poets. If we miss the sympathetic insight and the direct fellowship with the mountain spirit that Wordsworth and, to some extent, Byron display, there are compensations in the vigour and variety of his descriptions, not to say in their closeness to ourselves and our surroundings. His vein may to our day savour a little too strongly of the heroic, his language sound high-pitched, but he has at bottom a true love of mountains; add to which, he combines place with incident, scene with historic event, so realistically that patriotism is enlisted on the side of romance. "The Lady of the Lake," "The Lord of the Isles," and "Marmion" furnish abundant illustration. A few items, taken almost at random, will serve as examples:—

On high Benmore green mosses grow,  
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,  
    And cospes on Cruchan-Ben :  
But here—above, around, below,  
    On mountain or in glen,  
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,  
Nor aught of vegetative power,  
    The weary eye may ken.  
For all is rocks at random thrown,  
  
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone.  
Huge terraces of granite black  
Afforded rude and cumber'd track ;  
    For from the mountain hoar,  
Hur'd headlong in some night of fear,

When yell'd the wolf and fled the deer,  
 Loose crags had toppled o'er ;  
 And some, chance-poised and balanced, lay,  
 So that a stripling arm might sway  
 A mass no host could raise.

Oft on the trampling band from crown  
 Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down.

But ever and anon between  
 Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green.

The evening mists, with ceaseless change  
 Now clothed the mountains' lofty range,  
 Now left their foreheads bare,  
 And round the skirts their mantle furl'd.

The dell upon the mountain crest  
 Yawn'd like a gash on warrior's breast.

The rocky summit, split and rent,  
 Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,  
 Or seem'd fantastically set  
 With cupola or minaret.

Mountains, that like giants stand,  
 To sentinel enchanted land.

Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd,  
 The fragments of an earlier world ;

While on the north, through middle air,  
 Ben-An heaved high his forehead bare.

The last extract is a portion of the description of the Trossachs, on which Ruskin remarks :—" And all that the nineteenth century conceived of wise and right to do with this piece of mountain inheritance was to thrust the nose of a steamer into it, plank its blaeberreries over with a platform, and drive the populace headlong past it as fast as they can scuffle." (See Veitch's comments, *o.c.*, II., 206 ff.)

In the "mighty cliffs" Scott makes one of his heroes read a moral :—

May they not mark a Monarch's fate,—  
 Raised high 'mid storms of strife and state,  
 Beyond life's lowlier pleasures placed,  
 His soul a rock, his heart a waste?

Goldsmith's image is more pleasing, though no doubt the object of his simile was different :—

    Eternal sunshine settles on his head.

Byron, as the lover of freedom, is the poet of the sea, but only to less degree of the mountains. In "Manfred," "Childe Harold," and elsewhere, he reveals not merely accurate knowledge and love of mountains, but a certain yearning and wistfulness after his native hills which at once arrests and touches us.

    He who first met the Highlands' swelling blue  
    Will love each peak that shows a kindred hue,  
    Hail in each crag a friend's familiar face  
    And clasp the mountain in his mind's embrace.  
    Long have I roamed through lands which are not mine,  
    Adored the Alp and loved the Appenine,

    But 'twas not all long ages' lore, nor all  
    Their nature held me in their thrilling thrall;  
    The infant rapture still survived the boy,  
    And Loch-na-gar with Ida look'd o'er Troy.

Long years before, he had celebrated the tempests, echoes, and steep frowning glories of our domestic mountain, and formed a truer estimate of the rural beauties of England than some of his predecessors :—

    England! thy beauties are tame and domestic  
    To one who has roved on the mountains afar.

James Beattie derives special interest from his local associations. "There can be no question," says Veitch, "of the ardour, candour, and purity of the mind of Beattie, and of its deep and wide sensibility to the aspects of nature in its manifold forms. It is, indeed, the history of a poetic imagination nursed in the scenes of his native Kincardineshire, mingled with the lights reflected from Spenser and Thomson." He quotes from "The Minstrel" :—

    And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,  
    When all in mist the world below was lost.  
    What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,  
    Like shipwrecked mariner on desert coast,  
    And view th' enormous waste of vapour, tossed  
    In billows, lengthening to th' horizon round,

Now scooped in gulfs, with mountains now embossed !  
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,  
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound !

#### THE LITERATURE OF CLIMBING.

The literature of climbing has not yet been mentioned. This, in a mountaineering journal, may look like the play without Hamlet. "The literature of mountaineers," Mr. Lunn tells us ("Exploration of the Alps"), "is not as fine as the literature of mountain lovers." The implied contrast is suggestive. To most of us love of the mountains is the ruling passion. It is because we love them that we desire to climb them and make their nearer and more intimate acquaintance. It has been asserted that every view in them worth having can be got from the level, but we take leave to doubt the statement. At the same time, when the mere climbing feat occupies the foreground, the interest becomes centred in other aspects than the romantic or the picturesque. The language of climbing becomes as technical as that of an engineering journal. Even in Tyndall the pure scientist and the maker or breaker of records are so combined that we may doubt whether his work, interesting and exhilarating as it often is, is entitled to be ranked as ideal literature. Ruskin dismisses the gymnastic feats of the climber with the contemptuous remark — "The Alps themselves, which your own poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear-garden, which you set yourselves to climb and slide down again with shrieks of delight. When you are past shrieking, having no articulate voice to say you are glad, you rush home red with cutaneous eruptions of conceit." (Lunn, *o.c.*, 221). Leslie Stephen, Tyndall, and Whymper are all well worth reading ; and no doubt many others of the climbing fraternity fall under the same category. Mountains have, in fact, so many aspects and so much to reveal that we may well be grateful even to those whose prime interest is in engineering-routes and overcoming difficulties of ascent.



## THE MOODS AND LESSONS OF THE HILLS.

Literature has thus much to reveal for our instruction and our enjoyment. We have inherited from it a rich legacy, and our age is privileged beyond its predecessors in possessing so many clues and guides to the significance of mountains and mountain scenery. To the ancients mountains were obstructions and sources of danger or damage. They were barren and refused cultivation. The men of our day can recognise that the soil we till has in large measure been a gift from the mountain; from their treasures we derive the golden harvest. If they are places of storm, they also shelter and protect the lands they bound. If they separate nations, they also form natural boundaries and prevent quarrels. We see in them the symbol of endurance and the emblem of liberty. From the crowded fetid city we turn to the hills for health, for relaxation, and for delight. The breath of man is fatal to his fellows; the air of the mountains is the very breath of heaven. The solitude of the hills is deep almost as life; yet there is society where none intrudes. On the hill-top we reach a new standpoint and obtain a new perspective. The littlenesses of life shrink to their true proportion. We begin better to see and know ourselves. The mountain becomes a friend, yet a friend who resents excessive liberties, whose moods and even whims must be studied. His brow may become suddenly clouded, and we forbear to invite confidences for the present. Another time he is all smiles, takes us joyfully upon his shoulders, and admits us unreservedly to his treasures and his secrets. He raises us above the world and above ourselves, where each of us may profit by the experience according to his strength and his wisdom. Be we poet or artist, minister or doctor, teacher or schoolboy, engineer or husbandman, the everlasting hills have their blessings and their lessons for us. Their moods are as variable and as unaccountable as our own; we are not always able to interpret them, and we gladly resort to the seers, the dreamers, and even the mere explorers, whose insight is

more penetrating and whose revelation is more profound.

This is the great service literature in all the wealth and fulness of its compass can perform. The chief sources have incidentally appeared. Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Scott, Byron take precedence. But Davidson's whole list may be drawn upon, to which are to be added many names from Veitch. Nor should Stevenson be omitted though he is mentioned by neither. Than Ruskin perhaps no writer in verse or prose has entered more fully into the spirit of the mountains, giving us eyes to see something of the visions of wonder and beauty and glory that were vouchsafed to himself. His two great chapters, "The Mountain Gloom" and "The Mountain Glory," present a summary of all that is most striking and impressive in his work. The following extracts from the latter chapter may form a fitting epilogue:—

The mountains of the earth are its natural cathedrals, or natural altars, overlaid with gold, and bright with brodered work of flowers, and with their clouds resting on them as the smoke of a continual sacrifice.

Of Moses on Nebo, he says:—

Not strange to his feet, though forty years unknown, the roughness of the bare mountain-path, as he climbed from ledge to ledge of Abarim; not strange to his aged eyes the scattered clusters of the mountain herbage, and the broken shadows of the cliffs, indented far across the silence and uninhabited ravines; scenes such as those among which, with none, as now, beside him but God, he had led his flocks so often.

Of a greater than Moses:—

Nor, perhaps, should we have unprofitably entered into the mind of the earlier ages, if among our other thoughts, as we watch the chains of the snowy mountains rise on the horizon, we should sometimes admit the memory of the hour in which their Creator, among their solitudes, entered on His travail for the salvation of our race; and indulge the dream, that as the flaming and trembling mountains of the earth seem to be the monuments of the manifesting of his terror on Sinai,—these pure and white hills, near to the heaven, and sources of all good to the earth, are the appointed memorials of that Light of His Mercy that fell, snow-like, on the Mount of Transfiguration.

THROUGH THE LÀIRIG PASS AND  
GLEN FESHIE.

BY A LADY PEDESTRIAN.

What is the voice of strange command  
Calling you still, as friend calls friend  
With love that cannot brook delay,  
To rise and follow the ways that wend  
Over the hills and far away?

W. E. HENLEY.

LAST July I went to Inverey meaning to indulge in a week of rest. The weather proved too tempting, however, and the mountains too inviting, for one to remain satisfied with the pleasing walks in the neighbourhood, and, after a couple of days, the call of the mountains became too insistent to two of us, and so we set out for Speyside—my companion being of my own sex. One of us had long wished to “do” the Làirig, and the other for years had wanted to see Glen Feshie, so we pooled our desires; and in the two days at our disposal we both realised our ambitions.

The morning was dull and drizzling when we left Inverey, but by the time we had put Glen Luibeg behind us and said “Good-bye” to mankind for the day, the sun had broken through the clouds, and we made for the Làirig with high hopes—which, as the result will show, were not disappointed. As we sped along in the sunshine, numbers of brown Fritillaries, with their beautifully-spotted wings, flitted from side to side of the path, and time and again we stopped to search for caterpillars, but without success. (It may here be mentioned that an Emperor caterpillar, found on the way to Ben Muich Dhui a few days later, hatched out a fine specimen of the moth in March last—none the worse of its journey to the heights and back!) Before crossing the Luibeg burn we sat down on the heather and feasted on

the crowperts which grow so luxuriantly among the sand. We wended our way round the familiar Carn a' Mhaim, and soon came in sight of the slender Dee meandering in the valley below. The sun blazed down, and Glen Geusachan, with its light green carpet, looked cool and alluring, while the Devil's Point, in the shade of a passing cloud, glowered upon us dark and unfriendly. Soon we had to take shelter from a heavy shower by the side of a boulder, but the passing inconvenience was counterbalanced by the fine cloud effects we witnessed; looking towards the Làirig the high mountains were completely hidden by mist and rain, while Beinn a' Ghlo and the valley to the south were bathed in sunshine. We congratulated ourselves many times that, when we were at last attempting to go through the famous pass, it was after a fortnight of dry weather. Some years before in a wet season, we had gone as far as the torrent from the Pools, and we then walked through a succession of stony waterways for miles.

After crossing "the infant rills of Highland Dee" the path became very indefinite, and we blessed the good folk who had heaped the cairns, and we duly added our stone—and another forbye! On we continued, past the Pools, and then entered the gigantic cleft between Ben Muich Dhui and Braeriach, being much impressed with the grandeur and loneliness of the scene. This part of our journey took us much longer than we anticipated, but every footstep had to be considered, lest one overbalanced on a rock or brought down a boulder on one's foot. After an hour and three quarters' toil we emerged from the pass, and far below, but standing out clearly in the sunshine, Aviemore appeared in view. We felt elated at the sight of Speyside, but, unfortunately, our imagination played us false, and, instead of an hour's walk, as it seemed, it took us nearly four hours to reach our destination. Just as we got to the grassy part, and before we began our descent, we found a specimen of that dis-

tinctive plant, dwarf cornel. It had only two stems, and we felt that we could not conscientiously take it to add to our rockery collection. The "going" along the path by the Ghruamach burn was easy, compared at any rate with the stony bed of the pass, and we made good progress down the hillside until Rothiemurchus Forest was entered. Here we missed the keen fresh air of the mountains. The afternoon sun was at its hottest; the heather, which covered the pathway knee-deep, reflected its rays and added to the oppressive heat, while innumerable flies augmented our discomfort; and we were heartily glad when we reached an open space, and saw before us the signpost "To Braemar." Here we had a well-earned rest, and took counsel with Bartholomew.

So as to shorten our walk for the following day, our purpose was to make Lagganlia that night, taking the nearest route, and at the same time including a stop at Loch-an-Eilein. After considerable hesitation we decided on the track to the left, as we concluded that the one in front went to Aviemore, which we wished to avoid. The track looked rather unused, but in a few minutes we spied a footbridge, and that reassured us. After crossing it, however, the track disappeared, and we wandered aimlessly in the forest, attempting to keep west in the hope that we would strike the Loch. We came to a formidable stream (the Beinne, though we did not recognise it), and one of us waded through with difficulty, while the other plunged in with shoes on, preferring damp feet for the rest of the journey to braving the rocky bed of the burn. We kept down stream in hopes of finding a cottage where we could enquire the way, and by and by a friend appeared in the shape of the Cairngorm Club Bridge over the Beinne. We hailed it with a shout of joy, and immediately saw that we had made a mistake in crossing the footbridge—a mistake, we have since learned, that is by no means infrequent.

With renewed spirits and vigour, we selected the path due west from the Beinne Bridge, and steadily

following it—taking, by good fortune, the correct turns—we saw at last, glëaming through the trees, the waters of Loch-an-Eilein. We walked along the peaceful shores of the Loch, and in the evening light admired anew its perfect setting. The hospitable Refreshment Rooms were entered at eight o'clock, and it was only after conversing with the occupants that we realised that we had tramped since half-past ten o'clock (when we left Glen Luibeg), without seeing, far less addressing, one human being. In addition to providing us with a bountiful repast, the good folks of Loch-an-Eilein repaired our dilapidated shoe-leather, and, refreshed in body and sole, we left the Loch in its silent beauty, and continued our way by Kinrara. In the near distance was a stretch of soft blues shading into rosy pinks which topped the Monadiadhs, while in the foreground Loch Inch was lit up with all the colours of the setting sun—a glorious view indeed.

Twilight came on as we tramped mechanically the remaining few miles to Feshiebridge, and it was ten o'clock as we swung off the main road and passed through the wood to Lagganlia. The steep mountains flanking the glen were pink with the after-glow, and the heath-covered moorland looked dark and grand in the fading light. Late and unexpected though we were, our welcome was assured, for had we not, as a password, the name of Inkson McConnochie? Our hostess reproved us, not because of our sudden intrusion or of the lateness of the hour, but because, having had no intimation of our coming, she could give us only "loaf," whereas she would have had "scones and cakes" had she but known. The good lady was more distressed over this prospective calamity than we were. We were only too glad to throw off our knapsacks with a sigh of relief, and our subsequent entertainment was such as to make us feel that "It is good for us to be here."

Regretfully we left the clachan behind us at seven o'clock next morning, and had a splendid tramp up

lower Glen Feshie to Achlean. Most travellers omit this part of the glen, and take the moor road to or from Kingussie, thus losing, in my opinion, one of the best parts of the tour, especially if the journey is made "up the Glen." Beyond Achlean we attempted to cross the Feshie by an old footbridge, which of necessity rises high above the river, with a very unstable wire to assist one's balance; but, finding that we were too light-headed for this effort, we contemplated crossing the river in the good old-fashioned way. However, before we had determined on divesting ourselves of our shoes and stockings, a very substantial bridge appeared in sight, and by it we crossed to the south side, re-crossing by the bridge below Glen Feshie Lodge.

We spent a considerable time examining the huts in "the island," of which so much has been written, and we there realised, as we had never done before, what floods in Glen Feshie might mean. We then climbed upward, along a pathway which has been built up on the side of the scree, but, as fresh stones are falling daily, it is of necessity very rough. Alpine milk vetch was found here in profusion, its lavender-tinted sprays and fern-like foliage making a pleasing combination as it trailed over the grey stones. Leaving the scree behind, we turned a bend of the river, and here found it rushing along like a wild thing, tumbling over rocks and forming numerous little waterfalls as it dashed along. After crossing the Allt Coire Bhlair, we saw away on the hillside the stalker's hut which we had been told was one of the milestones on our journey. The bright sunshine of the morning had given place to cold mist with a head wind against us, and we were glad to take lunch in the lee of the hut.

Crossing the Eidart was safely accomplished, and we kept round the hillside according to instructions, and soon the sight of the Geldie coming down at right angles to its subsequent course dispelled all thoughts of losing our way in the bogs. One cannot imagine Glen Geldie interesting under any circumstances, but, in the heavy

rain and cold wind which we now had to face, it was bleak and desolate in the extreme, and we had to remind ourselves more than once that we were touring for pleasure. We found tracks for a few yards, only to lose them, until we reached the road to Geldie Lodge, and from thence onward we looked forward to the shelter of the keeper's hut, and the prospect of a cup of hot tea. The hut stood empty, but a shed afforded us a passing shelter from the elements, and we rested and refreshed before completing the remaining miles to Inverey.

After two days of comparative ease we had the good fortune to be of a party conducted to Ben Muich Dhui by a member of the Cairngorm Club. As in most things pertaining to the hills, our landlady was a sound judge when she predicted "Ye'll be a' richt wi' —!" We had an ideal climb on a glorious day, ascending by Glen Lui and returning by Glen Derry. On the strength of hints afforded by our guide, we betook ourselves to the Angel's Peak on the day following, our energies not being sufficient to extend the climb to the summit of Cairntoul. Next morning saw us *en route* for home, pleurably tired in body and refreshed in mind and spirit; and, after spending so many breezy hours in the heights, it was small wonder that we missed the bigness and space of the hills in the airless heat of the city, and that "sphagnum" at the depôt had a soporific effect for several days after.

E. S. M.



## FOUR BENS AND A TENT.

BY JAMES STEWART.

ON a Saturday evening preceding a Glasgow autumn holiday—now a few years ago—five men landed from the Loch Lomond steamer at Ardlui pier, at the head of the loch. They were not over-burdened with travelling gear, their baggage consisting simply of camping paraphernalia and provisions. A camping holiday, in fact, was what was projected, and in a very short time after the party landed, a tent was duly pitched on a convenient site in the shelter of a wood by the verge of Loch Lomond. This was the first experience of camping for three members of the party; the other two had made previous ventures under canvas.

During the week before we had dreamt frequently of the little canvas shelter that has meant for us in the past many days of freedom, and we fondly anticipated another period of relaxation and physical refreshment. When erected, the tent justified our expectations, and the man who made it was justly proud of his handiwork. We had looked forward expectantly to sitting in the tent listening to the “sighing of the wind at even”; but it was not so. The wind did not sigh; it raged and bellowed, and in mad fits came charging up the Loch like squadrons of invisible but audible cavalry, each blast sounding a louder and ever louder note as it drew nearer and nearer, its advent heralded by a straining of ropes and a fluttering of canvas. Two of us viewed the turmoil apprehensively, and visions of a tent riding towards Ben More on the wings of the storm haunted us continually. But the faith of the tentmaker in his handiwork never wavered. Nor was his faith misplaced: our shelter weathered that storm—and, let it be added, it has weathered many other storms since.

## BEN VORLICH.

Next morning a watery-looking sun leered down upon five straggling figures heading across the spongy bogland towards the bank of clouds which enwrapped Ben Vorlich—the Ben of that name in Dumbartonshire; not to be confounded with the better-known Ben Vorlich in Perthshire. We followed a streamlet as far as the corrie where its waters divide. Up to this level the hills were clear; higher, the mist held sway, and we entered its opaque realms suddenly; thereafter everything became huge and shadowy. Mighty boulders hurled from the heights lay all around; rock walls of startling steepness thrust up into the vapour; and enveloped in an intense gloom we pressed onward with quickening pulse. Within the arms of the corrie not a breath of wind was stirring, but across the exposed slope the wind drove with cyclonic fury, and our scramble over the scree on to the back of the ridge was not lacking in mild excitement. There we built a cairn as a guide against our return, for while our line of ascent was quite safe, it was flanked by precipices whose close acquaintance we did not desire to cultivate. The summit was reached after a breathless struggle in the teeth of wind and hail. Despite the velocity of the gale, never even for an instant did the density of the mist diminish, and from the mountain top no far-reaching panorama delighted our eyes; nothing was visible but a heap of stones and the whirling wrack. Nevertheless, we were of good cheer up there in the storm some 3090 feet above sea-level, for we had, at our first attempt, triumphed over Vorlich in one of his surliest moods, what is doubtless an easy ascent partaking somewhat of the nature of adventure.

A proposal to descend to Loch Sloy was hurriedly and emphatically vetoed. Was it because of the appalling picture of desperate places on the rugged shoulder of Vorlich conjured, out of his fertile imagination, by the member of the party who had viewed the mountain from Ben Vane and who did not relish the long tramp down the glen? Whatever the reason, we retraced our

steps along the ridge and were soon back at our emergency cairn, whence a quick descent was made into the corrie.

On the middle reaches of the mountain the mist thinned, and the wind limned for us a picture passing fair. This cloud-framed view comprised the southern end of Glen Falloch, the ebon waters of Loch Lomond, and the hills beyond, these last exquisitely etherealised where a ray of sunlight touched into green and bronze and orange the grass and brackens that clothed them.

#### BEN LUI AND BEN OSS.

From our tent on another occasion, said tent being then pitched in the Glen of the Rowans, we made a pilgrimage to Ben Oss and Ben Laoigh (or Ben Lui). To the farmer of Laggan and to a gallant officer in the Vale of Leven we were indebted for liberty to set up our tent in one of the most delightful sites it has been our good fortune to find in the whole course of our camping experiences. There were four of us this time, and two set forth in the early morning for the hills, the other two remaining in their sleeping-bags to guard the camp—so they said. For a mile or two we followed a fine path up Glen Caorrann; then holding sharply to the north over the high moors, we ultimately brought up on the belach between Ben Laoigh and Ben Oss. The ascent of Ben Laoigh from this side—the south—is easy to any one whose wind is normal, and we sauntered cannily up the shoulder, noting here a saxifrage, there an alpine lady's mantle, or sometimes a bit of moss campion, and thinking, maybe, that Laoigh was rather a featureless mountain after all, when suddenly the majestic snow-crowned peak, a wisp of cloud playing around it, soared into view. The elementary botanical research terminated suddenly; unconsciously our pace quickened; a brisk scramble amongst the boulders, and we were on the long-desired crest. There we looked over an entrancing scene—what appeared at first a mere tumult of cloud and sky, of mountain and

valley, of loch, river and sea, of sunlight and shadow. Gradually, however, the separate entities got sorted out, and we began to find our bearings and to identify some features of the encircling scene. Far south-west was Arran—misty, indefinite, cloudlike. Seemingly floating amidst the clouds on the north-east horizon, a mass of snow patches, loomed up the Cairngorms. At the base of Cruachan, Loch Awe stood out golden-splashed and emerald-studded.

Glen Orchy's proud mountains, Kilchurn and her towers ;  
Glen Strae and Glen Lyon . . . .

were ours—for the moment, at least ; and what more does a man want? After all, it is the seeing eye and the sympathetic understanding—whether in a belted earl, lording it over a county, or in a denizen of a vast city who carries in his rucksack the only house he owns—that truly possess the landscape in the great out-of-doors.

A snowstorm burst suddenly over the mountain while we were resting by the leaside of a boulder near the cairn, and from this comparative shelter we watched the lightning play around the hoary pate of Ben Oss, and rip at times the purple pall behind which Ben More was sulking. The storm passed as suddenly as it started, and long ere we reached the summit of Ben Oss the sky was swept clean and the sun was shining brightly. Prior to this excursion it had been our impression that the Tay rose on Ben Laoigh, but now we are inclined to think that the source of Scotia's noblest river is to be found a few feet beneath the summit of Ben Oss, where, a very tiny rill, it trickles into the little tarn on the north-west shoulder of the hill, emerging therefrom a lusty burn, which tumbles in a series of cascades into Corrie Laoigh.

A descent was made to Loch Oss, a lonely tarn in the hollow between Ben Oss and Ben Dubh Chraige ; and a tramp over the elevated platform which forms the base of the Ben Laoigh range terminated our outing.

BEN MORE (Perthshire).

A fine September afternoon; an enjoyable tramp up Glen Falloch, rich in the tints of autumn; and, later, a camp fire, where Billy mystified the company alternately with conjuring tricks and metaphysical dissertations, Jack read Omar and suggested improvements for the next tent, George smoked in silent contemplation as became a philosopher, and Bob played his mandoline and sang of Maidens of Morven, and while that rare voice of his rang out in our woodland retreat, the daily cares and troubles vanished for the time amongst the encircling shadows that crouched beyond the flicker of the firelight. And as the night had been pleasant, so too, in another sense, was the morning. The tang of autumn gripped the air; and as George and I strode up Glen Falloch the blood did not flow quite so sluggishly through our veins as is its wont, and we decided that, after all, life is really worth living, that Scotland is the grandest country in the world, and Glen Falloch one of the finest valleys in the land—and this despite the fact that we have seen Glen Affric, Glen Lyon, and Glen Garry. We halted for a moment at the bend in the road near the summit to look back; Brownlie Docharty paints scenery exquisitely, but I think that revelation of autumnal-tinted woods, mountains, rivers, and September mists would have taxed even his powers of artistry to portray. In the church at Crianlarich the congregation were singing the 121st psalm. To us it seemed to have a personal application; were not we seeking strength and inspiration amongst the hills? The clouds had settled resolutely on the great Ben by the time we reached it, and soon we were up amongst them, the outer world shut out by a mysterious opaque wall. In the valley a brisk breeze was blowing; on the mountain it was a hurricane, and every inch of the last 500 feet was disputed. Most of this part of the ascent we accomplished by the elementary method of crawling, and we often had to anchor to a boulder while a blast of exceptional violence

swept the hill, but at times we snatched several yards by an upright rush in the shelter of a friendly crag. In the end, however, we stood, buffeted and breathless but triumphant, on the top of the cairn. Hereabouts, the very "free breath of the broad-winged breeze" was just rather much in evidence, but the view from the craggy rim of Ben More did not amount to much.

In descending, we set ourselves resolutely to keep our line of ascent, but so great was the wind pressure that we emerged from the clouds a good half-mile east of where we entered them. We were like "drookit craws" when we reached the highway, but our rags of convention were dry enough by the time the tent was reached. So were we; and due honour was done to the feast which the housekeepers had prepared. Afterwards we smoked and discussed many topics of which I have but the the haziest recollection. The forenoon of the next day we spent on the gullies that seam the sides of Troisgeach; and with the evening came steamers and trains, and, later, tram cars and crowded streets. There remain, however, visions and recollections of the sublime solitudes of the mountains and the quiet beauty of the woods and glens.

## GLEN GIRNOCK.

LOOKING down into Glen Girnock from the Coyle of Muick one day, I suddenly wondered why I had never been in it. Many a time had I passed the entrance to it in walking along the south Deeside road, but always having had some definite project on foot with no time to spare—very often the catching of the last train of the day from Ballater—I never had entered the glen itself. During occasional holiday residence at Ballater, I had become fairly familiar with Glen Gairn, but somehow or other had not made the acquaintance of Glen Girnock. Possibly this neglect was due to Glen Girnock figuring so little in the repertory (so to speak) of Deeside pedestrians and to the depreciatory allusions to it in guide-books. One of these dismisses it summarily as “a narrow glen with a few farms,” while a writer on Deeside scenery contents himself with describing the Girnock as “a streamlet flowing through a pretty strath”—which might be said equally well of nearly every other tributary of the Dee. While I was musing on my neglect of Glen Girnock and considering whether I ought not to remedy it, my eye caught two very clearly-defined roads in the glen. Now, most roads that I do not know have for me a singular fascination—I always want to find out whither they lead; and as I continued gazing at these two roads their appeal to my inquisitive instinct became so strong that I resolved then and there to get to them some time or other and so investigate Glen Girnock. An opportunity did not present itself till long after, and it was only last summer that I managed to carry out my intention. I walked up the east side of Glen Girnock one day, and then walked up the west side the day after.

The Ordnance Survey map shews a road on the east side, but this is quite illusory, what road there is ceasing shortly after you pass the farmhouse of Littlemill. Where the road ends a path begins, and as this path—

which runs through a fringe of trees skirting some fields—evidently proceeds up the glen, the indication in the map may be warranted, but it is misleading all the same. The path soon degenerates into a mere track, and you emerge from the rather scraggy belt of trees into an open moorland and have the Glen right before you. It is not a long glen—four miles would probably be its total length—and it is not wide. Nor, frankly, did the strath appeal to me as in any particular sense “pretty.” An impression that the glen must be beautiful is conveyed by the picturesqueness of its entrance, which is between two finely-wooded hills, Craig Phiobaidh and Craig Ghuibhais, but the impression evaporates as you penetrate into the glen and find it in the main an expanse of rough grass and moorland running up into heathery hillsides. The glen is partly pastoral. Many sheep were grazing in the low bottoms beside the Girnock, and there are several farms on the left bank of the stream, one of these farms, Loinveg, being conspicuous from its position at the top of a steep slope. The dominant sense, however, soon becomes one of prevailing moorland, with that free and open aspect which accompanies moorland and gives it its peculiar charm. Hardly any character is imparted to the glen by the Girnock itself. The name is said to be a compound of Gaelic terms and to signify “the little rushing burn.” The diminutive exactly defines the situation; as a feature in the scenery the burn is entirely insignificant.

The track I had been following vanished near the ruins of a sheep bothy opposite the farm just named—either the track vanished or I lost it; but this was of little moment. The heights that wall in Glen Girnock on this side are really outliers of the Coyles of Muick, and I had decided to surmount the ridge and get on to the Coyles behind. This was very easily done. The day being a pleasant one in mid-summer, albeit the forenoon was somewhat dull, I had a delightful walk, while from the summit of the principal Coyle I had an equally delightful view. The big bens to the north-



west were clearly visible, but dark clouds hovered over Lochnagar, strangely reminiscent of a photograph of that mountain from this point which appeared in the last volume of the *C.C.J.* There seemed no indication that the Coyles were to be turned into a deer forest as was recently rumoured; there were sheep all around at all events, and the character of some new fencing pointed to the enclosing of sheep rather than of deer.

From the Coyle of Muick I descended into Glenmuick. The customary way is to walk in a northerly direction across the rough pasture-land between the Coyle and an extensive plantation till you reach a farm road that goes down to the Birkhall and Alltnaguibhsach road. For some reason or other—probably because the afternoon had become warm, the sun having come out, and I wanted to escape from the heat and the glare—I made for a slight opening in the wood which promised to develop into a glade and seemed to have in it, besides, the potentialities of a track down to the road. I was deceived. There was no glade and no track; my downward way became a very tortuous one and was at many places soft, at some decidedly wet—I had struck a watercourse, not a path. I forget now, but I rather think I finally encountered an iron fence of some height—a fence, however, with a gate conveniently near and handily open. Anyhow, I got on to the road, and, after following it for a mile or two, crossed at Mill of 'Sterin to the road on the east side of the Muick. Thence I had an enjoyable walk to Ballater, along a road that is always charming. The beauty of Glenmuick below the Falls, with its combination of birches and pines, requires no eulogy at this time of day—it has become well-known. It amply compensates for the circuitous and switchback nature of the road—I am not sure, indeed, that the turns and elevations of the road do not contribute very materially to the fuller perception of the loveliness of the glen.

I will not assert that the road on the west side of Glen Girnock is specially attractive. Everyone to his

taste, as the French saying hath it. Any road is good enough for me on a fine day, and the day on which I tackled this unknown road was remarkably fine—a red-letter day as regards weather conditions. There is just a possibility therefore that anyone following in my footsteps might not experience the sheer delight in being “out in the open” which I felt that day, and might wonder why I extol the walk—which I can very well do without claiming any superior attractiveness for the road itself. But once you have ascended the rather steep gradient that confronts you almost at the outset and have got on to the crest of the road at Loinveg, you have the expanse of Glen Girnock before you, backed by Conachcraig, with Lochnagar behind that; and in all this, surely, there is a prospect that is satisfying. The road, too, like that in Glenmuick, is of the switch-back order. After passing Loinveg, you dip down into the valley of the Girnock, then swing round almost at right angles, and climb up to Bovaglie. A postwoman whom I overtook left me at Loinveg, taking a short cut over the hill to Bovaglie, but I was desirous of following the road—it was one of the two I had seen from the Coyle of Muick—and so held on. After passing Bovaglie it joins the second of the roads I had seen—a road leading from Easter Balmoral to Inschnabobart, from the Dee to the Muick in fact. What tricks the memory plays! I walked along this road many years ago to join a Club meet at Loch Muick, but had forgotten all about it!

I reached the junction of the two roads at the height of the day—about 1 p.m. “summer time,” to use the terminology of the Daylight Saving Act—and rested there an hour or so, revelling in the light and air and sunshine and in the prospect—idling deliciously, to tell the honest truth. I think it was W. R. Greg, a very “solid” thinker and writer of bygone days, who suggested that the most perfect exhibition of idleness was to sit at the edge of a pool and chuck stones into it. I lean to the opinion that sprawling at full length on

the heather and kicking up one's heels in air excels even that—there is certainly less exertion about it. But doing nothing in this delightful fashion comes to an end like everything else. "Bundle and go!" is eternally at the back of the pedestrian's head—"Git up and git!" the Americans would phrase it; and so I pull myself together and resume my walk. As the road descends quickly to the Dee valley, you have a good view of Balmoral and the adjacent country-side, and you can observe, too, the effect on some of the erstwhile wooded heights of the great felling of timber that has taken place recently. I sauntered leisurely through Crathie churchyard, having a look at the many tombstones erected by Queen Victoria and at others, and then, taking the north Deeside road, walked on to Ballater. That walk is always delightful, and on this occasion it served admirably to constitute for me "the end of a perfect day."

A.

## A PATH INTO ITALY.

BY R. M. WILLIAMSON, M.A., LL.B.

IF the breakfast he has snatched at Lausanne has so far revived the weary traveller as to enable him to take an interest in his surroundings, he may note, as the train swings round at Martigny to follow the course of the Rhone, an opening in the mountain mass which guards the railway on the south. If the traveller is really a tramp and has no baggage registered to any<sup>2</sup> where in particular, he will do well to leave the train and explore the opening. He will find a baby railway ready to transport him as far as Orsieres, from which in due time he may reach the Grand St. Bernard. At Sembrancher, however, about ten miles from Martigny, is the meeting-place of two valleys. One runs due south towards Orsieres; the other—in which we are for the moment interested—runs at first eastward and after a few miles south-eastward, and is the Val de Bagnes, down which the glacier stream Drance rushes.

No town-dweller need look for a sweeter valley than this. At first it is open and smiling, with orchards and fruit in abundance. Moreover, it beckons the traveller to its further recesses where gleam summits of eternal snow, for on the east side the valley in its upper reaches is guarded by Mount Pleueur, Mount Blanc de Seilon, and the Pigne d'Arolla; on the west by the Combin Corbassière and the Grand Combin. As far as Lourtier, some seven miles beyond Sembrancher, there is a good driving road, and the traveller may indulge in the luxury of a mountain carriage. After that the road is little better than a path, and if the traveller still wishes to drive he may do so as far as Fionnay, other five miles, but he must be content with a long narrow vehicle like a water-trough on wheels, used for bringing home the hay and innocent of springs.



*Photo by*

*Mrs. R. M. Williamson.*

SUMMIT OF COL DE FENETRE DE BALME,  
LOOKING TOWARDS ITALY.



*Photo by*

*Mrs. R. M. Williamson.*

POINT D' OTEMMA,  
FROM THE COL DE FENETRE DE BALME.

Fionnay is our resting-place, and a delightful one it is. It is just under 5,000 feet above sea level—an ideal height. A most comfortable home is to be had here, and there are numerous expeditions of all degrees of difficulty. One may scramble on the alpe de Louvie, and if he is careful and patient he may be rewarded by seeing a family of marmots playing like kittens, but the marmots are timid, and as a rule all one can see of them is to hear their whistle, as an Irishman would say. Or one may from the Cabane de Panossière, which is 4,000 feet above Fionnay and a delightful excursion in itself, climb the Grand Combin.

But the sunny south, the land of Italy calls.

We've sent our souls out from the rigid north  
To climb the Alpine passes and look forth  
Where, looming low, the Lombard rivers lead  
To gardens, vineyards—all a dream is worth.

To reach Italy from Fionnay in comfort requires a day and a half. The path leads southward through a delightful valley with the mountains gradually closing in on either side, and about tea-time you reach the last habitation which, Swiss-like, is a comfortable inn. There are few better places for tea than a bench under an Arolla pine in front of the little inn at Mauvoisin, with Mount Pleureur and the Grand Tavé towering above you on opposite sides of the valley. Leaving Mauvoisin, the path leads for some little distance through a deep gorge, down which the Drance fumes and frets. On the left a splendid view is obtained of the Glacier de Giétroz, whose intermittent waterfall is so puzzling, and whose green ice looks in the sunlight like a gigantic crust of almond paste laid with mathematical precision on the top of a huge mass of rock of the colour of plum-cake, and promising a feast for school-boys and their elders till the end of time. It was down from this glacier that in the winter of 1817-18 huge masses of ice fell and dammed the river, which formed a large lake behind the obstruction. In the early summer the lake burst out carrying everything

with it, doing immense damage to life and property as far as Martigny. The country becomes wilder as we proceed, and just short of the Cabane de Chanrion, where we are to spend the night, it becomes steep. The Cabane is just over 8,000 feet and we reach it about seven o'clock—in good time for dinner, which our guide hastens to prepare. It is chilly out of doors, but warm and cheery inside.

Our start was timed for half-past four the following morning, but at three o'clock we were told that a thick mist overhung everything, and our departure was postponed an hour. When we did start the sky was beautifully clear and the stars were just about to disappear. The path, if it can be called a path, led downward for the best part of 1,000 feet, and then crept upward over the Glacier de Fenêtre between Mount Avril and Mount Gelé. What can surpass the crunching of hard snow below one's feet when day is just breaking, when the great architect has already risen and though unseen is gilding the snow summits as with gold-leaf! The Col Fenêtre de Balme, just over 9,000 feet, is in due time reached, and the view should satisfy the most exacting. Mount Blanc is not far off, while the giants about Zermatt and Arolla can all be distinguished. There is no inducement to linger on the top, for a piercing wind is blowing from the north, and we hasten down towards the land of promise and in an hour have second breakfast on a carpet of flowers which the most cunning weaver need never hope to match. The ruby fire of the alpine rose vies with the dazzling blue of the vernal gentian. The least beautiful but not the least plentiful of the flowers was the edelweiss. I never saw it in such profusion.

We are now in Italy and pass a magnificently-attired and heavily-armed gentleman, who might have been a villain from grand opera. We are told that he is a frontier Customs officer, but he takes no interest in us. Our packs promise him little, be he brigand or *douanier*. The path descends by numerous hair-pin turnings along

a stony track, and the sun of the south is over us. On all hands there is evidence of his power. By the time we reach Vaux, we have dropped over 4,000 feet and the heat has become great. I never experienced so rapid a change of temperature. The valley is reached, and although we can get no horse at Ollomont we are able to get a drink. Probably it was as poor wine as any in Italy, and the price lent colour to that, but to three weary and thirsty travellers it was as

A beaker full of the warm South  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim.

There we said Good-bye to our guide, who said he would reach Fionnay that night, and walked on to Valpelline, whence we drove to the beautiful old Roman town of Aosta.



## A DICTIONARY OF DEESIDE.—II.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

THE "Dictionary,"\* as before remarked, is of little or no use as a guide-book—in the special sense, that is, of indicating routes or conveying hints as to how to reach the hills. The information supplied about the mountains, indeed, is very meagre and is not of much value; Ben Muich Dhui is dismissed in a page and Cairngorm in 15 lines, though this scant treatment is partly excused by references to them in the article on Braemar, which is the longest and most "thorough" article in the book. Mr. Coutts does not fail to remark that "No other district in Scotland contains so many giant mountains as Braemar, and compared with them the loftiest peaks in the other divisions of the United Kingdom must 'hide their diminished heads,'" but nowhere does he get beyond the rather commonplace generalisation that "Mountains dominate the whole scenery of Braemar, varied as it is with lonely glens, sheltering corries, frowning precipices, impetuous torrents and waterfalls, lochs in great number but not of great size, wide areas of sand and disintegrated granite on the flattened expanses above, and long reaches of 'brown heath and shaggy wood' lower down." Picturesque description, apparently, was not Mr. Coutts's forte, and when he attempted it the result was rather grotesque, as in the comparison of the rush of water at the Linn of Dee to "the rapid and resistless charge of one of the old Highland clans, enraged at being caught in ambush, and writhing and rushing onward till freedom is once more accomplished." Mr. Coutts has more to tell us—and to tell us in less extravagant fashion—of places like Ballater and Balmoral

\*DICTIONARY OF DEESIDE. By James Coutts, M.A. Aberdeen, 1899.

and Invercauld, than of the mountains and of the glens. Even in these articles, however, the present-day reader will be interested—not so much in the gazetteer sort of information duly set forth, as in the occasional side-lights on old-world manners and local incidents that are rapidly passing from remembrance. Here, for instance, is preserved to us a delightful picture of the paternal regime and social amenities which prevailed on the Invercauld estate about a century ago:—

Great changes have come over the administration and “local government” of Invercauld since the days of the present laird’s grandfather, who died in 1862. The economy of the place then included a home farm at Keiloch, hardly a mile distant, with a large stock of dairy cows and other cattle, including a number of Highland cattle; a lime kiln where lime was prepared both for building purposes and for top-dressing the lands; a vegetable and flower garden, as well as a nursery for raising seedling forest trees and rearing them till fit to be planted out; a sawmill for cutting up grown timber; a flock of sheep pasturing in the meadows, and ten or a dozen Highland ponies, generally running about the parks, and stabled only for a few months in mid-winter; a slaughter-house where fattened victims from the flock and herd were prepared for the larder and the cook; a building for smoking and curing venison hams to be used outside the season when deer are fit to be killed; baking and brewing departments, where bread and ale were produced within the mansion-house; and a giraln or store for oat-meal, which was supplied by the Cromar tenants in part payment of their rent, and sold out (a shade below Braemar rates) to the servants and workers on the estate, many of whom, both men and women, might have been seen on a Saturday (the day when the giraln was open) carrying home a firlo or more of meal on their shoulders. The system was one which employed numerous servants and workers, most of whom had crofts attached to their cottages, and some who were not otherwise sufficiently provided for were allowed the use of a bit of the Keiloch home farm. The workers mostly lived at Keiloch and Felagie, but some of them at Braemar, and for the convenience of the latter as well as for general communication, several boats were provided on the Dee, and to encourage and facilitate church-going, one of the workmen was told off every Sunday to ferry all comers over the river.

Several rural festivities held from time to time were greatly enjoyed by the servants and country people, not so much the “harvest home”—though the home farm sometimes witnessed entertainments too—as some other occasions. About the time of the Braemar Gathering, the great annual holiday of the district, when usually the clan Forbes marched over from Strathdon and encamped for a day or two at Invercauld, hospitality was at its height, piping and dancing abounded, and every man of mettle was attired in all the glories of tartan and *Sporan molach*. The bringing home of the laird’s peats from Balloch Dearg moss was another great occa-

sion. When this undertaking, at which the Aberarder tenants assisted with their horses and carts, had been successfully accomplished, the "peat dinner," as it was called was provided, and old men used to vie with each other in reckoning up the number of "peat dinners" which they had attended. The table was usually spread in the open air, and the company, after regaling themselves with an ample repast, and cordially drinking the laird's health as in duty bound, enjoyed a dance on the green.

Of agricultural improvement at an earlier date—and of the great difficulty then of inducing its general adoption—we have this revelation:—

The laird of Abergeldie settled down at Birkhall about 1780, and brought the adjoining farm into a high state of cultivation, with a view to show the capabilities of the soil and stimulate his Glenmuick tenants who were alleged to be taking it rather easy on their small farms. The laird proceeded energetically, trenching balks, draining marches, levelling and straightening fields, and enclosing and subdividing them by dykes; and the farm was so well worked that it yielded bere, oats, potatoes, turnips (then only beginning to be cultivated in this locality), and hay of as good quality as any in Aberdeenshire. The laird succeeded equally well with horticulture at Birkhall, producing apples, pears, plums, cherries, and gooseberries as early and well flavoured as any in the north of Scotland. But though Birkhall was producing goodly grain and plums at the era of the French Revolution, there was no revolution in the general farming arrangements of the glen. The tenants looked on listlessly, and ascribed the effects to the power of money, which they could not imitate and did not try.

In much more recent times, the promotion of agriculture in Upper Deeside has been abandoned for the cultivation of deer, and in this connection Mr. Coutts waxes particularly sarcastic. He has a contemptuous reference to deer-stalking and grouse-shooting constituting "the chief end of man" in the mansion-houses and shooting-lodges of Strathdee and its glens for a couple of months after the 12th of August, with an addendum that holiday frequenters at Ballater "who relish hill-climbing but shoot neither wild birds nor quadrupeds" will find Morven and Lochnagar the chief attractions, though "many smaller, nearer, and less noted hills afford ready means of healthful and pleasant exercise." His mordant humour finds special vent in a section of the Dictionary devoted to Shootings and Fishings. This section is full of scornful allusions to sportsmen and deer. The former are referred to as devoting themselves to deer-stalking "with as much zest and alacrity as if their whole future depended on the

result"; the poor deer are abused for conforming to their environment, and soon learning "when and where to present themselves so as to benefit by the feeding provided for them." And depreciation of the whole deer forest business culminates in this passage—

There is a theory, probably not altogether unfounded, but sometimes pushed too far, that each forest has its own deer bred and maintained within it, and the artificial feeding may attach the deer to the ground a little more, though it tends to domesticate them in some degree. It is wonderful to learn how all the finest and heaviest stags that are killed have long been familiarly known to the gamekeepers. On the other hand, the inferior stags do not belong to the ground at all. When an inferior stag is killed (say) in Braemar, the first remark of the gamekeeper is sure to be—"That's a Glona'an stag"; and it is not at all unlikely that, if an inferior stag were killed in Glenavon, the gamekeeper would say—"That's a Braemar stag."

The disuse and practical disappearance of old drove roads and the quiet absorption by landed proprietors of public rights of way are, unfortunately, features of Highland territories, and from these the Braemar region has been by no means exempt. We have an impression that some enquiry was recently made about the existence of the Bealach (or Balloch) Dearg road. Mr. Coutts comes to our aid, and we learn from his work that it was a hill path between Braemar and the upper part of Glengairn by the west side of Culardoch, continued by Loch Builg to Inchrory, along which there was a right of way. Thirty or forty years ago (reckoning, of course from 1899, the date of publication), great droves of shaggy, long-horned Highland cattle passed to Falkirk and Amulree by this route, and flocks of sheep were driven north and south at certain seasons. About 1880, however, in connection with an extension of Invercauld deer forest, a road from Aberarder to Loch Builg was made along the east side of Culardoch, and the Balloch Dearg road "has since been fenced across"—an excessively polite way of saying it has been closed. Less gingerly reference is made to the dispute which occurred in 1891 about the right of the public to access to the Lion's Face at Braemar—a "burning" question in more senses than one, as Mr. Coutts with a touch of grim

humour terms it, for, as often as the fence across the path was erected, it was pulled down and burned. In the end, the dispute was amicably adjusted, and there is no need therefore to recall the sensational incidents which for a brief period made Braemar notorious, except merely to mention that they evoked from a young Aberdeen journalist—now editor of one of the chief illustrated papers of the metropolis—a clever set of verses, a happy parody of Albert Chevalier's "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road," which was the common asset of the whistling street-boys at the time.

Dipping into the Dictionary in the hap-hazard fashion we have been following and extracting interesting items here and there is pleasurable enough, but there is always the risk of wearying the reader, and it may be prudent therefore to abstain from further quotation. Enough has been cited at all events to indicate the diversified nature of Mr. Coutts's work and the general character of his notes and reflections, and to show also that the Dictionary is by no means a negligible quantity. It may have failed in its primary purpose of forming a guide-book to Deeside, but nevertheless it remains an instructive—and at times an entertaining—compendium of information about the region, particularly valuable for such sidelights on customs and the conditions of life as came within the author's own personal observation.

## In Memoriam :

RANALD RODERICK MACDONALD.

Died, 1st February, 1918.

WE have to record the death of another of our members since the last number of the *Journal* appeared—Ranald Roderick Macdonald. He was admitted a member of the Club in 1893, but previous to then he had attended some of the Club's excursions. Mr. Macdonald, although not one of the active mountaineering fraternity, was keenly interested in the Highland hills. Himself a Highlander, he loved the high places of the earth. He was a regular attender at the earlier excursions of the Club, and at least one excursion was denied him for he vainly waited for the arrival of the Club members at Monymusk railway station, the official starting-point for the Bennachie excursion on 25th September, 1893. But the swollen state of the Don suggested the wisdom of crossing the river by the bridge at Kemnay rather than risk the dangers of the ford at Paradise. So that day we missed his genial company.

Mr. Macdonald—who was the factor on the Cluny estates and Chairman of the Deeside District Committee—was a popular figure in Aberdeen town and county, and his sincere nature and friendship will be missed not only among the members of the Club, but by a far wider circle.

## NOTES.

ACCORDING to an article in the *Aberdeen Free Press* of 3 April, summer grazings for sheep in the Mar deer forest, estimated to carry 2500, were then being advertised, the district which it is intended to

SHEEP put under sheep consisting of Glen Ey and Glen Connie.  
REPLACING This "conversion" of the two glens, it seems, is the result  
DEER. of a visit of inspection by the Food Production Committee for West Aberdeenshire, the members of which spent two

days at Braemar in February investigating the capabilities of Mar forest in the matter of pasturage. The party, in addition to walking up Glen Ey to the shooting-lodge of Alltanour, went up the Dee to the White Bridge and the Bynack, passing on the way the ruins of what was once the large grazing farm of Dalavorar, and also visited Glen Lui, in which there are some fine haughs and grazing, particularly between the Black Bridge and Derry Lodge. The view of the Committee was that Glen Ey and Glen Connie (which runs into Glen Ey) should be thrown open for grazing this summer; and, on representations to that effect being made, the proprietors agreed. Glen Ey is enclosed by grass-covered hills and is thus more suitable for pasturage than the glens on the north side of the Dee, where there is more heather. At one time the glen carried a considerable population, and in the summer-time the cattle were driven up to shielings at Alltanour. About seventy years ago, however, the glen was cleared and converted into a deer forest.

A NOTABLE decline in the value of deer forests, due to the war, was revealed in a number of appeals brought before the Lands Valuation Appeal Court (Lords Johnston, Salvesen, and Cullen) in February.

DECLINING The forests of Invereshie and Invermarkie, in Inverness-  
VALUE OF shire, belonging to Sir George Macpherson-Grant of Ballin-  
DEER FORESTS. dalloch, were let last year for £450, as against £1,900 formerly, and Sir George contended that, after making allowance for the usual deductions and outlays, the net return for Invereshie was only £96 and that for Invermarkie £100. He accordingly sought to have the valuations fixed at these sums, instead of at £739 and £804, the former valuations. The local Valuation Committee adopted his figures. The Assessor, who was willing to reduce the valuations by 50 per cent., appealed. The Court, Lord Salvesen dissenting, upheld the Assessor's valuations with the 50 per cent. reduction. Lord Johnston, in giving the leading judgment, said the rent was a nominal one, and, having regard to the capital value of the subjects, could not be taken as the fair annual value. If such rents were accepted, then they had no alternative but to accept any rent that was *bona fide* in the sense that this was, however low the rent might be; and the result would be that a large part of the north of Scotland would be expunged from the valuation roll, which would be disorganised fatally for taxation purposes. Sir George Macpherson-Grant also sought to have the

valuation of his part of Glenfeshie deer forest reduced from £1126 to £300, but was equally unsuccessful, although the Court recommended that the question of whether the Assessor's 50 per cent. reduction was adequate should be reconsidered.

THE old controversy regarding the preservation of natural scenery against its invasion for public uses, recalled by Ruskin's denunciation of the

"desecration" of Loch Lomond, quoted by Mr. Clarke

THE LOCHABER in the first article in this number, has been revived by the WATER-POWER proposal to utilise the water-power of Lochaber for the

SCHEME. manufacture of aluminium. The project emanates from the British Aluminium Company, and the design is to

make of Loch Treig a great service reservoir, in which to store the waters of Loch Ossian, Loch Laggan, and the other feeders of the upper Spean.

Loch Treig meanwhile discharges into the Spean at its northern end, but

it is proposed to divert its waters southward, conveying them by a tunnel to be cut through the mountains to the existing power station at Kinlochmore,

adjacent to which (at Kinlochleven) the Aluminium Company has already a factory at work. The scheme is advocated on the ground that further

water-power is required to secure an increased production of aluminium, an augmentation of power by 25 per cent. being anticipated. There can be

little doubt that the scenery of Lochaber would be seriously affected, and the antagonistic views of lovers of the picturesque were voiced by Canon

Rawnsley in a forcible protest. As an illustration of what will happen, it is asserted that the river Spean will be made absolutely a dry ditch for

seven or ten miles. Other objections are urged, such as that the water-power of the Spean should be conserved for the people of the Spean valley

and not diverted to another valley and community, and that if water-power is to be utilised it ought to be in the national interest and not for the benefit

of private speculators. A Parliamentary bill sanctioning the scheme was brought before the House of Lords in the end of April, when much more

stress was laid on these objections than on what Lord Lansdowne characterised as "a violent disturbance of the natural features of an extremely interesting

area of country." As a result of the discussion, the bill was withdrawn. It is likely to be revived, however, in which event, it is to be feared, still less

heed will be paid to what may be termed scenic considerations. The development of industry after the war—and it is claimed that the production

of aluminium has now become a "key" industry—will be insisted upon so clamantly that utilitarianism is almost sure to triumph over æsthetic considerations.

IN Lord Morley's recently-published "Recollections" there is a striking passage on Irish scenery. Quoting from his Diary, under date October 31,

1893 (at a turbulent time in Irish politics), he says:—

THE "FEEL" "Cleared up papers and boxes at the Lodge [the

IN IRISH Chief Secretary's Lodge in the Phoenix Park, Dublin], and

LANDSCAPE. walked away from that elysian abode. The lawns were

white with hoar-frost, the sunlight warmed the great beech trunks, the lines of the mountains stood out dark and firm against the clear

sky, like the hills near Lucca. A glorious scene—only, like all the beauty of Ireland, without the associations of composure and peace. I have often



tried to explain and analyse this feel in Irish landscape. There is none in it of that spirit of happiness that makes the English lakes divine."

But is there really this difference between Irish landscape, abstractly regarded, and other landscape? Are the troubles of "the distressful country" reflected in its scenery? We very much doubt it. We are inclined to view Lord Morley's comment rather as the reflection of a passing mood—a temporary impression that even the Wicklow Mountains were lacking in the composure and peace elsewhere so sadly absent in Ireland; an impression wholly due to his mental environment at the moment. There is doubtless a tendency at times to find in landscape a reflection of our own moods and feelings, but the sentiment evoked is one wholly imparted by ourselves. The English Lake scenery would remain quite as placid even were Cumberland and Westmorland distracted by agrarian outrages.

"It would be interesting to know," said a recent magazine article, "how many people have stood on the topmost points of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Perhaps they would not number more than one from every million of the inhabitants of the British Islands. Many thousands, no doubt, who have climbed Ben Nevis, the highest British mountain, have climbed Snowdon, the highest mountain of Wales, and also

Scafell Pike, the highest English mountain, but few of them will have completed the round by ascending Carrantuohill, the topmost point of Ireland." The reasons why comparatively few people ascend Carrantuohill (3404 feet), the highest point of the highest range in Ireland, Macgillicuddy's Reeks, in County Kerry, are given as follows:—"First, because people do not climb hills in Ireland as an exercise or amusement; and next, because the Reeks are so far away from comfortable sleeping quarters that the journey out and back cannot easily be made on foot in a day." The usual route to Carrantuohill is given in the article as being by a ten-mile drive in a jaunting-car, followed by about six hours of heavy walking, which returns the traveller to the highway about twelve miles from Killarney, unless he returns by boat down the lakes. "In any case, it is a very long and toilsome day, starting early and finishing late."

[The "right starting point" for Carrantuohill (also spelt Carrauntoohill, the height being given as 3414 feet) was stated by Dr. Ernest A. Baker, in an article on "Macgillicuddy's Reeks" in the *C.U.J.*, Vol. V., p 256, to be a homely little hotel at Glencar, eight Irish miles from the railway station at Lough Caragh, on the route to Valentia. The same thing was said by Mr. James A. Parker, in an article on "Glencar, Co. Kerry," contributed to the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* in February, 1914 (Vol. XIII., p 2.)]

AN extraordinary project is announced from America—the conversion of a mountain into a sculptured monument. The monument is designed as a memorial of those who fought and fell for the Confederacy (the Southern States) in the American Civil War; and the mountain selected for the unique commemoration is a mass of solid granite, 1686 feet high, called Stone Mountain, near Atlanta, the capital of the State of Georgia. It is described as a solid stone two miles long, without a single flaw or

fissure in it—is called, indeed, “the big pebble.” Figures of gigantic size are to be cut on the mountain-sides, representing companies of the Confederate army and its famous generals on the march. Some idea of the scheme may be gathered from the statement that the central group, actual likenesses of the generals on horseback, will be about 35 feet high, while the men on the march will cover a space 2000 feet long. At the base of the mountain thirteen huge pillars are to be carved, corresponding to the number of the Confederate States. The sculptor—the designer, that is—is Mr. Gutzon Borglum, and it is expected that it will take hundreds of men eight years to carve the work.

THE following interesting paragraph, which is extracted from the *Aberdeen Journal* of 6th December, 1815, shows that prodigious walking feats were accomplished even a century ago:—

DEESIDE PEDESTRIANISM.—We have been favoured with the POSTMAN’S following from a Deeside correspondent—Having ob- WALKING FEAT. served in several of the Scotch and English papers some notice taken of the walking performed by the Deeside Post, it is but justice to the man, while it will afford some amusement to your numerous readers, to publish a more detailed account of it. Duncan Cumine began to walk as Post Office runner in one of the most mountainous districts of Scotland, from Castletown of Braemar to Charlestown of Aboyne, a distance of 30 miles—three times a week, on the 10th day of October 1807, in the following manner, viz., by going from Castletown to Charlestown, and back to Ballater Village, every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, making 40 miles each of these days; and from Ballater Village to Castletown every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday, 20 miles each day; and this he has performed from the day he began to this hour, keeping all his appointed times of departure and arrival most correctly, *without having been stopped one day* by sickness, the severity of the weather, or any other cause; being 9390 miles in the year, or 75,120 miles on the 10th of October last. Cumine is about 35 years of age, 5 feet 1 inch high, stout made, of very sober habits, and continues in good health and spirits.

[The computation is not quite exact. The yearly mileage should be 9360, and the total mileage for the eight years 74,880.]

I do not say that Fontainebleau is the perfect place to walk in: it is a little too trim; but it is good enough for me. It is a very good place to be alone in, and just now I am glad to be alone. I have

SOLITARY been bored horribly at the hotel this evening by two artists- WALKING. who could not think how I could care for solitary walking.

I was moved to an unexpected pitch of argumentative eloquence. All in a moment I saw why I cared for solitary walking, and I told them so in one long, and, I don’t doubt, rather noisy paragraph. I assumed the character of the contemplative vagabond, and, as near as I can remember now, said this: That the true vagabond is happiest alone. That there is absurdity in two men walking together; three—and the thing becomes grotesque. Hazlitt was right in deprecating conversation: the walker does not want to converse, except with nature and himself . . . There are a hundred reasons why he wishes to be alone: his sacred selfish-

ness demands it ; he came out for it, otherwise he would have stayed in the city ; no one is quite worthy to commune with him, every true vagabond being superior to everyone else ; he detests having his attention called to beautiful things, every true vagabond being the first detector and judge of beautiful things ; he does not want to agree, even less does he want to disagree, for every true vagabond knows best. And I concluded with this epigram : A companion is a mistake in many ways, but chiefly because when he is with you you are not alone.—E. V. LUCAS in "Listener's Lure."

WE note with pleasure that Major (Acting Lieut.-Colonel) Charles Reid, of the Gordon Highlanders, and Major Henry J. Butchart, Yeomanry (Scottish Horse), two of our members, have been awarded

THE CLUB. the Distinguished Service Order : Colonel Reid, by the  
AND MILITARY way, was wounded, for the third time, in April. Major  
SERVICE. George A. Smith, D.S.O., Gordon Highlanders, has been  
gazetted to be second in command. Captain Eric W. H.

Brander, 4th Gordon Highlanders, now a Staff officer, has been promoted Major, and has been twice more mentioned in dispatches.

WE are informed that a set of the first six volumes of the *Cairngorm Club Journal* which belonged to the late Mr. C. G. Cash is for

C.C.J. sale by private bargain. The first volume, it may be  
JOURNAL. mentioned, is now very scarce. The copy offered for sale  
is, unfortunately, in different binding from the other five  
volumes, but, like these volumes, it is in good condition, and has a number  
of maps bound up with it. Intending offerers should communicate with the  
Editor.

THE frontispiece to this number is a portrait of one of our former Chairmen  
—the late Rev. Professor George G. Cameron, D.D.,

PORTRAIT OF of the Aberdeen Free (now United Free) Church College.  
PROFESSOR Professor Cameron was the third Chairman of the Club,  
CAMERON. holding office for the two years, 1893-4. He died in  
1913, and a tribute to his memory appears in Vol. VII  
of the *Journal* (p. 279.)

## REVIEWS.

WONDER TALES FROM SCOTTISH MYTH AND LEGEND. By Donald A. Mackenzie. Glasgow: Blackie and Son, Limited.—Much that is interesting in relation to the Highlands and to Highland moun-

MOUNTAINS tains will be found in this volume, quite apart from the revelation it gives of Celtic mythology and the primitive AND MYTH. beliefs of the Gael. Beira, the Queen of Winter, was, it seems, the mother of all the gods and goddesses in Scotland.

She let loose many rivers and formed many lochs, sometimes willingly and sometimes against her will; and she also made the mountains, the only tool she used being a magic hammer. "When at work she carried on her back a great creel filled with rocks and earth. Sometimes as she leapt from hill to hill her creel tilted sideways, and rocks and earth fell from it into lochs and formed islands. Many islands are spoken of as 'spillings from the creel of the big old woman'." It was by some such upsetting of her creel that the mountain called Little Wyvis was formed. One of the reasons why Beira made the mountains was to use them as stepping-stones; another was to provide houses for her giant sons. They were very quarrelsome and were continually fighting with each other, and the old lady frequently shut them up in mountain houses; but this, somehow, did not prevent them fighting. "Every morning they climbed to the tops of their mountain houses and threw great boulders at one another. That is why so many big grey boulders now lie on steep slopes and are scattered through the valleys." "Myths," of this kind, it may be added, are more or less familiar in all the mountainous parts of Scotland, though the form of them varies, the spilling of creels and the chucking-about of boulders being generally attributed to the devil or his wife. Thus the "wart" on Clochnaben was thrown by the former at the latter (*C. C. J.*, I., 146).

To return to Beira, however. She forgot to cover a well on Ben Cruachan one night, and so the water streamed down the mountain-side, with the consequence that by morning Loch Awe was formed. One of her maids, named Nessa, who had charge of a well in Inverness-shire, was similarly neglectful—was, at any rate, late in going to put on the covering slab. When she drew near, the water was flowing so fast that she turned and ran for her life. Queen Beira, who was watching her from Ben Nevis, "her mountain throne," said that, as she had neglected her duty, she would run for ever and never leave water. "The maiden was at once changed into a river, and the loch and the river which runs from it towards the sea were named after her. That is why the loch is called Loch Ness and the river the river Ness."

R. A.

ONE of the minor effects of a European War is the restriction of Alpine climbing, and these restrictions were apparent in the October number of the *Journal* of the premier mountaineering club of the world. In the first article, Dr. J. H. Chapman tells a simple tale of a fortnight's climbing on the rocky peaks around Slogen, Norway. The matter for the article is taken from the author's diary which he wrote when visiting the district eight years ago. The climbing seems to resemble that found in the English Lake district, with the added joy of pure glaciers unadulterated by the visitations of man. The charm of the climbing is enhanced by views of open sea and fjord, which must be much appreciated by those accustomed to climb amid the bewildering clusters of snowy peaks which sometimes tends to monotony on an Alpine holiday. "The Campaign in the Trentino," from the pen of Edgar Foa, is an account, from the mountaineer's point of view, of the 1916 campaign in this region. The writer draws a vivid picture of the insecurity of Italy from attack by Austria as a result of the frontiers fixed after the war of 1866. This article, read in conjunction with that on "The Southern Frontier of Austria," by Douglas W. Freshfield which appeared in the February (1916) number of the *Alpine Journal* gives one a clear and distinct conception of the country in which the Austro-Italian battles have been fought. Mr. Freshfield gives a pictorial description in his article of the Col di Lana, the scene of furious fighting—

"There were bays of red rhododendrons, pools of larger gentian, rivers of forget-me-nots, lilies tawny and white, brilliant arnica, fragrant nigritella. It recalled to me the description of the Valley of the Princes on Dante's Mountain of Purgatory. And now this Garden of Proserpine, the haunts of shepherds and peaceful herds, is being defaced by trenches and watered with blood. The pity of it! But the works of nature will recover more readily than the works of man. The ruins of Rheims will remain through the centuries the shame of Germany. Here a few years and flowers will cover the trenches and the graves, and there will only be an echo in the valley homes to tell of 'old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago.'"

Articles in a historical vein follow, dealing with the early attempts on Monte Rosa from the Zermatt side. The number closes with Notes, Reviews and obituary notices, including one of those alas! familiar notices dealing with a climber who has given his life for his country. J. G. K.

OF necessity in these days, the articles in the *Alpine Journal* are largely historical, but perhaps its pages are the more delightful reading on that account.

In the first article in the February number, "Days of Long Ago," Mr. J. P. Farrar brings together records of the Early Mountaineering Mountaineers, particular reference being made to Rev. Charles Hudson, who was killed in the first complete ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865. Such articles as this serve the purpose, so fittingly expressed by Mr. Freshfield, "in bringing back to many and revealing to some the pleasures of the heights, in forming a link between successive generations of mountain-lovers and keeping alive the memory of our founders and forerunners." In our own small way, our own *Journal* serves this purpose, and our members will find refreshment if they dip occasionally into some of its earlier numbers.

An article on "The Early Records of the Col de St. Theodule and Other Passes of the Zermatt District," by H. F. Montagnier, recalls personal memories of this once famous pass. Altho' the Alps are at present obviously outside the scope of the majority of British mountaineers, and therefore accounts of recent excursions are conspicuous by their absence, we have a thrilling account of a war-time ascent of Mount Louis (Canadian Rockies). One of the few advantages of a European war is to have an article by the Editor of the *Alpine Journal* on "Walks in Snowdonia." One's inclination on reading the article is to start forthwith at the first available opportunity and follow the routes so beautifully described.

The *Journal* contains its Roll of Honour of those members of the Alpine Club who have given their lives for their country since the last issue. Notes and reviews conclude a number which will retain its interest and delight for as long as man is attracted by the mountains.

J. G. K.

*The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, hitherto published three times a year, is henceforth—for the present at least—to be published half-yearly, in April and October. This change, which has been made

"SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN-EEERING CLUB JOURNAL." with extreme reluctance, is due to the increasing difficulty of getting suitable matter for publication, many of the younger and more energetic members of the Club being at the front, and is also due to the continually increasing cost of paper and printing. Suffering ourselves from similar conditions, we can understand and sympathise, but we sincerely hope that the *S.M.C. Journal*, and the *C.C.J.* as well, will be able to "carry on." The April number of the former, at any rate, shows no falling off. Sheriff Scott Moncrieff Penney has a delightful article, titled "From Dan to Beersheba; or Sampling Scotland," in which he describes a tour—mainly with the aid of a bicycle—that, beginning at the Gorge of the Ericht, took him as far south as Whithorn and as far north as Forsinard. The Sheriff praises much of what he saw, particularly the beech avenue at Achnacarry and the scenery in Glen Affric and Kintail. He has even a good word for our climate: "incredible as it may appear" (he says) "during seventeen short bicycling expeditions in the last eight years, extending two days or week-ends to a week, in all parts of Scotland and England, and in every time of year from March to October, I have never had one wet day!" The scoffer will be tempted to ejaculate "What, never?" As an offset to the Sheriff's exceptional experience, Mr. G. E. Howard recounts incidents of quite different days spent in the hills—days of "hurtling wind" and "an endless roar of rain," including "a fight" he and Seton Gordon once had to get up Corrie Etchachan in a blizzard: "the wind roared down Ben Muich Dhui in one staggering screaming blast of snow." Dr. Ernest A. Baker continues his "Scansorial Gleanings in Belles-Lettres," citing numerous amazing and amusing blunders made by novelists in their descriptions of mountaineering. Mr. Allan Arthur furnishes an interesting account of "The Island of the Stone" off the south end of Lismore.

LORD MORLEY lavishes praise on Kincaig (west of Aviemore) in his recently-published "Recollections." He spent much of August and September, 1897, there; and though his notes in the main.

LORD MORLEY'S are a record of the books he read—books of an excessively PRAISE OF "heavy" nature that very few of us would tackle on a KINCRAIG. holiday—he has occasional observations on the scenery.

"View over the Loch extremely lovely." "Walked on to the moors behind us. One of the grandest panoramas I ever beheld. Not sure I would not call it *the* grandest, outside of Switzerland." "Such a divine vision on the bridge about 7 o'clock: water, wood, heather, crags, far-off hills, bathed in magic light. Italy cannot surpass it." And there is this record of a visit to the late Dr. James Martineau at Polchar:—"At noon we all went off on a picnic with the Murrays to Loch-an-Eilein. Most delightful in every way. Murray [Professor Gilbert Murray] and I called on old Dr. Martineau. Wonderful old fellow. Is 93; comes down soon after 8 and does not retire until midnight, but has plenty of dozing in the day. Can walk up a hill that would wind most of us."

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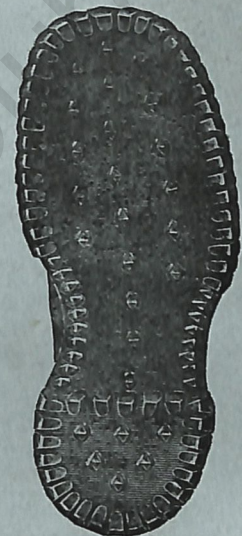


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