

The Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

EDWARD W. WATT.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Upper Deeside Fifty Years Ago, by the late Hugh Welsh, H.M.I.S.	121
Scottish Youth Hostels, by D. G. Moir	132
The Majesty and Beauty of the Clouds, by G. A. Clarke	139
Kinlochewe at Easter, by A. R. Martin	144
Shadow Buttress "A"—Lochnagar, by G. Roy Symmers	149
A Spring Traverse of Lochnagar, by Margaret Skakle	155
A Week in Ross, by W. A. Ewen	158
A Glimpse of Skye, by W. G. Evans	162
A Daft Day, by Hugh D. Welsh and Ian M. Robertson	166
Proceedings of the Club—	
The Annual Meeting: The Annual Dinner: New Year Meet, 1933: Dubh Loch of Lochnagar: Snow-climbing Excursion: Rock Climbs at Souter Head: Easter Meet, 1933: Spring Holiday Excursion, 1933: Saturday Afternoon Excursions, 1933: Lochnagar Ascents: Junior Section	172
Notes	196
Reviews	198
Correspondence	200
Illustrations—	
Liathach: Ballater and Inverernan Hostels: Cloud Photographs: Sgurr Ban of Beinn Eighe: Beinn Eighe from Liathach: Ruadh Stac Bhig and Meall a Ghiubhais: Mullach an Rathain of Liathach: Shadow Buttress "A"—Lochnagar: The Club at Kinlochewe.	

PUBLISHED BY

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.

AGENTS:

ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.

PRICE - 2/6.

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.

Glenburnie Park,
Rubislaw Den North,
Aberdeen.

A

B

C



April 15, 1933.

*Miss Helen Duncan,
Miss Agnes M. Pittendrigh.*

LIATHACH: A COMPOSITE PHOTOGRAPH.

Climbed during the Easter Meet at Kinlochewe.

A. Creag Dhu a Choire Leith.

B. Spidean a Choire Leith.

C. Bidean Toll a Mhuic.

The Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. XIII.

JULY, 1933.

No. 74.

UPPER DEESIDE FIFTY YEARS AGO.

By the late HUGH WELSH, H. M. Inspector of Schools.

[The following, hitherto unpublished, paper was written in 1881 by the late Mr. Hugh Welsh, H.M. Inspector of Schools. It is of special interest as giving some sidelights on tramping on the hills at that time—nearly a decade before the foundation of our Club. Though not a member of the Cairngorm Club, Mr. Welsh was a keen climber and a lover of the open. His son, the late Mr. William C. Welsh, was a member of the Club, as also is his son, Mr. Hugh D. Welsh, who is joint author of an article in the present number. Mr. Welsh was a great friend of the late Dr. Lippe, one of the founders of the Club, and had some tramps with him.]

WE left Aberdeen on Friday afternoon by the Deeside train leaving at 5 o'clock and, after an uneventful journey, arrived at Ballater a few hours later. Bent upon doing our outing as cheaply and yet as comfortably as possible, we did not go to an hotel, but sought for and obtained private rooms which satisfied our moderate wants. After a refreshing night's slumber and an early breakfast, we got under weigh about 6 a.m., in capital order for a stiff day's walk. Braemar was our destination, not so very far by road, but as we meant to go *via* Lochnagar, the distance and the difficulties were both considerably increased. To combat these difficulties, however, we had a long day, the promise of a fine day, and fairly satisfactory bodily powers. We were in the best of spirits and we swung along swiftly and cheerily.

On leaving Ballater, we crossed the Dee and walked a short distance westward until we came to the Muick, a brawling tributary of the Dee. On reaching this, we struck off to the left, keeping the east side of the stream until we

came to Birkhall, the property of the Prince of Wales. Shortly after we entered this glen and until we crossed to the west side of the stream, we had, to right and left nothing but woods of the beautiful, graceful birch. We had, through the foliage, occasional glimpses of the chapel and massive granite mansion of Mr. MacKenzie of Glenmuick. Immediately before crossing the Muick we had a peep, almost a bird's eye view, of Birkhall House, lying peaceful and quiet at the foot of the opposite brae. After crossing, young forests of fir surrounded us through whose thick undergrowth the writer has still a vivid recollection of forcing his way two years ago. In the fine bracing morning air we made rapid headway, and we soon called a halt at the picturesque Falls of the Muick. Here we spent fully a quarter of an hour admiring the view and taking a slight breathing space. After this our path passed through bleaker tracts, and judging from the neighbouring hills, we began to have an idea of what sort of climbing we might expect to have. As we wished our real climbing to take place before the sun was very high in the heavens we kept up a good pace until we came to Alt-na-ghuissac, the Prince of Wales's Lochnagar shooting lodge. Here we left the main road and here we began our ascent of the mountain. In passing the lodge, a barking cur revealed the presence of strangers, and the keeper—highland, of course—came forth to measure, I suppose, the respectability of the intruders. A few remarks as to the weather, the absorption of a few drops of the real mountain dew, and a passing glance of Loch Muick, sparkling at hand in the morning sun, delayed us for only a minute or two, and off we set again.

As there is a good track on this side quite to the top of the mountain, we had no difficulty in piloting our way. On our arrival at the first good spring we discarded our knapsacks for a little and had lunch. Partly for medicinal reasons, and partly, if not chiefly, because we liked it, a little whisky was mingled with the ice-cold water. We ventured to think it improved it and possibly made it safer. The stiffest part of the ascent had yet to be overcome, and we were anxious to be at the summit before noon. So we

started again. A glimpse of a herd of deer was obtained just before we began the steep ascent, but it was only for a few moments. Away they went scouring down the mountainside, and were soon lost to view. The weight of our knapsacks now began to tell on our strength, and our limbs, inexperienced with mountain climbing, began to feel the strain, and we were repeatedly fain to throw ourselves down on the slope or on a big boulder. The day now began to threaten to be unpleasant and heavy showers swept the face of the mountain, wrapping all in a grey mantle and penetrating our light summer clothing. The wind increased in power, and, as it was against us, we had considerable difficulty in forcing our way up the height. Suddenly we came in front of one of the frightful precipices of "dark Lochnagar." At its base was a little, dark loch whose waters were lashed into waves by the high wind, and we could just hear the *whish* of the waves as they broke on the shore. Above were the great frowning crags, rifted and rent, and fearful in their gloomy solitude. Round these crags we carefully edged our way, occasionally peering over into the abyss below, and picturing to ourselves the sensation of falling from the giddy height whirling over and over, and at last crashing a lifeless mass on the huge fallen rocks. We exercised great caution in all our movements, as a sudden gust of the strong wind then blowing might have given us a sad enough experience of what we had already pictured in the imagination. We again sought the track, and in a short time had the pleasure of surmounting all the difficulties of the ascent.

The summit of the hill was reached. And what a reward for all our exertions! On every hand huge mountains, mighty bens, with awful precipices, mostly bearing a snowy frontlet.

Crags, knolls and mounds confusedly hurled
The fragments of an earlier world.

Beneath our feet a faded mossy carpet, and there, seemingly within gunshot, the soft green vale of the Dee with its streak of silver, sparkling streams and wooded knolls. Away to the south-east were visible the precipitous braes surround-

ing Loch Muick ; further over in the same direction lay a wilderness of mossy pools ; and furthest of all one had a glimpse of the North Sea. As sitting still on such a height, in such a high wind and in such bitterly cold weather, was out of the question, we kept up our temperature by means of exercise in various forms. We prowled about the mountain top on the outlook for something new, and we had the pleasure of startling a number of ptarmigan, and of securing a few of their feathers. We scrambled down a steep face of the hill in order to reach a patch of snow, and be able to say that we had snow-balled each other in August. The patch turned out not to be so small as we imagined ; and it was almost as hard as a stone.

Scrambling up the height again, and securing a few fronds of ferns on our way, we resolved to put off no more time, but trudge onwards to Braemar. This was by far the most tedious part of our day's outing. The track for a great part of the way is not very well defined, and in a mist one who is not familiar with the route would most certainly lose his way. Our experience of Lochnagar climbing would lead us to advise tourists to go by Glenmuick, for though the way is perhaps steeper, it is much shorter and has a very well-defined track. Nothing noteworthy marked our descent, except that now and again we had different and varied views of the surrounding country from the many angles of our path. Here and there the shoulder of a hill coming into sight ; here and there numerous tarns with deep shadows over them ; all around rocky gorges ; and at last Loch Callater, a pretty sheet of water, giving birth to a stream which flows through a fine glen, both bearing the name of the Loch. A solitary gamekeeper's house at the southern extremity of the Loch gave rise to a vision of milk and scones and caused us to quicken our steps. We arrived there at last, after having traversed the south-western slopes of Lochnagar and the Cairns Taggart, a distance of seven miles—not a great distance certainly, but a tiresome and uncertain one for at least part of the way. A kindly welcome was extended to us by the inmates of the Loch Callater Lodge, and, after refreshing ourselves and

resting a little, we started on our way down the glen. We were almost immediately joined by a shepherd, a true highland specimen, an old man of fully 70 years of age. We entered into conversation with him, and he made five miles of our journey rather interesting and enjoyable. The twinkle of his eye should have been seen when we asked him if it was true that the natives of the glen were teetotallers. His answer was such as drew forth our flask on the instant, and I should say that, from the way in which a fair quantity of a fairly potent blend disappeared, he was not unaccustomed to quench his thirst with other than "the rills of his own native hills." He became now very communicative and was eloquent on the differences of *now* and his young days. *Then* the deer and the grouse were bigger, far bigger and more plentiful than *now*. *Then* he would meet 20 poachers on a hillside "*in a night*," and he had "a gless of whusky" from each and no complaints of the scarcity of birds. *Now* there were no birds, no poachers, and therefore no "whusky." Ah! the good old times! If he calculated the size of the grouse in the same way that he now calculates the number of poachers that he met and the number of "glesses of whusky" that he asserts he drank in a night, I fear he will get few to credit his statement. Be that as it may, he imparted a deal of information about the habits of the deer and pointed out the spots on the hillside where we would be sure to descry some of them at that particular part of the evening. By the aid of his telescope we made them clearly out, and we could notice that they were interesting themselves in us. They were too far away however to feel much afraid of us, and so they nibbled quietly on. During the rest of the time that our aged friend was with us he inveighed strongly against English lady visitors. They came to these glens evidently with the belief that Highlanders were untutored savages, asked them "Who made the hills?" leading them from nature to Nature's God, as it were. Instead of offering a flask and so getting into the innermost souls of the Gael, they offer a religious tract; and great is the wrath of the offended Highlander. Our friend gloried in having overcome one of these lady

tract distributors by his answer to her query, "Do you know who made all these beautiful hills?" "Ahl that I know iss, that it wassna me an' it wassna you," and off he bounded in high dudgeon. After narrating this and chuckling over the narration, our hardy companion left us bidding us a kindly good-bye. Thereafter we soon arrived at Castleton of Braemar, rather tired. Great was our dismay to find that it would be a difficult business to get sleeping accommodation. The two fine hotels were fully occupied, and so far as we could at first discover, every cottage had its complement of tourists. We tried the Police Office, but as we were law-abiding travellers, admission was denied. At last we secured a place to sleep in, and after washing and having supper, we tumbled into bed and very soon forgot our exertions of the day.

The two following days were occupied in rambling about within easy distance of Castleton. Ballochbuie Forest, Falls of Corriemulzie, The Colonel's Bed, etc., all received a share of attention and admiration from us. In the woods in the vicinity millions of ants are to be seen on every side, and they formed an object of interest to us. We took much delight in watching what were evidently the different tradesmen of the ant community. Here a hunter was hurrying home with the spoils of the chase—a beetle or other small animal; there the ordinary labourers were tugging at their loads with all their vigour. Here one smart, stout fellow was marching along quite easily with his burden; there two or three or more were sweating over some heavier weight. Others again were hurrying past, evidently bent on accomplishing a journey before beginning work. Streams were going in one direction, streams in another, and all as busy as possible, no gossiping by the way. It was amusing and instructive to place little difficulties in the way of the busy labourers and see how they were overcome.

On Tuesday morning we had breakfast shortly after 5 o'clock, and were on the road for Blair Athole, *via* Glen Tilt, by 6 o'clock. The first six miles were taken in at a brisk pace, and on reaching the Linn of Dee the first break of the journey was made. Here we hailed two tourists evidently

bent on "doing" Glen Tilt, too, but they had taken the precaution to drive this distance from Castleton in a dog-cart. During the day we repeatedly crossed and recrossed each other's paths, but, with this exception, we may say that hardly a human being was to be seen until we had penetrated a great distance into the glen. On leaving the Linn we immediately began to traverse a great tract of bleak moorland. Close to the banks of the Dee we noticed many green patches of what had at one time been cultivated land. In connection with each green spot were the ruins of one or more houses, indicative of the "survival of the fittest." Deer now take the place of the human inhabitants, and I think a kindness has been done to the hardy, but certainly poor branch of the human family, who struggled on for perhaps centuries in this desolate region. How human beings could manage to subsist by scratching the bosom of this poor part of mother Earth is a mystery. Lots of deer now became visible on the neighbouring heights, and several times we had a beautiful view of fine looking stags on the ridge outlined against the sky. A steady look, a toss of the antlered head, and each in turn disappeared.

Until the Dee turned northward, pointing almost directly towards its fountain head, we had no difficulty; but after that we had some unpleasant experiences. These unpleasantnesses might have been avoided, but as we were entire strangers to this locality, the path most used seemed to us the best, and as the following of this necessitated repeated fordings of streams a wetting now and again had to be encountered. Later on we learned that a better path for foot passengers existed, but for us the information came too late. A more dreary, forsaken district than the one we were now traversing it would be difficult to conceive. Our path was distinct enough, but also, in all conscience, bad enough. Unless great care were exercised, your toes either came bump against a large stone, almost sending you on your nose, or you went plunge over the ankles in a glutinous, mossy mixture. Long heather beginning to impart a purple tinge to the hill, and so to relieve the bleakness a little, stretched all around us. We remarked it as very strange,

and we think so yet, that although we passed through great areas of heather-clad ground, not a grouse crossed our line of vision during the whole of our rambles.

Very soon we reached the watershed of the Dee and the Tay, and then began the grandest and most solitary part of our day's journey. Our first stream flowing Taywards was a small rivulet, but the additions it constantly received from the numerous mountain streams, some of them torrents, made it gradually assume fair proportions; and, as it plunged and dashed its way onwards, the glen became deeper and more precipitous. A false step in very many places would have set us rolling down the steep declivity, and possibly a deep pool would have been ready to receive us, stunned as we were sure to be.

On our arrival at the Tarff, great was our consternation to find that there was no bridge. On the opposite side sat our two Linn of Dee friends, sunning themselves and enjoying their lunch. From their shoutings we gathered that the only way of crossing was by wading; and as we did not care to turn after coming so far, very unwillingly we began to unbuckle. The fate of a former tourist who lost his life in crossing made us "wale" our steps "wi' judicious care," and, by utilizing occasional rocks as stepping-stones, we evaded deep pools and reached *terra firma* in safety. A break of a few minutes was again made here, after which we pursued the "even tenor of our way" until we reached the Duke of Athole's Forest Lodge. On our left Ben-y-Ghlo raised its lofty head: its sides clad in a beautiful soft green, and having thousands of sheep quietly grazing. Some parts of the mountain were deeply scarred and chasmed, looking exceedingly dangerous even at a distance, but the harshness was softened by the surrounding verdure, and by the foamy torrents "leaping their way adown," eager to join the Tilt in its more dignified flow.

From Forest Lodge we had a good carriage road all the way to Blair Athole, had we had the good fortune to keep to it, but through inattention to our map, we went slightly astray. No difficulty as to our way was experienced until we passed Marble Lodge. For a time we trudged along

gaily, commenting on the fineness of the road and the trees, until we came opposite a bridge crossing the Tilt to our right. This bridge had a gate in its centre, indicating that the way was private. On making inquiry at a little girl, we learned that this bridge should not be crossed, but that we should hold right forward. We did so until we came to the parting of two ways, and now the question arose, "Which way should we take?" It was settled, after deliberation, that the most frequented one—the one showing most signs of usage—should be adopted. On we went, more and more pleased with our surroundings, and giving the Perthshire people, and the Duke especially, great credit for providing such a magnificent road for public use. We had our misgivings however, and repeatedly said it looked more like an approach or an avenue to a nobleman's residence than a public thoroughfare. Of this we were assured, when, on crossing the Tilt, a big board nailed to a tree confronted us with the information in large capitals—PRIVATE. Both were averse to turning, and although we now knew we were trespassing, we felt disinclined to retrace our steps, seeing we had come so far. At last cattle were seen on a height to our right, and the conclusion was at once drawn that a house must be near, where we might get the information necessary for putting us in the right way. But who was to scale the brae and prospect? No one volunteered until it was moved, seconded, and carried unanimously that the question be decided by lot. The lot fell to me, and I went, on a fruitless errand, however. No house was to be seen. A consultation was immediately held, and on scanning our map, we found that we were on the wrong side of the stream. We had come too far to think of going back until we again came to the parting of the ways, so a short cut was suggested in the supposed proper direction, through a young plantation. We felt that by taking this course, and going on till we came to the first road running at right angles, we were bound to be on the right tack. We also felt, however, that we had no excuse to be where we were and, had we been caught, we might have been put to some inconvenience. There was no path,

and it was clearly a case of wilful trespassing. We at last succeeded in gaining our end without mishap and, without much difficulty, except at the expense of a little extra exertion and consequent heat. In due time, after sighting Blair Castle gleaming white in the distance, we arrived at Blair Athole and easily secured apartments for the night. After refreshing ourselves by washing and eating, we made a slight tour of the immediate neighbourhood and then to bed "to sleep, perchance to dream."

We had arranged that our Wednesday's walk should merely embrace the Bruar Falls and the Pass of Killiecrankie, but

The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley.

After breakfast we set off leisurely up Glen Garry, the morning air laden with the rich perfume of the lime, and filled with the hum of bees already at work on the treasure spread out for them by the way side. Chestnuts, hazel, rowan, plane, and ash, with their rich, ripening fruit, mingled with the blossoming lime and formed on each hand an agreeable shade from the early morning sun. Now and again a peep of the Garry was had through the foliage, and what with the singing of birds, the pleasant-looking grain-covered fields, the mountains with woods creeping up their sides, the sweet-smelling air and a bright morning, we felt that a day's real enjoyment was before us. The first stream on our right was the Bruar, and, immediately on crossing it, we began to explore its course. The entrance to the glen proper had a locked gate presided over by a female guardian angel. We obtained admission after an exchange of courtesies. A well made, well kept path led us along the banks of the stream, and here and there, from vantage points on the overhanging rocks, fine views of the foaming torrent beneath were to be had. The glen, whose sides are now clad with "lofty firs and ashes cool," and whose craggy cliffs are adorned with "fragrant birks in woodbines drest," in answer to the prayer of Bruar water, presented through Burns to the noble Duke, is exceedingly picturesque and beautiful. It so happened that during our walk we en-

countered "the loving pair" spoken of in the same humble petition of Bruar Water, meeting by "sweet endearing stealeth." So far as we know the birks also spoken of in the same piece did their duty—

And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

The noble owner of the glen has contrived, by the erection of rustic bowers at the points most advantageous for viewing the best parts of the falls, to minister to the comforts of the sightseer. Of these we took advantage, as did the loving pair already referred to, and I doubt not they found them to the full as satisfactory and comfortable as we did. We varied our feast of sight-seeing by an occasional hunt after a squirrel, many of which are to be seen bounding along from tree to tree. One poor unfortunate was closely pressed by us, and, as it had to take refuge in a tree remote from others, its efforts to escape were rather frantic and to us ludicrous. Of course it had nothing to fear from us so far as bodily injury was concerned. It was a variation in our day's proceedings, and was the result of high animal spirits, with a dash perhaps of the feeling seemingly inherent in man to chase or secure whatever wild animal crosses his path.

After crossing and recrossing the Bruar we retraced our steps to Blair Athole. Immediately on our return rain came down in torrents, and as it seemed likely to continue, our intended walk through Killiecrankie vanished. Nothing was left for us, as our time was limited, but to take train to Perth. We whirled through the Pass certainly, and we can say we saw it, but the enjoyment was not such as we were certain to have derived had we traversed it in the way contemplated. We consoled ourselves, however, with the thought that we were in a limited sense like Jonah "in, out of the wet." Our journey to Perth was, so far, uninteresting. Thence we returned to Aberdeen, highly delighted and much benefited by our few days' wanderings.

August 24, 1881.

SCOTTISH YOUTH HOSTELS.

By D. G. MOIR.

IN the course of the two years since its formation, the Scottish Youth Hostels Association has become fairly well known, for the movement has been in some ways remarkable. The hostel idea is usually attributed to Germany, where hostels were in existence in 1911, but it was not until 1930 that an attempt was made to adopt the German scheme in this country. For years before 1930 rambling clubs were becoming increasingly popular. Youth had been showing a desire to get up and see his country, to leave the town for the countryside. The problem of extended exploration was the cost of the night's lodging, and although attempts were made by the Y.M.C.A. and other organizations, both in Scotland and in England, to provide the necessary cheap accommodation, these attempts were on too small a scale to be suited for a national movement. By 1930 the knowledge of German Youth Hostels had spread sufficiently for interested people in this country to realize that the German type of hostel was the right kind of accommodation to provide, and so came into being a Youth Hostels Association in England. Scotland followed in 1931, after deciding that a separate Association would be better than being a mere regional council of the English Association; and about the same time the wave of "Wanderlust" spread to other countries, Youth Hostel Associations being formed in Ireland, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and France, there being already hostels of the German type in Austria, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia. The latest country to join the movement is the distant Dominion of New Zealand.

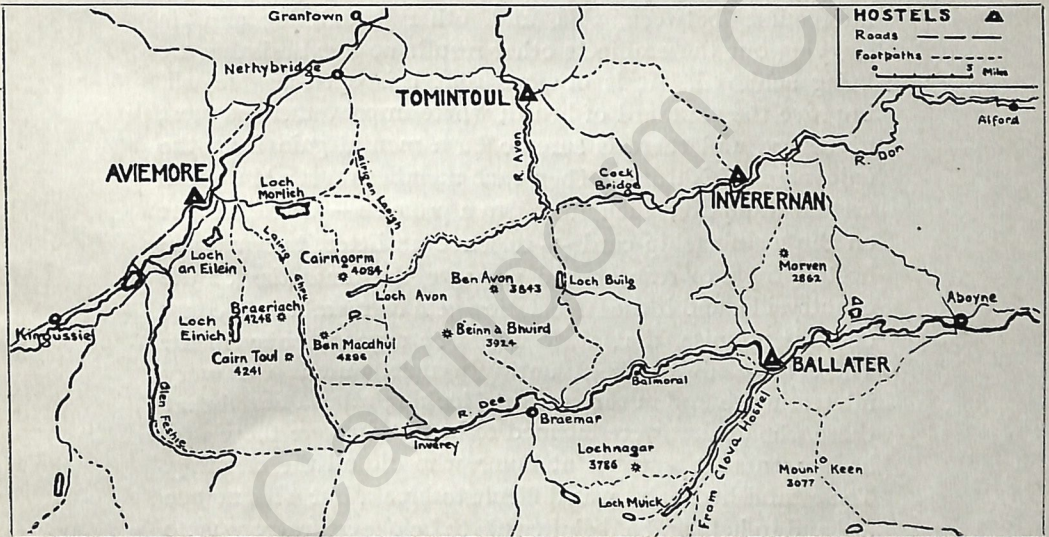
The rapid progress of the hostels in this country is sufficient proof of their popularity. The English Association

has now over 20,000 members ; Scotland's progress in terms of hostels, members, and bookings is:—

		1931	1932
Hostels	9	19
Members	1,165	3,873
Bookings (" Bed-nights ")	..	3,120	22,366

For 1933 Scotland has now 33 hostels open and other two are about to be opened, while the membership already exceeds last year's total. The hostel's success is not merely

SCOTTISH YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION—CAIRNGORM CHAIN.



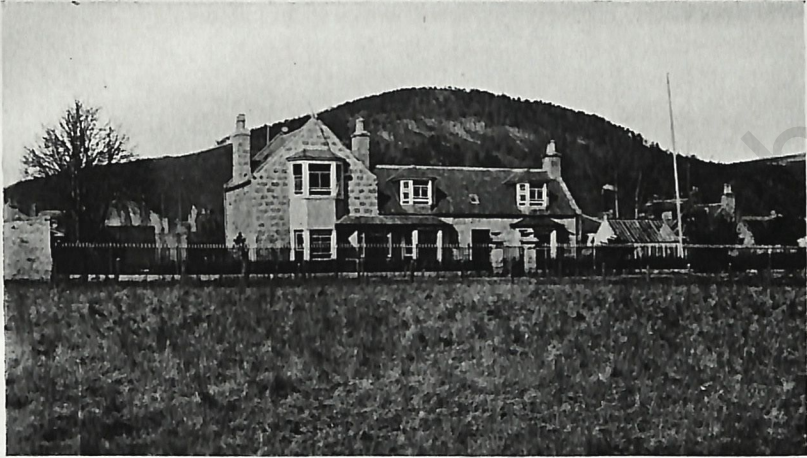
BALLATER	INVERERNAN	TOMINTOUL	AVIEMORE
48 beds.	24 beds.	20 beds.	32 beds.

a question of cheapness ; no doubt the avowed object of the Association is to provide cheap accommodation, but it provides incidental pleasures which count a lot. Apart from the bed, three blankets, and cooking facilities which every hostel provides for the shilling a night, there is, as Sir J. M. Barrie says in his Foreword to the Association's 1933 Handbook, " thrown in gratis all the home talk about what new ground the hiker is to break in the coming summer,

the comparisons of one route with another, the ideal companions, the keeping fit for great tramps, the baths in stream or loch, the mighty appetites that stir the pot, the revelry of a gypsy life, the comradeships formed, which may be the most lasting reward of all."

But the Association does not confine itself to providing pleasure, nor, even in its Constitution, can it limit its activities to the provision of hostels. It is of necessity and of choice co-operating to preserve the beauties of the countryside; to assist young people, particularly those of limited means, to know Scotland better; to improve friendly intercourse between this and other countries; and in carrying out these objects other results no less desirable are being achieved. It is obvious that this open-air life will improve the standard of health where improvement is most necessary, and there is sure to be a mental gain from the enjoyment of Nature. Then each member must act up to a certain standard; each must sign a promise — carried about on the membership card — to leave no litter, to leave the hostels tidy, to respect and preserve the amenities of the countryside, and if the Association gets its members to carry out this promise, that alone would be a good achievement. There have always been untidy people, and it was very interesting to find in the course of looking after a hostel that those who at first were inclined to be untidy were those who had parents or servants at home who did all the cleaning. The established habit was difficult to break, but with no one at hand to help and a definite rule to be obeyed there was no option but to learn to do things themselves. Cooking gave an even more curious sidelight on home training; it was not unusual for girls in their twenties to admit they had never cooked a meal, whilst many more of both sexes were quite unfamiliar with the workings of a kitchen range. Amongst others one found a total ignorance of food values, although one can certainly note a simpler standard of diet, due mainly of course to the desire to limit the pack carried to the real necessities of life. Altogether, here is a training ground for Youth.

The international relationships, which were but barely



BALLATER HOSTEL.



INVERERNAN HOSTEL.

contemplated when the Constitution of the Association was drawn up, have extended widely. The first international meeting of officials of Youth Hostel Associations took place last year in Amsterdam, and now, with but few exceptions, the membership card of one Association admits to the hostels of any other Association. Some hundreds came over last year from the Continent, chiefly from Denmark, Germany, and Holland, to stay in the English and Scottish hostels, and a like or even greater number went to the Continental hostels, a friendly intercourse, with no suggestion of rivalry involved, which should have a great influence for peace.

In establishing its hostels the Scottish Association has had to depend to a large extent on available buildings which could be secured cheaply. This is not as wealthy a country as England, and the money available for hostels has all along been much less than was needed ; nor had we in Scotland, as they had in England, buildings owned by a National Trust which could be given free for the use of the Association. The 33 hostels which have been opened in Scotland are due in part to the kindness of certain landlords, in part to the generosity of a few individuals who donated money, but most of all to the energy and co-operation of the officials and members of the Association who gave their own small subscriptions and donations and collected money in small amounts by all the known expedients of whist drives, dances, lectures, and the rest. Of the 33 hostels only eight are new erections, and as five of these are simply converted huts, only three of the hostels have actually been built by the Association, but despite the financial handicaps, the hostels are all at points where they are really useful. The Border Chain of five hostels, all of them opened in the summer of 1931, is excellently arranged for the exploration of the most picturesque and most romantic Border scenery, and has proved so popular that three more hostels had to be added this year. Next in distance is Edinburgh Hostel, greatly needed for people from other countries as well as for our own young people of other parts of Scotland. The Loch Lomond-Trossachs group of six hostels gives access to the most renowned scenery of Scotland, while the

three hostels of Eastern Perthshire, at Ardtalnaig, Glen Quaich, and Birnam, are convenient for the youth of Dundee and Perth. Next comes a gap, still to be bridged, between Birnam and Clova, the beginning of a chain stretching round the Cairngorms to Aviemore. From here you can join the North-west group at Loch Ossian, Glen Nevis, Fort Augustus, or Drumnadrochit, visit the West Ross-shire hostels at Ratagan, Strome, Achnashellach, Slattadale, Inver Alligin, and Gairloch, before crossing the sea to the Skye hostels of Uig and Glen Brittle. This list shows that it is now possible, with only one or two short lifts, to walk from the Borders to Skye with a hostel convenient for each night.

For the establishment of these hostels District Committees were formed successively in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee, each District having an area attached to the central town, while the rest of Scotland, including all west of the Caledonian Canal, is dealt with by a National Executive Committee. The Aberdeen District comprises Aberdeen, Kincardine, Banff, Moray and Speyside south to Newtonmore, and in this area thoughts turn naturally to the Cairngorms. The difficulty of getting suitable buildings near the Cairngorms has been great, but the present "Cairngorm Chain" of four hostels does give the walker a chance of seeing some of the finest of the scenery. Ballater Hostel proved very popular last year, as well it might, with its comforts of electric light, hot water circulation, and bath. A rented house overlooking the golf course, it provides accommodation for 48. At Inverernan part of the old coach stables was given for the use of the Association, and here there is room for 24, and if the hostel is a simpler type than Ballater, its quiet and pleasant setting has more of the charms of the countryside. In view of the popularity and usefulness of a chain of hostels, the 1933 programme for the Aberdeen Committee was obviously to place hostels to link with Ballater and Inverernan, and as a connection with Speyside seemed most urgent a wooden hostel has been erected at Aviemore with accommodation for 30, while, for the present, part of a house has been rented in the Square at

Tomintoul, and provision made for housing eight of each sex. Aviemore Hostel is the first specially built by the Aberdeen Committee, but their plans for an ideal hostel had to be scrapped in face of costs, and what has been provided is a plain building, made out of an old hut, with the minimum space and minimum requirements of a common room, a warden's room, and three dormitories. It is magnificently situated beside the main road and opposite the Spey bridge, a gap in the trees allowing a grand view of the Lairig Ghru from the hostel doorstep.

Each of the four hostels is in charge of a resident warden, and at each a bed, palliase, and three blankets are provided for the 1/- a night, with a good cooking stove and everything in the way of pots and pans. From the warden's store one can buy most of the provisions for a meal. For administrative purposes it is necessary for all using the hostels to be members of the Association or members of kindred Associations in other countries, but membership is open to all, and the annual subscription is the nominal one of 2/6 under age 25, 5/- for those over 25. The Association is intended primarily for young people, particularly those of limited means, and while the majority of members are in fact under 25, there is no intention at present to restrict the membership or the use of the hostels to young people. On the contrary, older people are meantime encouraged to join and to use the hostels for definite reasons. Even if they do not use the hostels, their subscriptions help in providing new hostels, and, if they are actively interested, their assistance is welcome in the great amount of voluntary work and in dealing with the many problems which are always found in a new organization, while if they do use the hostels they are able to help the wardens, who have still to gain experience, and to make suggestions for the management and improvement of hostels.

As the German Youth Hostel Association has been expanding continuously since its foundation over twenty years ago, there is reason to believe that the movement is a permanent one. The Scottish Association does not want to stand still, and in fact it cannot, for already half the hostels require

enlargement to meet the crowds at holiday periods. Running costs of the hostels can usually be met out of the accommodation charges, and out of the annual subscriptions a small margin is available, after meeting administrative charges, for capital expenditure, but the surplus is too small for much extension of hostels. New hostels are needed to connect the existing chains, *e.g.*, between Clova and Birnam, between Aviemore and the North-west, and between Loch Lomond and Glen Nevis. The fringe only of Argyllshire has been reached; Galloway is untouched, as well as the far North. In this district additions will be needed to the Cairngorm Chain (some members are already finding their way in one day from Ballater to Aviemore, one youth recently taking the bus to Braemar and walking from there to Aviemore over the summits of Ben Macdhui and Cairngorm); and the possibility of a hostel nearer Aberdeen has to be considered. Larger hostels with better facilities will have to be designed, and provision made for groups of young people in charge of a leader to be accommodated. Much has been done in the two years to establish the Association as a recognized feature of national life, but much more has to be done before it can rest on its oars.



CIRRUS OR "MARE'S TAIL" CLOUD.

G. A. Clarke.



ALTO-STRATUS—THE "WATERY SKY."

G. A. Clarke.

THE MAJESTY AND BEAUTY OF THE CLOUDS.

By GEO. AUBOURNE CLARKE, F.R.P.S., F.R.Met.Soc.

YOU who have scaled the summits of the Cairngorms have many a time and oft made close acquaintance with the clouds. On such occasions your chief concern has been the fact either that the clouds hid from your view some very desirable prospect you had toiled hard to enjoy, or else that their presence around you made further movement on the mountain summit a potential danger.

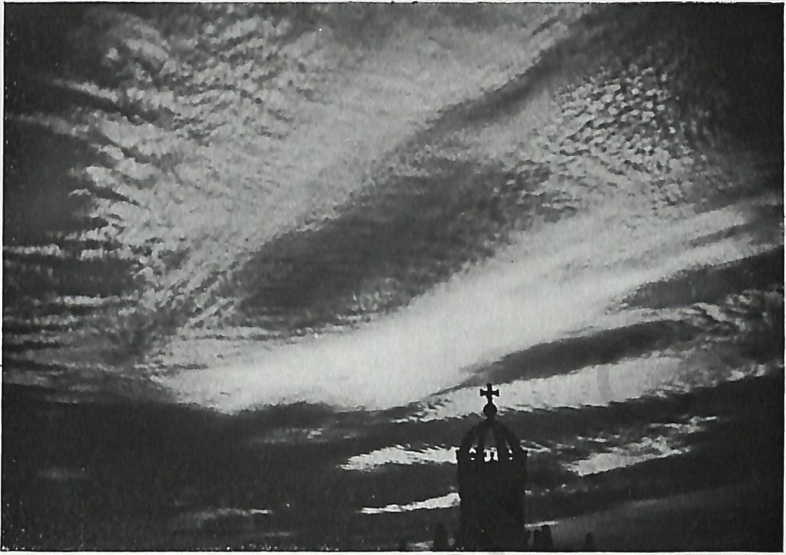
But let us for the moment keep to the plains and valleys and view these clouds from afar. See them wrapping the higher summits in a golden mystery at sunset, or in the height of a springtime noonday sending down shafts of quivering light at whose touch the snow in the corries turns to molten silver. See them blazing like scarlet watch-fires in the cool blue-green of the evening sky, or lying in orderly grey-purple bars athwart the crimson glow in the west long after sundown. Their variety is endless, their beauties ever changing and ever new, and by virtue of their distribution at successively higher levels they waft the mind almost imperceptibly from the tangible solidity of earth through that melting blue vault we call the sky, and so onwards to the outermost regions of star-strewn space.

Certainly those faintly delicate silvery wisps which constitute the highest of all clouds seem to be situated many leagues above us, but that is partly an effect of contrast with the lower cloud, which is always so much more massive in build and more solid in substance. I have already remarked upon the lowest cloud-forms being found enveloping the summits of our local mountains and reaching at times almost to the level of the ground, but had the majestic peak of Everest been set in our midst, its virgin summit would have reached almost to those cloud-wisps I have spoken of. For in our latitudes the limit of height for the clouds is

approximately six miles. At that altitude the air temperature is far below freezing point—about 60 degrees below zero or 90 degrees of frost—and so the delicate thread-like wisps are composed of lines of minute ice-crystals and not of tiny drops of water as is usual with the more solid-looking clouds. Because of their forms and appearance they have been named *cirrus*, from the Latin word signifying a tuft of hair. Sailors have termed them “mares’ tails” because of this tufted appearance. In our regions these clouds generally move from some westerly quarter—it is exceptional, though not altogether rare, to find them moving from eastward.

Beautiful as these high cirrus clouds are—and when seen tinted a delicate rose colour late in the evening, they are, perhaps, the most evanescent beauty to be found in the sky—they are harbingers of bad weather to come. This is because the cirrus clouds are formed in greatest quantity in the forefront of “depressions,” which, as you know, are regions of conflict between currents of warm and cold air moving from different directions and forming a vast eddy, with consequent fall of barometric pressure and the eventual occurrence of more or less continuous rain, together with strong winds and gales at times. When cirrus clouds are so formed it will be noticed by an observer that they rapidly increase in quantity till at last the whole sky becomes covered with a tangled web or even with an almost uniform whitish sheet of cloud, which in turn grows gradually denser and greyer until all that can be seen is a heavy blue-grey or yellowish-grey cloud layer through which the sun appears shining merely as a faintly luminous patch. We then have the “watery sky” as we familiarly term the *alto-stratus* of scientific terminology. When this condition of matters is reached, it is usually a matter of only an hour or two ere the *nimbus*—the real rain-cloud—appears, and we have to don our waterproofs.

Now you will of course know that you have met the rain-cloud trailing along the sides of even the lesser hills of Deeside, and therefore you will gather that, in my description, I have descended very far from the usual heights of the



G. A. Clarke.

ALTO-CUMULUS—"DAPPLED SKY" AT SUNSET.



G. A. Clarke.

STRATO-CUMULUS—THE SKY OF WINTER GLOOM.

cirrus cloud. Such is actually the case; for when a depression advances towards us, cloud is forming at successively lower levels as the central part of it approaches. Thus the "watery-sky" alto-stratus is found at levels between 15,000 and 8,000 feet as a rule, sometimes even lower. The broken, ragged nimbus below it may be anything from 6,000 to 1,000 feet high, and that is why sometimes you can see the higher hilltops even during rain, while at others times even the lower ones are hidden.

But fortunately the intermediate levels are not always occupied by cloud of such sinister import and gloomy appearance as the alto-stratus. Quite otherwise, in fact! For in the intervals between depressions, and likewise along their northern and southern margins, we meet with some lovely skylscapes formed by clouds of the *cirro-cumulus* and *alto-cumulus* types, which are usually grouped together under the popular designations of "mackerel" or "dappled" skies, according to whether the cloudlets lie in wavy bands or in detached flakes.

Though such clouds may not possess the extreme delicacy of the rose-tinted cirrus at eventide, they are nevertheless the clouds to which we owe our most gorgeous sunsets. Aberdeen may well vie with the famed western isles in the magnificence of its sunsets, and it may be of interest to know that the Grampian chain to the south of the Dee Valley, as well as the great Cairngorm group itself, contribute in no small degree to these glorious spectacles. And the reason thereof is as follows. The winds accompanying the mackerel and dappled skies are found to blow chiefly from some point in the south-westerly quadrant, so that before the wind reaches Aberdeen it must cross these mountain ridges. In doing so a series of waves is set up in the air and cloud is formed along the wave-crests. The "stream-line" movement of the air gives to the clouds strangely artificial forms, resembling those of airships, sand-dunes, or, as Shakespeare has it, "very like a whale." The texture of the upper and lower surfaces of these clouds is often singularly smooth, thus giving to the reflected sunset rays a curiously metallic quality. The golds and scarlets and crimsons of the sunsets

may then truthfully be said to blaze. Added to this intensity of colour on the clouds, the air itself is wonderfully clear and pure, so that the background of sky is always of the most wonderfully translucent blues and greens imaginable.

But even in the daytime the regularity and serried arrangement of the little clouds make them worthy of notice, and many a summer landscape is made all the more beautiful by their presence in the sky.

At still lower levels—between 5,000 and 2,000 feet—may often be found a somewhat similar but much heavier cloud called *strato-cumulus*. It is one of our commonest skies, particularly in a spell of cold, dry weather in winter-time, when the sky may have a characteristically gloomy look for days on end.

And now we come to those other clouds which in their forms seem to emulate the hills themselves. I refer of course to the "woolpack" type, known as *cumulus* when small and only slightly developed, and as *cumulo-nimbus* when they tower upwards for miles into the atmosphere.

The ordinary cumulus is found in our skies on almost any average fine summer day, but a little observation will reveal the fact that they begin to appear in the early forenoon, reach a maximum in size and quantity in the early afternoon, then rapidly disperse and disappear in the evening. They are caused by the condensation of moisture carried upwards by local ascending currents of air, which have been heated more rapidly than their surroundings by the power of the sun.

It is when the weather situation is such that these uprising currents are unusually strong, or meet with little restraint in their ascent, that we meet with the other variety, the cumulo-nimbus, which, though they show the same tendencies of growth during the daytime as do the cumulus, are not always so amenable to dispersal in the evening. Actually they are the clouds which give rise to our violent "April showers" of rain and hail, and also to our thunderstorms. When there is a tendency towards thunder, the summits of these clouds often spread out into a flat top resembling a blacksmith's anvil. There is of course no real



G. A. Clarke.

CUMULUS—"WOOL-PACK" CLOUD OF FINE SUMMER WEATHER.



G. A. Clarke.

CUMULO-NIMBUS—AN APPROACHING THUNDER-CLOUD.

hard and fast line of demarcation between cumulus and cumulo-nimbus, the former may, and frequently does, develop into the latter, but there are other times when the thunder-clouds appear in a widely extended bank like a range of distant snow-clad mountains. And to call them mountains is to use no undeserved metaphor, for none but the peaks of the mighty ranges of the Himalayas, Karakorams, Andes, or such like mountain chains, can equal in height or size a really well-developed mass of thunder-cloud. The ordinary cumulus cloud has its base some 3,000 feet or so above us, and its summit perhaps 2,000 feet higher, but the cumulo-nimbus, while having its base no higher, may have a summit towering up to 20,000 or 30,000 feet. Imagine it, if you can! A mass of vapour, microscopic drops of water, despite its very solid and substantial appearance, five miles or thereby in depth—and extending over perhaps a hundred square miles! Even the “steep frowning glories of dark Lochnagar” pale into insignificance beside that mighty structure—unsubstantial though it be. Just try and grasp its significance, and the torrential rain that usually accompanies a thunderstorm will cease to be a wonder any longer.

And finally I might mention the last and lowest of clouds, that known as *stratus*. It is really a fog floating some hundreds of feet above us, and often may indeed be actually a fog which has lifted. Sometimes it is dry, at others it gives us drizzle and “Scotch mist.”

Well, I have tried, all too inadequately I fear, to convey to you some impression of the beauty and wonder that is ever present in the sky. If you care to watch its ever-changing panorama, you will soon discover the source whence Shelley drew his inspiration.

KINLOCHEWE AT EASTER.

By A. R. MARTIN, B.Sc., Ph.D.

BEING a novice on his first visit to the West of Scotland, I have been given the job of writing up the Easter Meet at Kinlochewe. The idea is that I may say all sorts of quaint things. What with this and the impressiveness of the mountains, I feel like Gulliver being exhibited to the Brobdingnagians. But Gulliver must perform and not make excuses.

On the Friday parties led by the President and Mr. Parker did Liathach and Slioch. After much whistle-blowing the President got his party packed off in cars along the Torridon road, bound for the foot of Liathach—only half an hour behind time. It must require much patience and occasionally strong lungs to be President. The morning was still and sunny, and the sky so blue that we knew it could not last so divine for long. What a banal word brown is when applied to a heather-clad hill in such a light! It would require a Titian to capture the richness of this colour, which seems so varied that it embraces the whole spectrum, from a warm brick-red to a velvety blue in the shadows.

Liathach rises like a huge wedge driven up through the floor of the glen. I looked round and found my companions apparently unintimidated by its uncompromising aspect, and so I told myself that this heroic looking hill must have an Achilles' heel somewhere, and that the thing to do was to look unconcerned. The road runs along the southern base of the hill, and, therefore, the usual dull trudge up foothills is eliminated. On the other hand, the elevation of the road is only 200 ft., and so there is almost the whole of the 3,456 ft. of the summit to be climbed, and the slope is steep throughout. Liathach consists of a series of horizontal terraces of chocolate-coloured Torridon sandstone of uncanny regularity, capped with quartzite cones. The hard quartzite has protected the softer sandstone from erosion, leaving the mountain as a memorial to a remote geological age.



Easter, 1933.

SGURR BAN OF BEINN EIGHE.

J. McCoss.

Our route lay along a burn, which led us into a hanging corrie between Creag Dhu a Choire Leith and Bidean Toll a Mhuic. At close quarters the terraces did not prove the uniform vertical slabs of rock they appeared to be from the road. They had kindly cracks, and sometimes tamely petered out in grass slopes, thus allowing their flanks to be turned. The ascent of the corrie to the col between the main top and Bidean Toll a Mhuic was over fairly firm scree and boulder. After lunching and looking down the precipitous north face, we reached the highest top (Spidean a Choire Leith) by walking westwards along the ridge.

Although the blue skies of early morning had yielded to a translucent mother of pearl, visibility was good. The hills in this district are narrow ridges, rising sharply from an apparently level plain like a fleet of grim and somewhat disordered battleships from a brown sea. Consequently the æsthetic effect is quite different from that of the massive, remote Cairngorms, which owe their appeal to being such an excellent embodiment of the "thick rotundity o' the earth." Our nearest neighbour was Ben Eighe, whose shape, picked out by a freshly fallen powdering of snow, fully justified its name—file peak. To the west and north was the blue sea, and in the foreground the truly mountainous north face of Mullach an Rathain, verily a realization of the Platonic idea of a mountain. This was my first sight of the west coast of Scotland. Beyond it I beheld Skye, with all the awe that befits a novice who looks on the land of the Black Cuillin. Southwards was a welter of peaks, some of them ghostlike with their caps of whitish quartzite.

The descent began by going westwards to the Fasarinen Pinnacles, the first two of which were climbed by McCoss and Orkney. Thence we descended into Glen Torridon by a route which began with a steep grass slope and which, although it later took us over some rock and heather, miraculously avoided all pitches. When we were walking luxuriously along the level Torridon road we looked back at the vertical walls of sandstone and could not understand how we poor mortals had found a way down. In the numerous remarks to this effect, was there a touch of self-

flattery, an innuendo that we had really conquered those formidable terraces? Was this why the wise Mr. Parker, on seeing me deep in maps telling Mr. Medd about our excursion, said "I don't know what Martin is telling you, but don't you believe it"? Incidentals to the descent were the sight of an eagle and the collection from the road of red pebbles of Torridon sandstone and green ones of chloritic schist.

The next day was wet, really wet. A party did Slioch, but most of us thought hill climbing out of the question and either did some low-level walking or toured round the district by car. I was a member of the last ignoble, but dare I say sensible, group. The shores of Loch Maree were remarkable for the vivid colours given by the rain to the green moss and reddish-brown bracken luxurious beneath the protecting firs. Soon after leaving them we met our first waterfall in Kerrysdale on the way to Gairloch. Waterfalls were to be the dominant impression of the day. The most striking were at Mesach, where a narrow pinnacle rises some 200 ft. from the foot of the falls to a level with the top of the gorge. It bends this way and that with the rhythmic contortions of a Chinese drawing of rocks, to be surmounted finally by two or three small and absolutely vertical pines. The crofts along the coast were melancholy in their setting of mist, sea, and island. It seemed as if by travelling in space we had also travelled in time, and were in some strange other-world, far from modern civilization.

On the Sunday climbing was once more practicable, and two parties under the President and Mr. Parker did Ben Eighe by different routes. The path for Ben Eighe leaves the Loch Maree road only a short distance from the hotel, and leads to the gap between Ruadh Stac Bhig and Meall a Ghiubhais. We (the President's party) followed it as far as a burn and then struck left to a waterfall, thus reaching the slopes of Creag Dubh. Ben Eighe has not the individuality of Liathach, but it has fine quartzite ridges and unstable silvery screes, and offers unlimited scope for hard work. The going on top is almost uniformly bad, since the stones are jagged and plentiful—conditions very different from the



Easter, 1933.

BEINN EIGHE FROM LIATHACH.

A. R. Martin.

In foreground, Bidean Toll a Mhuic and Stuc a Choire Dhuibh Bhig of Liathach.



Easter, 1933.

RUADH STAC BHIG AND MEALL A GHIUBHAIS.

A. R. Martin.

Note the White Quartzite Scree.

flat gravel plateaux of the Cairngorms. The day was still and warm, but broken mist surged over the tops.

After leaving Creag Dubh I decided to follow Roy Symmers and S. C. H. Smith to Ruadh Stac Mor, perhaps rashly, considering the energy and speed of Symmers. We traversed a particularly unstable scree beneath the western cliffs of Sgurr an Fhir Duibhe. The stones are very sharp and of uneven size. Therefore a small slip is apt to start larger stones slipping down more quickly from above, with unpleasant results. On regaining the ridge we had an impressive view of the north face of Sgurr Ban, rising grimly and forbiddingly into the mist. However, its ascent along the ridge was only an uphill walk. For later in the day, after many such uphill walks, I feel that "only" is not *le mot juste*. On the top we met Mr. Parker's party, who had ascended by the col joining the main ridge to Stac Coire an Laoigh. Having arranged with them about motor transport back to the hotel on our descent from the hill, and having solved the problem of how many giraffe's necks it would take to reach to the moon, we proceeded along the ridge first to Spidean Coire nan Clach and then to the mossy plateau below Coinneach Mhor. The magnificent view of the north face of Liathach from this ridge was obscured by mist, but it was fortunately clear on the return journey. Stony ridges are satisfying, but they suffer from two defects; they keep on going up and down and are waterless. A traverse of the earthy eastern slope of Coinneach Mhor led us to the ridge at the foot of Ruadh Stac Mor, the top of which is marked by a large heap of loose, sharp stones, the most convenient and picturesque explanation of which would be that it was dumped there by a devil.

On reaching the top we were rewarded by bright sunshine and the disappearance of the mist. To the south-east the whole precipitous northern face of the Ben Eighe range was open to us. Near at hand to the south were the three majestic sandstone buttresses of the western face of Coinneach Mhor, rising perpendicularly from Coire Mhic Fhearchair, so symmetrical and so regularly decorated by cracks that they resembled the apse of some titanic cathedral.

To the west of these Sail Mor dropped straight into a still, dark green loch. Over the silver sea the hills of Skye looked their famous grape-blue.

We returned to the Torridon road by retracing our steps almost to the top of Spidean Coire nan Clach, traversing the scree to the grassy col leading to Stac Coire an Laoigh, and descending beside the burn which rises there. It was the first we had met, and, after our thirst was slaked, its sweet noise was a delightful accompaniment to the descent. Our times were : left hotel 10 a.m., left Ruadh Stac Mor 4 p.m., reached Torridon road 6 p.m.

This was our last excursion, although we had by no means exhausted the riches of the district. Alligin, on the north shore of Upper Loch Torridon, is said to afford a view from its summit which extends from Ardnamurchan in the south to North Uist in the west, and Cape Wrath in the north. Pleasant days could be spent on the Loch Maree hills, Slioch, Beinn Lair, and Beinn Airidh Charr. Not far away to the north and best reached from Dundonnell are the glories of An Teallach, for useful information on which the reader is referred to an article by Mr. McCoss, which also deals with Liathach and Ben Eighe, in this *Journal*, vol. viii, 1914, page 1.

For the hill walker the Kinlochewe area provides narrow ridges and precipices which make him something more than a mere hiker ; for the mountaineer rock climbs, such as the buttresses of Coire Mhic Fhearchair on Ben Eighe and the northern pinnacles of Liathach, which can satisfy the most expert.

However, we had done enough to return full of the peace, serenity, and strength of the hills.



Easter, 1933.

A. R. Martin.

MULLACH AN RATHAIN OF LIATHACH.

The Eastern End of the Fasarinen Pinnacles on left foreground.

SHADOW BUTTRESS "A"—LOCHNAGAR.

By G. ROY SYMMERS.

THE evening of the 17th of September, 1932, was passed by four members of the Club at the Spittal of Glen Muick. Seated in solemn state we whiled away the hours of darkness by playing whist. A rug-covered soap-box, situated in the centre of the apartment adjoining the byre, served as a card-table. In the immediate vicinity were scattered, nay, stacked, an assortment of suitcases and cabin trunks, some bearing steamship company's labels, gave our humble chamber the semblance of a custom's house, whilst others, brass bound at the corners, were more in keeping with our appearance. But for the presence of two "bergens" tucked away in an unobtrusive corner, an intruder might have mistaken us for a gang of bootleggers or part of a crew of buccaneers.

A grim and silent struggle, interrupted only when the writer upset his two-legged stool, was proceeding. The two senior members were defending their position against the determined onslaught of the juniors. At times, the clanking of chains, heavy breathing and other bovine noises issued from the adjacent byre. Ultimately the juniors gave in; they were heavily defeated by their inexperienced use of good hand-holds, coupled with a complete ignorance of the first principles of footwork and combined tactics.

An effusive greeting accompanied by the rattling of chains welcomed the writer as he entered the byre in search of the cold-water tap. After a mug of tea and a light evening meal the two younger members were banished to the warmth of the hay-loft and to their sleeping-bags. Entitled by reason of our grey hairs and the worrying thoughts of a sleepless night, Ewen and I stayed up late and went for a walk by moonlight. As we left the shadowy fir trees a picture of unrivalled beauty unfolded itself before us. Encompassed by steeply escarped foothills, sparkling and shimmering in scintillating mercurial splendour, lay Loch

Muick, curving away in one long sweep to the base of Broad Cairn's shapely cone, over which a ring-encircled moon shone from a blue and brilliantly starry sky. The night was breathless, but even so, the evening air was laden with the sweet fragrance of moorland and bog. As we walked and smoked, now the burbling protest of a burn as it forced its way through the unnatural restriction of a highway culvert, then the startled cry of some suddenly awakened wild creature broke the silence. Here at least, we needed no Jasper to remind us that "life is very sweet, brother." Quietly we turned and retraced our steps. The "staircase" was adopted in preference to the sporting and highly sensational "outside" route to our sleeping quarters. The brass-bound treasure-chests, which had already produced several "rabbits," were not to disappoint us, even at this late hour. From a nail in the wall hung an alarm-clock! We both regarded this curiosity with interest, which rapidly changed to disfavour when we discovered on closer inspection that the infernal machine had been set for 6.30. By mutual consent an adjustment of 330° was made and we turned to our sleeping-bags in a more peaceful frame of mind. Let us now draw the curtain and turn from prelude to adventure.

At 11.30 a.m. on the 18th, four climbers flung themselves down behind one of the huge boulders on the rock-knoll below the Central Buttress, glad to get out of the stinging sleet-laden wind. We had come to the parting of the ways. Middleton was obviously eager to make his debut as a leader. Lees, his companion, showed the characteristics of an excellent second. His deportment bore not a trace of excitement, his mind was evidently supremely and completely occupied in an attempt to forecast the contents of a tin box, the latest yield of the treasure-chests. Ewen appeared to be torn between the anticipation of a new climb and a feeling of responsibility towards the younger pair, who were for the first time leaving his charge. I, contentedly aware of the friendly granite at my back, the sleet-revealed wind whistling past and the jagged skyline far above, felt with renewed force the awe which Lochnagar's corrie has always

inspired in me. Thus we lingered, each eager for action in his own way yet glad to stay a moment longer.

With a brief, "Good luck!" we parted company, having arranged to meet again at the top. Lees and Middleton set off across the screes bound for Raeburn's Gully, while Ewen and I, mounting rapidly, headed for the foot of the Shallow Gully.* To the right of the latter the buttress rears itself in a terrific vertical face which is obviously unscalable. The reason for this unpropitious start is to be found in the presence of a broad ledge† which runs round the buttress some distance up. This grass-covered shelf starts at its lowest point about eighty to one hundred feet above the screes and slants in a spiral fashion up and round the nose of the buttress to the right. Reaching our agreed starting point, we roped up and I led the first pitch. The attack was to be carried out by way of a steep gravel shoot, the entrance to which was guarded by a vertical wall of granite about eight feet in height extending a considerable distance either way. A route was discovered up the middle of the wall and then the shoot was tackled. This proved to be very disagreeable and I was not long in coming to the conclusion that the shattered rock-wall on the right was healthier. A belay was found about fifty feet up, and the second man brought on. Ewen avoided the introductory wall by a movement to the right and was not long in coming to the same conclusions as myself regarding the quality of the rock. Having carefully stopped short of a nasty-looking section in the shoot above, I had the doubtful pleasure of watching Ewen disporting himself in the foulness of the gutter over my head. Exercising extreme caution, he succeeded in mounting a further fifteen feet before deciding that he had had enough. The return proved even more troublesome than the ascent, and I was quite relieved when

* *C.C.J.*, Vol. 12, pp. 10 and 188.

† This terrace can be seen to advantage on Mr. Dugan's panorama of Lochnagar in the *S.M.C. Cairngorm Guide*, opposite p. 80. As seen, picked out in snow, on that photograph, it takes the form of a reversed "S" lying about quarter of an inch to the left of the foot of the Douglas-Gibson Gully.

he again reached a level at which I might have been of some assistance in the event of a slip. The next move was to climb on to the insecure-looking masonry above my belay. This was fairly simple, and the following conversation then ensued: "What's it like above?" "Pretty hopeless!" "Any hope to the right?" "Not much, frightful looking chimney!" "Can I come up to have a look?" "I'm not sure that this platform will bear the weight of two!" This was news to me, particularly as I was situated directly in the line of possible avalanche. That settled it, and I shouted up to the effect that I was coming to have a look. The rock *did* appear rather shattered and insecure, but nevertheless bore up nobly, so that we were soon holding a council-of-war on its summit. A glimpse over the edge to the right revealed a steep chimney dropping some eighty feet to the screes. Our situation, however, was not quite so hopeless as it at first appeared to be. Crossing the 80° slabs in the chimney, about eight feet below our platform, ran a very narrow ledge. At the further end of this an open crack gave access in about fifteen feet to the start of the spiral terrace. The descent and crossing was mildly sensational but perfectly safe with Ewen belaying the rope from the platform. Once in the crack, everything was simple. The first half consisted of back-and-knee work with a finish on first-class rock out still further to the right. The descent of the second man can be safeguarded from directly above, and the whole problem is very interesting, not too difficult, and, treated the proper way, absolutely safe.

Our attainment to the terrace had been rather more difficult than we had anticipated, with the natural result that we started to think about what the ensuing section at the far end of the balcony would be like. Several casual inspections from below had led us to suspect that the hundred feet of rock above the upper end of the terrace would decide the outcome of our venture. Hence, hoping for the best, we cantered up and round the steep, overgrown ledge as far as it would lead us. At this point, we obtained a view of the routes open to us for the negotiation of the next pitch. These appeared to be two in number. To the right, a ridge



March 18, 1933.

W. A. Ewen.

LOCHNAGAR.

Arrows indicate the Terrace Start of Shadow Buttress A, mentioned by G. R. Symmers.

(A) Summit of Shadow Buttress A.

went up at an increasing angle, at the same time narrowing perceptibly to a vertical or slightly overhanging block perched rather precariously on the brink of the first or left-hand gully of the Giant's Head Chimney* series. Some distance to the left of the ridge, forming the obvious alternative, lay (vertically) an uninviting shallow green chimney. Leaving this for further consideration, if necessary, we advanced up the lower portion of our ridge and gained a small platform (with belay) immediately below the overhanging block. A very careful inspection showed that the mass appeared to be maintained in position by one small boulder wedged beneath it. A conference then took place, which resulted in Ewen making an abortive attempt to scale an impossible chimney a few feet to the left, rather than sit below the overhang while I tried to scramble over it. In the end I had my way and, using the good hand-holds afforded, had the pleasure of standing on the top of the block and remarking, perhaps unkindly, "It feels a bit shaky, old chap, so hang on to that belay in case . . .!" An upward movement to the left finished the difficulty and we were soon climbing together over easy ground.

On reaching the main rib of the buttress (we had been climbing on the right face since leaving the spiral balcony), a fine view was obtained down and across the Shallow Gully. The Gully was seen to have a wide and easy exit, across which it would have been quite easy for us to traverse on to the Central Buttress at about the level of the small pinnacle. Our route, however, turned sharply to the right and continued up an interesting ridge. The first of a series of somewhat similar obstacles consisted of a fifteen foot chimney, sufficiently steep to induce respect but overflowing with good holds. The breeze, from which we had so far been sheltered, now began to make its presence felt, and after another two hundred feet we started to look around for a sheltered spot where we could eat and smoke in comfort. Such an ideal was hard to satisfy, and our ultimate selection was neither calm nor comfortable. Little time was spent there as we had to keep moving to induce

* *C.C.J.*, Vol. 12, p. 189.

some warmth. The thought that our two friends were probably being treated to the effects of a hurricane of wind and great volumes of icy-cold water in Raeburn's Gully made us quite genial, it almost brought the perspiration to our brows! Our smoke finished, we surveyed the next portion of the ridge. Just above the point at which we had stopped a large detached monolith of granite stood separate from the parent face. By climbing the crack behind it and then standing on its summit, it was possible with a long reach to the right to gain lodgement on the face behind. Once well launched out on this, the climbing eased off and soon the prominent "gendarme," marking the exit from the Giant's Head Chimney, was reached and so the summit.

Lees and Middleton were nowhere to be seen, so we came to the conclusion that we had reached the plateau first. Walking round to the top of Raeburn's Gully, we were just in time to see a most extraordinary exhibition by Middleton on the last pitch. His style, although quite unorthodox, was extremely effective, and we were soon congratulating the pair on their first break-away from the leading-strings. To our sorrow, we learned that the Gully had been almost dry and completely sheltered from the biting wind.

Our day on Lochnagar was spent; night was creeping up on us from the east while we lingered. No longer was our desire for adventure . . . our heights had been attained and we reconciled our thoughts to the anti-climax, if such it be, of the descent. Thus, ere long, we stood in the glen beneath, and, gazing upwards, admired the heights, as a mountain should be looked upon, from a valley deep and dark and distant.

[From an inspection of the foot of the climb on the 3rd of June, 1933, it appears that there has been a recent fall of rock from the face above, which may have altered the initial pitches up to the spiral terrace. As far as could be seen from the foot of the cliff the main features are the same, but it is possible that the climbing, in the absence of certain holds, may have become more exacting. An examination of the buttress further to the right reveals no easy route to the higher end of the spiral ledge, and the writer very much doubts the practicability of such a venture.—G. R. S.]

A SPRING TRAVERSE OF LOCHNAGAR.

By MARGARET SKAKLE.

A HACKNEYED subject you say! Well, no apology is necessary for giving a description of a traverse of Lochnagar, for it would be an insult to that mountain to declare there was nothing new to say of it. Nowadays, when transport is so easy, boys and girls, youths and maidens, men and women, race up to the top and back again without thinking the feat in any way remarkable. Any week-end you will find bivvy tents lurking beneath the firs at Altnaguibhsaich, and the young stalwarts therein know the hill from A to Z. Nevertheless do we not all love to browse over the things that have stood the test of time—a fine old song, an exquisite vase, a lovely garden, anything that has been created with love and care? How much more then is it profitable to ponder over this masterpiece of the Creator! What a master-mind set this gem of corrie and loch, buttress and crag, precipice and plain, towering like a proud giant over lovely Deeside!

Of all seasons, Spring is the ideal one in which to see Lochnagar in his most majestic garb. This year, the Cairngorm Club elected to traverse the hill from Altnaguibhsaich to the Garrawalt. Sub-sections of the Club had explored out-of-the-way corners on various week-ends throughout the season, and the May Holiday saw a mass meeting of the enthusiasts. No time was lost in preliminaries, and the large party set off from the lodge in good spirits. There is something inspiring in that brotherhood which one feels as a whole company with kindred interests wends its way up a hill track. It is like the "assembling of yourselves together" which worshippers feel when they bow together to pray. It is like the journeying of the pilgrims in Taunhauser or the marching of the Israelites towards the Promised Land. The Cairngorm Club, threading its way along the slopes of Conachcraig and down by the dip at the Gelder, made a speedy pilgrimage, for the Foxes' Well was reached in

record time, and the welcome halt made for material refreshment.

Surely that well was not placed there by accident. How many amateurs have thrown themselves down at that hospitable oasis before they gathered their second wind to mount the Ladder? And surely the Ladder was not placed there by accident either, for the gasp of surprise which a beginner must give on first viewing the grandeur of the corrie is sufficient reward for the hard grind up that stony staircase.

On this occasion, the great corrie had been decked out in all its finery for this State visit. Never did the silent waters of the dark loch look more sombre. The sleeping giant of the hill, who at one time had emerged from that crater in fire and smoke, was imprisoned beneath the black surface, still and deep. The corrie hung round it like a mourning mantle of black and white, with deep rifts like chains holding the monster in spell. One could imagine Brunhilde standing there when the storm sweeps the mountain, calling her war maidens to come to her aid. Where is the Scottish Wagner who could fittingly write an opera to this setting?

The summit of Lochnagar seems less inspiring than the rest of the hill. At least on this May Holiday it did so. Perhaps it was because like other mortals, the Cairngorm Club must eat to find energy to finish the day's work. Or perhaps it was because no foot of ground could be found clear of snow, and such a cold seat could not beget inspiring thoughts. The best distant view was got, not from the summit, but later from the Stuic Buttress. However, the nearer view was superb. The western corrie was smiling up towards us like a sunny child, its two lochs like baby blue eyes fringed with the golden locks of the yellow sand. Nothing sinister here! Indeed the summit might have been the balancing place of the two forces of dark and light, good and evil, that are continually at work everywhere.

The cavalcade moved forward towards this sunny scene, down that boulder-strewn ridge which must have been part of the giant's upheaval long ages ago. Soon the corrie was rounded and the Stuic Buttress was seen in all its strength with the sun picking out each fissure on the great

wall. What visions were called up of past Presidents hanging "by the briers o' the een" over that terrible precipice! Here the distant view was enough to delight any mountaineer's heart. The glittering mass of the Cairngorms, fold upon fold, swept round from Cairntoul to Ben Avon, each peak standing out for inspection as though conscious of the special occasion. A light "that never was on land or sea" gleamed on the whole panorama, showing up the monarchs in true proportion and compelling the subordinates like Derry Cairngorm or Carn à Mhaim to lower their diminished heads. It was with reluctance that the club turned towards the long nose that leads towards the headwaters of the Garrawalt. If a "Te Deum" could have been sung, there was the place to sing it. Unfortunately Cairngorm Club members are rather inarticulate until pipes are lit up after supper time.

Our President has no doubt been trained by some of his predecessors to keep to a time-table. It was discovered that at the rate at which we were going, we were in danger of arriving at the Garrawalt Bridge several minutes too early! Accordingly, when a spring was reached before entering the tree area, a pleasant quarter-of-an-hour's reminiscent talk was indulged in. And so down to "Union Street"—as the President dubbed it—that lovely pine-needle track down past the Falls. Just as watches pointed to 5 the Club crossed the White Bridge, punctual enough to satisfy the most exacting martinet.

Will we do it again? Yes, a thousand times if we are spared. For a visit to Lochnagar never palls, and the monarch remains the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

A WEEK IN ROSS.

By W. A. EWEN.

FOR many years hopeful souls have been arranging trips to the Western Highlands, making cautious provision for "that rainy day." This Easter we turned westwards in more subtle fashion, provided with literature enough to outlast a fortnight's rain and with the minimum of climbing gear—included on the bare possibility of a fine day. The scheme failed, although, on the ninth day, the monotony of foggy westerlies was relieved by the advent of a foggy nor'-easter! The sun shone, it is true, on the first morning, and Dason, inspired—or disturbed—by the carolling of the matutinal lark, got up soon after six. The sound of frying bacon lured me from my sleeping bag at 6.30 (in round figures). We had pitched the tent near Loch Bhravin, a very suitable starting point for the "Ross-shire Alps." The weather, too, seemed propitious, until Dason announced his intention to climb in shorts. (I noted, however, that he carried several "heavier" garments in his rucksack.) From this time on, our glimpses of sun were few and short-lived.

By 9.45 a.m. we were contouring on the northern slopes of Druim Reidh, making for Sron na Goibhre and a' Chailleach, peaks rather devoid of interest, although occasional outcrops of rock and the lingering snow provided a certain amount of feature. By noon we were on the summit of a' Chailleach, obtaining fine views to north and west before the mists closed over us. Dason modestly retired behind the cairn and appeared later, more decorously draped in winter garb. As this failed to bring back the errant sun, we set a compass course for Sgurr Breac, climbing a fairly obvious ridge from the southern end of the Druim Reidh ridge. In spite of precautions, I was a little previous in announcing the summit, which is marked by a large cairn. This was discovered some fifty yards east of our position. Just beyond the cairn we commenced the descent of the north side of the mountain, which, we knew, was inclined to be precipitous in parts. Fortune and a snow slope provided

an easy route valleywards ; on our right was a fine rock buttress and westwards the ground appeared to be steep. The ascent of Sgurr nan Each and Sgurr nan Clach Gala might well be combined with that of Sgurr Breac, but the ridge drops here to 1,900 feet. We elected to return early to camp in order to visit Ullapool and repair omissions in the food list. Camp was reached at 3 p.m., leaving us ample time to motor to Ullapool.

The second night at Loch Bhraoin was less pleasant, a strong south-west gale keeping us awake for an hour or two, and bringing back memories of a Skye summer when this same tent had shown a marked inclination to make Kyle by the shortest route—over Marseo. It remained, on this occasion, more or less erect, but as Dason remarked, the only suitable tent for the West Coast is one with a “ floor ” sewn in—“ and then you know where you are ” ! We were not up with the lark, the wind-torn clouds over Sgurr Breac indicating a late breakfast. There being no improvement in the conditions, we moved on to Dundonnell, intending to climb An Teallach on the following day. During the evening the clouds dispersed and revealed the mountain ; there was rather more of it than we had expected, but we were slow to learn. Some days later we went to climb the “ grey one ” and found seven. It is time the climbing journals had ceased to practise this Gaelic euphemism on unsuspecting climbers ! Dason intended to devote the evening to a study of Gaelic place names, two of which he had, with some pains, already mastered. To differentiate between a’ Chailleach and An Teallach was, however, beyond the Sassenach ear, and the study ended in his insisting that we should climb something easy—like Lord Berkeley’s Seat !

In unpropitious weather, we set out, for An Teallach along the track from Dundonnell P.O. The summit of Glas Mheall Mhor was reached by a wholly uninteresting scree slope, made less bearable by a moist atmosphere and a chilling wind. Our chief object was to see the cliffs of Toll an Lochan, and it soon became obvious that these were not to be on view. So we decided to leave the southern peaks

for better weather and made our way down, and on the same day, in an endeavour to run out of the wind and cloud area, motored to Kinlochewe. Here the weather frequently showed distinct signs of clearing up, although when the improvement materialised it was impossible for us to say.

An early morning shower of hail, followed by rain, kept us in our sleeping bags on the day set aside for Beinn Eighe. But about noon, in a temporary lull, we set out from Cromasag and struggled through long heather to Sgurr a Conghair. From there the going was much better, and, although some scree is encountered, it is not the unstable variety. From Sgurr an Fhir Duibhe we traversed the Bodaich Dhubh Beinn Eighe to Creag Dubh and descended to Coire Domhain by an easy grass slope about 100 yards south of Creag Dubh summit. This makes a good excursion for a short day, the Sgurr Ban end of the ridge being particularly fine. The Bodach are interesting, but suffer from senile decay; on account of the high wind blowing we put on the rope, both the equilibrium of the climbers and the stability of the Bodach being something in doubt.

Not satisfied with his adventures on the tops, Dason decided to try conclusions with a recalcitrant stove, and proceeded to demonstrate that he could do everything with a Primus except light it. It hissed, spluttered, and expired; it played paraffin on the tent roof; it belched smoke and flame, and I deemed it advisable to leave it to the expert until the pyrotechnic display was over. From the safety of the car I could see Dason perform weird rites at a fountain of paraffin, to the accompaniment of strange gurgling sounds—not made by the Primus!

On the following day the weather made amends and we climbed Ben Alligin from Torridon. We gained nothing by using the path on the east side of the Coire Mhic Nobuil burn, which runs in a gorge and is not easily crossed until one is well off the direct line to Coire an Laoigh. The view from Ben Alligin beggars description; it is disconcertingly wide; the eastern mountains are a tangled recollection but those grey islands on the rim of the sea remain a clear and pleasant memory.

We appear to have missed one very rare item—to wit, the sight of one of the Club's "tigers" cutting seventy-five steps in *blue* ice on Liathach. A subsequent visit to Liathach did not reveal the presence of ice of any colour. Still, there can be little doubt that, if the blue ice was there, there also was this display of icemanship. The theory has been advanced that Mr. Parker's ice axe has peculiar properties akin to the power of Moses' rod—a useful asset in a mild winter! Is it not further rumoured that the ice axe, thrown down by Loch Maree, immediately turned into a salmon?

On April 14 we followed an easy route on the south slopes of Liathach (avoiding all ice slopes, glaciers, bergschrunds and Mr. Parker) and reached the summit ridge near Stuc a' Choire Dhuibh Bhig in an hour. From the eastern summit we traversed the ridge over Spidean a' Choire Leith to the Fasarinen pinnacles, where a descent was made to the road by a so-called easy route, vaguely outlined by the President some time before. Passing successfully through a labyrinth of terraces and rock-falls we arrived at the President's Burn (he said it was his), and shortly afterwards at a waterfall, where Dason sat on a wet slab, enjoyed a free bath, and prospected the route. His sedentary tactics and explosive account robbed this route of some of its charm, and it occurred to me to try another way, which proved easier and drier. A traverse brought us to the "President's Burn," by which we descended to the road. Many feasible routes on this side of the mountain look almost impossible from the road. The descent, in mist, might be something of a problem.

The next day was the worst of the week, and Slioch was scored off the list; but, in spite of bad weather and incomplete excursions, we saw sufficient of the Kinlochewe hills to make plans for further visits. In good weather much more might have been accomplished—with less to look forward to. Like most tours, this ends on a note of bathos; the powers that be demand an "article." But Dason's list of "camp menus" and "five-minute recipes" would have made much more interesting reading!

A GLIMPSE OF SKYE.

By W. G. EVANS, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S.

HEAVEN knows I had no wish to go with my friend B——. I've accompanied him on holidays before. He and trouble seem inseparable ; I am invariably dragged in. I pointed out to him, perhaps with too much emphasis, that Skye at Easter was a God-forsaken place ; full of puddles and mist ; a land fit for seagulls to live in. To make quite sure, I dwelt with care on the probability of muscular rheumatism and shipwreck.

Such pen-pictures served but to allure him ; I might have known better. A semi-coherent telegram requested me not to forget his climbing sprigs : address—Skye. Sundry similar demands apparently written on L.M.S. blotting paper, and *en route*, all equally illegible or ambiguous and devoid of proposed address, followed at intervals. Unable to bear it longer, burdened with his manifold needs, a bicycle, and a sense of impending trouble, I entrained for Skye.

The Kyle Hotel, Kyle of Lochalsh, is good after that endless exasperating crawl from Inverness. It came as a shock to be greeted at the door next morning by warm sunshine, a deep-blue sea and a really Mediterranean vista, with the Coolins in the distance. Blessed is he who expecteth nothing—but mist. That evening, too tired to stir, I rested within sight of the smoke of Sligachan, after 30 miles of headwinds, rain, hail, and unaccustomed exertion on surfaces well in keeping with tradition : and regarded the wet crags of Sgurr nan Gillean glistening in the evening sun, heavily and without enthusiasm.

The Sliguchan Inn, that Mecca of generations of climbers, was enduring the process, so dear to the heart of woman, of spring cleaning. Seating myself with tenderest care amidst workmen and tools, I waited, immobile, till speech and strength returned sufficient to explain to a half-

convinced maid that I was not in any way connected with any trade union.

Much too early next morning I was joyously greeted by my enthusiastic confrère B——. Let me add, that I, with unerring judgment, born of past suffering, had unearthed him overnight in Portree, by the simple expedient of telephoning the least expensive hotels, omitting all temperance ones: no lengthy description was required: each recognized him instantly.

The pinnacle of Sgurr nan Gillean was his first objective; nothing less would do. I groaned, but soon realized with relief that he, having scaled everything except the Storr rock in the few days preceding my arrival, was in anything but good condition. Knowing little of the mountain ahead except what I had read overnight in some dismal tome, the text of which seemed liberally bestrewn with statistics of the mortality-rate of those who climbed without a guide, we decided to try the "tourist route."

It is quite true to say that the Cuchullins are quite different from all other mountains in the British Isles. Difficulties lie on every hand; the right route may be obscure even in plain weather; distances are unusually deceptive. It may be that we found the aforementioned route; if so, my opinion of the average tourist needs revision. A rope would have been a great comfort on the last 200 feet, though the handholds are excellent and the gabbro unyielding; such rock as this irresistibly invites a climb even for those without a penchant for jeopardising their necks.

Little snow was encountered; none of it recent. The panorama from Sgurr nan Gillean well repays the climb. To the south-west, a jagged range topped by Alasdair; to the south, the massive citadels of Sgurr Beag, Sgurr na-'h'-Uamha, and Sgurr na Stri, hiding Harta Corrie; beyond a silvery Atlantic and the Outer Hebrides. To the east, and seeming far below Glamaig's green and brown slopes, bathed in sun, and beyond Raasay and Scalpay, and still beyond, the tall peaks of Ross-shire, momentarily blotted out in mist. To the north-east a specially arranged demonstration of typical Skye weather; hurrying rains sweeping in across

the Isle from the sea ; with bursts of short-lived sunshine playing on the glens of Trotternish, searchlight-fashion, through the clouds.

Friend B——, immersed in rations, agreed indistinctly that it was highly probable that we should soon be (a) very wet indeed, (b) wrapped in mist, (c) unable to get down again. My appetite departing, I hazarded a disregarded observation, that provided it be *terra firma*, sea-level has its points.

* * * * *

The following day, with bicycle and baggage, we removed from Sligachan to Glen Brittle, following Allt Dearg Mor over the Bealach a' Mhaim ; this was quite enjoyable. At the highest point of the pass is an impressive view of the grim, steaming flanks of Bruach na Frithe, and Sgurr Thuilm, with dark, forbidding corries and truly fearsome ridges thinly veiled with puffs of mist. Dante must have seen them.

On a dull, foreboding day in the Coolins, with lowered clouds raking the ridges, the appalling desolation communicates a feeling of depression hard to withstand.

It is small wonder that almost every crag has its history ; superstitious if not real. For the monarchs of the Cairngorms, with long acquaintance, one might entertain a feeling of affection ; the unrelieved ferocity of the Coolins would temper their attraction for most of us, with awe.

We descended on Glen Brittle house, navigated the bicycle circumspectly through the ranks of two platoons of interested Highland cattle, caked in mud, and insinuated ourselves into the house and—temporarily—into the good books of our hostess by unflinchingly declaring our passion for houses undergoing spring-cleaning. Was *all* Skye undergoing this same relentless operation ? In addition to this Easter curse, a heavy sea-mist, permitting scarcely 30 yards visibility, also lay upon the land.

The main contingent of the Club disporting themselves at Kinlochewe also shared its moisture—the thought was comforting.

Sgurr Alasdair having been decided upon the previous night, we, driven forth by broom and duster, emerged, to be greeted by a sympathetic fanfare from the Bovril squad also stationed somewhere in the mist. Shortly after, a water-rotted plank, successfully traversed by my friend B—, not very unexpectedly provided me with all the thrills and joys of surf-riding, in an icy waterfall swollen to ample dimensions. Neptune-like I arose from the flood. Whilst emptying hat, boots, and vocabulary, I detected, dimly, a hyena-like performance from higher up the bank. Philosophically pointing out, with an expression of sheer happiness, that I, at least, was no longer faced with the certainty of further wetness, we proceeded.

The story that the compass is unreliable in the Coolins owing to the magnetic nature of the rock was soon verified, but with map and mountain-loch to guide us, we eventually reached, after miles of bog-trotting, the desolate boulder-strewn slopes and roaring torrents at the foot of Coire Lagan. The "Great Stone Chute" between Coire Lagan and Coir' a' Ghrundda proved an unforgettable experience.

A steep, unstable scree-slope, probably nearly 3,000 feet in height, flanked by dimly-visible precipitous rock-walls, pouring down miniature cascades, splashing on the scree, gave us plenty to think about. A gingerly-made ascent of several feet, on all fours, was frequently rewarded with a wild downward slither in the middle of a rattling avalanche: weighty boulders perched on such a base needed watching.

Decades later, in slashing rain and best nursery-style, we crawled triumphant on to solid rocks, and the climb along the ridge to the pinnacle of Alasdair was quickly done. The height of Alasdair (3,309 ft.) fluctuates in different books: on wet days it is distinctly higher. A beautiful view! Naught but the dismal sound of dripping waters, squelching boots, and purplish remarks from scarcely-recognizable B—. There was nothing to see, he explained, wiping the streaming rain from his spectacles. Yes; Corrie Lagan, once in a life-time, on such a day with my friend B—, is quite enough.

A DAFT DAY.

By HUGH D. WELSH and IAN M. ROBERTSON.

OWING to its being of comparatively easy access, Lochnagar is perhaps the most frequently climbed mountain on Deeside. Usually the ascent is by the recognised foot-paths during the summer months, when long daylight and comparatively favourable weather conditions prevail. Numerous ascents are also made by the various gullies, chimneys, and buttresses which are features of the "steep frowning glories" of the northern and eastern aspects of the mountain, and provide all the thrills of rock climbing. Climbs under winter conditions, however, are no doubt undertaken but are infrequently recorded, so that an account of one by way of the Ballochbuie Forest may be of some interest to those who have not experienced the joys of an ascent of this landmark in deep snow. It was by this route that Byron, when a boy of fifteen, made the ascent.

The party numbered three, the writers and J. M. Shewan. In connection with investigations relating to certain soil problems in which we are engaged, samples of the soil from long-undisturbed pine forest were required, and no better place could be thought of than Ballochbuie Forest—"the bonniest plaid in all Scotland"—that remnant of the great Caledonian Forest which once covered the greater part of Scotland.

On Sunday, October 30, 1932, we left Aberdeen by bus at 7.50 a.m., *en route* for Invercauld Bridge, complete with rucksacks loaded with the requisites for soil sampling, and the inevitable adjuncts to a day on the hills. There was low cloud on the higher hills, but there was a promise of better conditions later, as patches of sunlight dappled the brown hillsides here and there. Our ultimate objective, Lochnagar, was cloud hidden, but the hills beyond Ballater were well covered with snow, and we speculated as to what the conditions on the higher levels would be.

About a quarter-to-eleven we stepped off the bus at the gate to the private road leading over the old Bridge of Dee to the Falls of Garbh-Allt. The snow was crisp but deep, and the air refreshing. After a chat with the keeper at the lodge we adjusted our packs and set off for the Garbh-Allt. Snow lay deep all round: the trees were laden. The Forest in summer is beautiful, but under snow it is indescribably so. Small parties of hinds with guardian males broke cover now and again and trotted away through the undergrowth. The intense stillness was broken now and again by the hoarse bellowing of challenging stags, but we did not see any signs of combat. Just below the Falls we struck off to the right into the Forest, ploughing knee-deep in the snow-covered heather and blaeberreries. Below the largest and thickest firs the snow did not lie so deeply, and here were dug out the soil samples we required. By now the air had become warmer, and a constant drip of water, with now and again a lump of soft snow, descended from the snow-laden branches. Rucksacks were packed again, each of us now having an additional load of three fourteen-pound bags well filled with wet soil. The bridge at the Falls was reached about 12.15, but we followed a deer track up the west side of the stream.

The snow was soft and damp, and in the long heather we often sank to well above the knees. In spite of this we had time to enjoy the beauty of what was around us. It was hard going, and we hoped for more comfortable and easier conditions higher up. We followed the Findallacher Burn, crossed it about a mile above the Falls and climbed the steep bank beyond, emerging through stunted firs on a long, flattish ridge between the Findallacher and the Allt Lochan nan Eun. The panorama of snowclad hills to the north and west was gorgeous in a rosy-golden sunshine. The Cairngorm giants supported tumbled masses of stormy-looking cloud, and seemed to soar above the dark tree and heather-clad foothills and valleys. The air was calm and mild: to the west there was glorious sunshine, but eastwards the sky was a mass of dull, leaden cloud, which filled the valley with a sinister, smoky-looking haze cutting out all

view, and giving the nearby snows a peculiar pallid grey appearance.

The crossing of the Allt Lochan nan Eun nearly put a stop to our programme. Ice covered the stones and shelved out below the water. Shewan, losing his foothold on the treacherous surface, fell face down into the water, but was up again immediately. Fortunately he had on his raincoat so that, apart from a soaking from the knees down, he was none the worse.

From this point the slope steepened, the snow lay deeper, and was so soft that progress was slow and laborious. We made the mistake of keeping to the east side of Meall an Tionail, where the snow had drifted over the peat hags: on the west side, which had faced the wind, the snow would have been harder and less deep. However, after considerable effort, we emerged on the col from which rises the long steep slope culminating in Cac Carn Beag. A boulder well up the slope, at about 2,750 feet, was our next objective, an ideal lunch halt and view point. Below us the Sandy Loch (Lochan an Eoin on the older maps) was smothered in snow and ice, and beyond, the black, mirror-like surface of Loch Nan Eun reflected the snow-plastered, mist-capped precipices of The Stuic. (On the older maps this loch is named Loch Dubh, a name that fitted it well on this occasion.) From among the Ballochbuie firs clouds of smoky mist arose, and, carried by sluggish currents, trailed themselves up and over the shoulder to the east of us. The wonderful panorama from west to north was, if anything, more beautiful and awe-inspiring than when seen earlier from lower down. Ben a' Ghlo shouldered up against a clear, yellow radiance, while Cairn Toul, Ben Macdhui, Cairngorm, Ben Avon, and Ben a' Bhuid soared, rosy tinted, into the clouds over wave upon wave of lesser heights. Eastwards the blackness had not lightened: Lochnagar itself was sunless, and a lazily drifting mist obscured the final climb and the tops of the nearby precipices. During our ascent we had remarked upon the numbers of flies and long-legged spiders crawling about on the snow surface. Where had they come from? There was no visible shelter for them, and here we

watched their apparently aimless wanderings around us. Fox tracks had been frequent, and here and there the foxes had dug holes to get to water. The silence was stifling, and a shout from us sounded thin and feeble in the still air, and echoed faintly from the crags behind. Time was hurrying on however, and at 3.15 we were once again on the move upwards.

Those who climb Lochnagar in summer will no doubt recollect what a jumbled pile of boulders the final peak is. The boulders were now for the most part deeply buried, and where their tops had been swept bare of snow, ice had glazed them so that they offered little hand or foot hold. The snow was so treacherous that we broke through continually, and hung suspended by our arms on the surface, feeling about below for something firm to stand on. Our progress was mainly on hands and knees, with an occasional stomach crawl over the glazed rocks. Our heavy rucksacks were an exasperation. At 4.25 the Indicator was reached in a biting wind and a flurry of fine snow. The mist lifted for a few seconds, and the huge cornices over the eastern corrie were revealed to us in the fast failing light. The light was now so far gone that the sooner we were off the hill the better.

It was an easy matter to scramble down in our final upward tracks, till a long slope invited a glissade to the saddle connecting with Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe. The bottom was hidden from us in the darkness, and we were just on the point of pushing ourselves off when a wide crack in the snow ahead was dimly discerned. Closer examination showed a great slab of snow stretching for many yards on either side of us ready to slide off. Skirting this to the left, and looking back and up, we saw that this slab was poised on the brink of a precipitous face of rock. What a narrow escape! The slope below us was now safe, and down we rushed. Hard snow and hail, carried on a bitter wind from the north, now came on, so raincoats were donned, and we set off along the western face of Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe towards Glen Gelder. Darkness was now complete. The going was heavy, soft and deep snow, covered with a tantalising unstable

crust, causing us to flounder and fall headlong time and again. This hill face and that of Creag Liath were crossed, and we were now on the slope overlooking Druim Odhar and Glen Gelder. Gelder Shiel was our next objective.

The snow had now developed into a steady downpour of rain and sleet, and our stumbling progress through the slushy snow across the tangled peat hags of Druim Odhar will not be soon forgotten. The brink of the Gelder was eventually reached at the plantation round the lodge. There was a lot of water running, but we splashed through knee-deep, and at 6.5 reached the road where it entered the plantation. Our going was easier, and it was a relief to have something trustworthy to walk upon, but even so, the trudge down to Easter Balmoral was anything but pleasant. Now and again a pair of green points of light would appear close to us and move slowly to the left. Foxes, no doubt. Away down the glen we could hear the stags bellowing. At 6.45 we entered the woods round Balmoral, where we received some shelter from the rain, and in due course reached the south Deeside road. We considered ourselves very fortunate in getting there so soon, as our bus left Braemar at 7.45 and we had ample time to get it at Crathie. Just as we crossed the Balmoral Bridge at 7.15 a bus went down the Braemar road. We thought it would be a good plan to go up to Crathie Church, sit in the porch, wring out some of the water from our clothes, and have something to eat. This was done, and while rucksacks were being packed again, the lights of a bus were seen coming down from the Braemar direction. Surely this was not our bus already? Shewan ran off to signal it to stop, while we followed at his heels. Just as he got to the gate, shouting, the bus roared past, and we were left gaping at one another! In the heavy rain a time table was examined by the aid of a flashlight, and to our consternation we found that the bus just gone was the last one that night and that there was no mention of one leaving Braemar at 7.45! How had we mistaken the time? There was no help for it but to make for Ballater and hope for a lift in to Aberdeen.

At twenty minutes to eight, therefore, three sodden

figures commenced the eight-mile tramp to Ballater, speculating on the chances of a lift. Walking was mechanical, and several times we had to rouse ourselves as we were on the verge of falling asleep. Near Abergeldie Castle a car came along behind us, and this we stopped. Unfortunately the car was full, so we were left lamenting. Not another car overtook us! The road seemed endless, but at length lights at Foot o' Gairn cheered us as we rounded Windy Corner. By this time we had decided to go up Glen Gairn a mile or so and try a friend there to run us in to Aberdeen. We were pretty tired, and as rain had never ceased we were thoroughly soaked. At the foot of the Gairnshiel road our packs were dumped and Shewan kept vigil over them while we two set off up the rain-filled glen. A peculiar feeling of floating was experienced now that our packs were off our shoulders, and it was difficult to maintain a straight course. Our friends were preparing for bed when we walked in, at 9.50. Hot tea and something to eat soon put us right, and our friend, with great goodwill, got out the car. Away we went, picked up Shewan and the packs, and warmed him up with some food and the contents of a thermos. Aberdeen was reached about 11.45, and very thankful were we to be back. But for our friend we would have had to stay in Ballater. Nevertheless, in spite of the discomfort, we had had a wonderful day—a day we will look back upon with great pleasure.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Forty-fourth Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on the evening of Saturday, November 26, 1932. The President, Mr. James McCoss, was in the chair and there was an attendance of 30 members.

Mr. William Garden, advocate, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, submitted the Accounts, which showed a credit balance of £27 0s. 6d. The membership at October 31 was 288, an increase of 18 over the previous year. The Accounts were unanimously adopted.

Office-bearers were elected as follows :—

Hon. President—Professor J. Norman Collie.

President—Mr. James McCoss.

Vice-Presidents—Mr. William M. Alexander and Mr. William Malcolm.

Hon. Editor—Baillie Edward W. Watt.

Hon. Librarian—Mr. J. A. Parker.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer—Mr. William Garden, advocate.

Committee—Mr. F. A. Ritson, Lord Provost Alexander, Mr. W. A. Ewen, Dr. J. R. Levack, Messrs. J. A. Parker, H. C. Dugan, J. C. Orkney, S. C. H. Smith, and Dr. D. P. Levack, the last four taking the places of Messrs. Geddes, Hay, and Reid, who retired by rotation, and Miss A. E. D. Bruce, resigned.

It was resolved that the New Year Meet should be at Braemar, the New Year's Day excursion to Lochnagar, and the Easter Meet at Kinlochewe. For the Spring Holiday excursion it was decided to traverse Lochnagar from Alltnaguibhsaich to Garbhallt. It was also agreed to arrange two snow-climbing excursions—to the Dubh Loch on February 12, and to Lochnagar on February 26; and three rock-climbing excursions on Saturday afternoons, March 4, 11, and 18, two to Souter Head and one to the Bullers of Buchan.

The Hon. Secretary reported, in regard to the Library, that six numbers of *The Alpine Journal* were required to complete the Club's set from Vol. XXVII, and that these, and binding cases and binding, and the index of Vols. XVI–XXXVIII, would cost £5 10s. 6d. This expenditure was authorized.

In regard to the Capital Fund of the Club, arising from Life Members' subscriptions, it was agreed, on the motion of Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Alexander Simpson, that an annual sum of 5/- for each surviving Life Member be transferred to the Income Account of the Club, and that interest at the rate of 4 per cent. be added annually to the Capital Fund.

THE ANNUAL DINNER.

Disappointment occasioned by the absence of Mr. F. S. Smythe, of Himalayan fame, at the Club Dinner, which was held in the Caledonian Hotel after the Annual Meeting, was more than compensated for by the complete success of the function in every other respect.

Mr. James McCoss, President, presided over a record attendance of 141, and the company included:—Members: Lord Provost Alexander, James McCoss, Baillie Watt, William Garden and Mrs. Garden, Dr. J. R. Levack and Mrs. Levack, Dr. J. W. Tocher, James A. Parker, Miss Margaret Skakle, Theodore Watt, George Duncan, William M. Alexander, G. T. R. Watt, G. S. Fraser, Dr. Walter A. Reid, E. Birnie Reid, F. A. Ritson, Dr. J. L. Hendry, Mrs. A. C. Hendry, A. Taylor, William Malcolm, Miss M. M. Telfer, G. J. Allan, Malcolm Smith, R. P. Masson, Maitland H. Gray, John Anton, R. T. Medd, W. D. Hutcheon, A. Simpson, S. C. H. Smith, John Angus, A. D. Edmond, J. C. Orkney, Miss B. P. Macfarlane, G. P. Geddes, H. J. Butchart, Miss E. J. Laing, Miss C. M. McDowell, James Conner, J. A. Hadden, Norman Wilson, W. P. Stewart, E. G. Gordon, Dr. D. P. Levack, Mrs. D. P. Levack, Dr. J. W. Levack, Miss E. L. Mitchell, Miss E. M. F. Cameron, A. Leslie Hay, Miss M. Yeaman, J. E. Bothwell, Miss A. E. D. Bruce, Miss P. Bruce, R. P. Yunnie, E. W. Smith, James Gove, Miss A. H. Dugan, Miss N. G. Henderson, Miss A. M. Pittendrigh, Mrs. E. A. Mackenzie, Miss Mary Daniel, Miss M. D. Johnston, Miss R. K. Jackson, Miss Mavor, Miss Wallace, J. R. Blair, Mrs. Blair, Miss Blair, David Anderson, H. G. Dason, Miss L. Brown, W. J. Middleton, D. A. Ewan, L. McGregor, William Stewart, J. A. Robertson, W. M. Macpherson, Miss W. Hay, Miss A. W. Stewart, Hugh D. Welsh, M. J. Robb, C. P. Robb, A. A. Slessor, James McHardy, Miss E. McHardy, H. C. Dugan, and J. A. Chisholm.

The Club guests were Dean of Guild John Black and Professor Alexander Gray, and the other guests were the Lady Provost, Mrs. McCoss, Mrs. E. W. Watt, Mrs. Theodore Watt, Miss Duncan, G. A. Clarke, Dr. H. J. Rae, T. F. Henderson, C. Davidson, Mrs. W. A. Reid, F. J. Donald, the Misses Donald (3), Mrs. E. B. Reid, Mrs. F. A. Ritson, Miss Joan Rust, Mrs. G. J. Allan, Mrs. Malcolm Smith, Mrs. R. P. Masson, C. McIver, A. E. Cruickshank, L. MacGregor, Mrs. S. C. H. Smith, Mrs. John Angus, Mrs. J. C. Orkney, Mrs. H. G. Dason, Miss E. E. McGregor, William Gerrard, Mrs. G. P. Geddes, Miss H. J. Chrystie, Mrs. H. J. Butchart, Mrs. Robertson, D. MacGregor, Miss I. D. Laing, A. J. W. Brockie, Mrs. Warren, Miss G. J. Martin, Miss F. E. Cameron, Hamish Mackie, Mrs. D. Anderson, Lieut.-Colonel Scott, Captain Anderson, Miss Laird, Mrs. J. A. Robertson, Mrs. W. M. Macpherson, Mrs. A. A. Slessor, Mrs. H. C. Dugan, and Mrs. J. A. Chisholm.

The President explained that Mr. Smythe, who was to have lectured on "Winter and Ski-Mountaineering," had been the victim of a motoring accident in Manchester. He was sure they all hoped that he would soon get well again—(applause). Within ten minutes of hearing the news about Mr. Smythe, he had been able to arrange for Mr. James A. Parker to lecture instead. It was very kind of Mr. Parker to help them out at such short notice and he deserved their sincere thanks—(applause).

After the loyal toast had been pledged, Professor Alexander Gray gave the toast of "The Club," with which he coupled the name of the President.

Professor Gray said, when he looked round the company, and when he studied the rules and the *Journal* of the Club, he felt he was a most unworthy guest at that festival, and most undeserving of the honour of proposing the toast entrusted to him. He observed that candidates for membership submitted a list of their ascents, Scottish and otherwise, with particulars of the hour and month. One of their most distinguished members had recently ascended into the Lord Provost's chair—(applause)—and henceforth from that serene altitude he would look down upon the thunder and the lightning—perhaps more thunder than lightning—(laughter). His (Prof. Gray's) ascents had been mostly by lift—in London, and the date was any year, any month. Hill-climbing, like charity, should begin at home, and might he admit that he had never even climbed the Broad Hill, although from the door of Harry Gordon's he had gazed up (enviously) at its beetling crags. On the other hand he had conquered the Blue Hill—(laughter)—and Brimmond. His first impression then, was that in that company of professionals, he, a mere amateur, was hopelessly out of place, like a vegetarian conducted to the Tower of London to a festival of beefeaters, or, like Gandhi, compelled to propose increased sales for furs—(laughter). But perhaps, on second thoughts, he might scrape into their good graces. His instincts, he believed, were sound, but they had been frustrated and perverted. The Club represented the natural man—all those who would rather hear the lark sing than the mouse cheep. And, in that, he was entirely with them and, therefore, hoped to be saved. As a general proposition it was better to cultivate a patch of potatoes than to cultivate the adolescent mind, and there was a larger crop at the end of the year—(laughter)—it was really more pleasant to extirpate weeds than economic heresies (and they burned better when dry). To plough the ploughed land with a plough was more invigorating than to guide the academic plough, though sometimes it was through surprisingly unresisting soil—(laughter). Consequently, the pass which he most desired for his deserving students, was a pass in the Cairngorms or the western hills, where there was no additional fee for sitting twice—(renewed laughter). So far, he was in agreement with them, but unlike them, he was not the stuff of which

heroes were made. Their spiritual home was the summit, preferably reached after climbing a rock in the manner of a fly on a pane; his was the furthest up croft, where the corn was stunted, where trout might be tickled in a conversational stream, where he might enjoy the companionship of weasels and mountain hares and all the high company of the heavens.

In proposing the toast of "The Club," therefore, he did so in the proper spirit of humility, as one who was content to be among the hills, saluting those whose unconquerable souls were satisfied with nothing less than the highest. If he might adopt the Platonic principle of dichotomy, he would divide all the multiplicity of societies into those that were useful and those which were not; their's certainly fell into the useful class and he had, therefore, special pleasure in congratulating them on their condition of prosperity. Paradoxically, it was gratifying to note that the Club was in no danger of being on the rocks—(laughter and applause). In commending their Club, he trusted that he was not introducing an undesirable political note when he said that in the nature of things they were a company of individualists. They very properly met there that night, and they likewise had Meets like those at Braemar at the New Year season, where they did things well and where (if he might say so) they expressed very gracefully some of their doings. For example, he read "The New Year was ushered in according to custom"—(laughter). And again he read—"On the stroke of midnight the company were entertained by Mr. Gregor in his usual generous manner"—(laughter and applause). But in the long run, the essence of all rambles, hikers, mountaineers, tramps, vagrants, and vagabonds and all the world's elect was that they journeyed alone or in the smallest companies. If he might say so, they looked charming there that night, but if they were suddenly and miraculously wafted to the only free hotel in Britain which kept a visitors' book, to the Shelter Stone, they would look out of place—(laughter). "The Cairngorms, in short, is not a commodity for mass consumption, and I commend you, in the first place," said Professor Gray, "for keeping alive a great ideal." We were living in an age of over-organisation: we were dominated by the machine. Even travelling was now so easy. Those who by their efforts climbed the steep ascent to Heaven (that is, the Angel's Peak) were the true travellers. He commended them then, inasmuch as they stood for the great principle that effort and exertion were necessary if anything worth having was to be attained. Secondly, he commended them for the special province which they had assumed for their activities. Under the beneficent rule of the Queen of the Cairngorms—whose relationships with foreign powers continued friendly—(laughter)—they had taken the Cairngorms under their charge, with a general interest in other hills in Scotland and, indeed, everywhere. They were the guardian spirits of the mountain, where spirits were always guardian.

He should have liked to have quoted to them the psalmist David, as well as Byron and Wordsworth, as to what the companionship of the hills meant. He believed that Byron and Wordsworth still gave the truest expression of what he might call the place of hills in human life, for our later poets were somewhat self-conscious, and seemed to be nervous about letting themselves go. And the enthusiasm of Byron and Wordsworth was largely occasioned by the preposterous "common sense" of the eighteenth century. They remembered Dr. Johnson, when Boswell threw a fly over his august nose. "Yes, sir," he said, as he contemplated the Western Highlands, "but it is not as fine as Fleet Street." He would give them another example which might be less familiar. Captain Burt, in the middle of the eighteenth century, wrote letters from the North of Scotland to a friend in London, which later made a most diverting book. He described the country where, as he said, an inhabitant of the South of England would be ready to die of fear if let loose, and added "But after this description of these mountains, it is not unlikely you may ask, of what use can be such monstrous excrescences?" They observed the implications. God doubtlessly made Fleet Street and the Broomielaw for a purpose, but surely it was in a fit of absent-mindedness that He made these useless and monstrous excrescences which they called the Cairngorms. He asked them, since it was their job to know, of what use were these monstrous excrescences? What was the use of a hundred square miles of heather, of wild waste places where only the red deer were, of rocks standing bold against the setting sun? What was the use of the winds of heaven, of the snow in the corries, of water that trickled through green moss of a thousand shades of greenness and over white pebbles? What was the use of a view from the top of one monstrous excrescence over the shoulders of half a hundred similar excrescences? Captain Burt—God bless him!—gave one answer. "It was," he said, "the deformity of the hills that made the natives conceive of their naked straths and glens as of the most beautiful objects in nature." So, likewise, an ugly wife served a useful purpose if she produced in her unfortunate husband a firm conviction that their quite plain daughter was something of a beauty. But they would give a different answer. Let them avoid rhetoric and the kind of thing that Wordsworth would say much better than he could. The high hills were not merely a refuge for the conies. All these things, said Professor Gray, represent a place of refreshment and comfort, a tonic by which humanity can be restored, a bath in which humanity might be cleansed. Strictly speaking, he supposed, from the scientific point of view, the hills were not eternal and even Ben Macdhui would pass like a shadow, but they were sufficiently eternal for those of them who had already misspent a large portion of their three-score years and ten. To view the world from the hills was like viewing things

from the altitude of eternity, so that all their little busy-nesses and they themselves sank into their proper proportions. Thirdly, in taking over the hills of Scotland, they were interested in what was most peculiarly Scottish. Presently, if the waters of controversy rose, they should be afraid to mention Scotland, just as forty years ago prudent people spoke of Erin when necessary, since mention of Ireland was almost bound to lead to a discussion on Home Rule and so led to many an unruly home—(laughter). They were not so advanced to-day, and therefore he might still mention Scotland. And of this Scotland, which they loved and served, the Cairngorms and the Western hills were the most enduring part. It is, added the speaker, a common complaint that all that is of value in Scotland is going South. Scotsmen who have prospered in London, when they come back to look at us, tell us that we export brains or have exported brains—(laughter). It is a well-known fact that we who are left are but a race of village idiots—(laughter). And other things in the new industrial revolution have set their faces to the South. But I think that Ben Macdhui, Cairn Toul, and Braeriach are safe for some time yet—(applause). Time forbade him speaking of the Scottish Youth Hostels movement, except to thank them for the interest they had shown in the past and to pray for their encouragement in the future. He gave them the toast of "The Club," coupled with the name of the President, and hailed them as among the last true travellers, as representing the companionship of the hills, and as a patriotic organisation interested in the most enduring features of Scotland—(loud applause).

The Chairman, in acknowledging, said :—In responding to a toast so ably proposed, one feels nervous in following the Professor up the pitch immediately in front. The handholds are not too good, and the footholds are no better. One feels it is very much safer to look up at him from the scree. Professor Gray is a mountain-lover, and the Cairngorm Club is a subject after his own heart. It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge on your behalf the cordial and very witty manner in which he has proposed the toast of "The Cairngorm Club," and we are most grateful to him, and offer him our sincerest thanks for coming here to-night. A notable achievement this year amongst Club members was the ascent of the Mitchell Tower, after dark. A most unusual offence against the recognized standard rules of climbing was perpetrated on this climb, as one of the party who ascended was left behind strapped to the highest point. This year a Junior Section has been added to the Club, and young people between the ages of 16 and 21 years are invited to join this new Section. These people are to be the climbers of the future and we welcome them. I am very proud of the Cairngorm Club and what it stands for. It is a most active body, with a large proportion of recently enlisted young members, who are very enthusi-

astic, and are doing things. The membership now stands at 298, just two from 300, and the increase is 28 over last year. The Cairngorm Club has great satisfaction in congratulating our member, Lord Provost Alexander. The honourable position of Lord Provost could not have been put in better hands. The electors knew where to get the right man, they came to the Cairngorm Club for him. We are full of confidence, now that he has tied himself on the leading end of the rope, and has started using his ice-axe. We feel that he will bring us all safely over the cornice to the summit. There is another prominent member of the Club who has been honoured, and whom we have pleasure in congratulating. He is Dr. Walter A. Reid, who received the degree of LL.D. from Aberdeen University. I remember about 25 years ago, if one went to Lochnagar one was sure to meet Dr. Reid, wearing a double peaked cap, climbing with Dr. Levack. As members of the Cairngorm Club we all love the Cairngorms. In sunshine or rain, blue skies or mist, the Cairngorms are always the Cairngorms. When summer has passed to autumn, and autumn to winter, the Cairngorms, lifting their summits skywards, remain sleeping under great white eider-downs of purest snow; mystic and silent guardians of the purple heather that will bloom again, of the burns that will reawaken when the time comes, to cascade down their sides.

In winter the Cairngorms is a place for strong and young people with stout hearts, revelling in the glory of storm and flood, wild nature and elemental forces. In spring the Cairngorms is unbelievably lovely. This is the time of great snowfields, colossal icicles, avalanches, bracing winds, and for long periods, brilliant sunshine. Club members have learned the advantages of this period and are now turning out to excursions in such numbers that it is often very difficult to get the names of those who attend.

In summer the Cairngorm group is indescribable in its variety of scenery and perpetual glamour. Forests, glens, and tiny lochans, streams and trackless heather moors, screes and steep stretches of rock to gaze upon. In the glens always the delicious aroma of the larches and the pines, splashing waters foaming over great masses of boulders. The bleached skeletons of the ancient pines sticking through the black peat, and green patches of boggy grass on which the cotton-sedge is strewn like flakes of snow. There is charm all the way up to them, from the cry of the lapwing to the croak of the ptarmigan. The immense thick forests of Rothiemurchus, Glenmore, Abernethy, and Ballochbuie have their own secret influences. Penetrate one of them on a summer afternoon when the sun is throbbing in the sky and in the forests deep gloom, save for filtered splashes of light throwing queer shadows, you hear nothing, not even the hum of bees or the chirp of a bird. There is a silence that can be felt, and you feel you are an intruder, and that you are being

watched by the eyes of the invisible wild life. It must have been such an afternoon as this which gave Robert Louis Stevenson the inspiration to write—

The first pine to the second said :
" My leaves are black, my branches red ;
I stand upon this moor of mine,
A hoar, unconquerable pine."

The second sniffed and answered : " Pooh !
I am as good a pine as you."

" Discourteous tree," the first replied,
" The tempest in my boughs had cried,
The hunter slumbered in my shade,
A hundred years ere you were made."

The second smiled as he returned :
" I shall be here when you are burned."

So far discussion ruled the pair,
Each turned on each a frowning air,
When flickering from the banks anigh,
A flight of martens met their eye.
Sometime their course they watched ; and then
They nodded off to sleep again.

There is, too, the moods of the clouds playing on the hillside of an afternoon, and their mystical groupings in the sky at evening-time, filling the mind with deep content as we leave the mountain summit to commune with the stars. Probably the best moments of every expedition are when one has had time afterwards to sit and think it all over again—(applause).

At this stage the company adjourned to the drawing-room, where Mr. Parker's lecture was given.

Mr. Parker was at the top of his lecturing form. He took his hearers on a "mystery tour." Beginning at Loch Lomond, he travelled up the West Coast of Mull and Ardnamurchan and on to Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour, through Knoydart to Loch Duich and Loch Broom, showing views of Beinn Dearg, and thence across to Harris. After depicting that little-known and mountainous district in the Hebrides, he went on to Iceland and Spitzbergen. From Alaska he took his audience along the coast to Vancouver and home again, via the Rockies, showing a slide of that magnificent peak, Mount Robson. The lecture, which was much appreciated, was illustrated by a wealth of lantern slides from Mr. Parker's own photographs.

Mr. Norman Wilson subsequently gave the toast of "The Guests." They were very sorry, he said, that they had not Mr. Smythe with them, and he was sure it would be their wish that he should couple Mr. Smythe's name in the toast—(hear, hear). Professor Gray had taken a very great and active part in the Scottish Youth Hostels

Association, and he was sure his interest in and work for the Association would go far, not only in making young people interested in the country but in the Club. Mr. Wilson also welcomed another guest in Dean of Guild Black, Elgin, a Vice-President of the Moray Mountaineering Club, which, although only a year old, had conducted a number of successful excursions. The Moray Club, he understood, intended going more or less to the North of Scotland, but he was sure they would visit the Cairngorms.

Dean of Guild Black, who suitably replied, wished the Club every success.

On the call of the Chairman the healths of Mr. William Garden, the new Club Secretary, and of Baillie Watt, editor of the Club *Journal*, were pledged, while votes of thanks were accorded Mrs. Garden and Miss Margaret Skakle for their songs; Mr. Stott, lantern slide operator, and Mr. George Allan and Mr. McGregor for their work behind the scenes.

The toast of "The Chairman" was given by Lord Provost Alexander. Like Mr. Garden he had been a member of the Club for many years, and never had it been more prosperous than it was to-day—(applause). Successive chairmen had each made their contribution to its success and prosperity. In paying tribute to the President, the Lord Provost said that Mr. McCoss was not only a climber but also a writer. In one of the most fascinating papers in any magazine in his time Mr. McCoss had written of a delightful excursion to the mountains of the moon.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1933—BRAEMAR.

THE 1933 New Year Meet, held at Braemar from December 30 to January 3, was a very successful one. There were 41 members and guests present, namely:—J. McCoss (President), Wm. Malcolm and W. Alexander (Vice-Presidents), J. Angus, J. Blair, Jun., H. J. Butchart, A. J. W. Brockie, J. L. Duncan, Wm. Garden, E. G. Gordon, J. Gove, A. L. Hay, W. D. Hutcheon, J. W. Levack, J. Morison, J. A. Parker, E. B. Reid, R. T. Sellar, E. W. Smith, G. R. Symmers, A. Taylor, and R. P. Yunnie, Mrs. Angus, Mrs. Blair, Mrs. Garden, and Mrs. Hendry, Misses Daniel, Duncan, Harbinson, McCoss (Queen), Pittendrieh, Sim, and Yeaman. Guests—Dr. Hendry, Dr. Pearson, and Wright, Mrs. Pearson, Mrs. Sim, and the Misses Pearson.

For the first two days of the Meet the weather was excellent, but it completely broke down on the last day. Most of the members arrived for dinner on Friday, and during the evening the dancing of Highland reels to the music of the pipes was much enjoyed by all present.

December 30, 1932.—Symmers ascended Beinn a' Bhuid in glorious weather.

December 31, 1932.—An early start was made, and the sun just caught the highest snow-clad summits of the Cairngorms as the party motored over the Black Bridge.

1. Angus, Butchart, Duncan, Levack, McCoss, and E. B. Reid, Mrs. Angus, Misses Duncan, McCoss, and Pittendrigh ascended Ben Macdhuì by Sron Riach under ideal conditions. On the top there was brilliant sunshine and a very fierce N.E. wind was blowing, which put wind-proof garments to their full test. Most of the plateau was a sheet of ice, the result of very low temperature. The view was good in all directions. At Stob an Sput Dearg the party divided. Messrs. Duncan and Reid, Misses Duncan, McCoss, and Pittendrigh descended by Loch Etchachan and Glen Derry, the remainder of the party descending by the route of ascent.

2. Messrs. Hay, Symmers, Misses Harbinson and Yeaman went up Glen Lui Beg and had a snow climb in Coire an Sput Dearg.

During the evening Miss E. McCoss, the Queen of the Club for 1933, was crowned. Preceded by a piper, she was borne shoulder-high into the room on ice-axes by the four most handsome members of the Club. The usual crown of stag-moss was placed on her head. The new Queen suitably acknowledged the honour and claimed the first dance with Mr. Parker. After E. B. Reid gave one of his amusing speeches the Queen's health was drunk in a bowl of punch, brewed and served by Angus and Sellar, who were dressed for the occasion and looked the part. The next part of the programme was the initiation of new members. Mrs. Angus, who had newly experienced the wintry conditions on the summit of Ben Macdhuì, passed the severe tests asked of her with flying colours, and was proclaimed a worthy member of the Club. The members then indulged in dancing under the leadership of Miss Sim.

January 1, 1933.

1. Harbinson, Hay, Hutcheon, Symmers, and Yeaman ascended Cairntoul. They went up the stream leading into the Saucer Corrie, and cut a route up the back of the Corrie to the summit, and descended by the usual route to Carrour.

2. Malcolm, E. W. Smith, and Yunnie had a climb in Coire an Sput Dearg, coming out about 50 yards from the Stob, and then proceeded to the cairn of Ben Macdhuì.

3. Duncan, Garden, McCoss, and Taylor did Lochnagar by the Garbh Allt. The boulders were ice-covered on the North Ridge and the wind was very cold. The Spectre of the Brocken was seen at the top of the hill. The descent was made over Meall an Tionail.

4. Misses Duncan, Pittendrigh, and Sim ascended Lochnagar by the Garbh Allt and joined No. 5 party.

5. Alexander, Angus, and Parker ascended Lochnagar by the Black Shiel Burn and descended by the same route.

6. Brockie, Gordon, and Wright did Cairntoul from the Corrou

Bothy, where they were staying. They ascended into the Soldier's Corrie and cut a route up the Slichet (first ascent in winter).

7. Levack, Morison, and Reid ascended Morrone.

January 2, 1933.

1. Daniel, H. Duncan, Harbinson, Morison, and Pittendrigh ascended Beinn a' Bhuird by the Slugan Glen. Conditions were so bad on the top that the party were content to gain the plateau and did not attempt to locate the cairn, but descended with as much haste as possible to milder regions.

2. Hay, Hutcheon, and Yeaman went to Loch Etchachan. The conditions there were very bad. They were wet.

3. Alexander, Malcolm, Taylor, and Smith walked up Glen Slugan and returned by Glen Quoich.

FEBRUARY 5, 1933.—DUBH LOCH OF LOCHNAGAR.

THIS excursion was arranged so that Club members might have a tussle with the gullies of Creag an Dubh Loch in winter conditions.

The party left Golden Square by charabanc at 8.30 a.m. for Alltนาguibhsaich. Those present were:—Misses Daniel, McDowell, McHardy, Patterson (Junior Section), and Stewart, Messrs. Clow, Dr. Evans, Gordon, McCoss, McHardy, McLay, Malcolm, Medd, Dr. Martin, E. W. Smith, Malcolm Smith, S. C. H. Smith, Slessor, Taylor, and Yunnie. Guests—W. Brockie, M. B. Watson, and J. McConnach—23.

E. W. Smith, McConnach, and Yunnie ascended Lochnagar by the Ladder.

Brockie, Gordon, and Watson went up into the Lochnagar Corrie and spent the day in the West Gully. They failed in the ascent owing to bad conditions.

McLay, Malcolm, and Malcolm Smith ascended to Lochan Buidhe.

The remainder of the party, fourteen in number, ascended to the west end of the Dubh Loch, where the stream was intended to be crossed, but owing to the great thaw it was in high flood. Miss McHardy, Miss Stewart, and Medd, jumped the boulders and got over, but it was found that all the party could not follow, so the remaining eleven members tried to cross higher up, and a crossing point was not reached till the party had ascended to 2,750 feet, and then only with difficulty. Medd followed the party on the other side of the stream to help in crossing and we joined forces with him. As the two ladies were somewhere at the foot of the cliffs, McHardy, Medd, and Slessor descended again on the south side of the stream to find out what had become of them.

The rest of the party, now numbering nine, made for the top of Broad Cairn, where an exceedingly fine view was obtained over Glen Clova to the south. I think I can safely say that I have never seen so little snow in February for the past twenty years.

Meantime Miss McHardy and Miss Stewart, who had come away without their knitting, did not know what to do with themselves, so they attacked the Central Gully, and made the first winter ascent of it. We saw their steps at the steep head of the gully as we passed it. McHardy, Medd, and Slessor, when they reached the foot of the Central Gully, saw the snow steps and followed the ladies' route to the top of the gully.

The party re-crossed the Allt an Dubh Loch by the small wooden bridge at the west end of Loch Muich. This was accomplished with some difficulty, as the stream had burst its banks and had formed another stream.

The bus was reached after dark at Allt-naguibhsaich, and tea was taken at the Alexandra Hotel, Ballater.

The South-East Gully seems to be impossible in winter. Great icicles were hanging on it from top to foot, and it certainly would not have gone this day. Its only ascent was by Symmers and Miss Bruce in September, 1928.

The Central Gully is an excellent snow climb, and deserves more attention. The North-West Gully, at the upper end of the cliff, has never been climbed, and it seems to overhang at the top. There is also a route to the top at the depression immediately south-east of the cliff. This route, though very easy, would entail step-cutting in hard snow.

It is worth while to note that if one is making for the foot of Creag an Dubh Loch, and the stream is likely to be in flood, the best way is to cross the stream by the small wooden bridge at the west end of Loch Muich.—J. McC.

FEBRUARY 26, 1933—LOCHNAGAR.

THIS was a snow-climbing excursion, and a party of members and friends, numbering 28, left Golden Square at 8.30 a.m., complete with full equipment of ropes, axes, and ski. Those present were:—Mrs. Ross MacKenzie, Misses Daniel, Hay, McDowell, McHardy, Patterson (Junior Section), and Stewart, Messrs. Aitken (Junior Section), Angus, Clow, Dugan, Gordon, Gove, Dr. Martin, Medd, McCoss, McHardy, Malcolm, Slessor, E. W. Smith, and Yunnie. Guests—W. Brockie, C. Medd, R. Mitchell, C. McIver, Miss M. McIver, C. McLennan, and Beard. During the outward journey the party ran into sleet, but beyond Ballater dry snow was falling. The intention was to drive up Glen Muich to the Spital, but we were advised that this road was impossible owing to drifts, so the route was changed, and the party motored to the Suspension Bridge at the Danzig Shiel. In a heavy snowstorm twenty-two well-equipped members started for the hill. Gordon and Beard put on ski and followed behind. The party ascended to the height of 2,500 feet

on the west side of Carn Fiaclan, above the Black Shiel Burn. At this point the weather conditions assumed a blizzard, and clothing began to freeze, so it was decided to go no further. It was obvious that it would be quite impossible to reach the summit. However, when the party reached the Forest again, conditions were very pleasant though it was still snowing, and the walk through the Ballochbuie to the bus was much enjoyed.

Messrs. Medd, C. Medd, C. McIver, and Miss McIver motored up Glen Muich and got stuck in the snow near the Falls. They walked to Allt-naguibhsaich and ascended the hill some distance, but had to turn owing to the snowstorm. Tea was at the Alexandra Hotel, Ballater.—J. McC.

ROCK CLIMBS AT SOUTER HEAD.

March 4, 1933.—No excursion was possible owing to very heavy rain all day.

March 11, 1933.—This was a very successful excursion. At one period during the afternoon four ropes were in use at the same time. Mr. Parker very kindly motored the party from Balnagask to the climbing ground in relays. The excursion was attended by Miss McDowell, Messrs. Clow, Gordon, Dugan, McCoss, and Parker. Guests—W. Brockie, R. Forrest, J. Irvine, R. Mitchell, R. Reid, M. B. Watson, and S. Wright. The Slab-top Chimney was ascended by Miss McDowell, Messrs. Clow, Watson, and Wright; the Milestone Climb by Miss McDowell, Messrs. Clow and Wright; the Crack above the Pool by Messrs. Clow, Brockie, Wright, and Watson. Overhang Crack at Pool was attempted by Gordon (exceptionally difficult: not yet ascended). The Face Climb at Pool was done by Gordon, McCoss, and Watson; the Face Climb south of Pool by Miss McDowell, and Messrs. Clow, Brockie, Gordon, Watson, and Wright; and the Short Face Climb, south of Pool, by Miss McDowell, Messrs. Irvine, Mitchell, and Wright. The Sea Traverse was accomplished by nearly the whole party.

March 18, 1933.—The party who attended this excursion consisted of Messrs. Clow, Dugan, Dr. Martin, and McCoss. Guests—Miss N. Helmrich and M. B. Watson. The party walked from Balnagask to Souter Head, where it was decided to go further south and visit Clashrodneay, below the farm of Cairnrobin, so that those present might see the climbs there. The climbs to the south, namely, the Back and Foot Chimney, the Trap Dyke Crack, and the Curved Crack were all too wet, so attention was directed to the climbs at the north end. The tide was too high for the start of some of the climbs, but a good deal of scrambling was accomplished. The Upper Crack above the little deep bay was ascended by Messrs. Martin, Clow, Dugan, and Miss Helmrich, and the Staircase was climbed by McCoss and Watson.—J. McC.

EASTER MEET, 1933—KINLOCHEWE.

This year the Club held their annual Easter Meet at Kinlochewe Hotel, Ross-shire. Those present were :—H. G. Dason, D. S. P. Douglas, W. A. Ewen, J. McCoss, A. R. Martin, R. T. Medd, J. C. Orkney, J. A. Parker, E. B. Reid, M. J. Robb, S. C. H. Smith, and G. R. Symmers, Mrs. Ross MacKenzie, Misses L. Archibald, M. Daniel, H. M. E. Duncan, A. M. Pittendrigh, A. W. Stewart, and M. M. Telfer. Guests—F. Garrow, A. A. Marr, D. Medd, Misses Brown and Stewart—24. This was a most successful Meet, and as the district was new to most of those present, the ascents were interesting and were very much enjoyed.

The following excursions were carried out :—

Tuesday, April 11.

Dason and Ewen ascended Beinn Alligin. They were finishing a ten days' climbing tour with tent and motor.

Thursday, April 13.

1. Dason and Ewen ascended Beinn Eighe from a camp established in Glen Torridon.

2. Parker caught a salmon and climbed Liathach, "says he." What he actually did was to walk to Loch Coulin and back again.

Friday, April 14.

1. Parker, Reid, Douglas, Marr, and the two Medds walked to the foot of Glen Bianasdail and climbed Slioch by way of the east corrie. The descent was made along the east ridge to Sgurr an Tuill Bhain, and thence down the east corrie.

2. Symmers walked from Achnasheen over Fionn Bheinn to Kinlochewe.

3. Dason and Ewen did Liathach, ascending between Bidean Toll a Mhuic and Spidean a Choire Leith. They traversed Corrie Leith then over the Spidean and kept the ridge westward to the Fasarinen Pinnacles, descending on the east of the stream in the gorge which descends to the keeper's house at the small wood.

4. Archibald, Brown, Daniel, Martin, McCoss, Mrs. Ross MacKenzie, Orkney, S. C. H. Smith, and Telfer followed the above route on Liathach, only they ascended straight up to the west of Bidean Toll a Mhuic.

5. Duncan, Garrow, Robb, Pittendrigh, A. Stewart, and M. Stewart traversed Corrie Leith to Spidean a Choire Leith, then took the ridge eastward and did Bidean Toll a Mhuic and Stuc a Choire Dhuibh Bhig, and descended near the route of ascent.

Saturday, April 15.

This day was wet, and excursions mostly on the lower ground were participated in by all the members.

1. Daniel, D. Medd, R. T. Medd, and Telfer walked to the watershed beyond Clair and Coulin, and back again.

2. Douglas, Marr, Reid, and S. C. H. Smith were motored to Achnasheen by Orkney, and there the car broke down. A goods train took this party of four to Achnashellach, and they shared a truck with another dog. They walked up the path by the River Lair to the watershed between Beinn Liath Mhor and Carn Eite, where they met the Medd party, and so to Glen Torridon.

3. Duncan, Pittendrigh, Robb, and Symmers did Slioch and came back rather more than a little wet.

4. Garrow, Martin, and the Misses Stewart motored the round—Dundonnell, Garve, Achnasheen.

5. Archibald, Brown, and Mrs. Ross MacKenzie also motored the same route.

6. McCoss and Parker motored to Gairloch and visited the Youth Hostel, Carn Dearg, where they had a lunch which cost threepence.

Sunday, April 16.

1. Martin, S. C. H. Smith, and Symmers did the following tops of Beinn Eighe :—Creag Dubh, Sgurr Ban, Spidean Coire nan Clach and Ruadh Stac Mor.

2. Daniel, Garrow, McCoss, Mrs. Ross MacKenzie, A. Stewart, M. Stewart, and Telfer did Creag Dubh. They traversed the ridge of the Black Men, and went over each of the pinnacles, keeping exactly to the ridge all the way, to Sgurr an Fhir Duibhe and down to the Fhir Duibhe—Ban col.

3. Douglas, Marr, Reid, and Parker ascended Beinn Eighe from Loch Bharranch by the excellent path in Coir' an Laoigh to Spidean Coire nan Clach and along the ridge to Sgurr Ban then down to the Fhir Duibhe—Ban col. At this point Garrow and the Misses Stewart dropped down into the Glen, and Daniel, Mrs. Ross MacKenzie, and Telfer continued on to Sgurr Ban and Spidean Coire nan Clach. McCoss joined the eastward-going party, composed of Douglas, Marr, Reid, and Parker, and ascended Sgurr an Fhir Duibhe and the pinnacles, dropping down into Coire Domhain and the Allt a' Chuirn.

Monday, April 17.

Parker started from Annat, at the head of Loch Torridon, and followed the path behind Ben-damph House to the bridge over the Allt Coire Roill. From just west of this bridge an excellent path was followed southwards up the glen to the Drochaid Coire Roill at its head. The intention had been to climb Beinn Damh, but it was covered with mist down to about 2,300 feet, with no signs of clearing. Enough of the hill was seen to show that its east face is precipitous, with a steep shoulder rising up from the Drochaid. The return to Annat was therefore made over the top of Beinn na h- Eaglaise (2,410 ft.)—a sandstone hill, with many small escarpments and, between its two summits, an interesting string of four small lochs. The east face of the hill is very steep, and a considerable detour westwards had to be made before a direct course could be struck out for Annat.



Easter, 1933.

THE CLUB AT KINLOCHEWE.

S. C. H. Smith.

Back Row—Stewart, Robb, Orkney, Symmers, Telfer, Douglas.

*Front Row—Stewart, Pittendrigh, Duncan, Ross McKenzie, Medd, Daniel,
Brown, Archibald, Marr, Reid, Garrow, Parker.*

The whole district is most interesting, with its towers of old red sandstone, white quartz summits and screes, and green chlorite schist. There is water everywhere, the sea and the lochs, with tree-covered islands. The breezes are more kindly than on the Cairngorms, and there is a peculiar mystery and peace which this part of the West breathes to one who is accustomed to the East coast.

J. McC.

EASTER MEET SECTION AT BRAEMAR.

G. J. ALLAN, M. H. Gray, and Malcolm Smith held a Meet of their own at Braemar.

Friday, April 14.

Allan and Gray motored to the Cairnwell. From there they climbed Meall Odhar and Glas Maol. They then struck north-eastwards along the boundary to Cairn-na-Glasha and Tolmount. After that they descended the steep slope into Glen Callater and walked along the valley past Loch Callater to Auchallater. The weather was clear when the climb was started, but half-an-hour later there was thick mist, which continued till Cairn-na-Glasha was reached. Thereafter the mist disappeared and good views were obtained.

Saturday, April 15.

On Saturday morning Allan, Gray, and M. Smith, who had arrived at Braemar the previous night, motored to Derry Lodge with the intention of climbing Ben Macdhui and returning by Derry Cairngorm. The route chosen was Glen Derry and Coire Etchachan, and fine weather was experienced until noon, when lunch was taken just below Loch Etchachan. From there the climb was continued against a strong head wind, which gave way to mist and heavy rain, so that no view was obtained at the summit. In view of the depressing weather conditions, it was decided to cut out Derry Cairngorm, and the return was made by the same route, heavy rain falling practically all the way. Derry Lodge was reached about 5.30 p.m.

Nothing strenuous was attempted on Sunday. In the morning the party enjoyed the bright sunshine and views on Creag Choinnich, and in the afternoon motored to Glen Ey, returning to Aberdeen in the evening.—M. S.

SPRING HOLIDAY EXCURSION, 1933—LOCHNAGAR.

A PARTY consisting of 22 members assembled at Ballater and motored in four cars to Alltnaguibhsaich. The route traversed was up the Ladder to Cac Carn Beag, then along the Callater Path to the top of the Stuib Buttress, down the Allt a' Choire Dhuibh to the Feindallacher Path and through the Ballochbuie Forest to the suspension bridge at the Danzig Shiel, where the motors were waiting.

The cliffs were magnificent, having been dusted to a grey shade by a fall of snow, during a thunderstorm, two days earlier. The day was excellent, without any wind, and though the temperature

was not very high, there was a good deal of sunshine. The Cairngorms were very clear, each hill standing out very distinctly. The Rev. E. Cruickshank was specially interested in Cnap a' Chleirich (the Priest's Knoll; 3,811 ft.), which was pointed out to him. Those present were:—W. N. Aitken (Junior Section), D. N. Collie, Rev. E. Cruickshank, Dr. Evans, Wm. Malcolm, A. Muir, J. McCoss, J. McHardy, and A. A. Slessor. Mrs. Ross Mackenzie, Misses Archibald, Burley, Daniel, Hay, McHardy, Mackenzie, Patterson (Junior Section), Skakle, and Telfer. Guests—G. A. Johnstone, Misses Johnstone and Marshall.—J. McC.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON EXCURSIONS, 1933.

MAY 20—PETER HILL AND MOUNT BATTOCK.

THE first Saturday afternoon excursion took place on May 20, 1933, and was attended by 25 members and guests. The party left Golden Square at 2.30 p.m. by charabanc and two private cars. Those present were:—Rev. E. Cruickshank, Wm. Garden, J. McCoss, J. C. Orkney, J. A. Parker, A. A. Slessor, Malcolm Smith, and S. C. H. Smith, Mrs. E. J. Hendry, Mrs. Ross Mackenzie, Misses Archibald, Burley, Campbell, Jackson, Johnstone, Martin, Mitchell, Telfer, Wallace, and Wisely. Guests—Messrs. T. Archibald, C. Lind, Mrs. Orkney, Mrs. S. C. H. Smith, and Master Smith.

1. Miss Burley, Mr. and Mrs. Orkney, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. H. Smith and Master Smith ascended Peter Hill by the path east of the hill and over Luther Moss, descending by the Glaspits Burn.

2. Cruickshank, Garden, Johnstone, Parker, Telfer, and Wallace did Peter Hill by the Glaspits Burn path and descended on the east side. Parker motored this party home, and Cruickshank crossed the Cairn o' Mounth on push bike.

3. T. Archibald, Lind, McCoss, Slessor, and Malcolm Smith, Mrs. Hendry, Mrs. Ross Mackenzie, Misses Archibald, Campbell, Jackson, Martin, Mitchell, and Wisely ascended Mount Battock by the Glaspits path, crossed the Aven, passing Cock Hill on the east. Their time was:—

	Time.	Distance.	Height.	Climbing Height.
Sawmill ..	4.0 p.m.		500'	
Glaspits— Peter Hill		h.m. mls.		
Watershed	5.0 p.m.	1.0 2	1,700'	1,200'
Aven ..	5.15 to 5.30 p.m.	0.15 ½	1,300'	
Battock ..	6.40 to 7.0 p.m.	1.10 2	2,555'	1,255'
Aven ..	7.40 p.m.	0.40 2	1,300'	
Watershed	8.10 p.m.	0.30 ½	1,700'	400'
Sawmill ..	9.0 p.m.	0.50 2	500'	
		4.25 9		2,855'

If we apply the climber's formula, it will be seen that they were going at the proper speed :

	h.m.
3 miles per hour—9 miles	3.00
2,855 feet—30 minutes per 1,000 feet	1.25
	4.25

The afternoon was fine and tea was partaken of at Feughside Inn.—J. McC.

JUNE 10—SOCACH.

A PARTY of 19 members started at 2.30 p.m. by charabanc and one private car. Those present were :—Messrs. J. Angus, Wm. Garden, A. R. Martin, J. McCoss, and S. C. H. Smith; Mrs. Angus, Mrs. A. Hendry, Mrs. Ross Mackenzie, and Mrs. Wilson; Misses H. M. Campbell, R. K. Jackson, M. W. Johnstone, E. Mavor, E. A. Mavor, Margaret Skakle, M. M. Telfer, and C. H. Wisely. Guests—C. R. Enson and Miss E. Allan. The charabanc left the Tarland road at Tillylodge and proceeded to Confunderland (for the benefit of the very ignorant who may not know where Confunderland is, I give its exact position—Lat. N.57° 10' 26", Long. W. 2° 48'), where the walk started at 4.10 p.m.

It rained all the time the hill was being crossed, but "It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven," and was refreshing and pleasant, even though the grass and heather were very wet. The first part of the ascent, The Top (1,750 ft. contour), was reached in 30 minutes, and Pressendye (2,032 ft.) in another 20 minutes, then Pittenderich (1,655 ft.) was crossed, and the beautiful wooded ridge running south to Tarland was traversed. Along a lovely wooded pathway marvellous glimpses of the hills were got, the Coyles of Muick having a fine setting against heavy clouds. The dazzling shades of green made brilliant by the rain were gorgeous, and the tender new shoots of the firs caught the eye, looking like blossoms against the older and darker greens of the trees. The club's now famous Saturday afternoon excursion tea—ham and eggs—was partaken of at the Commercial Hotel, Tarland, preceded by selections on the piano by Miss Skakle, the Club's bard.—J. McC.

JUNE 24—LOCHNAGAR.

THIRTY-EIGHT members attended the annual night excursion at the Summer Solstice. This excursion was so successful that the Club has probably never held an outing with more satisfactory results. During the journey to the Spital of Glen Muick the clear sky assumed a pale lemon colour, verging to pale blue at the zenith, and Loch Kinord was dyed a vivid crimson by a brilliant afterglow which swept the horizon for 90°.

The party left Golden Square at 10 p.m. and arrived at the Spital at 12.15 a.m. Glacier lanterns aided the climbers during the passage of the pine woods of Allnaguibhsaich. Beyond the woods there was sufficient light for walking, and by the time the Foxes' Well was reached, the light had improved and every hill was quite visible. In looking up at the few stars it was brought home to one that, if the sun did not withdraw for a short space the true glory of the heavens would never be revealed at all. The planets Mars and Jupiter kept us company all through the short summer night, and just over the Meikle Pap Col could be seen the great flaming sun Arcturus.

From the summit plateau, three-quarters of an hour before sunrise, the snow patches on Ben Macdhui and Beinn a' Bhuid and the Saucer Corrie on Cairntoul were clearly visible, while Ben Rinnes wore a scarf of cloud. The whole range of the Cairngorms was sharply silhouetted against the sky, and the Isle of May Lighthouse, fifty-seven miles distant, was seen flashing very clearly in the summer twilight. The limpid atmosphere made visibility excellent, but the hill colours showed up as greys and blacks. With the coming of dawn, however, the greens, browns, and silver-greys took on their true tone of colour and seemed more brilliant than usual. About fifteen minutes before sunrise, shafts of brilliant orange-pink light proclaimed exactly where the sun was going to appear, and the afterglow began to fade. Exactly to time, at 4.12 a.m. (summer time) due north-east, the wide red upper edge of the refracted sun peeped over the horizon. It seemed to come in little jumps till the large elongated disc was in full view. The upper edges of a great sea of "wool-pack" cumulus clouds immediately became tipped with crimson, and each high hill summit, according to height, was caught in a "noose of light" like the sultan's turret.

On the outward journey Martin and Watson tried the Black Spout by lantern, but owing to insufficient light, the unstable condition of the boulders at a new fall of rock, and shortage of time, they gave it up. Gove and E. W. Smith descended it, however, in record time on the return journey.

Breakfast awaited the party at Ballater, and Aberdeen was reached at 9.25 a.m.

Those present were :—Messrs. Wm. Alexander, J. Angus, A. Clow, H. C. Dugan, Wm. Garden, J. Gove, Wm. Malcolm, Dr. Martin J. McCoss, J. McHardy, E. W. Smith, S. C. H. Smith, Mrs. Angus, Misses Archibald, Daniel, Dugan, Henderson, McHardy, Mitchell, J. Patterson (Junior Section), Skakle and Wallace. Guests :—Messrs. R. Mitchell, W. Mitchell, W. Melville, A. Thomson, and M. B. Watson. Misses Browne, Burnett, Cruickshank, Fowlie, Harvey, Helmrich, Hepling, Malcolm, McKay, Rodger, and Young—(17 men and 21 women).

During this period W. D. Hutcheon and Geo. Shand were busy with the six Cairngorms. Their time was—

	H.M.		H.M.
Loch Builg . . .	8.45 p.m.	24th .	
Ben Avon . . .	10.50 p.m.	„ .	2.05
Beinn a' Bhuidh . . .	12.00	. . .	1.10
Cairngorm . . .	3.45 a.m.	25th .	3.45
Ben Macdhui . . .	5.20 „	„ .	1.35
Braeriach . . .	7.15 „	„ .	1.55
Cairntoul . . .	9.30 „	„ .	2.15
Carrou Bothy . . .	10.10 „	„ .	-.40
			13.25

This excursion reduces the time for the six summits by 1 hour 20 minutes, and is 25 minutes under the time set down by the well-known climbers' formula (*C.C.J.*, Vol. XIII, p. 98).—J. McC.

JULY 1—THE BUCK.

SIXTEEN members attended the last Saturday afternoon excursion. Those present were :—J. Angus, H. Dugan, Wm. Garden, J. McCoss, Dr. Martin, J. A. Parker, and A. Taylor. Mrs. Ross Mackenzie, Mrs. Wilson, Misses Archibald, Campbell, Henderson, Jackson, and Johnstone. Guests :—Miss Erskine Milne and Miss Fowlie. The party motored to near Meikle Cairn, which is $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles from the summit of the Buck. The day was clear and very warm, and a magnificent view was obtained in all directions from the top of the hill, where a considerable time was spent in the sunshine. The long peat ridge to Hill of John's Cairn was traversed on the way down. At this point some of the party crossed Peat Hill and went down the Kindie. The others descended to Auchmullen, thence to Glenkindie Inn, where tea was partaken of. Parker ascended Peat Hill and Mount Meddin from Glenkindie.—J. McC.

THE WEST GULLY OF LOCHNAGAR—FIRST WINTER ASCENT.

A PARTY of three members, consisting of E. G. Gordon, J. Gove, and R. P. Yunnie, ascended the West Gully on Christmas Day, 1932. We entered the Gully at 1 p.m. and emerged at 4 p.m. Our route was up the extreme left chimney, of which there are three, and gained the slightly ice-covered, rather treacherous grass slopes above. These slopes took us to about one-third of the height of the cliff, where a traverse was made along a ledge into the bed of the Main Gully, and the first pitch. Great care had to be taken at this part as the rock was very unreliable. To gain an entrance to a small

cave above a large slab of rock combined tactics were used. Immediately above we faced an overhang and traversed to the right, then worked back again over the chokestone, where the handholds were very poor. Up to this point the Gully had been wet in parts with some ice on the rocks, but there was very little snow. We could see, however, that snow lay ahead of us. The Gully now branched into a steep chimney which led into another cave, and combined tactics were again used to reach a small platform from which the leader could see the start of the Gully immediately below. A very difficult step had to be taken at this point, as the foot has to get wedged behind a rock and, with a spring, a handhold has to be reached. A good belay, however, can be found in the cave. We now came to the last pitch: the Gully narrowed and the exit could be seen. As we cut steps in snow-covered ice up the left side we noted that a high wind was now blowing. Some huge boulders had now to be surmounted, after which it was a straight climb to the top. We were very surprised at the scarcity of the snow for the time of the year. More snow would have made the climb easier in parts, but more difficult on the rock.—E. G. GORDON.

RAEBURN'S GULLY OF LOCHNAGAR—FIRST WINTER ASCENT.

G. R. SYMMERS, A. W. Clark, and W. A. Ewen had a very fine snow-climb in Raeburn's Gully on December 27, 1932. The lower pitches were masked in ice but, above the cave pitch, the snowfield extended unbroken to the cornice. Progress was sometimes made on "fingers" of ice, which the leader thoughtlessly broke after he had finished with them. In consequence, the third man met with entirely different conditions, incidentally losing his tobacco pouch in the service of the community. (No reward is offered for its recovery!) The bulk of the snow met with by the third man came from the leader's axe; in the circumstances, he feels disposed to disagree with the leader's statement that there was "perhaps just not enough snow to make conditions perfect." The climb occupied just about three hours, but half-an-hour of this was given over to a discussion between the leader and the second, on "why men climb," a subject which left the third man cold.—W. A. EWEN.

LOCHNAGAR—PINNACLE GULLY, No. 1 (VARIATION).

ON June 4, 1933, G. R. Symmers, W. A. Ewen, and W. Middleton (Junior Member) made a variation on Pinnacle Gully, No. 1 route. Just below the second cave pitch a horizontal traverse to the left was made, round a buttress of rather slabby rock to a shallow gully, leading, without difficulty, to the summit. There should be several interesting variation routes in this vicinity, but this particular alter-

native route has, perhaps, less merit than the orthodox finish to P.G., No. 1. The Junior Member views this "achievement" with ill-concealed contempt—he being, by nature, a fire-eater. The Seniors, tired and subjugated, after four hours of fruitless exertion on 150 feet of cliff on the previous day, were looking for something they *could* climb!—W. A. EWEN.

LOCHNAGAR—PINNACLE GULLY, No. 2.

ON the Sunday of the last Autumn Holiday week-end, H. G. Dason, W. A. Ewen, W. Malcolm, and W. J. Middleton (Junior Section) met at Altnaguibhsaich with the vague intention of climbing something in the corrie should conditions be suitable. The weather was not promising—a low barometer, high wind, mist, and rain showers. The Meikle Pap Col was crossed in mist, and a descent made in the general direction of the head of the loch, which only came in sight when within a few hundred yards. Several parties of climbers had been seen on the hill, and it was evident from the noise of falling stones that some were in the gullies. The conditions were not suitable for anything difficult, and, by common consent, the Black Spout was entered and then the left hand branch. Lunch was taken in cold, wet conditions below the first pitch. After lunch the difficulty was tackled. Middleton, after discarding his heavier garments, managed to pass the through route and lower a rope, by means of which the luggage, Dason, and Malcolm afterwards ascended the face with the help of a back-up from Ewen, who then roped up and ascended by a promising looking crack on the right of the pitch. A little further up, Ewen and Middleton (the experts) persuaded Dason and Malcolm (the cautious) that they could get just as wet and dirty in the Pinnacle Gully as in the left hand branch. The latter was, therefore, left behind, and the steep, narrow floor of the Pinnacle Gully ascended to the first pitch. This consists of a large choke-stone, which can be surmounted from a comparatively comfortable mantel shelf on the left hand wall. The difficulty is to get on to the mantel shelf from the sloping floor of the gully, the hand and foot holds being either non-existent or very awkwardly placed. Ewen and Dason got up by combined tactics and, being exhausted with their exertions, proceeded to fall asleep in the cave above. At least this was the opinion of Middleton and Malcolm as they waited patiently in the rain below for the rope to be sent down. All that came down was lumps of rock and dirt, not even an apology for such flagrant breaking of the laws of good climbing. However, at last the rope did appear and they were able to scramble up to the comparative shelter of the cave above. The exit from the cave was by a comparatively easy through route, sufficiently restricted to ensure that the climbers were now in a thoroughly wet and dirty condition. The remaining slope to the Col, though

steep, presented no difficulty. Ewen tried a direct ascent to the top of the Pinnacle from above the cave pitch, but decided it was not justifiable with the wet condition of the rocks. The ascent of the Pinnacle by the whole party was then completed by the route starting with a sloping crack a short distance down Pinnacle Gully, No. 1. Ewen was of the opinion that the slabs above the crack are increasing in difficulty, owing to previous climbers having kicked away some of the holds. After the ascent of the Pinnacle the summit of Lochnagar was visited, and the exertions of the climbers were rewarded by the mist clearing, and with the sun shining forth an enjoyable finish was given to an interesting day.—W. MALCOLM.

ON December 28, 1932, A. W. Clark and W. A. Ewen climbed the Spout branch, reaching the summit by Pinnacle Gully, No. 2. As on the previous day, the snow conditions were thoroughly good. The second pitch in Pinnacle Gully was not snowed over, but a passage was found on the left wall, from which the snow above the pitch was gained with some difficulty. The climb took two hours and a half.

Anticipating easier conditions later in the winter, W. Middleton (Junior Section) and W. A. Ewen returned to Pinnacle Gully on March 18, 1933. The pitch and wall were heavily iced, and the party spent an hour and a half on an ascent of 20 feet, reaching the Pinnacle "neck" at dusk.

The short ascent from the "neck" to the plateau calls for careful manœuvres in iced conditions. This ascent of the Gully took five hours. (The route on the left wall appears to be feasible only when comparatively free of ice.)—W. A. EWEN.

ON April 16, 1933, James Gove and R. P. Yunnie made an ascent of Pinnacle Gully, No. 2. The Gully was filled with hard-packed snow lying at an angle of fully 70°. The Pinnacle itself was free of snow and ice. The time taken in ascending from the foot of the snow tongue to the summit of the Pinnacle was about an hour and a half, and no difficulty of any kind was experienced. The climb was a most delightful one. We had a most thrilling experience, escaping an avalanche which came thundering down the Parallel Gully A, which we had been attempting to ascend about an hour previously.—R. P. YUNNIE.

SHALLOW GULLY OF LOCHNAGAR—FIRST ASCENT.

H. A. MACRAE and Mrs. Macrae (Miss Bruce) made the first ascent of this Gully. The Club wait a description of the climb from the pen of Mrs. Macrae as promised.—J. McC.

JUNIOR SECTION.

THE Junior Section of the Club was duly constituted last year. The rules and conditions are as follows :—

1. The Section shall be called the " Junior Section of the Cairngorm Club."
2. The object of the Section is to promote climbing, foster the knowledge of the hills, afford an introduction to the various branches of mountaineering technique, and act as a feeder to the Cairngorm Club.
3. The members of the Section shall consist of those who are not qualified for the Cairngorm Club on account of age. The age of the members of the Junior Section shall be between 16 and 21 years.
4. Every candidate for election as a member of the Junior Section shall be proposed by a member of the Cairngorm Club and be seconded by another member of the Cairngorm Club. These members must have personal knowledge of the candidate and state the candidate's age. Admission to the Junior Section shall be controlled by the Entrance Committee of the Cairngorm Club.
5. Members of the Junior Section shall be entitled to attend the Meets and Excursions of the Cairngorm Club, and they may promote Meets and Excursions of their own, provided they are accompanied by a member of the Cairngorm Club. They may also attend the annual Dinner of the Cairngorm Club.
6. Members of the Junior Section shall receive a copy of the Cairngorm Club Journal, in which Excursions of the Section may be reported. They shall also receive notices calling Club Meets and Excursions, and they shall have the use of the Club Library, but they shall have no voice in the management of the Cairngorm Club, nor shall they attend any of the Business Meetings.
7. Members of the Junior Section shall, on election, pay an Entrance Fee of 2/-, and also an Annual Subscription of 4/-.
8. Members of the Junior Section on reaching the age of 21 shall be eligible for admission to the Cairngorm Club under Rule 5 of the Cairngorm Club. No Entrance Fee shall be payable provided the candidate has been a member of the Junior Section for the three preceding years.
9. An Annual Meeting of the Junior Section shall be held immediately prior to the Annual General Meeting of the Cairngorm Club for the purpose of electing a Meets' Secretary for the ensuing year, and transacting any other competent business.
10. The Rules of the Cairngorm Club in so far as applicable shall apply to the Junior Section.

NOTES.

BACK numbers of the *Journal* may be had on application to the Hon Librarian, except the following numbers, which are out of print :—1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 20, 23, 31, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 48, 57, and 62.

SIR IAIN COLQUHOUN recently broadcasted a most interesting talk to young people on "The Care of the Countryside." It is to be hoped his remarks reached the ears of some older people who are thoughtless or indifferent to this important question. Sir Iain asked his hearers to show the litter louts, by precept and example, what poor-spirited, mean little creatures they are to spoil everyone's pleasure, and he told them to think of three things—the farmer's gates and fences, litter, and fires, "because," he said, "if the landowner could trust the public to behave sensibly over these matters, I think few of them would have any objection to giving full right of access over their lands. Nobody," he went on, "hates notice boards more than I do, but I can't afford to have the farmers penalised, and the woods burned and the fields turned into refuse dumps. It costs me a great deal as it is to maintain control of the ground, and I get nothing in return; but it has been proved time and time again that once control has been lost, the whole area deteriorates almost at once."

A FEW days after Sir Iain's talk, an important conference was held in Edinburgh between representatives of the chief agricultural and forestry societies and representatives of various societies. The proposal submitted was that trespass should be made an offence punishable by fine. It was recognized that that was the kernel of the whole question, and a long discussion ensued. The agricultural societies ultimately agreed to withdraw their proposals for the amendment of the law of trespass, and all the other societies agreed to unite with them in approaching the Secretary of State for Scotland with proposals for the provision of recreation grounds at the motor-bus termini near the large towns, either by the towns or by the State; that the lighting of fires in woodlands should be made a serious offence and subject to a heavy fine, though it was pointed out that the expression "woodlands" would require careful definition. Drastic and prompt penalties, it was proposed, should be inflicted on anyone who left a fire unextinguished or caused an outbreak of fire by carelessly dropping matches or cigarette ends. The conference agreed that it should be made an offence for any person other than the owner or occupier of the land to allow an uncontrolled dog on to fenced

or grazing land, and that the owner of dogs found straying should be liable to a fine, as well as to payment of the expenses of impounding the animals. It was unanimously agreed that the police should be authorised to take severe and prompt action against anyone leaving litter, bottles, broken glass, tins, or other rubbish behind them.

At the meeting of the Aberdeen County Road Board this month, Mr. H. L. F. Fraser, county clerk, said he had received INCHNABOBART letters from Ballater Town Council and also from RIGHT-OF-WAY. a member of the public, raising the question of the Crathie-Inchnabobart-Lochnagar right-of-way. On the direction of the factors of the Abergeldie Estate, Messrs. Wilson and Duffus, advocates, Aberdeen, a gate had been put across the road in a hollow near the bridge over the River Girnock adjacent to where a private road cuts across the old drove road, and a notice had been erected that the road was closed to vehicular traffic. He understood that this action had been taken because of damage done to the road by charabancs while the road was in a soft condition after a thaw. It was intimated that part of the road was to be put on the statutory list of highways. That part of the road was being used for distillery traffic. Mr. Fraser pointed out, however, that the road was not closed to pedestrian traffic. He suggested that they should try to negotiate with the estate for the re-opening of the road, which is a private road, to light traffic, but excluding charabancs. It was suggested that a committee should go to see the place first, and this was agreed to.

THE Cairngorm disaster, in which Alistair Mackenzie and Duncan Ferrier lost their lives, is very fully dealt with in an authoritative article, by the editor, in the April number CAIRNGORM of *The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*. Mr. DISASTER. Parry reviews all the facts and calls attention to the important letter by Mr. Garden in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* of January 12, on the risks of mountaineering and the precautions that should be observed. "We cannot resist," Mr. Parry concludes, "again urging hill walkers and climbers to consider an expedition from all possible aspects before deciding that the risk is worth taking. We should never advocate a policy of extreme caution, but nobody with the smallest experience of the mountains would for a moment consider starting a climb without taking what are merely ordinary precautions. This accident falls into that most tragic of all classes—those which might so easily have been avoided."

QUEBEC has put a ban on hoardings. According to a recent Act, passed by the Provincial Legislature, posters have been HOARDINGS. prohibited along the main highways. They may be shown only at places where they will not spoil the scenery.

REVIEWS.

The Complete Scotland. London: Ward, Lock & Co., Ltd. 7/6 net.
A new guide to Scotland is welcome. There is room "SCOTLAND." and need for it. It is always difficult to keep up to date, as changes and developments never stop, and it is the very latest about roads and paths and hotels that is needed in a good guide-book. Judged by this test, we have here a book that must satisfy the most exacting critic. All concerned in its production deserve warm congratulations on the result of their labours. The book is well described as comprehensive, surveying the country as it does from the Border to the Shetlands, and from Aberdeen to St. Kilda. Professor Mackie contributes an authoritative historical chapter, and Dr. T. M. Finlay gives an illuminating account of the geology and scenery of the country. These are excellent preliminaries to the detailed descriptions of the various routes. The point of view is mainly that of those who see the country from the roads, and consequently emphasis is put on the hill-paths and walking routes, while the motorist will also find the sort of information he wants. Numerous maps and plans add greatly to the value of the book. They are admirably produced in five shades, and a most valuable adjunct is the ingenious index map which is duplicated inside the front and back covers. It is to be noted that the walking and climbing routes have the authority of our Past-President, Mr. James A. Parker, and that is the best guarantee of their accuracy. Compact and most attractively produced in every way, this guide must make a wide appeal.

The Alpine Journal, Nos. 245 and 246, November, 1932, and May, 1933, 10/6 each. Two bulky and well illustrated THE ALPINE issues dealing, as is now usual, with almost all parts JOURNAL. of the world. Of the principal articles in No. 245 possibly the most interesting is that by the late Mr. H. G. Watkins, describing the British Air Route Expedition to Greenland, of which Mr. Watkins was the leader, and towards the end of which he lost his life. The second article describes the German expedition to Nanga Parbat in 1932 which, after establishing a camp at about 22,650 feet, with every prospect of success, had to retreat owing to bad weather and snow conditions. Another interesting article by Mr. Rickmers describes the little known mountains of Cantabria in the north of Spain. No. 246 opens with a 34-page article on the apparently never-ending controversy, Paccard v.

Balmat. The 1932 D. & Oe.A.-V. Expedition to the Cordillera Blanca of the Andes is described by Herr P. Borchers, Mr. H. N. Pallin's article on the mountains of West Patagonia makes interesting reading, as does also that by Mr. R. Schomberg on the Central Tien Shan. Mexico and Africa receive attention with papers on Ixtacchuatl and Popocatepetl and the Atlas Mountains. There are of course articles and notes in both issues descriptive of European mountains, possibly the most striking of which is Herr Hans Lauper's article on "The North Faces of Jungfrau, Mönch, and Eiger." Both numbers have coloured frontispieces.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, Nos. 114 and 115, November, 1932, and April, 1933, 2/6 each. *The Mountains of Harris and Lewis*, by J. A. Parker, will be considered by many as

S. M. C. the most interesting contribution to these two numbers. The principal heights are admirably described and the details of the routes owe much to the observation of an experienced mountaineer. Eight excellent illustrations are from Mr. Parker's photographs. Alastair L. Cram writes on *April-Climbing in Skye*, "a time when, apparently, the weather is a more than usually disconcerting factor." Skye comes up again in a short paper by James Drever, who points out that Skye weather is not as bad as has been supposed and accommodation is better than it used to be. The varied contents include many interesting notes and the illustrations are of a high standard. Tribute is paid to the work of Mr. MacRobert as Editor, who has an obviously highly competent successor in Mr. Charles W. Parry.

Scottish Youth Hostels Handbook, 1933. 6d. This is the official year-book of the Scottish Youth Hostels Association. It is edited

by Messrs. John Francey and Alan Fothergill and has S. Y. H. the distinction of a foreword by Sir J. M. Barrie, who HANDBOOK. remarks "that it has for so long been in the Scottish character to tramp alone or with one companion that I doubted when this scheme was first contemplated whether our youth would take to these gatherings in the gloaming with others who were mostly strangers to them . . . Such doubts were quickly dissipated, as the movement's immense success, while still a child, has proved." Full details are given of the work of S.Y.H.A., the facilities it offers, and the arrangements at each of the hostels. The short articles, descriptive or historical, are delightful. Last year's *Handbook* recorded 15 hostels, and this year's 31. Since publication there has been further progress, as will be noted from Mr. Moir's article in this issue of the *C.C.J.* The *Handbook* is evidence of the keenness which characterises the hostel movement in Scotland, and deserves the widest circulation.

WE have received Nos. 5 and 6 of Vol. XLVIII. of *The Scottish Geographical Magazine* and also the very full and most useful index of this volume. An interesting note calls attention to the fact that Sheet 22 of the Popular Edition of the ST. KILDA MAPPED. 1-inch Ordnance Survey Map, published last year, shows as an inset the St. Kilda group, this being the first appearance of the group on an Ordnance Survey Map. The first four numbers of Vol. XLIX. have also reached us. Among the numerous excellent articles, we may call attention to "Developments in Soil Science and Recent British Contributions to its Literature," by Dr. W. G. Ogg, of the Macaulay Institute for Soil Research, Aberdeen, and to "Kilimanjaro and Kenya Mountains," by Rev. Dr. John W. Arthur.

WE acknowledge with thanks receipt of *The Rucksack Club Journal*, Vol. VII., No. 3, 1933. 4/-.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE SCOTTISH ALPS."

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

SIR,—Has anyone ever encountered the phrase "The Scottish Alps"? I find it used by a French writer of the sixteenth century in a rather interesting passage. This is in Belle-Forest's "Cosmographie Universelle," a book published in Paris in 1575. That author's words, which are rather quaint in spelling, are as follows:—

Aupres d'Aberdon sont les Alpes d'Escosse, qui sont inaccessible aux gens de cheual. Aux piedz des montagnes il y a de grandes forests, ou on pense que autresfois a esté la forest de Calidonie, & y a és dictes forests une multitude incroyable de cerfs & dains. Aberdon a esté autresfois la cité royale des Escossois mais aujourdhy cest Edinbourg.

(Near Aberdeen are the Scottish Alps, which are inaccessible to people on horseback. At the foot of the mountains there are great forests, where it is thought the Caledonian forest formerly was, and in the said forests there are an incredible multitude of stags and does. Aberdeen was formerly the royal city of the Scots but now it is Edinburgh.)—Yours, etc., W. M. A.

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