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THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY
ROBERT ANDERSON.

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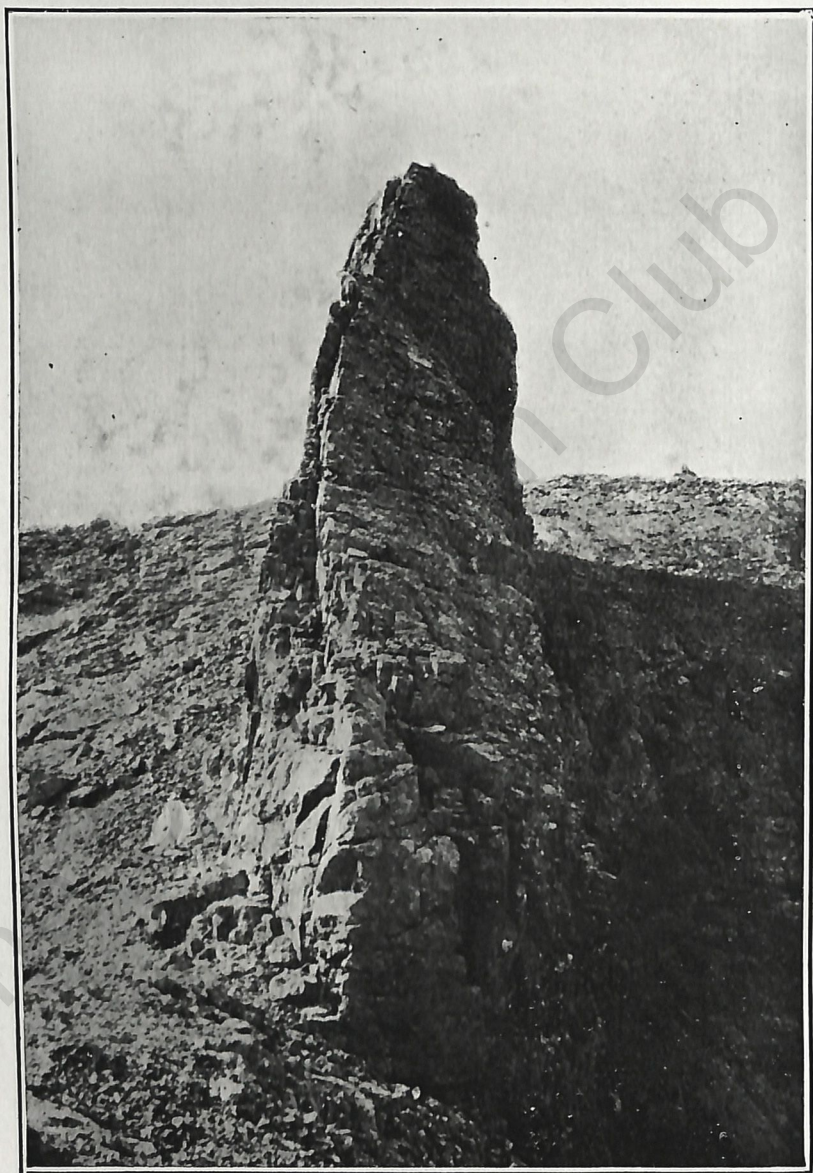


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Dr. J. R. Levack

THE INACCESSIBLE PINNACLE OF SGURR DEARG,
SKYE.

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A SUMMER'S NIGHT ON THE HIGH TOPS.

BY SETON GORDON, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

FOR a month on either side of the longest day there is no darkness on the high hills. For days on end grey vapours may envelop them so that they are hidden from the glens and all the world beneath, but even in the mists at midnight there is a soft twilight, and it is not until the coming of August that this twilight merges into true darkness. In fine summer weather a night spent on the high tops, 4000 feet above sea level, is an experience, even to one who knows the hills well, to live long in the memory.

It was towards eight o'clock one perfect evening, with brilliant sunshine and not a cloud in the sky, that the writer and a companion pitched their small tent at the head of a corrie 3600 feet above the sea, by name Clais Luineag. Much snow still lay in the corrie—indeed, its western side was still white almost as in midwinter, for the snow had been drifted in before many fierce winter gales. Gradually, as the sun dipped westward, these snow-beds lost their dazzling whiteness and were bathed in a soft warm glow. From our tent a wide view stretched away westward. Near us lay the fine forests of Glen Feshie and Gaick, with Ben Alder and its snow-flecked hill behind them, and away beyond that again the long outline of Ben Nevis. Even at this season of

midsummer this great hill was almost entirely snow-clad, for were its summit but 600 feet higher it would be the home of eternal snows.

As the sun set away behind the hills of the Atlantic seaboard, sixty miles distant, deer, in their feeding, closely approached our tent, and the charm of this summer's night seemed to weave its spell about them, for they were curiously unafraid and paid little heed to us. At midnight—G.M.T.—the corrie was bathed in a soft twilight. Looking north, the sky burned brightly with the sun's afterglow, against which the hill tops seemed black and grim. Towards the western horizon stars twinkled, and southward a pale moon hung in the sky. Gradually the light strengthened, and soon a cock ptarmigan roused himself in the corrie, croaking quietly in the intense stillness of the dawn. On a snow-field were the tracks of a fox, made when the sun still shone,—for now the snow was being bound in the grip of a black frost which had come to the hills with the dawn.

A couple of miles to the north lay Braeriach, 4248 feet above the level of the sea. Here is the birth-place of the Dee, but where it falls in cascades down the precipitous face of the hill the infant stream was still flowing almost entirely beneath great snow-beds which had imprisoned it continuously since late October. Even trout are absent from the uppermost reaches of the Dee, but within two miles of its source they are plentiful, and stray salmon at times press onward until they have reached a point of the stream where it is a full 2000 feet above sea level. Immediately beneath us the ground dropped away almost sheer to the glen of the Garbhchoire. More than anywhere on the whole Cairngorm range does the snow lie here—indeed, the corrie has never, within living memory, been entirely free of snow, even during the hottest summer.

As we stood on the ridge above the corrie, the rising sun, appearing from the plateau of Cairngorm near where Lochan Buidhe gives drink to the stags when

they feed on the high ground in fine summer weather, shone on the eternal snows of the Garbhchoire, so that from a cold greyish-white they were transformed by a pale rose-tinted light. And with the sun there came to the corries and glens a soft white mist which, at first no bigger than a man's hand, gradually and imperceptibly grew until the whole world beneath us was shut out, and only the hill tops were clear. As the sun rose and one looked across the mist-sea to the east, the sun's reflection on the clouds was almost dazzling, and we thought that the mists would soon be dispelled. But no! It was not till past mid-day that the sun obtained the mastery, and for an hour or two before then the clouds reached even the highest tops so that they were enveloped in cold damp vapours.

On a morning such as this the birds of the high tops revel in the joy of life. Ptarmigan, with half-grown chicks around them; sun themselves amongst the rocks. The snow-bunting hunts for insects where they have fallen, numbed, on the surface of some snow-field, or else amuses himself by running across the snow with head lowered and half-submerged beneath the icy surface. The king of the hills, the golden eagle, is wont, on a morning such as this, to perch on the summit of the highest hill, where he is warmed by the rays of the rising sun, and where he can survey glen and corrie in undisturbed security.

Summer may be short on the high tops, but while she lingers there it is good to commune with the Spirit of the Hills, and to taste of the pure joys that are given to the lover of Nature in her grandest and most noble form.

A ROCK-CLIMBING NOVITIATE IN SKYE:
SCALING THE COOLIN PEAKS.

BY A. M. MACRAE WILLIAMSON.

[*Some youthful members of the Club made their first visit to Skye last August, and, with little initiation in rock-climbing, ascended a number of the highest peaks of The Coolin, "doing" the Inaccessible Pinnacle, for instance, three times in five days. Their performance was quite remarkable, considering their youth and inexperience; and the subjoined account of it, by one of the adventurous party, will be found highly interesting.—EDITOR.*]

FOR some time we had been keen to do some serious rock-climbing, and a few expeditions on the more difficult courses at Souter Head had convinced us that there was only one sport in the world. Consequently, after the Easter meet of the Club at Crianlarich, Rusk and I decided that our summer vacation should be spent, in part at least, on a holiday in Skye. Arrangements were made and we were fortunate in securing accommodation at the post office in Glen Brittle. Before the time for departure arrived we were able to make up our party to three by the inclusion of Herbert Mackintosh, whose performances at Souter Head convinced us that in him we would have a safe and competent companion.

We had considerable misgivings about the ultimate success of our expedition, as it was planned for the month of August. All our friends were most pessimistic and remarked that we were sure to get plenty of rain, as August was the worst month in Skye. These fears, however, were quite unfounded as it turned out. Rusk and I set off one morning from Aberdeen on our motor-

bikes; Mackintosh at the last moment was unable to come for the first week. The bikes behaved splendidly, and we reached our intended destination, Jeantown, comfortably in the evening. Next day's run was to be to Kyle, and thence to Sligachan, where the bikes were to be left, as we were to walk to Glen Brittle. We got to Kyle by noon after some exciting work on the road from Strome Ferry to Balmacara, especially on the hill immediately above Strome Ferry station.

About two o'clock we landed in Skye. It didn't look a bit different from the mainland, though we felt as if everyone ought to be carrying coils of rope and wearing huge-nailed boots. However, there is one particular in which Skye does differ from the mainland, and that is that the roads are a trifle worse. The road was comparatively good as far as Broadford, though we did see workmen repairing it, just outside Kyleakin, with the aid of a rake. Evidently they go in for appearances, and ruts are not seemly in their sight, but to rake these ruts is a matter of little labour, for the surface of the road is such as may be found on any pebbly beach. Between Broadford and Sligachan, however, it is different. The surface of the road is a little better—in fact it has had tar-macadam put upon it, but that must have been long ago. It is not the surface that is so noticeable here, it is the gradient. There are two terrific hills on the road, with hairpin bends galore, and any one familiar with fixed engine motor-bikes will be able to gauge our efforts that day. Eventually we managed to overcome all difficulties and got on to the comparatively level road along the lochside to Sligachan. The weather, hitherto splendid, broke at this point, and we had a heavy shower for the last four or five miles; we comforted ourselves with the reflection that we were almost within smelling distance of our destination.

By the time we had finished tea at the hotel the rain had stopped, and, leaving our bikes and heavy coats, we set out for Glen Brittle, carrying our other belongings with us. The way lay up the valley of the

Allt Dearg—a torrent that rises among The Coolin and descends to join the river Sligachan. It is a beautiful stream with numerous waterfalls and magnificent pools. Before long we were on the summit of the pass and looked down into Glen Brittle. The hills were swathed in thick mist, but the Waterpipe Gully showed up well on our left hand. Descending quickly into Coire na Creiche, we soon gained the road that runs from Carbost to Glen Brittle Lodge, along which the remainder of our journey lay. Just as we reached the lodge the mist cleared, and we had a magnificent view of the stupendous cliffs of Sron na Ciche; it was worth walking fifty miles to see, let alone to climb. At the lodge we met another climber bound for the post office—a Swiss doctor, whose subsequent performances on the crags seemed to us little short of miraculous. Together we crossed the river and made our way to the post office, where we were met by our landlady, Mrs. Chisholm. We arrived just in time for dinner. We introduced ourselves to two members of the Rock and Fell Climbing Club, who were also on their first climbing visit to Skye; and after dinner we exchanged experiences, and it was late before we retired.

When we looked out next morning we were enchanted with the view. Sgurr Banachdich, Dearg, Mhic Choinnich, Alasdair, Sgumain, and the precipices of the Sron na Ciche were all free from mist, and to us, fresh from the beautiful curves of the Cairngorms, they looked even more stupendous than they really are. After breakfast we decided to go to the top of Sgurr Dearg and take a view from there to get our bearings, and see the famous Inaccessible Pinnacle, about which we had heard so much, and which, as mountaineers know, is no longer “inaccessible.” We had scarcely got on to the shoulder of the mountain when the rain came down and the wind got up, and altogether it became very unpleasant. We persevered, however, and in spite of the thick mist we ultimately got to the top and saw the Pinnacle looming up through the haze; it looked

tremendous—so tremendous that we gave up any hope of climbing it even after three weeks of training. We climbed down and went round to the eastern end to have a look from there. We even climbed up a bit, but the arête seemed to go straight up, the holds seemed to vanish, and we climbed down again.

Having found a comparatively dry spot (the rocks were streaming with water), we sorrowfully commenced to eat our lunch, and had almost finished when, in the lulls of the wind, we heard the sounds of song and laughter. Hastily finishing our meal, we ascended the slope to the western end and there beheld our Swiss friend on the well-known "mantel-shelf"—or, rather, he was just below and was attempting to effect a lodgment on it. He had removed his boots and was in his stocking-soles; he said there was less chance of slipping that way (we took his word for it, but have never imitated him). He kept on feeling for hand-holds and didn't seem to find any. This was not encouraging, as he had been up the Zmutt ridge on the Matterhorn, and if he couldn't find satisfying holds, how were we to find them? After about ten minutes he succeeded in getting on to the "mantel-shelf" and soon was on the top. No sooner had he got there than he threw down the end of his rope and invited us to come up. With considerable misgiving I tied on the rope and began my first rock-climb in Skye. The commencement was not very difficult, and I soon found myself just below the "mantel-shelf" and began to look for hand-holds. I was able to get a fairly satisfying one out on the right, and by using it was able to get another for my left hand: I found the rope most useful here, though I never had my weight on it. The fact of having a rope on helped me to keep my balance during the trying pull on to the "mantel-shelf," which slopes considerably to one's disadvantage. From the "mantel-shelf" to the top is easy enough, and I soon joined the doctor on the summit. Rusk followed quickly and soon was beside us. The weather conditions were not such as to encourage us to linger on the top, and almost

immediately we began to descend the eastern arête. We found this more trying than ascending the western side as the holds were almost invisible in the mist. We reached the foot, however, sound in limb and well-pleased with our first ascent in Skye. The weather cleared almost as soon as we had descended, and the wind dried our clothing before we got home. I shall always look back on the 10th of August, 1920, as one of the landmarks of my climbing experiences. To climb the Pinnacle had been one of our greatest longings, and lo! we had accomplished it on our first day!

The next day was dull, and mist hung about all the peaks. We decided that we would try an easy climb, and, accordingly, we set off after breakfast for the West Buttress of Sgumain. The climb afforded no serious difficulty except at the final rock tower, where the holds were small and sloping and very wet from the rain of the previous day. We accomplished the climb, however, and a short scramble led from the buttress to the top. The day was still young, and we looked about for fresh peaks to conquer, deciding in the end to traverse along to Alasdair. The ridge here is very narrow, and the way is rendered sensational by several pinnacles and gendarmes. We did not know they could be avoided on the right, and ultimately decided to traverse downward to the left and reach Alasdair by means of its buttress. After some sensational work on small holds in rotten rock we succeeded in doing this; and reached the top of the highest peak in The Coolin. We later discovered that this buttress is classed as infinitely more difficult than the traverse of the ridge even over the gendarmes. Our homeward way was down the great stone shoot, of which the less said the better: it would be an ideal place to which to send the ex-Kaiser for stone-breaking purposes; the utility of his work would appeal to all Skye climbers.

The third day of our holiday was magnificent; and having heard of the excellence of the climbing to be had on the Window Tower Buttress of Sgurr Dearg, we

decided on an expedition thither. The grind over the screes and slabs to the foot of the buttress was toilsome on such a fine day, but it was eventually accomplished and we attacked the buttress. The climbing, while interesting, is not very severe, and we were soon on the main ridge of Dearg. It was scarcely mid-day, and with the day so fine there was the prospect of a good view from the top. Accordingly, we set off and soon arrived there. The Pinnacle looked very fine—so fine, indeed, that we decided to try the eastern arête on our own account. We succeeded in the attempt. The climbing throughout is excellent and the holds ample; the views on each side are exhilarating in the extreme. We were very proud of having done this difficult climb unaided. Rusk descended the western end by means of the doubled rope, while I went down the eastern end again. So ended the third of our expeditions: we had already made five good ascents and two descents.

The next day was fine, but we decided that we would have an off-day—not that we were tired, but we felt that if we climbed every day we would have done all the climbs in our power before our third man turned up. The weather held, and the following day was still finer. We decided that it could not be wasted, and set off for the buttress of Mhic Choinnich. This magnificent buttress rises fully 1000 feet above the little loch in Coire Lagan. Its ascent turned out to be the finest climb we had yet attempted. The whole climb is difficult enough to be interesting, especially the last 200 feet or so, which is up a very exposed face, where the holds are small and the angle very steep. I would strongly urge all visitors to Glen Brittle to do this climb, especially if, like us, they are novices at the start. The rock is good, and danger is reduced to a minimum. We decided to go back *via* Dearg, and set out along the narrow ridge westward. Skirting the left side of An Stac we reached the top of Dearg and repeated our performance of two days before by climbing the Inaccessible Pinnacle—for the third time in five days.

We felt that there was a danger of our becoming *blasé* about it, so we agreed not to do it again until Mackintosh had joined us.

The next day, Sunday, was depressing; the rain descended in sheets all day, and the only excitement was got from watching the little burns fill up and the river rise steadily. We estimated that the rise in the river was quite eight feet. No climbing was done that day.

Monday was fair but dull, and we set off early for Sligachan to meet Mackintosh, who, we concluded, would probably arrive about five o'clock. We had scarcely got started when the rain came on again, and we were well soaked by the time the hotel was reached. Mackintosh did not turn up, so we resolved to take our motor bikes back. Over the journey I will draw a veil. It will suffice to say that we took three hours and a half to do the twelve miles—there were over half-a-dozen unbridged streams to cross, and the surface of the road on the Carbost side of the hill was extraordinary. It was such that I wonder a wealthy American hasn't bought it and shipped it over to the States as a curiosity.

We started out next day with the intention of climbing Bidein from Coire na Creiche and coming back over the ridge by way of Mhadaidh and Banachdich. We got to Coire na Creiche but no farther. We spent the day loafing about looking at the Waterpipe Gully. In the evening we were greatly pleased to see Mackintosh, who had motored across from Sligachan.

In celebration of his arrival we decided on doing the Cioch by Cioch Gully on the following day. Unfortunately, the day proved wet. Heavy, sad-looking clouds hung about the peaks, and when we did get a blink of sunshine the glimmer from the cliffs showed that the rocks were very wet. We were able, however, to accomplish our project on the day after, and found the climb exceedingly good despite the condition of the rocks. The archway pitch was a considerable waterfall,

and the last pitch completely baffled us, the "small holds on the left wall" being invisible under a film of running water. We accordingly made a traverse out under the slab and soon gained the top. Mackintosh distinguished himself by attempting the finish of the Cioch "direct," but had to be assisted with the rope over the last bit. We did not stay long on the top as a cold wind had sprung up. We descended by the Eastern Gully, coming down the second pitch on the doubled rope. This is a magnificent cave pitch which, to the best of my knowledge, is yet unclimbed.

On the afternoon of the next day we did the Window Buttress again. Mackintosh climbed through the window, using my head as a foothold. He gave himself a playful kick-off with his edge nails; my hair is beginning to grow again!

On the following day we did our greatest effort—the round of the peaks of Coire Lagan. We approached the ridge by way of the North Buttress of Sgumain and crossed to Alasdair along the ridge over the gendarmes. The day was fine, and the only regrettable thing was that, owing to mist and wind coming on, we were unable to do the Inaccessible Pinnacle, at least not without considerable risk.

For the next three days we did nothing except walk to Carbost. This journey we did in just under five hours; as we walked farther than merely to Carbost, we covered quite twenty miles in that time.

Our next climb was the Cioch again—this time by the ordinary route up the Eastern Gully and the slab. We had intended to do the whole of the Eastern Gully, but the mist came down and it got very cold, so we gave up the idea. We tackled some boulder problems in Coire Lagan, one of which was accomplished in truly noble style by Mackintosh. As the boulder overhung for the first five or six feet and was quite without holds except those seen with the eye of faith, the climb was highly creditable.

Our next effort was the crowning glory of the holiday

—a whole day on the Inaccessible Pinnacle. We climbed it by every known route, and certainly invented one variation, if not more. Our bag included the south-west crack, and a climb on the north-west corner, which overhangs for about twenty feet: a traverse has to be made to the right and the finish is by Raeburn's crack. This was a grand day—there was scarcely a cloud in the sky, and the rocks were almost uncomfortably warm. I think we climbed the pinnacle about twenty-two times between us that day.

This was our last day of really good climbing. Rusk and Mackintosh went to Sgurr nan Gillean and did the west ridge over the gendarme. Owing to my being badly burned by the sun (I adopt an unconventional attire on the tops of the peaks in warm weather), I thought it inadvisable to do anything strenuous, so spent the day in Coire Lagan. Ultimately, the midges drove me to the rocks, and I did the Cioch and completed the Eastern Gully round. Two days later we left for home.

This is quite the finest holiday any of us has had. We look forward to many more like it. The comfort to be had at the post office is marvellous. When I say that we were as well looked after as we would have been by Mrs. Birse at Clova, members will realise what a paradise for the mountaineer Glen Brittle is. I would advise all intending visitors to Skye to apply to Mrs. Chisholm for lodgings, and all who go from Aberdeen should make several expeditions beforehand to the cliffs at Souter Head.

FROM GARBHCHOIRE TO GLENCOE :
THE SNOW-BEDS IN THE CAIRNGORMS.

BY JAMES H. BELL.

I SPENT a few days in the Cairngorm region in July, with a view to securing some presentable photographs of the grand rock scenery of the Garbhchoire and other parts of the Braeriach-Cairntoul amphitheatre. In this, however, I was completely baffled by the ubiquitous and watchful mist, which prevented any more than two expeditions during six days' camping residence with a friend at Alltduie. The seventh morning was brilliant and afforded a perfect view—from the train at Aviemore!—of all the tops, with the conspicuous snow-field above Corrie Lochan. The treachery of the weather on the two occasions on which we ventured among the high hills was all of a piece with the above behaviour. Still, all the varied and unpleasant forms of atmospheric moisture can hardly efface the charm of these hills—especially the retrospective charm.

We reached Coylum Bridge about 9 p.m. on Thursday, July 8th. There we left a motor cycle and side car with the most of our goods and proceeded to Alltduie with a light weight tent and the merest necessaries. The idea was to settle the Garbhchoire amphitheatre in one day and proceed farther north. We started well next day, with a fresh morning sun shimmering on the Làirig burn as we ascended through the pine forest. All went well till second breakfast on the slopes above the Pools of Dee. There was a fairly large patch of snow on the screes above there, and the pleasures of being photographed in extreme peril on an Alpine ice slope with a walking-stick, and, later, of experimenting on the coefficient of friction on snow slopes, of boulders of

different shapes and sizes, did away with perhaps the only clear hour we had. It was certainly ominously dark and misty on the summit ridge of Braeriach half an hour later. In fact, the conditions were so uninspiring that we forgot the Garbhchoire and became absorbed in the erratic movements of a ptarmigan hen, anxiously hopping round the screes near us with drooping wing. After a short search, my friend located and captured the chick, and the last few moments' grace before the storm burst on us was occupied in photographing him after posing him in a niche between two boulders. Then we fled to the summit cairn. No use! In most parts of the world the wind comes from some particular quarter. On Braeriach it comes from all quarters at once. We fled down the ridge towards Sron na Leirg in a driving, freezing rain—large drops cutting into our faces like a sandblast. It faired up as we descended to the Làirig, and we dried our soaked garments in a blazing sun on Allt druie meadow.

We did not leave next day as our means of transport failed us, but it took five days for another promising morning to appear. It is a truism that everyone gets up at, or before, sunrise in a tent. On my first visit to Allt druie I breakfasted at 4 a.m. Last year (1920), we started at 6 a.m., but fell off to 9 a.m. for this second expedition. The weather was fine and enjoyable; I started off alone, but I was not sanguine. After all, it might collapse at any time, and there was clearly no occasion for hurry. So I smoked a contemplative pipe behind the moraines just above the tree limit on the Làirig. A lady passed me in full hill-tramping kit. Later, I joined her, and we proceeded together to the Pools of Dee. She was walking alone from Coylum Bridge to Braemar—a thing which would require some consideration—and still more tobacco—for me to undertake. I have often tried to blame this circumstance for the day's weather experiences in the Garbhchoire and my failure to secure photographs, but it will not do, as I had intended to start at 4 a.m. In any case, the

weather probably favoured the lady—at least, as far as Derry Lodge—whilst it was engaged in fogging up the Garbhchoire and Braeriach plateau. Meanwhile, I sloped upwards to the right to short-cut into the corrie—my second error of thoughtless indecision, since two years before I wasted much energy and many words on these same abominable screes. It should be possible to traverse from the Pools of Dee at the 3000 feet level into the Fuar Garbhchoire, but the self-control and labour expended would be colossal over these interminable screes of huge, rocking, granitic blocks. The two sane routes are either to slope up to the Braeriach summit ridge before the Pools of Dee or to descend farther to the junction of the stream from the Pools with the Garbhchoire burn or headwaters of the Dee. In the end, I made a rough descent to this stream down the steep screes, and followed it up.

Here the mist came curling down, and when I entered the Fuar Garbhchoire the Dee waterfall was lost in a white blur. In fact, it became so thick soon that nothing was visible but the snow-field, which almost filled the Corrie. One could certainly walk over snow for at least a quarter of a mile up here. The stream was, for long stretches, buried, and elsewhere showed fine caverns and snow bridges. A photograph I took then is rather suggestive, on a small scale, of a view I have seen of the seaward termination of an Alaskan glacier. However, I was still after a shot at the waterfall, and climbed up the rocks on the right side (facing). I had a splendid scramble up the 650 feet of granite cliff—but only ghostly and misty photographs. At the top, just beneath the rim of the plateau, there were some fine cornice effects. On the plateau, ten yards was the limit visibility, and I was glad of a minute pocket compass. I set my course north-west and wandered on for five minutes before consulting it again, when, to my surprise, I found myself on the edge of nothingness and going due south-east. Nothing for it but to climb up the ridge again, re-directing myself every minute. In a few minutes

I was again descending over sandy scree. On the way I surprised no fewer than three broods of ptarmigan, the hens croaking and circling about in the usual broken-winged fashion, but with small need for concealment, as about a score of fluffy, little, greenish-yellow chicks were cheeping and hopping about. They were fairly tame, pretty, little birds, and did not seem to mind the heavy rain and cheerless neighbourhood in the least. Five minutes later and I suddenly descended beneath the mist cap. There was the end of Loch Eunach, the winding stream down the glen, the shooting road, and the buttresses of Sgoran Dubh. I believe I should really have reached Alltdruie dry on this occasion, so warm was it in the valley, but for a *faux pas* on a mossy stone while crossing the Allt na Beinne burn.

It may be of interest to mention some other localities where snow-fields were in evidence in the days that followed. In the Cairngorms there was a large drift above Corrie Lochan on Braeriach, with several smaller drifts in some other western corries. In the Làirig were] one or two small drifts on the Sron na Leirg slopes, and a quite respectable bed on Ben Muich Dhui, above the waterfall over the Pools of Dee. About the lowest altitude snowbed we saw, however, was a short distance south of the summit of Wade's old road over Corrieyaraick—only about 2500 feet altitude, and exposed to north-west winds.

Wade's old road from Speyside, over Corrieyaraick, to Fort Augustus well repays a visit. It is really only the lower slopes which are in bad condition and serve as water courses, enforcing a "general wade." The view from the summit is magnificent, and is dramatically revealed to a traveller from Speyside. To the north-west the Sisters of Kintail and the other Glen Shiel peaks are most conspicuous. The bottom of the rift of the Caledonian Canal is not visible from here, but the deep, wooded Glen Tarff winds downward towards it, apparently at one's feet. There was no snow visible on any of the north-western peaks, but a little farther on a

glimpse across a gap in the hills to the south-west showed patches of white on the Ben Nevis group. A few days later we crossed the Mamores from the bend of Glen Nevis to Kinloch-leven by a col to the west of Stob Ban. The day was thick and occasionally wet, but there seemed to be no snow lying in any of the likely corries of the Mamores.

Our last climbing ground was Glencoe. The weather sustained its reputation to the last with a half-hour's blizzard on the summit of Sgor na Fionnaidh after a misty traverse of the Aonach Eagach ridge. Curiously enough, the mist did not descend till a full twenty minutes after we reached the ridge, thus affording excellent views from Ben Nevis and the Mamores, round to Ben Alder and Schiehallion. There was very little snow in Glencoe—only a few small patches in the upper corries of Bidean nan Bian. We had one other pleasant day—up to Ossian's Cave, over the top of Aonach Dubh and along the ridge to Stob Coire an Lochan. Ossian's Cave and Ossian's Ladder were very wet, but not until we topped our final peak did the storm get to work in earnest. Luckily, we struck easy screes into Corrie nam Beith. There seemed to be no snow in the eastern corries of Stob Coire an Lochan. These eastern crags have wonderful, slender pinnacles, and the rocks are so sheer as to allow of a stone dropping down over 1000 feet before reaching earth—truly, an admirable place for experiments with a parachute!

The corries held far more snow last year (1920) than they did in either of the previous two years. In late August, 1918, the Cairngorm snows were confined on the Braeriach side to a few insignificant patches in the upper main Garbhchoire with none in the other corries. In 1919 I did not visit the Cairngorms, but in early July there was still some snow on Ben More and Ben Lui, a few small patches in the upper corries of Bidean and Stob Coire an Lochan, and a fair amount on Ben Nevis. Of course, a visit in early September shows the snow at its yearly minimum, but I fancy little impression would

have been made last year on the beds of the Fuar Garbhchoire. A photograph I received later, taken in early July last year from Glen Dee below Cairn Toul, shows vast snows as well, in the Choiré Bhrochain of Braeriach, which was clear in 1918.

Besides the charm of their arctic corries and plateaux, I think the Cairngorms have more self-contained individuality and vastness than any Scottish mountain group. Especially is this the case with the wild and remote, rocky "cirque" from Braeriach to Cairn Toul, which I have not yet visited nearly as often as I would like to; and even then I do not expect to exhaust its variety and charm. Allt druie is an admirable base camp, and this fine open meadow, circled by glorious pine forest, with the rippling burn and the majestic imminence of the outposts of the Làirig—Carn Elrick and Creag na Leacainn—is varied enough to fill many an off-day with contented idleness.

THE LAIRIG DHRU IN CALM.*

BY JAMES A. HADDEN AND JAMES CONNER.

ALTHOUGH having quite in mind the old proverb "Once bitten, twice shy," the writers of these notes decided again to venture their luck in a tramp through the Làirig Dhrù. On a previous occasion—in the first week of October, 1918—we met with such a hostile reception from the elements that it seemed to us then unlikely that we should again run the risk of probably a similar experience. Looking back after the lapse of two years, however, the seriousness of the difficulties then encountered do not seem to have the same magnitude, while certain pleasant memories remain as vivid as ever. We are inclined to affirm that whether the passage of the Làirig be attempted when the Pass is in one of its angriest moods, when the swirling mists and blinding rain are propelled against you at tempest velocity, or when the forces of Nature are on their best behaviour, the Pass has a lure which is irresistible. We have now had experience of it under both conditions. On the occasion about to be described the fates were propitious. For a short respite from the stress and worry of city life—a modest Saturday to Monday excursion—there are in our view few walks to equal it and none to surpass it. Certainly, the walk through Glen Tilt is a charming one, but the beauties of that glen are "tame and domestic" in comparison with the Làirig. The situation of the latter, piercing as it does the great Cairngorm range, is a recommendation sufficient in itself, but the solitude of it and the wild grandeur of its scenery appeal to one at once. True it is that to reach it entails a rather long railway journey; but the ultimate result is worth the journey, and there is the advantage that, from whichever end one approaches the Làirig, there is

* See "A Tempest in the Làirig," *C.C.J.*, vol. ix., 173.

no monotonous and uninteresting country to traverse as a preliminary.

As has already been indicated, our journey through the Pass was on this occasion made under the most favourable weather conditions. Leaving Aberdeen on the Saturday preceding the August Bank Holiday by the afternoon train, we arrived about 9 o'clock at Boat of Garten, where the night was spent under the hospitable roof of the hostelry there, in years gone by well known to most members of the Cairngorm Club, and which under its present management has lost none of its traditions. Next morning we were up betimes, and a smart drive landed us at Coylum Bridge at 8.30. There was a considerable nip in the morning air, but before the Allt-na-Beinne Bridge was reached the chilly feeling had worn off, and throughout the remainder of the day the weather was ideal for walking. The numerous paths through the Rothiemurchus Forest are a little bewildering, but, following the advice given in an article in the *Club Journal*, to "keep your eye on the V-shaped gap in the hills in front," one is bound to arrive at the Bridge—the Club's Bridge—eventually. We think we have read somewhere a reference to the Saw-Mill as a direction, and it may be as well to mention, for the benefit of future pedestrians unfamiliar with the ground, that it is now demolished. A small hut still remains, however. The bridge was duly inspected, and pronounced to be in perfect order. We have since learned that, shortly after our visit, some of the steps were found to be broken. As we believe the cause has been traced to the pranks of a four-footed animal, we feel exonerated from any complicity in the affair. But to resume—a steady pace along the burnside and across the meadow soon brought us to the direction post at the entrance to the Pass proper, but, to use an Irishism, the post is not there. The upright remains, but the directing arm which is the essential, has vanished.*

* A new post, with a proper "directing arm," has since been erected by the Club.—EDITOR.

Soon we were through the wood—Oh, that heather!—and breasting the hill, which was quite an easy task in the invigorating mountain air. As we ascended the Pass, many backward glances were directed to the beautiful landscape about Aviemore and that part of the Valley of the Spey within the range of vision. Although the Rothiemurchus Forest has suffered considerable damage from the recent fire, the area affected is comparatively small when viewed from a distance, and it cannot be said that the fire has destroyed the sylvan beauty of the region. In our progress through the Pass we had no difficulty in following the path, although at times it was somewhat indistinct, and even the crossing of the boulders presented little difficulty, so well marked is the track by the numerous cairns, to each of which we duly added a double quota, to compensate for our enforced failure to contribute on the former occasion. This part of the journey, however, is very tedious and requires to be negotiated with considerable care. There is not much opportunity for sky-gazing, but, while taking a “breather,” on looking up the Pass our attention was at once arrested by the extraordinary glitter on a precipitous slope in the far distance. Was it the effect of the sun upon snow or water or polished rock? At one time the appearance suggested a flow of water all over the surface; at another, the flow seemed to stop and the sun to be glinting only on a moist surface; while, as a passing cloud partially obscured the sun, we concluded that the surface had a thin coating of snow. When at last we were opposite the spot, there was nothing to account for the glitter first noticed, though we were looking at the face of the same precipitous slope (part of Braeriach) on which it appeared. Given favourable weather conditions, however, one witnesses endless changes of light and shade in the Làirig.

Once past the boulders, you may with freedom feast your eyes on the precipitous slopes of Ben Muich Dhui and the stupendous crags towering hundreds of feet above you. In the pages of the *Club Journal* many

contributors have already done justice to the wild grandeur of the scene, and any attempt on our part to improve on these word pictures would be presumptuous. We are afraid, moreover, that we have already trespassed too much on the Editor's space; and as the day was by this time wearing on, we must needs be getting on too, if we were to keep our appointment at the Linn of Dee. Having paid due homage to the quality of the water at the Pools of Dee—not, perhaps, on strictly "Pussyfoot" lines—we resumed our journey, and soon were pacing down Glen Dee, pausing frequently to admire the magnificent precipices and corries of Braeriach and Cairn Toul, on the latter of which (round the Angel's Peak) the mist hung like a pall. About here we raised a small covey of partridges, and it struck us as rather curious that that was the only manifestation of animal life we had seen the whole day, always, of course, excluding the winged insects which were encountered in battalions while traversing the forest. To show how absolutely solitude was on this occasion a feature of the Pass, we may mention that, with the exception of an old lady whom we met going for the morning milk shortly after leaving Coylum Bridge, not a single human being did we encounter, not even while passing Lui Beg or Derry Lodge: time did not permit of our calling at either. After passing Derry Lodge, the mile or two to the Linn was soon covered, and we arrived at the Linn itself at 5.45 p.m.: we reached our trap only fifteen minutes late. Soon we were comfortably transported to our quarters for the night at the Invercauld Arms, Braemar, where, needless to say, we had the kind welcome and attention always given to members of the Cairngorm Club.

THE CURLEW.

Just as the dawn came breaking through,
And as the mavis began to sing,
I heard the note of the lone curlew,
That strangely subtle and wistful thing,
Calling me, calling me, strong as a spell,
To the lonely places I love so well.

Fresh from its home by the winter sea ;
From the oozy plots and the piled-up wrack—
For the wilderness called, as it calls to me,
And the love of the silence brought it back.

Back to the glens with the myrtle and heather,
The tartan-clad moss with its red, green, and grey,
Where the whaups and the grouse companion together,
Alone with their love through the long summer day.

Voice of the Lone One, calling up yonder,
Filling my heart with the waves of unrest,
Stirring my soul with a yearning to wander
Deep in the purple that rolls to the west !

Bird of the muirland, something is in me ;
Something akin to the love you have known.
Lands may be fairer, but nothing can win me
Nothing can wean me from Scotland, my own !

ARTHUR F. LESLIE PATERSON.

BIRKWOOD, BANCHORY.

—*Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 19th April, 1920.

HOLIDAYING AT WINDERMERE.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

MANY years ago—I must be excused condescending on the precise number—a Yorkshire friend and I spent a brief week-end in the English Lake District. We had two days only at our disposal. Setting out from Keswick on the first day, we walked along Derwentwater by the Borrowdale road to the Falls of Lodore—a most disappointing spectacle. I still remember our wondering where Southey got the inspiration for the wonderful torrent of words with which he described “The Cataract of Lodore,” culminating in the lines :—

Advancing and prancing and glancing and dancing,
Recoiling, turmoiling and toiling and boiling,
And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing ;
And so never ending, but always descending,
All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar,
And this way the Water comes down at Lodore.

The fact is that the falls as thus figured can be seen only after heavy rain. In ordinary weather people can do as we did—scramble easily up the rocky defile to the Watendlath Beck, the small stream which makes the fall. We walked alongside the beck for a couple of miles, and then made for the fells in front. Mist bothered us a bit and compelled us to alter our projected route. We got over High Raise all right, however, and this brought us within comparatively easy distance of the Langdale Pikes, a singular double-headed mountain, constituting a very notable feature of Lake scenery. We made for the head known as Harrison Stickle, and then descended to the Stickle Tarn. From this we found our way to Easedale Tarn—a way made smooth for us (in a sense) by our falling in with a party of pedestrians bound thither who were familiar with

the ground. The long day's walk ended at Grasmere, which we reached about eight o'clock at night. Next day we walked across the Grisedale Pass to Patterdale, this pass having much the same relation to Dollywaggon Pike and Helvellyn that the Làirig Dhrù has to Cairntoul and Braeriach. Then from Patterdale, which is situated at the head of Ullswater, we walked along the east side of that lake to Pooley Bridge, at its foot. This was another long walk, added to which, in the late evening, was a "bittock" of five miles from Pooley Bridge to Penrith, in order to catch a train at midnight to convey my friend to business next day.

The two walks gave us an insight into the scenery of the Lake district, and our appreciation of its beauties led to the customary vow to return at an early date and further explore this attractive region of mountain, lake, and dale. Such vows are easily made, and just as easily broken. Most of us probably have made them at one time or other and failed to keep them. "The world is too much with us." Competing holiday claims intervene; the demands of family and friendly intercourse have to be recognised and met. And so, or for other reasons, the mutual undertaking of my Yorkshire friend and myself has never been redeemed, and it was not until last summer that I found myself in "Lakeland" again. Then, unfortunately, the *Tempora mutantur* adage came into play. Advancing years, reinforced by medical orders, forbade strenuous walking of the nature just indicated, and I had to be content with looking on the fells and mountains instead of climbing them. One has almost to be apologetic in writing of mountain scenery, or any other kind of scenery, in such circumstances; but perhaps something may be said which may induce readers to betake themselves, sometime or other, to the English Lake district, and so become acquainted with its many charms.

My recent visit to the district was made in connection with a family reunion, Windermere being chosen as the meeting-place. Windermere virtually comprises two

towns which run into each other—Windermere proper, lying high up on a hillside, and Bowness, spreading below and running down to the edge of the lake. Between them, by the way, is a clock tower erected to the memory of Mr. M. J. B. Baddeley, the compiler of the well-known guide-books that bear his name. The towns are great holiday resorts in the season, and swarm with tourists and trippers, while motor-cars fly about in profusion, and large and heavily-laden char-a-bancs are encountered constantly. Accommodation had been found for us in a small but exceedingly comfortable hotel on the east side of Lake Windermere, three miles south of Bowness, situated on a slight eminence above the water and commanding a magnificent view. There was a decided advantage in being away from the two towns with their throngs of visitors and their distinctly urban air. This was counter-balanced to some extent, however, by the distance we were from Bowness, the centre for coach and char-a-banc excursions, and also by our distance from a landing-stage on the lake. A steam yacht plies up and down the lake (which is eleven miles long), making regular calls at certain places, and our nearest point for embarking or disembarking was fully a mile and a quarter away. It was the pier for the Storrs Hall Hotel—a former mansion-house converted into a hotel and enlarged by an incongruous annexe. The mansion-house has a bit of history attached to it, for Sir Walter Scott was a guest of the then owner in 1814, among his fellow-guests being Wordsworth, Southey, Canning, and “Christopher North.” “There was ‘high discourse,’” writes Lockhart (who also was of the company), “intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed.” On the last day of the visit, a regatta was held in honour of Scott.

It is superfluous to say that Lake Windermere is very beautiful. I picked up in the hotel an old “Guide to the Lake District” (Prior’s) and found in it this passage: “Winander Mere is the Queen of the English Lakes.

There is something about it, some combination of feature with dimension, which is not only beautiful, but majestic. The woods with which it is clothed to the water's edge, varied here by some bluff hill, there by some white cottage or villa nooked into a recess of the craggy bank, have an indescribable charm." It would be difficult to improve upon this general description. One feels the charm instinctively, and feels at the same time the inadequacy of any attempt to convey a sense of the impression produced. The woodland setting, so rich and so continuous, constitutes a fundamental element of the charm of the lake, while its tree-covered islands form an equally effective contribution to the exquisite beauty of the scene. Hardly less contributory are the smiling dales that rise beyond the wooded heights, gradually losing themselves in the mountains behind by which the upper part of the lake is encircled. An extensive range of distant mountains of magnificent proportions dominates the lake on its western side. From our hotel windows we could see, prominent in this line of mountains, the Old Man of Coniston, Bowfell, and the Langdale Pikes. ("Old Man," be it noted, is a misnomer, being a corruption of *Alt Maen*, Celtic for "big cliff.") These and other mountains of the range are visible at numerous points along the lake-side, with varying alterations of feature according to the viewpoint and the atmospheric conditions. You here realise thoroughly the suggestiveness of Browning's lines:—

Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement !
Still moving with you ;
For, ever some new head and breast of them
Thrusts into view.

We saw the mountains in all aspects—illuminated in bright sunshine, shrouded in dim haze, dark and lowering in the gloom of rain clouds, and gorgeous at sunset. Then would come a day when lake and mountain disappeared entirely, concealed—concealed, mayhap, for the whole day—in an impenetrable mist. There was something eerie and fantastic about this complete obliteration of a most imposing landscape.

One ought, of course, to sail up the lake—in the steam yacht referred to, or in one of the many rowing boats or motor-boats to be hired at Bowness. (I was amazed one morning to meet on the lake steamer a gentleman and his wife, not only from Aberdeen, but from my own street). A Manchester business man staying at our hotel was the proprietor of a commodious steam yacht, and on his invitation we had a cruise on the lake; and a most delightful cruise it was, as the yacht hugged the shore nearly the whole way and we were thus enabled to note the many beautiful bays and indentations of the lake. Perhaps the best and most comprehensive view of the mountains is to be had from Orrest Head, an eminence above the town of Windermere. This view is well summarised as “extending westward to Scafell, northward to Helvellyn, eastward to Ingleborough in Yorkshire, and southward to the sea at Morecambe Bay,” and it should not be missed. An excellent panorama of the view with the names of the mountains visible is given in Baddeley.

The Lake District is delectable ground for the pedestrian. Innumerable walks are at his choice, most of them having some special feature to recommend them, and he can indulge in either long-distance tramps or short and easy walks. The latter sufficed us—a walk to Bowness by the high road, for instance, returning through the Storrs Hall grounds, or southward along the same high road to Newby Bridge at the end of the lake and on to Lakeside, the terminus of the Furness Railway, returning by the lake steamer, which is run by the railway company. This road is in many ways characteristic of the district. It is of the switchback order, with numerous steep gradients, and it runs through woods luxuriant in foliage and undergrowth, and containing trees of great height, beeches, sycamores and oaks predominating, with a sprinkling of larches and birches; many bits of this road are very beautiful. There is a serious drawback, however. The road runs at a considerable elevation above the lake, and, what

with the woods and the high walls enclosing them—dykes covered with ivy and ferns, with a fringe of bramble bushes in front or rear—the lake is discernible only at intervals, at gaps in the woods or at the intervention of fields or pasture land. Moreover, as the hillside is studded with private mansions with extensive policies, it is impossible to get down to the lake front. All this is annoying, but a greater annoyance is the almost constant succession of swift-moving vehicles—motor-cars and cycles, and char-a-bancs—for this is the high road to Windermere from Lancashire, the thoroughfare for the conveyance of rich motorists and cheap trippers. The humble pedestrian is virtually driven off the road, which, with its high walls, is none too wide or safe; and he has to take refuge on an adjoining fell—if he can get access to it. A little examination will sometimes enable him to find a way; and if so he will be rewarded alike by the relief from passing vehicles and by the enlarged view that is opened up to him.

One day we crossed the lake by the ferry-boat, correctly described by Baddeley as “a useful but by no means elegant craft,” designed as it is to carry horses, carts, carriages and motor-cars, the occupants of these last complacently retaining their seats. We then walked past Esthwaite Water to Hawkshead, a quaint little village, with curiously constructed houses all huddled together. Here you are shown the Grammar School where Wordsworth was educated, his name carved out on a desk, and the house in which he lodged. From Hawkshead we set out to walk to Ambleside, but on reaching cross-roads we decided (the day being very warm) to take a more picturesque and more shaded road through woods which led to the ferry. We walked to Ambleside another day, and then on to Grasmere. Grasmere is a charming little spot on the edge of a lake, enclosed by smooth and shapely hillsides, green to their very summits; all the surroundings harmonise, yielding a soft, languorous effect, sweet rather than striking. Wordsworth and his poetry are associated with a great

part of the Lake District, but especially with Grasmere. Here is the house, Dove Cottage, where he lived with his sister from 1800 to 1808, and to which he brought his wife in 1802, and it was while living here that he wrote the best and more important of his poems. The house (in which De Quincey subsequently lived) was acquired for the nation about thirty years ago, and is now a show-place, full of Wordsworthian relics; it and the adjoining garden are kept as much as possible as they were in Wordsworth's time. The poet, his wife, and his sister are buried in Grasmere churchyard, their graves marked by very simple headstones.

The old rude church, with bare, bald tower, is here ;
 Beneath its shadow high-born Rotha flows ;
 Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near,
 And with cool murmur lulling his repose.

Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near.
 His hills, his lakes, his streams are with him yet.
 Surely the heart that read her own heart clear
 Nature forgets not soon : 'tis we forget.

Thus Sir William Watson in his "Wordsworth's Grave," the first poem to secure him general recognition. I own to liking better Matthew Arnold's simpler lines:—

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
 O Rotha, with thy living wave !

Despite the dislike of the motor-car one entertains as a pedestrian, you are apt to succumb to its lure in the Lake country. Certainly, by its means a great extent of ground can be traversed in a comparatively short time, and places may be seen that might not be visited otherwise, while a general idea of the topographical features of the region can be readily and—let me confess it—most pleasantly gained. I may outline a round we made one afternoon, though it may be scarcely intelligible without a map. Ascending the Troutbeck Valley from Windermere, we drove over the Kirkstone Pass to Patterdale, at the head of Lake Ullswater. We kept the west side of this beautiful lake for some

distance, catching a view of Striding Edge on Helvellyn and visiting Aira Force (or waterfall), and then crossed the moors by way of Matterdale to the Penrith and Keswick road. We followed this road to Threlkeld and then descended into the Vale of St. John, stopping at the King's Head at Thirlpost for tea. The homeward journey was by way of the east side of Lake Thirlmere and the base of Helvellyn and Dollywaggon Pike, and over Dunmail Raise to Grasmere and Ambleside. On another afternoon we had a similar long motor drive by Newby Bridge to the west side of Lake Coniston and on to Coniston and the Langdale Pikes. The scenery at Coniston Lake, with the heather and bracken of the fells, was more reminiscent of Scotland than anything we had seen in the Lake District. At Coniston itself we duly inspected John Ruskin's grave with its elaborate Celtic cross, and visited the Ruskin Museum, in many ways so reminiscent of the master of Brantwood, which we had observed across the lake. And there was some satisfaction in reaching the foot of the Langdale Pikes, on which we had longingly gazed every day of our stay. This was the last of our excursions, and it fittingly concluded our fortnight's visit to the Lake District, so abounding in loveliness, and now to us fragrant with most pleasing memories.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

ANNUAL MEETING, 1920.

THE thirty-second annual meeting of the Club was held in the Imperial Hotel, Aberdeen, on 18th December, 1920—Dr. Levack, the Chairman of the Club, presiding. It was preceded by a special general meeting, convened for the purpose of considering and (if so advised) adopting new Rules framed by the Committee. Dr. Levack also presided at this special meeting.

Mr. James A. Parker suggested alterations on some of the proposed new rules, and moved that the rules be remitted back to the Committee for further consideration.

Mr. James A. Hadden moved that a special Committee be appointed to consider the rules and the suggested alterations and other alterations that might be proposed.

Mr. Parker withdrew his motion in favour of Mr. Hadden's, which was ultimately agreed to by the meeting; and the following special Committee was appointed:—Dr. Levack and Messrs. W. Garden, W. M. McPherson, and A. Simpson (of the Committee of the Club), and Messrs. J. A. Hadden, J. D. MacDiarmid, J. A. Parker, and E. W. Watt (as representing the ordinary members), along with Mr. J. A. Nicol, the Secretary, Dr. Levack to be convener.

At the ordinary annual meeting, Mr. Nicol, the Secretary and Treasurer, submitted the accounts for the year, which showed:—

Income	£100 16 4
Expenditure	68 0 10
	<hr/>
Balance at credit of Club	£32 15 6

The expenditure included £3 11s. for the erection of a notice board at the Aviemore entrance to the Làirig Dhrù. The capital account, consisting of life members' subscriptions on deposit receipt, amounted to £22 13s. 6d. The appeal for subscriptions for the repair of the Allt-na-Beinne Bridge had been so successful that, after defraying the cost of the repairs, there was a balance of £4 7s. 8d., which had been placed on deposit receipt. The Eidart Bridge fund amounts to £1 11s. 8d. The membership of the Club at the end of the year was 165.

On the motion of Mr. Parker, the accounts were approved.

The officer-bearers were re-elected, and Messrs. D. P. Levack, J. A. Parker, and A. M. M. Williamson were appointed members of Committee, in place of Messrs. W. M. McPherson and R. W.

Mackie (who retired by rotation) and T. R. Gillies. The honorarium of the Secretary and Treasurer was increased from £15 15s. to £21.

The Easter Meet was fixed to be held at Braemar, with the view of climbing Ben Avon and Beinn à Bhuid. It was remitted to the Chairman and the Secretary to arrange for an excursion on the Spring Holiday and for one or more Saturday excursions.

DINNER OF THE CLUB.

The meeting was followed by a dinner—virtually, a new feature of the Club's proceedings, for, though a dinner was held after the first annual meeting of the Club in February, 1890, no similar gathering appears to have been held, apart from the dinners following upon excursions, which at first were more formal than they have become latterly. Most of the members present at the meeting remained to dinner. A number of guests of members were also present, and the company included five ladies, all of them, with one exception, members of the Club. Altogether, there was a company of about 50. Dr. Levack presided.

The "after dinner" proceedings were more varied than usual. A number of very striking photographs of the grand scenery of the Himalayas were thrown on a screen. They were taken by Dr. A. M. Kellas (brother of Mr. Henry Kellas, a member of the Club), who has made many journeys of exploration in these excessively high altitudes (See *C.C.J.*, vii., 180-1), and they included views of Kinchinjunga, K2, and Mount Everest, the highest known mountain in the world. The pictures were described by Mr. Parker. An excellent musical programme was provided, the singers being Mrs. Garden and the Misses Skakle, while Mr. Alex. C. Simpson proved a brilliant accompanist: "Excelsior" and "Lochnagar," so appropriate to the occasion, were most effectively rendered and highly appreciated. The toast-list was brief.

Sheriff Laing proposed the toast of the evening—"The Club." After expressing his cordial appreciation of the Club's invitation to the dinner, he said:—I am sure that your first and deepest and tenderest thought to-night must be of those members of the Club who, in the dark and tragic years during which the Empire was in peril, unhesitatingly placed their services on the altar of duty. These members loved the hills and mountains of Scotland. On them they developed their manhood, and during the years that they served their country, the strength of the hills was theirs. It was through that strength that they pursued the path of duty unflinchingly, and, through the valley of the shadow, rose to the highest peaks of sacrifice. We would remember them to-night. Their memory will ever be present with us.

The selection of the name of your club was a singularly happy inspiration, for it is not only known throughout the length and breadth of Scotland, but is cherished throughout the world wherever Scotsmen are gathered together. It brings back to me the happiest memories of boyhood and young manhood, for I have known and loved that wonderful land which stretches from Dalwhinnie to Boat of Garten. I have trod many parts of that beautiful region. I have walked the Làirig Dhrù; I have ascended Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm, and trod the slopes of Braeriach and Cairntoul; I have climbed Sgoran Dubh and looked down that long slope below which lie the dark waters of the loch. I have stood on Ben Muich Dhui when the wind was a hurricane and the rain was lashing, and I have been there on a clear summer's day when half of Scotland lay visible at your feet. This Scotland of ours is, indeed, a beautiful land, beautiful when it lies basking in the radiance of a summer sun, but perhaps even more mysteriously beautiful when, in the autumn or winter, mists and clouds drift across its proud and rugged face.

Of the value of mountaineering it is superfluous to speak in a club composed of those devoted to such an exhilarating sport. Physically and mentally, mountaineering is an admirable tonic, not only giving strength, but making the climber alert, observant, resourceful, reliant. These are not, however, the only benefits and advantages to be derived from mountaineering, for inseparably associated with it is the cultivation of the spirit of comradeship and the spirit of conquest or ambition. Your club is an excellent illustration of the true spirit of comradeship. Mountaineering means companionship—that friendly intercourse which permits of the exchange of views as to the character of the scenery, or the thoughts which arise during the climb. Comradeship is certainly one of the most valuable qualities associated with mountaineering. Of the spirit of conquest, I need hardly say that I do not mean conquest in the military or in the Prussian sense. I mean that spirit of dauntless courage and resource—that spirit of legitimate ambition—which enables one to overcome difficulties and trials and obstacles. The true mountaineer, whenever he sees a range of mountains, feels that he must scale these heights and see what lies beyond. Are not the twin spirits of comradeship and conquest, in the sense in which I have explained, those which our nation, in the industrial, social, economic, and political sphere, urgently requires to enable it to overcome the obstacles and difficulties of the present time? It is because I believe that this club is an excellent training-ground for good citizenship that I appeal to-night to the young men of our city to join the club, and by their enthusiasm, their loyalty, and their comradeship, seek to make it an institution not merely of local, but also of national value and importance. It is in the spirit of comradeship that I again thank you for having invited me here

to-night ; it is in that spirit that I wish you and your club every success and happiness in the future.

The Chairman replied. In the course of some remarks on the objects and delights of mountaineering, he quoted the following lines :—

“ This be your thought as you turn from the summit,
Gripping the rock as you gingerly go,
There where the cliff with the drop of a plummet
Dips to the scree and the valley below—
Men with a mind on a rational basis
Walk on a road (as I'm sure that they should) ;
Yours are the truly delectable places,
Yours is the spice of the Ultimate Good.”

Mr. Garden proposed “The Guests,” and Professor Ashley Mackintosh replied. The other toasts included “The Editor of the *Club Journal*,” “The Secretary,” “The Musical Entertainers,” and “The Chairman.” It transpired that Mr. Robert Anderson was the only original member of the Club present, and that only he and Mr. John Croll of the company present had been present at the first dinner of the Club.

The “first annual dinner” of the Cairngorm Club, following on the first annual meeting, was held in the Palace Hotel on 19th February, 1890, and was attended by 20 members. Mr. Alexander Copland, the Chairman of the Club, presided, and Mr. Robert Harvey, the Treasurer, was croupier. There was a long toast-list. The Chairman proposed “Prosperity to the Club” ; his speech in doing so was reproduced in the *C. C. J.*, vii., 196-7. Most of the other speakers on the occasion, like Mr. Copland, have since passed away. A few, however, still survive. Mr. T. R. Gillies responded for “The Scottish Rights of Way Association” ; Mr. Robert Anderson replied to the toast of “Tramps and Tramping,” and Mr. Thomas Jamieson to that of “Our Guests” ; Mr. George R. Gowans (who had designed an artistic menu card) spoke in response to the sentiment, “Art and Artists” ; and Mr. Alex. Inkson McConnochie duly acknowledged the toast of “The Secretary.”

NOTES.

THE Allt-na-Beinne Moire Bridge in the Rothiemurchus Forest, we regret to say, was damaged somewhat seriously last summer. It appears that a number of horses—presumably Highland ponies—were allowed to graze in the vicinity of the bridge, and it is surmised that one or more of them, while in a frisky mood, galloped across the bridge, with the consequence that the iron steps at one end were broken. The Club, by subscriptions from its members and from friends and others interested, erected the bridge in 1912, and has since assumed a kind of oversight of it; and in 1919 it had the bridge repainted, expending on that work the small surplus left of the original fund and making a substantial contribution from the Club's funds to balance the accounts. The repair of the bridge after the accident just narrated became absolutely imperative in view of the utility of the bridge to members of the Club and other mountaineers, standing as it does on the direct route to and from the Làirig Dhrù; and the Committee of the Club at once undertook to have the necessary repair works executed. This was done, at a cost of about £18. It is impossible, however, for the Club to defray this sum out of its ordinary revenue. Resort was again had to voluntary contributions. An appeal was addressed to members of the Club, and subscription sheets were placed in the hotels and principal shops of Aviemore. These latter yielded small result, but, happily, a generous response was forthcoming from Club members, and the cost of the repairs was fully met and a small surplus left over. That is all right for the present; but the liability of the bridge to accidents of the kind that occurred last summer, and to damage by floods and otherwise, presents a serious problem as to its future maintenance. The Club, unaided, cannot undertake the burden of continually repairing it—that is obvious. The bridge, however, is available to and is used by others than members of the Club, and is of service to the whole district. It really becomes a question whether the bridge should not now be taken over by the Badenoch District Council.

THERE was an exceedingly heavy rainfall in the Dee Valley on Monday, 4th October, following heavy rain on the Saturday: a Ballater record gave the rainfall for the first four days of October as 5.590 ins., equal to the total fall for 1919. As a consequence, the Dee rose rapidly in the early hours of Tuesday, overflowed its banks in many places and caused enormous destruction, particularly in the lower reaches of the river. Adjacent fields were submerged, and as much of the crop, owing to the backwardness of the harvest, had not been gathered, an immense number of stooks were washed away by the raging flood. At Nether Balfour, Durriss, for instance, the crops of about 22 acres were swept down the Dee. Several farmers along the river bank lost the whole of their grain crops, while in many places the soil of turnips and potato fields was washed away as well as the

tubers and roots. According to a picturesque report of the disaster—"Ricks of hay and sheaves of corn, fencing, trees, hedging, poultry and flotsam of all descriptions were swirled along and borne out to sea or stranded on the banks." The monetary loss must have been very considerable. Seventeen Shetland ponies were grazing on the island opposite Drumduan, Banchory-Devenick, but it was found impossible to rescue them, and, except two which swam ashore, they were all drowned. The Maryculter Bridge was seriously affected, part of the road-way being swept away, and the bridge itself being undermined. The "Shakkin' Brig" at Cults was under water, and was considerably damaged, parts of the mason work of the piers being demolished; the cost of the repairs is estimated at £1450. The neighbouring banks were also greatly destroyed. The Bleachfield works at the Bridge of Dee, were encompassed by the flood and inundated as well, great damage being done, particularly to the electricity plant. At Aberdeen Harbour, owing partly to the impetuous current of the river and partly to heavy seas, several vessels broke from their moorings, and two drifters, the *Glen Shee* and the *Glen Garry*, were borne seaward—unperceived in the darkness: the former stranded on the beach, the latter sank.

In the Braemar region the flood on the Clunie was apparently more striking and more destructive than the flood on the Dee. The "oldest inhabitant" had never seen the Clunie in such spate, the water reaching the spring of the arch of the bridge at Braemar. Several bridges in Glen Clunie were washed away or rendered unsafe, and flooded streams swept through Glen Ey and Glen Callater with disastrous effects.

There was general agreement that this flood on the Dee was the biggest that has occurred since "The Muckle Spate o' '29," the spate associated with the memorable Moray floods of that year and immortalised in David Grant's graphic poem, but some people contended that it was even bigger. A stone near the Bridge of Dee indicates the floodmark of the 1829 spate, and the October flood only attained a height two feet below that mark, while the last big flood on the Dee—on 9th May 1913—was 3 feet 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches below the 1829 mark. The validity of such a comparison, however, was challenged on the ground that the channel of the river has widened and deepened since 1829, and that in that year there were no Aberdeen waterworks at Invercarnie, withdrawing thousands of gallons of water per hour from the river. Accordingly, it was maintained that last October's flood was characterised by a greater volume of water than was the flood of 1829, or, as it was expressed by a correspondent of the *Free Press* who discussed the question: "The Dee has certainly broadened in many parts and also deepened by the constant scourings; hence it is bound to follow that a much greater volume of water passed down than is merely to be measured by reference to marks well on to a century old."

MR. JOHN D. MUNRO, in the course of an article in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* of 10th August last, descriptive of a night ascent of Lochnagar to witness the sunrise, gave details of remarkable echoes which he and his party awakened on the way up the mountain. We quote his account in full:—

ECHOES
ON
LOCHNAGAR.

"By slow stages we reached 'The Well,' and lay on the lee side of a large boulder to the left that gave us ample shelter from the breeze that came down from the slope. Afoot again by two o'clock, we paused some two or three times on 'The Ladder,' and there we sought and found what seemed to us remarkable echoes thrown back from the Meikle Pap. From a point about midway up an echo, repeated probably ten times, came up to us. The sound was tossed among the roots of the Meikle Pap that lay in the shadows below, and was flung back to us again and again.

"We tried the echo freely. Three short, loud yelps were given, and instantly there seemed to be unloosed from the dark places underneath a pack of lean hounds that came howling, streaming up the hill as if in pursuit of us. Screeches called up in return a chorus of shrieking furies that seemed to shake the hill with the screams of their mirth, and died away, still howling, in ruin. The effect was awesome. In the spaces below and out abreast of us small white clouds from time to time formed suddenly in the mid-air, and as quickly vanished. The spaces seemed tremulous with unseen presences that were not of earth, and when just out beneath us there appeared a pale cloud in the form of a tent we felt that the spirits of the hill were encamped and abroad, and we turned shuddering up the hill to escape.

"From a point farther up 'The Ladder' we found a sevenfold echo with a quality that struck us as unusual. It grew instead of diminishing in intensity and volume as it repeated, so that the last was many times louder than the first."

"ONLOOKER," who contributes "Doings of the Week" to the *Aberdeen Free Press*, recently called attention to a myth prevalent SPECTRAL FIGURE in Upper Deeside to the effect that a big spectral figure ON THE CAIRNGORMS. has been seen at various times during the last five years walking about on the tops of the Cairngorms. When approached, so the story goes, the figure disappears. Moreover, it has got a name—"Ferlie More," to wit. Is it possible that this myth has originated in the incident narrated by Mr. James A. Parker in his article on "A High-Level Ascent on Ben Muich Dhui" in the *C. C. J.* for July, 1916?

BRIEF descriptions of Balmoral Castle and its neighbouring scenery were given by Lord Beaconsfield in letters to his wife in 1868, when (as plain LORD BEACONS- Mr. Disraeli) he was Minister in Attendance on Queen FIELD ON THE Victoria at Balmoral Castle (the letters are reproduced FALLS OF in the recently published volume of Mr. Buckle's GARRAWALT. biography). Among the descriptions is the following rather excessive laudation of the Falls of Garrawalt:—

"Yesterday, after a hard morning's work—for the messenger goes at 12 o'clock, and I rise exactly at seven; so I get four hours' work—Lord Bridport drove me to see some famous falls—of Garrawalt; and though the day was misty and the mountains veiled, the cataract was heightened by the rain. I never in my life saw anything more magnificent; much grander falls often, as in Switzerland, but none with

such lovely accessories ; such banks of birchen woods, and boulders of colossal granite."

SOME interesting facts about the Mar deer forest were brought out at the County of Aberdeen Valuation Court held in the autumn. The

MAR DEER FOREST. forest has never been let, and so it is difficult to fix its economic value. Prior to the war, the assessable value was fixed by the Assessor at £4000. The Fife Trustees protested from time to time, and in 1917 the valuation, by an arrangement with the Assessor, was reduced by £1000. A portion of the forest, at the request of the Food Control authorities, was let for sheep grazing in 1918 at a total rent of £530. The valuation of the forest was thereupon reduced to £1625. The Assessor now proposed to fix it at £3200, but offered, as the grazing was to be continued, to reduce that figure by £400. He contended that £1625 was not now a fair value. The Assessor of Inverness, Ross, and Cromarty, he said, based deer forests at £20 per head of stags, and at Mar, one of the largest deer forests in Scotland, with an area of 110,000 acres, 150 stags would not be out of the way. The proper valuation, therefore, would be somewhere about £3000, but he would accept £2500. It was argued for the Fife Trustees that, so long as sheep were on the forest, the basis of valuation should remain unaltered, and they proposed that the figure should be £1030. The Court fixed the valuation at £2000.

A REPORT by Mr. W. A. Tait, C.E., Edinburgh, to the Scottish Board of Agriculture, proposing certain works for the improvement of the channel of

IMPROVEMENT OF THE SPEY. the Spey, is of interest, if only for the suggestion that the Feshie should be diverted into the Geldie and so into the Dee. There is no doubt that the head-waters of the Feshie originally flowed to the Geldie, and it is curious to find a modern engineering project thus coinciding with what was once a natural feature. It is also proposed to divert flood water from the upper portions of the Spey into the Spean by means of an artificial channel about three miles long. The object in both cases is to reduce the volume of flood water in the Spey, which is so destructive to the low-lying haugh-lands in the middle reaches of the river. To aid in this, it is in contemplation to lower Loch Insh by nearly 10 feet, to widen the course of the river and lower its bed below Inverallan churchyard, and to carry out a variety of other works. The Nethy is as bothersome a tributary of the Spey as the Feshie, but Mr. Tait makes no proposal with regard to it beyond suggesting that something might be done in the way of checking its velocity by utilising the old dams formerly used for floating down timber.

A SCHEME for dealing with the Spey in quite another way was ventilated at a recent meeting of the Moray County Council. A member proposed

ELECTRICITY FROM THE SPEY. that a Committee be appointed "with the view of participating in the Government scheme of utilising the Spey or any other suitable waters for generating electrical and lighting power in this county." There is no such Government project, though a Royal

Commission has been investigating the utilisation of the water power of the Highlands, and schemes of the kind indicated are being talked about. The gentleman who initiated the idea at the Moray Council wisely suggested that, if it was deemed injudicious to start an installation for Moray alone, a combined scheme of installation with Banffshire might be considered. The Council, however, turned down the whole proposal by nine votes to seven. Meanwhile, the Banffshire people are taking steps to see whether the waters of the Spey, Avon, Fiddich, and Deveron cannot be made available for a supply of electricity for that county. Projects for "harnessing" lochs and rivers in the Central and Western Highlands for the production of electrical power are also being mooted, and are to be brought before Parliament shortly. One—known as the Lochaber Water Power Order—proposes to dam up Loch Laggan and Loch Treig, and take the water by a tunnel to Kinlochleven to be used in the aluminium works there; it would also divert the upper waters of the Spey into Loch Laggan. What is known as the Grampian Electric Supply Order is a very ambitious scheme, which aims at utilising Loch Ericht, Loch Garry, and other lochs and streams in Northern Perthshire for the supply of power to no fewer than six counties. This scheme would also provide electricity from Loch Rannoch and Loch Tummel for Dundee, Perth, and other municipalities.

THE "GALLOWS TREE"—a venerable pine on the road from Braemar to the Linn of Dee, a little west of Victoria Bridge—succumbed to a violent

<p>THE "GALLOWS TREE" AT BRAEMAR.</p>	<p>gale which raged on Friday, 3rd December, and was blown down into the gravel pit above which it has stood for so long. Tradition assigned it the reputation of being the tree on which unfortunates met their fate when the old Earls of Mar, like other barons, possessed the right of "pot and gallows" on their estates. It is supposed to</p>
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have been used for purposes of "summary justice" after the exercise of that right became obsolete, and the latest occasion on which it was so used is said to have been in 1538, when a Lamont of Inverey was hanged on it by the Farquharsons, on a trumped-up charge of cattle-raiding. One of the "Legends of the Braes o' Mar" is to the effect that Lamont's mother followed the hanging party and, finding all her prayers for her son's release unavailing, cursed the Farquharson clan and predicted their downfall in a Gaelic rhyme, one verse of which has been translated thus :—

This tree will flourish high and broad,
Green as it grows to-day,
When from the banks of bonnie Dee
Clan Fhionnlaidh's all away.

The prophecy is regarded as now accomplished. All the minor Farquharson families on Deeside have passed away, and the root-family, the Farquharsons of Invercauld, became extinct in the male line.

COUNTING up the fatal accidents in the Swiss Alps alone this year, I

arrived at a total of 30 men and 7 women. Only one Englishman was among them, and he apparently died of heart failure, for he was quite elderly. It is interesting to compare ALPINE CLIMBING ACCIDENTS. these figures with those for 1919 (which, however, apply to all the Alps—French, Italian, Austrian, German, and Swiss)—57 accidents with 66 persons killed, or considerably more than in 1918. This year, taking Switzerland alone, only two accidents happened which were what might be called real mountaineering fatalities—that is, accidents to experienced climbers on difficult peaks, where anything in the nature of imprudence may be at once ruled out of court. Except one of these, all the other fatal mountain accidents were to guideless climbers.

Considering the number of tourists who attempted the ascent of the Matterhorn this summer, the wonder is not that there were so many accidents, but so few. Thus, on August 9th no fewer than 51 persons were on the Matterhorn summit at one time, which is said to be a record. Yet the mountain was not on the whole in remarkably good condition this summer. As for the seven women who lost their lives, it is extraordinary that in most cases it was due to their trying to take short cuts and insisting on departing from the path. Only in one instance, and that the case of a man, was an accident due to that formerly most frequent cause of Alpine mishap—too light or too inefficiently nailed boots. Every accident in the Bernese Oberland this summer seems to have happened to people who attempted difficult climbs without a guide and often without experience.—JULIAN GRANDE in the *Spectator*, 16th October.

THE rapid growth of facilities for road travel is viewed with a certain amount of misgiving by old-fashioned folk, who fear that it will spoil the sweet solitude of the countryside and make escape from SOLITUDE AND SOCIETY. the noise and bustle of town life increasingly difficult for everybody. As a matter of fact, there are greater opportunities now than ever for getting away from the crowd. However thronged the main roads may be at holiday times, we do not need to go very far from the beaten track to get all the solitude we want, and perhaps we appreciate it all the more for having to go a little out of our way to find it. The charms of solitude make their strongest appeal "to one that hath been long in city pent"; the jaded, restless town-dweller instinctively seeks happiness and contentment in a return to Nature. People who live in town are able by means of the motor 'bus to enjoy a quiet ramble in rural districts that were formerly inaccessible. The self-propelled road vehicle confers corresponding advantages on those who live remote from towns. A motor 'bus carries the shepherd's children from their lonely glen to the village school. A motor ambulance takes the victim of a colliery accident to a hospital no longer distant. Whether we live in town or country we are less at the mercy of our immediate environment, and the result is a freer, fuller and more varied life.—*The King's Highway*, for October.

THE poet, we are told, can find inspiration in the humblest thing, but even then one would hardly expect to come across a poem suggested by an Ordnance map. The versatile "Touchstone" of the *Daily Mail*, however, has contrived to sing the praises of the Ordnance Survey in the following verses :—

This is my country, good brown road,
 Green park, blue stream, red-contoured hill,
 For many a mile round my abode
 Shy lanes where I may roam at will,
 The path across the farmer's fields,
 With all the rural joys it yields.

Here rises up the village spire,
 And here the traveller may win,
 After long toil, his heart's desire,
 The cheerful shelter of an inn,
 And here a long and turfy glade
 Cuts through the pinewood's odorous shade.

This dotted road, unhedged and free,
 Will lead me on across the down,
 From whose high summit I shall see
 Homestead and mansion, thorpe and town,
 Here the last orchids linger still,
 With ragwort gay and tormentil.

So let me rise and hie me forth,
 By winding lanes or flowery meads,
 By east or west, or south or north,
 Whither an idle fancy leads,
 Without a guide save this neat plan,
 The Ordnance Survey's gift to man!

REVIEWS.

MOUNTAINEERING ART. By Harold Raeburn. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd. Pp. 274. 16/- net.—This volume should be on the book-shelf of every true mountaineer. By its guidance even the MR. RAEBURN'S veteran may amend his ways, and the novice, if he "MOUNTAIN- carefully attends to the advice given, will certainly be EERING ART." put on the direct line to become an exponent of his craft, and so, in the words of the author, "make his ascents in good style, with ease to himself and with safety to his companions." The volume is devoid of all padding. It is written by one who, from his inherent aptitude for the art, and wide experience among the principal mountain chains of the Eastern Hemisphere, makes it at once clear, to the merest tyro, that he knows his job inside out. No time is therefore wasted in getting the anxious enquirer up against the fundamental principles of the game, without a sound knowledge of which he must ever be an uncertain—if not dangerous—companion on the mountains.

It may interest readers to know that it was probably with no intention of becoming a cragsman, for its own sake only, that Mr. Raeburn first made his acquaintance with rocks. He has always been an ornithological authority, and in his quest after the birds and eggs of the British Isles he was, as a "Klimmer," naturally brought face to face with many a tricky rock problem. In 1896, however, he joined the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and in that Club he is now recognised as the leading authority and exponent of the technique of mountaineering. Let it also be added that Mr. Raeburn is a "yachtsman bold" and, as such, has had every opportunity of maturing that gift of balance and quick movement of which he is now a past master.

With the development of the craft, the author has, as is only to be expected, perverted, to some extent, many canons of the early mountaineers. We may find it difficult to advocate guideless climbing, climbing alone, two on a rope, etc.; but still we must have due respect for one who has more than justified his views by no less a feat than a traverse of the Meije *solus*. It is gratifying to note that Mr. Raeburn states that the British-trained mountaineer is fully deserving of that title, and need fear no difficulties likely to be met with on any mountain range in the world.

The author's advice on Equipment is exhaustive and practical. His Packing Lists are a *multum in parvo*, and, if adhered to, will prevent many a regret. The chapters on a stereotyped British Rock Climb and a British Snow Climb should form the ritual of every young climber, and might with advantage be substantially committed to memory for instant application when the novice is face to face with the conditions which the author brings out in these chapters, and which, needless to say, will occur—probably more than once—in every climb worthy of the name. The section set apart for Lady Mountaineers should make the volume attractive

among those Clubs which admit the fair sex. It is interesting to note that the author says if we take two complete novices on rocks—a youth and a girl of twenty—we shall find that the girl is quicker at picking up right methods and is safer at first than the boy. A remarkable instance is noted of a young girl of twelve making a successful ascent of Mont Blanc.

The chapters dealing with the Ethics and Rules and the use of the ice-axe and rope are particularly practical. The various rope-knot illustrations, too, deserve attention. How many professed mountaineers neglect the elementary rule by carrying their axes, when not in use, spike backwards, with the consequent risk to the follower—when the party goes single file—of being badly jabbed should he momentarily stumble! The author, however, overlooks nothing, and deals with details such as these. We agree *verbatim* with the remarks about Food and Drink. “Drink just as often as you like, provided you keep moving” is a sound maxim. The pure waters of the high hills are as nectar to the climber, and he appreciates them in a way quite unknown to the inhabitant of the valley. We perhaps question the propriety of drinking melted snow to any great extent.

For those meditating pastures new, a chapter on Exploration throws out valuable hints; and last, but not least, a full index, by which many gauge the true value of what may be considered a book of reference in the first instance, helps the reader to get at once what he is in search of.

We predict a wide-spread circulation for this delightful book among the mountaineering fraternity.

WILLIAM GARDEN.

THE LAND OF THE HILLS AND THE GLENS. By Seton Gordon, F.Z.S. London: Cassell and Co., Ltd. 15/- net.—The reputation as an accurate

observer of natural wild life and as an excellent exponent thereof, especially by the camera, which Mr. Seton Gordon has deservedly gained by his former books, is very considerably enhanced by this work. Serving as a Lieutenant

in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during the war, Mr. Gordon was engaged as an Admiralty patrol officer on the west coast of Scotland, and in the course of his duties he acquired an exceptional knowledge of that rugged and picturesque seaboard, landing, for instance, on many rocks and islets that are accessible to very few. The opportunities thus afforded an ardent lover of nature of obtaining a very special insight into the wild life of the region were not neglected, and they have been augmented by subsequent visits paid since the patrol work terminated. The result is a book which carries on, in the same fascinating fashion, the attractive studies of natural history which the author gave us in *The Charm of the Hills* and *Hill of Birds of Scotland*, only this time we are introduced more to seabirds and seals than to eagles and deer. The subtitle of the book, indeed, is *Wild Life in Iona and the Inner Hebrides*, and Mr. Gordon's “sphere of interest,” naturally, is determined by the limitation thus implied. He furnishes us with capital studies of, among other wild sea-fowl, the arctic skua, the red-throated diver, the white-fronted goose, the red-necked phalarope, and wild swans, describing their peculiarities, their domestic life, and their migrations; and he also gives us

a highly interesting account of the breeding-grounds of the grey seals. His descriptions reveal anew what his former works amply demonstrated—his precise observation and his skill in delineation, and, by no means least, his inexhaustible patience and the simple methods he adopts. As a reviewer has remarked—“The camera and the spy-glass constitute Mr. Gordon’s equipment as a field naturalist. By all that we gather from these pages, he never carried gun or fishing-rod.”

To Mr. Gordon’s camera we are indebted for fifty-seven very fine photographs in the book—not wholly of birds or of the western seaboard, however. There are several admirable specimens of marvellous mist effects, notably as witnessed from the summit of Ben Nevis, and there are also pictures of mountain scenery. The book, it may thus be inferred, is not confined to zoological matter. The opening chapter, for example, deals with “Sunrise and Sunset on Ben Nevis,” another describes Iona, and in other chapters we have much first-hand information about the Hebridean people, their customs, folk-lore, and superstitions. Of special interest to us here in the north is the contrast Mr. Gordon frequently draws between the birds of the west and those of the Cairngorm range and their respective conditions. One instance, relating to the ptarmigan, will suffice. Says Mr. Gordon :—

“The most striking characteristics of these ptarmigan of the west is, I think, the silence of the cock birds during the nesting season. Whereas on the Cairngorms these birds almost invariably utter their snorting croak when the intruder disturbs them in the vicinity of their nests, I never once, on the Mull hills, on which the species breed, heard them utter one sound. Again, in the Central Scottish plateau, a ptarmigan when brooding her eggs—and even before incubation is far advanced—is an extraordinary close siter. Often she will allow one to approach within a foot or two of her without rising, and even when she does leave her eggs she flutters only a short distance and watches anxiously. But in Mull the birds whose nests I came across rose from their eggs in the same manner as grouse do, and vanished at top speed over the hillside, nor did I see them again.”

R. A.

MR. G. M. FRASER’S description of the “Mounth” Passes over the Grampians was continued in the July number of the *Scottish Geographical*

Magazine, the detailed account of the routes being supplemented by much interesting information of a “MOUNTH” historical nature. There is, for instance, a discussion as to the probable Mounth route taken by Edward I. in his journeys to and from Aberdeen, and it is clearly demonstrated that the inscription on the granite memorial erected by Sir William C. Brooks on the Fir Mounth road is quite erroneous. As in our last number, we quote the leading points of Mr. Fraser’s enumeration of the passes :—7. The Cairn-a’-Mounth Pass—from Fettercairn, over the Cairn-a’-Mounth, the Bridge of Dye, and the Bridge of Bogendreep, to Banchory and Durris. 8. The Forest of Birse Mounth—leaving the former road near Feughside Inn, striking over the Birse hills and passing through the village of Marywell, and so on to Birse Church and the bridge over the Dee at

Aboyne. Near the summit of this road is the Corse-Dardar stone. 9. Mounth Gammel or Fir Mounth—leading from Glen Esk to Glen Tanner. (This road was described by Mr. Walter A. Reid in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* for April, 1919). 10. Mounth Keen—from Glen Mark, over Mount Keen (at a height of 2,500 feet), into Glen Tanner, and then by the Pollagach road to the Bridge of Muick. 11. Capel Mounth—from Glen Clova to the Spital of Glenmuick. 12. The Tolmounth—from Glen Clova by Glen Doll and Jock's Road, over the Tolmount (3000 feet), and down into Glen Callater and Glen Clunie. 13. The Cairnwell Road—the well-known road from Perthshire to Aberdeenshire by Glenshee and Braemar. 14. The Glen Tilt route from Blair Atholl to Braemar. 15. The Glen Derry drove road from Braemar to Speyside.

THERE have been three editors of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*—Mr. Joseph Gibson Stott, Mr. William Douglas, and Mr. F. S.

Goggs, the present editor. They all contribute to the "SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN- EERING CLUB JOURNAL." October number. Mr. Stott reproduces an article on "Climbing in Dalness and Mamlorn," published over thirty years ago: it describes ascents of Buchaille Etive and Ben Doran in very snowy and tempestuous weather, albeit the month was May (1884). Mr. Douglas writes on "The Exploration of the Cave at Fastcastle," near St. Abb's Head, and, from a careful examination of the cave made in May last by Mr. Raeburn and Mr. Sang—who only gained access by swimming into it—he demolishes the tradition that there was a means of entering the castle from the sea. Mr. Goggs describes an ascent of the Observatory Ridge of Ben Nevis made during the Easter Meet of the S.M.C. at Fort William. Sheriff Scott Moncrieff Penney contributes a pleasant gossipy paper on "Moffat in the 'Seventies": "motors and bicycles were unknown in those days," he incidentally remarks, "but people had their feet and used them more." There is a notice of Mr. Harold Raeburn's new book on "Mountaineering Art," emphasis being laid on a number of Mr. Raeburn's maxims, which "upset many idols of popular climbing belief." Among other things, this mountaineering expert advocates the wearing of lighter boots and allows one to drink as much cold water as he likes when climbing.

MR. W. T. PALMER has been succeeded as editor of the *Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club* by Mr. R. S. T. Chorley, and the new editor is

to be congratulated on the general excellence of the 1919 issue. As the Club is associated with the English Lake District, it is only natural that articles dealing with that district should predominate. Conspicuous among these is the account of how, on Peace Day, a number of members of the Club ascended Scafell Pike, the highest mountain in England, and "demonstrated" by lighting beacon flares, which are declared to be much better than bonfires. Another notable article is "New Climbs in Wasdale," the accompanying illustrations serving to show what the Lake district can offer in the way of rock-climbing feats. In many ways, however, the most interesting article is that of Mr. G. M. Trevelyan

on "The High-Alpine Warfare." By the aid of half-a-dozen excellent photographs, Mr. Trevelyan explains how the Italian campaign in the high Alps was conducted, and enables us to appreciate what he rightly calls "the unique part of Italy's war achievement"—"to maintain a continuous line running for more than two hundred miles over the high Alps, and to keep it along its whole length manned and supplied, day in day out, for three live-long winters, to say nothing of four summers!" Mr. Palmer has a charming contribution on "Floating Mists," his laudation of them ending thus:—

"Perhaps I have more enthusiasm for the mists than for those brilliant, glaring days when every rib and storm scar on mountain near and far is limned into ghastly clearness; when the rocks are hot and there is a torrid air beating round every peat-hag; when shadow dies in the gullies and even the waterfalls seem less cool, less vivacious. But the mists serve the mountain lover well, and deserve his hearty homage. It is quite a mistake to study them entirely from below; up and at grips with the heights there is more freedom, more latitude, brighter colour, broader sweeps. Floating or still, the broken mists are the most intimate friends of the mountain lover, full of sympathy, breathing life and vigour for his delectation."

NOW that he could see whereto the last night's march had brought him, Æneas Macmaster was startled at the desolation of the scene. The inn

stood on a desert edge; behind rose up the scowling mountains of Glen Coe, so high and steep that even heather failed them, and their gullies sent down streams of stones instead of foam. Eastward, where the inn-front looked, the moor stretched flat and naked as a Sound; three days' march from end to end they said were on it—all untracked and desert-melancholy. Its nearer parts were green with boggy grass, on which the cannoch tuft—the cotton-sedge—was strewn like flakes of snow; distantly its hue was sombre—grey like ashes, blackened here and there with holes of peats. The end of it was lost in mist from which there jutted, like a skerry of the sea, Schiehallion. God-forgotten, man-forsworn, wild Rannoch, with the birds above it screaming, was, to Æneas, the oddest thing, the eeriest in nature, he had ever seen. It charmed and it repelled him. He thought no wonder that the tribes who dwelt beside it should be wild, and envious of Lowland meadows. The very sight of it, so bleak and monstrous, filled even him with feelings of revolt against the snug and comfortable world.—*The New Road*, by Neil Munro.

AND now you are at Petersgraat [a lofty snow-ridge in Switzerland, 10,515 feet high, the summit of the divide between the valley of the Rhone and the Oberland]. . . . Whosoever you are, I think you

will want to be silent. The ice-world is not a talkative one. The silence that Kipling heard at Mandalay may compare with the silence of the snow-fields, but I doubt it. In the heaviness of that other silence, you were conscious of living things holding their breath. Of what are you conscious

here? What is it, invisible, inaudible, but all-pervasive, of an utterance in the spiritual ear as distinct as those mountains opposite you? What is it that you meet here that you never have met before? And how does it affect you? What singular new emotions steal over you—quiet, deliberate, like the calm procession of the hours, like the trance indescribable of the lonely sunshine on the eternal snow? It is useless to try to forecast for you this experience. Words are powerless to convince you. If one were to tell you how strange, how enticing, how unforgettable, is the lure of this mighty silence, this trance of the only changelessness which earth contains, this something which is like the breathing of the old gods in their sleep—but it is useless! The moment one attempts it, words lead towards paradox, towards metaphor, towards the most reckless imagery. And they would not convince. The spell of the ice-world, the visions that are its tenants, are not to be known at second-hand. If you want to know them, the gods of the ice have permitted you a single easy road—the road to Petersgraat.—“On a Glacial Highway,” by Nathaniel Wright Stephenson, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for November.

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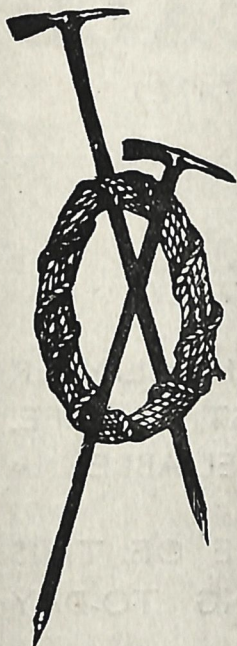


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