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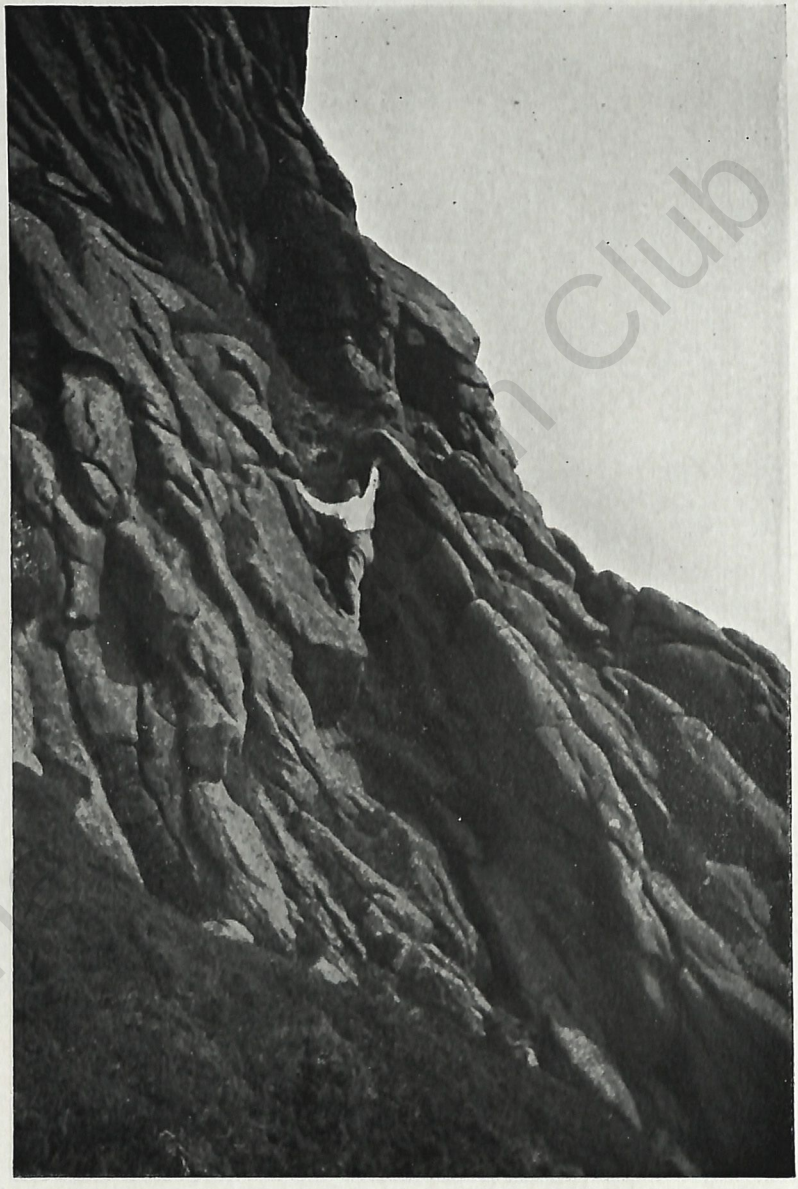

Photo by *Dr. J. R. Levack.*

CLOCHNABEN—SOUTH-EASTERN GULLY.

THE

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Vol. X. JANUARY, 1922. No. 58.

ROCK-CLIMBING ON CLOCHNABEN.

By Dr. John R. Levack.

THE rock-climbing mountaineer has very little scope for pursuing his favourite sport amongst the hills of Deeside. Lochnagar and the giants that encircle the head-waters of the Dee possess rock faces and precipices which, for grandeur and beauty, compare favourably with any to be met with elsewhere in Scotland. Generally speaking, these crags are not suitable for the average climber, for they are almost always too difficult, and are frequently quite impossible, owing to the nature of the rock. Granite weathers into huge, vertical slabs with rounded edges, and a climb up a face composed of this rock is, in most cases, much too difficult a proposition for the ordinary climber. In recent years, however, a good deal of careful investigation has been made amongst these crags by some of our expert climbers, but a lot more remains to be done. The face of Lochnagar was climbed many years ago by Brown and Tough, but the ascent by this route has not been repeated. Raeburn and Ling climbed the buttress on the north wall of the Black Spout at Easter, 1908. In the Garbh-Choire of Braeriach some interesting work has been done by Mr. Parker, while the crags on the eastern face of Beinn a' Bhuird have also been explored, but appear to be, for the most part, impossible.

One great drawback about the crags on upper Deeside is their remoteness from any base, and the consequent difficulty, as regards time, in reaching them. A ten-mile tramp, over rough ground, to the foot of the actual climb is a serious handicap, when the climb to be attempted is of a difficult nature. The rock-climber is tempted, therefore, to look around for suitable courses nearer home. All the hills of lower Deeside, unfortunately, are of the rounded, undulating type, heather-clad and uninteresting. There are no steep rock faces like those of Lochnagar or Braeriach.

One of these smaller, rounded hills, however, is redeemed from the commonplace, and made very conspicuous, by having, as its highest point, a large pinnacle or tower of rock protruding above the heather-clad surface of the hill. This tower is not set on the very top of the hill, but on the eastern slope a short distance lower down. Its summit rises well above the surrounding ground, and is actually the highest point of the hill, 1900 feet.

Clochnaben, as this hill is called, lies two miles west of the Bridge of Dye, and four miles south-south-west of Feughside Inn. A good description of it is given by Mr. Robert Anderson in Vol. I. of the *C.C.J.* (p. 138), but I can find no further reference to it in the *Journal.* Many thousands of people must have climbed this hill for the sake of the view; the more active of them will have scrambled up the easy west side of the rock to the summit cairn. Here the sensation experienced is one not to be met with anywhere else on Deeside, except, possibly, when standing on the topmost rock of Lochnagar—a feeling of great height, airiness and isolation. Many of the visitors must have walked round the base of the rock, and all of them would have been impressed with the steepness and apparent inaccessibility of the crags of the eastern face. No one seems to have paid any attention to the possibility of climbing the eastern face of the rock till 1901, when Mr. William Garden made some investigations, and

quickly concluded that any climbing here would be very difficult, if not dangerous.

The bare rock face itself, consisting, as it does, of giant slabs with next to no hand-holds, and set at a high angle, is manifestly impossible. There are, however, several gullies or chimneys which invite inspection. The first obvious one of these, not far from the north end of the precipice, is a narrow vertical crack which runs out on the summit ridge well to the north of, and much lower than the summit cairn. A few yards along towards the south from No. 1 there is a second gully, wider, and, at first, not nearly so steep as No. 1. It also comes out on the summit ridge to the north of and below the level of the summit cairn. Farther along and now to the south of the summit, the eastern face shows a third, but very ill-defined gully. Finally, round the south corner of the precipice, one comes upon the part of the rock which is longest from base to summit (about 100 feet). It is still very steep, but does not look quite so hopeless as the eastern face. Here there is a well-defined, broad shallow gully which might be called the south-east gully. Passing round to the western aspect of the rock, we find that only about 20 to 30 feet of it projects above the slope of the hill. This face, still more or less vertical, is much broken up, so that it is easy to scramble up it almost anywhere to the summit ridge.

There is no recorded climb on any of these gullies, but Mr. Garden tells me that, in 1901, he ascended the narrow chimney above-mentioned (No. 1), but he had a rope held from above to assist him over the unclimbable rocks below the chimney. Since that time nothing further has been done in the matter, apparently, till two years ago, when a party of five, including Messrs. Garden and Parker, made a reconnaisance of the rock. The weather was bad, and very little climbing could be done, but the same party returned a week later and got to work. The long south-east gully was first investigated. For about 30 feet up, the climbing is on steep easy rock;

then one comes to a big slab, set at a high angle and devoid of holds, which it is necessary to traverse to the left, so as to get into the continuation of the gully. Our party, on its first visit, got up over the easy rocks to the foot of the slab, but, the rocks being wet, it was found impossible to cross that slab, especially as we had no rope. So we gave up the attempt, but returned a week later, armed with an 80-foot rope.

Two of us got on to the summit ridge from the easy west side, and, anchoring in a convenient recess a little way below the top of the gully, threw down the rope to the three others, who had already climbed up to the foot of the slab. The leader, the tallest of the three, tied on and proceeded to negotiate the difficult bit, we up above meantime holding him in case of a slip. Owing to his long reach he could just stretch across the slab to its upper western corner and get a good hand-hold. He quickly swung himself across to a firm foot-hold and the difficulty was over. He required no assistance from the rope during the operation. His companions, having tied on, followed, but, both being shorter than the leader, just failed to stretch far enough to get the necessary hand-hold, and required a little help from the rope. Above the slab the gully becomes less steep and is grass-covered, so the party walked and scrambled up for about 20 feet, and came again to another steep rocky part, which afforded a nice little scramble up to the summit ridge. This climb was repeated last summer (1921).

The narrow vertical chimney (No. 1), first ascended, as already mentioned, by Mr. Garden in 1901, was climbed two years ago by J. W. Levack. He, like Mr. Garden, required the assistance of the rope to get up over the lower rocks and into the chimney proper. These lower rocks are vertical, smooth and holdless, and are unclimbable without help. Once in the chimney, the climber was able to work his way upward by the "back and knee" method without any assistance from the rope, which was held from the top of the chimney in

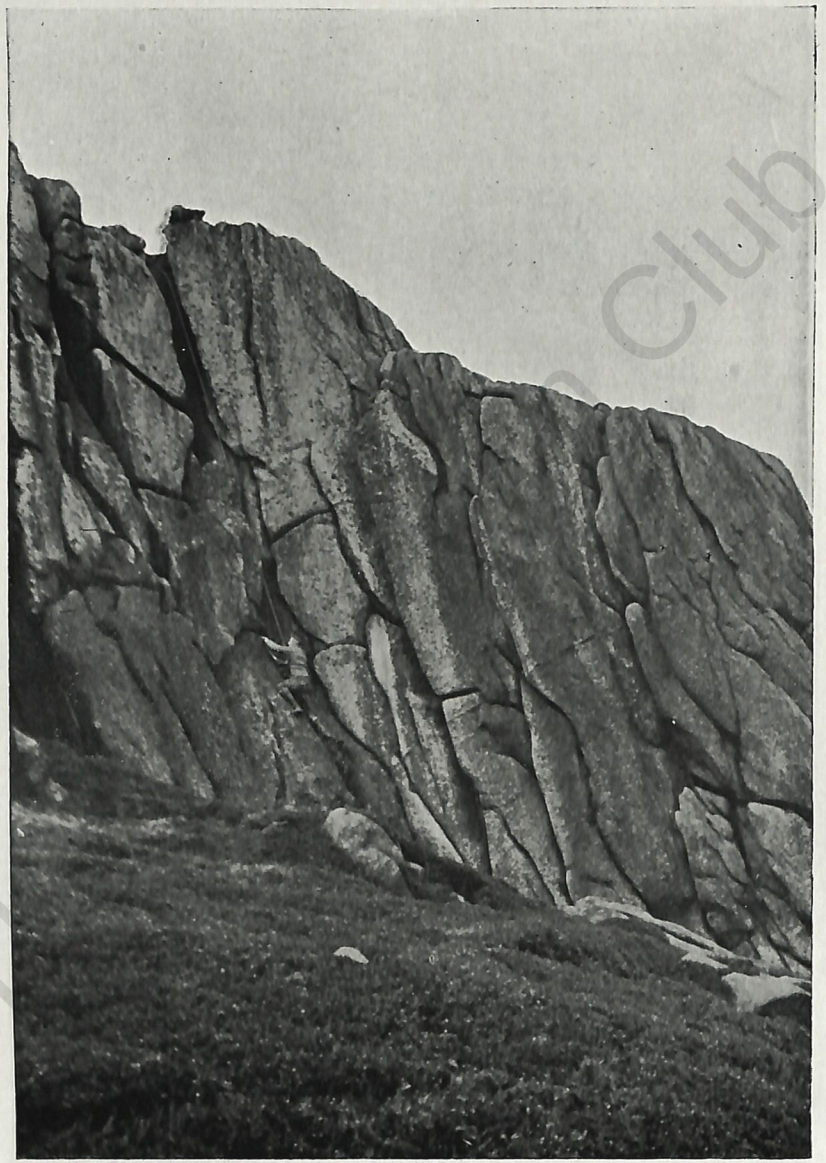

Photo by *Dr. Struthers Stewart.*

CLOCHNABEN—EASTERN CHIMNEY (No. 1).

case of a slip. After a sharp struggle of half an hour's duration he emerged, breathless, on the grassy platform at the top of the gully; the height from base to summit is here about 50 feet. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that this chimney can not be climbed by stout people.

No. 2 gully, as has been indicated above, is wider than No. 1. It is also much easier of access from below; in fact, the lower part is a simple scramble. Higher up, the gully steepens and narrows, so that the mode of progression is, as in No. 1. by the "back and knee" method, and, where it is too wide for this, by the "back and feet" method. Here the walls of the gully are nearly vertical and are quite holdless. Still higher up and about 10 feet from the top, the gully again widens, so that the "back and feet" method is no longer possible, and, as the walls are still vertical and holds are entirely absent, climbing here becomes impossible. One of our party, D. P. Levack, entered this gully from the foot of the rocks, having tied on to a rope from above. He quickly ascended the lower easy stretch, and "backed" up the steep narrow part. When he came to the wider upper section he called to us who were holding the rope that he could go no farther, so we had simply to pull him up. This gully, it seems, therefore, will not "go."

The next gully (No. 3) on the eastern face is much less defined than the others. It comes out on the summit ridge a little to the left (south) of the cairn, and is longer than the others. Want of time prevented us from exploring it, but it looks much worse than No. 2, and I doubt if it be possible.

Passing round to the west side of the rock, there is plenty of easy scrambling to be had. It is excellent practice for the beginner. He learns to stand up on a sloping rock, and he learns balance and confidence in an airy situation. The climbing on the east face is too serious and difficult for most people, but the climb on the south-east gully is distinctly good, and the scrambles on the west side are very delightful.

CLIMBING IN SKYE IN WET WEATHER.

By A. M. Macrae Williamson.

It was a glorious morning, which gave promise of a still more glorious day, when Mackintosh and I joined the early morning train to Inverness, *en route* for Skye. By the time Inverness was reached, the sun was blazing in a cloudless sky, and we took it as a good omen of the weather for our holiday. We had once more defied the pronouncement of people who professs to understand Skye weather, for it was the 27th of July, and August is generally regarded as the wettest month in that wettest of places. However, as we had had really fine weather in August last year (1920),* we had decided to give Skye another trial. At Inverness we took the train to Kyle of Lochalsh, and from there were ferried across to Kyleakin. In the motor-ferry we met two enthusiasts who were taking motor-cycles to Staffin; we had left ours at home—we had been there before! We walked to Broadford and put up there for the night, and next day we set out to walk the twenty-four miles to Glen Brittle, which was to be our headquarters during our stay in Skye. In due course, we arrived at the post office at Glen Brittle, and were heartily welcomed by our landlady, Mrs. Chisholm. We spent the evening seated in front of the cottage, watching the changing lights on the great Sron na Ciche precipice. Such a colour these rocks assume in the evening of a fine day!—from pale pink to dark purple; and all the gullies stand out clearly—a picture that is worth all the journey to Skye to see, all that and more.

The next day was magnificent, but we were tired and stiff after our walk, so we decided to take a day off and loafed about around the cottage, feasting our eyes on the wonderful scenery, scenery that is equalled in few places. Again there was a gorgeous sunset, again the

* See "A Rock-Climbing Novitiate in Skye," pp. 52-60.

great cliffs reflected it, again we rejoiced in the prospect of fine days to come. Alas! We awoke next morning to a regular downpour—what I believe is called "an average Skye day." The rain poured from leaden skies all day long, the hills were invisible under their mantle of thick mist; and we were obliged to stay indoors and while away the time reading, for we had not yet learned to climb in the wet—so far, we had always had plenty of fine weather in which to do our climbing, with a few wet days on which to rest. We were soon to learn that if one goes to Skye to climb, climbing has to be done in all weathers, on the principle, "Take what you get and be thankful."

The following day (Sunday) was no better. However, we got "fed up" of staying in the house all day, so at four o'clock we set out for a walk into Coire Lagan. We duly admired the gullies all streaming with water, but we would have been quite willing to dispense with the spectacle of these 1000-foot waterfalls. We walked as far as the foot of the Sgumain stone shoot, and then we conceived the idea of doing the Cioch. When we started out we had no intention of doing any climbing and so had not brought a rope, but we knew the way and thought we might try it. The Eastern Gully was easily crossed and we soon stood at the foot of the great slab. The slab was wet and cold, and no help could be got from friction, impossible in the circumstances. By following the ordinary route, however, and not attempting any of the stiffer variations, we soon reached the top of the slab, after which there is little or no difficulty, except perhaps the last bit on to the Cioch itself, which was rendered somewhat tricky owing to the wet state of the rocks. We were not induced to remain long on the top, but we were interested to note that the tin which we built into the cairn last year to serve as a receptacle for visitors' cards had disappeared. Nor did we waste much time on our return journey. We discovered that other two climbers had arrived at the cottage in our absence—Messrs. Porter and Hilton.

The day after was the 1st of August, and the pessimists would have been pleased, for the weather was no better than on the previous two days. We were all anxious to be doing something, however; so, making a late start, we headed for Coire Banachdich, intending to do the Window Buttress of Sron Dearg. This buttress is quite a large *massif* as seen from our cottage, and we had been there before, but the mist was so thick that we spent over three hours looking for it, and we only stumbled across the foot of it after having given it up for lost. We tied on in two parties—Hilton and I on one rope, Mackintosh and Porter on the other. We got on very well, and Hilton "sailed" through the "window" in truly wonderful style. He had the advantage of a tremendous reach, which is a *sine qua non* in this pitch, unless one is prepared to expend a terrific amount of energy and risk giving No. 2 concussion of the brain by using his head as a foothold. The window pitch is the only really difficult one, but the 60-foot vertical wall above it is very sensational. The holds are ample, however, and there is no difficulty or danger. We unroped above this and soon gained the top of Sron Dearg. By this time we were pretty well soaked, so we decided that we had better not try any other bits of work and accordingly we made tracks for home.

The next day was, if possible, worse than the preceding ones, and so dense was the mist that Hilton, who had not yet seen the Sron na Ciche face, was inclined to cast doubts on our veracity when we assured him that it was the cliffs just opposite. We went out, contenting ourselves with a walk along the road (to give it a purely courtesy title), and of course we got soaked. We were not in a very cheerful frame of mind that evening, especially when we remembered that the pessimists had said that once it really starts to rain in Skye, climbers may as well go home. We went to bed praying for a drought, just as, in all probability, people in the south were praying for rain. Some people are never satisfied!

The morning was misty, but dry, and we cheered up

somewhat. The promise of good weather, however, speedily vanished, and the rain came on again before eleven o'clock. It "faired" a bit in the afternoon, and we chartered the village boat and went for a row in the bay, having some fine views up Coire Lagan. We got back without incident, and became greatly elated by a beautiful evening. Hilton apologised for his scepticism, as the Sron na Ciche showed up very fine.

As the next morning proved fine—or comparatively so—we set off in high spirits for the Inaccessible Pinnacle. We had not gone far, however, when the wind began to blow a veritable hurricane, and we felt we would not be warranted in ascending the eastern arête. We separated. Porter and Hilton made for the Window Buttress, which they climbed, and then went on to the top of Sgurr Dearg. Mackintosh and I crossed Coire Lagan and made for the Western Gully of Sron na Ciche—a climb which we had not done before. The gully is a long one, and on that day it was entirely filled by a very energetic waterfall. The first pitch is a magnificent one—about 100 feet high, with a chock-stone. It is simple work to reach the foot of the chock-stone, but the balance out is rather tricky, and was not rendered any easier by a stream of water falling on the back of one's neck the while. Several good pitches succeed this one, all of which would no doubt be fairly easy in fine weather, but with the stream masking all the holds they became quite difficult. We were thoroughly drenched long before we reached the top, though it was not raining—in fact, it was really quite a nice day. We had fine views out to sea and also of the crags at the head of Coire Lagan. The gully gives out on the screes at the top of Sron na Ciche, and we got some sensational peeps down into the Central Gully. We returned by the west ridge of Sgumain, and by the time we got home we were almost dry. We were of opinion that this was the best climb we had yet done, considering the condition of the rocks. We did not use the rope though we had one with us.

The weather fluctuated back to "dismal" the next

day; but we recognised by this time that if we did not do climbs in the rain, we would never get any done probably. Hilton and Porter set out for the West Gully but acting on a wrong direction—due to the hills being covered with mist—they went about a quarter of a mile too far west and missed the gully. Mackintosh and I did the Cioch Gully. This is a very wet gully, especially the waterfall pitch where there is an archway of rock from which a curtain of water generally falls upon "the lunatic who works for pleasure." This pitch is remarkably holdless and altogether uncomfortable, and therefore, *ipso facto*, most enjoyable. The pitch above this baulked us at first, so we traversed round by the Cioch, climbed up by the slab, and descended the pitch by the rope. Having seen it, we were able to climb it—combined tactics are a great help at this point. We descended by the slab and made a rapid journey home for we were drenched to the skin.

It rained again the following day; and, as we had scarcely any dry clothes left, we did not go out. The afternoon proved quite fine, however, and Porter and Hilton went into Coire Lagan while Mackintosh and I loafed about. In the evening there were two more arrivals—Mr and Mrs. Bell from Sligachan. Mr. Bell is a member of the S. M. C. of old standing, and we looked forward to some climbs with him. The next day was quite as bad as any we had had, and at first no one could be induced to go out. In the afternoon, however, Hilton and I summoned up enough energy to attempt the Cioch by the Eastern Gully. We accomplished it without difficulty, but it was wet and miserable work, and we pictured the others sitting down to tea and hot scones in the cottage as we were feeling for holds with fingers that had lost all sense of touch. When we got back, we of course said we would not have missed the climb for worlds, but failed to elicit any symptoms of envy among the rest of the company.

A glorious morning greeted us next day, and we resolved to make the most of it. Mr. and Mrs. Bell set

out for Coire a' Ghrunnda, Hilton and Porter for the West Buttress of Sgumain, while Mackintosh and I marked down the North-West Buttress of Alasdair as our effort. No sooner had we got into Coire Lagan than a terrific downpour of rain came on, which put all face-climbing quite out of the question. We foregathered with Hilton and Porter behind a large boulder and abused the weather in unmeasured terms, but that was not of much use. There was nothing left for us but to abandon our programme and return home. Mr. and Mrs. Bell also returned, like us, decidedly damp. In the evening two young ladies arrived, to camp in the school-house after a week's camping at Elgol. They too, were very wet, and were heavily laden besides, each of them carrying about 56 lbs. weight (and this for pleasure !)

The day after was the very worst we had ; but we were all desperate by this time. Mr. Bell, Mackintosh, and Porter set out for Gars-bheinn—a little peeved because Hilton cast doubts as to its being a mountain. Hilton and I decided to do the West Gully of Sron na Ciche. It was considerably wetter than on the occasion Mackintosh and I did it, but we managed it. At one point, where it is necessary to "back and knee" up a vertical pitch, the force of water nearly washed us out. Farther up, we had the singular experience of climbing up between the rock and the waterfall and emerging through the bed of the stream—very pleasant !

As it was drawing near the time for Porter and Hilton to leave, we decided that the next day should be reserved for the Inaccessible Pinnacle. The day was unpromising, but the four of us set off along with one of the campers, Miss Pilley. We intended to reach the Pinnacle by way of the Window Buttress, and ultimately we did this. It was cold, wet, and misty—the first really cold day we had had. After doing the Buttress, Porter decided to go home, but the rest of us went on to the Pinnacle. We went up by the eastern arête—Hilton and I on one rope, Mackintosh and the lady on the other. I then went down the west side and climbed up again with the

rucsacs and spare sweaters—we needed these. After a hurried meal, we all got down the west side—not without considerable difficulty, however, owing to the wet and slippery nature of the rocks and to the effect of cold on the fingers. We got a few blinks of sunshine on our way down, and were genuinely satisfied with our day's work.

We were all feeling a bit limp next morning, but Hilton, Miss Pilley, and I set out for the west face of Sgurr Mhic Choinnich. This buttress is fairly easy, with the exception of the last few hundred feet, but it provides a very enjoyable climb. The day turned out fine, though the tops were never quite clear of mist. We climbed to within 300 feet of the top unroped, and then I led the party away to the right to try a new variation. After some awkward balancing up a slanting crack, a broad ledge was reached, and farther progress seemed barred by the overhanging summit. We were by this time immediately above the Tearlach-Mhic Choinnich col, quite off the west face, but not so far round as King's chimney. I could just see a hold or two up to the overhang, but could see nothing beyond. I proceeded carefully, and when on the last hold reached out to the full stretch of my arms and just touched a small hold that was sufficient to steady me over the overhang. A few feet farther on a resting-place was available and my two companions joined me, Miss Pilley having some difficulty with the long pull. There was nothing very serious in the way of rock gymnastics after this, and we soon reached the cairn—but from the south, instead of the west as we had originally intended. While we were climbing we heard shouts from Alasdair and Sgurr Dearg, and made out that Porter was up Alasdair *via* the stone shoot and that Mackintosh was disporting himself on the Pinnacle. We returned home along the ridge to Sgurr Dearg, Hilton and I traversing the Pinnacle *en route* and finding it much easier than on the previous day. Mackintosh had climbed it by every route, and we were just in time to see him do the south-

west crack. This made my twentieth climb on the Pinnacle. We got home really cheered with our day.

Two days after, we bade farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Bell and the two campers, who all went off to Sligachan. It was Porter and Hilton's last day, and Hilton was anxious to do something good. Mackintosh took him in charge, while I took Porter over the Inaccessible Pinnacle, which he had not yet done. It was a fine day, and the climb was easy. Mackintosh and Hilton had a magnificent day. They began with the Cioch gully; then did the Eastern gully and on to Sgumain; and then went along the ridge to Alasdair and across to Tealach. Crossing the Alasdair Dubh gap, they climbed Sgurr Dubh na Dabheinn on to Sgurr Dubh Mhor, and proceeded home by Coire a' Ghrunnda.

Porter and Hilton left the following day, and Mackintosh and I were once more alone. We rested that day, and on the next I did nothing, but Mackintosh explored the front of the Cioch. The day after was rainy and we thought we were in for another spell of wet weather, which was most disheartening, especially as the next day was to be our last. Miss Pilley returned for a few days, and seemed to bring good weather for our last day dawned cloudless.

We had decided that we would finish up with the West Buttress of Sgumain, then do Alasdair, and conclude by doing either the round of Coire Lagan or the Alasdair Dubh gap. It was so hot that we did not make a very good pace to the bottom of the cliffs, and by the time we started climbing we gave up the idea of doing the round of Coire Lagan. At the very start of the climb—which is of the indefinite order—I stumbled across a crack that seemed to have a pitch or two in it; in the end, it provided us with some of the hardest climbing we had done. The second pitch consists of a 40-foot crack with a chock-stone half-way up. Getting on to this chock-stone calls for some rather tricky work, and immediately above it there is some stiff climbing. This pitch took us a long time: Miss Pilley,

with her short reach, found some difficulty. After the second pitch the crack becomes indefinite and has to be looked for. There were no nail marks of any kind in the crack, so we built a cairn at the top of it. We followed the crack right up to the "shattered arête" that leads up to the big rock tower near the summit. It (the crack) can be seen from the slopes of Sgurr Dearg, from whence it looks continuous; it starts at the lowest point of the Buttress. It may be well, perhaps, to add, that all the pitches can be avoided.

From the top of Sgumain we went to Alasdair. There is one very awkward step on this ridge, but after a little combined tactics Miss Pilley managed to get up. The rest of the way is easy. The view from the summit of Alasdair is magnificent, and the day was so fine that it was seen at its very best—a view such as one beholds but once or twice in a lifetime, and to obtain which was well worth the compulsory wait enforced by the fortnight of rain.

It was getting late but we felt that we must do the "gap," and we did—crossed it and re-crossed it, albeit the undertaking is, to use the climbing phrase, "quite a stiff proposition." The views looking down either side are inspiring. We descended into Coire Lagan by the great stone shoot—a most exasperating place, but exceedingly imposing in the dusk that was now creeping in. We sat for a short time at the foot of the shoot beside a spring, and feasted on the scene. The cliffs looked magnificent. I have seen them in all kinds of weather—dripping wet, with the wind howling in from the Atlantic; and anon gleaming in the brilliant light of the sun in a cloudless sky. Till then, they had always looked hard, cold, repellent, and cruel. That evening they were all pale pink from the setting sun, and no hard lines appeared in them, nothing but soft and pleasing curves. Buttress shaded into buttress, gullies lost their stern outlines, and the sea, calm and peaceful, seemed to lap the slabs at the foot of the Coire. I have never spent a finer evening in the hills anywhere.

As we walked down the slopes and along the beach, we looked back at the peaks, beautifully silhouetted against the sky. We were exultant and sad by turns—exultant because of the delightful day we had had, sad because it was the last of our present sojourn in Skye.

The next day we took a sorrowful leave, and, heavy-hearted, tramped up the glen to Sligachan. As we reached the crest of the road and looked back at Glen Brittle, we saw the clouds rolling in from the sea and blotting out the landmarks of the dear old place. What a spot for a holiday! The place, though far from habitation, will now never be lonely to me, for it is peopled with recollections of happy days spent in the company of keen mountaineers, who understand each other with an understanding that comes only to those who work together among the rocks and in the fellowship of the hills. I think no one could ever tire of Skye and the Coolin. The awful majesty of Coire Lagan in a storm is a sight that is never forgotten. Climbing on great faces one somehow gets to the heart of things, and sees them in their true perspective; one realises how futile most ordinary concerns are, how small and impotent even human beings seem. Once visited, these rock-faces ever call on one to come back and give battle once more. They remain the same, yet are ever changing.

MORE SUMMER DAYS ON THE MOUNTAINS.—I.

By William Barclay, L.D.S.

> Now the soft hour
> Of walking comes; for him who lonely loves
> To seek the distant hills, and there converse
> With Nature:
> . . . . . .
> For Nature's charms, the hills, the woods,
> The sweeping vales and foaming floods,
> Are free alike to all.

During the past few years it has been our good fortune to return to the "old country" with the cuckoo—when "the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, and the time of the singing of birds is come"—so that we have turned more or less inadvertently into a fair-weather hill-climber. Still, it is very enjoyable to again wander o'er the grand old hills of Scotland and revisit spots familiar to us in the days gone by. Two summers ago we were privileged to spend one whole day of every week either tramping the old drove roads that wind their sinuous grass-covered way through the Grampians, or climbing some of the misty bens; and this summer (1921) we again enjoyed the same good fortune. The following is an account of some of our doings.

To start off with, during the month of May, we had a few preliminary walks among the Ochils, Sidlaws, and lesser Grampian heights, with the idea of getting into something like fit condition again, for life in the tropics does not tend to harden one.

I.—GLAS MAOL.

With the advent of June, however, we embarked on more extended excursions. The first of these was a visit to Glas Maol, and with the aid of our bicycle this was carried out in a one-day trip.* The mist was just

*From Scone, near Perth.

touching the tip of Ben Vorlich when we left home one morning in the early days of the month, and cycling *via* Blairgowrie and Glen Shee to the Spital, continued up Glen Beag for about three miles farther, until just opposite the burn coming down from Carn Aighe. Here, the bicycle was left to browse among the sheep, and, fording the river, we ascended the hillside diagonally towards Creag Leacach, whose stony crest was visible from the road.

The slope was nice and easy, mostly grass and heather, and just a wee bit moist, so that very little exertion sufficed to land us on the top of the Creag. The summit of Glas Maol was now in sight again; we had first seen it in the morning while cycling along Strathearn, 30 miles away. Mist was then driving across its bald crest, but now everything was bathed in sunshine.

There is undoubtedly an advantage in thus early being able to view the object of one's excursion: in fact, we are rather fortunately placed in that way, for from our bedroom window we can view a large slice of the foothills of the Grampians, with the peaks of Ben Vorlich, Am Binnein, Ben More, and Ben Chonzie showing up behind; while, on crossing the bridge over the River Tay, as we must do on the way to the railway station, a look is also had at the Beinn a' Ghlo group, Beinn Dearg, and Ben Vrackie. So that, before embarking on a railway journey, we are enabled to form a pretty good idea of what sort of weather is likely to be experienced on the hills.

A few minutes were spent in having a look around, then we continued north-eastward along the dykeside towards Glas Maol. Just beyond the dip on the Glen Brighty side we came upon a snug well-built shelter of stone, roofed with sods—a point well worth knowing to seekers after sunrise effects. Drifted snow filled all the eastern side of the march dyke, but there was very little anywhere else, only a few small patches here and there. Looking backward, Creag Leacach presented a very

pleasing outline—a regular "Creag" with its sharp, stony summit and steeply sloping sides, quite unlike anything one is accustomed to find among the smoothly-sloping, rounded Glenshee hills, and we regretted we were not carrying our camera. A good two miles separates Glas Maol from Creag Leacach, but it is quite an agreeable walk, at first over the small boulders strewing the slopes of the Creag, then up the broad grassy braes of the Meall; and it was just noon when we stood by the cairn (3502 feet) on the highest point in Forfarshire.

The doubtful morning had turned into a fine day, and the outlook was fairly extensive except in the far west. In the foreground in this direction, the most absorbing feature of interest was the fine south-eastern corrie of Glas Thulachan streaked with snow, while behind rose the imposing crest of Carn nan Gabhar. Northward, all the Cairngorms were spread out before us, from Beinn Bhrotain to Ben Avon. In the south, the Sidlaws showed their well-known tops, with Largo Law in the distance beyond. Then came the Lomonds and the Ochils, but, of course, the prime view was in the region of the Làirig Dhrù. We wandered over and had a peep into Canlochan Glen and regretted that we could not descend into Glen Isla but must needs return to our steed in Glen Beag. So we retraced our steps almost to the dip, then descended the steep hillside to the burn, which was followed down to the road just below the Devil's Elbow. Thereafter the cycle was picked up and we pedalled leisurely down the glen, reaching Scone just 12 hours after we left it.

II.—STUCHD AN LOCHAIN.

Ten days later we were in Glen Lyon, and made our first intimate acquaintance with that out-of-the-way mountain, Stuchd an Lochain, and although this can hardly be said to be a popular hill among climbers, it has been well known in the botanical world for a hundred and fifty years.

It was a wild scowling morning, with a strong wind

from the north west, as we cycled up from Aberfeldy, past old-world Fortingal to Bridge of Balgie. The mist drifted low over Carn Gorm as we passed, and nothing was seen of the Ben Lawers hills on the south side of the glen but their flanks. Before running down to Innerwick, the eastern corrie of Stuchd an Lochain came into view, right ahead, the broad base of the mountain seeming to completely block the glen. About a mile beyond Meggernie Castle we struck off to the right by a road which climbs steeply up Glen Conait and ends at the shooting lodge of Lochs, standing solitary between the two little lochs—Girre and Dhamh. Stuchd an Lochain rises directly opposite. About a quarter of a mile from the first of these lochans we left our bicycle by the roadside, and by great good luck managed to cross the river by stepping from boulder to boulder. Then we struck through the heather in the direction of the east shoulder of Creag an Fheadain, intending to pass along the ridge between the north- and east-facing corries of the mountain. As we started from an elevation of 1200 feet, it was not much of a climb to the shoulder we were aiming at though the slope was fairly steep.

A heavy shower of rain gave a sufficient excuse for a few minutes' halt in the lee of a boulder. The backward view from this point was very fine. We could look away down Glen Lyon to the pass of Chesthill beneath Creag Mhor, while on the south side the glen was backed up by the Ben Lawers' tops, now completely free of mist. Directly opposite us, and only a few miles away, the Tarmachans and Meall Ghaordie were very imposing, while on the north side of Loch Girre rose another very much out-of-the-way mountain—Meall Garbh. Taken as a whole, the prospect from here certainly demonstrates very fully the deepness and narrowness of Glen Lyon.

When the small cairn adorning the Creag was reached, we found that the shower had cleared the air and dispersed the mist, and a few minutes later, from the dip

below the south-east top, we had the satisfaction of seeing the cone of Stuchd an Lochain standing entirely clear on the other side of Coire na Cat, about a mile off. A broken-down fence runs all the way round, up the final slope, and over the summit.

A strong head wind was blowing, and it was anything but warm, so we did not feel much inclined to loiter. A march cairn was passed, then the small one marking the subsidiary or south-east top, Sron Chon a' Choirein (3031 feet). The name is only on the 6-inch O.S. map, but in reality the top is only a shoulder and not worth calling a separate "top" at all. A slight descent now landed us at the base of the final cone of the mountain. The next 200 feet or so are fairly steep, but we were sheltered from the wind and rapidly mounted, disturbing a raven which went off uttering his harsh croak as we stepped on to the small grassy summit, (3144 feet). There is no cairn—just two or three stones lying together on the highest point. The north-east face falls away steeply from our feet in broken-up rocky terraces to the little Lochan na Cat, lying 1000 feet below, but on all other sides grassy slopes predominate. Away down below us lies the shooting lodge of Lochs, snugly ensconsed in a planting of wood, and by moving a few paces to the north-west we can also look down on Loch Dhamh and the glen of the same name. Loch Girre is not seen from the summit, as the steep ridge on the other side of the corrie completely shuts it out.

Of distant view there was none, all the bigger hills being again enveloped in mist, but of course a good slice of the Moor of Rannoch was visible, with Loch Laidon, and numerous smaller pools. A little bit of Loch Lyon was also in sight.

A heavy shower of rain now sent us off the summit, so we hastened down to get shelter from the wind, and in driving mist just retraced our steps all the way to the end of the ridge. Then, when descending to the river, we came upon a fawn, beautifully marked, lying in a cosy corner among the heather; so we sat down beside

him for a few minutes. He lay quite still, looking at us and sniffing our fingers, and no doubt wondering what sort of an animal we were, but when we attempted to scratch his pow, he was up and off like a shot. Re-joining our cycle, we free-wheeled all the way down to the road in Glen Lyon.

It was noticed how early the bell-heather was in flower this year. Here we were only at the 20th of June, and yet we saw numerous patches in full bloom.

THREE STRATHS—TUMMEL, DEE, AND SPEY.

By the late Peter Anderson.

[Mr. P. J. Anderson, of the University Library, Aberdeen, has kindly placed at our disposal MS. Notes "taken on an excursion from Inverness to Tobermory, Oban, Inverary, Glasgow, Loch Lomond, Killin, Kenmore, Kinloch Rannoch, Blair Atholl, Braemar, Grantown, and Fochabers, from 27 August to 22 Septr. 1827," by his father, the late Mr. Peter Anderson, accountant, Inverness. "My father," writes Mr. P. J. Anderson, "finished his Law curriculum in the University of Edinburgh in 1826. He seems to have at once begun, together with his elder brother, George, the series of pedestrian tours through the Highlands which led to the publication, in 1834, of the well-known 'Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.'"

The Notes, representing as they do the observations of a most intelligent pedestrian on a Highland tour made nearly a century ago, are of very great interest; but they cover a wide field, and we are obliged to content ourselves with reproducing the last section, which deals with areas more particularly within "the sphere of influence" of the Cairngorm Club. Names, heights, etc., are reproduced as in the original MS.—Editor.]

Lochs Rannoch and Tummel.

Loch Rannoch is 11 or 12 miles long, and nearly 2 of general breadth, a straight sheet of water bordered on the north by a long low hill of very gentle slope and level outline. The hills on the south are higher and steeper. They stand apart from one another and in the centre are somewhat removed from the water. Con-

siderable quantities of natural birch and fir occupy both sides. A tolerable road goes round the loch. At Kinloch Rannoch a bridge of 4 arches crosses the Tummel. This village consists of half a dozen of huts and an inn at the south end of the bridge, and about a score more huts and another inn, a church and manse on the opposite side of the river. Closely adjoining is a neat house let as shooting quarters. For 3 miles below Kinloch Rannoch the bottom of the valley is quite flat and upwards of a mile wide, meadow and cultivated land. The advancing skirts of Schihallion and a broad terrace or eminence on the north side then fill up the valley, leaving for about 2 miles room only for the passage of the river, the banks of which are wooded with birch, larch, and fir.

The bottom of the glen again becomes level and continues widening till we reach Loch Tummel, 10 miles distant from Loch Rannoch. Tummel Bridge, where the road from Crieff to Dalnacardoch crosses, is 7 miles from the latter loch. Loch Tummel is 3 miles long and at the west end about two-thirds of a mile in width. It contracts towards the opposite extremity. Several obtuse little promontories fringed with ash project into the water. The hills and along the upper portion of the Strath are of gentle inclination and moderate heights. Those on the north preserve nearly an unbroken level outline. The southerly ones exhibit low detached summits but rising from a common continuous chain. In the slight depression of the hill-face a good deal of land has been brought into cultivation, and the greater part of the north side of Loch Tummel is arable. Birch is scattered here and there, but heath and grey stones occupy much the largest portion of the ground. As it approaches Loch Tummel the tortuous river is skirted with ash trees. The space of 4 miles from Loch Tummel to the Garry is a very deep confined pass. The north side rises steeply from the water, and swells out above into a continued succession of rounded cliffs with intermediate

receding acclivities; the whole clothed with birch, and some fir and larch. The opposite side is of much the same but less marked character. A few hundred yards from where it joins the Garry the Tummel forms a small fall. It is divided into two streams by a small rock on each side of which it pours for a few feet perpendicularly. Rushing furiously forward they reunite and dash headlong and in obliquely contracted volume. The whole height does not exceed 20 feet. The pedestrian ought to cross to the south side at the east end of Loch Tummel, by which means the pass will be seen to much more advantage, and he can be ferried across to the Dunkeld and Blair road at Portnacraig opposite Pitlochrie and 3 miles below the Fall, or 2 miles further down the river at Moulinearn.

The portion of Strath Tummel watered by the united rivers of Garry and Tummel is connected with Atholl, the lower part of the valley through which the former river holds its course, by the Pass of Killiecrankie, which forms an obtuse angle with either. For about a mile the hills on each side rise in a very steep acclivity. On the west a wall of rock lines the river. A narrow pathway is left along the opposite side. The western bank, which may be from 500 to 600 feet high is enveloped with waving birch trees, and rising behind it are seen a range of bare perpendicular rocks. The opposite side formed by the lofty Ben Vracky is similarly wooded to a corresponding height, but the ascending acclivity is continued with equal abruptness as far again in unadorned nakedness.

The Atholl Valley.

The valley of Atholl bends to the westward 3 miles above the pass. At the bend is situated Atholl House, where the Duke of Atholl generally spends a couple of months in autumn to enjoy deer shooting in Glen Tilt. It is a long narrow building of 3 stories with a row of servants' apartments at each end, standing on a sloping lawn encircled by broad belts of trees of various kinds,

among which are some fine specimens of larch, to the rearing of which his grace has paid peculiar attention. Great care has been taken to cut off the under branches of all the trees, and the timber on these estates is remarkable for the girth and straightness of the stems. Avenues of lime and other trees lead from the house to different parts of the park. There are two falls in the immediate neighbourhood generally visited by strangers—the Falls of Fender and the York cascade. They are each formed by burns falling into the water of Tilt a little way above and below the old bridge of Tilt. This stream flows between two perpendicular walls of limestone. Birch, ash and other trees cover the tops of the banks, and, springing from the stages of the rocks with a profusion of hazel, the Guelder rose, and other shrubs, completely overshadow the water. The Fender is seen through a narrow recess making a leap of about 30 feet; it then trickles in parted streamlets over 4 successive ledges of rock projecting from the side of the bank of the Tilt, making together about 40 additional feet. The burn forming the York cascade is a detached portion of the Fender. It falls into the Tilt a few hundred feet below the other falls. It is precipitated over the face of the rocky bank in a single descent of about 50 feet.

About a mile up the Fender a second fall is met, well worthy of a visit. The course of the burn is a steep dell wooded with birch. At this second fall the burn, from between pretty high banks, makes a slanting leap of about 40 feet perpendicular but obliquely adown the face of the rock in conforming to a groove channelled in it. It falls into a basin from which it pours sideways over a second height of 12 feet. Unless the water be very low, a portion of it escaping at the top straight down the rock is thrown off by a projecting shelf in a glittering spout.

Glen Tilt.

The water of Tilt, for about 2 miles above the old

Bridge of Tilt, runs between high banks rising from the water's edge. In the vicinity of the Falls of Fender the bare rock is exposed in many places; in general, the sides are very abrupt but covered with birch and ash and a perfect jungle of hazel; the rising sides of the glen immediately above the edge of the bank are wooded with fir and larch, to which cornfields succeed. Above this a narrow strip of flat ground occupies the bottom of the glen for 7 or 8 miles; the wood soon disappears, and the hills rise in steep acclivities covered with herbage and heath. They are unbroken save where an occasional ravine sends down a tributary streamlet and of almost uniform height, say 500 or 600 feet, except where Ben y Gloe raises his more aspiring form on the south. The glen is nearly straight and the inclination remarkably gentle. The Duke of Atholl has two small hunting-lodges; one 4, the other 7 miles from Blair. A bridge crosses the water 2 miles up the glen, another a little above the first lodge. There is also a third intermediate. As far as the second lodge there is a good road. Beyond it a mere footpath conducts along the north side. Four miles above the second lodge the rivulet of Loghaine [An Lochain] enters from a glen on the right. Keeping along the north side of the main stream, a mile further on we come to the Tarff, which, issuing from a confined defile on the left, is precipitated over two falls, the lowest about 10, the upper 25 feet.

Crossing the Tarff, the path continues along the now much diminished stream, for the former supplies the main body of the Tilt water, and the glen is soon found to split into two narrow ascending gullies. A track will be seen ascending the southerly one. This leads to Fallaird, another hunting-lodge of the Duke of Atholl. The pathway to Castleton of Braemar continues along the north side of the other gully leading along the steep face of the glen. Less than two additional miles brings us to the top of the pass, where we find an open hollow in the hills, with a flat mossy bottom, whence another

burn descends towards the Dee in a directly contrary direction to the course of the Tilt. After a run of 2 or 3 miles it falls into the Dee 9 miles above the Castleton. A footpath will be found along the south side of the hollow and burn and of the Dee to the Linn of Dee, 6 miles above the Castleton, whence a good road leads along the south side of the river. If mounted, the traveller should keep the opposite side of the burn. He will hereby fall in with a cart road which, fording the Dee, will give him the benefit of a good road for the 3 miles before coming to the Linn. The Dee inclines to the right hand; to the left are seen lofty precipitous mountains, whence it has its rise. It may be mentioned that, after leaving the Duke's lodge, a shealing will be met in Glen Tilt at the mouth of the Loghaine, another upon the south side of the burn falling into the Dee rather more than a mile from that river, and a farm-house on the north side further down the burn.

Strathdee—The Linn.

Strath Dee, when first met with, has a pretty wide flat central space. Below the Linn of Dee this increases to rather more than half a mile in breadth. This is meadowland with a few arable patches. In the portion between the Linn and the Castleton large quantities of birch are spread over their central flat. The hills are of moderate height and roundish or flattened outline. Various shelving glens intersect them on either hand. A mile above the Linn the great pine forest of the Dee commences. It here continues to clothe the sides of the southern (? northern) hills for 5 miles, down the river. The trees are generally very fine, but the great body of them are considered young in comparison with some of the veteran sticks among them, which measure 13 and 14 feet 6 feet from the ground, and are about 60 feet high. The whole of this pine forest will in all probability be felled in the course of a few years, as the axe is now busy at work.

The Linn of Dee is a spot where the river has cut a

long narrow passage, between 30 and 40 feet deep, through opposing rock, and forms four small falls, the central ones about 10 and 13 feet, the others not above half that height. Below the falls the water has scooped out a series of basins where it sleeps deep, dark, and motionless. When the water is low some of the connectiug channels are not above a yard wide, but it is subject to floods which sometimes fill the chasm to the brim.

The wood on the hills on the south side of the valley is nearly all birch. Two miles below the Linn, on the north side of the river, in the bottom of the valley is seen Mar Lodge, a commodious hunting-seat of the Earl of Fife. Its long low wings give it a length of front which makes it a very conspicuous object. The Strath is here straight for several miles, and presents a very peculiar appearance in its hanging pine forest on one side, and birch woods on the other, and in the wide level space between.

The distance from Blair Atholl to the Castleton of Braemar may be called 36 miles, taking 11 hours' moderate walking.

Braemar.

Castleton of Braemar consists of a few neat cottages and two or three slated houses on the side of the Cluny, a mountain stream, where it is crossed by the military road, about half a mile from where it falls into the Dee. Upon the opposite side—the west—there is a collection of scattered huts called Auchindryne. There is a good inn on either side. The castle of Braemar stands at the point of the eastern side of the glen through which the Cluny flows, on a slight elevation on the plain. It is a tall structure of four stories and attics of the shape of two buildings at right angles, with a turnpike stair-case in the interior angle. At each corner is a long hanging turret. The area on which it stands measures 65 paces. It is surrounded at a distance of 15 feet by

a four-sided wall with an angle protruding from the centre of each side. Government has lately placed a strong party of military in it—72 soldiers and 3 officers—to aid the Excise in the suppression of smuggling.

From Castleton to the Spittal of Glenshee is 15 miles, thence to Blairgowrie 19, and to Dunkeld 12.

The road crosses the Dee 3 miles below the Castleton, and the north road leaves Strathdee 6 miles further down. In this space of 9 miles the Strath makes two long sweeps. The hills may be said to form the extremities of ranges obliquely cut through by Strathdee, and separated by wide glens or receding hollows. Generally speaking, the diverging hills may be said to present abrupt rocky faces to a person looking up the Strath. From Castleton extensive fir forests extend for about 4 miles down on both sides of the valley. These woods are generally young. Birch is mixed with the fir in large quantities both in distinct masses and more intimate union, and, as already noticed, mingles with the corn fields and pasture in the centre of the valley. The first sweep of the valley below the Castleton is lined on both sides with woods, and the view from the Bridge of Dee both up and down the river is singularly grand, especially of each greater bend, where above the woods which clothe the circling gentle slopes, and the heathy acclivities which succeed them, an amphitheatre of lofty Alps rise in frowning majesty. A mile below the castle on the opposite side of the river, is the house of Invercauld.

Glengairn to Tomantoul.

Ascending the side of Strathdee, the north road crosses a broad bleak hill, and descends into Glengairn, a narrow stripe of arable and meadow ground bordered by heathy chains. At the bottom of the first stage, Runloan, 13 miles from Castleton, is reached. Hence the road reascends, and 6½ miles more over heathy hills bring us to the Don, along which we ascend for 2 miles

to Corgarff. From about half way from Runloan the road becomes almost impassable for carriages; a good road leads down Strathdon. The Don is here a small burn lined by a narrow strip of meadow and arable ground, and winding among sloping heath-clad hills. At Corgarff there is a tolerable thatched public-house beside a neat shooting-box. On the face of the south side of the Strath stands Corgarff Castle, an oblong building of 4 stories measuring 12 paces by 9, with a small wing at each end and encircled by a wall similar to that round Braemar Castle. A party of military—46 men, 2 sergeants and 2 officers—are also stationed here.

Leaving Corgarff, the road for the first 5 miles ascends one heathy ravine and descends another lined with snow posts, when it reaches a small burn called the Conglass. Following its course for 4 miles we reach Tomantoul, a small village built on a spot of tabular ground overlooking the Avon. It consists of about a hundred houses of one story with three or four exceptions, partly slated, partly thatched with heather. They are arranged in a straight street with a square in the centre. A church and neat humble manse lately built are the only features Tomantoul can boast of. Glen Avon is here a narrow winding glen flanked by steep banks partially cultivated with oak coppice, above which the undulating slopes exhibit at intervals considerable (comparatively speaking) cultivated spaces. Crossing the glen, the road reascends and descending into a small contiguous one proceeds up the side of it, presenting to the view, as heretofore, a vast expanse of heath-covered hills, of easy inclination and smooth regular surface. Presently a long reach of Strathspey opens sideways to the sight at some distance with its pine-filled flats and cultivated slopes. But for an obstructing hill a larger portion would be seen, but turning to the right another section of it is presented, where the white houses of Grantown and the high walls of Castle Grant rise amid long tracts of ascending pine

forest and birch woods and cornfields. Within 8 or 9 miles of Grantown the road becomes again very good.

From Tomantoul to Grantown is 14 miles, and from each of those places to Dalnashauch, at Inveraven, 13 miles.

Strathspey—Castle Grant.

At Grantown, Strathspey is of great width. For 5 or 6 miles downwards from the Bridge of Spey, a broad tract of flat ground occupies the centre of the Strath. The hills on the north side retreat far backwards from either extremity of this portion of the Strath, while the river makes a wide sweep for about 4 miles in the opposite direction. Above the central space on the north side rises a wide terrace, succeeded by a second commencing a little farther down in the bend of the receding hills. The central space with the exception of a few cultivated fields at either end, the face and front of either terrace, and the elongated summits of the hills are covered with extensive pine forests, while waving cornfields occupy the wide intervening tracts. The village of Grantown is built near the upper end of the lower terrace, behind the foremost wood, while Castle Grant stands about the centre and in the front of the second one, rather more than a mile to the east. Grantown is a remarkably neat village composed of about 120 houses, one-third of them two stories. The rest are of one story, partly thatched and partly slated. Several of these last are very neatly built of granite, and have much the advantage in point of appearance over the larger houses, which, tho' whitewashed, are comparatively comfortless-looking, probably from the want of lintels and window soles and the quantity of dead wall. The village is arranged in a long street, towards the east end of which the houses receding backwards on each side enclose a large oblong space, through the centre of which the road connects the opposite ends of the village, leaving a compartment covered with sward on either hand. This oblong area is lined with the two-storied houses. Near the centre of

one side is a handsome plain building surmounted by a clock—a sort of foundling hospital.

Castle Grant is an old building of 4 stories, projecting backwards at each end, with a row of lower buildings in continuation, thus enclosing on 3 sides a court approached from the remaining side by a flight of steps. A large collection of family and clan portraits and a few good paintings—among the rest, a large historical piece, The Death of Patroclus, by Gavin Hamilton—are the only objects of interest in the interior; but the view from the battlements of the tower—one of the abutting portions of the main building above-noticed—is incomparably fine. The position of the Castle has been already perhaps sufficiently indicated. Immediately around it are groves of sycamore lime trees and other hardwood trees. Undulating parks stretch upwards towards the hill-tops behind, and circle round the adjoining hardwood on either hand. Looking across the valley, beyond the double masses of pine which extend to right and left, are seen the long ascending russet slopes of the opposite hills, with the summits of Cairngorm and the adjoining Grampians towering in the background.

Beyond the long section of the valley in which Grantown and Castle Grant are situated, the hills which bound Strathspey continue for about 14 miles far asunder, but a great alluvial deposit on the south of varying surface and inclination fills up the greater part of the intermediate space, confining the flat ground which skirts the river to a very narrow bound. The river makes a few bold sweeps, but generally bends gradually from side to side. The hills on the north are continuous, and of flattened outline; those opposite consist of several chains differing not very materially in their line of bearing. They are also higher and of more marked character than the other range, of a smooth and softened configuration. The wide deposit already noticed is covered with heathy pasture, patched with cultivated ground. The strip of land along the

river is cultivated, but as the road is for the most part at some distance from the water, the ride is, as far as Aberlour, sufficiently uninteresting.

Craigellachie.

Here we reach the river, which the road crosses about a mile below at Craigellachie Bridge, a very handsome metal arch with a round embattled tower at each corner. A little below it the Strath bends suddenly to the north, and widens considerably at the bottom. The hills on the south advance close to the river, the wide deposit disappearing ; large fir woods mixed with larch, birch, and hardwood cover both sides with sloping cultivated spaces intermixed. Broad fields occupy the bottom ; the reach of the Strath for 4 miles below Craigellachie being thus eminently beautiful. After two other strong bends, the Strath continues in one long straight line to its termination. The east side of this terminal portion is of a level outline to Fochabers, beyond which it gradually subsides towards the sea, which is 4 miles distant. The opposite side, several miles above Fochabers, deflects to the westward, a wide low table-land rising above the bottom of the Strath. This part of the Strath is nearly as uninteresting as above.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

ANNUAL MEETING, 1921.

THE thirty-third annual meeting of the Club was held in the Imperial Hotel, Aberdeen, on 10th December, 1921— Dr. Levack, the Chairman of the Club, presiding.

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

Income	£116 11 3
Expenditure	100 17 11
Balance at the credit of the Club	£15 13 4

The expenditure included £55 2s. 4d. the expenses of the Club Journal, Nos. 56 and 57 ; and £15 16s. for printing, stationery, advertisements, etc ; the printing bill, it was explained, was exceptionally large, due to the printing of the new rules, first as drafted and then as revised. The capital account, consisting of life members' subscriptions on deposit receipt, amounts to £30 3s. 6d. The Allt-na-Beinne Bridge fund amounts to £5 12s. 8d. and the Eidart Bridge fund to £1 11s. 8d. There was collected for the Mount Everest Expedition fund £8 13s. 6d. The membership of the Club at the end of the year was 173.

On the motion of Mr. James A. Hadden, seconded by Mr. William Garden, the accounts were approved.

At this stage, the new rules of the Club, as adopted at a special general meeting of the members held on 15th November last, came into force.

Dr. Levack was called to the chair.

The following office-bearers were elected :—

Honorary President—Viscount BRYCE.

President—Dr. JOHN R. LEVACK.

Vice-Presidents—Mr. ROBERT ANDERSON and Mr. JOHN CLARKE.

Secretary and Treasurer—Mr. JOHN A. NICOL.

Editor of the Journal—Mr. ROBERT ANDERSON.

Committee (9)—Messrs. W. GARDEN, J. McCOSS, A. P. MILNE, J. RENNIE, M. J. ROBB, A. SIMPSON, J. A. PARKER, A. M. M. WILLIAMSON, and D. P. LEVACK.

The following meets and excursions were arranged :—New Year —Braemar ; Easter—Aviemore ; May holiday—Buck of the Cabrach ; Saturday excursions—(to be arranged by the President and Secretary).

It was agreed to increase the price of the *Journal* sold to the public from 1s. to 2s. the change to take effect with the next number (January).

Dr. Struthers Stewart suggested that the Club should make a collection of lantern slides of views in the Cairngorms. The idea was favourably entertained, but it was generally considered that, in the meantime at least, a beginning would be best made by the voluntary tender of slides by individual members.

DINNER OF THE CLUB.

The meeting was followed by a dinner in the hotel– Dr. Levack, the newly-elected President, occupying the chair. Sheriff J. D. Dallas, Aberdeen, and Major J. D. Ramsay, the King's Commissioner at Balmoral, were present as guests of the Club. Many members were accompanied by guests, several lady members of the Club were present, and altogether there was a company of about 70.

After dinner, Mr. James A. Parker exhibited a number of lantern views from photographs taken by him during a tour in the Pyrenees in September last, in which he was accompanied by Mr. Walter A. Reid. They made their headquarters at Luchon, and explored the Maladetta group, climbing the peak of the range, Pic d'Aneta, 11,167 feet high. A view was shown of the river Garonne at a watershed on the mountains, through which, 200 feet below the crest, it flows into the Val d' Aran ; and a number of excellent scenes of snow-clad mountains and wooded valleys were also thrown on the screen. Mr. Parker described the views, and, on the invitation of the President, Mr. Reid added some remarks on the tour.

The toast-list was commendably brief.

Sheriff Dallas proposed "The Club," which he described as the oldest Scottish mountaineering club in Scotland (applause). It was founded in 1889 by a small coterie of enthusiasts. He remembered some years ago, in Edinburgh, seeing a short report in a newspaper of the Cairngorm Club, which he did not bother to read ; not knowing the Aberdonian then as he knew him now, he thought it was an association for the acquisition of cairngorms (laughter). He had learned since that that was merely a minor part of the club's activities (renewed laughter). The main purpose of the club was to encourage mountaineering in summer and winter. He once attempted to learn the art of mountaineering. The process covered a period of years, and he was, in a way, relieved that such experiences as he had, did not render him liable to the great honour of being admitted a member of the very fine club of which he was a guest (laughter), because he found Aberdeen a pleasant place, and he always thought mountaineering was a dangerous game, and still thought so (laughter). He was rather helped in that view by the large number of members of the medical profession present (laughter). His experiences in the art of mountaineering were—

he had climbed the highest hill in England, the highest hill in Scotland, and the highest hill in London. Owing to the climatic conditions on Scafell, he saw nothing from the time he started until he came back, and the only thing he "marvelled" at was that he did not contract double pneumonia. As to Ben Nevis, it did not count, as, particularly to a member of the Cairngorm Club, it was merely a walk. He made the ascent of the highest acclivity in London at night—in a taxicab—the summit attained being that of Primrose Hill, 120 feet above sea-level (laughter). He had looked at the Cairngorms from afar, and yielded to no one in his admiration of them. Never having climbed them, he could not offer an opinion, but those who had done so told him that the view was far finer and grander at the top. Be that as it may, he would prefer to continue taking his pleasures at the foot, while holding high admiration of the powers and enterprise of the members of the Cairngorm Club who climbed (applause).

The President, in replying, said he thought the Club had reason to congratulate itself upon its healthy, happy, and youthfully exuberant condition at the present time (applause). He was apprehensive lest Sheriff Dallas had frightened some of their guests, because the Club wanted recruits (laughter). Their Club was 32 years old, and one or more of the original members were present that evening, among them Mr. Robert Anderson (applause). There was nothing wrong with the heart, or the lungs, or the head of a club that could hold the interest of a member for 32 years. For some years the Club had, perhaps, languished a little, but not much. It was always enthusiastic. But recruits then were not coming forward, and it was necessary to the life of an organisation that young members should be added to it. As a result of the persistence of the devotees of the sport, however, interest in mountaineering had been stimulated; it had become more general, deeper, and more intense, and young men had come to think that, after all, there was "something in it."

It was very difficult to give reasons why mountains were climbed. One was that people had been turning more and more to the beauties of Nature, and thought they could see them better from the tops of the hills. Mountaineers were divided into two classes—those who went up the hill for the view and those who went up the hill for the climb. The people who went to see the landscape took the easiest way, and had a knack of persuading other members of the party to carry their coats and other gear (laughter). This class was composed of "salvationists" (laughter), but after a time some of them came to think there was something more in it, and they proceeded to find out how they could get added excitement and muscular exertion by climbing, not by the ordinary way, but by one which would satisfy those desires and still allow them to arrive at the top—

intact. These people were known as "ultramontanes," and they again were divided into two classes, those who preferred rocks and those who preferred snow. The Cairngorm Club could cater for all, and on their beloved hills of Deeside the taste of every type of a climber could be indulged in and suited.

The Club was pleased to have as one of its guests Major Ramsay, who was always so ready to grant facilities for the members to roam at will through the Royal forests at Balmoral, including the approaches to Lochnagar (applause). In thanking Major Ramsay, they acknowledged also their gratitude for similar facilities to the other lairds on Upper Deeside. The Club had no difficulty whatever in indulging in the sport, and could follow the pastime all the year round.

They were very proud of their Club. It was the oldest mountaineering club in Scotland, and they hoped and believed that it would continue to flourish, and would live for a long time yet. There were more young enthusiastic members joining now than there had ever been before, and the standard of climbing had greatly increased—so much so that the younger enthusiasts were tackling things now that the older members would never have dreamed of tackling (applause). He would emphasise to those who had not sought them the advantages of the sport of mountaineering, and to those who had experienced its delights, his advice was—"Keep to the mountains as long as you can." His medical colleagues told him that it was not wise to go on the mountains after the age of forty, but he was older than that, and the "wisdom" of his friends remained unproved. Mountaineering was not a dangerous thing—in fact, it was much less dangerous than cycling down Union Street on a wet day—and as long as they were able to walk or crawl, they would go up the mountains (applause).

Mr. Robert Anderson proposed "The Guests," and Dr. Rorie, D.S.O., Cults, responded. The President proposed "The Secretary and Treasurer," and the concluding toast of "The President" was given by Professor Ashley Mackintosh.

There was an excellent musical programme arranged by Mr. Alexander Simpson. Mr. Alexander C. Simpson played the accompaniments.

NOTES.

THE proposed affiliation of mountaineering clubs referred to in our last number has been followed by the circulation (by Mr. G. A. Solly, the President of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club) of a series of suggestions for the formation of an Advisory Council of British mountaineering clubs. The objects of this Advisory Council would be "to unite the interests and to focus the influence of the large body of members of mountaineering clubs dispersed throughout the United Kingdom on objects of general importance to such clubs; to encourage mountaineering in the United Kingdom by centralising and pooling information, and by securing general facilities; and to protect and advance the interests of British mountaineers and the districts they severally frequent." Any club would be admitted to membership of the Advisory Council on payment of an annual subscription of 10/- if its members number 100, and an additional 5/- for every 100 (or part of 100) above the first 100; and would be entitled to appoint two delegates to the Council. An annual meeting of the Council would be held in December, and extraordinary meetings when requisitioned; all meetings would be held in London, and presumably the travelling and other expenses of the delegates would be paid by the respective clubs sending them. Independent action on any matter is reserved to each constituent club, either before or after the matter has been dealt with by the Advisory Council. These suggestions were considered at a recent meeting of the Committee of the Cairngorm Club, and the conclusion arrived at unanimously was that the proposed Advisory Council was neither necessary nor advisable.

THE AFFILIATION PROPOSAL.

THE past summer was characterised by a drought of exceptional duration, with the result that the volume of rivers and streams was greatly reduced. As "Mains" of the *Free Press* "Rural Talk" pithily put it—"Aw never saw watter sae scarce 'at Aw can min' on. . . Walls gyaun clean dry; strypes fae some drain 'at eest t' aye rin noo as dry's a fussle; an' th' verra burns an' bigger watters a' rinnin sae slow." The diminution of the rivers was specially noticeable. The Spey, for instance, reached its lowest level in living memory, the "well" out of which the Ythan flows actually ran dry, and many hill burns almost ceased to be. As a consequence of the drought, too, and of the unusual heat which prevailed, moorlands and woodlands became very dry and liable to ready ignition, and several hill and moor fires occurred—sometimes

FIRE ON THE HILL OF FARE.

spontaneously, in other cases through carelessness. One of the most serious was on the Hill of Fare, and it originated, it was stated, through a fire lit by a picnic party on the south or Raemoir side of the hill near "Queen Mary's Chair" at the Burn of Corrichie, the members of the picnic party having to beat a hasty retreat so rapidly did the flames spread. This was on Wednesday, 20th July. The fire assumed greater dimensions on the Thursday and Friday, sweeping on towards Cullerlie and along the east and north sides of the hill to Echt and Midmar. The reflection from the blazing hillside was seen from Deeside and Strathdon and even in Aberdeen, and smoke clouds from the fire reached the western districts of the city, fourteen miles distant. The fire continued on the Saturday, spreading to the fringes of the Midmar forest, but the "fire-fighters," by burning swathes across the path of the oncoming blaze, succeeded in getting it under control. Their efforts were aided by a heavy downpour of rain on the Sunday and Monday, and it was hoped that the conflagration had been subdued. A change of wind, however, caused a renewed outbreak on Tuesday morning, and the fire raged furiously all that day, the Midmar forest and Midmar Castle itself becoming endangered. By Wednesday evening, however, the fire was practically got under, though the moorland remained smouldering. It was estimated that 6000 acres of moorland were affected by the fire. The damage done to woodlands was reported to be infinitesimal.

DIMINUTION OF SNOW HEAPS.

ANOTHER result of the unusual drought was the very noticeable reduction of the number and mass of the snow-heaps ordinarily observable on the higher mountain tops all through summer. A member of the Club who, during a month's holiday stay at Braemar, renewed his acquaintance with a number of peaks in the region—"fifteen or so, more or less," to use his own nonchalant enumeration—assured us that quite a number of the familiar accumulations of snow had entirely disappeared. Among those that had thus vanished was the snow-bank adjacent to the path to Ben Muich Dhui after passing Loch Etchachan and the corries at the head of Glen Luibeg—a snow-bank fairly entitled to the appellation "well-known." The patches of snow in the corries of Braeriach which almost invariably endure throughout the summer were also gone. Indeed, almost the only snow that remained in August was one patch in the corries between the summits of Cairntoul and Braeriach and another in the corrie of Cairngorm known as Ciste Mhaireararaid or Margaret's Coffin. This corrie is notable as "one of the places where the snow lies longest; never, even in the hottest summer, does it altogether disappear." (See *C. C. J.*, 1. 134).

THE HIGHEST LOCH IN BRITAIN.

IN the *Graphic* for August 13th, Mr. Alexander B. Beattie had a brief article on Coire-an-Lochan, with an accompanying illustration from a photograph taken by himself. Coire-an-Lochan, fully 3250 feet above sea level, is the highest loch in Great Britain. "It lies east by west," wrote Mr. Beattie, "enthroned on the floor of a spacious corrie of its name, on the mighty shoulders of Braeriach in the Cairngorm Mountains, facing Strathspey. Crowned with screes and precipices, which form a sheer wall of some 500-600 feet in height, it is well sheltered from north and east winds. Snow lingers long on its boulder-strewn shore, and clings tenaciously where it clogs the rocky gorges. . . . In winter, loch Coire-an-Lochan is truly the battle-ground of the elements, when heavy curtains of driving mist hang over the ground carpet of chilly white, and the fierce gale that roars down the precipice chimneys drives home, with relentless force, stinging hail and blinding snow powder. It is fierce, but grand. In striking contrast is the peace of an early June morning. There is a clarity of atmosphere unknown to the low grounds. The canopy of blue sky is intensified in its reflection, and melting snow-patches peep over the cliff edges into the clear depths. The eye wanders far over a vast sunlight panorama of Scottish river, forest and mountain, only to be drawn back magnetically again and again to the pure placid silver aqua sheet of Coire-an-Lochan and its romantic setting."

STRATHSPEY SCENERY.

. . . A LITTLE farther on, the Spey widens into Loch Insh, the centre of one of the loveliest landscapes in the British Isles. If you would enjoy a *coup d'œil* of upper Strathspey, turn to the right at Rothiemurchus village and go up by Loch an Eilein (with its famous island-castle) to the wooded crag known as the Cat's Den, and look out from amid its pine-trees over Kincraig and Kingussie to the blue mountains of Badenoch. So far the scenery has been purely Scottish. But from the Craigellachie rock at Aviemore a Scandinavian element manifests itself; geologically Strathspey is a continuation of a Norwegian fiord. The vast pine-forests rivet attention: they stretch down the Spey for about thirty miles, and surround the Tulloch Hills in a great loop known as the Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Forests. The most attractive road lies not by the river but by that eastward loop, from Aviemore to Loch Morlich, and through the cleft between the Cairngorms and the Tullochs to Nethy Bridge: if you are vigorous and the glass is high you can include the climb of Cairngorm from the Glenmore shooting lodge. This is unquestionably one of the wildest and grandest corners of Western Europe; it is forest and rock and wild overhanging mountains all the way, with never a house. The culminating point is where a buttress of Cairngorm rises 1,500 feet

above a small dark green loch, whose shores are strewn with the withered skeletons of the ancient pines that have rolled down the scree from the forest that clings to the almost precipitous slopes. To the north and south you look out, from the pass, on dim-tossing expanses of forest and mountain, and the ear strains unconsciously for the baying of deerhounds and the sound of the hunting-horn. Nethy Bridge with its neat wooden villas, high above the loud and limpid Nethy might be in Switzerland.—"A Great Scottish River," by William Power, in *The King's Highway* for March, 1921.

SOLDIERS AND SKI-ING.

MR. ARNOLD LUNN, in an article on "British Ski-ing During the War," in the *British Ski Year-Book for* 1920 (noticed in our last number), describes some of the ski-ing expeditions by British officers and men who were interned as prisoners of War at Mürren. Incidentally he writes :—

"The British Tommy did not take to ski-ing in any very great numbers. About 20 per cent of the men who were fit to ski took up the sport with keenness. The rest tobogganed and skated. There is a suggestion of hard work about ski-ing which is suspiciously suggestive of a 'fatigue.' Some of the men suspected that their officers wished them to ski in order to keep them out of mischief, which was quite sufficient to prevent them ski-ing. "What use is ski-ing to the British working-man?" asked another gentleman with Bolshevist tendencies. I once persuaded a very sceptical Tommy to take up the sport. For a day or two all went well, and Thomas began to fancy himself as a ski-runner, so I took him on a run which wound up with a little easy wood running. Half-way through the wood I heard a loud crash, and the tardy convert was discovered with his ski imprisoned in the low-lying branches of a tree and his head submerged in snow. 'I say, Mr. Lunn,' he exclaimed, 'do you call this ski-ing? I call this —— bird's nesting.'"

"TRESPASSER'S WALK."

THERE is a type of "tramping" which belongs more to the future, a new type and an even more fascinating one, and that is the taking of cross-sections of the world, the cutting across all roads and tracks the predispositions of humdrum pedestrians, and making a sort of virginal way across the world. . . . In the country a real cross-section and haphazard adventurous tramp is one which can be known as "Trespasser's Walk." You take with you a little compass, decide to go west or east, as fancy favours, and then keep resolutely to the guidance of the magnetic needle. It takes you the most extraordinary way, and shows what an enormous amount of the face of the earth is kept away from the feet of ordinary humanity by the fact of "private property." On the other side of the hedge that skirts the public way is an entirely different atmosphere and

company. In ten minutes in our beautiful Sussex you can find yourself as remote from ordinary familiar England as if you were in the midst of a great reservation. And you may tramp a whole day upon occasion without meeting a single human being.—Stephen Graham in *John o' London's Weekly.*

LADIES' MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.

A LADIES' mountaineering club has been organised in England, Mrs. Winthrop Young being president. It is called the Pinnacle Club, and its main object is declared to be "to foster the independent development of rock climbing amongst women." There is a delightful terseness about the qualification for full membership—"proved ability to lead an ordinary climb of moderate difficulty." Twenty members of the Club possess that qualification.

DR. A. M. KELLAS'S GRAVE.

DR. ALEXANDER M. KELLAS, of the Mount Everest Expedition, who died at Khampa Dzong, on 5th June, was buried on one of the slopes below the fort, within sight of Everest, which he was so eager to climb, and looking over the three great peaks—Chomiomo, Chumalhari, and Kungchinjinga—which he alone had already climbed. His coolies made a rough cross out of the lovely wild flowers that spring up everywhere in this dry soil, and his body lies in a site unsurpassed for beauty. It looks across the broad plains and rolling hills of Tibet to the mighty snow mountains of Himalaya. "Such," concluded the above account of the grave, which appeared in *The Times* of 29th November, "is a fitting resting-place for the great mountaineer." The spot has since been marked by a stone, inscribed simply "A. M. K., 1921." We hope to be able to give an illustration of the grave in our next number.

OBITUARY.

MR. WILLIAM SKEA, printer, (of Messrs. Milne and Hutchison, Aberdeen), who died on 19th July, aged seventy-four, was an early member of the Club, if not indeed an original one, but he severed his connection with it about twenty years ago, when he relinquished journalism and set up in business as a master printer. He was a pedestrian of fairly good powers, and was familiar with Upper Deeside. He contributed several articles descriptive of walks to the early numbers of the *Journal*, notably "Two Days in Glen Muick" (1894), and "A Week-End in Glen Gairn" (1899).

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

AN appeal was made to members for contributions to the fund organised for the prosecution of the exploratory expedition to Mount Everest. It resulted in £8 13s. 6d. being subscribed. The secretary of the fund, writing from the Alpine Club in Savile Row, London, warmly acknowledged this "very generous" contribution.

THE following have been admitted members of the Club during the year :—

NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. David S. P. Douglas, 3 Queen's Gate, Aberdeen.

Mr. Loudon MacQueen Douglas, F.R.S.E., 29 West Savile Ter. Newington, Edinburgh.

Mr. Geoffrey P. Geddes, Postcliffe, Culter.

Sheriff A. J. Louttit Laing, Burnieboozle House, Aberdeen.

Professor Ashley W. Mackintosh, 9 Bonaccord Square, Aberdeen.

Mr. F. P. Milligan, 1 Moray Place, Edinburgh.

Dr. William C. Souter, 2 Bonaccord Square, Aberdeen.

Mrs. William Souter, 2 Bonaccord Square, Aberdeen.

Mr. Thomas Stell, Starker Street, Keighley, Yorks.

Mr. William C. Welsh, Logie-Durno, has resigned. The membership of the Club stands at 173.

REVIEWS.

BALMORAL IN FORMER TIMES: AN HISTORICAL SKETCH. By the Rev. John Stirton, B.D., F.S.A. (Scot.). Forfar: W. Shepherd. Pp. 57.—Balmoral has a history of its own, quite irrespective of the accretions of history which have gathered round it in modern days owing to its being the "Highland Home" of Queen Victoria and her successors on the throne. Singular to relate, it was Crown property four centuries before Prince Albert bought it, for in 1435 James I appropriated the earldom of Mar, of which Balmoral formed a part, and the Scottish Kings drew the revenues of the Mar territories (including Balmoral) till 1565, when John, Lord Erskine, was granted the earldom and the lands. About a century later, Balmoral somehow became a separate property, and was owned by a family of Gordons. Little is known about these Gordons, who are supposed to have been cadets of the Abergeldie family. More authentic history is reached when Balmoral, about 1655, was acquired by the Farquharsons of Inverey, and a distinctive family of Farquharsons of Balmoral was set up. There is a touch of irony in the circumstance that these Farquharsons were Jacobites, in view of Balmoral ultimately becoming the property of the successors of the Hanoverian monarchs against whom they strove. As a consequence of their devotion to the Stuart cause, the Farquharsons of Balmoral had chequered careers and were subject to the vicissitudes that beset so many of the Highland chieftains of the time. One of them fought at Killiecrankie, and died in exile at St. Germains; his successor—known as "Balmoral the Brave"—took an active part in the 1715 and 1745 risings and had eventually to go into hiding. The family of Farquharsons of Balmoral became extinct, and Balmoral reverted to the Farquharsons of Inverey and then to the Farquharsons of Auchendryne, one of whom sold Balmoral to the second Earl Fife in 1798. As is now well known, Prince Albert took over the lease of Balmoral in 1848, and four years later purchased the estate from the Fife Trustees, and subsequently built the present Castle. He bequeathed Balmoral to Queen Victoria, and she in turn bequeathed it to the Sovereign of the country.

BALMORAL.

Mr. Stirton, in his little volume, has given us—for the first time, we think—a connected history of Balmoral (merely outlined above), and his work is a distinct addition to the literature of Deeside, for which many will be grateful. If somewhat too concise, perhaps, it is none the less carefully and judiciously executed, and it will take its place as an authoritative exposition of the subject with which it

deals. The narrative is exceedingly interesting, and, in addition, is replete with many picturesque details, particularly in connection with the Jacobite Farquharsons. R. A.

THE PHYSICAL GEOLOGY OF THE DON BASIN. By Alexander Bremner, M.A., B.Sc. Aberdeen: The University Press. Pp. viii + 129. 6/- net.—In 1912, Dr. Bremner published a work on "The Physical Geology of the Dee Valley" (See *C.C.J.*, vii., 248-9), and he has now followed it up by a corresponding work on the Don Valley, really written in 1914, he tells us, though only now published. The work is characterised by all the qualities which marked its predecessor. It is manifestly the outcome of much patient investigation, and is written with clearness and with a thoroughness and minuteness which leave nothing to be desired. The Don is not so associated with mountainous country as is its neighbour, the Dee, but it is none the less a mountain stream, its source being at an altitude of about 2000 feet. The lower altitude of its source, however, has contributed with other circumstances to give it different characteristics from its sister river. This is most noticeable perhaps in the matter of glaciation. Dr. Bremner concluded that the Dee Valley glacier extended as far eastward as Dinnet, many miles from the source of the river, but he fixes the limit of the glacier of the Don basin at Invernochty and Bellabeg, places very much nearer to the source of the Don than Dinnet is to Braeriach. Like the Dee, however, the Don has suffered from the "capture" of its headwaters by other streams, a predatory procedure which took place prior to the ice age. The Avon ate its way back through friable strata and appropriated twelve miles of the upper Don, and tributaries of the Avon did similar work, so much so that by the combined operations the Don lost almost exactly 60 square miles of drainage area, and that an area with the heaviest rainfall. In a final chapter Dr. Bremner briefly discusses the subject of scenery in relation to the nature of the underlying rocks, making reference to the effect on Donside scenery of Morven, Lord Arthur's Cairn and Callievar, and Bennachie.

THE GEOLOGY OF THE DON VALLEY.

R. A.

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB GUIDE, SECTION A. GEOLOGY, etc. Edited by James Reid Young, Edinburgh. The Scottish Mountaineering Club. Pp. 144, 7/6 net, by post, 7/9.—This, we take it, is intended to be the introductory section of the projected "Guide," and so is necessarily of a preliminary nature, dealing with general features of mountains and of mountaineering craft. Thus there are articles on the geology of Scottish mountains (by Dr. B. N. Peach and Dr. John Horne), the meteorology (by Mr. Gilbert Thomson), the botany, with special

THE S.M.C. GUIDE.

reference to the flowering plants (by Professor Bower), and the bird-life (by Mr. Lionel W. Hinxman.) These are followed by two articles on mountaineering equipment and on snow conditions (both by Mr. Harold Raeburn), an article on rock climbing (by Mr. George Sang), and one—not by any means the least interesting—on photography for mountaineers (by Dr. Inglis Clark), while Mr. J. Gall Inglis contributes useful notes on maps, compasses, and aneroid barometers. The names of the several contributors are a sufficient guarantee of the accuracy and authoritativeness of the information supplied, which, as regards the geology and other scientific aspects of Scottish mountains, strikes us as remarkably complete. Mr. Harold Raeburn and Mr. Sang are recognised exponents of mountaineering generally and rock-climbing in particular, and their articles furnish much sound and sensible advice as to how to go about both. The A section of the Guide also includes Munro's Tables of the 3000 feet mountains of Scotland, revised and brought up to date partly by the late Sir Hugh Munro himself and partly by Mr. Gall Inglis. It is well to have these valuable tables reproduced in what is obviously destined to be the master guide to Scottish mountaineering. R. A.

PIONEER WORK OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEY.

IN a most interesting book,—recently published—"A Hundred Years in the Highlands," by Mr. Osgood H. Mackenzie of Inverewe, there is a reference to Sir Hector Mackenzie, fourth baronet and eleventh laird of Gairloch (born *circa* 1758), which illustrates how visitors to the Highlands were treated in his time.

"'Father,' Frank (his son and heir) would say, 'they tell me there is an officer come to-day to the inn at Ceann-t-saile.' 'Frank, run and find out his name,' was the reply. 'Give him my compliments, and say I hope he will come up at once with his things and remain here till he is obliged to leave.' The idea of a gentleman—ladies in those days never inspected our country—being allowed to remain at an inn was contrary to all rules of Highland hospitality and thought disgraceful. The entertained were not always angels unawares, but one day there arrived Major Colby, of the Engineers, who, with a sergeant and some privates, had been sent to the north-west as pioneers of the Goverment plans for the Ordnance Survey of Britain, a great work, hardly completed yet, though I must be writing of about the year 1816. My father (Sir Hector) caught many a fish on his hospitality hook, but never one like Colby, a highly-educated man of science, from astronomy all the way downwards, full of every kind of information, and most able and glad to pass it on to others. He had been all through the wars with Buonaparte, yet was always ready to come shooting or fishing in burn, loch, or sea with us if his men were carrying on routine work which only needed his presence

occasionally. He was with us nearly the whole summer, and I remember what high spirits he was in one day when one of his people won a prize by throwing the sun's rays from a concave mirror from, I think, the top of Slioch to the Clova Hills in Kincardineshire through some glen or other, thus enabling these spots to be fixed accurately for mapping. . . ."

The author quotes the above passage from a MS. left by his uncle, Dr. John Mackenzie. A. I. M.

"ALPINE JOURNAL."

THE first four articles of the current number of the *Alpine Journal* deal with the great Himalaya which has been so much in the minds of all mountaineers during the year. A short summary of Mountaineering in this region is given by Dr. Norman Collie, who also contributes an article on the Ranges North of Mount Everest as seen from the Kang La. Mr. C. F. Meade contributes a very useful article on Himalayan Hints for mountaineers, while the expeditions of the late Dr. Kellas to Kamet are described in extracts from his report to the Oxygen Research Committee. A man's own work is his best memorial, and Dr. Kellas's exquisite photographs reproduced in recent *Alpine Journals* and his writings on the unknown land between Tibet and India will ever remain as a memorial of our townsman who gave his life for the furtherance of scientific research in that far-off land. Various articles of interest on Alpine subjects follow, among which is a short note of special interest to Scottish climbers in the contribution of N. E. Odell dealing with an ascent of the Chasm, Buchaille Etive. The usual Memorial Notices, Club Notes and Reviews, finish a number which amply maintains the high standard set by the pioneer journal devoted to mountaineering. J. G. K.

"SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL."

THE Chasm, Buchaille Etive, is also dealt with in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, an article thereon being contributed by Mr. R. F. Stodart, who accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Odell in their investigation. One sentence descriptive of the start for home when the climb was finished is calculated to stir emotions in most of us: "As often happens, one of the party was certain he knew the quickest way down, and the others resigned themselves to the inevitable loss of time." Mr. D. H. Menzies writes on a climb of the Coruisk face of Sgurr a' Greadaidh. It was a whole-day performance with a vengeance, it being 11.30 p.m. before the ridge of the Black Cuillin was struck. "Progression along the knife edge of the summit ridge in the dim light of the midnight hour," says Mr. Menzies, "brought strongly to mind 'The Cat that Walked by Itself' in Just-so Stories." "W. G." contributes a notice of Dr. Kellas.

"YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB JOURNAL."

THE *Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* has made its reappearance after an interval of nearly seven years, and it is not surprising, therefore, to find it containing a record of the war services of members of the Club and In Memoriam notices of those killed in action. The career of many a good climber was evidently cut short by the great European conflict, but mountaineering has still its devotees, as is well attested by the contents of the present number. Several of the articles describing climbs are almost provocative of "thrills" on the part of the reader, so venturesome they appear and so fraught with danger. Especially is this the case with Mr. C. D. Frankland's account of his experiments with rubber-soled shoes, which he declares essential to the successful ascent of sundry pitches in the Lake district. Mr. C. E. Benson describes with not a little mordant humour several climbs in Arran. He has a particular quarrel with Cir Mhor and a contributor to the *C. C. J.*, (so far back as July 1904). What was described as scree he found to be sand. "Granite disintegrated to the condition of coarse sand is not scree," he writes. "In fact, the two-thirds of the terrace below the grass is in dry weather a gigantic sand heap, in wet a gigantic muck heap, much of it at a high angle, and studded with stones treacherously embedded."

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