

Vol. X.

January, 1923.

No. 60.

THE  
**Cairngorm Club Journal.**

EDITED BY

ROBERT ANDERSON.

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ISSUED TWICE A YEAR.

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THE  
**Cairngorm Club Journal**

EDITED BY  
ROBERT ANDERSON

VOL. X  
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THE CAIRNGORM CLUB  
1923

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[NOTICE TO BINDER—The illustration of Dr. A. M. Kellas's Grave (in No. 59) forms the frontispiece to the volume.]

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## RULES.

(Adopted 15th November, 1921.)

(Abridged)

I.—The Club shall be called "**The Cairngorm Club**," and shall have its headquarters in Aberdeen.

II.—The objects of the Club shall be—(1) To encourage mountain climbing in Scotland, with special reference to the Cairngorm group of mountains; (2) to procure and impart scientific, topographical, and historical information about the Scottish mountains, their superficial physical features, minerals, rocks, plants, animals, meteorology, ancient and modern public routes giving access to and across them, and the meaning of their local place-names, literature, and legendary or folk-lore; (3) to consider the right of access to Scottish mountains, and to adopt such measures in regard thereto as the Club may deem advisable; and (4) to issue a Journal or such other publications as may be considered advantageous to the Club.

V.—Every candidate for election as an Ordinary Member shall be proposed by one member and seconded by another member, both having personal knowledge of him, and shall supply, for the information of the Committee, a list of his Scottish and other ascents, stating the month and the year in which each ascent was made, or a statement of his contributions to science, art, or literature in connection with Scottish mountains. Such list, signed by the candidate and by the two members acting as proposer and seconder, will be considered at the next Meeting of the Committee; and if, in the opinion of the Committee, the qualifications be deemed sufficient, the candidate shall thereupon be admitted a member. Members of the Alpine Club and of the Scottish Mountaineering Club shall be eligible without supplying such a list.

IX.—Entrance fee, 7/6.

X.—Annual subscription, 7/6. Provision for commuting the subscriptions.

XI.—Associate member's subscription, 5/- annually.

XV.—Office-bearers:—a President, two Vice-Presidents, an Honorary Secretary, an Honorary Treasurer (or an Honorary Secretary and Treasurer), and an Honorary Editor.

XVI.—Committee of 9 members.

XVII.—Office-bearers and members of Committee to hold office for one year, but eligible for re-election. President and Vice-Presidents not to hold office for more than three consecutive years. The three senior members of Committee ineligible for re-election for one year.

XXIV.—The Annual General Meeting of the Club shall be held in Aberdeen on the last Saturday of November of each year for the transaction of the following business—(1) To receive the Honorary Treasurer's accounts for the year ; (2) to elect the Honorary President, Office-bearers, and Committee for the year ; (3) to fix the Meets and Excursions for the following year ; and (4) to transact any other competent business.

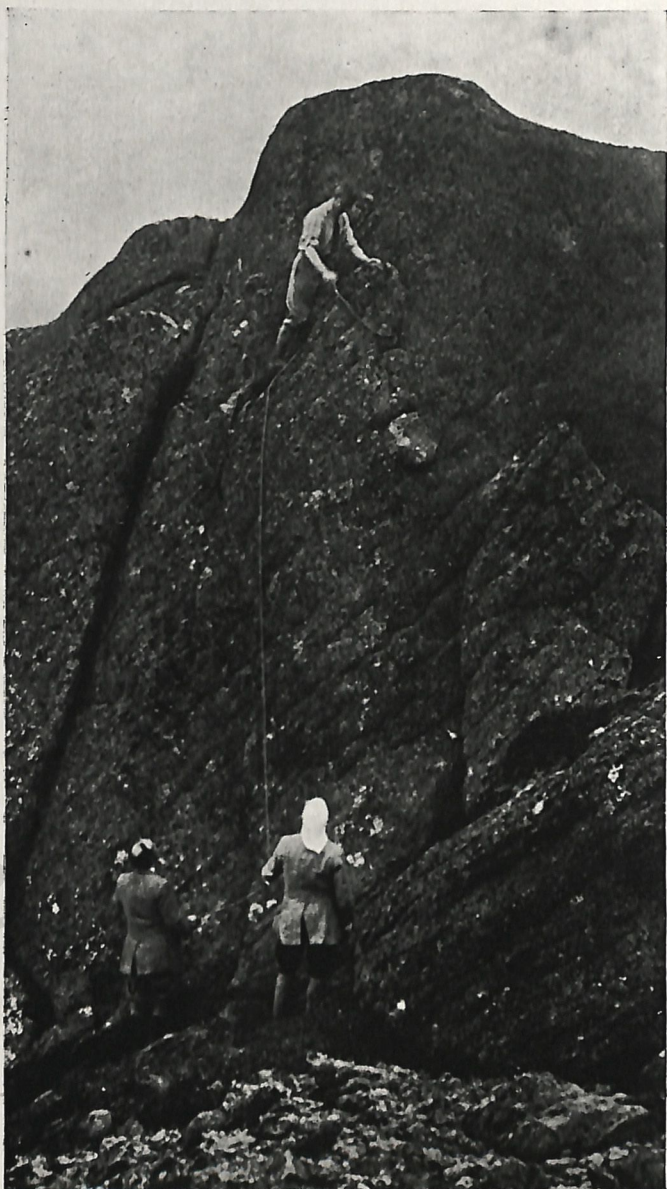
XXIX.—The Chair, whether at a General Meeting or at a Meeting of Committee, shall be taken by the President of the Club, or, in his absence, by one of the Vice-Presidents. In the absence of the President and Vice-Presidents, the Meeting shall elect a Chairman from among the members present. The Chairman, whether at a General Meeting or at a Meeting of the Committee, shall, in the case of an equality of votes, have a second or casting vote.

XXX.—At least seven clear days before either the Annual General Meeting or any Special General Meeting, the Hon. Secretary shall post to every member of the Club a notice of the time and place of such meeting and of the business to be transacted.

XXXII. Save in exceptional circumstances of which the Committee shall be the sole judges, a Club Dinner shall be arranged for in Aberdeen in each year immediately after the Annual General Meeting.

XXXIII. The Committee are empowered to entertain three guests at the Annual Dinner in the name of the Club.

XXXIV. Any member shall be at liberty to introduce guests at his own expense, subject always to such regulations as may from time to time be made by the Committee.



*Photo by*

*R. T. Sellar.*

THE NORTH BARN OF BEN BYNAC.

THE  
Cairngorm Club Journal.

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No. 60.

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THE BARNES OF BYNAC. IN A DAY.

BY JAMES MCCOSS AND R. T. SELLAR.

ON 6th August last we had the pleasure of being in a party arranged by C. P. Robb to ascend Ben Bynac. C. P. Robb, his brother M. J. Robb, and McCoss, all very enthusiastic, arrived at Huntly by motor from Aberdeen at 8 a.m., and were there joined by Sellar. We left immediately for Aberlour, where we were to breakfast. Our road followed the valley of the Deveron for the first few miles, and then led across the moors to Dufftown. Here we expected to get a glimpse of Ben Rinnes, but it was still well shrouded in mist, and even on the road we had the curious experience of shooting from brilliant sunshine into great banks of dense mist, to emerge again in half a mile into the sunshine. The rays of the sun were breaking up the mist in all directions, and some fine effects of ground mist crawling through the birch trees on the hillsides were obtained.

We reached Nethy Bridge shortly after 11 o'clock, and consulted Parker's famous map, and then a very pleasant run of four miles on a good road through Abernethy Forest brought us to Forest Lodge, where we stopped to change a tyre, and collect information about the condition of the road to Rynettin. We were told the road would require careful driving as it was narrow and rough, but, thanks to the driving skill of Marshall Robb, we had no difficulty in reaching Rynettin.



Mr. Carr, the keeper at Rynettin, was most hospitable and gave us all the information he could about the road, etc. It was most cheering to know that we could take the car another three miles to Ryvoan, which we reached at 12.30 p.m.

Ryvoan is composed of a stable and a living-room, in which latter were three young climbers from Edinburgh. The other half of the building is roofless. From Ryvoan the road makes a sharp elbow towards the picturesque pass to Loch Morlich. It is nearer, however, to cut this corner out and take to the heather, and make for the road again near Loch a Gharbh-choire, and thence to the bothy at the river Nethy. The door of the bothy was inside, and looked as if it had been used as a bed. A little beyond the hut we struck the Lairig an Laoigh path, and we followed it till we were up on the plateau.

We stopped to lunch at 1.30 p.m. at the altitude of 2325 feet by the side of a good well, close to the path, and marked by a small slab with a rounded top. The well is the source of a stream that runs to the Nethy. While seated at the well we had time to survey the surrounding country. To the north we had an excellent view of the extensive Forest of Abernethy and a glimpse of Speyside. Below us to the south was wild and lonely Strath Nethy and the steep glittering rock face of Sron a Chano.

A short climb of easy gradient brought us on to the extensive plateau due north of Ben Bynac. The guiding line over this wide upland is the north ridge of Bynac. This rocky rib runs up to the summit to a height of a little over 900 feet, and if the edge is kept it gives quite a good scramble. During our ascent of the ridge we had a good view of the south corrie of Mam Suim, Coire Stac na h-Iolaire, (the eagle's corrie). On its northerly side are three or four rocky ribs about 300 feet high, with deep-set gullies between. These gullies look a good proposition for a winter snow-climb. We reached the summit at 3 o'clock, but, unfortunately, thick mist hung on the high hills to the west, and Cairngorm

was seldom clear of it. Just below us on the eastern side of the mountain lay the valleys of Caiplich and the Avon; the latter could be followed to Inchroy, some eight miles and a half distant. Across the Avon were the very familiar summits of Beinn a' Bhuid and Beinn Avon, reminding one of many pleasant excursions. Almost due south were the Dubh Lochans, and the Lairig an Laoigh leading up to the saddle between Beinn Mheadoin and Beinn a' Chaoruinn. To the south-west we caught a glimpse of the Shelter Stone Crag, and a narrow slit of snow to the left, marking the Castlegates Gully. The snow on the Feith Buidhe was also visible.

We could willingly have spent a little more time on the summit, but we intended to visit the Barns, which are about half-a-mile south-east, and 400 feet below the summit. The top of the largest Barn can just be seen from a few yards east of the cairn, and if one is not careful the three points of rock forming the south backbone of the mountain may easily be mistaken for them. Viewed from a distance, the Barns appear to be three large boulders, and would certainly not attract much attention from the average visitor. On closer inspection, however, they proved to be rocks of considerable size, and presented plenty of scope for the rock-climber. As these rocks had apparently never been climbed we were quite anxious to have a look at them.

The smallest and most northerly Barn was the first to receive attention. It is a square tower, about 25 feet high on the shortest side, and after a brief inspection a route was found on this side. The other sides were manifestly impossible. The route starts up some blocks at the right-hand side, from the top of which there is a rather exposed step to the left, entailing some risk. The risk was obviated by threading the rope in advance through a deep slit about an inch wide behind an upright flake of rock, the rope being held from below, thus attaining complete safety. To reach the flake required a slight swing, and most of the staying-on is done by hugging it, as the foothold is not a good one. On the

other side of the flake there is a good foothold, and from there the rope was reversed in the slit giving a safeguard beyond, where there is another step leading up to a short gully and the summit. The accompanying illustration shows the rope being reversed on the flake. In the descent the flake was closely hugged, and the help of two men was necessary to get the descending man off it.

We next went to the south and largest Barn. (See illustration, *C.C.J.*, 1, 137.) The north-west face is the shortest, being some 50 feet in height. It is split by two vertical chimneys, both of which were tried, but they would not go. We then went to the south-west face, and Marshall Robb led up a long green crack in fine style. It finished with back and foot work. The top of this crack brought us to the bottom of a narrow through-chimney on our left, about 12 feet high. The head of this chimney took us to the summit ridge. At each end of this short arête there is a very rounded mass of rock about 10 feet high, which forms the summit. The standing-room on the arête is very small, and even with a back up it does not look as if the summit could be attained as it is completely holdless and round. We descended by the easier hollowed-out gully on the south-east side.

The middle Barn has a sphinx-like shape, being undercut and rounded at the foot, and looks as if it were built of feather-beds and sofa cushions. There are a few narrow chimneys and cracks of unequal width of very rounded and weathered granite, which an expert and thin climber might be able to overcome. We had not the time to try this Barn—besides, we are not all thin.

A pleasant walk to Ryvoan and the car brought our walking to an end. With a stop at Rynettin, we ran right through to Huntly, where Sellar left the car at 10 p.m. The others reached Aberdeen at midnight.

## TWO HILL WALKS FROM CLOVA.

BY WILLIAM BARCLAY, L.D.S.

To climb far up from the valley  
And its homely farmstead cries,  
And be alone in the silence  
Of the mighty hills and skies.

To tread the springy heather,  
Dark on the upland moor ;  
To feel the wind in our faces,  
Cold and sweet and pure.

AS has been mentioned from time to time in the pages of the *C.C.J.*, the Clova district is one which lends itself admirably to the activities of the hill-walker. To recapitulate—First of all, we have the three well-known tracks—through Glen Doll to Braemar, over the Capel Mounth to Ballater, and by Bachnagairn to Loch Muick, etc. Then as to the hills, they rise directly from the head of the glen, and they are mostly grassy or covered with grass and short heather, making the walking very pleasant. The slopes are generally easy, and the dips almost negligible, so that the first ascent of a couple of thousand feet is really the only climb worth mentioning during the whole day. What could be more enjoyable or more profitable to the old-fashioned hill-man than thus to wander leisurely from one top to another over cloud-shadowed sun-flecked hillsides, on through the length of a long summer's day, peeping into this glen, now into that, while at the same time the more distant prospect is constantly changing!

The following is an account of two such walks during the past summer. On each occasion a start was made from Forfar—the twenty-five miles separating that town from the farm of Braedownie, at the head of Glen Clova, being covered by the humble push-bike, as was also the return journey in the evening. Of course, to

those who can annihilate distance with their Rolls-Royce cars, that would be quite a negligible item.

The earlier excursion took place in the month of May, on one of the first really warm days of the month, when all the women-folks in Glen Clova were busy at their spring cleaning; such a wielding of scrubbing brushes and airing of beds and blankets I had never seen before. On quitting Braedownie, I crossed the river Esk and turned up Glen Doll to the lodge, which was shut up and deserted. The keeper was at work tidying up the kitchen garden, and his wife, like the rest of the good ladies farther down the glen, was busy with her seasonal cleaning. I passed round the lodge and followed the footpath till it emerged from the plantation by a wooden bridge which spans the stream here. Glen Doll now lay before me in all its freshness and grandeur. It is a wild little glen as one looks up to the black forbidding rocks of Craig Rennet right ahead, or into the depths of Corrie Fee, where the burn tumbles over the precipices in one long silver thread. Nearer at hand and high above us on the left nestles Corrie Kilbo, showing a rough stalker's path straggling along its western slope. The floor of the glen is filled with the broad prattling stream of the White Water.

I crossed the bridge and stepped along the footpath, which, after passing through the plantation and then through a deer-fence, slants up the hillside. At the lip of Corrie Kilbo I encountered a large herd of deer feeding side by side with sheep. The former, of course, on seeing me, wheeled about and went off at a canter up the glen and passed in single file over the skyline and out of sight. The track now crossed the burn and climbed high up along the right-hand side of the corrie, landing me on a wide stretch of moorland about midway between the summits of Mayar and Dreish, and at an elevation of 2746 feet. Rounding the head of Corrie Kilbo, just above the snow cornice, I proceeded in an easterly direction up the gentle grassy slopes to the summit of Dreish (3105 feet). A fence runs all the

way—in fact, connects this hill with Mayar. Snugly ensconced behind the large cairn, I could enjoy the wide prospect at my leisure, for the atmosphere was very clear. Suffice it to say that my vision ranged from the snowy Cairngorms and the paps of Bennachie to the Firth of Forth, the Lomond and the Pentland hills; and from the shapely cone of Mount Keen to the bulky Clachlet in the far west. A little bit of Loch Tay backed by the steep profile of Ben More was particularly arresting.

I now retraced my steps to the dip and walked along the flat tableland towards Mayar, whose summit rose from the moor about a mile off. On the way I rescued a sheep from a serious predicament. I found the poor animal securely fastened to the fence by its long fleece, which was firmly entwined round two of the wires, so that it was able only to slide backwards and forwards between the two uprights. I promptly cut it loose.

Mayar (3043 feet) stands at the head of Glen Prosen, and from the summit one can look down almost the whole length of this quiet pastoral valley, whose slopes were everywhere dotted with sheep and the whiter coats of their accompanying lambs. There is only a small cairn here, and the view is practically the same as from Dreish, but the actual hilltop is smaller and more shapely.

As I had made a late start, I must needs now get back to Clova, so, descending to the north, I tramped round the edge of Corrie Fee eastward to the path in Kilbo, by which I dropped rapidly to the white house in Glen Doll and so home.

Six weeks later, I was again in Glen Clova. In the midst of a spell of broken weather, I was fortunate in being able to snatch one good day. On this occasion Braedownie was reached by 9 o'clock, and that allowed ample time for a long day on the hills. Following the storm of the previous day there was a delicious crispness in the air; the day was more like one in autumn than in July.

My walk took me along the valley of the South Esk, past the beginning of the Capel Mounth path and the keeper's cottage just beyond it. Craig Mellon presents here even a steeper front than it does to Glen Doll—one long stone-shoot sweeping down almost from the summit to the river. Beyond the house the path, which at this point is indistinct, crosses the marshy floor of the valley, and leads to a rather primitive bridge over the river, here a raging torrent. After crossing the stream one is on firm ground again and soon reaches the corner where the glen narrows and turns sharply to the west. The windings of the path can now be followed as it climbs up the hillside towards the thick plantation surrounding Bachnagairn. Numerous sheep were feeding contentedly on the steep slope opposite, and in the distance I spied deer. Some time was spent by the old ruin admiring the falls and ruminating on the general surroundings of this "lodge in the wilderness." Then I moved on again. Recrossing the stream by the rustic bridge between the two falls, and following the zigzags of the Muick path, I soon reached the shoulder of the hill above, from which I could look down on the plantation and the upper part of the glen.

The path now travels away from the river over the moorland in the direction of Loch Muick, while the hump of Broad Cairn rises with a gentle slope on the left. Cuidhe Crom of Lochnagar showed occasionally through the mist. I left the path in the vicinity of the Forfar-Aberdeen county march and moved off to the left towards Broad Cairn, following a track which I noticed leading in that direction; but, before reaching the upper, stony part of the hill, I left it and struck over to the right to have a look at the Dubh Loch, lying dark and sullen beneath its surrounding cliffs. Then I made my own tracks for the top (3268 feet). A large herd of deer was feeding between me and Loch Esk, which, under sullen skies, appeared a desolate sheet of water.

Up till now the day had been very dull and gloomy—

almost threatening—and mist hung about all the higher hilltops, yet I had a clear view to the south as far as the West Lomond in Fife. Of the Cairngorms I could see nothing but a few snow patches below the trailing clouds of mist. Even Lochnagar was only seen occasionally, but the view of Loch Muick and the valley beyond was very refreshing.

Descending from the rocky knob which forms the summit of Broad Cairn, I strolled along the broad and almost flat ridge to Cairn Bannoch (3314 feet), another rocky little top, where I found a snug shelter just below the cairn and facing the Muick valley, with seats for two. Here I ate my lunch while the mist swirled about the slope of Cairn Taggart opposite, and the Allt à Choire Bhoiaheachl poured its waters in one continuous fall of quite 150 feet to the Dubh Loch below.

I next continued my high level walk—and it was both high and level—westward towards a couple of cairns which stood up against the sky about half a mile away, on the summit of Fafernle (3274 feet). In addition to being the county march, this is evidently the dividing line between the adjoining estates, for firmly embedded in the larger cairn is a dressed stone showing a big letter M on the east face, and an I on the west—Muick and Invercauld, I presume. The one thing noticeable on this hill was ptarmigan; they were everywhere, and during my walk southward along the ridge of the mountain I flushed hundreds.

The ground here at one time must have been fenced, as a long line of broken-down posts and loose strands of wire stretched south down the back of Fafernle for about a mile, and then struck across and ran up the slope of Tolmount. During my walk I followed the general direction of this fence to the Knaps of Fafernle (3059 feet) and Crow Craigies (3014 feet); then, turning to the west, I crossed the boggy ground at the watershed and struck up the short ascent to Tolmount (3143 feet). Viewed from Fafernle this is quite a distinct little top with a steep face to the Allt an Loch. Here I also



found two cairns a short distance apart. The one to the north commands a view of the length of Loch Callater and the lodge at its far end. Just below the south cairn are the ruins of a hut, which must have been a fairly substantial structure at one time and overlooked the whole valley towards Glen Doll.

The day had now improved so much that the sun actually came out and I lay basking in its rays spying the country all around. About me on the slopes of Tolmount fed numerous herds of deer all unconscious of my presence. But it was towards Cairn na Glasha that my glass was levelled most, for that brae-face presented a wonderful sight, and such a one as it had never been my lot previously to behold, and I have wandered about deer forests all my life. The whole hillside, quite half a square mile in extent, was actually swarming with deer, not grazing here and there in isolated herds as one generally sees, but so thickly distributed as to form one great gathering, and if there was one deer in that herd I am morally certain there was well-nigh a thousand. The scene reminded me forcibly of a big sheep farm when all the flocks have been collected into the home paddocks preparatory to clipping operations. Reluctantly I closed my glasses and prepared to move on. At the same time I thought it a pity to disturb such a multitude, so resolved not to visit Cairn na Glasha but to pass directly to Tom Buidhe, which rose a grassy dome about a mile to the south. On the way I successfully stalked a herd of deer, crawling up to within less than a dozen yards before I was discovered. The dip was soft and peaty, but the walk from the one hilltop to the other was quite short. Two small quartz cairns adorn the flat grassy summit (3140 feet). Mount Blair is a very prominent object from this top, as is Glas Maol from them all.

I continued my walk down the long south-east running ridge, crossing a considerable stretch of peat bog on the way, till the ground began to fall to the Fialzioch burn. Then I dropped down to the river, crossed it and joined Jock's Road at the commencement

of the steep descent into Glen Doll, just where the valley falls away from under one's feet, and the streams precipitate their waters in a series of falls. Above me towered the steep rocky buttresses of Craig Maud and Craig Rennet, black and forbidding in the evening shadow, and a great contrast to the kind of scenery through which I had been wandering all day.

A quiet walk along the excellent path above the White Water brought me in three miles to the white house of the Doll and to the end of a very fine hill walk.

## BEN MORE ASSYNT.

BY DAVID P. LEVACK.

IN the country lying immediately inland between two lines drawn east and west, one through Loch Lurgain, the other through Loch Assynt, there is a mass of hill-land in the west, little known to most people on this side of Scotland. The exploration of any part of this extensive playground is attained only by somewhat lengthy sojourns in the neighbourhood, and any particular district can be reached only by long journeys from the railway, which at no point is nearer than 40 miles by road. The isolation of the district is enhanced by the scarcity of accommodation, the extreme infrequency of houses, and the wildness of the landscape, relieved only here and there by little woods at the edges of its innumerable lochs.

Last year (1922) four of us solved all the difficulties of travel and hotels, by using a motor-car and camping where we chose. I have enlarged elsewhere on the glorious freedom of camp-life, and it is unnecessary to go further into the delights of such a method of travel.\* Suffice it to say that one afternoon in August saw us running along the road from Loch Inver, up the short wooded valley which separates the north end of Loch Assynt from the sea, through scenery such as is produced by the West of Scotland alone. The evening was just beginning when we bivouacked on the shore of Loch Assynt, on the promontory where stand the ruins of Ardvreck Castle, beside the Allt a Chalda Mor. A more perfect situation could hardly be imagined. The sunset crimsoned the water of the loch, the hills became purple with an indefinite haze, while the sky in the west was an emerald green shot with gold. A visit to Inchnadamph hotel procured butter, bread, and milk, and these,

\* See p. 109 of present volume.

supplemented by sundry herrings bought from a fisherman in Loch Inver, made a supper which was as extensive as it was appreciated. About 10 p.m. we turned in.

Next morning, after a hurried breakfast and the preparation of some immense cheese sandwiches, we ran the car into Inchnadamph, and set off, up the Traligill Burn, to attack the solitudes of Ben More Assynt. The track is a well-defined one for nearly a mile, running up the north bank of the burn to the farm of Glenbain, where, for all practical purposes, it ceases. Its absence is not felt in the slightest. The route lies on and up, rising higher and higher above the burn, over short hummocks of pasture land, and, finally, the crisp short heather of the hillside. Here let me point out that Bartholomew's half-inch map is out-of-date. The track shown leading to Ben More Assynt is on the south side of the burn, but it no longer exists. I would advise any one who attempts the ascent to hold to the north side, and there keep rising, rising, till the burn is a silver streak far on the right, and below, and the mass of Conamheall appears in front of the climber.

About three miles up from Inchnadamph, the burn divides, the left fork tumbling down a steep narrow valley which marks the northern limit of Conamheall. We turn up here, and climbing, now with hands as well as feet, we rise rapidly 1,000 feet in less than half-a-mile. And here another word of warning. It seems the easiest way out of a tiresome ascent to cross the stream to the south side, and strike obliquely up the rounded shoulder of Conamheall. It can be done, but let the climber prepare for a grinding ascent over what is literally an immense heap of road metal. Vegetation disappears, and he will find himself standing on a vast slope of shattered rock, just at the angle of repose, where pieces the size of pianos tend to move and shudder as he puts his weight on them, while here and there he has to cross little gullies filled with smaller rock debris, the whole of which slides like an avalanche without the slightest warning. No; the burn's the thing. Tiresome as it

may seem, and apparently leaving the direct line of ascent, it is by far the easiest route in the end. It eventually ceases, about 100 feet below the skyline, at the saddle between Conamheall and Beinn an Fhurain.

On the top of the saddle, the remains of the old march fence are still to be seen, twisted pieces of rusty wire, running north and south along the ridge. We turn left and due south, and climbing up the ridge by the fence, we gradually raise the top of Conamheall, on the ever-narrowing ridge. But all this time, away on our left and due east, across an immense basin of rock and little lochans, lie the remains of the oldest mountain in Europe, Ben More Assynt.\* From east to west, the north face of this immense pile of debris is an unbroken sweep of stones. Stones large, stones small, with little gullies streaking the surface, all set at the angle of repose, all ready to move.

At the summit of Conamheall, the ridge turns east, and after a lunch of our immense cheese sandwiches and chocolate, we carried on, over the never-ending stones, now dipping, now rising, towards the north top of Ben More Assynt. It took us the best part of an hour and a half to make the summit, a great mass of fissured rock rising out of the pile of debris that composes the body of the mountain. Only one top is marked on the map, but two exist, within a hundred yards of each other, and dispute arose as to which was really the summit. We have not yet discovered the answer, but we were on both; so surely the mountain is ours. By the time we had gained our objective, it was nearly five o'clock, and the late afternoon had begun to dim the landscape.

\* Ben More Assynt is probably entitled to the distinction of being the oldest mountain in the kingdom above 3,000 feet, for geologically it belongs to the oldest known rock system, viz., Lewisian gneiss, or "Old Boy," as it is irreverently termed. The extreme top is capped with Cambrian quartzite, which latter formation also appears on the western side of Coinnemheal (or Conamheall, pron. Connival).—"S.M.C. Guide Book" (*Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, ix, 140).

Still, to the east, we had the most desolate stretch of country that surely exists in Scotland. Miles and miles of broken moorland 2,000 feet below us, stretching over to the long line of water which is called Loch Shin, which marked the limit of our vision in that direction. Countless lochans and lesser lochans reflected the fading light, but not a sign or sound of life could be seen or heard. Southward, our view was restricted by the ridge, which again turns south, terminating in Carn na Convaroan and sloping down on the west to the Dubh Loch Mor and the Dubh Loch Beag, and the head waters of the river Oyke. Westward, the setting sun outlined Conamheall, Glas Bheinn and Quinaig to the north, while in between them we could see Loch Assynt and the coast-line north of Loch Inver.

Turning back once more to the west, we retraced our steps to the ridge, and now dropped down on to the north face, and moved diagonally down and across this vast stone shoot, to the lochan which marks the beginning of the Garbh Allt, a tributary of the Gorm Loch Mor, and eventually of the river Cassley. We quickly climbed the shoulder of Conamheall, and stood on the saddle in the evening light. Due west, against the setting sun, which made a brilliant band of light over the sea, between horizon and clouds, the solitary masses of Suilven and Canisp stood out, the former hiding behind Canisp, which seemed but a stone's-throw away. Farther south, Cul Mor and Cul Beag were just as clear, while over the north shoulder of the former peeped the jagged end of Stac Polly.

It was now getting late, and we hurried down the burn from the saddle, dropping in great strides down and across the south slopes of Beinn an Fhurain. A thousand feet disappeared above us in no time, and we were on more level ground but ever dropping toward Glenbain Farm. Here we met the keeper, and told him of our great day. He seemed quite enthusiastic over our toils, and said he had "only once seen the likes of us, and they were an Italian and a friend." I really do

not think we looked like an Italian, or his friend, but we said "Good-night" and went our way.

Inchnadamph and beer!—surely the finest brew of man after a practically waterless day—and then back to our ruined castle, now a silhouette against the golden loch, with the sun just disappearing in the west.

Such was a day of days in the hills. Tired but triumphant, we cooked and ate what I believe to be the record supper of any camp, the composition of which was turgid and complex, but the eating thereof ambrosial.

Next morning it rained as the west alone can rain, and we left for the south with the mountains shrouded in mist, and all the angels weeping.

## THE EASTERN PENTLANDS.

THE following notes may prove useful to members of the Club who are spending a few days in Edinburgh, and who wish to see something of the Pentlands, but have not time to explore the more distant heights.

The north-eastern extremity of the range, which is nearest to the city, is formed of the fine triangle of hills, Cairketton (1555 feet), Allermuir (1617 feet), and Castlelaw (1595 feet). The easiest ascent is by the north face of Cairketton, from the Lothianburn golf course, close to Swanston, and about two miles from the Braid Hills car terminus. The summit of Allermuir, which is surmounted by a tall listening-post, a relic of the war, can be reached from Cairketton by proceeding nearly due west across a heathery col for about a mile. Castlelaw is almost due south from Allermuir, distance also about a mile, and the way is rough and stony. The descent can be made along the south-west ridge to Glencorse Reservoir, and, by following the road by the side of the Glencorse Burn, the pedestrian rejoins the main road at Flotterstone Bridge, whence a walk of between four and five miles brings him back to the car terminus. The field of Rullion Green lies just to the west of Flotterstone. A good map for the purposes of this excursion is Bartholomew's reduced Ordnance, sheet No. 8, two miles to the inch.

The north-eastern flank of the Pentlands has many associations with men famous in literature and science. Lord Cockburn, who confessed to "a taste for the tops of hills," considered the summit of Cairketton to be one of the best view-points in Scotland; Stevenson often lay on Cairketton or Allermuir, "listening to the silence which is among the hills," and has enshrined both in a well-known poem:—



The tropics vanish, and meseems that I,  
From Halkerside, from topmost Allermuir,  
Or steep Caerketton, dreaming gaze again.  
Far set in fields and woods, the town I see  
Spring gallant from the shallows of her smoke,  
Cragged, spired, and turreted, her virgin port  
Beflagged. About, on seaward-drooping hills,  
New folds of city glitter. Last, the Forth  
Wheels ample waters set with sacred isles,  
And populous Fife smokes with a score of towns.

Hugh Miller described Glencorse Reservoir in his book on Edinburgh and its Neighbourhood, and Sir Walter himself climbed Castlelaw when staying at "haunted Woodhouselee."

Certain it is that the view from these heights is extremely fine. A magnificent array of hills, stretching from the Grampians and the Ochils to the Moorfoots, the Lammermoors and the Border uplands, the fertile plains of the Lothians and Fife, the noble Firth with its rocky islands, its mighty bridge and Royal dockyard, and, in the foreground, high Dunedin herself, "set on her hilly throne," make up a prospect that fully justifies the encomium of the lord of Bonaly. In the Royal Scottish Museum, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, there is a fine model of the Pentlands illustrating the topography and geology of the range.

J. R. L. G.

## THE HORIZON FROM LOCHNAGAR.

BY JAMES A. PARKER.

Apparently no complete description of the view from Lochnagar has as yet appeared in this *Journal* or in that of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. The best description that I have been able to find is that by the late Sir H. T. Munro, which appeared in Vol. II of the last-named *Journal*; but it is by no means complete. As this seemed to be an entirely wrong state of matters, I made a very careful note of the almost perfect view that I had from the summit on 22nd July last, on which day the visibility was extraordinarily perfect, especially in the south, the absence of smoke in the valley of the Forth being due to the Edinburgh and Glasgow summer holidays. The only parts of the horizon which were not seen were in the direction of Aberdeen and in the vicinity of Ben More and Stobinian, where there were rain storms. My observations of the more distant points were made with the aid of a Ross eight times prismatic binocular.

The following is a complete list of the various points that were seen, with the addition of one or two that were seen on former occasions, and two points taken from descriptions by other observers. The points are given in order, commencing with Morven in Caithness, and proceeding round the horizon in a "clock-wise" direction. The outstanding features of the list are, of course, Ben Armine, in Sutherlandshire, 90 miles distant and only 25 miles from the north coast of Scotland, and in the opposite direction, the Cheviot in England, 108 miles distant and 20 miles south of Berwick-on-Tweed, the distance between these two hills being thus almost 200 miles.

The complete list is as follows :—

Morven in Caithness	.	.	.	.	2313 feet ; 88 miles.
Scaraben	.	.	.	.	2054 ., 87 .,

Ben Rinnes . . . . .	2755 feet ; 31 miles.
Bin of Cullen . . . . .	1050 ,, 50 ,,
The Buck of Cabrach . . . . .	2368 ,, 26 ,,
Tap o' Noth . . . . .	1851 ,, 31 ,,
Morven, near Ballater . . . . .	2862 ,, 14 ,,
Mormond . . . . .	769 ,, 63 ,,
Bennachie . . . . .	1733 ,, 35 ,,
Mortlich . . . . .	1248 ,, 20 ,,
Hill of Fare . . . . .	1545 ,, 29 ,,
Brimmond Hill . . . . .	870 ,, 40 ,,
Girdleness Lighthouse . . . . .	46 ,,
Blue Hill . . . . .	480 feet ; 42 ,,
Mount Keen . . . . .	3077 ,, 10 ,,
Arbroath (direction of).	
St. Abb's Head . . . . .	81 ,,
Fife Ness . . . . .	52 ,,
Isle of May* . . . . .	170 feet ; 57 ,,

The Cheviot, clearly seen standing well up above the eastern slopes of

the Lammermuirs . . . . .	2676 feet ; 108 miles.
The Lammermuirs . . . . .	1749 ,, 78 ,,
St. Andrew's Bay . . . . .	45 ,,
Largo Law . . . . .	965 feet ; 50 ,,
Dreish . . . . .	3105 ,, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ,,
Mayar . . . . .	3043 ,, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ,,
East Lomond, Fife . . . . .	1471 ,, 48 ,,
Arthur's Seat † . . . . .	822 ,, 68 ,,
West Lomond, Fife . . . . .	1713 ,, 48 ,,
The Pentland Hills . . . . .	1898 ,, 76 ,,
Ben Cleuch, Ochil Hills . . . . .	2363 ,, 55 ,,
Earl's Seat, Campsie Fells . . . . .	1896 ,, 74 ,,

\* This is on the authority of Sir H. T. Munro's description quoted above. I did not see it.

† I did not see it ; but Mr. W. Garden advises me that he saw it on one occasion with a powerful telescope. It must be a difficult object to pick out even with a telescope as the background is unfavourable. Mr. Garden says that its direction is just to the west of the East Lomond. Lochnagar has been seen from Arthur's Seat. (See *C.C.J.*, I, 151, and III, 21.)

Glas Maol . . . . .	3502 feet ;	7½ miles.
Ben Chonzie . . . . .	3048 "	43 "
Ben Vorlich, Loch Earn . . . . .	3224 "	54 "
Ben Lomond* . . . . .	3192 "	73 "
Stobinian . . . . .	3827 "	62 "
Ben More . . . . .	3843 "	61 "
Ben Lawers . . . . .	3984 "	45 "
Carn Mairg . . . . .	3419 "	38 "
Schichallion . . . . .	3547 "	37 "
Glas Thulachan . . . . .	3445 "	13½ "
Ben-y-Gloe . . . . .	3671 "	19 "
Ben Alder . . . . .	3757 "	46 "
Ben Nevis . . . . .	4406 "	65 "
Creag Meaghaidh . . . . .	3700 "	49 "
Beinn Tee . . . . .	2956 "	60 "
Beinn Bhrotain . . . . .	3795 "	18 "
Monadh Mor . . . . .	3651 "	19½ "
Cairn Toul . . . . .	4241 "	19 "
Braeriach . . . . .	4248 "	20 "
Ben Muich Dhui . . . . .	4296 "	18 "
Beinn Mheadhoin . . . . .	3883 "	17 "
Cairn Gorm . . . . .	4084 "	18½ "
Beinn a' Bhuid . . . . .	3924 "	13 "
Ben Avon . . . . .	3843 "	12 "
Ben Armine . . . . .	2338 "	90 "
Morven in Caithness, as before.		

\* I am rather doubtful as to Ben Lomond.

## HILL HUNGER.

I want to stride the hills! My feet cry out  
For hills! Oh, I am sick to death of streets:  
The nausea of pavements and people always about;  
The savagery of mortar and steel that beats  
Me under, hedges me in; the iron shiver  
Of traffic!—I want to stride the hills, I want  
Hills toned frantic silver or a quiver  
Of scarlet; hills that hunger and grow gaunt!

I am tired of steps and steps, and a thousand flights  
Of stairs resounding, shuffling, quarrelling  
With shoes. I want a hill on windy nights,  
When April pauses with me, clambering  
Over the purple side to the top, until  
We pull ourselves up by a star—the hill! the hill!

JOSEPH AUSLANDER

—*Atlantic Monthly* for July.

## In Memoriam :

REV. DR. ROBERT SEMPLE.



WE regret having to record the death of Rev. Robert Semple, D.D., a former chairman of the Club, which occurred at his residence, 24 Balmoral Place, Aberdeen, on 8th October last. Dr. Semple—he was then plain Mr. Semple—was an original member of the Club, and his activities in connection therewith may be gauged from the fact that he was appointed fifth chairman, holding that office during the years 1898-99. A man

of much more than the average height, and rejoicing in a vigorous physique, he was a good walker, was keenly interested in mountaineering, and participated in many of the excursions; of one of these, the excursion to Beinn a' Ghlo in July, 1893, he furnished an interesting account

to the "Notes" section of the *Journal*. He also contributed an article on "Distance of the Visible Horizon" to the number for July, 1895. He dropped his membership of the Club a good many years ago, and so was comparatively little known to the younger generation of members, but older members have a keen recollection of his fine presence, his splendid staying powers, and his genial companionship.

Dr. Semple—he received the D.D. degree from the University of Aberdeen on his retirement from the active duties of the ministry in 1918—was for half a century minister of the Ruthrieston Free (afterwards United Free) Church, Aberdeen. He was also for thirty-seven years clerk to the Presbytery. He attained his ministerial jubilee in February of last year, and the celebrations on the occasion included the presentation to him by his fellow-Presbyters of his portrait in crayons, executed by Mr. John M. Aiken, Aberdeen. Dr. Semple was 77 years of age.

MR. ALEXANDER EMSLIE SMITH, JUN.

We have also to record the death of Mr. Alexander Emslie Smith, Jun., M.A., advocate in Aberdeen, which took place suddenly from a heart attack on 22nd August last. Mr. Smith, who was 58 years of age, had been a member of the Club for the past twenty years, and took part in many of the excursions. He was a good walker, and indulged in many pedestrian excursions with friends. Of one of these he contributed an interesting account to the *Journal*—"A Westward Tramp in Ross-shire" (January 1912).

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

ANNUAL MEETING, 1922.

THE thirty-fourth annual meeting of the Club was held in the Imperial Hotel, Aberdeen, on 25th November, 1922—Dr. Levack, the President of the Club, in the chair.

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

Income	£91	1	1
Expenditure	95	3	5

Balance at the debit of the Club £4 2 4

The expenditure included £50 1s. 6d., the expenses of the Club *Journal*, Nos. 58 and 59, and £14 4s. for printing, stationery, advertisements, etc. : the largeness of the printing bill, it was explained, was due to a portion of the cost of printing the new rules being placed in this year's accounts. The capital account, consisting of the commuted subscriptions of sixteen life members, amounts to £303 s. 6d. The Allt-na-Beinne Bridge fund amounts to £5 12s. 8d. and the Eidart Bridge fund to £1 11s. 8d. The membership of the Club at the end of the year was 170.

On the motion of Mr. James Hadden, seconded by Mr. D. P. Levack, the accounts were approved, and the customary honoraria were voted to the Secretary and Treasurer and the Hon. Editor of the *Journal*.

The President moved that Professor J. Norman Collie, London, be elected Honorary President in place of the deceased Viscount Bryce ; and this was unanimously and cordially agreed to.

Dr. Levack was re-elected President ; and the Vice-Presidents, the Secretary and Treasurer, and the Editor of the *Journal* were also re-elected.

According to the new rules, the three senior ordinary members of the Committee retired—namely, Messrs. William Garden, A. P. Milne, and A. Simpson ; and in their places, Messrs. James Conner and Howard G. Drummond, and Dr. J. L. McIntyre, were elected, the Committee thus being constituted as follows :—Messrs James McCoss, James Rennie, Marshall J. Robb, James A. Parker, A. M. Macrae Williamson, David P. Levack, James Conner, Howard G. Drummond, and Dr. J. L. McIntyre.

The following meets and excursions were arranged :—New Year—Braemar ; Easter—Tyndrum ; May Holiday—Benaquhallie (1621 feet), north of Lumphanan ; Saturday afternoons—Carnaferg (Aboyne), and Ben Aigan (Craigellachie).



The Committee reported that they had considered a suggestion put forward at last annual meeting, that the subscription should be increased, and had decided that the proposal was in the meantime inadvisable.

A vote of thanks was awarded to the President for presiding.

#### DINNER OF THE CLUB.

THE annual dinner of the Club was held in the Imperial Hotel immediately after the annual meeting. There was a company of about fifty members and guests, and the chair was taken by the President, Dr. J. R. Leveck.

After dinner, Mr. James A. Parker showed a number of lantern views taken by him during a three weeks' holiday that he had spent with Mr. A. Morice Wilson in the Cevennes and Pyrenees last September. The route that they followed in the Cevennes was from Mende to Millau by the Causse de Sauveterre and the Gorge du Tarn. In the Pyrenees most of the time was spent in the beautiful Vallee d'Aure. Subsequently, one or other of the party visited the Pic du Midi de Bigorre, Gavarnie, Lourdes, Biarritz and San Sebastian. After Mr. Parker had described the views, Mr. Wilson was called on by the Chairman for his version, and he gave a racy description of a night spent in the haunted bedrooms of the Chateau de la Caze, in the Gorge of the Tarn.

The toast of "The Club" was proposed by Dr. D. W. Geddie in an interesting speech, from the point of view of one who did not profess to be a mountaineer. In response, the President spoke in enthusiastic terms of the joys and benefits to be derived from the sport to which the Club is devoted. The toast of "The Guests" was proposed by Mr. William Porter, and replied to by Mr. W. A. Cameron, solicitor.

The President proposed "The Secretary and Treasurer," and Mr. Nicol replied in a characteristic speech, in which he made a strong appeal for the extension of the Club's membership. The toast of "The President" was given by Mr. James Conner; and the proceedings concluded with the time-honoured toast of "Bon-Accord."

A musical programme arranged by Mr. Alexander Simpson was much enjoyed. The accompaniments were played by Mr. Alexander C. Simpson; and, on the call of Mr. E. W. Watt, the ladies and gentlemen who contributed to the programme were very cordially thanked.

## NOTES.

AN animated controversy over the view from the Blue Hill was carried on in the *Aberdeen Free Press* during the autumn. It arose

out of an observer on the Blue Hill, on a day when the horizon was extraordinarily clear and distinct, VIEW FROM THE BLUE HILL. noting, "away up the Dee Valley at the most distant point," a hill with a big patch of snow on it, and assuming that the hill must be An Sgarsoch. This opinion was backed up by one set of correspondents and contested by another set, who argued that the hill with snow on it must be Ben Bhrotain, which is admittedly visible from the Blue Hill. Claims were also put forward on behalf of Cairn-an-Fhidleir (or Cairn Ealar), 3276 feet, about a mile west of An Sgarsoch, and Cairn-an-Fhidhleir-Lorgaidh, 2786 feet, about six miles beyond Ben Bhrotain and beyond the Feshie. Ultimately, the issue really came to be whether An Sgarsoch is visible from the Blue Hill. This point was practically settled in the negative by Mr. G. Gordon Jenkins, in an article in the *Free Press* of 16th October, in which by the aid of a curvature diagram, he demonstrated that An Sgarsoch was not visible from the Blue Hill. A further demonstration to the same effect is made by Mr. James A. Parker in the following interesting communication with which he has favoured us :—

"I ascertained last August that there was a small patch of snow on the north slope of An Sgarsoch, which seemed to confirm the statement made in the first letter that that hill had been seen from the Blue Hill ; but a mathematical calculation proved at once that the thing was impossible.

"On the 29th October, I climbed the Blue Hill with the man who said that he saw An Sgarsoch. Visibility to the west was perfect, and there was no difficulty whatever in convincing my friend that the 'unknown hills' were not An Sgarsoch, but were simply our old friends, Ben Bhrotain and Monadh Mor. With my Ross binocular (8 times) we could see the shadows of the clouds drifting slowly across their snow-clad summits, 60 miles away."

THE controversy just alluded to had hardly exhausted itself when the cairn on the Blue Hill from which the disputed view was obtained collapsed. It had been in a somewhat ruinous

COLLAPSE OF THE BLUE HILL CAIRN. condition for a considerable time past, but a violent wind-storm which prevailed during Saturday, 16th September, had a serious effect on the structure.

The cairn, which was 13 feet high, was composed of rough stones, a flight of fourteen granite steps leading to a circular platform on the top, with convenient seating, enclosed

by an iron railing. A large portion of the cairn, including the circular platform and iron railing, was blown down, and probably the whole structure was weakened, though the stairway remains intact. It is exceedingly unfortunate that this very valuable view-point should be thus rendered useless, and it is to be hoped that its restoration will be undertaken ere long. The cairn was erected in 1879, by the late Sir David Stewart of Banchory, on the highest point of his estate (480 feet above sea level.) A bronze tablet subsequently affixed to the structure states that the cairn was erected at the suggestion of Dr. Alexander Gerard and Dr. Alexander Cruickshank, and that "It affords an extensive view over sea, plain, valley and hill, the sea horizon being twenty-eight miles distant and the land horizon varying from six to sixty miles." An article by Dr. Alexander Cruickshank and Mr. Alexander Copland, giving a detailed description of the view from the cairn was published in the first number of the *C.C.J.* (July, 1893), and was accompanied by a diagram showing the relative position of the principal hills as seen on the horizon and the foreground. Mr. G. Gordon Jenkins directed attention to certain "inexactitudes" in this diagram in an article in the *C.C.J.* for July, 1917; and to his little volume on "Hill Views from Aberdeen," he appended a diagram of a Mountain Indicator for the Blue Hill.

Mr. Parker states that the view of the Deeside hills from the Cran Hill, which is a mile west of the Blue Hill, is even finer than the view from the latter hill. The Cran Hill is 483 feet high and is about the same distance from the Bridge of Dee as the Blue Hill, and there is a little house beside it where they sell refreshments! The view westward is quite unobstructed.

THE Aberdeen Centre of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society provided us again (Nov. 7) with a lecture by Mr. George L. Mallory on the year's climbing on Mount Everest; and aided THE MOUNT EVEREST of magnificent photographs, the lecture proved as fascinating as was the one he delivered in February. Unfortunately, the lecturer could tell us only of a succession of baffled efforts to reach the summit. The first attempt was made on May 19-21, when a party of four (of whom Mr. Mallory was one) started from the camp at the north col, at a height of 23,000 feet. Three of the party, after very severe hardships, reached a height of 26,985 feet on the third day, but finding that the top could not be attained before nightfall, they retraced their steps, rejoined their comrade (who had been obliged to give up), and returned to the base camp. A second attempt was made on May 28th, by Captain Finch and Captain Burce, who used the oxygen apparatus, which weighed thirty-two pounds and had to be carried by the climber. When they reached a height of 27,235 feet (only 1,905 feet from the summit), it

was found that the oxygen apparatus was not working so well as was expected, and they had to turn back, a severe wind-storm being experienced. A third attempt was made by Mr. Mallory and Dr. Somervell on 7th June, but it was quickly brought to an end by an avalanche, which carried nine of their porters into a crevasse, two only being rescued alive. Mr. Mallory furnished interesting details of all these attempts, his account being rendered all the more vivid by the accompanying photographs; and in concluding he reviewed the possibilities of Mount Everest being climbed. He is a decided optimist, and thinks it can be done—possibly without oxygen, certainly with it; and he is of the opinion moreover, that the task, having been begun by Britons, should be accomplished by them. His view, indeed, may be expressed in the title of Millais' famous picture about the north-west passage—"It ought to be done, and Britain should do it!"

PROFESSOR J. ARTHUR THOMSON delivered one of his charming lectures on natural history to the members of the Club and their friends at a special meeting held on 11th October.

PROFESSOR THOMSON'S LECTURE. The subject of the lecture was "Birds and Mammals of the Mountains," which it is needless to say was dealt with in the lecturer's felicitous and fascinating style. Professor Thomson's main purpose was to furnish a biological interpretation of how the mountains have come to be inhabited by the fauna we now find. The fauna of the mountains were readily divisible into three groups. There were the "relics" or survivors of the glacial period, such as the snow-mouse, the marmot, the blue (or mountain) hare, and the ptarmigan, which climbed the mountains when the climate became relatively mild. Then came what might be termed "the insurgent colonists," vigorous creatures which pressed up from the lower ground on to the pasture-shelves and plateaux at a considerable height, such as the chamois, the Rocky Mountain goat, and the Tibetan yak. Finally, there were "the refugees" who had found the plains too crowded for them—for example, the hyraxes or conies of Africa and Syria, the extraordinary desman of the Pyrenees, the water-ouzel or dipper, and, best of all, the archaic North American mountain beaver. Dr. Levack the president of the Club, presided, and Mr. William Garden moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer, which was very heartily accorded.

THE *Aberdeen Free Press* of 5th October had an interesting account of extensive improvements which have been carried out on the estate of Glen Lochy, on the south side of the Cairnwell, recently bought by Sir Archibald Birkmyre, the jute manufacturer of Port Glasgow and Calcutta. The old mansion-house has been greatly enlarged and improved, and it and the whole estate are now to be called Dalmuinzie, after an old castle of which there are still some remains. Among the innovations

A LIGHT  
RAILWAY  
IN A  
DEER  
FOREST.

introduced is the construction of a light railway from the mansion-house up Glen Lochy to an old shooting-box, a distance of two miles, the line rising to a height of 400 feet. The railway is 30 inches gauge, and the rolling stock consists of two petrol tractors, two carriages like the stock of an ordinary railway, and a combined tractor and carriage. The line is evidently meant for the convenience of sportsmen. "No longer," we are told, "will it be necessary for sportsmen to spend a night at the old shooting-box. They will sleep at Dalmuinzie, and in the morning step on to one of Sir Archibald Birkmyre's little trains and be carried up the glen in luxury."

THE first scenes of a new photo-play, to be entitled "The Romany," were filmed in the Highlands recently, these initial scenes being taken on the wild moor beyond Dalwhinnie, 1,500 feet above sea-level, with a majestic background of towering mountains. With due regard to the requirements of the play, the principal artistes engaged in the HIGHLANDS. lived for a time under canvas. The "story," however, does not appear to be particularly Highland in character. It deals with the interrupted love of a Romany king and princess, and gipsies rather than Highlanders constitute the *ensemble*. During the film-making they were housed in their own picturesque caravans.

THE ptarmigan is essentially a bird of the mountains, and is seldom seen on the lowlands. More often than not it is found above the 2,000 feet line; the rocky crags, towering peaks, and THE rugged corries of the Highlands being a favourite PTARMIGAN. haunt. In some countries—Norway, for instance—ptarmigan are met with at an elevation far beyond that suitable for the growth of trees. On inaccessible heights, where even the intrepid climber fears to tread, the ptarmigan is at home, finding sustenance from the scanty herbage, and roaming wild and free over great solitary expanses. Although somewhat closely related to the red grouse, the ptarmigan differs in habits from the bird of the lower moorlands; it is not polygamous and is of a different structure to the red grouse. In colouring of plumage, too, it has marked differences. In the sporting ptarmigan we get an eloquent illustration of Nature's protective colouration, for this mountain bird changes its plumage according to the seasons, and to this adaptation of hue it doubtless owes its immunity from extermination. Living on high, almost barren ground, where little cover or none exists, it is particularly exposed to attacks by vermin. Therefore, all-providing Nature has so designed the bird that as the environments change with the seasons its plumage also changes in harmony with its surroundings. In winter, when the mountains are

clad in their coverlid of glistening snow, the ptarmigan's plumage is also white, though Nature seems to have erred somewhat by allowing the bird to retain two black tips ; otherwise a ptarmigan at rest on the snow-covered ground is practically invisible even to the keen eyes of the hawk or the eagle. Even with these two small black patches on its spotless plumage it is not easily seen. In summer, however, when its light-coloured winter dress would render it conspicuous against the grey rocks and dark heather, the bird assumes plumage of grey and brown, which harmonises well with its summer haunts. Thus at each season of the year suitable variation in plumage affords protection for the bird, and, notwithstanding the obvious disadvantages under which it exists, it has so far proved able to withstand extermination.—“A.S.” in *Weekly Scotsman*, 19th August

## REVIEWS.

THE DEESIDE FIELD. Edited by A. Macdonald and J. B. Philip. Aberdeen: The Rosemount Press. Pp. viii+68, 2/6.—A Deeside Field Club was instituted two years ago, with the “THE DEESIDE FIELD.” archæology, folk-lore, history and literature of Deeside, and the still more laudable object of stimulating the interest of the young in these studies. Under the auspices of the Club a number of excursions to various places have been made, and at these excursions addresses were delivered dealing with outstanding features of the places visited, such as their architectural and archæological characteristics and their historical associations. So valuable were some of these addresses, containing as they did much information not readily accessible in printed form, that the Club wisely determined on publishing them. The original intention was widened, however, and a number of articles have been introduced dealing with diverse matters relating to Deeside which did not come within the scope of the addresses at the excursions. The result is a delightful and interesting volume, highly creditable to its editors, and bound to prove attractive, not only to Aberdonians and to dwellers on Deeside, but to all who have come under the influence of the beauties and the charm of the Deeside Valley. Conspicuous among the addresses that were delivered are those on “The Old Church of Maryculter” by Mr. G. M. Fraser, and on “Tullich and St. Nathalan” by Mr. W. Douglas Simpson; and these are in a sense supplemented by a paper on the “Scientific and Historical Appeal of Deeside,” by Mr. Alexander Macdonald, and one by the Marquis of Huntly on “The Historical Battlefields of Deeside.” There are four very valuable scientific contributions which give the book a distinctive character and must ensure it an enduring place in Deeside literature:—“Deeside as a Field for the Study of Geology,” by Dr. Alexander Bremner; “The Flora of Deeside,” by Dr. Macgregor Skene; “The Birds of Dee: A Biological Glimpse,” by Professor J. Arthur Thomson; and “Mammals of Deeside,” by Dr. James Ritchie. In a different vein, but noticeable for recalling many of the distinguished men long and honourably associated with Deeside, are “Some Past Deeside Notabilities” by Lord Aberdeen, “Some Celebrities of Central Deeside,” by Miss Burnett Ramsay of Banchory, and an admirable sketch of Anthony Mactier of Durris, well described as “a notable Deeside Laird,” for he transformed a barren tract into what is now one of the most famous arboricultural regions in the whole country. One obvious omission of the book is

the lack of reference to the Deeside mountains—but that is excusable perhaps in the case of a Club indulging only in one-day excursions. Mr. John Clarke, however, furnishes an article on "The Glen Feshie Route," and our other vice-president writes on "Scenic View-Points on Deeside," but leaves the ascertainment and appreciation of the views from the tops of the giant mountains beyond Braemar to "the energetic and ardent members of the Cairngorm Club." The book, it should be added, has a large number of excellent illustrations, which clearly show that many members of the Club are uncommonly good photographers. Altogether, the Club is to be congratulated on its enterprise in publishing such a work, and on its success in obtaining so many interesting and valuable contributions.

R. A.

**TOURIST'S GUIDE TO DEESIDE.** Illustrated. Aberdeen: "Aberdeen Daily Journal" Office. pp. 116. 1/6.—In this booklet we have guide-book matter—description of scenery,

**A DEESIDE** historical lore, and local incident—reduced to  
**GUIDE.** pemmican. Brevity is the feature, which was clearly inevitable in view of the limited size of the work. Nevertheless, having regard to the scale adopted, the treatment is fairly adequate, and all the prominent aspects of Deeside and its historical associations are duly noted. Written evidently for the casual tourist, the booklet contains enough to interest him in the country traversed, while ample (and just a trifle disproportionate) space is given to the three special holiday resorts, Banchory, Ballater, and Braemar. The work of revision might have been executed with a little more care. The quaint epitaph in Drumoak churchyard which is quoted refers to a dweller in Carnie, not "Cairnie"; the founder of the herds' bonfire in Durriss was Hogg, not "Ogg"; it is the Eildons, not the "Eidons," with which Sir Walter Scott is identified; and the Huntly monument on Mortlich, the Roman Catholic chapel in Glengairn, and the Gallows Tree opposite Mar Lodge are mentioned as if they were still existent. The press reader, too, is often at fault: he has made a bad break in passing "Clad" for "Cead" in "Cead Mille failte," (p. 50).

R. A.

"SEEN FROM THE TOP OF BEN-Y-VRACKIE" is the title of a sketch of the horizon viewed from this popular tourist hill, published by L. Mackay, stationer, Pitlochry, (price 9d).

**A PERTSHIRE** Though quite a modest production this outline  
**MOUNTAIN** sketch is very well done, and it is a pity that a  
**OUTLINE.** little more care had not been bestowed on the identification of some of the visible points, and also on the accompanying letterpress. The altitude is wrongly given in quite half-a-dozen cases—Ben Vrackie itself being among

S X



the number. The author, whoever he is—his name is withheld—is evidently not a hillman of very wide experience, as he is unable to recognise a number of well-known and unmistakable peaks. Adjoining tops of the Beinn a' Ghlo mountains puzzle him not a little, for while the group is correctly delineated, we find the name Ben-y-Glo placed over Braigh Coire Chruinn Bhalgain, the middle peak, with Carn na Gobhar at its north end, while the actual summit of Beinn a' Ghlo—Carn nan Gabhar—is christened Ben Vuroch. The latter hill is not shown in the sketch at all. The two distant peaks—only one is shown on the chart—seen over the Bealach an Fhiodha are, in our humble opinion, not Ben Muich Dhui, but Cairn Toul and a little bit of the Angel's Peak. Carn an Rìgh is marked Ben Gulabain. The quite distinctive and well-known Mount Blair bears the appellation "Lamh Dearg," while the much flatter Cat Law beyond does duty for its more shapely neighbour Mount Blair. Ben Alder, Ben Udlaman and Ben Lomond are omissions. Ben More in Mull is shown as being visible, but we hardly think this possible. With careful revision we have no doubt this chart will prove very useful to the tourist or occasional hill-climber. W. B.

IN the October number of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* Mr. E. W. Steeple describes "Some New Climbs from Glen Brittle," and Mr. H. G. Willink furnishes a

"SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN-EERING CLUB JOURNAL." brief account of an ascent of Blaven in 1873, which, it is surmised, was the earliest traverse of this Skye mountain by the rock faces and gullies therein mentioned, preceding Sheriff Nicholson's, which was not made till 1875. Mr. J. Gall

Inglis writes on "The Carn Mairg Range (Glen Lyon)," a range still very much a *terra incognita* but "essentially a hunting-ground for the hill walker, up and down over half-a-dozen peaks." In "A Day on Braeriach," Mr. Alexander B. Beattie describes a climb from the lower bothy in Glen Eunach to the summit of Braeriach by way of Coire-an-Lochan, the descent being made to the upper bothy. There is an effective picture of a "mist revelation" at the top: "Suddenly an opening appeared in the dense wall of drifting vapour and, widening rapidly, momentarily revealed an impressive snapshot view of the landscape 2,000 feet below. The mist again closed in, and we were left with the vivid recollection of an aerial picture of Glen Dee framed complete by Nature's hand." The article is accompanied by two excellent photographs by the author—"In Glen Eunach" and "Cairn Toul from Braeriach." In "A Glimpse at the Lunar Mountains," Mr. James M'Coss furnishes a most interesting article on the mountains of the moon—a subject, we suspect, which does not much engage the attention of the terrestrial mountaineer. The

article has a sub-title, "Through the Telescope and at Close Quarters"; but we do not imagine that Mr. M'Coss has been emulating Jules Verne and has made a journey to the moon. His observations evidently have been made through a refracting telescope, but he has skilfully woven an air of verisimilitude into them and described for us imaginary climbs up tremendous altitudes, "crag rising on crag, and precipice upon precipice, mingled with craters and yawning pits, towering pinnacles of rock, and piles of volcanic debris." This exposition of the mountains of the moon is deserving of careful study.

OF the dozen or so articles in the *Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* for the past year, no fewer than five are devoted to accounts of the exploration of some of the pot-holes which abound in Yorkshire. "Speleological" work, as it is termed, is also being conducted among the Mendip Hills in Somersetshire, and interesting discoveries have been made. Admirable photographs accompanying the articles give us some idea of the features of these curious subterranean chambers. There is a brief but interesting description of an endeavour—which was successfully accomplished—to cross the fells at the heads of the Yorkshire dales in snow. Mr. Matthew Botterill contributes a diary of a yachting cruise to Loch Scavaig and then through the Sound of Sleat to Loch Hourn and other places, with which were combined several mountain ascents.

WE have frequently called attention to the excellent verses descriptive of Highland scenery which appear from time to time in *Punch*. The latest contribution—in the issue of 25th October—was concerned with a day's run in a motor car from Edinburgh to Aviemore. There is a captivating enthusiasm in the concluding lines:—

The Highland Road's been sung before and should be sung again,  
With a verse for every heather hill and every rowan glen;  
And, though God's earth is a goodly place and a many roads there be,  
It's the North Road, the Atholl Road, the Highland Road for me!  
We may be pardoned quoting other two verses, which are calculated to thrill all familiar with the region delineated:—

A minstrel wind from Badenoch sang  
Laments for the waning day,  
As from darkling Ericht the Truim sprang  
To carry us down to Spey  
By crags and corries and grey rock spurs  
Where the steadiest head may flinch  
Till evening fell on the Laggan firs  
And the sunlit birks of Insh.

Then thanks be given whate'er betide  
 That still as heretofore  
 A man may waken in Morningside  
 And couch him in Aviemore ;  
 Thanks for the rare road running north  
 And a day that gave its due,  
 From the mounting sun on the Firth of Forth  
 To the moon on the Larig Ghru.

WE learn from a note in the May-June number of *La Montagne* the organ of the French Alpine Club, that the Council of the arrondissement of Grenoble has expressed the THREATENED view that chamois-hunting should not be permitted EXTINCTION for the next three years. The chamois, it seems, OF THE is "a victim of the war." Many Frenchmen CHAMOIS. learned at the front to use arms at very long range, and returning with German muskets and quantities of cartridges, have deemed it incumbent on them not to waste these munitions. So an indiscriminate warfare is being waged on the innocent chamois. Entire herds of them have been already annihilated, and there is a danger that "the most graceful animal of the mountains" will be eventually extirpated. As *La Montagne* says, it is desirable that the suggested prohibition be enacted as speedily as possible.

THE following interesting note appears in the *Bulletin of the Associated Mountaineering Clubs of North America*, for 1922 :—

DENUDATION appreciation of the necessity for a national forest OF AMERICAN policy, and for scientific forestry on all privately- FORESTS. owned as well as public lands ; and this will bring the needed legislation. Meanwhile we have over eighty million acres that have been denuded by fire and ruinous lumbering, and we add to them from ten to fifteen million acres yearly. Four-fifths of our forests are privately owned, and it is stated that our timber is being used about five times faster than we produce it. We lose 20,000,000 dollars a year by forest fires. At the present rate of destruction it is predicted we shall be without important forests in less than fifty years. It costs only five to fifteen dollars an acre to reforest denuded land, but no general effort is yet being made to provide for the future. We are paying over 85,000,000 dollars a year to import paper for newspaper use alone. There is gratifying activity on the part of some of our states, but none in the way of legislation. . . . Fifty years ago this spring, Nebraska started the Arbor Day movement, and since then 700,000 acres have been planted in this state alone. Some of the large western lumber companies are now beginning to apply scientific forestry and reforestation in order to insure a future for themselves."

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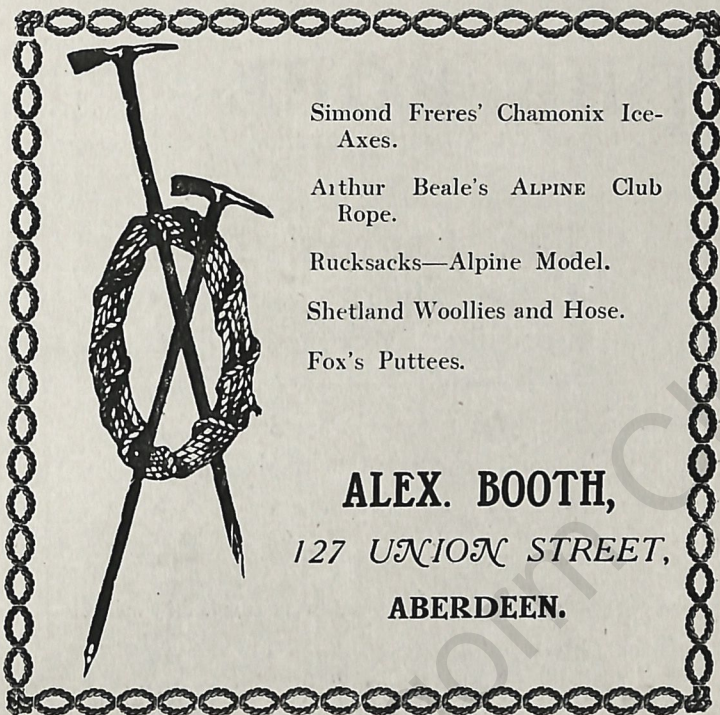
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