

The Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

EDWARD W. WATT.

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The Editor will be glad to consider any articles, notes and photographs submitted to him, and, in particular, he hopes that members of the Club will send records, however brief, of any interesting excursions which they make, so that the "Journal" may constitute an adequate record of the activities of the Club.

13 Forest Road,
Aberdeen.



SIGNING THE VISITORS' BOOK AT THE SHELTER STONE.

George Laing

The Cairngorm Club Journal.

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VISITORS' BOOK AT THE SHELTER STONE.

BY JAMES L. DUNCAN.

THREE years ago I wrote a short article in the *Cairngorm Club Journal* dealing with the inception of a Visitors' Book at the Shelter Stone at Loch Avon. I described how a party of us had gone there in August, 1924, and had left a Visitors' Book to furnish a record of those who visit that rather outlandish region. To that article, this is the sequel. On visiting the Shelter Stone this summer (1929), we found that five winters had left the book in a dilapidated condition. Its stout covers had gone, and much of the writing in it, on account of the dampness of the pages, was fast becoming illegible. If the book was to remain a permanent chronicle it was necessary that it should be removed. We, therefore, took it away with us and have left a new one, Volume II, to take its place. The next problem was to find a suitable resting-place for Volume I. One friend thought we might present it to the British Museum, while someone else suggested the National Library in Edinburgh! It has been thought most serviceable, however, to transfer it to the archives of the newly-formed Club Library. It is now there, with a new and rather more imposing binding, and with its pages, which were sadly out of order, properly arranged, for any member of the Club who cares to inspect it.

It will be found that the annals of the hardy adventurers, who have either visited the Stone or spent nights under it, make most interesting reading. Their number also is by

no means small. Some of the pages of the book have unfortunately got lost, but from these that remain I have compiled these statistics. After the Book was left in 1924, ten names appear. The first, and possibly the second, original page is, however, amissing, and the date of the first of these ten visitors is as late in the year as September 4. My own account of the inaugural ceremony is, alas, gone! In 1925, the number of visitors was one hundred and thirty-two, the first being on June 7 and the last on August 28. As the first recorded visit of 1926 is on July 18, there is evidently a hiatus so far as the end of 1925 and the beginning of 1926 is concerned. The number of visitors who signed the book in 1926 was one hundred and thirty-six, the last being on September 21. The number of signatories in 1927 was one hundred and thirteen, the first being on April 4 and the last on August 30. A small crop that year, but probably a page is again missing at the end. In 1928 the number was one hundred and eighty-eight, extending from June 3 to November 4. Finally, in 1929, we have one hundred and twenty names between March 7 and August 20, the date on which we removed the book and installed its successor. I am not prepared to guarantee the absolute accuracy of these figures, and I hope no one will demand my head if they are wrong, but, at anyrate, they are not far out. It is refreshing to think so many people should surmount the difficulties which beset the wanderer in these parts, for the Shelter Stone is by no means easy of access. Certainly one cannot envisage charabanc parties being brought to it, if the idea of turning the Cairngorms into a National Park ever bears fruit!

It can easily be gathered from the accounts in the book that the Shelter Stone is not a comfortable place in which to spend a night. One sojourner remarks that the Corrou Bothy in the Larig is a palace in comparison. I can testify to that personally. I spent a night on one occasion at the Shelter Stone. Well, it is worth it for the experience, but —! The true enthusiast is prepared of course to suffer in body for the good of his soul, and perhaps, if he is lucky, he will not be called on to suffer. This is, however, a

typical version of what the man or woman who stays over night at the Shelter Stone has to endure. I quoted it before, but it will bear repetition :—

Arrived 11 p.m. Had a drink. Sweltering heat, though snow on hills. Knocked a hole in the roof with my head! Went to sleep. Wakened 2 a.m. with blanket round my neck. Lit primus. Overcome by fumes. Extinguished stove. Burned fingers in doing so and jumped up and bumped my head on roof. Try to sort primus. Eureka! Water boiling! Tea has a funny taste. Sandwiches have a paraffin flavour. All in the game, I suppose.

That emphasizes the incommodious character of the place, but it does not mention the intense cold which has to be endured. My main recollection of the night I spent there is the futility of trying to sleep when one is freezing, and the joy which I get in restoring my circulation by doing strenuous physical jerks on the shore of Loch Avon at 3 a.m.

Staying at the Shelter Stone is a subject which lends itself to humour, which is not unnatural! One comes across statements like the imbecile observation that the Shelter Stone is the next largest stone after the earth. One person displays wit in his remark that the spirit is willing but the paraffin is weak. Others demand the installation of electric radiators and hot baths. One of the happiest efforts in the book is a sketch in Tom Webster's style of three drenched men descending the Garbh Uisge to the Shelter Stone. This is followed by the line—"they cooked, they ate, they slept, they freezed," and then there is another illustration, which is described as follows :—

Three dry men. See how they run ;
They all run out of the Shelter Stone,
To thaw their bones in the rising sun.

Occasionally the Shelter Stone seems to have been overcrowded. To this the following tale bears evidence :—

Last night a party of two men arrived after we had gone to bed. The Stone thus sheltered seven of us. Five lay in the large room, two in the entrance hall. It is well in a party of this size to bring along one or two whose faces won't spoil by being jammed and scraped against the walls of the shelter.

He is a bold man who bathes in Loch Avon. Yet one person writes that the loch is a pleasant place in which to bathe. Most of us will agree with the remark made by a subsequent commentator, "for those who like it."

The surroundings of the Shelter Stone are particularly magnificent. Even when the sun is shining the piled up cliffs and the utter desolation produce a sombre effect. When the rain storms gather overhead and the mist is swirling on the sides of the mountains, the blackness and gloom is intensified a hundredfold. To be alone in these circumstances might easily be a terrifying experience. Men have been known to fly in panic from the summit of Ben Macdhui to escape from the imagined presence of the supernatural. There is no mention in the book, however, of such experiences. Perhaps those who have gone there alone have had their minds too occupied with the practicalities of their situation to have bothered over the possibility of ghostly visitants. The attitude of mind revealed in the following sentences (deplorable as it may be!) possibly preserves the sanity of the solitary traveller. "Sorry I am not a word painter else you might find a vivid description of a most inspiring loch. At present I must satisfy my inner cravings." There is a regrettable scarcity of poets. Some Gaelic verses appear, but the only ones in English, which are not meritless, are these :—

From the broken Barns of Bynack I shall see the sunrise gleam,
On the forehead of Ben Rinnes and Strathspey awake from dream,
And again in the dusk of evening, I shall find once more the lone
Clear waters of the Green Loch, in the Pass beyond Revoan.

The most interesting signature in the Book is that of the Prime Minister, Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald. Along with a party from Lossiemouth he appears to have spent the night August 19 to 20, 1926, beneath the Shelter Stone. Even the most hardened Tory might respect a Prime Minister who has done that! The names of various members of his family also appear from time to time. Indeed, the first signature on the book, as it now exists, is that of his eldest daughter, Miss Ishbel Macdonald. One feature of the book is the number of University visitors. All the Scottish

Universities contribute a considerable quota, while Oxford and Cambridge are also represented. It will be seen from the dates which I mentioned before that visitors are practically confined to the summer months. The latest recorded visit in any year is that of a party on November 4, 1928. They give no description, however, of what the Shelter Stone was then like. The earliest recorded visit is that of Mr. James Doak on March 7, 1929. Writing of that day he says :—

Fine day. Loch Avon frozen with layer of snow on top. Shelter Stone full of snow. Ascent over Cairngorm easy. Feith Buidhe blocked with snow.

I cherish a hope that some New Year, when the Cairngorm Club are at Braemar, they may find their way to the Shelter Stone. The difficulties would of course be considerable, as to plough up Glen Derry in deep snow would not be an easy job. Perhaps some time it may prove feasible.

The Visitors' Book has, I think, served its purpose well. It has shown the lovers of these mountains to be by no means a small band. Adventuring in the Cairngorms is the pleasantest escape imaginable from a world of streets and houses, and, for those whose blood demands such an escape, may the Shelter Stone long have an open door !

BLUE HILL INDICATOR.

THE UNVEILING CEREMONY.

[*Cairngorm Club Journal* Special Report.]

AN interesting ceremony took place at the Blue Hill on Saturday, November 2, 1929, when the indicator provided by Colonel D. B. D. Stewart of Banchory-Devenick was unveiled under the auspices of the Cairngorm Club. A large gathering took part in the proceedings, including a full representation of the Club, members of the general public, and students of Aberdeen University.

Calling upon Mrs. Stewart to perform the unveiling ceremony, Mr. Parker, president of the Cairngorm Club, gave a brief history of the Blue Hill, recalling that Sir David Stewart had built a tower there many years ago. It was about thirteen feet high, and from the top one could see over the trees that clustered around the summit of the Hill. But finally the trees got the better of the tower, and it was impossible latterly to get a view of the surrounding country. In course of time, however, discussions began to take place between the late Dr. Cruickshank and Mr. Copland, first president of the Club, as to what could be seen from the top of the Hill, and it was stated by both of these gentlemen that Morrone, at Braemar, was within view. In the meantime the tower that had been erected by Sir David Stewart had been blown down. Mr. Parker went on to state that in course of time Colonel Stewart took the matter up with the Cairngorm Club, and he decided after some discussion that he would cut down a number of trees. He asked him (Mr. Parker) to meet him and give an indication of the trees that it was thought would be better to be cut. Colonel Stewart emphasised at the very outset that if any trees were to be taken down, a thorough job must be made of it. When the trees were cut down, proceeded Mr. Parker, they found that it would be quite unnecessary to build a cairn,

but the question arose as to what they would do with the stones. So at length they decided to use them to form a mound with a concrete core, on which to place the indicator. And in this, concluded Mr. Parker, we received the greatest help from Mrs. Stewart. Her first duty was to help us in matters of detail, her second, to feed the engineer when he used to go to her house on Sunday afternoons to talk matters over with Colonel Stewart—(laughter)—and now her third duty is to unveil the indicator this afternoon.

Amid applause, Mrs. Stewart ascended the steps on the the cairn, and, unfastening a ribbon of Stewart tartan, drew the covering—a scarf in the Club colours—from the indicator. "I hope it will be a great source of pleasure to mountain lovers," said Mrs. Stewart, in performing the ceremony. There was a strong local tradition, she added, that that Hill was where the sun-worshippers had their habitation many thousands of years ago. That might quite well be true, because from the Hill one could see the sun rise and set.

Mr. William Garden, an ex-president of the Cairngorm Club, proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Stewart. They were all very pleased, he said, that Mrs. Stewart had been able to come there that afternoon and unveil the indicator. She had unveiled it with precisely that grace and taste that they would have expected of her—(applause). There is not the slightest doubt, went on Mr. Garden, that with the unveiling of this indicator, one of the finest viewpoints in Kincardineshire has been unfolded, or rather, I should say, resuscitated, because until the tower was blown down, we had a magnificent view from here, seeing by means of that tower over the tops of the trees. The bird's-eye view right up the valley of the Dee, right down to its mouth at the Silver City by the sea is unsurpassed—(applause).

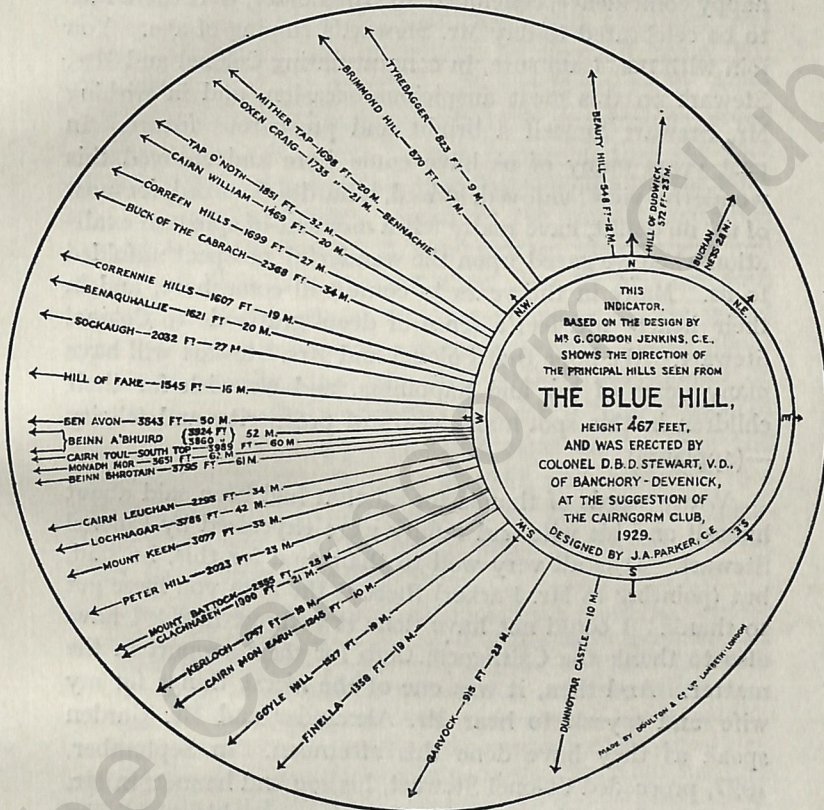
The very pleasant duty has fallen to me, added Mr. Garden, of presenting to Mrs. Stewart, on behalf of the Cairngorm Club, the scarf, bearing the Club's colours, as a memento of the occasion, and also the ribbon of Stewart tartan.

The gifts were handed to Mrs. Stewart amid rousing cheers. In a word, Mrs. Stewart thanked the Club for their

kindness, and assured the members that the gifts would always be a reminder of a very pleasant occasion.

To Mr. Henry Alexander fell the duty of thanking Colonel Stewart for his gift. It was a gift, said Mr. Alexander, that had three aspects. They first acknowledged most gratefully the privilege which they had enjoyed all these years of freely visiting the top of the Blue Hill. They wished to acknowledge very gratefully also the generosity which had led Colonel Stewart to renew that viewpoint, and enhance its interest by providing the indicator. And lastly, they wished to acknowledge the sacrifice he had made in cutting down much valuable timber in order that the view from the Hill might not be impeded. All these things constituted a remarkable gift. It was a gift, he ventured to say, that was peculiarly interesting and significant at that particular time. As they were no doubt aware, there was a strong movement all over the country for the preservation of natural scenery. It was being realized, perhaps as never before, that a population like theirs, so largely composed of town-dwellers, must have something to offer its soul, something by which they could get back into the open air and into touch with the beauties of nature and the joys of the countryside. It had been realised, continued Mr. Alexander, that a beautiful prospect such as they had from the Blue Hill was just as precious a possession as the richest collection of books in a library. And the sympathy and feeling of Colonel Stewart had made it possible for the town-dwellers of Aberdeen to come up there and feast their eyes on the far horizons. In Aberdeen just now they had noise and bustle; even on the roads yonder they were pursued by confusion. But up there, there was peace, and they could rest their hearts with infinite composure, looking at the hills and thinking of the large simplicity of this fair world. There was none who would appreciate the presence of that indicator and the fine view point on the Blue Hill more warmly than the members of the Cairngorm Club, and on their behalf he thanked Colonel Stewart most warmly. There were many kindred societies who would join in these acknowledgments,

and if he ventured to speak for the Town Council of Aberdeen and neighbouring local authorities, they also were very grateful to Colonel Stewart. They were endeavouring just now, continued Mr. Alexander, to preserve other view-points in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen, and it was their



THE BLUE HILL INDICATOR.

hope that other proprietors would safeguard various points of natural beauty. It was very encouraging that Colonel Stewart should have given a lead in this matter, a lead which he was convinced was going to have a far-reaching influence and effect. That gift was only one chapter in an interesting and most happy association which had existed between Colonel Stewart's family and the city of Aberdeen.

His great-grandfather was a provost of Aberdeen, his father was a provost of Aberdeen, and only the other day the Town Council had the pleasure of admitting his son, Mr. David Stewart, as a burgess of the City, thus welcoming the fifth generation of the family to civic life—(applause). It is a happy coincidence, concluded Mr. Alexander, that there falls to be celebrated to-day Mr. Stewart's coming-of-age. You join with me, I am sure, in congratulating Colonel and Mrs. Stewart on this most auspicious occasion, and in wishing Mr. Stewart himself a bright and prosperous future. In past years many of us have come here and enjoyed this wonderful view; enjoyed, indeed, is hardly the word, for most of us, no doubt, have really felt a moment of spiritual exaltation when we gazed upon the wonderful prospect unfolded to us. Many in the years to come will come here, and in their hearts will feel a sense of deep gratitude to Colonel Stewart. We hope that Colonel and Mrs. Stewart will have many years of joy and happiness, and we wish for their children in this spot many years of prosperity and felicity—(applause).

Warm words of thanks for all that had been said about himself and his wife and family were expressed by Colonel Stewart. It is all very well to thank me for this, he said, but (pointing to Mr. Parker) there is the man you have got to thank. I could not have done it without him. I have also to thank the Cairngorm Club for their support in the matter. And then, it was one of the nicest things for my wife and myself to hear Mr. Alexander and Mr. Garden speak as they have done this afternoon. In September, 1927, proceeded Colonel Stewart, his son and he met, in Mr. Nicol's office, Mr. Garden, the then president of the Cairngorm Club. Shortly afterwards, in order that no mistake might be made, he (Colonel Stewart) drew up a minute of what took place. That minute, as Mr. Parker had indicated that day, was to the effect, that if the Cairngorm Club would point out the trees they wished cut, he would do the rest. But there was one proviso, namely, that there must be a distinct understanding that the Hill was open during his pleasure. They would, perhaps, think

that there was not much in that proviso, but if he gave them the history of the cairns, as he was about to do, they would see that it was most necessary. But before dealing with the history of the cairns he wished to refer to something that followed from Mr. Alexander's remarks.

Mr. Alexander and he had had many meetings over town-planning schemes, in which, as they all knew, Mr. Alexander was very interested. He would say to Mr. Alexander as a town councillor, that the body on which he served should at once set about making a proviso that the spot on which they were standing that day should never be built upon—(applause). With regard to the cairns, continued Colonel Stewart, much had been written about them and much had been talked about them, but he had not seen one correct statement of fact yet—(laughter). He would give one bit of advice to anyone who was talking about localities, namely, that the first thing they should do was to come to the proprietors and ask if their statement was correct—(laughter). The first cairn at the Blue Hill was erected by the Sappers in 1817, and reference to a letter written to Sir David Stewart by the late Dr. Cruickshank was made. In that letter, which was dated July 30, 1879, Dr. Cruickshank said:—

Allow me to send you a copy of an outline skerch I made last autumn on the Blue Hill. It is the result of familiarity with the view from the Blue Hill for upwards of 40 years, for I remember being on the top on the Queen's marriage day, and I have visited it at least twice, and sometimes four or five times a year since. On my first visits the larches on the top were only a foot or two high, and thus there was no obstruction to the view in all directions from the base of the cairn. The trees were planted there in 1832. Though their high and exposed situation has greatly retarded their growth, they now much obstruct the view, especially to the N. and N.E., and the roughness of the cairn is only for the nimble and active to ascend.

I have often wished on my visits that the trees obstructing the view should be cut down, or that the cairn should be made of such a height, or of so easy ascent as to obtain the magnificent view with comfort. There are plenty of granite and gneiss surface blocks in the vicinity to increase the diameter and height of the cairn. Concrete might be used to cement the blocks together, and to form steps up to and a seat on the centre of the top.

The concrete would be a sufficient resistance to the destructive tendencies of some people.

The Blue Hill was an important station in the Trigonometrical Survey, when in June, 1817, the Belhelvie 5 miles Base Line of verification was measured, by Ramsden's steel chain, by Captain Colley and a party of the Royal Engineers encamped on Belhelvie Links. The angle made by two lines from the Blue Hill to the Tarbathie and Leyton ends of the Belhelvie Base Line had to be observed by the theodolite, and the three sides of this triangle (of which the angles were at the Blue Hill, Tarbathie, and Leyton) had been previously computed through a system of triangles extending over England and Scotland from Hounslow Heath, near London, where General Roy, in 1784, measured a Base Line, which was the foundation of the triangulation. When the Belhelvie Links Base Line was actually measured by the chain (and it took six weeks to do it, so many precautions to ensure accuracy), it was found that the measured length of this side of the triangle (or 5 miles 100 feet) was only *three inches* less than the computed length founded on the measured base line more than 500 miles distant, and on the measured angles and computed sides of the triangles between Belhelvie and Hounslow Heath.

Thus the Blue Hill has an important history in connection with the application of mathematics to an accurate survey of the country. It also commands the most extensive and finest land and sea views near Aberdeen.

The first cairn, proceeded Colonel Stewart, was in existence up to 1879, when Dr. Cruickshank and Mr. Copland got his grandfather to erect a cairn high enough to look over the trees as they then were. He thought the less said about the second cairn the better. One Fast Day the flag-staff on the top of that cairn was cut down by boys with penknives, and the seats were flattened. That was the end of that cairn. The third cairn was erected by his father, Sir David Stewart, in 1891, following upon newspaper correspondence passing between Mr. Copland and others. Mr. Copland and others wished to erect the cairn on their own responsibility in view of the destruction of this other cairn. Sir David wrote the newspapers that he could not allow that, because the public would claim the right to come to the Hill. He said he would once more erect the cairn, but he would give instructions to his successor (and that was himself) that if it were again destroyed it would not be

re-erected. The cairn fell in 1922. Several letters appeared in the papers, mostly anonymous, some by the late Mr. Robert Clarke, and he was badgered about not answering them. Well, he never answered newspaper correspondence. If the Cairngorm Club or others wished to know the reasons, they could come to him. I took no notice for several years, added Colonel Stewart, and then Mr. Nicol of the Cairngorm Club asked me to meet him and Mr. Garden; that, as I have indicated, was in September, 1927. I told these gentlemen that it was not that I would not erect the cairn, but I was faced with this, that I would be doing what my father said was not to be done. Very nicely, they put it that it was the weather this time—(laughter)—but you here to-day can think what you like; you can think for yourselves if the weather would have such a disastrous effect upon a cairn that was in existence from 1891 to 1922—(laughter). Following this, I thought I could pass over the instructions my father left, hence the cairn of to-day—(applause). I would appeal, as I did to Mr. Nicol and Mr. Garden, to the public to guard the cairn. I am not going to threaten; it would not be really fair to my son to do so; I only make a very strong appeal to the citizens of Aberdeen to regard this as sacred and not let anything be done that would destroy it; and further, I would make an appeal that no litter be left lying about the Blue Hill.

Colonel Stewart then read over the names of the hills that could be seen from the Blue Hill, and concluded by asking the company to accord a vote of thanks to Mr. Parker for presiding.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN INDICATORS.

J. A. PARKER.

AN excellent mountain-view indicator, the gift of *The Daily Record*, was erected on the summit of Goatfell last summer. It consists of a lithographed drawing on paper, designed by Mr. D. K. Paterson, of Paisley, enclosed in a glazed metal frame. It is supported by a metal framework which is enclosed in rough masonry. The drawing consists primarily of an outline map of the south-west of Scotland, with radial lines pointing out the direction, distances, and heights of the principal points which are visible in clear weather. The most distant hills noted are Skiddaw (105 miles), Slieve Donard (104 miles), Creach Bheinn (90 miles), and the West Lomond (85 miles). Ben Nevis is not mentioned, although Mr. Shearer, in his Ben Nevis panorama, gave "Arran" as one of the points visible; but he apparently could not identify which peak it was—possibly the Castles.

The erection of the Goatfell indicator, like that on Ben Lomond, is due to the energies of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Federation of Ramblers, which is evidently a very enthusiastic body.

While the most distant point visible from Goatfell is Skiddaw (105 miles), as stated above, it is interesting to note that the most distant points visible from the other four mountains which have indicators are as follows:—

Ben Lomond—Knocklayd, Antrim, 95 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles.

Ben Nevis—Ireland, probably Knocklayd, 120 miles.

Ben Macdhui—Ben Hope, 98 miles.

Lochnagar—The Cheviot, 108 miles.

The number of mountain-view indicators in Scotland continues to increase and, in view of our own activities in this direction, the following list of the more important ones (with dates of erection) may be of interest:—

Engraved on metal and not protected—

- Arthur's Seat.
- The Law, Dundee.
- Eildon Hill, 1927.
- Falkland Hill, 1928.

Engraved on metal and protected by removable wooden cover—

- Brimmond Hill, 1917.

Engraved on metal and enclosed in glazed metal frame—

- Ben Lomond, 1929.

Drawing on paper enclosed in glazed metal frame—

- Stirling Castle Rock.
- Corsiehill, Perth.
- Grantown-on-Spey, 1914.
- Bridge of Weir Golf Course, 1927.
- Goatfell, 1929.

Glazed stoneware, not protected—

- Lochnagar, 1924.
- Ben Macdhui, 1925.
- Ben Nevis, 1927.
- Blue Hill, Aberdeen, 1929.

In preparation—

- Ben Cleuch, Ochils.

It will be interesting to find out in the future which of the above types prove to be the most permanent. The metal plate on Arthur's Seat has been very badly defaced by vandals marking their initials on it, while that on the Brimmond Hill has been hardly touched. as people write their names on the zinc-covered wooden cover. At Grantown-on-Spey the indicator suffers by people pushing spent matches through the small ventilating holes at the edge of the frame on to the drawing. On Ben Lomond the plate glass has been broken on two occasions, with the result that the metal plate has been so affected by damp that a new plate is being prepared and will be fixed next spring. The stoneware slabs are, I am glad to say, in as good condition as on the day they were erected.

ALPINE GLOW.

BY JAMES McCOSS.

Thou wert to me,
That minute, with thy brow in heaven,
As sure a sign of Deity
As e'er to mortal gaze was given.
Nor ever, were I destined yet
To live my life twice o'er again,
Can I the deep-felt awe forget—
The ecstacy that thrilled me then.

Moore.

MONT BLANC.

ACCOMPANIED by my old friend, the late Robert Clarke, I stood one September evening in the main street of Cham-onix and watched the snows of Mont Blanc and the wondrous staff of Aiguilles gradually becoming dull and lifeless-looking in the diminishing light. The sky was clear, but the setting sun, as often happens, had buried itself behind a bank of cloud. The street lamps had been lit, and the valley generally had taken on a murky twilight. The mountain rose cold and grand, with no apparent stain upon its snows. Suddenly the sunbeams struck the upper snow and converted it into a dome of the most brilliant and dazzling golden-pink against the sky, which was a cold grey-blue shade. The rocks, too, were lit up and were changed from grey to red, and seemed ready to burst into flame. There was the same warm glow one sees on the gabbro when the sun is setting in Coire Lagan. For some time the gilded summit, surrounded by the lesser heights, held communion with the sun, while we waited in silence. Gradually these peaks in order of their heights turned pale in succession, and with a cold smile the colour died away, leaving only the summit snows of Mont Blanc crowned with a pale orange shade. I remember Bob's joy in watching this Alpine glow on Europe's highest snows, accentuated by the darkness



CHAMONIX AND THE MONT BLANC, 15,781 FEET.

of the valley where we were standing. The following verse explains very beautifully what the mountain seemed to be saying to us :—

I was a cloudy Alpine peak,
Barren and bleak,
And scarred and cold ;
But when you came
You turned my snow to flame,
My rocks to gold,
My crumbling crags to crimson spires
On lofty alabaster ways,
My sunset clouds to saffron fires
Before your vestal shrine ablaze,
My sombre pines to silver lyres
Sounding your praise,
Yea, and my very wounds and scars
To rosy furrows sown with stars.

Ronald Campbell Macfie.

LOCHNAGAR.

On February 10, after being in the shadow of the precipice of Lochnagar for four hours, we stepped over the snow-cornice into the sunshine, and coiled up the rope. It had been a wonderful hill day with bright sunshine. There was a hard frost and not a breath of wind, the snow was in excellent condition. The rocks were ice-glazed and colossal icicles were hanging from them. Under these conditions it is very pleasant on the plateau, but if the wind blows and the drift should rise, the conditions quickly undergo a change, and a walk round the cliff is a terrible ordeal. It was 4.30 p.m. and the sun was sending its beautifully-coloured horizontal rays towards us. A vast cone, with its apex pointing away from us was cut out on the country to the east of us ; night was within its borders and twilight still all round ; it was the giant shadow of Lochnagar. We seemed to be standing on the point of the gnomon of a gigantic sundial, the face of which was formed by miles of snow and heather-covered hills and glens. In the evening light each ridge and peak stood out with startling distinctness, and the snowy summits of the Cairngorms were all a rosy pink colour. There was a stillness that could be felt, and everything seemed unreal

and difficult to realize at the time. In the west the sun was sending a ruddy glare across the glittering snow of the White Mount, which dyed our faces, and cast our long shadows over the snow. A long, delicate cloud just above the sun was gradually adorning itself with prismatic colouring which was inexpressibly gorgeous, and the long series of western ranges melted into a uniform hue as the sun declined in their rear. We stood for half an hour under the most perfect conditions and watched the steps of the evening gradually creeping upwards towards us. The Dee valley was lost in a blue twilight, but we were still in the sunshine. At last only the small patch where we were standing remained in the ruddy glare of the sunbeams, but it, too, died away, and we were left in what seemed a cold and dead region. It is true there was still a wonderfully coloured sky, but its reflection did not last long on the hill-tops. We were now between the day and the night. The western heavens were of the most brilliant blue, with spaces of transparent green, while a few scattered cloudlets glowed as if with internal fire, and some higher cloudbands reflected a rich, bright purple. The horizon blushed with a pale red glow, against which the rugged skyline was silhouetted. To the east the night rushed up furiously, and it was difficult to imagine that the dark purple sky was really cloudless and not blackened by a rising storm. At 5.30 p.m. we were cutting steps down the Ladder and into the darkness as the stars began to appear in the dark, moonless sky.

The setting sun on Lochnagar
Seen from the glens both near and far,
The winter's snows had a ruddy hue,
But seen from the top the glens were blue,
And the rocky ridges towards Braemar
Had many a cold and rugged scar.

LOCHNAGAR : SOME REMINISCENCES.

BY J. R. LEVACK.

WITH the single exception of Ben Rinnes, up which I had been taken as a small boy, Lochnagar was the first mountain I ever ascended, now almost exactly thirty years ago, and it has remained my favourite peak ever since, the number of ascents during that time averaging two per annum. They have been undertaken at all times of the year, including New Year's Day. It might be interesting to readers of the *Journal* to recall some points about one or two of the excursions.

My first one was from Braemar in the month of July, on a fine, clear day, following two of continuous heavy rain. My companion and I had only the vaguest idea of the lie of the ground, and especially of the distance, although we had a map. We bicycled up to Callater and wandered up the very obvious path round Creag-an-Loch and up over Cairn Taggart. At the foot of the eastern slope of Taggart we saw some men repairing a fence, and when we reached them we asked them if the hill on the east side of the valley was Lochnagar. To our dismay we were told it was the White Mounth, and that Lochnagar was hidden by it and more than two miles further on. We trudged on and ultimately reached the summit cairn. The view was perfect in all directions, and, of course, absolutely new to us. My recollection of it all was that of a vast sea of rolling hills as far as the eye could reach, and a bright blue sky overhead, flecked with little white cloudlets. A short rest and some food, and we returned to Callater very pleased with our day. The Callater route to the summit is a good six-mile tramp—rather rough in places, especially above Loch Callater—but along the flat plateau of the White Mounth it is like walking over a golf course, with the added advantage of superb mountain scenery in all directions.

My first winter climb was in February, many years ago. Three friends, expert mountaineers and members of the Cairngorm and Scottish Mountaineering Clubs, kindly took me as passenger up the Black Spout.

It was in the days before motor cars, and an expedition to Lochnagar always meant a week-end in Ballater or Braemar, with two nights in a hotel. We arrived in Ballater in wet and stormy weather on a Saturday evening. After dinner we asked the hotel-keeper if we could have a "machine" next morning at 7.30 to drive us to Allt-nagiubhsaich. He thought we were mad, and said so, rather forcibly, but ultimately promised a trap for 8 a.m. Next morning, equipped with full climbing kit, we climbed into our open "machine" and drove off in pouring rain, which very quickly froze on our coats and remained so all day.

The tramp along the path to the Fox's Well is always interesting and is soon done. One and a quarter hours is about the usual time taken. We were out, of course, for a snow climb, so we left the path at the foot of the Ladder and crossed the Col, and dropped down into the Corrie. The view from the Col was superb, all the gullies filled with snow, and the frozen loch below. We clambered round the head of the loch and up the snow-covered steep scree slope to the foot of the crags and the beginning of the Black Spout. Here we rested for a little in a diminutive snow dell and had some food. Then we put on the rope (my very first experience of it), my place being third on the line. We moved off up the steep snow slope, the leader kicking steps with his heavy iron-shod boots, and the rest following up as if mounting a stair. Very soon, however, the snow became too hard for kicking, and the ice-axe had to be brought into use, the leader doing all the hard work of cutting the steps, while the others waited, firmly anchored, till it was their turn to move, one at a time.

First impressions are always lasting, and I shall never forget the curious sensation of mingled exhilaration and mild excitement as I stood motionless with my two companions in our steps, while there was no sound of any kind except the chip, chip of the leader's axe, and the steady,



J. Keiller Greig

THE TOP OF THE BLACK SPOUT GULLY, LOOKING EAST.
Black Spout Pinnacle in middle distance tipped with sunlight.



J. Keiller Greig

NEAR THE TOP OF THE LADDER.
Looking West into the Eastern Corrie.

gentle hiss of the dislodged ice particles, as they shot downwards past us. Once my companion behind me suddenly sneezed loudly, and nearly startled me out of my steps! Close to the top of the gully the angle steepens considerably, and the snow that day became very hard as we reached the steep part. Fortunately, there was no snow-cornice at the top of the Spout, so that there was little delay in finishing the climb. We unroped at the top of the gully and walked over to the main top. Out of the shelter of the gully, we were exposed to a stiff, cold N.-W. breeze, so we did not linger long at the summit.

After the tense alertness required in a climb such as I have just described, one is tempted to relax and be a little careless in stepping about on the broad, flat summit ridge of a hill. One of my companions trod carelessly on a flat stone. Now, there are two ways of treading on such a stone in such a place. If one step on its upper half it is all right, but if one step on its lower half, which is generally badly supported below, naturally the stone tips over, and down one goes. My companion trod on the lower half of such a stone, tipped swiftly over, and bit his tongue badly. A few minutes later I fell in the self-same way, and cracked a bone in my little finger, nothing serious, but it put my hand out of action and made the descent of the snow-covered slope of the Ladder troublesome. This is the only accident I ever met with on a Scottish mountain.

The drive home in the "machine," wet, cold, and tired as we were, was as unpleasant as it could be. Looking back on these old expeditions, and comparing them with similar ones of the present day, the thing that strikes one most forcibly is the extraordinary improvement in transport to and from the hill. The miseries one endured in the old days while sitting in an open trap, hungry, wet, and half perished with cold, while the unwilling beast between the shafts moved slowly along the road, most of the time at walking pace, would scarcely be tolerated to-day, when one can be carried in comfort in a closed car to and from the foot of the hill in about a quarter of the old time. Not infrequently, in the old days, when driving home from a climb, one had

to get out of the trap and walk, or even run, behind to keep warm and prevent a chill. All this has been changed by the motor car, and it is now quite simple to climb Lochnagar, or even Ben Macdhui, in one day, using Aberdeen as a base instead of Ballater or Braemar. With aeroplanes it would be simpler still, and I can easily imagine, in the near future, a very popular Saturday afternoon excursion by plane to Lochnagar or Ben Macdhui, tea near the summit, and home again to supper in Aberdeen!

The ascent of Lochnagar, or, better still, the traverse of it from east to west, or *vice versa*, in thick weather, is always interesting, but not always easy, especially if there be snow in addition to the mist. Some years ago two young climbers and I planned a trip in early September up the mountain from the Callater side. We were staying in Braemar and were waiting purposely for a thick day to see what we could do by compass, aneroid, and map, by way of practice. The morning we chose was dull, with no wind, and the mist was down to the 1,500 feet level, so that all the hills round Braemar were shrouded and invisible. We motor-cycled to Callater, and found the mist down to the loch. We followed the path round the side of Creag-an-Loch and on to the west side of Cairn Taggart. Leaving the path at the point where it turns southward along Taggart, we set a course eastwards over the hill, down its east side, then up over Little Taggart to the top of the Stui Buttress. The direction decided, it was arranged that I should walk in front and be guided and controlled by the other two members of the party, each of whom carried a compass in his hand. I therefore walked in the direction indicated, with the two guides strung out behind, one 15 yards away and the other 30. Whenever I deviated in the slightest degree from the correct line, one or other of the two guides at once shouted that I was wrong, and I had to be steered right again. It is so very easy to wander off the right line on a rough hill side, much easier than when steering at sea. We moved on steadily, and ultimately arrived at the edge of a precipice, which I presumed was at, or near, the Buttress. Peering over the edge of the steep place,

I looked around and tried to recognize any signs of our objective. I was puzzled for a bit, but remembered that, when steering in mist, one is very apt to hold too far to the left, and so I moved along the ridge to the right for about 50 yards and, sure enough, we came on the well-known rocks at the top of the Buttress. These rocks project well forward from the general line of the cliffs, and, standing on them, surrounded on all sides with dense, swirling mist, we peered downward over them to see if we could find a way down. We had a curious, eerie, "lost-in-the-clouds" sort of feeling, but we promptly put on the rope and climbed cautiously down right to the foot of the rocks, still shrouded in mist. Then we climbed up again, and decided that we would continue on to the top of Lochnagar. The path to Lochnagar lies just a little way back from the Stui, and we quickly found it, but further along, near the last rise on to the summit ridge, it disappears, and careful steering is needed to reach the South top. This we did, and again steering carefully, we eventually reached the main top. We knew that other two parties were to climb Lochnagar that day, so, when we arrived at the top, we listened, shouted, and whistled, and listened again for any signs of them. The mist was denser than ever, there was no wind, and the silence was profound and impressive. We waited for any answering shout, but none came, so we concluded that we were alone on the hill. As a matter of fact, we learned later that neither party had got anywhere near the summit of the mountain. After a comfortable rest at the cairn, we steered our way back to Callater without difficulty, shrouded in mist right to the loch. It is not always easy to steer correctly when leaving the summit, especially in a high wind, with driving snow along with mist. Some years ago in early May a party of eight or nine of us reached the summit in such conditions. It was easy to follow the edge of the crags as far as the top of the Black Spout, but from there to the summit (a very short distance) the compass had to be used. The summit rocks were a mass of solid blue ice, nearly a foot thick in places. Five minutes' stay there was long enough, so, having set a compass course, we turned and, with a shout,

plunged downwards in the teeth of the gale. Great clouds of dry, dusty snow swirled about us, so that we had difficulty in seeing even our compass clearly. In less than five minutes we were completely lost, and I was positive that we were descending the west slope of the hill. Therefore we called a halt and demanded from two compass-bearers that they should give us east. Moving then in this direction, we quickly reached the top of the cliffs and the rest was easy, the descent being uneventful. At least one member of the party, who had never been out in such weather before, was thankful when we got off the hill, and said so to me. I think he was afraid that he would never see Aberdeen again.

The number of people one meets with on the top of Lochnagar who have not the least knowledge of the names of the hills they are looking at is extraordinary. I once met a solitary tourist near the top who did not know even the name of the hill he was on.

One of the most fascinating parts of the game on the summit of a mountain is to try to name all the hill-tops visible from it, but many people seem content to reach their summit and remain blind and indifferent to the view round them. To help such people the Indicator was erected on the summit rocks, so that they could identify and name the peaks for themselves. The story of the erection and unveiling of the Indicator has already been fully told in these pages and does not require to be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the Indicator has proved to be of the very greatest help to visitors to the summit.

No matter how often one has been to the summit of Lochnagar, a trip up the mountain once again is as interesting and charming as ever to the mountain-lover. There is always something fresh to note, some new beauty of hill, loch, or sky to be admired and marvelled at. There are, curiously enough, some people who do not care for hill-climbing. They think the physical exertion expended in climbing a hill is out of all proportion to the benefits gained. Possibly, but every man to his taste.

A friend of mine, not a mountaineer, was once inveigled by an artist friend of his, who had been commissioned to



J. Keiller Greig
LOOKING NORTH-EAST OVER THE EASTERN CORRIE.
The Meikle Pap in middle distance.



J. Keiller Greig
ON THE RIDGE BETWEEN THE MEIKLE PAP AND THE "LADDER."
Looking West over the Frozen Loch to the Summit.

paint a picture of the corrie of Lochnagar at close quarters, to accompany him up to the col at the foot of the Ladder. It was a broiling hot day, and my friend had to carry the food and a rather heavy metal oil stove to make tea. He very soon got heated and rather winded. Sweat ran from every pore, and he was afraid to rest or take off his coat, in case he got pneumonia, so he toiled on till they reached the Fox's Well, where he unslung his knapsack. Looking round as he mopped his steaming brow he muttered, half to himself and half to his companion—"And this is what that — fool Levack calls pleasure!"

HOGMANAY AT BRAEMAR.

What shall we do with Club Cairngorm ?
We'll drink to the founder thro' whom it was born.

* * *

What shall we do with President P[arker] ?
At midnight we'll treat him to sweet harmony.

* * *

What shall we do with Irvine of Drum ?
We'll appoint him the scribe all our doings to sum.

* * *

What shall we do with Butchart, the Brave ?
When snow's on the hills we must let him rave.

* * *

What shall we do with Birnie Reid ?
We'll put him on straw for his mid-day feed.

* * *

What shall we do with the two of the Scrimms ?
We'll drive with them at the risk of our limbs.

* * *

What shall we do with Nesta Bruce ?
We'll get her the Ghillie from Cluny Hoose.

* * *

What shall we do with Symmers called Roy ?
We'll send him to climb the Old Man of Hoy.

* * *

What shall we do with Morison John ?
We'll get him a car that won't go wrong.

BYRON, THE POET OF THE HIGH PLACES.

BY J. R. LESLIE GRAY.

MY first intention was to write a paper on "Mountains in English Poetry," but I came to realize that such a title would be as empty as the famous caption, "Snakes in Iceland," for it is a fact that there are no mountains, or rather, mountains are never treated from the mountaineers' point of view in English poetry, at least until the beginning of the nineteenth century. This is not surprising. Indeed, we might have been surprised if it had been otherwise, for up to about two hundred years ago the southern and south-eastern districts of England (where there are no mountains) constituted the only nursery of poets in that kingdom. I have taken the trouble to make a list of the really distinguished English poets from Chaucer to Dryden, inclusive. They number forty-seven in all, and forty-six of them were born south of a straight line drawn from the Mersey to the Humber, while the forty-seventh (Andrew Marvell) was a native of Hull, which lies just to the north of that line. The great majority of the forty-six were educated in London or at Oxford or Cambridge, and twenty-five of them were natives of London or of the Home Counties, so, as they seldom travelled far beyond these parts, it follows that few of them ever saw a mountain, and their ideas of what mountains were like must have been gathered from books or evolved out of their own inner consciousness, and were entirely conventional. There are practically no descriptions of mountain scenery in the works of Shakespeare, and in Macbeth, his only Scottish play, the word "mountain" does not occur.

Those of the English poets who made a tour in Italy, as Milton did, and necessarily travelled among mountains on their way thither, usually regarded them only as dangerous, frosty, and forbidding obstacles; and classed them with the other dangers and discomforts of the journey, which they doubtless thought were more than sufficiently

execrable in themselves without the added horrors of such chilly and amorphous masses of rock and ice. Much the same sort of ideas prevailed in Scotland also, most of the Scottish poets being natives of the Lothians or Fife, who spent the greater part of their lives in the vicinity of Holyrood or of Falkland, and never went near the mountains if they could possibly help it.

After the commencement of the eighteenth century things went from bad to worse, and the poets of the time looked upon the mountains with greater horror and aversion than even their predecessors had felt. Their ideas of landscape were summed up in trim gardens, shaven lawns, Richmond Park, and the smooth and silvery Thames. Besides, some of them at least were admirers of the "Topiarian Art." All things are possible, but it is difficult to imagine a mountaineer gazing with rapture at a yew-tree cut into the shape of a peacock.

The "Poets of Nature" were little better than Pope and Addison themselves. Thomson was apparently more interested in rivers than in mountains; Gray shamelessly recorded his dislike to the Alps; Cowper lived in a flat district, and its scenery is reflected in his verse. It has been remarked of Burns that though he must have seen the hills of Arran on every clear day when he lived in Ayrshire, he never mentioned them in his poems. Although Wordsworth lived among mountains, and wrote some noble poetry about them, he saw them more with the eye of a poet-philosopher than of a mountaineer. The improvement begins with Scott, though it is difficult to understand why he celebrated such a tame region as the Trossachs, and such a commonplace eminence as Ben Venue. If Sir Walter had ever seen the precipices of Sgòran Dubh from Coire Dhondail he would have thought less of the Trossachs, and we might have had from him some mountain poetry worthy of his genius.

The Ettrick Shepherd was a hillman by inclination as well as by occupation, and we seem to catch the echo of the hill winds in much of his poetry. He was one of the earlier explorers of the Cairngorms, and among them is placed the scene of one of the poems in "The Queen's Wake."

It is from Byron, however, that we first get the true poetry of the mountains in full measure. He had his first experience of mountain scenery on Deeside, and his "Dark Loch-na-Garr," though not great poetry, is very good for a beginning. The following poem, written, as we are informed by Moore, only a year or two before the poet's death, shows conclusively that his love of mountains was born among the Aberdeenshire Highlands; and that the memory of that region, as well as his passion for the high places, persisted throughout his life:—

He who first met the Highlands' swelling blue
Will love each peak that shows a kindred hue.
Hail in each crag a friend's familiar face,
And clasp the mountains in his mind's embrace.
Long have I roamed through lands which are not mine,
Adored the Alp, and loved the Apennine,
Revered Parnassus, and beheld the steep
Jove's Ida and Olympus crown the deep:
But 'twas not all long ages' lore, nor all
Their nature held me in their thrilling thrall;
The infant rapture still survived the boy,
And Loch-na-Garr with Ida looked o'er Troy,
Mixed Celtic memories with the Phrygian mount,
And Highland linn with Castalia's clear fount.

Much as the Scottish mountains had done for Byron, it was from the Alps that he obtained his strongest inspiration, as the following passages from the Third Canto of "Childe Harold" will show:—

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to these summits led,

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion?
Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak

Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upreared of human hands. . . .

The sky is changed !—and such a change ! Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman ! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder ! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud !

And this is in the night :—Most glorious night !
Thou wert not sent for slumber ! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
A portion of the tempest and of thee !
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth !
And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

The following, from "Manfred," is perhaps slightly melodramatic, but it has the root of the matter in it :—

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains ;
They crown'd him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
The Avalanche in his hand ;
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
Must pause for my command.
The Glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day ;
But I am he that bids it pass,
Or with its ice delay.
I am the spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his cavern'd base—
And what with me wouldst *Thou* ?

I respectfully submit that I have proved my case, and that Byron is pre-eminently entitled to be called "The Poet of the High Places."

ON SGÒRAN DUBH—BUTTRESS No. 5.

BY G. ROY SYMMERS.

Again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a soft inland murmur. Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

Wordsworth.

WHAT can compare with a quiet summer dawn high up in the heart of our native hills ? Such was the question I asked myself, as I lay snugly in my sleeping-bag under the friendly roof of the upper Einich Bothy, giving ear to the harmony which came to me from without. My question did not receive an answer. The delightful transition period from slumber to complete wakefulness was cut short, and the human element in life was vividly impressed. From the stall next to mine (we were in the stable), resonating through the building, making the very rafters appear to vibrate, arose the song of one member of our party. Having been pestered for days with a doggerel chant which commenced " I can sing like a nightingale," I could not help thinking, even allowing discount for the wonderful range exercised, that the poor bird was not receiving quite its full share of justice. Hence, in the interests of justice, and because a small boulder was making its presence felt in the small of my back, I knocked up the party and set about preparing the breakfast. Meals even although indifferently cooked (of course I speak here on behalf of the cook) have a taste which they never have at home. (Calls of assent from my companions.) Please do not misunderstand me. That which is made by oneself, along with the assistance

of one's companions, eaten in the open air with an appetite stimulated by days of strenuous activity, goes down and tastes better than the finest delicacy at home.

Bear with me, gentle reader, No. 5 Buttress still lies at the head of lonely Loch Einich, the mist is slowly unfurling from its seamed and hoary brow—we are a paragraph nearer its conquest.

The business of washing-up completed, our party split, two members setting a course for Braeriach, whilst Miss Bruce and I hurried off to our buttress. As we traversed the west side of the loch the sun came up behind Braeriach, lending to its shadowy corries a sense of mystery. Beneath, and at our feet, the loch lay shimmering in the sun and lapping gently on the stretch of golden strand. Immediately above us, touched with delicate wisps of morning mist, towered the scarred and riven front of Sgòran Dubh. Our attention was taken by a fine gully which apparently split the buttress from scree to summit on the north side, and which commenced with a very fine initial pitch. This magnificent obstacle cannot be missed by anyone passing along the path by the loch-side, and it marks the start of our climb.

The first section, about ten feet in height, was found to be impossible because of the holdless upper surface of the gigantic choke-stone. Miss Bruce came to my rescue at this point. She climbed the right wall on loose holds and made a somewhat unsatisfactory traverse to a position above me. With the aid of the rope, I succeeded in making a long step to the right, which, without its assistance, could not be made under the present laws of gravity, there being no hand-hold to maintain balance while the step is being taken. Above this lower section rose a pile of precariously-perched blocks of granite which seemed on the verge of toppling down on our intruding heads. This upper division of the pitch must be fully twenty-five feet in height and cannot be termed easy. The start on the left over some big boulders is followed by awkward foot work on the left wall till a broad slab is encountered. Several narrow ledges on this slab provide the route upwards and across to

the right wall, where a vertical ascent over a choke-stone is called for. Wedged in a small recess at this point, the writer tried to thread the rope behind the final overhanging jambed-block and continue vertically upwards. All attempts in this direction failed. Looping the rope round a boulder, I made a speculative hand traverse over to the left wall, and was delighted to discover a possible exit on that side. Fortunately, after a somewhat constricted struggle up the space between a choke-stone and the left wall, there was sufficient hand-hold above the edge to admit of the pull-over being effected. Jubilation at my success died prematurely when I found that the other end of the rope was firmly wedged below. I had previously asked Miss Bruce to come off the rope, and to my dismay, when her turn now came, she had nothing to lend her even moral support. I played the rope just as the fisherman plays his line when the hook is caught on the bottom; at first gently and persuasively, then less gently and more persuasively, finally, like most fishers, I lost my temper. I cursed the rope, the rocks, not to mention myself, and ended up by jamming the rope at another point. I sat down and, I am sorry to say it, ordered Miss Bruce to climb up to the rope, when a sweet voice from the depths below answered, "Pull in the rope, I'm on the loop." When eventually she came over the edge, after having cleared the rope, I did the only thing possible under the circumstances, I apologised.

Now I can hear you saying, "This is a long story about the start of the climb." The buttress has a total height of 1,200 feet, and we've only reached an altitude of fifty feet above the screes. Do not look over the pages to see how much further you have to read. Beyond that initial pitch the climbing interest falls off rapidly. The upper part of the gully above the second pitch had to be abandoned. It grew slimy, slippery and slabby; in other words, quite abhorrent and not fit for man or beast. The grassy buttress on the right of the gully was climbed. The going here, although at places excessively steep, was not difficult except at sections where faces of loose, disintegrated granite had to be tackled. One of these faces forced us to make a descent



July 8, 1929

THE CAILLEACH.

G. R. Symmers

into a little gully on the right, which led back, rather fiercely at the top, on to the main ridge near the summit of our first gully. Rather above half the height of the buttress we obtained a striking view of Raeburn's Pinnacle, or what is locally known as the Cailleach (old woman). Seton Gordon depicts having seen an eagle resting on this pinnacle. We were not favoured by such a noble picture. The monarch of the crags, although no doubt resenting our intrusion, did not obtrude his presence on us. At the very top, the various ridges forming the buttress converge and the last part of our climb was along quite a narrow ridge of low angle, back to the mass of Sgòr Gaoith behind. The route, taken as a whole, was disappointing after the really first-class start, but the rock scenery and general prospect amply repaid any lack in climbing interest.

We were back at the bothy by 2.30 p.m. to find the others waiting, and after a wash, set off immediately for Aviemore to replenish our supplies and indulge in an off day. As the sun was sinking low in the west, as the shadows were lengthening in Rothiemurchus, we stood by Barrie's grave and paid homage to Him who had called us to the purple hills.

THE SHELTER STONE IN NOVEMBER.

BY JAMES SCRIMGEOUR.

LOCH AVON and The Shelter Stone! There is a glamour about the very names for all lovers of the Cairngorms. Remote and difficult of access even in the long days of summer, the difficulty of their approach is doubled and even trebled when the short, dark days of November are with us. But that Shelter Stone must surely be impregnated with super-magnetic power when at such a time of year it can draw from their warm firesides five heads of households who apparently laugh at the nonsense about "Too old at Forty" or even "Too old at Fifty."

Behold then these five worthies setting out for Braemar the "day before" so as to ensure an early start for the "Expotition"—as Christopher Robin would call it. "Geordie," our "Shuvver," is a cheery soul and enlivens the journey with his army experiences while we are proceeding up the Cairnwell and over the Elbow. Past Persey the distant hills are seen to be snow-clad, and in half an hour we are right in amongst them—with a fringe of snow on the road side. We arrive at Braemar and receive a warm welcome from "Mine Host," having the hotel practically to ourselves. A short walk in the dark after tea to stretch our legs—dinner, and then early to bed, for it's "early to rise" the next day. Not, however, before giving careful instructions for the morrow's provender. A thermos flask of tea for each (*eight* sugar knots in some of them) and sandwiches. Three demand jam sandwiches and biscuits and cheese, and the other two meat sandwiches, but on second thoughts the "meaty members" demand jam ones in addition!

A knock at the bedroom door—Five o'clock on a dark, dismal, rainy November morning—

Truly bed in such a case
Seems a comfortable place.

However there must be no funking it, so up we jump and get suitably toggled for the occasion. Breakfast at half-past five, provender packed into haversacks or pockets, and the cheery face of Geordie at the door to lure us out into the darkness for the ten miles' drive to Derry Lodge. We set off at the back of six, up that narrow twisting road past Inverey and the Linn of Dee, but we have it all to ourselves at that unearthly hour, save for innumerable rabbits and a couple of deer who skip leisurely across the road out of the glare of our advancing headlights.

The Derry Lodge "Sentry" now being withdrawn for the season, we get right up to the door of Derry Lodge—another name of memories for Cairngorm lovers, and, carefully instructing Geordie to be back at three o'clock for us, we set out on the walk proper at 7 o'clock sharp, in light quite sufficient for our comfort. The road is not the more familiar Larig Ghru route, but strikes sharp north from the Lodge up Glen Derry, following the Derry Burn, first through the remains of an ancient Scots pine forest, and then out into the open glen. At this point the clouds broke, blue sky appeared, the sun lit up the snow-clad bordering peaks, and for a brief space we really had visions of a fine day. But it was not to be, and we had intermittent showers all the rest of the way. In less than two hours we were right in amongst the snow and soon we were struggling up the wild Coire Etchachan in snow that was often knee deep and sometimes thigh deep. Before we got to the top we were in fairly thick rain—at times sleet and snow—and visibility became very poor. Maps and compasses were consulted, and conditions generally looked so bad that for a space there was doubt in the minds of some as to whether we could strike a reasonably safe course down the dangerously steep descent to Loch Avon. Our leader got muttered warnings of "Shot at dawn," and such-like, but with supreme confidence in his map and compass he gave us a line and we set out again, passing on our left Loch Etchachan (3,058 feet),

the highest loch of its size in the country—unfortunately shrouded in mist. This point was reached about ten o'clock, after three hours' strenuous walking and climbing. Soon the really ticklish part of the journey began—a 700 feet nearly sheer descent to Loch Avon over a mighty confusion of boulders thickly embedded in snow. This was a regular scramble—often on all fours—but in some ways the snow was a friendly enemy providing, as it did, a cushion against scraped shins and the like. By good luck we struck the track of a solitary deer, and that "rock expert" undoubtedly helped us down, but we were mainly indebted to our own guide for a safe journey down that awesome place. The famous Shelter Stone was reached about 10.30, and we had half an hour's rest for lunch. The Visitors' Books were unearthed—they are carefully preserved in a tin box, or to be more correct, in two biscuit boxes telescoped into one another—and the names of the party were duly inscribed and dated. We were very "bucked" to find that for the past three years at least there were no later entries than September, so we felt we had the honour of establishing a record of a kind.

We then set out on another very rough journey along the marge of that wonderful Loch Avon, majestic in its very desolation. The Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide describes it as the grandest loch in the Scottish Highlands, and its only possible superior is Coruisk in Skye. Mist on the tops again baffled our hopes of seeing its surroundings at their best, but it was at least clear lower down and the sight was wonderful. Those who had seen the place without snow pointed out that the snow softened the ruggedness of the scene, and that in some respects the summer aspect was the wilder. However, it was wild enough in all conscience. As we looked along the Loch we were entranced by a wonderful ethereal blue light playing over the snow at the far end of the Loch, caused presumably by sunshine above the snow. We struggled along the rocky shore—the loch is nearly a mile long—round Ben Vane (that extraordinary Gaelic language spells Vane as Mheadhoin), until passing the Dubh Lochan we strike the Larig an Laoigh.

It is certainly not much of a path, even for calves (which presumably give it its name), far less human beings, but such as it was, we were glad to see it and we made more rapid progress than we had done for the past three or four hours. We soon after came in sight of Glen Derry again, at the point where we climbed up the Coire Etchachan, halted for a few minutes to drain our thermos flasks to the last drop, and then set out on the last four miles of our tramp, which ended at Derry Lodge at three o'clock, according to plan, and were delighted to find the faithful Geordie awaiting us. It should be explained that the whole "expedition" had been most carefully "time tabled" by our leader, as we had to get from Braemar to Dundee in time to catch the last boat for Newport at 8.15. This we duly did, having in the meantime motored to Braemar, visited our hotel, changed our boots and nether garments (whose condition by this time was indescribable), got a substantial meal, and motored in the dark down the long winding Cairnwell Road. This ended a memorable day for all concerned. On a rough computation the tramp, which lasted from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., with three-quarters of an hour off, had measured well on for 20 miles of very rough going, nearly two-thirds of it being more or less through soft snow. Yet, so exhilarating was the air, and so high were the spirits, that no one was more than pleasantly tired at the end of the day.

A SUNNY WEEK-END IN THE CAIRNGORMS.

BY GEORGE R. SMITH.

WITH the long week-end of the Aberdeen Summer Holiday before us, and a promised continuance of fine weather, to go a-hiking into the hills seemed for three keen trampers perhaps the only naturally possible, or shall I say allowable, thing to do. So it was that we found ourselves on the Saturday afternoon train for Boat of Garten, all prepared to make the most of the few days.

By strange chance we made acquaintance with other two climbers on the train, so one can imagine that the rail journey proved rather a pleasant beginning—five heads over a map, and that fine book on the Cairngorms, by Alexander, and any journey could be a pleasure.

After the best part of three hours in a train, to tramp along in the open was most refreshing, even though the sun was rather hot and we each carried a hefty pack. We were, of course, bound for the Cairngorms, our object being to climb Cairngorm itself, then make for the Shelter Stone that night; so, guided by our map, we left the familiar Aviemore road and struck up An Slugan Glen. We were now on strange ground, and on such a perfect afternoon everything was seen at its best, as if seeking to give us on our first venture on this side of the great mountain group a special welcome. The going being very easy, every minute was a pleasure, and we were in the proper mood to enjoy most fully the varied beauties of this wonderful glen. Then when the valley opened came the magnificent panorama of the Cairngorms, and we agreed that the view here presented was certainly one of the finest in Scotland. Tempted to linger here, we sprawled on the heather, picnicking, and lazily resting after the warmth of the afternoon. Here was complete contentment. We had chosen a spot where the now weakening

sun could shine on us through a clearing in the trees. Everything was at its loveliest; the heather beginning to show its finest colourings and contrasting so charmingly with the greys and silver of stones and young branches. Tall trees close at hand invited our admiration, but our eyes ever returned to view the far, yet seemingly near hills, for the late afternoon sunshine kindly brought out each detail with splendid clearness.

While we were thus enjoying the scene and forgetting that we had a long way to tramp before night, our friends of the train, who had been visiting at Boat of Garten, came upon us. They accompanied us on the road as far as Loch Morlich, where we parted, our friends making for the Rothiemurchus Forest, where they were to rest before tackling Braeriach in the early morning. The next part of our road skirted the beautiful shore of the loch, then reaching Glenmore Lodge, we took the winding path through the trees, following the Allt More. Rewarded at every turn by the charm of new and delightful scenery, we pushed on, and although the walking was very easy, and we regretted that time did not allow of our dallying, we were almost glad to leave the last few trees and get to the open of the lower slopes of Cairngorm, for the shelter of the trees had begun to make things rather oppressive.

Making good progress, we could afford now and then to turn around and view the surrounding country, which, now that the sun had gone, was slipping into a loom of mystery. Far to the north we could trace the way we had come since afternoon, right down to the fine picture of the silent loch.

Thinking to make a straight line for the top of Cairngorm we foolishly left the path, a course of procedure that we soon regretted, for we encountered some very stony stretches that proved rather laborious, coming at the end of a day's programme. As we neared the top, a bitter wind blowing with us obliged us to don our extra wraps, for the cold now became intense, and as if daring our coming and sometimes threatening to engulf Cairngorm itself, a rolling mist guarded the approach to Braeriach.

It wanted but a few minutes to half-past ten when we

reached the cairn, and here in the softly diffused twilight we forgot the coldness and the late hour in endeavouring to pick out the more familiar outlines to the south and east. Formidable clouds had piled up from the west, casting a deep gloom over most of the country north of the cairn, yet allowing enough light to filter through to delight us with magic reflections from distant lochs. Here was night as it were asleep with one eye open. Far away beyond the hills the Culbin Sands returned a faint glimmer, creating the impression of a fantastic morning about to break in the north. But we had no doubt that this was only a little joke from His Solar Majesty, for the eastern horizon gave promise of a sunrise still a few hours distant.

Abandoning our idea of attempting the Shelter Stone that night, we descended a few hundred yards to the sheltered south of the cairn, and in a few minutes had erected our bivouac behind a huge boulder, bringing into use our walking-sticks, for, wishing to travel as light as possible, we had come without poles of any kind. Of the three J. was the only one who had taken a blanket. W. and I having extra overcoats, we piled all on top and huddled together. It will be appreciated by anyone that this, our first night passed nestling in the heart of the Cairngorms was an experience, the adventurous thought of which might keep one awake. At anyrate there was little, if any, sleep, only a fitful passing of the cold hours, a nightmare of discomfort and flapping canvas, yet not altogether unpleasant. I felt a bit sorry for our tent next morning. It did appear so dejected after the stiff breeze of the night-time. Viewed from without it seemed incredible that such a pathetic looking affair could have housed us so well. Crawling out into the morning about eight o'clock, the warm sunshine soon put new life into us, and after a splash at the source of the Coire Raibiart, followed by a breakfast worthy of the occasion, we lay completely happy in admiring the morning sunshine on the hills.

Somewhere between nine and ten o'clock we started on the trek again, feeling very fit, and making for the Larig Ghru and Braeriach. On such a fine morning everything

seemed so easy that we mapped out a programme that embraced Braeriach and Cairn Toul, and a return over Ben Macdhui. With excellent visibility the tops showed up with remarkable clearness, even to the far-distant Benachie. Cairn Toul and Braeriach seemed particularly tempting, Ben Macdhui appearing rather tame, I thought, when I recalled that but a fortnight before we had scrambled to the top on one of those winter days that prowl about the Cairngorms even in summer time. A little to the north of the March Burn we began our descent into the Larig, after scouting around for a suitable bit where we could scramble down. From being great fun it developed into something quite strenuous, for we had chosen a rather nasty place and had to spread out to escape the loose rocks and stones that we, despite care, sent careering down into the pass. The now broiling sun added to our discomfort, and there was a time when I almost wished that we had tackled something less tiring. Things became so exciting that I thought it best to rid myself of my heavy rucksack. This happened when I became stuck in a rather awkward position on some rocks, and for a moment had a funny feeling that I would fall right on to Braeriach! With a shout to W., who was leading, I dropped my rucksack, expecting to retrieve it a little further on; but we were not prepared for what happened next. Away it bolted like some live thing, bounding from rock to rock, gathering momentum as it went, and causing a small avalanche of stones in its wake. Fascinated, we stared after the ridiculous thing until distance made it impossible for us to see its further progress. Eventually we reached the bottom just twenty minutes before J., who had made slow progress, being somewhat handicapped with his light shoes. Meanwhile I had recovered my run-away rucksack, and as it contained most of the foodstuffs, we enjoyed quite a novel fruit salad, thanks to the pounding that the contents had undergone.

My companions had done the Larig on another memorable trip, though this was my first jaunt this way, and realizing that to start climbing again with our heavy loads was no joke in the inexorable afternoon sunshine, we agreed

to push on for Derry Lodge. No records were broken, for we frequently enjoyed a sun-bath by way of refreshment, besides meeting numerous parties making for Aviemore.

The vicinity of Derry Lodge, which we reached about six o'clock, presented quite an unusual aspect that evening, for all around were many parties of returned climbers, camping and busily engaged in preparing tea. Here we met our two friends, not long since arrived, who told us of an unexciting cold night spent in sleeping-bags, followed by a glorious day on Braeriach. After the scorching hours of the afternoon, the thought of slipping on our bathing-suits and giving ourselves a cooler in the waters of the Derry was irresistible, though the performance of which ceremony was scarcely necessary to sharpen our appetites for the attack on the provisions that followed.

A glance at our map had suggested that to follow the Derry, doing the Larig an Laoigh, and so down the Avon, offered a walk that promised to be interestingly new to us, and moreover would not oblige us to do anything in the way of climbing, for we wished to avoid anything strenuous if the prevailing weather conditions should continue. With still a few hours of the summer evening light, we decided to make for the Avon before darkness came, all of us being in good form now that the cool evening had come. We were soon well on our way, meeting returning rambles now and then, even after we had passed the lure of the trees of Glen Derry. Shortly after leaving the Derry, we lost the track for a bit, which meant a jolly scramble over deep heather until, from the top of the Pass we sighted a rough path following the burn on the other side. I think that we did our descent to the fords at, perhaps, the best time possible for feeling the grand remoteness of the Pass, for with the coming of the night the impressive wildness of everything was, if anything, accentuated, giving us a memory that will more than linger.

Reaching the Avon when failing light was beginning to make the going less pleasant, we hunted around attempting to ford the river by means of stepping stones, but finding this hopeless, there was nothing else for it but that we should

wade across—quite a thrill at this late hour! It was fortunate that we were well supplied with ground-sheets, for, after a vain searching and prodding for a dry place, we were obliged, while there was still a little light, to erect the tent on a spot which, if a little more than damp, gave us the shelter of a big rock. That menacing, rolling mist-cloud of last night had returned, having taken up its quarters beyond Loch Avon, and trailing a shroud over Cairngorm. This failed to damp our spirits, however, for by now we had absolute faith in the weather, though for the sake of comfort we took care that the erection of our tent was, to-night, more of a success. Every man for himself! We dressed for the occasion, even to gloves, caps, and extra coats, I keeping on my heavy boots, while J. looked especially ridiculous rolled in his blanket. After the ordeal of crossing the river, I had treated myself to a lemon, followed by a cigarette, but this didn't prove a very efficient night-cap; nor had I become skilled in the art of making a rucksack do service as a pillow, for my extra shoes still felt a bit hard! And tramping in shorts may be the thing for the daytime, but lying during a cold night inside a tent makes one wonder! Though to many it may seem anything but fun our lying out there in such a wild place, somehow I felt that this was the real way to do the hills. This was a taste of the adventure we all dream about in our early days.

After a futile attempt to make up lost sleep I sat up to await the coming light, and shortly after half-past three we crept out, packed up everything, and set off to meet the sunrise. A few minutes on the heather soon took the stiffness and the wrinkles from us. A morning when we could imagine ourselves to be exploring a new world, I was not really pleased when we struck the path that leads close to the Avon, though, after an hour or so, I had a grateful thought for those who had first made the trail. The magnificent picture when the sun first touched the mountain tops was something to remember. Many times we paused to admire the wonder of the morning sunshine, and then after a long stretch in the shadows it was glorious coming into the warm rays.

Now and then we sighted deer, taking one herd by surprise when we rounded the spur of a hill. No doubt the animals had come down to drink, and there was a bit of a stampede when they sensed us, all climbing to a safe distance, from which they regarded us, as if wondering what strange creatures we were and how dared we disturb their peace at this early hour. Two of the herd were unable to join the others, one of them crossing the river and making strange barking sounds to its mate, which, being without antlers, we thought might be a young deer. This one had hidden in deep heather, only a few feet from the path, and when we came alongside we were tempted to tickle its ears with our sticks, for the young brute was showing the top of its head amid the heather. But we had caused quite enough excitement already, and, besides, had no wish that the whole herd should come down upon us; so, when we had gone a few yards beyond the hiding place, we turned to see the young deer bounding across the river to join the other, when they speeded up the hill together, pausing now and then to look back upon us.

The sun had it all to himself this morning, for there was no mist, and with the fast-going early hours came increased warmth, so that our journey down the Avon was punctuated with short rests, during which we added weight to our packs by discarding our now unneeded extra clothes. Although everywhere there were magnificent opportunities for photography, we didn't bemoan the lack of our cameras, which, strangely enough, we had forgotten to bring with us. This felt like a day with no regrets, and feeling gloriously alive, we were content to enjoy the wonders of the Avon valley and to think of the possibilities of similar treks offered by this part of the country.

It was about half-past eight when W. suggested a dip in the river—rather a good idea we thought, now that we were warmed up. We found the Avon this morning much colder than the Derry was the previous evening.

Still, this merely refreshed us for another spell along the path. However, as we had been going fairly steadily for more than four hours, we decided to breakfast here, after which we spent a lazy hour lying by the river.

But time was slipping and we had to get over quite a bit of country to catch our afternoon bus, and once on the way again we stepped out with more speed, taking turns at setting the pace. The whole aspect of the country had changed since our early morning start. Well behind now were the three and four thousanders, and wild grandeur had given place to the less imposing hills.

As we neared the Linn of Avon the slight incline and the now scorching sun again gave us to think that we were wise in avoiding any climbing. Yet by the time we had reached Inchrorry with not a breath of cool air about, there were longings for a breeze from a hill-top to make things more pleasant.

The last part of our tramp to the Cock Bridge was, perhaps, the least enjoyable of the whole trip, not because of lack of interest, but that the terrific heat of the sun made our forced march rather uncomfortable, sometimes almost an ordeal. With the lesser hills had come flocks of sheep taking the place of deer. There were still the lonely miles of hills, but the remoteness had gone and now had come the comfortable-looking undulating stretches.

However, the Cock Bridge was reached just on one o'clock, and we were delighted when informed that we had an hour and twenty minutes before our bus started. This, of course, meant another dip, in the Don this time, a luxurious splashing in the cool water until our driver hailed us on time to start. He was only going to Bellabeg, and would leave in the evening for Aberdeen, which arrangement suited us admirably, for we were in no hurry to leave the hills. We felt so refreshed that, on getting off the bus, we very nearly started off to walk to Alford. But the Don won! Another splash in the river, then we had our second meal for the day, a four o'clock picnic by the river bank. Then followed an afternoon in the sun, and after those two nights of sleeplessness it cannot be wondered at that there was some attempt to make up arrears of sleep, for we all three dozed off for an hour—or so!

At 6 p.m. we bade good-bye to Strathdon, but not to the hills, for the magnificent evening made the journey

home a fitting finish to our adventures, and as this was only our second glimpse of the upper Donside hills, we saw much to delight us, with not even a thought of those missing photographs. But I now begin to have regrets that we omitted our cameras, yet there also comes the thought of another little adventure that will, perhaps, take us on a return journey over the same ground, when we hope that the sun will again take his part in the repeat performance.

THE CAIRNGORMS AS A NATIONAL PARK.

THE question of the establishment of a National Park or National Parks has assumed a new phase by the appointment of a Departmental Committee to report upon the subject, and, as the claims of the Cairngorms to be selected as the most suitable area in Scotland, are being strongly urged in various quarters, it may be well to put on record the main features of the movement which is now in progress. Credit for launching the idea of the Cairngorms as a National Park rests with *The Scots Magazine* which in the late autumn of 1928 published several articles urging the formation of such a Park or Nature Reserve in Scotland, and emphasizing the attractions offered by the Cairngorms for such a purpose. The subject was taken up in other periodicals, notably *The Glasgow Herald*, and in June, 1929, a conference called by the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, took place in Glasgow at which the matter was further canvassed, the consensus of opinion being in favour of the Cairngorms as the most suitable area. As a result of this conference a committee, called the Scottish Forest Reserve Committee, representing mountaineering clubs and other out-door organizations, was set up to promote the movement. The Cairngorm Club is represented on this Committee by its President, Mr. James A. Parker.

While this discussion was in progress in Scotland, opinion in England was also stirred into activity. Lord Bledisloe in a letter to *The Times* suggested that the Forest of Dean, which is Crown land, should be developed as a National Park, with facilities for week-end camping and other out-door interests, while in Wales a proposal to convert the Snowdon region into a Welsh National Park was similarly advocated.

Following upon this widespread display of interest in the subject, the Government set up a Departmental Committee to report upon the establishment of a National Park or Parks from the recreational point of view and from the point of view of the preservation of native flora and fauna. The Chairman of the Committee is Dr. Addison, and Scotland is represented upon it by Sir John Stirling Maxwell and Sir Robert B. Greig, the head of the Scottish Department of

Agriculture. The Committee has heard evidence from the representatives of various organizations in England, Wales, and Scotland, amongst these being the Scottish Forest Reserve Committee, already mentioned, and the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland. These bodies have recommended the Cairngorms as a National Park for recreational purposes, and Glen Affric as a reserve for flora and fauna.

The Town Council of Aberdeen took up the matter and in January it adopted a report prepared by a sub-committee of the Links and Parks Committee and resolved to submit this report to the Departmental Committee. The report, which was drafted by Mr. George Roberts and Mr. Henry Alexander, states in detail the advantages offered by the Cairngorms as a National Park or Reserve and offers definite suggestions as to how the area should be treated, along with estimates of the expenditure involved in making the necessary roads and acquiring the land. The area suggested extends from Loch Bulg and Inchrory west to Glen Feshie and Rothiemurchus, the approximate extent being some 282 square miles and the estimated capital value of the land, including, of course, the sporting rights which are the chief item, being £354,000. If this area be considered too large, it is suggested that Beinn a' Bhuid and Ben Avon be omitted, thus reducing the area to 168 square miles, and the capital cost to £195,000.

The report lays great stress throughout upon the importance of interfering as little as possible with the natural condition of the area. The roads to Derry Lodge, Glen Einich and Glen More would be improved and chalet inns and refuge huts would be built at a few selected points, but the interior of the area would be kept intact and inviolate as a sanctuary for the walker and nature lover.

The Town Council of Aberdeen by adopting this report has made it clear that, while it welcomes the idea of a National Park or Reserve in the Cairngorms, and while it confidently urges the great attractions of the area for the purpose, it is strongly opposed to anything that will destroy the character of the region or convert it into a mere glorified tea garden.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Forty-first Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Imperial Hotel, Aberdeen, on the evening of Saturday, November 30, 1929, the President, Mr. James A. Parker, in the chair.

The Accounts, which were submitted by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. J. A. Nicol, and unanimously adopted, showed that there is a credit balance of £134. 0s. 10d., the highest in the history of the Club. The membership is 272, higher than it had ever been. In 1917 it was 133.

The Hon. President and the other office-bearers were unanimously re-elected. Messrs. W. A. Reid, James Conner, and R. Sellar retired from the Committee by rotation and their places were filled by the appointment of Messrs. Leslie Hay, E. Birnie Reid, and Godfrey Geddes.

It was decided to hold the New Year Meet at Braemar, and the Easter Meet at Nethy Bridge. The Spring holiday excursion is to be to Mount Keen, and it was remitted to the Committee to arrange Saturday afternoon excursions. It was also decided to arrange for a party to climb Lochnagar on New Year's Day, if there was a sufficient demand.

The remit regarding the Corrour Bothy was continued.

The President reported that the Allt-na-Beinne Bridge had been repainted in August. This was a first class job and the bridge was as good as new.

Mr. Nicol reported that Mr. Parker and Mr. Garden had presented an oak bookcase to the Club as a token of appreciation of the honour the Club had conferred on them in electing them President. The Club was now collecting a library of books pertaining to the mountains in general, and the Cairngorms in particular.

On the motion of Mr. Porter, seconded by Dr. Levack, Messrs. Parker and Garden were very cordially thanked for their handsome gift, and, on the suggestion of the President, it was resolved to authorize the expenditure of £5 per annum in the purchase of books, the matter being remitted to the President and the Editor of the *Journal*, with powers.

The President reported that he had represented the Club on the Committee of the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland at various meetings which had been held in the autumn. He referred

to the fact that the Government had appointed a Committee to consider the question of national parks, and indicated that the whole question would be carefully watched on behalf of the Club.

On the motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Conner, it was resolved to record the Club's high appreciation of the action of Colonel Stewart in placing an indicator on the Blue Hill and clearing away a very large number of trees obstructing the view to the west.

The meeting closed with a cordial vote of thanks to the President.

THE ANNUAL DINNER.

Nearly a hundred members and guests attended the Annual Dinner of the Club in the Imperial Hotel, following the Annual Meeting, and, according to *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, whose excellent report we are permitted to quote, it was one of the most enjoyable ever held by the Club. Mr. Parker, the President, was in the chair, and the guests included Colonel D. B. D. Stewart and Mrs. Stewart, Banchory-Devenick, and Dr. T. R. Burnett, ex-President of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, who delivered a fascinating lecture on climbing. Among the apologies for absence was one from Mr. G. T. Glover, president of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, who regretted that he was out of Scotland that night, and sent his best wishes. Mr. George Duncan and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Alexander also sent apologies.

Proposing the toast of "The Club," Mr. Parker was in the happy position of being able to state that the membership had now reached 272, an increase of 115 in the last ten years. Turning to what he described as the political side of the Club's activities, the President referred to the movement started this year to establish national forest reserves, which had now reached the stage of being investigated by a Committee appointed by the Government. The proposals, he said, were in a somewhat nebulous condition at present, but the leading ideas were that certain areas might be set apart as preserves for the natural fauna and flora of the country, and that other areas might be dedicated to the enjoyment of the people in all time, with liberty to roam at their pleasure at all times without let or hindrance.

These proposals concerned them very intimately, because the Scottish area which had been most commonly mentioned as suitable for a national forest reserve was the region of the Cairngorms. "I think," explained the President, "that one essential condition of such a reserve is that it must be a mountain land remote from civilization, and that it must be so large that no matter how popular it may become, it will still retain its charm of solitude. (Applause.) The Cairngorms have this essential to a degree perhaps not equalled by any other area of land in the Highlands. Probably no other solitudes in this country are so remote from civilization as, say, Loch Avon or the rough corries of Braeriach and Beinn a' Bhuidr."

Another essential was that the selected district must be a beautiful one, and possess a bracing and reasonably dry climate. The Cairngorms satisfied those conditions in an eminent degree. (Applause.) A glance at the map at once suggested that the area to be included should extend from the eastern base of Ben Avon westwards to include Sgòran Dubh and the Glen Feshie Hills, an area of something like 250 square miles, of which about fifty square miles would be suitable for afforestation, while the remainder, the higher ground, would be available for mountaineering. Small mountain hotels of a simple type and camping sites would require to be provided at suitable spots, and in this connection Loch Morlich and Glen Lui at once suggested themselves. Refuge huts would also be required at places like Avonford, Loch Einich, and the entrance to Glen Guibhsachan.

The only new roads necessary would be that from Linn of Dee to Kingussie through Glen Feshie, which was long overdue, and a road from Cock Bridge via Inchroy to Tomintoul in substitution for the existing practical joke called the Lecht Road. The existing roads from Strathspey to Loch Morlich would require to be re-made, and a bridge would have to be constructed across the Dee at Braemar. "But," added the President, "absolutely no huts or works of any kind must be erected or carried out in or near the innermost sanctuaries of the Cairngorms, or on the summits of the mountains themselves. These must be left untouched. Tea chalets, say, in the Larig Ghru or on the shores of Loch Avon are simply unthinkable.

"Such is the picture, a fascinating one; but I doubt very much if it will ever materialize, as the difficulties which would have to be overcome are enormous, on account of the sporting interests that would be affected. A beginning could, of course, be made with the Glenmore Forest, which already belongs to the State, and if it were successful, it might form the nucleus for the bigger scheme in whole or in part. While all this discussion has been going on about the formation of national parks, people seem to have overlooked the fact that we have in the Highlands of Scotland one of the most beautiful districts in the world, which simply wants to be opened up by the general improvement of its roads and ferries and the provision of camping sites and rest houses to become the national forest of the British Isles." (Applause.)

Councillor Edward W. Watt, proposing the health of the guests, warmly welcomed Colonel and Mrs. Stewart. Many of them, he said, had been present at the unveiling of the fine new indicator on that splendid site, the Blue Hill, one of the finest viewpoints in Lower Deeside. They thanked Colonel Stewart for his enthusiasm in this matter. (Applause.) Welcoming Dr. Burnett, Councillor Watt referred eulogistically to his fame as a mountaineer.

Replying, Colonel Stewart said that anything he had done regarding the indicator at the Blue Hill had been amply repaid not only

by the Cairngorm Club, but by the population of Aberdeen. Colonel Stewart told how the indicator was being visited by large numbers of sightseers. He dropped a hint to Aberdeen County Council regarding the future of the Blue Hill. He revealed that a gentleman called on him and suggested that Kincardine County Council might consider taking over the Blue Hill.

"I think it is up to you to consider that point," the Colonel remarked. "I am quite uncommitted on the question, but it is well that you should know how the matter stands."

The President said that he examined the indicator last week, and there was no sign of any defacing being done to it or the cairn, and he saw no litter. (Applause.)

During an excellent musical programme, the company sang the Club song, "Where the High Road Ends."

Afterwards Dr. T. R. Burnett delighted the company with his lecture on rock climbing in the English Lake district. Dr. Burnett described many interesting climbs, and showed a splendid series of lantern views. Incidentally, Dr. Burnett assured the members of the Club of the co-operation of his own in their efforts for national parks.

On the call of Dr. J. R. Levack, a cordial vote of thanks was given to Dr. Burnett.

Replying to the toast of his health, proposed by the President, Mr. John A. Nicol, the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, painted an alluring picture of the glories of mountaineering and advised non-members to join the Club and share in those enjoyments.

Mr. J. McCoss proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs. William Garden for her songs, to Messrs. George and Wilfred Smith for their violin duets, and to Mr. Meston for his admirable Scotch recitations.

The vote was heartily accorded and the proceedings ended with a hearty vote of thanks to President Parker.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1930—BRAEMAR.

THE following full and interesting account of the New Year Meet at Braemar has been received from a member who was present. The party had their headquarters at the Invercauld Arms Hotel. The Meet was one of the most successful in the history of the Club.

Friday, December 27. Miss N. Bruce, Major H. J. Butchart, E. B. Reid, and H. Q. Irvine arrived.

Saturday, December 28. Miss N. Bruce, Major Butchart, E. B. Reid, and H. Q. Irvine motored up the Cairnwell Road until the car stuck in a snowdrift, 1½ miles beyond the Glen Clunie Lodge.

Miss N. Bruce accompanied by H. Littlejohn, underkeeper at Glen Clunie Lodge, set off along the road to climb the Cairnwell

and Cairn Aosda or "Moses Cairn." When they had been walking for over an hour their attention was attracted by wandering footprints, obviously of someone who had lost his way. Walking back along the track for about 400 yards, they came on an old man of the tramping fraternity half buried in the snow, and covered with an old coat. He was able to drink some hot cocoa and said he had lain down on Thursday night. H. Littlejohn remained with him while Miss Bruce returned to Glen Clunie Lodge to warn Mr. McHardy, the head keeper, who set off with a horse and sledge to fetch the man back. Miss Bruce then proceeded to Braemar for further help. So far the old man is progressing favourably.

The skiers, Major Butchart, Reid, and Irvine, had proceeded on foot up the south-east shoulder of Carn Dubh, where they put on their skis before ascending to the summit of the plateau. They then proceeded to the top of the stream which has its source just west of the 2,697 point. Here they got a good run of $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles. The snow was crusted and going was very difficult. They then retraced their tracks and descended a very steep slope just opposite the Shan Spital Bridge, and skied along the road to Glen Clunie Lodge, where they picked up their car.

J. & J. W. Scrimgeour arrived the same evening.

Sunday, December 29. Miss Bruce, R. Symmers, J. and J. W. Scrimgeour left in one car, and Major Butchart and H. Q. Irvine, with their skis, in another car, and motored up to Glen Clunie Lodge, where the cars were left. The climbers and skiers proceeded up the Cairnwell Road to within $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile of the summit of the pass. Here the climbers proceeded up the North face of the Cairnwell. The whole way up the road and the Cairnwell the going was very heavy, as a thaw had set in and the snow was soft and inclined to be slushy in parts. The wind was blowing alternate rain and snow into the faces of both parties. The last few hundred yards of the climb had to be done on hands and knees owing to the extreme force of the gale, the last 100 yards took 10 to 15 minutes. The view from the summit was good for such a day. The ascent was accomplished in just under an hour. Lunch was taken in a moderately sheltered corner about 150 feet below the summit. From there, by means of glissades, the road was reached in about 10 minutes. The skiers lunched in a hollow near the "Thieves' Burn," and then climbed about half way up the same face of the Cairnwell as the climbers, and practised turns on the lower slopes. The snow for skiing was very slow, with patches of ice in places which made going very difficult. Both parties then united and proceeded back to Glen Clunie Lodge, where the cars were picked up. The Cairnwell Road was very deeply drifted, while at times there was no indication of where the sides of the road ended and the heather began.

The President, accompanied by E. B. Reid, crossed the Dee by the new bridge built for carting wood, at the junction of the Clunie

and the Dee, and walked up to the Quoich. From here they approached Carn-na-Drochaide from the west, and reached the summit in a hurricane. From there they headed north-west into the Slugain Glen, reaching the Lodge for lunch. The going from the summit to Slugain Lodge was very difficult, through soft snow and in the teeth of a gale with driving snow or sleet. The return to Braemar was made down the Glen, re-crossing the river by the new bridge. After crossing the river, there were seen ten stags in a turnip field, where only sheep were supposed to be, thus showing the fierce conditions in the heights.

L. M. Morison, guest, arrived this evening.

Monday, December 30. Two parties left Braemar in cars for Derry Lodge. One party, which consisted of the President, Miss Bruce, J. and J. W. Scrimgeour, and R. Symmers. The other party was composed of skiers, namely, Major Butchart, H. Q. Irvine, J. M. Morison, and E. B. Reid.

Owing to the breakdown of one of the cars, the start was delayed. Both parties left Derry Lodge at 9.15 and proceeded via Luibeg and the Sron Riach to the 3,000 feet contour, where, owing to the ice crust, the ski-ing party decided to go no further. Up to this point the climbers had found going fairly heavy, as there were many patches of soft snow. Above this the conditions for climbing were excellent. The party continued along the cliffs above Corrie Lochan Uaine to the Stob Coire-an-Sputan Dearg. Thence the party set a course for the summit, which was reached at 12.45. The cairn and Indicator were found encased in a thick coating of ice. The view eastward and southward was unimpeded. The return was made by the same route.

Meanwhile the skiers had some excellent running, made the more interesting by large patches of ice which necessitated frequent swing and turns. Most of the running took place between the heights of 2,500 feet and 3,000 feet.

The weather conditions and views, particularly of precipices and corries, were exceedingly fine, and were enhanced by occasional clouds and flurries of drifting snow from the summits. The two parties reached Derry Lodge at 4 p.m.—the members being hospitably entertained by Mrs. Grant at Luibeg Cottage.

In the evening, the party was strengthened by the arrival of ex-Vice-President Walter A. Reid, and also by Robert Sellar.

Tuesday, December 31. The following members set off to climb Ben Bhreac, 3,051 feet, and Meallan Lundain, namely Miss Bruce, W. A. Reid, J. Scrimgeour, and R. Symmers. Leaving Derry Lodge at 9.45 a.m. they proceeded up the Derry for about $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile, where a crossing was effected dryshod by throwing a tree trunk across the stream. The western slope of Ben Bhreac was then ascended, and the summit made in a cold wind, with drifting snow, by 11.45.

After a short stay, the descent was made to the Pol Bhát, where a little snow-climbing was indulged in. Meallan Lundain was next climbed, and the descent made to Derry Lodge.

The ski-ing party, which consisted of Major Butchart, H. Q. Irvine, L. M. Morison, and E. B. Reid, motored up to Glen Clunie Lodge, where the car was left. They then skied along the bridle path from Glen Clunie Lodge to Loch Callater for about a mile. From here they climbed to the summit of Carn Dubh and proceeded towards Carn an Tuirc. From the saddle between these two hills a good run of over a mile in length was discovered down the stream which enters the Callater just below the loch. There the snow was powdery, with patches of ice, but the summit was bare and wind-swept. After lunch, Carn Dubh was re-ascended, and the return made by the same route to Glen Clunie, where the skiers were hospitably entertained by Mr. McHardy.

The President, R. S. Sellar, and J. W. Scrimgeour motored to Glen Clunie Lodge. From here they set off to climb An Socach, by way of the Baddoch. The summit was reached in good time, although the going was somewhat heavy owing to softish snow. The descent was made by the same route, and the Lodge reached about 3.15.

Dr. and Mrs. David Levack, J. W. Levack, and Miss Ruth Warren arrived in the afternoon, also J. Middleton, W. Malcolm, and A. Taylor.

There was a good assembly of the members of the Club on Hogmanay and a very enjoyable evening was spent. A small committee was in charge of the programme, which was varied and amusing. The President told some racy stories of his experiences on tour in his inimitable manner. One of the most entertaining items was the story by Messrs. Butchart, Reid, and Scrimgeour which brought in amusing hits at the members present (*v. p. 141*). The feature of the evening was the "Cairngorm Ceremony." Amid much laughter and jollity, the President crowned Miss Bruce Queen of the Cairngorms for the ensuing twelve months with a crown of heather. She was chaired by two handsome squires on a throne composed of ice axes. On the stroke of midnight the company were entertained by Mr. Gregor in his usual generous way.

Wednesday, January 1. Lochnagar was climbed by the President, John Middleton, J. Scrimgeour, R. S. Sellar, and A. Taylor. They went up the Black Shiel burn and reached the summit by the north-west slope. They had the satisfaction of finding that they were the first to climb Lochnagar in 1930. While having lunch at the top, they watched in the distance the other section of the Club ascending from Allt-na-giubhsaich, but owing to the intense cold they were unable to wait for the arrival of this other party. The return journey was made over the top of the Meall Coire-na-Saobhaidhe (3,191 feet). The snow conditions for walking were excellent.

Miss Bruce, W. Malcolm, and S. R. Symmers, leaving the Garrawalt Shiel, proceeded along the shoulder of Meall-an-Tionail towards the Stùic Buttress. The going was fairly good over hard snow. The conditions on the Buttress, owing to the thaw, were less difficult than on the previous day. The Buttress was climbed by the crest of the ridge in about 40 minutes. The snow being soft and treacherous in places, the descent was made by the gully to the east of the Buttress, after having first lowered the leader over the cornice. Some glissades were made, but owing to the steepness and presence of rocks, great care was necessary. The return from the Loch was made by the same route as the approach, and the car was reached just before dusk.

Major Butchart and H. Q. Irvine motored to Glen Clunie Lodge and skied up the Baddoch Burn for about 2 miles. They then climbed about half way up Socach Mor but found the snow very poor, so they descended to the burn for lunch. After lunch they ascended Carn Chrionaigh and skied down along the crest to the Baddoch Burn, and so on to Glen Clunie Lodge by 4 o'clock. On the whole the snow was rather slow, since a thaw had set in. There were seen on the slopes of Carn Aosda a herd of more than 150 hinds. E. B. Reid and L. M. Morison ascended Morrone before lunch, and afterwards they ascended up Craig Coinach. E. B. Reid, J. and J. W. Scrimgeour left this evening.

H. Q. I.

Thursday, January 2. The President motored Middleton to Derry Lodge, and from the Black Bridge the latter climbed Beinn Bhreac (3,051 feet), while the former took some photographs of the Derry.

Sellar motored to about a mile beyond the Linn of Dee and walked up to the Chest of Dee.

Morison took Symmers up Glen Clunie and instructed him in the gentle art of ski-running.

Friday, January 3. Sellar motored the President up to Derry Lodge, from which they walked up the Larig Path as far as opposite the Corrou Bothy, which was visited by one of the party and found to be in fair condition, with the exception of the roof which badly calls for renewal. The Visitors' Book was inspected and was found to have been signed by 49 people since the 12th September last, the date when the book was placed in the Bothy.

Saturday, January 4. The last members of the Meet, the President and Sellar, left for home.

AN ATTEMPT ON THE STUIC BUTTRESS.

Tuesday, December 31.—A party of four, consisting of D. P. Levack, Mrs. Levack, Miss Ruth Warren, and J. W. Levack left Aberdeen in a very fine dawn at 6.50 a.m., and had an excellent breakfast at Pannanich Hotel. They then continued their run to

the Bridge of Dee, below Braemar, and were allowed to take the car across the old bridge to the Garrawalt Shiel, where they parked it. From there they took the usual path to Lochnagar through the forest, and struck off from this at the upper limit of the trees, bearing directly for the base of the Stuic Buttress. The going was excellent, with frozen snow bearing well right to the Sandy Loch, which was covered with ice and drifted snow. After a little food they began the climb, and not more than a hundred feet or so up the Buttress they had to rope, as there was hard ice on the rocks, and the snow was not very firm. By a process more painful than exciting they slowly rose, very disturbed by the cold, made very severe by strong gusts of wind and their inability to move quickly enough to keep warm. There was a good deal of cutting of steps and careful moving, and they got to the final pitch, about 150 feet below the top, where the rocks become quite exposed. Here it was obvious that the climb had to end, for the usual route of escape, to the left of the Buttress, was a solid mass of ice, and the party was rather cumbered by climbing four on an eighty-foot rope. They traversed out to the left, on to the steep snow slope which runs up the side of the Buttress on the south side, and after some difficulty on the part of the ladies, who found the angle of the slope rather trying, they descended to the loch again in a series of zig-zags, after a rather uncomfortable three and a half hours of exposure to biting wind and driving snow. By the time they reached the forest it was quite dark, and the usual path was quite blotted out, so that it was with some little difficulty, by the aid of a lantern, a compass, and the Pole Star, together with Sirius, that they finally joined the road on the south side of the Dee, and so got back to the Garrawalt Shiel, and finally on to the hotel at Braemar, in good time to join in the revels of the New Year Dinner, and the jolly party afterwards.

D. P. L.

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1930—LOCHNAGAR.

On January 1, 1930, the Club's first New Year's Day Excursion went to Lochnagar, and it was a great success. A most enthusiastic party of 20 left Aberdeen by the 8.5 a.m. train. A start was made from Ballater at 10.15 a.m., and although there was not any snow there, it was very soon met with in Glen Muich. The company had to dismount from the motors a short distance beyond the Falls of Muich as the road was blocked with snow. Lunch was partaken at the "Stick," and the party afterwards continued their climb much refreshed. At the Meikle Pap Col, Bothwell, Donald, and Hay went down into the Corrie and had a good snow climb in the Sput Dearg. The main party ascended the Ladder and reached the summit at 2.15 p.m. At the top it was found that the Braemar party, consisting of Parker (President), Sellar, and Taylor, had preceded us

but had left New Year's greetings on the snow. We were seen by them at the top of the Ladder, however, from Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe. The weather conditions were good, and quite a long time could have been spent at the top if there had been more time. The party arrived back at the Falls of Muich at 5.30 p.m. and motored to Ballater in time for the 5.52 p.m. train.

Those present were—the Misses Forbes, the Misses Mackinnon, and Miss McCoss; also the two Bruces, Bothwell, Collie, Donald, Dugan, Duncan, Hay, McCoss, Mackinnon, Purvis, Charles Robb, M. J. Robb, Shennan, and Speirs.

J. McC.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON EXCURSIONS.

JUNE 29—CORRYHABBIE, SPEYSIDE.

Who said thirteen was an unlucky number? At this excursion there were thirteen of us, and all voted it an unqualified success. We travelled by the Speyside "excursion" to Dufftown, whence we motored up Glen Fiddoch to the Lodge. In glorious sunshine we followed the stream up one of the finest glens in Scotland. Then, led by Mr. Malcolm, we mounted the hill and walked easily from top to top, Miss Bruce acting as porter for the less robust members. The view towards the north was fine, but the Cairngorms were partly obscured by haze. The return was made along the ridge, and as we had abundance of time, we browsed for half an hour in the glorious afternoon sunshine. After changing our hobnailers and eating double rations at the Commercial Hotel, we returned by train. At Kittybrewster the entire company crowded into one compartment, where a lady guest proposed a vote of thanks to the members for the enjoyable day, and a verse of the Club Song was sung with gusto.

M. S.

A WEEK-END FROM BRISTOL.

MR. J. R. CORBETT, who is a member of the S.M.C., and who lives in Bristol, had a week-end's tramping in the Lochnagar district last summer which is worth recording. Leaving Bristol at 5.15 p.m. on Friday, June 28, Ballater was reached at 9.45 a.m. on Saturday, on which day Mount Keen was climbed as a short training walk.

On Sunday, Mr. Corbett left Ballater at 9.55 a.m. and walked to Allt-na-Giubhsaich and thence to the top of Lochnagar (4.58 p.m.) via Little Pap, Meikle Pap, and Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe. Then all the 3,000 tops on the White Mounth were visited, and Carn an-t-Sagairt Mor was reached at 7.21 p.m. From this it was a two hours' run out to the Broad Cairn, and another two hours' to the top of Tom Buidhe, 11.28 p.m. A course was then set for Mayar and Dreish, the latter being reached at 3.57 a.m. And then it was only

a 17-mile tramp over the Capel Mount to Ballater which was reached at 12.35 p.m. on Monday afternoon, 26 hours 40 minutes after it had been left on the previous forenoon. The total distance walked was about 50 miles, with practically 9,000 feet of ascent. Twenty 3,000 feet tops were visited. Ballater was left on Tuesday morning and Bristol reached at 12.57 a.m. on the Wednesday. Mr. Corbett is qualifying for the ascent of all the 3,000 tops in Scotland, and the above week-end left him with only 25 to do. Good luck to him!

J. A. P.

ST. ARNOLD'S SEAT, 1,615 FEET.

It is possible that many members of the Club may know where the above hill is situated; but I must frankly admit that I never knew of its existence until about 11.30 a.m. on Sunday, October 27. Tempted by a magnificent morning, Garden and I had left Aberdeen via the Stonehaven road for an unknown, i.e., uncertain, destination, and 11.30 saw us at the Tannadice junction between Brechin and Forfar. Here we turned north and made for Glen Ogil, which we thought might be worth a few hours' exploration. We took the car to road end near Glen Ogil House, and from there climbed up to the top of the hill to the west, which is called St. Arnold's Seat, as it looked as if it might furnish us with a fine view. It did. The climb was delightfully easy—just about 900 feet up, through a larch wood and over heather. The view, as the day was perfect, was magnificent, embracing as it did the whole of Strathmore from the hills at Laurencekirk to the smoke of Perth, while the North Sea was visible as far as St. Abb's Head. There is a big cairn or heap of stones on the top of the hill, and we sat on the lee side of it for nearly an hour, basking in the brilliant sunshine and admiring the panorama. Of the big hills we picked out Schiehallion, Ben-y-Gloe, Glas Thulachan, and Glas Maol; the last three looking well with their first winter snows. I do not know who St. Arnold was, but the Seat is well worth visiting on a clear day for the view. The round trip, as our American cousins would say, took just exactly eight hours from Aberdeen.

J. A. P.

THE POSITION OF THE BARNES OF BYNACK.

SINCE the Beinn Tarsuinn controversy of recent date, climbers will be feeling a lack of confidence in the hitherto infallible accuracy of the Ordnance Survey. Although I do not aspire to the discovery of another mislaid Munro, I should like to have the following verified:—

On July 11, 1929, the writer and party were on the summit of Bynack More in very thick mist. It was decided that before heading for Faindouran Lodge we should pay a visit to the Barnes. With this object in view, the map was brought out and the exact height and

position of the Barns noted. The aneroid (a good one, not my own) was then adjusted to read the height of the summit, and we set off on our compass course. Having descended to the proper height of the Barns, as indicated by the aneroid, we stopped and looked around for our objective but could see nothing larger than the usual hillside boulder. Now, I felt annoyed to say the least of it, because it seemed to cast a shadow on my route-finding ability, of which I am, perhaps, unduly proud. At any rate, no leader likes to admit that he has gone astray, and, therefore, you may take this dissertation, if you care, as a bad workman's complaint against his tools. To return to the slopes of Bynack: we wandered backwards and forwards along the hillside for quite a time without result. Suddenly, through a break in the mist, one of our party saw the fantastic shape of one of the Barns high up on the mountainside above us. On reaching them, we took an aneroid observation and found the altitude to be considerably above what the map indicated it should be.

In what follows, I set down my observations in the hope that they may be of some interest.

Height of Bynack More, by 1" Cairngorm Map	=	3,574 feet.
Average height of Barns, by 1" Cairngorm Map	=	3,075 feet.
Aneroid reading at Barns	=	3,250 feet.

Lending weight to these, Mr. Malcolm has kindly furnished me with his observations, also taken this last summer whilst ascending the hill in mist:—

Aneroid reading at Barns	=	3,250 feet.
Aneroid reading at summit of Bynack More	=	3,620 feet.
Therefore—Difference in altitude	=	370 feet.
Hence true elevation of Barns	=	$3,574 - 370 = 3,204$ feet.

From these results it would appear that the Barns are shown on the map in a position some 150 feet below their actual location.

G. ROY SYMMERS.

LAIRIG AN LAOIGH AND BEN BYNACK MORE.

At the Autumn Holiday week-end, after some very unsettled weather in town, two members of the Club left Aberdeen on Saturday afternoon and arrived at Braemar in time for dinner. A short walk on the side of Morrone in the evening gave one the impression that winter was not far off, and the chances were about even as to the morrow being fine or wet. After an early breakfast, the hotel was left soon after eight o'clock and Derry Lodge reached, by motor, at 8.45. The weather was cold and clear, with hills free of mist, and the sun only occasionally hidden, so that the walk up Glen Derry was most enjoyable and invigorating. The junction with the Coire Etchachan track was passed at 10.13 and, the track presently becoming indefinite, the hillside on the right was climbed for a short distance till a track was again found which led over the Beinn

Mheadhoin, Beinn a' Chaorruinn Col (about 2,500 feet)—time, 10.45. The view up Coire Etchachan was very fine, with a cornice of fresh snow showing on the precipices of Ben Macdhui. From the Col, where a ten minutes' halt was made, the peculiar rocks of the Barns of Bynack were clearly visible. On the way down to the Avon a number of ptarmigan were raised. By carefully choosing a route the stream was crossed without wading, and dry-shod, and after 15 minutes' halt, the track was again followed towards Ben Bynack. A careful look-out was kept for the glimpse of Loch Avon mentioned in the "Guide to the Cairngorms," but this was not seen, and we decided that the Loch cannot be seen from this track. A short distance from Lochan a' Bhainne the track was left and the hillside ascended close to the left of a prominent stream tumbling down from A'Choinneach. This stream was crossed at about 2,900 feet level, and a gradual ascent northwards along the ridge brought us to the Barns at 1 o'clock. A little scrambling was done in the big gully, and the weather-worn rock proved uncomfortably sharp to the bare hands. After taking some lunch in the shelter of the gully a start was made at 1.40 for the summit of Ben Bynack. The weather in the meantime had changed for the worse, and the higher tops were now hidden in the mist which was sometimes enveloping the Barns. The summit (3,754 feet) was reached in 12 minutes and, steering a compass course in the face of driving sleet and mist, the north ridge was soon distinguished and followed downwards. In fine weather this ridge might give some interesting scrambling. Some little difficulty was found in picking up the track to the north of this ridge, but after crossing comparatively good ground, this was eventually found and quickly followed to the Nethy footbridge—3.30. Just before this bridge the map shows a track striking off for Forest Lodge on the east side of the Nethy, but this could not be found, and previous memories of wandering in bad ground on this side decided us to take the longer but well-marked road by Ryvoan. While sitting at the footbridge our attention was drawn to peculiar sounds in the direction of Ben Bynack, and presently, from high up in the mist, three flights of geese appeared. They passed directly over our heads and disappeared towards Loch Morlich. At times they were in perfect "V" formation with a leader in front, but when last seen were in one long line. The bothy at Ryvoan was found to be occupied by two rambles who had just arrived from the Corrou bothy. The remainder of the walk presented no difficulties, and in due course Rynettin and Forest Lodge were passed and Nethy Bridge reached at 6.30. On the way through the Forest, frequent halts were made to refresh ourselves with cranberries, which were plentiful. The juniper bushes also carried a large crop of berries. The total distance walked was about 22 miles, and height climbed, 2,400 feet, making bogie time $8\frac{1}{2}$ hours—actual time taken being $9\frac{3}{4}$ hours.

W. M

CORRESPONDENCE.

AN OUTRAGED MONARCH.

[To the Editor of *The Cairngorm Club Journal*.]

SIR,—In the July issue of *The Cairngorm Club Journal* there is an article entitled "An Outraged Monarch," by E. Brand. There is nothing in the article to indicate that it is written as fiction, and a few of your readers who know nothing whatever about "the way of an eagle," may take the article seriously. I think it is a pity that fiction of this sort should appear in your excellent journal, unless it is clearly indicated that it is intended as fiction. What was the author's object in writing the article? The whole story is obviously ridiculous, but I fail to see that it is either good fiction or good farce.

Yours etc.,

SCPTIC.

July 18, 1929.

[The character of the article was obvious, but we agree that it would have been better to indicate this. Let us also admit that shortness of "copy" was one reason for printing it. There has been a welcome improvement in this respect since last summer.—Ed.C.C.J.]

GOLDEN EAGLES.

[To the Editor of *The Cairngorm Club Journal*.]

SIR,—There is some evidence to show that the golden eagle is on the increase in the North of Scotland. On October 6 of this year, near Tomintoul, I saw the somewhat uncommon sight of four eagles hunting in company. From the top of Tom-na-bat they worked steadily in the direction of Monadh Fergie, quartering the ground in systematic fashion. It is very probable that these eagles were the parent birds and their nearly full-grown young from an eyrie known to exist in the vicinity.

Some of your readers may be able to give the precise data regarding golden eagles—or other less common upland creatures—seen by them during the last two years. If so, I shall be grateful.

Yours, etc.,

ROBERT M. NEILL.

THE UNIVERSITY,

ABERDEEN, November 25, 1929.

REVIEWS.

Climbs and Ski Runs. By F. S. Smythe. Pp. xx and 307. 74 illustrations. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1929—

21s.) This is a very delightful book, descriptive of the author's climbing adventures in the Dolomites, Corsica, Switzerland, and, above all, in the region of Mont Blanc. The contents are arranged chronologically and lead up from simple work to thrilling descriptions of three of the most difficult climbs in the history of mountaineering, namely, the east face of the Aiguille du Plan, and the author's two new routes up the Brenva face of Mont Blanc. The graphic descriptions of the two latter bear striking evidence of Mr. Smythe's skill both as a mountaineer and as a writer. The 74 photographs which illustrate the book are all excellent; but one feels the want of a good photograph of the east face of the Aiguille du Plan showing the route followed. The author's use of the term "green ray" sunrise in Chapter VII is a misnomer, as *the* green ray, seen sometimes at the instant of sunrise or sunset, is a totally different phenomenon from the green-coloured sky which is described. We cannot but feel that it would have been better had the somewhat harrowing description of the Montanvert Railway accident been omitted, as it is not very pleasant reading and is quite unnecessary. Besides the sudden change of subject (on page 226) from the description of the destruction of the passenger coach to the words beginning the next paragraph, "The weather was now perfect," is, to say the least of it, unhappy. There is no index to the book, and one would have added much to its value. These, however, are minor faults which detract but little from what is one of the most thrilling books of mountaineering adventures which has been published in recent years.

The Alpine Journal, No. 239, November, 1929. 10/6 net. This is a very interesting number which fully maintains the high standard set by its predecessors, and contains 191 pages,

60 illustrations, and two maps. The articles and notes contain references to practically all the mountain regions of the world, with the exception of South America. The principal articles of general interest are those by Mr. W. Rickmer-Rickmers on the Pamirs, a beautifully illustrated article on the New Zealand Alps by Mr. H. E. L. Porter,

an interesting paper by Mr. A. E. Gunther on the Sierra Nevada, California; and Mr. Strumia's article on the Maligne Lake district in the Canadian Rockies, which is of especial interest in view of the Summer Camp of the Canadian Alpine Club to be held there this year. The most interesting papers, from the purely climbing point of view, are that descriptive of the east Arête of the Eiger, which has evidently now been "tamed" very drastically by fixed ropes, and Mr. Williamson's paper on ascents of the Hohberghorn and Stecknadelhorn. Mr. W. N. Ling contributes an instructive paper on "Technicalities," which reminds one strongly of the style of the late Harold Raeburn. The illustrations are excellent, the frontispiece being a beautiful reproduction in colours of an old print of the Lake of Geneva.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal. No. 108, November, 1929. 2/6 net. The first place in this interesting number is very appropriately given to an account of the Charles Inglis

S. M. C. Clark Memorial Hut on Ben Nevis, which has been erected JOURNAL. at the foot of the northern cliffs. The hut is a substantial structure and has been adequately, even luxuriously, furnished, the equipment including a writing-desk and small library. Mr. J. A. Parker, following up the articles which he contributed to Nos. 66 and 68 of *The Cairngorm Club Journal*, describes very fully, in "Beinn Tarsuinn and the British 'Threes'," how he verified the fact that that mountain is actually a "Munro," bringing the total number of British "Threes" up to exactly 300. Mr. Garden writes on "Blair Atholl to Aberdeen *via* Beinn a' Ghlo," an expedition which involved an absence from the Granite City of just 33½ hours. All the usual features of the journal are in evidence, and the illustrations are both numerous and excellent.

SOME copies of Mr. Parker's photograph of "The Forest Primeval," which formed the frontispiece of No. 68, showed
 A serious printing flaw in the lower right-hand corner.
 DEFECTIVE If any reader who may have received a defective copy
 PHOTOGRAPH. will send a post card to the Editor, he will be glad
 to arrange for a good copy of the photograph to be
 sent to replace the defective one.

ERRATUM.

On page 57 of No. 68, for "Vol. XIII" read "Vol. XII."



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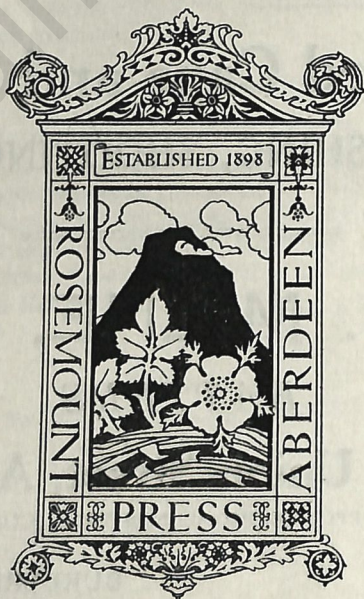
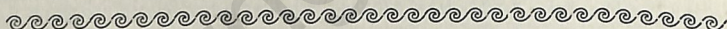
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