The Cairngorm Club Journal

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John A. Gavin

LANDSEER'S HUT, GLEN FESHIE

The Cairngorm Club Journal.

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EDITED BY

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ABERDEEN

THE FREEDOM OF SKYE.

E. C. W. Rudge.

In the summer of 1944 Skye was no longer a prohibited area, and I spent a most memorable holiday rambling and climbing amidst the Cuillin and elsewhere. I experienced again the joy of making good friends, both on and off the hills; the kindliness, hospitality, and generosity of the Skye folk; the character of peace and beauty in the countryside; the delicate colouring and subtlety of line which give to the scenery a quality of almost magical loveliness. I saw again the lovely colouring of the hills; the grandeur of huge crags balanced with apparent insecurity on narrow precipitous ridges, sometimes looming gigantic through mist, sometimes stark in the sunlight; the dizzy rush seawards of 1,000-foot cliffs, vertical for the greater part of their height, black and grey of basaltic columns looking as though carved by human hands from the living rock; the wide, empty, living plain of the sea itself, its edges lace-fringed with the dancing surf, now breaking against wall-faced cliffs, now upon the shores of beautiful sea-lochs deep-cut into the heart of the land. A symphony is remembered; a perfect whole blended from perfect parts, sound, colour, and texture all contributing to its flawless composition.

My arrival at Kyleakin was accompanied by sunshine and rain squalls; the hills were glorious to look upon, with their rich colours accentuated by the water which descended their flanks in streams swollen by the showers, crystalline in the sun. This weather was typical of that which favoured me in the days to come; Skye weather at its best, with the wind blowing from north or north-east and only occasional showers to vary the sunshine. It was one of the finest summers in living memory. Glen Brittle looked lovely in the afternoon light—and Nancy MacRae's enormous tea in my honour rounded off most effectively the blending

of æsthetic and material factors, which together occupied my mind.

On the following morning I set out alone for the peaks. I was the only guest at the Lodge, and almost the only visitor at Glen Brittle, so much of my time was spent in solitary rambles. There were a few showers early in the day, but very soon it became a wonderful day for views, and the colouring everywhere was glorious. I have seldom seen finer views than I saw that day. I climbed the rough, stony buttress of Sgùrr nan Gobhar, then ascended to the summit of Banachdich, which was covered by a light mist. Thence I descended into the deep cleft between Banachdich and Sgùrr Thormaid—Norman's Peak, named after Norman Collie—and scaled the steep west face of that impressive spire. From its summit I was rewarded with a splendid Brocken Spectre, my shadow being thrown on to the cloud surrounded by a perfect circle of rainbow colours. The great ridge of Sgùrr a Ghreadaidh sprang up before me like a huge bow, extremely narrow and formidable in appearance, with black precipitous crags dropping hundreds of feet into the corries below. However, on closer acquaintance the ridge proved easy to climb, and the traverse of the twin summits was followed by the ascent of Mhadaidh's highest peak. From this airy pinnacle a truly marvellous view was displayed of Loch Coruisk, with the peaks of Rhum beyond. I often noticed that when the Cuillin's tops were clear these lower peaks were in cloud. I now decided I had done enough for the first day, and descended direct into Coire Ghreadaidh and thence back to the Lodge.

Next day I decided to visit a section of the Main Ridge which I had never previously explored, so I set off for my first visit to Coire a Ghrunnda, intending to follow the Ridge right to its southern end. This intention I carried out and had a most interesting day. On the way to Coire a Ghrunnda I saw two splendid stags, which were still near the mouth of the corrie on my return. I had never been to the head of this magnificent ice-worn corrie before and was greatly impressed by its enormous size. The lower part is flanked by the tremendous crags of Sron na Ciche and the western

rugged and broken shoulder of Sgùrr nan Eag. The climber is confronted with a most formidable barrier, consisting of the great wall of glaciated slabs which is characteristic of this corrie. However, there is a weakness in this great barrier at its northern end by which access is gained to the upper corrie. This is a whole mountain world in itself, the great jagged peaks rising up all around the loch there, Lochan Coire a Ghrunnda. On the north are Sgùrrs Sgumain, Alasdair, Thearlaich, then the crags of the Thearlaich-Dubh chasm, followed by Sgùrr Dubh na Da Bheinn and, on the south side, the steep ridge of Sgùrr nan Eag. For sheer savage grandeur it is a scene which must have few equals anywhere, and in the Cuillin it is only surpassed—if indeed it is surpassed—by the sinister majesty of Coire Lagan.

I climbed from the corrie to the north shoulder of Sgùrr Dubh na Da Bheinn, from which a fine view of Sgùrr Dubh Mhor was obtained. Thence to the summit of Dubh na Da Bheinn was a steep scramble, the upper part being in cloud. To get off this summit in the cloud was not easy; twice I cast around and landed on the edge of vast cloud-filled gulfs before I found the true line of the Ridge. Coming out of the cloud was dramatic; suddenly a view of the lochan, far below in the corrie, appeared, then a great rock tower on the ridge ahead, lastly the rugged mass of Sgùrr nan Eag, its summit still cloud-capped. Skirting the vertical wall of the tower, I embarked on the fine steep ridge of Sgùrr nan Eag and reached the summit just as the cloud cleared from it. From this point the views were grand—Glen Brittle and the open sea to my right, Soay and Rhum visible ahead, Coruisk and its surrounding peaks, with Blaven a superb dominant in the background, on my left. The Ridge for some way now was rough, but usually fairly wide, and it was not until Gars-bheinn was reached that it narrowed again. For a short distance here it was very narrow indeed, with a sensational drop on the left side, but as the summit was approached it became less sensational and the actual summit-peak was much easier to climb than it had looked from the ridge, whence it appeared to be a sharp, very steep cone.

Conical and steep it certainly was, but the holds were many and large. From the summit I ran down on steep scree almost the whole way to the moor below, over which I tramped back to Glen Brittle. On the way I had a fine view of the enormous and most impressive slabs which rise from the bottom of Coire nan Laogh almost to the top of the Main Ridge in one huge unbroken wall. I also again saw the same two stags near the entrance to Coire a Ghrunnda.

On the next day (September 2) a climber asked me to join him, and we climbed the Window Buttress on Sgùrr Dearg, an enjoyable route on impressive crags. I went on and climbed the Inaccessible Pinnacle. There was a high wind, and the solitary ascent of the longer eastern ridge of the pinnacle, with big vertical drops on both sides, was a thrilling experience. The ridge is so narrow that, for most of the way, the climber is looking down both sides simultaneously. Both the rock walls down which his eyes travel are absolutely vertical, and continue downwards for a most impressive distance. The views were again wonderful, Rhum looking very fine and the whole long line of the Outer Isles—over 100 miles—showing up very clearly.

September 3 was an off-day, and I lazed about, looked at salmon leaping in the mouth of the burn, bathed, and read. I now, for the first time during this visit, had leisure to absorb in repose the great beauty of this lovely glen. It seemed to me that the essence of its beauty lies in contrast; the great jagged grey peaks towering above the purple, green, and yellow-brown moors, gently sloping to the shores of the loch, itself grey-blue with white surf breaking on its beaches. Nature's savagery blends with the work of human hands, indicated by the scattered habitations and cultivated ground apparent in the midst of these wild, untamed surroundings. The whole picture seemed to me to offer a perfect example of the right relationship between the human and non-human elements in nature.

On the following day a party from the neighbouring Youth Hostel and myself set out to visit Rhum. Owing to the state of the sea and wind, however, we did not get very far. It was very wet and squally, with a steep, choppy sea,

and Ronald Macdonald decided that we could not get to Rhum, so we visited Soay instead. This is a very pretty, wild little island, and in spite of being soaked to the skin we enjoyed our visit. We were entertained with true Highland hospitality by Ronald's father and mother, a splendid old couple who insisted on giving us large quantities of their own food although we had all brought our own, and hanging the wet clothes of the ladies all over their small kitchen to dry off the worst of the soaking. They lived in a historic old shieling, one of the oldest which are still inhabited. The wind had slightly abated for our homeward voyage. I was interested to see the old "Minerva," a craft well known to Skye visitors of pre-war days, in Soay's little harbour; also to find a very large conger occupying most of the bottom of the small boat which took us off shore.

On September 5 I went out alone again and climbed Sgùrr Sgumain by its imposing north buttress. This climb is considered a " moderate," but there is only one pitch which might sometimes demand the rope, except in a very high wind. However, a good deal of the rock is very loose, and the climb does not appear to be done often. I then went on over the summits of Sgùrrs Alasdair and Thearlaich, descending again into Coire Lagan from the Thearlaich MhicCoinnich col. The climbing was never difficult, although there are several steep and narrow places which have to be negotiated, but it was always interesting and required care. I shamelessly avoided the *mauvais pas* on the west ridge of Alasdair by climbing a chimney to the right of it; the rock was extremely wet and I was wearing rubber-soled boots, as my nailed boots had given me blisters. It rained all day—it was almost the only wet day of my holidays—and the clouds blowing about the tops made the great pinnacles and arêtes very impressive to look at; even more awe-inspiring than they appear in clear weather.

In four days I had now climbed sixteen Cuillin peaks, thirteen of which were " Munros." The fact of being alone for these climbs had given me an extraordinary feeling of intimacy with these great crags, and this feeling became intensified during the days that followed.

September 6 in my diary claims, "walked to Talisker by Loch Eynort, back over the moor. A lovely day." Loch Eynort is certainly lovely; it cuts into the high moors south of Talisker, then suddenly bends round to the north. It is narrow, remote, and utterly peaceful. On its shores cattle graze, paddling in its cool waters. A few houses form a small settlement on its upper reaches. Everyone seems happy. It is hemmed in by high moorland hills, those on one side being planted with trees, mostly conifers. The fins of basking sharks, or dolphins, are seen above its surface.

Having crossed the moor, I came to a steep, winding descent which led me down to Talisker, as lovely and peaceful a place as I have ever seen. To the south towered the huge cone of Preshal More, its north face cleft by a great gully rising from its base to its summit. Below it the moors stretched seawards, forming one arm of the lovely bay. The other was also moorland, ending in a great craggy cliff hundreds of feet in vertical height. A fantastic "stack" stood sentinel to the bay. The dwelling-places consisted of two or three shielings and the manor house, almost hidden by the trees of its little park. Scarcely a sound disturbed the silence of this lovely sunny day. Two happy old men chaffed each other in Gaelic over their haymaking. Happiness and peace were the dominant characteristics of this altogether charming place.

On September 7 I climbed Sgùrr MhicCoinnich, the great wall-sided mountain at the head of Coire Lagan. It is named after Alexander Mackenzie, the famous Skye guide of former days. The climb is easy—as climbs go—the ridge narrow and quite thrilling at times, the views superb, especially down the eastern wall to Loch Coruisk and back towards Sgùrr Dearg's great eastern crags. The savage serrated ridge joining this peak to Sgùrr Banachdich looked immensely formidable—and inviting. Magnificent, too, were the spires of Sgùrrs Thearlaich, Alasdair, and Sgumain, soaring into the sky across Coire Lagan. During the descent from Coire Lagan I looked back (I am always looking back!) and saw a superb rainbow completely spanning the corrie and entirely contained by it. The apex of

the bow was well below the ridge of MhicCoinnich, and its two ends rested on the flanks of Sgùrrs Dearg and Alasdair.

I had developed a sore foot during the last day or two, and therefore changed my plan to walk over to Sligachan. I drove over instead, and spent the day, which was very wet, resting. All the peaks were white with snow when the clouds cleared away.

The following morning I again set out for the hills, this time up the Bhasteir Corrie—as grim and savage a place as you will find in the Cuillin. Having climbed Am Bhasteir, I thought I would visit the notorious *gendarme* on the west ridge of Sgùrr nan Gillean. This rocky policeman is not so savage as he looks; in fact, he will cause no traffic stoppage unless those who accost him are either affected by giddiness or physically defective. Anyway, I climbed over him without any difficulty and with considerable admiration for the splendid narrow arête on which he stands. He literally overhangs the arête on both sides when you are seated—or kneeling (I did not stand up!)—on his head, which is itself only a foot or so in width. The thrill of one's position is accentuated by the (quite false) appearance of insecurity in the architecture of the ridge itself, which appears to be on the point of collapsing. If it should ever take it into its head to do so, and someone happens to be on it at the time—well, it is a long way to the bottom!

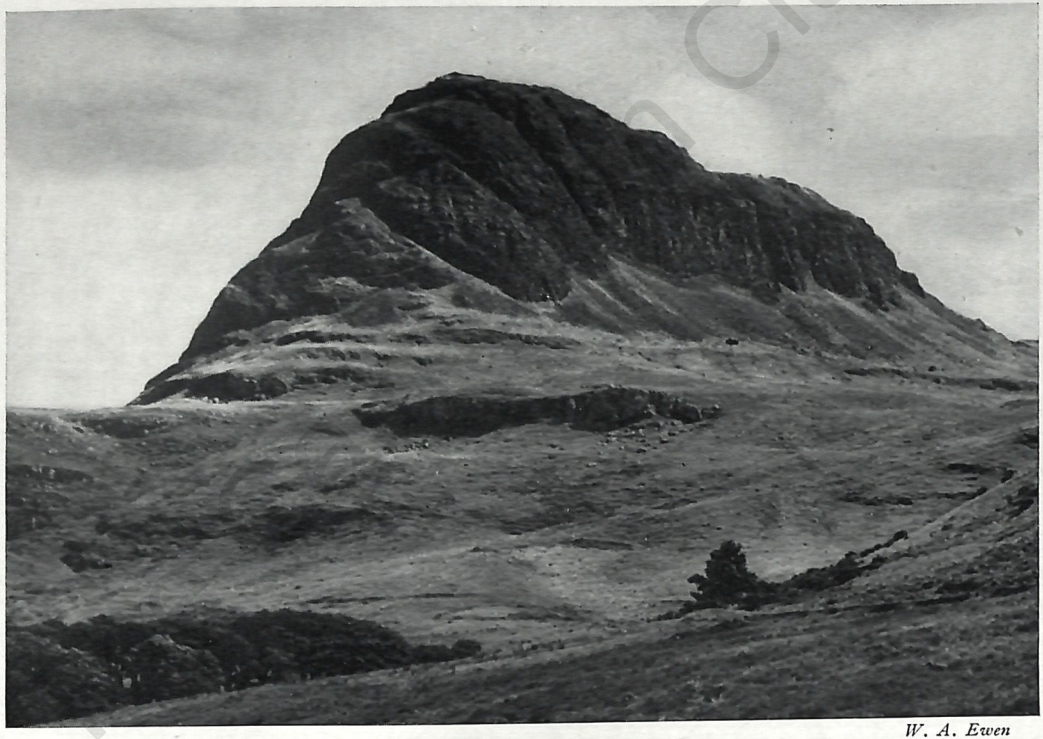
After climbing over this *gendarme* I followed the west ridge to the summit of Sgùrr nan Gillean, one of the loveliest peaks I have ever seen. The view was grand; the greater part of the Main Ridge was clearly visible, the Pinnacle Ridge uplifted its savage spires in the direction of Loch Sligachan, the ridge of Sgùrr nan Gillean itself stretched downwards and again upwards to Sgùrr na h-Uamha. Beyond Glen Sligachan rose the Red Hills, terminated to the south by that grand mountain with the beautiful name, Blaven, the "Peak of the Flowers." I went on down the Ridge and climbed Sgùrr na h-Uamha, a peak which is seldom visited but is well worth climbing. Thence I descended Coire an Glas and followed the Sligachan Burn back to the famous old climbers' inn where

I was staying. I saw many stags peacefully feeding in Coire an Glas.

The next day yielded a fine day's climbing in the company of Bill Wood (if you don't know who he is you will soon find out if you go to Sligachan!). We made what we think may have been a new route up the second pinnacle of the Pinnacle Ridge. It was a fine climb on excellent rock, and gave a direct ascent of this pinnacle from its foot in Coire Bhasteir to its summit—almost straight up the face, probably about 600 feet. We used the rope for about two-thirds of the ascent, but unroped again on the summit and climbed the Pinnacle Ridge unroped, except for the short overhang just below the summit of the third pinnacle. We then descended the west ridge of Sgùrr nan Gillean, over my old friend the *gendarme*, down Coire Bhasteir, and so back to the hotel and a huge meal. As part of our route was thought to be new, we entered up the climb in the Climbers' Book.

I took it easy on the 11th and bussed to Armadale, seeing much of the beauty of this loveliest of islands and enjoying the relaxation of an off-day. At Armadale I spent some time watching numerous herons and wild geese grouped on the rocks off the coast or swimming in the sea. This was the first time that I realised that the heron has affinity with the sea. I visited Ardvasar and chatted with a number of the local people, then went to look at the Castle. I don't know whether I trespassed or not; anyway I entered the grounds and shortly found myself about to enter the back door of the Castle! This seemed an impertinence, so I retired in good order and did some exploring on the coast. The mainland opposite looked grand in the sunshine; Ben Sgriol, Luinne Bheinn, and Meall Odhar very impressive.

Next day Wood and I went to Carbost. Wood had business to do there in connection with his Customs job, so could not join me on the hills, but he very kindly gave me a lift to a point midway between Carbost and Talisker, which I badly wanted to visit again. I had a wonderful day in glorious sunshine. First I climbed the great gully on Preshal More, which I had noticed as so conspicuous on my first visit. Preshal More appeared to me to be well worthy of exploration



W. A. Ewen

PRESHAL MORE

from the point of view of rock-climbs; it is a very fine peak, and if it were less remote would probably be popular with cragsmen. Actually it is obviously very seldom climbed, as the rock is almost devoid of nail-scratches, and the more obvious routes are of more interest as gardens than as climbs. Even the great gully, which positively demands exploration, has hardly a nail-scratch in it. The ascent is not technically difficult except at the top, and then only on account of the extreme instability of the rocks. Very careful and delicate movement was necessary here, and every hold had to be carefully tested. The rock was steep, loose, and treacherous. The interior of the gully was very fine and impressive, the remoteness of the situation adding considerably to the thrill of the climb. I descended the crag on the opposite side and climbed two pinnacles in a great wall-sided cleft which had obviously been placed there just for that purpose! Both were slightly scratched—but only very slightly—probably by Wood himself when he climbed this peak on an earlier occasion.

I now found myself in a lovely wild stretch of open moorland, with Preshal Beg raising its flat-topped summit before me. This is a most remarkable mountain. Like Preshal More, it is formed of columnar basalt, but in its own case this formation shows the most extraordinary regularity. All the columns are cut off clean along their tops in a dead-straight line, and the superimposed conglomerate, which forms the actual summit, gives it the appearance of an enormous cake. It is a few feet higher than Preshal More, so its title of "Beg" is misleading, though it certainly *looks* smaller.

Next, I followed the line of cliffs back to Talisker. I have never seen such cliffs; there can be few finer anywhere in the world. For several miles their average height is close on 1,000 feet, and at several points they exceed this height. Except for 100 feet or so at their base they are absolutely vertical and are formed of gigantic basalt columns, black or dark grey in colour. Great stacks, broken arêtes, crazy pinnacles, and collapsing gullies abound; the observer rubs his eyes and thinks he is dreaming. Wood told me he had once had to rescue a sheep-dog from one of these precipices

and never wanted to repeat the experience. I fully believe him.

As I was leaving the cliffs I entered a little gully with a stream running along its bed. Suddenly an eagle flew down the gully, passing not 10 yards from where I was standing. As it passed it looked at me in a wholly uninterested manner, then continued on its way. Few people can have had the good fortune to see an eagle in flight at such close quarters. Its eyrie was probably on one of the crags forming the walls of the gully.

My holiday was now nearing its end, and one section of the Main Ridge of the Cuillin still remained unexplored. Bill Wood could give me another day, so we decided to cover this section and to look for Mallory's climb on Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh while doing so. We set forth for Coire na Creiche in fine weather, but it is a long way from Sligachan to the foot of Mhadaidh and, when we reached it, we had to decide whether Mallory's climb or the Main Ridge was to absorb most of our attention. I was particularly anxious to traverse this section of the Ridge, and Wood, who lives in Skye, did not mind which we did, so after a rather perfunctory attempt to find Mallory's, which may or may not have been successful, we climbed to Mhadaidh's highest peak by the Thuilm Ridge and left Mallory's to another visit. We then traversed the other three peaks of Mhadaidh, the three peaks of Bidein Druim nan Ramh, then An Caisteal, Sgùrr na Bharnich, Bruach na Frithe, down the Fionn Corrie, and so home. The rope was not used, except for a short abseil executed by Wood when descending from one of the peaks of Bidein. A good deal of easy rock-work was involved, one of Bidein's summits proving not so easy. It was altogether a splendid day and I got a very good appreciation of the northern section of the Main Ridge from it. At the foot of the Fionn Corrie a drop of " neat and strong " sent us both back to supper in a most comfortable state of mind and body!

I had one more day to enjoy before returning home. The morning brought heavy rain and an appearance of more to come, but the weather improved later and after lunch I set out to explore the enormous 500-foot red granite crag which

springs like the prow of a ship from that side of Marsco overlooking Glen Sligachan. The Climbers' Book contains an entry by Odell which intrigued me, since it describes a route which he discovered up this crag. He says that it should repay exploration and comments on its fine appearance and the good quality of the rock.

On reaching the foot of the crag—or, rather, the point on the Glen Sligachan track immediately below its foot—I saw that it was even more huge than I had thought. It extended right across the face of Marsco below the summit, which was covered with cloud, and seemed to offer a very extensive field for exploration. However, there was a wide though shallow amphitheatre immediately above me which looked exciting and from which Odell's route appeared to start. I made for this and reached it after a rather laborious scramble over scree. What a grand place it was! The two sides of the amphitheatre formed arêtes hundreds of feet high, their tops lost in cloud. The centre was a great wall of reddish rock, steep at the foot and apparently almost vertical higher up: what lay above could not be seen. I started off on what I took to be Odell's route, but I must have been mistaken in my calculations, for after about 80 feet of climbing the route petered out altogether at an impassable corner. I looked around and could see no other way at first; then I noticed that a high patch of scree, mentioned by Odell as a point which should be made for, lay away to my left on the farther side of the amphitheatre. Without descending I set out to traverse across the face of the amphitheatre to reach it. This was not difficult, as climbing goes, but it gave a fine, rather exposed traverse on good holds right across the great red wall at an average height of 100 to 150 feet above its base, gaining height at the finish on to the scree. I now had trouble again in trying to trace the route. A broken ledge, very exposed and narrow, led back on to the face and looked like an impasse, although the cloud which swirled about it may have caused it to look more fearsome than it actually was. Directly above me a series of great steps, rather like a huge crooked staircase, looked preferable, and I chose this way. I mounted this

giant's staircase up into the cloud; it curved round to my right then ended abruptly. I was at the summit of the crag.

I now set about the problem of descent and decided that a steep gully to my left looked hopeful. I climbed down into this, crossed it, and came out on to broken rocks which led obviously and easily downwards. Scree soon appeared, and almost at once I walked out of the cloud and saw the glen below me. I also saw a party of friends from the hotel who had left soon after I did, also bound for Marsco. I joined them, and we returned together to the hotel, baths, and supper.

So ended an unforgettable holiday in Skye. To part from my many good friends was hard, and harder still to leave the island which I love so well. However, I look forward to seeing it again, and them again, and I hope it may be soon—though one of them I shall not see again, for he has since lost his life on Scafell.

Keats wrote that beauty is truth, truth beauty. For many who believe that this is true, their spiritual home will ever be found in Skye.

April 1947

COIRE AN T-SNEACHDA

W. A. Ewen

IN PRAISE OF CLIMBING

A. Fraser Ross.

Every hill-lover, returning home dishevelled, has been asked, half in derision, half in earnest, "Why do you do it?" In the days when the Cairngorms and our indulged love of them were taken for granted as a normal part of living, the question remained unanswered. But now that the hills are far away, and the peace and freedom of the sea have set me remembering that other peace and freedom which belong to them, I feel compelled to attempt a reply. As a small boy I judged that the distant hills of marvellous blue could only be made of substance fallen from heaven. All my subsequent wanderings upon them have been a confirmation of this, for every day spent in the apparently material pursuit of climbing mountains has been filled with adventures of the spirit. There lies the answer. We climbed in search of adventure.

Inward experience was a greater part of such adventure than outward physical accomplishment. For this reason we did not find it necessary always to climb precipices; simple walking in the hills brought many rewards and was never despised. Hill-climbs quite devoid of difficulty were yet so full of enlivening human incident and minor adventure, so full of things to pause at and admire, that mind and spirit were continually refreshed. In great part this was because we who climbed were companions by choice. I could not have wished better company. There was Johnny, for example, gay, six-foot, for ever exulting in the beauty of hills, or in the strength of storms, or simply in his own irresistible love of life. A. M., the Irishman, had so learned and infectious a delight in birds that I saw with his eyes their grace and charm, and felt more intimate with them. Even now I cannot bring to mind the pinewoods without friendly recollection of jaunty tits or of those extraordinary

acrobats, the crossbills; nor high moors without hearing the mournful pipe of golden plover, or envying again the air-borne eagle. A. M. and I shared an exploring interest in topography. Together we read for ourselves the glacial history of corrie and overflow channel, marched down watersheds, and saw how aggressive rivers had stolen the headwaters of their peaceful neighbours. In the late hours of many an expedition, joint-achingly lengthened in such pursuits, have I blessed his tirelessness and undefeatable good humour. But it was with Grant, the serene, the imperturbable (except when confronted with the fabulous treasure of some rare plant!), that I suffered an incurable double fever, for colour photography and for alpine flowers. No day was too long that found upon a northern cliff the sun-filled globes of trollius, clustered purple saxifrage, rock veronica, white dryas, or the closely cushioned flowers of the dwarf campion. We could hardly bear to leave them, these marvellous plants. It wasn't so much the strange devices by which they had shepherded their spark of life through cold and drought and storm. It was the miracle they had accomplished of creating, out of rain and wind and scanty grains of rock, a richer profusion of delicate loveliness than that of any lowland flower; the courage they showed flaunting so gaily their fragile petals in the grimmest places. Nor was any climb in the dark, even of midwinter, too trying if morning light held expectation of a photographic "masterpiece." Even more exciting than such premeditated pictures were the fleeting glories of light and colour that had the habit of appearing suddenly and unexpectedly, to be seized on the instant or lost for ever. To every moment of every expedition the camera added these things: an alert hopefulness that upholds the fisherman; the tremendous possibility, denied to him, of immortalising the magic moment; and a discipline of observation and appreciation that continually increased our awareness of beauty. The loveliness of clouds—"the clouds, the marvellous clouds!"—I had mostly to myself, or enjoyed with Chris, the botanist, a newcomer to the hills, sensitive to beauty, active, eager, and unafraid. But this is no catalogue of friends. Although sometimes I climbed

alone a companion was always better, especially one who could share easy, friendly silences. Some of the most silent of days, whether given over to strenuousness or to idle contemplation, were utterly companionable. And not an hour went unrewarded. Seeking adventure we came upon much beauty; in search of beauty we met adventure. Pleasures such as these described, and others that are hardly communicable, filled our days of hill-wandering.

Hills there are without such reward: hills without flowers, without birds, without water, without clouds even; hills where the sun is hostile and beauty attends only its rising and setting. Watching the mountains of the Arabian Desert, I thought of Huxley's lines:

> "If there were water, if there were
> But a shower, a little fountain springing,
> How rich would be the perfumed air,
> And the green woods with shade and singing.
> Bright hills, but by the sun accursed:
> Peaceful, but with the peace of hell."

Yet men will climb even these for exertion's sake, and

> "For lust of knowing what should not be known."

The rewards of exertion are real. Who has not known the joy of using muscles strenuously, and of resting after effort? But there is much more to it than that. How else did we face gladly the bitter toil of climbing throughout whole days of storm when nothing could be revealed to us but our inner selves? Occasional activity on the heroic scale is good; it makes us bigger men. One form of such activity we always found irresistible. In the enthusiasm of discussing a new expedition I might say, "Shall we make it, C. W. M.?" And Grant and A. M. would answer simply, "Yes." "Come-what-may" meant we'd set out upon the agreed hour and complete that expedition, no matter what the condition of weather or hill. The challenge to our powers was not to be refused. And sometimes, on a climb begun in hopeless storm, the elements would suddenly relent and grant such a vision of beauty as is hardly to be found, and not so greatly to be appreciated, in any other circumstance.

If the weather denied us that, there was much to be said for the asceticism of it, the defying of fatigue and hunger and many kinds of discomfort, not grimly, not thereby humbling the spirit, but raising it in triumph and laughter above the querulous demands of the body. How often we have returned exhausted in body but mightily refreshed in spirit!

Rock-climbing called for more than mere disregard of comfort. What compelled us to it? In part it was the physical well-being demanded and engendered; the challenge of the mountain raising itself upon its precipices at our approach, and growling, "Touch me gin ye daur"; the fascination of committing ourselves beyond retreat to something that asked our utmost powers; the excitement of not knowing if we were going to be successful. There was the thrill of knowing how imperative it was to be calm: not for a moment, whatever befell, could panic be allowed to take hold of us. And after that uncertainty which is the essence of adventure came the relief and joy of achievement. And we exulted without dishonour, having met upon the precipice all the joys and virtues of battle, none of its cruelties and hatreds.

Two aspects of rock-climbing, more than all these, made it for me an enthralling sport. One was the shared adventure, the comradeship of common effort, here raised to a complete and vital consideration and trust between chosen friends. It enabled us to overcome otherwise insurmountable obstacles; and we knew, although we did not say it, that upon this trust were laid the lives of our friends. The other was that, in climbing, we were keyed up to a more intense awareness of our surroundings, to a finer and more vivid appreciation of their beauty. We were exalted. We saw, as with the eyes of God, a world made new.

For all this, it was snow-climbing which gave me most joy. It had all these fascinations, and more besides. No cloud was as sightless as that upon a snow-covered mountain; no wind as cruel as the winter blizzard. We might find ourselves in an empty grey-white shadowless prison, hardly able to tell whether the next step led up or down or into space; or struggling fiercely into a shrieking void, whose

noise and force and desperate cold seemed bent on numbing the power of thought needed to take us safely home. How impossibly remote then seemed the world of warmth and comfort and men! But no memories are more cherished than those of the rewarding days. I have ski-ed and climbed, for example, all through a calm and cloudless night of full moon; and at dawn, when the moon was falling westwards, stood upon Lochnagar summit waiting for the marvel of sunrise. By sun or moon the hills in winter held a splendour and a fascination not to be found at any other season. The tireless exhilaration of frosted air; the million-pointed sparkle of snow-crystals; the light-filled shadow; the gleaming slope that swept up towards heaven; under such spells as these the troubles of the world fell away, petty and meaningless. We knew only that we must conquer those slopes for the prize of beauty. We had discovered that the light of the sun was of an unimagined splendour.

It was also short-lived, and many a night came down to catch us far from home. Then foolish commonsense would whisper, " Miles and miles to go. You'll pay for it now! " But though limbs were beginning to stiffen and ache we'd answer exultingly within us, " What of it ? Look where we have been! Was ever such a day ? " And, of course, it was true enough; we had been among

> " Mountains that like giants stand
> To sentinel enchanted land."

It will always remain so for us: a magic land whose streams make thirst a blessing, where hunger and fatigue are felt to be no hardship; a land of courage, friendship, laughter, and loveliness. And we shall keep the inner resource, the strength of spirit that it gave to us.

SUTHERLAND UNSEEN.

Dr W. Lumsden Walker.

The sky gradually grew darker as we drove steadily north; the rain which had been threatening for the last few hours began to fall. After this introduction there will be little difficulty in realising that this was the summer of 1946, the month of July; to be precise, the 31st. Dr W. T. Hendry and I, after one of those early starts for which we are so celebrated, had left Aberdeen at 11.30 A.M. in his car and were now well on our way to Inverness, our ultimate destination Ullapool. The rain was still falling as we drew up at the Youth Hostel; and throughout the discussions of the evening it continued to cast a prophetic gloom on our plans.

To our surprise August 1 dawned lightly; it was obviously the day for a good climb, but as I was not by any means in training, a climb involving no long distance. This I had demanded and this I was granted. We motored to Loch Lurgainn and left the car by the roadside, at the western end of Stac Polly, and made our way, in brilliant sunshine, to the foot of the western end of the hill, our intention to climb the west ridge, traverse the summit, and descend by the east ridge. At this point I shall quote Hendry's log verbatim: "We contoured round into the shallow Coire Gorm and up steep slopes to the foot of the western ridge. We passed the foot of Baird's Pinnacle at the base of the south-west ridge. The face rises in three definite tiers—grassy ledges intersected by steep rock walls, the last of which leads to the summit plateau. The rock is sound and, for the most part, clean." Inglis Clark's description is excellent: "It was essentially a rock-climb, the great slabs of rough sandstone set almost vertically, affording excellent friction grips, but refusing hitches when they would be most desirable."

The first wall was ascended about its middle by a steep but simple grassy groove, which led us directly on to the first grassy ledge. Here we roped and I led on (from this point we led alternately), following the ledge along to its right edge. Here we found an obvious route up a crack to the right, and then, following a series of grassy ledges to the left, finishing up a steep vegetated wall. Above this we found ourselves on a wide but steep platform, which we followed again to the right edge until we were directly above Baird's Pinnacle. The rocks now above us were set at an easier angle than those of the main wall above the platform. We followed up this ridge, which led on at an easy angle, giving the most magnificent views to the north and south. We had, of course, a view continuously to the west, a view which, on the more exposed portions, I gazed at with some distaste. On these rocks there seemed to be nail marks, a pleasing sign of previous human visitation. At this point the climb, up to now of a merely moderate standard, began to increase somewhat in difficulty. A steep pitch led to a small stance, which, by a left traverse, brought us on to a flat rectangular platform. Here was the crux of the climb. At the side was a large, loose rectangular block and above this a narrow vertical crack in a narrow wall. We ascended the loose block and, both standing on this somewhat inadequate platform, we climbed this next pitch by combined tactics, Hendry being rather severely trampled upon. Above this pitch there is a large platform providing a very good belay, and from here, by a simple traverse to the right, one may find a cairn from which there is a simple through-route under a chockstone in a chimney leading directly on to the summit.

From here, after a short pause for refreshment and to admire the view (had we but known it, we were only once again to enjoy a summit view), we traversed the ridge to the east top. Our expectations had been roused by the S.M.C. Guide's description of this summit ridge, and I fear we were both somewhat disappointed with its standard, although this disappointment was more than compensated by the glorious scenery all round us. To the west lay the

Atlantic, silver blue in the sunlight, to the south the beautiful Loch Lurgainn, backed by Ben More Coigach and the inspiring mass of Fiddler's Peak; eastward the shapely masses of Cùl Beg and Cùl Mòr; to the north Suilven, the mountain of which so much has been written and of which we had such high expectations, one of the fixed items on our itinerary. A last look round and we descended rapidly by the east ridge, traversing round the hillside on its lower slopes back to the car and thence to the Hostel.

By next morning the weather had reverted to that state of inclemency for which this summer was so noted. Nevertheless Cùl Mòr remained our objective and we left the Hostel with all possible haste—indeed, with a haste which seemed to fill the Warden with some degree of mistrust—and followed the road from Ullapool, in the direction of Elphin. Just beyond a stretch of water, which, had we been able to see its far side, we should probably have recognised as Lochan an Ais, we stopped the car and reluctantly stepped out into what can be best described as the materialisation of the impersonal B.B.C.'s words: "Gale warning." Even more reluctantly we changed into climbing boots and stepped on to the moor, sinking, on the drier parts, only to our ankles in water. From the car we headed directly for the col between Creag nan Calman and An Laogh. To the north side of, and above, Lochan Dearg we struggled through heather and boulders, leaning against a wind which made even the thought of conversation intolerable, along the base of the cliffs of what the map would have assured us, had it been possible to take it out, was Cùl Mòr. Needless to say, our view ended about 200 feet up the cliffs. Our only desire now was to find a relatively sheltered route to the summit. Soon —I suppose it *was* soon—we reached a wide green gully. This gully cleaves the steep buttress of black rock, separating it from the higher rock, which is not terribly steep. We scrambled up the bed of this gully, which was wet and full of filthy vegetation, but nowhere of any degree of difficulty, the only anxiety being the obvious signs of very recent falls of rock; falls which the shrill whine of the wind seemed to warn us might happen again. No such misadventure,

however, overtook us, and we came, after some 500 feet, on to a grassy band, which, on a clear day, may be seen bisecting the south face of Cùl Mòr. Once over this we climbed the final, approximately triangular buttress by heather, grass, and rock—which, under better conditions, might afford a pleasant afternoon's scrambling—arriving ultimately at the summit at a point about 20 yards west of the cairn. Here I had an excellent view of Hendry and the cairn, but of nothing else, and it was impossible, therefore, to fix our route by comparison with surrounding features. From here, after lunch on Creag nan Calman, we walked to Sròn Gharbh and descended by the south-east nose of the Sròn, to join the path between Loch an Laogh and Lochan Fhionnlaidh back to the car. Back to the car—what blessed words these are—dry clothes (even if we did have to change in the rain), food, and a rapid drive to Inchnadamph, where we relaxed in the blissful comfort of the hotel.

Rising reluctantly from the luxury of our beds, and turning the hotel calendar to August 3, we came down in good order to breakfast. The weather again seemed threatening and, by the time we had left the hotel, the threat was realised; the Highland rain was falling once again. Silent it may be, but, during this week, soft and gentle it decidedly was not! We walked up Gleann Dubh, past Glenbain Cottage on the north side of the river for some 3 miles, and then climbed steeply to the col between Beinn an Fhurain and Conival, and thence over large and extremely unpleasant blocks of rock which seemed to wind interminably into the mist above us, to the summit of Conival. From here we followed the ridge to Ben More Assynt. This ridge is quite easy but is difficult to locate in mist (we vouch for this), and is summed up by Hendry in the log (written on the spot and, no doubt, in a spirit of some prejudice) as tiring and unpleasant. From this summit (3,273 feet) the ridge leads south-east to Càrn nan Conbhairean. It is grassy, rocky, and narrow, and leads over several pinnacles. In the S.M.C. Guide it is compared in standard with the ridge of Aonach Eagach, but I should class it as not only shorter but decidedly easier. It is not at all difficult, even under the conditions we met.

We scrambled down wet rock and grass to Dubh Loch Mòr. In bad weather this could lead on to difficult or rather treacherous rock if descended on the northern end of the ridge. From here, had we paused to think, we had a pleasant walk round Garbh Coire, over the Breabag-Conival col back to Glen Dubh and the hotel, where dinner was calling us so insistently. Alas! we did not pause to think; we did not linger to glance at our map; in ever-thickening mist we followed the stream out of Dubh Loch Mòr. Had we paused for even a moment's consideration it might have struck us as odd that the stream which flows from Garbh Coire into Dubh Loch was now flowing out! In this euphoric state, and our thoughts only of food and possible symphonic variations on the theme of a dinner-gong, we walked gaily down Strath Oykell.

I refuse to recall to memory the following few hours; suffice to say that we retraced our steps, ascended (or nearly so) Breabag, and traversing round the Cùil Dhubh, dropped happily into the Blessed Valley of Gleann Dubh. It was now nearly 9 P.M., but a perfect Highland evening; the wind had fallen; the rain had stopped; the mist lingered only on the high tops; Loch Assynt spread its glories before us; and, with a song in our hearts and milk, of the bounty of the shepherd's wife at Glenbain Cottage, in our stomachs, we tramped, tired but elated, into the hotel.

The Sabbath dawned; Sunday, August 4, and a calm lay in the hotel as we came down (late) to breakfast. (How kind this hotel is to the unpunctuality of the climber; how well this inn follows the Highland tradition of hospitality.) Three members of the Moray Mountaineering Club joined us and mentioned that their thoughts had turned to Suilven; would we care to come along in the car with them? With alacrity we accepted the invitation and in (for us) a remarkably short space of time we were speeding southward along the road. We motored to the north end of Loch Awe and here we left the car. You will note that until now I had made no mention of the weather. There is, I feel, no need. Perhaps the wind was less strong. Perhaps the rain was heavier. It is difficult to judge these features dispassionately

May 1945 *R. L. Mitchell*

SUILVEN : MEALL MHEADHONACH FROM CAISTEAL LIATH

after a few days. The mist was certainly as thick. We set off to the north of Loch Awe and Loch na Grouagaich over streams where footbridges are provided. It is just possible that the water in the streams is deeper than that on the moor. True it is we rarely sank below our knees. Our friends were to ascend Suilven from the north, and then return over Canisp. We were set on at least inspecting Caisteal Liath. It is a weary trudge to the east end of Suilven, but some of the misery is to be avoided by keeping to the higher ground. From our starting-point we went by the north end of Loch a' Chroisg and the south side of Loch Fada. Here, once more, the rain stopped but, to our dismay, the mist lifted only patchily, and we could get no clear view of Suilven or Canisp. We traversed round the east end and along the southern flank of Suilven, pausing in a cave under a boulder just below the middle peak (we imagine, the peak was invisible) for food. At last we reached Caisteal Liath, decided upon and, after a little difficulty, finally located Ramsay's Gully. Up to now our day is best described in Hendry's words in the log: "A devilish hard plod." We roped up at 3 P.M. and led off on our usual system of alternate pitches. The log of the climb reads thus:

1*st Pitch*.—Climbed the bed of the gully and traversed out to the right over grass, then up and back to the gully bed again.

2*nd Pitch*.—Climbed the gully bed and then traversed up and out to the right below a large slabby wall.

3*rd Pitch*.—A long grassy climb leads back to and overlooks the gully.

4*th Pitch*.—Led out to the right over a grassy gravelled gully (loose) and thence up steep grassy blocks to a narrow ledge at the foot of a rocky exposed nose. There is severe exposure here to the right and all stances are on loose grass (which in this case was very wet). No hitches are available. Here I must digress. This nose Hendry climbed direct; it is the only route. I attempted it and can only say I disliked it extremely. There is no great technical difficulty but there is no sure rock stance; there are no belays, and one is standing throughout on very loose wet grass. I never had a greater feeling of insecurity. From here the route continues up steep grass.

5*th Pitch*.—A black vegetated wall is ascended to the left, and then the route leads up to a large stance at the foot of a slab, with a good rock bollard—the first hitch we had found.

6th Pitch.—Continues up the vegetation round the corner to the right. A short crack leads on to further grass.

7th Pitch.—One hundred feet of scrambling up steep heather to the left leads to an open gully. This is climbed up the centre and later on the slabby right wall. From here, easy scrambling leads to the summit.

Once on the summit we rejoiced, our spirits not to be damped by mist or rain. We fed happily, and followed along the summit ridge. We traversed the middle peak by what we are sure was the wrong route—a series of narrow ledges on the south side—with a gale driving rain into our faces. The rest of the ridge afforded no difficulties—the famed hiatus gave us no trouble and we continued over the east top and down the east ridge, to come once more out of the mist. We continued along the high ground to the south of Loch Meall a' Mhùraich to Meall na Braclaich (which made definitely easier going than the morning's route) and thence back by the north of Loch a' Chroisg to the road and the hotel.

The sun shone brightly through our curtains and awoke us relatively early in the morning of August 5. We packed up our belongings, said farewell reluctantly to mine host of Inchnadamph, and drove along the north side of Loch Assynt. Once more its waters sparkled and the hills on our right shimmered in the heat. We changed into shorts (to the great delight of the clegs) and rapidly ascended the Spidean Còinich of Quinag. Here, once more, we had the most glorious views—from Ben Hope and Ben Loyal in the north to An Teallach in the south. Time, precious time, however, was passing, and we descended to motor through country of indescribable beauty to Lochinver, happily arriving there at 2.50 P.M. After a short halt we turned southward along the coast, to stop at the roadside to eat a loaf and a vast quantity of cheese which we had purchased, along with other cheer, in Lochinver. Never have I eaten half a loaf so quickly! We stopped once more, just beyond Inverkirkaig, and walked along the path on the north side of the Kirkaig, a most delightful walk, to a point just east of Loch a' Ghlinne Sgoilte, where we feasted our eyes on our beloved Suilven and on the other northern peaks. At

length we returned to the car and proceeded in good order to the Ullapool Youth Hostel.

On August 6 we motored south to Loch Droma, stopping just short of the east end. We then contoured round the side of the hills to the west side of Loch a' Garbhrain and then up the river to Loch Coire Lair. The weather was good, very good, and we gazed with joy at the slopes of Cona Mheall and Beinn Dearg. At the end of the south-east ridge of Cona Mheall we could see a prominent, snake-like grassy gully, lined with orange sand. On the right (east) side of this was a prominent buttress, which appeared, and, in fact was, the true continuation of the south-east ridge. Parker had said that this south-east ridge might afford interesting climbing; and it was with this in mind, and also the remark of the S.M.C. Guide: "Cona Mheall has a fairly serrated ridge which should afford some interesting work," that we ascended the hill-side to the buttress. About 1,000 feet above the loch and just after a wet pitch in the gully previously mentioned we came on an easy fan-shaped slope, above which the buttress became definite. Here we left the gully and traversed out to the right to the steep foot of the buttress, where we built a cairn. A 50-foot initial pitch on good, sound rock gave promise of excellent climbing, but this was not altogether realised. Higher up the ridge becomes wider and indefinite. The route followed was as direct as possible and marked with cairns. Steep pitches and easier scrambling connected wide turf ledges. Some of the climbing was delightful, but none of it was difficult. The rock is sound and the route would afford a very pleasant scramble of moderate difficulty to the summit of Cona Mheall, the true ridge terminating at a blunt pinnacle and connected to the main ridge by an easy sneck. From the summit it was a pleasant walk to the summit of Meall na Ceapraichean. Our luck now deserted us; the weather changed suddenly and, in wind and driving rain, we set off for the summit of Beinn Dearg. From here it was an easy descent by the south-east ridge, overlooking the inspiring Coire Ghrada. It should be noted that the true top of Meall na Ceapraichean (3,192 feet) is at the south end

of the ridge; the 3,150 contour to the north is only a point on the ridge.

We had one day only left; the next day was August 8 and we had to return home. We started from the hostel early and drove gaily by Loch Achall to Rhidorrach, our target Seana Bhraigh. For once we were early, and we gloried in our conscious virtue. Suddenly a bump, a skid, a curse from Hendry, and our car lay with two wheels in the ditch—immovable. Our gloom was little relieved by the arrival of an ancient man on an ancient bicycle who, with poorly concealed pleasure, informed us: "Indeed, many gentlemens had slipped into that ditch and it was a very hard job to get the little cars out." However, he suggested that help might be found at Rhidorrach Lodge, a mile ahead. This was so and, joined by the chauffeur with jacks, planks, ropes, and other impedimenta we started to get the car back on the road. At this point we were joined by a postman and a keeper, the postman observing that "the last car to go into the ditch was very difficult: we had to push it on to the loch side and over the rough stones for a mile." The gentle north Highland accent, which I usually find so pleasant, for once grated on my ears. We were lucky. A half-hour's struggle found the car once more on the road and so, after a suitable exchange of thanks and largess to the ancient who, it appeared, was the road-mender, we drove up to Rhidorrach Old Lodge, beyond which a car cannot go. From here we walked by the path near the east end of Loch Daimh, then across to the Allt na Caorach and, by traversing the north shoulder of Meall nam Bradhan, steeply up the hillside to Loch Luchd Choire. We were both tired and found this very hard going. Had we been fresh it would have been a most enchanting walk. From Loch Luchd Choire we chose one of the prominent buttresses on the north-west face, leading up directly but slightly to the left (north) of Craig an Duine. There are three large buttresses flanked by two others, shorter, but perhaps steeper. We chose the middle of the three and this led us by a grass and rock scramble to Craig an Duine summit. It rises in 150-foot steps, and from below gives the impression that it

might afford interesting work, but it is disappointing. It would afford an alternative line of ascent to the north ridge of Craig an Duine. The Craig an Duine Pinnacle affords no difficulty either in ascent or in descent, and from here it is a walk of about a mile to the summit of Seana Bhraigh. From the summit we descended the west ridge over the col to the south of Meall nam Bradhain and over the River Doucharry to join a path marked on the O.S. Map leading northwards to Rhidorrach Old Lodge. It is very heavy going over bog and rough moor and the path is not to be found. I think we should have done better to have retraced our previous route.

Our week had ended. We turned our car southwards again and slowly the peaks of Sutherland disappeared in the mists behind us. It was our first visit to these hills, but we both vowed it would not be our last. There is everything here: material for the rock-climber, a vast territory for the hill-walker, a paradise for the photographer. Despite all the villainy of the weather the country fascinated us and called on us to return. Such were our thoughts as we drove southwards into the rain.

A COLLECTION OF POEMS.

J. C. MILNE.

LOCH A'AN.

(*A Verse Catalogue or Guide*)

GLEN EINICH, Glen Derry,
Glen More and Glen Dee!
And a' in atween
There's ferlies to see.

The Lairig, gey throwder!
It couldna be waur.
Carn Toul, wi' its corrie,
Kenspeckle owre Mar.

Glen Geusachan, green!
The Garchory, wow!
Braeriach, od man,
A gey lang knowe!

Loch Etchachan, middlin'!
Loch Einich, a sicht!
And wee Lochan Buidhe
Nae marra for hicht!

Cairn Gorm, gey siccar!
Macdhui, a' hump!
Loch A'an, doon yonner,
The stang o' the trump!

THE PATRIOT.

FECHT for Britain? Hoot awa!
For Bonnie Scotland? Imph, man, na!
For Lochnagar? Wi' clook and claw!

COIRE AN DUBH LOCHAN.

Beery me owre on Beinn a' Bhuird!
Doon at the boddom o' yon roch quarry hole,
Glacier-howkit fin a'thing in snaw wis smored,
For I couldna thole,

Na, I couldna thole to be faur the angels sings,
Me that has scuttert wi' granite and hedder for biel',
And kent the spang o' the golden eagle's wings!
Hap me up weel,

But nae owre weel, for ilka noo 'n 'an
I wid like to be wi' the ongyauns and the steer,
Wind on Dubh Lochan, thunder owre Ben A'an,
And the reid hull deer.

LOCHNAGAR.

Och ay! Och hon!
A gey clim' yon!
And jist fin I
Wis thinkin' te masel'
" Gin aince up by
The glory and the spell
O' God's haill Heaven sklentin' doon
Owre a' the hulls a hunner-faul' o' licht,"
Sure as death!
Cut ma breath!
A muckle Hielan' mist cam' roon,
And Lochnagar gaed swirlin' oot o' sicht.

LOCH A'AN.

O FAUR's Loch A'an ?
Loch A'an,
My man ?

Awa' owre yonner, ayont the sicht,
Faur golden eagle and ptarmigan licht.

Will I ken Loch A'an ?
Loch A'an,
My man ?

Dark as fear in darkness smored!
Bricht like the blade o' archangel's sword!

Will I tell Loch A'an
O' you,
My man ?

O' a young man, yonner, gey lang sene,
Comin' doon Beinn Mheadhoin to the Shelter Stane!

GEY!

GEY hulls ?
A gey sicht!
Gey heich ?
A gey hicht!

Gey straucht ?
Gey stey!
A gey speel ?
Ay—gey!

MACDHUI.

As I gaed up Macdhui
To see what I could see,
Deil tak' yer Hielan' hedder!
It fairly thraws wi' me!

As I gaed up Macdhui,
Says I, " My man, fut neist!
There's naething here but granite gear,
And a whazzlin' in ma breist."

As I gaed up Macdhui
I lookit east and west
To see the bonnie Hielan's,
But a' I sa' wis mist!

O fare-ye-weel, Macdhui!
I leave ye te yer lane,
A maist unceevil hullick
O' hedder, mist, and stane!

MIST.

A' UP Glen Muick,
Gweed govie dick,
Mist—dreepin', thick!

On Lochnagar,
And a' owre Mar,
'Twis mebbe waur!

Mist—thick and weet!
'Twis sair te see't!
The Deil gang wi't!

O me! O midder!
Faur sorra idder
Sic Hielan' widder!

MAR.

WEEL, man,
Been far ?
Fie na !
Jist Mar.

Fut like ?
A' knowe !
Muckle sheep ?
Gey fyowe.

Nowt, mebbe ?
Na, deer—
A' horns !
Gweed be here !

Bits o' craps ?
Feint a grain !
Owre weet ?
There's nae sayin' !

Mony folk ?
Gweed kens !
Pucklies, mebbe,
In the glens.

Nae folk !
Nae gear !
Ay man,
A gey steer !

AWA' TE THE HULLS!

Awa' te the Hulls!
Fae the scutter o' bairns and byeucks, for fut could be waur!
Fin the thocht burns bricht in yer hert, like Bethlehem's star,
O' awa' up yonner and owre the Forest o' Mar
Te the reid granite Hulls.

Awa' te the Hulls!
Fae the fashious steer o' folk, and the hard stane street,
Te faur the contours gang swingin' up te mair than fower thoosan' feet,
And a Nor'lan' win' comes owre them strummin' aul'-farran sangs that are sweet
On the reid granite Hulls.

Awa' te the Hulls!
Fae the raivel an' snorl o' things, and yer ain sma' sel',
Te faur ptarmigan reist on rocks that æons can spell,
Faur there's muckle te wile ye te thochts ye can only tell
Te the reid granite Hulls!

"Caw! Caw! Caw!"
Said a strappin' young craw
As he dabbit his nib in a lochan,
"The water's a' richt
For sic a like hicht,
But it's nae like the water o' Buchan!"

KOLAHOI.

W. A. W. Russell.

Kolahoi, at the top of the West Liddar Valley, is undoubtedly one of the finest peaks of Kashmir. Its vast pyramidal summit, commanding the neighbouring tops, rises sharply out of an immense plateau of surrounding glacier, while the lower reaches are protected by steep, heavily crevassed glaciers. It has been ascended a number of times by way of the long east ridge. The usual method of tackling it is from the valley of the West Liddar itself. Two camps are established, one at the glacier snout and the other at about 15,000 feet on the glacial plateau. The east ridge presents about 2,000 feet of rock work before reaching the summit at 17,799 feet.

After a good four weeks of climbing, around Sonmarg and Nilani in the Sindh Valley, we moved over the Zoji La into Ladakh. Using Dras as base we established a camp at 16,000 feet on the little-explored Jarakhesh Glacier. Defeated on the north ridge of the 19,600-foot peak which commands the glacier, through vertical ice at about 1,500 feet from the top, we retreated to the Sindh Valley and then crossed the Yam Har Pass (13,500 feet) into the West Liddar Valley, at the pleasant wooded alp at Lidderwatt. Continuing up the Liddar we were forced to camp at 11,000 feet, about a mile from the glacier snout. Our original intention had been to camp at the small lochan of Dud Nag, some 1,500 feet higher, overlooking the North Glacier. As usual, our troublesome pony wallahs and coolies had staged a minor mutiny, refusing to go any farther. We strongly suspected that this had been inspired by our old ruffian of a headman, Mohammed Butt, whose longing for comfortable camps was now well known to us. The mountain was a grand sight. The North Glacier was hidden from us by the steep sides of the valley but,

towering above the ridge, the mountain stood out as a perfect pyramid.

Leaving our mutineers to pitch the camp, we struck up the valley and took stock of our position from the top of the glacier snout. The north face rose vertically from the glacier, presenting a sheer exposure of over 4,000 feet. The angle of the east ridge looked quite reasonable. We decided to approach it by the extreme west branch of the glacier and to tackle the whole thing in one day. If this failed, there would be no alternative but to bivouac high up on the glacier in a second two-day effort. Returning to camp we were greeted by Mohammed Butt, who atoned for his past sins with a four-course dinner, fit to be served in any first-class London restaurant! This idea of a comfortable camp was not too bad after all. If successful, to-morrow would present us with over 6,700 feet of climbing on ice and rock. Luckily, we had acclimatised ourselves to the altitude on previous ascents. The process had been most unpleasant and mountain sickness and glacier lassitude were still fresh in our memories. On two occasions we had been brought to a halt by our limbs refusing to go any farther. This seems very strange, since Everest climbers have reached a height of 28,000 feet unaided. The whole process is gradual and simply cannot be rushed. After a comfortable night we were rudely awakened by our bearer, Ramzana, at 5 A.M. It was still dark but Kolahoi stood silhouetted against the sky. The top looked very far off.

Setting out at 6 A.M. we moved up the side of the glacier until we were eventually forced to traverse the steep sides of Hiurbagwah, in order to avoid a steep section of the glacier. At this stage we remained unroped since the crevasses were not covered by snow and the angle was easy. Instead of following the west branch right round we struck up a side shoot. At this point we roped up. I led, followed by Ramzana, with Fleming in the rear. A bit of step-cutting was necessary and some crevasses on a steep section were crossed by delicate snow bridges. This route brought us out on the less steep section forming the beginnings of the glacial plateau at about 13,400 feet. A long steady slog

up the now snow-covered glacier took us close to the foot of the east ridge. The ridge seemed very long and the bergschrund looked singularly unpleasant. We decided to cut out the ridge, follow the glacier higher up, and try to force a route on the south face. Ramzana began to tire and drag on the rope and the sun beat down on us, quickly skinning nose and hands. Luckily our faces were protected by a good month's growth of beard. At 16,000 feet we struck up a shallow ice-filled corrie on the south face. Going now was extremely slow. The slope up to the rock forming the south face was a thinly covered ice-slope and this was criss-crossed by a number of gaping crevasses. Belays were unprocurable and we were exceedingly glad to reach the good, firm rock. The bergschrund itself proved easily surmountable.

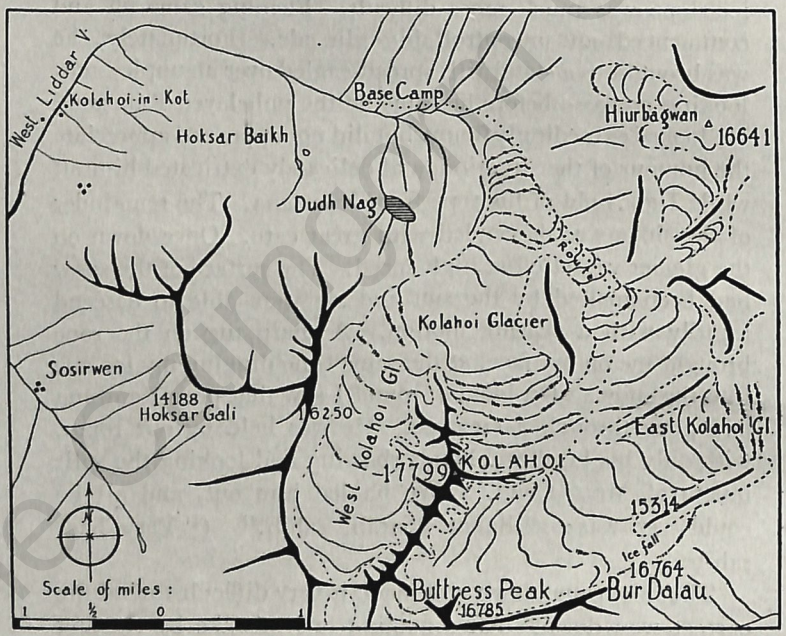
We sat down on a scree-covered shelf. It was now midday and we were at about 16,500 feet. Before us stretched a good 1,300 feet of steep rock. The top section appeared almost vertical but was almost completely devoid of snow. Our thoughts, however, were at this point mainly occupied with our immediate comforts. Fleming managed to eat a hearty lunch, but I could only nibble at a small piece of bully and a few biscuits. So scorching was the sun that we endeavoured to make little hutches of stones in which to hide our faces from the glare. Morale was low! Ramzana was quite *hors de combat*, and Fleming and I were feeling much the worse for wear. Fifteen minutes' rest considerably improved our condition, and when we started again we were reasonably fit. Ramzana was left behind and we were to collect him on the way down. The first section, although quite steep, was fully supplied with holds, and in most places we managed to move together on the rope. Following the course of a shallow couloir we were brought to the foot of the steep section. Luckily, this section was well broken up and, although almost vertical, proved of a moderate to difficult standard. This section, we thought, would bring us out high up on the east ridge, but we were uncertain how much of the ridge still lay before us. On reaching the ridge we were overjoyed to see the unmistakable, snow-capped summit only 50 feet above. Unfortunately the clouds were

now swirling around us and the view was most disappointing. Through the mist we looked down the gross exposure of the north face on to Dud Nag, and below in the valley we could see the position of our camp site. Nanga Parbat and the Karakorums were both completely obscured by thick banks of cloud. We had witnessed excellent views of these fine mountains while climbing on the Jarakhesh peaks.

It was now 2.30 P.M. and, as it grew dark before 8 P.M., we decided to waste no time on the descent. The first part proved to be without undue difficulty, and we were again roped up with Ramzana at 4.30 P.M. The descent of the ice-slope was much more difficult. Fleming came off and commenced an uncontrollable glissade. Fortunately, he was brought to a standstill, spread-eagled over an unpleasant-looking crevasse before he came on the unbelayed Ramzana. He looked exceedingly funny, but did not appear to appreciate the humour of the situation, and delicately extricated himself while I got hold of his rope from Ramzana. The remainder of the slope was descended with great care. Once down on the glacier we set off at high speed. The surface of the snow had been melted by the sun and we were able to descend rapidly with a skating motion. A sharp tug on the rope brought me on my face, at the same time digging my ice-axe into the snow. On looking round I saw that poor Ramzana had gone through a crevasse. He was held by our ropes, with only his head and hands showing and looking the split image of Mr "Chad." We hauled him out, and all he could say was: "Bahut kharab, sahib." ("Very bad, sahib.")

The mist came down and made it very difficult to find the correct way down. After making one mistake by starting down the wrong side shoot, we eventually came out of the mist on the lower glacier, which we descended by our old route. Darkness overtook us on the lower section, and the final part resulted in many spills and much cursing. One hundred yards from our camp we were met by our coolies, led by Mohammed Butt, who were making a great show as a search party. As it had been dark now for some considerable time they had obviously no intention of proceeding farther. They

surrounded us, making a great fuss of undoing our boots and puttees, washing our feet, and bringing us mugs of steaming tea. After a first-class dinner we wasted no time in getting to sleep. The climb had taken fifteen hours of constant ascent and descent. We were well pleased with our day's effort. We had made a second route, which, as our ascent in one day proved, was much quicker than by the east ridge. During the day we had enjoyed every conceivable type of mountaineering of an interesting, if not technically difficult, character. It came as a fine finish to an excellent holiday.



ASCENT OF KOLAHOI

(Kolahoi was first climbed by Kenneth Mason and Dr Ernest Neve on June 28, 1912, by the east ridge, the route now usually taken. Lieut. Russell was apparently not aware, at the time of writing, that the first ascent of the south face was made by Hunt and Brotherhood in July 1935 (*Himalayan Journal*, Vol. VIII, p. 108). For account of first ascent see *Alpine Journal*, Vol. XXVI, p. 407.—ED.)

OVER THE LAIRIG GHRU.

(Tyros in the Cairngorms.)

ALEX. TEWNION.

WHEN we pedalled westward from Braemar one summer evening on our heavily laden bicycles, Harry Wood and I little realised the magnitude of the struggle we had set ourselves when we avowed our intention of crossing the famous Lairig Ghru, the Boulder Pass of the Cairngorms, with bicycles. For this was Harry's first time in Scotland, where he was spending his annual summer holiday, and I myself had never been beyond Derry Lodge; consequently, some of our difficulties will be realised when I mention that our only map was a 10-mile-to-the-inch road-map on which the Cairngorms were marked as a tiny cluster of mountains, and with only those roads indicated which touched the villages on the outskirts of the range.

But as we pushed our machines up the long incline leading westward to the Linn of Dee we were brimful with confidence and enthusiasm, looking forward quite eagerly, in fact, to what we anticipated as an easy hill-path. The immediate prospect was bright; pine woods lined the Linn road on either hand, and progress, though slow, was a simple matter of propelling the bicycles along a steep macadamised road. And so, having time to spare, we stopped at the Corriemulzie Bridge, some 3 miles from Braemar, and made our way by a gap in the fence and down through the trees to a small footbridge crossing 20 feet above the Corriemulzie Burn. Here, creeping gingerly over the extremely rotten, moss-covered tree-trunks forming this bridge, we were rewarded by a splendid view of the Corriemulzie Falls, over 30 feet high, which shoot in spraying cascades to the rocks lining the stream-bed beneath.

On the road again, we wheeled down through the tiny

village of Inverey, and on to the Linn of Dee, where, as it was getting late, we pitched our tent for the night. Strolling afterwards to the Linn we gazed on the water boiling through the tremendous pot-holes, and were lucky enough to spot a salmon making a terrific effort to propel itself up the seething turmoil of waters. Unsuccessful, it fell back to the shelter of a pool to recuperate for another attempt, while, deafened by the incessant roar from the Linn, and almost mesmerised by the foaming convolutions that swirled and boiled up from the depths, we deemed caution advisable and withdrew from the edge of the cauldron.

Morning ushered in a host of midges and the first of our misfortunes. Blue with cold, we crept from our blankets and hastily pulled on our clothes, then tried in vain to light the small collapsible petrol stove I had brought. This stove was a source of constant amusement to Harry: it had no pump, but was guaranteed by its makers to generate its own pressure when heated with a little methylated spirits, though unfortunately it seldom reacted as desired. Apparently it suffered from moods, for the previous evening it had caused us no trouble, but light it would not now that we required it in a hurry. With the stench of spirits and petrol filling the tent, we had to resort finally to the nearby trees for firewood to provide ourselves with breakfast.

Packing after a hasty meal and wheeling our machines to the road, we continued over a very rough gravelled track towards the White Bridge, a white-painted wooden bridge spanning the Dee at the mouth of Glen Dee. There we found a finger-post pointing to the north, proclaiming, "To the Lairig Ghru," and delighted to see a well-trodden track leading up into the hills we cycled along in good style for a few hundred yards. A small shelf of rock jutting across the path was the first intimation we received of pleasures to come, and lifting our cycles over it we trundled them on along a worsening muddy track.

On and up into the hills we climbed, pushing the bicycles on the path and ourselves walking in the rough heather. The sun beat down strongly and hordes of clegs—those pestiferous deer-flies which abound in the Highlands—soon found our

perspiring bodies, settling unfelt on bare knees and necks and sucking heartily till an intense itching warned us of their company. Smack! A cleg would fall to the ground, to be stealthily replaced by another voracious bloodsucker, and so the wearisome process repeated itself every few minutes. We felt thankful that midges did not thrive in the glen, for then our plight would have been truly desperate—there are few worse tortures than midges at their devilish work!

Busily occupied alternately slapping at clegs and lifting the cycles over obtruding boulders and muddy pools, we crept farther and farther into the mountains, passing an old larach beside which grew a small birch tree, the last tree on the southern side of the Lairig. A black, rocky mountain drew into sight, towering to the skies and dwarfing its neighbours with its great bulk. This was Beinn Bhrotain (we learned later), a barren expanse of tumbled boulders and heather, with a precipitous east face that loomed over us as we crawled ant-like beneath. Beyond rose an even more awesome hill, Bod an Dhiabhail, the Devil's Point, with great sloping slabs lining its southern face and a 1,000-foot cliff rising above scree-strewn slopes on the east.

Slipping on rolling pebbles, squelching through bogs and mud and drenched with perspiration, we struggled on, passing a wide glen on our left between Beinn Bhrotain and the Devil's Point. At its head stood a high mountain on which rested a large patch of snow—an object of great interest, but one we could spare little time to contemplate, although it was the first occasion we had seen snow lying so late in summer. On we plodded, sometimes carrying the cycles 100 yards at a stretch over stony patches of ground, again pushing them through running water where the path degenerated to a stream. My cycle began to drag. Heavily loaded with gear, it was too burdensome for me to manœuvre with ease, so Harry relieved me of some of the load, including our precious groundsheet. Thus eased, our speed increased a little, but many were the halts caused by the unaccustomed exertion of tramping with bicycles.

The great precipice of the Devil's Point darkened as clouds appeared over the horizon and swept down on the

Cairngorms, threatening rain. The giants of the Cairngorms —Ben Macdhui, Braeriach, and Cairn Toul—were now in sight ahead, but soon mists shrouded the tops and drifted lower down the hillsides till the Devil's Point hid its horn in cloud. Across the Dee appeared a small stone house, a tall figure in a kilt giving a friendly wave as we passed lugging our heavy machines. We returned his gesture and debated as to who would stay in such a lonely spot, but the mystery was solved for us a short distance along, when two men came in sight, bent double under enormous packs.

" Hullo," said one in a sing-song Glasgow accent, looking on us with pity. " I see you're crossing the Lairig."

" Yes," I agreed. " Can you give us a rough idea as to how far we are from Aviemore ? And what are all these hills called ? Our map isn't too good."

" Surely. You're about 14 miles from Aviemore, and the worst still to come! And this is Glen Dee; yonder is Carrar (Corrour) Bothy, where we're staying a few days; and up there is the Devil's Point, where we'll be climbing to-morrow if the weather holds."

" Not up that face ? " I asked, revealing myself as the veriest tyro as I gazed at his nailed boots and the rope festooning his pack.

" Ach! it's not so difficult as it looks," he said disparagingly. " You'll have more trouble crossing the Lairig than we'll have climbing the rocks. You've about 4 miles of boulders to carry the cycles over, and that'll be no easy job."

After advising us about the route ahead they continued on their way to the bothy, while Harry and I dragged our cycles some distance farther. A thin mist swept down Glen Dee from the high cleft of the Lairig, and in a short time enveloped us in a drizzle of rain. Deciding to heed the climbers' warning about the boulders on the Lairig, we searched for, and found, a level stretch of grass by the Dee, which we thought would be ideal for a camping ground. Undoing our packs, we pitched the tent while rain drifted in columns across the hills.

" Where's the groundsheet, Harry ? " I asked, seeing it nowhere around.

" H-m-m, I must have left it on my bicycle," he said.

But one look was sufficient to dispel our hopes—it was definitely lost, and, what was worse, it had been our only groundsheet.

" I'll go back and look for it," said Harry, a noticeable lack of enthusiasm in his voice. He knew only too well that our erratic course that day, winding to avoid bogs and rocks, precluded any possibility of finding the groundsheet. Sure enough, when he set out during a lull in the rain, he returned in empty-handed disconsolation, and we wrapped ourselves in our blankets that night with only a raincoat beneath us to prevent the chill dampness of the ground penetrating to our bodies.

During the night a furious storm burst in the mountains. Sheets of solid water lashed down Glen Dee, but our tent had only recently been waterproofed and kept the downpour from penetrating above. Not so beneath. Unthinkingly we had pitched the tent by a high bank of heather-matted rock down which the rain poured in streams to our patch of grass, where it seeped slowly into the ground and transformed it into a boggy morass. Some time through the night I was awakened by the cold and found that our blankets were absolutely soaked; however, I could do nothing in the darkness and, turning over, fell asleep again.

In full daylight we opened the tent-flaps and looked north on a stern and gloomy sight. The V-shaped gap of the Lairig Ghru between Ben Macdhui and Braeriach was half-obscured with swirling mists, and the nearer rocky slopes of Cairn Toul disappeared upwards in a grey pall of dense vapour. Rain still fell heavily in the glen; the hills streamed with water; altogether it was an unprepossessing view for amateur mountaineers to behold. But one small crumb of consolation remained—the stove worked at our first attempt, and we cheered somewhat after a hot breakfast.

Little movement was possible until the weather improved; the rain was too heavy to countenance an advance, and we had no desire to return to Braemar; and so we remained in the tent for several hours, lying on the sodden blankets until the patter of rain on the canvas slackened. Then we hurriedly

struck camp, and packing the equipment on the bicycles carried them over the soaking heather to the path, now a rushing burn. Once more trundling our machines, the stiffness eased from our limbs and with increasing warmth we snapped our fingers at the drizzle which still drifted from the north. Splashing along the track we took burns in our stride, for once wet we had to think only of continued progress and a stream more or less made little or no difference.

Climbing, ever climbing, the cycles bouncing on stones or sticking in pools of mud, we squelched and floundered on to the north, nearer and nearer the grim opening of the Boulder Pass. On our left a great glen came in sight, strewn with riven blocks of granite, where clouds momentarily lifting revealed a great field of snow lying at a steep angle against a semicircle of black cliff—a glimpse only, and a blank grey curtain again hid the scene. The path now mounted amongst enormous boulders fallen from the long tongues of scree sending exploring fingers towards us from the invisible steeps of Ben Macdhui; and more often we had the cycles on our shoulders than on the path—a modern version of an old fable. We toiled on into the mist, the only human beings in a desolate waste of heather, rock, and water, following the dwindling Dee till we came to its birthplace amongst the boulders.

The strain of carrying equipment, food, and cycles became too great for comfort. We removed the packs from the cycles and left the latter by a conspicuous rock, while we covered the first lap of a relay over a faint scratched trail through the boulders. Coming on a small pool of water in the rocks we thought it enough of a landmark to be easily identified in the mist, and dumping the packs beside it returned for the cycles. Hunting for these was no easy task, we found, since innumerable tracks led here, there, and everywhere through the boulder-field; but chance brought us to the machines, and shouldering them we retraced our steps to the pool. The cycles being lighter than the packs, we continued beyond the pool to another, and then two larger ones, tarns of limpid water with a faint tinge of blue, and very cold, floored with even slabs of granite—the Pools of

Dee. These pools, despite their name, are not the source of the Dee; however, in fine weather they have a greater appeal than the actual source, and many a climber has plunged in them for a refreshing dip.

But that day our thoughts were far removed from bathing. All our energies were devoted to carrying our gear over the pass and down to the far-away Aviemore. Continuing above the Pools, we almost trod on some ptarmigan sheltering amongst the rocks. They seemed remarkably tame, and fluttered off protesting our intrusion on their solitude with harsh calls. Almost invisible against the grey boulder-field, with which they blended in perfect harmony—their mottled plumage is Nature's finest camouflage—they were betrayed only by their white wings as they flew a few yards uphill. In the prevailing weather conditions they were safe from marauding eagles, but exposure to the storm had forced them from their usual haunts on the higher slopes to seek what shelter they could find in the Lairig.

By the huge cairn marking the summit of the Lairig, 100 yards from the Pools, we left the bicycles and retraced our steps for the packs, but somehow in the mist we mistook our direction and wandered away up the hillside. Discovering our error when the slope rapidly steepened, we descended to the boulder-field and searched for our packs for some time in vain. Backwards and forwards across the Lairig we stumbled, clambering over gigantic blocks of granite or twisting our ankles in half-hidden crevices, reviling the drifting mists the while. Suddenly, and most providentially, a rent was blown in the vapour by a gust of wind, revealing the packs lying beside a heap of stones which we were positive we had just searched. Rushing to the packs lest the mist close down again, we thankfully slung them on our shoulders and walked back past the Pools to the summit cairn.

Resting by the cairn, we called the wrath of the gods on our heads by cursing the miles of weary boulders, the dense mists, the drizzling rain—but most of all we cursed ourselves. What a business! To trek on and on, with cycles on our backs and little knowledge of where we were going,

seemed the utmost folly. Still, we could afford a few more days to the task if necessary, and after having come so far it were cowardice to turn back. Sitting there, smoking and meditating on our sad lot, we heard a grating clatter approach from the north, out of the solid wall of vapour seething through the Lairig.

" Hallo, there," I shouted. " What's doing ? "

A lean and lanky mountaineer loomed out of the mist. " Well, lads, you're having a rest. What's the idea of the bikes up here ? "

Rather mournfully we told him we were traversing the Lairig, and that unfortunately we hadn't realised it was such a tough proposition; but could he tell us how far it was to the road.

" Only another 6 or 7 miles," he said cheerfully. " But it's not so bad as all this. Maybe a mile of boulders, that's all, then you've a decent path. . . . Well, I must be pushing on. Wish you luck! So long."

When the sound of his footsteps had died away we looked at one another. Only a mile of boulders left: we should make it yet; and even as the thought crossed our minds the wind freshened from the north and the mists started to disperse. High above, a little remnant of snow became visible, bridging the March Burn where it started its mad rush off Ben Macdhui down to the Pools of Dee. Across the Lairig the tangled heather slopes of Braeriach rolled upwards in surging billows towards a great steep corrie, the Coire an Lairig; and immediately to our north the sharp peak of Creag an Leth-choin jutted skyward above red scree slopes ascending from the Lairig. West of Creag an Leth-choin the rounded tops of Sron na Lairig and Carn Eilrig led the eye down from Braeriach's shoulder to the hazy blue pine-woods and green fields of Strathspey; and far away on the horizon, 30 miles and more to the northward, the sands of the Moray Firth gleamed golden under a warm sun that was just beginning to make itself felt on the Cairngorms. Our spirits rose at the sight—life was worth living after all. With vigour renewed as the sun warmed and dried us after long dreary hours of mist and rain and soaking clothes,

we commenced the last gruelling lap of our journey over the Lairig Ghru.

Backwards and forwards we tramped, portaging our kit in quarter-mile bounds, and at length, well on in the afternoon, we drew clear of the hateful stony desert. Strapping our equipment to the cycles again, we made better speed along a narrow, well-beaten track which led down over gravel banks rising high above the Allt Druidh, the Lairig Burn draining the northern side of the pass. Down, down, ever down we lurched and galloped as our unwieldy machines occasionally took control on the steep path. Steep it is, indeed, for it descends 2,500 feet in 4 miles, and at times we feared for our very necks. But all things must come to an end, and eventually we heaved sighs of relief as the Lairig debouched on to the boggy moors of Rothiemurchus.

But one misfortune often leads to another, and so it proved in our case. From the harsh boulder-strewn wastes of the Lairig and the misery of rain and mist, we entered once more the unhappy hunting grounds of voracious hordes of insects amongst the bogs extending several miles from the Lairig towards the woods of Rothiemurchus. Clegs, midges, and a particularly vicious type of gnat gave us no rest now that we had arrived on easier ground. Once again we suffered the unbearable misery of an itching torture. We slapped, we scratched, we almost turned the air a blistered blue; but the drifting fog of insects inexorably closed its ranks and advanced to the feast. Lumps rose on our faces and knees, our ears became as pendulous blobs of flesh. We slaughtered countless myriads at every blow, but our utmost efforts were unavailing and we almost despaired under the insatiable onslaught. The insects on the Braemar side of the Cairngorms had been bad enough; these were a thousand times worse, and, I believe, the worst in Britain. I have since experienced the effects of insects all over Britain, and more than a few abroad, but I have yet to meet anything that can nearly approach the ravages of the insects in Rothiemurchus Forest. Thank heaven I discovered citronella oil; without it I should never again venture near the north side of the Lairig Ghru. And nor, I warn you, should anyone else.

So, slapping ineffectually at our awful tormentors, we reached the welcome pinewoods and made our way through a maze of tracks till we came to the Allt na Beinne footbridge —a very needful erection in view of the spates to which this " great rocky mountain brook " is liable—and there, almost clear of our tiny friends, we halted for a much-needed rest.

There, by the Allt na Beinne footbridge, the Lairig Ghru proper may be said to end, for, as I have already mentioned, a driving road exists from the bridge to Aviemore. And downright glad we were, too, to reach Aviemore and so bring to a successful conclusion our first attempt at pass-storming, as the foolhardy act of crossing hill-passes with bicycles later came to be known. But our initial traverse of the Lairig roused unsuspected emotions within us, and when later in the evening Harry and I set off northwards from Aviemore and reached the outskirts of the village, we halted for a last view of the tumbling mountains across the Spey Valley. A beam from the setting sun warmed the red screes below the rocky pinnacle of Creag an Leth-choin, and as it lifted heavenward glitters of light were struck from a quartzite slab high up on a jutting tower in Braeriach's northern corrie. Then our emotional unrest was loosed, and found expression in a solemn vow to the giant Cairngorms: " We shall soon return."

And we did; and, despite game legs and wives and such like acquired during the war, we still do.

CLIMBING IN AUSTRIA.

D. Mark Nicol.

Bruck on the Mur, Steiermark, Austria, was an unknown quantity when we left Novara. The first lap of the journey from this old north Italian town was made by train, and took us to Udine in the wide plain south of the Austro-Italian border. Because we were much nearer the hills, we couldn't see the magnificent mid-winter panorama of the Alps from Mont Blanc in the west to Monte Rosa in the east which we had been able to enjoy from Novara. Our proximity to the frontier hills towering above us was, however, an exhilarating compensation. We stayed at Udine a few days before motor transport became available to take us over the Pass into Austria. The railway had been made impassable by snow, and it was better that we made the journey by road, since by rail much of the scenery is lost by the number of tunnels on the line. Having crossed the few flat miles of cold black orchards silhouetted against the snow which lie between Novara and the hills, we started to rise towards an apparently solid wall of rock. As we approached this, the course of the road became visible and we were soon between widely separated rock faces rising from the broad stony bed of a snow-fed river. The walls converged as we climbed above the water, which we crossed and recrossed, often over makeshift bridges whose predecessors had been destroyed as the Germans pulled out. Many parts of the river-bed were strewn with wrecked tanks and bridges, and railway engines half-submerged in the icy water were further evidence of the intensive bombing which the retiring troops must have endured.

For several miles the road wound upwards, and eventually —too soon—we arrived at the highest point and started the descent into Austria. Down we swept across opening country, past cosy wooden villages and icy streams, civilians and

troops gliding on skis across the easy slopes, and revelling in the brilliant cool sunshine, the crisp snow, against which dark fir trees stood sparsely, clean and sharp, and the deep-blue sky. Every colour was sparklingly clear and cheerful on its white background—a red figure sweeping down the slope, a brilliant yellow-sweatered skier flashing past the black trunks and deep-shadowed green of the fir-tree spires, and the smooth shadows in the snow. About four o'clock in the afternoon our trucks pulled into Villach, and we were sorry, from some points of view, that the journey had come to an end. Our stay there lasted only a few days in a pleasantly situated camp which had once housed D.P.'s. The place is overlooked by a fine mountain range to the south, the most prominent feature of which is the docked triangle of Predil. The last lap of our journey took us to Bruck, this time by rail. Again it was a beautiful day, and snowy Predil looked magnificent seen from the train, far away through snow-laden trees standing by the shore of the long Worther See which runs in an amethyst strip from near Villach to Klagenfurt 30 miles away. Onwards from Klagenfurt the country was open and flat, gradually becoming more and more hilly as we penetrated deeper into Austria, and always the pine trees perched thick on the slopes. Several fairy-tale castles were left behind, rising white from the top of steep rocky piles, their picture-book spires and turrets sharply outlined in the clear air.

By the time the train rattled into Bruck it was obvious that we had come to a part of the country where the hill-minded would not have far to look for enjoyment. It was surprising to find, however, on arrival in the unit, that no one had climbed even the nearest hill; but climbing fever proved infectious. Our first trip was a walk up one of the nearby hills with sledges. Sledging on this occasion was the object, as it could hardly have been called a climb. Among four of us we had two very small one-seater sledges, and the few people we passed on the way down seemed to derive great enjoyment from the sight of two large British soldiers perched on each of these things. Inexperienced as we were in the art of sledging, it gratified us to find that it took us

only twenty-five minutes to come down a slope which we had taken two and a half hours to climb. This twenty-five minutes included accident time as well, of course. Strictly limited seating accommodation accounted for most of the halts, which were necessitated when the person sitting in front deprived his passenger of his allotted portion of the canvas seat—roughly 9 by 4½ inches.

Rennfeld was the first high hill on our programme. It stands to the south of Bruck and is 5,200 feet. This involved a climb of about 3,900 feet, as Bruck is 1,200 feet above sea level. The climb was uninteresting and fairly exacting, as the snow lay very deep and soft beneath the pine trees of the higher slopes. We managed to keep to a fairly clear ridge towards the summit, however, and after four hours were on the flat top. Here there is a *Gasthaus* firmly fixed to the ground by steel rope stretched across the roof. The view to the north was very fine, and fortunately the weather was clear, for far away could be seen the Hochschwab plateau, snow-covered and precipitous, rising at the summit of the Hochschwab itself to 7,200 feet. Eastwards spread a wide patchwork extending beyond the horizon to Vienna, and to the west, hilltops undulated as far as the eye could see. Unfortunately Austria's highest—the Gross Glockner—is invisible from this point, but the Dachstein mountains away to the north-west could just be seen.

For several weeks after we did Rennfeld our activities were held up, strange though it may sound, by as much work as could be coped with, and by the general difficulties which seem to arise on attempting to get a day or two off. However, in a few weeks the work slacked off, and week-ends became more feasible. One Sunday evening a couple of us took a walk over one of the little hills which surround Bruck, and having crossed the summit and descended the other side, found ourselves on a narrow road by which stood a very inviting *Gasthaus*. We walked into the low, dark-beamed parlour and sat down. The curiosity aroused by our entry was evident, and a few rustics gathered round the two other small tables, eyed us suspiciously before returning to their cards and tall glasses of beer. We bade them *guten*

abend, which seemed to surprise them, and they puffed their great china-bowled and knobbly pipes with renewed vigour. We were struck by the homeliness of the place, which was old and mellow and very clean, and went back the next Sunday. We were recognised immediately, and this time one of the older men approached us rather timidly. He was bald, but his wrinkled and friendly brown visage was bedecked by a very large and tangled black moustache. Clad in his best Sunday tweeds, adorned at the seams and edges of the lapels and pockets of the jacket by brown piping, and with a broad brown stripe down the legs of his trousers, he seemed to be a part of the place. His coat buttons were carved in the shape of edelweiss from deer-horn, and the hat hanging on the wall had a *Gamsbard* of gigantic proportions stuck in the back, surrounded by his badges and ski-ing medals. He asked us if we would like a game of cards. Between us we were able to tell him that we didn't know the game they were playing, but would like very much to learn, and they soon thawed out and were most hospitable. By the end of the evening we had arranged to meet one of them who would take us at the week-end to the Hochschwab, where he intended to put in a couple of days ski-ing.

Two more of the unit were recruited, and as soon as work was finished on Saturday we borrowed a truck and set off. Fortunately for our climbing expeditions there was no check on the unit transport at that time, as the whole unit was only eleven strong and without any interfering sergeant-majors. Two days' rations and changes of socks were our only load, as we had been told by our self-appointed guide, if such he could be called, that we would spend the night in a hut called the Sonnschienhutte, where bedding and cooking facilities were provided. The weather had been perfect for several days, so a change of clothes was considered unnecessary considering the reliability of the climate. Our rucksacks were negligible in size compared with the unavoidably heavy loads required for a few days in the Cairngorms. We picked up Franz a few miles up the road, and the truck took us 23 kilometres to Tragoss-Oberort, which is a picturesque village having as a background the

D. Mark Nicol

EBENSTEIN AND GRASERWAND

cliffs of Pribitz which drop practically vertically into a perfectly clear little loch known as the Grüner See. Here I met, quite by chance, a blacksmith who had made the crampons for one of the Himalayan expeditions. He showed me a post card with a photo of the expedition on it, written by Dyhrenfurth, thanking him for the satisfactory results which had been obtained with these spikes. Among the other trophies which he kept wrapped in a much-worn piece of oiled silk were several certificates obtained at exhibitions, and letters from dozens of Alpine climbers. Each had to be carefully inspected and admired before we could go on.

We climbed above the loch between the cliffs of Pribitz on the right, and Zirbeneben and the Zellerwart to the left, and in an hour were in an open grassy valley about 3 miles long and a mile wide. About half-way along we started to climb on a good path above the flat bottom and were soon well up the right side with fine views opening both in front and behind. The path continued to be very easy going as it doubled across the face of the pine-clad hillside. As we rose, the wall of the hill above grew steeper and steeper until it was a sheer cliff face fringed with trees at the top. Magnificent views of Hochturm and Griesmauer opened out as we rose, displaying their snowy precipices finely illuminated by the evening sun. It took us three hours to reach the top of the climb, where we found a wide snow-covered plateau—the Sonnschienalm—dominated by two heights—Ebenstein (6,910 feet) and Graserwand (6,361 feet). The plateau is about 5 miles from west to east and of slightly less breadth. Its farther end is covered with very old and beautiful pines on an undulating descent to the loch lying at the foot of the cliffs of the Graserwand-Sackwiesensee.

The evening was deepening the blue of the eastern sky as we started across the snow towards the light of the hut. Behind us an unbelievably brilliant sunset silhouetted the jagged black cone of Griesmauer against the fathomless blue ice of the sky, across which seemed to trickle streams of molten copper, their glowing vapour swept upwards by an unfelt breeze in graceful wisps across the darkening heavens. The spectacle faded as the sun sank from the approach of

evening. We found the house to be a weathered and solidly built timber dwelling, compactly able to house about thirty people. An accordion, ever popular with the people, was playing in the wooden-benched dining-room, whose walls were hung with photographs of the surrounding hills. Having been made very welcome, a meal was soon brewing and we were shown our room. Here we found, much to our surprise, short but comfortable beds, and several very good blankets. The roof sloped low over our heads, and through the small window could be seen the last shadow of Griesmauer. Supper was very pleasant, accompanied by the music of ski-ers and climbers as they sat outside in the cool evening air singing their native Styrish songs, cheerful and sad. As we lay in our four-bedded room, warm between soft blankets, I thought of the last night I had spent in the hills, and hoped that it would not be long before I could smell the peaty Shelter Stone again and the dewy tweed as we lay on a mattress of heather.

In the morning we rose with the light and made, and ate, a good breakfast with a relish which made us feel rather ashamed under the envious eyes of the civilians, who nevertheless look remarkably strong and healthy. It had been decided the previous evening to ascend the western side of the Graserwand, which is mainly a steep scramble, but which also provides some quite stiff pitches, cross the saddle linking the hill to Ebenstein to the west, and climb this before coming down its long ridge to the plateau. So at 7 o'clock, with about six hours in hand, we set out while the snow was still crisp on top, and without much difficulty reached the top of the Graserwand by 10.30. Our party included Franz and a friend, and a girl we met at the hut who had given a fine display of ski-ing the previous evening. Unfortunately some mist was blowing up from the north-east, and by the time we had gone half-way along the crest of the saddle it was thick, swirling up the face of the hill and pouring over the ridge. A sheer wall looming up in front of us was all that could be seen of Ebenstein. Our plan had originally been to traverse to the right of the summit rock which now confronted us, and to make the final ascent from

the west, where the going is a bit easier. As the weather showed no sign of clearing we decided to forgo the idea of climbing Ebenstein altogether and to descend to the hut again. We couldn't afford to spend valuable time, which we might need, in the event of our being delayed by mist, even on the shorter route. So on that particular occasion we missed the very impressive panorama which can be seen from Ebenstein on a clear day, and which we came to know pretty well through subsequent trips.

The slope on our left which we had to negotiate was very steep, but there was not much snow, and there were clear patches all the way to the bottom. We kept to these because we had no ice-axes, but the two Austrians and the girl decided to cross a long steep patch of hard snow, as the going appeared to be rather smoother on the other side. When they were about half-way across the belt the girl's foot must have struck a patch of ice and she fell. Being unroped and without an axe, according to the haphazard fashion of these parts, she could do nothing to stop herself sliding. We stood helpless, and had just to watch her slithering down faster and faster. She had enough presence of mind and, fortunately, the ability to steer herself towards a protruding rock about 250 feet down the slope from the point at which she had fallen. Impact with this would at least be less than if she were to continue another 1,000 feet to the rocks at the bottom. As she hit the rock she was flung clean into the air, to fall to a standstill in a 10-foot cleft on the other side. She was very lucky not to have been badly hurt, but, as it was, she escaped with a nasty cut on her leg and a bad shaking. She managed to get back to the house without much difficulty, and after having lunch we all set off on the return journey to Tragoess.

The descent was made by another route, and the path took us to the southern side of the plateau, sharply down the face of a steep wall which formed one of the sides of a level-bottomed bowl in the hills, and through a narrow " klamm " to the village. The truck was waiting, and by half-past five we were back in Bruck, having completed a trip which formed the basis for many future week-ends.

Infinite variety is the attraction of the Hochschwab. The Sonnschienalm, sun-bathed and pine-covered, contrasts strikingly with the dark and treeless scree and shadow of the northern aspect of the massif. Westwards, peak upon peak, piling until they appear only as faded spectres looming on the horizon, are offset to the east by contours resembling, in places, those of the Cairngorms. Magnificent as this Austrian landscape is, clean and sharp and spacious, the feeling of wild remoteness so keenly stimulated in us by our own hills is rather unfortunately dimmed by the proximity of the *Gasthaus* at almost every vantage point, and by the great number of people whom one sees. Nevertheless, we spent very many thoroughly enjoyed week-ends in these hills, and were introduced by them to many good friends.

This year, "fresh fields and pastures new"; we hope to be able to arrange a few expeditions in Carinthia, and also in Salzburg and the Gross Glockner. Let's hope we manage Glencoe and Ben Nevis too.

THE PAST PRESIDENT: H. D. WELSH.

THE Annual General Meeting, 1946, saw the end of an outstanding Presidency, outstanding for its length—it started in 1938—but more so because of the qualities Hugh Welsh brought to that office. At p. 14 of Vol. XV. of the *Journal* you will see at the lower corner of the pen-and-ink sketch by Tom Train, in the company of a band of illustrious climbers past and present, a solitary kilted figure, bright, youthful, cheery looking: that is the figure we came to take for granted at all our Meets, excursions, and social functions. Against the background of his predecessors it is difficult to see what special qualities he had to bring, but these can only be fully assessed by those of us who had the good fortune to spend long days on the hills in his company.

First amongst them was probably his great love of the hills and the people who either live on the uplands or like to spend their time there. This is brought out in his contributions to the *Journal* and his many admirable lectures delivered very willingly to scores of audiences, but more so in his attitude to junior members and to newcomers to excursions. If he has no first ascents to his credit he has certainly done more towards spreading an interest in hill-walking and in mountaineering into a widening community than has anyone in the Club since its inception.

The first President in the second half-century of the Club's existence, Hugh was well versed in and keen on the traditions it has built up. He had known most of the original members either personally or at second-hand through his familiarity with their doings and writings, but his greatest link with the early pioneers of mountain-climbing in Scotland lay in the deep friendship that sprang up between him and the late Dr Norman Collie, our Honorary President for many years. Two men could scarcely have been more unlike. Dr Collie was almost a recluse and Hugh the most companionable of fellows, yet, in the porch

of Sligachan Hotel, Dr Collie's home for many years, the two of them got together, and in that way much of the hidden charm of the recluse was conveyed to members of the Club in the yarns with which Hugh interspersed his lectures on days in the corries of the Cuillins.

Our Past President set a very high standard in his organisation of excursions. Those of us who turned out with him just knew that we had very successful outings, but there is much more to it than that. A successful satisfying day for a mixed party does not just happen. It cannot be arranged beforehand, and any attempt to appear to organise it would have the opposite effect. The carrying out of the duties of President has to be done in such a way that it does not appear to be done at all. Hugh Welsh knew just how to do that. Maybe it was that he was always lucky in his weather for, according to him, he has never had a bad day in the hills. His mists are always rose and opal!

With the general tendency to co-ordinate interests on a National scale, Mountaineering Clubs, during the last year or so, have been getting together, and the Cairngorm Club was very fortunate in having as its representative at the various meetings a President who was in himself the embodiment of the aims and objects of its constitution. Having seen him in action at these meetings I must admit to feeling a certain justifiable pride in watching the President establish for the Club the standing which its seniority merited, yet never in the smallest degree overlooking the welfare of all who seek pleasure and recreation on the hills.

Hugh's period of office was a long and difficult one. The outbreak of war in 1939 led to a decision being taken to keep the Club alive in all circumstances. Transport difficulties put Meets almost out of the question. Members were scattered in the Forces and those at home were kept busy with Civil Defence—our President could now be seen in the guise of a sergeant of the Special Constabulary looking for black-out offenders—but the Club was kept alive, and its decision to retain their President in the chair through the first year of an uneasy peace was a happy one. The Club Dinner, held in November 1946, at which he made his last

appearance as President, was indeed the proof, if any was necessary.

In saying good-bye to him as President we all look forward to sharing his perfect mountain weather, his opal mists, and his music of the corries in his company for many days in many years to come.

E. W. S.

THE PLACE-NAMES ON AND AROUND LOCHNAGAR.

W. M. Alexander.

The following is a short survey of the Lochnagar area from the point of view of nomenclature. It is the outcome of a check-up made in recent years with a view to finding out the most authentic pronunciations of the names of the area as now in use. Most of the names here given will be found upon the 6-inch Ordnance Map; but with many of them some indication of the spoken sound may be useful, and nearly all call for a passing remark as to meaning or otherwise. In the notes which follow, the spoken sound is given with the stressed syllable printed in capitals (*e.g.*, LochnaGAR); "ch" is as in "loch," "y" as in "yet." The meanings given are those which are reasonably certain. For the sounds as here set down I am indebted to various informants, particularly to Mr James Abercrombie, Crathie, and Mr John Lamond, Braemar.

As to the name Lochnagar itself, I am unable to add anything to what previous writers have recorded. Lochnagar is presumed to have originally applied to the loch in the big corrie. It is not known when precisely it came to be applied to the hill. The syllable "gar" is in any case obscure, being capable of a number of different conjectural explanations, none of them satisfactory. It will be convenient to take the Lochnagar area in sections.

The Direct Route.—The path goes up the side of Allt na Giubhsaich (Alt-na-GYOOsich: "burn of the fir wood"). On the right is Conachcraig, a considerable hill (ConnachCREK: no meaning). At the top of the burn is a gully called Clais Rathadan (Clash RATTen or ROTTen: "rat's gully"). Where the ascent of Lochnagar proper begins you have, down on the right, Coire na Ciche, where the Gelder has its source (CornaKEECH: "corrie of the

pap "). In front is the Muckle Pap (*Cioch mhor*: KEECH-vore). The Little Pap (*Cioch bheag*: KEECH-vek) is a mile to the south. On your left hand as you go up the Ladder is the slope on which is the Cuidhe Crom (COO-ie crowm: "crooked snow-wreath"). The big snow-wreath which gives its name here is very conspicuous in spring, and generally lasts till the month of June. It is always nearly the same in shape, a sort of elongated oval with a humped back; being visible from many parts of Deeside, this wreath was formerly taken as an index of the lateness of the spring or otherwise. Near the summit you pass the top of the Black Spout, probably a translation of an original Sput Dubh.

THE SUMMIT.—The summit peak of Lochnagar is the Ca Carn. The Gaelic systematic spelling would be Cà Càrn; both words are stressed about equally. Half a mile to the north and lower down is the Ca Carn Beag, or Little Ca Carn. The Ordnance maps have Cac Carn Beag, which is an unjustified form; for one thing, Cac is not the sound, and for another, it is a most unlikely word to occur here. The correct name, as said, is the Ca Carn. It seems to be now only known to a limited number of people, and it would be well if climbers would keep it in use and not allow it to be distorted by the map form. No clear meaning can be given to Ca Carn. The first word sounds like *cadha*, which means "a way over a hill range"; but as there is no way over here that meaning scarcely fits.

LOCHNAGAR TO BRAEMAR.—You pass near the Queen's Well. This name dates from Victorian times. An older name recorded is Fuaran nam Balgair, "well of the foxes." For the other Fox's Well at the foot of the Ladder no Gaelic is known. On the left is the plateau, the White Mounth (*Mon-gheall*: Mon-YALL, with same meaning). On the right are the cliffs overlooking Loch nan Eun (Loch-nan-YANE: "loch of the birds"; this is the same name as with the other Loch nan Eun at the head of Glen Ey). Farther over is the Sandy Loch. There are two small pools beside Loch nan Eun called by Maconochie, Lochan na Feadaige and Lochan an Tarmachain ("little loch of the plover,

ptarmigan ''); but these names seem to be not known now. Prominent on the right is the well-known peak called the Stuie, also spelt Stuic. This name, much used by climbers, is good enough Gaelic; *stùc*, or sometimes *stuadh*, describes such a peak. But the local people do not use it; they always call that peak the Stob of Loch nan Eun. The path descends and crosses a headwater of the Muick, Allt na dà Craobh Bheithe on O.S. (" burn of the two birch trees "), a name apparently unknown now. On the right are Little Cairn Taggart and Big Cairn Taggart (Carn an t-Sagairt, CarnDAGGartsh, Bek and More: " little and big cairn of the priest "). After that the path goes down the side of Creag an Loch (CraiganLOCH: " craig of the loch ") to Loch Callater.

THE GLENMUICK SIDE.—Going west from Allt na Giubhsaich, a sharpish hill on the right is the Strone (*sròn*: " a nose," common in the Highlands for any nose-like hill). Beyond it a stream coming down into Loch Muick is the Allt Dearg (Allt DSHERRig: " red burn "). This burn drains an area called the Moss of Monelpie (MonELLpie: the word Monelpie would itself mean the " moss of Elpie," whatever the latter word means). A mile farther on, the Glassalt, a much bigger burn, comes off Lochnagar, its source being near the summit (GLASSALT: " green burn," no doubt from the relative greenness of its banks). The cliffs above the Glassalt Shiel are Creag na Sithinn (CreknaSHEEN: " craig of the venison," but the name is not quite clear). Above Loch Muick the main stream is the Dubh Loch Burn, or Allt an Dubh Loch. It will be noticed that with Dubh Loch, as with Glas Allt and some other names here and elsewhere, the adjective comes before the noun. This may indicate that such names are of some antiquity; the modern language, if making such names afresh, would turn them the other way—Loch Dubh, Allt Glas. A mile west of the Glassalt the Loch Buidhe Burn comes off the White Mounth. It has its name from the small Loch Buidhe (Loch Boo-ie: " yellow loch "). Below that loch there is a waterfall called the Stulan (STYOOLan, diminutive of *steall*, " a jet of water "). A couple of miles

west is Coire Boidheach (Cor-BOYach: "bonnie corrie"), with a stream in it which rises near the Stuie and runs towards the Dubh Loch.

GLENMUICK TO CRATHIE.—The modern road is an estate one; the old road, a disused track, is not far from it and slightly more direct. From Inchnabobart you go up the side of Allt Mhaide (Allt-VATSH or VETSH: "burn of the stick"; the interpretation is uncertain, this name occurring in Glen Cluny and elsewhere). On the left is Conachcraig, the north top of which has some rocks upon it called Caisteal na Caillich (Kastyelna-KALyich: "witch's castle"). Near the watershed between Muick and Girnock a large boulder is beside the road. This is the Muckle Steen of Badhabber. The Moss of Badhabber (on map, Moine Bad a' Chabair: "moss of the clump of the pole") is the moss north of that on the upper Girnock. The ridge between there and the Gelder has the following features: Conachcraig, Little Conachcraig, Coire an t-Slugain (CornLOOKan: "corrie of the gully"), Coire na h-Oisinn (CornaHOSHin: "corrie of the corner"), Craigengall ("craig of the lowlander"). Minor heights to the north terminate in Craig Gowan, near Balmoral. On the south side of Craig Gowan is the Dubh-Chlais (Doohlash: "dark ravine"), a name now inapplicable, the trees having been cut; through it a road goes towards the Gelder.

BALMORAL AND BALLOCHBUIE.—Looking across the Dee from the heights north of the Inver a series of hills stretches up towards Lochnagar. That area is the Balmoral Forest. The woods beside the river are Garmaddie (supposedly *Garadh-madaidh*: "wolf's den"). Behind that are Craig Doin (Craig Dine) and the Ripe, neither of which names have any known meaning. The Ordnance Survey has "Ripe Hill," with its common habit of putting the word "hill" after names; but this hill is called simply the Ripe. Beyond these are Druim Odhar (Drumower: "grey ridge") and Cnapan Nathraichean (Cnapan-NAErihen: "adders' top"), with Carn Fiaclach (Carn FEEklech: "toothed cairn"). Next, farther back, are Craig Liath (CrekLEE-a: "grey craig") and Meall Tionail (Melt-

SHEENel, meaning uncertain, but literally a "gathering hill"). The hill close to Lochnagar is Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe on the map, but is called simply Coire na Saobhaidhe (Corn-SIVVIE: "corrie of the fox's den"). In Ballochbuie the Garrawalt (GARRawalt: "rough burn") collects the waters of the Blackshiel Burn, the Burn of Loch nan Eun, and the Feindallacher (Fane-DALLacher). The latter is *Féith an t-Salachair*: "burn of the muddy place." *Féith* (fae) is a mossy burn, as distinguished from *allt*, an ordinary burn. A branch of the Feindallacher comes down from what are called the Corrie Doos (Coireachan Dubh: "black corries") on Little Cairn Taggart.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the names recorded on the maps for the Lochnagar area are, with a few exceptions, still known, and are pronounced locally in a way that does not differ materially from the original Gaelic sound of them. It appears that one important correction of the map names should be made, which is that the summit of Lochnagar should be called the Ca Carn, the lesser top to the north being the Ca Carn Beag. This gets rid of the Cac Carn Beag of the O.S. maps, which has for long been questioned as a dubious form. Another item, which is more of the nature of a note than of a correction, is that the peak called the Stuie (Stuic on revised O.S.) is locally called the Stob of Loch nan Eun. In conclusion, mention may be made of two names that are extinct. In the Invercauld records there is reference to a Forest of Brecach, or Braco, located about the south side of the two Cairns Taggart. This name is not on any map and is unknown to my informants. Then there is "Bin Chichins," which Gordon of Straloch's map (1654) puts about where the White Mounth should be, and which looks like a misplacement by that excellent map-maker. That name, which has apparently been out of use for centuries, is definitely applied by other old writers to the main Grampian range to the south.

1939-45

ROLL OF HONOUR.

Leslie D. Durno	Lieutenant	R.N.V.R. (Fleet Air Arm).
William Lawson	Corporal	R.A.F.
Charles Ludwig	Pilot Officer	R.A.F.
James W. Scrimgeour	Captain	R.A. (A.A.).
D. C. Thom	Captain	Army (G.H.).
G. T. R. Watt	Surgeon-Lieut.	R.N.V.R.

LIST OF MEMBERS WHO SERVED IN H.M. FORCES.

A. E. Anton	Lieutenant	1st London Scottish.
J. D. Auld	Commander	R.N.R.
G. A. Beck-Slinn	Captain	R.A.
J. R. Blair	Lieutenant	R.A.S.C.
J. E. Bothwell	Trooper	1st Lothian and Border Yeomanry.
J. S. Cardno	Captain	R.A. (Anti-Tank Regt.).
G. F. Collie, M.B.E.	Captain	R.A.S.C.
J. H. F. Crawford	Lieutenant	Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.
I. K. M. Esslemont	Radio Officer	Merchant Service.
R. J. C. Fleming	Major	R.A.
M. G. Fyfe	Leading Wren	W.R.N.S.
J. Gove	Major	R.E.
H. H. I. Glennie	...	R.A.M.C.
John Lunn	Major	R.A.
Lord M. Douglas Hamilton, O.B.E., D.F.C.	Group Captain	R.A.F.
W. J. Middleton	Sergeant	R.A.F.
A. Leslie Hay	Flying Officer	R.A.F.

List of Members who served in H.M. Forces.—*continued.*

A. S. Howie	...	...
I. M. A. Hustwick	...	...
J. Patrick Jeffrey	Lieut.-Colonel	R.E. and West African Regiment.
D. P. Levack, C.B.E.	Colonel	51st H.D. (A.D.M.S.).
J. W. Levack	Major	R.A.M.C.
G. Lorimer	Major	Gordons and Frontier Force Rifles (I.A.).
A. O. Lovelock	Flight-Lieut.	R.A.F.V.R.
A. A. Marr	Major	Seaforth Highlanders.
P. C. Millar	A/B	R.N.V.R.
J. G. Mutch	Major	R.E.M.E.
Mrs M. McArthur	Jun. Commander	A.T.S.
R. O. Mackay	O.S.	R.N. (M.T.B.).
D. Mark Nicol	Corporal	R.E.
E. Birnie Reid, O.B.E.	Lieut.-Colonel	Scottish Command.
R. M. Reid	Corporal	5/7th Gordon Highlanders.
Ian C. Ritchie	...	R.A.
G. A. Roberts	Sergeant	R.A.F.
I. F. Rose, M.B.E.	Captain	R.A.M.C.
J. S. Shand	Lieutenant	Gordon Highlanders.
A. Tewnion	Lance-Corporal	K.O.S.B.
W. P. Stewart	Major	51st Division (R.A.).
A. M. Thomson	Lieut.-Colonel	R.A.M.C.
W. L. Walker	Senior M.O.	British Red Cross.
R. B. Williamson	Major	51st H.D. Signals (R.C.S.).
C. W. Williamson	Major	4th Btn. Gordon Highlanders.
C. H. Wilson	Corporal	R.A.F.
R. P. Yunnie, M.C.	Major	Black Watch (P.P.A. 8th Army).

JAMES ALEXANDER PARKER
1864-1946

In Memoriam.

JAMES ALEXANDER PARKER, B.Sc., M.Inst.C.E.
1864-1946.

It is with very deep regret I have to record the death of J. A. Parker, which took place at his home, 76 Rubislaw Den North, Aberdeen, on September 28, 1946. Ever since he joined the Club in 1907 he has been one of its most energetic and enthusiastic members. No further evidence of that is required than to refer to his many interesting and instructive articles which appear in the Club *Journal*, and to the Indicators on Ben Macdhui, Lochnagar, and the Blue Hill, which were all erected to his design and under his direct supervision. He also gave the Club the benefit of his professional knowledge when the Club rebuilt the bridge over the Allt na Beinne Moire.

Parker's mountaineering experience was very wide. He had made some fine ascents in the Alps and Pyrenees, and, when on his world tour, he visited the Japanese Alps and also the Canadian Rockies. He was, of course, a member of the Alpine Club. He had an intense love for the hills of his native land, and he was one of the very few who had all the "Munros" to his credit. It would not be too much to say that there is not a single hill in Scotland about which he could not give very accurate and full information as to how it might best be climbed.

Parker served on the Club Committee for many years, and whilst acting as Librarian he took on the laborious task of making a very full Catalogue of the Books and contributed towards the cost of buying a bookcase for the

climbing expedition his companions could rest assured that he would see it through, and well within the time allowed. He took some knowing, and to strangers he might possibly appear somewhat brusque, but to tried companions he was a reliable, staunch, and true friend.

WILLIAM GARDEN.

BESIDES looking back, as others do, to James Parker as a friend and companion on open-air excursions, it was my fortune to share with him what was perhaps the most characteristic of his indoor relaxations. To him any problem of applied mathematics was a thing entered on with zest and handled with a precision which one could only envy. Such problems were congenial to him. He welcomed them and he solved them, or, alternately, defined the limits of their solvability, not as a task, but as a pleasure. As is well known, he was the best authority on maps that we had in this part of the country. Geodesy also appealed to him, especially where there was a problem to be worked out. A frequent question asked him by people was: "Can so-and-so be seen from so-and-so?" This always gave him an opportunity of helping others out with the aid of his well-known curve. Whether easy or difficult, important or unimportant, every question of any kind received his careful attention, without haste and without delay. I saw him last—it was over a matter of great circle bearings—within a few hours of his death. The question was dealt with and disposed of as so many others had been dealt with before, and it seemed at the time to be just another of our accustomed contacts. From these contacts I derive to-day, in addition to pleasant personal recollections, an abiding admiration for his clarity of mind.

DAVID S. P. DOUGLAS.

there are many enthusiasts who received their introduction to climbing in a party led by Bill. Quiet and unassuming, he possessed a remarkable patience for detail and an organising ability which was for ever planning new expeditions to the hills. His knowledge of the Scottish hills was very thorough, and there was hardly a " Munro " which had not been climbed by him. He had also climbed in Austria, and an account of his experiences there appeared in the *Journal*, Vol. XV, 1939, pp. 40-50.

Besides his interest in climbing, Bill was a keen skier, and displayed the same energy and enthusiasm in this field as he did in climbing. All his many friends will long remember his infectious enthusiasm for the mountains and the open air, and those who shared these activities with him will miss his comradeship whenever they revisit the hills which were so loved by him.

G. B.-S.

GEORGE L. McINTYRE.

GEORGE L. MCINTYRE was one of the oldest members of the Club, joining in 1891. He died in April 1946 at the age of eighty-six. In his prime he was a climber of great energy and contributed a number of articles to the Club *Journal*. He served on the Committee from 1908 till 1920. Although he was not known to many Club members for a number of years past, he retained a keen interest in the Club and attended almost all the Indoor Meets, and, regularly, the Annual General Meetings. He was a photographer of considerable ability, and a number of his lantern slides are to be found in the Club collection.

H. D. W.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

GENERAL MEETINGS.

THE 57th Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Oddfellows' Hall on November 27, 1945. Hugh D. Welsh, President, was in the Chair. The President extended a welcome to members returned from the Services. Accounts for the year were read and approved. For the purpose of election of office-bearers it was decided to count the period of the war years, from November 1939 to November 1945, as one year. James A. Parker was elected Honorary President in place of Professor John Norman Collie, deceased. New members of Committee were elected on a card vote in the order: Ruth K. Jackson, Colonel E. B. Reid, R. H. Calvert, W. Malcolm, and J. W. Baxter. The Trustees reported that they were not then in a position to open negotiations for a lease of Derry Lodge.

A Special General Meeting of the Club was held in the Caledonian Oddfellows' Hall on February 18, 1946, to discuss the question of the Club's affiliation to the British Mountaineering Council (see under p. 79). The matter had already been under discussion at the November meeting, when those present were in favour of the formation of an association of Scottish climbing clubs.

A Special General Meeting of the Club was held in the Business Women's Club, 19 Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen, on Saturday, November 16, 1946, to consider the proposed new Rules presented by the retiring Committee. Mr Hugh D. Welsh, President, was in the Chair. The Rules, apart from Rules 3 to 7, were approved, and the new Committee was instructed to reconsider the rejected Rules.

The 58th Annual General Meeting of the Club was held at the close of the Special General Meeting referred to above. Accounts for the year were read by Mr Macgregor, on behalf of the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Mr William Garden, who was absent on account of illness. The accounts were approved. Office-bearers for the year were appointed, as given below. The President, in a review of the year's activities, referred to the deaths of the following members: James A. Parker, Honorary President; George McIntyre (1897); James F. Tocher, Dr Theodore Watt, and Leslie Durno.

R. M. Williamson was elected Honorary President and other Office-bearers appointed as follows:—

President.—E. Birnie Reid.

Vice-Presidents.—William A. Ewen and Ruth Jackson.

Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.—William Garden, 18 Golden Square, Aberdeen. Phone 7960/7961.

Honorary Editor.—William A. Ewen, 242 Mid Stocket Road, Aberdeen. Phone 1446.

Honorary Librarian.—Robert L. Mitchell, 19 Seafield Drive East, Aberdeen. Phone 7487.

Honorary Meets Secretary.—Edwin W. Smith, 6 Viewfield Avenue, Aberdeen. Phone 6067.

Committee.—Messrs R. H. Calvert, H. D. Welsh, W. M. Duff, H. J. Butchart, J. H. Crawford, G. A. Taylor; Misses H. M. E. Duncan and Ada Adams; and F. W. Alexander, Junior Meets Secretary.

A Special General Meeting of the Club was held in the Royal Hotel, Aberdeen, on January 28, 1947, to consider the new Rules. Colonel E. B. Reid, O.B.E., was in the Chair. The Rules were unanimously approved.

NEW RULES.

The Committee hopes that it may be possible to print and issue to members copies of the new Rules in the near future. In the meantime, attention is drawn to the more important of the new provisions. The Annual Subscription is increased to 15s., but members residing at a distance from Aberdeen may pay a reduced subscription of 10s. Members under twenty-one years of age pay half the annual subscription. Candidates for membership must present for the consideration of the Committee a list of climbs accomplished, stating the month and year of the ascent. Junior members may be admitted at the age of sixteen and do not require to submit a list of climbs, but must be proposed and seconded in the usual way. Their application for full membership, however, may be made at age eighteen, and must be accompanied by such a list. (The Committee regards attendance at a Club Meet a necessary preliminary to election, and suggests that candidates should not present themselves for full membership until a number of climbs have been accomplished, a proportion of them in winter, with ascents in the Cairngorms included.)

ANNUAL DINNER.

The first post-war Dinner was held in the Caledonian Hotel, Aberdeen, on November 23, 1946. Hugh D. Welsh presided, and the Club had as guests Messrs N. E. Odell, Alexander Harrison (S.M.C.), Eric Maxwell (Grampian Club), and John Geddes (Morayshire Mountaineering Club). The President proposed the Toast of " The Club " in a speech greatly to the liking of his audience. W. M. Duff's reply included a warm tribute to the retiring President. Colonel Butchart welcomed the guests and Mr Harrison replied. Nearly 150 attended.

After dinner Mr N. E. Odell described the ascent of Nanda Devi,

with a very full range of slides of the expedition, picturing the Plains of India, the Alaknanda Valley, Badrinath and the Pilgrim Way, the route up the Rishi Gunga to the Inner Basin, and on the mountain. It was all told in a very unassuming way, which touched only lightly on the formidable difficulties which the expedition faced and overcame. Colonel E. B. Reid conveyed the members' appreciation of Mr Odell's kindness in coming north to address the Club and their thanks for a very pleasant evening. Dr Odell had arrived from India only three days before and had travelled north against his doctor's advice.

MEETS AND EXCURSIONS.

SUMMER EXCURSIONS, 1945.

It was found difficult to arrange for distant excursions during 1945, so the nearer and smaller hills figure largely in the activities. On April 7, I note, there was a walk from Maryculter to Muchalls, names with which I am vaguely familiar as places one passes on the way to somewhere else! On May 12 there was an excursion to Bennachie and, on May 27, to Clochnaben, by cycle. These produced nothing new save some quaint remarks about the bicycle as a means of transport. On July 8 the cyclists were out again to the Hill of Fare, but there was a noticeable thinning of the ranks. On June 9 Tap o' Noth was on the card and the Midnight Excursion was held as usual on June 23/24. Twenty-two members crossed Lochnagar from Spittal of Glen Muick to Braemar and also, as usual, midsummer weather dogged the party. The clouds lifted about 4 A.M., by which time all were well on the way down. On September 23 an excursion to Mount Keen was well attended. The party crossed the Glen Muick hills from Ballater and rejoined the bus at Glentanar House.

WINTER EXCURSIONS, 1946.

Custom dictates that the New Year Meet shall be held at Braemar, with what I regard as unvarying monotony and many others call desirable regularity. At New Year 1946 hotel accommodation was not available at Braemar and no Meet was held. This practice, for which there is no real sanction that I can discover, almost precludes the possibility of holding an Easter Meet at Braemar, although climbing conditions at that season are normally very much better than at New Year.

The usual winter excursions were arranged: to Lochnagar on January 1, February 10, and March 3, and to Beinn a' Bhùird on March 24. Snow conditions were fairly good up to the middle of March, when a thaw set in and mild weather spoiled the snow on Beinn a' Bhùird.

The number of parties in the Spout or its branch, on these excursions to Lochnagar, tends to increase, while other feasible and excellent climbs remain neglected. The Central Buttress Gully, for example, is probably steeper than the Spout and offers a more sporting finish, and Pinnacle Gully No. 2 usually gives a more interesting climb than the Branch or the Chimneys. One Junior member complains that there is not enough time available for anything but the Spout and, of course, it cannot be too strongly impressed on the Juniors that they must not keep their elders waiting! That brings me to the excursion of March 3, when it snowed all day. Most of those present stayed on the low ground; all, indeed, except nine—all of them senior members. These nine, the Groupe de Haute Montagne, appeared bent on collecting all the tops of Lochnagar in the day. They followed the usual route, they tell me, making a diversion to the Meikle Pap on the way up. For the rest, they all but succeeded, narrowly missing the Little Pap on the way down. And all this was achieved in little more than three hours over schedule! Mr Duguid drives well, and taking his bus out of Glen Muick that night with only one visit to the ditch he may regard as one of his best performances, a feat not surpassed even by the achievements of the G.H.M. For the rest of the year the excursions were favoured with consistently good weather.

EASTER MEET, 1946.

The Easter Meet was held at the Dell, Rothiemurchus, from April 18 to 23. The party included Messrs E. B. Reid (President), Mitchell, Ramsden, Whitehouse, Calvert, Rudge, Hendry, Roberts; Misses Jackson, Duncan, Pittendrigh, Hoggarth, Wisely, and several guests.

On Good Friday Misses Hoggarth, Wisely, Jackson, with Calvert climbed Cairngorm from Loch Morlich, thence by Cairn Lochan to the Lurcher's Crag and the Lairig. Mitchell, Hendry, and Roberts went to Stob Choire Claurigh on the 19th, to Bynack More from Ryvoan on the 20th, when Hendry climbed the northernmost Barn. Hendry and Roberts took in A'Chòinneach also, and the same party went to Glen Banchor on the 21st to climb Càrn Dearg, and on their last day climbed Geal-Chàrn and A'Mharconaich, from Dalwhinnie.

On the 20th, Misses Jackson, Hoggarth, Wisely, Duncan, and Pittendrigh walked up Glen Einich to the site of the lower bothy and continued to Braeriach by the south side of the Beanaidh Bheag and the ridge between Coire an Lochan and Coire Ruadh. Here they met three members who were staying in Aviemore, Messrs McIntosh, Esslemont, and Mutch, with whom they joined forces. The parties reached the summit in mist and snow and there parted company, the ladies returning to the saddle between Braeriach and Sròn na Lairig. Col. E. B. Reid's party did the same round in the opposite direction.

Regarding the activities of the others the Editor has little information. Rudge was as far afield as the Shelter Stone, and Ramsden and Whitehouse, I feel sure, did not come all the way from Manchester to sit in the hotel. If members would send a complete but concise account of their activities immediately after the Meet the Editor's worries would be halved!

SUMMER EXCURSIONS, 1946.

The Cairnwell is an excellent centre for the peak baggers; one can collect a number of Munros here with a minimum of exertion! Of rock-climbing there is practically none, and this year little snow remained save in an occasional sheltered gully. Welsh and Duff were suspiciously uncommunicative about their intentions, but they left with McLay and Reith ostensibly to explore the Baddoch. Welsh returned with a four-pronged salmon spear wrapped up in a macintosh. I make no conjecture, offer no explanation; I state the simple fact. Hendry departed strangely along the high road in the direction of Glenshee. After about a mile he was seen to rummage in his pockets, apparently without finding what he was looking for, and then to wheel left up Creag Leacach. I am told that he went over the tops to Kander at top speed and then back to the Cairnwell, where he climbed some of the tops west of the road. Odd. Roberts and Alexander climbed the wide gully in Corrie Kandar and so on to Glas Maol, which was visited by most of the others. Misses Adams, Lawrence, and Beaton did Glas Maol and Creag Leacach, and then the Cairnwell and Càrn Aosda, while Mathieson and McGregor collected everything within reach on the east side of the road. Smith, Dyer, and Mrs Crawford went on to An Socach, and Taylor and Ewen went out to Glas Tulaichean and came down the Baddoch.

An excursion to Ben Rinnes was arranged for the May Holiday, but this did not prove a very popular outing. Only five attended, but they enjoyed a good day on the hill. Mrs Caldwell, of Aberlour, entertained the party to coffee on their arrival there. There was, on the other hand, a full bus load for the Clova outing. Miss Daniel did the Ben Tirran, Green Hill, Boustie Ley, Ben Reid round, but the others continued to Braedownie, whence most reached Mayar and Dreish by one route or another. Two parties went to Glen Doll and one to Juanjorge.

Seventeen members and guests spent a Saturday afternoon, May 25, on Mount Battock. The route was from the footbridge beyond the Bucket Mill at Woodend by the track along Glaspitt to the watershed east of Baudnacanner. Battock is still a long way off from there and the dip into the Aven valley is exasperating. It was cold, windy, and gloomy on top and visibility was poor. The return was made by the same route. Five hours' walking.

For the excursion to Lui Beg on June 2 we had the firm's second-

E. C. Thomson

CRAIG MASKELDIE, LOCH LEE

best bus, which indignity was inflicted upon us by the state of the Derry road. We were late in arriving at Derry, but there was time enough for Ben Macdhui and even for the Càrn a' Mhaim, Macdhui, Càrn Crom round, as one party demonstrated. Roberts and Alexander went to Beinn a' Bhùird by Clais Fhearnaig and two parties to Derry Cairngorm, one by the corrie of Lochan Uaine. The rocks here provide some simple scrambling. Hendry found his way to the Shelter Stone *via* Beinn Bhreac, Beinn a' Chaorruinn, and Beinn Mheadhoin. Bad weather threatened from the north-west and a few hail showers blew over, but colourful views were obtained in other directions.

Kerloch, a notable eminence of the Lower Gramps, was visited on Saturday, June 15. The party numbered six. It becomes plain that it is hardly worth while including these Saturday afternoon stroll-with-the-dog excursions on the circular. Kerloch we might save for our declining years and since, even under the present administration, I see no prospect of our declining equally or at the same time, Kerloch might well be left out of the calculations of the Meets Secretary!

The bus was full on the occasion of the excursion to Glen Isla. If this were not the first Club outing to Glen Isla, it was certainly the first for many years. No doubt most of those present had already seen the Caenlochan from the Glas Maol ridge, but the best view of it is from the valley bed. The Glen was reached *via* Kirriemuir, on a morning that carried a hint of rain. But the mist soon cleared off the tops and the day improved rapidly. A large party crossed the Monega Pass and walked back to Glenshee. The others went up the Caenlochan, where the last of the larches were being cut, some to Tom Buidhe and the Callater hills, and others to Caderg and Glas Maol. The bus went round to Glenshee and picked up the parties at various points on the Cairnwell road.

The Midsummer Excursion, on June 22/23, was from Coylum Bridge to Linn of Dee. Rarely is the Midnight attended by midsummer weather, but this one was; the Lairig party passed an hour and a half at the Pools of Dee. Some thirty attended and four main routes were selected: *via* Glen Einich and Braeriach (Baxter, Calvert, Crawford, Mathieson, and McGregor); *via* the Lairig (Smith, Hutcheon and guest, and several others); *via* the Shelter Stone (E. B. Reid and guest, Pat Sellar, and McLellan), while Train and party went over the Lurcher and Macdhui. The proceedings terminated with breakfast at Braemar, the first post-war visit to Invercauld and the first under the new management.

The excursion to Loch Lee on September 29 was unique in that all expenses of transport and refreshment were borne by one of our oldest members, Mr R. M. Williamson, who joined the Club in 1892. Mr Williamson was a climber of wide and varied experience, with several contributions to the Club *Journal*, and although he has not climbed for many years, or taken an active part in the Club activities, Mr Williamson has always shown a very keen interest in our doings, and,

wishing to give some expression to it in some practical way, desired, as a father of the Club, to be allowed to bear the expenses of the outing. The twenty who attended this excursion are greatly appreciative of this gesture, and the President conveyed their thanks, and that of the Club, to him for his generosity.

W. A. E.

INDOOR MEETINGS.

Three Indoor Meetings were held in 1945; on January 19, February 16, and March 23. At the first we were to have seen some M.O.I. films, but a snowstorm held up films and operator somewhere about Keith. Symmers thereupon suggested that each member get up and talk for five minutes, and he was invited to begin. I remember him insisting that the leader should be permitted to lead and elaborating on the duties of the tail-enders. A stern disciplinarian, apparently; at, or about, 3,000 feet he becomes much milder! In the face of these authoritarian pronouncements nobody ventured to say a word, and it fell to the President to keep the party going until refreshments arrived.

For the February meeting the President had obtained from Major Biggs, a friend whose acquaintance he had made at Sligachan, the loan of a collection of colour slides of Skye. The slides, which were of great beauty, illustrated the glories of Skye throughout the year. Our grateful thanks are due to Major Biggs for so willingly lending this valuable collection.

On March 23 Train gave a talk on painting and sketching in the mountains, or rather on his personal approach to the subject. His energy and enthusiasm were reflected in the number and variety of the pictures he brought down, and the large meeting greatly appreciated his efforts to make the evening enjoyable.

The Indoor Meetings, 1946, were held on January 28, February 22, and March 22. H. D. Welsh sends the following notes on these events:—

For the first, Miss E. J. Malcolm gave a talk illustrated by lantern slides, entitled, "In the Shadow of the Cairngorms." Well-remembered scenes were presented in attractive form and her racy descriptions were much enjoyed. At the February meeting members were called upon to describe some of their experiences, and a Brains Trust proved of great interest and enjoyment. It was hoped that lantern slides belonging to our late Honorary President, Dr Collie, would be shown at the March meeting. However, the Alpine Club, in whose possession the slides now are, were unable to lend them. Instead, Misses Hoggarth and Jackson staged a number of charades dealing with place-names familiar to us as frequenters of the Cairngorms. Humorous readings and recitations on climbing subjects were given by Mrs Noble, and Miss Evelyn Rodger sang several songs.

THE BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL.

THE B.M.C. was formed in 1944 with the object of co-ordinating the activities of the various climbing clubs throughout Britain, so that action on a national scale could be taken in affairs of common interest, such as matters affecting the appearance and usage of mountain country (*e.g.*, power schemes, deforestation, location of industry). The need for such an organisation became apparent during the war, when Clubs, acting individually, could give only limited assistance to the Service departments. Advice and other assistance has also been sought by industry, shipping lines, and educational authorities, and this work is best co-ordinated through a central authority.

At the outset the organisation was centred on London, and Scottish Clubs, finding London too distant from Inversnecky—thinking, in other words, that Scottish affairs should be handled in Scotland—were slow to affiliate to the new body. Since then, however, the B.M.C. has delegated responsibility to local committees, in Scotland, Wales, and the Lake District. At a Special General Meeting of the Club, held in February 1946, it was decided, by the unanimous vote of the meeting, to join the B.M.C., and Sir Frederick Whyte and Major Charles Reid were invited to represent the Club on the London Committee of the B.M.C. Both were reappointed at the Annual General Meeting of the Club in November 1946.

THE ASSOCIATION OF CLIMBING CLUBS IN SCOTLAND.

IN January 1946 the Scottish Mountaineering Club convened a meeting of representatives of Scottish Clubs, with the object of establishing an informal committee to discuss matters of common interest. Further meetings took place at Glasgow (March), Dundee (June), and at Aberdeen (November). Messrs Hugh D. Welsh and E. W. Smith represented the Club at all meetings. Business included discussions on Climbing Huts in Scotland, National Parks, the work of the First-Aid Committee, etc. One favourable result of these meetings is that freedom of movement between various Club huts has been obtained. Co-operation between the Clubs has been easy and pleasant. Latterly the A.C.C.S. and the Scottish Committee of the B.M.C. have become practically identical bodies.

FIRST-AID COMMITTEE OF THE BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUBS.

THIS body was formed prior to the war and is not part of the B.M.C., although the two work in the closest co-operation. The Club became affiliated to the F.A.C. by a decision of the Special General Meeting of February 1946. Shortly afterwards the Club launched an appeal to members for donations to an Emergency Fund, to which £91 was

contributed by August. In due course a sum of £30 was sent to the F.A.C. to be earmarked for the establishment of a First-Aid Post in the Lochnagar area. By June 1946 this post was established at Spittal of Glen Muick, with the kind permission of Colonel Eric Mackenzie, of Glen Muick. Other posts have been established in the area by the F.A.C. in conjunction with local Clubs. The list reads:

Spittal of Glen Muick	–	Mr J. Robertson.
Braemar – –	–	Police Station. Phone, 222.
Lui Beg Cottage –	–	Mr Scott.
Coylum Bridge –	–	Mr Grant, Merchant. Phone, Aviemore 220.

SEARCH AND RESCUE ORGANISATION.

UNDER this scheme, volunteer members of local Clubs could be called in to assist should search or rescue become necessary in their area. A number of members have agreed to hold themselves available and others to lend cars. Convener of key men is R. L. Mitchell, 19 Seafield Drive East, Aberdeen (Phone, 7487), to whom volunteers should send their names.

NOTES.

THE Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club has leased a cottage, "Black Rock," in Glencoe, near Kingshouse, as a Club Hut. There is accommodation for ten, two dormitories, kitchen, and wash-shed. Terms for the whole cottage for kindred Clubs, at present, 3s. 6d. per person per day. All arrangements made through the Hut Custodian, Miss C. Barclay, Catriona, Milngavie, Glasgow.

The S.M.C. Hut at Lagangarbh, Glencoe, is now in full operation. The J.M.C.S. has acquired a cottage at Steall, Glen Nevis, for which the accommodation charge is 2s. per night.

Members wishing to stay at any Hut must book through the Club Secretary, Mr William Garden, who will make the necessary arrangements with the Hut Custodian.

The Scottish Rights-of-Way Society is promoting a Bill, which it is endeavouring to have introduced into Parliament at the earliest possible opportunity, to amend the law in Scotland relating to rights-of-way. Briefly, competency of actions of declarator relating to rights-of-way would be raised in the Sheriff Court; the period of use (or disuse) necessary to establish (or extinguish) a right-of-way would be reduced from forty to twenty years. County Councils would establish a register, erect notice-boards at termini, etc. A memorandum relating to the Bill may be seen in the Club Library.

The Forestry Commission has announced plans for establishing

Glenmore as a Forest Park. Glenmore Lodge would be required for Forestry personnel, but three acres of land near-by would be set aside as a camping site.

A large avalanche fell from the Clova slopes of the Dog Hillock, near the footbridge across the South Esk, a mile above Moulzie, on February 25 or 26, 1947, taking with it large stones, turf, and heather, and killing thirty-seven deer. The avalanche travelled at least 1,000 feet, swept across the Esk for over 50 yards, pushing some of the dead deer in front of it. The breadth of the avalanche at the Esk was some 150 yards. Mr Allan Cameron, of Moulzie, who saw the avalanche on February 27, is of the opinion that the deer were caught while they were sheltering in a hollow about half-way up the slope. Regarding the probable cause, he says: "It was a wild time of drift and the snow combed over the ridge of the hill until it became too heavy and broke away." The carrion crows were on full rations for weeks!

A correspondent on *The Times* reports the result of a survey of the eagle population of the East Highlands. In the Cairngorms area, he says, the number has remained stable, but in the Clova-Lochnagar area there has been a sharp decline over the last decade. In 1946 he saw no eagles at all where, in 1938 and 1939, he had seen them daily. The major cause of the decrease, he thinks, is the destruction of adult and young eagles by gamekeepers, who do not always realise that the eagle is strictly protected by law at all seasons. He concludes that the eagle will be extinct in the East Highlands in about thirty years' time at the present rate of decrease. (At least one eaglet was raised in the Clova-Lochnagar area in 1946; another single eaglet was seen in the same eyrie in May 1947.)

The Association of Bird Watchers and Wardens, at the invitation of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, has initiated a scheme for the better protection of the eagle and other birds of prey—osprey, kite, hobby, honey-buzzard, marsh and hen harrier, white-tailed eagle, etc. Rewards of from £3 to £10 are offered to gamekeepers and others for the rearing to maturity of any of these. The Scottish Society for the Protection of Wild Birds has also launched an appeal for the fuller protection of the golden eagle. The Society suggests that disturbance of birds or eyries during the breeding season should be reported to the local police.

The question of mountaineering in the Glencoe district has apparently been occupying the attention of Argyll County Council. Some members of the Council think that a ban should be placed on climbing in certain of the danger areas. The Council will have to improve on Army methods of warning people off. I am reminded of the Club excursion to Kerloch in June 1946, where the party reached a notice-board: "Danger. Unexploded Bombs and Grenades." The party had just walked through the danger area!

The winter of 1946-47 will be remembered by skiers as one of the best for many years. It was remarkable on Deeside more for the duration

than for the depth of snow. As in 1946, the thaw arrived about mid-March, after some forty-five days of storm. The Kincardine hills, seen from the Mearns, appeared to be carrying much more snow than usual and, even at Easter, large snowfields remained although elsewhere there was little snow below 2,500 feet. At Crianlarich the snowline was about 2,500 feet; Dalwhinnie did not impress as a ski-ing centre, but the Cairngorm corries surpassed all expectations. The snow began below Clach Bharraig, about 1½ miles from Glenmore Lodge. Above 3,000 feet "the black specks had disappeared; the white was everywhere. All was well." All, that is, except the overhead conditions, which were generally abominable.

Temperatures recorded at Braemar during April (between 4th and 8th) were 10 below zero (ground frost). The official record is minus 17° at Braemar on February 14, 1895, although Barrie's diary recorded 26° F. (58° of frost) at Corrour on December 30, 1927.

B.M.C. NOTES.

THE British Mountaineering Council is now issuing a Bulletin at approximately quarterly intervals. Members of the Club can obtain this Bulletin for 5s. a year (4s. for the remaining issues of 1947). It covers news of the Council's activities, items of general mountaineering interest, information about equipment and allied subjects. Order from the Assistant Editor, R. S. S. Wood, 107 Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7. Cheques should be made payable to the British Mountaineering Council.

The Council has decided to form a central fund to assist Clubs in the provision of further huts and bivouacs in the British Isles, particularly in Scotland, open to all members of constituent Clubs. Consideration is now being given to the association of this fund with the proposal for a War Memorial to all climbers killed in the war.

The Council is now empowered to organise lectures and film shows in any district, if a number of local Clubs request it to do so, but not otherwise. A group of the smaller London Clubs recently made such a request and it was possible to arrange the showing of two excellent sound films, one of caving and the other of climbing on the Aiguilles du Diable.

The Council has recently issued certificates of competency to four men practising as Guides in England and Wales. Further applications for certificates are under consideration.

The specification, design, and supply of mountaineering equipment is kept continuously under review. The Secretary of the Rope and Equipment Sub-Committee, A. R. H. Worssam, 85D Marchmont Street, London, W.C.1, will deal with inquiries on these subjects.

Copies of the Pelican book, "Climbing in Britain," which is a practical guide to hill-walking, rock-climbing, and winter mountaineering in this country, can be obtained, price 1s. 3d., post free, from the Assistant Secretary, E. C. Pyatt, 96 Priory Gardens, London, N.6.

John A. Gavin

LANDSEER'S HUT: INTERIOR

HOW PERMANENT?

YES. How permanent are our hills, our roads, our houses? The thought struck me as I stood looking through the small window of a bothy in Upper Deeside during the first days of May this year. Rain and sleet showers scurried down the glen and battered the window pane before me. The view was grand. Outside the elements raged and stormed. The trees bent before the blast. The hills frowned in gloom one moment, the next lit up and smiled, and in brief moments it was a sunny smile, showing their snow caps and white-streaked mantles. I stood and watched in comfort behind that pane of glass, a big log fire at my back. Yes, these hills were permanent. They would be here when I came back, probably in a different mood, but they would greet me all the same.

But this bothy, would one say it was permanent? Would the pane of glass be in this window? Would the box-bed, the deer's antlers, would the bothy itself be here when I came along next time; or, like many of the houses in our glens, be nought but crumbling walls in a few short years? In the Quoich, in Slugain, in the Gairn, in the Deskry, I have found good shelter in wild weather, when a tent was useless, and then, after a lapse of a few years, on a second visit, found ruins. And roads? Not permanent, I thought. There was a road between Delnadamph and Inchrory. I cycled along it once. On a second visit the road had disappeared. It had gone back to heather. In the Corrieyairack only Wade's bridges and a few dykes mark the road—Wade's work is lasting. Something permanent here.

It surprises me that there is still a roof on Corrour Bothy in Glen Dee. Forty years ago it had its box-bed, armchair, and rough comfort, and a polite bearded keeper at the door. I remember he would not let us climb Devil's Point that day because the deer feeding in Glen Geusachan had not to be disturbed. The bothy still stands, and it has a roof too—just. In Glen Feshie there was Landseer's Hut. From a collection of sketches made during holiday walks and climbs I came on these of Landseer's Hut, date 1929. It may be of interest to climbers to have a record of its condition then. The famous painter used the hut around 1850. In 1929 the place was still intact, though approaching a ruin. Part of the deer fresco over the fireplace was still there, as the sketches show. How it looks to-day I cannot say. Little remains of it, I expect. The hut was situated on the east side of the river above Glen Feshie Lodge.

Yes, only the hills are permanent! They will be here when I come back, but this bothy window might be out, and the log fire too, and I may not view this wild scene in such comfort. I said to myself, "Drink your fill of this, young man. It's good, and the memory of it, in future days, will do you good."

J. A. GAVIN.

REGARDING INSIGNIA.

THE device on the Club button is a representation of Lochnagar; the Library stamp is an ice-axe, entwined with climbing rope; the decoration on the *Journal* cover brings the total of Club emblems to three, where, it has been suggested, one token would suffice. The Committee is considering a proposal that the cover design be adopted as the single badge, book-plate, and voucher, but would welcome other suggestions, with designs, if necessary. No prize is offered! The stock of Club buttons is now exhausted.

NEW CLIMBS.

LOCHNAGAR.

Gargoyle Direct.—This route is on the west buttress between Gargoyle Chimney and the west gully, starting a little to the right of the lowest rocks of the buttress and ending at the Gargoyle. The route started from the snow slopes in a shallow cave at the foot of a conspicuous fissure in the great slabs towards the right of the buttress, and then by a low wall on the left on to and up a smooth slab to a prominent flake on the right. A traverse to the right along a crack in the flake and up grass leads to a face with a square, trenched recess, from which a penthouse roof is climbed to the easy rocks below the terrace.

On the middle section the route follows a groove to the right of a small subsidiary gully on the right of Gargoyle Chimney to a grassy terrace. A sloping rock terrace is then traversed to the small gully, which is entered and climbed to a cave. The chockstone is turned, with difficulty, on the right wall. Above this a cleft in the right wall of the gully (marked by a sentry-box and a chockstone) leads to a neck between two gullies. The route then goes up a slab and to the right, across a narrow gully to a chimney with an overhanging top which is climbed on the right wall. This leads to a window behind a pinnacle, from the top of which a platform is gained. Four great rock steps then lead to the amphitheatre below the Gargoyle.

The route on the upper buttress follows the ledges and fissures of the woolsack rock formation to the right and up by a ledge to a sentry-box. It continues to the right up a crack and round a corner on to ledges over the west gully. A crack with a chockstone is then climbed to a slab below the Gargoyle. The window above the Gargoyle is attained by a rock rib on the right of the crack and a traverse leftwards.

The climb was made after a fresh fall of snow and was rated "hard-severe." (D. H. Haworth (J.M.C.S.) and G. J. Ritchie, May 19, 1946.)

The following variations on established routes have been reported. Falls of rock have resulted in various changes in the climbs previously

recorded, some details of which are given below. The greatest change is in Raeburn's Gully, where the old crux has been swept away entirely, altering the whole character of the gully.

Shadow Gully.—Hendry and Walker repeated this climb in November 1940 on snow and Auld and Hendry climbed it again in May 1944. The climb is very steep and treacherous, with much loose rock and vegetation at a steep angle and without belays. After the first two pitches it is necessary to make a wide detour to the left to the foot of a very difficult vertical wall. When this difficulty is passed there is easy ground to the Central Buttress Pinnacles. (The climbers who made the first ascent had nothing good to say about it.)

Shadow Buttress "A": Variation.—Walker and Hendry climbed the "obvious alternative" suggested in the original account (*C.C.J.*, Vol. XIII, p. 153) in June 1944. A grass chimney leading up to large, smooth slabs with a narrow crack of 40 feet provides an exposed and difficult start.

In July 1941 J. H. B. Bell and Miss N. Forsyth climbed to the Spiral Terrace by a route immediately on the edge above Shadow Chimney (*S.M.C.J.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 29).

Gargoyle Chimney.—The chockstone blocking the long chimney was climbed direct, after much gardening. This is harder than the original movement to the right (W. T. Hendry). The Tewnion brothers, finding the boulders of the 3rd pitch iced up, climbed the pitch *via* the chimney on the right, abandoned on the first ascent on account of loose rock (*C.C.J.*, Vol. XIII, p. 224).

Parallel Gullies "A."—On his second visit to this climb Hendry found it necessary to cut out the steep and exposed section below the Hexagon Block (*C.C.J.*, Vol. XII, p. 193 *et seq.*). A route was found up the right-hand branch of the gully instead and thence up a steep wall, thus regaining the original route on the buttress at the niche below the rectangular block. This is less difficult than the original route, but is to be preferred if the soundness of the rock of the buttress is in doubt. The final rib, about 200 feet high, is very steep, and appeared sound enough on the first ascent (1930).

Raeburn's Gully.—A great rock fall from the Tough-Brown Ridge has demolished the double cave pitch in Raeburn's. This I regard as a catastrophe of the first magnitude, fit to be classed with the Fall of Constantinople, the Union of 1707, Hammond losing the toss at Sydney, and things of that kind! The magic was perhaps as much in the name as in the climbing, which was nowhere very difficult (although the thread belay at the crux had become blocked up latterly), but the interest was sustained throughout and the problems varied. The first boulder pitch remains and above it the gully becomes impossible. Here Hendry and Ross climbed the left wall for some 20 feet and so reached the bed beyond the impasse. This upstart, this mushroom, they tell me, is difficult; but it has no history! The rest is moderate.

CAIRNGORMS.

Carn a' Mhaim Slabs.—These are on the east slopes overlooking Glen Lui. Walker and Hendry climbed these from bottom right corner to top left in July 1940. Auld, Lumsden, and Hendry made a direct route up the centre and over an awkward overhang in April 1943.

Devil's Point Slab Route.—Hobson, Walker, and Hendry climbed straight up the steep smooth slabs behind Corrour Bothy in March 1940. An overhang has to be negotiated and 200 feet from the top a wide shallow gully comes in from the right. Steps were cut in ice to the top. Difficult in boots.

The south-east and south-west gullies are both long, wet, shallow, and slabby with much loose rock. The first is almost difficult, with some exposure; the other is moderate, if that.

The Chockstone Gully of Sgòr an Lochan Uaine now harbours a series of piled block pitches. The escape below the final impasse is on the right wall (25 feet), which is vertical, and the holds are small.

CREAG AN DUBH LOCH.

South-east Gully.—W. A. Russell, M. Smith, and W. Stephen climbed this gully under snow conditions on January 27, 1947. The party cut steps to the chockstone pitch, which was iced over, and there worked their way up fairly soft snow banked against the right wall. Near the level of the 3rd pitch the angle steepened and handholds had to be cut for about 15 feet. A knife-edge of snow running up against the left wall was used to surmount the cornice. The time taken was three and a half hours.

The through route on the penultimate pitch has undergone considerable alteration and now presents insuperable difficulties in summer. A route might be found on the left wall, by-passing the pitch.

W. T. Hendry and George Lumsden climbed the buttress (or ridge) on the south side of the north-west gully on May 5, 1946, after a fall of snow. This is the ridge described in greater detail below, but Hendry and Lumsden started much closer to the gully, so that the two routes are quite distinct below the grassy terrace. After a promising start the angle became easy, but the party enjoyed a splendid scramble on sound rock. At times the climb was on a definite ridge, but escapes were too often possible. Haworth and Ritchie appear to have deliberately closed their eyes to the easy alternatives.

Edinburgh University Climb.—This route is on the north-west buttress, near the left end of the rocks immediately to the right of the false gully which cleaves the buttress about the middle. It goes obliquely up to the right to the grassy terrace and then follows the crest of the ridge overlooking the north-west gully. It was climbed by D. H. Haworth and G. J. Ritchie on May 18, 1946.

A prominent face in the lowest rocks, recessed at the foot, is cleft by a narrow crack, by which the ledge above is reached. Thirty feet up a shallow gully a crack leads out to the right, where the corner is turned from the edge of a flake and the slabs there surmounted with a left traverse at the top to reach a mantel. Above this a recess with a flake is left by a chimney, to come out on the crest of the slabs, which are left, however, only after an awkward traverse right, under a hanging slab. Up the easy slopes towards the right a short, steep face is followed by a grassy slope, whence an overhanging corner is turned to reach an arête leading to the grassy terrace. A traverse is now made to the arête overlooking north-west gully.

Ledges on the wall of the gully assist progress up the arête to a point where a narrow crack on the edge gives trouble before it fades out, and an exposed and delicate move must be made to a hanging groove to the left. The flanking strips of grass spoil the next section of steep, razor-edged arête. Above this, the chosen route crossed easy ground and traversed left across a slab to an exposed, recessed corner with an overhang which is cleft by a crack housing two chockstones. A momentary lodgment between these enables one to reach over and pull up on the overhang. The rest is easy walking.

BOOKS AND JOURNALS.

LIMITATION of space makes it necessary to curtail the notes on books and journals. The following have been added to the Library:—

"Tararua Story." Published in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of the Tararua Tramping Club, 1919-44. An illustrated record of climbing in North Island, New Zealand (1946).

Climbers' Club Journal, 1945-46. This number contains two Scottish articles: "Skye in August," by H. J. F. Cairns, and "Cape Wrath to Fort William," by A. J. Young, an account of a walking and climbing holiday in the Northern Highlands. Some valuable information on the properties of nylon is given in "Specification and System of Tests for Climbing Rope (Report to B.M.C.)," by R. P. Mears.

Cambridge Mountaineering, 1946, has also two Scottish articles: "Skye in Sunshine," by G. T. H. Crawford, and "Scottish Holiday," by G. H. Wiltshire, a record of climbs in Glencoe, Ben Nevis, and Skye.

The *Open Air in Scotland* is a new magazine, issued quarterly, devoted to open-air sports in Scotland, tramping, camping, climbing, cycling, canoe-ing, ski-ing, fishing, and cruising. It is published by Messrs Wm. McLellan of Glasgow, to whom subscriptions may be sent. The price of a single copy is 1s. 6d.; four copies cost 6s. 6d., post free. Contributors have included G. W. Young, F. S. Smythe, J. H. B. Bell, Alastair Borthwick, B. H. Humble, John R. Allan, etc. It is readable, up to date, informative. Current Number 5, May 1947.

" Rock Climbing and Mountaineering," by Carl Brunning, is a new and revised edition, covering much the same ground as " Climbing in Britain," by J. E. Q. Barford (Pelican Books, 1s.). Both aim at presenting a practical guide to climbing in Britain. Of the two, the first is the more pleasant to handle and is nicely printed and illustrated, but it costs five times as much. Mr Brunning distinguishes, and rightly distinguishes, between expert rock-climbing and mountaineering, but when he says that there is no expert rock-climbing in the Cairngorms he is out of date. I would agree that the Cairngorms form a good mountaineering area, and that being so, would say that the beginner deserves to hear much more about snow conditions, cornices, etc., than Mr Brunning or Mr Barford, for that matter, tell him. The latter, indeed, suggests that Scottish avalanches have not been really dangerous, whereas, in fact, they have resulted in odd cases in loss of life, *e.g.*, the Gaick affair. The deer killed in the recent Clova avalanche also point to the opposite conclusion. Both books, however, should prove exceedingly helpful to beginners and of interest and value even to experts.

" Mountain Holidays," by Janet Adam Smith, is an attractive account of climbing holidays in the Highlands and Alps, written to recall, as the author says in her foreword, the enjoyment of days on the mountains and the pleasures of inns and villages, glens and pastures. Lively sketches of people and vivid description make this pleasant reading. (Dent, 15s.)

The *Alpine Journal*, Vol. LV, Nos. 270-273. No. 270 contains three papers on " Mountain Rescue in War and Peace "; by Dr Raymond Greene on " General Principles and Materials Available "; by F./Lieut. J. C. Lloyd on " R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Service "; and by A. S. Pigott on the " F.A.C. of the Mountaineering Clubs." This is continued in No. 271, with illustrations of various types of stretcher, followed by an article on the Greene carrier. No. 270 has an article on the " First Ascent of the North Face of Mount Kenya," by P. H. Hicks, and, in No. 273, Mr Hick's companion on the north face climb, Mr Arthur H. Firmin, describes an " Ascent of the South Face of Kenya." References to the Cairngorms in the *Alpine Journal* must be few; one occurs in Geoffrey E. Howard's " A Mountaineering Family and Other Memories." In the same number (271), " Mountains under Deep Snow," by T. C. Paynter, contains notes on snowshoes, the build of ski, and properties of ski-ing boots, etc. This article is supplemented in No. 272 by a short note by Gerald Seligman. In No. 273 Lord Malcolm Douglas Hamilton has an article on " A.T.C. Training in the Cairngorms " and J. E. Q. Barford one on " The Use of the Rope in Rock Climbing." This number also carries the " In Memoriam " of W. P. Haskett Smith, the pioneer of climbing in England.

" On Scottish Hills," by B. H. Humble (Chapman & Hall, 1946). This is one of the better of the recent crop of mountain books. It

seems to get the atmosphere of the hills both in the pictures and in the text, and the reason for this is not difficult to find. The author, who is also the photographer, was primarily interested in the hills and not in writing a book. This is seen from the fact that the photographs cover hills all over Scotland, in summer and winter, by day and night. Such pictures as that of the sunlit ridge of Na Gruagaichean in snow, and the snow slope of Buachaille Etive Bheag, are alone a justification of the book. Club members who are seldom on the more southerly of the Scottish tops will find much of interest in the pictures of the hills around Arrochar, particularly those of the Cobbler.

" On Scottish Hills " was presented by Mr William Garden, and " Mountain Photography " (C. D. Milner; The Focal Press, 1945), by Sir Frederick Whyte. " Mountains in Flower," by Volkmar Vareschi and Ernst Krause (Lindsay Drummond, 1939), has been added to the Library.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, No. 137, 1946, and No. 138, 1947. The price of this *Journal* has gone up from 4s. to 7s. 6d., a steepish rise in the cost of climbing; but both *Journals* are packed with informative material and splendidly illustrated. The Editor completes his Survey of Scottish Climbing Clubs commenced in No. 136. W. M. Mackenzie offers some sound advice on Bivouacs and Bad Weather, and B. H. Humble surveys Scottish Mountain Accidents between 1925 and 1945. The major contribution to New Climbs is by the late B. P. Kellett (A Record of Ben Nevis Climbs), continued in No. 138, while R. Frere has some notes on new climbs in the Cairngorms —Savage Slit, Cairn Lochan; Cripple's Cleft, Sgoran Dubh; Clach Bun Rudhtair, Ben Avon.

In No. 138, W. M. Mackenzie writes on the Winter Climbs in Glencoe, drawing attention to the great increase in standard of difficulty that hard winter conditions may bring even to routes normally easy. W. H. Murray contributes notes on new climbs in the same area, as do Messrs Curtis and Townend in Arran. Dr G. K. Fraser discusses the future of Highland Forestry, and the survey of accidents is carried to 1947.

An In Memoriam of James A. Parker, late Honorary President of the Cairngorm Club, appears in No. 138.

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