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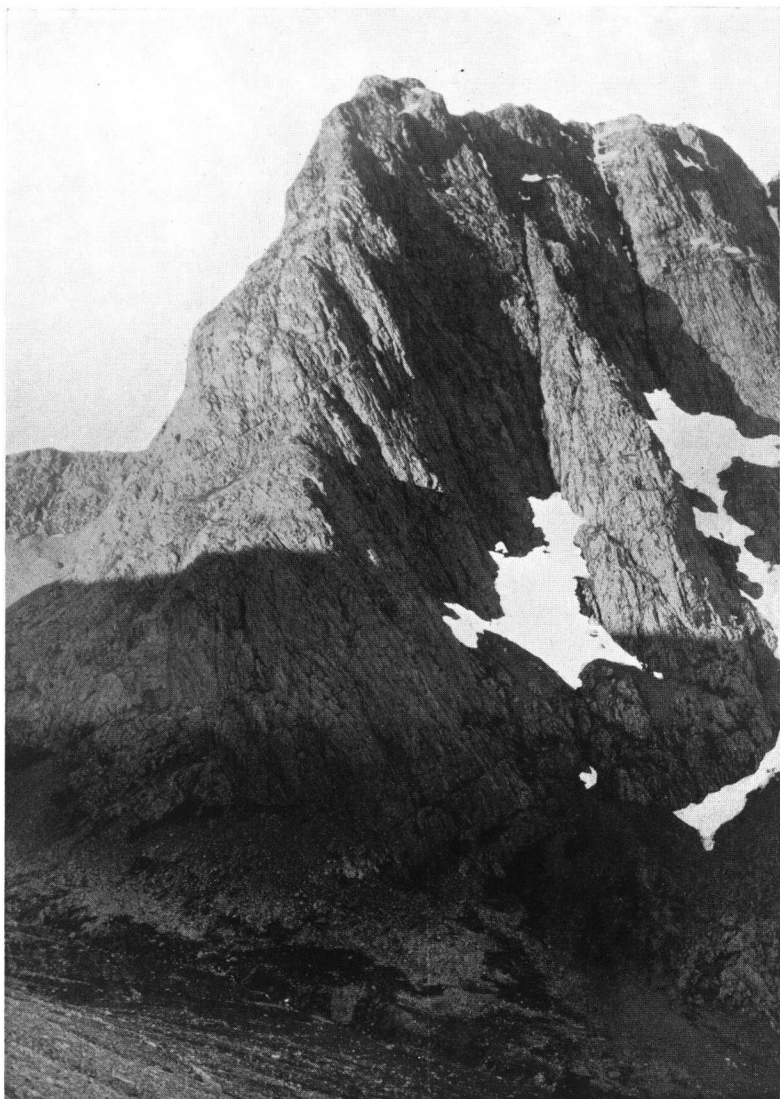
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Copies of the Journal can be obtained on application to the Agents, or Mr W. B. Speirs, Hon. Assistant Editor, 48 Victoria Crescent Road, Glasgow, W. 2. Telephone: Home, Western 1492; Business, Central 6833.



June 1931

G. Graham Macphee

NORTH-EAST BUTTRESS AND OBSERVATORY RIDGE. (See page 235)

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

VOL. XIX.

NOVEMBER 1931.

NO. 112.

TWELVE DAYS IN THE HUT.

By G. GRAHAM MACPHEE.

HAVING submitted for the Editor's consideration two or three photographs of the Ben Nevis Face, as well as notes of some climbs, I am, at his request, attempting to describe, at greater length than may be warranted by incident or achievement, how these came to be taken. The Editor was at pains to inform me that his desire for an article was prompted rather by his publication of the photographs than by any faith he had in the literary or descriptive powers of my pen.

When early this year I decided that an Alpine holiday was out of the question, my thoughts turned to a visit for climbing on Ben Nevis, and I saw at once that this would be the fulfilment of a wish cherished for a quarter of a century, ever since on the 25th June 1906 I first set foot on the highest point in Britain. From that day onwards one of my ambitions was "a week in June" at Fort William. What visions of ambitious enterprise these words recall, and what castles in the air were built on that slender foundation! The realisation was long in coming, and the fallacy lay in the supposition that the weather in June would be fine.

We arranged to meet on 13th June, and my two guests, A. T. Hargreaves and H. V. Hughes, arrived first. This had the advantage of letting them take up the greater part of our food supply, and on arrival by the last train I had little more provisions to carry than some eggs, most of which got broken. The day had been fine, and on

rounding the shoulder of the hill at 10.30 P.M., the sight of the North-East Buttress in the afterglow of the sunset, standing out clear above the dark glen like some fairy dwelling, is one long to be remembered. It was quite dark when I neared the Hut, but a candle thoughtfully placed in the window acted as a beacon.

On Sunday it rained, and we spent a busy morning cleaning the Hut. About midday I espied an imposing cavalcade approaching us up the bed of the burn. It was headed by Mrs Inglis Clark, followed by her sister, both mounted on horses led by gillies, while a sumpter horse laden with rucksacks brought up the rear. Thanks to their *wettermäntel* of *loden* cloth, both ladies arrived dry, and Mrs Mabel Inglis Jeffries arrived on foot soon after. The object of this pilgrimage was to bring up a new picture of Captain Charles Inglis Clark, which was duly placed in the Hut.

Later in the day we ascended the Douglas Boulder with Mrs Jeffries by the ordinary direct route, Hughes leading, and the chief impression I have of this climb is the effortless grace with which the lady member of the party surmounted the series of rather awkwardly high steps of which it mainly consists. On our return to the Hut, we found that the two ladies had successfully performed the Herculean task of getting a fire to burn in the cooking stove.

On Monday the ladies left us early, in heavy rain. Later, when the rain abated somewhat, we went out and prospected a new route on the great East Buttress of Carn Dearg, which we had noted from the Hut. It promised well, but we decided to wait for a better day.

On Tuesday Hughes led us up the Observatory Ridge direct, and we think this is one of the nicest climbs on Nevis. The difficulty is nowhere extreme (we did not employ combined tactics at any point), the route is quite obvious and direct, and the climb finishes with almost dramatic suddenness within a few yards of the summit cairn. We descended the Tower Ridge to the gap behind the Douglas Boulder, and then down the West Gully, which was unpleasantly loose.

The next day dawned clear and promising, so we decided to attempt the new climb on Carn Dearg. Hargreaves led in fine style, and altogether it made a great expedition. Notes of the climb will be found elsewhere. The early promise of a good day was not fulfilled, and we had barely finished the climb and our sandwiches when the weather turned really nasty. We struggled to the top of Carn Dearg in rain and mist, and then along to the top of No. 3 Gully. It looked fearsome in the mist, and as Hughes had never done any glissading, and we had no ice-axes, we decided to push on to the top of Ben Nevis and go round by the Carn Mòr Dearg Arête. After some difficulty in finding this in the thick mist, we got an easy line back to the Hut, and arrived well satisfied with the day's work. The leader christened our climb Route I., to avoid any risk of the obsolete eponymous nomenclature which still persists sometimes.

We were not sorry to see rain pouring down on Thursday, as it gave some excuse for a day of complete rest after our efforts on Carn Dearg, and even Hargreaves was quite resigned to a day's inactivity. We spent some time poring over the records of previous visitors in the book of climbs. Fired by the implied challenge in Williams's account of an attempt on the Observatory Buttress, we set off next day to "have a look at it." Hargreaves led up progressively more difficult pitches until an impasse was reached. A shower of snow, combined with the numbing effect of the cold, determined a retreat to a convenient ledge, where we lunched, but after that we pushed on up to the right, and completed the climb, which is described in the notes. Near the top the writer received a dull thud on the head from a stone which, fortunately, had not fallen very far, but which was of considerable weight. After a visit to the summit we descended the North-East Buttress, and by this time the weather had relented so far as to provide a delightful evening. We had magnificent clear views.

Next day Hargreaves had to leave us, so, as it was a fine morning, we were up betimes, and left the Hut at 8.30 A.M. in order to ascend Raeburn's Arête on the

North-East Buttress. This must be one of the finest climbs on Nevis. I think we probably kept too much to the right of the arête, as the severity of the slabs we ascended was not suggested in the "Guide Book" description. On one pitch Hargreaves ran out 130 feet of line before reaching even a moderate belay, and there was only one poor stance half-way up the pitch. The quality of the rock was superb, and the climbing was sheer delight.

We reached the "first platform" in a shower of rain, and by hurrying down the easy way, we regained the Hut by noon, well pleased at having bagged such a fine climb on the only occasion during the week on which the conditions rendered it possible. We got down to Fort William in time to have tea before seeing Hargreaves off by the train; then Hughes and I collected some food and set out on our return journey. This was no pleasant prospect, as the day had darkened, and before we were half-way the rain started. We reached the Hut very much bedraggled, but Horne and Drever, whom we had met ascending as we hurried down to Fort William, had prepared hot tea for our return, and we spent a pleasant evening. Our expectations as to Stobie's arrival were fulfilled when that stalwart turned up about midnight, having cycled from Arrochar to Fort William. The reason for this *tour de force* I have so far failed to discover.

On Monday Hughes and I set off to attempt the Comb direct, and got past the difficult part after some delay. We have since learnt that Pigott and Wilding ascended the Comb about 1922, so Hughes's climb is not new, as we had hoped. We descended No. 4 Gully, and, being full of energy, ascended No. 2, kicking hundreds of steps, and then came down No. 3. It was Hughes's first serious attempt at glissading, and it was astonishing to see how much his style improved at the second descent. We stopped to admire the Lochan in Coire na Ciste, which was of a marvellous blue colour and had an incipient "iceberg" breaking away from the "snout" of the rudimentary "glacier."

Next day it rained steadily, and we had a day of rest

till the evening, when it cleared, and we went out to explore a new climb on the cliffs of Carn Dearg. On Wednesday we commenced the new climb, but lack of time and, I must confess, enthusiasm prevented me from attempting the crux of the climb, and we traversed off to join an easier route to the summit. There was a waterfall at the start of this, and it seemed afterwards a pity that on our only fine day we should have chosen such a wet route. Hughes was at the top of his form and wanted to lead something, so we descended to the foot of the Great Tower, and he led the direct route up the face, which is mentioned by Bell in *Journal*, No. 108, p. 379, as a variation of Wilding and Pigott's route of 1922. We descended No. 3 Gully, and had a marvellous glissade. Hughes's style was by this time almost academic. This seemed much the fastest route down, and thirty minutes after leaving the Observatory I was back in the Hut, without hurrying.

The weather had been perfect for my last day and promised well for the morning, so, instead of going by the early train, I decided to pay one more visit to the top of Ben Nevis. Hughes having arranged to climb with the others, I therefore set off alone to dump my rucksack at the Half-way House, and reached the summit by the pony track long before the tourist hordes were due there. It was a fine day, but not very clear owing to the heat haze, and the distant islands were not visible. The snow had melted considerably in the last week, so that there were only small patches left. I thought of the contrast to my visit of exactly twenty-five years ago, when the Observatory was entirely covered by snow level with the roof, and only the tower, not then dismantled, projected above the snow. That was very remarkable at the end of June. On that occasion the clarity of the atmosphere was such that we could see Ireland, and the great extent of the view remains indelibly impressed on my memory. This visit to the top of "the Ben" on the "silver wedding" anniversary of my first ascent seemed a fitting ending to the glorious holiday spent at the Charles Inglis Clark Memorial Hut.

G. Graham Macphee has supplied the following Notes on some of the climbs referred to in the foregoing article:—

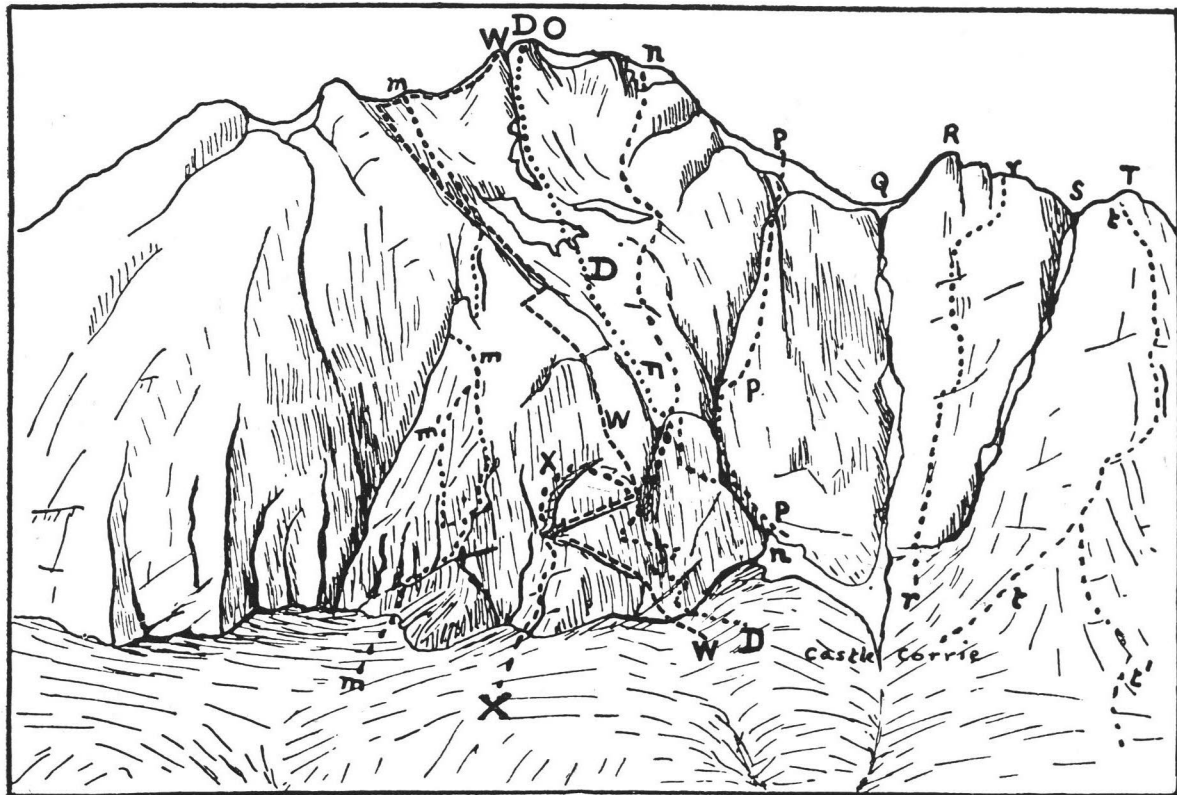
CARN DEARG OF BEN NEVIS, ROUTE I.

What is believed to be a new route was made up the great eastern buttress of Carn Dearg on 17th June 1931 by A. T. Hargreaves (leader), G. Graham Macphee, and H. V. Hughes. The weather conditions were moderate: wet morning, fair interval, rain and snow later.

The route lay up an obvious curving buttress well seen from the Hut, looking about 250° true bearing. This buttress is to the right of the lower end of the gully, which is apparently common to both Moonlight and No. 5 Gullies (see "S.M.C. Guide," p. 10, diagram), as seen from the Hut.

The climb started a few feet to the left—facing the rock—of the lowest point of the buttress (Cairn), and the first easy 15-foot pitch could be avoided by traversing on to the buttress from the left (Cairn). The second pitch, 30 feet, went to the left, then up to the right to a ledge, and required careful balance. The third pitch, 60 feet, was made straight up near the right-hand edge of the buttress to a big ledge. Thirty feet of scrambling then led up to a grassy crack slanting to the left to a large block belay. Thence a delicate climb to the left past the foot of a groove led to a good belay and stance at the foot of a smooth slab, 20 feet. This slab might be climbed in fine weather (though it is off the route), but the leader moved back into the groove, and climbed it with difficulty over a bulging top to a large recess, 40 feet. The climb was continued up rotten rocks to the right, then back to the left on to sound rock, and up to a large platform with good belay, 40 feet. Easy scrambling led to the top of the buttress, about 250 feet from the start (Cairn).

An upward walk, over grass to the right led to the foot of the conspicuous deep-cut chimney, where a belay was found in a recess to the right (Cairn). The chimney, 40 feet, was climbed to a grassy groove, which was followed over two small pitches for about 70 feet to a point where a belay was found at the foot of a repelling-looking recess. The right-hand steep 15-foot wall was climbed on good holds to a belay 5 feet beyond. Broken rocks for 10 feet led to an awkward stride back into the chimney, which was climbed for about 45 feet to a good seat beside an obvious spike. This can be used as a belay. The next pitch is an exposed slab. A large amount of loose turf had to be removed in order literally to unearth the small holds on which reliance must be placed for the next movements. Covered with wet slimy earth and moistened with incessant drips from the overhanging right wall, this slab proved to be the crux of the climb,

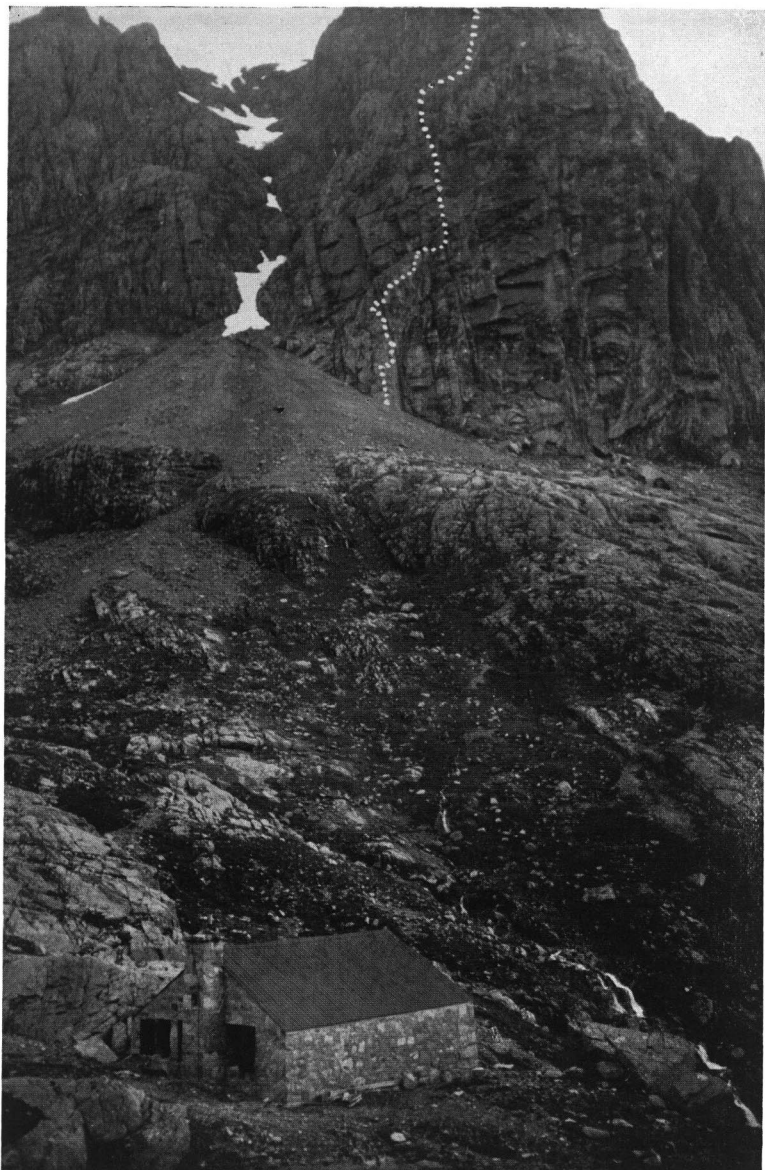


CARN DEARG OF NEVIS

O. Summit of Carn Dearg.
P. Raeburn's Buttress.
Q. South Castle Gully.
R. The Castle.

S. North Castle Gully.
T. Castle Ridge.
W. Luscher's Climb.
D. Harrison's Climb.
X. Macphee's Climb.

m. Staircase Climb.
n. Cousin's Buttress.
r. Castle Climb.
z. Castle Ridge Climb.



June 1931

G. Graham Macphee

THE GREAT BUTTRESS OF CARN DEARG, SHOWING ROUTE I. (See page 234)

but no doubt when washed by rain or under dry conditions it would turn out to be quite simple. In 25 feet a spike belay was reached at the foot of the final chimney, which was about 40 feet high, and led to a large grass shelf at the top of this section of the climb (Cairn), fully 500 feet from the foot of the buttress at the start.

Continuing up the grassy ledge an obvious buttress above was climbed (Cairn), and rocks which gradually became more and more broken up were followed until the Ledge Route to the summit of Carn Dearg was joined at a height of about 3,400 feet above sea-level.

BEN NEVIS—OBSERVATORY BUTTRESS DIRECT.

On 19th June 1931 our party, consisting of A. T. Hargreaves, G. Graham Macphee, and H. V. Hughes, attempted to find the route described on p. 12 of the "C.I.C. Hut Climbing Book." In trying to follow the description (of which we carried a copy), we climbed steep rocks from what we took to be the foot of the buttress—slightly to the left of its centre, facing the rock—up two pitches of 60 feet, one of 40 feet, and then some "overhanging" rocks to a ledge, then some easier climbing to a large platform. Here an exposed traverse to the left on sloping holds led to an awkward corner above which more broken rocks led to a belay on a platform. Some more "overhanging" rocks took us to a recess with a sloping left wall and useful belay, then we followed a steep staircase to another platform with a large block belay on the edge. Moving to the right, then up, another ledge was reached with, leaning against the left wall, a large slab which served as a thread belay. The leader here moved up the steep slabs to the left for 50 feet, and with difficulty made a belay and brought the second up. Further progress seemed improbable, and a shower of snow, added to the already bitter wind, determined a retreat to the flake belay.

After lunch the snow had stopped, and the leader now moved to the right from the flake belay up steep slabs to an overhang on their right, next a gully. Moving up to the left of the overhang, a step to a foothold above the overhang on a bulge enabled him to continue the climb to a removable chockstone found in a hole, which was used as a belay. This pitch was somewhat artificial, as a traverse to the right could be made to easy rocks, but this would have taken us off the direct route. Another 30 or 40 feet ended the difficulties (Cairn).

Scrambling for 200 feet or so led to the foot of an obvious crack, topped by an overhang. This crack was followed for a short distance, and the leader then broke out on the right wall over easier slabs, but the direct line on the crest of the buttress was regained above the overhangs by a chimney, and followed to the summit, close to the Observatory.

BEN NEVIS BY THE COMB.

On 22nd June 1931 H. V. Hughes and G. Graham Macphee started at the lowest part of the rocks of the Comb, where the "bergschrund" abutted on the rocks about 10 feet up (Cairn). Sixty feet of difficult rocks, then 100 feet very difficult, with a hard exposed corner, led to 250 feet of easy going to the scree ledge, leading up to the right, really tapering from 40 or 50 feet wide ("S.M.C. Guide," p. 21). From the extreme right end a difficult chimney was ascended to a good belay, and much time was spent in essaying a very severe wall. After lunch we returned to the ledge and climbed another dangerously loose chimney just above and to the right of a huge block. This led to a cairn on a grass ledge, assumed to be the lowest point reached by the prospectors mentioned on p. 22 (*ibid.*). Thence easier climbing led to the ridge and the top of the Comb.

I have since heard that in 1922 Messrs Pigott and Wilding ascended the Comb direct, so our climb probably coincided approximately with theirs, and the cairn we saw was probably built by them.

CARN DEARG BY DIRECT START.

On 24th June 1931 G. Graham Macphee and H. V. Hughes attempted, by a direct start, to climb from the lowest part of the rocks to the summit of Carn Dearg in a straight line.

We commenced at the lowest part of the buttress next on the west to the Staircase Climb buttress, and almost vertically below the summit of Carn Dearg, as seen in Dr Inglis Clark's photo facing p. 15 of the "Ben Nevis Guide," and the diagram facing p. 16, which reappears with certain additions facing p. 234 of the present number.

From the left of the lowest point of this buttress easy scrambling for 60 feet took us to the foot of a chimney, 70 feet, which led to a grass platform with a good belay on the left wall. A second, harder, 70-foot chimney was climbed, and landed us directly at the left-hand angle of the zigzag rake shown so clearly in the diagram, and used by Dr Luscher in the climb described by him in the *Journal*, No. 93. A few feet to the left of this angle (where we built a cairn) we climbed a broken-up crack with an awkward exit on the left, and came to a very exposed slab with a good belay. This slab was covered with moss, which peeled off in large sheets, revealing glassy holdless rock. Some loose blocks were dislodged at a slight touch and went crashing down all the way to the stream in the bottom of the glen. The slab was climbed on the right-hand edge with great difficulty to a grassy rake where some large blocks provided belays. The almost vertical rock wall above was the next obstacle. Although only some 30 or 40 feet high at this point, it looked desperate. We had already spent much time in cleaning up the holds before it was possible to get thus far, and as time pressed we decided to traverse along the rake, after noting two possible lines for surmounting the wall directly above.

The rake led behind a curious leaf of rock, down into a well-like hole, up to another larger leaf of rock, and down behind it, to join easier ground at its western end. In order to save time, we decided to make for the summit of Carn Dearg by the easiest route, and chose the climb described by Alex. Harrison in the *Journal*, No. 103. We failed to realise until too late how unpleasantly wet we would get in the shower-bath provided by the waterfall, or we might have chosen another climb.

There seems to be some confusion in the description of the start of Harrison's climb, which, I think, goes up grassy ledges to the west of the clearly marked zigzags used in Dr Luscher's climb, and between that climb and the Cousins' Buttress climb, which goes up the west side of the Cousins' Buttress; the Cousins' Buttress climb and Harrison's climb only touch at the neck behind the buttress, as the former goes directly up the rock wall from the neck, while the latter bears to the left along a turfy ledge.

Dr Clark's photograph and the diagram do not show the full extent of the wall to the east of the Cousins' Buttress. This wall is seen very much foreshortened laterally and so tends to crowd out Harrison's climb, which lies immediately to the east of the Cousins' Buttress and goes up the eastern gully of the buttress. This wall would be better seen in full face from the Castle Ridge.

IN DEFENCE OF BEN MORE.

By E. C. THOMSON.

“And the heart of the toiler has throbbings that stir not the bosom
of kings,

He the true ruler and conqueror, he the true king of the race.”

—KIPLING.

SOME may say Ben More needs no defence, but it is not very long since one of our most active members assured me that Ben More was a mountain he positively loathed. He is probably not alone in these sentiments, for at the time I knew well enough that after each of my last three ascents I had vowed that never, never, never would I be enticed into climbing the hill again! Yet the first suitable occasion always found me grinding up those interminable slopes once more, and it only required this unseemly attack to bring me out as its champion. My one qualification for such a rôle is that, despite the hard things I have sometimes thought about Ben More under stress of bad training, deep down I have a great affection for it. Did not my uncle and two cousins, when I was very small, climb it from Balquhiddy and meet a tremendous thunderstorm near the summit, and later on, when I was considered old enough to go with some one bigger, was I not foiled of my desire during a whole month's visit to Killin for lack of a companion? These are the things that whet the appetite and surround a mountain with a halo of joyful anticipation.

For long, therefore, Ben More remained a nebulous dream of the future, but at last, in the small hours of the morning of 27th July 1917, two weary and very junior subalterns might have been seen stepping out of the train at Crianlarich into sheets of teeming rain. Along we trudged to Luib in the dark, and I can remember yet the scent of the dripping woods as we crossed the Ardrain burn, for rain is more than ordinary wet round about

Ben More. Luib still slept like a log when we arrived there at five o'clock, so we whiled away the time in the smoking-room, dozing uncomfortably till breakfast-time. After breakfast the rain had cleared, but all the hills were still deeply buried in mist. A conference followed. My companion seemed to have common sense on his side. It was quite senseless to climb the hill on such a day. But why not, I suggested, at least walk to the foot of the hill and give the day a chance? A fitful gleam of watery sunshine in the glen lent support to my argument. A feeble glimmer it was, but it sufficed. By the time we reached the foot, the mist had receded a few hundred feet up the hill, so again I suggested we might go ahead to the fringe of the mist. The rest of the story is easily told. We never made up on that mist. An hour or two later we were basking in the sunshine by the cairn, drinking in one of the most extensive views in the country.

These, however, are purely personal matters. Every one has a few hills for which he has a peculiar affection. There are stronger grounds for writing something in defence of an old friend. For one thing, Ben More has been sadly neglected in the *Journal*. One has to go back to Volume I. to find an article on the subject other than in the "Guide Book" numbers. In these days, as now, there was only one "Ben More." Of course, there is Ben More, Mull, and Ben More, Assynt, and Beinn Mhòr Cowal, and Beinn Mhòr of Kintail, and probably a host of others, all very fine hills, possibly rich in features that Ben More lacks. For all that, Ben More remains in undisputed possession of the title—the only one of them all that requires no further description to distinguish it.* More than a Triton among minnows, his massive bulk and well-shaped cone are set off by brethren lesser in height but comparable in rugged beauty.

* In a conscientious desire to test the accuracy of this statement, I tried it out on the President by remarking that I was up Ben More the other day. He at once replied, "Oh, yes! Good! Ben More, Mull!"

Ben More is a popular mountain, especially in summer, amongst non-climbers, and it is somewhat paradoxical that its popularity should not extend in the same degree to more serious mountaineers, for its very popularity is due primarily to its ability to satisfy (and none too quickly) the instinct of the mountaineer to strive for the summit. The eye that contemplates Ben More sweeps straight up from the depths of Glen Dochart right to the summit cairn, and simply compels one to rise and attack that long slope. But each in his own fashion. No small



"A Popular Mountain, especially in Summer, amongst Non-climbers."

part of the interest on a holiday is to watch the various parties at work. My last visit was on a fine August Sunday. Up came two brothers, each bending low under his enormous army pack, with arms hanging limply down, and boiled faces swollen with exertion. The leader heeded neither person nor thing, but the gleam in his eye revealed the fixed determination to plug straight on to the top without stopping. The second followed hard in his brother's wake, but a certain restive glancing to right and left seemed to indicate a sense of scenery being missed, while the gleam in *his* eye might have come from a sense of shame that he contemplated the rôle of Mr Ready-to-Halt. Anyway, the sight of our party

basking in the sun fanned the spark of revolt into flame, for, throwing down his pack, he shouted up to his fast disappearing companion, "Ye can gang on by yersel', I'll hae a seat."

"Mere plugging," says the scoffer. That may be so. Yet if the plugging instinct is not one of the essentials of the mountaineer, I am satisfied the capacity to enjoy such, where it is a necessary part of the route, is a clear indication of the mountaineering temperament. We do not enjoy it at the time or for its own sake. If we did, we might as well wear enormous boots like those provided for the International Kangchenjunga expedition and load our rucksacks with all sorts of junk to make the going heavier. No, it is the afterglow of the Plug—the silent Plug, the dogged Plug, the boggy Plug, the Plug in scree, the Plug direct, the Plug in traverse, the Plug endured, the Plug overcome—that is the joy, the pleasure, and the pain of it. Who will write the Epic of the Plug? For in truth the humble Plug has its part to play in the making of the complete mountaineer. But if plugging up a mountain is not always a pleasure it rouses at least a good fighting instinct, and no one could do much climbing without the capacity to endure and enjoy it in some degree or other. Smythe tells us that in climbing the higher Himalayan peaks the right temperament is even more important than an expert knowledge of technique. There is even a right temperament for getting the full amount of pleasure from climbing Ben More. The ascent is a living essay on "Gradualism." We must be "genuine philosophers at heart," recognising that all things—even "cairns"—come in due course to those who are worthy of them.

Ben More, however, is not all plug and no pleasure. The view from the summit, if we get there, is a rich reward. Few of the large party that climbed it at the New Year Meet of 1929 will forget the view we had that day. There is, in fact, only one thing missing. If you have been climbing the other hills round about, you will miss it at once, though it may take a moment to realise what it is. The dominating feature of all the other views

—the mighty Ben More himself—is absent, and the majestic sweep of the col from Ben More to Stobinian is not to be seen. This group is one of the really fine things of Scottish mountain scenery, and is seen to the best advantage from the Killin side. The lower stretches of Glen Dochart are dominated by it, but to appreciate it fully you must live for some time underneath it and see it in all its lights and shades.

Sentinel of the North! As I round his broad base on the Loch Dochart road or see his great cone rise behind me as I travel north from Crianlarich, I feel I have definitely passed into our wonderful Highland heritage.

Perfect Pillar of the Southern Gate! When like a Pyramid he bursts into view as I return from Bridge of Orchy or Dalmally, I sigh to think he is the last of the Paladins, and that once over the shoulder of his neighbours I shall pass down Glen Falloch to the Glasgow road.

On one occasion a friend of mine had become newly possessed of a motor cycle, so we pitched a tent at Bridge of Orchy and proceeded to climb, on successive days, Ben More from Crianlarich, Stob Ghabhar by the Upper Couloir, Buchaille Etive Mor, The Cobbler, Stob Coire nan Lochan of Bidean, and the Aonach Eagach Ridge. All the mountaineering wealth of the West Highland line was cast at our feet, and we grasped it with both hands. It is hardly surprising that, at the end of the holiday, we looked back on Ben More as rather tame, and wondered why we had wasted a day on it. Yet at the time we had been well content, thinking we had had a first-rate day.

The truth is, that the love of the hills is more elusive than we think. These are the days of the small car and the cheap excursion, which give us tremendous advantages over our predecessors if we use them properly. But many hills which we used to think remote and unattainable we now know in every detail and can visit any week-end. Consequently, if we are going to take full advantage of our opportunities, we must know just what it is we do want from the hills; otherwise we may be disappointed. I think many beginners are falling into this trap. They

are naturally ambitious and desperately keen to climb something with a title, such as the Crowberry Ridge or the Church Door Buttress. Are they going to work through the list and then begin to gain experience of all sorts of conditions on easier hills? The conditions will not wait for them, but in any case they are beginning at the wrong end.

Here, again, is where Ben More comes in. It can give experience at one time or another of most of the snow conditions known in Scotland. In some circumstances it will demand every respect, this applying not only to hard but also to soft snow. If anyone has any doubts on the subject, let him refer to the note by Macalister, in the number for June 1912, on the avalanche that overtook him in March of that year.

I have said enough in vindication of an old friend. Let those who think they loathe him give him another chance, not in haste and possibly bad training snatched between the coming and going of a cheap Sunday excursion, but on a day chosen out of many spent living under his shadows. That will be a worthy offering to a fine mountain. They will not return disappointed.

THE CENTRAL CRACK OF COIRE AN LOCHAIN.

By A. HARRISON.

IN the summer of 1925 Bartholomew and I stayed at a cottage at Coylum Bridge, where an old keeper regaled us with an interesting story. He said that looking down the cliffs of Craig an Lochain of Cairngorm one saw the waters of a small lochan glistening with more than usual brilliance. This, he explained to us, was due to Cairngorms which had fallen from the unscaleable cliffs above and glistened in the depths of the water.

Whilst scarcely giving the story full credence, it tickled our fancy, and we planned an expedition to the Lochain on the last day of our stay; but the weather was so bad that, instead of going to the Coire, we went and had tea at the Aviemore Hotel.

This year we were again in Speyside, and one day on our way back from Loch Avon we had a good view of the rock slab in Coire an Lochain. The slab looked quite interesting, and we decided to make an investigation of both it and the supposed cairngorms in the cliffs.

We started up the Laraig and struck up left by the dry valley that runs between Creag an Leth Choin and Creag a Chalamain. Just at the exit we came across some stags with horns in various stages of growth, but all still in velvet; one stag had only a single antler. Bartholomew fitted his telescope attachment to his minute Leica camera in the hope of getting a snap, but we did not see them again. We lunched by the side of the burn which comes down from the back of the Creag an Leth Choin, just where the Coire an Lochain burn joins it, and, after a drink from the burn, continued up the burn to the Coire.

There are two small lochans in the Coire, the inner one being the larger. It was evident that there had been a recent avalanche down the east side of the slab, and

some of it must have been carried across ice on the lochan, as fresh blocks of stone were on the north side of the loch and one block lay in the water and was still covered with gravel. We turned over some of the smaller blocks and found underneath partly withered grass, showing that the avalanche had occurred this spring. Some of the blocks had cut deep furrows in the ground.

It was evident that there were fresh broken rocks which might yield cairngorms if there were such things in the neighbourhood. The day was not over-bright, and perhaps that was why we saw no cairngorms glistening in the lochan.

Viewed from the lochan the slab looked quite as interesting as it had from a distance, and we decided to make a route by a crack which appeared to run from the bottom right up to the top. We approached it by the groove down which the last avalanche had swept. As we went up the groove we looked amongst the rocks and gravel for stones, and did find one or two smoky crystals but no brown or purple ones. So the old man was not altogether wrong, and with better luck we might have found some stones worth having.

The bottom of the slab lies at a little over 3,200 feet, and the angle is not severe. In dry weather, wearing rubbers, one could walk all over it, but on this day the slab was wet and we were wearing boots, and so we had to use our hands from time to time. The slab has the appearance of being a series of overlapping plates, and is bright red in colour—a marked contrast to the surmounting rocks, which are dark with weathering and vegetation.

Less than half-way up there is a slightly sloping terrace about 12 feet broad, which extends practically the whole way across. Near the top the slab loses some of its smooth appearance and finally abuts against the summit cliffs of the Coire. The slab is about 400 feet long but not quite so broad. Near the top of the slab the crack disappeared, but we saw it continued up the face of the cliff above a patch of brilliant green moss. We thought this route would make a

suitable continuation. We found the first pitch in the chimney (above lower \times in illustration) difficult, and turned it by going to the right and traversing back and upwards. The second pitch was narrow and unpleasantly loose, but once it was negotiated the route opened out and presented no undue difficulty, although the rocks were not all too secure. Usually there was a choice of routes. The top was reached (at upper \times in illustration) after about 350 feet, still in the continuation of the original crack; we built a cairn at the point of our exit after a climb of about 750 feet.

To the east of us was another buttress, surmounted by the summit cairn, which may give some climbs of an indefinite order. There were two buttresses to the west; the extreme west one does not appear practicable, but the one between it and ours should give an interesting route.

After finishing our survey we made our way down to the Laraig by the easy way to the south of the Creag an Leth Choin, and had tea by the burn and then home down the pass.

The rock composing the slab is of excellent quality. The upper cliffs are mostly of tabulated granite with a certain number of loose blocks and the usual rounded granite holds. They offer good climbing, and the notes on page 138 of the "Cairngorm Guide" should be amended. It may be found that this coire will give as good climbing as any other coire or face in the Cairngorms.



July 1931

L. St C. Bartholomew

THE UPPER ROCKS OF COIRE AN LOCHAIN OF CAIRN GORM. (See page 246)



June 1931

THE COMB. (See page 236)

G. Graham Macphie

THE DIAMOND BUTTRESS OF BIDEAN NAM BIAN.

By J. H. B. BELL.

“Very like a whale.”—“Hamlet,” iii. 2.*

ABOUT thirty years ago it could be fairly claimed that the Church Door Buttress of Bidean nam Bian was the most notorious crag in Britain. The buttress was conquered in 1898 by a strong S.M.C. party composed of Messrs Bell, Boyd, Napier, and Raeburn (*S.M.C.J.*, Vol. V., p. 135), but only after several determined attacks had been already repulsed. From the Glencoe road below Loch Triochtain one can see the massive columns of the twin buttresses which support the loftiest summit of Argyllshire, and the disquieting thought must have troubled many a mountaineer—Why the neglect of the twin sister of the Church Door? Many reasons have been given—the buttress was indefinite, it was vegetitious, it was loose, and, lastly, it was impossibly steep. A short note by the present writer in the last number of the *Journal* (*S.M.C.J.*, Vol. XIX., p. 215) was characterised by a very restrained optimism. It was clear that only a resolute attack under perfect conditions would have any chance of success along the central line of the buttress (or the diagonal of the diamond). The need for absolutely perfect conditions and dry rock was again exemplified on 23rd May of this year, when a party composed of Messrs W. B. Speirs, G. R. Symmers, and the author wisely desisted from the attempt after ascending about 100 feet on wet rocks and in heavy rain.

* The suggested name for the climb is offered with due hesitation. The upper part of the diamond can be seen from Glencoe, the lower only from a certain point in the corrie. The *hardness* of the climb is not in doubt. The author has given much thought to the title, but finds himself little better than Polonius at the finish.

The unique spell of fine weather during the month of August this year presented the awaited opportunity. The rocks and even the turfy ledges were perfectly dry when C. M. Allen, J.M.C.S., and I laboriously ascended the lower slopes of Corrie Beith. The sun blazed down from a cloudless sky and everything seemed perfect. Allen, who had never considered the buttress seriously, was quite jubilant. It was quite otherwise with me. I felt quite unwell, disinclined to eat, and only desirous of going to sleep in a sheltered sunny corner. The sun was too hot, there was too much wind, the corrie was very steep, and, lastly, I felt sure the buttress was unclimbable. Just to humour Allen, I agreed to go to the foot of the rocks and make a start. I was sure we would not get up much more than 100 feet, when, honour being satisfied, the rest of the afternoon could be given over to recuperating in the warm sunshine.

We had little difficulty in finding the small cairn left after the attempt of September 1930. The start from this point would be up a very steep series of slabs with few holds, but this could be avoided by moving along about 15 yards to the right. From the foot of the rocks the extreme steepness of the lower part of the buttress is quite evident, and the objective beyond the first 100 feet of easy climbing is a pinnacle high up on the sky-line on the left. The main difficulties would be in the 200 feet of climbing just below this pinnacle.

We started off at 3.15 P.M. in rubbers and *Kletterschuhe* respectively, and roped almost at once at the ends of a 100-foot rope. Broken rocks led us to a chimney behind a detached block on the left, and beyond this we could look down on the steep, difficult slabs. It was from this point we had retreated in May. Quite obviously the climb did not go straight ahead, but it was just possible to step across the top of a chimney on our right, and to find a good stance a little way beyond. Looking up to our left, we could now see another pinnacle beyond the one we had seen from below. Above this the angle of the buttress was easier. We could also see how to reach a huge moss-covered overhanging block, well on the way

to the pinnacle. The route lay above a semi-detached flake of rock and obliquely upwards for 60 feet. The huge block made an excellent stance, but offered no belay. This was perhaps the worst feature of the climb from the point of view of mountain ethics, as the next section was extremely steep and exposed, and required a good deal of gardening. Perhaps another party will find something to remedy the defect. It must surely have been at this part of the climb that our unguarded language, accompanied by the thunderous crash of loosened boulders, fascinated two climbers on the neighbouring ridges of Stob Coire nam Beith. The wind was blowing from us towards them, and the same evening at supper in Kingshouse they helped us to "see oorsels as ithers see us."

The ascent continued from the end of the mossy platform by crack-holds on the right for 25 feet or so. There followed a very awkward upward step to the left into a steep little chimney which was ornamented with various rocks of extreme looseness, but the stance and belay above this were really magnificent. An easy move to a platform 15 feet higher found us at the base of the conspicuous pinnacle. The chimney to the right of the pinnacle was of open angle and evilly smooth. It refused to yield to my efforts. We then tried a traverse round the left side of the cliff, and by descending I believe we might have been able to get on to easier rocks. However, Allen volunteered to lead the chimney to the left of the pinnacle. The severe section of this chimney is not over 20 feet in height, but it is really a tough customer, and we were well pleased to find ourselves on the top of the pinnacle at 5.40 P.M. We seemed to have got over the most difficult part, and we felt justified in leaving a small cairn.

We decided to persevere in the due line towards the summit of the buttress, although we could almost certainly have traversed to the left on to the easier ground of the route of August 1930. For 100 feet the ascent, though steep, was quite easy. A 25-foot steep pitch followed, and soon we had climbed up behind a mammoth over-

hanging block with a capacious niche behind. The rock wall above was quite sheer, and progress could only be effected by climbing the slabby roof of the block to its apex and making a sensational stride across the abyss on to some wonderful secure rocks. Sixty feet of rope were taken out here to a wide, secure platform where we left our second intermediate cairn.

Again we were offered a choice of routes. We could have traversed to the right by a series of turfy ledges to a point where easy rocks led to the sky-line, far above the precipitous walls of the central gully. Such a route would almost certainly have led to the summit. Ten feet above us we could also have traversed to the left on to the terminal arête of the August 1930 route. Straight above us was an evil-looking narrow chimney which rose vertically 20 feet or more to a recess of doubtful value. Allen went up to the recess and spent a long time in considering his next move. I sheltered myself beneath the overhanging rocks whilst the gardening proceeded overhead. At last Allen had solved the problem with the ascent of a 10-foot wall on the right. There seemed to be a good stance above. The lower part of the chimney was certainly difficult, but the upper wall can be easily dealt with by a bold attack, making use of the capacious holds above the wall. Beyond this we again had to deal with a short, difficult chimney, after which things suddenly began to ease off. The top of the last chimney was only 80 feet distant from the cairn on the summit of the buttress. It was 6.55 P.M., and the buttress was vanquished by a perfectly direct route from the lowest rocks leading straight to the summit cairn.

We left a small cairn just above the last difficulty to indicate the route to a descending party, and later rebuilt the cairn at the start of the climb in its proper position. The climb is without doubt a worthy neighbour to the Church Door Buttress. Generally speaking, the rock is fairly sound and the belays adequate, even although the general angle is undoubtedly severe, and the pitches are often fairly long. It is emphatically a climb for perfect weather and dry rocks, and whilst it cannot lay

claim to the picturesque character of its more famous neighbour, yet there is a healthful variety of striking situations throughout its 550 feet of ascent. How else was it that four hours had vanished almost unperceived like as many minutes, and that, seated by the cairn of Bidean, I felt that I had never had an ailment in the world? Such is the sovereign healing power of our rugged crags and chimneys!

A WEEK AT CORROUR BOTHY.

By P. D. BAIRD and R. N. TRAQUAIR.

CONTEMPLATING a week's tramp over the Cairngorms from Inverey, we reached our starting-point at 9 P.M. on Monday, 23rd March last. The day had been a hard one, for we arrived from Blair-Atholl at 9 P.M. after taking $13\frac{1}{2}$ hours to walk through Glen Tilt, the result of bad training and heavy packs.

On Tuesday we set about rearranging our belongings for the first of three carrying trips to Corrour. We had hoped to drag our gear, about 250 lbs. in all, on a sledge, but it thawed at the eleventh hour, and neither horse nor sledge could go to the bothy.

After a lazy morning we sent our packs on to Derry Lodge, and followed unladen. There we found our provisions, including 1 cwt. of coal. We spent an hour and a half packing, and did not get away till 5.30. About 8 o'clock we lit our lantern, and eventually at 9 reached the bothy.

The next day was spent carrying, and being fortunate to find a snow bridge over the Dee, we used it almost every day till we left.

The next day, the third fine day in succession, saw us on the tops at last, for we dared tempt the weather no further; and in spite of the fact that most of our coal was dumped by the wayside, we climbed without concern. Sgor an Lochain Uaine was our chosen peak, and we went by the N.E. Ridge. Conditions were perfect, dry rock and hard snow, and we got up without cutting more than two or three steps all the way. On the top the sun was shining brilliantly, and our return over Carn Toul, therefore, slow. Off the latter peak we prospected Corrie Brochain in the true professional style with an enormous telescope brought for the purpose.

At length we reached Corrour, and, choosing a safe

place, descended by gravity, though our standing glissade did not last very long.

The weather was still fine next day when we set out for Corrie Brochain. As we reached the corrie, a warm wind blew up from the S.W. and a few spots of rain fell. We looked wistfully at the heavily corniced summit, and remembered that "the avalanche débris in the upper corrie of Ben Nevis may exceed 100 feet in depth." It had been warm for the past three days with hot sun, and was now obviously thawing at a prodigious rate. We went on, close under the rocks by way of sheltering from a possible fall, crossed the foot of the East Gully, and continued our traverse on the terrace leading to the Central Buttress Gully; this also, according to plan, was to be crossed, not climbed, and the Black Pinnacle attacked in a corner on its east face, where some snow had collected and a possible route was thereby indicated.

The snow was sodden right through like slush on a town street, and after an hour of stamping, we were tired of it. The rock, on the other hand, was dry and warm, so we climbed up it. Continuing our westward traverse on the rocks, the base of the Braeriach Pinnacle, we reached the gully about its middle. Here we were stopped. The wall of the gully was smooth and overhanging. The snow could only be reached by roping down. We had with us a length of line for this very purpose, but a staircase is not the same as a mountain-side, so we decided to go up instead.

The ridge from here to the top of the Braeriach Pinnacle gave a delightful climb. Some of the rock needed careful testing, but there was never any difficulty. The top of the pinnacle is a short level ridge, overhanging the east branch of the gully, with the final summit rising from its eastern end. Here, supported by sound rock on each side, are two strips of incredibly rotten stuff, which looks as if it may fall into the gully at any moment. This last and only obstacle, more sensational than difficult, was successfully overcome, and a minute later we stood on the highest point. [This climb is described in some

detail, as it appears to be the first ascent of the pinnacle from below.]

After lunch we crossed over to the summit plateau, and visited all three tops of Braeriach in turn. We returned through Glen Geusachan, and here, under the Devil's Point, we were not surprised, nor displeased, to see the débris of a large and recent avalanche.

The next day, Saturday, though fine, was misty. We could put off the coal-heaving no longer, so we made the best of it and covered Carn a' Mhaim, Ben Macdhuì, Creagan a' Choire Etchachan, Derry Cairngorm, and Carn Crom, beneath which lay the coal. We collected half of it, and, thus lightly laden, were soon back at the bothy.

Next morning one pair of boots, foolishly left in the porch all night, was frozen stiff, and had to be thawed over a primus stove. A cold south-east wind was blowing, and everything was frozen hard again. We set off in good time for the Corrie Cath nam Fionn, where we had spotted a gully while returning from Braeriach two days earlier. Inspection from below was disappointing. The gully, which is on the north-west face of Ben Bhrotain, is short and not steep, though the angle varies a little. Half-way up this very ordinary gully we came suddenly upon ice, very thinly covered with snow. A hundred feet or so of step-cutting in real hard ice followed, and we reached the top without further incident. We made a special expedition to bag the Carn Cloich-mhuillin, for it is a Munro, and a fine viewpoint into the bargain, and then returned over Beinn Bhrotain to Monadh Mor. Here the whole plateau was spread out before us. Sharply cut off on the west, with the cliffs of the Corrie Garbhloch just showing, the glistening whiteness of the snow was broken only by the black cliffs of Sgoran Dubh. To the north rose the rounded summit of Braeriach, also snow-covered, while the boulder-strewn slopes of Carn Toul, in contrast to the rest of the scene, were almost entirely free of snow. We descended to the Loch nan Stuirteag, and from there, a nasty piece of side-walking round the head of Glen Geusachan landed us at the Devil's Point. A glissade down Corrour brought us to the bothy once more.

The next day was bad. A little snow had fallen during the night, and the mist was low on the hills. The south-east wind, that harbinger of ill-weather, was still blowing.

Undaunted, we set off for Corrie Brochain to try the Black Pinnacle again. We found Corrie Brochain with the aid of map and compass, but in it we could distinguish nothing. We were so closely wrapped in a bewildering and uniform whiteness that it was impossible to see the snow we stood on. For an hour we traversed over steepening snow slopes without getting anywhere. The aneroid said 3,400 feet. We went on again, and at last reached some rocks; still 3,400; I distrusted the aneroid completely. We sat on a rock and had lunch. We were now quite lost, and our chance of recognising anything in the corrie was nil; in addition, we were very uncertain of what was underneath us, so we decided to retire. Carefully at first, and then more quickly, we ran downhill. At the bottom we turned left. But No. 1 brought out a compass. "I could have sworn the blue end pointed north," said he, "but now I'm not so sure." No. 2 had a compass with a floating dial; the blue end did point north. Wrong again, we turned about, and eventually debouched out of the mist at the right place—opposite the burn coming out of the Lochain Uaine of Carn Toul. The mist was now much lower, and it was snowing hard. We collected our things at the bothy and fled to Inverey, where we arrived at 8 P.M.

The next day was spent in idleness and luxury. We walked down to Braemar, enjoyed a shave, lunched at the hotel, and hired a car to take us home.

On 1st April, our last day, we left Inverey at 4.10 A.M. At dawn we were climbing up from Auchelie to Creag an Lochain. Sunrise overtook us just short of the top, and we watched the summits and ridges of the Cairngorms appear out of the morning mist, picked out in gold.

The wind, still from the south-east, was bitterly cold, and hurried us on our way. Great masses of mist swept across the ridge, each summit clearing as we reached it. We climbed Carn Creagach, Stob Coire Bhearnaist, and

Carn Bhac, and at 8.20, in the lee of Beinn Iutharn Mhor, called a halt for breakfast. The wind eddies were really extraordinary here. A tobacco-pouch and a post card disappeared in one gust, and as we climbed, these crazy articles preceded us up the hill, crossing and recrossing, always just ten yards ahead. On the top there was no shelter, and we staggered across in the full force of the gale to the cairn. From here, over Mam nan Carn and Carn an Righ to the Allt Shlinne Mhoir, the wind hounded us from top to top, and we ran down at last to the low ground warmth and shelter. The watch had stopped, so we shot the sun with a compass, and made it 11 o'clock. For the next hour our route lay over the low ground, and although it was still freezing, we enjoyed some respite from the wildness of the upper air. At the head of Loch Loch we shot the sun again. It was noon.

After a rest we tackled Ben-y-Gloe. On Carn Gabhar the wind was mysteriously calm, and we reached the top, this time in mist, quite easily. On Braigh Coire Chruinn-bhalgain the gusts were terrific. We ran hard uphill while the wind came roaring round the corrie, and then, bang! we were pinned to our axes. On Carn Liath we thought we had fooled the wind, but the first cairn was not the top. The last few hundred yards on the summit ridge in the teeth of the gale, though practically level, cost us the sternest effort of our holiday.

We were both very glad to run down to Blair-Atholl, where we had time for a good tea before catching our train.

ROUND ABOUT ROSS AND SUTHERLAND.

By P. J. H. UNNA.

THE Editor has asked me to write on Ross and Sutherland, but why, he alone knows, for I have never intentionally entered Sutherland; and if, on the rare occasions that I have crossed into Ross, the weather has permitted an expedition, my experiences have not been sufficiently eventful to interest others. He must have done this either on incorrect information about me, or because he was short of copy and looked to me as a last resort. If the former, I have nothing more to say; so I will assume the latter, probably without justification, but it will give me something to write about.

I will therefore start on the basis that there is difficulty in getting articles for the *Journal*; not that that is a bad thing in itself, for it gives an editor something to do for his honorary status. If, however, there is difficulty in getting good articles, that is a different matter; for the *Journal* is the one link which keeps members living in outlying parts in touch with the Club.

As a matter of fact, I have for some years been wondering how the Editor manages to keep up the *Journal* in such an efficient state, and whether the time is not fast approaching when the subject-matter dealing solely with mountaineering in Scotland will become somewhat exhausted. That raises a question of principle which I would like to discuss.

The founders of the Club wisely chose the title *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, but successive Editors, probably in accordance with policy dictated by the Committee, have restricted the contents, except as regards the small-type notes headed "The S.M.C. Abroad," to climbing in Scotland. They have thus interpreted the title as meaning *Scottish Mountaineering Journal*, without the word "Club." That may have worked all right up

to the present, but it seems doubtful whether the ground is not becoming pretty well covered. If so, future accounts of new climbs will tend more and more to deal with detailed variations from older routes, and although such variations are to be encouraged, they are apt to make dry reading.

It may therefore be worth while considering whether the time is not ripe for making the main part of the *Journal* a record of the doings of our members, irrespective of the locality in which they take place. Naturally, climbs in Scotland would receive precedence, but papers on climbs abroad would not be ruled out. That would, I know, be distasteful to some members, and it would remove what has hitherto been a distinctive feature of the *Journal*, but I am inclined to think some change in policy will become inevitable if the standard of the *Journal* is to be maintained.

The change will be a big one, but need only be brought into operation in so far as it is necessary to make good any lack of papers on important new work in Scotland. At all events it will prevent what has happened in England and Wales, where the climbing-ground is so much more restricted that an account of a new climb may largely consist of precise records of individual hand and foot holds. Furthermore, the conditions in Scotland are so different that far better training for general mountaineering can be obtained, with the result that an account of a climb abroad will almost invariably be not only an account by a member of the Club, but also an account by a climber who learnt the first principles of mountaineering in Scotland, the more so now that membership of the Alpine Club has wisely been ruled out as sufficient qualification for ours.

Another point I should like to raise is in regard to ski-ing. Although it is not worth while for anyone to go to Scotland especially for ski-ing, those on the spot can often obtain quite good conditions. The snow may often be too hard for the ski-ing to be called perfect; but the art of ski-ing is too frequently assumed to refer to powder snow, whereas it is one which should enable all

states of snow to be tackled with reasonable facility, and there ought to be times when ski-ing on wet snow—a most enjoyable form—is readily obtainable.

That brings me to my second suggestion, which is that a small part of the *Journal* should be devoted to ski-ing in Scotland. I must therefore try to convince the die-hards who maintain that mountaineers are not concerned with ski-ing. The Continental clubs have regarded ski-ing in its true aspect as relative to mountaineering, and there is no reason why the S.M.C. should not do likewise. I regard ski in the same way as I regard my nailed boots, rubbers, and crampons—as articles to be used as occasion arises, the one selected being that which makes it easiest to get about the hills. True that on such grounds one would seldom select ski in Scotland; but ski cannot be efficiently used without considerable practice, and as practice is a means of obtaining the end, even ski-ing in Scotland may within proper limits be regarded as mountaineering, and so come within the scope of the *Journal*. There is no reason why it should not do so because there is also a Scottish Ski Club, especially as many of the members of that Club are probably not interested in mountaineering, but merely regard the hills as suitable places for the use of ski.

With these remarks I will conclude my dissertation on Ross and Sutherland.

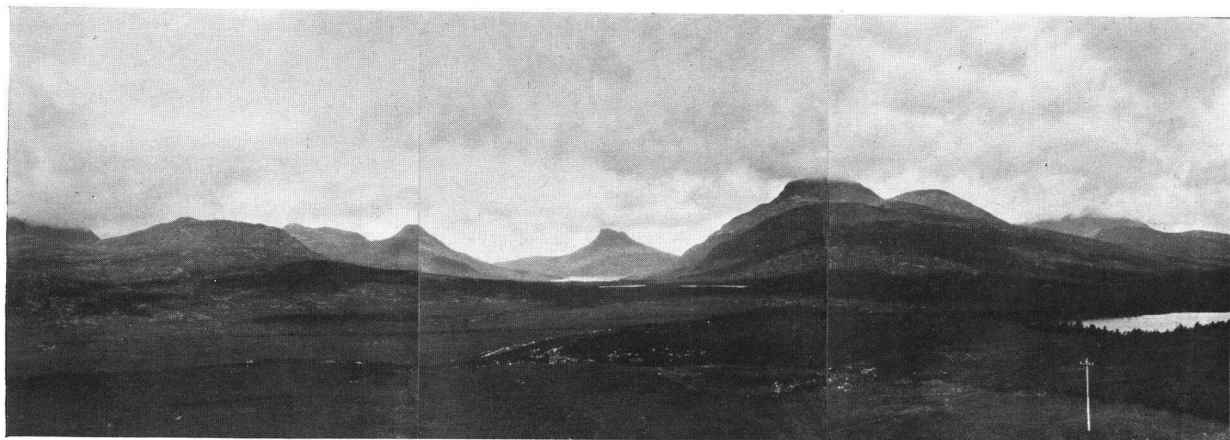
EDITOR'S NOTE.

The Editor, in the conventional manner, accepts no responsibility for the opinions or accuracy of contributors in general, nor can he always guarantee the relativity of manuscript and title! The response to the editorial request in this instance somehow reminds us of the waiter who, being asked to furnish coffee without cream, returned after an interval to report that the cream was finished and “would coffee without milk do as well?”

If Unna has not been in Sutherland, that is clearly his own fault, and we hope that intentionally or unintentionally he may find himself there in due course,

and that an article showing his appreciation of its mountain features may then be forthcoming.

While particular members have occasionally been asked for an article, the bulk of these have been selected from MSS. submitted without any solicitation. On the merits of the questions raised by the foregoing article, the intimate knowledge of our Scottish hills and the wide climbing experience of the writer entitle his views to very careful consideration, and no doubt some other members of the Club will be prepared to state their attitude on these questions either in writing or at the General Meeting.



August 1931

BEN MORE OF
COIGACH, 2,438

BEINN EUN,
2,000

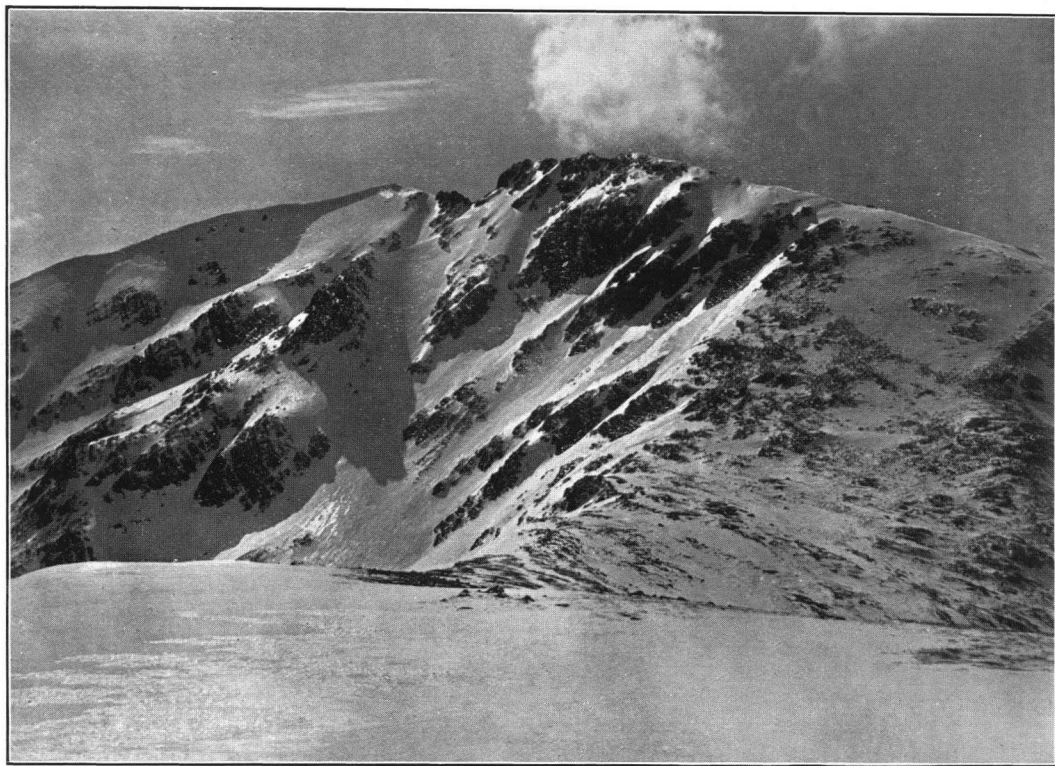
AN STAC OR
STAC POLLY, 2,009

CUL BEAG,
2,525

CUL MOR,
2,786

Allan Arthur

Looking West from the Ullapool-Lochinver Road



April 1931

THE NORTH FACE OF AONACH AIR CHRITH. (*See page 270*)

A. E. Robertson

GHOSTS' HIGH NOON ON THE CAIRNGORMS.

By DAVID W. ROBINSON.

THEY say that Midsummer's Eve is the night in the year when the fairy people come out of their retreats, and that all human mortals are infected with a strange madness if they happen upon them dancing in some fairy dell. It must have been some taint of this "madness" that lured me away from a very pleasant Saturday afternoon's tennis to go and look for the sunrise on the Cairngorms. This, too, in the year of grace 1931, when, as every schoolboy knows, the first three weeks of June were incessantly wet and the sun was not visible even at midday. However, I yielded to persuasion, or perhaps temptation, and at five o'clock on the said Saturday afternoon I called for Allan Steven, and, accompanied by two friends in another car, we set off with the scent breast-high.

We had a steady uneventful journey, and ultimately arrived at Achlean Farm in Glen Feshie shortly after ten, and proceeded to disembowel the car. We decided to have some hot soup before we started, but the fates willed otherwise, for, after an hour's coaxing and mendacious encouragement of a "primus," we gave up in disgust and set off up Carn Ban Mhor in the gathering darkness. The wind had gone down considerably with the sun, but the weather looked a trifle uncertain and there was thick mist on the tops of the hills. We followed quite a good track to begin with, but after a bit we had to share it with a stream, although finally, about 2,500 feet, we emerged triumphant with the track, but without the stream. Here our two companions were visited with one of these rare moments of sanity, and they decided to proceed no farther. We arranged with them to bring the cars round to Coylum Bridge in the morning, as we thought that would be an easier way down, and then we entered the mist.

It was now about half-past twelve, but it was quite light enough to see ten or a dozen yards ahead, despite the mist, and we could see quite plainly how the track ran. Eventually it came out on a flat plateau and proceeded to lose itself. We made a very creditable attempt to follow its example. However, this time the gods were with us, and after some pleasant aimless wandering a strange grey figure loomed through the mist and proved on closer inspection to be the cairn. Behind it, with the aid of a match, we examined watch, aneroid, and compass. We found the time to be one o'clock, the height approximately 3,400 feet, and whither lay our next objective, Braeriach. The finding of the cairn was a great piece of luck, since the top of Carn Ban Mhor is so flat, and the mist and the darkness so restricted our view, that the moral effect of the definitive top was very encouraging.

We set off for what we reckoned to be the centre of the horse-shoe of the cliffs above Loch Einich, and the first landmark we came on was the Great Moss. The night was now about its darkest, and we could just distinguish between peat-bog and tufts of grass. The air was very still, and it gave one an eerie feeling to hear the sucking and gurgling of the bog and, in the distance, the sighing of the wind in the corrie and water hurling itself over some rocky ledge. It brought back to my mind a picture I once saw of the villain in "The Hound of the Baskervilles" who met a sticky end in a morass. Thus oppressed we almost unconsciously quickened our steps as we leapt from a tuft or extracted a foot from the mire. Eventually we crossed the moss, and could discern the edge of the cliffs on our port bow. We skirted round for quite a while, always keeping twenty or thirty yards from them, until finally, through a breaking in the mist, we saw the ground rising sharply and encouragingly ahead of us. On the strength of this we sat down and had something to eat, and decided that as we were so well up to time we would try Cairntoul first and come back to Braeriach.

When we got to the top of the first rise we were rewarded with a rift in the mist which showed us what looked

like a lochan beneath us, and what appeared to be Braeriach up the slope ahead, with the sound of water falling from towards the lochan. As Cairntoul was now our objective, we did a right-wheel and proceeded in an easterly direction. Then came the dawn. There was none of the *ροδοδάκτυλος* *ἔως* about this dawn. It was cold and grey and cheerless, and seemed somehow to spell tragedy. It put one in mind of women waiting up all night for ships that would never make the harbour again. With the dawn rose the wind, and helped to make things even more depressing, and we were glad to be moving to keep warm. The higher we rose, the colder and more biting became the wind, until, when we arrived at the Einich Cairn, we were thankful for our "Balaclavas." We did not bother to take a compass bearing, with the result that after about twenty minutes' walking we again arrived at the Einich Cairn. This time we did bestir ourselves, and eventually found the shoulder of Angel's Peak, and from there the top was reached without difficulty. We only stopped to take a bearing, as by now our discomfort had been added to by the rain, and we hurried on till eventually we struggled up to the top of Cairntoul. It was now four o'clock and a real dirty morning as we munched a roll in the shelter of the cairn, and although I would fain have tarried a little longer, we were afraid of becoming chilled.

So off we set again back over Angel's Peak, with the wind now in our faces instead of our backs. All our clothing was soaking, and my plus-fours had just reached the stage where they were chafing my legs and making walking very uncomfortable. Steven was wearing shorts, and consequently enjoyed (?) a goodly breeze about his legs. We came back over Angel's Peak safely, but neither of us had sufficient courage to take off our gloves to read the compass, with the result that we set off down the south-west shoulder instead of the western. We discovered our mistake after a short time, but instead of descending to the col and up the other side, we came down a long way below it, and had a longer drop and a further climb. Feeling thoroughly chilled and miserable, we

struggled up the slope and on to more level, though still rising, ground. At length through the mist I saw a familiar grey blur that gladdened my eyes, and with an expectant thrill I lumbered on to what I thought should be the top of Braeriach. The ground, however, was suspiciously flat, and the cairn looked unpleasantly familiar, and then I recognised—the Einich Cairn.

The wind was now a miniature tornado, and with our soaking wet clothes it went right through us to the very marrow. It seemed impossible to get warm, and still more impossible to get out of the wind. I was also feeling very hungry, but, of course, to stop and feed there was out of the question, so we decided to give up Braeriach and try and find a way down towards Loch Coire an Lochan. At length, after walking over the flat plateau for some time, we saw through the mist the lochan below us, and the contemptuous and mocking spur of Braeriach up to our right. But Braeriach had ceased to interest us; all we wanted to do was to get out of that perishing wind, and it was with great relief we huddled in a rocky hole beside the lochan and ate our breakfast. Even there it was pretty cold, and we did not stop long, but pushed on down to the Einich bothy, which we reached at about 7.30 A.M.

To our relief it was quite dry in Glen Einich, although there was still a strong wind blowing, but now it was in our favour, as it served to dry our clothes. The walk down Glen Einich was very long and wearisome, although rather pretty with the pine trees and the yellow gorse in full bloom. We stopped twice on our way down the glen, once after about three miles, when Steven promptly fell asleep and had to be rudely wakened, and a second time, where the path to the Larig Ghru joins the Glen Einich track and where Steven returned the compliment by interrupting me in the middle of a delicious dream about hot water. Finally we reached Coylum Bridge about ten, but the others were not due till noon. We hoped they would be early, and tried to fill in the time by getting some sleep, but without success. Whenever I was just about over, a fly would settle on my nose or a car

pass with a blast of its horn, and I had to begin all over again. The others eventually turned up at a quarter to twelve, and when we asked them if they had not thought of coming earlier, they said they thought it was just about eleven. As we had the only watch, they had been reduced to telling the time by means of the joint use of compass and sun.

We motored up to Boat of Garten, where Steven and I had a most welcome bath, and then joined the others at lunch. We set off back home soon after lunch, and arrived in Glasgow in lashing rain shortly before seven. Thus did we spend our Midsummer's Eve, but I have yet to see the rosy-fingered dawn or the passage of Aurora across the sky, both of which synonyms, it seems to me, were born of rapture rather than reality.

THE POSITION OF THE "GUIDE BOOK" SCHEME.

By the GENERAL EDITOR.

IT may be useful at the present moment to give a short summary of the position of the "Guide Book." The scheme, as laid down, is that the "Guide Book" is divided into three volumes:—

Volume I., in six sections.

Volume II., in three sections.

Volume III., in two sections.

The composition of these volumes is as follows:—

Volume I.—

A. *General.*

B. *The Lowlands.* Everything south of the Firth of Clyde, Forth and Clyde Canal, and Firth of Forth.

C. *Southern Highlands.* Bounded on the south by I.B and on the north by the Callander and Oban Railway to Killin, River Tay, Strathmore, Brechin, Montrose.

D. *Central Highlands.* Bounded on the south by I.C and on the west and north by Oban, the Caledonian Canal, Inverness, Spey Mouth, and on the east by the River Spey to Newtonmore and the Highland Railway to Ballinluig.

E. *Ben Nevis.* Is an island in I.D.

F. Ben Nevis Panorama.

Volume II.—

A. *The Cairngorms.* Bounded by I.C, I.D, and the sea.

B. *Western Highlands.* West of the Caledonian Canal and south of the Dingwall and Skye Railway, marching with I.D and E in the south.

C. *Northern Highlands.* North of Skye Railway.

Volume III.—

A. *Island of Skye.*

B. The Islands, and Index.

Up to date the following Sections have been published :—

I.A, I.E, II.A, and III.A.

No. I.A was completely sold out, and a second impression has been published.

No. III.A (Skye) and II.A (Cairngorms), first impressions, have been sold out and have had to be reprinted.

Section II.B (The Western Highlands) is in the press, and it is confidently anticipated that it will be published during December.

Section II.C (The Northern Highlands) is well in hand, and will be published in the spring of 1932.

Section I.D is also well in hand, but the Glencoe part of this section is being specially surveyed from a climbing point of view by J. H. B. Bell and a Committee. Their investigations will probably be finished in the early summer of next year, after which publication will follow immediately.

The Rev. A. E. Robertson has agreed to take H. Alexander's place as General Editor.

The following have agreed to act as Sub-Editors :—

I.B, John Dow.

I.C, J. C. Thomson.

I.D, H. MacRobert.

II.B, J. A. Parker.

II.C, W. N. Ling.

III.B, W. W. Naismith.

All the Sub-Editors would be obliged if members would send photographs and particulars likely to be useful in the preparation of their respective volumes.

Members are also asked to do what they can to help the sales of the sections published. This is all important so as to obtain funds to print and publish the remaining sections.

Copies may be obtained on application to W. B. Speirs, Hon. Assistant Editor, 48 Victoria Crescent Road, Glasgow, W.2.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

EASTER MEET, 1931—CLUANIE.

THE Easter Meet, 1931, was held at Cluanie, Tomdoun, and Glen Shiel, the following members and guest being present at Cluanie during all or part of the Meet :—

Members.—A. E. Robertson (*President*), J. L. Aikman, G. Barlow, J. W. Baxter, A. Dixon, G. T. Glover, G. E. Howard, W. N. Ling, A. R. Muirhead, E. W. Steeple.

Guest.—J. A. E. Howard.

Snow was plentiful, and the weather taken on an average throughout was very good, certainly better than was expected from the conditions prevailing immediately beforehand.

Thursday, 2nd April.

Those arriving during the day were greeted by very thick weather. Snow was lying at 500 feet.

Glover and Ling, who arrived about one o'clock, ascended Carn Fuaralach.

Barlow climbed Druim Shionnach by North Ridge.

The President (in his car) climbed a steep, tricky, snow slope between Tomich and Cluanie.

Friday, 3rd April.

Barlow left for Glen Shiel.

Ling and Glover climbed Carn Ghluasaid and continued over Creag a Chaoruinn, Sgurr nan Coubhairean, Sail Chaoruinn, Tigh Mor (three tops), and Drochaid an Tuill Easaid.

The President, Howard, J. A. E. Howard, and Muirhead ascended Creag a Mhaim. Muirhead continued to Druim Shionnach, while the Howards received an object-lesson in mountain photography from the President.

Dixon arrived on foot from Tomdoun, having climbed Creag a Mhaim on the way. Steeple arrived.

Saturday, 4th April.

The President, Howard, and J. A. E. Howard motored to Dornie.

Steeple, Dixon, and Muirhead climbed Carn Fuara-lach in high wind and rain.

Ling and Glover were driven off A' Chralaig by a blizzard from the west.

Sunday, 5th April.

A certain amount of speculation was aroused early by the arrival of two telegrams, addressed to the S.M.C., and handed in at Tyndrum. The first asked for assistance to find two youths supposed to be lost on Buachaille Etive. The second, which was dispatched some hours later, although delivered at the same time, cancelled the first, the youths having duly turned up.

It happened, however, that a certain member presented himself for breakfast after the rest of the Club had finished, and, knowing nothing of the telegrams, was handed the first one only. He was then allowed to thoroughly digest the unpleasing prospect of a long drive breakfastless before the second message was displayed. An unkind trick this.

Ling and Glover ascended Mullach Fraoch-choire, and subsequently A' Chralaig, keeping to the ridge throughout. This ridge proved very enjoyable, excellent views being obtained. Certain ice-covered pinnacles required some care to overcome.

Dixon and Muirhead started later and followed the same route. Also covering the same ground, but in the reverse direction, was a private party, consisting of four gentlemen and one ice axe. Coming off A' Chralaig on the way to Mullach, this party encountered Ling and Glover, who volunteered information as to the most advisable route when they should arrive at the pinnacles. Shortly after the first encounter the party ran into the two above-mentioned late starters, and they also offered detailed instructions regarding the same place. It transpired afterwards that the respective directions, both given in good faith, were exactly contradictory. It is not

known whose advice was followed, but the writer has no doubt that an opinion, carrying behind it the exceptional weight of two ex-presidents, would surely overcome any ordinary opposition.

The President, Steeple, and two friends of the former who had motored from Dornie, climbed the Horse Corrie on Carn Fuaralach. They enjoyed 500 feet of exhilarating climbing on a snow slope measured at 45° to 50°.

Barlow climbed Sgurr Leac nan Each from Glen Shiel.

Monday, 6th April.

The weather to-day was ideal, and the President took the opportunity of making additions to his collection of mountain photographs. For this purpose he ascended a corrie leading to the north ridge of Aonach air Chrith.

Ling, Dixon, and Muirhead drove down the Shiel to the old bridge and climbed Creag nan Damh, and then followed the ridge over Sgurr Beag, Sgurr an Lochain, Sgurr an Doire Leathain, Sgurr Coire na Feinne, Maol Chinn-dearg, Aonach air Chrith, Druim Shionnach, and Creag a Mhaim. Dixon left the others at Aonach air Chrith in order to return by the fine north ridge to Cluanie. He made the mistake of trying to turn the first lot of pinnacles on the west side, but after this stuck to the ridge, which, in places, was a knife-edge of snow. On the way down he was alarmed to come across marks of what looked like a free fight in the snow. Fortunately this turned out to be nothing more than evidences of the President's photographic activities.

Baxter and Aikman arrived from Kinlochquoich, where Aikman's car had been doing duty as a tent from 3rd to 5th April. They were at Moy, Loch Laggan, on the 2nd, and climbed Creag Pitridh, Mullach Coire an Iubhair, and Beinn a' Chlachair. On the 3rd they ascended Sgurr a' Mhaoraich from the Kinlochhourn road. On the 4th, from Kinlochquoich, Sgurr na Ciche was climbed by north ridge, a descent from the summit being made to Garbh Chioch Mhor Col, thence down the gully. They were assisted in the descent by a thunder-

storm. On the 5th, also from Kinlochquoich, they climbed Sgurr nan Coireachan, Sgurr Mòr, and Gairich.

Tuesday, 7th April.

Baxter and Aikman climbed Ciste Dhubh and were rewarded with occasional views through the mist.

To-day saw the end of the Cluanie Meet, that just referred to being the only ascent made on the 7th.

The care and attention of Mr and Mrs Macdonald to the wants of guests, and the good food provided at the inn, have all to be experienced to be believed.

TOMDOUN.

The party at Tomdoun Hotel numbered thirteen. There were eleven members—Bartholomew, Corbett, Dow, Macphee, Matheson, Meldrum, Monro, Mowat, Solly, T. Evershed Thomson, Unna—and two guests—A. S. L. Hamilton and W. Stanley Major. Aikman and Baxter, who camped out, were also present at the Meet.

There was plenty of snow on the hills. Thursday was misty, and on Saturday there was a storm of wind and a fresh fall of snow, but the weather on the other days was fairly good.

Thomson was the first to arrive and made a solitary ascent of Gleouraich (3,395). Unna, Dow, and Matheson also arrived on Thursday. Unna ascended Achlaise (1,773), and Dow and Matheson Glas Bheinn (1,825).

Corbett should have arrived on Thursday morning, but owing to a special effort in the way of unpunctuality on the part of the Railway Companies concerned he only arrived at Spean Bridge that night. Here were also Solly, Aikman, and Baxter. The two last named had motored from Loch Laggan, stopping at Moy to ford the Spean and climb Creag Pitridh (3,031), Mullach Coire an Iubhair (3,443), and Beinn a' Chlachair (3,569).

On Friday Thomson and Hamilton climbed Creag a Mhaim (3,102) and Druim Shionnach, and Dow, Matheson, and Unna traversed Gleouraich and Spidean

Mialach. They found the "spoor" of an eagle that had landed on the cornice and walked across the snow—talon marks 7 inches in length and 4 inches in width.

Meldrum arrived by the night train, and he and Solly climbed Achlaise in the afternoon. Corbett, who had his bicycle, climbed Ben Tee and arrived later in the day.

Aikman and Baxter motored to Kinlochquoich, where they camped for the next three nights. In the afternoon they climbed Sgurr a' Mhaoraich (3,365).

The last arrivals on Friday were Macphee and Major, who motored from Liverpool. As their speedometer recorded 384 miles for the day's run they went on to Kinlochhourn and back in the dark, so as to bring the mileage over 400. This performance will be best appreciated by those members who have travelled the Kinlochhourn road in daylight.

On Saturday, in spite of the very unpromising weather, there was a general move in the direction of Kinlochquoich. Aikman and Baxter, being already on the spot, succeeded in getting up Sgurr na Ciche (3,410), and met a severe thunderstorm on the way down.

Macphee, Meldrum, and Major walked along the north side of the Gairawan to Lochan na Cruadhach and tried the north ridge of Sgurr na Ciche, but were driven back by lightning when about 400 feet below the top. Thomson, with Hamilton, Monro and Mowat, were also driven back before reaching the summit.

Dow's party, which included Bartholomew, Corbett, and Matheson, were less ambitious, and reached the top of Sgurr Mòr (3,290). Unfortunately, when about half-way home, the car slipped into a ditch and was badly damaged. Bartholomew was sent on to the hotel at the first opportunity to get his car out and bring the party home.

Solly and Unna motored to the footbridge at Ban Ath and attempted Gairich, but they also found the weather too severe when they reached a height of 2,500 feet.

On Sunday Aikman and Baxter took advantage of the fine weather for a long day over Sgurr nan Coireachan (3,125), Sgurr Mòr (3,290), and Gairich (3,015).

Bartholomew drove Corbett, Matheson, Meldrum, and Mowat up the Cluanie road to the foot of Creag a Mhaim, and climbed Aonach Air Chrith (3,342), Druim Shionnach, and Creag a Mhaim. On the way down Bartholomew fell and cut his wrist with the pick of his axe, but was able to drive his car back to the hotel.

The rest of the party spent the morning in the hotel or at church, but in the afternoon Monro and Hamilton climbed Spidean Mialach.

On Monday Thomson drove Matheson, Monro, and Hamilton down Glen Shiel, and they did Sgurr na Ciste Duibhe (3,370), Sgurr na Carnach, and Sgurr Fhuaran (3,505), and enjoyed a fine view in which the details of the Cuillin ridge were plainly visible. After a run down from Sgurr Fhuaran they cooled off by fording and bathing in the Shiel River, and called at Cluanie on the way home to obtain instructions from the President as to the pronunciation of the peaks they had climbed.

Meldrum, Solly, Unna, and Major ascended Sgurr Choinnich. Macphee drove up the Cluanie road and ascended Creag a Mhaim and Druim Shionnach. Corbett cycled to Kinlochquoich and climbed Sgurr a Choirebheithe (2,994), which turned out to be a more interesting proposition than many of the neighbouring "Munros." Bartholomew and Dow stayed behind to superintend the salvage of Dow's car.

Aikman and Baxter also proceeded to Glen Shiel and sunbathed at the foot of Beinn Fhada. They slept at Cluanie.

On Tuesday everybody left except Corbett, Matheson, and Unna, and they traversed Gairich, up the west ridge and down the north; Bartholomew and Dow being able, by pooling their resources, to muster one uninjured car and uninjured driver, departed together. On the way home Monro and Thomson climbed Creag Meaghaidh from Aberarder.

Aikman and Baxter climbed Ciste Dhubh (3,218), but their doings now belong to Cluanie rather than Tomdoun.

Matheson and Unna left on Wednesday and Corbett

took an off-day about Kinlochhourn. On Thursday he traversed Beinn Loinne, taking a long rest at the ordnance cairn (2,455) to allow for time-lag on his aneroid. He made the height of Beinn Loinne 2,530, and of Druim nan Cuamh 2,555. On Friday he traversed Sgurr a Chlaidheimh, Sgurr nan Eugallt (2,933), and Sgurr Sgiath Airidh (2,890).

CLUB ROOM.

No lectures have been delivered in the Rooms since last report, but this does not signify that there will be any dearth of lectures during the coming winter.

LIBRARY.

Since the last issue of the *Journal* there have been presented to the Club:—

- “Scottish Gaelic Studies,” Vol. III., Part 2, April 1931.
Presented by the publisher.
- “Reflections on Guideless Climbing,” by Noel E. Odell.
Presented by the author.
- “Memoirs of the Geological Survey, Scotland: Geology of Ardnamurchan, North-West Mull, and Coll.”
Presented by the publishers.

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

During the same period the following journals of the kindred societies and others have been received:—

- Alpine Journal. Vol. XLIII., No. 242.
- Canadian Alpine Journal. Vol. XIX., 1930.
- Himalayan Journal. Vol. III., April 1931.
- Cairngorm Club Journal. Vol. XII., Nos. 70 and 71.
- Annual of the Mountain Club of South Africa. No. 33, 1930.

- Climbers' Club Bulletin. March 1931 and May 1931.
Fell and Rock Journal. Vol. VIII., No. 3, 1930.
La Montagne. January to August 1931.
Les Alpes. December 1930 to September 1931.
Bulletin Appalachian Mountain Club. June 1931.
Italian Alpine Club Journal. December 1930 to July 1931.
Bulletin du Club Alpin Belge. Vol. VII., No. 21, and Vol. VIII., No. 22.
Svenska Turistforeningens Arsskrift. 1931.
Scottish Ramblers' Year-Book. 1931.
Den Norske Turistforenings Årbok. 1931.
Zeitschrift des Deutschen und Osterreichischen Alpen-Vereins. 1930.
Sierra Club Bulletin. February 1931.
Bulletin Pyrénéen. January to March 1931.
Ladies' Alpine Club Year-Book. 1931.
Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club. 23rd Annual Record. 1930-31.
American Alpine Journal. 1931.
Till Fjälls Svenska Fjällklubbens Årsbok. 1931.
Akademischer Alpenclub Bern. Vol. I., November 1929.
The Scottish Ski Club Journal. 1931.

SLIDE COLLECTION.

The thanks of the Club are due to Mrs Sang, who has kindly presented eighty slides from her late husband's collection. They include sixty views of the Dolomites; twenty of the slides are "unplaced." The Club is also indebted to Messrs H. C. Comber and J. Rooke Corbett for gifts of slides of Scottish scenery, the Alps, and Dauphiné.

Obituary

ONE regrets to note the passing of the Rev. Colin Campbell, D.D., of Lorachan, Callander, who was an Original and Life Member of the Club and a Member of the Alpine Club. His memory will be treasured by those who knew him not only for his love of mountaineering but for his real personal worth.

REVIEWS.

The Hills of Peace. By Lawrence Pilkington. Longmans, Green & Co. Pp. 48. 2s. 6d. net.

Lovers of the hills will find much that appeal to them in this little collection of poems, in which Mr Pilkington reveals not only a nice talent for describing the natural beauties of the mountains, but also a deep conviction of the spiritual refreshment to be derived from their contemplation. How well he expresses what we have all so often felt when he speaks of "the hills, the streams, the mountain-side on which the sunlight gleams" as the garment of God. The verses entitled "Moors and Mountains," with their references to the Cairngorms and the "Coolin Hills of Skye," will specially appeal to the mountaineer. We trust that Mr Pilkington will not be slow to publish a companion volume to "The Hills of Peace." E. B.

Alpine Journal, Vol. XLIII., No. 242.

The first article in the *Journal* is designated "Himalayan Contrasts," by General the Hon. C. G. Bruce. General Bruce points out that as the Himalayas stretch for a distance of approximately 1,500 miles, it is unwise to apply to one part of the group conditions which have been found to apply to some other part, and that the conditions of each separate group in the chain must be studied. He also lays stress on the marked difference which is found in the condition of tops which are comparatively close together, the cause being that the northern slopes are, in few cases, affected by the monsoons, whereas the heights which lie more to the south have a much greater precipitation of both snow and rain owing to their nearness to the Indian Ocean. Varying conditions regarding supplies of food and porters are also touched on.

The next article is by Dr T. Graham Brown, which deals not only with his new ascent of Piz Bernina, but his other expeditions in the Alps in July and August of 1930. Considering the unfavourable weather conditions which prevailed in 1930, the number of successful expeditions which Dr Graham Brown accomplished are remarkable.

Another article of interest is one by H. E. L. Porter, dealing with the Glacier Peak and other ascents in New Zealand. The season in 1930 seems to have been worse than usual, and Mr Porter must have exercised infinite patience. It is apparent that the difficulty

of access to some of the New Zealand tops confines these expeditions to those who have considerable time at their disposal.

Other articles are some climbs in Korea by C. H. Archer, who had to adopt unusual methods to attain his summits, and an article by the late R. P. Hope on solitary climbs, of which forty-seven are detailed, including that of the Dom.

The *Journal* also includes articles on such widely separated countries as Alaska and Kenya. The *Journal* maintains its usual high standard both in illustrations and letterpress. A. H.

The Himalayan Journal, Vol. III., April 1931.

The number commences with an article by Brigadier-General the Hon. C. G. Bruce on the ill-fated expedition undertaken by Messrs Mummery and Hastings and Dr Collie in 1895, when the former and two Ghurkas lost their lives under the slopes of Nanga Parbat. No one is better qualified to write on this subject than General Bruce, who himself was one of the party. I quote the following paragraph from General Bruce's pen, which gives the reader an idea of the difficulties with which the Himalayan pioneers had to contend :—

“ Mummery's expedition of 1895 was backed by no great Society, nor was it equipped regardless of expense. It was not much further furnished either with special stores or tents than an ordinary shooting expedition, except, of course, with mountaineering equipment.”

It is interesting to compare this with the account of the International Himalayan Expedition of 1930, contributed to the *Journal* by Professor G. O. Dyhrenfurth, which will be familiar to those who have read Mr Smythe's book. On reading the Professor's account, one cannot but feel that, with the large supplies and number of porters at its disposal, something better might have been made of the organisation of the expedition. This criticism is supported, at second hand anyway, in the review of Mr Smythe's book, which appears on p. 134 of the *Journal*.

There are numerous other articles which space forbids me to enlarge upon, and I recommend those interested in Himalayan exploration to read the *Journal* for themselves.

I feel diffident in passing adverse comment on a publication compiled by such an experienced body of climbers—pioneers in most cases—but it does occur to me that the illustrations leave something to be desired. I find no fault with the beautiful photogravure of Nanga Parbat composing the frontispiece, but the majority of the illustrations might be better. Possibly bad atmospheric conditions are responsible.

G. M. L.

The Canadian Alpine Journal, Vol. XIX., 1930. Price, \$2.00.

Highly interesting and informative.

Mount Robson figures largely in this number. Three articles bear directly on this great Peak, one by N. E. Odell, a member of the last Everest Expedition, narrating a successful ascent, another by R. L. M. Underhill, whose party was baulked of success by dangerous snow conditions just short of the summit, and a third dealing with the tragedy which cost Mr Waffl—a distinguished and capable mountaineer—his life.

British readers will be much entertained by Miss M. E. O'Brien's concise survey of "Rock Climbing in Continental Europe." The Meije is disposed of as an "amusing traverse of moderate difficulty," from which we gather that a new race of nephilm is arising in Canada.

The completion of the new Memorial Cabin in Jasper Park marks another step forward in the history of the Club. There are now four first-class climbers' cabins in the Canadian Rockies, which serve the same purpose as the S.M.C. Hut under Ben Nevis.

The number runs to 190 pages, and contains 70 photographs and other illustrations, many of which are excellent. In fact, the activity of the members of the Club and the vastness of their playground prompts the suggestion that publication of this *Journal* might take place oftener than once a year.

S. C.

The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, Vol. VIII., No. 3. 4s. net.

The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club is always looked forward to as one of the most attractive events in the mountaineering literary year. This number, which completes Vol. VIII., is more than up to standard. Energetic fellows these "Fell and Rockers," and the part under review includes articles on Greenland, Switzerland, Norway, and Canada, as well as on the hills nearer our hearts. It holds in addition the music and words of a song which, though it doubtless livens the hearts of the lakelanders, is probably as obscure to the average Scot as "Gibb o' Gushetneuk" is to the average Saxon.

Apart from this question of dialect, however, there is not a mountaineer who reads the present number but cannot fail to be thrilled with T. R. Burnett on the ridge of the Ringstrid, or rejoice with W. G. Standring in the conquest of the Wetterhorn. We dare not risk eternal hostility by selecting any article as standing pre-eminent, but at the same time fairness and honesty compels us to admit that there is none that we could not cheerfully publish in our own *Journal*. Higher praise there is none. We would emphasise the helpfulness that may be gained from a perusal of its pages, for most

of the writers give hints from their experiences that others following may profit. The number is more than copiously illustrated, and, as stated, has the music of a new song by G. Basterfield, were we able to understand the music or the words. I am sure we should estimate the worth of that alone at the price of the number. If the Fell and Rock Climbing Club continue in this fashion, they will ensure for themselves the leadership in mountaineering literature.

A. M. M. W.

Cairngorm Club Journal, Vol. XII., No. 70.

Mr G. Roy Symmers, under the heading "Some Rock Climbs on Lochnagar," describes minutely nineteen different climbs on the North Face; several of these being new ascents under the author's leadership and a few still awaiting conquest. The account is illustrated by diagram, and will be extremely useful to climbers seeking fresh honours on Lochnagar. Mr J. A. Parker, during his trip round the world, managed to put in a climb in Japan, and an account of his ascent of Kamiyama in the Hakone Mountains appears in the *Journal*. Another article of interest is "The Glen Doll Right-of-Way Case," by James Scrimgeour.

Vol. XII., No. 71.

An article on Ben Lawers and the neighbouring hills by Mr James M'Coss, written in guide-book style, should prove useful for those unacquainted with the district and who wish to ascend the hills. Mrs J. A. Wilson describes a walking tour, undertaken by herself and another lady (unnamed), from Inverey to Ballachulish unaided by mechanical transport, and thence over Corryarrick to Braemar partly assisted by train and bus. Their longest stretch in one day was from Kinloch Rannoch to Kingshouse, which is no mean performance for a mere male.

G. M. L.

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.



AN EARLY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB.

THE letter to Sir Walter Scott from Donald Campbell, which appeared in the present volume of the *Journal* at page 187, having been brought to the notice of the Duke of Argyll, His Grace writes as follows:—

“ I know nothing of Donald Campbell’s Club, but he is certainly the Donald Campbell who was tacksman in the 1820-30 period of Coileissan and other neighbouring sheep farms, viz., tenants to my Ardkinglass grandfather and great-grandfather. He was of the Drumsynie family, cadets of the Campbells of Carrick, who were old cadets of the Campbells of Ardkinglass who, in 1390-1420, branched off from the main stem of Argyll.”



SGOR NA H’ULAI DH AND BEINN FHIONNLAI DH.

On 20th April 1927 Messrs Corbett and Parker ascended these two hills from Clachaig. Crossing the River Coe by the bridge near the hotel, a S.W. course was struck across the marshy moor to a bridge across the Allt Fionn Ghleann, at the spot marked “ ford ” on the 1-inch map. From the latter a rough path and, finally, a fair road led to the houses at Gleann leac na-muidhe. From this point a S.E. course was made up the west side of Aonach Dubh a’ Ghlinne, the crest of which was reached at about 2,600 feet, and was followed to its southern end—Stob an Fhuarain (*c.* 3,160 feet). Rain and mist had been encountered at about 2,000 feet, and persisted more or less—usually more—for the rest of the day. From Stob an Fhuarain a short descent took the party to the foot of the peak of Sgòr na h’Ulaidh, up which an easy ridge led to the rocky excrescence which forms the summit, and where there was an indifferent cairn. The time was 1 o’clock, and after lunch had been taken in the lee of the rocks a short excursion was made to the west to make certain that the actual summit had been reached.

A south-easterly course was then laid off down the at first gradual and latterly steep shoulder of Sgòr na h’Ulaidh to the N.W. end of Meall a’ Bhuiridh, and from thence S.W. to the watershed at the

head of Glen Creran. Towards this watershed Beinn Fhionnlaidh throws out a steep rocky buttress, which, although broken up with grass ledges and gullies, was considered by us to be too intricate for the time available. We therefore turned the steeper part by traversing to the west and then climbing up easy but steep grass to the top of the buttress above the steep part. From here to the summit of the Beinn was a simple compass course due west for about 1,200 yards, the last part being along a fairly narrow ridge with snow in places. The cairn on the summit was reached at 3.30 P.M.

Now followed what might be called a rather pretty problem in compass work, viz., to reach the bealach between Sgòr na h'Ulaidh and Meall Lighiche, in dense mist over ground which was quite unknown to us. First we went due west for about 600 yards, so as to get to the assumed easy slope beyond the buttress called Caorach on the map, and then north till we reached the little lochs about 2,300 feet. From them we went east along the top of the ridge indicated on the map, with a wonderful gorge on our right, into which the streams on the north face of Beinn Fhionnlaidh, all in full flood, discharged with tremendous noise. Near the east end of the ridge we found a convenient grass slope, which led us down to the stream in the gorge on our right, and which was easily crossed, although in flood, about a quarter of a mile above its junction with the Creran and just where it emerged from the gorge. Still going east, the Creran itself was crossed at about 1,200 feet.

The scenery in this inner reach of Glen Creran is evidently of very high order, and we regretted that our views of it were restricted to occasional breaks in the mist. There are magnificent crags at the end of the shoulder by which we had descended.

Careful compass and aneroid work now took us to the bealach between Sgòr na h'Ulaidh and Meall Lighiche, which we crossed in thick mist, and shortly afterwards struck the head waters of the Allt na Muidhe, and so back to our motor at Clachaig, which was reached at 7 o'clock, just nine hours after we had left it in the morning.

J. A. PARKER.

PAPS OF JURA.

The coastguard officer whom we met at Port Askaig had never heard of anyone climbing the Paps of Jura. As he appeared to be still of military age, and the last reference to this beautiful group of mountains in the *S.M.C. Journal* was in 1908, this was perhaps excusable, but I wonder whether there is any other mountain in Scotland important enough to appear in the school-books of forty years ago which has been so long neglected by the S.M.C.

I had been favoured with clear weather during the crossing from West Loch Tarbert, and having examined the mountains both from

the east and the west with a pocket-telescope, I was able to select easy routes.

There is a ferry at Port Askaig consisting of a boat with a motor engine powerful enough to enable it to cross at any stage of the tide. I crossed in this at 9.30 A.M. on the first fine morning, and arranged for the boatman to bring me back at 7 P.M. The double trip cost 6s.

The flat land near the coast is very boggy, but as you go inland it becomes drier. I skirted round the west sides of Beinn a' Chaolais and Beinn an Oir until I reached the west ridge of the latter mountain and could see Loch an Oir. This ridge offered an easy slope of grass and loose stones, well below the scree angle, which led to a dip in the summit ridge of Beinn an Oir a little north of the cairn (2,571). In this dip were the ruins of two substantial huts. The grass slope continued down the east side of the mountain and afforded an easy route to the col between it and Beinn Shiantaidh.

So far as I could see, the only side of Beinn Shiantaidh which was less steep than scree was the ridge immediately in front of me, and I both ascended and returned by this route.

The day had been fine so far, but hazy in the distance, and the best part of the view from each pap consisted of the other two paps. In the case of Beinn an Oir and Beinn a' Chaolais the steepest sides of the mountains face one another round the head of the Na Garbhlochanan corrie.

Coming down Beinn Shiantaidh I dropped down to the 950-foot contour in Gleann an t' Siob, so as to avoid the rocks of Beinn an Oir, and kept well to the left, ascending Beinn a' Chaolais by the ridge which formed the left-hand skyline when seen from Beinn an Oir. As I did so, clouds blew in from the west, and the crossing of Beinn a' Chaolais was effected with the aid of a compass. No difficulties were encountered, and a south-west line from the summit brought me back to daylight near the foot of Lochan Gleann Astaile.

J. ROOKE CORBETT.

ELECTRIC STORMS.

Archibald C. Smith, from the Lorn Hotel, Oban, writes:—

I am not a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, but get the *Club Journal*. I shall be glad to know if, from the following information and from your experience in climbing, you can confirm my explanation of the phenomenon we experienced on 3rd May 1931.

A friend and I were on Cruachan (Taynuilt Peak, 3,611) on 3rd May. When on the peak, snow fell for about fifteen minutes and, simultaneously with the snow, the atmosphere became charged with a loud buzzing and crackling sound. This was accompanied by an acute tingling and pin-pricking sensation on the face and hands, and most particularly on the hair. The sensation ceased with the

snow stopping. There was then a loud peal of thunder coming from the Port Sonachan (Loch Awe) direction.

We were of opinion that this state was set up by a current of electrically charged atmosphere, induced probably by the snow fall. I have never had a similar experience while climbing. You have no doubt experienced something similar often, and I should be much obliged to hear from you at convenience. I regret troubling you about what is apparently trifling, but I am rather anxious to know more of it.

Commenting on this, H. MacRobert observes:—

These electrical storms are not uncommon on the Scottish Mountains. They usually occur during snow or hail storms. The ice axes of a party hiss and buzz with the electric discharge, and occasionally small stones or anything projecting from the ground make a rustling noise like wind. The electric storm is also felt on the hands and face, and hair stands on end. Unless very pronounced there is no danger in these disturbances, but sometimes in the Alps the storm is so violent as to cause danger to life. In such cases ice axes or anything of that nature are abandoned for the time being, and ridges or prominent parts of the mountain are left for the shelter of gullies or corries.

Reporting a climb on the Buttress of Sgoran Dubh, A. L. Cram mentions a similar experience:—

At the beginning of last May the writer found himself, in company with E. Maconochie, London (non-member), once more at the foot of these attractive cliffs. A route was prospected up the unclimbed northern portion of the buttress. A long vegetable chimney was found to split the face, and this was followed until a snow shower enforced retreat. Without snow the arête on the right should be less greasily followed. The crux of the climb seems to lie in overcoming the slabs above the chimney.

Following on this reverse, the southern portion of the buttress gave a long and interesting climb. Instead of traversing to the left, below the impending slabs, as advised in the "*Cairngorm Guide*," an unmistakable cleft was overcome by the rough texture of the granite. There was much snow on the rocks, and this was being constantly added to by heavy showers. We were impressed by the severe lines and massive beauty of the upper ridge portion.

On the following day we ascended the Fiacail Ridge of Cairngorm, almost invisible beneath incoherent snow. At Cairn Lochain our axes commenced to fizz and crackle, the sound increasing when the point was held upwards above the head. A hasty glistade failed to banish the noises, which did not disappear until we were below 3,000 feet. The weather consisted of frequent snow showers alternating with very hot sunshine. The noises were loud, continuous, and resembled "morse" signals.

BEN ALDER.

H. and J. MacRobert, after camping on the shores of Loch Rannoch overnight on 18th July 1931, had a good day on Ben Alder on the 19th. Advantage was taken of the new road near the west end of Loch Rannoch to the south-west end of Loch Ericht as extended by the recent operations. The road, which is rough but passable, reaches a point about 5 miles from the shepherd's cottage at the foot of Ben Alder. Excellent views were obtained all round. It is of interest that a small inn has been opened at Rannoch Station, containing about four rooms. The proprietor is A. Cameron, The Store, Kinloch Rannoch.

THE STRATH GLASS GLENS.

The following notes of apparent errors in Munro's Tables were made by Andrews (Perth Juniors) and myself in the course of a short stay at Glenaffric Hotel, Cannich, at the end of June 1930.

1. On 28th June we went up Carn nan Gobhar from Glen Cannich and went along the ridge westwards over Sgurr na Lapaich, along the whole length of An Riabhachan, then over An Socach and back to the car via Coire Mhaim and Benula. We were both absolutely clear that Note 8 on page 127 of the "Guide" against An Riabhachan is incorrect, the real summit being the Ordnance 3,696-foot point where the larger cairn is built, and not the top on the county boundary where there is a smaller cairn. We both had aneroids and we agreed that the county boundary point was approximately 15 to 20 feet lower than the 3,696 point.

The county boundary cairn is at the extreme east end of the mountain at the point where the boundary leaves the main ridge and turns north along and down a transverse shoulder which forms a minor watershed. The ridge of An Riabhachan over 3,250 feet is 2 miles long, the east end giving an almost level walk of $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles, with a magnificent prospect (if visible) on either side.

It might be noted that previous parties crossing this hill seemed to have had no doubt as to the 3,696 point being the summit. See *Journal*, Vol. XI., pp. 141 and 358.

2. On 29th June we did all the Munros and tops on the ridge between Glens Cannich and Affric, beginning with Toll Creagach, as far as Mam Sodhail, then returning over Stob Coire Lochan and Beinn Fhionnlaidh to the car at the Lodge. We were quite clear that the height given in the Tables for Tom a' Choinich Beag, 3,450 feet, is undoubtedly wrong if the figure of 3,443 for An Leth-Chreag is correct. An Leth-Chreag is certainly 50 feet higher than Tom a' Choinich Beag. We did not, unfortunately, reset our aneroids on the summit of Tom a' Choinich, so that we cannot estimate the absolute heights of the two subsidiary tops, but leaving An Leth-Chreag at 3,443 Tom a' Choinich Beag would be approximately

not more than 3,390. Note 4 on page 126 of the "Guide" gives Sir Hugh Munro's estimate as 3,325, which is probably a little low.

3. On 2nd July we spent some time doing the Creag a' Choir' Aird ridge from end to end in clear weather, and decided that the Tables are somewhat defective as regards this hill. The south end of the ridge is a broad hummocky plateau, but the highest point of it is clearly lower than the highest point of the northern end of the ridge, which is not at the 3,188-foot cairn but rather less than half a mile south of the cairn—in the new 1-inch map there is a small 3,150 contour line at the point. The so-called East Top (3,058) has, further, no claim whatever to be considered as a top as the col between it and the 3,188 point is only about 15 to 20 feet lower than the East Top, so that the latter should be deleted as only a shoulder (in any case the highest point on this shoulder is not east-north-east of the north top, but north-east). The col between the real summit and the 3,188-foot point we made about 3,025 feet, so that it is doubtful whether the North Top should be reckoned a separate top apart from the real summit or not. On the south ridge Dr Corner's three points given in Note 2 on page 126 of the Tables could not be identified at the distances noted, but the three highest points we passed from south to north we made approximately 3,160, 3,190, and 3,175 feet, the col to the north being 2,970 feet, the highest point of the mountain 3,215 feet, and the next col 3,025 feet (as already noted).

J. Dow.

NOTE ON THE ABOVE.

The increase in the An Riabhachan height was made on the faith of the 3,700-foot contour given on the newly issued $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch O.S. map, corroborated by the hill-shading in the 1-in., which showed little or no dip to the county boundary cairn, but a decided rise up to it. There cannot be more than 10 feet difference between the two tops, as the 6-inch O.S. gives a 3,686 point on the boundary—just before the sharp angle, presumably the position of the cairn. I suspect it is another case of the shading being at fault (discussed in the last number), as the two shadings are very similar on Riabhachan and Beinn nan Oighreag.

On the other questions I can offer no opinion, not knowing the hills, but I was very dubious of Creag a' Choir' Aird as revised by Munro himself. On turning up his Card Index, the following are his notes:—

"Creag a' Choir' Aird, E. Top. Is this a top?"

"Ridge S. of Creag a' Choir' Aird. 3,210 app. (3,000). Now separate mountain. $\frac{1}{2}$ mile S. of Creag a' Choir' Aird. H.T.M. measurement. *N.B.*—Examine this ridge carefully on 6-inch map. Part of ridge is locally called Meall Garbh, and I made it 3,150."

"Tom a' Choinich Beag, 3,450 (app.) (3,250). I made this height 3,325."

J. GALL INGLIS.

THE NATIONAL PARK IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

We are indebted to Mr William Leavis, Johnson's Court, London, for the following paragraph reporting a proposal to establish a National Park in Czechoslovakia :—

“ A bill is to be placed before the Czechoslovak Parliament containing a plan whereby a considerable part of the territory of the High Tatra region, close to the Czechoslovak-Polish frontiers, is to be converted into a national natural preserve. The park will comprise a large portion of land in the High Tatra, and will extend to the territory of the Liptovské Hole as far as the Orava district.

“ The object is to preserve an important part of the mountains in an unspoiled form, to develop it into a centre of an intense tourist traffic, to make of it a ground for scientific research in all the important branches of the natural and geographical sciences, and at the same time to keep it available as rationalised forest, meadow, and game cultivations.

“ To avoid any curtailment of the rights of the inhabitants, the border line would be drawn so as to coincide with the forest demarcation frontier.

“ The organisation and the administration of the preserve will be entrusted to a board of curators, with a director at its head. The director would most probably be the manager of the State forests and estates of the district, and he would reside at the town of Liptovské Hradok, in eastern Slovakia. The National Park of the High Tatra region will be of particular interest to botanists and to natural science students generally.”

THE CHASM OF BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR.

The only recorded ascent of the Chasm was that made in April 1922 (*S.M.C.J.*, Vol. XVI., p. 62) by R. F. Stobart and Mr and Mrs Odell.

In July 1930, W. B. Speirs, J. G. Robinson, and G. F. Todd ascended as far as Pitch 8, the climb occupying five hours. Wet weather prevented any further attempts till 9th August 1931, when two parties attempted the ascent. W. B. Speirs and J. G. Robinson reached the top of Pitch 10, and R. R. Elton, D. W. Robinson, and G. R. Speirs reached the foot of Pitch 8, both parties taking five hours. On 23rd August 1931, W. B. and G. R. Speirs reached the top of Pitch 14, and owing to the experience gained during the previous attempts, the time taken was only three and a half hours. Finally, on 30th August 1931, J. G. Robinson and I. G. Jack made the complete ascent, which occupied seven hours, the last pitch requiring three hours before it was overcome.

The Chasm is the deep cut on the Glen Etive face of Stob Dearg, and is bounded on each side by cliffs of from 50 to 100 feet high. The

floor is like a gigantic staircase with steps of from 30 to 120 feet high, and between each step is a level place covered with gravel. The rock is reliable throughout, as, owing to its steepness, all loose stuff is removed by the water.

Pitch 1.—This is a short pitch, but the climber is forced in by a large chockstone of doubtful security, and speed is necessary to avoid a soaking.

Pitch 2.—This pitch is also short, and the route lies up a shallow gully between the large chockstone and the north wall.

Pitches 3 and 4.—The problem in the next two pitches is to circumvent the huge blocks which are jammed in the Chasm, with a cave underneath each. In the first one we ascended to the back of the cave, then traversed out to the right and up on the north wall, keeping close to the block. Stobart's party turned this pitch by keeping to the grass on the north wall.

In the second case we were unable to make a route on either side of the block, although something might be made of the south wall near the block. We turned the difficulty by ascending the steep grass on the north wall, then round an awkward corner to the top of the block.

Pitch 5.—This pitch was climbed on the south side of the waterfall. It is steep, and the holds are not very satisfactory. The landing is on grass, and a run out of 100 feet is necessary to reach a satisfactory stance to bring up the rest of the party. This is the pitch of red slabby rock mentioned by Stobart.

There are two short easy pitches here, one of which is very wet, and just above them a secondary gully comes in on the south side of the Chasm.

Pitch 6.—A ledge running upwards to our right on the pinnacle dividing the two gullies led us to the top of a steep pitch of rotten rock which Stobart's party climbed by the shallow gully on the north side of the waterfall. We crossed the water, negotiated an awkward corner, and joined the upper part of the gully, which was followed to the top.

Pitch 7.—We recrossed the stream to the south side and ascended an arête about 50 feet high, bounded on the one side by a shallow gully and on the other by a waterfall. It is steep, but the holds are good. The last party climbed the waterfall direct, the stream being practically dry.

The Chasm is crossed here by a trap dyke, and this is about the only place where an escape is possible on the north side.

Pitch 8.—The stream comes over in a waterfall about 100 feet high, and the route lies up a very shallow gully on the north side of the waterfall. The first 30 feet are steep, but the rock is good, and here there is a good hitch where two can stand together. The next 70 feet are as steep and the rock is interspersed with vegetation, and even after dry weather is damp in places. From the hitch a traverse was made to the left for about 6 feet, then good rock was followed for about 30 feet to where there is a hitch which was used on our first ascent. As it does not look too secure and the leader has

to move up to allow the second man to come in, it was not used on the latter occasions, but the leader went up the remaining 40 feet to the top of the pitch before bringing up the second man. The finish is rather awkward, as a traverse has to be made across very steep rocks on to grass which leads to the lip of the waterfall.

Pitch 9.—The stream was crossed just above the waterfall, and the leader climbed up about 10 feet on the south wall, then along a ledge which peters out just at a small waterfall. The leader, therefore, climbed straight up to a good hitch, where he belayed the second man while he negotiated the balance step across to the lip of the small waterfall. The leader then followed by the same route.

Several short easy pitches led from here to—

Pitch 10.—This pitch consists of a cave problem, and was surmounted by Stobart's party by means of combined tactics. It seemed to us that they must have been assisted by snow at the foot, as the first 12 feet are quite smooth and the cave is too wide to back up. We therefore turned the pitch by climbing the buttress on the south side of the Chasm.

The next section of the climb is enclosed by steep walls about 100 feet high on each side, and there is only one escape, which is on the south wall just above Pitch 12. The stream is now very small, and the chockstones in the bed can be utilised as holds.

Pitch 11.—This pitch was climbed chiefly by back and knee.

Pitch 12.—The climb was commenced on the north wall, and for the first 10 feet the holds are small. The remainder of the climb was up the actual watercourse, and the final hold is under water except in very dry weather.

Pitch 13.—This pitch is short and easy.

Pitch 14.—The problem here is to surmount a large block jammed in the Chasm. The leader climbed up under the block, then out to the right on the north wall on small holds. There is a very good hold at the back of the block, and an undercut hold for the right hand under the block was used for the last pull up to reach this hold.

Pitch 15.—This pitch is called the "Devil's Cauldron," and is about 200 feet in height. The route throughout was up the actual watercourse, and was considerably more difficult than anything yet encountered. Under any but the driest conditions, this pitch would be impossible.* For the first 80 feet, progress can be made by wedging one foot in a narrow crack at the back of the watercourse and using small chockstones as hand-holds. About 70 feet up it was deemed advisable for the leader to unrope and thread it through behind a small chockstone, as the next 10 feet to the first platform are rather exposed. Here the second man joined the leader and belayed him from the back of a small cave. The next 15 feet proved the real crux

* Owing to the icy conditions prevailing at the time, Stobart's party turned this pitch by means of a 120-foot chimney on the south wall.

of the climb. It consists of a very narrow chimney which is completely closed in at the top. The leader moved slowly up by wedging the knee and heel in the chimney, till it was possible to reach an excellent foothold well out on the right. Once this was reached, good hand-holds were found for pulling oneself on to the second platform. From here there are still two small chockstones to be surmounted. The first one has a through route, and is comparatively easy. The 10 feet separating the two chockstones was surmounted by back and foot, and was again rather exposed. Once on top of the second chockstone all difficulty ceases, and easy scrambling leads one clear of the gully.

W. B. SPEIRS.

BENBEOCH (1,521 feet).

Having occasion to spend a week at Dalmellington, I noticed from the New Cumnock road a row of cliffs on the south-east face of this little hill. A few days later three of us climbed the hill and visited the "craig" on our way down. We discovered 200 or 300 yards of excellent rock (possibly basalt, but I am no geologist) on an average from 50 to 80 feet in height. Hexagonal columns leant against the hill-face, providing fine little chimneys in the spaces between columns. Having neither rope nor hobnails, we confined our energies to the easiest route midway along the craig with an amusing little chockstone pitch half-way up, but any party having occasion to visit the district should certainly go provided with rope and boots and do some exploring. There will be a certain amount of "gardening" to do, but the underlying holds were exceptionally sound wherever we tried them.

E. C. THOMSON.

THE CLACHAIG GULLY.

This gully runs from Clachaig Inn up to the col on the west side of Sgor nam Fiannaidh. The actual climbing commences at a height of about 700 feet, and from that point to the finish at 2,500 feet there is no escape on the west wall. The east wall at first is not so forbidding, but above 1,300 feet, where a subsidiary gully joins carrying more water than the main one, the sides are steep and slabby and egress would be difficult. The rock in the actual stream bed is clean, but owing to its friable nature it is somewhat treacherous.

On 27th September 1931 my brother and I attempted the ascent after a long period of dry weather, but in spite of this there was a fair flow of water which resulted in a complete soaking on several occasions. The climbing was not very difficult at first, and in one and a half hours we reached the subsidiary gully at about 1,300 feet.

Here we were confronted by a steep pitch covered with wet moss, which we tried to turn on the east wall by ascending the slabs. We managed to reach a point at the same level as the top of the pitch, but it was not possible to traverse into the gully again. We therefore joined the subsidiary gully and ascended it for about 200 feet, and again attempted to rejoin the main gully, but without success. We continued up the hillside on the east of the main gully to 2,500 feet, where we crossed and came down the west side. The upper portion contains several formidable-looking pitches, and owing to the steepness of the walls the whole 1,400 feet would have to be ascended up the bed of the stream. W. B. SPEIRS.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—This gully was attempted by Messrs Collie, Solly, and Collier in March 1894, but they also were forced into the subsidiary gully and did not complete the climb.

S.M.C. ABROAD.

The Editor regrets he has had to omit some of Mr Vandeleur's interesting account of his visit to the Himalayas from which the following is excerpted :—

Last autumn I was able to realise an ambition, cherished for many years, to see (not climb!) the world's highest mountains. Leaving England on 25th September, I embarked on the evening of the 26th at Marseilles, on the P. & O. s.s. "Narkunda," and after a pleasant but not eventful voyage, landed at Bombay on 9th October.

Crossing over to Calcutta, we left there on the 12th by train for Darjeeling. The summit of the line is reached at Ghum (7,407 feet), after which the train runs downhill for a few hundred feet to Darjeeling, where we arrived soon after midday. There was no sign of the Snows. This was 13th October. I was told that the 15th was the "official" date for the clear weather to set in, but that it could not be relied upon to be punctual! This was a great disappointment, as I had been led to believe that October was *the* month for Darjeeling. Let others take warning from my experience, and note that November is the month when one may count on clear weather. Then, I believe, the great mountains are continually visible.

The morning after my arrival, however, was gloriously clear, and I saw the Kangchenjunga group to perfection. It is a view that takes one's breath, no matter how often one may have studied and pictured it to oneself beforehand.

On 19th October I left Darjeeling with a Major Ivan Simson, of the Royal Engineers, to make the excursion to Sandakphu and

Phalut, on the Nepalese frontier, to see Everest. In arranging this trip we received much kind help from Lieut.-Col. H. W. Tobin, D.S.O., the Darjeeling Secretary of the Himalayan Club, who played such a prominent part in the last Kangchenjunga expedition.

Staying overnight at Tonglu Bungalow, we were greeted next morning by a wonderful view of Kangchenjunga and his attendant peaks. Kangchenjunga still towered 18,000 feet above us, and is truly a most marvellous monster. Equally fine, perhaps, is Jannu (25,300 feet), the Matterhorn of the group, which stands out to the left of Kangchenjunga. This glorious view was before us during the early part of our day's march, but about 10 o'clock became completely hidden by the usual mists. From Tonglu to Sandakphu is a walk of 14 or 15 miles. From 10,000 feet one drops to 8,600, and eventually rises to 11,900, but there are innumerable minor "ups and downs," so it is a fairly laborious walk.

From Sandakphu next morning we again saw the Kangchenjunga group, and also the Everest group, much further west. Every peak was quite clear except Everest itself, which had a wisp of cloud obstinately clinging to the summit and obscuring it. This appears to be a characteristic of Everest when the wind is in a certain quarter. From Sandakphu the north-east ridge and shoulder are clearly seen. Everest itself, however, is dwarfed by the great peak of Makalu (27,850 feet), which stands just to the right of it, and nearer, and which has often been mistaken for Everest. Everest is 89 miles from Sandakphu, Makalu 77. To the left of Everest appears the South Peak ("Lhotse" of the Everest expeditions), the southern face of which is a terrific precipice of black rock, untold thousands of feet in height, possibly the greatest approximately sheer drop in the world. Doubtless there is a Nepalese name for this most remarkable peak.

From Sandakphu to Phalut (c. 11,800 feet) is a pleasant walk of about 12 miles, with many short ascents and descents. In this region there are large numbers of fir trees, many of which, however, are dead. Rhododendrons, too, are much in evidence. Next morning was cloudy, so we abandoned our intention of pushing on to Singaleela, a point two or three miles farther along the ridge. Fortunately, we had booked accommodation for two nights at Phalut, and on the second morning we enjoyed a perfect view. The Phalut view is superior, on the whole, to that from Sandakphu, though Everest (85 miles distant) is partly hidden by Makalu. Far away in the east a great conical peak towered high above its fellows. It was probably Chomolhari (23,930 feet). A feature of these early morning views is always the "sea of cloud," which lies over the foothills of Nepal and Sikkim.

C. R. P. VANDELEUR.

During the latter part of July, I was at Pralognan, a good climbing centre in Southern Savoy. Owing to unsettled weather, I only accomplished two high ascents—the Dôme de Chasseforêt (11,802 feet) and the Grande Casse (12,668 feet). The former is an easy glacier expedition, with a fine panorama from the summit. The latter is a really fine mountain, the highest in the district. We climbed it in uncertain weather.

From Pralognan I crossed the Little St Bernard by motor to Courmayeur, whence I ascended Mont Blanc by the Dôme route. One place on the Dôme glacier was almost impassable this year, but a low ice cliff, over the top of which a rope was thrown, eventually proved to be the solution of the problem, after a delay of about two hours. Above the Col du Dôme we experienced a cold (and at times strong) wind, with mist. We reached the summit at 11 o'clock, having taken nine hours from the hut. As we did not regain the hut till after 4 o'clock, a second night there was necessary.

I also made several minor ascents alone in the Pralognan and Courmayeur districts. At Pralognan I had the pleasure of meeting our member, J. Y. Macdonald.

C. R. P. VANDELEUR.

G. R. Speirs writes as follows :—

In May of this year, while I was with the 1st Minesweeper Flotilla in Norwegian waters, I was fortunate in being able to make several expeditions among the hills.

One of the places visited was Odda, at the head of the Sör Fjord, which is a small industrial town situated among steep mountains and bearing a marked resemblance to Kinlochleven. Having observed a large glacier not far from the town, I took the first opportunity of visiting it. To save time, I hired a motor for the first 8 kilometres, the latter part of the journey being up a beautiful dale with a rushing glacier stream in it. At the village of Buar the road stopped, and I set out on foot, following a footpath for about 1 kilometre to the glacier snout. In order to obtain a better view, I then turned up a grassy gully off the main valley and climbed steeply for about 1,500 feet. This opened out into a basin made by the great glacier plateau of Folgefond on one side and a little ridge on the other. The first top of this ridge was Eades Nuten, which I ascended, then continued along and arrived eventually at the higher top—Rokle Nuten (about 3,500 feet), from which an extensive view was enjoyed. There was still quite a lot of snow about, so that the scene was almost similar to one among our own mountains in early spring. I was greatly tempted to venture on to the main summit, but as I was alone, I did not feel justified in traversing the glacier, particularly as it was masked by new snow. The descent from here down to Odda by a very steep

path was rather difficult to follow, and several times when I strayed from it I found the descent barred by high cliffs, necessitating a traverse till the path was again found.

A week later while in Bergen I did a circuit of the hills to the north-east of the town. This range is about 2,000 feet in height, and rather resembles our border hills. There were about five tops in a distance of about 8 miles.

It is unfortunate that the journey to Norway is so expensive (about £14 return 1st class and £9 return 2nd class), for the passage takes only twenty-one hours from Newcastle, and anyone going there would be well rewarded with good climbing of a kind little more severe than in our own country, but with the added spice of higher cliffs, greater snowfields, and occasional glaciers.

A. L. Cram and A. R. Wilson, J.M.C.S., spent three weeks in Valais, camping and climbing. They report :—

We arrived at Sion, in the Rhone Valley, on 18th July, and travelling by car to Les Haudères, walked up the Arolla Valley to Satarme, where we camped. On the following day we traversed the Petites Dents de Veisivi, from the West Col to the Col de Zarmine. On the two days following snow fell almost to valley level, which prevented any attempt on the Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla. Camp was therefore transferred to Arolla. On 22nd July we made an attempt on the Dent Perroc. This notoriously loose peak, having greeted us with an immense rock avalanche, threw down stones all day. Owing to a late start and the pressing necessity of finding a route (reasonably) safe from these missiles, we were forced to turn back on the upper rocks, within 400 feet of the highest point, owing to lack of time. On the 23rd we went up to the Jenkins Refuge, and next morning traversed the Pigne d'Arolla to the Col de Serpentine. A height of 12,500 feet was reached on Mont Blanc de Cheillon (12,700 feet), but the final rock arête was reluctantly abandoned owing to oncoming bad weather. A return was made to Arolla over the Pas de Chèvres. On the 26th we went up to the Cabane de Bertol with Josef Georges as guide, climbing the Dent Blanche on the following morning by the Wandfluh Ridge. Much new snow was present, and the traverse of the grand gendarme, on the Ferpècle side, was heavily iced. It was the first ascent this year from Arolla or from the Bertol. Georges returned to Arolla that evening, but we remained to be defeated next day by a snowstorm on the Aiguille de la Za. On the 29th we recrossed the Pas de Chèvres to the Cabane de Dix, which we found very pleasant. Next day we reversed our former check by traversing Mont Blanc de Cheillon from the Col de Cheillon to the Col de

Serpentine, continuing on over the top of the Pigne d'Arolla to the Jenkins Refuge. The ascent of the West Ridge of Cheillon would have been laborious without crampons. Crossing some steep ice bulges, we gained the crest much nearer the Ruinette than is usual, and followed the ridge circumspectly owing to big cornices. The descent to the Jenkins through the Pigne ice-fall, in the heat of the afternoon, provided an anxious finish to a remarkably enjoyable day. Next morning we climbed Mont Collon by the N.N.W. Ridge, which is reminiscent of the Crowberry Ridge. We traversed over pinnacles to the south peak, but did not attempt to descend to the Col de L'Eveque on account of the frequent stone falls that appeared to sweep part of the route. We returned by the N.N.W. Ridge to Arolla via the Jenkins and the Glacier de Pièce. Late on the evening of 1st August we again went up to the Bertol Hut, making an ascent that was "lightning" in more ways than one owing to darkness and approaching thunderstorms. Again turned off the Za in the morning, we were confined to the hut for another day and night by snow and severe electric storms. On 3rd August a break in the weather permitted us to cross, late in the day, the Col d'Hérens to Zermatt. This was a fatiguing process, due to 8 inches of new snow. We apparently went off the route on Mont Miné, and were forced to negotiate considerable crevasses and descend a steep ice slope. We were informed by guides that the crevasses on the Stockje glacier were very wide this year, which was certainly the case. Next afternoon we went up to the Matterhorn Hut, which was full, and spent the night at the Belvedere Hotel—at a reduced rate. The Matterhorn was in bad condition with snow down to within 1,000 feet of the hut, but we were able to ascend and descend the Hornli Ridge. The "pent house roof" entertained us but poorly with new snow over ice. There was a good deal of snow, both new and old, everywhere over 13,000 feet, and much of the upper rock was iced. We were in mist during the descent from the Solvay Refuge to the hut. We descended to Zermatt that night and returned to Sion next morning, our plans on the Weisshorn shattered through Wilson being recalled to England. Despite rather changeable weather, we were able to carry out the major part of our programme. We found a climbing camp, although much more laborious than residence in an hotel, fascinating and undoubtedly more satisfying.

W. N. Ling, R. Corry, and P. J. H. Unna spent three weeks in the Zillertal and Hohe Tavern districts of the Austrian Tyrol in the latter part of July and beginning of August, along with J. W. Brown (non-member). The weather was unsettled and the last week definitely bad.

Starting from Mayrhofen they went up to the Dominikus Hut, and on the next day to the Furtschagl Hut, from which, the following

day, the Mösele was ascended. Crossing the Schonbichlerhorn, from which a fine view was obtained, they gained the Berliner Hut. A fine afternoon and evening were followed by twenty-four hours' heavy rain, with new snow not far above the hut, which put a stop to further climbing for a day or two; so the party returned to Mayrhofen, and from there moved on to Zell-am-See.

On 31st July they walked up to the Kursinger Hut in showery weather, and on 1st August ascended in fine weather the Gross Venediger, 12,008 feet. A pleasant day was spent crossing the Krimmltor to Krimml and on to Zell-am-See. Corry then left for Cortina, where he traversed the Kleine Zinne from the north, and had a good climb on Tofana.

The rest of the party went up to Moserboden, and from the Heinrich Schwaiger Hut climbed the Grosses Wiesbachhorn, Bratschenkopf, and Glockerin, five tops in all, down to the Oberwalder Hut below the Gross Glockner—a splendid day, with fine views.

Next morning was stormy and misty, and after crossing the Riffitor on the way back to Moserboden, the party came in for a thunderstorm with heavy rain, and got very wet.

Next day, an off day, was fine and very enjoyable. The following morning they set off to cross the Grieskogel and Hoch Eiser to the Rudolf Hut, but were driven back by bad weather to Moserboden. There followed thirty-six hours of rain, with snow down to 5,000 feet, and as their time was nearly up, they crossed to the Krefelder Hut and down to Zell-am-See whence, after a visit to Salzburg, the party returned to England.

It is a charming district, with beautiful valleys, and mountains suitable for a veteran party, whose average age exceeds threescore ! It was disappointing that so many projected ascents were prevented by the weather.

E. C. Thomson writes :—

My wife and I spent three weeks in Switzerland this summer. We arrived at Arosa on 14th June and remained there until the 22nd. We climbed the Aroser Rothorn, 9,790 feet, and Aroser Weisshorn, 8,710 feet. We also attempted the Thiejerflüh, 9,140 feet, from the Furka Pass, but did not leave ourselves enough time to complete the ascent. Had we been content to go right round to the col leading to the N.E. ridge, we should probably have got up all right, but in endeavouring to cut up loose screes in a short cut we found some very loose rock to be more dangerous than it had looked from below, and retreated. There are no glaciers in this district, and the snow condition was very similar to a good Scottish Easter in central Inverness-shire. Glissading conditions were excellent on all the

Rothorn group. We then went to Zermatt on the 23rd, and next day walked up the very laborious Unter Rothorn, 10,190 feet, for our first close view of the big peaks. The weather disappointed us, and we returned in sheets of rain. On the 27th, in ideal weather, we climbed the Breithorn, 13,685 feet, with Emil Perren as guide. He is an excellent guide, one of the coming men, I should say, and, speaking good English, is a most likeable companion. We could not have engaged him for such an easy climb as the Breithorn any later in the season. We returned home by Geneva after a day at Argentière.

TWO MOUNTAINEERING MAXIMS.

1	2	3	4		5	6		7		8	9	10	11	
12	13		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		22	23	24
25	26		27	28	29	30		31	32	33	34			
35	36	37	38	39	40		41	42	43	44		45	46	
47	48	49		50	51	52		53	54	55		56	57	58
60	61	62		63	64		65	66	67		68	69	70	71
					73	74	75							
76	77	78	79	80		81	82	83	84	85	86		87	88
89	90	91	92	93	94	95		96	97	98	99		100	101
102	103	104	105	106	107	108		109	110	111	112	113	114	115
116	117		118	119	120	121	122		123	124	125	126		
127	128	129	130	131		132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	

HOW TO SOLVE THIS PUZZLE.

Take first clue: 1, 5, 8, 6, Cloud.

The answer is Mist. Put M in square 1

I	”	”	5
S	”	”	8
T	”	”	6

and so on with other clues. Do not worry if a square is occupied already. The letter required will be there. On solution, two mountaineering maxims will be read from left to right.

SQUARE NOS.

1, 5, 8, 6.
 2, 56, 68, 17, 44, 84.
 109, 16, 19, 81, 134, 130, 132, 129.
 138, 117, 111, 33.
 121, 126, 55, 113, 139, 90, 124, 51.
 60, 49, 114, 128, 32.
 112, 133, 74, 65, 107, 108.
 54, 61, 18.
 110, 137, 21, 34, 47, 1, 67, 75, 83.
 66, 15, 57, 92, 131, 106, 35.
 76, 116, 91, 86, 80.
 11, 9, 123, 28, 70.
 27, 52, 42, 41, 98, 120, 119.
 93, 37, 24.
 25, 94, 3, 83, 114.
 22, 23, 38, 39.
 29, 5, 18, 82.
 13, 12, 10, 36.
 31, 20, 14, 7, 45, 62.
 46, 50, 89, 96.
 40, 53, 48, 49, 59.
 72, 43, 73, 101.
 102, 103, 69, 30.
 95, 92, 63, 127.
 26, 104, 105, 118.
 77, 39, 135, 100, 136, 125.
 64, 78, 79, 85.
 58, 71, 87, 97, 98.
 88, 111, 115, 122.
 99, 12, 4.

CLUES.

Cloud.
 Pertains to high mountains.
 A good way of coming down a snow slope.
 Water crystals.
 A mountain above Ballachulish.
 A well-known original member.
 A meet season.
 An ugly old woman.
 Connected with Magna Carta.
 Drunk at dinner.
 Made by the fire.
 A famous ridge.
 Numerous.
 A great many.
 Sign.
 Not any.
 Not far away.
 Fortress.
 3,524 feet.
 Speedy.
 Fat.
 365 days.
 Cape.
 The Kiddies' Club in the *Daily Mirror*.
 A kind of grain.
 Answer back.
 Achievement.
 English river.
 Mists.
 Enemy.

THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH SECTIONS.

EASTER MEET, 1931—DALWHINNIE.

FOR the Easter Meet, Dalwhinnie was chosen as the rendezvous, but a considerable number of members sought their sport further afield, the representation at Dalwhinnie being reduced to twelve members, viz. :—

Members.—W. J. C. Ainslie, W. L. Coats, D. T. Gibson, W. P. Lindsay, W. F. M'Allum, J. M'Laren, Maclay, F. C. M'Leod, R. Neill, Waddington, C. M. Woodburn, and N. S. Woodburn.

Guest.—M. Gillies.

The weather conditions, with the exception perhaps of Saturday, were very pleasant. Friday was warm and sunny, but Saturday dull and much colder, with some blizzards, one of particular severity in the course of the afternoon proving somewhat trying to climbers, particularly the Ben Alder party. Some snow fell during Saturday night, but vanished very quickly up to about 2,000 feet in the warm sunshine of Sunday forenoon. Except for one or two very short sleety showers on Sunday afternoon, the remainder of the Meet was spent under the warm benevolence of King Sol, and with only a gentle breeze from the S.W., Monday was quite equal to a fine summer day. Snow was scarce, even on the tops, and the conditions, though very pleasant, gave little scope for the use of either ice axe or ski.

Friday, 3rd April.—Ainslie and Waddington arrived in the morning and, together with Maclay, the first arrival on the previous evening, spent the day on Carn na Caim, A'Bhuidheanach, and Glas Mheall. M'Allum and Gibson, arriving later in the day in company with M. Gillies, who broke his journey north to spend the day

with them, contented themselves with Carn na Caim. M'Laren and Lindsay travelled up with the same train to Dalnaspidal, where they went in search of ski-ing on the hills to the west, but were not very fortunate, and came in by the evening train.

Saturday, 4th April.—Having motored up in the morning from Pitlochry, the brothers Woodburn bagged the four Munros to the east of Loch Ericht. The only bird to catch the early morning worm at Buchanan Street that day was Neill, who arrived in time to pay a solo visit to Meall na Cuaich. M'Leod spent the early hours of Saturday morning, till the next train left, looking for new climbs in the vicinity of Buchanan Street Station—so far no first ascents have been reported—while Coats brought up the rear in the afternoon train. In bed that night, on the top story and at the far end of the corridor, the remembrance of the derelict hotel near the station gave the last-mentioned member a few uneasy thoughts till he recollected that the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch manilla was in the bedroom—not in the hall. It is understood that the rope was again in the bedroom the following night.

Seven members had planned an expedition to Ben Alder, but the boatman who was to have conveyed them to the far end of the loch failed to turn up, and they decided to do the whole journey on foot. Lindsay, Gibson, and M'Laren eventually turned back without tackling the main objective, but the other four made the ascent of Beinn Bheoil and then continued on to Ben Alder, reaching the summit about 4 P.M., six hours going from the north end of Loch Ericht and the final ascent made in the teeth of a blizzard. Well down in the corrie, on the way back, Maclay was suddenly overtaken by an illness which necessitated a night on the hill. Waddington elected to remain with him, while Ainslie and M'Allum pushed on to Ben Alder Lodge for help. Mr Findlay Mackintosh, the deerstalker, immediately set off in a heavy snowstorm, and after locating the stranded men about 1 A.M., returned to Dalwhinnie, where he recruited a rescue party composed of four men from the sawmill and several members of the Club, who were already turning

out for a search. Maclay was eventually brought back safely to Dalwhinnie on Sunday forenoon, thanks very largely to the strenuous and prompt efforts of Mr Mackintosh. This action, it is gratifying to note, was subsequently recognised in a tangible way by the Carnegie Trust.

Later in the day, Lindsay and M'Laren visited Meall na Cuaich. Ainslie left by the evening train, and Gibson set off the following morning on foot for Laggan.

Monday, 6th April.—Two parties spent an easy day on Meall na Cuaich and Geal-Charn respectively, the latter party claiming to have bathed in Loch Ericht, and all returning in time for the general debacle by the 6.5 P.M. train south. Incidentally it was discovered that while the scheduled connection reaches Glasgow at 12.15 A.M., the L. M. & S. section of the 6.5 P.M. from Dalwhinnie stops at Coatbridge (*en route* for London) at 10.15 P.M., and from Coatbridge, of course, there is a frequent bus service ("S.M.T." and "Midland"), taking about thirty minutes to Glasgow.

Waddington and Neill, in paying a visit to Geal-Charn and his neighbours, struck a gully which gave them several hours' work and incidentally prevented their return to the hotel till late on Monday evening, so that it was the following morning before they—the rearguard—arrived in Glasgow.

Apart from the unfortunate incident on Ben Alder, the only cause for regret was that better snow conditions did not exist. But what was lacking in this respect was made up for by one or two glorious days on the hills, such as make one more than ever glad to be alive; if we did not have much opportunity to show ourselves true sons of Abraham, we could at least claim spiritual kinship with "stout Cortez."

THE BEN ALDER INCIDENT.

Considerable publicity was given to the unfortunate experience undergone by Maclay and others when climbing Ben Alder in April last. The information which appeared in the Press at the time was in certain respects erroneous,

and as it is desirable to have an authentic record of the incident, the following narrative has been prepared by those concerned.

Seven members had planned an expedition to Ben Alder, and arranged for a motor-boat to transport them to the far end of Loch Ericht. Unfortunately the boatman failed to turn up, and rather than forego the climb, the party decided to walk the fourteen odd miles to the foot of the mountain. Before they had covered the full distance, Lindsay, M'Laren, and Gibson decided not to attempt the climb, although the latter two actually explored the corrie on the N.W. side of Ben Alder before turning back.

Waddington, Ainslie, M'Allum, and Maclay carried on until abreast of Beinn Bheoil, which they first climbed, and then went on to the summit of Ben Alder via the southern shoulder. In spite of a bad blizzard on the way up, the party had covered a distance of 12 to 14 miles on the level, and then climbed the two peaks, all within six hours.

During the descent into the corrie they found themselves confronted with a sheer drop, and had to make a wider detour, necessitating climbing back several hundred feet on to the shoulder, at a time when they were already beginning to feel somewhat tired from lack of a rest which, on account of the weather, was impossible until more sheltered ground was reached.

When they were practically out of the corrie and rounding the north end of Beinn Bheoil, Maclay suddenly became unwell and quite unable to proceed. He was carried to a somewhat sheltered spot, where Waddington remained with him, while M'Allum, followed by Ainslie, set off to Ben Alder Lodge for assistance. On hearing their story, the stalker, Mr Finlay Mackintosh, in spite of the fact that he had been up all the previous night, immediately took the pony, with a supply of coats and beverages, and set off in the dark and in the teeth of a fierce blizzard in search of Waddington and Maclay, whom he succeeded in locating about 1 A.M. Maclay was too unwell even to be brought down on the pony. After giving him every possible attention and wrapping

him up very well, Mr Mackintosh accompanied Waddington back to the lodge and set off forthwith in his motor-boat for Dalwhinnie, to recruit a rescue party.

Those at the hotel, estimating that the party were not likely to be off the hill much before dark, after which there remained a distance of about fourteen miles to be covered, did not feel any great anxiety till about 11 P.M. By this time the blizzard was at its worst, and in view of the uncertainty as to what part of the hill the four might be on, it was decided to snatch a few hours' sleep and turn out with the first sign of daylight. When Mr Mackintosh arrived they were just preparing to start. Neill and the Woodburn brothers, together with four volunteers from the sawmill, returned with Mr Mackintosh in the motor-boat to the most convenient point on the lochside, and succeeded in bringing Maclay safely down the hillside on a stretcher, thence by motor-boat to Dalwhinnie, where the doctor already awaited him, and every preparation had been made by the hotel proprietor for his comfort.

Maclay, although very weak and hardly conscious, was comparatively warm and comfortable, even when the rescue party reached him about 8 A.M.—thanks very largely to the attention he had received from Mr Mackintosh earlier in the morning. Once in the boat and in the warmer morning air, Maclay speedily revived, and his safe arrival at Dalwhinnie brought much relief to all.

It is impossible to overestimate the debt due to Mr Mackintosh for the arduous and most heroic feat which he accomplished; in fact, it is probably not too much to say that his timely and self-sacrificing assistance was the means of saving Maclay's life.

GLASGOW SECTION.

JULY MEET, 1931—C.I.C. HUT

SOMEWHAT hasty and last-minute arrangements for a Meet in July resulted in five members being temporarily transformed into beasts of burden, with the C.I.C. Hut

as their objective; the arrivals on 16th, 17th, and 18th July being, respectively, A. Geddes (Edinburgh), R. W. B. Morris, J. M'Laren, J. B. Russell, and, finally, W. L. Coats.

The party was rewarded with a very good week-end, the rain confining itself for the most part to the hours of darkness, and the mist, except perhaps for Saturday, kept well up and sometimes right off the tops.

Climbs done during the week-end comprised Carn Mor Dearg by the arête, Tower Ridge by Eastern Traverse and Recess Route, and Castle Ridge by orthodox and "Geddes" route (?), the latter apparently being somewhere on the west of the cliffs, the party having overshot their objective in the mist on Saturday. Two members made an unsuccessful attempt to descend the North and South Castle Gullies, the descents actually done being Moonlight No. 3 and Tower Gullies. In the latter two, good snow provided excellent glissades, with a preliminary bit of step-kicking by the more timid members. Commencing in the Tower Gully and finishing in Gardyloo, over 1,000 feet of snow remained, and, in the absence of "picks," this was successfully descended with improvised alpenstocks—provided by an act of vandalism at the derelict hotel.

After dinner, the calendar slipped back several hundred years, as the Hut occupants, wrapped in the real Highland kilt (evolved from Hut blankets), and sitting around the "crusie," indulged in the songs to which the glens re-echoed in bygone days.

Unfortunately there was a serious casualty—on Fort William Station—on Monday evening, where, after successfully negotiating the rough ground on the hill, the White Horse got badly lamed on the hard concrete. It was obvious, and regrettable also, that one member's rucksack was not water (?) tight. The resultant atmosphere in the compartment, further humidiated by discarded boots, socks, and other garments, ensured an undisturbed journey back to Glasgow.

AUTUMN MEET, 1931, AT KINGSHOUSE,
GLENCOE.

Members.—A. Arthur, G. Arthur, Coats, Coutts, Humble, Jackson, C. M'Lay, Monro, and Scott.

Guest.—Bell.

Monro and the Arthurs arrived on the Friday night and camped in Glen Etive. Aikman and Jackson arrived while the first arrivals were at breakfast, and shortly afterwards had the pleasure of seeing our Hon. President doing the shortest climb of the Meet, *i.e.*, climbing stiffly into his car and departing for home comforts. However, we felt honoured and much heartened by the short glimpse we had of him, but not even his bright presence could dispel the mist which lay at the level of the moor and caused a feeling of salvationism to overshadow us.

Some would have fain gone back to bed, but in the end we walked down Glen Etive to Dalness, and from there went over Buchaille Beag to Glencoe. This was an unhappy route, for the President fell asleep whenever he was allowed to sit, and we met the tenant of the forest on the top, and he was extremely annoyed at our having spoiled his stalk.

The President called on the tenant, Mr Stockdale, at Dalness House, later, and an amicable agreement was reached, whereby the good name of the Club was preserved, and it was arranged that we should not be on their beat on the following days.

Our numbers were increased that evening by the arrival of Coutts, Coats, Scott, Humble, and Bell.

On Sunday, Coats, Monro, and the Arthurs climbed the North Buttress of Buchaille by what they decided was the original route. It was a good climb, with an interesting mantelshelf problem and the rocks in good condition.

The rocks of Sron na Creise engaged the attention of Jackson and Bell for the morning, after which they walked over Clachlet, and from there to the Chasm, which they admired from below.

The most energetic were Coutts, Scott, and Humble, who did all the tops of both the Buchailles.

Monday dawned very damp, and no one had the courage for an early start. Jackson and Bell got into "D" Gully, and after four hours' climbing of varying severity on the short pitches and high walls of the gully, managed to get out in time for a bathe before going home. This spasm of cleanliness was duly registered in Humble's camera, who, with Scott and Coutts, had spent the day photographing the district.

Monro drove Coats, the Arthurs, and M'Lay to the study, and they climbed Bidean. They did all the tops in under five hours, and this speed was probably due to the haunting spectre they must have had of the milk they had consumed over the week-end and charged to another's account at the inn.

The Meet was a success, and the number present an improvement on those at previous Autumn Meets. No extensive peak bagging was done owing to the unexpected presence of the stalkers.

EDINBURGH SECTION.

INVERORAN—WEEK-END, 17TH APRIL 1931.

Inveroran welcomed a small but select party of the J.M.C.S. on 17th April. After the constituent members of the party had welcomed each other, the rest of the evening was spent in discussing the intention of two members to enjoy the hotel for only one night out of the three and to camp on the others. After a vote the campers, who were in the minority, were ultimately pushed out into the darkness and rain and advised to get it over, as the weather might be even far worse the next night. It is a pleasure to record that these dauntless spirits actually braved the elements for all three nights, but were latterly induced to feed at the hotel owing to incipient scurvy brought on by an unvaried diet of bacon.

Saturday, 18th, was clear but windy, and the whole available force, consisting of Bartholomew, Ainslie, Sutherland, Ogilvie, D. Sandeman, and Pattullo, proceeded in massed formation up Stob Ghabhar by the gentle ascent from the south. The leader of the expedition was at pains to discourage an ascent via the upper couloir projected for next day. Two original members present offered no comment. In view of the strafe about "incidents," a new rule has been unofficially imposed upon the Club, viz. :—

- (a) Thou shalt have no incident.
- (b) In the event of a contravention of (a) thou shalt at all costs keep it from the public press.

In accordance with the stupid tradition of eating lunch on the most exposed eminence for miles around, a few firmly held sandwiches were munched on the top. The party then proceeded along the ridge.

In course of the return journey the leader (who was delivering a discourse on advanced rope technique) was all but lost through falling through a hollow snow crust into a chasm. After a realistic panic, however, he was restored to *terra firma*, and the thoughts of the party reverted pleasantly to the coming evening meal.

In the evening the Secretary arrived, and was duly censured for his sluggishness. Elliot, Robertson, Simpson, and Wilson were found to have arrived and pitched camp. Some of them had been on Dorain.

Starts on Sunday were not so early as they might have been. Ainslie, D. Sandeman, and Pattullo proceeded to Buchaille Etive, which they climbed by a snow gully. On the road back they were held up (peacefully) by a family party with an elderly automobile, and a worthy came forward confidently exclaiming, "Ye wudna see an auld Scottish Horseman stuck for a drap o' petrol!" The climbers refrained from descending to the obvious retort, and, changing the subject, learned that he was an itinerant pearl fisher, who had come down from Sutherlandshire to fish some of the local lochs. Ultimately the

climbers moved on, the poorer by a quantity of petrol and baffled in their attempt to see whether the horseman's tank had really been dry or not.

Bartholomew, Ogilvie, and Sutherland did Beinn a' Chreachain and Beinn Achaladair, accomplishing the descent from the latter in record time owing to hunger. They arrived back just in time to partake of hotel tea, and half an hour later did full justice to dinner. Elliot and Co. devoted their attention to Clachlet and Meall a' Bhuiridh.

On Monday the same parties were out, Ainslie, Sandeman, and Pattullo doing Beinn a' Chreachain and Beinn Achaladair, and Bartholomew and Co. dealing with Clachlet, while Elliot and party went to Stob Ghabhar. It is concluded in absence of any report to the contrary that these expeditions were faithfully carried out, but the Meet dispersed without an opportunity of hearing of any special feats. The week-end was notable for the wonderfully clear distant views obtainable at times on all three days. This fact made a deeper impression upon A. than upon the writer, who was usually left to wait upon a steep angled ice slope whilst A. expatiated upon the scenery from a position of security.

ARROCHAR AND KINGSHOUSE—

WEEK-END MEETS IN SEPTEMBER 1931.

We also had two week-end Meets, one at the beginning of August at Arrochar, and one in the middle of September at Kingshouse, being in both cases blessed by perfect weather.

Ogilvie and Sutherland arrived in Arrochar about mid-day on the Saturday, where they found Hewat, and all three wandered up Beinn Narnain and climbed the Spearhead arête. Elliot, Brown, Welch, and Lindsay arrived on the Saturday evening, and the whole party encamped near the torpedo station. On the Sunday, Williams of the S.M.C. joined us, and we all did the Cobbler traverse in twos and threes. After this, Williams, Elliot, and Brown left for

home, Sutherland and Hewat went down to the camp, and Ogilvie and Welch, after doing the Maclay Crack, went over to Narnain with Lindsay, and climbed the Jammed Block Chimney. The Monday was a day of appalling heat, which brought out hordes of marauding clegs. All the remaining members trudged up Ben Vane, with the exception of Lindsay, who, already in possession of a surfeit of Munros, found a sunny spot above the cleg line, where he nudely basked and ate blaeberreries until the others returned.

In September all were camping at Coupal Bridge, apart from the Secretary and the Hon. President, who were at Kingshouse, where also Messrs Alex. Harrison and Ian Campbell of the S.M.C. were staying. On the Saturday, Ogilvie, Traquair, Hewat, and Sutherland climbed the Curved Ridge. On Sunday, Ogilvie, Traquair, and Sutherland did a new climb in Coire nam Beith, which Harrison and Bartholomew had prospected the day before. Anyone wishing to hear a vigorous, almost Tartarinesque, account of this climb should apply to Ogilvie. Bartholomew and Harrison were prospecting on Aonach Eagach, Lindsay and Hewat wandering along the ridge in their company. Campbell was able to lead Horne up the Crowberry Ridge in spite of the fact that he had spent the previous night in the same room as "the most restless sleeper on God's earth." Elliot, Robertson, and Horsburgh wandered up Bidean nam Bian, an unfortunate injury to Elliot's arm preventing a more ambitious programme. On the Monday, Horne and Campbell did a gully in Coire nam Beith. Elliot, Robertson, and Horsburgh did the Curved Ridge, and Traquair and Hewat on one rope, Ogilvie and Lindsay on another, did the North-West Buttress.

Apart from Official Meets there has been a good deal of activity among the members. At least five were abroad in the summer. Wedderburn was at Arolla and elsewhere among the Pennines, Drever at Kandersteg and Zermatt, while Lindsay and Villars made their annual pilgrimages to Norway and Austria respectively, and A. R. Wilson was at Zermatt with Cram of the S.M.C.

PERTH SECTION.

EASTER MEET AT THE NEVIS HUT—
3RD TO 6TH APRIL 1931.

Present.—J. M'Nab, R. M. M'Intyre, C. Rude, and A. L. Cram, S.M.C.

Cram and Rude were the first arrivals at the Hut, and on the Friday enjoyed a fine climb in No. 3 Gully, entailing three hours' step-cutting in very hard snow, and at the top had some ticklish work surmounting the huge cornice. M'Nab and M'Intyre arrived on Friday night.

A blizzard greeted the first man out on Saturday morning in true Ben Nevis style, when a start was made for No. 4 Gully. Leading in turn, good progress was made in very hard snow, to about three-quarter way up, when a terrific cornice was seen which looked impossible. However, the two "Macs," after a hasty meal, ascended to inspect, and by "hand over fist" work reached the cornice, where the first impressions were confirmed. It was unsafe to tackle, more especially in the gale. In the meantime Cram and Rude had unsuccessfully tried to find an escape to the right. The descent was made in the teeth of a gale—distinctly unpleasant.

The Aonachs were visited on Sunday in a day of sunshine and shower. Steps had to be cut across the arête, and the peaks were tackled by a gully and rocks on the left. A return was made by Carn Mor Dearg to the Hut, the glissading being very fast . . . too fast for one member who landed among the rocks. The whole climb took ten hours.

It was a glorious morning on the Monday, too good to bury oneself in a gully, so Cram on skis and the remainder of the party in shorts and shoes, armed with cameras, spent a very enjoyable few hours on the slopes of Coire Leis. Regretfully at 2 P.M. we once more locked and barred our erstwhile Highland Home, and shouldering our much lightened bergans, descended again to civilisation after another "Best Ever" week-end.

MIDSUMMER MEET, 1931.

Present.—Andrews, Atkinson, Balfour, M'Nab, and M'Intyre.

The Meet was held at the Ben Nevis Hut from 3rd to 6th July.

The last three members ascended from Auchantee in the cool of the night, arriving at the Hut at 3.45 A.M. Somewhat later that day an ascent of the Tower Ridge was made from the West Gully of the Douglas Boulder in mist. No difficult pitches were encountered until the corner by the Recess Route was turned, where wet uncertain holds on the exposed chimney proved exciting. The summit was reached in three hours, and a descent was made by the Coire Leis to the Hut.

Andrews and Atkinson arrived during dinner, but no inducement would make them partake of the fare—Spean Bridge Hotel must be a very fine place, indeed !!!

A misty morning found the Tower Ridge party starting for the N.E. Buttress, to the lower slabs of which they had the enjoyable company of three members of the fair sex *en route* for the summit. A fine climb was enjoyed on the Buttress, heavy rain showers making the chimney to the left of the "gendarme" and the exposed chimney higher up demand great caution. A direct route to the summit was followed except for the turning of the "gendarme" by the left chimney, the climb occupying two and a half hours. Balfour descended to Auchantee and home, while the others returned again by the Coire Leis. Andrews and Atkinson had a very pleasant day on the Castle Ridge, and returning to the Hut for their bergans had also unfortunately to return home.

Nine o'clock next morning found M'Nab and M'Intyre ascending by rocks and scree to the east face of the Douglas Boulder. The left ridge was followed at the start, and thence, by an exciting traverse and an overhanging wall to a delightful right-angle chimney leading to some easy rocks, the party reached the summit. The weather was again misty but dry, and after a brief rest a somewhat sensational descent was made by the West Ridge, where

a holdless, slimy chimney and a sheer wall gave good sport. The last man using an over-secure belay had, after descending the last pitch, to ascend again and recover the rope. The entire climb from the Hut occupied three hours. And so ended one of the most successful Meets of the Club this season. Many places are proposed for Meets, but the Hut always seems to win, and it certainly always does afford delightful week-ends of climbing.

The departure from Perth of some of the Section's most enthusiastic members has brought it into the "salvationist" class more or less, though there is still left one or two more daring souls in its midst. Since New Year every Sunday has found some of its members on the hills, and very many enjoyable days have been had despite the wet weather. Particularly long and delightful days were the ascent of Ben Macdhui from the Linn of Dee and the round of the tops of Ben Cruachan, both done from Perth in day Meets. The activities of two members, now resident in Glasgow, are not very clear, but by such a feat as the attempted ascent in iced conditions of the Church Door Buttress by one of them, it is gathered that the good name of the Section is being upheld in "foreign fields."

Indoor meetings have been very spasmodic, due, no doubt, to the fact that the Committee climb together nearly every Sunday, but with the approach of winter it is hoped to resume these.

The Secretary would like to take the opportunity to correct an error in the April issue of the *Journal*, when the New Year Meet at Loch Awe was described as "Glasgow and Edinburgh Sections"—the Perth Section of the Club being ably represented, and submitting its Report at the Annual General Meeting.

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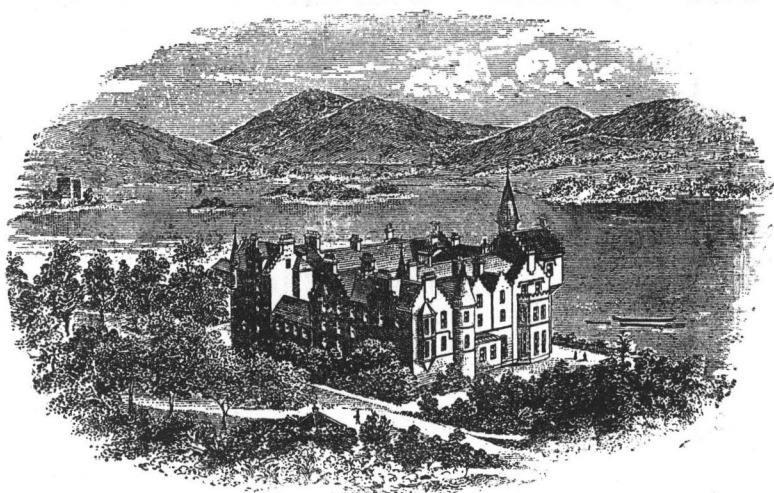
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