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NOTES, GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL, ON THE CUILLIN HILLS, SKYE.

BY ALFRED HARKER.

[*Communicated by the permission of the Director-General of the
Geological Survey.*]

I.—GEOLOGICAL.

THE dependence of the physical features and scenery of a district upon its geological constitution is a subject which has often been treated, and an admirable discussion of it, as applied to Scottish mountains, has indeed already appeared in this *Journal*.* The special aspect of the matter as it affects climbing has, however, rarely been touched, and a few remarks under this head concerning the finest mountain group in the British Islands may therefore be of interest. Although the writer cannot claim to be regarded as a climber, he has become familiar with the Cuillins in the course of some years' work in the service of the Geological Survey of Scotland.

With the exception of certain older and underlying strata, which appear here and there along the coast, the central part of Skye is composed exclusively of igneous rocks—*i.e.*, of rocks consolidated (usually crystallised) from

* Sir A. Geikie, Vol. IV., p. 113.

a state of fusion. They are all of Tertiary age, and thus fall within the latest of the great time-divisions of geology. The geological history of the district consists indeed of two chapters—the record of early Tertiary times, when these rocks were formed, and of later Tertiary times, when they were carved into their present forms by the erosive action of running water and finally of ice. The extent of this erosion has been enormous, thousands of feet of rock having been removed from the mountain district; and the existing surface-relief has been evolved during this process on the general principle of the more durable rocks determining the more prominent features. The topography is thus traceable only in an indirect way to the volcanic and allied agencies which gave birth to the constituent rocks, and all comparisons of the mountains with volcanic cones, and of the corries with craters are purely fanciful.

The principal events in the first chapter of the record fall under three heads:—(1.) The outpouring of vast floods of lava, which consolidated as basalt, extending over about two-thirds of Skye, and once prolonged even farther (as appears from these rocks terminating abruptly in high sea-cliffs). This lava was not poured out from any great volcano like Etna, but welled up through innumerable fissures, as in Iceland, many small flows from different fissures overlapping one another. (2.) The intrusion or injection among the basalt lava-flows of new material, not very different in chemical composition, but assuming on consolidation the more coarsely crystalline form of gabbro. This difference is due to the fact that the molten material did not reach the surface, but cooled only gradually beneath the weight of a great thickness of basalt, since removed. The gabbro consists of many distinct intrusions, but the whole forms an irregular cake-like mass with basalt below and originally also above it. (3.) The intrusion in similar fashion of molten material of different composition, which crystallised as granite. The granite forms a cake-like mass underlying and partly cutting into the gabbro, but also extending farther eastward. These three groups of rocks are represented roughly by three divisions of the district:—(1) The Moorland Hills; (2) the Cuillins,

including the Blaven Range; and (3) the Red Hills; and these represent three strongly contrasted types of scenery. The differences so conspicuous to the eye depend, however, only in part upon the dominant rocks mentioned above. They are largely related to the very numerous minor intrusions in the shape of parallel sheets and dykes of basalt and diabase, which belong for the most part to a time somewhat later than the last of the events just enumerated. Thus, the strongly terraced appearance of the slopes of the Moorland Hills, and the flat tops of many of them, are due to the great number of intruded sheets or "sills" forced in between the lava-flows, and, by their superior durability, giving rise to salient features. The deep gullies, in which the burns often flow down the slopes of these hills, are often made by the decay of nearly vertical dykes by which the lavas were traversed. A glance at the map shows a strong tendency of the burns to run in straight lines, and to take a N.N.W. or S.S.E. direction, this being the usual bearing of the dykes by which the burns have been guided. The granite is almost free from sheets and dykes, and so the smooth flowing outlines of the Red Hills are determined merely by the crumbling and destruction of the granite itself. Where dykes do occur, they tend rather to project above the granite surface than to form gullies.

The Cuillins exhibit more complexity, and, from their interest to climbers, demand a more detailed notice. It is important to observe that the range extending from Blaven to Belig is geologically and physically a part of the Cuillins, though to some extent separated from the main group by the granite of Marsco, Ruadh Stac, and Meall Dearg. The unique nature of the Skye mountains, both from the scenic standpoint and as a field for climbing, is largely due to the fact that nowhere else in Britain is found so large an area of gabbro. Not only is this rock extremely hard and tough, but also the unequal weathering of its component minerals gives rise to extreme roughness of surface on the small as well as the large scale. Excepting only where the rock has been polished by ice, it gives excellent holds for hand and foot, and so affords security on faces of quite

sensational steepness. Varieties of the gabbro differ somewhat in this respect, the most remarkable being perhaps the rusty-weathering rock which occurs on Sgurr Dubh na Dabheinn, Caisteal a' Garbh-choire, and a few other places.

Although gabbro is the dominant rock of the Cuillins, there is also a considerable amount of basalt, belonging to the lava-group, in the form of lenticular and irregular patches entangled among the gabbro. The intense heat to which it has thus been subjected has greatly altered its character, making it much harder and more resisting than the corresponding basalt of the moorlands; but it is in general much more brittle and splintery than the gabbro, and affords less secure holds. The upper parts of Alasdair, Tearlach, and Mhic Coinnich consist of basalt, and patches, sometimes of considerable extent, occur in all the western corries and on the branch ridges which divide them, as well as on Gars-bheinn, Bruach na Frithe, &c.

A conspicuous feature in almost any view of the Cuillins is the stratified appearance of the slopes, sometimes carried so far as almost to suggest a rough stairway. This is produced by a great number of parallel sheets of basalt and diabase intruded in such a way as to intersect alike the gabbro and its enclosed patches of basaltic lava. At a given locality these sheets have all roughly the same inclination, usually 20° to 40° to the horizontal, while comparison of different localities shows that they "dip" or incline always towards the centre of the gabbro area. Thus the dip is to the south on Sgurr nan Gilleann, east on Sgurr Dearg, north on Sgurr na Stri, and west on Clach Glas. To the climber much depends on these inclined sheets, and especially upon their relation to the trend of the ridge at any place. For example, the western part of the main range, say from Ghreadaidh to Dearg, runs on the whole north to south, while the basalt sheets are inclined eastward. In these circumstances the crest-line is often made by one of the sheets, and the two slopes of the ridge have strongly contrasted characters. On the west side the outcropping ledges present good holds, and form sometimes a kind of natural staircase, besides affording convenient traverses (*e.g.*, on Mhic Coinnich). On the east

side of the ridge the projections slope the wrong way, and climbing is in general much more difficult. To take another illustration, Sgurr a' Mhadaidh has a roughly east to west trend, so that the inclined sheets run athwart the ridge; consequently there is no continuous ridge-line, but a succession of summits, each having a steep drop to the west and a relatively smooth, gentle slope to the east. The rough and broken character of the Sgurr Dubh Ridge results partly from similar conditions.

The dykes which traverse the gabbro and other rocks in a nearly vertical direction are a very important factor in the detailed topography of the mountains. The basalt and diabase of which they are composed are more readily destructible by atmospheric agents than the gabbro, and hence a dyke is often indicated by a trench or fissure. Where a ridge runs athwart the direction of the dykes, it may thus be divided by deep gaps, as in the Pinnacle Ridge of Sgurr nan Gilleann. Where, on the other hand, a ridge runs in the direction of the dykes, it sometimes exhibits a vertical face, which represents the bounding wall of a dyke which has been destroyed—the Bhasteir precipice is partly due to this cause. The "Inaccessible" is a mass of gabbro left standing between two such vanished dykes. Deep gullies caused by the weathering away of dykes are seen in Sgurr a' Fheadain, Druim nan Ramh, Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain, Blaven, and many other places. In the same way arise chimneys such as those in the Bhasteir Tooth and Sgurr a' Mhadaidh. Not all the dykes give rise to gullies. Some are welded in a peculiarly intimate way to the gabbro which they traverse, and do not weather away easily. Again, a large proportion of them are earlier than, and therefore are cut by, the inclined sheets; as a rule only the later dykes, which cut the sheets, give rise to conspicuous gullies.

Although in the carving out of the relief of the district running water has played a vastly more important rôle than ice, the latter agent, having imparted the final touches to the process, is responsible for many of the surface features. Not only were all the valleys occupied during the Great Ice Age by glaciers, but it is probable that at the

stage of maximum glaciation even the highest summits were buried under ice. No finer examples can be found of the rounding, smoothing, polishing, and scoring of rock-surfaces by ice action than are displayed about Loch Coruisk and Loch na Creitheach, and in many of the corries of the Cuillins. An extreme case is Coir' a' Ghrundda, the bottom of which is, from this cause, almost impassable. The amphitheatre form usually assumed by the head of a corrie is a result of glacial erosion. So, too, is the longitudinal division of a corrie into two or more portions separated by a steep drop: this is well seen in Coir' a' Ghrundda, Coire Labain, Lota and Harta corries, and others. Another feature connected with the glaciation is the great extent of coarse screes in some parts of the mountains. At a late stage of the Glacial Epoch, when the higher mountains stood out above the ice, these exposed peaks were subjected to the action of frost for a long time, and a great accumulation of fallen blocks resulted from this action. Thus arose the splintered summit-ridges, in such sharp contrast with the rounded rocks below, and thus originated probably the great bulk of such screes as those of Coireachan Ruadha and Garbh-choire. These screes are naturally in greater force on the more difficult side of the ridge, which may thus become the easier side for passes through the gaps.

II.—TOPOGRAPHICAL.

Much of our information concerning the topography of the Cuillins is due to records in this *Journal*, and especially to Dr Collie's list of altitudes (Vol. II., p. 168), and Mr Douglas' fuller compilation of names, heights, and positions of peaks (Vol. IV., p. 209), supplemented by a map subsequently issued. Having derived much assistance from these and other items in the *Journal*, I gladly respond to Mr Douglas' request for corrections and additions.

In the following notes I include such of the altitudes in my note-books as may be of interest to climbers. All are taken with the aneroid, and make therefore no pretence to accuracy. For comparison, I quote in parentheses altitudes

already published in the *Journal*, the sign = being employed to denote exact agreement. Agreement, exact or approximate, may be taken as confirming the earlier figures, and any considerable discrepancy as making a case for further observations.

A few remarks on nomenclature are given in their places. The S.M.C. has done good service in providing names for a number of prominent peaks, and those given on Mr Douglas map may be regarded as established. There still remains certain summits which seem worthy of distinct names, including one which attains the dignity of 3,000 feet—a distinction shared by some fifteen peaks in the Cuillins, besides the outlying Blaven.

One general criticism of Mr Douglas' list, offered with due deference as from a non-climber, concerns the descriptions "easy," "sheep-pass," &c., as applied to passes in the Cuillins. If a pass is to mean, as it surely should mean, a place where any able-bodied man may, without serious difficulty, go up on one side and down on the other, it will properly be described in the language of the ordinary pedestrian, not of the cragsman. Remarks on some of the cols from this point of view will be found below. They may even be of service to climbers as indicating the easiest descent from the ridge in bad weather, and with this object the route *down* is noted where it is likely to be of help. A map marking these and other pedestrian (not climbing) routes among the mountains, with the speediest ways of access to the several corries, will be deposited with the Editor of this *Journal*.

Sgurr na h-Uamha Ridge. The only new altitudes I have here are :—

Bealach Coire nan Allt Geala (between Sgurr nan Gilleann and Sgurr Beag), 2,360.

Bealach a' Glas-choire (between Sgurr Beag and Sgurr na h'-Uamha), 2,050. [Both easy passes.]

[The peak "called something which sounds like Sgurr a' Beoch." has proved an insoluble problem to the Gaelic scholars. On Forbes' little sketch-map of 1846 the small corrie immediately N.E. of this peak is called "Corry Beaoch," and comparison with the text shows this to be a misprint for "Corry Reaoch," evidently a phonetic spelling for Coire Riabhach, of which this small corrie is a branch. This

seemed a possible solution of the mystery, but it turns out to be merely an odd coincidence, for Mr Colin Phillip tells me that "Beoch" was simply a mistake for "Beag."

Bhasteir Ridge. [The name doubtless suggested by the resemblance to a headsmen's axe. This and Druim nan Ramh (gunwale, with rowlocks) are almost the only picturesque names among the crowd of "Dubhs," "Deargs," &c.] :—

Bealach a' Bhasteir.

Bhasteir Rock, 3,050 (3,030, Collie).

Bhasteir Tooth, about 3,000 (2,900, Douglas).

Branch Ridge running N. from Bhasteir Tooth :—

Dip, 2,865 [easy pass between Coir' a' Bhasteir and Fionn Choire].

Sgurr a' Bhasteir, 2,950 (2,900, Douglas).

Dip, 2,030.

Meall Odhar, 2,060.

Main Ridge continued W. from Bhasteir Tooth :—

Bealach a' Leitir, 2,940 (2,700, Douglas ; perhaps a clerical error for 2,900). [Easy pass. Descent into Lota Corrie ; keep left side of gully (scree), the other side (rock) in ascending. Going down from Lota Corrie, keep to burn, on left side of it.]

Sgurr a' Fionn Choire, 3,050 (3,000, Douglas).

Dip, 2,970.

Bruach na Frithe (3,143, T.S.). Bruach na Frithe Ridge runs N.W. to Meall a' Tobar nan Uaislean (1,682, T.S.), and Bealach a' Mhaim, 1,150.

Main Ridge continued S. from Bruach na Frithe. On Mr Douglas' map the name An Caisteal is attached to the southerly summit of Bruach na Frithe ; it belongs to the more detached peak some 200 yards farther S. The S. summit of Bruach na Frithe might well be named Sgurr na Bhairnich (*i.e.*, Limpet). In the part of the range which next follows, and especially about the peaks of Bidein Druim nan Ramh and their connections, the O.S. map is far from accurate.* Mr Pilkington's rough sketch-map is in some points more correct. I have few altitudes in this neighbourhood. Sgurr na Fheadain is about 2,215, and the dip just S.E. of it 2,100. These are on the short branch ridge which divides Coir' a' Mhadaidh on the N.E. from Tairneilear on the S.W. [Certain writers in this *Journal* have taken exception to these last two names, and even proposed to interchange them, so as to bring Coir' a' Mhadaidh next to Sgurr a' Mhadaidh ; but the O.S. map certainly follows local usage, the ultimate court of appeal. It is probable that the former name covered originally not only the small corrie, but its continuation, now called Coire na Creiche (a name of suspiciously new appearance). The

* The worst errors of the old six-inch map are corrected in later issues, but the one-inch map is still hopelessly misleading here.

conspicuous mountain above this large corrie would, according to common practice, be styled Sgurr a' Mhadaidh, and this name, too, may once have been more comprehensive; indeed the old O.S. map makes it embrace Bidein and the Fheadain Ridge.]

Bealach na Glaic Moire has two branches—the N.E. one 2,510 (= Collie), the S.W. 2,515. [Easy pass. Descent into Tairneilear; keep well up to right until the deep gully from Bidein is crossed and a second gully reached; then go down on top of screes of Sgurr na Fheadain. Descent into Coruisk, use N.E. branch of pass, and for ascent the other.]

Of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh I have only verified the altitudes of the two western summits. From the northerly one of the two the Thuilm Ridge runs off to the right, N.W., with dip, 2,515. [Easy pass. Descent into Coir' a' Ghreadaidh; from lowest point of col go down about 20 or 30 feet, and then turn sharply to left along a sloping ledge. Descent into Tairneilear; go 70 or 80 yards along ridge towards Sgurr Thuilm, then down, bearing to right.]

Main Ridge continued S. from Sgurr a' Mhadaidh :—

Bealach, 2,760 (= Collie). This is the "An Dorus" of the O.S. [Easy descent into Coir' a' Ghreadaidh. Descent into Coir' an Uaigneis troublesome owing to slippery slabs; in corrie take left side of burn.]

Gap (the "An Dorus" of Douglas, a term which seems to be applied generically to any narrow pass; this may be called Macleod's Gap for distinctness), 2,890 (= Collie). [Easy descent into Coir' a' Ghreadaidh by scree-gully.]

The O.S. map is far from correct in the part of the range next following. Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh has not a round top, but a narrow crest-line with two summits, 3,190 and 3,180 in order (= Collie), besides a wart-like prominence N. of the chief summit. From this prominence a spur runs off to the right, N.W., with successive points at about 2,870 and 2,770. From the S. summit of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh a shorter spur runs off to the left, E.S.E., dividing Coir' an Uaigneis from Coireachan Ruadha.

Main Ridge continued S.W. from Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh :—

Dip, lowest point of ridge, 2,810 (2,800, Collie). [Not a pass, but possible descent into Coir' a' Ghreadaidh.]

Small prominence on ridge.

Dip, 2,930.

"North top, Sgurr na Banachdich," 3,040 (= Collie). [This peak seems to deserve a distinctive name, especially as Sgurr na Banachdich is otherwise well provided with summits. Mr Colin Phillip, who has already stood sponsor for more than one peak, suggests "Sgurr a' Leighiche," the Doctor's Peak, in honour of Dr Collie.*] From here a

* Or, on the model of Alasdair and Tearlach, we might say Sgurr Thormoid (Norman's Peak).

short spur runs off to the right, N.W., into Coir' a' Ghreadaidh.

Bealach (2,920, Collie). [Descent into Coir' a' Ghreadaidh ; first a short rough scramble ; then easy, turning to right round spur just mentioned. Descent into Coireachan Ruadha not difficult.]

Sgurr na Banachdich (3,167, T.S.). The branch ridge of Sgurr nan Gobhar runs off to right, W., terminating at cairn (2,047, T.S.). From this ridge, at about 2,700, the shorter spur of An Diallyd runs off to N.W. ; saddle 2,365, summit 2,375. [Easy descent from Sgurr na Banachdich by Coir' an Eich. Note that the "pock-marked" rock occurs in Coire na Banachdich, the mountain being, of course, named after the corrie.] After the "third" and "fourth" tops of Banachdich comes

Dip, 2,865 [alternative pass].

S. termination of Banachdich part of range, 2,900. From here a spur, about 2,650, runs off to left, E.N.E., dividing Coireachan Ruadha into two smaller corries. [This spur is conspicuous as seen from the E., owing to a broad horizontal band of orange-yellow, with darker rock above and below. It might be named Sròn Bhuidhe.]

Bealach Coire na Banachdich, 2,815 (2,810, Collie), not as marked on map, but in next gap to S. [Easy pass. Descent into Coire na Banachdich ; avoid obvious way by central gully, and keep well up to left until reaching another gully, which comes down from Sgurr Dearg. Descent into Coireachan Ruadha over easy scree ; keep to right until past some smooth rocks at about 1,800.]

Gap just before precipice of Dearg, 2,940. [The map is faulty about here, the high part of the Dearg Ridge being carried too far northward, and the westward sweep to the gap and pass not indicated.]

Sgurr Dearg Ridge runs S. from summit cairn (3,234, T.S.) to a point 3,165 ; then after a dip, 3,135, runs W. from a point 3,160 to a marked summit (3,042, O.S.), continues to a point 2,535, from which a short spur runs off to N.W., and terminates at the cairn (2,012, T.S.).

The O.S. map immediately E. of the Sgurr Dearg Ridge is very difficult to understand. The Inaccessible Pinnacle, which seems to be only about 100 feet distant from the summit cairn, is not marked, and the strongly accentuated point on the map to which Mr Douglas has attached the name has apparently no existence on the ground, though there is a small pinnacle at or about the site. The other point on the map, farther east, corresponds pretty nearly with the position of the nameless peak, 3,155, below and S.E. of the Inaccessible. [Easy descent from Sgurr Dearg to Coire Labain over scree, skirting W. base of Inaccessible and peak just mentioned, and bearing

to left until near the pass. Avoid the scree leading more directly down towards the corrie.]

Main Ridge continued from Sgurr Dearg. Watershed passes N.E. of the Inaccessible and its anonymous neighbour to :—

Bealach Coire Labain, 2,680 (2,690, Collie). [Descent into Coire Labain easy. Descent into Coireachan Ruadha troublesome for the first 300 or 400 feet (until joining the Coire na Banachdich Pass), having rotten rock at top and smooth slabs at bottom ; the latter may be avoided by keeping away to left.]

Gap about 120 yards S.E. of Bealach ; lowest point of ridge, 2,620 ; not a pass.

Sgurr Mhic Coinnich.

Dip, about 2,935, not checked. [Possible pass. Descent into Coire Labain, first a short rock-climb, then a scree-gully joining the Alasdair Stoneshoot at about 2,500. Descent on other side on to col of Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain presents no difficulty.]

Branch Ridge of Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain runs N.E. and then N. :—

Dip, about 2500. [Easy pass between Coir' an Lochain and Coireachan Ruadha. Going down from Coir' an Lochain, leave burn where it begins to descend steeply, and strike over rocks to right, N.E., until a grassy ledge is struck ; a zigzag along such ledges leads easily to the head of Loch Coruisk.]

Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain, chief summit, about 2,575 (wants checking).

Gap.

Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain, N. summit, 2,440 (2,450, Douglas).

Alasdair-Sgumain Branch Ridge, running from Sgurr Tearlach S.W., S.S.W., and W.S.W. :—

Gap, head of Alasdair Stoneshoot, 3,150 (= Collie). [Easy descent to Coire Labain tarn ; no way to Coir' a' Ghrundda.]

Sgurr Alasdair, 3,275 (= Collie).

Dip, 3,010 (3,050, Collie). [Easy pass ; on Coire Labain side joins Alasdair Stoneshoot.]

Sgurr Sgumain, chief summit (3,104, T.S.), with a short spur running W. into Coire Labain.

Dip, head of Sgumain Stoneshoot, E. branch 2,770, W. branch 2,720. [Easy pass. Going down to Coire Labain, choose E. branch of stoneshoot ; keep to left at bottom.]

Sgurr Sgumain lower summit, just W. of above dip, 2,780.

The lower cairn (2,507, T.S.) is not on any true summit.

Main Ridge continued S.E. from Sgurr Tearlach :—

Gap ("Alasdair-Dubh Gap"), not a pass.

Bealach, 2,830 (2,810, Collie). [Descent into Coir' a' Ghrundda easy. Going down from Coir' a' Ghrundda, leave the burn where it turns to left after first steep descent, and, passing just below a rough bit of scree, keep up on right side of corrie, thus avoiding all slippery slabs. Descent into Coir' an Lochain rough.]

I have no altitudes to record for the Sgurr Dubh ridge. The summit of Sgurr Dubh Mhor I should place farther west than it is marked on Mr Douglas' map.

Main Ridge resumed after Caisteal a' Garbh-choire :—

Dip, 2,560. [Bealach a' Garbh-choire is not here, as marked on map, but 200 yards farther S.]

Bealach a' Garbh-choire, 2,620 (= Collie). [Easy on both sides, but of little use as a pass owing to the extremely rough scree, a mile long, occupying all the floor of Garbh-choire.]

Sgurr nan Eag (3,036, T.S.) has a nearly level summit ridge running S.E. for 300 or 400 yards; to give it two tops is rather a needless refinement.

Dip, 2,555 (2,550, Collie). ["Sheep pass" of Douglas. I cannot regard it as a real pass, since there is no direct approach from Coire nan Laogh without climbing. Going down to Garbh-choire, bear to left for the first 100 feet.]

Sgurr a' Coire Bheag, 2,875 (2,870, Collie), with branch ridge running off to left, N.E., dividing Garbh-choire from Coire Beag.

Dip, 2,760 (2,750, Collie). [A possible pass. Descent into Coire nan Laogh; at first keep well up on slopes of Gars-bheinn. Descent into Coire Beag difficult at first, keeping close under Sgurr a' Coire Bheag; then bear well to right to avoid slippery slabs.]

Gars-bheinn (2,934, T.S.), with small peak on ridge immediately W. of summit, 2,890.

The six-inch O.S. map seems to be fairly accurate here, except that the summit of Gars-bheinn is not sufficiently isolated, nor the S.E. precipitous termination of Sgurr nan Eag indicated, while the burns in Coire nan Laogh are unrecognisable. The one-inch reduction has been made with gross carelessness, Gars-bheinn being placed 200 yards too far to the S.E.

Gars-bheinn Ridge, running S.E. from the Summit :—

From a point a little S. of summit a branch ridge runs off to left, N.E., dividing Coire Beag from Coir' a' Chruidh, and terminating in a prominent crag, about 2,125.

Prominent point on ridge, about 2,665. A little beyond this another branch ridge runs off to left into Coir' a' Chruidh, terminating in a knoll at about 1,850.

Ridge continues E.S.E. with a prominent point at 2,485, and another (termination) at 2,275.

In conclusion, I give approximate altitudes for some of the mountain tarns :—

Coir' a' Bhasteir, 2,250.

Coir' a' Ghrundda, 2,220.

Coir' an Lochain, 1,815.

Coire Labain, 1,805.

Loch an Fhir Bhallaich, 895 ["Loch of the Spotted Folk," probably trout].

MACCOITAR'S CAVE, SKYE.

BY SCOTT MONCRIEFF PENNEY.

THERE were kings in Greece, though perhaps not so great, before Agamemnon, and there are climbs in Skye besides those on the Coolins, though perhaps not so sporting. I know that members of the S.M.C. visiting the Isle of the Mist rarely stay at Portree. They sometimes pass through *en route* for Sligachan, but the more approved plan is to take a boat of their own, like the Mackintoshes at the Flood, and anchor in Loch Scavaig, whatever the weather, or to bring their own houses and pitch them above the flood on the shore of Loch Coruisk. But fate has ordered me, less fortunate, to winter in Portree. The Coolins are sometimes visible, generally not, and when they are, and the day is still and cloudless, there is always something to prevent me going to them, not to mention that John Mackenzie has temporarily deserted the township of Sconser for the slightly larger village called "Town" *par excellence*. So as the homely "Cat's Nick" is far away, I have to look for "practice scrambles" nearer at hand. One excellent one I have found, or rather I have been taken to, and already I have so much taken to it that I have "done" it three times in ten days.

It is somewhat out of the ordinary run of climbs, being a fairly long cave with two good pitches in it. To add to its attractiveness there are the facts that it requires light (artificial), and that it may have its charms enhanced by the presence of female beauty (natural). It is situated high up on the steep northern shore of Portree Bay, just beyond the "Black Rock" at the entrance to Portree Harbour. It is within half-an-hour's walk of Portree, and may be reached by a scramble up from the path by the water's edge, by a sheep track along the face of the cliff, or by a steep descent of some thirty feet from the table-land above. The entrance is narrow, and narrowness, combined with a lofty roof, is one of its characteristics throughout its entire length. It slopes steadily downwards at a moderately steep angle, with occasional rises, affording pleasant

scrambling all the way until the *pièce de resistance* is reached. This is a perpendicular pit, about $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep to the nearest standing ground in the centre, but shelving a foot or two more on both sides. It is guarded by a boulder which slightly projects over the mouth. Between the boulder and the right-hand wall of the cave is a large, loose, but safely jammed stone. Round either the boulder or the stone the rope may be passed. If the boulder is utilised, it is best to allow the two ends of the rope to hang down and to use it double; but to the stone a single rope can be tied. The difficulty of the throw-off, if the face is to be *climbed*, is that the first foothold is on a ledge below the boulder. On the upward journey there is really no need of the rope for persons having a moderately long reach. From the floor of the pit progress is made by squeezing under a large stone, and the path of the ultra stout is here barred. Just beyond the stone another less perpendicular drop of about ten feet brings the explorer to a small circular chamber at the end of the cave. This descent is of the nature of a chimney, and by jamming back and feet against the walls all fear of slipping before again reaching *terra firma* is removed. The passage of the cave in and out for a party of four takes an hour and a quarter, doing it comfortably, and allowing time for adjustment of the rope, the lighting and passing of candles, and the inevitable card-leaving in the ubiquitous bottle.

I was first introduced to the cave by one of the local bar of Portree, for lawyers here, as elsewhere, show their good sense by being foremost in their devotion to the climbing craft. On that occasion, as we had left no directions for a search party, and had no second rope, and as I was doubtful about being able to manipulate the first pitch going up should my friend sprain his ankle in the second pitch going down, we stopped short of the end at my request. Three days later, however, with the courage engendered by the moral support of a second rope, I undertook to pilot the Procurator-Fiscal (as yet uninitiated) to the utmost corner of the cave, and successfully carried out my contract.

My last visit was the most enjoyable as well as the

most scientific. My original guide and I were accompanied by two ladies, mother and daughter, who both climbed excellently, and we were plentifully supplied with string for taking measurements. We had an adventurous start, for the wind going along the cliff was so strong we thought it advisable to rope, and my patient instructors in the S.M.C. will be glad to know I cast on the proper knots without a hitch. We carried a bicycle lamp, two carriage candles, and an ordinary candle, and the illumination was satisfactory. We fixed a nail into the cliff at the mouth of the cave, tied the string to it, and carried our clue like Theseus along the ups and downs of the labyrinth. We made the length of the cave to be 190 feet, but as that was practically a "bee" or a string line in the air, we may safely, without exaggeration, call the passage at least 80 yards.

Prince Charlie has a cave of his own some miles farther along the shore, and no outstanding man is associated with this one. Its name would seem to indicate that it was used at one time by a cottar's son for the purpose of hiding, possibly from the press-gang. While I hope mine is a virgin descent so far as regards the S.M.C., I heartily recommend the scramble to any member of the Club who may find himself stranded for an afternoon in the capital of Skye, provided he does not happen to be wearing his best Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes.

SEPTEMBRIANS IN SEPTEMBER.

BY R. A. ROBERTSON.

IN prehistoric days there existed a body of young persons who designated themselves the "Tramps." The Tramps were a unique body. They had no president, no council, no auditor, no secretary, no treasurer. Each individual combined these several offices in himself, without the honour or the emoluments attached to any. The party constituted the desired utopia. To borrow a geometrical formula of a deceased member of the Legislature, each and every one of these individuals was not only equal to the other, but equal to anything. In the Septembrian era of these persons, they may now admit the justice of being charged with follies committed in earlier years. The conduct of certain Tramps in the epoch of March is ridiculed by the populace. But our Tramps were at least guiltless of the craft of the daring mountaineer as is so cunningly related in the later pages of the *Journal*. They were guiltless of writing reveries and satirising the mainstays, the props, the handholds, and the footholds of the S.M.C. Their follies consisted in walks when all was shrouded in darkness, in gloom, or in mist, illumined only by the brilliant light of ardent patriotism, which burned unquenchably in the bosom of one of them, and which shed its lustre on his crowd of average followers. Their memory tells of a midnight walk from Berwick, of which the only lucid and practical recollection appears to be the bath and breakfast at Dunbar. It tells of a midnight walk to Glasgow to see the Exhibition, of the ruthless worry of their persons by a collie dog which accompanied them, and which in its loyalty prohibited even a few minutes' sleep on the roadside. It tells of long tramps over the hills and hot roads with blistered feet. But what are more than memories are the companionships, the lasting friendships, and the substantial reality of imagination that men were men in these days when they were boys together.

In September last what remained of the physical and mental attributes of a remnant of this corporation indicated

a desire that in the mellowed autumn of their lives they might once more experience the delight and glory of roughing it in a wild and untamed expedition to the Highlands. Later on, excuses and ultimately apologies for absence came from some, but no one member excused himself on the ground of having married a wife. Having decided to rough it, the Tramps elected to be accompanied by their wives and families. After much thought, Tarbet Hotel was determined upon. It possessed the required qualifications of containing within itself the necessary accommodation for the wives and families, and for the few small parcels which not unreasonably might be expected to accompany this section of the party. It is true that there were mutterings when a first-class saloon carriage presented itself for the occupation of the Tramps, but mindful of their grim set purpose to rough it they accepted of the situation. In due course the party arrived within sight of their destination. The hotel lights were seen glimmering below with almost Alpine effect, and scorning topographical research, September and May skipped down the station road in a manner suggestive of light-hearted joy. It was late before the last lorryful of luggage arrived.

After the most elaborate preparations overnight, three of our party succeeded in getting under weigh at the witching hour of twelve. (This refers to mid-day, not mid-night.) The sun had crossed the yard-arm. Our provisions consisted of three "baps" and a pot of strawberry jam of prodigious weight, purchased from the village grocer. Owing to the expense involved, we avoided taking mules to carry the baggage, but elected to carry it ourselves. For the same reason we dispensed with the services of a guide, and in the boldness of vanished youth we left our rope at home. There is what Baedeker would describe as an admirable track suited to pedestrians, but much frequented by cyclists, which leads from Tarbet to Ardlui, on the west side of Loch Lomond. This we followed without difficulty for about three miles. We then turned to the left and commenced the real business of the day. A Bergschrund, that salvation of Alpine *raconteurs*, was on this occasion devoid of interest and existence, and was

consequently surmounted without difficulty. An enormous couloir was our next obstacle. After a council of war, we decided that it was necessary to traverse it. Our consultations were deliberate and protracted; but there was no alternative to our ultimate decision, because our mountain lay upon the other side. The couloir presented distinct evidence of constant irritation, and of the frequent passage of material. The angle provoked discussion, and some further considerable delay took place before this point was disposed of. After looking anxiously towards the summit, we dashed across and paused. Fifteen minutes afterwards our leader pointed with outstretched arm to the summit of the couloir, and with a noise of thunder a West Highland train swept down, carrying all before it. In a silence of deep unutterableness we clasped hands and congratulated each other on our avoidance of the possible. Surmounting a moraine with a great deal of vexation, we were disappointed in not finding a glacier, but traces of one being pointed out, we felt less dissatisfied, and reflected on what might have been had we come earlier.

Given a hot sun, a breathless atmosphere, and a full knowledge and appreciation of the delights of a full-length stretch on the grass, with a cigar, and the individual must have a superabundance of romance who would expatiate on the enjoyments of a steep grass slope. To us the delight was unfathomable. We promptly sat down at the foot of the hill. We indulged in mental back somersaults—in comparing “then” with “now.” The grand old deeds of the grand old days were trotted out, while ever and anon a refrain of “aye, aye, aye” soothed the closing melody of some unusually tall recollection.

We advanced. Literature is old, and articles on mountaineering have been the subject of archæological research. What, then, is there new to relate of the ascent of a hill. But nowhere do we find chronicled in detail an ascent of Ben Voirlich. To those who only have climbed in Switzerland, the Caucasus, or Skye, it may be explained that Ben Voirlich is a mountain in Scotland. Its precise locality, and the different routes of its ascent, will be found chronicled in the Statistical Tables in Vol. I. It can be

seen with discomfort from the tourist coach between Loch Katrine and Inversnaid. *Ici on marque les batons*, but be careful that the marker does not confound Ben Voirlich with several other mountains of the same name.

If fatalities upon a mountain make it popular, then indeed must Ben Voirlich be acclaimed. There has been more self-respect murdered, suicided, and strangled on grass slopes than on any other composition in the world. Indeed, after lunch—after the consumption of that pot of strawberry—there were more hairbreadth escapes from voluntary descent, there was more vocabulary than the whole past, present, and future numbers of the *Journal* can contain. Therefore will it only be said we got to the top, and we came down again.

There is plenty to do at Tarbet if you know how to do it and don't do it. To sit outside the hotel on a calm evening and make olfactory observations upon the botanical origin of cigars in itself may give rise to an intricate study. Lessons in perseverance may be obtained from the assiduous attacks of a special breed of mosquito believed to be indigenous to the shores of Loch Lomond. Poems have not been written in his honour, music has not been composed commemorating him, but for dexterity and assimilation of food, nothing can compare with a Loch Lomond mosquito. He is everywhere—hair, nose, eyes, ears, clothes, upstairs and downstairs. Emulative of the true mountaineer, he searches after the beautiful. Ladies in evening dinner costume fly from him. The psychological moment for a view is the moment of good digestion, but the interest passes if you are associated with mosquitoes. Be your contour ever so contented, ever so resplendent, when you leave the dining-room, a few minutes attempted *dolce* at the front door leaves you a shattered, irritable, blasted pulp. Then hence to the smoking-room, and then to early rest. The morning awaits thee. The mountain summit calls.

Lying a-bed next morning looking at the mists rolling up the Ben, when conscience tells you to be up and doing, when your muscles actually speak to you, and speak joyously, of the wickedness of idleness—all this is true

happiness. Happiness, after all, is a negative proposition. Its existence as a positive is precarious and doubtful. The constant assertion of enjoyment in energetic habits may deceive the inexperienced, but true happiness exists but with the contented mind. Therefore will we lie a-bed this fine autumn morning. To the restful a hillside is indeed beautiful to look upon.

After breakfast a stroll. Is it a right and proper thing in these pages to speak well of a vulgarised place thirty feet above sea-level? Is it orthodox to rhapsodise on the deep blue colour of the lake, to speak admiringly of the glistening ripple of the tiny waves breaking in unexpected bays? Can we speak of the cry of the birds, of the wealth of flowers, of the soft beds of moss, of the changing colour of birch and bracken. In none of these things is there the vigorous originality of contorted mountain shapes, but when they are gone, and the strong flood of recollection pours in upon you, you realise the wail of the wanderer far from his "ain countree."

"Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are flying ;
Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,
Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying,
My heart remembers how."

We returned to Edinburgh on the night of a public holiday. Never shall we forget that terrible journey. If there is one place in this world which it is justifiable to anathematise—to consign to the lowest depths at the hottest moment—that place is Stirling Railway Station on the night when Edinburgh and Glasgow hold their last annual revel.

A SNOW BRIDGE IN COIRE ARD DHOIRE (CORRIE ARDER).

BY DONALD CAMERON-SWAN.

AFTER the excellent article on "The Creag Meaghaidh Range," by Mr Robertson, in Vol. III., p. 25, illustrated by a beautiful photograph of Coire Ard Dhoire, and the equally entertaining account of "Corrie Arder," by Mr Tough, in Vol. IV., p. 141, with the accompanying drawings of the surrounding cliffs, it seems almost presumptuous on my part to add another word to what has been so well said by these members, or to further illustrate any part of that country.

I must, however, lay some of the blame on our Editor, who asked me for an article, and when I would have excused myself, insisted that I should at least give him a "Note" on my photograph of the "Snow Bridge."

In my wanderings on the Highland hills at all seasons of the year, it has been often my good fortune to discover ice and snow bridges and tunnels, where deep drifted snow has blocked up a gully, and where the constant flow of comparatively warm rain-water has worn a tunnel beneath, gradually enlarging the span of the arch until the crown or roof gives way and the abutments fall in.

One of the largest and finest tunnels of this kind I well remember exploring on the northern side of Beinn-na-Muich Dhuì in the late autumn; it was about a hundred feet long, and I walked through from end to end, having to stoop most of the way.

The snow bridge, which is illustrated in this number of the *Journal*, was remarkable for its size and for the length of time it had lasted through the heat of summer and autumn. Its position above Lochan a' Choire can well be seen by referring to the picture facing page 141, Vol. IV.; it was at the foot of the gully marked "b," in the cleft between "The Pinnacle" and "The Central Buttress."

The altitude above sea-level was about 2,300 feet. The span of the arch was 35 feet, and the extreme height 12 feet.



SNOW BRIDGE IN CORRIE ARDER.
Photographed in September, by D. Cameron-Swan.

My friend, Dr Kenneth Campbell, then resident at Craigville, near Laggan Bridge, accompanied me on this walk, and he is seen in the photograph cooling his back against the icy wall of the bridge.

Some freshly fallen pieces from the crown of the arch, which fill up the foreground, show that before many more days had past our bridge must have perished.

The photograph but serves to convey a very poor idea of the beauty of the scene—the dazzling purity of the fallen ice pinnacles, the delicate shades of green and blue in the translucent arch showing in fine contrast to the rich brown, purple, and green of the hills beyond.

It may interest some of our members—especially if they be “Jacobites”—to know that Prince Charlie passed through “the window of Corrie Arder,” close to this bridge, in coming from Lochiel’s country on the 28th August 1746, and that he returned from “Cluny’s Cage,” in Ben Alder, by the same pass on September the 14th, six days before he sailed for France.

For these dates, and the fact above stated, I am indebted to my friend, Mr W. B. Blaikie, of Edinburgh, author of that masterly contribution to the Scottish History Society —“The Itinerary of Prince Charles Edward Stuart.”

SOME HOLIDAY RAMBLES.

BY EDRED M. CORNER.

IT seems becoming almost the custom to apologise for writing an article which does not deal with deeds of derring-do. There is usually some sameness about the descriptions of such deeds, for instance, one may quote hotel directions. Ascend the staircase (with its two or more pitches), turn to the right, keeping close to the left wall, which examine for doors and cabalistic symbols (*i.e.*, cairns and nail marks). Generally speaking, such are the directions by means of which the desired haven is attained. The simile also shows the great value of the directions to any one on the spot. Arguing that such records are mainly of value "on the spot," it is my intention to narrate the experiences of a holiday that was of ordinary kind, and in which well-known ground was travelled over. Many people are more pleased to read of places they know than of places they do not know. Therefore I do not apologise, for though not of permanent value this paper may be acceptable in some quarters. The younger generation may pass it by in disgust, but some whose limbs are less elastic may have old memories awakened.

Leaving London on the night of September the 5th, accompanied by a friend, Mr S. O. Bingham (non-member), we travelled continuously *via* Inverness, Dingwall, and the Kyle of Loch Alsh to Skye. Sligachan was reached in just twenty-four hours. It was cold and wet, and did not promise for better weather. In fact, we were told that the beautiful summer was just broken. We were told this at all our places of sojourn. Next morning, the 7th, we started out at about 9 A.M. and gently made our way into Fionn Choire. Finally we arrived at the foot of a chimney, which we decided was to introduce us to the Skye rocks. We got much entertainment and damp in this chimney. In one place, after some back and foot work, we had to work round a fallen block, gallantly stemming the tide of water with our bodies. Thus were we well baptized in Skye. The upper part of the gully proved or rather looked too

interesting, so we traversed and finally gained the ridge, which was followed to the top of Bruach na Frithe. There was no view, and it was bitterly cold, therefore we followed the ridge east, and climbed Sgurr a Fionn Coire. Just after leaving this top a weird and monstrous form suddenly loomed up out of the mist with almost appalling suddenness. We were both innocent of the Coolin ridges, and not used to this kind of thing. Enough was seen to enable us to give our apparition a habitation and a name—the Bhasteir Tooth. The ridge was then followed over Sgurr a Bhasteir, and we unwisely descended into the Bhasteir Corrie, where we ascended, descended, slid down, and traversed over slabs till we were sick to death of playing a kind of musical chairs with them. As might be suggested, we gained Sligachan at last.

On September the 8th we started about the same time and walked up into the Bhasteir Coire. We then ascended to the lowest pinnacle by means of a nice little chimney. The lowest two pinnacles are perfectly easy. In former days the real climb was said to begin at the base of the third pinnacle, now it commences just past the summit of this pinnacle. We gained the summit of this pinnacle and contemplated the descent. It's all very well knowing that a place has been often climbed, but when you cannot see where the holds are on account of the overhang, and the party is not strong enough for excessive exploration, as was our case, we decided to retrace our steps, traverse the east side of the pinnacle, and climb the gully to the col between the third and fourth pinnacles. When we examined the *mauvais pas* from below we found that it was not so hard; such is the demoralising effect of being able to see the holds. I feel sure that in the future this visual factor will spoil all really good climbing. From Mr Maylard's latest paper I conclude that he must also think with me, as he regards the overhanging period as imminent. Over the fourth pinnacle we had an excellent climb to the summit of Sgurr nan Gilleann. It may be described, perhaps, as an expert's walk, but I am afraid we must have taken it too seriously. The rain was still falling, the wind blowing, and the temperature low. Now

we made the error of descending into Glen Sligachan. We repeated the previous day's slab gymnastics in most superlative style. In fact, by dint of keeping at it we reached the burn in the glen when real darkness fell. We were happily ignorant of the track, and after a meal commenced to feel our way to Sligachan. My friend, posing as being new to the game, sent me on ahead. It was so dark that you could see the glint of water when about twenty yards off, but when you came nearer you could not tell whether it was heather, peat, water, or a hollow. We stumbled along until I came to a full stop, being halfway up each thigh in a peat bog. There I should be now but for my companion. Three times in this unhappy two hours did we go through the main burn. The first occasion was intentional, the others we did not recognise the burns as the main stream till we stumbled on Sligachan. It seems almost unfortunate, but we again reached the hotel safely.

On September the 10th we had quite a mild day as compared with the last. Reaching Coire na Creiche we ascended Sgurr a Mhadaidh by its fine Thuilm ridge. From here we descended and traversed the face of its next top, and made our way towards Coruisk. Time was getting late, and not wanting to repeat our experiences in Glen Sligachan, we rapidly ascended and descended Druimhain into Harta 'Corrie and again reached Sligachan, but this time by the track. It was a beautiful day, with masses of mist rolling between the black summits of the Coolins. In fact, I should not have picked a better day for the climb. Every detail of the cliffs was easily seen, and all the hollows shown up by beautiful belts of mist.

September the 11th and 12th were fearfully wet, and we did nothing. On the 13th the weather showed little signs of improving at about 5 A.M., so we caught the early boat at Portree for the Kyle of Loch Alsh. Imagine our chagrin at looking back from the Kyle of Loch Alsh at the clear ridge of the Coolins and the weather promising one fine day at least. As the die was cast, we sorrowfully journeyed to the Boat of Garten, where we were again greeted by rain softer in kind than that of the West. On September 14th we left the hotel and drove *via* Aviemore to Coylum Bridge.

Starting to walk about 9.45 A.M., we vigorously strode along the Loch Eunaich track till we were finally convinced we were not on the Learg Ghrumach track. Then ensued some bog-trotting, and eventually we joined the Braemar route at the bridge. Our bad luck still followed, for we met an admirer of the Club and a zealous student of the *Journal*, but, alas! a "low-gear" man. A man so built walks with great ease and rapidity up tracks, and we, being victims of circumstance, made splendid time up the Learg. I felt that the Club must not be brought to shame before an admirer, but we paid dearly for our pride. Leaving our conversational and best-intentioned companion, we ascended the slopes of Creag nan Leacainn in thick mist and heavy rain. On the ridge it was blowing hard, which rendered it chilly in our sodden condition and forbade halts for refreshments. After walking up one mound and down another we at length reached a well-made cairn—natural conclusion, Cairngorm. In consequence a few minutes were spent walking about with a jam sandwich in one hand and the other hand in pocket. To our shame be it said the top was that of Coire an Lochan, 3,983 feet. The ridge to the east fell and then rose again, and though it looked unlikely I concluded it led to the Ben Bynac group. We walked on and passed a very big cairn which puzzled us, but we concluded it was all right. Then came a long and dismal search for the missing Ben Bynac. Suffice it to say we did not find it, but a rift in the mist disclosed a kidney-shaped lochan. This lochan lies about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles above Loch Morlich, but south of the north ridge of Cairngorm. We had really followed this north ridge and never been near Ben Bynac. The ridge was followed and the track struck about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles above Glen More Lodge. With characteristic forethought but, I am afraid, "orientalism," we had ordered a trap to drive us the paltry thirteen or fourteen miles back to Boat of Garten. On inquiry at the lodge, the trap was said not to be there. Not knowing any short cuts across the hills, we walked home *via* Loch Morlich, Coylum Bridge, and Aviemore. It was a lovely starlight and moonlight night now, but my companion was not entirely used

to such methods of travel, and refused to be comforted. The hardest part of the climb was in front of us. I had to climb a knobbly signpost and read the directions with the aid of a match. At the first attempt my foot slipped on a wire and down I came, cutting my hands *en passant*. I am glad that the zealous student of the Club annals was not there to see or hear me. But it really was trying. I think as *fin de siècle* amusements come more and more into the climbing world, sign-post exercise in the dark will outdo bouldering. The directions were deciphered and finally the hotel reached at about 11.30 P.M., only to find that the trap was at the lodge.

September 15th was very wet and blowy. We drove from Kingussie to Tulloch in the teeth of it, catching the train to Fort-William. Some members have spoken of the Tower Ridge in summer as a mere walk except the Tower, whilst others allowed that it would give good sport then; whilst Dr Collie told me at the Boat of Garten that it was a good climb for work in hand and scenically fine any time of the year. We started at 8.45 on the 16th, following the track to the lochan, and traversing the foot of Carn Dearg, we were at last under the cliffs. It was a magnificently clear day, all the marvellous sculpture of the great ridges showing up. We should have been fired with wild climbing ardour; but we sat down and admired and ate blueberries. What a degenerate race hill votaries may become! From the chronicles of Buchaille Etive Mor I glean that the Editor will sympathise with us. For, we argue, was not a mighty ridge named in honour of his (we suppose correspondingly mighty) appetite for crowberries. Again, a diligent student of the *Journal* will remember his notes on Ben Chonzie, where the gastrologic capacity of that mountain is set forth. Arriving in Coire Ciste we climbed the dirty gully that separates the Pinnacle from the foot of the Tower Ridge. I do not know whether the ridge is usually gained from this col, but we looked at it and went down the other side of the col, traversed and gained the ridge from the "Observatory Coire" side. A name might be suggested for this corrie, like Coire Coille in honour of the first climber of the Tower Ridge. Having followed the ridge for a bit for

some unknown reason we bore to our right along a ledge and were confronted by a most unpleasant face of rock. In the lower ten feet there was an unpleasant bulge out. This makes it tiring when you have to search for holds. About fifteen feet up was a ledge about a foot to eighteen inches wide, and on this ledge were two very unstable large blocks of stone. My companion's feelings must have been unenviable as I worked round these. From the ledge we got into a difficult chimney, and then by one or two more chimneys regained the ridge. The passage from the ledge to the chimney is difficult, and the holds are far apart, so that unless one has long arms the difficulties are much greater. My companion being shorter came round by hauls from above. As we climbed the Tower by the recognised route, I can compare these two pieces. The lower climb is longer and, I think, quite as difficult. At the Tower I stood on the knob of rock and looked at the narrow ledge above. There were the cracks where ice axes are inserted and noble deeds done. I found it easier to follow Raeburn's example and straddle into the gully, as the cracked rocks were wet. Again my companion's shorter reach failed, and with a proper absence of pride he called on me to heave. The ridge and cleft beyond this is entertaining but comparatively easy.

September 16th is noteworthy for the meeting with another member of the S.M.C., Mr A. W. Russell, and on the 17th we visited that beautiful spot the head of Glen Nevis. On the 18th it was blowing and raining hard, so we retired to Killin.

Amongst hill pleasures are two pastimes which have been dubbed Ultramontane and Salvationist. The latter term has somewhat erroneously become to be regarded as almost synonymous with peak-bagging. Personally I like both, and should regard a holiday as largely wasted if it did not include some hill walks. From Killin we did two long walks through country sung of by a former Editor. There is no climbing here in summer. On the 20th we ascended Meall Corranaich from Lochan nan Learg, and then walked over Ben Glas, Ben Lawers, An Stuc, Ben Garbh, and Meall Gruaidh to Tighanloan. It was very

wet and bitterly cold, and in one clear interval we saw the tops of the Cairngorms white with snow. The next day we drove to the Free Kirk in Glen Lyon, and then walked over Cairngorm, Meall Garbh, Carn Mairg, Creag Mhor, &c., returning by Glen Lyon and the pass to Tighanloan. A fine wet day, with plenty of mist, which kept lifting to help us over this moorland.

On September 22nd we went on to Perth and picked up our luggage. For I will confess a thing that my companion knows not at the time of writing. As he is a person who takes a long time packing, getting up, and, worst of all, getting ready for dinner, I devised the scheme of sending almost all our luggage on to Perth. The result was successful.

How often does the word wet or rain occur in the *Journal*? I do not mind writing it, for I was taught the lesson one night at the Camera Club. One member of the S.M.C., Mr Priestman, showed a lot of beautiful photos of the Lofoden Mountains. Mr Lamond Howie was called on to speak, and waxed eloquent about the Scotch hills. Dr Collie backed him up ably, and both of them said that the scenic beauties of Scotland were to a great extent due to the moistness of the climate. Hence I am very thankful for the large amounts of wet and beauty I have got in Scotland.

THE TAPMOST ELEVATION.

Air—"MAGGIE LAUDER."

WHEN high hill taps, like baxters' baps, wi' snaw are white
an' floury ;

When doon the lum the hailstones come in winter's wildest
fury ;

When young an' auld, tae jink the cauld, devise a thoosan'
ways, sirs !

At hame in toon *we'll* no sit doon, *we'll* up an' spiel the
braes, sirs !

Our President, in words weel-kent, said hills were bigged
maist human,

They've feet, an' heid, an' shouthers-deed ! like ony man or
woman ;

King Dauvit's psalms rehearse their charms—he maun hae
been a climber—

An' mountains' names poetic flames hae lit in ilka rhymer.

Let Switzer boast his mountain host, an' craw o' Alpine story ;
Or nigger-loon "Hills o' the Moon"—they ca' them
"Ruenzori"—

Auld Scotland kens a thoosan' Bens could ding them
tapsalteerie,

The great Munra he named them a'—fair coontin', no
camsteerie.

Wi' rod an' gun some tak' their fun ; an' some on cycles
wallop ;

An' some gang trips i' trains or ships, through foreign
climes to gallop ;

The gowfin' game a wheen'll claim, tae gie their hochs a
streekin' ;

A sma'er class the bottle pass till aiblins they've past
speakin'—

Then let us a', baith great an' sma', in fav'rit pastime revel
Sae lang as such is aye in touch wi' aims o' worthy level ;
That spielin' Bens the lead maintains—I think needs sma'
persuasion ;

Oor constant aim is aye the same—"the tapmost elevation."

J. G. S.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the St Enoch Hotel, Glasgow, on Friday, the 1st December 1899, at six o'clock. The President, Mr R. A. Robertson, occupied the chair.

The Hon. Treasurer submitted his accounts for 1899, showing that the Income amounted to £87. 1s. 5d., and the Expenditure to £64. 17s. 4d., leaving a balance of £158. 12s. 6d., as compared with £136. 8s. 5d. at the corresponding date last year. The accounts and statement were unanimously adopted.

In room of Mr R. A. Robertson, who now retired from the Presidentship, Mr A. E. Maylard was elected President, and Mr Lionel W. Hinxman was elected Vice-President in room of Mr Maylard. Mr R. A. Robertson and Dr Inglis Clark were elected to the two vacancies on the Committee, in succession to Professor Ramsay and Mr Brown, who retired by rotation. The chair was then taken by Mr Maylard.

In accordance with notice, Mr Maylard moved that Rule VIII. be altered to read—"The President and Vice-Presidents may be re-elected for *two* consecutive years, but not longer." This was seconded by Mr R. A. Robertson, but the proposal was, on the motion of Mr Maclay, seconded by Mr Munro, negatived by a large majority.

It was arranged that the New Year Meet of the Club should be held at Inveroran, and the Easter Meet at Kinlochewe, with an alternative Easter Meet at Arrochar.

The Hon. Secretary reported, in terms of Rule XVI., that the following gentlemen had been elected Members of the Club:—Thomas Edmonstone Dalton, Alexander Moncrieff, Alfred Charles Waters, and Robert Ernest Workman. He further reported that the membership at the beginning of the year had been 148, of whom 2 had died and 4 had resigned, leaving 142. The addition of the 4 new members made the membership at present 146. As Librarian, he reported that the reserve stock of *Journal* sets was now reduced to five. Among additions which had been made to

the Library, he mentioned a collection of Notes on Skye and Arran, by the late Sheriff Nicolson, presented by Mr Douglas, and a portfolio of Maps used by the late Professor Heddle, presented by Mr Alexander Thoms, St Andrews.

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL DINNER was held immediately after the meeting, when thirty members and fourteen guests were present, with the newly elected President, Mr Maylard, in the chair. The toasts were:—

The Queen	President.
The Navy, Army, and Reserve Forces	President.
<i>Reply</i> —William Lamont.	
The Scottish Mountaineering Club	President.
The Alpine Club	Gilbert Thomson.
<i>Reply</i> —Hermann Woolley.	
Visitors	Prof. G. A. Smith.
<i>Reply</i> —Walter Douglas Campbell.	
The Chair	Prof. G. G. Ramsay.

EXCURSIONS.

S.M.C. ABROAD IN 1899.

A PARTY consisting of Dr and Mrs Inglis Clark, Mr J. A. Parker, and Mr F. C. Squance were together in the Zillerthal district of Tyrol, and climbed a large number of peaks between 9,500 and 11,500 feet in height, several of them difficult. *Steigeisen* were used where steep ice was encountered.

The following ascents were made by two or more of the party :—Reichenspitze, Simony Spitze (East), Pferrerspitze (first ascent from south), Floitenspitze, Schwarzenstein, Ochsner and the "Kirchl," Schönbichler Horn, Berliner Spitze, Feldkopf, Grosse and Kleine Mörchner, Gr. Greiner, Schrammacher, Thurnerkamp, Gr. Mösele, Rossrückspitze, Rothwand, Mörchnerscheid, Ahornspitze, Röthspitze, Mörchnerscharte Spitze.

Mr PARKER describes one side of the Grosse Mörchnerscheid as "O.H." the opposite side as "A.P.," and the rest as "A.A.P." (*i.e.*, almost A.P.!).

Mr H. G. S. LAWSON was at Montanvert and Zermatt in July, but unsettled weather interfered much with his plans. Among his successful expeditions were ascents of the Dom, Breithorn, and Monte Rosa.

Mr JAMES DRUMMOND was at Zermatt, and *inter alia* traversed the Gabelhorn, and climbed Monte Rosa from the Greuz Glacier.

Messrs W. W. KING, J. RENNIE, and W. DOUGLAS were in Dauphiné in August, and among their joint climbs were the Grande Aiguille, Pic Coolidge, and a traverse of the Meije. The Pic d'Olan was climbed by Rennie and King, and Les Ecrins traversed by King. Douglas and Rennie afterwards ascended Mont Blanc and the Grande Chamois.

Mr A. M. MACKAY, with a friend, in the Oberland climbed the Höhstock, Finsteraarhorn, Mönch, Jungfrau traversed (without guides), Lonzahorn, and first ascent of two peaks of the Füsshörner. From Zinal they traversed the Dent Blanche, the first ascent by amateurs from that side.

Major HOWARD HILL and Mr HARRY WALKER climbed the Satarma Needle, Dent Perroc, Mont Collon (traversed), Mont Blanc de Seillon, crossed the Col d'Hérens to the Schwarz See, and thence ascended the Breithorn. Mr Walker remarks that "the 19th August was excessively cold, and consequently this hill was not densely populated!" The Rimpfischhorn, Matterhorn, and Gabelhorn followed.

Mr H. C. BOWEN was climbing at the Montanvert, and among other things made a traverse of Mont Blanc.

Mr C. W. PATCHELL was in Norway in August. With Johannes

Vigdal he spent a week in exploring the Justedalsbræ from Sperle, finally crossing it to join Mr Slingsby's party in Stryn. Here, and later at Øie in Söndmøre, he took part in several expeditions. With Mr A. B. Todd he made a new ascent of Smörskredtind from Habastaddal. The weather was generally bad.

Mr R. A. ROBERTSON was among the Dolomites in August, and made a traverse of Croda del Lago from Val Formin and down north ridge, the Popena by south ridge, Kleine Zinne from south, traverse of Sorapis from north to south, Cinque Torre, traverse of Ortler, traverse of Vertainspitze.

Mr HOWARD PRIESTMAN was in Norway early in the season with his brother, Mr Harold Priestman. They crossed the chain of the Jötunheim and climbed five peaks *en route*. Deep snow made travelling very heavy.

Messrs C. C. B. MOSS and T. K. ROSE were together in the Dolomites, and climbed the Grosse Zinne, Dreischüsterspitze (traversed), Paternkofel (first ascent of west face), Kleine Zinne (traversed—up north and down south face), Western Zinne (first ascent of east face), Tofana di Mezzo, Croda del Lago, Piz Popena.

Mr A. W. RUSSELL, when in the Engadine, ascended the Monte del Forno (10,545 feet) from the Maloja Pass.

Dr JOSEPH COLLIER, we hear, spent six weeks in the Tyrol.

Messrs WALTER BRUNSKILL and WALTER BARROW from Ried, in the lovely Lötschenthal, climbed the Bietschhorn by its long arête (nearly six hours' work from the hut to the top, and as long returning), crossed the Beich Grat to the Belalp, where they encountered Messrs MacLay and Solly, and with them had an S.M.C. meet on the summit of the Aletschhorn. Afterwards the Schienhorn and Füsshorn (highest peak). "Fine weather and grand views."

Messrs G. A. SOLLY and JAMES MACLAY made a guideless first ascent of one of the Füsshörner from the Belalp, and afterwards climbed the Aletschhorn, as above stated. Mr MacLay also ascended the Ofenhorn, Hullehorn, and Bortelhorn from Binn without guides, besides some smaller expeditions.

Dr COLIN CAMPBELL accomplished the following :—Zapport Horn from San Bernardino, Rheinwald Horn from south-west, Buffalora and Giumella Passes (on same day), Passo del Uomo, San Giacomo Pass, Zwischbergen and Andolla Passes in one day from Saas Fee to Centrona Piana, and returned to Saas next day. Also several other glacier expeditions from Schwarz See and Saas.

Messrs G. T. GLOVER and W. N. LING had a fortnight at Zermatt, and made good use of their time. They threaded their way through the Gorner icfall and climbed the Riffelhorn by Matterhorn Couloir by way of a start, and afterwards, with professional help, ascended the Rothhorn and Weisshorn, and crossed the Matterhorn.

Rev. J. F. DALY was for some weeks in July at the Belalp, and during his stay in Switzerland he made the ascent of the Aletschhorn and of the Piz Pallu.

Mr KYNASTON spent three weeks in Norway at Loen, at the head of the Nordfjord. Among his successful ascents were the Auflemfjeld and Melheimsnibben Rödenibben, Skarstenfjeld and Skaala.

Several other members of the Club were climbing last summer in the Alps or in Norway, but they have not favoured the Editor with any record of their achievements.

BEN MORE, ASSYNT, AND BEINN DEARG, ROSS-SHIRE.—Ben More, Assynt, is easily reached from Inchnadamff, where there is an excellent hotel, most comfortable and most moderate. There is a daily coach from Invershin to Lochinver, passing Inchnadamff, but a cycle will be found to be at once the more pleasant and the more independent and expeditious way of getting about in these regions. Starting on a grand spring morning in late April this year, I took the path from the bridge at the inn up to the shepherd's house, Glenbain, in Glen Dubh, keeping along in the same direction for about two miles farther. The west face of Coinnemheall is one vast steep slide of screes with scarps of broken rock cropping out here and there—no proper climbing to be had; so to avoid this I bore away to the bealach on the north between Beinn an Fhurain and Coinnemheall, and gained the top of the latter by its north-west ridge. There was a considerable amount of snow on the upper parts of the hill, which being old and in good condition made the going very much quicker and easier than it would have been in summer, as the whole hill is strewn with loose blocks of quartzite, sharp and angular, frightfully trying to one's temper and one's boots.

Coinnemheall (3,234) is loosely called Ben More by many of the natives, and most of the "tourists" who essay Ben More really only climb Coinnemheall, but, as a glance at the map will show, the real top of Ben More lies a mile farther in to the east. They are connected by a fine undulating ridge (lowest point 2,900 feet), overlooking on both sides the wild, deep corries to the north and south. I soon scrambled along this and reached the cairn, about $3\frac{1}{4}$ hours from the inn. Ben More is 3,273 feet, the highest hill in Sutherlandshire. There was a splendid view from the Hebrides to Orkney, the grey-scalped mountains of the Reay Forest to the north, and the rich red pinnacles of the Assynt Hills to the south-west, with the "wine-dark" sea in the distance, being a perpetual feast to the eyes. The ridge and the panorama were too fine to be lightly parted with, so I simply retraced my steps to Coinnemheall, then committing myself to the tender mercies of a tempting-looking snow gully on its west face, an exhilarating glissade took me down to the head waters of the Traligill, and so to "mine ease at mine inn." Next day I cycled south to Ullapool—a most magnificent road—and, crossing over to Dundonnell, spent some most delightful days in the Teallachs. I then shifted my camp to a friend's house at Inverlael, at the head of Loch Broom, six miles from Ullapool. From this I was able to explore thoroughly the Beinn Dearg, Ross-shire, group. Of the group as a whole little need be said:

they are simply great, flat undulating uplands, affording splendid walking but little climbing. But I would like to call the attention of the Club to the north face of B. Dearg. I do not think any one has made mention of it before in the *Journal*. There is a magnificent buttress of what looks like good climbing rock on the north side of B. Dearg, falling into the Gleann na Squaib. It stands out very prominently when looking at B. Dearg from Ullapool. As I saw it one day from the top of Meall nan Ceapraichean, one mile north of B. Dearg, it looked a very likely place. It has a fine rock face, with several good gullies running up it, and one especially which, filled as it then was with ice and snow, with several ice pitches in it, promised well for a climb. The face is at least 750 feet. Most unfortunately I was alone, so could only look at it longingly. It was no place for a single man to tackle. To reach it, drive or cycle from Ullapool to Inverlael Lodge, then take the shooting path up Gleann na Squaib for about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles, always keeping the track by the bed of the burn, with the Diollaid a' Mhill Bhric close on the right (south) hand, till you come to a tiny lochan—Lochan Lathail, O.S. 6 inch—marked in the 1 inch and just indicated in Bartholomew's $\frac{1}{2}$ inch map. The gully starts immediately *above* this lochan.

There are also some good climbing rocks rising from Loch a Choire-Ghranda, to the east of B. Dearg, but they are much farther away, and therefore more difficult to get at.

ARCHD. E. ROBERTSON.

CREAG MEAGHAIDH RANGE, EAST OF THE "WINDOW."—Whilst staying last October at Aberarder Lodge, at the east end of Loch Laggan and a few hundred yards from the hotel, I devoted an afternoon to a tramp over the eastern portion of the Creag Meaghaidh range. I had not my *Journals* with me, and had forgotten Mr Tough's warning (*Journal* No. 21) that from Aberarder Farm the apparent short cut should be avoided, and the left bank of the stream followed, when a good path will be struck. I left the Beallach, *i.e.*, "the Window," at 3 P.M. at a height of about 3,000 feet, and for the rest of the walk was in mist. Even in mist it is almost impossible to go wrong, and after traversing the seven uninteresting tops of the range I struck the road near Loch Crunachan at 6.15. It should be mentioned that Corrie Arder is now the sanctuary of a small deer forest, and should on no account be visited in the summer or early autumn.

H. T. MUNRO.

GEAL CHARN (3,036 FEET), MONADHLIATHS.—This mountain appears on the map to be a long way from anywhere. It is, however, easily climbed from Loch Laggan Inn, and is by no means a hard day's work. When stopping at Aberarder Lodge last October I devoted a

Sunday to it. There is a good road to Glenshirra and Shirramor Lodges, either from Loch Laggan Inn or from Laggan Bridge, a little beyond which, at Drumgask, there is an inn. The Spey is crossed by a bridge just above Shirramor Lodge, and the ascent is a mere stroll over heather and grass. The mountain is no more interesting than the rest of the Monadhliaths, but from its height and central position should have a good distant view.

H. T. MUNRO.

DEPTH OF SNOW AT BEN NEVIS, 1898-99.

The following heights were observed at the snow-gauge on the 1st and 15th of the month during the winter of 1898-99.

1898.	Inches.	1899.	Inches.
Nov. 15 - - -	0	Mar. 1 - - -	51
Dec. 1 - - -	4	" 15 - - -	55
" 15 - - -	0	Apr. 1 - - -	60
1899.		" 15 - - -	60
Jan. 1 - - -	11	May 1 - - -	59
" 15 - - -	27	" 15 - - -	47
Feb. 1 - - -	42	June 1 - - -	40
" 15 - - -	50		

Snow disappeared from the gauge on 24th June. The maximum depth at gauge was 67 inches on 19th and 23rd April.

PREVIOUS YEARS' RECORDS.

Maximum depth for 1884	.	141 inches	.	May 28.
" " 1885	.	142 "	.	Apr. 3.
" " 1886	.	123 "	.	Apr. 10.
" " 1887	.	69 "	.	Apr. 28.
" " 1888	.	77 "	.	May 6.
" " 1889	.	57 "	.	Apr. 24.
" " 1890	.	96 "	.	Apr. 25.
" " 1891	.	56 "	.	May 4.
" " 1892	.	74 "	.	Mar. 9.
" " 1893	.	66 "	.	Mar. 17.
" " 1894	.	127 "	.	Mar. 13.
" " 1895	.	54 "	.	Apr. 13.
" " 1896	.	76 "	.	Mar. 28.
" " 1897	.	80 "	.	May 7.
" " 1898	.	77 "	.	May 15

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WINTER MEETS: A DIVISION IN THE CAMP.

BY A. ERNEST MAYLARD.

IN accordance with precedence, the heading to these notes should be "The Winter Meet." But for certain cogent reasons presently to be given, I am compelled to break through custom and speak of the "Meets" which were held this last winter.

That the official Winter Meet of 1899 was more honoured in the breach than the observance, or in other words, that more members of the Club met elsewhere than at Inveroran—the previously selected place of rendezvous—affords some reasonable ground for comment and reflection.

No member who has ever been present at an official Club Meet, whether at New Year or Easter, is likely to absent himself and go elsewhere except for some very sufficient reason. The good comradeship and pleasant evenings which these Meets afford are attractions in themselves, apart altogether from the more technical objects in pursuit. As a rule not more than three or four men will enter upon an expedition together. But who does not enjoy the companionship of from ten to twenty or more of his *confrères* around the cosy evening fire when exploits are discussed and plans laid for the morrow's doings. These are no slight attraction to the convivial and clubby mountaineer, who, however much he enjoys his mountaineering,

none the less appreciates the opportunities which a social evening affords of spending a good time with his fellows, some of whom, it may be, he only meets on these occasions.

Sufficient reasons must, therefore, exist why there has been recently growing up an insidious but nevertheless very perceptible want of concerted action on the part of members who in the past have usually met together at the official Meets, and which culminated in such a very conspicuous division on the last occasion when the Club was supposed to have assembled at Inveroran.

Quite unintentionally and with much regret I was compelled to absent myself from the official Meet at Inveroran. This regret was, however, very greatly mitigated by my finding that my enforced detention at the Loch Awe Hotel placed me in the company of a small contingent of the Club who had apparently pre-arranged to assemble there for the New Year holidays. Perhaps I should, in the eyes of some, have better fulfilled the functions of my august office by warmly reprimanding such desertion of the official Meet, instead of rather cordially condoning it. But what could even a President do when confronted by a Vice-President, and, lack-a-day, that embodiment of all that is orthodox and exemplary, the very Editor of the *Journal* himself! Needless to say, such extraordinary deviation from the path of duty by two such important officials dare hardly be taken except under grave provocation or for some very cogent and justifiable reason. While the temporary indisposition from which I suffered quite exempted me from any accusation in the opinion either of myself or that of others regarding my absence from Inveroran, I felt I should not be altogether failing in my duties if I sought to make some investigation into the reasons which induced my colleagues in office to avoid Inveroran and take up their quarters at Loch Awe. The more so was this investigation forced upon me when, on New Year's Day, a telegram came addressed "To the Renegades of the S.M.C., Loch Awe Hotel"! That Mr Munro, a past President of the Club, should in such a flagrantly public manner address a telegraphic message in terms so grossly reflecting upon the dignity and good names of the President, Vice-

President, and Editor, not to mention the names of other respected members of the Club, was enough to rouse the tender susceptibilities of any rightly-organised members of society. Need I, therefore, say that the recipients of such a public affront justly bristled with wrath and indignation, raised their axes high aloft, allowing them to descend amidst execrations expressed in language suitable to their own feelings and quite appropriate for the occasion. Let it be in truth said, however, that this righteous indignation was but of short duration. No sooner was the envelope with its revolting address torn open, and the contents of the telegram perused, than a sentiment of calmness and composure settled upon the feelings of all. The peaceful spirit of the mountains had descended, and like the veil of mist that blots from view every jagged rock and gaping chasm, nought was felt but the calming influences of good New Year wishes, couched in terms both cordial and sincere.

So ended this little episode, neither, I fear, so seriously acted up to, nor so soberly reflected upon, as above described. Anyhow it was not entirely devoid of effects, for we were forced to see that our *confrères* at the official Meet did not altogether approve of our absence, the more so when it was known that the absentees were in stronger force than those present at Inveroran. We on our part equally regretted the division in the camp, for we too felt that we were deprived of the good comradeship of many of our companions whom we heartily wished were with us. This apparent split in the Meet soon afforded material for conversation, and came at last down to the individual question as to why each one of us was at Loch Awe and not at Inveroran. Fortunately for myself I found that my own excuses on the score of temporary indisposition were fully accepted in both camps; and as regards my comrades it soon became equally clear that they one and all possessed reasons sufficiently extenuating to exempt them from any blame in the matter.

In the interests of the Club Meets these reasons are well worthy of consideration, and it will be found that they afford very good ground for making some change in the way we arrange our Meets.

The custom, as is well known, regarding the Club Meets, is at the Annual General Meeting to select places for the New Year and Easter Meets. A certain place is proposed by any member present, and seconded; others similarly are proposed and seconded. These are then put from the chair, and duly voted upon. Those places which receive a majority of votes are selected. Now, as I know from experience, it becomes quite possible for the majority to comprise numerous members who have themselves no intention whatever to be present at either of the Meets, while the minority consists of those who do intend to go to the places they vote for. This result was apparently precisely what happened at the last Annual Meeting. I forget the exact figures, but Inveroran was the place selected for the Winter Meet by a considerable number—a number far in excess of those who eventually attended the Meet. Loch Awe, which was also proposed and duly seconded, was in the minority, but of that minority a larger proportion turned out at that place. Hence it resulted that the actual place selected at the Annual Meeting was not the one most desired by the majority of those who really intended to be present. Still further, those who had serious intentions of going to the hills in the winter were made to feel that a sufficient consideration had not been given to those requisite conveniences so specially desirable at that frequently inclement period of the year. The ultimate result was that various members felt compelled to consider much more their own individual interests and pleasures; and that only those who possessed the time and opportunity, and, may I say also, a certain amount of physical indifference to the discomforts of a little roughing it, could—or from a rigid sense of duty would—attend the officially-selected place. It was in reasons of this nature that the majority of the “renegades” at Loch Awe took shelter, and, I think it will be allowed, quite legitimately.

Now, as the result of our united deliberations, we unanimously arrived at the conclusion that if our Winter Meet was to be a “Meet” and not “Meets,”—in other words, if we are to meet as a Club and not as scattered contingents—we must take fully into consideration the following points at

our annual meeting in December, when the time falls for the selection of places :—

1. The place itself must be easily accessible by rail either from Edinburgh or Glasgow.
2. The hotel must be in comparatively close and convenient proximity to the railway station.
3. The hotel must be in its general equipments comfortable and capable of holding a fair number of men.

How materially a combination of these conditions affects the numerical attendance of members has on more than one occasion been well illustrated, and, perhaps, in none better than in the Winter Meet of 1896-97, when there assembled at Loch Awe Hotel no fewer than eighteen men.

If, then, we are to aim at union and not separation at our Winter Meet, we must proceed on some such lines as the following at our annual deliberations on the subject in December. Either we must carefully see that the above three conditions are duly considered when deciding upon our place of meeting, or we must limit the vote to those who seriously intend to be present if circumstances permit.

The force of these few remarks might have been still more intensified if I had stated that there were small bands of "renegades" other than those at Loch Awe who sought out other more convenient and accessible places than Inveroran. To them, as to those at Loch Awe, a bleak drive of two miles in an open carriage on a wild winter's night was not considered tempting; nor was a wait of several hours at Crianlarich between the abominable connection, or better no connection at all, of the Oban line trains with the West Highland, considered a sufficiently agreeable way of spending a good part of a short holiday.

But I must not pursue this subject further. I trust I have said enough to show that we need to exercise a little more reasonable forethought in the selection of our places of Meet, more especially that of the winter.

I have left but very little space to describe the actual doings of the Club at these different Winter Meets of 1899 and 1900. I am only competent to speak of what we did at Loch Awe. I must leave it for others to describe their

programmes at the particular centres at which they were located.

Grand old Ben Cruachan never disappoints ; disagreeable and even execrable as the weather may be, yet he always possesses a welcome for those who will show their affection for him. We—that is to say, Douglas, W. P. Ker, Rennie, A. W. Russell, Sang, and myself—had two days on Cruachan. On the Saturday (30th December) we took the old Cruachan Burn route to the summit, while on Monday (1st January) we repeated much the same route and ascended Drochaid Ghlas. Neither mornings, as we left the hotel, were propitious ; indeed, the grunts and growls of the party as they splashed along the sodden track of the old road, with a drizzling rain overhead, on the first day of the New Year, were not pleasing sounds to hear, nor altogether suggestive of mountaineers intensely enjoying themselves ! However, it's there that the mountains always seem to defy and defeat the weather. For, although the latter did its solid best to drive us back, the former still held out its allurements and conquered, for we steadily kept on our way, and were rewarded by reaching our top and reaping many enjoyments which we must otherwise have missed. Must I confess that some of these latter were of a gastronomic character ! True, we hadn't with us any of the "Club temperance drink" ; * indeed, there was a marked absence of anything in the fluid line, but the wonderful products of a more solid character that from time to time came forth from concealed pockets and immediately disappeared into other secret places were, forsooth, wonderful to contemplate and digest. But I must not forget in these very pleasing recollections to say something of the snow and the view. The latter is briefly

* What is known as the "Club temperance drink" is an agreeable mixture of brandy and Chartreuse ! It happened on one occasion that three members found themselves rather exhausted and very cold on the top of Ben Cruachan. One of the party was a total abstainer, the other two were given to temperance ; but the only one who possessed a flask was the total abstainer. Most praiseworthy, be it said, this was carried for the benefit of others. So good were the contents, which proved to be brandy and Chartreuse, that the two temperance members duly despatched the whole !

despatched by saying that we saw very little more than each other, for the mists hung heavily over us and around us, and possibly the greatest optical impressions we each received was the broad, or narrow as the case might be, back of the man who walked immediately in front. The snow! Well, there was plenty of it from base to summit. It was soft, terribly soft, so that progress was slow and difficult. Indeed, so deep and soft was it almost right to the summits that I doubt if some of us could have managed the ascents, except in the relief way we progressed. For by giving each man a ten minutes' lead, we were able to make pretty continuous progress; and ten minutes was about as much as each of us could comfortably stand. It may read like a good bit of a grind, but long snow work always is. Every step, however, takes you higher, and there is always the pleasure of having overcome difficulties and attained at last the sought-for object.

If, then, the days at Loch Awe were not all that we should have liked—and they certainly were not in the matter of weather—not one of us, I think, would have missed being there. The chief regret that pervaded our feelings was that we were not a united party, that there were some good comrades at Inveroran as well as elsewhere whose companionship we should have liked and welcomed round that fireside, always so cheery and enjoyable at the end of the day's exploits.

THE FREEVATER AND GLENSTRATH-
FARRAR MOUNTAINS.

BY H. T. MUNRO.

LAST December I was hind-stalking in the Freevater Forest in Northern Ross-shire. The weather for the most part was extremely mild and generally rainy. One fine day, however, I was lucky to be on the higher tops, and to get a fairly good view to the north and west. The massive, but somewhat uninteresting, outline of Ben More Assynt and Conamheall, with Quinag over their left shoulder, lay to the N.N.W., and then, turning to the left, that wonderful array of isolated peaks rising from the low rounded gneiss plateau, which makes the scenery of South-west Sutherlandshire unique, and which has a fascination to my mind excelling that of the Central Highlands, dearly as I love them. Canisp, standing out a most perfect sugar-loaf; then Suilven showing two peaks with a deep notch between them, reminding one forcibly of the double hump of a dromedary; Cul Mor, Cul Beag, then the long but grand ridge of Ben More Coigach; next, on the point between the two Lochs Broom, Beinn Ghobhlach, from which, if the recollection of an August afternoon long before the formation of the S.M.C. does not play me false, there, is to be enjoyed one of the most lovely views of mountain and sea in all Scotland; while last but not least, a little to the south of west the jagged outline of the Teallachs above Dundonnell, unsurpassed in rugged grandeur on the mainland of Scotland. The Dornoch Firth to the east and the Minch to the west are in sight, whilst in clear weather the Outer Hebrides can be plainly seen. The day was too hazy to make the southern and eastern view worth recording, but at any time what I have described must be the most noteworthy features.

The Freevater hills, rising to some 2,700 feet, are mostly heather-covered, round-topped quartzite hills. They have a few craggy faces (what Scottish hills have not?), but, except for their views, offer little attraction to any but the stalker, and, being miles from anywhere, are not likely to be much visited.

On the morning of Saturday, 9th December, we awoke to find a changed state of affairs. Nature had got her face washed ; a considerable coating of snow above 2,000 feet ; intensely hard frost, clear air, blue sky, and old Phœbus, who had been in bed for a fortnight, doing his best to make up for lost time. Alas ! we were due to leave that morning, and a project of mine, to make my way further up the glen, and attack the Ross-shire Beinn Dearg and his neighbours from the east, had to be abandoned in consequence of the illness of the stalker's wife at the lodge where I had proposed to put up. Still, such weather could not be wasted. The previous year when stalking in the Glen-cannich Forest, I had been struck with the graceful outlines of the mountains immediately to the north across Glenstrathfarrar. So now after a delightful fourteen-mile bicycle ride to Bonar Bridge, and a journey to Beauly, tedious and uncomfortable as only the Highland Railway can make it, I bicycled out in the dusk to Struy in Strath Glas. Next morning it was after nine before I got off. As it happens, though, I had ample time for all I wanted to do. A nine-mile bicycle ride up Glenstrathfarrar, which, though very lovely, with its lochs and its birch and Scotch fir woods, is certainly not equal to Glen Affric or Glen Cannich. At a crofter's cottage at Mulie (pronounced Moily, and spelt on Bartholomew's map Millie) I left my bicycle, and at 10.15 took to the hill. It may at once be confessed that these mountains, in spite of their height—Sgurr a' Choir' Ghlais is only six feet lower than Snowdon, and as much higher than Schichallion—are of the most "Salvationist" character ; the only one having any features worthy of our "Ultramontanes" is Sgurr na Muice (2,915 feet), above Monar Lodge, which shows a fine eastern face to the little Loch Toll a' Mhuic. The ascent from Mulie to Sgurr Ruadh (3,254 feet) took just two hours over heather and grass to the very top. From here an easy descent to about 2,550 feet, and a rise to 3,242 feet at Carn nan Gobhar.* The actual summits of this and the next mountain are covered with large blocks of quartzite, otherwise the range is grassy. Sgurr a' Choir' Ghlais (3,554 feet) has two good cairns about fifty yards apart. It was

* These names and heights from the 6-inch O.S.

reached at 2 P.M., one and a half hours from Sgurr Ruadh, the climb to it either from east or west being about 700 feet. The next top is Creag Ghorm a' Bhealaich (3,378 feet),* then Sgurr Fhuar-thuill (3,439 feet—the "sgurr of the cold hollow"), and lastly, Sgurr na Festig (3,326 feet),* reached at 3.10 P.M. The depression between these last three tops is not very great. I have been unable to find out the meaning of Sgurr na Festig, but am told it has the finest view of any mountain in the neighbourhood, which I can well believe; however, although the day was fine and sunny, and the hills all free of mist, there was a curious black haze over the distance, and Ben Wyvis and the Fannichs to the north, and Sgurr na Lapaich, &c., to the south, could only be dimly seen. The frost was intense, and the wind piercingly cold. Thanks to a good path which extends to the very summit of Sgurr na Festig, the road was reached in an hour and a quarter. Then a five-mile walk to Mulie, and a lovely bicycle ride by moonlight back to Struy.

I do not think that the Glenstrathfarrar hills have been previously mentioned in the *Journal*, and have therefore given them more prominence than they would otherwise deserve. One or two points should be noted.

With a bicycle the whole range can be easily done on the shortest winter's day. The little inn at Struy, ten miles from Beauly, has been reopened with a beer license. If beginning the range from the east, cross back at once from the cottages at Mulie to the (true) left bank of the Allt a' Mhuilinn, you will soon strike a rough track which will help you. If beginning your climb from the west end of the range, continue along the carriage road till you have crossed to the west side of the Allt Toll a' Mhuic about a mile beyond Broulin Lodge; a few yards further a good path strikes up the (true) right bank of the burn, and leads to the top of Sgurr na Festig, which lies a half-mile west of Sgurr Fhuar-thuill. There are cairns on the three mountains named on the 1-inch O.S., but none on the three whose names and heights are only found on the 6-inch map. The whole district is in deer forest.

* These names and heights from the 6-inch O.S.

A WET DAY ON THE ARRAN HILLS.

BY JAMES MACLAY.

TWENTY-FIFTH SEPTEMBER 1899 was Glasgow Autumn Holiday, and Workman and I had planned an excursion to Arran for that day, which, I was satisfied, would be my last opportunity of a climb until the New Year.

We caught the 8.25 A.M. train at St Enoch's Station after having successfully overcome the difficulty of paying our tram fares with no smaller change than a £1 note. The boat, as was not unlooked for, was half an hour late, and we were deposited on the pier at Brodick at 11 A.M.

The weather omens had not been favourable. The bad weather, which we had hoped would come off before the holiday, had hung fire. The morning was dull, and all the hill-tops had been deeply wreathed in mist as we crossed from Ardrossan, whilst a westerly gale was blowing which made a heavy sea till we got under the shelter of the land, and there was just a suspicion of a drizzle and threats of something worse.

We had not, however, come there to be daunted by appearances, so after laying in at a grocer's sufficient stores of chocolate, raisins, &c., to assist our sandwiches to eke out existence for the next six or eight hours, we proceeded briskly on our way towards Glen Rosa.

As we entered the glen the weather seemed almost hopeful for a time, and once fairly on the path, and out of sight of human habitations, we enjoyed to the full that delightful sensation which can be properly experienced only on such snatched visits to the hills, the sensation of contrast between the silent majesty of nature around us and the turmoil and bustle of the city which we had barely realised that we had left behind us.

It was a pleasant trudge up the glen, drinking in and revelling in the grand but sombre scene, and it seemed quite a short time when we rounded the bend and ascended to the upper part of the glen where the lower slopes of Cir Mhor were visible, the top being covered with mist.

Our first objective was A Chliabhain, which loomed up to our left ; and once fairly in the upper glen, we sat down behind a rock to have a feed, and to prospect for a part of the face where we might have a scramble.

We had just time to do so, and had determined to attack it close to the skyline on our right, when the rain, which had been threatening, broke in a heavy downpour which continued more or less for the next two or three hours.

We had, however, to quote a distinguished politician, determined that we must see this thing through, and so setting a stout heart to a "stey brac" and a drenching rain, we proceeded to breast the steep hillside.

There was nothing to note till we got well up towards the ridge. Here, after rounding some slabby places and traversing others, we got to a craggy part, and had an interesting scramble, whilst Workman made his first acquaintance with Arran granite. Presently we reached the summit, and found ourselves face to face with a stiff 'western blast, from which we had been effectually screened by the hill hitherto. The ridge was long and pretty level, and we started to work our way round to Ben Tarsuinn in thick mist. To keep the ridge, we hugged the side we had just ascended, and when we got round the corner it seemed that the cliffs were higher and steeper than where we had come up. This we had been unable to see from below, as this part of the ridge was then hidden from us.

Presently we reached the foot of a steep and rocky spur of Tarsuinn. Here we found a sort of cave, where we had a halt and lunch, and when we started again we found that the rain was practically over, though not before we had been well drenched.

Another scramble up granite rocks brought us to the top of Tarsuinn, and the next problem was to reach A Chir. Owing to the conformation of the ground, this was not very easy to do in mist. By dint, however, of the use of map and compass, with the assistance of a glimpse below the mist, we succeeded in hitting the end exactly, and at once proceeded to the attack.

We scrambled up and along the skyline, notwithstanding

a wind that threatened to blow us into Glen Rosa, and after a rest on the top proceeded to descend the craggy northern end. The rain had thoroughly soaked everything, and had seriously affected the celebrated friction grip quality of the rock. Perhaps it was our finding the slabby rocks everywhere slippery that made us miss the usual route, where it leaves the crest of the ridge and descends on the west side. At any rate we found it prudent to go considerably below the usual way, and had to climb back to the ridge again. At the well-known drop, where the route goes to the east side, the writer made another variation from the usual way, which, however, did not present any advantage.

The mist had cleared as we were descending the ridge, and it was now everywhere clear, and we were enjoying the delightful sensation of having a glorious prospect after hours during which we could not see a distance of more than thirty or forty feet. We were not long in disposing of the remainder of the distance to the foot of Cir Mhor, and we climbed it with a strong balmy breeze at our backs, and were quickly on the top.

This was our ultimate goal for the day. It was now past 5 P.M., and the sun was getting low in the stormy-looking west. Below us was the basin of upper Glen Sannox with the magnificent cliffs of Cir Mhor, which we could only partially see. In front of us were Caisteal Abhail and the Witch's Step, whilst on the right, beyond the saddle, stretched the Goatfell ridge, behind us was Glen Iorsa, and on both sides was the sea.

It was a grand sight, but the shadows were getting long, and we had to move again. We enjoyed a few parting scrambles down granite slabs on our way to the saddle, and disturbed some deer on the way. From the saddle it was a plain trudge down the glen to Brodick, with Cir Mhor looming up grandly in the fading light behind, till we turned the corner, and he could no more be seen.

Brodick Hotel proved a grateful haven of rest that night, and next morning we were on our way back to the hurly-burly.

EXPOSTULATION WITH CRUACHAN.

TUNE: *Into thir dark and drublie days.*

OF Crechanben the crewilté,
 The driftis dreich, the hichtis hie,
 It sair wald tene my tong to tell;
 Quha suld reheress thy painis fell
 Forgaitheris with the frenesie.

With fensom feiris thou art forfairn,
 Ay yowland lyk ane busteous bairn;
 With mauchie mistis thy mirth is marrit,
 With skowland skyis the spreit is skarrit,
 And seitis ar cauld upon thy cairn.

Quhair is thy lown illuminat air,
 Thy fre fassoun, thy foirheid fair?
 Quheir is thy peirles pulchritude?
 Quhy stayis thou nocht as anis thou stude,
 Quhy girnis and greitis thou evirmair?

Return agane fra drowpand dule!
 Restoir thy pure wayfarand fule,
 And lat him se thee quhair thou smylis,
 With Mul, Arane, and the Owt-Ylis,
 Into the lufsom licht of Yule.

Quod KER.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

INVERORAN MEET—JANUARY 1900.

THURSDAY, 28th December 1899, was the last day of a spell of clear frosty weather. The ground was thickly covered with snow and the cold intense when the West Highland train, the engine of which was armed with a snow plough, set down four passengers at Bridge of Orchy Station shortly before 7 P.M. The passengers were:—J. G. Inglis and his cousin, L. Inglis (guest), a member of the New Zealand Alpine Club; H. T. Munro and the writer, J. G. Hay Halkett (guest), whose journey across Perthshire had taken four hours longer than that of the others from Edinburgh. Inveroran was reached after a drive of three miles.

That night we retired early, leaving orders that we were to be called before seven o'clock next morning. But unfortunately the entire establishment overslept themselves, and we were not aroused from our slumbers until eight o'clock. This meant breakfast shortly before nine, and it was 9.45 before, ice axes in hand, we sallied forth.

The morning was dull and cloudy. The frost had to a large extent broken down, and everything pointed to a complete change of weather—it might be to snow, it might be to rain. Inglis and his cousin parted from us at the hotel door, bound for Ben Dothaidh (3,283 feet), and Munro and I turned our steps northwards with the intention of climbing Beinn Toaig, and the higher summit, Stob a' Choire Odhair.

Our route lay for three miles or so along the Kings-house road, behind the woods which form the background to Loch Tulla Lodge, and afterwards across the forest—the ground rising gradually. On our way we surprised a magnificent royal which had been sheltering in the wood, and which dashed across the road and stood for a few seconds on a knove about eighty yards to our left. He looked splendid against the snowy hills, and Munro wished that he were deer-stalking and not peak-bagging, or *at*

least that he had his camera with him. Before we left the road we also saw several large herds of deer feeding as best they could in the snow, which became deeper as we proceeded, and one hind passed within ten yards of us.

The woods being now well behind, we left the road and struck west for the broad shoulder of Beinn Toaig, the lower portion of which we could see below the mist. We soon found the kind of work we had to expect, as the snow proved soft and powdery, and our feet sank at every step. Before long we reached the mist and deeper snow, and although occasionally we came across comparatively firm footing in places exposed to the north-east wind, walking was most difficult. Munro led the way, but my heavier weight caused me to break through his steps, and to sink to considerable depths. The last two or three hundred feet being rather steep, progress was slow. It may be said that during the whole Meet we were obliged to have constant recourse to the compass, aneroid, and Ordnance maps.

The summit of Beinn Toaig (2,712 feet), upon which there is no cairn, is a mere shoulder of the higher Stob a' Choire Odhair (3,058 feet—the "hill of the dull-coloured corrie"), to which we pressed on in dense mist that prevented our seeing it rising ahead until we were on its slope, and through ever-deepening snow in which I often floundered up to the waist. The summit is cairnless, and neither the name nor height is to be found on any map, save the 6-inch, although on the 1-inch map, Sheet No. 54, it is indicated by a small 3,000 feet contour in the left bottom corner. We reached the summit at 1.45. There was no view, and it was snowing slightly and bitterly cold. This was the only day during the Meet that we were at all inconvenienced by the cold, or had to resort to knitted helmets or ear-flaps.

We descended in a westerly direction towards Stob Ghabhar. When we got below the mist we could see the bealach below us, and bore south of it into Glen Toaig, and after the stiff walking on the higher ground were glad to hit the deer-path which runs down the east side of that glen. Lower down we passed close to several large herds of deer.

When we reached the hotel about five, we heard that the two Inglises had also found the snow very soft, and the walk tiring. They got no view from Ben Dothaidh, but were fortunate in managing a glissade or two on the steep face opposite to Loch Tulla. Whilst we were at dinner, R. E. Workman arrived from Glasgow.

The morning of the 29th turned out wet and stormy, and Workman was the only one of the party to get up early. The rest of us came down about 9.30. Although the day did not promise well for photography, Munro, Inglis, and Workman took their cameras, and we started off in wet snow showers about 10.45.

Having determined to make Stob Ghabhar the object of our expedition, we retraced our steps of the previous afternoon up Glen Toaig until we came to a point opposite the face of a shoulder of Stob Ghabhar, which is named in the 6-inch Ordnance map Aonach Eagach. Here the weather having temporarily improved, we lost a good deal of time in being photographed in groups by Munro and Inglis, the deer which the photographers were hoping to come across being conspicuous by their absence.

We then struck across the glen and made for a couloir on the side of Aonach Eagach. Munro and I here left the others engaged in putting on the rope, and traversing the face of the hill we gained the sheep fence which runs to the top of Aonach Eagach, and thence to the summit of Stob Ghabhar. Walking was now very heavy. The snow had drifted so as to cover the fence in places, and although huge fog crystals, projecting for a couple of feet from the fence, told of the recent cold, the state of the snow was as bad as ever. Munro comforted me by saying that he never remembered seeing snow in worse condition.

Shortly before we reached the top of Aonach Eagach (3,272 feet, no cairn), we heard shouts behind us, and Workman joined us. The couloir had been too much for them—an obstacle near the top proved insurmountable, and the Inglises were obliged to return to the inn to catch the afternoon train to Edinburgh. We three then pressed on, and arrived at the cairn on the summit of Stob Ghabhar (3,565 feet) at three o'clock. In the approaching twilight

and mist the top of the upper couloir looked very formidable.

We decided to try and find a place where we could glissade down, and accordingly returned the way we had come near the large and well-formed cornice. After proceeding a few hundred yards, we came to an easy gully down which we enjoyed some moderate glissading. In the course of this, however, my mackintosh slipped away, and I had to fight my way up after it for several hundred feet in very deep soft snow. This delayed us considerably, and we reached the lochan which forms the source of the river Ba in thick mist and gathering darkness.

A rush was made through the snow for the col above Glen Toaig before dark, but in the hurry we merely crossed a projecting shoulder of Stob a' Choire Odhair, and half an hour later saw looming across a wide stretch of peat hags the massive and steep face of what was obviously the Clach Leathad.

A long and tiring tramp over snowy and wet moor, with little light to guide our steps, brought us, just after six, to the Kingshouse road, a little to the south of Ba Bridge. Over four miles of snowy and slippery road had then to be negotiated, and we were thankful to reach the inn at 7.15.

On our return we found H. G. S. Lawson awaiting us. He had arrived from Edinburgh about 11.30, and had followed us. However, he stuck to the Kingshouse road too long, and took to the hills on the left only to see us across Glen Toaig on our way up Aonach Eagach, and too far off to overtake. After a good hard walk through the snow he returned to Inveroran.

The evening train brought us no other mountaineers, but a letter and a plum pudding which the President had sent from Loch Awe. The plum pudding was well received, but when the members gathered from the letter that the President and two other office-bearers had deserted the Club's official Meet for the flesh-pots of the Loch Awe Hotel, there were loud protests. It was accordingly arranged that Munro should send to the "renegades" an indignant New Year's Day telegram.

The night was stormy, and on Sunday morning the

weather could not have been more uninviting. There was a high wind and heavy rain. We all agreed that it was not good enough to go to the hills, but Lawson and I for the sake of the exercise walked the 19½ miles to Kingshouse and back in rain and sleet, the others remaining behind.

The President's plum pudding appeared at dinner, and somewhat assuaged the wrath of the members. Munro had brought his flute, and after dinner we had some music, there being a piano in one of the rooms.

New Year's morning showed more promise than its predecessors, and we rose fairly early in order to make for the Clach Leathad group, of which we hoped to bag three or four peaks. We left the hotel at 8.40 in a waggonette, and reached Ba Bridge at 9.35. The hills, which, during our drive, we were beginning to see for the first time, were now rapidly becoming clouded over, and all chance of a distant view seemed at an end. On leaving the road, we kept the path on the north side of the Ba until the Allt Coire an Easain (the "burn of the corrie of the waterfall") was reached, and then struck up through powdery snow, bearing gradually to the right until we came to a broad shoulder of the hill. Then followed a long ascent, all of which was through deep snow in the softest possible condition, to the summit of Meall a' Bhuiridh (3,636 feet—the "round-topped hill of the roaring or bellowing"), which is marked by a cairn. Though unnamed, and only a 3,500 feet contour given on the 1-inch map, Meall a' Bhuiridh is really the highest in the whole Black Mount District, and, being divided by a very considerable dip from the next top, may be regarded as a separate mountain from the Clach Leathad.

We next proceeded to Mam Coire Easain (3,506 feet), the cairn of which took us one hour and twenty minutes to reach, the snow being so extremely heavy that the leader had to be changed several times during the ascent of the few hundred feet rise. The ground was also very steep in places, and Workman, who had brought his camera—as had Munro—photographed us in apparently very perilous positions.

Only a slight dip separates Mam Coire Easain from the Clach Leathad (Clachlet, 3,602 feet), which also boasted

a cairn, and which was reached in twenty-five minutes, at 2.35.

So thick was the mist, though fairly dry and still, and therefore not uncomfortably cold, and so uniformly white was everything, that considerable care had to be exercised by the leader in our descent of the S.E. shoulder to avoid approaching too near the edge of the corrie, which for the time of year was heavily corniced. The footprints in the snow made it an easy matter for those who followed, but for the leader it was often difficult or impossible to tell if the ground in front rose or fell.

After descending the shoulder for some time, we got some capital glissades down into Coire Easain. As we got below the mist we enjoyed the only good view of the Meet—a lovely glimpse in the late afternoon light of Ben Doirean and Ben Dothaidh. From Coire Easain we made our way to Ba Bridge much as we had come, but Munro and Lawson hurried on, as the latter had to catch a train which necessitated his covering the five miles from the bridge to the hotel in an hour.

Tuesday morning was wet and stormy, and Munro and I departed, leaving Workman planning a walking expedition to Glencoe. And so ended a New Year's Meet which, although not favoured by the elements, had proved most pleasant and invigorating. Inveroran is certainly a first-rate mountaineering centre. Had time and weather permitted, there were many other excursions which would have been open to us—to Ben Doirean, Ben Dothaidh (which the Inglises climbed), to Ben Achallader, Stob Coir an Albannaich, Ben Starav, and many others.

We found the Inveroran Inn, under the management of the new landlord, Mr Cameron, most comfortable. It may not be as imposing as the Loch Awe Hotel which seduced the office-bearers from their allegiance to the Club, but it served our purpose well. We found the food good and wholesome, our rooms clean and warm, and the people in the inn civil and obliging—and what more can mountaineers want?—J. G. HAY HALKETT.

THE KINLOCHIEWE MEET—APRIL 1900.

THE Easter Meet lasted from Thursday evening to Tuesday morning (12th to 17th April), Munro forming a fringe of one at each end. (He was found in his slippers and left in bed.) Fulfilling last year's resolve, the Club found itself again at Kinlochewe. The contingent of one from Aberdeen picked up the other detachments at Inverness, and after a somewhat exhausting trundle through a N.W. wind, the party eventually dined on *the* fish of *the* fisherman.

Many of the remarks made in the account of the Easter Meet of last year might here be held as repeated *brevitatis causa* (as the lawyers have it), especially those about the weather and its offsets, the natural joviality of the Club, and the superb entertainment of mine hostess. This time the Meet was with difficulty sandwiched in between two spells of fine weather. It is but fair to the weather clerk to add that the sun generally shone on our evening homeward steps.

A very lingering fondness was in general displayed for Beinn Eighe and Slioch, and the Black Men were like to have their heads turned by over-much attention. There were, however, some excursions further afield to record. On Friday, Slioch and many of his boulders succumbed, not without gyrations into soft snow.

The first party on Beinn Eighe pressed on, buffeting and buffeted by a mighty wind in hopes of attaining Ruadh Stac, but after countless tops, resigned themselves to defeat and a *glissade d'abandon*. Through the day party after party (so my recollection goes) kept arriving at the Hotel, and making the short circuit over the "Men."

Eventually the gathering was found to include the following:—The President, L. W. Hinxman, J. Rennie, W. W. Naismith, W. Douglas, H. T. Munro, H. Raeburn, H. G. S. Lawson, W. N. Ling, J. A. Parker, Mackenzie, J. G. Inglis, H. C. Boyd, F. C. Squance, A. M. Mackay, and a guest, Mr Cookson.

Saturday.—An interchange of peaks, but Lawson and Ling visited Coire Mhic Fhearchair. Its *pièce de resistance*

was hopeless in the conditions, and they climbed Sail Mor by the gully. The same pair accompanied Munro to A Mhaigdean, to the north of Loch Fada, next day, and proved to their satisfaction that it is well over 3,000 feet high and a considerable distance away.

Liathach all this time was looking bonnie (when it could be seen), but no assault was made till Monday. On that day the departure of large drafts of our forces cheered the weather up wonderfully, and the faithful few who drove to Torridon were rewarded with a magnificent day. The attack was delivered by a party of six on the Northern Pinnacles (see *Journal*, Vol. III., p. 131). Meanwhile Mackenzie performed excellent service by scouting round the hither end of the mountain, sighting the enemy, himself unseen, while Inglis made splendid practice as a snaphooter. The effort was bound to succeed, and it did.

The Northern Pinnacles had encased themselves in ice, and new driven snow over all made some speculative digging necessary. This occasionally unearthed a hitch, more often did not. The Fourth Pinnacle cost most time owing to an inexperienced member trying to cut steps. Two hours' work, and the two detachments rejoined one who had gone ahead to prospect the view on Am Rathain.

Forward over the Fasarinen Pinnacles, which gave little trouble, to Spidein Coire na Leith, and then a rush for the last top on the ridge, spurred by the waning light and a penny bet. After a false cry, we finally left this peak at about one hour after sunset; a friendly glissade took us well on our way, and we stumbled to the road at nine, and the welcome hotel at eleven o'clock. A seasonable finish to a very enjoyable Meet.

A. M. MACKAY.

ARROCHAR MEET—APRIL 1900.

THE alternative Meet at Arrochar was in some danger of resembling Lord Dundreary's bird of one feather flocking all alone by itself. The writer had assiduously inquired, and could learn of no one who was going there, and he was not much surprised if a little disappointed at finding no one at the Colquhoun Arms on Friday night but himself. However, he heard that there were ice axes at the other hotel, and proceeding thither, later on, he found Mr Robertson, son of our late president, Mr Goggs of Edinburgh, and Mr Nettleton and Mr Marler of London, the two latter being members of the recently established Climbers' Club. This party had had a stormy day on the Cobbler, and after introductions and a couple of hours' chat, we arranged to go all together the following day to the hills lying to the north of the Cobbler. This mass we have, I believe, been in the habit of calling Narnain at its southern and Crois at its northern end, but I found the local nomenclature was Crois for the south and Feorlin for the north end.

We started about 9 A.M. next day. It was still blowing hard, but there was not much rain during the day.

We crossed the Allt Sugach by the bridge just beyond the farm, as it looked too full to cross elsewhere, and bore up and round towards the north to avoid the wind. From the top of the front ridge we skirted round to the north end past some cliffs that would have afforded some scrambling, and arrived at the foot of a steep snow gully, up which we made our way. Part of this was icy, and required the cutting of steps, and at one or two points gave a little trouble. We passed an interesting crevasse with icicles hanging inside.

This gully brought us out near the summit, where we were met by gusts that sent us staggering. We, however, made our way towards the east corrie, and found a sheltered place for lunch. From this point we observed several gullies. One of these, a perpendicular cut in the cliffs, about the middle of the corrie, seemed attractive, and we made

for it. A steep streak of snow led to the foot of the rock pitches, and a small stream was pouring down. The gully proved a tough job.

By putting a leg right into the water, the first landing was reached, and after removing a lot of turf and stones, and with the assistance of the second man at two difficult points, the worst part was passed, and the third man was told to come up. The operations had, however, already occupied one and a half hours or more, the others meanwhile sheltering in a position not safe from stones, and within the reach of spray. In view of this, and of the increasing danger from stones and the inadequate length of the rope (said to be 100 feet), it was reluctantly decided that the two last members should go round an easier way. After they were out of the line of fire the climb was completed without much delay. The moral is that five is too large a party for such a climb.

Whilst the others proceeded to the top of Narnain, I hurried to the station to meet Workman. We had agreed to go to Inveroran that night, but all things considered, I had decided it was better to remain at Arrochar, so he was unceremoniously ordered to leave the train, which he did with as good a grace as was possible in the circumstances.

Sunday was atrocious. We got drenched, not only by the rain but by the sea, on our way to church, and we got no farther than church and the other hotel all day, though Dr Inglis Clark boldly descended on us from Tarbet, where he was staying.

Monday turned out a beautiful day. Workman, Marler, and I proceeded to Narnain and the Cobbler, whilst the others went for Ben Vane and Ben Ime.

We ascended the right side of the Allt Sugach to the corrie, and then made for a gully we had noticed running up to the ridge a bit from the summit of Narnain. Some rocks here gave us a scramble, but the gully itself was a plain snow climb. From the ridge we proceeded to the top of Narnain. Here we had an hour's fine scrambling on the more northerly of the two buttresses, which was ascended and descended by a variety of routes.

After a meeting here with Corner, who had just arrived

that morning, we proceeded to the Cobbler, enjoying one or two short glissades on the way. We ascended the side of the Cobbler to get into the corrie by a short snow gully which proved the steepest piece of snow we had been on, and led us through a natural bridge. From the top of this gully we traversed to the foot of the V-shaped buttress in the middle of the corrie. This Boyd speaks of as having been neglected, and we had determined to show it a little attention.

Attacking it on the left near its lowest point, we had no great difficulty in getting up about one-third of the way. Here we found cliffs which required some negotiation, one point being decidedly stiff, and other parts rather ticklish, owing to the snow and loose turf. However, we reached the top in about three-quarters of an hour, and after a minute or two's halt glissaded from close to the cairn right into the corrie.

On my return to the hotel I found Lamond Howie and Meares were there, but Workman and I had to leave that night. They and Corner, I believe, had some enjoyable days on the hills in the neighbourhood, but I understand did nothing special in the way of new climbing. Thus ended a rather slender and straggling Meet.

One thing has been impressed on my mind by it, namely, that there is still a lot of scrambling to be explored on the Arrochar Hills by the man who will look for it.

JAMES MACLAY.

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.

TRACKS IN GLEN SPEAN.—Mr Corner's most useful note on the above (Vol. V., p. 261) appears to want supplementing. For the sake of clearness, I incorporate in the following most of the information which he gives.

From Spean Bridge there is a fair carriage road for upwards of seven miles over the Learg nan Leacan, to where the one-inch O.S. and Bartholomew's maps show a fork in the road near a point marked 1,544 feet. Here there is a stable and a (private) telephone office. I am told that a rough track leads from this point to Creaguaineach Lodge at the head of Loch Treig, but in the snow I saw no traces either of it or of the other path which appears on the map to fork from it and to pass S.W. between Stob Ban and Meall Mor. Up to here, however, it is a fair driving road.

From Spean Bridge the south side of the river is of course kept. Two roads branch off to the right with notice boards "private road." These both lead to Kylliechonnet Lodge. Our road crosses the Cour and turns past Coirechoille Lodge, which is near the Spean, and on the maps is marked Dalnabie, and must not be confused with Coire-coille shown on the maps, some two miles inland. The road is fairly level for some distance beyond the lodge—for fully four miles from Spean Bridge—very nearly to the base of Stob Coire nan Ceann, as the long curved northern shoulder of Claurigh is called on the six-inch map; therefore, by driving so far, both time and trouble may be saved; while as the road extends right round to the foot of Stob Ban, it is invaluable for a return after dark. I assume that every one knows that the highest summit of the big range lying to the east of the Aonachs is Stob Coire Claurigh (3,858 feet), although both the name and the height are only to be found on the six-inch O.S.

This road also of course leads to the western base of Stob Choire an Easain Mhoir, which can therefore be crossed, for at the foot of its northern shoulder (Meall Cian Dearg) a bridge crosses the Treig, and the railway can then be followed across the Spean to Tulloch.*

* Refer also to Vol. V., p. 67.

For the western end of the Claurigh range and for the Aonachs, follow the Fort William road from Spean Bridge for nearly a mile to where a road crosses it, and passes under the railway to the left. This leads, as a good carriage road, to Lianachan, and just beyond the lodge the carriage road turns off to the right as shown on the map; how far it extends I cannot say, but I fancy to Inverloch Castle. Anyhow it would take one to the base of Aonach an Nid. A well-made bridle-path continues south from Lianachan. It crosses the Allt an Loin, two hundred yards from the lodge, by a row of stepping stones, some of which would certainly be covered if there was much water in the burn, and passing round the stables, leads up the hill and through the wood (the Coille Lianachan), at the other side of which it ends, at the foot of the long N.E. shoulder of Aonach Mor. Some traces of an old path are here and there to be seen higher up the glen.

Just beyond the stable an equally well-made bridle-path strikes off at right angles to the left, *i.e.*, east. I cannot say where it eventually goes to, probably to the Coirecoille of the map. In about a hundred yards, however, it crosses a small burn by a well-built bridge, and immediately beyond this an indistinct track may be seen bearing off to the right over a grassy knoll. Follow this, and it soon improves into a good path, and crosses the Cour by a substantial bridge, three hundred yards to the north of where the long shoulder of Beinn an Soccaich merges into the plain.

From the above it will therefore be seen that the whole of this range can be approached by good roads or paths across the stretch of bog which separates it from the highroad. And with the help of these paths Spean Bridge is undoubtedly the best centre for visiting this district.—H. T. MUNRO.

THE CORROUR HILLS.—The Corrou crossing-place, at which all trains will stop on giving notice, is about a half-mile to the west of the head of Loch Ossian. A good track leads, as shown in the map, from it some way up the shoulder of Carn Dearg, where it forks, the right branch going to the old lodge of Corrou, while the left goes to the large new lodge situated at the foot of Loch Ossian.

By taking the early train (7.35 from Glasgow) it is quite possible, without unduly hurrying, to cross Carn Dearg (3,084 feet), Sgor Gaibhre (3,128 feet), and Sgor Choinnich (3,040 feet)—this name and height are on the six-inch map only—and descending to the foot of the loch, return over Beinn na Lap (3,066 feet),* in time to continue your journey to Fort William by the evening train.—H. T. MUNRO.

CLACHLET.—My brother, Robert Reid Russell, and I were fortunate in arriving at Inveroran in clear frosty weather on the evening of Friday, 16th March. Next morning we started for Clachlet, and walk-

* Refer also to Vol. V., p. 67.

ing to the Ba Bridge, were there joined by my sister and another lady who had driven across from the hotel. Leaving at 9.35, we held close round the east side of Creag an Fhirich, and crossing its summit, reached the top of the eastern buttress at 12.10. Above 2,000 feet our route was almost wholly over snow of a generally hard and icy nature. After fully half an hour at the cairn, in bright sun with sharp frost but no wind, enjoying an almost perfect view, we left for the main ridge of Clachlet, which was reached by two, the snow on the ascent from the col being at places of a measured slope of 50 degrees. After first visiting the north summit for the view of Buchaille Etive and Ben Nevis, we returned to the south and highest summit. Leaving again about four, we followed the ridge to the east, and then descending and crossing the Ba, reached the road some $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Inveroran, where we arrived about seven.

STOB GABHAR.—The 18th March was another fine day, but with an east wind and some snow showers. I left Inveroran at 9.45, and after leaving the Glendochar road, on emerging from the wood, made direct across the moor for the corrie between Stob Gabhar and Ben Toaig, and reached the summit of the low ridge overlooking the lochan at 11.15. The ridge I was on is only about 2,200 feet, and forms an easy col between the Ba and the Dochard, a good deer-stalker's path running from the Dochard half-way up the corrie, and then winding up Ben Toaig. Being by myself, and the snow in a very icy condition, I left the north-east face alone, and after a good deal of cutting and kicking steps, reached the ridge that runs east from Stob Gabhar, and separates the main corrie of Stob Gabhar from the corrie facing Inveroran. This ridge is fairly narrow at places, and there took the form of a hard snow *arête*. On leaving the cairn, I descended the latter corrie, and returned to Inveroran across the moor.

ARTHUR W. RUSSELL.

THE CAIRNGORMS.—On the 20th January, along with Mr E. B. Robertson, non-member, I had a look at the condition of the snow on the Cairngorms. To save a very early start, we took the train the previous evening from Edinburgh to Blair Athole, travelling up in torrents of rain and with a generally unpromising prospect as regards weather. However, it was either colder further north, or became so during the night, for, on leaving Aviemore Station a few minutes after nine the next morning, we found the roads covered with ice and very slippery. Clouds were lying heavily on the hills, and as the outlook appeared stormy, on reaching Coylum, we decided to leave Cairngorm alone and go by the Larig to Braemar, taking Ben Macdhui if it appeared fairly practicable in daylight. After passing the empty cottage near the bridge over the Eunach, the going became bad as the snow grew deeper, but once we were clear of the forest the snow proved of excellent quality and greatly assisted our going. We reached the pools of Dee exactly

at twelve, and there had lunch, consisting mainly of a tinned fowl that appeared to have been shot. The snow on the side of Ben Macdhui was tolerably hard, but my companion cut rapidly up, and we soon found ourselves in driving mist on the plateau above. Here there was comparatively little snow, most of it having been blown off, and we had little difficulty in finding the cairn, which was duly reached at 1.40. As the mist was thick, and the wind high and very cold, there wasn't much to detain us at the top, so we hurried on in the direction of Glen Lui Beg. Through a break in the mist we had a grand glimpse down the corrie to Loch Uaine. Here is a place for a fine winter climb. To enjoy a series of very mediocre glissades we came down on the top of the westernmost of the branches of the Lui Beg, and reached tolerably level ground at the place marked 2,250 on Bartholomew's $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch map. Right down the glen the going was simply execrable, soft snow of uncertain and irregular depth on the top of large stones and heather forming a combination devoutly to be abhorred. The Larig track was ultimately reached, but as it was covered uniformly by about a foot of bad snow, it was soon found better policy to keep off it and dodge the drifts on the broken ground by the side. It was after five, and pretty dark, before we passed Derry Lodge, but there was little more to bother us afterwards, and with a short stop for tea at the Linn, we reached Braemar about eight o'clock, after a most enjoyable day.

Next day we went to Blair Athole by Glen Tilt. Soon after passing the Linn of Dee it began to snow, and the wind, which had always been high, rose almost to a gale from the south-east, directly in our faces. How long it took getting from Bynack to the Falls of Tarf I should not like to say, and really forget, but, as at times it was almost impossible to stand, and quite impossible to see ahead, our rate of progress was, to say the least of it, slow. After reaching the Tarf, the storm abruptly subsided, and by the time we reached the Forest Lodge it was a sort of a fine evening.—H. G. S. LAWSON.

BACK NUMBERS.—Mr A. W. Russell, 76 Thirlestane Road, Edinburgh, is anxious to complete his set of the *Journal*, and is willing to give 2s. 6d. each for the first eight numbers. Perhaps some member can help him?

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

THE ROOF-CLIMBER'S GUIDE TO TRINITY. Cambridge: W. P. Spalding, 43 Sidney Street.

"Though there's doorway behind thee and window before,
Go straight at the wall." —BROWNING.

A NEW field has been opened to climbers who have the good fortune to be resident members of the University of Cambridge. Sligachan or Wastdale Head at Easter and the Long Vacation in Switzerland or the Dolomites contented an earlier generation, but the aspirant for Alpine Club honours can now keep his hand-(and-foot) in throughout the flying terms as he "seeks new sensations on the artificial erections of man."

Traditions of ascents made (for decorative purposes) to the Gate Tower of St John's and other salient pinnacles of Cambridge scenery will be familiar to most Cambridge men. But these are isolated and perhaps mythical feats, and may be classed with such exploits as the ascent of Pic Canigou by Peter of Aragon in the sixteenth century.

Roof-climbing has now become a serious art, and in the pamphlet now before us the "stegophilist" will find a guide book so lucid and complete within its limited range as to compare with such classics as Ball's "Alpine Guide" and Haskett-Smith's "Climbing in the British Isles."

The author is a real sportsman, and up to all the rules of the game. The rope is mentioned as a necessary part of the equipment, but appears seldom to be employed. For steep roof descents the "gable method"—in which "the leader hangs from the top of the tilt by his hands, a second descending him and grasping his ankles, and the rest using the improvised ladder and assisting its subsequent descent"—seems to be that usually adopted.

Although the roof-climber escapes the dangers of the avalanche and crevasse, his course is not without its peculiar perils. Thus we read of "porter-swept gullies" and "the slumbering don," and note that the Library traverse is rendered exceptionally difficult by the "contiguity of the Vice-Master's rooms," while a certain "natural awe" has prevented a frequent crossing of the Master's Lodge.

For obvious reasons the excursions described are made under the shades of night. The author would, however, "view with regret any alteration in the College regulations tending to soften the conditions."

The darkness indeed, he poetically observes, "surrounds the venture with an air of vague mystery, and lends a pleasing uncertainty to the handholds, a depth of impressive gloom to the courts and gutters . . . that could hardly be spared, while the recurring step of the night porter, heard when the climber hangs in literal suspense in some awkward lamp glare, rouses thrills of the chase unknown in legalised stegophilism."

No reference is made to climbing under winter conditions. We imagine that the "impossible slopes" of the hall roof when snow-covered might yield to judicious step-cutting, and spare the climber the somewhat ignominious expedient of lying in the gutter and pulling hand-over-hand up the coping.

The Guide confines itself to the ranges of Trinity College, and describes the four principal routes. Other special climbs are discussed, prominent among which is the great chimney climb of the Library, a truly sporting ascent of 31 feet, mostly "back and knee" work. A pamphlet by the same authors on "Roof-Climbing in General" is now in the press, and will no doubt be followed by a series of Climbers' Guides to the principal Colleges of the University of Cambridge. Our recollections of the principal features of Cambridge scenery, after an interval of more than twenty years, are somewhat hazy, but we imagine that the *aiguilles* of King's Chapel and the Pitt Press would afford some sporting climbs, while a traverse of the pediment of the Fitz-William should be full of interest.

We believe that one of the authors of this work is now resident in Edinburgh. We may therefore hope for the early appearance of a Climbers' Guide to the Scott Monument and other public buildings of this city.

A word of praise should be given in conclusion to the excellent plan and diagrams that illustrate the various routes; and also to the apt quotations, such as the lines which head this notice. L. W. H.

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

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No. 33.

SOME CLIMBS ON THE SALISBURY CRAGS.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

A SCORE of years ago the young blood of Edinburgh was content to believe that with the exception of the Cat Nick, no route existed by which the precipices of the Salisbury Crags could be scaled. A daring few had doubtless essayed the task elsewhere, as witness the initials or dates engraved in the solid rock at points inaccessible to the ordinary paterfamilias; but these, if they ever reached the summit, have left no traditions, nor have they endeavoured to claim priority. Since that time the Scottish Mountaineering Club has come into existence, and with its alpine methods, so that, gradually, one point and another has yielded to the climber, till the wall of cliffs is assailable at many places.

Mr Raeburn, in his paper (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. IV., p. 335), has placed a summary of these climbs before our members; and those who, book in hand, stroll along the Radical Road, can at least single out some of the routes therein described. It is difficult, however, to so describe these routes that the passer-by may with certainty recognise them, where they start and where they terminate; and with a view to their better identification, the photographs accompanying these notes have been taken.

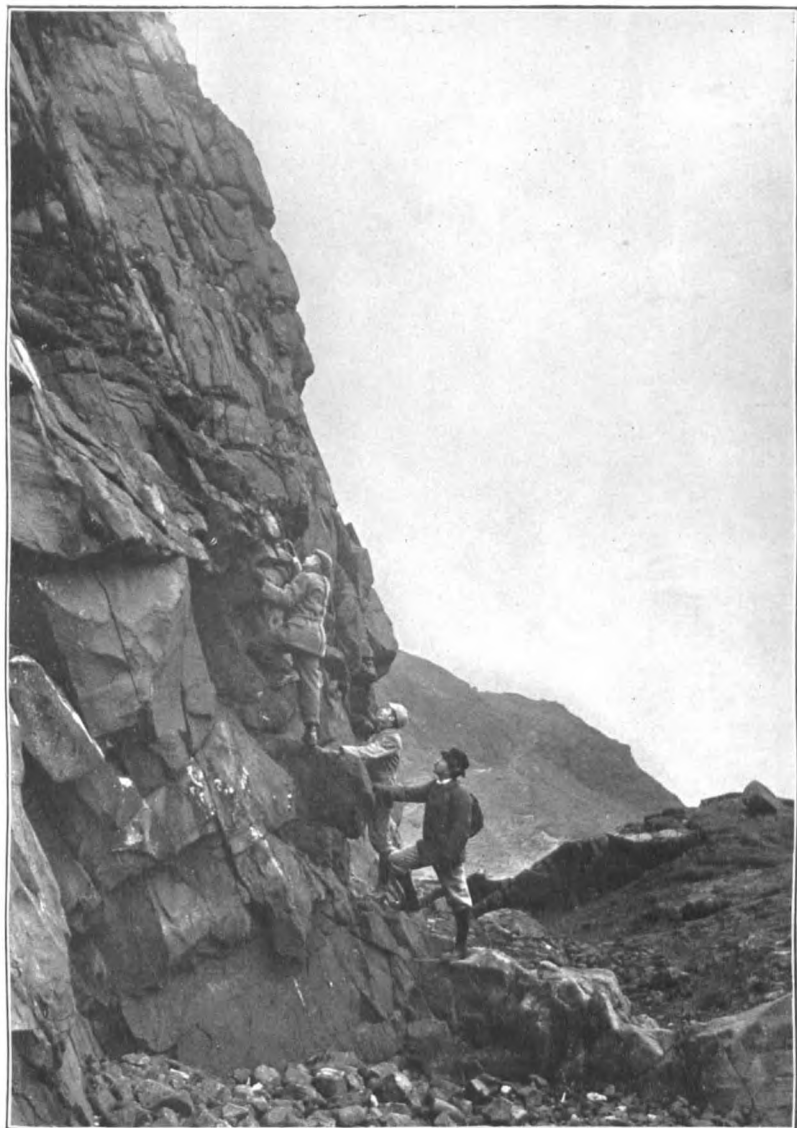
It may be that there are some, even in the S.M.C., who would frown on these attempts at miniature mountaineering, designating those who partake in the sport as mere gymnasts, and hardly to be classed as mountaineers; but if it were worth while to argue with these, I think a very valid defence might be forthcoming. Let it suffice to point

out that if the ascent of a mountain by the easiest route is legitimate sport, then any opportunities of practice climbing which will make the climber more skilful and therefore more secure should not be deserving of condemnation. In many mountains even the easiest route is difficult, nay even dangerous, and practice on the Salisbury Crags or even on our Scottish mountains may, apart altogether from the enjoyment derived therefrom, be regarded as a valuable preparation for the more uniformly difficult work abroad. There may be others also who, despite Mr Raeburn's alluring account, still doubt the attractive nature of our Crag Climbs, and it is to these possible converts that I trust this short paper may appeal. Battles royal have already raged round the respective merits of the Whangie and the Queen's Park, but I do not enter into these. My sole desire is to show by word and photograph that the "Crag Climbs" are in essence of the same nature as the more difficult Alpine Rock Climbs. Indeed it may be said that he who can lead up all the recognised routes in the Queen's Park with confidence and security is a climber of no mean ability. The only fault that can be urged is their shortness, but this is atoned for by their variety and interest.

Entering the Queen's Park by the St Leonard's gate, the eye takes in at a glance half of the range of cliffs which extend from the Hunter's Bog to Holyrood in an inverted crescentic form. From this point it is easy to recognise the original contour of the Crags, somewhat disfigured, no doubt, by the gaps of the little and great quarries. The grumbler, however prone though he may be to romance about what might have been, must admit that the portions of the original rock face which remain to us east of the Cat Nick do not offer much hope to the climber; and except in two instances—the Cat Nick Buttress and the Eastern Buttress of the little quarry—have hitherto proved unassailable. The vandalism of our ancestors has, on the other hand, provided us in the neighbourhood of the little quarry with six climbs, which distinctly fall under the category of "gymnastic," and range from the comparatively easy to those of real difficulty.

Before coming to these, however, we find on the natural

A
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EASTERN BUTTRESS (LITTLE QUARRY).

Harold Raeburn.

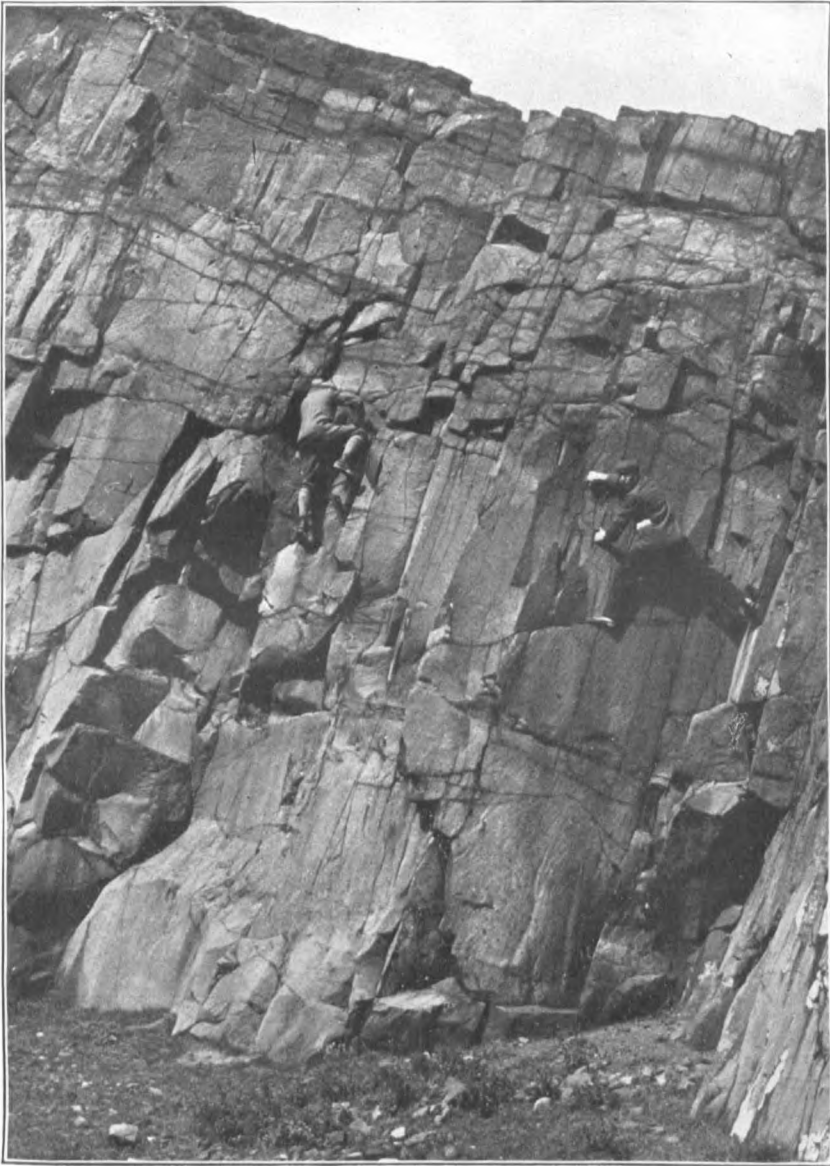
A, Line of Ascent.

rock face the *Eastern Buttress Little Quarry Climb*. It is true that some minor climbs, although not by any means easy, exist to the east of this buttress, but these have not yet been classified, and information is wanting. The buttress itself is easily recognised, showing the original ramparts of rotten rock, and standing up at a steep angle. In the accompanying photograph it will be noticed that the upper rotten rocks lie on an under stratum of hard sandstone, which, from having been quarried, somewhat overhangs. The most obvious point of attack is engaging the attention of Mr Naismith, where a narrow comb of rock runs on to the wall and enables the hand to reach a reliable though slightly loose hold above. The stretch is, however, long, and it will usually be found more convenient to reach the ledge some 4 feet farther east by means of a convenient foothold and a somewhat awkward scramble up the bulging rock. Having reached this ledge, and while the leader is endeavouring to find a route up, the question presents itself to the second man, who, perhaps, like the writer, has found his arms and hands barely strong enough to land him in this *festa loca*, as to what compensation he may look for to counterbalance the heavy handicap put on him by nature. Perhaps it is true that leanness sometimes goes hand in hand with an acid temper, but the possession of equanimity scarcely makes up for these physical defects. I ask our worthy President to tell us what physiological recompense the climber has who finds these Crag Climbs beyond his power. Without awaiting his deliverance it will be well to follow the leader, turning to the right, and thence up and up, and finally somewhat left by a recess to the sky-line. The climb is steep and rotten, and the upper part is perhaps more risky than difficult. As Baedeker says, "Only for adepts."

The three *Quarry Climbs* are the shortest on the Crags, but they present a delightful variety. Beginning with the most westerly, that to the left, the "*Ordinary Quarry Climb*," there are two modes of starting. The easier commences farther to the left, traverses with good hand and foot hold about 11 feet above the ground, and only presents one projecting pitch, showing the marks of blasting, which prevents the route from becoming a regular constitu-

tional. Those who prefer it can climb directly up the smooth slab to the said pitch, making use of an old blasting hole for hand or foot. Quite close to this is the "*Long Stride Quarry Climb*," the most difficult of the three. Keeping into the angle of the rock, it is easy to get up the first 7 or 8 feet. The direct ascent of the angle can be accomplished, but is beyond the powers of most climbers, the holds being small, the rocks nearly vertical, and the slabs slippery. The usual route is by means of a long stride to a narrow ledge on the left, where the left hand finds a convenient hold at arm's length. Thence, standing on a needle of rock, another narrow ledge must be reached by a straight up pull and careful balance, and after that the climb is soon at an end. For those of short stride like the writer, the step to the ledge is risky if not impossible, and should not be undertaken without a rope from above. To others of weak arm power and defective balance, the next step may prove still more unsafe. Before the lucky ones, however, with long legs and attenuated frames, the difficulties vanish like the morning mist which too often forms a tarrying night-cap on Arthur Seat above.

The third or "*Quarry Face*" route is in some ways the easiest of all. It lies about 35 feet to the right of the angle climb. Perhaps the only difficulty is at the bottom, where a long stretch and a determined pull are necessary to reach the first standing ledge. After this the different stages follow comfortably. It is after negotiating these climbs that the writer ventures to propound an answer to the query already suggested about compensation. I think the climber whose arms are not strong enough to pull him up these pitches may legitimately argue after this fashion. Our ancestors (monkeys or what not) were great climbers, and could hang by one hand while enjoying their morning paper or luncheon, but their brains were sadly deficient. Our babies, we are told, at birth still retain this ability, and only require practice to enable them to hang with one hand and enjoy their feeding bottle at the same time. As the brain grows this power fails, till, when man has reached his full maturity, he feels less and less able to trust himself to his arms over some smooth slabby rock. Clearly, this is

A²
|B⁴
|B²
|B³
|A¹——B³—B⁴—B³|
A³

LITTLE QUARRY.

|
B¹*W. Inglis Clark.*

ORDINARY QUARRY CLIMB.

A¹, Usual Route.A², The Finish.A³, Direct Climb.

LONG STRIDE QUARRY CLIMB.

B¹, The Start.B², The Finish.B³, The Long Stride.B⁴, The Balance Pull.B⁵, Direct Route.

the effect of brain growth, so that the majority of the Club may congratulate themselves on this manifestation of brain power. I have no *post-mortem* measurements to prove this hypothesis, but give it for what it is worth.

Unlike Cir Mhor, where it may be remembered a luncheon party on the rocks gave rise to heretical remarks by Raeburn and the writer, the Crag Climbs are not suitable for lengthy discussions. Hereabouts are the haunts of schoolboys and love-sick couples, and sundry precautions must be observed to ensure a climb without audience. The three West Buttress or Corner Quarry Climbs are especially in the eye of the public, being close to the path, and having suitable view-points in front to accommodate several thousands. Besides, there are sundry ledges where the ragamuffins of St Leonard's take delight, and woe to the luckless one who essays these climbs and fails to accomplish them.

The first or most *Westerly Corner Climb* commences by two variations, 8 feet apart, both leading to a flat basin some 18 inches square. That to the right involves a balance pull on to the platform, during which a steadying hand behind will assist the bow-window climber. The left-hand route is over sloping rocks to the same platform, and is less certain. Above, a still more difficult balance pull is encountered, which is made somewhat easier if the climber makes use of a sloping rock on the left. About 15 feet higher this climb joins the next one on the ledge referred to later. This climb is only indicated at the extreme left of the photograph.

The *Middle Corner Climb* commences with an 8-foot stretch and a pull up smooth rock. Then follow some nice little passages leading up to where the route turning to the left leads over an evident overhanging block (see left-hand figure in photograph). There are two ways of surmounting this block. The lower leads along a broken up ledge to the adjoining angle, where a not too easy pull lands one above. The upper continues straight up the steep wall to a foothold on the corner, when a confident stride with extended handholds enables the block to be reached.

The next pitch is perhaps more difficult, for the first

handhold is barely within the writer's reach, standing on tip-toe, and without a little *vis a tergo* on a rope from above, it is not by any means easy to make use of an excellent shelf which gives standing room on the left wall. Above this we soon reach the ledge running about 15 feet below the summit, exit from which may be had in several ways.

The most *Easterly Corner Climb* is of a tougher character than the others, and is not available to all our members. The difficulties are two in number, a balance corner and a smooth vertical slab. Starting directly from the bottom, the first 10 or 15 feet lead to the obvious block (see right-hand figure in photograph), which forces the climber on to the steeply sloping rocks to the right. An excellent handhold for the left hand exists; but when the highest foothold is made use of, this is too low to be satisfactory. Some men extend the hand to a flat hold far to the right, and are then able to lift the left hand to a good hold above. The right foot can then find a footing near the right hand, and the corner be passed. Failing this, the right hand must reach up to the satisfactory hold before-mentioned, and with both feet out on the sloping rocks, a lift takes the climber to the middle platform and past all danger. The first of these methods is alone open to me without the safeguard of a rope, and this only when tennis shoes are worn. To some the upper steep slab will be more difficult. The height of the first handhold is over 6 feet even when standing on a self-evident block. The right hand placed on this, the left must reach the hold a foot higher up, and the body be drawn rapidly on to the easy ledge above. The difficulty varies greatly with different men, but in any case the starting platform is broad, and gives a sense of security. Above this slab, keep round the corner to the left, and on to the main ledge below the skyline, where a long pull in a slight recess lands one on the grass above.

Instead of descending to the road, it is more agreeable to skirt along the top of the Craggs to the Cat Nick, and, scrambling down, reach the foot of the Cat Nick *Arête*. To the lover of scenery this walk is of enchanting beauty.

A¹
|A²
|B²
|C¹
|C²
|A²—B²—A¹—B¹——C²—C²—C¹|
B

CORNER QUARRY CLIMBS.

|
C¹*W. Inglis Clark.*

WESTERLY.

A¹, First Balance Pull.
A², The Finish.

MIDDLE.

B¹, Start from First Platform.
B², Second Difficult Pitch.
A², The Finish.

EASTERLY.

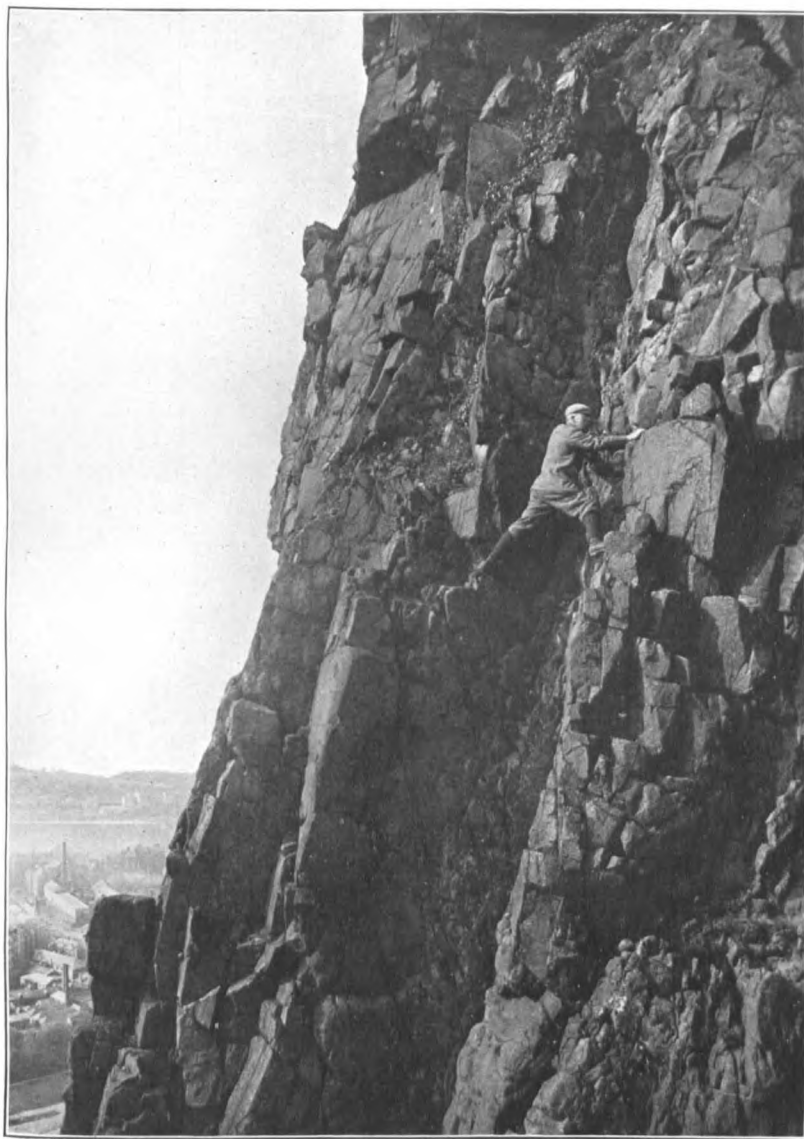
C¹, Start.
C², Balance Corner.
C², Vertical Slab.
C¹, Finish.

Behind, Arthur's Seat raises its head above a series of cliffs, gullies, and slopes worthy of a mighty mountain. To the left, the Whinny Hill, with its attractive Dasses or precipitous cliffs, leads down to St Anthony's Chapel of pious renown, and St Margaret's Loch, the boating resort. There, Inchkeith keeps guard over the interests of our mariners, and the steep line of the High Street unites Palace and Castle ; while beyond, the Forth and the Highland hills call up a thousand memories. Below, the smoky city shows turret and steeple and the ancient beacon grating, and the eye may wander far away to Pentland or Moorfoot or Lammermuirs. Little wonder that along with the love of climbing for mere climbing's sake, the Edinburgh youth drink in inspiration with every breath, and become unconsciously influenced by their surroundings.

The descent of the Cat Nick is a pleasant break in our musings, and prepares us for the more serious ascent of the *Cat Nick Arête*. This, now favourite climbing route, is one of the most sensational, and certainly the longest of the Crag Climbs, and has the advantage of being a natural route, so that the climber never fails to enjoy it from start to finish. On the north side of the Cat Nick, a buttress of somewhat rotten rock rises steeply from the road. At first, the footholds are excellent, but soon these become fewer, and for about 20 feet constant care is required to avoid the dislodgment of loose rocks. The route is now so popular that these are not very numerous, but at each recurring spring, a good deal of gardening is found requisite. This lower pitch is the most difficult part, and is succeeded by well broken up and firmer rocks till the prominent block seen in the photograph is reached. Here there is a slight choice of routes ; but if the direct one be followed, it will be found that shortly before reaching some ivy, the holds are none too numerous. A traverse is now made across the steep white chimney (see figure in photograph), where, however, good hitches and holds are available, and the climb is transferred to the steep wall hemming in the upper part of the gully. The best sport is obtained by going straight up, occasionally taking a rest to enjoy the sensational depths below. Finally, we are landed in a spacious recess,

and reach the top by easy rocks. An interesting variation consists in starting some 20 or 30 feet farther north, climbing up to the upper end of some miniature Samson's Ribs, and traversing round some not too easy corners, finally joining the ordinary route near the very prominent block. Those who do not care to tackle the bottom pitch should go about 30 feet up the Cat Nick, and by easy stages join the climb at the aforesaid block.

Up till 11th July of this year, the Cat Nick, from a symmetrical point of view, was imperfect. It required a climb on its eastern side to balance the *Arête* on the west, and the evident route, if it could be accomplished, was on the *Cat Nick Buttress*. Previously, on several occasions, Inglis and the writer had made preliminary attacks on it, and a six foot friend had tested the strength of my shoulder blades and successfully surmounted the formidable pitch in the middle. On this morning Raeburn and the writer succeeded in making the complete ascent, with some little self-congratulation. Starting from the road about 10 feet east from the *Nick*, the route leads up on the wall forming the left hand side of a prominent cave. Thereafter, stepping across a tuft or two of grass, entrance is made into the steep chimney just below the second figure in the photograph. The chimney and blocks on the sky-line are then followed, or the climber keeps directly up the steep wall, and so up to the right hand shoulder of the upper figure. Here a vertical pitch, 8 feet high, leads to a balance corner, which must either be negotiated by the aid of a friendly shoulder below, or by stepping across to the dark ledge shown at the left hand of the photograph. Excellent holds exist outside the corner, but one's ideas of gravity become confused the moment the attempt is made to get into the recess above. A hold may exist below the root fibres of a tuft of grass which tenants the spot, but at present, even with the moral assistance of a rope, this passage will test all qualities of grip and balance. This is the crux of the climb. Thereafter, though very steep and very rotten, the difficulties decrease, and after a partial ascent of the very steep chimney above, the climb is finished on the sensational *arête* to the right of the same.



A² -

A³ -

|
A¹

|
A³

W. Inglis Clark.

CROSSING THE WHITE CHIMNEY.
CAT NICK ARETE.

A¹, Line of Ascent.

A², Prominent Block.

A³, Shaky Block.

A⁴, Line of Ascent.

E D
| |

C
|

B
|

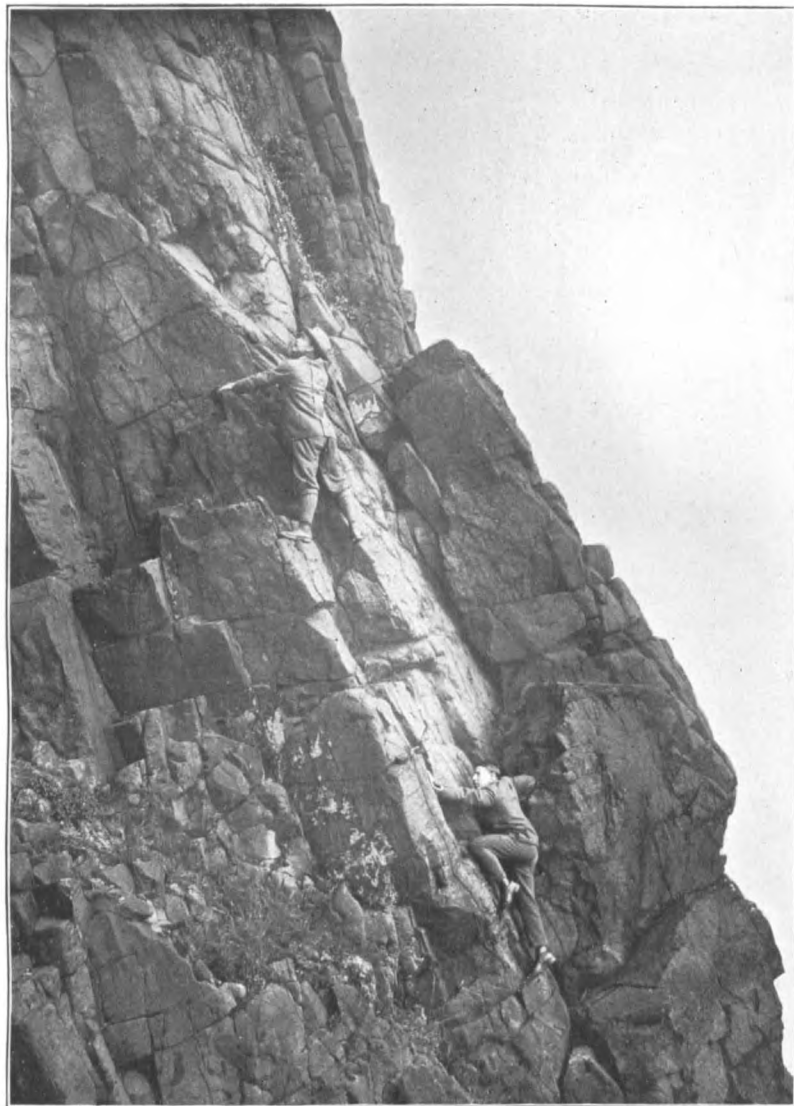
E—

D—

C—

—B

—A



|
A

W. Inglis Clark.

CAT NICK BUTTRESS (First Ascent, July 11, 1900).

A, Line of Ascent.

B, Alternative Route.

C, Foothold for Right Foot.

D, Sloping Ledge for Toes.

E, Leading to Chimney.

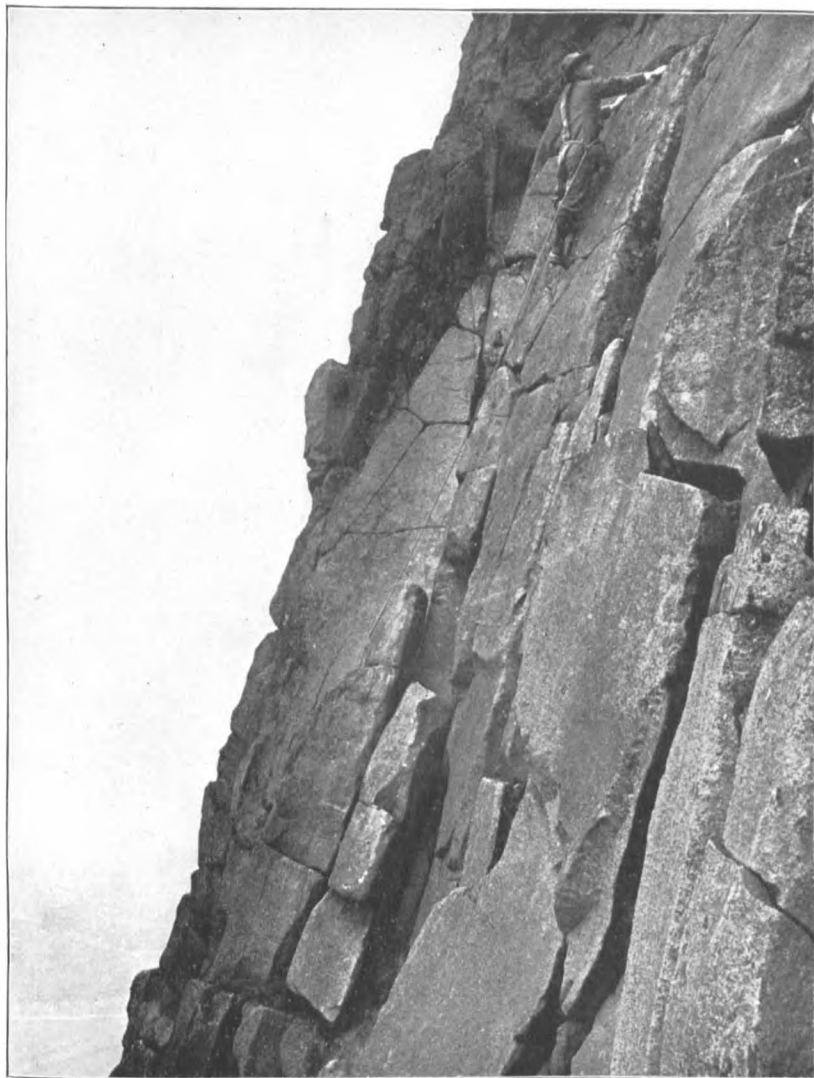
In these days one hears a good deal about the rights and grievances of woman. The difficulties in the way of women climbing in the Queen's Park must be added to these. On no balmy summer afternoon or evening, and not while the forenoon sun has restrained his inquisitive eye from the recesses of the Cat Nick, can the fair sex "rollick on the ridges." On some wet and misty day, when the easterly haar drives along and damps even the ardour of the sterner sex, when it shrouds the rocks in mist, then only can the ladies overcome the difficulties of foot and hand and balance without fear of drawing a crowd. Or in the early morn—not, it is true, when graves do yawn, but rather when sober members of the S.M.C. yawn and turn again in bed—then is the time for doughty deeds on crag and in chimney. So it befell that one afternoon last summer, a wife of a member of the S.M.C. essayed the Cat Nick *Arête*. She had reached the prominent block in safety, when lo, from St Leonard's Hill some observing youngster espied her light blouse. Ere a minute had passed the news had sped, and soon a crowd of excited urchins raced down the hill, across the path, and up the steep talus slope to the Crag. From the vantage point of view of the rocks they seemed like a swarm of ants, and ere the foremost had reached the Radical Road hundreds of children were congregated at St Leonard's to view the unwonted spectacle. Ignominious flight was alone possible, the ascent was abandoned, and ere more than a score of the spectators had taken up positions in the Nick itself, our party had disappeared over the top of the gully and were *en route* for home. No, the morning is the only practicable time for such attempts or for new explorations. The surface rocks are naturally so loose, that new climbs require to be carefully handled to avoid danger to the lieges, and the removal of loose stones can only be accomplished at an early hour.

The last climb embraced in my photographs is the *Cracked Slabs Route*. Previous to 26th June 1900, this had not been ascended without a rope from above. It was daringly conceived by Mr Raeburn, but near the top an exceedingly steep chimney with but loose holds forbade

any attempt at accomplishment. The difficulties even in reaching this chimney are eloquently portrayed in the accompanying photograph, and to overcome these requires not only strong fingers and hands but an absolute command of balance. Mr Raeburn had previously done some work at freeing this climb from dangerous rocks, but not till the beginning of June was the attack made in earnest. On three occasions early morn saw the writer anchored above the cliffs while the pioneer disported himself below. Ever and anon a sound of falling rocks roused me from my meditations, and told that the chimney was safer if not easier. At last the rope indicated no tension, but uncertain as to what might be going on below, I allowed it to hang in case the bold climber might require it after all. A few minutes of suspense, and Raeburn's head appeared between me and the Castle, and he joined me on the grass ropeless. The long-planned climb had at last been accomplished legitimately. On an early occasion I made personal acquaintance with it. A reference to the photograph shows a prominent pinnacle rising from the bottom. This is about 25 feet in height, and may be ascended on either side, the left being perhaps easier. Standing on the top of this, a 60 feet rope gives length enough to tie on, if the first man above comes a little over the edge to the lowest *firma loca*. Unpromising though it looks, the route is straight up over the smooth slabs. Good handholds at arm's length enables the foot to reach a hold, and then a convenient sharp piece of rock, just below Mr Raeburn's foot in the illustration, materially assists further progress. A difficult point leads into the chimney, to the right of and above the hands in the picture. The chimney constituted the great original difficulty, for steep though the slabs are, they give firm and safe holds. The chimney, on the other hand, is steep and still very rotten, but will soon, with use, settle into good working order. After ascending direct in the chimney for a few feet, a difficult exit is made to the right, where a respectable square foothold is found, and thereafter a few steps lead to the top.

Fain would I refer to the many other excellent climbs in this neighbourhood, but I fear that there may be some

B
|



|
A

W. Inglis Clark.

CRACKED SLABS ROUTE (First Ascent, June 26, 1900).

A, The Bottom Pinnacle.

B, Entrance to Chimney.

who will shake their heads and say, "A truce to this prating about foot and hand hold and traverse and pinnacle and the like." To these I would urge a personal inspection of the Crag. There in every crevice of the rocks are hidden the lovely rock rose, or pink-flowered *Lychnis*, or the graceful lady fern, growing with a luxuriance scarcely dreamed of. Such a visit would be a perfect revelation, unfolding to the eye a richness and variety of vegetation which needs to be seen to be believed. Amid these wild rocks innumerable birds build their nests, and a stray rabbit may still startle you as you explore the "earth ledge" or "recess" routes. Do these mingled charms not attract you—the sport of climbing, the romantic outlook over the grey capital, the unparalleled panorama of sea and sky and rock and cultured plains, the wildness and beauty of the flora, and the animation of bird and other wild life? then indeed you must be hard to please, and any words of mine would be unavailing.

BENIGHTED ON BEN MORE ASSYNT.

BY W. W. NAISMITH.

THE Editor evidently believes that the following narrative of broken mountaineering laws and the natural consequence thereof, although not edifying, may prove instructive.

Wednesday, 11th July 1900, found me at Oykell Bridge Inn with a fine afternoon at my disposal. Ben More Assynt was only fifteen miles off, two-thirds of which could be cycled. This mountain had been merely a name to me since my school days, and I wanted to make his acquaintance. Unfortunately I had neither map, compass, nor aneroid with me, and only thin boots. To climb an unknown peak in these circumstances was of course madness, and I shall not attempt to palliate the offence.

I left my bicycle with the gamekeeper at Ben More Lodge, on Loch Ailsh, a pretty sheet of water with a wooded island, and started for the hill at 5 P.M.—much too late! The “packet” of sandwiches given me by the hotel people contained two minute specimens only, and as they were not worth carrying, they were promptly eaten on the way up.

The highest point of Sutherlandshire has not, I think, been described in the *Journal*, and it is probably but seldom climbed from the south. It rises to 3,273 feet, and has several other tops not much lower. Coinnemheall (pron. *Connival*), 3,234 feet, a mile west-south-west, is separated from Ben More by a dip of about 300 feet.

I followed a track along the left bank of the river Oykell for two miles, then sloped up the hillside, passed a round little loch (Dubh Loch Beag) close on my right, and ascended the grassy southern shoulder of Ben More. The top of that was gained in two hours from the lodge, and another half-hour's hard going along an interesting ridge took me to a knob, which various indications—including the finding of a pocket-comb—pointed to as likely to be the summit. This southern ridge has precipitous sides in several places, and is fairly narrow—somewhat resembling the crest of Aonach Eagach. The rock is “Old Boy” until

within a few yards of the top, when it changes to Cambrian quartzite. From about six o'clock the weather had shown signs of deterioration. Canisp, Suilven, Cul Mor, Cul Beag, and the Teallachs, which had previously stood out with startling clearness, began to put on their night-caps. A cloud would hide the top of Ben More itself for a few minutes and then disperse, but only to form again. When I reached the first top and looked over, the whole valley to the east was filled with rolling mist, which quickly crept up the slope and enveloped the solitary wayfarer. Not being certain which was the summit, I proposed to go on over everything as far as Coinnemheall, and descend by its south-east ridge into Glen Oyckell, and so home; but this project did not come off. A hundred yards away, and only faintly discernible from the pocket-comb top, was another quartzite summit with a small cairn. From that top, a well-defined ridge—the only one visible—descended until it was lost in the thick fog. Was this the continuation of the main ridge? If so, it ought to run west or south-west at first; and the wind, which had blown steadily all day from the west, ought to be on my "starboard bow"; and sure enough it was! So, with hardly a passing misgiving, I trotted down the ridge as fast as the rough quartzite permitted, until I had descended probably 1,000 feet. As the ridge showed no signs of rising to another top, I concluded that the two tops close together must have belonged to Coinnemheall. I therefore quitted the ridge and turned to the left down a scree slope, fully expecting to emerge from the clouds in Glen Oyckell. By-and-by the air cleared sufficiently to show me that I was in a strange country! Several lochs with very irregular outlines were not far off, and a herd of deer were grazing in the foreground. The stags were so aghast at seeing a human being come down from the sky, that they apparently forgot to be afraid, and gazed in a sort of spellbound way until I was quite near them. The valley I had dropped into was not that of the Oyckell. I must, I thought, have somehow got on the Atlantic side of the watershed, and the precipitous buttress on my left was no doubt the reverse side of Coinnemheall. If so, however, what had become of Suilven

and his grotesque neighbours? Even though shrouded in mist, why did I not see their bases? Oh for a map and compass! Skirting the cliffs on my left, I mounted the ridge beyond, but the buttress had then changed its appearance, and had no resemblance whatever to Coinnemheall. A further considerable descent, followed by a most unwelcome ascent, put me on another ridge, merely to find that the valley on its far side had a stream in it certainly, but it ran the wrong way! Then surely the next ridge was the watershed I was hunting for. No, it wasn't! My preconceived notion that I was on the *west* side of Ben More, and that, by circling round the mountain to my left for a short distance, I was bound to arrive at the watershed at the head of Glen Oykell, was responsible for most of this wild-goose chase.

Once more I decided that a ridge on the horizon *must* be my goal, unless indeed it had evanesced. I even persuaded myself that I recognised the contour of the hills on both sides of the col ahead of me. A tedious up-and-down traverse across two miles of scree and rough ground ended only in another disappointment. I was looking down a new valley, but not the right one. The night was by this time as dark as a moonless July night ever is. Rain had been falling heavily for some time, and I was wet through, dead beat and painfully hungry. It was already long past the time I had promised to be back at Oykell Bridge Inn, and the prospect of *ever* getting there appeared remote. Even the whereabouts of Ben More itself was now a matter of uncertainty; and remembering the time I had been trudging since leaving the top, it seemed possible that I had put another hill or two between me and it. It occurred to me that a man might wander for days through a large part of Sutherlandshire without meeting a human habitation, and that I had been told that a "shower" in those latitudes sometimes lasted for a fortnight. With these dismal reflections I sat down and wound my watch. No sound broke the solemn silence except the distant rush of a burn.

"When things are at the worst they begin to mend."
I had not rested many minutes before I noticed that the

fog was "lifting." The first thing seen was a corner of the northern sky faintly reddened by the invisible sun, who had then doubtless got as far as Behring Straits on his nightly round. That glimpse gave me the points of the compass approximately. The partial dispersion of the mist also revealed a ghostly apparition which greatly puzzled me. It seemed to be Suilven, but metamorphosed in some extraordinary way. A subsequent examination of the map explained the mystery. I had been looking at a conglomeration of Suilven and Canisp seen in line.

It was at last evident that, whereas I had intended to descend the south side of Ben More, I had actually gone down its north-east side! and a change of the wind, which had chopped round from west to east, if it did not cause the mistake, at least prevented its discovery. As any attempt to continue the circling process round this bulky mountain and its outlying spurs would probably make matters worse, I resolved to attempt, what I ought to have done hours before, namely, to go right over the top of Ben More, and retrace my upward route. The first difficulty was to find Ben More! After considering the situation, I decided to steer if I could south-east, in the hope of knocking up against my friend sooner or later. A mile's walk across comparatively level moorland, with some very boggy bits here and there, brought me to a ridge running in the desired direction, but after a weary grind it ended in an isolated top surmounted by an Ordnance cairn. A slope of terrible quartzite scree went down to a neck between two tarns on the far side, but nothing was at first visible beyond. After a short halt, the shadow of higher ground loomed out of the obscurity. To descend quartzite scree set at the greatest angle of shaky "repose," at midnight, in thin boots, and without a stick, is, I contend, an extreme trial of one's equanimity, but "time saw me through," and a well-marked ridge rose from the dip. At first grass, it soon changed to scree and rock, and became steeper, until it led to the top of something which I felt sure was over 3,000 feet. A ridge running to the left at right angles to that I had come up dipped for a few hundred feet and then rose to a peak whose top was in cloud. The summit I had

reached was for the moment clear of fog, but heavy rain made everything hazy. I concluded that it was Coinnemheall, and if so, by holding on south-east into the valley I should find myself at the source of the Oykell. But there was still a little doubt whether I had actually bagged the highest top of Ben More or not, and after such a long night's work it would never do to leave that question open. So I followed the ridge to the left. It seemed to be absolutely interminable, but, at long and last, at 1.30 A.M., it *did* come to an end between two quartzite tops, which were at once recognised as those I had left exactly six hours before! Hech! Tired but grateful, I allowed myself just five minutes' rest, then scrambled along the southern ridge as fast as the imperfect light allowed. At the rounded shoulder the mist became very thick again, and it looked like going astray once more, but I picked up my bearings before any harm was done. Four o'clock saw me back at the keeper's cottage. He and his wife, worthy people, insisted in spite of protestations on getting up and preparing breakfast, and never was it more acceptable. Thus fortified, I cycled through a shower-bath to Oykell Bridge, along a road covered with several inches of porridge or some other similar material. When one has once become wet through, and is relieved of the anxiety of trying to keep dry, rain, if it is only heavy enough, becomes almost enjoyablé; and so it happened that a bedraggled but tolerably cheery traveller turned up at his inn at 6 A.M., and tumbled in among the blankets, with the reflection that it must not occur again, but that after all he would not have missed the weird experience for a good deal.

THE NORTHERN PINNACLES OF LIATHACH.

BY A. M. MACKAY.

IT is my happy lot to chronicle part of a certain day on the hills which I recall with more undiluted satisfaction than perhaps any other.

A day stormy at first, then breaking into glorious climbing weather ; a sufficiency of difficulties to overcome, as also of sudden and entrancing scenic effects, and the interest kept tense to the last by a race with darkness—what more could be desired? It is only with part of this day that we have at present to do. Four hours were spent on the Northern Pinnacles, of which the first ascent (one under summer conditions) was recorded in Vol. III., p. 131, of the *Journal*. The pioneer seemed to have doubts of his own veracity, and a tinge of shame at his own candour in using such terms as “terribly unstable” and so forth. It was to settle these doubts that at Easter a party of six set forth from Kinlochewe, in weather decidedly wintry.

Turn thine eye aside, O well-instructed among readers, while I enumerate a few simple geographical facts for the benefit of some other. Liathach lies in Ross-shire on the north side of Glen Torridon—is pronounced more like *Leagach* (insert much guttural), consists of a long ridge with three main tops, by name Spidean a Choire Dhuibh Bhig, Spidean a Choire Leith, and Mullach an Rathain. From the last and westernmost there runs to the north the Pinnacle Ridge, curving gracefully downwards and rather towards the east, enclosing in its sweep Corrie na Caime, of which more anon.

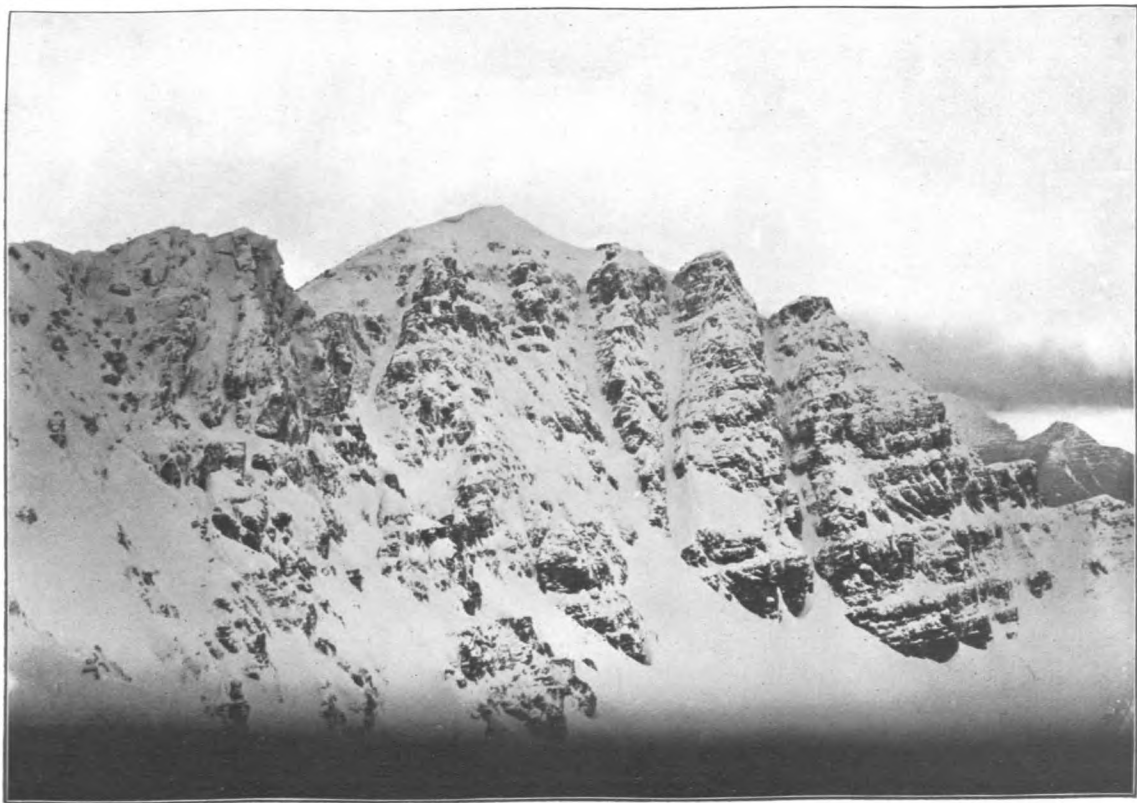
A word as to the approach, which is necessary inasmuch as our ridge lies *not* on the (relatively speaking) populous side of the hill. From the Torridon coach road, one end of the long main ridge must be skirted, *i.e.*, either by Allt a Choire Dhuibh Mhoir on the east, or by Choire Mhic Nobuil on the west. The latter route has hitherto been followed, but I incline to believe that the eastern approach is shorter, and it would save five miles of a drive. As we approach from the west, the Pinnacles show imposingly

over another and less serrated ridge, separated from the true one by a deep cut gully. This ridge may be followed easily enough to the top—a route adopted by an independent member of our party.

Both parties on the Pinnacles hitherto have made the mistake of taking to this preliminary ridge, thus involving a descent into the open top of the gully, and an ascent by a steep snow chimney to a snow notch below the Pinnacles. Two better courses offer: crossing the foot of the gully, the climber would find an awesome but probably practicable wall of rock leading straight up to the foot of the Pinnacles. This, however, is still but the *side* of the true ridge, which here bends round to the east; and the really correct course for the stickler in mountain ethics would be to start from its extreme end and follow it throughout. For it must be confessed that to separate five pinnacles and dub them "Pinnacle Route" is here a little arbitrary. They are only the upper half (best, it is true, and most circumscribed) of the total ridge: the lower half would allow of more vacillation, but would still be interesting, especially in the nethermost pitches. Here then is a hint for future trackers of the untried. I am convinced this end of the ridge would be best approached round the east end of Liathach.

Meanwhile, a party of two and after them another of three, have been ascending a small couloir filled with deep snow to the aforementioned notch, which is just off the edge of the photograph to the right. One after another as they top the col, they pause astonished. And truly it is a wonderful glimpse, to look down to the frozen tarn of Corrie na Caime and the sheer buttresses frowning on every side, each ledge and crack of the sandstone picked out in purest snow.

Becoming once more the unsentimental gymnasts that it is considered seemly to be, Naismith and the writer left the others with a tripod, and advanced to the business of the day. The first pinnacle is barely worth the name and was passed by the side, the second presents an imposing wall and must be circumvented to gain a chimney on its side. The route was taken along the right base of the rock; the ice-axe proved a good pick for the glaze, but an



NORTHERN PINNACLES OF LIATHACH.

J. Gall Inglis.

inferior spade for the snow that lay above, and progress was slow in proportion to the amount of sapping to be done. The steep little chimney had unpleasing rounded holds, but led well up to the horizontal but narrow summit of the pinnacle. The next that presented itself to bar progress and be in turn knocked down, showed a long slope and a variety of difficulties. Steep snow led up between two spits of rock. Up that to the left Naismith led, while Raeburn took his party up the other. Neither was easy. Above was a long stretch of snow thinly powdered on iced scree and at an awkward angle, with a paucity of hitches to bring followers over the steep part. Then more rock with iced holds forced us a little to the left into a snow couloir with a sensational shoot downwards to the tarn. Finally a perch was attained just below the black rock which shows on the top of this (third) pinnacle: from here the look of the fourth pinnacle over the chasm was such as to strike terror into even the heart "bound in threefold brass," which according to Horace can face the raging deeps.

But first, how to reach even thus far? for "no road this way" was plainly writ on the slabs leading round to the col. And what of the bad step of an all too aerial character which we were promised when there? Naismith settled the first question by resuming the lead and disappearing above our heads over the black rock aforesaid. Holds abounded, but were of a modest and retiring nature. The long stride resolved itself into a crack just visible in a thin edge of snow. Safely past this *monstrum horribile ingens*, we all surveyed the fourth pinnacle. On the right an easy snow slope led to a forbidding crag round which a small ledge wound, but seemed to end in space at the sky-line. To the left was another ledge, snow-bedecked but tilted at a very steep angle, and to appearance steeper than it really proved. The lower edge, which overhung the gully to the left of the col, showed glistening ice protruding under the snow over a sheer drop. Yet up this it behoved the leader to find a way. By keeping to the right for a little, a hitch was found, one of those rare hitches whose occurrence maketh glad the heart, as the occurrence

of hitches does not always do. Beyond this no snow deep enough for a step was to be found, and the wandering eye had a trick of keeping the imagination ever busy. Luckily there was ice under the thin snow, and a few chips in this gave something of the desired feeling of precision to the steps. Half way up, where the slope was steepest, a crack in the buttress on the right deserved all the benisons it received; and then some score more steps conducted to another of those sensational saddles so inexpressively lovely in which the mountain abounds.

Here a welcome shout proclaimed the presence on the top of the independent member, who assured us that the difficulties were over. And very soon Naismith had hand-railed up the rope and plunged through the deep snow of the last pinnacle, and so through a slight cornice to the summit of An Rathain. The second party tied on and quickly followed; and presently all foregathered for a photograph in marching disorder. And so ends an account in which naught is extenuated and very little set down in malice.

Although there is no problem of particular neatness, the climb as a whole gave intense satisfaction; all the more so since it had put the veracity of the pioneer beyond a doubt. At any rate, under the beautifying clothing of their winter aspect, the Northern Pinnacles afford a good winter day's work, and he who does them and the Fasarinen as well, will return with memories worthy of a hill whose form and structure so delight the eye.

A GALLOWEGIAN WANDER.

BY EDRED M. CORNER.

MY interest in this region was first awakened by that stirring romance, the "Raiders," by Crockett. Ever since I read this book I have longed to wander through the regions described there. In order to gain some knowledge of the district I studied Mr Colin Phillip's paper on the "Highlands of Galloway," and Mr Watt's note, both published in the *S.M.C.J.** This visit, like almost all projected visits, was put off and put off until matters were brought to a head by an English climber asking me to give some report of this region.

On 27th March 1897, I started from London in the full tide of enthusiasm that awakes in the hill-lover at the prospect of a holiday. In my mind my plans were fixed, and like most plans, they were not fully carried out. For I assured myself that Arran should be my wash-pot wherein to improve my bodily condition, over Galloway would I cast out my boots, o'er Tyndrum would I triumph. Unfortunately Tyndrum was never reached. All my plans were upset by a most unromantic and necessary thing, namely, boots in bad repair, and new ones slow in arriving. In Arran with plenty of soft snow I had several most enjoyable days on the hills. In their wintry garb the Arran Hills presented quite new aspects to me, though their summer appearances were very familiar. Cir Mhor, as is most proper, received most attention, and with pardonable pride my number of ascents became double figures. My boots having arrived, the journey to Dalmellington was commenced. The railway people were good enough to furnish me with waits of three-quarters of an hour at Irvine and two hours at Ayr, much to my annoyance. But to their credit I must say Dalmellington was reached that night. The proprietress of the Black Bull is nothing if not hospitable, and as the weather was cold, carefully sent to inquire if I would prefer sleeping in sheets or blankets.

* Also Sheriff Nicolson's articles in *Good Words*.

The start next morning was made at 9 A.M., and under very good omens, for the first bridge I crossed, over the Muick, was garnished with a text. A well-filled rucksack kept the pace in modest bounds until Craigmulloch, at the head of Loch Doon, was reached, 9-10 miles. The walk was most enjoyable, and the scenery about the foot of Loch Doon is very pretty. At Craigmulloch, I had most comfortable quarters at the keeper's house. After lunch I felt that it was my obvious duty to learn something of the country. The best way in which I could do this, was by following a ridge due south, when I should have the Kells range on the east, and the Merrick and its *confrères* on the west. Crossing the Carrick burn by a bridge, the little hill of Starr was ascended. From here the great scene of desolation, so characteristic of this region, commenced—long stretches of boggy moorland, dotted over with boulders and lochans, stretched out for miles. Over this moor, or more correctly through it, one has to travel in this country. The next landmark surmounted was a little hill with a long name, Clachmawhannal, 1,169 feet. The desolation became greater as I advanced. Bearing slightly to the west, still travelling through boggy moor, I arrived on firmer ground, and ascended Hooden's Hill. The ridge has three cairns, and on its east encloses a corrie called the Slock, which is very typical of the best of the climbing ground in this region. The cliffs consist of granite, broken in places by irregular and usually broad ledges, and offering scrambling of no very high order, though plenty of danger and humiliation by stopping the climber at the foot of a smooth slab of granite set at what appears to be a ridiculously easy angle. The second cairn on the ridge, I believe, corresponds to the Gordon's Loup of the 6-inch map, 1,810 feet by aneroid. The ridge is broad and flat, the highest point being at the southern extremity, and is called the "Lump of Eglin," 1,875 feet. The ridge southward continues over Mullwharchar and Dungeon Hill, both over 2,000 feet, and presenting climbing which looks better than that mentioned in the description of the Slock corrie, but like that situated on the east or Gala Lane face. I left the main ridge at the Lump of Eglin, and followed a branch ridge eastwards of

the top of a hill with the interesting but suggestive name of Yellow Tomach, 1,775 feet. The rock would be better called speckled, so that the name might be altered.

The cliffs of this hill had received mention from Colin Phillip, and I had been in consequence ordered to explore them. Through these cliffs I descended, and found no difficulty, though climbing of the vegetable and boulder type could be obtained for short stretches. An occasional shallow gully might offer a wet pitch, probably coated with spongy moss, to be surmounted. The descent was continued into Gala Lane, and the burn reached. This was a fatal mistake. The burn here is no longer rushing and brawling, leaping on its rocky bed, but has retired to the quieter dignity of a fen drain. Its banks also recalled those of its southern relative in that they were sedgy and boggy. Down four miles of superlative bog I floundered, and regret to state did not speak well of the suggester of my trip. Everything in these degenerate days ends some time, and the only result was a greater consumption of broth, and a quieter pipe afterwards.

The next morning began badly with a heavy shower, and I found that the clouds had condescended to rest upon the head of the Wee Hill of Craigmulloch. At 9 A.M. things began to improve, and I set out. Profiting by my bog-trotting experiences of yesterday, I gave all burns a wide berth, and only joined the Eglin burn higher up. But not so high as I wished to, for above all things the climber is a weak man. Have they not frequently been turned aside by weather, heat, edibles, especially bilberries and crowberries? On this occasion I was deflected from my course by a large boulder that was split in two and offered some scrambling. It was situated by the side of the burn. The crack just allowed my body to enter, and some ten minutes were spent on the boulder ascending and reascending it. The Eglin soon took upon itself the modestly majestic drain-like characters that the Gala exemplifies so well, but, in contradistinction to the latter, its banks gave good walking. Crossing it just after the Saugh entered it, I surmounted the Rig of Minshalloch. This rig runs up to the foot of the great N.E. corrie, under the summit of

the Merrick. The Merrick, 2,764 feet, is the monarch of Galloway, and had spent the morning coquetting with the mist; but now forgot its kingly dignity so far as to become sulky and childish, hiding its head in the mist. The ascent was made by the southern ridge of the corrie, which was grassy except for a few rocks. But now the Merrick treated its humble pilgrim most lavishly with wind and blinding snow. This low trick put my back up in both senses, and somewhat revengefully I at length sat on the monarch's cairn. From what could be seen of the corries,—they have been described as rocky,—scree seemed to greatly preponderate. In fact it was borne in upon me that Mr Phillip's descriptions were flavoured more by the artist than the rock climber. Following the ridge north, I ran over the Spear, 2,560 feet, which is to the Merrick as Stob Garbh is to Ben Lui, to the col, 2,125 feet. The Merrick is shaped somewhat like a squat Ben Lui. From the col I soon arrived at a barren and cairnless waste, which is the top of Kirriereoch, 2,562 feet. Crossing the county march, which is north of the summit, I descended over slippery long grass and scree to the col, 1,750 feet. And having had enough wind and snow for one day, I descended, joining the burn, Tunskeen, followed it to Loch Macaterik. Passing the sandy little cove Macaterik, and following the Black Garpel burn, I rejoined the Eglin, and so home. I had intended to include Tarfessock and the Shalloch on Minnoch, following the length of the Merrick range, and this could have easily been done in decent weather. The shapes of these hills are not very bold. The Merrick I have likened to a squat Ben Lui: Kirriereoch recalls the writing-desk hill of the Badminton, and Tarfessock and the Shalloch are miniature Aonach Mors from Roy Bridge.

Saturday morning promised a fine day, and kept that promise well. The views were spoilt by haze, and a cold wind prevented long halts. At 9.30 A.M. I strolled by Starr, and crossed the Gala at Lochhead farm, and continued up the lower slopes of the Kells to a kind of high level route, where the going is easy and the Gala bogs avoided. Crossing the Kirreoch burn, Meikle Craigrarson, 2,000 feet, was ascended. The western hills of Gala Lane are well seen

from here, and present the best-looking cliffs and gullies in the neighbourhood. The ridge of Meikle Craigrarson abuts on the mass of Corscrine, which is the highest hill in the Kells range, and from the former hill presented the aspect of a somewhat glorified Primrose Hill clad with snow. For be it said for the benefit of northern readers, Primrose Hill, 219 feet, and Parliament Hill, Hampstead, 330 feet, are the Salisbury Crags or Whangie of the Cockney, and it will be easy to understand why the London contingent of the Club did not demean themselves to participate in the "local scrambles polemical essays." The top of Corscrine for the height of the hill (2,668 feet) is even larger than that of Aonach Mor. After a painstaking search a diminutive cairn was found not at all on the place one would expect to find it, but placed according to the whim and exactness of the Ordnance Survey. In order to warm myself, and save other wanderers trouble in finding it, I built the cairn into more decent proportions. Then, as the day was still young, I strolled to the North Gairy top (2,175 feet) in order to see the Loch Dungeon, situated between it and Millfire and Milldown. The saddle between Corscrine and the next hill to the north, Carlin's Cairn, is about 2,025 feet high. Carlin's Cairn is crowned by a large and evidently ancient cairn, of which the following history is related by Mr Harper in his "Rambles in Galloway," p. 214 :—"The cairn was erected by the wife of the miller of Pulmaddy, who, on Bruce taking refuge at the mill when pursued by the English, concealed him among the sacks of corn in the hopper of the mill, and effected his escape. In happier times Bruce rewarded his protectress with a grant of land in the neighbourhood of Pulmaddy. She, in return, wished to raise a monument to the king for the generous gift, and some time after she brought together all her neighbours and kinsfolk, and caused them to carry a quantity of stones to the extreme edge of the Kells Rhyngs, in sight of Carrick, and overlooking Loch Doon, and there she erected what it is now known as Carlin's Cairn." From this point Corscrine has improved greatly in appearance. The N.E. corrie, flanked by the ridge of Craigrine, was filled with snow, through which the black rock showed. In the summer I have no doubt the corrie

is full of scree. The east slope of Carlin's Cairn consists of steep grass, broken rock and scree, and forms one of the more savage gairies of the district. The ridge northwards is very broad and hummocky, with a pool or two of water. Meaul is a lump, as its name implies, and is 2,279 feet high. From here I branched off west to a col, 1,850 feet, and thence up Cairngarroch, 2,156 feet, one of the most shapely of the Kells. Retracing my steps, the main ridge was regained and followed, with a wall, over the three hummocks of Bow to the saddle, 1,875 feet, and then to the summit of the Coran of Port Mark. There is a cairn with a stick in it, and the height is 2,042 feet. The cold wind had dropped, and half an hour was spent comfortably dreaming of many things. Somewhat regretfully I made my way to Lochhead and back to Craigmulloch.

The Kells present absolutely no climbing possibilities. Their ridges are composed almost entirely of grass, and are usually exceedingly broad. Thus they present no difficulty that could not be overcome by any determined invalid. They yield fine views. To the west lie wild stretches of desolate moor, with green Gala Lane intervening between the Kells and the cliffs of Yellow Tomach, Mullwharchar and the Dungeon. Beyond these are seen glimpses of Lochs Enoch and Neldricken. The picture is closed by the fine line of hills, the Merrick and its Spear, Kirriecoch, Tarfessock and the Shalloch o' Minnoch. On the east lies the green valley with the village of Carsphairn, extending by St John Dalry on to Loch Ken; and behind Carsphairn, its Cairns-muir towered up in its snowy robes, looking worthily "the highest of the three," and flanked by the undulations and beautiful colouring of the lowlands. Of the distant views I cannot speak, as I could not even see my earliest friends, the Arran Hills.

Thus ended as pleasant three days' holiday as any hill wanderer could desire. The desolation of the country forced my loneliness on me, but there was no climbing where a companion was necessitated. The last day the weather hounded me with wind and rain back to Dalmellington, perhaps as a profaner of the sacred fastnesses of the hills.

To this paper I append a geographical note giving the heights of the principal summits and cols. The dips are none of them great, and each range could be done in a day's work. A glance at the list will show that the "footage" is well distributed throughout the "mileage."

East Range from S. to N.

The Merrick,	2,764 feet.
Saddle,	2,500 "
The Spear,	2,560 "
Saddle,	2,115 "
Kirrieroch,	2,562 "
Saddle,	1,750 "
Tarfessock,	2,282 "
Saddle,	2,025 "
Shalloch on Minnoch,	2,519 "

Central Range from N. to S.

Gordon's Loup, 1,810 feet app., dip unnoticeable.	} Hooden's Hill.
Lump of Eglin, 1,875 " " "	
E. of Lump of Eglin, Yellow Tomach, 1,775 feet.	
Saddle, 1,600 feet	
Mullwharchar, 2,272 "	
Saddle, ?	
Dungeon Hill, 2,000 " (cont.)	
Saddle, ?	
Craignaw, 2,000 " (cont.)	

Kells Range from S. to N.

Meikle Millyea, 2,455 feet.
Col, 2,125 "
Milldown, 2,400 "
Col, 2,275 "
Millfire, 2,350 "
Col, 2,275 "
Corscrine, 2,650 "
W. of Corscrine, Meikle Craigrarson, 2,000 feet, dip inconsiderable.
S.E. of Corscrine, North Gairy Top, 2,125 feet, dip inconsiderable.
N.E. of Corscrine, Craignine, 2,000 feet, dip inconsiderable.
Col, 2,325 feet app.
Carlin's Cairn, 2,650 feet.
Col, 2,025 "
Meaul, 2,279 "
E. of Meaul, Cairngarroch, 2,156 feet.
Col, 1,813 feet app.

Bow (3 tops), 2,000 feet (cont.).

Col, 1,875 feet app.

Coran of Port Mark, 2,042 feet.

The above heights are obtained from the 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, and I have added the approximate height of other places from aneroid observations.

A'MHAIGHDEAN.

BY H. T. MUNRO.

FEW, if any, Scottish mountains are more difficult of access than A'Mhaighdean—The Maiden. Far from any human habitation, without a road or even a track approaching it, situated in the very midst of that wild district of moor, mountain, and loch—especially the latter—which stretches north and west from the shores of Loch Marce to those of the two Loch Brooms, and is given over entirely to deer, its very name is probably only known to few of our members, whilst fewer still have ever climbed it. Even the Ordnance surveyors do not seem to have mapped the district with their usual care,* for while the 6-inch map gives no height to the Maiden, the 1-inch map only gives a 2,750 feet contour.† It has long been suspected, however, that the mountain exceeds 3,000 feet in height. Dr Heddle and Mr Colin Phillip had both made it about 3,100 feet, and this has been given as its approximate height in the tables of 3,000 feet mountains published in Vol. I., though whether either of these gentlemen had actually climbed it, or merely estimated the height from levels on neighbouring hills, I am not sure.

For many years I have desired to make this ascent, because of its remoteness, because of its commanding position in the centre of a most beautiful and interesting district, and last but not least, to determine as far as may be its true height.

Easter Sunday, this year, 15th April 1900, was certainly not a tempting day for the hills—the worst of a very wet week, which, as Mr Mackay has said, was with difficulty sandwiched in between two spells of fine weather. H. G. S. Lawson and W. N. Ling, however, nobly agreed

* It will be seen from *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. III., p. 11, that on the O.S. maps of the whole of the southern portion of the Teallach range, which is only about six miles to the N.N.E. of the Maiden, not a single height is given.

† Sheet No. 92 of the 1-inch map. The name A'Mhaighdean is in the centre of the "O" of "Ross-shire."

to accompany me on an expedition to the Maiden, and at 9.45 we started from Kinlochewe in a pretty persistent downpour. There are practically only two possible routes to the mountain. One is by boat to Letterewe, and over the shoulder of Beinn Lair, but as it would have taken far too long to row from the head of the loch, and it was doubtful if we should get a boat from the Loch Maree Hotel on a Sunday, we chose the other—namely, by the Heights of Kinlochewe and Gleann na Muice.* The Heights of Kinlochewe, usually spoken of as “the Heights,” consist of a few crofters’ cottages by the burn side, and are not in any sense on a height. Driving or bicycling is possible so far. On the S.E. side of the burn there are some extremely fine falls of the Norwegian type. At the Heights you must be careful to cross to the left bank of the stream. The previous year when going to Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair (not to be confused with Coire Mhic Fhearchair on Beinn Eighe) and Stob Ban, I had followed the track marked on the map which keeps the right bank of the burn from the Heights; it, however, crosses to the left bank in half a mile, and to avoid having to wade it I had had a rough and trackless walk up the glen. Therefore, cross to the left bank at the cottages. There is a good bridle path up the glen as far as the end of Lochan Fada, where it ends.

The watershed here is a curious one, lying as it does between the little lochs Gleann na Muice and Sgeireach. The view from here is very striking and alone is well worth the two and a quarter hours which it took us to reach it, the cluster of hills round the head of Lochan Fada grouping as well as anything I have seen in Scotland—notably the black, frowning, northern precipices of Beinn Lair. We did not, however, see the view until our return, for the hills were shrouded in mist, and the rain had turned by this time into sleet.

A rough and trackless trudge along the north shores of Lochan Fada, having occasionally to strike inland to cross some of the numerous burns which come down from

* Of course the north shore of Loch Maree could be followed to Letterewe.

Beinn Tarsuinn. "Claona" marked on the map is a ruined sheiling, and all signs of the track leading north-west from it have long since disappeared. The most direct and obvious, as well as easiest way to the Maiden is straight up the long shoulder from here. As, however, the mist still hung low on the hills we thought it advisable to continue to the head of the loch before striking up, in order that we might on reaching the shoulder get a sight of the Gorm Loch Mòr to guide us. By so doing we lost a little time unnecessarily, for by the time we struck the shoulder the clouds had cleared off and the sun shone out. We had now reached the snow, which was pretty heavy and moreover drifting badly. Ling set the pace, which one of us, at any rate, who has no longer got youth on his side, found a pretty stiff one. The ascent, however, is perfectly simple—indeed one could ride to the top, which we reached at 3.30 (no cairn). Nevertheless the mountain is a fine one, with some good cliffs overhanging the Dubh Loch from its north-west shoulder. The sun shone brightly, and we spent a quarter of an hour admiring the view—the grand north-west face of Slioch, the long row of cliffs descending from the flat ridge of Beinn Lair, the lovely view down the Fionn Loch and the beautiful outlines of the Beinn Deargs and the Teallachs, only a half-dozen miles off to the north, being its most striking features. We all three carried aneroids, which we had carefully set on leaving the loch. The descent to the loch at Claona was made in thirty-five minutes, so we had a good opportunity of checking the aneroids, which with unusual unanimity gave the mountain as 2,060 feet above the loch. Now the loch is between 1,000 and 1,010 feet, so the mountain may safely be said to be 3,060 feet.

The return journey calls for no remark. From Claona to the end of the loch took an hour and ten minutes, and thence to Kinlochewe Hotel, which we reached at eight o'clock, two hours and a quarter. The weather, which had obligingly been fine just when it was most important to us, broke down again and rained in torrents as we walked down the glen.

A SATURDAY AFTERNOON ON THE NORTH FACE OF STUC A CHROIN.

BY J. GALL INGLIS.

A WELL-KNOWN and experienced member of the Club once remarked to the writer that he would not climb in winter with a man who came to a Meet provided with an alpenstock instead of an ice-axe, as he would be an element of danger to the whole party. It might have been supposed that the recipient of such plain advice would think twice before incurring the risks implied in the statement, but in mountaineering, as in other things, inexperienced mortals rush in where angels fear to tread, and one frosty morning early in February saw the writer at Lochearnhead Station, having volunteered to conduct his cousin, the Rev. James Inglis of Moukden, to the top of Stuc a Chròin. In defiance of the above warning, he had only armed the said gentleman with an alpenstock that had seen service in the Alps twenty years before, but by way of extenuating circumstances it may be mentioned that two prominent officials of the Club had spoken to him anent the mountain in question in rather disparaging terms. After hearing a Club official irreverently calling it "Stucky," one feels amply excused for having deemed it unnecessary to attack it in full war paint!

After a two-mile tramp along the road from the station, we crossed the Ample Burn, and struck diagonally up the side of Ben Our, towards the col between that hill and Ben Vorlich. It was hard frost, and snow to the depth of an inch or two covered the ground; the sun was shining brightly, and there seemed every prospect of a good day, were it not that a dark brown fog persistently drifted over the hills from the north-east, foreboding the fulfilment of the weather forecast of "snow showers." Little we thought, as we breasted the slopes in the cheerful morning light, of the surprises in store for us before the end of the day.

The first of these came when we had climbed a couple of hundred feet above the valley. The turf gave place to long heather, with the snow lying on the top of it in such

a manner as to make it impossible to see the nature of the ground beneath. As we went on, laboriously lifting our feet clear of snow and heather at every step, and slipping or stumbling every few yards, for ten, twenty, thirty minutes, we began to ask ourselves where pleasure or profit came in, in this kind of thing ; but as the snow rendered it impossible to select better ground, there was nothing for it but to go on in hope—which, alas, was long deferred !

About eleven o'clock the sky darkened, and a shower came sweeping up from Loch Earn. Something very small and white suddenly alighted on the writer's sleeve ; it was an exquisite six-rayed snow crystal, scarcely bigger than a large pin-head. So delicately was it formed that one wondered that it did not melt away at once ; but in the frosty air it remained intact, and presently similar crystals—some equally small, others as large as a threepenny piece, but all of perfect symmetry—came floating down at intervals of a few seconds. Presently one came which had its rays ornamented at the tips by tiny sub-rays ; others, some of them still more complex, but all perfectly symmetrical, came in slow succession, diverting the attention for the time being from the monotony of climbing. But in a few minutes ordinary snow-flakes began to come thick and fast, effectually putting a stop to the study of crystallography, and once more we stumbled on over the heather and through the “shower”—if such it could be called, seeing that it lasted for fully an hour.

About 1,600 feet up the heather had been burnt, and the going became easier. The snow “shower” came to an end about the same time to our great relief, and a little later we became quite cheerful on coming to a large, though narrow snowfield of very hard snow at a tolerably steep angle. Up till then everything had pointed to the probability of the snow being powdery for the rest of the day, so we welcomed the seventy feet of cutting involved, and hoped for more ! Having surmounted the slope, we went on without further incident to the col connecting Ben Our with Ben Vorlich, reaching it at one o'clock.

The view from the col was not very inspiring ; the hill-tops were hidden by heavy mist which gave every

promise of having come to stay. An icy blast blew up from the corrie on our left, chilling us to the bone as we walked along the col, which keeps on the 2,250 feet contour for nearly three-quarters of a mile. We found also that by coming *via* Ben Our we had involved ourselves in a long circuit round the corrie between Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chròin, whereas we ought to have followed the footpath up Glen Ample for a couple of miles, and then turned off up the burn coming out of the corrie. In consequence of this mistake it was nearly two o'clock before we reached Bealach an Dubh Choirein, and saw the rocky northern buttresses of Stuc a Chròin towering above us into the mist.

By this time the weather had taken a turn for the worse ; the mist, now darker than ever, had crept farther down the hill, and clouds of snow-dust were borne on the blast that swept up from Glen Dubh Choirein. We had wished to attempt one or other of the gullies on the north face ; but in view of the weather and of the fact that we must catch the evening train for Edinburgh, we came to the conclusion that we must try something easier. And with a sigh of regret that all hope of adventure must be abandoned, we began to traverse westwards along the hillside below the rocks. It was composed of small boulders, half concealed by snow, among which one had to move with some caution to avoid stepping into concealed holes. In about twenty minutes we came to the foot of a long straight open gully—or hollow, rather—just to the west of the rocks, and leading, so far as the mist permitted us to see, right up to the top of the ridge. It was filled with very powdery snow, but we resolved to make it our line of ascent.

Just as we began to ascend it the weather most unexpectedly began to improve. The mist lifted, revealing the top of the ridge—which was heavily corniced—a little to our right, and five or six hundred feet above us. Under the dark line of mist that arched the corrie, Ben Our suddenly shone out in snowy splendour as the sun broke out from the clouds that had obscured him since the forenoon ; the wind fell, and all around there were unmistakable signs that it was going to be a fine evening. So we

pushed on with redoubled vigour to gain a long rib of stones and rock, just peering above the snow, that led nearly to the top of the ridge, and seemed to offer easier going than the heavy snow-wreaths in which we were floundering. But a hundred feet before the rib was reached, to our astonishment the powdery snow suddenly came to an end, and we were confronted with a smooth slope of the hardest and toughest snow the writer has ever seen. It was so hard that the "big hobnailer" rebounded from it leaving scarcely a mark, so the axe had again to be brought into requisition, and big "soup-plates" were cut for the benefit and safety of the alpenstock man, as the angle was about forty-five degrees. The work was hard but congenial, and the leader did not spare himself, partly from ignorance of the labour involved in cutting steps up a slope of such hardness, and partly because he expected that the rock rib already referred to would save further trouble till quite near the top of the ridge. But when he reached the rib he was greatly chagrined to find that he could not get on to it at all! From below it had seemed an easy slope up which one could walk easily; instead, it was composed of thin flakes of stone at a steep angle, hard frozen to earth or turf it is true, but too small and unreliable for either hold or hitch. Moreover, its sides of smooth rounded rock, rising out of a small "bergschrand" filled up with powdery snow, beat off all attempts to get on to it, so there was nothing for it but to keep to the snow and try again farther up. But as the leader uncoiled the rope for the sake of his alpenstock companion—who had never been on a steep snow-face before—and looked at the smooth icy slope above and below, he began to wonder how much hope of safety lay in the inch and half spike of the said alpenstock if by any chance he slipped! However, he kept his thoughts to himself, and having roped, resumed the cutting of "soup-plates," each of which took at least twelve or fifteen vigorous strokes of the pick to produce.

Sixty feet or so higher up the leader again attempted to get on to the rib, and this time his efforts were crowned with success. Pausing to take breath, he began to consider the situation, which was such as to cause him some anxiety, for

he had reached his present situation by taking somewhat unjustifiable risks. The stones and rock above him did not seem much less arduous, but on the whole he felt that he would do almost anything rather than descend the last twenty feet he had come up ; so, having a good hitch, he brought up his cousin beside him, and then went on with all the speed he could. For the fast-yellowing sunlight gave warning that the short winter day would soon come to a close, and visions of anxious relatives vainly expecting the return of the mountaineers began to rise before his mind—also of a certain congregation on Sunday afternoon waiting in vain for the missionary they had specially invited to grace their annual missionary meeting !

After what seemed only a few minutes, but in reality nearly half-an-hour, the leader was startled to hear the rear man call out, "Sun's set !" Looking upward, he saw that about 120 feet of ever-steepening snow yet remained to be surmounted ; he had been working for two hours and a half on the slope already, and it was evident that the top could scarcely be reached under another hour. In these circumstances he saw that he must reserve what strength he still had for the final slope, and possible cornice ; also, that there was nothing for it but to try the somewhat risky experiment of setting his cousin—who had never cut a dozen steps in his life—to lead for a time. Accordingly the rear man was brought up to a specially prepared platform ; axe and alpenstock were exchanged, and while the new leader made his first essay at stepcutting, the writer at last got an opportunity of studying the scenery, for he could do little or nothing in the way of anchoring his cousin.

The varied view from that slope was one never to be forgotten. Fifty feet to the east were dark frowning buttresses of rock cleft by a very narrow gully. Beyond them was Ben Vorlich, clothed in the cold, marble-like majesty of his winter robe, known only to those who have been among high mountains in winter before or after sunset. Below lay the four hundred feet of greenish icy slope up which we had come, and as the writer saw at the foot the dark heads of rocks and boulders peeping out from the snow, the full dangers of the situation came before him. How easily the

glazed handle of the ice-axe might slip through the unaccustomed hands that were now wielding it! How easily his inexperienced companion might lose his balance on the narrow steps and cause both climbers to go shooting down with express speed! He sadly thought on the warning he had disregarded; a second axe would have given reasonable security, for the danger lay only in inexperience and incomplete equipment.

Meanwhile the new leader had been acquitting himself very creditably; but when he had advanced forty feet, he showed signs of being done up, and once more the writer resumed the lead. On starting to work again he wondered how his cousin had been able to make progress at all, for the snow was harder than before, and the angle of the slope had increased so much that it was necessary to cut hand-holds for safety. Soon the cutting had to be done by one hand, rendering progress slower than ever; but up we zigzagged for another half-hour until at last we knew that the top of the ridge must be within measurable distance. And now the leader thought he might try and press the pace. But to his great annoyance and anxiety, his tired legs refused to respond, beginning to tremble violently, and to take cramp, whenever he attempted to take longer or higher steps than usual. It was an awkward complication in such a situation—the angle of the slope was now somewhere about sixty degrees—but as it caused greater care than ever to be taken, it was perhaps a blessing in disguise.

It was an anxious moment as we neared the apparent top of the ridge: would we be confronted farther back by the continuation of the great cornices we had seen farther down the ridge? But it soon became clear that this fear was groundless, and after a few minutes of feverish work to surmount the last and steepest part of the slope, to his unbounded thankfulness the leader found himself standing in safety. The rear man soon appeared—an icicle an inch and a half long and nearly a quarter of an inch thick hung from his moustache—and we looked our congratulations to one another that we had got clear ere the darkness fell. Well we might, for the sun had set for nearly three-quarters of an hour; we were three thousand feet above

the sea, and five or six miles of unknown country would even now have to be traversed in the dark.

Striking straight down the other side of the ridge, we reached Glen Ample in about half an hour. Strathyre Station was only a couple of miles off—but on the other side of a hill which rose a thousand feet above us. It added much to our misery to think of its being so near and yet so far, and we went on in silence up the glen hoping that the path marked on the maps was a good one—but it was not even a bad one. Here and there, at first, we came upon it, but in spite of the light of a crescent moon, we soon lost it—if indeed it exists at all—and we were left to a greatly intensified repetition of our experiences on the sides of Ben Our, in heather compared to which that on Ben Our was short.

The passage of that glen remains in our memories like a hideous nightmare. We had breakfasted that morning at half-past five, and were now so tired and half drowsy that we dared not sit down to rest lest we should fall asleep and never wake again. Suffice it to say that we reached Strathyre at a quarter to nine, only to find the post-office shut, and that neither friends nor congregation could be communicated with till next morning. We spent that night and the Sunday in Strathyre, and after our exertions were glad not to be in town for Sunday duties.

In conclusion, the writer hereby intimates that he intends for the future to heed the warning mentioned at the beginning of this paper. He would also warn his mountaineering friends and clubmates that the mountain spirit that inhabits Stuc a Chròin evidently keenly resents being called “Stucky,” and also the slight put upon his dignity by coming to *his* habitation with an alpenstock—from that side at least!

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.

GLENCOE.—The week after Easter, A. E. Robertson and I, having both failed to get to Kinlochewe, set out in quest of some unambitious fresh air. For a tour from a mountaineering point of view so restricted, it might be well to exercise care in the choice of companions, or at least to make full disclosure of the restriction to those who may be chosen. This latter, from sheer carelessness, I failed to do until we were faced by our first difficulty on the hillside, fortunately at a point allowing a choice of routes. I am free to confess that I found Robertson rebellious ; but I pride myself on self-command, and he will now be found to acknowledge with enthusiasm my *vis inertiae*. In a word, the harmony of the expedition was for a moment in danger—but absolutely nothing else.

On Monday, the 16th, we reached Bridge of Orchy by the evening train, and rode to Clachaig. The road by lamplight requires some humouring, but offers no real difficulty. Next day we climbed Bidean by the Stone Shoot, and to make the most of the sunshine ambled home along the ridge with an eye to scenery. The detail was very fine, the hill showing good Arctic form, but the distance was hazy. Just as the south slopes came in view, as if by special arrangement, there started an avalanche upon, I hope, an unusual scale. Something like 100 yards of snow face seemed to give a lurch and boil away, the stain reaching downwards like a black ripple over water. The blocks fell from 500 to 700 feet, and judged by comparison with traces of small avalanches which we saw and examined, must many of them have been of the size of a grand piano.

Next day was stormy, so we started late and made our way to the ridge of Aonach Eagach by a perfectly easy slope, which gains the crest a little to the east of the dip on the east side of Meall Dearg. My self-command quelled a mutiny and refused the traverse.

Next day to Inveroran ; and on Friday, Stob Ghabhar, which also we found in full winter. The cornice was large but interrupted, and we made our way easily up at a point a few feet from the cairn. Both here and on Bidean, the snow was soft.

ALEX. MONCRIEFF.

GLEN FESHIE.—The *Journal* gives little if any information regarding the district lying at the head of the Feshie and the Tarf, and forming an interesting watershed with Carn an Fhidleir as centre, and the following note may be of interest. Leaving Edinburgh in the afternoon of 30th June with Messrs F. G. Sutherland and M. S. Shaw (non-members), Kinraig was reached over an hour late. After supper at Dunachton Cottage—nearly a mile to the north-west of the station, but comfortable—we left at 10.15 and followed the road to Feshie-bridge, whence we made straight for the summit of Creag Mhigeachaidh by 12.15. The sky was rather thick, save for a band of strong yellow light in the north which was finely reflected in the Spey and the numerous lochs in the valley. A short descent and a longer ascent brought us near the top of Geal Charn, and then passing a rather dilapidated bothy, we reached the ridge of Sgoran Dubh in mist, and followed it to the summit by 2.15, where we came across a ptarmigan and young brood. After waiting for the sun to rise and scatter the mist, we left at 3.45, and held south over the plateau, and then descending to the Eidart, followed the stream till its bend to meet the Feshie, where we left and made for Carn an Fhidleir. By leaving the Eidart sooner we could have avoided the Feshie and taken the low ridge separating the Feshie from the Geldie; our route took us across the Feshie twice. Carn an Fhidleir, though giving a rather tiresome ascent over heather and grass (a path or ditch leads nearly to the col to the west, but the direct route is simpler), commands for its height a very fine view, and is interesting as giving rise to tributaries of the Spey, Dee, and Tay. The *Trientalis* and dwarf cornel were plentiful on its north side. Leaving the top at 12.30, we descended to the Glas Feith Bheag, and followed it to the Tarf, crossed that stream, and made for Loch Mhaire. The Allt Mhaire, which we followed to the Tilt, is, for the first few miles, very sluggish, passing through peat bogs, but thereafter taking a rapid drop of over 100 feet, runs through a grassy valley for a mile or so. We forded the Tilt half a mile beneath its junction with the Allt Mhaire, and reached Blair before 8 P.M.

A. W. RUSSELL.



BEN LOMOND FROM NEAR INVERUGLAS.

W. Inglis Clark.

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

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S.M.C. GUIDE BOOK.

THE Editor of the S.M.C. Guide Book has met with insuperable difficulties in completing the work in the form originally contemplated, and to enable some progress to be made, he proposes, when space permits, to run portions of it through the pages of the *Journal*. Members will thus have the use of what has already been written, and allow the Editor to have the benefit of any corrections or suggestions that may occur to them.

The arrangement of the book falls naturally into six divisions, and it is proposed to name them as follows:—

1. SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS.—Includes all south of Fort William, Glen Spean, and Loch Laggan, west of Highland Railway, and all north of the Forth and Clyde Canal.
2. EASTERN DIVISION.—Includes all south of Inverness, east of Lochs Ness and Lochy, and north-east of Glen Spean, Loch Laggan, and the line of the Highland Railway from Dalwhinnie to Perth.
3. WESTERN DIVISION.—Includes all west and north of the Caledonian Canal, and south of the Dingwall and Skye Railway.
4. NORTHERN HIGHLANDS.—Includes all north of the Dingwall and Skye Railway.
5. SOUTHERN UPLANDS.—Includes all south of the Forth and Clyde Canal.
6. THE ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

In the first division thirty-six groups have been under consideration, and these are—(1) Ben Lomond, (2) the

Arrochar group, (3) Ben Lui and its neighbours, (4) the Crianlarich group, (5) the Ben More trio, (6) Ben Vorlich, (7) the Ochils and the Fife Lomonds,* (8) the Trossachs Hills, (9) Ben Chonzie, (10) Schiehallion, (11) Cairn Mairg, (12) the Ben Lawers group,* (13) the Killin group,* (14) Heasgarnich,* (15) Ben Chaluim,* (16) Ben Doireann to Creachan, (17) Chuirn and Vannoch,* (18) Ben Cruachan, (19) Ben Eunaich, (20) Starav to Clachlet, (21) the Buchailles, (22) Bidean nam Bian, (23) Sgor na h-Ulaidh, (24) Beinn a' Bheithir, (25) Aonach Eagach, (26) Ardgour, (27) Mamore, (28) Ben Nevis, (29) Aonachs Mor and Beag, (30) the Easains, (31) Cnoc Dearg,* (32) Sgor Gaibhre,* (33) Beinn Eibhinn,* (34) Beinn a Chlachair,* (35) Ben Alder, (36) Sgairneach Mor.*

Of these groups, the eleven which have been marked with an asterisk have not yet been allocated, and the Editor will be glad to receive information regarding them.

BEN LOMOND, 3,192 ft.

(DIVISION I. GROUP I.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 12\frac{1}{2}'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 38'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, sheet 38. Bartholomew's reduced Ordnance Map, sheet 12.

The derivation of the name is uncertain. One writer gives it from an old British word Llummon, signifying a beacon ("Tartanland," p. 170).

Ben Lomond was long the most celebrated of Scottish mountains. It is still the rival of Ben Nevis for the foremost place in popularity. This is due to its conspicuous and easily accessible situation, to the ease with which it can be ascended, and to the magnificence of the view it commands. Owing to its somewhat isolated position at the southern extremity of the Highlands, it forms a conspicuous object from many points of view, whilst from its summit there is obtained a singularly extensive and varied survey of mountain and loch, valley and plain, with a picturesque middle distance of hill, wood, and water.

Ben Lomond seems to have been considered at the beginning of last century the only mountain in Scotland

worth ascending, for the countless travellers who deluged us with their "Tours" and "Guides" about that time, seldom fail to express either regret that the unsuitability of the weather had prevented their making the ascent, or to give a vivid picture of the "horrors of the dread sublime" that prompted "Ben Lomond's fearful height to climb."

Those who are interested in the annals of Ben Lomond are referred to the *S.M.C. Journal*, III., p. 140, for a *résumé* of the early descriptions of this mountain; but we may here state that Dr Garnett in his "Tour" of 1798 mentions that "this mountain is visited by strangers from every quarter of the island." From a remark, however, in the same book we must not be surprised at the strange and marvellous sights some of those early mountaineers saw, for it is stated that "it is deemed impossible to reach the top without the aid of a bottle of whisky!"

Geologically, Ben Lomond consists of a hard mass of mica schist dipping steeply to the south-east. The summit mass, which rises sharply on all sides, appears conical from most points, but is in reality a curved ridge which descends steeply towards Loch Lomond on the one side, and on the other is fringed by cliffs extending for some distance. The north end is steep, and under winter conditions may be difficult without suitable equipment. The corrie below the cliffs is unusually steep, so much so that it appears as one ascends to have no floor at all.

The actual summit is the top of a huge bastion which flanks the corrie on the north. From this the summit ridge extends south-east, and then bending to the north-east, dips somewhat steeply to Glen Dubh, the line of cliffs here forming its side towards the corrie. In winter long glissades may be had in the corrie under favourable conditions.

Ben Lomond may be ascended from every side. The cliffs, which are the attraction from a climbing point, lie close under the summit, and are therefore not included in ways of ascent.

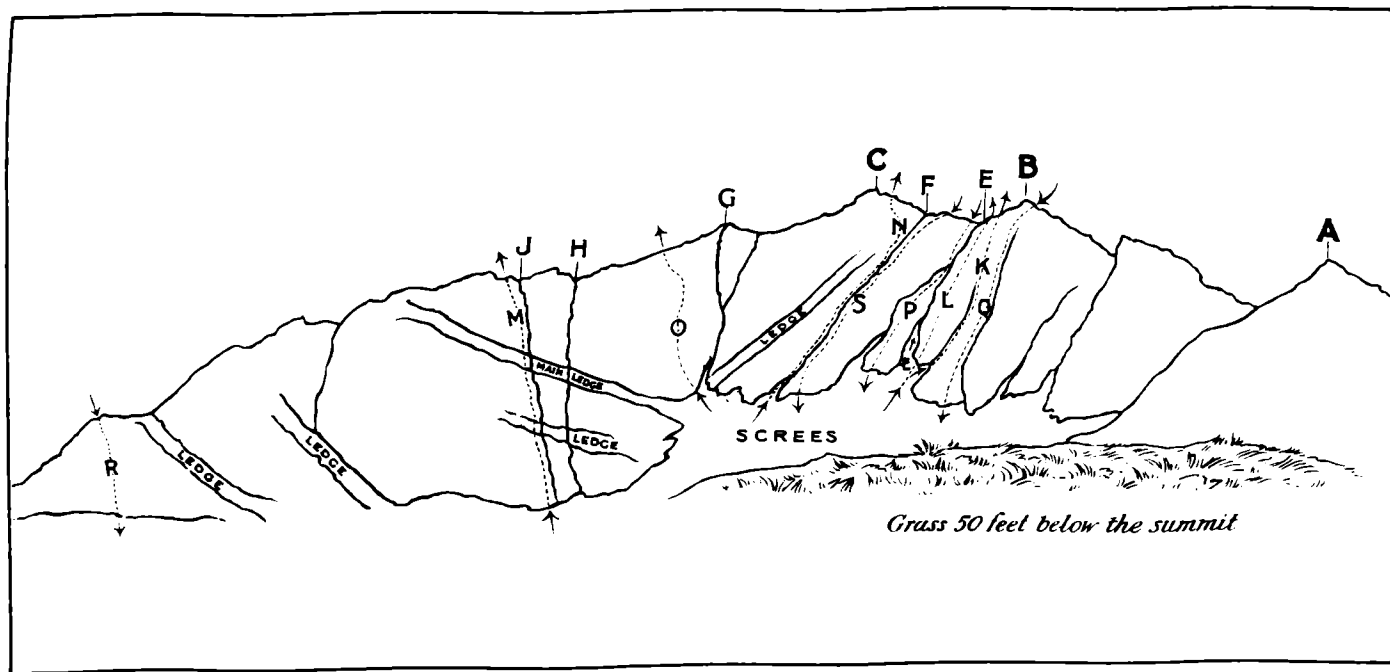
1. From Rowardennan. (a) *The ordinary route.* The gradient is easy, and ponies can be used. Turn to the right at the pier, and take the pony track at the hotel. This

ascends gently to the north-east, bends round to the end of the south shoulder, and follows the ridge of the shoulder to the foot of the peak, which is ascended by a zigzag. From the top of the zigzag the path is nearly level to the summit. Time, $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours. (b) From Ptarmigan Lodge north of the pier a direct ascent can be made to the top. This route is not always permissible, and has no advantage.

2. From Tarbet. (a) Go to Rowardennan and take the ordinary route; or (b) cross to Rowchoish and ascend steeply for 1,500 feet, then by an easy gradient on the Loch Lomond side of the Culness Burn to the foot of the peak. Thence the ascent is steepish. Time, $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours from Rowchoish.

3. From Inversnaid. (a) Follow a rough path to Rowchoish, and ascend as just described; or (b) it is better to leave the path before crossing Culness Burn and ascend, keeping upon the right side of the stream, and make for the north ridge, where a narrow path can be found to the top.

4. From Aberfoyle there is a choice of routes. (a) Follow the Duchray road to where it crosses the ridge at the head of Loch Ard. This point may also be reached by taking a rough track from the foot of Loch Ard through "The Ross" to Couligartan. Here take the road that continues up the Duchray valley. This ends at the new aqueduct of the Glasgow waterworks across the Duchray, and a little farther up is a ruined bridge. This point can also be reached by taking the Loch Ardside road to Blarhulachan House, and crossing the dip of the hill above by a path which should be asked for, as two paths ascend from this point. The ruined bridge is seen after crossing the dip. Crossing the Duchray (if the river is swollen it is best to cross by the aqueduct and follow the river to the bridge), a path, very sloppy in wet weather, will be found leading almost in a bee-line to a wooded knoll with ruined cottages at the foot of Bruach Caoruinn Glen. Cross the knoll at the cottages and descend to the stream and cross it (about half an hour from the bridge). Ascend from the stream for a few hundred feet, and thence an easy gradient leads along the hillside on the left side



THE CLIFFS OF BEN LOMOND LOOKING SOUTH-EAST FROM SUMMIT.

A TOP No. 1.
B TOP No. 2.
C TOP No. 3.

E, F, G, H, J GULLIES.

K, L, M, N, O ROUTES ASCENDED.

P, Q, R, S ROUTES DESCENDED.

of the stream till a broad moor is reached about one hour from crossing the burn. Thence cross the moor to the shoulder of the Ben, about three-quarters of an hour. Irregularities are best avoided by keeping to the sloping ground on the left (south) margin of the moor. Once on the shoulder the Rowardennan path is reached. The gradients of this route are easy, but from the foot of Bruach Caoruinn Glen to the shoulder it tends to be dull. (b) Take the Loch Ard road as far as Blaruskin or "The Teapot," and cross the hill to the Duchray valley by a road possible for carts to Strone Macnair keeper's house. (*Note*.—Avoid the turn to the left after crossing the Chon.)

An alternative with more ascent, but shorter, and giving a grand view of the Ben, is this. Take the road to the left at the head of Loch Ard till it crosses the Chon Water. Leave the road on the right just beyond the bridge, and follow a track, not always clear, to the dip of the hill, and thence descend to Strone Macnair.

Continuing the road past Strone Macnair up the Duchray valley, there are several routes.

(1.) Cross the stream by stepping stones close to and visible from road a little below Loch Dubh, and ascend to the lowest point in the ridge on the other side—about 1,000 feet. A slight descent is then necessary to the watershed between two small streams. Ascend the bluff beyond and work round the head of the streams shown on the map to the foot of the peak, where the Rowardennan path will be got. This is the most direct way, but dull.

The other routes ascend from Comer.

(2.) Ascend by the left side of the Allt Mor, and work round the head of the stream to the foot of the peak, as shown on Bartholomew's map. This is roundabout and dull.

(3.) By keeping the left side of the stream proceeding from the corrie, and crossing it to the right side about the lower end of the corrie, and ascending the corrie, the ridge is reached by a gap just to the south of the summit. The top can thus be reached in under two hours from Comer. This route is steep nearly all the way.

(4.) From the cottage on the left bank of the Duchray

cross the main stream by a bridge, and keep to the south side of the Caorunn Achaidh burn for a few hundred yards. Cross it above some linns and ascend the hillside, following the trend of the stream. Two or three isolated trees act as landmarks. In about an hour a sloping moor is reached, with the north shoulder right in front. Crossing the moor a steepish ascent may be made where a small stream descends from the ridge, or farther to the left a broad couloir at a similar angle ascends to the ridge, where it joins the main peak. Once on the ridge the route is the same as from Inversnaid as already described. This is an interesting route. Time, $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours from Comer.

(5.) From Stronachlacher (or Inversnaid). The road is followed to Frenich farm at the head of Loch Chon. Thence a ridge of about 1,000 feet ascent has to be crossed, and a descent of nearly as much made to Comer. By crossing the Glen a little above Comer some descent is saved.

The view is most extensive. Beneath, to north and south, lies Loch Lomond, bisected by the projecting height of Ptarmigan. To the east Loch Ard nestles amid its wooded hills, and, beyond, the Lake of Menteith is visible. In the angle between these directions lie the Lowlands. To the east the Carse of Stirling and Forth estuary stretch to the horizon, flanked by the Ochils, the Saline Hills, and the Lomonds. Stirling Castle and Abbey Craig are clearly visible, and even Arthur's Seat may be seen occasionally. To south-east lie the Campsie range and Kilpatricks with Glasgow smoke visible between. Far away rise the distant Tinto and South Lanarkshire hills, and farther to the right Merrick, Cairnsmore, and other South Ayrshire hills. Turning to the Highlands, the Arran peaks are seen over Bute to the south-south-west, and the Mull of Kintyre and sea beyond, and even Ireland are visible, and the Paps of Jura in the distance to the west-south-west. Just across the loch the Loch Long group, Ben Crois, Narnain, Ben Vorlich, Ben Vane, Ben Ime, Ben Arthur (the Cobbler), and Ben Donich rise boldly. Then follow Mull in the far distance, Ben Cruachan nearer, and Ben Lui over the head of Loch Lomond. Just to the right of this Ben Nevis rises bluff beyond the Black Mount and Glencoe hills.

To the north lie Ben Chabhair, Cruach Ardran, and the Crianlarich group. Farther to the right are Ben More and Stobinian. To the right again is the more distant flat-topped mass of Ben Lawers, and then Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin, seen between Ben Vane and Ben Ledi, with Ben Venue almost immediately in front, complete the panorama.

As has been already indicated, a range of precipitous cliffs surrounds the great Northern Corrie. The rocks, consisting of mica schist, are not altogether satisfactory from a climber's point of view. Even when but of moderate steepness, the absence of holds and their generally slippery nature render their ascent unpleasant, if not dangerous. Moreover, frequent grass patches intermingle with indefinite portions of cliff, so that the climber, generally speaking, finds a difficulty in following any well-defined arête or natural line of ascent. Many gullies intersect the cliffs, some of which afford sport in summer, but it is in winter or early spring that these should be visited. Naturally of a steep angle, they afford, at times, very difficult ice or snow work, when by the trickling and freezing of water, a wall of ice is produced approaching the vertical in steepness.

Referring in detail to these cliffs, it is convenient to divide them into four sections:—

The summit, and tops A, B, and C. The great bastion forming the summit is steep, and in winter has on its north side several narrow snow gullies.

The cliff below top A presents no difficulty, being much broken up. The next section, dominated by top B, extends to the gully E, where the cliffs bend sharply to the east, and no less than three routes have been explored on the precipitous face. The third section, culminating in top C, presents a steeper and loftier face on the whole, unclimbable walls broken by easy ledges or grass patches. The gullies on this face are steep, and two, F and J, have been ascended. Apart from the gullies, perhaps the best defined route of ascent is the Pinnacle Route O, so called from the pinnacled rocks near the skyline. This affords a pleasant variety, although its difficulties may be in great measure avoided by those of strictly Salvationist principles.

For convenience of reference, the routes of ascent or descent are given alphabetically in the order of priority, as far as can be gathered from references in the *S.M.C. Journal*. The gullies named are only those referred to in published papers.

Messrs Fraser Campbell and Lester, and afterwards Maclay and Naismith, ascended route K, and descended route P (*S.M.C. Journal*, III., p. 344).

Messrs Maclay, Naismith, and Weston ascended routes L and M, and descended Q (*S.M.C. Journal*, III., p. 344).

Messrs Inglis Clark and Shannon ascended gully F and routes N and O, and descended routes R and S (*S.M.C. Journal*, IV., p. 331).

THE BEN LAWERS.

BY ALPHONSE DE MACTURQUE.

AH, the beautiful country of Scotland; "the land of the mountain and the deluge;" of the purple heather and of the "usquebaugh"; the fatherland of MM. Bruce and Wallace and Burns, and of John Knox. The Scotland and France have they not ever been enchained by of sentiments the most amiable; and for me there is also that although I am the individual of France my ancestors at a distance they were citizens of Scotland.

Behold me, then, *en voyage*, to apprise myself of the beautiful countenances of this dear native land; having filled up myself with the excellent yarns of M. Black, of Milord Sir Scott, and of MM. Carlyle and Bædeker.

I am arrived at Edinburg, where I myself avail of letters of presentation to MM. Macdram and Macparritch, very honourable citizens of this Athens Modern. And after several days they me propose that I them accompany on a mountain pilgrimage to the Highlands. What joy! I am in want to see these Highlands—"the land of brown marsh and of the hairy forest;" the cradle of my ancestors heroic.

Yes, I will to go with my most excellent friends. My heart is in the Highlands with MM. John Knox and Rob Roy, and the brave fellows of the Club of Mountaineers of Scotland.

But alas! one says to me that the mountains find themselves most high; the cold makes enormous; and it is wanting me the great boots and the kilts, the ropes, the crampons, the clinometers, and the ice-hatchets, with whiches it is important that the passenger on the mountains to equip himself. Courage, Alphonse! I say to me; I shall myself procure these chattels, and my comrades shall see that I am not below of my heroic ancestors of Scotland.

Of the merchants of Edinburg I sharply acquire myself my fitting-out; along with the scientific instruments, the knife of the chase, the pistol, and the hunting trumpet of brass for to sound it the note of triumph when I am arrived

at the supremest peaks of the mountains. Also a flagon very great of this good whisky, to prevent me the rheums.

By the railway we are arrived at the city of Killin from Edinburg, one night very swarthy; with of rain, and flatulent—me, Alphonse, and this dear Macdram, with the excellent Macparritch.

I am charmed of the *entourage*—these brave Highlanders, this warm fire of the peat-bogs—the whisky, and the haggis.

Whence is this haggis? He is a brown animal—as *beche de mer*—a species of snail, of magnitude very great. He burrows himself below of the rocks on the mountains; and the Highlanders seize him with ferocious dogs, which one calls “the collie dogs.” Then one boils him in the whisky and devours him as a pouding.

And the bagpipe! I weep, I am desolate with joy. What of flatulent tempests—what melody of screechings and yellings as of one thousand damnations! My ears they burst themselves; my soul he is at a distance with my ancestors heroic, with Sir Scott, and the brave Milord Macbeth!

And at all times we drink of the whisky. Sometime he is naked and very powerful; other time one names him “the toddie”—with of water very hot, and of sugar and lemons; beside, we drink him in flagons boiling of soda!

Hourra! I uplift myself and I dance the reel dances of the Highlanders—the strathspey quick-of-the-foot, and the pantaloon dance. My foots they are in the atmosphere—I look at my brave ancestors—I see MM. Macdram and Macparritch, not the ones, but by dozens and twenties. Oh my poor head! he explode frightfully—at an end one carries me to the chamber of sleep.

To the morning we prepare ourselves for the ascension. The Ben Lawers is a mountain prodigious, of steep incredible; some little of distance from the city of Killin. On the chart he has of height 4,000 metres. He arises on the shore of Lake Tay up to heaven.

We depart from the city at seven hours twenty-five minutes; and with the valiant hearts we march to the conquest along a highway by the border of the lake, and

beneath the disreputable thickets. But we do not see this pig of the Ben Lawers. He effaces himself in fog of obscurity terrific.

"Behold the Scottish mist," says me Macdram. But for me I whisper, "Courage, Alphonse, my friend;" and I in secret imbibe a fragment from my flagon of the good whisky.

Forward, my braves children! Arrived at foot of the Ben Lawers, I enclose myself in my helmet of sheepskin, my wetter-mantel, my protector of the bosom, my spectacles of the blue glass, my respirator, and my envelopes of the legs; and I am strapped to the long rope alpine with my companions of the *voyage*.

Hourra! at last my foots they are on the heather of my fatherland; but Holy Blue! I find me engulfed very soon in a crevasse, most hollow, in the marsh; whence one extracts me with much of difficulty and of danger by aid of the rope. Alas! my kilts he is black of the mud; and oh, the season makes cold. The wind he puffs like thousand of bagpipes—the thunder grumbles of a manner to appal—the fog and the rain but they are frightful.

The mountain ever ascends in face; and I am compelled to creep stomach to land, with pain hard and robust. But this dear Macdram ever he stretch strongly on the rope; besides M. Macparritch projects me by the rear; and we continue ourselves to elevate. We see nothing; we are embraced of fogs; we breathe the cold water like of fishes.

My heart he kicks himself in the bosom; my throat she strangles herself. All quickly, some enormous animals rush themselves past us in the fog, with bestial commotions. "Holy name of a pipe!" I cry myself; "these are the bears, the wolves;" and in a moment I extract my pistol, my knife of the chase; but this Macparritch he say me, "No! it is the sheeps." So we drink again the willie-waughs of the whisky, and we press forward—"with robust hearts to the stey brae."

Soon we are arrived in the snow; and the rocks more gross than of castles enclose our advance. But we humbug them, with bravery, and they are abandoned astern.

During of many hours, as it to me appearances, we buck up forward ; and of labour there is none of cessation. Sometime we creep on the knees—like a snake—around of the rocks ; sometime we skate on the stomach across the snow ; sometime we hang like a spider to the rope. My brave companions cut ladders in the ice with blows of the hatchet, and the rains descend to the inferior country, as the avalanches. My kilts he has become of ice and he is splintered in ribbons ; and the acidity of the weather gives me on the limbs of great scarifications.

At the end there arises in face of us a rampart prodigious of uncouth black rock. We ourselves hurl to the attack, with of cries, "Come along, Macduff." But in vain the able-bodied Macdram beats him with the hatchet, the objection will not herself efface. With the nails and the teeth we scratch furiously upon the rock ; we entomb the toes in his icy caverns ; we caress him with the knees and the stomach, but we cannot climb him up. Again and again a time we shoot forth aloft the rope—and for her of length we attach the our cravats, our girdles and to add the our strings of the boot—she will not herself suspend.

"Alas," I cry, "we are betrayed, we are lost ;" and I burst myself into tears on the neck of Macparritch.

"Courage, my old one," says me this brave man. He withdraws the spikes out of his boots, and them affixes to the rock, in effect to construct a ladder for our elevation. Success follows him ; and with joy we surmount over the wicked step. But during his endeavours such was the cold that his vestments gripped themselves, and his breath made to freeze upon the cruel rock his eyebrows and his moustache ; and it was wanting the united hardihood of us all for him to detach.

In an end after descending more of profound chasms, and the escalade of more of light-headed pinnacles of rocks, here are we arrived at summit of the Ben Lawers—at three hours ten minutes and a half after mid-day. I am suffused of joy, I weep upon the bosom of my brave friends.

"*Vive la France ! Vive l'Ecosse !*" I shout with enthuse ; and I make to tantara upon my trumpet ; and

we all drink copiously—"a small drop in the eyes"—of the John Barleycorn.

There is none of panorama ; only this dam Scottish mist ; with of rain a deluge, and of tempest a "tapsalteerie."

Let us descend ! My friends, of our more adventures I will not engrave upon you. In an end we arrive ourselves at our auberge in the city of Killin at ten and a half hours of the night. My robes they are in small tit-bits ; my hide is of the blue and the black, and with the mud and ensanguinated ; I have abandoned the my pistol, my cutlass, and my camera in the crevasse ; my boots I them have left embalmed in the peat-bogs ; and I possess the rheum ; but me—Alphonse—have I not stood myself on the spike the most supreme of the Ben Lawers, and I shall return to the beautiful France in triumph.

And, good M. Editor, my excellent friends they will to say me that I shall write for your honourable Journal some little documents of our voyage, in the language Scottish—that it may be a spur and a pushing forward and an information to other brave boys to pursue in our footsteps.—Receive, M. Editor, the assurance of my consideration the most profonde.

A. DE M.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE TWELFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Royal British Hotel, Edinburgh, on the evening of Friday, 7th December 1900. The President, Mr A. E. Maylard, was in the chair.

The Hon. Treasurer's statement for the past year was submitted by Mr Naismith, and showed that the finances of the Club were in a flourishing condition, the balance at the credit of the Club having increased from £158. 12s. 6d. to £208. os. 11d. in the course of the year.

The President referred to the important services which had been rendered to the Club by Mr Naismith, and to the great regret with which the Committee had acceded to his desire to be relieved from the honourable responsibilities of office. Mr Graham Napier was elected Hon. Treasurer, as recommended by the Committee, and Messrs Bell and Lawson were elected to the vacancies in the Committee caused by the retiral in rotation of Mr W. C. Smith and Professor Norman Collie.

The President next submitted for the approval of the meeting an arrangement by which the use of a special room in the Hon. Secretary's office would be available for Club purposes, such as storage and consultation of books, maps, &c., and the hanging of Club pictures. He expressed the hope that this step towards the attainment of a separate Club room might lead to further donations on the part of members of pictures and other things which might be of interest. The Club unanimously approved of the proposal.

It was decided, after some discussion, that the New Year Meet should be held at Loch Awe, and the Easter Meet at Fort William.

The Hon. Secretary reported that William Andrew Brown, John Gilbert Hay Halkett, Alfred Harker, James Lindsay Henderson, Ronald Macdonald, John Swinnerton Phillimore, Thomas Handyside Baxter Rorie, Charles Alfred Smith, and Charles William Walker had been elected, and that the membership of the Club was now

151. At the beginning of the year the membership had been 146, of whom 3 had resigned and 1 had died, while the addition of 9 new members brought the membership up to 151. Special reference was made to the loss sustained by the death of Mr John W. M'Gregor, who was well known to many of the members as an enthusiastic and accomplished climber, and who had died suddenly in Mexico.

Immediately after the meeting the ANNUAL DINNER was held. The members present numbered thirty-seven and the guests twelve, with Mr Maylard in the chair. The toasts were:—

The Queen	The Chair.
The Imperial Forces	The Chair.
<i>Reply</i> —Mr Rennie.	
The Scottish Mountaineering Club .	The Chair.
The Alpine Club	Mr W. C. Smith.
<i>Reply</i> —Mr Solly.	
The Retiring Treasurer	Mr Brown.
<i>Reply</i> —Mr Naismith.	
The Guests	Prof. Ramsay.
<i>Reply</i> —Prof. Lodge.	

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.

S.M.C. ABROAD IN 1900.

Dr COLIN CAMPBELL'S list for this year runs as follows :—(1) From Gepatsch Haus, the Weiss-See Spitze, descent by the very steep Weiss-See Glacier and the Nöderberg. (2) From Sulden Hotel, in the Ortler Group, the Königspitze, by the Königsjoch. The ascent was rendered very difficult by a tremendous storm the previous night which coated the rocks and ice with thin fresh snow, and caused great destruction in the Sulden Valley. (3) Crossed from Trafoi to Sulden by the Payer Hütte, with Miss Marjory Savage, guideless. (4) Traversed, with Mrs Campbell and Miss M. Savage, the Madatsch Glacier, the Ober-Signal Kuppe, and the Eben Glacier, from Franzenshöhe to Ferdinandshöhe, in the Ortler Group. (5) From Franzenshöhe ascended, with Miss M. Savage, the Geisterspitze, in the Ortler Group. The bad weather of the latter part of August cut the climbing short.

Messrs J. A. PARKER and F. C. SQUANCE, with Dr and Mrs INGLIS CLARK, spent three weeks in the Grödner and Rosengarten Dolomites. The whole party climbed the Grasleiten Thurm, Winkler Thurm, Haupt, Ost, and Nord Vajolett Thürme, Laurinswand, Kessel Kogel, Colombert, and Collaz, Zahnkofel. In addition one or more of the party climbed Funffingerspitz, Grohmannspitz (by Enzenberger Weg), Daint de Mesdi, Gran Odlä, Boespitz, Tschierspitz, Östliche Rothspitz (first ascent from east), Rothspitz No. 3 (first ascent), Scalieretspitz, Cima di Pape, and Schlern. They were favoured throughout by nearly perfect weather.

Mr H. G. S. LAWSON made the following ascents during the first three weeks of August :—Traversed Rothhorn to Mountet Hut, returning next day by Triftjoch : Weisshorn, ordinary route up and down from Randa : Dent Blanche, ordinary route from Staffel Alp, returning same way to Zermatt : Strahlhorn, from Adler Pass and Rimpfischhorn, from Adler descending to Taesch : Pollux, from Schwarzhornjoch and on over Castor to Sella Hut : Lyskamm from Sella Hut, descent *via* Lysjoch : Taschhorn, from Taescharp *via* Mischabeljoch,

descent to Randa. Snow fell on the evenings of 7th, 10th, and 17th, and the only generally clear view was from the Rothhorn on the 1st.

Mr W. H. LING was in the Cortena district of the Dolomites in August, and among his successful ascents were the Cinque Torre (various routes); Becco di Mezzodi; Piz Popena, S.E. ridge; Croda da Lago, up W. side by Sinigaglia's route and chimney, down N. side; Tofana di Mezzo, by "Via Inglese" (Phillimore's route) down by the precipices; Kleine Zinne, up N. side, down S. side; M. Cristallo, from the Pass. Mr GLOVER was with Ling on the Croda da Lago, Tofana, and Cristallo expeditions. They went up the Cinque Torre without guides, and made an unsuccessful guideless attempt on the Croda.

Mr JAMES MACLAY and Mr SOLLV made the following ascents in the Todi district, most of them guideless:—Dursistock, Scheerhorn, Gross Windgate, Piz Cambriales, Todi (traverse).

Mr RAEBURN and Mr DOUGLAS spent the inside of a fortnight in the N.W. Dolomites. Among their joint ascents were the Grosse Fermeda, the Zahnkofel, the Funffingerspitz, and Marmolada. Broken weather interfered much with their plans, but Mr Raeburn managed to include the top of one of the Vajolett towers.

Mr R. A. ROBERTSON was up the Cima Tosa, Cusiglio, Campanile di Val di Roda, Cima di Val di Roda (traversed from N. to S.), and Mr MAYLARD accompanied him on the Cima Tosa climb.

NEW EXPEDITIONS IN NORWAY IN 1900.

SÖNDMÖRE.

KVITEGGEN (1,705 metres) BY THE NORTH-WEST RIDGE.—On 14th July, Messrs G. P. Baker, Howard Priestman, and Wm. Cecil Slingsby were admirably led up this interesting and difficult ridge by Lars Haugen. This climb, which begins directly above the cosy mountain inn at Fibelstadhaugen, affords 2,600 feet of first-rate rock climbing up a steep and narrow ridge where sharp edges alternate with gruesome chimneys. Within 150 feet of the top, the party were faced by a broad crag which overhung a deep notch in the ridge. Lars, who was hoisted up on the shoulders of one of the party, tried gallantly, but all in vain, to climb up, and the rest were only too glad to see him down again. Finally, the crag was turned by a descent and a rather sensational traverse, and the *Kvit Egg*, or white ridge, a long cornice which reminded two of the party of Ben Nevis, and the peak was won.

This ascent is a good companion to the climb made on Slogen in 1899, and indeed it was planned and would have been made in September of that year but for a break in the weather. It is one of the best climbs in Söndmøre, a region which is an exaggerated Skye, with small glaciers thrown in.

JUSTEDALSBRÆ.

AABREKKEBRÆ.—On 18th July this grand glacier was ascended and thoroughly explored by Fröken Bertheau, Messrs Baker and Slingsby,

with Elias Hogrenning as porter. A pass which they had contemplated making was too dangerous to attempt, and probably was impracticable. This glacier is hemmed in by two almost perpendicular walls in a manner that is seldom seen in Norway and never in the Alps. It was once descended by Mr and Mrs Baker (*Alpine Journal*, Vol. XII., p. 269).

SANDENIBSKAR (about 5,100 feet).—On 20th July the same party set off from the luxurious hotel at Loen, in doubtful weather, to attempt the ascent of one of the Tinde Fjelde, a fine range of jagged spires behind Skaala. They went through a gap between Skaala and Sandenib which brought them in thick mist on to the Skaalabræ, thus making a new glacier pass. With this and several hours of very interesting glacier groping, well led by Hogrenning, they had to be content, and finally they descended a lovely valley to the farm of Hogrenning, where the parents of Elias regaled the party with cream porridge, home-brewed ale, aquavit, and other delicacies, a capital termination to a day of disappointment and yet satisfaction, and a considerable amount of adventure.

TYVE SKAR (Robbers' Pass) AND NYGAARDSBRÆ (about 6,200 feet).—On 22nd July the same party, with the addition of Mr H. Priestman and two porters, made this grand pass in glorious weather. Leaving the little restaurant at the head of Loensvand at 4.15, where they had spent the night, they reached the great snowfield far above the snout of the Kronebræ at 12, at a height of 5,250 feet, and set off on the glacier at 12.30. At 3.25 they gained rocks on Liakslen, and after a long rest they were struggling alternately with difficult "boiler-plate" rocks and intricate ice-falls until 11.15. Finally, they reached Faaberg at 2 A.M. next day. A glance at the beautiful coloured picture of this pretty serpentine glacier in Professor Forbes's "Norway and its Glaciers," will show that there are convex sides on the Nygaardsbræ, and that in these places chaos reigns supreme. Mr Patchell ascended this glacier in 1899 when it was covered with snow.

JOTUN FJELDE—THE HORUNGTINDER GROUP.

NÆBESKAR (about 7,000 feet).—There still remained one gap in the chain of the Skagastølstinder which had not been crossed. It was a V-shaped notch in the ridge, about 250 feet deep, between Mellemste Skagastølstind and Skagastølsnæbbet, and it was reputed to be impracticable; indeed it had been attempted several times, but always in vain. Fröken Bertheau and her English friends, with Ole Berge and Hogrenning as guides, had spent one glorious and never-to-be-forgotten day on the range when the V had been reconnoitred from above. On 31st July the same party, with the substitution of Herr Eilert Sundt for Fröken Bertheau, crossed the North Peak and the Næb to the V, but found too much new snow to make a difficult rock ascent, so turned back. Four of the party, thirsting for adventure, descended a very steep and narrow tongue of glacier to the Stygge-

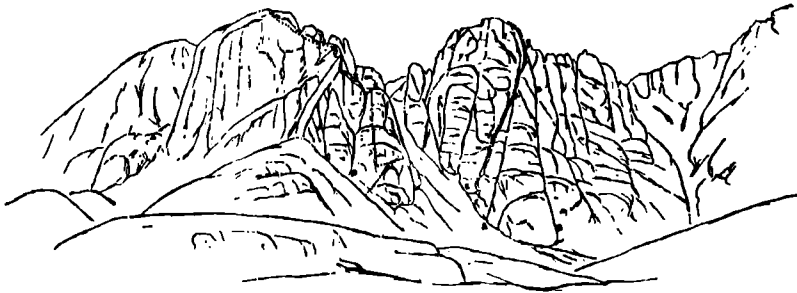
dalsbræ. As the bergschrund could not be crossed or jumped, it had to be turned by difficult rocks. Two hours and twelve minutes of real hard work were spent in turning this schrund; in other words, in descending 35 feet. The intricacies of the great glacier below afforded much more enjoyment and less anxiety than had been the case above.

MELLEMSTE SKAGASTÖLSTIND BY THE NORTH RIDGE (about 7,500 feet): THE ASCENT OF THE V.—After two false starts on previous days, Messrs Slingsby and Sundt, with Ole Berge and Hogrenning, left Turtegrö at 7.7 A.M. on 4th August. They arrived at the V at 11.5, and had a glorious climb up to Ole Berge's stol, and from thence up Mellemste Skagastölstind, and descended by the west face. The climb is magnificent, and Ole led the party brilliantly. It was a fortunate coincidence that the man who made in 1876 the first ascent of Store Skagastölstind should be one of the party to link the whole chain together.

W. C. S.

BLAVEN.—Dear Mr Editor,—I was staying at Broadford last June, and spent several days scrambling on the east side of Blaven and Clach Glas, and it occurred to me as a great pity that this grand piece of country seems to have been so little worked over.

There is a carriage road from Broadford (9 miles) to the very foot, and then right before you four or five of the very finest gullies. Perhaps



BLAVEN FROM THE EAST.

you have records of climbs in these, and this face is not really so fresh as it seemed to me, but if not, there is here a rare opportunity for the chimney lovers. The most striking are the two long ones on Clach Glas (A and B) which I did not attempt, but looked into two or three on the lower rocks of Blaven (C and D) and found that they were of much too high a class for our powers. We found, however, that there was a way across the face of Clach Glas (E F) something like Jack's Rake on Pavey Ark, which hits the ridge just at the place where the ordinary route to the top turns out on to the west face. The knowledge of this

rake may be useful to those trying serious climbing on this side of Clach Glas, and it gives a short route to the top from the east.

We spent three days in examining the spur which runs east from the top of Blaven, and succeeded in making the ridge good. The only difficulties are in the ascent of the lowest pinnacle (z) and in the passage from it to the second. We found a fault about 2 feet wide which ran straight to the top of z, and it afforded holds which were scarcer on the glacier-ground rocks on each side of it. Looking from z towards x, there is a mossy ledge about 9 inches wide which is doubtless the correct way, but which we did not take, preferring the rotten stuff a little to the right.

The tracing I send is from a drawing of my father's from Torrin.

I had with me a shepherd named Duncan Grant, of Broadford. He is a good walker, but knows nothing of the Cuchullins, and if any one wants a pleasant companion who is anxious to learn to climb, and who won't funk if he can possibly help it, I can strongly recommend him.

—Yours, &c.

SIDNEY S. WILLIAMS.

MEALL NA CUAICH.—Most members travelling by the Highland Railway between Dalwhinnie and Aviemore must have noticed to the east of the line a prominent round-topped heather-coated hill—a typical meall—which from its isolated situation is obviously peculiarly well placed as regards view. The name of this mountain is Meall na Cuaich. On the 1-inch O.S. it is called *Stac* Meall na Cuaich, and only a 3,000-foot contour is shown. Correctly, however, as given on the 6-inch map, it is Meall na Cuaich, with a height of 3,120 feet, and the *Stac* only applies to its western shoulder, immediately overhanging the little Loch na Cuaich—the Lake of the Cup—a somewhat desolate sheet of water about a mile long, surrounded by steep, round-topped heather-covered hills.

Besides the view, it has another attraction for the hill-lover, especially in early autumn, for it is *not* in deer forest, and although it forms part of a rich grouse moor, by following the route about to be described little harm can be done at any time of the year. Though not quite the most direct, the easiest line of ascent is north, along the railway from Dalwhinnie to the first cottage just where the line crosses the Allt Cuaich; then keep close to the right of the burn (*i.e.*, the true left bank)—an intermittent track which will be found useful runs at only a few feet from the burn right up to the loch where the actual base of the hill is reached at an elevation of 1,300 feet, or only a little more than 100 feet above the Dalwhinnie Hotel. The ascent from here is of the easiest, over short, dry heather, grass, blaeberreries, &c., with here and there rocks and scree of quartz schist (?) cropping out. The summit is marked by a fine large cairn; and a sheep fence runs north and south over the top, at right angles to our line of ascent, so that, although few will care to make the ascent except in fine weather, the

view being the attraction, you have only in fog to go straight on until you strike this fence, and then follow it up hill until you reach the cairn. Steady, but not fast-going, the following times should suffice. From Dalwhinnie Hotel to where the railway is left, half an hour—thence to the base of the hill at the loch, a short hour—thence to summit, one hour. The return journey should take half an hour less.

As before indicated, the mountain, on account of its isolated position in the very centre of Scotland, and facing down the valley of the Spey, is peculiarly well placed for a view. When I climbed it on 2nd September 1900, the far distance was hazy, but having previously ascended every prominent hill within a radius of from 40 to 50 miles, I am able to form a fair estimate of its extent as well as of its quality. The view resembles that from Beinn Dearg in Atholl a dozen miles to the east,* but the foreground is infinitely more varied. The special features are the lovely vista down Strath Spey, with Loch Insh in the middle distance, and doubtless in very clear weather the far-away shores of Caithness 100 miles away to the N.N.E., and also the broken outline of the lower hills immediately to the west, between Glen Truim and Strath Mashie, with a peep of the upper end of Loch Laggan, as well as the fine upper end of Loch Ericht, backed by Ben Alder and the interesting ranges of mountains lying immediately to its north; while seen over the dull, flat outline of the Monadhliaths is the splendid panorama of the beautifully shaped western Inverness-shire and Ross-shire mountains. From the Cairngorms, the western range of which is peculiarly well seen, round by the Deeside mountains, the Beinn a' Ghlo range, the Sidlaws, Schichallion, Ben Lawers, and the hills on both sides of the Callander and Oban Railway, round to the Lochaber mountains, seen through gaps in the Ben Alder group, there is scarcely a hill of any note which is not in sight.

The whole excursion will not take above five hours, allowing ample time to enjoy the view and luncheon, and can therefore be dovetailed into a journey between Edinburgh or Glasgow and Inverness.

H. T. MUNRO.

BEN NEVIS, TOWER RIDGE.—On 6th September 1900, Rev. A. E. Robertson and the writer, instead of taking the usual route (to the right) at the Tower, followed a narrow grass ledge to the *left*; then through a cleft bridged by a large block, and straight up broken rocks to the cairn on the top of the Tower. This route, which is quite simple, would afford an alternative in the event of the steeper rocks on the west side being found in bad condition. If desired, the Tower might even be avoided altogether, and a traverse made into the easy branch of the "Gardyloo Gully."

W. W. N.

* See *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. I., p. 323.

TWO DAYS IN CUMBERLAND.—Two members of the S.M.C., Messrs Lawson and Raeburn, spent the 17th and 18th of November climbing in the English Lakes. On the second of the above dates they were fortunate in having the companionship of two English members of the Club, Messrs Glover and Ling, who know the district thoroughly, and who have lately had the credit of accomplishing the impossible there. Glover and Ling have discovered two new climbs in this thoroughly polished and highly finished climbing region.

These climbs are respectively a new variation at the foot of the Eagle's Nest Arête on Great Gable called Ling's Chimney, and a fine new chimney on the Ennerdale face of the same mountain now known as the Engineer's Chimney.

Leaving Edinburgh by the 2 P.M. express to Carlisle, one can dine on board and be deposited at Keswick in time to walk up to the head of Borrowdale by nine the same night. This we did, and were surprised to find how quickly and easily the nine miles walk was reeled off.

On the 17th we began with the central gully of Great Gable's Ennerdale face. The lower two-thirds of this affords interesting and fairly easy climbing. Then a choice of three exits presents itself. We tried the central, which runs up a very steep chimney divided into two pitches, the upper of which is the most severe. The lower of these went with some little difficulty, but the leader judged the top one too risky under the conditions, all the rocks being covered with a film of ice, so we descended, made for the top by the easy exit to the right, and crossed Gable summit to the Napes, very glad to get out of the reach of the biting north-easter raging on the Ennerdale face. Here the conditions were very different, and we had a most enjoyable scramble, descending by the Eagle's Nest Arête. The traverse of the Needle was the next item, ascending by the crack and descending by the longer route at the side. We finished our day's sport by the ascent of the Needle Arête, keeping on the strict arête from the col. Taken this way it gives a capital little climb.

The start-off is tricky; its key will be found in a couple of curious rounded finger-holes—quite Dolomitic in style, by the way.

The writer was interested in comparing his impression of the top stone of the Needle with that gained on a former occasion. At that time, Christmas Day 1897, he gained the first ledge without assistance by stepping off an ice-axe-head; on this, Lawson's kindly proffered shoulder formed the take-off. The impression received was that the aid of a shoulder practically abolishes the difficulty of this part of the climb. The last bit, however, before the edge of the top stone can be grasped, still remains a distinctly *mauvais pas*, though the possession of a long reach would simplify it a good deal. At the ledge a long reach is rather a disadvantage than otherwise.

From the summit of the Napes we kept up, crossing the east shoulder of Gable and striking down to the path below the Styhead Tarn.

The next day, 18th, was to be a short one, as we had to be down at Keswick the same evening to catch the 6.30 train, so we all (Glover and Ling had arrived about nine the previous evening) got away before eight for Skawfell. We went by way of Grain Gill, then over the shoulder of Great End, over the Pikes and down to Mickledore. Here it became apparent that any of the heroic climbs were not for us to-day, the rocks being sheathed in glittering fog crystals, or glistening with ice. We, however, went down Rake's Progress to the mouth of Deep Gill, the starts of the various climbs on this splendid rock face being pointed out to the two visitors by Glover and Ling. The bold audacity of the opening move of the Keswick Brothers' Climb particularly struck us; yet Messrs Ling and Glover assured us that it is not exceptionally difficult, and we should have gone up this way but for the ominous glitter of ice in the upper chimney. The way we did go up was by Deep Gill, finishing by Professor's Chimney and ascending the Pinnacle from the Col. The presence of a good deal of ice, fog crystals, and a little snow made this route considerably more sporting than it would be in summer, the excellent finger-tip holds on the Pinnacle, for instance, having all to be rediscovered and dug out. We descended by way of the North Climb, which again can by no means be considered altogether easy under winter conditions. Bundling up the ropes here, we made rapid tracks for Borrowdale, and an hour after arrival there saw us *en route* for Keswick, which we reached in ample time for our train at 6.30.

The weather during the whole trip was dry; in the afternoons of both days even fine and sunny. For four weeks it had poured continuously, and the idea of going to the English Lakes in such weather was received by the friends of the Edinburgh contingent with utter ridicule; but fortune favours the bold, and neither Lawson nor Raeburn for their part will regret their resolve to defy the croakers and to make a Martinmas raid on beautiful Borrowdale.

H. RÆBURN.

CERTAIN OPTICAL PHENOMENA.

My attention having been directed to certain optical phenomena by an article in *Nature* (an extract from which is appended), I think the following may possibly interest members of the Club.

I came home from fishing on Loch Eilt on the 1st of August, and had just read the communication under the above-quoted reference.

I witnessed the same (I believe precisely the same) phenomenon on Loch Eilt about the middle of July this year. Standing up in the stern of the boat, the breeze very light, the sun very bright behind me, I saw what he saw, and I cannot describe it with any alterations upon Mr A. M. Worthington's; but I have one small, though perhaps not unimportant addition to make, viz., that the colour of the rays seen were greenish and white only, and the appearance of their extremities had a curious feathery and *vanishing effect*. The shadow of my head

in the water was simply a dark vague shadow (not so distinct as in a "Brocken," or reflection on a cloud)—see a description of a "Brocken" which I gave in an early number of this Magazine. So far as I can recollect, a friend and myself were fishing during a light air of wind ; but close under the lee of the boat as we drifted, the water was *almost* calm, save for a slight slow, oily curl. Apart from the immediate subject, I am interested in what Mr Worthington says about the formation of lenses and convexities formed on water by the ripples on its surface ; and the action upon the distribution of the rays of light by the presence of matter in suspension, which latter, as he clearly shows, are the direct cause of these coruscations being visible. What I would like to know is whether any of the members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club have ever seen anything similar, and if so, where ; and also whether they could name any particular place where this would be more likely to be witnessed to full advantage. I might suggest such a place as the deep corrie of Lochnagar, which is surrounded, or almost so, by high precipices, as an example of what I mean to convey, but there must be many suitable places well known to the members.

ANOTHER OPTICAL PHENOMENON.—Upon another day on Loch Eilt, a companion and myself witnessed a very lovely and curious display. I have seen many reflections in our Scottish lochs in my time—as, indeed, who among our regular anglers upon these sheets of water have not?—but I never before saw anything so lovely and perfect as that we saw on this occasion, unless I except a scene in Faroe of which I have a photograph.

The time was mid-day ; the loch lies east and west ; the sun was very bright, and the water was absolutely *dead calm*. The reflections appeared, so to speak, clearer than the everlasting hills themselves and the other things reflected. Seven sheep were, as our boatman expressed it, "in the bottom of the loch." (This remark, by the way, gave rise to another)—"John, we want to see the fish in the bottom of the boat." "Aye," said John, "that's a fact." But let that pass.

But the most remarkable, and indeed marvellous reflection we witnessed, was that of a certain rock by the water's edge. I would have cheerfully given £5 for a camera !

The rock is a favourite place for lunching at, but except in that its convenience in that respect is great, there usually appears to be nothing peculiar about it under ordinary circumstances. But on this occasion, the rock and its perfect reflection together showed (shall any one ever see it again ?) the almost anatomically perfect representation of the skeleton of a bottle-nosed whale, even to the smaller bones of the head, neck-vertebræ, ribs, and flukes, and great tail. The *surface of the water was indistinguishable*.

Should a photo be taken of the rock itself at any future time, even if not under the favourable circumstances we saw it in, I believe a perfect representation of what we did see could be produced—thus—

by simply cutting off the photo at the water-line, and applying a mirror at the lower edge, or by folding the sheet sharply and straightly over the edge of the mirror.

In Faroe in 1894 I had seen the absolute reflection of the bones and almost complete skeleton of a 60-foot long Rorqual whale, and I have a photograph of it taken by Mr Norrie ; thus perhaps I was the better able to promptly recognise the *marvellous* resemblance to the general anatomy of a whale which we saw in the reflection in the pellucid waters of Loch Eilt.

J. A. HARVIE-BROWN.

Nature, 26th July 1900.—AN OPTICAL PHENOMENON.—I desire to call attention to an analogous and very beautiful phenomenon of perspective which I should have mentioned at the time, but that the winter season of the year is not favourable to its observation in this country.

When the sun is high and shining brightly in a clear sky, let an observer stand so that the shadow of his head falls on the surface of the water that is deep, clear, but not quite clear, and slightly agitated by the wind. He will observe that from the place where the shadow of his head falls, shafts of light seem to radiate in all directions. When once well observed, the phenomenon is very striking, but it has surprised me to find how very few persons have noticed it. I first observed it many years ago, when I used daily, about mid-day in summer, to cross the bridge over the channel leading to the boat store in the Portsmouth Dockyard, near the main entrance. But it was not till a year later, on Ulleswater, that I found the explanation. The lake was there turbid in parts, from the washings of the mines, but quite clear in others. Standing up in a boat, one could see the phenomenon very clearly where there was very slight turbidity, but not if the water was quite clear, nor if there was much turbidity, and never in a dead calm. This gave the explanation. The convexities of the surface, when there is a slight agitation, acting as lenses, split up the otherwise uniform illumination into separate parallel shafts of the light, each consisting of slightly convergent rays, which, traversing liquid, are rendered visible by the suspended particles they illuminate.

These shafts, seen in perspective, have their point of apparent convergence exactly opposite to the sun, *i.e.*, in the shadow of his head. If the water is smooth, there are no particles to illuminate and reveal the shafts: if too turbid (or too shallow), the light does not penetrate far enough. If the sun be too low in the sky, too little light enters the water ; if it shines through clouds, so that the source is diffuse, a uniform illumination results. Hence the rays are not easily noticed in winter.

After the phenomenon has once been well seen under such circumstances as I have described, one can hardly enter a boat on a bright day without being haunted by it, and realising that, although the shadow of one's head may not actually fall on the water, yet every streak of light in the water radiates from it.—A. M. WORTHINGTON, R.N. Engineering College, Devonport, 22nd July.

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

SCRAMBLES AMONGST THE ALPS. By Edward Whymper. Fifth Edition. With 5 maps and 130 illustrations. Price 15s. net. Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street.

"Toil and pleasure, in their natures opposite, are yet linked together in a kind of necessary connection." These words, which the author places on the title-page, although written nearly two thousand years ago, supply a very good argument, if any were needed, for the reasonableness of our favourite sport.

The book before us records Mr Whymper's triumphs and adventures in the 'sixties. He was fortunate in beginning his climbing career at a time when half of the Alps were still untrodden, and he was able to accomplish the first ascents of such well-known peaks as Mont Pelvoux, the Pointe des Ecrins, the Aiguille d'Argentière, the Grand Cornier, the Grandes Jorasses, the Aiguille Verte, the Ruinette, and the Matterhorn, among a host of others.

In making these ascents, as might be expected, the supposed easiest way was followed in every case; difficulties were not courted as is the modern fashion. The reader will also observe that in selecting routes, faces were preferred to ridges, and snow to rock.

We consider the "Scrambles" far and away the most fascinating story of Alpine adventure ever published, and we venture to think that no other book has done so much to fill the mind of the British boy with the desire to see the glaciers and snowy peaks with his own eyes. We well remember, when the first edition was put into our own hands, our fearsome delight as we gloated over the icicles of the Col Dolent, the snow bridge across the Dent Blanche bergschrund, and the thunderstorm among the crags of the Matterhorn; and how we thrilled with horror at the accident on the Col du Lion!

If any of our readers do not possess a copy of this Alpine classic, we recommend them to acquire the present edition at once. It contains everything that appeared in the last (*Edition de luxe*), with the addition of a note relating to Professor Guido Rey's exploration of the Furgg arête in 1899. The whole of the familiar illustrations reappear—"The Matterhorn from the Théodule," "The Zermatt Club-room," Croz smashing through the Cornice on the Morning Pass, and all the rest of them. The smaller woodcuts and portraits are specially admirable. Take for instance "Beachy Head," "Séracs on

the Mer de Glace," "J. B. Bich" (whose face would do for a Highland precentor), "The Summit of the Matterhorn in 1874." Who that has trodden that airy crest, with "the toe of his boot over Switzerland and the heel over Italy," can look on this last little sketch without feeling twinges of the old "malady"? But why particularise when all are good?

As everybody knows, a large portion of the book is occupied with the author's many assaults on the Matterhorn, and his eventual triumph, at a fearful cost. Times have changed since 1865, and now many persons with little or no climbing experience are every year "hailed and lifted and prised" up the sides of the Cervin; whereat old climbers growl and are exceeding wroth. In biting irony they suggest the erection of notice-boards to warn cyclists that the hill is dangerous, and the stationing of a policeman on the top to control the traffic! For ourselves, we confess to some sympathy with even the most unmitigated tripper in his wish to scale this glorious mountain. Provided that he can obtain sufficient haulage power, why should he not have himself conveyed to the top? The event will perhaps stand out afterwards as one of the few redeeming features of a commonplace life.

The Matterhorn itself can never be commonplace. Heedless of those ephemera, its awful precipices now hidden in storm, now flashing in the sunlight, it will ever remain in majestic isolation, holding converse only with Him "who maketh the clouds His chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind."

W. W. N.

ABRAHAM'S SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE COBBLER, BUCHAILLE ETIVE, BIDEAN NAM BIAN, AND BEN NEVIS, 6 by 8, in Platino-type. 1s. 6d. each.

MESSRS ABRAHAM, of Keswick, have very kindly given me the opportunity of looking over an excellent series of photographs which they obtained in Scotland last May. The districts visited were Arrochar, Glencoe, and Fort William. The series extends to about sixty views, and it goes without saying that they are nearly all good, while not a few of the Cobbler and Buchaille Etive have been taken from new view points which show some of our special climbs better than any photos yet obtained.

There are some specially good ones of the Cobbler, and an excellent view of Ossian's Cave from below the ladder, as well as one from the valley.

Among the climbs which they did and illustrated were the Church Door of Bidean nam Bian and the Crowberry Ridge of Buchaille Etive. Of the latter climb Mr Ashley Abraham speaks in most enthusiastic terms. It was done for the first time directly from the foot of the ridge, and not joined by the gully at the side as had previously been the route. He is quite of the opinion that they have "nothing so

continuously good in the Lakes." This, taken with the offer to swop Buchaille for Great Gable (*S.M.C.J.*, Vol. IV., p. 149), looks as if the great climbers of the Lakes were beginning to realise that there are hills in Great Britain outside Cumberland. W. D.

THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF SCENERY. By JOHN E. MARR.
Methuen & Co.

THE study of the causes of the beauties of natural scenery must always appeal to the true mountaineer. But as many of them are busy men who have little time at their disposal, the study of natural scenery has of necessity been neglected. Mr Marr is to be congratulated on having published a most readable little book on the subject, and which is so clearly written as to cause little effort in its perusal. He has plentifully illustrated his points with examples from the Welsh and English Lake scenery, but evidently his knowledge of Scotland is not nearly as great. This is the only point, and that merely a party point, that can be regretted. The book all through is inspired by the love of mountain scenery. "Over all is the ever-changing sky, with clouds hurrying past, driven by the tempest, or wreathing languidly round the mountain peak. Happy is the man who takes heed of these things, and pleasurable are the emotions which are excited by inquiry into the causes that have produced them. And lives there one who, communing thus with Nature, and admitted to some of her secrets, is not led to ponder with reverence upon the First Great Cause?" In his concluding chapter he tells this tale:—"When speaking enthusiastically to a Scotch boatman of the beautiful hill scenery of the north end of the Isle of Arran, I was at first somewhat surprised at his remark that I should see the flatter south end and its corn-fields; I was not prepared for the influence of contrast with normal surroundings, in determining a man's ideas of what is beautiful." Finally he warmly advocates the preservation of natural scenery from the hand of the Philistines, and shows how that many of Nature's beauties in England, Wales, and Scotland are being sacrificed yearly.

The book is most readable and instructive without being too much of a study, and above all it is pregnant with the spirit of the lover of nature, and such should all mountaineers be. The print is good, and there are a number of mountain photographs well reproduced.

E. M. C.



LANDING PLACE ON STAC LÌ.

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

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DEER AND DEER FORESTS.

BY DUNCAN DARROCH OF TORRIDON.

TO the majority of the owners and occupiers of deer forests in Scotland it is a great pleasure to be able to allow the climbing and scientific public to share as far as possible in the delights of climbing the hills and enjoying the scenery, but the climbing and scientific public is not always aware of the great damage that may, quite inadvertently, be done to the valuable sporting interests involved, and it may not be amiss to point out some of the aspects of the case which are perhaps not generally known.

At certain seasons of the year the stags, after their new horns have grown, and while they are getting in their full condition for going with the hinds, at which time they are also in the best condition for the sportsman's purposes, delight in frequenting the upper corries of the high hills, where, if not disturbed, they remain till they go after the hinds.

In the west of Ross-shire they shed their horns about the end of April, and from the end of May on till the stalking season begins—that is, till the end of July—it is most important in the interests of the forests that there should be no disturbance of these upper corries, the very places which the adventurous mountaineers wish to visit.

Hind-shooting begins about the middle of November, giving fully a month's grace to the deer after the stag-stalking has stopped, and the rutting season has begun, for the animals to conduct their love affairs in peace; and the hind-shooting ends finally about the end of January.

The deer on the west coast come down to the low ground when the weather becomes severe, especially when there is snow on the low ground. But the snow very seldom lies for any length of time, so that they are able to get enough to eat all the winter, sometimes having to scrape the snow away with their feet in order to get at the grass or young heather below. I have known them in hard winters go to the shore seemingly to eat the seaweed.

On the west coast the calves are born from the middle of June to the middle of July.

It will be seen, then, that the time in which the hills can be traversed without interfering with the sport consists of the months of February, March, April, and May, and during that time there can be no real harm done to the sporting interests by those who wish to visit the hills for mountaineering or scientific purposes. At the same time, however, it is always desirable that notice should be given to the keepers before hand, especially if a large party is to visit the ground. Such a course is certainly very much preferred by the owners and occupiers.

People who have not been brought up in a deer country, or who have not been initiated into the sport of deer-stalking, have no conception at all of the damage that may be done, quite unintentionally. In stalking, clothes are worn which harmonise with the prevailing tints of the ground, as men in ordinary tourist clothes could seldom attain the all important object of seeing the deer before the deer could see them. In certain directions of the wind too, differing as to the lie of the hills in each separate forest, the stalkers will stay at home, and not go near those hills, so as to avoid the inevitable disturbance caused by the scent of the human being. I remember a distinguished scientist, a great lover of the hills, writing me that he was to be in my neighbourhood in the summer, and asking permission to go along the watershed of my principal hill. He thought he knew all about deer, and assured me that he would so conduct matters that he would disturb none. I had to reply that unfortunately the deer disliked the odour of a scientist just as much as that of a sportsman, and that it would be a grave detriment to our forest to have

any one going through that hill at that time of the year, but that if his exploration of that particular hill at that particular time, was really very important, I would be glad to send one of my stalkers with him, so as to minimise the danger to the sporting interests. Our friend, whose acquaintance I made later on, was a gentleman, and wrote at once to say that he would put off his trip for another year.

Deer forests are assessed in the valuation roll according to the number of stags they yield in the year, and on this valuation parochial and county rates and income-tax are imposed, so that the owners and occupiers of forests pay so much per stag to the public. The right of shooting a stag is estimated to be worth from £30 to £50, so that if a gentleman who wants to indulge himself in a little walk sends my stags off the ground, the loss to me is considerable. It is no use assuring me that they will come back, for if they have gone to the less picturesque hills, they, if really good, have every chance of being shot there, and, even if not, they may not return until the stalking season is over.

If a man wants to go through the hills in the month of June, most proprietors, I think—of myself I am sure—would be glad to allow him to go if accompanied by a keeper. It would be very much better not to have the risk of disturbance, but a careful stalker could generally go through the tops without doing much harm; but from the end of June till the end of January it is not fair to ask the deer-forestry interest, which contributes its full share of rates and taxes, to allow the results of the year's preparation to be imperilled.

DEER AND DEER FORESTS.

WITH INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT.

THE desire had long been felt that some reliable information should be obtained about the natural habits of deer in the Highland forests, and the special proprietary interests of those connected with them. How best to obtain this was the question. What was wanted was a perfectly impartial view of the matter, as considered on the one side from the aspect of the owner or occupier, and on the other from that of the mountaineer.

It is not difficult to understand how diverse, unfair, and unreasonable might be the opinions expressed by an autocratic and unsympathetic proprietor on the one hand, and a democratic, free-thinking "rights-of-way" man on the other. It seemed that the only way to obtain a really impartial and unbiassed discussion of the subject was to solicit the opinion of one who, as a lover of deer-stalking, and perchance an owner, possessed equally a keen and sympathetic appreciation of mountaineering. Many there doubtless were to whom the appeal might have been made. But considerable delicacy was felt in moving in the matter; for there was a natural sense of anxiety regarding the kind of response which might be got. For be it candidly confessed what was really desired was something that would not prove inimical to the interests of mountaineering.

It seemed, therefore, that the best way to go about the matter was to frame a set of leading questions, and to submit these for answer to one or more keepers of reliable standing. Of course this did not quite cover the whole field of investigation, but it would at least elicit certain essential facts of practical value.

It need hardly be said that the principal object in view in instituting this investigation was not to ascertain when or where there might exist any supposed *right* to enter a deer forest or climb a particular mountain, but to ascertain when and where it would be really harmful to do so, or when it might be reasonably expected that an owner or tenant would grant the required permission to

any whose intents were of a purely harmless and perfectly unobtrusive kind.

How considerably this question of the *right* to enter a deer forest was regarded by the original founders of the Scottish Mountaineering Club is shown in Rule III. of its Regulations and Bye-laws, where it is definitely stated that "The members of the Club shall respect proprietary and sporting rights, and endeavour to obtain the co-operation of proprietors." It is in acting up to this that such mutual and sympathetic regard has come to exist between proprietors and members of the Club, each for the sport of the other. And further, it may be added, that it is largely due to this mutual good feeling and sympathy that the Club had as one of its earlier Honorary Presidents the esteemed Cameron of Lochiel, and has as its present representative the Most Honourable the Marquess of Breadalbane.

The special privileges ever held in view and sought for were those which would admit of members of the Club indulging in their sport, not as ignorant tourists nor as insistent "rights-of-way" men, but as those who, while loving mountaineering for its own sake, yet intelligently respected, in the pursuit of their own pleasure, the sport and lawful rights of those to whom they were indebted for the privileges granted.

The Editor has been good enough to allow me to read a proof of Mr Duncan Darroch's paper, published in this number. I need hardly say with what pleasure I have done so. Possibly had it been known earlier that such a contribution was forthcoming, there would have been no need to have addressed the questions to keepers. The pleasure with which this article will be read by members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club will, I venture to predict, be universal. It removes any need of comment upon or deductions from the answers received from the keepers. The facts recorded are practically the same; but we have in addition what will be most valued, the kindly and sympathetic expressions of one who, while a true lover of his own sport, is willing to accord every reasonable facility to those who indulge in another. This reciprocity of feeling and breadth of spirit is all that is needed to maintain what

has, almost without exception, been the happy experience of the Club in its past relations with both tenant and proprietor. And we owe, I think, a debt of gratitude to Mr Darroch for putting into words the encouraging spirit of pleasure which he believes exists in the hearts of "the majority of the owners and occupiers of deer forests in Scotland to be able to allow the climbing and scientific public to share as far as possible in the delights of climbing the hills and enjoying the scenery."

FROM A KEEPER IN THE BEN ALDER FOREST.

1. When is hind-stalking finished for the season?
About the 15th of January.
2. When do the stags begin to cast their horns?
Near the end of March, according to condition.
3. In what part of the forest are the deer usually to be found in the winter months?
Between my house and Loch Erricht Lodge, near the loch side.
4. Does a heavy fall of snow drive them into the low ground?
Yes.
5. Do they remain in the low ground usually as long as the snow covers the hills?
Yes, as a rule they won't go near the high ground, unless in very open weather.
6. When do they begin to go to the upper corries?
About the end of May.
7. Are they less disturbed in winter than in summer by the appearance of a stranger in the forest?
They are less disturbed in winter.
8. When the ground is covered with snow, and in time of frost, upon what do they feed, and where do they get it?
They feed on grass and heather after clearing off the snow with their fore feet, sometimes 18 inches deep.
9. Do you approve of hand-feeding in winter?
I do not approve of hand-feeding unless the winter is unusually hard.
10. If you do not approve, why do you not approve?
Because if you once begin it, they will be depending upon it, and will not try to provide for themselves.

FROM A KEEPER IN THE BEN ULA FOREST.

1. When is hind-shooting finished for the season?
In most forests by the end of January at the latest, and should be finished if possible by the beginning of January.
2. When do the stags begin to cast their horns?
Usually in the first week of April. Hand-fed stags cast after the beginning of March.
3. In what part of the forest are the deer usually to be found in the winter months?
In the lower parts, where the best heather and grass is to be found; also in woods and sheltered places where it can be found, especially in stormy weather. The hinds are much more hardy in winter, and always keep higher than the stags.
4. Does a heavy fall of snow drive them into the low ground?
Certainly, they will not stand in snow if black ground is anywhere near them. In places where they are disturbed with people or dogs they lie in the snow through the day and come down to feed at night. In forests they keep as low as they can.
5. Do they remain in the low ground usually as long as the snow covers the hills?
Yes, by all means, if left quiet.
6. When do they begin to go to the upper corries?
As a rule after the beginning of April, and continue to draw up to the higher hills and corries until the middle of September.
7. Are they less disturbed in winter than in summer by the appearance of a stranger in the forest?
They don't take nearly so much heed of seeing people in winter, and less still in spring.
8. When the ground is covered with snow, and in time of frost, upon what do they feed, and where do they get it?
If there is any sunshine to thaw the snow, they take advantage of it, and scrape the snow off all the best pieces of grass, which they know all right by instinct. In very hard frost they prefer heather.
9. Do you approve of hand-feeding in winter?
Yes, by all means, in any place where it can be done with advantage. In some high forests so few stags stay for winter that it is impossible.
10. Do you approve of tracking wounded deer with dogs?
I prefer to watch them and stalk a second time. I think trackers do more harm than good unless it is a very wide forest.

CLIMBING IN ST KILDA.

BY NORMAN HEATHCOTE.

THE island of St Kilda is probably unknown to most if not all the members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club as a climbing resort, and yet there are few places in the United Kingdom where more attractive climbs are provided for the enterprising mountaineer, or where the venturesome rock-climber can find better opportunities of risking his neck.

It is owing to some allusions to climbing in my book on St Kilda that I have been asked to write this article, and though climbing was not the object of my visit, indeed such climbs as I did accomplish were only incidental to the day's work, I will try to give some details about the possibilities of this lonely group of rocks as a field for the mountaineer. There is much that may be of interest to the readers of this journal that would not appeal to the ordinary public.

I do not wish to encourage too many people to go there, as there is not room for more than a few people at a time, so I will begin by pointing out some of the disadvantages of St Kilda from a mountaineering point of view.

In the first place, it is a long way off, and when you have got there it is by no means certain that you will be able to get away again on any given date. The steamers *Dunara Castle* and *Hebrides* sailing from Glasgow include St Kilda among their places of call about once a fortnight during the summer months, but if it happens to be blowing at all hard from the south-east it is quite possible that passengers may not be able to land.

Then there is no accommodation to speak of. The native houses are very good—for native houses—but it would be preferable to occupy one for a week than a month. Personally I stayed in the factor's house, which at least has the merit of being empty, but I gather from the accounts of those who have tried them that the St Kildans are not the only inhabitants of the other houses. They also have a pleasing habit of cooking all kinds of food



STAC NA BIORRACH.

in the same vessel, so until you have learned to like the flavour of fulmar oil the food is apt to be unpalatable. But after all these are minor matters. The most serious objection to St Kilda as a climbing centre is that all the most interesting expeditions have to be done by boat. Seeing that St Kilda is a small island right out in the Atlantic, and that the sea is never calm, even in the calmest weather, it is obvious that this is a great drawback. Even in June, which is probably the finest month, one might spend a fortnight there without ever getting an opportunity of landing on Stac na Biorrach or Stac Lii. You cannot even be sure of being able to take advantage of a favourable day, as you must be dependent on the natives for a boat, and if they want to look after their sheep, cut turf, or catch birds, they would be quite capable of refusing to go for love or money, though the latter is a fairly good persuader even in St Kilda.

On the main island there are of course precipices which can be climbed—also some that cannot; there are grass slopes steep enough to make your hair stand on end, and ledges narrow enough to try the steadiest head, but it is impossible to get along the shore anywhere, and so all the climbing has to be done from above, which to my mind is not satisfactory. There is great satisfaction in getting to the top of anything, and the more difficult the ascent the greater the joy, but to go down a cliff in order to come up again is not at all the same thing—I would do it to get a photograph of a bird, or to find a good point of view from which to watch the waves, but not purely for the sake of climbing.

The most difficult climb ever undertaken by the natives is the ascent of Stac na Biorrach, an isolated rock 240 feet high, situated in the passage between Soay and the main island. It is only possible to land here when the swell is less big than usual, indeed any one but a St Kildan would say that it is quite impossible to land under any circumstances. And yet the landing is not the most difficult part.

Martin, who wrote a book about St Kilda in 1697, describes how at one point the climber has to hold on by

one thumb while he swings his legs from one ledge to another. He was speaking from hearsay, and I must say I did not put much faith in his statement until I saw an account of the ascent written by one who actually accomplished it. This shows that there is little or no exaggeration in Martin's description.

Mr Barrington, the only man not born in St Kilda who has been to the top of Stac na Biorrach, has kindly given me permission to quote his letter. He says: "It was Donald MacDonald who jumped from the bow of the boat on to the slimy sloping seaweed at the foot of Stac na Biorrach, and went up like a cat about 50 or 60 feet with a horse-hair rope around. I then followed with the assistance of the rope hand over hand. M'Quien came next, and we all three stood on a knob (overhanging) about 18 inches square. Then followed the real crux; to go edgeways along a ledge four inches wide with feet dangling in the air, the ledge being wet with guillemots' droppings. It was terrible work, and I knew I would slip, as my fingers had not the tremendous grip of MacDonald's, who got over with an effort. I did slip, and but for a sudden powerful jerk of the horse-hair rope given by M'Quien, which rose me fully three feet and gave me a new hold, I would not be here to write this."

Mr Barrington also says that he considers it the most dangerous climb he ever undertook, though he has been to the top of most of the big Alpine peaks. Of course it is short, and is free from the special dangers incidental to a long mountain excursion, but as a test of nerve and agility it is not easy to find its equal.

Stac Lii is perhaps the most interesting spot in the St Kilda group, but its chief interest is for the naturalist not for the mountaineer. It is the principal breeding-place of the gannets, the whole of the top, which is of considerable extent, and every available ledge being packed with their nests. It is about 530 feet high, the ground sloping gently from the top on three sides, and then falling away in practically perpendicular precipices. The rock is intersected by a basaltic dyke, and it is thanks to this dyke that the ascent is not only practicable but comparatively easy.



STAC LIH FROM THE SEA.

A stiff climb up steep rocks for 150 feet or so brings you to the dyke which forms a ledge leading diagonally up the face of the cliff until it emerges on the easy slope near the top. The landing is the worst part, and I must say that if I had the option of leading the way, or letting some one else be the first to land, I should willingly resign the honour. It is a most appalling undertaking, at any rate under the conditions that prevailed when my sister and I landed there. A stanchion has been fixed on a ledge some 20 feet above the sea level, and when a rope has been thrown over this the boat is brought close to the rocks, and the pioneer has to jump on to the face of the cliff, which at low tide is overhanging and covered with slippery seaweed, and haul himself up to the ledge.

For such-like acrobatic feats the St Kildans always take off their boots ; in fact for all climbing operations they either go barefoot or wear a pair of coarse socks. I tried climbing in boots at first, but very soon came to the conclusion that their plan was the best. It is bad for the stockings and painful to the feet, but there are so many sloping ledges to be negotiated on which nailed soles can get no foothold, but where one can walk with ease on stockinged feet, that any one wishing to climb in St Kilda must be prepared to sacrifice his stockings and his feet. Stac Lii is rather more than four miles from St Kilda, and it is advisable to select a fine day for the expedition and to keep an eye on the weather. On one occasion when we went there it came on to blow from the west, and we found it was impossible to get home again, the result being that we had to spend the night in the boat on the lee-side of Boreray. Though an interesting experience to look back upon, this was not altogether pleasant at the time, and might very easily have been more serious than it was.

There are several other stacks worthy of the attention of the climber. The route up Mian-a-stac was pointed out to me, and I must say it looked very difficult, but climbs of this sort where the rocks are absolutely firm are generally easier than they look.

There is an easy way up Stac Levenish, and we only

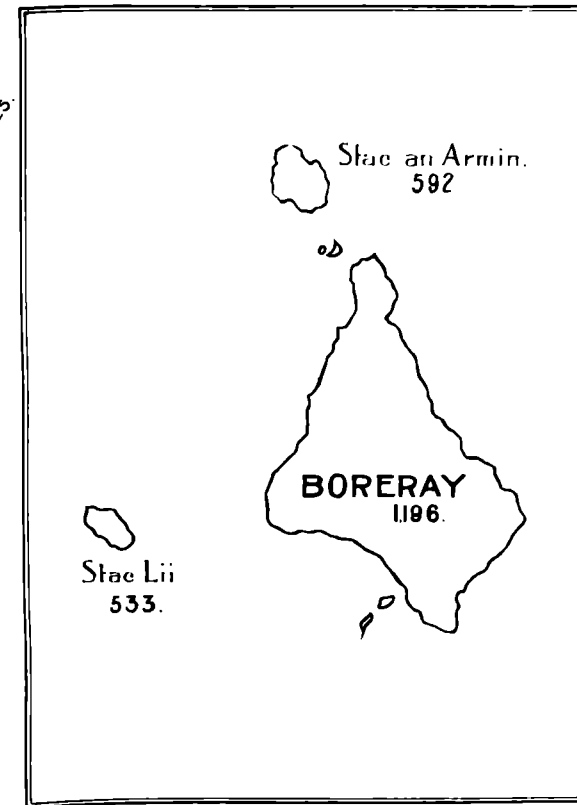
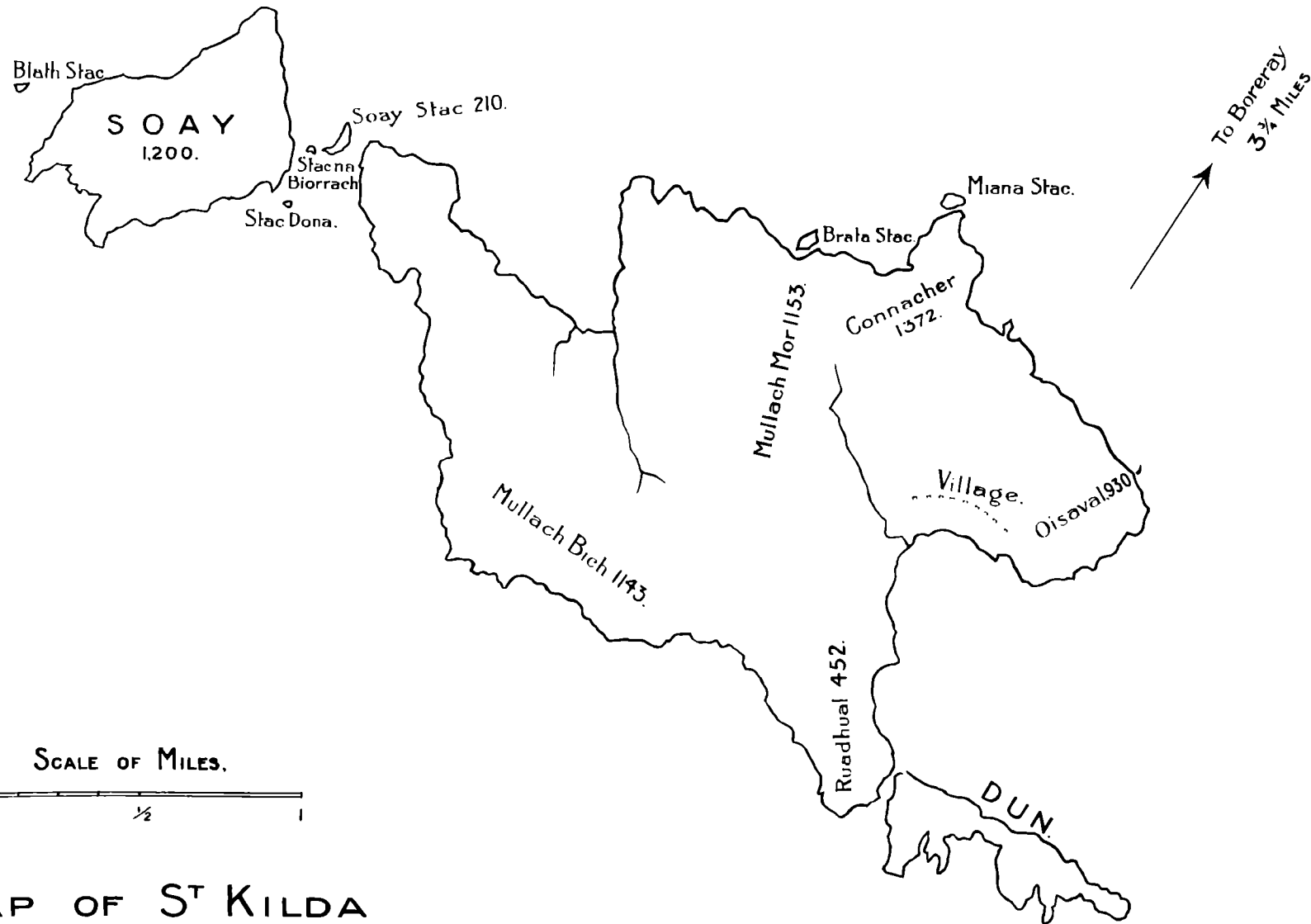
attempted the difficult side because the swell had increased to such an extent during our stay there that we found it was quite impossible to get into the boat at the usual landing-place, and so had to climb to the top again, and get down to the lee-side of the rock. It is not really a difficult climb, though it might not be easy to find the way without a guide. There is a steep and narrow chimney which requires some care, but the rocks are very firm and there are no loose stones, as during the winter gales the sea washes right over the stack and clears away everything except the solid rock. It is about 200 feet high.

There should be some interesting climbs on Boreray. It is of the same geological formation as the Black Cuillin, and is not unlike them in form, except that the slopes are covered with lovely soft turf instead of the abominable screes that are such an unpleasant feature in those otherwise delightful mountains. I followed the northern arête for some little way down from the top, but being alone, and not having much time to spare, did not go far, not far enough to see whether there would be any chance of getting down to the sea. The average slope is not too steep, but from what I have seen of the arête from other points of view, I should think there would be some awkward bits.

There are several ways by which the top of Soay may be reached from the sea. The easiest route entails a certain amount of climbing, and some of the others look as if they would satisfy the most exacting seeker after difficulties. The first time I visited Soay it was impossible to land at the usual place owing to the swell, and we rowed round to the north side of the island where the cliffs are about 1,000 feet high and look most formidable. The natives undertook to pilot us to the top, but the climb looked so much more suitable for a wild goat than for a lady (my sister accompanied me on all my expeditions) that we did not venture, and watched the St Kildans scrambling up the rocks and crawling along the ledges, till they looked like flies on the face of the cliff. We eventually landed on a shelf of rock on the east side, and were told that it is possible to reach the top from here. This route looked



A ST KILDAN CLIMBING ON STAC LEVENISH.



MAP OF ST KILDA
by
Norman Heathcote.

Levenish 180.

much more difficult than the one we had just refused, but I have no doubt it would afford an interesting climb.

I am afraid I have not been able to give much practical information about climbing in St Kilda, because, as I said before, this was not the object of my visit, but I hope I have said enough to show that these islands may be worth the attention of the members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and that those who have exploited the Cuillin, Ben Nevis, and other climbing centres of Scotland, may find a fresh field for their labours. I feel sure that any one who does not mind roughing it, and has time to spare, may spend a most enjoyable fortnight in St Kilda. If he approaches them in the right way he will find the people easy to get on with, gentlemanlike in manners, pleasant companions, and first-rate climbers.

[The four illustrations which accompany this paper are kindly lent by Mr Heathcote, from his book on St Kilda.]

BEINN DEARG AND THE FANNICHS.

BY H. G. S. LAWSON.

As that particular portion of Ross-shire in which the Fannich Hills are situated was unfamiliar to me, it was with pleasure that I found myself able to fall in with a proposal of H. T. Munro's that we should take a flying visit to those parts. Neither of us had much time to spare, but with bicycles it is wonderful how accessible some of the remoter districts really are so long as you are not very particular about damaging your tyres. We accordingly arranged to meet at Aultguish Inn on the morning of 9th March. Munro, who is always good for a little scouting work, decided to take the early train from Edinburgh to Garve on the 8th, and spy out the land, with, as I afterwards discovered, the quiet intention of adding to his already sufficiently weighty bag of peaks. I arrived at Strathpeffer a little after seven the next morning, and started against rather a nasty wind, but with the roads much drier than I had ventured to hope. As I have before found that expeditions commencing with the 4 A.M. train for the Highlands are subsequently subjected to modifications, I made inquiries in passing Garve Station, but found that no change had been made in this case. Munro was duly forward with all the impedimenta, the weather looked tolerably decent, and everything seemed well. On reaching the inn I found Munro in the middle of breakfast. The previous afternoon he had gone up Am Fraochagach by a ridge running from near Loch a' Gharbh Raoin, and had found the snow mostly in good condition, requiring a moderate amount of step-cutting high up. Coming down by Strath Vaich, he had had difficulty in crossing a stream in the dark, and had to retrace his steps for a long distance. Eventually he returned to a keeper's house, the occupier of which mounted him on a steed and sent him down the glen in great style. He ultimately arrived at the inn well after midnight. Munro remarked that the outstanding feature of the country was that there were no bridges anywhere, and that where an apology for stepping stones existed, they had evidently

been constructed for the use of a S.M.C. ex-President other than himself. I observed the saying at the time, but unfortunately did not pay much attention to it.

The Fannich Hills are grouped pretty much in the shape of a cross, one limb of which runs north-west to south-east, and the other east to west. Sgurr Mor and Carn na Criche being common to both. The south-east to north-west route is well described by Gilbert Thomson in the second volume of the *Journal*, and had been traversed by Munro in 1893. Our original plan had been to go to Beinn Dearg on the day of my arrival, and the following day traverse the Fannichs from east to west, but as the day seemed fine, we altered our plans, and decided to visit the Fannichs first. This turned out to be a most unfortunate decision. As we purposed leaving the road near Loch Droma and descending toward the boathouse at the lower end of Loch a' Bhraoin, bicycles were obviously of little use, and as we were making rather a late start, it was thought best to take a trap which, after depositing us five miles up the road, would drive round to the boathouse and get us back at a reasonable hour. Mr Mackay, our landlord, acted as driver, and at 11.45 we dismounted and started across a very boggy moor for Beinn Liath Mhor Fannaich. The snow, when we reached it, was deep and soft, and continued so till near the summit, which was reached at 2.30. The height of this hill, which is marked only by a contour on the O.S. map, was made to be 3,120 feet. There is a cairn on the top, and another about thirty yards short of the summit. What it is for I know not. We then had a few glissades to the col between this peak and Sgurr Mor. The top of this, on which is a large cairn, was reached at 3.30. Sgurr Mor, 3,637 feet, is the highest of the Fannichs, and seems a very finely shaped hill, but owing to the mist we saw it only in bits. Carn na Criche was reached twenty minutes later (cairn beyond summit), and we were soon trudging up the steep north ridge of Sgurr nan Clach Geala, which is 3,581 feet, and the second highest peak of the range. This was heavily corniced on the east edge. The top was reached by 4.45, but no cairn was visible, though there may possibly have been a small one com-

pletely covered by the snow. We hurried down the south ridge in the mist toward Sgurr nan Each, and reached that top (no cairn) at 5.30, and on arriving at the beallach between Sgurr Breac and Sgurr nan Clach Geala at six, decided we must leave the former peak and A'Chailleach for another occasion. The descent continued over very rough ground down the left side of the burn flowing toward the north. This increased in volume very rapidly, and soon became a powerfully flowing torrent. At that time we didn't expect to have any streams to ford, but intended to keep down the bank till the junction with the outlet from Loch a' Bhraoin, which in its turn we understood would be crossed by a bridge. After a bit we saw a sight which made us consider things, and ultimately demonstrated that it is not only the woman who deliberates that is liable to be lost. On the other side of the stream there appeared what in the fading light seemed to be a first-rate bridle-path. Munro, who had descended Meall a' Chrasgaidh (the hill to the right) to the boathouse at the end of Loch a' Bhraoin some eight years previously, was confident that he never had had to ford a torrent like that beside us now. He might possibly have crossed this stream and the outlet from Loch a' Bhraoin by separate bridges, but probably the bridge he had crossed was below the conference of the streams, and that consequently the sooner we got across this one the better. This we managed with just a little trouble.

The description of the next part of our expedition I approach with some hesitation, and had it not been for the lofty moral example of our ex-Treasurer, who manfully owned up to all his misdemeanours, I admit that an attempt might have been made to conceal certain events which followed. The truth is that two S.M.C. members disgraced themselves by failing to get home on the evening they intended, had to stay the night out, and finally arrived at their destination some twelve or fourteen hours behind time. I shall tell a plain unvarnished tale, but shall extenuate to the extent of pleading that for each of them it was a first offence.

By the time we had got across the stream and were

re-shod it was quite dark, and we found that what had appeared to be a path was something quite different. What it was, or what it was for, neither of us ever made out. It seemed to be a narrow artificial and very irregular ridge, and as far as progress was concerned was no better, but soon got worse, than the open moor, with all its soft peat holes and frequent pools of water. We stumbled along this at a snail's pace for an hour or two, wondering when the bridge would appear, and then found our advance barred by a torrent falling down the hillside into the main stream. This tributary formed a series of cascades, and was quite hopeless to cross where we were. The only thing to be done now seemed to be to ascend the bank of stream number two, and see if there were any fordable part. We accordingly climbed up several hundred feet, back to the snow again, but no place where we could get across appeared, nor did there seem to be any prospect of such turning up for a long way. It seemed rather hopeless work following this stream indefinitely, and we thought a look at the map might assist us.

Between us we managed to raise three matches, and before attempting to light the first we carefully arranged the map with a view to having the proper part before us when things became visible. There seemed to be now more wind than I had noticed before, and it was a palpitating moment as the first match was struck. To our joy it stayed in, but to our disgust we found that the map was folded upside down, with a wrong part presented to us. As quickly as possible the map was rearranged, and we found the general district where we were, and then lit first match. Number two seemed always in danger of being blown out; and number three was lighted needlessly soon. For a few precious seconds we drank in as much of the map as we could, and then outer darkness—worse than before. By this time it was tolerably manifest that unless the moon came out we were landed for the night. For provision for the day we had each taken two sandwiches and a piece of cake, but although extremely hungry, we thought it better to reserve for future use the small quantity of cake that alone remained. No good place

could be found to lie down on. The heather and peat hags were as sodden as they could be, and where there was any shelter a snow-drift was sure to be found. All the same we did lie down for a bit. For the beginning of March, and in the locality we were, the night, though extremely dark, was probably not a cold one, as far as a thermometer reading might indicate. To compensate there were other discomforts. Everything was saturated. Our boots were more or less full of water, frequently there was a drizzling rain, and when it stopped there was sure to be wind, which was worse. We appeared to have seen different things on the map during the half minute or so that it was visible to us, and we endeavoured to reconcile the different impressions that had been made. For the next hour and a half we discussed this in a way that would have done credit to the historical debates that took place during the yachting meet. Afterwards the point as to whether we were as hungry as we had been a couple of hours previously arose, and on this subject it may be mentioned that we agreed that we were not. The reason for this and supplementary questions were next considered for at least an hour, bringing us on to about one o'clock. The coldness of our feet had now become almost unendurable, and as it seemed just a little lighter, we thought that by climbing the hill a little we might find how we really lay by Loch a' Bhraoin. For the best part of an hour we mounted very slowly up the side of the stream, and finally agreed that we saw the loch pointing a good deal higher up the valley than we were. The next question was, where was the bridge? In his former excursion Munro was certain that he came down the shoulder of Meall a' Chrasgaidh almost in a bee-line for the boathouse at the end of the loch; that he had had no difficulty crossing streams, and that he had crossed one bridge, and possibly two. It therefore seemed impossible that the bridge could be lower down the valley; and the only feasible explanations seemed to be that it had been washed away or that we had passed it in the darkness. This was quite possible, as we had failed to see the stream issuing from the loch. By this time the moon, though never appearing, must have

risen considerably in the heavens, and things seemed to be distinctly lighter. We then descended to where the streams met, and commenced ascending the main stream, hugging the bank. We felt we were now quite entitled to finish any food we had. This took about a couple of minutes, and at about three o'clock we started up the main stream again looking for the bridge. Often the thought of the whereabouts of our trap and what sort of a time our landlord was having occurred to us. Was he, also in the open, or had he a roof over his head? We went very slowly up the rough ground by the side of the stream, and in about half an hour or so passed the junction with the overflow from Loch a' Bhraoin. This, as already mentioned, had not been noticed in the jet darkness as we came down, and the sight of it encouraged us in the hope that we had also failed to notice the bridge. During the next little while several false reports were raised as to the bridge being in sight, but as each of these was found to be groundless, Munro would state that as far as he recollected the bridge was about 300 yards above the particular bend of the stream at which we happened to be. This took place about half-a-dozen times, and by then we were getting much above the direct line between the shoulder of Meall a' Chrsgaidh and where the loch must be. I continued to hope all things regarding this bridge, but began to think that it must be used solely by such people as Mrs Harris, and when we came to a rather sheltered place, suggested a rest, and sat down. Munro went on a bit, I believe did ditto, and eventually returned with no further information regarding the bridge. Obviously we had just to get across without it, and to put in the time till dawn we considered as to whether if, admittedly you are as wet as you could be, there was any advantage in stripping when you came to a place where fording was practicable.

Different views were held and acted on when the opportunity ultimately arose, and the matter is still undecided. At six o'clock it was sufficiently light to see what was going on, and ten minutes later we found a place which we thought we could ford. This was managed successfully, and shortly we came in sight of the loch, with

a bridge at its outlet. Seven o'clock found us across the bridge, with our driver and a keeper standing at the door of the boathouse. Short explanations followed. The bridge that we had sought so earnestly was a myth, but except in spate the stream, notwithstanding its width, may easily be crossed dryshod. Mr Mackay had fortunately met this keeper on driving up to the boathouse, just as the latter was leaving for some remote cottage. The two of them had sat up in the shanty expecting us every minute. By good luck there happened to be a tin of cocoa and some extraordinary biscuits in the place, and with a good fire they managed to make themselves tolerably comfortable. We gladly joined in a cup of cocoa, and at eight o'clock drove off, rather over twelve hours behind time. The chance of seeing the gorge at Braemore and the Falls of Measach in fine flood was too good to be missed, so when we came to the junction of the Ullapool and Dundonnell roads we dismounted and went through the Braemore grounds. The falls are probably familiar to most S.M.C. members, and have often been described, but I doubt if any have seen them in better form than they were on that Sunday morning. The horse, like ourselves, was feeling somewhat the want of food, and it was nearly noon before Aultguish was reached. On our arrival we were sorry to find that everybody had stayed up during the night for us, and it was obviously with a feeling of relief that it was seen that everybody was much as usual. By his conduct on the previous night Munro had given away his reputation, and no astonishment was manifested on his account. Glances full of that quality that is said to be cultivated by familiarity were, however, directed at me. The extremely limited amount of Classics I ever knew is now pretty well all forgotten, but one dictum of an ancient sage still stays in my memory. He pronounced that the wisest man was he who thought of wise things and did them, and that the next wisest man was he who said the wise things another did and followed that good example. With fools, however, exactly the contrary holds. The man who did idiotic things solely of his own accord no doubt was a bit of a fool, but he who saw the foolish things one fool did and

proceeded to do likewise was a much more hopeless character. The good people of Aultguish showed plainly that they were disciples of that philosopher. As we had missed the previous day's dinner, that day's breakfast, and it was nearly luncheon time, a compromise was made regarding meals, and shortly a first-rate one, consisting of roast mutton, ham and eggs, and cheese appeared. After that we retired to our rooms, and one at least indulged in rather more than forty winks. We had pretty well spoiled our chances of doing anything that day, but as the afternoon was very fine, we went for a walk along the Garve road and loafed generally.

As we had to catch the evening train at Garve, the next day's programme had to be short, and Beinn Dearg was decided on. We accordingly bicycled as far as the bridge over Abhuinn a' Ghiubhais Li, and then walked up the valley of Allt Mhucarnaich for nearly two hours, crossing the stream just above the junction with a tributary that comes in from the north at about 1,400 feet. From near here we were fortunate enough to see an avalanche on a scale far beyond anything I ever dreamt of occurring in this country. For a width of over a hundred yards the snow suddenly peeled off the face of the shoulder to our left, and came rattling down with a tremendous noise. Munro, who has made such innumerable excursions on the hills during winter, admitted that he had seen nothing like it before, and when afterwards we came to the bed of slip many were the regrets expressed that neither had a camera. The snow was heavy as we ascended farther, but a steady grind took us to the top—large cairn—at about 1.30.

Earlier in this volume Mr A. E. Robertson describes a splendid north face to this mountain. We stayed for more than half an hour on the top, hoping to get a good view of this, but saw it only imperfectly, through a thin shifting mist. There seemed to be something similar at the north-east side, but as one is liable to be greatly deceived regarding the relative size of things in a mist, I shall attempt no description. Two hours after leaving the top brought us to the road again. A mile or two down the

condition of the road at last proved too much for us, and Munro had what looked like a nasty spill from his machine, though he professed to be little the worse. The inn was reached at five, and our tour was at an end.

It is always pleasant to have grounds for acknowledging one's indebtedness to one's host, and this sketch would be incomplete without some such recognition. Mine host of Aultguish treated us in every respect very well, and though most irregular hours were kept, seemed to be able to produce excellent repasts at very short notice. He, moreover, plays the game in a sportsmanlike way, for although you engage rooms, occupy them with your baggage, keep the entire establishment up during the night, and then don't turn up till the following noon, no charge for apartments nor attendance appears directly or indirectly in your bill. This point I respectfully commend to the consideration of the ex-Treasurer of the Club should he be contemplating anything further in the nocturnal line. He can start from no better base.

THE BLACK SHOOT—IN WHITE.

BY HAROLD RAEBURN.

IT is a number of years now since the first ascent of this gully was recorded in the pages of the *S.M.C. Journal*, but the subsequent visits of members have been few.

These visits have, I consider, been fewer than the merits of the "Black Shoot" as a climb deserve. This is probably owing to the somewhat discouraging account of its wetness and dirtiness as experienced by the conquerors of its mossy waterslides, curious twisted chimney, and steep pitches.

The conditions under which a party of S.M.C. members climbed the gully on 30th December 1900 were quite different, and though they could not be said to render the climb any easier, they probably accounted for the comfortable cleanness and practical dryness with which the party arrived at the summit. As the Black Shoot affords a climb of a typical gully style such as is more usually met with in the "Lakes" or Wales than hitherto practised in Scotland, it may be of interest to describe our party's ascent in detail.

As, however, to some readers of the *Journal* the "Black Shoot" may be only a "name" and nothing more, it may be as well to give it "a local habitation" in addition by describing briefly its situation and early history.

High up on the rocky eastern shoulder of Ben Eunaich, the mountain on the north side of the entrance to Glen Strae, "yawns like a gash on warrior's breast" a deep black chasm very conspicuous to any one crossing from Glen Strae to Glenkinglass by Glen Allt na Copagach, but not very obvious from any other view-points. The "face" here is about 400 feet high and perhaps quarter of a mile long, and is composed of a mass of porphyry superimposed upon the prevailing mica-schist of the district. A short mile farther west again we meet with the well-known Cruachan granites.

The first mention of the Black Shoot as a climb will be found in the *Journal* for 1890, page 85, and records two attempts, the first by Messrs Lester and Robertson in the

previous December, and the second in April by Lester and Campbell. In March 1891 a party of four found the conditions such that no attempt on the climb could be made. The next attempt was made on New Year's Day 1892 by a party of four, Messrs Gibson, Lester, Naismith, and Thomson. This party attained a point somewhat higher than that previously reached, but were stopped by a boulder which had fallen from above and blocked the chimney. The fourth and successful attempt was made on Queen's Birthday, 19th May 1892, by four S.M.C. members—Gibson, Douglas, Lester, and Naismith—and a very good account of this by Lester will be found in the *Journal*, Vol. II., p. 117.

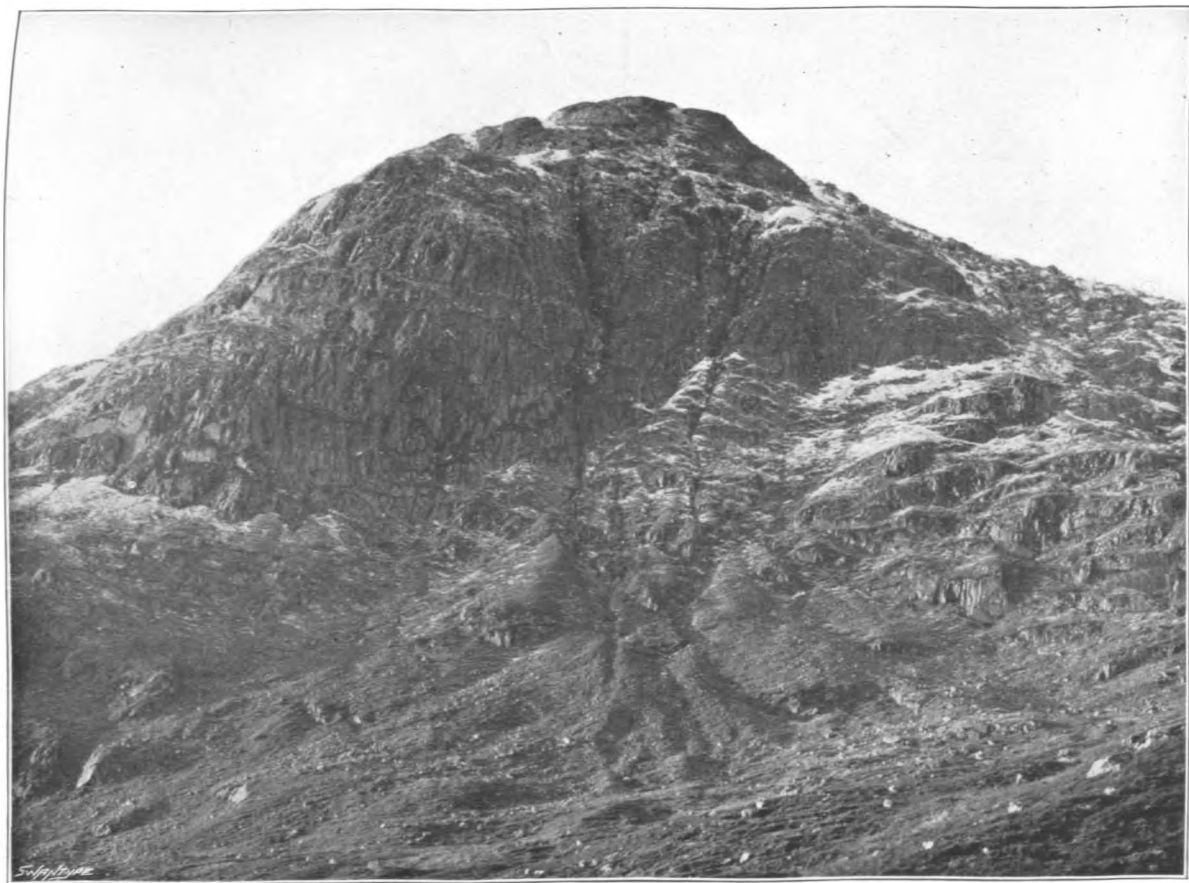
My acquaintance with the "Black Shoot" was made during the Winter Meet of 1897 in company with Maclay, a member well known for his love of steep, slimy, and difficult "cracks" and chimneys.

We took it in turns to lead up the various sections of the climb, and I noticed, not with too much regret, that M. arranged it so that the steepest and wettest portion fell to his share.

From the description of former explorers it is clear that they had omitted the lower part of the gully below the shoot. This is a somewhat ill-defined waterslide, a mossy luzula-bedecked wall, of very considerable steepness. The original route goes up the buttress on the north side of this, and traverses into the gully just where it becomes better defined, and the angle eases off for a while very considerably.

Maclay and I, however, tackled it from the very bottom, and found this lower portion—perhaps 50 feet in height—if not the most difficult, the most disagreeable and dangerous part of the ascent, on account of the treacherous nature and abundance of the vegetable covering, and the necessity of standing in and seeking handholds under the stream of icy water that trickled down the slide. As showing the changes that may occur in climbs in the course of a few years, I may mention that the boulder which stopped the earlier explorers, and which was at last surmounted by Gibson (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. II., p. 70), had now disappeared, and we found the chimney quite unobstructed.

The foot of this chimney is the spot where, if hitherto a



THE BLACK SHOOT, BEN EUNAICH.

W. Inglis Clark.

wetting has been avoided, a shower bath appears in ordinary circumstances inevitable—a jet of water usually shooting down the crack of the chimney and distributing its chilly favours with impartiality upon the up-struggling face, body, and limbs of the climber. Above this, though the climbing is actually more difficult, the chimney is much drier.

Maclay and I emerged on the summit on this occasion certainly pretty wet, yet after all Bell and I got even wetter next day in merely walking from Loch Awe Hotel to the summit of Eunaich and back again.

Coming to the snow ascent of last winter on 30th December.

On the previous day, Dr Clark, J. G. Inglis, Rennie, and I had traversed Ben Eunaich and Beinn a Chochuill, ascending from the east past the foot of the "Black Shoot," and the accompanying photo by Dr Clark was taken from near the Glenkinglass track directly opposite it.

The snowline then lay at about 2,500 feet, but during the night a very heavy fall occurred, almost six inches, bringing down the line to not more than 1,500 feet, and making the face present a very different appearance to what it does in the photograph. It was a dull and somewhat threatening morning when Mackay, Sang, and I left the hotel bound for the "Shoot." The easiest way to gain its foot from Loch Awe Hotel is to keep the Dalmally road as long as it remains on the north bank of the river. Just before reaching the bridge a cart track will be noticed which leads off on the left, keeping close to the river to a small cottage. Fifty yards or so short of the cottage, another cart track will be seen branching off on the left and leading through a marshy hollow, and then below a steep little crag. Here the track again branches, the straight line continuing on to some sheep fanks at the entrance of the glen, while the left slants up hill gradually and passes right under the east face of Ben Eunaich on its—somewhat ill-defined—way over to Glenkinglass.

Leaving the track just before it begins to descend to cross the stream, we made for the "Shoot" through ankle-deep slushy snow. It improved, however, higher up, and by the time we reached the luncheon place, just below the

buttress to the right of the bottom waterslide, it was tolerably dry, though the temperature was slightly above the freezing point.

As we approached the rocks there occurred an incident which, in more credulous times, might have been considered as a warning to draw back. The ominous number of *three* ravens appeared sailing out from the face of the crags and circling around with airy wheelings and loud croaks. I fear, however, that we moderns have lost the sublime self-conceit of our superstitious forefathers, who saw in the movements and appearances of bird and beast only reference to themselves and their affairs, and the incident passed for what it was really worth. This crag is one of those north and north-east facing kind to be described as "strong," and well fitted to furnish, a couple of months later, a nesting home to the raven, which, like other cliff-breeding birds, shuns the wet south-west faces in preference to the drier if colder north and north-east.

From our lunching spot, which was at about a level of half-way up the waterslide, the route led on the right-hand buttress, here composed of rock intermingled with very steep heather. It begins by a narrow ledge leading to the left with a delicate balance corner to pass, above which, however, is a first-class hitch, then straight up for 40 feet or so; and then still by the left into the bed of the gully above the lower slide. This part in summer presents little or no difficulty, and even now only required a good deal of digging with the ice-axe to make stands or find hitches. The route now lies for a time directly up the gully bed. The more one straddles up by the sides, and the less in the bed, the drier one remains. After about 20 feet of this sort of work, a very steep little pitch occurs covered with green slimy moss. Here, on both occasions, I have preferred to go out on the left wall and climb up over a rounded overhanging sloping ledge of moss and grass, requiring cautious treatment, especially in snow. Above this one again turns into the bed of the gully, now at a very gentle angle, and a few yards' easy scrambling places the climber in a deep cleft below the "Twisted Chimney."

We are now actually in the "Black Shoot." The gully walls project far on each side and overhang as does the chimney itself, and the next 12 or 15 feet is the hardest part, gymnastically speaking, of the climb. There was a good deal of ice now on the rocks, but this was fortunately very loosely adherent, and finger and toe holds could be cleared out with comparative ease.

Just above the "turn" of the chimney, where it is narrowest and projects most, the holds are poor for a bit, but they suffice, and shortly the leader disappears from the view of those beneath. A few feet higher he finds an excellent place to "jam" while manipulating the rope for No. 2. We had only a 60 foot rope for our party of three. This in several places rather hampered the leader, who could have got much more comfortable stopping places with a little longer run out, and we considered that 80 feet would have been a better length; 60 feet is ample for two. It was very amusing to the man above on this occasion, while jammed in the chimney, to listen to the puffings of the upstruggling second and third men, and to see their breaths like clouds of steam come drifting up the narrow crack. He at first thought that briar pipes must be going, but discovered that later only bronchials were in use.

Ten feet or so above the "jam" the wall on the left breaks away and leads out on to a very considerable ledge, with good hitches and ample standing room for a party of four, if they don't mind crowding a bit.

Here there is an apparent choice of three routes, but though one to the left appears at first the most promising, no one has as yet succeeded in forcing a way there. All have been driven back into the direct line of ascent.

The point now is to gain a somewhat adverse sloping small ledge on the right (north) wall of the chimney. This is not an easy matter for the leader to do without assistance, and the only one who has dispensed with a back is, I understand, Mr J. S. Napier, who led the second ascent in December 1897. By making use of No. 2, who leans across the gulf as a ladder, this step is rendered perfectly safe and simple, but from here to the top of the overhanging part is, I consider, especially with snow and ice about, the portion

of the climb which calls for the greatest care and caution on the part of the leader, who can gain no assistance from below, and who will find, in snow, a deal of hard one-handed burrowing work to find holds in the bank of loose stones, earth, and moss overhanging the exit of the pitch. Until he is up the rest of the party are best a little way along the ledge.

On the occasion of the first ascent an accident which nearly proved very serious happened owing to one of the party who was directly below being struck by a stone.

Above this steep pitch the gully resumes the character it exhibits lower down, and the angle eases off. The climbing, in fact, is now practically over, though one or two steep little grassy pitches have still to be overcome.

Here is the point from which the "Black Shoot" looks most impressive, and might easily be pronounced on a cursory examination impossible—the steep black walls projecting far on either side, and restricting the distant view to a narrow strip of snow-clad hill and green brown valley, while at one's feet the pitch drops with an abruptness so great as to prevent a view of the hundred feet or so immediately below.

The rest of the climb calls for little remark. On arriving at the summit, our watches informed us that we had taken 1 hour and 35 minutes from the luncheon place, a height of 350 to 400 feet.

The large amount of snow of course caused the pace to be slow, and a longer rope would also have assisted in shortening the time. From the summit our party kept along the face of Eunaich to the edge of a large ravine or gully with steep walls, but of easy angle and filled merely with scree. This in mist has been taken for the real Black Shoot, but is about one-third of a mile south-west of it, and faces south-east. We descended by broken rocks on its east edge, and back to Loch Awe by the route traversed in the morning.

CLOUDLESS MARCH DAYS IN SKYE.

BY SCOTT MONCRIEFF PENNEY.

"Dunedin is queenly and fair,
None feels it more than I ;
But in the prime of the summer time
Give me the Isle of Skye !"

IT is not, however, only in summer that Skye may be preferable to the metropolis. While during March the Castle Rock was swathed in mists, and the frequenters of Princes Street were shivering in those east winds for which the capital is so famous or infamous, we in "The Isle of Mist" were revelling in calm seas, brilliant sunshine, and cloudless skies.

Now, though the pages of our *Journal* are full of references to Skye, yet nearly every article tells of scaling inaccessible(?) pinnacles, climbing perpendicular gaps, or making stomach traverses along six-inch wide ledges, and I have frequently thought that, like the portals of a place even more savage and forbidding than the most gruesome parts of the Coolins, the whole island of Skye was guarded by the warning to duffers and Salvationists, "All hope abandon ye who enter here." It is to revive hope in the minds of old-fashioned lovers of mountain scenery and of ridges, which are not arêtes, who may possess neither ice-axe nor rope, and yet may somehow have got into the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and be enthusiastic members even if not "crack" climbers, that I am writing by way of encouragement and invitation an account of four days' tramping (partly in company with a bicycle) through the length and breadth of Skye.

On Saturday, 16th March, our iron horses brought me and a friend from Portree to the door of Sligachan Hotel shortly after ten o'clock. The tramp through the glen was at once begun, and my friend had a record first visit. Clouds only rested now and again on the hill-tops to give variety and lend effect to the landscape. As we approached Harta Corrie, Sgurr Dubh loomed up grand and large on our right, and as we turned the shoulder of Marsco, Blaven with

"cloudless" head burst on our view to the left. We followed the pony track to the cairns, and there for the first time in our lives we saw the wild Coolins unveiled before us—Garsbheinn, Sgurr nan Eag, Sgurr Dubh, Sgurr Alasdair, Sgurr Mhic Coinnich, Sgurr Dearg, with the Inaccessible Pinnacle looking like a slate stuck vertically into the top of a wall, Sgurr na Banachdich, Sgurr a Ghreadaidh, Sgurr a Mhadaidh, Bidein Druim nan Ramh, the Castles, Bruach na Frithe, Bhasteir Tooth, Sgurr nan Gilleann and its pinnacles—when have you such a view in August? All the giants were likewise clothed in white, though their black ribs protruded from their garments of snow, and such studies in black and white are necessarily impossible in autumn. We descended to the loch, walked along its north side, saw the few remaining sticks of the Camp, passed through its back garden, much in need of draining, and climbed Druim nan Ramh. We began to zig-zag up rather too soon, and actually managed to introduce a hands and knees traverse along a ledge with a shower bath above and a nasty steep chimney below. The view-point on the ridge overlooking Harta Corrie is the finest and most central I have yet seen—commanding as it does, on the one side, Loch Scavaig, Loch Coruisk and its encircling mountains, and, on the other, Lota Corrie, guarded by Bidein, Sgurr nan Gilleann, and Sgurr na h-Uamha, with Blaven and its companions across Glen Sligachan. We descended to the Bloody Stone, and kept the left bank of the Sligachan river to the bridge; but with due respect to Mr Harker, who calls it the "shortest route," I should in future prefer to cross the river and keep the pony track.

The Monday following we ascended the best hill near Portree for obtaining a view. It stands on the west side of the Sligachan road above Viewfield House, and is locally known as Fingal's Seat. On the Ordnance Survey map this name (Suidh Fhinn) is confined to the lower northern top, the highest point being given as Beinn na Greine, and its height 1,367 feet. Two hours and a quarter suffice to take you up and down in comfort. It occupies a good central position, and enables one to obtain a good idea of

the "lie" of the island. I have climbed it in deep snow when an ice-axe was a necessity, and on that occasion I saw Skye under unfamiliar but none the less beautiful conditions. The feature of the view is the way in which the sea is seen to creep up into the land in all directions, so that it is probably the case that no point in Skye is more than four miles from salt water. The Coolins, Macleod's Tables, and the very top of Dunvegan Head stood out well, but the Harris hills were but faintly visible.

On Wednesday we set off in the opposite direction—northwards—and three hours took us to the top of the Storr (2,360 feet). The atmosphere, especially to the west, was phenomenally clear, and such a day does not occur often, or Skye would be overrun with Cockneys. Every eminence in the Long Island from Barra Head to the Butt of Lewis stood out in sharp outline against the sky. One rehearsed the names of the Coolins, and identified the heights from Beinn na Caillich above Broadford to Sgurr na Banachdich. Eigg, Rum, and Canna showed up to the south; Ben Alligin, Leagach, and An Teallach were seen to the east and north-east; Scour Ouran and its Six Sisters were plainly visible; but farther to the south-east was not so clear.

I was left to do the rest of my tramp alone. Sheriff Nicolson, our late Vice-President, a leading authority on all things connected with Skye, and author of the lines at the head of this paper, is alleged to have said that "to ascend the Storr and follow the mountain ridge the whole way till you come to the highroad near the Quiraing is no doubt one of the grandest promenades in Skye, commanding wide views in all directions." I had determined to follow his advice, although I have as little doubt he never did the tramp himself as I have that Scott "never went by light of moon to see what could be seen at noon"! It is a fine ridge walk, and the view of the basaltic terraces and cliffs on the east side of the range is unrivalled. I would fain have had another hour in which to catch the steamer at Staffin, but, by making twenty-five minutes cover all rests, I reached the boat slip in four and a half hours after leaving the Storr. The true nature of the range is seen from

the sea. It is a succession of tops with numerous although not heavy dips between. From the Storr the ridge appears to be pretty well continuous, or I might not have attempted it with the time at my disposal. There are in all seven different dips before Beinn Edra (2,003 ft.), a sharp imposing top at the north end of the ridge, is reached, and the climbing, including the ascent of the Storr, amounts in all to more than 4,250 feet. With the exception of two easy bealachs, down which a horse might be taken, there did not appear to me to be any places where a descent towards the east could be comfortably made. There is, however, a well recognised but steep passage down from the head of Glen Hinnisdal, which runs up from beyond Kingsburgh on the west, to Loch Cuithir (pronounced *Queer*) and Lealt on the east.

Uig Bay and its long pier were well seen to the left before I reached Bealach Uig, by which I went down into the boggy glen leading to Staffin. In front of me the Needle Rock of the Quiraing was most distinct, and by a somewhat early start from Portree the Quiraing itself might be added to the day's work.

I completed my survey of the island two days later by a bicycle ride round the south end, returning from Broadford to Portree by the wild road round the head of Loch Aindórt, which has upon it one of the worst hills (for bicycling) in Skye, named Druim nan Cleochd. To those who have hitherto avoided the promontory of Sleat as flat, tame, and uninteresting, the scenery will come as a pleasant surprise. The country is quite unlike the northern part of the island, being well wooded. It closely resembles Ross-shire, and the views it commands, both of the Coolins on the west and of the mountains above Loch Hourn and Loch Nevis on the east, are very remarkable. Let no one who traverses it on foot or by bike omit to take the new "round," which crosses and recrosses the peninsula. The road, distinctly rough in some places, leaves the main road two and a half miles south of Isle Ornsay, and leads by a delightful glen to Ord, a charming spot, then keeps along the west coast by the ruins of Dunscaith Castle to Tarskaivaig and Gillean, and returns to the east side at Ostaig

by another fine glen, the summit being 633 feet above sea-level.

As I returned in the gloaming from Armadale Castle to Broadford by the haunted Black Lochs I heard a distinct sharp cry behind me, which caused me to turn round suddenly. There were strange lights in the lochs, and huge black objects visible in their calm depths. No wonder no one would, not so long ago, willingly pass this uncanny spot after dark! But the prosaic days of bicycles do not harmonise well with ghosts and fairies. I fear the cry was from my tired and unoled iron steed. The lights were the reflections of the heather burning on the moors above, and the black monsters were the shadows of the rocks.

Given such cloudless days as I was favoured with, for grandeur, beauty, and variety of scene, Skye is hard to beat.

S.M.C. GUIDE BOOK.



THE ARROCHAR GROUP.

(DIVISION I. GROUP II.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 14'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 47'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheets 37 and 38. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, Sheets 11 and 12.

1. Ben Arthur
(the Cobbler) . . . 2,891 feet, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Arrochar.
2. Ben Narnain . . . 3,036 feet, 1 mile north-east of No. 1.
3. Ben Ime (the Butter
Mount) . . . 3,318 feet, 2 miles north-north-west of No. 1.
4. Ben Vane . . . 3,004 feet, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-north-east of No. 1.
5. Ben Vorlich . . . 3,092 feet, 5 miles north-north-east of No. 1.
6. Beinn an Lochain (Hill
of the Little Loch) . 3,021 feet, 3 miles west of No. 1.

The first four of these hills form a diamond-shaped group, measuring about six miles from north to south, and five miles from east to west. The last two lie outside of this group, the latter being immediately to the west of the western point of the diamond, and the former opposite its north-east face. They are composed of schistose grits, mica-schists, and gneiss, with a few small patches of diorite and basalt dykes on Ben Vane and Ben Ime.

With the exception of the Cobbler and Narnain, none of these hills have attracted the attentions of the rock-climber. Presenting sloping shoulders covered with long grass, they offer no difficulty to the active walker, who, if he so desires, may, with Arrochar as a starting-point, make the round of the Cobbler, Ben Ime, Ben Vane, and Ben Vorlich within eleven hours. From their accessible position, however, and with the advantages of early and late railway connections with Edinburgh and Glasgow, the

Arrochar Group will always hold a first place with those whose climbing possibilities are limited to a single day.

From what has been said, it will be evident that a few words will suffice to describe these hills, with the exception of the Cobbler and Narnain. It is true that given suitable wintry weather, excellent snow-work would be possible on some of them; but owing to their proximity to the sea, snow seldom accumulates to any great extent, a superabundance of rainfall being the only equivalent.

BEN IME, 3,318 feet, presents a cone of comparative sharpness, well seen from below the south peak of the Cobbler. From this point will be noticed a steep rock face leading down into Coiregrogain Glen. From the south-east ridge of Ben Vorlich other rocks may be seen, on the same (eastern) side, but these have not so far been explored by the climber. Ben Ime is most conveniently reached by following the route to the Cobbler (see later) to the col or depression between that peak and Narnain. From this point an easy ridge leads direct to the summit.

BEN VANE, 3,004 feet, and BEN VORLICH, 3,092 feet, may be ascended with equal facility from Arrochar or Tarbet. In the one case the path up Glen Loin would be followed, and in the other the road by Inveruglas. A ridge of Ben Vane and a ridge of Ben Vorlich come down almost to the point where these two paths meet. These ridges form a gentle line of ascent, but a steeper climb is got in either case by going on to Loch Sloy, and thence climbing direct up the face.

Ben Vane when viewed from the shoulder of Vorlich, just above Inveruglas, shows a fine rocky peak, with a steeply sloping southern face and a more gentle declivity to the north. The grass slopes which rise on the southern side for about 1,800 feet, are said to be among the steepest in Scotland. The rocky portions, though picturesque, hardly hold out hope to the rock-climber.

Ben Vorlich is easily reached as above, but it is more commonly ascended from Ardlui. From Inverarnan southwards for several miles the slopes of this mountain run down to Glen Falloch and Loch Lomond, and present no difficulty at any part to the climber.

The south-east ridge is rocky, and although presenting no difficulty, offers a number of short rock faces and gullies which might give good sport.

From a scenic point of view this ridge is very attractive, and few excursions are more pleasurable than the ascent from Inveruglas to the top. From it Crois and Narnain are seen at their best, and as we ascend, the Cobbler shows a fine though unfamiliar contour. Bens Vane and Ime also, from certain points, exhibit a craggy aspect, intensified when seen under snow conditions. When approaching the summit the walker passes along the crest of the Coire na Baintighearna, where truly Alpine effects are produced in spring, by the contrast of the extensive snow-fields with the black rocks of the "little hills." The view to the south-east extends down Loch Lomond, and is unobstructed.

BEINN AN LOCHAIN, 3,021 feet, may be reached from Arrochar, but Cairndow, on Loch Fyne side, is the nearest starting point. In either case the ascent would be made from the road through Glencroe and Glen Kinglas. This mountain resembles the foregoing in general formation, and has no distinctive features. It is separated from the main group by a valley which at its highest point (Rest and be Thankful) is 900 feet above sea-level.

BEN ARTHUR or the COBBLER, 2,891 feet, although the lowest of the group, is by far the most interesting and important.

Though not attaining to 3,000 feet, and therefore of but secondary interest to the "Munro-bagger," its strange rocky peaks and its excellent position as a view-point combine to place it in the front rank of our Scottish hills.

Well seen from the steamboats on Loch Long and Loch Lomond, and from the West Highland Railway, its unusual outline has attracted the attention of thousands of tourists, and in this way its name has become more or less a household word. Who first christened it the Cobbler is uncertain, and to which part of the mountain the term refers is apparently open to discussion, but readers are referred to interesting remarks on this subject in *S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. V., pp. 154 and 155. Although having no



THE COBBLER FROM THE SLOPES OF NARNAIN.

W. Inglis Clark.

strong opinions on the matter, the writer would suggest that in the Eastern Alps the term "Cobbler" or "Schuster" is applied to those rocky peaks whose summits terminate in perpendicular pinnacles or towers, and which from a distance present a more or less fantastic appearance. The "Dreischuster-spitze" in the Sextenthal is perhaps the best-known example, its three Cobblers showing boldly against the sky when seen from a distance. It is possible, therefore, that the name may have been originated by some traveller returning from these Dolomitic regions and seeing a fancied resemblance in our Scottish "Dolomite" (?).

Although, as we have seen, the Cobbler is very accessible by rail or steamer, yet its conditions of rainfall and cloud make an expedition to it nearly always more or less of a venture. As Glencroe is reputed to be one of the wettest spots in the Western Mainland, so the Cobbler not only indulges in plentiful ablutions, but often retains a storm-cloud round its summit when Arrochar basks in unclouded sunshine. Hence the term "Cobbler weather" is held to describe something worse than even "British hill weather."

But the rock-climber has a greater grudge than the photographer or tourist. The rocks, consisting of micaceous schist, present but few hitches or projections. On account also of the persistent rainfall, they are here treacherously slippery, not only in substance, but increasingly through the growth of lichen or moss, which, when wet, often baffles a trusted hobnailer, even when the angle is not excessive.

To the naturalist the mountain is not devoid of interest, and in winter, hares in their coats of ermine may be seen high up on the rocky slopes of the south peak. At other times, above the corrie, the buzzard may be noticed, visiting the inaccessible rocks on either hand, or anon winging his way to the more secluded cliffs of Narnain. In winter the tracks of foxes are on the snow, and Reynard himself has been descried on the rocks of the south peak.

The view from the Cobbler, if not so extensive as that from Narnain (see page 190), is somewhat similar. The

outlook to the north-east is circumscribed by its higher neighbour, while Bens Ime, Vane, and Vorlich all do their share in limiting the view. Still, enough remains to the east, west, and south, while the scenery of the corrie itself, as viewed from north or south peak, is of the wildest description.

In winter the effects are vastly heightened, and the corrie holds a lot of snow. The rocks, covered with fantastic ice-crystals and festooned with frozen garlands, present a magnificent sight under the winter sun. The numerous gullies and chimneys are in some cases more difficult, in others more easy in their winter aspect, and excellent glissading is to be had from the cols between the north and centre peaks and between the south and centre peaks. There are several long snow-filled couloirs leading down from the centre peak into the corrie, but I have on two occasions found these heavily corniced. A word of caution may be given, that these hills, from their proximity to the sea, are liable to thawing and freezing, a process which may convert otherwise easy slopes into almost impracticable ones. Last winter, in February, such was my experience, when, in company with my wife, seven hours were taken (including perhaps two hours for photography) in ascending from Arrochar to the summit. Of these about two hours were spent on the iced slope extending from the centre of the corrie to the col above the south peak.

As may be seen from the general photograph (Plate I.), the Cobbler possesses three distinct peaks. That to the left, the south peak, is known by the familiar names, Jean and the Cobbler's Last; to the right, the north peak is called the Cobbler's Wife; while in the centre is the Cobbler or central peak, with its bold rocky buttress to the north.

Stories have always been current of inaccessible portions of this mountain, and indeed this is not surprising. The ordinary tourist, sauntering up for a view, considers the central peak unclimbable, and passes the south peak as beyond his powers. And so they are to the uninitiated, for no mere walking route leads to either. It may here be pointed out that the Cobbler, speaking generally, is easy



SOUTH PEAK OF THE COBBLER, FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

W. Inglis Clark.

of ascent on all sides, but that the rock-climbing on portions of it is of no mean difficulty even under favourable conditions.

Tourist Routes.—The Cobbler is most easily reached from Arrochar, which indeed lies practically at its base, but it may also be ascended from Glencroe or from Upper Inveruglas.

From Arrochar the road is followed round the head of Loch Long to the cottage at Sugach. Here a choice of routes is open :—

A. The climber immediately zigzags up the grassy slope, at the same time gradually holding slightly to the left, so that at an elevation of about 1,000 feet he may turn the shoulder of Narnain and approach within about 100 yards of Allt a Bhalachain, the Buttermilk Burn, which turbulently flows down from the Cobbler Corrie. From this point, or a little up the slopes of Narnain, a most comprehensive view of the corrie, with its grotesque and overshadowing precipices, is obtained. Should dense mist prevail, a not uncommon occurrence, the burn will assist the traveller in approaching the corrie; but even those well acquainted with the mountain may fail to strike the entrance unless under the guidance of compass and map. Keeping some little distance above the stream, the route leads with but slight rise over boggy grass till some rocky outcrops of Narnain are passed, and the famous Narnain boulders reached. These lie quite near the stream, and form a landmark in misty weather. A little farther the route divides :—

Continuing with the main stream on the left hand, the slopes of Narnain are followed to the col dividing that peak from the Cobbler, which is then easily ascended by the rough northern slope.

On the other hand, crossing the Buttermilk Burn, where a main tributary comes down from the corrie, the pedestrian follows this over boggy and swampy ground, and by many variations may clamber up to the rocky corrie itself, lying in a semicircle of rocky peaks or precipices. A rough foot-path threads its way among the fallen blocks of the north peak, and emerges on the col between it and the central

peak. Turning to the left, an easy scramble leads to the summit.

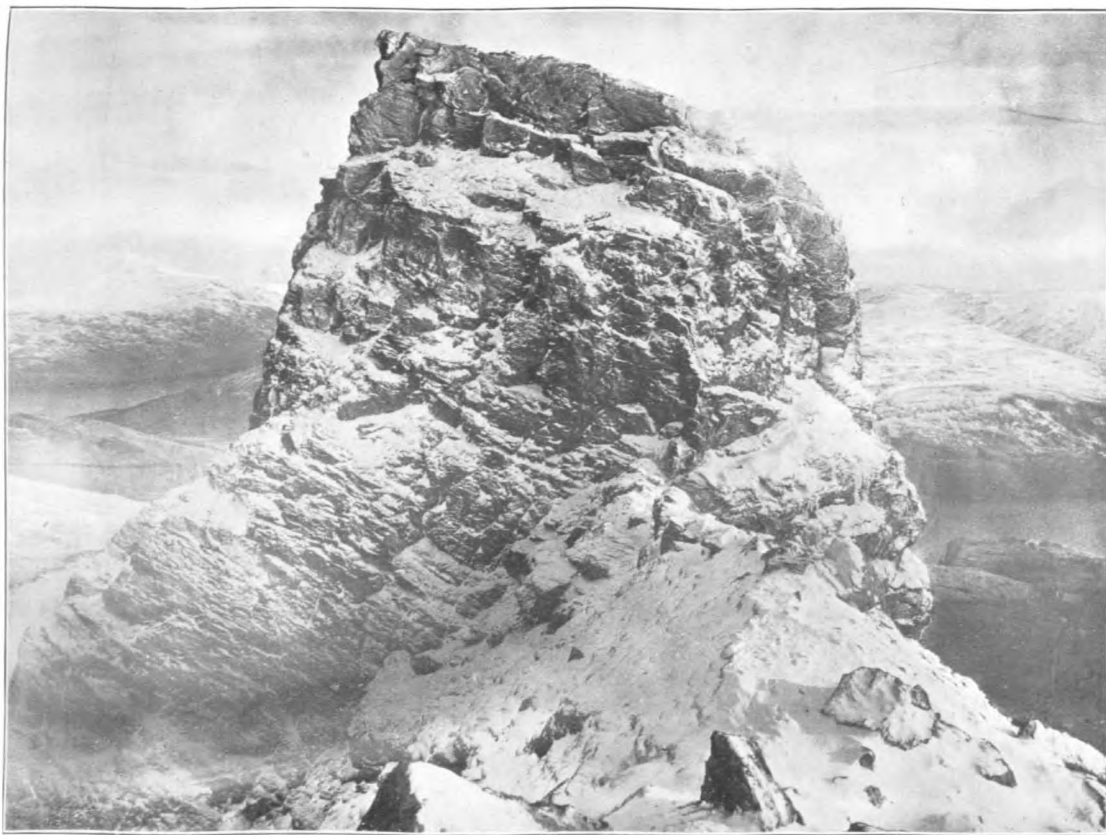
B. The road is followed as in *A*, past Sugach and past the Buttermilk Burn, and the ascent made directly up the long sloping ridge leading north-west to the south peak, Jean. Following, this we pass Jean on our right hand, and so over rocky slopes to the summit.

Travellers from Loch Fyne side, prepared for a somewhat steeper but still easy ascent, may attack the slopes of the hill from any point below the house of Laigh Glencroe, and in this way avoid rounding the south ridge to the Buttermilk Burn.

From Upper Inveruglas the south side of Inveruglas Water is followed to the junction of the Coiregrogain and Inveruglas Burns. Turning sharply to the south to avoid the slopes of Ben Vane, the former burn is followed on its south or right-hand bank, and in this way, after about two miles' walking, the col between Ben Ime and the Cobbler is reached, and the northern slope of the latter ascended.

Rock Climbing on the Cobbler.—THE SOUTH PEAK, which lies to the south-east of the summit, though it is no longer hedged round by the romance of inaccessibility, holds out to the climber problems which have not yet been solved. The traverse from north-east to west has attracted the attention of our best men, but still remains unaccomplished. On the other hand, the southern or easiest face, when under winter conditions, may prove a hard nut even for adepts to crack. The side of the peak looking to the corrie presents a steep and forbidding face. "This face consists of very steep slabby rocks, covered with a thin coating of lichen whose normal condition seems to be one of saturation, and sheets of moss having no adhesion whatever to the rock. Consequently, in ordinary Arrochar weather, such holds as there are are very wet and slippery, and the climbing is both difficult and treacherous."

"The *arête* connecting the south peak with the central peak abuts against the northern face, and affords the shortest route to the summit. A ridge in line with this *arête* runs up to a considerable height on the southern face; but even in



SOUTH PEAK OF THE COBBLER, FROM THE NORTH.

W. Inglis Clark.

the ordinary 'tourist route' traverse of this peak the climbs are mainly face climbs, and are actual climbs, *i.e.*, they cannot be walked. The west face is apparently hopelessly steep." Obviously, then, from these descriptions, climbing routes must mainly hold to the northern and southern faces. The following include such routes as have already been accomplished.

On reference to the photograph (Plate II.), there will be noticed an apparent chimney leading up near the right-hand bottom corner of the peak to a steeply sloping ledge covered with snow. This has not yet been climbed, and does not give much encouragement in this direction. To the left of this, where the snow extends upwards, a shallow chimney or recess leads up to the more marked division of the peak, culminating in the seeming cleft near the skyline. This also has not been climbed.

(a.) Farther left, where a ledge leads to a snow patch, with snow-marked vertical crack above, a traverse may be commenced which ultimately leads to the skyline and on to the usual southern route.

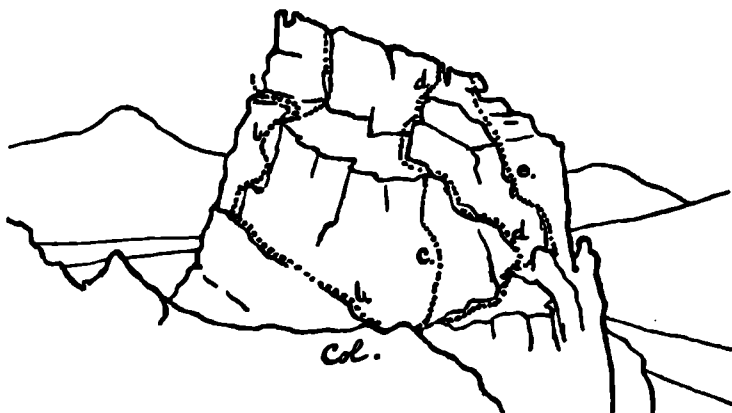
For about 50 feet of this the going is easy, but after that "the ledge leads out on a very steep face, composed of moss and grass rather loosely adherent, finishing below in a perpendicular drop. Working across this face and gradually ascending," the angle of the south-east face is turned, about half-way up, below some overhanging rock, and entrance made into the gully on the south-east leading up to the junction of the south ridge with the face. Here the ordinary route is joined. On the whole this route has little to commend it, as it is "slightly dangerous from the fewness and badness of the hitches, and the treacherous nature of the mossy ledges."

The lower portions of the precipice (to the left in the photograph), though apparently offering more than one route, do not seem to have been yet climbed.

Passing round to the north-west and north faces (see photograph, Plate III.), the climber has choice of four different routes. If the reader refers to the excellent diagram reproduced here from Mr Boyd's paper on the Cobbler (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. V., p. 162) he will be able

to trace out routes *b*, *c*, *d*, and *e* on the photograph accompanying this paper.

(*b*.) A narrow but well-marked ledge leads with a gentle slope to the angle of the north-east and north faces. "At the farther end a fairly stiff climb directly upwards leads the climber to another grass ledge, broad and very comfortable, just below the summit. From this upper ledge the top may be gained by escalading a vertical 12-foot wall provided with some good holds; or the climber may, as an alternative, turn the corner to the left by a sloping slab of rock (which must be treated with caution), and finish the climb by a little chimney on the north-eastern face."

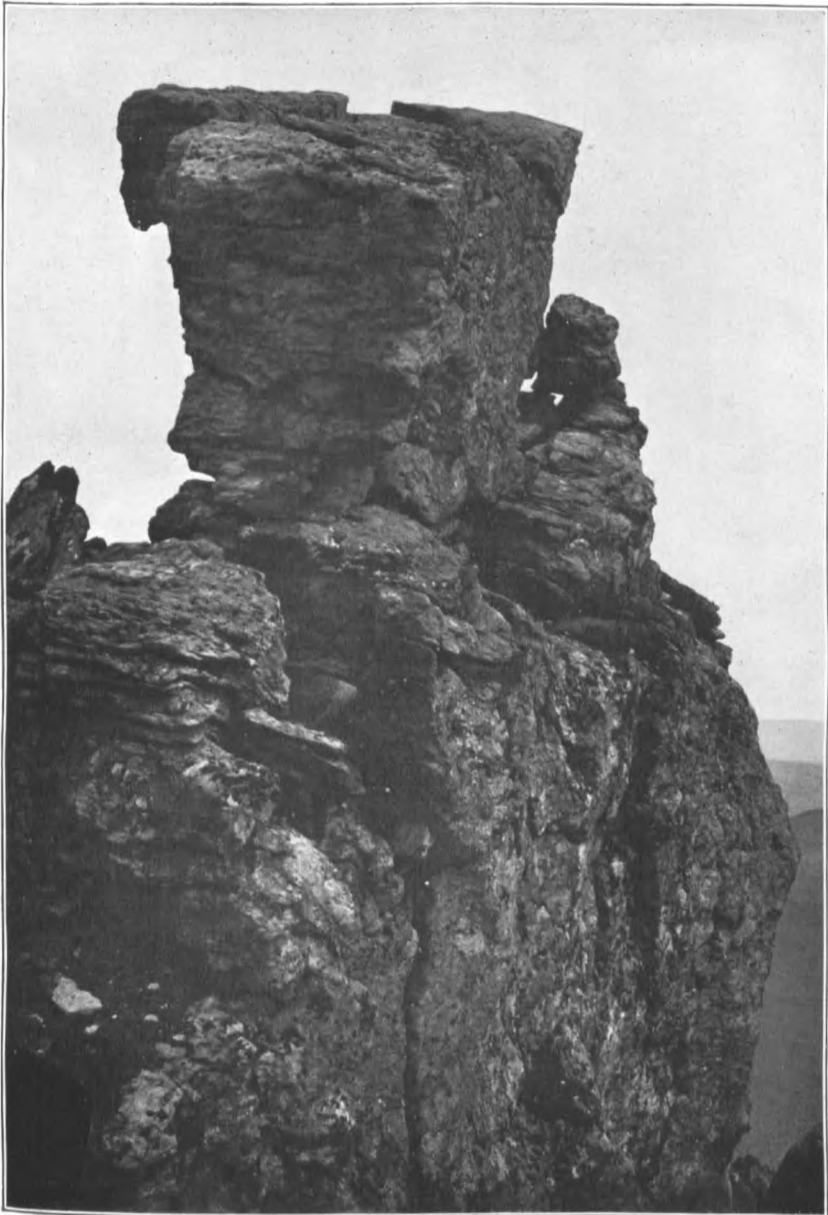


SOUTH PEAK FROM CENTRAL PEAK.

(*c*.) This sporting route starts direct from the col, and ascends by a 40-foot climb up good rock to the upper ledge where it joins route *d*.

(*d*.) The most popular route on this face also makes use of the prominent ledge referred to. When near the end "a shallow chimney, changing presently to a grassy ledge, will be observed sloping obliquely upwards to the left." It leads to the western end of the very roomy snowy ledge easily recognised in the photograph. Turning once more to the right, a scramble up one or two steep rock pitches lands the climber on the top.

(*e*.) Starting from the snow-covered col, the prominent



CENTRAL PEAK OF THE COBBLER, WESTERN SIDE. *W. Inglis Clark.*

ledge on the north-west side is followed to the extreme end. At this point a steep and difficult crack or chimney is climbed, and from the ledge at the top the upper part of the peak is easily reached.

(*f.*) The climber approaching the peak from the south-east will notice that a rough rocky arête forms the angle of the south-east and southern faces. The ascent of this (left in Plate II.), keeping strictly to the ridge, is difficult and sporting. At the bottom the angle of the rocks is great, and the holds are of such a character as to tempt the climber to leave the matter over to a more convenient season. Should this be the case, it is easy to circumvent the difficulty by following the grass to the left, and returning to the rocks where a grass ledge affords access. From this point, by keeping always near to the angle of the south-eastern face, a not too difficult but always interesting climb is obtained round corners, up faces, or by the aid of cracks to the top.

(*g.*) The easy route is commenced on the south-west face where some steep grass slopes abut on the screes below. Considerable variation is possible, but no real difficulty need be encountered.

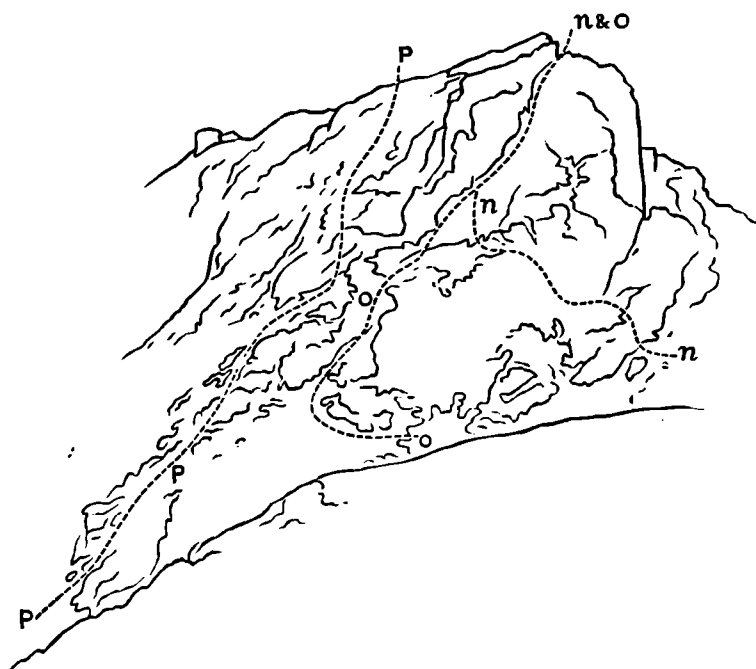
THE CENTRAL PEAK and buttress (Plates IV. and V.).—The actual summit constitutes "the Cobbler," a narrow wall of rock vertical on its east and west faces, and sloping steeply on the south. The northern end is of moderate height, but has not been climbed.

(*h.*) The ordinary route commences where a number of fallen rocks abut on the north-east corner. A small window will be observed leading through to the west side, where a satisfactory ledge is followed to the south-west angle. Here a second window perforates the peak. The climber, however, standing on the sill, mounts on the lintel, and turning to the left, is soon on the top. Under icy conditions it is not always easy to descend from the south-west window-sill to the ledge in returning.

(*i.*) The southern arête route. Mounting from the col on the northern side of the south peak, a steep arête will be noticed leading to the summit. The angle is not excessive, and the holds, as a rule, are good. Some care must, how-

ever, be exercised, as the rocks are slippery, and a fall might be awkward.

(*k.*) On the eastern face, a narrow ledge (the M'Gregor Ledge) leads to the sill of the southern window. The rock above overhangs, and holds are absent, so that to get on to the southern extremity of the ledge is difficult, and to move along it is more so. A rope held through the window will at least give moral assistance if physical is not required.



CENTRAL PEAK BUTTRESS.

(*m.*) The M'Gregor Ledge may be attained more easily by climbing up directly below the southern window. In this case the perilous traverse is avoided.

THE CENTRAL PEAK BUTTRESS (see Plate V.) affords at least three excellent climbs.

(*n.*) Proceeding up the scree slope, on the northern side of the buttress, which leads to the *col*, a very large and



THE CENTRAL PEAK OF THE COBBLER WITH ITS BUTTRESS.

W. Inglis Clark.

obvious cavity in the rock, about 30 feet high, is passed, and the climb commences at a point directly above a boulder projecting through the snow in the illustration. A number of nearly horizontal ledges are utilised to lead the climber back over the aforesaid cavity and on to the face of the buttress, at the right-hand corner of the very evident snow patch. The route continues straight up to a small snow patch, and then follows the line of the right-angled gully, sloping upwards in the illustration, and terminating immediately to the right of the highest point.

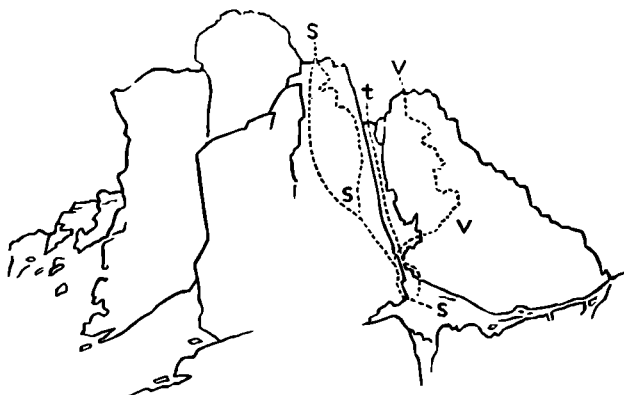
(*o.*) If the footpath which winds among the fallen rocks at the base of the north peak be followed till it commences to ascend towards the col, a sheep track will be noticed leading to the left, below the rocks of the buttress. After passing the first rib of rock, a narrow gully or chimney, easily recognised in the photograph, leads up between rock walls, but without difficulty, for about 100 feet. The route then leads into a cave. The walls of the cave are rather far apart, and the roof projects considerably, but a good height up on the right wall (looking up) a small ledge exists. To gain this ledge a considerable amount of feet and shoulder work is necessary. The route now turns round the right edge of the cave, and enters an upper and smaller cave. This upper cave possesses a very small window, the sill of which gives an excellent hold, and from this a traverse is made to the right and up a small chimney, where the holds are small but good, and which leads into the upper continuation of the main gully, which coincides with the right-angled gully, terminating route (*a*). A short 30-foot scramble leads to the sky-line, just to the right of the highest point (in the illustration).

(*p.*) Starting at the extreme left hand bottom corner of the buttress, the rocks are followed to the sloping snow or vegetable-covered broad ledge. Crossing this, a 20-foot wall of rock is reached, to the left of the start of the climb (*o*). The rocks are followed upwards, and a somewhat vegetable climb leads to the ridge.

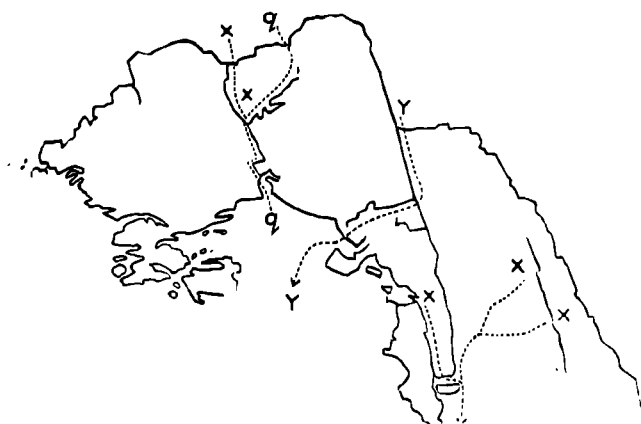
THE NORTH PEAK is perhaps the most impressive of the Cobbler summits, whether seen from the south (see Plate VII.), whence its overhanging beaks are prominent,

or from the west (see Plate VI.), whence its shapely form is most striking.

Like the other peaks its rocks are exceedingly slippery,



NORTH PEAK FROM THE SOUTH.



NORTH PEAK FROM THE WEST.

x Unsuccessful attempts.

and consequently apparently probable routes frequently prove impracticable when put to the test.

(q.) The right-angled gully. In the illustration of the view from the west will be noticed the large enclosed



NORTH PEAK OF THE COBBLER, FROM THE WEST.

W. Inglis Clark.

snowfield directly below the two prominent peaks. This route starts from the highest point of the snow, and leads up the steep and water-worn pitch of rock which is bare of snow. To many, including the writer, this is a veritable *pons asinorum*, the narrowness of the foothold and the absence of handhold leaving one in a very awkward predicament if unable to finish the pitch. It was such an occurrence that led the writer to devise the corner traverse, which is distinctly less risky. Having climbed half-way up the pitch, a good foothold will be found on the left wall. Extending the hand to the corner, the body is drawn round on to a satisfactory ledge, and thence directly up to a grass patch, where the ordinary route is joined. Above this the gully continues without difficulty till the upper very steep portion is reached. (This may be climbed to within a short distance from the top, but an overhanging portion precludes exit.) A narrowish ledge is now followed to the right, leading under an overhanging rock, where it is convenient to crawl on all fours. Past this a broad ledge leads to the last difficulty. Here the rock is undercut, and affords no foothold for perhaps 18 or 24 inches. Above this the rock is slightly overhanging, so that climbers with a short stride experience some difficulty in getting foot and hand hold at the same time. It is advisable, though not necessary, that the leader be guarded by a rope, as more than one climber has slipped off the pitch, and a vertical cliff falls directly from the ledge. The route leads to the left by the snowy patch, and so to the skyline.

(*r.*) Starting from the before-mentioned enclosed snowfield at the upper right-hand corner, a route leads along to the great "Ram's Head" Gully. "The principal difficulty is to reach the gully from the small heather patch" (covered with snow in illustration), "and this is done by crawling along a very narrow ledge, underneath an overhanging cliff, and overlooking a sensational drop down the gully. Beyond the ledge, and before one is free from the sensational proximity of the aforesaid drop, there is a little pitch to be negotiated. Once that is passed, the rest is easy."

The gully has not been climbed from below. In the

illustration a dark shadow will be noticed parallel to and to the left of the gully. This chimney in the angle has been ascended for some distance till it terminates in a cave from which no exit is practicable. Two other unsuccessful attempts may be mentioned. From the foot of the Ram's Head Gully a snowy ledge leads to the right. At the first point where the snow extends upwards into a kind of recess, the climber may force his way for perhaps 20 feet, but an overhanging part prevents farther progress. On the other hand, by following the ledge to the extreme right, a corner is reached overhanging a horrid gulf. No means of getting into the steep chimney exists, but it is possible that, with the aid of dry rocks and rubber shoes, a passage may be forced up the angle of the rock above.

(s.) Maclay's crack route (see north peak from the east).—Near the foot of the prominent central snow gully on the south face, and just within the shadow of the rocks cast on the snow, there will be noticed a chimney in the angle of the rocks leading up to a snow patch. First of all, a little chimney, 8 or 9 feet high, is negotiated. "Some little distance up, the crack widens into a small grass platform (the snowy patch), and here the route divides. The left branch, one of the earliest climbs discovered on the peak, continues extremely narrow for a short distance, till it terminates at a sensational corner where the cliff overhangs. Then turning straight upwards, the top can be reached by one or two easy zigzags. The right branch (well seen as a snow-filled chimney) starting from the grassy platform, at first leads the climber back almost to the edge of the big gully, then turns to the left once more, and so leads by easy stages to the top. Both branches afford interesting climbs, and are free from any great difficulty."

(t.) The prominent northern gully is of moderate inclination and offers but two difficulties, a pitch at the bottom where the assistance of a back is convenient, and one half-way up. After heavy snowfall these pitches may become obliterated, and facilitate the ascent.

(v.) The buttress on the eastern side of the great gully is considerably broken up by ledges, and may be ascended



NORTH PEAK OF THE COBBLER FROM THE SOUTH.

W. Inglis Clark.

without difficulty in many ways. After negotiating the lower pitch of the gully, a "stomach traverse" will be found leading "out to the right along a small sloping ledge below an overhanging wall." This leads out on to the broken face, and the climb becomes undefined, although several very steep rock pitches may be encountered according to the inclination of the climber.

Beyond the routes indicated, no well-defined climbs are known to have been accomplished on the rocks of the Cobbler.

Photographically the Cobbler is a most repaying mountain. Although it presents no great outlines as of a mountain mass, and indeed from Arrochar is but a cockscomb excrescence peeping over an uninspiring foreground, the sight of the corrie always excites enthusiasm in the mountaineer's breast. Unfortunately the corrie is in summer badly lighted, and rarely shows sufficient light and shade for good photography. The best general view is obtained by climbing to the rocky buttress of Narnain overlooking Arrochar. Rounding this on the south, the proportions of the peaks are best seen, but the foreground is defective. By following Narnain ridge to the col, before the final summit, a fine foreground of rocky masses is obtained, showing up the whole height of the corrie, but somewhat robbing the north peak of its significance. Descending to the Buttermilk Burn, the water may be brought into the picture, and with a rising front all is well. For a near view into the corrie, nothing can surpass that from the ridge extending to the south peak. From the last point before "Jean" is reached, the whole corrie will fill a half-plate using a 5.3 lens. The north peak is most shapely from the base of the south peak, but the uncouthness of the beaks comes out best from the rocks on the east side when entering the corrie. Here also the central buttress is best seen. The south peak should be viewed from the base of the north peak as well as from the foot of the arête of the central peak. A very fine view is obtained from a point somewhat east of the central peak. Here Loch Long shows finely between the south and central peaks.

BEN NARNAIN, 3,036 feet, rising directly from Glen Loin at Arrochar, is, though somewhat overshadowed by its more attractive neighbour (the Cobbler), an interesting mountain, and with its shoulder, Crois, or Feorlin, 2,785 feet, offers a great variety of rock-climbing. The best general view of the south-east face of Narnain is to be had from the hill Cruach Tairbert, separating Glen Loin from Glen Tarbert; while on the other hand Crois stands up in an imposing way when seen from a little promontory near Upper Inveruglas, or, better still, from the south-east ridge of Ben Vorlich. On the slopes facing the Cobbler are numerous outcrops of rock and the shattered debris of fallen cliffs, among which some scrambling may be obtained. Near the top, and surrounding the Sugach Corrie, the rocks are more continuous, forming a range of precipices of considerable height—perhaps 100 feet. These and the rocky shoulder of Crois may be made an admirable training ground for the beginner in rock-climbing, as there are numerous places giving difficulty with the minimum of danger, and some of these might even tempt an experienced climber.

From Arrochar the summit of Narnain is invisible, being hidden behind the prominent buttress rising above Sugach. The ascent is made most advantageously direct from the cottage, where the road to Inverary turns sharply to the south-west. Besides being comparatively dry, this route possesses many advantages from a scenic point of view. Bearing directly up to the south side of the prominent rock face visible from the road, the finest general view of the Cobbler Corrie is obtained, while to the south Loch Long winds away till it merges in the Clyde, the horizon being filled in by the romantic peaks of Arran. Turning to the right, the easy ridge is soon reached and followed to a subsidiary peak some hundreds of feet below Narnain, and separated from it by a slight depression. Looking to the right, a fine view of the eastern precipices of Sugach Corrie is obtained, and farther the easy southern slope of Crois. Descending to the col, the fine peak of Narnain rises against the sky and shows the wall-like ridge near the summit. In winter conditions the direct

ascent from this point up the rocks may be laborious, but when free from snow no difficulties are met with till the prominent wall near the summit is reached. Keeping to the right, a gully leads past the wall, and thus to the summit, or equally easily the route may be pursued on the southern side, and the flat top reached. The sporting route, however, goes up the very steep ridge in the centre on its southern face. To get on to this, the "Spear Head arête," a very short but difficult overhanging chimney, must be negotiated on the western side of a small abutting rock. Should this be impossible, more easy access is obtained on the eastern side of the same rock. An exceedingly vertical climb with excellent holds leads round the corner on the left to the west face, and then direct up to the very narrow ridge, and so on in an easterly direction to the final steep wall of the main ridge. A short climb lands one on the top, which is cut off from the farther part of the ridge by a chasm some 60 feet deep, by 3 to 4 feet wide. The ascent of this "Jammed Block Chimney" from the western side is difficult and sensational, presenting as it does two pitches, the upper being the more difficult. From the central floor of blocks exit may be made on to the eastern face through an aperture, and the climb finished up the very steep eastern face. The whole ascent from the bottom on the eastern face is distinctly good from a climber's point of view.

Three alternative routes exist, besides numberless variations. The Buttermilk Glen may be followed to the col between the Cobbler and Narnain, whence an easy shoulder runs up to the summit; or the Sugach Corrie may be entered, keeping the already described ridge on our left, and the Narnain Crois ridge struck by easy scree slopes to the north-east of the summit. Thence either Narnain or Crois are readily approached. The third route is from Inveruglas as described under Ben Arthur, and leads to our peak by the north-west shoulder. In this connection also Crois may first be ascended from Inveruglas and the ridge followed to Narnain. As has been hinted, Narnain affords excellent sport to the rock-climbers. The easy ridge already mentioned, leading to the summit from Arrochar, offers several interesting gullies on the Sugach side. The central one of

these, under the subsidiary peak, is steepish, but cannot be called difficult. In the Sugach Corrie, at the south end of the range of cliffs, a difficult chimney may be noticed. The approach is by a steep tongue of grass or snow. The chimney is almost A.P. at first, but not quite so steep after about 30 feet. Suitable anchorage is not obtainable before the 80 feet rope is nearly out. Exit is made on to the ridge above. The rocks in this neighbourhood invite further investigation. The north face of the Crois (looking to Loch Lomond) presents a range of cliffs that merits study. A gully at the low right-hand corner gave a good climb at Easter, part of it being iced. These cliffs are some distance below the summit, and are reached by bearing round the north side of the shoulder that trends down to the east.

No account of Narnain would be complete without a reference to its caves and its boulders. The caves are most easily reached by taking to the hill at Sugach Cottage, gently sloping upwards so as to cross the Sugach Burn at an elevation of perhaps 500 feet. A number of rocky masses have fallen, and it is near these on the south-east slope of Crois that the caves are to be found. They consist of deep narrow fissures, probably formed by a land slip, 30 to 40 feet deep, and connected by short tunnels. Open to the sky above, they give excellent practice in back and feet work of varying degrees of difficulty. The boulders, as has been said (p. 177), lie close to the Buttermilk Burn, and offer an unusual number of problems to the climber. Of but moderate height, and possessing the attractions of a soft fall, they rarely fail to tempt mountaineers from the direct route, and are responsible for many a late return from the hills.

Apart from its undoubted rock-climbing attractions, Narnain stands very high from a panoramic point of view. From here the long stretch of Loch Lomond extends with but slight break from Inversnaid to the islands at its south-eastern extremity, forming a noble foreground for Ben Lomond and its attendant buttresses. Loch Katrine with Ben Venue, and the Lake of Monteith direct the eye to where the windings of the Forth lead

down to Stirling and, shall we say, Edinburgh. Farther north the Crianlarich peaks, as well as Ben Lui and Ben Cruachan, are within touch, and Loch Etive, Loch Linnhe, and the Ardgour peaks are well seen. Mull, Jura, and the glittering Atlantic pass us on to Arran, Ailsa Craig, and the visionary Ayrshire hills, while the stretches of the Clyde near its junction with Loch Long and the smiling Gareloch conjure up visions of happy summer holidays, not sullied even by the sight of Glasgow's chimneys peering through a cloud of smoke. Below, Loch Long, and the Cobbler, and the Brack fill up the foreground, and it requires but the magic hour of sunset and the snowy garland of winter to complete the ravishing scene. But this is only a guide-book article, and staid matter-of-fact must rein in the fanciful truth. Yet perchance a hint of gorgeous brown reds in the depths of bracken-covered valleys, contrasting with the rosy afterglow on the snows of Ben Lomond and other peaks, may suggest that even the prosiest of guide-book writers may be warmed into enthusiasm by such sights and visions as met the eye of the writer in mid-winter on the summit of Narnain.

W. I. C.

First Ascents of or References to Climbs on the Cobbler.

SOUTH PEAK—

- (a) Raeburn and Rennie, July 1898. Vol. V., p. 142.
- (b) Naismith and Napier. Vol. IV., p. 65. Turned corner on to north-east face.
- Bell and party, September 1895. Vol. IV., p. 65.
- (c) Naismith and Rennie. Vol. IV., p. 65.
- (d) Naismith and Thomson, May 1894. Vol. III., p. 162.
- (e) Naismith and Rennie.
- (g) Naismith, Thomson, &c., September 1889. Vol. I., p. 63.
- (h) Do. do. do.
- (i) Do. do. do.
- (k) M'Gregor and party, September 1895. Vol. IV., p. 65.
- (n) Workman and White, June 1900.
- (o) Raeburn and Rennie, July 1898. Vol. V., p. 142.
- (p) Maclay and Workman, April 1900.
- (q) M'Gregor and Naismith, September 1896.
- Clark and Inglis, November 1897. Corner variation.
- (s) Maclay and Naismith, May 1895. Vol. III., p. 351.
- (t) Naismith and Thomson, May 1894. Vol. III., p. 162.
- (v) Naismith and Raeburn, November 1891. Vol. V., p. 41.

BEINN LAOIGH OR BEN LUI.

(DIVISION I. GROUP III.)

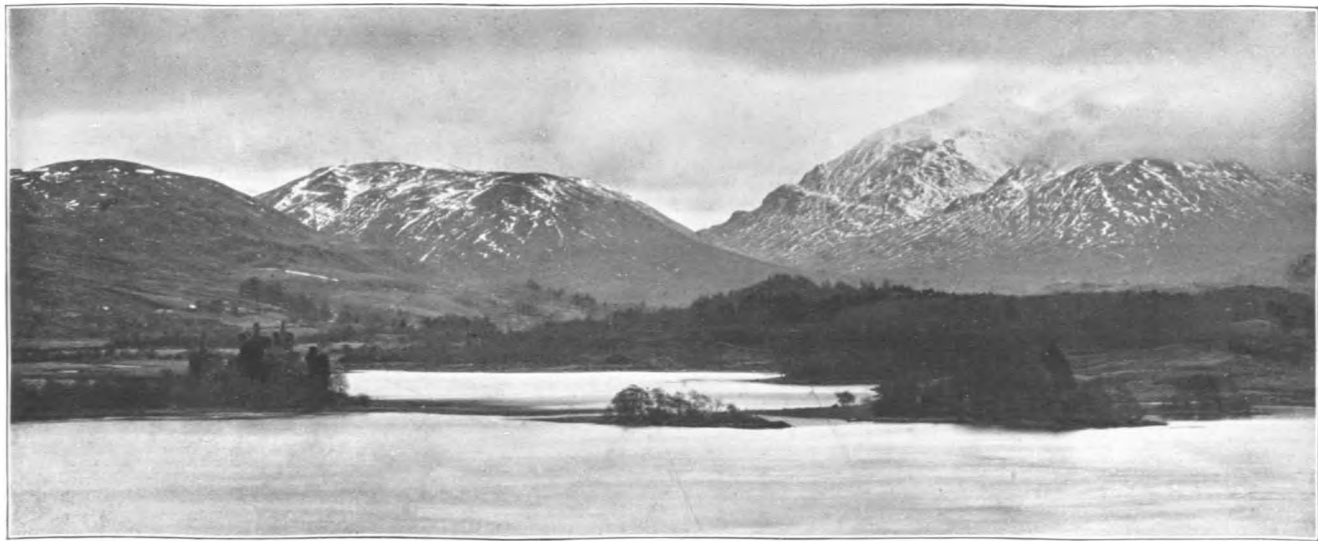
Lat. $56^{\circ} 23\frac{3}{4}'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 48'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheets 45 and 46. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, No. 11.

The summit of the Ben Lui group lies 6 miles from Dalmally, 5 from Tyndrum, 8 from Crianlarich, and 8 from Ardlui. At each of these places there is a good hotel. The range extends east and west for some 6 miles, and contains the following tops:—

1. Beinn a' Chliebh, 3,008, pron. *Ben a Cleav* = the mountain of the chest or breast. Lies 1 mile south-west from No. 2.
Col, 2,561.
2. Beinn Laoigh, 3,708, pron. *Ben Lui* = the mountain of the calf. Lies 6 miles east of Dalmally.
Col, 2,288.
3. Beinn Oss, 3,374. Lies $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles east-south-east from No. 2.
Col, 2,580.
4. Beinn Dubh-chraige, 3,204, pron. *Ben Doo-chray* = the mountain of the black crag. Lies $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east by south of No. 2.

The tourist sees Ben Lui to its best advantage from the north side of Loch Awe, where it is seen rising boldly above Kilchurn. When its sharp double peak is concealed in mist the mountain can often be recognised by the distinctive three steps on its north shoulder. Ben Lui forms a conspicuous object among all the neighbouring peaks, and rivals Ben Cruachan in the affection of many hill-lovers. The principal attraction to the climber lies hidden in a deep corrie on its north-eastern slopes, where the sun rarely shines and the snow lingers long into the summer. This corrie is named Coire Gaothach = the corrie of the winds; but it is more generally known to climbers as the Big Corrie of Ben Lui. A glimpse of this corrie is got from the railway line half a mile or so before reaching Tyndrum.

Geological Formation—Crumpled and folded mica-schist,



BEN LUI FROM LOCH AWE.

W. Inglis Clark.

with a general south-east dip. There are several small intrusions of igneous rock, one of which crosses the extreme summit of Beinn Laoigh.

Ascents — Lines of least resistance. — From Dalmally, follow the Tyndrum road for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Corryghoil.



NORTH-EAST CORRIE OF BEN LUI.

(The name for which on the 6-inch Ordnance Map is Coire Gaothach, *i.e.*, the windy corrie.)

1. South-east ridge	First recorded ascent, 6th March 1892	..	Jl., Vol. II., p. 83.
2. South gully	First recorded ascent, 15th April 1892	..	" " II., p. 129.
3. South rib	First recorded ascent, 2nd Jan. 1896	..	" " IV., p. 110.
4. South central gully	First recorded ascent, 2nd Jan. 1896	..	" " IV., p. 110.
5. Central gully	First recorded descent, 13th April 1891	..	" " I., p. 214.
		First recorded ascent, 31st Dec. 1892	..	" " II., p. 266.
6. Upper snow-field	First recorded descent, 2nd Jan. 1896	..	" " IV., p. 110.
7. North rib	First recorded ascent, 2nd Jan. 1896	..	" " IV., p. 110.
8. Gully to ridge of Stob Garbh	First recorded ascent, 14th Feb. 1892	..	" " II., p. 82.

From here turn south-east for another $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Socach, from whence a gradual rise on the watershed of the mountain places one first on the top of Beinn a Chliebh and then on Ben Lui. The ground is covered with grass

and heather to within some 500 feet of the summit, which in summer is strewn with large scree. Time from Dalmally, 3 hours.

From the summit there are three ways open to descend. (1.) Returning in one's steps. (2.) To Tyndrum by keeping Stob Garbh on the right, and joining the Choninish at the lead mines. (3.) To follow the watershed of the mountain to Beinn Oss and Beinn Dubh-chraige before descending to Tyndrum. There is a foot-bridge over the Choninish at Coninish farm, but the stream may be crossed lower down by the railway bridge. A descent may also be made to Ardlui, either direct to the Dubh Eas from the summit or from Beinn Dubh-chraige by the Sput Ban and Glen Falloch. Time from Dalmally to Ardlui, 10 hours. (*Journal*, Vol. I., p. 247.)

From Tyndrum, cross shoulder of hill behind (south of) the Caledonian Railway station and descend to Coninish farm. From there a track takes one to the workings of the old lead mines (1½ hours). Cross burn by foot-bridge just above the meetings of the waters, and opposite a sheep-fank, and keeping Stob Garbh on the left, circle round it till the main north ridge of the mountain is joined. Beinn Dubh-chraige can also be ascended from Choninish, and the circle of the top made from that end. About ten hours is the time it usually takes to go from Tyndrum to Dalmally over the four tops. (*Journal*, Vol. II., p. 75.)

Climbs.—Most of the climbs on Ben Lui that have been recorded have been done from the Big Corrie, and the diagram here given shows their position.

The difficulty or ease of the ascent entirely depends on the state of the snow. Sometimes the central gully, which is perhaps the most interesting of the gully climbs, is little more than a walk, while at others it affords a thousand feet of step-cutting. The south and north ribs will always afford an interesting climb.



BEN LUI, FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

Jas. A Parker.

THE CRIANLARICH GROUP.

(DIVISION I. GROUP IV.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 22'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 34\frac{1}{2}'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheet 46. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, 12.

These mountains extend from Stobinian to Glenfalloch and southwards from Crianlarich. They are mostly under grass and moss, and the solid rock crops out only in very few places. No cliffs of any size are to be found among them, and they are at their best when under a heavy mantle of old snow. There is, however, a fine bit of terraced rock on the north side of Stob Glas (a south-western spur of Cruach Ardran), and any rock climbs that may eventually be found will be of no great importance. The mountains included in this group may be divided into two sections, viz. :—

Beinn Chabhair, 3,053 feet, pron. *Ben Ha-i-ar*, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles east-north-east of Ardlui ;

Beinn a Chroin, west top 3,068 feet, east top 3,101 feet, $4\frac{1}{4}$ miles south by east of Crianlarich ;

An Caisteal, 3,265 feet, $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles south of Crianlarich.

These are not often climbed. They have no outstanding features, and therefore offer nothing but a fine breezy walk to any one who desires to explore them. There is no recognised route to the top of any of them, but one of the prettiest is by the Allt Innese from Inverarnan. It is a far cry to reach them from Balquhiddy, though occasionally it is done, but they can be easily reached from Crianlarich by the Ardlui road and then up the Falloch.

The second section consists of—

Cruach Ardran, east top 3,477 feet, west top 3,429 feet, lies 3 miles south-south-east of Crianlarich ;

Ben Tulachan, 3,099 feet, $4\frac{1}{4}$ miles south-south-east of Crianlarich ;

Stob Garbh, 3,148 feet, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south-east of Crianlarich.

Cruach Ardran is the most striking of the mountains in the group. It towers above Crianlarich, and shows a clear-cut outline to the sky. Many a time while waiting

for trains to pass, the view of this splendid mountain has made a long detention go pleasantly. No serious rock-climbing is to be had on it, but plenty of scrambling can be got, and the winter ascents of its north and north-east slopes are sometimes difficult. The usual way to make the ascent from Crianlarich is to follow up the west side of the Allt Coire Ardran and strike the west shoulder of Cruach Ardran, and ascend the west top first, while a steeper ascent may be found by following the stream to its head and climbing the gully between the two tops.

BEN MORE GROUP.

(DIVISION I. GROUP V.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 23'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 32\frac{1}{4}'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheet 46. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, Sheet 12.

Ben More and Stobinian are formed of massive grits and crumpled mica-schists, belonging to the Highland metamorphic series. Similar mica-schists make up the *Cruach Ardran* group, in which there are also many small intrusive dykes of basalt and other basic igneous rocks.

Situated in the heart of Perthshire, immediately to the south of the Callander and Oban Railway, and about half-way between Luib and Crianlarich Stations, from either of which the group is readily approached, as also from Balquhiddy.

There are three summits, viz. :—

Ben More ("the great mountain"), 3,843 feet;

Stobinian ("the hill of the birds"), named in the Ordnance Survey "Ben A'an" or "Am Binnein," 3,827 feet; and,

Stob Coire an Lochan ("the round hill of the corrie with the loch in it"), 3,497 feet.

Ben More is three miles east by south of Crianlarich and about the same distance west-south-west of Luib Station, Luib Hotel being a mile farther away. Stobinian is fully a mile south of Ben More, and Stob Coire an Lochan is hardly half a mile south-south-east of Stobinian and

nearly three miles as the crow flies from the west end of Loch Voil.

Ben More is one of the most majestic and prominent mountains in Scotland, which circumstance no doubt explains its name. Its nearness to its twin peak Stobinian, with a clearly cut V-shaped dip of 1,000 feet between them, adds greatly to its interest as an object from a distance.

In shape Ben More resembles a sugar-loaf, its top being much flatter than that of Stobinian, which from most directions is a perfect cone. The smooth sides of the former can in summer be climbed almost anywhere, and for that reason the mountain might be expected to occupy a low place in the rock-climber's catalogue. So far from that being the case, the *Journal* proves that Ben More is one of the most popular climbs, no fewer than twelve ascents being recorded in Vols. I. and II. Ben More is also distinguished as the scene of a fatal accident happening to a climber.

The mountain has three ridges, viz., north-west ridge pointing to Loch Dochart Castle; the north-east ridge pointing to the ruins of Rob Roy's House; and the south ridge leading to Stobinian across the Bealach-cadar Bheinn. A short distance above the bealach on the east side of the ridge there are a few cliffs. The north-east ridge is also precipitous on its east side for a short distance between the 2,500 and 3,000 feet contour lines, and though it is unlikely that any continuous climbing could be found there, the cliffs lend some interest to the route along this ridge from Luib. Below these cliffs on the same side, and within the tree limit, is Rob Roy's Cave. The north-west ridge has a depression or shallow corrie on either side, in which snow lies till far on in the spring, especially in the hollow on the north side of the ridge. A curved snow wreath hereabout visible from the valley has even received a name (Cuidhe Crom, "the curved wreath"). It was near this spot that the unhappy accident happened. Two climbers, unroped and without axes, were descending the north-west ridge towards Crianlarich. The mountain side was entirely snow-covered, and the weather being cold and cloudy, the surface of the snow seems to have been hard frozen. One of the climbers unwarily quitting

the crest of the ridge where the snow was comparatively level, found himself slipping slowly down the north side of the ridge. His companion called on him to stop, and he evidently attempted to do so with a walking stick, but without avail. He soon disappeared, and was not arrested until he reached the bottom of the hollow, 400 or 500 feet below, where he was found dead, having apparently broken his neck in colliding with a rock. The slope at that point was hardly steeper than 40° , and the accident would have been well-nigh impossible to any one with an ice-axe. An iron cross on the top of a rock marks the spot where the body was found.

The north side of the mountain in many places is sufficiently steep to give good practice in snow-craft in winter. One party when descending this side estimate that they glissaded in the aggregate 2,500 feet.

The distant view from Ben More is perhaps not so extensive as from some humbler summits, but the near bird's-eye view obtained of Loch Dochart and the two glens on either side (drained by the Benmore Burn and Allt Coire Choarach respectively) is very interesting. For descriptions of the view see *Journal*, Vol. I., p. 154, Vol. II., p. 264.

In historic times Ben More was a deer forest, but now it is devoted to sheep.

In 1769 a party of astronomers is said to have ascended to the summit of Ben More for the purpose of observing the transit of Venus, but the earliest recorded ascent seems to be that described by "T. H. C." in his "Tour in Scotland" published in 1840.

On the col between Ben More and Stobinian there are one or two pools of water, which are frozen for a large part of the year, on which one may usually get a "slide" at Easter.

Stobinian.—Owing to its distance from the sea Perthshire enjoys a more continental climate than most of Scotland—that is to say, it has greater extremes of heat in summer and cold in winter. For that reason possibly its mountains usually have more snow on them than others of the same height elsewhere. The east side of Stobinian being steep and protected from the sun, holds large masses

of snow until well into summer, so that the mountain as seen from Kingshouse Station presents a veritable alpine appearance for more than half of the year. On its north-east aspect the snow lies at a high inclination, and some of the slopes extend continuously for nearly 1,000 feet. There the climber can find plenty of scope for the use of his ice-axe. It is, however, not a place to take any liberties with, and the slope is too severe for glissading purposes, unless in its lower part.

The other faces of Stobinian do not carry so much snow, nor are they equally steep.

The short eastern ridge which runs from the summit is rather interesting in winter, though not difficult. It will probably prove considerably easier than an ascent of the steep snow slopes to the north of it just referred to.

The north ridge leading to the Benmore col is often icy, and at one point it is fairly steep, but with an axe there will never be any real difficulty.

From the summit of Stobinian to that of Ben More or *vice versa* it will take in summer half an hour fast going or an hour easy.

Stob Coire an Lochan (3,497 feet).—From Stobinian to Stob Coire an Lochan is only a stroll of ten minutes. Though a graceful point, the latter is too much overlooked by his higher neighbours to attract climbers, were it not for the fact that the quickest route between Stobinian and Loch Voil lies over the top of Stob Coire. From Stob Coire a ridge runs due south for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to a point called Stob Invercarraig. In descending to Loch Voil and Balquhiddy one can follow either the ridge just referred to, or another ridge, rather more interesting, which runs east from the Stob Coire an Lochan, and forms the watershed between Rob Roy's Glen on the north and Monachyle Glen on the south.

From the head of Loch Voil to Balquhiddy is 4 miles, and from Balquhiddy to Kingshouse 2 miles, and from there to Strathyre 2 miles more; or a slightly shorter road can be taken from Balquhiddy to Strathyre by keeping to the west side of the river Balvag, which drains Loch Voil.

W. W. N.

BEN VORLICH (PERTSHIRE) GROUP.

(DIVISION I. GROUP IV.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 20\frac{1}{2}'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 13'$. Ordnance Survey one inch scale, Sheets 46 and 47. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, Sheet 12.

This lies due south of Loch Earn, and is bounded on the west by Glen Ample and on the east by the celebrated Glen Artney.

Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin are composed of metamorphic rocks—the schistose grits known as the Ben Ledi Grits. Their general dip is to north-north-west, at high angles.

The group contains three principal summits, viz. :—

Ben Vorlich (3,224 feet),

Stuc a Chroin (3,189 feet), (“the hill of the plough?”), and

Beinn Each (2,660 feet).

Ben Vorlich is 4 miles south-east of Lochearnhead Hotel, Beinn Each lies $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles south-west of Ben Vorlich, and Stuc a Chroin is nearly midway between them, being exactly a mile south-west from Ben Vorlich.

Ben Vorlich is a shapely cone, its sides for the most part clothed with grass or scree slopes, with few outcrops of rock. It is a very prominent object from parts of the Caledonian Railway between Dunblane and Perth, and is also one of the most notable features of the view from Stirling Castle and its neighbourhood. When snow-clad it presents the appearance of a miniature Weisshorn.

The mountain has four ridges—(a) North-west ridge extending to a low top called Ben Our; (b) north ridge pointing to Ardvorlich House; (c) a short south-east ridge; and (d) the south-west ridge leading to Stuc a Chroin. The col on this last ridge is 2,656 feet above the sea, and is known as the Bealach an Dubh Choirein. Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin enclose between them on their east side the grand corrie of the Gleann an Dubh Choirein—a burn which drains Glen Artney and falls into the Earn at Comrie.

The ascent of Ben Vorlich may be made from either

Lochearnhead Hotel, Lochearnhead Station, Kingshouse, Strathyre, St Fillans or Callander. The easiest tourist route is to drive from Lochearnhead Hotel along Loch Earn to Ardvorlich, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, ascend Glen Vorlich on the west side of the burn, and thence climb the mountain by its north ridge. The routes from Kingshouse or Strathyre are much shorter in distance, but all involve a dip of 500 feet or more in crossing Glen Ample. From St Fillans follow the road along the south side of Loch Earn, and the ascent is made from Glen Vorlich, as above described. From Callander the Comrie road is followed for three miles. This is left, after crossing the Keltie by a wooden bridge, and keeping the farm of Arivurichardich on the right the bealach between Stuc a Chroin and Meall Odhar is crossed before dropping down to Gleann an Dubh Choirein. The ascent of Ben Vorlich is then made by the south-east shoulder. From its comparatively isolated position Ben Vorlich commands a grand panorama, especially towards the lowlands; North Berwick Law, Tinto, and the Arran peaks being occasionally seen.

As Glen Artney is a deer forest, climbers should avoid the east side of Ben Vorlich in the stalking season.

Stuc a Chroin.—Though only a mile distant from Ben Vorlich, and of the same geological character, Stuc a Chroin possesses much more interest to the climber, inasmuch as its north end and most of its east face are precipitous. At one point the cliffs are almost vertical, and as these are seen on the skyline from the railway near Lochearnhead, they give the mountain a very striking profile,

Its west and south sides are comparatively uninteresting, although on the long and crooked south-west ridge, which connects with Beinn Each, an occasional rocky knoll is encountered, which may afford some scrambling if desired. On one of these a party of Scottish Mountaineering Club members spent more than an hour in a fruitless attempt to scale its steep face on New Year's Day 1891. "Stob Lester" has been suggested as a suitable name for it. A wire fence runs along the ridge all the way from Stuc a Chroin to Beinn Each, and is a good guide when the hill is under mist.

Stuc a Chroin may be separately ascended from Lochearnhead Station, Kingshouse or Strathyre, but it is almost invariable for Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin to be taken together. It thus happens that the north end of Stuc a Chroin which faces Ben Vorlich is the line of ascent generally chosen, but this route is by no means the easy stroll such as is got on any of the Ben Vorlich ridges. Even in summer one must use hands as well as feet to scale some of the rocky steps. For ordinary climbers, however, it is probably needless to rope at that season; but in winter when the rocks are likely to be loaded with snow crystals and ice, this climb should only be undertaken by a properly equipped party. Any party of tourists without axes, &c., finding the rocks in such a condition, would do well to make a detour and climb the mountain from its easy western side.

In winter several good climbs may be found on the steep east face. One is described in the *Journal*, Vol. III., p. 19, but it is difficult to identify the route from the description.

Two gullies have been ascended when filled with snow. The first of these is referred to in the *Journal*, Vol. III., p. 107, and is a long serpentine gully, set at a general angle of 40° to 45° . To reach it from the Ben Vorlich col the climber follows the horizontal shelf or break in the cliffs of the east face, at about the level of the col, until he strikes the gully at right angles. As this face gets little or no sunshine, the snow will probably be hard and require steps to be cut. The top of the gully is about 200 or 300 yards north of the cairn. Another snow gully, shorter than the other and farther to the north, was climbed in March 1895. On that occasion the rocks of the north end of the mountain were very icy, and as time pressed, the party traversed to the left, skirting the foot of the steep cliffs, and ascended the first snow they came to round the corner. The whole time occupied on that expedition from Lochearnhead Station to Stuc a Chroin and back was $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Beinn Each is a fine bluff hill, and has several outcrops of rock on which an energetic cragsman with a little

ingenuity may get sport, but it is hardly necessary to devote much space to it here, except to mention that any one desirous of reaching Callander after climbing either or both of the two preceding peaks will find it an interesting route to follow the main ridge south-west from Stuc a Chroin to Beinn Each, and thence he may either descend to Loch Lubnaig at Ardochullarie, or if preferred he can follow the long south-east ridge of Beinn Each for two miles or more, and strike the Callander road in Glen Keltie.

W. W. N.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE NEW YEAR'S MEET AT LOCH AWE, 1901.

IT was a happy inspiration that led the founders of the S.M.C. to make the "Meets" an integral part of the arrangements of the Club. At these Meets, New Year or Easter, new members become acquainted with each other, and unite with the veterans in all the amenities of mountain sport. The New Year's Meet has always been a favourite with those who go to it, but alas! the attractions of the home fireside, and the table groaning with New Year fare, prove too strong with the majority, and in consequence the band of mountaineers is small in numbers, if select in quality. It may be that mountaineering at this season of the year is considered to be particularly arduous and partaking of a heroic element, while yet the winter's snows have not settled down into solid foothold, but I am convinced that it has only to be tried to be repeated. The Club has been singularly unfortunate in its weather in recent years, but on this occasion a strong force of the Committee made a protest to the Clerk himself, and favourable conditions prevailed. As all loyal members know, the New Year's Meet was held at Loch Awe Hotel, famed alike for its scenic position, accessibility to the hills, and its good cheer. Here, it may be remembered, these powerful attractions wooed away the leading officials of the Club from the Inveroran Meet, an incident which has since caused much shamefacedness. But the pendulum swings back, and this year no less than the President, a Vice-President, the Editor, and four humble Members of Committee held up the banner and endeavoured to keep matters right at the dinner-table. Friday, 28th December, was a gloomy, cloudy day, with rain below, and Rennie, as he plodded his way from Crianlarich to Loch Awe on foot, no doubt often envied the former inhabitants of these parts, who, wrapped in their plaids, could lie down in the plashing rain, untroubled by the thoughts of rheumatism or kindred ills. When the next contingent—Gall Inglis,

Maclay, Raeburn, and the writer—arrived by the evening train, a hasty Committee meeting was held at the dinner-table, with the result that ere Morpheus asserted his sway o'er eyelid and brain, the stars were twinkling above, and gave promise of a better day. A punctual breakfast led to the departure of Inglis, Raeburn, Rennie, and Inglis Clark *en route* for Ben Eunaich. The morning was brilliant, and fine vistas of lake, island, and mountain, led over to the east, where Ben Lui towered aloft—a snow-clad peak. Passing below the Black Shoot, the party struck up for the ridge leading from above it to the summit, and were soon above the snow-line, 1,500 to 2,000 feet, where the going was good but soft. From the summit of Ben Eunaich the Spectre of the Brocken was excellently seen. Under favourable conditions a descent of some 800 feet was made to the col, and thereafter the long ridge of Ben a Chochuill was reached in time to get an unclouded view of the whole range of Cruachan. Here a certain amount of friction was caused by a Member of Committee, who insisted on restricting his supply of acid drops to those who accompanied him along the horizontal ridge to where the official top exists—a sorry example of a peak-bagger.

After darkness had set in, Goggs, Maclay, and Workman returned from Ben Bhuiridh, where they had spent some exciting hours in making a traverse of the face of the Ben. Starting from the col, they had found a more or less defined ledge leading round awkward corners, generally snow-clad, and eventually coming to a stop near some steep gullies, on the lower but steeper rocks to the north. Here a frozen waterfall proved a convenient means of exit, up which the skilful axe of the leader soon led a way. The evening train further increased our numbers, when Douglas, Mackay, and Sang joined the party. Sunday dawned grey and gloomy, while a glance at the hills revealed a further descent of the snow-line. The threatened rain, however, held off, and enabled the whole party to be abroad. A large contingent walked to Dalmally, where they divided their attentions between—

“The Auld Kirk, the cauld kirk, the kirk without the people,
And the wee kirk, the Free Kirk, the kirk without the steeple.”

Meanwhile Douglas and Rennie penetrated to the veiled sanctuary of Ben Eunaich, and Raeburn, Mackay, and Sang reached the slopes of the same mountain by the Black Shoot. Doubtless owing to the proximity of the new century, the Black Shoot had a comparatively clean face for once in its existence.

Monday morning was delicious in its brilliance and sparkle, and the whole party, as they wended their way up to the Cruachan Corrie, were rewarded with entrancing views of Mull and Jura, snow-clad, towering above the intervening stretch of moorland. The hillsides, when not covered with snow, presented an ever-delightful kaleidoscope of russet browns and yellows mellowing under the nearly horizontal rays of a winter sun. Four distinct parties attacked the heights in their own way. Raeburn and Sang ascended Meall Cuanail by one rocky buttress and returned by another, reporting an excellent climb under prevailing conditions. Mackay, Goggs, and Workman, and later Gall Inglis and the writer, took an easier route to the same peak, descended to the col leading to Ben Cruachan, and in this way reached the summit. The three first-named made their way to Corrie Chat, and thence to the Taynuilt peak, returning direct to the col, and by the corrie to Loch Awe. Inglis's party, despite an icy gale in the teeth, made its way along the crest of the ridge to Drochaid Glas, and found the passage not only laborious but sporting. Deep snow had filled up the interspaces between the boulders, but owing to its softness, the climber, be he ever so wary, was not unfrequently engulfed to the breast, and found it no easy matter to extricate himself. Unfortunately dense mist prevailed, but a short clearance tempted Inglis and the writer to descend a short distance on the north side, with the object of photographing some fine ice-festooned rocks. Old Boreas was, however, on our track, and three times was the sacrilegious camera hurled into the snow, till at last the entrancing picture being again blotted from sight, we endeavoured, with frozen fingers, to pack up our snow-sodden apparatus and return to the ridge. A descent into the corrie afforded no genuine glissading, but took us out of the biting blast, and a steady

tramp brought us to the hotel about 5.45 P.M., in fair moonlight. The chief peak alone was the goal of the fourth division—Douglas, Mackay, and Rennie—who, following the stream, made for the col between Meall Cuanail and Cruachan, and thence direct to the top, returning the same way.

Monday evening was the high-water mark of the Meet, when the President, along with Drummond and Munro, gave dignity to our festivities. Music, billiards, and repartee sped on the evening hours, and the waning century held up its hands at a degenerate race when the hour of midnight disclosed a dispersed gathering, and thirteen beds groaned under the weight of S.M.C. men, or at the prospect of immediately receiving them. No speeches, no whisky-drinking, brought in the new century, but each man dreamed of doughty deeds on the mountains of the snow.

W. I. C.

Misled by early torrents of rain, and the assurance of the boots that "it's an awfu' bad mornin' an' poorin' rain," Clark and Inglis left by the early train, their places being taken by the two Russells, who arrived in the sma' hours of the morning. But the boots proved a prophet like unto the negress with little honour in her own country, for the clouds broke and a generous sun showed here and there the tops and slopes glistening in a fresh and lower drawn mantle of spotless snow, and but a short time after breakfast had been absorbed, the hotel had disgorged its hardy hillmen to their happy hunting grounds. First went Maclay, Workman, Mackay, and Goggs up Allt Mhoille and on to Beinn a Chochuill and back through the head of Glen Noe and over the ridge into Coire Cruachan, arriving back at the hotel on four o'clock. The President, Munro, and Drummond got to the *very* top of Ben Eunaich—still more incorrigible peak-bagging at the instance of one member of the party who had been up the day before—there they encountered Douglas and Rennie, to whose untiring efforts the mighty Beinn a Chochuill had succumbed. Raeburn had subjected some of the buttresses and gullies of Beinn a Bhuiridh to a research in aid of interesting all-fours work,

while the two Russells and Sang found some amusing climbing on the crags of Stob Diamh, and after a forbidding repulse gained the summit of Stob Garbh. By one o'clock the day had not improved and a plentiful supply of fresh snow was driving over the tops before a strong westerly wind. This eventually deterred the last-named party from a contemplated attack upon Drochaid Ghlas and forced them to descend into Coire Cruachan, during which they inadvertently found much water under the fresh fallen snow. The snow all over was in bad condition, and no glissading eased the labours of descent for any of the parties.

That afternoon train asserted the claims of business on many of those who would willingly have lingered yet a little while among the beloved hills, and the deserted dinner-table that night spoke eloquently of the ravages of necessity. The President, Drummond, the two Russells, and Sang were all that remained of that "merry band." Quietness and a total relief from the phantasy of the weird Mr and Mrs Biggar and the Baby marked that night. Breakfast next morning found the President and Sang in sole possession.

The day promised well, and the President was ambitious to ring the brow of Beinn Mhic-Mhonaidh with an S.M.C. halo. He and the Recruit did therefore wend their way through the sylvan beauty of Glen Strac and on to where the ill-defined paths open upon the heather uplands on the eastern side of the river, thence across a foaming torrent rejoicing in the name of Allt nan Giubhas. An easy victory was Beinn Mhic-Mhonaidh, but the glory of this virgin peak was greatly enhanced by half-veiled glimpses of the surrounding mammoths. Only 2,602 feet says the Ordnance Survey, but it was cold enough to be the North Pole. The hill seemed teeming with game, and the climbers had a close and glorious view of a large herd of antlered stag disporting round the summit.

The Ordnance Survey sheet shows a bridge across the Orchy river close by Larig farm and for this a bee line was struck. Put not thy faith in Ordnance Survey sheets! The Larig farm is a ruin, and the bridge is not. Also be not advised by the Craig keeper, for he loves not trespassers

even though they do acquaint him of the being of a fox upon the hills. The President and the Recruit scanned eagerly the face of the swollen water for the promised bridge, but in vain. The road looked so inviting on the other side and the tangle of undergrowth impeded progress so, and the failing light made hardship harder and the future blacker still. The river Orchy is deep and wide, and it seemed to say in the words of the prophet of old—"This is no go!" Still, since the opposite side would not come to the President, the President needs must go to the opposite side, and go he did! The Recruit followed with a prayer. "The torrent roared, and we did buffet it;" it was a stormy crossing and a secret to be kept from insurance agents, but once safe across out of the breast-high water on to the firm hard road little time was lost, and the distance between the bridge, which appeared from nowhere, mockingly spanning the torrent a mile and a half farther down, and the Dalmally Hotel must have been covered in record time. Mr Fraser having advised our coming by telephone and kindly provided just a spoonful to keep out the cold and speed the railway track, the moon showed the way, and the last expedition of the first New Year Meet of the century came to a successful close. That night at dinner the President seemed no less grieved than the Recruit that the rotameter gave only 21 miles for the day's work.

When the early train left Loch Awe on the morning of the third, it carried with it the last supporters of a thoroughly enjoyable and admittedly successful New Year Meet.

G. S.

THE EASTER MEET AT FORT WILLIAM,

4TH—9TH APRIL.

FOR the third time have the Members of the Club foregathered at Fort William, in weather less brilliant indeed than those days of unbroken sunshine that signalised our first visit here in 1895, but still on the whole greatly superior to that experienced during the last two Easter Meets.

A few early birds arrived on the Wednesday ; on Thursday came the bulk of the party, followed by stragglers by each train, until on Saturday night the party present numbered thirty-one, including—The President, Bower, Campbell, Clark, Douglas, Glover, Halkett, Hinxman, Howie, Inglis, Lawson, Ling, Mackay, Maclay, Meares, Munro, Penney, Raeburn, Rennie, Rohde, Solly, Squance, Thomson, and Workman, and guests, Messrs Goggs, Robertson, Mounsey, Nettleton, Marlier, Marples, Reddie.

The snow in the higher regions was loose and powdery, and there was often considerable drifting, this being especially the case on Monday. So bad, indeed, was the condition of the ridges of Ben Nevis that only the Castle Ridge was attempted and climbed by two parties.

Several interesting gully climbs, however, came off, including a second ascent of the Observatory Gully. An unsuccessful attempt was made on the Observatory Buttress, the *finale* of which was a descent of the Ben in the dark by a new route, considerably to the south of the pony track.

The result of this possibly unintentional originality was the arrival of the benighted party about 11 P.M., much to the relief of those who were already inventing plausible excuses for not joining the usual search-party for the remains.

Fuller accounts of these climbs will be found elsewhere in this, or in a forthcoming number of the *Journal*.

Ascents, Salvationist and otherwise, were also made of

the Binneins, Stob Bàn, Sgòr a Mhaim, Gulbheinn, and the Parallel Roads of Glen Roy.

On the last day of the Meet a telegram was received from Macgillicuddy Reeks, in which Messrs Phillip, Slingsby, and Collie drew invidious comparisons between that obscure Irish hill and our own Ben Nevis. To this the Ben replied in fitting terms of dignified contempt.

It only remains to add that the arrangements for our welfare at the Alexandra Hotel were everything that could be desired, while the sunny smile and genial *bon-homie* of the waiter lent an additional charm to the morning and evening hours.

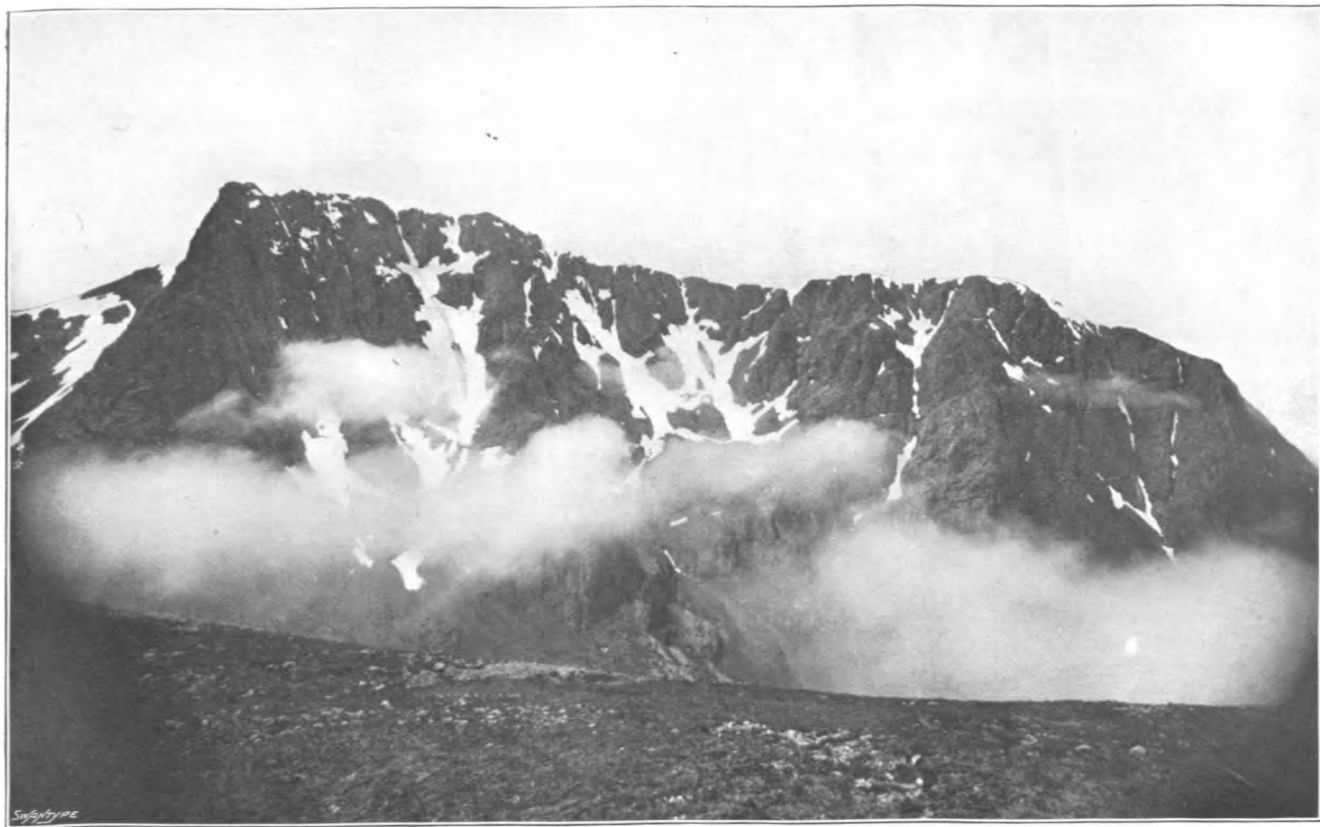
L. W. H.

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

FIRST AID TO THE INJURED, with special reference to Accidents occurring in the Mountains. By Dr Oscar Bernard, Surgeon to the Engadine Hospital, Samaden. A Handbook for Guides, Climbers, and Travellers. Translated from the German by Michael G. Foster, M.A., M.D. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900.

Into a comparatively small brochure of 136 pages, the author has compressed a very practical and instructive account of the illnesses and accidents peculiar to mountaineering. It is written solely for the guidance of those who are not expected to possess any special medical knowledge; but it may with much justice be said, that even medical men themselves who are climbers will not fail to derive a good deal of very useful practical knowledge in the rough and ready way of dealing with emergencies peculiar to the special exigencies of mountaineering in high altitudes. The book is capitally illustrated; and what the uninitiated may fail to grasp in the text, he will have little difficulty in understanding by reference to the illustrations. This small brochure may be very warmly recommended to every amateur mountaineer, and should be in the hands of every professional guide.

BACK NUMBERS.—W. A. Brown, 2 Grosvenor Terrace, Dundee, will be glad to have the offer of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, at 5s. each.



BEN NEVIS FROM CARN MOR DEARG.

W. Inglis Clark.

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

VOL. VI.

SEPTEMBER 1901.

No. 36.

THE OBSERVATORY RIDGE, BEN NEVIS.

BY HAROLD RAE BURN.

INSATIABLE is the appetite of the modern, even of the modern mountaineer, for novelty. When one centre becomes an exhausted one, or he considers it so, he flies to pastures new. Latterly our Scottish mountaineers have apparently been falling into the belief that Scotland is one of these exhausted centres. We hear of their doings in Switzerland, the Tyrol, Dauphiné, or even in remote western lands such as Canada or Kerry. Desolation meanwhile has fallen on such exhausted centres as Skye and Arran. No more are the wondering and disgusted fishers in the smoke-room at Sligachan swept out by a spate of mountaineering maundering—as they consider it—and their fishy tales forced to hide their heads before the mute eloquence of the “big hob-nailers” and the long yarns of the 60-foot rope. No more do we read of doughty deeds done on the faces and in the gullies of the slabby granite peaks of Arran, and even Nevis is becoming deserted for lowly and obscure English or Irish rocks, with such outlandish names as creeks or reeks, arks and rakes, or similar harshly sounding titles. That Nevis at any rate is not quite yet an utterly exhausted centre is the purpose of this paper to show.

True is it that all the main ridges and buttresses have long been climbed and re-climbed up and down, traversed on to at various points, and ingenious schemes evolved for evading their main difficulties. Still, in the lower corrie are numbers of ridges and buttresses, not to

speak of chimneys, left, each one of which looks capable of affording a good climb; and in the upper corrie two long ridges, the lower very little shorter than the North-East Buttress itself, afford interesting variations to the direct climb of the great north-east face.

The objection may be urged that these routes are not the plain and obvious ones to the summit of Nevis. No more they are—the obvious route is the path; but the objection is of no value to the genuine climber. One might as well say that the Zmutt or Furgg Ridges were not the obvious routes up the Matterhorn, but are they any worse as climbs for that?

In the photograph by Thomson, which appeared in Vol. III., and is again printed in this number, the two Observatory Ridges are well shown, giving evidence of their steepness by the absence of snow on their lower portions. The photograph by Clark, also given, shows the rocks more as I found them on the 22nd of June. At Easter this year a party of four S.M.C. members made an attack on the upper of the two; but after a three hours' contest, during which they mounted a bare 300 feet, were forced to beat a retreat. The conditions were certainly adverse. Deep loose snow in the corrie was replaced by slabby rocks covered with a glaze of ice, over which swept hissing streams of loose snow from the upper regions. The steepness was such that in places handholds as well as footholds had to be cut in the ice. Such climbing may not be very difficult, but it becomes a question of time and endurance, and the party decided that neither commodity would hold out. As it was, through various little circumstances, they did not dine that evening till 11 P.M. As one of the party on that occasion, the writer came to the conclusion that the lower or North-East Ridge would give later on not only a better climb, but one considerably longer and better defined.

On the 22nd June the opportunity came of testing this theory. I was trysted to meet that evening on the summit of Ben Nevis, Dr and Mrs Inglis Clark. They had come fresh from battling with the elements on the rugged ridges of Skye, and flushed with the conquest of a new route on

the "blue-grey stone" of the Eastern Coolins, to finish their trip by doing the most of the Nevis climbs in two days.

Thanks to the new Mallaig Railway, a train now leaves Edinburgh at 4.30 A.M. which deposits one at Fort William before 10 o'clock, so that by 10.30 I had left the Alexandra behind and had set face towards the familiar slopes of Meall an t-Suidhe.

I had failed on short notice to find a companion for the day, so was forced to go solus. One advantage of this, however, is that there is no one to "force the pace," so that rests can be indulged in as much as one is inclined for, and leisure afforded to study the natural surroundings. Deviations from the direct path are also permissible, and accordingly I deviated in order to visit the nesting rock of a pair of buzzards which earlier in the season were building here. They were unfortunately not about to-day, but I hope may have escaped the fate too often meted out to these interesting and practically harmless birds at the hands of the *£. s. d.* game-trader. The weather, which had been close and warm in the morning, became threatening as I entered the great corrie, and soon after down came the rain in real Nevis style. It did not last long, however, and as I gained the foot of the Observatory Ridge, the mists began slowly to roll up their filmy curtains—magnificent transformation scenes of gleaming snowfields, jagged ridges and pinnacles, black frowning cliffs, and long white deeply receding couloirs, coming into view as the visible circle gradually widened.

In my opinion there is nothing finer in all "braid Scotland," lovely Lakeland, or rugged Skye, to surpass or even equal the splendid north-east face of our highest mountain. There was still an immense amount of snow in the corrie, and my way lay for a time over the rugged miniature seracs of old avalanche remains; then slanting upwards I traversed a steeply sloping snowfield which abutted against the foot of the ridge.

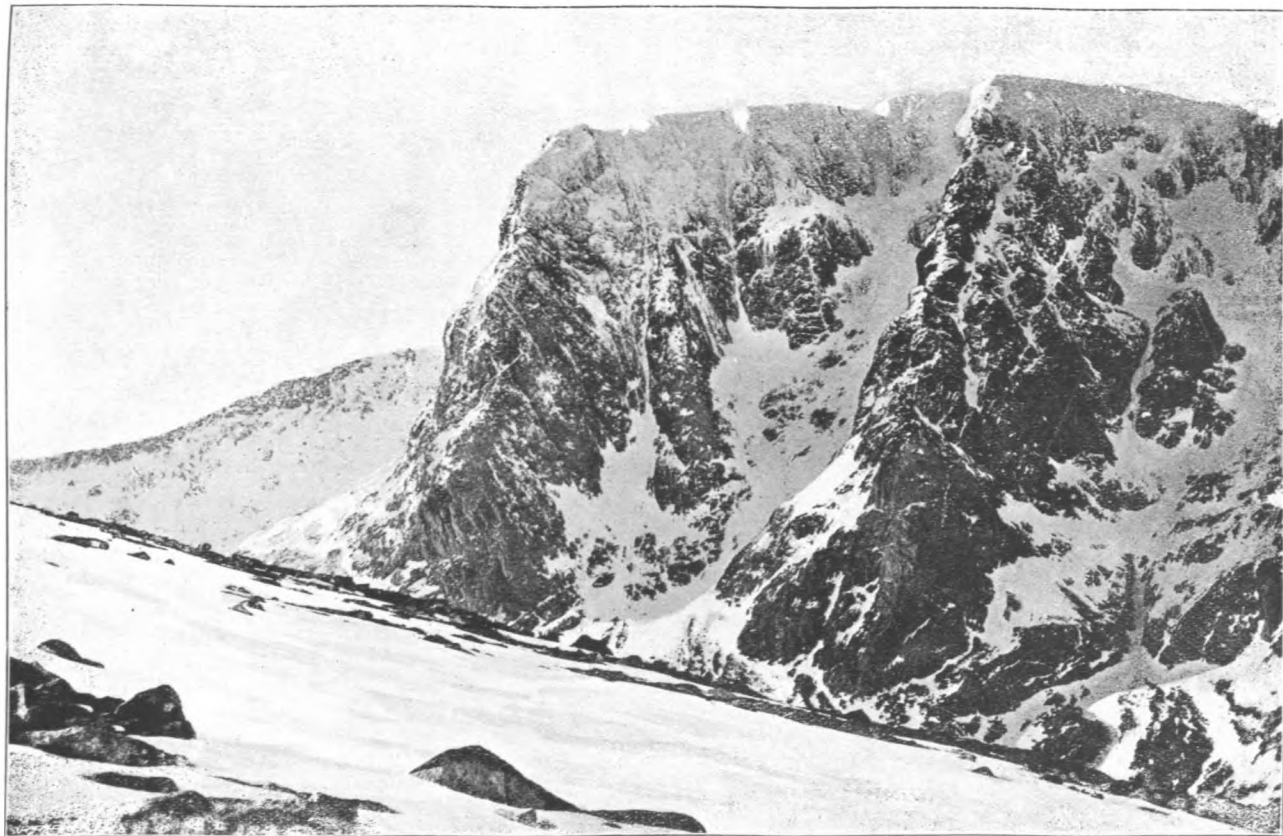
The bergschrund here was fortunately neither deep nor wide. Had it been of a similar character to that which our party encountered on the following day (see present number, p. 228), 30 to 40 feet deep and 8 to 10 feet wide,

it would have proved impassable in the absence of an ice axe and required circumvention.

The climb begins at no very severe angle, but on rocks distinctly slabby, and poor in holds and hitches. It almost at once becomes a well-defined arête, and higher up is bounded on both sides by very fine almost A.P. precipices. Throughout its whole length it affords less opportunity of deviation from the exact ridge than does its north-east neighbour. Perhaps at no point does it offer such an awkward bit for the solitary climber as the "man-trap" of the North-East Buttress—which can be escaped by descending a little on the right, or up a rather difficult chimney on the left—but I remember three distinctly good bits on it. First the slabby rocks near the foot. Then a few hundred feet up an excellent hand traverse presents itself. It is begun by getting the hands into a first-rate crack on the left, then toe-scraping along a wall till the body can be hoisted on to a narrow overhung ledge above. This does not permit of standing up, but a short crawl to the right finishes the difficulty, at the top of an open corner chimney, a more direct and possibly preferable route.

The third difficulty, and the one which cost most time, is rather more than half-way up, where a very steep tower spans the ridge. I tried directly up the face, but judged it somewhat risky, and prospecting to the right, discovered a route which after a little pressure "went." This is a slightly sensational corner, as the direct drop, save for a small platform, is several hundred feet. This part occurs a few hundred feet below the termination of the black portion of the ridge as seen on Thomson's photograph.

The ridge now eases off and traverses show up as possible, either on to the North-East Buttress on one's left, or to the upper or South-West Observatory Ridge to the right. The gully on the left now holds heavy snowdrifts. The climbing, however, is far from over, numerous steep or slabby bits engage the climber's vigilance; but at length the last rocks are gained, where the crest of the ridge plunges under the great snowfield that girdles this face of the mountain, still at midsummer presenting in places icy cornices 20 feet high.



BEN NEVIS, NORTH-EAST BUTTRESS AND TOWER RIDGE FROM THE NORTH.

Gilbert Thomson.

Here I sat down after building the usual cairn—time 4.30, three hours from the bottom—to bask in the sun, which had been shining gloriously for the last hour, and to drink in the grandeur and beauty of the surroundings. These I fear are apt to be missed by the climber during the actual climb, especially if engaged by the problems that confront him when engaged on a new ascent.

But what is that note? A bird song strange and new! What could it be? There is only one possibility—it must be the snow bunting; and there sure enough it was, a splendid male in full summer plumage, singing sweetly, with utterly unbunting-like notes, from a rock projecting from the snow below the brow of the cliff.

But one must be an ornithologist to appreciate the pleasure of hearing for the first time the song of a bird hitherto only familiar as a winter visitor.

Though it be rank heresy to write so in these pages sacred to the cult of the mountains as “haunts of ‘scansorial’ feet” of men, yet I fear that if asked to say which of the two I would sooner have missed, the climb or the song, I might be tempted to say the first. However, no such invidious choice was forced on me, and the snow bunting’s song was an additional pleasure to a most enjoyable scramble.

STORMY JUNE DAYS IN SKYE AND ON
BEN NEVIS.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

I. SKYE.

THE month of June is, by many, considered to be the month par excellence in which to visit Scotland. Though wanting the purple robe assumed in August, the colouring in June is enhanced by the greater brilliancy of the sunshine, while the long summer days are more suited for travel and mountaineering adventure. I had long held this opinion, and had been so generally fortunate in the past, that it came as a shock to find my June holiday in Skye ruthlessly interfered with, and rendered practically a failure, by bad weather. After a brilliant May, June was entered on with fear and trembling, but the hand of the storm fiend stayed itself till we (my wife and self) were safely landed in Skye, that island of stress and storm. Our journey from Fort William to Mallaig presented a series of ravishing pictures, set out in brightest colours, and the voyage on to Broadford afforded such panoramas of peaks and lochs, tempered only by a delicate haze, that no thought of coming storm obtruded itself. Our plans were clear and simple. Blaven and Clach Glas were to be explored on the eastern side, and then a move to Sligachan would enable us to fill in some untrodden (by us) ridges in the Coolins climbing routes to photograph, and dubious points to settle. Not a very ambitious programme! Mr Williams' interesting note on Clach Glas (Vol. VI., p. 129), as well as his attractive sketch, raised a strong desire to extend his experiences; and the existence of such a comfortable hotel at Broadford, within driving distance of the peaks, made the proposal a feasible one. But we had counted without the weather. Scarcely had we landed, and started to walk some three miles for a view point, ere we found an increasing north-west wind opposing us, and a rapidly obscuring haze rendering photography impossible. Although detail was invisible, yet the fretted outline of the Blaven group, from

Loch Cill Chriosd, appeared to us to be one of the most magnificent in Skye. Duncan Grant (referred to by Mr Williams) being no longer available, we decided to make the ascent of Clach Glas alone, rather than chance a mere novice as porter, and retired to rest in high spirits. The sound of rain in the morning brought us back to a meditative mood, and deferred the assault for another day. Next morning was dry, but an ever-increasing gale, hurrying masses of cloud against the pinnacles of Blaven and Clach Glas, gave only short intervals in which to study the proposed line of ascent. As will be seen by reference to Mr Williams' sketch, the east face of Clach Glas is cleft by several conspicuous gullies, the longest of which, starting at an elevation of about 800 feet above Loch Slapin, runs in a straight line to the col on the northern side of the summit tower. The general face is rocky, and consists of a series of steep pitches alternating, in the central portion, with scree ledges. Looking down from above these screes the impression is given that the rocky portion of the hill is confined to the few hundreds of feet of ridge rock, and hence the statement has been current that grass slopes lead up to near the summit (Vol. IV., p. 19). On the contrary, the grass slopes end at an elevation not very far above the foot of the gully referred to, leaving a more or less rocky face extending to the summit. Access to this face is most easily obtained where Mr Williams' "Jack's Rake" terminates at the bottom; but on the northern side, abutting on the stone shoot between Clach Glas and Sgurr nan Each, there are also many easy approaches to the rocks. On the Blaven side the rocks are more continuous, and the numerous gullies which seam the face seem mostly to terminate in abrupt pitches of slippery rock. Mr Williams had previously ascended the "Rake," so that our ambition led us rather to explore the long gully previously mentioned. Commencing at the bottom pitch, the slippery nature of the rocks first attracted attention, and as rain and hail were plentifully distributed by a gale of hurricane force, we soon decided to avoid being washed out of the gully by ascending the rocks on the north side (true left). After this we but rarely ascended the true gully, the numerous pitches being

considered impossible for so weak a party, under prevailing (or probably any) conditions. The north wall rises steeply from the gully, and only at parts affords easy access. By keeping on the ridge excellent climbing was obtained. Farther up we encountered the four pinnacles climbed by Naismith and Parker, some years ago, from the upper side. As their lower faces, however, were very steep, if not impossible, we crossed the gully to the southern side and made direct for the summit. These pinnacles are well seen in the accompanying photograph, our line of ascent practically following the skyline on the left, passing the lowest pinnacle on the near side, crossing the gully farther up, and finishing the climb by the skyline to the summit. The rocks proved steep but excellent, affording as a rule sound foothold, and reminding one of the Ben Nevis North-East Buttress climb. Should the climber be pounded on these rocks, escape may generally be had by holding more to the left. Eventually we struck the ridge exactly at the south cairn of Clach Glas. I am afraid to say how many hours we had taken to make the ascent, but the number was not far short of six. Meanwhile the weather had got steadily worse, and but for the partial shelter of the rocks, advance would have been impossible. Now, on the summit, we were exposed to the full blast, and found it necessary to keep to the east side to avoid being blown away. Conversation was impossible, while the dash of hail and roaring of the wind tended to stupefy. We had meant to ascend Blaven, but as the hour was already past five, decided to traverse the ridge to the north and descend the scree slopes adjoining Sgurr nan Each. When we approached the north face of the tower, however, we soon realised that neither hand nor foot hold could be retained, and reluctantly retraced our steps to the Blaven end of the ridge.

Bearing in mind my experiences in 1895, I was anxious not to repeat them. On that occasion, in company with Gall Inglis, I descended too soon into a gully on the Lonely Corrie side, with the result that several times progress was only possible by a hand over hand descent on the rope, and several hours were spent before we reached the



CLACH GLAS—N.E. FACE.

W. Inglis Clark.

friendly screes below. Remembering the direction, "When in doubt, keep to the east," we followed the ridge to the last drop, and then essayed the three possible ways of reaching the col. The steep gully on the right with occasional pitches, the descent direct over the final rock wall, and the gully on the left were equally emphatic in refusing us exit. The force of the wind blew us about helplessly and forced us back.

Our idea was now to get down an easy and more sheltered gully to the Blaven screes and back to Loch Slapin; but, in the driving mist and hail, we were gradually forced down on the steep rocks, abandoning one gully after another, as the final pitches loomed below us. To cut a long story short, we worked back to the "Rake," and two soaked and tired beings emerged on the grass slopes below, about 9.20 P.M. Just at the bottom of the rocks we had a good omen, for a magnificent golden eagle rose twenty feet away, and soared above us till it was lost in the mist. Our course lay across the Corrie Dunaiche, and through the peat bogs to the peat track leading to Loch Slapin. Would our trap still be at the rendezvous? Seven o'clock was the appointed hour, and what driver would wait in such a pitiless storm for three long hours? The memory of the driver of Munro and Lawson in the Fannichs cheered us up, and again the Highland character was vindicated, and plashing through peat and bog to our dogcart, we were soon whirling off to the comfortable inn at Broadford.

The weather continuing inclement, we next day moved on to Sligachan, and planned an immediate attack on the ridges. But, alas, for man's proposals, the morning broke wild and stormy, and so continued till we left ten days later. A stone-breaker by the road was consulted as to the prospects.

"Ah weel, ye see, it's a nor'-west win' the day, and that's a baad win' for Skye. It's aye wet and stormy."

"But," said I, "I thought the south-west wind was the wet wind here."

"Ou aye, the soo'-west win' is an awfu' wet win' here."

"I suppose the east wind is the best wind."

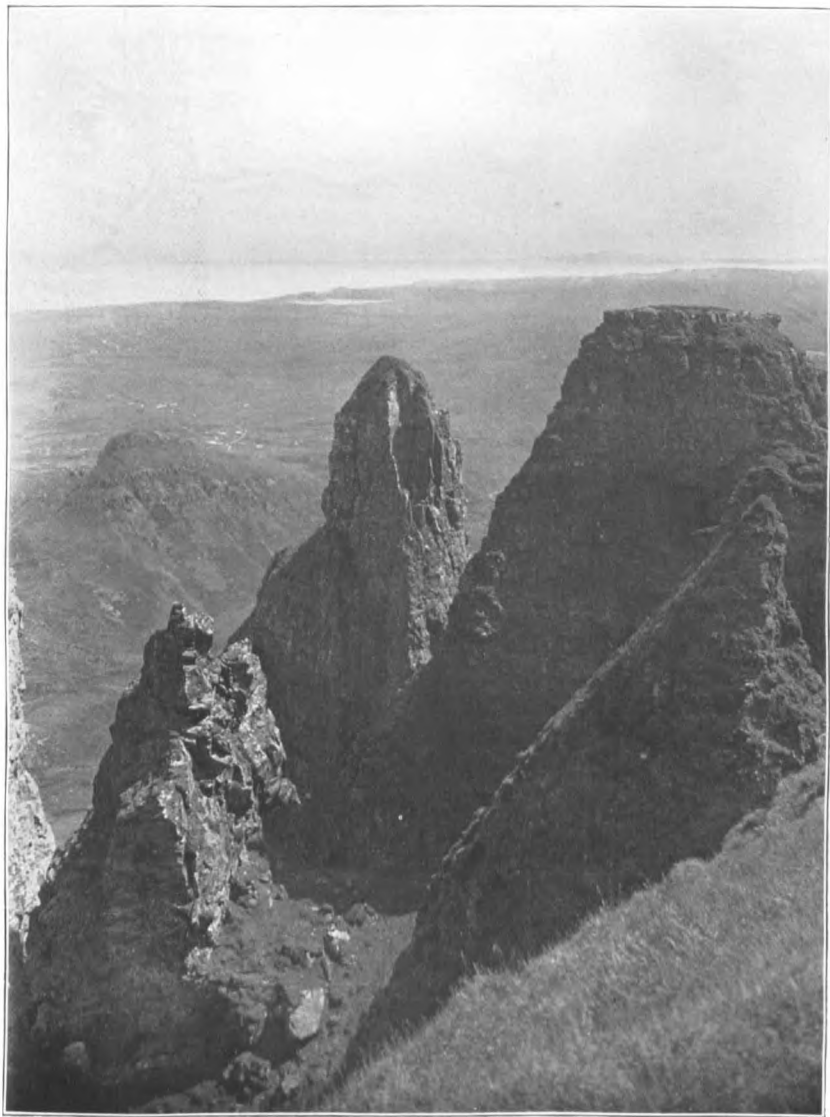
"Na, na, the nor'-east win' is aye rainy, and the south-east win' poors for days at a time."

"But the east wind must surely be good."

"Aweel, aweel, I hev' seen it fine wi' the east win', but no aften."

To prove this statement we tested the wind in every direction, and found hail, rain, and storm continuously, with the exception of one fine day when the wind was due east.

An ascent was made of Sgurr na h'Uamha from Harta Corrie, keeping as closely as possible to the route followed by Messrs Naismith and Parker some years ago. About half a mile beyond the Bloody Stone, which we climbed in passing, a buttress projects well out into the glen. To the right of this is a not very prominent gully or water-course, with water-polished rocks impending above. Climbing with the burn on our right, we endeavoured to force a direct route up, but as the rocks were slippery, and no evident advantages were forthcoming, a traverse was made on to the scree-covered buttress referred to. Rising from this were several ribs of rock, and selecting the apparent skyline ridge, we had an excellent climb over good rock, in a line leading almost direct to the summit. At the top of the rib two stone shoots almost join, that to the left being an extensive one. A few steps lead right on to the steep summit wall, which we followed on the left edge till it landed us on the top. The rock throughout was good, with but few rotten portions, and afforded excellent holds. A porter, a young lad, Archie M'Kenzie, nephew of John, proved very satisfactory, and evidenced a desire for serious rock-climbing, with a view to becoming a guide. Pursuing our way along the ridge towards Sgurr nan Gillean, we were agreeably surprised to find such excellent sporting pinnacles, somewhat on a par with the first and second pinnacles of that mountain. Fortunately the wind was northerly, so that magnificent although interrupted views of the Coolins were obtained. As it curves round and faces the different ridges, Sgurr na h'Uamha presents a unique view-point for photographer or artist. Owing to heavy mist, we did not proceed to the summit of Sgurr nan Gillean, but returned home by the glen.



PINNACLES OF THE QUIRAING.

W. Inglis Clark.

An ascent of Sgurr a Bhastier (twice repeated from the corrie the same day) was made for photographic purposes, but the high wind prevented the fugitive glimpses from being satisfactorily utilised. As bad luck would have it, we had left Sligachan in storm and disgust, to return home, when the only fine day arrived. Hastily countermanding orders, we decided to drive to the Quiraing, in order to give the weather time to make up its mind ere we returned to Sligachan. It were hardly suitable, in a mountaineering journal, to dilate on the charms of this rare day. In the morning the Coolins were still wrapped in mist, but the distant hills of Harris and the islands stood up across the foreground of sea or basaltic cliff like the creations of an artist's fancy. Uig, with its romantic bay and promontory, beguiled us for a time, till a new conveyance was ready to speed us on our way to the Quiraing. The moorlands, through which our road led, formed a busy scene as the natives, in coloured costume, gleaned in the peat harvest for their winter store, old and young being impressed for the service.

On reaching the point where the footpath leads to the Quiraing, fleecy clouds still hung about the rocks, and the ridge extending to the Old Man of Storr only at times showed its summit through its low-lying mantle. But it was a day of hope and refreshment such as the sun-sated south never knows. The rich blue of the sea contrasted finely with the breakers foaming far below, and far across, where islands interrupted the wide expanse, ranged familiar mountains, the Teallachs, Suilven, Ben More of Assynt, Quinag, and the like. Such a dreamy, ethereal, atmospheric panorama made one wish to spend the long day lying on the sward. But our time was brief, and a too short rest was taken on the top of one of the fantastic pinnacles, whence the scene reminded one strongly of the Vajolet Towers in dolomitic Tyrol. Why do our great climbers leave the Quiraing to the vulgar throng? Are there no brave hearts that yearn to climb these giddy peaks? True, they are small, but in proportion they are difficult, and will test all qualities of foot and handhold as much as many a lofty peak. Hastening back to Uig, a wire was

sent to Portree to detain the mail-cart for Sligachan, and we brooked no delay to again trying our fortunes on the Coolins. Was the vision of these peaks, as we drove southwards, intended to lure us on, like some siren Loreley, or was it meant to be an abiding suggestion of the unattainable. In any case, word-painting can convey no impression of the exquisite colouring and form of this matchless group, as it towered up beyond Loch Snizort, its corries and cracks taking on a variety of hues under the evening sun.

Next morning from Sligachan, Sgurr nan Gilleann still looked down on us, but how changed. A dull cloudless sky formed the background, and hardly a breath of wind was felt. Suddenly there seemed to be shot from the summit, as if from a mighty volcano, a series of bombs, which ascended perhaps 500 feet, burst into a ragged cloud, and quickly spread above the summit. Breathlessly we watched the wondrous sight, and ceased our preparations for departure. Ten minutes elapsed, and then with appalling suddenness the storm broke, driving dust and leaves before it, and tearing Loch Sligachan into wreaths of spin-drift, which whirled up the mountain-side in the growing darkness. It is at such times, when nature refuses access to her sanctuaries, that we gladly turn to bouldering and the minor difficulties of the Eagle's Nest Chimney. Fortunately Sligachan is well furnished with good boulders, and we noticed on some of these that shreds of many coloured worsted still adhered to rough edges where the members of the S.M.C. were wont to disport. Let me bring this rambling account to a close with a warning. Three years ago I negotiated the Eagle's Nest Chimney, and with considerable difficulty managed to pass through the narrow aperture at the top. For those who have not visited this charming spot, a treat lies in store. Every one must have noticed a rocky ridge projecting from the foot of the Pinnacle Route, and running down to Sligachan Water. The prominent black gully in the face is the Eagle's Nest. At first the climb is up through beds of ferns, fresh and graceful, among which are freely interspersed wild hyacinths and other flowers. Then follows a wet and steepish gully where the wild flowers from year to year struggle with the

mountaineer for foothold. Finally you enter the grim and perhaps dripping chimney, where, for some 30 feet, back and knee are fully employed. At the top a block of rock closes in, and offers two openings for exit. The larger of these had formerly permitted my passage. On this occasion four coatless attempts were made, only to find the writer hanging in mid-air, like Mahomet's coffin, and crying, "Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt." Foiled at this point, my wife was brought up and completed the ascent, thus illustrating the saying, "The last shall be first," and leaving me to ponder, as I slowly retraced my steps, on the necessity of climbing such places in the leanness and sunshine of youth.

II. BEN NEVIS.

It is seldom that the members of the S.M.C. have time to turn over the pages of the visitors' book at the Ben Nevis Observatory. As a rule the weary stalwarts have toiled up the Carn Mor Dearg arête, plodded through snow gullies, or made their way up Tower or other ridge, and are too intent on their hospitable refreshment to spend their time on the vagaries of the visitors' book. To them perhaps the strangest remark appended to some visitor's name would be "First and last time," a remark which occurs frequently in the book referred to, and which seems to voice the feelings of a large proportion of those ascending the mountain. A similar idea is expressed by many who only ascend by proxy, and who imagine that the delights of a hill are a definite concrete entity, capable doubtless of being retasted, but essentially the same. Is not Ben Nevis always the same—the view from it the same, the horrid grind over rough stones the same? But then these people have not realised that the actual shape, dimensions, and surroundings are but, in a sense, the mere setting of the day's enjoyment. The actual picture or experience is in constant change, and seems ever fresh and exhilarating to the true lover of nature. So it has come about that the writer has been attracted, time and again, back to the loftiest of our peaks, and each time with the enthusiasm and freshness of a new acquaintance. More than a score

of times and by fifteen different routes has it been my good fortune to reach the summit, and on no two occasions have the prevailing conditions resembled each other.

It may be in the memory of readers of this Journal that two years ago, under the title "Four Days on Ben Nevis," I endeavoured to place before them the temptations and advantages of residence at the Summit Hotel, and it might be thought that with this I might be satisfied. A recent visit to the summit was, however, under less favourable conditions, and presented the rock climbs from a new point of view. Returning from a stormy holiday in Skye, a glance from the train near the head of Loch Eil revealed the Ben free of cloud, and determined my wife and me to make the ascent that very night to make amends for our disappointment. A wire to Raeburn, telling of our intention, brought him by the early train to give us the benefit of his skilled leadership. Meanwhile our baggage was sorted out to go up by the morning pony, and in light order we started for the track. Our spirits were high, for, in the exquisite evening light, the recesses of Glen Nevis, guarded over by mountain forms, glowed in emerald and brown, an epitome of spring and summer. All was tranquil, and passing clouds only brought into greater contrast the startling clearness of the atmosphere. Soon, however, Stob Ban and Scur a Mhaim were hatching a plot, and a heavy shower forced us to shelter under one of the wooden bridges on the route. By the time the half-way house was reached, a glance down Loch Linnhe showed a thunder-storm near Ballachulish, and from our high point of view, as we ascended, its progress not only interested us, but hastened our footsteps. The chief laboratory of the lightning travelled up the course of the loch, but scouts hurried now to the Ardgour hills, and again to the hills on the east. The narrow limits of the rainfall were well defined, making us speculate on our possible escape. Meall an t-Suidhe proved our guardian angel, and, with the rattle of thunder, the rabble and rout of the clouds passed over the lochan, their ragged edges swirling and boiling like a tempestuous sea. But though the lightning spared us, the clouds, now pouring from the south, discharged their contents so effectually

ally that not a dry garment remained to us when we reached friendly shelter, and made demands on the surplus clothing of Observatory and Hotel.

The storm raged fiercely all night, and so saturated was the atmosphere, that even in bed one's hair dripped with moisture, and the walls and ceiling streamed with water. The morning was cloudy, but by mid-day the clouds had risen, and we were tempted to make an afternoon stroll, which can be highly recommended to those who do not care to tackle the more serious climbs. Descending to the junction of Carn Dearg and Ben Nevis, a few steps took us to the head of No. 4 Gully, where heavy cornices still existed. This gully offers a uniform scree slope leading down into Corrie na Ciste, but to make up for this, presents, as you go down, superb views of the rocky ridges in front, and is a vantage ground from which our pioneers may work out new routes by chimney or face. Large fields of avalanche snow sloped steeply down to the Lochan na Ciste, the exquisite blue water of which reminded one of the Märjelen See, or other Alpine lakes. Round the shores of this lochan several deep crevasses prevented access, and enhanced the Alpine effects. Skirting the cliffs of Carn Dearg, we traversed past the gully ascended in January 1898 (Vol. V. p. 45), across No. 5 Gully, still holding much snow, and by a horizontal ledge leading to the top of the great Carn Dearg Buttress. It was the original route followed by Napier and party described in Vol. III., p. 345. Though essentially a rock scramble, it presented in at least one place a veritable rock-garden. Some perennial spring furnished a gently trickling waterfall, and nature had taken advantage of it to garnish the spot with luxuriant beds of saxifrage, crassula, and Alpine phlox, all now in full summer array. Its brilliant hues, toned down by sober moss, attracts attention from a distance, but a nearer approach is necessary to appreciate this oasis in the rock desert. No difficulty to speak of exists in the route, but the stupendous scenery of the Castle Ridge being now added to that of the other ridges, the photographer or artist will be tempted to dally by the way. At the top of Carn Dearg we joined Raeburn, who had added to his laurels

by a first ascent of the Observatory Ridge alone. The night was again wild and stormy ; but when morning came the summit was clear, and superb cloud effects were spread before us. We decided to descend the Tower Ridge, and in due course reached the *mauvais pas* on the Tower, Raeburn being sheet anchor. The rocks were slimy, and a careful study of the place confirmed me in my opinion of 1896, that it is not a place to be trifled with. There is at least one spot where a satisfactory handhold is desirable, and where the climbing cannot be called easy. As the ridge is now well known, suffice to say that we descended the final chimney leading to the col at the bottom pinnacle (Douglas' Boulder). Those who desire to reach the top of this pinnacle usually descend the gully to the west and find an easy way up. We, however, essayed the direct ascent of the crack (since found to have been made use of by Naismith and perhaps others), and after some considerable effort, were safely on the top. Looking back, dense clouds of mist enveloped us, and now and then opened up to show us the ridge, and, far above, the Tower looming high, an impressive sight. Scorning the easy way back to the gully, we descended some distance directly over the ridge; and then gradually worked round to the right, where an excellent, though perhaps sensational hand traverse brought us back on to the wall overlooking the eastern gully. A series of somewhat rotten pitches now led directly down in a direction parallel to the gully, and we landed on the screes below with our faces to the North-East Buttress.

So delighted were we with this varied piece of rock-work, that our next ambition was to attack the Western Observatory Ridge leading up on the east side of the Gardyloo Gully. An attempt had been made by another party last Easter, under impossible conditions, and on this occasion also we were doomed to fail. We had just made some progress direct from the foot, and were traversing to the east to escape the holdless slabs above us, when the rain came down in torrents accompanied by a cold north wind. Espying a huge bergschrund below where the snow had receded from the rocks, we made for this in hope of shelter. Avoiding the soft snow which partly bridged up

the crevasse next the rocks, good foothold was obtained on the hard body of the semi-glacier. Such a sight must have been but rarely witnessed in Scotland at midsummer. Above us towered a fretted roof of snow-ice, from which depended huge points of snow, only requiring columns to complete the arching, and below the crevasse yawned to a depth estimated to be at least forty feet. How much deeper it went we could not conceive, but we were unanimous on this point at least.

It was a weird position, the bluish light from the snow contrasting with the dark rocks, down which coursed a series of waterfalls, constantly increasing in size. The temperature being low and our position no sinecure, we decided to make for the summit by the North-East Buttress. I may be pardoned for reminding readers that access to this ridge is usually had from the eastern side, where an easy ledge leads up to the first platform. The direct ascent from the bottom has not yet been accomplished, and on the west side only two ascents appear to have been made ; by Slingsby's chimney leading up to the first platform, and a little to the left of this where Napier forced his way up the rocks (Vol. III., p. 331). As the storm showed no sign of abating, our natural anxiety was to reach the summit as speedily as possible. But how? To ascend the buttress by the usual route, we must descend at least 800 feet round the bottom, and traverse back by the ledge. What a temptation, in our wet and sodden condition, to try and repeat the climbs of Slingsby or Napier! On approaching the bottom of Slingsby's chimney, water was seen to flow freely down it, and our leader's idea was rather to climb up perhaps thirty feet, traverse to the left, and then turning directly upwards, so strike the ridge. Glimpses through the mist enabled a plan to be sketched out, although the appearance of the rocks was distinctly unfavourable. As we surmounted pitch after pitch, however, a way seemed to open up, which we carefully marked with small cairns, and ere long without serious difficulty we were on the first platform. The wind now made itself more felt, and the temperature fell to near the freezing point, so we put on full steam to keep up the circulation.

How different that ridge was from the flower-bedecked climb on the occasion of our last visit. Then the warm rocks invited delay, but now the fingers, dripping with icy water, felt keenly the sharp and rough edges of the porphyritic holds. By the time the man-trap or gendarme was reached, one might have imagined the company to have been a party of cab-drivers slapping their shoulders in a February blast. The writer, placed in a scalariform attitude at the foot of the gendarme, was made use of by our leader, and subsequently by my wife, to illustrate the downtrodden husband, and enable them to attain a position above. When it came to my turn, no amount of gentle persuasion would induce me to throw off the restraints of gravity and rejoin my companions. After such treatment it was natural to be proud, and then, perhaps, the most cogent reason was that I couldn't get up, but persistently slipped off, illustrating the principles of the water railway, with its water lubrication. Owing to the force of the wind, the suggestion to follow my route of two years ago, or to ascend up the western side, were dismissed, and an attack was made on the overhanging chimney above the gully to the left. My rope being secure in Raeburn's hands above, I could make full use of the somewhat rickety holds, and was soon beside the others. Only one serious difficulty remained, the forty-foot chimney, and with so good a man as leader, what mattered it that hands and feet had little feeling, and that the teeth chattered with the regularity of an electric clapper? My wife first, and then the writer, were soon above it, and all three were hastening to the hotel, where the usual excellent repast loosened our tongue strings to recapitulate the incidents of a stirring day. Our whole trip had taken but nine hours including all halts. The Observatory report that the temperature had fallen to 33° made us coincide in the opinion of the observers, that wind and rain, at a temperature of 33° F., are more trying than a snowstorm with several degrees of frost, even when accompanied with wind.

So ended our holiday as it began, in storm and cold, but the memories of it are warm, and the discomforts have long ago served but the more to enhance the glories of our own Scottish mountains.

AN EIGHT HOURS' DAY IN A LOCHNAGAR GULLY.

BY GEORGE DUNCAN.

LOCHNAGAR is always an interesting mountain, and a recent attempted ascent may be worth recording.

On 14th July, Messrs Harold Raeburn, William Garden, and the writer paid a visit to the great corrie of the mountain, with the view of subjecting the eastern gully to a summer scrutiny. This is the gully which was attempted in March 1893 by Messrs Douglas and Gibson (*Journal*, Vol. II., p. 246). It was again attempted under winter conditions in April of this year by Messrs Raeburn, Garden, Crombie (non-member) and the writer, but the party got no higher than the early explorers of 1893. The "vertical wall of smooth black rock," described by Douglas in the article referred to, rendered a frontal attack hopeless under any conditions. No feasible route could then be seen on the left, and the condition of the snow was alone sufficient to deter us from trying any way of escape on the right. It looked, however, as if in summer one might traverse to the ridge on the right of the gully, and it was to test the possibility of forcing a passage in this way, that the expedition of July was undertaken.

An early start was made from Inschnabobbart, in Glen Muick, and we rounded the shoulder of Conachcraig into Clashrathen. Thence our route lay over the col between the Meikle Pap and Cuidhe Crom. We reached our gully, having made very indifferent time, at a quarter to ten, and found a long glacier-like tongue of hard snow protruding from its mouth. We had an axe, and soon got to the top of the snow, but no sooner had we bade it good-bye than we were confronted with what turned out to be probably the most difficult pitch actually ascended during the day. Above us a huge jammed block formed the roof of a very respectable cave, and, above that again, another huge stone similarly blocked the way. The roofs formed by these stones had, however, one drawback; they had a very pro-

nounced eavesdrop, and we had here our first taste of the water, which was to form our staple refreshment during the day.

As at the top of the gully, so here a frontal attack was hopeless. Indeed, an attack in any direction seemed somewhat hazardous, but by traversing to the left, right out on the steep wall of the gully, Raeburn soon found himself on the top of the cave, and after some time and not a little skilful direction and assistance from our leader, Garden and the writer stood beside him.

For the next few yards the going was easy ; then came a pitch fortunately free of caves, but unfortunately also free of holds, and made up chiefly of steep, wet, waterworn rocks, with rotten bits intermingled. Pitch after pitch, all pretty much of the same sort, followed, until we again stood, as best we could, beneath the smooth black rocks at the top.

As we neared these rocks, we had been anxiously looking for the expected way of escape on the right, and at first it did seem that we could make a traverse in that direction. A nearer view dispelled our illusion. The road which had seemed to be possible, when viewed from below, was found, on closer inspection, to be paved with the rottenest of rocks, and to lead only to an overhanging cliff. Raeburn then turned his attention to the left. Going up, we had kept as near as possible to the water line of the gully, but at the top we were stationed on its right side. It is here fairly wide, and the first difficulty experienced was the traverse of the steep wet slabs in the middle. These crossed, our leader climbed right out of the gully close under the steep cliffs which bar the way in front, and keeping these on his right, while Garden and the writer remained hitched in the gully. We had 120 feet of rope, and Raeburn got up to a height of about 60 feet above us, where he got a firm hitch. After some involuntary gyrations, the writer, who was middle man, got up to the point Raeburn had reached, by a lower and apparently easier route, the first part of which leads up a narrow crack just on the left side of the gully. Here Raeburn and the writer, who was the fortunate carrier of the rucksack, had a bite of food, while Garden remained below with only that

desideratum of every well-regulated community, "an abundant water supply," to console him. We were to leave the rucksack here for Garden, when he followed, but, alas! the descent had to be ordered before he could move, and after that no food was thought of till the climb was over. Meanwhile Raeburn went on to prospect a traverse still more to the left which seemed to lead to a possible chimney, another chimney leading right above us having been pronounced impossible. His traverse seemed a somewhat perilous route. There were few supports, and his progress was marked by the descent of loose stones and surplus vegetation to the depths below. Soon he returned with a bad report. The traverse was neither good nor particularly safe, and the possibilities of the chimney were not apparent. A consultation was held and descent was resolved on.

Our climb had already, we knew, taken a considerable time, but the exact time we did not know. We had been too busy to take out watches, and in the depths of the gully the sun was invisible. We determined, however, to get down as quickly as possible, so as to make the ascent of the hill in some other way, and view our gully and its chimneys from above.

Unfortunately we found our return to be far from easy. In his article, Mr Douglas remarks on the "great serpentine waves" of the descent of the gully as it appears in snow. In summer its damp sides and water-washed bed are no improvement from an æsthetic point of view, and they are an unmistakable disadvantage to the climber. The descent resulted in damage not merely to the clothes but also to the persons of some of the party, and when, after great toil and tribulation, we arrived again on the roof of the cave our general appearance was by no means prepossessing.

We had now a problem before us. The ascent of this part of the gully had been accomplished only after a traverse along some small ledges in the precipitous left wall, and a descent by the same means was not inviting. Obviously, the only way was the direct way, viz., to lower ourselves by the rope, over the roof to the floor of the cave. Search was accordingly made for a hitch, and, after some mining operations, to which Raeburn and Garden devoted much

energy, we were able to pass the rope round a firmly fixed boulder. First Garden descended, then the writer, and then Raeburn swung down. Unfortunately when we came to endeavour to get off the rope we found our hitch to be too good ; the rope jammed, and regretfully we had to cut it.

We were soon again on the snow, and our unsuccessful climb was over. We felt a trifle hungry, particularly Garden, whose sole portion had been the water, which his garments, like those of all of us, had so copiously imbibed. Our hunger was soon explained, for, on consulting a watch, we found it was twenty minutes past six. We had certainly done a full eight hours' day.

We had, however, to get to the top somehow, and after an endeavour to eat the pulp to which most of our food was reduced, we went up the Black Spout, arriving at the Cac Càrn Beag, the highest point of the mountain, at twenty minutes past seven. We then skirted the edge of the corrie and had a look at the top of the gully. The chimney which had been Raeburn's objective appeared easy so far as we could see, but unluckily by this time a thick mist had descended, and it was not possible to make a very close examination. We pursued the path down the ladder, and reached Inschnabobbart a little after nine o'clock.

Will the gully go yet? So many climbs once pronounced impossible have yielded before successive attempts that it is not unlikely that this one will yet be accomplished. If the question were put to our leader, I fancy his answer would not be absolutely in the negative.

S.M.C. GUIDE BOOK.

THE OCHIL AND LOMOND HILLS.

(DIVISION I. GROUP VII.)

THE OCHILS.

Lat. $56^{\circ} 11'$; W. Lon. $3^{\circ} 46'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheet 39. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, Nos. 8 and 12.

The Ochils form a range of pastoral hills north of the Forth, and stretching about 24 miles eastwards from Bridge of Allan, with a breadth of about 12 miles. They are chiefly composed of Porphyry and other volcanic rocks of the Old Red Sandstone age. They are more interesting for the view they afford than for climbing exercise. The highest, Ben Cleuch (2,363 feet), is a broad ridge, which may be ascended in little more than an hour from Alva or Tillicoultry, or in about two hours from Dollar; and the descent may be varied by making for Blackford on the Caledonian Railway, allowing extra time for dips into the small glens interrupting a direct course. The distant view is practically uninterrupted, twenty-three towns and portions of twenty-five counties being visible. The Firth of Tay with its bridge, the gleaming sands of the Firth of Forth, the high houses of Edinburgh and chimneys of Glasgow are objects for a field-glass, while the mountain view includes Ben Nevis, 63 miles distant, and Ben Macdhui. A fine panorama was published by J. A. Knipe in 1875. The best-known view-point in the Ochils is Dumyat, above Menstrie. Although only 1,375 feet, it rises so abruptly from the carse, and projects so much in front of the range, that it commands a remarkably fine foreground. Many other summits have names, but they present little variety of structure.

The Ochils are intersected by numerous small glens, generally with singularly steep grass slopes, but occasionally taking the form of rocky gorges, which afford short climbs. Short climbs may also be had at several points on the south face. Among those easily got at may be mentioned the rocks (conglomerate) on the summit to the south-west of Dumyat nearly above the houses marked Cotkerse on the Ordnance map; also the rocks in the gorge separating this summit from Dumyat, among them being a pinnacle and chimney discovered by Raeburn in 1898.

Dollar Glen is beautifully wooded, and its western branch forms a gorge which is perhaps the finest of its kind in the country. Alva Glen is also frequently visited.

J. W. D.

THE LOMOND HILLS.

Lat. $56^{\circ} 15'$; W. Lon. $3^{\circ} 18'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheet 40. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, No. 13.

The Lomond Hills, in the west of Fife, offer little inducement to the keen rock-climber, but to the hill-walker are of considerable interest both geologically and botanically, and at the same time afford a view of great variety and extent due to their isolated position rather than to their height.

The West Lomond (1,713 feet), the highest point, and the East Lomond (1,471 feet), commonly known as Falkland Hill, are separated by a stretch of moorland which falls very gently south to the Ballo Loch, but which descends abruptly to the north, and forms at the west end, due north-east of the West Lomond, a cliff of about 200 feet, due to the outcrop of a dolerite sill. The rock, in part columnar in structure, is on the whole in rather a bad condition. To the south of the West Lomond lies the Bishop Hill, but separated by a dip of nearly 900 feet, formed by the Glenburn, which flows north-west, and eventually joins the river Eden.

The ascent of the Lomond Hills may be made from various points or stations on the North British Railway

system, which almost encircles the hills. One of the best routes is by way of the Bishop Hill, and then traversing the hills from west to east, as described by Mr Brown (Vol. III., p. 38). This route may be commenced at Blairadam Station and then by traversing Benarty Hill, descending and crossing the river Leven at the sluices on its exit from the loch, and passing round the shore of the loch, the ascent may be made either from Kinnesswood or Easter Balgeddie village—a deep scar on the hillside leading up to a short limestone and sandstone face (an old quarry working) being an interesting route. The summit (1,492 feet) lies a little farther south. Slightly farther over, to the north-east of the summit, lies the now disused Clatteringwell Limestone Quarry, whence some good fossils have been obtained. Balgeddie village may also be reached direct from Kinross, Milnathort, or Mawcarse Stations—about three miles by road in each case.

From the Bishop Hill, the West Lomond can be reached in an hour to an hour and a half, over rough grass and moorland—the ascent from the Glenburn being up steep heather slopes.

The ascent of the West Lomond may also be made direct (1) from Mawcarse Station in about one and a quarter hours—the main Leslie road is followed a few hundred yards, and then an old grassy road on the left just beyond a cottage is taken, and at a subsequent fork the right-hand branch, and thence crossing a couple of fields, some moorland and the Glenburn, the West Lomond is reached, the first 500 or 600 feet of ascent being steep; or (2) from Gateside Station the route lies across the fields to the west of Urquhart Farm, with a subsequent steep ascent to the summit in an hour from the station. This route passes immediately to the west of the dolerite cliff previously mentioned, and is the easiest way to approach it.

From the summit, the East Lomond lies due east, and may be reached in about an hour, the quickest route being the direct one, passing to the south of the Miller's Loch (1,157 feet), and crossing the moor until the hill road between Falkland and Leslie is reached, and then an old road running east from some cottages leads on to the

shoulder of the hill. Several hundred yards to the south of this direct route, a stone dyke, which runs the whole length of the ridge, forms a good guide in the dark or mist, until the hill road is reached. By keeping some distance to the north of the direct route, and making for the west corner of the Bracks Plantation, a wooded knoll lying north-east by east of the west summit, a right-of-way path will be struck which leads up from Strathmiglo, and gradually changing into a cart track, joins the Falkland-Leslie hill road about one and a half miles from the village. The descent from the East Lomond to Falkland village is by a steep path through the wood, and three-quarters of an hour must then be allowed for the walk to Falkland Road Station. A descent, but longer, may also be made to the south to Markinch or Leslie Stations.

A. W. R.

THE TROSACHS GROUP.

(DIVISION I. GROUP VIII.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 15'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 25'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheets 38 and 46. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, No. 12.

The group we have now to describe is, thanks to the genius of Sir Walter Scott, the classic ground of the Highlands of Scotland. No Highland tour is complete which does not include a visit to the Trosachs, and the natural beauty of the scenery is widely and justly celebrated. Ben Ledi, Ben Venue, and "steep Ben A'an" are household words. With Ben Lomond and Ben Nevis they are the most widely known of our Scottish hills. They fully repay the trouble of a climb by the grandeur of the views they command, but the seeker for new and difficult routes will not find much here to detain him.

The district we include under this head is bounded towards the south and west by a line drawn from Callander to Aberfoyle, thence by the Stronachlachar road to the head of Loch Katrine, and thence by Glen Gyle to its source. Towards the north it is bounded by the Bal-



BEN LEDI FROM ABOVE L. LUBNAIG.

W. Inglis Clark.

quhidder Glen, starting from the source of the Lochlarig Burn, the river Balvaig, Loch Lubnaig, and the Leny. The western part of the group is not very accessible, but it is also of less interest than the eastern part.

The prominent summits are Ben Ledi (2,875 feet) and Ben Venue (2,393 feet). Ben A'an (1,750 feet), though very striking from several points of view, is merely an outlying spur of a higher hill of no particular character. Loch Katrine forms a natural division between the Ben Ledi chain and the shorter Ben Venue chain. The principal points on the former are Ben Ledi and Ben Vane (2,685 feet) and Stob a Choin (2,839 feet). Ben Venue and Beinn Bhreac (2,295 feet) are the principal points of the minor chain.

The best centre for climbing these hills is the Trosachs. Ben Venue and Ben A'an are just at hand. Ben Ledi and Ben Vane and others can be climbed *via* Brig of Turk and Glen Finglas, and if it is desired to attack the more western ones, the steamer can be taken to Stronachlachar. Ben Ledi is, however, oftenest climbed from Callander, and Ben Venue is frequently climbed from Aberfoyle.

Geologically these hills chiefly consist of mica-schist and schistose grit. The great fault of Scotland runs through Callander and close to Aberfoyle, and bounds the group on the south-east, the hills south of Loch Vennacher being the upturned edge of the Old Red Sandstone formation. A band of slate forms the hill above Loch Ard. Behind that is the band of schistose grit in which are Ben Ledi, Ben Venue, and Ben A'an and others. Farther north-west is a band of mica-schist in which rises Stob a Choin.

Ben A'an is the only hill that gives climbing, and near the summit it affords the best rock climbing in the district. Climbing may also be got on the lower slopes of Ben Venue near the sluices at the end of Loch Katrine. Stob a Choin has some rocks on its north-east side. Elsewhere it is not easy to find rock climbs of any length.

It will now be convenient to take the hills one by one, and describe the usual lines of ascent.

1. BEN LEDI.

Ben Ledi is prominent from Stirling and imposing from Callander. It fairly towers over the Pass of Leny and the lower end of Loch Lubnaig. Seen from the east the summit looks square and solid, but from the south it is a long hog-backed ridge.

The ordinary route starts from the Callander and Trosachs road at Coilantogle Farm, and leads by a path in a gentle slope up the ridge the whole way to the summit. Another route starting from Stank Farm at the end of Loch Lubnaig is decidedly steeper. The right side of the burn is followed for about half a mile, and then a direct ascent made to the summit. About half-way up are some rocks which may afford a scramble. Another obvious route leads from Achnahard in Glen Finglas, which is the direct route from the Trosachs. From Strathyre it can be ascended by taking an old track starting a little east of Laggan Farm on Loch Lubnaig leading up to the ridge behind, where the ridge recedes most from the loch, whence it is a ridge walk to Loch na Corp at the foot of the main peak. The time for all these ascents may be put at from two to three hours from the start of the climb.

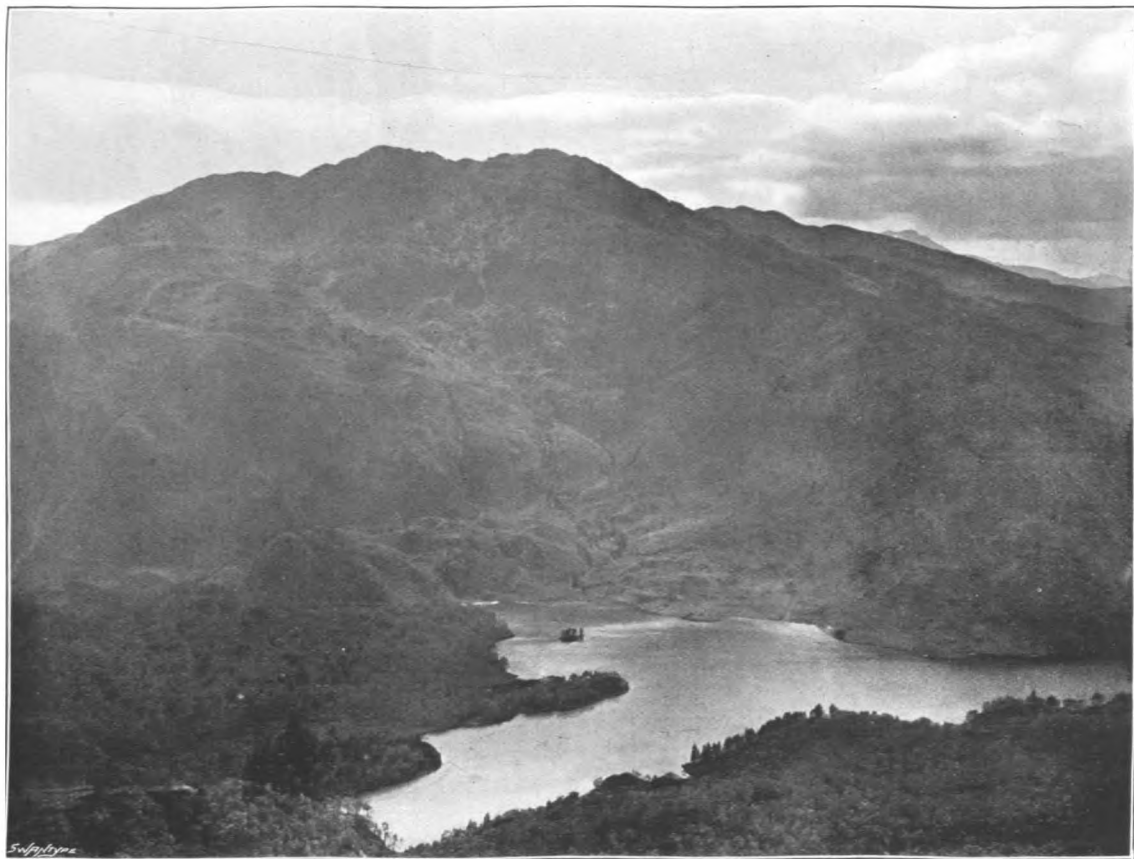
The view is extensive and varied, embracing the Carse of Stirling, with the hills to the east and south, as well as the Highland hills to the west and north.

The ridge between Ben Ledi and Ben Vane does not fall below 1,900 feet. Directly behind Laggan Farm there are some short cliffs which seem to have been the seat of a slip or subsidence within a recent era.

The hill which rises steeply from the lower part of Loch Lubnaig, between the East Laggan Burn and Stank Glen, bears a line of rocks on its sky-line, but none of these seem to be of any great height.

2. BEN VANE.

This is a round-topped uninteresting hill. It is most readily ascended from Strathyre *via* the watershed between the West Laggan Burn and Glenbuckie. Two hours from where the road crosses the Laggan Burn should suffice.



BEN VENUE FROM BEN A'AN

W Inglis Clark.

From Achnahard in Glen Finglas an easy ridge leads to the top.

3. BEN VENUE.

Ben Venue is not high enough to show prominently from a distance. From the Aberfoyle and Trosachs road its appearance is very fine, but its celebrity is undoubtedly due to its bold impressive appearance and beautiful surroundings as seen from the shores of Loch Achray or from the Trosachs or the lower part of Loch Katrine, whence its lower slopes rise steeply.

Ben Venue possesses two summits about a quarter of a mile apart, the western being the higher by 7 feet. The prospect from the latter is the more extensive, but it lacks the beautiful view of the lower end of Loch Katrine and the Trosachs with its rare combinations of wood and water, island and glen.

From the Trosachs, Ben Venue can be attacked from two sides. The most direct route is to ascend the steep hillside from the sluices and then make straight for the top. The other is to follow the Aberfoyle road till the river is crossed, then ascend Glen Riavach, keeping the left side of the stream for some distance, then ascending directly to the summit. From Aberfoyle, by leaving the road near its highest point and striking over into Glen Riavach, the top may be reached without having to descend to any great extent. From the top of Loch Ard it can be reached by taking the path up Ledard Glen to the pass, whence a rough ridge leads to the foot of the west peak. The time from the Trosachs may be put at $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, from Ledard at 2 hours, and from Aberfoyle $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours.

As already mentioned, there is some rock climbing to be got near the sluices. There is little, if any, elsewhere.

4. BEN A'AN.

Though only 1,750 feet in height, "steep Ben A'an" is a most prominent object from the Trosachs and the lower end of Loch Katrine. But perhaps its most striking aspect is when seen in profile from the direct path by which the top is reached from the Trosachs Hotel, when it appears

to be a conical hill with an almost sheer face of several hundred feet.

Ben A'an is not a peak by itself. It is merely the termination of a ridge which rises to the north to nearly 1,900 feet. Its steep face is towards the south—an uncommon phenomenon.

The Trosachs seem to have been formed by the cutting through, by geological agencies, of a band of schistose grit that was once continuous between Ben A'an and Ben Venue, leaving the steep face of Ben A'an to the north of the cut. The lower rocks near Loch Katrine seem scarcely to have weathered at all for a long period, as they are still smooth and rounded as if glaciated or water-worn.

The easiest means of obtaining the fine view which Ben A'an commands is to take the obvious path that starts from behind the Trosachs Hotel and leads direct to the top. It may also be ascended directly from the end of Loch Katrine, starting a short distance from the pier and avoiding the face by keeping to the right. The face, however, is what will interest climbers. A sketch of it is subjoined.

It will be observed that the rock is in three sections, the two upper being separated by a broad grass ledge. Owing probably to the amount of vegetation and to the fact that there is more level ground between the sections, the face appears when approached from the front much less steep than it really is.

The climb marked *c* on the lower cliffs is by an ill-defined gully.

The middle section shows two prominent gullies, marked *a* and *b*, affording good climbs. The gully *b* is decidedly difficult owing to the necessity of passing a jammed block with very little hold to do it.

The upper section gives a variety of short climbs *b*, which is up a deep crack with jammed stones and a cave, is perhaps the most difficult. For details of routes see *Journal*, Vol. V., p. 52. The possibilities of these cliffs are by no means exhausted, and further exploration would no doubt be rewarded. The rocks round the margin of Loch Katrine give good scrambling.

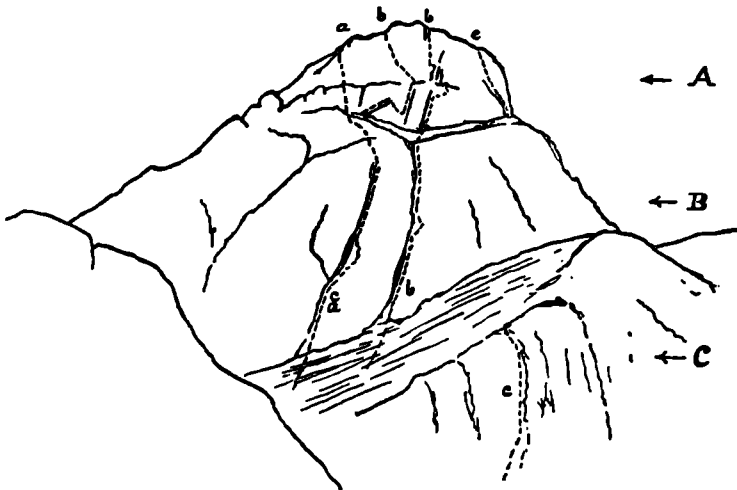


BEN A'AN.

W. Inglis Clark.

The hills above the Aberfoyle and Stronachlacher road deserve mention.

Craigmore, just above Aberfoyle, affords a very fine view of Ben Lomond and Loch Ard, particularly at sunset. There is some rock climbing to be got on the face though the pitches are short. The ridge thence westward to Ledard Glen is an easy and interesting walk. The western and highest summit of Beinn Bhreac (2,295 feet), at the head of Ledard Glen, is perhaps the finest point of view



BEN A'AN FROM THE SOUTH.

A. Upper cliffs. *B.* Middle cliffs. *C.* Lower cliffs.

a., a. Route of 21st May 1896.

b., b. Routes of 1st January 1898.

c., c. Routes of 22nd January 1898.

in the district. It may be ascended by Ledard Glen or by the face to the west of the glen, but the best and most direct route starts from the road opposite Blaruskin Lodge and reaches the sky-line a little to the east of Blaruskin Burn, whence the route to the top is obvious.

Ben an Shithein (1,871 feet), an isolated hill above Strathyre, is crossed by a path at about 1,400 feet. It possesses a few rocks on which scrambling may be had.

The hills west of Ben Vane need not detain us.

Meall Cala (2,203 feet) is a round uninteresting hump.

The obvious route is from the junction of Glen Meann and Glen Finglas direct to the top. Its neighbours to the west until Stob a Choin is reached are of a similar character and of similar height. The tops of Stob a Choin are 2,839 and 2,766 feet. As mentioned, it has a rocky north-east side. The last of the group is named at one end An Garadh (2,347 feet), and at the other Meall Mhor (2,451 feet). All these may be ascended from Loch Katrine side or Lochlarig Glen.

J. M.

BEN CHONZIE.

(DIVISION I. GROUP IX.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 28'$; W. Lon. $3^{\circ} 59'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheet 47. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, No. 12.

Ben Chonzie (3,048 feet), pronounced *Ben Honi*, stands at the head of Glen Turret, and is the culminating height, and the only point exceeding 3,000 feet, of the large stretch of elevated moorland which lies between Strathtay and Strathearn, and which is intersected by several beautiful glens, namely—(1) On the south-west, Glen Lednock, by which a road crosses from Comrie in a north-westerly direction to Ardeonaig on Loch Tay; (2) Glen Turret, which runs north-west from Crieff to the foot of Ben Chonzie; (3) Glen Almond, also running in a west-north-west direction, the lower portion of which, five miles to the north-east of Crieff, forms a narrow and picturesque defile known as the Sma' Glen; and lastly, Strath Bran, which extends south-west from Dunkeld for ten miles to Amulree (good inn); here it turns north-west and is called Glen Quaich (glen of the cup), in the hollow of which, amid pastoral scenery, is the pretty little Loch Freuchie, from the south-west shores of which a track leads up the wild little Glen Lochan past two small lochs and over a low col to the upper portion of Glen Almond, which it joins a little below the north base of Ben Chonzie.

On the north side of Glen Lochan, Meall nan Fuaran (2,631 feet) shows some fine rocky corries.

The only point, however, likely to attract the climber in the whole district is Ben Chonzie itself, and this merely on account of its accessibility and view. From Crieff it is 8 miles north-west, driving being practicable as far as Glen Turret Lodge at the head of Loch Turret, $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles from the summit. From Comrie the mountain lies $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles north, driving in this case being possible up Glen Lednock as far as Invergeldie Lodge, which is 3 miles from the summit.

The mountain, which forms part of a grouse moor, is clothed on all sides with verdure, short grass on top, and heather and a profusion of berries, especially cloud berries, on the sides. It is composed of mica-schist and schistose grit, which, however, only crop out in a few insignificant rock faces on the south-east, below which, between the little Lochan Vaine and Loch Turret, are some very fine and extensive examples of moraine mounds.

Situated on the fringe of the Highlands there is a fine view down Glen Turret and of a wide stretch of Lowlands beyond, while to the north Ben Lawers and his neighbours, seen across Loch Tay, which is, however, entirely hid by flat-topped intervening heights, present a most imposing appearance.

H. T. M.

SCHICHALLION.

(DIVISION I. GROUP X.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 40'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 6'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheet 55. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, No. 12.

Schichallion (3,547 feet) is an isolated peak, about 4 miles south-east from Kinloch Rannoch, and fully 9 miles west-north-west from Abergfeldy.

As seen from east or west it presents a sharp and peculiarly graceful cone, its sugar-loaf appearance giving a suggestion of stiff climbing which is not realised on

closer acquaintance. This pyramidal form is characteristic of the quartzite which forms the upper part of the mountain, while its north and south flanks are crossed by bands of limestone and dark schistose rock. Its shape as seen from north or south is much broader, and the top, in place of being pointed, shows a long line of no great inclination. Its west end is, however, somewhat higher than the east. The mountain is remarkable for the uniformity of its shape, the contour lines forming rough ovals almost from base to summit. This by no means increases its interest for the climber, but was used for the service of science in the well-known experiment on the earth's density. By means of geological investigation and those comparatively regular contours, the then Astronomer-Royal, Maskelyne, was able to estimate with fair accuracy the mass of the mountain, and to compare that mass with that of the earth. The "Schichallion experiment"—the comparing of the effect of Schichallion and that of the whole earth on a plummet—will always be famous in the annals of science.

The sides of Schichallion are largely grass-covered, and there are no cliffs, but the top ridge is like a stone pavement, and many large blocks have fallen on to the slopes below. On the sides, springs are somewhat numerous, and in summer may be observed from a distance by the trail of bright green below them.

Schichallion may be readily ascended from Kinloch Rannoch, Tummel Bridge, Aberfeldy, or Kenmore. Aberfeldy is the most distant, but between it and the mountain there is first a hotel at Weem, and next a small inn at Coshieville. Weem is 1 mile, and Coshieville 6 miles on the way. The usual routes are—(1) From Kinloch Rannoch follow the road on the south of the river (the short cut to Aberfeldy) to Tempar Farm, from which ascend by the west shoulder or by the Tempar Burn, a walk of about 5 miles in all. (2) From Tummel Bridge follow the Aberfeldy road until opposite the foot of the long eastern ridge, about the junction with the above-mentioned road from Kinloch Rannoch, and just short of the White Bridge public-house; the ridge is reached by passing to the north side of Dùn Coillich, and is then followed

all the way. The distance by this route is about 8 miles. (3) From Aberfeldy, take the road by Weem and Coshieville, striking off to the left (west) up Gleann Mor, about 2 miles beyond Coshieville, and so on to the east ridge. The distance from Coshieville is about 6 miles. (4) From Kenmore the road on the north side of the Tay joins the above road from Aberfeldy near Coshieville, and about 3 miles from Kenmore.

Schichallion does not present any opportunity for rock climbing, and although possibly some good snow climbs might be got on it, there are neither corries nor gullies of any importance, and no record has been made of any difficulty. An article in the *S.M.C. Journal* (Vol. III., p. 260) describes a snow ascent from Tummel Bridge in April 1885, but axes apparently were not used. Doubtless in some weather conditions they would be necessary.

G. T.

CARN MAIRG.

(DIVISION I. GROUP XI.)

Lat. $56^{\circ} 38'$; W. Lon. $4^{\circ} 9'$. Ordnance Survey Map, one inch scale, Sheet 55. Bartholomew's Reduced Ordnance Map, No. 12.

This extensive stretch of raised upland lies between Loch Rannoch and Glen Lyon, and few steep slopes (if any) occur on its gently sloping sides. The mountain may be said to extend from Coshieville Inn to the pass from Innerwick in Glen Lyon to Dall on Loch Rannoch, and according to Munro's tables embraces eight tops, the highest being 3,419 feet. They are—

Creag Mhor, 3,200, pron. *Crag Vor*=the big crag. Lies 3 miles west-south-west from Fortingal.

Meall Liath, 3,261, pron. *Mel Le-a*=the grey hill. Lies $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east by south from Carn Mairg.

Carn Mairg, 3,419=a deplorable heap of stones. Lies 4 miles west-north-west from Fortingal.

Meall a Bharr, 3,250 app., pron. *Mel a Var*=the end of the hill. Lies 1 mile west by north from Carn Mairg.

Meall Luaidhe, 3,000 app. Lies $\frac{3}{4}$ mile south-east from Meall Garbh.

Meall Garbh, 3,200 app., pron. *Mel Gar-ve*=rough hill. Lies $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles west from Carn Maig.

An Sgor, 3,002=a gash? Lies $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles west by south from Carn Maig.

Carn Gorm, 3,370=the blue mountain. Lies $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-north-east from Free Church of Glen Lyon.

I do not know much about this mountain, for my knowledge has been only gained in one brief visit to the top of Carn Maig, and that too when it was hidden with mist and drenched with rain. This ascent was made from Fortingal by the Munlinn Glen, and the return by Coire Eachainn. The slopes were grassy and gentle, and the summit plateau was strewn with loose stones.

Mr Stott records (*Journal*, I., p. 132, and II., p. 113) a walk with Mr Munro along the ridge—if its broad back may be so termed—of the group from Innerwick to Fortingal, and they seem to have had some doubt as to the accuracy of the O.S. map.

W. D.

NOTE.—The next groups falling to be described are Ben Lawers; the Killin group; Heasgarnich; Ben Chaluim; Ben Doireann to Creachan; and Chuirn to Vannoch. The Editor will be glad, if members who have information regarding, or photographs of, these hills will communicate with him.

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.

A BLIZZARD ON BEN NEVIS.—To some it is given to achieve success lightly ; to others, after strenuous efforts, to fail nobly is the reward. In the second class must be placed the party consisting of Messrs H. Raeburn, W. Douglas, J. Rennie, and the writer, who on Monday, 8th April, endeavoured to ascend the subsidiary buttress between the Observatory Gully and the North-East Buttress.

It was a pleasant warm morning as we made our way over into the corrie, and on entering the bottom of the couloir we found miniature avalanches of soft snow pouring off the rocks. A short halt for refreshments, and then the buttress was attacked at the point just opposite to the commencement of the Tower Ridge climb. The first thirty feet consisted of very steep rock sheeted with ice, which masked all the holds. After an unsuccessful attempt by the writer, Raeburn was called upon, and, not to be denied, made his way up to a ledge where the snow was sufficiently deep to afford anchorage, while the rest of the party scuffled up.

We mounted diagonally to the right by ledges and gained about 200 feet in height, then traversed to the left by an ice-slope, where steps had to be cut, until we reached the edge of the arête. There we found the conditions so bad that we reluctantly decided to turn back ; the task of clearing the holds of snow would have taken so long that, as it was now well on in the afternoon, there was no chance of our reaching the top before dark. We retraced our steps, got into the gully, and waded down to the foot in soft snow. It was now decided to reach the Observatory and tea by the Carn Mor Dearg Ridge, and we skirted the North-East Buttress and ascended the soft snow until we reached the cornice on the ridge. The wind had been gradually rising, and when we topped the crest we found a perfect blizzard blowing straight in our faces, which made it very difficult to see the way, and also very uneasy for the said faces. We now put on the rope, fearing the cornice, and chipping steps, struggled on and up, gradually assuming the appearance of Polar bears, as the driven snow froze on our hair and garments, until at 5.15 we gained the welcome shelter of the Observatory. After thawing, we had tea, and learnt that

the wind was blowing at the rate of forty miles an hour. At six we resumed our march. The wind was still blowing at the same rate, and it was impossible to see twenty yards in front of us. Our course was set for the Red Burn, and about every fifty yards we swung round and consulted the compass ; but the wind caused us to keep too much to the south, and when the snow at last thinned out, we found ourselves in a steep rough gully on the south side, and scrambling down in the rapidly increasing darkness, we reached the stream in Glen Nevis at nine, and were glad to find that we were on the right side of Polldubh.

It was now very dark, and we kept the rope on over the bog, where the leader's "Ware water!" was often not soon enough to prevent the second from splashing after him into a hole. When the welcome lights of Glen Nevis House were seen, we struck the path, and our difficulties were at an end. We arrived at the hotel at 10.45, in time to set the minds of our friends at ease, for they had sent to telephone to the Observatory, and had begun to talk of search-parties for the remains.

We did ample justice to the excellent meal which awaited us at this somewhat belated hour.

W. N. LING.

PAVEY ARK.—Dear Mr Editor,—I was very sorry that you could not get through to Ferney Green.

Raeburn came over, and we had a very good day on Pavey Ark on Saturday, 29th June.

We began by going up the right-hand branch of the little gully which Jones in his book says that he considers as good as the big gully. I think the bottom pitch is quite as stiff as anything in the big gully, but it is shorter, and the only fault is that there is not enough of it. Then we came down the big gully and lunched at the tarn.

Of course these had only whetted Raeburn's appetite ; and then we went to a crack which starts near the foot of Jack's Rake and spent an hour and six minutes in getting to the top of this. From the tarn there appear to be three pitches ; the first one wassome what stiff, and the top almost a walk, but the middle was to me very difficult ; in fact, I went up for some distance practically on the rope. There were nail-marks at the bottom and several at the top, but very faint traces in the middle.

I had not heard of this being done before, but on getting down to Dungeon Gill we found an account by two men whom I do not know by name (Hargreaves and Hughes), of a climb up it and the big gully about the end of May. I consider it about the stiffest climb that I have done in the Lakes, and harder (for its height) than anything I did in the Dolomites last year, except the Winkler.—Yours, &c.,

F. CONRADI SQUANCE.

BEN NEVIS—THE OBSERVATORY GULLY.--This is the hardest of the gullies hitherto climbed on Ben Nevis. It had certainly been climbed once at least before this Easter, but there were rumours that other ascents had been made—one in summer. Unfortunately, details of these climbs are not available, and it is in hopes that some may be obtained that the present note is inserted in the *Journal*.

The gully is the one looked down into from the Observatory Rubbish Shoot. It is the north-east or right (true) branch of the wider gully, which lower down, separates the Tower Ridge from the slabby precipices below the Observatory.

The left hand or Tower branch of this presents no difficulty in winter except that arising from the cornice, but the Observatory Gully has, about a hundred feet below the top, a large cave pitch which may be very difficult in summer. In winter, this cave pitch is ordinarily a frozen waterfall. If the snow is ever sufficiently deep to cover this up entirely, the difficulty of the climb depends upon the state of the cornice. I understand that in the two days' contest with the gully, which its original conquerors, Messrs Hastings and Haskett Smith, had, the cornice proved very formidable. Lawson and I on 6th April this year found the ice pitch the harder. Up to the point where the gully separates off from the Tower branch, the climbing calls for no remark. At once thereafter, the gully becomes very narrow and rapidly steepens, till the cave pitch is reached. On 6th April very little of the cave could be seen from below, but on Lawson clambering up and using his ice-axe with vigour, a sufficient opening was soon made, and we passed into a large cavern. The floor was composed of drifted snow, and the back sides of ribs and columns of glistening blue ice covering the rock. This cave is an absolutely "firma loca" for the second man, while the leader is tackling the ice-fall. The difficulty was to get at the ice-fall. It was so steep in a direct line overhanging, that pulling-in handholds were absolutely necessary; these had to be made. I managed to work up the jaws of the cave far enough to get a good undergrip for the right arm, below a great spout of ice that shot over the overhanging lip, and then cut a handhold and toehold for the left hand and foot out on the face of the ice-fall to the left. The strain was severe, and I had to twice descend to the cave for rest. Ascending the third time, I stepped up and out to the left, and now with axe in the right, worked at the weakest part of the fall above. Luckily breaking right through here into a hole behind the ice, I thrust my hand in, and felt with satisfaction the magnificent hold given by a clenched fist. The next eighteen feet, though hard work, was easier, and I got on to snow again. Lawson then came up and we congratulated ourselves that our struggles were nearly over, as the cornice overhead did not look as if it would give much trouble. Herein were we mistaken, as the angle rapidly steepened, and the snow became harder. What we took for a comfortable ledge leading out below the cornice to a weak part on our right, proved to be only a few inches broad, and at a steep angle. There was nothing for it

but to attack the cornice direct. Fortunately it proved soft, and though overhanging about four feet, it yielded easily to the axe. The stand below was unsatisfactory, soft snow sticking to hard icy stuff. Lawson proffered his shoulder as a foothold, but, as he was already at an angle of 90° , I explained that if I stood up on him the bulge above would certainly reduce the angle, but it would be on the wrong side, and the ice pitch, 80 feet below, was rather big to jump comfortably; and anyway, we wanted up and not down. There was therefore nothing for it but patience and labour, and to make the cornice blocks small enough to head off conveniently, I had worked my hat about level with the edge, when we heard the voice of an eloquent legal member of the S.M.C. A shout brought the party, who had come up by the Castle Ridge, to the edge. I expressed a desire to shake hands with one of them, so Workman kindly extended his arm, and I was so glad to see him that I did not leave go till landed on the top. Lawson needed slight persuasion to follow, and we all departed for the Observatory.

HAROLD RAEBURN.

KLETTERSCHUHE IN THE LAKES.—It has been suggested that climbers in this country might find it of advantage to use Kletterschuhe for rock climbs. Jones in his "Rock-climbing in England" mentions Kletterschuhe, merely to say "the Cumberland crags are too smooth to make scarpetti (Kletterschuhe) worth trying; these are rope-soled shoes, that grip better than nailed boots, when the texture of the rock surface is sufficiently rough." This, I think, is based on a misapprehension of the nature of Dolomite rocks, which are in reality far from rough, the magnesian limestone of which they are composed being readily dissolved by rain water, and the edges of the rocks consequently soon become rounded, so that they do not cut the shoes. I have tried Kletterschuhe on the Salisbury Crags, and though they undoubtedly render climbing both easier and safer, one hour's wear on the crags did them more damage than a couple of peaks in the Dolomites. With a view of giving them a fair trial on a representative British climb, I took them to Wastdale this July. I was to meet Bell on Saturday evening in Borrowdale, to have a look at the Skawfell climbs, and thought I could not do better than take a climb on the way. The one I thought most likely to be suitable was the long climb of the Pinnacle from Steep Gill by Slingsby's Chimney. Any chimney with that possessive in front of it was bound to be good. Leaving Wastdale Head at one, I took 1 hour 40 minutes for the grind up Brown Tongue to the foot of Steep Gill. Leaving all heavy baggage, stick, &c., here, I pocketed my Kletterschuhe, and started by the slight chimney or gully that marks the beginning of the climb. For more than halfway up the scrambling is very easy. Then, unless one intends to take the wet and slimy chimney of Steep Gill itself, the route slants up on the

right wall towards the clean cut profile of the pinnacle ridge below the Low Man. Arrived at a large slice of rock apparently falling away from the cliff, the first *mauvais pas* is encountered. The position is decidedly sensational, and put me in mind of the drop from the lintel of the "Church Door" in Glencoe. It is now necessary to stand on the left foot on the apex of the rock slice and stepping up to a high and badly sloping foothold on the cliff above, to drag up with very inadequate holds till the left foot can be placed in a small recess level with the left handhold. I tried this with boots on, but not being able to find any higher handhold, without standing right up on the left toe hold, did not feel at all certain that the right boot would remain on the sloping ledge if too great downward pressure were used. With a second's shoulder this step would be perfectly easy, but with nothing but 200 feet of space to back one up, it could not be risked. On taking off boots, and putting on Kletterschuhe, the step went all right, and standing up on the left toe hold, I quitted the low handhold used, and stretching up the slab above found a finger-satisfying grip in reach. A small triangular patch of grass was then gained at the foot of the Slingsby Chimney. The entrance to this overhangs a good deal. It is easy enough to straddle up to the crack which continues the chimney above and to find a splendid hold on a jammed stone well in, but when an attempt is made to get into the crack, the fun begins, the hold which is wanted a little higher up to enable the climber to force himself in, is unfortunately not there, and I exhausted myself with three futile efforts to find this non-existent. It was impossible to adopt heroic measures and trust to luck higher, the odds were too heavy against me for that. Comforting myself with the title of that well-known Alpine book, "Where there's a Will there's a Way," I examined the chimney more closely and noticed a small slanting edge bearing nailmarks running up the slightly overhanging wall on the right. The plan evidently was to get the right foot up against this till nearly level with the head and then to force the body into the crack. This answered, and I felt with relief the shoulder muscles gripping the edge of the crack, a good chest inflation sufficed to hold me in position while I let go the jammed block and got a new hold higher. The rest of the chimney went like smoke, and I soon reached the top of the Low Man. From here to the summit is delightfully sensational though quite easy. The narrow arête shown in the photo of the Pinnacle Ridge by the Abrahams, suits Kletterschuhe very well, in fact the lower portion may be walked in safety with them. The descent of the short side which Glover and I had found not easy last November, was also just the thing for them.

Bell and I next day ascended Skawfell again, this time *via* Mossgill Collier's exit, but I did not use Kletterschuhe, there is too much moisture about the climb. On the "Collie" step a stiff straight-edged boot, perfect confidence, and upright behaviour are what is required, and Collier's Chimney above is too slimy for cloth soles.

The conclusion I draw is that Kletterschuhe are only useful in this country for a short steep climb on pure rock where it is essential not to slip. Probably the Needle and Eagle's Nest Arête on Great Gable would go well with Kletterschuhe. There is usually too much moisture, moss, and grass on our average British climbs to render it worth while to carry these shoes, evolved as they have been to suit a special district. In Skye they are not required, and indeed would not last more than a couple of hours on the razor-edged, crystalline rocks of the Coolins.

HAROLD RAE BURN.

A MILE ABOVE GLASGOW.—On 2nd September, heedless of the mountaineering rule which forbids artificial aids, a member of the Club, along with an expert companion, ascended a "Nameless Peak," 5,350 feet high, near Glasgow. From that altitude the sea was visible on the west coast, and the Perthshire and Argyleshire mountains could be seen *over the top of* the Campsies and Kilpatricks. Starting from a point two miles N.E. of Glasgow, the balloon passed right over the city, crossed Renfrewshire, and finally landed among the low hills in the neighbourhood of Stewarton.

The weather was superb, and the extraordinary charm and novelty of the near bird's-eye view made the hour or so occupied by the trip seem far too short.

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