

Vol. 20.

April 1933.

No. 115.

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL.

EDITED BY
CHARLES W. PARRY.



ISSUED TWICE A YEAR—APRIL AND NOVEMBER.

PUBLISHED BY
THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB,
3 FORRES STREET, EDINBURGH.

AGENTS:
EDINBURGH: DOUGLAS & FOULIS.
GLASGOW: WM. PORTEOUS & CO.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE NET.

All Notices for November Number should be sent to the Hon. Editor at Tomlinscote, Frimley, Surrey, as soon as possible, and not later than 1st October 1933.

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WILLIAM DOUGLAS

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

VOL. XX.

APRIL 1933.

NO. 115.

In Memoriam.

WILLIAM DOUGLAS.
1863-1932.

WHEN a man passes beyond, with whom one has been through many alarms and excursions, memories and recollections crowd upon one. Such a man to me was William Douglas. It is not easy to separate in one's mind even the principal events in a lifelong friendship, a friendship which passed beyond those bounds of sea and land that hold so many memories of adventure.

Douglas was elected to the Club in December 1890, and the following May contributed the first of his many articles to the Club *Journal*. This article, on "Ben Screel," containing as it did such keenness of observation, beauty of description, and variety of interest, gave a sure indication of those qualities which were later to be of such value to the *Journal*. In all, Douglas contributed over fifty articles and notes, embracing not only all types of climbing but almost every allied subject as well. Throughout these writings one is struck by the wide knowledge and deep interest which characterise them, while his own personal feelings with regard to the hills can best be understood from a quotation taken from his speech returning thanks to the members, on the occasion of a presentation to him from the Club: "I have learned to love these hills of Scotland, and to understand them better while roaming among them in your company. In fact, this Club has become a part of my life in a way I little dreamed of when I joined it some eighteen years ago."

In 1908 Douglas married Phyllis Procter, who subsequently became one of the original members of the L.S.C.C., and she and two sons survive him. I was best man at the wedding, and the cake on that occasion took the form of a mountain peak peopled with climbers wielding ice axes.

Such adventures as come to my memory were those wherein the Club attacked the hills from a steam yacht, while on another occasion Douglas and I together climbed the Coolins from a sailing yacht, in which the members had a very crowded life and developed the instincts of their Viking ancestors. It had to be repeatedly kept before them that although there were sheep on the islands there was also a sheriff at Inverness. Then there was that glorious holiday in the year 1897, when we pitched a camp by Loch Coruisk and remained there for a whole month in every sort of weather. But Douglas' experience was by no means limited to Scotland. He had climbed, between 1895 and 1912, in Switzerland, the Dolomites, France and Italy, the Canadian Rockies, Norway, and the Jura Mountains. Perhaps the most notable of his ascents abroad, and one I had the good fortune to share with him, was the traverse of the Meije, an affair of about twenty-one hours' duration. In all his climbing he was to me above everything a comrade, bold but not rash, steadfast and reliable, weighing well the risks and willing to take a reasonable chance.

In the Allt a' Mhuilinn is the Club's memorial to Douglas—the great boulder at the foot of the Tower Ridge—beneath whose shadow stands the Memorial Hut to Charles Inglis Clark. It is right indeed that the memory of these two names be bound by such a close association, and that climbers, standing by that grand memorial to Inglis Clark, will see above them the vast boulder, no firmer or more steadfast than he whose name it bears.

But it was to Douglas as Editor of the *Journal* that the Club probably owes most. For eighteen years he gave to the Club devoted and faithful service as Editor. He loved a good book for its own sake and had a fine



WILLIAM INGLIS CLARK, D.Sc., F.R.S.E., A.C.
PRESIDENT, S.M.C.

1913-1919

HONORARY SECRETARY, S.M.C.

1902-1913

literary taste. He gave that to the Club, along with his historical and archæological knowledge, in the office he so well adorned. How he loved the Club and his fellow-men is well shown in an extract from his letter to the Editor, which appeared in the 100th number of the *Journal*: "... but what I gave to the Club was a great joy to me, and it was returned to me a hundredfold in the friendships it brought and in the happy hours spent with its members."

What indeed Douglas gave to the Club it is impossible to say, but he has left us with something that cannot be taken away—a memory of affection and respect, and a feeling of pride that we have been counted among his friends.

J. RENNIE.

WILLIAM INGLIS CLARK.

INGLIS CLARK has left us and we in the Scottish Mountaineering Club have lost one whose record on behalf of our Club is never likely to be surpassed.

It is of Inglis Clark as a mountaineer, and particularly as a Scottish mountaineer, of whom we think, although his attainments in many other phases of life were considerable. All his life Scotland had been first in his thoughts, and although he had climbed widely abroad one always likes to think of him on the Ben, on rock or in snow in the prime of his strength, and of his exploits all over Scotland, from Narnain to Stack Polly.

His courage and cheerfulness however awkward the climb were tremendous and contagious, whether he was leading or in the worse position of watching the leader making heavy weather above.

To recollect Clark saying, "Man, isn't this gorgeous!" brings to many of the older members the remembrance of the best of days in the Highlands—it somehow was very expressive of all Clark was feeling.

Joining the Club in 1895 it was not long before his energetic spirit marked him as a leading member,

becoming one of the Committee in 1900, then Secretary for eleven hard-working years, and finally President from 1914 to 1919—covering the whole period of the war—a longer period than any other President has held office in our Club.

When one comes to think of it the S.M.C. has always been extraordinarily fortunate in its permanent office-bearers, and in no office more than in that of Secretary, of which there have only been five in the whole lifetime of the Club. It is pleasant to know that the earliest Secretaries are still with us, and I know they will not be hurt when it is said that Inglis Clark was the one who first brought the art of arranging Meets to its present (may we say) perfection—when every detail is given us in advance, the means of getting to the place, the times of trains, the hotels and any keeper's lodges available, to say nothing of all the correspondence involved with landowners and factors as to permission to climb—a heavy task for which there is little to show. Clark brought all this about.

Whether as Member, Secretary, or President, Inglis Clark always brought a cheery note into any affair in which he was concerned, especially at Meets however large, and he was one whose largeness of heart would have expanded the membership of the Club almost indefinitely.

Clark was highly successful in his professional life, his particular science being that of Chemistry, and this led him to excel in photography, with which he has enriched many pages of the *Journal*. It was Howie, I think, who initiated him, for in Clark's paper, "Searcher after the Beautiful," the views are chiefly those by Howie. Clark in turn passed on the tuition, and assisted to put many on the right way to make pictures worthy of our hills. His particular forte was colour photography, in which he had great success, reading a paper on this to the Alpine Club, amongst others.

The same scientific spirit of inquiry led him to become one of Scotland's earliest motor owners and drivers, and in his high-wheeled Arrol-Johnston dogcart, S.2,

which to us nowadays appears so comic a machine, he, with his wife and family, made exploration in the distant parts of the Highlands more than a quarter of a century before the improvement of the roads made the " Highland Motor Tour " such a simple matter.

In his life Inglis Clark was a particularly happy man, in no part of his life more than in his home, and before their children grew up he and his wife had many a good climb together, and anyone lucky to be one of the party could see and appreciate the spirit of this happy pair of mountain lovers. His two children, Mabel and Charlie, both became keen and skilled mountaineers—his daughter became President of the Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club on its twenty-first birthday, and Charlie a member of the A.C. almost at the earliest permissible age; whilst Mrs Clark, whose energy was equal to that of her husband, was the first President, indeed one might say the originator, of the successful L.S.C.C.

Inglis Clark began to explore Scotland quite early in the 'seventies—he tramped all over the north-west of Scotland, in Ross-shire and Sutherland, as well as in the Highlands nearer home—and in the 'nineties began his more serious hill climbing. Like all good S.M.C. men, although opportunity is denied to many, he climbed at all times of the year, in snow as well as on rock, although I think in his inner self he preferred rock work. He was the instigator of many good rock climbs, and whether he led on them throughout or not he was equally enthusiastic. With Mrs Clark he did many difficult ascents, as, for instance, an early ascent with Raeburn of the difficult Crowberry Ridge Climb on Buachaille Etive Mor.

He also found new climbs near home—on the Salisbury Crags, then on Narnain and Crois—whilst as far afield as Stack Polly and at Kinlochewe he found fresh routes. But perhaps he was really more associated with The Ben than with any other single mountain, for he spent many days in the Allt a' Mhuilinn, and was the pioneer of many new routes up these grand crags; and no one more than he would have rejoiced in the thought that, thanks to his splendid present of the Hut, the younger generations will

be making routes up those precipices unthought of even by a Raeburn. Clark's exploits are to be found in many numbers of the *Journal*, and I rejoice to think that I was the sharer of four of the happiest days of his mountaineering life in the Highlands (to which he often referred in our talks) when we lived on the summit of Ben Nevis at the time the Coronation of King Edward VII. was cancelled owing to his sudden illness on 26th June 1902. Here Dr and Mrs Clark made the second ascent of the then little-known Staircase climb, and first ascents of other subsidiary routes on the Tower Ridge, whilst later, with Raeburn, they did some most difficult exploration work on the Trident Buttress, it being a misfortune that Clark just missed making the first ascent of the Observatory Buttress with Raeburn.

Many things conspired to connect Clark with The Ben, in none more so than the remarkable escapade of his son Charlie, who with Goodeve and M'Intyre spent a whole day and night on Ben Nevis on 29th December 1907, reaching the summit in a gale after midnight and reaching Fort William safe, without any serious mishap, after being thirty hours out—a tribute to the stamina and ability of the party. Inglis Clark, as might be expected, set out with the first search party, and it was a good effort—of which not every man of fifty would be capable, whatever the emergency—when one realises that, on a stormy night in the depth of winter, he left the Alexandra Hotel at 11.30 P.M., and was standing on the top of The Ben above No. 3 Gully at 4 A.M., rejoicing to see by the marks of boot and rope in the cornice that the three they were in search of had safely reached the summit and the easier side of The Ben. It is sad to think that such men as Charles Clark and Goodeve had to be sacrificed to keep our country free; both by a coincidence fell in the Eastern Theatre of War.

The one serious blow in the life of Inglis Clark was undoubtedly the loss of his son Charlie on active service. Like many of the best of our youth Charlie joined up early, but was killed towards the end of the war, in Mesopotamia. This tragedy was manfully withstood,

and with characteristic energy the parents set out to provide a memorial fit for their son.

This, by the happiest inspiration, they found in the Hut in the Allt a' Mhuilinn. Every member of the Club who was appealed to for practical help gave it willingly, and the Hut took shape and was completed in 1929.

Finally, on Easter Monday, 1st April 1929, the Hut was formally opened, the donors, Dr and Mrs Inglis Clark, having made the journey up on the previous day, and making light of a task trying to many younger than themselves. The night before the opening was spent in the Hut by the couple and a number of their friends, and all who were privileged to stay there that night realised that in the completion of the Hut they were witnessing the realisation of the fondest hopes of Charlie's parents. The sudden entry of two rather scared wanderers, from the dark and stormy night without, added the necessary touch of drama, showing how in reality this Hut might become a refuge for those in distress.

The ardent spirit of Inglis Clark never deserted him. When later in life he had to abandon climbing he then toured in various parts of the world, noting and enjoying everything with the youthful eagerness so characteristic of the man, and which never left him to the end.

To William Inglis Clark our Club owes much of its present standing and security; no one more than he was anxious for this. But apart from that, the spirit of men like him in the early days of any Club leaves an influence which, unseen, helps it forward. But alas! many of we older members have lost in him a very dear friend.

G. T. GLOVER.

JAMES COOPER LYON.

1882-1932.

JAMES COOPER LYON joined the Club in 1918. Many years before he became a member he had been an enthusiastic lover of his native hills, and I well remember when it was suggested to him that he should join the

Club, with what keenness he set about acquiring the necessary qualification. He did not attend many of the Club Meets or Dinners, but at the outset he became a Life Member. He read the Club *Journal* with regularity, and he was at all times deeply interested in the doings and the best interests of the Club.

He was always at his best on a hill walk with his more intimate friends. He was a man of great observation, taking delight in drawing the attention of his companions to the beauties of mountain form, and the birds, beasts, and flowers associated with the hills. On a long expedition—of which he made many—the other members of the party always knew, when a halt for refreshments was made, that some choice and unexpected tit-bit would be produced from his weighty knapsack, which was freely and ungrudgingly distributed, for he had a great heart, and always a word of cheer for the man who was fatigued or suffering from the weather conditions.

He had many hobbies. Etchings and water-colour drawings had a special attraction for him. He was a very skilled musician, and a great supporter of all local musical efforts, to which he subscribed liberally, and gave his own valuable assistance as a player. When the winter days were past, however, the call of the open came to him, and in his leisure hours—though these were few—he was to be found on the hills or the golf course.

By his passing, his friends are the poorer, but their privilege to have been one of them, and to have shared his refined tastes and genial companionship, is a heritage for which they will ever be grateful.

He is survived by a widow and three daughters.

W. G.

We have also to record the loss which the Club has suffered by the death of Scott Moncrieff Penney. While circumstances have made it impossible to include an article in this number, his many friends will be glad to know that one is in course of preparation, and will appear in the November number.

FAN CORRIE AND DIAMOND BUTTRESS
OF SGÒRAN DUBH.

By J. H. B. BELL.

THIS short article is the tale of a week-end Meet of the Perth Juniors. On Saturday, 14th May, M'Nab, M'Intyre, Dow, and I left Perth by car for Aviemore. The expedition provisioned itself *en route*. We proceeded past Coylumbridge as far as the locked gate on the Einich road. There we shouldered our ponderous burdens and set out for the upper Einich bothy. The evening was fine, the views across the river to the pine-clad slopes of Càrn Eilrig and back across the forest to the Monadhliaths being magnificent. By common consent we halted at the spectacular bend on the road, where the upper snows of Sgòran Dubh first come into view. As we neared the first bothy there was a rattle and a roar from behind. C. M. Allan, the wild man of the Section, had arrived by motor cycle from Glasgow. The first bothy was locked. We proceeded to the top bothy. This was also locked. A painful incident ensued. Owing to a sense of responsibility for the comfort of his men, the Honorary Vice-President attempted to effect an entrance by the chimney. For a long time he remained jammed in the vent up to the armpits, but the joint labours of two men finally extricated him. After this the Section decided to occupy the stable. The roof was discontinuous, but the evening was fine. After all hands had been set to heather pulling, there was soon a pile 18 inches deep of luxurious springy bedding in each stall. Supper in the open was followed by an endless stream of amusing stories, as we sat smoking our pipes in the gorgeous still evening. About 11 P.M. a group of us strolled along to Loch Einich and over its wonderful stretch of sandy beach. The moon was glinting shyly down the flanks of Braeriach. A considerable swell on

the loch was shivering the reflected moonbeams, for the wind was rising.

We were rather late on Sunday. Allan and I were the worst offenders. We breakfasted in a very leisurely manner. About 10.45 A.M. the last member of the party arrived in a Baby Austin. This was Myles, who had cunningly, and with hardly an inch of clearance, driven his car through between the tall posts beside the locked gate. We three started off at once for the No. 2 Buttress on Sgòran Dubh. It is not too easy to place our climbing route. It starts fairly low down on the buttress and close to the gully between Nos. 2 and 3 Buttresses. It is somewhere between the Bachelors' and Married Men's Buttresses. This was not a matter of design, however, in spite of the fact that our party consisted of one married man, one already in the preliminary toils who has since then succumbed, and one who both then and now has approached no nearer the thralldom of domesticity than the already recorded half-bodied attempt at chimney sweeping. We believe that M'Intyre and M'Nab probably made an ascent of the Bachelors' Buttress on this occasion. Dow elected to climb by a longer and easier route.

We started to climb on the lower slabs, just on the north side of the gully. The slabs soon became very difficult, and I remember one very awkward traverse across a steeply inclined smooth granite slab to the right. This may have been 60 or 80 feet at least above the start. The method was ingenious. The climber secured himself over a rough belay with just enough slack rope to slither down and across to a small foothold. The others held the belay rope from below. Myles did not enjoy the pendulum swing particularly. Allan, being the last man, was held only from across the slab. This dynamic method of securing climbers is quite a valuable one for friction slab climbing. Loose heathery ledges had to be negotiated beyond this. An attempt to get back on to the upper slabs on our left was fruitless, that route being altogether too exposed. The only line of advance was an awkward traverse on the right, followed by a short

descent to the foot of a steep rock ridge or buttress. This route goes quite well right from the bottom of the ridge, but it is necessary to keep a little to the right of the crest. The route is really very good for some distance, but we soon encountered serious difficulties with an overhanging nose about 100 feet up. Again there was nothing for it but another traverse to the right. The landing was on rocks which had to be very carefully tested. An easy pitch now led upwards to a well-built little cairn. We suspected that this had something to do with the Married Men's Buttress. It was obviously more likely to be the foot of a climb than the top of one, as good rock continued upwards, whereas there seemed to be a feasible approach up easier ground from below on our right. In pursuance of our original line, we immediately traversed back to the left round a sensational but easy corner. We were now on the line of our former arête, and were able to climb straight upwards for about 100 feet to a sheltered recess where we lunched. We had now reached a point considerably above the upper end of the chimney climbed by M'Nab and M'Intyre. We proceeded after lunch for a little way until our buttress became very easy.

Our next move was a long horizontal traverse over easy slopes into the bed of the large upper fan-shaped corrie of the mountain. This corrie is located between Nos. 2 and 3 Buttresses, and we named it the Fan Corrie of Sgòran Dubh. Cleaving its upper slopes centrally was our next objective in the shape of a huge buttress, with both an upper and a lower part in the form of a true ridge. As seen from the upper bothy, it is shaped rather like a diamond of rock. We very soon reached the base of the rocks without losing any height. The initial arête was fairly easy. We moved together and quickly. The middle section was by far the most interesting, and provided about 80 feet of difficult climbing. We started directly upwards from the end of the lower arête, Allan leading. The angle is rather severe, but the holds are just sufficient up to a belay 40 feet up the cliff. A difficult 15-foot chimney leads over satisfactory upper rocks to

an excellent belay. Above these two pitches the climbing becomes much easier. There is an upper arête with one or two gaps, which are easily passed. The upper arête then leads on to a short slope below the summit cornice. This is probably less than 200 feet below the summit of Sgòran Dubh. We reached the summit at 4.15 P.M., greatly pleased with our combination route of mixed slabs, followed by the Diamond Buttress in the Fan Corrie, affording in all at least 1,500 feet of interesting climbing.

Allan left at this point, as he had to be off on his return journey to Glasgow. Myles and I continued over Sgòr Gaoith, and then proceeded to descend by the Pinnacle Ridge. The descent went interestingly above the Pinnacle, with one sensational but easy neck. I climbed the Pinnacle from the upper neck and found it quite awkward to descend. We cut out the lower part of the Pinnacle ridge by traversing southwards across the head of a magnificent precipitous gully, and so on to easy slopes above the well-made shooting track. On the way back to the bothy I had a refreshing bathe in Loch Einich.

We reached the bothy about 8 P.M., and proceeded to feast on the cyclopean Forfar "braidies," which Myles had caused to be made with three-quarters of a pound of steak in each. Dow and M'Nab had gone home, which made the provisions more ample than ever. During the night it poured hard, and waterproof covers were an advantage for a sleeping-sack. Unfortunately, the braidies were too much for M'Intyre. At least twice he went out during the night to look at the weather, neglecting to close the door behind him. It was noteworthy that he turned his face away with horror and loathing when I commenced to breakfast off braidie and tea about 7 A.M. on Monday morning. Myles, as became a member of the medical profession, was more circumspect. He carefully scraped out the meat from another, and fried it separately in a small frying pan.

The weather was too bad for climbing on Monday. The only thrill was the return journey between the posts beside the locked gate on the Einich road.



April 1932

D. Myles

FAN CORRIE AND DIAMOND BUTTRESS, SGÒRAN DUBH
(from above the lower rocks)



July 1932

SUNSET ON SGÙRR ALASDAIR
FROM THE BANACHDICH—THORMAID BEALACH.

James Drever

A WORD ON SKYE.

By JAMES DREVER.

MUCH Celtic enthusiasm has been lavished upon the misty Isle of Skye, but from the mountaineering point of view the mist, which is generally of a very solid variety, is Skye's least admirable feature. At the same time, as some one—Mr Abraham, I think—has remarked, the curious thing about a fine day in Skye is that it makes one forget all the wet ones that went before it, and the six fine days we got during the first three weeks of July were more than worth waiting for. Not that the bad weather was made an excuse for laziness. The writer has a vivid recollection of a very enthusiastic climber setting off at 2 A.M. on a doubtful morning with the professed intention of promenading up and down the length of the ridge, for all the world like a policeman on his beat. Unfortunately, the weather made up its mind to be very wet indeed, and about breakfast-time the prospective policeman reappeared in a somewhat chastened frame of mind. In his favour be it said, that he had travelled from Sgurr Dearg to Bruach na Frithe in considerably less time than the "Guide Book" allows. Besides this *tour de force* quite an amount of ridge-walking, and two climbs—the Window Tower Buttress and the West Central Route on Sron na Ciche—were done under bad weather conditions.

But it was only when the sun had dried the rocks that the more exposed climbs were attempted. Then, in rubbers and sunshine, we scampered freely over that *multum in parvo*, the "Sron." Under these conditions even such climbs as the Cioch Direct, the Slab and Groove, and the Girdle Traverse became reasonably straightforward. On the last named, one of our members went in company with men who do their climbing mainly in Wales and Cumberland. He was amused at their disappointment in having lost the route described in the "Guide Book," although both he and they were certain that

their own way was at least its equal in difficulty. If not *the* girdle, it was *a* girdle, and surely waist-lines may change in climbing as in fashions.

But in view of the numerous climbing journals and diaries which exist nowadays, it is a piece of unwarrantable egoism to suppose that ordinary ascents of known routes are of interest simply because they have been made by the person who takes it upon himself to describe them. Even an ecstatic appreciation of the scenery, however sincere, tends merely to echo other appreciations, and to achieve thereby an appearance of empty formality. Accordingly, anyone who wishes to know more of the climbs that have been mentioned may be referred to the "Guide Book," and anyone who wishes to appreciate the scenery may be referred to Skye.

On the other hand, there are certain features of the Coolins which change from day to day and from week to week. At any particular time climbers on the range form a community that is in some respects curiously like a country village. Everybody knows all about everybody else; and, during the summer months, it must generally be possible for any individual climber to extract a certain amount of amusement out of what he considers the eccentricities of other members of the community. Our particular community had all the necessary ingredients. It had its oldest inhabitant, who had passed his sixtieth year, and was still able to do "threes" in comparative comfort. It had its village idiot, who was discovered one day, in perfect town attire, waiting apprehensively for the boulders in the Sgumain Stone Shoot to fall on top of him, and who was later observed in Glen Brittle with a bag of golf-clubs. It even had an infant prodigy. This last revealed himself dramatically on the Inaccessible Pinnacle. Two of our members had just climbed the South-West Crack with the deliberation it deserves, making use of a belay and stance two-thirds of the way up, and they were coming down again by the short side when they heard a voice behind them: "Hullo! I came up your way." Their gratification at having had the climb assigned to them was somewhat dashed by the

thought that the youth must have shinned up with more speed than safety in something under two minutes.

The most entertaining members of the community, however, did not fall under any of the recognised categories. Very professional looking they were, with Tyrolese hats and big bulging rucksacks, and as they proceeded along the ridge they addressed one another in stern and commanding voices. Every now and again they adopted dramatic positions and took photographs of one another. But their rate and manner of progress had to be seen to be believed. They spent about half an hour crawling along the Tearlach Ridge: in places they even tried to shuffle along astride it in spite of the fact that its breadth was such as to give an acrobatic dancer considerable difficulty. It would be unkind to chronicle their various misadventures. They were last seen on a very wet and lonely stretch of road telling each other in stern and commanding voices how to mend a puncture.

But in describing our little community we seem to have wandered very far from our original subject, and it is only fitting that we should end as we began, by saying a few words in praise of Skye. We have already suggested that Skye weather is not as bad as has been supposed. Ill-natured critics have further pointed out that Skye is as difficult of access as the Swiss Alps. This may or may not have been the case, but nowadays many ruling factors are altered. With improved ferry services Skye is only a day's journey by car from anywhere in Scotland, and even from the North of England. Accommodation, too, is better than it used to be: Glen Brittle House takes in boarders, and camping in the lower part of the glen is no longer prohibited. Last, but not least, an unofficial successor to John Mackenzie is frequently in attendance. If any stranger comes to these parts wondering what to do and how to do it, the inhabitants will one and all say, "Just you go and ask Mr Hughes": and Mr Hughes will take them under his genial wing and conduct them up climbs that they had never dreamed of attempting when they arrived.

And when they return to Glen Brittle, as they will if they are men of discernment, it is long odds that the first sound to strike their ears will be Mr Hughes' voice raised in learned discourse on cracks and chimneys, buttresses and gullies; and they will be greeted with enticing tales of yet another "amiable severe" that has been discovered for their delectation. For, above all, Skye is one of the few places that still rewards the explorer with something more than an arbitrary line of gymnastic problems.

THE AMPHITHEATRE WALL.

By A. HORNE and H. V. HUGHES.

SO much has been done of recent years that it is becoming a matter of some difficulty to discover a new rock climb of any length. In Wales and in England the increasing popularity of the gymnastic side of our sport has certainly given rise to numberless "variations," but the only entirely new climbs are in the form of "girdles" or short and sometimes exceedingly difficult routes on isolated crags.

In Scotland, however, there is still some opportunity for exploration. Even some of the more well-known climbs have not yet become marked by the blazed trail of countless iron-shod boots, and, if a description of a climb is not actually taken with one, route-finding forms part of the day's work. To have read a description beforehand will be advantageous in many cases, but in order to get the best out of a known route, the "Guide Book" should be left behind. In this way, also, the word "Mountaineering" in the titles of our clubs can be justified. Otherwise we rank as climbers!

Although each account of a new climb reduces the possibilities of future exploration, no one appears to wish to suppress such contributions to mountaineering literature, and I give the following description without further excuse than that no one is compelled to read it, nor carry it with him, if he tries the route for himself.

When planning a visit to Skye I was on the lookout for something new, and as the sketch drawing of the precipice of Sron na Ciche in the "Skye Guide" showed a space above the Amphitheatre with no route on it. I took the earliest opportunity of looking at the place itself. This revealed a crack which might prove possible and which was certainly the only way of surmounting the

middle section of the wall which overhung the lower slabs. Above, the angle eased somewhat until just below the Terrace. The sketch referred to shows a route on the upper rocks working behind the Flake, but I preferred to see if one could continue more directly up above the Amphitheatre.

A few days later H. V. Hughes and I emerged from Mallory's Groove (or its twin—who knows?) on to the Terrace, and I then revealed to him my ambitions with regard to the wall. We therefore looked over the edge, where a cairn is now built, and I was surprised to find that it was so steep that the very bottom was in view. That we would find it difficult we were certain, but we thought we might climb the upper wall immediately, as it looked more tractable.

Accordingly, we built a cairn about 20 feet to the right of the Flake, started up to the left, and back to the right up a crack to a large corner about 30 feet up. This is unmistakable, as a huge poised block lies on the outside edge of the floor. As we were in rubbers, and no boot-scratches were being left on the rocks, we decided to number the belays: therefore a cross and Roman numeral were scratched on the rock at the back of the ledge, though there is a better belay 8 feet above the floor. As progress immediately upwards did not look inviting, we climbed out of the corner to the right and traversed 20 feet or so to a spike belay by a stance. Above this to the right there was an overhang, which caused a little careful working, and then a groove continued 20 feet to another stance and belay. Then up 10 feet before traversing upwards to the right for 15 feet across a steep rake, which here led up from the Terrace. Belay and stance.

A more interesting bit followed, for we mounted on to a pinnacle on the right, worked up 5 feet to a hand traverse to the left, under an overhang, and so to a belay and seat. Twenty feet upwards to the left, over jammed blocks to a belay, and a further 40 feet in the same line, led out on to the plateau where we built a cairn.

Only one bit could be described as really difficult,

the rest constituting a nice interesting climb. We enjoyed it immensely, and determined to have a look at the wall from below at some later date. The weather prohibited this, however, until Friday, the 22nd July, the day we had arranged to leave for home. It had been wet for three days, but this morning was so promising that we forthwith abandoned our plans, and prepared to sally forth to Coire Lagan. Just as we were setting out there came a most terrific downpour which lasted nearly an hour. It became fair again at 12 o'clock, and Hughes and I then set off together.

All the cliffs of the Sron were streaming with water, so we had to forget our intentions, and turned to Holland's route to the Cioch as a substitute. Once on the top we basked in the sun, which was now gloriously warm, ate our lunch, and basked again. From our eyrie we watched the shadows creep round, until tips of sunlight appeared on parts of our projected route. This was about 4 P.M. At 5.15 we built a cairn at the lowest point of the rocks above the Amphitheatre, and commenced operations.

The Amphitheatre is a hollow in the cliff face, to the west of, and slightly lower than, the hexagon block. With his back to Coire Lagan and the easy slabs which lead up from it, the climber has this block, and the ridge from which it protrudes, on his left, with the Central Gully between it and the wall in front. On the right is a long sweep of slabs rising to Professor Collie's Arête. The wall in front is steep, and in places overhangs. Drips of water from the top, at one place, do not touch it until within a few feet of the slabs below. Although the wall comes to a point where the climber is standing, it spreads out above, until, about 300 feet up, the Terrace crosses it at a slant, and makes it possible to walk up to the right to the plateau. Above the Terrace is the upper wall, the route up which I have just described. Roughly the main wall is divided into three sections. The bottom one is a succession of slabs and steep places. Then overhanging occurs to the right and left, and the only route apparent to us was formed by a crack running vertically upwards, with a slight curve to the right towards

the top. This crack is not immediately above the foot of the climb, but is a bit to the left. There are three jammed blocks in it and an overhanging corner, above which the angle eases. The third section of the wall is very imposing, and if it were not that the Terrace gives way above the crack and allows of an easier angle it would be impossible.

We had thought the first section would prove the easiest, but we were quite wrong. The slabs were very steep and the walls between were almost barren of holds. The first belay, a poor one, was at a height of 55 feet above the cairn. Luckily the next movement, a traverse up to the right, was not so difficult, and a belay was found in 25 feet. Above this traverse was an overhang, and we at first intended to pass it by one of two broken cracks which cut the edge above. The leader spent a little time on a wet and slimy ledge there, but soon decided it would be better to try the steeper and drier wall on the right, above the belay. Severe climbing for 25 feet led to a substantial terrace where a rest was possible.

We built a small cairn here, but it is too far to the left to indicate the route.

Above was a choice of routes in two embryo chimneys close together. The leader started in that to the right and finished in the other. A good stance and a belay were found 35 feet above the terrace. The next 25 feet were extremely difficult, and should they be surmounted and a retreat be necessary later, this pitch might prevent a safe return. We had 100 feet of line and judged it was not sufficient to rope down, for the slabs below looked hopeless.

Our enthusiasm carried us away, however, and apparently carried the leader up the pitch, for the second found it expedient to have an extra rope with knots in it to form handholds. The route is up a slanting crack, above the slab on the left from the last belay. The wall on the left of the crack gives a small foothold to begin with, but none later, and the wall on the right overhangs. If the crack is any more slimy than when we were there it would be foolhardy to attempt it, as the

finish at the top is bad. A good double belay, in the form of two firm rocks in a crack, is provided above.

This done, we made our way to the foot of the crack where a thread belay for our line was found. To pass the blocks jammed in the chimney or crack, one has to climb out and over them in unusual and exposed positions, rather like climbing over a gargoyle at the top of a building. The third block turns out to be resting on the floor of a corner, and we made our way under and behind it to a ledge, which made a good stance, 25 feet above the foot of the crack. The through route is narrow and twists. The weightier member of our party had partly to undress before succeeding in his struggles. There was hardly room for two on the ledge and the leader had to move immediately the second emerged—a safe movement, however.

At the end of a long run-out, the next pitch would be considered very severe, but with the second close up to the leader a simple bridging movement takes him out over space, and it is not difficult to get into the easier groove above. Stance and belay in 25 feet.

The continuation of the crack is set back at an easier angle, and a run-out of 75 feet leads to a spike belay below the final pitch. As the crack stopped short at a steep and greasy wall, it was necessary to climb out on the left, and 20 feet up good sound rock landed us on the Terrace. Here we built another cairn.

A snack and a rest, and not a little mutual congratulation, and we were off again up the upper wall route we had done previously. We found that our system of numbering belays was a "washout," for three or four days' rain had removed most of our efforts, so our religious numbering of belays on the lower wall, although we were wearing boots, had been in vain.

We reached the top at 9.25 P.M. well satisfied with this, the last day of our holiday. Parties following us may not find difficulty where we did, but their route cannot vary much, as we saw no opportunity of working in either direction after the second pitch.

In the "Guide Book" classification we believe this climb would rank as a "4."

AN ARRAN RIDGE WALK.

By W. C. WATSON.

ALTHOUGH all but a native of the island of Arran, never heretofore have I been able to goad the unwilling flesh from out the flesh-pots of Whiting Bay.

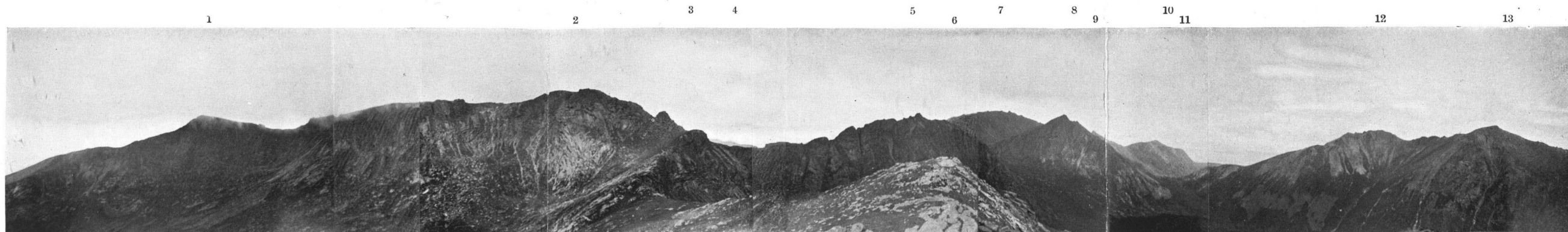
Always have I loved the distant views, the hills, the moors, all that is Arran, aye have I found myself content. In May of this year, however, a member of the Ladies' Climbing Club prevailed on me to accompany her to the hills, and I would tell of that day and that climb.

It was a glorious Sunday morning—the stillness had not yet been broken by the monotonous, persistent, and competitive clang of church bells. Thin wisps of smoke were beginning to curl heavenwards from the crofters' fires, everywhere Nature was stirring, birds twittering in the hedges, hens cackling in the farmyards, and we ourselves stepping towards the hills, whistling a braggart air.

We wandered up the path beside the Rosa Burn, watching for the flash of rainbow trout in its clear waters. Only the murmuring of the stream broke the stillness of the glen. Soon we reached the point where the glen turns northwards revealing Cir Mhòr and the Witches' Step. Instinctively we left the babbling brook, and for the next hour kept upwards and to the left at a steady pace. Once the ridge was gained soft breezes blew on bared arms and chest; no longer was it necessary to deflect the melted fats of soft living from nose and chin.

Far below, in sombre black, "Frees" and "Wee Frees" would be hurrying to shut themselves away for their morning's meditation, but we were free, free to meditate in a temple not built with hands—free to learn at first hand of the blessings bestowed upon us.

Basking on the warm rocks at the top of Beinn a' Chliabhain, the whole group from Beinn Nuis to Goat



Photo

W. C. Watson.

PANORAMA FROM BEINN A' CHLIABHAIN.

1. Beinn Nuis	2,597 feet.	7. Caisteal Abhail	2,817 feet.
2. Beinn Tarsuinn	2,706 „	8. Cir Mhòr	2,618 „
3. Bealach an Fhir-Bhogha.		9. Witches' Step.	
4. Coire Daingean.		10. Suidhe Fhearghas	2,081 „
5. A'Chir	(approx.) 2,100 „	11. The Saddle.	
6. Beinn a' Chliabhain	2,141 „	12. North Goat Fell	2,659 „
13. Goat Fell	2,866 feet.		

Fell was exposed to view, and away to the north-east the Argyllshire peaks faded into the dim blue distance. Unfortunately, neither the lady nor I were prepared for any serious work so, on reaching the point where the ridge we had climbed joined the A'Chir Ridge, we reluctantly slid down some small screes to the glen.

Once having broken the spell of the she-woman of my erstwhile Sodom and Gomorrah, I found it easy to contemplate a future expedition into the wild spaces—another break from the lazy surroundings into which I had allowed myself to become ensnared.

In July I was again in Arran for a glorious fortnight, as also was Broadbent, one of my climbing friends. We were stationed at Whiting Bay, staying extremes apart, and managed to dodge one another successfully for about the first week. One morning I found myself cornered at last and forced to fix the following day for an attack on the A'Chir Ridge.

The first move was to interview the landlady; as this was my third interview, and the other two had been somewhat on the north side of friendly, I had some misgivings. After acidly commenting on the fact that I was used to early morning hours, she consented to let me have an early breakfast and some jelly pieces, and I departed joyously.

I did not see the dawn; nevertheless I was away with the first bus for Brodick. Broadbent joined me at King's Cross, and from there to our destination we mumbled about the weather. There was bright sunshine between heavy showers and the sun looked like winning.

We followed the same route as I had done in May—up Glen Rosa to the top of Beinn a' Chliabhain (2,141). This hill, for convenience sake, we duly rechristened "Chilblains." From this point, the sun being straight overhead, I managed to get a panoramic photograph of the group from Beinn Nuis round to Goat Fell. The ridge was kept to, up to the junction with the A'Chir, and we started our day's adventures on the rocks.

The first portion of the ridge was disappointing

although with a high wind it might be quite exciting—the second part gave us all the excitement we wanted. We travelled along it quickly until we came to a deep cleft; here we halted and, rather than admit to one another that we thought we were stuck, tactfully resolved to have some food. At this point the mist came down and enveloped us, making our thoughts all but as gloomy as our surroundings.

Dimly I remembered some one telling me that at one point the climber had to leave the ridge on the east or south-east side, but the more I looked at it the more I was convinced that this information was anything but correct. Such opinion I imparted to Broadbent—he was, if anything, more pessimistic than myself, his contribution to the solution of the difficulty being to the effect that we would have a stiff time climbing back. When he had comforted his inner man with bread and jam he took a brighter view of things and we examined the gap. Whither or no the mist had chilled our feet I cannot say, but we decided we would not take the south-east route. Then we examined the north-west slope: it was not at all inviting, and we took what we thought to be the lesser of two evils and started down the slabs in an attempt to work past the gully. We were not happy. The rucksack seemed to be desirous of pushing me out into the gloomy depths of what the Ordnance Survey map calls “The Black Rough Corrie.” The corrie did not get me—a self-evident fact! We slithered down and we scrambled up, and at last found ourselves again upon the ridge.

On viewing the gap from the opposite side, we could see a rounded crack slanting up to the south-east face but were not impressed; we had passed the obstacle and did not feel any great urge to try it by the reverse route. From this point the ridge was a pleasant walk to the Bealach between it and Cir Mhòr; here we held a council of war, and it was decided by a majority of two that we strike down Glen Rosa and leave Cir Mhòr to some other day.

It is a fine walk down the glen beside the Rosa Burn.

There are an abundance of tempting pools where one could plunge in the cool green depths. We fell to no such attractions, but keeping a steady pace reached home and a good meal.

The rain caught us just as we got into Brodick, but, being now in an exalted frame of mind, no amount of wet could damp the satisfactory glow that can alone be earned by a good day on the hills.

THE CORRIEYAIRACK PASS.

By ROBT. M. GALL INGLIS.

WHILE General Wade was making his famous military road from Perth to Inverness, he saw that it would be of strategic advantage to have a branch from Badenoch to Fort Augustus, and so give convenient access to that important centre. Accordingly the road over the Corrieyairack Pass was planned, and was finished about the year 1732.

Branching off the main road at Dalwhinnie, it crosses the hills to Laggan, and from there leads up the head waters of the Spey and over the Corrieyairack Pass to Fort Augustus.

* * * *

It was the opening of a Scottish Youth Hostels Hut near Fort Augustus that put the idea of a tramp over the Corrieyairack into our heads and, as we had planned spending a few days at the Ben Nevis Hut, two friends and myself decided to cross the Pass *en route*.

For trampers, the traverse of the Corrieyairack in one day is rather a lengthy undertaking, the distance from Laggan Bridge being 24 miles, but if a car is available, 12 miles' walk will be saved, as there is a good driving road up the glen as far as Melgarve.

My father offered to drive us as far as the road was practicable, and meet us next day at Spean Bridge, so, in due course, at Laggan Bridge church, we turned up what our old O.S. map indicated to be the route General Wade's road followed. After a couple of miles, however, we were surprised to find that the large bridge over the Spey was in ruins, and concluded that recent floods had done the damage, for we had been told that this road went all the way to Melgarve.* A foot-bridge, however,

* Since the above was in print, a Fellow of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries has informed me that the bridge was never finished.

had been erected at one side of the ruins, so we shouldered our rucksacks, and set out to face the extra 9 miles we had not bargained for, and which would make our tramp a race against nightfall.

Crossing the river, we walked up a steep path for 100 yards or so, past some workmen's huts. Imagine our surprise when presently we found ourselves on a fine driving thoroughfare running up the glen; obviously it had an entrance somewhere near Laggan Bridge, so we rushed back over the foot-bridge in order to catch my father before he got the car turned and departed for Spean Bridge. We were none too soon; had we been two minutes later we would have missed him, and would have had to suffer the irony of a two-hours' tramp over a road we might have driven up in comfort. However, all was well, and we were soon back in the car again, on our way back to Laggan Bridge. On making inquiries there, we were told that the road up the glen (a public one) turned off about 2 miles west of Drumgask, through a gate between two pillars.

Following this road, we found it to be of fair surface, and it took us up a pretty strath, well wooded in the lower half, while higher up hills of bold outline—the outspurs of Creag Meaghaidh—relieved the bleakness of the moor. After Garva Bridge, however, the hills assumed the uninteresting shape common to the Monadh-liath Range. The road now became somewhat gravelly, and ended at last at a broad ford about a quarter of a mile before the gamekeeper's cottage at Melgarve. We stopped at a convenient turning place about 100 yards back from the ford, and again shouldering our packs, set off along a ruddy watercourse, all that remains of General Wade's famous military road after a century's neglect.

For about a mile the road ran in a straight line, then turning right, round the end of a hill, the great Corrie of Corrieyairack came into view. The scenery now became very dreary, being even drearier for us now that the rain had come on. To our left was the Allt Yairack and the long humpy ridge of Meallan Odhar; on our right, the grassy slopes of Gairbeinn and Geal

Charn rose steeply, and, in front, the corrie itself bare and lonely. The monotony of our walk was relieved by watching the movements of some deer on the hill to our left. As we rose higher, we could not but reflect what a wonderful undertaking the construction of the road was, two hundred years before. How lonely and forsaken those soldiers must have felt up there in that wild corrie (especially in those days when the mountain fastnesses were feared), making only a few yards of road each day, often with the rain blattering down upon them! Little wonder there was often discontent in the camp.

Up, up went the road in a gradual slope, in a straight line, until, some 500 feet from the steep top of the corrie, it turned left, and ascended in twelve great zigzags, bringing us to the grassy summit of the pass, 2,507 feet above sea-level. The two cairns at the summit were reached one and a half hours after leaving Melgarve. One of these cairns marks the spot where a woman, carrying her infant in her arms, was overcome by fatigue and cold during a snowstorm, and sank down exhausted. Next day she was found by a search party, dead, but the infant was still alive, although cruelly frostbitten. On being carried back to warmth and safety, it recovered completely, although the limbs had suffered badly from exposure.

All the way up the pass the wind had been fairly strong in our faces, but now on the summit of the pass we encountered a furious gale, and a sharp shower of hail made the going very unpleasant. So strong was the wind that we could hardly make our way against it.

On a fine day a very good view could no doubt be obtained from the top of Corrieyairack, but under the present conditions we could see nothing.

The path here was at its best, fine grassy turf making a very pleasant descent. We were congratulating ourselves on this when suddenly the road relapsed into its former liquid state, becoming even worse than on the Laggan side. As we went on, the rain ceased for a few minutes, and we could see ghosts of great hills through the drifting mist. Then on would come the rain again, and blot everything out of sight.

About $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles down we found that the road made a loop to the left, but this could be avoided by making straight for the path which is seen not far below the curve. We plodded on, half-running, until we came to the steep slope leading down to the Allt Lagan a' Bhainne. Here the road was practically indistinguishable amongst rushes, but fortunately the fine new bridge over the river, erected last year by the Scottish Right of Way Society, is visible from this point, and indicates the direction.

Here the character of the scenery changed; it was pleasant to come into a beautifully wooded valley after the lonely moor above. Deep in this valley runs the river, and considerable difficulty must have been experienced in crossing before the new bridge was erected, Wade's bridge having long been washed away. Beyond the bridge the road again rose high above the river, its surface still appallingly rough and wet, and led down the valley to what at first sight appeared to be the last hillside before seeing Fort Augustus. But suddenly it turned sharply to the left, and led us up to a flat plateau from which the first glimpse of Loch Ness and Fort Augustus was obtained. At the foot of the slope below we could see a good road which evidently led into the village, so we hastened down to it, only to find at the foot a notice, "Wade's Road," pointing up the way we had come. A hundred yards or so along the good road we found a notice, "Private," against us, and another "Wade's Road" pointing into a sort of pass on our left. This pass did not take long to get through, however, and a rough path beside a wall brought us down to the main Spean Bridge road, four hours from Melgarve, and another twenty minutes took us into Fort Augustus. Three-quarters of an hour later we arrived at Auchterawe, where the Youth Hostel is, bringing us to our journey's end.

Next day we took the 10 A.M. bus to Spean Bridge, where my father met us and we went on to Fort William, and spent two enjoyable days at the Charles Inglis Clark Memorial Hut, returning to Edinburgh through Glencoe.

It may be worth while here to make a few comments on the New Road through Glencoe. After seeing it, I can say that the Glen is in no way spoiled.* The view from the Study is missed, but soon after passing Bridge of Coe, on rounding a curve, suddenly, past the slope of Sgòr nam Fiannaidh, the magnificent jagged ridge of the Aonach Eagach sweeps into view, seen to much greater advantage than from the old road. The precipices of Aonach Dubh and Stob Coire nan Lochain are also seen to great effect.

* * * *

As can be seen from the above, the traverse of the Corrieyairack would make a glorious excursion on a fine day. The conditions under which we did it were very unpleasant, little or no view being obtained, but under favourable circumstances a good deal ought to be seen.

The road is very rough all the way, rutty, heathery and grass-grown, and streaming with water for the greater part of its distance. It is between 9 and 12 feet broad, and the route cannot be missed. The only doubtful part, as I have indicated, is at the Allt Lagan a' Bhainne, but on making for the bridge the track will again be struck. Four hours will suffice for the traverse of the pass.

NOTE OF TIMES.

Melgarve	.	.	.	1.10 P.M.	
Summit	.	.	.	3.15	„ (after thirty-five minutes for lunch on the way up).
Main Fort Augustus Road				5.40	„
Fort Augustus	.	.	.	6.0	„
Auchterawe	.	.	.	6.45	„

Traverse of pass, four hours; Melgarve-Fort Augustus, four and a quarter hours.

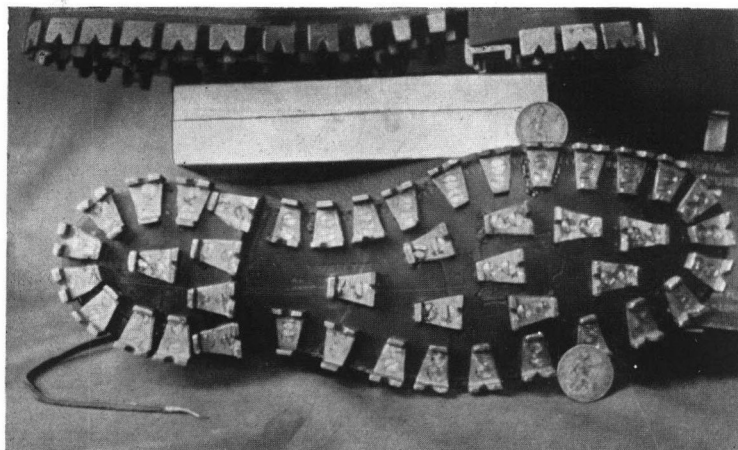
* The question is—what does the road look like from the hills? On the road itself it is naturally less obtrusive.—ED.



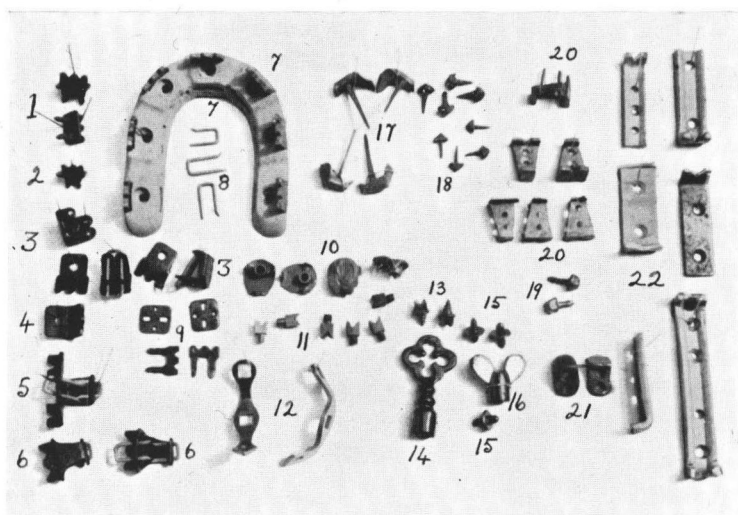
May 1925

THE CORRIEYAIRACK PASS
WADE'S BRIDGE: ALLT COIRE UCHDACHAN

A. E. Robertson



BOOTS NAILED WITH MALLEABLE-IRON CASTINGS.
(Halfpenny for scale—1 in. in diameter.)



Photos

NAILS.

G. Graham Macphree.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Tricouni, No. 1. | 12. Keys for "Bell's Patent." |
| 2. " No. 2. | 13. Ice Spikes. |
| 3. " No. 3. | 14. Key for Ice Spikes. |
| 4. " No. 4. | 15. Cricket Spikes. |
| 5. " No. 5. | 16. Key for Cricket Spikes. |
| 6. " No. 6. | 17. Ring Clinkers. |
| 7. " Heel. | 18. Alpine Hobnails. |
| 8. Fasteners for Nos. 3, 5, or 6. | 19. Square Hobnails or "Tackets." |
| 9. Separate parts of No. 1. | 20. Malleable-iron Castings. |
| 10. Plates for "Bell's Patent." | 21. U.H.U. Nails. |
| 11. Points for " " | 22. Woolworth Nails. |

NAILS.

By G. GRAHAM MACPHEE.

COMPARATIVELY few climbers take any real interest in their footgear. For many it suffices to place an order with A. of London or B. of somewhere else, and abide by the result produced. If the boots hurt or the nails drop out, another maker is tried next time; if not, all is well. The result is that bootmakers are usually very autocratic, and do not bother to carry out the climber's wishes. The story is told of a well-known mountaineer, a member of an Everest Expedition, who ordered a pair of boots nailed with Tricounis. When the boots arrived, they were nailed with clinkers and hobs. On remonstrating, he was told that Mr — always made boots that way, and if he did not like them, he could leave them. He did so. It is best for the climber to nail his own boots.

The foundation of good rock-climbing is footwork, and the foundation of good footwork is footgear. The naked foot is, of course, the natural way to climb. Rubber footgear most nearly approximates to the bare foot, since when rocks are wet, rubbers slip just like the naked foot. Stocking soles adhere better to wet or damp rock, and are therefore an artificial aid to climbing, as are scarpetti. The traditional footgear of "properly nailed British boots" is, of course, also an artificial aid to climbing. It is of nails that we have to treat.

The high standard of severity attained by modern rock-climbing in such places as the English Lake District demands the most effective equipment available. Requirements vary on different kinds of rock. In the Dolomites it has been found that soles of rope or felt give the best results, but in most places nailed soles can be used. It is true that some of the older generation of climbers can manage wonderfully well with poorly nailed boots. I have seen one man wearing boots like boats, with clinkers worn to resemble domes of silence more than nails, who

climbed a delicate slab with apparent ease. Yet I think his margin of safety must have been nil, " μ " must have been pushed to the limit, and I feel sure he would have climbed even better in well-nailed boots.

Leather alone tends to slip on rocks whether wet or dry. Nails give a grip on the rock.

Simple Nails may be regarded as nails consisting of one piece of metal which is attached directly to the boot. Compound Nails are those requiring to be fixed to the boot by screws, etc., and may consist of more than one part, like Tricounis. These divisions may overlap and are rather artificial. For instance, ice spikes and Bell's patent ("scrapers") are essentially the same nail, but the former would be classed as simple, the latter as compound.

Hobnails or *Tackets* provide the simplest form of nailing. They should be placed round the sole of the boot as close to the edge as possible and about one-third of an inch apart, with a few more dotted about the heel and the centre of the sole. Raeburn thought highly of this arrangement.

Clinkers need no introduction to most climbers. They are also called alpine nails, or fly-wing nails, and consist of a body with a flange at one end and a tapered spike near the other end, made of wrought iron. The old "continuous" method was to put many of these nails as closely as possible round the edge of the sole, with the flanges overlapping for mutual support. When worn, the result was a continuous rim of metal, excellent for protecting the sole, but useless for gripping on rock. If put in separately or in pairs, these nails very soon got kicked out.

Ring Clinkers are an improvement, and have a much longer spike which is passed through the sole diagonally at the edge, bent round the edge, and tucked under the flange of the nail. If properly inserted—no easy matter—this nail should stay in as long as the leather lasts. These nails can be spaced separately, but are often inserted in overlapping pairs. If several are placed close together and overlapping, as on the toe, they give a durable result.

They should be put in from the sides to the centre, and the central nail then overlaps two other nails at the toe.

The latest improvement is an extension inwards on the sole, with a hole for a small nail to steady the clinker.

A double clinker has been designed for the corners of the heel, but in my opinion a better result is got by using the ordinary large clinkers, putting one at each corner of the heel and overlapping others inwards towards the centre of the leading edge. A lot of wear takes place along this edge when descending, and it should always be well nailed.

The centre of the heel and of the sole can be filled with tackets placed so as to leave no large bare areas; or sole-nails may be used. One is enough for the heel.

Sole-nails, to call them that for want of a better term, are much used by Swiss and other alpine bootmakers. They have a flattened conical head, sometimes ribbed, with slight points at the ends of the ribs to prevent rotation. They are made of a soft iron and seem to stay in better than tackets. They are sometimes of other shapes, such as an inverted wedge. They are useful for filling odd spaces, and on the instep.

Cricket Spikes and *Ice Spikes* are screwed into the sole. The former have a single spike, the latter end in four sharp points. They are useful to screw into a hole left by a tacket or hobnail, as the key for them is light to carry on an expedition. They are bad for the boot, as the screw does not give enough hold to withstand severe stress, and if kicked out they leave an even larger hole. Raeburn's suggestion of preparing holes for their reception packed with string, and repacking after removing the screws, would be tedious and troublesome on the mountains. The advantages of ice spikes can be enjoyed by the use of scrapers (Bell's patent), *q.v.*

Bernina Nails consist of a thin plate of metal bent to form a right angle with three barbed prongs projecting from one edge to go into the sole. I found that they worked loose when the edge next the sole cut into the leather and eventually damaged it. This defect could be overcome by fitting a light plate between the nail and

the sole to prevent the nail cutting into the leather. The chief advantage of Bernina nails is their lightness, as they command a large area of sole for comparatively little weight of metal.

Sakorb Screws are flat, circular, hard steel nails with a raised serrated circumference and a hole in the centre for a screw. The serrated edges are very hard, being apparently case-hardened, and besides giving a good grip when new, do not wear down so quickly as softer nails. The Sakorb screw tends to rotate on the central screw, and a friend of mine once did a graceful pirouette on a pointed hold due to this cause. This defect can be obviated by filing (with difficulty) a nick in the edge and inserting a small nail in this nick. Sakorb nails are somewhat expensive, but are used by a good many rock-climbers in special positions, such as the toe of the boot or under the ball of the great toe.

Mummery Spikes are practically obsolete, as they ruin the boot. Two of them in the heel are less injurious, and are very useful for hard snow or soft ice, but they are quite superseded by crampons.

Scrapers.—This type of nail is also known as Bell's patent, and consists of two parts, a plate with a threaded socket and a nail to screw into the socket.

The plate is let into the sole of the boot between the layers of leather, and the socket projects through a hole in the outside layer of leather, which should be of the same thickness as the depth of the shoulder of the socket to give a flush result. Three points at the corners of the scutiform plate prevent rotation of the plate inside the sole. I understand that bootmakers soak the leather before the plates are inserted, and then beat the layers together to ensure close apposition.

The nails may be of any pattern, such as cricket spikes, but the writer had some specially made after the fashion of four-pointed ice spikes but slightly longer, with case-hardened points. The first lot were not case-hardened, and it was found that the points speedily became blunted. A key is used to tighten the points in the plates and, being light, should always be carried.

It is wise to smear the sockets and screws with vaseline or hard grease when first inserted to prevent moisture working in. Rust would render replacement of a nail almost impossible.

The chief disadvantage of these nails was the expense, since having to get points specially made increased the cost of nailing a pair of boots very considerably. Another disadvantage is that the spikes are too far from the edge of the boot, though this can to some extent be overcome by filing the narrow side of the plate next to the edge of the sole. Other disadvantages are that the boot must have the sole stripped in order to insert the plates; even putting the plates as closely together as possible does not allow of very many nails per boot, and some people supplement the scrapers by additional hobnails which, of course, nullify the advantage of having scrapers at all; the points may get kicked off in descending scree or rough ground after the climb, and if snapped off, the screw part is left in the socket and must be drilled out, or else a new plate inserted in the sole.

The advantage of scrapers is that they give the best grip of any nails I have tried. They can be used on any kind of rock, on very sloping holds, and on the smallest holds on which they can be placed. On soft and even moderately hard rock they will bite into the rock. The case-hardened points last quite a long time, and the long type of nail can be "sharpened" by filing it to produce four new points when it gets worn down.

U H U Nails are now apparently obsolete, though it is possible they may still be obtainable from Germany. The nail is made of malleable cast iron in two patterns, the H and the U, and is fastened to the boot by two screws. The nails are best arranged with a U and an H alternately. They are rather small, wear out quickly, and are costly.

Malleable Cast-iron Nails, made of low-carbon-content iron castings, were devised to succeed U H U nails. They also have two patterns; the broad-ended have a broad flange opposite the double spike, and the single-ended have a narrow flange opposite the single spike.

The flange protects the edge of the sole and the two spikes protect the two screws and afford a better grip. It is better if the flange is countersunk in the edge of the sole, and being of regular form this is much simpler than in the case of U H U nails. The difficulty is to get the screws clear of the stitching of the boot, and in the 1932 pattern this has been overcome by having the screw holes a little farther away from the flange, so that when the flange is countersunk the screws are both inside the stitching. The flange of the narrow-ended type can be divided by filing into two prongs which pass into the leather, when the nail is used in the middle of the sole. This device aids the two screws to hold the nail firmly.

The disadvantages are the expense, the tediousness of countersinking the flanges, the considerable weight of a complete set of nails, and the somewhat rapid wearing-down, though this is less than with many other types of nail.

The advantages are that an excellent grip is obtained on most kinds of rock, the gripping points are at the very edge of the sole, any number and arrangement can be used, a new nail can easily be fixed to replace a worn one, as they are all drilled exactly, and the same kind of nail can be used in the centre of the sole as round the edges—an important matter from the point of view of friction. This last advantage, of course, also pertains to scrapers, Tricounis, etc.

It is my opinion that this is the best nail for general purposes so far devised. A set should last at least a month in the Alps, and spares can be carried to replace worn nails easily, a screwdriver being alone required; $\frac{5}{8}$ inch No. 5 wood screws are used to fasten the nails to the sole, and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch No. 5 for the heels. It is a good thing to pierce holes with an awl for receiving the screws, and to work a little gold-size or Durofix into the holes before putting in the screws. This gives a good result, and nails are seldom or never lost. It is best to have the nails more closely set along the inner border of the boot. The writer's experience is that most wear in rock-

climbing takes place under the metatarso-phalangeal joint, *i.e.*, under the ball of the big toe, and nails should be closer together in this position.

A propos of these nails, the conservative nature of some mountaineers was evinced when a well-known climber, who was, I believe, to some extent responsible for the vogue of U H U nails in this country, was recently shown some of these malleable-iron castings. He was indignant at the suggestion that they *could* be better than U H U nails, and while admitting that the latter are now almost unobtainable, he refused to accept a set of the new nails. As one who has used both, I have no hesitation in saying I prefer the new type.

The new nails might be even better if made of soft cast steel, but it is difficult enough to get any manufacturer to make them at all, even in lots of 5,000.

(Continued in November Number.)

JOHN MACROBERT,

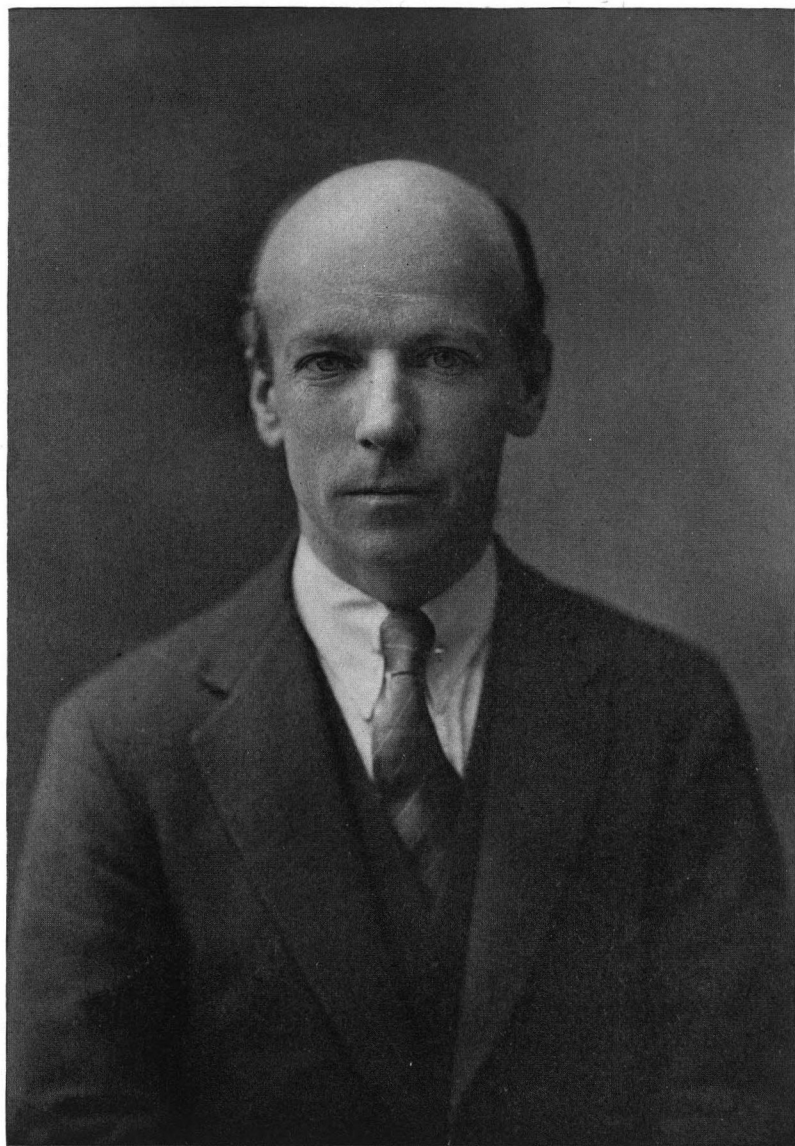
HON. EDITOR, 1928-32.

AFTER the death of G. B. Green, George Sang edited one number of the *Journal* while the Committee sought for a successor. John MacRobert agreed to take over from Sang until one was found. As time passed and the problem appeared to be an insoluble one, MacRobert was asked to continue in office, which he did at no little inconvenience. His activities, apart from his profession, are many, and his position as Editor has made great demands on his time. It was only to help the Club out of a difficulty that he agreed to continue as Editor, and the thanks of the Club are due to him, in no small measure, for his readiness to carry on.

For four years MacRobert controlled the destinies of the *Journal* and carried out his duties with the greatest success. The maintenance of such a high standard is an accomplishment of considerable difficulty, and the continued excellence of the *Journal* is, in itself, an eloquent tribute to the success which has crowned his efforts, and to the ability with which he has followed in the footsteps of his distinguished predecessors.

During MacRobert's Editorship there have appeared articles of general interest to the number of about 24; descriptions of new climbs, 15; excursions and memoirs, 14; and technical articles about 9, besides the usual Notes and Excursions. This will serve to show the variety and interest of the last ten numbers. That his efforts as Editor did not cease when he gave up office is shown by the number of articles he was able to hand over to his successor, and these, moreover, would seem to justify his assertion that there is no sign of any lack of material about the Scottish hills with which to fill the pages of the *Journal*.

MacRobert has thoroughly earned the rest to which



JACK MACROBERT
HON. EDITOR - 1928-1932

the members of the Club will agree he is entitled. Let us hope that his "rest" will be gained by exchanging the ice-axe for the pen, and that his experience as Editor will tempt him to describe his activities for the benefit of the Club and, incidentally, for the benefit of his successor.

THE CAIRNGORM DISASTER.

THE following paragraph appeared in an English Sunday paper, dated 15th January, under the heading of "The Cairngorm Tragedy":—

"Even many of those who live in the near vicinity of the Scottish, Welsh, and Lakeland mountains fail to realise the danger attendant upon attempts to reach some of the summits during the winter months.

"The recent tragedy of the Cairngorms has once more emphasised the tragic sequel that may follow such efforts, and one has a feeling that authorities ought to issue regular warnings during the bad weather against such climbing feats.

"In fact, it would not be a bad idea if there were an official 'close' season for the scaling of uplands above a certain height."

The author of the above paragraph expresses an opinion which is held by many people who are quite unaware both of the circumstances of such regrettable accidents, and of the precautions which are taken by those accustomed to climb in the high hills in the depth of winter. It has therefore been thought advisable to give a brief account of the unfortunate event, and at the risk of "harping on an old theme," to issue a grave warning to those who, without sufficient consideration of what may be the outcome, persist in disregarding what are merely the usual precautions taken in winter mountaineering, at all events by trained mountaineers. For the writing of this article, information has been obtained from all the numbers of the *Glasgow Herald* which contained reference to the accident, and from extracts from the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*.

On Sunday, the 1st January, Alistair Mackenzie and Duncan Ferrier motored to Glenmore, where they left their car and set out with the intention of climbing Cairngorm. Apparently they made known their plan

of passing Sunday night at the Shelter Stone near Loch Avon.

Mackenzie was evidently acquainted with the district, having made several ascents in the Cairngorm region; his companion, a younger man, was also an active athlete but with less experience of mountain climbing.

On Tuesday, the 3rd January, the keeper at Glenmore became anxious, since the two men had not returned for their car. He telephoned to Grantown with the result that from the 4th to the 9th January search parties scoured a large area of ground in search of the missing climbers. For a long time the only clue discovered was contained in a note-book found at the Shelter Stone, where the men had passed Sunday night. This contained the following extract:—

“ Arrived here 3.30 P.M. after a stiff climb over ice and against a stiff head wind ”; and later, “ 2nd of January, dawn wilder than the 1st, mist rising before a fierce gale, setting out for Glenmore, 11 A.M.”

In view of these entries, it can only be assumed that either these men were unacquainted with the conditions they were likely to meet, or were prepared to take what even then must have been obvious to be a very grave risk. Consider that note of the 1st January, “ A stiff climb over ice and against a stiff head wind,” and then that last pregnant entry, “ Dawn wilder than the 1st.” It might fairly have been conjectured that conditions on the tops were altogether exceptional. The Shelter Stone by Loch Avon stands at about 2,400 feet, below which level ice must have been already encountered; what then would be the state of the ground at 3,500 feet, which seems to have been at least the height attained by the climbers, at a low estimate, and what greatly increased severity might naturally be expected of the gale at that increased height? A properly equipped mountaineering party would be hard put to it to extricate themselves safely from such a situation, but these unfortunate men were in no sort of way prepared to face what men of experience would have expected to face on that day. Ferrier wore only a light trench coat over a scout uniform and light

pull-over, and ordinary shoes with a few protectors in the soles. Mackenzie wore breeches, an army tunic, and a light raincoat. His shoes had no nails at all. Neither carried an ice-axe, absolutely indispensable to those who climb above the snow-line in winter. It will be obvious from the above that neither man was in any way prepared to meet bad weather. It is doubtful if such clothing would enable the wearer to survive a winter night even in the higher valleys without some shelter. For such an expedition as they had planned it was totally inadequate.*

On 6th January came the first definite clue since the finding of the note-book at the Shelter Stone. A haversack belonging to Mackenzie was found on the north slopes of Cairngorm beside a burn which runs down towards Loch Morlich. This sack contained blankets rolled in a waterproof sheet. These would, of course, be of great value at a bivouac, in the open, or under shelter, but provide no warmth for the climber struggling to reach safety. It is easy to be wise after the event, but there is no doubt that a few reserve garments and the use of proper clothes in the beginning might have staved off the exhaustion which appears to have overcome the climbers when within measurable distance of safety.

During the search the weather was extremely bad, every indication pointing to the probability of the bodies being buried under a thick layer of snow. Footprints, however, were found leading from the direction of the summit of Cairngorm to near where the haversack was found. When the last search party returned on 7th January, severely handled by the weather, it was decided to abandon the search till the milder spring conditions should have melted the great snow-fields. But on the 8th conditions had so greatly improved that a strong party set out for a final search near the place where the last traces had been found. Their efforts, as is well known, were crowned with success. The bodies were found on the bank of the Allt a' Coire Cas, on the north side of

* See page 54.

Cairngorm, near the spot where the haversack had been discovered. It is unnecessary to describe the pitiful state of the bodies; let it suffice to say that they bore tragic evidence of the fury of the storm and of the heroic efforts of the men to win through. It appears that they had actually succeeded in crossing Cairngorm from Loch Avon, but exhausted by the terrible struggle, their senses dimmed by the force of the gale, and not realising their position, they had sunk down or fallen, and been covered by the snow in Coire Cas on the other side of the mountain.

Enough praise cannot be given to those who took part in the search for six days in hail and sleet, snow and wind; that their efforts were successful was no more than their deserved reward.

There remain but one or two points to be cleared up—the mention of a “closed season” or “warnings during bad weather.” These are neither desirable nor necessary if precautions are taken. Climbers in Scotland are frequently isolated during many days when staying at some remote bothy or hut. A portable wireless would appear to be the sole means of receiving such warnings, but the impracticability of carrying a heavy instrument of this type is at once obvious. The present writer remembers climbing the Tower Ridge of Ben Nevis at Easter in practically summer conditions, yet within eighteen hours the strongest climbing party with which he has ever climbed, at home or in the Alps, was defeated on the same Ridge and forced to make a dangerous descent. Such instances could be multiplied at will, but the above will serve to show that the suddenness of weather changes in Scotland (much more rapid than in the Alps) make weather warnings far too late to be of any service.

In this particular case any such warning would have been unnecessary. The entry in the “log” found at the Shelter Stone shows that the climbers realised that conditions were very bad; that they continued with their original plan in spite of this can only be attributed to faulty judgment. In the letter by Mr Garden, quoted

below, the correct plan to have followed under the circumstances is clearly seen.

The question of a "close season" is scarcely worth discussing. Trained climbers have to accomplish a sufficient number of expeditions in bad weather without going out of their way to look for them. Victory may often lie in retreat, and the experienced climber, recognising this, will invariably weigh the risk before asking more of himself than he is certain he can give. In conclusion, the following extracts from a letter by Mr William Garden to the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* of the 13th January are worth the careful attention of every hill walker and climber:—

"1. The party must always be thoroughly equipped as regards clothing, no matter how favourable the weather conditions may appear at the start of an expedition. A spare pull-over, a broad Shetland muffler, a woollen helmet, a burberry close-fitting jacket, woollen gloves (pod shape) with an outer canvas covering, strong hob-nailed boots, and anklets of knitted wool should on every occasion form part of the essential outfit.

"2. As regards the number of the party, it should never be less than four, for winter expeditions at any rate. . . .

"3. Should the weather conditions become exceptionally bad, the party should at once appreciate that it is a greater victory to retreat than to advance.

"4. Constant reference must be made to the compass."

It might be added that the possession of a map, and the knowledge of how to use it, is also an essential. Even ground with which one is familiar becomes quite foreign in heavy mist.

Mr Garden concludes his letter: ". . . had the ill-fated party of last week, when it left the Shelter Stone, followed the north side of Loch Avon and crossed the Saddle (2,707 feet) at the east end of the loch, and so struck the head waters of the River Nethy, instead of re-ascending Cairngorm by Coire Raibeirt, it would in all probability have won through. It would have had the

wind behind it, and the advantage of being at a very much lower altitude."

Reviewing the whole circumstances of this sad accident, we cannot resist again urging hill walkers and climbers to consider an expedition from all possible aspects before deciding that the risk is worth taking. We should never advocate a policy of extreme caution, but nobody with the smallest experience of the mountains would for a moment consider starting a climb without taking what are merely ordinary precautions. This accident falls into that most tragic of all classes—those which might so easily have been avoided.

C. W. P.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1933—CRIANLARICH.

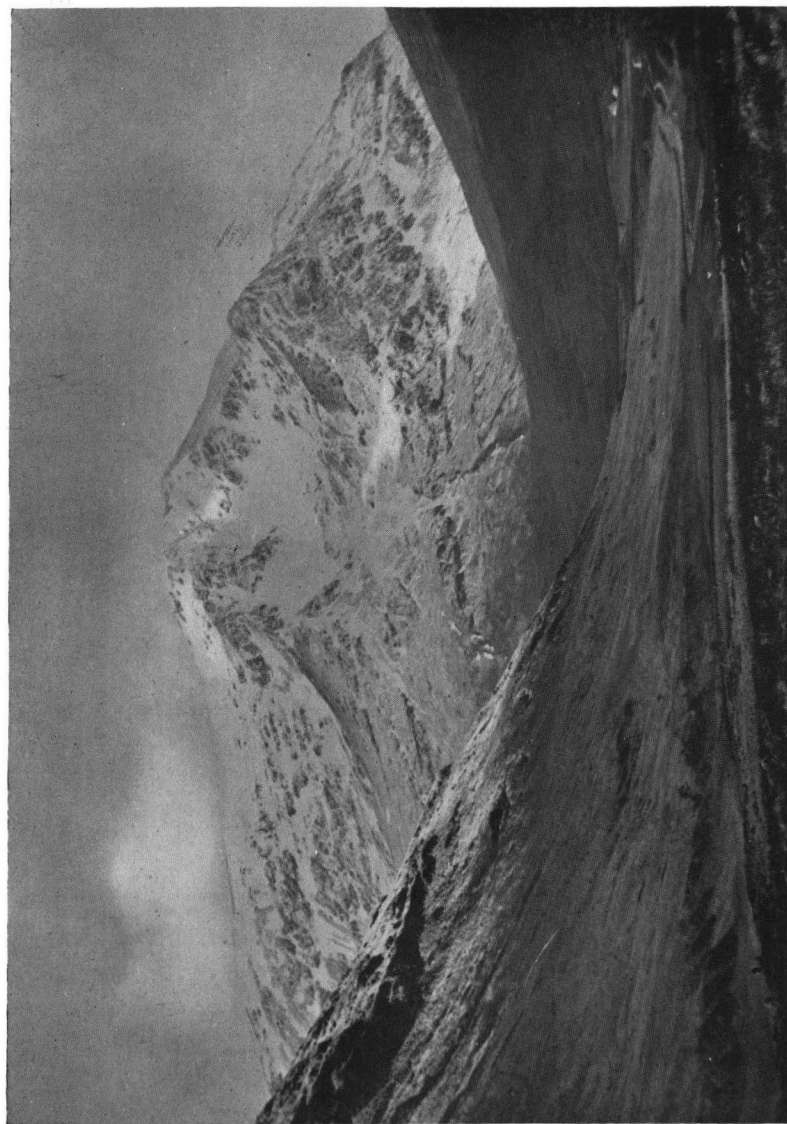
THE following members and guests were present at one time or another* :—

Members.—The President, J. Logan Aikman, W. J. Bannister, L. St C. Bartholomew, J. H. B. Bell, D. Rainy Brown, J. F. A. Burt, T. Fraser Campbell, Ian M. Campbell, J. Rooke Corbett, S. F. M. Cumming, Arthur Dixon, Percy Donald, John Dow, J. Gall Inglis, R. M. Gall Inglis, T. H. Gibson, Alex. Harrison, J. Harrison, K. K. Hunter, A. G. Hutchison, J. S. M. Jack, Kenneth G. Jackson, Robert Jeffrey, G. Murray Lawson, W. G. P. Lindsay, W. N. Ling, J. Y. Macdonald, Ian W. M'Innes, D. Mackay, J. G. MacLean, Ross MacLean, G. Graham Macphee, Sir H. M'Pherson, D. H. M'Pherson, Jack MacRobert, E. N. Marshall, R. W. Martin, M. Matheson, R. W. B. Morris, J. G. Osborne, C. W. Parry, J. P. Pattullo, J. Rennie, John Roberts, Rev. A. E. Robertson, T. G. Robinson, A. J. Rusk, R. N. Rutherford, J. A. Scott, R. M. Scott, W. B. Speirs, G. R. Speirs, E. C. Thomson, Gilbert Thomson, H. W. Turnbull, W. Waddell. (57.)

Guests.—Barry Brown, Norman L. Hird, B. H. Humble, J.M.C.S., S. I. Jack, H. M. Kilgour, D. R. Kilgour, A. Melville, Charles D. L. Murray, Dr Myles, J. Neill Orr, F. M. Shewell. (11.) A total of 68.

Those who arrived before the official opening of the Meet had rather the better weather, as conditions became deplorable as time went on, culminating on Monday,

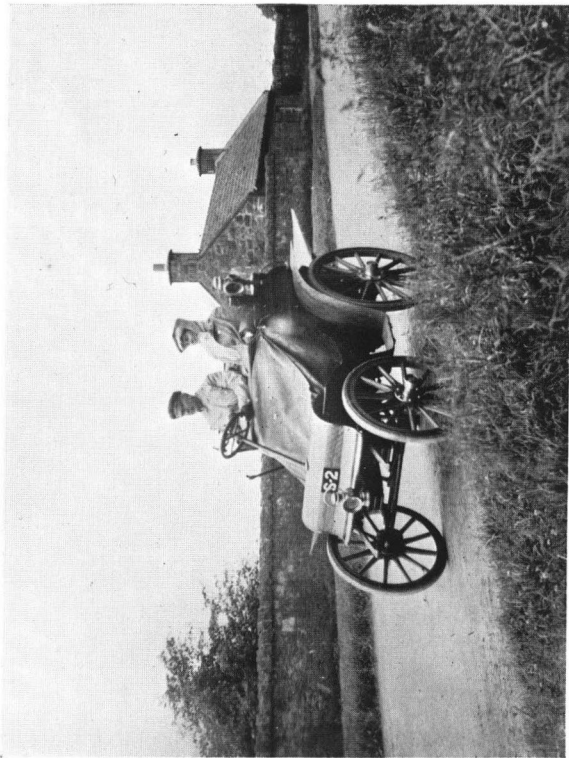
* If any names are inadvertently omitted from this report the historian offers his apologies. If anyone was not asked what he did, he may (or may not) console himself with the thought that others were asked considerably more than once.



H. Gardner

BEINN LAOIGH FROM NEAR CONINISH

April 1922



DR AND MRS INGLIS CLARK IN S.2.
(About 1903.)

the 2nd, in one of the worst gales ever experienced at a Meet. As is often the case at a New Year Meet, the snow conditions were poor, and many parties appear to have spent a quite appreciable part of their time in the study of mountain life, as represented by ptarmigan, deer, etc., while others of less materialistic outlook reported having seen remarkably clear Brocken Spectres. For all those who stayed at Crianlarich, and especially for those who ventured but a modest distance each day, the hotel provided comfort than which the present writer can remember nothing better at any Meet that he has attended.

A good deal of climbing was accomplished, though the purist may pardonably wonder at the inclusion of an ascent in Glencoe; perhaps at Easter the historian may receive word of an ascent of Ben Lomond. The expeditions are given in no particular order on each day, but appear in the order in which they were received.

Sir Hugh M'Pherson and D. H. M'Pherson started their climbing a week before the official opening of the Meet. On Saturday, 24th December, they climbed An Caisteal and Beinn a' Chroin; on Sunday, Beinn Chaluim; on Monday they traversed Beinn Dòrain, Beinn an Dòthaidh, Beinn Achaladair, and Beinn a' Chreachain. On Tuesday they ascended Beinn Dubhchraig and Ben Oss.

On Wednesday Donald arrived, and with the M'Phersons did Beinn Chabhair.

Corbett also arrived, having ascended the first of a list of tops, distinguished by the most formidable names, Meall na Fearna.

Thursday was very wet, nevertheless Donald, the M'Phersons, and the Kilgours, who had arrived the previous evening, did Beinn Laoigh and Beinn a' Chleibh.

Corbett added worthily to his list with Beinn Chaorach, Beinn a' Chaisteil, and Beinn nam Fuaran.

The President, celebrating his accession to office, arrived at the Meet not only a day before the official opening, but a day earlier than he had ever been noticed to appear before. He found little difficulty in leading

Ling and Parry (in the dark) from the station to the hotel door.

Bartholomew arrived by car, and Sir Hugh M'Pherson left in the evening.

Friday, 30th December.

This was a much better day, especially in the evening. A large number of members arrived during the course of the day.

The President, Ling, and Bartholomew did Ben More and Am Binnein.

Parry, accepting the kind offer of the loan of Bartholomew's car, motored to Bridge of Orchy to photograph.

Donald, M'Pherson, and the Kilgours did Meall Corranaich and Meall a' Choire Lèith. Donald and H. M. Kilgour had, according to the rest of their party, a much-needed if not very enjoyable bathe on the descent.

J. H. B. Bell and Dr Myles ascended Meall Bhuidhe, and left the next day to explore in Glencoe. A separate note on this, and on one or two other climbs, appears at the end of the Report, to complete the account.

Corbett bagged another 2,500 feet top, Stob a' Choin, also another eminence which he failed to identify, but which a galaxy of Past-Presidents had no difficulty in naming Beinn a' Chaorbeathad.

J. Rennie and T. Fraser Campbell arrived for lunch. It was a real pleasure to welcome two original members to the Meet, and many were the expressions of regret from those on the hills, that they had missed seeing these old friends.

The evening trains brought many arrivals whose names will be found in the list of the next day's activities.

Saturday, 31st December.

The Meet having reached nearly its climax, the weather did the same. The morning was damp, the afternoon wet, and the evening soaking, with high winds.

Quite a number arrived by the early train and were enjoying breakfast when the remainder descended at the normal hour.

Burt, arriving before lunch and remembering his previous unfortunate premature departures, threatened to depart immediately afterwards, with the charitable object of securing improved weather conditions for those remaining.

Corbett did Beinn a' Chuirn, getting a lift home. He reported it was raining.

E. C. Thomson and Parry walked almost to Ben More Farm and back in the morning.

Dow and Macphee ascended Stob Creagach, Meall na Dige, Stob Coire an Lochain, and Am Binnein.

Cruach Ardrain and Stob Garbh appear to have been the most favoured climbs on Saturday as no fewer than five parties accomplished this traverse.

The President, Jack, and Ling; Donald, M'Pherson, and the Kilgours; Dixon and Morris; Rusk, Hutchison, and Rutherford; Jack MacRobert and Hunter, were the parties concerned. Most of these ascended by the Grey Heights Col.

Cumming did Stob Garbh.

In spite of the wear and tear, the contour of these hills appears to have changed little, although Matheson and Roberts, starting together for Cruach Ardrain and Beinn Tulaichean, mislaid each other descending Stob Garbh and arrived home separately.

Bannister and R. M. Scott did Beinn Chaluim.

Logan Aikman walked to Ben More Farm.

Murray Lawson and Bartholomew did Beinn Chabhair and An Caisteal, descending by the Twisting Ridge.

M'Innes and Pattullo ascended Ben More and Am Binnein.

Alex. Harrison, J. Harrison, and J. A. Scott arrived, having done Am Binnein from Balquhiddy.

T. G. Robinson and Jackson ascended Cruach Ardrain and Beinn Tulaichean then back over Cruach Ardrain and Stob Garbh.

J. Y. Macdonald and Orr did Beinn Chaluim,

descending to the north. They actually reached the top twice to make sure the ascent had been completed.

Ross Maclean, starting late, did Cruach Ardrain.

Jack Maclean, Waddell, and Ian Jack ascended Beinn a' Chreachain by gullies.

Martin and Melville nearly did Beinn Chaluim, descending to Glen Lyon, a big round of some 25 miles.

Gilbert Thomson, Marshall, W. B. and G. R. Spiers arrived late in the evening.

There were forty-four present for dinner on Saturday evening, the largest recorded at a Meet at Crianlarich. Christmas and New Year cards were received from Graham Kerr and Geddes, while greetings were received from the Cairngorm Club, Ladies' Scottish Climbing Club, and Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland. Suitable replies were sent to these Clubs. Apologies for absence were received from H. Alexander and M. J. Robb, also a message from A. E. Robertson.

After dinner the President reminded the Club of the great loss they had suffered by the death of William Douglas and William Inglis Clark. In a short speech he outlined the great extent of their work for the Club, and spoke of the deep affection which they inspired in all who knew them. At his suggestion the whole company rose, and remained standing for a few moments, as a silent tribute to their memory.

Before dinner Jack was seen to be effecting repairs to the President's hat, the real reason not being forthcoming until later, when he presented to MacRobert a cardboard crown, which appeared to be of approximately correct dimensions, decorated with the presidential initials.

Sunday, 1st January.

This was a very much better day than the others, though with a cold wind, fairly strong on the heights.

Murray Lawson, Turnbull, and Matheson did Beinn Achaladair, Beinn a' Chreachain, and Meall Buidhe. Parry went with them to Loch Tulla to photograph.

Gibson, Osborne, Pattullo, and M'Innes did Beinn

an Dòthaidh, Beinn Achaladair, Meall Buidhe, and retreated from Beinn a' Chreachain.

Alex. Harrison and Shewell, with some J.M.C.S. members, did the central Couloir of Beinn Laoigh.

The President, Ling, J. Harrison, and J. A. Scott ascended Beinn Laoigh by the ridge.

Bannister, R. M. Scott, Orr, and Morris did Meall Glas, Beinn Cheathaich, and Meall a' Churain.

Rutherford, Robinson, and Jackson ascended Beinn Dubhchraig, Ben Oss, and Beinn Laoigh.

J. S. M. Jack, Burt, and Cumming ascended Ben More.

Corbett and Donald did Beinn nan Imirean, Sgiath Chùil, and Meall a' Churain!

Gilbert Thomson and E. C. Thomson reached 1,700 feet on Cruach Ardrain.

Mackay walked from Balquhiddier.

Rainy Brown, R. M. Gall Inglis, Lindsay, and Ian Jack ascended Beinn Dòrain and Beinn an Dòthaidh.

Marshall and J. Craig and party did Stob Garbh and Cruach Ardrain.

Dow and Martin did Stob Coire Bhuidhe, Stob Garbh, Cruach Ardrain, Beinn Tulaichean, and back over the shoulder of Cruach Ardrain to Meall Dhamh, the Grey Heights, and home.

Murray was up the Grey Heights, Cruach Ardrain, and Stob Garbh.

Ross Maclean, J. G. Maclean, and Waddell ascended Meall a' Bhùiridh and Clach Leathad.

Macphee, Logan Aikman, and Dixon did both tops of Beinn Chaluim.

Hunter accompanied Jack MacRobert, who left for Glasgow, as far as Killin.

Rusk and Roberts walked towards Tyndrum to get a glimpse of Beinn Laoigh.

Melville walked to near Ardlui, then took to the hills, walked round Ben Vorlich, and home by the road—a round of about 30 miles.

Quite a number of climbers took a walk in the evening before dinner, which may be taken as a compliment to

the catering. The previous day's record was broken, as forty-nine sat down to dinner on Sunday.

To-day the study of wild life reached its height, as several parties saw large quantities of deer and ptarmigan, though no reports were received of wild cats.

Monday, 2nd January.

Monday morning was very windy and cloudy, and heavy rain followed in the afternoon. Conditions were extremely bad on the tops, no party succeeding in bagging a "Munro."

Rutherford, Robinson, and Jackson accepted a lift from Rusk a few miles down Glen Falloch, then walked to Ardlui. Hunter was with the party but continued walking to Tarbet.

The two Harrisons and Shewell returned from Cruach Ardrain early and wet.

Donald, after unsuccessfully attempting to borrow E. C. Thomson's flu' left, bereft of excuse, with Dow, Orr, R. M. Gall Inglis, and Humble for Beinn Dubhchraig. After very nearly reaching the summit they had to return, as Gall Inglis most unfortunately was blown off his feet and cut his hand nastily on his ice-axe.

Murray Lawson and Burt walked $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles towards Beinn Laoigh from the Schoolhouse. They were accompanied there by Matheson and Mackay, who returned later, having spent the afternoon studying forestry.

Dixon and Martin reached the snow-line on Ben More, then retreated. During the return journey conditions became so bad that they nearly returned to complete the ascent.

J. S. M. Jack walked back to the hotel from 4 miles the other side of Tyndrum.

Turnbull, Bannister, and R. M. Scott walked back from the farm at Beinn Laoigh.

Morris and Roberts walked to Beinn Laoigh and back.

J. G. Maclean and Waddell ascended Beinn Odhar—the only completed ascent. Although this is not a "Munro," it is a thoroughly good "Corbett."

Ian Campbell, Murray, and Ian Jack retreated from the shoulder of Beinn Achaladair.

Robert Jeffrey and party arrived, but got no climb owing to the dreadful weather. A. E. Robertson arrived in the afternoon. Only nine were left for dinner on Monday evening.

Tuesday, 3rd January.

Blue sky and clouds in the morning were followed by rain and cold winds in the afternoon. Snow attempted to fall, and there was a little new snow on the tops.

Matheson and Rainy Brown did Beinn Chuirn. Robertson and Parry walked towards Coninish, returned to the Schoolhouse when rain started, and lunched in Rainy Brown's car before walking home.

Conditions were very bad on the tops with driving hail and sleet.

Wednesday, 4th January.

The last die-hards departed.

The following three reports were received later and are given here to complete the account:—

Saturday.—J. H. B. Bell and Turnbull attempted to follow Collie and Hasting's route on the face of Aonach Dubh in Glencoe. Tough and Brown are supposed to have repeated it from the somewhat scanty description. It lies east of Shadbolt's Chimney.

Sunday.—J. H. B. Bell and Colin Allen proceeded to Coire Beith to photograph and investigate the Arch Gully. This was exceedingly difficult owing to half an inch of ice glaze on the rocks, so an exit was forced to the right up a chimney. Then they proceeded over Bidean and Stob Coire nan Lochan.

From J. Y. Macdonald.—"On Saturday night I went to Luib, the Crianlarich Hotel being full, and formed an unofficial overflow Meet with Blackie, and on Sunday, with two non-members, we climbed Meall Ghaordie. On Monday, Blackie and I went up Beinn Heasgarnich from Glen Lochy, and enjoyed a thoroughly miserable

day. There is no doubt that if we had had to face the wind on the summit ridge on the outward instead of on the return journey, we would never have reached the cairn. There was just enough snow to enable us to retrace our steps without taking our eyes off the ground. I had to leave that night."

From B. H. Humble.—"Saturday.—One of a big crowd on Cruach Ardrain and Stob Garbh.

"Sunday.—With two non-members, first ascended Ben More, then over Am Binnein, Stob Coire an Lochain, and Meall na Dige. At bealach between latter two hills encountered three youths. Their story was as follows: They were cyclists spending the week-end at the Youths' Hostel at Loch Voil. They had come from there with the intention of climbing Ben More. When well up, one man came off and slid down a considerable distance. He had lost his glasses, and his face and both forearms were cut and bleeding. The three were dressed in usual cyclist's kit—open-necked shirt, sweater and jacket, shorts, and thin shoes. They had no gloves, no headgear, no sticks, and carried no packs or extra clothing. All were feeling cold, but were below snow and mist and making good progress for home when we saw the last of them."

This was a most enjoyable Meet, very well attended in spite of the bad weather. The thanks of the Club are due to Mr Stuart and his staff for their most successful efforts to make everything as comfortable as possible.

C. W. P.

FORTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1932.

THE REV. A. E. ROBERTSON presided at the Annual General Meeting held in the Caledonian Station Hotel, Edinburgh, on Friday, 2nd December 1932.

The HON. SECRETARY read the minutes of the last meeting, and the HON. TREASURER submitted the Club's financial statement. The finances of the Club were

found to be in a healthy condition both as regards the revenue of the Club and the invested funds.

The HON. EDITOR'S report was submitted and approved. On his retiral from the Editorship of the *Journal* he was warmly thanked for his services during the last few years.

The HON. LIBRARIAN submitted a report on the Library and Slide Collection. He also received a cordial vote of thanks on demitting this office.

A report on the Club Hut was submitted by R. R. ELTON: he said that there was increased use being made of the Hut.

The GENERAL "GUIDE BOOK" EDITOR submitted his report for the year, with special reference to the two new volumes which had been published.

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

The various office-bearers were appointed for the ensuing year:—

President.—H. MacRobert in place of Rev. A. E. Robertson.

Vice-President.—Stuart F. Cumming in place of J. C. Thomson.

Editor.—C. W. Parry in place of J. MacRobert.

Librarian.—Malcolm Matheson in place of G. Murray Lawson.

New Members of Committee.—G. R. Speirs, J. Robb, and G. G. Macphee.

Custodian of Slides.—D. Mackay.

Hon. Secretary.—Alex. Harrison.

Assistant Hon. Secretary.—J. Logan Aikman.

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

It was agreed to hold the Easter Meet for 1934 at Braemar, and the New Year Meet, 1934, at Loch Awe.

RECEPTION.

The Reception was held at the Royal Arch Halls, the guests being received by the President.

There was an exhibition of a collection of photographs, which comprised a few foreign views in addition to photographs taken in Scotland.

After tea Dr Lewis Graham showed slides of the Western Highlands and Skye.

The reception was well attended, and a cordial reception was given to Dr Graham's exhibition.

CLUB-ROOM.

During the winter the following addresses, illustrated by lantern slides, were given in the Club-Room :—

“ The Southern Alps of New Zealand.”

“ Camps and Climbs in Scotland.”

“ A North-West Passage from Badenoch to Poolewe.”

These pleasantly informal talks were given by Alex. Harrison, Percy Donald, and the Rev. A. E. Robertson respectively, and were thoroughly enjoyed.

LIBRARY REPORT.

Since the last issue of the *Journal* the following volumes have been presented to the Library :—

“ Episodes in a Varied Life.” By Lord Conway.

“ The Teton Peaks and Their Ascents.” By Fritiof Fryxell.

“ An Epitome of Fifty Years' Climbing.” By Claude Wilson.

The Club collection of maps has been supplemented by the addition of all the Scottish mountain sheets of the 1-in. O.S. brown hill-shaded edition (purchased by the

Club), by a considerable number of 6-in. O.S. sheets selected from the maps belonging to the late Colin Phillip (very kindly presented to the Club by Mrs Phillip), and by the Ordnance Survey $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. scale atlases of Scotland and England. The whole collection has now been carefully indexed and arranged by Mr Percy Donald, to whom the Librarian is much indebted. The index will be found on the Club-Room table and the folded maps in one of the bookcases. The flat maps are in the map cabinet in the attic.

SLIDE COLLECTION.

Mr R. Jeffrey has kindly presented eight slides showing technical details of climbing on the Aiguille du Grépon. The Club is also indebted to Mr J. Y. Macdonald and Professor H. W. Turnbull for seventeen slides including Ben Nevis and certain of the Pennine Alps.

There is an increasing request for slides, and in order to have the Scottish collection more complete topographically the Custodian would appreciate the gift of slides of the following hills and groups which are not at present represented :—

Beinn Heasgarnich: Beinn Chaluim (from Glen Lochay):
 Ben Vannoch: The Chno Dearg Group: The Sgòr
 Gaibhre Group: The Eastern Cairngorms: Gulvain:
 Moruisg and Sgùrr a'Mhuilinn: A' Mhaighdean: Mullach
 Coire Mhic Fhearchair: Fionn Bheinn: Ben Klibreck.
 D. M.

Vol. XX. of the *Journal* begins with the current issue, and in accordance with previous practice the Contents and Index to Vol. XIX. are published with this number. The work of preparing these has been done by Mr J. A. Parker, to whom we are greatly indebted for the considerable labour involved.

SOUTHWARD BOUND.

METAPHORS AND A MORAL.

*“ As I came through the desert, thus it was,
As I came through the desert.”*

—THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT.

As I came o'er the Devil's Stair
The rain sent Etives down my spine,
A Clachlet weighed my shoulders down
—And Kingshouse bar had closed at nine.

As I came o'er the Blackmount road
Night's gully-walls closed in on me,
And in the dark my soul fared forth
—On nine miles uncompacted scree.

As dawn came grey by Orchy-side
My thoughts were stark peat-blackened roots,
And all Glencoe was in my heart
—And most of Rannoch on my boots.

* * * *

As I come o'er the mem'ry now
A Brocken-glory rings its woes,
A Crianlarich *alpen-gluhen*
Flushes the deathly facts with rose.

And so I'll start, next free week-end,
With visions of a sunlit track,
Hope, Nevis-high, within my heart
—And two skin-changes in my sack.

J. F. A. B.

REVIEWS.

Scottish Mountaineering Club's Guide Book, The Northern Highlands. By W. N. Ling.

Extract from the "Geographical Journal" of December 1932.

"A new volume in 'The Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide Series' is always assured of a warm welcome from all climbers, and this section, which covers the country north of the Skye-Dingwall Railway, is of particular interest since it deals with a district consisting almost entirely of mountains and lochs. The author, himself a climber of note, gives us the benefit of his practical experience. . . .

"The illustrations are good and frequently of great practical value. The book includes three excellent maps and an index, and is very good value for the money. It should be in the hands of every climber."

With the publication of this section of the "Guide Book"—"The Northern Highlands," by W. N. Ling—the task undertaken by the S.M.C. many years ago has been completed in so far as concerns the large area of the mainland of Scotland beyond the Caledonian Canal, or to give it the finer name, the Great Glen.

No one is better qualified than Ling to compile this Guide, as although not the first—Hinxman and Collie having been earlier in the field—Ling, some thirty years ago, set himself to master the district about which he writes, and with many different members of the Club explored these parts, remote even now, but remoter still when roads were poor and cars non-existent, and sporting restrictions severe beyond the ken of the younger generation.

This Guide in the clearest fashion gives full directions as to where the hills are to be found, gives distances from the nearest place of resort, and defines the main features of the mountain described. All heights of summits and minor points are given, following the example given to the Club by Munro.

Climbs recorded are still somewhat scarce, but as may be expected, not only has Ling scanned all the heights and corries with the eye of a practised rock climber, but has made many of the new routes up these remote crags. It must be remembered by daring youth that Highland rocks bear their peculiar perils, particularly on first ascents where the moist climate too often masks with moss so many hand and footholds.

The preface ends with the exhortation of the Editor, "on with the work," and no one more than he has kept to his motto, for not a single diversion from the hills and routes is made; he turns not aside from

the stern pursuit to rhapsodise on the scenery or to give a thought to history, passing even Ardvreck Castle on Loch Assynt without a sigh for unhappy Montrose.

Where there is so much to praise, may we say that we should have welcomed some finer photos of the glorious Torridon groups, which are poorly represented. As a special mention the picture of Suilven from Canisp, by Hugh Gardner, stands out with stereoscopic clearness.

This Guide is good as a help to reach the Northern Highlands, to explore them when reached, and to recall the happiest memories of them when away from them. No other Guide gives the climber in this district what he requires.

G. T. G.

The Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa, No. 34, 1931.

This is an excellent number, and is quite up to the usual high standard which we have learned to expect of the *Mountain Club of South Africa Journal*. A notable feature of the issue is an exhaustive list of the climbs on Table Mountain, which has been compiled by Mr A. B. Berrisford. This list should prove of great value, not only to members of the Mountain Club of South Africa, but also to visitors from other countries who wish to explore Table Mountain. The other articles in the number are all good, and it is difficult to select any particular contribution for special comment. The number contains a plentiful supply of very good illustrations.

Excerpt from "Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness," Vol. XXXIII., 1932, p. 32. Literary Review.

" 'The Western Highlands,' by Mr James A. Parker, forms an excellent guide, published under the auspices of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. It contains thirty-four illustrations of mountain scenery and a map. A special feature is the alphabetical list of mountains, etc., with the genuine Gaelic names and reliable explanations of their meanings."

The Rucksack Club Journal, Vol. VII., No. 2, 1932, No. 26.

This is a most excellent number. The first article on "Climbing Plans" is delightful. The author's reference to the Gritstone Hundreds calls to mind the qualifications attributed by a certain American author to the Alpine Club.

We visit in turn the Himalaya—a very interesting account of an

ascent of the Lhonak Peak; the Pillar Girdle in the English Lake District; the Oberland in 1931, which shows what can be done in a season of bad weather; and North Wales, with special reference to Tal-y-braich. In this article the author draws attention to the neglect of excellent climbs which suffer by the proximity of more famous neighbours.

The editor then discourses learnedly on the word "rucksack." We shall note his decision and conform, in the spelling at least, to the title of his *Journal* (apologies for our error—*S.M.C. Journal*, April 1930). While we agree most heartily with most of the editorial remarks, it seems to us that, as long as a club really remains a club, that is to say an association in which most of the members are well known to each other, the use of the first person in writing gives a more personal interest to the article.

An unusual account of a defeat in the Dolomites in rather pathetic circumstances, an instructive and comprehensive article on "Mountain Photography," an article on "Club Huts," and the notes on climbs and excursions, etc., complete a most varied and interesting number, further distinguished by many really beautiful photographs.

C. W. P.

Episodes in a Varied Life. By Lord Conway of Allington. London, Country Life Ltd. 15s.

Most of the members of the Club will have read one or more of the many mountaineering books written by Lord Conway, better known perhaps as Sir Martin Conway, and they will be glad to have this full-length self-portrait of a man so famous in the history of climbing. While this book does not deal primarily with mountaineering, the reminiscences of his many climbs and explorations in all parts of the world take up a large portion of it, and these reminiscences are rendered more fascinating by personal memories of men like Whymper, Mummery, and Coolidge. It comes as something of a surprise to find that the same individual may combine a passion for the Himalayas and the Andes with a passion for the patient classification and appraisal of works of art, but Lord Conway has a many-sided character, and this account of his life and activities makes one realise acutely the rich and varied nature of the experiences that may be crowded into one career. Readers interested in mountaineering will inevitably be driven to his other works, of which a complete list is given on the fly-leaf to the volume under review.

The Teton Peaks and their Ascents. By Fritiof Fryxell.

This small book of 100 pages, kindly presented to the Club by the author, contains a well-documented history of climbs in the

Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming. The exploration of the Teton Peaks, still incomplete, has evidently been something of a passion with Mr Fryxell, and one envies him so much virgin mountain territory. The book can be used as a guide, and contains many attractive illustrations. It is a far cry to Wyoming for members of the S.M.C., but who knows? When America has departed from the gold standard we may yet fix Wyoming for our Easter Meet!

The Alpine Journal, Vol. XLIV., No. 245.

The *Journal* opens with an account of the British Arctic Air Route Expedition of 1930-31 by H. G. Watkins, the leader of the expedition, who was so unfortunately drowned in Greenland in 1932. Watkins, only twenty-five when he died, possessed a record of achievement as explorer, mountaineer, and leader of men which was perhaps unique for his years. The expedition did remarkable work in unexplored Greenland, and the account, written in a terse and lucid style, is of the greatest interest. A description of the German-American attempt on Nanga-Parbat fails somehow in vividness: we get our main impressions from the illustrations. J. L. Longland, in "Some Guideless Climbs," occupies most of his space with an account of some fine guideless expeditions in Dauphiné, but uses his opportunity to make an eloquent and very logical plea that a little more sympathy and understanding should be extended (presumably by the *Alpine Club*) to the alleged heresies of the younger school of climbers. Our editor has several illustration blocks which he cannot use. His sympathies with Mr Longland's plea will be heightened when he learns that Mr Longland introduces photos into his article which do not directly illustrate the text! In "The Highlands of Cantabria," by W. Rickmer Rickmers, the mountains play a minor rôle, but the author's whimsical and delightfully humorous description of travel in unsophisticated Spain provides a literary *bonne bouche* which calls for a special vote of thanks. Other articles of special interest include "The Upper Shyok Glaciers" by Kenneth Mason, "The Tour and Trient Glaciers" by D. L. Burk, and "Jägi and Bietschhoerner" by F. S. Smythe. With a feeling of sadness, but with the sense of a foreboding realised, one reads on pages 348-349 that Toni Schmid, whose extraordinary climb on the north face of the Matterhorn was referred to in the last number of the *S.M.C. Journal*, has been killed in the Eastern Alps.

M. M.

NOTES AND EXCURSIONS.

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

THOSE members who were at Crianlarich at New Year will remember the discussion concerning the limitation of membership, initiated by G. Graham Macphee. The following letters on this subject have been received from J. H. B. Bell and Macphee. In publishing these letters the Editor would urge members to give the matter their most careful consideration, as their decision will no doubt be called for in the near future.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—Of recent days there has been manifested both anxious thought and active discussion on the question of the limitation in point of numbers of the Club membership. This may be forced upon the Club as a regrettable necessity, in order that the spirit of intimacy and informal friendship may be maintained at the Club Meets. Whatever method of limitation be adopted, the fundamental characteristics of the Club should be preserved. It is therefore essential that the Club should not only maintain but increase its standard of proficiency in the art of mountaineering, even as this art itself has advanced since the formation of the Club. The popularity of climbing is on the increase, and if the Scottish Mountaineering Club is to maintain its primacy and authoritative voice in the sport, it must keep its doors open to all mountaineers of a high standard of competency, who would not be debarred under present conditions, and who might wish to enter in the future. It is also reasonable to assume that whatever changes may be made, the essential institutions of the climbing meets and the *Journal* will remain.

At present the Club is largely recruited from the Junior Club, a body over whose activities the Senior Club has practically no control. This is a pity, for mountaineering is an art and a craft, many things being handed on by tradition rather than by precept or the written word. The Juniors have certain advantages. They are smaller and more compact bodies centred locally, and therefore better able to use such opportunities as occasional week-ends and holidays. It is suggestive that visitors to the Clark Hut are roughly in the proportion of two Juniors to one Senior.

With this preamble I would suggest the following solution to the problem of limitation. It is clear that the only solution which will adequately maintain the strength and authority of the Club is one which depends on stiffening the qualification for membership in an equitable manner, whilst at the same time providing that the Club members shall have the opportunity of shaping the candidates before they present themselves. This is desirable, as true qualifications are difficult to assess.

Let there be two classes of members—full members and associate members. The latter class might be privileged to enter upon a lesser qualification than that at present required from members, but they would only be accorded part privileges of membership. This arrangement would be wide enough to include the Juniors. Local sections of the Club could then be set up, which would include both classes of members. This organisation would be elastic, and would not conflict with the present activities of the Club as a whole. The *raison d'être* of the Junior Club would then disappear, and they would participate along with the full members in the conduct of the local sections.

The qualification for full membership would be considerably but equably stiffened, in accordance with the opportunities for mountain craft afforded by the Scottish peaks. Except in special cases a period of associate membership would be insisted on. It is not easy to assess mountaineering competence, but I think it could be vouched for by the personal experience of other full members. Each candidate should produce evidence of special accomplishment in one or other of the following phases of Scottish climbing: snow and ice climbing, rock climbing, traversing complicated but easy hills in bad and difficult weather conditions. Present members would be full members. Only full members and their guests would be eligible to attend the traditional Club events.

I cannot but think that some arrangement such as that outlined above would meet the present difficulties and leave the Club in a strong condition. The details would have to be hammered out in committee, but it is almost certain that two results would be attained. The Club membership would be limited in numbers, but its future members would have passed through a good apprenticeship. The formation of local sections might indeed be a very desirable feature in itself.—I am, yours faithfully,

J. H. B. BELL.

SIR,—As the originator of the present movement to regulate the size of the Club, I am glad to find that my idea is supported by so influential a member as J. H. B. Bell.

He writes that such a course of action may be forced upon us if we are to preserve the Club spirit—a spirit of which we are justly so proud. This is putting it mildly. I feel sure that if the Club is

allowed to grow without limit, it will inevitably lose this Club spirit and cease to be a Club in the best sense of the term.

The ideal size of a climbing club appears to be between 200 and 300 members. The S.M.C. is rapidly reaching the upper limits beyond which the intimacy and friendliness which have always characterised the Club will be lost.

There is a more practical reason for keeping the numbers within bounds. Hotel accommodation in Scottish climbing centres is limited, and already there are few places where a Meet can be held if even only a fifth or a sixth of the members attend. Already some of the senior members feel impelled to absent themselves from Meets in order to leave room for more active members, which is a pity both for them and for us. The practice of dividing a Meet between two or three hotels is unsatisfactory.

The question of limiting the number of members was discussed some years ago, but since then things have altered very much—the Club membership has increased by nearly 50 per cent.—and it seems time to reconsider the matter under changed circumstances.

Bell has made the excellent suggestion that a stiffening of the qualification should be resorted to. I do not think that the formation of separate sections is advisable, as this would almost inevitably lead to competitive climbing, nor does it seem desirable to encroach on the activities of the Junior Club.

However, details can be worked out in committee. The main point is to realise the necessity of doing something *before* the Club becomes unwieldy.—I am, etc.,

G. GRAHAM MACPHEE.

William Blackwood sends the following itinerary of a climbing holiday in the Western Highlands, Skye,* and Cairngorms; also a note on the traverse of Beinn Alligin.

The party consisted of A. L. Cram, S.M.C., W. Blackwood, J.M.C.S., with G. Hall for the first week. This holiday was done with a small two-seater Jowett car and two tents, a large living tent, 7×7×6 feet, and a Guinea tent.

Mar. 24. Left Perth, 3.50 A.M.; arrived Torridon.

„ 25. Beinn Eighe (Sàil Mhòr to Spidean Coire nan Clach); fine clear weather, very little snow.

„ 26. Beinn Eighe (Creag Dubh-Sgùrr Bàn). Hall, who was a complete novice, felt slightly off colour that night, and so on.

„ 27. Cram and Blackwood did Liathach, complete traverse. Weather again fine, very little snow. Time, 8 hrs. 35 mins.

* See *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. XIX., No. 114, p. 392.

- Mar. 28. With the party again complete, we did the traverse of Beinn Alligin. Up the E.S.E. ridge of Sgùrr Mhòr, across the towers and on over the summit to Tom na Gruagaich. Weather fine.
- „ 29. Shifted camp to Dundonnel.
- „ 30. Traverse of An Teallach (Bidein a' Ghlas Thuill to Sàil Liath). High wind, snow, and hail; visibility poor.
- „ 31. Confined to camp by poor weather.
- April 1. Weather poor, so struck camp. Took Hall to Inverness, and then went to Kyle by Achnasheen. Across to Skye, to near Sligachan, for the night.
- „ 2. To Glen Brittle; a slack day. The Coolin covered in new snow down to 1,500 feet. Remained so, becoming gradually iced up during our stay.
- „ 3. Sgurr Alasdair, by Coire Lagan and Alasdair stone shoot. Conditions alpine.
- „ 4. Coire Ghrunnda, Sgurr nan Eag, Caisteal a Garbh Choire, and the Dubhs. Conditions alpine.
- „ 5. Bad weather; high wind, hail, and iced rocks. Sgurr na Banachdich from Coire Banachdich. Ridge to Sgurr Dearg impossible. The weather was moderate on the low ground.
- „ 6. Sgurr Dearg by the ridge. Conditions as on the 5th. Ridge to Mhic Choinnich impossible. Down into Coire Lagan.
- „ 7. Same fast moving cloud on the tops promising hail, high winds, and iced rocks. Up Coire na Creiche and Coir' a' Mhadaidh to the col between Sgurr na Bhairnich and An Caisteal. From there iced rocks made it impossible to get on to the ridge towards Bruach na Frithe.
- „ 8. A fine day again. Sgurr Sgumain by ridge. Left that night for the mainland, but missed the ferry. Tent blown away in middle of night by southerly gale.
- „ 9. By Glen Moriston and Inverness to Aviemore. Loch Ness road in horrible condition.
- „ 10. Easy day.
- „ 11. Weather low down moderate, but up in Gleann Einich the now usual gale. Tried No. 1 Buttress, Sgòran Dubh, but turned back by iced rocks.
- „ 12. Off day.
- „ 13. Up Gleann Einich, and attempted Braeriach. Heavy mist above 2,000 feet. Nearly walked over cornice. Failed to find cairn, but probably reached 4,000 feet. Usual gale of wind and snow.
- „ 14. Off day. Went along to Loch an Eilein.
- „ 15. These next three days were glorious; fine blue sky, hard frozen snow underneath. Sgòran Dubh Mòr-Beg, Sgurr Gaoith Gel Charn. Back by Loch an Eilein.

- April 16. By Gleann Einich to Braeriach, Cairn Toul, down to the Larig Ghru, and home by the abominable Larig path.
 „ 17. From Braemore Lodge up Cairngorm, a' Choinneach, on to Bynack, climbing over the "Barns."
 „ 18. Home to Perth.

TRAVERSE OF BEINN ALLIGIN (ROSS-SHIRE).

Conditions.—A little snow on the summits. A fine day with a south-west wind, white cumulus clouds, visibility good.

Party.—A. L. Cram, S.M.C., W. Blackwood, J.M.C.S., G. Hall.

By car to the foot of Coire Mhic Nòbuil (8.45 A.M.). Up the excellent stalking path for a mile, then over the bridge to the left. We were at the foot of the E.S.E. buttress of Sgùrr Mhòr at 10 A.M. The hill appears to be composed of alternate layers of heather and sandstone. The sandstone is broken up and provides a variety of routes. The direct traverse, as we did it, is interesting, and the rope is advisable at the beginning.

We went straight up. At first easy heather, then the angle steepened and the rope was put on. A small plateau was reached, then three towers separated us from the main summit. The first tower was topped at 11.30 A.M., and the rope taken off. From there on the ridge consisted of a series of ups and downs over the two remaining towers to Sgùrr Mhòr. There are steep drops on the northern side, towards Loch Toll nam Biast.

We passed the summit of the steep gully which divides the two summits, then we reached the summit of Tom na Gruagaich, which is flat and paved with vast paving stones. We dropped down to the road quite safely by the col and gully which descend to the S.S.E. from a point just south of Tom na Gruagaich. By keeping high up the glen one avoids the almost impassable gorge lower down, formed by the waters. The car was reached at 4 P.M. The climbing consists chiefly of mixed scrambling, and owing to its broken-up character, one can choose pitches as easy or difficult as desired.

CLIMBING IN ROSS-SHIRE.

Ratagan Youth Hostel is a pleasantly situated house on the south-west shore of Loch Duich, hemmed in by trees on three sides, and with an admirable view of the loch to the north-east where it disappears into Strath Croe. On the horizon A Ghlas Bheinn and the five Sisters of Kintail, with the little village of Invershiel nestling at their feet, form a small part of the wonderful view which is seen from the door of the men's dormitory; our party consisted of J. Robertson, B. Horsburgh, and myself.

Sunday, the 10th July, dawned a none too favourable day; we decided to risk it, however, and accordingly made our way up to the Saddle. Entering the glen the rain started again, but making our way up the steep shoulder of Sgùrr na Creige we were hailed by dense mist. The visibility was very bad, and the rain had increased in volume, so after scrambling about we eventually came down to the glen at a point above the waterfall, and arrived back at Ratagan thoroughly soaked.

The next day showed more pleasing prospects, and at 7.15 A.M. we set out to achieve the traverse of the South Range from Shiel to Cluanie. A little way past Shiel bridge the path, which passes by the Allt Undalain and can be seen making its way over a small ridge, gives fairly good going until it crosses a wooden bridge guarded by a very insecure handrail, with a none too promising drop into the burn, and then resolves itself into the usual deer-stalker's path.

The hills around us were looking wonderful in the sunlight, a pleasant contrast to the previous day. Loch a Coire Uaine lies in a hollow bounded by a very imposing semicircle of rocky peaks, steep and very vegetations in parts; numerous scree-shoots and gullies are also evident. We traversed up on the left and, reaching the ridge, made our way up to the peak. The ridge itself is of the knife-edged variety and involved some pleasant scrambling.

The time was now 10.45 A.M. and the Saddle gained; the visibility was perfect and to the north-east the five Sisters of Kintail stood out clearly in the sunlight, while further to the north the peaks of Ross-shire presented a lovely view. We descended to the south-east by a steep scree-shoot which involved some care. Our way led us over the Bealach Coire Mhàlagain, and, after a scramble, to the top of Sgùrr na Sgine. Another steep descent and we were on the summit of Sgùrr a Bhac Chaolais.

The main peculiarity about the latter peaks was the very steep slopes to the south-east. Nearer the peaks themselves the rock was very vegetations and treacherous, slabs coming away at a very light touch, while lower down the footing had to be watched or a strained ankle might have resulted. More grassy slopes followed, and in due course we reached the summit of Creag nan Damh via the Bealach Duibh Leac. To the south Loch Hourn, with its wooded sides, was basking in the sun, and farther to the south the peaks in the vicinity of Fort William stood out clearly. Over Glen Shiel the North Ridge, with the Sgùrr na Ciste Duibhe in the foreground and a glimpse of Ben Attow beyond, was, in itself, ample reward for our labour.

Sgùrr Beag, Sgùrr an Lochain, Sgùrr an Doire Leathain, and Sgùrr Coire na Feinne were next traversed, and at 4.55 P.M. we settled down to have another snack. These latter peaks showed a marked contrast to the Saddle group; the grassy nature was still evident, and although the rock was plentiful enough, some of the outcrops had still to be treated with care. Between Sgùrr an Lochain and Sgùrr an Doire Leathain a fine view was obtained of a little loch.

It lay at the foot of a huge basin, the shape of a horseshoe, and provided one of the sources of the Allt a Choire Reidh, a burn which flows into the River Shiel.

Excepting the Saddle, the Maol Chinn-dearg ridge, terminating in Aonach air Chrith, was a sight only climbers are privileged to see. The north face of the latter was indeed a sight to behold, and from the lowest point on the ridge the rocky buttresses were the outstanding feature of this vast amphitheatre.

The end of the range was now in view, and about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the east lay Creag a' Mhàim. After a fine walk along the ridge, on which a great number of sheep were grazing, we reached the summit and halted for a while before making for Cluanie Inn.

The day was now wearing on but the light was still good, and to the south, separated by Glen Quoich, was the Gleouraich group of hills, which seemed of the same type as those we had experienced. Cluanie Inn was calling, however, and our packs had developed extra weight, so, keeping to the ridge, we made for the road and reached it just where a bridge spans the Allt Giubhais, and 3 miles on we came to the inn. The time was 9.50 P.M., this representing a fourteen-and-a-half-hours' day. Our next consideration was a wash up and a good meal, and it is to the credit of Cluanie Inn that even at this hour both were forthcoming and thoroughly enjoyed.

On the following day, promising to be back at the inn at 7 o'clock, our next venture into the hills was to the north-east. Leaving Cluanie, we walked along the road to the loch and, turning to the left, made our way on to a path which petered out on the slopes of Càrn Ghlua-said; our next objective was to gain the Glas Bhealach, which separated Càrn Ghlua-said from the peak of Sgùrr nan Conbhairean. On our left was the Gorm Lochan, a typical Highland lochan, surrounded by a horseshoe ridge. It was a pleasant walk to the top of Sgùrr nan Conbhairean, and following the ridge, which runs practically north, we reached Tigh Mòr na Seilge at 3.30 P.M.

It was another magnificent day, and the view was one of the best. To the north Mam Sodhail and Càrn Eige lay before us, and with the aid of our glasses the peaks of Beinn Eighe, An Teallach, and the mountains to the north-west stood out clearly, while to the north-east Loch Affric, with its heavily wooded slopes, stood out a leaden pool in the heat of the day. Farther up in the same direction the upper lochs forming the Caledonian Canal could be seen, forming a silvery stretch reaching into the blue haze.

After coming down to the valley of the Allt na Ciche we next tackled the slopes of Mullach Fraoh-choire, with its triple tops, and after some scrambling reached the summit at 6 o'clock. Our view to the west, which had been hidden by this peak, now lay before us, and Skye was seen in a blaze of light, the sun's rays reflected by the water. The jagged peaks of the Coolins stood out, a wonderful sight, and again the glasses brought to us the Inaccessible Pinnacle, conspicuous among the maze. Rum, Eigg, and Canna were set in

a sheet of living fire, while the Hebrides lay far in the blue mists of the horizon.

Time was getting on, so we tramped down the knife-ridge to A' Chràlaig. The ridge as far as the Bealach was typical of the Saddle ridge, and a scramble led us on to the peak at 7 o'clock. So ended another day, after an easy walk back to Cluanie, a good dinner, and a well-earned rest.

The heat by this time had taken effect, and our next day was spent in an easy walk to Ratagan through Glen Shiel.

The north ridge of Glen Shiel was another of our objectives, and accordingly we set out at 9 o'clock to carry on to Sgùrr Fhuaran, and the peak was attacked by a steep shoulder which rises from Glen Shiel. There are some very fine corries in the neighbourhood of this peak, and rock-scrambling seemed to be the order of the day; after a stiff plug we reached the top. The weather clerk seemed unable to make up his mind. Ben Attow was enveloped in mist, while the south range was also mostly covered, but we decided to carry on to Sgùrr na Ciste Duibhe with the optimistic hope that it would clear up.

Our path to the Ciste Duibhe was very rocky, with much scrambling up the slabby slopes. We contoured round the Sgùrr na Càrnach and reached the summit at 1.30 P.M. More rocky work and the summit of the Sgùrr nan Spainteach lay behind us on our way to Sàileag. Keeping to the ridge we reached Sgùrr a Bhealaich Dheirg, a very fine peak with a splendid approach.

The weather, which had so far kept up wonderfully well, now showed signs of breaking down, so after a short rest on Aonach Mheadhorn we contoured round Sgùrr an Fhuairail, over the Bealach a' Chòinich, and on to the Ciste Duibhe, a rocky peak on its north and east faces. After another descent in a drizzle to the Bealach, and following the Allt a' Chaoruinn Bhig, we arrived again at Cluanie, and a car back to Ratagan finished another day.

A walk round the shores of Loch Duich and our climbing holiday ended. Singularly enough, we never met another person on all our journeys. We once saw a shepherd on the slopes of Glen Quoich, but our only companions were the deer, ptarmigan, hooded crows, and a solitary eagle.

Ross-shire is indeed the land of magnificent scenery, and our experience is one that will long remain stamped on our memories, and only time will remove.

RICHARD BROWN.

ROCKS ON COIRE GARBHLACH.

On 5th October 1932, D. Myles (Perth J.M.C.S.) and J. H. B. Bell motored to Achlean, Glen Feshie. In a heavy wind they walked up Coire Garbhlach. The lower rocks of the corrie are not very

interesting. The party contoured up the north side of the corrie until a fine rocky face became visible high up on the left. This is a little way beyond the waterfall between the upper and lower corries. The longest and most promising ridge was selected, and a good climb of about 300 to 350 feet in height was obtained. The lower difficulties are avoidable, and variations can be made. About one-third of the way up the climbing was very good, and a steep crack had to be forced on the left. A steep wall rose above this. Working up to the right from a kind of col, a steep bit of climbing led on to a ridge, too near the vertical to be climbable directly. On the other side it is easy to descend into the foot of a 60 to 70 foot chimney. This soon becomes very difficult, and careful wedging tactics are necessary. The upper part is again difficult, but a magnificent belay is available. Beyond this point the climbing gets easier and easier to the top of the buttress. Gradual slopes then lead to the summit of Meall Dubhag, 3,268 feet. There a fierce gale was blowing, and the party reached Achlean in gathering darkness. There are probably quite a number of other climbs available in this corrie.

J. H. B. BELL.

S.M.C. ABROAD, 1932

W. N. Ling was in the Austrian Tyrol for three weeks in July and August with P. J. H. Unna and J. W. Brown. The weather was broken and unfavourable, but in spite of it they had an enjoyable time in the Oetzthal, Pitzthal, and Kaunserthal. Their ascents included the two tops of the Wildspitze, Hintere Schwarze, Kleinleiten Joch, Pitzthaler Joch, Hintere Brunnenkogel, Mittelberg Joch, Oelgruben Joch, and Kopf, and a good deal of walking.

THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1933—KILLIN.

Members.:—The Arthurs, Baird, Bell, Dyce, Harvey, Jack, M'Intyre, M'Leod, M'Lusky, M'Nab, Ogilvie, Shillinglaw, Stewart, and Watson.

S.M.C..:—Bartholomew, Elton, Forrest, and Lindsay.

Guests.:—Anderson and Henderson.

The meet commenced to form on Friday evening, and it was somewhat strange to witness the decorum with which the members conducted themselves. This was probably due to the recent departure to the S.M.C. of a few of the Glasgow Section members, or perhaps owing to the absence of Bartholomew, who is capable of upsetting any well-ordered conditions.

Saturday gave early promise of good weather, conditions unfortunately unfulfilled.

Forrest, Harvey, M'Lusky, Stewart, and Watson were on Meall Corranaich, Beinn Ghlas, and Lawers. The party motored to the Lochan on the Bridge of Balgie road and thence the tops were visited in the above order. Conditions were very icy, and a high wind precluded ridge-walking. Falls were frequent, but the only damage visible was the appearance of yet another rent in Forrest's breeches. Snow was falling as the party made their way back to the car.

The Arthurs, Baird, and Jack set off for the Tarmachans, and reported having cut twenty steps, which was the record for the day. Elton, who had departed from Glasgow by the early train, left Killin some two hours after this party but caught up on them near their first top; which goes to prove that either Elton is inordinately fast, or

that some J.M.C.S. member was sadly lacking in practice in the art of step-cutting.

Bell, M'Intyre, N'Nab, and Shillinglaw were also on the Tarmachans, but conducted themselves with such secrecy that no corroborative evidence is available.

The Dinner and Annual General Meeting were held that evening, and it was with great pleasure that the Meet welcomed Mr Rusk of the S.M.C., one of the founders of the J.M.C.S. The speeches were of an unusually high standard, Lindsay excelling himself.

The General Meeting was lengthy and productive of much sound argument. It was also the best-conducted meeting we have had in recent years. No one pulled the hairs on the chairman's knees, or applauded when he called some one to order, and thus, *ipso facto*, there was no incentive for the Chairman to admonish physically the culprit—usually a lengthy process.

Sunday was quite the best day of the Meet, and most parties went farther afield.

M'Leod and Anderson came up by the morning train, but, as they arrived too late to do any climbing, spent the day exploring the lower reaches of Glen Lochy.

Harvey and Watson, who announced that they were climbing to a system, proceeded with the elimination of the Lawers group by annexing Meall Greigh and Meall Garbh. As on the previous day, conditions made ridge-walking rather exhilarating, although the absence of a high wind was of some assistance. Elton informed Forrest, who told M'Lusky, who persuaded Stewart that a most delectable hill, yclept Stuchd an Lochain, lay in Glen Lyon and was normally very inaccessible. The result was that the last named motored the party to a convenient starting-point, and the hill was duly conquered. Like other parties on that day, this one experienced fine weather conditions with new snow above 2,000 feet. A return was made via Loch Giorra and down a track which, in dry weather, would appear to be feasible for cars. The track appears only as a footpath on most maps.

Bell, M'Nab, M'Intyre, and Shillinglaw were on Heasgarnich and Creag Mhòr. Owing to their exhausted

state on return this party could give but a garbled account of the day's happenings, but M'Intyre said he saw a "dear."

Ogilvie and Baird were also on Heasgarnich and appear to have spent a considerable portion of the day glissading; in fact from the number of glissades enumerated they must have done a phenomenal amount of climbing.

Yet another party, consisting of the Arthurs, Bartholomew, and Jack, made the same hill their objective. *En route* up Glen Lochy Bartholomew found a suspension bridge and proceeded to test its stresses, but in what manner is not recorded. The summit of Heasgarnich was reached and then ensued a delightful game of Hunt the Glissade. A suitable patch was eventually found, and all was very merry till an agonised wail from the worthy member of the S.M.C. warned the rest that that particular patch of snow had worn rather thin.

Monday.—In contrast to the previous day's weather we were greeted with a morning of driving rain and sleet.

Dyce and Henderson arrived, and Lindsay came over from Crianlarich. One by one the various parties set off for various objectives, but one and all arrived on Meall Ghaordie, which soon began to resemble Princes Street on a busy morning.

All went well until the summit plateau was reached and then the Meet found that it could not reach the cairn only a few yards away. The parties had climbed on the lee-side of the hill, and as soon as the top was reached it was found impossible to stand up. Hence the undignified spectacle of members on hands and knees crawling over the final 20 yards to the cairn. Some fifteen reached the cairn in this manner and immediately crawled back again to the shelter of some rocks; others with more sense subdued their pride and retraced their steps.

With the wind at their backs very fast progress was made downhill, one party doing the first 1,000 feet in just under seven minutes. Every one was back by 1 o'clock, which must constitute a record, even be it an unenviable one.

Bartholomew alleged that he got above the clouds, but apparently he landed on his feet again.

We would like to mention our appreciation of the manner in which the hotel staff contributed to our welfare. The attendance at the Meet was very small, but the weather, with the exception of the last day, was quite good. Probably the lack of snow contributed to the sparse turnout.

GLASGOW SECTION.

AUTUMN HOLIDAY MEET, 1932—ARRAN

Present.—Kellock (Edinburgh Section), Dyce, Dyer, Stewart, M'Lusky, and Forrest.

All arrived at Corrie on Friday evening except Forrest, who appeared on Saturday at midday.

Saturday dawned a perfect day, and one member, at least, disported himself in the sea before breakfast.

Kellock, Stewart, and M'Lusky set out early for Goatfell, and on reaching the summit very wisely sensed rain and returned via the East Ridge in time for lunch.

Dyer and Dyce ascended Suidhe Fhearghas, and were negotiating the Witches' Step when the rain descended on them in all its fury and washed them down North Glen Sannox back to Corrie.

On Sunday morning the sun was shining again, and after tentative bathing, a mass attack was launched on the Cat Stone, that well-known boulder by the roadside near Corrie. Practically every one managed to ascend and descend both the "Italian" and "Swiss" sides, and Forrest made a glorious attack on the "Furggen Ridge." The party then set off for Cir Mhòr, and after an unsuccessful attempt on some very wet slabs under the north-east precipice, an ascent was made by a very loose and fairly easy gully near the head of Glen Sannox.

Summit conditions were not very favourable, but glimpses were caught of the A' Chir Ridge through the clouds. This ridge was traversed without incident and

was enjoyed by all, the soundness of the rock being appreciated after the sadly decayed rock on Cir Mhòr. A return to Corrie was made via Glen Sannox, the only incident being when Kellock became mixed up in a chimney, and after abseiling down had to climb up again to retrieve his rope.

On Monday morning the weather was at its worst; however, soon after breakfast a very thin wedge of blue sky was noticed in the north from where the wind was blowing, so Dyer and Dyce set out for Goatfell and what proved to be the most perfect day imaginable.

The terrible conditions of the early morning had convinced the others that there was no place like home, and thither they returned during the early part of the day. They must soon have regretted their decision, for by this time Dyer and Dyce were sun-bathing on the summit of Goatfell. Such is our Scottish weather.

From Goatfell our two stalwarts made their way via the Saddle to the summit of Cir Mhòr and thence via The Castles and the Witches' Step to Suidhe Fhearghas.

During this ridge walk the most perfect conditions prevailed, and the rain-washed atmosphere permitted of views from Sleive Donard to Cruachan and from Ben More (Mull) to the Merrick and the Galloway hills.

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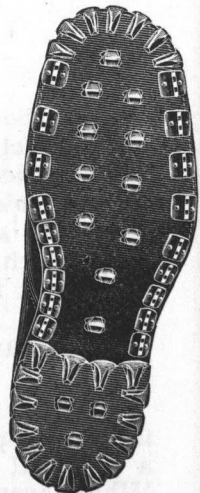
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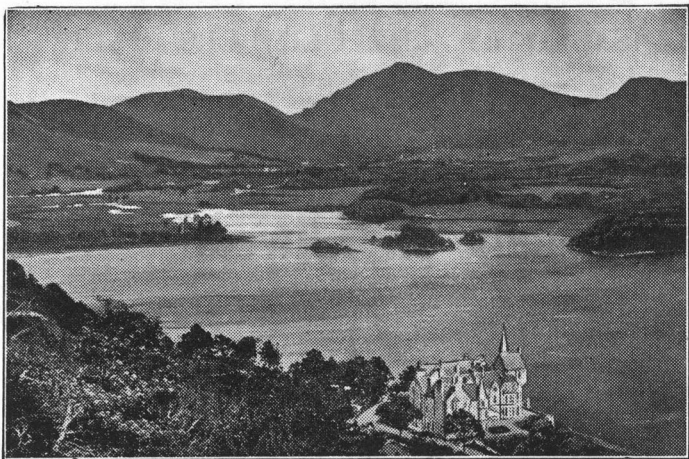
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