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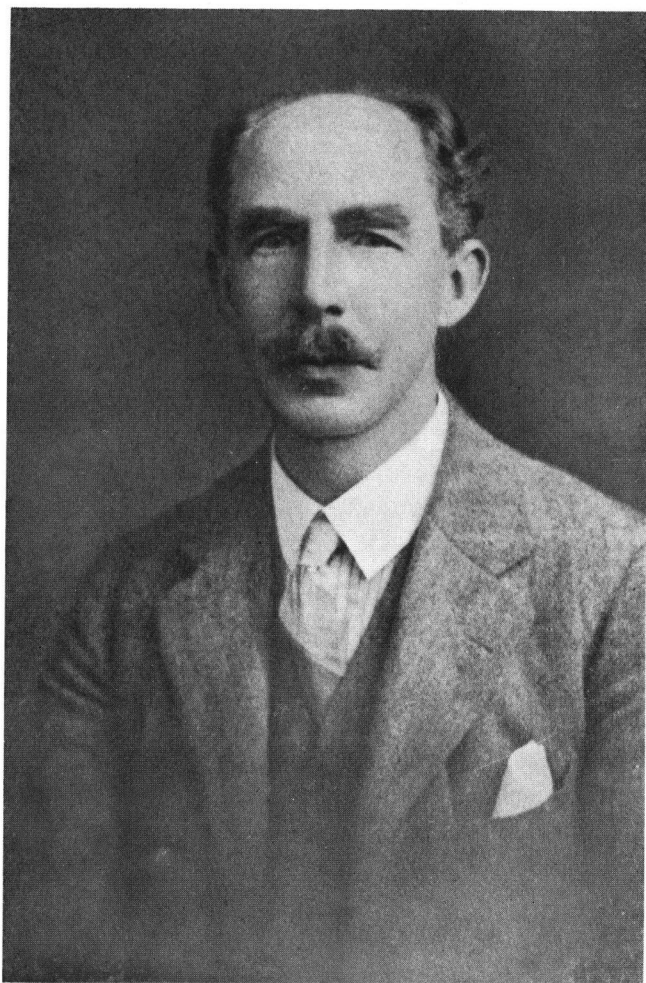
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GEORGE SANG
Honorary Secretary, S.M.C.
1914-1930

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

VOL. XIX.

APRIL 1931.

NO. III.

In Memoriam.

GEORGE SANG.

ANOTHER pen will tell of George Sang as a mountaineer; though in passing I may say that Harold Raeburn, during a pause in one of our many rock climbs, said to me, "I think Sang is one of the best climbers in the S.M.C." It is of himself that, in response to the Editor's request, I wish to speak. Few in the Club have had such intimate fellowship with him and in such varied circumstances. We were first drawn together in the early years of my Secretaryship, when I urged on him the charms of a Dolomite walking holiday, which later he carried out with Mrs Sang. As the ever-increasing duties of the Secretary encroached on my time, I suggested George Sang as Assistant Secretary, and for four happy years my burdens fell off. During that time no labours seemed too great for my genial and able assistant. There was no question then, when I entered on my six years' Presidency, that Sang was qualified in the highest sense to be Secretary, and the Club has since then rejoiced in the ever-evident enthusiasm and ability he showed.

But, it may be asked, in what way was Sang pre-eminent? In addition to a punctual and punctilious discharge of his duties he had a continuous stretching out of new ideas, and was "everybody's body" in all the various activities of the Club. It was not sufficient to make ample arrangements for the Meets, but he was at every one's disposal to correct errors, to arrange parties, and to stimulate

the amusements of the evening. So also at the Annual Meeting and Reception his speeches introduced a geniality and humour which was highly appreciated. In other circles, the Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club, he acted as Auditor, and as our representative he was a prime favourite at the Fell and Rock, the Rucksack, and other Climbing Clubs, where his speeches were looked forward to with anticipation and listened to with pleasure.

And I must not forget that during the long period since I first became President of the Scottish Ski Club to its new birth a year ago, Sang was the Secretary and carried out the work with the greatest satisfaction. Curiously enough, I climbed little with Sang, but at least some incidents may illustrate his chivalrous and unselfish nature. On that terrible night when Goodeve, Macintyre, and my son were lost on Ben Nevis (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. X., p. 73), Sang, Morrison, and I set forth at 11 P.M. to find the missing party. We were heavily laden with blankets, food, stimulants, and extra ropes, and it took a long time to reach the plateau and to find footprints in the snow at the top of the Tower Ridge leading down on the southern icy slopes of the mountain. I do not forget the numerous parties who, in answer to our pre-arranged signals, attacked the cliffs from the banks of River Nevis and eventually found the trio and brought them back in safety. On another occasion our fearless member, Dr Macmillan, whose climbing qualities were but slender, insisted on being taken up the Ledge Route of Càrn Dearg, and Sang, Morrison, and I succeeded in gratifying his desire.

The opening of the Charles Inglis Clark Hut in 1929 gave scope to Sang's great administrative powers. The negotiations had been tedious, but now the Hut was complete, and my wife and I will ever remember how every detail of the opening was arranged. Mr and Mrs Sang drove us to where horses had been provided to carry us up to the Hut. With characteristic self-abnegation he denied himself the chance of sleeping that night in the Hut, and instead had a band of old friends, Glover, Ling, A. E. Robertson, H. MacRobert, Goggs, and Elton,

to look after us and welcome us there. I have said enough to indicate that the loss we all feel so deeply is of one who possessed those qualities we admire—strength, activity, unselfishness, enterprise, geniality, wit, and others that may occur to our fellow-members. Our sympathy flows over to Mrs Sang and her daughter, who have lost a loving husband and father.

W. INGLIS CLARK.

Dr Inglis Clark has written of our lamented friend as a man and our Secretary: it falls to me to add a few words of him as a mountaineer. It was my privilege to climb with him for over twenty years, and no one could wish for a better companion or more trustworthy comrade on a mountain.

Endowed with an admirable balance and a muscular frame, he was safe and steady on both rocks and ice, and an excellent judge of route. Our first expedition together was in the Lakes with Harold Raeburn in 1910, and the following year we had a most successful season in the Alps. At that time he was qualifying for membership of the Alpine Club, and in seventeen days we added to his list ten good mountains—Weissmies, Ulrichshorn, Nadelhorn, Sudlenzspitz, Portjengrat, traverse of Rimpfischhorn to Zermatt, Matterhorn, Dent Blanche, Mont Blanc de Seilon, and traverse of Grand Combin—all guideless and a party of two, which took him triumphantly into the Club. In the spring of the following year we had a good holiday in Sutherlandshire, and in the summer went out to the Graians with Harry and C. W. Walker, where we did the Herbetet and Grivola amongst others.

In 1913 we had some climbs together in Scotland, but in the summer I was in the Caucasus, and he went with his wife in June to the Brenta group and climbed the Cima Tosa and others. In 1914 we were out again with Harry MacRobert. After traversing the Grand Paradis and some other climbs, we were caught by the outbreak of war and had to return by sea from Genoa.

His cheery company and geniality were much appreciated by his fellow-voyagers. During the war years, in our scanty leisure, we did many climbs together in the Lakes and in many districts of the Highlands at the Meets and private expeditions, and it was not till 1921 that we were out in the Alps together again. We tried the Aletschhorn, which we found rather too much for a first expedition, and then climbed the Bietschhorn, and with H. C. Bowen made an attempt on the Grandes Jorasses, which was defeated by an enormous crevasse which made the glacier impossible. After that we traversed the Lyskamm and five tops of Monte Rosa.

In the winter and spring we had many expeditions in the Highlands, and in the summer went out to Saas Fee with his wife and daughter and had some good expeditions there with them, and finished up the season with a race against a storm on the Dom which the storm won, and we had to retreat half an hour from the top, and had some difficulty in getting down. The following year we were at Arolla and climbed the Petite Dent de Veisivi and traversed the Aiguilles Rouges, then crossed the Col du Collon to Prarayé. From the Aosta Hut we climbed the Dent d'Hérens, and then went on to Cogne, and after visiting some of the valleys crossed the Theodule Pass to Zermatt.

In the next year we had many climbs together at Blair Atholl, in the Lakes, and in Skye, but he did not get out to the Alps with our party. He was elected to the Committee of the Alpine Club at this time, and served with much acceptance.

In 1925 he organised a party of S.M.C. men to go out to the Oberland, and we spent a joyous ten days at Fafleralp and across the Oberland to Grindelwald, a great success largely owing to his good work.

He was not out in the Alps again, except for winter sports, but spent his holidays mainly in the Highlands, the fruits of which were told in delightful papers in the *Journal*. He wrote in admirable style and with a most refreshing humour. Of his self-sacrificing work for the Club, his kindly help to young members as well as old,

and his genial humour, which enlivened all our gatherings and Meets, it is impossible to speak too highly, and, though he has been taken from us untimely, he leaves a fragrant memory of a genuine lover of the mountains, a true-hearted and unselfish friend, and an inspiration to all who knew him.

W. N. LING.

* * * * *

In supplement of the foregoing tributes to Sang's memory it should be added that he joined the Club in 1898 and died on the 6th November 1930, having retained up to the time of his last illness that mental and physical vigour which were inherent in his character.

"On their own merits modest men are dumb,
'Twere shame for others to be so."

It is fitting, therefore, to recall here an incident which is probably unknown to many of his younger friends and companions. On the 20th of June 1916, while Sang was working in an explosive factory at Rosslyn, an explosion occurred followed by a fire which trapped four girls in the burning building. Before the building blew up they were rescued by the daring work of Sang and another of our members, W. A. Morrison. For his great gallantry on this occasion our unassuming friend was awarded the Albert Medal and the Carnegie Certificate.*

In conclusion, let me pay tribute on the pages of the *Journal* to the indispensable guidance and whole-hearted assistance which, quite apart from what he contributed with his own gifted and humorous pen, he accorded to me in the production of the *Journal*.—EDITOR.

* *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. XIV., p. 197.

DAY-DREAMS

“ On the hillside I recline,
 Ever yearning for the lost ;
 Ever gazing towards the West,
 Where the sun sets in the sea.”

Translation of Gaelic Song (Dr MacLachlan),
 by Rev. K. Macleod.

WANDERING on the brae above my house last summer, I sat down on the dry moss with my back against Creag na Cloiche Gile (the Rock of the White Stone), a far-seen landmark, ri cul gaoithe agus ri aodann greine (sheltered from the wind and with its face to the sun), and lazily looked across the foot of Glen Lochaidh (the gloomy glen) to where a bright rainbow and its fainter outer arc were spanning Gleann Urchaidh nan Tulmanan (Glen Orchy of the Mounds). Musing upon these same tulmanan, which are obviously old ice moraines deposited by the receding glaciers as the last Ice Age was drawing to its close, I suppose I must have slept, for I suddenly awoke feeling slightly cold, and rubbed my eyes. What had happened ? Where was I ? *Who and what was I ?* My hair was long and shaggy, and a beard matted my throat and face well nigh to my eyes. A sort of rough kilt of deerskin had somehow taken the place of the one I had been wearing, and, saving it, I was naked, my cromag (crook) had been replaced by a stone-pointed spear, while a rude sinew-strung bow and quiver of flint-headed arrows were slung on my shoulder. Looking towards Beinn Laoigh (Ben of the Calf) and the Meall (Rounded Hill), I was astonished to find they had each grown some thousands of feet higher, Beinn Laoigh reaching perhaps 9,000 feet. The bealach between the Meall and Beinn a' Chleibh (Ben of the Breast) had practically ceased to exist, an enormous ice fall occupying the well-known gap, and a mighty blue-grey glacier filling

the trough of Allt a Chaorainn (Burn of the Rowan) at my feet, to sweep down to meet the even greater ice streams issuing from Gleann Lochaidh and Glen Orchy. Looking past Gleann Strae to Cruachan nan Seachd Beann (Stacks of the Seven Bens), I beheld other great ice falls and glaciers tumbling in seeming confusion from a greatly magnified Cruachan, a combination of seven Matterhorns and Jungfraus towering some 8,000 or 9,000 feet above the sea. Loch Awe had miraculously vanished, and in its place there surged a great ice sea, rolling in hummocked desolation out of sight between high rocky peaks, from which lateral glaciers poured their tribute to the great ice plough, which, hour by hour and century by century, was slowly carving out the bed in which, 50,000 years later, Loch Awe was destined to lie. Casting my eyes downwards, I realised with a throb of thankfulness that a thin, blue wisp of smoke was rising from Succoth, but in place of the slated house and substantial farm buildings there were only rude wattle huts hanging precariously on a rough moraine above the glacier-filled Eas-a-Ghoill (Waterfall of the Stranger). From one of the huts a skin-clad woman appeared, and shading her eyes with her hand, she looked towards the snowy slope above her, while to her deerskin skirt two small figures clung. My confusion and utter loneliness vanished, I grasped my spear and shouted, and leaping down the brae—*awoke*, to find myself a twentieth-century farmer, with my latest bought Stirling ram gravely regarding me, and a possible wiggling from the "gude-wife" awaiting me for being once more late for lunch!

ALASTAIR C. M'LAREN.

CHRISTMAS AT CLUANIE.

By LEWIS GRAHAM.

"WENDY" took us from Birmingham as far as Derby, and then we said good-bye to her at the works, where she put in her holiday having the usual winter overhaul. Travelling all night, my wife and I continued northwards for the first time by train, going via York to Spean Bridge. Here Mr MacDonald met us soon after day-break, and took us on to Cluanie by car, and the drive over Mam Cluanie blew the town and train cobwebs away.

Our first day was Christmas Eve, and we decided to go up the Glen Allt a Chaoruinn Beag opposite the inn, with the faint hope of conquering the "Munro" standing at the head of it and looking a long way off. It was our first experience of these hills, and with the short hours of daylight we reckoned there was no time for dawdling. We reached our objective, Ciste Dhubh, in three hours and twenty minutes. The inn was clear when we left. As we ascended we went through a stratum of mist. On emerging from this we were in brilliant sunshine, and it was quite warm with frost and hard snow in patches underfoot. The views around were magnificent. Every peak could be identified, lying like an island in a huge sea of mist. One could see the Sisters of Kintail, which look far better thus from the east than the west. Ben Fhada and Mam Sodhail glittered white and gold.

There was no time for picnicking on the top, so we came down the way we went up. At the bealach at the end of the glen we went into a cold mist again. Here the guide went wrong, bearing too much to the east. A rent in the clouds showed the white top of Garbh Leac, and warned us we were in Glen Allt a Chaoruinn Mhoir. Plodding down this we just got home by dark, having the satisfaction of visiting Ciste Dhubh, and walking

round the base of the Byre. We have never had a better day on the hills.

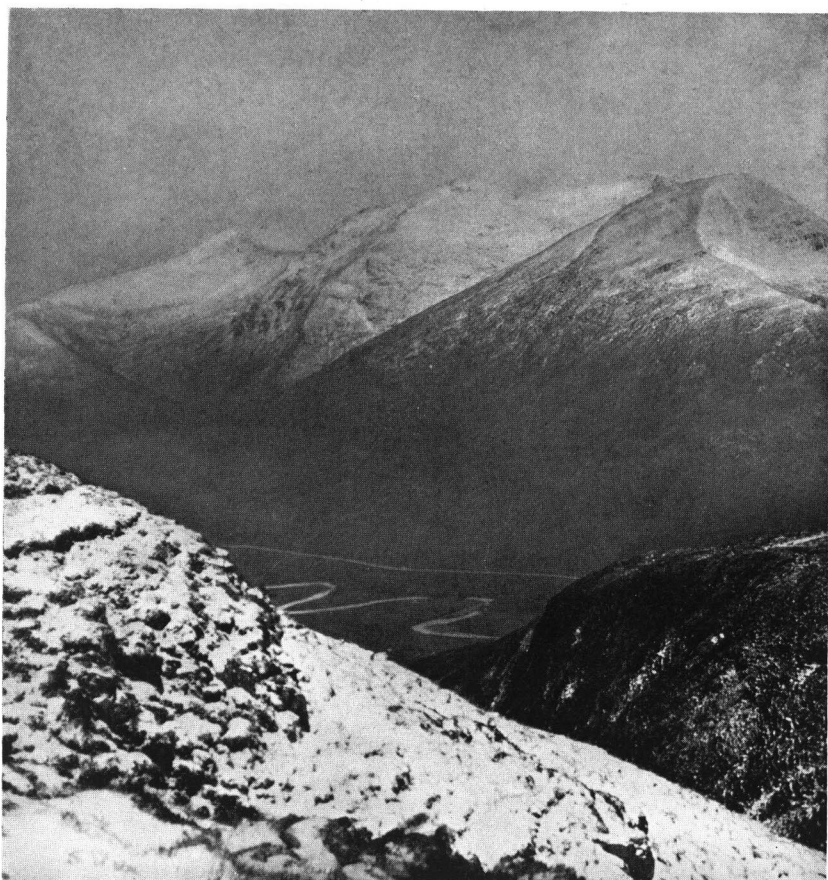
Christmas Day was spent helping a sick man, so we had an "off" day. The weather was perfect, with hardly a cloud in the sky, and all the tops around showing distinctly. Some photographs were taken of views from the inn.

We woke on Boxing Day to find snow had fallen in the night almost down to the road, a steady drizzle everywhere, and mist at about 1,250 feet. There was a stiff S.E. wind, so we decided to put our backs to it after walking along the road to Scobbie's Croft and taking the hillside. A good path goes through the deer fence, of which Scobbie opened the gate. Then we were blown straight up the nose of the Byre into the mist and snow blizzard. We walked along its ridge to the end, through snow thigh deep in the drifts, and were alternately almost blown off into the glen on one or other side. At the end we turned left into Glen Allt a Chaoruinn Beag, and faced the wind, and so home. The expedition took three hours, was constantly enjoyable, and was just sufficiently sporting for us without anxiety.

The day after Boxing Day was spent in the inn, watching constant rain, interspersed with hail showers. The wind kept in the same quarter, and it was thought it might blow itself out at midday, as some of the tops began to show, but it closed in again with the early sunset. Had it been the first day of a holiday one might have put out to sea along the road for a soaking, but books and dry clothes prevailed. Rainfall at the inn for the twenty-four hours was $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches. We heard the Drumochter Pass was blocked with snow, so ours here was the tail-end of it.

Next day, and the last of our leave, was perhaps the best in some ways. The wind had gone round to south-west and was blowing hard, with rain at lower levels and snow higher up. We decided to face it and try for Druim Sionnach, and perhaps Creag a Mhaim. There is an excellent path (which makes a good start for folk like us), which commences just before the first bridge

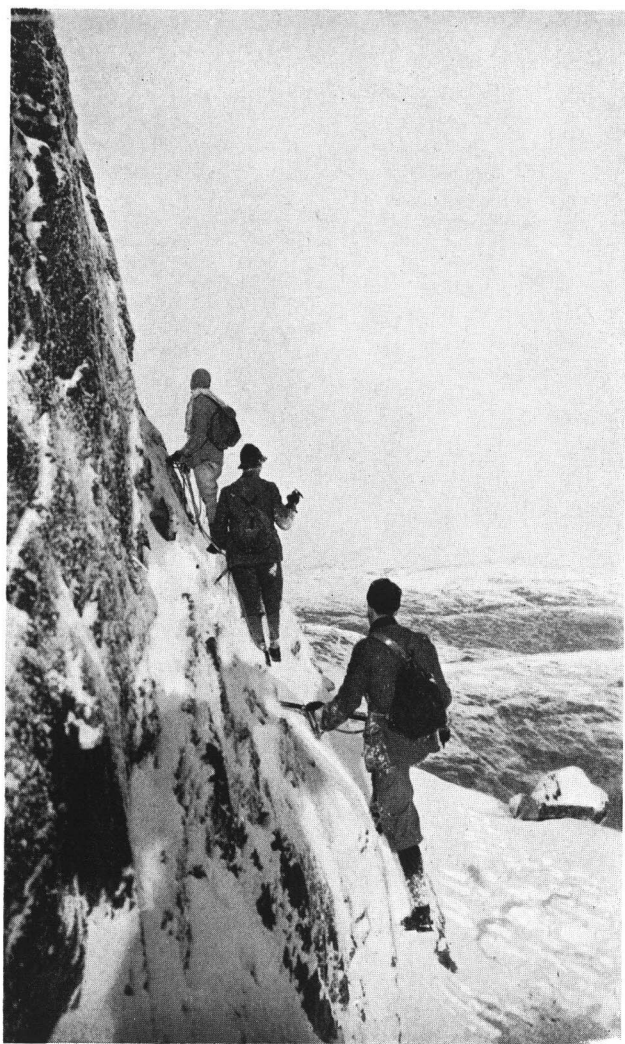
on the Tomdoun Road after crossing Cluanie Bridge. One goes fairly straight up the Druim, leaving the lovely Loch a Mhaoil Dhishnich on the left. Until we reached the summit we had a hard wind on our right. This never stopped, but was interspersed with hail or snow. When there was wind only, we were able to get glorious views in every direction, as the peaks showed all shades of blue snow on them. Above and between, the sky glowered in black, greys, yellows, and greens. We could watch fresh hail-storms coming at us up Glen Shiel. Time was getting on, and we saw the top of Creag a Mhaim ahead, but as it was just more than a stone's throw, we decided to turn back and be content with Druim Sionnach and the ridge between. We came back the same way as we went. Our footsteps were filled in, but the way off was obvious. We came on to the road just at dusk. It snowed in the night, and was 3 inches deep on the road the morning we left. The sun shone brilliantly, and we returned home by Dornie, Kyle, and Inverness.



December 1930

Lewis Graham

GLEN CLUANIE, FROM THE SOUTH, WITH SGURR A' BHEALAICH DHEIRG
AND CARN FUARALACH ON RIGHT. (*See page 168*)



1st January 1931

A. G. Hutchison

ARROCHAR ALPS. (See page 171)

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1931

By A. G. HUTCHISON

SUCH a touching appeal as that made by the Hon. Editor at the Meet on New Year's night must not be disregarded. The younger members of the Club, like their seniors, are expected to be impressionable, and, moreover, are expected to record their impressions for the benefit of posterity. It matters not whether A.'s performance is poor, that B. eschews snow slopes of more than moderate angle, or that C. will always put off till to-morrow what he might quite well do to-day (a failing in some mountaineers as in other folk): yet A., B., C., and D., too, have spent a day on the hills, each in his own peculiar way, and the unfortunates who were not with them are longing to know all about it—at least so it is, according to the Editor. The probability that none of them is competent to record his impressions is cheerfully to be ignored.

Very well, what are they all thinking during the early hours of a New Year's day in an eastern corrie, when the stars are fading out and the first dawn of 1931 is in progress? There would be much prose and perhaps a little poetry in four minds. Regrets of an indigestible Christmas week—very bad for the wind; delight at the reunion of hobnailer with crisp snow; anticipation in the promise of the fresh North wind; and a feeling of right perspective as the shadows of the world of men vanish like the night, giving place to the pleasing largeness of the world of hills; these are the vagaries of early morning fancy. Many conflicting thoughts would pass, heterogeneously mixed, for the aspiring spirit of man is at ill accord with weak flesh, and especially so at daybreak. Two figures are seen conferring in the dim light, and the subject of discussion appears to be the morning star, which still hangs undaunted in the paling sky. A.'s long legs and swinging gait are taking him far ahead up the corrie, while B., of more ample proportions, is

observed darkly ruminating over his axe at the trickle of a half-frozen burn, which tempts more subtly than any tea in the hotel. The day has begun, and out of the shadows come the four, bed and early morning trains forgotten, dead and buried a thousand feet below. There is a perfect Alpenglow on the tops. Each hears the other enthuse, but words seem rather useless and the remark from some one about a bird and an early worm, though apparently apt, is also almost irreverent. The black and white upper corrie is no longer the shadow of reality it appeared to be, and the long thoughts of prospect and retrospect which engaged the individual in the half light converge on the more practical present in the problem of finding a good route. Through the broken rocks on the face of the mountain side runs an upright band of snow, curving somewhat, and narrow enough at one point to supply the pinch of doubt that is to season the morning's work. Access is gained by an easy rake, for there is no bottom to the gully: instead the snow strip splays out over a respectable rock rib. This geographical feature will supply the necessary spice. Like a well-behaved party, this one halts at the foot of the rake and has a second breakfast: then the fun begins. Whether or not there is a beautiful precision of movement and the perfect rhythm of upward motion it is hard to say. Perhaps the passing raven knows. At any rate, the second man is heard addressing the leader in most encouraging terms, and there seems to be a certain pleasing and proper collusion between the two. This is as well, for a plaintive voice from far below is hurling winged words at those who, in their passing, have passed so well that a poor tail of the rope has nothing but his own inadequate imagination left to stand on. But sound carries badly on a clear day, and in the higher, purer air above the pitch winged words have lost their sting. Number Three, immediately concerned, smiles enigmatically, twists the rope round his axe, and continues to take photographs. Delicate snow wreath, frosted rock, falling chips, numbed fingers, two good hours, and the party eventually emerge in sunshine. The short winter day is at its best, but time is flying and

the job is just begun. From north top to south top is a short five minutes, and then the slope that leads to the dark loch below. How seldom the snow seems to be in condition for a glissade. It goes for 10, 15, 20 yards, and then the feet go through, or else the unsuspected patch of ice threatens a parabolic inversion. To sit and slide is wetter, but safer. And so in divers ways, running, jumping, and sliding, the four came down the hill, to meet again by the river where it issues from the loch. Lunch is produced.

Why go to Switzerland for winter sports? Nobody would if such winter days were the rule rather than the exception. But your ski expert will tell you that Scotland seldom produces just the right kind of snow in sufficient quantities, and so, of course, there must be an exodus for the Alps. Well, that may be so, but there are compensations in the land of the Bens. It is not easy, for instance, to descend at lunch time below the snow level and bask in a pleasant heathy country by a cheerful riverside if you are in Switzerland. This is possible, however, on the odd winter day at home. Half an hour for laziness, and then three of the party make to cross the river, while the fourth, sensible man, betakes himself off down the glen for home. He is sceptical of the reasoning of the others, namely, that the best road home lies across two more tops because, simply, it is the shortest. So they part company, and now it is interesting to watch how different men employ different methods in crossing a river. Some make the approach in a leisurely fashion, in perfect faith Joshua-like; and when the water does not part at their advance, they halt in hesitating contemplation on a slippery stone in mid-torrent until they go in. Others employ "rush tactics." Three coggly stones and one foot in the water and the far bank is reached. But all, having landed, will assure the others that they have crossed dry shod.

Uphill after lunch is very uphill indeed. It looked a very long grind from the opposite hillside, and it is so in reality—1,500 feet of steady gradient and soft snow on the top half; then a respite while a small

corrie is crossed. The summit just across the way does not look so very much higher, but a final treadmill of execrable stuff dispels the illusion. The brilliance of the day has become overcast, and long fingers of mist are feeling over the hills to the west. The sinking sun has a "I've-done-my-best-for-you" look about him, and the wind has freshened. Under the lee of a sheltering crag near the top sit the three. One at least has envious thoughts of the prudent seceder who by this time no doubt is well on his way home. Who said this route was shorter? But there is no doubt now, the die being cast, that the most direct way is over the graceful peak across the glen. The alternative is a weary number of miles through a dark corrie and a probably darker glen. So, after a fortification of chocolate, ginger, and raisins, a hasty descent is begun to the bealach which, thankfully, is not as low as it might have been. Two S.M.C. members are met not 100 yards from top finishing their day. "Good huntings" are exchanged, and their useful footsteps indicate the best way down to the bealach. This at 1,700 feet is under snow, and from it the party, for the third time that day, address themselves to a rising slope beyond. A steady plug inevitably does it, but the higher, the more frequent become the halts. More ginger, more chocolate, and the ridge of the mountain is gained. The early moon is now well alight, and serves to illuminate a ghostly but fascinating scene to unaccustomed eyes. Mist is pouring over the western slopes and flooding the dark corries; stray wisps blow across the ridge. Puffing and blowing, the party moves up a bad snow surface of loose powder lying on frozen stuff underneath, rather trying to the temper at that stage in the proceedings. At long last the large cairn is seen dimly looming through the gathering gloom, and the party collect for further refreshment. The moon has disappeared behind clouds, but a dull orange light in the south-west is sufficient to give the direction for the descent over familiar ground without having recourse to lanterns. The day is to end, apparently, as it began, in gloom. Down the easy slopes they hurry; sometimes

a stone is a hole or a hole is a stone, and occasionally a weird figure is seen spinning like a teetotum on his axe where a bank of hard crust has been mistaken for soft snow. The portal between the two familiar hills of summer days is entered and passed in darkness. There is just enough reflected light to guide the feet. A passing salutation to these two old friends, and then the tumbling burn in the home corrie makes pleasant company till the lights of the hotel are sighted gleaming across the loch. What is that hard, black thing? Ah, yes, the road, and another fifteen minutes on its unaccommodating surface brings the end of the day. No, not quite the end; after dinner there is still the usual cheerfulness of an S.M.C. New Year's night. Surely that makes a fitting cap to eleven hours on the Scottish hills.

Well, there it is. Nothing very thrilling to record, no new, exciting ascent, not even a fight with a refractory cornice. But then life is just a succession of ordinary days, although, let us hope, they are arranged on an ascending plane; and we are just asked to put our ordinary best into them. This has been just an ordinary day on the hills, and hill climbing, we are told, is like life. So if the essence of this account does not taste sufficiently of the meat for giants, blame it on the Editor. This is only an impression, and he asked for one, even if it is only from a humble salvationist.

AN OFF-DAY AT THE HUT.

By MALCOLM MATHESON.

THE car which had taken us from the Station Hotel to Achintee started away on its return journey to Fort William. We looked ruefully at the four huge rucksacks which lay on the grass at our feet. Four heavy sacks and but two pairs of shoulders to carry them!

Donald Mackay and I were *en route* for the Nevis Hut. Our ample provisions included many tins of pears and peaches. Adequate sustenance for four days, together with a change of clothes, climbing rope, and other odds and ends, could not, we discovered, be accommodated in less than two rucksacks apiece. Ultimately we shouldered our loads and laboured up the pony track, each of us convinced that he was carrying more than his fair share of the common stock. We dumped our burdens at the Hut, and spent the remainder of the day in a scramble up to the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête by way of the rocks at the head of Coire Leis. The mist was thick and persistent; the only thing I saw that afternoon was Mackay.

Next morning broke fine. On our way to the Tower Ridge we met Dougal for the first time. He stood on the summit of an outcrop of glaciated rock at the mouth of Coire na Ciste, and eyed us with a disapproval which amounted almost to disgust. When we stopped, facing him, he lowered a truculent head and stamped an impatient foot. He evidently regarded us as impertinent interlopers. Dougal (for convenience in narrative I must give him a name) was a splendid-looking old ram with magnificent horns surmounting a minatory, purposeful, and anything but sheepish-looking countenance. We moved threateningly towards him. He merely lowered his horns to the "ready" position and again stamped his foot, refusing to give way an inch. Much

amused, we passed on our way. We didn't know Dougal so well then as we did later, but it was already clear that he was no ordinary sheep.

An hour or so later, gazing contentedly about from the summit of the Douglas Boulder, we spotted him in the corrie below, occupying the summit of another slabby outcrop and proudly surveying the regions which he evidently regarded as his private domain. It was clear that Dougal had the mountaineer's itch for standing on the highest available pinnacle, and that a little rock-climbing formed no bar to the attainment of his desire. Mackay straightway dubbed him the "slab-specialist." Still later in the day, eating our sandwiches at the foot of the "recess route" on the Tower, we looked for Dougal in vain. Although invisible to us, I feel sure he was revelling in the joys of yet another successful ascent. In due course we reached the Observatory cairn. Stretched luxuriously on the sunny and windless summit, we contrasted our present ease with our first experience on the Ben. Picture two climbing neophytes tied together with a frozen rope, hampered by ice-plated clothing, battered by a furious wind, dazed by impenetrable mist, and you will have some notion of our then tribulations as we staggered about on the summit plateau. We balled snow in our hands and flung it forward so that the eye might have something to focus on. We even went the length of addressing one another as "Nansen" and "Amundsen"! But it was all in vain: we never found the cairn. Other reminiscences of wind and weather beguiled our stroll back to the Hut in the balmy evening air.

The following morning, on our way to the North-East Buttress, we encountered Dougal again. Once more he occupied the top of a rocky outcrop. Once more he regarded us with marked disfavour, and again he refused to be intimidated by our close approach. His indignant expression made it clear that our appearance offended his sense of beauty; that we were, in fact, blots on the landscape and interfered seriously with his enjoyment of the scenic glories of the Allt a' Mhuilinn.

We forgot Dougal as we struggled up Slingsby's Chimney—an unpleasant place. Some distance from the top we were glad to traverse out of it and finish the climb by the broken rocks on the left. I had hurt my leg the day before, and started that morning with some misgivings as to whether it would hold out. The misgivings were more than confirmed on the narrow footholds in Slingsby's Chimney, and an inspection of the injury at the "first platform" made it clear that there would be no more climbing for me for a week or two. Very regretfully we sidled off the Buttress by the grassy ledge into Coire Leis.

I come at last to the off-day which furnishes a title to this article. Rosy sunlight glinting on the rocks of the North-East Buttress, a clear sky, and gentle zephyrs from the north-west greeted us when we awoke next morning. Despite my disabled leg, all thoughts of descending to civilisation were forgotten. One sound leg up at the Hut on such a day is worth two sound ones down in Fort William.

Mackay went off on a photographing expedition. I cleared up the breakfast things, bathed in the Allt a' Mhuilinn, sun-bathed on its banks, and then limped into a camp-chair in front of the Hut. With me I had the Hut binoculars: "Presented by the President, 1929." I can recommend Colonel Glover's binoculars and the use I made of them. Sitting at ease in the warm sunshine, I began a detailed inspection of the most impressive mountain scene in these islands; that amazing panorama of cliff and gully which fronts the Nevis Hut. When the survey was completed, I looked at my watch. Three hours had passed like three minutes! Previous visits had given me but a dim realisation of the towering magnificence of the Allt a' Mhuilinn precipices, but those three hours of binocular-gazing have fixed in my mind a complete picture of the whole face. I can now, as it were, take this picture from its mental repository and look at it whenever I feel inclined. This is no small privilege. It is true, I think, that fuel for the lamps of memory is best gathered when the body is at rest. Might

it not be more "repaying," as Mr Baedeker puts it, if those occasional days of very perfect weather in the mountains were mainly spent, not in strenuous physical exertion, but in meditative and sequestered contemplation of one's surroundings?

After a solitary lunch I regained my camp-chair and began (with the binoculars) to work out climbs on hitherto unexplored faces. I did two new and very difficult climbs on the west face of the North-East Buttress and one still more difficult on the cliffs of Càrn Dearg! Mark Twain, I believe, climbed Mont Blanc by this method, which has much to commend it. Almost as exhilarating as real climbing, it is neither so exhausting nor so dangerous, and one can balance airily and confidently on holds that might seem both inadequate and unreliable to the climber in the flesh.

Mackay returned. As usual, the light or the shadows or something had been all wrong for good photography! With all modesty I informed him of my successful climbs. He seemed strangely unimpressed. He even suggested that I would have been better occupied getting tea ready against his return. During tea, however, he became more amiable and told me he had twice encountered Dougal. On each occasion Dougal was occupying the summit of a rocky eminence in Coire na Ciste. Unlike the rest of his gregarious kind (who seem to spend twelve hours of every day feeding and the other twelve chewing the cud), it would appear that the solitary Dougal takes little interest in the more material side of life. Climbing from one good view-point to another, he spends all his waking hours in contemplating the glories of his native mountain.

Our meal over, we settled into camp-chairs in the open. The evening was warm and windless. The cliffs were now mostly in shadow, but the July sun, still high enough to strike the upper rocks, had turned these to burnished copper, leaving a sharp line of demarcation between this glowing colour and the ashen grey of the lower face. For a long time, passing the President's binoculars one to the other as occasion demanded, we

sat in silence watching the subtle changes of light and shadow as the sun sank lower in the west.

Suddenly we became aware of Dougal. Just opposite the Hut is a large slabby face of glaciated rock. Dougal was perched on top of it. He looked at us fixedly; but his expression seemed less aggressive and contemptuous than usual, and I thought I saw in Dougal's eye some suggestion of that sympathetic and understanding regard which one mountaineer has for another. I welcomed this approach to friendliness with a clearer conscience from the fact that the provisions we had brought to the Hut included no mutton! Through all the remainder of that evening he retained his position, keeping us under surveillance, but by no means making us the sole object of his attention. His glance roved from cliff to corrie and from corrie to sky, and if Dougal did not share our pleasure in the marvels of the Allt a' Mhuilinn that evening, I am very much mistaken. Gradually the sunlight faded. The skyline to the north-west became more and more defined until every detail was etched sharply against a golden sky. From the shadow of the Ben we watched the rays of the setting sun strike level across the ridges and furrows of the northern world. Truly, it is only during the sunset hours and from the high fastnesses of the hills that the "mountain glory" is revealed in its full majesty.

A stag came up from the lower glen and, at no great distance from the Hut, stopped and examined us carefully. Then, timidly but determinedly, he edged his way round the lower rocks of Càrn Dearg and trotted daintily along the scree-covered shelf below the main cliffs. This shelf leads nowhere. The sparse grasses that grow there must be of delectable quality! Dougal showed his extreme disapproval of this new intrusion by head-shaking and foot-stamping, but never moved from his position on the slabs.

It was getting dark; hardly enough light to distinguish Dougal's white head on the rocks opposite. We bade him good-night and retired to our bunks. More than pleased with this day of memorable inactivity, and with

thoughts of the cliffs, the sunset, and our friend Dougal gently simmering in my brain, I fell asleep.

Dougal followed me into my dreams. I saw him standing in the S.M.C. rooms addressing a large gathering of brother rams. He stood upright like a human. His right fore-foot was extended above his head in a graceful oratorical gesture. His left fore-foot was thrust through the sling of an ice-axe. His shoulders were encircled by a coil of climbing rope. Dougal was in process of delivering to the annual meeting of the Rams' Climbing Club a discourse upon the pleasures of slab-climbing in Coire na Ciste!

I can recall little of Dougal's most interesting address, but I have very vivid recollections of the crashing applause with which his fellow-members of the R.C.C. greeted him when he had finished. This applause was so loud that I awoke with a start—to find that Mackay, groping for his watch in the dark, had knocked the enamel basin off the Hut table!

I sat up in bed and looked out through the window. The Allt a' Mhuilinn glen, under its canopy of stars, was black as a wolf's throat; but even yet the final curtain had not been rung down upon the pageant of that wonderful day. Away in the north-west the horizon still held vestiges of light and, across the intervening miles of darkness, the distant hills were silhouetted quite clearly against a ribbon of violet sky.

TWO DAYS ON GARBH BHEINN OF
ARDGOUR.

By R. R. ELTON.

GARBH BHEINN of Ardgour is, in the words of more than one early contributor, "one of the most perfect little hills in Scotland." It is remote, and its attractions are not visible to the casual eye: he who wishes to see the best of it must take some trouble. From Onich or Ballachulish the general view is magnificent, but Garbh Bheinn looks, in itself, quite an ordinary hill, except for the abrupt top and glimpse of cliff on the northern side which suggest the possibility of hidden treasure. It is not until the very heart of the hill is reached that the treasure is revealed.

In the early volumes of the *Journal* I had read many glowing accounts of expeditions to Garbh Bheinn, and each account suggested that the writer had been provided with some unusual fare. Accordingly, when the Easter Meet at Ballachulish in 1927 brought a golden opportunity of reaching it, I joined with E. C. Thomson, who had looked on it for many years with a covetous eye, in an expedition. J. H. B. Bell and my brother completed the party.

The ideal method of approach would have been by motor boat directly across the loch to Inversanda Bay, but we were unfortunately denied this pleasure, and had to be content with the more prosaic transport afforded by bus and ferry via Onich and Corran. An early start was essential, and we were at the ferry before 8 o'clock on the Saturday morning. The sky was cloudless, and the last wisps of mist clinging to the hillsides were being rapidly dissipated by the brilliant sunshine. A perfect spring morning!

At Corran we experienced the first of our delays.



April 1927

LOOKING UP GLEN GOUR. (*See page 182*)

K. R. Elton

Twenty minutes of hideous noise from the big bell at the ferry produced no effect, and only a stentorian roar from the combined party eventually brought forth our reluctant Charon. Again, at Ardgour Hotel delays faced us, and we saw the best part of the day vanishing before we were well started. It appeared that it would be at least half an hour before our car—an ancient vehicle of American origin—could be mobilised, so we retired to the hotel and settled down before the fire to recover some lost sleep; but even that peace was denied to us. Before long we were aroused by a loud wail of anguish from Bell who was discovered groping frantically in the fire. Taking his courage and a one-legged pair of tongs in both hands, he was sending the coals to the four corners of the room. At length a charred object, apparently his favourite pipe, was exposed to view, and Bell pounced on it, leaving us to save the hotel. This little interlude cheered us considerably, and with the arrival of our chariot, Bell also recovered his equanimity.

The run down the side of the loch was glorious, enchanting views of the loch and the Glencoe hills appearing at every turn. The car was released at the bridge at the foot of Coire an Iubhair to return for a second party, which had, we shrewdly suspect, encouraged our early start in order that they themselves might suffer no delay at the hands of the natives.

The best method of approach to Garbh Bheinn is by way of Coire an Iubhair. The hill is entirely blocked to view by the shoulder of Sron a Garbh Choire Bhig, and the walk up the glen is rather uninteresting. The glen is of the usual U-shape and very featureless until the bend is reached. Once round this, however, the whole scene changes, and the glen itself becomes wild and picturesque. A short distance farther, and quite suddenly the slope of Sron a Garbh Choire Bhig gives way to a steep, narrow corrie, at the head of which the cliffs of Garbh Bheinn make a bold and challenging appearance.

The full attraction of the hill now becomes apparent. A fine-looking arête rises on the immediate left of a tremendous gully which splits the cliffs from top to bottom,

and leads to the main summit. On the other side of the gully are the two northern tops, each with a fine rock face. Surely here was a little paradise for the rock-climber! The arête appeared to offer the longest climb, and a unanimous decision to take this route was come to.

The walk up the corrie is itself quite amusing and interesting. The north-western side is precipitous, and the gigantic boulders strewn under its cliff gave us some good scrambling and also some pot-holing of a minor sort.

After lunching at the foot of the rocks, where Bell with praiseworthy determination smoked a battered pipe to the bitter end, we roped up, and began climbing close to the gully. The rather slabby rock and steep grass at the start offered little encouragement, and some time was spent in an unsuccessful search for a route. Meanwhile the second party (three "Slithy Toves" of senior rank) had profited sufficiently by our many delays to make up on us, and they now sneaked past us on the regular route. We accordingly traversed about 20 yards to the left and, Bell leading, followed them up to a broad grassy ledge which divides the climb into two distinct parts. This first part is rather of the vegetable order, and alternates between short chimneys and steep grass. No definite route can be described, but we found that where two routes seemed feasible, the left-hand one was the better, as any deviation to the right was likely to take us into the gully, which has not been climbed throughout.

The second part of the climb, in contrast to the first, provides about 500 feet of wonderful rock, with in places a ridiculous profusion of holds. The arête itself is very narrow, and for some time most of the climbing has to be done on the left wall, but in the upper half it broadens out and allows some variation in route. We followed the grass ledge to the very end, where it disappeared into a sheer face of cliff. At this point, where we seemed to have come to the end of our tether, a route straight up the face appeared, and on being put to the test it yielded rather easily, and we reached the arête again some 50 feet higher. An overhanging mass of rock forbade a direct

ascent, and we again traversed back on to the left-hand wall ; thence a short climb on very steep rock with wonderful holds took us back again to the arête. This whole performance had to be repeated some 10 feet higher, but thereafter we followed the arête closely. At no point was the climbing difficult, but one short knife-edge stretch where the holds were rather shallow required care. The views from the arête were sensational, the cliffs falling very steeply on either side, and especially on the right, where colossal slabs dropped sheer and unbroken to the gully.

The weather had by this time changed completely, and the last 200 feet of the climb were done in mist and with a threat of rain. Our first intention of returning via the head of Coire an Iubhair and Glen Gour was therefore abandoned and we ran down over Sron a Choire Garbh Bhig to our starting-point. Thomson and I outstripped the others on the 7-mile walk back to Ardgour, where our generous impulse to send a car to meet them was fortunately frustrated, for Bell, determined to put a Spartan finish to the day, went bathing in Loch Linnhe with my brother. Ballachulish Hotel was reached at 10 o'clock, the expedition having taken about fourteen hours, of which fully half were occupied in reaching and returning from the hill. But it was worth it!

Six weeks later, along with W. B. Speirs, I revisited Garbh Bheinn to do the same climb. This was an expedition of painful memories for me. I went up from Glasgow on the pillion of his motor bicycle, and arrived at Ballachulish in a stupefied condition. A rather rough crossing at Corran did little to help matters, and we spent an anxious time holding the machine upright across the small boat on a narrow plank. All of us were anxious, the man for his boat, Speirs for his bicycle (I would gladly have seen it disappear at the time), and myself for my skin. All survived, however, and we made short work of the distance to Garbh Bheinn.

I had previously primed myself with information as to how to find the beginning of the climb in case of mist, but unfortunately it was a glorious day, and I had no

chance to show my ability under bad conditions. Instead, I showed my inability under perfect conditions, and after climbing about 150 feet we found ourselves in the great gully. A short consideration of the facts satisfied us that however easy it might be to get down, nothing short of rope and tackle would get us up. Rather than retrace our steps we decided to prospect the climb on the right-hand side of the gully, and accordingly climbed down the gully until we could find an escape on that side. *En route* we descended an amusing cave pitch by way of a hole in the roof. From its foot a traverse was made round a corner into a narrow subsidiary gully with a beautiful grassy floor which sat up and simply begged to be climbed. After I had struggled up about 50 feet, I found that it was sitting up a trifle too straight, and also that the scanty holds by which I had levered myself up seemed to have disappeared entirely. As Francis Bacon says, "The rising unto place is laborious, and by pains men come to greater pains: and sometimes it is base, and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing. Nay, retire man cannot when he would, neither will he when it were reason." My position exactly! Whether or not it was possible to get up, I felt that only a rope and tackle would enable me to get down. A wisp of a hitch was grasped at as the justification for Speirs coming up, and I squirmed up another 40 feet in an "ecstasy of caution." Speirs again joined me and, aided by a lion's share of the instinct for self-preservation, I managed to overcome the final 30 feet.

From the top easy rocks led up to a point opposite the broad grass ledge (described in the previous climb), and a continuation of the break enabled us to cross the gully again and complete the climb on the main arête. The day was perfect, and we lay on the top for a long time drinking in the air and the view. At length, however, I had to accompany Speirs down to the mechanical horror which awaited me at the foot. But it was worth it!

AN EARLY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.

[We are indebted to Howard Priestman for the discovery in "The Private Letter Books of Sir Walter Scott" of an interesting letter dealing with the foundation and activities of a Mountaineering Club that was apparently formed in Scotland in 1815. This book is published by Messrs Hodder & Stoughton under the Editorship of Wilfred Partington, to both of whom we are obliged for their courtesy in permitting the following excerpt to be reprinted. Mr Partington's introduction precedes the letter.]

THIS letter may give us quiet amusement at the spectacle of enthusiastic clubmen, under the inspiration of Ossian and blue Highlander, on the reeling summit, surveying fourteen counties and all the cities of Scotland. It may raise doubt whether any club to-day would or could stand twenty-four hours of such sublime exertion and refection; but there will be no question of its truthfulness to Scottish sentiment. Incidentally, we may picture the worthy president, doubtless with the said Highlander at his elbow, obviously straining himself to "write up" to the great idol of Scotland.

From DONALD CAMPBELL.

LOCHGOILHEAD, BY CAIRNDOW,
26th April 1822.

SIR,—At a committee meeting held here yesterday of the Highland Mountain Club of Lochgoilhead (the only institution of the kind in Scotland), convened for the purposes of arranging the necessary preparations for the ensuing general meeting, 22nd June (the Summer Solstice), being the day originally fixed upon for holding the anniversary, in conformity to the usage of Fingalian taste and independence, it was moved, and unanimously voted, should it meet with your concurrence, to enrol you as a constituent member. This was done in consideration of your well-known attachment and readiness

on all occasions to promote the interest and spread the fame of every circumstance connected with the Highlands, for which the meeting return you their grateful thanks. As President of the Club I was enjoined to transmit you without delay these our vote and sentiment.

The Club was established in 1815 principally with a view to adopt the dress, cultivate the language, and to perpetuate the manners and refined sentiments of our remote ancestors as (in)culcated by the sublime immortal Ossian, and for several charitable and scientific purposes. The Club, having partaken of some refectation at the Inn, march off in grand style to the top of a lofty mountain, preceded by the bagpipes playing national airs, and their officer bearing their flag. On their journey they occasionally regale themselves with a bumper of the genuine blue Highlander. In the progress of their ascent objects expand and multiply exceedingly until their arrival on the summit six o'clock in the evening. Then what a glorious prospect bursts instantaneously on the sight. . . . In the delightful expansive diversified prospect that we descry, a part of fourteen Counties, likewise a part of the Emerald Isle interspersed with innumerable fresh-water lakes, and lochs, bays and seas branching from the Atlantic, a multiplicity of islands, promontories, and necks of land varying in shade and form in proportion to distance. In the group the whole of the beautiful interesting Firth of Clyde constitutes a prominent part. The briny undulating element containing on its bosom swarms of fishing boats collected in fleets, or scattered in every direction, a great number of coasting vessels of from twenty to a hundred tons burden, ships of every description with their canvas unfurled, ploughing the deep, loaded with the exports of our country, or returning fraught with the produce and luxuries of foreign climes. To vary the scenery, a distant view of the cities and towns of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Dumbarton, Greenock, Ayr, Stirling, Perth, etc., etc., with the most of the intervening richly cultivated charming country. In the whole nothing attracts the attention, or commands our admiration, more than the sublime uncommon appearance

of the sun for about three-quarters of an hour before he sinks in the ocean, and for the same time, tho' quite different—yet equally grand, after he rises at half-past two in the morning. If the silent peerless queen of the night happens to be in her second or third phase, aided by the brilliancy of the twinkling stars, (she) renders the interval a clear, interesting, charming twilight. The whole is the cause of such agreeable sensations as baffle the pen to describe, or imagination to paint; to have an adequate conviction (it) requires to be seen. Indeed a person finds himself most completely in fairy-land, or rather fancies himself wafted thro' the mid regions of ether, enjoying celestial felicity.

The Club repairs at ten at night to a commodious comfortable tent previously erected in the centre of a wide plain on the summit covered with thick moss, soft as velvet. After a sumptuous supper served in the true style of Highland hospitality, and a bumper of genuine mogbea, the Cuach Withair (Yeu bowl) and Sligean Creachais (Scollop shells) are produced, it being well known it was out of these our remote ancestors drank their favourite beverage. After every standard toast there is a discharge of musquetry. The conversation, song, toasts, and sentiments are principally in Gaelic. Thus with occasional marches, strathspeys, and reels from the bagpipes, the time passes joyously and insensibly away until, summoned at ten in the morning to drink a bumper of whiskey to "happy to meet, sorry to part," and happy to meet there, or on a similar spot, next year, and another Deoch an Doris, the Club descend to the reverberating sound of the bagpipes and of musquetry.

At five in the afternoon they retire to the Inn to dine, to which the principal inhabitants of the neighbourhood are invited. The time passes with the utmost conviviality until they separate at a late hour next morning, to meet the 22nd June next year, being highly pleased with their excursion.—Your most obedient humble Servant,

DONALD CAMPBELL.

RESEARCH IN GLENCOE.

By J. H. B. BELL.

IT has been decided to publish a new section of the S.M.C. "Guide Book" this autumn, and as this section will include the magnificent climbing-ground of Buchaille Etive and Glencoe, a Sub-Committee has been appointed to see that the known climbs in this area are adequately described, and that no naturally obvious route, if hitherto unclimbed, shall remain unattempted.

A careful perusal of the past numbers of our *Journal* yields a good deal of information about the climbing possibilities of Glencoe, but a number of happy days spent on the rocks also reveal to the inquiring eye that there still remains virgin ground. As the co-operation of all the members is most desirable, both in the matter of photographing the more recondite recesses of the mountains, as well as in clearing up the doubtful details, a brief review will be given of the likeliest fields for new discoveries. Any references in numbers are, of course, to volume and page of the *S.M.C. Journal*.

1. *Buchaille Etive Mor. Stob Dearg*.—The best-known climb here, "The Crowberry Ridge," with all its variations, has been so well described as to require no further comment. On the south-east side of the mountain, the "Chasm" has been well described in a recent number, XVI. 62, but it seems that the completed ascent under summer conditions has not yet been effected. The great precipice facing Kingshouse is also not in a satisfactory state. The first Central Buttress route is described in V. 90 and 231, by J. H. Bell. Recently two routes are described in XVIII. 379, but in no case has the buttress been climbed directly and centrally. The lower cliff promises to be exceptionally difficult. Collie's climb to the south of this cliff is not very easy to identify. There are quite possibly some new climbs to the west of the great gully, or Gully A, although one route is described there in XV. 185.

2. *Aonach Eagach*.—There is little record of climbing

on the Glencoe face of the Aonach Eagach ridge. A note, VII. 109, might be cited in this connection, showing that two interesting ridge climbs have been obtained here leading to Meall Dearg.

3. *Aonach Dubh*.—There is certainly new work to be done on the north face of Aonach Dubh. W. Tough, IV. 48, describes an ascent from a start to the left of, and below, Ossian's Ladder, which finished at the summit cairn. I have found this exceedingly difficult to find. At some distance above, and to the west of the foot of Ossian's Ladder, inspection last summer suggested a possible ascent by slabs to a terrace running back eastwards, from which it might be possible to attain the summit of Aonach Dubh. There is also a fine unclimbed gully to the west of this starting-point, and probably quite a number of other possible climbs up to 300 feet in height.

The western broken cliffs of Aonach Dubh have been twice ascended, VII. 96 and 110. Since then they seem to have received little attention.

4. *Stob Coire nam Beith*.—The only concise account of a climb here is in VII. 110, describing what is generally known as the Arch Gully. There seems to be no record of a continuous route on the fine buttress just to the west of this. The author worked out a route in 1924 some way still farther to the west, but, though quite interesting, it was disconnected. Between the Arch Gully and the Church Door Buttress of Bidean is another buttress of trap rock which does not seem to have been investigated at all. It is certainly very steep.

5. *Stob Coire an Lochan*.—The first note on the eastern cliffs of Stob Coire an Lochan is found in III. 158. An excellent account of the ascent of the Central Buttress of these by Dr Inglis Clark is in X. 240. In that account reference is made to neighbouring buttresses and to an unclimbed pinnacle. Since then the cliffs have been most unjustifiably neglected. They are certainly remote, they are of trap rock, and they seem most relentlessly perpendicular, but these are hardly cogent reasons for their wanton neglect by the ultramontanes of the Club.

6. *Bidean nam Bian*.—The classical article on the Church Door Buttress is to be found in V. 135. There are two recognised routes to the roof of the Church Door, but so far there is no finish which avoids the crossing of the roof. If there were, it would spoil the artistic finish of the climb. A note appears in this number on the companion, or Eastern Buttress. An attempt was made on the central route on this buttress last October. The attempt failed, as the route promises to be fairly difficult and exposed, and to require the co-operation of a fairly strong party.

The author of these notes makes no claim to have given a complete review of the rock-climbing problems of to-day in Glencoe. The district has still great potentialities, and the above are, in the author's opinion, but a few of the outstanding problems which should at any rate be attempted before the "Guide Book" goes to press.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1930.

COLONEL GEORGE TERTIUS GLOVER presided at the Annual General Meeting held in the North British Station Hotel, Edinburgh, on Friday, 7th December 1930. At the commencement the President read a letter from Mrs Sang thanking the Club for the Heather Wreath sent in memory of her husband. As was inevitable, an underlying sense of sorrow permeated the proceedings at the General Meeting and at the Dinner, both of which have been usually so full of his personality.

The acting HON. SECRETARY read the Minutes of the last Meeting, and the HON. TREASURER submitted the Club's Financial Statement. The funds were found to be in a healthy condition, and the membership was reported to show an increase of five as against the previous year.

The HON. EDITOR'S report was submitted and approved. He stated that it had been found necessary to increase the number of copies printed from 600 to 700.

The HON. LIBRARIAN submitted a report on the Library and Slide Collection.

A report on the Club Hut was submitted by R. R. ELTON, which showed that its popularity was increasing.

These various officials were cordially thanked for their services in the past year.

A motion by F. S. GOGGS, that Rule No. 26 should be amended to enable a reversion to a three years' term of office for the President, was defeated on a vote being taken.

The various office-bearers were appointed for the ensuing year: *President*, Rev. A. E. Robertson. *Vice-President*, J. C. Thomson in place of H. MacRobert. *New Members of Committee*, J. Logan Aikman, C. K. M.

Douglas, M. Matheson, and D. Mackay. *Custodian of Slides*, D. Mackay. *General "Guide Book" Editor*, Henry Alexander. *Hon. Secretary*, Alex. Harrison. *Assistant Hon. Secretary*, J. Logan Aikman.

The other office-bearers, members of committee, and trustees of the Club funds were re-elected conform to Rule No. 26.

It was agreed to hold the Easter Meet for 1932 at Tomich and Invercannich and the New Year Meet at Brodick.

RECEPTION.

THE Reception was held in the North British Station Hotel, the guests being received by the President, and after tea J. H. B. Bell showed slides of the Caucasus and described his experiences in summer when he visited these mountains in company with Russian climbers.

Although the Reception was not so fully attended as that held in the Station Hotel in 1928, there was a large attendance, and J. H. B. Bell's slides were given a cordial reception by the visitors.

ANNUAL DINNER.

THE Forty-Second Annual Dinner was held in the North British Station Hotel, with the retiring President in the chair. There were present 65 members and 21 guests.

After the usual toast of the King's health had been drunk, the toast of "The Guests of the Club" was proposed by the Hon. Lord Moncrieff and replied to by the Lord Provost of the City.

The President, in proposing the "S.M.C.," referred to the great loss which the Club had sustained by the unexpected death of the Hon. Secretary, Mr George Sang, and, voicing the sentiments of every one present, stated that the Club could not have had a more capable,

energetic, tactful, and devoted controller of its destinies than George Sang.

The toast of "Kindred Clubs" was proposed by Dr Ratcliffe Barnett, and C. W. Walker, representing the Alpine Club, replied on behalf of the numerous Clubs included in the toast.

As usual the health of the retiring President was proposed by his successor and responded to enthusiastically.

The only music which was rendered was the Club Song by Stuart Jack. The curtailment of the programme was voted a complete success, as it gave members an opportunity of meeting each other and indulging in some private speech-making, an opportunity the lack of which has been commented on at previous dinners.

TO GLOVER, 1929-30.

CHIEFTAIN beloved! whose two years' reign has been
A chance to know thee better; yet, oh, Glover!
Thy reign was incomplete. Where, sir, thy Queen?
Was love so wide thou couldst not be a "lover"?
Thy "loves"—we hear thee hymn them day by day
In simple words that well straight from thy heart—
Thine engines worshipped in MacAndrew's way,
Nursed, fondled, fought for, cared for part by part.
Thy cars, from ancient types whose deeds have been
But the forerunners of some mightier class,
Enshrined in memories that still keep them green
Till they in turn for some still greater pass.
The moorlands wide have called thee with thy gun,
The heather's purple hue, the spinney's brown,
The beagle's cry has caught thee, made thee run
O'er the wide fields, the hilltops, and the down.
But first and foremost of thy chaste harem,
Those hills that far and wide have held thy love,
Swiss, French, and English, but of first esteem
Those hills of Scotland others far above,

To which thine exile eyes return again,
 As some in dreams behold the Hebrides.
 And in thy longings, o'er the narrow main
 There rise before thee such dear loves as these,
 The massive front of Buchaille, ridge and tower
 Ascending to the sunshine or the mist;
 The battlements, defiant in their power,
 Which guard the Ben, thou lover-like hast kissed.
 And there 'mongst beauties circling Kinlochewe,
 Thy heart is drawn in joy and ecstasy,
 When springs into thine ever ardent view
 The peerless Liathach so fair to see.
 Though now thy sweet brief chieftainship must end,
 The tribute from thy comrades nobly won,
 They ne'er shall lose thee as their constant friend.
 And still thy lover's race thou well mayst run,
 For none of these can e'er be thine undoing,
 And still thou'lt follow eager and pursuing.

J. S. M. JACK.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1931—ARROCHAR.

THE New Year Meet of the Club was held at Arrochar from 26th December 1930 to 5th January 1931.

From first to last there attended :—

Members.—Rev. A. E. Robertson (*President*), J. C. Thomson (*Vice-President*), J. L. Aikman, Thos. Aitken, L. St C. Bartholomew, J. H. B. Bell, J. F. A. Burt, J. Rooke Corbett, H. J. Craig, A. L. Cram, W. H. Dinsmore, A. Harrison, K. K. Hunter, A. G. Hutchison, J. Gall Inglis, R. M. Gall Inglis, W. N. Ling, J. Y. Macdonald, D. Mackay, Sir Hugh M'Pherson, D. H. M'Pherson, Ross M'Lean, John M'Lean, H. MacRobert, J. MacRobert, M. Matheson, I. B. Mowat, R. C. Paterson, T. G. Robinson, A. C. Russell, J. A. Scott, and E. C. Thomson.

Guests.—J. Bowstead, Gordon Jackson, and Ian Paterson.



4th January 1931

BEN LOMOND FROM THE COBBLER CORRIE. (*See page 196*)

A. E. Robertson



4th January 1931

THE COBBLER. (See page 196)

A. E. Robertson

There were also gathered at the Toll House, Inverarnan, W. B. Speirs, G. R. Speirs, and J. G. Robinson, J.M.C.S.

The advance party—J. Rooke Corbett—arrived on Friday, 26th December, and on successive days achieved (Saturday) Beinn a Mhanaich, 2,328 feet, and Cruach an t'Sithein, 2,244 feet; (Sunday) Tullich Hill, 2,075 feet, and Mid Hill, 2,149 feet; (Monday) Beinn Damhain, 2,242 feet, and Meall an Fhudair, 2,508 feet; and (Tuesday) Beinn a Choin, 2,524 feet, with leisurely lope and lithe, long limbs.

When K. K. Hunter joined Corbett on Wednesday, 31st December, they climbed Beinn an Lochain with a certain amount of uplift from a bus. Corbett, always modest of his own efforts, maintains that this top should be deleted from Munro's tables, being short by 8 feet of the prescribed height. Two aneroids and an Abney level, supported by Hunter, corroborate this verdict. [Parker and Gall Inglis might now give Beinn nan Oighreag a rest and join battle on the top of Beinn an Lochain!] Burt, arriving in the morning, tackled the Cobbler. Everybody else was content to arrive in time for dinner.

Thursday, 1st January, found Bell, Burt, and Mackay on Ben Lui, the top being reached by the left gully. A perfect day, with sunshine and clean, hard snow. Hunter took Ben Vorlich and enjoyed 600 feet of a snow gully. Hutchison, Jackson, and T. G. Robinson had a full day over Ben Vorlich, Ben Vane, and Beinn Ime—perhaps the most strenuous effort of the Meet. Without drawing invidious comparisons or encouraging records, one may say it is comparable to that undertaken by Gilbert Thomson and Naismith in September 1889,* which commenced with a walk from Garelochhead to Arrochar at 9 o'clock on the previous evening, and after a 4.30 breakfast at Ross's Hotel, included the Cobbler (South

* *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. XVIII., p. 2.

and Centre Peaks), Beinn Ime, Ben Vane, Ben Vorlich, and a final rush to Tarbet.

Scott, Harrison, and Matheson climbed Ben Vorlich, and found the views inspiring. Brocken spectres were seen by various parties.

E. C. Thomson and Gall Inglis, jun., reached Beinn Ime by way of Coronach.

Ling, H. MacRobert, J. MacRobert, J. Y. Macdonald, and Colin Russell motored to the top of the Rest and ascended Beinn Ime by Luibhean. Ling and Colin Russell also included Ben Vane, the others being less ambitious.

The President and J. C. Thomson walked and talked and photographed, sometimes together and sometimes in turn.

The detached party at the Toll House, Inverarnan, W. B. Speirs, G. R. Speirs, J. G. Robinson, and three others (names unreported), attacked Beinn Dubhcraig on skis by the north-east Coire. A late start prevented them reaching a height of more than 2,500 feet.

After dinner, in spite of the interruption caused by a committee meeting, a genial evening was spent with song and saga. Stuart Jack's absence, much regretted as it was, at least drew forth some new talent, and the Club Song was neither neglected nor murdered. The President told a moving story of an old woman who was wounded by a cow, and how the Book of Common Prayer was ill-adapted to deal with this situation. The Editor insisted on speaking about the *Journal*. He pointed out that all the members had their individual poise, which should not be hidden away but brought into the light, and that the inspiration of the heights, of the massive tops, of the red glint on the snow cornice, should force their pens to paper for the preservation of mountain lore and literature. He was ultimately induced to stop, but not before he had touched a chord in Hutchison's harp (see p. 171). E. C. Thomson, H. MacRobert, K. K. Hunter, Hutchison, and others threw their musical talent into the common pot with much acceptance. Quite irrelevantly one recalls the story of the minister's wife who visited the sick old man and sang to him several days

in succession, till at last the invalid said: "Dod, mem, it is a peety ye canna sing; ye're sae wullin'!"

Friday, 2nd January.—Corbett left. The President and J. C. Thomson continued as before. Sir Hugh M'Pherson, D. H. M'Pherson, and J. Bowstead went over the Cobbler and Narnain. Scott, Ling, Harrison, and H. MacRobert did Narnain and Crois.

E. C. Thomson and J. MacRobert motored to Glen Kinglas, and climbing the Ben Fhithleir at the west end traversed over various tops to the east end in a good deal of snow and wind, enjoying, however, one or two blinks of fair weather.

Craig, R. C. Paterson, Ian Paterson, Hutchison, T. G. Robinson, and Jackson climbed Ben Vhrackie, and, being very fresh to the end, scorned a "lift" on the road home.

Dinsmore, Mowat, and Colin Russell had an interesting day on Ben Vorlich. Bell, Matheson, Burt, and Macdonald covered Narnain and Crois.

The Inverarnan party, joined by W. Ross M'Lean and Thomas Aitken, continued their backsliding on skis, and visited Beinn Ghlas at Killin. J. G. M'Lean climbed Beinn Ghlas and Meall Corranaich.

The weather was a big change from the previous day, and the sun was rarely seen. Most of the tops were in mist and snowstorm. The President again supervised a genial evening.

Saturday, 3rd January.—The President photographed around Loch Sloy. Harrison and Matheson climbed Ben Vane, while Ling, J. H. B. Bell, and J. Y. Macdonald did Ben Vorlich. Sir Hugh M'Pherson, D. H. M'Pherson, and J. Bowstead had a good day on Beinn Ime and Ben Vane. E. C. Thomson, G. R. Speirs, W. B. Speirs, and J. G. Robinson crossed the River Falloch at Inverarnan, and went down the east side of Loch Lomond. They were greatly attracted by Cnap Mor (536 feet), as this would have beaten the record of the President and J. C. Thomson, who had conquered Cruach Tairbeirt (1,364 feet), but owing to the difficulty

of the ascent, the party continued down the loch and contented themselves with Stob nan Eighrach (2,011 feet). A better day but misty on the tops.

Sunday, 4th January.—The President climbed the Cobbler and took photographs in the corrie. Harrison, Matheson, Ling, and Bartholomew visited the Cobbler, where, avoiding the south top, they went direct to the main and north tops. Here they enjoyed a beautiful spell of sunshine, and were able to view with approval Bell and Cram negotiating the south top with skill and energy. The going seemed difficult owing to the sun and ice.

J. H. B. Bell and Cram, as indicated, had an interesting climb on Jean, and finished on the main peak.

E. C. Thomson, Aikman, and Jackson climbed Beinn Douich (2,774 feet). Sir Hugh M'Pherson, D. H. M'Pherson, and Bowstead motored to the Rest, and climbed Beinn an Lochain. This was the best day of the Meet, and by some voted their best day on the hills.

The independents at Inverarnan with the M'Leans and Aitken continued ski-ing. W. B. and G. R. Speirs, however, traversed the summit of Beinn Ghlas during a lucid interval, probably induced by the arrival of H. MacRobert.

Monday, 5th January.—The remainder, now shrunk to five, left without further climbing. The President appropriately was the last to haul down his flag, leaving at 12.30.

Our cordial thanks are due to the proprietors of Arrochar Hotel and Ross's Hotel for the care and attention bestowed on our comfort.

CLUB ROOM.

The following meetings have been held in the Club Room during the winter :—

1930. 25th November—"The Eastern Alps," by Dr A. Ernest Maylard.

16th December—Some new slides of the Cairngorms, Glen Affric, Glen Shiel, Glencoe, etc., by Rev. A. E. Robertson.

1931. 20th January—"Mont Blanc," by Dr Inglis Clark.
24th February—Mr W. N. Ling described some of
his climbs in the Alps.
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LIBRARY.

Since the last issue of the *Journal* the following books have been presented to the Club, viz. :—

- By the Alpine Club, "The Pioneers of the Alps," C. D. Cunningham and Captain Abney, F.R.S.
By the publishers, Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., "The Hills of Peace," Lawrence Pilkington.
By the publishers, Edward Arnold & Co., "Climbs on Mont Blanc," Jacques and Tom Lepiney.
By the publishers, Victor Gollancz Ltd., "The Kangchenjunga Adventure," F. S. Smythe.
By B. H. Humble, "Album of Photographs."

The Club takes this opportunity of thanking the donors for their generosity.

During the same period the following journals of kindred clubs have been received, viz. :—

- Alpine Journal. Vol. XLII., No. 241.
Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal. Vol. VI., 1930, No. 19.
Climbers' Club Bulletin. November 1930.
Les Alpes. October 1930 to November 1930.
Bulletin du Club Alpine Belge. Vol. VII., Nos. 19 and 20.
Bulletin Pyrénéen. October to December 1930.
The British Ski Year-Book. Vol. V., 1930, No. 11.
Ramblers' Federation Handbook, 1931.
La Montagne. September 1930 to December 1930.
Bulletin Appalachian Mountain Club. December 1930.
Sangaku (Japanese Alpine Club Journal). Vol. XXV., 1930, No. 3.
Italian Alpine Club Journal. April 1930 and November to October 1930.

SLIDE COLLECTION.

The Club is indebted to the President and to Messrs Bartholomew and Parker for the addition of eleven slides to the collection. These include maps of various districts in the Highlands, a panorama of the Cairngorms, and a view of the upper section of the Church Door Buttress climb. All the foreign slides have now been "placed."

REVIEWS

Annual of the Mountain Club of South Africa, No. 32, 1929. 2s. 6d.

This eminently readable and well-illustrated journal opens with a "Plea for Preservation of World Peace," a speech by General Smuts at the Annual Memorial Service on Table Mountain; thereafter the pages are devoted to the business of mountaineering and rock-climbing. We may envy the members their sport in a land where climbing and exploration go hand in hand, where not only new routes but virgin peaks await the foot of man, and peak-naming is one of the duties of a sub-committee.

The contents prove the keenness of the South African mountaineers in heavy bush fighting, for hours on end, in a roadless region, where camp must be made with ever-watchful consideration for bush fires; thereafter hard-going through the hills—probably unmapped—where water is a rarity, and where the prismatic compass is more than a luxury.

The various articles reflect the activities of a healthy club in such a region, recording first ascents of 5,000-foot peaks and new routes up magnificent faces of Dolomitic steepness, but of rock texture and outline unfamiliar to us. Thus to a devotee of our homeland hills, A. O. Izzat's "In the Lake District" affords an opportunity of gauging the ideals and standards of South African climbers; they are high. Referring to Walker's Gully and the north-west and south-west climbs on Pillar Rock, the author states that the gully "provides about 400 feet of the most strenuous climbing I have ever done"; but, regarding the others, "both climbs were simply delightful." The visitor's chief impression of English climbing is "that men climb here no matter what the weather conditions." "British climbers undoubtedly beat us at climbing under adverse conditions, and, judging from Walker's Gully, at gully climbing too. At more exposed buttress and face climbing I feel convinced we could teach them a good deal."

The author continues: "Another point struck me forcibly, from the men I climbed with: they are essentially 'cragmen,' and have very little interest in anything else. . . . I think we can claim to be far more 'mountaineers.'"

Other articles include "The First Season of Ski-ing in South Africa," in which the author, after tracing the history of the sport, says: "For ski-ing to be a success . . . we must have a hut."

A welcome note, "On Observation and Judgment," is capable of expansion, and might have been improved by diagrams. The illustra-

tions are plentiful and impressive—page 62 suggests a rock-climbers' paradise—but the reproduction might possibly be improved. A feature is a reproduction, in colour, of a painting by Hugo Naudi, of Ben Heattie, Keeromberg.

That the club has its own fight for the preservation of the natural beauties of its adopted mountains is apparent from the references to the Table Mountain Cableway: by taking a firm stand the committee appear to have saved much for posterity, but point out that a closer guard should have been kept. We wish them good luck in all their activities.

W. A. M.

The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal, Vol. VI., 1930, No. 19.

As usual, Mr E. R. Roberts has succeeded in producing a first-class journal. Not the least interesting article is an account of his holiday in Corsica in the spring of 1929, where, incidentally, the weather savoured more of Scotland than of the Alps. Another article from the same source is an account of the opening of the Charles Inglis Clark Memorial Hut, at which he represented the Y.R.C., and when he put in some fairly strenuous climbing with Smythe and our fellow-members, Bell and Parry.

Mr Botterill writes of an expedition by yacht to the Outer Hebrides, where he explored some of the little-known hills in South Uist and Harris, and, when reading the article, one is impressed by the tremendous aid a yacht can be to climbing among the islands.

A great deal of space in this journal is given over to "pot holing," a pastime with which the writer has little sympathy and less experience. One can get wet, lose oneself, and suffer all the disagreeable incidents which attend this so-called sport, without looking for trouble underground.

The journal contains many photographs, all excellently reproduced.

G. M. L.

The Secret Valley. By Nicholas Size. Fred. K. Warner & Co. Ltd., London. 2s. 6d. net. Second Edition, with Foreword by Hugh Walpole.

To most climbers it is of interest to learn something of the early history of the places they visit and the part played by the hills in the lives of the early inhabitants. This book describes in a most interesting way the long fight put up by the inhabitants of Lakeland, with their headquarters at Buttermere (the Secret Valley) against the Norman invaders. They took advantage of the rugged nature of the country to such effect that they remained free from the yoke of the conqueror, and it was not till the reign of Henry II. that Lakeland became part of the English Kingdom, but at their own suggestion and on most favourable terms.

W. B. S.

The Alpine Journal, Vol. XLII., No. 241.

A most enthralling number. The chief articles are: (1) "The Fight for Kangchenjunga, 1929," by Paul Bauer. The modest descriptions of the difficulties encountered, and of what, at times, must have been their desperate plight, will appeal to the mind and imagination of the mountaineer. The Editor's description of the attempt as being "a feat without parallel in all the annals of mountaineering" is very much to the point. And (2) "The Assault on Kangchenjunga, 1930," by F. S. Smythe. This is an excellent article, and the photographs are very fine. The expedition was unfortunate in weather conditions, and especially in having a fatality amongst the porters. The *Journal* also contains numerous articles on expeditions, ranging from Greenland to Egypt, which are well worth reading.

G. A. S.

The Kangchenjunga Adventure. By F. S. Smythe. Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1930.

This latest work by Mr Smythe is one of the very best books on our sport which has yet appeared. It is well got up, and the illustrations, numbering forty-eight, are exceptionally good. The price is 16s. As the title of the book implies, it is a story of adventure and not of scientific research. Mr Smythe writes not only for climbers, but for all who love tales of adventure, and the narrative is so clear that, with the help of the illustrations, one can follow in detail the actual routes on the mountains. One or two of the photographs have been sacrificed from the artistic viewpoint by tracings on them of routes and letterpress, but these convey a wonderful impression of what the climbers were doing and the difficulties of their routes. Among the most striking of the photographs are these of Wedge Peak, an Ice Avalanche, and Ramthang Peak, but they are all above the average for a book of this type.

The story is mostly of the assault on Kangchenjunga, which, Mr Smythe remarks incidentally, may be the second highest mountain in the world, as the latest estimates have made it 34 feet higher than K. 2, 28,250 feet, which has for long been considered next to Mount Everest in height.

Kangchenjunga had never been seriously assaulted until 1929, when an extraordinarily fine performance was put up by a Bavarian party on the north-east ridge approached from Sikkim. Our own member, the late Harold Raeburn, explored the south-west approaches and reached a height of about 21,000 feet. He pronounced the whole of this side unclimbable, and this is confirmed by Mr Smythe. The only other apparent route was the north or north-west, and many

years ago Mr Douglas Freshfield has suggested that a route to the summit might be found here. Unfortunately this route involves an approach through the forbidden territory of Nepal, and it was only at the last moment that Mr Smythe's party obtained permission to enter Nepal. The party, which was an international one, led by Professor Dyhrenfurth, consisted of German, Austrian, Swiss, and English climbers. They crossed the Kang La from Sikkim and went through Nepal to the Kangchenjunga glacier which flows north-west from the summit. They made their first assault directly up this glacier, with a view to reaching the north ridge. This failed, and one of the porters, Chettan, who had already distinguished himself on Mount Everest, was killed in an avalanche. The second assault was made by the north-west ridge, which, from the photographs, appears to be hopelessly inaccessible, and proved to be so in actual practice.

Mr Smythe stresses the very serious obstacles to climbing in the Kangchenjunga district which arise from the weather conditions due to the mountain's situation to the south of the main chain, and so opposed to the full effects of the monsoon. These conditions give rise to immense accumulations of ice and snow, causing avalanches, and to an almost constant high wind on the upper slopes.

After their failure in the main objective, the party moved north over the Jonsong La and made a successful attempt on Jongson Peak, 24,344 feet, and thus gained the highest summit hitherto ascended. The previous highest authenticated ascent was Trisul, by Dr Longstaff, 1,000 feet lower, but, of course, on Mount Everest an altitude of 28,000 feet was reached.

There are very few printers' errors, but "east" and "west" have been misplaced by the author on more than one occasion, an error which even creeps into pages of our own *Journal*.

H. M.

NOTES AND 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.



EASTER MEET, 1930.

REFERENCE is made on page 120 of last issue of the *Journal* to an ascent of Cairngorm by a party of three in two hours fifty-two minutes. The scribe intended no reflection, and indeed the real lover of the hills will not seek to create records but rather to linger in leisurely enjoyment of the changing beauties that make up the climber's day. [Here we must pause to disclaim any intention to rebuke our contributor on page 207. The Editor's path is proverbially thorny!] It is proper, however, to state that one of the party concerned had recently sustained a dislocation of his ankle, and the time recorded is not to be taken as normal.—HON. EDITOR.

HOSPITALITY.

The President represented the S.M.C. at a dinner given by the Midland Association of Mountaineers in Birmingham on 21st February.

This Club—a very large and influential and enthusiastic one—was founded in 1922, but as this was its first dinner, a special effort was made to make the gathering a success, and indeed it was! There was an attendance of over 160 members and guests. Among those present were: Brig.-Gen. the Hon. C. G. Bruce, of Mt. Everest fame, representing the Alpine Club; Mr L. S. Amery, M.P.; Mr and Mrs Winthrop Young; W. P. Haskett-Smith, E. S. Chantrell, the Climbers' Club; C. Chubb, the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club; Mrs John Hirst, the Pinnacle Club; W. M. Roberts, the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club; Harry Scott, the Rucksack Club; Miss S. M. Taylor, the Ladies' Alpine Club; Eustace Thomas, the Fell and Rock Climbing Club.

The dinner and the speeches alike were unusually good. The next day was spent in a combined motoring and walking expedition among the Cotswolds, when everything was done for the comfort and pleasure of the guests. Altogether a very happy week-end. Commend me to the Midlands for hospitality, good comradeship, and good cheer.

A. E. R.

Howard Priestman attended the dinner of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, which was held under the cloud of George Sang's death. Their hospitality was much appreciated.

Mr F. S. Goggs represented the S.M.C. at the Annual Dinner of the Climbers' Club held in London on 14th February 1931.

The proposer of the toast of " Kindred Clubs " made sympathetic reference to the death of Mr George Sang, who had been present at the Climbers' Club Dinner in 1930.

Mr Goggs, on behalf of the members of the S.M.C., thanked the Climbers' Club for their sympathy, and said that the loss of their President, Mr Myles Mathews,*with whom Mr Sang had many traits in common, would enable them the better to appreciate the loss which the S.M.C. had sustained.

The S.M.C. was represented by G. A. Solly at the Annual Dinner of the Mayfarers Club, held in Liverpool on the 13th December last, with the retiring President, F. Lawson Cook, in the chair, and an attendance of nearly ninety guests and members. Very great satisfaction at the completion during the year of the Club Hut in Langdale was expressed. Some excellent speeches were made, particularly by E. H. Pryor, who was welcomed after a good recovery from his severe accident and illness, and by Mr W. F. Bushell, the new Headmaster of Birkenhead School, who is a member of the South African Mountaineering Club, and alluded to the kinship of climbers in England and the distant Colonies. During the proceedings the Annual Meeting of the Club was held, and officers were elected and all the usual business was done in the record time of 1 minute and 38 seconds, an example of brevity which might be studied by our own and many other Clubs.

G. A. S.

THE CAIRNGORMS IN TWELVE HOURS.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Club frowns on record times and peak-bagging, it had been for a long time my ambition to traverse the whole Cairngorm range in one day, including the four 4,000-foot tops of Cairngorm, Macdhuì, Cairn Toul, and Braeriach.

I had attempted this once before, in 1919, but was prevented doing Cairngorm by running into a shooting party near the top, and had therefore to leave it out.

On the 28th August last year I set out from Grantown by car to Cowlumbidge, and left there at 9.45 A.M.

The day was close and humid, and all up the Lairig the mists were hanging about the trees, till I got below the crags of Creag an Leth-choin, when the mists began to rise with the heat of the sun, and I went up on the shoulder to the most northerly top of the ridge—3,365 feet—and traversed right round the precipices above Lurcher's Crag to Cairngorm, lunching there at 1.45 P.M.

I then went almost due north, past the cliffs looking down on the Shelter Stone and Loch Avon, sighting a huge eagle, and on to Macdhuì at 3.35 P.M. But as the mist was very dense here, there was no view.

From there I struck down the Allt a Choire Mhor to the Lairig, where I bathed, across the Gharbh-choire at 2,200 feet, up the steep north ridge east of Lochan Uaine to the two tops of Cairn Toul, leaving there at 5.30 P.M., and via Angel's Peak and the Wells of Dee, where I had another bathe, to the top of Braeriach.

I was above the mists in the valleys all day, and when leaving Braeriach, at 6.55 P.M., and going down the west ridge of the central corrie, the light of the setting sun on the vapoury mists, which were boiling up from the valley without a breath of wind, was extraordinarily beautiful.

I struck the road in Gleann Einich, where it crosses the river about a mile below the Lower Bothy, and walked down the glen in the evening twilight, getting back to Coylumbridge at 9.15 P.M.

It was truly a glorious day, and involved approximately 30 miles walking and 8,000 feet climbing in 11½ hours.

The notes of these times are given as an incentive to the younger members of the Club.

ALLAN ARTHUR.

BEINN NAN OIGHREAG.

Beinn nan Oighreag is a rather uninteresting grassy hill which stands on the south side of Glen Lyon, 2 miles to the north-east of Meall Ghaordie and 3½ miles north of Duncroisk in Glen Lochay; from which latter point it can be ascended very conveniently. On page 142 of this volume of the *Journal* there is a note by J. Gall Inglis in which he claims that the hill is about 100 feet higher than the height, 2,978 feet, given on the Ordnance Maps, and that it is therefore a "Munro." I was rather surprised that Inglis should have sent this note to the *Journal* because, some months previously, and after a careful examination of the upper part of the hill, I had given him what I considered was sufficient information to prove that his claim was erroneous. In the Editorial Note on page 143 I was promised "further data," but have received none although I have waited for three months. It seems, therefore, that I had better state my case now without waiting any longer.

My attention was first drawn to the hill by the telegram that Inglis sent to the Easter Meet at Aviemore last year in which he claimed that the hill was a "Munro." In the course of a correspondence that I had with him subsequently he gave me details of the observations that he had made when he had climbed the hill on Good Friday. As his conclusions appeared to be sound, I inferred that the hill might be higher than 3,000 feet, and decided that I had there-

fore better go and climb it. Garden and I did so on the 3rd of May and, for a reason that will appear later, I climbed it again last autumn. On both of these occasions the weather was perfect, and the following is a note of the observations that I made and the conclusions that I came to.

The summit of the hill is of a hummocky nature and has three distinct tops. On the middle top there is a fairly large cairn which is evidently of considerable age. On my second visit I endeavoured to pull the cairn to pieces in order to find out if it protected an Ordnance Survey Station Mark; but I was unable to do so single-handed as the bottom of the cairn consisted of very large flat stones which I could not move. I was therefore unable to ascertain whether or not there was an Ordnance Survey Mark underneath. From the construction of the cairn and the appearance of the stones I was quite satisfied that it was actually the cairn built by the Ordnance Surveyors, and marks the 2,978 feet point shown on the Ordnance Maps. I need hardly add that I rebuilt the cairn and left it as good as I found it.

North from the Ordnance Top the hill falls gradually to a peaty hollow and then rises slightly to the North Top, which is a featureless mound, the highest point of which is about 25 feet lower than the Ordnance Top and about 393 yards distant therefrom.* On the highest point of the North Top there is a small well-built cairn which stands a few yards north of the parish boundary which is here indicated by the remains of a wire fence running roughly east and west. The North Top is clearly shown on the shaded 1-inch Ordnance Map, and beyond it the hill falls away in all directions, as is also clearly shown on the map.

South from the Ordnance Top and at a distance of about 253 yards therefrom, we come to the South Top, which is a smooth knob of rock at practically the same elevation as the Ordnance Top.

Beyond the South Top the hill falls fairly rapidly for about 100 feet, and then runs out southwards as a broad and nearly level shoulder to a point about 427 yards from the South Top, where the remains of the wire fence, which run along the shoulder, bend sharply to the right and run down the hillside in a south-westerly direction towards the Oighreag-Ghaordie bealach. This bend in the fence, which evidently coincides with the parish boundary shown on the maps, is the shoulder which Inglis claims to be the 2,978 feet Ordnance point.

The above particulars are the results of the observations that I made on the 3rd of May, and which were checked on my later visit. I think that anyone who compares them with the shaded 1-inch Ordnance Map will agree that they are in complete agreement with it. For example, the total distance from the North Top to the shoulder, according to my pacing, is about 1,073 yards, and on the

* Note all the distances given were carefully paced out several times, and the levels were taken with an Abney Level, or otherwise determined as accurately as possible.

1-inch Ordnance Map it scales about 1,145 yards, which is near enough. Another important fact is that, while on the 6-inch Ordnance Map a great many spot levels are given on the summit of the hill, there are none higher than 2,978 feet, as would most certainly have been the case had the hill been 100 feet higher.

Inglis' claim that the shoulder is the Ordnance Surveyors' station is, on the face of it, absurd, because no surveyor would have fixed a theodolite station there, as from it a great part of the northern horizon is blocked out by the summit of the hill.

When I returned to Aberdeen in May I gave Inglis my results to that date very much as stated above, and it was only then that he told me that at Easter he had made a curvature and refraction observation on the Creag na Caillich-Ben Voirlich line which proved by calculation that Beinn nan Oighreag was about 3,078 feet high, and that therefore he would not accept my opinion as being correct. This, while not very complimentary to me professionally, was rather annoying, as I felt that Inglis might have given me all his data before I went through to Killin. As a matter of fact, however, I had examined the horizon very carefully on 3rd May to see if there was a pair of points that would give me a good curvature observation; but I saw nothing of a satisfactory nature. Inglis' statements of what he had seen from the shoulder were somewhat indefinite, so that I did not place much faith on his calculations.

Last autumn I happened to stop at Killin for one night on my way home from the west coast, and as the following day was perfect, I decided to climb the wretched hill again and take a look at Creag na Caillich and Ben Voirlich. The first thing that I noticed on getting to the top of the hill was that the two hills were not in line, but were separated by a very considerable horizontal angle—so much so, in fact, that without a theodolite it would not be possible to ascertain accurately the level on Beinn nan Oighreag from which the tops of the two hills would appear to be on the same level. The best that I could do was to fix my walking-stick in a horizontal position on suitable supports and then go back from it as far as possible and sight the tops of the two hills over its upper edge, and then repeat the observation, higher or lower, until I found a point from which the two hills appeared of the same height. I made this experiment three times on the east slope of the top of the hill, and the average of the three positions so determined was found to be 32 feet lower than the Ordnance Top, or 2,946 feet. By calculation, according to the late G. Gordon Jenkins' rule, the two hills should appear of the same height when viewed from a height of 2,960 feet on Beinn nan Oighreag.

I then went down to the shoulder, and on making a similar observation there found that from it Creag na Caillich appeared most decidedly higher than Ben Voirlich. There was no doubt about this. Had the shoulder been 2,978 feet high, as claimed by Inglis, Voirlich would have appeared slightly higher than Caillich.

I can only say in conclusion that my considered opinion, based on my observations and the other particulars given above, is that Beinn nan Oighreag is only 2,978 feet high, and that the shaded 1-inch Ordnance Map is substantially correct, and gives a wonderfully correct representation of the upper part of the hill.

The quest was on the whole most interesting although it proved to be a wild goose chase. Garden and I had a most delightful day on the hill. In the forenoon the sky was brilliantly blue, and in the afternoon, when climbing Meall Ghaordie, we were rewarded with one of the finest displays of alpine flowers that we had ever seen on a Scottish hill.

JAMES A. PARKER.

* * * *

My paper giving the details of the observations which seemed to prove that Oighreag was 3,078 feet (a paper which Parker has read) was withheld from the last *Journal*, pending further information. The state of my health has unfortunately prevented me from revisiting the hill, but from what is said below, I could hardly be expected to accept Parker's conclusions without further personal investigation: I do not think he would have done so himself, had our positions been reversed.

Parker's case, until his second visit, so far as I understood it, was based on the assumption that the cairn he examined was the O.S. point, and the parish boundary on the map the course of the wire fence. He supported his case by professional surveying experience, admittedly of the highest order, and by paces; but so far as I could ascertain he took no barometer readings as confirming or otherwise; he says he could find no satisfactory points that would give a good curvature observation, and strangely enough he now gives no indication whatever of the *amount* of depression between his North Top and the O.S. cairn, although information on that point is a most vital factor in my case.

My case was also based on an assumption, viz., that the hill-shaded O.S. correctly delineated the hill, and I, too, supported my case by my long professional experience, but as a cartographer, backed by a confirming barometer observation and *two* curvature observations. All three lines of investigation gave concordant results, which could only be explained to the contrary by assuming (1) that the O.S. Map was wrongly shaded; (2) that the barometer had been behaving in a very unusual way; and (3) that the Clerk of the Weather had staged for my special benefit an exhibition of what refraction could do in the way of abnormal horizon-raising. I think it will be agreed that there are very long odds indeed against all three things happening together. I trusted the shading because I had never found it wanting, as the result of more than fifty years' experience of it on the hills—subject to certain obvious limitations—thus, when Parker asked me to accept his conclusions, I respectfully declined,

though in view of his high professional status, and, to some extent, the circumstantial nature of my evidence, I was more than inclined to concede that he was correct.

Parker having presented his detailed case, it seems fair that I should present mine. When I visited the hill, the weather was clear, the thermometer stood about 38° . Coming up by the northern ridge, on arriving at the summit I could find no agreement whatever between the configuration of the hill and the shading on the map, except on the hypothesis that the shoulder was the 2,978 point. The barometer—set about three hours before at 1,805 feet—registered 3,210 feet, and though we knew that it must be falling, it seemed very unlikely it would fall $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in such a short period, considering the type of weather. Besides, when we returned to our car, assuming a steady fall, and making a time-allowance, the figures were almost in perfect agreement with the 3,078 theory. The position of the wire fence seemed in agreement, and from the actual top, Voirlich and Stuc a' Chroin rose high above the level of Caillich, near Killin, in a way it was obvious they could not do if we were below 3,000 feet. I searched the hill for some distinguishing feature to act as a definite starting-point, but could find none that gave any clue, nor any curvature-observation, save the general one of Voirlich. Then I tried alignment-bearings, but could find nothing definite enough in a suitable line, so we went down to the shoulder to repeat the procedure.

The wire fence was found to turn sharply there, for the first time so far as we could judge, in accordance with what the 6-inch map had led us to expect; alignment-bearings were a little dubious, but quite too indefinite to be of any real value; finally, I came round to Voirlich, and found it was now level with the top of Caillich, but if anything a shade higher: * Stuc a' Chroin, only 35 feet lower than Voirlich, served to check the accuracy of the levelling. It needed no theodolite, or even pencil and paper, to know that if the shoulder was only 2,878 feet, more than 100 feet lower than Caillich (2,990 feet), then Voirlich, six times farther away, would have to be of the order of 3,600 feet to be seen level with Caillich. Parker's statement that the two hills were "separated by a very considerable angle" is, to my mind, very misleading. The angle as measured on the map is only 6° , which, on a stick held level at arm's length, subtends no more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, or thereby.

The weak point in both our cases was that neither of us—so far as I could make out from Parker's letters—had established an in-

* Parker complains that I did not furnish him with this fact, but the margin being ample, as explained above, and the fact obvious, it had only a general significance, and escaped my memory until my son reminded me of it when Parker's letter came in. Then I set to, and was astonished to find that it absolutely fitted my theory, as Parker admits. But why did Parker not notice it himself?

disputable starting-point from which to work. I recognised this when on the shoulder, and was only prevented from going down half a mile or more, to check the windings of the fence, by sheer physical inability to face the climb up again.

From all the above, it will be seen that my investigation was not less thorough than Parker's, and conducted on strictly scientific lines. As I understand the situation now, Parker, by doing what I could not do—following the fence to Ghaordie—has satisfied himself that he has correctly located the shoulder, and as the condition I postulated has now been fulfilled, I have pleasure in now accepting his verdict as to the height of the hill.

But that is not all the story. In the course of our tilting he has tried to score points against my case by certain not very complimentary statements regarding my knowledge of what surveyors would do and would not do. He has, in consequence, exposed two Achilles' heels, and it remains for me to "Smite and spare not!" And in proving that Oighreag is not a "Munro," he has also supplied the proof that the hill-shading of the summit ridge is altogether wrong. He states that in his opinion the shading gives "a wonderfully correct representation of the top of Oighreag," but if he had only taken the trouble to "pace" the shading as he paced the hill itself, he would have found that it lands him in a *reductio ad absurdum*. It is quite an interesting little problem.

Hill-shading on the O.S., as I have found it, is necessarily to some extent relative, but is based on the broad principle that slight gradients are represented by wide-spaced, very light shading, steep gradients by close, heavy shading. That on Oighreag, south of the north "top," is close and heavy, almost identical with that extending upwards from the 2,750 contour, and heavier than the lighter shading on the northern ridge; the slope is therefore of some considerable steepness, and it extends southward for about 950 feet to the col, while south of the col the slope rises for about 370 feet to the 2,978 O.S. point (both these measurements are in plan, not vertical). The hill-shading south of the col is almost indistinguishable, therefore the slope is very slight. But the O.S. point is 25 feet higher than the north "top," and the distance in plan from the col some two and a half times less than the other, therefore the gradient must be very much greater; in other words, the much steeper gradient is on the O.S. represented by imperceptible shading, and the lesser gradient by heavy shading; the O.S. shading, therefore, *must* be wrong somewhere. The depression between the two tops is a mere gentle undulation, and I think Parker will agree that there is no particular difference in the gradient on each side. I did not trouble to measure it, but estimated the dip as being of the order of 30 to 40 feet. On this basis the gradient of the north side is about 1 in 26, and of the opposite side about 1 in 6, using the measurements of hill-shading length; every motorist will appreciate the difference. The fact is, that the heavy shading of the north "top" should never have

been there; the shading should have been of the slightest and widest, and our papers would never have been written.

Coming next to the "Achilles' heels," Parker states: "While on the 6-inch O.S. Map a great many spot levels are given on the summit of the hill, there are none higher than 2,978 feet, as would most certainly have been the case had the hill been 100 feet higher. Inglis' claim that the shoulder is the Ordnance Surveyors' station is, on the face of it, absurd, because no surveyor would have fixed a theodolite station there, as from it a great part of the northern horizon is blocked out by the summit of the hill." But both these statements are quite unwarranted in the face of well-known facts; the footnotes in Munro's Tables, for instance, will give evidence on the subject. On Slioch the O.S. trigonometrical station is 50 feet below the top, which blocks out a great part of the eastern horizon, and no higher levels have ever been published on the 6-inch map. On Sgairneach Mhor the only O.S. point is on a kind of shoulder, and the hill rises for 100 feet above it, the true height of that hill being probably 3,260 feet. The O.S. cairn on Carn Dearg West, Ben Nevis, is fully 100 feet below the actual top, and on Meall nan Ceapraichean the only height given is that of the mere shoulder, Ceann Garbh, although the hill rises some 150 feet higher. My hypotheses were therefore quite in accordance with known O.S. practice. But to clinch the matter, I cite the well-known surveyor, Mr John Matheson, lately the superintendent of the O.S. in Scotland, with whom I often talk over cartological problems. He told me that the O.S. surveyors did not necessarily place their observation points on the actual summit, but rather to suit their convenience, as it might well happen that other stations which must be observable were invisible from the top. In that case they might not measure the top at all—"I think mistakenly," he added. He also told me that the O.S. surveyors were quite accustomed to erect *turf* cairns at their observation points as well as stone ones, and that wire fences were sometimes knowingly placed away from the actual boundary.

The only other remark I have to make is on the discrepancy between Parker's curvature observation from the shoulder, and mine. Both were undoubtedly correct; as I have already remarked, Stuc a' Chroin was there to prevent any tendency to get off the level, and I had no preconceived notion one way or other to bias the observation, and the most remarkable thing is that it was absolutely exact if my hypothesis was correct. There must have been anomalous refraction that day, a conclusion probably supported by the barometer, which must have fallen greatly and risen again in the course of a few hours.

As this paper has been much longer than I could have wished, some further details concerning Oighreag, from my unpublished paper, will, with the Editor's permission, be given in the next *Journal's* "Notes," as they may be of use to the Editor of the "Guide Book." One thing, however, may be mentioned now—it offers a very fine panorama of pointed peaks.

J. GALL INGLIS.

EASTERN BUTTRESS, BIDEAN NAM BIAN.

Bartholomew, Harrison, and myself were on Bidean nam Bian on Saturday, 30th August. The day was very misty, but after lunch an investigation was made of the hitherto unclimbed buttress on the other side of the Central Gully from the Church Door Buttress. It was not possible to get started on the rocks facing the Central Gully below the upper neck of Collie's Pinnacle. At this point the author tried to work back to the left and upwards by ledge traverses, but ledges were rotten and unsafe. Finally, the party made a route straight up to the top of the buttress from a point in the Central Gully some way above the neck of Collie's Pinnacle. This proved somewhat loose, but fairly easy. Then a descent was made to the Bidean Stob Coire nan Lochan Col, and so down the scree to the northern end of the base of the buttress. Working along towards the Central Gully, two starting-places for an ascent presented themselves. The weather was now wet, and the northernmost starting-place was tried. The lower rocks were good, firm, and steep, and not at all easy. About 60 feet up the party was forced outwards to the left. Some way higher it was evident that there was an easy exit to the left on to scree, but we tried to keep our climb going in the direction of the summit of the buttress. Thus it resolved itself into a succession of steep pitches separated by wide ledges. Many of the pitches were not at all easy, especially a troublesome loose slab pitch and a fine steep chimney, but no pitches were long. The climb terminated on a short rock arête which ran southwards parallel to the arête to Stob Coire nan Lochan, and this ended on the summit of the buttress. We left one cairn below and one half-way to indicate our route. We are of opinion that the other starting-place which we left unexplored will, if it is not too difficult, yield a very fine climb to the summit of the cliff. But the climb will certainly be difficult, and will not be practicable except under excellent conditions. Our climb was about 500 feet in height.

J. H. B. BELL.

S.M.C. ABROAD.

K. G. M'Lean writes as follows:—

In February of this year I joined the Staff College at Quetta, in Baluchistan. Knowing nothing of the country, I was amazed to find that Quetta was surrounded by magnificent mountains, at that time covered in snow.

Quetta is 6,000 feet above sea level, and within a radius of 15 miles are the mountain masses of Zarghun (11,730 feet), Takatu (11,390 feet), Chiltan (10,870 feet), and Murdar (10,446 feet). Close to

the hill station of Ziarat—some 50 miles away—is the huge massif of Khalifat (11,434 feet). From March till November the mountains are free from snow and present excellent rock-climbing and scrambling. They are all of similar shape, one side is a precipice, the other side is a more gentle slope of smooth slabs. The rock is either a hard, sound limestone or a coarse conglomerate. The sides are seamed with deep water-worn gullies.

We are very fortunate in having Colonel Norton as an instructor here. In March he introduced me to Takatu. We climbed the west peak by the south face, a party of three roped. It was an excellent climb on sound rock. The lower slopes were then starred with dwarf irises and tulips, while on the rocks were stunted junipers.

In April I made a solitary ascent of Murdar. I foolishly underestimated my thirst, and had only provided myself with a flask. The hot, dry air on these waterless hills parches one's mouth, and I was nearly exhausted on my return.

In August I spent a fortnight at Ziarat, and was lucky enough to meet the political agent, Mr Skrine, who has done much climbing in Scotland and the Pamirs. He took me for a magnificent walk, a traverse along the 4,000-foot precipice of Sangar by a small ledge. The ledge in places was grassy and covered with gentians, small campions, and other flowers, and we saw several markhor grazing. After camping for the night I climbed Khalifat the next day, a delightful scramble up sound rocks, terraced rather like Monte Cristallo.

In September I climbed Murdar again (with a large water-bottle), and did the east peak of Takatu, an easy scramble.

THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

DAYS IN ROSS AT THE SUMMER MEET.

OUR accustomed hour of 6 A.M. found us astir on Saturday morning the 7th of June. In the clear light our new camp site looked as delightful as the old, situated as it was in a little wood half a mile east of Torridon at the foot of the lofty southern wall of Liathach, whose be-pinnacled ridge soared above the tree-tops. All that we missed was the bathing in the invigorating waters of Loch Clair, but indeed it was doubtful if we could have bathed even if we had had facilities. Every pest of the woods seemed to encircle our hapless bodies, till eating and sleeping were only possible within the tight shut doors of tents sprayed with a brand of fly-killer. However, though we bore their repeated attacks with true J.M.C.S. fortitude, all were glad to leave camp and go out over the col towards the splendid head of Meall a' Chinn Deirg, which had held out a challenge to us ever since our arrival.

Skies were blue and the air cool and sweet after the rain. Soon we came to one of the many stalking paths and this led us up-stream, through the scented bogs, alongside a pleasant fern and birch clothed gorge. A walk of about 5 miles from camp brought us to Lochan an Eoin, on the far shore of which our peak rose, curiously detached and solitary. Taking the left fork of the path, we walked round the loch towards an attractive looking buttress supporting the peak on the east. A conspicuous feature of this was a vertical wall of red sandstone, which

ran smoothly round the foot of the rocks to a height of about 50 feet.

Now since it was necessary our rope reposed in camp, but we decided to climb without its safeguard. Doubtless, ropeless climbing is to be deprecated, but in our fit state we felt it would be justifiable to dispense with its incubus, and add to the enjoyment of the climb. The wall was therefore breached at various points and grand holds lead up to a terrace, above which a delightful succession of arêtes, chimneys, and cracks went up the rocks, which were rather steeper than we had anticipated. Literally, dozens of attractive routes prevented any definite climb being worked out, yet the rocks between each terrace were difficult enough to warrant the name of a pitch. As a rule, the easy looking rocks were difficult on account of a scarcity of holds, but the steeper rocks, though airy, had sufficient holds for safety.

Ample scope was afforded for that delightful Torridonian sport of Terrace Wandering, and I had soon lost touch with the others. The steepest rocks overlooked the lochan and led there, wonderful outlooks opened up to Liathach and Beinn Alligin, across Glen Torridon, where our tents rested on "the oldest floor in the world."

The height of the buttress is about 500 feet, and the time taken was one leisurely hour. All the attributes of a good climb are present, but the frequent terraces with their lines of escape to right and left lower it to the level of an exhilarating scramble, but it can be recommended as the most interesting way of approaching the cairn of Meall a' Chinn Deirg.

Bathed in hot sunlight on the top of this isolated Munro we had the best view of our holidays. Most prominent was An Ruadh Stac, towering up apparently in one sheer wall from the abyss of Loch Ruadh Stac, and quite close at hand. Beyond, when we could take our eyes from Ben Damph, we could see from Black Isle to Ireland and from Ben Hope to Ben Lui. All our old friends were visible, and as we traced our winter playgrounds from the Lyon to the Nethy, perhaps we might

be permitted a sigh, even at midsummer, for those exhilarating days with the axe and for the return of the snow.

Annandale, Dawson, and M'Curragh arrived from Perth about 10 o'clock in the evening with news of the outer world, and clocks registered midnight before all were in bed, but not to sleep, and we almost welcomed the rain that came up on the night wind and effectively combated the insects.

A few steps from the doors of our tents on the morrow placed our feet on the lower slopes of Liathach, and *en masse*, scrambling over terraces, we approached a queer leaning pinnacle at the Western end that is very apparent from the road.

At a height of 2,000 feet the " Crazy Pinnacle Ridge," as we christened it, comes down into the turf in a nose of rock. Scrambling not necessitating the use of a rope led to the pinnacle, which was found to be about 15 feet high and to bar the narrow ridge. It was climbed straight up, not without some trouble on loose rock. Beyond, some broken and narrow ridges sloped back, with a long drop on the left to the colourful waters of Loch Torridon, to the sole *mauvais pas*. This is a right-angled corner with a precarious chockstone, and though but 20 feet high required care. The rope was used here for the novitiates, and at least one would give an " unsolicited testimonial " to the high breaking strain of the " three red thread."

Above this pitch climbing interest ceases, and a grassy slope leads back to the cairn of Mullach an Rathain.

A way was made along the pinnacles to Spidean a' Choire Lèith, the President shepherding our visitors, who had a few heart throbs, if such were possible under rope-compressed ribs, over the gaps in the chilly mist.

There was no sleeping amongst the summit rocks to-day, and Henderson and I, chilled with waiting on the others, quitted the cairn and, descending by a little glissade, went out along a ledge on to the first pinnacle of Am

Fasarinen and descended the main face of the cliff. The rocks were steep, we could see inside the chimney-pots of a house in Glen Torridon below, but we dropped quickly from ledge to ledge not caring to don the hindering rope in the absence of belays. The sandstone rather lent itself to descending, the unsatisfactory hand-holds on the ascent forming splendid "palm grips" on the descent.

We turned, damply, from the foot of the cliff, which was running with moisture, and descended in a diagonal line directly towards the house which had been observed from the top. The way led across the steepest rocks on the south face of Liathach, but Henderson went ahead in great style, and now descending a wall, now slithering down a watercourse or wriggling down a chimney, without a check we reached the road and arrived in camp only a few moments after the others, who had retraversed the pinnacles to the grassy corrie below Mullach an Rathain. Since the rocks on the first pinnacle went well, it seems that the remaining ones might provide interesting scrambles from the South.

That night, after a sunny evening, clouds came to Torridon, and by early morning our old enemy the south-west wind was threatening to tear our canvas from its moorings, and would have done so had we chosen an exposed position, so that we blessed the strip of wood that bravely broke the gale.

The President, Annandale, Dawson, and M'Curragh left for home in the sopping rain the next morning, and we three remaining reluctantly abandoned our intentions on the "Maiden" and Beinn Tarsuinn on account of the exposed camping-ground. The succeeding days proved the wisdom of our decision. We drove via Gruinard Bay to Dundonnell, where, arriving cold, hungry, and tired, we found the little inn closed and deserted. This was a sad blow, but we were hospitably received at the little farm of Corriehallie and, the rain ceasing, pitched our tents there for the night.

The spiky tops of An Teallach probed the watery clouds the next morning as we set off at the late hour

of 9.30 in deceitful sunshine for Glas Mheall Liath. Once on the exposed moor, wind, rain, and hail, with blinks of sun, left us somewhat bewildered, and we were soaked long ere we reached Bidein a' Ghlas Thuill over the easy tops of a ridge that must look effective from Glas Mheall Mor.

Heavy snow showers and a gusty bitter wind did not tend to make us linger in our "two-piece ensemble" on the summit nor on Sgùrr Fìona and the fine ridge it sentinels. Lord Berkeley's Seat was hardly so sensational as we had been led to believe, and each of us despite the wind stood on the highest point.

A climber (Fell and Rock) and his wife (L.S.C.C.) were met below the last tower of Corrag Bhuidhe, and we halted and chatted. These were the sole people we encountered on the mainland hills.

A little care was required in descending direct the last tower, but before long we had trotted over the remaining tops and had halted on Sàil Liath to admire the prospect of the strange rocks of Sutherland, when suddenly remembering the hour, we rushed down snow and scree at a reckless pace to the "Marble Ridge," and thence ran all the way back to camp. Stopping there only for a hasty meal we set off for Ullapool, and such was Henderson's driving that not only did we arrive there in time, but even before "time."

The crossing of the Challichs took about nine hours from Corriehallie.

On the return journey we were in a better frame of mind to appreciate the exotic rhododendron garlands round Braemore Lodge, which were rich and lovely even in the dull twilight and heavy rain. The bad weather had driven the deer down to the low ground. Countless scraggy yellow beasts, unlike the splendid red deer of our own county, blocked the road and strung themselves unwillingly out of the way on repeated blasts of the horn.

The view backwards across the dun herds to the new snow lying on Beinn Dearg and Cona' Mheall resembled those exaggerated pictures which artists love to paint of the Highlands.

We returned next day to Kinlochewe, heavy cold rain washing away our hopes of exploring the massif of the Fannaichs.

ALASTAIR L. CRAM.

GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH SECTIONS.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1931—LOCH AWE.

THE New Year Meet, 1931, was held at Loch Awe. The attendance of fifty-nine, including forty-one members, was most satisfactory and possibly constitutes a record. Such figures provide an even greater proof of the healthy condition of the Club than the article in the last number of the *Journal*.

The following were present * :—

Members.—W. J. C. Ainslie, Allan, P. D. Baird, Blackwood, Buchanan, Elliott, W. D. Forrest, Geddes, D. T. Gibson, R. Gibson, T. H. Gibson, D. Gourlay, J. L. Innes, G. G. Jackson, M'Innes, M'Intyre, F. C. M'Leod, J. H. C. M'Leod, M'Nab, Milne, Morris, R. Neill, Osborne, Paris, Patullo, Ramsay, Robertson, J. G. Robinson, D. Sandeman, N. Sandeman, Short, J. M. Simpson, R. Stewart, D. G. Sutherland, G. F. Todd (O.U.M.C.), R. N. Traquair, W. Waddell, Wedderburn, A. R. Wilson, C. M. Woodburn, and N. S. Woodburn.

S.M.C.—T. Aitken, J. L. Aikman, L. St C. Bartholomew, T. Comrie, A. L. Cram, R. R. Elton, D. Inglis, A. R. Lillie (C.U.M.C.), J. G. M'Lean, W. R. M'Lean, I. H. Ogilvie, D. W. Robinson, G. R. Speirs.

Guests.—K. A. Goudge (C.U.M.C.), B. B. Kinsey (C.U.M.C.), G. Krause, D. C. Lillie, J. V. Nimmo.

The weather conditions during the Meet were none

* Apologies are tendered for any errors or omissions in the list of members and guests or in the subsequent account of their activities.

too good. There was some sunshine on New Year's Day and on the Sunday, but generally the highest tops remained mist-obscured. The snow-line was approximately 1,500 feet, but even above that level snow was soft and lacked depth and, accordingly, gully-climbing was unsatisfactory. As cold weather had been experienced during the last few days of 1930, the rocks, and especially those in the northern corries of Cruachan, were extensively ice-clad as at least one party found to its cost.

Thursday, 1st January.—Practically all had arrived by Wednesday evening. On Thursday, on account of the unpropitious rock and snow conditions, salvationism reigned supreme, and the majority were on Cruachan where a peak-bagging competition was in progress. The best return was made by Elton, D. W. Robinson, and Todd, who had collected Meall a' Bhuiridh and the seven tops of Cruachan. Out of respect of Elton, who believes in—and acts upon—the seven-and-a-half-hour-day system, this *tour de force* was accomplished from the Hotel, over the tops and back to the road at the Falls of Cruachan, in seven hours twenty minutes. The second best score was two under bogey, a party consisting of Aitken, Cram, and the M'Leans returning a card with a total of six tops. Four parties achieved five tops—one of Bartholomew, Short, Stewart, and Wedderburn; another of Ainslie, Sutherland, and the Sandemans; a third of Goudge, Kinsey, and A. R. Lillie; while the fourth consisted of the representatives of the Perth Section. This latter party was observed at one point desecrating the New Year by climbing *sans chemises*. Four tops were the lot of Elliott, Innes, Robertson, and Simpson. Aikman took Baird and D. T. Gibson over three tops and initiated them into the joys—and otherwise—of glissading. On the Taynuilt Peak, this party claimed to have had a view of the brocken with triplicated spectrum and fog bow—a much more original idea than the stars which, to less ambitious minds, are the usual concomitant of glissading. Geddes, Krause, and M'Nab, sublimating their acquisitive instincts, contented themselves by

climbing a shallow gully in one of the south-east corries.

Of the others, M'Innes, Patullo, Forrest, Jackson, D. C. Lillie, and Waddell were on Eunaich and Chochuill. Morris and the M'Leods were on Eunaich only.

Late in the afternoon there were a number of arrivals who had climbed *en route*. The Woodburns and Gourlay had stopped their car at Crianlarich to collect Ben More; Ramsay and Traquair arrived by way of Laoigh and Chleibh; Speirs and J. G. Robinson had skied on Dubhcaraig.

The Annual Dinner of the J.M.C.S. was held in the evening, Neill filling the chair. After the toast of "The King," speeches were made by D. W. Robinson, W. R. M'Lean, Patullo, and Todd. Of these, three were excellent—the last-named speaker was a model of infelicity.

Following the dinner, the Sectional Meetings and the Annual General Meeting were held. The attempt of the Chairman of the Annual General Meeting to defeat last year's record time of thirty-five minutes was ably frustrated by the introduction of a number of completely irrelevant proposals and amendments. The evening's entertainment—apart from the annual meetings—was provided by Geddes with his violin, who, it is very pleasing to note, has apparently become an annual attraction. Waddell skilfully accompanied him at the piano. The humorous element was provided by Bartholomew, who again gave his justly celebrated rendering of a mentally unstable chairman conducting an annual general meeting—another annual attraction.

Friday, 2nd January.—Weather conditions were dull, and only one party essayed ultramontaniam. This party consisted of Elton, Aikman, and Todd, who had a fine climb up the North Ridge of Drochaid Ghlas.

A few other parties were on Cruachan. One of them, consisting of Comrie, T. and R. Gibson, M'Innes, Ogilvie, and Patullo, climbed four tops. Forrest and Jackson won the heights of Meall Cuanail when over-

indulgence at the dinner on the previous night inflicted a just reward upon one member of the party, and so they returned home. Blackwood and Wilson were also observed on Cruachan. Gourlay and the Woodburns set out for Cruachan, and aided by some unique methods of route-finding in mist, found themselves, after much labour, on Meall a' Bhuiridh.

Eunaich and Chochuill claimed a number. Parties consisting of Baird, Bartholomew, Paris, and Sutherland; Short, Stewart, and Wedderburn; Cram, Geddes, Krause, and M'Nab were amongst their district visitors.

Aitken, Morris, D. T. Gibson, and the M'Leans motored to Killin for ski-ing purposes. Allan and M'Intyre left for home via Laoigh. That hill, with Chleibh also claimed Elliott, Simpson, and Robertson, and another party consisting of Neill, the M'Leods, D. W. Robinson, and Waddell. This latter party, it is rumoured, effected an exciting descent aided by an improvised rope of scarves.

Two parties were further afield. Ainslie and the Sandemans motored to Baa Bridge and climbed Clachlet and Sron na Creise. But the finest performance of the day—or indeed of the Meet, according to the representative of the Oxford Club—was the performance of certain members of the C.U.M.C. who had motored to Glen Fyne and climbed Buidhe. Desirous of effecting a hasty return to Loch Awe, they ran down, and magnificently scorning to retrace their footsteps in the snow, found themselves in the wrong glen. Over their 15-mile walk to Inveraray, in order to hire a taxi to take them up to their car in Glen Fyne, it is perhaps more charitable to draw a veil.

The worst performance stands to the discredit of two well-known habitués of Inverarnan, who were so overcome by the reactions occasioned by uncontrolled indulgence at the dinner that they were barely able to climb into their car and motor home.

The following also left on Friday: Aitken, Allan, Blackwood, Elliott, Elton, Innes, M'Intyre, M'Lean,

M'Nab, Neill, Nimmo, Ramsay, Robertson, and Wilson.

Saturday, 3rd January.—In spite of somewhat decimated ranks, there was still an enthusiastic gathering. Gourlay and the Woodburns climbed Eunaich and Chochuill. D. T. Gibson, F. C. M'Leod, and Simpson climbed only Chochuill. D. W. Robinson and Todd set off to Eunaich in search of Beaver Buttress and the Black Shoot. Owing to the mist, they failed to locate either climb, but enjoyed some scrambling on rock outcrops. They proceeded over Eunaich, and Robinson went on to Chochuill.

Buchanan, Comrie, T. Gibson, Osborne, and Ogilvie visited the Eastern Peaks of Cruachan. Forrest and Morris also paid a visit to that district. Traquair, Baird, and Paris climbed a shallow gully in Coire Chreachain to the Sron an Isean—Stob Diamh bealach. Aikman and Jackson went sub-munroeing, and then proceeded to the S.M.C. Meet at Arrochar.

One member—I regret to have to chronicle the crime—established a precedent by having breakfast in bed and, considering the day well begun, afterwards proceeded to maintain the standard by inveigling another misguided sinner to desert the paths of righteousness for a motor run to Oban.

The following left: Aikman, Ainslie, Bartholomew, Buchanan, Cram, D. T. Gibson, Goudge, Jackson, Kinsey, A. R. Lillie, D. C. Lillie, Ogilvie, Paris, the Sandemans, Short, Simpson, Stewart, Sutherland, Todd, Traquair, and Wedderburn.

Sunday, 4th January.—The rest of the Meet dispersed home, either directly or over some hills. Those who adopted the latter course were fortunate in the weather, which improved for the last day.

Thus ended a most enjoyable Meet. If weather conditions were none too good, hotel conditions were all that could be desired. One point in particular—the happy idea of installing afternoon tea on the running

buffet system—was very greatly enjoyed. A predecessor in office of mine has justly written : * “ As is invariably the case at Loch Awe, the Meet was a thorough success, and the attentiveness and kindness of the hotel management and staff were much appreciated.”

GEORGE F. TODD, Jun.

* *S.M.C.J.*, April 1928.

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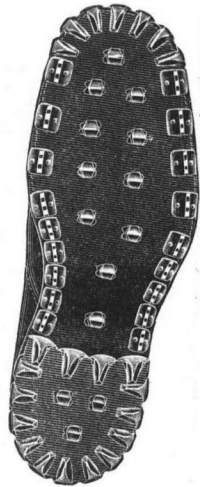
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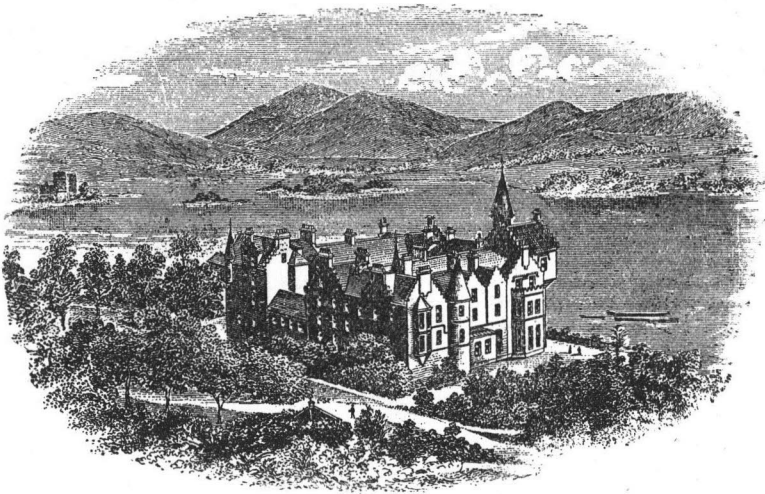
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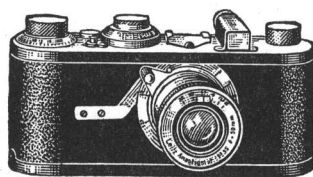
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