



ON THE RIDGE OF CLACH GLAS—LOOKING SOUTH.

THE SCOTTISH  
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB  
JOURNAL.

EDITED BY  
WILLIAM DOUGLAS.

VOL. IV.



EDINBURGH:  
THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.  
1897.

1000

Geography  
Grant  
1-19-28  
16080

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Rise and Progress of Mountaineering in Scotland—VI. <i>By Prof. G. G. Ramsay</i> . . . . .	1
Clach Glas, Skye. <i>By Fred. W. Jackson</i> . . . . .	16
Ascent of Suilven by the Grey Castle. <i>By Prof. G. G. Ramsay</i> . . . . .	23
Lochnagar by the Cliffs. <i>By William Tough</i> . . . . .	35
In the Land of the Mackays. <i>By Cameron Swan</i> . . . . .	43
Climbing in Glencoe. <i>By William Brown</i> . . . . .	48
On Boulders. <i>By T. Fraser S. Campbell</i> . . . . .	52
Formation of the Club. <i>By Prof. G. G. Ramsay</i> . . . . .	73
The Corries Round Achallader. <i>By Herbert C. Boyd</i> . . . . .	92
Four Days on Buchaille Etive Mor. <i>By J. H. Bell</i> . . . . .	100
Old and New Routes on Ben Lui. <i>By James Maclay</i> . . . . .	106
Scottish Mountains. <i>By Sir Archibald Geikie</i> . . . . .	113
Corrie Arder. <i>By William Tough</i> . . . . .	141
Buchaille Etive Mor. "The Crowberry Ridge." <i>By W. W. Naismith</i> . . . . .	149
Ben A'an. <i>By H. C. Boyd</i> . . . . .	155
Sgurr Dubh, Skye. <i>By W. Douglas</i> . . . . .	159
Mountaineering Equipment . . . . .	165
Ben Hope in 1776 . . . . .	167
The Coolins in 1896. <i>By W. Brown</i> . . . . .	193
In Ptarmigan Land. <i>By Lionel W. Hinxman</i> . . . . .	214
Lochnagar and Ben Nevis. <i>By W. Inglis Clark</i> . . . . .	218
Mountain Memories. <i>By J. G. Stott</i> . . . . .	224
Climber's Guide to the Gaelic Tongue. <i>By L. W. H.</i> . . . . .	238
A Chuilionn. <i>By Norman Collie</i> . . . . .	259
Climbing considered in its Physiological Aspects. <i>By A. E. Maylard</i> . . . . .	267
A Blizzard on Ben Lui. <i>By W. W. Naismith</i> . . . . .	276
Mountaineering with Cycles. <i>By W. Douglas</i> . . . . .	279
The "Upper Couloir" of Stob Ghabhar. <i>By A. E. Maylard</i> . . . . .	307
Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour. <i>By W. Brown</i> . . . . .	312
Y Tryfaen, Wales. <i>By Fred. W. Jackson</i> . . . . .	316
Sgor na Ciche—A Climb against Time. <i>By H. C. Boyd</i> . . . . .	322

	PAGE
Ben Lomond by the Cliffs. <i>By W. Inglis Clark</i> . . . . .	331
Arthur's Seat and the Salisbury Crags. <i>By Harold Raeburn</i> . . . . .	335
<i>With Map. Pg. 336.</i>	

## ILLUSTRATIONS :—

A Peep through the Clouds . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 44
"A Perfect Matterhorn" . . . . .	26
Beinn Achallader, North Corrie . . . . .	94
Ben Laoghal . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 44
Ben Lui, North-East face . . . . .	109
Ben Lomond, Cliffs of . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 332
Boulders, Clach Mhor . . . . .	54
"    Clach an Fhionn . . . . .	55
"    Clach a' Chait . . . . .	56
Buchaille Etive Mor, North-East Face . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 100
Do. do. do. . . . .	" 149
Clach Glas, from foot of Drumhain . . . . .	16
"    Ridge of, looking South . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 18 (Front)
"    Bealach between Ruadh Stac and Garbh Bheinn . . . . .	19
"    Marsco . . . . .	22
"    from the North . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 196
Corrie Arder . . . . .	143
"    The Cliffs of . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 141
Corrie Labain, Skye . . . . .	" 114
Corrie na Creiche . . . . .	" 198
Glamaig, Skye . . . . .	" 124
Ladhar Bheinn from the North . . . . .	" 270 261.
"    from Barrisdale Bay . . . . .	" 282
"    Stob a Choire Odhair from . . . . .	" 282
Lochnagar . . . . .	37
Loch Toll an Lochain . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 116
Loch Scavaig and Sgurr Dubh . . . . .	160
Loch Coruisk . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 193
On Goatfell, Arran . . . . .	" 118
Sgurr Dearg Pinnacle, Skye . . . . .	" 200
Sgurr Alasdair from Sgurr Dearg . . . . .	" 202
Sgurr nan Gillean from Drumhain . . . . .	204
Sgurr a Choire a Lochain, Skye . . . . .	206
Skye from off Loch Brittle . . . . .	159
Slioch, Loch Maree . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 122
Snow Cornices and Crevasses . . . . .	180-181
Stob Ghabhar, Plate I. . . . .	<i>To face</i> 307
"    Plate II. . . . .	" 310
Suilven from the South . . . . .	32
Tryfaen, North Gully . . . . .	<i>To face</i> 318
"    from the North-East . . . . .	316

MOUNTAINEERING NOTES :—

	PAGE		PAGE
A.C. in Scotland . . . . .	296	Buchaille Etive Mor by	
Alps in 1895 . . . . .	60	the North-East Face . . . . .	62
"  1896 . . . . .	242	Cairngorms . . . . .	343
Aonach Eagach . . . . .	64	Cat Nick in Winter . . . . .	302
Arthur's Seat as a		Cioch na h-Oighe . . . . .	173
Scrambling Centre . . . . .	65	Cir Mhor Face . . . . .	63
Askival and Allival,		Cobbler . . . . .	65, 248
Rum . . . . .	301	Creag MacRanaich . . . . .	247
Bass Rock . . . . .	342	Gars-Bheinn, Skye . . . . .	177
Ben Alder, A Flying		Ladhar Bheinn . . . . .	299, 300
Visit to . . . . .	344	Luinne Bheinn . . . . .	300
Ben Chonzie . . . . .	179	Norway . . . . .	243
Ben Lui . . . . .	177	Notes from the Far North	249
Ben Nevis and Glencoe	178	Peebles to St Mary's Loch	178
"  in November	244	Stob a Choire . . . . .	247
"  Tower Ridge		Stuc a Chroin . . . . .	296
Pinnacle . . . . .	172	The Saddle . . . . .	176
Ben Nuis Precipice . . . . .	63	Tyndrum Hills . . . . .	298
Ben Venue . . . . .	298	Wastdale Head . . . . .	174
Bhasteir Tooth . . . . .	65	West Monar . . . . .	175

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES :—

" Berghesteigung in den Coolins " . . . . .	251
Depth of Snow at Ben Nevis, 1895-96 . . . . .	251
"  "  "  1896-97 . . . . .	346
Qualification of Candidates . . . . .	69
" Three Score and Ten " . . . . .	252

REVIEWS AND NOTICES :—

Abraham's Photographs of Skye . . . . .	190
Abraham's Welsh Photographs . . . . .	352
Bartholomew's Scottish Atlas . . . . .	138
Ben Nevis, Panorama from Top of . . . . .	72
Bonney, Professor T. G. Ice-Work . . . . .	135
Cadell, H. M. Geology of Sutherland . . . . .	135
Eckenstein, Oscar. The Karakoram and Kashmir . . . . .	189
Fitzgerald, E. A. Climbs in the New Zealand Alps . . . . .	186
Freshfield, D. W. Exploration of the Caucasus . . . . .	182
Harper, A. B. Alps of New Zealand . . . . .	350
Haskett-Smith, W. P. Wales and Ireland . . . . .	70
Inglis, H. R. G. Contour Road Book . . . . .	190
March, Dr H. Two Seasons in Switzerland . . . . .	71
Muir, John. Mountains of California . . . . .	137
Panorama from Wallace Monument . . . . .	191
Perry, Alex. W. Welsh Mountaineering . . . . .	257

	PAGE
Sinigaglia, Leone. The Dolomites . . . . .	255
Weston, Rev. Walter. Japanese Alps . . . . .	254
Wherry, E. Alpine Notes . . . . .	188
Whymper, E. Chamonix . . . . .	191
„ Zermatt . . . . .	353
 CORRESPONDENCE :—	
Annual Subscription . . . . .	68
“Auld Reekie” to “Practice Scrambles” . . . . .	65
Club Hut at Coruisk . . . . .	306
“Practice Scrambles” to “Auld Reekie” . . . . .	133
Snow Cornices and Crevasses . . . . .	180, 253
Suilven . . . . .	133
The Strength of the Climbing Rope . . . . .	347
 PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB :—	
Seventh Annual General Meeting and Dinner, December 1895 . . . . .	57
Special General Meeting, December 1895 . . . . .	57
New Year's Meet at Tyndrum, 1896 . . . . .	126
Easter Meet at Fort-William . . . . .	129
Eighth Annual General Meeting and Dinner, December 1896 . . . . .	239
Special General Meeting, December 1896 . . . . .	239
New Year's Meet at Loch Awe, 1897 . . . . .	284
Easter Meet in a Yacht, 1897 . . . . .	288
„ at Tyndrum, 1897 . . . . .	294

THE SCOTTISH  
Mountaineering Club Journal.

---

---

Vol. IV.

JANUARY 1896.

No. 19.

---

---

RISE AND PROGRESS OF MOUNTAINEERING  
IN SCOTLAND.—VI.

BY PROFESSOR G. G. RAMSAY.

I HAVE been advertised to give in this number an account of Scottish mountaineering as practised by the members of the S.M.C., together with the story of the formation of our Club. I shall do so with the greatest pleasure ; and, in common with all my brother members, I owe a great debt of gratitude to the writers of the series of articles in this Journal, which have thrown so much light upon the manner in which mountains, and the climbing of them, have been regarded by generations previous to our own. I am sure these articles have helped many of us to feel more than we did before what need there was for our Club—how little understood, and how very little spread, is that sense of the glory and delight of the hills which sends us careering over every part of them, by every route, and in every kind of weather—and what great need there is that the gospel of the mountains should be still further preached. They have shown us how comparatively recent is a love of the hills, in our sense ; how recently, even after admiration for mountain scenery in the abstract was firmly established, man began to explore them in their inner structure, and make friends of them. But full and interesting as these papers have been, the territory has scarcely yet been exhausted ; and as each man may claim the right to compose his own preface, I would crave leave, in this article, to say a few further words upon previous ways of looking at mountains, and of writing about mountains—especially the



mountains of Scotland—that I may be the better able to point the contrast between the old way and the new, and to indicate what are those characteristic features of our Club which will in time, we all hope, win for it the gratitude of the everlasting hills.

To us it seems very strange, and scarcely credible, that such glorious opportunities for enjoyment, for health and happiness, and for the cultivation of some of our finest sensibilities, should have been unused so long. And especially is this strange in this Britain of ours, where love of country and of country life have maintained a stronger hold than in any country of Europe, and where our whole social system has hitherto accorded a superiority and prestige to country pursuits over city pursuits scarcely known elsewhere. In spite of this, it is but the day before yesterday that our people began to delight in the beauty of wild scenery, or to look on mountains as anything but barriers or deformities; it is but yesterday that they began to explore them at close quarters; to substitute accurate observation and knowledge of detail for vague and blended impressions of general effect; to exchange admiration for the distant splendour of a fair face, gazed at in passive ecstasy across some great theatre, for the rapturous personal companionship of love or friendship.

The Lake poets did much to open the eyes and hearts of their fellow-countrymen to the beauties of natural scenery; but even with them it was rather the soft, more domestic phases of hill scenery—the lake, the cascade, the wood, the “lawns,” and upper pastures—that stirred their muse and provoked their musings. The stern majesty of the hill-tops, with their attendant cloud and sky effects, was brought in to close the scene as a splendidly shifting background to the panorama, or as a highly mercurial material for supplying sentiment and imagery to the sensitive soul, rather than as a thing of joy in itself, to be loved and revelled in and wandered over with delight, like Naxos of old, by its band of Bacchanals. Walter Scott had the true spirit of the hills coursing through his blood; and though he too has painted them to us from below rather than from above, though what he loves most to dwell upon is the

copse and the den, the heather and the moss, the peat-dyed river and the birken knowes, and the other picturesque beauties of the lower uplands, it is true nevertheless that the run of that noble deer from Glenartney to Loch Katrine has done more to create a sense of the joy of scouring freely over the hill-tops than all the guide-books that were ever written since the creation of the world.

Guide-books, indeed! The poor hills of Scotland have received but sorry treatment at their hands. It is a distressing task to run through all the recognised guide-books for Scotland, down to the most recent and most pretentious, in which "Mountain, Moor, and Loch" are enlisted as advertising agents to induce the traveller—or rather the ticket-taking tourist—to book by the West Highland line. In simplicity, no doubt, and in common-sense, our modern guide-books have improved upon their predecessors. They give information with a Bradshaw-like precision unknown to our grandfathers. They neither abuse the mountains as "deformed masses," nor go into long-winded poetic raptures over them. They neither have the smug insensibility to mountain beauty which marked Johnson and his Boswell, nor indulge in the language of vague and tawdry rhodomontade in which the panegyrics of later travellers are couched. But they have vices all their own; and by a course of progressive improvement in the art of catering for the British tourist, by the continual addition of new matter, and a continual remastication of the old, they have succeeded at last in developing, on what should be the most fascinating of all subjects, a kind of style beside which that of Murray's Railway Guide is endurable, that of an ordinary auction catalogue a positive delight. But before expatiating on the dulnesses, the deficiencies, and superfluities of the modern guide-book writer, let us make a few more references to two or three of the earlier authors from whom it is his boast to have delivered us.

In his journey to the Western Islands, Dr Johnson reached Glenmollison (*sic*). "We were now," he says, "in the bosom of the Highlands, with full leisure to contemplate the appearance and properties of mountainous regions. . . . Mountainous countries are not passed but with difficulty,

not merely from the labour of climbing, for to climb is not always necessary, but because that which is not mountain is commonly bog, through which the way must be picked with caution." Here the mountains are simply a nuisance in the traveller's path: a nuisance which might be happily circumvented, were it not for the perverse ingenuity with which Nature insists on making the road uncomfortable, even where mountains fail to do so, by other annoying methods. So far, we have only a specimen of the "Salvation Army" mountaineer; but in the following general description of the Highland hills, we have the æsthetical side of the learned doctor's soul laid bare:—

"They exhibit very little variety, being almost wholly covered with dark heath, and even that seems to be checked in its growth. What is not heath is nakedness, a little diversified by now and then a stream rushing down the steep. An eye accustomed to flowery pastures and waving harvests is astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility. *The appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness*, dismissed by Nature from her care, and disinherited of her favours, left in its original elemental state, or quickened only with one sullen power of useless vegetation."

The idea of Suilven and other mountains of the west being "incapable of form" is exquisite; and the holding up of "flowery pastures and waving harvests" as the only kind of scenery to be admired, presents an exact parallel to the sentiment of my friend, the West Highland sea captain, quoted in my first address as President, who could understand people admiring the beauty of Greenock or Gourock, with their trim villas and straight paths, but could see nothing to admire on Loch Fyne—where there was nothing but "rocks and woods, and the like o' that."

In the marvellous "Pedestrian Tour through Part of the Highlands of Scotland in 1801," by John Bristed, of the Inner Temple, and his friend, we find some genuine appreciation of scenery interlarded between frantic tirades against the filthiness or rudeness of the inhabitants, and interminable prosy disquisitions on political and social subjects. What moved him most to rapture was the Carse

of Gowrie, "a valley teeming with fertility, the hills for the most part clothed in wood to their very summits;" "the whole constituting a garden of Eden, a terrestrial paradise, on which Nature had showered her choicest blessings." The Pass of Killiecrankie, however, proved rather too much for him; for though his first sensation at the foot of the pass was to "suffer his soul to be wrapped in ecstasy by a survey of the most admirable and stupendous scenery with which his eyes had ever been blessed," yet when he looks at the bare hills above, "in bleak and sullen majesty," he thinks better of it, and remarks that "in ancient days a poet might surely have been forgiven if he had placed the infernal regions directly in this spot, which might then have appeared to be the *bones and skeletons* of the world." This worthy gentleman, and his friend Cowan, dressed as sailors, walked up the *Tunnel (sic)* along Loch Tay to Killin, and so by *Glenfarloch (sic)* down Loch Lomond to *Tarbut (sic)*, asking questions of everybody, engaging everybody in conversation; yet never once, along the whole route, though speaking sometimes in a tone of misty grandeur about the mountains, does the idea of going up a hill suggest itself to him: never once does he ask or record the name of a hill— not even that of Ben Lomond, the most be-touristed of Scottish mountains.

In the "Observations on the Highlands, &c.," by William Gilpin, Prebendary of Salisbury (2 vols., London, 1789), we have a work mainly intended as a guide to what is called "Picturesque Beauty." It does not therefore deal with mountains, except as an element in artistic scenery; but the style in which he treats them in this respect not only brings home to us the difference between our idea of natural beauty, and our ways of enjoying scenery, as compared with those of our grandfathers, but also illustrates and confirms in the most striking way some of the fundamental principles of our Club. This reverend and artistic gentleman brought down to Scotland with him much learning, and, amongst other things, a complete set of preconceived, *a priori* principles about the Romantic, the Picturesque, and so forth. Thus armed, he passed a judgment on all the scenery he saw, condemning this, or com-

mending that, according as it conformed to, or improperly and unjustifiably departed from, the canons of beauty which constituted his æsthetic code. He travels about with the air of an H.M. Inspector of Mountains, or as a University Examiner for Degrees, whose business it is to conduct an Examination in the Department of Hill Scenery; to take careful note of the merits or shortcomings of a mountain, and after careful consideration of both, to pluck it or to pass it, according as it comes up, or fails to come up, to the required standard; and to issue certificates of merit, general or partial, to lakes, valleys, or views, according as they may happen to deserve them. Appended to the decisive verdicts are sometimes to be found instructive notes, kindly added for the information of candidates, indicating the causes of failure, or pointing out how the construction of a mountain or of a scene should have been gone about to produce a more satisfactory result.

In the general Syllabus of Examination it is announced that equal attention will be paid by the Examiner to "the scenes of Nature, and to the rules of Art"; and mountain-candidates are given some hints as to the principles on which marks will be assigned.

"A mountain is of use sometimes to close a distance by an elegant, varied line; and sometimes to come in as a second ground hanging over a lake, or forming a screen to the nearer objects. To each purpose the Scotch mountains are well adapted." The last sentence is obviously added to make Scottish candidates feel that if they fail, it is not for want of natural ability.

Mountains in general are to be judged by a severe standard. Their want of modesty in asserting themselves challenges severe criticism. "It is not often that these elevated bodies (*i.e.*, mountains) coincide with the rules of beauty . . . less often than any other mode of landscape. In a level country the awkwardness of a line is hid, but the mountain rearing its opaqueness against the sky shows every fault . . . with great exactness."

Among the first hills to be commended, though with moderation, are those on the Tweed, near Yair and Ferney. "These mountains had few faults to show. *They were*

*both well-formed and well-connected.*" (One would think he was speaking of some pretty girl of good family; or of a well-shaped pedigree ox at a cattle show.) Approaching Edinburgh, he is a little annoyed at the deception practised on him by the Pentlands, which "in themselves are not magnificent," but impose upon the stranger by taking advantage of "a medium of light mist." Arthur Seat is "a rock of peculiar appearance which hangs over Edinburgh: romantic, but not picturesque"; and the term "picturesque," it seems, has been bestowed on Edinburgh generally in ignorance of the facts. As you approach nearer to Edinburgh, "Arthur Seat, which is still the principal object, appears still as odd, misshapen, and uncouth, as when we first saw it. It gave us the idea of a cap of maintenance in heraldry, and . . . can no more be picturesque than a face with a bulbous nose can be beautiful." It is some comfort to discover later on that "the town and castle, on the left, *make some amends, and are happily introduced.*"

Travelling towards Stirling, he commends one fine landscape on the road, though gently chiding the distant mountains for "not being in the shade"; but unhappily the views from Stirling Castle, with its magnificent outlook on to the Perthshire Highlands, he condemns as "being in general over a barren and uninteresting country, but amends is made by the superior excellence (possibly up to an Honour standard?) of one of them over the Forth, which has always been esteemed the most celebrated view in Scotland. It is not indeed picturesque, but it is exceedingly grand and amusing (*sic*). You overlook a flat valley of vast extent stretching almost as far as Edinburgh, &c."

The Grampian Hills, which run through the middle of Scotland, "rarely swell into mountains of considerable note, but—on the whole—may be esteemed among the grand features of the country. The view of Perth, as seen from the top of Moncrieff Hill, would be extremely picturesque were it not for one awkwardness. The Tay runs in a direct line between parallel banks. The painter, in copying nature, need pay little attention to such untowardnesses, but may venture to correct them. *The translation must needs be bad if the idiom of the language into which*

*you translate be not observed.*" In other words, the faults of Nature must be treated like the mistakes in a schoolboy's exercise: they must be scored through, and the school-master's corrections, in accordance with the strictest rules of grammar, put in their place.

The valley around Dunkeld is "a favoured spot," but would have been a still more beautiful scene if Art had done as much as Nature. Much indeed it has done, but nothing well. It is interesting, however, to see noticed "the many thousands of young pines now struggling for existence among the crannies of rocks, and many thousands more which have gotten hold of the soil, and are flourishing greatly"; and to have seen in our own day the prophecy amply fulfilled that "it will be a century before these pines, thriving as they are, will have consequence to break the lines of the mountains and give a proper degree of sylvan richness to the scene."

The position of Taymouth Castle, and the laying out of the grounds, is scathingly denounced: "Nothing could show a more thorough inattention to every idea of beauty and taste than the whole contrivance of the place. A situation so unhappily chosen, in the neighbourhood of such a scene as Loch Tay, it required some ingenuity to fix." Yet Loch Tay evokes no enthusiasm: its banks are too straight, its hills are dull and tame (no mention of Ben Lawers or any other single hill by name), and though Killin itself has pleasing environs, yet on leaving Killin "we launched into a wild country which Nature had barely produced, but had done nothing to adorn. All was wide, waste and rude; totally naked, and yet in its simplicity often sublime; the ground heaving like the ocean into ample swells, and subsiding into valleys equally magnificent. The ideas were grand rather than pleasing." We soon come to Loch Dochart, which leads to the discovery that "the main use of islands, from a picturesque point of view, is to break the tedious lines of such promontories and mountains as fall into the water." Inveraray Castle, its situation, grounds, and scenery, evoke the author's enthusiastic approbation: in Loch Lomond he admires greatly the islands and sky effects upon the hills, naming "Ben Lomond the second

hill in Scotland," which raises "its respectable head upon the right, though its form is rather marred by the regularity of its line." Ben Lomond and "Doniquaick," in the grounds at Inveraray, are the only hills named in the whole of this Highland tour, as recorded in two large volumes. His delight throughout is in water, in river banks, and wood; and after describing Hamilton Palace and its grounds, he tells us, "I do not remember ever meeting with a scene of the kind which pleased me more than the wild river views about Chatelheraut," on the banks of the Avon.

Now there are two or three noteworthy things about this book. In the matter of scenery, this worthy and cultivated gentleman is clearly ahead of his time. He is struggling in a purblind and priggish kind of way to throw behind him the spirit of conventionality and artificiality with which the eighteenth century regarded Nature. He is rising rapidly out of the region of well-bred, mealy-mouthed shepherds and shepherdesses. He has a genuine interest in country objects and in natural landscape; and though he thinks that Nature has made many mistakes, that much of her ruder work should be kept out of sight, and only her more refined parts submitted to close inspection; that a mountain, in particular, should be skilfully manipulated, like some faded beauty, and gazed at from a distance, through a transparency of luminous haze, with her weak points veiled behind a gauze of delicate mist, or touched up by the rouge of a setting sun: though he condemns Arthur's Seat as being like a bulbous excrescence on the nose, and reserves his highest raptures for those scenes in which Nature has surrendered herself to the art of some skilful tire-woman in the person of duke or marquis: nevertheless, in spite of all that, it marks a great advance that he should care to travel leisurely through Highlands as well as Lowlands, enduring much discomfort, expecting to find natural beauty, and prepared to consider in a fair judicial spirit the claims for recognition advanced by different kinds of scenery. The very tone of superiority and condescension which he adopts towards mountains comes partly from the consciousness that he is a pioneer as a nature-seeker, and must not push his idiosyncrasy too





science. But anything so preposterous as to walk right across country, or to go up any mountain, except the merest pimple of a hill for the sake of some "prospect," would never have occurred to him.

We now come to the first Guide-books, properly so-called—books written not for the information and entertainment of the arm-chair reader, but intended to help the tourist along the road, and furnish him with all the "necessary information respecting routes, conveyances, accommodations, amusements, curiosities, scenery, antiquities, and historical associations." These awful words, taken from the preface to "*Nelson's Handbook to Scotland* (Rev. John Wilson), 1860," prepare us at once for the melancholy descent, in a literary point of view, from the traveller who travels for travelling sake, is himself interested in all he sees, and gives the best he has for readers of the same kidney as himself, to the purveyor of practical information for the average Tourist: that strange compound of curiosity without intelligence, of money without manners, of modest attainments and immoderate self-satisfaction, that has taken such a craze for locomotion during the last half-century, and done so much to deform those fair parts of the earth which have been opened up—almost created—for its benefit. This new Tourist-power has pushed itself with unappreciative imitation into every scene which has been admired sufficiently by other people to make it "the thing" to go and see it; its first object, in its so-called travels, being to get itself carted as comfortably as may be along the proper routes from one good hotel to another—for, alas! the tribe has done to death the good old name of *inn*. "I suppose this is what they call Scotch mist," said a smug member of the genus to me on the coach-top as we drove into a bit of white, dry mist, on the top of the Cairnwell. "Yes," said I, "and it's English mist, and Irish mist, and Welsh mist too; it's generally called mist all the world over." A cock-grouse got up and crew. "Did you ever eat grouse?" asked the intelligent traveller, addressing another tourist, a middle-aged female who sat near. "I did once," she answered, "and thought it very nasty." "Yes," he rejoined pensively; "it must be purely an acquired taste."

Under these influences, "the detested bondage of guidehood," as John Hill Burton called it, has had to yield to the still more detestable slavery of the modern guide-book: a jumble of condensed extract of information, on every conceivable subject, distilled into numbered paragraphs, laid out in alphabetical order, and distributed with nice judgment over big print, little print, and middle print—to say nothing of asterisks, capitals, and italics—according to a scale of merit in which the Hotel always occupies the highest place, and what interests the mountaineer, the lowest. But as the proverb says, *Nemo repente*: the downfall to the lowest depths of utility was not made all at once.

The earliest Guide-book I have seen—"The Scottish Tourist, 1825"—is dedicated to Sir Walter Scott. It begins with the ominous warning that "tours in Scotland have of late become so fashionable that no apology seems necessary," &c.; and then there is a fine patriotic touch in the next paragraph: "But it is not its scenery alone that renders Scotland so highly interesting. *It was never conquered!*" Thus Fashion and Patriotism are to form "the Scottish tourist's" bicolor: the former instinct to be gratified by a complete enumeration of every gentleman's seat encountered on the road, with the name of its proprietor (initials, unhappily, often left blank): the latter by an immense and somewhat indiscriminating expenditure of epithets on the beauties of the country—our friends the mountains (in default of closer acquaintance) being described with the least knowledge, the largest adjectives, and often in the smallest print.

Of Loch-na-gar (described from hearsay): "No description can give any adequate notion of the 'steep frowning glories' of this scene—they must be seen to be appreciated aright." At the head of Glen-lin-beg (*sic*), "the huge mountains seem to approach so closely as to cause a twilight gloom even at mid-day." The tourist, with much difficulty, ascends Ben-Mac-Dhui, where he is "the highest subject in the United Kingdom, being by the most recent measurements ten to twenty feet higher than Ben Nevis. He may, on a clear day, perceive the ocean on three sides of him—

the Atlantic, the Moray Firth, and the German Ocean" (in the early guide-books, I notice, all views worth noticing include these three oceans); "but the chief objects of interest are the *ten thousand tops*—the almost boundless ocean of mountains in every direction, and the tremendous yawning gulf under the spectator. *In fact . . . the prospect will amply repay the toil of attaining the summit.*"

In a similar style, the north shoulder of Benvenue "stretches in vast undulating masses into the lake, thus unapproachable in that direction; in short, all that is stupendous and wild in mountain scenery here unite." On Loch Lomond "the sublime and beautiful are admirably combined, including lovely islands and numerous gentlemen's seats." The ascent of Ben Lomond is divided into three stages: at the top "a view more fraught with objects calculated to produce sublime sensations is nowhere to be met with." Of course it includes the German Ocean; the blue mountains of Cumberland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man; apparently also about two hundred of the Hebrides. Nor is science forgotten: "The botanist will here have a high treat in the sudden transition from the vulgar vegetables of the plain to the elegant natives of the Alpine regions; and the partisans of the igneous theory will have ample food for their system also."

The ascent of Ben Nevis also is made, or professed to be made, whence the tourist "casts his eye, with conscious pride, from one of the greatest points of elevation in the British dominions," over the inevitable German Ocean, and all the hills then known to the map from Ross-shire to Colonsay, "each of them surrounded by an assemblage of other mountains."

The future glories of Oban, that paradise of the modern tourist, are described with fine prophetic skill: "Its situation is extremely healthy, having good accommodation for bathing, excellent inns for the convenience of strangers, and markets amply supplied with provisions at moderate prices. *It is thus a delightful summer residence.*"

In 1834 was published a very superior book to this: "Guide to the Highlands and Islands," by the brothers George and Peter Anderson, already so well spoken of,

in the late number of this Journal, by Mr W. A. Smith. It is dedicated to "the noblemen and gentlemen of the Highland and Agricultural Society," and forms a sensible, delightful story-book, full of anecdote, history, and legend, to enliven the passage along the principal routes through the Highlands. As they are happily Scots, we hear less of the filth of the inns and horrors of the roads than from Southern travellers; being both somewhat scientific, we have a good deal of the botany and geology of the country; though not always according to the gospel of Sir Arch. Geikie. Their preface informs us that no guide-book of the kind had existed before. They are encouraged to write it (oh, that all writers of modern guide-books had a similar qualification!) by the fact that they already possessed "an extensive acquaintance with the mountainous districts of their native land"; and they appeal with pride to "the unqualified admiration of strangers from every part of Europe of the scenery of the Highlands."

The glories of the Highlands are described as follows:—  
 "They exhibit within very circumscribed limits varieties of scenery of the most opposite descriptions, enabling the admirer of nature to pass abruptly from dwelling on the loveliness of an extensive marine or champaign landscape into the deep solitude of an ancient forest, or the dark craggy fastnesses of an Alpine ravine; or from lingering amid the quiet grassy meadows of a pastoral strath or valley, watered by its softly flowing stream, to the open heathy mountain-side, whence 'alps o'er alps arise,' whose summits are often shrouded with mists and almost perennial snows, and their overhanging precipices furrowed by foaming cataracts."

Good and entertaining as these worthy brothers are, their feeling towards the hills is not the same as ours. At Dalwhinnie they speak of "the uniformly bleak and melancholy aspect of the moors. The mountains are dull and uninteresting in their forms; the plain between them is uniformly 'houseless, treeless, and lifeless,' wanting in everything but barrenness and deformity. There is not even an object so much worse than another as to attract a moment's attention." From the top of Ben Nevis "it may

safely be said that every point of the horizon is 120 miles from the spectator"; and the view, with its Atlantic and German Oceans, is described accordingly. The mountain has been thrown up in three stages, successive eruptions having occurred one within the other, as inside a gigantic telescope. In the Trossachs the pedestrian "is recommended to explore their untrodden mazes," but this only means he should explore the other side of the river. If he is fond of "lone and wild scenery," he is to take a trip across the hill, from Loch Ard to the Trossachs, five and a half miles long. Schiehallion and Ben Lawers, in travelling through their country, are barely so much as named.

But the sun is sloping; the muleteer, our Editor, is signing to me with a flick of his whip, and I must be off. Farewell, Mr Editor, till May. Then summon me with the first spring weather to the tops, to course with you over the last of the winter's snows. Then call me to the rescue of this Journal, like Juvenal of old, with my stoutest shooting boots upon my feet.\*

---

\* Juv. Sat., iii. 316-322.

## CLACH GLAS, SKYE.

BY FRED. W. JACKSON.

FULL as the Coolins are of fascinating rock climbs, there is hardly to be found a more choice piece of ridge than that known as Clach Glas, connecting Garbh Bheinn (pron. *Garrven*) on the north with Blath Bheinn (pron. *Blaven*) on the south. This group, lying to the S.E. of Glen Sligachan, is almost detached from the main chain of the Black Coolins, and joins to the Red Hills at the head of Am Fraoch Coire, where the place of fusion may be easily recognised.



GARBH BHEINN, CLACH GLAS, AND BLAVEN, FROM THE FOOT OF DRUMHAIN.

Looking from Sligachan on a clear day, just where the lines of Garbh Bheinn and Marsco intersect may be seen a dark grey mass, rising like a truncated cone dinged on the right-hand side. That is the summit of Clach Glas. Again, the visitor to Loch Coruisk, approaching the foot of Drumhain, having had in view for some time the rugged slopes of Blaven, comes suddenly in sight of the west face of Clach Glas as the "Red Stack" is left behind. Should

mist be creeping along the tops, as when first I saw it, a lasting impression will be created by the picture of a foreground of heather, Loch an Athain a little way off, with "Rough Corrie" beyond, and higher still—though scarcely separable—"Lonely Corrie," surrounded by walls of bare rock of a steepness unusual in places even in the Coolins. The upper rocks of Clach Glas are in fact almost perpendicular—at one part absolutely so. It is forbidding looking, but all the more on that account the climber plans conquest, and considers how the ridge will best "go." He may be a trifle disappointed to find that the most sensational bits are not difficult, and only require care.

The summit is claimed to have been first reached so recently as May 1888 (see *Alpine Journal*, vol. xiii., p. 445), by Mr Charles Pilkington's party. They attacked it by the west face, and went up the steep southern side of the main tower, but do not appear to have traversed the whole of the ridge. Taken in that way they thought it an "impostor," but the following of the ridge throughout by the absolute crest—about half-a-mile—will be found to give excellent sport. As it is hardly likely that any shepherd ever had occasion to climb the great tower, and as all who knew anything about it declared that it had never been climbed before, Mr Pilkington and his friends may safely be credited with the first ascent, and the honour of it.

The guides always begin by climbing Blaven by the side of the conspicuous cleft on the N.W. end, and then drop down for the traverse of Clach Glas northwards. This was the course adopted when crossing in 1893 with Mr Naismith and others (see *Journal*, Vol. II., p. 321). On 31st July this year, Dr T. K. Rose and I, with Donald M'Kenzie, took the ridge the reverse way, and I have no hesitation in saying that I am entirely in favour of beginning at the north end. The objections to the other course are, that there is first the six or seven miles of Glen Sligachan to be walked without gaining anything in height, followed by the excessively steep climb of nearly 3,000 feet up Blaven, the greater part of it over the most tiresome screes imaginable. All this is calculated to dull the keen



edge. Further, the ridge is far less imposing approached from the south, and not so interesting. The course I prefer is to walk two and a half miles along Glen Sligachan to the point where a wire sheep fence was in course of erection by the side of the Measarroch Burn, which runs between Beinn Dearg and Marsco. On the right bank there is a well-defined deer-stalker's track. About a mile and a half up, the stream divides. Cross over here, and walk up the heather-covered tongue between the branches of the stream until the water-shed is reached, and a view obtained in the direction of Loch Ainort. Still keep slightly upwards, until a deep channel is crossed. Beyond this a sheep track will be seen, running almost level for three-quarters of a mile along the flank of Marsco, and round the head of Allt Coire nam Bruadaran, the valley ending at Loch Ainort. It is important to strike this track, or time may be lost working along the steep grass slope. It leads to another watershed at a height of about 900 feet. Here Am Fraoch, or "Heather" Corrie—locally designated "The Corrie of the Shields"—running between Marsco and Ruadh Stac (the "Red Stack") down to Glen Sligachan, lies at our feet, to the right. A track will easily be seen curving round the head of this corrie, and in ten or fifteen minutes, still at about 900 feet level, yet another watershed (the third) is reached, with Loch an Athain immediately below, and beyond it a view along the valley to Camasunary and Loch Scavaig. Clach Glas and Blaven rise in all their grandeur about a mile to the S.E., across the desolate hollow known as "Lonely" Corrie. The accompanying illustration is drawn from a sketch taken on the bealach to show the rocks of Clach Glas, and has been checked and corrected from a photograph by Professor Weiss.

So far it has been easy going, and, because of the constant change of scene, much more interesting than Glen Sligachan. There is now a choice of routes. One is to make for the top of Garbh Bheinn, but this way lies over small moving screes, moving to wrath! Another is to descend into the corrie, so as to skirt under the rocks forming its north side, and then mount again over screes to the grass saddle between Garbh Bheinn and Clach Glas. The true sporting

way, however, is at once to turn east from the bealach and cross the rocks aforesaid. Now the fun begins. No course can be laid down. The climber can disport himself as he thinks best. It will take one and a half to two hours to reach the grass saddle, by narrow ledges, over walls, down and up a dozen little ravines, where there is never any difficulty however. There is no more drinking water after this until a long descent has been made, possibly some hours later.



CLACH GLAS FROM BEALACH BETWEEN RUADH STAC AND GARBH BHEINN.

On arriving at the saddle an entirely new and striking view eastward presents itself, whilst the summit wall of Clach Glas shows in the form of a massive tower, like the menagerie monster, "terrifying to the beholder." The illustration to represent the scene is drawn from a careful sketch taken at this point. Where the ridge is not pinnaled it consists of steeply sloping slabs—in many cases cut off smoothly on the edge—terraced at intervals by grassy ledges, the whole surmounted by the great central tower—just 200 feet from base to summit—whose walls are not many degrees removed from the perpendicular. With the exception of the few hundred feet of ridge rock, the eastern side appears for the most part to be merely grass slopes to the valley below.

Instead of taking to the rocks at once, Donald led off along a grass traverse. We objected, being resolved to follow the crest of the ridge. The answer was, "She will be on the ritch soon enough." We insisted, in spite of protests about the time required, and in the result "went the whole hog, every bristle," as Dr Rose expressed it. There was nothing specially noteworthy until the foot of the tower was reached. Here again our guide wanted to pick an easy way, but, yielding to pressure, consented to climb direct from the neck. Whilst he and Dr Rose were engaged here, I thought I saw a more sporting way, and presently found myself on the west face of the tower. Soon further progress was impracticable. To retire was ignominious. A glance downwards revealed a prospect of immediate dissolution and eternity, so the next best thing was to climb up by such hold as there was for some twenty-five or thirty feet, and rejoin my companions as they were finishing a tough little bit. I forget the exact number of hundreds of pounds sterling that was fixed as the price of temptation to go my way; whatever the sum, it was but a figurative form of saying that it looked bad. As I had no intention of losing either hold or head, there was no risk, and I found that my confidence was not betrayed when I whispered to the rock, "You stick to me, and I'll stick to you." It is, as we all know, the keen enjoyment of such moments that lifts a climb out of the ordinary, although I should be the last to say that Coolin climbing can ever be called monotonous. It is always a succession of surprises; if the difficulties are seldom great, the problems are none the less interesting, and the chances of sport endless. Besides, there is the ever-present possibility of a fall resulting in a body being, in the words of the Etrick Shepherd, "dashed on the stanes intil a blash o' bluid." This keeps the wits alive.

After the first fifty feet or so there is no difficulty, and the top of the tower is soon reached. The height is given in Dr Collie's tables (Vol. II., p. 171) as 2,590 feet. There is just room to perch like the eagles that had been pluming themselves shortly before our arrival. Leaving the summit, the way for six or eight yards is along a good crack

in a sloping slab, followed by a steep and rather rotten and narrow arête of some sixty feet in height, requiring caution. This is Mr Pilkington's "impostor." Looking back it will be seen that the way down has been only a few inches from the edge of a perpendicular face of rock, at least a hundred feet high. No wonder it impressed the first climbers as looking far worse than it turned out to be. The rest of the way to the last bealach simply requires careful scrambling, but is narrow. From there a descent may be made into Lonely Corrie, but it is usual to take Blaven into the day's work. First there is a steep fifteen-foot wall. The hold is ample, but the landing on the grass above will have to be effected by sprawling over the edge. Should one be descending instead of ascending this place, the last step will very likely be a combined tumble and jump, if the experience of three at least of our party in 1893 is any criterion. The rock is so steep as almost to compel one to fall off. The northern end of Blaven is a perfect maze of shattered pinnacles. It appears to be generally want of time that prevents scrambling amongst these, and the guides leave them severely alone. We therefore proceed over open grassy ground to where two stone shoots are distinctly seen a little way ahead. The second of these is the better and shorter one to take; both lead into an enclosed place, Mr Naismith's half-crown pinnacle forming the eastern side. Facing south we next climb a pretty sixty-foot chimney, leading to the final walk to the top of Blaven. The second top is quite close, but not worth visiting; and here, parenthetically it may be said, let no one be deluded into walking along the ridge of Blaven to descend at Camasunary—it is a fraud. The view from Blaven is very fine, and it would be well to make much of it as a moral tonic before descending to Loch an Athain. If one arrives there unshaken and in a serene frame of mind, and has not known rebellious thoughts on the way down, he must be of a more gracious disposition than the majority of his fellows. Those Blaven screes have this to be said for them, they dwarf the trudge homewards along Glen Sligachan into a mere detail.

For the drawing taken from the foot of Drumhain I have had the advantage of supplementing a sketch with

details from photographs by Mr John N. Kitching. The third small illustration is drawn from a fine photograph taken by Mr J. B. Pettigrew on the summit of Marsco. It shows



GARBH BHEINN, CLACH GLAS, AND BLAVEN, FROM SUMMIT OF MARSCO.

Am Fraoch Coire, the bealach connecting Garbh Bheinn with the Red Stack, and the rock walls of Lonely Corrie unusually well, Clach Glas assuming a very sharp-edged appearance.

## ASCENT OF SUILVEN BY THE GREY CASTLE.

BY PROFESSOR G. G. RAMSAY.

"A PERFECT Matterhorn!" was the cry; and then a long and loud "Whoo-hoop! whoo-hoop!" repeated again and again, broke from my son Malcolm and myself as the splendid form of Suilven, seen in profile from the east, burst upon us for the first time. It was a lovely evening, the 26th August 1895. I had never seen the mountain before; I did not know that Scotland contained a hill so fine in shape, so unique in its isolation. We had walked all day westwards from Lairg, along the road, with our packs upon our backs—a charming but uneventful walk. Over the long rolling heather slopes, in their finest Tyrian hues, to Rosehall; up the Oykell to Oykell Bridge and Oykell Bridge Inn, with its well-spread tea-table; then up the quiet-going ascent which gradually carries the Inchnadamph road across the watershed between East and West. So far, we had been coming up a sweet Highland valley, with its never-ending beauties and varieties of form, colour, and material, but without one outstanding feature—no jagged outline, no peak, to challenge the mountaineering instinct. We stroll leisurely up the hill, across a bit of flat moor, and unconsciously reach the watershed: and then, O ye gods of the mountains! what a glorious sight is before us! In one moment the scene has changed, and the full glory of western form and colour breaks upon us. The sun is setting in yellow splendour, paving with gold a strip of distant sea; in the foreground is spread a broad low waste of wild and rugged moor, studded with lochs and tarns innumerable, out of whose somewhat dreary flats three magnificent hills toss their heads into the air. Canisp, on the right, his long razor-like crest running straight away from us; on the left, the long sweep of Cùl Mòr, caught up at intervals into points from which it hangs in folds like massive drapery; while right in front, most superb of all, Suilven leaps out of the earth, erect and solitary, as if disdaining all intercourse with his kind. Foreshortened as we look at him from this point, his three peaks show only as two, of which the eastern, in reality

the lowest, seems the highest, divided by a deep gash from the main mass of the hill behind.

To see such a peak as that is to climb it: or at least to resolve to climb it. And indeed who could read Mr Hinxman's charming description of Suilven, and the account given of his ascent of it in the Journal for May 1890, without determining to conquer the mountain at the first possible opportunity? So being bound for Lochinver, with designs on Suilven, and discovering now by ocular demonstration that a bee-line from Aultnacallagach (where we were to sleep) to Lochinver would run right over the ridge of Suilven, we determined forthwith to make a pass of it to Lochinver next day, and to follow the ridge along its entire length, if possible, from east to west.

But was it possible? I had forgotten the details of Mr Hinxman's route—my knapsack is unfortunately too small to contain all the back numbers of the Journal—I only remembered that he had found part of the arête practicable, part not. We could get no information at Aultnacallagach. One informant, a minister of the district, told us it *might* be possible to climb the nearest (or eastern) peak; but that it was quite impossible to pass from that peak to the two others, as there was an impracticable chasm in the way. This impracticable chasm was that crossed by Mr Hinxman five years ago. Another told us that we could not get on to the mountain at all, as it was situated in a deer forest—that too we knew before. A third advised us to ask the leave of the stalker, who lived at the east end of the forest; but as he added that the stalker would certainly decline to give leave if asked, and as it turned out that there was no stalker living in that part of the forest at all, the suggestion was not a helpful one. Obviously we could do better than that for ourselves.

So with nothing better than the reduced Ordnance map and our own eyes to guide us, we set out from Aultnacallagach on the morning of the 27th August. The morning was fine: no clouds on Suilven as yet, nor on any of the tops about. We start in good time. One mile along the Inchnadamph road, skirting Loch Borrolan, brings us to Ledmore; another mile along the Ullapool road to the left, to Loch

Cam. On a lovely haugh of brilliant grass near the loch—on limestone, of course—a gay company of “tinklers” were packing up their camp. A happy thought struck me—we might want a rope. So we ransacked the stores of the camp, and for the sum of one shilling became possessors of a veteran rope-end some twenty feet long; but as it had a dubious look about it, we first tested its quality by organising a tug-of-war in the middle of the camp, to the great amusement of the tribe.

Two hours' tramp along the north side of Loch Cam (which drains into Loch Veyatie, the loch parallel to the south flank of Suilven), over slushy moor interspersed with rocky humps and tiny tarns, brought us right up to the eastern end of Suilven. It looked formidable, more formidable than the reality, as we looked up to it from our luncheon-place. The whole mountain has been so well described by Mr Hinxman—geologically, orographically, and mountaineeringly—that I need do little more than epitomise his description. The mountain consists of one long knife-like crest, running for about a mile and a half from E.S.E. to W.N.W.; for simplicity's sake I shall call it East and West. It is more or less precipitous the whole way round; but the two splendid features are the East and the West ends, which start up from the low ground in a series of precipitous bastions, not unlike (especially at the East end) the successive tiers of a wedding-cake; the ledges, however, between the bastions being so narrow as scarcely to afford standing-room. The West end rises in just two of these bastions, turning towards Lochinver the precipitous symmetrical cone which has earned for it from Southerners the name of “Sugar-loaf,” and which presents an appearance of absolute impregnability. The crest from east to west is boldly indented, so as to form three outstanding peaks divided by deep clefts from each other. Of these three peaks the eastern (called Meall Bheag) is the lowest (barely 2,000 feet); and it is cut off from the middle peak (Mheadhonach) by a deep gash, which shows splendidly as seen from north or south, and into which the rocks descend from Meall Bheag in a precipitous drop of from 200 to 300 feet. Mheadhonach is 2,300 feet high; and it again is separated by a



second gash, not so clean cut as the first, from the highest or western peak. This peak is called by Mr Hinxman Caisteal Liath, or the Grey Castle; but according to the usage of the keepers in the forest, that name is more properly reserved for, or at least equally applied to, the grand precipice which forms the western end of the mountain, and which in local belief has never yet been climbed.

The illustration below, taken from Mr Cadell's drawing in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, August 1895, will give a tame idea of what Suilven looks like from this side.



"A PERFECT MATTERHORN!"

The flanks of the mountain, to the north and south, are precipitous also, and rise in a similar bastion-like formation all the way round; but they present weak points at the two gashes above mentioned, which correspond, as Mr Hinxman tells us, to geological faults, and down from which the natural drainage of the mountain side has poured long steep slopes of débris. The usual way to the top is up one of these slopes to the gash called Bealach Mòr, which separates the middle from the western peak, and so westwards along the ridge. Our hope was to be able to climb straight up the eastern end, to follow the crest the whole way, over the middle and highest peaks, and then down the western face of the "Grey Castle." This was the route followed by Mr

Hinxman as far as the top of the western peak, but he had found the descent down the "Grey Castle" impracticable.

The climb up the eastern peak proved less formidable than it looked. The successive rings of rock-wall looked too steep to climb, the green ledges which separated them too narrow to afford standing-room. But the difficulties, once grappled with, disappeared. The green ledges were broader than they looked; the rock bastions were scored with *cheminées*, and gave good foothold. Close to the top we encountered an extraordinary cross fissure, some six or seven feet wide, cleaving the hill perpendicularly towards its base, like a crevasse; but just at the point where it intersects the *arête*, a narrow bridge of stone had been considerably left to cross by, and in a few minutes more—thirty-seven minutes from the base—we found ourselves on the top of Meall Bheag.

But, alas! no view. By this time thick mist had crept up, the wind had risen, and we found ourselves enveloped in a howling drift, not able to see ten yards before us. In vain we peered into the mist, and craned over the edge before us, hoping to see down to the neck below: no bottom could we see, nothing but mist driving along the face of the precipice.

I crept forward on my stomach, reached out my hand as far as it would go, and twice dropped a stone; it was just four seconds before we heard the click of the stone as it struck the cliff face below and then bounded on. Not promising! We edged on a bit to the right, towards the north, till I saw, some twelve feet below, a small vantage-ground big enough to stand upon. Securing the rope round us both, I was lowered cautiously to this point. Seeing another good foothold below, I fixed myself firmly enough to arrest the cat-like descent of Malcolm, who slithered down into my arms, using his gymnastic talents to good purpose. A second similar drop followed, and then a third, assisted by some handy ledges. We could now see through the mist a cluster of flinty little needles which mark the nape of the neck below, and after a few more drops (*not* of whisky) we landed safely on the neck itself. We must have followed Mr Hinxman's route down this wall-face: certainly no other

seemed practicable. If he descended it without a rope, I think he must have run some risk; it is just the kind of descent which a rope makes safe and easy. Looking back to it from below, it had all the appearance of good Alpine rock-work; very like the approaches to the Trift or Capuchin Jochs upon their "business" side.

From this point to the top of the middle, and thence on to the western peak, it is a charming bit of climbing. The ridge is narrow, dips steeply and jaggedly up and down, is interesting throughout, but not difficult. As we clambered along, the mist broke here and there into gaps, giving us partial but splendid pictures, now of Canisp and Quinag upon our right, now of Lochinver before us, now of Cùl Mòr and Stack Polly to the left. We were on the top by 5 P.M., with an almost clear view. We were now to try our fortune down the formidable rocks of the "Grey Castle" at their western extremity, which bit alone remained to complete the passage of the arête from east to west.

But we were doomed to fail that day. Some 300 feet of easy descent brought us to the top battlement of the "Castle"; below this we found the cliff fell in a hopelessly sheer wall, smooth and crackless, absolutely impracticable at that point. Edging away towards the left or northern side, we peeped over; again an impossible slope, plunging over a convex curve into something still more steep below and out of sight. Moving round a little farther, we came to something more promising, a kind of groove or channel between two upright walls, taken out of the hill as if by a huge gouge. The angle here was easier, and my son, leading the way, got down some hundred feet or two to a curious projecting nozzled rock, which I called in his honour "Malcolm's Nose." But here all progress was barred; the slope, so far as we could see it, resumed at this point its normal steepness, and then shot over an edge into the unseen below. To descend further seemed madness, but we were satisfied that if the thing could be done at all it was only at that S.W. angle of the "Castle" that it could be done.

So back we turned, very sorrowfully; but instead of retracing our steps to the top, and so along the ridge as before to the Bealach Mòr, we resolved, as a short cut, to

coast round the north face sideways, hoping to find some earlier practicable point for a descent. By good luck, we hit upon a narrow grassy ledge, which, with some chancy breaks in it, runs round the entire northern face of the mountain. But we gained nothing by our manœuvre; no single point could we find at which a descent was possible, and we had just to skirt the entire mountain, with some difficulty, till we came round, after all, to the very gully descending from Bealach Mòr which we had hoped to baffle. A rapid slither over loose screes, then half-an-hour's slushy tramp over moor, brought us to the Canisp forest deer-path, above Loch-na-Barrack, by 7 P.M., and by 8.25 we had covered the six miles to Lochinver Hotel.

Next morning, on coming down to a somewhat late breakfast, we heard that the keeper of the Canisp deer-forest, Andrew Kerr by name, had called at the hotel at an early hour inquiring anxiously about two half-witted tourists in kilts whom he had sighted on the top of Suilven the day before. He had a long story to tell. He had seen them first on the ridge, then on the top; and then, in their ignorance, they had gone on and tried to get down the "Grey Castle." He had shouted and waved to them to come back; each moment he thought they would be lost, for no man had ever gone down that way before. "I thought they would be killed every minute. They had very little brains! I would put my glass on them, and then take it away again, as I did not want to see them go down; and then I would put the glass on them again, thinking to see that they were down. To think of seeking to go down the 'Grey Castle'! And then they came all round the north end, running on and looking down—they chanced on the only way they could have got along at all. Och! they were in a bad place—a very bad place! And they had little brains—both of them. But the tall one, the lad with the grey kilt—och! he had no brains at all!"

All this was repeated to us verbatim by himself when we saw him soon after, with great kindness, but without any sparing of the epithets. He had no indignation against us as marauders in his forest; he asked no questions as to whether we had got leave to go there. Low as was his

estimate of our intellectual powers, he was sympathetic, even enthusiastic, as to the climbing part of the performance; only he adjured us with much earnestness not to think of trying the "Grey Castle" again. Dangerous advice! especially when coupled with the information that no man had been known to go up or down that way before.

That day we devoted to a vain attempt to get up Quinag, the fine range which locks in Loch Assynt to the north. Before we were half-way up, down came the mist, breaking into rain soon after, in accordance with the daily weather routine for August 1895.

Next day promised better, so we were off early, prepared for work, resolved either to go up Cùl Mòr, or to prospect the Grey Castle from the bottom, should the weather make the tops impossible. On the way, we looked in upon our good friend Mr Hely H. Almond, of Loretto, who has long been one of the tutelary spirits of Lochinver, and has established himself there for his holidays in ideal West Highland quarters, where, hatless and collarless, he leads a perfect life of nature—half laird, half crofter. With him we had a fine breezy talk, *more Lorettonico*, upon things in general, and a few things beside. We all know that Mr Almond, *qua* mountains, enrolled himself long ago as a member of the Salvation Army; nevertheless, he has a genuine enthusiasm for mountaineering, provided that—like a Turkish pasha and his dancing—he can get it done for him by other people. So he rubbed his hands with glee when we told him we were bent on assailing the virginity of the "Grey Castle," and provided us with a brand-new rope (a stout clothes-line doubled), which we found a very superior substitute for the cart-rope of the tinklers. Not that he believed much in our success; he was ready to give long odds in favour of the maiden preserving her purity untouched; and I rather fancy nursed a secret suspicion that if we made a serious assault upon her, we should probably meet with the same punishment for our temerity as that awarded to the hunter Orion for his flirtation with the spotless Diana—descent to a lower level.

Thus armed, and refreshed with draughts of lime-water, we drove four charming miles along the switchback Ulla-

pool road to Inverkirkaig, then up the sweet glen of the Kirkaig for some miles more, and out on to the open moor. By this time, of course, the mists were descending; Cùl Mòr was enshrouded; but Suilven's grand western buttress stood clear, straight before us, challenging assault. The sight was irresistible; so leaving Loch Fionn to our right, we turned off to the left for some distance, along a well-made deer-path (God bless the deer-forests, after all!), and then made straight for the foot of our hill. Planting ourselves for lunch right in front of it, we scanned carefully the whole precipitous face before us. It looked unassailable. Rising straight up from where we were to the foot of the precipice forming the extreme western bluff of the mountain, was a steep talus; above the talus, the rock seemed to run up in two distinct precipitous stages to the top, separated from each other by a narrow tier of grass. To reach this shelf was indispensable; and it seemed possible to reach it either by working straight up some steep *cheminées* in front, or by turning the flank of the confronting rock by means of some narrow ledges slanting upwards to the right. It was above this grassy halting-place that the rock face looked impossible. At two points only there seemed to be a suggestion of practicability. Just to the right (that is, the south) side of the west end, the rocks seemed to shelve upwards less steeply, though more smoothly, than elsewhere; tufts of grass or heather gave promise of foothold. Farther along to the south, there seemed to be another upward opening; but this proved on inspection to be just as practicable as a house wall. Our first job was to reach the grassy ledge. We tried first to go up the *cheminées* in front, and wasted nearly an hour in the attempt. After some nice climbing, in which we depended much on the rope, we came, close to the top, to a very long step without foothold, with a perpendicular drop below. This was too much for us. So we turned back to the talus, and getting up by the narrow ledges to the right without difficulty, found ourselves at the foot of the second or main stage of the precipice.

We now carefully examined the trench or cleft which we had sighted from below. It was excessively steep—too steep to climb without good foothold. To the left it abutted

on a perpendicular wall ; to the right, after some twenty to thirty feet of width, the slope became impracticable again. The first few yards seemed feasible ; so up we went, firmly roped, zigzagging out from, and back to, the wall on our left, as foot- or hand-hold suggested. The rock was good ; it went better than we expected. The slant was very steep and slippery with the rain, now pouring in torrents. We



SUILVEN FROM THE SOUTH. (From a sketch by Mrs Almond.)  
The dotted line shows the route.

moved carefully, one at a time, now one leading, now the other, the rope always taut ; neither moved till the other was firmly planted, ready either to haul up the other, or to oppose himself to a human avalanche in case of tumble. Bits of moss or heather gave good hold here and there to fingers well dug in ; but these were very treacherous : excellent if resting on a crack or rift of any kind, but often merely hanging on to the smooth rock face, and loosened by the rain. Once I was just about to put my whole weight on a fine cushion of moss angled against the rock to the left, when at the first test the whole gave way, and bounded into nothing. It was actually growing in an angle between two quite precipitous walls. We were now drenched to the skin ; the wind made merry with our kilts, blowing them anywhere but where they ought to be ; and we had often to clasp the dripping rock with bodies as bare as—but less hard than—

its own. We could scarce see for the rain: but we still held on, finding foot- or hand-hold of some sort. We were now more afraid to go back than to go on, though we had taken the precaution, as we went up, of marking the points at which we had taken the more difficult passages. Once only, when Malcolm was leading, and luckily firmly set, I slipped completely, and swung free over the rock for some seconds, like a sack of goods being lowered from a warehouse. I blessed that rope of H. H. Almond's not slightly!

After about just one hour's climbing we worked over a sort of angle; the slope eased a bit, and I saw, right over our heads, through the mist, a sharp projecting point of rock. "Hullo, Malcolm!" I shouted, "there's your nose, I do believe! Hurrah!" And indeed it was the identical nozzle to which we had got down from the top two days before. Even now we scarcely dared hope we could reach it; but in ten minutes more we were safely clinging on to the nozzle, cheering with all our might into the mist, and taking a rare good pull at our flask in honour of the S.M.C. and of the *intactæ Palladis arces* which we had now fairly won. The only alloy to my happiness was that at a bad bit near the top my stick, a sturdy favourite, had slipped out of my hand, and bounded out of sight towards the bottom with suggestive rapidity. (I once did the same thing with my ice-axe on the Egginerhorn, producing thereby a fine bit of "Russian scandal." It took my guides an hour to recover the axe, cutting through ice. Next day my wife heard it reported that "Professor Ramsay had lost his *eyesight* on the Egginerhorn for *two whole hours!*")

A few minutes brought us to the top of the mountain, the climb up the final bastion having just taken us one hour and ten minutes in all. No view, of course; so we hurried down eastward, along the ridge to the Bealach Mòr, whence we descended on the south side (instead of the usual way by the north side), in the vain hope of discovering my stick at the bottom of the rocks. After coasting the southern foot of Suilven to no purpose, we had the roughest and wettest of walks across the wildest of moors, with no deer-path to guide us, finishing up by fording the swollen Glen Canisp



water in the dark, about a mile above Lochinver, and sighting the hospitable lights of the hotel by 9 P.M.

Just before entering the village, we stumbled against two men in the dark. It was Andrew Kerr, with a friend. We told him of our climb. It put him into a state of the greatest excitement. Consternation, incredulity, delight, poured out of him by turns, merging finally in a mixed state of indignation and enthusiasm, which suggested how much the S.M.C. has still to do in the way of familiarising the Highland mind to the idea of climbing for its own sake. To Andrew Kerr, it was not merely that the climb was useless and foolhardy; there was to him something half uncanny in our venturing up places which had not been climbed before. Nature had set her bounds, which man was not to pass. I was reminded much of what our dear friend Veitch used to say of the feeling of awe and more than human mystery with which the folk looked up the dark glens and hills of the Border country; the same spirit that was in the remark made to a young lady in my own glen, after the frightful gale of 17th November 1893, "Ah, my lamb, there was a rude forester at wark last nicht!" So now Andrew Kerr: "I never thought any living man would go up the Grey Castle. No man ever went that way before. There is a story that one man went down that way with a gun: but I do not believe it. He would go down, certainly; but he would never walk away from the bottom. But take my advice, and give it up; you would not like to lose your life at the bottom of a rock. I could see it was not the first time you had been on a hill; but take my advice, and give it up. Any way, they will never believe here that you was up that way!"

With this comforting assurance, and many a warm shake of the hand, he said "Good-night." Next day he came to see us off, and renewed his adjurations to us to give up climbing, again and again; and as a memento of the day, he presented me with a beautiful long hazel stick of his own making, to replace the old friend lost over the side of the "Grey Castle."

## LOCHNAGAR BY THE CLIFFS.

BY WILLIAM TOUGH.

LOCHNAGAR has, for various reasons, long held a high place in popular favour among the mountains of Scotland. Some of these reasons there are, such as the ease of the ordinary routes of ascent and the example of Royalty, which, while doubtless appealing strongly to the bulk of visitors, do not at all influence the true mountain worshipper. But the principal reason is one which affects all classes; drawing upwards with varying power of fascination both the professed lover of high places and the tyro to whom the cult of the mountaineer is as one of the divine mysteries. For even among the lower orders—if I may use the expression without any reference to distinctions in the social scale—it will be acknowledged that the compelling attraction of Lochnagar is that magnificent crescent of cliffs which encircles the head of the great corrie and towers above the waters of the small dark loch, stern and sheer to the level of the summit plateau. One does not need to be a mountaineer to appreciate the grandeur of this range of precipices. Indeed, if the feeling of reverent awe is to be taken into account in analysing the emotions excited by such a scene, it is questionable whether the ordinary sensitive man or woman has not a distinct advantage over the trained mountaineer—especially if the latter be of the cliff-climbing variety on the hunt for a “first ascent.”

Strangely enough no serious attempt to test the accessibility of the Lochnagar cliffs seems to have been made previous to the time of our visit, if we except the gully climb attempted by Messrs Gibson and Douglas, and described by the latter in the second volume of our Journal.\* Their local reputation perhaps had something to do with this. “Why don’t you climb the cliffs of Lochnagar?” I was asked in Aberdeen the day before this very ascent. “They would try your mettle and give you something to talk about—if you succeeded.” The irony of the remark was obvious, and the smile that accom-

---

\* Vol. II., p. 246.

panied it that of the man who has made his point. But I kept my own counsel. My reputation for sanity had already suffered during a previous visit for suggesting the feasibility of such an undertaking, and I had no wish again to bring upon me the fate of the irreverent innovator.

It was a forenoon early in August when Brown and I dismounted at the gate of the small farmhouse of Inshnabart. We had cycled up from Ballater without meeting with any of those exciting incidents which only prove their value in the period of reminiscence and description. The day, our only one, was well enough suited to our purpose. The higher summits, it is true, were all invisible, and as we topped the ridge we saw the black brows of the great frowning cliffs swathed in bands of fleecy mist. But below all was clear, and the work we had taken in hand lay plain before us.

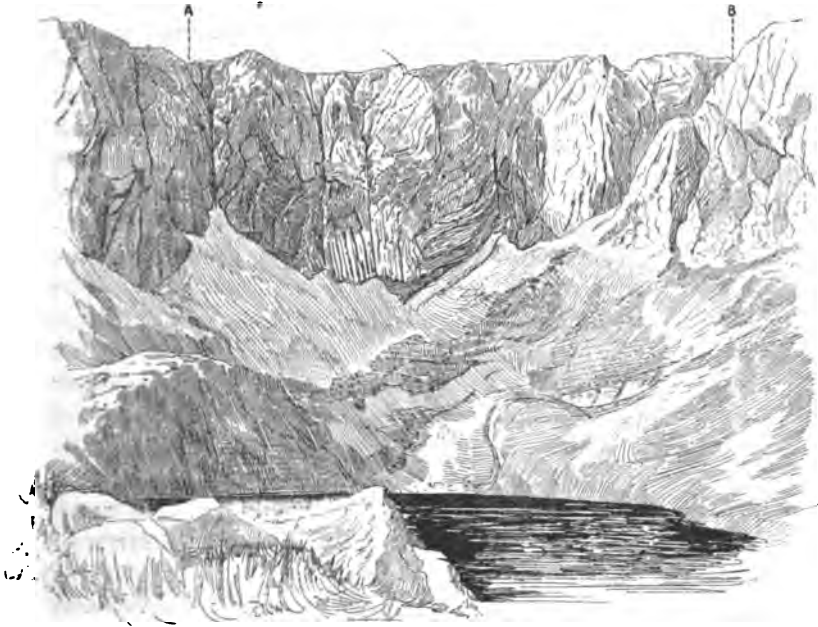
A pretty exhaustive survey of the cliffs both from above and below had been made by my companion some weeks before, with the result that much time was probably saved on the present occasion. It had seemed to him that the most feasible line of attack was to be found on the precipice forming the central buttress of the N.W. division of the corrie. Here the cliffs attain about their greatest range in altitude and while presenting a tempting appearance of accessibility give promise of quite that degree of sensationalism which renders rock-climbing one of the most fascinating pastimes in the world.

The position of our climb is easily found in the ordinary photographs of Lochnagar corrie, as the buttress stands in the very centre of the picture, its base descending well down towards the loch in the form of a gigantic V. And now having made our selection we spent no time in wider investigation, but resolved to risk our solitary day on this one hazard.

With vivid recollections of the corries of Skye, and fresh from the boulder-strewn slopes at the head of Corrie Beach in Glencoe, we found the walk over the scree of Lochnagar gentle and easy to a degree. Passing above the lower range of rocks which continue the wall of separation between the two divisions of the corrie almost down

to the water's edge, we quickly reached the beginning of our climb and at once put on the rope.

The part of the precipice we had chosen is, as we now saw, divided by two shallow water-worn gullies into three vertical sections of very unequal width. The principal of these, that most to the west, shows a very decided ridge on its extreme right running straight to the top. Our selected route lay up this ridge. But a very short examination



LOCHNAGAR CLIFF.

A, Gully attempted in March 1893. B, Black Spout.  
*The dotted line shows the route described.*

showed us that any attempt to reach it by a perpendicular climb from the base of the cliff was out of the question. The most clearly indicated, possibly the only available, line of ascent at first, and for a considerable distance, lies up the face of the left-hand division of the buttress slightly to the left of the more easterly of the above-mentioned gullies.

For the first hundred feet or so we made excellent progress, although from the smoothness of the rocks and

the downward dip of the stratification the whole of this first part of the climb was distinctly more difficult than its appearance from below had led us to expect. The rock was nowhere shattered or weathered so as to give a firm footing. There were none of those slight projections round which a cast of the rope gives such a sense of security. Every fissure capable of holding the most infinitesimal quantity of soil had been taken advantage of to form a strip of green, so that, altogether, we had an exceedingly favourable opportunity of testing the various merits of the frictional method.

After crossing the first gully and establishing our position well up on the central section, we at length seemed to see our way stretching clearly before us. The plan we now adopted was to climb straight up and cross gully No. 2 at a point where the cliff retreats more sharply backwards, and a series of slight ledges appear to offer a comparatively easy route to the crest of the main ridge. The idea was good, but it wanted carrying out, and this, as we shortly found, was a task rather beyond our powers. For a short distance indeed Fortune seemed to bestow on our efforts her most propitious smile; then, having lured us on sufficiently far to suit her malevolent purpose, she abandoned us in a manner which I can now describe as utterly heartless, though another adjective would perhaps more clearly express my feelings at the time. It was a series of great slabs, steep, smooth, and fitted so closely together as to defy both finger-tip and toe, that barred our way. Even the trustworthy footing I always confidently look to find on Brown's head in cases of more than ordinary emergency failed me here. The support he would have had here was altogether too "moral" in its nature to enable him to bear the double strain, and nothing was left for us but to descend. I need hardly say that the process of "climbing down" loses none of its usual humiliating characteristics when the physical is added to the figurative significance of the act.

As is always the case on very steep rocks the descent cost us both more time and trouble than the ascent. But it was managed at last, and then we crossed the gully easily enough. The place where we did so was somewhat lower than the

point we had reached where we went to waste precious time on the smooth face of the precipice, and was as nearly as we could judge about 150 feet from its base. Of course we had seen this route from the first, but as the other appeared more direct and easier we had chosen it, thus falling into the trap which stands ever open for the unfortunate rock-climber and which no amount of experience seems to enable him to avoid.

After we had crossed the gully we encountered a very dirty and disagreeable scramble by the side of the trickling stream, over rocks plashing with water and covered with a most objectionable slippery green slime. Then came a further traverse to the right, which landed us on a wide grassy ledge crossing the face of the precipice with a moderate upward slant, and leading straight in the direction we wished to go.

It was here that our second great disappointment met us full in the face. The upper end of the ledge terminated in a new series of slabs. These projected over each other in a manner that was perfectly hopeless, and besides were covered with patches of loosely adhering moss which came away on the slightest touch, and seemed rather to be placed upon the rock than growing on it. We did indeed make a trial of these rocks, but almost as soon as Brown removed his hands from the soles of my boots I simply stuck ingloriously, and had to be helped down again.

We had already seen that it was manifestly useless to make any attempt to force a way up from the bottom end of the ledge, so that things now began to look rather blue. About half-way up the ledge, however, we had noticed a narrow, irregular kind of rocky shelf running some distance athwart the face of the cliff above us. As it seemingly led to nowhere in particular, and was a most unlikely place in every respect, we had never thought of tackling it. But the last few minutes had put a different complexion on things, and we resolved to give it a trial. Clambering on to it, we crept across only to find that it suddenly ended round a projecting corner in a small grassy patch. Above was an overhanging brow of rock, showing no crack or crevice for a distance of several feet. There was no longer any choice

of routes with us; we had either to get up there or abandon the climb for the time being. The game was worth a last effort, and we determined to make one. As it was impossible to climb the place without aid, Brown came to my help, and it is certainly due to his efficient backing that the place was conquered. With considerable difficulty, for I was in front and Brown close up to me, there being barely standing room for two, I managed to scramble from his knee to his shoulder. But even when mounted on this lofty pedestal I failed to reach the necessary hold by a good couple of feet. For a minute or two I remained helplessly spread-eagled on the face of the cliff, almost despairing of ever getting up, and not at all clear as to how I should ever get down from my awkward perch, when suddenly the thing was done. How he managed it, considering the position he was in, I don't know; but with a supreme effort Brown shot me upwards the required distance by a sudden powerful jerk. My outstretched fingers caught the welcome crack, and mounting rapidly I found safe anchorage about forty feet above one of the most awkward places it has ever been my fortune to tackle successfully. Our delight was naturally great, and in the case of one of us at least showed itself in a very practical manner, not unconnected with the use of the rope. For the way in which the heavy man of the party now came up those rocks, his finger-tips playing upon the face of the cliff with a delicacy of touch that would have moved the envy of a professional pianist, and his every movement suggestive of the bounding lightness of the airy thistledown, was a treat to see.

We had besides another source of satisfaction, though of rather a grim kind, in what we had done. There was now no turning back for us. We had crossed the Rubicon, burned our ships, been guilty of any and every act which metaphorically expresses the absolute necessity of reaching the top of our cliff. But fortunately we came on nothing afterwards which could at all compare in difficulty with the place we had just passed, though more than once we found the way seriously threatening to close in upon us. Forced slightly to the left as we fought our way upwards, we almost immediately encountered one or two bits where a slight

impulse from behind, if not exactly needed, was nevertheless received with gratitude, and where just the gentlest suggestion of traction was followed by no outburst of indignant protestation.

Our course, somewhat devious certainly, but strictly marked out for us, next led to a series of broad ledges bearing strongly to the right, and separated from each other by steep pitches of rock and grass. The ledges themselves were invariably covered with a growth of grass or grey moss, and we found the most convenient way to negotiate them was to run rapidly up them on all-fours. The slope was generally pretty considerable, and the smallest stop caused the treacherous stuff to yield beneath our feet. It promptly slid if we tried to sit on it, and more than once induced in us that feeling of utter helplessness in the face of possible disaster which is surely the high-water mark of mountaineering misery.

But when we at length reached the edge of the long-looked-for ridge, the nature of the climbing underwent a sudden and delightful change. It still continued for some distance excessively steep, but in place of the smooth slabs on which up to this point a good hold had been a rarity and a slip a contingency to be guarded against most carefully, we found the rock so broken and shattered that the numerous projections seemed by comparison to form a huge natural staircase.

There was only one thing now to disturb our serenity, and that was the appearance of a deep notch in the upper horizontal part of the ridge which looked as if it might still cut us off from the top. But none of the plans that were formed for circumventing that notch were brought into operation for us, very happily indeed considering the nature of some of them. The place when we came to it proved to be a mere shallow depression, over which we walked with our hands in our pockets on to the summit plateau. We had spent just three hours on the rocks.

Our first business was to build the usual commemorative stone man at the top of our ridge. But I much fear that long ere now his various members have gone to increase the screes at the foot of the precipice. The habit of hurling



stones over the cliffs seems to flourish on Lochnagar as it can do only there and on Ben Nevis, and I really think attention ought to be called to it. These falling stones form a very real danger to every visitor to Lochnagar Corrie. We had a slight experience of it while on the cliff. The sudden crash of a large stone, which seemed to be coming straight down upon us, broke on our ears. As it happened, we were not in a line with it, but the numerous reverberations made it impossible for us to say where it was until we accidentally saw it rushing past far below. Had it been coming straight towards us, we could certainly have done nothing to get out of its way, and an *accident* would probably have resulted. Our shouts stopped the discharge of any further missiles, but surely none but idiots need to have it pointed out to them that Lochnagar is far too much frequented a mountain to make such a practice permissible under any circumstances whatever.

On the top of the mountain we found a strong wind blowing, and as the mist did not allow of any distant view, we only stayed long enough to make a few notes of possible climbs for future occasions, and then scudded gaily down before the breeze to Alltnaguibhsaich. There we were received with the usual bountiful hospitality, and found awaiting us one of those teas which live in the memory. I certainly tried hard to do it justice, but Brown—that, however, might well be the subject of a separate paper.

IN THE LAND OF THE MACKAYS.

BY CAMERON SWAN.

"It's a far cry to Lochow," and a farther cry to the Kyle of Tongue!

Having been invited to spend a week in Sutherland at the shooting lodge of Kinloch, by Mr W. E. Lawson, I left London one Thursday afternoon in June, and by dint of almost continuous travel by rail and coach, arrived at Kinloch at four on Saturday afternoon.

How inexpressibly sweet is the pure air of the North, how great the glory of the mountains! Too fast the train whirled you through the wilderness of Nature, too fast the coach rattled you through these northern solitudes. After all, Shanks his pony is the only proper steed.

The last day's forty-mile drive was grand. Leaving Lairg before 7 A.M. in the solidly built mail-coach, along with some half-dozen fellow-travellers, and a tarpaulin-covered mountain of mails, we cross a long stretch of dreary moorland, almost parallel to Loch Shin, along Strath Tirry; and as the watershed is gained, the peaks of many distant mountains are seen clearly on the horizon. To the west lies the highest of the hills of Sutherland, Ben More Assynt, and over his shoulder, slightly to the north, is the graceful peak of Glas Bheinn. On the north-west, eight miles away, Ben Hee shows his long ridge and two southern corries; while just above us, on the north-east, is that spur of Beinn Cleith Bric (Ben Klibreck), known as Carn an Eild. The drive down on the other side of the watershed to Altnaharra, gives one a grand view of the precipitous north-western flank of Klibreck. Beyond Altnaharra we rise steeply to another watershed, followed by an equally deep descent, to the head of Loch Laoghal (Loyal). The road now skirts the western shore of the loch to its foot, and Ben Laoghal slopes gently down to the water's edge, revealing its beauty of colour more than its majesty of form.

One more climb for the horses, and the narrow strip of

land separating Loch Laoghal from the Kyle of Tongue is crossed, and the little village of Tongue is reached.

Here Mr Lawson's gig awaited me, and the last four miles to Kinloch were too speedily covered to enable one to gaze sufficiently on the glories of Laoghal.

Ben Laoghal is one of my early loves. I first met her ten years ago, in travelling from Cape Wrath to Orkney, and ever since I have worshipped her memory.

Who—that has walked from Broadford to Sligachan, on rounding the steep slope of Glamaig, and to whose eyes the vision of the Coolins' snowy peaks has suddenly been disclosed—has not at that moment felt his soul grow big with unutterable emotion?

So it is with Ben Laoghal, that silent goddess—beloved of the sun, the clouds, and the wind—to love her once, is to love her ever!

Opposite that mountain, on the top of a deep slope above the river Kinloch, stands the house of that name; and there, the most genial of hosts waited to welcome me.

“And the *tea* wass goot!”

In the gun-room that evening, Lawson showed me on the Ordnance map the boundaries of his shooting, which is one of the largest in Sutherland, including Ben Laoghal, Ben Dòchas (Ben Hope), and extending to the slopes of Ben Hee.

The next day (Sunday) was, indeed, true to its name; and that kindly deity—Apollo—smiled upon everything, but especially upon Ben Laoghal and ourselves. Consequently we determined to explore the hidden recesses of that mountain, and to set foot upon its summit. A party of four, comprising our host, two ladies, and myself, started forth about noon, without either ropes or ice axes! First a scramble down the hill in front of the house, then a crossing of the Kinloch River by jumping from stone to stone, and we were on the great peat bog which stretches to the foot of the Ben.

From the edge of the bog the ascent begins very steeply, and we were glad to enter the delightful shade of Coille-na-cuille (the wood of the nook), and to pull ourselves up by the low branches. Beyond the belt of trees the slope became



A PEEP THROUGH THE CLOUDS.

*From Ben 'Dòchas.*



BEN LAOGHAL.

*From Lochan Hacoin.*

shore of Loch na Seilg (the hunting loch) is reached. Here my equestrian friends remained to fish, while I began the ascent of Ben Dòchas (Ben Hope), with Mr Lawson's head stalker, Donald Mackay, for companion. Our walk up the mountain was made doubly interesting by the view which was gradually disclosed, and by Donald's knowledge of every hill and crag and loch that we saw; moreover, speaking and understanding Gaelic and English equally well, he explained the meanings of the place-names in the forest. I felt very proud afterwards to hear that Donald had reported that we had enjoyed a very long conversation "in the Gaelic"!

The east wind blowing strongly, brought its showers which draped Ben Laoghal, and swept over towards us, blotting out all the distant views, till at last we could only see a few yards ahead. There was no real climbing by this eastern route, and we were on the cairn (3,040 ft.) about an hour after leaving the loch. It being past noon, we sought out as well as we could, a sheltered spot in which to eat our lunch, and suddenly found ourselves on the very edge of the great western precipice. Here was a cave formed by horizontal layers of rock, and in this natural opera-box we sat and lunched, drinking the real "mountain dew" which dripped over the rocks. Below us the surge of clouds boiled and heaved in the abyss, now and again becoming whiter and thinner, so I determined to wait for the hidden view. Presently, through a rift in the clouds, far below was seen the head of Loch Hope and the ford at Casach Dhu, but only for an instant, for the white mist again enveloped us. After nearly an hour of patient waiting, we were rewarded by a general lifting of the clouds, revealing a magnificent mountain panorama. Sometimes cloud-capped, and at others with their peaks appearing above the sea of clouds, Beinn Spionnaidh, Grann Stacach, Foinne Bheinn (Foinaven), Arcuil (Arkle), and Meall a' Chuirn (Meall Horn), were prominent amongst their lesser brethren, while 3,000 feet below us gleamed the long stretch of Loch Hope, beyond which, far across the green moor, lay Loch Eireboll, and yet another loch—the Kyle of Durness, and then the red rocks of Cape Wrath.

Along the dark valley of Strath More, beside the winding river, the Pictish fort "Dun Dornadilla" was seen.

Our descent was rapid, little more than half an hour bringing us to the loch, where we met the anglers, who had made a very fair basket in spite of the east wind. After a few more casts from the shore, which added half a dozen fish to the catch, we tramped back to our horses, and having found them and strapped upon them their tether ropes, we mounted, and my troubles began again.

While my steed walked, I sat on him with some degree of dignity, but when he trotted, and that was too often, I struggled in vain to synchronise my rising and falling in the saddle with the beast's jolts. A bruised and breathless wreck, I slid from my charger at Kinloch, feeling as though all my internal organs had become merged into one!

A bath with "Elliman" in it, followed by dinner, proved grateful and comforting, and I gradually became convalescent. For the next few days, however, walking was to me a painful performance, and I was obliged to be a spectator only at a tennis-party at Tongue House, where I had been invited.

Even forced idleness has its charms, and the "Contemplative Man's Recreation" is delightful, especially when one casts the line on the waters of a loch shadowed by mighty crags where the golden eagle builds, and at whose steep base the black water laps.

Such a place is Loch an Dithreibh, where Lawson and I succeeded in getting a dish of trout for dinner and breakfast.

Sunset on Ben Laoghal is a sight worth travelling a thousand miles to see.

A maiden's blush is not more beautiful than is the rosy glow on the great crags; the purple shadows throw each pinnacle and spur of rock into strong relief, marking its corries and ridges and rugged peaks with a clearness and splendour of colour which is supposed by most to exist only in the great snowy mountains of the world.

"Lord, gie's a guid conceit o' oorsels!" I hold that for all that is most beautiful in mountain scenery, we need not travel out of our beloved Scotland.

## CLIMBING IN GLENCOE.

BY WILLIAM BROWN.

WHAT *Nisi Prius* was to the old judge, whose idea of heaven was to sit there all day long, Glencoe is to the enthusiastic rock climber. I will not be guilty of the modern heresy of exalting it over Skye, but, the peerless Coolins apart, Ben Nevis and Arran are its only possible rivals. Most climbing grounds have some drawback, but Glencoe has none that the keen cragsman, who has spent a week at Clachaig, will remember when he comes home. He may note *at the time* that the weather is often execrable, and that the mud of "Ossian's kailyard" is of no ordinary adhesiveness, but what are these trifling drawbacks compared with the excellence and abundance of the porphyry as a climbing medium, the truly "sporting" character of nearly all the climbs, and the comfort and the convenience of Clachaig as a base of operations?

From a strictly moral standpoint, Clachaig is almost too comfortable; for it dispenses with the chastening influence of the after-breakfast walk to the foot of your climb. You simply rise from the table and step on to the rocks, a blessing which only those can properly appreciate who have walked fifteen miles to climb two hundred feet of granite in the Cairngorms. As a kind of set-off, however, it has been wisely ordered by the providence that watches over the undue development of adipose tissue, that nearly all the Bidean climbs terminate in Corrie Beach, and Corrie Beach is the most disciplinary glen in the four kingdoms. Boots, that have defied the Coolins, come to Corrie Beach in the prime of their life, and perish miserably in an afternoon.

Another feature of Glencoe—which is perhaps partly due to the high standard of steepness of all the slopes—is that most of the climbs are more difficult than they look. The scramble into Ossian's Cave is a good instance in point. The cave is situated high up on the rocky face of Aonach Dubh, but as seen from the road it appears as if a grassy tongue, connecting with an obviously simple

approach, led right up to its mouth. This is the point from which all sneers at the cave should be religiously fired off, for when you have come, not without toil, to the foot of the supposed tongue, and discovered that it consists of over a hundred feet of sheer rock, there is apt to be a certain flabbiness in the expression of your contempt. No good cragsman will make much of Ossian's Cave, but at the same time no honest one will despise it. When Tough and I climbed into it in July, the rocks were running with moisture, and the vegetation which grows profusely upon them was like a well-watered market-garden. It was simply impossible at places to get a firm hold of the solid rock. Hands, knees, toes, and eyelids had to be awkwardly spread over a mixture of mud and vegetable, which affords a support as treacherous as it is dirty, and which no respectable mountaineer, having regard to his Norfolk, will care to depend on. There is a story in the district of a friendly tree which once grew at the mouth of the cave, by means of which early explorers, by hitching a rope round it, avoided those excesses of gymnastics, and descended with cleanliness and ease; but if it ever existed, that tree has long since disappeared, for I can find no mention of it in any of the notes in the visitors' book at Clachaig.

To the left of Ossian's Cave is a difficult climb which Collie and Hastings have done, but unfortunately their account of it in the visitors' book is a little vague. Tough and I tried to repeat it, but we had so much difficulty in finding their route, and in following it when found, that it is quite possible we were on the wrong track altogether. At all events this is what happened. We followed the usual cave route, striking up steep rocks to the left just before reaching the final pitch. Easy rock for some little distance brought us to an extremely awkward bit, where, after turning a nasty corner just above a tree growing in the cliff face, the only possible alternative was to climb diagonally across a very steep pitch, with scarcely any holds, into a shallow gully on the left. Tough almost reached this gully, but the few remaining holds were so loose and rotten that he was forced to return. The unsuccessful negotiation of this bad bit took nearly an hour



and a half, but it is right to say that the rocks were extremely wet.

To the left of the gully, where we were stopped, is a great rock buttress, which runs right up to the summit of Aonach Dubh, showing from just underneath it an imposing line of pinnacled crags. To climb on to this buttress, and follow it to the top, was now our object; but when we proceeded to make the attempt, we found that the lower rocks were everywhere inaccessible. However, by a little persistence the difficulty was turned if not surmounted. By a lucky oversight in its rocky armament, a narrow grass ledge allows the climber to make his way round the foot of the buttress, and to emerge on its steep eastern flanks. These are a sweet thing in slopes. Above, on one's right hand, the black towering crags rise steeply to the sky-line of the buttress; underneath is a horrible chasm, into which every rock that one dislodges falls with a loud booming noise. For nearly two hours we traversed this rocky bulwark, finding it always impossible to climb straight up, while there was a horrible suggestiveness about the invitation the loose rocks gave us to drop straight down. Ultimately, after many zig-zags and threatened *cul de sacs*, an easy stone shoot opened on the right, and was thankfully followed to the summit, the recipient of more blessings than are usually reserved for that particular kind of abomination. Whether any one ever followed this precise route before I am unable to say, but it is not one that I can recommend.

Before taking leave of Aonach Dubh, I ought to mention that the climb up the craggy face, fronting Loch Triochatan, is both interesting and easy. The rope is nowhere required, and Dr Collie did it alone, to the no small astonishment and incredulity of certain residents at the foot. It is not, however, quite an orthodox climb, and may be classed under the category "Vegetable," which is Tough's latest contribution to the nomenclature of mountaineering. Trees and shrubs abound, and at one place are the climber's sole protection against the blandishments of gravity.

It is at the head of Corrie Beach, however—often erroneously spoken of as Corrie an Lochan—that some of the greatest climbs are to be had. The huge eastern pre-

cipice of Bidean should afford endless scrambling, mostly easy; but exactly the opposite might be said of the two monster buttresses which form the crown of Bidean's highest peak. There the possible climbs are likely to be few in number, and probably very difficult, especially on the right hand one, which, when scaled and written up, will be one of the finest things in first ascents that this Journal has chronicled. The other is less striking, and shows several routes that will certainly "go."

Midway in the big gully between these buttresses is an interesting pinnacle, that was climbed first by Collie, Solly, and Collier in the spring of 1894. It is not difficult, but on reaching a certain point in the ascent a most sensational view is disclosed of a narrow shattered edge, ending in a crazy-looking point, which leans out over a horrid gulf. Along this the climber has to go, but it is a fraud and a delusion, for underneath it on the other side is a broad easy ledge, along which a regiment of soldiers could march.

No description, however brief, of this glorious land of rock scrambles, would be complete without mention of the cliffs of Stob Coire an Lochan at the head of Corrie Lochan. I am *almost* tempted to say that these cliffs are impossible. Certainly they are the sheerest and loftiest in the neighbourhood, and are worth visiting on account of the marvellous and fantastic forms into which they are cut, the narrow and fearsome gullies which seem to have been artificially chiselled out of the living rock, and the weird pinnacles that start up unexpectedly on the face of the precipice—most of them hopelessly inaccessible by legitimate means.

Lastly, for the enthusiast in such things, for the voracious walker whose thought is of views and prospects, nothing can excel the outlook from Bidean round the horizon of rock-bound peaks, and the many-forded western sea. The President could state, in the language of Bartholomew and the Ordnance Survey, how many mountains and tops are actually visible, but the view lives vaguely (though none the less pleasantly) in *my* memory—and vague persons shouldn't attempt descriptions.

## ON BOULDERS.

BY T. FRASER S. CAMPBELL.

MANY years ago there existed in Edinburgh a little coterie of enthusiasts, who were wont to devote most of their odd holidays to the exploration of the mountain systems of their native country. This was in prehistoric times, before the conception of the Scottish Mountaineering Club had come to fruition. The ring of the ice-axe was not heard in the land, nor had the cameras of Howie, Douglas, Rennie, and Thomson stripped the mask from the face of Nature and exposed her beauties to the vulgar gaze. Munro had not tabulated the summits, and assigned to each his proper position in the hierarchy of the hills; there was no "authority on snowcraft," and the great pick or spike controversy had not threatened to eclipse the gaiety of nations. But many a merry night was passed in Highland inn, and many a stormy morning saw the "tramps" toiling through wind and snow up the spurs of Cruachan or the corries of Ben Lough. These days are past, but not the friendships which they fostered nor the memories which they evoked. Some of the little band have turned respectable, and have sought succour of sorrow in the cultivation of the domestic virtues, and one has fallen asleep. But there is a big chiel in a far off land, who, I know, did not allow the responsibilities of wet nursing the infant Journal to overshadow in his mind the recollection of his adhesion to the "tramps"; while one of our vice-presidents made almost his first acquaintance with winter climbing in Scotland in their company. This was upon Ben Achallader, and it was upon this occasion that the writer first introduced his improved method of glassading upon soft snow, which has never become popular, and which upon a subsequent expedition nearly created a vacancy in the Club.

Upon some such occasion as this was the "Boulder Society" formed. This was the inspiration of a moment, and Stott joined it with enthusiasm and offered his services as secretary, which the other half gratefully accepted. Stott's secretarial duties consisted for the most

part in lying on his back in the shade with a pipe in his mouth, while the writer created "lines of cleavage" in his nether garments, and generally defied the laws of anatomy by making improbable ascents of some of the Arran boulders.

In the Badminton volume upon "Golf," Mr Horace Hutchinson alludes to the advertisement of an enterprising vendor of sporting requisites, who offers to the unwary public the "Game of Golf complete, in a box." "In a box," Mr Hutchinson adds, "is good." Now it is not my contention that one can practise the art of climbing complete—on a boulder; but I know many who have spent most pleasant hours in the pursuit of this branch of our favourite sport, which affords to the ambitious climber at least as good practice as falls to the golfer who "putts" a ball along his drawing-room carpet into a dog-collar, or essays to "loft" it into his wife's easy-chair, only to succeed in putting it through the parlour window, which I have seen.

It must be admitted that the exercise of boulder-climbing is almost purely athletic, but the training to nerve and muscle may stand the climber in good stead upon some more important occasion—and moreover it is comparatively free from danger. It is not for me to belittle the fascinating possibilities of a flight through space, but for myself I will confess that advancing years have fostered in my mind a decided preference for a short fall—and a soft one!

Upon the sides of many of our mountains, and in the adjoining valleys—but especially, so far as my own experience teaches, where there is a granite formation—there lie great blocks of stone, varying in size from a few tons to many hundreds; some bare "needles," or smooth round boulders, while others are clothed upon their tops with fern and heather, and even trees. On the side of Loch Eck there is a huge rock cleft in two, the ascent of which, after several ineffectual attempts, was at last achieved by Lester; this is covered with a heavy growth, and I have sat on its top eating blaeberreries under the shadow of a rowan-tree. In Glen Inveruglas there is a similar though smaller rock, which affords a most interesting climb. I remember that upon one occasion an excellent climber, the length of whose

arms and legs, however, was incommensurate with his intellectual capacity, was much chagrined at his inability to negotiate a crack and so reach the top, from which two of his companions mocked his unavailing efforts.



CLACH MHOR.

The accompanying illustrations, taken from photographs, are views of three of the principal of the Arran boulders, which are now well known to many of the Club. The objects of this paper not being scientific, I must refer the curious reader to the report of the Boulder Committee of the Royal Society of Edinburgh for particulars as to the sizes, weights, and probable origin of these rocks. Suffice it to say that the largest, Clach Mhor, weighs some 620 tons, has a girth of about 100 feet, and is 15 feet high in the highest part. It stands upon the edge of the hillside overlooking the road, about three-quarters of a mile on the Brodick side of the Corrie Hotel.

Details of the different modes of ascent may be left to the individual. In the picture the figure to the left is our worthy Editor, grappling successfully with the mysteries of the "friction grip"; while perched up aloft is the writer, who has ascended by another route, and who now views

the Honorary Treasurer engaged in a futile endeavour to establish frictional relations between his waistcoat buttons and a smooth rock surface.

The double boulder in Plate 2 is situated on the shore side of the road past the Corrie Hotel, going towards



CLACH AN FHIINN OR THE BRUCE STONE.

Sannox. Here the Editor is once more seen at his best. Several sporting variations are to be found on the rock, but the one indicated in the picture is the most interesting. This has been named the Bruce Stone, legend having it that The Bruce once sheltered under it—an indication perhaps that the tourist of the period looked upon any residence in Arran as “desirable”—even as he does unto this day.

The third illustration is of the “Cat Stane,” which stands upon the other side of the road from the “Bruce,” and somewhat nearer Sannox. It is possible to ascend from the road, but the more practicable route is from the inside, which is sufficiently difficult, both foot- and hand-hold being revealed only to the faithful. There is extant a photograph of a popular member of the Club, “snapped” in the act of ascending from the road; but the attitude into which he has been forced by the exigencies of the situation

is not considered to be such as a self-respecting mountaineer would wish perpetuated, and I am forbidden by the Committee—of which he is a member—to make it public.

There remains one other boulder of this group, called, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, the "Rocking Stone"; I at least have always failed to rock it. At a little distance one is inspired with the idea that its ascent is easy, but this is not the case. Hence it has been called, after the manner



CLACH A' CHAIT OR THE CAT STANE.

of Mr Grant Allen, the "Rock which Couldn't." But it has been ascended once or twice.

It is not my intention to compare the ascent of these boulders to that of the Wastdale pillars, the gymnasium of English climbers, or to that of our own larger monoliths and quarry faces. But sufficient amusement may be obtained on them to while away an idle forenoon, and sufficient abrasion of the cuticle may be experienced to make the memory thereof as lasting as it is pleasant.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in Glasgow on Tuesday, 3rd December 1895, when Prof. Robt. Adamson, Dr R. J. A. Berry, Mr H. C. Bowen, Mr D. S. Campbell, Dr W. I. Clark, Mr J. W. Drummond, Mr Alex. Fraser, jun., Mr E. W. Green, Prof. A. B. W. Kennedy, Mr J. W. M'Gregor, Mr T. Meares, Mr J. S. Napier, Prof. G. W. Prothero, Rev. Dr George Reith, Dr T. K. Rose, Mr F. C. Squance, Prof. F. E. Weiss, and Dr A. R. Wilson, were balloted for and elected members of the Club.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the St Enoch's Station Hotel, Glasgow, on Friday, the 13th December 1895, at six o'clock. The President, Mr H. T. Munro, was in the chair. Thirty members were present.

The minutes of the Sixth Annual General Meeting were read and approved.

The Honorary Treasurer submitted his accounts for 1895, showing that the income amounted to £86. 19s. 9d., and the expenditure to £80. 17s. 8d., leaving a balance to the credit of the Club of £66. 3s., as compared with £60. 0s. 11d. at the corresponding date last year, and they were unanimously adopted.

To fill the vacancies in the list of Office-bearers, the following were elected:—*Vice-President*, Mr Colin B. Phillip; *Members of Committee*, Prof. G. G. Ramsay and Mr William Brown. The remaining Office-bearers were re-elected.

The motion which appeared in the Billet under Mr James Maclay's name, regarding the election of members, was discussed at considerable length. An amendment was proposed by Mr Douglas. This, however, like Mr Maclay's motion, was not carried, and the meeting finally resolved that the Rules regarding the election of candidates remain as they were, excepting only that a recommendation be made to the Council to devise a scheme for voting by post.



The following places were selected for Club Meets:—

New Year—Tyndrum, from Monday, 30th December, to Thursday, 2nd January.

Easter—Fort-William, Thursday, 2nd April, to Tuesday, the 7th.

The Honorary Secretary stated that the present membership consisted of one Honorary President, three Honorary Members, and one hundred and twenty-seven Ordinary Members.

The Honorary Librarian stated that the following books have been recently added to the Library:—Mummery's "Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus," Whympers' "Scrambles amongst the Alps," and Haskett Smith's "Climbing in Wales and Ireland." The *Alpine Journal* has also been received regularly, Vol. 17 being now complete. Mr Rennie has handed over to the Club a number of volumes (up to date) of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*. The photographic collection is still rapidly growing, there being now in the Club-room three albums of prints of various size, besides seven framed enlargements on the walls. There is also a collection of several hundred lantern slides, which is available for the use of members. The Librarian has also charge of the back numbers of the *Journal* which remain in stock, but these are now so far reduced that of the eighteen numbers issued, only eight remain in print. The few sets which were reserved are being steadily taken up, in spite of the fact that the price has more than once been raised, and there are now only about a dozen sets remaining.

The Honorary Editor stated that the *Journal* had been well supported during the past year by the active members of the Club, and that he had no difficulty in getting papers to fill its pages. He called attention to the large item in the Club expenditure for its production, but stated his belief that the good work it is doing, both in and outside the Club, fully justifies the sum it costs. He also stated that the *Guide Book* was making fast progress, and that the Committee appointed to assist him were, Messrs Brown, Hinxman, Jackson, Munro, Phillip, Naismith, Rennie, and Thomson.

After a hearty vote of thanks to the Office-bearers, and

to Mr Thomson for the continued use of a room in his office for Club purposes, the business of the meeting was concluded.

THE ANNUAL DINNER was held in the St Enoch's Hotel, at the close of the General Meeting. The President, Mr H. T. Munro, occupied the chair, and Messrs R. A. Robertson and A. E. Maylard acted as croupiers. There were forty-four members and guests present. It was in every way a thorough success, and reflected great credit on the Dinner Committee. The front of the menu card was ornamented by a sketch of Coire na Creiche, Skye, from the pencil of Mr Colin B. Phillip, and the tailpiece was from a design by Mr Fraser Campbell, illustrating a boulder climb. The toasts of the "Queen," and the "Navy, Army, and Volunteers," were given from the chair, the latter being replied to by Colonel Wavell. Thereafter the Chairman gave the "Scottish Mountaineering Club" in a neat and telling speech, in which he related how much offended he had been by some American reflections he had heard on the highness of Scottish mountains, especially in hot weather. He referred to the proposed Guide Book, and showed what full and complete details would be required from a climber's point of view, and alluded to the starved information which had hitherto been published on the subject. "Kindred Societies" was proposed by the Rev. Dr Hamilton, and Mr Solly, in responding for the Alpine Club, touchingly referred to the sad loss that club had sustained in the death of Mr Mummery, and gave some pleasant reminiscences of his own experiences in the Caucasus. "The Journal" was proposed by Mr W. A. Ramsay, and replied to by the Editor. The toast, "The Guests," was given with great verve by Professor Ramsay, and Lord Dalrymple replied. Songs and recitations were contributed by Messrs J. M. Crawford, Hinxman, W. A. Ramsay, Rennie, and Wigan; and in accordance with use and wont the meeting resolved itself into a small party for the further exploration of the Whangie. This was last heard of late on Saturday afternoon in the neighbourhood of Aberfoyle.

## NOTES AND QUERIES.



*The Editor will be glad to receive brief notices of any noteworthy expeditions. These are not meant to supersede longer articles, but many members who may not care to undertake the one will have no difficulty in imparting information in the other form.*

THE S.M.C. ABROAD IN 1895.—Mr H. C. Bowen experienced rather broken weather during his holiday in Switzerland. He crossed the Stockhorn in a snowstorm, climbed the Unter Gabelhorn from the Trift side, the Wellenkuppe, crossed the Adler Pass to Saas Fee, the New Weisssthor to Macugnaga, and the Lysjoch from Alagna to Zermatt; had a delightful scramble on the Riffelhorn by a chimney to the left of the regular route from the glacier, and finally climbed the Gabelhorn. Mr Brant accompanied him in his expeditions, and they did most of their climbing for themselves, taking but one guide with them as part of their luggage.

Dr and Mrs Colin Campbell had a successful holiday among the Alps. From the Val de Bagne they crossed the Col de Fenêtre to Valpellina, without guides. On 15th July, from Cogne, Dr Campbell made the first ascent of the Grivola for 1895. Returning to Switzerland over the Col du Mont Brulé, he climbed for the second time the Aig. de la Za, by W. face. Afterwards, from the Schwarz See Hotel, in addition to several glacier and other excursions he ascended Monte Rosa, and, for photographic purposes, the Breithorn.

Dr Collie, as we all know, was a member of that ill-fated expedition to Nanga Parbat, which involved the loss of one of the most brilliant climbers of the day. With the memory of Mr Mummery's book fresh in our minds, the news of his death came with startling emphasis. The record of that ill-fated expedition to the Himalayas will be awaited with melancholy interest, but enough is known to make it certain that Mr Mummery perished whilst attempting an unexplored pass, and that he fell a victim to one of the hazards too frequently associated with fatalities in the higher mountains. It is fitting for this *Journal* to contain an expression of sincere regret that a valuable life has been forfeited under such circumstances. To those who knew Mr Mummery, the personal loss must be great, but these pages are more concerned with the loss to the cause of mountaineering,—a cause which perhaps received its ablest advocacy from Mr Mummery, and which was very dear to his heart. He leaves a fitting, and we believe a lasting monument in his recent book, and all lovers of the mountains and

their literature must experience a sense of profound sorrow that it should have received the saddest of all commentaries in such a sudden closing of the career of its gifted author.

Mr E. A. Crowley, besides minor expeditions, some of them solitary, crossed the Eigerjoch and Jungfrauoch without guides; also the Wetterlücke, Mönchjoch, Beichgrat, and Petersgrat more than once. He traversed the Mönch from Wengern Alp to the Bergli Hut, climbed the Eiger, the Jungfrau from the Roththal, the Tschingelhorn, and all but completed an ascent of Jungfrau by the difficult Schneehorn route (twenty-one hours out in bad weather).

Mr W. Douglas and Mr James Maclay had a good month at Zermatt and Saas Fee in July and August, though the bad weather which prevailed during the early summer interfered somewhat with plans. The following were their principal joint expeditions:—Unter Gabelhorn, Riffelhorn from Gorner Glacier, Rothhorn, Matterhorn, Dom, Rimpfischhorn ascent from Täsch Alp, Fee Joch and Allalinhorn, Ried Pass and Balfrinhorn. Mr Maclay also climbed the Wellenkuppe.

Mr J. W. Drummond enjoyed splendid weather in the Oberland in September. His ascents included the following:—Wetterhorn with descent to Rosenloui, the Eiger, the Mönch and Jungfrau on same day, the Finsteraarhorn from the Concordia Hut to the Grimsel Hospice over the Oberaarjoch. Next day he went over the Strahlegg and up the great Schreckhorn, reaching Grindelwald at 11 P.M.

Mr W. Wickham King had nearly a month of unbroken weather in Switzerland in August and September, during which he accomplished the following interesting ascents:—Matterhorn, traversed from Zermatt to Breuil; Dom, and Täschhorn in one day; Suddlenspitze by E. arête, with descent over the Nadelhorn; Mittaghorn and Eggnerhorn, traversed without guides; Riffelhorn, descent to Gorner Glacier, also without guides.

Professor A. B. W. Kennedy ascended Mont Collon, the Petite Dent de Veisivi, the Matterhorn (from Arolla, sleeping at the Schwarz See) and Mont Blanc de Seilon; and traversed the following high passes, namely:—Col de Chardonnet, Col de Sonadon, Cols de Giétroz and Seilon, Cols de Bertol and d'Hérens, Cols de Valpelline and du Mont Brulé. Dr Kennedy likewise took part in numerous "boulder" ascents in the neighbourhood of Arolla Hotel,—a form of recreation for off-days which seems to be as popular at Zermatt and Arolla as it is at Corrie.

Mr H. T. Munro was at Zermatt for a week or two in August, but not being well he refrained from much climbing. He, however, ascended the Breithorn with Dr and Mrs Colin Campbell.

Mr W. W. Naismith joined Messrs Maclay and Douglas at Zermatt, and climbed the Rimpfischhorn with them. Subsequently crossing to Arolla, he did the Aig. de la Za by W. face, Grand Dent de Veisivi and traverse of Petite Dent (alone), Aiguilles Rouges

traversed, Mont Collon first ascent by N.N.E. arête, Mont Blanc de Seïlon, Ruinette by N.E. arête, descent to Giétroz Glacier (new) and Mauvoisin.

Mr C. W. Patchell did good work in Norway, as a list of his mountain expeditions will prove. Jostedalabrae traversed thrice—1, from Nysaeter to Svaerdal Saeter over Kvitokol (new); 2, from Faaberg to Bodal over Lodalskaupe; 3, from Briksdal to Grov, in Jostedal (new descent). In the Horunger he ascended the Dyrhougstind from the Skagastölshytte (new), and the Store Skagastöltind, and in the Sondmore district the Blaatind (new) and Kolaastind.

Mr J. H. W. Rolland stayed for some weeks in the Engadine and Tyrol, and among other expeditions ascended the Piz Bernina, the Königspitze, and Cevedale. He afterwards represented the S.M.C. at a dinner of about two hundred members of the Italian Alpine Club held at Sondrio.

Mr Godfrey A. Solly spent a month in the Alps, but as he had scarcely recovered from the effects of an accident in the spring he did not attempt any serious mountaineering, excepting the ascent of the Grand Paradis.

---

BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR BY THE N.E. FACE.—On the morning of the 27th July last, Messrs Rose, Brown, and the writer started from Kingshouse Inn to climb the N.E. face of Buchaille Etive. Leaving the road a little beyond the station of the Glencoe coaches, we struck straight across the moor to the foot of the mountain. It was a disgusting morning. The rain was falling dismally, and the whole mountain was concealed in mist, which, occasionally lifting, gave us a momentary glimpse of great precipices towering above us. Our intention was to climb up the rocks to the left of the great gully, which runs down from the summit and faces the Glencoe road. The way at first, through deep heather and over great blocks of stone, grew rapidly steeper, and soon landed us on the slabby face of the buttress, the work on which, while fairly hard for a considerable time, calls for no particular description. Then all at once there loomed up out of the mist before us an immense perpendicular bastion, whose appearance *en face* was utterly hopeless. An examination to the right revealed a long, narrow, and almost vertical cleft or chimney, up which we thought it just possible we might be able to force our way. As it was evidently only a place, however, to tackle as a last resource, we resolved to explore the rocks at the eastern side of the bastion, and after following a gradually ascending and rapidly narrowing ledge at its base, we after a time came upon a place which seemed to offer us a fair prospect. On trying it, we found that it went excellently, and for several hundred feet we scrambled upwards by a series of long, narrow, and very steep chimneys, which, however, offered excellent holds. We found this chimney work very pleasant,

as it protected us from the bitterly cold wind and rain, which speedily chilled us, and drove us to the use of the gloves whenever we appeared on the open face of the buttress.

Shortly after the cessation of our chimney sweeping operations, we suddenly found ourselves face to face with a second bastion, smaller and less steep than the last, but otherwise resembling it most closely. This one, however, we found no difficulty in passing, and then keeping well round to the right, we climbed straight upwards by the excellent rocks overhanging the very edge of the gully, and by-and-by became aware of the top by nearly stumbling over the cairn. The rain now poured harder than ever, and the mist limited our view to a radius of a few yards, nevertheless we contentedly sat ourselves down in puddles of water, and enjoyed lunch as only men can who have finished a successful climb. Then following the line of the summit until we came to a second cairn, we sank gradually to the left, and made our way down by Corrie Fionn. This corrie proved one of the roughest we had ever seen, and as it was quite unknown to us all, the descent of it proved a rather ticklish operation in the heavy mist. We had been wet to the skin for hours before we got back to the hotel, and our worthy host deserves no small credit for the satisfactory manner in which his wardrobe withstood the severe strain put upon it that night.

W. TOUGH.

---

**BEN NUIS PRECIPICE.**—On 6th July 1895 the N.E. face of Ben Nuis, which is one of the steepest rock-walls in Arran, was scaled, apparently for the first time, by Messrs Green and Boyd. From the foot of the precipice two parallel gullies divide the rocks, which are for the most part composed of huge slabs, and look impracticable. The gully to the left is shallow, while the one to the right is well defined and enclosed by savage rock-walls. The climbers chose the latter, and found it easy as far as they went, the floor being steep grass. It terminates in a dark chimney, probably feasible, but as it would have taken the party to the top of the cliff a good way below and to the right of the summit of Ben Nuis, they preferred to traverse to their left out of the gully. They presently reached a small grassy platform below a fine cavernous-looking chimney about forty feet high, the ascent of which involved some very stiff back and foot work. From the top of this chimney they climbed obliquely up grass ledges and easy rocks, always keeping to the left, until they stepped off the face on to the very summit of the mountain.

---

**CIR MHOR FACE—NEW ROUTE.**—On 7th July 1895 Messrs Bell, Boyd, Green, and Graham Napier accomplished an ascent of the steep lower rocks of the N. face of Cir Mhor, starting from a point between "B" and "C" on the sketch (Vol. III., p. 212). After some ineffectual attempts to ascend the "C" gully, and a crack to the left of

it, the party attacked the rib of rock separating the "B" and "C" gullies. At first the rocks were broken and fairly easy, but they soon became smoother. Good progress, however, was made up sundry cracks. Higher up some very stiff slabs were encountered, in places so steep and destitute of holds that the leader (Bell) required assistance. The last bit of this portion of the ascent was the worst, and there the leader had to climb the length of his rope without help from those below, as there was no good anchorage. Once he was up it was easy to follow with the rope. They were now some 200 feet up the face, and entered a steep gully of rather rotten and treacherous grass—the upper continuation of the "B" gully apparently—between steep walls. It terminated in a collection of huge blocks, through a hole in which the party crawled, and found themselves in a small room or cave about twelve feet high. Leaving a cairn there, Bell, standing on Green's shoulders, managed to climb to a hole in the roof, the only exit, and then hauled up his companions. They had now reached the easy upper slopes of scree and grass. From that point the party mounted to the right, past the cairn at the top of the "stone shoot ridge," and gained the summit by "Bell's Variation" (Vol. III., p. 347).

Since the above note was received, Mr W. Wickham King informs us that in August 1892 his friends, Messrs F. P. Evers and J. Bristow, followed much the same route as that just described, the main difference being that they apparently kept to the "B" gully from the start. They had no rope with them, and though they encountered some rather difficult pitches, we gather from their description that they had selected a somewhat easier route than Mr Bell's party. The summit ridge was reached at the point marked "E" on the sketch.

---

AONACH EAGACH.—In August last Messrs A. R. Wilson, A. W. Russell, and A. Fraser spent several days among the Glencoe hills, choosing Clachaig Inn as headquarters. Aonach Eagach, the north ridge of the glen, was the chief attraction, as it looked particularly inviting from below, and no record could be found in the Journal or the hotel book of any party having been along it.

On the first day the ridge was gained by leaving the road a quarter of a mile below Loch Triochatan, and going nearly directly up, the ascent being easy, though long and tiresome. On the ridge itself there is no difficulty till it narrows, and there is a steep drop of fifty feet with a corresponding rise on the other side to a small peak just short of the summit. Just beyond the summit there is another dip to two little pinnacles. At this point the party left the ridge, descending by a stone shoot which, after some time, ended in a burn and a high waterfall. To escape this, another smaller burn to the right had to be crossed, and a descent made down a steep bit of cliff, on which the holds were neither so frequent nor so good as could have been wished. The rocks here, and all along the ridge, are very rotten and loose, at

this point especially none could be found strong enough to trust the rope to. The rest of the descent was simple.

Another day Messrs Russell and Fraser went along the whole ridge. The only difficulty on the remaining part of it was in getting on to the eastern top, which rises steeply after a dip in the ridge.

A. FRASER, Jun.

**COBBLER.**—On 26th September 1895 Messrs Bell, Boyd, J. S. MacGregor, R. G. Napier, and Naismith were on the Cobbler. With Mr MacGregor as leader, they climbed the rock on the top of the central peak from the corrie side, without using either of the natural doorways—a new variation probably. They afterwards ascended the south-east peak by a new route. From the col they followed the horizontal grassy ledge to the left (the usual route goes to the right) as far as the north angle of the mountain. They then ascended, first to the right and afterwards to the left; and lastly a short but rather bad chimney brought them to the north end of the large patch of grass, which is cut off from the summit by a line of vertical cliffs. These are usually surmounted by means of a detached rock near the south end of the grass, where the cliff is lowest, but Messrs Bell, Boyd, and MacGregor forced a way up the rocks underneath the summit. Messrs Napier and Naismith, from the bottom of the grass patch, went to the left, round a corner, on to the steep north-east face, and emerged on the summit at the cleft behind the projecting crag, which everybody who ascends this peak makes a point of standing on.

W. W. N.

**BHASTEIR TOOTH.**—Referring to my note on page 166, Vol. III., with regard to the descent from Bealach a Leitir into Lota Corrie, in which occur the words, “an exact measurement here would be useful, for it seemed to me fully 300 feet,” I may say that on 4th August I measured the distance 330 feet from the ridge to the spot where it is first practicable to get on to the rocks.

F. W. JACKSON.

#### ARTHUR SEAT AS A SCRAMBLING CENTRE.

DEAR MR AUTHOR OF “PRACTICE SCRAMBLES,”—Your paper upholding the Western Metropolis as a climbing centre for a half-day’s amusement has too long remained unchallenged, and I now take up cudgels for mine ain romantic town. The Cartland Crags, the Whangie, and the Devil’s Den may be all that you say of them, but what are they when compared with that vast and mighty range of precipices that rejoice in the name of the Salisbury Crags, or the soaring bald pate of the Lion’s Head, that delights the eye of every visitor to Edina, Scotia’s darling seat?

Come with me, my friend, and I will show you, within a few minutes



of Princes Street, as fair a field as was ever presented to man to keep his iron muscles from rust or his wind and nerves from becoming flabby. I promise you that *there* you will find no "lack of opportunity to test the accuracy of your spring, your skill in discriminating between fixed rocks and shaky, or the grip of your hand and foot." Those frowning battlements that front the Castle Rock and throw the venerable old Palace of Holyrood into the shade have untold treasures that will only reveal themselves to the faithful.

Come and I will introduce you to some of the wonders of the land, for you have proved yourself worthy of that honour. See, there, on the left, as we wend our way up the Radical Road from Holyrood, stands the *Pic Robbieson*, towering into the blue, a grand isolated wall of "trap." Try the chimney at the foot; yes, it is wide enough to admit *your* body with your knees on one side and your back on the other. Why, "the tallest man in the Alpine Club" did it and found it easy—and that too in the remote ages before the S.M.C. was born. Now you are out and on the arête. My! is it not narrow? On with you. Up that beautiful staircase all the way to the top. Get on your pins, man—what are you kneeling for?—and take a look round. "Ah, how giddy a thing it is to cast one's eyes so low." Well, down the other side, there are good holds all the way.

Oh, you don't think much of that climb, do you? What's that you say? Not so good as the Whangie? Stuff! Well, certainly it has not yet chucked a man off the top, so you have me there, and we will pass on to the next. Now we come to the *elder-tree route*. It is only about 100 yards up from the *Pic*, and just beyond the west buttress of the quarry. I have not yet tried it myself, but shall be delighted to back you up. The man who first did it tells me it is the longest and most varied climb on the Crag. A short steep grass slope, a ten-foot rock wall, and another steep bit of grass, lead to a sloping ledge beside a flourishing elder-tree. Here the fun begins. A shallow niche lets one with difficulty up a steep wall of black "trap" to another elder-tree. The tree shows fight, so look out. Above this is a traverse to the left and a climb over a crumbly slope, and the thing is done. However, if you had thought of doing this, you should not have come in wedding attire, for the trees are a bit dirty.

Between this and the Cat Nick nothing *as yet* has gone, but two routes have been attempted. Here is one of them—the *recess route* it is called. It will no doubt go some day,\* but there are a lot of loose bits about it that would require careful handling. The other lies in that gruesome-looking chimney. Two of our best climbers, hailing from the West too, had the temerity to try it, but alas, after getting half-way up, they had to come back. There, a hundred yards farther, that is known to fame as the Cat Nick. No use going up that to-day. It is only suitable to climb on Sundays, with a tall hat and umbrella.

---

\* It went on 9th December.

Now we are coming to the north corner of the big quarry. You see this is the highest part of the cliff, and there is a climb on it which we call the *great corner climb*, that ought to go but won't. It got all the encouragement and coaxing necessary, and yet it would not. A man, not unknown to fame on north-east buttresses, dragged your humble servant out of his bed at the unholy hour of 5 A.M., and that for two mornings running, to woo it into submission. But at that hour it was not amiable, and four feet in the middle refused our most enticing overtures, although it was approached from both top and bottom. Do you see that longish strip of red slabs just where you would have to stand, and over which you would have to climb? Well, they are loose, my boy, and growl and groan whenever you touch them. To send them down would endanger the lives of countless sheep and lambs, and holiday-makers on the slopes below, and is not to be thought of. So come away, for I don't believe anything in this big quarry, or on its eastern buttress, is climbable. But as we enter the small quarry there are a couple of climbs, or rather a single climb with a variation, up its western buttress. When first climbed, tennis shoes were used. Two sloping slabs have to be walked over, and to know that one can gum securely his understandings to the rock is delightful, but these illegitimate appliances are not required by the light-(?)footed mountaineers in properly shod boots.

Here is the little quarry. Do you see that place in the north corner? That is the *small quarry corner climb*. "The authority on snowcraft," who, by the way, is a (hob-)nailing good man on rocks, showed me how to do it. We will climb it if you like. It is not high. You see the first stage is about the worst. When you get to the top of this platform catch hold of the knob of rock above, on the right, and swing yourself into the steps still farther to the right, then watch your balance for the next pull up, and the rest is fairly easy. Now a few yards along we will descend by another route. It is called the *small quarry face-climb*. The lower part is also the worst, but a place at the top requires care. This climb was shown me by an ornithological friend the other day, who discovered it in trying to find the corner climb which I had previously told him of. I don't think there is another route in this quarry, so there is no use your looking for one.

Come along then, still farther round. You see the character of the rock has changed and become rounded, friable, and loose. There is a climb on it called the *small quarry east buttress climb*, but it is an unpleasant one. This little narrow arête of rock running up to the buttress is where the climb begins. First, a pull up of four or five feet to an overhanging ledge, and then the rest is more risky, from the looseness of the stones, than difficult.

All the rest of the cliffs beyond this, to the entrance to the Hunter's Bog, are quite easy, so we won't put off time with them at present, but hurry across and up the Guttled Haddie. You, as a good

Scottie, will not require an explanation of that name. From the top of this sandy shoot and shallow gully we trend northwards below the rocks of the Lion's Head, over grassy slopes. Anywhere above this will "go," and give a delightful face-climb; but come farther round and tell me what you think of this beautiful little chimney. It is about twenty-five feet long, and so delightfully narrow that when once you are in it fits so tight that it is difficult to get out again. There is another good chimney below us, certainly the best in the Park, but we have not time to visit it to-day. It lies above the Piper's Road in the Hunter's Bog. As I have heard that the volunteers' bullets do not always hit the target, it is better to choose a time when they are not practising to visit this climb.

Well, here we stand at last, exactly 822 feet above the level of the sea. Come and sit down, and I will enjoy a pipe while you admire the view. Can you pick out Ben Lomond? See, there it is right over the water that appears to the left of and beyond Dalmeny Park. Now don't imagine you can see the Cobbler, for I am sure you can't. I have seen occasionally the north hills of the Arrochar group (over the right shoulder of Ben Lomond), Ime, Vane, and Vorlich, but the Cobbler never. There are Ben Venue and Ben Ledi; they are often seen. The latter appears just over the highest point visible of the Forth Bridge. Can you make out Ben Lawers? The line for that is Inchcolm. Schiehallion lies a little to the right of it. There, behind you, man, are the Pentlands, where the dwellers in this learned city can stretch their long legs whenever they have a mind to. The Moorfoots and the Lammermuirs are a little more to the left. They are also a grand place to get fresh air and exercise. But, alas, there is not a rock climb among the lot that I know of. Only a small ridge on the face of Caerketton, above Swanston, gives what is hardly worth calling a rock climb.

Why, in writing you this letter, I thought I had you with me all the time, so the sooner you come through, the sooner you will be convinced that the Modern Athens is no a pad place for hills and rocks whateffer.—Yours combatively,

"AULD REEKIE."

---

LINDERTIS, *December 1895.*

DEAR MR EDITOR,—This year's balance-sheet shows the funds of the Club to be in a satisfactory condition. Still there can be no doubt that a large increase in our income is much to be desired. I think, sir, you would not be averse to a little more money being annually voted for the Journal. And while we have been so fortunate, through the kindness of Mr Gilbert Thomson, as to have a room in his office always at our disposal, we all hope some day that we may be able to have a permanent club-room of our own.

The only means of raising more funds is by increasing our entrance fee or subscription, or both. I do not think there would be much

objection to raising the entrance fee to £2. 2s., and the annual subscription of *new* members to £1. 1s., and I do not believe it would deter many from joining.

The question is whether any considerable number of old members would leave the Club if the subscription of *all* was raised to £1. 1s. Of course we should not suffer pecuniarily if we lost half our members, but I am sure that none of us would be willing to see old members retiring from the Club on account of an increased subscription.

The Alpine Club had the other day to face the same difficulty, and adopted what I cannot but think a most objectionable course—namely, while making the increased subscriptions compulsory on all new members, they invited old members to increase theirs, but left it optional for them whether they choose to do so or not.

The matter is not one of pressing importance, but it may have to be dealt with in the future, and I take this opportunity of bringing it under the consideration of members.—I am, sir, yours truly,

H. T. MUNRO.

---

#### QUALIFICATION OF CANDIDATES.

THE Committee has had under discussion the climbing qualifications which shall be considered sufficient for admission to the Club, and has decided for the present to pass only such Candidates as can satisfy the following conditions, or what in the opinion of the Committee may be deemed equivalent :—

I. The Candidate's list to contain a *minimum* record of twelve climbs (at least six of them in Scotland), each of which shall be either the completed ascent of a 3,000 feet mountain, or a climb involving some little difficulty.

*For example*—Ben Lomond, Cioch na h'Oighe from the Punch-bowl, a traverse of the Cobbler, the Ennerdale Pillar Rock, or the steep side of Ben Ledi in snow, would count ; but summer ascents of Goatfell, Ben Venue, Merrick, or the Old Man of Coniston would *not* count, (though of course all such minor ascents might be mentioned).

*Note*.—Repeated ascents of the same mountain shall under no circumstances count as more than two climbs.

II. The climbs to have been spread over three years or more.

III. The list to include at least two snow climbs, in Scotland or elsewhere.

*N.B.*—The above does not apply to Members of the Alpine Club or to Candidates who, under Rule XV., may be eligible on account of contributions to Science, Art, or Literature in connection with Scottish mountains.

---

BACK NUMBERS OF THE S.M.C. JOURNAL.—The Rev. Dr Colin Campbell, The Manse, Dundee, will give 4s. each for Nos. 8 and 9 (May and September 1892) of this Journal, in order to complete a set.

## MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

CLIMBING IN THE BRITISH ISLES.—II. WALES AND IRELAND.

WALES by W. P. HASKETT SMITH ; IRELAND by W. C. HART.

With thirty-one illustrations by ELLIS CARR. London : Longmans, Green, &amp; Co.

HAVING ticketed and labelled his native land, Mr Haskett Smith, with the assistance of Mr W. C. Hart, performs, in this little book, the same friendly office for the climbs of Wales and Ireland. It would be insincere to suggest that all the success of the former book has descended upon this one. Some of the faults indeed of No. 1, which we noted in reviewing it, have been corrected in No. 2. Specially is this true of the alphabetical arrangement, which, in the volume now before us, has given place to a rough (but quite satisfactory) attempt at classification, under which the different peaks, ridges, corries, and climbs are grouped under the mountains to which they belong, and two main headings—"Where to Stay," and "Where to Climb"—enable the perplexed reader to proceed with some serenity of understanding through the varied materials of which the work is composed. Portions, indeed, of the Welsh section could scarcely be improved upon. "Snowdon" is really excellent, if we except the frequent allusions to fatal accidents, which impart a positively gory complexion to the work, and encourage the popular delusion that mountaineering spells danger and death. This is unfortunate, to say the least of it, yet what else could the ignorant "tripper" suppose when he reads such a sentence as this : "The Cwm has no attractions for a climber, yet at least one life has been lost in it" !

There is the same practical directness about this book as about "England," the same capacity for stating a simple fact in a simple and interesting manner, and we doubt not that both climbers who know the ground and climbers who don't will climb all the better for having "Haskett Smith" in their pockets.

The doubt, however, is suggested even to the most superficial reader, whether Wales and Ireland are ripe for treatment, and whether it would not have been better to let them blush unseen till a little more history had gathered around them. Of Wales, perhaps, this criticism is scarcely just, for, like the Lake District, it has been a happy hunting ground for the Christmas and Easter mountaineer for years past. But who that has read Mr Hart's interesting and suggestive account of Irish coast scenery can fail to see that the many beautiful climbs in which he interests us have scarcely even been attempted. The truth is Ireland is in its mountaineering infancy, and in a work professing to answer the question "Where to climb," it is a little casual to refer the inquiring reader to a series of cliffs which have never been climbed, and which, if they resemble most sea cliffs, are either extremely difficult or extremely inaccessible. For the rest, Mr

Hart's essay is full of interesting and instructive information. The pity only is that it should be so much out of place in this book.

There are minor details we take exception to, such as the irritating system of printing initials instead of names in the records of ascents. Like all compromises, this device is most unsatisfying, and it will keep the speculative reader in a constant *furor* of conjecture as to the owners of the initials. For our own part, we think the names should be given or nothing at all, and as between those two alternatives much can be said for the latter, except in really memorable first ascents.

The conclusion, however, of the whole matter is, that the book taken as a whole will be found eminently useful, and probably its joint authors will desire for it no higher praise.

---

TWO SEASONS IN SWITZERLAND. By Dr Herbert Marsh, R.N.  
London: T. Fisher Unwin.

THE would-be author of every new book of travel or adventure finds himself at the very outset of his task face to face with the question of whether he is justified in making any demand upon the public sympathy or interest. Is he prepared to provide his readers with something out of the ordinary run in the way of incident? If not, he must at least be able to throw some new light on what incident there is, and justify the telling of an old story by some happy gift in the manner of its narration. But in addition to these elementary and general considerations of matter and manner, the author who claims to deal with the sport of mountaineering in Switzerland has this very important point to consider, that his work must necessarily invite comparison with that of men whose books have long been accepted as classics in this branch of literature.

Now, whether the author of "Two Seasons in Switzerland" was in any way influenced by such considerations in deciding to make his bow to the public we have no means of knowing. Judging by the result before us, we should say he was not, for, taken all over, his book is about the most unsatisfactory production in this branch of literature we have ever seen.

That Dr Marsh would have anything quite new to tell us we did not expect. Switzerland has too long filled the rôle of playground to the rest of Europe to allow us to cherish any hopes of that kind. That he did some very good work we most willingly and gladly allow. Indeed some of his guideless ascents may be described as exceedingly meritorious performances, such as any mountaineer might be proud of, let alone a man in his second season. Nevertheless the majority of the climbs described in his book are of the most ordinary kind—climbs done every day during the season, and not a few of them by men who have never previously set foot upon a mountain. His accounts even of the best of them sound to most of us "familiar as an oft-told tale," and while they would have been quite in place in a

book printed for private circulation only, are likely to awaken no interest in any one outside the circle of his own personal friends.

For the rest, we may say at once that the book shows no great power either of description or reflection, and is utterly without any suspicion of literary finish. Such is the tottery condition of many of the sentences, indeed, that no support of a merely moral kind, nothing short of a pair of strong grammatical crutches, could by any possibility meet their case. Minor blemishes are the author's eccentricity in the matter of nomenclature, and his too free use of rather objectionable slang phrases. The adaptation of nautical expressions to mountaineering exigencies is occasionally amusing, and serves on the whole to impart an air of freshness and raciness to the narrative.

The illustrations, while adding little of artistic value to the book, supply to some extent the want of a table of contents. Still this omission is a serious drawback, the more so as there is nothing in the body of the book to indicate where any particular ascent is to be found, or what ascent is being described at any particular place, without a search that is both confusing and irritating.

And yet, notwithstanding all its shortcomings, there is something attractive about the book. It breathes throughout the cheery self-reliant spirit of the true mountaineer, and we lay it down with a feeling of regret that we have been able to say so little in its favour.

---

PANORAMA SEEN FROM THE OBSERVATORY ON THE SUMMIT OF BEN NEVIS. R. S. Shearer & Son. Stirling, 1895. Price 1s.

MESSRS R. S. SHEARER & SON are to be congratulated on the excellent panorama of hill-tops as seen from the summit of Ben Nevis, which they have just issued. It is exceedingly well executed, and singularly accurate in detail. The admirable method of colouring adopted—brown for the nearer hills, purple for the middle distance, and light blue for the horizon—simplifies the perspective in a wonderful way, and it is just the thing wanted to enable any one to understand the view. It is eight feet long by four and a half inches wide. The only mistakes that can be detected are very trifling, and are hardly worth mentioning. But we are under the impression that Garbh Bheinn (Garven) and not Creach Bheinn in Morven is usually called the Saddle, and the height of the former, according to the 6-inch map, is 2,903 and not 2,500 feet. It also seems improbable that Ireland can be seen from Ben Nevis, for the distance of the visible horizon from a height of 4,400 feet is but eighty-one miles; but as it is just possible that the high ground of the interior may come into view, we do not wish to dogmatise on that point. When this has been said, we have nothing but praise to bestow, and we have no hesitation to recommend every one contemplating a visit to the summit to provide himself with one of these excellent panoramas, for he will certainly find it a most useful and pleasant aid to his enjoyment of the view.

THE SCOTTISH  
**Mountaineering Club Journal.**

---

---

Vol. IV.

MAY 1896.

No. 20.

---

---

THE FORMATION OF THE SCOTTISH  
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.

BY PROFESSOR G. G. RAMSAY.

I HAVE undertaken to put on record a short account of the birth of our Club. I should like to execute this task in a spirit of modesty and simplicity, not as though our Club had done wonders of any kind, or performed feats to be boasted of, but yet in a spirit of satisfaction and mutual congratulation in the consciousness that the Club has already shown that it may be the means of cultivating a love of the hills; of spreading a taste for hill-climbing as well as a familiarity with our Scottish hills; of promoting amongst our healthy-bodied and healthy-minded youth a knowledge of the fact that the climbing of hills, to those who pursue it with true mountaineering craft, affords a pastime and a sport as various, as exciting, and as exhilarating as any other kind of sport known to man; and last, not least, of promoting among kindred souls that delightful kind of friendship and companionship with which Nature seems specially to reward those who seek her in her solitudes.

If any justification for the existence of our Club were needed, it would be found in the series of articles which have appeared in this Journal on the History of Scottish Mountaineering. The present article professes to be the last of the series—so far as the title is concerned it might almost claim to be the first. For in very truth what have all these articles told us about Scottish mountaineering? They have told us of little except of its practical non-



existence up to the present day. They have described the feelings of horror and terror, sometimes amounting to loathing, excited in the minds of the early travellers by the wildness and difficulties of our hills. They have told us how the most lovely scenes of Highland scenery excited, not admiration, but disgust and repulsion in the minds even of educated travellers down to the end of the last century.

The delightful volume edited by Mr Hume Brown contains a collection of early Travels in Scotland, beginning with the famous Walking Tour of Edward I. in 1295, and extending down to the end of the seventeenth century; but from the beginning to the end of that volume, much as we read of the horrors and savage nature of the Highlands and their inhabitants, we can find only one single expression which betrays any admiration of rude natural scenery, where Sir William Brereton (1636) speaks of "the mighty high rock of Ellsey" (Ailsa Craig) as being "a much to be admired piece of the Lord's workmanship." Captain Burt, in 1730 and later, speaks of a modest glen near Inverness as "most horrible" and "a terrifying sight." "The huge naked rocks" near Fort-William "produce the disagreeable impression of a scabbed head," the whole Highlands "are of a dismal gloomy brown, most of all disagreeable when the heather is in bloom." It is no wonder that he hurries on "to conclude this description of the outward appearances of the mountains which I am already tired of as a disagreeable subject," and tries to relieve it by conjuring up, in contrast, the happy dream of "poetical mountains, smooth and easy of ascent, clothed with verdant flowery turf, where shepherds tend their flocks"; and ends by apostrophising his friend: Ah! after all this, "what do you think of Richmond Hill, where we have spent so many hours together, delighted with the beautiful prospect?"

Later on, we have the "beautiful prospects" of Captain Burt exchanged for the true and simple Nature-worship and Nature-study of Wordsworth and his school, whose semi-philosophical, semi-poetical musings and wanderings were quickened into life and action, so far as Scotland was

concerned, by the picturesque and historical imagination of Sir Walter Scott. But Scott, alas! bequeathed to us not only "the Lady of the Lake": he left to us also as an abiding inheritance, as a special creation of his own, that "stupid clamjamfray of tourists which the Lady of the Lake has let loose upon the place," so that (thus speaks his great friend Macculloch) "Loch Katrine seems to be in a fair way of being belaked by the same unholy crew which has made the English lakes a standing nuisance." We must not deny that "the unholy crew" have done good to Scotland in their own way—they have made themselves dear to the hearts of hotel-keepers, of railway and steamboat companies, and of other classes too numerous to name; but they have not done much for the Scottish hills, they have not added to their charm, to their picturesqueness, or their solitude. Their most potent influence in this direction (beyond the extension of hotel and travelling accommodation, which we must in all justice put down to their credit) has been the stimulus afforded to the production of that modern monstrosity, the Tourists' Guide-book, by whose latest efforts the whole country, with its scenery, history, and inhabitants, is described "as she is seen" by the luxuriously-seated traveller from the promenade deck of the "Columba," or from behind the plate-glass windows of a West Highland Railway saloon carriage. Such is the only style of mountain literature which pays those who cater for

"Strand and Piccadilly emptied  
On the much-enduring North."

But lest we Scots should be too pleased with ourselves, it is worth noting that Scotland, strange to say, has been behind England in the matter of hill-climbing. I refer not merely to the Alpine Club—not only the earliest but by far the most distinguished mountaineering club in the world—but to the diffusion of hill pedestrianism in England long before it became a general pursuit—indeed it has never yet become a general pursuit—in Scotland. My own taste for hill-climbing, first inspired by the enthusiastic example of my father, was also largely stimulated by the fact that as a schoolboy I spent several summer holidays in English

scenery resorts. In those days, as now, the hills of the Lake district of Derbyshire and Wales were full of pedestrians—boys, young fellows, and grown men—scouring over the country with knapsacks on their backs, and rejoicing to spend the cream of their holiday in this way. I have never come across anything like this in Scotland. There are various reasons, no doubt, to account for the difference—the greater inaccessibility of Scotland; the absence of good country inns; the greater compactness and general get-about-ability of the southern hill districts; last, and most important, the sporting character of Highland properties, and the necessity for quiet which sport entails. In fact, the mountain energies of the Highlander have all been consumed in the direction of sport; and though sport generally takes men so much over the hills, it is a strange fact how seldom the two qualities—the love of sport, and the love of mountaineering for its own sake—are found combined in the same person. The late Sheriff Alexander Nicolson indeed, one of our own members, gave a delightful account of ascents in Skye in *Good Words* for 1875; but the first to do full justice to the mountaineering capabilities of the Coolins, and to turn to them the attention of the Alpine Club, was Mr Charles Pilkington.

But whatever the explanation, the fact remains that hitherto hill-climbing has been comparatively little practised in Scotland. No special facilities have existed for it. It has been confined mainly to a certain number of stock mountains, lying on the main routes, ascended and re-ascended by well-worn paths, frequented principally by tourists, and that only in the zenith of the tourist season. There has thus been nothing, apart from sport, to suggest to our athletic Scottish youth that besides the charms of football and cricket and bicycling, there was yet room for delightful sport and exercise, and adventure too, in the climbing of the most beautiful hills of the world; and there were no means at all for enabling existing hill-lovers to combine together, and get the benefit of each other's experience.

Added to this, the glory of climbing hills in the winter was unknown. The idea that in Scotland the height of summer is, in some respects, the least interesting—not the

most interesting—of all seasons for exploring hills ; that in winter the mountains are in many respects at their best ; that during such periods of fine weather as frequently occur in winter, especially in time of frost, the air is more keen and clear, the views are wider and more exquisite, the variations in colour, especially in sky and cloud effects, more striking ; the grand outlines of rock and hill more strongly and majestically marked, the gentler sweeps and arêtes and generally all the finer lines are delicately and precisely traced by the contrasts of grey-green grass and black-brown heather, of black rock and dazzling Swiss-white snow ; that there is an enchanting crispness of footing, a racy freshness and buoyancy of air, a delicious sense of variety and unwontedness, almost of adventure, added to the most simple ascents by the conditions of winter climbing, which bring almost to our doors some of the main charms of Alpine mountaineering — all this is new, and our Journal is full of records of the bright pictures of the joy and exhilaration which the members of our Club have found in winter excursions of this kind.

But though we may look for infinite pleasure in Scottish snow-climbing in winter, and make it a legitimate boast that we face similar snow difficulties with proper mountaineering appliances, it would be a mistake to suppose that we can thus gain any adequate conception of snow-work in Switzerland. The peculiar difficulties and dangers of Swiss snow and glacier work are wanting. The conditions presented by one season's snow, accumulating during a single winter and disappearing again by summer time, are wholly different from the marvellous phenomena of ice-life presented by the enormous accumulations above the permanent snow-set level, which it has taken centuries, may be, to effect. We have no crevasses in Scotland, practically no avalanches, except perhaps from steep rocks immediately after a severe snowstorm ; no fear of overhanging ice *névé* or ice cornices ; scarcely any fear of falling stones. We have occasionally come across something like a *bergschrund*—a slit at least too wide to cross—close to the crest of a mountain on its steepest and eastern side, and we have undoubtedly been stopped by overhanging cornices. I saw

a magnificent specimen of such a cornice on the crowning ridge of Braeriach after that remarkable snowstorm of September 1883. It stood out straight to the east, jutting out as it were to meet the snow which had been driving into it from that side. Interesting and enjoyable as our snow-work often is, I am inclined to think, however, that on the whole the snow is rather a help than a hindrance to high climbing in Scotland. It seems to me that difficult and almost impossible places are more often made easy by being filled with snow than *vice versa*. Towards the approach of spring the snow is generally in an excellent state. By successive fallings, thawings, and freezings it has been reduced to a fine consistency; there is little or none of that terrible ploughing through deep soft snow, under a hot sun, which so often in Switzerland makes one despair of ever reaching the top. Steep gullies, almost precipitous, are often plastered right over with a splendid coating of firm frozen snow, hard to cut, but which afford splendid foothold under a well-wielded axe. The angle may often be so steep that the experienced Alpine man can scarce believe it to be safe; but the footing once made is splendid, and with a good head, and steps well cut, the steepest angle may be ascended with perfect safety.

The only real snow danger I have come across is that of losing one's footing in that most delightful of all luxuries—a glissade. There are many good places for glissading to be found; but where the necessary conditions of sufficient steepness and proper snow surface are to be had, it seldom if ever happens that there is a long natural slope free from obstacles, and ending in a safe gradual bottom to bring up at the foot the too impetuous glissader. The course is generally strewn with rocks and boulders, and to lose one's footing on such a slope is a very hazardous matter. Mr Alex. M'Connochie, in the first number of this Journal, relates a narrow escape of this kind which he had in a corrie between the top of Ben Macdhui and the Shelter Stone, and I myself had a similar experience on the slopes of Ben Achallader at the Easter Meet of 1894. I think it worth recording for the sake of a valuable hint it may give to beginners as to

the proper method of stopping oneself when fairly off down a snow slope. Finding with some difficulty a fine long streak of snow, garnished with frequent boulders which I intended to dodge by steering, I tried to start upright, in the proper position; not getting off readily, and thinking there was not enough slipping power in the snow, I sat down carelessly, throwing my feet up, to try a sitting glissade, but behold! before I was fairly in my seat I was off. Taken by surprise, I let my ice-axe go, was pitched forward on to my head, and before I knew where I was, I found myself bounding like a ball over and over, striking against the snow with head and heels alternately, and going faster every second. I knew there was a sudden ending to the slope in rocks about 400 or 500 feet below, and that I was passing over snow peppered with rocks, against one of which my head might come at any moment, and so diminish my interest in all subsequent proceedings.

Happily it flashed through my mind how my brother had once saved himself in a similar predicament in Switzerland, by stretching out his arms and legs as stiffly, and as far as possible, in the form of a St Andrew's cross. I did my best to do the same; but for a time found it impossible to keep arms and legs firmly stretched out. Something seemed to dash them in violently again. Three times I forced out my extremities; each time I felt the pace slacken; but each time they were beaten into my body again by resisting snow, and I bounded on again helter-skelter. The last time I succeeded in keeping them out; and brought myself up with about fifty feet to spare between me and a mass of jagged rocks, which were waiting for me at the bottom. With much complacency I looked up, and marked what a clever line I had taken so as to avoid the stones, scattered with much profuseness on each side of my track. I had lost nothing but my cap—and a little skin.

But if Scotland scarcely presents the features of Alpine snow-climbing, it is otherwise with rocks. All round our shores, all over the Highlands, along the sides or faces of the innumerable lovely dens which are the charm of our river-scenery everywhere in Scotland, and which abound in precipices of every degree of difficulty, we have at hom

and in the use of the best lines, ropes, and in minute details of the art of climbing the Alpine Mass, when all the ropes are broken and now-work, I remember the joy and ease with which a Scotchman took to rocks when we were a chance of them, and how easily we could show the Scotchman that he had learned as in the snow and in the safety of the mountain as he learned in being a good rock-climber. That I have said above as to Scotchmen not being so much in the mountaineering way as the English and the particular. The English and the Scotchman in the Highlands—all more the Englishmen—have from time immemorial roved and braced the art of finding their way up and down the most inaccessible hills, and the Englishmen have thus I believe carried down to us a good deal of hard and dry, if not and nerve, which are not only the strength of the Scotchman, which illustrated with care and practice, makes it all to attain to excellence in a number of the mountaineering craft, and which are ending in every year from the ranks of our S.M.C. in increasing numbers, worthy recruits to the Alpine Club.

One special danger attached to rock-climbing in Scotland I should like to mention. As a rule the hardy rocks of ancient Caedon afford excellent foot and hand-hold—they are not so slippery as the Alps. But our damp climate, especially on the west coast, favours the growth of all kinds of moss, grass, and lichen, which hungrily lay hold of every cranny, and will often grow luxuriantly on bare rock faces, with practically no soil at all beneath them. Where this occurs on the steep smooth shelving rocks, worn smooth perhaps originally by ice, or by continual water-drip, the climber is too apt to trust to beautiful green cushions which look perfectly solid, and are amply large enough to hold him, but which having no sort of holding ground beneath, will slip right away with the first weight put upon them.

I have myself more than once narrowly escaped accidents of this kind; and Mr Pilkington lately wrote to me that he feared that unless the attention of climbers was called to this danger, some fatal slip would some day be the result.

What varieties of rock-climbing may be found in Scot-

land is amply attested by the good work done by our members in Arran, in the Coolins, on the Teallachs, on Suilven, and elsewhere, all as recorded in our Journal. Indeed should I wish to recount in detail how our Club has already largely fulfilled the hopes of its founders; how it has quickened an interest in hill scenery, and the knowledge of our hills; how it has shown that every good hill has many sides, many ways to its top, all full of charm; how it has dissected ranges and ridges, and shown how many and divers points of attack they present, all interesting, many exciting, to the mountaineer (see especially the excellent description and chart of the rock faces of Cir Mhor and Coich na h-Oighe, Arran, in the January 1895 number of the Journal); how it has shown to the young enthusiast in hill-climbing the need of caution, and the value of experience, and given to the more elderly of us the new joy which is to be gained by being allowed to be infected once more by the priceless enthusiasm of youth; how district after district has been attacked, route after route projected and made out by our pioneers; how all Scotland has been laid under contribution—all, I believe, without once, on any single occasion, interfering with the rights of farmers, or tenants, or proprietors, or giving rise to one unseemly altercation; how we have thus already done something to bring home to the hearts and minds of our fellow countrymen the fact that we have here, in our Highland hills, the most delightful and inspiring playground that is to be found from one end of Europe to the other: all this, is it not written in the Journal of the Scottish Mountaineering Club? I could pick out many articles from the Journal, and single out many members by their names, who by their expeditions or their articles have done the work which I attribute to the Club, and laid the basis, I hope, of a good reputation for it. But lest the Club should seem to boast, I will rather tell simply how the Club came into being, and let our successors tell that we came into being to some purpose.

It was on a gloomy foggy morning in the last week of January 1889 when I had just finished my morning lecture—I had perhaps been telling my class that Horace had blundered in calling the hill behind his Sabine farm



*Lucretilis*; that he probably had no idea and didn't care what its name really was; and that I was quite sure he had never climbed a hill in his life—that I was informed that a gentleman was waiting to see me in my retiring-room. "A deputation," I thought, "wanting me to give a lecture to the Young Men's Christian Association, or to take the chair at an anti-Disestablishment meeting!" To my pleasure I found Mr Maylard and a friend. They asked me, "Had I seen the letters in the *Herald*?" "Alas!" I replied, "yes, yes; far too many of them, more letters than ever, and written in worse English than ever; but on what subject? Has the *Herald* been attacking the University with more than its wonted vivacity?" (We could think of nothing but University Bills in those days.) "Oh, no," says Mr Maylard; "about forming a Scottish Alpine Club." This was indeed a delightful surprise, and then I heard the whole story of what had happened.

On the 10th of January had appeared a spirited letter from Mr Naismith, headed "Proposal for a Scottish Alpine Club," in which he had described mountain climbing as "one of the most manly as well as healthful and fascinating forms of exercise"; declared it was "almost a disgrace to any Scotsman whose heart and lungs are in proper order if he is not more or less of a mountaineer, seeing that he belongs to one of the most mountainous countries in the world"; and ended by suggesting the formation of a Scottish Alpine Club, with two kinds of qualifications for membership, one founded on Alpine ascents, one on Scottish. For the latter, perhaps the ascent of six peaks above 3,500 feet might suffice—Baddeley's Guide (in pre-Munroian days) producing a list of seventeen of such summits. In the same letter Mr Naismith pointed out that winter-climbing in the Grampians afforded a very fair substitute, and excellent preparation for subsequent scrambles in the Alps.

This letter may fairly be regarded as the charter of our Club. It was replied to on January 14th by "Cairn"—a shelter name behind which crouched the timid personalities of our faithful and sturdy brother, Mr Gilbert Thomson, whose office has been a shelter-stone to the Club ever since it was formed, and Mr D. A. Archie.

The conjoint "Cairn," while warmly welcoming the idea of the Club, objected to any Alpine reference ; pointed out that height was no test of difficulty ; and dwelt on the advantage which such a club might be to hill enthusiasts, by spreading interest and information on the subject.

Mr Naismith replied sympathetically on the 18th January, and in the *Herald* of the 19th, Mr Maylard came upon the scene. Dating on the 18th, he warmly espoused the idea, and suggested the name of a "Scottish Mountaineering Club," pointing out strong objections to the introduction of the word "Alpine." Being, however, a man of action, Mr Maylard did not confine himself to sympathy. He suggested that a meeting should be called, to which all interested should be invited, and offered himself to receive the names of any gentleman (or lady) who might feel interested in the matter.

Let it never therefore be said henceforth that no good ever came of writing a letter to the newspapers. Here three men perfectly unknown to one another, but bursting with unknown sympathy for each other, found fortunately their point of contact, and upon their happy union, brought about by the *Herald* Advertising Life Agency, were founded the fortunes of our Club.

Within a few days of Mr Maylard's letter to the *Herald* I had the honour of receiving the visit above mentioned. I was delighted beyond measure to hear of the good seed which had been cast upon the ground. I had often longed for the existence of such a club ; as I explained at length to Mr Maylard, I had been for years and years expatiating, in season and out of season, on the delights of hill-climbing, but I had found my enthusiasm invariably met by nothing better than an amused incredulity. With the notable exception to be mentioned, I had never, outside the limits of my own family, met with a single Scotsman who cared seriously to practise the art of mountaineering. That exception was my dear friend, the late Professor Veitch, to whose delightful companionship, of heart and brain and body, over many a steep braeside in Perthshire and Peeblesshire, I owe some of the most charming recollections of my life.

As I have already narrated in this Journal, I founded, along with Professor Veitch and Mr Campbell Colquhoun of Clathick, in the year 1866, the first Mountaineering Club in Scotland. It was called the "Cobbler Club"; its aim was to climb the Cobbler, and whatever other worthy hill could be reached in the course of a Saturday expedition from Glasgow, and to crown the labours of the day by such an evening of social enjoyment as can only be spent by those who have had a sniff of true mountain air during the day.

Needless to say, I entered heartily into Mr Maylard's plans. A second letter from him to the *Herald* acknowledged the receipt of many sympathetic communications; and he expressed the hope that the Club should not be for Glasgow only, but should embrace members from all parts of Scotland.

Things now being ripe, an advertisement was inserted, calling a meeting of all interested in the subject, to be held in the Christian Institute, on the 11th February 1889, under my chairmanship.

The meeting was very hearty. There were about forty present. I explained the object with which the meeting had been called, and sketched shortly the lines on which, in the opinion of the promoters of the meeting, a Mountaineering Club might be formed. The proposal met with a most warm response; and I desire here to call especial attention to the support given to the proposal by three Glasgow gentlemen, none of them likely to become mountaineers themselves, but who all loved the hills, and were all anxious to help a movement likely to lead our vigorous youth in that direction. As a Highlander and true Scot himself, and as one knowing full well of what vital importance to the character of our youth is the character of our pursuits, Dr Donald Macleod spoke very tellingly on the subject, and created a spirit of enthusiasm in the meeting, which has characterised our proceedings ever since.

Two letters, also in strong commendation, were read out—one from Mr Charles Gairdner, late manager of the Union Bank, who kindly offered to act as Treasurer to the Club; and one from the late Dr A. B. M'Grigor. To this

letter, and its writer, I wish to refer with especial respect. His name will illustrate in a special way one of the features of the Club—viz., that we welcome not only hill-climbers, but all hill-lovers; those who in writing, in science, in art, or in any other way, have felt and furthered the glory of the hills. Dr A. B. M'Grigor was honourably and affectionately known and admired in many departments of life and work; but few perhaps to-day remember that he was an enthusiastic mountaineer. Not exactly of the climbing sort: for he never had the time, or perhaps the physique, for high Alpine work. But there never was a man who was more a mountaineer at heart. He loved Switzerland, he knew Switzerland, he knew every scene and detail and incident connected with Swiss mountaineering as very few members of the Alpine Club know them. He knew the topography of Switzerland almost as well as he knew the topography of Jerusalem. He devoured the *Alpine Journal*; and all the glories of high Alpine work had passed into his heart. His health, alas! was already failing when he encouraged the formation of our Club, and was made one of its first Vice-Presidents, along with Professor Veitch and Sir Alexander Christison; but I rejoice that he was still able to give his sympathy to the starting of the Club, and the Club may well feel proud in reckoning him as one of its founders.

Let me record that once again I came across a gentleman whose knowledge of the Alps was of the same kind as Dr A. B. M'Grigor's. Snowed-up for a week at Saas-fée in September 1887, I met an Edinburgh gentleman, elderly, of the name of Hayward. We soon discerned that he was an absolute mine of information about the Alps. No great climber or walker, he came every year to Switzerland, and acquired a knowledge of the passes, ascents, and routes of the country quite unrivalled. Whether he had been to a particular valley or not, he knew all about it, and could give every particular of height, distance, and accommodation. Switzerland was, in fact, the love of his life.

I must say one word more about Professor Veitch, one of the most notable of our original members. We all were proud to have him as our second President, and we were

all grieved when he passed away, in sight of his own dear Peeblesshire hills, in September 1894. He had done much for the mountains of Scotland. No more enthusiastic lover of wild hill scenery was there in the whole land: probably no man living had been a more faithful worshipper, a more incessant climber of hills, especially in his own border country, from the days of his early boyhood. He has consecrated that passion in his poems, full of pathos, full of the tenderest and truest interpretation of every hill sight and scene, full of the spirit of the mountains as it spoke true and fresh to his pellucid soul in his solitary mountain rambles.

And along with Professor Veitch, I may be permitted to name one who was an intimate friend and companion of his—one who, like him, both Professor and Poet (unwonted combination!), had perhaps as fine a sense of the splendour of wild Highland scenery as any poet of this century—Principal Shairp. Of him Mr Francis T. Palgrave finely says: "It was the wildness, the vast *loca pastorum deserta*, the asperity of desolation, the glory touched with gloom of the Highland world, by which Shairp was penetrated;" while of "The Bush aboon Traquair" he says that it is "distinguished by such gracious exquisiteness of sentiment and melody, that it should singly be enough to ensure him an abiding-place in that unique and delightful company—the song-writers of Scotland." The very titles of his lyric poems show us how he revelled in the hills; they carry us over all the tops which Scottish mountaineers love most; and what finer picture of high moorland was ever painted than his "Moor of Rannoch" ?—

"Beuchaille Etive's furrowed visage  
To Schihallion looked sublime,  
O'er a wide and wasted desert,  
Old and unreclaimed as time.

Yea! a desert wide and wasted,  
Washed by rainfloods to the bones,  
League on league of heather blasted,  
Storm-gashed moss, grey boulder-stones;

Mountain-girdled—there Bendoran  
To Schihallion calls aloud,

Beckons he to lone Ben-Aulder,  
He to Nevis, crowned with cloud.

Cradled here old Highland rivers,  
Etive, Cona, regal Tay,  
Like the shouts of clans to battle,  
Down the gorges break away.

And the Atlantic sends his pipers  
Up yon thunder-throated glen,  
O'er the moor at midnight sounding  
Pibrochs never heard by men."

We may gratefully remember one who has thus described the favourite hunting-ground of our Club. We must not forget that he and other older men who had drunk in the spirit of Wordsworth have done much to help us to enjoy and love the mountains. They did much to foster, to fan, and to purify the mountaineering spirit, and they have for ever rescued it from degenerating into mere animal athleticism.

To return to our first meeting on February 11th, 1889. I have as yet named scarcely any but Glasgow names; but that was an accident of the time and place of meeting. We were already assured of the support of men in Edinburgh and the East country; and when the provisional Committee set to work to read their letters and compare notes, they soon found they had names enough to represent all parts of the country, and to justify the title resolved on at the first meeting of the "Scottish Mountaineering Club." Several Alpine Club men had already volunteered to join; and when after several meetings of the Sub-committee the Club was fairly constituted on March 11th, the Sub-committee announced that the Club would have no difficulty in starting with a list of nearly one hundred original members.

Mr Frank C. Hartley and Mr Colin B. Phillip, both Alpine Club men, had been present at the first meeting; Mr J. H. W. Rolland, A.C., Mr Robert A. Robertson, A.C., and our sturdy pillar, faithful in New Zealand as in Scotland, Mr J. G. Stott—soon to be made Editor of the Journal—put in a very early appearance on the scene; Sir Alex. Christison took the matter warmly up; needless to say,

Mr Hugh T. Munro sniffed the new proposal, the moment it was in the air, from his Forfarshire heights; Aberdeen was represented by Mr Alex. I. M'Connochie and the Rev. George A. Smith, A.C.; Dundee, St Andrews, Selkirk, and many a place besides, sent in their contingents. Thus was the Club definitely constituted on March 11th, 1889; and I had the great honour, which I shall always greatly appreciate, of being designated as its First President. It may be interesting to note that out of the number of 94 original members with which the Club started, 14 were members of the Alpine Club; 17 came from Edinburgh; 13 from various other towns in the East country; 12 from England; while the remainder were from Glasgow and the West of Scotland. On the occasion of each annual dinner some notable member of the Alpine Club has been present: the President of that Club, Mr Horace Walker, indeed an original member, honoured us with his presence at the dinner of 1891, and accompanied some of us in an expedition next day when we climbed the Whangie.

It would be out of place in an account like this to do more than give the names of those who actively took part in the formation of the Club. This I have already done; but I must not forget the Rev. John Steel, an original member of Committee; and I must add one word of special recognition of the services of our Hon. Secretary, Mr Maylard, our Hon. Librarian, Mr Gilbert Thomson, and our Hon. Treasurer, Mr Naismith, all three have shown an enthusiasm for the interests of the Club which is beyond all praise. One member, who joined us after the formation of the Club, in November 1890, must be named—Mr William Douglas. Under his editorial hands the literature of the Club bids fair to be as good as its climbing: he himself does it honour in both capacities. The first number of the Journal, with Mr Stott as editor, appeared on January 1st, 1890.

One more point I should like to refer to with gratification. In my opening remarks at the original meeting of February 11th, 1889, I laid strong emphasis on the fact that I and my friends had no desire to see the proposed Club mixed up with any attempt to force rights-of-way. We

did not desire the Club to become a stravinging or marauding Club, insisting on going everywhere at every season, with or without leave, and indifferent to the rights and the enjoyments of farmers, proprietors, and sportsmen. That position, I am thankful to say, the Club has consistently maintained. In our winter climbs we have been welcomed and assisted wherever we went; in our summer climbs, our members have not treated the mountains as exclusively their own, and have recognised that they are capable of affording more kinds of sport than one. Deer-stalking is a rare and noble sport, identified for centuries with the Highlands: a sport in which a considerable part of the *Highland* population are interested in various ways; and it is a sport for which a certain amount of quiet and exclusiveness is essential. Where such exclusiveness has been excessive, and beyond the necessary requirements of sport, it has too often been the result of the want of consideration on the part of tourists themselves, who, pushing themselves in everywhere, after the true fashion of the Briton when he is away from his own home, in thoughtlessness or defiance, and with no particular end to serve except that of pleasing themselves and asserting their independence, have frequently spoilt sport when a little inquiry or forbearance would have pointed out to them some other direction in which they could have got all the pleasure they wanted for themselves without interfering with the pleasure of any other person.

No one who has experienced what it is to have a long carefully-planned stalk marred at the last moment for the day—it may be for several days—by the blundering obtusion of a southern tourist in some perfectly unnecessary place, will fail to appreciate the excellence of the Club rule that while we love the mountains we desire to take the utmost pains to prevent our enjoyment of them interfering with that of other people. The fact that Cameron of Lochiel and the Marquis of Breadalbane have been our first Honorary Presidents, and show a warm interest in the Club, is sufficient proof that we know nothing of the theory which assumes that proprietors form the only class whose rights and wishes as to the disposal of land should be disregarded.



The periodical meetings of the Club have been so successful that a word should be said about their origin. The first informal gathering of members for a climb was held on Friday, 1st April 1889, when Dr Coats, Prof. Jack, Messrs Mark Davidson, Gilbert Thomson, Munro, and myself slept at Lochearnhead with the intention of going over Ben More to Stobinich. The Saturday produced a raw east wind with mist on the tops, developing later into sleet and snow. Prof. Jack left us at the base; but the rest of us in spite of this mist, bitter east wind, and driving snow, made our way by compass and aneroid with perfect correctness: at first up Stobinich, then down into the gap that divides Stobinich from Ben More, and then up Ben More and down on the other side. We were rather proud of our success under the conditions of the day. Beyond a grateful introduction for some of us to the beauty of snow crystals, the main incidents of the day were that having unluckily taken leather instead of worsted gloves, I got all but frost-bitten in my fingers; and that another member of the party in descending made a rather serious slip, which well illustrated the uses of the rope.

In October of the same year Naismith, Stirling, Watt, and Gilbert Thomson had a meet at Arrochar, described in the Journal; at Easter 1890 Coats, Thomson, and Naismith were climbing in the Black Mount; and on 1st January 1891 there was another informal meet at Lochearnhead, described by Mr Maylard, at which Fraser-Campbell, Lester, Maylard, Naismith, and Gilbert Thomson were present. By that time the idea of having regular meets, officially arranged beforehand, had been talked of, and the first meet of the kind took place at the Crook Inn on Tweed, at the suggestion of Prof. Veitch, on Friday, 27th February 1891; and on the next day, to Mr Veitch's great satisfaction, the whole party went up the Broad Law, a hill which throughout his life had been one of his greatest favourites. This was followed by a meet at Dalmally at Easter 1891, and since then each New Year and Easter has seen an ever-increasing representation of the Club at some Highland centre.

And now, long may the Club live and prosper! New as its aim and work is in some respects, let us remember that there have been good men before us who have pointed the way to the hills in Scotland and elsewhere, and let us try to live up to the best of what they did and felt. We have many new realms to conquer; may we conquer them and enjoy them when conquered, in the true mountaineering spirit, and do everything we can to encourage that spirit in the young generation which is rising around us.

## THE CORRIES ROUND ACHALLADER.

BY HERBERT C. BOYD.

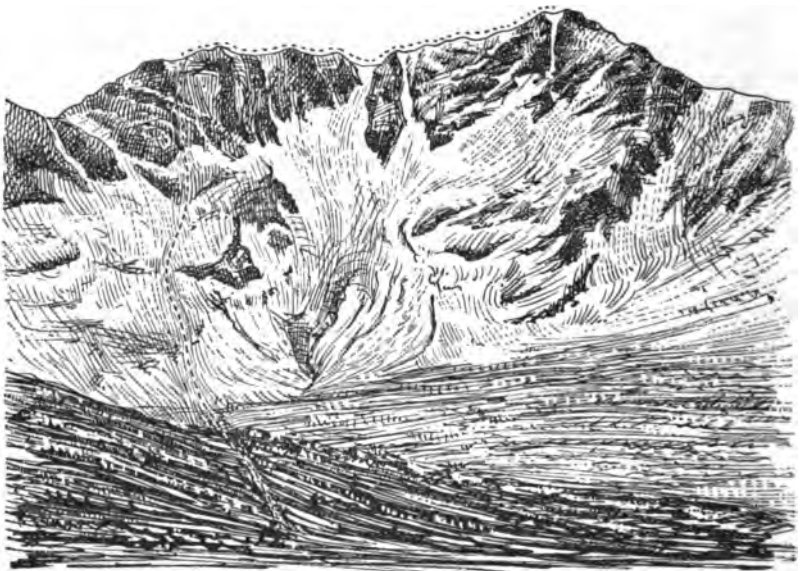
HOW many members of this Club, I wonder, are acquainted with the farm-steading of Achallader?—that small group of buildings clustering, for company, as I fancy, round the solitary old ruin which stands like a hoary sentinel on the very verge of the Moor of Rannoch, and which looks out, as it has done for centuries, over the wide expanse of swelling moorland towards the rolling hills beyond. The farm is an extensive one, and is occupied by a numerous household; but so far as intercourse with the outer world is concerned, it is lonely. The railway passes quite close to it; the mouldering grey keep which overlooks it must, indeed, be a familiar object to the eyes of all travellers to Fort-William; but I should think that it has hitherto held itself in comparative seclusion from the restless surge of nineteenth-century civilisation. It watches the busy and the pleasure-seeking world flash past it from day to day, but suffers it not to disturb its ancient repose. The character of the only approach to it—from Bridge of Orchy—certainly does not suggest that its seclusion is often disturbed. And yet the place is worthy of a visit, and once visited is likely to draw you back. The tired city man, in search of rest and fresh air, could find no purer or more peaceful spot to recuperate his powers; for the angler there is Loch Tulla, scarcely a mile below, fed with scores of streams pouring from the hills, all teeming with fish; while the climber who delights in long lung-filling tramps over the hills, or in scrambling among their black and savage corries, can here find abundant scope for his favourite pastime. Two rugged mountains overshadow it behind—Beinn an Dothaidh (3,267 feet), which lies two miles to the south, and Beinn Achallader (3,403 feet), a mile and a half to the E.S.E. The summit of Beinn Creachan (3,540 feet), which is three and a half miles to the east, is concealed by the projecting shoulder of Beinn Achallader. These mountains (not to mention others farther away, but quite accessible) all possess fine corries on their northern faces; Beinn Creachan has also an eastern

corrie, separated from the northern one by a shoulder which runs north-east, forming the march between the counties of Perth and Argyle. It was with the view of exploring some of these little-known corries that a party, consisting of William Brown, A. E. Robertson, and myself, was organised towards the end of last January, and fixed on Achallader Farm as a base of operations.

When we stepped on to the platform at Bridge of Orchy that Saturday evening, the very essence of gloom appeared to have descended on the face of nature. The night was black as pitch. Dark, heavy masses of cloud came hurrying up from the south, accompanied by strong wind and a drizzling rain. Nothing could look more unpromising than the prospects of mountaineering in the depth of winter under such conditions. Having donned our "wettermantels," adjusted our "rucksacks," and furnished our precious lantern with a candle purchased at the village store, we were set on the track by *the* policeman of those parts, and off we stepped into the dark on our night march.

And what a march that was! If we had to cross one stream, we had to cross a hundred—the road was simply intersected by them at intervals of every fifty yards—and no mere rivulets, but formidable mountain torrents, whose roar could be heard through the darkness long ere we reached them. Then it was "Lantern-bearer to the front, and light the way across!" and the bearer of the saving light would gingerly pick his way across on such stepping-stones as were to be found, then turn the cheering beams on his benighted comrades on the farther side, and encourage them with shouts to leap with confidence on the slippery stones that wobbled treacherously in midstream. What we should have done without that lantern I shrink from contemplating. And every now and then it would flicker and go out, and there would be much huddling together and a vast expenditure of matches before it could be rekindled. But "the longest lane has a turning"; before half-past eight the friendly gleam of the lights of Achallader announced that our wanderings were at an end, and the warm welcome of our host, Mr Stewart, and a hot supper banished from our minds the perils of the road.

It was a stormy morning when Brown and I set off for Beinn Achallader, which was to be our first object of attack. A strong gale was blowing from the south, with stinging showers of hail, and the smoking of the snow on the ridges warned us of what we might expect on those altitudes. Following the railway for three-quarters of a mile, we struck up across the heather slopes, gradually mounting till we turned the shoulder of the hill, and came in sight of the north corrie—those crags which, with their dominating peak,



NORTH CORRIE OF BEINN ACHALLADER.

as seen towering above the old firs of Crannoch wood, compel the admiration of the traveller speeding northwards. Fresh snow lay in abundance on the heights, but it was evidently shallow and very powdery, as we could judge from the way in which it swirled and drifted before the fierce wind. It was some comfort to think that, as the wind was from the south, we should enjoy comparative shelter in the corrie. The line of cliffs, half a mile in length, was intersected by several well-defined snow gullies, one large one cutting right up to the summit, which lay to the

extreme right. These gullies, however, did not seem to present any features of particular interest or difficulty. We finally fixed our attention on a very narrow band of snow that dropped straight down the rocks to the far left, for some 500 or 600 feet, and from some distance off looked like a thin silken cord hanging down the face of the precipice. A closer inspection showed, as is invariably the case, that its apparent perpendicularity was illusory. It was, however, exceedingly steep, and filled with hard frozen snow, interrupted in several places with pitches of rock. The walls of the gully, which were glazed with black ice, approached each other at times so closely that I sometimes found the utmost difficulty in avoiding the continuous shower of chips of frozen snow, and occasionally earth and stone, sent down by my leader as he hewed his way upwards. Wherever the gully widened there was no difficulty—merely straightforward step-cutting in good hard snow—except when some exceptionally fierce squall would burst down on us, sweeping in our faces blinding showers of drift, and compelling us to stay our progress till it passed, steadying ourselves meanwhile against it with our axes buried in the firm crust. The rocky pitches, however, already alluded to, offered climbing of another and more interesting order. The snow thinned out, giving place to ice, the pick had some difficulty in finding lodgment in the frozen soil, and the leader had once or twice to get the benefit of “a shoulder.” The last of these pitches, coated entirely with thick ice, was the hardest, and called for a struggle and a shove; then the walls of the gully gradually receded, and a steep snow slope, scoured by pitiless gusts, led to the summit ridge, after a capital climb of two hours’ duration. The full blast of the hurricane, from which we had been partially sheltered during the ascent, instantly caught us fair in the face. Whew! how it roared and howled up here! We have read a famous climber’s description of himself as “afoot with the quiet gods” on some lofty mountain peak. In this instance the description would have been singularly inappropriate. The gods belied the character of tranquillity accorded to them; the reverse of “quiet,” they were, on the contrary, having a most uproarious time of it. Our faces,

however, buried in the recesses of our helmets (what a boon those elegant articles of headgear prove in a blizzard!) were proof against the blast, and felt perfectly snug and warm. We struggled stoutly along in the teeth of the gale, over the half-mile of ridge that still separated us from the summit, and, arriving there, found it undesirable to linger. Nothing was to be seen but the mist scudding before the wind at a headlong pace. The ground had been swept almost bare of snow, but every stone and blade of grass was encrusted with a thick rime that clad them in winter's most delicate drapery, and the icy mist rapidly converted both our hapless selves into veritable representations of Father Christmas. Abandoning all designs we might have at one time entertained of visiting Beinn Creachan that day, we turned our faces homewards and our thoughts to dinner. We kept the ridge in a southerly direction for some distance, then turned and cut straight down hill till we joined the Allt Coire Achallader, and about half-past three reached our snug quarters at the farm.

That evening the wind dropped, the sky cleared, and a sharp touch of frost set in. Before retiring to rest for the night, I stepped out of doors for a little, and my eyes rested on a scene of exceeding beauty. Scarce a cloud was visible in the frosty, star-sprinkled heavens; in the far north the gentle lights of the aurora played softly, and the "silver sickle of the moon" shed a faint radiance over the wide expanse of the moor, while all around the snow-capped hills kept their solemn watch. No fairer scene could rejoice the soul of the mountaineer, or stir brighter hopes for the morrow.

We started for Beinn Creachan the following morning a few minutes after eight o'clock. The railway line was left about halfway through the wood of Crannoch, the projecting shoulder of Meall Buidhe was rounded, and we found ourselves about 9.45 on the shores of the lonely lochan that lies at the base of the northern corrie. The thick ice, which extended from shore to shore, had been rent and cracked by the high wind of the preceding day into multitudes of floes. The morning, though fine, was not as clear as we had anticipated, for the clouds obscured the upper part of

the cliffs, so that we were unable to make a very accurate survey. The corrie consisted of two distinct portions, forming the segment of a circle—Meall Buidhe on the right and Beinn Creachan on the left, connected by an easy col. Grass abounded on the face of the latter, where the rocks were very much broken, but it was covered with a thin sprinkling of loose snow of the "sawdust" genus, quite fresh, not more than a day or two old. One long strip of snow, too open to be called a gully, but the nearest approach to one in the whole face, stretched upwards for a considerable distance till it disappeared in the mist above. If that continued the whole way up, we thought it would offer a fairly obvious route, and lead us to the ridge rather to the right of the summit. Having decided to try it, we wound round the left margin of the little loch, and at ten o'clock reached the foot of the rocks below our strip, where we put on the rope. Brown took the lead, I came next, and Robertson brought up the rear. The first obstacle that confronted us was a frozen waterfall, some ten feet high, whose bulging masses of clear ice promised fair scope for the icemanship of our leader. A few blows of the axe, however, showed that the ice was much too hollow to allow of secure steps being cut, so we turned to the rocks on the left. The water from the fall here oozed through, converting the soil into slime, in which but precarious footing was to be had, and the grasses and reeds, which were the only available handholds, showed a most pernicious tendency to come away in the grasp. With the aid of the spike of an axe, however, jammed in as a support for the foot, Brown struggled up the slime, till he could wedge his body in an outward-sloping crack or ledge in the rock above; then a convulsive wriggle brought him within reach of a firm handhold, whence a haul landed him on the top. His companions presently joined him, much out of breath, they having benefited by considerable strain on the rope. It was the only piece of violent gymnastics of the day. We raced up one or two easy fields of old snow, but had shortly to abandon our "gully" (if what was hardly even a shallow depression could be so called), as farther progress up it was barred by a succession of rather awkward pitches, coated



with ice and treacherous new snow. Turning to the left, we traversed a number of grassy ledges that wound among the rocks. The whole of this north face would, indeed, in summer be nothing more than a simple scramble, owing to its broken character and the abundance of excellent grass, offering an infinite choice of routes; but in its present condition it was far from easy. The light snow that covered every ledge like fine flour was most untrustworthy. Where it concealed the hard layers of old snow, good steps, it is true, could be cut, but this was but seldom; it more frequently overlay turf or scree, frozen so solid that the merest notches could with difficulty be hacked for the feet. Though the angle was provokingly moderate, progress was extremely slow. Only one man could move at a time, and it was a matter of conscience for each to take the utmost care to avoid the possibility of a slip; and even then the anchorage of the two stationary members of the party was often so insecure, and a slip would have been so difficult to check, that the rope served little more than as a "moral support." In such situations, where even a hard blow of the axe could make little impression on the solid earth, the ancient controversy of the respective merits of pick and spike was revived and debated with its pristine fervour.

Zigzagging steadily upwards among the rocks in this fashion, we at length bore once more to the right, where a fairly extensive snow-field above us held out a hope of more reliable steps being obtainable. The only doubt was as to its character when we should reach it. At first we had to scramble up some banks of loose powder that threatened to pour down bodily in an avalanche. Stamping it down into footsteps as best we could, we finally reached some rocks that gave us the hitherto rare luxury of a good hitch. Then some frozen slippery scree had to be traversed before we had the satisfaction of finding ourselves again on the crusted beds of our favourite substance, in which our leader, regardless of incipient cramp, was soon hewing great "soupleens" for the mere joy of the exercise. The angle grew rapidly steeper, until we were ready to stake our last dollar that it was fully  $60^{\circ}$ , though no one was willing to halt to put it to the test of measurement. Below stretched a few

yards of shining snow-field, and the next object on which the eye rested was the lochan, hundreds of feet below; immediately above was apparently a sharp arête, backed by the blue sky—what was beyond that we could not tell. A few more steps solved the question. The fancied arête proved to be the edge of a level snow-field on the verge of the precipice. We leapt triumphantly on to the crest of the mountain, cast off the rope, and scampered up to the cairn, which we reached at half-past two, after four and a half hours of continuous climbing, for about a thousand feet, on almost every foot of which the watchword had been "steadiness and care."

We were now at leisure to feast our eyes on the gorgeous view that had been spread out behind us all the morning, though we had been too steadily occupied to devote much attention to it. The mist on the summit of our mountain had entirely lifted, and an extensive panorama stretched around us on all sides. Far below was Loch Lyon, cradled among hills on which the clouds reposed. To the north the wide expanse of the great moor, dotted with lochs and tarns of every size, extended to the distant fastnesses of Ben Alder, where the sullen grey of Loch Ericht was dimly visible. But the cream of the view was on the western horizon. From the mighty mass of the Blackmount, over which the clouds, tinged with colour by the level rays of the declining sun, drifted in stately movement, a long range of snow-topped mountains spread, peak beyond peak, as far as eye could see, to the towering bulk of Ben Nevis, monarch of them all.

Having despatched a hasty meal, we bundled up the rope, and at 2.45 started on the descent by the north-eastern shoulder. Trotting and galloping over the easy grass slopes, we came home at a rollicking pace, and sat down to dinner at four P.M. Shortly after six o'clock the train caught us up at Bridge of Orchy, and whirled us back to town, congratulating ourselves on having had a first-class holiday, and on having mastered two of the finest corries of that most interesting range.



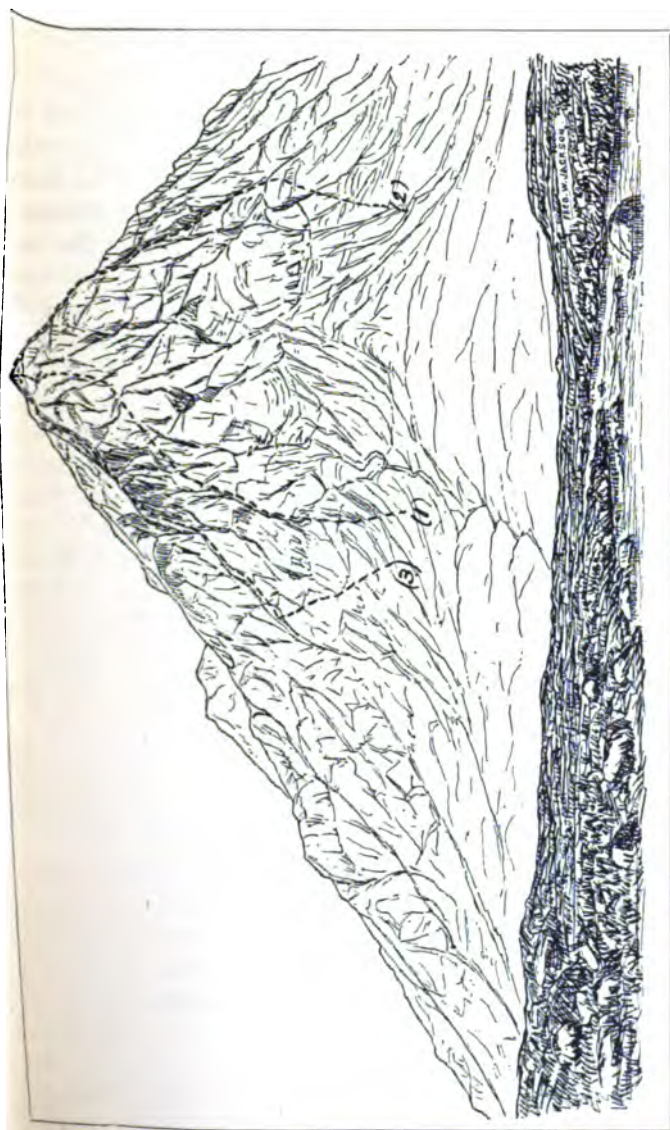
## FOUR DAYS ON BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR.

By J. H. BELL.

BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR—"Great Shepherd of Etive"—is the name of the ridge which runs for nearly four miles on the western side of Glen Etive. The ridge rises over three minor tops to its highest point, Stob Dearg, at its north-east extremity, and from there falls almost precipitously towards Glencoe on the north, and Glen Etive on the east. Much of the north cliff is of the slabby variety very unattractive to climbers, but the east cliff is broken up by gully and ridge into the rugged form admired both by the lover of mountain beauty and the lover of rock-climbing. The first recorded ascent of this eastern cliff was made on 24th March 1894 (see *Journal*, Vol. III., p. 103) by Dr Collie, with Messrs Solly and Collier, during the notable expedition on which they led the way up the Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis. (Their route is the centre one marked 1 on the accompanying Sketch.) The next ascent was made by Messrs Brown, Rose, and Tough in July 1895 (see *Journal*, Vol. IV., p. 62). The north limit of the cliff is well defined by a broad and deep gully extending almost the whole height of the rocks. Tough's party ascended by the great ridge just to the east of this gully. (Route 2 on Sketch.)

Attracted by the account of Dr Collie's climb, and by the noble aspect of the hill from Kingshouse, my friends and I had long hoped to climb its eastern cliff. On 16th November 1895 an opportunity came.

Green, M'Gregor, and I planned a rush to Kingshouse. We wrote nearly a week beforehand to order a trap to meet the afternoon train at Bridge of Orchy. Then the rains descended and the wind blew. The rest of the week was a sample of the very worst Scotch weather. An hour or so before we left Glasgow a friend warned us not to rely on the trap we had ordered, for he knew the ways of the district, and thought it very unlikely that a trap would be sent thirteen miles of hilly road to fetch three unknown visitors. The warning was useful, for we were not too taken aback at finding ourselves at seven o'clock on the platform at



STOB DEARG OF BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR.  
(1) Dr Collie's route. (2) Tough's route. (3) Route described.



Bridge of Orchy Station among luggage calculated on a driving scale, but with no trap.

We carried the baggage down to the refreshment-room for the railway workers, which is near the station, and changed into climbing clothes to walk to Kingshouse. Before we started we heard that a dogcart was going to Inveroran at eight o'clock, which would take our things, and that we might get driven on from there. The chance of getting dry clothes to Kingshouse was not to be missed, so we accepted this offer, and did reach Kingshouse at 11.30 that night—with the kit. Most of the way along the road it rained, but at the highest point the rain changed to snow, which, together with a faint white gleam from the hills through the dark night, gave us some idea of the work awaiting us.

The next day was a day of fitful rain, snow, and sunshine. In the bright intervals the Buchaille appeared covered with snow for 2,000 feet. We left Kingshouse at nine, and making first for the bridge on the Glen Etive road, then struck across the moor about in a line for the summit.\*

The mountain was plainly in very bad order for rock-climbing. Every rock was covered with a thin sprinkling of soft fresh snow, and every few minutes small cascades of loose snow fell off the steeper rocks. We reluctantly gave up the east face, and skirted under the rocks, intending to ascend by the snowy ridge running out towards the south-east (the left hand sky-line in the Sketch), but even this route had its difficulties.

After traversing for some little time, we came out on to the side of a remarkable gully or chasm, not much less than 100 feet deep, and at the place where we struck it—with vertical sides. By descending a few hundred feet we could have turned the gully, but we allowed it to change our plan and drive us on to the rocks after all. So we started up the buttress or ill-defined ridge just on the right (N.E.) side of the gully. For about 300 feet, although the wet

---

\* When the burns are in spate, the Coupal river cannot be comfortably forded, and must be crossed either at this bridge or by the footbridge at Altnafeadh, three miles along the Glencoe road.

snow made it cold work, the rocks were easy. The first difficulty was a long shelf or open chimney, slanting up and across a rock face. This required some care, and after it we decided to rope. The order on the rope was settled as usual with us by tossing. M'Gregor got the lead, I was second, and Green last.

For about 400 feet more we were able to go steadily on till at 2,200 feet we reached the foot of a steep bluff. The rock was a good deal broken up, and several ways that possibly might "go" offered. M'Gregor first tried a chimney right opposite the line of the ridge. It was full of ice, and refused to go. We then moved to the right about twenty feet to a kind of natural staircase, which led up to the lower end of a ledge fifteen feet above. The steps were small, far apart, and covered with ice, so that it was only after a good deal of help from an ice-axe, and many rests to warm his fingers, that M'Gregor wriggled on to the shelf. Unfortunately we had left one of our lengths of rope in the train, so that we were all on one 60-foot rope. M'Gregor required the whole length to reach an anchorage, and I had to unrope. Green then started up, but just as he reached the shelf, his fingers got thoroughly numbed, and he had to be lowered down again. We had now been more than half-an-hour over twenty feet, it was snowing fast, and we were all miserably cold, so that although we had one man past that particular obstacle, we decided to retreat. It was too late for an ascent by an easy route.

We went back to Kingshouse, and on Monday, over Meall a Bhuiridh and the Clachlet to Bridge of Orchy.

On Saturday, 28th December, we returned to Kingshouse, the party this time being J. Napier, G. Napier, M'Gregor, and myself. The weather was again against us. A week of keen frost, with cold winds, broke up on the morning of the 28th, and in the afternoon snow fell, and covered the country to a depth of three or four inches. By the morning of the 29th a rapid thaw had begun. Rock-climbing was impossible. We knew that a big snow-filled gully on the Glencoe face had been ascended more than once (see *Journal*, Vol. III., p. 103), so went out to look for it.

The clouds were low on the hill, we had only a vague idea of the whereabouts of the gully, and the Coupal river drove us too far to the west before we could cross it. We went badly astray, and ascended by Tulachan Corrie, about half-a-mile to the west of the gully. The snow in the corrie was fairly steep at the top ( $46^{\circ}$  measured), but in good order for kicking steps, and gave no sort of difficulty. From the col between Corrie Tulachan and Corrie Cloiche Finne, we walked along the ridge to the top, and then started down a great gully, which runs up quite close to the top. We found afterwards that this was the gully we should have ascended, and that it is just to the west of the ridge climbed by Tough and party. A few feet at the top of the gully were steep, so we roped before starting. The angle soon eased off, and we sat down and slid gaily for 600 or 700 feet. Then we reached a place where the gully widened and steepened, and the burn which we had heard beneath us broke through the snow. The snow in the centre of the gully would not bear, and it was necessary to traverse across and climb down the rocks on the other side. This seemed to be going all right, but it was very slow, and we soon found ourselves with only one hour of daylight left, and apparently more difficulties below. We turned, hurried up the gully and along our track on the ridge, and down the snow slope by which we had ascended, just in time to reach easy ground before darkness came suddenly down, as it does among the hills in winter.

Next day we set out again to look for the foot of the big gully. This time we crossed the Coupal by the Etive road bridge, and then J. Napier and I kept down close by the river until we were opposite the gully to get as good a view as possible of the face. Thick clouds again hung low on the hill, and we could not decide which of two gullies that appeared close to each other was the right one. After some discussion, we chose the wrong one. G. Napier protested strongly, but as he could give no good reason for the faith that was in him, he was overruled. The gully we climbed is, at the foot, about 100 yards to the west of the big gully into which it runs at a height of about 2,700 feet. The rocks at the bottom gave some climbing, and the gully



itself kept an angle of 45° very steadily; but with the snow in the condition in which we found it, the ascent by this route offers no difficulty. We crossed the summit ridge, and descended by Corrie Cloiche Finne.

The thaw had now been continuous for two days, and had cleared the snow off the steeper rocks, so that on the morning of the 31st we thought we might attempt a rock climb. We returned to the ridge which had defeated us in November. The rocks were in much better condition, and we passed the place at which we had stopped before without much difficulty by traversing along a ledge which was previously quite banked up with snow. A hundred feet above we reached a broad ledge at the foot of another and more formidable bluff. We attacked the bluff by a shallow gully ending in a long chimney or steeply inclined shelf. Plenty of rope is necessary here. We had with us 180 feet, and were obliged to use it all. The top forty feet had to be climbed without stopping, as there was no place where a long stay was possible. This was the most difficult part of our climb, but the most sensational was to come.

The bluff we had been climbing was separated from the upper part of the buttress by a gap about fifty feet wide, with smooth vertical walls. About twenty feet below the top of the bluff, and rather to the right, the walls were connected by an arête of loose rock covered with snow. A rib of rock projected from the opposite cliff to meet the arête. Obviously the way was to climb this rib till above the vertical wall, and then get into a snow-filled gully beside it.

The mouth of the gully at the top of the rock wall was filled with a cluster of blue ice, and it appeared likely that we would be forced into the gully before we were above the ice. The place, however, proved less formidable than it looked. The arête was easily reached and crossed, and some excellent hitches in the rock by the side of the gully gave great help there. After getting clear of the ice, we kicked steps up the gully, and climbed a long but easy chimney at its head, which brought us out on to the upper snowfield, about 500 feet below the summit. The mist, which had surrounded the mountain all day, distorted quite

innocent projecting rocks into towering cliffs, and thus lent some uncertainty and interest to the trudge up the snow; but no more real difficulties occurred before we found ourselves among our own footsteps on the summit ridge within thirty yards of the cairn.

We had taken five and a half hours to ascend from Kingshouse, of which time three hours had been spent in climbing 600 feet. Towards the end of the climb it had become necessary to reach the top somehow, as there was not time before dark to return by the buttress.

As time was short, we descended again by glissading down Corrie Tulachan. The snow was harder than it had been two days before, and the speed was further quickened by an attempt to race a cake of gingerbread which broke loose, and made the pace down the slope. While walking back along the Glencoe road, the clouds lifted for the first time during our visit, and we got by moonlight a view of the Glencoe face and of the big gully for which we had searched in vain.

This was New Year's Eve, and our host at Kingshouse had gathered the neighbours—four in all—to bring in the New Year with Highland honours. Dances and toasts and Gaelic songs passed a lively evening, which is among our most pleasant memories of our winter visit to the Moor of Rannoch.

On 1st January we returned to Bridge of Orchy over Sron Greise and the Clachlet.

## OLD AND NEW ROUTES ON BEN LUI.

BY JAMES MACLAY.

THE name of Ben Lui (or Laoigh) is not to most people a familiar one. Standing somewhat aloof from the frequented track, he seems to have escaped the compilers of the geography books of our youth, notwithstanding that the head fountains of the Tay issue from his sides; and though of very respectable height for a Scottish mountain (3,708 feet), his fame has been almost confined to the somewhat restricted circle of mountain lovers.

Still he does not altogether refuse to show himself even to travellers on well-beaten paths. His top may be seen any clear day from the steamer on the lower part of Loch Lomond. He is conspicuous from Ben Lomond and many other hills, and from the Ben Venue direction his sharp pyramid outrivals in steepness the twin peaks of Ben More and Stobinian. His steep N.E. face is well seen from either railway between Crianlarich and Tyndrum, and his giant steps appearing high in the background, relieve at one place the monotony of "the wearisome glen."

Whilst Ben Lui has thus escaped the attention of writers of books, and has not been the object of an early cult, his sterling merits as regards picturesqueness and scope for the exercise of the mountaineer's craft have been fully recognised in recent years. One devotee has already inscribed a paper to his honour in the first volume of this Journal, and various other ascents have been chronicled in its pages. His magnificent N.E. face has been the subject of attack and conquest at several S.M.C. meets, and perhaps most of all at the last New Year meet; and the writer thinks the time has come when the accumulated results of these efforts may with advantage be gathered up and presented in collected form.

In doing so the writer feels that he is dealing with a friend. Though not his earliest nor yet his most familiar one among our mountains, Ben Lui has been something to him which no other mountain has been. It is about a dozen years since, after having long felt the attractive force of his

distant majesty, he set out from the head of Loch Ard at 3.30 A.M. one August morning to win the summit for the first time, and after crossing two intermediate watersheds stood upon the top about 1 P.M., only to meet the all too common fate of the Scottish climber and return without having seen anything but the cairn. That climb was made by the Inverarnan route. After crossing the Dubh Eas by the bridge on the Glen Falloch road, the writer turned off to the left and attacked a corrie-like recess to the right of Creag nan Caorruinn, at the top of which he found himself at the brink of the great moor that sweeps from Glen Falloch to the foot of Ben Lui and Beinn a Chleibh.

Crossing the moor, he worked round to the back of Ben Lui and ascended a steepish slope of about 1,500 feet to the top. In recrossing the moor he took a more southerly direction, and returned to Inverarnan by the course of the Dubh Eas, crossing to the right bank before the stream descended into its deep gorge. This was an easier gradient than the way by which he had ascended.

The writer's next ascent was his first ascent at an S.M.C. meet, when newly fledged as a member of the Club. This ascent was from Tyndrum, by the great central gully of the N.E. face. An account of it appears in the *Journal*, Vol. II., p. 259, and it lives in his memory as his first experience of cutting steps up a steep Scotch snow slope, the angle having been at one place 60°.

These two ascents may be taken as typical of the ordinary hill climb and the climb that requires some mountaineering skill and proper equipment respectively; for Ben Lui, in common with many other Scotch mountains, furnishes climbs of both kinds.

The Inverarnan or Ardlui route has been sufficiently indicated. To follow in the reverse direction the route by which the writer returned, the road should be left just before it crosses the Dubh Eas, where a track will be found, and the stream crossed by a bridge above the gorge, but before it reaches the level of the moor. The time required for the ascent is about three to four hours.

From Dalmally one can either go over the top of Beinn a Chleibh, or the Tyndrum road can be followed to the

junction of the Eas Daimh with the Lochy, and the latter stream forded. Thence an obvious route leads directly to the top; but for the best climbing ascend by the right side of the Eas Daimh to the watershed, and thence work round the foot of "the giant steps" into the N.E. corrie.

But Tyndrum is the starting-point for Ben Lui *par excellence*. Crossing the low ridge above the Callander and Oban line by a path that can be got by crossing the fence at the west end of the station, we follow the path, which is very boggy, till it reaches a rough cart-road that ascends the glen to Coninish farmhouse, and thence is not more than a track to the old lead-mines just at the foot of the Ben. If it is clear, grand views of the N.E. face, which is one of the finest hill faces in Scotland, are enjoyed all the way up the glen. From the lead-mines the ascent into the corrie is obvious.

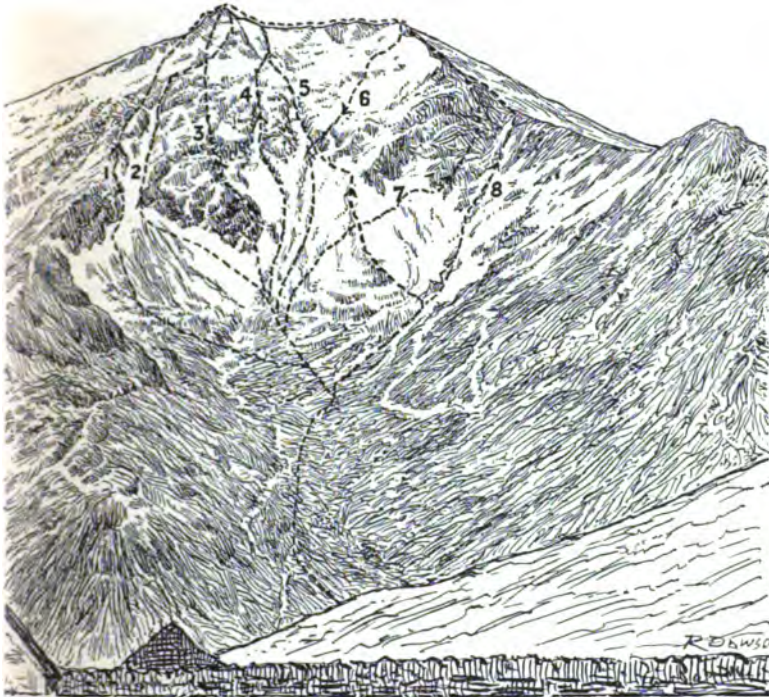
Here a considerable number of alternatives present themselves. The corrie is flanked by two huge buttress arms, whilst inside it two great rock ribs descend from the ridge nearly to the foot. The larger rib is the left or south rib which supports the summit.

A little to the right of this rib is the steep couloir before referred to, which may be called the "central gully." It has been the favourite highway to the top in winter ascents, and affords an excellent snow climb. Between it and the south rib is a narrower gully, which may be called the "south central gully." Beyond the rib, *i.e.*, on its left or south side, is a broader couloir which bifurcates near the top, the right branch terminating a short distance below the summit. This may be called the "south gully." Returning to the right again, there is a great stretch of snow between the central couloir and the right-hand rib, which we shall call the "upper snow-field." The right or lesser rib we shall call the "north rib."

This face of Ben Lui formed the principal object of attack at the New Year meet this year. As will be gathered from the account in another part of this number, several new routes were prospected.

On the first day a party ascended the south gully. No difficulty was found, except among the ice-plastered

rocks at the upper end of the gully. The following day, again in thick mist, a party of which the writer formed one traversed to the left from the lower end of the central gully looking for the tracks of the day before, which were understood to be at the near side of the south rib. Not



NORTH-EAST CORRIE OF BEN LUI.

(The name for which on the 6-inch Ordnance Map is Coire Gaothach, *i.e.*, the windy corrie.)

1. South-east ridge .. ..	..	..	First recorded ascent	6th March	1892 ..	Jl., Vol. II., p. 83.
2. South gully .. ..	..	..	First recorded ascent	15th April	1892 ..	" " II., p. 129.
3. South rib .. ..	..	..	First recorded ascent	2nd Jan.	1896 ..	" " IV., p. 110.
4. South central gully .. ..	..	..	First recorded ascent	2nd Jan.	1896 ..	" " IV., p. 110.
5. Central gully .. ..	..	..	First recorded descent	13th April	1891 ..	" " I., p. 214.
6. Upper snow-field .. ..	..	..	First recorded ascent	31st Dec.	1892 ..	" " II., p. 260.
7. North rib .. ..	..	..	First recorded descent	2nd Jan.	1896 ..	" " IV., p. 110.
8. Gully to ridge of Stob Garbh	..	..	First recorded ascent	2nd Jan.	1896 ..	" " IV., p. 110.
			First recorded ascent	14th Feb.	1892 ..	" " II., p. 82.

finding them, we attempted to cross the rib. This was found far from easy, and after ascending for some distance up somewhat difficult rocks, we had to leave the rib and make for the couloir again, to enable one of the party to catch a train.

Next day was clear, and saw no less than four parties on the face. Tough led a party up the south central gully, which did not present any great difficulty, and then in descending traversed diagonally from the north end of the ridge across the upper snow-field and through a gap in the rocks to the foot of the central gully.

A party of four, led by Naismith, had a very long climb up the north rib, the rocks and turf being troublesome through ice and frozen snow; whilst Bell and the writer succeeded in surmounting the difficulties of the south rib, which was in similar condition.

This last climb took our small party almost three hours, and seems to merit description. Taking the rib at its west point, the rocks from the first were steep, and the writer got some ironical applause from a party comfortably lunching some distance below as he crawled along the first narrow ledge—a kind of encouragement which he was *very* glad to be spared at some points later on.

The height of the pitches of rock and the narrowness of the frozen and snow-covered ledges forced us to the right as we ascended; and presently a long and ticklish traverse to the full stretch of the rope enabled us, by means of holds dug out of icebound soil above, to surmount a barrier that threatened to stop our progress, and landed us at the edge of the buttress.

After this the difficulty lessened for a while. Presently we reached the part that had been climbed the previous day, and as it had been proved to be possible, it was thought legitimate to turn it by taking to the snow, rejoining the rock where it had been left the day before. Here the rocks again were steep for a while, but not particularly difficult. Then they eased off gradually.

We now imagined our difficulties were over, and began to admire the view with a feeling of work completed, when suddenly we found ourselves confronted by a wall of rock that seemed to bar farther progress. This obstacle was just beyond a gap or nick in the ridge occupied by a level patch of snow.

We stopped to reconnoitre. Presently we found that though impossible in front, there was just a possibility of

working up by some ledges to the right. These were essayed, and fortunately good holds were found ; and after some trouble and the defeat of an attempt to climb straight up, owing to the rock being actually overhanging, a traverse to the left was effected, which turned the worst part of the rock wall in front. The difficulty was not by any means over, but ultimately, by means of holds hacked out of frozen turf, we succeeded in dragging ourselves over the remaining difficulties and planting ourselves firmly in a secure position above. This was the last really bad bit. The angle soon eased off, the easy slope of the upper end of the ridge which Tough had christened "Princes Street" was reached, and over ice-plastered rocks the summit was attained without further trouble at 2.45 P.M.

Here a marvellous view presented itself. As we ascended we had observed a mantle of mist gradually enveloping the country. By this time it had so far spread itself that it enwrapped all but the mountain tops, which rose like islands from a sea. To the west the setting sun tinted the sea of mist red and gold. Sweeping the eye round the horizon towards the right, the Paps of Jura, the Mull heights, and Ben Cruachan were successively seen, then across the broad stretch of mist which covered the Moor of Rannoch, the Black Mount Hills, Bidean and the Buchailles, and Ben Nevis and his huge neighbours. To the right of the moor were the tops of Ben Achallader, Ben Doran, &c. ; then Ben Lawers, Ben More, and Stobinian, and their neighbours, Ben Vorlich, Ben Lomond, and the Loch Long hills ; then the distant Ayrshire hills ; and lastly, the peaks of Arran emerging from the surging mist, and then the sunset light again. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight !

After unsuccessfully looking for Naismith's party, we returned to descend by the great couloir. It had become *icy* since the morning. Care was necessary, and progress *was* slow. Presently a shout attracted our attention, and we saw Naismith and his friends just on the ridge, after their long climb of the other rib. We dissuaded them from following us, and continued our slow descent till we reached a place where we could glissade, when a very few minutes landed us at the bottom of the corrie. The light was almost



gone when we reached the lead workings, but by shouting and striking matches we succeeded in effecting a junction with the other party, and we proceeded home together narrating our own adventures and listening to those of the others, whilst latterly the writer came in for considerable denunciation for hurrying too rapidly over the boggy path across the hill.

Besides the routes already mentioned, some others may be indicated. In March 1892 Gibson and Lester ascended the ridge of the left or S.E. buttress of the corrie, which as seen from the neighbouring rib shows a fascinating saw edge. The S.E. and N.E. faces of Stob Garbh have both furnished good climbs, which have not been fully explored. On one occasion a very strong party was headed off from the N.E. face by the icy condition of the rocks and soil. The ridge between Ben Lui and Beinn a Chleibh presents a wall of rock on the N.W. side which the writer believes has been ascended only at its easiest part, whilst below it good glissading is often to be got. Lastly, by making a circuit to the S.E. from the cairn, and descending towards the Allt Corrie Lui, a steep couloir may be found, named the Fox's Couloir, from the fact of a fox having shown the way down it to the party with which the writer first ascended the N.E. face, as mentioned above, and which was on that occasion descended not without risk and even detriment to the party. This gully may give a good glissade, but care is required at the foot, as the slope steepens and it ends in a steep stony scree.

Despite the various prospectings referred to, it will be seen that Ben Lui is not exhausted, and variations at least may still be found. Altogether the N.E. face offers to the climber an amount and variety of excellent climbing which few of our mountains can boast. Taken as a whole, there are very few superiors to this old Ben, who holds his secluded sway at the borders of Perthshire, Argyll, and Dumbarton, and sheds his waters to three several seas.

## SCOTTISH MOUNTAINS.

BY SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE, D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.,

*Director-General of the Geological Survey.*

MOUNTAINEERING, besides all the physical stimulus and mental exhilaration that attend it, may be combined with a good deal of hard thinking, and with such calls on the imaginative faculty as vastly enhance its delights. Scottish mountains are excellent examples of the way in which this higher kind of climbing may be called forth. They fall far below an Alpine chain in majesty and loftiness, but there are few ranges of hills which within the same space of country combine such a remarkable variety of interest and attractiveness in regard to diversities of origin and history.

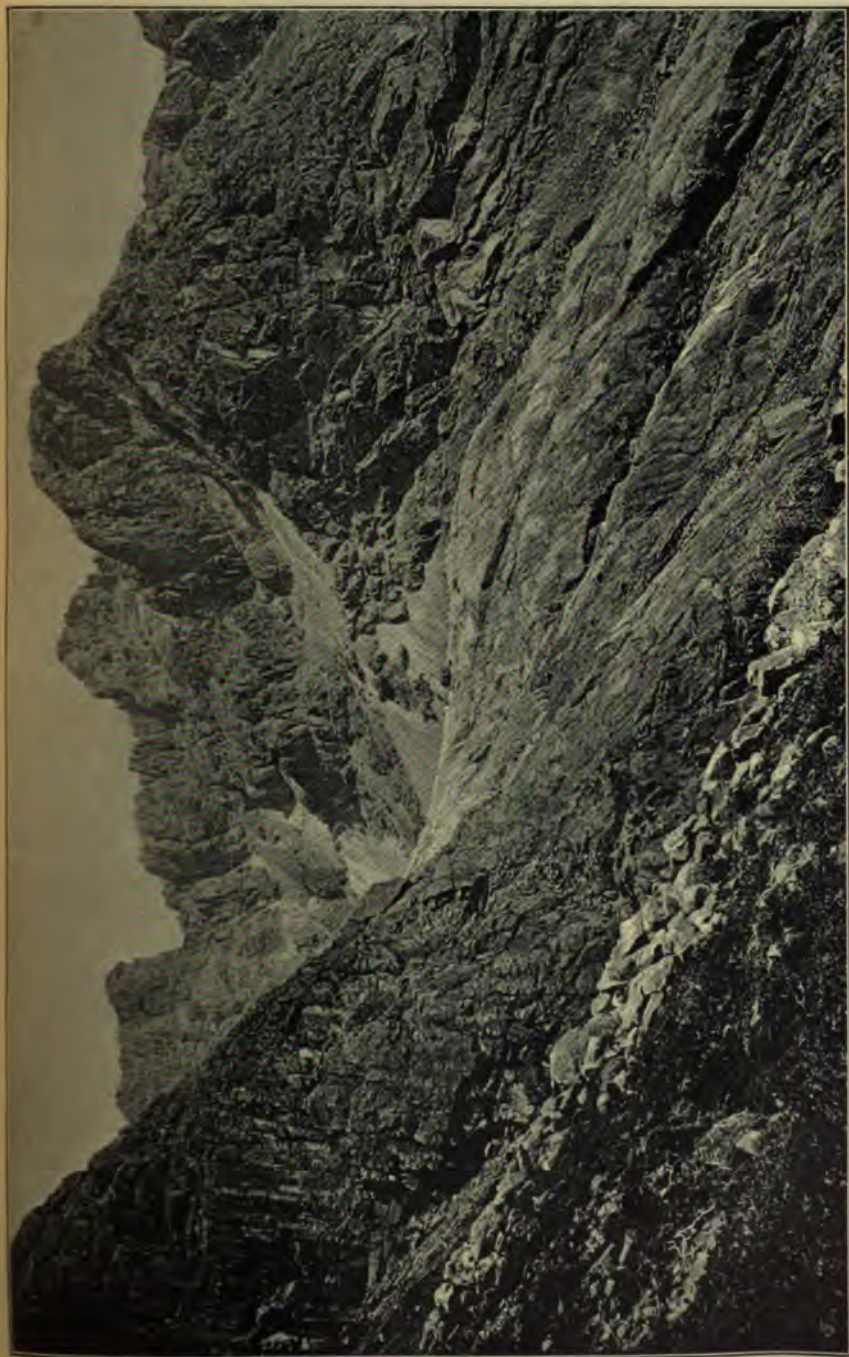
Having wandered among these mountains since boyhood, I have come to know them familiarly, both outside and inside, and I propose to jot down in these few pages some reflections which this experience suggests to me. I shall try to show that our mountains differ from each other not only in form and colour, but in the nature of their component materials and in their structure, and that their external contours are dependent on these internal characters. I shall point out further they differ also in origin, not only as regards the materials of which they are made, but also in respect to the evolution of their shapes. I shall prove, moreover, that they belong to vastly different periods of the earth's history, some being inconceivably old, others comparatively modern.

1. The most obvious differences among our mountains are those of form and colour, which even the most untrained eye cannot fail to notice. Yet it is not every traveller or tourist who realises how rich this country is in varied types of mountain form. But let any one with an ordinary share of the observing faculty sail round the west of Scotland and take note of the successive mountain groups that pass before him, and he will acknowledge that the voyage of a couple of hundred miles has been almost as instructive to him as if he had scoured over half of the globe. As he descends the noble estuary of the Clyde, he sees on the right

hand the long broken tableland of the Highlands plunging in green declivities to the edge of the sea, and on the left hand the terraced uplands of Ayrshire. As the firth opens out, Arran comes into view, and displays, though on a small scale, a true Alpine type of form, sweeping up in rocky slopes to a line of peaks and spiry crests. Nowhere in Europe does colour come more notably forward in landscape than in the west of Scotland. Apart from the varied and ever-changing hues due to atmospheric causes, there are the extraordinarily rich tones given by the heather, bracken, and deer grass, combined with the greys of the lichen-crusted rocks. But the rocks themselves display a remarkably wide range of colour. Even in the Firth of Clyde this variety makes itself felt, but it increases greatly as we pursue our course up the west coast. Who, for example, will ever forget the blaze of purple and orange herbage on the slopes of Arran, from which the grey peaks and russet streaks of *débris* mount up into the clouds, and the contrast between these colours and the vivid greens and dark browns of the rocky southern end of Bute and the western declivities of the Cumbraes?

The points of view from which instructive comparisons and contrasts might be made all along the western seaboard of the mainland are endless. I will cite only three. As we sail up the coast of Cantyre, the mountains of Jura rivet our attention. If the sky is clear, and their huge cones are lit up with sunshine, they gleam as if carved out of snow. Their white rocks, as well as their conical shapes, mark them out from every surrounding group of hills. And this contrast becomes only the more striking as we move northwards and find the white gleaming rocks of Jura prolonged into Scarba, while the neighbouring islets and promontories have their low cliffs and skerries of a livid blue.

Amid all the variety of outline and colour which this western coast displays, the culmination of interest is to be found after the Point of Ardnamurchan is passed: Leaving the sea of the Inverness-shire mountains on the right hand, and the verdurous rocks of Muck and Eigg and the blue pyramids of Rum on the left, let us fix our eyes on the



COIRE LABAIN, CULLIN HILLS, SKYE.

Illustrating the characteristic serrated crests and rugged declivities of the Tertiary Gabbro-rocks. Many of the deep notches on these crests are caused by the more rapid weathering of basalt dykes.

*From a photograph by W. Norris.*



group of the Cuillin Hills, which now comes into full view. In all the range of the British Isles there is nothing so Alpine in form and so rich in colour as this insular mountain group. Springing from the very level of the sea to heights of more than 3,000 feet, these hills unite in themselves an extraordinary variety of contour. (Plate A.) Their splintered crests surpass for jaggedness any other hills in Western Europe, until we get as far north as the Romsdal and the Lofodden Islands. And as for colour, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the depth of tint which the Cuillins may assume. Their rocks are for the most part dark in hue, and they weather with a surface which seems in some way to drink in the atmospheric tints. When a canopy of cloud just rests on their summits, and casts a shadow over the crags and corries below, their craggy sides put on so deep a hue that we first think of them as black, until, on further reflection, we perceive them to be of the deepest and purest violet. The mountaineer who can spend his holiday in climbing and musing among the corries and crags of the Cuillins is a mortal much to be envied.

A third illustration of the distinctive form and colour of Scottish mountains may be taken from a region still farther north—the western coast of Ross-shire and Sutherland. The hills of Applecross and those around Loch Torridon, and again, the detached groups in the Loch Broom and Assynt districts, stand out from all other features in the landscape around them. (Plate B.) In some respects indeed they are unique in Britain. Their distinguishing characters are that they consist of pyramids, sometimes joined together at the sides as in Applecross, sometimes standing strangely alone as in Assynt, and that these pyramids are built up of a reddish stone in level sheets like courses of masonry. There is something curiously bizarre yet fascinating about these north-western hills. At every turn their odd combination of steep rocky declivity and lines of horizontal terrace suggest gigantic exaggerations of human architecture. Their warm ruddy hue, too, offers an impressive contrast to the cold blue-grey of the rolling platform of rock from which they rise. Here and there, moreover, a patch of white

stone that caps their summits looks in the distance like snow, and its screes of *débris* like stone-laden glaciers creeping down into the corries below. I shall have more to say about these hills a little further on. I refer to them now merely as illustrations of the wonderful variety of form and colour which may be found among the mountains of Scotland. But to enumerate all of the types of form would require the whole of this article. I therefore pass on to their differences in regard to the nature of their component materials.

2. Everybody who has climbed among mountains knows that they include many varieties of rock, and that in some way their peculiarities of form are connected with the nature of these rocky materials. Instead of trying here to give an account of all the distinctive rocks that enter into the construction of the Scottish mountains, I shall content myself with selecting a few typical examples of the manner in which difference of resultant form depends upon difference of component material.

Two broadly contrasted groups of rock enter into the framework of our hills. In the first place, there are those of igneous origin; including the Plutonic series, that is, those which have consolidated from a molten condition deep within the earth, and have subsequently been exposed at the surface; and the Volcanic, or those which have been ejected to the surface in the form of lava or ashes. In the second place, there are the Sedimentary rocks, those which have been deposited in the form of sediment under water, and which, after being consolidated into stone, have been upheaved into dry land.

These different kinds of material have necessarily exercised a potent influence upon the forms of the mountains. In considering this subject, it must be remembered that in no single instance are these mountain forms original. We have no case of a mountain upheaved as such, and retaining the shape originally bestowed upon it by the terrestrial revolution that gave it birth. In every example, no matter what the shape or composition of the elevation may be, its present contours are due to a process of sculpture. Rain, wind, springs, streamlets, the changes of temperature and of





LOCH TOLL AN LOCHAIN, AN TEALLACH, ROSS-SHIRE.

A mountain carved out of nearly horizontal Torridon sandstone. The vertical gashes mark the positions of lines of joint and fracture.





moisture from day to night, and from summer to winter—in short, all the atmospheric forces that are ceaselessly at work in wearing down the surface of the land—have combined to carve out the shapes of the hills. But the process of sculpture is not precisely everywhere the same, for here one kind of sculpture-tool and there another is wielded most effectively by Nature ; and even if the same tools were everywhere employed in the same way, and with the same amount of vigour, the resulting topography would not always be the same. On the contrary, it would necessarily vary with each change in the character of the material exposed to the great sculptor. We should not look for the same kind of effect to be produced if a statue were carved in granite as if it were carved in chalk. Much more may the results of Nature's operations be expected to vary with the innumerable variations in the character of the resistance offered by rocks to the work of her sculpture-tools.

Bearing this fundamental principle in mind, we carry with us an important clue to the interpretation of mountain forms. We are enabled to understand how each hill or group of hills has come to wear its present topographical features, and why these features change so much as we trace them through the successive mountains and mountain chains of the country.

Consider for a few moments the characteristics of mountains carved out of igneous rocks, and how they are produced. The Arran hills supply us with an admirable illustration. Goatfell and its neighbours are formed of grey granite, which mounts up from the glens partly into steep bare ledges of rock and partly in long screes of *débris*. The rocky ledges, as they are followed upward, are seen to be built of rudely piled sheets of naked stone, traversed by two sets of irregular divisional planes, one of which cuts the other. The granite is thus divided into large blocks, which, under the influence of the weather, are etched out along their lines of junction, very much as the joints of ancient masonry are affected by the same cause. The blocks are thus by degrees separated from each other, and becoming detached are launched down the crags and slopes as loose boulders. Meanwhile the crests, being most exposed to the

vicissitudes of our northern climate, are more especially attacked. Their rocks are more splintered and cleft, their forms become more jagged and peaky. Winter after winter the frost drives its wedges of ice farther and farther into the walls of granite, which are thereby rent open. Slices fall away from them. Portions of them are left for a time as outstanding pinnacles, only however to be in turn cut down and hurled in fragments into the corries beneath.

Now in all this process of degradation we shall find, on examination, that tumultuous, capricious, and irregular as it may seem, not a touch is given, not a block is carved out, not a spire is isolated, not a boulder is detached, save in obedience to strict and ascertainable law. And the law is that the destruction of the granite is effected by means of its joints. The rock is traversed by divisional planes, which if we could quarry well into its mass would hardly be visible to the eye, for in the solid unweathered stone the two sides of a joint fit about as closely as the two sides of a crack in a pane of glass. The quarryman knows these lines well, for it is by taking advantage of them that he is enabled to extract the blocks which he furnishes for building purposes. Nature, too, unerringly discovers them. It is along their lines that water most readily percolates, and frost most effectively acts. Hence, where the joints reach the surface the rock is there eaten most away, and begins to gape and split.

The system of joints in granite, as in other rocks, is often extremely complicated. These divisional planes are in great measure fissures of retreat, due to the contraction of the rock as it passed into a solid state from its original molten condition. Two main series of them may commonly be detected, one of which may be vertical, the other horizontal, or they may be inclined to each other at various angles. The intersection of these two sets of joints divides the rock into rudely quadrangular blocks. It is by taking advantage of this double series of lines that Nature severs the blocks from each other. Every mountaineer who has climbed Goatfell will remember the curiously artificial wall-like forms which the granite assumes at various places below the crest. (Plate C.) This Cyclopean architecture is due to the

PLATE C



ON GOATFELL, ARRAN.  
Cyclopean wall of granite, due to the weathering of the rock along two sets of joints.



action of the weather along the joints of the rock. The one set of planes gives as it were the courses of the masonry, and the other the individual stones in each course.

All plutonic rocks, of which granite is a conspicuous example, are distinguished by their systems of joints. In some these lines of division are much closer, or intersect each other at different angles from those in other rocks. The resultant topographical forms vary in the same proportion, with the additional distinction that arises from the way in which the body of the rock decays. Some igneous masses, like the gabbro of the Cuillin Hills, seem so compactly framed, so bare of detritus, and roughened with such a bristling surface of projecting crystals, that one might be tempted to think that they must be able to defy the elements. Others, again, like parts of the Arran granite, are endowed with so little coherence that they crumble into mere sand.

As a strong contrast to the topographical forms that come from the sculpture of the plutonic or deep-seated igneous masses, let us look at the landscapes which owe their characters to the denudation of the superficial volcanic rocks. And here Scottish geology is singularly rich. For the size of its territory there is no known area of the earth's surface where so varied a record of ancient volcanic action has been preserved. From the Cheviot Hills on the south to the far Shiant Isles on the north, nay even to the Orkney and Shetland Islands, we possess a chronicle of extinct volcanoes which range in age from so recent a time as the Tertiary periods back to beyond the known beginnings of life upon our globe.

From so complete a volcanic history a large series of illustrations might readily be gathered. The cones of the Pentland and Ochil Hills, the terraced uplands of North Ayrshire and the Campsies, the domes of the Bass, Traprain, and Ailsa, the solitary crags of Edinburgh, Stirling, and Dumbarton—these and many more might be cited. It will be enough to make reference to but one example, which I will draw from the northern half of Skye. The voyager who sails along the western coast of this singularly varied island is impressed by one of the noblest ranges of sea-cliff

in the British Isles. Mile after mile there stretches out before him a vast wall of rock, fretted below by the restless waves of the Atlantic, but crowned above by quiet green pastures, which slope away inland into verdurous hills and descend into fertile valleys. Though these precipices vary in height, sometimes sweeping up to a bold headland a thousand feet above the tides, and sometimes giving place to low bays and broad arms of the sea, they retain throughout a singular sameness of form and colour. They are most prominently distinguished by a series of nearly horizontal bands which run along their fronts, winding into all the recesses and round all the promontories with an almost wearisome persistence. These bands are marked partly by differences of form and partly by variations in colour. Some are of a rich brown tint, and divided into more or less regular columns; others are almost black, and present a rough, worn, and mouldering aspect. Lines of bright red stone often separate them from each other, and their level ledges and slopes of *débris* furnish a fertile soil for the sea-pink and grasses which in that mild and moist climate clothe the naked stone with so vivid a green.

What are those successive bars of stone that rise above each other along the western cliffs of Skye? Each of them was once a sheet of molten lava. They have been poured out, one above another, from many fissures and vents, until they have built up all the northern half of Skye. The red lines between them are partly old burnt soils. Here and there we may detect the bottoms of pools that gathered on the surface of the ancient lava-plains, and into which leaves from the surrounding woodlands were blown by the wind or washed by rain. The vertical face of precipice which has been cut across these piles of volcanic materials by the progress of denudation affords a most impressive proof of the enormous waste which these comparatively young rocks have undergone.

But the cliffs are really the sides of hills which rise away inland, reaching in Trotternish a height of more than two thousand feet. If, from a favourable point of view, we survey the inland of the northern half of Skye, we find that the same parallel bars which stand out so conspicuously on the

sea-walls are prolonged into the interior, where they show themselves as terraces of dark rock separated by grassy declivities. Along the sides of the valleys these terraces rise one above another to the very tops of the hills. Nay, they even encircle these tops, which then terminate in flat surfaces like level racecourses. The singular truncated and terraced cones of M'Leod's Tables are good examples of this peculiar structure.

As a last illustration of the influence of material upon external form, I may cite an example of the influence of Stratified rocks. In these, where they have not been much disturbed, but still retain an approximately horizontal position, the planes of stratification are the dominant feature. Lines of vertical joint also come into play. By the co-operation of these two systems of divisional planes, the rocks are carved into long bars, each of which corresponds with a bed or group of beds of sediment. Where the material is hard and the joints well defined, each bar may form a vertical face with a ledge above, like the lines of stones in a colossal pyramid. Where, on the other hand, the material is of a less durable kind it may crumble into *débris*, and form slopes from which only here and there a harder band will project, to indicate the really bedded character of the rocks.

Undoubtedly the most gigantic examples of this type of mountain structure are the red sandstone mountains of the west of Ross-shire and Sutherland, to which I have already alluded. (Plate B.) Few tourists, and not many mountaineers, have explored the best examples of this strange type. The Applecross Hills, for instance, as seen from the head of Loch Kishorn and from the cauldron-like corrie up which the road winds from Kishorn to Applecross, unite in their forms and colours a combination of qualities seldom to be seen among stratified rocks. Their strangely marked lines of bedding run persistently from cliff to cliff of naked rock. Their lines of vertical joint have cleft them into deep gullies. They have been carved out into vast crater-like hollows and isolated into huge domes and cones. Their sombre red hue, too, adds to their impressiveness, contrasting as it does with the golden bent and purple heather below them, and with the gleam of the white quartzite on the mountains to the north.



Not less striking are the mountains around Loch Torridon, which are composed of the same material, and the marvellous group between Loch Maree and Little Loch Broom. But perhaps some of the most singular examples of this type of scenery are those where, in the long course of denudation, vast outlying fragments of the red sandstone have been left standing up as isolated hills. It is in the Assynt country that such outliers are best developed. Suilven, Coul More, Canisp, and Quinaig form a group of mountains which, for what one might almost call whimsicality of form, have no rivals elsewhere in Britain.

Much more might be said regarding the influence of material upon mountain form. I have dealt only with the simplest examples, but there are many others which might be cited as exhibiting the effects of complicated architectural structure. The red sandstones of the north-west show how undisturbed strata affect the contours of hills. But stratified rocks comparatively seldom remain in their original horizontal position. They have often been folded, dislocated, crushed, and piled over each other. In such a mass of broken material the guiding lines for the denuding agents may be exceedingly complex. But the space at my disposal will allow me only room for a brief consideration of one other aspect of the Scottish mountains—that of their relative age.

3. When we contemplate a mountain landscape, or when we pass from one hilly region to another, we are impressed with the harmonious manner in which all the lines fit into each other. Slope and plain, hill and hollow, all blend so imperceptibly, and seem so entirely parts of one connected and symmetrical whole, that we naturally assume them to have all one common origin, and to go back to one definite period of production. So improbable does it appear that any one part of the landscape should have started into existence before the rest, that the casual tourist finds it difficult to believe that it ever could have been so, and when any proof of the assertion is offered he is apt to receive it with an incredulous smile.

Nevertheless, nothing can be more certain than that in every country the several parts of each landscape vary in



**VIEW OF SLIOCH (3,217 feet), LOCH MAREE, ROSS-SHIRE.** *From a sketch by Sir Arch. Geikie.*  
The central mountain consists of nearly flat Torridon sandstone. The hummocky ground emerging from underneath the sandstone on both sides and in front consists of gneiss and forms part of a group of mountains that existed before the deposition of the sandstone, and is now being laid bare once more by denudation. The gneiss on the right hand reached a height of 2,500 feet.



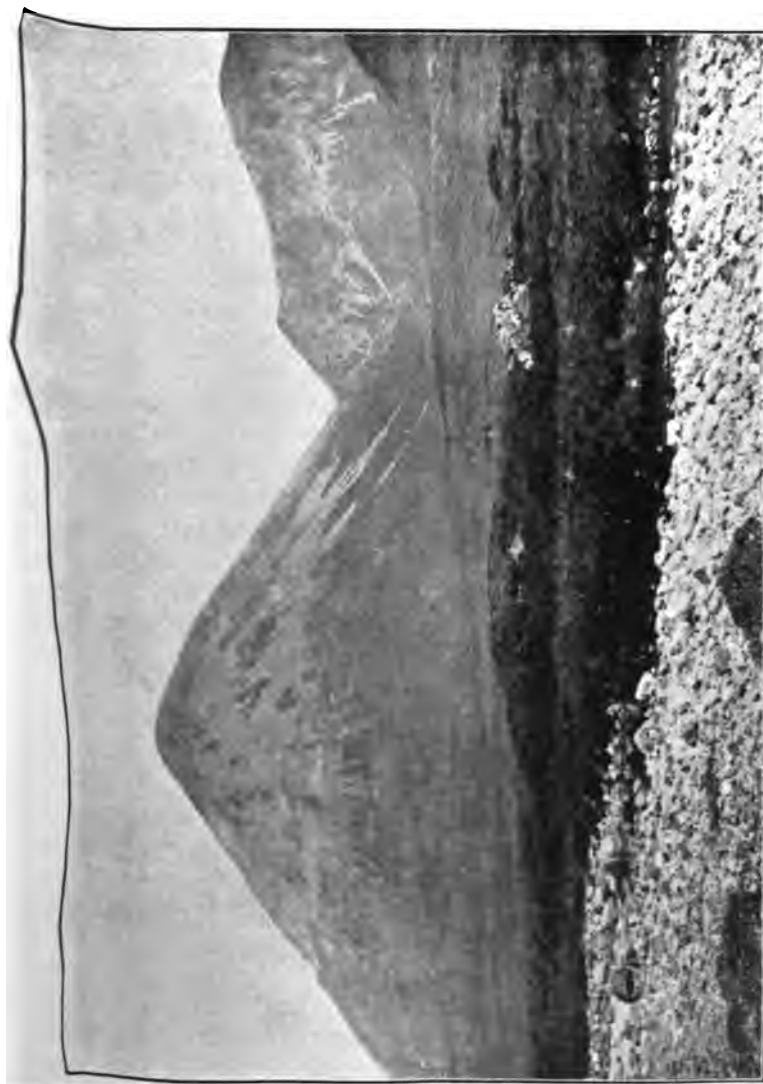
age. Not only do the hills differ from each other in the relative antiquity of their materials, but they also differ in the dates of their definite evolution as prominences on the earth's surface. That this statement must be true will be apparent if we reflect that in the crust of the earth there are many successive formations, and that those which lie undisturbed at the top must be younger than those which remain below. But it does not follow that a mountain carved out of the newer formation is necessarily younger than one carved out of the older. We have to consider at what period the process of carving began. It may quite well happen that a mountain group has been cut out of a late series of rocks before, in the course of geological revolutions, an older series was pushed upwards and laid bare by denudation, to be in turn sculptured into mountains.

In no respect are the Scottish mountains more interesting than in the wide differences of age which they manifest. They include a small group of the very oldest mountains in Europe, and also a good many which are among the youngest. The most ancient of all lie out of the way alike of tourists and mountaineers. I am not aware that any members of our Club have ever set foot on them. They rise to the east of Loch Maree, and extend towards the hollow of Little Loch Broom. (Plate D.) There is nothing peculiar in their forms to distinguish them from their much younger neighbours. It is not until we begin to study their structure that we realise that in these scattered hills we have before us a fragment of primeval Europe. They take us back to an age anterior to the appearance of the oldest known forms of life upon the surface of the globe—to the very beginning, as it were, of geological time. They have been preserved all through the long cycles of the past by having been buried under the sediments of the sea or lake in which the red sandstones of Applecross and Torridon were deposited. As they sank into these waters, their slopes were, step by step, submerged under sheets of gravel and sand, until their highest summits disappeared. How deep a mass of rock once covered them it is impossible to tell. But it was enough to protect them until a comparatively recent time. One by one they are emerging again to day-

light, as their mantle of hardened shingle and sand is being stripped away from them. You can climb their sides, one foot on the red conglomerate that marks their former shore-lines, and the other on the grey gneiss that rose above the water into dry land. One of these re-excavated mountains, A'Mhaighdean, a little to the north-east of Ben Slioch, rises to a height of three thousand feet above the sea. They must have formed a varied group, with winding valleys between them, carved out of the oldest rock in Europe—the fundamental gneiss.

The rest of the Highland mountains are modern in comparison with these monuments of antiquity. Yet they, too, differ a good deal in relative age. Their materials have undergone gigantic crushing and dislocation. Enormous masses of the earth's crust, many miles in length and thousands of feet thick, have been driven over each other, and it has been out of this compressed, plicated, and fractured material that the main mass of the Highlands has been carved. The geologist who wanders over the wilds of our mountains, while he meets at every step with tokens of the stupendous forces that came into play in the piling up of the rocks, is everywhere likewise reminded that the present forms of the hills are not aboriginal, but have resulted from the action of the denuding forces, prolonged through inconceivably vast periods of time.

In fine, as one more illustration of the element of relative antiquity in our mountain system, I may allude to the piles of material heaped up by our latest volcanoes. In a geological sense these eruptions ceased, as it were, only yesterday. They go back no further than older Tertiary time—that is, they are younger than the clays, sands, and gravels of the London basin. When they took place, Scotland probably stood at least five or six hundred feet higher than it does now. All along the west of the country, in the long depression, then probably a terrestrial plain, between what are now the mainland and the chain of the Outer Hebrides, there stretched a wide sea of lava, poured forth from many scattered vents until it had accumulated to a depth of more than three thousand feet. Here and there, below this volcanic plain, the subterranean forces protruded huge



GLAMAIG, GLEN SLIGACHAN, SKYE. From a photo. by R. J. A. Berry, M.D.  
Illustrating the conical forms assumed by the granitic rocks of Tertiary age among the Inner Hebrides.



masses, first of black basic and then of pale acid rock. How far these injected materials influenced the surface we cannot tell. Not improbably the lava-plain was there pushed up into broad dome-shaped swellings. Finally, the eruptions came to an end, and denudation, which had been at work all through the volcanic period, was left in undisputed possession of the field. The rivers that bore the drainage from the Western Highlands to the sea cut out for themselves channels and ravines in the lava-floor. Rain, frost, and all the other meteoric influences, continued their ceaseless task of erosion. The originally level, or nearly level, plain was carved out into valleys and gorges, with intervening ridges. So great has been the waste, that the thick pile of lava has been entirely stripped off wide tracts of country. The great intrusions of black gabbro and pale granite have been laid bare to the day, while out of the one have been carved the mountain groups of Rum and the Cuillins (Plate A), while out of the other have emerged the Red Hills of Skye. (Plate E.)

As we know the geological date of the volcanic eruptions, we have a measure of the greatest possible antiquity of the topographic features which have been carved out of the volcanic rocks. This to the thoughtful mountaineer is a matter of prime moment. It enables him to realise that within a comparatively recent geological period, mountain groups more than three thousand feet high have been isolated and sculptured; that valleys many miles long, several miles broad, and some thousands of feet deep, have been hollowed out; and that all this stupendous amount of erosion has taken place not merely in soft rocks, but in materials as obstinate and durable as any upon the surface of the land. He learns that the mountains are, after all, in the prodigiously protracted history of the earth's surface, merely shadows that come and go, as the subterranean energy upheaves them and as the atmospheric forces crumble them into dust.

[Two of the illustrations for this paper have appeared before in the *Journal*, and are printed a second time at the request of the author.—Ed.]



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

## NEW YEAR MEET 1896—TYNDRUM.

WHEN the Club last visited Tyndrum, at the corresponding time three years earlier, the weather conditions were of the hardest. Even the mountain streams were frozen almost solid, and several parties visited the ruined castle on Loch Dochart by walking over the ice. On this occasion the weather conditions were sadly different, and New Year's Day was about as cheerless for mountaineering as one could well imagine. The next day fortunately was much more invigorating.

The first detachment arrived on Monday evening, 30th December, the members of it being Parker, Penney, Rennie, Squance, and Tough. On Tuesday evening reinforcements came up in the shape of Boyd, Douglas, Maclay, Moncrieff (guest), Raeburn (guest), A. E. Robertson, and Gilbert Thomson; while on Wednesday evening the party was increased by the arrival of Bell and Naismith, but diminished by the departure of Boyd.

The hills ascended were Ben Lui, Cruach Ardran, Stob Garbh, Beinn Chaluim, and Pike's Peak. The first and last of these were the most popular, the one through the day, and the other in the smoking-room after dinner. The majority of the attempts on Pike's Peak resulted in uncompleted ascents, until finally, first Raeburn, and then Parker, qualified themselves to act as guides. "Pike's Peak," in other words, was a Yankee puzzle, which some discerning friend had sent to Naismith, and which he thoughtfully brought to Tyndrum. As it will not be necessary to refer further to its ascents, it may simply be noted that in addition to those above mentioned, Maclay is believed to know the details of all the impossible routes. Pike's Peak had the advantage that at any moment the climber could relinquish the ascent, and go to sleep.

The details of the proceedings out of doors were as follows:—

On Tuesday the five early arrivals climbed Ben Lui by the south gully, and came down by the N.W. corrie. The

cairn was encased in fog crystals, which by the next day had entirely disappeared. The weather was exceedingly bad.

On Wednesday the mist hung heavy on the hills, and the day was damp and close. The five first-mentioned, who climbed together throughout, made their way (by train to Crianlarich) to Ben More Farm, from which they ascended Stob Garbh by the north face, and then Cruach Ardran by the east face, up the long snow slopes which have several times been mentioned in the Journal. On the descent the lower of these gave a fairly good glissade. Returning to Corrie Ardran, Squance and Parker walked home, while the others preferred to wait at Crianlarich for the train.

Boyd, Maclay, Moncrieff, and Robertson attacked the south rib, but time failed, and they traversed into the central gully, by which also they afterwards descended.

Douglas, Raeburn, and Thomson went up this gully all the way. With the exception of two small pitches, which were troublesome on account of the slight adhesion of the snow to the rock, the ascent was rather a tame one, as everywhere else steps could be kicked. The descent was made by going along the summit ridge for some distance to the south-east, and then coming down by the Fox's couloir. As the party had reached the summit comparatively dry, there was a marked disinclination for sitting glissades on the return. The weather, although dull and unpleasant, remained fairly dry until the evening, when rain began to fall heavily.

Thursday was clearer and colder, and the day was decidedly a pleasant one.

Moncrieff and Robertson bagged Beinn Chaluum. Of their adventures nothing is recorded further than that they went up the hill, and came down again. As this particular hill exceeds 3,000 feet, its ascent therefore comes in the shape of a duty to the conscientious peak-bagger.

All the others made for Ben Lui. The original five went up the south central gully, joining the central couloir near the summit. Descending over the north summit a traverse was made across the upper snow-field back into the central couloir near the foot, and the remainder of the snow was glissaded.

Bell and Maclay took up the unfinished climb of the previous day, and completed it after some three hours' work of a rather sensational kind. They descended by the central gully, the upper part of which proved laborious, as the snow was very hard, and for a long way steps had to be cut.

Douglas, Naismith, Raeburn, and Thomson went up the north rib, the character of the work being very similar to that on the other buttress. It took about four hours' continuous scrambling, the size of the party making the progress somewhat slow. The holds throughout were poor and scarce, really good ones being very few and far between. The ascent would in summer be perfectly simple, but does not appear to have been previously recorded. The summit was reached about an hour after Bell and Maclay had got there, and as their difficulties in the main couloir were very obvious, it was avoided, and the Fox's couloir route taken instead. The two parties met at the road, and returned over the moor together. From the cairn there was a magnificent view of mountain tops rising like islands in a sea of mist.

The general break-up began that night by the departure of Moncrieff, Penney, Rennie, and Robertson. On Friday the early train accounted for Douglas, Maclay, Naismith, Raeburn, Thomson, and Tough; while Bell and Squance made a more dignified retreat in the forenoon. Parker remained for photographic purposes till the evening, and got some very successful views of the Ben Lui face, on which the "little footprints" are distinctly seen. The usual photograph on New Year's morning, taken on this occasion by Parker, suffered for want of light.

With his departure the meet came to an end. It had no very outstanding features, but was an enjoyable gathering, and gave several interesting climbs. The small quantity of snow, and its general softness, were unfortunate, as the interest would have been largely increased had the snow been either of first-rate quality or in larger quantity. It need not be said that the hotel was as comfortable as ever, and that Mr Stewart and his assistants spared no trouble to make their department of the meet a success. G. T.

## THE EASTER MEET AT FORT-WILLIAM.

2ND TO 6TH APRIL.

RAIN, mist, and all uncharitableness, welcomed the Club to Fort-William on this its second visit to the headquarters of "Long Shon." A succession of cloudless Easters had spoiled members for grey skies and mist-laden summits; and therefore it was a grievous disappointment when Friday set in wet and muggy, and Saturday, Sunday, and Monday went singly and collectively from bad to worse.

"Weather," however, as is well known, has rather a stimulating effect upon Scottish constitutions and the proceedings of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. Its only effect was to promote the consumption of a rather larger quantity of Ben Nevis coffee, and to strengthen the memories of those warm intervals in the Observatory kitchen between the ice of the Tower Ridge and the bumpy delights of the path. To the weather also it was partly due that the climbing was of a more serious character than usual. There was no basking on the summit of Stob Ban or on the Castle Ridge. "Bouldering," even that fascinating modern amusement, went a little out of fashion when the climber's body became the watershed of a whole drainage area, and the candidates stood waiting their turn in a dismal downpour like competitors at a water-polo match. The sensible view prevailed that you might as well get soaked on the precipice as saturated in Glen Nevis; and so there were no lack of candidates for the heroic ascents on the N.E. face. Last year the two great arêtes were impracticable, owing to the thick snow drapery which covered them, but this year the Tower Ridge "went" before the meet began, and was ascended during its course by no less than four parties. The first of these had an interesting story to tell when it returned. It was out for fifteen hours, of which nine were spent on the rocks, and the last two occupied with the details of a sensational "rescue," which the "rescuers" now suspect may have been intended to lessen the labours of step-cutting on the "great white slope." History records a similar incident on Bienn Dothaidh.

Under winter conditions the Tower Ridge affords a most

respectable climb, and no one can complain that the passage of the Tower is devoid either of interest or difficulty. Three parties preferred to traverse it on the right, but the other two climbed straight up the end rocks and found them sufficiently sensational as (on Saturday, at least) they were wet and glazed.

At the foot of the Tower Ridge is a pretty little pinnacle which previous parties had always omitted. It looked so tempting, however, on Friday morning that one Tower Ridge party was lured on to attack it, and a rather hot attack it proved. The rocks are excessively steep, and the holds, though firm and secure, invariably slope outwards. Near the top one man had to unrope, as nearly 100 feet were required to let the leader reach a secure anchorage. The descent on the other side is quite simple. Another, and, it is said, easier ascent was made on Monday by a ridge rather farther west. The first party followed the sky-line of the ridge at right angles with the glen.

The N.E. buttress was only ascended by one party. It held a good deal of ice, and was reported to be in a rather difficult condition. The gully above the first platform was paved with blue ice, and had to be left severely alone. Higher up also, below the last "peeler," the summer route (by the forty foot corner) was impracticable for the same reason, and a new line had to be struck out up the rocks on the left.

Many members devoted themselves to the gullies, of which by the end of the meet only one, viz., the left hand branch of the Observatory gully, remained unconquered. One by one the mighty Ben is being stripped of his mysteries, till now only one side of the terrible Carn Dearg buttress remains unexplored. An attempt was made upon this, but the laugh at the end of the day was on the side of the mountain. The discomfited party afterwards crossed gully No. 1, and found consolation in ascending the "Castle."

The N.E. ridge of Aonach Beag was ascended by two parties. Seldom even at a late Easter have the hills carried so little snow as they showed this year. The gauge at the summit registered 75 inches during the meet, but this

reading gives a very deceptive idea of their condition as compared with last season, when the wild winds of January and February swept nearly the entire snowfall into the corries, and permitted glissading far down the mountain side in gullies which this year showed scarcely a trace of white. As at last Easter, however, the snow was soft and (differing from 1895) very slushy, so that even at the top of the steepest gullies on the north-east face of Ben Nevis the axe was for the most part a useless encumbrance. On the big ledges, however, it was quite indispensable.

Indoors the meet was an unqualified success. Long hours of healthy exercise bred contentment even with the poor fare, and with Mr Colin Phillip at the head of the table the merriment never flagged. The suspicion of flatness that last year seemed to threaten the very existence of these big gatherings was on this occasion wholly removed. Quite a unique interest was afforded by the presence at Fort-William of eight members of the Alpine Club, who visited the "Alexandra" in the evenings, and did their best to keep us lively. This party consisted of such well-known climbers as Collie, Hastings, Slingsby, Solly, Haskett-Smith, Prof. Dixon, Collier, and Bowen, and great must have been the wailings at Wastdale, green the complexion of the Pillar Rock and the Parson's Nose at this powerful defection from Lakeland and Wales. The confidence of the English poet who wrote

"You were my earliest passion, and when shall my fealty falter?

Ah, when Helvellyn is low! ah, when Winander is dry,"

recked not of the "lowness" and "dryness" for climbers of an "exhausted centre," and of the dangerous attractions of virgin climbs across the Border.

Few who were present at last year's meet would have ventured to prophesy that its numbers would so soon be eclipsed, and that thirty-two members and guests would be found assembled under the same roof. These were not, however, all present at the same time. Some arrived late and others left early, but at one time or another the following powerful muster took part in the proceedings, viz., Bell, Boyd, Brown, Brunskill, Campbell, Clark, Crowley, Douglas, Fraser, Green, Hinxman, Howie, Prof. Kennedy,

King, Maclay, Macgregor, Meares, Moss, Naismith, Parker, Patchell, Phillip, Rennie, A. E. Robertson, Rose, W. A. Smith, Squance, and Gilbert Thomson—members; along with Grant, Raeburn, Reid, and R. G. Napier—guests. One and all of these must have carried home pleasant memories of what—till next year at least—will be remembered as the biggest—and wettest—meet on record.

W. B.

## NOTES AND QUERIES.

---

*The Editor will be glad to receive brief notices of any noteworthy expeditions. These are not meant to supersede longer articles, but many members who may not care to undertake the one will have no difficulty in imparting information in the other form.*

---

*To the Editor of the Scottish Mountaineering Journal.*

LIVERPOOL, 7th February 1896.

SIR,—The matter is of little importance, but as Professor Ramsay wishes it, perhaps you will allow me to state that on 26th May 1892 Mr Charles Pilkington and I ascended Suilven by the S.W. angle of the Grey Castle, the route so well described by Professor Ramsay in the January number of the Journal.

We discussed at the time the question of sending a note of our ascent to you, but came to the conclusion that it was hardly likely that this route, the only practicable one which we could discover at or near the west end of the mountain, should have escaped the notice of previous climbers.

I am sure that all readers of the Journal will rejoice with us that we came to that decision, as otherwise they might have missed one of the most charming articles which has graced the pages of the Journal.—I am, sir, yours truly,

HORACE WALKER.

---

DEAR MR "AULD REEKIE,"—Have you ever attended a New Year Meet of the Club when the weather was "seasonable," and when the voice of the enthusiasts had prevailed in fixing the hour for the morning start? If so, you can recall the feelings, not over friendly, with which the voice announcing "seven o'clock" was regarded. But these feelings, I am persuaded, never last long. Why then do you nurse your wrath against the unfortunate individual who four years ago made a mild endeavour to rouse you to appreciate the climbing blessings at your doors? For, sad to say, the whole of the fir



volume of the Journal had passed without any reference to Arthur Seat, and with only a casual one to the Salisbury Crags—as possessing a talus slope. The first suggestion that either might provide good climbing was in an article published in the first number of the second volume, dated January 1892, under the heading of “Practice Scrambles.” Amid the somewhat belated indignation which this has called forth, it is a satisfaction to see that the suggestion has at last borne fruit, and that Arthur Seat is thought worthy of better things than to be a racecourse, to be accomplished from and to the G.P.O. within forty minutes.

Had the article referred to appeared elsewhere than in the pages of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, the suspicion would have arisen that it was a *rag*—a red one, judging by the vigour with which it is attacked. But for your present feelings toward Arthur Seat much allowance must be made. Calf-love, a new convert, and gases in the nascent condition (you may choose the sentimental, the ecclesiastical, or the scientific comparison), are all well known for energy. Even when these feelings lead you to scoff at the attractions of other places, it would be cruel to remind you of one of your own sons who followed King Jamie to London, and replied contemptuously to the question whether Edinburgh had a river to compare with the Thames—“The Thames! we hae the Water o’ Leith and the Nor’ Loch.” I do not mean to follow his or your example, and therefore do not extend to you the invitation to climb the steep face of Garnet Hill, to risk your limbs in swinging by ropes over Vinegar Hill, or to explore the recesses of the Schipka Pass.

But your letter gives me the opportunity, apart from any question of rivalry, of confirming from further experience the view I expressed four years ago, that there is opportunity all round for interesting scrambles. Have you ever tried Loudon Hill? It is a nice afternoon excursion from Glasgow, and has an A.P. face. Near the peaceful-looking Gourrock there are some “illigant” cliffs, which *have* chucked a man down. If you are enthusiastic enough, you may leave Glasgow after the business day is over, climb Goat Fell or travel along the ridge of A’Chir, and again be on hand for the next day’s work. On a single holiday, without spending a night from home, anything on the Callander and Oban line, up to and including the whole ridge of Cruachan, can be accomplished. But a catalogue of the climbs that can be comfortably done in a day from Glasgow would rival in magnitude Munro’s famous tables, and like the Doctrine with a similar name, might lose favour as it travelled eastward.

One lives and learns. After realising that the climbs of Edinburgh are within a few minutes’ walk of Princes Street, one understands how it is that at a meet the Edinburgh contingent looks so anxiously after means of conveyance, whenever the hill happens to be more than half a mile from the hotel.—Yours retaliatorily,

THE AUTHOR OF “PRACTICE SCRAMBLES.”

## MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

THE GEOLOGY AND SCENERY OF SUTHERLAND. By H. M. CADELL.  
Edinburgh : David Douglas. 1896.

THIS is an enlarged edition of the small work issued by Mr Cadell in 1886. In the present volume the author describes in clear and popular language the scenic character of the different geological formations, and the effects produced on the face of the country by the Glacial Period. He also explains at some length the complex structure of the North-West Highlands, and gives an account of the controversy that raged for so many years as to the correct interpretation of the phenomena in that classic region—a controversy now happily set at rest by the work of Professor Lapworth and the Geological Survey.

A paper by Professor Judd is drawn upon for a description of the secondary rocks and coal-fields of Brora, and the book closes with an interesting account of the Kildonan gold-field. In it the author refers to the points of difference between the gold-fields of Sutherland and Australia, and draws the conclusion that although auriferous quartz veins are wanting, and the alluvial diggings cannot be regarded as certain or permanent, the gold may be finely disseminated through the rocks of the district in sufficient quantity to pay under improved methods of extraction.

The purist may possibly object to Mr Cadell's spelling of certain Gaelic place-names, and regard such forms as Spionnu, Coul More, Arkle, Foinaven, and Suilven as weak concessions to Southron incapacity. But unless the Ordnance Survey maps be taken as the standard of orthography, or—a most undesirable alternative—a complete system of phonetic spelling be adopted, these inconsistencies must always occur.

The volume is illustrated with sketches by Mr Straton Ferrier and the author, including views of Ben Hope, Ben Laoghal, and a somewhat sensational picture of the crest of Suilbheinn. Another view of Suilbheinn, from the pencil of Mr Peach, has already appeared in the pages of the Journal.

There are also orographical and geological maps of Sutherland and Caithness, and a section showing the succession of the rocks in the district.

L. W. H.

---

ICE-WORK, PRESENT AND PAST. By Professor T. G. BONNEY.  
(International Scientific Series.) London : Kegan Paul, Trench,  
& Co. 1896.

THIS is not, as its title might suggest, a work on mountaineering, but treats of glacial geology. Perhaps no department of science furnishes at present a larger crop of difficult and unsettled questions than this, and by a somewhat strange antithesis no disputed questions of science seem to generate a greater amount of argumentative heat than these icy ones. The facts of glacial geology confront the mountaineer in

volume .  
Seat, at.  
sessing .  
good ca  
second  
Scram<sup>i</sup>  
called .  
borne  
than .  
withi  
I  
of t  
hav  
wh  
Se.  
g<sup>n</sup>  
e  
e  
o  
:

Scotland receive so large a share of treatment as in Dr James Geikie's "Great Ice Age," or Sir Archibald Geikie's "Scenery of Scotland." Still the facts and the latest theories of glacial geology are treated in a comprehensive and impartial spirit, and the book forms an excellent introduction to the subject. If we may refer to one defect, it is in the illustrations. These might well have been more copious, and in some instances less far-fetched. For this perhaps, however, the author is not altogether responsible.

---

THE MOUNTAINS OF CALIFORNIA. By JOHN MUIR. New York :  
The Century Co. 1894.

THE specialist, be he climber, geographer, or naturalist, will not here find his particular hobby ridden so far or so hard as he would like. It is a pioneer book by one of the early pioneers, and in the stirring times of which his earlier recollections treat, such things as glaciers and hill climbing were not deemed worthy of such special study and adoration as they now receive. The author, a colonist in search of a healthy recruiting ground, wandered into the Californian Sierras in October 1871, and found a small glacier on the headwaters of the Illilouette Basin. Truly these were the golden days of discovery and mountain adventure! when every turn one took might disclose a gold mine, a new big tree, a Yosemite Valley. We have descriptions of some such discoveries and hints of others.

The author wanders on, careless of mankind and provisions, noting with his all-seeing eye the trees, flowers, and mountains, and all that they contain; observing with the joy of a schoolboy on a holiday, and recording with the calm delight of the artist and savant, eager to show to others the beauties spread around him and them; content that others dig for and find gold in the gulches, if he is free to lift his eyes to the everlasting hills, and enjoy his life at the altitude of the "bread line."

His first chapter on the Sierra Nevada will show in what an enthusiastic spirit he looks on all mountains, and especially those of his adopted country. It is among them that the rough work of preparing the earth for man's habitation was done. Man, when he comes, may indeed scrape it with a plough, or dig a gutter of a railway cutting, but that he can only do because the earth has been forged, mellowed, and made ready to his hand by fire, water in the form of snowflake and glacier, and what geologists graciously call "time." Then follow chapters on the glaciers, the snow, the passes, the glacier lakes and meadows, the forests, the latter with descriptions and engravings of the Californian conifers. There is an account of the "big tree," for which the author, like most people who have seen it, has a reverent worship. It is comforting to know that this tree is still in the prime of life as a species, growing in broad forests of all ages in the south of

the State, and not in isolated groups of grizzled and decaying giants, as usually seen by tourists in the northern parts. Decaying giants! These trees seem to live for ever. Lightning alone seems to make them think of death. In following the author through his calculations of the age and duration of these hardy perennials one is reminded of astronomical and geological calculations of the age of the earth, and what a poor weed of an annual man is after all. J. RENNIE.

---

ROYAL SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY'S ATLAS OF SCOTLAND.

Drawn, engraved, and printed by the Edinburgh Geographical Institute, 1895.

THIS imposing volume, handsomely and royally bound in red and gold, is 18 inches by 12, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick in size, and fourteen lbs. in weight, and is therefore hardly adapted for convenient use to the mountaineer in the glen or on the hilltop. But nevertheless it is of unique practical interest and value to all who desire to study intelligently the topography of Scotland. It contains "a series of sixty-two plates of Maps and Plans illustrating the Topography, Physiography, Geology, Natural History, and Climate of the Country, designed and prepared under the direction of J. G. Bartholomew, F.R.S.E., F.R.G.S.," whose name is a guarantee for care, beauty, and thoroughness of work in cartography. Further, the work has been specially edited—as regards Topography, by the late John Bartholomew, F.R.G.S. (father of the above); as regards Geology, by Sir Archibald Geikie; as regards Physiography, by his brother, Professor James Geikie; and as regards Meteorology, by Alexander Buchan, LL.D., all well known as Scotsmen of eminence in their own departments of knowledge, and as thoroughly, nay, even enthusiastically, familiar with the natural features of their native land. The basis of the Atlas is a reduction of the Ordnance Survey in forty-five sectional maps on the uniform scale of half an inch to the mile, and *uniformly* coloured in contour lines showing every 250 feet of height. This grading is maintained throughout with the utmost delicacy and clearness, and constitutes perhaps the greatest beauty and attractiveness of the maps. Look, for instance, at Sections 19 and 20, comprising the Fort-William district in which the members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club have recently been so much interested, and the way in which the great shoulders, massive ridges, and steep slopes, as well as the actual tops themselves, are graphically indicated will be seen to be admirable. The white cone of Aonach Beg looks over the Carn Mor Dearg arête to the grey summit of the great Ben himself; and to the south across Glen Nevis, whose depth and lateral steepness are well suggested, the long high range of notable peaks running from west to east through the great Mamore Forest, from Stob Ban to Binnein Mor, is vividly

portrayed. And so also, in the other mountainous sections, the hills are all well brought out ; and, indeed, in what section of Scotland do you not find hills and dales ! On one of the general maps at the beginning of the Atlas (see Plate II.), moorland, hill, and uncultivated land are coloured purple, and woodland and cultivated land green. The eye rests on a purple expanse, with some green fringes and intersections ! By the side of this map, also on Plate II., is another one coloured according to density of population, the white parts being uninhabited, while those burdened with humankind are brown of various depths. The brown is laid on pretty thick between Edinburgh and Glasgow, thins out towards Berwick and Ayr, and Perth and Aberdeen, but the great mass of the country to the centre and north-west is of an innocent whiteness. Instructive prefatory tables inform us that of a total area of 29,786 square miles in the land, 14,158 are mountain and heath ; and that while the population in Midlothian is 1,199 to the square mile, in Sutherland it is only eleven ! These are striking facts in connection with our country, which are very forcibly brought before us by the pictorial effect of these ingeniously contrived maps. We notice, however, one inaccuracy cropping up in some of the sections, and that is that various footpaths are depicted as "Driving Roads," e.g., on Section 26 the rough tracks out of the head of Glen Affric, including the famous Bealach to Kintail, are marked with double lines, which, according to the "explanatory note" at foot of the maps, indicate a minor driving road, while "Footpaths" are said to be shown by dotted lines. Now, as many of us know, and therefore perhaps it does not matter very much *to us* what is put down on the maps in this respect, these paths are *very* "dotted lines" indeed. And woe betide any adventurous tourist who, strong in his faith in the Ordnance Survey and Bartholomew, may venture on these paths on any wheeled machine, be it gig or bicycle. But do not let us dwell on such tragic contingencies ! The maps, on the whole, are marvels of correctness and beauty, and—most important—of consistency and uniformity ; and the volume, which is dedicated to the Queen, is one that is a credit to the country which it so faithfully depicts, and to the city in which it is produced.

Plans of all the principal towns are placed at the end of the volume ; and to complete a record of its contents we should mention it also contains a series of maps showing the rainfall and temperature, not only in each district, but in *each month* in that district—the river basins, the geological formations, and the natural history, &c. From these we note that while there is a very great difference in the yearly rainfall in different districts, from 92.7 inches in Glengyle, in Perthshire, to 23.3 only at Nairn, the average temperature all over Scotland is very much the same, averaging about 46. Then there is a concise table of the Etymology of Scottish Place-names—a most fascinating subject ; and an historical Cartographical Record, compiled with great care by Mr J. G. Bartholomew, beginning with the work of Ptolemy of Alexandria in A.D. 150, and, after narrating some 170 separate

maps of Scotland, including Blaeu's great Atlas in 1654, concluding with his own "Reduced Ordnance Survey." And, finally, there are elaborate summaries by the Geikies of the Physical and Geological Features of the Country. The whole work is wonderfully complete, and probably there is no other country in the world which has produced such a satisfactory graphic record of itself, *physically*.

W. A. S.



TWO PEELERS.





some of our more energetic club-fellows—we resolved for once to overcome our usual indolence and find our way across the hill without the aid of brake, bus, or gig.

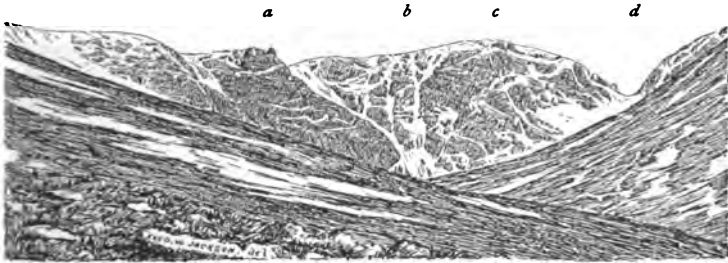
We had only an hour's daylight left, or just enough, as we were assured by a local authority, to take us to our destination. But the hour departed and with it the day, and the end of a second hour approached and found us still floundering and splashing among the bogs and mire-holes on the wrong side of the Patack. We recognised with bitterness that our informant's calculations had been vitiated by the usual consideration of the elastic "bittock." Perseverance, however, brought us to the end of all our difficulties, and although the crossing of the river in the darkness, the road, or rather rut, through the plantation, which only Douglas's pocket-lamp enabled us to navigate in safety, and the final tramp to the hotel door, where we arrived about 10.30, were disagreeable enough realities at the time, they have since been transmuted by the magic power of kindly Time into a series of humorous incidents on which we can look back with a sense of positive pleasure.

The natural approach to Corrie Arder is by the banks of the stream which, flowing from Lochan a Choire, finds its way into Loch Laggan just below the farm of Aberarder. The distance from the hotel to Aberarder is a little over three miles. Leaving the road before we reached the mouth of the stream, and crossing the latter at some distance above the farm, we kept well up on the left side of the glen. Here we had once more impressed on us the oft-repeated lesson that the love of short cuts, so deeply rooted in every mountaineering heart, is planted there only to be resisted and overcome. For while engaged in the exciting but somewhat wearying process of dodging under, leaping over, and generally circumventing the trunks and branches, prone and upright, of the numerous birch trees which adorn this side of the glen, we saw well up on the opposite slope what we afterwards found to be an excellent path winding its serenely level way towards the centre of the corrie.

From the lower end of the lochan, at their base, we examined the precipices and gullies before us with the

interest always excited by the prospect of a new ascent. It was our intention to find a way to the top of the cliffs, either by one of the "posts," as the gullies of Corrie Arder are locally called, owing probably to their appearance when seen from a distance, or, if that seemed impracticable, to try to discover a route up one of the great buttresses.

A careful scrutiny of the central part of the corrie convinced us that neither of these tasks would prove very easy of accomplishment. The two gullies to the extreme left, as well as one or two to the extreme right, we of course left out of account. They were obviously too easy to be



CORRIE ARDER.

(a) The Pinnacle, (b) Avalanche Gully, (c) Creag Meaghaidh, (d) The Window.

even interesting. But the rest of the rocky rampart looked as if it would afford fair sport. The rocks everywhere, both by character and disposition, seemed unfavourable for climbing purposes. Belonging mainly to the schistose formation, their uniformly downward dip indicated insecurity of hold, while frequent large surfaces of smooth slab gave eloquent warning of troublous times to whoever should attempt the seductive inclination of the seemingly easier routes of ascent. Moreover, the summits of the cliffs all round the corrie were crowned by a considerable depth of snow, rising nearly perpendicularly from the rock, and in places overhanging in some of the finest cornices we had ever seen in Scotland.

Having examined and disapproved routes successively proposed on the Pinnacle Ridge, so called from the fine pinnacle with which it is crowned, and which is perhaps the most striking thing in the whole corrie (marked *a* in the

illustration), and on the Central Buttress (marked *c*), we finally resolved to try what could be done with the great "Post" (marked *b*), which runs up the centre of the precipice. It was, of course, filled with snow, and though the upper part appeared excessively steep, we did not anticipate any insuperable difficulty in its line of ascent, and had the weather been favourable for our attempt, I do not think any such difficulty would have been found. But the air was warm and muggy, and in the lower regions the thaw was proceeding apace. The snow consequently was far from being in good order, and we soon found ourselves sinking to the knees in it at every step. But still it held, and trusting to find it grow firmer as we got further up, we kept on, taking advantage of an occasional rocky islet to relieve our going.

Traces of avalanche action were visible on every side of us. Immediately to our left a broad groove or channel three or four feet deep, with hard smoothly polished bottom and sides, indicated the main path of the falling snow; and down this at intervals, with sinister hiss, glided a stream of fragments from the cliffs above. Still, these discharges were too insignificant to trouble us much at first, and cutting our way across the course of these tiny streams, we kept on until the condition of the snow, which had been gradually growing worse, brought us to a complete halt. We were now rather more than half-way to the top, and had reached a position beneath the point where the "post" assumes the character of a real chimney. On this steep slope the incoherency of the snow made further progress quite impossible. The axe-head slid through the treacherous stuff as if it had been so much sawdust. It absolutely refused to afford further foothold. A struggle of a quarter of an hour failed to advance the leader a single yard in any direction, and we finally found ourselves compelled to retrace our steps. This, however, we did the less reluctantly, as we had noticed for some time that the snow from above had been falling much more frequently and in larger quantities than had been the case earlier in the day.

As it happened, we did not turn a moment too soon.

We had not descended many yards, when a loud crash above our heads announced that something like a real avalanche had fallen. The regular channel proving too small to hold it, it came sweeping past us on both sides. One large erratic block of snow, flying over the first two members of the party, struck Raeburn fairly on the head, while the smaller fragments which followed covered his head and shoulders as he lay prone upon the steep slope. Fortunately the snow was quite soft, so that no harm was done. It was as a hint that the incident impressed us most strongly. The nature of the work prevented us making any great speed in our descent; but we had safely recrossed the avalanche track, and, sheltered as we thought by an island of rock from any flying shot, were going our best, when again came the bang! crash! of the falling cornice. An upward glance showed us that once again the snow had burst its narrow bounds. Several large blocks appeared shooting directly over our protecting rock. I had barely time to throw myself face downwards, firmly grasping the shaft of my axe, which was buried almost to the head as an anchor to Douglas, when I received almost simultaneously three heavy blows on the head, back, and ribs. The following rush of loose snow, though exerting considerable pressure, I managed to withstand easily enough; nevertheless, it was with a feeling of relief that I felt it ease off sufficiently to enable me to stand upright. This was fortunately our last experience of assault and battery at the hands of the ill-disposed Spirits of the Post, for in a few minutes we were beyond reach of their attack. But for the fact, however, that it was white, soft, recently fallen snow which was peeling off from the rocks and cornices above, the consequences must undoubtedly have been serious.

The following day matters were very much worse. The older snow was then coming down mixed with earth, stones, and all kinds of detritus. We saw one large mass of cornice, carrying with it great blocks of rock, sweep directly over our own track. Had we been there when that torrent swept down it, the most appropriate name for that particular post would have been, as one of the party

remarked with grim jocularly, *Post Mortem*. The author of this atrocity was promptly asked to give the couloir a chance of qualifying for such a striking name by making another attempt on it. It is needless to say that, flattered as he felt at such a request, he resolutely refused to sacrifice himself on the altar of *Nomenclature*.

After descending for some distance it seemed easy enough to reach the top of the cliffs by the Pinnacle Ridge if we could strike the crest of the latter above its lower vertical part. Traversing, therefore, to the right over alternate patches of rock and snow, we scrambled down into the great gully which separates the Pinnacle Ridge from the central face of the corrie. Here, too, were abundant traces of falling snow, so keeping as much out of the direct line of missiles as possible, we ploughed our way upwards for some distance, and were soon able to cross the broad flank of the ridge to its edge. From this point to the foot of the pinnacle our progress was a simple and easy walk. The pinnacle itself, however, is quite another matter. From below, and in the condition in which we saw it, it appeared a very hard nut to crack. With efficient backing of the pyramid order I think it might be successfully tackled. But it certainly looks formidable, and as we had not too much time at our disposal, we left it for a more favourable opportunity—or for a more favoured party.

The precipice to the left of the pinnacle over which the climber would be almost hanging is, I should say, one of the most vertical I have ever seen on a mountain. A black face of about a thousand feet in height, it as nearly approaches the perpendicular throughout the whole of that distance as one could wish to see, and more resembles one of the great sea cliffs of Shetland or St Kilda than most things of the kind to be seen in a mountain corrie.

Our return to Dalwhinnie was varied by a visit to the mountain named *Creag nan Adhaircean* in the O.S. map. As none of us can fairly be considered adepts in the pronunciation of Gaelic—especially when it is conducted on the “look and say” principle—this name caused us some trouble at first. But once the O.S. spelling was boldly

disregarded, and the well-known and easily remembered variation "Hairpin" adopted in its stead, things went quite smoothly.

Our design in making this detour was partly to view the remarkable gorges which cut the mountain off on two sides from hill and moor alike, partly to interview a peregrine which was known to one of the party to have his nest in the neighbourhood. Although we examined closely only the smaller of the two gorges, we found it an extraordinary place, and one which, as the guide-books say, "well repays the trouble of a visit." As for the falcon, his lordship, though at home, was shy. He repeatedly showed himself, but seemed to have decided objection to any very close communication. This in his case was only natural, as only two days before a dastardly attempt had been made upon his life, and he had learned to distrust the race of men.

The S.M.C. has still much work to do in the education of those who dwell by the side of lone Loch Laggan. Axe and rope are still to them a source of puzzled wonderment. One garrulous old fellow, on catching his first glimpse of the axe, ventured the interrogatively humorous remark—"That will be the same battle-axe that Bonaparte himsel' had?" While another worthy no less inquisitive remembered a "theologist" who used to "go on the hulls wi' a thing like that an' pick oot the ferns wi' it, roots an' a'." He accordingly at once set us down as three "theologists." But a sight of the ropes quickly changed his views, and he hurriedly left us with the fervently expressed hope that we "were no a' in the Calcraft business." As these were only types, it will be seen that a visit to Creag Meaghaidh has charms for others than the pure Ultramontane. To the Salvationist it should prove a perfect paradise. He can wander there for miles and bag top after top without ever descending below the 3,000 feet level. In a word, I advise my fellow-clubmen, who do not already know the district, to set apart a couple of days for it at the earliest possible opportunity, and I live in the hope of reaping a rich harvest of thanks from those of them who follow my advice.

## NOTE ON THE BIRDS OBSERVED.

I have been asked to add a note on the birds observed during the above trip. These were naturally, at the high levels generally traversed, few both in number and species. In all twenty-eight species were observed, and the majority of these in the immediate vicinity of the hotel and loch. Among the more interesting birds, the wild weird wail of the Greenshank was heard during our walk over in the dark from Dalwhinnie. A single pair of Partridges were seen in the little oasis of Aberarder farm, and an Eagle on the fine precipices of Corrie Arder, where on the summit pinnacle was its favourite look-out. The bones and feathers of the Ptarmigan were strewed around, and castings composed entirely of the remains of the mountain grouse, showed that this interesting bird must be abundant in the district, though we only saw a few pairs. The clear bell-like notes of the Snowbunting were first heard on the easy traverse out of the great snow gully to the pinnacle, and a pair of the birds afterwards seen on both days probably settling down to breed. Oyster-catchers were numerous and noisy along the shores of Loch Laggan, and a number of Common Gulls were also seen here. The Blackbird at the loch level was represented by a few pairs of its relative, the Ringousel, on the lower mountain slopes, while the ubiquitous little Meadow Pipit was common alike from the shores of Loch Laggan to the snowy summits of the cliffs of Corrie Arder.

HAROLD RAEBURN.







N.E. FACE, BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR.  
The arrow indicates route described.

BUCHAILLE ETIVE MÒR.—"THE CROWBERRY  
RIDGE."

By W. W. NAISMITH.

ALTHOUGH Buchaille Etive Mòr has figured considerably in the *Journal*, climbers who know it will agree with me that it well deserves all the attention yet bestowed on it, and a great deal more. An English climber lately offered to negotiate for a transfer of this mountain to Wastdale-head in exchange for Great Gable. Perhaps we might have "a waur offer, waur offer," for the Gable is no mean mountain; "but where's the Scot" who would entertain any such proposal? I have therefore no compunction in asking permission, *encore une fois*, to say something about a section of this glorious cone that has not been described. I refer to that part of the east face between Dr Collie's and Mr Tough's routes (see Sketch, Vol. IV., p. 100). The accompanying view, which is reproduced from a photograph taken at Easter 1893, by Mr Rennie, from the Glencoe road, two miles west of Kingshouse, shows this aspect of the mountain in greater detail. On the extreme right is the big gully, often ascended in snow. Next comes the huge rounded ridge climbed by Messrs Brown and Tough. Then a long gully, narrower than the other. It has probably not yet been done; but judging from the glimpses we had of it, and the fairly continuous snow in the photograph, it may be expected to offer no serious difficulties. Bounding this gully on the left is a prominent ridge, shown in the view as almost directly under the top of the mountain. This was our climb. Then comes a shallow gully, evidently quite simple, and, I fancy, the quickest route to Buchaille Etive from Kingshouse, though no ascent is yet recorded. Further to the left is a curved ridge, ascended by Mr G. B. Gibbs in July 1896, and described by him as not difficult. Then a straight little couloir, with snow in it, and a short ridge beside it, guarded by tremendous cliffs on the left. Neither of these possible routes is believed to have been tried. Dr Collie's route—the earliest ascent of the east face—is still more to the left.

On the 3rd August 1896, Mr Douglas and I met at the Bridge of Orchy, the Editor having bicycled all the way from Edinburgh in two stages of about sixty miles each. We rode to Kingshouse in an hour and a half, leading our machines for less than a mile out of the thirteen. At Kingshouse we were welcomed noisily by a Skye terrier and two young collies, who in doubt whether we were friends or foes, and divided between the conflicting claims of duty and natural affability, compromised matters by barking vigorously and at the same time wagging their tails. On explaining the object of our visit the barking subsided, and we invited them all to dinner at nine P.M., though only two doggies were able to accept. After making some change in our garb, we proceeded on foot to the junction of the roads, waylaid Her Majesty's mail coach, seized the mails, and abstracted a rope and a pair of climbing boots. That highway robbery accomplished, we made a bee-line for "the Shepherd," the river Coupal being low and allowing us to cross dry-shod.

The ridge we were aiming for looks appallingly steep from the road, but we had been deceived once before by the inaccessible appearance of those Buchaille Etive crags, and were not to be "done" again. This particular portion of the mountain is certainly steep. The contour lines on the 1-inch map indicate that the upper 2,000 feet are inclined at an average angle of  $45^\circ$ , and the last 1,100 feet rise at an average rate of 11 in 9—that is about  $50^\circ$ . We reached the foot of our ridge in rather more than an hour from the road, including the ascent of some easy broken rocks. The writer's chief difficulty so far had been to get his companion past the clumps of ripe crowberries growing everywhere, and this circumstance has suggested a name for our climb. The forbidding aspect of the ridge was now somewhat mollified, though its ascent still promised to be stiff enough without looking for difficulties. Both sides of the ridge, as far as we could make out, were sheer walls, so that there would be no escape into either of the gullies in the event of our being "pounded." At its lower end also, the rocks which formed the crest of the ridge are hopelessly steep, and nearly unbroken for some 300 feet.

The photograph shows that no snow lies on them. I will not prophesy that that cliff will never be scaled in a direct line, but before then I think mountaineering science will have to advance to a higher stage of development. It is conceivable that a line might be chosen up those rocks, any part of which could be climbed if it were, say on a "boulder," or even if there were a reasonable number of platforms or anchorages. But in the absence of these, a continuous steep climb of 300 feet is at present generally regarded as "impossible," because it would make too great demands on nerve and muscular endurance. In this connection I cannot help thinking that what may be termed the psychological influence of *platforms* receives inadequate acknowledgment in most descriptions of rock-climbs. A brick wall ten feet high, with all the joints between the bricks open, is an easy climb. If twenty feet high, it becomes a difficult climb; if twice that height, a desperate feat; while a chimney stalk, 100 feet high, in similar condition, would be "impossible" without a steeple-Jack's apparatus.

But I am wandering from the "Crowberry Ridge," at the bottom of which Douglas and I are putting on the rope, while we scan with eager anticipation the mighty rocks above us, hitherto untrodden by either man or beast. To the right of the high cliff the rocks sloped upwards more gently, abutting against the loftier portion of the ridge like a lean-to shed against a higher building. The two sections of the ridge appeared to unite above, and a shallow gully or groove, that ran up the middle of the lower rocks, evidently offered the best prospect of success. After proceeding gaily for a short distance we came to an overhanging part, where we were forced to leave the friendly groove, and go up ten or fifteen feet of a vertical rock ladder, with a horrible drop below into the chasm on our right. The highest step of the ladder was several feet short of the top of the pitch, and the only obvious handhold within reach was a big block, which swayed ominously at the first touch. Seeing that we were both directly underneath this gentleman at the time, we begged him earnestly not to disturb himself on our account—until we got past—when Douglas,

in the interests of future climbers, tipped him over into the gully, with a clatter that woke all the echoes of the surrounding crags. Above that difficulty we passed two minor obstacles, and got to a tolerably level place, where we thought we could, by turning to the left, reach the crest of the ridge. In any case there seemed to be no alternative route, for the moderate slope we had been following ended abruptly, a short distance ahead, at the foot of an impossible precipice, with a huge spike of porphyry projecting from it. Starting with a climb up a wall ten feet high, where we both found it difficult to keep our balance owing to a slight overhang, we had to mount a rather troublesome slope of slabby rock. There were few good grips, and no anchorage for the leader till he reached the crest. The whole of our sixty feet rope was needed at this place, and it would not be particularly delightful to go down. From this point onwards we followed the crest of the ridge, which is fairly narrow, and allows one to look down into the abyss on either side—always a pleasurable sensation. It is quite an easy scramble, and we rose rapidly, although we encountered one or two steep bits, and some more crowberries. On approaching the top we saw that our ridge terminated in a pinnacle, detached from the mountain, the gully on our right (N.) side running up to the gap behind the pinnacle. As *our* side of the gully appeared to be still very precipitous, we were in happy uncertainty whether, when we got to the top of the pinnacle, we should not find ourselves, as an Irishman might say, in a hole. However, on getting to where we could look into the gully, we saw that we could readily reach a little grass ridge connecting the pinnacle with the rest of the mountain. The pinnacle rises about forty feet above the saddle, and on the top of it we found the first sign of visitors we had observed—namely, the cairn built by Dr Collie's party, who had ascended it from the saddle in snow.

The ridge was vanquished! It had given us a thousand feet of interesting climbing, and had occupied just two hours. On the way up we had left one or two stone marks along our track. The porphyry of Buchaille Etive is an honest, downright sort of material, nice to climb. If a

fragment is loose, it tells you so at once; and if *in situ*, you can usually trust your whole weight to the tiniest flake—not like some rocks, which seem to be firm to the hand until a strain is put on them, when they suddenly fail you.

Ten minutes more took us to the summit of the mountain. There we sat down and feasted our eyes on the wide panorama on one of the loveliest evenings it has ever been our fortune to spend on a hill top. All the giants round about were clear, except Ben Nevis, which alone had a cap of cloud. To the west Loch Linnhe was crossed by a broad belt of gold; while down below, on the other side, we saw the conical shadow of our mountain mapped out on the level moor.

We left the cairn at six o'clock, to descend the big gully beyond Tough's ridge. In such weather one would suppose it to be an easy matter to find this gully, but in some inexplicable way we followed the wrong ridge, and only pulled up on the brow of the Tulachan Corrie, a quarter of a mile away! Several other climbers have, strangely enough, been baffled in their efforts to hit the big gully, and one is almost forced to explain the phenomenon by concluding that this place is the "sanctuary" of the mountain elves and fairies, who, to prevent the impious invasion of its solitudes, are wont to employ all their harmless arts to lure the unwary stranger into other gullies, which are, so to speak, open to the public. Their usual dodge is to conceal their ravine under a veil of mist, but on this summer night they tried a different plan, and made the atmosphere so unnaturally transparent, that objects a mile off looked close at hand. We at last discovered the gully despite its witchery. It follows the line of a dyke of reddish igneous rock, less durable than the porphyry. Its descent is by no means a simple walk, as it contains several steep pitches. One place, about half-way between the top and the waterfall, took up a good deal of time. We had there to descend a hundred feet of wet rock, garnished with water cresses and other aquatic plants, among which it was not easy to find and test the footholds. There would be no such difficulty when ascending. It was quite a revelation to us to compare the August condition of the gorge

with its appearance at the snowy Easter of 1893. Then it presented a broad, smooth, and, except at one point, an unbroken slope of snow, rising at an almost uniform angle. Now that the snow was gone, we noticed that it had hidden a perfect chaos of rocks, caves, trenches, cascades, and what not. The depth of the snow at one or two points must have been as much as forty or fifty feet.

As we were enjoying ourselves we did not hurry down, and by the time we reached the road the stars were twinkling in the southern sky.

## BEN A'AN.

BY H. C. BOYD.

BEN A'AN in the Trossachs can hardly be called a "mountain," if it is judged merely by its altitude. Not only does it fall short of the dignity of a "Munro"—that mystic, but occasionally fallacious, patent of nobility to which every ambitious Scotch mountain is now supposed to aspire—but it does not even come up to the level of an ordinary 2,000 feet hill, its height being only about 1,500 or 1,600 feet. Having regard, however, to the more important qualities, in the eyes of the modern school of mountaineering, of mountain sculpture and the character of the climbing to be had, I think that as you look up at the crags that command the Pass of the Trossachs, you will be ready to acknowledge that on that side at least Ben A'an is a most respectable peak. 'Contrary to the rule that usually leads one to expect the northern or eastern faces of a mountain to be the most precipitous, the crags of Ben A'an have a southern aspect. On the north and east the hill is connected by slight depressions with undulating ridges of heathery upland, while on the south and west it runs boldly down in rugged outline to the shores of Loch Katrine. As every one knows, the lower slopes that overshadow the eastern extremity of the loch, and form one side of the Trossachs Pass, are richly clad with luxuriant woods of oak and birch of surpassing beauty—a beauty which is at its height in the "merrie month of May," the time of the visit I am about to record, when the trees are dressed in their freshest green, and the leaves are charged with sap. Nature has indeed here dowered the earth with her utmost bounty, and scattered her wealth with so lavish a hand, that it is small wonder that Scott's poetic fancy was fired by the loveliness of the scene. But it is not for me to enter on a description of the features of that classic ground. They have been described once for all and immortalised in the "Lady of the Lake," where such readers of the Journal as are not familiar with the *ipse locus* can find the scene depicted in glowing colours, and enriched with the poet's



most exuberant imagery. I have been asked merely to chronicle a climb, and to that I shall accordingly address myself.

From the point of view of the mountaineer, Ben A'an obviously offers excellent climbing on its southern face, where the rocks descend abruptly for some 500 feet to the upper fringe of the woods. Impressed by the aspect of these rocks, as well as by the consideration that they had been unduly neglected in the past by members of the Club, (we could find no traces in the Journal of their having been climbed), Mr Gilbert Thomson, my brother, Rev. Arnold Boyd, and myself, arranged an expedition for Thursday, 21st May last, the Queen's Birthday Holiday, to see what could be done. Of the alternative routes by Aberfoyle and Callander, we chose the former, and had a charming walk over the hill-road to the Trossachs, past the shores of Loch Achray, and through the woods, before we reached the base of our climb. The day was hot, so we were glad to throw ourselves on the turf to cool down a little and take our preliminary survey. The lower rocks looked very steep and difficult, but they were seamed by several gullies that appeared to offer promising lines of ascent. Higher up, steep grass slopes led to a final pitch of rocks which terminated with the summit. Of the gullies referred to, two large ones right in the middle of the face attracted our particular attention; the one to the right looked rather narrower than the left one; both bore quantities of vegetation on the ledges at the sides. We roped, and Thomson, who had declared a preference for the right-hand gully, was invited to lead the way up; my brother followed, and I brought up the rear. The gully commenced with a slippery scramble up a rather rotten slope of grass and rock, then came a very steep pitch, with most unsatisfactory holds, leading up to a nearly vertical chimney, up which Thomson gallantly swarmed for about thirty feet only, however, to find his further progress completely barred by the overhang of the rock at the top. We, being comfortably posted below, cheerfully assured him that the thing was done, and that a bold spring was all that was required, but Thomson saw the matter in another light;

and on his pointing out that in the event of the failure of the spring, it would be to the detriment of our skulls, as the gully did not allow any escape from the track of falling bodies, we came round to his view of things, and persuaded him to descend. We resolved to have a look at the other gully to the left, and so, reversing our previous order, we made our way round to its base.

The initial stage was easy. Then it branched in two, the right branch being very narrow, and the left one wide; but as the rocks at the top of the latter had a decided overhang, and threatened us with a repetition of our former difficulties, we turned our attention to the alternative route. The absence of footholds was compensated for by the narrowness of the chimney, which enabled the limbs to be securely jammed in the crevice. About fifteen feet up a swing over to the right placed us on a short arête which formed the crest of the gully on that side; then turning to the left, a hot scramble up some grass and through some shrubs and trees brought us to the foot of another steep chimney about twenty-five feet in height. Thomson resumed the lead, and had an opportunity of displaying his skill in ascending the chimney in true chimney-sweep fashion, the chief difficulty being the dodging of a tree which grew at the top.

We were now on the upper grass slopes of the hill, and, our time being short, we thought it better to avoid the final pitch of rocks which still confronted us, and to take the easiest route to the summit. But our pusillanimity met with the fate it deserved. Our "easy" route presently resolved itself into a series of slabby rocks which gave us as much trouble as anything we had previously encountered. Thomson's engineering skill, however, was equal to all difficulties, and shortly before four o'clock we lay stretched on the heather on the summit, investigating the contents of the knapsack and admiring the view. The descent was made, by the watercourse (destitute of water) immediately to the east of the summit.

Now the record of our climb being complete, there is little need for me to dwell on the vicissitudes of the homeward journey, though in some respects these far eclipsed those of

the climb itself. The mental agonies that we suffered that evening, when the engine of our train, finding itself overloaded, treacherously deserted us, and left us helpless and fuming with wrath on Flanders Moss, and prospects of home and dinner and the cheery fireside faded into the uncertain future,—the petty vexations and miseries, and all the minor trials of the road, that exhausted the patient charity of the veriest Job of our party,—these are subjects more painful to reflect on than interesting to record. Let it suffice for me to chronicle the bare fact that, notwithstanding the N.B.R., we *did* reach home at last, and the sorely neglected rights of the long-suffering inner man were at length triumphantly vindicated.

## SGURR DUBH, SKYE.

BY W. DOUGLAS.

AN early writer on the Coolins remarks that the proper way to reach the island of Skye is to "go there by water"; and of all the water-ways to the Isle of Mist, the ideal one is to sail in a yacht. There is no doubt about the advantage of this method, provided one is a good sailor, and there is wind enough, but not too much, to waft him there speedily.

After a week's cruising from the Clyde, in the good little ship "Ronaval," we left Canna early one summer's day for Skye. The wind was light and was blowing from



SKYE FROM OFF LOCH BRITTLE.

the N.E., and thus we had plenty of time to drink in and steep ourselves in the wonderful features of that perfect view as we slowly beat up to Skye in long tacks. The peaks of the Coolins were here and there cloud-capped, but now and then a well-known head would break the sky-line, and one by one, from Sgurr Dearg to Gars-bheinn, each were named to our satisfaction. Sgurr Mhic Coinnich was the first to be recognised; its long back and steep southern face were unmistakable at the head of Corrie Labain. Then the Old Man of Skye shook himself free, and Alasdair was the last to show his head. The un-

interesting ridge of Sgurr nan Eag shut out much, but terminated in the more shapely peak of Gars-bheinn.

At length at the end of a long and pleasant day we rounded Soa Island and sailed into Loch Scavaig. The wonderful mountain of Blaven was there, so too was Sgurr nan Gillean, Bhasteir, Bidein Druim na Ramh, and then Sgurr Dubh opened out to the left, a grand and solemn picture of storm-riven rock. Running the gauntlet of the sunken reefs and baffling winds, so prevalent in the loch, we sailed right to its head and dropped our anchor in one of the wildest and most sublime spots in all bonnie Scotland. Had I the pen of Scott I would paint a vivid picture of that scene, and tell how the noisy cataract of the Mad Stream came dancing and leaping in cascades over the lower battlement of rock, and how grandly the triple summit of dark Sgurr Dubh rose against the sky-line in ridge and peak, bristling with spear-points, but I shall leave such pictures to those who can draw them. Sgurr Dubh is ever beautiful, beautiful when clearly outlined against the sky, and still more lovely when wisps of mist float up its sides from the Garbh-corrie and throw out unsuspected ridges and towers into strong relief.

I shall never forget the view we had of it one morning after our arrival. The Garbh-corrie was filled with mist which was gradually being dispelled by the sun, and as it rose to the hilltops, fleecy fragments were detached and wreathed themselves out and in among their spurs and towers. But "this was a sight to dream of, not to tell." Unfortunately, though keen to climb Sgurr Dubh at once, I was doomed to a day's inactivity on board the yacht, which I spent in reading up the history of the mountain. Truly not an arduous task, for of previous writers on Sgurr Dubh there are not many.

Nicolson records his ascent—probably the first—in *Good Words* for 1875, in which he characterises it as the hardest adventure he ever had among those hills. He made the ascent from the Garbh-corrie and descended to Coruisk.

Charles Pilkington in his now classic paper gives an even more stimulating account. "We were beaten back,"



LOCH SCAVAIG AND SGURR DUBH.



he says, "by a trap dyke high on the north ridge of Sgurr Dubh, and having to descend right into the corrie to circumvent it, we gave up the expedition and returned the way we came. . . . We were somewhat consoled for our defeat by Walker telling us he had made the ascent with others in 1883 by a fine rough scramble from Corrie Lochain."

Clinton Dent, in vol. xv. of the *Alpine Journal*, then records that Pilkington and Hastings made the ascent from the Alasdair col, and descended by the Coruisk face; and we learned on the spot from Mr Sidney Williams, who, with that veteran climber his father, was camped at Scavaig, that there was a drop on the other side of the first or lower summit, which was usually avoided by a slight descent on the southern side. On the northern side it cannot be turned so easily.

It was not till the 11th of June that I was ready for the hills. The day opened gloriously. Not a breath of wind was blowing. The sun, out of a blue sky, blazed down upon us with an intense heat. Rennie, Lamont, and I started shortly after ten o'clock to make the ascent. We wended our way up the side of the Mad Burn (the Allt a' Chaoich of the O.S.), and across the level ground, stretching to the foot of the hills, above the lower rampart of rock. Crossing the stream, we mounted the screes for some hundreds of feet. Then a diversity of routes offered themselves. We selected a ledge running to our left, which soon led us to a long stretch of slabs. These were delightful to clamber over, for cracks crossed them within easy reach of our fingers. The heat was intense, and the rocks were quite warm to the touch. Then we made an attempt to go straight up the steep rocks on our right, but the leader, after struggling up some tough places, heard sundry growls and grunts from those below, which resolved themselves into the emphatic sentence, "that the lads fra our toun never gie themsells mair trouble than there is okashion for." He was even threatened with deposition if a more rational course was not followed, and accordingly, with such mutinous expressions ringing in his ears, he had to curb his ultra-mountaineering propensities, and select another ledge



which took us easily up to the first or lower summit. It was reached at half-past twelve, and the aneroid showed it to be 2,450 feet high. With great pleasure were the rucksacks thrown off, and lunch and cameras produced.

Now for "the drop." The connecting ridge was seen some eighty feet below, but nothing of the intervening space. The rope was unwound, and a man sent down to explore. He soon returned with the joyful intelligence that it would "go" all right, for the *mauvais pas* resolved itself into a pitch of about fifteen to twenty feet of vertical rock with a break in it about half-way down. The first man was soon lowered, the second followed, and the last, finding an excellent hitch for the rope, came down sailor fashion with his back to the wall. I doubt if this place could be climbed safely without a rope, at least it would be exceedingly difficult to do so.

The ascent to the central or highest peak (which Dr Collie makes 3,120 feet) gave a most interesting scramble, and one that could be made as easy or as difficult as any one liked. We reached the top at 2.50, and then more photography and more lunch.

Next followed a fairly steep descent of an interesting kind, probably of 200 feet, and another rise to the west summit (3,090), which we reached at 3.45.

Views from hilltops do not always appeal to the *blasé* climber, but he would indeed be a poor mortal who could not appreciate the view from this point, surrounded as it is by these great, hard, and rugged hills of solid rock, shooting up on all sides with their jagged crests clear-cut against the sky and sea. Fine as the view is from the other two peaks of Sgurr Dubh, the one from here I think is the best, for the hills seem to shape themselves into more picturesque forms.

To the south of us the long flat ridge of Gars-bheinn and Sgurr nan Eag flanks An Garbh-choire, and I was interested in following the route taken by Rennie and Lamont, who had traversed it from end to end two days previously. They had found no difficulties on the ridge. Two spurs, however, leading from An Garbh-choire had been lately climbed by Mr Sidney Williams, and they gave, I understand, some excellent sport. The most beautiful picture,

however, was Alasdair, and we recognised the photo, that accompanies Mr Pilkington's paper in the first volume of our Journal, as being taken from this point. While we were admiring the perfect lines of this, the most shapely of all Coolin peaks, two figures appeared on its summit looking like giants outlined against the sky. They were Williams and John Mackenzie, who had successfully made the ascent from the Sgurr Dubh col, and passed without much difficulty the obstruction referred to by Dr Collie in Vol. II., p. 173. While on the subject of Sgurr Alasdair, I found that its N.E. peak is now known as Sgurr Tearlach—a tribute to Mr Charles Pilkington, who has done so much pioneer work in Skye. There are still a number of unnamed peaks in the Coolin range, such as the peak between Gars-bheinn and Sgurr Eag, the west peak of Sgurr Dubh, the peak to the south of Sgurr Dearg, Banachdich and Mhadaidh might be split up and the various tops named, the peak of Bidein Druim na Ramh (if it is a peak of Bidein) that lies west of the Bealach a Glaic Moire, the peak that lies between Bruach na Frithe and Bhasteir on the main ridge, all these and others ought to be named, and thus simplify future description,—but who is to do this?

However, to return to the view. The whole range of the Coolins was before us. There was Mhic Coinnich with Dearg behind it, Banachdich, Ghreadaidh, and Mhadaidh; the ever-fascinating towers of Bidein Druim na Ramh leading on to Bruach na Frithe, Bhasteir and Sgurr nan Gillean. The whole view from this point I felt to be, not only the most lovely, but the most geographically interesting of any in Skye.

After spending nearly an hour on the top, we made as rapid a descent as the nature of the Rough-corrie would allow, and reached the yacht shortly after six o'clock. No doubt this climb was much simplified by our being located at the foot of the mountain, but an early start would bring the ascent quite within easy reach of Sligachan.

Next day we sailed away and rounded the south coast, with its caves and cliffs and craggy knolls, till we dropped anchor in front of Talisker's Distillery. Here I left the yacht, but on the way home spent a most delightful Sunday

in renewing my acquaintance with the "pinnacles" and western ridge of Sgurr nan Gillean; and as the most fitting ending to this paper, let me quote a verse or two of Nicolson's Hygienic Hymn in praise of the pure ozone:—

" A happy man was I  
On that Sabbath day alone,  
Worshipping there, in the silent air,  
Steeped in the pure Ozone.

I breathed the blest Ozone,  
On the crown of Sgurr nan Gillean,  
With gladsome mind, of mountain wind  
I drank a plenteous fill in.

Drinking the blest Ozone,  
On the crest of that awful hill,  
I thanked the Lord, who the world had stored  
With the life that the air did fill.

Great is the dome of St Paul's,  
Arching o'er altar and throne ;  
Greater still is that silent hill  
Bathed in the pure Ozone !"

MOUNTAINEERING EQUIPMENT.

IT is sometimes imagined by an ignorant public that Alpine preparations have assumed an elaborate, not to say luxurious, character. This is, of course, a ludicrous error. In truth, mountaineers revel in hardships, and, as a rule, take with them little beyond the few simple necessaries recommended in a well-known "Report on Equipment for Mountaineers." To climb with less would be terribly rash, and might bring a noble recreation into disrepute, yet some of the less obvious items in the Report might elude the memory. We have therefore embodied them (duly italicised) in the subjoined ballad, which, if set to stirring music, may some day, by the aid of the "musical-boxes" recommended in the Report, become familiar wherever the ice-man or the penny-ice-man is held in honour.

THE HARDY MOUNTAINEER.

*"Persicos odi, puer, apparatus."*

IT was "a brave, a British boy,"  
 Who never felt the throb of fear,  
 Who longed to "snatch the fearful joy"  
 Which thrills the hardy mountaineer.

In horrid places, far from town,  
 In *tents* he fought with frost and fate,  
 On *quilts of finest eider down*  
*Not less than 7 ft. x 8.*

Forth to the wilderness he went,  
 More drouthy than the son of Hagar;  
 His manly back, perspiring, bent  
 'Neath half the stock of *Dr Jaeger*.

With *Norfolk-jacket*, of the kind  
 Which loves the *pocket*, loathes the *pleat*;  
 With *knickerbockers, flannel-lined*,  
 And garnished with a *double seat*.

To supplement this scant costume,  
 He donned, on sailing from the Mersey,  
 The neat yet adventitious bloom  
 Of *running drawers and over-jersey*.

He wore but half-a-dozen *caps* ;  
*Two pair of gloves* his hands did deck ;  
 He'd *anklets, gaiters, ponchos, wraps,*  
 And *mufflers twofold round his neck.*

So when, secured by trusty hitch  
 His *walking-mutton* faced the steep,  
 No man could feel quite certain which  
 Was mountaineer and which was sheep.

'Midst all his hazardous pursuits  
 Huge waggons followed one by one,  
 With *meats, fowls, soups, oil, wines, and fruits,*  
 And *jams and jujubes* by the ton.

Yet, seeing the heroic band,  
 Some flung against their heavy traffic  
 Rude jests about "Mashonaland,"  
 And "specials" for the *Daily Graphic*.\*

*Beef-tea* sustains him on his tracks,  
 And *kola* helps him on and up ;  
 Behind him, men on aching backs  
 Bear *suitable liqueurs for cup.*

He climbs with science, force, and fire ;  
 Yet, victory in view, he stops—  
 "Ye gods !" he cries, "we must retire ;  
 I've left behind my *acid drops* !"

Thus valour missed its goal sublime,  
 Ambition in the bud was nipped.  
 No matter ! Better luck next time,  
 When he's more thoroughly *equipped* !

---

\* All who remember Lord Randolph Churchill's expedition under the auspices of the paper here named, will recall his extensive outfit, his occasional failures to find French cooking or his favourite brands of champagne, and his distress at these discoveries.

## BEN HOPE IN 1776.

BY THE REV. CHAS. CORDINER.\*

*28th June 1776.*

LEAVING Tongue, passed by an old square tower called Bar-castle or Castle-varrich, placed on a rugged mount, commanding a full view of the firth all the way down to the sea, and rested for the night in Ribby-dale [Ribigill], a romantic open valley, bounded by rugged and lofty mountains: a large rivulet pours its clear current in serpentine windings through the dale, here and there overshadowed with trees of various size: all around, the eye is presented with objects most majestically wild: on one hand, the shelvy heaths, which stretch up into the mountain Ben Hope; on the other, the dark hill and huge precipices which rise beyond Tongue. On the north a very rocky ascent to the craggy eminence where Bar-castle stands; but on the south, in most distinguished magnificence, is reared the lofty mountain of Ben Lugal [Laoghal]. It rises immediately from the dale, to a prodigious and precipitous height: its bold front, towering almost to the zenith of the sky, is lost in clouds and mist, and seems to consist of regions void of vegetation: immense masses of rock, formed into cliffs of various form, inter-wrought with trees and shrubs and scattered pieces of verdure, next strike the view: irregular belts of wood, strewed along the declivities from where the precipices end, constitute the girdle of its enormous base, which, stretching down amid the softer beauties of the dale, makes a very grand and pleasant landscape.

Had one only to admire this so various and noble scenery, and not to travel through the horrid paths, by which the exhibition is obtained, it would be extremely delightful. They are alarming us with the difficulties of to-morrow's route, but the hope of seeing the celebrated Dun of Dornadilla banishes every other care and animates the thoughts of the journey.

I understood that the direct course thither lay between

---

\* "Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Scotland, in a Series of Letters to Thomas Pennant." London, 1780, p. 99.

the mountains of Ben Lugal and Ben Hope, but the guides seemed convinced that there the number of pools and mossy ground, softened into bog by perpetual streams from the hills, formed such a labyrinth of sloughs that they could not undertake to carry our little caravan safely through, and it was found necessary to have an additional guide, more particularly acquainted with the route we were to take. Our way was to be sought across the mountain of Ben Hope. Its top seems divided, and shows a hollow in the middle. Through that distant valley were we to advance into the country beyond. The morning clouds were resting between the towering summits of the mountain, as in regions of superior tranquillity. When I first descried Ben Hope, and saw its shapeless head heaving into the horizon, and spreading like a vast vapour above, beyond the other hills, I could have formed no idea that I should be under any temptation of attempting to gain its summit, yet this now became not only expedient but necessary. We advanced from the dale directly in front of the mountain. For some time the ascent was perfectly easy, but the paths were to be sought (for scarce any two chose the same) amidst large masses of rock which projected from the soil. Round stones and hillocks covered with heath filled the intermediate spaces. The ruggedness continued to increase as we approached the steeper parts of the mountain. The ponies wandered through with much seeming unconcern, but the danger of being thrown, on such a road, was considerable. On showing an inclination to dismount, the guides told me, "that I had better keep on horseback while the ways were good, because by-and-by I should be under the necessity of walking." There was but little comfort in this admonition; however, I trusted that they were exaggerating, for it was not easy to conceive in what manner the face of the earth could be more horribly rugged. But ere we had advanced an hour I found their observations had been pertinent and just; their declaration became perfectly realized; there remained no more possibility of riding.

The vast chasms dug out by the winter torrents pouring down the steeps were so frequent and irregular that no art

could avoid them. In many places the soil was entirely washed away, and left the rocky mountain bare; in other places it was stagnated in a soft and boggy state, where one might plunge to an immeasurable depth. Where the slope at any time was more level, and free of rock and bogs, the heath was rank and scraggy, and every part of the progress occasioned new fatigue. The ponies, left to themselves, followed us with great dexterity, and kept regular pace with us, whether we struggled through the brake or had occasion to jump or climb.

Sometimes the ascents were so very steep, and the ground precipitous, that we were obliged to make large sweeps, by traversing, to gain upon the hills. This toil, however, was not altogether void of entertainment; here, picturesque and mossgrown rocks overhung our way; there, passed the yawning gloom of some horrid cavern; or, from the higher eminences, looked down upon the surrounding world astonished at the greatness of the scene. About noon we arrived at a level, where there was green herbs and coarse grass, and rested that the horses might feed. This place it seems is the usual stage where the weary travellers between these distant dales refresh themselves with a portion of whatever provision their prudence has carried along. It is a flat plot in the bosom of the mountain, sheltered round, except where it opens to the south-east. The day was pretty calm and the sky clear; the air felt warm, though evidently purer. The superior distinctness of vision was exceedingly pleasant.

The prospect of the northern ocean, interspersed with islands, and the prodigious cliffs that project along these bold and mountainous shores, so extensive from this high point of view, was elevating and grand. In one particular it very much surprised me. I had taken a sketch of the firth of Tongue, from Bar-castle, the preceding evening, and by that means had been particularly attentive to mark its effect, and now found that after half a day's journey the distance scarcely seemed any thing increased, nor any part of the prospect less distinctly marked. The outline of the buildings at Tongue was so accurately defined, I thought I could have run down to it in half an hour.



Soon as they thought the ponies sufficiently refreshed, we renewed our journey up the mountains, and got into the clouds, which were hovering round its top. At first the mist only obstructed our view, but felt chilly as we advanced. When we began to open the horizon beyond sudden gusts of wind came down between the cliffs into which the summit of the mountain is divided, and the clouds were tossed about in eddies by the squalls until they fell in showers of mingled sleet and rain. It became intensely cold. The current of air, loaded with these embryo-snows, was extremely penetrating. We quickened our pace to get beyond the highest part of our route, and soon found the difficulty of surmounting Ben Hope was over, and that we got into a milder climate again.

But a wide extent of desert country lay before us, and exhibited a most august picture of forlorn nature. The prospect was altogether immense, but wild and desolate beyond conception. The mountains presented nothing to view but heath and rock; between them formless lakes and pools, dark with the shades thrown from prodigious precipices, gave grandeur to the wilderness in its most gloomy forms. The proceeding into this uncomfortable desert was not to be avoided.

The declivity of the mountain for some time yielded pretty good footing. The sloping rocks were tolerably even, interspersed and connected with firm turf, and as the levellest ridges could be followed in an easy descent, we made a most expeditious journey down a great part of the way. But, too soon, we came to an end of that noble pavement. A dreary moor received us, in which none but the most wretched paths were to be found, and we got involved among swamps more formidable than the ruggedest of the hills. At times the surface bent and waved under our feet, while the pressure made the water from beneath spring up in small streams round every step. This progress was attended with the perpetual dread of sinking in the quagmire. One of the ponies plunged, and was with difficulty extricated. The banks of rushes were our greatest comforters. Their matted roots made the surface firm. Where they were distant, the passing over the

morass became truly alarming. I thought we should have been swallowed up. Far beyond the sight of habitation but those of eagles, or of inhabitant but wild-fowl, and involved in these horrid swamps, I shuddered at the rash procedure; even to see the halls of Fingal, or of higher chiefs than him! nor knew the premium that would have made me return by the same way again.

Mr Cameron Swan, to whom a proof of the above paper was submitted, writes as follows:—

“I think it not possible that Cordiner went over Ben Hope at all, or he would certainly have mentioned the three lochs he must have passed on the way—Lochan an Seilg, Lochan a Ghabha Dhuibh, and the Dubh Loch. Had he reached the top of Ben Hope he could not have continued his journey westward over the mountain unless he had taken a parachute and dropped gently down the 2,000 feet precipice on that side. There is no morass or ‘dreary moor’ between the foot of the mountain and Strathmore.

“His route probably was, first by the side of the Kinloch river, then skirting the shoulder of Meallan Liath he would pass near An Gorm Lochan, which lies in the corrie described as ‘facing south-east.’ If this was so, he never would have been higher than 2,000 feet above the sea, and the latter part of his route would correspond with the ‘dreary moor.’”

## EXCURSIONS.

---

*The Editor will be glad to receive brief notices of any noteworthy expeditions. These are not meant to supersede longer articles, but many members who may not care to undertake the one will have no difficulty in imparting information in the other form.*

THE TOWER RIDGE PINNACLE, BEN NEVIS.—This pretty little boss of rock stands at the base of the most popular of the Ben Nevis climbs, and has been usually omitted by parties ascending the ridge. The only previous record of its having been climbed will be found in the *Alpine Journal* (vol. xvii., p. 521), when the Messrs Hopkinson went up by its short, and descended by its long side. It has a most imposing appearance, and were it only placed on the top, instead of the bottom of our heaven-kissing hill, the "Inaccessible," "Napes," *et hoc genus omne*, would have to take a back seat. When a party of four, consisting of such eminent climbers as Brown, Hinxman, Raeburn, and the writer (puzzle: find the luggage), found itself at the base of this little pinnacle on 3rd April 1896, the insatiable appetite of three of these mountain maniacs, bursting with the pent-up enthusiasm of a long winter in town, not only felt equal to the Tower ridge but insisted in demolishing as well what they irreverently christened "Douglas's Boulder." The "luggage" was dubious, but his scruples were brushed scornfully aside, and the pinnacle was tackled at its lowest point. The "luggage" observed that all the holds sloped the wrong way.

Having donned the rope—160 feet of it—we were soon climbing up the steep sides of the pinnacle, which on its Allt a' Mhuillin side cannot be far short of 700 feet in height. The other side drops down to a col, separating it from the Tower ridge in a steep little gap of about sixty or seventy feet. We sent Brown on ahead. All went well and easily for a bit; but soon we had plenty of time to admire the view, for as we edged over to the right the holds became more imaginary, the rocks more precipitous, and the pace of the leader more erratic. Some finger-thawing was also indulged in about this time, the rocks being intensely cold and too difficult for gloves. A couple of hours quickly passed; then the caravan came to a dead stop, and our leader seemed to be stuck somewhere above us. Up we all came to see what he was about. We found him gazing at a lovely obstacle of the smooth-slab order—a thing that would have made a delightful slide, with something soft below to fall on. A yawning precipice, however, made a nasty landing-place.

"Up you go, you'll do it easily," says Hinxman, metaphorically patting the leader on the back. "I don't like it at all," is the response;

'but I'll try.' So he tries; and with much shoving, scraping, panting, and puffing, successfully manages this ticklish bit, and disappears from sight. "No more rope! are you right?" is sung out to him round the corner; and at once comes the answer: "Not a bit! don't pull! give me more rope, and look sharp!" Hinxman untied; but still the cry came for "more rope." So the "luggage" was detached, and deposited in what was called "a delightfully secure place." This, however, was the description of the man who had *not* to stand on it. In reality it resembled the geometrical entity, length without breadth. When nearly all the 160 feet of rope had run out, Hinxman and Raeburn tied on, and disappeared from view, leaving the comforting assurance behind them that the rope would be chucked down for the "luggage" immediately. Half-an-hour passed, and no rope. Even the joys of 'bacca began to pall, for the only response to an occasional shout was showers of hail and keen blasts of cutting wind. Just as the "luggage" was considering whether it would be possible in his frozen condition to get down the way he had come up, some flying stones and a noise overhead preceded Raeburn's cherubic visage over the top of an overhanging rock. A rope was led down, and the "luggage" was pulled up. There had been some obstruction up above which prevented the rope from reaching the "luggage" in any other way.

There being no more difficulties to speak of, we walked to the summit, and enjoyed a halt there, and a new and original drink, of which Raeburn is the patentee. Unless you jump to the col, getting down requires some manipulation. We managed it by descending towards the west, and traversing backwards along a snowy ledge into the snow gully on the west. Down this—being too late for the ridge—we slid and floundered, and then made straight tracks for home.

We had been most of the day on the pinnacle; but when we heard that the party ahead of us had spent nine hours on the Tower ridge, we were glad at having given up that part of the expedition.

W. D.

---

CIOCH NA H'OIGHE AND CIR MHOR: VARIATIONS.—On 13th July 1896, Mr W. P. Haskett-Smith and I spent a long afternoon on Cioch na h'Oighe. After going up No. 1 ledge (see Vol. III., p. 199) and down No. 3, we joined No. 3 with No. 4 by climbing straight up smooth but not very steep rocks from near the foot of No. 3 ledge, and struck ledge 4 fully a third of its height up. Following this ledge upwards, we made a variation at one point on the route previously adopted; and again, before reaching the head of the ledge, we diverged to the left, and had a short climb on some good rocks, which brought us to near the summit of the Cioch. From there we followed the main ridge as far as the gully at the very head of the Punch Bowl, with a shaky little pinnacle standing in the middle of it. This we climbed from its lowest side.

The following day, after spending some time on the Corrie boulders,

we walked up Glen Sannox to Cir Mhor, and visited the cave described by Mr Gilbert Thomson (Vol. III., pp. 214, 215). We then crossed over to the foot of the grassy ledge which mounts obliquely across the face of the mountain from near the top of the Stone Shoot Ridge. Instead of following Mr Bell's route (see Vol. III., pp. 347, 348), we kept the line of the "grassy ledge" he speaks of, and after passing an awkward corner and one steep pitch, emerged on the sky-line a short distance west of the summit. Retracing our steps for a few yards, we traversed without any difficulty to the broad platform below Bell's "Groove." The ascent of the groove gave us some grand muscular exercise, and a sharp appetite for a third breakfast. For the next hour or more we larked about in the mist among the mighty rocks of the "Rosa Pinnacle" and the "N.W. Pinnacle." When on the top of the latter, we noticed a lamb in difficulties about the middle of the north face; and an attempt to help him led us into some rather curious places—including a round tunnel worn through the solid rock, and a fantastic cleft, where all the skill of the conqueror of the Napes Needle was needed to force a passage. After a time we found ourselves only a short distance from the top of the Stone Shoot Ridge, but cut off therefrom by an impassable gulf. We finally reached the "Upper Shelf" (see sketch, Vol. III., p. 212) by a circuitous route, followed it to the point "H," and went down the gully just below. As conjectured by Mr Thomson, this gully proved to be comparatively easy, and it is evidently the most direct approach from the valley to the western portion of the face of Cir Mhor. Until the afternoon the weather on the 14th was most melancholy; but my companion appeared to thoroughly enjoy "British hill weather," and the more the rain battered and the wind howled, the higher his spirits rose!

W. W. NAISMITH.

---

WASTDALE HEAD.—At Whitsuntide 1896, Mr Douglas and I paid a first visit to Wastdale Head, where were gathered a large number of climbers. We received a kindly welcome, which made us feel at home at once, and added greatly to the pleasure of our trip. Among other friends we had the pleasure of meeting four English members of the S.M.C.—Messrs Barrow, Brunskill, Priestman, and Squance.

Now that we have seen this climbers' El Dorado with our own eyes, we both confirm heartily all that has been said or sung in its praise. Indeed, the half was not told us. As compared with Sligachan, Wastwater Hotel has a great advantage in being placed in the middle of the best climbing ground, instead of on the edge of it; and as most of the finest climbs are within an hour or an hour and a half of the hotel, one can enjoy a grand day's scrambling, and get back in time for tea, and have a swim in the "beck" before dinner "forbye."

The weather was exceptionally fine, and the views from the tops were usually superb. Most of the well-known climbs were done at Whitsuntide. For example, the Pillar Rock, by all conceivable routes,

including "the stomach traverse," "the hand traverse," Slingsby's Corner, Pendlebury's Crack, the Ladder and notch route, and the west and central Jordan climbs. The fine climb up the face of the Scafell Pillar from Steep Ghyll was accomplished by several parties ; as also the famous Napes Needle, and the various interesting ridges which adorn that side of Great Gable. One of these, the Arrowhead Arête, is narrower than anything I ever saw in Scotland. Scafell was ascended and descended by almost all the "sporting" routes—*e.g.*, Mickledoor Chimney, North Climb, Moss Ghyll, Deep Ghyll ; Great End, by the two long gullies in its eastern face ; Pavey Ark, by the Big Gully, &c., &c. Full particulars of all which delightful climbs and places, are they not written in "Haskett-Smith" ? During our visit a party descended for the first time the steep and difficult chimney in the Scafell cliffs, called "Collier's Climb," Mr O. G. Jones being "last man." The same brilliant cragsman on the previous day made the first ascent of a vertical crack over sixty feet high in the north side of the Kern Knott.

If I might venture to compare the Wastdale climbing with the rock-work one usually gets in Scotland, I should say that the English standard of difficulty seems to be a little the higher. Steep passages, which in Scotland would likely have been left alone, have here been reconnoitred, and studied, and worked out, until they were made to go ; and now everybody does them, ladies included. Most of the climbs are of course short. The longest, as well as the best, climb we had was that on the north side of the Pillar Rock from the base, which took our party of four two hours and forty minutes. At first sight it looks hopelessly steep, but a closer acquaintance shows it to be well broken up ; and while the interest is kept up from start to finish, and some bits are sensational, no part is either particularly difficult or dangerous. To be sure, we had the advantage of seeing everything under the best possible conditions, with the rocks dry and warm, and no shower baths to speak of in the ghylls. In winter, when the rocks are glazed, and the grass platforms are masses of green ice, or even when the rocks are wet, the difficulties are doubtless greatly enhanced.

W. W. NAISMITH.

WEST MONAR.—Central Ross-shire has probably received less attention in the Journal than any other first-class climbing district in Scotland. The following notes of the West Monar hills and the Saddle may therefore be of interest. Coming by the morning train from Strathcarron, I left Glencarron siding at 6.45 A.M., on Tuesday, 12th May last. All trains will stop to set down or take up passengers here, but as there is neither station-master, porter, nor clerk, you must yourself put up the signal to stop the train. Craig Inn, marked on Bartholomew's map, has long ceased to exist. Rather more than a mile down the glen from the station the Carron is crossed, and the glen of the Allt a' Chonais ascended by a good estate road. This glen

is extremely picturesque. The river forces its way through a wild rocky gorge clothed with some very fine old Scotch firs, and backed with the grand range of mountains—the subject of this note—which, notwithstanding the phenomenal heat of the weather for weeks previous, had still a good deal of snow on them. At the finest point of view, and a little way from the road, the proprietor has placed a rustic bench.

After an hour's walk up the glen the road was left for a track bearing off to the right, *i.e.*, S.W., which was followed for some way, and then the north shoulder of Sgurr Choinnich attacked. This, though steep, was easy, and the summit (3,260 feet, no cairn) was reached at 10.15. Though the distance was somewhat hazy, the view was lovely, the most striking features being Slioch and Beinn Eighie to the N.W., and Bidein a' Choir Sheasgaich, less than three miles off to the S.W. The bealach to the E.N.E. is about 400 feet lower, and neither the descent nor the ascent on the other side offer any difficulty. Sgurr a' Chaoruinn is 3,452 feet, and has a large flat cairn. Bidein an Eòin Deirg, a mile to the E.S.E., is a mere subsidiary top, and notwithstanding its distance from Sgurr a' Chaoruinn, its nearly equal height of 3,430 feet, and big cairn, ought not to be considered a separate mountain. The bealach between the two I made about 3,150 feet. It took me, however, half an hour to reach it and another to return, so a hasty descent of the easy though steep N. shoulder of Sgurr a' Chaoruinn was made, the hill road regained at 12.45, and Glencarron siding reached at two, just in time to catch the train, which took me to Strome Ferry, and on by the post-cart the same afternoon to Shiel Inn. The drive along the shores of Loch Duich is one of the most lovely in Scotland.

THE SADDLE.—One of the objects of my trip had been to explore all the ridges of the Saddle. Mr Rennie in March 1893 had climbed the mountain (Vol. II., p. 294), but had omitted the northern and eastern ridges. Accordingly the day after my arrival at Shiel, the 13th May, was devoted to its exploration. The Saddle, as every one knows, lies half-way between the heads of Lochs Duich and Hourn,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles due south of Shiel Inn. The route lies up the Allt Undalain, which comes down behind the hotel. About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles up, the burn forks. Following the western branch, the Allt a' Choir' Uaine, I gradually worked up out of the stifling heat of the glen to the shoulder to the west, and at 1 P.M. reached Sgurr Leac nan Each, 3,013 feet. This hill, which has a cairn with a stick on it, forms the western side of Choir' Uaine—a very fine, wild, crescent-shaped corrie, with a small lochan at its base. The next summit, called on the O.S. Sgurr na Creige (3,082 feet, cairn with stick), is locally known as Bidean an Dhonuill Braec, while the northern spur of the Saddle—the eastern horn of the crescent—is known as Sgurr na Creige. The ridge all the way round the crescent is nowhere narrow, though some scrambling is required here and there. There are, however, some fine rocks and gullies facing the corrie, which are well worthy the attention of our

"Ultramontanes." The western summit of the Saddle is on the 6-inch O.S. marked 3,196. Between this and the main peak is another good top of about the same height. From the main peak (3,317 feet) a steep rocky descent leads north to the above-mentioned ridge, rising again to a good summit, which, as before said, is locally known as Sgurr na Creige, about half a mile north of the Saddle.

From here I traversed the N.E. face of the Saddle by some extensive and steepish snowfields, and made for the summit half a mile or so east from the main peak, which is locally called Sgurr na Forcan, and is at least 3,100 feet. The corrie formed by this and the above-mentioned northern spur is named Choire Chaoil, and is not nearly as fine as Choir Uaine. A steep though easy descent was made from here to Glen Shiel, and the inn reached an hour later. I had been out exactly ten hours, but the weather was most oppressively hot, without a breath of air even on the topmost summits, and much time was spent in rests and photography. The views, though very fine, are, unless my memory is at fault, scarcely equal to that from Sgurr Fhuaran, just across the glen, and decidedly inferior to that from Ben Sgriol, which I had enjoyed on an almost equally sultry day in the same month of the year, but before the birth of the Journal.

H. T. MUNRO.

GARS-BHEINN, SKYE (2,934 feet).—W. Lamont and J. Rennie ascended this on Wednesday, 10th June 1896. Landing from a yacht near the mouth of the Mad Stream, Loch Scavaig, they struck up the hill in a S.W. direction, crossed the lower end of the corrie, and climbed to top by the S.E. spur, shown in C. Pilkington's map. The rope was put on from the corrie to top of Gars-bheinn. The slope consisted of steep rock-pitches and screes. The ridge was followed from Gars-bheinn, past top unnamed on C. P.'s map, to Sgurr nan Eag, thence to lump at bealach, between Coir a' Ghrunnda and the Garbh-corrie. We descended latter to starting-point. The ridge is much broken and gashed in places. There is a deep rent to east of Sgurr nan Eag, bridged by jambed boulders at top. A good view of the rent is got from the western parts of Sgurr Dubh. Our experiences of the Garbh-corrie would make us in future keep as near as possible to the burn in it. No times were taken, as the day was devoted more to ridge-wandering and photography than climbing proper.

J. RENNIE.

BEN LUI.—On Saturday, 8th August, Mr Bell and I climbed this mountain from Tyntrum by the "south rib," described by Mr Maclay in his paper in the May number. The conditions were, however, very different from those experienced by the climbers last January, when both grass and rocks were covered with snow or glazed



with ice. In fact, almost the only difficulty we had to deal with was the deep moss with which the rocks were plentifully covered, and which was in many places most treacherous. This difficulty was chiefly felt in the first stage of the climb, where for about 200 feet the buttress is very steep, and there is hardly a hitch. At the top of this stage there is one step of considerable difficulty, where a rather awkward corner has to be turned, and a long reach is required. After this the climbing is perfectly easy, with the exception of a pitch of about thirty feet high, more than half-way up, with a broad grassy platform at the base, so that you have the comfortable assurance that if you *do* slip, you won't roll to the bottom of the mountain.

We reached the top in four and a half hours from Tyndrum, and descended to Ardlui in easy time to catch the evening steamer to Luss.

H. C. BOYD.

---

BEN NEVIS AND GLENCOE.—An English climber, who is not (yet) a member of the S.M.C., but who is well known at Wastdale, has favoured us with a list of some climbs accomplished by him in about ten days in July last. As he was alone during all the stiff climbs, and it was, moreover, his first visit to the district, the record is a remarkable one. So far as we know, it is the first time any of the Ben Nevis ridges have fallen before a solitary climber. Here is the list:—1, Ben Nevis ascended by Castle Ridge and descended on same day by Tower Ridge; 2, Ben Nevis ascended by N.E. Buttress and descended over the top of Carn Mor Dearg; 3, Ben Nevis from Glen Nevis, opposite Sgor a Mhaim; 4, Bidean nam Bian from Coire Beach; 5, Aonach Eagach from end to end; 6, Buchaille Etive Mor, by an easy but probably new route up the east face; 7, Stob Coire an Lochan of Bidean by the N.E. corner of the eastern of its two ridges, and down by Meall Dubh and Ossian's Cave. With regard to the last, our friend begs that some climbing botanist will visit and catalogue the plants in the bard's luxuriant "garden" just below his cave.

---

PEEBLES TO ST MARY'S LOCH BY GLENSAX, RETURNING BY MEGGET AND MANOR.—This is an excellent hill walk, and can be accomplished from Edinburgh in a day. Leaving by morning train, Peebles is reached shortly after 8 o'clock. Cross the Tweed and take the Bonnington Road, passing Bonnington farm, or follow drove road a short distance and pass Haystoun farm, above which these two paths unite. The drove road keeps the hilltops and may be taken as an alternative route, but it is rather longer. There is a good track up the glen to Glensax (shepherd's house), after which the best course is to keep close to the stream, following the small "grain" to the left when near its head, immediately above which the "Dunrig" is crossed at a height of about 2,300 feet. The descent to the Douglas Burn is made, keeping the Black Cleuch on the left, after which follow the

burn to Blackhouse Tower. Here cross the stream by wooden bridge, ascend the hillside, and keeping the "Wardlaw" on the left, the foot of St Mary's Loch is reached at Dryhope, whence there is a good road to Rodona Hotel. On the return journey, keep road up Megget Water for about two miles, when, after crossing Glengaber Burn, a hill track on the right is taken which leads to Manorhead. The path keeps "the Craig" on the left and descends hillside to Manor Water, where the road is joined about ten miles from Peebles. By crossing the Manor at Castlehill a path will be found to Cademuir farm, from which Peebles is reached by path across Cademuir Hill. This is much the most pleasant road. The total distance is about thirty miles, and the time taken by two Edinburgh friends was as follows:—Peebles left, 8.20; Dunrig crossed, 10.45; Rodona, 1.20 (15 minutes rest for lunch included); Rodona left, 2.35; Manorhead, 4; Peebles, 7 o'clock—40 minutes before train time.

---

BEN CHONZIE (OR HONE), 3048.—The most pleasant time to ascend this hill is about the middle of the month of July, for then the whole hill is under a thick carpet of ripe berries, which one can gather in handfuls at every step. When a friend and I made the ascent from Comrie on 18th July we followed the Lednock to Innergeldie, and continuing up the side of that stream for a couple of miles, struck up the slopes of Ben Hone. The crowberries were in millions and millions, the blaeberreries in thousands and thousands, cranberries in hundreds and hundreds, and the cloudberreries in dozens and dozens. The latter unfortunately were not ripe, being still hard and red. The descent was made by following the round-back of the mountain to Cairn Chois. The walk was a most pleasant one, and the views of Ben Lawers, Schiehallion, Farragon, and the Ben a' Ghlos were good. The rest of the hills were in mist.

W. D.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### SNOW CORNICES AND CREVASSES.

(To the Editor of the "S.M.C. Journal.")

SIR,—Climbers of Ben Nevis in winter or spring cannot have failed to be interested in the huge snow cornices which then guard the heads of the gullies which cleave the great northern precipices; and the conditions found on Ben Nevis probably exist more or less on all flat-topped mountains which have a steep face towards the north or east.

Immediately below the cornice, or at the foot of the vertical ice-wall left by the breaking away of the cornice, at a distance of ten, fifteen, or possibly twenty feet below the surface of the level snow on the summit, it is common to find a hollow or crevasse.

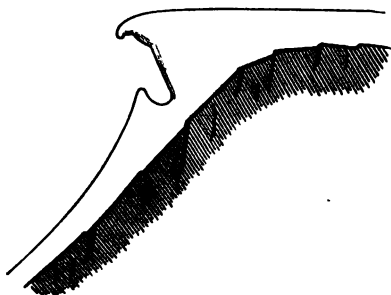


DIAGRAM 1.

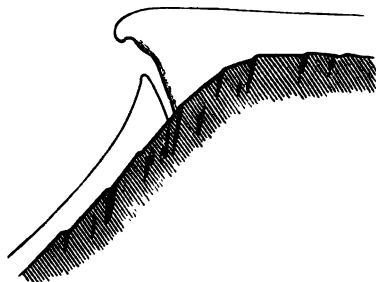


DIAGRAM 2.

The hollow or crevasse has frequently proved of service to climbers ascending the steep snow slope, as it provides an anchorage for some of the party while the leaders are making an assault on the final difficulty.

Various interesting questions arise—*e.g.*, What causes those crevasses or hollows underlying cornices in Scotland? Do they ever occur on narrow corniced arêtes? Are they ever found on mountains covered with perpetual snow? and if not, why not?

In the opinion of an eminent mountaineer, who knows snow mountains as very few men do, they are caused by snow blown over the cornice from the summit plateau and gradually forming a ridge while the hollow behind the ridge is protected by the cornice as by a roof, until it assumes the appearance of a crevasse, though it is really not a crevasse in the ordinary sense. This theory is simple, and if

correct, explains why the crevasse should be found only where there is or has been a cornice (Diagram 1).

Another theory has been mentioned, namely, that the hollow is a true crevasse, the result of tension, caused by the snow on the steep slope slipping or settling downwards, and consequently detaching itself from the summit snow at or near the point of contact. Where a cornice exists the break would naturally occur just below it (Diagram 2); but where there is no cornice, and the upper and under snows meet at something like a right angle, the break, it is suggested, occurs on the *top*, some distance back from the edge of the snow cliff, and is marked by one or more cracks or small crevasses (Diagram 3).

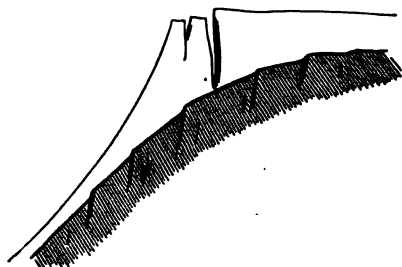


DIAGRAM 3.

Assuming any truth in the latter theory, it is further hinted that the knowledge might be utilised by climbers approaching the edge of a flat-topped mountain to ascertain whether the edge is corniced or not. If surface cracks be visible, there is no cornice; but if there be no cracks, the existence of a cornice may be suspected.

To settle the question it has been suggested that a self-denying mountaineer might kindly swathe himself in blankets, and perch himself at the top of a steep snow slope some fine night when a winter gale is drifting the powdery snow in all directions, and tell us what goes on. Perhaps, however, some of your readers may be able to throw light on the subject without adopting any such heroic measures.

—Yours faithfully,

W. W. NAISMITH.

## MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

---

THE EXPLORATION OF THE CAUCASUS. By Douglas W. Freshfield.  
With illustrations by Vittorio Sella. Two Volumes. London  
and New York : Edward Arnold. 1896.

WHATEVER may be in store for our richly dowered posterity a hundred years hence, there is certainly one thing which they will have to do without, and that is the delight and surprise of exploring new regions on the earth's surface. It is one of the few advantages of being middle-aged that one can remember Grindelwald and Zermatt when they were at their best ; when they had just become comfortable, and had not yet become notorious ; when the "Adler" had not given way to the "Bär" ; and when guides and their "Herren" could still sit and gossip on the long low wall in front of the old Monte Rosa without fear of being hit by tennis balls or scraped off by teeming omnibuses. Old fogies of the present day can at least retort upon the younger generation that they were born too late to skim the cream of Alpine climbing, while these in their turn will have the same advantage over their children in the Himalayas and the Caucasus. Considering the advances that have been made in the last twenty years, it is hardly possible to believe that in two more generations Kinchinjunga will not be as familiar as the Matterhorn, and our *blasé* descendants at the end of the twentieth century will look back with envy to the days when there were great mountain tracts still untravelled and unknown. That sense of novelty which is the chief delight of travelling is, like coal, a diminishing quantity ; and, unlike coal, it is difficult to believe that any adequate substitute for it will be found.

The two magnificent volumes lately published by Mr Douglas Freshfield are a striking sign of this rapid advance. Thirty years ago—that is, two years before Mr Freshfield climbed Elbruz—the mountain country between the Black Sea and the Caspian was almost entirely unknown. Hardly a valley had been fully explored ; not a summit had been trodden by the foot of man ; the inhabitants were often suspicious, sometimes even hostile ; the maps were vague and misleading. Now almost all the chief peaks have been climbed ; food, porters, and beasts of burden are to be had without serious difficulty ; and the maps are as good as those of Switzerland in 1860. Hotel accommodation seems to be still, to say the least, defective, and there are no mountain huts ; but all this is, doubtless, only a matter of time. It is not displeasing to national pride to note—though Mr Freshfield, quite rightly, abstains from dwelling on this point—that the exploration of the Caucasus has been even more exclusively due to British enterprise than that of the higher regions of the Alps.

This sumptuous book is also a proof that public interest in mountain travel is, if anything, on the increase. We have had of late many splendid works of the kind—Mr Whymper on the Andes, Sir W. M. Conway on the Himalayas, Mr Fitzgerald on the New Zealand Alps ; but Mr Freshfield has surpassed them all. Mr Whymper has, indeed, the somewhat unique distinction of combining great literary power with first-class handiwork in that, alas ! apparently moribund art, the art of wood engraving. But Mr Freshfield's illustrations, consisting of process reproductions of excellent photographs, mostly by Signor V. Sella, have a certain advantage in directness and fidelity over any less direct impressions, even if Mr Whymper's are to be preferred from the point of view of art. With any others in their own *genre* they certainly need not fear comparison. The photographs appear to have been very little touched except here and there ; and in photographs of distant mountains this is, to some extent at least, in the present state of the art, inevitable. The superiority of the simple photographic reprint to other methods may be seen at once by comparing, say, the picture of "Ailama" (vol. ii., p. 41) with that of a "spur of the Caucasus" (*ib.*, p. 145), where the shading of the snow slopes takes off both size and mystery, and makes the mountains look as if they were dressed in accordion-pleated frocks. The illustrations are mostly, of course, of mountain heights, vast slopes, and deep valleys ; but there are others, too, of human habitations, and of single figures or groups. Some of the latter—*e.g.*, that of the women of Latal (i. 221)—are as good as anything in the book. Of the illustrations in the text the larger number are appropriately inserted in the places to which they refer. But it is open to doubt whether it would not have been advisable in this as in other books of the same kind to collect the full-page illustrations into a separate volume, where it would be easier to find and to compare them. Certainly this would be better than scattering them, as is generally done, evenly throughout a book ; or than inserting them in places where they have nothing to do with the text, as, for instance, in the general and introductory chapters of Mr Freshfield's work.

Mr Freshfield is a mountaineer of what may perhaps be called the older school—that is, while a master of the mountaineering craft, he is a traveller first and a climber afterwards. The modern mountaineer is inclined, as Mr Freshfield says, "to turn what used to be a form of travel into a form of sport." But this book is a book of travel in a mountainous district rather than a mere book of mountaineering. It contains several chapters of mountaineering adventures pure and simple, some of which have been contributed by Mr Holder, Mr Cockin, and Mr Woolley—the chief living Caucasian climbers ; but there is a great deal in it besides climbing. Mr Freshfield does not indeed discuss the ethnology, the botany, or the geology of the Caucasus with any parade of learning or superabundance of detail. But we feel him throughout to be the open-eyed and many-sided traveller, equipped for noting, and capable of presenting to his readers the scientific as well as the picturesque aspects of the country through which he travels,

without forcing them to be specialists in order to follow his descriptions. There is nothing laborious or diffuse about his work, and there is no padding. The style is throughout easy, clear, and agreeable, neither soaring into inflated rhetoric, nor sinking into the slipshod and commonplace.

His introductory chapters on "The Discoverers of the Caucasus," "The Characteristics of the Caucasus," and "Caucasian History and Travel," are admirable in the lightness but adequacy of their touch. His notes of the utterly misleading statements quite lately made respecting, for instance, the glaciers and the mountain shapes of the district by men of the eminence of Réclus and Heim, afford ample justification (if such were needed) for collecting what is now known about the country into a single book. The author draws effective comparisons between the Caucasus and Switzerland. "The ridges of the Central Caucasus," he says (i., 42), "are far steeper than those of the Central Alps. The whole southern front of the central group keeps up the average slope of the steepest part of the eastern face of Monte Rosa; it is as if the Macugnaga precipices extended for ten miles." And again: "Caucasian scenery belongs to the romantic school. It produces impressions rather by broad effects than by crowded details. Compared with the mountains, the forests and flowers of Suanetia, the Alps and pine woods and chalet-dotted meadows of Grindelwald look stiff and tame; even the great Italian valleys yield in sublimity. . . . Very seldom in the Alps is the beauty of forests brought close to the splendour of snow and ice. The interval is generally that grim debatable ground of rock and rubbish which Mr Ruskin imagines to be an interposition of Providence, but which sometimes seems the reverse to the weary mountaineer. In the Caucasus there are few of these dull barrennesses: the hill-sides are clothed not by monotonous pine woods, but in a rich medley of European forest trees; they are brightened by an undergrowth of laburnums, azaleas, laurels, and rhododendrons, and broken by glades full of flowers that grow six feet high. The traveller who rides in fair weather over the Latpari Pass, and then crosses the grassy spurs of Tetnuld to Mujal and Besho, will confess that the Alps must yield, that neither the Oberland nor Monte Rosa can show such a combination of sylvan scenery and sunlit snows." (i., 72). Descriptive passages of this simple and straightforward effectiveness abound in the book.

The other chapters of the book are devoted to separate districts or separate periods of exploration. Two in the second volume give a detailed account of what was done in 1888, "the *annus mirabilis* of the Caucasus." Perhaps the most effective of all is the chapter (ii. 16) which records the search for the unfortunate party, consisting of Messrs Donkin and Fox, who with two guides were lost on Koshtantau in that year. It is a thrilling story, and at the same time a signal example of what may be done by mountaineering skill and experience in a task which must have seemed at first almost hopeless. The passage in which the author records (ii. 83) the later doings of the

search party, of which he himself was a leader, especially deserves quotation. After describing the finding of the last sleeping-place occupied by the lost mountaineers, which was below a pass on which they had built a stone-man, he proceeds as follows :—"Woolley and I with one guide went on to the pass, still some 300 feet above us. . . . We carefully pulled to pieces the little stone-man on the pass, but found no record within it. We then rebuilt it, and inserted a memorandum of our visit. The scene we looked on as we lingered on the rocks beside it was strangely beautiful and impressive. The silence of the upper snows was broken only by the constant ring of the axes and the voices of our comrades, which rose clearly through the thin air, as they still laboured in their sad task of seeking all that might be found under the ice coverlet. Their figures were thrown out on the edge of the crags against the surface of the Tiutuin snowfields as are those of sailors on a masthead against the sea when seen from some high cliff. The day was cloudless, the air crystalline ; space was for a moment annihilated or shown in a scale by which we each seemed to stand, not six feet, but 14,000 feet high! The many passes and heights of the central ridge of the Caucasus lay literally at our feet. We looked over them, and past the clustered peaks and vast snow reservoirs of the Adai Khokh group to innumerable indefinite distances, amongst which I recognised the horn of Shoda, green heights of Racha, blue mountains of Achalzich, opalescent Armenian ranges fading into a saffron sky, on which hung the far-off amber cloudlets which often mark the position of Ararat. Every detail was distinct as on a map-man's model, yet the whole was vast and vague, wonderful and strange, creating an impression of immeasurable shining space, of the earth as it might first appear to a visitant from some other planet. The splendour of nature on this day of days seemed not out of harmony with the sadness of our errand. It affected the mind as a solemn and sympathetic music. While I gazed four white butterflies circled round the little monument, and again fluttered off. An ancient Greek would have found a symbol in the incident."

Of the dangers and privations of his journeys Mr Freshfield makes light. He does not harrow our feelings or court sympathy by dwelling on what is to be expected by any one exploring the Caucasus. But he tells us enough to show that travellers in that region must "scorn delights and live laborious days." The quotations (ii. 63) from the diary left by Fox give a very vivid picture of these troubles, and they do not seem to have been at all exceptional. The climbing itself, though not in general more difficult than Alpine climbing was in the earlier days, is rendered both more laborious and more dangerous by the greater height of the mountains, the frequent bad weather, and the distance from civilisation. "The Caucasus does not suit me," grumbled a well-known Alpine guide ; "the valleys are too long, and the peaks are very high ; and one cannot get to the top till late in the day, and has to come down in the dark." All this is against travelling in the Caucasus ; but, on the other hand, it has its attractive sides. We are



not all of us, fortunately, like Dr Johnson, who so frankly preferred "the good inn in the foreground." But one must be strong and patient and good tempered, and if possible, add a pinch of Mr Freshfield's humour. That is the salt which flavours many a scanty hill-side meal, and softens many a stony bivouac. Fortunate indeed is the traveller who can not only travel and climb and see like Mr Freshfield, but who can also describe for others with the same infectious gaiety and vivid enjoyment.

G. W. PROTHERO.

---

CLIMBS IN THE NEW ZEALAND ALPS. By E. A. FITZGERALD.  
London: T. Fisher Unwin.

MR FITZGERALD has had a great opportunity; and in criticising his book it is fair to ask how he has used it. His name will be for ever associated as that of their first successful explorer with Mounts Sefton, Tasman, and Sealy, the first-named of which is in the enjoyment of a local reputation as fearsome as the first impressions of the Matterhorn. By his discovery of the Fitzgerald Pass he has solved the problem how to connect the West Coast with "the Hermitage"—a problem apparently as important to the New Zealanders as our own evergreen "North-West Passage" controversy. He has explored outlying portions of the range which formerly were vague surmises in the brains of Government surveyors; and by his ten weeks' sojourn round and about the Hermitage has awakened a European interest in New Zealand snows, which is the first step in all probability to the popularising of a new "Playground."

These of course are the materials out of which a great book of travel is made, especially when plentifully besprinkled with hairbreadth escapes and illustrations vividly depicting them. It is certain that the appetite both of climbers and non-climbers was whetted by the diary of Mr Fitzgerald's achievements which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*, and that expectation ran high regarding the finished work which was to tell his story in full.

We hope every one has not been so disappointed as we have been. Not that the book is without interest, or that it contains any outstanding blemishes of matter or treatment. The record of such experiences as Mr Fitzgerald had has an intrinsic interest for all lovers of adventure; but there, generally speaking, the merits of the book cease. We are sorry to say it, but we found the style very dull and heavy, and the diary form in which it is cast introduces the wearied reader to a mass of trivial detail which is irritating and monotonous. This is specially noticeable in the earlier chapters, where the author's prolixity runs into irrelevant discourses about Ceylon, extols or depreciates in true guide-book fashion the qualities of hotels, and imperils the effect of really noteworthy experiences by overloading them with every passing incident that his industrious diary can resurrect. In the later chapters, however, where the action is more rapid, this fault is greatly diminished, and both the ascent of Mount Sefton and the try-

ing journey down the Copeland River to the sea hold the reader's interest pretty constantly exercised. The wonders of the West Coast are indeed excellently described, as witness the following passage :—

“There are few phenomena of nature quite equal, perhaps, to the huge surf that rolls in upon these southern shores with the force and the roar our minds connect with tempests, only here under a clear sky and from a calm sea. Inland the glorious snow ranges lay in full view, and even now it seemed scarcely real to me that I had actually crossed the mighty barrier. The peak of Mount Cook was alone enveloped in a light haze, but Tasman, Haidinger, and Elie de Beaumont towered to their vast heights within a distance of fifteen miles from the spot where I sat. The intense green of the forest, reaching from the snow to the blue sea, lent an inconceivable splendour of colour to the scene” (pp. 275, 276).

This also is worth quoting as a sample of the author's best style :—  
“As we approached the lower end of Chancellor's Ridge our attention was arrested by a phenomenon, new, I think, to ordinary experience of glaciers. The rocky precipices here descended to the very edge of the Fox Glacier, and were covered with a mass of fern, shrub, and semi-tropical creepers, forming a brilliant wall of intense green down to the very lip of the dazzling white ice. The mists had, by this time, lifted, and the sun was already making its appearance and investing this strange and new spectacle with all its splendour. This luxuriant vegetation grew from the moist earth in the crevices of these cliffs, which were almost vertical, but of a stone sufficiently soft and crumbling to allow of numerous fertile deposits in its fissures. These cliffs reached, in places, some four or five hundred feet in height, above which the slopes receded, clad with a luxuriant forest of scrub. Here and there little rivulets fell in bright cascades down this veritable tapestry of vegetation. A scene like this would alone repay the West Coast tourist for an expedition up to this point” (pp. 290, 291).

On the whole one feels grateful to Mr Fitzgerald for his book. It is an honest one ; it tells of a noteworthy expedition, and if the literary style falls short of the high level that has been attained in similar works, it is at least a comfort that there are no sickening heroics, no sky-cleaving flights of rhetoric ending in dismal disaster on mother earth. And all must agree that the story is one any man might be proud of telling. Though Mr Fitzgerald had the benefit of Zurbriggin's assistance, his conduct of the expedition, and the pluck and perseverance he exhibited in face of repeated failures, and under the most eccentric weather conditions we ever heard of, are worthy of the highest admiration. This alone will make his book a notable one.

We are not sure, however, that the New Zealanders will appreciate all that the author says of them, or that we ourselves appreciate the propriety of saying it. If they have healthy appetites, why shouldn't they eat? and Mr Barrow, who wrote the chapter on Mount Sealy, should remember that there is an excellent rule in Alpine ethics which forbids hostile criticism of other members of the party, even though they be

mere servants, or at least requires that, where such criticism is necessary, it be most sparingly used.

The book is copiously illustrated, but very unequally so. The "Swan-type" photogravures are as usual excellent, but the collotypes are just the reverse. They belong to a type of art which in the drawings of Mr M'Cormick (also represented in this volume) aims at or tends to the eliminating of all interesting and realistic detail. Perhaps Mr M'Cormick, like the Katisha, is an acquired taste. At all events we have never been able to "acquire" him. Mr Willink contributes some characteristically good pictures, but the frontispiece, entitled "Descent from the Silberhorn in a Storm," is a very remarkable composition. In our ignorance we imagined it was the dance of the witches in Macbeth.

---

ALPINE NOTES AND THE CLIMBING FOOT. By G. WHERRY,  
M.B., F.R.C.S. Cambridge: Macmillan & Bowes.

THIS is a chatty little volume, without any great pretensions, but written in a pleasant amiable manner, and dealing with subjects which are dear to all climbers, and about which any stray scraps of information are always welcome. As the author says in his preface, "A small matter will suggest pleasant memories of mountaineering to those who see the Mer de Glace in every frozen puddle, as a child sees pictures in the fire."

Readers of the S.M.C. Journal will not quarrel with Dr Wherry's dictum that "the outside of a mountain is good for the inside of a man," and he proceeds to take us to the top of well-known Alpine summits—the Matterhorn, Weisshorn, Dent Blanche, Gabelhorn, Dru, Aig. Verte, Mont Blanc, and a lot more.

Most of the chapters are simply Alpine letters of various dates republished without change, and we need not, therefore, be surprised if some of the ideas are not startlingly novel. For example, we are told that a stone lying on a glacier protects the ice from the sun, so that in time the stone is perched on a pedestal; and again, that the Schwarzsee Hotel is built on one of the spurs of the Matterhorn, about three hours above Zermatt.

Our author throws some little light upon a multitude of matters besides ordinary mountaineering, such as fly-fishing at Kandersteg, Swiss braxy or "precipice mutton," frost-bite, mountain sickness, dog Latin, climbing the Meije with a broken rib, how to dodge lightning, the Zermatt "coiffeuse," and the superior excellence of hazeline cream to the common lanoline.

A few useful hints are given regarding the prevention of accidents, though the Doctor's remark about "presence of mind" naturally calls up the irreverent rejoinder that "absence of body" is better! The reader will be amused at the recommendation to carry a strong knife, because an ingenious, and we trust veracious, old gentleman, who had slipped off a mountain path in the dark and was hanging on to the

edge, by his eyebrows apparently, managed to anchor himself with his "gully."

The part of the book which will attract most attention is the chapter dealing with "the climbing foot," where Dr Wherry suggests the proposition that people climb best who, by reason of possessing flexible ankle-joints, can go straight uphill, planting their heels and whole feet flat on the slope, and not, as he alleges young climbers do, by going on their toes or else turning sideways. Starting with that assumption, an attempt is made to prove that Swiss guides can bend up their feet more than amateurs, and several photographs of naked feet are here reproduced. These diagrams, by the way, are a little gruesome, and at first sight suggest the honourable profession which the author adorns, the members of which are not infrequently referred to in pulpits, "by way of illustration," as armed with the lengthy and somewhat inconvenient "lance."

The question raised is an interesting one, but we confess we are not convinced by the author's reasoning. Most of us *have* probably observed the difference he speaks of between the guides and ourselves; but we think the explanation is to be found not so much in a more elastic ankle as in a difference of boots, which the guides wear wide and loosely laced, so that their feet can wobble about. Their heels are also much higher than those of the Alpine or shooting boots now in vogue.

The conclusion reached by Dr Wherry, so far as we can gather, seems to be that a man has passed his best as a climbing animal at the age of twelve months, for his toes cannot then be made to touch his leg, which was the case when he was five weeks old.

If the theory were sound, its practical outcome would be to discard boots in favour of shoes when climbing. But we are not satisfied that there is necessarily any disadvantage in not putting down the heel when ascending a steepish slope. Among Highlanders generally a high instep and well-arched foot are something to be proud of, and the resultant light springy step is, we consider, of much greater use to a mountaineer than the capacity of going flat-footed on slopes. In saying so we intend no disrespect to "Bonnie Jean," whose charms have oft been sung at a mountaineering meet.

We venture to suggest a simpler and more reliable method than Dr Wherry's of discovering the best climbing foot, viz., to look out for the foot whose proprietor wears down his boots at the toes!

---

THE KARAKORAMS AND KASHMIR. An Account of a Journey by  
OSCAR ECKENSTEIN. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

THERE is not much to interest the mountain climber in this little book, which may be regarded merely as an amusing note to Sir W. M. Conway's more elaborate account of the same journey. We are glad to see, however, that Mr Eckenstein has introduced "rock-problems" to the natives of Askole, where he amused himself by arranging

climbing competitions on some very good boulders in the neighbourhood. These natives must be splendid gymnasts, for he found that the best man would have beaten with ease, and over all kinds of rocks, the best Swiss guide he had ever seen.

---

THE "CONTOUR" ROAD BOOK OF SCOTLAND. By HARRY R. G. INGLIS. With 500 Diagrams and Maps. Edinburgh: Gall & Inglis.

THE idea of this useful little book is to present the cyclist with sections of all the principal Scottish roads, showing in contour lines all the inequalities of elevation that are to be met with, and their relative situation. With more truth than usually attends self-made claims, the author describes the book as "an entirely new departure in mapping"; for, though many have been the "aids" to cyclists, this is the first that recognises the all-importance of the hill and the advantage of accurate information regarding it. We have tested the diagrams by roads that we happened to know, and can speak to their general accuracy and clearness. Appended to the diagrams is a descriptive letterpress, with information regarding mileage, inns, surface, places of interest, and giving the exact figures of the various gradients. We note that the Glencoe road, which mountaineers have frequently to traverse *en route* to Clachaig and Bidean nam Bian, is regarded as the cyclist's *bête noir*, and that the road from Struan to Dalwhinnie is a good second in badness. Seeing, however, that the Larig Pass is mentioned as an Appendix route, we should have thought that the cyclist's odium would have been reserved for more unridable roads than the one in question. Glencoe is not so very dreadful. Compared with the moor road from Linn of Dee to Derry Lodge, where we once imperilled a bran-new "Premier," it is as asphalt unto a ploughed field.

In the western section are some wonderful diagrams, where strict accuracy of gradient can only be obtained by a series of Matterhorn-like contours which will remind the mountaineering cyclist of a Coolin ridge. The ride from Tornapress to Applecross (12 miles, summit level 2,000 feet) lies over a beautiful representation of Schiehallion, and Inverness to Fort Augustus shows a scarcely less mountainous profile. The connection of two noble sports, which have already been linked together in the Journal, is thus completely established.

---

SKYE: A SERIES OF MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHS. By G. P. ABRAHAM, Photographer, Keswick.

WE have great pleasure in making known the existence of a splendid series of high-level photographs taken in Skye by the Messrs Abraham, of Keswick. These photographers, who are already well known to many of us by their climbing views in the English Lake District, spent three weeks of last May in Skye, and have secured between fifty and

sixty excellent views, which give a very good idea of what climbing in Skye really is. Where all are good, it is not easy to single out any for special praise, but Nos. 15 and 22, illustrating the "pinnacle route" and "western ridge" of Sgurr nan Gillean; No. 30, Corrie na Creiche; No. 31, view looking south from Bruach na Frithe; Nos. 44 and 45, views looking north and south from Sgurr Dearg; and No. 7, Scaavaig and Sgurr Dubh, are among the best. Some, however, are rather "theatrical," the figures having been too manifestly posed. They are sold in platinotype, 6 x 8 inches, at 1s. 6d. each.

---


PANORAMA FROM THE WALLACE MONUMENT, STIRLING. Stirling :  
R. Shearer & Son.

MESSRS SHEARER & SON have added to their series of hill panoramas one from the Wallace Monument, and it gives an excellent representation of the scene from that point. Although it is not reproduced in the highly finished style of the view from Ben Nevis, yet the accuracy of that panorama is maintained in this; and we are glad to see that the old age, when the shapes of the hills were exaggerated beyond all recognition, is passing away before the stern realities of fact, which is the characteristic feature of the present day. We hope we may soon have many more such excellent aids to the enjoyment of summit views, for there are many points in Scotland well worthy of being so honoured.

---

CHAMONIX AND THE RANGE OF MONT BLANC. A Guide by  
EDWARD WHYMPER. London : John Murray (3s. net).

MR WHYMPER has laid all who take an interest in mountaineering matters under a fresh obligation by the publication of this charming little Guide. While admirably fulfilling the object for which it professes to exist, it is nevertheless much more and much better than the unassuming title "Guide" would lead one to expect. At least such would be the case were the author any other than Mr Whympere. He, however, has set himself such a high standard in all the work he has already produced, that he has compelled the public to look for something of more than ordinary merit in whatever bears his name. This Guide is quite up to his reputation. The information which it gives is conveyed in such a delightful form that we have read it with quite as much pleasure as we have had in the perusal of many books treating solely of Alpine adventure. The little book deals with its subject first historically, and the historical portion is followed by the topographical. Not the least useful, and by no means the least interesting part of it, is the Appendix, which contains lists of Guides, "Tarifs" of Excursions, Tables of the Peaks and Passes, and other items of information which it is good that one should possess.



The illustrations, diagrams, and maps, although among them we recognise several old friends, are, as one would expect from Mr Whymper, clear, distinct, and all that could be desired, either from the pictorial or the utilitarian point of view. As has been already indicated in what is said above, perhaps the chief characteristic of the book is the utter absence of the "Dryasdust" element. The interest is excited and maintained by the numerous quotations, some of them of a very sensational nature, from Mr Whymper's own "Scrambles," from the *Alpine Journal*, and from the writings of men like Professor Tyndall. Altogether, in dealing with this book, one is apt to overlook its character of Guide, though this is never done in the book itself, and to recommend it, as we most cordially do, on its merits as an addition to the mountaineering literature of the day. That it is absolutely without defects we of course do not believe; but our opinion is abundantly indicated when we say that the only fault we have been able to find with it is that it is bound in paper, and therefore liable to perish more speedily than if it had been got up in some more substantial form.





5

4

3

2

1



# THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

---

---

Vol. IV.

JANUARY 1897.

No. 22.

---

---

## THE COOLINS IN '96.

BY W. BROWN.

THE Coolins, like the Alps, have a magnet-power to draw climbers year after year to their summits. The climate, it must be admitted, is the wettest in Scotland. Good days are rare as the gratitude of editors, and experience shows that a climbing holiday in the central or eastern Highlands is far more healthful than a sojourn in the Isle of Mist.

Yet the Coolins are the most popular hills in Britain; and they are popular because they yield the finest climbing, contain the finest rocks, the shapeliest peaks, and the wildest corries. The ideal of the sport is to be found amongst them in perfection—the combination of all the essentials on which a keen sportsman could insist. It is a place where the tyro and the expert find themselves equally at home, for the climbing is of every variety. Most of the climbs look more difficult than they are, which is an agreeable deception. The climbing, too, is mostly safe, because the rocks are nearly everywhere sound. The views are superb, both near and distant. A constant feast of colour and of striking scenes is before the climber's eyes. He goes out in the morning, and the mountain tops, just piercing the mist, are red with the rising sun. At mid-day, when the morning vapours have floated up the dark mountain sides, the black jagged peaks stand out still and clear against the blue sky, and the corries, bathed in shadow, lie black at their bases, adding height and grandeur to their

appearance. As the afternoon fades away, the sun sinks behind some distant isle, the shining plain of the sea is spread out beneath, and Rum, Mull, Canna, and Eigg sleep peacefully on its surface, drawing graceful curves across the evening sky. There is no sight like this in all Scotland; and Nicolson is probably right in saying that there is nothing finer in the "Isles of Greece."

The Coolins lie at the southern extremity of the island, and consist of two groups, the Red and the Black Coolins, divided from each other by Glen Sligachan. The Reds are round and uninteresting in shape, and are formed of granite. The Blacks, on the other hand, are of wonderfully bold outline, and are made of gabbro. They form a crescent or horseshoe of irregular outline, divided into two unequal portions by a low-lying ridge, on one side of which is Loch Coruisk, and on the other Harta and Lota Corries. Sgurr Alasdair and Sgurr Dearg are the giants which dominate the larger or western section, and Sgurr nan Gilleán, with its five splendid needles, towers over the other. Blaven lies detached from its Black brothers at the south-west end of the Reds, with which, however, it has no connection other than a geographical one. Bidein Druim nan Ramh, though the lowest of all the peaks, is, from its position at the junction of the ridges, the keystone to the whole fabric, and is the most central and easily identified summit in the whole range.

From Sgurr na h-Uamha in the north to Gars-bheinn in the south, the Coolins form a continuous chain, the highest summits being linked together by high ridges, which, though broken into many bealachs, rarely fall much below 3,000 feet. On each side of the main chain there are short lateral ridges, between which lie the corries, nine in number, including the huge hollow of Coruisk. Neither in the corries nor on the tops is there much trace of vegetation; the summits are of bare and naked rock, blue-black in colour, while the corries contain the *débris* torn off from the peaks above, and tossed into a state of chaos which is quite inconceivable, and can only be adequately measured by its deadly effect upon shoe leather. On account of their chain-like formation, the Coolins have

always lent themselves to the form of climbing known as "ridge wandering." It is said that the whole ridge has been traversed from end to end in one day; but ordinary climbers will agree that this is a feat for the gods, who can step from mountain top to mountain top. Three long summer days would ordinarily be required to complete the circuit.

The development of rock-climbing in Skye has followed for the most part the line of the ridges. These are so full of material, so bristling with obstacles of every kind, that hitherto climbers have been content to travel along the obvious routes. Of course, when Nicolson made his first ascents of Sgurr Alasdair and Sgurr Dubh, the latter was reputed "inaccessible," a halo of awe and reverence protected the hill from casual visitors, and the ordinary ascents were mentioned in very respectful tones. As for the "Inaccessible Pinnacle," the brothers Pilkington had not yet ascended its eastern edge, and Nicolson hazarded the reluctant opinion that "with rope and irons it *might* be possible to get to the top," but, he added, "it would be a useless achievement." The present-day climber who runs over the "Pinnacle Route" smiles at those sentiments, and goes off to scale some "inaccessible" face; but it would be easy to show that Nicolson's climbs were relatively as difficult as, say Alasdair from Coire Labain by the rocks, when the moral effect exercised by unexplored and traditionally dangerous peaks is taken into account. And when we find a distinguished climber like Mr Pilkington traversing round the central peak of Bidein Druim nan Ramh instead of climbing straight up its north-eastern face, and an ex-President of the Alpine Club pronouncing the Alasdair Dubh ridge "impracticable," the achievement of Nicolson in getting down the Coruisk face of Sgurr Dubh by midnight, and with a plaid for a rope, is extremely creditable.

There comes a time, however, even at the richest centres, when the search for new climbs has to be conducted through a microscope. The Alps have reached that stage long ago, but the best instance in point are the mountains round Wastdale. At Christmas and Easter men assemble there in scores, and not the most lurking crack nor the most

faintly marked wrinkle on the mountain face can for long escape their vigilance. This minute form of the sport has not hitherto been necessary in Scotland, where N.E. corries and unclimbed faces exist in all the Highland counties; but the historian of the future will no doubt record the fact that it began in Skye in the summer of 1896.

A large muster of the mountaineering clan filled Sligachan from June to September; and as the weather was so good that all the old smoking-room jokes, made at its expense, had to be carried out and buried, a large amount of new climbing was done.

The campaign was opened in June by Messrs Douglas and Rennie, who sailed a yacht into Loch Scavaig and attacked Sgurr Dubh and its neighbours from that point. Their principal ascent will be found in the *Journal*, Vol. IV., p. 159.

In the same month Dr Inglis Clark and two friends did most of the Sligachan climbs, including "The Pinnacle Route" and Clach Glas. Their experiences are interesting (1) because they were new to the Còolins, and came to them with a standard of difficulty which, as the Doctor himself says, was formed "from a long record of mountains climbed in this country and abroad, on the most approved Salvationist principles"; and (2) because they were unable to obtain the services of John Mackenzie.

On the "Pinnacle Route" they found no difficulty, except at the well-known spot in the descent of the 3rd Pinnacle, of which Dr Inglis Clark writes:—

"Here, it may have been a piece of undigested ham, or perhaps some malignant microbe placed in the sandwiches by Donald, I don't know which, but one of the party funk'd it, and had to be unceremoniously lowered down dangling in space for a little while. The last man hitched the rope too high, and after sliding down gracefully, found that the rope would not unhitch, and that the step had to be re-climbed to recover the rope. A capital hitch exists just above the step, but this we had overlooked."

On the day they climbed Blaven and Clach Glas they ate their dinner at 11.15 P.M., which seems to be the average hour for that movable feast after the Blaven expedition.

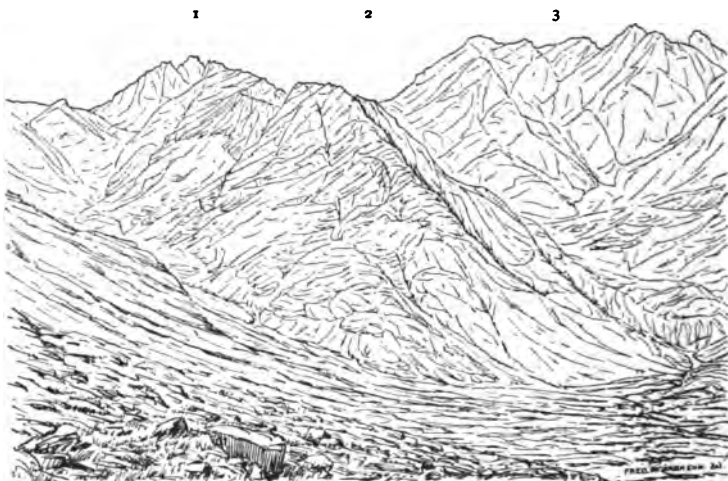


CLACH GLAS FROM THE NORTH.

*From a Photo. by J. Gull Inglis.*

assault. A wall of green rock descends perpendicularly on the right hand, but on it are sufficient footholds, and placing the right foot on these, the overhanging boulder is passed and the top gained. Under the prevailing conditions of hail and rain I consider this passage distinctly difficult."

The next party was composed of the Napiers, Bell, and W. Brown, who spent four days in July at Glen Brittle. Among their climbs (which embraced the circuit of Corrie Labain, the "Inaccessible," Bidein Druim nan Ramh and Sgurr Mhadaidh, Sgurr nan Gillean, and Bhasteir) were the following more noteworthy expeditions:—



CORRIE NA CREICHE.

1. Bidean Druim na Ramh. 2. Gully on Sgurr na Fheadain. 3. Sgurr a Mhadaidh.

*Ascent of Gully on Sgurr na Fheadain.*—Rumour, arising from an entry in the Sligachan Climbers' Book, credited this climb with being impracticable, and it was with the view of putting the rumour to the test and of confirming (or otherwise) the account of Messrs Kelsall and Hallett, who claimed to have done it, that this expedition was undertaken. Mr Bell supplies the following notes on the climb, from which it will be seen that the description of Messrs Kelsall and Hallett was found accurate in every particular:—

"Sgurr na Fheadain—the 'peak of the water-pipe'—is

the **highest** point of a spur which projects from the main ridge of the Coolins, and divides the upper part of Coire na Creiche into Corries Mhadaidh and Tairneilear.

“ The ‘water-pipe’ is a gully, about 1,200 feet high, in the rounded buttress of rock at the end of the spur. The gully was first ascended on 9th September 1895 by Messrs Kelsall and Hallett, who wrote a full account of their climb in the *Sligachan Climbers’ Book*.

“ On 21st July 1896 we attempted to repeat their climb, but, choosing the wrong route at the ‘stack of rock’ about 850 feet up the gully, were forced out on to the ridge on the left (N.E.) side, and followed it to the top. On 26th July 1896, J. S. Napier and J. H. Bell returned to the gully and completed the climb.

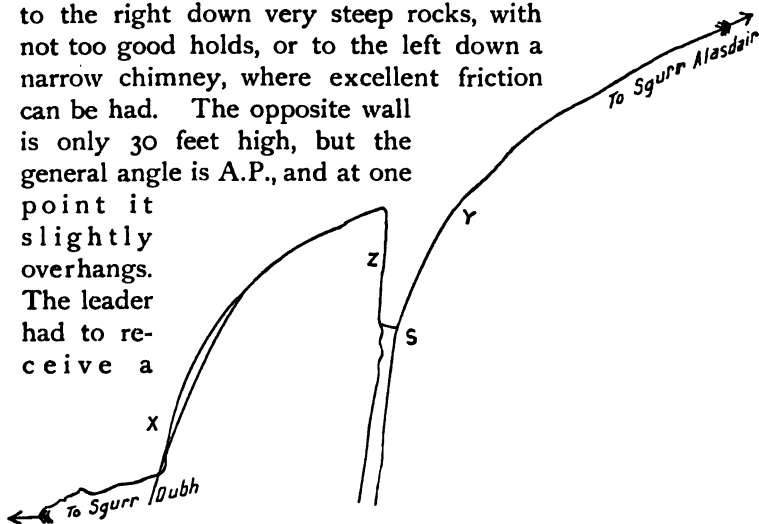
“ The gully gives interesting climbing almost throughout, and there are at least four specially good places. (1.) Near the foot there is a very steep pitch, about 80 feet high. To climb straight up the bed of the gully here would certainly be very difficult—probably impossible. The pitch can be passed by following a sloping grassy ledge on the right wall. We reached the ledge by a rather rotten chimney at the right-hand corner of the pitch, and a traverse backwards from the top of the chimney. It can be more easily reached by starting up the right wall farther back from the edge of the pitch. The ledge may be identified by a small tree growing on it about half-way up. (2.) About 300 feet up there is a vertical pitch with a small waterfall. Possibly, if one was regardless of a ducking, this pitch might be climbed direct, otherwise the right wall must be taken to and climbed almost to the top before a traverse can be made back into the bed of the gully. (3.) About 850 feet up a ‘stack of rock’ divides the gully into two branches. This was passed by both parties by climbing up to a small grassy ridge by a shallow gully in the stack itself, and from there traversing into the right hand branch. (4.) Near the top, at a place where the gully is narrow and both the walls quite unclimbable, there is another steep pitch about 30 feet high. The way here lies up the watercourse, and if the weather is bad—as it was on 26th July—the ascent of this pitch will be found a very



wet job." Interspersed between these obstacles are jammed stones, polished by water, and calling for a good deal of energy.

*From Sgurr Alasdair to Sgurr Dubh by the Ridge.*—

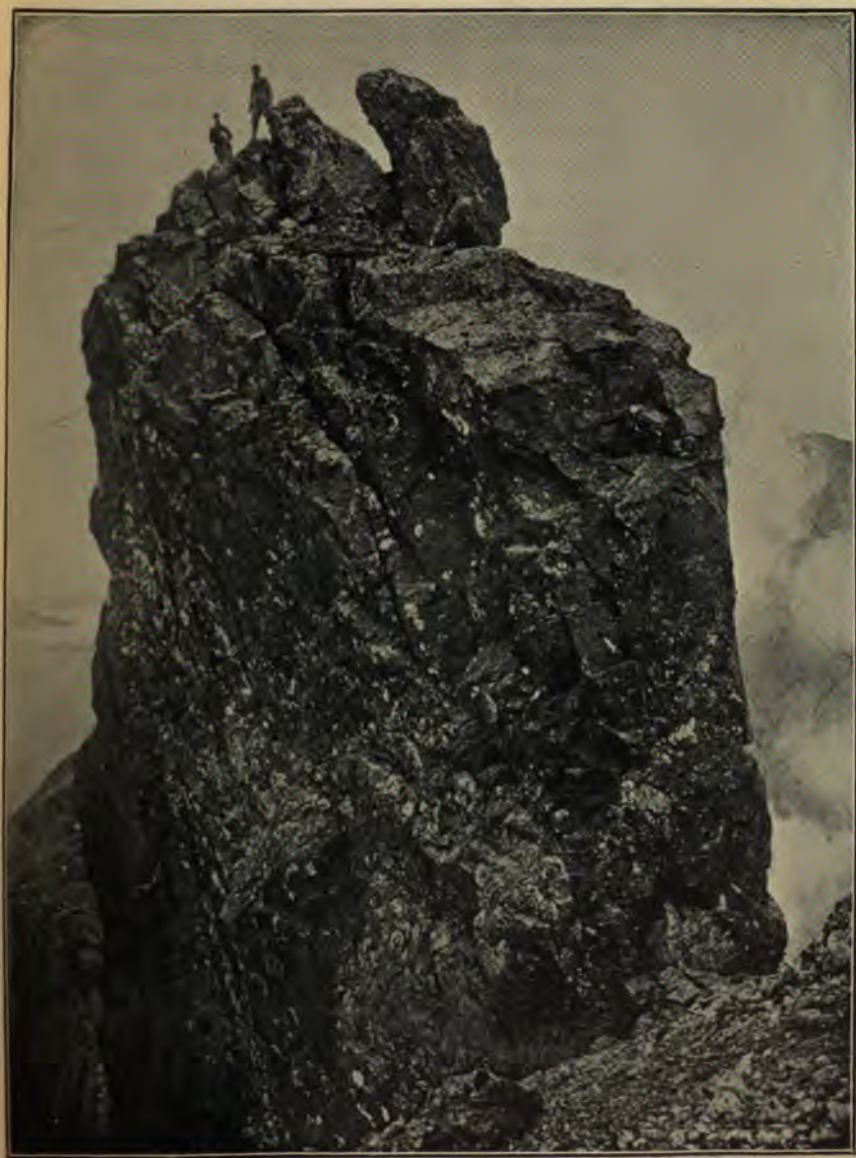
The sole difficulty of this climb consists of a gap in the ridge about 100 feet under the top of the Alasdair stone shoot. The wall nearest Alasdair is about 70 feet high, and is nearly perpendicular. The descent divides itself into three stages, viz.:—(1) A steep slab, with awkwardly placed holds, leading to a good anchorage; (2) easy rocks leading to a jutting stone, from which (3) the last stage begins, either to the right down very steep rocks, with not too good holds, or to the left down a narrow chimney, where excellent friction can be had. The opposite wall is only 30 feet high, but the general angle is A.P., and at one point it slightly overhangs. The leader had to receive a



little assistance from below while passing this point, and the rest of the party benefited considerably from the rope, which is probably as nearly indispensable here as it ever can be in the Coolins. Once in the gap, there is apparently no exit except up one of the enclosing walls, the gullies on either side looking particularly unpromising.

Describing the crossing of the gap in the reverse direction with John Mackenzie, in June last, Mr Sidney Williams writes to the editor:—

"We hit the Tearlach-Dubh ridge close to its lowest part, and followed the top of this ridge to the top of Tearlach. This ridge is broken by a drop which cuts off a small



*From a Photo. by W. Douglas.*

THE PINNACLE OF SGURR DEARG FROM THE NORTH-EAST.



pinnacle. The outline of the ridge, remembering it roughly, is something like this (see diagram on opposite page).

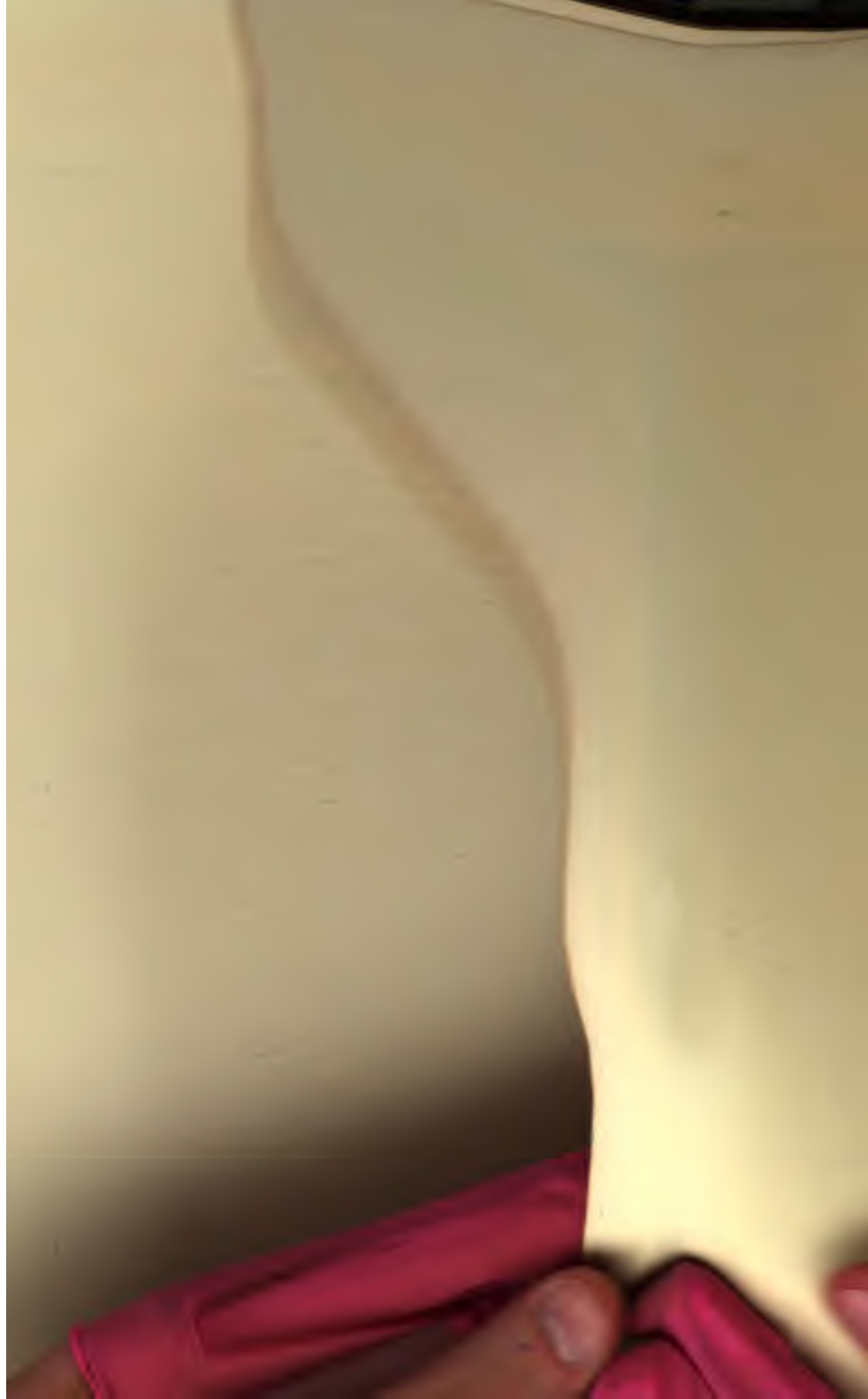
"Going up it was necessary to turn three or four feet on to the Ghrunnda side, beginning the pinnacle at X. The drop Z is 'absolutely perpendicular,' with an easy hitch at the top. It might be 30 feet, but I should not think it is so much. Going up Y there are very few holds at first, and we could not do it until I had managed to throw the rope into a crack 15 or 20 feet above S. We came back across the top of Ghrunnda Corrie, and could see no way of turning Y on that side. Coming down this ridge, I should imagine that Y would not be so hard as we found it, and Z much harder, and the corner at X might seem awkward."

Just beyond the gap is a sensational little corner—quite easy—before the Alasdair-Dubh col is reached. The ridge afterwards becomes very easy, and continues so over Sgurr Dubh na Dabheinn and Sgurr Dubh Mhor. In descending to Loch Scavaig, a divergence has to be made to the left to ascend Sgurr Dubh Bheag and to cross the "bad step" described by Douglas (Vol. IV., p. 162).

*From Loch Scavaig to Glen Brittle by the Coast-line.*

—This expedition, which was the sequel of the immediately preceding one, was taken part in by Messrs J. S. Napier and Brown, and was found to be an extremely fatiguing variation upon the direct route through the bealach between Sgurr Mhic Coinnich and Sgurr Dearg. There is said to be a path all the way round about 1,000 feet above sea-level, but N. and B. were unaware of its existence. They kept for the most part quite close to the water, into which the Coolins for some distance pitch very abruptly, and had to cross a succession of rocky spurs and slabs before reaching more open country. There, however, the difficulties were scarcely less, consisting of shrubs, long heather, and bracken blended together into a perfect jungle. At the inlet opposite Coire nan Laogh they left the coast-line and made a bee-line across the moor to Glen Brittle House, reaching it at 11.15 P.M. Time, about four hours.

Messrs Alexander Fraser, jun., and G. Sang were at Sligachan in the beginning of August, and accomplished some good work, which can best be described in the following notes



primary  
is somewhat

\*Goin  
to the G.  
drop 2 1/2 in  
top. It is  
much G  
we could  
into a crack  
the top of  
ing 1 on  
imagine it  
much had.

Just be  
easy—left  
afterwards  
Duth and  
to Loch Se  
second St  
described

From  
—This  
preceding  
and Bro  
various  
times S  
and to  
now low  
They  
which  
had

es, which are good to be sub-joined are  
ched the present writer's name. The list  
items are new climbs or variations as

*made by S.E. Ridge.*—On 1st September  
Norman Colles and Mr E. B. Howell  
the south peak of Sgurr na Fàinne from Loch  
e rocks were struck at about 1000 to 1000  
d. To start with the route lay up the  
falls over the side of rock on the south  
is. Keeping on the west side of the  
for about 200 feet was somewhat diffi-  
e of the slabs became less progress was  
ute then followed was in a westerly  
leading on to the precipitous face  
idha. This was traversed diagonally  
distance then by doubling back again  
ached and followed to the top of the  
b affords between 2000 to 2500 feet  
to bare rocks.

*N.W. Face.*—On 3rd September  
, and Naisnich mounted the crag  
Corrie Laban in company with Mr  
. The latter made the ascent by the  
ile the others converged to the summit  
bed a chimney. They then crossed  
e foot of the steep side of Sgurr na Fàinne  
o the summit of Sgurr na Fàinne  
v emerged on the top within a few  
as their friends arrived from the  
b is about 1000 feet in height and

The rocks are extremely steep  
icent.

*from Harza Gully.*—On 10th  
r and Naisnich left the Sgurr na Fàinne  
ed the Bloody Stone and from  
ight to the top of Sgurr na Fàinne  
kept the left side of a gully  
e near the sky-line on the left,  
e southern buttress to the top—

supplied by Fraser. "We put in the following," he says, "viz.:—(1.) The 'Pinnacle Route' of Sgurr nan Gillean, returning by the West Ridge and the Bhasteir. (2.) From Corrie na Creiche to the ridge just north of the Castles, intending to get down into Harta Corrie; but when near the bottom, we were stopped by the steepness of the rocks, and came back over Bruach na Frithe. There seemed to be a possible route into the corrie by a large chimney, with smooth perpendicular sides, but as we had no rope, we could not get down into it. (3.) Ascended the spur in Corrie na Creiche from the (O.S.) Tairneilear side, skirted the west peak of Bidein, and traversed by the four peaks of Mhadaidh to the summit of Greadaidh. From there we returned along the ridge to the chimney to the north side of the small peak on Greadaidh, and descended by it into Corrie Greadaidh. (4.) Traversed Clach Glas from the col between it and Blaven to the north end, leaving the ridge again for the corrie as soon as the rocks became practicable. Mr Sang having left at the end of the week, I went with John Mackenzie, on the following Tuesday, to the ridge of Thuilm from Tairneilear, and from there over Mhadaidh and Bidein. Mhadaidh is very much easier from the west than from the Bidein side, as all the steep faces have to be gone up instead of down."

September was *the* month of the Sligachan season. Oddly enough the weather was the exact opposite of the continuous and heart-breaking rain which rampaged over the rest of the country. The hills were usually clear, and the days unusually bright. Exceptions of course there were, and one memorable one, when the smoking-room was filled with "mountaineering talk" all day—much to the discomfiture of the anglers—but there were few days when one or other of the parties was not out, hunting for new ascents.

Far the best work was accomplished by a large party, composed of Messrs Collie, Collier, Howell, Naismith, and Parker. Of course these were not all climbing together, but joined and disjoined their forces from time to time. Mr Naismith, the historian of the party, has been at some trouble to collect and describe its various achievements in



*From a Photo. by W. Norris, Fraserburgh, June 1897*

**SGURR ALASDAIR FROM SGURR DEARG.**

1. Sgurr Mhic Coinnich.
2. Sgurr Tearlach.
3. Sgurr Alasdair.
4. Sgurr Sgumain.





the following notes, which (too good to be sub-edited) are given as they reached the present writer's hands. The list, of which all the items are new climbs or variations, is as follows:—

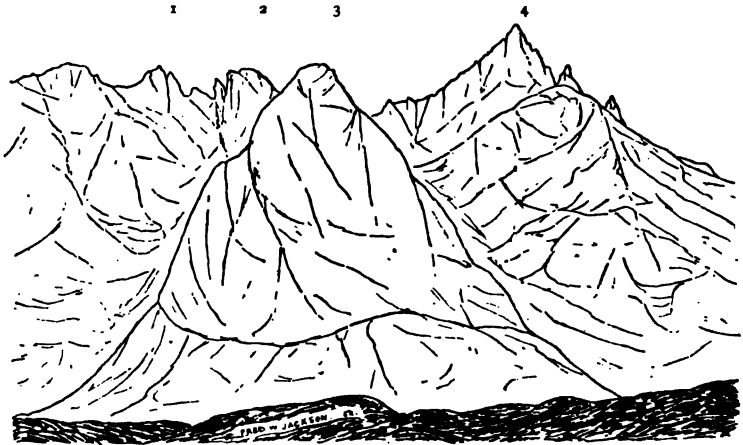
*Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh by S.E. Ridge.*—On 1st September 1896, Professor Norman Collie and Mr E. B. Howell (a friend) ascended the south peak of Ghreadaidh from Loch Coruisk. The bare rocks were struck at about 300 to 400 feet above sea-level. To start with, the route lay up the small stream which falls over the slabs of rock on the south of Coire an Uaigneis. Keeping on the west side of the stream the climbing for about 200 feet was somewhat difficult, but as the angle of the slabs became less, progress was more rapid. The route then followed was in a westerly direction, eventually leading out on to the precipitous face over Coireachan Ruadha. This was traversed diagonally upwards for a short distance, then by doubling back again the S.E. ridge was reached and followed to the top of the mountain. This climb affords between 2,500 to 3,000 feet of climbing on first-rate bare rocks.

*Sgurr Alasdair by N.W. Face.*—On 3rd September, Messrs Collie, Howell, and Naismith mounted the screes above the little loch in Corrie Labain, in company with Mr and Mrs Colin Phillip. The latter made the ascent by the Great Stone Shoot, while the others diverged to the rocks on the right, and climbed a chimney. They then crossed a short easy slope to the foot of the steep rib of smooth rock which leads directly to the summit of Sgurr Alasdair. Sticking to this rib, they emerged on the top within a few feet of the cairn, just as their friends arrived from the opposite side. The climb is about 1,000 feet in height, and is a most delightful one. The rocks are extremely steep, but the holds are magnificent.

*Sgurr na h-Uamha from Harta Corrie.*—On 4th September, Messrs Parker and Naismith left the Sligachan Burn, nearly a mile beyond the Bloody Stone, and from there climbed pretty straight to the top of Sgurr na h'Uamha. At first they kept the left side of a gully (visible from the B. Stone near the sky-line on the left), and afterwards followed the southern buttress to the top—

a steep pitch being turned on the right. The rocks are good, and the climbing interesting without being difficult. This peak has been climbed before from Harta Corrie, but no marks were noticed, and the route followed by previous climbers was probably farther to the east.

*Sgurr a' Fionn Choire from Lota Corrie.*—The same party, after crossing h-Uamha, descended to Lota Corrie, and climbed the top between the Bhasteir Tooth and Bruach na Frithe. The salient feature of its south face is a prominent nose. The nose was ascended for a short distance on its east side, then turned by a ledge immediately below the



VIEW FROM DRUMHAIN.

1. Sgurr a' Fionn Choire. 2. Bhasteir. 3. Sgurr na h-Uamha. 4. Sgurr nan Gillean.

overhanging part, and finally scaled from its precipitous west side. (Small cairn left there.)

*Sgurr Mhadaidh, N. Peak, from Tairneilear.*—On 5th September, Messrs Collie, Parker, Howell, and Naismith climbed the great N.W. buttress of Mhadaidh, which gave 1,200 feet of good rock-climbing. The buttress is in three sections of nearly equal height, the upper being the easiest, and the middle section the stiffest. A perpendicular pitch in this latter had to be turned by traversing to the right into a shallow gully, which was followed for a rope's length or so. A traverse back to the middle line of the buttress was accomplished by Dr Collie, who wormed himself along

a very narrow and sensational groove, 60 feet long, across the face of an A.P. cliff, and invited the rest to follow him. (Small cairn left at the end of this "stomach traverse.")

*Sgurr nan Gillean Pinnacles from the N.E.*—On 7th September, Messrs Collie, Howell, and Naismith discovered an interesting and probably new approach to the Pinnacle Ridge. The route affords a capital scramble, and must be the nearest rock climb to Sligachan Hotel. The way is difficult to describe, but it followed generally the line of a rib or buttress which runs N.E. from the 1st (lowest) Pinnacle to the head of Corrie Riabhach. After passing some easy rocks, the party attacked a steep face of excellent rock immediately to the left of a gully, visible from Sligachan as a vertical cut. Subsequently crossing some scree, they ascended a 40-foot chimney, and a nearly vertical wall just above it, on the top of which a small cairn was left. The Pinnacle route was afterwards followed, and it may here be mentioned, in reference to the description given in the Journal, Vol. II., p. 287, that the knob of rock between the 3rd and 4th Pinnacles and the "unclimbable tower" between Knight's Pinnacle and Sgurr nan Gillean, both of which are usually skirted, can be climbed over without difficulty.

*Clach Glas by W. Face.*—On 9th September, Messrs Parker and Naismith climbed the rocks of Clach Glas from the "Lone Corrie." Their route lay about midway between the two prominent gullies which cleave the mountain face. The lower rocks were smooth slabs of the "boiler-plate" variety. About a third of the way up, a steep angle of good rock, 40 feet high, was scaled. The ordinary route from Garbh Beinn was joined some 100 or 150 feet from the top. Four pinnacles, in a row, on the north-east side of Clach Glas, which may or may not have been climbed before, were afterwards visited, and stones placed on the top of each.

*Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain.*—On the 12th September, starting from a camp beside Loch Coruisk, Messrs Collie, Howell, and Naismith, with John Mackenzie, crossed this peak from north to south. Its height is about 2,450 feet, and it lies on the north side of Corrie Lochain, and exactly one mile due west of the upper end of Loch Coruisk. The

ascent gave over a thousand feet of rock climbing, and occupied two and a half hours, most of it across steeply inclined slabs of wet and rather slippery rock—not of the ordinary coarse-grained gabbro. Though no part was specially difficult, nearly every step required care, and good anchorages were few and far between. No signs of previous visitors were found either during the climb or on the top, so that the peak was probably virgin. A small cairn was built, and the party then descended to the gap on the south-west side, and followed for some distance the long ridge which joins Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain with Sgurr Mhic Coinnich. Subsequently leaving the ridge, they crossed some horrid stone slopes and made for the Inaccessible

To S. Mhic Coinich ←



DIAGRAM SHOWING ROUTE.

Pinnacle. The view of the Pinnacle, and indeed of all the Coolins, from Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain, is specially grand.

*Sgurr nan Gillean — Gully between 2nd and 3rd Pinnacles.* — On 16th September, Messrs Collier, Parker, and Naismith, with Mr W. Reid (a friend), climbed this gully from the Bhasteir Corrie, to the accompaniment of hail, thunder, and lightning. It is believed to be its first ascent. The only difficulty is to get past a large cave. This was managed by climbing with "back and knee" out to some jammed stones near the roof of the cave. Standing on the top of these, Dr Collier succeeded in reaching an upper set of jammed blocks, and the rest was easy.

Other parties at Sligachan during September were Mr

and Mrs William Smith, Mr and Mrs Colin Phillip, who ascended Sgurr Alasdair by the Great Stone Shoot, and Messrs Duncan and Garden from Aberdeen. The latter climbed the "Pinnacle Route" with John Mackenzie, and descended by the western ridge. They also climbed Sgurr Banachdich, and came along the ridge to Sgurr Dearg, traversing the "Inaccessible." Along with Parker, Duncan had the following expedition on Garbh Bheinn and Sgurr nan Each, of which Parker writes:—"We climbed Garbh Bheinn and Sgurr nan Each on the 8th September. Following the route described by F. W. Jackson on page 18, we climbed right over Garbh Bheinn from the first col beyond Marsco. The climb up and down was perfectly simple, but was always interesting on account of the fine views obtained. The north-east face of Garbh Bheinn is very precipitous. Sgurr nan Each consists of a narrow ridge about one-third of a mile long running eastwards from the north end of Clach Glas. Its north and south slopes are precipitous, and look as if they might afford good climbing. The ridge is much broken up, and afforded a delightful scramble, although quite easy."

The stimulus and direction given by these ascents to rock-climbing in Skye would be more likely to be permanent, were it not for the fact that the situation of Sligachan (the only centre) is specially unsuitable for these minute climbs. It is an excellent house in most respects, and excellently situated for Sgurr nan Gillean and the Bhasteir group, but it is far too remote from the western corries, where the best sport is to be had, to be of much service in exploring that end of the ridge.

Nicolson once called Sligachan the true centre for the *bonâ fide* traveller. *Bona fides*, however, in those days was a virtue unhesitatingly conceded to any one who came to Skye at all, or who, having braved the supposed discomfort of Portree, had the courage to venture farther inland. Nowadays, however, Sligachan is a headquarters of the Circular Tourist. It is a place to which he rushes from the steamboat and rushes back again next day, having discharged his double obligation of tasting a little real Talisker and seeing the Coolins through the mist darkly from a seat

in a retreating waggonette. The climber, however, bent on difficult work must get nearer his mountains. For him Glen Brittle House is an ideal centre. It is charmingly situated at the head of the loch, amidst the most pleasing surroundings, and the view of double-peaked Sgurr Alasdair rising up at the head of Coire Labain, just opposite the windows, is wonderfully grand and impressive. But then Glen Brittle is a private mansion, and naturally permission to stay there is only to be had as a special favour from the proprietor. For those who are not so fortunate, the alternative remains of camping out in Coruisk. That is a nice idea to talk about (and probably no expedition to the Coolins is planned which does not include camping out in Coruisk), but I am informed by some who have tried it that the bitterness of their repentance during the midnight watches, when the rain was pouring through their "portable tent," was such as to give rise to grave doubts regarding the success of the scheme. The real solution, of course, of these and all other difficulties is a hut at the head of Coruisk. It is said that the proprietor is opposed to the idea, but under proper management and regulation it would be quite unobjectionable, and a source of very great convenience to mountaineers. If constructed on the Alpine hut model, it would not cost much to build, and the cost of upkeep would be inconsiderable. Coruisk would undoubtedly be the best site, as affording easy access to every corrie in the range except Corrie Bhasteir, which is readily accessible from Sligachan.

A P P E N D I X.

NAMES, HEIGHTS, AND POSITIONS OF THE COOLIN PEAKS.

**Sgurr nan Gillean**, 3,167\* = the peak of the young men, lies 3 m. S.S.W. of Sligachan Hotel.

(a.) From the summit a branch ridge runs to the N.N.E. dividing Coire a' Bhasteir on the W. from Glen Sligachan on the E. This is the **Pinnacle ridge**. The fourth pinnacle lying next to Sgurr nan Gillean is 3,000 ap. The third is 2,900 ap.; the second, 2,700 ap.; and the first, 2,500 ap.

(b.) From the summit a branch ridge runs to the S.E. dividing Lota corrie in the W. from Coire nan Allt Geala in the E. It ends in **Sgurr na h-Uamha**, 2,400 ap., pron. Sgurr na Hoo-a = the peak of the cave, which lies 1 m. S. by E. from Sgurr nan Gillean. A small peak lies between this and Sgurr nan Gillean,  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. S.E. by S. from the latter, and is called something which sounds like **Sgurr a' Beoch**, 2,475 ap. This is the ridge by which the tourist makes the ascent. He joins it between the summit and Sgurr a' Beoch.

(c.) From the summit the main ridge continues westward to the **Tooth of Sgurr nan Gillean** and

Coire a' Bhasteir (executioner's corrie.) } Bealach a' Bhasteir (an easy pass). { Lota corrie  
(Loft corrie).

**Bhasteir**, 3,030 ap., pron. Vasteir = the executioner,  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. W. of Sgurr nan Gillean. **Bhasteir Tooth**, 2,900 ap., lies immediately under Bhasteir to the W.

(a.) From 50 yards W. of the Tooth, a branch ridge runs N. for  $\frac{1}{4}$  m., and ends in **Sgurr a' Bhasteir**, 2,900 ap. It separates Fionn Choire from Coire a' Bhasteir.

Fionn Choire (fair corrie.) { Bealach a' Leitir = pass of the declivity, 2,700 } Lota corrie.  
(an easy pass).

**Sgurr a' Fionn Choire**, 3,000 ap., a small peak between Bhasteir and Bruach na Frithe.

Fionn Choire. Dip. Lota corrie.

**Bruach na Frithe**, 3,143,\* pron. Bruach na free = the brae of the forest,  $\frac{3}{4}$  m. W. of Sgurr nan Gillean.



Coir' a' Mhadaidh } Bealach, 2,520 ap. (an easy pass). Lota corrie.  
(fox's corrie.) }

**An Caisteal**, 2,740 ap. = the castle, lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. S. of Bruach na Frithe.

Coir' a' Mhadaidh. Dip. Harta corrie.

**North Top, Bidein Druim nan Ramh**, 2,820 ap., pron. Bidein Drim na Raav = the hill of the ridge of oars, lies 1 m. S.S.W. of Bruach na Frithe.

Coir' a' Mhadaidh. Dip, 2,730 ap. Harta corrie.

**South-East Top, Bidein Druim nan Ramh**, 2,860 ap.

Coir' a' Mhadaidh. Dip, 2,750 ap. { Coruisk  
(water cauldron).

**South-West Top, Bidein Druim nan Ramh**, 2,810 ap.

(a.) From South-East Top a branch ridge runs S.E. called **Druim na Ramh**, and divides Coruisk from Harta corrie.

(b.) From South-West Top a branch ridge runs for  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. N.W. towards Coire na Creiche (the corrie of the spoil), and ends with **Sgurr na Fheadain** = peak of the water-pipe. This ridge divides Coir' a' Mhadaidh in the N.E. from Tairneilear in the S.W.

(c.) From the South-West Top the main ridge runs S.W. to

Tairneilear } Bealach na Glaic Moire, 2,510 ap. = pass } Coruisk.  
(Thunderer.) } of the big hollow. }

*N.B.*—The six-inch map (of 1879, printed in 1887) has caused some confusion by placing the three peaks of Bidein Druim na Ramh in a straight line, while their tops form a triangle. The Bealach na Glaic Moire does not run over the col, with the natural arch formed by a jammed block, between the S.E. and S.W. peaks, as inferred by Prof. Adamson in the *Cairngorm Journal*, vol. i., p. 188, but lies to the south of all the Bidein peaks. It crosses the ridge between Sgurr a' Mhadaidh and Bidein at its lowest point, and runs along the south side of Sgurr na Fheadain till it drops into the Tairneilear of O.S. This is the pass in common use to cross from Coruisk to Coire na Creiche. Any one coming over from Coruisk when they get to the bealach should keep to the right, skirting the slopes of Sgurr na Fheadain.

**North Top of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh**, 2,925 ap., pron. Sgurr a Vadee = the fox's peak, 1 m. S.W. from Bruach na Frithe.

Tairneilear. Dip. { Coire an Uaigneis (retiring  
corrie), and Coruisk.

**Second Peak of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh**, 2,880 ap.

Tairneilear. Dip, 2,820 ap. Coire an Uaigneis.

**Third Peak of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh**, 2,910 ap.

Tairneilear. Dip. Coire an Uaigneis.

**South Peak of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh** has two tops. The one to the N. is 2,990 ap., and the S. top is 3,020 ap.

(a.) From the summit of the 2,990 top a ridge runs W. to **Sgurr Thuilm**, 2,884,\* pron. Hulim = peak of Tulm, with a bealach from Tairnelear to Coire a' Ghreadaidh.

Coire a' Ghreadaidh. Bealach, 2,760 ap. (fairly easy). Coire an Uaigneis.

Coire a' Ghreadaidh. } An Dorus = the door, 2,890. (N.B.—A pass { Coire an Uaigneis. } said to have been used by the Macleods.)

**North Top Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh**, 3,190 ap., pron. Sgurr Greeta, *i.e.*, Greeta's Peak, lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. S.W. of S. top of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh.

Coire a' Ghreadaidh. Dip, 3,100 ap. Coireachan Ruadha.

**South Top, Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh**, 3,180 ap.

(a.) From summit of N. top a short branch ridge runs into Coire a' Ghreadaidh.

Coire a' Ghreadaidh. } Bealach, 2,920 (an easy pass). { Coireachan Ruadha and Coruisk.

**North Top, Sgurr na Banachdich**, height unrecorded, pron. as it is spelt, the small-pox peak, so called from the rock being pitted all over, lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. S.W. of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh.

Coire a' Ghreadaidh. Dip. Coireachan Ruadha.

**Second Top, Sgurr na Banachdich**, 3,167\* (the highest top).

(a.) From this a ridge runs N.W. to **An Diallaid**.

Coire a' Ghreadaidh. Dip, 3,020. Coireachan Ruadha

**Third Top, Sgurr na Banachdich**, 3,104.\*

(a.) From this runs for 1 m. W. a ridge to **Sgurr na Gobhar**, 2,047,\* pron. Gaur = hill of the she-goats.

Coire na Banachdich. Dip. Coireachan Ruadha.

**Fourth Top, Sgurr na Banachdich**, 2,937.\*

Coire na Banachdich. } Bealach Coire na Banachdich, 2,810 ap. { Coireachan Ruadha and Coruisk.

N.B.—This pass is difficult in Coire na Banachdich owing to slabs.

**Sgurr Dearg**, 3,233,\* and the **Inaccessible Pinnacle**, 3,255 ap., pron.

Sgurr Jerrack = the red peak (named "Inaccessible Peak, 3,212," on the Admiralty Chart), lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. S. of Sgurr na Banachdich.

(a.) From this a ridge runs W., dividing Coire na Banachdich from Coire Labain.

Coire Labain } Bealach, 2,690 ap. (an easy pass). { Coireachan Ruadha and Coruisk. (corrie of the hollow).

**Sgurr Mhic Coinnich**, 3,180 = Mackenzie's peak, lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. S.E. of Sgurr Dearg.

Coire Labain. Bealach (a difficult pass). { Coir' an Lochain and Coruisk.

**Sgurr Tearlach**, 3,230 ap. = peak of Charles (the old N.E. peak of Alasdair).

Coire Labain. { Dip, 3,150. (N.B.—Head of "Great Stone Shoot," from Coire Labain. Im- } Coir' a' Ghrunnda. possible on Ghrunnda side.)

**Sgurr Alasdair**, 3,275 ap. = peak of Alexander, lies close to and W. of Sgurr Tearlach.

(a.) From summit a ridge runs S.W. and ends in **Sgurr Sgumain**, 3,104,\* dividing Coire Labain from Coire a' Ghrunnda.

(b.) From Sgurr Tearlach and Sgurr Mhic Coinnich a buttress runs N.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  m., and ends in **Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain**, 2,450 ap., which lies exactly 1 m. due W. of the upper end of Loch Coruisk.

(c.) From Sgurr Tearlach the main ridge runs S.E. to the

Coir' a' Ghrunnda. Alasdair-Dubh col. Coir' an Lochain.

**Sgurr Dubh na dabheinn**, 3,090 ap., pron. Sgurr-doo-na-da-ven = the black peak of the two hills (named "Sgor Dubh ni dabheinn, 3,003," on the Admiralty Chart), lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. E.S.E. of Sgurr Alasdair.

Coir' an Lochain } Dip, 2,900 ap. An Garbh-choire. and Coruisk. }

**Sgurr Dubh Mhor**, 3,120, pron. Sgurr-doo-vor = the big black peak, lies  $\frac{1}{4}$  m. W. of Sgurr Dubh ni dabheinn.

Coir' a' Choarium. Dip. An Garbh-choire.

**Sgurr Dubh Bheag**, 2,450, pron. Sgurr doo-vick = the little black peak, lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. W. of Sgurr Dubh Mhor. This ends the main ridge, but a branch runs S. from Sgurr Dubh ni Dabheinn to

**Caisteal a Gharbh-choire**, 2,740 ap., which lies at the heads of the Garbh-choire and Coir' a' Ghrunnda.

Coir' a' Ghrunnda. { Bealach a' Gharbh-choire, 2,620 ap. } An Garbh-choire. (an easy pass.)

**North Top, Sgurr nan Eag**, 3,020 ap., lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. S. of Sgurr Dubh na dabheinn.

Dip.

**South Top, Sgurr nan Eag**, 3,036,\* lies  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. of Sgurr Dubh Mhor.

Coire nan Laogh. Bealach, 2,550 ap. (a sheep pass). An Garbh-choire.

**Sgurr a' Coire Bheag**, 2,870 ap., lies  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. N.W. of Gars-bheinn.

Coire nan Laogh. Dip, 2,750 ap. Coire Beag (small corrie).

**Gars-bheinn**, 2,934,\* pron. Garsven = the echoing mountain (named "Gairsbheinn, 2,902," on the Admiralty Chart), lies 1 m. S.E. of Sgurr nan Eag.

*Note.*—This list has been prepared by Mr Douglas partly from Dr Collie's Heights (Vol. II., p. 168), partly from the Ordnance Maps, and partly from information supplied by Club members. An asterisk after a height denotes that it is taken from the O.S. maps. The other heights are from aneroid measurements by members of the Club. Inaccuracies will no doubt be found to exist in it, and the Editor will be glad to receive any information which may lead to their correction.

## IN PTARMIGAN LAND.

BY LIONEL W. HINXMAN.

HIGH up in the heart of the Aberdeenshire grouse-moors, where the upper waters of the Gairn have cut a deep valley through the rolling heather-covered moorlands, lies the lodge, nestling under the steep hillside, and sheltered from the north and east by a small plantation of stunted firs and larches, whose twisted stems and broken tops speak eloquently of many a hard struggle for existence with winter gales and drifted snow.

This plantation is for the birds a very oasis in a treeless wilderness. The grass and wood sedges grow rank and long among the stems, and hide the domed nests of the willow-wrens. Wood pigeons come to the spruce firs, and the hawks would fain build but for the ever-watchful eye of the keeper down below, anxious for the safety of the two or three broods of blackgame that shelter here in the long heather. A little burn comes down through the heart of the wood from the moorland above, falling in miniature cascades and tinkling rapids among the great stones brought down by the winter floods that fill its bed. Here all day long the delicate grey wagtails run restlessly to and fro on the rocks, or hover in the air like great yellow butterflies, their long slender tails drooping and quivering at every moment. The sweet sudden song of the redstart comes from the larches, and his nest is close by amongst the loose stones of the dyke. Higher up, near the edge of the moor, a pair or two of ring ousels build in the rocky banks, and somewhere along the burn the dipper is sure to be seen, curtseying energetically from a flat stone or walking unconcernedly at the bottom of a clear pool.

The lodge is a long, low, comfortable-looking building, with rough-harled granite walls, flagged roof, and rustic porch of untrimmed fir stems. From the front of the house, the road and a sloping grass field measure the breadth of the glen to the river, which now runs clear and placid enough over its shallow stony bed. But the stems of the

dwarf willows that grow along the margin, barked on the up-stream side by the ice floes, and the deep scores cut in the turf along the bank, tell of the wild times when the ice breaks up in spring, and the stream, swollen by the melting snows of Ben Avon, drives the great masses hurtling and grinding over each other along the banks.

Let us follow the road that leads up the valley to Ptarmigan-land. The river swings pendulum-wise from side to side of the narrow glen, cutting deeply into the peaty banks, from which the bleached and wasted pine roots protrude with a grim suggestion of skeleton forms. Bones they indeed are, the buried remains of the great Caledonian Forest that once stretched far and wide over these barren moorlands. At the convex side of every bend there is a deep pool, on the other a wide shingle beach where the red-billed oyster-catchers pipe shrilly, and the little sandpipers run and flit with crescent wings and quavering whistle.

Close to the road is a green "wallee" (Anglicè, well-eye), a spring, where the water oozes up through a yielding carpet of green and red mosses and water-plants. No less than six foxes were taken at this place one winter by the keeper. The bait, the carcass of a sheep a good deal more than "high," and therefore irresistible to Reynard, was thrown on the moss and surrounded by traps placed just beneath the water. The mountain foxes of Ben Avon are splendid fellows. Grey rather than red is the predominant colour in their thick furry coats; they stand higher on the legs, and are altogether larger and more wolf-like than their red cousins of the Lowlands.

The path now leaves the glen, and winds up among a network of steep heather-covered moraines, and hollows filled with dark peaty lochans. Herein are goodly trout, not the starved fingerlings of the mountain torrent below, but plump pounders and two-pounders, wise too, and not easily to be beguiled, save in the late gloaming of a summer evening. A pair of redshanks is sure to be nesting hereabouts. See, here they come, wheeling round and round with wings curiously drooped, and quick, impatient, double whistle, as if frantic at our intrusion on their domain. A

little blue hawk flies out of the heather on the steep side of the moraine, and a few steps farther on the hen bird rises at our feet, and there, in a hollow on the bare ground, are the four beautiful eggs of the merlin, very like those of the kestrel, but more uniform in colour, and of a richer reddish brown.

Two thousand feet of steady climb up the convenient shooting path that winds over the shoulder of the Big Brae, and here is the first snow, filling up and bridging over a deep gully that runs far into the mountain-side. The surface is fast dissolving under the warm May sun, but a very little way down it is still hard *névé*—almost glacier ice—showing blue in the walls of the miniature crevasses. A few hundred feet more and we are on the great tableland that stretches with an average height of 3,500 feet above the sea for twelve miles westwards, and forms the summit of the Cairngorm range, or, as they were formerly and more fittingly called, the *Monadhruadh*—the Red Mountains.

All around is a scene of sterile desolation. The mountain top is covered with coarse sand and weathered slabs of granite, varied with patches of blackened moss and withered Alpine sedge, or half-melted snow. Every hollow in the gently undulating surface holds a spring, and from every spring, swollen with the melting drifts, bubbles up a rill of the clearest water that runs here and there over the yellow sand until it plunges under the dark arch of a snowdrift and is lost to sight. There was a cool breeze down in the glen, but here it is hot and breathless, the sun beats fiercely on the barren ground, and we are glad to creep under the shade of the nearest granite block—"the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Listen! a harsh grating croak comes from the scattered rocks close at hand. Scanning the ground inch by inch, a slight motion catches the eye, and there, only a few yards from our feet, a pair of ptarmigan are crouching among the stones. Look how closely the delicately pencilled grey plumage accords with the weathered surface of the granite; mark the contrast of the brilliant red round the eye of the cock bird, and the feet, thickly feathered to the toes.

Throw a pebble towards them. They rise, and with them half a dozen more till now unseen, while another, which the eye had passed over a minute before as a mere rounded projection from the rock, joins them as they dip over the shoulder of the hill, the broad bands of white across the wings showing conspicuously as they fly.

A dark thundery haze hangs over Glen Quoich and the hills to the west, but to the north the sky is clearer, and beyond the level grey line of the Moray Firth rises the dim outline of Morven in Caithness, and the blue peaks of Sutherland and Ross. Nearer at hand, wave after wave of dark heather-covered moorland stretches away to the horizon. Looking down from such a height the lower hill-tops seem flattened, and the bottoms of the valleys are concealed, giving the effect of a billowy waste almost monotonous in its uniformity, save where an opening to the south affords a glimpse of the meadows on Deeside—an oasis of brilliant green among the surrounding wilderness of brown and grey. Right in front of us rises the beautiful outline of Lochnagar, graceful yet strong, a true granite mountain form.

The spiry peaks and fantastic pinnacles of the west coast, the *dents* and *aiguilles* of the Alps, may seem at first sight more impressive. But these appeal rather to the craving for the *bizarre* and sensational in Nature. Sooner or later they create a feeling of unrest, and the eye returns with a sense of relief to the quiet massive forms, the firm rounded outlines, the "strength in repose" of the great Cairngorms.



## LOCHNAGAR AND BEN NEVIS.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

“THE best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley,” and so I found during the month of August, when I, with my family, was living in the farmhouse of Strathgirnock, near Ballater, almost under the shadow of “dark Lochnagar.” It seemed as if a month of holiday would suffice to explore the stupendous cliffs which have prompted Byron’s famous lines, and as my zeal was set agog by our worthy editor, I made plans with other climbers, which, had they been carried out, would have gone far to settle at which points the summit was accessible. But, alas! even members of the S.M.C. failed me, and I was limited to a single week during which I had a climbing companion. Even then the clerk of the weather treated us scurvily, and drove us back from the very loch itself. Never mind! though “cribbed cabined, and confined” to a single day on the cliffs, the memory of feasts of blaeberry, crow, and cranberry will not readily fade, while Salvationist ascents of Lochnagar bore their own reward. My companion, untutored in the gentle art of cycling, made his way up Strathgirnock on foot, and thence over heather moor to the corrie, whilst I pleasantly cycled up to the Hut to join him farther on. Our worthy landlord at Strathgirnock, on learning the object of our journey, did his best to dissuade us, and even took an unfair advantage by painting to my wife in fearful colours the doom that was in store for me. “Dae ye no ken, mem, that he is jest thrawin’ awa’ his life. No leevin’ man can possibly climb thae cliffs. It’s the same as fair suicide.” Then again, the shepherd at Alltnaguibhsaich warned me that “only yin man, ca’ad Broun, ever gaed up thae awfu’ rocks, and wha can say if even he did it? Man, I wadna gang yonder for a thousan’ pun’. Turn, man, and dinna commit suicide.” But even these failed to dissuade, and following the example of the youth in the poem, I pushed on, carrying (metaphorically) “a banner with the strange device, Excelsior.” It is to be admitted that the first

sight of these cliffs is forbidding. Rising in but little broken phalanx, they offer few points of attack. Entering the corrie from the left, we first came to the gully attempted in March 1893 (see Journal, Vol. II., p. 246), but after a scrutiny of the wall of rock at the top, we thought it would keep. Then came the route ascended by "the man ca'ad Broun" (see Journal, Vol. IV., p. 37), but this also we passed, although the start off seemed hopeful. Just beyond, and before the Black Spout is reached, a narrow gully runs right up the cliffs, dividing later into two branches, of which the right seems the more precipitous. At the entrance a large mass of rock had fallen, apparently recently, for the earth had not yet been washed off the sloping slabs by the rain. The yellow scar renders this gully conspicuous for a long distance. The first contact with the rocks evidenced something very different from the gabbro of Skye, for the holds were few and water-rounded, affording a delightful feeling of insecurity, even on short pitches. The route lay up a pretty steep wall plentifully furnished with water, which poured down in a thin sheet. The holds were mostly covered with moss, and as the wind was bitterly cold, our fingers were quickly benumbed. Having taken the left-hand branch, we, however, met with nothing of special difficulty, although all was bad enough from the slippery footing afforded, until we had ascended nearly to the top of the mountain, and were approaching the final wall, near where Brown's party finished. Here the pitch rose more steeply, and our path was abruptly blocked by a large boulder which had become jammed in the gully. We had strong hopes at first of surmounting this, but we found immediately below it a wall several feet high, and above this a recess, which was accessible enough; but as the boulder projected some inches beyond the wall, and no hitch whatever could be got, it was impossible to surmount the obstacle. Although the rope could give no safety whatever, a careful attack was made on the wall rising on the left at an angle of  $60^{\circ}$  to  $70^{\circ}$ . On the face of this a few holds enabled me to climb to a point higher than the boulder, but I found it impossible to traverse to the right

the intervening ten feet or so. We then heartily wished for ability to perform that marvellous feat recorded by Tough, when Brown, by the simple expedient of muscular contraction and expansion, shot his companion two feet higher up the cliff and saved the day. I confess that my muscles had no such energy in them, especially as a vertical drop of fifty feet yawned below me. My companion thought he saw a way up a green recess farther out on the cliff, and with the headstrong enthusiasm of youth persisted in it. With the gravity of age and the credit of the S.M.C. on my shoulders, I pointed out the narrowness of the ledge which traversed the cliff horizontally, the treacherous moss, saturated with water, which covered every hold, and the angle of ascent, but in vain. Along it we had to go, and while the young one considerably denuded the rock of its covering and left it bare as a bald head, the old one had to make his way along and up with the airiest of holds. At last a point was reached much above the boulder and near the summit of the cliff, but as the situation became momentarily more desperate, a descent had to be made, during which appearance and dignity suffered considerably, and the rock was bereft of every shred of vegetation. The situation was fraught with danger, and after the prospect of a fall of 200 to 300 feet, it was a comfort when the foot rested on the narrow ledge before referred to. Once back at our boulder, we vowed that our lot was like that of Tantalus, after whom we named the gully. The descent to the screes occupied much time, and included several involuntary spread-eagle glissades; but we made up for it all by climbing the Black Spout, and interviewing our gully from the top. We found we had been quite close to the top, and that the climb ended at the boulder. The view from the top was very remarkable for definition and colouring. While descending over bog my foot went into a hole, and a somersault resulted. On reaching the Hut an hour later, and preparing to cycle home in the growing darkness, I found to my dismay that my watch was gone, lost during the somersault. I turned at once, reascended the mountain, found my watch, hurried down, cycled home in the darkness, and confuted the assertions of my landlord,

who knew I would be killed. While beaten at the very last step, I yet believe more skilful climbers will find this a practical route to the top, and with dry rocks it may not be found very difficult. On the right hand the rocks seem to be breaking away, and in some places threaten imminent descent, so that it is quite likely the character of the climb may at any time be altered from this cause.

Since I had first heard of the S.M.C., the ridges of Ben Nevis continually presented themselves to my mind as goals to be striven after. As the ascent of the Tower Ridge had only been done by experts, it seemed unlikely that it would be within the powers of a mediocre climber like myself, so that my climbs in Skye and elsewhere during the summer were looked upon as in preparation for an attack on this fascinating ridge. In any case a summer climb only was contemplated, and the Edinburgh autumn holiday, 21st September, fixed as the date. Parker, fresh from a fortnight in Skye, joined me in Fort William, and so little did we anticipate a winter climb that neither of us brought an ice-axe. Taking a preliminary saunter to the base of the precipices, however, we were surprised to find the cliffs plastered with snow for 600 feet below the summit, so that, taking Carn Mor Dearg *en route*, we crossed the arête and made for the Observatory to borrow an ice-axe. We encountered a heavy snow-storm, which lasted for a couple of hours, and on reaching the top found icicles three feet long hanging from the doorway. The snow lay as far down as the arête, and at the summit was about seven inches deep. The only available axe was one of which the pick was partly broken, and the handle had no point. Leaving this at the half-way Observatory, we returned home to prepare for a winter ascent. The night was brilliantly clear, and in the morning hoar frost covered the ground, but the air was calm, and a finer morning could not have been desired. Retracing our steps to the Hut, where we recovered our axe, and striking round by the scree of Carn Dearg, we were not long in reaching the scene of operations. Out of the sun it was very cold, and ice encrusted the ground. As the ascent of the Tower Ridge has already been described

in the Journal, I shall not take up much space in referring to it. The climbing is good from the very bottom, and affords every variety of foothold. Passing round the base of the lowest pinnacle, we struck up to the cleft which separates it from the ridge, and ascended the rocks to the left, without going into the cleft. The chief difficulty encountered was in taking the ice-axe along with us, and we found it often profitable to send it up on a spare rope. At one very steep pitch a ledge had to be followed round a corner to the right, and here the axe was a regular obstruction. Until we reached the Tower proper we had no real difficulty, and many climbers who might not feel equal to the complete ascent would be well rewarded by persevering to this point. The views of the North-east Buttress, and across the corrie to Carn Dearg, are such as cannot be obtained elsewhere. On reaching the Tower itself it was evident that our ice-axe, which on an earlier occasion Parker had declared we would later on curse, had now become an absolute necessity. Here we found all the holds covered with hard snow or ice, and even the preliminary climb up the lower walls required careful treatment. Reaching a narrow ice-covered platform, four or five feet long by a couple of feet broad, a great wall of rock towered above us for about sixty feet. On this the holds were few indeed, and our hopes centred in a shallow recess or gully which, starting about twenty feet above us, led to the top. A narrow ledge, four or five inches wide, crossed the wall, about fifteen feet up, but terminated about five feet from the lower end of the gully. Up to this ledge there were but the suggestions of holds. A narrow crack, sufficient to admit the pick of the axe, went vertically up the face. To make a start, it was necessary to step off the platform on to a projecting knob to the right, where you overhung the precipice descending far below. The only available hitch is about three feet up, and from that point Parker, who led in excellent style, virtually took his life in his hands. Progress was very slow, and the horizontal ledge could not be reached till the leader had obtained two steps for his left foot—one on the ice-axe, the handle resting on my shoulder; the other on the ice-axe held up at arm's length in my left

hand. In each case the pick was placed in the narrow crack already mentioned. The ledge proved to be covered with ice, and had to be cleared before a foot-hold was obtained on it. I am informed that Raeburn on a former occasion, imitating the contortionists, stretched his feet from ledge to gully and managed to cross; but we found this impossible, and access to the gully had to be obtained higher up. The gully itself was filled with ice, and being at a very steep angle, afforded no safety. Leaving the axe here, Parker crept cautiously to the right, where a projecting knob vertically above me afforded the first and only safe hitch. The rope, a sixty-foot one, barely sufficed to turn the knob till I had climbed a few feet. The ascent of the ice-covered slab for the last man would have been impossible but for the rope; but it was excellently used by Parker, and a hand over hand progression for some ten feet landed me on the ledge, whence a detour, first to the right and then to the left, brought me into the gully to recover the ice-axe. From this to the top of the Tower was but a short climb. We counted that the passage of the sixty feet had occupied one and a half hours, during which the temperature of the last man had steadily fallen. Scientific men tell us that the temperature of the body cannot fall more than a few degrees without death; but after holding on to icicles for an hour or more we think there must be some error in their observations. On arriving at the top we received an ovation from a crowd of tourists and others who had been watching our progress farther down on the ridge; but the demoralising effect this had on Parker was sad to relate. While on the rock-wall, butter would not have melted in his mouth; but once in sight of the ladies on the top, the way in which he ordered the married man to lead across the cleft was a sad revelation. The cleft did not prove difficult after our late experiences, nor did the subsequent ascent up the snow-covered rocks to the summit, where we arrived about four hours after we started the climb.

## MOUNTAIN MEMORIES.

BY J. G. STOTT.

DEAR MR EDITOR,—Seven years have now passed since the publication of the first number of our *Journal*. Glancing through the pages of the three handsome volumes into which it has grown,—an occupation I often indulge in,—I flatter myself that the predictions I ventured to make in the preface were indeed prophetic. I will not now recapitulate them; but I will aver, without fear of contradiction, that in the fullest measure they have come to pass.

I am much struck with a feature in many of the later articles; it is the opening up of new ground, and the conquest of that which was before deemed very difficult, if not impossible. Compare what used to be said of certain of our better known mountains, in some of the early numbers, with more recent records of ascents. Cliffs and faces, ridges and gullies, formerly thought impracticable, have now succumbed to the “agile Ultramontane,” and are numbered, tabulated, and described in most approved orographic phraseology. An increasing spirit of adventure is permeating a large section of the Club; things are now done that would not have been done in the old days; and exploration is pushed further afield into the remotest fastnesses of the Highlands. I look upon the *Journal* as in large measure responsible for this vigorous order of things. A strong *esprit de corps* and feeling of emulation are fostered by it; and under your able management, Mr Editor, it is bringing the Club up to the full of that pitch of excellence foreshadowed by the first President in his memorable opening address.

I doubt if *you* can altogether appreciate my feelings as I read these back numbers—so far, far away from the scenes they describe. Ah! these good old days, these pleasant faces, these dear old comrades. Stop! one of them I still have with me—a mute companion truly, but none the less a tried and trusty one. In a corner of my room, opposite me as I write, stands a sturdy staff of oak. Warped, weather-

bleached, ironshod is he—the veteran of many a hundred leagues of Highland travel, the hero of eight-and-thirty ascents of proud three-thousand-footers of Munro's list, as a long column of graven notches testify, much as Fenimore Cooper's braves notched their rifle stocks for scalps taken.

Come, old friend, let us reminisce together for a while. Maybe 'twill strike a friendly chord in far-away Scotland, and those who know us not may skip the page if the tale is too dull for them.

It was away back in June 1890 that a small party of us foregathered for a sniff of Highland breezes. My two companions could not manage more than one of those delightful week-end expeditions we all know so well ; for myself, I meant to take a few more days, and go farther afield. We left Edinburgh, then, one bright Saturday afternoon, and travelled through to Balloch, where we embarked for the sail up Loch Lomond.

Never had the loch looked more charming. Every shade of green and yellow glowed in the woods or rolled in waves of colour along the hill-sides. Wet crags and rocks flashed back the sunbeams ; the burns ran riot down the braes ; the loch, blue as the sky overhead, shimmered in the sunshine, or laughed in silver ripples on the shingle beaches of the wooded islands. Aloft the grim old Ben bore up the heavens on his rocky peak ; and as we travelled sufficiently round him to scan his north-west cliffs, we saw winter's snowdrifts still reposing in many a shady cleft. From Inversnaid, we looked right up the course of the Inveruglas Water into the heart of the rough and rugged mountains of the Macfarlane country—the stalwart Arrochar fraternity—their streams roaring adown the corries ; their cliffs throwing darksome shadows ; their snow streaks flashing in the sun. And higher up the loch the view disclosed a giant peak, black and minatory against the sunset ; and we knew our old love, Ben Laoigh. Then came Ardlui, and the smooth reaches of the Falloch River ; and in the quiet of evening we started on our walk up the glen to Crianlarich.

Aye, it is a bonnie walk ; the dew is falling now, and the air is heavy with the scent of the larch and the haw-



thorn. Somewhere on the hill a cuckoo is calling; but presently his note gives place to that of the mournful owl. But still the sunset is flaming over the western hill-tops, and golden gleams are pouring through the bealachs, and gilding the opposite side of the glen, where the hawthorns cluster like snowdrifts at the foot of the crags, and the russet heather and bracken mingle with yellow broom and grass of the greenest on those big, bold slopes.

And as we rise along the line of the glen, the Falloch chafes and boils beneath us; and adown deep woodland ravines beside leaps many a flashing cascade to join it, with Gaelic name, sweet-sounding as the turmoil of its waters. All too soon we topped the ascent; the road swung down the brae; and the white gables of Crianlarich came into view, nestling almost at the foot of huge Ben More, whose lofty cone seemed miles away up in the star-spangled sky.

The ancient proverb anent men and mice and their schemes was fully and unpleasantly exemplified next morning. When we took our last look round about midnight, the sky was blue and starry, flushed with warmer colour in west and north; the mountains were unclouded, and the air was soft and balmy, dew-laden and heavy with the scent of wild flowers. But while we slept, the weather-demon had gone to work, slewed round the wind to the east, and nailed it there by the ears; laid his cold paw on the thermometer, and lowered it ten degrees; rummaged up the clouds from the four quarters of heaven, and piled them on all the mountains round about. Thus when we came down from Slumberland, mist and drizzle made things look very cheerless; and of the three hills we had meant to climb not a trace was visible.

Some enthusiasts would have recked little of this—so on occasion have we done—but under present circumstances we spent the morning in a course of tobacco smoke and barometer-beating. I am an infallible believer in thumping the barometer. If you only thump it long enough, it is sure to go up! It did not disappoint us on this occasion, and about mid-day, the weather showing signs of clearing, we departed.

Our plan for the day had been to commence with Ben Chalum over to the north of Crianlarich, and follow the summit line between Glens Dochart and Lochay, pretty well down to Killin. But it was much too late to attempt this now, so we turned eastward, and for about three miles strolled down Glen Dochart to the foot of Loch Tubhair. Here we crossed the river, and laid a diagonal course over hummocky moorland to reach the upper waters of the Riobain Burn. We soon made up our minds to confine our attention to Meall Chuirn, as the nicest-looking "top" in sight. It is a little over 3,000 feet in height, and when you are pretty well under it, you mount over slopes of bent and heather, some of them very steep, and reach the shoulder. This is a really very handsome little rocky peak, quite the best among the summits immediately surrounding; and having surmounted its last ledge, and stretched yourself out by the cairn, you are surprised at the singular excellence of the view you command. From no other point is there a finer view of Ben More. His peak overtops us by over 800 feet, and although six miles away in the south-west, quite overwhelms us. From base to summit it is one long steep slope. The slopes of Ben More are, I think, the longest in the kingdom. The rocky cone of the Binnein peeps from behind his great mossy brother; and over its shoulder again are seen Balquhidder's braes, and the rugged Bens to the east of Glen Falloch. Farther round to westward is the Ben Laoigh group. Grand old Laoigh himself looks regal from here. Imagine a huge rocky cone that has been cleft down the chine, and one-half removed bodily. Now tear the inside out of what is left, plaster his black old ribs with ice and snow, pull one of them half out here and there, and heap up the shattered ruin of the rest of the mountain round about, then you will have some idea of him. Viewed from the north-east in the first half of the year, Ben Laoigh is one of the most imposing mountains we have.

Then the eye travelled on to Cruachan, and thence north and eastwards to the clans of giants away about Blackmount, Dalness, and Mamore—Ben Heasgarnich's flat snowy top forming the stepping-stone to Meall Ghaordie,

and the dozen or so of summits that lie betwixt Loch Rannoch and Tay, and form what is known as the Breadalbane Range in the botanical world. Every cottage in Glen Dochart, from nigh to Tyndrum down to Killin, was in sight—every reach of river, every dark clump of pines. The day was a good one now, and blue sky and flying white clouds were mirrored on loch, and tarn, and water-hole.

Rising at length, we shut up map and telescope, and started on a wild run down the steep northern snow slopes. The corries here are deep and precipitous, making a much finer show than the southern face of the hill. Soon we left the snowland behind us—the home of the blue hares and the ptarmigan—and got down to the grouse habitat. Some of the deep gullies we crossed were perfect little ferneries; and one of our party broke his stick outright and perilled some of his bones in his efforts to secure rare specimens.

In due course we reached the Lochay at Innischoarach, and for about seven miles dawdled down that lovely glen, reaching Killin just as the sun sank behind the snows of Creag Mhor, far away at the head of the valley, and his last rays gilded the rocky summits above the village.

Next morning our party was broken up, my friends returning to town, while I shouldered my knapsack, and set out for Ben Lawers. For about six miles I followed the winding road by the loch side, till I came to the burn of the high-sounding name of Allt an Tuim Bhric. It had its sources in a corrie near the peak; and trusting to it to guide me through the thick grey mist, I struck up the gentle heathery slopes on its eastern bank.

There is always something a trifle gruesome in plunging into dense mist. As it begins to twine its filmy folds around you, you halt and look about for a minute. Down below, ever so far away as it seems, are the dark loch, the woodlands, the cultivated slopes, and all the warmth and comfort of civilisation. Above is cloudland. You face the slope again; suddenly the air grows darker—above, around, below, nothing is in sight but intangible greyness—an opaque envelope of swiftly flying vapour, in which

crag and rocks immediately about you loom ghostly and indistinct, like grotesque genii of the mountains that have assembled to oppose your intrusion into their domain. But you grasp your staff more firmly on the steepening gradients, and up, up, up you win your way slowly. You are above lowland vegetation now; the scanty turf is sowed with shingle and boulders, and slippery and spongy from wet. Now you scale a rocky scarp; now you plunge forward through a snow slope. Quite suddenly it grows light in front; the pull-up ceases; you have topped the ridge of the mountain; and in a moment all the winds in heaven swoop down and buffet you: the wet mist swirls and boils around; and you catch flying glimpses of black dripping crags, rocky chimneys and corries, and curved crests and long slopes of snow. A hundred yards or two you rise along the roof line, then the big cairn looms through the fog, and your whoop of joy startles the echoes.

Small need at this period of the life of the Club accurately to describe Ben Lawers: it has been done before. Suffice it that the peak, which rises to 3,984 feet, lies about three miles back from the shore of the loch. It is, or was then, capped by a splendidly constructed cairn, 18 feet high, designed to bring its altitude up to the 4,000 foot line.

Lawers is one of the easiest and most accessible of all our high hills. From Old Lawers Inn, on Loch Tay, you can ride a pony to the summit. South, east, and west its slopes are for the most part very gentle, but it shows some fine corries on the north; and *here* during half the year you can get some Alpine work. It is said to command one of the finest views in Scotland, from the Cairngorm Mountains to the Lothians, and from the Atlantic to the German Ocean. But though I have been four times up the mountain, from all the cardinal points of the compass, I have never had a distant view from it.

It is an eerie sensation, curled up thus all alone, waiting for a view, on a storm-swept mountain peak. Except the rocks close to you all else is veiled by the mist. Not a living thing is within ken—only the tiny mosses and the lichens on the rocks remind you of life. It is more solitary

than a desert island. How the wind rushes and roars amid the rocks—rising into eldritch screeches and dying away in long melancholy howlings—how the mist goes surging onward ceaselessly. But look! suddenly the gloom lightens; above you the sun appears—pale, green, sickly! The mist thins away and discloses shadowy glimpses of lands beyond; or it is rent asunder for a moment, and like gleams of fairy-land there flash upon the vision deep snow-filled corries, shoulders and summits of neighbouring mountains uptossing to the sky—here the gleam of a tarn—there the silvery streak of a torrent. Then the view is blotted out once more; but the busy fingers of sun and of wind are at work; golden sunbeams strike downwards through the fog-gleam along the wet rocks—roll the mist into wreaths and ribbons and bannerettes, and send them curling and sweeping along the hill-faces, pouring tumultuously over the ridges like the snowy surf that thrashes impotently on a rocky shore. On such a day it is questionable whether you are not recompensed for the loss of distant view. Look across that wild cirque that contains sunless Lochan a' Chait, black and gloomy as Styx or Acheron; see the triple peaks beyond belted with mist, streaked with waterfalls, black buttress of rock impending over headlong snow slope—the whole seen, and lost, and seen again,—aye, it is a memory to bide with one for ever.

Three-quarters of an hour sufficed for the descent to Lawers pier on the loch, whence I made my way to Kenmore; and that evening—a perfect summer night—I walked across from Dunkeld to Blairgowrie, one of the most beautiful bits of road in Perthshire.

There are no mountains at Blairgowrie, so the following day I marched in roystering breeze and sunshine to Spital of Glenshee. Many of our members know the Spital—the meeting-place of three glens—guarded by those big mountains—surrounded by brattling brooks, green meadows, and wild heathery hills—a pleasant spot truly.

Starting betimes next morning, I followed the Glen Beag road for two or three miles; and opposite Carn Aighe, the first summit of importance on the right of the glen, I crossed the river and began to mount. There is little or

no "climbing" about any of the hills here; long steep grassy or heathery slopes that on a hot day, to a man with a big knapsack, are somewhat arduous. For the last couple of hundred feet the cone consists entirely of loose stones and boulders of coarse sandstone and schist. From the top, the ridge dips for a couple of hundred feet, and then rises towards the north-east into the rocky summit of Creag Leacach, 3,238 feet. The saddle is carpeted with soft brown fibrous moss, dry as tinder; and on the eastern slope were heavy snow-wreaths reaching far down the corries.

There is a charm even about this mere hill-walking that compensates in some measure for the absence of difficulty and excitement beloved of the rock climber. Firstly, on such a day as this, the strong mountain air has an effect like mild intoxication. You feel fit for absolutely anything. Then Nature presents all manner of attractions. Beneath your feet the beautiful little pink and white and blue mountain flowers seem almost to smile up at you. Now you startle a brace of dappled ptarmigan—now you watch the antics of a family of snow buntings; again on an opposite slope you see a herd of deer. And ever the view grows wider and more beautiful as you ascend; and on all sides, up from the depths below, ascends the murmur of the streams.

The view from Leacach was superb. The eye wandered over all the upper basin of the Tay, far down in the south-west; dwelt with delight upon burly Ben Lawers; and was only stopped by the snowy peaks of Ben More and Am Binnein, more than sixty miles away. All around were mountain peaks innumerable, and your varying fortunes upon them came crowding back to memory. Pleasant summer rambles—like to-day's—in some cases; wild winter snowstorms in others, when with trusty comrades you battled along the ridges in *tourmentes* of stinging hail and sleet—your clothes wet and frozen, your extremities almost frost-bitten—and fairly stormed your peak.

From Leacach I made my way to Glas Maol. With the exception of some of the Lochnagar summits Glas Maol is the highest in this part of the country. Three

thousand five hundred and two feet it upheaves its huge broad back. It is perhaps the least shapely of the group. A great tabular summit covered with scanty vegetation and gently sloping corries are its chief characteristics. The snow still lay on it in very considerable patches; and otherwise dry brown slopes were marked by the vivid green of numerous springs.

On a day like this, when, despite the cold north wind the sun exercised such scorching power as to make the whole atmosphere shimmer, how refreshing were the verdant little oases. I shall never forget the one I lurched at. Toiling from the saddle up the steep brown bank saw its green riband high above me. At its lower edge ground was only boggy—farther up a tiny rill of cold water trickled and gurgled through the moss, and a yard higher was a little pebbly basin, a foot in diameter filled with liquid crystal that bubbled up from the bottom. How fierce, and sunburned, and dishevelled you look your hot visage hung for a moment above its clear level. No fear of *bacilli* or *bacteria* up here, 3,300 feet above level, so we drink to our heart's content; and then over on the soft moss, we slip off the straining knee straps, and get out the flask, the sandwiches, and the late. We won't smoke here—we'll keep that joy until the summit, which is only 200 feet above us now.

The highest point in the Glas Maol plateau is with a big cairn. Three counties—Forfar, Perth, and Aberdeen shires—join hands at it. The area is so small you have to move about to command the whole view; and after lighting a pipe we do so. The features are the complicated Lochnagar summit, which look specially well from here, and the Cairngorm, which miles away they rise beyond all the billows of brown mountain—miles of huge rounded eminences almost covered with snow; lying there vast and silent under a deep blue sky.

Leaving my rucksack at the cairn, I took my gun and walked to the eastern edge of the plateau, down into the famous corrie of Caenlochan. "The precipices, between 2,000 and 3,000 feet high

several miles on either side of a glen so oppressively narrow that it is quite possible to throw a stone from one side to the other. Dark clouds, like the shadows of old mountains passed away, continually float hither and thither in the vacant air, or become entangled in the rocks, increasing the gloom and mysterious awfulness of the gulf, from which the mingled sounds of many torrents, coursing far below, rise up at intervals like the groans of tortured spirits. A forest of dwarfed and stunted larches, planted as a cover for the deer, scrambles up the side of the precipices, for a short distance, their ranks sadly thinned by the numerous landslips and avalanches from the heights above." Such is Caenlochan, as described by the Rev. Hugh Macmillan in his charming book, "Holidays on High Lands." And such was Caenlochan as I saw it—the sunbeams vainly striving to penetrate to its depths; the snow-wreaths poised and ready to fall from the summits of its cliffs; the shrill scream of a falcon accentuating the hoarse murmur of its waters.

Regaining my rucksack, I descended through a heavy snowdrift on the north-west face of the hill; crossed the depression to the shingly slopes of Cairn na Glasha; and meeting one of those beautiful mountain streams there, I followed it down to Glen Clunie, and so to Braemar, where I arrived about six o'clock.

It had been my intention from Braemar to make an extended cast among the Lochnagar summits and drop down into Glen Clova; but the morning after my arrival dawned upon a wild storm of mist and rain and wind. The Lochnagar country is far from delightful in such weather, with strong probabilities of getting lost in it; so I gave up the idea—which, however, was carried out with Munro eight months afterwards—and framed an alternative to cross the Benchinnin range from below Ballater. The Braemar Hotel was empty—the tourist season had not commenced—and as the hotel barometer had been sent to Aberdeen to be mended, there was no hope of improving the weather by thumping it! So in the afternoon I turned out, and walked down to the wells of Pananich, a couple of miles beyond Ballater, where there is a nice hotel, and well-appointed mineral baths.



The sun next morning poured such a flood of light into my room that he turned me out of bed at six o'clock, and about an hour afterwards I was footing it towards Aboyne. Not for far, however, for in a mile I left the road, struck southwards into the deer ground, and over bogs and ridges shaped a course for the Tanner Water.

After clearing the crofts and cultivation of Pollagach, I ascended diagonally along the face of a high heathery ridge, abounding with grouse and curlews. The summit line was won at about 2,000 feet, a noble view of the Tanner winding 1,000 feet below ; and the great central range of the Benchinnin Mountains, culminating in the cone of Mount Keen (the easternmost of the "three-thousand footers"), blocking the southern sky beyond.

Whoop! away down the heathery hill I sprang, and soon I passed the lonely cottage of Etnach, and quenched my thirst in the cold waters of the Tanner. A road had recently been made up the glen to a shooting lodge beyond the foot of Mount Keen, supplanting, so far, the bridle track that still crosses the shoulder of the mountain, and forms an old right of way between Forfarshire and Aberdeenshire.

Crossing the stream, I rose a few hundred feet on the brae, and then sat down to luncheon. A draught of cold spring water and whisky completed the meal ; then I lit my pipe, and lying back on the heather spent one of those glorious half-hours that are only known on the hills. Some big boulders broke the wind, and allowed only a playful puff now and then to creep round and play with the tobacco smoke. The sun lay warm on my calves and big boots ; the murmur of the river came up from the glen, and mingled with the nearer sounds—the joyful *kok-kok-kok* of the merry brown grouse, the wail of the curlews, the hum of a few bees that had thus early ventured to the heather for honey. High overhead volumes of snowy cloud pursued their stately course across the blue ; the grand old hills, brown with shaggy heath, and grey with shingle, were all around ; the wild glen lay below, growing greener and more fertile looking as it opened north-eastwards, where were hotels, and villages, and railways,

and bustle foreign to the spirit of the mountains. All too short seemed the rest. The trusty pipe went back to the pocket; the shoulder straps once again asserted themselves; and once more the breath came shorter and faster as thew and sinew went to work, and lifted you, yard by yard, up this stey brown brae that rose so starkly in front.

To shorten a long story, in time I reached the top of the pass. Not that there was a pass; the rough track merely ceased ascending, rolled over the shoulder of the hill, and pitched down the farther side. Turning to the left, I took to the ling and heather, and for about 600 feet more climbed the hillside till I came to the huge cairn of stones on the summit.

Mount Keen rises to a height of 3,077 feet, and the chief features in the view are the central part of the valley of the Dee—the country due north of it—the snowy Cairngorms on the one hand, and the eastern precipices of Lochnagar on the other. For the rest there is that tumultuous assemblage of mountains—

“A countless herd of hills  
Tossing their shining muzzles in the sun.”

When I left the cairn I was in Forfarshire. The *march* of the two counties follows the ridge. For a long way down the descent was very gradual, and through the cold atmosphere I sped along at a sharp trot. Arrived at the top of the Ladder Burn, more caution became necessary; but I soon traversed the steep shingly path, and dropped down into the quiet green pastures of Glen Mark. In a meadow close to the keeper's cottage is the well where the Queen and Prince Consort lunched in September 1861, on the occasion of their crossing from Deeside by the Mount Keen track. The water is enclosed in a stone basin, surmounted by granite arches. Some deer were drinking at the stream two or three hundred yards below the spot; and straight overhead, in the south, rose giant Craig Braestock, rugged and inaccessible enough to harbour in security the fox and the raven.

A couple of miles down the glen I struck the foot of

Loch Lee, with Invermark Lodge and the ruins of bluff old Invermark Castle guarding the strath. I found a good road now, and by the side of the hurrying Esk—the joint progeny of the rivers Lee and Mark—I followed it for nearly four miles to Tarfside. It is a bonnie little village by the side of a great Highland burn that brings its bright brown waters roaring down from the northern hills to mingle with the Esk. Churches muster strongly here—there are three—and there is also one of those funny little merchant's shops, where you can buy anything from ginger beer to gunpowder, from tin tacks to taraxacum. It was the first of these commodities I invested in (*faute de mieux!*)—"dropsical, enervating, and unmanly beverage" though stout deerstalking old Scrope calls it; and then I strode away, a dozen miles to Edzell.

Sometimes high on the flank of grassy or heathery hills, with the Esk roaring far below; sometimes low down in thick copsewood or flower-scented meadows, with the river flowing calm, glassy, peaceful. Many a homely cottage peeped at me from its bower of roses and honeysuckle; many a bank of broom in glorious golden glory lit up the brown hillsides; rabbits gambolled across the road, and birds poured their melody in the thickets. All around, the huge hills rose up into the steel blue sky—green, brown, grey, and purple; and more than once—looking back—I caught sight of the hoary top of Mount Keen—far away now.

Late in the evening, when the sun rested on the western hills, and the cattle went lowing homewards, I got to Gannochy; and leaving the dusty road I went down into the woods. The bonnie woods of Gannochy! How soft the breeze of eventide rustled through the foliage that hung above the dark waters of Esk; how warm the rays of sunset lay along the wooded knolls and the tall crags. And in keeping with such surroundings the river swam calm, dark, sullen, under the grey rocks. Not for long, though. A white rapid was the first sign of revolution; but soon the stream plunged headlong into a chasm; and the spray cloud rose, and the prisoned waters chafed and thundered. Then for some distance dark pool succeeded pool, cascade

overleaped cascade, and cataract shouted back to cataract. But the climax was to come. Where the gorge was cut through a conglomerate of red sandstone a narrow bridge spanned it, and beneath you the white-crested waves of amber leaped along the rocky walls—flinging their spray up amid the ferns and the wild flowers, roaring in impotent rage at the foot of the crags—and, broken and subdued, creeping back again in the golden eddies and shallows, to toil with air bubbles and floating wreckage, and for a few moments to live over again the calm joys of their childhood far away back amid the grim old hills. All too soon this fairy glen came to an end; the path emerged from the dense beechwoods, and in another mile the road brought me into the village of Edzell. . . .

In a recent number of the *Journal* our worthy ex-President inveighs against “articles of the mountain timetable kind, with their catalogues of miles, and feet, and minutes, and endless dissection of the unhappy points of the compass.” Well, *I* think these serve a purpose of their own—they are the sacred books of the inner circle of our worthy friends the Ultramontanes. I have striven not to imitate them; I have posed as a Salvationist; but I doubt not, Mr Editor, you are of opinion that my solo on the big Salvationist drum has been quite unduly protracted.  
*Vale!*

THE CLIMBER'S GUIDE TO THE PRONUNCIATION  
OF THE GAELIC TONGUE.

OH, a terrible tongue is the tongue of the Gael,  
And the names of his mountains make Southrons turn pale :  
It's ill to pronounce them, to spell them is worse,  
And they're not very easy to hitch into verse.

A mountain's a mountain in England, but when  
The climber's in Scotland, it may be a *Beinn*,  
A *Creag* or a *Meall*, a *Spidean*, a *Sgòr*,  
A *Carn* or a *Monadh*, a *Stac*, or a *Torr*.

For he goes up Beinn Dothaidh  
In the ice and the snothaidh,  
And nothing will staim  
From climbing Sgòr Mhaim ;  
If he's long in the leagaidh  
May tackle Creag Meagaidh,  
Or, job that is hardhoire,  
The " posts " of Corr' Ard Dhoire.  
He strolls up Beinn Eighè  
By the easiest weighe  
If he's wise—but Sgurr Dubh,  
Will make him look blubh.  
Very grand is the vuidhe  
Will get from Meall Buidhe,  
But more will he sithe  
From Bruach na Frithe.  
Then for sport that is raoghal  
He hies to Beinn Laoghal,  
And surely will straidheimh  
'To ascend Beinn a' Chlaidheimh,  
And gaze from afarr  
On Beinn Airidh a' Charr.  
To get up Stob Gabhar  
Takes more than an abhar,  
But considerably leas  
The ascent of Carn Eas.  
Now one cannot conciol  
That the slopes of Beinn Sgriol  
Are hardly as sheur  
As the crags of Carn Bheur,  
Nor can one mainteadhoin  
That the view from Beinn Meadhoin  
Surpasses the vaoigh  
Observes from Beinn Laoigh.

And besides the above there are dozens which I'm  
Unable at present to put into rhyme ;  
Whilst most of these hills, it's no libel to say,  
Are easier climbed than pronounced, any day !

L. W. H.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in Glasgow on Wednesday, 2nd December 1896, when Joseph Collier, George Duncan, William Garden, George Bennett Gibbs, David Hepburn, H. G. S. Lawson, R. G. Napier, Harold Raeburn, A. W. Russell, A. J. Shepherd, W. Cecil Slingsby, M. W. Travers, H. G. Walker, were balloted for and elected members of the Club.

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Central Hotel, Edinburgh, on Friday, the 11th December 1896, at six o'clock. The President, Mr H. T. Munro, was in the chair.

The Honorary Treasurer submitted his accounts for 1896, showing that the income amounted to £122. 9s., and the expenditure to £88. 12s. 7d., leaving a balance to the credit of the Club of £99. 19s. 5d., as compared with £66. 3s. at the corresponding date last year, and they were unanimously adopted.

To fill the vacancies in the list of Office-bearers the following have been elected:—*Secretary*, Mr Gilbert Thomson; *Members of Committee*, Mr William C. Smith and Mr A. E. Maylard. The remaining Office-bearers were re-elected.

After a brief discussion, it was unanimously agreed that Rules XV. and XVI., regarding the election of new members, be altered to read thus:—

RULE XV.—“Every candidate for admission to the Club must forward to the Secretary (*on a special form to be obtained from him*), at least one month before the Annual General Meeting in December, or any other General Meeting, a list of his Scottish and other ascents, stating the month and year in which each ascent was made, or a statement of his contributions to science, art, or literature, in connection with Scottish mountains. Such a list or statement must be signed by the candidate, and by two members of the Club, acting as proposer and seconder.”

*(Members of the Alpine Club are eligible for election without further qualification, and gentlemen who have made ascents or given valuable contributions as above, elsewhere than in Scotland, may be recommended for election at the discretion of the Committee.)*

RULE XVI.—“If in the opinion of the Committee the qualifications be deemed sufficient, the name, designation, and address of the candidate, along with the names of his proposer and seconder, shall be

sent by post to each member at least one week before the closing of the ballot, together with a voting paper on which shall be printed the names of all candidates for election. Any member desiring to vote must seal up his voting paper and send it, accompanied by his name written on a separate piece of paper, to the Secretary in such time as to reach him before the closing of the ballot. In voting, a member shall strike out from the voting paper the name of any candidate against whom he desires to vote. He shall leave uncanceled the name of any candidate for whom he desires to vote. He shall write the words 'no vote' against the name of any candidate for or against whom he does not desire that his vote should be recorded. Two members appointed at the previous meeting of Committee shall together count the votes at the closing of the ballot, and the Secretary shall declare the names of the successful candidates at the next General Meeting.

"Not less than eight votes must be recorded for the election of any candidate, and one adverse vote in eight shall reject for one year."

The following places were selected for Club Meets:—

New Year—Loch Awe.

Easter—(1st) The S.W. Coolins, &c., to be reached by steam yacht, and (2nd) Tyndrum.

The Honorary Editor stated that the Journal had appeared three times during the year, and that, owing to increased sales, it had only cost the Club some £35. He pointed out that nineteen members had contributed papers, notes, and reviews during the year, and that the Club was indebted to Sir Archibald Geikie, Professors Ramsay and Prothero, Messrs Bell, Boyd, Brown, Fraser, Fraser-Campbell, Hinxman, Jackson, Maclay, Munro, Naismith, Rennie, W. A. Smith, Swan, Thomson, and Tough for doing so.

The Honorary Librarian reported that the use of the Library among the members was increasing, and that during the last year there had been a considerable demand for the use of the lantern slides. Since last report "Hours of Exercise in the Alps" had been presented by Mr Solly, "Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers" and "The High Alps in Winter" by Mr Maclay, and the continuation of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* by Mr Rennie. The *Alpine Journal* is regularly received as an exchange, and Mr Weston recently gave to the Club the last five numbers of Vol. 14 (102 to 106).

The Honorary Secretary stated that in the course of the year the Club had lost only one member, and that

through resignation. The present membership of the Club, including the thirteen elected at the Special Meeting on 2nd December, was one hundred and thirty-nine.

After a hearty vote of thanks to the Office-bearers, and to Mr Thomson for the continued use of a room in his office for Club purposes, the business of the meeting was concluded.

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL DINNER was held in the Central Hotel at the close of the General Meeting. The President, Mr H. T. Munro, occupied the chair, and Messrs Thomson and Rennie acted as croupiers. There were fifty-one members and guests present. The toasts were:—

- THE QUEEN - - - - - PRESIDENT.  
 Navy, Army, and Reserve Forces - - - PRESIDENT.  
*Reply, Colonel WAVELL.*
- The Scottish Mountaineering Club - PRESIDENT.  
 The Highland Hills - - - Prof. G. G. RAMSAY.  
*Reply, Prof. FORSTER-HEDDLE.*
- The Alpine Club - - - - - W. TOUGH.  
*Reply, Prof. G. W. PROTHERO.*
- Hill-Walkers and Mountain-Climbers - W. BROWN.  
*Replies, { Sheriff W. C. SMITH.*  
                   { W. W. NAISMITH.
- The Guests - - - - - C. E. W. MACPHERSON.  
*Reply, R. T. YOUNGER.*

A special feature of the Dinner was the presentation to Mr Maylard, the retiring Secretary, of a handsome writing-table set, consisting of double silver inkstand, pair of silver candlesticks, silver-mounted ivory paper-cutter, and silver-mounted gum-pot. The inkstand bore the inscription—“Presented to A. Ernest Maylard by friends in the Scottish Mountaineering Club in recognition of his invaluable services at the formation of the Club and during the past eight years, 11th December 1896.”

The following forenoon a large party were on Arthur Seat and the Salisbury Crags, the “steady guides” being Messrs Raeburn and Brown; and in the afternoon the Editor gave an acetylene-gas lantern demonstration, showing a number of mountain-views taken by himself and others.



## EXCURSIONS.

---

*The Editor will be glad to receive brief notices of any noteworthy expeditions. These are not meant to supersede longer articles, but many members who may not care to undertake the one will have no difficulty in imparting information in the other form.*

THE S.M.C. ABROAD IN 1896.—In the Alps the season of 1896 will long be remembered as among the wettest and worst within the memory of the oldest climbers. During nearly the whole month of August, and well into September, fresh snow fell among the high peaks almost daily. As might be expected, this state of matters greatly interfered with climbing records, a large part of the climber's time being occupied in going up to huts and coming down again. Only one or two ascents are recorded of the Matterhorn, which in ordinary seasons is climbed thirty or forty times, and the Gabelhorn and Dent Blanche are said not to have been climbed at all.

Messrs Charles Pilkington, W. Cecil Slingsby, G. Solly, and Horace Walker spent six weeks in Switzerland, and being out early, managed, in spite of the weather, to make several good expeditions, all of them guideless. These were the Glarnisch; the Galenstock; the Jungfrau; Mönch; first ascent of the Central Fusshorn from the Bel Alp; col and peak of Mont Fort; a traverse of Mont Blanc from the Dôme Glacier to Chamouni.

Mr Walter Brunskill snatched the following ascents out of a stormy fortnight at Zermatt:—Monte Rosa by the rocks; the Wellenkuppe; and the Riffelhorn by the "Matterhorn Couloir."

Mr E. A. Crowley, among minor ascents, made a traverse of the Trifhorn, with descent of N.W. face (not given in Conway, and may be new—with a companion); the Aiguille de la Za (alone); the Vuibez séracs—an ice-fall which has probably not been passed before without taking to the rocks; Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla traversed (climbing every gendarme on south peak—party benighted on ridge). All guideless.

Mr J. W. Drummond spent some time at Arolla, where he did several of the well-known climbs. He subsequently crossed the Col d'Hérens, but found the weather at Zermatt impossible for mountaineering.

Mr W. Wickham King visited Tyrol, and ascended the Grosse Zinne, Kleine Zinne, Croda da Lago, Saas Maor (traversed), Cima di Bocche, Winkler Thurme, Rosengarten Spitze, and Innerkofel; crossed

the Passes of Cristallo, Ambriciola, Camelle, Rosetta, Jiuribretto, Val-fredda, and Lousa. He also made the ascent from the Langkofel hut up the ice couloir to the col between the Zahnkofel and Innerkofel.

Professor Kennedy was at Pralognan for a week, and climbed the Grande Casse in a thick mist. He then went to Courmayeur, and crossed the Col du Géant to the Montanvert, where he stayed three weeks. The weather was pleasant enough for walks and photography, but fresh snow every second or third day made high climbing impracticable.

CLIMBS IN NORWAY. — The past season witnessed quite an onslaught upon Norway by members of the S.M.C., no less than eight members having taken part in the attack. The Horungtinder bore the brunt, but other districts were not neglected. The Horungtinder, it may be explained, are a fine group of black gabbro mountains from 6,000 to 7,900 feet high, with sharp peaks and ridges, resembling the Coolins on a larger scale, and give capital rock climbing with a fair share of ice work. The weather was in striking contrast to that experienced in Switzerland, there being few days that were not fine.\*

Mr Howard Priestman with Mr F. N. Ellis, and with Thorger Sulheim and Knut Fortun as guides, in June and July ascended the Eastern Riienstind, Eastern Maradalstind, and Store Skagastölstind, and crossed the Ravenskar, Gravdalskar, Vikingskar (believed to be for the first time), the Rienskar, and the Maradalskar.

Mr C. W. Patchell and Mr H. C. Bowen spent some five weeks in Norway. They made the following expeditions with Johannes Vigdal of Solvorn:—(a.) In the Horunger: Middle Riienstind (second ascent by east face), Soleitind, Mellemste, Vesle, and Store Skagastölstinder, with the complete (new) traverse of the *arête*. (b.) In the Jostedalsbrae: from Nysaeter to Brigsdal over the Austerdalsbrae, and an unsuccessful attempt to force the S.E. *arête* of Lodalskaupe. After parting with Vigdal they climbed alone. (c.) In Söndmör, Slogen, Smörskredtind, Skruen, the great needle on the east *arête* of Jagta (new), and the Gjeithorn. (d.) In the Romsdal: the Horn, Mjöltnir (by a new route), and the highest Vengetind; an attempt on the highest Troltdind in September was a failure, owing to lack of time and the presence of much ice in the couloir. (e.) In the Eikisdal: the Gjuratind, and the whole *arête* of Aagottind from Vikesaeter (new).

Dr T. K. Rose and Mr Moss, with Mrs Rose, ascended the Uranaastind and Langeskavl from Eidsburgarden with a guide, and afterwards without guide ascended the Graasiden and made the first ascent of the Uranaastind by the fine south *arête*. Next from Skogadalsboen Dr Rose and Mr Moss, in company with Mr Squance and Mr Maclay, and with Knut Fortun as guide, ascended the Gjertvastind and made the second crossing thence (believed at the

\* As Norsk terms are not universally understood, it may be explained that "tind" is the usual name for a peak, "skar" is equivalent to col, "brae" means glacier, "dal" means valley, and "store" means great.

time to be new) to the Store Styggedalstind, and thence to the Centraltind, returning the same way. Afterwards Dr Rose and Mr Moss, with Fortun as guide, ascended the Austabottind from Turtegro, and later the same party, with Mrs Rose and Mr F. W. Jackson—(1) ascended the Store Skagastölstind (for the first time in new snow); (2) ascended the Soleitind by the Lövnaasi, doing the whole ridge, and thence, skirting the Riiienstind by the Bersdalsbrae to the ridge above the Gravidalsbrae, had a steep rock climb by a small cascade to the ridge of the Store Riiienstind, and so to the summit, descending by the ordinary route — a very fine expedition and partly new.

Mr Squance and Mr Maclay, after a preliminary ascent of Tufsen with Mr Alfred Priestman and Misses Ethel and Ida Priestman, and Thorgeir Sulheim as guide, made the ascent of the Store Riiienstind from Turtegro with the same party and Knut Fortun in addition. They next with Fortun alone ascended the Store Skagastölstind, and the following day crossed to Skogadalsboen by the Styggedalsbrae and Gjertvasbrae. After the expedition in company with Dr Rose and Mr Moss mentioned above, they with a porter alone ascended the Uranaastind by a variation of the ordinary route, and descended the south ridge ascended by Dr Rose and Mr Moss, and thence descended by a new route to the Uradal. Subsequently Mr Maclay with a porter ascended the Maradalstind, making a new descent to the Maradalsbrae, and wound up his season by an ascent of the Austabottind, crossing the range from Farnaes to Fortun in course of this expedition.

---

BEN NEVIS IN NOVEMBER.—Lured by the mountain magnetism of the monarch of Bens, W. Brown, G. Duncan, and H. Raeburn combined on 7th November in an expedition to distant Fort William to attempt the ascent of the N.E. precipices of Ben Nevis by way of the Carn Dearg Buttress.

This buttress has been climbed in summer by avoiding the very steep lower portion and gaining the ridge above by means of a grass ledge running across from the left (see *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. III., p. 345), but Brown, who had reconnoitered the route, was of the opinion that the direct climb was possible.

However, the conditions under which we found the hill precluded even the least attempt to solve the problem, the conquest of which therefore remains for some future chronicler to record. We consider, however, that we have solved one problem of no slight interest to N.E. precipice climbers, among whom a singular unanimity prevails in anathematising the steep grass-slopes of Meall an t-Suidhe.

Instead of facing these, or skirting them to the left, we took the pony track up the Ben till just below the halfway house. Crossing the hill at a good height above Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe, we did not have to descend into the glen of the Allt-a-Mhuillinn more than a

couple of hundred feet, and reached the foot of the Castle Ridge in less time and with much less exertion than if we had breasted the grass-slopes.

Snow was first met with at about 1,800 feet, and was hard and in excellent condition. Descending into the rocky glen of the All-a-Mhuillinn, very curious behaviour on the part of our usually trustworthy hobnailers first drew our attention to the state of the rocks on the N.E. side of the mountain, and we found that, though to the eye they appeared all right, they were in reality completely coated with a thin transparent film of hard ice, the "Verglas" of Swiss mountaineers. Under these conditions the easiest of rock-climbs became very difficult, and the ascent of any of the four great ridges utterly impossible. We were therefore reduced to the somewhat tame alternative of cutting our way out of Coire na Ciste up one of the snow gullies.

The day, though dull with a chill N.E. breeze, was not a bad one, and the mist, though sometimes descending as low as 3,000 feet, often lifted high enough to enable us to get fine views of the precipices from the towering battlements of the castle—round which were circling a pair of golden eagles—to the steep giant profile of the N.E. buttress.

From below the Castle Ridge we skirted round the foot of the Carn Dearg Buttress. This buttress is split by a rock gully that appears to offer the best route to the summit. Unfortunately, however, the lowermost 30 feet or so of the gully is wanting, the drainage in summer pouring off in a waterfall over a sheer wall of rock. Now, this was a mass of huge ribs and stalactites of ice twisted into all kinds of curious forms, but not stable enough to allow of steps being cut in them. The climb might be rendered possible if a heavy N.E. gale were to pile a mass of snow against the foot of the buttress, but otherwise the route appears hardly feasible.

The snow in Coire na Ciste was very hard, and we made good progress up the steepening slope to the foot of gully No. 3. Shortly after entering this and the mist at the same time, the snow became too hard for the boots to make any impression, so we roped up, Brown leading, and started cutting.

The writer being last man had now plenty of time to admire the scenery which, circumscribed as it was, presented scenes of fairylike loveliness. The towering rock-walls that soared up on either hand, black in their natural nakedness, were now draped all over in a lace mantle sewn with millions of jewels—fog-crystals in fact—overlapping each other plate above plate and feather upon feather, so that not a trace of the stone was visible.

The size of these masses of opaque ice was astonishing. On the ridges of the rocks several pieces I broke off measured almost a foot from the point of attachment to the rock to the latest born of their outermost feathery crystals. They all pointed in the same direction—downwards at the same angle as the gully.

Their formation is probably explained by the weather conditions prevailing for several days at the time of our visit, the N. and N.E. winds gathering the mists in Coire na Ciste, and pouring them in a constant stream over the edges of the cliffs and up the funnels formed by the gullies, while rising as they did from warmer regions lower down to strike the surface of the rocks chilled to 20° F., they deposited their moisture in the form of these exquisite fog-crystals.

Emerging at length from the gully on the crisp snowfields of the upper part of Nevis, we were not long in gaining the Observatory, where we learnt we were the first visitors since the beginning of October. After staying in the Observatory some time, and enjoying a hospitable cup of the hot coffee of happy memories to two at least of our party, we were favoured on coming out again by the mist suddenly breaking up and rolling off, revealing bit by bit the whole face of the mountain and surrounding sea of snowy summits, a most grand and impressive panorama.

Some suggestions had been made that we should return to Fort William *via* the Observatory gully, so accordingly we stopped at the mouth of that rather gruesome-looking spot and sent Brown in advance. First, however, we put him under the restraining influence of a 60-foot Alpine hitched round a couple of firmly-driven-in ice-axes. These precautions were not unnecessary, for otherwise the stern commands of the law of gravity, in conjunction with a slope of 80° or so on icy snow, acting on a man of so law-abiding a disposition as Brown, would probably have induced him to leave us *en route* for the bottom of the gully in record time. After allowing him to descend about 50 feet we therefore, by means of the gentle attraction of the Alpine, persuaded him to return to *nix firma*, and resolved not to dock the next dividends of the Insurance Companies.

This Observatory gully, left hand branch, is the only one that was left unclimbed at the close of the Easter Meet of 1896, and it certainly appears hopeless from above. Only if filled by a vast fall of snow would there be a chance of its "going."

About 4 P.M., while we were descending the snow slopes of Carn Dearg, the sun, which had been hidden all day, suddenly appeared in a narrow clear strip between the dense mass of black clouds and the horizon, staining the western hills and seas with a blood-red colour, while far away to the N. and N.E. the sky assumed a most ghastly, livid corpse-like hue, below which the icy mountain summits shone with a startling whiteness.

It was in truth a strange and eerie effect, which, despite the sharp wind, we lingered to gaze upon as it slowly faded before the creeping shadows of the dusk closing in from the eastwards.

HAROLD RAEURN.

---

CIR MHOR, ARRAN.—On 29th November, R. G. Napier, P. Hillhouse, and J. H. Bell spent some hours on Cir Mhor. They reached the Upper Shelf (see Journal, Vol. III., p. 213) by the rib of rock just on the left (south) side of Maclay's chimney. They then followed the shelf till past the precipitous bluff which ends the pinnacle ridge—that is nearly as far as the X in the sketch, p. 213, Vol. III. From there they struck upwards, by a series of chimneys and strange corridors in the rock, in a direction pointing slightly to the left of the summit. This route led up to the platform about 50 feet below the summit, and the climb was finished by the "Groove" (Vol. III., p. 347). The mountain was entirely clear of snow, and for the time of year the rocks were fairly dry—still Cir Mhor maintained its character as a particularly dirty and clothes-destroying mountain.

J. H. BELL.

STOB A CHOIN, BALQUHIDDER.—Last New Year's morning, when crossing Cruach Ardran from Crianlarich, my companions and I were struck by the rugged appearance of Stob a Choin, on the south side of the valley, and as I happened to be staying at Strathyre in August, I took the opportunity to climb it then. Following the road past Lochs Voil and Doine, I left it about a mile past Inver Lochlarig, and skirting the foot of the hill till I reached the burn coming down the face of Stob a Choin, I followed it up to near its source, and then struck off to the right for the top. I came back by practically the same way, the time on the hill being slightly over two hours. Instead of returning by Balquhiddier, one could reach the Trossachs by keeping down the south side of Stob a Choin, and along the path by Loch Katrine. The top of the hill consists of a hard rock, while the whole north face is broken up by small crags of rather loose rock and grass, which can be either climbed or avoided as one feels inclined. A bicycle would be an advantage in this climb—the twenty-four miles or so of road begin to pall on one before the day is done.

ALEX. FRASER.

CREAG MACRANAICH, BALQUHIDDER.—During a short holiday in September spent with my brother at King's House, Balquhiddier, we directed some attention to the Creag MacRanaich group. The route taken was by the railway line for a mile or two, and then up Gleann Ceann Droma. There is a good path on the east side of the burn, running well up into the corrie. From its most southern point the hill rises for close on 900 feet, and affords some good rock face climbs. Farther east it appeared to ascend more in the form of ridges. Traversing the summit, about two and a quarter hours from King's House, we passed three cairns—the central probably the highest, and though not given on the 6-inch map, the height must be nearly 2,700 feet. Another day the ascent was made by the steep grass slope of Meall an t-Seallaidh, 2,794 feet. We noticed some slight cliffs towards Gleann Ceann Droma, but the mist prevented us seeing their real

extent. This route takes about half an hour longer than the other, and necessitates a considerable descent ere reaching the west face of the Creag. The ascent of Stuc a Chroin was made another day by way of Coire Chroisg, which we found to consist chiefly of a steep grass and rock slope, with little real climbing.     ARTHUR W. RUSSELL.

---

**THE COBBLER.**—A party consisting of W. Tough and the writer visited this weird and fascinating hill on 31st October, and was supremely favoured by the weather, mist being entirely absent the whole day. The views in consequence were wide and varied, embracing innumerable snowy peaks, glittering lochs, and dark green valleys, and when the sun began to sink behind the mountains of Jura, the whole sky, with the piled masses of cumulus clouds, was flooded with the most glorious colouring. Especially fine was the backward view through the pass between Arthur and Narnain, the inky-black pinnacles of the Cobbler standing up sharp and jagged against the green and gold sky, and the peak of Ben Ime filling up the background, its snows shining rosy pink in the afterglow. In the morning Ben Lomond was well seen, and looked an immense height, quite as high, in Tough's opinion, as many a 7,000 feet peak in the Alps.

We began our climb on the north peak at its foot, directly below the northmost of the two great beaks that form such striking features of the hill. A wide grassy gully here opens out the face of the mountain. A short distance up this branches, the left route going into a large cave fantastically ornamented with huge icicles. The cave was first explored, two stories of its interior being ascended by crawling over jammed blocks, but the roof could not be gained owing to its overhanging badly, and not possessing a skylight. The right-hand route continues up easy grass, with rock pitches at intervals, for about eighty feet, but then diminishes to a crack, which Tough and I, not being mountaineering book illustrations, declined to attempt. An apparent way out of the difficulty is offered by a grassy ledge that runs across the face to the right, but after following this for some distance, we found it came to an abrupt end on the face of the cliff on the left-hand wall of the very straight gully or chimney that may be noticed running up the peak immediately to the right of the northmost beak. It appeared possible to gain this gully by ascending the rock face, but we allowed it to stop us, and retraced our steps to the bottom.

We then ascended the peak by the gully discovered by Messrs Naismith and M'Gregor on 27th September. This runs directly up between the two beaks. An effort was made to straighten that climb by the ascent of the forty-foot chimney at the top, but the last fifteen feet proved too much for us, and, under the conditions, was clearly impossible, a snow cornice several feet thick overhanging its outlet. We therefore escaped to the right by a most convenient grass ledge, and gained the summit by a steep fifteen-foot rock wall.

Thereafter we took several photos, amused ourselves on the summit rocks, and finally crossed the south peak by the usual route, time not permitting of the more sporting variation to the left being taken, and a strong wind that had arisen blowing the snow off the ridges in a somewhat blinding fashion. The snow-line lay at about 2,000 feet, and we found our ice-axes useful on the grassy southern peak.

HAROLD RÆBURN.

---

#### NOTES FROM THE FAR NORTH.

[*To the Editor of the S.M.C. Journal.*]

SIR,—Perhaps you remember that I advised climbers who come to Tongue, to try the ridge route of Ben Laoghal—I had not done it myself at that time, but it looked interesting—so this year I followed my own advice and took the ridge from north to south as far as the head of the great corrie, Coire Choille na Cùile, where I struck to the ridge which ends in Sgòr a Chleirich, thence descending into the corrie, and so home.

In climbing the northern peak of Laoghal there are some very fantastic pinnacles of rock which stood out finely on the sky-line as I took the easier slope of the ridge.

On the summit of the most northerly of the many craggy tops which together form Sgòr a Chonais Aite, there is an opportunity for those of the brethren who love steep things to hang from a sharp edge of rock by their eyebrows or heels, or in whatever other fashion they choose, over an almost vertical precipice of 700 feet. I was content to lie on my stomach and peep over. The scramble up and over the other little tops was all the more interesting as clouds had begun to drift over the hill from the west. The ridge dips some 300 feet between Sgòr a Chonais Aite and An Caisteal (the Castle), which is the highest peak (2,504 feet), and the last bit up the walls of the mountain fortress is fairly perpendicular, and, like the descent on the other side, would be somewhat difficult if it were not for the broad crevices which intersect the rocky walls. A broad ridge with a slight peak at the head of the corrie runs round to the southern end, where there are two peaks joined by a narrow ridge. There is a marvellous and (to me) an awe-inspiring precipice between the first of these peaks and the detached and nameless hill beyond Loch an t' Sionnach, and here I managed to crawl to the edge and balance my pocket-camera pointed downward to the rippling waters of the loch a thousand feet below, while I exposed a plate. The clouds had now lowered so that the driving mist covered everything, and I sheltered behind a rock, waiting until I could see the way to the last ridge. Occasionally there was a glimpse of the sunlit landscape below, and of the rolling surge of cloud in the great corrie: then the last peak, Sgòr na Chleirich, loomed up out of the clouds, and I made a dash for it, just managing to reach the top when the mist again fell, so I had



perform to make myself comfortable between two great boulders for about an hour, waiting for a chance to descend in safety, as the mist was so dense that I could not see a couple of yards ahead. My patience was rewarded by a sudden sunburst which showed that the level-bottomed sea of cloud had lifted; the mist, however, still rolled in the corrie as though loth to leave its shelter, and I made for the ridge whence the best descent could be made. The sun now shone almost on the horizon, and I noticed the clear shadow of the ridge that was cast on the white mist beyond. Suddenly I stopped, amazed and delighted at the sight that was before me! On the edge of the shadowy ridge was a spectral figure in a kilt, surrounded by a circular rainbow of vivid colours.

I walked—it walked; I held up my stick—it did the same! I said to myself—that is, to the spectral figure—“I know you: you are my ‘Brocken Spectre!’” I got out my camera as quickly as possible, watching the spectre do the same, and had the joy of seeing three other little rainbows join the big circular one at the top and sides symmetrically. Alas, when I was ready to take the photograph, and about to ask myself to “keep quite steady, please,” the colours had already faded somewhat, and being obliged to put the camera on a rock and stoop to remove the cap, the spectre unfortunately followed my example, so that the resulting photograph was not nearly so good as it would have been if I had had an instantaneous shutter on the camera, and thereby been able to take a snap-shot at the erect figure. A few seconds after the photograph was taken, the spectre disappeared, so I made my way down the steep side into the corrie, across the half-dried bed of Lochan ‘a Choire, and down the jagged rocks by the side of which the stream tumbles in a series of cascades. Unlike the lonely day’s scramble I have just described, in which I had no companion save my spectre, I had the pleasure of companionship in my second ascent of Ben Dòchas (Ben Hope).

Once more I was destined to bestride a horse for the first part of the road to the foot of the hill; however, my studies in synchronous vibrations had so far been successful that I found my theories work in practice, and actually enjoyed the ride.

Leaving my host and my sister fishing on the loch below, our climbing party consisted of four—Mr Fred Box (son of the Duke of Sutherland’s factor at Tongue), two of Mr Lawson’s head stalkers (John Murray and Duncan Fraser), and myself.

It should be noted that no one ought to climb Ben Hope without first getting permission from the shooting tenant at Kinloch, or in his absence from one of the head stalkers, as the Sanctuary of the Deer Forest lies on the slopes of the hill, and serious damage might be done if the deer were disturbed.

Starting from Loch na Seilg (the hunting loch), we made straight for the small nameless lochan which lies in the corrie half a mile to the south-west. It is interesting to notice that this lochan has *two*

outlets (though only one is marked on the 1-inch Ordnance Map); both of the issuing streams soon disappear underground, and are not seen until they join Loch na Seilg. In the corrie we took the slope to the northern side of the lochan, and made for a gap in the sky-line ahead. Having reached the ridge, which is there about 2,500 feet high, you peer down the sheer precipice on the other side into the black waters of Dubh Loch na Beinne, and across Lochs Hope and Eireboll. From this point the real climb begins. There is something fascinating in lying on the edge of such a "horrid chasm," and spying through a telescope thrust vertically through an almost detached piece of rock at the deer quietly grazing 1,600 feet below. The ridge from the gap to the top is in places sufficiently exciting to have cheered the hearts of my bolder brethren. Clouds that had threatened as we came up, now closed upon us, and on gaining the plateau which forms the summit we had some difficulty in groping our way to the cairn. The descent was made by the broad ridge to the south of the corrie, and is very easy. Only yesterday I had the pleasure of receiving a letter in Gaelic from one of the excellent Highlanders who accompanied us.

CAMERON SWAN.

---

 DEPTH OF SNOW AT BEN NEVIS, 1895-96.

1895.		Inches.	1896.		Inches.		
Nov.	1	-	0	Feb.	15	-	40
"	15	-	13	Mar.	1	-	43
Dec.	1	-	25	"	15	-	52
"	15	-	33	April	1	-	74
1896.				"	15	-	68
Jan.	1	-	35	May	1	-	71
"	15	-	34	"	15	-	34
Feb.	1	-	42				

Snow disappeared from gauge on 29th May. Maximum depth at gauge = 76 inches on 28th March 1896. W. THOMSON.

---

 "BERGHESTEIGUNG IN DEN 'COOLINS' DER INSEL SKYE."

WHAT bore a strong resemblance to a glacier photograph with the above title, exhibited in the window of a Vienna bookseller last July, compelled an immediate entrance and purchase of "Sport im Bild" for 26th June, to which the process reproduction in question formed the front-page illustration. What a thrill went to my finger tips. The great outside world was at last recognising our Scottish mountains. On opening the journal I found a column of mellifluous German setting forth the attractions of our Skye mountains with all their characters of atmosphere, mist, snow, and grand rocks. How odd our old friends looked in their Teutonic dress. Sgurr-nan-Gillean, whom

we never insult by translating into English, figures as "Jungenmänner-spitze" in the German. The spirit of the dear old sheriff looms in "Nicholson's Kamin nach der Bhasteir-Schlucht." The only Scottish guide is not forgotten, a good word being said for "John Mackenzie von Sligachans-Hotel"; and as to the scenery, we have it—as if from the pen of one of ourselves—from Loch Scavaig, "die See und die Inseln Rum und Eigg," to "der Blaven mit Seiner abgeplattennen," "der Clach-glas," and "der Bhasteir mit Seinem Pik."

W. L. H.

---

"THREE SCORE AND TEN."

*Lines by the late Mr Thomas Anderson, Banker, Hamilton.*

I SAILED o'er the lovely Loch Lomond,  
I gazed on the cloud-shrouded Ben,  
And I said, I have scaled that proud summit  
Long ago—it is no matter when—  
I was then but a stripling of twenty,  
And now I am three score and ten.

The sun shines as brightly as ever  
On the lake, on the isles, on the Ben ;  
But the sunshine of youth has passed o'er me,  
And can never return back again.  
Alas ! for the spring time of twenty !  
Alas ! for the threescore and ten !

As I sit by the brink of the waters,  
Near the foot of a beautiful glen,  
My spirit comes back fresh as ever,  
And I think I could yet climb the Ben ;  
But no, the rheumatics say, "Never,"  
And whisper, "You're three score and ten."

So here is my "Rest and be thankful,"  
For though I may not climb the Ben,  
I can feast on the exquisite landscape  
That entranced and delighted me when  
I was but a stripling of twenty,  
And charms me at threescore and ten.

And well may the old man be grateful  
To gaze on loch, mountain, and glen,  
And recall, 'mid the glories of nature,  
That freshness of feeling again,  
Which glowed in the spring-time of twenty  
Nor fades in the three score and ten.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

---

### SNOW CORNICES AND CREVASSES.

(To the Editor of the "S.M.C. Journal.")

SIR,—The ingenious theory propounded in Mr Naismith's letter in the last number, that the hollow so frequently found just below a cornice in Scottish mountains is due to the piling up of snow blown over from the summit plateau, is possibly in many instances correct. I am strongly of opinion, however, that it is in a large majority of cases a true crevasse—or more correctly *berg schrund*—for, while the crack most frequently occurs just under the cornice, it is also often found a few feet below the line where a steep snow slope abuts against a rock wall—exactly the place where a *berg schrund* would be looked for in the Alps.

On Scottish mountains a long steep snow slope very frequently extends right up to below the cornice of the summit plateau, so that if any slight downward movement of the whole mass of snow occurred at all, it is just here that a *berg schrund* might be expected.

On the other hand, I may point out that the conditions illustrated in Mr Naismith's Diagram 3 are not incompatible with the piling up theory, for when the upper snows, including the cornice, have melted away, the crack would still remain, and would, as Mr Naismith shows, be a guarantee that there was no cornice.—Yours faithfully,

H. T. MUNRO.

## MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

---

### MOUNTAINEERING AND EXPLORATION IN THE JAPANESE ALPS.

By the Rev. WALTER WESTON. London : John Murray.

AMONG the charms of mountaineering not the least is that it is many-sided. A bit of rock gymnastics, a snow grind, or a steady trudge to the top of a mountain by the tourist route, has each its attractions, and the term mountaineering is wide enough to include them all. But even in this wide sense, a man who was a mountaineer and nothing more would be disappointed with Mr Weston's book. For the reader gradually discovers that the dominant position of mountaineering in the title is due more to the author's enthusiasm than to the contents of the work. The journeyings between the base of operations and the base of the mountain account for a very large proportion of the total bulk of the volume, and those whose ideal of mountaineering literature is such a book as "My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus" are not certain to appreciate this contribution. Of mountaineering in that sense there is none. There are doubtless accounts of ascents by steep arêtes and by long snow slopes, but the sensational incidents without which a difficult ascent does not seem complete, are conspicuous by their absence. The axe and rope are only mentioned in the most casual fashion, and even then the rope is such as would bring down a storm of righteous indignation if it were produced at one of our meets. Such difficulties as were encountered seem to have been chiefly on the lower ground, such as the impenetrable brushwood, or the still more impenetrable superstition of certain remote villagers, who looked on a certain ascent as an act of desecration, to be prevented if possible. It is satisfactory to observe that native guides are so well up in mountaineering expressions :—"You have no idea of the inaccessible nature of those upper rocks, and in their present condition you are running a risk that is absolutely unjustifiable." We might be reading an account of the Crowberry Ridge or the N.E. Buttress.

But if the "mountaineering" of the title has scant justification, the "exploration" has enough and to spare, and is of exceptional interest. It is not the scamper of the globe-trotter or the personally conducted, but the exploration of a man who knew the country and its people well, and meant to know them better. Even those who have a fair

acquaintance with recent writings on Japan will learn much that is new, while the ordinary reader will find it necessary to unlearn a good deal of what he thought he knew, and to considerably modify his views as to civilisation, and the reverse. The comparisons which incidentally appear between Japanese manners and our own are not always favourable to the latter, but many of us have experience nearer home of the difference between the natural native and the native spoiled by the tourist. The same dismal transformation which we lament in the Highlands has evidently commenced in Japan.

The accounts given of Japanese customs and manners and the descriptions of Japanese scenery are both full of interest, and whether or not Yarigatake, "the Matterhorn of Japan," would be considered by our Ultramontanes as presenting sufficient difficulty, and whether or not the "matchless" Fuji would be admitted to excel Ben Nevis or Sgurr Alasdair, it is impossible to read Mr Weston's descriptions without a feeling akin to envy of his opportunities, and admiration of the use he has made of them. The Japanese mountaineering clubs, who send deputations to the top of the sacred mountain, may differ somewhat from our own, but the same germ is there, and the veneration accorded to the mountains irresistibly suggests Sheriff Nicolson's fine reference to King David.

What has been said about the text may apply equally to the illustrations. Although they are not mountaineering pictures, they are pictures of a high class, both as regards artistic merit and general interest. The whole book is a delightful one.

---

CLIMBING REMINISCENCES OF THE DOLOMITES. By Leone Sinigaglia, Soc. Club Alp. Ital. Translated by Mary Alice Vials. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

OF the many recent and important additions to mountaineering literature published in English, few, if any, will be more welcome than the translations of Signor Sinigaglia's contributions to the "Bollettino del Club Alpino Italiano." These contributions form a record chiefly of his climbs on the Dolomites of the Cortina district; but the record also includes descriptions of ascents of the three well-known peaks of the Sextenthal—the Dreischusterspitze, the Elferkofel, and the Zwölferkofel, in addition to the even better-known Kleine Zinne.

Signor Sinigaglia is a well-known member of the Italian Alpine Club, and his name became familiar to most English climbers by his description of the sad circumstances attending the death of Jean Antoine Carrel during an expedition on the Matterhorn in 1890, when the latter, along with Gorret, were acting as Signor Sinigaglia's guides.

The author refers to his book as "an unpretentious record." We would rather call it a modest, but important record, and one par-

ticularly welcome to English readers; for, as Mr Garwood, in his interesting preface, points out, the climbs of this delightful district have received much less attention at the hands of English writers than of those of other countries. We have nothing to compare with Grohmann's "Wanderung," Zsigmondy's "Im Hochgebirge," Wundt's "Wanderungen in den Ampezzaner Dolomiten," and the same writer's "Die Besteigung des Cimone della Pala." It is all the more surprising that this is so, when we remember that in the pioneer days many important first ascents were made by Englishmen—the Civetta by F. F. Tuckett, Blackstone, Howard, and Hare; the Cima di Canale, the highest of the Rosengarten group, and the Saas Maor by Tucker and others (the latter in 1875); while E. R. Whitwell made first ascents of Cimone della Pala, Piz Popena, and Croda Rossa. Ball and Bonney were among the first climbers in the district, and the former in his "Eastern Alps" certainly deals pretty fully with the district, but he was, of course, limited by the comparative dearth of mountaineering information available at that time. During the last few years climbers in this country have become alive to the charms of the Dolomites, and we confidently anticipate that many readers of this book will be added to the number.

The book itself is extremely readable, and, while the author describes with much detail and great accuracy the various points of the many climbs included, the record never becomes dry or tedious, nor do these details prevent his giving natural and pleasant expression to his impressions, produced by the delightful scenery by which the climber is ever surrounded in this wonderful district.

Of the Drei Zinnen, as seen from the hut on the Toblinger Riedel, he says: "Here indeed we are confronted by the indescribable. These colossal fortresses of rock, so bold, and so symmetrically placed by the side of one another, tower majestically to the sky like sentinels on guard, showing from this side—especially the two greater peaks—walls exceedingly precipitous, and almost smooth. These three gigantic rocky obelisks, remarkably original examples of the most fantastic Alpine architecture, leave an impression that defies analysis, and that none of the most enthusiastic eulogists of the Dolomites have yet succeeded in doing justice to. As one of them has aptly said, the beholder can but wonder and be silent."

The important new routes described by Signor Sinigaglia are the north ridge of Croda da Lago, the west side of Croda da Lago, and the west-south-west face of Cristallo. The record of the first ascent of the north ridge of Croda da Lago is a truly remarkable one, and it shows what undreamt-of climbing possibilities there are on these peaks. Signor Sinigaglia took one and a quarter hours in his ascent on a previous day from the "Rast-Platz" by the ordinary way. With Pietro Dimai he does the climb by a *new route* at the first time of asking in forty-seven minutes:

The author, quoting from Guido Rey, says: "The discovery of a

new route up an already well-known peak is a matter of little interest when the one so found does not boast any advantage of safety, brevity, or convenience over those already known." Signor Sinigaglia assures us that this new route combines all the qualities above enumerated.

The other new routes described are evidently different matters as regards length and difficulty, and it is apparent they must be treated with due respect.

It is no easy matter to give what would be to the average climber's mind a correct impression of the difficulty of various points in a climb, but Signor Sinigaglia seems, so far as we can judge, to have been very successful in this respect, and neither exaggerated nor underrated the difficulties he met with. He was singularly successful in his expeditions, and on only one occasion, which is related in an interesting chapter, which he describes as "A Day's Adventure on Antelao," did he and his guides fail to reach their top by the way marked out.

The book is profusely illustrated by, in the main, capital photographs reproduced, and if the reproductions are not all so beautiful as the view from the summit of Marmolada, which forms the frontispiece, they admirably illustrate the book.

The translation seems to have been done extremely well, and the various climbing technicalities accurately expressed, for we take it that "hand-holes," which the reader comes across occasionally, is not intended to be *hand-holds*, as so many holds on Dolomite peaks are holes, and not excrescences or cracks.

W. B.

---

WELSH MOUNTAINEERING. By Alex. W. Perry. London :  
L. Upcott Gill. 2s. 6d.

"So far as I am aware there is no authenticated or practical guide to the mountains of North Wales." These are the opening words of Mr Perry's little book, and they give us the key, containing as they do an astonishing confession of ignorance. It is difficult to speak seriously of a man who gives himself away in this manner. It is as though some one should publish a treatise on Chemistry, assigning as a reason that so far as he was aware there was no practical work on Chemistry. Mr Perry ought to know, and probably by this time does know, that his book is quite unnecessary, and that the ground has been far better covered by others. The guides to Wales are legion. Has he never heard of Haskett-Smith and Baddeley? But better far, for the public he seeks, if he will invest in Woodall's "Gossiping Guide to Wales," he will discover that the work of compiling a guide has been done once for all. On comparing the two books we find that with the exception possibly of four molehills not worth mentioning, the ascents have been well described by Woodall, who also gives a vast number more. With the idea in his mind that he is a pioneer, we can to some extent understand the line Mr Perry has taken, but



after his proclamation of ignorance it is amusing to observe how he assumes the position of teacher. The egotism of the introductory chapter reaches the height of sublimity. The expression, "I shall group *my* mountains," is delightful. One seems to gather that because he has "traversed nearly every path and route given in this book," he has taken the mountains under his patronage, and would retail them out to such as may put themselves under his care and guidance. "Your guide must always be your master, and as such you must acknowledge him. He knows the path, and, although you may be very clever, you don't." Again, "If you follow recognised paths—paths I hope to guide you along—you can, with a minimum of danger, gain heights," &c. But Mr Perry magnifies his office. "Remember when you are on a mountain your life is in the hands of your guide, and he has no wish to ruin his reputation by letting you kill yourself." There is also a quantity of cheap moralising and advice, which reaches a climax in these sapient words: "I can confidently say that with ordinary care and common-sense the summits can be reached by all, yes, even by ladies, who, by the way, make excellent climbers." Why then "*even* by ladies"?

If the book were well done, the introduction might be overlooked, but it was surely unnecessary to publish a guide that dismisses most of the hills with six or eight lines of description, including such expressions as "the summit is easily reached," "pass to the left of a cottage and the hill is before you," "continue along until a favourable point is found for a direct ascent." The author speaks of "giving minute definition of paths and landmarks that are easily recognisable," and, indeed, a guide-book to be serviceable should be so clear that "the wayfaring man, though a fool," need not go astray even in a mist; but the traveller who puts his trust in this little book will, we fear, not get the enlightenment he is led to expect should he become involved in mist and bad weather. His instructions are to go right, left, or straight on, compass bearings being much too seldom given: even the feeble little maps do not give the direction by compass. It would be interesting to know when our authority traversed the railway from Beaumaris to Red Wharf Bay, seven miles long. We observe that there is no "minute definition" in this instance. Such a railway certainly does not exist now, and probably never did during the present era.

There are several misspellings (perhaps as forgivable in Welsh as in Gaelic), but because the book is "printed in Holland," and Dutchmen do not possess mountains, is that any reason why an English writer, an English publisher, and a Dutch printer should conspire to perpetuate such a caricature of mountains as is the design on the cover?

F. W. JACKSON.



"in those countries you are not to suppose that you shall find villages or enclosures. The traveller wanders through a naked desert, gratified sometimes but rarely with the sight of cows, and now and then finds heaps of loose stones and turf in a cavity between the rocks, where a being born with all those powers which education expands, and all those sensations which culture refines, is condemned to shelter itself from the wind and the rain." . . . Also that "a walk upon ploughed ground in England is a dance upon carpets compared to the toilsome drudgery of wandering in Skie." It is not surprising that Johnson at the age of sixty-four looked upon hilly country with aversion—the mountains interfered with his convenience; and he only mentions the hills in Skye once.

"Here are mountains that I should once have climbed," he writes to his friend Mrs Thrale, "but to climb steeps is now very laborious, and to descend them dangerous." No doubt at the Doctor's age he was right, still we feel somewhat disappointed that during his stay at Talisker he was apparently unconscious of the Coolin, and we receive but small consolation from his elegant epistolary communications when they tell us instead, that he was gratified sometimes but rarely with the sight of cows, and that Mr Boswell was affected almost to tears by the illustrious ruins at Iona.

All this shows us how the attitude of people towards the wilds of the Highlands has become completely changed in one century, for Johnson was not in any way peculiar in his ideas. Look where we will in the literature of that time we find the same sentiments. Pennant, who visited Skye the year before Dr Johnson, describes the Coolin as "a savage series of rude mountains," whilst Blaven "affects him with astonishment."

Thirty years later the only natural objects in the island that interested Forsyth, at least so far as one can judge from what he writes in "The Beauties of Scotland," were an "obelisk of uncommon magnitude" in the parish of Snizort (probably the Storr Rock), and a waterfall and sea-cave near Portree.

But a new school was growing up, and Sir Walter Scott

was one of the first to insist that a visit to the Highlands would reveal objects more interesting than cows, waterfalls, and sea-caves. People were beginning to find in the torrents, mountains, lochs, and pine woods, beauties they had not seen before. No longer were the hills chaotic masses of rock, ready at any moment to fall and overwhelm the valleys, no longer were the moors and glens expanses of uniform barrenness or gloomy mountain fastnesses; but at the beginning of this century (1815) we find Robson writing of one of the most remote and wild regions of the Highlands, namely, the head of Glen Tilt, "Of all the romantic scenes which are presented to those who explore the recesses of the Grampians, none will be found to possess a more picturesque combination of wild and characteristic beauty than this;" and in the preface to his accurate and delightful volume on the scenery of the Grampian mountains he says, "With the man of taste few districts in this kingdom have equal claim to admiration." Robson was not a Scotchman, but a London artist, yet one only has to look at his sketches, and read the letterpress of his book, to see how well he appreciated mountain form, and how he understood in no uncertain manner that which now delights us moderns in the Highlands. His water-colour picture of Loch Coruisk\* is an honest attempt to accurately reproduce the wonderful colour and savage beauty of the grandest of all Scotch lochs, and one is only sorry that he has introduced into the foreground a fully dressed Highlander—a legacy, no doubt, of that old feeling that made Dr Johnson crave for cows, and that even now survives at the end of this century in the pretty sketches of Scotch hills where the foreground is animated with Highland cattle.

Since Robson's time many people have been to the Highlands and to Skye and the Coolin. Turner visited them, and the impression produced may be seen from his drawing of Loch Coriskin; and this drawing is described by Ruskin, in "Modern Painters," as "a perfect expression of the Inferior Mountains," yet any one who had really seen the Coolin would hardly be justified in asserting that the draw-

---

\* In the South Kensington Museum.

ing (Fig. 29, vol. iv., "Modern Painters") was the perfect expression of the hills round Sgurr Dubh, even though it may be the perfect expression of an inferior mountain.

Fortunately the Coolin are never inferior mountains, unless we measure them by the number of feet they rise above the sea. "Comparative bulk and height," says the late Sheriff Nicolson, "are of course important elements in mountain grandeur, but outline and features are, as with human beings, even more important." Clachlet at Easter covered with snow, and seen from the Moor of Rannoch, towers up into the heavens, at a distance of a few miles, just as grandly as a peak five times its altitude does, thirty miles away in the Himalayas.

It is the atmosphere that adds both dignity and charm to these Scotch hills, making them appear far bigger than they would in the clearer air of the larger mountain ranges, and giving them all the softened colour and perspective so necessary to emphasise the real beauty of true mountains. Their form also helps them in no small degree. The long flowing lines of the lower slopes gradually rising from the moorland below, and the beautifully carved corries that nestle into their sides, all tend to strengthen and serve as a fit substructure for their more wild and broken summits.

At their feet lie no valleys with dirty white streams tearing down between mud banks, their sides are not disfigured with monotonous pine forests of a uniform and dull light green colour, but the heather and the grey rocks, lichen covered, mingle together on their slopes, lighting up with every flash of sunshine or deepening into every shade of brown and purple gloom as the storm clouds sweep over their summits; whilst below brown trout streams wander between the wild birches and Scotch firs, staying here in some dark pool hidden away under the rocks covered with ferns and heather, flashing out again there into the sunshine over the pebbles and across the low-lying moor.

Those who have seen the Coolin from the moors above Talisker in the twilight; or have watched them on a summer's evening from Kyle Akin, rising in deep purple velvet, broided with gold, out of the "wandering fields of barren foam," whilst

“The charmed sunset linger'd low adown,  
In the red west ;”

or lazed away a whole day on the sand beaches of Arisaig Point gazing towards Rum and Skye, lying light blue on the horizon, and across a sea brilliant in colour as the Mediterranean amongst the Ionian Islands ; or lingered at the head of Loch Coruisk till the last pale light has faded out of the heavens behind Sgurr Alasdair, and only the murmur of the streams breaks the stillness of the night air—those who have thus seen the Coolin will know that they are beautiful. But to the climber who wanders in the heart of this marvellous mountain land the Coolin has more pleasures to offer. He can spend hour after hour exploring the corries or threading the intricacies of the broken and narrow rock edges that form so large a part of the sky-line. From the summits he can watch the mists sweeping up from below, and hurrying over the bealachs in tumbled masses of vapour, or he can dreamily follow the white sails of the boats, far out to sea, as they lazily make for the outer islands ; then clambering down the precipitous faces he can repose in some sheltered nook, and listen to the sound of a burn perhaps a thousand feet below echoed across from the sheer walls of rock on the other side of the corrie ; there is always something new to interest him, it may be a gully that requires the utmost of his skill as a mountaineer, or it may be a view of hill, moor, and loch backed by the Atlantic and the far-off isles of the western sea. Nowhere in the British Islands are there any rock climbs to be compared with those in Skye, measure them by what standard you will, length, variety, or difficulty. Should any one doubt this, let him some fine morning walk up from the foot of Coruisk to the rocky slabs at the foot of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh. There he will see the bare grey rocks rising out from the heather not 500 feet above the level of the loch, and these walls, ridges, and towers of weather-worn gabbro stretch with hardly a break to the summit of the mountain 2,800 feet above him. Measured on the map it is but half a mile, but that half-mile will tax his muscles ; he must climb up gullies that the mountain torrents have worn out of the precipices, and over slabs of rock sloping

down into space at an angle that makes hand-hold necessary as well as foot-hold ; he must creep out round edges on the faces of perpendicular cliffs, only to find that after all the perpendicular cliff itself must be scaled before he can win back again to the ridge that is to lead him to the topmost peak. There are many such climbs in the Coolin. The pinnacles of Sgurr nan Gillean, the four tops of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh, and the ridge from Sgurr Dearg to Sgurr Dubh are well known, but the face climbs have been neglected. The face of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh from Tairneilear, the face of Sgurr Alasdair from Coire Labain, are both excellent examples of what these mountains can offer to any one who wants a first-rate scramble on perfect rock. Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain, on the northern face, gives a climb as good as one could anywhere wish to get, and it is only a preliminary to the giants Sgurr Alasdair and Sgurr Dearg that lie behind.

Yet splendid though the climbing in the Coolin may be, it is only one of the attractions, possibly a minor attraction, to these hills, and there are many other mountain ranges where rock-climbing can be found. It is the individuality of the Coolin that makes the lover of the hills come back again and again to Skye, and this is true also of other mountain districts on the mainland of Scotland. To those who can appreciate the beauty of true hill form, the ever-changing colour and wonderful power and character of the sea-girt islands of the west, the lonely grandeur of Rannoch Moor, the spacious wooded valley of the Spey at Aviemore, backed by the Cairngorm Mountains, wild Glen Affric, prodigal of gnarled pines, abounding in strange curves of strength, or the savage gloom of Glen Coe—all these scenes tell the same tale, and proclaim with no doubtful manner that the Scotch mountain land in its own way is able to offer some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in the world. The Highlands of Scotland contain mountain form of the very finest and most subtle kind—form not so much architectural, of which Ruskin writes, " these great cathedrals of the earth, with their gates of rock, pavements of clouds, choirs of streams and stone, altars of snow, and vaults of purple traversed by the continual stars," but form where

the savage grandeur, the strength, and the vastness of the mountains is subordinated to simpler, yet in a way more complicated structure.

Scotch mountains have something finer to give than architectural form. In their modelling may be seen the same beauties that in perfection exist in Greek statuary. The curving lines of the human figure are more subtle than those of any cathedral ever built. The Aiguilles round Mont Blanc are architectural in the highest degree, but the mighty summit rising up far above them into the blue sky, draped in wonderful and sweeping lines of snow and ice, marvellously strong, yet full of moderation, is far more mysterious, far more beautiful than all the serrated ridges and peaks that cluster round its base.

It is in the gentleness of ascent in many of the Highland hills, in the restraint and repose of the slopes "full of slumber," that we can trace all the more subtle and delicate human lines, and it is due to the strength of these lines that the bigger mountains seem to rise without an effort from the moors and smaller hills that surround them. To many people the Cairngorm Range is composed of shapeless, flat-topped mountains devoid of character. They do not rise like the Matterhorn in savage grandeur, yet the sculptured sides of Braeriach, seen from Sgoran Dubh Mhor, are in reality far richer in beautiful intricate mountain sculpture than the whole face of the Matterhorn as seen from the Riffel Alp.

The individuality of the Coolin is not seen in their summits, which are often almost ugly, but in the colour of the rocks, the atmospheric effects, the relative largeness and harmony of the details compared with the actual size of the mountains, and most of all in the mountain mystery that wraps them round: not the mystery of clearness, such as is seen in the Alps and Himalayas, where range after range recedes into the infinite distance till the white snow peaks cannot be distinguished from the clouds, but in the obscure and secret beauty born of the mists, the rain, and the sunshine in a quiet and untroubled land, no longer vexed by the more rude and violent manifestations of the active powers of nature. Once there was a time when these peaks



were the centre of a great cataclysm ; they are the shattered remains of a vast volcano that ages since poured its lavas in mighty flood far and wide over the land ; since then the glaciers in prehistoric time have polished and worn down the corries and the valley floors, leaving scars and wounds everywhere as a testimony of their power ; but now the fire age and the ice age are past, the still clear waters of Coruisk ripple in the breeze, by the loch-side lie the fallen masses of the hills, and the shattered debris left by the ice, these harbour the dwarf hazel, the purple heather, and the wild flowers, whilst corrie, glen, and mountain-side bask in the summer sunlight.

But when the wild Atlantic storms sweep across the mountains ; when the streams gather in volume, and the bare rock faces are streaked with the foam of a thousand waterfalls ; when the wind shrieks amongst the rock pinnacles, and sky, loch, and hill-side is one dull grey, the Coolin can be savage and dreary indeed ; perhaps though the clouds towards the evening may break, then the torn masses of vapour, tearing in mad hunt along the ridges, will be lit up by the rays of the sun slowly descending into the western sea, " robing the gloom with a vesture of divers colours, of which the threads are purple and scarlet, and the embroideries flame ;" and as the light flashes from the black rocks, and the shadows deepen in the corries, the superb beauty, the melancholy, the mystery of these mountains of the Isle of Mist will be revealed. But the golden glory of the sunset will melt from off the mountains, the light that silvered the great slabs will slowly fail, from out the corries darkness heralding the black night will creep with stealthy tread hiding all in gloom ; and last of all, behind the darkly luminous, jagged, and fantastic outline of the Coolins the glittering stars will flash out from the clear sky, no wind will stir the great quiet, only the far-off sound, born of the rhythmic murmur of the sea waves beating on the rock-bound shore of lonely Scavaig, remains as a memory of the storm.

CLIMBING CONSIDERED IN ITS PHYSIO-  
LOGICAL ASPECTS.

BY A. ERNEST MAYLARD, B.S.

THE interest attached to any pastime centres primarily upon the purely pleasurable effects produced by its pursuit. Our enjoyments may possess no obvious or appreciable connection between the means and the end. We indulge in some kind of recreation and we enjoy its immediate and remote effects, without being in any sense conscious of the various connecting links lying between the ends of the chain which metaphorically holds the cause and the result. To many, however, some knowledge of these various intermediate links redoubles the interest attached to any pastime, and increases the pleasure with which it is pursued. While, fortunately, the knowledge of the reasons for our joys constitutes no necessary part of them, nevertheless the analysis of these reasons certainly tends to, or rather should tend to, add to the pleasure of indulgence.

That we do not all care for the same kind of pastime, and that those of us who do pursue the same source of pleasure do so with very variable degrees of zest, opens up for the inquirer many interesting questions, and affords a field for investigation which is only limited by the bounds of human knowledge in anatomy and physiology. For after all it is in the structure of the human frame and its innumerable functions that we must seek for the reasons why, in the first place, we enjoy ourselves; and why, in the second, each of us individually does so more by indulging in one pastime than in another.

That the nervous system, and more particularly that part of it comprised by the brain, plays a prominent, and possibly in most instances a predominating part in the enjoyment of any pursuit, is of course certain; and it is impossible to say wherein lies the explanation of the difference which exists in individuals in this respect, equally as it is impossible to explain the various other differences that constitute mental characteristics. It is, however, possible

to show how certain pursuits may influence the brain indirectly through the medium of the vascular supply, and still more remotely through influences effected by the lymphatic, muscular, and osseous systems. In this latter consideration we become narrowed down in our investigation to the nature of the pursuits which call forth the activity of one or more of these systems.

It will be seen at once that an examination of the various pastimes will show in what particular they differ in themselves, and in what way these particular differences are likely to affect individuals in their constitution both anatomically and physiologically.

I am not concerned here with any consideration of comparisons. Climbing is our pursuit ; climbing is our pleasure ; and it is only in response to a request that I venture to consider an aspect of our pastime that is replete with interest, and I hope I may be able to do so in a way that shall not be too technical, or be beyond the comprehension of those uninitiated in the simpler paths of anatomy and physiology.

To clear the ground somewhat for a discussion of the subject, and to limit the field for consideration, it may, in the first place, be asked, why does a man climb? Why, in other words, does he select to ascend a hill for exercise instead of being satisfied to walk round it? We, of course, assume or rather conclude that he selects the one in preference to the other because it gives him greater pleasure. But is the pleasure realised of the same character to all? In other words, we may ask, are we all actuated by the same motives? I think we must concede at once that there are many motives which prompt men to climb. To some it is a horrible grind, as the expression usually goes, but then they say the more than reward rests in the after enjoyments connected immediately with the varied and changed conditions met with in high regions, and remotely with the improvement in general bodily health which results. To others, again, the pleasure itself is directly associated with the energy put forth. The mere physiological exercise involved in raising or lifting the body puts into action certain parts of our body that, had they the

power to express an opinion, would say they liked it. As a third class may be instanced those whose delight centres in the overcoming of physical obstacles, the conquering of difficulties which call forth not only the pleasures connected with muscular exertion, but the faculties of discrimination, observation, and judgment associated with purely mental efforts; it is probable that the mental aspect of the question prevails as the incentive to action; but it is equally certain that the muscular factor plays a not unimportant part. For however much the exercise of the brain function may be the source of pleasure, that pleasure would be more than neutralised if the purely physical side was either not equal to the requirements, or if equal, not associated in its exercise with unmitigated pleasure.

If now we analyse all these various motives, we are forced to conclude that muscular exercise plays a very essential and almost common part, and it therefore behoves us to consider as a physiological basis what part the mere contraction of muscles plays in producing pleasurable effects immediate and remote.

With us it must be more or less conceded that our pleasure is practically synonymous with health. Above all things, climbing has an invigorating effect, and invigoration means nothing if it does not signify something associated with feeling better. If, then, we say, as we must, that climbing is conducive to good health, and that good health signifies the harmonious and normal action of the various constituents of our economy, then muscular action must mean a beneficial effect in some way produced upon these constituents. Our field of observation, therefore, while still a very extensive one, becomes simplified and parcelled out into regions which may be said to contain for separate consideration the lungs, the heart and blood-vessels, the brain and nervous system, the liver, stomach, and intestines, the skin, in short, every organ and tissue which go to make the complete human structure.

Most of us are conscious of the good effects a climb has upon one or more of our defaulting members, at least those of us who are unfortunate enough to possess such. One says it does his liver good, another that it puts his bowels

The contractions of the muscles in straightening or bending the various joints has a most important influence upon the blood and lymph channels; they accelerate considerably the movements of their contents, hurrying them away and making room for the reception of fresh. Regarding the important effect of this increase in rapidity of the circulation in other organs and other parts of the body I shall speak presently.

Our aching muscle then is produced by a choking up of all the channels, which should be free both to carry away rapidly the effete products and to receive the fresh food supply. The strain which is more or less suddenly brought to bear upon them finds them with their little canals sluggishly moving on their contents, and failing to convey the necessary nourishment to a hard-worked and weary muscle.

It will, of course, be understood that the more the number of muscles put into action, and the greater the action both as to rapidity of contraction and weight lifted, the greater the needs and the effect upon the circulation. Hence when the arms as well as the legs are brought into play, we have almost all the voluntary muscles of the trunk and limbs acting. This means that a large quantity of carbonic acid—one of the principal effete products of muscle contraction—is being poured into the system, and that a large quantity of oxygen—an important constituent of muscle nourishment—is required to supply its place. There is only one chief centre where this supply of oxygen can be obtained, and where the carbonic acid can be efficiently got rid of, and that is in the lungs. In order for the blood, which is the medium of conveyance, to discharge its carbonic acid sufficiently quickly, and take in the required quantity of oxygen, the respiration must be accelerated and the rapidity of the circulation increased. To effect the latter, the heart begins to pump vigorously, and pour the blood into the great aerating chamber, the lungs. Here it meets with the oxygen of the respired air, but if this is to be supplied in sufficient quantity for the greater influx of blood, the respirations must be increased, and if the needful supply is not forthcoming, the climber is then what he

terms "out of breath," and he is bound to stop until the supply and the demand become equalised. It is not that his muscles could not do more, but that the blood being surcharged with carbonic acid and deficient in oxygen, other more important organs of the body, such as the brain, which equally needs oxygen, refuse to perform their part in the vital economy, and so our energy comes to a stand-still.

It will be at once seen how all-important is the question of fresh air. But for that the climber could never do the amount of work he does, nor acquire the same beneficial effects. It is the freshness and purity of the mountain air, and its freeness from all impure gases and organic particles—those pernicious little microbes!—that renders it such wholesome and invigorating nourishment to our system. Not only is every organ and tissue of the body getting rid, by means of the exercise, of much effete and often harmful material, but these same parts are being recuperated in a way that, by no other conditions, could be so advantageously accomplished.

To return, however, to our muscle contraction and its effect upon the circulation. Every time a muscle contracts it exerts pressure upon the blood-vessels which percolate its tissue, and owing to the peculiar structure of the veins, and the course of the blood in the arteries, this pressure exerts a favourable influence upon the onward flow of the blood towards the heart and the lungs. This increased rapidity of circulation must necessarily affect the whole circulatory system, and results therefore in all the organs of the body being supplied with a constantly renewed quantity of oxygen. Such a rich supply of fresh nourishment of this kind means a reparation and renewal of their structure, and consequently they become better fitted to fulfil their natural functions. In this way is to be explained the good effects produced upon the liver, the intestinal canal, the brain, and other parts.

Yet another important effect is produced indirectly by the muscular contraction. The chemical process which takes place in the contraction of muscle, and in the process of oxidisation in other parts, involves the production of

heat. To counteract this excess and maintain the normal temperature of the body, the skin and tissues immediately beneath it become freely supplied with the rapidly circulating blood, and as a result there is great functional activity of the glands in these parts, which manifests itself in profuse perspiration. The radiation of heat which takes place from this extensive area of enlarged cutaneous blood-vessels, as also the evaporation of perspiration from the whole skin surface, tend in combination to materially reduce the temperature by cooling the body surface. While heat, therefore, is being produced interally, cold is being caused externally, and we have a mean which differs only by 1° or 2° Fahr. from that which exists when no exercise is being taken. The sensation of considerable heat in no way implies that the body is proportionately as hot as it seems. The effect is mostly produced by the abnormally free supply of arterial blood to the skin wherein is contained the nerve terminations which receive and convey the sensation. It is much the same as when we stand near a fire or put any part of our body into hot water, with this distinction, that the heat in the one case is applied to these sensory nerve endings from without, while in the other it comes from within. It should be stated, however, that the regulation of the body temperature is not wholly explained by the above simple description; there are other and more complicated factors at work to consider, which would carry me much beyond the intended limits of this article.

To sum up, then, these few scattered thoughts upon a very wide subject, we may say that the climber's legs ache because the "drains" and "food channels" of his muscles are plugged up for want of a free flushing; that his heart palpitates or throbs because it is striving to drive the blood sufficiently rapidly to the great centre of food (oxygen) supply, the lungs; that he suffers from want of breath because his lungs cannot supply sufficiently rapidly the air (oxygen) that the blood requires; that he feels hot because of the free and increased supply of fresh blood to his skin, wherein are the sensory nerve endings; that he perspires because of the increased activity of his sweat glands by reason of their abundant blood supply.

Lastly, the climber is refreshed and benefited by his pursuit, because that fresh and unpolluted mountain atmosphere has supplied the oxygen which he, by his muscular exercise, has caused to circulate rapidly and abundantly through every organ and tissue of his body.



## A BLIZZARD ON BEN LUI.

BY W. W. NAISMITH.

WHEN Mr Douglas and I reached Tyndrum on the evening of the 5th March last, we were astonished to find more than half a foot of snow on the railway platform, for there had been none in the south.

During the night the wind howled drearily, and when, after an early breakfast, we left the hotel at 7.25, the clouds still scurried along before a northerly gale, although the white landscape was lit up with patches of sunshine. The depth and softness of the snow made the walk to the Lead Mines tedious work ; but, trudging steadily without a halt, we reached that point in two hours. For half of the distance we used the tracks of somebody, with small boots and short legs, who had traversed the moor before us with a dog. Crossing the burn, the youthful Tay I presume, by the wooden bridge beside the sheep-pen, we made for the "Windy Corrie," following a low ridge from which the wind had swept most of the snow. As we approached the corrie the fresh snow became very deep: in some drifts we were in nearly to the waist. We took turn about in making the holes, but progress was terribly slow. On the steeper slopes the quickest mode of ascent proved to be by crawling on hands and knees. We stopped for a little at the foot of the couloir in the middle of the corrie, by which we proposed to ascend, for the rock ridges were out of the question.

Ben Lui had hitherto been clear to the top, and we had noticed he had been smoking his pipe vigorously all morning, in a way his doctor would certainly not have approved of. Now, a small cloud enveloped the summit, and it remained there most of the time we were on the upper part of the mountain.

From the head of the couloir we went straight up to the ridge between the two tops. This ridge is often heavily corniced, but not so on this occasion, and where we struck it there was no cornice at all. The angle of the slope

increased, until near the top it was fully  $50^{\circ}$ , and we discussed the chances of starting an avalanche. Fortunately, however, the new snow was slightly shallower there than it had been further down, so that we could cut or kick steps in the solid material underneath. A furious gale was blowing *up* the snow wall, but we had our backs to it, and were not much incommoded in the ascent.

The cairn when we reached it (12.5) was a lovely object. Owing to a short break in the clouds, the snow crystals were ablaze in the sunlight against a background of deep cobalt. We could stay only a minute or two at the cairn, for whenever we approached the edge of the east face, the wind and snowdrift were so vicious, that we were glad to take refuge in a snowy recess among the rocks on the west side, where we could draw breath comfortably.

To vary the descent, we meant to try the steep snow slope close to the cairn—a route taken by more than one party at New Year 1896—and to rejoin our previous track at the top of the couloir. The upper part of this slope was inclined at an angle of  $48^{\circ}$  measured (which is equal probably to about  $60^{\circ}$  estimated!), a slope which of course requires steps to be made. Near the top, too, the wind had torn off all the new snow, and left hard snow covered with a crust of ice. The question arose how to cut steps in the teeth of that awful blizzard. Apart from any difficulty in keeping one's balance, the powdery snow was driving up the slope in such an extraordinary way, that it was all but impossible to look down long enough to cut a decent step, and if that was managed, one had to turn round afterwards and gasp for breath. By using all our rope, however, the leader was held from the top while he made a series of shallow notches down the worst part of the slope. The rest of the way we descended backwards, with our eyes shut as much as possible, kicking steps into the under snow. It was a curious experience this blizzard coming from below. Before we had been exposed to it for two minutes, we resembled two polar bears. Talk of Nansen at  $85^{\circ}$  North latitude! Our clothes were soon converted into coats of mail. Our eyes and noses were filled with drifted snow. Icicles depended from our hair,

and even our cheeks were encrusted with ice. The fine dust penetrated every seam and opening in our attire. It drifted up our sleeves, and under coats and jerseys, and even formed snowballs in the sanctum of the watch pocket. It lodged in quantities inside of a woollen helmet, partially melted there, and then froze into solid ice. Had we not both kept hard at work kicking steps we could not long have withstood the cold ; and, as it was, the limit of our endurance was almost reached.

When we eventually gained the couloir we found our former steps entirely filled ; but that was of no consequence, as the worst of the blizzard was now over, and the going was easy. Very soon we took off the rope, and glissaded to the bottom of the corrie in great style, and with tons of snow accompanying us. We returned to Tyndrum before four, tired, but well pleased with our expedition.

## MOUNTAINEERING WITH CYCLES.

BY W. DOUGLAS.

EVER since 1890, when I saw from the top of Ben Screel the splendid mountain of Lurven (Ladhar Bheinn), I had longed to visit the neighbourhood, and view from a closer standpoint the wild scenery of its grand and desolate corries, and see the rugged peaks which guard their precipitous sides. But as year on year sped by, and the country of Knoydart remained as far distant as ever, I began to think that if I was to realise my wish I had better make straight tracks for the hill, and that without further delay.

A close study of Bartholomew's map revealed the fact that a road ran from Invergarry to Kinlochhourn, and that there was a house at a place called Skiary, some two miles down the south side of the loch, where, according to Murray, "two beds, clean," were to be had. (If the writer of those three words would only apply for these beds late some winter's night I think, I would forgive him!) Thus, if the roads were suitable for cycling, it brought Loch Hourn within a day's journey from Edinburgh, and an idea struck me that a week-end excursion might be made to embrace the notable mountain of Lurven.

In this laudable plan I was gallantly backed up by Mr Rennie, and in spite of the unsettled condition of the weather, we fixed on a day early in April to make the attempt, in the anticipation that the "easterly monsoon" which usually sets in about that time would have made its appearance, and have cleared the air of all the uncomfortable storms that had so persistently prevailed since the beginning of the year.

On the morning before our start a fresh fall of snow actually covered the ground to the depth of an inch, but this was quickly licked up by the sun, and as the glass hopefully indicated a rise, we decided to trust ourselves to fate, which was kind enough in this instance to reward our confidence by bestowing on us three of the most brilliant

days of sunshine which it has ever been my luck to experience among the hills.

We arrived at Spean Bridge with the forenoon train, shortly after mid-day. The country all along the line was looking its best, for I do not agree with those who maintain that the Highlands require the purple tints of autumn to make their scenery beautiful. To my mind nothing can be grander than the great stretches of brown waste rolling up to the foot of some snowy giant whose head is boldly outlined against a clear blue sky. But this is beside the point. We mounted our bikes and rode off for Invergarry and Tomdoun. Cycling on hard roads, even with luggage, is a pleasant and speedy mode of transit; but when the iron beastie is laden with big hob-nailers, rope, camera, ice-axe, and the other impedimenta of a climbing holiday, and when the roads are of the moist and sandy description, it is another story altogether. Such was the condition of the roads on the 2nd of April, and we were not surprised to find ourselves considerably behind time when we reached Tomdoun. There is a new hotel at Tomdoun which has just been opened, and every comfort that a traveller can desire is to be found there. Of this we took the fullest advantage before launching ourselves into the wild and uncivilised parts of Knoydart,—vague rumours having reached us of the inhospitable reception we were likely to receive on arriving at that far and distant district.

The going was fairly good till Quoich Bridge was left behind, and then, as the shades of night began to fall, the surface of the road grew worse and worse, till at last it became totally unridable, and we had to dismount. A long two hours' trudge followed while we shoved our beasties up the hill to the watershed of Scotland and then down the steep descent to Loch Hourn in pitch darkness. Bearing in mind the inhospitable rumours, we hailed each little cottage and farm as it hove in sight with a request for a bed, and although the inducements held out were enough to soften a heart of stone, we met with the invariable response—"Na, we have nae peds for you whateffer, and I doot ye wull nae get pit up hereabouts at all." So on we tramped to our last remaining hope, the "two beds, clean,"

and devoutly prayed that the good people of Skiary would still be up when we reached that far-off hostelry.

The road ends at Kinlochhourn, but a bridle-path leads in two miles to Skiary. In the darkness there was not much of the pathway visible, but on and on we forced our way, over boulders, round sharp corners overhanging the sea, occasionally crossing frozen watercourses, and as often as not carrying our bikes shoulder-high. The last straw was added to our burdens at a place where we were brought to a dead stop by a stone wall covered with bramble bushes, and through which the bikes refused to go. Here we abandoned our steeds for the night, and made our way for a dim light in the far distance. This, when we reached it, some time before midnight, proved to be "Macmillan's Hotel of Skiary." Now the fun began. No admittance! no beds!! and a request to move on!!! A firm resolve, however, to do nothing of the kind gained for us first an entry to a miserable room, and in the small hours of the morning a bed was eventually put at our disposal. But, alas! the comfort of that bed was not conducive to sleep, and although both Mr Rennie and I have done a lot of "roughing it" in past years, we never, neither at home nor abroad, struck anything like this before. Camping out and amateur yachting trips are luxurious experiences compared with a couple of nights at Skiary, and any one who cannot live solely on porridge and whisky had better give Skiary a wide berth.

The following morning broke bright and clear, and the grand scenery round Loch Hourn did much to compensate for the roughness of our quarters. As soon as it was light we were off to recover our cycles, and by 8.30 we had housed them safely and were wending our way down the loch-side to Lurven. The bridle-path which had taken us to Skiary continued all the way to Barrisdale Bay—some six miles further. It is a lovely road for those who have time to spend over it, but as it rises with every knoll and sinks again to the sea with the most uncompromising regularity, it gives an amount of climbing one could well dispense with, especially if a serious ascent is contemplated at its other end.

The views of Loch Hourn and Ben Screel were glorious, and Lurven, as we turned into Barrisdale Bay, looked down upon us in unsurpassing grandeur. Its great range of cliffs, seamed with snow-filled cracks, was framed by grassy ridges leading up to the two outlying spurs—Stob a' Corrou and Stob a' Herkill—and made a wonderfully grand picture.

Mr Phillip has already described this mountain in our Journal for September 1891, but I may as well repeat what he says on its main features. First and foremost, there is the great Corrie Gorkill (Coire Dhorcaill) rising from Barrisdale Bay, and surrounded by four giant peaks. Beginning in the N.E., there are:—

1. **Stob a' Choire Odhair**, 3,138 (pron. Stob a' Corrou, = hill of the dun corrie), the lower slopes of which on the N.E. are of the rounded grassy type, but the summit ridge is narrow, and continues for a mile, with a big dip, to

2. **Ladhar Bheinn**, 3,343 (pron. Lurven = the cleft mountain). The ridge from Lurven continues in a rugged outline above the splendid precipice of Corrie Gorkill to the Bealach a' Coire Dhorcaill, 2,350 ap., and rises to

3. **Stob Dhorcaill**, which is a sugar-loaf buttress running into the corrie. Further to the east is

4. **Stob a' Chearcaill**, 2,760 (pron. Stob a' Herkill = peak of the circles). This forms the S.E. enclosing wall of the corrie, and is a most striking-looking summit, especially when seen from Barrisdale House, where it presents a form somewhat like a slate set on edge.

We tramped round the Bay of Barrisdale, crossing the river by a wooden bridge, and wended our way up a well-made stalker's path on the lower slopes of Stob a' Herkill which brought us into Corrie Gorkill above a deep ravine. From here we crossed the stream, and taking the shoulder of Stob a' Corrou, we had a very stiff grind up a long grass slope to the base of the final summit, which rose above us for some 300 feet in a fine peak. As the condition of the rocks was here exceeding treacherous, owing to many being ice-covered and hidden below a thin coating of powdery snow, we put on the rope, for steep slopes on either side made it not a place in which to slip. The

1

2

3 4



LADHAR BHEINN FROM BARRISDALE BAY, 3rd APRIL 1897.

1. Stob a' Herkill.      2. Stob a' Gorkill.      3. Lurven.      4. Stob a' Corrou.



STOB A' CHOIRE ODHAIR FROM THE TOP OF LADHAR BHEINN,  
18th APRIL 1897.



## LOCH AWE MEET, NEW YEAR. 1897.

BY H. T. MUNRO.

THE old Campbell saying, "It is a far cry to Loch Awe," has, with modern facilities of travel, become very fallacious ; and, indeed, there are few places more generally accessible to members at all seasons of the year, or more deservedly popular, than the Loch Awe Hotel. What if to many of the older members it is an "exhausted centre"? Who ever tires of the view from Cruachan (if he is lucky enough to get it)? And are there not always the famous "Black Shoot" and the gullies on Beinn a' Bhuiridh? Is there not the north face of Cruachan besides the Drochaid Glas, which, if not a Pons Asinorum at any rate this year, perilously resembled the Lurlei in the utterly depraved manner in which it lured unsuspecting members on to its rocks, and then led them hopelessly astray? And lastly, is there anywhere in the Highlands a more comfortable hotel than the Loch Awe, or a more attentive host than Mr Fraser? What wonder, then, that sixteen members and two guests (a "record" for the winter meet) should have assembled there for the New Year of 1897?

Messrs A. E. Maylard and Munro were the first to arrive by the afternoon train, on Thursday, 31st December. They were followed by a large contingent who came by the evening train, including Messrs Gilbert Thomson, Parker, Penny, and Conradi Squance, who had crossed Am Binnein from the south, and joined the train at Crianlarich. Messrs Maclay and Drummond arrived in the small hours of the morning, but, judging both by their execution at breakfast and their feats on the hills, all-night travelling had agreed with them. The other members present were Messrs J. H. Bell, Herbert Boyd, W. Inglis Clark, W. Douglas, W. W. Naismith, J. Napier, Harold Raeburn, and J. Rennie, with Messrs Arnold Boyd and R. S. Manford guests.

The weather, it must be admitted, was not encouraging—mild, rainy, and cloudy, with little snow below 3000 feet ; and as there was no frost outside, the hotel billiard-table was converted into a rink, and it is to be feared that the

attractions of curling (indoors) interfered somewhat with those of mountaineering (out of doors).

The 1st January, however, saw all the party on the hills. Messrs Douglas, Munro, Raeburn, and Rennie ascended Cruachan by the Cruachan Burn route, and followed the ridge as far as the Drochaid Glas, whence they again descended to the Cruachan Burn. Everything above 2,500 feet was shrouded in mist, and, notwithstanding the mildness of the weather below, a moderate blizzard was encountered on the ridge. Mr Squance accompanied the party as far as the Punch Bowl, and then crossed the Larig Torran to the north of Beinn a' Bhuiridh into Coire Ghlais. Messrs Clark, Parker, Maclay, Drummond, and Penny crossed the Larig Noe; the two former ascending the Drochaid Glas by its north ridge, and following the main ridge to Stob Diamh, descended by Stob Garbh and Coire Ghlais; while Maclay, Drummond, and Parker skirted the north face as far as Coire Chait, whence they ascended Stob Dearg by a new gully, which, though short, was filled with snow in fair condition, and afforded good sport. From Stob Dearg they proceeded to the big peak and the Drochaid Glas; here, however, a considerable time was lost in attempting to descend a gully close to the top, under the erroneous impression that it led to the Loch Awe side of the main ridge—*i.e.*, to the Cruachan Burn. The attempt was given up owing to an awkward pitch of rock, which would have been difficult for the last man. Returning to the top in gathering darkness, they endeavoured to find a way to the main ridge from the N.E. face of the peak. Such a way unfortunately did not exist, and they were continually forced downwards on the steep face, till emerging from the mist they made out the main ridge high above them on the right, and found themselves benighted—on a very dark night too—in Glen Noe. More than once the party would have resigned themselves to spending the night out but for Maclay, who seemed to have the eyes of a bat, and eventually led them safely over the Larig Noe and into the hotel at 10 P.M. Let it be remembered that there is no semblance of a track until a mile from the hotel, and that two of the party had been travelling all night.

A word of warning to those who, not well acquainted with Cruachan, find themselves on the main ridge in mist. The Drochaid Glas—the 3,312 feet point of the 1-inch O.S., and one mile east of the big peak of Cruachan, lies somewhat back from the main ridge, the slopes of which, whether it is approached from the east or west, lead easily up to the summit, turning in either case almost imperceptibly to the north. When the summit is reached, a fine ridge—the “Grey Bridge”—extends straight from you, *i.e.*, north, and unless the compass is carefully consulted, or you have a previous knowledge of the mountain, it is difficult to realise that you have for the last few hundred feet been bearing either to the right or left, according as you have approached the summit from the east or west; and you are then apt to proceed down this northern shoulder under the impression that you are still on the main ridge, and so find yourself in Glen Noe.

Messrs Bell and Napier ascended Beinn Eunaich *via* the Black Shoot, which had only been previously climbed on the 19th May 1892. Messrs Maylard, Naismith, and Gilbert Thomson amused themselves in some of the gullies at the back of Beinn a' Bhuiridh, while Mr Herbert Boyd, with Messrs Arnold Boyd and Manford, ascended Ben Laoigh, by the N.E. corrie, on their way to join the rest of the party at Loch Awe.

On 2nd January Messrs Raeburn and Maclay made the third ascent of the Black Shoot. Naismith, Parker, Inglis-Clark, and Gilbert Thomson devoted themselves to the cause of science by working out snow problems in the neighbourhood of the Drochaid Glas; while Bell and Napier fell into the same mistake as Maclay's party had made the previous day, but discovered their error after descending some five hundred feet from the Drochaid Glas, and retraced their steps.

Several of the party left for the south by the evening train.

On Sunday, 3rd January, the weather was particularly abominable, and in consequence there was an abnormally large congregation in the beautiful little church. One or two persistent Sabbath breakers were on the hills—let their names and their deeds be forgotten.

Monday, 4th January, was, as far as weather is concerned, the best day of the meet, although the tops were still covered with mist, but unfortunately the bulk of the party were obliged to leave by the morning or mid-day trains. Messrs Bell, Napier, Parker, and Rennie, however, made their way to the gullies at the back of Beinn a' Bhuiridh, where to quote Mr Rennie's words, "Napier and Bell started to climb one of the gullies about 11 A.M. Parker and I looked on for more than an hour. We then went round to where a big burn was pouring down another gully. We had to traverse to the left to get up, and had thirty or forty feet of as nasty a climb as we wanted, carrying three axes, two rucksacks, and no rope. We came round on top of the other two who had made up their minds to go down, discovered some sixty feet of lunch string in our pockets, got up their rope with this, and brought the whole party to the top at 2 P.M. We built a cairn at the top of the gully, which we named the 'Raven's.'"

The meet, if not in any way specially remarkable, was at any rate a very cheery one, and will undoubtedly be pleasantly remembered by all who took part in it.

## YACHTING MEET, EASTER 1897.

BY PROFESSOR R. LODGE.

IN the afternoon of Thursday, 15th April, the steam yacht "Erne," under the dual but harmonious control of Captain Turner (the owner) and Captain Smith, steamed into Oban Bay, having on board the President of the S.M.C. and two or three other hardy passengers, who had braved the squally seas round the Mull of Kintyre. Late in the evening the remaining members and guests—making twenty-nine in all—who had been delayed by the holiday traffic, arrived by rail, and after the usual turmoil of hunting for berths and sorting luggage, we all sat down to supper and to discuss the gloomy subject of the waves and the weather. About midnight the rattling of the chains told us that the anchor was up and the voyage had begun. Off Lismore we had our first experience of uncomfortable motion, and even in the shelter of the Sound of Mull the captain met such a squall of wind and hail that he thought it prudent to drop anchor off Tobermory, and to postpone till daylight the rounding of Ardnamurchan Point. So we had a few hours' peace before the terrors of the voyage began in the early morning of Friday. Breakfast was served under the welcome shelter of Eigg and Rum, but not a few pallid faces and abstemious appetites showed that the previous tossing had not been without effect; and the late risers had hardly finished their meal before the crockery began to dance off the tables, and the more timid sailors once more sought the seclusion of their berths while the yacht crossed the open water between Rum and Skye. At last the dropping of the anchor showed that we had reached our destination in Loch Scavaig, and all assembled on deck to gaze on the rock-bound bay, with the Coolins standing as gloomy sentinels on the one hand and Blaven on the other. But it was soon evident that the programme of the trip was not destined to be carried out to the letter. The veriest landsman could see that Loch Scavaig, with a south-west gale blowing straight into it, did not offer either comfort or security. If any hardy spirits had tried to row ashore,

they must have been drenched by the spindrift which blew in horizontal showers towards the shore ; and even if they had succeeded in landing, they would have found it impossible to return to the yacht. The two captains conversed with anxious faces, the President was called into the conference, and after a brief delay the anchor was weighed, and we emerged from Loch Scavaig to seek for a possible shelter in the Sound of Soay. But here again Captain Turner declared the anchorage to be unsafe, and it was at last clear that under existing conditions all idea of landing in the south of Skye must be given up. So, as a temporary expedient, we retraced our course to Rum, and found ourselves, with half a day wasted, in the welcome shelter of Loch Scresort. The afternoon was spent in climbing the heights of Allival and Askival, and after dinner the party resolved itself into a debating society, and set to work to discuss future movements with much animation.

It was evident that uncontrollable circumstances had broken down the authorised programme ; no alternative scheme had been drawn up, and the whole of the west coast was before us. We might stay off Rum, we might approach Skye by Sligachan Bay or Portree, or we might enter any of the innumerable lochs on the mainland. Gradually out of the infinite variety of suggestions three main parties could be distinguished. The stalwarts were for the original plan at all hazards, or at any rate they insisted that our movements should be so arranged that at the least sign of improving weather we could return to Loch Scavaig at a moment's notice. Others were for change and variety, even at the risk of converting a mountaineering expedition into a yachting cruise. Finally, the pusillanimous hedonists thought all other considerations of little moment as compared with a peaceful night's rest in which they could forget that such an ailment as seasickness was possible. Some were bold enough to hint that in bad weather the neighbourhood of a first-class hotel would lend attractions to the most beautiful view, but this suggestion was treated with the contempt it deserved. Finally, it was decided, on the suggestion of the President, to run for Loch Hourn, which offered

the best climbing and the most attractive scenery compatible with the possibility of a speedy return to Skye. So we breakfasted in Loch Hourn on Saturday morning, and there we spent a very enjoyable Saturday and Sunday, in spite of frequent storms of hail and sleet. The mountaineers ascended Ladhar Bheinn and Luinne Bheinn, while those who had not yet recovered from the voyage made boating excursions to the head of the loch and tested the resources (very limited, except as regarded whisky) of the "hotel" at Skiary. A mild excitement was provided on Saturday evening by two members of the party who failed to turn up to dinner, and who had last been seen trying so make their way to Inverie by a track which led in a wholly different direction. There was a general feeling of relief when their hail was heard from the shore about 10.30 P.M., and it was discovered that they had been across to Loch Quoich, thence to the head of Loch Hourn, and had finally made their way to the yacht's anchorage in the dark by a most uncomfortable trudge across rivers, streams, boulders, and bog.

On the Sunday evening the usual discussion was more animated and prolonged than ever. For most of the party the last day was approaching, and the projected ascent of the Coolins had not been even attempted. It was at last decided that a resolute attempt to return to Loch Scavaig should be made in the morning, that the President should be roused at an abnormal hour, and that he should be authorised to change the vessel's course only in case of an absolute decision of the captains that landing in Scavaig was impracticable. So we woke to find ourselves once more tossing about after the peace of the last two nights, and with the prospect of a very transitory breakfast. But at the last minute prudent counsels prevailed, and we ultimately breakfasted at anchor in Loch Nevis instead of off the churlish coast of Skye. We were now on the southern side of the mountains that we had climbed from Loch Hourn, and within easier reach of Meall Buidhe and Sgor na Ciche, both of which were ascended by different parties. Monday was the wettest day of the trip, and for hours it rained with heavy showers in between. But when

the rain at last cleared off it was found that the wind had dropped, and the weather we had longed for all along had at last set in. The result was that the return was the very converse of the outward voyage. We all collected on deck, and while we were rounding the dreaded Ardnamurchan all were as festive as possible. A piper was discovered among the crew. The President danced the fling amidst frantic applause, but the climax of enthusiasm was reached when the veteran Captain Smith appeared to take part in a foursome reel, and when he retired exhausted his place was taken by Miss Turner, the owner's daughter. So rapid and favourable was the journey, that we were in Oban Bay by 12.30, and there was an interval of peace before the majority of the party had to be called in time to catch the early train on Tuesday morning.

The main part of the trip was now over, but for those who remained on board the next two days were perhaps the most enjoyable of all. In the first place, the weather remained fine and settled; in the second place, the ship's stores, which mountaineering appetites had seriously diminished, were replenished at Oban; and finally, the departure of our friends left us in expansive comfort. One cabin, which had previously been filled with eight burly passengers, was now swept and garnished for a single occupant. On the Tuesday we started from Oban soon after 7 A.M. for Ballachulish, where a vehicle was hired to convey the party to the Clachaig of Glencoe, in order to ascend Bidean nam Bian. This was the most enjoyable climb of the trip; the sun was brilliant, the view superb, and there was a great glissade down the soft snow. On Wednesday morning the yacht had made its way to Lowlandman's Bay in Jura, and we trudged over some six miles of peat bog to the foot of the Paps, and had a gentle climb up the highest of these rather uninteresting and stony lumps. Then back to the yacht, dinner, and the voyage round the Mull. But its terrors had disappeared; the wind was off shore, and though it was too cold to stay on deck, the party made merry in the saloon with speeches and songs and the President's flute. The health of Mr Munro, who had done his utmost to make the excursion



successful, was drunk with all the honours ; as was that of Captain Turner, who, with his assistants, had shown the greatest courtesy and kindness to those on board.

At 4.30 on Thursday morning the "Erne" came to anchor in Rothesay Bay, and the remaining members of the party made their way in driblets to their different destinations. And so the voyage came to an end. No doubt the most prominent impression, especially in the minds of those who left on Tuesday morning, is one of disappointing weather, and of failure to carry out a scheme which had been long and confidently contemplated. But it would be a great error to conclude from this that the expedition was unsuccessful. If one can exclude this one disappointment from one's memory, it is easy to dwell upon much that was pleasurable, even apart from the details of individual climbs, which will doubtless be recorded elsewhere. One very striking characteristic of the trip was the number and variety of the cameras on board. Almost every passenger was an amateur photographer ; snap-shots were incessant ; and apartments were utilised as dark rooms which had never been designed for such a purpose. Another reminiscence which will not readily fade is the energy and variety of the nightly debates : the vigorous assertiveness of Professor Ramsay ; the ingenious, if rather noisy, "asides" of Mr Robertson ; and the delicate hints conveyed under the guise of studied impartiality by Mr Munro. Above all, one will recall the constant good humour and high spirits of all on board, and the genial way in which captains and crew entered into the spirit of what must have been to them a wholly novel sort of trip. Those of us who were not on the Committee, and who were therefore free from the chilling impression that they had planned something which proved impossible, would have no hesitation in asserting that the expedition was an unqualified success.

The following members and guests were present, viz. :—

*Members.*—Messrs W. Barrow, J. H. Bell, H. C. Boyd, W. Brown, W. Brunskill, D. S. Campbell, W. Douglas, W. Garden, W. L. Howie, H. G. Lawson, W. Low, A. E. May-

lard, C. C. B. Moss, H. T. Munro, H. Raeburn, G. G. Ramsay, J. Rennie, R. A. Robertson, T. K. Rose, and T. H. Smith.

*Guests.*—Messrs H. Barrow, Cuthbert, Gibson, Johnston, Ling, Lodge, M'Kelvie, Newman, and E. Robertson.

---

*N.B.*—An account of some of the climbs in Rum and on Lurven will be found on pages 299-302.

## TYNDRUM MEET, EASTER 1897.

BY WALTER A. SMITH.

SAFE from the raging waves of the Atlantic, three members of the Club had two or three days together here. The weather was indifferent, but there was a very ample amount of snow on the hills ; and the following brief note is supplied at the request of the Editor.

Messrs King and W. A. Smith arrived on Good Friday forenoon, and shortly afterwards were wending their way up Glen Chlachain, whence they ascended Ben Chaluum. A strong cold wind from the west, with some snow, blew them up and along the ridge to the top, on the steep north and east sides of which heavy snow wreaths and slopes were found. They glissaded down towards Lochan Chailein, and crossing the low watershed to the south, descended by the rattling stream of Inverhaggernie to Strath Fillan. The walk home to dinner, in the very teeth of a fierce gale with hard sleet, was rather trying ; but they thought of their friends on the "yacht" at Skye (?), and were comforted.

Dr Inglis Clark turned up on a bicycle that evening, and on his advice (with the most excellent results) the three made an early start for Crianlarich on the Saturday morning, and by 11 A.M. were close under the great steep N.W. face of Cruach Ardran. This is a very finely shaped hill, and its grand face and crest were beautifully draped in snow. The great bifurcated gully in the centre showed two continuous and precipitous-looking snow routes to the summit, with a great overhanging cornice to the right. An ascent by the narrower upper bifurcation was at first contemplated, but an assault by the rocks and crags to the left was preferred as promising more variety and interest. So the rope was adjusted, and under the skilful and active leadership of King the summit was reached in a little more than three hours, including fifteen minutes for lunch on a narrow ledge under a bit of cliff above a scree of ice and snow. Two points of comparative difficulty (*i.e.*, difficulty to the *writer* !) were duly overcome. These were, *first*, at about 500 feet above the base, the getting up a precipitous

wall of smooth rock of ten feet or so on the east side of a gully ; and *second*, the icy escape from the top of a little chimney full of snow to the west of the cliff under which lunch was enjoyed, about 400 feet or so below the summit. Above this the slope eased off considerably, though still quite steep. Owing to snow and mist, no view was obtained from the top, so the party at once descended rather to the west to the head of the broader bifurcation of the big snow gully referred to above, under the cornice, which was found of great size and beauty. A glorious glissade of some 1,500 feet or so was obtained from this point, so that the base was reached again in under twenty minutes from the top, and Crianlarich Inn (for afternoon tea) before 4 P.M.

Here Naismith, Thomson, and Squance (and his *big* brother) dropped from the clouds (otherwise the top of Ben More), materially assisted in the consumption of tea, and carried King off to Roy Bridge by the evening train. Dr Clark also departed, bicycle, axe, and all, to Loch Lomond ; and so the writer found himself, on the brilliant morning of Sunday, the sole representative of the S.M.C. under the hospitable roof of Tyndrum Hotel. By judiciously hinting, however, over the ham and eggs and tea, at the delights of the snow slopes on Ben Lui on a *fine* day, three pleasant and active youths from Edinburgh were induced to accompany him into the great N.E. corrie (in which the snow lay deep), and thence—being necessarily on “Salvationist” principles—in a scramble up to the top of Stob Garbh, from whence a glorious view was had. The whole N.W. face of Ben Lui was one glittering steep slope of snow ; and, after ascending the saddle towards the top until some 250 feet above the level of Stob Garbh, this slope, probably about half a mile broad, was traversed, and found to be in a very crisp, hard condition, on which the one axe in the party was found of some little use. Crossing the ridge to the west a glissade was obtained down into the glen of the Eas Daimh. And so terminated the rather limited proceedings of the 1897 Easter Meet of the Club at Tyndrum.

## EXCURSIONS.

---

*The Editor will be glad to receive brief notices of any noteworthy expeditions. These are not meant to supersede longer articles, but many members who may not care to undertake the one will have no difficulty in imparting information in the other form.*

**ALPINE CLUB IN SCOTLAND.**—In evidence of the extent to which Alpine climbers now recognise the fact that the Scottish mountains offer the best field for the practice of snowcraft at Easter, we may point out that members of the Alpine Club flocked to Scotland last April in unprecedented numbers. In addition to several A.C. members of the yachting party, there were at least five more staying at Sligachan, six at Clachaig in Glencoe, and four at Roy Bridge, besides several others scattered over the Highlands.

---

**STUC A CHROIN (3,189 feet), "HILL OF THE CLOVEN HOOF"**—28th February 1897.—Animated, doubtless, by the highest Christian motives, our worthy Editor lured the eminent cragsman and learned ornithologist, Raeburn, and myself to spend the last Sunday of February at Callander. The weather had been unsettled during the week, and the dull daylight disappeared rather gloomily as we entered the "Dreadnought Arms," from the station on Saturday evening. We had, however, an hour or two of hope and sunshine next morning, as we strolled leisurely over the brae to the Keltie Water, and heard the birds sing above the woods and the braes of yellowing gorse. The rivers were in flood, and the vale of the Teith behind and below us was a series of ponds and pools that glistened in the morning light. The ornithologist noted seventeen different birds; the Editor spoke of rocks and "rocky" reminiscences; I smoked the pipe of peace. It was Sunday morning in the Highlands! And so we reached that shepherd's cottage with the fearful name of "Arivurichardich," mentioned by Mr Brown, on page 19 of Vol. III. of this Journal. Here we left the Comrie path, and duly gained the col to the Glen Dhu Choirein. It may be noted, the path over this col (which continues more or less all the way to Glen Vorlich and is marked by occasional cairns) keeps pretty high up the hill side north of the cottage. There is a "built" well to the east of the top of the col. Looking back from here, about 11 A.M., we saw the whole south-western sky was darkly black, and we instinctively felt the day would be stormy. However,

we pushed on along the rough western side of the upper part of Glen Dhu Choinin. As we sped along, and just before the mist came down on the ridge above us, we saw two or three deer upon it. Soon after noon we were deliberating—in an incipient snowstorm—under a big boulder fringed with icicles, below the crags of Stuc a Chroin, and in the heart of the corrie between it and Ben Vorlich, what was to be done. The deliberation was assisted by luncheon, eaten under difficulties, and the inevitable photograph was taken! The “bealach” immediately to the north, between the two hills, was fast closing up with cloud and snow showers. The crags looming darkly above us to the west were becoming increasingly invisible. However, we knew whereabouts our top should be, and made steadily upwards for it. A steep and slushy scramble for 500 feet or so, up some gullies, brought us to a long grassy terrace running along below the upper crags, and about the level of the top of the bealach. It was now snowing heavily and continuously, and we could practically see nothing. We eased *slightly* to the right along this terrace, and then, being duly roped, and Raeburn leading, struck sharply to the left up a short succession of steep gullies, rocky corners, and slippery grassy “bits” concealed in snow. These took us on to the ridge (which is rough, steep, and broken) but a short way north of the top. Groping our way through the snow, now driven in our faces by a high gale of wind, we seemed rather to cross the ridge towards its west side, and had our final tussle rather to the left again, up some smooth rocks, which took us to the summit. It was now after 2.30, and blowing a regular blizzard from the S.S.W., almost in the teeth of the direction we meant to, and *did*, take. The air was full of snow, and nothing else was to be seen except the end of a wire fence along the ridge to the S.W. We surmised, fortunately correctly as it proved, this would continue along the top ridges towards Ben Each, beyond which we intended to drop down into the narrow and romantic little pass from the head of Glen Ample over to Ardchullarie on Loch Lubnaig. It was wild work, and bitterly cold, fighting our way through the storm along that fence! Down a rocky slope there, only to climb up again a grassy slope here; along the dip of the Bealach Glas, with the wind howling up from the corrie of the Lochan a Chroin down below us to the left; round a curious rocky passage towards the Bealach nan Cabrach; and then, finally, this kindly guiding fence invited us up the steep slope of the top of Ben Each. But having now a pretty shrewd guess of where we were, and having had about enough of its interminable ups and downs (and it always seemed to keep us in the *teeth* of the storm!), we thanked it for its useful courtesy, bade it a not too sorrowful farewell, and kept along the north side of Ben Each. Thence we soon got straight down to the ruined cottage at the very head of Glen Ample. It was a pleasant relief to get down from the “war with the elements” upon the tops, and to be able to sit down for two or three minutes for the first time for over four hours. The soaking remains of the last sandwich were conscientiously washed down by something else; and

thus fortified we pursued our comparatively easy way by the rugged path through to Ardhullarie, along which the Earl of Menteith and Dugald Dalgetty rode, as described in the second chapter of the "Legend of Montrose." A steady walk in the gathering darkness down Loch Lubnaig side and through the Pass of Leny, by the side of the swollen torrent of the river, brought us back to Callander at 7 P.M., tired and hungry, but with good appetite and minds at ease.

W. A. S.

---

**THE TYNDRUM HILLS.**—Two friends, Messrs Moncrieff and Reid (non-members), and the writer, had three days' outing at Tyndrum from the 9th to the 12th February. The weather conditions were most favourable. The first day we did Cruach Ardran by the N.E. face. The snow here, as everywhere, was well down the hill, being absolutely continuous above 2,000 feet. There was a strong wind blowing, which made the snow softish lower down, but above 2,500 feet it was harder, and steps had to be cut. On the ridge the force of the wind was terrific; no headway at all could be made against some of the gusts. You had just to dig your axe into the frozen crust and hang on. Here, at any rate, the rope was of service in keeping the party together (we would have been blown away otherwise!)

The next day we did Ben More by the well-known gully facing Crianlarich, step-cutting for 1,500 feet; snow very hard; average angle about 40°. We got some good glissades on the easy western slopes between Ben More and Stobinian. Our last day was spent on Ben Doran. The first part of the hill is an awful grind, and the sun was strong, which made it worse. But higher up it was an ideal winter day. We lay on the snow for an hour on the summit basking in the sun, smoking our pipes and revelling in the view, which was exquisite. From the Lomonds in Fife in the east to Jura in the west, and from the Cairngorms in the north to the Arran hills in the south, our eyes feasted themselves on a truly alpine scene, everything mantled in white, and the higher lochs covered with clear black ice—a perfect picture worth crossing a continent to see.

If the ascent was a grind, the descent certainly was not. The hill is made for glissading—just the right angle of slope and no rocks—so away we slid, covering in one or two shoots 2,000 feet in twenty minutes.

Mr Stewart at the Tyndrum Hotel was most indefatigable in his attentions. He put a dogcart at our disposal, and the dinners and attendance were irreproachable.

ARCHD. E. ROBERTSON.

---

**BEN VENUE** was ascended on 31st January last by A. R. Wilson, Aleck Fraser, jun., and A. W. Russell, and (non-members) John Fraser and George Sang, having crossed over to the Trossachs from Aberfoyle. The ascent was made by the N.E. face, leaving the Achray Water

several hundred yards below Loch Katrine sluices, and making for a gully a few hundred feet up. The lower part of this gully is comparatively simple, and only required a few steps cut in the ice; the upper part, however, is much steeper and narrower, and is separated from the lower by a considerable waterfall, then a mass of ice. This fall forced us out on the right, whence a very awkward passage by the edge of the gully over frozen turf and glazed rock led to easier slopes of snow stretching to the base of the top buttress. This buttress, rising steeply for 600 feet, and unsurmounted by any cairn, afforded no further difficulty than was due to the strong gale and blinding clouds of snow. Three members of the party had passed round the rocks to the left of the gully, and gained the summit from the east. About half a foot of freshly fallen snow had made the ascent very heavy and the rocks rather treacherous. The cold was intense, eyebrows being plastered with ice, and gloves and hands sticking to the axe. Leaving the western summit unclimbed, we began the descent to Gleann Riabhach at 4 P.M. A few short sitting glissades helped us down, where we found a slight track leading to Achray Farm, and there joining the Aberfoyle road, reached our hotel by 7.30.

ARTHUR W. RUSSELL.

---

LADHAR BHEINN, Saturday, 17th April 1897.—The story is told in this number of the Journal of a long journey made by the Editor and Mr Rennie to visit Ladharr Bheinn (Lurven), a grand mountain on the shore of Loch Hourne. When the "Erne" was driven, by wind and wave, away from Skye, and took refuge in Loch Hourne, the knowledge gained then was of great use to the party on board. Lurven, although quite close to the shore of Loch Hourne (the descent can be made from the top in one hour), is almost hidden by one of its own spurs, and little can be seen of the great corrie (Coire Dhorraicall) which lies under its summit peaks. Messrs Brown, Boyd, Raeburn, and Bell landed from the "Erne" to try to find a way up the range of cliffs which head this corrie. They landed at the mouth of the Allt Coire Dhorraicall, struck up the grass slopes on its right bank, and joined a stalkers' path which leads very easily well up into the corrie. Thick clouds at a height of about 2,300 feet hid all the upper cliff, and at one place only for about a quarter of a mile steep rocky buttresses could be seen projecting below the clouds. It was found afterwards that these buttresses emerge on the summit ridge about 500 feet below the top, and about half-way between the highest summit of Lurven and the spur called Stob Dhorraicall (Gorkill). They form the highest and finest part of the cliff. After two ineffectual attempts to climb the rocks, which were plastered with snow, an ascent was made by a great gully which descends straight down through the whole height of the cliff. Rather less than half-way up the gully there is a vertical pitch of smooth rock approaching 100 feet in height. This must be turned by climbing out



of the gully and up the rocks on the left. These rocks were of a very similar character to those on the buttresses of Ben Lui—moss-covered ledges with short slabby pitches between them. When free of snow they would probably be quite easy, but, as it was, it was only after a considerable struggle that Raeburn, who was leading, piloted the party up them and into the gully above the pitch. The rest of the climb was merely a walk up the gully. The angle was fairly steep (at one place  $47^\circ$  measured), but not a step had to be cut. After reaching the ridge the party spent some time exploring the top of the cliff, and then walked over the summit and down by Stob a' Choire Odhair (Corrou). The gully can be easily identified, as it is the most prominent on the cliff, and has throughout its length on its right (W.) side a very striking vertical wall of rock.

J. H. BELL.

---

LADHAR BHEINN, 18th April. — Two parties made a complete circuit of the Lurven ridge. Starting from Barrisdale Bay, Messrs Bell, Garden, Gibson, and Raeburn struck up through Coire Dhorraicall (Gorkill) to the point where the N.E. ridge of Stob a' Chearcaill (Herkill) rises up, as the Editor puts it, like a "slate set on edge." The ascent of this slate edge was a little troublesome. Although the ridge is not nearly so narrow as it appears to be from Barrisdale House, it rises at a considerable angle, and care is necessary owing to the character of the rock. With Bell leading, a zigzag route was followed along various snowy ledges and up several steep slabs, where the holds were the reverse of satisfactory. A party, composed of Harrison and Walter Barrow, W. Brunskill, and W. Brown, followed immediately in their wake, and profited considerably from the elaborate moss-clearing and step-making which the first party found necessary. They had also the advantage of having the route ready-made for them, which at one point, where Bell's party had held too far to the left, meant the saving of about half an hour. Both parties afterwards walked over all the Lurven tops, except Stob a' Dhorraicall (Gorkill), which projects about a quarter of a mile into Coire Dhorraicall. The ridge rises and falls over a number of subsidiary tops, and for the most part is fairly narrow, but there is absolutely no difficulty of any kind. The features of the walk is the narrow knife-edge of snow which forms the summit of the highest peak, and the magnificent rampart of snow-wreathed rocks which the ridge skirts all the way from Stob a' Herkill to Stob a' Corrou. The time occupied by the second party was just under six hours.

W. BROWN.

---

LUINNE BHEINN was another of the points climbed from Barrisdale Bay. The party (Walter Barrow, Harrison Barrow, T. H. Smith, and W. Brunskill) who made the ascent, without knowing anything

about the peak, hoped that under the mist which hid its summit there might be something in the nature of a climb, but in this they were disappointed. Making their way to the keeper's house, they got on to the deerstalkers' path which runs up Glen Unndalain leading up to the col between Sgurr a' Choire Bheithe and Luinne Bheinn. From low down the path a face of rock is seen near the top of the col, marked by three dark lines suggesting chimneys, but when close to the face it is seen that these offer no climbing. Instead of following the path actually to the col, it was left just under this rock face, and a jutting out ridge aimed for which appeared to join the main ridge close to the summit. This was followed, and no difficulties met with other than the tiring ones of fresh soft snow of considerable depth lying on steep grass slopes and "scree," or less steep slabby rocks. There are two peaks on the ridge of nearly the same height, and only a short distance apart, the dip between being inconsiderable. The descent was made on to the path leading from Inverie to Barrisdale, and a splendid view obtained of Stob a' Chearcaill (Herkill), which offers a nice climb on to the Ladhar ridge.

W. BRUNSKILL.

---

ASKIVAL AND ALLIVAL, ISLAND OF RUM.—Few of the members of the S.M.C. who took part in the ever-memorable yachting expedition of Easter 1897 had any idea that they should find themselves on Friday, the 16th of April, at anchor in Loch Scresort, Rum. Beaten back by the violence of the elements in our attempt upon the Coolins from the sea, we had turned and fled into Rum's only harbour, and, like the French in 1870, many of us found the maps we were provided with of little use. Fortunately Rum is not a very large island, and its highest summit, the splintered top of Askival, is not remote from the sheltered anchorage of Scresort, so that considering the lateness of the hour—it was 2.30 before we got ashore—a large number of the party were able to do the two mountains which lie nearest Scresort.

An interesting account of winter expeditions in Rum by H. T. Munro will be found in Vol. I. of the Journal, p. 259; and a further paper on Rum in June, by J. B. Pettigrew, in Vol. III., p. 278.

A good description of the island is also given by Harvie-Brown in "A Vertebrate Fauna of Argyll and the Inner Hebrides," 1892 (Edinburgh: D. Douglas), with a map, and an illustration—from a photograph—of the view from Askival of the terraced S.E. face of Allival, with Scresort in the distance.

In Munro's paper is a description of a steep part on the N. arête of Askival, and the Ultramontaneering souls of Messrs Bell and Brown had fixed on this as the primary object of attack by our party of four, consisting of the two above-named with Boyd and Raeburn.

After mounting some 800 feet from the beach, we struck a very fair track, which skirts the spurs of Allival to the E., and takes one to

the foot of Corrie nan Grundd, a fine wild rock basin, with a small tarn in it. We worked through the boulder-strewn desolation of this corrie, and presently gained the ridge connecting Allival with Askival, and reached the foot of the steep part leading up to the summit of Askival. The steepest part can be easily turned by going a little to the left, and the face on that side presents no difficulty whatever, but on the right of the ridge an almost vertical cliff of over 100 feet high forbids the slightest variation. Owing to the nature of the rock (gabbro) of which the ridge is composed, its direct ascent is more difficult in appearance than in reality, and Messrs Bell and Brown rapidly scrambled up it and disappeared, unheeding the request shouted by the photographer of the party to pause midway and have their portraits taken in the act. The force of the wind experienced on this ridge was very considerable, and quite accounted for the leaders' failure to hear the request. A party led by Messrs Brunskill and Barrow, who had taken Allival *en route*, now came up, and the photographer was gratified after all. Boyd and I then ascended to the summit by the ridge, ropes not required at any point. A considerable amount of soft new snow lay on the last few hundred feet, and near the very summit, 2,659 feet, a little ice was met with. Messrs Bell and Brown descended the E. arête, having to avoid one small perpendicular drop by leaving it for a time, and the writer descended the S. arête for about 300 feet, meeting with no difficulties, and then traversed round the E. side of the mountain till close to the E. arête, ascending to the top again up a steep gully, thinly floored with soft snow. We then joined forces at the col, and returned to the yacht over Allival, 2,365. The weather on the whole was not bad, and we had some good views of Rum itself and the adjacent island of Eigg, though storm-clouds from the west were continually obscuring the outline of the higher peaks.

H. RAEBURN.

---

THE CAT NICK IN WINTER. — Looking to the south-east from Princes Street, Edinburgh, the eye rests on the Salisbury Crag, crowned with a noble range of precipices, Arthur Seat showing its head from behind. When these Crag first attracted the attention of climbers is unknown, but certain it is that from the commencement of the century the "gutterbluids" of the Dumbiedykes and Canongate have regarded them as their special perquisite, the arena where they might exercise their prehensile and climbing powers. But, despite the efforts of many generations, it has been practically left to the S.M.C. to demonstrate the highways from the Radical Road to the top of the Crag, and up till recently the Cat Nick has held a reputation as being the only feasible way of ascending the cliffs. Now, as those who attended the demonstration on the Saturday after the annual dinner will remember, there are several other routes more or less difficult—

the Elder Tree, Recess, Red Ridge, and Sloping Slab routes, among others—which have been discovered or exploited by Raeburn, Douglas, and other enthusiasts. Indeed, so much have the merits of these routes overshadowed the reputation of the Cat Nick, that a writer in the *Journal*, Vol. IV., p. 66, speaks of it contemptuously as only suitable for Sunday, with a tall hat and umbrella. Despite this withering reflection, the Cat Nick is no mean climb, especially when taken under difficult conditions; and the writer remembers well how, when but a lad of fourteen and of diminutive stature, he surmounted the overhanging pitch at the top, and considered that this had given him a claim to manhood. In these days the rocks were not so well rounded as now, for the Cat Nick was still the blue ribbon of rock-climbing in Edinburgh, and no mere novice attempted it. Since then I have climbed it often, even with ladies and children, till every foot and hand hold has become familiar to me as the level road. The gully seemed to have nothing more to offer, till, after joining the S.M.C., the thought grew upon me that a winter ascent might prove attractive. On Friday, 22nd January 1897, a strong north-easterly gale blew over Scotland, driving before it dry powdery snow, which searched its way through the frames of ill-fitting windows, and chilled the hearts of all exposed to the blast. On Saturday morning the gale had spent itself, and as I passed into the Queen's Park by St Leonard's Hill the Craggs stood up bravely, every crack and cranny picked out by a tracery of white. Arthur Seat, robed in a snowy mantle, had assumed the appearance of one of the Alps, and from the neighbourhood of the old beacon of St Leonard's the eye wandered across to Inchkeith, even to Fife, where the hills were white from head to foot. Looking across the valley there rose the slopes of the Craggs, with the Cat Nick, its inner recesses snow-white, and at the distance showing but little rock. Was this the treasured opportunity, and must I let it pass? During the forenoon a friend well tried in climbing exploits suggested that the back of Arthur Seat might afford a glissade. This, however, seemed unlikely, and, instead, we decided to climb the snow slope direct to the Cat Nick, and thence home to dinner. The slope itself, as every one knows, is about 250 feet in height, and of an average angle of about 30°, so that without the aid of an ice-axe the ascent over dry powdery snow was difficult indeed. But at last the Radical Road was reached, and we looked up to the Alpine gully rising snow-clad to the sky-line. Should we attempt it or not? No ice-axe, no climbing gloves, and a determination not to damage our go-to-meeting "Handschuhen" by plunging them in the snow, the odds are that if you ask a member of the S.M.C. to weigh these disadvantages against the charms of a virgin ascent (for the day) up such a gully, he will at once vote for the attack. Besides we had brought a rope, not an Alpine Club one, it is true, but a length of packing-rope, and so we started up the rocks. From the very footpath, snow covered every handhold; not the firm snow that mountaineers love, but loose snow, which drifted about with each eddy of wind that swept round the corner. Our first difficulty

occurred about twenty feet up, where a less vertical portion enabled us to join forces. This resisted every effort, for although we succeeded in laying bare a good handhold, yet the snow from above poured down so steadily that nothing but pressure from below could enable us to surmount the pitch. After ten minutes' labour we almost decided to abandon the climb, but agreed to make one more attempt. This succeeded, and the first man was able to pull up the last by means of the rope. We now bitterly regretted our decision not to sacrifice our new gloves, for our hands were almost paralysed by the snow, into which we had to plunge them up to the elbows to secure a hold. There remained now, however, only a couple of steep pitches above us, while descent, unless involuntarily, seemed equally difficult. The leader, by dint of assistance from behind, reached the last snow plateau, and the last man, to save time, was following as closely as possible, when an incident occurred which it is desirable to relate as a warning to climbers not to risk the shock involved in plunging bare hands into snow several degrees below the freezing point. The last man had had to ascend with but little assistance from the rope, and had to encounter the snow which poured down from every rock, so that for about ten minutes his hands and wrists were exposed to the intense cold. The pain was great, and just at the moment when he had rejoined his companion he felt a faintness coming on. He had only time to get into a safe position, by jamming his foot against a block, and to call to the leader to secure a hitch for the rope, when he became unconscious for a few seconds. Fortunately the situation was safe enough, and during the few minutes which elapsed before strength was sufficiently restored to make an assault on the last pitch, the weird situation was fully realised. Far below were the snow-covered houses, with their chimneys, down which we could almost look into the interior. The children were sliding their toboggans on St Leonard's Hill, and the hum of the city rose to our ears. Yet here we were, almost as completely shut off from human help as if we had been in the heart of the Highlands. The grim walls were shrouded in snow, and the gully below us fell down in abrupt steeps, which shut out even the footpath from which we had ascended. Above, rose the overhanging pitch, seven or eight feet high, easily surmounted in ordinary circumstances, but forbidding on this occasion. The usual footholds were entirely hidden or slippery with ice, and after several efforts it was evident that no one short of a seven-footer could pass the barrier unaided. Mountaineers, however, do not stand on ceremony, and ere long, from the vantage-point of the last man's head, the leader was able to get on to the projecting knob, and after clearing off a quantity of snow, to reach the top. The last man tested the rope to the full, and had practically to be pulled up past the difficulty. As evidencing the keenness of the frost, our clothes, which during the struggle had been moist with perspiration, were immediately frozen as we emerged from the sheltering gully. Our ascent had taken seventy-five minutes instead of the usual five minutes, and the difficulties would only have been reduced,

not removed, if we had been provided with ice-axes. Indeed, so shifting was the snow, that save as a means of clearing handholes, an axe would only have been a hindrance. It is said that a certain place is paved with good resolutions, and we have sent on our contribution by resolving never more to climb in snow without gloves. Our hands did not recover their equilibrium for at least twenty-four hours, and were certainly the worse for the wear.

W. INGLIS CLARK.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

---

(To the Editor of the "S.M.C. Journal.")

January 4, 1897.

SIR,—Kindly allow me, through the medium of the Journal, to thank "the man ca'ad Broun" for his interesting and instructive *résumé* of the Coolins in 1896. Let me also say how heartily I concur in his suggestion of having a Club Hut in Coruisk. I long ago advocated shelters near the base of operations (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. I., p. 133). I never enjoyed to walk, as some members of Club have done, five miles or more an hour, even for a few hours, after a day on the hills to catch the last train or to dine before, say, 11.15 P.M. The "Club Meets," so admirably arranged by our late Secretary, has done much to obviate the "rushing" to and from the hills, and has also done a great deal to promote fellowship between members. There is still, however, room for a Hut at Coruisk, and let us hope Mr Brown's idea will ere long become an accomplished fact.

It is one of the chief articles in the creed of the members of the S.M.C. that all proprietary rights shall be respected. I mention this here only because of misconception in the minds of some respecting a former contribution referred to above, where this trait was not specially mentioned. It is hoped, therefore, that any objection on the part of the proprietor of Coruisk will be readily overcome when he is fully informed about the Club and the objects in view.

D. MACKENZIE.





PLATE I.



*From Photo by H. C. Boyd.*  
SUMMIT OF STOB GHABHAR, SHOWING "UPPER COULOIR" CLEAVING N.E. BUTTRESS.

# THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

---

Vol. IV.

SEPTEMBER 1897.

No. 24.

---

## THE "UPPER COULOIR" OF STOB GHABHAR.

BY A. ERNEST MAYLARD.

STOB GHABHAR, in the Black Mount, has, as everybody knows, a couloir which cleaves the bold north-east rocky buttress of its summit, and which has afforded many an hour's good sport, sometimes defying every effort to successfully ascend it, while at others succumbing to the persistent and stubborn assaults of the "good old axe." How many attacks have been made upon this particular couloir in winter and spring I do not know. Our Journal records but two; the first partially successful, the second unsuccessful. The following adds a third, and was successful.

The first attempt was made on 16th April 1892; the lower half of the couloir was climbed, but the ascent could only be continued by a diversion from the ice and snow to the rocks. The second attempt was made on 24th March 1894; the condition of the ice and rocks, however, rendered the ascent impossible. On 1st May of the present year (1897) it was for a third time attacked, and the ice proved of such a nature as to admit of a complete ascent. I personally took part in the first and last ascents; and it is particularly in regard to the last that I am tempted, for reasons which will shortly appear, to write a short account of it.

Being, as I have just stated, one of the party—which comprised Professors Ramsay, Joseph Coats, and Mr Naismith—who made the ascent in 1892, I wrote an account of the same for the Journal, which appeared in the

September number of that year. I will not repeat all I said then, but I would like briefly to refer to the salient features of the climb. Before doing so, however, let me just shortly indicate the physical features of the couloir, in order that those unfamiliar with it may better understand the difficulties it sometimes, and most frequently, presents in winter and spring. A reference to the admirable photograph taken by Mr Douglas (see Vol. II., p. 127) will serve to make clearer this description, as will also that taken by Mr Boyd which accompanies this paper (see Plate I.).

A snow slope of perhaps 30° approaches the foot of the couloir (marked "upper couloir" in Mr Douglas's illustration), when it changes to about 40° as it passes up between the rocky sides which bound it. These sides differ considerably. Thus on the south side the rocks are either perpendicular or overhang, while on the north side they tend to shelve off, leaving slabs which mostly lean downwards. After the couloir is ascended for about 150 feet, the foot of an ice-fall is reached, which rapidly changes the angle from 40° to 60°, or even more (I am speaking from memory and imagination in the matter of these angles of inclination, and am cognisant of the danger of overestimating, but being conscious of this likely error in judgment, I believe I have under—rather than over—stated the inclination of the different slopes). This very high grade of inclination exists for about 15 to 20 feet; but on reaching this height it at once shelves off to an angle a little less than that which approaches the foot of the fall. This easier grade exists for about 120 feet, the couloir at the same time widening out, until the cornice near the summit is reached. The whole interest of the climb centres in successfully negotiating the ice-fall. I have never seen the couloir in summer, but this ice-fall is doubtless in winter and spring a frozen waterfall.

To return to the first ascent in 1892. The snow was in excellent condition, and about 500 feet of step-cutting had to be executed before the base of the "fall" was reached. It was soon found that the "blue" ice of which the "fall" was composed would admit of only a traverse and no ascent. When crossed the rocks had to be taken to, and

fortunately were in such a condition as to admit of the "fall" being circumvented. The snow in the couloir above the "fall" was again approached and ascended to the summit. The crossing of the "fall" and the ascent of the rocks took about two hours. A cold north-east wind whistled up the gully, chilling to the very bone those whose unhappy lot it was to wait and watch the laborious efforts of the leader hewing out steps in the hard blue ice.

In the ascent attempted in 1894 by Messrs Campbell, Boyd, Maclay, Moss, and W. Ramsay, and described by Mr Fraser Campbell in the May number of the *Journal* for that year (Vol. III., p. 98), the ice-fall when reached was "voted impracticable by the leaders, and a return to the rocks at this place being apparently very hazardous, the party descended the couloir and continued the ascent by the corrie to the right."

In marked contrast to the two attempts just briefly described is that which I am now about to narrate. Two features stand out prominently in connection with it—one, the complete ascent of the couloir, including the ice-fall; and the other, that of the party of four, two were ladies, the one a wife of a member Professor Adamson, and the other the sister of a member Professor Weiss.

A great deal of snow had fallen and was very soft, so that the approach to the couloir was both tedious and laborious. A plunge up to one's knees or one's hips was a by no means uncommon occurrence. The foot of the "fall" was approached with some feelings of dubiety, for there were no reasons to suppose it any easier or more likely "to go" than on the two previous occasions. However, when the axe was brought to play upon the foot of the "fall," the ice was found to give in such a way as to admit of conventional "soup plates" being cut and a traverse effected; and to suggest also that should the rocks prove impossible, the "fall" itself might be ascended. As soon as the foot of the "fall" was nearly crossed, it was at once seen that the rocks were absolutely unapproachable. They were glazed with ice and a thin coating of snow; and from their downward inclination, such a thing as a handhold, a foothold, or a hitch for the rope was out of the question. It then became

a matter of attempting the steep "fall" or giving up the thing as not feasible. It soon became evident, however, that steps could be cut which would give alike good hand-holds and good footholds. The condition of the ice was excellent: it approached more of the nature of frozen melted snow—neither true solid ice nor hard snow. By picking deeply both inwards and downwards, the fingers of each hand were able to get a good grip of the steps above. It was soon found that a tolerably long rope was needed if the leader was to secure himself above the "fall" before the next followed. We had with us a 60-foot rope, and as there were four on it, it became necessary for Miss Weiss, who was second, to unrope and stand aside while Mrs Adamson came up to the foot of the "fall"; by this means just sufficient rope was given to allow of the necessary anchorage on the easier slope above the "fall." Adamson now directed his wife, while I took in the slack, he paying out while I listened for his injunctions, for I could see nothing of what was going on below the "fall." Without any tension on the rope, the welcome sight of Mrs Adamson's head at last appeared in view, and after a few more exertions she was safely secured above me. The rope was then taken off Mrs Adamson to admit of the necessary length being lowered for Miss Weiss. With equal celerity and fearlessness, Miss Weiss followed without a slip, and without putting any strain on the rope. Adamson brought up the rear, and we were once again together, a little proud, justly, I venture to think, of what we had successfully accomplished. We now got into position again, re-applied the rope, and commenced the final ascent. Before reaching the cornice we were caught by as veritable a whirlwind and blizzard as ever raged on mountain top. We were forced almost to throw ourselves down face foremost in order to keep our places. The wind shrieked, buffeted us on all sides, and drove up the frozen particles of snow, peppering us as if with pellets. Fortunately it only lasted for a minute or two, when we were again able to raise our heads, open our eyes, and ascertain if we were "all there." The ascent was then continued, and a particular place in the cornice made for where it was noticed that the snow had filled in the hollow of the

PLATE II.



*From Photo by J. Rennie.*

SUMMIT OF STOB GHABHAR, N. E. BUTTRESS CLEFT BY "UPPER COULOIR."



overhanging ridge. Once above this we found ourselves within a comparatively few feet of the cairn. Visible this was, but nothing else, for thick mist was driving over us in dense clouds, shutting out of view all distant scenery. It was too cold for a prolonged stay, so we hastened down the easy southern slope and ere long reached Mackintyre's, the head keeper's, lodge at Inveroran. He came out to meet us, and was apparently much impressed by the feat accomplished by the ladies, crediting them as being the first to his knowledge to ascend the "Upper Couloir" of Stob Ghabhar.

The excellent photograph taken by Mr Rennie (see Plate II.) shows that portion of the rocky buttress which bounds the southern side of the couloir, the latter commencing at the foot of the rocks to right of the observer. The shadow of the overhanging cornice is well seen to the left, as also the long straight grooves in the snow slope produced by the broken-off pieces of the cornice.



## GARBH BHEINN OF ARDGOUR.

BY W. BROWN.

IT is three years ago since I first saw Garbh Bheinn soaring proudly out of Ardgour through the morning mists, its fine cliffs and bastions brightly illumined by the rising sun, and seeming to dwarf by their greater dignity and impressiveness the equally high hills in the neighbourhood. A year later I heard Mr Colin Phillip extolling the merits of a fine mountain at the Fort-William Meet, and assigning to it a high place among the still unappreciated peaks of Scotland. This turned out to be Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour, which, according to Mr Phillip, was a striking and original mountain of bold outline, and full of interesting possibilities for the rock-climber, having a great array of ridges, buttresses, and gullies, all unclimbed, and a fascinating pinnacle supposed to be "inaccessible." Such a catalogue of attractions was, of course, absolutely irresistible, and I therefore learned with dismay that this Admirable Crichton among mountains was reserved for an English party, shortly to be conducted thither by Mr Phillip himself. The party came, but, I believe, neither saw nor conquered. It occupied most of the day wandering in a Scotch mist and soft snow about the base of the mountain, and I suppose returned home disgusted.

So Garbh Bheinn's rocks remained unclimbed until April of this year, when Mr Bell and I, having failed to get into Clachaig owing to the Alpine Club being in possession of that ideal little inn, crossed Loch Linnhe, determined to find consolation in Ardgour. The move was an extremely happy one. It revealed a most charming headquarters at Ardgour Hotel, opposite Corran Ferry, where the climber has all the delights of a most picturesque situation, with convenience of access, moderate charges, and a perfectly fascinating table of fares connected with the adjacent ferry, which, with the infinite variety of arithmetical problems thence arising, will beguile the tedium of an "off day."

Corran is seven miles by road from Inversanda, which is

the nearest inhabited point for Garbh Bheinn, but we were lucky in being driven the distance by the lessee of Inversanda deer forest, who was staying at the hotel. The same gentleman accompanied us to the head of Glen Iubhair, but having other objects in view besides climbing, and not being much impressed with the merits of our route as a means of reaching the top, parted company with us at that point.

Glen Iubhair is rather a featureless glen, but we noted as a promising sign that the prevailing rock as it cropped out in "boiler-plate" slabs in the bed of the stream and high up the hillsides was either our old friend gabbro or something closely resembling it, from the pleasant and well-remembered crunch that our hobnails made in crossing it. A mile from Inversanda the glen takes a bend to the left, and bit by bit Garbh Bheinn creeps into view, forming by the gradual addition of ridge to corrie and crag to buttress one of the boldest pictures of mountain grandeur that is to be seen on the mainland of Scotland. Imagine a deep rocky corrie with a great headland of naked rock projecting into it on the right, and extending in that direction in a long wall of precipice, seamed with gullies and ribbed with ridges, falling in straight lines from the sky-line, and seeming to offer a practically unlimited field to the climber. The crest of the mountain is finely peaked and turreted, and one pinnacle more conspicuous than the rest stands boldly forth in the foreground. This is the so-called "inaccessible pinnacle"—inaccessible, however, as it turned out, to nobody but a lame man.

Of possible routes to the summit from this point I have no doubt a diligent search would discover more than a score. The easiest seems to be up the corrie to the col on the south-east and thence along the south-east ridge; but having regard to the excellence of the rock Bell and I allowed our eyes to rest longingly on the great headland before referred to, which from this point was seen to be cleft into two portions by a large and conspicuous gully that descends from the summit of the mountain. After careful deliberation we selected the north wall of this gully for our ascent, as it seemed to be the true crest of the buttress, and

is both steeper and grander than the south one. On reaching the foot of the rocks (at a height of 1,800 feet by Bell's aneroid) we roped and commenced to ascend by a grassy tongue immediately to the left of the gully. From this point to the end of the first stage of the ascent the route is difficult to describe. Generally speaking, our object was to reach a broad grassy ledge or rake that encircles the upper part of the buttress like a girdle, and is very conspicuous from below. We gained this point by following a diagonal course towards the left, making height by a succession of wet and water-worn gullies, and traversing wherever a patch of grass, scree, or heather offered a sufficiently tempting way. The "going" here is treacherous rather than difficult, and it seems probable that a comparatively simple access to the grass ledge can be found on the other side of the ridge.

When the grass ledge is reached, the climber instinctively ascends to its highest point, expecting to find a continuance of the same easy route round the corner. "No road this way," however, is written large upon the forbidding cliffs which there confront him, and on the smooth face of which the ledge terminates. The way indeed seems hopelessly blocked in all directions, but a trial is all that is necessary to show that the steep rocks rising from the upper end of the ledge are quite practicable, and indeed far more easy than they look. We traversed first to the right and then backwards to the crest of the buttress, which was afterwards followed to the summit of the mountain. The climbing is continuously steep and interesting, with a delightful uncertainty arising from every fresh pinnacle and traverse, suggesting the possibility of defeat at the last moment, or a less comfortable retreat down the sides of the precipice if the ascent be persisted in. No place is specially difficult, but I have a vivid recollection of returning some aid Bell rendered me earlier in the climb, by crawling on his invitation to the back of a cave, and making a "jammed stone" of my back and limbs, while my companion climbed gaily on to the roof, and made all the stones around me shake and rattle and threaten instant burial of my mortal remains. After the ridge was reached, the rocks, which throughout

are splendidly firm and sound, formed an easy if somewhat steep staircase; and with the exception of one rather sensational traverse on the right-hand side, the climbing was without incident. The whole ascent from the foot of the rocks occupied two and a half hours, and without being either difficult or dangerous, was one of the most charming and interesting scrambles either of us had ever taken part in.

The summit of the mountain (2,980 feet by Bell's aneroid; no height on the O.S. map) is quite an assemblage of tops, and after visiting all of them in turn, we began to think of descending by the "inaccessible pinnacle." While we were standing on the west top, the identity of that alluring eminence was a matter of animated discussion. It would really appear to be the projecting bluff which runs down from the central top, but we concluded at the time that it must be a sharp rocky point that we could see low down on the shattered ridge leading from it towards the N.E. Accordingly to that point we made tracks, and after some manoeuvring down an A. P. chimney and across a hard frozen snowfield, we had an enjoyable scramble across the point in question and several subsidiary ones. The ridge is so shattered and rotten as to be marked out for special notice in the six-inch map as the *Fiaclan an Garbh Bheinn*, but its descent is a matter of no great difficulty.

From the foot of the mountain we made our way home across the col between *Beinn Bheag* and *Sgor Mhic Eacharna*, and afterwards through *Glen Gour*.

## Y TRYFAEN, WALES.

BY FRED. W. JACKSON.

WE have it on very ancient authority that there is much comfort in "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." In like manner the shadow of a great name is something to be grateful for. Thus, when Mr Haskett-Smith says in his Welsh Climbing Guide that Y Tryfaen (pron. *A Truviin*) is "the most remarkable rock mountain in Wales," my responsibility is perceptibly lightened, and the Editor justified in giving place to one of little Wales's mountains, notwithstanding that mighty Scotland is still a mine to be worked for many years to come. Baddeley's Guide uses the same expression, but I should not have ventured to say more than that Y Tryfaen (which means possibly "the three-peaked") is *one* of the most remarkable Welsh mountains, always giving the palm to Snowdon, and in this opinion I should have the support of "Badminton." At any rate it is a most interesting mountain, worthy of much attention, and is not difficult of access. A reading of Mr T. V. Scully's two articles, in Vol. III. of the Journal, will be found helpful towards understanding the character of the locality. The nearest railway stations are at Bethesda, five miles to the west, and at Bettws-y-Coed, ten miles to the east. Capel Curig, where there are several hotels, is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles on the way from Bettws-y-Coed. The road along the Ogwen Valley or Nant Francon attains almost 1,000 feet at the water-shed near the foot of Tryfaen, and as the mountain is but 3,010 feet high, the climb of it is not very formidable. It runs north and south, springing from the shore of Llyn (Lake) Ogwen, and ending a mile beyond at Bwlch (the Welsh equivalent for Bealach) Tryfaen, the summit forming a true ridge with three separate peaks, the middle one being the highest and crowned with two large stones visible from the road. What it lacks in height it makes up in picturesque outline. From the north-east side (as illustrated) it is most striking, whilst as seen from the north, across the valley, it assumes



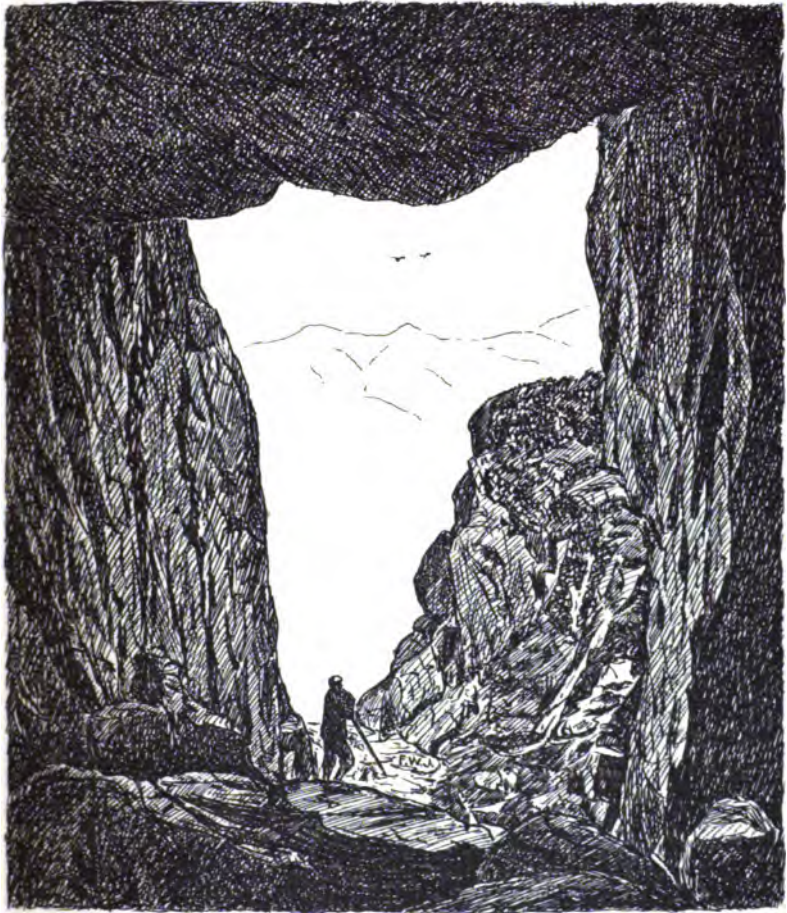


a really imposing sugar-loaf appearance, well set off by the Glyders beyond. Cwm Bochllwyd, in which lies a little lake, forms the hollow on the west, and the glacier-worn Cwm Tryfaen that on the east side. A pleasant scramble can be had by following the ridge from end to end : it is chiefly rock-work of a simple character, but some little problems may be found on the way. Should the ridge be traversed southwards, it would be advisable to continue beyond Bwlch Tryfaen over the Glyder Arête (shown in the illustration)—very like a bit of Skye ridge—to the summit of Glyder Fach, perhaps the most wonderful mountain top in Wales, consisting of piles of huge blocks of weathered stone.

When viewed from the eastern side, a noticeable feature of Tryfaen is a continuous line running right across the face of the mountain, roughly parallel with the line of its base. This proves to be an easy traverse formed by a fault in the rock ; when climbing the mountain, it should be reached at the earliest possible moment. All below it is an exasperating mixture of heather, scree, and broken rock, set at a sufficiently steep angle, whilst above it is almost entirely bare rock, seamed with gullies. From Bwlch Tryfaen the traverse is reached almost immediately ; at the other end it may be seen winding round at no great elevation above the road, to be presently lost on the west side of the mountain, the side on which there is hardly any true climbing, but a fair amount of scrambling. Almost all the rock climbs are above the traverse on the east side, the gullies being good for 400 or 500 feet each. There are six or seven of these, but only the three central ones offer sufficient opposition to be considered sporting. The walls of the gullies and the faces of rock between them show many climbs of the fancy kind, but it is the gullies that practically monopolise attention. To avoid confusion it will be desirable to adopt the distinctions used in Mr Haskett-Smith's climbing book. He calls the main one the "North" Gully, because it comes out immediately to the north of the summit, whilst those to left and right are called the "South" and "Nor'-nor'" Gullies respectively. The Nor'-nor' affords some very enjoyable climbing, and is never



very difficult. It consists of pitches at intervals, stretches of scree between, varied with an occasional piece of wall scaling. Should any portion appear too difficult, it is generally practicable to escape at some point near the obstruction. The South Gully is very similar in character, but has two awkward pitches. At two or three places it opens out and divides into right and left branches. On 1st August this year a party of three climbed this gully, keeping to the left throughout, as this seemed more sporting. "Badminton" says, don't take a novice with you ; but, then, if the poor novice is to be "cut," how is he to become anything else? Anyhow, I was disobedient on this occasion, sinning doubly in taking two novices ; but as one was Wood and the other Cole, it only required the touch of fire to awaken heat and kindle enthusiasm. By which simile I mean that my two companions took to the work with ardour. The first pitch is a very little way above the traverse. It is only some 15 feet high, but has a steep coping-stone that throws one off, and, judging by the experiences related by Mr Haskett-Smith, refuses all exit by the roof. Our leader made two attempts, the second time supported by a rope taken up by the right-hand wall. He got as far as possible, the right side pressed against a wet mossy face of rock that transferred its moisture through his clothes. No amount of wriggling would let him pass between the coping-stone and the wall ; the stone just buried itself in his coat and refused to let go. The rope upset the gravity of some scree above, every bit of which as it fell going with unerring aim straight for the prisoner, who carried the marks away with him. Perhaps some one of the consistency of a wafer could pass this obstruction, but in that case he would hardly have the lung capacity necessary for a climber. The second awkward pitch is close to the top of the gully, and has to be climbed by the left wall, where at the crucial point there is no grip for the hands. Progress is made by pressing the arms and hands on two flat ledges sloping towards the climber, who feels that the balance is held rather too evenly to be quite pleasant when he remembers what is below, especially as foot-hold is none too good.



*From a photograph by J. B. Pettigrew.*

**THE "CAVE" PITCH IN TRYFAEN NORTH GULLY,  
LOOKING OUTWARDS.**

UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
LIBRARY

The *pièce de résistance* of Tryfaen climbing is the great central or "North" Gully, containing as it does two if not three distinctly difficult pitches, one being a cave. It would scarcely be believed that the following lines are by a modern poet, there is something so archaic about them; yet when I found the late Lord de Tabley using them, it occurred to me that many a worse description of the North Gully might be given.

"A chasm, in whose mouth the tumbled crags  
Tumbled and jumbled as in Titan wars,  
Lie fragmented in horror, block on block,  
Torn and enormous boulders."

Mr Haskett-Smith's quoted descriptions of the upper and lower pitches speak of one as not easy and the other as giving some trouble, therefore I need not feel ashamed to say that I find them difficult. And here I may express a doubt about clinkers for such climbs, for at both pitches I slipped off owing to the nails failing to grip. This was at Easter last year, when with Drs Rose and Lewkowitsch we made a successful ascent. The North Gully is continued below the traverse, but not often taken throughout. Those who begin at the bottom will find that there is a difficult pitch emerging a few feet below where the climb generally begins. In a mist it is not always easy to find a particular gully, but there can be no mistake about the North one. If the cave is not reached in a few minutes there has been a mistake. This cave, represented in the accompanying illustration, is stated in Mr Haskett-Smith's book to have been surmounted by one man climbing over the shoulders of another, but it can be accomplished by other means. The only exit is by the right-hand (northern) wall, some 10 or 12 feet high, to which the left shoulder must be turned. A loose flake of rock stands on the ground; balance on this and slowly raise the body until the back of the head and the right hand can be pressed against the roof. Reach the left hand through the skylight upwards and back as far as possible until a small hold is found. There are two, but that farthest back must be grasped.

Next release the right hand and swing round to catch the other hold. You are now hanging by both hands. Fling the right foot up against the only projection on the surface of the wall. A little assistance from below is not to be despised at this juncture. Now comes the tug of war ; it is a severe struggle to get up to where the wall bends over, at too great an angle for repose. Keep as much as possible to the left, and wriggle and pull up the best way you can. One is forcibly reminded of the primeval curse bestowed upon the serpent, " Upon thy belly shalt thou go." Moreover, it generally happens that water is running over the slab, to the manifest injury of ornamental clothes.

The second pitch is immediately above the cave, and consists of blocks one above another, the upper ones projecting farthest. The holds are peculiar, and not to be described. Whatever water there may be in the gully goes coolly down your upraised sleeve and out at the knee until you escape by the top left-hand angle.

The third principal pitch is just below where the gully finally opens out. By actual measurement it is from 22 to 25 feet high, and only possible by the right-hand wall, which, but for the sake of appearances, might as well be quite perpendicular. Of hold there is practically none for a dozen feet, so that the climber somewhat resembles a squirrel on a tree trunk. There is one good rest for a foot, and here our leader last year had to stay struggling in vain for several minutes, not having the necessary length of arm to reach the next friction clutch. At last, in foreign accents, the help of an ice-axe was suggested and accepted. Not to put too fine a point upon it, the head of the axe was applied to the most suitable place, and the dead centre overcome by a push from below and a simultaneous grab, but how the next few feet were passed there seems to be no recollection. About 20 feet up there is a ledge, and the thing is done. The rest of the party kept a little more to the left, and found it slightly easier, and the rope by no means a hindrance. The climbing of this gully by the pitches is purely a matter of choice, for at several places they can be avoided by leaving the direct course.

There are many mountains that one is content to leave

after the first introduction. Not so Tryfaen: he may become like an old friend, whom one is always glad to see and give a hand to. He will give you a hearty grip in return, and let you feel quite at home wandering over his domain.

## SGOR NA CICHE—A CLIMB AGAINST TIME.

BY HERBERT C. BOYD.

“There be some sports are painful, and their labour  
Delight in them sets off.”—*The Tempest.*

THE winds conspired last Easter that the good yacht “Erne” should not cast anchor in Loch Scavaig, and the stalwart band of mountaineers on board were debarred by an adverse fate from setting foot on the Coolins. We had made a valiant attempt—at least we believed that our skipper had; and therefore, after we had failed in our second effort—“failed nobly,” as Rennie feelingly put it—we found ourselves on the morning of Easter Monday at anchor off Inverie in Loch Nevis. What took the ship’s company there no one seemed to know. A fine loch, no doubt, though it looked rather gloomy under the weather conditions that prevailed during our visit; but our object was *to climb*, and the question was, What was there to climb? The authorities said there were Luinne Bheinn and Ladhar Bheinn close at hand; but we had spent the last two days in climbing those hills from Loch Hourn, their finest side, and after steeping ourselves in the grandeur of their corries, we felt little enthusiasm for their tamer slopes. Then it was said there were some good boulders on shore; but, seriously, *does* one penetrate to the remotest fastnesses of the Highlands for the sake of climbing—boulders? No, we were out for bigger game than boulders; after having come so far, we clamoured for something big, something new, if possible. Our clamour seemed to be for the unattainable, until it transpired, from a study of the maps, that at the head of the loch lay a fine mountain on which no one on board had ever set foot. “But such a grind to get there,” was the discouraging comment with which the information was accompanied. The appetite of some men, however, for anything in the shape of a new mountain is insatiable. The prospect of a “grind” does not deter them. One would think that this acute form of mountain-hunger, which is peculiarly the mark of the man who is “qualifying for the Club,” might have passed away with the probationary period; but it is not so. Thus, when the ship’s boat

was lowered, behold! four such gluttons tumbled in with ice-axes and rucksacks, heedless of the opprobrium attaching to inveterate "peakbaggers," and with the avowed intention of making Sgor na Ciche their goal that day.

Perhaps, however, I should mention another circumstance which must be held accountable for the smallness of our muster. The skipper had declared that if we wished to make certain of catching the early train at Oban next morning, it was imperative that he should weigh anchor at 6 P.M.; and the President had therefore ordained that any man who was not on board by that hour would be left to find his way back to civilisation as best he could, for the yacht he should see no more. A threat which certainly put the fear of death into the hearts of many a would-be aspirant after the maiden beauties of Sgor na Ciche, for the question arose, Was the expedition feasible within the time? Now, had we anchored at the head of the loch, as we at one time fondly hoped, there would have been small difficulty; the mountain would have been before us. But the captain would not venture his vessel through the Kyles that divide the upper loch from the lower; and lying as we did at Inverie, it was another matter. The maps showed that the distance to the foot of the mountain was about eight miles in a straight line through Glen Meadail—for there appeared to be no reliable road round the loch-side. Add to this, that the road through the glen rose to a height of 1,700 feet, then sank again to sea level, after which the 3,410 feet of the mountain had to be faced, and some idea will be gained of what had to be done within the eight and a half hours at our disposal. Nearly 7,000 feet of vertical height and twenty miles of walking within that time did not appeal to all. Men who had been climbing the day before said they preferred to have an off day—the weather was not looking nice—they would gather primroses, for was it not Primrose Day? And so, as I said, our party numbered only four—the two Barrows, T. H. Smith, and myself.

Landing, then, at half-past nine, we took our way through the village, and up the shore of the loch as far as the entrance to Inverie House; then turned off to the left,



and began to ascend by a road which wound through woods of larch just beginning to break into their tasselled green. We were much struck with the contrast between Loch Nevis and Loch Hourn in the signs of the approach of spring. Loch Hourn we had seen yesterday bathed in the brilliant April sunshine, but with hardly a trace of greenery; the earth and the trees seemed still to feel the hand of winter. To-day, on the other hand, though dull and cheerless, the earth was bright with primroses and daffodils, and everywhere the trees were putting out their fresh green leaves. A striking contrast; and yet the two lochs are separated by only a few miles. It was difficult to account for such a difference of climate in so short a space.

The road soon leaves the trees behind, and takes us over the bare heath—a good road, so far as we could see, leading through Glen Dulochan to Barrisdale on Loch Hourn. Presently the track for Glen Meadail branches to the right.\* This is our route. After crossing the Inverie River by a wooden bridge, a little below its confluence with the Allt Gleann Meadail, the path winds for some distance along the banks of the latter stream—a fine picturesque piece of Highland river scenery—the water dashing fiercely through a narrow rocky channel, over linns and falls overhung by budding birch trees. Then we reach a place marked “ford” on the map, at the entrance to the glen, where the stream, though broad, is easily crossed by stepping stones. The burn is gradually left below, on the right, as we rise steadily, mile after mile, up the glen, along the side of Meall Bhuidhe. The glen presents very conspicuous evidences of ancient glacier action; the lower slopes are planed smooth; moraines abound; the line of flow of the ice can everywhere be detected in the smoothing and polishing of the rocks. On the other side of the glen stands the rugged mass of Bheinn Bhuidhe, the blackness of whose upper rocks, slashed with snow, is dimmed with

---

\* In the older issues of Bartholomew's maps (only two or three years back) this track is indicated as a main road; the same is true of other mere mountain tracks in this region; their true character is correctly indicated in the latest issues. *Cavete*, all ye who venture to combine cycling with mountaineering!

the gathering mist; the snowfields above are almost entirely blotted out. For the weather, which was dull and gloomy at the outset, has now settled down to a regular fit of the sulks. The clouds hang heavily on the hills, and come far down their sides. As they draw closer down, a dismal rain begins to fall; it is clear we are in for a spell of typical "British hill weather." The pace, too, is severe—indicated by the monosyllabic character of the remarks that interrupt occasionally the regular swing of the feet, and the sigh of relief with which the rucksack is transferred to the shoulders of the "next man."

At last, after two hours' steady walking, we reach the col, and get our first glimpse of the other side. Over against us lies the huge bulk of Sgor na Ciche, wrapped in mist, its base only dimly visible. But what a drop lies between! From where we stand the path plunges abruptly down in sharp zigzags for 1,700 feet to the deep valley of the Carnach, crossing it close to the muddy flats at the head of Loch Nevis. That has to be descended before the mountain is approached; it has also to be reascended on the return. Can we do it in time? A hurried council is held; a hasty calculation—necessarily uncertain, as we do not know the nature of the difficulties above the snow line. It is now half-past eleven. Allowing half an hour for the descent to the Carnach, and two and a half hours (including halts for lunch) for the ascent of our peak, we should be there by half-past two: that would leave us three and a half hours for the return. Again, can we do it? A division prevails in the council; some think we can, and that in any case it is worth while to try it, in order to accomplish the object of our expedition: others insist on the utter uncertainty of accomplishing anything at all if we make the attempt. And then that steamer—and the President's threat! Too awful to contemplate! Then a vote is taken. Walter Barrow and Smith wish to make sure of *something*—of ascending *some* mountain—and catching the steamer; so they elect to climb Meall Bhuidhe. Harrison Barrow and I decide to go on to Sgor na Ciche. We can but turn if we find it impossible. The contents of the rucksacks are redivided, and we part.

Trotting and jumping down the well-made stalkers' path, and cutting off all corners, we achieve a rapid descent. The singular thing about this excellent path is, that within 50 yards of the foot, it comes to an abrupt stop—evinced by a sudden and unaccountable shyness of the solitary cottage at Carnach. Just below the cottage is a bridge over the river leading to—a morass; the map indicates a continuation of the road here, but we saw no signs of it; only half a mile of the most approved style of bog, full of lanes and pools of water and villainous quagmire, reaching to the foot of our hill. And here we passed the only sign of humanity we met with that day out of Inverie—an old woman gathering peats. The lower creation was represented chiefly by deer, with which these hills appear to be abundantly stocked. Being on strictly Salvationist principles for the day, we selected the longest and easiest grass slope that we could see, and were gratified to find that the south-west slope or ridge, which runs down towards the loch, presented delightfully smooth and even going; no switchback curves, or time-losing excrescences; all nice easy inclined plane. And so, having made good progress, we flung ourselves on the turf, about one o'clock, for a well-earned lunch.

We had entered the mist by this time, and it was raining heavily. Nothing was visible but our grass slope. Soon we came to the snow line, and the rain changed first to sleet, finally to dry snow. The higher we climbed, the heavier it became. At the same time the slope steepened, and became more rugged; the snowy covering grew firmer; rocky pitches, covered with crystals and drapery of snow and ice, occasionally confronted us, and called the axe into play. Now a short ice gully, where a staircase had to be cut; now a rib of rock, where the snow, crisp or powdery as the case might be, had to be cleared away to obtain sure footing. And all around the whirling snow-flakes, whitening us from head to foot. There was nothing really difficult, however, to turn us aside. Such obstacles as we met with afforded interesting climbing, and served to vary what would have been otherwise a monotonous ascent. But they lost time; the deep soft snow made climbing heavy work, and necessarily slow; it was uncertain

how far we were still from the top, as we could see nothing, and we had no aneroid. We began to debate whether it would be prudent to persist; we were approaching our time limit, for it would be altogether too serious jockeying with that steamer. Then, just as we were anxiously consulting our watches, there, joyful sight, was the cairn, dim looming through the drift! And down we squatted beside it at 2.20, after a climb of about two hours.

We were well within our time allowance, so we allowed ourselves a halt of ten minutes—for a little refreshment and to consider our situation. View, of course, there was none, but to the eye of faith much was revealed that to the bodily eye remained hidden. Here were we seated on the topmost summit of a shapely peak—that peak which has earned such choice epithets in these pages as “the great isolated peak of Sgor na Ciche,” “the steep and almost Matterhorn-like Sgor na Ciche”—whose form we well could fancy, though it was denied us to see it, with its flowing lines, its graceful cone, its finely sculptured corries—ascending in long, gentle slope from the sea, sinking in steep gradient to the deep trough of the Carnach at our feet, 3,000 feet below, and to the north-east and south-east throwing out two giant arms or spurs—arms enclosing (who could doubt?) a savage corrie, the very shrine and inner sanctuary of the mountain, where the mountain spirit might be supposed to dwell. The ground sloped rapidly away on all sides of the cairn, and little indication could we see of the existence of that corrie; but to the true believer, apart from the testimony of the map, its existence down there in the mist was indubitable. For was it not *bound* to be there in accordance with all the laws of Scottish mountain structure? And where there was a corrie, there must be a climb—probably climbs—though not for us to-day. With a little exercise, the eye of faith may be induced to show us, still further beyond the veil, a wild sea of hills innumerable girdling us, now all wrapped in the billowy clouds; and winding among them multitudinous lochs—inland, Loch Quoich, Loch Arkaig, perhaps Loch Eil; seaward, Loch Hourn, Loch Nevis just below, Loch Morar, and how many others,

running in deep inlets from the west; beyond all, the mighty Atlantic, studded with islands. How fair a prospect that would be in the glad sunlight, now all blotted out by the mist and the drifting snow!

The first stage of the descent was partly scrambling, partly floundering; where steps were needed, not stopping to make them, we slipped, slid, or tumbled over the rocks or down the gullies on to soft beds of snow below. Then we came to the long stretches of snow-field that invited to the glissade, and off we set on our haunches; but, alas, coming to the end all too soon, sitting among slush. And then to the long grass slopes once more. We descended obliquely by the steeper slopes that flank Glen Carnach, making a straight line for the cottage at the foot, as the beginning of our path through Glen Meadail. At 3.35, the river, very much swollen by the rains, was forded; then before facing our second climb to the col, we sat down to another repast and finished the remainder of the edibles. And now for the tug! It had taken us half an hour to make that descent, at a sharp gallop all the way; it would evidently take an hour to make the ascent. But Barrow set the pace so heroically, that in three-quarters of an hour I found myself panting on the heather on the top, in a rather congested condition, full of envy, however, for my friend's lungs and muscles, which seemed no more incommoded than if we had been on level ground. I was allowed five minutes to recover somewhat; the march was resumed at 4.40. We had an hour and twenty minutes before us, and as it was all down hill, and we had only taken two hours to come *up* in the morning, we were confident that we should do it without difficulty. So, resting in a false security, with many a story we beguiled the way, and beguiled ourselves into a forgetfulness of the lapse of time. Our ford at the bottom of the glen presented a very different appearance from that which it bore when we crossed in the morning. We then crossed dry-shod by stepping-stones. Now all stepping-stones were swept by a swimming flood, and we were washed to the knees. So rapidly had a Highland stream risen with that one day's rain.

Suddenly—what sound is that? A long-drawn howl

echoes through the hills. Great Cæsar! the steamer's whistle, sounding the signal of departure, and we are still two miles off! Again and again the sound is repeated—and now we hear the ship's bell too. We set off manfully at a run, and for a time laboured on together; but I soon found that running with waterlogged ironclads on a hard road did not agree with me. They would carry me bravely *down* the hills, but *up* the hills they would not. So I abandoned the race to Barrow, and toiled doggedly on, half a mile in the rear. *He* had the satisfaction of coming in winner at 6.5, I a good second at 6.10, and found the ship's boat still waiting. On board the yacht steam was up, all was in readiness, nothing stayed its departure but the absence of us two stragglers, and no sooner were we on board than the anchor was weighed and we were off.

And now being safely off the hills, and steaming down Loch Nevis to the open sea, behold! the clouds roll away, the sky clears, and a perfect evening succeeds. I think none of us are likely soon to forget the beauty of that evening as we steamed past the western isles, and watched the sun setting in a blaze of glory over the peaks of Rum, flooding the gently heaving surface of the sea with rich golden light. How black those peaks stood out, sharp cut against the glow! And then, the mirth that prevailed—how the pipes were brought on deck, and the President, in all the splendour of Highland garb, footed it so deftly through the intricacies of the Highland fling—and reels were danced with enthusiasm, amid the cheers and laughter of the onlookers—interrupted occasionally by a sudden roll of the vessel, which would throw the dancers staggering into each other's arms—all this who shall forget? Coming as it did that mellow April evening, as the sunshine after storm, when even the angry toss of the sea had subsided into a gentle swell, and contrasting so sweetly with the gloom of the hills on that day of weltering rain, the scene was invested with an additional charm. It formed a fitting termination to the Meet, and completely wiped out any lingering feeling of disappointment at the scurvy treatment we had received from the elements in being so ruthlessly shut out from Skye.

And now, Mr Editor, I hear you observe, "But this was not mountaineering. This was a mere race, a rush, a grind." Be it so: I shall not dispute the point. It may not have been mountaineering in its highest and most enjoyable form—and I grant that it was not; but when a man cannot have the highest, is he not to content himself with the best within reach? For we held that Sgor na Ciche *was* the best within our reach that day. In the circumstances, what better was to be had in Loch Nevis? It was the highest mountain, the most notable,—we believed also the grandest, the most beautiful. The beauty and the grandeur, it is true, were hidden from our eyes, and we had merely the satisfaction of having accomplished the ascent, of having "bagged a peak"; but that was our misfortune. Willingly would I have offered a description of the mountain, instead of a bald narrative of an ascent—such a description as the Ultramontane loves, with the corries all named, divided and subdivided according to the most approved classification, the ridges and gullies all identified and ticketed in order, accompanied by an illustrative photograph; but such has not been my happy lot. The humble part allowed us was merely to go up—and come down again. It was also our misfortune to have to do it against time; but that must be laid to the skipper's charge for allowing us such scant grace, and especially for blowing his whistle in that soul-terrifying manner, so disturbing to our nerves. Gladly would we have accepted a couple of hours longer for the expedition; doubtless we should have in that case had the cheering company of half of our fellow-members from the yacht. But these things were not to be. And after all, is there anything so contemptible, so unworthy of a mountaineer, in a "grind"? Surely not. For is it not from taking delight in good hard tramps that the majority of us have grown to be mountaineers? Such things are good in themselves—muscle-forming, lung-strengthening, fitting one for more serious achievements; and when plain solid walks have gone into disrepute, and are scouted in this Club as "flat, stale, and unprofitable," we shall indeed have fallen on degenerate days.

## BEN LOMOND BY THE CLIFFS.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

AFTER the Easter Meet of the Club at Tyndrum, described in last Journal by Mr Smith, I had an opportunity of visiting the precipices of Ben Lomond. Twenty years ago I had ascended from Rowardennan, but at that time precipices were not in fashion, and their existence on Ben Lomond was only alluded to as an additional reason for caution. Looking over the back numbers of the Journal, two papers on the Ben excited my interest, and from a perusal of the one by Mr Maclay (Sept. '95, p. 343), I decided to ascend the Ben by the cliffs, and see if any new route could be exploited.

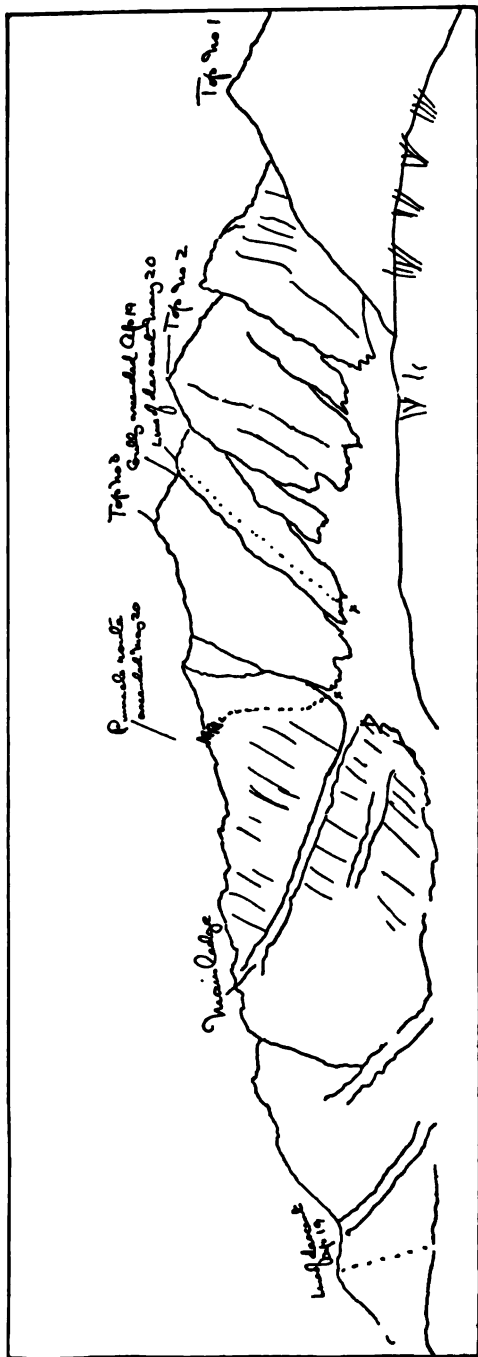
The Edinburgh Spring Holiday, 19th April, was an unfavourable day for such an attempt. In addition to the delay in the local steamers, the rain came down freely, and clouds covered the mountain for 700 feet. My rope and ice axe stimulated the wit and repartee of the tourist band who hurried on to the top from Rowardennan, forgetting the adage, "Chi va piano va sano"; and my brother-in-law and I were not sorry when our route left the beaten track and led over to the northern corrie. An intensely cold wind was blowing, and the slopes were not readily passed on account of the slushy snow, which was neither "flesh nor fowl." Arrived at the corrie, a magnificent wintry scene lay before us, for the snow lay deep, and hardly a point of rock pierced the white mantle. We struck the corrie where the cliffs were perhaps 100 feet high, and as every ledge was covered with snow, a full hour was occupied in the descent to the snow slope at the base, the rope being freely used for both the while.

The grandeur of the corrie was beyond description, and the clouds which shrouded the upper part of the cliffs, and farther north even lay below us, only intensified the Alpine character of the scene. We had carefully studied Maclay's diagram of the cliffs (see Sept. '95, p. 343), but were quite unable, owing to the mist, to follow the descrip-



tion. A long steep snow slope led us gradually upwards, consoled by the reflection that if perchance retreat was necessary, a splendid glissade would reward our efforts. This was not, however, to be, for suddenly, and *apparently vertically* above us, a snow chimney became visible through a break in the clouds. Which of the gullies described in the paper was this, and did it lead to the top? The hour was 4 P.M., the last steamer from Rowardennan was 5.45 P.M., and a steady snowstorm threatened to cover us up. Besides, the angle of ascent seemed impossible, unless the snow or ice were in excellent condition. The preliminary 60 feet showed stiff fight, and the clinometer gave an average reading during this distance of  $75^{\circ}$  to  $80^{\circ}$ . Fortunately, for the most part good solid ice was found, and big basins were cut out for safety. Soon the chimney was entered, some 4 to 5 feet wide, with ice-covered rocks on either side, and not an inch of hand-hold, but the angle decreased to  $60^{\circ}$ , and not till near the top did we meet with serious difficulty. Here a steep pitch over 30 feet high exceeded  $75^{\circ}$ , and the ice was not more than a few inches in thickness; but by dint of hacking, sufficient holds were obtained in the rock or frozen scree underneath, and the final slope gained. A small cornice confronted us, but in view of the insecurity of our foot-hold, this was avoided by a rather difficult traverse under an overhanging rock to the left, and at 5.45 P.M. we emerged on to the sky-line. But where were we? On an undoubted point, with the ridge sloping either way. Descending the other side, we soon came on the snow-covered footpath, and following this, reached Rowardennan, where we halted for tea. Ferrying across, a smart walk brought us to Luss about 9 P.M. It was in vain that we studied Maclay's paper, for no gully of  $60^{\circ}$  to  $80^{\circ}$  steepness seemed to be indicated. The climb had been a stiff one, but owing to the excellent ice, thoroughly safe. So choice a route must not be left uncertain.

The Queen's Birthday gave an opportunity to unravel the mystery, and after staying at Tarbet overnight, an early crossing enabled us to put foot on the opposite shore ere the morning dew had passed away. It was



THE CLIFFS OF BEN LOMOND FROM FIFTY FEET BELOW THE SUMMIT.



an ideal morning, and the colouring of nature, still fresh in its youth, enchanted the eye. The ascent through the varied woods made the road seem easy, and in due course we reached the top. The outlook was clear and distinct, the snow-white mass of Ben Nevis appearing close at hand, while a long array of familiar peaks stretched in either direction. From here Maclay's diagram was so far intelligible, for tops Nos. 1 and 2 were easily recognised, but the portion embracing the range of precipices in the high cliff needed revisal. The accompanying sketch, taken from a little below the top, is, I think, fairly accurate, and shows the chief points sufficiently well. Descending to the col, we kept to the ridge over tops 1 and 2, but found nothing to correspond till we reached top No. 3, and there found our identical gully running up from below, and a little to the north of the top. But how changed! Where before only walls of ice guarded the way, here were wide ledges and blocks of rock giving access to the gully without difficulty. In the centre, water flowed freely, and this, freezing as it flowed, had evidently filled up the gully with ice in the way described. The angle from top to bottom, roughly taken by clinometer, seemed about  $55^{\circ}$  to  $60^{\circ}$ . Descending the arête marked with the dotted line, we found the snow in the corrie too hard for step kicking, too slippery and steep for walking, and too rough and icy for safe glissading, so that the descent and subsequent traverse to the point of ascent hardly came under the category of snow-craft, and was somewhat undignified.

Arriving at the bottom of the prominent ledge shown in the sketch, there seemed to be many ways up the cliff, none of them affording very excellent climbing. The route taken ascended directly up the rock at the base of a well-marked snow gully, and presented no difficulty whatever. We have named it the Pinnacle route, as its termination is marked by some prominent rocks at the sky-line, well seen from below, and even from Ben Lomond itself. The only sporting bit is at the top, just where an easy and evident way leads on to the ridge. Here a piece of pointed rock invites the climber to stand on it, and ascend right up the pinnacle. An overhanging pitch, which makes a fair

demand on the muscles, and the prospect down below should holds give way, make this not an easy climb for a pioneer. We alternately attacked this from below, clearing good holds, and making sundry safe attempts to surmount the obstacle ; but prudence suggested that without further refreshment our muscles were not equal to the task, and moved an adjournment for luncheon. Thereafter, the rope being passed down from above as a precautionary measure, the leader boldly attacked the pinnacle, cleared away all risky holds, and finally made his way up without assistance. On the whole, however, although some excellent snow gully climbing is to be got, I do not think these cliffs will ever attract many climbers. The numerous grass patches which intersect the rock, while they often afford no safety to the climber, take away from the peculiar charm which attaches to a genuine rock climb.

## ARTHUR'S SEAT AND THE SALISBURY CRAGS.

BY HAROLD RAEURN.

FAVoured in many respects by nature as is the city of Edinburgh, in none is she more favoured from a scenic point of view than in the possession of her bold crags and hills. Rising like the Castle Rock from waves of greenery, or, like the Calton Hill, above a grey slate sea of houses, they lend a picturesque strength and impressiveness to her scenery.

Conspicuous above all other heights rises the splendid little mountain group comprised within the limits of the Queen's Park. Whether it be the great rampart of cliffs, shaped like a bent bow, called the Salisbury Crags, the graceful outline and bold curves of the couchant Lion of Arthur's Seat, or the smoother slopes of the Whinny Hill, all are alike beautiful. Not only in the eyes of mountaineers alone, but to all lovers of the picturesque in scenery, is the Queen's Park a delight, and geologists find in it many striking object-lessons in their favourite science. We are now, of course, considering the Park from a mountaineer's point of view ; but mountaineering and geology have always been closely connected, and it is impossible to be a mountaineer and find no interest in geology, while every geologist must be a bit of a mountaineer as well, and many geologists are and have been eminent in both pursuits.

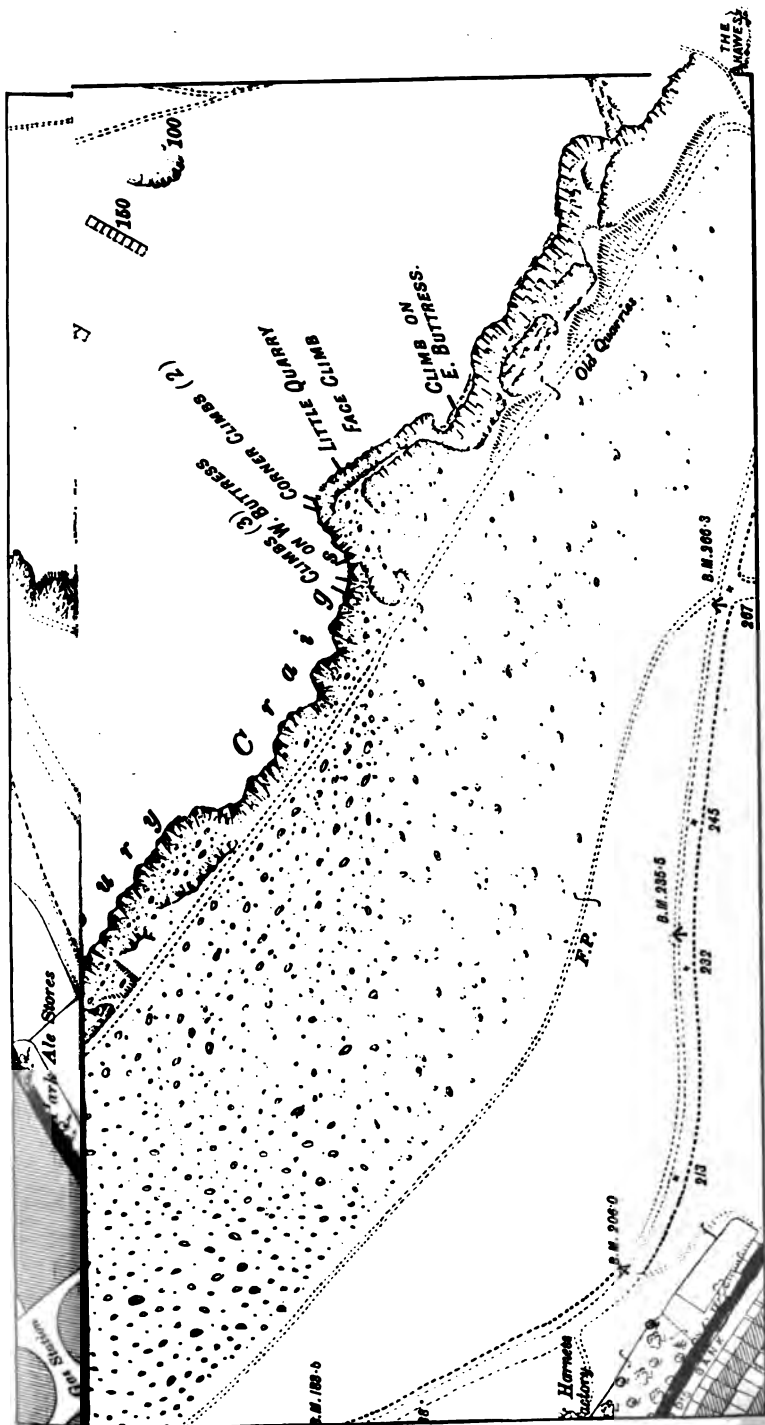
The highest point in the Park is the top of the Lion's Head, which attains the height of 822.9 feet. This to an Alpinist, or even to the bagger of native Bens, may seem truly insignificant ; but a half-sovereign is smaller than a five-shilling piece, and many a Highland Ben of ten times its bulk has less of the real mountain about it than has Arthur's Seat. The chief point that strikes the eye of the climber on visiting the Park is the great amount of rock exposed, and its generally very steep angle compared to the size of the hill. This is accounted for by the geological structure, great outflows of volcanic rock superimposed upon and protecting the softer carboniferous strata below. These outflows are of various ages, but are all

comparatively recent. The latest is generally supposed to be that plug of basalt which now forms the summit crest of the Lion's Head.

In those days the now peaceful couchant Lion must have roared and ramped indeed, when he shook his mane of flame and ashes, and thundered aloud from his volcanic throat what time the lavas poured from the riven hills in streams of liquid fire. These stirring times are long past, but it is on the later flows that the best climbing is to be had. At many places, such as Samson's Ribs, the Lion's Jawbone, the Dasses, &c., good examples of basaltic columns may be seen. On the lower slopes, however, the rock is frequently composed of a crumbly red volcanic tuff, thoroughly unreliable. This forms the overhanging cliff of the Lion's Haunch, or Raven's Rock, an evident former nesting-place of that bird, which, less than a century ago, also nested on the Castle Rock.

The general colour of the soil of Arthur's Seat and the Craggs is a rich red, owing to the large amount of iron contained in both the eruptive and sedimentary rocks. The real colour of the basalt is, however, a dark grey, evident on fracture, but owing to the oxidising of the iron in the stone the surface colour is like the soil—red. At one time considerable masses of sandstone must have been exposed in places along the line of the Craggs, especially just above Holyrood, but the old quarry workings removed the greater part of this. At several places the burnt sandstones may be seen lying beneath a 60-foot wall of lava. The quarries fortunately have done little to damage the general contour of the Salisbury Craggs, and some hundreds of yards of the best cliffs are quite untouched by the pick.

Though the actual climbs on the Craggs nowhere exceed 90 feet in height, yet even these gain a wonderful impressiveness from being placed on the summit of a steep talus slope of over 200 feet; and in a dense mist, when the North Sea "haar" hides the city and the green slopes below, and exaggerates and distorts the rugged basaltic ribs and buttresses, one feels as far above the world as on some splintered crag in a wild north-eastern corrie 2,000 or 3,000 feet above sea-level.



**SALISBURY CRAIGS, REDUCED FROM THE 25 INCH ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP.**  
 BY PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

Scale  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a Mile.





There are some capital little scrambles to be had on many parts of Arthur's Seat itself, yet it is on the Crags that all the most interesting problems are to be found, and to them we shall first proceed. Before starting, however, a caution must be made against the dislodgment of a single stone unless at such an hour that no one is about. On the unquarried portions the rock is often very shaky. After a heavy gale I have seen the Radical Road strewn with large fragments of rock, and several of the climbs have been allowed to remain in an uncleared condition on account of the risk involved in sending down a stone.

The writer will not readily forget, however, the thorough and skilful manner in which a very shaky bit of the red ridge was cleared by a certain Professor last December. The climbs may be said to start with the "Pic Robbieson" (see map), that "grand isolated wall of trap" which will be noticed rising at right angles to the path about 100 yards up from the foot of the "Radical Road," and just opposite the Palace of Holyrood.

After running over this—it is very narrow, but excellent foot and handholds abound—we ascend the path about 80 yards farther, when the foot of the *Elder Tree Route* will be reached. This is easily recognisable by two flourishing elder trees which grow on the cliff. No less than five variations of this climb have been done. The original route led from the lower elder tree up a small chimney on the left, and *through* the upper elder tree to a broad ledge, from whence the top is easily gained. The variations are the *Balanced Stone Chimney*, to the right of the elder tree; the *Overhanging Ledge*, to the left of the original route; the *Little Chimney*, more to the left; and *Bell's Variation*, still farther to the left.

The next climb is not far off. Fifty yards farther up the path comes the *Red Ridge Route*. Its position may be fixed by a great outstanding block to one side of the final climb. A scramble up a steep rock and grass slope lands one at the foot of the block, which is circled to the left. The route then runs very steeply up to a small chimney, practically vertical, and with rather poor holds. From the top of the chimney a cut leads up behind a projecting stone—the

summit of the Red Ridge—and thence to the top is 15 feet of easy ledges. The next climb—the *Earth Ledge Route*—starts a short 40 yards higher up from the Red Ridge. A considerable patch of grass will here be observed about two-thirds up the face. This is gained by a chimney in which grows a small tree. Exit from the top bears slightly to the left, and from the Earth Ledge a very steep 15-foot wall leads to the summit of the cliff. This climb is steep, and in places decidedly shaky. A considerable interval now occurs, where no climbs as yet have gone. Then 100 yards from the Earth Ledge comes the *Cracked Slabs Route*, not done, however, without slightly more than moral support from a rope. This runs up some very steeply sloping red slabs by means of cracks, and makes considerable demand on the muscular powers, even with the aid of a rope. On the buttress between this and the *Recess Route* (*q.v.*) is an excellent little climb—the *Cleftblock Chimney*. The chimney itself unfortunately does not extend the whole height of the cliff, but occupies the central half of the total; the lower part terminates in a large projecting block. To gain the chimney the block may be reached by a very long step and hand pull from the left, or directly from below by a narrow cleft. Towards the top the chimney overhangs, but escape offers to the left up some steep projecting slabs, then round a corner, where a rope from above is almost necessary, the few small ledges having an outward slope, and no handhold being available. Once round this awkward corner a broad ledge is gained, from whence to the top is quite easy.

The next climb—the *Recess Route*—is simple, and was one of the earliest to be discovered. It runs up the second bay or recess in the cliffs, on the lower or Holyrood side of the Cat Nick. The route cannot well be missed, and presents no difficulty, except that near the top a hand-lift from a small earth ledge over a projecting block is facilitated by the possession of a long reach. The next recess to the Cat Nick is in the line of a well-marked fault in the lava flow, burnt sandstones being mixed up with the igneous rock in a confused manner somewhat as in the Cat Nick itself.

It has been called the *Sloping Ledge Route*, not that the ledge is the line of ascent, but it is the strongest feature of

the spot. This was first climbed by a party consisting of Messrs Brown, Douglas, Priestman, and the writer last autumn. It is quite simple save for a small portion about half-way up. The route followed was up the grassy lower slopes to a recess below a small chimney. The exit from the chimney to a small ledge above proved difficult till the expedient of removing the boots was suggested by Mr Priestman. Above this the route is obvious and not difficult.

We now come to the *Cat Nick*, an ancient and well-known route to the top of the Crag from the Radical Road, well worn and polished by the hands, feet, and knees of generations of youthful climbers. This in its winter aspect has been eloquently treated of by Dr Clark in the last number of the Journal, and even in summer a first descent is apt to be somewhat awesome to a stranger unaware of the magnificent holds on the steep top portion. The cliff here may be ascended or descended without touching the ordinary route at any point by means of the *Cat Nick Arête*, the left-hand edge—from the path—of the gully. This is a steep, though not difficult climb, abounding in safe little right-angled ledges.

Past the Cat Nick, we arrive at the highest point reached by the Salisbury Crag, nearly 600 feet, and turning the corner, where the cliff shows from the east the well-known profile head—a somewhat low type, it must be confessed, to occupy so elevated a position—we pass what has been called somewhat prematurely the Great Corner Climb. I say pass advisedly, for, if possible, it is hardly justifiable. Tradition pointed this out as being a feat of two well-known Alpine Club men, but their climb was really done on the west buttress of the little quarry, a considerable distance eastwards towards the Hawes. This Great Corner is the beginning of the quarries, and now the cliffs stretch for a long distance presenting sheer walls of rock, and utterly forbidding any ascent.

It is not till we get along as far as the little quarry that any route has been discovered, and here the cliffs are much lower and the climbs much easier than on the other side of the Cat Nick. They are all, in fact, pure gymnastic climbs. Every foot and hand hold is as secure as possible,

though apt to be puzzling to a stranger on a first descent, owing to the height and often concealed position of the steps. The climbs are (*vide* map) three on the west buttress of little quarry, two in the left corner, and one on the face. The climb on the east buttress is, however, of a different character to the others, and requires delicate handling, as this buttress has been left untouched by the quarrymen, and is decidedly shaky. It first succumbed to the united assaults of "Auld Reekie" and a "North-Eastern" friend. From this eastern buttress the Craggs rapidly diminish, and the few small climbs to be found even here are hardly worth mentioning.

We presently come to the pass over to the Hunter's Bog known as the Hawes, a familiar term to Lakeland climbers. From the Hawes a path called the Piper's Road runs along the base of Arthur's Seat, and forms the starting point of several scrambles. The rocks here are, however, very crumbly and treacherous, and though extensive, hardly present very definite climbs.

The quickest route to the Lion's Head from the southwest is up a rubbly gully called by the expressive if inelegant name of the "Gutted Haddie," and starts from the Piper's Road. This, however, is hardly a climb, though even here hobnailers will be found distinctly more serviceable than thin nailless shoes.

To the immediate right of the Gutted Haddie stands the Raven's Rock before mentioned. The bulk of this cliff is far too vertical not to say overhanging to render ascent possible. A steep little chimney, however, at the south end was explored and climbed by Dr Clark, and a route admitting in its higher part of a good deal of variation has also been done on the north end.

On the Dasses and the ranges of small cliffs running down parallel with the Hunter's Bog numbers of first-rate 15-foot chimneys of all degrees of difficulty may be found, but perhaps the best climb in this part of the Park is that on the *Fallen Column Rock*, which rises above the tourist path on the east side, a little above St Anthony's Well. The difficulty here is to start the climb. The easiest way is by stepping off a detached block lying at the foot of the

cliff. We are now clinging on a sloping ledge below some overhanging blocks. The holds are, however, extremely good, and after we have pulled ourselves over the blocks, we gain the summit by the sharp edge of a sloping column of basalt which some one likened to the Napes Arête of Wastdale on a small scale.

Turning back from this rock towards the Hunter's Bog again, we may make a direct ascent of the Lion *via* the *Red Chimney*, and the *Little Chimney* on the Nose. The former starts just south of the Dasses, and is the largest chimney in the Park. The straight exit is rather crumbly, but an easier escape offers to the right near the top. Ascending the scree slopes of the Lion's Neck, we may gain the summit either *via* the *Nose Chimney* or by the *Cheek Climb*. The former is obvious. The latter starts up the lower tier of basalt columns forming the Lion's Jawbone. Here a steep 20-foot pull lands one on a ledge carrying a sheep track across the face. Descending this a few yards, and ascending another 20-foot basalt column, we gain a shallow scoop below a projecting knob—the Lion's Eyebrow it may be called. The exit to the top by the left is easy, but if the right be taken a sporting finish to an interesting little climb will be obtained, and we presently emerge on the polished summit of the Lion's Head.

I need not dwell on the magnificent and wide panorama to be seen from thence on a clear day. Arthur's Seat is peculiarly well situated for wide views, as it is the supreme height in its neighbourhood, not cribbed and confined, as are so many hills of superior altitude, by jealous rivals pressing on their flanks, but kingly by name and shape, whether as the throne of Arthur or as the king of beasts, it lifts its head proudly to the sky, the chiefest mark and ornament of Scotland's capital.

## EXCURSIONS.

---

*The Editor will be glad to receive brief notices of any noteworthy expeditions. These are not meant to supersede longer articles, but many members who may not care to undertake the one will have no difficulty in imparting information in the other form.*

THE BASS ROCK.—On 26th June Mr Douglas and I visited this interesting island, partly for ornithological purposes, and partly lured by reports relating to desperate climbing to be obtained in the great cave that passes through the rock. We were fortunate in obtaining an exquisite day, a slight breeze from the east tempering the heat of the sun, and not raising a sea too heavy to allow of our landing on the rocks at the eastern entrance of the cavern. This is just below the great overhanging eastern cliff of the Bass, nearly 300 feet high, around which circled swarms of snowy gannets and graceful kittiwakes. According to tradition the cave is only accessible “at dead ebb of spring tide,” so we timed our visit for low water, and despite the croakings of our aged skipper, who had once, he said, “put a man through”—*i.e.*, landed him at one side and taken him off at the other—“thirty years ago, but never since,” we jumped on to the rocks at the entrance of the cave, and sending the boat off to meet us on the west, started on our passage through the Bass. At this entrance the opening is wide and lofty, and two or three pairs of shags have their nests on overhanging shelves near the roof, and these looked upon our intrusion with considerable disfavour. Disregarding their hostile remarks, we advanced into the deepening gloom. The floor of the cave is here paved with cobblestones, weighing about 20 to 50 tons apiece, particularly smooth and slippery, and so hard that they afforded a very insecure footing to hobnails. The jointing between these titanic cobbles is rather open, spaces 2 or 3 feet wide being frequently left. Rising somewhat, the cave rapidly narrows, still, however, maintaining a height of over 20 feet with a width of about 10. At length we reached *the* great block of rock, and saw the welcome slanting gleam of light that told of the nearness of the exit. Below the rock, however, lay solid night, and at first the writer, who lowered himself over its edge by the hands, failed to find foot-hold. A kick, however, resulted in a splash, and we knew we had come to the pool in whose awful depths—reported as 3 or 4 feet—might lurk

slimy monsters of the briny seas. What should we now do? Retreat and justify the forebodings of our ancient mariner, or boldly press forwards and wade, or if necessary swim, the Stygian pool. Our trusty (?) lamp was relighted—it had been blown out by the strong draught that swept through the rocky corridors—and by its friendly gleam the pool suddenly shrunk from the awe-inspiring to the insignificant, its maximum depth nowhere exceeding 18 inches, and no monsters, and nary a lurk—to use an Americanism—save a monstrous log, whether washed in by the waves or used as a bridge by other explorers we could not tell. The pool can nohow be avoided, but by each removing one shoe and stocking we got through without wetting the other, and walking over the fine beach of pebbles that floors the western entrance, returned to our boat, our waiting friends, and to sunlight once more. The cave was formerly a haunt of seals and sea otters, and report has it that a number of years ago a visitor was upset by the rush of one of these latter animals as it escaped to the sea. We were a little disappointed, perhaps, at not obtaining the desperate climbing, but our passage of the cave was certainly not the least interesting incident in a very pleasant day's outing.

H. RAEBURN.

---

CAIRNGORMS.—On the Queen's Birthday, A. W. Russell and I had a most enjoyable walk over the Cairngorms. Taking the night train to Aviemore, we left the station at half-past four, and made for Glen Eunach, reaching the lower bothy in a little over two hours. Up to this the clouds had been hanging about the summits, but as we ascended the slopes of Braeriach they were gradually dispersed by the sun, and by the time we had reached Loch Coire an Lochain the sky was perfectly clear, remaining so during the rest of the day. Skirting the loch, which was still frozen thickly, we chose for our route a part of the steep snow slope free from rocks, close to the right of where a small waterfall, two-thirds of the way up, showed the course of a burn. This slope took longer than we anticipated, and it was not until 11.15, after a good deal of step cutting, and circumventing the cornice at the top, that we crossed the final slope and reached the place where the cairn ought to be. This was completely hidden by the deep snow, and much careful prodding with the axes failed to reveal its whereabouts. After an hour spent in taking lunch and photos of the finely corniced cliffs, we walked on round the edge of the Garbhchoire, and skirting behind the Angel's Peak, reached the summit of Cairntoul by two.

A north-easterly course from Cairntoul, at first over rough scree, then by long glissades down snowy slopes, brought us into the Larig at the junction of its water with the Dee, whence, after a short rest, we made up Ben Muich Dhui. Keeping to the left of a small corrie, we made our way, mostly over rocky ground, to the top (5.15).

From Ben Muich Dhui to Cairngorm was only a long trudge over



undulating ground, almost all snow covered, with which we were not ill pleased to have done, and at seven we rested on the last of our peaks.

The Cairngorm and Muich Dhui group were, curiously, very much freer from snow than Braeriach and Cairntoul, and it would be interesting to know if this is usually the case. The top of Cairngorm especially was almost clear, though perhaps its lesser height would partly account for this.

A half trot, half glissade from the top of Cairngorm brought us down into Choire Chais, near the foot of which we joined the path leading to Loch Morlich. Darkness was coming on as, at 10.15, we left the road near Coylum Bridge and had a welcome tea at the farmhouse of Guislich, and we finished our day by a walk, not quite so brisk as that of the early morning, of the remaining three miles to Aviemore, in time to catch the one o'clock train home.

ALEX. FRASER, Jun.

---

A FLYING VISIT TO BEN ALDER.—On Saturday, 24th July last, Mr Gibson and I decided to make a flying visit from Edinburgh to Ben Alder.

Our difficulty was to contrive to do so in the time at our disposal, seeing that we could not leave town till after two o'clock in the afternoon, and that we were due back again at 10 A.M. on Monday morning. To complicate matters, we found that the 10 P.M. from Inverness does not run on Sundays, so there was nothing for it but catch the 1.15 from Dalwhinnie on Sunday afternoon.

Leaving Waverley at 3.50, we reached Rannoch about 8.45. The weather was very sultry when we left town, and by the time we were on the Moor of Rannoch, we could see from the great darkness in the east and south, and occasional vivid flashes of lightning, that a thunderstorm was at work at no great distance. At 8.45 then, we found ourselves on the platform at Rannoch, and five minutes afterwards we were on the Camasericht road, which we followed to its junction with the Corroul path, where we struck the moor in a N.E. direction. By this time it was getting very wet and dark, except when an occasional flash for a moment dispersed the surrounding gloom. Our route lay by the south side of Lochan Sron Smeur and the north side of Lochan Loin nan Dubhach, and as we felt sure that we could see these in the darkness, we determined to steer for them. As we trudged along, every now and again in the eastern horizon we could see magnificent displays of lightning, and it will be remembered that an exceptionally severe storm passed over the East of Scotland that night. The effect on the lonely moor was weird in the extreme. By 11 P.M. a distant flash revealed to us Loch Ericht, and by ten minutes past midnight we were in front of Mr M'Cook's welcome fire, at Ben Alder Lodge, wringing our soaking garments. Had he not put a light in his window, it is doubtful whether we could have made out his house, as it was exceedingly dark. The walk along the shore of

Loch Ericht must always be bad, but at night it is positively painful, and we only resorted to it because the moor was hopeless, my friend having several times gone headlong into burns and holes.

Mrs M'Cook took the utmost pains to dry our clothes, devoting her attention alternately to them and a *Scotsman*, which we gave to her, while we got into blankets and made an unsuccessful attempt to sleep. At 3.45 we again made a start, but our luck was bad, and it was now pouring very heavily. We made our way up the side of a burn behind the house, passing Prince Charlie's cave, which, however, is nothing more than a few huge stones leaning on one another, and then almost hidden from view by rank bracken. The weather was getting deplorable—thick mist and heavy rain. At last we reached the ridge of the Ben, which slopes to the west and south, and dips rapidly to the north and east. We followed the ridge religiously, and after a long search found what was undoubtedly the 3,757 Cairn. A terrible shower of hail made us rush for the ridge again, and crawling underneath an overhanging ledge we had the satisfaction of watching the hailstones rolling down the slope without, most of them being without exaggeration the size of the proverbial pigeon's egg. Here we had what we were pleased to call "breakfast," and by that time a rent in the cloud revealed to us Loch a' Bhealaich Bheithe far below, which we reached by a steep descent about 7.45. We observed in the descent one or two good "pitches," which, however, time would not permit us to try. From the loch we had an opportunity of examining the slope, which was now clearing of mist, and lit up by the occasional rays of the morning sun. Although our expedition had mainly been made with a view to ascertain if there were any good climbs on the ridge, I would venture to say that there seem to be really none worthy of note, with the possible exception of one small gully on the face at the west end of the loch, and the two buttresses at the east end of the ridge, which are mentioned in a previous article on the mountain.

The day was now improving, and the masses of storm clouds seemed to be disappearing. We left the loch about eight o'clock, and hastened along the bridle-path by the side of the Culrea Burn down to Loch Pattack, where the path holds well to the right. Here the view certainly charmed us—the Cairngorms and Monadhliaths standing out in that exquisite blueness only seen after a heavy rainfall, with Loch Pattack in the foreground sparkling in the morning sun. The sight well repaid us for our dreary night's experience.

At 10 o'clock we were at Loch Ericht Lodge, and 11.30 saw us in the waiting-room at Dalwhinnie Station getting into clothing which, if not Sunday attire, was at least a pleasant change. As we steamed south we saw "the Ben" standing out clear at the far end of the loch—a moral for would-be Sunday climbers possibly. At 5.30 we were once again in Edinburgh, having been away about twenty-six hours.

## DEPTH OF SNOW AT BEN NEVIS, 1896-97.

1896.	Inches.	1897.	Inches.
Nov. 1 - - -	17	Feb. 1 - - -	35
" 15 - - -	10	" 15 - - -	37
Dec. 1 - - -	0	Mar. 1 - - -	33
" 15 - - -	15	" 15 - - -	35
		Apr. 1 - - -	44
1897.		" 15 - - -	50
Jan. 1 - - -	19	May 1 - - -	72
" 15 - - -	33	" 15 - - -	77

Snow disappeared from the gauge on 8th June. Maximum depth at gauge, 80 inches on 7th May.

## PREVIOUS YEARS' RECORD.

Maximum depth for 1884	.	141 inches	.	May 28.
"	"	1885	.	142 "
"	"	1886	.	123 "
"	"	1887	.	69 "
"	"	1888	.	77 "
"	"	1889	.	57 "
"	"	1890	.	96 "
"	"	1891	.	56 "
"	"	1892	.	74 "
"	"	1893	.	66 "
"	"	1894	.	127 "
"	"	1895	.	54 "
"	"	1896	.	76 "

## CORRESPONDENCE.

---

### THE STRENGTH OF CLIMBING ROPE.

*(To the Editor of the "S.M.C. Journal.")*

SIR,—In November last E. W. Green and I did some tests with an old Alpine rope, and have since, with the help of several friends, tested some new Buckingham A.C. ropes, supplied by the Committee of the S.M.C.

We first tested the dead weight which the rope would lift.

In every case we tied bowline knots in the rope. Knots weaken the rope, and the break always occurs at the knot. The bowline is the strongest of ordinary knots. Its strength is given in the A.C. Report on Equipment, 1892, as 72.4 per cent. of the strength of the rope. We found that the rope broke with a load of 13 cwt. or 1,456 lbs. In the A.C. Report, 1892, the dead load on the rope without knots is given at 2,135 lbs.

$$\frac{2135 \times 72.4}{100} = 1,545 \text{ lbs.}$$

So that the ropes we tested were slightly weaker than those tested for the A.C., but as 1,456 lbs. is rather more than the weight of eight 11-stone men, the rope is quite strong enough for dead-weight loads.

We then tried to determine the power of the rope to resist the sudden shock of stopping a falling body. We attached the upper end of the rope to a very strong sling round a wooden beam. The weight dropped was an 85 lb. iron shackle. The loops were about 9 inches long, and the length of the rope between the knots was about 4 feet 6 inches. Under these conditions, the rope stood a fall of 6 feet 6 inches, which is equivalent to a fall of only 3 feet 6 inches with a weight of 11 stone. When we were doing these experiments, we did not realise the great difference which the length of a rope makes in its power to stop a falling body. This power depends on the pull which the rope can exert, and the distance through which that pull can act on the falling body—that is on the strength and the stretch of the rope. The stretch of a rope of course varies with its length. To illustrate this, we made a series of dropping tests of cord,

the results of which are tabulated below. The cord lifted 52 lbs. dead weight.

Length of Cord between Knots.	Height from which a 4 lb. weight could be dropped without breaking the Cord.
24 inches.	18 inches.
54 "	27 "
90 "	35 "
126 "	45 "

I estimate that if, instead of 4 feet 6 inches between the knots, we had 20 feet, and the other conditions of our experiment were the same, the rope would stand 11 stone falling about 9 feet. The shock of stopping an iron shackle is of course more severe than that of stopping an elastic weight like a human body, and something which cannot be exactly estimated must be added to the credit of the rope on this account.

In our experiments the attachment above was almost unyielding also. Under actual conditions the rope is often hitched round a rock, so that it could give very little. This kind of hitch is the most severe on the rope, and if the position is such that a fall might occur which would be enough to break the rope, it is better, if possible, to have the rope hitched so that, while offering a considerable resistance, it can slide through the hitch, so that the shock of a fall may be gradually met. The leader is the only man in a climbing party who is likely to fall any considerable distance before the strain comes on the rope. For the rope to be any security to him it is essential to keep the second man as close up as possible. Probably many of us have had delusions as to the value of a rope hitched 20 or 30 feet below the leader on steep rocks.

Passages such as the following may be met with in accounts of climbs :—

"It was an awkward moment, for the other man was not well situated for supporting a jerk at the end of 30 feet of rope, which would mean a fall of about 50 feet."—*Alpine Journal.*

"He" (Ulrich Almer) "cannot be more than 10 stone, but whether the rope would stand a strain of 10 stone falling 30 feet is a question I must leave the Committee of the Club on Mountaineering Equipment to decide."—*Alpine Journal.*

On a snow slope it is generally possible for the second man to be close to the leader, so that the rope is more often a safeguard to him on snow than on steep rocks, where hitches or positions where a man can be firmly placed are often far apart. Then, too, on snow a slide only has to be met, and not a perfectly free fall. If the snow is of such a character that 22° is the least angle at which it can be glissaded, then on a slope of 60° of such snow, a slide of 15 feet will strain a rope of the same length as much as a vertical fall of 10 feet.

If the slope is  $50^\circ$  the length of slide must be  $19\frac{1}{2}$  feet.

” ”  $70^\circ$  ” ”  $12\frac{1}{2}$  feet.

The only statement on the subject of dropping tests of climbing rope that I have seen is in the A.C. Report on Equipment, 1864. It is said there that “these ropes will bear 12 stone falling 10 feet or 14 stone falling 8 feet”; but as in the Report, as I saw it, there were no particulars as to whether knots were used, or as to the length of rope, and the nature of the weight dropped, it is impossible to estimate the value of the tests. On the mountains the most severe test that can come on the rope is that the leader should fall while vertically over a firm hitch on the rope. In this case the length of rope between the hitch and the knot would be only half the height of the fall, and there would be in addition about 4 feet in the knot and loop. I would suggest that these conditions should be observed in any further dropping experiments.

Before the rope will break, unless it is cut, a pressure of 13 cwt. will come on the ribs of a falling man, so probably it is quite strong enough. Whether a man has any chance of standing such a jerk without serious injury is a question for the doctors.—Yours faithfully,

J. H. BELL.

## MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

---

“PIONEER WORK IN THE ALPS OF NEW ZEALAND.” By  
ARTHUR B. HARPER, B.A. T. Fisher Unwin.

CAN a Maorilander's book best be reviewed from its native country? Perhaps not—yet the slightest of acquaintances with some of the country described, and a personal knowledge of many of the pioneers of Alpine work in New Zealand, may qualify the writer in some measure to introduce this graphic narrative to members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.

Mr Harper bases his claims to speak with authority on the fact, that he is the only man who has intimate personal knowledge of *both* sides of the great Alpine chain of New Zealand. In 1889-92 he was a holiday traveller in the Tasman district (on the east side of the range), and did good work both as an explorer and a mountaineer, and in 1893-95 was employed by the New Zealand Government in the survey of the valleys and glaciers of the western side.

“It is not right,” he says, “that one who has special knowledge on a subject of general interest should keep that knowledge to himself; and for this reason—as well as with the object of recording our work, and helping others by our experiences—I have ventured to write the following pages.”

The greater part of the book deals with the author's travels and experiences as a Government surveyor.

Along with our veteran explorer, Mr Douglas (who has recently been specially honoured by the Royal Geographical Society for over twenty years of valuable work), Mr Harper carried out the exploration and scientific investigation of the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers—two large ice streams that descend almost to sea-level—and the reconnaissance surveys of the branches of the Cook River, Karangarua, Landsborough, Twain, and Copland Rivers, with their tributary glaciers, and the complicated system of mountain ranges surrounding them.

People at home have little idea of the hardship and toil entailed by work of this kind. The country is rugged and broken in a most tremendous degree, and is densely-impenetrably forested to a height of about 4,000 feet. All the valley floors are paved with chaotic agglomeration of enormous boulders, among, over, and under which four or five miles a day is good progress; and at short intervals the rivers plunge through wall-sided gorges, where the traveller is forced

to climb the mountain to make a passage. And in the "bush," as we New Zealanders call our forest, nearly every foot of way has to be cut with a billhook.

Add to this a rainfall of near 150 inches per annum, that keeps vegetation in a chronic state of moisture, and can make the smallest creek impassable in an hour. The explorers are of necessity cut off from civilisation for weeks—nay, months—at a time; and depots of provisions to last them through the season have to be established along their route. A few miles up from the coast is the limit of pack-horse travel; for the rest of the distance the burden has to be "humped" laboriously on the surveyor's own back, through tangled forest and rock-encumbered gorges, necessitating many journeys over the same ground. Even when actually at work, away from fixed camp, the surveyor is rarely burdened with less than 40 or 50 lbs. of food, instruments, and other impedimenta. No wonder Mr Harper, with three years' experience of this labour behind him—albeit to him it was labour of love—to which are superadded not a few narrow escapes from sheer starvation as well as from drowning and bad accidents, says that subsequent travellers "too frequently undervalue the work of map-making and topographical exploration; and a man's capabilities and exploits are too often estimated by the number of high ascents made and new routes discovered by him, without considering the usefulness of the results. It is impossible to map the country without a great deal of hard, and more or less monotonous work, and those who in after-years make use of the maps are apt to forget this. We too frequently find climbers ignoring those who have preceded them, and whose work has materially helped them; some even attempt to add to their own exploits by omitting to acknowledge their predecessors' work." This is a pardonable allusion, although practically the only one Mr Harper allows himself, to a recent book on New Zealand by a member of the Alpine Club. The author of it made several memorable first ascents, for which full measure of credit is due and is accorded him, but his claim to be regarded as an explorer is a ridiculous and an impertinent one, and is supported by a series of misstatements that are apparent to every one here acquainted with the subject.

Although Mr Douglas had in previous years been up most of the valleys described in the book, he had attempted little or no work above the snow line. It was reserved for the author—himself an Alpine Club man, well versed in the uses of axe and rope—to push the survey right up among the glaciers, and into the vast fields of *névé* that feed them. It is hard to say which is the more interesting reading—the narrative of the toils in the bush and the gorges, or the Alpine work amid the everlasting snows.

Mr Harper is an enthusiastic photographer, and his book is enriched with many beautiful illustrations. As reproduced, however, many of them are unsatisfactory, and they are the weakest feature of



an otherwise capital book. The writer has been privileged in seeing many of the original photographs—some of them of great beauty. When one considers the vicissitudes to which the plates were so often exposed, as recorded in the narrative, the wonder is—not that some plates were damaged—but that any survived.

There is much information about the fauna and the flora of the Alpine districts. The fauna is represented entirely by a few insects and birds. Of the latter Mr Harper writes with much humour, but it requires some acquaintance with the manners and customs of his subjects to credit all he says of them. There is much that is interesting too in his ingenious speculations upon glacial phenomena. This is a subject that has been little studied in New Zealand, but the field is an immense one. There is an excellent map in the book.

Probably few of my readers will ever see our beautiful country of New Zealand, but that is no reason why they should not find much to interest them in Mr Harper's graphic yet modest recital of his adventures and experiences amid scenes that are second to none for solitude and mountain grandeur.

J. G. S.

---

“NORTH WALES.” A Series of Mountain and Climbing Photographs.  
By G. P. ABRAHAM, Photographer, Keswick. 1s. 6d. each.

Following up their success of last year with a series of Skye photographs, Mr Abraham's sons have put together a set of eighty views of North Wales, or rather of the particular mountains Cader Idris, Snowdon, Tryfaen, the Glyders, and the Devil's Kitchen. There is the same excellence of workmanship as before, and a wider range of choice. The distinction between the two kinds of photographs—mountain *and* climbing—is doubtless intentional. The purely mountain pictures are almost uniformly admirable, and in many cases highly artistic besides. But when it comes to the climbing photographs, we are sorry that we have the same criticism to make as before. The “theatrical” posing is carried even further, and in a few cases, notably in No. 51, there is something of the circus or acrobat element introduced. When the subjects are so good we cannot help regarding this as a serious blemish. What particular class do these pictures appeal to? We hasten to say that our knowledge of the Welsh mountains named is greatly increased by such a fine display of their detail, the main characteristics of Welsh scenery being well depicted. The Snowdon set is particularly complete, but is it not a latter-day heresy to employ the rope on Crib Goch? We notice that a number of the photographs illustrate an article on Y Tryfaen in the current number of the Journal. The pitches in the North Gully are well shown.

Amongst the pictures which excel artistically we may mention Nos. 14, Snowdon from Capel Curig; 38 and 39, Snowdon and Crib Goch; 46, Y Tryfaen; 59, The Glyders; 61, Llyn Idwal; 79, The Glycer Arête and Tryfaen; and 81, Llyn Bochllwyd.

"A GUIDE TO ZERMATT AND THE MATTERHORN." By Edward Whymper. London: John Murray. 212 pp., with 65 illustrations and numerous maps.

This is a companion volume to "Chamonix and Mont Blanc" (see Journal, Vol. IV., p. 191).

In reviewing anything from Mr Whymper's pen we are conscious of a strong bias, for his charming "Scrambles" was our earliest mountaineering book, and holds almost as warm a place in our heart as "Robinson Crusoe" and "Tom Brown's School Days." Even now we believe it still holds its own as not only the best illustrated, but also the best written story of climbing adventure ever produced.

Apart from any prejudice in its favour, the work before us can be heartily praised with a clear conscience. It is far and away the most interesting climbers' guide we have read.

To study most guide-books before visiting a new place, or even during a first visit, is always more or less of a task, but their subsequent re-perusal is much more agreeable. That, we think, holds good here so far that no one will enjoy this book so much as the *habitué* to Zermatt. At the same time, we should advise everybody who goes there—whether climber or tourist—to carry Whymper in his pocket.

The Alpine climber will find all the well-known big climbs described, and an up-to-date record of all subsequent ascents by new routes. The lover of hill-walks and glacier rambles too will here get all necessary information about the numberless minor ascents and other excursions. To appreciate the author's eminently clear and practical directions one only needs to compare Mr Whymper's book with the description of the same excursion given in any ordinary guide-book.

The first chapter gives a short history of Zermatt (formerly called Praborgne) and of the great mountains which encircle it, and ends with a Table of First Ascents. With the solitary exception of the lesser of the Twins, the whole of those were accomplished by British climbers.\*

Chapters II. to V. contain the story of the Matterhorn, which of course nobody could tell so well as Mr Whymper.

Chapter VI. gives concise and lucid directions How to get to Zermatt.

---

\* In this connection, the following generous recognition by a French writer of the part played by our countrymen in the conquest of the Alps (*Le Monde Moderne*, August 1897) is worth translating. "To the English," he says, "belongs the honour of having given the impulse to the whole movement for thoroughly exploring mountain summits. . . . It is by the formation of the first Alpine Club that the English have, by their example, created numerous similar societies in the various European countries. . . . The Germans, although not equal to their Anglo-Saxon rivals in dash and intrepidity, have always shown a strong appreciation of the poetry of the mountains."

Chapter VII. describes the lower part of the Zermatt Valley, and the ascents to be made therefrom.

Chapter VIII. gives much interesting information about the village of Zermatt, on whose rough cobblestones John Bull is wont to make himself so delightfully at home.

Subsequent chapters treat of Excursions from Zermatt, the Riffel Hotels, Schwarz See and Saas ; and an important Appendix contains, *inter alia*, Tariffs of Excursions, Lists of the Peaks and Passes, and of the Local Guides.

Nothing seems to have been left out ; unless it be that, with an old climber's contempt for the modern pastime of "bouldering," the position of the "Shoehorn" is not marked on the Zermatt plan !

In a careful perusal of the book we failed to discover anything that we could really take exception to. An Index might have been useful, but a full Table of Contents, and the clear division of the text into paragraphs, renders this want of less moment.

The book deals very fully with the fatal accidents to mountain climbers in the district, which resulted in the deaths of about forty persons—the Matterhorn accounting for seven travellers and six guides, and the Lyskamm for four travellers and five guides.

To the uninitiated reader, ignorant or forgetful of the large numbers of climbers who have scaled those mountains during the last forty years, the record may tend to confirm the popular fallacy that Alpine climbing is unduly dangerous ; whereas the facts appear rather to prove the contrary. Even in the case of the Matterhorn, we are probably within the mark in estimating the number of amateurs who have made the ascent since 1865 at over a thousand, of whom much less than one per cent. lost their lives. The Lyskamm percentage would be somewhat higher, as, until lately, it was ascended comparatively seldom ; and this peak, with its evil cornice, has proved itself the most disastrous in the Pennine Alps. If, however, we group the remaining fourteen great peaks, viz., Monte Rosa, Strahlhorn, Rimpfischhorn, Allalinhorn, Alphubel, Täschhorn, Dom, Weisshorn, Rothhorn, Gabelhorn, Dent Blanche, Breithorn, Pollux and Castor, we find that so far as known only four amateurs have perished—a proportion so low that it may almost be treated as a "negligible quantity."

The work is profusely illustrated, about thirty of the maps and views being taken from "Scrambles amongst the Alps," and the rest specially prepared. Among the most interesting of the new engravings are :—A View of "The Great Tower," A Zermatt Storehouse, Portrait of Croz, The Upper Hut on the E. Face of the Matterhorn, Jean Antoine Carrel, The Matterhorn Bridge, The Théodule Hut, Monte Rosa from the Gorner Grat, Outline of the "Mummery Ridge," The Mattmark Boulder, and "An Old Public Servant" (although in this last portrait, our old friend Jost wears, we think, an aspect of unusual solemnity!).

Most of the illustrations are from the author's own hand, and like the whole of Mr Whymper's engravings, they combine marvellous accuracy in details with all the requirements of effective pictures.

# INDEX.

**A** BRAHAM'S photographs of Skye, 190; of Wales, 352.  
 Achallader, ascent by N. corrie, 94.  
 Alasdair-Dubh-gap, Skye, 163, 200-201.  
 Allival, 301.  
 Alps, members' climbs in 1895, 60; in 1896, 243.  
 Anderson, G. & P., *Guide to the Highlands*, 13.  
 Aonach Beag, N.E. ridge, 130.  
 Aonach Dubh, 48-50.  
 Aonach Eagach, 64.  
 Arran, boulders at Corrie, 52; 63, 117, 173, 247.  
 Arthur's Seat as a scrambling centre, 65, 335-341.  
 Askival, 301.

**B** ARTHOLOMEW'S *Scottish Atlas*, review, 138.  
 Bass Rock, Passage of the Cave, 342.  
 Bealach na Glai Moire, Skye, 210.  
 Ben A'an, Trossachs, 155-158.  
 Ben Alder, Flying Visit to, 344.  
 Ben Arthur, *see* Cobblers.  
 Beinn Chalum, 126.  
 Ben Chonzie, 179.  
 Beinn Creachan, 97.  
 Ben Hope, 46-47; in 1776, 167-171.  
 Ben Laoghal, 44-45, 249.  
 Ben Lawers, 228-229.  
 Ben Lomond by the Cliffs, 331-334.  
 Ben Lui, old and new routes, 106; in Jan. '96, 126; ascent of south rib, 177; blizzard on, 276.

Ben Nevis at Easter '96, 129-132; Tower Ridge Pinnacle, 172; 178; Tower Ridge in September, 221; in November, 244.  
 Ben Nuis precipice, 63.  
 Ben Venue, 298.  
 Bhasteir and Bhasteir Tooth, 65, 197.  
 Bidean an Dhuill Braec, 176.  
 Bidean an Ebin Deirg, 176.  
 Birds of Corrie Arder, 148.  
 Blaven, 21, 196.  
 Bonney, Prof. T. G., *Ice-work*, review, 135.  
 Boulders, 52-56.  
 Bristed's *Pedestrian Tour*, 4.  
 Buchaille Etive Mor, Tough's climb, 62; four days on, 100-105; Crowberry ridge, 149-154.

**C** ADELL, H. M., *Geology and Scenery of Sutherland*, review, 135.  
 Cairngorms, 343.  
 Candidates for the S.M.C., the qualification necessary, 69.  
 Cat Nick in Winter, 302.  
 Cioch na h' Oighe variations, 173.  
 Cir Mhor face, "C" gully, 63-64; variations, 173, 247.  
 Clachaig, 48.  
 Clach Glas, Skye, 16-22; 196; by W. face, 205.  
 Cobblers, 65, 248.  
 Coolins, 16, 115; in 1896, 193-208; list of peaks, 209-213; 259-266.

Corrie Arder, 141-147.  
 Corrie Beach, Glencoe, 48, 50.  
 Creag Meaghaidh, 141.  
 Creag MacRanaich, 247.  
 Creag nan Adhaircean, 146.  
 Cruach Ardran, 126.  
 Cycles and Mountaineering, 279.

DUNRIG, 178.

ECKENSTEIN, Oscar, *The Karakoram and Kashmir*, review, 189.

FITZGERALD, E. A., *Climbs in the New Zealand Alps*, review, 186.

Formation of the Club; Naismith's letter to the *Herald*, 18th Jan. 1889, 83; First Meeting, 11th Feb. 1889, 84, 87; First "Meet," 90.

Freshfield, Douglas W., *Exploration of the Caucasus*, review, 182.

GÆLIC, Guide to Pronunciation, 238.

Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour, 312-315.

Garbh Bheinn, Skye, 207.

Gars-bheinn, Skye, 177.

Geological paper on the Scottish Mountains, by Sir Archibald Geikie, 113-125.

Gilpin, W., *Observations on the Highlands*, 5.

Glas Maol, 231.

Glencoe, 48-51, 178.

Goatfell, 117.

Guide Books, new and old, 3.

"HARDY Mountaineer," *The*, 165.

Harper's *New Zealand*, review, 350.

INGLIS, H. B. G., *The Contour Road Book of Scotland*, review, 190.

JOHNSON, Dr Samuel, 3.

LADHAR Bheinn, 282, 299, 300.  
 Leacach, 231.

Lochnagar, ascent by the cliffs, 35-42.

Lochnagar, Tantalus Gully, 220.

Luinne Bheinn, 300.

MARSH, Dr H., *Two Seasons in Switzerland*, review, 71.

Meall Chuirn, 227.

Mountain Memories, 224-237.

Muir, John, *The Mountains of California*, review, 137.

NELSON'S *Handbook to Scotland*, 11.

OSSIAN'S Cave, 48-49.

PEEBLES to St Mary's Loch, 178.

Perry, Alex. W., *Welsh Mountaineering*, review, 257.

Physiological Aspect of Climbing, 267-275.

Proceedings of the Club, 57, 69, 239, 284.

Ptarmigan Land, 214-216.

QUINAG, 30.

ROPE, Strength of, 347.  
 Rum, 301.

SADDLE, The, 176.

Salisbury Crags, 65, 335-341.

Sgurr a' Chaoruinn, 176.

Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain, Skye, 205.

Sgurr a' Fionn Choire from Lota Corrie, 204.

Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh by the S.E. Ridge, 203.

Sgurr Alasdair by the N.W. Face, 203.

- Sgurr Choinnich, 176.  
 Sgurr Dubh, Skye, 159-164.  
 Sgurr Mhadaidh N. Peak from Tairneilear, 204.  
 Sgor na Ciche, 322-330.  
 Sgurr na Creige, 176.  
 Sgurr na Fheadain Gully, Skye, ascent of, 198-9.  
 Sgurr na Forcan, 177.  
 Sgurr na h-Uamha from Harta Corrie, 203.  
 Sgurr nan Each, Skye, 207.  
 Sgurr nan Gillean, ascent of gully between 2nd and 3rd pinnacles, 206.  
 Sgurr nan Gillean, pinnacles from the N.E., 205.  
 Sgurr Leac nan Each, 176.  
 Sgurr Tearlach, Skye, 163.  
 Shearer, R. S., & Son, *Panorama from Ben Nevis*, review, 72.  
 — *Panorama from the Wallace Monument*, review, 191.  
 Sinigaglia, Leone, *The Dolomites*, review, 255.  
 Skye, Abraham's photographs, 190.  
 Smith, W. P. Haskett, *Climbing in the British Isles—II.*, review, 70.  
 Snow cornices and crevasses, 180-181, 253.
- Snow, Depth of, at Ben Nevis, 1895-6, 251; 1896-7, 346.  
 Stob a Choin, Balquhiddy, 247.  
 Stob Ghabhar, ascent of Upper Couloir, 307-311.  
 Stob Coire an Lochan, of Bidean, cliffs of, 51.  
 Stob Garbh, 126.  
 Stuc a Chroin, 296.  
 Suilven, ascent by the eastern end, 26-27; by the west end, 31-34, 133.
- "THREE Score and Ten," 252.  
 Tryfaen, Wales, 316-321.  
 Tyndrum Hills in February, 298.
- WALES, Abraham's photographs, 352.  
 Wastdale Head, 174.  
 Weston, Rev. Walter, *The Japanese Alps*, review, 254.  
 Wherry, G., *Alpine Notes and the Climbing Foot*, review, 188.  
 Whymper, Edward, *Chamonix and the Range of Mont Blanc*, review, 191.  
 — *Zermatt and the Matterhorn*, review, 353.



# Ascents.

		<u>Feet</u>
<u>1896</u>		
4 April	Ben Hynish	460
2 May	Ballegioch	1084
4 "	Clachertyfarlie Knowes (small cairn)	1781
" "	Earl's Seat	1894
" "	Hart Hill	1697
16 "	Castlewalls.	700
21 "	Cruach Ardaran S.W. Top	3429
" "	do N.E. "	3477
" "	Stob Garbh	3148
21 June	Tom na Cona (Luss)	1245
17 Octr.	Meikle Bin	1870
<u>1897</u>		
16 April	East Lomond	1471
" "	West "	1731
3 May	Ben Lomond up to abt.	2000
15 "	Castlewalls	700
29 "	Neilston Pad	854
17 July	Sgur Dubh Bheag	3185
" "	" " Nhor } Sgoran	3635
" "	" " Dubh } Dubh	3658
" "	Sgur Gharbith	
25 "	Largo Law	948
7 Augt	Meikle Caldou	602
27 Sept	Carn Ban (point near)	1327
" "	Tighvein } Arran	1497
" "	Squilger } Arran	1332