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J. H. B. BELL



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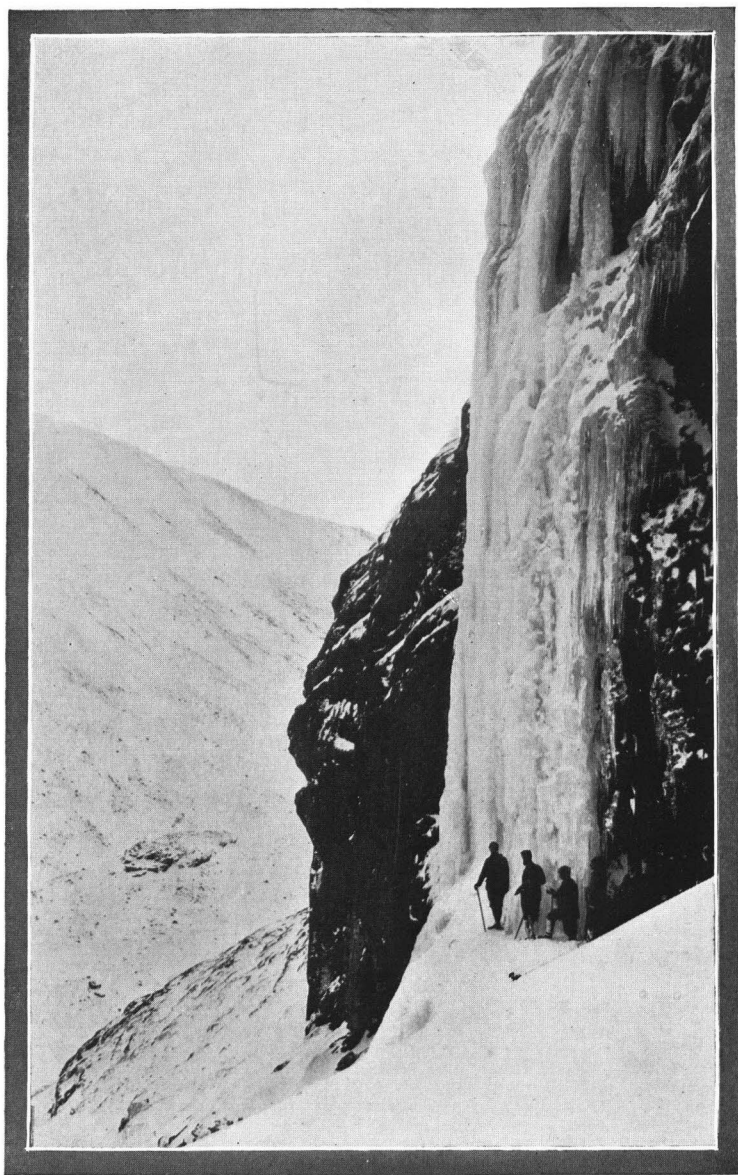
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*April 5, 1901*

*J. Gall Inglis*

FROZEN WATERFALL, CARN DEARG W., BEN NEVIS

*(With Best Wishes for Easter 1937)*

# THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

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VOL. XXI.

APRIL 1937.

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## JOYS OF THE HUT.

By J. LOGAN AIKMAN.

THE sad fact disclosed by the Custodian of the Charles Inglis Clark Memorial Hut in his report at our last Annual Meeting, that out of a Club membership of 300 only twenty-two had visited the Hut during the year, brings me to think that to many the joys of residence there must be unknown. Surely it cannot be that many think of the Hut merely as a rough shelter for ultramontanes, whereas it is undoubtedly the finest spot in our glorious country for those who love the hills and the rocks in a more salvationist and contemplative way. No one with any soul can live there without being moved to exhilaration. Merely to step out of doors is to behold the giant cliffs, either bathed in sunshine, with every well-known and well-loved climbing route showing up sharp and clear, or in winter and spring plastered with snow and ice and looking well-nigh impregnable, or again, as occurs only too frequently, looming out from time to time through rifts in cloud and mist, and then relapsing into mysterious obscurity when, though unseen, the presence of the vast crags may still be felt. It is not only the sense of sight which can be gratified, but also the sense of sound—the cheerful noise of the waterfalls on a blazing summer day, the more usual roar of the torrents in spate, the furious crescendo of the hurricane blasting its way round the Douglas Boulder, the booming of the storm in the gullies, and the crash of falling stones and

ice, and even the stillness I have known when all is frozen or blanketed in snow.

I count it my good fortune to have visited the Hut in all these conditions—on days when the sky was cloudless and the rocks shimmered in the heat, on days when rain and storm made everything a mass of foaming spray, on days when two feet of snow had fallen overnight, making egress from the Hut difficult, and on days when all was ice-bound, and water could only be drawn from the burn after a hole had been hacked through a foot of ice.

Memories arise both grave and gay, of journeys when, heavily laden with a mass of provender, one has toiled up the last interminable mile, usually in dusk or darkness, when one has floundered in soft snow, and of one special occasion when hard, crisp conditions prevailed, and a February moon rose frostily in the east amid a welter of stars, flooding the snowy Nevis ridges with ghostly light.

Within the Hut, when once the stove is roaring away (and there is no reason why that should not happen, if one knows how to humour the creature) there is an atmosphere of warmth and good cheer. Over the orgies of the evening meal it is perhaps kinder to draw a veil, but many who read this will remember gargantuan feasts of rare excellence that, in one instance anyway, defeated their own purpose. Hut hours are never those of the lark. One exception comes to mind when a large party of inmates viewed the dawn in their night attire, some armed with cameras even ascending far up the slopes of Carn Mor Dearg, intent on making photographic history. It is upon evenings at the Hut, however, that many will rather let their memories linger—evenings when, after the sight of the sunset glow over the western peaks, discussions wax long and strong on all manner of subjects, and conclusions are arrived at which could never be reached at a more mundane level.

This Paradise—for such most of its devotees will term it—lies not in far Cathay, nor in the recesses of the Himalaya, but can be reached after a trek of two or three hours from a main road; surely no great toil or hazard, even if one is laden like a camel or a yak.



22nd March 1925

BEN ACHALLADER FROM CRANNACH WOOD

*A. E. Robertson*



## BENIGHTED ON THE MOOR OF RANNOCH.\*

By W. J. G. F.

*(Continued from p. 36.)*

ABOUT three miles beyond the county march, the river Gaur intersects the moor, forming a dividing line between north and south. The route here lay through the Menzies territory, and an item in the programme had been a meeting at the river with the laird, the late Sir Robert Menzies, who had desired that in the construction of the railway effect should be given to certain minor deviations. Sir Robert had undertaken to provide a boat for conveying the company across the river.

This break in the march had latterly been looked forward to as an interval available for rest and refreshment, and exchange of views on the situation, which had begun to cause considerable anxiety in view of the weather conditions, the distance still to be accomplished, and the obvious discomfort of more than one of the travellers.

The Gaur is a main artery of the principal western tributary of the Tay. It has its source in the corries of the Black Mount, and, including in its course Loch Ba and Loch Laidon, continues directly eastward to Loch Rannoch in a series of boulder-strewn rapids, sluggish pools, and miniature lochs, which form at this season an effective barrier to the pedestrian on his way between north and south. It was consequently with some anxiety that the river was approached by the stragglers, lest plans had again miscarried.

Fears were, however, dissipated when a figure was descried at the rendezvous, which turned out to be not Sir Robert, but his head keeper, conveying the regrets of his master that he had been prevented from coming, and

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\* Reprinted from *Blackwood's Magazine* of September 1927 with the kind permission and approval of the Author's representative and of Messrs Blackwood.

also, as a symbol of goodwill and personification of himself, his own battered flask.

It was now a good hour and a half after mid-day, and the nearest dwelling on the route still eight miles distant across the same trackless waste. Wind and rain showed no abatement, and early darkness was threatening.

Wisdom would long ere this have decided to turn aside to Rannoch, where there was the lodge, and sundry scattered dwellings between, but to pursue the course was the order of the day; and so, after ferrying across the river where it leaves Loch Laidon, the company, with several of its members weary and dispirited, bade farewell to the keeper, and again set off.

Gradually the pace became slower and more laboured. The party resolved itself into couples at ever-widening distances apart, the hale and hearty bearing the burdens of the afflicted, and encouraging their efforts. In this state of straggling disunion the little group moved slowly onwards over the face of the moor until the elderly land agent, now far behind, came to a standstill, and with pitiful resignation declared that he could go no farther. Shouts were passed from one to another to the front, and a general concourse and consultation followed.

The nearest known dwelling was the shepherd's cottage of Gorton, seven miles distant on the edge of the moor, at the head of Glen Tulla. Dusk had already set in. Of the seven members of the party one was completely exhausted, two, the lawyer and the engineer, were nearly so, and past being of assistance save in respect of the moral support each derived from competition with the other. There appears to have been a distinct rivalry between them, as each subsequently declared that but for his efforts the other would certainly have succumbed to exhaustion and exposure! The rest were normal and hearty, excepting the contractor, whose nerves and judgment were decidedly upset by the strain of the situation.

Possessed of vigour, and filled with the instinct of self-preservation, he declared that he would carry on by himself, so long as he was yet able to get clear of the place,

using an adjective which might either be intended as anathema, or a simple fact relating to the constitution of the moor. Protestations and representations of possible dire consequences to himself were made in vain. With the vaguest notion of locality, he started off in the growing dusk, declaring he would find and send help.

It was then decided that the surveyor, who had before traversed the moor, should make his way as fast as possible to the shepherd's house for assistance, while the lawyer and the engineer would continue to follow as best they could. The major and assistant engineer agreed to remain with the elderly land agent, who had by now collapsed into complete insensibility. The situation was particularly exposed, and afforded no shelter from the elements. Darkness closed down, and the cold was intense, the discomfort being aggravated by hunger and wet clinging garments.

The most sanguine calculations gave hope for the arrival of assistance by about eight o'clock, provided the lone group could be located. By the aid of a few dry matches the weary hours could be seen to be passing. Meanwhile the exhausted victim lay upon the sopping ground without sign of life. An attempt was made to conserve warmth by huddling all three together, but the cold made it impossible, and recourse was had to racing and plunging around, in order to keep up the circulation.

On one occasion these efforts proved to be too extended, and the position of the prostrate body could not be found until after a long, systematic, and anxious search. Thereafter a pocket-handkerchief was attached to the umbrella as a mark.

As the time drew near when hopes of assistance might be realised, the last of the matches were burnt as flares, while at intervals united shouts were raised. No response came from out the void, and as time passed hope turned from thoughts of succour to seek comfort in the distant certainty of the breaking of another day. So the miserable and weary vigil continued till after midnight, when of a sudden hope sprang again to life—a light (or was it will-o'-the-wisp ?), now seen, again gone, reappearing,

flickering, swaying, brighter, nearer, shout answers shout; and out of the darkness a dog ran up, followed by two shepherds bearing a basket with food and spirits.

Some of the latter having been forced between the lips of the patient, he was shaken into semi-consciousness, and after further administrations became more or less aware of his surroundings and circumstances. Some two miles to the left was a hut or bothy, known to the shepherds, and used as a shelter by the ghillies during the deer-stalking season. Towards this it was decided to make a start, in the hope of finding it in the darkness. One shepherd led the van, searching out the firmest ground to tread on. The major and the other shepherd, one on each side, supported the exhausted man. The fifth member brought up the rear, bearing the furnishings and impedimenta of the others.

The wind and rain had somewhat abated, but some parts of the moor, which had to be crossed in the direction of the hut, were rougher than had hitherto been encountered. There were times when the overburdened party was in great difficulties.

This passage left an impression as of a nightmare.

The sprawl on to all-fours, the struggling recovery, only to fall into the unseen bog; the groping for a hold in the slimy mess; the further plunge and scramble upwards on to the heathery tuft; the shouts for the lantern to retrieve the scattered baggage. However, it came to an end, a stream was struck—the Avon Dubh—they are all black streams here,—and from it the shepherds knew their whereabouts. On following its banks, where the ground was easier, the hut before long loomed in front. It was a wooden erection with iron roof, while inside, on bursting in the door, the lantern disclosed a bench and a rusty stove.

Search revealed a stack of peats behind the hut, and a few in the heart being dry, a fire was in time lit. It was now about 3 A.M. The shepherds having brought the party to this haven, set off home with the object of returning with food. The bench was ranged in front of the stove, and the sufferer made as comfortable as circumstances



permitted, but he relapsed into his former state of unconsciousness. The conditions left much to be desired. The stove did not appear to relish being awakened from its winter slumbers and was decidedly "dour." The atmosphere became dense with acrid fumes of peat reek, which issued at every joint, so that to open the eyes soon became painful, and doubts began to arise whether the change of quarters was going to be for better or worse. The situation becoming acute led to investigations on the roof, and the removal of a sod from the top of the flue, at which the stove burst into such violent action as to become red hot, and threatened to render the place untenable through very excess of zeal. Means were, however, found to moderate its vigour, and in time the warmth, the steamy atmosphere, and the general reaction from the cold and exposure of the naked moor induced a feeling of drowsy content. So another interval passed.

Shortly before dawn voices without proclaimed the return of the shepherds, who had brought a meal of scones and butter, with tea and all appliances. Thus fortified, after "redding up" the hut, not omitting to replace the sod, the procession again mustered, and set forth on the five miles to Gorton, which was reached without further serious incident by about 10 A.M. Here took place a happy reunion with the other members of the party. The contractor alone was absent. News had, however, already been spread regarding him, and a search party of men and dogs had mustered, and were on the point of starting, when a messenger arrived with the welcome tidings that he was safe in a cottage some three miles down the Glen of the Tulla.

Allowing for certain hotly disputed details, reflecting upon the prowess of the respective individuals, the facts which finally emerged were as follows:—

The surveyor, who had been told off to obtain help from Gorton, had in turn become exhausted, having in the darkness blundered on far beyond the cottage, until pulled up by falling over a wire fence. This proved the last straw in his undoing, and he collapsed into oblivion. Fences here are scarce, and coming to himself some four

or five hours later, the fence told him where he had got to. Realising his responsibilities, he pulled himself together, and followed the fence until it struck the track leading back up the side of the glen, and then followed the track until he reached the shepherd's cottage.

Here he told his tale, and was stowed away between warm blankets, and the shepherds set out in the direction he had indicated as that in which they were most likely to fall in with the stragglers. They had proceeded but a short distance when there was a faint response to their shouts, and following the direction of the sound, the lawyer and the engineer were found tucked together as closely as possible, lying behind a large boulder in a more or less prostrate condition, but bravely endeavouring to comfort each other with such hopes as could be derived from the circumstances.

The final collapse appears to have been simultaneous, though each maintained vehemently afterwards that he had been all right, and that it was the other's condition which caused him concern! With a revival of energy inspired by the timely succour, a fresh start was made, and guided by the shepherds they soon reached the cottage. Then the kindly and anxious shepherds set out again, and ultimately succeeded in locating the major and the assistant engineer with their unconscious charge.

After an interval for rest and further warm food, a cart was brought to the cottage, into which the now somewhat revived land agent was placed, along with such others as felt in need of a lift. The procession then started off down the glen, making for Inveroran, still eleven miles distant. The contractor's quarters, which lay but a short distance off the road, were in due time reached. Here he was found occupying the best bed, with a kind old dame in attendance, administering such medicinal comforts as were within her power.

Whatever his bodily frame had suffered, his vigour of language was unabated, and his night of wandering was reviewed in a flood of disjointed phraseology, selected mainly at random from an unpublished vocabulary, but amongst which certain words could be recognised,

such as "belly," "precipice," "head-first," "neck," "muck," "filthy slime," "water," interspersed with frequent invocations of a beneficent Deity, the general effect being an impression of a ghastly night of horror, wretchedness, and imminent peril.

The grey dawn had found him hatless and drenched, bruised, dishevelled, and wild, gazing down into the misty valley from far above. The net result, however, did not appear to be alarming. The loss of his hat, which had taken place at an early stage in his adventures, seemed, now that all was over, to be the chief cause of concern. Moreover, he alone of all the seven had accomplished unaided the passage of the moor. Alone he did it!

The patient had no doubt good cause to feel that he ought to be nigh to death if he were not, and being for the time in well-deserved comfortable quarters, decided to remain, and allow the rest of the company to proceed, which they did, arriving at Inveroran Hotel towards evening, three days out from Spean Bridge.

Thus, then, safely ended the adventure. Comfortably ensconced before a blazing fire, within the hotel at Inveroran, clad in borrowed garments of all shapes and sizes, while their worthy host, the late Mr Forbes, exerted himself to give them of his best, the wayfarers could well afford to laugh and to chaff one another over their experiences, and could enjoy to the full their present comforts, rendered doubly grateful through their recent privations. But there were serious thoughts in the minds of all.

Ere Inveroran had been reached snow had begun to fall, and the journey next day to the railway station at Tyndrum was with difficulty achieved, so deep were the snowdrifts. Had the snowstorm come but twenty-four hours earlier, and overtaken them while still out in the open on the desolate moor, there is little doubt that grim death would have demanded toll of perhaps more than one of the band.

But they did cross the moor, and if any are inclined to belittle the achievement, let them try it themselves, from

Loch Treig head to Inveroran, starting on a short winter's day, in a gale of wind and rain ; and they must remember that there was no railway to fall back upon when weary, like the channel swimmer's attendant boat, ready to render aid in an emergency, nothing but their own little group of toiling men, slowly and painfully scrambling onwards over the desolate, lifeless, limitless waste of wild wind-swept moor.



## SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING AND ITS RELATION TO MOUNTAINEERING ABROAD.

### III.—SOME CONTRASTS.

By G. A. SOLLY.

I HAVE been asked to write upon smaller points not fully dealt with in the papers of W. N. Ling and G. G. Macphee; this is not an easy task as both are climbers of great experience, and in the main I agree with their opinions and suggestions.

#### WEATHER.

My experience of mountains abroad has been in summer only, but I have visited the Highlands in most months of the year.

My advice as to weather is—If you go to the Alps in summer, expect good, but be prepared for bad. If you go to the Highlands, expect bad, but hope for good, and in June you are likely to get it.

A good guide in the Alps knows his own weather signals better than any ordinary amateur, and few can learn much except by experience. At Zermatt I have been taught to look to the Täschhorn, and at Saas Fee to the Laquinhorn. A north wind in the afternoon and evening is a good sign, but you must look to the highest clouds, far above the valley wind.

Unless the weather seems hopeless, do not fear to go to a hut, and in the morning to start; but even more important, do not fear to turn back if the weather continues bad. Sometimes it has paid to turn back early and to stay at the hut all day in the hope of being not too tired to start again next morning.

In Great Britain the danger from weather is seldom serious to an adequately equipped party. With sufficient good clothing and food, with a compass and lantern and either an ice-axe or stick for the dark a party should get

down to the valley and find some kind of shelter for the night. The disasters in recent years in the Cairngorms seem to have been due to ignorance of the winter conditions. A party of strong young men may have heard that a mountain route or pass is quite easy, and that X and Y have been over, and think surely we can go where X and Y can. That may be true, but they have not realised that X and Y are well provided, whilst they are going with little more than a shirt and shorts and a few biscuits. To cross the Larig Ghru may be a pleasant walk in summer, but a death trap at New Year or Easter. Many of us have known days when the thermometer has been at zero on Ben MacDhui, and a gale has blown travellers off their feet on Braeriach.

#### NIGHTS OUT.

Much of the last paragraph applies to this also.

As to nights out on the mainland of Scotland in fine summer weather, have as many as you can, but carry a light wrap, a scarf or muffler, and a little extra food. In winter, see the last paragraph, but turn back before it is too late. Let the condition of the weakest member of the party be the main consideration, and let all keep in touch. No one should be allowed to get out of sight of all the rest.

In Skye few will risk a night out in winter. In the Alps a great deal of nonsense has been talked about nights out. A guided party of reasonably strong travellers is seldom benighted. The guides will turn back in good time, but an extremely slow party may cause delay to others. Those below are liable to have stones sent down upon them, so must shelter, and those above cannot easily pass. If there is a very weak party or there has been an accident, others are asked to remain within touch or, if necessary, to help.

An expert guideless party on unfamiliar ground should go prepared for a night out, and not be afraid of it. One night should hurt nobody. An old rule was that each

one should start prepared to enjoy a long day, and quite able to last out a night and second day without fear of breaking down. When darkness has overtaken a party on a mountain, it is often much safer for them to stay where they are than to risk a serious fall when trying to descend over difficult ground, and it would be well if anxious friends at an hotel would trust them to do their best and to act with prudence.

A climber may be a great source of danger if he knows that his friends will get restless and perhaps hysterical if he is not home within the record times in the climbers' guide-books, and he may urge his party to try difficult short cuts and to climb down unknown ground in the dark when their judgment favours staying where they are until daylight, when they can walk home in two or three hours. I write of what I know.

There is also the fear of the unpleasant experience of having to pay the unnecessary expense of a search party of guides from the hotel. We can all help to avoid this by conferring with the hotel keeper before a search party is organised. I have several times been able to delay such parties, and have twice seen the climbers walk in before 10 A.M.

It would perhaps be better to let this refer to British parties only. Other considerations must apply when the climbers belong to other nations.

#### THUNDERSTORMS.

British climbing does not give much training for thunderstorms in the Alps or the Caucasus, but the following suggestions may be useful. If on a high ridge, get as well below it as you can immediately and take shelter under rocks. Put your axes away. Remember that electric current takes the most direct route, and can get faster through wet clothes than through the human body—that may be the reason why cattle are so often struck or killed when sheltering under trees, and individuals when using an umbrella. Some individuals

are constitutionally framed so as to be able to feel when a storm is coming half-an-hour or more before others, but most of us must trust our common sense and wait till our hair is raising our hats, and lots of metallic articles and points of clothing are fizzing about us. If caught on a smooth glacier, walk quietly on as far apart as the rope allows, hope the rain will drench you, and trust in the powers that rule the storms. I have no other advice to give.

#### FOOD AND EQUIPMENT RESERVES.

It is always better to be on the side of safety, but the degree depends on many factors. In Scotland, reserves of both food and equipment seem to have been needed at the time of those disasters in the Cairngorms. A few points are perhaps worth noting. Let your provisions be divided, and all carry something. Such a thing may happen again as on the Dent Blanche when O. G. Jones and three guides were lost, and the survivor had to find his way home alone.—What was the value of a sack then? One sack may be lost at any time, and you may find that all the meat was in it—or all the wine (if you think it worth carrying). Personally I do not. At the risk of offending my younger friends, I venture to say that they are apt to eat up provisions too quickly. On one occasion five of us shared out all the food equally. An hour later our undergraduate member had finished his last crumb. We were about seven hours from home, so had to put aside a share for him again, but we kept control.

These notes have gone far enough, but I recognise fully the changes that have come. Few of the earliest British climbers had any climbing between one summer and the next. Comparatively few were in training. There was very little winter sport for young men before the seventies, and no chance of learning mountaineering. Now, hundreds of boys and girls of 16 have quite long records of expeditions made, and maps, books, photos, and lectures are available for all. One or two children have begun when less than two years old! Even when



I began I was well on towards 30, but hardly knew what a glacier looked like. Preparations that were quite usual then are now unnecessary.

Many of the notes made are founded on personal experience, and may not be accepted by others ; but they are sent in response to the request of the Editor, whose only " order " was that I should be brief and not longer than Macphee, as the *Journal* was well supplied. Have I succeeded ?

## DAYS THAT ARE PAST.

By J. GALL INGLIS.

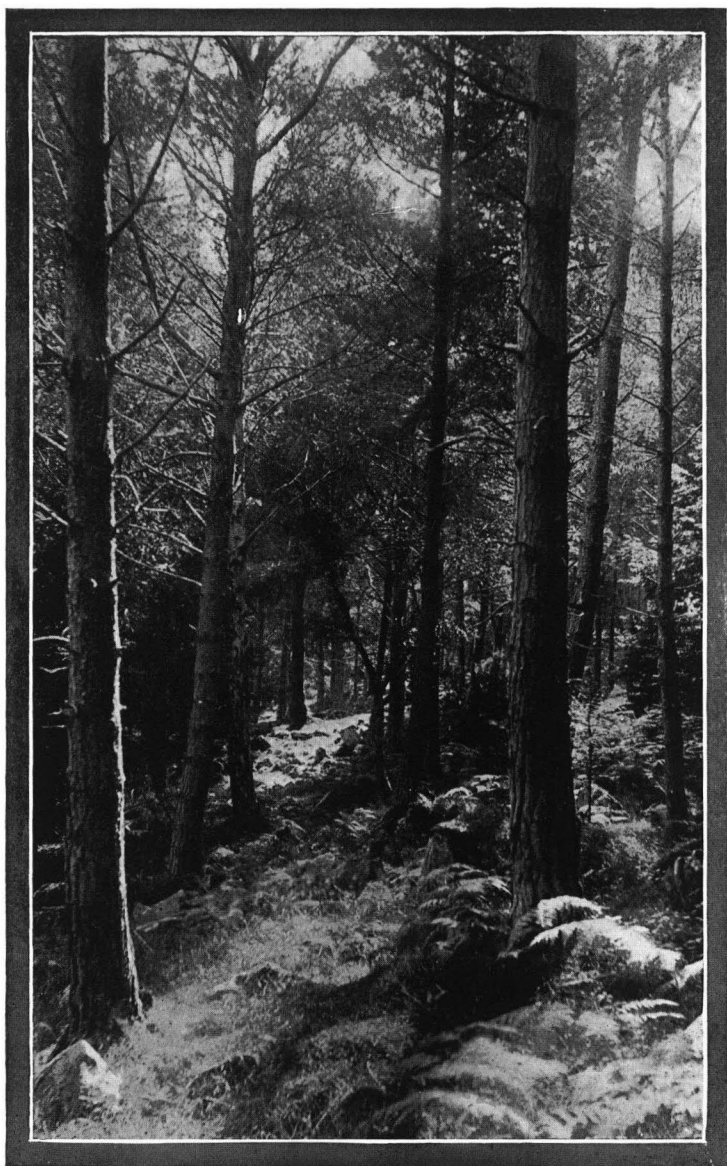
## V.—THE SHADOW OF WYNANS.

ON Wednesday morning we rose with some excitement: would our relatives arrive, or was our expedition to be for nothing? For, to provide for weather contingencies, they generally allowed a spare day in the week's programme, which, unused, might cause acceleration, while a succession of bad days might mean the cutting out of some proposed expedition. Our hosts, however, assured us that no party such as we described had come to Lubnan Damph, and as the weather was fine, and it seemed unlikely they would abandon the main object of their visiting the district, we hoped for the best.

The party had to drive 15 miles from Invercannich, so we reckoned they would not arrive till well on in the forenoon: nevertheless, all morning we eagerly watched the point across the loch where the road from Invercannich first came into view. At last, about 11 o'clock, a waggonette appeared on the road: when it drew nearer, a small telescope we carried showed that it contained our relatives.

When the conveyance reached the bridge over the river, we retired round the corner of the house to wait for the grand *dénouement* when the wagonette drove up to the door—we expected that the horses would be put up in the outhouses. But we waited and waited in vain, and at last, wondering what had happened, peeped cautiously round the corner, to find that the wagonette had stopped at the Lodge gate, a hundred yards or so from the house.

Rather crestfallen, for it seemed inevitable that we would be recognised long before reaching our relatives, we hurried along the road, and arrived at the gate just as our father and one of his brothers had started off along the path; a third brother was sitting at the roadside looking straight in front of him, and a fourth standing



*Sept. 1890*

A PINE FOREST—THE MONADH LIATHS

*J. Gall Inglis*

in the middle of the road with his back to us. To our great satisfaction it was obvious they had paid no attention to us.

"How do you do, Uncle William," I said to the one standing in the road.

He turned round and stared at us with wide-opened eyes, as if we had been apparitions; his face worked for a moment or two, as if he were not sure of his senses, then, recognising that we were flesh and blood, he shook hands heartily with us, and shouted "Robert! Robert!" to our father.

Great was the wonder and merriment at the unexpected meeting in a place that was truly "the back of beyond," but presently we all set out again along the bridle path leading to Lungard, *en route* for "Dispute Hill."

When we came to ford the river at Lungard, there being no stepping-stones, my brother and I sat down to take off our boots and stockings, as we had done when crossing the day before, expecting our relatives would do the same. But to our astonishment as each one came to the water he marched right into it, boots and all, and it was only when we saw them emerging on the other side with their trousers perfectly dry that we realised that there was method in their apparent madness. They always went their expeditions in long pull-on boots of the best quality, which came nearly half-way to the knee; the upper part of the boot was wide enough to admit of the bottom of their trouser-legs being tucked into them, thus they could negotiate long grass and heather, or a moderately deep burn without getting wet. It was no doubt owing to their preoccupation with the tucking-in process that they had failed to notice our approach at the Lodge. These boots, by the way, were never nailed.

After crossing the river we turned up the Allt Lungard, and reached the col which was the scene of the "First Discussion" in 1856, when the party found it only a couple of miles from Lungard, instead of the 6 miles indicated by their maps. A steep high hill blocked all view in front of us for 2 miles to right and left; at its foot, if my memory serves aright, there was a bit of a

loch visible—Loch Muirichinn, which in 1856 they mistook for Loch Gead. The map was laid down, and there was a discussion, which ended in agreement that the writer of the “Pedestrian Tour” had rightly gauged the direction of Craig Inn from the col; but, lest he should be unduly puffed up, the mistaken Pedestrians took good care to point out that it was a most impracticable route after all, for they would have had to negotiate three separate ranges of mountains 3,000 to 3,500 feet high before they reached their destination!

The writer of the “Pedestrian Tour” now wished to ascend “Dispute Hill,” to view the country with the O.S. map; none of the others, however, felt able (not being in the best of health, and over or nearing seventy), and I was asked if I would come with him. Would that I had! It would have saved many an hour of puzzlement when the broken narrative of the expedition came into my hands. But not being gifted with prescience I declined, partly because one of my boots had begun to gape, and in view of the return journey a thousand feet of climbing seemed undesirable for it. So my uncle went on alone, and the results of his observations are given in the note on that part of the tour.\*

While waiting the climber’s return, we discussed the subject of our going back to Kyle Akin—which we had taken for granted would be by the same route. It was suggested, however, that we might take another way; the brothers were going to drive to Loch Affric next day, and could give us a lift thus far, leaving us to follow the right-of-way to Kintail. So we drove back with them to Invercannich—where I spent part of the evening in cobbling my boot.

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\* On climbing An Socach a few years ago, it appeared that the Pedestrians did not go to the top of that hill after all: if they had, they would not have gone wrong as Loch Monar is well seen—as indeed I had suspected from the map contours. But the narrative stated: “After a long climb we reached the top of the range.” From what I saw, they went along the ridge till they saw Loch Gead, when, supposing from the map that it was Loch Monar, they went no farther.

It was a beautiful drive in the evening light, but in some respects a sad one. There was much ado at that time about the ongoings of one Wynans, who had recently acquired the Cannich estate, and was clearing out the crofters wholesale for the deer, and lording it in the glen with a high hand, besides being a bad neighbour to the adjacent proprietors. (My recollection of what we were told is that he was a Northumbrian (?) miner who had made a fortune in America.) As we drove along, we passed house after house, most of them quite good—some of two stories, even, and slated—with doors locked and windows boarded up, and young as I was, I felt my blood boil. At Lub nan Damph we had been told that the people in the cottages over the road bridge were being turned out; my recollection is that the buildings were thatched cottages then, and we took it that the tenants were being evicted; but from revisiting the place recently, it is possible that the cottages were merely being rebuilt, as the site is now occupied by modern ones.

Next morning we drove up Glen Affric, which was seen to advantage as the day was fine. On leaving the wagonette at the end of the road, I have no recollection of following the present path, which is nearly a quarter of a mile from the loch; at any rate, a couple of miles from the Lodge, we came out on the shore of the loch. The O.S. map was laid down and there was a discussion, at the end of which some one said, "The Ordnance Survey is wrong." So far as I could gather it had something to do with a wooded point on the other side of the loch, but I never learned definitely. I am inclined to think now that it may have been the situation of Affric Lodge, which, I was told at the last Invercannich Meet, was originally where the garages, etc., now stand, but had been rebuilt farther west, in the seventies, I think.

We parted from our relatives about 4 o'clock and set out for Kintail, this time with the O.S. map to guide us, and with instructions to take the short road after Alltbeath, where we would doubtless be put up for the night. As we passed Mam Soul, looming faintly through thick haze 3 miles away, I looked at it curiously, for it had long

been familiar on the map and in geography books, being sometimes credited with being 4,000 feet, but now degraded to 3,862 by the new O.S. map, and surpassed by Carn Eige; otherwise the route to Alltbeath was without incident.

As we neared that place—in my recollection a one-story cottage with outbuildings, a little off the path—we saw a keeper, in the usual knickers and deer-stalker, talking to a man on horseback. Just before we reached them the man rode away, and we saw that he was in riding breeches, was mounted on a very fine horse, and had a rifle across his knees. As he passed, he looked curiously at us, and I have often wondered who he was and where he was going.

Meanwhile the keeper was proceeding towards the house, but hearing me following he turned round, and my heart sank within me at the sight of his surly, ill-natured face. However, I made my request, "Could you put us up for the night?"

"Na!" in the sharpest and most disagreeable tones, and he turned and resumed his way.

"Could you not let us stay in an outhouse, even?" I began; but he paid no attention, leaving me dumb-founded. After the hospitality of the last two nights we had little expected such a reception.

I rejoined my brother, and going on a little farther, we sat down and considered what to do, for matters looked rather serious. It was now 6 o'clock; the sun would set in an hour and a half, and the map told us the nearest habitation was 8 miles away, on the other side of Beinn Fhada, over a 1,700-foot pass. Expecting to get a meal at Alltbeath, we had taken nothing but sandwiches since breakfast, and though we had some provisions with us, it would be necessary to stop now for some food, so that only something like an hour and a quarter remained for us to get over the pass before dusk. There was a somewhat longer and more level route by the south side of Beinn Fhada, but we had been strictly charged not to take it, as the shepherd's house marked on the O.S. had been closed. So as there seemed nothing else to be



done in the circumstances, we decided to go on up Glen Grianan.

We pushed on as fast as we could, but progress was slow, for the track marked on the O.S. was frequently almost non-existent, and the going boggy and heavy; a slight rain began to fall, and as it was evident darkness would arrive early that night, I anxiously scanned the hills ahead, wondering what we would do if the path petered out over the pass, which seemed to rise steeply. However, to my great relief, when we reached Loch Bhealaich about sunset, a well-made bridle-path was seen zigzagging up the hill, and half an hour later, when at 8 o'clock we reached the summit, we found that it continued down a wild gloomy pass, which we were thankful had not to be negotiated in the dark. After a while, however, the corrie opened out, and we could see lights beginning to twinkle at the foot of the glen. It got darker and darker, but about 8.30, as we crossed the burn coming down from Ceum na h-Aon Choise, there seemed to be a break in the clouds, and looking up I saw a sharp peak, dimmed by a slight shower, towering up in the middle of it. In my recollection it dropped to the corrie for hundreds of feet at an angle of some 70°, and I can see it yet, but wonder if it would look exactly the same to-day!

By the time we reached the foot of the glen, probably about 9 or 9.30, it was pitch dark; there were several lights on the other side of the water, however, which was cheering, as it meant nearing civilisation, and we expected that before an hour had passed we would be safely housed for the night. But all of a sudden the good path began to deteriorate, and finally narrowed into a track a foot wide—running through short grass—which, however, we were able to follow by the feel of our feet on the grass when we got off it. But after a few hundred yards it led among clumps of rushes, in which it apparently disappeared altogether: fortunately it had brought us close to the river bank, so that we were not without something to guide us, of which there was need, for it was so dark that the outline of the hills was barely visible against the sky.

We sat down at the water's edge, and, lighting a candle we had with us, studied the map and found we must be about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from Innis a' Chro. There were lights a few hundred yards away across the river, and we surveyed it with our candle to see if there would be any possibility of fording it. But the dim flickering flame revealed nothing, and though, from the murmur of the water, it flowed tolerably placidly, the map indicated that it was wide; also, having been impressed by its roar below us all the way down the glen, we had reason to believe that it might prove fairly deep. So we packed up our map, and went on very cautiously along the river bank, feeling for every step, for the ground was absolutely invisible.

All of a sudden I caught sight of the outline of a roof against the sky; we made for it and found a barn-like stone building with a 3-foot recess in the wall, ending in a closed and locked door. No lights were visible, but we knocked, and knocked again, without response. The candle being lit again, it proved to be 11 o'clock; the map made it evident that this must be some outlying barn of Innis a' Chro, so taking the compass direction, we set out for that house, and presently saw something white looming ahead. But just then we came upon a very deep peat hag, and then another. If I recollect aright we tried to turn them, but in vain, so, fearing we might come to grief in the dark, and that we might not easily find the barn again, we turned back to the recess, expecting that the night would have to be spent in it. Thankful we were even for that shelter, for there had been slight rain for a good while, but ere settling down we shouted and shouted for some time, hoping to attract the attention of the people in Innis a' Chro: it was all in vain, however, so we began to prepare for supper.

We had, I think, lit the candle, when we heard voices, apparently behind the house. We thought at first that our shouting had been heard after all, but presently the sounds resolved into a woman's voice, speaking inside the house.

"What do you want?" she said, in very Gaelic accents.

"We are two Sassenach boys who are benighted; can you let us in?"

The door was cautiously opened three or four inches :  
" Give me your hand," she said.

I did so, rather wondering at the request. Instantly the door was opened, and we were taken into the dark " but " of a crofter's cottage, and then into the " ben," the living-room. The occupant was an old woman of perhaps sixty, who bustled about to give us a meal, stirring up the peat fire and boiling the kettle. She told us she did not answer when we knocked, thinking we were tramps, and when we lighted the candle she thought we were going to burn down the house! No doubt our shouting reassured her, but she said that when she asked for my hand she wanted to feel if it was soft, as a tramp's hand would be hard.

Everything in the cottage was very clean, and she insisted on giving us her bed, which we took very reluctantly; it seemed a shame to relegate her to the " but," while we slept in comfort. I think, however, her heart was touched by my brother, who was in his early teens, and very tired. Next morning she told us that if it had been a fortnight later the house would have been shut, as she was being turned out; but I do not know if this was on Wynans' property. It was with the utmost difficulty that we got her to accept any money when we left—before which the keeper's wife came from Innis a' Chro, and expressed regret that they had not heard our shouts, or they would certainly have come to our assistance.

Revisiting the place in 1935, I found that the cottage was gone, and in its place one of galvanised iron. Hedges and trees were now all around; of the peat hags almost no trace remained. But going a quarter of a mile up the glen, beyond the bounds of civilisation, there was the smooth green meadow dotted with rushes, just as we remembered it—by feel! And there, beyond it, was the path coming down the glen, and suddenly disappearing when it reached the meadow, only it was strange to find how very short the distances were, that we thought so very great in the dark!

One incident more before this narrative closes. We

set out about 10 o'clock, and soon reached the high road to Dornie. As we passed Kintail Manse the minister was standing at the gate, and he looked at us as if lads on tramp were a downright curiosity, as I have no doubt they were in these days in most places.

"Where have you come from?" he asked, in tones expressive of great wonderment.

We explained, and when he heard where we had slept, he pressed us to come in and have a second breakfast, which we were not unwilling to do, for the old woman's resources were slender, and I think we had had to eke them out with our own provisions. When we went in, the breakfast things were still on the table, and apparently not very long left, though it was about 10.30! I suspect the minister had an easy charge in that thinly populated district. He was a burly, fine-looking man, and had a large, well-furnished manse. He sat and talked to us while we ate, and then sent us on our way rejoicing in another sample of Highland hospitality.

It was about 11 miles along the road to Balmacara, and when we got to that place we felt disinclined for another 7 miles of it, so resolved to keep to the shore, and save 3 miles. I think we had heard there was a track. After a not uncommon feature of short cuts, however, it proved a delusion as far as saving of time was concerned, for there was often no path at all, and the going was frequently very rough. However, it was a beautiful and much more enjoyable route, in the afternoon sunshine, and about 4 or 5 in the afternoon we reached the ferry, and so to Kyle Akin.

Here endeth the narrative of our experiences in 1882.

## INITIATIVE IN CLIMBING.

By THE EDITOR.

"He who climbeth on the highest mountains laugheth at all tragic plays and tragic realities. . . . The atmosphere rare and pure, danger near and the spirit full of a joyful wickedness: thus are things well matched."—ZARATHUSTRA.

IN this number we publish a brief review of a handy little book of climbing technique\* which has given rise to much controversy amid the great ones of our Craft. We are not here concerned with the points at issue, but we have been moved to some reflections on the attitude taken up by several of the greatest mountaineers towards climbing rules in general.

If climbing mountains were on a par with many other sports, a precise code of rules would, no doubt, be highly important. But, for most of us, mountaineering is much more than a sport. It boasts of a philosophy and of a literature of its own. When our greatest Scottish mountaineer, Harold Raeburn, was writing on the technique of climbing he instinctively recognised this, and entitled the work "*Mountaineering Art*." A careful perusal of this too-little-known book would well repay the attention of our younger members. In its "*General Guide Book*" the Club has taken the same line. It has recognised the diversity in character of Scottish mountains, where one may find all sorts of snow and ice, all kinds of rock with and without vegetation, and all sorts of weather at all seasons of the year; so the Club has never issued over-concise regulations as to climbing procedure, but has dwelt on general ideas as to what should be done in varying circumstances.

The Editor recently spent an enjoyable and instructive day on the face of the Pinnacle Buttress of Coire Ardair. This is quite a sound climb for such as have taken the

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\* "*The Technique of Alpine Mountaineering*."

trouble to master the technique of vegetatious mica-schist, a most venerable and ancient rock formation, to which the Central and Northern Highlands owe a great deal of their distinctive character, and one, moreover, which is usually devoid of such modern innovations as belays, or even cracks, for the insertion of pitons. Again, the flanks of the North-East Buttress of Ben Nevis abound in smooth porphyry slabs, alike intractable to nailed boots and to the rubbers so favoured by our English climbing brethren. Only stocking soles or certain types of felt soles, much used in the Eastern Alps, would seem to be of value on such rock. Finally, Dr G. Graham MacPhee in our last number put rather a new complexion on some of the climbing problems of Scottish snow and ice.

The greatest mountaineers, like the greatest artists, scientists, and men of action, worked out their own way to perfection: in fact, they broke most of the rules. Years afterwards they became canonised; the rules, perhaps somewhat modified, went on. The only trouble with great mountaineers is that many of them, despite everything that one might expect, live to a healthy old age. They tend to become conservative and to insist on the observance of many of the rules which they themselves cheerfully disregarded in the fiery days of youth. To such men we listen respectfully in public, for we know that in private there is always a humorous twinkle of the eye and a tolerant smile for the younger men who go to the mountains in the true spirit of adventure, so long as they are free of the foolhardy pride of self-glorification.

What then is to be done about this business of rules in climbing mountains? Read them through, of course, to begin with, but far better learn the craft on the hills themselves from some experienced climber. Paradoxical as it may seem, there is little doubt that the best time to study a manual of technique is in retrospect, when the doings and experiences of a climbing holiday are still fresh in the mind. That is really the only time when technical advice has any chance of making a deep

impression. Rules are very good if they embody the gist of the experience of the best mountaineers, but hardly so useful if the rule book becomes so detailed and complicated that the very effort of scrupulously following it out breeds a false sense of security. As Leslie Stephen has pointed out very justly, it is impossible to lay down any simple code of rules which will provide for security in all cases, and that "Nothing, in fact, is sufficient except skill, activity, experience, and presence of mind."

This point is brought out very forcibly by that great mountaineer, Mr A. F. Mummery, in the final chapter of his book, "*My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus*," perhaps the best essay in mountaineering literature on the subject of safety in climbing, an essay which has recently been incorporated in its entirety in a foreign textbook of climbing technique. Concerning the use of the rope, Mummery says, "There is, however, some danger of its being regarded as a sort of Providence, always ready to save the reckless and incompetent, no matter how slight their experience, no matter how little they may be fitted for the expeditions they undertake."

Vigilance and mountain-sense can never be adequately developed, however, unless expeditions are undertaken which, with a becoming humility of judgment, are such as will stretch the climbing powers at least a little more than anything which has gone before. Throughout all this, to quote Mummery again, "The first lesson the novice has to learn is to be ever on his guard, and it is one that the oldest climber rarely fully masters . . . it is a habit which must be acquired, and to which no road, other than constant practice, will ever lead him. It wants long experience to impress upon the mind that the chief danger of extremely difficult climbing is to be found in the easy places by which it is followed."

So much for the spirit of liberty in the matter of climbing rules: unfortunately there is another insidious threat to the true spirit of Scottish climbing, and many of us must plead guilty as aiders and abettors. The reference is to the growing mass of minute detail in the



description of new climbing routes. The disease is not yet widespread, but it is growing. Already the western buttress of Sron na Ciche in Skye is becoming nearly as complicated as the east peak of Lliwedd.

These remarks are prompted by a recent communication received on the subject of the notorious Rannoch Wall route on Buachaille Etive. At the crux of the climb is to be found a piton. Should one go straight up from this piton "or move out left on to the open face on small but positive holds"? Fortunately, the Editor had been up six weeks previously, and his reasoned conclusion is that Scotland is still a free country, where competent climbers should be able to decide the point for themselves: if they cannot do so they should not lead up Rannoch Wall. This also serves as a rather brusque answer to the latter part of the communication, which cited two cases of parties, who, after experiencing great difficulty at the crux of the climb, were finally extricated with the assistance of the spectators. A great deal might be said on the subject of the use of pitons on Scottish mountains, but it would take too long. This particular one was probably firm to begin with, it was reported to have been quite loose in May of this year; but was quite sound in July. Perhaps it should not be trusted out of season.

The distinctive excellence of Scottish climbing that gives it the character of true mountaineering is surely that much is still left in the matter of route-finding to the initiative of each succeeding party. It is a false sense of progress which would give a detailed description of each pitch, or worse still, of each handhold. The ideal account of a new climb should, in the first place, be accurate about the topography of the start, general line, and finish. Any places of special difficulty, picturesque charm, or distinctive features are worth recording. Beyond this, all that is necessary is an idea of relative difficulty, of time taken, and of the prevailing conditions during the first ascent. It is far too often the case that more detailed descriptions are so confusing that successive parties fail to identify the route.

Action and reaction are usually equal and opposite. There is already the rumour of the formation of a Gadarene society among some of our English climbing friends. It is reported that this society functions in two ways. By day they pull down cairns on routes and mountain tops; by night they prowls around with pots of paint, blazing trails which lead to the disintegrating crests of precipices. Who can say what will be the end of it all?

## THE NORTH-WEST RENFREWSHIRE HILLS.

By GEO. F. TODD.

*(Continued from p. 109.)*

BUT during the later nineteenth century, in consonance with the movement of increasing interest in Nature which had been spreading abroad in Britain, a greater attention to local scenery is found and contemporary writings contain a crescendo of appreciation. From almost complete neglect the hills attained a position of notice; from mere notice the attitude of the beholder awoke to one of interest, and then from interest passed to admiration, and almost to worship. George Robertson, in a second revision of Crawford's work, had written of the parish of Lochwinnoch that "part of it consists of high and bleak hills, in the background; part of it is a low winding valley, in general of a very fertile soil, and in the heart of it, is the largest loch or lake in the county. . . . It is the very vale of Tempe of Renfrewshire," and the Old Statistical Account had observed that "the hills do not rise in ridges, but are altogether separate and distinct from each other and present those alternate risings and falls which constitute so material a part of picturesque beauty." Ramsay, in his "Views in Renfrewshire," had prefaced his work with some criticism of the extravagant words of his predecessors—"when describing scenery, the writer has avoided indulging in those high-sounding generalities, now so common." But if he has disciplined his prose, his draughtsmanship has had no like restraint, for his illustrations, and particularly those of the Gleniffer Braes in the background of the engraving of Staneley Castle, and of Misty Law behind Millikin House, portray stormy peaks of rugged and serrated outline.

From this point the stream of eulogy thickened and grew even more intense, and in the present century one writer has declared that "there is a pure and softly flowing sweep of contour, and a charm of delicate colour

about these green and treeless summits, found nowhere else in Scotland." Yet, there is no doubt that much of the pleasure taken in these hills is just, and is founded on a genuine and firm basis of something more than mere local pride or worship. In certain seasons the hills are lined with smoothly graded colourings, soft yet definitive, rather than clad with the harsh and often glaring contrasts of the Highlands, and this forms an interior most appropriate to their quiet outline. There are some lights, too, in which these moors assume shapes most attractive. The long dreary views of limitless moor, dull, brown, extending so flatly and bleakly to the distant skyline, become irradiated with life and form, with the vigour and the depth of reality. To the two dimensions of mere length and breadth a third is added, and the formerly flattened landscape assumes depth and solidity.

Apart from such brief æsthetic value, however, the Renfrewshire Hills are of no interest to those in search of pure mountaineering. The introductory narration of heights and levels will have shown a district of negligible elevation, and the mention of moorland will have dispelled any vision of deeply flanked uplands, or of the steep-banked mountains of the Highlands. These hills are but small undulations at a level slightly higher than that of the surrounding countryside—merely temporary deviations from the standard measure—and they rise to crowning points only with grave reluctance. There are no sharp cones, no succession of range beyond range, ridge upon ridge, no "corries deep rock-walled in grey."

The ground surface is often boggy and marshy, and the land is pitted with many small lochs, bare and bluish-black, reflecting the smoking clouds; or wooded and shaded, sparkling and spotted with slanting infiltrations of glistening light. Many of these numberless natural lochs have been converted into utilitarian reservoirs. The moorland surface varies from a coat of firm turf, cropped by nature, to heather and deep brown bracken. But from the mountaineering point of view these hills are, alas, dull and rather featureless.

In this district, then, the exercise of the rock climber

is limited to strenuous scratching and stretching on a few outcrops. Craigminnan, for example, has some hard problems. Calder Crag, another rock exposure in Calder Glen and beneath a miniature corrie slightly north of east from Hannah Law, is lined with a few short climbs. At Kilmacolm there are several outcrops around the Knapps Loch. The best of these is a very small buttress topped in the centre by an overhanging tree. A few feet to the right of this lies a hard route. One young member of the S.M.C., who was particularly pleased about his ascent of this, and even more so about a subsequent descent, became deeply chagrined on learning later that his descent was neither the first nor the fastest, as a very well-known past-President of the Club had secured both records with one notable and as yet unrepeatable effort. At Largs there are two outcrops, one above Greeto Bridge on the south-eastern flank of Girtley Hill and the other on the western face of the same hill facing out to the firth. The old red sandstone cliffs along the coast from Ashton to Portencross are generally unsafe, and any climber on the Three Sisters of Portencross will soon attract a large and interested audience, but speculating probably on the locus of curvature of a body falling through space, rather than filled with an appreciation of rock-climbing technique and petro-prehensory skill.

While they may be devoid of qualities pleasing to the rock or ice climber, these hills have, nevertheless, a considerable reputation among local ski runners. Their modest inclination, so useless to the mountaineer, is the delight of the ski-er. One enthusiast has written in the *Journal* that during a former winter he had "an excellent day in March, going down to Bridge of Weir by a morning train, putting on ski there, and journeying via Queen's Hill and Misty Law to Lochwinnoch, a distance of about eighteen miles."\* Moreover, to write that "Misty Law is visited only because it appears to be the highest hill of the district, and Hill of Stake only because it actually is the highest hill" is to mis-state grossly.

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\* *S.M.C. Journal*, X., p. 291.

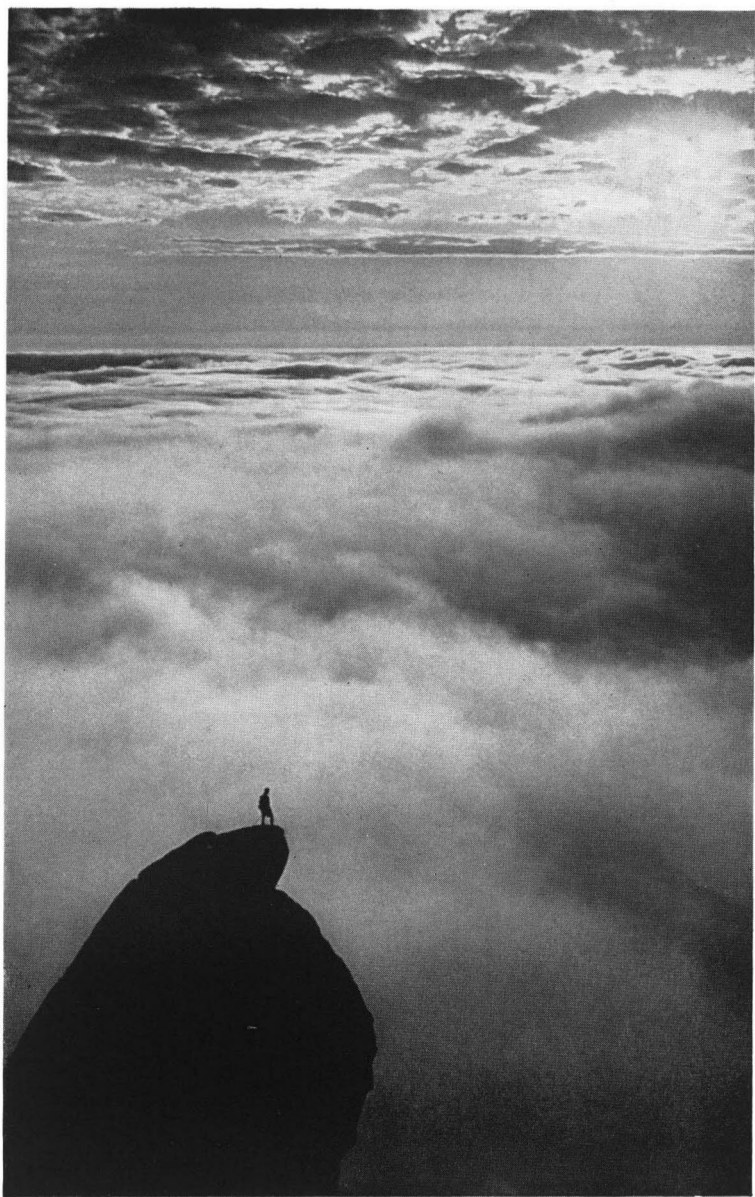
These moorlands are capable of forming the object of a very pleasant afternoon stroll. The air is clear and pure, and the wanderer has an impression of space and isolation. The immediately surrounding country may often be obscured by the level expanses of heavy foreground, but the distant regions can be clearly and easily perceived.\* The distant views from these hills indeed have long been known and will always justify a visit. As early as 1710 it had been written that this country has "many pretty Risings of the Ground, from whence there are very agreeable Prospects of the most part of this Shire, as also of the Netherward of Clydesdale, and of many Places both of the Shires of Dumbarton and Stirling, the Southern and Western places being Mountainous." Again, in 1839, Ramsay wrote that "from Corkindale Law, a view may be obtained, unrivalled in beauty and extent by any in the west of Scotland from a similar elevation, commanding as it does, not only the half of the Scottish counties, but also the tops of Skiddaw and Saddleback in Cumberland and some of the Irish mountains, with the whole sweep of the ocean from the Scottish to the Irish shore." Mr Frederick Mort's modern panorama is equally well known—"above all, the views from the hills of Renfrewshire are unsurpassed in Scotland. From Misty Law, even Corkindale Law farther inland, a vast panorama is unrolled on a clear day. Northwards lies the broad valley of the Clyde, a dark pall of smoke marking where Glasgow blackens the landscape. Here and there a gleam of silver betrays the course of the river as we sweep the horizon from Dumbarton Rock to Tinto. To the north-west, blue in the distance, are the rugged peaks that form the outposts of the giant armies of the Highlands, the massive bulk of Ben Lomond, the gashed outline of the Cobbler, and the shapely cone of Ben Ime, prominent

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\* The indicator beside the sixteenth tee of the Ranfurly Castle Golf Course marks Ben Cruachan, Ben Vane, Ben Lomond, Beinn a' Chroin, Cruach Ardrain, Ben More and Stobinian, Stuc a' Chroin, and Ben Vorlich. Ben Lui, Beinn an Lochain, the Cobbler, Ben Narnain, and Ben Vorlich (Loch Lomond), visible from other parts of the district, have drifted out of sight at this point.

among the less noticeable mountains. Westward the eye lingers on the jagged, granite peaks of Arran, then passes to the blue form of Ailsa Craig, seeming to hang like a tiny haystack in mid-air. Perhaps even a glimpse of Skiddaw may be had in the far south, if the air has recently been washed by rain, and is unusually clear and free from dust. Although the view from the high interior hills is the most extensive in Renfrewshire, it is not the finest. For that we need climb only to a modest elevation on any of the hills behind Gourock or Greenock. Then to most of the features mentioned above must be added a near prospect of the blue waters of the firth, sparkling in the sunshine, or lying one mass of molten gold and crimson, as the sun sinks behind the mountains of Cowal. It is one of the finest views in Britain."





*June 1936*

SUNSET FROM A'CIOCH

*B. H. Humble*

## HIGH COOLIN DAWN.

By B. H. HUMBLE.

BILL MURRAY had been in Skye for a week, but had not visited Coruisk, so I planned a journey there—and by the best possible route. At 10.30 P.M. on 23rd June we left our camp in Glen Brittle and trudged up Coire na Banachdich. At midnight we bathed in a pool about the highest point of the burn, then zigzagged upwards over broken rock. At 12.40 A.M., in mist and darkness, we were over 2,000 feet up, and arrived at a sloping ledge with a rock wall on one side and an impressive drop below. We donned extra sweaters, lay down, dozed, and slept. So passed the darkest hours.

At 2.5 A.M. we awoke and moved off. There was thick mist around us and rock to negotiate; with sleep not yet out of our eyes we had to tread carefully. Soon we reached the main Coolin ridge, and it was an eerie business finding our way along it in the grey ghostly hours before the dawn. Rock towers loomed up out of the mist, and were climbed or turned. The scratches of hundreds of hobnailed boots showed the way unmistakably.

On, over the two tops of Banachdich, over Thormaid to Ghreadaidh. I commiserated with Murray that, on this, our long excursion, we should see nothing but mist. He grunted and pointed to the south. It was strangely light now. We were among clouds, not mist! Away to the south a sharp cone of rock appeared. That was but the beginning, and the wonder of it all is still with me. The clouds sank slowly. Peak after peak came into view. It was fascinating, and not at all easy to pick them out and name them when detached from their connecting ridges and divorced from their corries. The sun was now up although hidden in clouds. Sgurr nan Gilleann appeared quite black, while its outline was tinged with the rose flush of dawn. Am Bhasteir was unmistakable, and, as the clouds sank lower, we could trace the whole

serrated range from north to south. To the west, white clouds stretched out as far as eye could see. To the east, great masses of clouds rolled over the bealach between Bidein Druim nan Ramh and Sgurr a' Mhadaidh and poured themselves down to the abyss, where lay Coruisk.

Suddenly a tremendous peak appeared in the east. It could only be "Blaven, mighty Blaven," a very Everest that morning. For two hours we watched, fascinated by the glory of the cloudscapes, then, in brilliant sunshine, moved on over the four rock tops of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh. Still the clouds swirled below us; from camp they saw nothing but mist at a thousand feet till early afternoon. We were truly "in the higher, purer air."

The heroes who first did the main Coolin ridge in one day took an hour and a half from Banachdich to Mhadaidh. We took six hours, and are not ashamed. Haste would have been sacrilege that morning.

At 9.30 A.M. we started downwards from Bealach na Glaic Moire, and at 11 A.M. had the bathe of a lifetime in a transparent green-blue pool, where the burn enters Loch Coruisk. "Grim and awesome," "Gaunt crags rising from the water's edge," "Dark ledges of barren rock"—these terms occur in the usual descriptions of Coruisk. That was not the Coruisk we saw! It was bright and welcoming that summer day. The ling, the true Scottish heather, was only in bud, but the bell heather was in full bloom. We trod through ferns and young bracken. We saw wild roses and a solitary rowan tree; the brambles tore our legs; the sundew flower glinted in the bogs, and butterwort, and heath dog violet grew in profusion.

Our arrival was well timed. We had the loch to ourselves for an hour before the tourists arrived. Then MacBrayne's "Loch Nevis" steamed into Scavaig and dropped anchor. Murray said it never occurred to him, but at once I thought—a ship! passengers! food! An obliging boatman took us out, and we caused something of a sensation as we drew up at the side of the ship. Murray had a straggling growth of a week's duration on

his face, while the adhesive gabbro had claimed a good deal of my trousers. The steward rose to the occasion nobly—a four-course lunch, two helpings of everything, and as many cups of coffee as we could drink.

Back ashore, and how different Coruisk! Tourists were scattered all over the southern shores of the loch. Some never managed that stony half-mile of path, while others were staggering along on high-heeled shoes. Wild men of the mountains they took us for, and we had to run the gauntlet of their cameras.

At 4 o'clock we started up the glaciated slabs of Sgurr Dubh Beag. The weather was tropical now, and that eastern ridge was sheer delight. Far below lay Coruisk with gulls wheeling around its islands. Beyond were the lighter waters of Scavaig, the green Isle of Soay, and laughing summer seas, extending out to the cloud-shadowed Coolins of Rhum.

That steep ridge was much longer than we thought. And how we suffered from thirst! A drop to the bealach—the only place where we used the rope all day—then on to Sgurr Dubh na Da Bheinn. What took us up that mountain was the thought of our last tin of grape fruit, which we had reserved for the top. Each particle of it I consumed slowly, rolling it round my mouth to savour the full relish of it and moisten my parched throat. Oranges were as scarce as gold in Glen Brittle last June, and we went through twenty tins of grape fruit in ten days.

At 9 P.M. we were on the summit. Our plan to cross the Thearlaich-Dubh gap and descend to Coire Lagan had to be given up, as we had told camp that we would be back about 10 P.M.

A rush down to Lochan Coir' a' Ghrunnda, a last meal there—sardines—and a fast walk over the moor, took us back to camp at 10.30 P.M. exactly, twenty-four hours after leaving. Murray agreed that I had shown him the best route to Coruisk.

## NEW CLIMBS.

## ZERO GULLY, BEN NEVIS.

[*Note.*—This name is suggested by the current numerical nomenclature of the Nevis gullies, for the steep gully between the Observatory Ridge and the flank of the North-East Buttress. It is not a good name, but we have not yet heard of a better.—J. H. B. B.]

THIS gully, so formidable in its lower and still unclimbed section, is usually raked by avalanches in winter under any weather conditions when avalanches are likely to be found anywhere at all. In summer a healthy waterfall sprays down the lower reaches, and there is plenty of wet moss and slimy green rock. The difficult Slav route lies on the smooth, slabby rock above the gully on the left. In fact the Slav route enters the gully at one point, and runs parallel to its upper section.

While it cannot be claimed that this note describes a "100 per cent. pure" first ascent, yet it is the first winter combination ascent of this gully and its lower left buttress. C. M. Allan and J. H. B. Bell climbed this on 5th April 1936, on a day of hard frost and sunshine. The complete climb took from 10.45 A.M. until 5.10 P.M. During this time there was a brief halt for lunch. In the lower and wider snowfield below the gully proper the *névé* lay at an angle of  $40^{\circ}$ , which steepened to  $48^{\circ}$  below the bergschrund. This was wide but bridged, so it was easily crossed on hard snow. Probably there was enough snow to mask a 50-foot summer pitch. Then steep slopes demanded step-cutting for 100 feet or so. Above this the gully was nearly vertical, and was thinly draped in icicles on the right, whereas the mossy rocks ahead were water-worn and ice-boltered. There was a kind of approach ledge on the right of the icicle-fall, but it only led in below another such place.

So we tackled the rocks on our left—great smooth porphyry slabs like the whole of this face—with few small but good holds. Fifty feet up we came to a piton, apparently the second or upper piton on the Slav route.



*June 1929*

*A. E. Robertson*

DAWN ON THE NORTH-EAST BUTTRESS

A. Zero Gully.

B. Left Wall, Observatory Buttress.

The second man removed this with difficulty, and we had it. Fifty feet higher is a splendid belay. The rocks so far had been clear of snow and ice. We now trended somewhat to the left, but soon worked to the right on to a glorious luncheon platform overlooking the gully not far below us—a floor of frozen snow leading up to another ice-fall, perhaps 40 feet high. The next section became rather difficult, as ledges were occasionally covered with hard snow or thin ice. An attempted break-away to the left failed on holdless slabs. The route lay up to the right into a snow-filled recess, and then to the left along a frozen snow lip. We proceeded a little more to the left, then delicately up to the right on holds just adequate. The last short pitch up to a magnificent stance and belay was the hardest.

To our right lay the gully, filled with icy snow lying now at a uniform angle. We soon entered it and commenced cutting. There followed nearly three hours of constant step-cutting in the hard floor of the gully. Two short ice-falls had to be surmounted *en route*. Below the lower one the gradient of the gully was  $55^{\circ}$  for a long way. The second ice-fall had a troublesome initial bulge. The crest of the Observatory Ridge could have been gained somewhat lower than this, but we continued in the gully, only utilising the ridge crest for a short distance somewhat higher. This was equally hard and presented no advantage in speed of ascent. The whole of the final section of the gully continued at a uniform gradient of about  $51^{\circ}$ . Finally, we climbed out at the summit plateau of the Ben quite easily, as there was no cornice.

We both consider that, owing to the rock difficulties, especially where ledges were iced, and owing to the hard labour of step-cutting, this was the hardest winter climb which we had done. A week later Mr G. G. Macphee and party repeated our route, and were able to follow the marks of our steps, as the weather in the interval must have been continuously fine.

J. H. B. BELL.

(*Snow-gradients were measured with a clinometer.*)



## LEFT WALL, OBSERVATORY BUTTRESS, BEN NEVIS.

A most interesting and rather severe rock climb, by what must be regarded as a new route, was made up the northern face of the Observatory Buttress on 13th September 1936 by a party of three—C. M. Allan, J. H. B. Bell, and E. A. M. Wedderburn. The weather was good, although the rock was a bit wet in places. Nails were worn throughout. The route took four and a half hours' climbing time.

The climb starts on the foot of a rocky buttress bounding the impossible-looking gully which demarcates the lower face of the Observatory Buttress from the steep slabby wall leading up to the Observatory Ridge. Its length is probably about 400 feet, and it finishes a few yards to the left of a well-built cairn, which can only mark the termination of Rubicon Wall Climb. From there, easy scrambling leads to the crest of the buttress not far below the top of the Ben. The general character of the climbing is by slabby rocks broken by occasional ledges, but offering few belays. At the luncheon spot, less than half-way up, the position was fairly near to overlooking the unclimbable gully. Farther up, short traverses to the right were necessitated, so that the finish was not near the gully. It may be added that it is very difficult to trace out this route by inspection from below. A cairn was left at the end of the climb, probably unnecessarily, as one tends to be restricted to one route when once one is properly launched on to the climb. The difficulties are nearly continuous.

List of main features :—

1. One hundred feet or so moderate rock.
2. Sixty feet severe, straight up, and finally to right.
3. Forty-five feet more moderate to luncheon spot.

From here, apparently feasible route upward and leftward does not go, nor would it go higher up if the first part went. On the right, however, is a kind of semi-detached flake of rock, awkward to mount, but this is the way.

4. Ninety feet severe to right on to flake, then up over difficult slabs, then easier section.

5. Very difficult 90-foot pitch on slabs and small holds, ending with delicate traverse to right to large block.

6. Awkward corner upwards to right, then another such to the left, and a final short pitch.

J. H. B. B.

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## SOUTH GULLY OF CREAG COIRE NA CISTE.

*(First Ascent, 10th April 1936.)*

This climb starts at the foot of the narrow part of No. 3 Gully, level with the lowest part of No. 3 Gully Buttress. It leads to the right up an obvious steep slanting ledge to the foot of the gully, which is such a conspicuous feature of this part of the crag. The gully bears back up to the left, and, though steep, presents no difficulty. The cornice proved a formidable obstacle to a solitary climber. The climb finishes near the highest portion of Creag Coire na Ciste.

Standard.—Easy or moderate.

G. GRAHAM MACPHEE.

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## DOUGLAS BOULDER, WEST FACE.

What is probably a new route on the Douglas Boulder was climbed by W. G. McClymont and J. H. B. Bell on 10th May 1936. The climb took a little less than two hours. Looking at the face of the Douglas Boulder from the Hut one sees three chimneys, in conformation like an inverted letter N, rather elongated. The right-hand one is probably unclimbable. The left-hand chimney, of which the base is easily reached, has an unclimbed pitch about half-way up. I tried this on an evening of August 1935, and on the present occasion the party again attempted it fruitlessly.

We therefore descended somewhat, were able fairly easily to work into the base of the centre chimney, and ascended this without much difficulty to near the top. There it was necessary to traverse out to the right on slabs and so return above it. This went fairly well, and higher up the final rocks of the Douglas Boulder gave a fairly easy choice of routes. J. H. B. BELL.

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### AGAG'S GROOVE.

#### CROWBERRY RIDGE: BUACHAILLE ETIVE MOR.

The climb starts in a corner on the main face, round from and a little higher than the usual start to the Crowberry Ridge, marked by a cairn. For the most part the line is along a groove running obliquely left up to the bulge situated high on the wall, and then it continues as a crack, rising vertically to the crest of the ridge. On page 57 of "The Central Highlands Guide" the line of the groove can be seen in the photograph bordering on the right of the white face of the Crowberry Wall.

*1st Pitch, 50 Feet.*—By a thin crack to a stance and a spike belay.

*2nd Pitch, 45 Feet.*—Up the continuation of the crack, finishing up the left wall to a stance and a block belay.

*3rd Pitch, 40 Feet.*—By the groove to a ledge and a poor belay.

*4th Pitch, 75 Feet.*—Easier climbing by the groove, or the shelf on its left, to a large grass platform and a big block belay.

*5th Pitch, 50 Feet.*—By the left face of the shallow groove to a spike belay. The leader ties on the second man, who establishes himself several feet below as a safeguard, while the leader tackles the crux. The holds are sufficient, but there is no stance.

*6th Pitch, 20 Feet.*—A vertical nose climbed by poor holds and a thin crack. The stiffest part of the climb.

*7th Pitch, 45 Feet.*—Easier climbing by a crack to a

corner with a sloping roof above. Selection of poor belays.

*8th Pitch, 16 Feet.*—Direct to a small stance several feet below a spike belay, or on better holds by a traverse left and then straight up.

*9th Pitch, 60 Feet.*—By the face to the left of the crack, then direct up it, finishing on the right. Cairn.

The climb is about 400 feet long, and now that it is known, the number of pitches may be reduced by longer run-outs.

J. F. HAMILTON.

A. ANDERSON.

A. C. D. SMALL.

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### STOB COIRE NAM BEITH.

On 29th March 1936, J. A. Brown and T. D. Mackinnon, J.M.C.S., after an unsuccessful attempt on the crack climb of No. 3 Buttress, which was abandoned owing to icy conditions and incessant rain, a start was made from the scree up the deep-cut chimney to the right between Nos. 3 and 4 Buttresses.

The first short pitch was easily surmounted, a good volume of water being inducive to haste.

Approaching the next pitch, a way was forced up a very narrow steep rib of rock on the left wall, which slanted to the top of a 20-foot cave pitch, which could not be passed from the bed of the gully. There were many loose rocks which had to be removed before upward progress was possible, and there is still room for extensive gardening. The essential holds, however, are firm. The leader, while on this rib, was belayed from the only stance, under the waterfall. This pitch is about 70 feet in length and offered considerable technical difficulty. At the top a good belay was found about 10 feet above the waterfall.

Continuing upwards, an easy 20 feet was next encountered when the chimney narrowed considerably, and another steep waterfall pitch of about 20 feet was passed.

The angle above this then eased off and good progress was made for 150 feet, where the chimney forked. The right branch seemed to be subsidiary, so the left one was taken, which was very steep and narrow, with a large chockstone near the top with a possible through route, although the outside route was taken. The holds were small but the rocks sound. There were several feet of ice at the foot of this chimney, without which it should go; a shoulder at the start might be necessary.

Straight above this pitch a narrow crack continues with good holds. Here the chimney can be said to finish, and the way found up sound rocks, which become easier as the summit is approached. T. D. M.

[The chimney between Nos. 3 and 4 Buttresses was climbed previously on 25th November 1934 by a party consisting of A. Horne, D. J. Fraser, and J. H. B. Bell. Unfortunately the matter was not recorded in the *Journal*, so that equal credit undoubtedly belongs to the above-named climbers, to whom, in good faith, this was a first ascent. Except in main outline the description here given seems a little unfamiliar to the Editor, but there is certainly only one such chimney, and it forks exactly as described.—EDITOR.]

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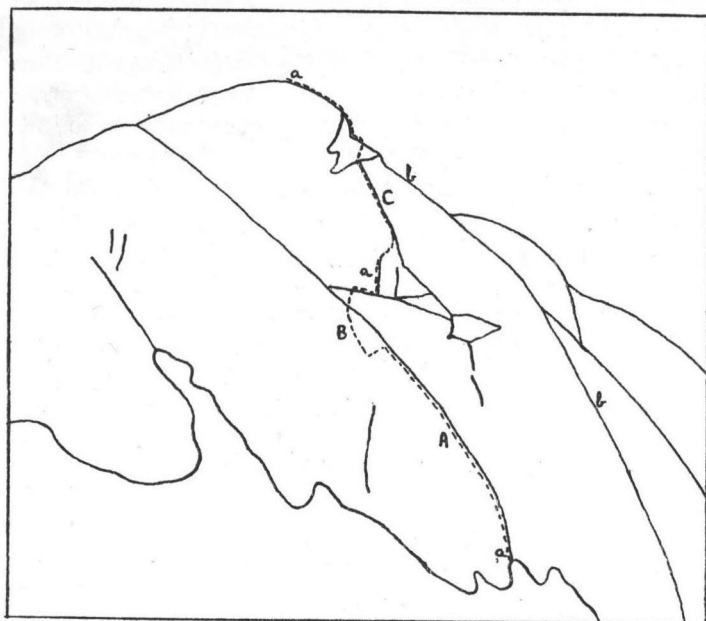
## GARBH BHEINN OF ARDGOUR.

### SOUTH-EAST CHIMNEY.

From the summit of Sròn a' Garbh Choire Bhig, a well-defined chimney is seen running diagonally up the upper half of the south-east flank of the Great Ridge. This chimney is plainly visible in the photograph of the Great Ridge facing page 15 of the S.M.C. "Guide to the Western Highlands."

The climb commences at a point in Garbh Choire Mòr slightly above the bottom of the slabs of the Great Ridge. A steep, slabby gully, which runs diagonally up the lower part of the south-east face, is followed for about 500 feet, until a traverse to the left can be made across somewhat holdless slabs to a grass slope (B in diagram). (It may

be possible to reach this same grass slope more easily from farther up the corrie.) A short distance farther up, a narrow grass ledge leading to the right on the main face is followed for about 50 feet. A shallow scoop, leading vertically upwards, is then climbed on good holds to a fine belay (about 30 feet). Steep rocks are next climbed,



GARBH BHEINN, THE GREAT RIDGE.

(From the South.)

A. Slabby Gully.  
B. Grass Slope.  
C. S. E. Chimney

*a a, a.* Route Followed.  
*a, b, b.* Great Ridge.

bearing right until the bed of a narrow grassy gully is reached. This is ascended for a short distance until it merges into a long, narrow, almost vertical chimney, which may be divided into three pitches.

1. From the bottom of the chimney the right wall is climbed, close to the bed, to a small cave with a good stance (about 20 feet).

2. The body is wedged up between two vertical walls to a small but secure chockstone, above which easy but

rotten rocks lead to a large cave (about 60 feet), where there is a good stance for the second man, while the leader negotiates the difficult final pitch.

3. Facing the right wall the climber rises vertically as far as he is able without jamming his chest. A movement is then made outwards to the top of an arch over the chimney, above which the right wall is followed up easier rocks out of the head of the chimney to a grass slope (about 25 feet). The crest of the Great Ridge is then easily reached at a point some 250 feet below the summit.

The climb was done on 26th August 1936 by R. R. Macdonald and A. R. Wilson.

It is recommended that no rucksack be taken on this expedition. A. R. WILSON.

### NORTH-EAST BUTTRESS OF GARBH BHEINN, ARDGOUR.

*Date of Ascent.*—4th October 1936.

*Party.*—J. K. W. Dunn, A. M. MacAlpine, and W. H. Murray (all J.M.C.S.).

*Rock.*—Quartzite.

The start of the route, now marked by a cairn, is found at the lowest rocks of the buttress at the left-hand edge of a long, vertical wall.

*Pitch No. 1, 50 Feet.*—Easy slabs to good stance.

*Pitch No. 2, 90 Feet.*—Difficult slabs directly upwards to good stance and belay.

*Pitch No. 3, 30 Feet.*—Vertical wall to good stance and belay.

*Pitch No. 4, 60 Feet.*—An obvious wall of smooth slabs at a high angle, reached by a traverse to the left. Exceptionally minute holds lead to a grass ledge.

*Pitch No. 5, 60 Feet.*—Fairly easy slabs. A wide terrace then provides a walk over broken ground to the greater rock massif of the buttress.

*Pitch No. 6, 50 Feet.*—Difficult slabs are climbed directly upwards to the left-hand termination of a ledge that runs for a short distance across the face of the buttress. This ledge is followed to an open corner which is crossed to a sloping grassy stance.

*Pitch No. 7, 50 Feet*—A scramble on easy rock diagonally upwards to the right.



*Pitch No. 8, 80 Feet.*—Moderately difficult rock to an enclosed corner on the right.

*Pitch No. 9, 60 Feet.*—The corner is climbed either by inside or outside routes to a second, double corner.

*Pitch No. 10, 80 Feet.*—The arête, formed by the right-hand edge of the corner, is climbed on exposed rock and small holds until it becomes possible to trend towards the right where a good stance is found.

Some 200 feet of easy rock and grass now lead to the continuation of the slabs at the north-west edge of the buttress. Although steep, these slabs are clearly climbable and give access to the upper rocks descended by Ling and Raeburn in 1908. Approaching darkness, however, forced the party to escape, without completing the route, by a traverse on to the north face.

It remains to be said that the rock is equal, if not superior in quality, to the very best of Skye gabbro. The party climbed well over 600 feet of virgin rock and encountered no loose or rotten rock *en route*. There is a marked paucity of belays. When ascended in its entirety, this buttress will yield between 1,000 and 1,200 feet of rock-climbing.

WM. H. MURRAY.

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### EAGLE'S BUTTRESS, LOCHNAGAR.

*Note.*—Mr G. Roy Symmers points out that compass directions are very confusing on the horseshoe configuration of the Lochnagar cliffs. The "west" side of Douglas Gully indicates the right-hand side during an ascent. The "west" face of the buttress described, and a southward traverse on this face must be understood conformably to the above definition. In a day of sunshine this orientation will be found at least approximately correct.

THIS imposing buttress, which almost overhangs the Douglas Gully on its west side, was climbed by J. H. B. Bell, W. G. McClymont (New Zealand A.C.), and D. Myles on 7th June 1936. The climb was fairly difficult, and took from 1.30 to 5.45 P.M. It appeared to be impossible to follow the line of the crest of the buttress, so that most of the climbing was on the face away from the Douglas Gully. The difficulties, and, in fact, the complete uncertainty of ultimate success held out to within about 80 feet of the top.

The start was from the hard snow of the gully, a few yards above the lowest rocks of the buttress, and not so far up as a great slabby face inclined at  $45^{\circ}$  or so and rather holdless. The first difficult section of about 90 feet led straight up to the crest of the buttress, to a perfect stance and belay. It involved a stiff little chimney, then another chimney, almost a crack with few holds, followed by some traversing on crack ledges between the smooth slabs on the left and an easier ascent to the top. There the party crossed the true arête of the buttress.

The next difficulty was a little gully terminating in a small difficult pitch under steep rocks on the left. Things now became much easier. The party were on the west face, and could, to some extent, select a route steeply upwards towards the crest of the buttress. Then came a difficult 40-foot chimney with rather open walls. This finished with a very awkward exit to the left, with some loose blocks. Easier climbing led in 100 feet or so to the crest of the buttress, but close above this point the crest became vertical and could not be followed. A traverse on the side of Douglas Gully looked equally hopeless, as the way lay over smooth, holdless, steep slabs, all rock joints being the wrong way.

Retreat down to the level of the difficult chimney was necessary, but the line chosen led to the south or right (ascending) of the line of ascent. It was, in fact, necessary to descend and traverse to about the level of the foot of the chimney before resuming the ascent in a direction which still inclined southwards. Clearly, therefore, any subsequent party could reach this point by an oblique upward traverse from below, although this might not be at all easy. For some distance good progress was now maintained upwards and across the face, but the face above was too steep, and the jointing of the rock unsuitable, for a straight ascent to the summit of the buttress.

The only hope was to work up to a corner on the right above some rocks which almost overhang a gully to the right of the buttress. This afforded in the next 150 feet or so the most thrilling part of the climb, the

sort of place where it would have been very unpleasant to have to descend the whole way, but where suspense was maintained until the party was within about 100 feet of the top of the rocks.

There were many small difficult pitches, and a good deal of manœuvring one way and another. To begin with was an awkward, holdless corner, and then a good pitch leading to a remarkable stance behind a huge pyramidal block which, though massive, could just be rocked. This block was the key to the situation. It could safely be used as a take-off to work over a slab on to an upper crack, along which one went to the left in below a corner. Escape was now to the right, a kind of mantelshelf leading to a wide ledge with good belay. A further pitch consisted in swarming over a huge block. The final section was up two steep cracks with ample holds, after which a short, easy scramble led to the top of the buttress.

A certain amount of loose rock had to be dealt with during the climb.

J. H. B. BELL.

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### BEINN EIGHE.

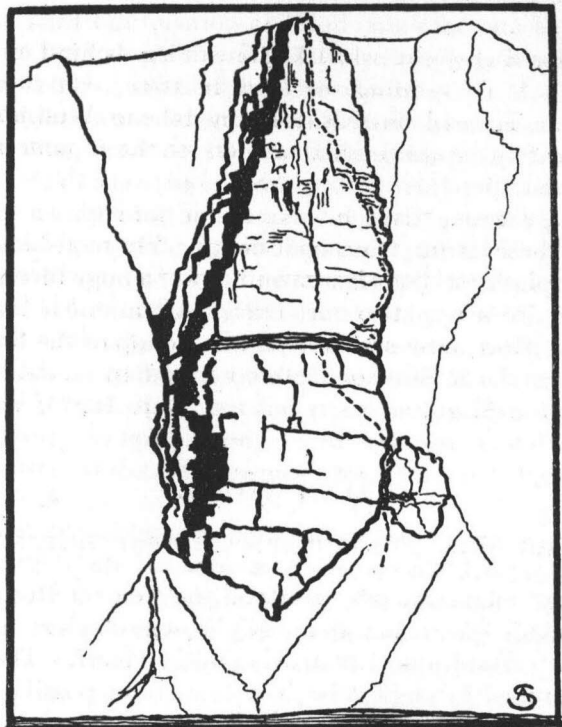
#### COIRE MHC FHEARCHAR.—CENTRAL BUTTRESS.

What may be a new climb on the Central Buttress of Coire Mhic Fhearchar, Beinn Eighe, was done on 4th June by J. F. Hamilton (J.M.C.S.) and W. Kerr. The route was climbed in dense mist, and it was not possible to fix its position with accuracy, but the general situation is shown in the accompanying sketch.

The start was made up the gully to the right for some 150 feet, then an oblique line to the left over loose Torridon sandstone to an obvious grass ledge. Above this is the quartzite section of the buttress. A crack was ascended for 60 feet to a corner and a belay. This was rounded to the right by a sensational movement, and a course made up the edge of the buttress by a series of steep corners linked together by short traverses to the right and finishing at a stance and a belay. From here the route went up a groove out on to the centre of the face,

on which the angle eased off until about 200 feet from the top. This was climbed direct by a very steep slab, done in two pitches with a spike belay half-way up, on small but sufficient holds.

The first and last sections on the quartzite part of the



BEINN EIGHE—CENTRAL BUTTRESS.

route are exceptionally steep. In all, the climb is about 800 feet and, as it apparently takes the difficulties by the shortest way, it is suggested that it be named the "Direct Route."

J. F. H.

*Note.*—This is probably a new climb, although it is in part near the route of Pigott and Wood (cf. *Rucksack Club Journal*, 1923). Mr A. S. Pigott writes that their route, although followed on a misty day, kept to a central line from base to summit of the buttress, and that there may be an identity of route only on the upmost section of the climb.—EDITOR.

## JOHN GROVE, 1866-1936.

THROUGH the death, on 6th December 1936, of John Grove, the Club has lost one of its older and, in his time, one of its most active members. Educated at the Glasgow High School and University, Grove entered the legal profession, and in his practice, over a long period of years, enjoyed the esteem of his professional colleagues and the confidence of a large clientele.

As a young man his favourite sport was yachting, but he was also fond of the hills and took part in scrambles on the Arran peaks and on the "Bens" in the vicinity of Arrochar and Crianlarich.

His first visit abroad, in the early nineties, was to the Bernese Oberland where, in the company of two friends, an enjoyable walking tour was made from Interlaken by the two Scheideggs, the Grimsel and the Furka to Goeschenen, thence (by rail) to Lucerne. Most of the well-known viewpoints near Interlaken and Lucerne were climbed during the tour, and he so greatly enjoyed this outing that it led to frequent visits to the Alps in subsequent years.

In the course of his Alpine holidays he visited the Dauphiné and Tarentaise districts and also Chamonix, in the French Alps; and, in Switzerland—apart from the Bernese Oberland—the principal mountaineering centres in the valleys lying to the south of the Rhone from the Val d'Illiez to the Simplon. He climbed at Chamonix, Champéry, Champex, Arolla, Zermatt, Saas Fee, Kandersteg, and Grindelwald.

On joining the Club in 1904, he not only had Alpine experience but also had profited from climbs on the Scottish hills in the company of members of the Club, particularly with Gilbert Thomson, Naismith, and Goggs. From the date of his entry he was a regular attender at the Meets and other functions, and could always be counted on by his fellow-members to make a third or a fourth in a party bound for a day on the hills. He was an enthusiastic lover of the mountains, and one of the most sociable men who ever walked.

His unfailing cheerfulness and humorous temperament made him a welcome companion, and his name will always recall memories of happy days on the mountains and of merry talk, in the hut or hotel, in the evenings.

To his widow and to his sister the Club extends its sympathy in their loss.

WALTER NELSON.

### GEORGE LISSANT COLLINS

GEORGE LISSANT COLLINS, who was elected a member of the Club in 1908, died on the 3rd December 1936 at his home in Rochdale, where he was head of a leading firm of solicitors and had taken an active part in many Church and charitable works.

He had visited the Alps regularly since 1893, and was an original member of the Climbers' Club, but he had not climbed in the Highlands until 1907, when he came with the writer to the Inchnadamph Meet. While there, we joined W. N. Ling in the ascent of Stack Polly by a new ridge on the north-west side, and with Sir Hugh Munro we climbed the Castle Ridge on Suilven, and made other expeditions.

From that date he was a regular attender at Easter Meets until after the outbreak of war, and he was present at least once at an annual meeting and dinner.

He visited the Alps for the last time in 1924, and made one or two moderate expeditions there, but his strength gradually decreased and he had to be content with fishing and hill walking, including an ascent of Great Gable on Whit Sunday, 1924, when the Fell and Rock Club Memorial was unveiled.

Comparatively few of the younger members will have met Collins, but many older members will have happy memories of their expeditions with one who was a safe and reliable climber on the hills, and a very cheery companion on offdays, or indoors in the evenings.

G. A. SOLLY.

### **In Memoriam.**

#### **WALTER BRUNSKILL.**

THE late Walter Brunskill was one of the earliest members of the S.M.C., joining the Club in 1892. He came of a family associated with Ravenstonedale in Westmorland, and from his youth up was a lover of the mountains and a climber.

In his young days he was a fine athlete, and played rugby football for Durham County. He had climbed in many parts of Scotland, and was a member of the historic S.M.C. Meet in 1897, on the S.Y. "Erne." It was then intended to climb the Coolins from the yacht in Loch Scavaig. But being driven out of that loch by a gale, the party visited Rum and Eigg, and Lochs Nevis and Hourn. The impromptu programme was largely dictated by those members who disliked sea sickness!!!

In his early visits to the Alps, Brunskill climbed alone with guides. He became a member of the Alpine Club in 1895. Subsequently he did a good deal of climbing in the Alps, the Dolomites, and Norway with the late Howard Priestman, Walter Barrow, Godfrey A. Solly, and others.

He married Annie Westmorland, whose brothers were among the pioneers of climbing in the Lake District, and she was the third lady to climb the Pillar Rock. For many years he lived at Darlington, but on his retiring from the Managing Directorship of Pease's worsted spinning mills, he moved to Storrs, Windermere, whence he made expeditions into the hills and fells. He was a safe, capable climber, and one of the kindest and best-natured companions anyone could wish to have. He died on the 18th October last, in his eightieth year.

WALTER BARROW.



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

## NEW YEAR MEET, 1937—GLENCOE.

THE 1937 New Year Meet will be remembered for its execrable weather, for its good fellowship, and for the unsolicited and somewhat misleading publicity which it secured in the press. The Meet was distributed over four hotels, the headquarters being at Glencoe Hotel. In all, 50 mountaineers took part, amongst whom 3 were brief visitors and 6 were guests. Glencoe housed 22, Kinlochleven 7, Clachaig 10, and Kingshouse 8 climbers. The records of all sections unite in paying tribute to the respective landlords for every comfort and courtesy enjoyed during the Meet. Such tributes really mean something when the weather is so bad. By all accounts the weather got progressively worse from Thursday, 31st December, to Sunday, 3rd January, on which date most people went home, although a Kinlochleven party was reported to have awaited better weather on the Monday.

In spite of the bad weather, almost incessant snow-showers and cold winds, several ascents were recorded. It must be admitted, however, that the best of the Meet was the hilarity and good fellowship within doors. No doubt the gentlemen of the Press also experienced this lightheadedness, which manifested itself in exciting paragraphs in various newspapers. It appears that Hogmanay was celebrated in true Highland fashion among the mountaineers. Desperate schemes were hatched overnight, and "a party set out at dawn to scale the rocky cliffs that have lured many expert climbers to their doom." A fearful new climb was being attempted—"the Ossian's Cage Ridge—whilst police and doctors along the Glencoe range were standing by." In view of the uncanny reticence of many of the members, the upshot of this great adventure is still unknown.



*April 1936*

LOCHABER AND LOCH LEVEN FROM THE SLOPES OF SGURR DEARG

*Percy Donald*

The following members and guests were present :—

AT GLENCOE.—The President and Messrs Aikman, Burt, Corbett, T. H. Gibson, Hird, J. S. M. Jack, Jeffrey, J. Y. Macdonald, H. MacRobert, J. MacRobert, Martin, Matheson, Myles, Orr, J. G. Osborne, Pattullo, T. G. Robinson, R. M. Scott.

*Guests.*—N. Brown, Murrie, Maclure.

*Visitors.*—J. Rennie, A. Horne, Harvey.

AT KINLOCHLEVEN.—Messrs Crosthwaite, Dixon, R. R. Elton, Hemming, Morris, E. C. Thomson, T. E. Thomson.

AT CLACHAIG.—Messrs G. Arthur, Bartholomew, I. M. Campbell, Cumming, A. Harrison, Lawson, Ling, J. A. Scott, and Waddell.

*Guest.*—P. Fletcher.

AT KINGSHOUSE.—Messrs K. K. Hunter, J. G. Inglis, R. M. G. Inglis, D. W. Robinson, Roxburgh, and Turnbull.

*Guests.*—J. R. S. Waterston and I. Johnston.

## ASCENTS.

### GLENCOE PARTY.

*31st December 1936.*—Corbett did Creach Bheinn (Glen Creran).

*1st January.*—Aikman, Robinson, Scott did Meall a Bhuiridh (Clachlet), H. MacRobert, Macdonald, Jack, Brown did Sgor na h'Ulaidh and Stob an Fhuarain. J. MacRobert was somewhere about.

*2nd January.*—A large party went from Duror across to Glencoe. Matheson, Murrie, and Macdonald did the Pap and Sgor nam Fiannaigh. Robinson, Orr, and Aikman did Sgarr Dhonuill. Jack and Corbett did the Pap. Horne and two J.M.C.S. men were on the Dinnertime Buttress.

### KINLOCHLEVEN PARTY.

*1st January.*—Dixon, Morris, Elton, and the Thomsons did Am Bodach, the first two also doing Stob Coire a Chairn. Hemming and Crosthwaite did Na Gruagaichean and Stob Coire a Chairn.

*2nd January.*—Dixon, T. E. Thomson, and Morris did Sgurr Eilde Mor. Crosthwaite and Hemming did Sgor na h'Ulaidh. E. C. Thomson and Elton did Garbh Bheinn (a Corbett).

## CLACHAIG PARTY.

The recorder has grasped the gist of the Hon. Treasurer's complaint about the size and expense of the *Journal*. The Clachaig party enjoyed itself.

## KINGSHOUSE PARTY.

*1st January.*—Roxburgh and Robinson got a top of the Buachaille Bheag. Turnbull and Waterston did the Buachaille Mor across the north buttress. R. M. G. Inglis and Johnston did the Buachaille Bheag and later enjoyed a glissade.

*2nd January.*—Roxburgh and Robinson failed on the Clachlet, whilst others walked in Glen Etive.

*3rd January.*—Robinson and Roxburgh got the main top of the Buachaille Etive Bheag. Turnbull and Waterston ascended Sron na Creise by a gully and Stob a Ghlaise Coire.

J. H. B. B.

## RECEPTION.

ONCE more it was impossible to hold the Edinburgh Reception in either of the Station Hotels, but it was, nevertheless, a decided improvement on the "scrum" of 1934. The social side of the afternoon would be more enjoyable, however, if everyone present at tea were seated. If this can be arranged in Glasgow, it is surely not beyond the powers of the Edinburgh caterers. Mr Robert Jeffrey provided the lantern display with a series of slides of the Mont Blanc range of great beauty, and it is no exaggeration to say that he set a new standard of excellence by which future receptions will be judged.

E. C. T.

## ANNUAL MEETING, 1936.

THE Forty-eighth Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Royal Arch and Egyptian Halls, Edinburgh, on Friday, 4th December 1936, at 6 P.M. Mr William Garden, President, was in the Chair. There was a fair attendance. The meeting disposed of its business speedily and without contention.

Only the main items will be noted here, as a minute has been circulated to all members.

The HON. TREASURER noted a certain amount of over-expenditure, which he attributed to the high cost of the *Journal*. He also alluded to heavy expenditure on "Guide Books." This was covered by stocks in hand.

The HON. SECRETARY reported the deaths of 6 members during the year—Messrs Henry Cockburn, L. W. Hinxman, W. Brunskill, H. C. Boyd, W. Low, and Sir Felix Schuster. There were 2 resignations and 11 new Members. The membership stood now at 306, including 3 Honorary and 12 Original Members.

The HON. EDITOR dealt with the high cost of the *Journal*, agreed to reduce this if possible to nearly £65 a number, a difficult task if quality was to be maintained, and asked the members to co-operate in obtaining increased sales. A discussion followed.

On the report of the HON. LIBRARIAN, the Committee were requested to consider making the Club Room more attractive and more used by members.

The HON. "GUIDE BOOK" EDITOR reported the issue of new editions of the "Ben Nevis" and "Northern Highlands" volumes. The Club extended its thanks to Dr MacPhee and to Messrs Ling and Corbett for their excellent work. In view of the financial position, it was approved that no new volumes or editions be undertaken meantime.

The C.I.C. Hut was reported to be in good order, a new stove having been installed. It was regrettable that so few members used the Hut.

The COMMITTEE'S recommendations for the new office-bearers and Committee were approved.

Crianlarich was selected for New Year Meet, 1937-38, and Ullapool for Easter, 1938. A vote of thanks was accorded to Mr Garden as the retiring President.

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## ANNUAL DINNER.

THE Forty-eighth Annual Dinner was held in the Royal Arch Halls, and was the usual success, the diners being allowed to help themselves to the courses, an innovation

much appreciated by the recording scribe who had come from Glasgow and had had nothing to eat since tea-time. The Club was toasted after a happy speech by the President, in which he deprecated the present-day craze for records which had now extended to the sport of mountaineering, as evidenced by the offering of a prize for the winner of a race from Fort William to the summit of Ben Nevis and back. Then followed the "Club Song" by Mr J. S. M. Jack; the Dinner would never be the same again if Mr Jack should by any mischance become word-perfect.

The health of "Our Guests" was proposed by Mr E. P. Buchanan and acknowledged by Colonel E. L. Strutt, of the Alpine Club.

The final toast of the retiring President was wittily proposed by his successor, Mr P. J. H. Unna.

D. J. S. H.

## EDWARD C. THOMSON.

### HONORARY TREASURER, 1928-36.

MR EDWARD C. THOMSON'S period of office has seen a considerable expansion, both in the Club membership and in the multiplicity of duties which fall within the province of the Hon. Treasurer. The production and sales of the series of "Guide Books," both as regards new volumes and new editions, has grown too large for the care of the Hon. Secretary as it remained in the days of the late George Sang. Both in this respect and as regards the erection, maintenance, and running of the Charles Inglis Clark Memorial Hut, a good deal of new work has devolved upon the Treasurer.

In all these respects E. C. Thomson has proved himself equal to the job. He was well nurtured as understudy to his predecessor, Mr H. MacRobert, from whom he took over everything in good working order. Thomson enjoyed his period of office, and worked harmoniously with all the other officials and members. In his turn he

hands over the Club finances in a most satisfactory condition to his successor, Mr J. G. Osborne, for whose benefit he makes one parting recommendation to members—to continue to lighten the burden of the Treasurer by paying subscriptions as early as possible.

But E. C. Thomson is also a keen mountaineer. As an old friend I particularly remember his good company and wholehearted enthusiasm during some of his and of my own earliest climbs on the Coolin and on Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour. Those were days of pure enjoyment and discovery. Thomson's first climb, Ben Vorlich (Perthshire), was in August 1912. He joined the Club in 1920. He is rather proud of a link with the great days of the past, in the form of the ascent of a gully on Creag na Caillich (Killin) in the company of the late Harold Raeburn. Probably it was Raeburn's last Scottish climb.

Thomson has climbed in the Tyrol in 1922 and on the Dolomites (Gross Fermeda, Monte Cristallo, Croda da Lago), also in Switzerland in 1931 (Zermatt Breithorn and some climbs near Arosa). He has in 1927 and 1928 climbed on the western peaks of Ireland.

His favourite climbs are the traverse of Blaven and Clach Glas, the face of Stob Ghabhar and its Couloir, the Great Ridge of Garbh Bheinn and the Central Gully of Lui. He is never happier than when on holiday—wandering, cycling, camping amidst the peaks and lochs of our western coasts.

J. H. B. B.



## 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.*



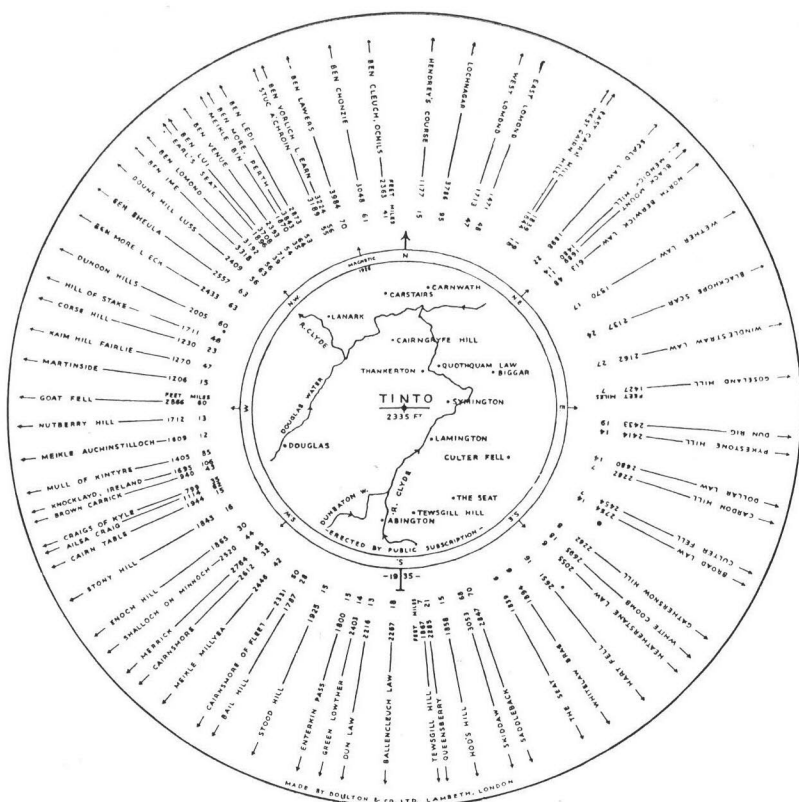
### WARNING TO HILL WALKERS.

A PRINTED slip in the following terms is being inserted in all copies of the Guide Books, and certain hotels and Youth Hostels are being invited to display mounted copies of this notice. The Committee feel that accidents are most often due to inexperience and lack of proper equipment, and they hope that the remarks and suggestions in the notice may be seen by the less experienced hill walkers, and may lead them to exercise a greater measure of care and judgment in their expeditions. It has also been thought advisable to draw attention to the trouble and expense involved in search parties. J. L. A.

### “WARNING TO HILL WALKERS.

“The Guide Books issued by the Scottish Mountaineering Club describe routes which range from difficult climbs to what are, in fine summer weather, mere walks. All must judge for themselves whether they have the experience necessary for carrying out their intended expeditions within a reasonable time, remembering that conditions may quickly change a simple walk into a serious undertaking. Safe walking on the hills involves properly constituted and adequately equipped parties, reasonably prepared for unexpected difficulties, and having strength of mind to turn back when desirable. For full description of proper equipment see the ‘General Guide Book.’ Experienced climbers, even when merely expecting to walk, wear boots suitably nailed for rock climbing, and carry reserves of food and clothing, 1-inch map, compass, torch, a rope (unless it is certain not to be required), and an ice axe when there is any chance of meeting snow or ice. Others cannot afford to take less.

“Accidents in recent years call for this notice; for not only have local residents been called away from their ordinary vocations and caused trouble and anxiety, but experienced climbers have been summoned from long distances to form rescue parties. It will be understood that such assistance must not be regarded as always available, and that local workers may reasonably expect to be adequately paid.



## THE TINTO INDICATOR.

We publish above a photograph of the upper surface of the view indicator which was erected on the summit of Tinto on the 13th September 1935. The indicator consists of a circular disc of Doulton Stoneware 23½ inches in diameter and 4 inches in depth. The design is similar to that of the indicator which the Club erected on Ben Nevis in 1927 with the difference that in the centre there is an outline map of the surrounding country instead of an inscription. Mr J. A. Parker designed the indicator and supervised its erection. (*See also C.C.J., June 1936.*)

J. A. PARKER.

*"Some Common Causes of Difficulty are :*

- "Failure to judge length of time required for expedition. Unduly slow or incompetent companion. Illness: sprained ankle. Unexpectedly difficult ground. Mist: darkness: snowstorm: loss of way. High wind (especially on ridges). Extreme cold: frostbite. Members of a party becoming separated.*
- "Deep soft snow: steep hard snow. Except on the level, snow, whether hard or soft, necessitates an ice axe for safety. Soft snow may freeze hard in a few hours and so involve step-cutting.*
- "Ice-glazed rocks or paths. One shower may cause this and the ice may be invisible.*
- "Sudden spates, rendering burns uncrossable or only safely crossable with a rope."*

### COR ARDER

It is intended to include in the November number a symposium on climbing in Cor Arder. The announcement of certain new climbs has been held over to be included in this article. These comprise: (i) Two interesting gully and chimney climbs at the top right-hand corner of the face containing the Posts; (ii) a summer investigation of the right-hand Post (to the right of Avalanche Gully); (iii) a direct ascent of the steep face of the Pinnacle Buttress.

J. H. B. B.

### OUR NEXT ISSUE.

The Editor has now used up all his overmatter and awaits contributions from members. Information on Cor Arder will be welcome. It is also proposed to bring out an article on new climbs in the area which will fall to be covered by the "Southern Highlands' Guide."

A good, humorous tale of mountain adventure would be welcome. In any case, early contributions are most welcome of all.

J. H. B. B.

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### Climbing Guides to the English Lake District: III. Great Gable, Borrowdale, Buttermere.

A new edition of this excellent Guide has just been published by the F. & R.C.C. under the general editorship of H. M. Kelly with section editors C. J. Astley Cooper, E. Wood-Johnson, and L. H. Pollitt. It is a well bound pocket-size book of about 150 pages. W. Heaton Cooper has illustrated the climbing routes with clear and artistic sketches. The climbs are precisely yet not too minutely described. It is also most interesting to glance through the list of first ascents.

J. H. B. B.

## REVIEWS.

**The Technique of Alpine Mountaineering.** Published by The Uto Section of the S.A.C.; translated and published by the Association of British Members of the S.A.C.; procurable from the Hon. Librarian, George Anderson, 32 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1. Price, 2s. 6d.

In the preface it is explained that it was considered that this little book, which was in circulation for many years in the Uto section of the S.A.C., might be usefully translated and made available to English members. The book is so small that it can be carried on expeditions.

The reviewer does not agree with all the statements in the book. The counsel that handholds on rocks should be as high as can be conveniently reached does not seem to us sound, nor the counsel that the body should be as close to the slope as possible.

The section which deals with knots seems to us weak, and as the book is primarily intended for the novice, it would seem to us better to have omitted the part on spring-hooks.

The instruction that when roped only one member of the party may move at a time on easy rocks does not seem in keeping with the practice in the Alps, but no doubt the novice will soon find that discretion must be observed in the observance of this instruction.

Opinions vary so much on the use of a sling on rocks that it can safely be left to the novice to make up his own mind on this subject after short experience.

It is a pity that the author does not stress further the danger of crampons where the snow has a tendency to "ball." In a book which is primarily for the novice it would be better to state that, wherever there is a tendency for the snow to ball, crampons should be removed.

The section on compasses has been rewritten by the British Section of the S.A.C. We have found that in the Alps a prismatic compass has not many advantages over a small simple compass, and where weight is an important factor the difference in weight between a prismatic and a non-prismatic compass is a factor to be considered.

We would have preferred that the space which has been devoted to prismatic compasses had been used to give some advice on clothing, equipment, and weather conditions. Advice on this subject would have been invaluable to British climbers going on the Alps for the first time.

Lastly, those who consider undertaking winter mountaineering will probably have considerable summer Alpine experience. It is not for those that the translation will be useful, and it seems rather advanced for novices.

We have criticised parts of the book in detail, but it must be remembered that this book is a translation, and that consequently the translators were not entitled to take undue liberties with the original.

We have no hesitation in saying that the book will be of great value to British climbers on their first visit to the Alps. In fact, there are many points which serve as useful reminders to climbers with much more experience.

A. H.

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**Snow Structure and Ski Fields.** By G. Seligman. Macmillan. 25s.

The present fashion is all for rock climbing, but it must not be forgotten that the founders of the sport of mountaineering preferred snow; and with some reason, for it is a most intriguing and sympathetic medium.

Although practically any kind of snow conditions may be met with in summer it cannot be asserted that snow-craft is of a fraction of the value to the summer mountaineer that it is to the spring or winter ski mountaineer. More and more climbers are learning to ski, and skiers learning to climb, and in any case, even if the knowledge is not essential, it will make a summer climb the more interesting. And so Mr Seligman's book is of great importance.

It is strange to think that from 1921 to this year Arnold Lunn's little book "Alpine Ski-ing" was the most informative treatise on snow-craft. Now another past-President of the Ski Club of Great Britain is adding to our knowledge, but even Mr Seligman finds it impossible to improve on Mr Lunn in many respects.

The first two parts of the book deal in the simplest language with the scientific aspects of snow, of the changes which it may undergo, and of the formations which it may assume. The whole book is most lavishly illustrated. The first two parts are simplified by diagrams and homely experiments which serve to drive home the points which Mr Seligman makes.

The third part of the book deals with practical matters—mainly avalanches. Never before has such a wealth of information been laid before the keen student of these most interesting phenomena. Although this information tends to conflict in some particulars—our Mr Unna is one of the leading heretics—so many authorities are cited on either side of these doubtful issues that the reader is able to judge for himself until he is able to put his theory to the test. This part of the book also includes very valuable chapters on Tactics on Avalanche Ground and Safety in the Mountains, and ends with a dozen pages on summer conditions, and a few remarks about ski-ing conditions, which will be worth their weight in wax to the ski mountaineer.

Mr C. K. M. Douglas of the Meteorological Office contributes an understandable and helpful chapter on Alpine Weather, and drives

home most forcibly the lesson which Mr Seligman draws earlier in the book, that it is often possible to gauge the probability of avalanche conditions by a study of the weather for the preceding week of two.

No doubt some of Mr Seligman's theories will be superseded when our knowledge and technique has advanced, but in the meantime we have in his book the very last word on snow for mountaineers and a considerable contribution to that branch of science.

E. A. M. W.

**Climbing Guides to the Snowdon District.** I. Cwm Idwal Group. By J. M. Edwards. 127 pages. Published by Climbers Club. New Edition. 1936.

This well-bound pocket-size guide-book is perfectly adapted for use on the hills. The arrangement is good, the letterpress and the style clear, and all the routes are well illustrated in the 8 diagrams which appear at the end. Several photographic illustrations are of rather minor interest.

J. H. B. B.

**Scrambles amongst the Alps.** By Edward Whymper. John Murray. 10s. 6d.

**The Playground of Europe.** By Leslie Stephen. Basil Blackwell. 5s.

**My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus.** By A. F. Mummery. Basil Blackwell. 5s.

The increasing popularity of mountaineering has so many disadvantages that it is a relief to be able to note one of its compensations. The big editions of these three classics of mountaineering literature have been out of print for many a long day, so it is pleasant to record the issue of these beautiful editions at such popular prices. They should have a large sale. "Scrambles" contains the original illustrations beautifully produced, a number of very fine half-tones, and some good maps.

E. C. T.

**Armathwaite.** By Lawrence Pilkington. Published by Longmans, Green. 2s. net.

Any book of verse by the author of "The Hills of Peace," who is also one of our original members, is a joy to peruse. The author has a mellow philosophy founded on the contemplation and enjoyment of the hills. Not without a wistful glance backwards in time, he now seeks a refuge in the eternal hills from all those moods of strife

and discontent which to-day threaten the peace of the world. Speaking of Skiddaw, he says,

“ When older eyes rest on such well-loved hills  
Past scenes come crowding in upon the mind ;  
Oh, for one day of youth to roam these fells  
And see again those haunts of early days,  
To tread the heights, to see afar and feel  
Surrounded by a world of lasting peace.”

J. H. B. B.

**Attack on Everest.** By Neil Macintyre. Methuen & Co. Ltd.  
5s.

This book is described in the preface as “ the elaboration of a series of articles on attempts to climb Mount Everest, which appeared in the *News Chronicle*.” It is the sort of rubbish which is enjoyed by readers of the penny press, and is part of the price that has to be paid for the widening interest in mountaineering, and for the big expeditions.

E. C. T.

**The British Ski Club Year Book, 1936.**

So many mountaineers now combine ski-ing with climbing, that this journal becomes an increasingly welcome addition to our library. The articles are catholic both in regard to type and locality, and the book includes an interesting and racy account of the Winter Olympic Games at Garmisch, and a perfectly hair-raising description (well illustrated) of the World Championship Races at Innsbruck.

R. R. E.

**Ladies' Alpine Club. Year Book, 1937.**

On turning over the pages of this Year Book one's attention is at once caught by some most delightful woodcuts and excellent photographs. The letterpress easily maintains the high standard set by the illustrations, and the climbing narratives are all alive. The general articles are very interesting, and the contribution by M. Scott Johnston on the Monk's Cowl is especially good.

I. M. C.

**Scottish Ski Club Journal, 1936.**

This contains many articles of interest to the ski mountaineer, pre-eminent amongst which are, perhaps, E. A. M. Wedderburn's “ Brown on Mount Blanc ” as a thriller, and one on the Ben Nevis Snowbeds, by Mr Bonacina, as a source of information. The latter



is an interesting supplement to Mr Seligman's researches in the Alps, but much remains for future study. A useful short note shows how to transport skis on a car.

J. H. B. B.

**The Himalayan Journal, Vol. VIII.**

This is an excellent number full of interesting articles, well produced, and wherever necessary accompanied by clear line diagrams, which make the articles easy to follow. The number is beautifully illustrated throughout. Pride of place amongst the articles must be given to Eric Shipton's account of the 1935 Reconnaissance of Mount Everest, in which he expresses the opinion that an expedition consisting of more than six Europeans labours under a handicap of immobility and lack of unity. An important lesson learnt was that monsoon snow never consolidates and can never be trusted, however safe it may look. This lesson has since been further emphasised by the incident on the North Col slopes in 1936. The interest of the journal is spread throughout the whole range from the Soltoro Karakoram in the west and Chitral to Kabru in the east.

E. C. T.

**The New Zealand Alpine Journal, Vol. VI., No. 23, June 1936.**

This annual record of the activities of The New Zealand Alpine Club runs to 200 pages of fairly small type, but even to those who know little of the country it is full of interest. While the Club is forty-five years old, and has 300 members in its six sections, it is fortunate in that there is still plenty of exploration to be done, and new peaks to climb. There are 6 pages devoted to lists and descriptions of exploration and first ascents. The conditions seem to be comparable to the Alps, though the problems are often greater, as we read of difficulties of access, scrub on the lower slopes, lack of bridges, a low permanent snow line, flies, inaccurate maps, and appalling weather conditions.

Half of the volume is taken up with activities in New Zealand, with articles on climbs done over thirty years ago. The New Zealand member of the Everest Reconnaissance Expedition of 1935 contributes an interesting illustrated article of 20 pages. Generally, the articles, though going into considerable detail, are very readable. For example, mountaineers elsewhere might like to try using permanganate of potash crystals for marking a trail across snowfields or through crevasses. There are 30 pages of photographs, but the reproduction hardly does justice to the excellence of the subjects.

A. D.

**The American Alpine Journal, Vol. II., No. 4.**

The articles in this volume range from Yukon Territory, California, and Switzerland to South Africa and Rapua, and a comparison of

the transport methods in the various countries is interesting. Clearly, so far as the vast unexplored territories of North America are concerned, the aeroplane is becoming increasingly popular both to survey routes and to minimise and ease arduous approaches.

Most of the articles, one feels, are too compressed, and there is a tendency to colourlessness and lack of personal detail. This is particularly so in the descriptions of Yukon exploration.

Of interest to S.M.C. members is the inclusion of Mr G. A. Solly's name under date 1887 in "A Survey of *American* Ascents in the Alps." It is not clear whether he is included by virtue of nationality, or because he met on his ascent of the Matterhorn "a young American woman IN TROUSERS."

R. R. E.

#### **Appalachia, June 1936, No. 81.**

Those who are interested in National Parks for Scotland would do well to read the article in this magazine on the Shenandoah National Park. This article seeks to defend the clearing of the Appalachian Trail in this region against the loss of the "wilderness aspect." It becomes clear that to some people a National Park is not consistent with a sense of wildness and remoteness. If the region is wild or remote or inaccessible it is not serving its purpose as a National Park, which should yield "The greatest good to the greatest number." The article gives food for thought and should be read by our members. "Timagami for Women" is a good humorous article on canoeing in Canada, and an article on "The High Uintas," a range in Northern Utah, is also interesting. The photographic reproduction throughout is good, but with the exception of "Shiprock" the subjects are a little dull for a magazine that does not require to confine itself to its home ranges.

E. C. T.

#### **The Canadian Alpine Journal, Vol. XXIII.**

The members of the Alpine Club of Canada have a vast area of unclimbed mountain territory to explore, and the present number contains an account of the first ascent of the Leaning Towers, which is well told and provided with a good sketch map. There are also two accounts of an expedition to Mount Waddington by the Sierra Club. Members of the party ascended the snow summit, which is only 60 feet lower than the main rock summit, but bad weather prevented them from reaching the top. Mount Waddington has since been climbed. The journal is well produced, but as many as five photographs are sometimes crammed on to one page.

E. C. T.

#### **Mountaineering Journal, Vol. IV., No. 4; Vol. V., No. 1.**

Far too large a proportion of these two numbers is given over to the reproduction of cheap, sensational newspaper clippings of climbing accidents, but, apart from this rather serious defect, quite

an interesting little magazine might be produced if the editors took even the smallest amount of trouble over their detail work. Some of the errors occurring in these numbers are repeated time and again, and are so glaring as to be quite inexcusable. E. C. T.

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**The Alpine Journal, November 1936.**

Pride of place goes to the account of the 1936 Everest Expedition, by Mr Hugh Ruttledge. The examination of the west side of the North Col has yielded information of value to future expeditions, but further exploration would appear to be necessary before access thereby can be assured. The next article of importance is an account of exploration in the western part of the Vatnajökull in Iceland, by A. de Pollitzer-Pollenghi—the second expedition to this district, and the only one since Watts' crossing in 1875. Other leading articles are those by H. E. L. Porter on Dampier (N.Z.) and by R. Schomberg on the mountains of N.W. Chitral. There are descriptions of many climbs in the Alps themselves, and in this connection it is interesting to note the number of new routes made on mountain faces as opposed to ridges. A salutary warning is conveyed in the description of the Eigerwand accidents, and Sir Claude Schuster's paper (read at an A.C. meeting) emphasises the conclusions reached therein. The successful ascent of Nanda Devi is recorded. Perhaps we may look forward to a full account in the next number of the journal.

R. R. E.

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**The Grampian Club Journal, 1937.** (Copies, 2s. each, from E. Maxwell, 39 Dock Street, Dundee.)

We extend a hearty welcome to the record of the first ten years' activities of the Grampian Club. The journal is a well produced volume of some sixty odd pages and recalls many mountain scenes in the course of an enjoyable evening's reading.

An excellent article by A. A. B. Martin traces the stages in the exploration of a new climb—Pleasant Terrace on the Ossian's Cave face of Aonach Dubh. The accompanying photograph clarifies the somewhat puzzling topography of this face. There is a complete guide to the Scorrie and the Winter Corrie of Driesh. Some articles have a historical flavour, whilst others, such as "Golden Autumn: White Winter," breathe the true spirit of hill enjoyment. There is humour, too, as in the case of the miner who spent his annual week's holiday on the summit of Ben MacDhui eating peasemeal.

The Club also wanders abroad, and its members discourse on Mont Blanc, the Tasman Glacier and the mountains of Sikkim.

J. H. B. B.

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Review of "Climbing Guides to the English Lake District" appears on p. 223.

## THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

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### NEW YEAR MEET, 1936-37—CRIANLARICH.

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

*Members.*—J. K. Annand, R. Buchanan, D. L. Campbell, W. C. Carmichael, T. Cormie, A. A. Cowan, A. F. Down, R. O. H. Down, E. E. Gardiner, J. W. Glen, C. C. Gorrie, C. K. Lewis, J. N. Ledingham, A. M. MacAlpine, W. M. MacKenzie, W. M'Lellan, F. C. MacLeod, D. M. Macphee, A. I. L. Maitland, W. G. Marskell, W. H. Murray, G. Peat, G. Poole, J. M'N. Porteous, F. E. O'Riordan, A. M. Smith, W. D. Short, T. R. Stevenson, F. R. B. Stewart, J. M'K. Stewart, R. D. Walton.

*S.M.C.*—D. J. S. Harvey, A. Horne, B. H. Humble, J. J. Murray, T. D. MacKinnon, I. H. Ogilvie, W. C. Watson.

*Guests.*—W. Bell, R. H. Buchanan, J. T. Dunlop, A. C. Heath, C. F. Hepburn, M. Moffat, C. Young, F. C. Borwick.

Weather conditions throughout the Meet were very poor, a cold west wind accompanied by almost continuous rain swept the hills each day. Soft snow lay above 2,000 feet, but it was of no climbing value, and it is not surprising that climbs were generally of a low standard.

*Thursday, 31st December.*—Humble, Marskell, and Young were the first arrivals and spent the day on Cruach Ardrain, going up the "Y" Gully and coming down over Stob Garbh.

*Friday, 1st January.*—Cold and showery. Annand, Borwick, Cowan, A. F. and R. O. H. Down, Glen, Heath, Hepburn, O'Riordan, Peat, Poole, Stewart, and Yeaman made a massed assault on An Caisteal and carried on over Beinn a Chroin. It was not until they

reached the summit of the latter that they realised there were thirteen members present. Though shaken, the party made a safe descent.

Stewart, Watson, Short, and Harvey were fortunate enough to find a snow gully on the N. face of Beinn an Dothaidh, which led up to a small cornice.

Humble and Young climbed Beinn Laoigh, the centre gully taking them  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours. They found a strong wind blowing on the summit, so beat a hasty retreat.

MacKinnon and Maitland did Ben More and Stobinian.

Porteous, R. and R. H. Buchanan went up the right fork of the "Y" Gully on Cruach Ardrain and came down by the left. This popular hill also entertained Bell and Macphee.

MacKenzie, MacAlpine, W. H. and J. J. Murray, Lewis, and Walton were on Beinn Eunaich and Beinn a Chochuill. They were fortunate enough to be near the centre of an electric storm, and the charged condition of the falling snow gave a good exhibition of "singing ice axes."

Ledingham, MacLeod, and Carmichael went up the Allt Riobain to Meall Chuirn and on to Beinn Dheiceach in soft snow and mist.

The Glasgow President and Campbell climbed Beinn Chabhair on their way to the Meet. Coming down they found the Falloch in spate, but as it was pitch dark and raining hard, they waded across, clutching each other convulsively for support.

M'Lellan and Moffat skied on the Beinn Glas col, where it snowed all afternoon.

The Annual Dinner and Meeting were held in the evening, the dinner being notable for the entire absence of speeches, and the meeting for the interest aroused by the proposed new constitution of the Club. Forty-five members and guests sat down to dinner.

*Saturday, 2nd January.*—The hotel awoke to driving rain, breakfasts were prolonged to a late hour and philosophical arguments raged over the pleasures to be enjoyed under such conditions.

A. F. Down, Poole, and Horne showed a fine contempt for the weather by tackling Aonach Dubh, and did one of the few climbs of the Meet on the Dinner-time Buttress.

Cowan, Gardiner, and Walton climbed Cruach Ardrain by the "Y" Gully.

Porteous and R. Buchanan were on Stob Garbh.

Peat and Hepburn carried out a reconnaissance of Beinn an Dothaidh from the shelter of Achaladair farm, but decided by a majority vote to retire to their car. Marskell, Macphee, and Humble, however, conquered this peak by the N.E. gully, and glissaded down over some waterfalls.

M'Lellan and Moffat again skied on Beinn Glas, accompanied on this occasion by MacAlpine and MacLeod.

Smith, Ledingham, Dunlop, and Campbell got a soaking on Beinn a Chleibh, but found a small gully which interested them.

Stewart, Watson, Short, and Harvey in the course of their travels came across some eminent members of the S.M.C. engaged in a game of bowls. The green, alas, was not Argyll's, but a cosy hotel lounge, and the game was being played with oranges and an apple. Stewart ably led his party on a tour of the Argyllshire hotels.

*Sunday, 3rd January.*—Again wind and rain.

Glen, Poole, Gardiner, and A. F. Down climbed Beinn Doireann, but abandoned their original intention of carrying on over Beinn an Dothaidh owing to the weather. Peat and Hepburn were on Doireann also.

Ogilvie, Gorrie, Heath, and R. O. H. Down spent the day on Stobinian.

Carmichael and Ledingham made a rapid ascent of Meall Ghaordie from the south, while Campbell, Smith, and Dunlop, to avoid the wind, tackled it from the east.

Stewart and Watson climbed, or rather ascended, a "sub-Corbett," Creag na h-Iolaire (whereabouts doubtful).

Walton spent a short day on Stob Garbh.

Porteous, R. and R. H. Buchanan were on An Caisteal.

A pleasant feature of the Meet was the large turnout



of both the Edinburgh and Glasgow sections, which compared most favourably with previous years. Unfortunately, the Perth section were not represented. Despite the weather, the Meet as a Club function was very successful, though, as will be seen from the records, a disquietingly large number only climbed on one day, thereafter preferring the softer pleasures of the hotel fires.

D. L. C.

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION.

The 1936 photographic competition attracted seventy-six entries, and these with many others were exhibited at a meeting on 14th December. There were photographs of all parts of Scotland, of the Pyrenees, of the Jotunheim of Norway, of the Tyrol, of Bavaria, and of the Austrian Alps, all taken by members during the previous year.

Outstanding among them all was J. C. Henderson's dramatic photograph of Abraham's Ledge, while the same member's "Among the Clouds" (Cruachan) was much admired. D. Scott exhibited a Scottish Matterhorn, none other than the centre peak of the good old Cobbler, while D. Henderson showed some very fine examples of his work, particularly "Birth of a Cloud." A. M. Smith's beautifully toned picture, "The Magic West," conveyed well the glamour of the land of Appin, while the same member illustrated the stages of the Church-door Buttress climb by a series of four photographs. A composite photograph showed the new Rannoch Wall climb, and R. D. Walton overcame the difficulties associated with photographing the hidden Falls of Ghlomach. A. C. D. Small exhibited some attractive sketches and a water-colour of Nevis, and R. Anderson showed a painting of Beinn Laoigh.

The competition was judged by Mr W. W. Weir, Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, aided by Mr W. L. Coats (S.M.C.), and the kindly criticism should help towards a better show next year.

A good many members of the L.S.C.C. accepted the invitation to the meeting, but it is regrettable that so few S.M.C. members supported the effort.

The prize winners were :—

#### CLIMBING SECTION.

*First*—"On the Cobbler," A. M. Smith.

*Second*—"Left Traverse from Abraham's Ledge, Crowberry Ridge," W. H. Murray.

#### GENERAL SECTION.

*First*—"Among the Clouds," J. C. Henderson.

*Second*—"The Cobbler," D. Scott.

B. H. HUMBLE.



GLASGOW SECTION.

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MEET AT INVERARNAN, 7TH FEBRUARY.

The few members who arrived were rewarded by the finest weather conditions of the season, a brilliantly sunny day with snow in excellent condition.

J. K. W. Dunn, W. M. MacKenzie, and W. H. Murray climbed Buchaille Etive Mor by the Crowberry Gully.

A. M. MacAlpine and D. Scott were turned back by the condition of the Upper Ice Couloir of Stob Ghabhar.

W. G. Marskell and D. L. Campbell found the centre gully of Beinn Laoigh in perfect condition and, basking in sunshine on the top, got a splendid view to the N. and E.

F. R. B. Stewart, W. C. Watson, and Laidlaw climbed Cruach Ardrain by the "Y" Gully. They were followed by a party of axeless hikers who, far from being satisfied with having good steps ready cut for them, loudly criticised the party's rate of progress.

A. C. Borthwick, W. Bennet, A. Thomson, and R. M'Leod left officially for Beinn Laoigh, but, changing their minds, climbed elsewhere.

D. L. C.

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[*Note.*—In future J.M.C.S. Meets must be reported in good time, and anything of more than half the length of the account of this New Year's Meet will be returned for further condensation. Please give a general account of the doings of the Meet, and, if you like, a more detailed account only of unusual or meritorious performances.—EDITOR.]

# Scottish Mountaineering Club.

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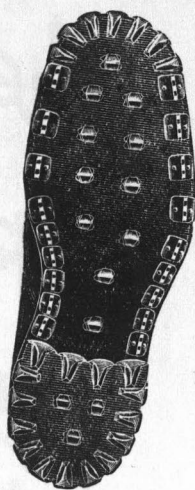
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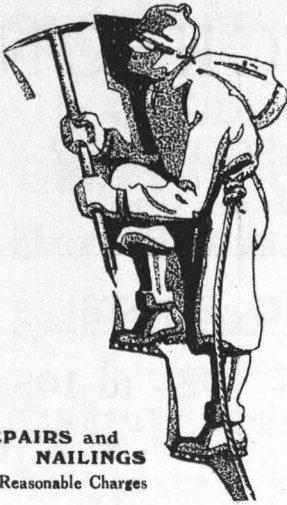
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