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THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY
ROBERT ANDERSON.

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Photo by

GLENMORE FOREST—AT THE HEAD OF THE SLUGGAN GLEN.

Peter Leslie.

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THE CANADIAN LUMBER CAMPS IN THE
CAIRNGORMS.

BY HENRY ALEXANDER.

THE timber-cutting by the Canadians in the Cairngorms formed one of the episodes of the Great War—a minor episode, of course, but still one of considerable local importance—and it may be of interest to give some account of a visit paid to the lumber camps in Nethy Forest and Glenmore early in October, 1918. This was within a few weeks of the Armistice. But at the time no one dreamed that the war was so near an end, and work was being pushed on in the various camps with the utmost energy, while arrangements were being made to fell other woods on Speyside. Had the war lasted much longer, it is exceedingly likely that we would have seen the Canadian Forestry Corps on Deeside. Glentanar was talked of as marked down for destruction, and the Birkhall and Abergeldie woods would probably have gone also. Even Ballochbuie might not have been spared. In fact, it is said that the King offered Ballochbuie to the Government, but that it was very properly decided not to fell it except in the very last resort. And, fortunately, things did not come to that.

I write frankly as a forest lover and not as a forestry man. The silviculturist will tell you that a wood is ripe for cutting, and that it is foolish to let it stand any

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longer. I cannot look upon these forests on the Dee and the Spey in quite this hard light. To me, and I am sure to many others, they have become entwined in our memory of the Cairngorms. We cannot think of the Cairngorms apart from the dark pine woods that clothe the lower slopes and send their scattered sentinels up the mountain sides. One is loth to lose a single tree. Happily, as things are, the remoteness of some of the most beautiful of the woods is their safety, and now that the emergency of the war is past it is not likely that they will be touched. Glenmore would not have been cut by any timber merchant as a business proposition. Everything is a "proposition" with the Canadians, as with the Americans.

Even at the very high prices for timber prevailing during the war, it might not have paid a private contractor to buy the Glenmore woods and face all the cost of felling them and getting the timber to the railway. Only a Government organisation, like the Canadian Forestry Corps, operating without regard to profit, could have undertaken the work. During the war, timber had to be got, whatever it cost. The Canadian operations, therefore, were carried on as a branch of the war, and they must not be taken as typical of forestry methods that can be pursued in the same region under normal or peace conditions. They form a wholly exceptional episode.

The first military timber cutters to enter the Cairngorms were not the Canadians but German prisoners. There were two camps of these, one at Nethy Bridge and the other at Inverlaidnan near Carr-Bridge. They were engaged in cutting smaller timber for pit-props. But on this point I cannot speak definitely. All I know is that at Nethy Bridge a tramway was laid from the woods—on the north side of the Nethy, where the cutting was going on—down to the Great North of Scotland Railway. It was an interesting track, consisting of logs laid end to end, and along these rough and ready rails there were run wagons with deep and

broad-grooved wheels, the groove engaging the rail. I saw a party of the Germans being marched to their work. Beyond this, the story of the German prisoners on Speyside is unknown. For the British War Office in its wisdom made a great mystery and secret of the German prisoners. No one was supposed to know where they were or what they were doing. The idea of allowing a journalist to visit the German camps and describe them would have made the Censor in Whitehall stand aghast.

And probably if the British Censor had had his way it would have been the same with the Canadians. They would have come, worked, and gone without a word of public reference being permitted. The Canadians, however, thought differently. They have not that shrinking dread of publicity which afflicts British official departments. They were quite willing that a visitor should see their camps and give them a write-up—if a technical colloquialism may be excused. Earlier in 1918 I had visited the Canadian camp at Fetternear, and written an account of the operations there ; and, following upon this, Colonel W. H. Milne, the officer in charge of the 55th District of the Corps, with camps at Fetternear, Nethy Forest, Loch Morlich, Cortachy, Kincardine-on-Forth, and Kilkerran in Ayrshire, invited me to go with him to Nethy Forest and Loch Morlich and describe the work here as I had done that at Fetternear. It was a chance to get away from the office to the hills, and I jumped at it. And the Censor at Whitehall refrained from interfering. The articles had to be submitted to him, as a matter of form, but he evidently deemed it expedient to allow more publicity about Canadians than Germans and there were no excisions or blue pencillings.

A note of explanation may be given about the Canadian Forestry Corps. It was not a body consisting entirely of expert timbermen. In its earlier stages it was this, when one or two companies of real "lumber-jacks" were enlisted in Canada and brought over to France and this country to fell timber ; but as the war proceeded, its

character changed, and it simply became a branch of the Canadian Forces, into which men were drafted who were not fit for service on the field or who had been in France in the fighting units and been disabled. The officers, however, were, in most cases, men who knew something of the lumber business in Canada. It would have been quite impossible to raise a similar number of men in this country with the same experience of timber-felling and sawmilling, and though the home timber people were very scornful of the Canadians, and said they were slap-dash and wasteful in their methods, it has to be recollected that they were working against time and that they had to get the timber for the armies in France, and that they got it. There was no slacking at the timber camps which I visited. I have seen saw-mills in Canada and been struck, as I suppose every other visitor is, by the way in which things are speeded up and by the pace that is set for the workmen. It was the same at the Canadian camps on Speyside. The saw-mills went at top speed. They devoured the logs. The whole plan of the "operation"—to use a timber term—was devised to keeping the mill going. The mill must not stand idle. The officer commanding had to arrange the work and allot his men to felling and hauling so as to keep up a steady supply of logs for the mill. The mill set the pace, and it was a hard pace. To talk of the men in the Canadian Forestry Corps as unfit was an irony.

The day I spent at Loch Morlich brought this home to me most vividly. The first storm of the winter had come. Cairngorm itself was white with snow, and a gale of wind and wet was blowing up the glen. The whole place was sopping. Heather and moss are wetting enough in rain at the best of times, but where logs were being hauled the surface vegetation was churned up with the peat below into a perfect slough, and horses and men were sinking in it and staggering and slithering about, as they dragged the trees down the slopes to the little railways. It had been a wet summer, and I do not blame these Canadians for being rather

contemptuous of Scottish scenery. They had a pretty hard time of it at these timber camps, some of them remote from even a village or any place of entertainment, and, though, of course, it was better than the hardships and dangers of the front, and not to be compared for an instant with fighting, the experience was far more rigorous than anything that our overpaid and O.B.E'd munitioneers underwent. Loch Morlich is magnificent on a fine day : it is magnificent even in a storm, once in a way as a novelty ; but to spend week after week there, in wet weather, working in the woods, is another matter. I fancy that one of the problems of forest development in the Highlands will be to get men to face the discomforts and isolation which will necessarily attach to a good deal of the work. Wages will have to be high. It is the problem of rural labour in an exaggerated form.

The first cutting by the Canadians in the district was in the Sluggan. This is the deep cleft which runs through the hills from Kincardine Church almost to Loch Morlich. It is a picturesque little glen, and, though all the slopes on the east side of it are now bare, enough trees remain on the west side to still give charm to the scene. The Canadians—to be exact, No. 110 Company of the Canadian Forestry Corps—arrived here in November, 1916, under Major H. A. Calder. They were housed in Glenmore Lodge while they built a camp at the south or Loch Morlich end of the Sluggan. Here huts for 200 men or so were erected, with storehouses, stables, and so on, and a sawmill of the Canadian type. In these mills the log, instead of being fed along rollers on the saw bench against the saw, is clamped on a travelling carriage which is carried forward and backward on rails. Two men, standing on the carriage, jerk the log forward each time as a slab is cut off. To give a full description of this very interesting mill would take too long. It is much faster than the Scotch mill.

The Sluggan camp was in full operation by May, 1917. A railway, two miles and a half long, was laid from the mill along the bed of the Sluggan glen, supported in

many places on trestles built above or along the bed of the stream, and down this the logs were brought on little trucks to the mill, the haulage in the steepest part being by a wire rope and fixed engine. In all, some 50,000 trees, all fir, were felled in the Sluggan and cut into timber of different sizes at the mill. The hill sides on the narrower part of the Sluggan are very steep, and the fellers and haulers often worked in very difficult places. After the trees were hauled out, the branches and small stuff were gathered into heaps or "windrows." These are burned and the place is then ready for re-planting. The same procedure was followed in all the camps. Wherever I was, I saw the brushwood being collected and the place tidied up. The Sluggan "cut" was completed by the autumn of 1917, and in October of that year Major Calder and his Company moved to Nethy Forest to begin operations there.

For the purpose of carrying the sawn timber from the Sluggan mill to the Highland Railway at Aviemore, a light railway was built, five miles in length, from the camp to Aviemore station. So boggy was the route at one point that the line had to be "floated" as it were on slabs and brushwood ballast, and over the Druie a trestle bridge, 60 feet long, had to be built. For the crossing of the Spey the public bridge was used and the rails laid over it.

In July, 1917, another company of the Canadians, No. 121, under Major M. C. Rousseau, arrived at Glenmore, to cut the timber on the shores of Loch Morlich. This was a bigger "operation" than the Sluggan one. The number of trees to be cut was 76,000. They were not compact but were scattered over a wide area, extending from the western end of Loch Morlich right up the glen almost to the Green Loch, on the way through to Rebhoan and the Nethy. The camp was built at the upper end of the loch, just across from Glenmore Lodge, not far, in fact, from the stalkers' path which leads from the Lodge up Cairngorm. The officers' quarters—a picturesque Swiss chalet or Lake of the Woods-looking

hut—was placed on the top of a knoll, and below it, in a hollow, was the camp, with the sawmill on one side of a square, the office and stores on another, the huts and Y.M.C.A. on a third, and the “Finns’” quarters on the fourth. Every Canadian camp had its Y.M.C.A., with a lounge and library and piano and “dry” canteen—all under a sergeant, generally a divinity student. Without some place of this kind existence would hardly have been tolerable to the men in these isolated timber camps.

The “Finns” deserve explanation. They were a strange up-throw of war conditions. Here, at the top of Loch Morlich, there were dumped down not only 170 Canadians, gathered from all parts of the Dominion and including Americans who had enlisted among the Canadians, but a weird assortment of half-a-hundred foreigners, Russians, Norwegians, Greeks and what not. They were men from foreignships stranded in British ports or rescued at sea, and, as they could not be sent back to their own homes, they had been formed into labour companies and sent to the Canadian Camps as volunteer labourers. There seems to have been some Finns amongst them to begin with: in any case, they had got the name and it stuck to them.

On the whole, they were peaceable and hard-working, but sometimes they ran amok. The day before I was at Loch Morlich, a Greek had slashed another fellow with a knife because he had called him a German, no doubt with an adjective prefixed, and the victim was in the hands of the C.A.M.C. orderly. Perhaps the future historian, when he reads of Finns at Loch Morlich, will think it has something to do with the ancient Gaels, and that he has come on traces of the sons of Fingal. He will be rather out.

A water supply had been laid down for the camp from the hillside. There was electric light everywhere, driven from the steam boiler at the sawmill. In a rough enclosure was a drove of pigs to eat up the waste food. Everything went with clock-work precision. Officers and men were in khaki uniform, though naturally very

little of "uniform" survived the rough work of the woods. Still, it was a military camp with all the rules and conventions of the army, down even to what, I believe, is called a "clink" for offenders, a shanty of wood like everything else. All day there rose the sing or drone of the sawmill as the saw tore its way down the log, and at night, when the mill was silent, you heard the chuff-chuff of the electric dynamo. And at ten o'clock, it, too, stopped, and you came out for a moment from the hut and saw the dark pines standing guard over the camp, and away up in the sky a star rising over Cairngorm, and you thought of this strange company of men, gathered from the Seven Seas by the fate of war, and slumbering there.

Captain G. H. Flewwelling, a New Brunswicker, had succeeded Major Rousseau in command of the Loch Morlich camp, and was in charge at the time of my visit. Of the 76,000 trees marked for felling, 55,000 had been cut, and great piles of sawn timber had accumulated in the yard at the head of the loch. The light railway from Aviemore to the Sluggan, to which I referred previously, had been extended up to the Loch Morlich camp, and last year, 1919, the timber was shipped out by this line. I am told that visitors to Aviemore last summer were allowed to travel up on the empty wagons to the Loch and come down on the top of the loads, but soon the line will be taken up, I suppose, and perhaps it is already removed. In order to bring the trees to the sawmill little railways were laid in various directions—one for instance, along the south side of the Loch, and another up the glen towards the Green Loch. Altogether, there were about ten miles of such lines laid for the Loch Morlich cut, and this was apart from the light railway down to Aviemore.

When I heard that the Canadians were cutting Glenmore, I was afraid that the place was going to be stripped bare and spoiled for our life-time. Happily, the Duke of Richmond and Gordon stipulated that it should not be a clean cut, but that a scattering of trees

should be left to secure natural regeneration of the forest and—what perhaps concerns some of us more—preserve the beauty of the scene. The desolation, therefore, is not so complete or so serious as I had expected. Loch Morlich is not ruined.

I was interested to hear some of the Canadians say that, instead of locating the mill at the head of Loch Morlich, the logs might have been dumped in the loch and floated down the stream to Aviemore and the mill put there. This would have been a revival of the methods employed when Glenmore was cut a hundred years ago. The old dam and sluice gates still exist at the foot of Loch Morlich, by which an artificial spate was produced in the river to float the logs. There is a similar dam in the stream above Loch Morlich, and there is one in Nethy Forest also. This device of an artificial spate is used in Canada at the present day, and the Canadians, therefore, are quite familiar with it. It would have been strange if they had revived the old practice and we had once more seen timber floating on the Spey.

The Nethy Forest camp—to which let us now pass—was the show camp of the Canadian Forestry Corps. When the 110th Company, under Major Calder, had completed the Sluggan cut, it moved to Nethy Forest, which is on the Seafeld estate. This was in December, 1917. A charming site was got for the camp in the middle of the woods about a mile south of Nethy Bridge station. The old Ordnance Survey map shows a building called Racoig on this spot, but the house disappeared years ago, and all that remained was a beautiful open space of green turf in the middle of the pine woods, with the Duack burn flowing past it. The saw-mill was erected at one side and the men's huts and storehouses at the other. The scene was a very pretty one as I saw it on a crisp autumn day. We motored along the woodland road from Nethy Bridge. Many of the readers of this Journal know how pretty the roads are in the Nethy Forest. Then suddenly we came upon

a complete lumber camp in the heart of the woods. Everything was built of timber, cut in the forest itself. The men's huts were lined with felt composition, but the officers' quarters and the stores and other administrative buildings were walled with "backs"—or slabs of wood with the bark still adhering to them—and this gave them a very picturesque and backwoods appearance. Neat sidewalks of wood ran from building to building, fringed with stones, painted white, and the turf in the centre formed a pleasant quadrangle or campus, on which rose a flag-staff with the Union Jack. It was all very tidy and agreeable and singularly quaint in the region of the Cairngorms.

The site, of course, was a very fortunate one. At the Sluggan and at Loch Morlich no such ready-made sites presented themselves, and the camps at these places had simply to be dumped down in rough ground and the best made of them. Major Calder in Nethy Forest found a good site and, being evidently of a neat and orderly mind, he made the most of it. When I visited Nethy Forest in October, 1918, no fewer than 52,000 trees had been felled, and there were still a number to cut. One fir which I witnessed being cut measured 28 inches diameter at the stump and was 115 years old by the rings. The most of the timber here, as at the Sluggan and Loch Morlich, was ripe for cutting.

I have spoken of the Loch Morlich "operation" as a difficult one. "It's picturesque, and that's all there is to it"—was the way one of the Canadians put it to me, and when it started blowing and sleeting, he ceased even to call it picturesque and cursed it extensively. At Loch Morlich the camp itself was seven miles from Aviemore and the nearest civilisation, and the trees to be cut were scattered over a wide extent of rough and difficult ground. Compared with this, the Nethy Forest "operation" was a simple one.

The Nethy Camp was only a mile from the village of Nethy Bridge, and though the trees to be cut were not compact or all in one area, still the ground as a whole is

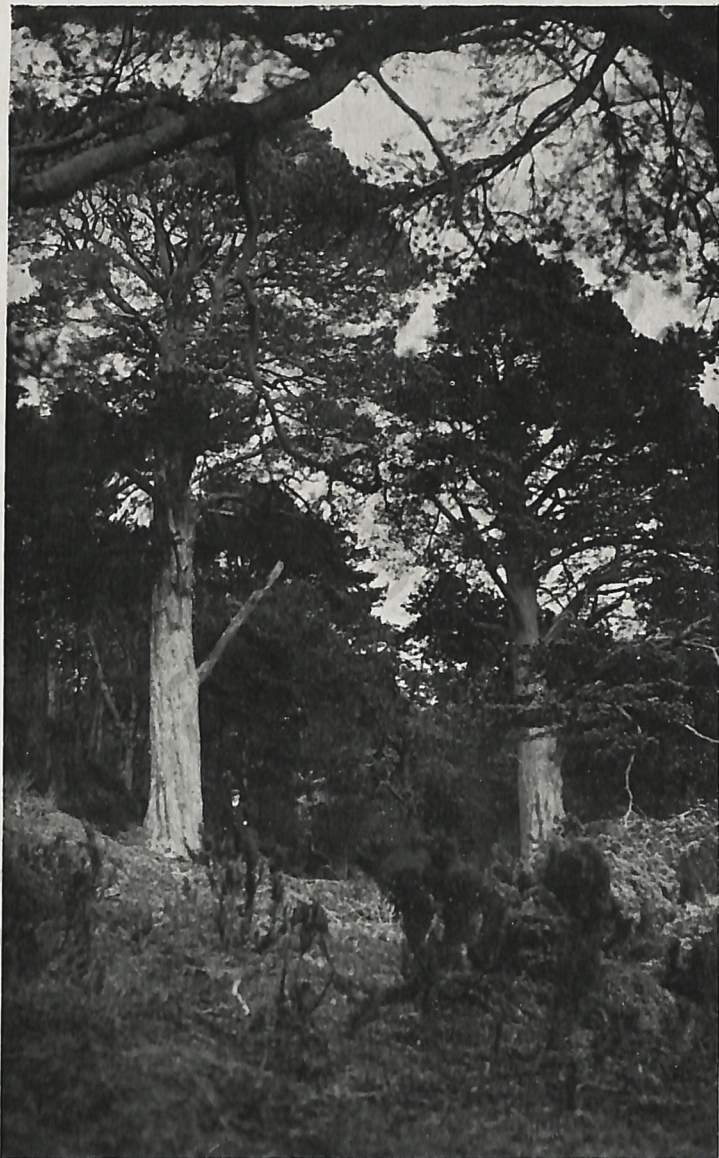


Photo by

Peter Leslie.

IN THE CALEDONIAN FOREST, ABERNETHY.

fairly level and no great obstacles had to be encountered in hauling them to the mill. Here, as at Loch Morlich, tramways were laid down and the logs were carried on little trucks, pulled by horses. On the steeper ground at the Sluggan and Loch Morlich the tramways had to be operated by wire ropes and fixed engines. The sawmill at the Nethy Camp was of the usual Canadian type, and self-supporting in the sense that the boiler was stoked with green sawdust carried into it from the saws. A broad-gauge line was built from the Great North Railway up to the camp, and the sawn "timber" was loaded direct into the railway wagons at the mill.

Knockando, lower down Speyside, scarcely comes within the Cairngorms, but reference may be made to the Canadian Forestry camp there because of the remarkable cable transporter which was erected over the river. The 106th Company, under Major G. D. Blackader, was engaged at Knockando. The timber to be cut was on the east bank of the Spey on a hillside high above the river. For convenience in shipping the sawn timber, it was decided to place the sawmill at the side of the Great North Railway, which here runs on the west bank of the river. So a great wire cable, 2,300 feet in span, was swung across the valley from the hillside where the trees were being cut, to the sawmill, and over this the logs were carried as on the blondins familiar at quarries. This Knockando cable was said to be the second longest single-span logging cable in the world. Still lower down the Spey there was another Canadian Forestry camp—at Orton; while farther west and north there were camps at Forres, Nairn, Dornoch and Braemore in Ross-shire. But these do not come within the field of this article.

We are indebted to Mr. Peter Leslie, the Lecturer in Forestry at Aberdeen, for the photographs from which the illustrations accompanying this article have been made.

SUNSET MOUNTAINS.

If, Lover of the Mountains, thou must grieve
Long absence from thy highlands ;—Lonely One,
Go forth some lucent evening to receive
The benediction of the setting sun :
Then of the crests of purple clouds afire,
And in the shadow of their shoulders bright,
And in the sky pools—deep beyond desire,
Build thou thy vanished corrie, loch and height.
Build on with fondest memory, build on
With dearest love, with strongest hope, with joy ;
Reviving some fair picture long ago,
That so the fall of dusk may not destroy
The image in thy heart, reformed again,
Which thou hast nearly lost mid toil of men.

GORDON C. GRANT.

AN EASTER WEEK-END IN THE WEST.

BY A. M. MACRAE WILLIAMSON.

THE announcement that the Cairngorm Club was to have an Easter Meet at Crianlarich filled us with enthusiasm, which was strengthened considerably by the arrival of the circular giving some of the possibilities of this mountaineering resort. My chum and I therefore made arrangements to join the Meet, at the same time praying for fine weather. It is a curious fact that, though we have made several climbs together, we have never yet had a really fine day. We are now regarded more or less as Jonahs.

We decided to go to the rendezvous by motor cycle. The morning was fine and the glass high and steady when we set off on our 140 odd miles. After a few minor troubles we "got down to 'it,'" and the "bikes" went very well. The road was a bit cut up, but we made very good time to Weem. The road from Weem to Kenmore as it was that day would break the heart of a motor cyclist or a constructor of non-skid tyres. There was several inches of mud covering deep ruts made by lorries engaged in timber haulage. As we had both fixed engine cycles, it required somewhat skilful driving to negotiate parts of the road; fortunately, neither of us really skidded. That road still haunts me; after a run on the "bike" and a heavy supper it comes back in all its frightfulness. The subsequent holiday, however, discounted all the discomfort experienced *en route*.

The run down the south side of Loch Tay was magnificent, and the road from Killin to Crianlarich was so good that we forgot about the scenery, and even policemen were banished from our thoughts.

We arrived at the hotel a little before the advance party of the club, and we all sat down to our first meal there together. After dinner, plans were laid for next day. Mr friend and I were feeling somewhat slack, as we had done nothing since the previous summer, so we decided to try Ben More, and, if we felt like it, go on to Am Binnein. We were cheered by one of the party, who told us Ben More was quite a straightforward hill since the top was always visible.

The day dawned fine, but some of the hills held a little mist. Ben More, we were glad to observe, was clear. We got started about 9.30 a.m. By the time we reached the farm of Ben More the mist had come down, and we resolved to say a few words to the gentleman who averred that the top was always visible. At 2,000 feet we entered the mist, and almost immediately a heavy snowstorm came on, accompanied by a fierce north-east wind. We climbed steadily, and shortly before one o'clock we reached the summit. The mist had got very thick and we could hardly see the cairn even when we were within a few feet of it. We were quite warm, however, and, not carrying any "wetter mantels" or rucksacks, were feeling quite fresh. We decided, therefore, that we might try Am Binnein. A sharp drop brought us to the saddle between the peaks, and after a short halt for food we tackled the climb. The mist prevented us seeing anything of the surrounding country, and, as we were not tempted to stop for long rests, we gained the top at 2.25. It was much colder than on the top of Ben More, and an immediate retreat was made to the saddle and then to the Ben More burn. The hotel was reached shortly after five o'clock, the two miles of road being covered at a speed of five miles per hour. The rest of the party came back a little later from Cruach Ardrain. After dinner there was a large addition to the party, among the new arrivals being the president. Plans were laid for the morrow's climb, and Ben Lui (Beinn Laoigh) was fixed on as the peak for the whole party.

The members were taken in relays to Tyndrum, and from there a start was made. As we proceeded up the valley we were rewarded with glimpses of the peak, but it was never really free from mist. We took lunch at the foot of the snowfield, which stretched up into the mist. At first we kicked steps in this snow, but at 2,700 feet the ropes were put on. This was a new experience for my chum and myself, neither of us having been on snow before. We divided into three parties, each party taking a separate gully. The angle of the snow at the top was 66° . This was not inconvenient to stand on if big steps were cut, but it was considerably inconvenient to the second and third men, as all the snow and ice cut from the steps fell in fine showers on them, and every time they lifted up their voices in complaint a mouthful of snow cut them short. I took good care to lead at this point. The 1,100 feet of step-cutting occupied just over two hours, the summit being reached shortly after three o'clock. We were able to get some fine glissading in the descent, and some of the really energetic people went up again for the glissade. The long tramp back from the mountain to Tyndrum was very monotonous. My chum and I, not being bound by trains or the local motor, were able to get back first, and so had the pick of the baths.

Sunday was to be a quiet day, but, inspired by the fineness of the morning, we set off with most of the members for Cruach Ardrain. There was nothing of any importance in the climb, except that we very nearly broke our record since the day was almost clear—in fact, at times we had quite extensive views. We again had good glissading, and some amusing photographs were secured of typical attitudes. The climb was a trying one, as the day was hot and stuffy. Cruach Ardrain is a fine-looking peak, but as a climb we found it disappointing. There was very little snow and what there was was soft.

Monday saw the departure of the most of the members, only we two and Mr Watt remaining. We went to Bridge of Orchy by the morning train with the

intention of putting in an easy day on Ben Douran. The sky was almost cloudless when we arrived, and we decided it would be a shame to waste the day on one hill. Accordingly, we struck up to Ben Dothaidh. All the way up we got magnificent views to the west and north-west—ridge upon ridge of dark mountains capped with snow. The day was hot and we took frequent rests. The top was reached about half-past twelve. The view was still good, although the mist was closing down and Ben Douran was now invisible. We spent some time wandering about the top looking into the magnificent corries on the north and north-east. These showed snowfields almost equal to Ben Lui, capped by enormous cornices. After taking a photograph or two we made for Ben Douran. We dropped into the col and climbed up the other side. The snow was soft, the mist was down, and slight sleet was falling—not altogether cheerful. The summit of Ben Douran is a very commanding position; the only regret we had was that we couldn't see into the great corrie on the east—it must be really magnificent. After a short stop we retraced our steps to the col and thence to Bridge of Orchy.

Our week-end was nearly over and we decided to finish it in style. Next day we set off on our cycles for Fort William, with the intention of climbing Ben Cruachan on the way. We had an excellent run to Bridge of Awe, except for a very sharp hail storm at the entrance to the Pass of Brander. Ben Cruachan on the Bridge of Awe side is very steep, and the day was very warm. We had very good views to the south and west, Mull especially showing up well. The top was shrouded in mist, but just as we got up it lifted and we had really a fine view—undoubtedly, the finest we have ever had together. The ascent occupied about $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours and the descent $1\frac{3}{4}$. The remainder of the day was spent in getting to Fort William *via* Connel Ferry and Ballachulish. We reached our destination at eight o'clock. We stayed at the Alexandra Hotel, and there

found several members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club who had had their Easter meet there.

Our objective for the next day was Ben Nevis by the ordinary route, but the morning was wet and this, coupled with the fact that our boots were hurting the backs of our ankles, seemed to predict a day of rest. However, the rain cleared about eleven, and having found another madman to join us, we set off for the top. Until the half-way hut was reached we had magnificent views in every direction that was not shut off by the Ben itself. After that the mist came down. We entered the snow line about 2,500 feet, and the rest of the way was rendered stiff by about a foot of fresh snow lying on the top of the other older snow. We reached the top without incident in $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Our companion then suggested that we should go back *via* the Carn More Dearg ridge and the tops of Carn More Dearg. We agreed and at once set off. The ridge was a sensational affair that day. A very fierce gale was blowing across it, and we were often reduced to hands and knees. We got over, however, and traversed the top of Carn More Dearg. We then cut down into the valley on our left and followed it to the road, along which we plodded until Fort William was reached.

This was the end of our climbing for that holiday, and a great holiday it had been. For six days continuously had we been climbing, and we felt very fit. Our one regret was that we had no time to do more.

Next morning we set off on our 182-mile journey to Aberdeen. The first 52 miles to Drumnadrochit were over appalling roads; in several instances, bridges had been washed away, and we had to drive through the burns. The remainder of the journey, however, was on first-class roads, and, except for a short stop in Elgin for petrol, was conducted non-stop, at an average speed somewhat in excess of the statutory allowance. We got to Aberdeen at 7 o'clock well pleased with our holiday. We have now got two things to look forward to—(1) a holiday equally good, and (2) a climb free from mist.

GRIERSON'S "RAMBLES AMONG THE
SCOTTISH MOUNTAINS."

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

PERSONAL accounts of mountaineering in Scotland are not very numerous until a comparatively recent date. Mountaineering itself and the love of nature which underlies it are essentially modern things; it is quite within modern times that mountaineering has become popular, and that the appreciation of nature has attained its present vogue, literary and otherwise.* It is not surprising, therefore, to find the literature of mountaineering exceedingly limited. Of early works on the Scottish side of the subject belonging to the nineteenth century one of the most prominent, as it is also one of the best, is a little volume of 232 pages—"Autumnal Rambles Among the Scottish Mountains: or Pedestrian Tourist's Friend," by the Rev. Thomas Grierson, A.M., Minister of Kirkbean, in Kirkcudbrightshire.

It was originally published in 1850, but a second edition—a copy of which is before us—was published in the following year. This second edition was announced to be "greatly enlarged," the enlargement consisting of the addition to the matter in the first edition of a section dealing with "Moffat and its Mountains, etc." and a much larger section descriptive of "A Fortnight on Deeside." The Deeside section, of course, imparts a special interest to the volume to those who are more particularly associated with that district of the country; but, quite apart from that incidental feature, Mr. Grierson's "Rambles" are well worth perusal. The style in which they are

* See "The Mountains in Literature," by John Clarke, *C. C. J.*, ix., 121.

written is somewhat old-fashioned perhaps, but its very quaintness gives piquancy to what Mr. Grierson calls his "unpretending lucubrations." The definition, inspired doubtless by modesty, is nevertheless substantially accurate. Mr. Grierson's accounts of his "Rambles" are exceedingly plain and direct, almost severely so; and albeit he was a clergyman, they are singularly unemotional, and wholly devoid of florid description. But his frankness and downrightness are attractive, and he commands attention by the thoroughness of his zeal for walking. The book, be it borne in mind, is a record of mountaineering experiences at a time when walking and mountain-climbing were not so common as they are to-day—a time, indeed, when devotion to them was quite exceptional, and was regarded as eccentric. So the appeal of the book is in a sense quite modern, and in all probability the work, did it make its appearance to-day, would meet with much more acceptance even than it did apparently when it was originally published.

Mr. Grierson evidently had been a great walker, from his youth upward; and in the preface to the first edition of his book (reproduced in the second edition) he gives us some details of his accomplishments in this respect. While he was a boy, he says, roaming alone among the hills of Nithsdale was one of his chief gratifications, and this taste had continued to increase ever since. "Even now," he adds naively, "when many may allege that a Pisgah-view of another and a better land should engross my attention, there is to me nothing more exhilarating than the mountain air and the view of distant peaks on which I have already stood, or which I still hope to surmount." (He was then sixty years of age—and died four years later—in 1854). He was ordained minister of Kirkbean in 1824, when he was thirty-four, and for many years he was able to devote several weeks in autumn to walking. He never enjoyed himself more, he declared, than when, "entirely alone, or sometimes with a favourite terrier, I have jogged on from dawn till dusk, occasionally spending an hour or two angling in burn,

river, or loch ; for a staff-rod and fishing-basket, in which I carried my scanty wardrobe, constituted the whole of my travelling apparatus."

He gives a detailed list of the mountains and hills on whose summits he had stood—a very comprehensive list, indeed, ranging from Ben Wyvis to Criffel, from North Berwick Law to the Storr and Quiraing in Skye. He follows up his general summary by details of some of his rambles, "to prove what may be done by patience and perseverance, for I never was a quick walker." He must have been a pretty steady one anyhow, judging from this sample :—

In the autumn of 1811, the year of the great comet, I left Glasgow early, breakfasted at Dumbarton, went up Loch Lomond side, crossed at Rowardennan, went over the shoulder of Ben Lomond to Blairhulichan, and stayed all night at Ledard, on the north side of Loch Ard. Next morning, started at four, crossed the mountains to Loch Katrine, where I was boated over by a shepherd ; over the mountains again, through the Forest of Glen Finglas and its deep bogs to Balquhidder ; over the mountains again to Glen Dochart and Killin ; over the mountains again to Glen Lyon ; and once more across the mountains to Loch Rannoch side, which I reached before twelve o'clock at night—a severe a mountain fag as perhaps ever was performed in one day.

Unfortunately, scepticism prevails as to this single day's "mountain fag." Mr. Walter A. Smith, in an early volume of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, described it as "a 'cross country' route which certainly requires an effort of the imagination to believe in," it being nearly forty miles as the crow flies, and more likely to have proved nearer sixty miles if the walk had been actually made. This instance of exaggeration, however, may be allowed to pass in consideration of Mr. Grierson's very obvious merits as a pedestrian. Undeterred by distance, undaunted by rain, and undismayed by lack of food or shelter, he jogged along contentedly, noting and observing all the while.

Both in his preface and in his concluding chapter Mr. Grierson gives some hints to pedestrians as to clothing,

boots, avoidance of whisky, and so on. They are perfectly sensible, but are now so generally adopted that they need not be recapitulated. Mr. Grierson, as we have seen, was a moderate walker: the pace, he says, "should not exceed three and a half miles in the hour; or three, stoppages included." But his chief recommendation is a rather unusual one and is a revelation of an exceedingly strong personality:—

As the very best advice I can give pedestrians, I would recommend early rising and always turning over a good long stage before breakfast. This I never failed to do when a young man; and even now I like walking before breakfast best when on a journey. Fifteen to twenty miles before nine o'clock was my ordinary arrangement. This made the remainder of my journey comparatively easy; and, after being fairly on the road, I generally enjoyed this part of my work most. Breakfast in such circumstances is doubly welcome, and is seldom much of a remuneration to the provider. Upon the strength of it, I always finished my day's work before partaking of a second meal, which was all I required or cared for in the twenty-four hours. These terms, combined with my long journeys, prevented others from being anxious to accompany me in my Highland expeditions.

The bulk of the first edition of Mr. Grierson's work consisted of accounts of rambles in Arran, in the Highlands of Galloway, in the West Highlands (from Oban to Inverness by the Caledonian Canal), in the Ochils, and in Skye—all between 1840 and 1849. In Arran he ascended Goatfell, in Galloway Merrick, and in the course of the West Highlands journey Ben Wyvis, which he describes as "an ugly, savage-looking concern"—the ascent was made amid rain, and snow and mist, however—adding that "being far removed from any inhabited district, none should attempt its ascent who have not an entire day at their disposal." The return journey southward brought Mr. Grierson to Aberdeen, which he reached apparently a day or two after Queen Victoria's first visit and landing in 1848, and "just one hour too late for seeing the interior of the *Victoria and Albert*, which was open to respectable

parties, not exceeding twelve, every day from eleven till four." Mr. Grierson's impression of Aberdeen is exceedingly flattering but at the same time not lacking in candour:—

Aberdeen, in many respects, is one of the most remarkable cities in the kingdom. Its streets, bridges, and harbour are on a scale which might well become the capital of Scotland. The new College, new North Church, County Buildings, Banking-houses, Markets, etc., are well worthy of the attention of all travellers. They impress one, indeed, with the idea of their being too fine—much grander than there is any occasion for; and lead one to infer that, in these respects, the pride of the inhabitants has outrun their prudence. The suspension-bridge over the Dee is a truly splendid structure, and the viaduct for the intended railway is the most magnificent thing of the kind in Scotland; but the nearness of these edifices to each other and their awkward relative position create a confusion which is somewhat offensive to the spectator. . . . The viaduct terminates at the New Markets in Union Street, one of the most spacious, elegant, and substantial anywhere to be seen, being throughout constructed of polished granite [!], of which there are many quarries all around the city, and which is exported to London and other places as an article of traffic.

The most elaborate of the accounts is that descriptive of "A Week in Skye," which best exhibits Mr. Grierson's qualities as an observer and narrator. He landed at Broadford, visited the Spar Cave at Loch Slapin, and then sailed in to Loch Scavaig and Loch Coruisk. "Upon entering Loch Scavaig," he says, "the Alps of Skye appeared in front of us in all their glory; and certainly I never saw any mountains so grisly, wild, and sublime as the Cuchullins, or Coolins as they are generally termed." Loch Coruisk he describes as, without exception, the most terrific scene he ever witnessed; he and a friend made for Sligachan by "an abrupt ascent" over a spur of the Coolins, and, he adds, "let any man visit that scene if he be really anxious to witness the sternest and most impressive that Scotland can boast." One of the main objects of his visiting Skye was to climb Sgurr-nan-Gillean, which he had

fully satisfied himself was quite practicable—this was in 1849 when the Coolins were not so well known to climbers as they are to-day—but during breakfast on the day selected “the clouds caught hold of the highest points of the Coolins, and gradually crept down their ravines, attended by rain, till we saw that our purpose was altogether hopeless.” Mr Grierson sensibly adds—“To ascend almost any high mountain in mist, even though well known, is perplexing; but in such circumstances to have attempted Sgurr-nan-Gillean would have been absolute folly and madness.” So, “with much chagrin,” he set off for Portree and contented himself with visiting the Storr and Quiraing. He thus summarises his general impressions of Skye:—

The Spar Cave, Loch Coruisk, Glen Sligachan, the Storr, and Quiraing, are the main objects worthy of attention; and if I were to particularise which of all these interested us the most, I would decidedly say Loch Coruisk. It is the most sequestered and inaccessible of all the Scottish lochs. Dark, deep, and desolate, it reflects the lofty Coolins from their highest pinnacles down to the very water's edge. In this pellucid mirror “auld Nature's sturdiest bairns” may survey their dingy charms from head to foot. But in storm and tempest, when foaming cataracts dash from the precipices, when the forked lightning darts from the splintered crevices, and a thousand echoes reverberate the crash of the thunder, what imagination can conceive a more tremendous scene? The powerful pencils of Turner and Horatio McCulloch have indeed been splendidly employed in the delineation; but as they could not be actually present in the elemental strife, many features of it must have been omitted or misrepresented. In crossing over from the head of the loch to the source of the Sligachan, the tourist may safely assert that he has witnessed a scene unrivalled in her Majesty's dominions. I am familiar with the scenery of Glencoe and Arran, but greatly though I admire it, I must very decidedly give the palm to what I have been attempting to describe.

The second edition of the “Rambles,” as already mentioned, contained an account of a fortnight spent on Deeside, presumably in 1850. Mr Grierson witnessed the annual Highland Gathering at Clova, and then proceeded to walk to the Spital of Muick, hoping to

reach it by nightfall. He complains of the rugged nature of the ground, which he describes as consisting of nearly equal portions of mountain and moss, and he and a friend who accompanied him, "soon got entangled in an extensive morass, full of quagmires, a species of travelling alike fatiguing and tedious." He left his friend in order to have a distant view of Loch Dhu, and then descended to Loch Muick, but the darkness increasing, he resolved to "squat for the night," and accordingly, "after collecting some heath, and spreading it on the sheltered side of a rock, I composed myself for rest, having put on dry shoes and stockings, and made myself as comfortable as circumstances would admit"—the dry shoes, we must assume, were carried in his fishing basket. He rejoined his friend next morning and the two of them ascended Lochnagar, on the view from which Mr Grierson becomes quite rapturous. They then walked to Ballater, and on by way of Crathie to Braemar, here generally designated Castleton.

In his exposition of Deeside Mr Grierson, it must be confessed, is somewhat discursive. There is a good deal of laudation of royalty, especially in connection with a visit paid to Castleton by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, while a defence of deer forests is introduced, in palliation of the extreme strictness of the Duke of Leeds, who was then tenant of Mar Lodge and Mar Forest. Incidentally, Mr Grierson makes a very naive allusion to the Duke. He "had the luck" to see the Duke killing a fine salmon with the rod about a quarter of a mile above the Linn of Dee. "He was pretty deep in the river, with fishing boots," says our author, "and managed the matter remarkably well *for a Duke*"—the italics are Mr Grierson's. Mr Grierson ascended Ben Macdhui (as he writes the mountain's name) by the Corrie Etchachan route, accompanied by one of the Duke's foresters, but the day was unfavourable, being very tempestuous, with heavy showers of sleet, hail, and snow. Our notice of Mr Grierson's interesting book may be fittingly concluded with an

extract detailing his experiences on Ben Macdhuì, more especially as it describes a feature of the mountain-top that has long since vanished :—

Just above the loch (Loch Etchachan) we got one indistinct peep into Loch Aven; but after this the snow fell so thick that seeing beyond 50 yards was out of the question. My attendant took me a little way to the left that I might get a glimpse of the upper part of Glen Lui-Beg, through tremendous precipices, with which a sudden gust of wind had nearly made me more familiar than would have been altogether pleasant. We then steered nearly due north till we reached the remains of the Sappers' House, which had evidently been one of the most substantial of the kind, as its terribly exposed situation required. A very short way north of this stands the cairn, which was invisible till we came within 15 or 20 yards of it. For the last two hours there had been almost a constant fall of heavy snow, which in many places was more than knee deep, and near the summit the drift was quite blinding. When we reached the cairn, ten miles from our starting place, we were quite benumbed and covered with icicles, so that a tasting from the whisky-flask was right acceptable to us both.

This cairn is by far the highest of the kind I have seen. It is built in the Tower of Babel style, in four distinct storeys, the pinnacle being, I would suppose, from 20 to 25 feet in height. I was too much chilled to go to the top, and only ascended the second storey, on which I placed a large stone, handed me by my companion, whose attentions I shall not readily forget. Some say that Lord Fife caused this cairn to be more elevated than common, that it might overtop Ben Nevis, the competition being considered a neck-and-neck affair; while others jocularly allege that, as he had intimated his intention of being buried there, it might be as well he should have a fair start upwards. It is pleasing to reflect that for many years his lordship has led such a quiet and orderly life as to require no such vantage-ground.

TO A SCOTTISH GOLDEN EAGLE AT THE
LONDON "ZOO."

Above him stretch the iron strings
That bar him from delight,
He lifts and droops his useless wings
In terrible despite,
And, still upcast, his glittering eye
Explores the freedom of the sky.

Perhaps he sees the lonely cloud
On far Schiehallion's crest
Blown by the gale like some pale shroud
Out of the sea-swept west,
And feels on his expanded wing
The snowflake's bleak delightful sting.

Perhaps above his eyrie, high
On some sea-fronted crag,
He hears the city's distant cry
Break like the tides that drag
The shingle up and down the screes
Of the lone Outer Hebrides.

Beside him in her neighbouring cage
His Chilian cousin broods
On tropic forests rich with age,
On sweeping hills and floods
Wherein all Badenoch should but yield
The little corner of a field.

She cannot hear the waves that break
In white salt-crested foam,
Where the Atlantic thunders shake
The Golden Eagle's home,
Nor the long melancholy sough
Of wind across some Scottish loch.

Only the Golden Eagle knows
These old familiar dreams,
And still within his eye there glows
A life that feels, and seems
To hunger yet for that fair shore
That has betrayed the child it bore.

ISOBEL W. HUTCHISON.

CARLOWRIE, KIRKLISTON,
WEST LOTHIAN.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS ON DEESIDE.

FOLLOWING up recent articles descriptive of Deeside,* a brief account may be given of some books illustrating the region. The most interesting of these is *THE SCENERY OF THE DEE, WITH PEN AND PENCIL*, illustrated by Andrew Gibb, F.S.A.Scot., and further illustrated by J. Marley Hay, F.S.A.Scot. A handsome quarto volume of 85 pages, beautifully printed, the type enclosed in lines with a liberal margin on each side—few such books are produced now-a-days except select and expensive *editions de luxe*—it was published in 1884.

The volume had a curious history, thirty-four years elapsing between its conception and its publication. As far back as 1850, the idea of the work occurred to the once well-known firm of Messrs. Keith and Gibb, engravers and lithographers in Aberdeen, and the artistic part was undertaken by Mr. Andrew Gibb, one of the partners, than whom (says the preface) "few were so well qualified for, and whose facile pencil delighted in, such work." In this he was assisted by a Mr. Bryson, described as "an able young artist," while Mr. James Cassie, R.S.A., is credited with having contributed "several" sketches (really only two, so far as we have observed—Inchmarlo and Balmoral). The literary part, we are told, fell to Mr. William Jaffray, "a clever young writer, in the office of Messrs. Davidson, Advocates, Aberdeen, who accompanied Mr. Gibb on several leisurely tours to the localities they delineated and described." The work was taken up only when found convenient, and several years elapsed before it was fairly well advanced. Then it was laid aside altogether, and apparently never resumed, lying untouched for many years. Mr. Gibb died in 1881, and Mr. J. Marley Hay, who had become his

* "Macgillivray's 'Deeside,' Vol. viii., 113-19.

"Early 'Guides' to the Cairngorms," Vol. viii., 207-14.

"A Dictionary of Deeside," Vol. ix., 104-9 and 154-8.

partner, resolved "to form the fragments into a whole and carry the work to completion"—a highly commendable resolution, which has preserved to us a series of sketches of the scenery of the Dee between 1850 and 1858. These are supplemented by sketches of later date furnished by Mr Hay, who was also responsible for more than half the letterpress, 36 pages only having been printed off when the prosecution of the work was dropped.

The volume is interesting chiefly for its numerous illustrations; there are 29 full-page lithographic plates and 100 minor pictures interspersed in the letterpress. These illustrations delineate Deeside before it was developed, so to speak—before the present Balmoral Castle was built, before the railway was made (the line to Banchory was not opened till 1853 and the extension to Aboyne till 1859), and long before the Deeside villages became the holiday resorts of Aberdeen citizens and "residential villas" came to be in demand in consequence. Among the very first pictures that meet our gaze is one of the old-fashioned four-in-hand mail coach, so reminiscent of "the days that are no more;" and early in the descriptive account we are told how the narrator, from the old Bridge of Dee, "watched a succession of broad rafts, composed of tree trunks from the forests far up the river"—a sight no longer to be seen. Gone, too, are several of the old inns here mentioned—one opposite Drum Castle, the "Drum Arms" at Park, and "a small wayside inn, called Cammas-o'-May, standing in a clump of birch trees." The modest proportions of the "Fife Arms" and the "Invercauld" at Braemar as here depicted will astonish those familiar only with the huge "caravanserais" they have become; and there is difficulty in identifying the "Monaltrie Arms," Ballater, with the present "Invercauld Arms"—the entrance portico then faced the west instead of, as now, the north; besides which, the house itself has been largely reconstructed. One of the quaintest things in the book, by the way, is the account

of "the evening promenade" at Ballater, with its accompanying illustration—so far removed are the assemblages that seem then to have gathered nightly from anything that occurs to-day. We have preserved for us here a picture of "the miserable 'sheep cot' on the moor" which did duty as the first Free Church at Ballater; and on the opposite page is an illustration of a vanished hamlet, "The Micras"—a higgledy-piggledy collection of wretched-looking hovels. Among other things that have vanished—the semblances of which are retained here, fortunately—are the old gateway facade at Blackhall, Banchory, with its goat a-top and the motto that puzzled passers-by, *Che Sara Sara* ("What will be will be"); the cradle-bridge at Abergeldie, the two mansion-houses known respectively as New and Old Mar Lodge, and the wooden bridge across the Linn of Dee which preceded the existing Gothic arch.

The eternal hills remain, however, and we have full-page plates of Lochnagar, Ben-a-Bourd, and Ben Muich Dhui, and smaller illustrations of Glen Lui, Glen Derry, Loch Avon, the Shelter Stone, etc. The treatment of some of these mountain scenes is rather fantastic, undue emphasis being laid on certain features; the "realistic" mountaineer, at all events, will be inclined to regard the pictures as overdrawn, and to wonder where the point of view is from which they were presumably taken. A somewhat similar criticism may be made of the descriptive letterpress. It is in the rhetorical style common in the treatment of scenery half a century ago; most of it is exaggerated, not a little of it turgid, and trifling incidents like the scaring of deer are detailed in meticulous fashion.

THE ROYAL DEE—"A Description of the River from the Wells to the Sea. Written by Alex. Inkson McConnochie. Illustrated by J. G. Murray, A.R.E."—may be regarded as the modern complement of "The Scenery of the Dee." It depicts Deeside as we of the present day know it, for though a new generation has

grown up since it was published (1898), Mr. Murray's sketches of places like Braemar, Ballater, and Aboyne, drawn more for artistic effect than with absolute fidelity to detail, are still true in the main; the impression they convey is not weakened by any substantial discrepancy between the picture and the actual scene as it is to-day. Anyhow, these sketches provide an entertaining contrast to many of the pictures in Messrs. Gibb and Hay's volume, and illustrate such new and prominent features of Deeside as Crathie Church, Glenmuick House, Glentanar, Blackhall Castle, etc. Particularly noticeable are Mr. Murray's charming landscapes, such as the Dee valley at Mar Lodge and the river views at Pannanich, Kincardine O'Neil, Culter, etc. These are mostly full-page pictures, but many of the minor drawings introduced in the letterpress are exquisite; two of them may be mentioned as specially so—Meikle Inverey and the Cairngorms from above Inverey.

The descriptive letterpress is far superior to that in the earlier volume. It is more direct and to the purpose, and has no mawkish sentimentality about it, no tawdry attempt at "fine writing," so-called. If the narrative errs at all, it is in rushing to the opposite extreme—in being somewhat "pedestrian," too prosaic an account of quite exceptional scenery. Yet there is no lack of recognition of the picturesqueness continuously encountered in the journey down the Dee from the Wells to Aberdeen harbour, and the topographical details are plentifully interspersed with legend and tradition, historical and personal allusions, story and anecdote. The first four chapters in particular, descriptive of Deeside from Braeriach to Balmoral, are exceedingly well done. Mr. McConnochie is enthusiastic in his laudation of Deeside, and at one point makes a sort of apology for the lavishness of his eulogies—only to immediately withdraw it! "Our progress along the banks of the Dee," he says, "may be regarded by some as accompanied by an indiscriminate pæan," immediately adding—"There is, however, nothing to retract." On

the whole, we think not, though we may hesitate to endorse the opinion that the Dee, between Braemar Castle and Invercauld Bridge, "transcends the Trossachs."

QUEEN VICTORIA'S HIGHLAND HOME AND VICINITY was a "Diamond Jubilee" production, published in 1897. It consists of 36 illustrations, reproductions (with four exceptions) of photographs by Messrs. G. and W. Morgan; and for each picture Mr. McConnochie furnished a descriptive sketch of a uniform length of 29 lines of type. Compression within this space and with such precision is something of the nature of a feat, only to be accomplished by one thoroughly conversant with his subject. Several of the mountain views—Braeriach, Cairn Toul, etc.—are excellent. The author will be found in the picture of Clach Bhan, seated on the top of the tor.

DEESIDE—Painted by William Smith, Jun. Described by Robert Anderson—was one of the series of "Beautiful Books" issued by Messrs. A. and C. Black; it was published in 1911. It has been previously noticed in the *C.C.J.* (Vol. vii., pp. 129-30), and it will suffice, therefore, to say that its principal feature is a series of illustrations in colour by Mr. William Smith, Jun., the well-known Aberdeen artist—one and all of them admirable pictures; Braeriach and Lochnagar majestic and sublime, the Dee in its lower reaches placid and sweet.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1920—BRAEMAR.

THE Club Meet at Braemar during the New Year week-end was very successful, and was greatly enjoyed by all the members present. A number of members arrived at Braemar on the Wednesday evening, and most of the others, including the Chairman and the Secretary, on Friday evening. One gentleman made the journey from Ballater on foot and returned by the same method next day. Needless to say, the majority favoured the Railway Company's omnibus, which, being closed, was quite comfortable. The snow on the road increased in depth towards Braemar, at which there were some six inches on the level. The weather conditions throughout were ideal. New Year's Day and Friday were bright and frosty, and members climbing had magnificent views of the Cairngorms. On Saturday the temperature rose a little and at times a snowfall seemed imminent. Fortunately, no break took place, and on Monday, the last day of the meet, frost set in again.

Owing to the shortness of the day and the depth of snow in the glens and on the foothills, expeditions to the more distant tops were not attempted. One party of four did have a try at Lochnagar on the Saturday, but encountered deep snow in Ballochbuie Forest, and high wind with driven powdery snow on the hills. Finding it almost impossible to stand against the wind and snow on the summit of Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe (3191 ft), they decided that further progress towards Lochnagar was inadvisable. Had the wind been in a favourable direction, doubtless the first ascent of the mountain for 1920 would have been accomplished in spite of the depth of snow.

For the most part, members confined their attention to the hills in the immediate vicinity of Braemar, namely,

Morrone, Creag Choinnich, and Carn-nan-Sghliat.

Morrone was ascended twice by different parties. A party of five on Saturday followed the gully on the east face and reached the top in about two hours. Owing to the bitterly cold wind, a very short stay indeed was made at the Cairn. The party descended by the west side, having a few short glissades on the way, and, turning north, soon reached the road at the Corrymulzie Bridge. On the lower slopes of the hill a fair depth of snow was met with, but the older snow and that above the 2,000 feet level was sufficiently hard to support the climber's weight. A very pretty snow cornice was discovered near the top of the gully. Members carried ice-axes, which were of great assistance although nothing in the nature of ice was met with on the steep slopes and step-cutting was unnecessary. A herd of some 30 stags was seen as the party approached the hill, and a fair number of grouse in the usual winter pack formation.

The other ascent of the hill was made by another party on the Friday. On reaching the summit, they followed the southern ridge for some distance towards Carn-na-Drochaide and descended to the Cluny. The road to Braemar from the Spital of Glenshee was found very heavy even in its lowest portion.

Carn-nan-Sghliat was ascended by a small party on Thursday. Here also a little glissading was enjoyed during the descent.

Creag Choinnich was visited by eight or nine members on Sunday forenoon. Some time was spent at the old quarry, where a few of the company had a little practice in rock climbing. The vertical pitch at the top of the scree chute was found to be almost impassable, but two members ascended near it after attaching themselves to a rope let down from above as a precaution. On the summit, fine views of Ben Avon and Ben-na-Bhuird were obtained. The sun was shining on Ben Avon, and the various tops were exceptionally clear. Lochnagar was invisible and the distant Cairngorms somewhat obscured.

The snow scenery amongst the trees near the base of the hill was greatly admired.

Another party on Sunday walked some way beyond the Linn of Dee in the direction of the White Bridge. Ben y Gloe and the other hills to the south were very distinct. The river was frozen over near the Linn, where the party spent some time as the weather conditions were very pleasant.

Various winter sports were available for the younger members, who spent much of the time on ski, with occasional skating and sledging. The snow on Morrone was hardly deep enough for serious ski-ing, but much practice was obtained on sloping fields, for the most part at the base of that hill.

On Saturday the Chairman sent a telegram of greeting to the Scottish Mountaineering Club at Loch Awe. Mr. Ling, the president of that Club, promptly replied.

Over a dozen members returned to Aberdeen on Monday. Those who travelled by the morning omnibus obtained a magnificent view of Lochnagar, which stood out sharp against a blue sky background. The only cloud was a small white one in the col. High above, a few clouds were coloured pink by the rising sun.

MARSHALL J. ROBB.

EASTER MEET, 1920—CRIANLARICH.

THE Easter Meet was held at Crianlarich, from Thursday, 1st April, to Monday 5th. The following members were present:—Mrs. Levack, Dr. J. R. Levack (chairman), D. P. Levack, J. W. Levack, A. P. Milne, J. McCoss, G. McIntyre, J. A. Parker, W. A. Reid, M. J. Robb, and Theodore Watt,—11; along with the following guests:—A. J. Rusk, N. Shepherd, and A. M. Macrae Williamson, (since proposed as members)—3

The Club was very fortunate as regards weather conditions, each day of the meet being fine, and, consequently, a good many hills were climbed. It is true that there was little sunshine, and on the heights mist reigned

supreme during the first two days, but every morning all the members left the hotel *en route* for a climb. Ropes and axes were much in evidence, as all present seemed to be of the "ultramontane" type.

The meet opened on the Friday with the ascent of Beinn More by the N. W. ridge, and Am Binnein from Bealach-eader-dhu-bheinn. Cruach Ardrain and Beinn Tulachan were also ascended. Cruach Ardrain was climbed by the right and left branches of the Central Gully on the N. W. face. The snow in the right gully was in good condition, and a fine climb was experienced. In the left branch the snow was thin in parts, and the climbers of this gully had more than once to take to the rocks for firmer footing. This mountain with its fine outline and snow-lined gullies looked splendid from the windows of the hotel, which it seemed to overhang.

On the Saturday those left of the party (Parker and Robb went to the S.M.C. Meet at Fort William on Friday evening, and Reid left for the north on Saturday morning) motored to Tyndrum and proceeded to Beinn Laoigh, and climbed gullies 4, 5, 6. of Coire Gaothach. There was not quite the usual quantity of snow on the hills at Easter this year; but, nevertheless, the windy corrie looked majestic with its grand sweep of 1,100 feet of snow-slope towering into the mist. Beinn Laoigh is a singularly beautiful mountain, and gives what is considered to be the finest snow climb in Scotland. Near the top of the corrie the snow was very hard, and the angle steepened to 65 degrees as measured by clinometer. The hill was capped with mist, but there was very little wind, and the party had quite a pleasant time among the summit rocks, which carried icicles and fog-crystals. The descent was made into the corrie with the two lochans to the north of Stob Garbh, and some good glissading was obtained on the way down. The younger members of the party re-climbed the snow and had the exhilarating rush all over again.

Sunday was the best day of the meet, and fine views

to the south and west were obtained from Beinn-a-Chroin and Cruach Ardrain. On the north face of the latter some excellent glissading was participated in.

Climbing Notes :—

Friday 2nd—J. W. Levack, Milne, Parker, Reid and Robb, climbed the central gully on the N. W. face of Cruach Ardrain and traversed Beinn Tulachan. Rusk and Williamson did Beinn More and Am Binnein.

Saturday 3rd—Coire Gaothach of Beinn Laoigh. McCoss, Milne, and Shepherd, climbed No. 4 gully; D. P. Levack, Rusk and Williamson climbed No. 5 gully; and the chairman, J. W. Levack, McIntyre, and Watt climbed No. 6 gully.

Sunday 4th—The chairman, J. W. Levack, and Milne climbed Beinn-a-Chroin; D. P. Levack, McIntyre, Rusk and Watt climbed the Central Gully of Cruach Ardrain; and McCoss, Shepherd, and Williamson did the left branch of this gully.

Monday 5th—Rusk, Watt, and Williamson climbed Beinn an Dothaidh and Beinn Doireann.

Tuesday 6th—Rusk and Williamson climbed Ben Cruachan; and on Wednesday these two energetic young men ascended Ben Nevis, and Carn Mor Dearg.

The Meet was a most successful one, and everybody had a good time. During the evenings the chairman was in the chair, and kept the party merry with his endless store of humorous stories.

The arrangements for the Meet, which were made by the Secretary, Mr. J. A. Nicol, were a complete success.

JAMES MCCOSS.

SPRING EXCURSION, 1920—BENRINNES.

THE Spring 1920 Excursion of the Club was to Benrinnes—on Monday, 3rd May, the Aberdeen spring holiday. This Speyside mountain (2755 feet) has been frequently climbed by the club, the ascent generally being made from the Aberlour side. On this occasion a party of eleven members and prospective members travelled from Aberdeen by the 8 a.m. train to Dufftown, and were joined there by a party of five ladies and gentlemen who had motored across from Buckie. The united party then drove up Glenrinnes to Craighead Inn, the idea being to ascend to the West ridge of Benrinnes, as there was a strong north-westerly wind, with frequent showers

of rain and sleet. By following this route the wind was behind the party all the way, and the mist, which had been well down on the hill, cleared away, and when the party reached the top, everything was perfectly clear. The view from the summit (as has been mentioned before in the *C. C. J.*) is one of the finest and the most extensive in the north of Scotland, embracing eleven counties and extending from Schiehallion to the Pap of Caithness, and from Ben Alder to Buchan Ness. If it was not wholly revealed owing to the weather conditions, the panorama unfolded amply rewarded the exertions of the climbers. The Cairngorms were distinctly visible from Ben Bynac to Sgoran Dubh, and their appearance was rather extraordinary, giving the impression that the spectators were looking at a stupendous range very far distant and of a height far exceeding the reality. They were clear of mist, and the sun was shining on them, imparting to the mountains a curious rich golden colour. The Moray Firth was quite visible. Lochnagar appeared rather dimly through some driving clouds.

There are three rocky tors on the summit of Benrinnes designated "Scurran" (or Sgoran)—the Scurran of Morinsh, the Scurran of Well, and the Scurran of Lochterlandich, this last being the principal. All three were duly visited, and then the party descended the hill by the south-east ridge, making for the Glenrinnes road. At this stage the weather became very bad, the mist closing down on all the hill-tops and being succeeded by heavy rain.

On their return to Dufftown the party dined in the Fife Arms Hotel, Dr. Levack, the Chairman of the Club, presiding.

There were Club excursions on the afternoons of Saturday, 12th June, and Saturday, 26th June, to Cairnmon-Earn and Cloch-na-Ben respectively.

NOTES.

ON a recent alteration of one of the rules, a member quietly hinted that the rules as a whole might well be revised, and, acting on this suggestion,

Mr. William Garden drafted a new set of rules, which, PROPOSED NEW RULES. having been discussed and amended by the Committee, will be submitted to the next annual meeting. The existing rules, with very little alteration, have been in force since the institution of the Club, thirty-one years ago. They are few in number—eleven in all—are tersely expressed, and are exceedingly comprehensive in their nature. The conservatives among us will probably be of opinion that, as these rules have worked so well for so long, they should be retained with as little change as possible. But we have modernists in our number who are desirous of bringing the Club “up to date” and into line—as regards the rules, at any rate—with the Scottish Mountaineering and other Clubs, and the new rules may be regarded as a reflection of their views. The chief change effected is in the qualification for membership. The old and rather inadequate rule of accepting as a member any one who had ascended a Scottish mountain 3000 feet high is abandoned, and the following stiffish test substituted :—

“Every candidate for election as an ordinary member shall be proposed by one member and seconded by another member, both having personal knowledge of him, and shall supply, for the information of the Committee, a list of his Scottish and other ascents, stating the month and the year in which each ascent was made, or a statement of his contributions to science, art, or literature, in connection with Scottish mountains. Such list, signed by the candidate and by the two members acting as proposer and seconder, will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee; and if, in the opinion of the Committee, the qualifications be deemed sufficient, the candidate shall thereupon be admitted a member.”

The Chairman vanishes and becomes President; in other words, the President becomes the actual instead of the honorary head of the Club. The other office-bearers are practically those at present—two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer (these two offices may be combined), but the Editor of the *Journal* is added, and the Committee will consist of them and nine other members. The Secretary and the Editor have apparently a tenure *ad vitam aut culpam*; the other officials and members of the Committee cannot hold office for more than three years. The annual general meeting is fixed for the last Saturday of November, and a provision is introduced for holding a Club dinner annually. The new rules number 34, many of them dealing in much greater detail than did the former ones with the calling of special meetings, etc., and with the general administration of the affairs of the Club.

ALL lovers of mountain and woodland scenery must grieve over the disastrous series of forest fires in the Highlands that has made the week of 12-19 June memorable. These fires, which broke out almost simultaneously, proved very extensive and destructive, and, owing to the prevailing heat and the excessive dryness of the undergrowth, which after the long drought was as inflammable as tinder, great difficulty was experienced in coping with them and getting them under control. Most of the contents of the present number of the *C.C.J.* had been sent to press by the time the fires occurred, and so we are unable to give full or precise details. But it seems apparent that tremendous havoc has been caused in the Abernethy and Rothiemurchus forests, which, following on the great felling of trees for military purposes, will materially lessen the sylvan beauties of Speyside. Large parts of the dense forest to the south of Nethy Bridge, extending to the Tor Hill and Loch Garten, have been destroyed, while the Dell district suffered severely and fires raged also in the woods about Craigmore. In the Rothiemurchus region a large tract of wood from the Beinne Burn to Loch Morlich was burned, and the fire here spread rapidly in the direction of Aultnancaber and Drumintoul Lodge, above Coylum Bridge, the Lodge at one time being in imminent danger. Extensive forest fires also occurred at Moy Hall, at Dunmaglass, near Inverness, and in the Black Isle. In Aberdeenshire a fire raged for several days in the Glentanar Forest, sweeping at first from the Allachy Burn along the Firmouth road almost to the Tanar, and breaking out afterwards in various directions, woods on the slopes of the Strone, Bad-na-Muick, and Baudy Meg being ultimately embraced in the conflagration. The area burned everywhere is extensive, and the damage of course great. The scenic loss, too, is deplorable, for "the country sides" affected will remain bare and gaunt for a large number of years.

A NEW critical study of Arthur Hugh Clough, by James Insley Osborne, may be mentioned here—not so much because of its inevitable reference to Clough's poem, "The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich," as for the revelation of the real "Bothie" that was figured in the poem. The revelation is by no means new, but the story may be told once again, more especially as it is doubtful if "The Bothie," that notable experiment in English hexameters, originally published in 1848, is now much read, or read at all. Its neglect is to be deplored, for, as Stopford Brooke said, "There is a true love of Nature, especially of Scottish scenery, in the poem," and, moreover, it is "full of quaint, observant humour." Something might be said, too, in favour of its reflections on life and work and its stimulating ideals.

The poem arose in this wise: In the summer of 1847, Clough went from Oxford to the Highlands as tutor of a reading party of undergraduates, who finally settled down for several weeks in a large farm-house at Drumna-drochit, on the north shore of Loch Ness. Here they were visited by Thomas Arnold (Matthew Arnold's brother) and John Campbell Shairp (afterwards Principal Shairp), who were on a walking tour in Scotland, and

had walked north along the west side of Loch Ericht, putting up for a night at a forester's hut, named "Toper-na-Fuosich," where they were hospitably treated. When the reading party broke up, Clough and a friend began a long ramble through the Western Highlands by taking this walk along Loch Ericht and stopping at the forester's hut, the description of which in the poem may be regarded as meant to conceal its real location, several of the allusions being quite inapplicable to Loch Ericht-side:—

There on the blank hill-side, looking down through the loch to the
ocean,

There with a runnel beside, and pine-trees twain before it,
There with the road underneath, and in sight of coaches and
steamers,

Dwelling of David Mackaye, and his daughters Elspie and Bella,
Sends up a column of smoke the Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich.

The poem was at first titled "The Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich" (the "Hut of the Bearded Well"), but this was subsequently altered to "The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich." Some of the incidents of the poem, according to Shairp, happened to him and Arnold while they were stopping at an inn on Loch Rannoch; and in Glenfinnan, at the head of Loch Shiel, they ran into the ball which Clough utilised—a celebration given by MacDonald of Glen Aladale in honour of the officers of some naval vessels then lying in a near-by port. The poem, besides, has direct references to the Braemar region, showing that Clough or some of his party had stayed there.

R.A.

THE *Inverness Courier* has recently published a series of interesting articles by Mr. Alexander Mackenzie on "Early Road-Making," with special reference to "General Wade in Upper Badenoch." The famous military roads, which did more than anything else to open up the Highlands in the eighteenth century, are always associated with the name of General Wade. Mr. Mackenzie points out, however, that he was in reality responsible for only a very small portion of them; still, he was their originator, and to him must be awarded the credit of having contrived the system which afterwards received such great extension. The roads were begun in 1725, and the system under which they were carried on remained in operation, with very little interval, till 1814, though before then many of them had been abandoned. They attained their fullest development about 1784, when Lieutenant-General Alexander Mackay, then commanding the forces in Scotland, reported that they extended to about 1100 miles. One of the best-known of General Wade's roads is that from Fort Augustus, at the head of Loch Ness, to "the great Highland road" from Perth to Inverness, which it joins at Dalwhinnie. This road goes right up the Corryarrick Pass by a series of traverses, and across it at a height of 2500 feet—much higher than the Cairnwell road (2199 feet) and Drumochter, Dava, and Tomintoul, all of which are between 1400 and 1500 feet in height. The construction of the Corryarrick section of the

road must have presented many formidable difficulties. The use of blasting materials was then unknown, all requirements had to be conveyed through a trackless country, and sufficient food and shelter for a large body of men had to be provided—a serious problem of itself; “the work was done,” says Mr. Mackenzie, “under circumstances that would have discouraged any man less capable and determined than the diplomat and engineering hero that first opened up the Central Highlands.” Mr. Mackenzie has a high word of praise for General Wade’s bridges. “The stability and endurance of all the bridges erected by Wade,” he says, “much depended on the length and fitness of the materials employed in the arch. The ring-stones were in many cases 5ft. 6ins. in length, even and uniform in thickness, and firmly grouted with liquid mortar. The foundations, in every case where possible, were laid on rock, while the haunching of the arch was amply sufficient to resist the thrust that might be placed upon it, the whole being banked up with sound material, and protected from wind and flood.” Mr. Mackenzie’s articles deal principally with the road which General Wade constructed through Badenoch and Strathspey, and contain much information with regard to the district it traverses, the local history, and the scenery.

DR. DAVIDSON of Torphins, in his book on the Gallipoli expedition—
 “The Incomparable 29th and the River Clyde”—gives
 BEN SLEOCH the following description of the mountain scenery in the
 IN THE island of Imbros, in the Ægean, whither several
 ÆGEAN. battalions of the expeditionary force were moved for a
 rest:—

“We dipped into a deep valley, clothed on all sides in thick shrubbery, with plenty of trees on the lowest part, along which there was a tiny stream with occasional beautiful rocky pools. The trees here and all along were principally olives, figs, mulberry, and a few walnuts. The road was the merest track, littered with stones, and wound up hill and down dale. At first it was so bad that I thought it must surely lead soon to a better path, but little did I think what we were in for; we were soon among huge boulders, and nothing but boulders, up and down shelving rock, often two feet higher than the path, slithering over stretches of hard, bare rock, and all the time without a single stumble on the part of any of our mounts. The scenery soon became simply glorious, and my three companions, who all knew Switzerland, said it was exactly like that country, except for the absence of chalets. The hills rose on all sides, some to a height of 5000ft. rough as possible, all volcanic of course, some looking as if they had belched out flames and smoke not so very long ago. One reminded me of Ben Sleoch as it rises out of Loch Maree, the same mass of rock atop, but here more rugged. Each mountain top and side was studded with enormous needle-like pinnacles and warty masses. It is strange how fertile these volcanic earths are. These high mountains were clothed with trees below, and had thick shrubbery almost to the top—mostly hollyoak, I fancy. The colouring of the rocks is very fine, the colours being warm reds, browns, purples, and yellows in one mingled mass.”

THE *Times Literary Supplement*, in its review of Sir Martin Conway's

"Mountain Memories," gave the following striking enumeration of the mountains and scenes referred to in the book :—

"The story begins with Sir Martin's earliest experiences in Switzerland, when to climb the Breithorn—a cow mountain—was an intoxication; and it ends, fittingly, in Tierra del Fuego, the end of the world. The Chilas gorge, 24,000ft. in depth—from the crest of Nanga Parbat to the river bank one steep, unbroken incline of snow and rock; the Hispar glacier, a stately avenue a hundred miles long; the Biafo glacier, a channel framed on either side for fifteen miles by needle-sharp spires that out-jut the Aiguilles of Chamonix in steepness, outnumber them perhaps a thousandfold in multitude, and out-reach them in size; the overwhelming magnificence of the Baltoro pass giving on multitudinous peaks among which K2 for all his 28,000ft. is but a prince among his peers; the magnetic sand on a many-coloured hill among the Chilean volcanoes, "which leaps into the air and flies about in sheets and masses when thunderstorms pass over, to the horror of the Indians"; the torrent from the Golden Crown glacier in Spitsbergen, dyed blood-red through the disintegration of sandstone and flowing in a deep, blue-sided trough over the white ice; the ice feathers draping a long *couloir* on Horn Sunds Tind, "splendid plumes eighteen inches long and of loveliest forms, like ostrich feathers glittering with diamond dust," which break into fragments in the wind, clash as they fall, and fill the air with a sibilant rushing sound so that the mountain sings; the shadow of Aconcagua flung 200 miles over the purpled waters and homing to his conqueror's feet as the sun mounted—these are but a few of the wonders with which the mountains have recompensed Sir Martin Conway for his service and devotion."

Mr. WALTER M. GALLICHAN, in an article in the *Daily Mail* of 24th March, poured scorn on "the average pocket lunch of diminutive sandwiches," mentioning that many persons, especially delicate women, became exhausted when trying to perform walking feats during the holidays upon such an unsubstantial meal. What should be aimed at, he contended, was the maximum of nutriment in the minimum space and weight. He recommended the substitution of cheese, which is one of the most nourishing foods; one ounce of cheese will give more staying power than twice the weight of lean beef. Sugar too, in one form or another, should be a part of the "concentrated lunch;" his own preference was for good chocolate, and next to that Swiss roll. Fruit and nut cakes, dates, figs, and raisins were also recommended. His "concentrated lunch" finally took the form of "Three ounces of bread, one ounce of cheese, two ounces of dates, and a bar of chocolate." Wheatmeal biscuits, oatcake, shortbread, and gingerbread, he added, contain rather more nutriment than ordinary bread or plain cake, "and they are all better food than the conventional thin sandwich with a shaving of lean ham."

MEMBERS of the Club were afforded a special opportunity—of which many took advantage—of witnessing a series of cinematograph pictures of scenery in the Rocky Mountains of Canada, which were shown to the Aberdeen branch of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in the Coliseum picture-house on 25 May. The pictures formed an exhibit sent by the Canadian Government to the International Congress of Alpinists held at Monaco in April, and were remarkably fine examples of photographic art. Many of the wonderful scenic features of the Canadian Rockies were displayed, and, in addition, representations were given of difficult and “fear-some-looking” mountain ascents. The camp life of the mountain-climbers was the subject of a number of humorous scenes, while sections of the 5000 feet film were devoted to the varieties of plants and animal life met with at different elevations. Mr. Byron Harman, of Banff, Alberta, was in charge of the exhibition. Dr. Levack, the chairman of the Club, presided.

THERE has been a gratifying accession of new members since the last annual meeting, the following 20 ladies and gentlemen having been admitted by the Committee during the present year :—

NEW	Alexander J. Adam, 97 Irvine Place, Aberdeen ;
MEMBERS.	Alexander E. Anton, solicitor, 1 St. Peter's Terrace, Buckie ; John Anton, M.A., B.L., solicitor, 1 St Peter's Terrace, Buckie ; Alexander Booth, 127 Union Street, Aberdeen ; Miss Annie C. Esslemont, Fairford, Cults ; George Hendry, M.B., 93 West Church Street, Buckie ; James Lorimer, Solicitor, “Norwood,” Cullen ; Miss Elizabeth Lyall, 40 High Street, Buckie ; James Cooper Lyon, 21 Waverley Place, Aberdeen ; William Round, M.A., 4 Dirlton Place, Bellshill, Glasgow ; A. J. Rusk, Clinton House, Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh ; D. Scott, Surveyor, Customs and Exeise, Strait Path, Banff ; R. T. Sellar, Battlehill, Huntly ;—Shepherd, 90 Fonthill Road, Aberdeen ; Miss Margaret Skakle, Bank House, Cults ; Miss Mary Skakle, Bank House, Cults ; James Watt, District Valuer, 25 Union Terrace, Aberdeen ; A. M. Macrae Williamson, 22 Rubislaw Den South, Aberdeen ; Gordon Wilson, 49 Rubislaw Den South, Aberdeen ; Major James Wood, M.C., Art Master and Architect, Reidhaven Street, Cullen.

The membership of the Club now stands at 173.

REVIEWS.

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB GUIDE. SECTION E.
BEN NEVIS. Edited by H. MacRobert, Edinburgh: The Scottish
Mountaineering Club. Pp. 42. 5/- net; by post, 5/3.—

THE THE Scottish Mountaineering Club has made a beginning
S. M. C. with the publication of its projected Guide Book to the
GUIDE. Mountains of Scotland. As readers of the *S. M. C.*

Journal are aware, much material has been already accumulated and has appeared in the *Journal*, but much still remains to be done. For instance, the region west of the Caledonian Canal and south of the Dingwall and Kyle of Lochalsh Railway line has yet to be "written up," and an appeal is made to those acquainted with Knoydart and Glen Shiel and the forests of Glen Affric and Strath Conon to furnish particulars. As it has been found impracticable, on financial and other grounds, to publish the Guide complete and as a whole, it has been decided to bring it out in sections, and the first section, dealing with Ben Nevis, has just been issued. This elaborate description of Ben Nevis and its various ridges, buttresses, and gullies, with the climbing routes, and a survey of the meteorology, topography, flora and fauna, is written by Dr. Inglis Clark; and the mention of his name is a sufficient guarantee of the carefulness, completeness and accuracy with which the work has been done. Precise details are given of all the climbs that have proved practicable, and the veriest tyro at climbing will find this an invaluable guide. For the non-climber there is very much in the general descriptions that will prove of interest, and the Guide is enhanced by a dozen beautiful illustrations, from photographs by Dr. Inglis Clark and others. If the complete Guide be produced on the scale and in the excellent manner of this section, it will become a most valuable possession. That however, will depend upon the support received, and we accordingly appeal to members of the Cairngorm Club to help along the commendable project of the S. M. Club. To drop into a little banality, the "Guide" is a book that no mountaineer should be without.

R. A.

THE RECREATIONS OF AN HISTORIAN. By George Macaulay Trevelyan.
Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd. New Edition. 1919. 2/6 net.—From this

volume Mr Trevelyan's chief "recreations" would seem
AN ESSAY to be writing articles on historical and literary subjects
ON in a lighter vein than that of the solid contributions to
WALKING. Italian history which have earned him a distinctive place
among historical scholars. He can unbend otherwise,
however, for included in his "trifles"—as, presumably, he would term
them—is a delightful essay on "Walking," which has much of the tone of
intimacy and the charm of style that characterise the well-known papers
of Hazlitt and Stevenson on the same theme. It is a dissertation on the

pleasures of walking, and it conveys impressions of the feelings inspired by certain walks rather than descriptions of the scenes viewed. It is permeated by a fine instinct for Nature and natural beauty.

The "personal equation," too, is obvious but not obtrusive: Mr. Trevelyan takes a keen delight in a healthy exercise, and testifies to its stimulating effects. His "recipe for the blue devils" is the simple one of going for a long walk. Quoting the couplet:

"A Sunday well spent
Means a week of content."

he gives it an interpretation not strictly orthodox, perhaps, but nevertheless eminently sane and sensible:—

"That is, of course [he says], a Sunday spent with both legs swinging all day over ground where grass or heather grows. I have often known the righteous forsaken and his seed begging for bread, but I never knew a man go for an honest day's walk, for whatever distance, great or small, his pair of compasses could measure out in the time, and not have his reward in the repossession of his own soul."

Very evidently Mr. Trevelyan is a devotee of walking—of long walks as against mere "tramping." The references to various walks show that he has wandered in many directions—in the Lake district, round the coast of Devon and Cornwall, across Central Italy, and elsewhere; and allusions to spins of five-and-twenty miles, walks by night and in rain, demonstrate that he is of the very best quality of walkers—those to whom unfavourable weather conditions are no deterrent.

On the much-debated questions whether walking should be solitary or in company, whether it should be accompanied by talk or conducted in silence, Mr. Trevelyan has a good deal to say, but he hardly expresses a definite conclusion, though leaning to the view that only solitary walks are perfect. The choice really depends on the mood of the moment, and, after all, "the high, ultimate end of Walking is something other than to promote talk." Then there is the question of road-walking. Mr. Trevelyan rightly says "There are many schools of Walking and none of them orthodox." One school is that of the road-walkers, whom he terms "the Puritans of the religion;" but, on the other hand, "the secret beauties of Nature are revealed only to the cross-country walker." There are many other reflections in this charming essay well worth the consideration of all pedestrians—not least, "the social duties" incumbent on the walker and those equally incumbent on landed proprietors. Mr. Trevelyan deprecates the bad habit of closing moors, which, he says, is spreading in some places; and almost the only cynical remark in which he indulges is this:—"The Highlands have very largely ceased to belong to Britain on account of the deer, and we are in danger of losing the grouse moors as well. If the Alps were British, they would long ago have been closed on account of the chamois." R. A.

To the April number of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Mr. G. M. Fraser, Librarian of the Aberdeen Public Library, contributes the first of a series of articles on "The 'Mounth' Passes over the THE "MOUNTH" Grampians." He points out that the term "Mounth PASSES. is the English rendering of the Gaelic "Monadh," meaning a moor or heath and having no reference what-

ever to a road or pass. "Mounth" was originally applied in its proper meaning to describe, not a pass, but the Grampian range itself, as in the well-known phrase, "dwelling to the north of the Munth," in Aberdeen's first charter from William the Lion. By corrupt and loose usage, however, "Mounth" came to be applied to the passes through the range. Mr. Fraser enumerates six of these passes:—1. The Causey or Cowie Mounth, a "historic highway," which ran between Cowie and Aberdeen, and was the main connecting link between Aberdeen and the south till the Stonehaven turnpike road was made. 2. Elsieck Mounth, leading from Stonehaven to the old ford and boat on the Dee at Tilbouries. 3. The Slug Road, leading from Stonehaven to Durris and to the crossing of the Dee at Crathes and at Banchory Church. 4. Cryne's Cross Mounth, leading from Laurencekirk and "Paldy" kirk in the Mearns to the river crossing at Mills of Drum. 5. The Stock Mounth, leading from Glenbervie to Strachan. 6. Bulg Mounth, an important pass leading from Glenfarquhar to Deeside, but doubtless well known as a drove road. An accompanying map shows that there are more of these Mounth roads to be enumerated. The map, by the way, correctly designates the pass between Ben Muich Dhui and B'aeriach—for the first time in our observation—as "The Lairig."

The number contains, besides Mr. Fraser's article, Professor Lyde's presidential address at the Geographical Section of last year's meeting of the British Association, the subject being "The International Rivers of Europe," and an article on "Recent Developments in Spitsbergen," by Professor Rudmose Brown.

THE April number of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* opens with "The Cairngorms—An Appreciation," by G. Murray Lawson—a sprightly

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article recounting experiences during visits to the Cairngorm district, including those of a day of rain, ultimately transformed into sleet, rendered all the more unpleasant by a strong south-easterly gale. The writer, nevertheless, is loud in his praise of the Cairngorms and of Rothiemurchus forest, and has even a kindly word to say of sleeping under the Shelter Stone. "It is true," he remarks, "that the couch it offers is somewhat hard, and that at times the draughts are somewhat persistent, but, after a day spent in the open, slumber, induced by fresh air and exercise, comes readily, and the sleeper awakens in the morning more refreshed than if the night had been spent in conventional surroundings. Then there is the scenery at one's doorstep, so to speak." Accompanying the article are admirable photographs of Carn Elrick and the Pools of Dee. Permission has been given to reprint from *Punch* some verses by Miss C. G. M. Orr on "The Road"—"the road that runs by Atholl." Of the seven verses two apply to the Speyside section of the road:—

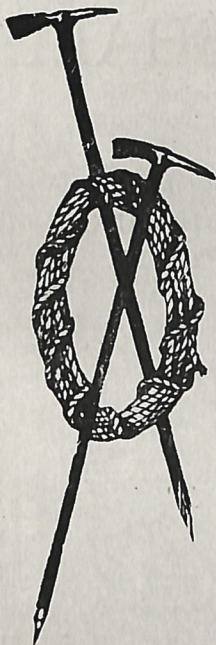
The road it runs by Alvie—you may linger if you list
To gaze on Ben Muich Dhui and the Larig's cap of mist;
There are pines in Rothiemurchus like a gipsy's dusky hair,
There are birch-trees on Craigellachie like elfin silver-ware.

The road it runs to Forres and it leaves the hills behind,
 For the roving winds from Morayshire have brought the sea to mind ;
 But still it winds to northward in the twilight of the day,
 Where the stars shine down at evening on the bonny haughs o' Spey.

Mr. G. W. T. H. Fleming writes on "Loch Etive Side," and under the title of "Froth and Fancy" Mr. G. Sang has some reflections on the Peaks of Cruachan. An illustration is given of the War Memorial Tablet erected in the Library of the Club's Club-room.

THE *Rucksack Club Journal* for the present year has a great variety of articles, ranging from climbs in the Lake District and Wales, on Ben Nevis and Cioch, in Skye, to "A Few Days' Peak-Bagging in Vancouver." Mr. J. Rooke Corbett, in "A Day in Shetland," describes a walk from Scalloway to Ronas Hill, which he ascended at midnight ; he then made for Hillswick, where he knocked up the hotel at 4 o'clock in the morning, in broad daylight. "The Caravaners Up-to-date" is the record of a tour in an improvised caravan—an ambulance "body" fitted on to a motor chassis ; the "van" was used as a mobile "base," from which many hill ascents were made. There is an interesting article on a Journal in the Lakes, written in 1769 by Thomas Gray, the author of the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard." The poet became quite enthusiastic over the scenery—so much so that, as the writer of the article suggests, the generally accepted statement that Wordsworth was the first man to appreciate the Lakes will have to be modified.

ALTITUDE is, I have often thought, a more potent factor in the life and conduct of man than latitude—more even, perhaps, than ALTITUDE AND race, environment, or heredity. Crime, I am inclined CONDUCT. to believe, is more often hatched at the bottom than at the top of a mountain. A writer who knows the Cotswolds inside and out insists that the cottagers who live on or near the top of those delectable hills are ethically, as well as intellectually, superior to those who dwell at the foot. A monk of Monte Cassino informed me that the people of the little town (I forget its name) half-way up the holy mount were both more moral and more pious than the inhabitants of Cassino in the plain below ; and, when I asked the reason, said simply, "E piu alto," as if that explained everything. It must be easier, I sometimes fancy, to lead a virtuous life at Harrow-on-the-Hill than at Moreton-in-the-Marsh or Bourton-on-the-Water. Given the choice, I should prefer to reside at Pera rather than at Galata ; at Petropolis or Tijuca, with the cool rivulets running through the streets, rather than in hot wicked Rio de Janeiro ; in the keen clear air of Jerusalem, nearly 3000 feet above the Mediterranean, rather than in sleepy steaming Jericho, 1300 feet below it.—"A Medley of Memories," by the Right Rev. Sir David Hunter Blair.



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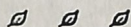
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