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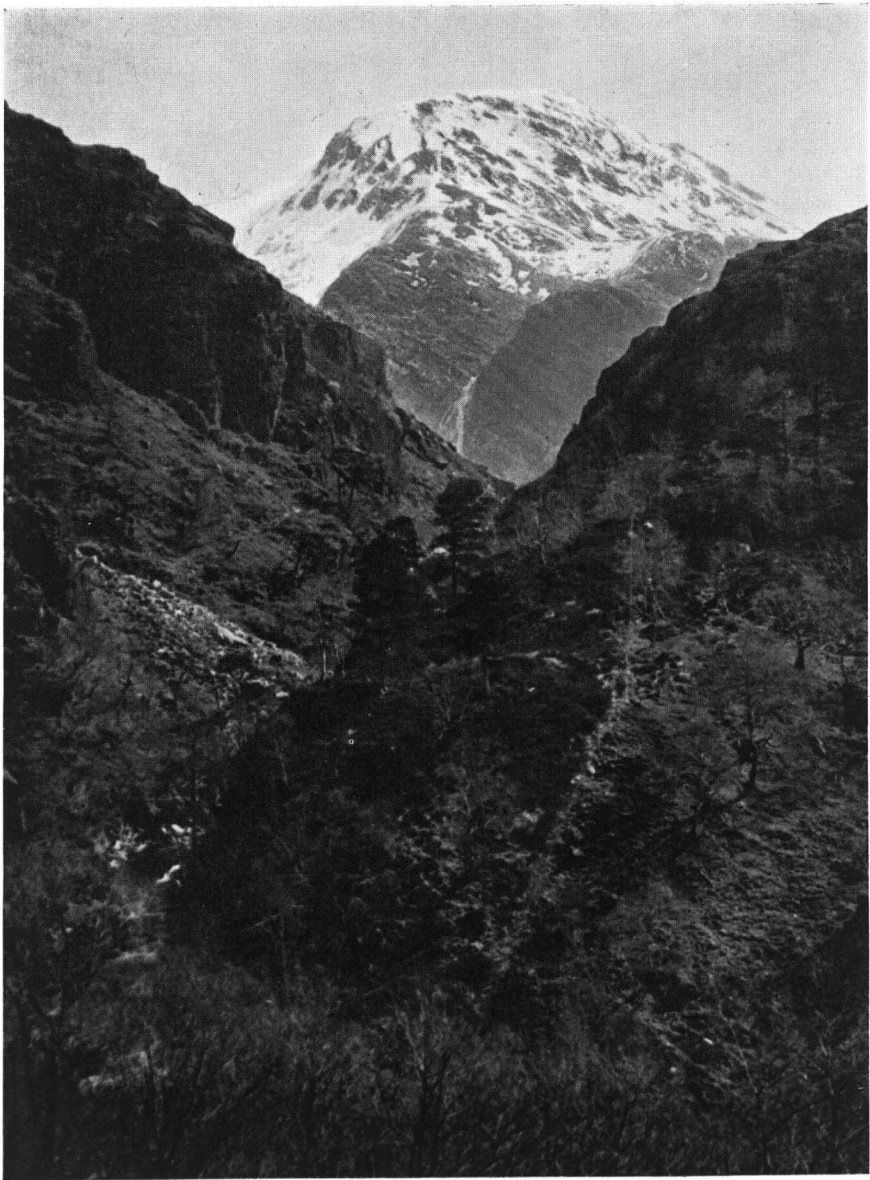
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April 1922

AN GEARANACH FROM THE GORGE—GLEN NEVIS

H. Gardner

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

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THE MOUNTAINS OF SOUTH UIST.

By J. A. PARKER.

MOUNTAINEERS, as a rule, do not go to South Uist, they are content to "Behold the Hebrides" from a distance—that is, from the Cuillins—and let it stay at that. This had been my own practice for many years; but last June I decided that I would cross the Sea of the Hebrides and see what Beinn Mhòr and Hecla looked like at close quarters. I did not regret doing so. These mountains have already been described twice in the *Journal*,* but I think they merit a third description, with some illustrations.

South Uist is about 10 miles long by 3 miles wide. The whole of the island is very flat, with the exception of a cluster of hills on the east coast between Loch Boisdale and Loch Skipport, at which the island reaches its greatest width of about 4 miles. The hills are divided into two distinct groups by Loch Eynort.

The southern group lies between Loch Boisdale and Loch Eynort, and contains fully half a dozen summits, of which the highest is Stulaval, 1,227 feet. The rock is, of course, gneiss, and these hills are of no particular interest, as they are covered mostly with grass, with few rock faces showing. In the Bealach a' Chaolais, between

* "South Uist," by W. W. N., Vol. X., p. 162. "Notes on South Uist," by F. G. Farquhar, Vol. XII., p. 107.

Stulaval and Triuirebheinn, there are the interesting remains of two groups of ancient circular stone dwellings near the place marked on the 1-inch map as "Earth House." They are about 6 feet in diameter and something like those at Grimspound on Dartmoor, but not nearly so good.

I devoted a day and a half to the eastern members of the group. On the first day I crossed the north branch of Loch Boisdale by the stepping-stones near Auratote, and then struck up along the west slope of Triuirebheinn to the gap, the Bealach na Diolaid, between it and Clett. A steepish little descent then took me down to the east end of Loch Stulaval, from which it was a simple ascent to the summit of Stulaval. On the return journey I visited the stone dwellings in the Bealach a' Chaolais, but did not succeed in finding the entrance to the Earth House, and then I climbed up to the top of Triuirebheinn (1,168 feet), which has no special features of interest, and so back to the hotel.

On the forenoon of my last day at Lochboisdale I climbed the southern member of the group, Beinn Ruigh Choinnich (902 feet), which rises steeply on the north side of the loch opposite the hotel—an interesting little hill with plenty of rock exposures but nothing of climbing interest. I was told that Ireland had been seen from it a week previously, but the conditions during my visit were not clear enough either to verify or to disprove the statement. Calculation shows that Ireland cannot be seen; but the local reputation of the hill is that the distant hills of the north of Ireland (Slieve Snaght (2,019 feet), 135 miles away) have been seen from the summit looking due south. I leave it there. Mirage is a funny thing.

Hecla (1,988 feet) and Beinn Mhòr (2,034 feet) and the intermediate peak of Feaveallach (1,723 feet) are much more interesting. I made them the object of the first good day that I had. To reach them I hired a car to take me to the Post Office at Loch Dòbhrain, $11\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Loch Boisdale. From there I walked up the south side of the Abhainn Roag to Loch Airidh Aulaidhd, an



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BEINN MHÒR, SOUTH UIST

J. A. Parker

The south-east summit from the main ridge, looking S.E. The highest part of the Glen Hellisdale precipice to the left.



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BEINN MHÒR, SOUTH UIST

J. A. Parker

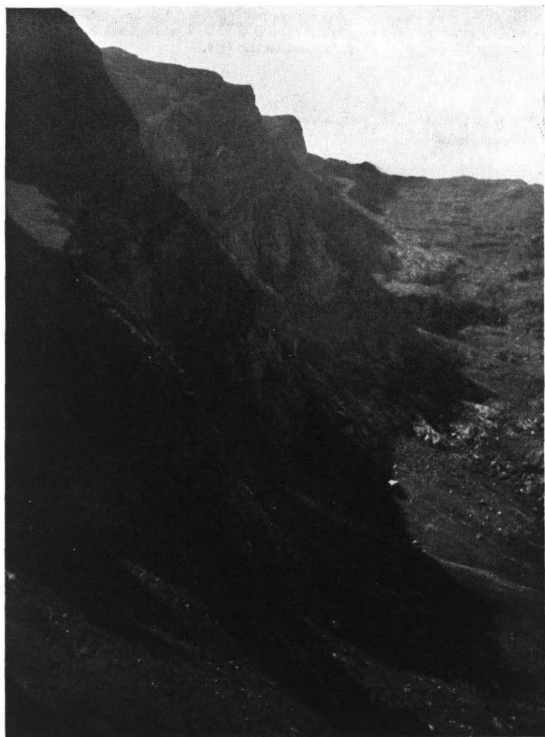
The eastern end of the Glen Hellisdale precipice taken from the main ridge. A portion of Loch Hellisdale is seen, and beyond it Rudha Hellisdale projecting into the sea.



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BEINN MHÒR, SOUTH UIST
A part of the summit ridge, looking west

J. A. Parker



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BEINN MHÒR, SOUTH UIST
The Glen Hellisdale precipice from the east, looking towards the summit ridge of the mountain

J. A. Parker

from thence on to the north-west shoulder of Hecla and to the summit—the last part being rocky, with a narrow grassy ridge leading to the cairn. The top of the hill consists of some steep rocks which look well from the west but lose interest when reached. The hill commands a fine view looking down to Loch Skipport. The view across to Skye must also be good, but visibility was bad and I did not see the Cuillins. From Hecla I descended to the bealach (*c.* 975 feet) at the head of Glen Usinish, and then up by easy slopes to the summit of Feaveallach. Like Hecla, this hill is also crowned with some steep rocks; but they are of greater interest. The crags face north and are probably about 100 feet high. The rock, gneiss, is very firm, with plenty of good holds, and would probably afford several good, though very short, rock climbs.

When on the summit of Feaveallach I could not help noticing that, while the rocks in the bealach at the head of Glen Usinish were highly ice-worn, the summit rocks of Hecla and Feaveallach were not. Evidently the great Scottish ice-field which streamed across the Hebrides to the Atlantic was not deep enough to submerge the tops of the two hills, which must have stood up above the ice as rocky peaks.

From Feaveallach I descended by pretty steep slopes to the Bealach Hellisdale (*c.* 975 feet), which also contains highly ice-worn rocks. From here the appearance of the north face of Beinn Mhòr was decidedly interesting. To the south-west an easy and broken-up slope led up to the north-west top of the mountain (1,994 feet). From this top the main ridge of the hill led south-east to the highest top (2,034 feet), and from near the latter a very fine precipice ran eastwards and formed the south enclosing wall of the upper end of Glen Hellisdale.* As it was evident that the crags would repay an investigation, I descended down into Glen Hellisdale and crossed over to them. The face is wonderfully steep, and is broken

* On the 1-inch and 6-inch maps the precipice is shown as running east from the north-west summit, which is not the case.

up by numerous gullies—one of which is exceedingly narrow and wall-sided—and buttresses. The greatest height is probably about 750 feet. The rock is gneiss, like the whole of the island, and is very sound, with plenty of good holds. I made for the east end of the crags, and gained the skyline by climbing up a steep grassy and rocky gully or slope. I then followed the edge of the crags all the way to the south-east summit. There is no doubt in my mind that there must be any number of good climbs to be had on the precipice. Were it in Skye or on the mainland it would have been fully explored by this time, and probably worked out to several places of decimals.

The summit ridge of Beinn Mhòr is delightfully narrow and broken up. At one point it is a knife-edge of rock. The walk along the ridge to the north-west top was very interesting, and from that top I descended by way of the north-west shoulder of the hill, Maola Breac, to the Post Office, where the car arrived a minute later. The round of the three hills involved about 4,000 feet of climbing and took about nine hours. A lot of time had, however, been spent in taking photographs and making notes.

To climb Beinn Mhòr alone the best way is from the Post Office (which is, I believe, licensed!) to cross the moor to Maola Breac, and then follow the north-west shoulder to the summit.

The most convenient way to reach Loch Boisdale is by steamer from Mallaig, which takes about seven hours. The trip across is most delightful, and affords interesting close-up views of Rhum, and a more distant and very wonderful view of the southern Cuillins. Combined as it was with the rail trip from Fort William in the forenoon, the nine and a half hours' journey from there to Loch Boisdale was one of the most fascinating that I have ever had on the west coast of Scotland—or anywhere else.

EXPLORATION IN THE NORTH-WEST.

By P. D. BAIRD.

Party.—E. J. A. Leslie, P. D. Baird, S.M.C., J. W. Crofton.

15th June.—The rain descended in sheets as we passed along the shore of Loch Shin, but had ceased by the time we reached Scourie. It was the first rain for several weeks, and the spirits of the fishermen at the inn were running high; in fact, the whole place was humming like a hive of bees. We camped that night on a small hill above the bay.

16th June.—This day had been reserved for a visit to Handa and its birds. But the sea was too high for a small boat, and our purses would not run to a motor launch, so we decided to cross Kylesku and establish a central camp from which to climb the Assynt hills. Past the ferry the rain began again, so we abandoned our idea of climbing Quinag that day and continued along the Drumbeg road, which we found to be a "sporting route" with glorious scenery.

Well beyond Lochinver we came on a splendid site within walking distance of Suilven: it was a small bracken-covered knoll, screened from the road by birch trees, and overlooking Loch Buine Mòire. Beyond, Cùl Mòr and Cùl Beag rose grandly, but Suilven was hidden by a swelling skyline. Twenty feet above the loch we pitched our two tents.

17th June.—The morning was far from promising, and wishing to reserve Suilven for a finer day we took the car to Loch Lurgainn to attempt the buttress of Sgùrr an Fhithleir. We were uncertain whether the crossing between Loch Lurgainn and Loch Bada na h-Achlaise (marked Ath Mòr on the 6-inch map) was possible. However, it proved to be simple, and, except in a big spate, must be a better way to approach the hill than from the east.

The weather was showery and the clouds were low as we walked over the moor, but the buttress seen in profile was an inspiring sight. We made out several features: a large boss near the foot where the climb would evidently begin; then a small overhanging nose some 200 feet higher; above that, again, a notch, which we named the "Hansom," with a small stone seat. Beyond this the ridge appeared forbiddingly steep before easing off to a shoulder. We got to the foot of the boss at 2.30, and ate our luncheon round a corner out of the wind. The day was thoroughly raw and unpleasant for rock-climbing.

From our luncheon place (cairned) the climb was started—quite unnecessarily—up a crack which overhung at the top and brought us to the summit of the boss. The line of this crack, *i.e.*, to the right of the arête, was followed for two pitches, the climbing being much harder than it looked. On the third pitch the crack became very steep and holdless, so that the leader was forced out to the right. Here a difficult mantelshelf was climbed with the help of a shoulder—an awkward manœuvre, for the ledge below was small and sloping.

A flat roof forming a small cave now blocked the ascent. This was easily turned to the right and the same grassy crack was followed to a second larger cave (cairn). Here a thread belay was made behind a small chockstone. The leader took a shoulder and escaped to the right, while the others found a neckhold on the side of the roof to be a solution to the problem. A steep crack, where the first good handholds were found, then led up to a series of rather loose slabs. No. 3, while employing his neckhold, was unfortunate enough to lose his hat. The crack took immediate advantage of this and poured a stream of water down his neck.

All the party were now drenched to the skin and were well up into the cold wet mist. Grass was climbed to the "garden," a deep green recess where the line of ascent we had been following was blocked by a high vertical wall. To the left were slabs broken at 20-foot intervals by terraces of grass leading out on to the arête.

The last of these brought one to the "Hansom." We looked at the arête from here: in rubbers, on a perfect day, this might give a severe climb, but it was hopeless for us. We retreated to the garden, and thence escaped to the right on to the north-west wall overlooking Lochan Dearg. Here we found a narrow ledge of true mountaineering proportions leading steeply up the face. Much gardening was needed, the debris bounding magnificently into the mist, the crash of its landing following several seconds later. We worked along the ledge, which became progressively easier, except in one place where there was a 10-foot step in the line of ascent. This was negotiated to the left of a steep and horribly loose crack then an awkward and uncouth knee traverse led back to the right again.

A short distance beyond this step we could turn to the left and emerge on the shoulder of the buttress. Easy scrambling along the ridge, which remained well defined, now led us to the summit of Sgùrr an Fhìdhleir, where we built a substantial cairn. The climb could be described as moderately difficult, the awful weather making it rather more trying. It was our first experience of the Torridon sandstone, which we found lacking in adequate handholds and belays; yet it was reasonably rough, and the felspar pebbles gave good though doubtful finger-grips. A poker was used for belaying in turf, and a gardening tool in the shape of a tomahawk was carried. With these weapons girt about us we must have looked a formidable party.

We descended by the corrie to the N.W. of the buttress and returned to camp by the way we had come, wet but triumphant.

18th June.—We rose very late, for heavy showers fell during the morning. In the afternoon it looked finer, so at the dreadful hour of three we set out for Suilven, hoping to traverse the ridge. But we never even got to the foot of the grey castle. A long strip of storm-cloud was moving south-west over the mountain, and the thunder was crashing around its rocks. We sheltered under an overhang near the Fionn Loch, watching the

fish leap in the river and the common gulls fly round, while the rain poured down.

Finally we gave up all ideas of Suilven and returned to camp determined on an early start and climb next day. On the way we crossed a small hill called Cnoc Breac. Here the weather cleared, and we had a glorious view of Loch Sionascaig of the islands, with the isolated hills of Assynt all around. This is an unique country. To the west is the rolling waste of gneiss stretching to the sea; to the east the red hills stand out with startling abruptness. That evening the desolation to the west was magnified by the black slant of thunder rain, while eastwards a clear sky and the green-studded lochs lent a kindlier touch to the scene. We returned round our loch to camp just as the sun was setting.

19th June.—Rising at six we struck tents and were away in the sun before ten. Once more we drove to Loch Lurgainn and struggled up the steep scree to the western foot of Stac Polly. The leader displayed unnecessary energy on some lower rocks, but our climb really started at the neck behind a rectangular pinnacle which stands out clearly on the skyline. This pinnacle might go in rubbers; the simpler method of using a plank from the main ridge would, we feel, be unsporting.

We had a short but enjoyable climb. The leader was in good form and the rock suited his technique, since overhangs were frequent. We found scratches on the highest pitch but otherwise failed to identify previous ascents. The whole ridge can easily be varied, and the rock is much more suited to climbing than that on Sgùrr an Fhìdhleir.

We had a grand view from the summit, where cloudberries were in blossom. We could see our slanting ledge on Sgùrr an Fhìdhleir, and pick out the whole climb with glasses. Lewis, too, was very faintly visible.

Stac Polly has some wonderful pinnacles. But we had no time to spare here and had to hurry down to the road again. We resumed our journey by Ullapool and on to the foot of the Dundonnell hill. From here we carried our packs over the path to Achneigie in Strath

na Sheallag, which was to be our base for the next few days.

20th June.—Tuesday was a day of soaking rain and low mist. Crofton, with unpleasant zeal, set off to climb An Teallach, and claims to have reached both Sgùrr Fiona and Bidein a' Ghlas Thuill. The other two set out to fish on Loch na Sheallag. But the boat filled rapidly and needed constant bailing; not a fish stirred, and though we tried the river as well, it was also without success. Returning up the glen we saw a pair of green-shanks, who obviously had a nest or young in the vicinity. It was sad that in the course of the next few days we had no opportunity to search for them.

21st June.—The morning found us on the hill again, struggling beneath a boiling sun to rise above the cleg line. We skirted round the foot of Sàil Liath into Toll an Lochain. Here there is a ridge of rock that had defeated an attempt of mine last year, and upon which, therefore, I wished to be revenged. We had called it the "Tongue," since it occupies the gully between the two buttresses of Sàil Liath much as a tongue fills a mouth. Last year we had climbed the black cleft in the left-hand buttress, but this time we skirted round into the gully, and the Tongue came into view above us looking more impressive than I had dared to hope.

Building a cairn at the foot, we set off up the obvious crack in the lower part of the ridge. This had two small overhangs, the first being easily turned to the left, while a belay was found 90 feet up just below the second. This proved to be much stiffer but was finally turned, again on the left wall, and we found ourselves on the big mossy terrace which affords a possible escape to the left.

Now the climb took to the arête, which overlooked a grand wall on the right. Forty feet of hard steep climbing led to an excellent fine small stance and belay. Beyond this was scrambling, and the "Tongue" was climbed. We had taken over three hours, including a long stop for lunch, and the whole climb had been delightfully definite. The rock was the best Torridonian we had encountered.

An Teallach was a popular mountain that day. No fewer than thirteen climbers were there, including members of the youthful H.M.S. "Rodney" Mountaineering Club, who were semaphoring from peak to peak. After sheltering from a heavy thunder shower we descended the south side of the Cadha Gobhlach and bathed before supper in the Sheallag.

22nd June.—The day was favourable for our projected trip to the south-west, and we set out with bivouac material and two days' food. Forging the Sheallag we struck up Gleann na Muice Beag. There is a good piece of rock at the junction of glens Mòr and Beag, and two other buttresses in the latter, all of which look worth investigating. The first seemed slabby, but close inspection revealed that it was Lewisian gneiss, rough-textured, and with plenty of small holds. It was our first meeting with this rock, and we now had high hopes of good climbing on it.

Our loads were fairly heavy, so we gave up the idea of climbing a buttress and walked up on to the ridge instead. Here one leaves the 1-inch map, and the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch failed to indicate the large rise and fall of the ridge on the way to A'Mhaighdean. Tiring of it in the hot sun we skirted under Ruadh Stac Mòr, dropping our packs by a small col close to Fuar Loch Mòr at about 1,800 feet. On this side A'Mhaighdean shows a wonderful buried landscape of gneiss capped by the horizontal red sandstone, and the loch looked very dark and green below.

We lunched and sheltered from a heavy thunder-plump, passing the time with whisky poker. Later we made our way unladen towards the farm of Carn Mòr. Watch was kept for the buttress which Glover and Ling named Torr na h'Iolaire, and we soon identified it rising grandly above the farm, with a smaller but steeper buttress to the west. These are named on the 6-inch map Sgùrr na Laocainn and Carn Mòr respectively. The picture of A'Mhaighdean ("Guide Book," p. 37) is undoubtedly taken from the former, which must be identical with Glover's Torr. I dislike questioning the authority of these pioneers, but there seems to be no justification for the change of name.

After delivering a note we walked up the gully between these two. It is filled with amazing pegmatite boulders. Little time remained, so we did not attempt to make out Glover's route, but followed the gully for some way till we found a suitable place for a short climb almost level with the top of Carn Mòr. We took to a grassy ledge to the right, where large pegmatite veins showed in the rock above, past a small Cioch-like pinnacle. A ridge of rock ran up to the left, and we began at a spot just before this (cairn) where there was a shelf sloping up into a vertical crack. This overhung at the top, and the leader was defeated by it. No. 2, however, forced an escape to the right on a wall where one was out of balance for an uncomfortably long time.

The next pitch was easier; up the arête and into a gully flanked on the right by a steep wall. A crack running up this was next taken, giving a grand pitch, and the full 100 feet of rope was run out. Above this (cairn) an easy pitch led to the very top of the buttress. The gneiss had proved excellent for climbing, and we were at a loss to know why this has never been emphasised. Holes apparently constructed for the boot were weathered out, and the whole surface was rough and gave wonderful fingerholds. It was also hard and firm, and the nails left little mark.

It was now late in the evening, and the view was wonderful. A'Mhaighdean was smoking with mist, and the screes of Ruadh Stac Mòr were a bright pink in the last rays of the sun which was setting over the Fionn Loch. Skye and Lewis looked very close in the rain-cleared atmosphere.

We walked down to the path and thence to our bivouac, disturbing a very young fawn on the way. Two of us had waterproof bags and were to sleep under the sky. I, having none, preferred the shelter of a giant boulder and built a comfortable mattress of heather. Then we bathed at eleven in the cold green water of Fuar Loch Mòr; a quick plunge, then a few gasping strokes to land. Hot supper warmed us, and it was after midnight before we turned in.

23rd June.—We got away at ten, rounded the loch, and walked slowly up A'Mhaighdean. On the ridge there is a square, flat-topped sandstone pinnacle with three steep faces, but, unfortunately, a simple way up from the north. We were preparing to ascend this when a rucksack was seen rolling slowly but steadily down the gully to the south, followed by its anguished owner. He failed to gain on it and a chase of 300 feet ensued. Meanwhile, the others tackled a crack on the south side of the pinnacle and had a short amusing climb. We reassembled on the mossy table top. Fuar Loch Mòr looked grand below us, but the sight was a thirsty one.

We descended the easy side of the pinnacle and went on up A'Mhaighdean. It was a pleasant surprise to see that the summit, invisible from our bivouac, was of gneiss; one of the highest points to which this rock rises. A very rare Munro was now ours!

The view was rather hazy. Loch Maree is hidden from here, but the cliffs of Ben Làir show up well. These are reported uninteresting, but I am sure that a visit at Easter would repay the trouble.

After a lengthy meal we descended a big grassy gully leading south-west towards the mouth of Gorm Loch Mòr. The south-east and north-east cliffs are mentioned in the "Guide Book," but we considered the big ridges to the south-west from the summit more promising. At about 2,500 feet we left our gully and traversed west, where a buttress of rock descends to a grassy slope; it looked as if it would give a good climb.

We started up a faint groove (cairn) but were immediately forced off to the right on to a very holdless face. Farther up this a ledge led back to the left, to a point above our starting-place where there was a belay in 20 ft. This first pitch was very stiff, and I found myself unable to follow exactly in the leader's tracks.

A shorter pitch brought us on to the ridge to the left. Beyond this some delightful slabs at an angle of about 55° led up to a grassy niche which was overhung. There was just room for three here, and the leader excavated a fine stone bollard.

The next pitch looked very hard, but turned out to be quite simple. Two small parallel cracks to the left of the niche took us over the steepest part, but another tricky crack followed. The leader, a "crack" man, was in his element. The last pitch began up a reddish slab with good small holds, and finished among a host of great blocks to the right of a prominent square tower. Here we unroped, but further scrambling was required before we regained the summit.

This had been the most enjoyable climb of all, very varied in its problems, and, save for the first pitch, of no great difficulty. The mist had descended during our two hours' climb, but it was warm and dry and altogether friendly.

We descended into Gleann na Muice past the rather dull-looking cliffs depicted in the "Guide Book." In the glen we saw fresh tracks of two pairs of climbing boots, and later came upon half a loaf of bread and four baps, evidently dropped by the owners of the boots. Their misfortune was our joy, and the baps soon disappeared from sight.

Light rain came on before we reached Achneigie, and thoughts of supper spurred us over the last few miles of moor. Though our imaginations were fertile, the meal Mrs Macdonald provided surpassed our most ambitious hopes.

24th June.—Next morning we crossed to Dundonnell and drove to Skye to join the C.U.M.C. meet.

THE TWO-THOUSAND FEET TOPS OF THE SCOTTISH LOWLAND UPLANDS.

By PERCY DONALD.

JUST as some people are impelled by some inexplicable, irresistible impulse to try and boil water for tea over an inadequate fire of incombustible twigs on a gale-swept upland, so others can never really derive the maximum benefit from that fuller life unless they are adding top after top to their bag. It must be admitted that from time to time I have set out with the idea of cleaning up the Munros in a district, but a hot day and the lure of a limpid pool in the valley below have almost invariably proved my undoing. In any case, this Munro bagging is becoming far too common nowadays.

Accordingly, searching for something new and easier, my eye alighted on the Lowland two-thousand footers which had probably never all been ascended by the same two feet. Distance, it is said, lends enchantment to the view, so at a distance of 2,000 miles or thereby an elaborate scheme was prepared for doing all the tops, with considerable assistance from a tent, in fifteen consecutive days. Came December, with its short days and chilly nights, and the nearest top only some 15 miles away, and this same elaborate scheme did not look so good. Indeed, it did not look good at all. In short, it was scrapped, and an easy-going scheme without time limit was prepared and modified from time to time as occasion, laziness, and the vagaries of bus and train services demanded.

Now, before disgorging statistics in the best Parker style, and cluttering up the pages of this otherwise interesting *Journal* with aneroid heights *à la* Gall Inglis, it must be emphasised that this "top" business is, like out-of-doors tea-making, a very serious affair. Dow's reception of the idea was absolutely correct, breathing

the atmosphere of Cathedral Cloisters, and he promptly put in a priority claim for his forth-very-coming Lowland Guide. But ha! what have we here? It is the Hon. Editor on the war-path, and he promptly indents for Article, advance, one off, for the *Journal*. Now, so far so good, but what does the Editor do but send off a reminder in these terms:—

“ I hope you are going to manage the article about the Lowlands (was it?) by the end of September. I should so like to raise a racy article distinguished by wit and humour for that Number! You will try, wont (*sic*) you ? ”

You will observe that what the man wants is wit, wit mark you, about a solemn thing like tops. I wonder what Burn would have to say about it. He will be asking Lawson next for a humorous note on tea-making above Loch Skeen in mid-winter. The man doesn't even know it's about tops at all. “ The Lowlands (was it?) ” indeed! In any case “ were they ? ” or perhaps even “ weren't they ? ” or for pedants “ were they not ? ” would all *sound* better. So let the Hon. Editor and all whom it may concern take note that this article is a very serious production, and for wit and humour they are referred to the J.M.C.S. pages.

Having got that out of the system, the statistical department may now take over.

The area dealt with extends from the Ochils to the Galloway Hills and the Cheviots, although Scotland has only a half-share in two out of the seven tops of the latter—and quite enough, too! The first ascent was Tinto on 12th December 1932, and the last Blackcraig Hill on 28th May 1933, the total number of climbing days being twenty-seven, with two additional days spent exclusively on travelling. May headed the list with eight days, and April footed it with zero. The total net walking time was 178 hours (207 hours gross, including halts for note-taking, eating, and bathing). The total distance covered was 396 miles, which gives the low average speed of $2\frac{1}{4}$ m.p.h., partly explained, however, by the total

height of 89,300 feet which was ascended and presumably descended again. The cost per climbing day was 9s. (of which 4s. was due to transportation), per hill 2s. 9d., and per top 1s. 10d. In addition to the twenty-seven days mentioned above, a further six days were spent from 28th March on Bencleuch to 25th August on Swatte Fell clearing up points of doubt.

The number of "hills" is 86 and "tops" 133, these figures being exclusive of the 5 Cheviots wholly in England. In addition there are 15 "humps," with single 2,000 feet contours, of insufficient merit to class as tops. Kirkcudbright, with Merrick (2,764), boasts the highest hill, while Dumfries and Lanark share the lowest, Earncraig Hill (2,000), between them. Kirkcudbright also heads the list on a quantity classification, having 18 hills (27 tops) all to itself and 1 hill (2 tops) on its boundary. Peebles, however, although claiming only 15 hills (26 tops) to itself, has a further 12 hills (16 tops) on its boundary. Footing the list is Roxburgh, with only 1, Cauldcleuch Head (2,028), to itself, but on the Union Boundary are 1 hill, Windy Gyle (2,034), 1 top, Auchope Cairn (2,382), and the highest ground (2,422).

The "hills" and "tops" above 2,500 feet are:—

1. Merrick	.	.	.	.	2,764
2. Broad Law	.	.	.	.	2,754
3. Cramalt Crag	.	.	.	.	2,723
4. White Coomb	.	.	.	.	2,695
Firthhope Rig	.	.	.	.	2,627
Great Hill	.	.	.	.	2,540
5. Dollar Law	.	.	.	.	2,680
Fifescar Knowe	.	.	.	.	2,650
6. Corserine	.	.	.	.	2,668
Carlin's Cairn	.	.	.	.	2,650
7. Hart Fell	.	.	.	.	2,651
8. Lochcraig Head	.	.	.	.	2,625
9. Cairnsmore of Carsphairn	.	.	.	.	2,612
10. Kirriereoch Hill	.	.	.	.	2,575(approx.)
11. Molls Cleuch Dod	.	.	.	.	2,571
12. Shalloch on Minnoch	.	.	.	.	2,528

"Tops" and "hills" were determined by the following rules:—

"*Tops*."—All elevations with a drop of 100 feet on all sides and elevations of sufficient topographical merit with a drop of between 100 and 50 feet on all sides.

"*Hills*."—Grouping of "tops" into "hills," except where inapplicable on topographical grounds, is on the basis that "tops" are not more than 17 units from the main top of the "hill" to which they belong, where a unit is either $\frac{1}{12}$ mile measured along the connecting ridge or one 50-feet contour between the lower top and its connecting col.

The actual result of the application of these rules is that, with but few exceptions, an 80-feet drop determines a "top" and the 17-unit rule a "hill."

In addition, information was collected in respect of "humps," *i.e.*, points enclosed by a single 2,000 feet contour but not meriting inclusion as tops. This was done in order that the record should include every separate area of ground reaching the 2,000 feet level.

Readers will now stand by for a few notes on how it was done (not, observe, *why* it was done, which admits of one explanation only), interspersed with approximate aneroid heights (marked "ap."). References to the 1-inch O.S. map are to the Popular Edition. I should be glad if any members could give further information, confirmatory or otherwise, with reference to these approximate heights.

The most remarkable thing about 10th January on the OCHIL HILLS was that I caught the 7.34 A.M. train at Haymarket. The hardships of such a start were, however, much ameliorated by the presence of a Pullman breakfast car on the train. Menstrie was reached at 9.39 A.M. by bus from Tillicoultry. In spite of thick mist above 1,000 feet and awkward peat-haggy going, without guiding fences, from Blairdenon to Ben Buck, schedule was kept, but darkness falling early owing to the mist, it was not possible to capture Innerdownie. Returning from Dollar by Kinross, the same Pullman provided very necessary consolation for an uncompleted

day. On the 19th, with snow above 1,500 feet, the job was completed with Innerdownie and a revisit to King's Seat Hill (2,125 ap., $\frac{1}{8}$ mile N.W. from 2,111 point). Incidentally I managed to bag a bathe, January being the only month remaining without an outdoor dip in a Scottish burn to my (?) credit. The climate in these parts is wonderful; open-air bathing all the year round. In Egypt the swimming-baths are closed for about five months every winter. A revisit to Benclench to verify Ben Ever (2,010 ap.) showed three recent landslides on the Burn of Sorrow, one of which had quite spoilt my little bathing-pool of January.

The MOORFOOT HILLS were completed on 21st February from Eddleston to Innerleithen, a white hare shoot being encountered on Jeffries Corse. The summits and ridges are largely covered with peat hags.

TINTO produced the largest cairn (about 100 feet diameter by 15 feet high), and the shortest day (3 hrs. 20 mins. net, 9 miles and 1,700 feet of climbing), the return to Thankerton being made by Howgate Mouth.

In summer the eight tops of the CULTER HILLS could be done comfortably from Culter in a day, thus avoiding the big drop and climb between Culter Fell and Heatherstane Law. I took two days, one from Culter on 26th January with snow down to main road-level, and one from Tweedsmuir on 11th February with snow above 2,000 feet. The separate 2,100 feet contours round Cardon Hill and Chapelgill Hill should probably be continuous, and Heatherstane Law proved the unsuitability of the kilt for sitting glissades.

The MANOR HILLS comprise the Peebles and Selkirk hills south to the Talla-Megget road, and, together with the Moffat Hills, gave the greatest difficulty in schedule planning, not only to avoid duplication, but also to fit in with daylight and bus times. The Glensax circuit was tackled from Peebles on 14th December, starting with Birk's Hill (2,045 ap., $\frac{1}{8}$ mile S.W. from 2,030 point) and finishing on Hundleshope Heights, which was eliminated from the list of tops on being revisited on 18th August. Drumelzier Law, Middle Hill,

Taberon Law, Hunt Law, and Great Knock were climbed on 25th January from Dulyard foot-bridge to the Crook Inn, with snow down to main road-level. On this and many other occasions transport was provided by the small, one-man, heated and rug-equipped S.M.T. bus which plies on this route four days a week in winter, and by which it is a real pleasure to travel. Unfortunately, I was not on it when it was snowed up on 25th February. Middle Hill (2,340 ap., $1\frac{3}{8}$ miles S.W. by S. from Pykestone Hill) is only named on the 6-inch O.S., and is shown on the 1-inch O.S. with a 2,400 feet contour. This height was checked on another occasion with the same result. Other contours in this area also appear to be incorrect. The 2,250 feet contour should not be broken between Middle Hill and Long Grain Knowe, and the 2,300 feet contour should be broken between Long Grain Knowe and Grey Weather Law (2,335, $\frac{3}{8}$ mile N. by E. from Long Grain Knowe, and named only on the 6-inch O.S.). Neither of these two latter points are, however, tops, although Grey Weather Law might replace Middle Hill as a hill if the 2,340 ap. value turns out to be high. From Talla Cleuch Head (Muckle Side on the 1-inch O.S.) by Broad Law and Cramalt Crag to Clockmore (2,105 ap., $\frac{1}{16}$ mile W. from 2,100 point) was an easy day from Tweedsmuir on 13th February. The Stobo to Peebles circuit over Pykestone Hill, Dollar Law, and Greenside Law on 13th March was one of the two longest days (22 miles) and the fastest ($2\frac{3}{4}$ m.p.h.). It had been intended to do Black Law, but light did not permit and this had to be left for a fifth day.

The MOFFAT HILLS are bounded by the Moffat-Tweedsmuir-St Mary's Loch roads and occupied four days. Exchanging the warmth of the bus on 23rd January at M.P. 43, near the Devil's Beef Tub, for snow-covered uplands, a route was followed over Whitehope Heights (2,090 ap., $1\frac{1}{8}$ miles W. by N. from Hart Fell, and named only on the 6-inch O.S.), Hart Fell, and Swatte Fell, returning by Roundstonefoot to Moffat. Mist covered the tops above the 2,250 feet level, although it was fine

below. Swatte Fell was revisited twice, once on 13th May in pouring rain, and again on 25th August in very wet mist, when a complete set of aneroid readings was taken. The final conclusion is that the top is 2,390 at the dike, $\frac{1}{8}$ mile N.E. from the 2,388 point, but that a cairn 2 feet diameter by 1 foot height, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile E. from the top, is practically the same height. Both the 2,373 points rank as tops. The second day finished on Saddle Yoke (2,412), which, however, has a higher top, Under Saddle Yoke (2,445 ap.), named only on the 6-inch O.S. Normally I selected my weather with some care, but a previous arrangement for 16th March with a cousin home from Ceylon to run me down in his car was productive of the record low distance of 8 miles over Great Hill, Lochcraig Head, and Nickies Knowe, under weather conditions of infinite variety but uniform frightfulness. The only noticeable exclusions were a heat-wave and a dust-storm. My cousin was glad to borrow a spare deerstalker hat to protect his ears from a hail-storm, and I found the kilt somewhat inadequate protection for the knees. These three tops were revisited on 19th August under more auspicious conditions.

The last day, 24th March, on the Moffat Hills was also the first of a three-day expedition which can be recommended even to the anti-peak-bagging fraternity. The bus deposited me at Tweedsmuir at 12.1 P.M., and the route was by Carlavin Hill, Molls Cleuch Dod (Mid Craig was ruled out by inspection, but lingering doubts were removed on 14th May by an ascent from Loch Skeen), Firthhope Rig, White Coomb, and Carrifran Gans. From here some contouring over steepish ground enabled the well-named Rotten Bottom to be reached without loss of height. Here the dry-stone dike, which is otherwise continuous from Carlavin Hill all the way round to Garelet Hill, is replaced by a wire fence. The day finished over Hartfell Rig and down the Blackhope Burn to Shortwoodend, where the night was spent. The next day a start was made for the *ETTRICK HILLS* at 8.50 A.M., and beginning with Croft Head and Loch Fell continued to Ettrick Pen, back to Capel

Fell, and thence to Herman Law, arriving at Chapelhope for the night at 7.40 P.M. This, although only 19 miles, was rather a heavy day, and was responsible for the record of 15 tops and 5,700 feet of climbing. Smidhope Hill (2,111, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile N.E. by N. from Capel Fell, and named only on the 6-inch O.S.) has three points of almost equal height, but the middle one is probably the summit. Bodesbeck Law has a second point to the north and nearer the dike, which must be nearly the same height as the top. The third day, already referred to, over Black Law was even finer than the two which preceded it, and a delightful bathe was enjoyed in a burn on the slopes of Deer Law. The return to Peebles in time for the 9.3 P.M. bus was by Glensax, the upper reaches of which are well worth a visit, in spite of the very bad peat hags in the depression between Blackhouse Heights and Dun Rig.

On 22nd December I dealt with the west group of the LOWTHER HILLS, ascending Comb Head (2,060 ap.) from Troloss, and finishing up with a 4-mile walk from below Lousie Wood Law to Crawford.

The east group was covered on 11th March, the previous day having been devoted to the Garelet Hill to Saddle Yoke ridge from Tweedsmuir to Moffat, where the night was spent. Leaving the steam car at Beattock Station at 9.10 A.M., a rough road was followed to near Lochanhead, whence Queensberry and the succeeding tops were taken in succession to Comb Law (2,120 ap., $\frac{1}{8}$ mile S. from 2,107 point). The bus was joined near Troloss at 6.50 P.M. This is a most interesting route, involving some 5,000 feet of climbing.

CAULDCLEUCH HEAD (2,028) was captured on 14th January on a rather rushed walk of no particular interest from Hawick to Shankend.

It was not possible to deal with the remaining groups from Edinburgh, so a halt was called during April while waiting for longer light and milder weather. Accordingly, it was not until 19th May that I travelled by bus to Dumfries and thence with Dow and his car to Yetholm.

The CHEVIOT HILLS took two days. On the first we

motored to Sourhope and bagged Comb Fell (2,160 ap., $\frac{3}{8}$ mile E. by N. from 2,132 point), Hedgehope Hill, and The Cheviot, which on the map appears to possess several extra tops, but actually can only claim a very poor one, Auchope Cairn. The 2,350 feet contour should be unbroken between the 2,419 point and Cairn Hill. The main top is marked by an oasis of broken bottles in a desert of bottomless peat hags. It is, however, in England. Our departure was accelerated by a very snappy thunderstorm. The next day, with the assistance of the car to Cocklawfoot, we cleaned up the remaining three hills over going which was fairly good in marked contrast with that of the previous day. I had a very fine bathe in the Usway Burn.

On the 22nd we transported ourselves to Dumfries, and so far forgot ourselves as to spend the afternoon picnicking and bathing at Castle Point. A most delightful interlude.

The Cairnsmore of Fleet trio of the GALLOWAY HILLS was done from Dumfries with Dow in a day. Meikle Multaggart is probably 2,000 ap. as the top is very flat.

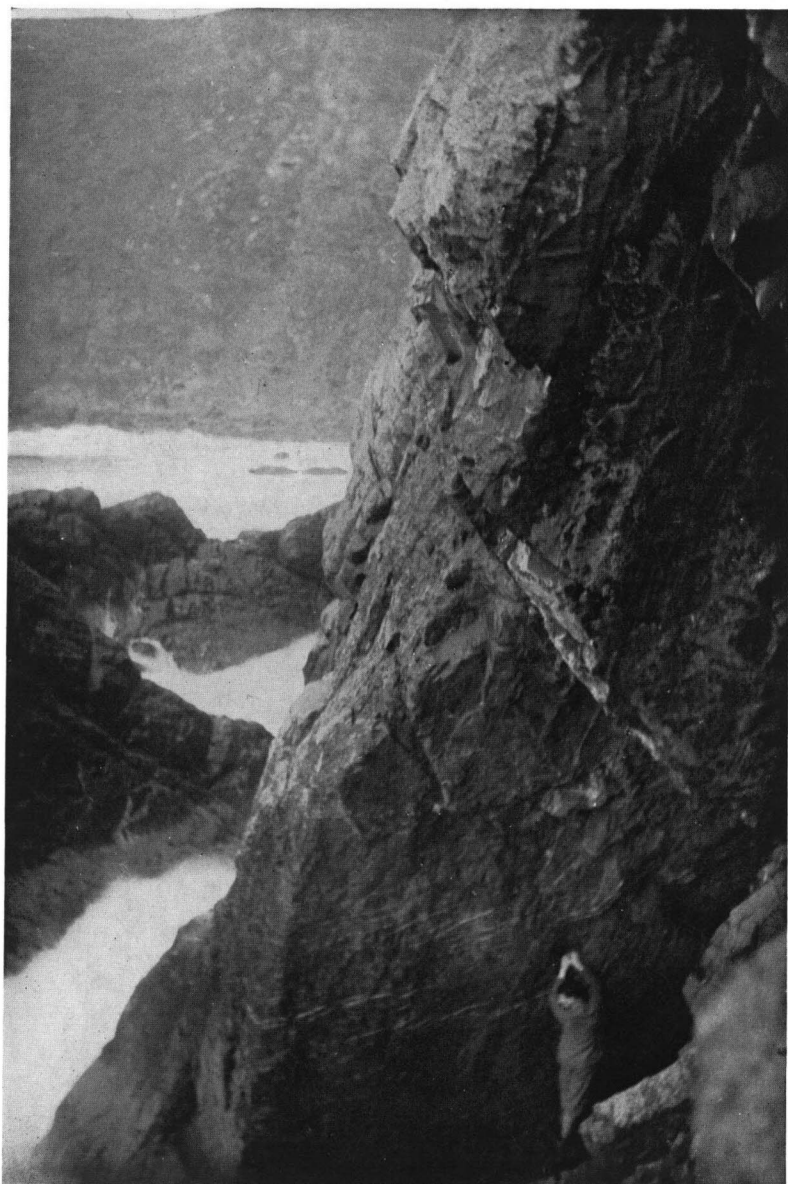
The next day Dow motored me to the Murray Monument, where I started on the last five days of my self-appointed task. The speed on these days was only $1\frac{3}{4}$ m.p.h., due in part to the rough going and in part to the fact that I was carrying camping kit. Millfore (South Top) is probably 2,025 ap. After Curleywee the day became really misty and wet, and after Larg Hill, when water got into the compass, it was decided to follow the Pulniskie Burn to Borgan rather than to try short cuts. House of Hill Hotel being full, comfortable accommodation was found in the post office. A dry morning and a lucky lift to Glen Trool instilled fresh energy, and the route went north over Merrick, Kirriereoch Hill (2,575 ap., $\frac{1}{16}$ mile S.E. of 2,565 point), Tarfessock (South Top) (2,050 ap., $\frac{1}{2}$ mile S.E. by S. from Tarfessock), and Shalloch on Minnoch, thence south again to the shores of Loch Enoch, where I camped on a bog, there being nothing else except rock or water to camp on. The next day was a trifle too energetic,



May 1929

Percy Donald

THE LEITHEN VALLEY AT WOOLANDSLEE, WITH THE SLOPES OF WHITEHOPE LAW ON THE LEFT AND
WINDLESTRAW LAW IN THE DISTANCE



September 1933

W. E. Gray Muir

FAST CASTLE—ENTRANCE TO CHAPEL CAVE

(See page 103)

involving as it did a 6 A.M. start, 12 hours' net walking time, 22 miles, 5,400 feet of climbing, and 12 tops. Starting off with Mullwharcher, a return was made to collect the tent when the day was really begun over Dungeon Hill (2,020 ap.), Caignaw, through the very boggy Silver Flow to Meikle Millyea and north along the ridge including Milldown (2,410 ap.) and Bow (South, 2,001 ap.; Middle, 2,000 ap., and North Top, 2,002 ap.). The Salutation Hotel, Carsphairn, was reached at 8.10 P.M., and I will long remember with gratitude the celerity with which were produced (a) one pint beer, (b) one hot bath, (c) one hot supper. I felt better then.

With an early start the CARSPHAIRN HILLS could probably be managed in a day, but it would involve spending the night at New Cumnock. Accordingly, a late start was made at 11 A.M. with the idea of camping *en route*. The first day took me to Windy Standard and included two humps, Keoch Rig (2,020 ap.) and Trostan Hill (2,035 ap.). A comfortable camp site was found in a small, circular sheep fank near the head of the Holm Burn. On the last day a start was made at 7.30 A.M. beginning with Alhang (2,100 ap.), and thence by Meikledodd Hill (2,100 ap.) to Blackcraig Hill and down the Afton Water to New Cumnock. The day was intermittently misty and the going boggy in the cols. The 3.18 P.M. bus from New Cumnock left comfortable time for tea at Thornhill while waiting for the Edinburgh bus.

It is expected that the complete Tables will be published in the "Lowland Guide." These, while based on the model of the well-known Munro's Tables, differ from these in one notable respect. The "best ascended from" column has been scrapped, and columns giving information about cairns or other distinguishing summit marks and about ridge fences and dikes have been added, both primarily for assistance in misty weather. It is realised that the foregoing makes very dry reading, but it is hoped that it may not be entirely without interest as a record of how the job was done, and that it may be the means of persuading members to produce further information in regard to approximate heights.

FAST CASTLE.

By IAN M. CAMPBELL.

"IMAGINATION can scarce form a scene more striking yet more appalling than this rugged and ruinous stronghold, situated on an abrupt and inaccessible precipice overhanging the ocean and tenanted of yore by men stormy and gloomy as the tempest they looked down upon." This cheerful description of Fast Castle was written by Sir Walter Scott, and from the picture he has painted you will rightly suspect that the place offers considerable possibilities for the rock scrambler.

The cliffs on which the castle is built are about 80 to 100 feet high, and the best rock is to be found on the seaward side. Across this face access may be obtained to two very interesting caves, and it is the routes to these caves that I now propose to describe.

To assist my descriptions I have made a rather unconvincing plan of the castle as seen from the air. I wondered whether I should endeavour to camouflage my inexpert cartography by alleging that the sketch was "taken from an old plan c. 1543," but decided that it would be simpler to call it "seen from the air," as I am thereby entitled to ignore criticism from non-flying members.

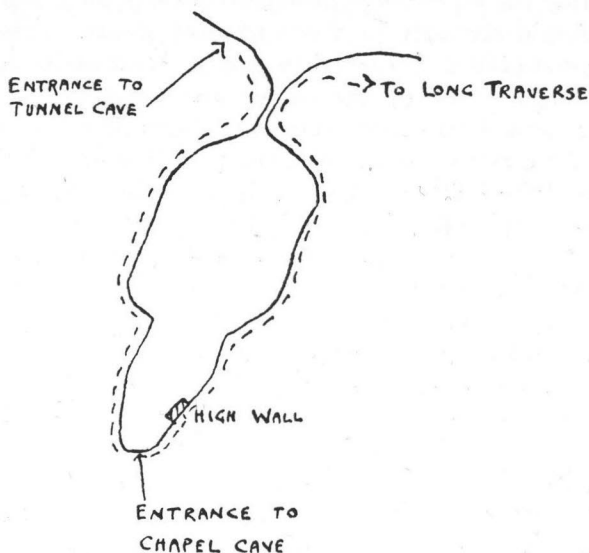
First I shall deal with the tunnel cave which I think was originally investigated by Mr Sang and others a number of years ago. Their journey was written up in the *Journal*,* but if my recollection is right, they used a raft in order to reach the mouth of the cave, and I therefore think that it might be interesting to describe how my brother and I made the trip without artificial aids.

On reaching the ruins of the castle the easiest reference

* See *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. XV., pp. 305-9.

point to take is the portion of redstone wall, which is about 12 feet high and is situated on the farthest out bit of land. It is from here that the journey to the cave is begun by descending the steep grassy slopes immediately below the high wall until the ground levels out.

One then turns to the right and moves along for about 20 feet until the edge of the steep rocks is reached. The accompanying photo* is taken from this point, and it is here that an excellent belay will be found. As the rock



overhangs a little it is useful to put a double rope over this belay, and it is thus possible to reach the slabs beneath without any difficulty. From these slabs one can traverse practically the whole way round the cliffs, at heights varying from 5 to 20 feet above the water level. On the day which I am describing I was trying to be an ultramontaine, and so I stuck to the rocks almost the whole way, while my brother, who is frankly ultramarine, took to the water and reached the cave long before me. Indeed, as he was getting impatient, I abandoned the last stretch of rock and swam in to the

* See illustration facing p. 101.

cave mouth to meet him. By now my readers will have shrewdly deduced that I had left my clothes behind. I took this precaution because at an early stage of the traverse the rock bulges out in a manner that threatens to push one into the sea, a threat which it managed to fulfil on the first occasion that I climbed along that way.

However, to return to our cave. It is about 60 feet long and 12 feet high at the entrance, but it narrows considerably the whole way back until one is only just able to wriggle through to the backmost point. The sea enters the cave with each tide, and by its ceaseless movement has rounded off the angles and projections on the rocks; and since, moreover, the whole place is coated with slippery seaweed or lichen, it will be realised that non-skid footholds are rare. As we neared the far end of the cave the light grew dim and the small circle of daylight at the cave mouth seemed terribly far away. The gurgle and rumble of the incoming waves was repeated hoarsely by the lichen-covered walls, and we peered anxiously into the gloom as if fearing to meet some Obscene Presence that might have its dwelling-place in this unholy cavern. As I moved forward towards the blackness my foot slipped on something smooth and slimy wet. I did not have the sensation of falling, but some unseen force seemed to draw my limbs down and over the slippery rock until I found myself crawling and stumbling forward on all fours. Ultimately the end of the tunnel was reached, and it was with a sigh of relief that we turned and made our way hurriedly towards the sea and freedom.

A visit to the Chapel Cave makes a much more enjoyable trip. The route commences at the belay already referred to, and the figure in the accompanying photo is shown just entering the cave. A really interesting bit of slab work may be had by climbing straight up the steep right-hand wall to a chockstone which will be found just below the roof. A pair of rock pigeons nest on this chockstone, and after calling on them one proceeds along the slabs towards the back of the cave.

The return journey can be varied by coming along the narrow floor of the cave, where some skill is required to avoid slipping into the deep pools.

And now for a brief reference to the out-of-door climbing. A very pleasant trip may be made by following round the rocks towards the Long Traverse marked on the sketch. This traverse may be varied at will, as the rock is sound throughout, and some quite pretty problems of balance can be experimented with. I can also recommend a visit to the top of the large rock called Thrummy Car, which rises out of the sea about 200 yards north of the castle. The climbing is not at all difficult, though loose rocks have to be treated with caution. The landward end of this rock can only be reached at low tide, and when one has climbed to the most seaward point the sensation of being perched up in the middle of the ocean is quite exciting.

I have done quite a lot of scrambling on other parts of Fast, but I hope that the above notes have sufficed to indicate the variety of interest which may be looked for at this delightful place. I realise that there are several other climbs which could be developed, and possibly they have already been done by people who know much more about the place than I do. For although I have been down to Fast quite often, I have never had anyone with me who was keen on rock-climbing, and consequently my activities have been somewhat restricted through having had to climb alone.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE PRESIDENT.

It was a boyish escapade, but there are the photographs before me; not the masterpieces of Howie or Robertson or Clark, and only one of any size the sole survivor of six half-plates, carried laboriously with an ample camera and wooden tripod, and that one broken at the corners, but here it is before me as I write, and two small snaps, but they are enough. No elaborate notes of times and heights, such as are indulged in by Uncle William and which so hopelessly curb the imagination, but memories, vivid memories, of a great day.

True that a few years earlier, the President, with a respected and gallant member and the writer, setting out from Brodick, where all were staying, had climbed up and along all the peaks and ridges to the west of Glens Rosa and Sannox (but judiciously avoiding the A' Chir), and descended to Sannox; and, gallantly but foolishly refusing refreshment and rest with friends at Corrie, had walked back to Brodick, the President and the writer giving sundry assistance to the aforementioned gallant member, whose youthful ardour, having carried him all too successfully past Corrie, failed to support his youthful body all the way home; but that was only an inaugural inauguration, and the real thing came a few years later (and here we come down to dates), in August 1898.

This time the starting-place was King's Cross, where the morning boat to Brodick brooked of no delay and ensured a timely start.

To the breakfast on board the "Glen Sannox" full justice was done, and well that it was so, for our inexperience sent us off with but sparse rations.

The party consisted of the writer's brother, a worthy engineer, the President, and the writer himself, ages 19 to 16, and there they are on the one surviving plate, climbing laboriously up "The Castles," and in the snaps, basking on the top of Cir Mhòr, and deep in the heather, fighting the midges in Glen Sannox.

The day was glorious, and the way was up Glen Rosa to the Garbh Allt bridge, thence up Ben Nuis, Ben

Tarsuinn, Cir Mhòr, the Castles, Seat of Fergus, and the descent to Glen Sannox, all successfully accomplished, save that when well down from Ben Tarsuinn it was discovered that the tripod top of the camera had been left behind on the summit; lots were cast for who should retrieve it, and the lot fell on the President. He had something to say about it, but being in those days no President but only a common member of the expedition, his protests were disregarded; also that the President's sandwiches contained an undue proportion of ham fat, which he cast indignantly into the valley; also that the descent to the Ceum na Caillich was speedy but unorthodox.

But having reached the Sannox burn, and bathed, the ferocity of the midges drove us up the Cioch na h'Oighe, from the shoulder of which we saw the "Glen Sannox" well on her way from Ardrossan on the evening run, and knew that we could not catch her at Brodick. But what was that to us? On we went, to arrive on Goatfell about 8 P.M., and so down to Brodick and into the hotel—famished—about 10 o'clock; so famished, indeed, that the engineer's stomach revolted at the biscuits and cheese which were to carry him back to King's Cross, but which in his case carried on to the dining-room carpet, despite the attempt of the President (selfishly frustrated by the owner) to use my brother's hat as a receptacle; and this contretemps led to our hasty and surreptitious departure, my brother, being the fleetest, settling the bill at the office, while we made the best pace we could up the Lamblash road.

But we footed it home bravely, and even raised a tune to whistle us in from the Gamekeeper's to Hamilton Villa at King's Cross, where we were welcomed about 11.30 by our folk as if we had risen from the dead. Of course it was not fair to them, and the whole thing was badly bungled from the point of view of a properly provisioned and conducted mountaineering expedition; and there are no authentic times; but there are memories, such memories, and above all, it was the Inauguration of the President.

J. S. M. J.

NAILS.

By G. GRAHAM MACPHEE.

(Concluded.)

Woolworth Nails are made from angle-irons obtained for a penny each at a certain well-known store, hence the name, which has been handed on to a popular boulder in Hollow Stones on Scafell, where the nails were first tried on rock. The irons are cut into suitable lengths, and the end is bent at right angles and filed V-wise to form two points or claws. Holes in the body of the nail are drilled for screws to fasten the nail to the boot, and the nails are arranged with the claws along the edge of the sole, fan-wise at the toe. These nails are chiefly of use with an old boot which is nail-sick and will not hold single nails. A superior pattern is made by choosing a strip slightly longer than the width of the boot and bending both ends to form claws, one at each edge of the sole. These, of course, can only be used behind the toe part of the boot.

A rock-climber who is also an engineer has devised a "super" nail of this type by having strips of chrome-nickel-steel or some such alloy made with the ends bent at right angles, and each strip the exact width of the portion of the sole to which it is intended to be fastened. The cost of this would be prohibitive to the ordinary individual. One of the great merits of the Woolworth nail above described is its extremely low cost.

"*Italian Nails*" are so called from the fact that I have seen them used only by some Italian climbers. The design varies according to the whim of the individual. A good pattern consists of a soft steel plate of suitable thickness, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 2 inches long. Two cuts about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch long are made in one narrow edge to

form three tongues. The central tongue is bent at right angles to form a flange for the edge of the sole, the other two are bent in the opposite direction to form claws. Three tongues are similarly formed in the other narrow edge, and the two outer ones are bent away from the sole to form two more claws. The third tongue is left flat on the sole to take a screw. Three or more holes are suitably drilled to take screws for fastening the plate to the sole, and rather large screws are used to fix the nail securely. The temper of the steel can be varied after bending the claws, and each climber will have his own idea of how hard the claws should be.

This nail is good, giving a firm grip with the claws, and the plate protects a large area of sole. The pattern described is for an edge nail, but a central pattern can also be devised. I am surprised that the idea has not been utilised more, as it can be modified almost infinitely according to individual taste.

Tricouni Nails can be obtained from Tricouni S.A., 2 Place de la Fusterie, Geneva. There are at present six patterns. The original edge-nail type appears to be now obsolete, but had its good points.

Tricouni Nos. 1 and 2 are of the same pattern, No. 1 being large and No. 2 small, and consist of a plate to fit flat on the sole, with two holes for retaining nails and two holes for the blade. The blade has two prongs to fasten through the plate into the sole, and three notches on the "business" edge, which is case-hardened. These nails are much used, and are most frequently placed round the edge of the boot. When used in the centre of the sole, my experience has been that they are best placed with the blade antero-posteriorly. This prevents the foot slipping sideways, and gives greater resistance to the commonest dislodging force—an accidental kick on rough ground. When placed crossways or even diagonally they are more easily knocked out.

Tricouni No. 3 pattern are edge nails only, and consist of a holder firmly fitted over the edge of the sole and fixed through it, and a toothed nail. The 1921 model had one staple clenched through the sole by a

special machine, but the latest idea is to have two staples which can be put in without a particular appliance. The blade is slightly angled to allow for the lateral curvature of the sole. When placed in the holder, a tongue in the latter should be tapped so as to engage with a hole in the blade. The blades can be renewed without removing the holder, which remains permanently fixed to the boot, and only comes off with a piece of the leather. The teeth of the blades are hardened, and give a good grip on most rock. In addition, as a young guide once remarked to me on being shown these nails for the first time, "They are excellent for hard snow or soft ice."

Tricouni No. 4 nails are the *pièces de réchange* for the Tricouni heel. This is a U-shaped piece of aluminium alloy, screwed to the boot sole in place of a leather heel. It takes five or six interchangeable No. 4 nails, according to its size. Three sizes are made. It is claimed that the Tricouni heel combines increased efficiency with lightness. The secret of fitting this device, in my opinion, is to fill the inside of the U with crêpe rubber, which prevents snow balling up in the heel. The new pattern of Tricouni heel is an improvement on the old one. The heel should be fitted when the boot is being made. It is more used by Continental climbers, and they seem to like it.

Tricouni Nos. 5 and 6 are simplified modifications of No. 3 and are more easily fastened to the boot. No. 5 is a sort of double No. 6, and appears to me to have too much leverage for the amount of anchorage. No. 6 seems to be nicely balanced and to be a good compromise of the various qualities desired in this type of nail. The points of both are, of course, hardened.

No. 6 Tricouni round the edge and No. 1 for the centre of the sole, and for the heel, would give a good result as, the hardness being the same, the friction would be uniform all over the boot, just as with boots nailed throughout with malleable iron castings.

The perfect system of nailing a boot has yet to be discovered. The purpose for which the boot is required will influence the choice of nails.

For general rock-climbing I consider the new malleable iron castings the best. For very delicate rock-work, scrapers give the best hold, and in certain places are better than rubbers or stockings even on dry rock, but they are unsuitable for walking over rough ground or descending scree, as they are too easily damaged. One expert rock-climber has a pair of *shoes* nailed with small (No. 2) Tricounis all round the edge for placing on small holds, and ordinary soft iron hobnails in the centre of the sole for friction holds. He finds this arrangement suitable for Welsh rock, though not so good in the Lake District; but he has not tried the new malleable iron castings.

For ordinary hill-walking, as in Scotland, probably ring clinkers and hobnails are as good as any other system of nailing, and old traditions die hard. Personally, I prefer No. 1 Tricounis for this purpose, as the total weight is less. The blade should be fitted longitudinally, not across the sole.

Boots for the Alps are a different problem. Here one wants a compromise for conditions changing perhaps many times on one climb. Each mountaineer will have his own particular fads.

My own fancy, after several experiments, is as follows: six or seven reinforced ring clinkers at the toe, closely placed and overlapping after the fashion of the Grindelwald guides; this is excellent for kicking steps in hard, steep snow. From these clinkers to the instep I would have malleable iron castings placed more closely on the inner border, especially under the great toe; these are good for rock-climbing and, being interchangeable, can be renewed as soon as wear becomes apparent. The centre of the sole would be filled with No. 1 Tricounis placed antero-posteriorly for greater firmness; these give a good grip, and with their plates afford maximum protection of the leather for minimum weight. This could be continued to the heel, or else on each side of the instep Nos. 1 or 2 Tricounis would be placed, with a few soft-iron hobs in the centre; this arrangement gives a grip on pointed holds or knife-edged rocks, and is light.

The edge of the heel would be completely surrounded by large clinkers set especially close along the front edge, and one No. 1 Tricouni should be placed in the centre to protect the leather. I have not sufficient experience of the Tricouni heel to speak of it, but it looks efficient.

The numbers of each type of nail required, of course, depend on the size of the boot; the fewer the lighter.

I consider it best to nail boots without any consideration for the possibility of having to wear crampons. I find that crampons fit just as well if put on over the nails, whereas attempts to adapt the arrangement of the nails to the crampons have simply spoiled the nailing without benefiting the wearing of crampons in the least.

I do not intend to deal with nails for Himalayan mountaineering, having no experience, but in such expeditions weight is of paramount importance, and a lighter system of nailing has to be adopted. Another important factor is thermal conductivity. If the nails penetrate far into the sole, cold is conducted to the feet, and special means have to be taken to counteract this disadvantage. This applies particularly to Polar exploration.

On very long climbs in the Alps, and on climbs involving bivouacs, these factors may need to be taken into account, but on ordinary alpine expeditions they are practically negligible.

MUNROS, BEARDS AND WEATHER.

By J. Dow.

THE Editor has suggested to me that following precedent * I should let him have some notes on the "Munros." I am not sure that I have much to report which is in the least degree new, but I shall try to avoid repetition.

Subject to my remarks below, Robertson's pioneer work in ascending for the first time all the 3,000-foot mountains of Scotland was certainly a feat. Again, subject to my later remarks, to cover all the subsidiary tops as well as the main mountains, as Burn and Corbett did, was also somewhat of a feat, and similarly to ascend all the 3,000-foot mountains in Great Britain and Ireland as Parker has done was a very meritorious performance; but when I have said this I would like to make it quite definite that to complete the ascent of the 277 Scottish Munros under modern road and transport conditions is very far from being in the slightest degree a feat. This will be very clearly seen when I have to admit that never once had I to spend a night out, never once did I fail to return to a hot bath and a comfortable bed, and very rarely did I even miss dinner, so that in actual fact the whole affair was in my case pretty much of a luxury progress. Fifty-five of the hills were climbed on day excursions from my former home in Edinburgh, and in every other case the return was to a fully equipped and licensed hotel (the latter adjective is inserted, I should explain, for the benefit of *other* Club members). If nowadays any kudos is to be obtained by ascending all

* Robertson: *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. VII., p. 10.

Burn: *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. XV., p. 339; *Cairngorm Club Journal*, Vol. XI., p. 147.

Parker: *Cairngorm Club Journal*, Vol. XI., p. 290; Vol. XII., p. 84; *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. XVIII., p. 336.

Corbett: *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. XIX., p. 324.

the hills on the Munro list it will, I fear, have to be earned by climbing them all on dates between, say, 1st December and 31st March, or in some such fashion.

I am not prepared, however, to be too modest about the matter, and I would therefore quote two points in my favour. The first is that the hills were all ascended by me after the age of forty-five, though this is a very trifling thing in these days of longevity; when someone does the lot after he reaches sixty I shall be willing to take off my hat to him. The other point is, however, much more important—that no one before me has climbed the 277 mountains without the assistance of a beard. I do think that this is a really vital consideration; and indeed one might argue with considerable force that bearded men cannot, in a civilised society, be reckoned, and that therefore to me belongs the glory and honour of being the first to count as a conqueror of the Munros. While I would not be prepared to press this contention to the bitter end, or even to go to the length of arguing that to call in the extraneous assistance of a beard is as illegitimate from the mountaineering point of view as would be, for example, the making of all the ascents seated in a caterpillar tractor, I am still strongly of opinion, however, that it is not quite playing the game; and when one contemplates in particular Robertson's conduct in this connection it is difficult to find suitable language in which adequately to describe it. Burn, Parker and Corbett, while they certainly completed the list in each case with the aid of a beard, have had the grace not to play the hypocrite in the matter; but Robertson, after making no doubt full use of this artificial and (I repeat) semi-illegitimate aid, most basely and callously after his performance sacrificed that which I have no doubt really made the performance possible. I am content to draw attention to this, and to leave judgment to others, but a more lamentable example of sheer ingratitude I should have difficulty in conceiving.

One more word before leaving this subject of beards. Those who have had may I say the pleasure and privilege (please do not insert a query, Mr Editor) of ascending

Munros with me may, on occasion, have marvelled somewhat at my solemn and respectful demeanour and behaviour when at the summit cairns. I should therefore explain that at these supreme moments there was always in my mind the thought that on this peak four grave and reverend men have at one time stood, and that over this cairn, on four great days of the past, four dignified and (more or less) flowing beards have wagged. Such thoughts, it will be admitted, would induce awe and reverence even in the most frivolous, and I hope that I am not of the most frivolous.

On the question of transport one point might be mentioned. I find that 214 out of the 277 hills were ascended with the help of a motor car—somebody else's when available, or my own in the last resort. These cars were left lying, generally for many hours at a time, here and there all over the Highlands without the slightest precaution ever being taken, and not only was there never any theft, but never once was anything even disturbed unless on one single occasion in Glencoe when the road reconstruction work was in full swing there. I do not think that a higher compliment could be paid to the people of the Highlands of Scotland than merely to state this fact; and I do not believe that in any other country in the world could such a record have been possible.

Coming to statistics, I find that the ascent of the 277 Munros and of 153 of the subsidiary tops in the Tables, most of which tops were taken as being either on the route or reasonably near, required a total of 150 days out, spread over 6 years. I have sometimes been asked as to weather experiences, and I am giving a short analysis which may be of some slight interest in this connection. To the 150 days noted other 8 days have been added which were occupied by repeat ascents, and it must further be explained that owing to the necessity in my case invariably of making arrangements in advance none of the days was picked for weather reasons but all had to be taken just as they happened to come. I have assumed the three main enemies to be wind, mist and rain in the order stated, Class 3 comprising days when none of these

was troublesome and Class 0 days in which they were all troublesome more or less. The result is as under :—

	Class 3.	Class 2.	Class 1.	Class 0.	Total.
January . . .	2	2	1	1	6
February . . .	2	2	1	...	5
March . . .	2	1	1	2	6
April . . .	7	6	5	5	23
May . . .	13	15	2	3	33
June . . .	9	7	3	2	21
July . . .	4	2	1	...	7
August . . .	3	4	7	2	16
September . . .	1	...	...	1	2
October . . .	5	8	8	3	24
November . . .	1	1	1	...	3
December . . .	3	7	1	1	12
					158

On classifying, roughly, days in Classes 3 and 2 as good and in Classes 1 and 0 as bad, the following percentage results are obtained :—

	Good.	Bad.		Good.	Bad.
	Per cent.	Per cent.		Per cent.	Per cent.
January .	67	33	July .	86	14
February .	80	20	August .	44	56
March .	50	50	September	50	50
April .	57	43	October .	54	46
May .	85	15	November .	67	33
June .	76	24	December .	83	17

In fully half of the months the totals are, of course, too small for the results to be of any value, but the preponderance of good weather in May and June and of bad weather in August is certainly striking, and the figures for the winter months are also interesting although as noted of little real value.

As an interference with enjoyment mist is the greatest nuisance, and out of the 277 Munros 114 were mist-capped when ascended. For a variation of the proverbial pastime of hunting in a pitch-dark room for a black hat worn by a bare-headed nigger who isn't there, I can confidently recommend searching the summit plateau of a flat-topped Munro in thick cloud for a cairn which may not exist!—though in actual fact it almost always does. Only 20 Munros have summits without marking of any kind, and 10 of these are reasonably sharp-topped; but in a fair number of cases the cairn is not on the actual highest point of the hill.

With regard to relative difficulty from the point of view of the hill walker, to which class will normally belong the type of man who will desire to complete all the Munros, it can quite definitely be repeated that there is nothing whatever out of Skye which cannot be ascended under normal conditions without the compulsory use of the hands. In Skye the Inaccessible Pinnacle is the only summit for the ascent of which a rope might be desirable, and even here if the hill walker finds, as he probably will, that the ascent of the shorter side is beyond his powers, and has to go up the eastern arete, he may feel that any help he can get from the rope is more moral than physical. None of the other Skye Munros need trouble the hill walker at all provided he goes to them in good weather.

And now, finally, a few remarks with regard to the Tables themselves. I understand that the new edition of the General Guide is to be issued with the Tables unaltered, but as the Club by including them in the Guide is to some extent accepting responsibility for them, more or less, I think that sooner or later their revision will have to be tackled, and possibly in the near or distant future the Club will appoint a Sub-Committee to take the job in hand. I am not personally aware of the rules which Sir Hugh Munro applied in deciding which were separate mountains and which were tops—if indeed he did apply any rigid rules at all—but my own idea is that a businesslike classification would have to take into account the following factors, of importance

in the order named, (1) dip, (2) distance and (3) difficulty. A formula could no doubt be evolved for dealing with the first two factors automatically, and while the third might to some extent be a matter of opinion general agreement as to the facts in each individual case would probably be found to exist. As an example of the changes which might be found necessary were the list to be reconsidered on these or similar lines I might mention the following—as examples merely, not as an exhaustive list by any means:—An Teallach and Beinn Eighe might each rank as three Munros; the two Buachailles of Etive, Bidean nam Bian and Liathach might in each case rank as two Munros; Am Bathaich of Sgurr a'Mhaoraich might be a separate Munro: while on the other hand the number of Munros in the Cluny Ridge might be reduced from seven to five; Mam Sodhail might be a top of Carn Eige; in the Ardverikie Forest, Aonach Beag might be a top of Geal-Charn and Creag Pitridh a top of Mullach Coire an Iubhair; Carn Ban in the Monadhliadths might be a top of Carn Dearg; and An Garbhanach and Stob Coire a' Chairn in the Mamores might perhaps hardly be considered as separate Munros. There would also be many possible adjustments in the list of tops, but my notes are lengthy enough already.

THE STEPPED RIDGE OF SLIOCH.

By WILLIAM BLACKWOOD.

FROM A' Mhaighdean and Beinn Tarsuinn we, Cram, MacDougall, and I, had seen that the western end of Slioch was supported by several steep terraced buttresses and ridges. The sight of them on Friday and Saturday, across Lochan Fada, had so fired Cram's and MacDougall's enthusiasm that it was hopeless for me to protest; even Liathach had to take second place.

After an off day on Sunday, when it rained hard, we set out at 8.40 A.M. on Monday morning, 16th April 1933, from our camp near Kinlochewe. The morning was dull, with no wind. The tops were clear, but little puffs of mist were hanging about the lower slopes, not a good sign.

Loch Maree was dead calm as we rowed across. We thought of the waves and flying spindrift we had seen some few days previously and hoped that the day would remain fine.

We drew up the boat on a pebbly beach not far from the entrance to Gleann Bianasdail, and contoured round Slioch to the west, keeping at first some 250 feet above the loch. By the time we had reached the deserted shieling the mist had formed, and it grew colder with the light rain which came with it. Visibility became very poor as we struck upwards to the col between Slioch and the western end of Loch Garbhaig. As we reached the col the rain stopped and the mist lifted to about 2,500 feet, and although we could not see the whole of the buttress, visibility was good enough for us to make out the main features of the western end of Slioch.

Approaching as we did, we came first upon the main buttress. This is very steep and overhangs at the base. About 200 feet below its foot there is a rock standing out from the jumbled mass of stony debris, shaped like some fantastic animal's head, which is quite distinctive.

We were at the foot of the main buttress by twelve mid-day. The overhang at the base looked unsurmountable, although there seemed a possible way up its extreme southern edge. To bolster up our courage we sat down and had lunch, but even after lunch we could not make the buttress "go." So we walked along towards Lochan Fada, past the main buttress and past a tremendous forked gully.

On the far side of the forked gully was a buttress or ridge swathed in mist. Then, as it gradually cleared, we saw rising above us a crazy succession of fantastic towers and pinnacles. We were round the corner now, and could see two isolated towers at the foot of an easier buttress farther along. But they held no appeal like the ridge with the crazy towers, or, as we afterwards called it, The Stepped Ridge.

We roped up, Mac leading on 80 feet of rope, Cram second, and then myself, separated by 60 feet of doubled line from Cram. Our height above the sea we estimated at 2,250, and we started at 12.30 P.M. The rock was sandstone of fine texture, very hard and in places smooth, and owing to the mist it was, of course, very damp.

The first pitch defeated us and we avoided it by a gully on our right. Then came a 40-foot pitch with a chimney at the top, which was very steep. This brought us to the top of the first tower. Then we discovered that we were climbing up a narrow staircase; from below each "step" looked like a tower, but the top of each tower was flat, and a grassy platform led to the foot of the next step.

Then we went up a 60-foot pitch with a gap. The next pitch had a severe overhang, but we ascended on the left, and then did a stomach traverse, across to the right below the overhang, up to a sensational corner (above the forked gully which lay between the main buttress and the ridge), and round the corner to where a difficult 10-foot pitch led to a ledge. Here there was a beak, similar to that on "Jean," overhanging the forked gully. Then the route led up to a large block of stone, through a window, and so to the summit of the 2nd Step.

We next went along a narrow platform to the foot of a slabby wall, then diagonally up to the left across the wall. The next pitch, some 60 feet in height, had a difficult start. Mac managed it all right, but it worried Cram, and personally I felt, in places, like crying out for assistance from above. This brought us to the top of the 3rd Step.

We then passed along the platform to the foot of the 4th Step, which was the biggest of all. Mac managed to get up about two-thirds of the way, but was stopped by a 10-foot pitch, a vertical knife-edge with no holds. We therefore went along a grassy ledge to the left, and then up a grassy gully for some 150 feet, and then back again to the right by a ledge. Above us was now a slab with a narrow crack near the right side. Mac did not like it, but Cram and I, for some unknown reason, romped up it. This brought us to the summit of the 4th Step. The time was 4.20 P.M.

Here our ridge ended, and we worked across to our right to the top ledges of the main buttress. To get there we went across a gap, very similar to that between the top of the Curved Ridge and the col behind the Crowberry Tower. We could move all together now, and we were on top of the main buttress by 5 P.M. Here we had another meal, and then walked along to the main summit of Slioch, 5.25 P.M.

During the climb we had kept to the true nose of the ridge as far as we were able, but it is, I think, possible to avoid most of the difficult pitches by means of very steep grass gullies. The route is fairly definite, and No. 3 built many cairns. We found the climb most enjoyable and intensely absorbing. There is a certain amount of grass and earth work.

When we reached the summit of Slioch, the mist came down again, and we felt glad that the visibility had been good enough for us to enjoy the ridge. We went along to Sgùrr an Tuill Bhàin (5.30), and from there dropped down south-east to Gleann Bianasdail (6.20 P.M.) to the lochside. We rowed home to camp damp but happy, arriving at 8 P.M.

In Memoriam.

SCOTT-MONCRIEFF PENNEY.

SCOTT-MONCRIEFF PENNEY became a member of the Club in 1892, and although, therefore, not an original member, he could still be classed as one of the Old Brigade whose interests were often more concerned with a love for the hills, and with the less energetic aspects they presented, than with the actual physical exercise involved in ascending them. He rarely attended the Club Meets, but was seldom absent from the Annual General Meetings of the Club, where his interest was frequently manifested by those suggestions that a legal mind such as his was capable of usefully contributing. Those whose connection with the Club is of comparatively recent date sometimes fail to appreciate adequately what those who were practically its pioneers did to ensure the success that they themselves now enjoy. Penney loved the hills of his native land, not so much for the difficulties presented in reaching their summits as for the beauty of scenery they afforded him, and allowed him, therefore, the less strenuous exertion of following the easiest routes of ascent. The physical energy now indulged in by the modern climber, and the temptation to regard a mountain's merits as dependent solely on the success of "bagging" a peak by the almost "absolutely perpendicular" route, could not have appealed to him, and for one very cogent reason, that he was not a robust man, and in his later years suffered much from attacks of asthma. It was doubtless the hampering effect of this latter complaint that induced him to stick more to the level and find his needed exercise in bicycling. However, he made up for these drawbacks in that what he did not, and could not, accomplish himself he did his best to encourage in others, in his belief that no sport afforded more pleasure, gave a keener interest in fostering good

comradeship, and was better suited and more likely to produce health both of mind and body than a love of mountains and all that they stood for.

We will miss him at our Annual Meetings, but will remember him as one who helped to give to the Club the success it now enjoys.

A. E. M.

H. E. E. HOWSON.

ALTHOUGH Hugh E. E. Howson became a member of our Club only last December, he had for many years been a member of the Alpine Club and, more recently, of its Council. He was one of the party of four Eton masters who lost their lives last August when climbing in the Engadine upon a snow-laden ice slope on the descent of the Roseg. As a friend has recorded, "These were in no sense amateurs playing a dangerous and hardly understood game. They were in the fullest sense mountaineers."

I first met Howson many years ago during an early experience of winter climbing: Howson was wandering, a quiet enthusiast, over the frozen ridges of Helvellyn. He was then a Sixth Form Master at Shrewsbury. In the Lake District, the Coolins, and in Wales he learnt the craft that later he was to put into practice in the Alps. He was a born climber with a wonderful sense of balance, his tall figure moving with deliberate ease among the intricacies of ice and rock. To the less experienced his presence on the rope gave that same feeling of confidence that marks a really good guide. A vivid memory remains of Howson leading in a climb up the south-east face of the Rimpfischhorn, and of the skilful route-finding this involved. He was a most beautiful photographer, and among the hills his habitual reserve gave way to humour and lighthearted happiness. We know that we have lost in him a friend of rare distinction, held in high repute by many in our Club. From Scotland and from her mountaineers sympathy goes out to his relatives and to the great school which he served.

H. W. T.

JOHN MACKENZIE.

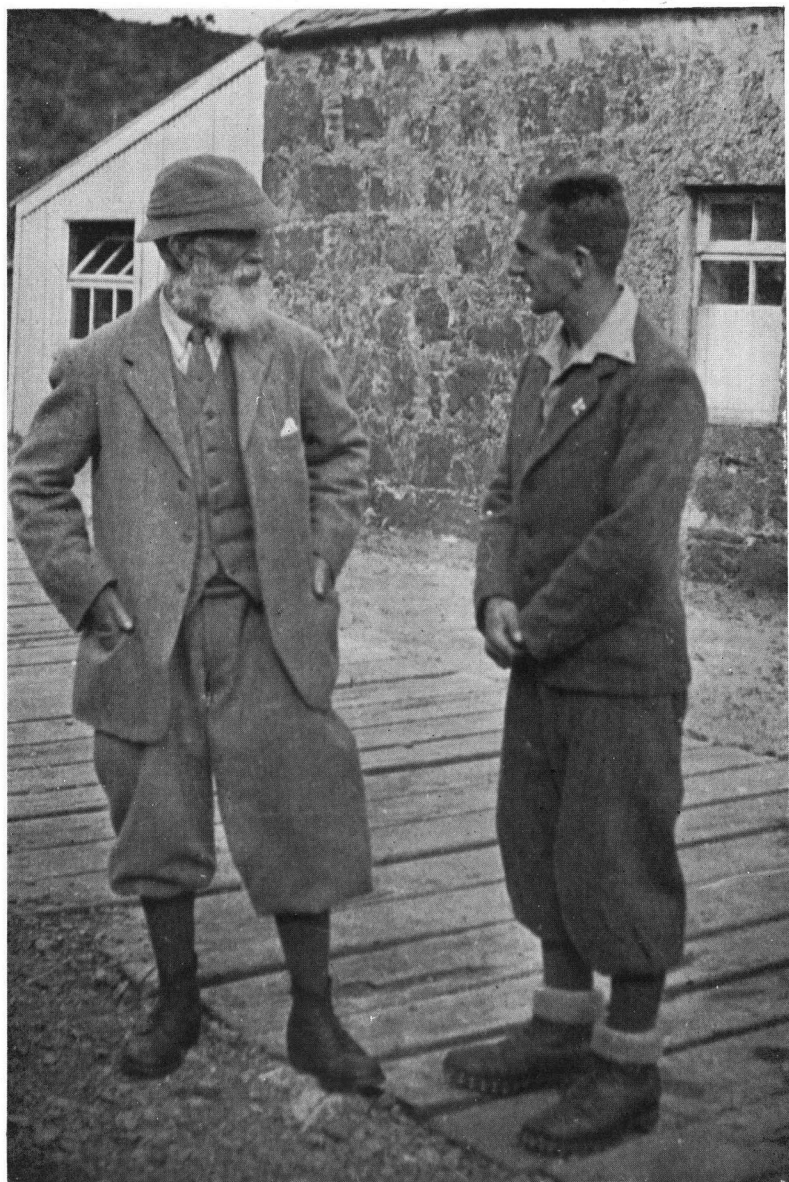
WITH the death of John Mackenzie at the age of seventy-six almost the last link with the pioneer climbing in the Coolin has been snapped. For over fifty years he has been associated with those magnificent peaks that afford the finest rock-climbing in the British Islands. John Mackenzie began serious climbing with Charles Pilkington in the eighties, now two peaks in the Coolin, Sgurr Tearlach and Sgurr Mhic Coinnich, are named after them.

No one knew the hills better than John Mackenzie. Many are the best climbs that he was the first to accomplish; he was the first to set foot on the Chioch in Corrie Lagan, a spot that may be described as the Mecca of British climbers.

Up to a few years ago he was the only native rock-climber and guide. His record was so well known that about fifteen years ago the President of the Alpine Club sent John, as a recognition of his work, a letter signed by himself, the Vice-President of the Club, and the Secretary, to say how much they appreciated what he had done for British mountaineering, and how he was the only native guide in Great Britain, also that in future he should always be sent free the *Alpine Club Journal*.

It was not, however, as a mountaineer that John Mackenzie stood out as a great man. Those who knew him will always remember him as a most lovable, charming, and delightful companion.

His interests were much wider than those connected with climbing. He was almost keener on fishing, and his love of the wild moors and the lochs was deep down in his heart. He would stop rowing a boat in a loch to say, "Look at the wonderful reflection of the reeds in the water with the Outer Islands lying pale blue over the sea far away in the west," or he would call one's attention to a rowan tree bending down to some small stream on the moors, whilst below were moss-covered stones and a bunch of fern just touching the water of a brown pool where the trout lay.



July 1932

JOHN MACKENZIE AT SLIGACHAN

J. Banford



Easter 1933

GARBH BHEINN, BEN RESIPOL, SGÙRR DHOMHNUILL, GLEN SCADDLE, LOCH LINNHE
from upper slopes of BEN NEVIS

H. Gardner

As a companion on a long summer day he was perfect. Always cheerful, keenly alive to everything—the wild birds, the fish in the rivers, the deer on the hillside, and all natural things.

There is no one who can take his place. Those who knew him will remember him as a perfect gentleman, one who never offended either by word or deed. He has left a gap that cannot be filled. There was only one John, simple-minded, most lovable, and without guile. May he rest quietly in the little graveyard at Struan.

J. N. COLLIE.

MUSINGS.

NOT literary musings, but merely musings on a walk from Corrou, crossing to Poldhu, *en route* for the Easter Meet at Fort William.

The proceeding will probably be inadequately described in the "Account of the Meet" with Brooke-like terseness as—"Saturday, 15th April, Jack walked from Corrou."

In modern poetry it might run thus—

Corrou, 9.15, dismal,
Raining;
No one for company,
Started on the line,
Passed by sparse cottages,
Lonely and remote,
Up the great Glen,
Peaks towering all around,
Wrapped in the swirling mists,
My way I found.

Sorry! A rhyme has managed to intrude,

But to my ear true poetry must have rhyme,
And some set measure just to mark the time.

The modern stuff is easier by far and very suitable for a telegraphic age.

Be that as it may, I alighted at Corrou from the morning train, little knowing that a revered Past-President was luxuriating in his sleeper; and failing to spot any member of the S.M.C., or even of the J.M.C.S. or the L.S.C.C., who might accompany me, I battened down and prepared to face the lashing rain. The train steamed away, and I followed it along the line for a mile or two, and then took the path by Lochtrieghead, calling at the ghillie's cottage, where Mr Campbell

warned me of the evasive nature of the path and of the possible difficulty of crossing the Rath.

Truly, it was wet and the path sodden, but the great Glen is wonderful, opening out into broad expanses at Luibeilt and Tom an Eite. Sunshine gleamed fitfully on some of the slopes, but now came the dreaded crossing of the Rath. A long detour up the hillside would have helped to a dry crossing, but I decided on the direct route, and after poising perilously on a rock or two, just plunged through. Signor Boticelli would no doubt have painted it in a different way to Mr Epstein, but in both cases the water would be much in evidence. Of course Mr E. was not there, but then neither was he in the Garden of Eden when he portrayed "Eve" more correctly for his statue spelt "Heave" (and let us hope she gets it).

A strong relief party had set out to my succour under the able generalship of the President, and with two highly intelligent officers at his command, but despite the most skilful tactics on their part, I passed them unnoticed; and I scorn the base imputation of Glover that I did so on my hands and knees and other parts of my anatomy. Spotting Bell's car parked and locked about 3 miles above Poldubh, I left a note and walked on, to be overtaken and picked up at Poldubh; but I can enthusiastically recommend that walk for those who are mature enough not to grudge a day stolen from the joys of the peaks. Perhaps Corbett, after he has bagged all the Thousands, will make a collection of the Glens.

J. S. M. J.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

EASTER MEET, 1933—FORT WILLIAM AND ARDGOUR.

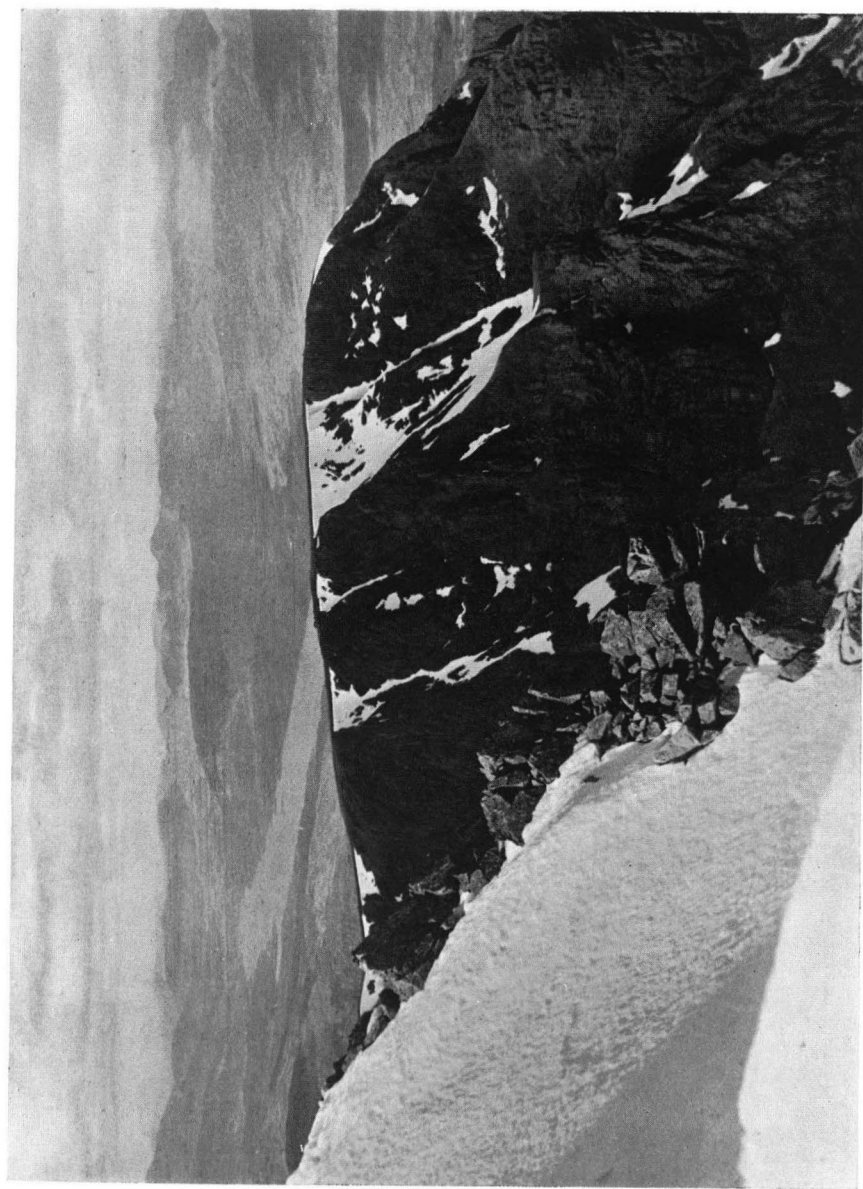
THE following members and guests were present at one time or another:—

Members.—The President, J. Logan Aikman, C. E. Bell, J. H. B. Bell, Arnold Brown, Ian Campbell, J. Rooke Corbett, S. F. M. Cumming, Percy Donald, John Dow, Hugh Gardner, George T. Glover, Alex. Harrison, J. S. M. Jack, Robert Jeffrey, G. Murray Lawson, W. G. P. Lindsay, W. N. Ling, G. Graham Macphee, E. N. Marshall, M. Matheson, C. W. Parry, R. C. Patterson, Rev. A. E. Robertson, A. J. Rusk, A. W. Russell, A. C. Russell, Rev. Alan G. Smith, G. A. Solly, T. Evershed Thomson, G. C. Williams. (31.)

Guests.—F. D. C. Allen, Peter H. Brown, Dr Burnett, Norman Hird, J. N. Innes, D. Myles. (6.) A total of 37.

Owing to the different times of the Glasgow and Edinburgh holidays, and to the fact that the Easter holiday coincided with neither of these, it had been decided to hold unofficial Meets at the first two of these week-ends. The decision proved to be an unfortunate one, as nobody appeared at the first (or Glasgow) week-end and only one attended the Edinburgh Meet the following week-end—Macphee, who travelled from Liverpool.

Arriving on Friday the 7th, Macphee motored to Kinlochleven and crossed Mamore over the tops of Am Bodach, Stob Coire a' Chairn, An Gearanach, and An Garbhanach to Steall. He then walked back to Fort William by the Gorge and Polldubh, rather a heavy ending to a long day. On Sunday he went to the Hut



Easter 1933

CÀRN DEARG AND LOCH EIL FROM BEN NEVIS

H. Gardner



Easter 1933

R. Arnold Brown

LOCH LINNHE FROM GARBH BHEINN OF ARDGOUR, LOOKING TOWARDS BALLACHULISH

and found four J.M.C.S. and two C.U.M.C. members who seemed indisposed to climb, so he went over the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête and the Ben, and had a good glissade down No. 3 Gully, returning by the distillery to Fort William. On Monday he returned to Liverpool.

The weather was rather variable during the official Meet, but at least two of the days were extremely fine. There was remarkably little snow on the summits for the time of year, but enough to give some enjoyable glissading in the gullies. On this occasion the Meet was housed at the Station Hotel, where the members were made very comfortable.

The doings of the Ardgour Meet are given separately, except where they overlapped the doings of the official Meet.

Gardner and Allen were the first arrivals, on Monday, 10th. Tuesday was an off-day, and on Wednesday they did Sgùrr a' Mhàim. On Thursday the President appeared (another record!) with C. E. Bell. A. E. Robertson, who had arrived the previous day, motored to Loch Arkaig to photograph, while Ling, Gardner, and Allen crossed the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête from the Ben to Càrn Mòr Dearg. The day was fine, but cold in the evening.

Solly, the Russells, and Parry arrived in the evening by train, and Rusk and Ian Campbell by car. Later, Harrison and Jeffrey also arrived by car.

Friday, 14th.—The weather was fine in the morning but more cloudy as the day passed. A high wind sprang up in the afternoon and the weather became very dull.

Robertson and Parry motored, with various halts for social and historical reasons, to Loch Lochy, where they visited the Hut at Glas-dhoire. Whilst Robertson photographed, Parry had a bathe.

Harrison, C. E. Bell, and Russell ascended the Tower Ridge.

The President, Jeffrey, and Hird walked up to the Hut, traversed the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête, Ben Nevis, and Càrn Dearg.

Ling, Gardner, and Allen ascended Aonach Beag.

Solly and A. W. Russell ascended Ben Nevis, and returned by the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête, the Hut, and Distillery. Solly was later in the evening heard to express surprise at being "rather out of training," a state in which many persons a third of his age might feel justified in finding themselves at the end of an equally strenuous first day.

Dow and Matheson ascended Beinn Fhionnlaidh in Glen Etive *en route* to Fort William, having passed the previous evening at Crianlarich.

Macphee left the train at Spean Bridge and did the whole series of tops on Stob Choire Claurigh to the head of Glen Nevis. Wiser (or richer) than on the last occasion, he had arranged for a car to meet him.

Arnold Brown, Peter H. Brown, J. H. B. Bell, and Myles arrived by car in the evening.

Hut.—Rusk and Ian Campbell arrived about noon and spent the afternoon exploring a gully climb on the west side of the Tower Ridge. The day was clear, with a high wind.

Murray Lawson, Stuart Cumming, and Lindsay arrived in the afternoon, and Williams and Aikman in the evening.

Saturday, 15th.—The weather was very dull, with considerable rain in the morning, but towards midday started to clear up.

Harrison, Jeffrey, and Hird walked to Steall and back. Russell walked to Polldubh, then over the hills to Wade's old military road, and so back to Fort William.

Matheson and Myles motored to Loch Shiel, left the car at Craigag, and ascended Sgòr Craobh a' Chaoruinn.

Jack walked from Corrour.

Robertson and Parry accompanied Macphee and Bell part of the way to the Hut in the afternoon.

Ling, Glover, Colin Russell, Gardner, and Allen were on Stob Choire Claurigh, Allen and Russell returning by the Stob Bàn Bealach to Spean Bridge.

Dow was up Gulvain.

Evershed Thomson and Brown did Stob Choire

Claurigh, Stob Coire Easain, Stob Coire an Laoigh, and Sgùrr Chòinnich Mòr.

Marshall and Patterson arrived in the evening.

Hut.—Innes arrived about noon, and with Rusk and Campbell ascended No. 4 Gully and descended No. 3. They reported much rain and little wind.

Williams and Lindsay appear from the record to have "idled up the Hut," but the historian feels that the probability is greater that they actually tidied up the Hut rather than converted it into a seemingly easy boulder problem.

Lawson, Cumming, and Aikman left the Hut, and J. H. B. Bell and Macphee arrived in the evening soaked to the skin. Bell appears to have been present at the Hut on this occasion owing to the self-sacrifice of A. E. Robertson, who gave up his place; as he got steadily wetter, Bell began to have more doubts as to the extent of Robertson's sacrifice and less as to his ability to forecast the weather. Lawson and party had by this time reached the Distillery; later they reached Fort William.

Sunday, 16th.—This was a really lovely day and all parties reported extensive views extending to Skye, Ben Vorlich, Jura, the Outer Isles, and Stùc a' Chroin.

Lawson, Cumming, and Thomson traversed Aonach Mòr and Aonach Beag, returning home early in the afternoon. Parry went with them to the Gorge to photograph.

Ling, Glover, Gardner, and Allen motored to Loch Eilde Mòr, from where they ascended Binnein Mòr and Na Gruagaichean.

The President, Harrison, Lawson, and Jack ascended the Castle Ridge. The President took films, to enliven which Jack was pushed over the top of No. 3 Gully. When last seen he was making excellent time back to the Hut.

Solly reached 1,500 feet on Sgòr Chalum, and had a most delightful walk home by Achenadain, with very fine views on the way.

Jeffrey and Hird went over Sgùrr a' Mhàim, Am Bodach, and An Garbhanach.

Dow and Dr Burnett motored to Mamore, from where they climbed Na Gruagaichean, An Garbhanach, Stob Coire a' Chairn, and Am Bodach.

Arnold Brown, C. E. Bell, and Peter Brown climbed Garbh Bheinn by the Ridge. On the summit was met the Ardgour Meet having a sun-bathe, a complete sun-bathe. Ardgour's version of this "intrusion" is given later.

Marshall and Patterson went to the Hut to give Robertson a hand with the cleaning.

Aikman and Myles motored to Glenfinnan viaduct, from where they climbed Sgùrr nan Coireachan, Meall an Tàrmachain, Beinn Gharbh, and Sgùrr Thuilm. The two features of this climb appear to have been the views and the great heat.

Hut.—Rusk, Ian Campbell, and Innes climbed the N.E. Buttress, and returned to the Hut by the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête. The day was perfect, and the views included Skye, Ben Vorlich, and Stùc a' Chroin. Lindsay ascended No. 4 Gully, visited the summit of Ben Nevis, and glissaded down No. 3 Gully to bathe in the Lochan Coire na Ciste. Bell, Macphee, and Williams ascended an easier variation of the Pinnacle Route on the Secondary Tower Ridge, reaching the Great Tower by the Recess Route, Williams leading, and so to the top of the Ben. Bell descended the N.E. Buttress, avoiding the Man-trap, and down Slingsby's Chimney. Macphee and Williams descended No. 4 Gully, and ascended the eastern prong of the Trident by an easy but interesting variation, and revisited the summit of Ben Nevis. They then glissaded down No. 3 Gully to the Hut. A. E. Robertson arrived at the Hut at midday, and, according to the report, found the place in a horrible condition, "which is not to be wondered at considering the habits and character of those in residence." He spent the afternoon in cleaning up and burying sundry tins, jars, and bottles. The morning of the 17th was occupied in further similar duties, and

he left in the afternoon, according to the chronicle, murmuring, "Something accomplished something done."

Monday, 17th.—This was a disappointing day and little climbing was done. From the Hut, Stuart Jack and Williams climbed the Tower Ridge by the Recess Route, descending No. 3 Gully, and so back to Fort William.

Many members left in the course of the day and few remained. Jeffrey and Hird left, climbing Binnein Mòr and Na Gruagaichean *en route*. Ling, Glover, the Browns, Gardner, and Allen ascended Sgùrr Chòinnich Beag, Sgùrr Chòinnich Mòr, Stob Coire Easain, and Stob Choire Claurigh. Parry took the train to Mallaig and back, and Solly, J. H. B. Bell, and Myles motored to Loch Eilde Mòr, from where they ascended Binnein Mòr and Na Gruagaichean, returning to Fort William to bring Solly back. Lawson and Cumming left for Edinburgh, with the intention of climbing the Crowberry *en route*. Aikman motored to Loch Eil, and ascended Gulvain, reporting mist above 2,300 feet.

Tuesday, 18th.—Gardner and Allen lunched on the top of the N.E. Buttress, thus completing a record of seven days above the 3,600-foot level. Corbett, whose doings are given by themselves, with Dow and Smith, motored to Loch Eilde Mòr and climbed Sgùrr Eilde Mòr, Binnein Beag, and Binnein Mòr.

Wednesday, 19th.—Dow and Smith motored to Achriabhach and climbed Sgùrr a' Mhàim, Stob Bàn, and Mullach nan Coirean. Smith also climbed Am Bodach. Finally, on Thursday, Smith climbed Ben Nevis before leaving by car, and Dow ascended Càrn Mòr Dearg, Càrn Dearg Meadhonach, and Càrn Beag Dearg.

Since Corbett had not been greatly in evidence during the Meet, as his climbing took him to different places, his activities are recorded separately below.

On Monday the 17th he took the early train from Arrochar to Tulloch, and after inspecting the new dam at Roughburn, ascended Beinn Teallach, Càrn Dearg, and Creag Dhubh. Up till this ascent Beinn Teallach

had enjoyed the distinction of being the highest British mountain upon which Corbett had not trodden. On Tuesday, as recorded above, Corbett was with Dow and Smith, and on Wednesday he took the train to Locheilside and walked over Glas Bheinn, Meall nan Damh,* Sgòr Craobh a' Chaoruinn, Sgùrr Ghiubhsachain, and the 2,520 top between Druim Tarsuinn and Meall Mòr, down to Resourie, and by road to Strontian.

THE ARDGOUR MEET.

This Meet was distinguished chiefly (apart from its personnel) by the few members who attended it. In point of fact Percy Donald was the sole representative for the whole of the Meet. On Sunday he got a lift to the junction of the Glen Tarbert road, from where he climbed Garbh Bheinn, returning by Glen Gour. Near the summit he was, in his own words, rudely interrupted in the middle of a sun bathe by three members engaged in a race with time. On Monday he went up Glen Scaddle as far as Creagbheitheachain! The historian feels sure he did this on purpose. He then returned to the hotel over Sgùrr na h-Eanchainne. Tuesday was spent in going up to the Hut, and the next forty-eight hours in solitary state. Wednesday was spent quite admirably in repair work on the Hut, and on Thursday he walked by the arête and Glen Nevis to Lochossian Hostel, despite the note to the contrary in the Hut book. The following day he returned home.

The Meet was a great success in spite of a poorer turn-out than was anticipated. On the whole the weather was kinder than might have been expected, and the arrangements for the members' comfort at the Station Hotel were admirable.

C. W. P.

* See p. 150.

CORROUR MEET, *2nd to 6th June 1933.*

ON Friday, 2nd June 1933, the Meet opened with the arrival by the early morning train of Glover, Ling, and Aikman, who spent the day climbing Beinn Eibhinn, Aonach Beag, and Geal-Chàirn. The main party arrived late on Friday afternoon, and consisted of the President (H. MacRobert), S. F. M. Cumming, E. C. Thomson, T. Evershed Thomson, R. R. Elton, M. Matheson, J. S. M. Jack, J. Dow, P. Donald, A. Dixon, R. W. B. Morris, and J. H. C. MacLeod. The party was welcomed by Mr Robertson, the head keeper, who drove three members in his car to the Lodge, the other nine being driven on the lorry with the luggage. After a journey of about five miles the party arrived at Corroul Lodge at the end of Loch Ossian, and were met by the three early arrivals. The evening was passed pleasantly exploring the beauties of the rock-gardens and the surroundings of the Lodge. The President fished, but apparently he could only catch sardines, and would not adopt the suggestions made that he should use a floater and try for whitebait.

Saturday was dull in the morning, but as the day went on the mist lifted, and the tops were clear in the late afternoon. G. G. Macphee arrived in the morning, but was too late for the photographs which had been taken of the Meet. Three parties went on to the hills. The first consisted of the President, Glover, Ling, Cumming, Dow, Jack, and Aikman. The hills climbed were Càrn Dearg and Sgòr Gaibhre along with the tops Sgòr Choinnich and Meall a' Bhealaich. Some of the party omitted one or both of the two tops. Aikman left the hills early in order to return to Glasgow by the afternoon train. Ling and Glover made friends with a fawn calf, which wanted to return to the Lodge with them but its mother objected.

The second party consisted of Elton, Macphee, Matheson, and Donald, who climbed Beinn Eibhinn, Aonach Beag, Geal-Chàirn, and Càrn Dearg. Some of them climbed all the tops of these hills and some omitted

certain tops but not others. Elton, Macphee, and Matheson went up to the top of the Lancet Edge on Geal-Chàirn. After doing all this Elton actually went up Ben Alder to finish the day with five Munros and four tops. On his way down Ben Alder he was attacked by a ptarmigan whose chick he wanted to make friends with. When he arrived in the glen of Uisge Labhair, he met a member of the third party, who affirms that Elton was keeping on walking like Felix, and that both his eyes and feet were bloodshot.

The third party consisted of E. C. Thomson, Evershed Thomson, Dixon, Morris, and MacLeod, who also climbed Beinn Eibhinn, Aonach Beag, Geal-Chàirn, and Càrn Dearg as well as three tops. They did not, however, visit the top of the Lancet Edge, but descended from Càrn Dearg to the glen, and crossing the Bealach Dubh, proceeded down the glen of the Uisge Labhair. Both this party and the second party found this glen very rough going. There was a pestiferous path which constantly petered out in the middle of peat hags. (Does this description of the glen meet the wishes of the member who told me to write a harrowing description of the wretched glen ?) To make matters worse, some members of this party had taken too few sandwiches and others had not approved of the sandwiches. The Assistant Secretary said in his circular that sandwiches with various "fillings" would be provided. The true nature of the word fillings was not generally realised, and the fillings were certainly various. One member wanted to know whether the "date" sandwiches had the stones in them, as he found hard bits. After he had carefully flung away all the hard bits some one told him they were really cut walnuts. Many mixtures of cheese and fruit formed the fillings, but although the sandwiches were sometimes much criticised or sometimes relished, they were all eaten up.

Sunday was a glorious sunny day, perhaps on the hot side, but wonderful all the same. Twelve men out of the fifteen were on Ben Alder. The President and Jack went up the glen of the Uisge Labhair and crossed

the Bealach Dubh to climb Ben Alder by the north ridge. This ridge was interesting, and although precipitous in parts, there was a deer path a great part of the way. One large deer seemed to resent their intrusion and pushed a stone at them. The stone went bounding down the hillside, just missing them—by 100 yards or so! Ling, Glover, and Cumming went up Ben Alder direct on the west side. Matheson and Macphee also used this route and, in addition, climbed Beinn Bheòil, descending to Loch a' Bhealaich Bheithe, and returned over the Bealach Dubh. The two Thomsons, Dixon, Morris, and MacLeod climbed the same hills as Matheson and Macphee, but went out the way the others came back. The day being very warm, nearly every one bathed at least once. Two men bathed in a snow loch at about 3,600 feet on the summit plateau of Ben Alder. One of these bathed in a novel way, as he did not take his boots off. Coming off Ben Alder some members saw a fox, and apparently got a very good view of it, as it was quite close. Elton climbed Càrn Dearg and Sgòr Gaibhre, going home by the afternoon train. On this day Dow, with the help of Donald, struggled up his last Munro. Dow is the fourth member of the Club who has climbed every Munro in Scotland, but the remarkable part of his achievement is that he appears to have done it without the assistance of a beard!*

On Monday the President and his party were the first to start out for the hills—a distinction they also held the previous day. The President, Jack, and Dow climbed Beinn Eibhinn (crossing Glas Choire) and Aonach Beag. Ling, Glover, and Cumming climbed Chno Dearg, and then Cumming turned back to fish. The others continued to Stob Coire Sgriodain. Matheson and Donald climbed Chno Dearg and Stob Coire Sgriodain. E. C. Thomson and Dixon also climbed these hills, but instead of returning direct they went down to Fersit Halt, where they got the afternoon train to Corrour. T. E. Thomson, Macphee, and Morris climbed Càrn Dearg and Sgòr

* See p. 154.

Gaibhre. They arrived back early and climbed the boulder in the courtyard by three routes. A. E. Robertson arrived at Corrour by the morning train, and was at the Lodge to welcome the climbers on their return from the hills. The President, Jack, T. E. Thomson, and Morris left by the 5 o'clock train.

Tuesday morning saw signs of activity much earlier than usual, as breakfast was before eight to enable Ling, Glover, and Cumming to catch the train to the north. Ling went up to meet Bell, while Cumming and Glover climbed Stob Coire Easain and Stob a' Choire Mheadhoin. Dow and Macphee took a morning train south, and Robertson accompanied them to the station on his way to Loch Treig to take photographs. E. C. Thomson, Matheson, Dixon, and MacLeod climbed Càrn Dearg and Sgòr Gaibhre, while Donald went up Meall Dhearcaig "in pursuit of photos." All the last mentioned took the 5 o'clock train south, thus closing a most successful Meet.

The thanks of the Club, and especially of those members attending the Meet, are due to Sir John Stirling-Maxwell for his kindness in again placing his beautiful Lodge at our disposal.

J. H. C. M.

ANNUAL DINNER.

THE Forty-Fourth Annual Dinner was held on 2nd December 1932 in the Caledonian Hotel, Edinburgh, at the close of the Annual Meeting. The President, Rev. A. E. Robertson, was in the chair, and there were present in all sixty members and seventeen guests.

After the loyal toasts had been honoured, the PRESIDENT proposed the toast of "The Club" in an eloquent speech, taking for his text that love for the hills that he shared in common with other members. J. S. M. JACK then sang the "Club Song," with incorrect words and with the aid of a book, as one shocked observer

noticed. JACK MACROBERT, inspired doubtless with the song and enjoying his new freedom from the cares of the Editorial office, soared into speech on the subject of "Our Guests," his vocabulary shunning the confined bounds of mere English and blossoming forth into French, setting up a high standard of humour and flippancy which, for better or worse, was maintained for the rest of the evening. Mr W. W. M'KECHNIE gave a delicious reply, embellished with rare gems from his collection of stories, including a harrowing one of the traveller to a Highland inn who wrote in the Visitors' Book that he had put up there with his wife for two nights. A. M. M. WILLIAMSON followed the lead of flippancy set by his predecessor and denounced "The Health of the Kindred Clubs," not even sparing the grey hairs of Mr Solly. R. H. ISHERWOOD of the Rucksack Club replied suitably, and the final speaker was H. MACROBERT, the President-elect, who proposed the toast of "The Retiring President," to whom the welfare of the Club has been, and is, of such vital interest. This toast was honoured with enthusiasm, for which the CHAIRMAN returned his thanks. The evening's festivities terminated in the time-honoured way by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

J. L. A.

HOSPITALITY.

AT the end of September I had the great pleasure of attending the 1933 Dinner Meet of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lakes, which was held at Bowness, on Windermere.

I arrived on the Friday evening, and on Saturday morning Mr Meldrum took me to Pavey Ark in Langdale, where we ascended Rake End Chimney. After lunch we descended Great Gully, the rock being bone dry after the long drought, thus making the climbing very pleasant and easier than usual.

The Dinner in the evening had a distinct Himalayan character, the principal guests being Brigadier-General

C. G. Bruce, Messrs Hugh Rutledge, J. L. Longland, C. G. Crawford, and G. W. Wood-Johnson. I always understood that

“There you break your fast after ten o’clock,
Then coom and climb with the Fell and Rock,”

but evidently not so now, for when I strolled leisurely down to breakfast at the early hour of 9 A.M. on Sunday, I found the whole company already well dug in, and soon after every one piled into fast cars and tore off to the hills. This time I was in the care of Graham Macphee, and was taken to Gimmer Crag, where we made the ascent of the Slab and Bracket, followed by that of “B” route, which is very airy, but the rock is excellent.

I cannot sufficiently express my indebtedness to the Club for their kindness to me as the representative of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and to their Honorary Secretary, Mr Appleyard, for the trouble which he took in making all the arrangements for my stay.

W. B. SPEIRS.

LIBRARY REPORT.

We have continued to receive copies of journals issued by kindred Clubs, and a number of these are reviewed in a later section of this *Journal*. Copies of the back numbers of the *Wayfarers’ Club Journal*—a new journal which first appeared in 1928—have been placed in the Library, and future issues will be received as they appear.

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

“Modern Mountaineering,” by G. D. Abraham.
Presented by the Author.

“Ancient and Historical Monuments’ Commission:
Report on Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan.” Pre-
sented by Arthur Anderson.

“Walks and Climbs around Arolla.” Presented by
London Section of Swiss Alpine Club.

- “Tramping in Skye,” by B. H. Humble. Presented by Messrs Grant & Murray.
“The Golden Stag” and “Eagle of Coruisk” (Poems), by William Jeffrey. Presented by the Author.
“Guide to Scotland.” Presented by Ward Lock & Co.
“Dwelly’s Gaelic Dictionary” (3 volumes). Presented by G. T. Glover.

The recently acquired 1-inch O.S. brown hill-shaded maps in the Library Bookcase are intended for reference only, and are marked “Not to be taken away from Club-Room.” About 20 of these sheets have been missing since the beginning of July. This has caused some inconvenience, and the Librarian will be glad if the borrower will return them at once. “Norway: The Northern Playground,” by W. C. Slingsby, is also missing. If this catches the eye of the borrower perhaps he will return it as soon as possible. Members should note that a record of any book borrowed should always be entered in the register on the Club-Room table.

SLIDE COLLECTION.

L. St. C. Bartholomew has kindly presented seven slides (including a map) of the Bernese Oberland.

The thanks of the Club are also due to Mrs Douglas for a gift of fifty slides of Cogné and the Graian Alps from her late husband’s collection.

D. M.

REVIEWS.

Ski Notes and Queries, Vol. VI. (3), May 1933.

This number, which is the fiftieth of the series, manages to include in its fifty-odd pages a remarkable variety of information, remarkable both as to the subjects dealt with and the geographical distribution of the same.

The number starts with a brief history of the Journal and letters from the Presidents of the Ski Club of Great Britain from 1903 onwards.

The illustrations alone, both pictorial and technical, repay a study of the number. To the average Scottish ski runner the article by H. M. Luttman-Johnston on "The Stembogen-Christiana" will be found invaluable as a useful turn for cross-country running. The note by Mr F. Edlan on "The Külbis Run" appeals to the reviewer, who experienced these conditions quite recently.

A. H.

Tramping in Skye. By B. H. Humble. Edinburgh: Grant & Murray Ltd. 5s.

Leaving Queen Street Station by the early morning train, which the author unaccountably prefers to any other, we are given glimpses of the majestic West Highland scenery as the train pursues its winding way to Mallaig. Then steamer to Kyle, ferry to Kyleakin, and the party lands for its first visit to the Misty Isle. The route followed covers a considerable part of the island, going by Sligachan and the Storr to Duntulm in the north, by Dunvegan to Neist Lighthouse in the west, and by Carbost and Loch Coruisk to Elgol, which is the most southerly point reached; and the major portion of the book deals with this tramp round the island. Other chapters touch on the wanderings of Prince Charlie and Samuel Johnson, and give notes of some alternative routes, while appendices refer to Gaelic pronunciation and train and steamer services. There are several good sketch maps, and the illustrations, while not of uniform excellence, include several gems, among which R. Anderson's "Sgùrr nan Gillean from Blaven" and A. E. Robertson's "A Hebridean Sunset" must be selected for special mention. The outstanding feature of the book is its friendliness, allied to which is an enthusiasm engendered by that wonderful first-time feeling

which most of our members will have already experienced. For them, perusal of this book will recapture in some measure the glamour of their first visit. To those who have not yet visited Skye it can be recommended as combining in one volume both a readable narrative and a guide to the island.

P. D.

Modern Mountaineering. By George D. Abraham. Methuen & Co. Ltd. 7s. 6d.

The author of this book, who has probably done more than any-one to popularise climbing in this country, needs no introduction to mountaineers. His latest book follows the general idea of "The Complete Mountaineer," and brings it up to date with regard to the popular climbing centres at home and abroad, and to modern methods.

The technique of modern climbing has developed enormously in recent years, especially in connection with the artificial aids so largely used on the Continent, and only a short outline can be given in a book of less than 200 pages. The fifteen pages devoted to Scottish climbing are likewise of a general nature, but it is evident that Mr Abraham still has a high opinion of the splendid opportunities of gaining sound mountaineering experience afforded by our Scottish hills. In the Lake District chapter the fine climbs on the west side of Gimmer Crag are not mentioned, nor are several other notable new climbs elsewhere, while some minor climbs are described at length. We entirely agree with his remarks (p. 123) on the defilement of "Cloggie" by unsportsmanlike methods which should find no place in British rock-climbing. The Brenta group in the Dolomites might have been mentioned, but on the whole his survey of foreign climbing grounds is well balanced.

Modern rock experts will perhaps not all agree with Mr Abraham's remark about rock belays, and experienced ice-men do not as a rule require to cut "soup-plates" (p. 172) when wearing crampons.

His description (p. 21) of the training and surveillance of professional guides abroad is interesting in view of the fact that in this country no control whatever is exercised by the State, and there is apparently nothing to prevent any Tom, Dick, or Harry from setting up as a "guide" in the Lake District or elsewhere.

As in most of his other books, Mr Abraham revels in accidents, particularly fatal ones, and there is scarcely an accident of which we have heard in recent years which is not mentioned. While it is easy to be wise after the event, we agree with the author's stress on the necessity for constant care.

There are several slight errors which no doubt will be corrected in

the next edition. For example, the guide Zurcher on page 86 is really the Herr A. Zürcher of page 79, and Route I. on Carn Dearg Buttress was led by Mr A. T. Hargreaves (p. 139), whose namesake on page 108 was not a member of the Rucksack Club. There is an excellent and fairly complete index, but we wonder why some of the names are accorded the dignity of "Mr" and others are not.

"Modern Mountaineering" is a happy combination of general guide-book and instructive text-book, and, needless to say, has illustrations of the high standard we have come to expect from its author. Mr Abraham's pleasant style of writing and his personal acquaintance with climbers and mountains make reading the book thoroughly enjoyable.

G. G. M.

New Zealand Alpine Club Journal, Vol. V., No. 20.

Mr Arthur P. Harper, A.C., the President of the Club, has retired from the office which he has held for the past eighteen years. He was one of the founders of the Club, and the first Hon. Secretary in 1891. The New Zealand Alpine Club is greatly indebted to Mr Harper, who kept its spirit alive for many years when otherwise it might have died through lack of enthusiasm. He retires with the knowledge that the Club is probably in a more thriving condition than at any other time in its history. His valedictory letter contains much sound advice which might be taken to heart by any member of any Mountaineering Club. He stresses the importance of caution in uncertain weather conditions, in knowing when to turn back, the superiority of exploring as against peak bagging, and, lastly, the wisdom of learning technique behind a good guide.

The contents of the Journal show that Mr Harper's enthusiasm for exploring has borne fruit. The Journal contains numerous accounts of fresh exploration in the South Island. These articles make one realise what a wonderful field New Zealand is compared to Europe, where every peak has been climbed by nearly every possible route.

One's only criticism of the publication is that in many cases the illustrations are not on a par with the text.

A. H.

Scotland. Ward, Lock, & Co. 7s. 6d. net.

Although the major part of this guide will be of more use to tourists than to climbers, there is nevertheless much information in its pages of interest to mountaineers. To those who wish more general knowledge of a given district than the purely climbing

guide books provide, this volume will be found extremely useful and to contain an immense amount of information of every description. It is not too large to slip into the coat pocket, and will be found well worth its place either when on a walking tour or when camping. The sections devoted to walking, sport, geology, and scenery will probably be of most interest to members of the S.M.C. There are ten maps and many good plan drawings, and, an excellent feature, an index to maps and plans on the end papers; there is a good index to the text.

Other features that appeal to us are the descriptions of the views from the summits, clear instructions as to how to get there, often with alternative routes of greater interest and difficulty, and relevant information of geological, historical, and pictorial interest. To those who motor to the hills this book will give a new and wider interest in their journey unless they have an altogether exceptional knowledge of the country. Altogether a very excellent production.

C. W. P.

**The Rucksack Club Journal, Vol. VII., No. 3, 1933,
No. 27.**

Another excellent number of considerable variety, interesting throughout. Probably the most important (and controversial) articles are "Mountaineering and the Press," by P. J. Monkhouse, and "All These Journals," by the Editor. Herein are discussed the cases for and against the formation of a central all-embracing Journal to which all Clubs send their contributions. The disadvantages and difficulties, which in cases of this sort need much more careful consideration than the more obvious benefits to be derived, are clearly shown by the Editor. Mr Monkhouse is also concerned with the education of the public, and therefore of the press in the first instance, in mountaineering matters. These articles alone repay study of the number.

Eustace Thomas contributes a description of the traverse of the Aiguilles du Diable under the title of "A Devilish Holiday," but appears to have prepared himself by a religious prelude. Of special interest to Scottish climbers is J. H. Doughty's "Uneventful Day on Ben Nevis," uneventful perhaps but not without incident. There are many other articles, including one on "Applecross," by Rooke Corbett. "Everest Equipment," "Ascents in the Dolomites," "New Climbs in the Lake District," and the "Proceedings of the Club," etc., complete an interesting number. The illustrations, which are excellent, include several Scottish scenes.

C.W. P.

The American Alpine Journal, 1933, Vol. II., No. 1.

The size of this imposing volume makes any review for which there is room in these pages rather inadequate. The Journal is for the most part concerned with new ascents, as would be expected with the opportunities available. To judge by the evidence of the Journal the American Alpine Club is in a flourishing state. Articles which particularly struck us were "The Mount Logan Adventure," "The Cosmic Ray Expedition to Mount McKinley," in which an aeroplane was used for the transport of baggage, and two articles on "Nanga Parbat." But the *bonne bouche* of the volume is the account of the ascent of Minya Konka in south-west China. This is the highest summit so far attained by Americans (approx. 24,000 feet), and its conquest is a model of how such attacks should be planned and carried through. We shall look forward to the more extended article promised in a later issue.

"Reconnaissance in the Coast Range of British Columbia," "Scrambles in the Sierra Nevada and in the Mount Sneffels Region of Colorado," and notes of ascents in various parts complete a remarkably good number. The whole volume is beautifully illustrated.

C. W. P.

The Canadian Alpine Journal, 1932, Vol. XXI.

This is, like the *American Alpine Journal*, of formidable size. The volume is interesting, but contains fewer accounts of exploration than we should have expected in a field so inviting and extensive. An excellent article deals with the attempts on Kangchenjunga of recent years, and gives a good idea of what is probably the greatest climbing feat in the annals of mountaineering. One article, "Lillooet River Watershed," deals purely with exploration. The first photograph illustrating this article bears a striking resemblance to Monte Rosa as seen from the Riffelhorn. Mountaineering in Mexico, an ascent in west Greenland, and several descriptions of first ascents in various regions complete the climbing section, which occupies over ninety pages. Rather over thirty pages are devoted to ski ascents, and in the scientific section "Glacier Flora" and "Observations on the Toby Glacier, Purcell Range" are the subject of interesting and detailed discussion. The second of these articles shows evidence of exceptionally careful study. The illustrations, if of rather variable merit, illustrate the articles admirably, while some of the whole-page photographs and one large panorama are quite first class.

C. W. P.

The Alpine Journal, Vol. XLV., No. 246.

This number of the *Journal* is of the usual admirable standard. Descriptions of climbs of the more dramatic and thrilling kind are perhaps less evident than usual, but the geographical range of the articles is wider than ever. We are given accounts of expeditions in Patagonia, Alaska, Mexico, Morocco, and Central Asia. Chief in interest, perhaps, is the narrative of the D. and C.E.A.-V. expedition in the Cordillera Blanca, Peru, where five summits of over 6,000 metres were ascended, as well as fourteen peaks between 5,000 and 6,000 metres. The author considers the Cordillera Blanca to be the most beautiful and the most difficult mountain-massif in South America. One cannot help observing that modern expeditions give increasingly larger consideration to the scientific aspect of mountain exploration. One of the members (Hoerlin) of the D. and C.E.A.-V. expedition established cosmic ray stations at 5,500 and 6,200 metres and, entirely alone, remained for a fortnight at the first and for a week at the second; a remarkable feat of endurance. Difficult ascents of the north faces of the Jungfrau, Mönch, and Eiger are described by Hans Lauper. The *Journal* contains a fascinating article by Henry Montagnier on the recently discovered diary of Thomas Blaikie, a Scottish gardener, born in Edinburgh in 1750. One cannot help agreeing with the author that Blaikie's diary is the most remarkable record of Alpine expeditions that has come down to us from a British traveller of the eighteenth century. The "In Memoriam" section contains full notices of our late members, Colin Philip and Inglis Clark.

M. M.

The Journal of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, 1932, Vol. IX., No. 2.

This *Journal* opens with "A Ride in Iceland," by E. W. Hodge—a picturesque description of apparently not too picturesque country. Iceland has its own peculiar attractions, but will obviously never become a happy hunting ground for the many. "Some New Climbs in Skye," by C. Astley Cooper, will provide useful matter for our revised "Skye Guide" when it is issued. Mr Cooper says that Scotsmen "appear to regard rocks as an easier and slightly more interesting method of attaining Munros than by the ascent of steep grass or scree." Only Mr Cooper can tell us exactly what he means by this curious pronouncement. Dorothy Pilley descants on the joys of the Diamond Mountains in Korea, a sort of mountain fairyland where we shall all climb when we have the leisure to get there. The rocks are steep and holdless, and the climber is greatly assisted by a long bamboo pole with a steel hook at the end. But what would the Alpine Club say to this? A. E. Storr has an admirable article on the

Pyrenees which should be read by any of our members contemplating a visit there. It contains the very true observation: "One should go to the Pyrenees more for the sake of wandering among mountains than for the ascent of peaks." There is a very attractive article by Katharine Chorley on Norway and the Romsdalshorn. Like the Matterhorn, the Romsdalshorn has an individuality, almost a personality. It is not a difficult mountain, but anyone who has climbed it knows that he has added something definite to his achievement and to his experience. Lack of space forbids detailed mention of numerous other articles, but the whole *Journal* is interesting, and of the illustrations the series of photographs "From Kirkfell—Winter" is particularly good. M. M.

The Himalayan Journal, 1933, Vol. V.

The *Himalayan Club* have now issued five successive annual *Journals*. They deal exclusively with the Himalayas, but the bulk and quality of the present production make it clear that the Editor is unlikely to suffer from lack of material. Interest and activity in Himalayan exploration grows every year, and it is clear they are destined to become the Mecca of future mountaineers. The many articles contained in the *Journal* are interesting without exception. We may perhaps mention specially the description by Willy Merkl of the 1932 attempt on Nanga Parbat. An ascent which under the most favourable conditions would have meant a desperate struggle was defeated considerably below the summit by almost incessant snowfall. Dr Eugen Allwein describes the exploration of the Passaram and Talung Valleys in Sikkim, undertaken as a sort of afterthought upon the retreat of the Bauer Expedition from Kangchenjunga in 1931. This valley "promenade" turned out to be nearly as exhausting and dangerous as Kangchenjunga itself. The illustrations throughout the *Journal* are excellent, but a special word of praise must be given to the splendid series of aerial photos taken in the course of an R.A.F. flight from Risalpur to Gilgit. M. M.

Sun Cloud and Snow in the Western Highlands. By Arthur Gardner.

I have just read Mr Gardner's new book, which he has very kindly presented to the Club Library. It is the account and pictorial record of a holiday spent in Ballachulish, Ardgour, Ardnamurchan, Mull, and Arran, and is meant to fill in any gaps in his former and corresponding volume, "The Peaks, Lochs, and Coasts of the Western Highlands."

Mr Gardner, as he confesses right away, does not go in for strenuous days on the hills, but prefers to spend his time seeking out attractive views for his camera. His advice to those planning a Highland holiday to try the months of April or May is sound, as we all know. Especially to the photographer are these the ideal months, when the snow still lingers on the higher hills and the weather is seldom hopelessly bad. Then, as the author remarks, does the art of picture-making become a sport also, as the photographer tries to catch "that errant gleam of sunshine" in the proper place.

Mr Gardner first makes his centre at Ballachulish; he makes an expedition to the northern ridge of Glencoe above the Study and an ascent of Bidean nam Bian. He next crosses Loch Linnhe to Corran and goes up Glen Tarbert to Strontian, from where he makes ascents of the Ardgour hills, and down Loch Sunart to Ardnamurchan. The next chapter deals with a holiday in Mull, and we have views of Ben More and his neighbours from the north side of Loch na Keal. An expedition is made to Iona, and Mr Gardner has some interesting remarks to make about the historic cathedral. His last chapter deals with a holiday in Arran, and is, I think, the most interesting. He ascended nearly all the important tops and has some fine views from their summits.

Frankly, his photographs (with the exception of the Arran views) are a little disappointing. We are much indebted, however, to Mr Gardner for presenting this handsome addition to the Club Library.

T. G.

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.



"THE LOWLANDS GUIDE."

MEMBERS will appreciate the fact that it is a much more difficult task to obtain good photographs for this Guide than for most of the others. The Editor of "The Lowlands Guide" would therefore be grateful if any members who have photos of the district to be included in this Guide would send them to him as soon as possible. The fact that the country south of the Forth and Clyde Canal is much less picturesque than that in the north has added considerably to the difficulty of securing the necessary photos. An urgent appeal is therefore made to all who may have prints which might be of use to send them to John Dow, "Belmont," Dalbeattie Road, Dumfries.



MEALL NAN DAMH.

J. Rooke Corbett, in the account of his doings at the Easter Meet, sends the following note on the subject of this mountain:—

"Meall nan Damh is not well drawn on the Ordnance Map. There is a top close to the cairn and about 20 feet higher, and a second top about 5 furlongs farther west. My aneroid showed no difference between the two tops in height, but I could see so much of Stob Coire a' Chearcaill from the second top over the first top that I think the second top must be the higher of the two. There is no sign of the second top on the map. Sgor Craobh a' Chaoruinn has a very fine rocky top, with almost vertical cliffs on the south and west and a steep slope to scramble up on the east."



Most members of the Club will recollect that the celebrated Scottish Evangelist, John M'Neill, died in April of this year. An interesting paragraph, containing information which may be new to many, appeared in the newspapers about that time and is given below:—

"One of the Rev. John M'Neill's most characteristically energetic performances was to climb Ben Nevis every day for a week and hold

a service on the top. This he did while holidaying at Fort William in the summer of 1899. The Ben was climbed by more people in those days, perhaps, than now, and at the last service the congregation numbered about forty. Not many men of 45, as he then was, would climb the Ben on six successive days."

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MEET—GLEN BRITTLE.

The C.U.M.C. held a climbing Meet in Glen Brittle for ten days from 23rd June for the benefit of those who were unable to attend the Alpine Meet. Sixteen members were present, of whom eight stayed in the Post Office, while the rest camped.

The Meet enjoyed fine weather, with only two bad days. On the last day magnificent sea-of-cloud effects were encountered, with Brocken spectres in profusion. The range was pretty thoroughly explored, and two parties spent nights in bivouacs at either end of the ridge, but bad weather damped their ardour for the complete ridge walk. Rhum was visited by a party of eight and "Hallival and Askival" ascended. Several short pitches of various standards of difficulty were found, but nothing of any importance.

The Meet was fortunate in being able to form the larger part of a rescue party on their first day, but that experience had rather a disastrous effect on their subsequent climbing.

For the sake of record the following climbs or variations are appended:—

Sgurr Sgumain. North Buttress.—Start at grass patch above and to left of scree between N. and N.W. Buttresses of Sgumain, about 50 yards from start of Pilkington's N.W. Buttress climb. The route goes straight up the face over very steep rock, with the leader continuously out of sight of the second man. Rock fairly loose, but good belays. Climbing consisted of pitches connecting ledges and recesses, and was always exposed, although some of the pitches were quite short. After 300 feet of this type of climbing a broad shelf was reached, from which two exposed pitches landed the party at the cairn on the W. Buttress. Standard, 3a. (approx.).

Sron na Ciche. (a) Cioch Direct.—Variation of second pitch below terrace. Climbed on slabs on the left of the groove normally followed. Magnificent exposure. This pitch was also varied on the right, ascending to the roof of the groove, and the climb continued to the terrace on this line.

(b) *Mallory's Slab and Groove.*—Most of the parties doing this followed a variation of the second pitch probably invented last year by Mr J. A. Ramsay. Instead of making the delicate step to the right, the slab is climbed directly up, making a much more difficult pitch.

Sron na Ciche, Coir' a' Ghrunnda, South Crag. (a) *White Slab Route.*—From the platform below the white slab a steep chimney and crack slightly to the left was climbed instead of following the usual route more to the right. This perhaps adds a No. 4 pitch to a climb which, apart from it, should not have been classed as more than a No. 3.

(b) *Central Buttress.*—Finish directly up tower above Pinnacle rake to right of ordinary route. Interesting. E. A. M. W.

THE BRAERIACH PINNACLE OF COIRE BROCHAIN AND THE FOREFINGER PINNACLE BY THE SHELTER STONE.

G. L. Ritchie sends the following account of two ascents in the Cairngorms;—

Cecil G. Cowie, Stephen R. Tough, and myself spent from the 15th to the 28th July in the Cairngorms, during which the following two climbs were made. The first is the ascent of the Braeriach Pinnacle of Coire Bhrochain, which, according to the Club "Guide Book," had not so far been accomplished. The party was as given above. Starting from the foot of the East Gully, we climbed straight up the face, keeping to the side of the gully for about 300 feet. An upward traverse to the left was then made, which brought us right out on the top of the Pinnacle. The photo shows the route followed. The climb was of a moderate nature, with good, firm holds, except on the last 100 feet of the traverse. Here the rock was very rotten and needed careful handling.

The other climb was on the Forefinger Pinnacle, beside the Shelter Stone. The route taken was different to that taken by Drummond and M'Coss, except the last chimney. The route begins at the north corner and works round to the east side; from here it goes straight up till it joins the chimney mentioned above. Although the top part of the rock is rotten the rest is firm, and gives good climbing, but most of the holds slope outwards. This climb was done by Cowie and myself.

ROUTES TO BEN ALDER FROM THE SOUTH.

While on holiday in Rannoch in July, I took the opportunity to investigate the new road to Loch Ericht, with the view that it might help an expedition to Ben Alder from the south. This road was made by Balfour Beattie in connection with the Grampian Power Scheme, and leads from Bridge of Ericht, on Loch Rannoch side, to the new dam on the River Ericht at the south end of the loch. The Rannoch Scheme is now complete, and the road has become the property of the Rannoch Estates, who probably intend to use it as a motor road for shooting parties. The Grampian Electric Power Supply Co. have, of course, the use of it also. It is guarded by

large iron gates at Bridge of Ericht, which are padlocked, and permission to use it would require to be got from the Rannoch factor.

The road itself is very disappointing, as it is in a bad condition. Any surface that there has been is torn up by the heavy traffic, and is more like a long stretch of scree than a motor road. It rises steeply from Bridge of Ericht for the first 2 miles—and there are many sharp bends—follows the east bank of the Ericht, and stops at the dam. The dam is about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles south of the loch, almost where the Allt Ghlas joins the Ericht. To get to the west side of the loch and Alder Bay, the Cam Chriochan burn would have to be crossed. There is a bridge three-quarters of a mile from the loch, but the burn can be crossed a little below the bridge in summer. This entails, however, about 2 miles of heavy going, from the end of the road, and a total distance to the foot of Ben Alder of 5 miles at least.

In my opinion, therefore, even if it was accessible and good, the new road is of little advantage. The other route to Ben Alder from Rannoch (and the one I have used on several occasions) is to take the bridle path, which starts at the sawmill behind Rannoch Lodge and which gives good going all the way till it stops suddenly, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Benalder Cottage (unoccupied), a distance of approximately 9 miles. Though this route entails rather a long walk, it is not a tiring one. The views to the west, across the moor, and of the hills in the south are magnificent, and make Ben Alder a very pleasant expedition from Rannoch.

T. J. GIBSON.

FOUND.

A silver wristlet watch has been found at the Ben Nevis Hut, at or before Easter. It is of Swiss manufacture, has a leather strap, and is marked "Prestige lever." The owner may obtain possession of the watch by communicating with the Hon. Assistant Secretary, 121 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, C.2.

CLIMB ON SGURR NA FEARSTAIG—GLEN STRATHFARRAR.

Climbed on 11th April 1933. Party of A. L. Cram, K. MacDougall, W. Blackwood.

Conditions.—Misty with occasional light rain; a very little snow on the tops.

We left the Glen Strathfarrar road about a mile above Inchvuilt and went up the good stalking path to Loch Toll a' Mhuic; straight up past the loch, bearing slightly westwards and over three broken rock ledges (routes optional). Then, on keeping to the right, one sees a conspicuous overhanging chimney at about 2,500 feet. To the right of the chimney is a big gully and between the two lies the buttress which we climbed. The climb starts from a rather loose

stone which is sufficiently firm for one to climb over it and then goes up 50 feet to a grass ledge. Mixed rock and grass follow for another 100 feet or so, where a grassy ledge is left by a gully. Then round a corner on the left, keeping on the outside, and up to another ledge by a grassy gully, as the direct route would not go. Continue by a small chimney and at 250 feet, across a chockstone gully to the right, and below chockstones to slabby ledge on left side of big gully. Leave the gully and go outwards to a corner which is very airy, but there is a good hitch. Proceed round corner on moss to steep rock rib with good holds, and then to the right again and up a wall with poor holds at the top. This lands one at the top of the climb, which ends near the 2,881 feet top of Sgùrr na Fearstaig. The climb took $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours and we built many small cairns. The route is not very definite and rather "vegetable," but it gives an interesting route to the summit.

W. B.

THE DOUGLAS GULLY, LOCHNAGAR.

This gully was climbed on the 12th September 1933 by Mr C. Ludwig, of Aberdeen. Mr Ludwig, who was alone, has given me the following particulars:—

"There were no very serious technical difficulties, but the rock throughout was so rotten that the climb may be considered as quite unjustifiable. The description in the Guide Book is rather misleading, as the wall of dark rock does not block the gully but actually forms the right wall. The gully was followed to within 150 feet of the top when the climb led up by some narrow cracks to the left for some 50 feet, after which the gully was rejoined, and followed to the top. The climb took 1 hour 15 minutes."

J. A. PARKER.

THE MITRE RIDGE.

An article on the first ascent of the Mitre Ridge of Beinn a' Bhuird of Ben Avon will appear in the next number of the *S.M.C.J.* Claim to the first ascent was made by Mr Charles Ludwig, who has kindly sent a short note on his ascent made on the 9th September 1933; but as two parties consisting of Messrs Wedderburn, Baird, and Leslie, and Messrs Cumming and Crofton made separate and different ascents on 4th July, it is probable that their ascents must rank as the first. Mr Ludwig's climb has already been described in a short paragraph in the papers on 21st September, under the impression that it was the first ascent.

THE MUNROS.

Members will be interested to learn that John Dow has completed the ascent of the Munros. An article on his experiences, mental and physical, appears elsewhere in this issue.

S.M.C. ABROAD, 1933.

W. N. Ling spent a month in Tyrol and Hohe Tauern, from the middle of July, with J. W. Brown and P. J. Unna, member. The weather was rather broken, but there were some very good days. In the Silvretta group, *Piz Buin*, *Silvrettahorn*, and *Dreiländer Spitz* were climbed on successive days, then a break of weather occurred and the party moved on to the Oetzthal, where the *Schrankogel* and the *Wilde Leck* were climbed on successive days, the latter a good rock climb. Another break and three very wet days at Krimml and then up to the *Birnlücke* and across the frontier to the *Birnlücke Hut*, from where a good day on the *Dreiherrenspitz* completed the climbing programme.

Donald Mackay and I went to Norway this summer, arriving at Turtagrö on 10th July. A long drought prior to our arrival was succeeded by almost consistently foul weather, and we got soaked on six successive days. However, during the nine days Mackay was with me at Turtagrö we managed to do the Dyrhaugstind, the Soleiryggen, and the Store Skagastolstind by the Skagastolsryggen. For the latter, which involves some route-finding difficulties, we took a guide. Scenically the Skagastolsryggen is magnificent and the rock throughout is excellent. An attempt on the Riingstind was defeated by a hailstorm on the Gravdalskar, and we made matters worse by choosing a particularly nasty route off the glacier. We also failed, owing to a combination of weather and difficulty, on the Nordlige Midtmarasdalstind, where abnormal glacier conditions made it impossible to reach the ordinary start of the climb. After two hours on a steep and rotten face somewhat to the right of the proper route, we were quite glad to get back to the glacier. After Mackay returned home I did the Store Austabottind and then went off to see some of the country, combining walking, motoring and steamer travel in pleasing variety. At Aandalsnes I climbed the Romsdalshorn, but arrangements for climbing at Oye and Loen were upset by rain and mist, and two days specially reserved for climbs on my return to Turtagrö were visited by torrential downpours, high winds, and new snow on the tops. The weather rather spoilt climbing, but travel in Norway is a continual feast of magnificent scenery, and the people everywhere are delightful. Turtagrö Hotel is very comfortable (they think nothing of giving climbers a hot dinner at 11 P.M.), and the Horungtinder provide a great variety of expeditions which can be done without the attendant miseries of huts and early starts. Lastly, Norway is off the gold standard; it is at present considerably cheaper than the Alps. MALCOLM MATHESON.

THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF
SCOTLAND.

EDINBURGH SECTION.

AUTUMN HOLIDAY MEET AT KINGSHOUSE,
16TH TO 18TH SEPTEMBER 1933.

Members.—Fraser, Marjoribanks, Ogilvie, Stobie, Troquair, and Welsh.

Visitors.—W. G. P. Lindsay (S.M.C.) and G. de Rham.

Saturday, 16th September.—Ogilvie, Marjoribanks, and De Rham arrived at midday and started at 2 o'clock to climb the first two or three pitches of the chasm. The exceptionally dry conditions made it possible to keep to the bed of the stream without getting wet, where other parties had sometimes turned the pitches by climbs on the walls. The party continued to the top of the tenth pitch, which they reached in 3 hours 10 minutes.

The rest of the Meet arrived at night.

Sunday, 17th September.—Troquair, Fraser, Stobie, and Welsh had an airy expedition up the Crowberry Ridge, climbing by Greig's ledge on two ropes, led by Fraser and Troquair.

The others sauntered easily up to the foot of Ossian's Staircase, and after a slimy ascent to the cave, presented Ossian with a waterproof cover (once the property of Mr Woolworth) for his damp visitor's book, and left him a tip of 500 Soviet inflation roubles.

Monday, 18th September.—Stobie, Marjoribanks, and de Rham climbed the North Buttress on Buachaille Etive Mhòr, while Troquair, Welsh, Fraser, and Lindsay set out late in the morning on a purely contemplative

expedition, examining the foot of the Central Buttress and peeping cautiously into the chasm, after which they returned home.

Except for showers on Monday, which made the rock slippery, the weather was favourable to climbing.

I. H. OGILVIE.

GLASGOW SECTION.

MEET AT C.I.C. HUT, SEPTEMBER 1933.

R. ANDERSON, J. Banford, B. H. Humble, D. Scott, and J. Howie (guest) arrived at 11.30 P.M., Saturday, 23rd September, in darkness and without a guiding light from the window. The Hut was full up, and these five spent a comfortable night on the floor, there being fourteen occupants altogether.

Saturday.—Stewart, Dyce, Broadbent, and M'Cluskie arrived about 4 o'clock, after great difficulty in the darkness. They did the Tower Ridge and descended No. 4 Gully. Wilson and MacKinnon, in the afternoon, did No. 3 Buttress. Macleod went up No. 3 Gully and rejoined Wilson and Mackinnon.

Sunday.—In spite of their comfortable beds, this party were first awake. Scott and Howie did the Castle Ridge, descended No. 1 Gully, ascended the Tower Ridge from the Gap, and then bagged Càrn Mòr Dearg.

Stewart and M'Cluskie left. Dyce, Broadbent, and MacKinnon did the N.E. Buttress and descended No. 3 Gully. Wilson and M'Cluskie did Càrn Mòr Dearg, the arête, and down a rock pitch between Nos. 3 and 4 Gullies. Anderson, Banford, and Humble did Tower Ridge and descended No. 4 Gully.

Monday.—About five moved off while others were asleep. (Scott and Howie slept on the floor again.) All climbed the N.E. Buttress, Anderson and Banford ascending to the first platform by the route to the left of Slingsby's Chimney, and then following the Ridge.

Scott, Howie, and Humble ascended from the first platform but moved well round to the west of the Ridge, ascending an interesting 120-feet chimney to regain the Ridge. Both parties forgathered at the Mantrap for photographs, and continued to the summit. Then they descended by the arête, and cleaned the Hut before leaving at 2.40 P.M. for the 3 o'clock train home.

Broadbent, Dyce, and MacKinnon did Càrn Mòr Dearg and Càrn Dearg Meadhonach. Every one left by the evening.

Two Edinburgh J.M.C.S. members called in about 1 P.M. on Monday. The S.M.C. was represented at the Meet by J. Carruthers and J. Dallachy.

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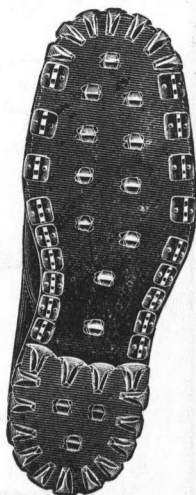
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