

# The Cairngorm Club Journal



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VOL. XV.

1940.

No. 81.

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Vol. XV.

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WILLIAM A. EWEN.

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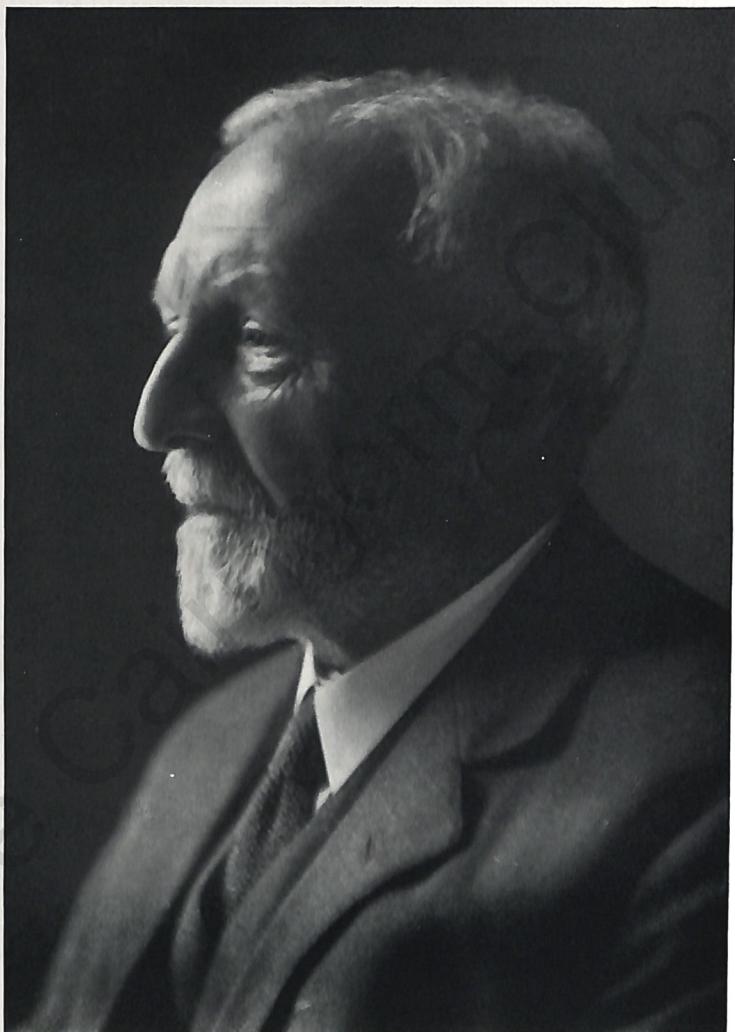
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DR JOHN CLARKE

## THE STORY OF THE CAIRNGORMS.

ALEXANDER BREMNER, D.Sc.

WHETHER the boundaries of what are to be strictly regarded as "The Cairngorms" have been defined I do not know, but, on any view, the granite mass forms the main part of the group and its presence is the reason for the existence of the mountain mass.

The Cairngorms do not owe their present prominence either to a special and localised folding and upheaval or to a local accumulation of ejected volcanic material. They gradually emerged as mountains because they were composed of a rock resistant to denudation, surrounded by other rocks less resistant. The granite, out of which the outstanding summits and ridges have been carved, has withstood reduction better than the crystalline schists into which it was intruded and by which it is now surrounded. The Cairngorms, therefore, are, like all British mountains, *Relict Mountains* or *Mountains of Circumdenudation*.

The story of the Cairngorms is the story of the granite mass—of its intrusion, of its disinterment, of its sculpture by the hand of Nature into its present form. That story, except in its earliest and latest stages, is obscure; for much of the long intervening stages direct evidence is but slight, though supported by the definitely ascertained sequence of events in the history of similar regions.

### *A. Intrusion of the Granite.*

Some four to five hundred million years ago all the mainland of Scotland except a coastal strip from Skye to Durness, much of the north and west of England, nearly all Wales, and a large part of Ireland were subjected to tangential pressure from north-west and south-east, and thrown into a series of more or less parallel ranges of folded mountains—

known collectively as the *Caledonian Mountains*—running approximately north-east and south-west.

All the ranges were not formed simultaneously. Folding proceeded during Ordovician and Silurian times, and by the beginning of the Devonian or Old Red Sandstone period the pressure to which the Caledonian orogeny was due had relaxed. It was then that the *Newer Granites*, to which class the Cairngorm granite belongs, were intruded in a molten condition deep down among the previously folded and metamorphosed (altered) rocks of the Caledonian ranges.

The *Older Granites* were intruded before or during the folding, and in the larger masses their component minerals show a banding or foliation, due to movement under pressure after or during consolidation: they are indicated on geological maps as “Foliated Granite,” and clearly belong to the period of tangential pressure and orogenic or mountain-building movements. They may be seen in typical form on Cairnshee (Durris) and between Glen Clova and Glen Esk.

The Newer Granites, on the other hand, show no sign of mineral banding: they were not intruded under tangential pressure but after pressure had relaxed or been replaced by tension.

Cooling of an intrusive molten granitic magma under a thick and heavy cover is essential for slow crystallisation and the production of coarse-grained, wholly crystalline rock like the Cairngorm granite.

#### *B. Uncovering of the Granite.*

1. **Early Stages.**—The Cairngorm granite, then, seems to have been intruded by, and almost certainly somewhat before, the beginning of Old Red Sandstone times. Since then it has been stripped of its cover and has itself been denuded—to what depth one can only guess. It is, however, impossible to believe that all the hundreds of millions of years which have elapsed since its emplacement among the roots of the Caledonian Mountains should have been needed for an uninterrupted process of subaerial denudation to uncover it and carve it into its present form. Within these

long æons there is evidence that there were (1) periods when subaerial denudation of one part of Scotland spread continental deposits over adjoining areas, and (2) periods when the region was depressed, partly or wholly, below sea-level and buried under thousands of feet of marine sediments.

**2. Later Stages.**—It is known with certainty that early in Tertiary times, millions of years ago, all Scotland was raised above sea-level: the watershed lay far to the west and drainage was directed eastward. Rivers rapidly sank their valleys into the land to a depth determined by the base-level (*i.e.*, sea-level) of the time. At first valley deepening went on rapidly and the interstream ridges became more and more pronounced. But as time passed they too were cut into by the development on their flanks of streams tributary to the rivers on either side, and were everywhere attacked by other agents of denudation—chemical action of air and underground water, frost-rending, rain-wash and soil-creep. The main streams too developed gentler and gentler gradients as they cut down nearer to base-level, and began to swing from side to side of their valleys and to undercut, and aid in the destruction of, the interstream ridges.

In country built of rocks of *low* and *uniform* resistance the final result would be the reduction of the whole to a series of broad river valleys separated by low divides and the formation of—not a plain but—a *peneplain*. In Scotland, particularly in the Highlands, where rocks generally offered *high* and *varied* resistance to denudation, the peneplain was very imperfect, the more resistant rocks on certain watersheds standing up as *monadnocks* or relict mountains and ridges. These rose—some more than 1,000 feet—above the gently undulating surface of the peneplain carved on intervening and less resistant rocks.

Relative to sea-level, the land at the close of this period of imperfect peneplanation stood much lower than now. By and by elevation—greatest in the west—raised the peneplaned areas to a height of 2,000 to 3,000 feet above the sea to form what has been called the *High Plateau*. The eastward slope imparted to the upheaved peneplain revived the whole drainage and streams at once began to cut down

into the substance of the High Plateau. Valley deepening was followed in due course by valley widening, and the surface of the former peneplain is now approximately indicated by the level of the watersheds on the strongly dissected High Plateau.

The High Plateau is well displayed between the Highland sections of the North Esk and South Esk, and as far north as Glen Muick and westward to the sources of the Isla; it is very evident in Gaick Forest and Atholl Forest, in the Monadhliath and the basin of the Upper Findhorn. One interesting portion abuts against the north flank of the Cairngorms and, in fact, includes part of the granite area. The Caiplich and Avon drain a region where the summit levels on interstream ridges rise to  $2,500 \pm$  feet. To the south the Beinn a' Bhùird plateau and the Ben Avon ridge rise rapidly to heights of well over 3,500 feet.

The High Plateau, first defined and named by Drs Peach and Horne, is not to be confounded with "The Table-land of the Highlands" which is the subject of cap. vii in Sir Archibald Geikie's charming volume, "The Scenery of Scotland," now unfortunately out of print. Geikie says in this book: "Does it not seem to [the observer] that these mountain tops and ridges [of the Highlands] tend somehow to rise up to a general level, that in short there is not only on a great scale a marked similarity of contour about them but a still more definite uniformity of average height" (third edition, p. 147); and again: "The long flat surfaces of the Highland ridges mark, I believe, fragments of a former base-level of erosion" (*ibid.*, p. 155). It is clear that Geikie considers that the summits of what are now usually called "monadnocks" mark the former level of a peneplain —his "base-level of erosion." He speaks elsewhere of the Cairngorm plateau and the flattish top of Lochnagar, most of which has been cut away during the growth of the great corrie, as parts of the peneplain. In distant view, particularly from the south, the Cairngorms show up as an undulating plateau; and no one who has walked across the flat tops of Braeriach, Ben Macdui and Beinn a' Bhùird will deny that a plateau feature is there clearly marked.

It seems likely that both the High Plateau and the Table-land of the Highlands are verities: the latter was formed as a peneplain which, after an uplift of 1,000 feet or more, was afterwards reduced to an imperfect peneplain at a lower level, the now dissected High Plateau. The much denuded remnants of the Table-land of the Highlands are indicated most often by isolated summits and ridges that rise nearer to 4,000 than 3,000 feet, but most plainly by flat-topped monadnocks like the Cairngorms.

That there should be remnants of a peneplain at a higher level than the High Plateau seems reasonable since in various parts of Scotland there are indications of the beginnings of peneplanation at lower levels than 2,000 feet. The Scottish area, it may be assumed, was elevated not all at once but by stages. Each stage was followed by a long interval of still-stand and peneplanation more or less perfect—the first of which there is any evidence, by that which produced the Table-land of the Highlands; the second, by that testified to by the High Plateau; the later, by platforms of erosion and incipient peneplanation at levels below 2,000 feet (the lower limit of the High Plateau). Peneplanation, it may be added, always begins at the coast, and, being due to widening of valleys and reduction of watersheds, extends slowly inland along the river valleys: it rarely reaches completion.

### *C. Sculpture of the Cairngorms.*

**1. Preglacial Sculpture.**—The Cairngorms could not be said to exist till they had been set in relief as *hills* during the denudation that produced the peneplain now 2,000 to 3,000 feet above sea-level. On the uplift of that peneplain to form the High Plateau they were carried up with it and attained a height that justified the name of *mountains*.

Because of a long process of differential denudation coupled with an uplift of the whole country, the Cairngorms gradually emerged to form an isolated, flat-topped mountain mass which—as one would expect—acquired a radial drainage

system of its own. Off its west end a number of streams discharge to the Feshie, but the eastward drainage off the narrower east end is not well marked. A glance, however, at any good map shows the numerous streams with courses approximately north or south, the main watershed running nearly east and west.

Now rivers not only deepen and widen their valleys by *vertical* and *lateral* erosion but also slowly—very slowly—lengthen them by *headward* erosion. In the Cairngorms they have pushed their way back and, with the aid of tributaries subsequently developed on their valley sides, have cut up and destroyed a great part of the original summit plateau.

A pair of streams working along the same line but in opposite directions may be called *opposing streams*. Their sources are pushed back towards each other till they eat into and lower the broad or narrow dividing ridge, across which they form a shallow depression or saddle and finally a deep notch. If headward erosion by one of the pair is more rapid, the watershed is not only lowered but displaced towards, and into, the valley of the less aggressive stream. In both these cases a pass is formed from one valley into the other : the usefulness of the pass as a route across the mountain mass depends on the amount by which the height of the watershed has been reduced.

In the Lairig Ghru the watershed has been greatly lowered by the activity of the two opposing streams, Allt na Lairig Ghru and Allt Druidh. There are two watersheds in the Lairig an Laoigh south of Bynack More ; both have been cut down by opposing streams.

The present source of the Am Beanaidh is Lochan nan Cnapan, which lies well to the south of the springs of Allt Luineag and Allt Sgairnish, the two headstreams of the Eidart. From just below the south top of Braeriach (4,149 feet) a small stream flows for some distance south-west as if heading for the Eidart, makes an abrupt right-angle bend, and pours through Coire Dhondail to Loch Einich. It seems clear that the original watershed between northward and southward drainage ran from Sgor Gaoith to Einich Cairn : the Am Beanaidh pushed the watershed southward and

invaded the territory of its rival. Their preglacial relationship is now much obscured by the enormous amount of glacial erosion at the head of Glen Einich.

Another example of the work of opposing streams is furnished by the Upper Quoich (which originally flowed down Glen Slugain) and Allt an t' Sluichd. Between their heads a marked dip or saddle has been worn in the watershed. Here again the preglacial features are obscured by the results of glacial erosion so prominent in the Garbh Coire and Slocdh Mòr.

**Denudation of the Summit Plateau.**—At an early date in the history of the Cairngorms as an independent mass the summit plateau was severed into two parts, a western and an eastern, by the formation of the flat saddle of the Moine Bhealaidh. The flat extends south and east along the ridge bearing Craig Derry (2,900 feet) and Beinn Bhreac (3,051 feet). The severance probably occurred during the denudation that led to the evolution of the High Plateau : the flat corresponds in elevation with, was probably formed as part of, and here represents, that physiographical feature. Or may the flatness be partly due to erosion by ice from the west ? It lies directly opposite the mouth of Corrie Etchachan, and we know that ice from it traversed the Moine Bhealaidh.

The *Western Plateau* lies west of the Lairig an Laoigh, and thirty square miles is a moderate estimate of its area at an early date. It certainly included Cairn Toul, Braeriach, Ben Macdhui, Cairn Gorm, and Beinn Mheadhoin, together with the now outlying and denuded fragments seen in Sgòran Dubh and Sgòr Gaoith to the west and Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mòr to the south-west. Later the plateau has been broken up in various ways. (*a*) As explained above, opposing streams have cut it in two along the line Glen Dee-Lairig Ghru. Glacial erosion on the watershed and along the valley lines has emphasised this line of division. (*b*) Ben Macdhui and Beinn Mheadhoin have been separated from Cairn Gorm by headward erosion of the Avon and its headstreams. (*c*) Both portions have been encroached upon along much of their margins by other

streams, most of whose valleys now head in definite corries, large and small. (*d*) Sgòran Dubh and Sgòr Gaoith no doubt represent portions detached by the Am Beanaidh and Eidart; Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mòr have been isolated through the development of Glen Geusachan by fluviatile, later supplemented by glacial, erosion.

The *Eastern Plateau* consists of Beinn a' Bhùird, Cnap a' Chléirich, and Ben Avon. It too has been cut across in the saddle between the opposing streams, Quoich and Allt an t' Sluichd. The summit of Ben Avon has been reduced from a plateau to a ridge by stream attack along its flanks. Beinn a' Bhùird too has been gashed by streams working back from the Quoich, and the plateau has been greatly diminished by the formation and growth of the great eastern corries.

**2. Glacial and Postglacial Sculpture.**—At the close of preglacial times the drainage pattern of the Cairngorms was the same as it is to-day, but the valleys were very different. Trunk valleys like Glen Einich, Glen Geusachan, Glen Dee, and Glen Derry were shallower and narrower. Those whose streams were actively cutting into the plateau, as in the Garbh Choire and Corrie Etchachan, were deep, narrow glens, V-shaped in cross-section.

The summit plateaux were more extensive. Summits, ridges, and valley sides, long subjected to weathering in a mild preglacial climate, had acquired a thick mantle of deeply weathered rock. Here and there tors, consisting of the more resistant patches of granite, projected on plateau and ridge as on Exmoor and Dartmoor, which have escaped scouring by ice-sheets, and as they have in postglacial times been once more developed in the Cairngorms.

Weathering along the well-developed system of joints partially freed blocks from the parent rock, and removal by wind and rain of the finer products of weathering led to their appearance on the slopes as loose, rounded boulders resembling glacial erratics.

Lakes were not much in evidence—if at all. Washing by rain and deflation by wind carried much of the loose, granitic soil into the valleys to clog the watercourses and give rise to shallow pools, more often temporary than permanent.



D. Sandison

ETCHACHAN AND CAIRNGORM

(1) **Glacial Sculpture.**—One effect of glaciation was the early removal of the mantle of weathered rock: thereafter the ice worked on living rock. But even an outline of the work of ice in the sculpture of the Cairngorms would demand more space than can be given it now. A fairly complete account, "The Glaciation of the Cairngorms," was published in 1929 (*The Deeside Field*, Fourth Number, 1929).

To glaciation, however, are due all the features that to-day attract the mountaineer—properly so called—and the "high walker," and the following points may be specially noted:—  
(a) All the larger valleys have been widened and deepened into glacier troughs, U-shaped in cross-section and bounded by oversteepened rock walls. (b) The numerous lakes, from corrie tarns to long glen-lakes, are directly due to glaciation.  
(c) The heads of nearly all valleys that terminate on the edge of the plateaux, particularly those facing north and east, have been converted into corries. Very few corries, none of them typical rock-walled amphitheatres, open to south or west. Coire Sputan Dearg, facing south, though rock-rimmed, is not a typical corrie, but rather a glacially widened valley head; Coire Garbhlich, opening to the west, is still less typical. (d) To the formation and gradual enlargement and encroachment of corries is to be attributed the loss by the plateaux of a large proportion of their preglacial extent.  
(e) Severe glacial erosion of the watersheds in the two easiest passes has greatly increased their value as cross-routes.

(2) **Postglacial Sculpture.**—This has been slight. A few effects may be noted:—(a) Scree formation, mainly due to frost action on steep rock faces. This tends to undo the oversteepening by ice. (b) Frost-rending on bare tops and ridges. Many of these are now completely covered by coarse frost-riven rock fragments. (c) Wind action, e.g., the formation of wind potholes on the tors of Ben Avon. The sandblast that undercuts exposed rock and which the "high walker" faces with toil and pain in a strong wind must be a by no means negligible factor in the denudation of exposed spots.

## THE MOUNTAIN NAMES OF SCOTLAND—II.

P. A. SPALDING.

HAVING considered in a previous article the mountain names of Scotland from the historical point of view, it may now be of interest to consider them as names pure and simple; to look at their topographical distribution on the map as it stands to-day. It would obviously be impossible to take into account *all* the names, which must run into several thousands, and for the purposes of this analysis I shall take the list of "Munroes"—*i.e.*, all the mountains in Scotland of 3,000 feet and over—as set forth in the "General Guide Book of the Scottish Mountaineering Club." This list comprehends 544 names, and inasmuch as it includes almost all the best-known and most prominent hills in the Highlands and Islands, it may fairly be considered as representative of the whole.

First I shall take the generic names, and afterwards the specific ones.

Admiring the beauty as well as the interest of the mountains as nowadays we do, we might expect them to have imaginative or romantic names, particularly since these names were given, in the vast majority of cases, by people of pure Celtic blood, and the imaginative fervour of the Celts was a byword even as long ago as Classical times. Also, as a mere matter of curiosity, it must often occur to us to wonder what lies behind the tongue-twisting Gaelic syllables that sprawl across the map, and defy all efforts at pronunciation! It may be as well to say at once that a search for imaginative or poetical names will not be rewarded, though we shall discover much that is of interest otherwise. Nor is the reason far to seek. The people who gave the mountains their names *lived* among them: to them they were commonplace, they had no atmosphere of excitement or mystery, and no memories of long carefree days of enjoyment centred around

them. The idea of climbing them for pleasure, without some definite motive connected with hunting or herding, would have been unthinkable. As we shall see, the mountains were named from a purely utilitarian and practical standpoint, as to-day we name streets and squares. Only very rarely were considerations of beauty, significant form, and the like allowed to influence the choice.

To consider, then, the use of primary or generic words. We find that about 60 per cent. of all the mountains in Scotland over 3,000 feet listed in Munro's Tables have names which include the following six generic words—Beinn, Sgùrr, Càrn, Meall, Stob, and Creag, which occur in this order of frequency. The Beinns come first, but with only a small preponderance over the Sgùrrs—81 to 77. There is then a big drop to the Càrns—55, and a smaller drop to the Mealls—43, which are almost equal in numbers to the Stobs—41. Finally come the Creags, with 29 examples. By dividing these regionally, and considering their distribution over the country with reference to the meanings of the names, we should arrive at a fair estimate of the general character of the mountains to be met with throughout the Highlands.

Thus if we divide the country roughly into five areas—North, South, East, West, and Central—we find that the Beinns (rounded head or top), though they do occur in all areas, do so most frequently in the South and East. As we should expect, the Sgùrrs (sharp, steep hill: pinnacle) occur overwhelmingly in the West; next most commonly in the North-west and Centre, while the Southern district has only 5 examples, and in the whole Eastern area, including all the country east of the Perth-Inverness railway, there are only 4. On the other hand, again as we should expect, the position is reversed as regards the Càrns (heap or pile: heap-like hill). Out of a total of 55, no less than 31 are in the Eastern area, and their numbers decrease steadily as we move West and North. There are 11 in the Central region, and only one in the North. The Mealls (shapeless hill: mound) and Stobs (prickle: thorn: pointed hill) are almost confined to the South and Southwest, with some examples in the Centre. The Creags (crag

or quarry-like hill) are in the East and West and hardly appear in the North or South.

Of the other generic names, the following are the commonest, though they are not numerous enough to consider regionally. Sròn (nose, promontory, headland) occurs 12 times in the Tables; Mullach (roof or ridge-like hill) occurs 9 times; Stùc (little hill jutting out from a greater, steep on one side, rounded on the other) occurs 7 times; Aonach (moory ridge) occurs 6 times; Bidean, Mam, Maol, and Tom occur each 5 times. There are, of course, many names not included in this list or even in the Tables; the variety of such generic names for mountains and parts of mountains is so great as to provide enough material for an article in itself.

Turning now to the secondary names, an analysis of these as they appear in the Tables yields the following results. (I should say that not *every* name is considered. A few are of doubtful authenticity, and some are still a puzzle to Gaelic scholars.)

In tabular form: (1) colour words or names indicating colour occur 122 times; (2) names involving natural features (plants, trees, rocks, water, etc.) occur 109 times; (3) names of a descriptive or adjectival type (great, small, rough, etc.) occur 105 times; (4) names which include objects (parts of the body, domestic utensils, etc.) occur 76 times; (5) names of animals or birds occur 49 times; (6) names involving people or personal names occur 41 times; (7) last of all come abstract names, occurring 11 times. Taking the list as a whole, nine separate words occur in the names of the mountains 10 times or more, viz., mòr (great), 35 times; dubh (black), 21; dearg (red), 20; glas (grey), 17; beag (little), 16; garbh (rough), 15; liath (grey), 14; loch, 11; and clach (stone), 10.

Taking the types of name separately, it will be seen that colour words are the most frequent of all. Of the colours themselves, grey in its various forms (glas, liath, odhar) is the commonest with 34 examples; red (dearg, ruadh) comes next with 23. Then black (dubh) with 21, the commonest single colour word. Then white (bàn, geal, fionn) with 19; yellow (buidhe) follows with 9 examples; blue (gorm)

and speckled (breac, riabhach) 7 each, and finally comes green (uaine) with 2 examples, both due to peaks having been named after "green" lochs in the corries beneath them. Secondly, the natural features class includes trees, of which the commonest is the rowan (caorunn), occurring in the names of 8 different mountains. Eleven mountains are named after lochs in their corries or the glen below; 6 are named after waterfalls, 5 after passes, and so on. Thirdly, of adjectival name elements, great (mòr) is by far the commonest, occurring in the Tables no less than 35 times, while small (beag) occurs less than half as frequently. Other adjectives occurring more than once are rough (garbh), middle, notched, curved, cold, slippery. An interesting group of 11 names is connected with noise, either of the wind or water, of the roaring of stags, of singing, shouting, or weeping (coronach). Seven mountains have names suggesting that they were associated with such human activities as hunting, fowling, singeing or burning, or that their slopes were used as a place of assembly or of refuge.

Fourthly, the class of object names includes many parts of the body; breast (8 times), head (4 times), shoulder-blade, tongue, teeth, heel, finger, shank, and others, 28 in all. Also such domestic articles as butter, basket, shoe, hat, knife, fork, file, box, couch, table, cup, wine. Clearly not all of these names were used because they were suggested by mountain shapes. Some play is given to fancy, as when, for instance, mist round a mountain top is likened to a hood, as in Beinn a' Chochuill. Fifteen names, like plough, saddle, byre, forge, furrow, millstone, refer to the business of agriculture and farming. In a group of their own come the following: castle, shield, sword, spear, plunder, and treasure-trove. Sword and spear seem to require interpretation. Perhaps the mountains so called were connected in some way with a remarkable weapon; perhaps Slioch is not really derived from "sleagh," a spear, as some have supposed.

Fifthly, of the animals from which mountains have been named, the commonest, as we should expect, is the deer, with seven examples. Then come goats, horses, sheep, and

cattle. The boar, the wolf, and the otter (*dòbhran*, Beinn, Dòrain) each occur once, but birds receive less attention than we might expect—eight in all to thirty-nine animals, and the list is completed by two marine creatures, the whelk and the limpet. It is difficult to explain the presence of these.

Sixthly, of personal names there are three Donalds who have mountains named after them, three Kenneths, and two Findlays. Of the rest some are quite modern. The following occupations also are represented. Mason and shepherd (twice each) and hunter. These we should expect, and indeed their absence would be surprising; but it would be interesting to know why and after what king Càrn an Righ was named, or what monk is commemorated in Beinn Mhanach. In addition, we have a mountain memorial to a priest, a cleric, a soldier, an archer, and (possibly) a dairymaid. There are three “maiden” mountains, two “black men,” “old men” and “old women,” and one instance of “young men.” There is one example each of a Scotsman, the Fianna, the Caledonians (but this is doubtful), and the Spaniards. This last, Sgùrr nan Spainteach, commemorates the battle of Glen Shiel in the rebellion of 1715, the last battle fought on British soil against a foreign foe.

Finally we come to what is perhaps the most interesting, though certainly the most meagre and disappointing, group of all. These are the abstract or metaphorical names; names which have no practical or utilitarian motive behind them. There are only eleven of them, but they raise some interesting questions.

It is perhaps not so very hard to imagine why three mountains are named after Hell, while only one—and probably not even one, since the meaning of the name “Nevis” is still extremely doubtful—is linked with Heaven. Ben Nevis is popularly construed as “Hill of Heaven,” and if this is correct it may mean no more than that it seems to fill the sky, and simply implies “Heaven touching.” But what is the reason for the impliedly unenviable reputation of the Beinn Iutharns, one in the Laggan district, and two near the Cairnwell? Why should they particularly be associated with the nether regions? The Gaelic word for

Hell (Ifrionn, Iutharn), surprisingly enough, also signifies "coldness," and this may perhaps have something to do with the explanation of the name as applied to a mountain. Ben Wyvis, too, although it may simply mean "mountain of storm," has been interpreted in more sinister fashion as "mountain of terror." It has been suggested that its bulk—certainly considerable—was the cause of the terror it was supposed to inspire; but this hardly seems satisfactory. It is even possible that Nevis and Wyvis are a cognate pair of names derived from a root meaning "ugliness" or "shapelessness," and this is supported to some extent by their both being particularly bulky and massive hills. Two mountains are called "old." Again it is a puzzle to know why they should have been singled out in this way. Scientific geology was born in Scotland, but it is hardly conceivable that in the days when these names were given one mountain should have been thought to have been standing longer than another! Carn Aosda, near the Cairnwell, with its bare, stone-littered slopes, has a certain likeness perhaps to a bald head, and the "maol" in Glas Maol opposite, used adjectivally, means "baldness." But what of Seana Braigh—the "old brae"—in Ross-shire? Was it named so by people who had once lived near it, and having moved to a distance, referred to it, half-affectionately perhaps, as the "old" hill, the hill they used to know well? Probably this is to read too much into the word, and it is better to say simply that we do not know. Still more difficult is it to understand why the summit of Lochnagar should have been looked upon with such dislike as to have earned the name it now bears, happily concealed beneath the innocent-looking syllable "cac." And was Stob Coire Sgreamhach, which means "disgusting" or "nauseating" corrie, so called because it is difficult to keep a footing while walking on it, or because it inspires giddiness, with all its unpleasant symptoms?

So far, possibly with one exception, the list of abstract names shows a spirit strikingly derogatory to the mountains, and it is pleasant to be able to complete it with two names—Beinn Eibhinn and Càrn a' Choire Bhoidheach—meaning respectively "joyful" and "beautiful." It is only justice

that the second of these should be situated in the White Mounth district, to offset the bad nominal reputation of Lochnagar! But there may be no connection between the two. And Coire Bhoidheach if beautiful and shapely is not more so than many other corries or the mountains which contain them. One would have expected many more such names : Gaelic is certainly rich in words expressing beauty, grace, and the like. "Eibhinn" normally means "joyful" or "glad," but may also mean "comely," and Beinn Eibhinn in the Alder district is one of the most strikingly "comely" mountains in the Highlands. A curious problem is set by the name "Alligin" (Beinn Alligin, Torridon). It has been suggested that this means "little jewel." If this is so, is it used as a term of endearment ? To judge from mountain names in other parts of the world this would not be so absurd an interpretation as it sounds. Or is it, more practically, a name connected with the losing or finding of a precious stone ? In this case it would fall into line with Sgòr na h-Ulaidh, which signifies the "peak of treasure-trove."

Nevertheless the paucity of terms of appreciation or imagination is such that the meanings of only about twenty names out of over 500 are not at once obvious in their significance, or require interpretation. Even of these few some are doubtful, and one is inclined to favour the more matter-of-fact and unimaginative alternative interpretation, where such exists.

What general conclusions can we draw from the foregoing analysis ? We can say I think with certainty that those who named the mountains tended to identify them first of all by considerations of colour and relative size. This is what struck them most. We can sometimes tell from its name from which side or aspect a mountain or range was most familiarly known. The old name of the Cairngorms, the Monadhruadh or Red Hills, was clearly given by the inhabitants of Speyside, from which the rufous granite of the corries of Brae Riach is so obvious a feature, and contrasts with the dun-coloured Monadhliath (Grey Hills) on the opposite side of the valley. From Deeside the redness is not nearly so obvious. Secondly, they distinguished the mountains in relation to other aspects of the landscape ;

then according to their shape or the shape of prominent parts of them, inasmuch as these suggested everyday objects or as being associated with occurrences in their own lives. In a less degree they named the mountains with reference to the birds and beasts that frequent them, and occasionally with reference to domestic animals. We should expect that some hills would receive personal names. Presumably these were given in most cases because an individual was particularly associated with the mountain, on account of some feat of hunting or the like. Some of these names are modern; memorials of the men who first ascended the hills in question. One at least commemorates an historic event.

It is somewhat surprising that so few mountain names are drawn from mythology, since other place-names in many parts of the Highlands are full of memories of the Fianna and the other figures and events of Gaelic folklore. Coire Cath nam Fionn of Beinn Bhrotain tells of some fabulous battle, but such names are very rare.

Finally, the fact that out of eleven abstract names no less than nine are derogatory or associated with unpleasantry, while only two express approval, seems to show, with the other evidence, that our ancestors had little love of their native mountains, or appreciation of mountain scenery as such. The unpronounceable and mysterious-looking names conceal meanings that are almost always severely matter of fact, and when there are deviations from this rule they usually indicate dislike rather than the opposite.

But with the generic names Gaelic comes into its own. England being on the whole a level land, the English language is poor in general words descriptive of high or mountainous country; Gaelic, on the other hand, is rich; so rich that it is absolutely impossible to find English equivalents, except by a lame periphrasis, for a tithe of this verbal wealth. This is sufficient to show that if the men who named the mountains did not feel inclined to go into ecstasies about them, they yet looked at them closely, and carefully differentiated the types of mountain contour from one another. They had a highly developed sense of mountain *form*; nor did they lack words to distinguish what they saw.

## BACK NUMBERS.

R. L. MITCHELL.

" THERE is no despotism like that of the zealous and energetic editor who, by his own devotion to his project, acquires the right to hold to their word those who, in a moment of unguarded sympathy, have promised to enlist under his banner." Such were the opening words of our *Journal*, written by the first Honorary President, later to become Lord Bryce, in " Some Stray Thoughts on Mountain Climbing." Thus it appears that Inkson M'Connochie employed editorial cunning closely allied to that of our present editor, for such ideas are not far from the mind of your reviewer, especially as many of the highlights from the pages of the *Journal* have been filched by the editor for his history of the first fifty years of the Club, which appeared in the preceding issue. Nevertheless there is not one volume, one number, which does not still provide much of interest, and the difficulty is not in finding what to mention in a review such as this, but what to leave out.

Of the four topographical articles in the first number, the only one with a Cairngorm connection was on Sgòran Dubh, surely the Cairngorm top least often visited by the Club, written by Hugh T. Munro, a Scottish climber whose name may survive longer than most. Others dealt with Beinn Laoigh, Beinn a' Ghlo, and the Blue Hill. As all but the last had by a strange coincidence been ascended by your reviewer for the first time during the Jubilee year of the Club, there was nothing for it but to make a first ascent of the Blue Hill. But the account of this expedition, its hazards and hardships, is a story which must be told elsewhere! Amongst the first batch of Notes, which were formerly more interesting than they have become of late, the attempt by Douglas and Gibson on the most difficult of the standard gullies on Lochnagar is recorded. Not until the summer of

1933 was this gully climbed, by Ludwig, and it is as yet unclimbed under winter conditions, as at the time of Douglas and Gibson's attempt. Unfortunately, no account of Ludwig's ascent appears in the *Journal*, beyond casual mention in a report of an annual dinner.

One editorial problem which becomes apparent in writing an article such as this is the rendering of Gaelic names, and any inconsistencies are due to the adoption to the spelling used in the article in question. Thus we pass from Beinn Muich Dhui to Ben Macdhui, Learg Ghruamach to Lairig Ghru, noticing that it is generally the more popular names which have shown evolution—or is it merely progressive misspelling? Whilst on the subject of nomenclature, it is perhaps a pity that the apt title of Cairnmaster, used by the now defunct Perthshire Mountain Club and recorded somewhere in the Notes, did not find a place in our constitution instead of the prosaic Chairman and Presidents whom we honour.

The lack of articles on the Cairngorms was soon remedied, and the first six volumes, more especially the first three, provide an unequalled source of information on most Cairngorm topics, other than snow and rock climbs. The collective index to Vols. I. to VI. is particularly useful in this respect. M'Connochie himself wrote the principal series, "The Cairngorm Mountains," which was well illustrated by sketches by J. G. Murray (Vol. I., pp. 236, 309, 336; II., p. 38). A more useful guide to the area for the hill-walker is difficult to find. Supplementing this, Professor Trail's "Flowering Plants and Fern Allies of the Cairngorms" (Vol. I., p. 197), Rev. William Forsyth's "Outlying Nooks of Cairngorm" (Vol. I., pp. 134, 294; II., pp. 9, 206; III., p. 17), and C. G. Cash's "The Cairngorm Parishes and the (Old) Statistical Account of Scotland" (Vol. VI., pp. 116, 154) demonstrate the wide field covered. The last is well worth mention as it brings together the very scattered information on the state of the Cairngorm country at the end of the eighteenth century, contained in Sir John Sinclair's twenty-volume Statistical Account. Then, be it said, Statistical Accounts were not the terrifying things they have

become to-day. We note many even stranger spellings, as, for example, Loch-na-garaidh, which at that time was known mainly for its amethysts; it must, however, have been visited fairly often, at least in summer. The following description of the birthplace of the Club may be of interest: "At the foot of Cairngorm is Loch Aven, from whence the river of that name issues, containing plenty of trout, but dry and indifferent ones to eat. At one end of this loch, surrounded with vast mountains, is a large natural cave, sufficient to hold a number of men secure from snow, rain, and wind. People often lodge here for nights, some for necessity, others when hunting or fishing. It is commonly called Chlachdhian or the 'Sheltering Stone.' "

We learn that smallpox was the only disease that was "remarkably fatal" in the district, and find mention of such an unlikely person as the Delai Lama of Thibet, in an account not of the Himalaya but of the Cairngorms, written in the seventeen-nineties.

Yet whilst the *Journal* has ever been concerned chiefly with the hills of Scotland, and those of the north-east in particular, there has been no restriction of subject-matter, which has ranged from the Rockies to the Himalaya, from Japan to New Zealand, and it will be quite impossible even to attempt to notice such articles in this review.

Amongst the more general articles in earlier volumes, the series of J. C. Barnett on "Mountain Measurements" (Vol. I., pp. 152, 192, 278) may be taken as an example. These dealt with methods of determining altitude, and are typical of many semi-technical papers dealing with subjects of interest to hillmen, even should they not all react as does this author to some of the manifestations of progress. "What mountaineer," he writes, "is there who has not felt his pulses thrill when, in some wild and silent solitude, he gazed upon the station cairns and altitude marks that reveal the passage of the Ubiquitous Survey Sappers?" Are such thoughts aroused by the bare concrete blocks which in recent years have surmounted and occasionally, as on Ben Macdhui, displaced the summit cairn? Let us hope that in time they will disintegrate into the landscape.

Interspersed among "Experiences (or Misadventures, or Camping) in the Cairngorms" and the "Lochnagars in April" (or June or October, but seldom December or February), which form the less interesting matter of the earlier volumes, are to be found, in addition to articles of the types already mentioned, short monographs such as that of Rev. George Williams on "Heather" (Vol. IV., p. 87), dealing with its botany, its ecology, and its place in literature.

In 1911-12, J. G. Kyd, who had already reviewed the first twenty-one years of the Club (Vol. VI., p. 177), brought out two numbers, and, on leaving Aberdeen, was succeeded by J. B. Gillies. With the changes we note the first introduction of articles on rock climbing and a temporary improvement in the reproduction of the illustrations. But one is curious of the reason for the poor quality paper in Vol. VII., pp. 97-130 (January 1912). Typical rock-climbing articles of this period are by James McCoss on the Kincardineshire Coast Climbs (Vol. VII., p. 107) and H. G. Drummond in Glen Clova and Glen Doll (Vol. VII., p. 12), in which we learn that Parker was the Jonah of the party! Thus names familiar to present-day members begin to appear.

In the "Circuit of the Cairngorms," John Clarke (Vol. VII., p. 201) describes the covering of the four main tops in one day—not, however, the first of the records as all six had already been done (Vol. VI., p. 49). A further attempt (Vol. VII., p. 316) described by J. L. McIntyre concludes: "At 7.59 (I must be exact here) (A.M. or P.M., ? reviewer) Mr Clarke re-entered his house at Boat of Garten; a minute later, it is said, the spirit of a certain Colonel Bogey looked in, but retired discomfited using words which one may hear upon the golf course, but never on the mountains." But perhaps the author had never eavesdropped on a party in a stubborn gully. The Bogey question was discussed by Parker (Vol. VIII., p. 19), who quoted Naismith's rule (*S.M.C.J.*, Vol. II., p. 136) that the time taken by a party in fair condition for easy expeditions should be an hour for every three miles on the map with an additional hour for every 2,000 feet of ascent. A later series of record attempts

on the six tops occurred in 1932-33 (Vol. XIII., pp. 98, 191), one on the occasion of a memorable midnight excursion which the Club enjoyed on Lochnagar. That morning was such as is described by Pittendrigh MacGillivray in a few verses entitled "Lochnagar: Dawn, July 22, 1914" (Vol. VIII., p. 43). A few days later war broke upon the world, and apart from the *Journal*, the activities of the Club were limited, and the office-bearers kept in office until the conclusion of hostilities. Actually the Committee were given powers to arrange such excursions as circumstances permitted, but it appears, from *Journal* reports, that nothing was done. As in the present conditions, it seems that the *Journal* may suffer appreciably from war-time restrictions, it is to be hoped that it will be possible to continue other activities in some modified form. Out of 140 members, 41 were on active service in 1914-18, and there were 17 casualties, 9 of which were fatal. The Roll of Honour appears in Vol. IX. at p. 244. A further scanning of the earlier volumes confirmed the fact that not a mention of the Boer War occurred.

In the number for July 1915 are articles on the Vat by Alexander Bremner (Vol. VIII., p. 86) and "The Call of the Wild," by H. D. Welsh (Vol. VIII., p. 94), both of whom twenty-five years later we are pleased to find assisting in the production of this number.

In the middle of Vol. VIII. Robert Anderson took over the editorial pen for the next three volumes, but maintained the form and content of the *Journal* rather like that of Gillies, with the influence of M'Connochie still dominant.

An unconventional route from Glasgow to Braemar is described by George Buchanan Smith (Vol. IX., p. 20), and members on a certain excursion not so long ago will agree with his remarks about Càrn-an-Fidhleir, "What a wilderness we were in the midst of—never in Scotland have I felt it so." This is a most invigorating article by one of the members who fell in the Great War.

The Jubilee Number of the *Journal* in January 1918 contained articles by several of the contributors to the first issue, amongst them Viscount Bryce, Sir Hugh T. Munro,

and James Rose. The opening paragraphs of Lord Bryce's article have once again a peculiar aptness.

" Unable to visit the Alps in war-time, I have this summer been wandering among the mountains of Sutherlandshire and Perthshire, and along the delightful shores of Arran. Hills and glens are silent. All the young men have gone —many never to return. The faces of the women are sad. Seeing few anglers in the rivers, hearing hardly a gun upon the moors, one is reminded of Macaulay's lines about Etruria when Lars Porsena was marching his army on Rome :

“ ‘ Unharmed the Waterfowl may dip  
In the Volsinian mere.’ ”

“ One tries among these lovely peaks and along the wave-resounding shores of ocean to forget what is passing in Flanders and France, in Macedonia and Palestine and Mesopotamia. But the contrast between the stillness and beauty of Nature, offering us her peaceful delights, and the flames of strife and hatred which have enwrapt the whole world, destroying the youth of many nations, seems almost as awful here as it does to those in the midst of battle, who have indeed little time to reflect upon it.”

Amongst the more technical articles which are to be found in every volume is one by G. G. Jenkins, on “ Curvature and Refraction (Vol. IX., p. 27), which might well be read by all members who attempt to identify distant peaks. It supplements an article by Rev. Robert Semple (Vol. I., p. 265) on the “ Distance of the Visible Horizon ” and could well be studied in conjunction with other articles on “ Map Reading,” by P. A. C. (Vol. VII., p. 154), and “ Compass and Map Reading,” by D. P. Levack (Vol. XIV., p. 178).

Vol. IX. includes a list of Club excursions from 1889 to 1919 (p. 298). In the early days excursions were much less frequent than they have become in recent years. Originally only three meets or excursions were held, at the spring, summer, and autumn holidays, but the latter was soon dropped owing, it was explained, to the bad weather frequent at that date. A few Saturday afternoon excursions and later extra week-ends made up the year's programme.

Scanning more recent volumes shows that the first of the New Year Meets was that of 1920, to Braemar, where it has remained every year except 1927, when a meet at Ballater was poorly attended. The New Year Meet of 1920 appears, in fact, to have been the first official Club meet or excursion in the period between the Aberdeen September Holiday and Easter. How the earlier members must have disliked snow! The first Sunday excursion, other than those at week-end meets, did not come until July 14, 1931, and attracted but four members. Fortunately this lack of desire to climb Morven on a Sunday did not discourage the supporters of the innovation, and soon the snow-climbing excursions to Lochnagar in February and March were instituted (1932). Figures of members attending meets show that the number of members turning out has tended to rise in the last few years. Never, however, since that Mount Keen excursion of fifty years ago has the attendance exceeded the number of members. There is much of interest in the accounts of meets and excursions long past, in those at least which are not merely registers of attendance and lists of tops covered. While it may not be of great interest to know what the Club eats for tea, it is news when the presidential rucksack makes an involuntary descent of a hard-won snow slope, and accounts of such incidents are welcome. May we, however, make a plea for accuracy on the part of reporters—however excusable the muddling the Hogmanay and New Year's Day may be!

An article by James McCoss (Vol. X., p. 119) on knots and climbing hints may be taken as the forerunner of the real change, as far as the *Journal* was concerned, from hill-walking to rock and gully climbing. We have noted this to a slight extent in 1911, but under Robert Anderson's editorship the M'Connochie tradition had prevailed, and continues to the first number of Vol. XI., which has articles by Robert Clarke, "On Ben Muich Dhui at Christmas" (perhaps the date is significant), and J. R. Leslie Grey on "The Physical History of Arthur's Seat." The three numbers of Sir Henry Alexander's short period as editor are the Indicator Numbers, with full descriptions of the

labours of Parker and his co-workers on Macdhui and Lochnagar. In E. W. Watt's first number the most important item is undoubtedly the note on p. 283 (Vol. XI.) on the Left-hand Branch of the Black Spout, initialled G. R. S. This record of the passing of the Chokestone pitch is the first of many accounts of ascents by Symmers in the north-east corrie of Lochnagar. "Two Climbs on Lochnagar" (p. 313) is the second, and introduces the name of W. A. Ewen, our present editor, who with Symmers laid bare the secrets of the north-east corrie. J. A. Parker records in "The Scottish Threes" (Vol. XI., p. 290) the ascent of all the 276 separate mountains of Munro's Tables—Beinn Tarsuinn being then undiscovered! The incident on Mount Arrowsmith, Vancouver Island, B.C., which the same author reports (Vol. XII., p. 1) may be related to these 276 ascents, as the thirty-four-year-old ice-axe whose long-suffering shaft presumably assisted in many of these ascents finally rebelled, fortunately at a not too inconvenient moment.

A link with the past is A. I. M'Connochie's article on the Moor of Rannoch (Vol. XI., p. 70), forty years after his first publication for the Club. Throughout the intervening years since his series on the Cairngorms previously noted, various articles of his had appeared in the *Journal*. Before leaving Vol. XII. the names of the articles from Symmer's pen must be included. These are: "With a Rope on the Crags of Lochnagar" (p. 6), "An Unclimbed Gully" (p. 31), "The Pannanich Cave Pitch" (p. 42), "On Sgòran Dubh" (p. 146), and "Some Rock Climbs on Lochnagar" (p. 186), the last being an account of the Lochnagar position up to 1931.

On p. 87 is the catalogue of the Club Library, now unfortunately well out of date—perhaps a revision will be published in the not too distant future? Finally, mention must be made of J. C. Ormerod's masterpiece, "A Case of Forbearance," especially as our editor misquoted the title when he referred to it in the preceding number! Incidentally no attempt has been made here to quote titles in full.

If Vol. XII. showed the trend to rock climbing on

Lochnagar and elsewhere, Vol. XIII. contains little else but accounts of new climbs in the north-east corrie. There is one notable exception—J. Norman Collie's "Dreams" (p. 59), a delightful account of the memories of a great traveller. It is utterly impossible even to mention all the articles dealing with the cliffs of Lochnagar. Raeburn's Gully is described by James McCoss (p. 19), Eric Maxwell (p. 23), and E. W. Smith (p. 81). W. A. Ewen writes on The Central Buttress (p. 70), the Black Spout Pinnacle (p. 90), and Polyphemus Gully and Gargoyle Chimney (p. 221), whilst there are several more contributions from Symmers. No one who intends climbing in the corries of Lochnagar should do so without first consulting the detailed information available in Vols. XII. and XIII., both in the articles quoted and in the Notes in each number. These two volumes are to the rock and snow climber what M'Connochie's articles in the earlier volumes were to the hill-walker.

On W. A. Ewen taking over, a change to the present printers, the Darien Press, brought about alterations in the make-up of the *Journal*. This is particularly noticeable in the reproduction of the illustrations, especially as the first number was illustrated almost entirely by H. C. Dugan, who was responsible also for the Club Crest which now appears on the cover. Throughout the life of the *Journal*, the illustrations have been rather mixed, and reproduction until recently, except for some early swan-types, was, to put it mildly, indifferent. The most photographed view in the Cairngorms, the Sròn Riach shoulder of Ben Macdhui from the Lairig Path, has appeared at least four times. The first rest on the way through the Lairig is certainly not due at the Luibeg Bridge, and stopping here to take a picture might well be abandoned, for a year or two at least. But perhaps the photographers all start from the Aviemore end.

The policy of the present editor has been to pursue an intermediate course with articles both on serious climbing and on topics of general interest, but if more of the former category were made available they doubtless would be readily accepted. Since Symmers fled to the lowlands and Ewen himself retired to the editorial chair, members equally at

ease on rock, snow, and paper have been disappointingly few. We hear rumours of new climbs, but the descriptive faculty seems to have deserted the climbers.

Having made our way through the first fourteen volumes of the *Cairngorm Club Journal*, we must take leave of it at a time when its very existence is in peril—not from any lack of vitality in itself or in its parent Club, but because the freedom of the Hills of Scotland is beset. The spirit of the time is reflected in a passage from "Dreams" by our Honorary President, and which forms a fitting conclusion to our survey:—

"There are other times when storms sweep over the mountains, then a different and more subtle beauty reveals itself, when the rain falls, and the winds shout and wail over a grey land; when the streams gather, and the rock faces of the hills are streaked with white waters. Torn clouds, shadowy horses of the Valkyrie, tear in mad hunt along the ridges, wan gleams of light struggle and die away in the ruined corries, and the deep voice of the tide calling on the beach can be heard in the distance, its wild waves dashing against tall cliffs and barren shores. Sometimes when the winds are at rest, the mists come down and all is hidden in a garment of white stillness. The loneliness and silence is of another world. Strange thoughts wander through one's mind. The old mysterious tales of ghostly beings who haunt the wilds. There are places that one dreads, where one trembles and is afraid, one knows not why, and fears stand in the way. For the Sidhe have power over us and can weave strong spells of magic to our undoing, and there are others, the Great Lords of Shadow, the Herdsman of Dreams, the baying of the White Hound, the Washer of the Ford who weaves shrouds out of the moonbeams by the river of Death, and those unnamed ones who can entice the soul out of the body, driving it afar into the dark and madness. To guard one from the dominion of these there is an old Gaelic prayer: 'Send God in his strength between us and the Sidhe, between us and the dread Hosts of the Air.' "

## THE WICKLOW MOUNTAINS OF EIRE.

A. OSBORNE LOVELOCK.

DURING a stay of eighteen months in Eire I managed to do a fair amount of walking, and I feel that the following notes may be of interest to members who, when these troublous times are over, may feel inclined to sample the delights offered by this charming country.

The district to which I shall confine my observations is easily reached from Dublin, and although it does not offer the best walking in the country, is well worthy of notice.

The Wicklow Mountains, or, as the northern fringe is termed, the Dublin Mountains, rise immediately south of the city and do not at first present an imposing spectacle. Farther south, however, some very fine scenery is to be found. This, though lacking the majesty of our own Cairngorms, has a beauty of its own which may be likened to that of the Border hills of Scotland. Heather is not as plentiful as in Scotland and it is much intermingled with grass. There is a good deal of bog, and occasionally heavy, damp peat is found even on summits of over 2,000 feet. Rock is not very plentiful. The corries are, as a rule, of the long, smooth type, but there are one or two magnificent examples of the " pothole " type of corrie with sheer cliffs and cold lochans at the foot.

Examining the range from Dublin, two small but sharply defined peaks—the Great and Small Sugar Loaves—are seen. These rise to the east, while to the west runs a long plateau, gently undulating, and called the Featherbed. Behind this, and invisible from Dublin, rise the true Wicklow Mountains.

The best centre for a walking holiday is the village of Glendalough which, although inundated by charabanc parties in the " season," has a good hotel and some magnificent scenery. The village lies about twenty-five miles from

Dublin and may be reached by two roads. The better is the main Dublin-Bray road which forks right and brings one direct to Glendalough. The other, which is longer but far more interesting, is the old military road from Rathfarnham. The surface is not good but quite practicable, and the authorities are steadily improving it. The road winds up the steep side of the Featherbed in a series of magnificent curves. At every turn fine views are to be had across Dublin, and on a clear day Carlingford Lough and the Mountains o' Mourne may easily be seen. Once the summit is reached the road flattens and the gently rolling plateau stretches out on all sides. Some miles farther on a steep climb over the shoulder of Kippure (2,475 feet) brings the motorist to Sally Gap. A pause here is suggested, for below and to the right lie two very fine corries. Each has a lochan nestling in it: the Upper and Lower Lough Bray. Seemingly hewn out of the mountain by some gigantic hand, they are frowned upon by great cliffs of a sombre colour. I have not climbed the rock of these corries, but I think that, as in other parts of the Wicklows, the going is very treacherous.

Leaving Loch Bray and Sally Gap behind us we follow the road on its descent to Glendalough.

Glendalough is the third of three branching glens: Glenmacnass, Glendasan, and Glendalough. Farther south and on the same "stem" lies Glenmalur. There are two loughs in the Vale of Glendalough. The Lower, which is nearer to the hotel, is not worthy of mention, but the Upper, lying between great cliffs, presents an awe-inspiring sight. From the antiquary's point of view there is much of interest. St Kevin had his home there—if a cave in the cliff which rises sheer from the water can be called a home! There is also an example, said to be one of the finest in existence, of a Round Tower.

A very pleasant walk may be had by following the path to the north of the lake up to the far end. Here may be seen the remains of old lead mines. A burn, the Glencalo River, falls from the heights above into the head of the lake. Climbing now by way of the old lead-workers path through masses of fallen rock one soon reaches the top of a "saddle."

On looking back a striking resemblance, on a smaller scale, to Loch A'an of the Cairngorms is noticed. The lough is roughly the same shape and, although lacking the wildness and majesty of Loch A'an, is very beautiful indeed. Striking east and following the top of the cliffs which, in some places, are over 1,500 feet sheer above the water, the interest never fails. Ever-changing lights off-set by dark masses of precipitous rock make this walk at a height of between 1,500 and 2,000 feet one of pure delight. A sharp scramble down a fissure known as the Giant's Cut brings one out at the foot of the lake, and in a few minutes the hotel is reached. The distance is nine miles, but it may be lengthened with advantage by climbing from the cliff edge to Mullacor (2,179 feet), whence a fine view of both Glendalough and Glenmalur may be enjoyed.

While the average height of the tops in the Wicklows is between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, there is one, Lugnaquillia (3,039 feet), which is above the average. Lugnaquillia, or just Lug, as it is familiarly called, lies to the south-west of Glenmalur. The ascent is made from here and is steep up to the 500-foot contour. It then rises gently to 2,400 feet, where a sharp climb brings one to the flattish top. The summit, known as the North Prison, is marked by a cairn, and on a clear day the views are very fine. To the west and north-west lies the vast central plain of Ireland, while to the north the hills of Donegal and Mourne may be seen. Very rarely, and I was fortunate, the Welsh hills may be made out with Snowdon as a clear landmark. The summit is rocky, though there is much bog where the several burns have their sources. The majority of these flow down to Glenmalur and help to feed its river—the Avonbeg.

From Lug two smaller tops may be climbed. Either the Carraway Stick (2,218 feet), which lies to the south-east, or going northwards to Table Mountain at 2,302 feet. Both make pleasant walks, although a certain sameness of outlook is unavoidable. This latter point is one that is a little apt to mar the pleasure of the Wicklow Hills; there is never a very wide difference of view. All are most extensive, but a little variety would be a great improvement.

One thing that struck me very forcibly while exploring this region was the absence of wild life. I saw an occasional peregrine, and once a raven flew up the Glendalough cliffs. One or two brown hares made the total of all I saw. This absence of life surprised me, as the altitudes are not great and the climate is pretty temperate.

I have not the space to describe any more of the many climbs that are to be found in these hills, but Tonelagee (2,636 feet), with the heart-shaped Lough Ouler tucked away at the foot of a corrie 1,000 feet deep, is well worth a visit. Mullaghleevaun (2,615 feet) may be reached from Tonelagee or, as a separate walk, from the Wicklow Gap at the head of Glendasan.

In conclusion let it be said that any member who has not been too spoiled by our Cairngorms to appreciate the rather simpler beauty of these lower tops would, when travelling restrictions are once more removed, be well advised to try a holiday in this land of charming hospitality and to make the acquaintance of the Wicklow Mountains of Eire.

## LOCHNAGAR—A FIRST VISIT.

ROBERT BAIN.

SINCE the days of my youth, one hill above all others has tempted me. Then, as now, I was not interested in the attainment of mere height so long as I was on a hill, somewhere, anywhere. A hill was a place where one lay in the heather, looking at the plain below. In imagination the raiding clansmen could be seen feeling their stealthy way out of the corries, sometimes using a wood as shelter, sometimes creeping up under cover of the river banks, as they converged on the castle below. As the mood fitted I lay and planned ferocious attack or glorious defence.

I was tempted from my Perthshire hills, not by the great Ben Nevis, not by the extensive heights of the Cairngorms, but by their smaller neighbour Lochnagar. Dark Lochnagar! Here was a hill to fill the imagination —here was a name to dream of and to conjure up pictures of towering precipices, black crevice and dark, wet rock, dully, malevolently glistening. There was something fearful which repelled, and yet the whole picture had an air of mystery, a suggestion of new and great discoveries which was infinitely compelling.

For many years Lochnagar remained a dream, a dream to be dreamt at night in the depths of winter when the winds whistled and snow and sleet battered on the window. Once, indeed, I lay on the rising ground above the Devil's Elbow and, looking out at where Lochnagar should be, let my fancy roam. That was the nearest I got to the hill for several years, until finally an opportunity to join a climbing party presented itself. Doubts assailed me. Should I decline and be sure of my dream mountain? Or should I go and run the risk of disillusionment? I went.

It was very quiet and peaceful as we walked upwards through the forest, our feet making no sound as they sank



*Robert Bain*

LOCHNAGAR SCENE

into snow so freshly fallen that it did not squeak. A capercailzie rose with a crackling of undergrowth and winged its noisy way through the trees, while some deer eyed us questioningly before they retreated. Nothing else stirred.

Soon the stately pines began to thin out, and the foothills of surrounding mountains became visible through the mist and lightly falling snow. The ascent grew steeper, the going harder, the pines were left behind and below, and we were out on the open hill, able to look around us. The outlook was grey and gloomy, yet there was a certain ethereal beauty in the intermingling of rising snow-tipped forest and drooping mist. Nothing above a few hundred feet was visible.

Up we went, into the mist, figures some thirty yards ahead showing up only dimly in the gloom. The snow was soft and deep. The wind rose and the temperature dropped as we climbed, so that soon, coats which previously had been wet were now frozen stiff. Miniature snowdrifts built up in the corners of our windward eyes, and varied were the types of headgear which now made their appearance. Progress, by map and compass, was slow, but eventually the crest of a ridge was reached, along which we made our way, sometimes aided, sometimes checked, by a gale which came whistling and whirling out of unseen corries, but always almost blinded by the fine snow powder now being blown off the surface. Suddenly we found our way seemingly barred by a steep snow slope rising right up into the mist above. The angle of the slope, intensified by its misty indefiniteness, gave it the appearance of a great limitless wall.

Up and up we went. Would we ever get to the top of this never-ending staircase? Resting for a moment, I watched figures disappear wraith-like in the mists above, figures appear wraith-like from the mists below. Between the whistling gusts of wind, the rhythmic chip, chip of the ice axes, curiously softened and muffled by the blanket of mist, or occasionally the heavy breathing of a companion was heard. Every other sound was that of wind. A snowball

came rolling past me and vanished below, and as I watched it I pondered its beginning and end.

Then what had been a smooth surface became broken, the gradient eased off, and we burst out on to a summit. Here was a dead calm, though some twenty feet below the wind was whistling past. Around us loomed the outlines of huge boulders, encased in frozen snow. Here was a snow cave, carved out by some curious eddy in the wind; there was a solitary, unexplained pinnacle; while all that could be seen was iced with fog crystals which formed the most amazing floral designs. I sighed for the gleam of sunshine which would have made it a fairyland. But this was no place to linger at that time of day, so, after a roll-call, down, down, and down we went. Soon we were into the wind again, and this time it was against us. Still seeing no farther than before, we made our way, it seemed, for mile after mile, buffeted this way, flung that way, almost blinded by the frozen snow and icicles which hung from our eyebrows, our nostrils, and our moustaches. Now we plunged to the thighs in a softer snow patch, now felt for a precarious hold on wind-swept ice, but still we went down and down.

A pine showed up through the mist. Another and yet another appeared, and then, within five minutes, we stepped out of the blistering, searing wind into the quiet, peaceful haven of the forest. Every twig of every branch of every tree bore its clinging burden of snow and not one moved. The quiet and stillness seemed unnatural and almost oppressive. It was a never-to-be-forgotten transition and a fitting close to a memorable day. What is more, I still had my dream to play with.

## THE ASCENT OF MOUNT HUYGENS

J. McCoss.

"O God, I thank Thee that set high the hills and stars."

IN front of me is a colossal aeroplane, and I watch the men take their places in it. They are fine specimens of manhood and obviously have the enthusiasm of youth. These men have been busy preparing for this day, and now the work is finished and everything is ready down to the smallest detail. The massive structure moves forward and gains height immediately. In thirty-six seconds I have lost sight of it. They are gone. The initial speed of the plane is 500 m.p.h. in the atmospheric friction near the earth, but after clearing the stratosphere the designers guarantee 2,500 m.p.h., without using very much fuel.

The personnel number sixteen, consisting of a crew of nine, whose average age is twenty-two years, and Newton, the captain, aged thirty. Besides being an excellent aviator, he is also an astronomer of some importance. The other six men are the mountaineers, who are about twenty-six years of age. In four days this climbing party is timed to reach the foot of the screes. I am specially interested in the expedition because I had been out in 1922 (*S.M.C.J.*, vol. xvi, p. 182), and also because Towers, one of the climbers, is a friend of mine and a most accomplished rock climber.

After the return of the expedition I visited Towers and found him with Newton. I very cordially shook hands with both of them; we sat down and, without more ado, I said to them, "Go ahead."

"Well," began Newton, "I shall tell you about our outward voyage. We started at 3 P.M. and, with our nose heading for Aldebaran, we were doing easily 2,500 m.p.h. away out in soundless space. The February moon was about 50 degrees and the sun about 100 degrees on our starboard, but in four days the moon had travelled to come nearly into

line with Aldebaran, and the sun was rising on the particular part of the moon's surface on which we wished to land.

" The interior of the plane was an oxygen cylinder, and we could produce much more oxygen than we required. Inside the plane we had inky black shadows and brilliant sunlight ; there was no merging of one into the other. In the first twenty-four hours we had traversed a little under 60,000 miles, and looking back at the earth a wonderful spectacle met our gaze. The earth, slightly less than half illuminated on the left side, had an apparent diameter sixteen times that of the sun. It stood out brilliantly against the dark violet sky. As it was February the North Pole was in darkness, but the ice-cap at the South Pole was very conspicuous. The moon, now five days old, illuminated the dark side, and the complete disc was well seen because of the sun's illumination of the atmosphere round the surface. Immediately below the earth was the great red star Antares, the nearly burned out sun with a diameter larger than the orbit of Mars and a real brightness 386 times that of the sun. (What must its size and brightness have been when it was young and, probably, blue in colour ?) I now began to operate the 10-inch telescope, and turned it on the nebula of Orion and had an entrancing view of the trapezium. I also examined the nebulous stars in the Pleiades and, as a contrast, inspected the Coal Sack near the Southern Cross.

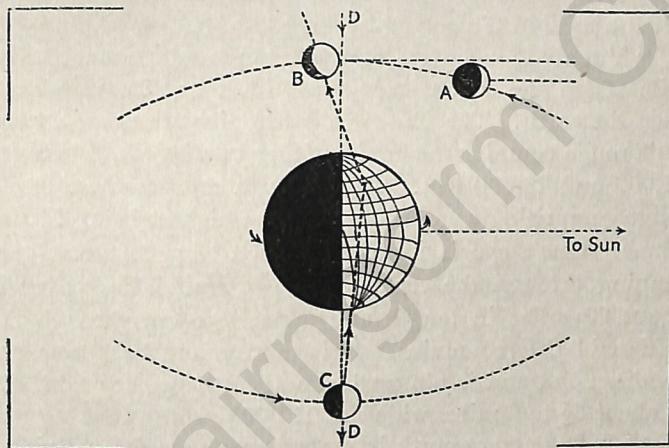
" I was thrilled with the feeling of being the first man to gaze through a 10-inch telescope on any individual part of the complete celestial sphere, and I followed the Milky Way, powdered with stars, until I arrived back where I started, and the words of Henry Vaughan came to my mind :

" ' I saw Eternity the other night,  
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,  
All calm, as it was bright—  
And round beneath it, time, in hours, days, years,  
Driven by the spheres,  
Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world  
And all her train were hurled.'

" I turned the telescope on the most wonderful spectacle of which we know in the universe, the planet Saturn. From

my privileged position it was wonderfully brilliant, and the staccato shadow of the ring rested on the highly illuminated ball of the planet and the shadow of the planet rested on the ring.

" It seemed to me that our objective was now worthy of attention, so I switched on to the moon, which is now 36 degrees to the starboard. The first object that attracted my attention was the Altai Mountains. The illuminated summits of the western end of the range were protruding out into the dark



POSITION OF MOON WHEN PLANE—

- A, STARTS FROM EARTH.
- B, ARRIVES AT MOON.
- C, STARTS FOR EARTH.
- D-D, EARTH'S PATH.

side of the moon to the east of the crater Piccolomini, while their lower slopes were still in inky blackness. The sun had risen on the Pyrenees twenty-four hours ago, and now they were throwing dark shadows to the east.

" In another twenty-four hours we had traversed half the journey, and the moon's apparent diameter had doubled. The Hoemus Mountains stretched far beyond the dark side of the moon, and many summits showed as bright beads of light. Farther north is Aristotles, a crater 48 miles in diameter, with a circular rampart 10,000 feet high. The crater presents all the true volcanic characteristics in a

remarkable degree. The outside, as well as the inside, of its vast surrounding wall displays on the grandest scale the landslip feature of subsidence of its overloaded banks, the result of overpiling of ejected material and the consequent crumbling down and crushing of the substructure. A group of conical mountains occupy the central floor of the crater and stand over what was once the vent from which the ejected matter was discharged. On the exterior slopes radiate ridges, the result of flowing down of streams of very fluid lava, while all round for miles are hundreds of craters about a mile in diameter.

" Twenty-four hours later we were only about 60,000 miles from the moon, now four times its size as viewed from the earth. The Caucasus Mountains are now in view. This range contains mountains rising to a height of between 11,000 and 19,000 feet. To the north-east are the Alps, a range comprising some 700 peaks, the highest being Mount Blanc. One's eye is instantly attracted by the great glen running through the centre of the group. This valley is about 90 miles in length and appears to cut through the loftiest of the mountains. It is narrow and broken at the southern end and is almost lost among the great peaks. It is about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 6 miles wide and 11,500 feet deep.

" At 20 degrees north latitude we now see the sun rising on the magnificent volcanic range of the Apennines. This chain runs north-west to south-east and is upwards of 450 miles in length, and contains some 3,000 peaks. It is the grandest range on the lunar surface and rises gradually from a comparatively level surface on the south-west side in the form of innumerable small hills of exudation, which increase in number and altitude towards the north-east side, where they culminate and suddenly terminate in a sublime range of peaks whose altitude and rugged aspect form the most terrible and wonderful scene the imagination can conceive. The almost vertical north-east face is casting intense black, spire-like shadows on the level plain beneath, some of which extend fully 90 miles until they lose themselves in the general shading due to the curvature of the lunar surface. It is especially wonderful when the sun

climbs its shining pinnacles and slowly discloses the tremendous chasm that lies below its terrible precipices. Many of the summits rise at one bound to heights of 18,000 to 21,000 feet from the plain at their north-east base. Mount Huygens at the centre of the range is 18,000 feet high, and this is the mountain that our friend Towers and his climbers went out to ascend.

"As we were now nearing the moon's surface we put in operation the electro-magnetic apparatus at the tail of the plane and gradually slowed down to the required speed for landing. Along the north-east precipitous base of the Apennines are two more or less parallel cracks about 15 and 30 miles from the foot. They are fully a mile wide in some parts and are partially filled by masses of material from the sides which have fallen inward and partially choked them. The depth of the chasms is very great, and they owe their existence to some mighty upheaving action at a profound depth. They have been estimated to be at least the appalling depth of 10 miles.

"We made a splendid landing closer up to the mountains than the cracks and well into a deep and flat recess running into the range north of Mount Huygens. We were now right at the foot of our mountain, and I think that Towers could best tell you what happened afterwards."

Towers then gave me the details of the ascent of Mount Huygens, and, to say the least of it, I was fascinated as I listened to his narrative. "We got into our full kit," he began, "and it comprised a complete overall inside which temperature had no effect and each climber could breathe, eat, and drink in comfort. We were all expert in semaphoring, as speech was impossible; the lips may move but no sound comes forth. There was no air and, hence, no sound. Little time was wasted, and we started at once in two parties of three working close together. This arrangement gave us the strength of six men and the mobility of three, and we found it worked very well. As 6 lbs. weigh only 1 lb. on the lunar surface, our equipment, though heavy, did not inconvenience us very much, and we were climbing under conditions as favourable as on the earth. We went into the

heart of the range to the west, then we turned south and afterwards due east to the summit. At first the going was fairly good, but as we turned south the route became extremely rough and absolutely baffles description. The worst of your boulder-strewn slopes on the Cairngorms would seem a carpet to it. The sharp angles of the rocks have never been rounded off by the action of air and water.

" We reached the height of 10,000 feet after ploughing through volcanic dust and loose debris. To the south-west side of the range the hills gradually became lower and lower until they reached to the plain 100 miles away. On the moon the visible distance in miles is equal to the square root of (the height in feet over 2·442), therefore we could not see farther than some 64 miles owing to the acute lunar curvature; therefore the plain was not visible. On the earth the view would have been as extensive at a height of 2,277 feet. However, the objects that were visible were lit by dazzling sunlight, flecked with black shadows, and distant objects were seen as clearly as those at close quarters.

" It was now apparent that the real climbing was in front of us, and the general angle appeared to be at least 50 degrees all the way to the summit. The rock was wholly igneous, without any denudation. Most of it had oozed up and slowly flowed down from small, high volcanic openings. This does not apply to the north-east face, that seemed to have broken away and fallen into molten lava at the foot or to have been afterwards covered by lava, as there was very little sign of the fallen material at the base. It was obvious this face could not be climbed owing to its great smoothness and steepness.

" On the south-west side that we were ascending there were no clean-cut gullies, nor chimneys, nor horizontal terraces, nor cracks whose softer rocks had worn away, nor dykes whose harder rocks were left standing. Nearly everywhere convex and bulging faces presented themselves to us. The best ally we had was the spaces between the smaller individual streams of lava that had gently flowed downwards. In these recesses we always found firm footing, but care had to be exercised, as there were very few belays.

We very quickly grasped what was required of us for this kind of climbing, and indeed we all realised that we had been in more difficult places on the earth. We came to a drop very like the Third Pinnacle on Sgùrr nan Gillean, and we could not turn it. The rock had broken off and the debris could be seen lying around the base of it. It turned out to be an impostor, however, and we descended very easily, but in case of trouble we left a length of rope hanging for our return. At last, after an exceedingly strenuous ascent and after encountering difficulties of various kinds, all of which were within the range of our climbing experience, we reached a fairly flat space just under the final ridge leading to the summit, and very quickly we fell fast asleep. In four hours we rose refreshed, and found the ridge to be quite like the traverse of the four summits of Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh, only it was about six times as long, and it rose gradually to the south. On our left steep rounded slabs of lava ran sharply downwards, and on our right was an appallingly vertical drop, so terrible that we kept away from the immediate edge as we moved along the ridge. A short distance from the actual top we were held up by a gap of 25 feet on the ridge, and it nearly proved too much for us, but by threading the rope behind a flake of rock, the only one we saw on the mountain, we overcame the difficulty and walked quietly on to the summit. The elevation of 18,000 feet had been reached on the lunar surface.

"In a death-like silence which reigned unbroken we looked along the terrible range of peaks for some 150 miles in either direction, north-west and south-east, as far as the horizon. Never had I seen anything like it on the earth. There is something almost nerve-racking in an absolute stillness, and there was a sinister calm on this mountain-top in which fear and death had a footing. On the north-east side, below the precipice, stretched a comparatively flat floor of lava to the horizon.

"We returned by the same route and arrived back safely at the plane, where we received a splendid welcome. We had been seen on the summit with the aid of Newton's telescope. To descend from the high mountains to the

pasture lands is the most delicious experience that mountain-eering affords, for the soft beauty of the valley, where flowers decorate the pastures in tender profusion, is an ideal contrast to the harsh glare of the upper regions. But here, at the foot of the mountains, the aspect is as sterile as on the summit ridge.

"The earth had turned its dark side to us, which was lit up by full moonlight. The situation was vastly enhanced by the unchanging pitch-black aspect of the heavens and the stars shining brilliantly in the dazzling sunlight.

"The moon's long day of 304 hours was nearly at a close and night was approaching, the darkness was creeping up from the west, and the time for leaving the moon had now arrived. We arranged to leave by rocket, starting with three successive bursts. These had to be sufficiently powerful to carry us a tenth of our journey, as the gravitational equilibrium of the earth and the moon is at this point. Afterwards it would be quite easy, as we were now right on the earth's track and it would be rushing towards us at  $18\frac{1}{2}$  miles per second. The great moment arrived and everything went according to plan; we reached the earth in less than a quarter of the time that it took us on the outward journey.

"We leave it to those that come after us to visit the other side of the moon when it is illuminated from last quarter to first quarter, and there to discover a new mountain range worthy of the name—The Cairngorm Mountains."

## THE LIFE PRESERVERS' SOCIETY.

JAMES A. PARKER.

No, this article has nothing whatever to do with the activities of people armed with "short sticks with loaded heads, used for defence against assailants," or the other way about. It simply deals with the doings of a small group of business and professional men of mature age (several of whom are members of our own Club), who, armed with nothing more formidable than walking-sticks, went away out into the country every Saturday for long walks to enjoy the fresh air and their own congenial company. It was considered that this would be better for our health than working, more or less hard, in the office. Hence the above title, which was that which we gave to the Society.

The scheme was started several years ago by the late Mr William Tawse, who was in command and made all the arrangements for the walks. The membership of the Society was about twenty and, for postal reasons, not less than that number. Every Saturday those members who could get away would leave Aberdeen by motor cars in the early forenoon and proceed to some suitable starting-point, 30 to 40 miles out, and from it walk across country by disused road, path, or hillside to a specified point to which the motors would, or should, have proceeded to wait for the arrival of the walkers. Sometimes the motors and/or the hikers would fail to turn up at the specified point and complications would ensue. But it was great fun, and the party would then be driven to a friend's house or a convenient hotel for afternoon tea, and thereafter motor back to Aberdeen for supper.

The writer was roped into the Society owing to his having prepared in 1931, at Mr Tawse's request, a schedule of about two dozen suitable walks, the average length of which was about 12 miles. The total number of walks accomplished

since the inception of the scheme was well over 200, and Mr Tawse took part in all. The trips were always delightful and were attended by an average of, say, eight members. The season was from mid-February to mid-July. The former date being fixed to avoid the worst of the winter and the latter to avoid disturbing game.\* The writer took part in many of the outings, and it may be of interest to recall a few of them.

We were out every Saturday, wet or fine; but on the whole had always good weather, or said that we had. The really bad days were mighty few. Probably the second worst day was that on which we traversed the skyline of the Garvoch Hills from north to south in a stiff southerly gale with drenching rain. Really not very pleasant, as there was no shelter; but with a change of footgear and a good tea at Fettercairn none of us was any the worse.

A mighty cold walk was from Rosehearty to near Strichen by the direct road in February 1938, with a strong, cold north-east wind. The only shelter that we were able to get was in a little shop by the roadside, where the goodwife put us into her parlour and, in order to make us comfortable, put two shovelfuls of burning peat into the grate. The chimney refused to draw, and in a few minutes the little room was so full of pungent peat-reek that we could hardly see across it. Then one man said that he would try the old wife's cure for a smoky chimney, which was to stand the poker up against the front of the grate. This he did with apparent confidence; but the result was a complete failure, and matters became worse than before. Then another man calmly suggested that the poker would be more usefully employed if it was reversed and pushed up the chimney to open the damper! This he did with immediate success, and the room soon cleared and we were then able to enjoy the excellent Irish

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\* For fuller details of the Society reference should be made to "Braemar Octotoddle," 1939, which records a Society Meeting at Braemar on April 14-16 in honour of the eightieth birthday of Dr Walter A. Reid, who was one of the founders of the Society. There is a copy of this little book in the Club Library which Dr Reid presented to the Club.

stew which he produced from a large thermos. The first man said little; but his appetite showed no sign of having been affected by his failure.

On a later occasion the second man aforesaid went one better, and previous to leaving Aberdeen, and unknown to the others, concealed in the boot of one of the motors the uncooked ingredients for nine rations of Irish stew, a primus lamp, and a pressure cooker. Towards the end of the walk he and two others rushed on by a short-cut ahead of the main party to the cars, which were waiting at Migvie School. The pressure cooker was at once got out of its hiding, and into it were placed the meat, potatoes, and onions, pepper and salt added, the whole shaken up, and the lid screwed down. The cooker was then placed on the primus stove and heat applied, and in about thirty minutes we were serving out rations of Irish stew piping hot and excellently cooked. Splendid!

On one occasion there were only two hikers—W. Tawse and myself. We started from Aldivalloch and walked across the hills to Blackwater Lodge. From the latter we walked due north by road and finally by a path on the east side of Cairn Crome to the gateway at the entrance to the private road leading up the glen to Glenfiddich Lodge, where the motor had been instructed to wait for us. The car was not there! The driver had arrived all right; but the gatekeeper had assured him with the utmost confidence that we would not come over the hill but would simply have followed the road all the way to the Lodge and would be there. So the driver went up the glen to the Lodge to wait for us. This was a bit awkward; but fortunately a motor cyclist turned up and kindly went up the glen to the Lodge and told our driver that he had better go down the road and pick us up.

A particularly fine walk was from Alltnaguibhsaich by the south side of Loch Muick to the Black Burn, and on by the high-level path over the hills to Bachnagairn. The descent to the latter through the larch trees in the first beauty of their early spring foliage was very fine indeed. The motors were joined at the entrance to the drive to Glendoll Lodge. As the hour was not convenient for ordering afternoon tea

at the Milton of Clova Inn we carried on to Kirriemuir, where we succeeded in getting into, or making, a traffic jam in the main square. However, in the absence of the Law, our expert got us out safely and he then tried to get a supply of bridies, as we were by now a bit hungry. All the shops were sold out, but finally he found a baker who was just proceeding to take a batch out of the oven, and he bought the necessary number. They were frightfully hot and we did our best, but the spectacle of the nine of us standing on the side-walk of one of the main streets in Thrums nibbling at the red-hot things was a sight for the gods. But the bridies were so good that we did not mind what the people thought. Then on to Aberdeen for supper. A great day.

On May 28, 1932, we climbed Lochnagar by way of the Blacksheil Burn and the steep north-west shoulder of the hill. Dense mist was entered at about 2,150 feet, and the summit was attained without any special trouble, although there were several patches of hard snow on the steeper parts of the slope. We then crossed the summit plateau and descended the Ladder, and did not emerge from the mist until we were a long way below the Fox's Well. Those members of the party who had not done an expedition before in thick mist were a bit impressed; at least the two men who led the party flattered themselves that such was the case. During the descent I happened to tell Mr Tawse that it was my forty-ninth ascent of Lochnagar, and he said at once, "Then we will come back in July and do your fiftieth." This was done a couple of months later by the same route, but in clear weather. The party now saw the nature of the north-west slope up which they had gone in thick mist on the former occasion, and some of them said that had they known what the slope was like they would not have gone up it.

In the schedule already mentioned, walk No. 26 was from Braemar to Inchrory, and in my explanation I stated, "No. 26. This is a snorter, and is for adepts only, with guide. Best done in a long day in June." We did it three times. On the first we had a very early start from Aberdeen and motored to Invercauld House. Then by way of the Slugan and Quoich to the Sneck, thick mist having been entered

some little time before we reached the latter. Then down the Slochd Burn to the bridge across the Avon, and thence to Inchry to the cars which *were* there. Tea at Tomintoul and home to Aberdeen, which was reached pretty late—in fact, almost early. And that was that!

So the next year it was decided that we would do it again, but this time by night, and over the top of Ben Avon to see the sunrise. Quite! We left Aberdeen shortly after 7.30 P.M. on July 14, 1933, and drove to Invercauld House as before. We now saw that the conditions up aloft were far from good, and the stalker who joined us in a few minutes said that the weather was hopeless and advised us to go to the hotel for the night and start in the morning after breakfast. This we accordingly did, and after breakfast at six o'clock reached the Sneck in good time and in good weather as far as it was concerned; but there were thick clouds on the upper part of Ben Avon. As there was therefore no use in going up to the summit we decided to go down the Slochd by our former route. At first the view into the Garbh Coire was magnificent, but shortly—in fact, very shortly indeed—everything was blotted out by thick clouds and heavy rains. By the time that we reached the Avon we were drenched and the rain was still coming down in torrents. The river was in full flood, and the bridge which we had crossed the previous year had been conveniently washed away during the winter. To cross the river was impossible, although one of our members made the attempt and would have been washed away down stream if he had not been fortunate to catch on to a big boulder a little way out in the torrent. He was rescued in due course. We then walked down the rough ground on the right bank of the river and presently came to, and were trapped by, the Caol Ghleann Burn, which was also in full flood and impossible. So we had to walk up beside it for a full mile before we came to a place where we could cross in safety. The cars were joined at Inchry, and Tomintoul was reached in due course. Here the hotel people placed four bathrooms and plenty of hot water at our disposal and gave us an excellent tea, the great feature of which was the "evening dress" of those members of the

party who did not have a change of clothes. Aberdeen was reached about midnight.

But we were not going to be beaten by Ben Avon, so the next year we tried again. We left Aberdeen on the afternoon of Friday, June 29, for Braemar, where we had a high tea. Got away about nine and reached the Sneck about midnight more or less; principally more, I think. One thing is perhaps worth mentioning: Mr Tawse and I left Altdourie together well in advance of the rear party, who had been delayed. W. T. said that he would do it all right, but that I would have to give him plenty of rests. I replied that I would give him as many as he liked, but added that, after it became so dark that he could not see the details of the ground, he would not require any rests as he would simply go on automatically. This turned out to be the case, and he and I reached the Sneck well before the second party. We waited at the Sneck until about 2.30 A.M. and thus had plenty of time to admire the magnificent lighting effects of the Garbh Coire in the early dawn. The summit rocks of Ben Avon were reached in ample time for the sunrise, but unfortunately there were clouds on the north-eastern horizon and we did not see the sun until it was well up above the horizon. We now followed the main ridge of the mountain for miles and miles—in fact, for many more miles than some of the party had been bargaining for. At one place water was met and a brew of hot tea was served out by the man who considered, and now proved, that a spirit cooker could be used several times as against the once only of a thermos flask. As a matter of fact the cook had to use his cooker three times before the other men had had enough. Then on to Inchry for the cars, breakfast at Tomintoul, and home to Aberdeen. It had been a great day, or rather a great night, done in perfect weather.

Alas, these pleasant days are now but a memory, as our dear friend William Tawse passed away from us very suddenly when being driven homewards from Banchory on Saturday, April 6. We miss him greatly.

## In Memoriam.

JOHN CLARKE.

ON September 28, 1939, our last surviving original member passed away. Dr Clarke had a long career as a mountaineer and walker, and several generations of young people learned from him how best to enjoy the wonders of nature as they appeared to the observant eye and the cultured mind. Of his many exploits among the hills there seems no one left to tell. His son Ian died two days after his father, and his son-in-law, Sir Henry Alexander, survived him by only seven months. Both were keen mountaineers and were well fitted to write of his doings. My own recollections are in no way adequate, because I have done no walks with him for forty years. My earliest memory of him is a walk he did from Aboyne of 56 miles, but I can give no details of it except that it embraced both sides of the Dee and included the climbing of Mount Keen and Morven. His wife went out in a pony trap to meet him in the evening, but he refused to get in and insisted on finishing the last 3 miles on foot. My second recollection is more painful, and although it took place in 1893 many of the details are as vivid as if they had happened yesterday. I was nine and a half years old, and we started from Braemar at 8.30 A.M. in a dog-cart which took us to the Derry Lodge. There was thick mist and it had begun to rain. Dr Clark insisted that it was "an essentially fine day," and we started for Cairn Toul. In fording the Dee I slipped and fell into the river, and so became thoroughly wet from head to foot. On the top of Cairn Toul it was blowing half a gale, and when we eventually returned to Braemar at 8 P.M. the mist was still down to the door. During these twelve hours we had at no time been able to see more than a few yards round us, and I have never felt so cold and miserable as on that July day in 1893.

Dr Clarke was not really a climber in the generally accepted sense of the term. He was more of a walker, but he loved the hills and drew great inspiration from them. He has had many companions in his mountaineering, both members of his family and many other young people, all of whom speak of the joy of having walked with him and of all he has taught them. He taught me as a young man two things which have proved useful in many circumstances in life. The first was to observe my surroundings in a detailed manner for landmarks, flora, and fauna, and signs of wind and weather; and the second is even more important—the trick of being able to go much faster at the end than at the beginning of a walk. His finishes were in the nature of spurts. After a 28-mile walk, nearing home his time for the mile was generally thirteen minutes.

I twice climbed Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm with him. On the first occasion he had to carry me on his shoulder through a snowdrift, but on that occasion I again fell in, owing to the fact that Sir Herbert Grierson, who was a little behind, caught me on the back of the head with a large snowball! These excursions, with the kindly welcome we always received from Donald Fraser at the Derry Lodge on our return, were days of great pleasure, as were our frequent trips together to Lochnagar, sometimes with Downie's pony for the younger members of the party; except once, when he insisted on descending in a north-westerly direction to Ballochbuie Forest, where we seemed to be engulfed in a sea of enormous boulders which my legs were too short to negotiate. I shall never go that way again.

Dr Clarke was punctilious about mountain manners, especially as regards game, and would often make wide detours to avoid disturbing feeding deer. He used to write for and usually obtained permission from the owners of property when he wished to walk in the stalking season. One year he had been turned back by keepers when trying to climb Ben Avon, so he waited until the day of the Highland Games, when all the keepers were in Braemar. On his return at the bottom of the Sluggan in the evening he met the keeper coming back from the Games. The latter



DR J. R. LEVACK

accepted the situation and put Dr Clarke across the river in his boat.

In 1913, at the age of sixty, with Dr M'Intyre and with his son Ian respectively, he twice climbed the four Cairngorms. He did them once—Cairngorm, Ben Muich Dhui, Cairntoul, Braeriach, and once in the reverse order. Finally, in 1932, from Speyside, at the age of seventy-nine, he did a 20-mile walk, including Braeriach and down over Angel's Peak. His long walks when approaching the age of eighty caused his family considerable anxiety, and about that age he became more moderate, and contented himself with his 5 miles a day, whatever the weather. He kept this up until within a month or two of his death, and I played round Balgownie with him in April 1939 in exactly two hours. His firm belief was that a man could not be healthy unless his body was continually surrounded by oxygen, and the health he enjoyed seemed to bear out the truth of this.

As has been recorded in the *Journal*, he was instrumental in the building of a new bridge over the Allt-na-Beinne, which was opened in 1912, and which has since proved a great boon to walkers up the Larig. He also collected money and erected an Indicator on Eildon Top. He went latterly every spring to Melrose for a change of air, and enjoyed to the last his walks among the milder hills of the South.

J. B.

#### JOHN R. LEVACK.

By the death of John R. Levack the Club has lost one of its outstanding personalities. While indifferent health had of recent years prevented him from attending Club functions as regularly as he did in the past, he was happily able to attend the Informal Meeting which replaced the 1939 Dinner. He died at his home, 10 Golden Square, on Saturday, September 7, 1940, in his seventieth year.

Born at Lossiemouth, he was educated at Robert Gordon's College and at Aberdeen University, where he graduated M.B., C.M., in 1891. He was immediately attracted to

radiology, and after a period of research work in collaboration with the late Sir James Mackenzie Davidson became, in 1925, Lecturer in Radiology and Electro-therapeutics at Aberdeen University. He rapidly enhanced his reputation in this field by his work in the X-ray department of the Royal Infirmary, and during the Great War he served in the R.A.M.C.(T.F.) as Medical Officer-in-Charge of the X-ray and Electrical Departments of the 1st Scottish General Hospital. He was promoted Major in 1915.

Dr Levack joined the Club in 1905 and became Chairman in 1918, a position he filled with distinction until 1925. One of the innovations for which he was responsible was the holding of a Dinner after the Annual General Meeting of 1921. This was the first Club Dinner held since 1890, immediately after the formation of the Club, and continued to be held until the 1939 break. While Chairman he rarely missed any Club meet or other function, and even when his climbing activities had ceased he maintained a close association with the Club.

He contributed many notes and articles to the *Journal*, notably on rock and snow climbing on the Deeside hills; to Vol. VI., notes on a visit to the Cuillin Hills, first visited in 1904 with William Garden; to Vol. VII., a further article on Skye; and to Vol. XII., "Lochnagar: Some Reminiscences." He had been on the summit some sixty times, often making the journey from Ballater or Braemar in an open pony trap. He comments on the miseries inseparable from this, the only available form of transport, but he refused to allow the weather to interfere with his plans. Indeed, he goes on to describe how he chose a day with mist down to 1,500 feet for an ascent of Lochnagar to give two young climbers some practice in map and compass work. They got it! Many years later one of the young climbers contributed an article on Compass and Map Reading to the *Journal*.

With Garden and Parker he did much to encourage the growth of mountaineering in the north-east, lecturing to Club and other audiences and producing some magnificent slides of Scottish mountain scenery. The success of his

efforts in this direction is measured by the very considerable rise in the Club membership during his term of office.

Photographs of Dr Levack appear in the *Journal* at Vol. IX. (1920) and at Vol. XI. (1925).

### SIR HENRY ALEXANDER, LL.D.

THE death of Sir Henry Alexander at his residence, 31 Queen's Road, Aberdeen, on April 7, 1940, came as a great shock both to his relatives and fellow-citizens alike, on account of its alarming suddenness. In the manner of his passing, however, none can regret that there was no lingering illness, for the best that we can wish for those we love is that they may be spared prolonged and hopeless ill-health.

Sir Henry was born in Aberdeen on June 20, 1875. He belonged to a family which for many years held a distinguished position in the public life of his native city, and particularly in Aberdeen journalism. He received his education at Aberdeen Grammar School and Aberdeen University, graduating M.A. in 1895. His interest in educational affairs as author, editor, and administrator led to his receiving from his University the honorary degree of LL.D. in 1935. He was Convener of the Editorial Committee of *The Aberdeen University Review*, 1914-28. In 1914 he succeeded his father, the late Mr Henry Alexander, as Editor of the *Aberdeen Free Press*, a post from which he retired in 1922 when that newspaper became merged in the *Aberdeen Daily Journal*. He was Lord Provost of the City of Aberdeen from 1932 to 1935, and an *ex officio* member of the University Court since 1932, having latterly acted as Assessor to Admiral Sir Edward Evans, the re-elected Rector of the University. He was D.L. and J.P. for the County of the City of Aberdeen. He was President of the following, namely, the Territorial Army Association of the City of Aberdeen, the Aberdeen Branch of the British Red Cross Society, the National Lifeboat Institution (Aberdeen Branch), the City of Aberdeen Playing Fields Association,

and the Royal Northern Agricultural Society. He was an Hon. Fellow of the Royal Empire Society, and a member of the following: the Council for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, the Northern Lighthouses Board, the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation, the Scottish Regional Appeals Advisory Committee of the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Scottish National Literary Society, the Consumers' Committee for Scotland of the Food Council and Consumers' Committee of Great Britain, and also Chairman of the Aberdeen King's Roll Committee.

In particular did Sir Henry distinguish himself, however, as Chairman of the Aberdeen and District Joint Town Planning Committee, which involved the preparation of a town-planning scheme for an area extending to ninety-six square miles, consisting of a large portion of the City of Aberdeen, and of the adjoining land within the counties of Aberdeen and Kincardine—a scheme which was the largest and most comprehensive of its kind ever undertaken in this country, and to which he devoted five years of constant work. In March 1933 the scheme was approved of by the Department of Health for Scotland, and earned the considered appreciation of town-planning experts not only throughout this country but also abroad.

Sir Henry was from his youth a keen lover of the Scottish hills, and on every occasion available to a man with so many and exacting duties as he had, he endeavoured to retreat to the great cathedrals of nature, where he could enjoy the rest and refreshment to body and mind which they can always afford. He joined the Scottish Mountaineering Club in 1908, but it was not until 1911 that his mother Club, the Cairngorm Club, found him within her fold.

As one would expect from his professional hand, the leaves of the *Journals* of both Clubs were, from time to time, adorned with articles, both about the hills and the historical and legendary lore of the country around them, with a charm of style, and in a manner which showed he had an unfailing eye for mountain form in all its varieties, coupled with a very thorough knowledge of life in the Highlands in bygone days.



SIR HENRY ALEXANDER, LL.D.

His masterpiece, however, was undoubtedly the "S.M.C. Guide Book to the Cairngorms," extending to over two hundred pages. This book contains a most exhaustive and minutely accurate mass of information with regard to these important mountains, and has so far been one of the best-sellers of all the guide books yet issued by the S.M.C. He edited the *Cairngorm Club Journal* from 1924 until 1926.

Occasionally, however, Sir Henry wandered from his homeland hills, and in 1910, 1913, and 1923 we find him in the Tyrol, on the Matterhorn, and in the Pyrenees respectively, but it was the Scottish hills which attracted him most, and there were few of their tops he had not visited more than once.

In his variety of public work he at all times carried into it caution and prudence, and so in his mountaineering he belonged rather to the Salvationist than to the Ultramontane class. He was never inclined to look upon the mountains from the greased-pole point of view which Ruskin used to deplore. Like all true mountaineers, he climbed for the joy he got from the ever-changing scenes on the hillside, where, far from the noisy highways, he could linger and enjoy the peace and restfulness of the quiet places. And now he has gone down the long Western Ridge and disappeared in the sunset, but we cherish his memory for all that he was to our Club, and to ourselves—a fine, true gentleman. "Sic itur ad astra."

W. G.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE Fifty-first Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Palace Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 25, 1939, Mr Hugh D. Welsh, President, in the Chair.

Accounts for the year were read and approved. Office-bearers were re-elected *en bloc* for the duration of war. It was arranged to hold the New Year Meet at Braemar as usual, and the Committee was instructed to arrange such other Meets and Excursions as circumstances permitted.

Mr Parker reported on Club property, all of which is in good order, the Allt-na-Beinne bridge having been repainted on May 16, 1939.

Some seventy-four members met after the Business Meeting to enjoy a programme of music and dancing, the former provided by Miss Mitchell and Messrs Train and Middleton.

## MEETS AND EXCURSIONS.

As the date of the Club's Midnight Excursion drew near, members who had decided to take part fervently hoped that weather conditions would be more favourable than those experienced during the last two or three "midnights." After all, the date of departure, Saturday, June 24, 1939, was Midsummer Day, and surely wishful thinking would have some effect. It had, but perhaps there had been too much of it, or the technique was wrong.

The party of nineteen, nine of whom were ladies, had anything but midsummer conditions, being favoured with rain in the glens and corries, and on the summit plateaux with sleet and snow borne on a high wind, and heavy mist; it was also very dark, and there were two or three inches of wet snow underfoot on the summits. The party travelled during the afternoon to Aviemore, where an enormous high tea was disposed of at the "Pot Luck." Entering Rothiemurchus at Coyer Bridge, the company shed Cardno and Mackenzie, who made for the Lairig Ghru track and eventually ascended Creag an Leth-choin, traversed the plateau to the summit of Ben Macdhui, and came down to Glen Dee by the Allt Clach nan Taillear. At the Lower Bothy in Gleann Einich, Smith, Mitchell, and Train, with Misses Hoggarth, Jackson, and Murray, struck off on to the Sgoran Dubh ridge and sheltered for a time on Càrn Ban Mòr. Hoggarth and Jackson set off from there southwards and came down the Eidart, crossed into Glen Geldie, and so down to the White Bridge. The other four crossed eastwards to Cairn Toul, coming down into Glen Dee by Corrour. The remainder of the party, led by Mackay and Welsh, continued up Gleann Einich,

ascended to the Braeriach plateau by Coire Dhondail, and, in filthy conditions, came down An Garbh Choire to Glen Dee. All reached Derry Lodge an hour or two before the conveyances were due, so many were able to get themselves partially dried at a welcome fire at a camp there. In due course all gathered at Invercauld Arms Hotel, Braemar, where hot baths and breakfasts awaited. There was at least one consolation—if there was not midsummer weather there was ample scope for map and compass work!

The Excursion on Sunday, July 9, 1939, with Glen Clunie Lodge, Braemar, as base, was a very successful one in spite of somewhat adverse weather conditions. The party, consisting of seventeen members and guests, broke up into four groups, all of which encountered a good deal of mist and slight rain on the higher levels. A group of four ascended Glas Maol and descended by the Monega Right of Way to Clunie Lodge. From there they crossed to Lochcallater Lodge by way of the glen between Creag an t-Sean-ruigh and Creag nan Gabhar, and walked down to Auchallater. Three, intent on bagging two Munroes, climbed Càrn Aosda and The Cairnwell, and returned to Glen Clunie Lodge by Baddoch Burn. Other three crossed to Coire Kander and explored the rocks above the loch, returning to Glen Clunie over Càrn an Tuirc. The remainder, seven in number, had an interesting day on Sgùrr Mòr and An Sòcach, returning by the Baddoch Burn.

On the occasion of a practically non-existent Easter Meet at Glencoe, Robert, the editorial imp, insisted that information on the activities of the party was not necessary for the writing of the report of the proceedings. We are in a practically identical predicament, as having been begged to produce this report eleven months after the event, it is now rather difficult to disentangle events of New Year 1940 from those of 1939—or any other year.

One does remember that Mrs Gregor and Priscilla were no longer at the "Invercauld" to welcome the party, which was rather smaller than usual. Various other members of the Club were distributed throughout Braemar and at Corrour. There is one respect in which a reporter who followed Robert's advice would almost certainly go wrong. Lochnagar was not one of the objectives on New Year's Day, for probably the first time since 1920.

On Saturday, December 31, the early arrivals did the round from Glen Ey by Creag an Lochain and Càrn Bhac and down Allt Cristie Beag. Sunday found the parties scattered over Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhùird, the Ben Avon cars having some difficulty in getting to the Bealach Dearg on account of snow and in getting back because of the lighting restrictions.

A few members set out for Ben Macdhui on the following morning. Robert could, no doubt, give a satisfying account of what the others did, but I have quite forgotten. Nor did the Ben Macdhui party reach

their objective. Difficulties due to the necessity of having coupons before petrol could be obtained and to frozen cylinder blocks (such was the weather) delayed the start, and Càrn a' Mhaim was all that could be achieved.

Other memories of the Meet include the temporary failure of the lighting, perhaps excusable or at least explainable at Hogmanay; the melodious strains of the Etchachan choir at Piedmont and Colonel Butchart's search for snow to ski on. But now that the names of those present are cropping up memory begins to be too sorely taxed.

The absence of members on war service and the difficulties of transport also had an adverse effect on attendances, and two of the excursions—one to Burn of Vat and Culblean on June 1, and Clochnaben on July 7—had to be cancelled.

The three snow-climbing excursions were well attended, the first two, on February 11 and 25, being again to Lochnagar, the ascent on the former date being made from Alltnagibhsaich, and on the latter from Ballochbuie Forest. The third, on March 10, was to Beinn a' Bhùird.

The visit on February 11 was a very successful and enjoyable one, the conditions being excellent in every way. A partial thaw had preceded a renewed hard frost and the snow surface was firm and icy; only in a few places was the crust broken through. Snowdrifts on the Glen Muick road prevented the conveyance being taken much above the sawmill, and that involved a few miles extra tramp each way. The company of twenty broke up into small parties, some ascending by the Black Spout, others attempting some of the buttresses and gullies, and the remainder being content with the Ladder route.

On the second visit snow-covered roads made the Glen Muick route impossible, so a start was made from the Deeside Road at the Danzig Bridge. One party went ski-ing, but were not very successful in finding runs. A large party made for the Stuic, and reached the summit in mist, but returned early to the Sandy Loch, enjoying some glissading practice on the lower slopes. Another party followed the Black Shiel Burn and eventually reached the summit in mist. An early return to the shelter of the woods was made to allow of a belated lunch.

The adventures of the remaining party are told in another report. The waiting and the worry made a dreary finish to what would otherwise have been a good day. It was a very subdued bus-load that reached Aberdeen in the early hours of Monday morning.

On Sunday, March 10, the first halt was again at Danzig Bridge, to allow our Editor and two other members to return to the scene of the adventures of the Sunday before last, and if possible retrieve a missing ice-axe. They were not successful in the quest, but turned up at Braemar at tea-time, having had a very good day.

The other members of the party continued up to Invercauld House,



New Year's Day, 1940

H. D. Whitehouse

CÀRN BHAC

where a start was made for Beinn a' Bhùird. One party made for the North Top direct by the Sneck. They had fine visibility during the morning. The other party, which eventually split into two, made for the South Top, and very early in the day encountered mist. The leading members missed the South Top and descended by the Corrie. The slower party were more fortunate and made the South Top and continued on to the North Top, where they met Mr McDonald's party. From there on the visibility was excellent and the descent was made by the Sneck in conditions very nearly perfect.

Ballater was the headquarters of the Easter Meet, where Whitehouse was first and enjoyed an afternoon of brilliant sunshine on the Coyles of Muick before the Bothwells and Mitchell arrived on Thursday evening. Malcolm, McLay, and Misses Davidson and Mearns arrived later. Bothwell, Mitchell, and Whitehouse covered Lochnagar thoroughly on Friday, ascending from Spittal of Muick by way of the Black Spout, over snow which was very soft in the corrie but which improved in the gully. Then they glissaded the snow slopes into the west corrie, crossed Loch nan Eun, and reached the plateau again by the Stuic Buttress, returned to Cac Càrn Mòr cairn, dropped down the Glas Allt, turned the head of Loch Muick, and reached the Spittal by the path on the south side of the loch. On the same day Lawson and Reid (camping) climbed the gully immediately to the east of the Stuic.

The six members who crossed the Mounth Road from Ballater to Glentanar and Mount Keen the following day were inclined to consider the attractions of Mount Keen somewhat overstated, and found it difficult to support the members who suggested a Club excursion to that grinding eminence. In any case, any who desired to visit it should have patronised the Easter Meet, as it was one of the obvious objectives from Ballater.

Malcolm, McLay, Mearns, and Davidson spent Sunday on the Coyles of Muick, whilst Miss Bothwell, Mitchell, and Whitehouse traversed Lochnagar from Alltnagiubaish to Ballochbuie, ascending the Red Spout, as, when they reached the corrie, conditions were so bad with thick mist, snow, and wind that none of the gullies could be faced. Later in the day conditions became better and, at the summit, presented a great contrast to those of two days previously, with considerable fresh snow covering the plateau.

The fourth day found the remnants of the Meet on the lower tops around Ballater, Pannanich, Crannach, and Craig Coilleach, all providing excuses for a further day out of town.

On May 4 a full bus-load travelled to Aviemore on the occasion of the joint Meet with the Etchachan Club, returning on May 6—with some extra passengers apparently left over from a previous excursion. (At all events, no other explanation has been vouchsafed!) Many of those taking part belonged to both Clubs, and I abandoned an attempt to discover how many there were of each, particularly as one lady member

of the Cairngorm Club insisted that she attended in her capacity of member of the Etchachan Club. Say thirty all told.

Lawson and the majority of the Etchachan members went to Cairngorm, camping in the forest, or, in some cases, near the summit. Snow fell during the night. Presumably the high campers descended something and the others, or some of them, certainly went up. Cairngorm was most popular. Two went to Sgòran Dubh and both the way and the mountain seemed far, far away. All enjoyed a very fine week-end, although there was too little snow for the number of ice-axes out!

The Day Excursion on Monday, May 6, to Bennachie had a very meagre attendance, only five members taking part, but one brought along a company of fifteen Girl Guides! Two of the party visited two or three of the tops and descended to Kemnay, and other two returned to Oyne after a little time spent on the Mither Tap. The remainder, including the Girl Guides, crossed the hill to Monymusk, returning to Aberdeen by bus. Excellent weather and wide views added to the enjoyment of a delightful day.

On Saturday, May 18, nine members and two guests climbed the Hill o' Noth from Gartly and the Glen o' Noth. Sellar met the party on the summit and, in perfect conditions, was able to point out the chief features of interest in an extensive view. The descent was made via Rhynie, where tea was taken.

Ben Avon was visited on Sunday, May 26, a conveyance carrying a company of fourteen up Glen Gairn as far as Daldownie. The ascent was made over Càrn Dearg and Càrn Drochard and so on to the tor-studded ridge of this interesting mountain, where several of the rock outcrops were visited. On Leabaidh an Daimh Bhuidhe, the rock outcrop on the highest point, the more energetic tested their skill as rock climbers. Though excellent weather was experienced, a cold high wind swept over the summit and visibility was restricted by a dark haze.

The Midnight Excursion of 1940 took the form of a traverse of Lochnagar, from Ballater to Braemar, on the night of Saturday-Sunday, June 22-23. A party of sixteen travelled to Ballater by bus on the Saturday afternoon, and after tea at Loirston Hotel were conveyed to Spittal of Muick, and set off from there about 8 o'clock in very bad conditions. Mist was thick and low down, and rain was frequent and cold. Although it was the day following the longest day, two days after full moon, and two days before Midsummer Day, darkness came down very early, and it was pitch dark when the summit rocks were reached and the party settled down wet and cold in what shelter they could find out of a northerly wind laden with rain. Alternative routes had been suggested in the Club circular, but under the conditions pre-

vailing there was no inducement to deviate from the usual routes. Seven made the ascent by way of the Black Spout, while the remainder kept to the easy Ladder route. All gathered at the summit rocks about 11.30 P.M. Soon after 1 o'clock conditions became worse, and eight decided to make for Braemar, followed by the remainder about half an hour later. Rain and mist were heavy, and a bitter north wind added to the discomfort. Map and compass work, aided by electric torches, took the party off the hill, one group going down into Ballochbuie by the Feindallacher Burn, the other carrying on to Loch Callater over Càrn an t-Sagairt Mòr. All gathered at Invercauld Arms Hotel, Braemar, about 6.30 A.M. for a very welcome hot bath, and returned to Aberdeen by bus.

Our grateful thanks are due to Captain H. D. Ross, Factor of the Balmoral Estates, Mr G. D. Menzies, Factor of Invercauld Estates, and Mr J. B. Hosie, Factor of the Mar Estates, for their ready permission to go over ground under their supervision, and for the facilities given to us in many ways. Their interest in our activities is cordial, and we are fortunate in our relations with them.

Indoor Meets were held in the Caledonian Hotel on January 11, February 2, and March 5, 1940. At the first William Malcolm showed how to use the Silva Compass, after which useful exposition several members succeeded in making a cautious journey from corner to corner of the room. (Perhaps the Committee will encourage further talks on new items of equipment?) A show of slides included some by H. D. Welsh of the Cairngorms and the Cuillin, and a number of Agfacolor slides made by W. J. Middleton on a visit to the Perthshire hills.

February 2 was the occasion of the Club Dance, a feature of the proceedings which becomes increasingly popular.

The third venture took the form of an Exhibition of Photographs, Paintings, and Sketches. There were just under one hundred pictures on show and the standard was high. William Garden described, with slides, a journey to the Canadian Rockies, and J. B. Macdonald stayed nearer home with a coloured cine-film of the Cairngorms and Lochnagar. The show was very well attended and will, we hope, become an annual event when normal times return.

#### ACCIDENTS IN THE CAIRNGORMS.

About 5 P.M. on February 25, 1940, two members of the Club, Miss Ray Fyfe and Mr Garth Lorimer, were descending westwards from Lochnagar into the corrie of Loch nan Eun. They were the last of several parties to leave the summit plateau, having reached it by way of the Left Branch of the Black Spout. Visibility was poor, but being reasonably sure of their position they started to glissade. A few moments later the leading climber called for a halt, as the slope became steeper and an occasional boulder appeared. The second braked almost to a

standstill, but on reaching an icy patch failed to retain her grasp of the axe, her hands being numb from having had her gloves off previous to the glissade. An unfortunate combination of circumstances led to an uncontrolled descent of three or four hundred feet, involving injury and benightment.

In mist and gathering darkness her companion failed to find her, after searching an hour or more. He decided to make for Spittal of Glenmuick rather than risk losing time in the Ballochbuie Forest, where the path would have been difficult to find in the dark. At 9.30 P.M. he arrived at Spittal, and Mr John Robertson, stalker, carried his message to Inchnabobart, the President receiving it by telephone at 10.30 P.M.

The President was given to understand that the accident had occurred 200 yards west of the summit and was due to the breaking of a cornice. West of the summit, of course, the presence of cornices is highly unlikely, and the impression was given that the fall had occurred on the much steeper, eastern slopes. Actually, the party had not been to the main summit but had crossed the saddle between the tops from the vicinity of Raeburn's Gully, 200 yards west of which the accident occurred. Had more accurate information been available the Club search party could have proceeded to the precise location. Within a few minutes of the receipt of the message a repetition was called for, but by that time Mr Robertson had left Inchnabobart.

The Club search party (Dr Thomson, Mitchel Train, Beck Slynn, Lawson, R. Reid, and Mr J. Reid, of Ballater) set out at 11.45 P.M. and reached the summit, for the second time within twenty-four hours, at 4.30 A.M., again by the Danzig and Blackshiel route. (Glenmuick was snow blocked.) Mist, wind, and snow made their task difficult, and they failed to locate the ice-axe left to mark the scene of the fall. (It has not yet been found.) They therefore proceeded to search the north and north-east slopes until noon. Other parties of police, keepers, and Club members joined in the search after daybreak, and one of these parties found the injured climber about 2 P.M.

Although injured by the fall she had been able to don more clothes, of which, fortunately, she had an adequate supply. Thanks to magnificent stamina she was able to come down on her feet. Danzig Shiel was reached about 3 P.M. Members will be pleased to know that the climber suffered no lasting injury.

This account pales in comparison with the press reports of the day; I have been handicapped by having had to stick to the facts!

On August 21, 1940, a Dr Hamilton, of Edinburgh, left Aviemore for a walk, intending to return for dinner. It was a bad day, with hail and sleet on the tops. It was not, however, Dr Hamilton's intention to climb, nor was he equipped for a long expedition in bad weather. When he failed to return the matter was reported to the police who organised search parties on the following days without result.

On Sunday, September 22, 1940, Mr Henry Iain Ogilvy and Miss Lucy Scott Robson suffered fatal injuries as a result of an accident on the cliffs of Sgoran Dubh. Mr Ogilvy was a member of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club and a very capable climber. It is unlikely that the cause of the accident will be established.

## NOTES.

Members' subscriptions are due and payable on January 1, and resignations must reach the Honorary Secretary *before* that date. Members are requested to send payment of subscription promptly on the first reminder to avoid incurring unnecessary work and expense.

Assistance in compiling a roll of members on military service will be appreciated. Any member who can assist in making the roll as complete and as accurate as possible should send details to the Honorary Editor.

## HIS FIRST THOUSAND.

Mr J. A. Parker ascended his one thousandth hill over 1,000 feet in height in July 1939. The hill is the Wishach Hill, 1,375 feet, in the Fouldlands. When he climbed it Mr Parker believed that it was No. 999, but a subsequent and very careful check-up of his list of ascents proved that it was actually No. 1,000. This was unfortunate for some of us, as a more important hill had been reserved for No. 1,000, to be climbed later with suitable ceremonies! Wishach Hill is of a somewhat retiring nature, but it may be seen from the railway near Wardhouse. In addition to the thousand hills over 1,000 feet, Mr Parker has climbed many under that height and has repeated many ascents. His most frequently climbed hills are Lochnagar and Ben Macdhui, with fifty-four and thirty-one ascents respectively.

Members will be interested to know how it all started. In his father's house in Glasgow hung a picture of the mountains at the head of Loch Long, and during his last year at school he was allowed to decide where the summer holiday would be spent. Pointing to the picture he had sat opposite for many years he said, "There." And there he climbed his first thousander.

W. A. E.

## AN OLD-TIME GLENGAIRN SHEPHERD.

The Gaelic monthly *An Gaidheal* has published some recollections of conversations with an old-time Glengairn shepherd, John Michie. The writer is Rev. Cyril Dieckhoff, of Fort Augustus Abbey, a Russian, who writes his account in excellent Gaelic.

Michie, who died some thirty years ago, sought refuge at Fort Augustus in his old age. He was born at Ardoch in Glengairn, and after a long life's work he set off one day across the hills on foot for Fort Augustus. When he reached Strath Faragaig, says the account, he asked his way to Cill Chumein. (To all Gaelic speakers Fort Augustus

is Cill Chumein, *i.e.*, Cumin's Church.) They directed him down to the lochside at Foyers to take the boat, at which he was much annoyed, for he had always made all his journeys on his own legs. " Michie had a withered hand, but the other was the biggest hand I have ever seen." Once, when sleeping in a barn at Braemar he was wakened by something on his chest. He put out his hand and seized it; it was a rat, which he killed with a squeeze of his fist. He had frequently driven sheep from Braemar to Edinburgh before there were any railways. Glengairn got its chief sporting interest in those times out of the contests of wits between the whisky makers and the gaugers. Michie had known men who had been soldiers in the American War of Independence. At the Lonach Gathering he had once seen Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, and he described him as being very noticeable for the extreme whiteness of his hair and beard. He knew Ewan MacEchan, the priest at Braemar who compiled one of the early Gaelic dictionaries, and he described him as always going about with a Spanish cloak upon him.

W. M. A.

## ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY.

- "A Guide to Chamonix and Mont Blanc," by Edward Whymper, 1896.  
Purchased.
- "A Guide to Zermatt and the Matterhorn," by Edward Whymper, 1897. Purchased.
- "Always a Little Further," by Alastair Borthwick. (1939. Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d.)
- "Narrative of an Ascent to the Summit of Mont Blanc," by John Auldjo, 2nd edition, 1830. Purchased.
- "Braemar Octotoddle," Anon., 1939. Presented by Dr W. A. Reid.
- "British Hills and Mountains," by J. H. B. Bell, E. F. Bozman, and J. Fairfax Blakeborough. (1940. Batsford Press. 8s. 6d.)
- "English Lakeland," by Doreen Wallace. (1940. Batsford Press. 8s. 6d.)
- "Guide to Aberdeen and Eastern Scotland." Presented by Ward, Lock & Co.
- "Guide to Inverness and the North of Scotland." Presented by Ward, Lock & Co.
- Revue du Club Alpin Suisse*, Vols. I.-XV., 1925-39. Presented by Mrs R. M. Williamson.
- "Rock Climbs on the Cobbler," by J. B. Nimlin, B. H. Humble, and G. C. Williams. (Reprint from *S.M.C.J.*, 1940.)
- "Songs for Climbers," by B. H. Humble.
- The Alpine Journal*, Vols. LI. and LII., May 1939 to November 1940.
- "The Cairngorms," by Sir Henry Alexander. *S.M.C. Guide*, 2nd. edition, 1938.
- The Rucksack Club Journal*, Vol. IX., No. 3, 1940.
- The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. LV., and Index; Vol. LVI., Nos. 1, 2, and 3.

*The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal:*—

Index to Vols. XI.-XX., by R. M. Gall Inglis and others. N.D.,  
1939. Purchased.

Vol. XX., Nos. 128-130, November 1939 to November 1940.

*The Mountaineer*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, 1939. (The Mountaineers,  
Inc., Seattle.)

“ Unclimbed New Zealand,” by J. Pascoe, 1939. Presented by E. B.  
Davies.

“ Visitors’ Book from Thistle Cottage, Inverey,” 3 vols., April 1897 to  
February 1939. Presented by Miss Gruer’s heirs.

LANTERN SLIDES.

Ten excellent slides of the Cairngorms, many of historic interest.  
Presented by Mr George McIntyre.

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FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING.

The Fifty-second Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Palace Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 23, 1940, Mr Hugh D. Welsh, President, in the Chair.

Accounts for the year were read and approved. Mr J. A. Parker’s resignation from the post of Librarian and Custodian of Lantern Slides was received with much regret.

Payment of subscriptions by members serving with H.M. Forces is to be optional.

A Sub-committee (E. W. Smith, W. Lawson, E. Davidson, and R. Jackson) was appointed to arrange other excursions as and when possible. Members interested should hand their names to the Honorary Secretary so that they may be notified of any arrangements made.

At the conclusion of the Business Meeting some fifty members met in the Palace Hotel, musical entertainment being provided by Mrs Garden, Misses McRonald and Thomson, and by Messrs D. Wilson and A. S. Middleton.

## REVIEWS.

**British Hills and Mountains.** By J. H. B. Bell, E. F. Bozman, and J. Fairfax Blakeborough. (Batsford Press. 8s. 6d.)

In recent years we have seen more than a score of guides to Scottish hills and English crags, but until now no single volume devoted to the mountains as a whole. The authors' difficulties in dealing with such a vast array of peaks are great, but they have within the limits of their space compiled a remarkable store of information. Dr Bell, of necessity, makes his survey of the Scottish mountains a very general one, but enriches his narrative with references to personal experience and with much practical advice. The authors of the England and Welsh sections can proceed at a more leisurely pace and delineate their mountains in rather greater detail. All succeed in portraying well the chief characteristics of their mountain groups and are ably backed up by the photographers. The collection is a magnificent one, the Scottish ones superb. (On the whole, Scotland comes well out of this!) At 8s. 6d. the book is a bargain.

**English Lakeland.** By Doreen Wallace. (Batsford Press. 8s. 6d.)

This book is written primarily for the motorist, although visitors to the lakes, whatever their purpose, should find in it much of interest, for Miss Wallace casts her net wide. I could have wished for something more of the topography, something less, perhaps, of the Herdwick sheep and other matters, and for an occasional amble farther than the bonnet of the car. For the author knows and loves her Lakeland, although her interests are centred in the dales and she has little to say to the climber. Her opening chapters are crammed with information of a most interesting and varied character, while the later chapters are devoted to much more restricted fields of human activity. Apart from this lack of balance, the book is a most interesting and informative one, and the photographs are quite up to the Batsford standard.

**Always a Little Further.** By Alastair Borthwick. (Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d.)

The first part of the book tells of the author's early adventures, and misadventures, on the hills; the next introduces a variety of characters encountered on the roads and moors, providing some fine pen-pictures and some strange adventures; in the final section the author has graduated to the more difficult rock courses, but his ascents are still packed with incident.

The adventures which stand out are the hunger-march from Broadford

to Glen Brittle, via Camasunary, on a meal of brambles and the amazing predicament of Hugh on the Buachaille. Pounded well up the Chasm, this stoic read and slept until he was rescued by two Glasgow bakers in dancing pumps! This episode is the highlight of the book, which, if not all mountaineering, is all interesting.

**The Alpine Journal, Vol. LI., 1939 ; Vol. LII., 1940.**

The arm of the Editor of *The Alpine Journal* is long ; articles range from Greenland to Tasmania, from Alaska to Himalaya. 1938 saw several expeditions at work in the latter ; H. W. Tilman writes on the attempt on Everest, and there are accounts of other national expeditions to K2, Nanga Parbat, the Gangotri district, and to the Karakoram. Problems of high-altitude climbing are dealt with by Peter Lloyd (Oxygen) and by C. B. M. Warren (Mountain Sickness and Physiological Problems).

André Roch recounts the experiences of a Swiss expedition in Greenland, and Bradford Washburn a first ascent of Mt. St Agnes (13,500 feet) in Alaska. Other interesting articles deal with a ski ascent of Mt. Sanford, Alaska ; with Lofoten and with Jan Mayen (the Beerenberg).

The Alps and their history remain, for the writer, of more absorbing interest than any other group, and both Vols. LI. and LII. have something outstanding to offer—Professor T. Graham Brown's history of climbing on the south faces of Mont Blanc; C. F. Meade's estimate of J. J. Blanc, le Greffier, in "A Great Guide"; "The Almers and their Führerbücher" also recalls the golden age of Alpine mountaineering.

Vol. LII. presents as noteworthy a feast; Professor T. Graham Brown follows up his article on the Brenva face with a short history of some early attempts from the Innominata basin, and there is promise of more to come. Of the other Alpine articles, "In and Out of Saas" by some of the less ordinary routes makes most appeal.

New expeditions are fewer, but there is an account of Shipton's interrupted visit to the Biafo and Hispar Glacier regions of the Karakoram and, on the American continent, A. E. Gunther describes a visit to the Andes of Venezuela, and Walter A. Wood discovers some unclimbed peaks in Colombia—19,000 feet high and within 30 miles of the Caribbean coast. There is the unusual story of the hoisting, and hauling, of the Nazi flag on Illimani.

Articles of a more general character include "Sketching in the Alps," by Cecil W. Hunt; "The Poetry and Humour of Mountaineering," by Michael Roberts, and, an outstanding contribution in these days of upheaval, "Should the Mountain be Brought to Mahomet?" by Geoffrey Winthrop Young. Mr Young discusses some modern trends in mountaineering, but one wonders whether his own fine philosophy would find any sympathetic understanding in those lands where mountaineering has become an international competition.

**The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal**, Vol. XXII., Nos. 128, 129, 130.

No. 128 continues the "Short History of Scottish Climbing" commenced in the Jubilee issue by H. MacRobert. E. A. M. Wedderburn contributes the history of the post-war period, the two forming a valuable and interesting record. J. Gall Inglis writes on the Monadh Liath Munros; E. B. Bailey on the Geology of Glencoe, and G. G. Elliot on Winter Camping in the Cairngorms. New climbs chronicled include Sgòran Dubh (No. 1 Buttress), Lochnagar (Parallel Buttress and Tough-Brown Ridge), and Ladhar Bheinn, to say nothing of an extended version of the Cuillin Ridge.

In No. 129 the Editor himself sets the ball rolling with "Valhalla," a highly interesting account of climbing on the Tower Ridge. E. A. M. Wedderburn begins a new series, "Nights Up There," reminiscences of nights out in the Alps and on Scottish hills, and E. W. Hodge contributes yet another delightful article on the Hebrides. "A Crowberry Commentary" is well timed, for the rapid development of the Rannoch Wall climbs was leaving the distant spectator a little bemused.

In the In Memoriam section Stair A. Gillon pays a noteworthy tribute to the late Lord Tweedsmuir.

No. 130 contains a guide to rock climbs on the Cobbler, well illustrated and with useful diagrams. (This has been reprinted in booklet form for the benefit of those who may want to use it "in the field.") W. H. Murray continues the "Nights Up There" series with an account of a Hogmanay spent on Ben Nevis, and J. F. A. Burt has a delightful article on "The Inferior Mountains" and answers, satisfactorily, I think, the question, "What makes a mountain?" Among new climbs noted are one or two in our own area, the north-west gully of Creag an Dubh Loch, and a more direct route on Eagle Buttress, Lochnagar.

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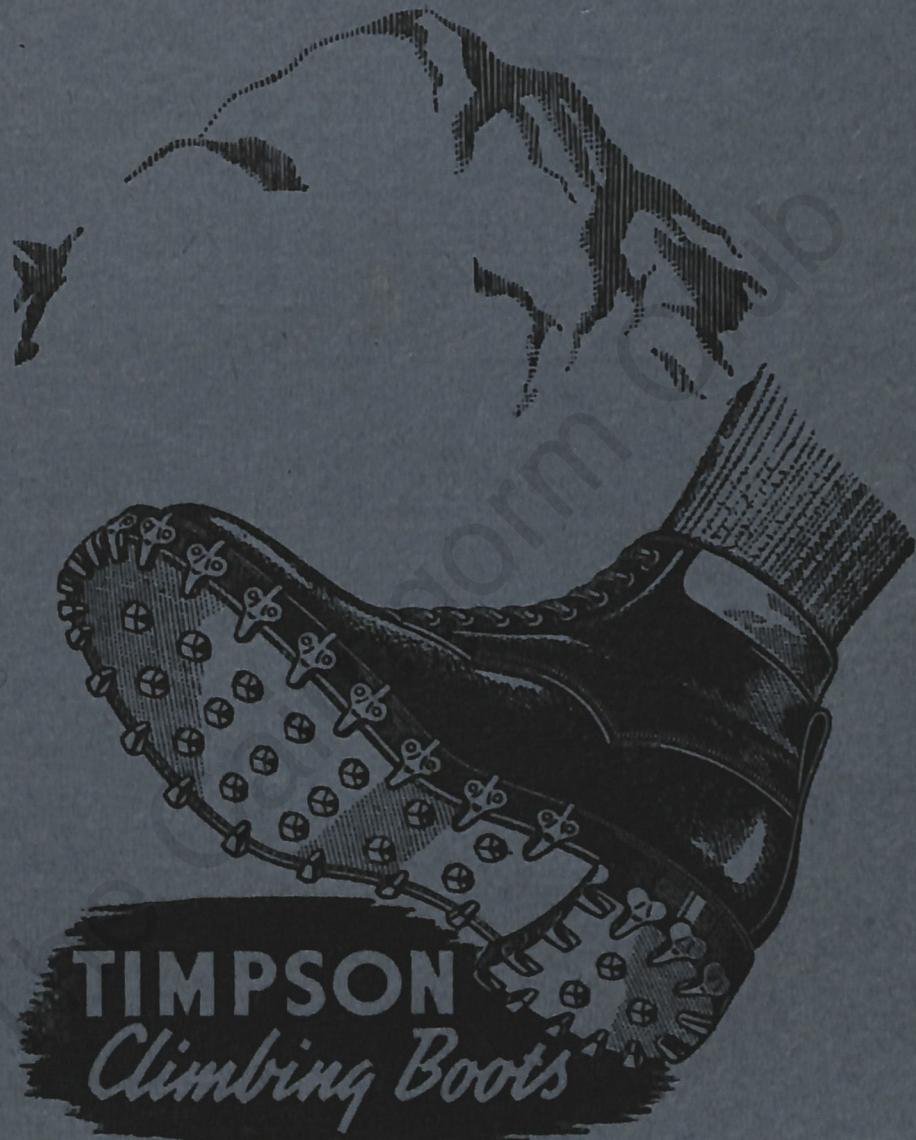
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