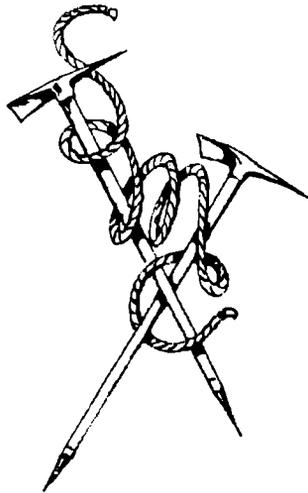


THE SCOTTISH
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THE SCOTTISH
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
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EDITED BY
WILLIAM DOUGLAS.



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LOOKING DOWN LOCH CORUISK FROM BEHIND THE CAMP.

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

VOL. V.

JANUARY 1898.

No. 25.

THE CLIMBERS' CAMP AT CORUISK.

BY W. DOUGLAS.

So much depends in a camping holiday upon the site and surroundings of the camp, and so much of the pleasure and profit, if any, in reading of the campers' adventures arises from an intelligent understanding of those conditions, that I had almost begun this article by a description of Coruisk and the Coolins. 'Twould have been an oft-told tale to the readers of the Journal. Collie and others have already described them far more eloquently than I could ever hope to do, yet no one, I venture to think, could realise even from their accounts what it means, to live for five weeks in the heart of Coruisk; to see Ghreadaidh slowly forming out of the gloom of the morning mists; to see, when some storm had passed, the wet slabs of the Coolins glistening in the sunlight; to see, when the sun had set, shafts of light darting through every cleft on the Banachdich ridge and thrusting golden streamers into the darkness of the corries, and to feel continually the near presence of the immense black peaks that crowded around our lonely camp—these, and many other sights that we daily witnessed, it is hardly in the power of words properly to express.

This article, however, being entirely practical in its aim and object, let me, in the interests of those who may wish at some future time to camp at a spot as remote from the habitations of man as that at the head of Loch Coruisk,

endeavour to give an outline of the plans and arrangements which we made beforehand, and which enabled us to carry out successfully our long sojourn in the wilds of Skye.

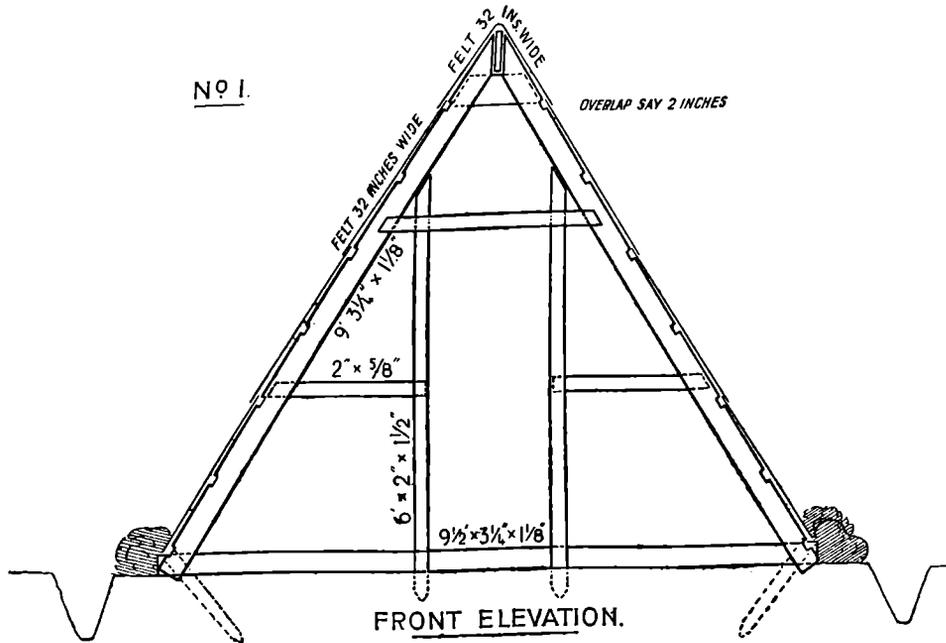
After obtaining the sanction of Macleod of Macleod to camp on his ground at the head of Loch Coruisk, we arranged with John Macrae, a fisherman in the island of Soay, to hire us a boat for the time of our holiday. Without a boat it would have been impossible to transport our baggage to the head of the loch.

Our next endeavour was to ascertain what would be the most suitable kind of house for our purpose, for we required one that would be easily carried, and strong enough to withstand the winds and floods that we were likely to encounter. The idea of a tent was at once discarded, for even the best of tents would never have weathered a Skye gale. Profiting by the experience of Mr Williams and other artists who are in the habit of living in portable wooden houses, Mr Rennie evolved a very good structure of wood and felt, which suited our purpose admirably; and after living in it night and day for more than a month, I cannot see how in any respect it could have been improved. It was quite watertight, and kept our beds and bedding perfectly dry. The accompanying diagrams show the plan of the house. Its chief disadvantage is that it cannot easily be taken down without spoiling the wood and felt, and this precludes the idea of using it more than once. The three huts which formed our camp were all built after the same model, with the exception of "The Cook-shop," which, as will be seen from plans Nos. 2 and 4, had an extension at the back for the accommodation of the cooking-stoves.

DIRECTIONS FOR SETTING UP THE RENNIE HUT.

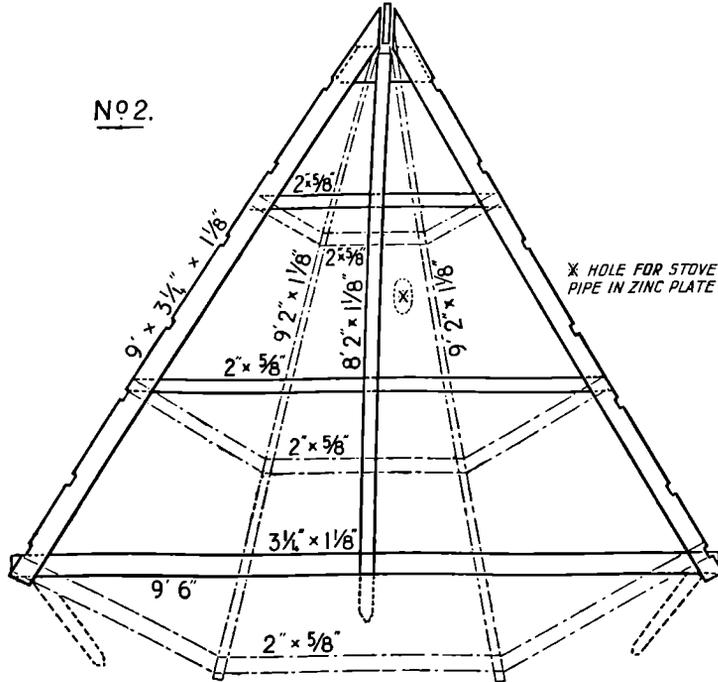
In setting up these huts, the first operation is to screw the end triangles together, and to set them up facing each other 8 feet apart. The ridge-pole is then slipped into its place, and the ends bound together with a few of the side spars, when the whole thing should be able to stand by itself. It is next squared with the ground, the side supports for the ridge-pole inserted, and the rest of the spars nailed on. All that has to be done now to the framework is to peg the corners down to the ground, put up the door-posts, and fill in the ends. Seven strips of felt are next cut out, $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet long. These are

No 1.



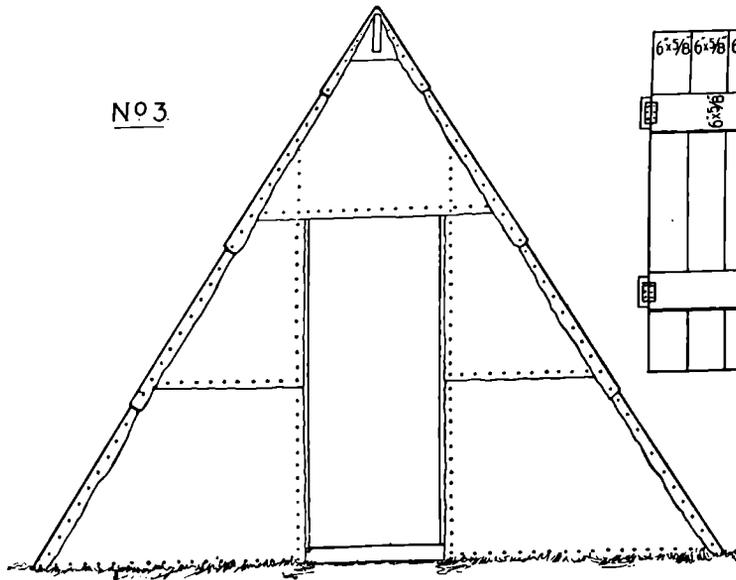
FRONT ELEVATION.

No. 2.



BACK ELEVATION.

Nº 3



6x9/8	6x9/8	6x9/8	6x9/8
6x9/8	6x9/8		
			4 9/2"

FRONT ELEVATION COVERED WITH FELT.

required for the roof of each hut, and should be nailed on, commencing with the bottom, so that the upper one overlaps the lower about 2 inches. The ends are next covered, and the doors put on the last thing of all.

OUTFIT.

The Wood.—Three kinds of wood were used in the construction of the framework, and the technical names for these were—

First quality flooring	-	-	6½ inches	×	1½ inch.	
Sarking	-	-	8	"	×	¾ "
Lining	-	-	6	"	×	¾ "

We got the quantity we required from a joiner in Helensburgh, and it was cut up by ourselves into—

2 pieces	8 ft. long,	6½ in.	×	1½ in.	-	Ridge-poles.		
1	"	10	"	"	-	Cook-shop ridge-pole.		
6	"	9½ "	3½ in.	×	1½ in.	-		
12	"	9	"	"	-	} Triangles.		
16	"	9½ "	2 in.	×	1½ in.	-	Supports for ridge-poles.	
12	"	6½ "	"	"	-	Door-posts and ends.		
42	"	8	"	2 in.	×	¾ in.	-	Cross-spars.
12	"	4½ "	6 in.	×	¾ in.	-	Doors.	
6	"	2	"	6 in.	×	¾ in.	-	"

This, with some over-planks for flooring, &c., cost £2. 7s. 6d.

The Felt.—This was called roofing-felt. It was 32 inches wide, and we purchased four rolls at 7s. 6d. a roll. In each roll there was 25 yards, and it weighed 90 lbs. The cost of each hut thus came to about 26s.

Provisions.—24 2-lb. tins of soup—Kidney, ox-tail, mock-turtle, mulligatawny, gravy, Julienne; 14 2-lb. tins of meat—Beef, brawn, chicken and tongue, Halford's curried fowl, mince, ox tongue; 2 tins pears, 4 tins tomatoes, 4 lbs. dried apples, 4 lbs. dried apricots, 2 lbs. figs, 5 lbs. prunes, 7 lbs. rice, 14 lbs. oatmeal, 2 lbs. coffee, 3 lbs. tea, ½ lb. cocoa; 14 lbs. sugar; mustard, pepper, salt, pickles, sauce; 5 lbs. cheese, 7 lbs. beans, 7 lbs. wheaten biscuits, 2 boxes ginger nuts, 7 lbs. ship biscuits, 12 2-lb. jars of jams and jellies, 1 doz. Swiss milk tins (*N.B.*—First Swiss Brand Unsweetened Condensed Milk, London Agency, 3 Laurence Pountney Hill, E.C., goes very well with porridge), 2 lbs. flour, 4 lb. skin of lard, 3 tins sardines, 3 tins Maggi soup, 3 lbs. macaroni, 14 lbs. ham, 4 doz. eggs, 8 lbs. butter, 1 stone potatoes, 6 lbs. onions, 12 doz. oranges, 1 packet Hudson's extract, 14 2-lb. loaves of bread, 1 gallon tar, and 4 gallons paraffin oil. *N.B.*—We had to renew our supply of oatmeal, sugar, milk, butter, rice, and bread.

Coke.—2 cwts. in 4 bags.

The Scrim.—This was a thin white cloth which we used for lining our sleeping huts; it cost 2d. a yard.

The Furniture.—Four camp beds. These were got from the makers, Hoyland & Smith, Birmingham, and were 6 feet by 2 feet 3 inches, with an iron framework and wire mattress, above which was a thick felt mattress. One coke stove called the “Doctress,” from Smith & Wellstood, Glasgow; one paraffin stove called the “Primus”; one folding-table, and four chairs.

Pots and Pans.—One each, kettle, porridge-pot, goblet, frying-pan, deep-pot and steamer, tea-pot, coffee-pot, milk jug, 6 cups and saucers, 10 plates, 3 trays, 3 basins, 2 pails, and 6 deep-bowls, 6 each knives, forks, and spoons.

Lanterns.—Three paraffin, called Hinks’ “Hurricane.”

Tools.—Spade, hammers, saws, pincers, &c.

Nails.—1 lb. 2½-inch cut nails, 3 lbs. 2-inch cut nails, 1 gross 2¼-inch by 14 screws, 5 lb. clout tacks, hinges for doors, brass hooks, and coils of wire.

With all this baggage, Rennie, Brown, Barrow, and I arrived in Oban on 19th July 1897, and the following morning we steamed northwards in Macbrayne’s steamer “The Gael” for Loch Scavaig. The weather looked very unsettled, and dark rain-clouds hung heavily over the mountains of the mainland as we sailed up the Sound of Mull, and rounded Ardnamurchan Point, but fortunately the sun was shining brightly when we reached Loch Scavaig. From there it is about a quarter of a mile to Loch Coruisk, and two miles more takes one to the head of the loch.

With the assistance of Macrae and two of his mates we made short work of the portorage, but the boat was much too small for our purpose, and it took in all seven journeys to transport the baggage to our camping ground. Before nightfall we had two of our houses erected, and five boat-loads brought up from the foot of the loch, but it was hard work, especially the lumping, and we were tired men when we turned into our comfortable beds that night.

The following two days were spent in putting up the third house, and in getting the camp and ourselves into good working order. We were fortunate in having three perfect days for all this, for it would have been exceedingly uncomfortable, to say the least of it, had we been caught in bad weather before we had got everything ship-shape.

The site of our camp was on the silted-up bed of the river at the head of Loch Coruisk, and was exactly two

miles from the summits of the principal mountains at the head of the corrie. Its situation was a most picturesque one. In front, the loch studded with little islands, stretched away from our doors to the rocky peak of Sgurr na Stri, whose bold outline blocked the horizon to the east; to right and left the south and north shores of the loch rose steep and slabby to the summits of the Druim na Ramh ridge and Sgurr Dubh, while circling at the back of the camp was the great range of the Coolins, with Ghreadaidh in the centre ever grand and majestic. Though picturesque in situation, the site of our camp could hardly be said to be perfect as a peaceful place of residence, for at best the ground was but a bog in wet weather, and the rattle of the wind was at times like the commotion of peas in the mouthpiece of a whistle.

23rd July.—Opened the campaign upon the mountains, for up to that time we had been unable to do more than lift our eyes to their tops, and that only during the too brief intervals of hewing of wood and drawing of water; but now we were at last free to make their closer acquaintance.

The morning was lovely, and the sun shone brightly on the jagged ridges of the Coolins, which were in full view when my fellow-campers started out for their first climb. Alas! an attack of asthma was to keep me at home that day, and with envious eyes I saw them wending their way over the steep brown slabs of Druim na Ramh to the foot of a gully leading to the top of the ridge, and there I lost sight of them. In the afternoon the clouds gathered up and down came the rain. Rennie and Brown turned up about five o'clock in a drouked condition. They had had a pleasant though uneventful day's climb to the top of Bidean Druim na Ramh. Barrow had left them there with the intention of going to Sligachan for letters, and of returning to camp at night-fall. As the evening advanced the storm increased, and Rennie, who had promised to meet Barrow in the punt at the foot of the loch, donned his oilers and went off with a lantern to fulfil his engagement, though both Brown and I had some misgivings about allowing him to brave the elements on such a night. It was now blowing a

gale. The wind got higher and higher with every squall, and buffeted our houses in a most alarming fashion. The rain was now coming down in floods, and the great water-works of the Coolins were beginning to roar. We were thankful when Rennie turned up in safety about midnight. He had seen no signs of Barrow, and we of course thought, seeing the night had turned out so bad, that he had not left Sligachan.

24th July.—The storm had blown itself out, and the mists were gradually lifting from the hills, while we amused ourselves about the camp until the truant should turn up. The whole forenoon passed without any signs of him. At two o'clock we got somewhat anxious, and search parties were organised. Just as these were starting we discovered the culprit limping slowly along the north side of the loch. He had reached Sligachan all right the previous afternoon, but on his later journey he had missed his way in the dark, where the track to Coruisk branches off from the one to Camasunary, and had wandered about all night in the wind and the rain. We soon got him to bed, and after a good night's rest he was, fortunately, none the worse of the exposure.

As the day was now too far spent to do anything on the hills, we devoted what was left of it to fishing, and got a good basket, the largest trout being 2½ lbs.

25th July.—Another night of heavy rain. We had to turn out in the small hours of the morning to deepen the trenches. It rained most of the morning, but in the afternoon it cleared a bit, and Brown and I had a walk and some bouldering round the sides of our back garden—as we called the great green meadow of bog land which extends behind the rocky outlet of the river to the base of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh.

26th July.—Last night we had a renewal of the storm even worse than we had had it before. We slept this night with most of our clothes on, and our boots within easy reach, for the alarming manner in which the strong timbers of our houses creaked and groaned made it appear probable that they might be wrecked at any moment. The howling of the wind and the noise of many waters was



THE CAMP, CORUISK

terrific, and we realised what it means to hear "Corricken roar" in a manner I am sure the poetic author of the line had no experience of. All night the rain came down in torrents, and the river, to add to the terrors of the situation, ran racing past in flood within a few paces of our camp. The smooth slabby sides of Sgurr Dubh were literally converted into one vast water-slide, and the water came pouring over them in cascades, which threatened to flood us out of house and home. About four in the morning I got into oil-skins and took a turn round the camp. Oh! what a sight was there. The whole air was filled with driving sheets of spindrift, which the wind was lifting from the loch and carrying over our houses in clouds of spray. The waterfalls that were thundering down their floods on all sides were being partially swept away in showers of spray, and it was only with difficulty that I could stand against the gale. The roar of the winds and waters was deafening, and high up in the corries I could hear the storm-fiends shouting and howling among the peaks.

Our boat, the object for which I had turned out, was cut off from us, lying in the middle of the river, but moored to what was now an island with a foaming torrent roaring past on each side of it. All day long it continued very wild and stormy, and we stopped indoors most of the day. One unpleasant result of the gale was that the rising loch had stolen a bag of our coke, some onions, and a drum of tar, which we had inadvertently left at the water's edge. We were rather unfortunate with our coke, for a yacht ran off with a portion of our second supply.

Tuesday, 27th July.—Rain, rain, rain! Pouring all day. Rennie and Barrow went down the loch to meet the steamer. Some misunderstanding with the man in Oban. Result—no fresh provisions!

28th July.—Thank goodness we had a quiet night at last, and were off by 11.30 for Collie's climb on Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh. Aided by the description on page 203 of Vol. IV., we, I think, hit off his route fairly well. Hardly had we touched the rocks when down came the rain again. However, when once one is thoroughly wet on a warm day, all discomfort vanishes so long as he keeps moving,

and we had a delightful climb, though not quite so difficult as we anticipated. There is, however, a rather sensational traverse in gaining the crest of the upper buttress, the route leading up loose and shattered ledges on the Coireachan Ruadha face on which the rock is not reliable gabbro, but a most treacherous form of trap. On reaching the top we followed the ridge southwards, and in the thick mist made several attempts to get down the sides before we found an easy route that would go.

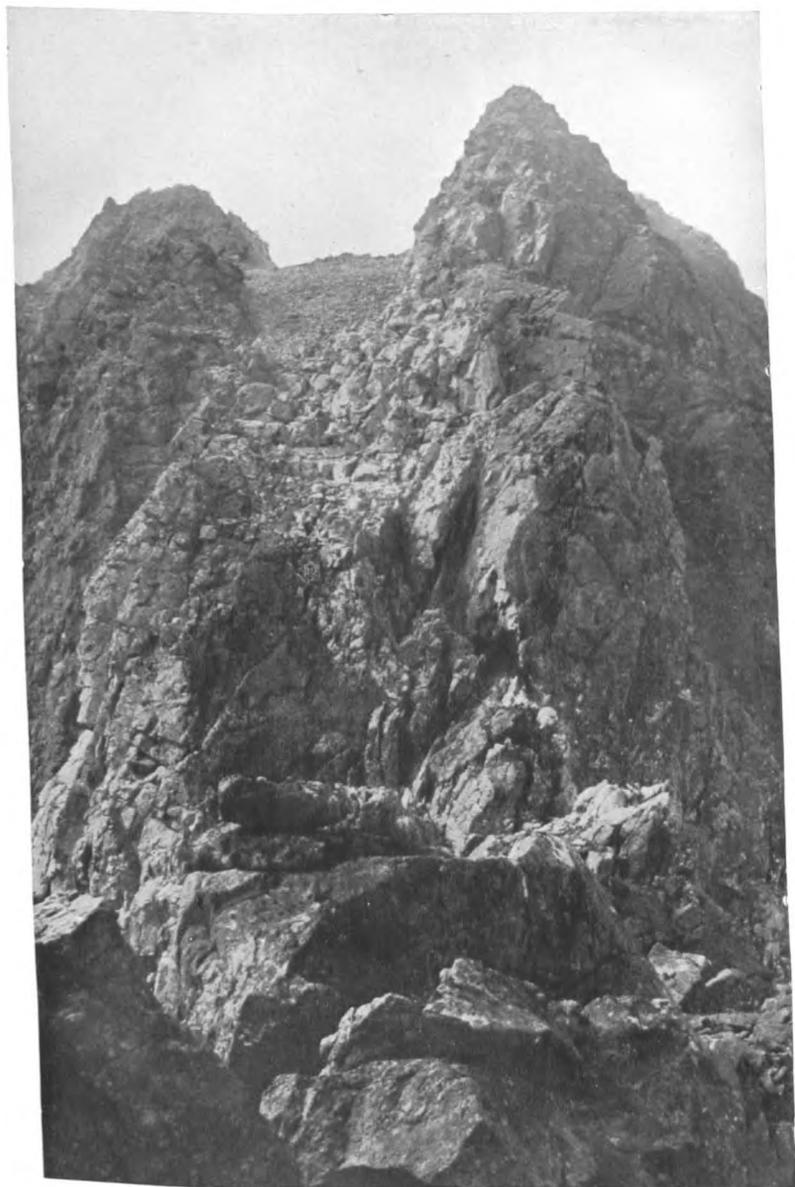
It had been raining all day, and when we reached our "back garden," we found the river had again grown to gigantic proportions, but choosing a place where in this flat boggy ground it had split itself up into several water channels, we managed to ford it bit by bit, though in places the strength of the current almost carried us off our feet.

29th July.—We had another stormy night of wind and rain. Brown and Barrow went off to Sligachan for letters in the afternoon and stayed there all night.

30th July.—Last night we experienced the heaviest gale we had yet had. The violence of the wind was tremendous. When I went out after one of the worst squalls I found that our boat had been lifted clean away from the place we had left it, and was lying upside down on the beach. Fortunately no damage was done to it. It cleared up towards mid-day, and Rennie and I occupied ourselves drying the accumulation of wet clothes. In the afternoon he and I had a grand scramble up the slabs of Sgurr Dubh, enjoying to the full some splendid mist effects as the storm clouds slowly dragged themselves away from the sides of the hills. In the evening we rowed down the loch to meet Macrae in answer to his beacon fire, and found he had brought us some fine big lythe and a couple of dozen of fresh eggs, a most welcome addition to our larder. Brown and Barrow turned up at dusk, having had a splendid climb on the Bhasteir face of the fourth pinnacle of Sgurr nan Gillean.

31st July.—A grand hot day, but most enervating. We had no energy to do more than move about, but enjoyed doing that thoroughly.

1st August.—A misty morning, and still very sultry.



SGURR ALASDAIR FROM THE SOUTH.

We made an effort to exert ourselves, and started off for Sgurr Dearg. The awful screees of Coireachan Ruadha were a terrible grind on such a hot day, and we toiled over them but slowly. The mists would not lift, and as we could make nothing of the face of Sgurr Dearg without a clear view, we, after trying several leads that would not go, skirted round the base of the cliffs till we got to the Alasdair-Dubh col. It was now fairly late, but we all descended into "the gap." The long side, however, looked as if it would take too much time to accomplish, so we left it for another day. The thunder was now rolling among the hills, and a lurid light was in the sky, so we rattled down the screees, crossed Coir' an Lochain, and got back to camp before the storm burst.

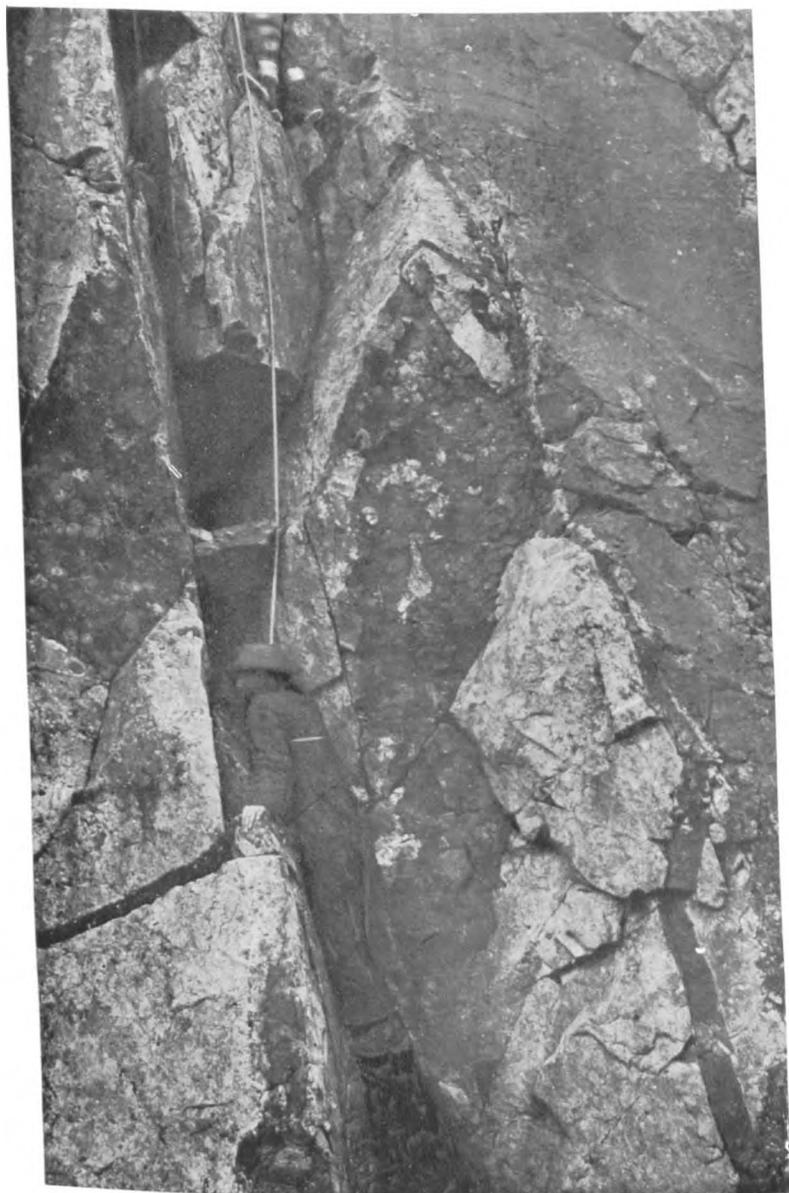
2nd August.—At last the weather looks better and the morning is fine, with every promise of a clear day, but still the air is very sultry. Alasdair-Dubh gap was to be the order of the day, and we started soon after breakfast, heavily laden with all our cameras—whole-plate, half-plate, and quarter-plate. The passage of this gap is reckoned the most difficult bit of climbing on any part of the Coolin ridge, and as it is as well to take advantage of such hitches for the rope as may be obtained, we took, besides our cameras, an eighty, a sixty, and a spare rope for these impedimenta. All this baggage was an immense nuisance, and we vowed, before the day was over, that such a load of cameras would never accompany us again on a climbing expedition. After getting to the ridge between Sgurr Dubh and Sgurr Alasdair, we followed it north-westwards till we came to the pinnacle. The face of this is very rotten, and the greatest of care had to be exercised so as not to dislodge stones on the heads of those below. We easily managed the short side of the gap with a hitched rope, and the bottom pitch of the other was climbed by throwing a rope up to the hitch above it. Brown led here, and soon had all of us up beside him. After that Alasdair and Tearlach were bagged, and we spent some time admiring the face of Sgurr Mhic Coinnich from above the col. This we also thought of trying, but at first not hitting off the right way down, we had to give it up for want of time, and

hurried down by Coir' an Lochain to camp. This was the most delightful day on the hills that we yet had, and had it not been for our burdens, it would have been one of unalloyed joy. We cached our cameras beside the lochan, and glad indeed we were to get rid of them.

Tuesday, 3rd August.—The thunderstorm of two days ago had not yet cleared the air, and it was still hot and sultry. This being Tuesday, we made a pilgrimage to the foot of the loch to meet the weekly steamer. The tourists came off in hundreds and spread themselves over the adjacent country in no time. The purser had his work cut out for him in collecting them together again before the steamer sailed. We got our bread this time, and now we were in clover again. Soon the steamer sailed, and we were left for another week in solitary possession of the whole district of Coruisk. This was Barrow's last day, and after he had stowed his traps on board the steamer, he marched off to Sligachan.

4th August.—Still sultry. Brown and Rennie climbed Sgurr Dearg. Their route was under the north cliffs of Sgurr a' Coir' an Lochain, across Coireachan Ruadha to within 300 feet of the col between Dearg and Mhic Coinnich, thence westwards by a ledge, and reached the ridge between the nameless peak and the pinnacle. The Inaccessible was traversed, and they returned to camp by the Bealach Coire na Banachdich.

5th August.—Still sultry. Rennie and I made an effort to exert ourselves in spite of the oppressive conditions of the atmosphere. We struggled up to Coir' an Lochain to recover our cameras which we had left there on the 2nd. As we reached them the thunderstorm, which had been brewing for the last few days, burst with great force. We rushed for a little cave which gave us shelter till the worst was over. It was a grand sight. Perched as we were some 2,000 feet above our camp, and surrounded by the grandest peaks in Skye, we felt the sublimity of the storm to the full. The thunder rattled and roared louder and more continuously than I had ever heard it before, and the lightning flashes were of the most startling and vivid character. Then the rain descended in sheets, and infant



THE MIDDLE PITCH ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE ALASDAIR-DUBH GAP.

streams were born in a second to grow to great rivers before they reached the valley below. The wind, too, came in sudden and cold gusts, sweeping the rain from off the rocks in clouds of spray. This display lasted for near an hour, and then the storm gradually died away. I shall never forget the clearing of that storm. There are pictures in the heavens that far surpass those of the earth. The mists were of all degrees of density, and great banks were piled up, twisted, and rolled into each other in marvellous confusion, while the sun, struggling through here and there, lighted some up and left others in inky blackness. The ragged edge of the Coolins was peeping through in places, and the whole made as grand a scene as I have ever witnessed.

6th August.—The air was much more bracing this morning, and oh, joy! we were able at last to breathe freely and walk with a pleasure we had not yet experienced. Some days previously we had reconnoitred a fine climb on the face of the highest peak of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh, above Coire an Uaigneis. Not a long climb—perhaps 800 feet in all—but it looked very steep. We took the easiest way into the corrie, and then tackled the rocks. Brown, who was leading, took us up splendidly. Any one looking at Mhadaidh from Coruisk will see a V-shaped buttress of rock running into the scree-slope above Coire and Uaigneis, with a gully cutting it into two. We got on to the rocks at their lowest point, and, with the gully on our right, kept a straight line for the top. It made a capital climb up continuously steep rock, but without any really exceedingly difficult pitches in it. On getting to the top we ridge-wandered over the other four peaks to the Bealach na Glaic Moire, and in doing so got some excellent scrambling. The steep places are all on the S.W. sides of the tops. On the south face of the third there is a pretty bit of climbing in a shallow gully, and on the second there is a fairly difficult bit to be passed where a pillar of gabbro leaning against the cliff face has to be climbed. But, oh! these scree-slopes of Skye. The Coruisk side of the Bealach na Glaic Moire gives as fair a sample of their ankle-twisting powers as can be got.

7th August.—Brown after breakfast starts off to Sligachan for letters. He returned the same evening much disgusted with the length and monotony of the tramp. R. and I had enjoyed the solitude of the camp, fishing, cooking, and loafing being the order of the day.

8th August.—A most glorious morning. Every line and crack on the mountain faces were clearly defined. Several photographs were taken before breakfast, and we hurried through that meal with a rapidity never seen before. Away we went for old Coireachan Ruadha to have a shot at one of the Banachdich faces. Several leads were tried, but they would not go. We reached the ridge by a scree-gully, and spent a long and delightful day in walking from one end of Banachdich to the other, and descended at dusk by Bealach Coire na Banachdich.

9th August.—As we had been busy taking aneroid heights of the hills, we thought we might as well know the depth of the loch, and for this purpose we spent most of the forenoon in rigging up a sounding line. As soon as it was ready down came the rain, and it poured all afternoon. In the evening it cleared up, and we took some half-a-dozen soundings along a line drawn down the centre of the loch. The greatest depth we found was only 96 feet.

10th August.—Tuesday again. After meeting the steamer we ascended Sgurr na Stri for the view. This point is, I think, the best place on the island to get a really picturesque and comprehensive idea of the Coolins.

11th August.—Rain all forenoon! We spent the day in risking the "dangers of the bad-step," and in getting some dairy produce from the farm at Camasunary.

12th August.—This is Brown's last day, and we resolved to "bag" a lot of peaks instead of trying new climbs. The morning was fine, though mist was low down on the hill-sides. We made for us an early start, and were off by 8.30. We were on the top of Bidean by eleven. The traverse of the peaks of Bidean took some time, but we reached Bruach na Frithe *via* the Castles by 1.30 to 2. Climbed the Tooth and Bhasteir in the usual way, and parted with Brown at the Policeman. He, dropping down

on Sligachan, left Rennie and me to return to camp *via* Sgurr nan Gillean and Druim na Ramh.

When we got back we were delighted to find a new addition to our party in Raeburn, who had come over from Sligachan to pay us a short visit. We arranged great climbs for the morrow, but—

13th August.—Rain! rain! rain! Real Skye rain and no mistake, and all the water-works of the Coolins were going at high pressure. It continued like this all day. By the afternoon our visitor had enough of it, and we accompanied him for a mile or so on his way to Corrie na Crieche and Sligachan. On our return to camp we found that the loch had raised its level by nearly three feet.

14th August.—The storm still continues. Rain and wind all day. In the afternoon we got into oilers and had a saunter to Scavaig for exercise.

15th August.—Raining still. Another short walk in the afternoon was all we cared for. In the evening Raeburn came over from Sligachan again.

16th August.—No doubt in honour of our guest we had a tremendous gale last night. It was the worst we had yet had, and although we were somewhat used to storms by this time, I really thought the huts must come down, but they rode out the squalls splendidly. The morning looked somewhat promising, and the wind had gone down a little. We started for the Alasdair-Dubh gap. Soon the weather was as bad as ever, and on the ridge the driving mist and rain made it frantically unpleasant. I waited in shelter on the near side of the gap while the two R.'s raced across, bagged Tearlach, and came back at full speed. They took only an hour and a half to the double journey.

Tuesday, 17th August.—If the gale of the 16th was bad, that of last night was infinitely worse. None of us got much sleep. It still continued roaring all day, and we thought of our provisions on board the weekly steamer. It of course could not put into Scavaig on such a day, and we had to look forward to the pleasure of living on the scraps of our outfit for a whole week. Our guest by this time had had enough of camp life in such weather, and left us in the afternoon for the flesh-pots of Sligachan.

18th August.—The gale blew itself out in the small hours of the morning. We climbed Sgurr na Stri with our big cameras, but alas! the mist came down and kept the tops of the hills lightly covered, so that we could not get the view. We waited for three hours on the top in the hopes of its clearing, but without avail.

19th August.—We spent this day in Coir Uisg with the cameras, but the mist again baffled our efforts to get good pictures.

20th August.—Rain all day! We had arranged to meet Raeburn on Blaven to climb Clach Glas together. As that was now out of the question, we spent the day in fishing.

21st August.—The beginning of the end! We took a boat-load of stuff down the loch, and in the afternoon climbed Gars-bheinn, and had a splendid view all round.

22nd August.—We made a fairly early start this morning, and took another load down the loch where we left the boat. We then crossed the hill to Camasunary with the intention of climbing Blaven and Clach Glas, but the weather was again against us. Down the rain came, and when we got to Camasunary we saw that Clach Glas, in any comfort, was not for us to-day. We therefore cached our rope and cameras at the foot of Blaven, and raced up and down that mountain in double quick time (less than three hours up and down from Camasunary). We were back in camp again by four o'clock.

23rd August.—A most glorious day, which had unfortunately to be spent in packing and in transporting down the loch as much baggage as we could spare.

24th August.—This is our last day in camp. We were up as soon as it was light, and got the last of our property packed, and two more trips down the loch finished our work.

In reading over this record of our daily doings there appears to be an undue proportion of "weather," and too little "climbing" recorded, but no doubt "weather" always impresses one more when camping out than at any other time. We were not singular, however, in having a rough time from storms of wind and rain. Accounts reached us from Sligachan that the river there had one day been higher

than the oldest inhabitant had ever seen it before. Sgurr nan Gillean was struck by lightning, and the topmost slab split in two, and fragments of it, whitened and charred, were scattered right and left. In the south-west corner of the island, one poor man, as we afterwards saw from the papers, was struck dead in the same storm.

But the sultry weather of the first fortnight was, I think, even more trying than the actual storms which came later. Its relaxing effect was very great, and at times it was only with an effort that we could rouse ourselves to do anything. But notwithstanding all the discomforts of "weather," the camp life was most thoroughly enjoyed by all of us, not a single hour of the time hung heavily upon our hands, and we were in perfect health the whole time.

There is one thing, however, that we would have liked to have done before leaving, and that was to remove all traces of our residence, but alas! the most willing flesh is weak, and when we had wrecked one house we found our time would not permit us to do more before the steamer sailed. The doors of the other two huts were therefore left open, in the hope that the next gale from the south-west would carry them clean away, and obliterate all traces of the Climbers' Camp at Coruisk.

NOTE I.

The magnetic qualities of the Coolin rocks are well known, but I do not remember having seen any notes on the subject from a climber's point of view. Here are two sets I took on 8th August 1897, showing as much as 57 degrees difference of bearing of a distant point from stations not ten paces apart on the flat.

SGURR NAN GILLEAN—PRISMATIC COMPASS BEARINGS.

- A1. From a point 10 paces North of S. na Banachdich cairn, 63 degrees.
A2. Do. do. South do. 69½ do.

Bearings taken standing, compass in hand. These points are pretty much on the ridge.

BOLSTER STONE ON INACCESSIBLE, BEARINGS.

- B1. From a point 5 paces East of S. na Banachdich cairn, first reading, 218 degrees ; second reading, 215 degrees.
 B2. From a point 5 paces West of S. na Banachdich cairn, 161 degrees.

Bearings taken sitting, compass in hand. These points are off the ridge.

J. RENNIE.

 NOTE II.

STONEFALLS, *24th July and 10th August 1897.*—Two of these were seen within five weeks, when camping in Skye in July and August last. They both took place in the daytime, about noon, after heavy and continuous rain. The first descended a gully on the Druim nan Ramh ridge towards Loch Coruisk. This gully comes down nearly to the water of the loch, about five hundred yards from our camp at the head of the loch. My attention was drawn to it by a noise like thunder. Looking up, I saw a small mist-like cloud rapidly descending the hillside. In front of, and above this cloud, huge rocks played about. The point of departure was hidden in rain and mist, and the stopping point cut off by a low-lying spur, so that it is impossible for me to estimate the length of fall, or the amount it was spread out, as I saw it *en profile*. Nearly a month later I had a good chance of seeing a stonefall *en face*. I was cooking in the hut, and again I heard a noise like thunder. Rushing out, I saw a misty cloud descending from the top of the corrie, between Sgurr Dubh Mhor and Sgurr Dubh Bheag. Beginning quite narrow, the front of the fall spread out in a fan-like shape to a breadth I estimated at 150 to 180 yards, with a perpendicular fall of 700 or 800 feet. At some points it seemed to sweep the whole of the Sgurr Dubh Mhor side of the corrie.

J. RENNIE.

CLIMBING CONSIDERED IN ITS PHYSIO-
LOGICAL ASPECTS.

II.

BY A. ERNEST MAYLARD, B.S.

IN a previous number of the Club Journal I sought to show how it was possible to explain physiologically many of the salutary effects produced by a climb. Those who found any interest in the perusal of that article will remember that I attributed the beneficial results attained very largely to the purity of the mountain atmosphere, and to the free circulation through the body of this food-producing medium brought about by the comparatively excessive and exaggerated exercise indulged in. But while it was shown that the free and active circulation of the blood through every organ of the body was a most, if not the most, important factor in recuperating and invigorating these parts, it was also indicated that the influences exerted by the nervous system on the same organs probably produced an effect quite appreciable in its results, although not so easy of explanation. I propose in this short article to deal with this latter aspect of the subject, and, if possible, add yet another reason to those already given for the pleasure and health-giving profits which belong to the pursuit of mountaineering.

Independently of the beneficial effects produced upon the brain by the circulation through it of richly aerated blood, effects which are general in their action, there are probably local influences at work invoked by the stimulation of other receptive and distributive agents. Thus the brain is affected by the eye, the ear, and the nose, or in other words by what we see, hear, and smell. But more than by all these there are impressions of an important psychical character being produced. Changes in thought have peculiarly beneficial effects in giving rest to one part of the brain, while they call forth the exercise of another. Let us, however, take up each of these sources of cerebral stimulation separately, and consider how they play their

respective parts in the rôle of giving health and pleasure to the climber.

First, then, as regards the eye. It is more than probable that the actual sight is improved, for we know that perfect vision depends not only upon the presence of a retina and refracting media, but upon the power of proper accommodation. Thus a man in his office constantly writing or reading has to adjust his vision for near objects, that is to say, he has to exercise certain small muscles and ligaments within the eyeball. Immediately he looks at anything beyond, say a foot in distance from his eyes, these small muscles relax, and there is no longer any muscular or ligamentous strain within the eyeball. Now a man who is climbing the whole day has his eyes fixed on more or less distant objects, so that hours of complete rest are afforded the ocular muscles, both those within and those without the eyeball. Of course, so far as the particular effect is concerned, all out-of-door pursuits produce a similar result. But when we come to consider the more purely visual effects of light, colour, form, size, and distance we are dealing with factors which are in some respects more peculiar to mountaineering than to the pursuit of other pastimes, and which produce results proportionate to their appreciation. Thus the greater the pleasure experienced in viewing the scenes presented to the eye—whether these be of the nature of grandeur of mountain magnitude, or of contour, or of colouring—so much the more intense must be the general effect produced, directly upon the brain, indirectly through the brain upon every organ and tissue influenced by it. In illustration of the powerful impressions produced through the eye upon the brain, I need only recall to the climber's mind the inexpressible pleasure and all-absorbing effect invoked by the first faint rays of early dawn as they strike the snow-clad slopes of some mighty Alp, a sense which only becomes intensified by the gradual merging of the soft mellow tints of daybreak into the warmer glows and richly golden hues of sunrise. Or again, the unalloyed feelings of delight awakened in his soul as he gazes from the hut through an atmosphere that almost sparkles, upon a deep blue cloudless sky bejewelled with

stars that glitter like diamonds of the first water. Is there any other pursuit where the eye conveys to the brain impressions so keenly pleasurable, so completely enthralling, so abstracting that the mind can dwell on nothing in the past, nothing in the future, but all in the present.

Now with respect to the ear. We may in the first instance, as in the case of the eye, consider the local effects upon the organ itself. Here also we have, besides the Organ of Corti—the particular part which has to do with the reception of sound, and the analogue of the retina in the eye—the muscular apparatus for regulating and preparing the drum of the ear for the reception of loud or penetrating noises. It is probable that in the life most of us lead in busy towns this function of our oral apparatus is constantly hard worked ; and although quite inappreciable, the real rest given to the ear by the comparative stillness of what we significantly term mountain solitude, does afford a means for recuperation and repair. Now when we consider the purely sensory effects upon the brain, we find influences capable of being produced, if not of such an intense nature as in the analogous case of the eye, at least of sufficient power to give pleasure. The pleasing effects of sounds are very variable. What may rivet the attention of one will hardly attract the notice of another. To some there is a special pleasure in the modifications which many familiar sounds undergo through the distance which intervenes between the place of production and its receipt. Take, for example, the tinkling of a distant bell, or the far-away rumble of thunder reverberating among the valleys below. To others the sound of a trickling stream or the roar of a mountain torrent, the song of a wild bird, or the cry of some animal, attracts the ear and gratifies. While to others again pleasure is derived from the many happy associations which may be invoked by particular sounds. There is, however, a peculiar source of pleasure which the ear affords, not provoked by sound, but rather by its entire absence. It is impossible not to be impressed by such a novel situation as that which is experienced when not a sound is to be heard. The perfect peace and repose which this purely negative sensation produces is to many a source

of profound mental rest and enjoyment. Here, again, it is almost the exclusive privilege of the mountaineer to be so placed that this delightful sensation may be realised to its full.

All these varied effects have a wholesome and stimulating influence upon the brain, and the general good they are capable of indirectly producing upon all other organs of the body are directly proportionate to the amount of pleasure which each is capable of giving rise to.

As regards the nose, we possess an organ which may be said to subserve a double function. On the one hand it is concerned with respiration, on the other with the sense of smell. If we consider it from the former aspect, its necessarily intimate functional association with the lungs renders it probable that what invigorates and stimulates the one will have a similar effect upon the other. It is certain that quite independently of smell the keen fresh mountain atmosphere does call forth a sense of pleasure as we forcibly inhale it. Who has not experienced the stimulating invigoration felt when, standing on the mountain side, he expands his chest to the utmost, and endeavours to suck into his lungs as copious a draught as possible of air that is to him the very embodiment of purity, sweetness, and freshness? This peculiar sense of pleasure has doubtless a wider source than can be derived solely from the lining membrane of the nose, but there is, nevertheless, an appreciable effect experienced there; and so far it, like the other senses of sight and hearing, may produce a beneficial effect upon the brain. What part the true sense of smell has in our enjoyment it is perhaps a little difficult to say. It cannot be much, and at most must be very limited. To many scents will at no period possess any attraction. There will be some, however, to whom the fragrance which comes from the heather, the bog myrtle, or the bracken will be a real source of pleasure. To such we may assume a certain beneficial effect will be produced; and, as in the case of sight and sound, it will depend chiefly upon the amount of pleasure the sense is capable of calling forth.

Now while it has been shown that the various stimulating effects upon the brain, produced by the pleasurable

emotions evoked through the medium of the special senses, are beneficial in a general way, both to the nervous system and through it to other parts of the body, it must be pointed out that these effects upon the brain have probably a more specific influence. It is sufficiently known how all-important a part the brain, in its more strictly psychical aspect, plays in influencing the healthy functional activity of all organs of the body. An overworked brain, like the overheated bearings of an engine, soon shows its effect by deranging in some way the rest of the machine, and the power it is capable of producing. In the human body one of the first great functions to suffer is that of digestion, and when once that begins to fail nourishment is no longer properly assimilated, and a general breakdown soon follows. So far as our knowledge goes at present, it seems likely from what we have learnt regarding the motor functions of the brain, that like these there are special localities excited by certain mental exercises ; and by exercises I mean that a man in following any particular pursuit probably makes use of some one of those special brain centres. While this particular area or locality is capable of separate usage, it nevertheless possesses connections or associations with the whole brain which renders its action apart from other regions impossible. Hence if this particular area be overwrought or impaired, it soon begins to produce a somewhat similar impairment in the other regions. It must be confessed that much of this reasoning is conjectural, but still there are bases of strong probability about it, both from the known localisation of motor functions, and the fact that it offers the only reasonable explanation of the benefits derived from a change of pursuit which may be even purely mental in character.

We are now in a position to consider wherein lie the benefits of climbing to one whose customary pursuits entail some particular localised mental strain. It may, *in primis*, be stated that the beneficial effects to be derived will depend directly upon the degree of difference which exists between the particular daily use to which the brain is subjected, and the pursuit to which it is purposed it shall be diverted, provided always that this pursuit gives at least

a fair amount, if not a maximum, of pleasure. It will be readily understood that no diversion can be so effectual as that which introduces the element of danger. Not that the danger encountered necessarily involves risk, rather that with the required amount of concentration safety is ensured. It is this very exclusive concentration of the brain upon something new that so completely diverts the thoughts from their accustomed channels, and gives that required rest to the over-exercised region which allows of the needed repair. Of course the diversion brought about by the introduction of the element of danger is met with in other pursuits than that of climbing. Sport in many forms embraces it—horse-racing, hunting, certain kinds of fishing alike afford examples ; but in rock-climbing, traversing, glissading, step-cutting, we have perhaps the required condition best illustrated, because the danger encountered so entirely concerns the individual, it is solely upon himself that the success or failure of his endeavour depends. The truth of what I am stating must, I think, appeal to all active brain workers. Can any man say that that which has engrossed his thoughts perchance by night as by day, still monopolises his attention when he is taking a very ticklish step across an ice slope or upon a steep rock face? It is just this enforced severance of an otherwise almost inseparable association which gives the fatigued brain area its needful rest. It might be nothing short of the consideration that his life was at stake that would enable the climber to break the link in the chain which bound his life-thoughts down to a subject increasingly harmful to his whole life.

This particular aspect of our sport is one which is often lost sight of by those who adversely criticise our pastime, who look upon it as needlessly dangerous; and while failing to appreciate its pleasures, equally disregard its profits. It is, however, a very valuable attribute of our pursuit, and there are very few other pleasures that a man can indulge in where it is possible for the mind to be riveted, it may be for hours, upon lines completely foreign to and far removed from the ruts of daily life. A man may walk, fish, or shoot, play golf, tennis, or cricket, row,

sail, or cycle, and yet not be able for any unbroken length of time to keep his thoughts away from that which he is seeking to free himself, and which is wearing his brain and impairing his health. Let him, however, have from six to eight hours on the slopes of some stiffish mountain peak with precipitous rocks to scale, difficult traverses to negotiate, and dangerous ice-falls to ascend, and then see how little his mind will dwell upon matters which hitherto seemed of transcendent importance. They now sink into insignificance and even absolute oblivion when compared with the danger which awaits him if he fails to devote his undivided attention to what he is about. However deep the depression into which an overwrought brain may be plunged, be it from work, worry, anxiety, or troubles of any kind, there are few who after a day's real hard work on a mountain side, will not realise a nervous rebound that brings with it a feeling of renewed invigoration, preceded it may, and probably will, be by a joyous sense of mental rest and relaxation. Whatever pollutes and stagnates our should-be-natural life of health and happiness on the lower levels upon which we live and labour, there still exists for us in the heights above a passive sense of peace and purity, which calms to rest the most tried and excited brain, and makes life seem after all worth living.

Such, then, are the physical and physiological results of purely psychological causes. The brain receives its rest and repair from the temporary diversion of the usual trains of thought, and it derives wholesome stimulation from the emotional effects conveyed by means of the eye, the ear, and the nose. With the very centre of our machinery and the source of our actions placed in good working order, the remaining part of our economy becomes equally well regulated. The sum total of it all is, expressed in simple language however scientifically explained, that, to those who are able to indulge in the pursuit of climbing, it is the best thing in the world to restore health, give happiness, and fit a man for his daily labour.

A WET DAY IN GLENCOE.

BY HAROLD RAEURN.

NOT that a wet day is anything extraordinary or exceptional in these far western regions, but the 26th of last September was a day of clouds that wept with a force and freedom even exceeding that of the condensed vapours of the "Isle of Mist" itself.

After several postponements, Mr J. S. Napier and I settled upon this date for an attack upon one of the upper buttresses of Bidean nam Bian—now known as the "Church door"—and accordingly, on Saturday, 25th September, transporting ourselves and cycles by the West Highland Railway as far as Bridge of Orchy, we mounted for the twenty-four miles ride to Clachaig.

With a moderate SW. gale blowing, we did not find the long rise above Loch Tulla to the watershed very hard work, though the road was rather patchy in places, and our cycles were well loaded.

After a slight descent to Ba bridge, and a view up into the rocky recesses of the Clachlet, we rose again pretty steeply over a long sloping shoulder of that fine mountain,—the vast expanse of the Moor of Rannoch, studded with lochs and tarns, stretching away to the west. As we breasted the summit, and began the run down to Kingshouse, suddenly came into view the splendid cone-shaped bastion of the Buchaille Etive Mor, like a rocky and huger and steeper Glamaig.

The whole mass of ridges and gullies of the Stob Dearg of Buchaille was well seen, and I was fortunate in my first view, as Mr Napier, who has climbed in these regions several times, remarked he had never before seen the mountain so well.

The rise from Kingshouse to the Glencoe watershed, though not great, we found hard work, for the wind instead of being behind was now ahead, and here the rain, long threatened, came down at last, as it can in Glencoe, in almost solid masses, speedily drenching us to the skin, as we sped down the steep descent of Cona's rapid stream.

The road is not of the best in the upper part of the glen, and I fear that I paid less attention to the magnificence of the scenery than it undoubtedly deserves; but it was impossible to miss, or fail to be impressed by, the stern grandeur of this, perhaps, the wildest of Scottish glens.

The curious vertical cut high up on the face of Aonach Dubh, known as Ossian's Cave, was pointed out by Mr Napier. For scenic effect, however, I have no doubt that the best way to visit Glencoe is from the lower end, the direction in which the tourist coaches run. We reached the hospitable shelter of Clachaig at three, and occupied ourselves during the rest of the day in drying and cleaning up, while the winds blew and the floods descended all night.

When we looked out next morning it was upon a landscape limited by mist and streaming with water. Long white gashes in the great black rocks, shining luridly through the swirling fog, marked the site of every crack and gully, and the demoniac howling of the westerly gale told of plenty more water still to come from the vast reservoirs of the Atlantic. The prospect was of a rough wet day—amply fulfilled. However, we got started at 9.20 (during a momentary lull) for the "Church door." Crossing the Coe, in high flood, by the wooden footbridge near the hotel, we slanted up hill for the mouth of the Bidean corries. The lull in which we started proved very transient, and we had barely "faced the steep" when down came the rain in torrents, speedily penetrating our knickers, and it was not long before the floods falling so copiously on the watershed of our shoulders found their way down the channel of our spines. Despite these little unpleasantnesses we made good progress, reaching the wire fence on the right bank of the Allt a Coire nam Beith at 10.20. We followed this closely till it strikes off on the right towards the great buttress of Stob Coire nam Beith, climbed by Dr Collie's party at Easter 1894. Here we abandoned its guidance, and kept up along the small burn that has its source in an almost microscopic tarn below the upper buttresses. The rain by now, 11 A.M., was less violent, and the mists displayed some tendency to lift, and afforded occasional

glimpses of the great black mass of our objective buttress. There are two well-defined ridges or buttresses, separated by a large gully, at the foot of which stands up a nice little pinnacle, first climbed by Dr Collie's party at Easter 1894. The "Church door" is that on one's right hand on approaching the gully from below, and is the buttress that supports the summit of Bidean. At its foot—in Coire Beith—lie some of the roughest and most unstable screes in the kingdom.

The "Church door," so called from its shape when viewed end on, consists in its lowest portion of a well-defined ridge terminating in a pinnacle, which is cut off from the main rock by a deep cleft, bridged however in several places by large jammed blocks. The lower side of the pinnacle is obviously hopeless. Most of the parties which have attacked this climb have done so from the left (true) side. But the party who had got up by far the highest—Messrs Green, Napier, and Bell—had worked their way up behind the pinnacle by means of the crack from the right-hand side (true), and from thence had ascended the ridge to where it joins on to the face of the upper part of the buttress, being here turned by an awkward sloping shallow chimney, practically destitute of holds. Mr Napier and I were less fortunate than this party, and did not even get so high as they had done. As far as the first platform above the pinnacle the route is fairly easy. Starting from the floor of the big gully, just opposite Collie's pinnacle, it leads by grassy platforms connected by steep little rock pitches to the foot of a vertical chimney leading into the crack before mentioned as cutting through the ridge. At this point any one in possession of a "bow window" may as well turn back, for the accommodation in this crack is limited. Mr Napier, on the former occasion, had essayed it without removing the rucksack he was carrying, and got jammed for some time in a very awkward position in consequence. We were careful this time to remove all impedimenta, and ascended through the crack without difficulty to the platform above the pinnacle. Here comes a very awkward step from a small platform round a corner on the left (true) of the ridge. Below the ridge we

had been sheltered from the wind, but up here we experienced its full effect, now laden with sleet and hail mixed among the rain, and in our soaked condition we speedily became chilled. I must confess to having a preference to keeping a line of retreat open, and this spot would be distinctly bad to repass on a descent should we be turned higher up, so I reluctantly suggested a retreat. Napier concurred, and we gave up the ascent of the "Church door" for this time at any rate.

After the ascent of Dr Collie's pinnacle—quite simple—and lunch taken to a shivering and chattering accompaniment, we ascended Bidean by the big gully, and had a look at the "Church door" from above. The top part does not present any serious difficulty, and both Mr Brown and Mr Bell at different times have descended here a good way; but the junction of the top of the ridge below, with a grassy ledge running across from the right is the crucial difficulty of the climb, and this has hitherto proved insurmountable. Leaving Bidean nam Bean about two o'clock, we proceeded over the summit of Stob Coire an Lochan to the top of Aonach Dubh.

The weather now considerably improved, and the nearer tops and ridges gradually thrust themselves through the encircling folds of vapours, while overhead the sun made gallant and temporarily successful efforts to make his welcome presence seen and felt. The eastern precipices of Stob Coire an Lochan are very fine; one gully in especial is walled in by the most vertical sides that I remember seeing. Somewhat farther down the ridge a curious needle-like pinnacle stands out from one of the faces of these cliffs, and is apparently quite unclimbable. Crossing over the top of Aonach Dubh, we descended on the west of Ossian's Cave to the gully that runs down below it. The whole face of Aonach Dubh is here very much broken up, and hardly presents any definite climb; but the ascent into and descent from Ossian's Cave, although not difficult, is certainly not a walk, and the descent under snow conditions would undoubtedly require great care. The cave itself is hardly a desirable residential anchor-hold for even the hardest of anchorites. It is merely a shallow scoop, with a floor

tilted downwards at an uncomfortable angle ; a most inhospitable cave indeed, telling visitors with the mute eloquence of gravity to "get out." We found the metal box, written of in the Clachaig book, guided thereunto by certain minerals placed in a peculiar and symbolic manner on one of the ledges of the cavern, the meaning whereof to the initiated being, "Cache—seek and ye shall find." Therein did we read the names of certain high-priests of Oromaniacal mysteries, whose handiwork had we likewise observed and profited by on the ascent into the cave. From the cave we made straight down the hill, and got back to Clachaig about six o'clock, the weather having latterly much improved, merely violent squalls of hail and rain at frequent intervals in place of a continuous downpour as in the forenoon.

Next morning we started in the dark, and had a most enjoyable ride to catch the 8.15 A.M. train at the Bridge of Orchy. The storm had blown itself out, and a gentle breeze helped us up the steep ascent of Glencoe. By the time we gained the watershed day was dawning, the air was fresh and clear, and the views we had of the mighty hills that rise around the shores of the Moor of Rannoch, now tinted by the rays of the rising sun, made us regret that we must pass them by and delay not, for time and trains wait for no man, unless indeed he be a Joshua or a railway director. "If yesterday were but to-day!"

A DAY ON CIR MHOR.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

THIS romantic hill has already been so well described by Mr Gilbert Thomson (Vol. III., p. 212) that it needs some confidence to write another paper on the subject. Since his paper, moreover, a number of notes have appeared in the Journal, indicating new routes or variations of old routes, and a *résumé* of these would doubtless be of use in order to present Cir Mhor up to date. In the pages which the Editor has kindly granted me I do not propose to undertake this task, but rather to show what a splendid variety of mountaineering experience is to be met with in the course of a single day's climbing on this mountain, situated as it is within a few hours' journey of the metropolis itself.

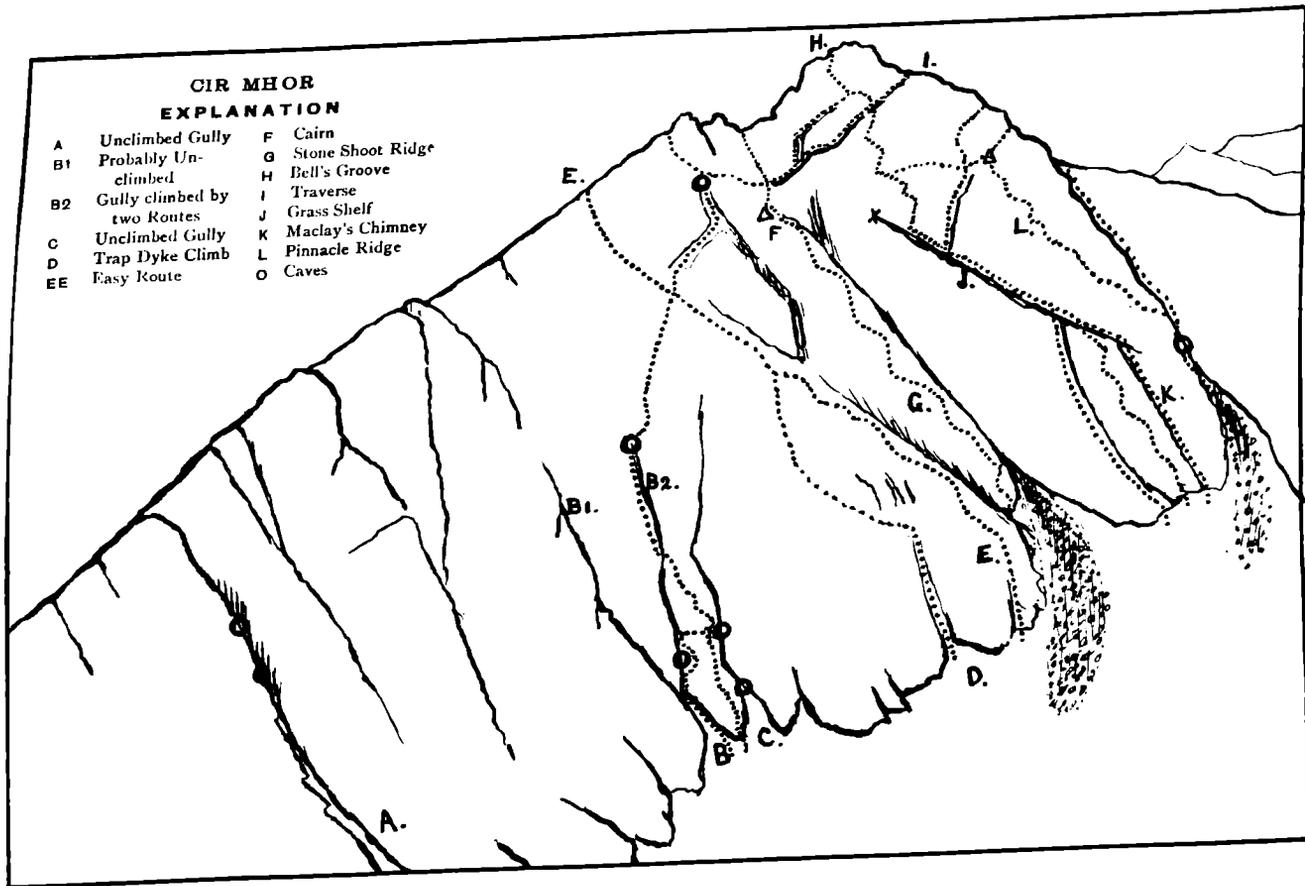
It was on the Edinburgh Autumn Holiday, and I had prevailed on Raeburn to give me a taste of some of the climbs on the great precipice facing Glen Sannox. Taking our way up Glen Rosa from Brodick, the morning mists hung but lightly on the western peaks, and gave us hope for fair conditions. Here and there a clump of heather in bloom reminded us of its August glories, but as a whole, nature had assumed a more sober vestment as befitted the period of the year. The wind, which blew in force from the west, seemed to expend its power aloft, and only fanned us sufficiently to strengthen and invigorate us for our task. The ordinary breakfast hour had not yet arrived when we reached the "Saddle," separating Glens Rosa and Sannox. Though the day was young, we did not yield to the temptation to "bide a wee," but resolutely continued our course, skirting the precipices of Cir Mhor on the left, till we reached the corrie which forms the upper continuation of Glen Sannox. From this point of view the great precipice soars aloft to the very summit itself, and presents a magnificent sight, with its dark gullies, jagged arêtes, and precipitous rock faces. No wonder that former generations deemed the mountain inaccessible from this side, and equally no

wonder that its very difficulties have proved such a stimulus to so many of the S.M.C. Here are to be found easy routes for the staid, or difficulties ranging up to the impossible for the lighter footed of our members, and the charm of first ascents still awaits the explorer. Our route was only partially original, but as it included many of the tit-bits, as well as some new work, and had not a single dull moment, I may be excused for describing it in some detail.

If the reader will refer to the sketch in the Journal, Vol. III., p. 212, he will notice three gullies marked A, B, and C, as routes attempted unsuccessfully. In 1895 (Vol. IV., p. 63), Bell and a party ascended the buttress of rock between B and C gullies, and eventually entered an upper gully terminated by a cave. Bell, standing on Green's shoulders, climbed through a hole in the roof, and then hauled up his companion. We had read this note before we started, but, found it difficult to recognise the details when we reached the rocks. We intended to attack B gully, but had some difficulty in deciding which was this, as the crack to the left of C (Vol. IV., p. 63) seemed to us a distinct gully, for which we suggest the name B2. After ascending B gully, over steep slabs, polished with running water, for about 150 feet, we reached a dark cave with slimy approach up a steep rock face. To the left there seemed a possible though very difficult continuation into the upper portion of B gully. Entering the cave, an opening was visible above, but as water descended plentifully, and the walls afforded few holds, retreat was the order of the day. An awkward traverse to the right engaged our attention, the holds being decidedly treacherous, but after turning the corner we found ourselves in B2 gully, which here narrows to a steep grassy chimney. Ascending this a short distance, we landed above the cave, and looked down the skylight. A glance around showed that probably the water had originally flowed down B2 gully, but had been diverted by the falling of the rocks which formed the cave, and so it eventually found its exit through B gully. Be this as it may, we now climbed some thirty feet above the cave, and

CIR MHOR
EXPLANATION

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| A | Unclimbed Gully | F | Cairn |
| B1 | Probably Unclimbed | G | Stone Shoot Ridge |
| B2 | Gully climbed by two Routes | H | Bell's Groove |
| C | Unclimbed Gully | I | Traverse |
| D | Trap Dyke Climb | J | Grass Shelf |
| EE | Easy Route | K | Maclay's Chimney |
| | | L | Pinnacle Ridge |
| | | O | Caves |



traversed along a steep grass face to the right, and looked into C gully. . From this point the direct ascent of C gully seems hopeless. After this we seem to have struck Bell's route, and had a rather heart-quaking traverse to the left and upwards to where a "moss-fall" has to be crossed. Here a smooth rock buttress has become covered with thick spongy moss, and the passage is somewhat risky owing to the absence of a satisfactory hitch.

This, however, proved sufficient for our little party, and we then found ourselves in a narrow gully, grassy at the bottom, and with vertical cyclopean walls on either side. Progress seemed blocked by a huge rock, which lay right across, and presented a smooth face to us. Some interesting but not difficult sport led us over the shattered rocks intervening, till we came close to our obstacle, when we noticed a narrow opening at the right hand, through which, after a little scrambling, Raeburn disappeared. In answer to his shout, I soon joined him, to find ourselves in a well-formed cave, but which threatened to prove impracticable. The walls form a floor space something like a triangle, of which the acute angle continues to slope upwards, but gradually narrows to a few inches. In the roof is an opening, about eleven feet from the floor, apparently inaccessible to a single-handed climber. This opening at the top is about 4 feet long by 2 feet wide, but lower down it widens till it is about 4 feet across, and it is then a full stretch for a climber using shoulders and toes for support. From no wall can a direct climb be made, and holds are practically absent.

To my surprise, the leader, after pacing about for some minutes like a caged lion, declared his intention of going through the hole, and in due course I beheld him, minus coat and rope, his shoulders pressing one side of the hole, his feet the other side, and so he walked up to the daylight, back downwards and face to the sky. Roped, I endeavoured to follow, but only succeeded in getting one foot and my neck into the hole, which I tenanted for perhaps three minutes, during which time Raeburn gave me excellent advice in a cheering voice. But the laws of gravity and obesity are inexorable, and with a jerk I swung free in the

air, and had my revenge as I was lowered over Raeburn's knee, the only available pulley. Ignominiously I beat a retreat through the entrance door, and made a way up the right-hand wall of the gully.

Joining the cave route (see *S.M. Journal*, Vol. III., p. 214), we successfully negotiated the different tortuous passages of the "Bow-window Cave," and were glad to learn that the "bow-window" regulations allowed us to pass. The name "bow-window" has reference to a narrow inside passage which each traveller has to negotiate in solitude and in darkness. When first discovered only the most attenuated of our climbers were permitted to pass, but with advancing years and a tendency to embonpoint these have at length enlarged the hole so much that it is probable in a few years that even "bow-window" climbers will not be turned back.

Our next object was the "Bell's Groove," a difficulty named after a member of the S.M.C. To gain the foot of this, we passed above the top of the stone shoot ridge, and along a broad grassy ledge to the right, following the variation described by Mr Naismith (Vol. IV., p. 174). The ledge terminates at a corner where a great block leans against the face of the cliff. The route lies in a narrow chimney through the window formed by this block, and is in the line of a trap dyke. At the top are a number of jammed stones which look insecure, but are firm enough. Passing these, we turned an awkward corner, and ascending a steep little grass chimney, found ourselves on the broad platform below "Bell's Groove." A few feet below this a small cairn is seen on the right hand, and serves to assure the traveller that he is on the right path. The "Groove" I can recommend to any one as an excellent test of endurance. As it has only been modestly described by the discoverer (Vol. III., p. 348), I may say that at this point the cliff consists of a series of huge granite slabs, known as boiler plates. These vary in size, from thirty to fifty feet long, and ten to twenty feet wide, and are placed at an acute angle. Being without hand hold, they are absolutely impassable, even with the best hobnailers. Where the slabs join, however, they may either overlap like slates, downwards or upwards, or more usually present a shadowy

ledge on which moss or other growth is found. In the present instance the under slab overlaps the upper, leaving a well-defined groove, polished at the bottom, about two feet deep and eight to ten inches wide, on the right-hand side. Above rises the smooth wall of the upper slab, while the lower slab presents an edge of say eight inches before falling at a steep angle. The whole groove is itself set at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and the distance to be traversed is from thirty to thirty-five feet. Lastly, three small blocks of stone have become jammed in the groove, affording a much-needed resting-place for the panting climber. The ascent on the smooth narrow edge is only accomplished by a sort of caterpillar process, in which not only is the slab grasped by the inside of the knees and thighs, but arms, stomach, and even chin are all needed to make any progress. The most trying part is during the first five feet, before the first block is reached, and should any wag remove this block, the difficulty of ascent will be greatly enhanced. After this our climb was ended, and we negotiated a well-deserved luncheon a little below the summit.

Here it was that Raeburn explained an almost profane remark that he had made to me on a former occasion while endeavouring to ascend the "boiler plates" forming the lower part of the Ben Nuis precipice. The remark was, "I would not trust a climber who had only climbed in Skye." Such a heretical opinion judged ill for his mental condition, and the subsequent statement—"The Skye climbing, as far as my experience goes, is ridiculously easy, with the exception of the gap on the Alasdair Dubh ridge and the lower portions of the rocks near Coruisk"—was not reassuring. At the summit of Cir Mhor, however, under the influence of unlimited tins of mountaineering jam, his spirits rose, and he further explained his position. The whole question hinged on the meaning of the word "difficult." Without attempting to treat the subject exhaustively, I may suggest that the word "difficult" has several significations. Thus a peak is a difficult one in the popular sense if there is no easy or even apparent route to the top, yet, if a guide be forthcoming,

and the route present no gymnastic obstacles, and does not require a steady head, it forthwith ceases to be difficult. Even with climbers the term is used differently. Thus crack climbers, of whom we have a good sprinkling in the Club, would refuse to apply the term to any situation, however steep, and at whatever altitude, which yet afforded them firm rock holds, even of small size. I have noticed that the size of the hold necessary varies proportionally to the age of the climber, and that if he is "sair hauden doon wi' a wife an' bairns" he frequently requires very decent standing places indeed before he pronounces a passage not difficult. Even the crack man no doubt humours the term according as the auditor is another crack man, or a partner in the giddy dance. But, as Horace says, "Tamen amoto quaeramus seria ludo," let us seriously see how this affects the character of Skye climbing. In Skye the climbs look much more difficult and dangerous than they really are, for the angle is as a rule very steep, and gives one the impression of being impossible. Commence climbing, however, and we find the rock rough, hard, and sharp, affording friction grips in plenty. The holds are as a rule plentiful and safe, and numerous chimneys enable one to find a way of escape from nearly every rock face. If the head is not affected by the position, can we really call this difficult climbing? For most beginners it always appears sensational, but familiarity reduces or dispels this feeling, and one can then judge calmly and dispassionately. Now compare this with climbing on Ben Nuis or Cir Mhor. At first sight the lower part of the Ben Nuis precipice seems not forbidding. Great granite slabs at no great angle do not look very formidable, but, as we found to our cost, they are difficult, yes, and dangerous in the extreme, and, despite their mild appearance, will defy the best among us. Why is this? It is because they do not weather in a way which will afford fresh holds, but sullenly and dourly expose a rough but uniform face to the climber. Again, the vegetable growth, which is fairly plentiful, is a constant risk, and woe to him who trusts too freely to it. It is the absence of vegetable matter and the presence of numberless holds that makes climbing in Skye and in the

Tyrol Dolomites a luxury and a delight. No wonder Dr Collie wrote so enthusiastically about the Coolins. But are they the best training ground for the beginner? Are they not apt to lead to over-confidence, and so to land the climber into difficulties when he subsequently transfers his attention to Arran, Lochnagar, or even Ben Nevis? These are questions which I do not answer, but commend for consideration. By the time that we had finished our philosophical confab, a rising wind from the north-west and descending mists had sufficiently lowered our temperature, and we were glad to hurry to the Glen Rosa Pinnacle, on the rocks of which we had been promised good sport. Passing the first little buttress to the west of the top of this pinnacle, we descended a little distance to where an unpromising wall of boulders led down to the left into a steep chimney. Raeburn disappeared over the edge to prospect, and soon a joyous shout was heard from below. Scrambling after him, his voice seemed to issue from the bowels of the earth, and I was in doubt how to proceed, when he explained that the only route was through a narrow aperture below my feet leading through a winding cave. This proved most interesting, and I rejoined him in a small grass recess. From this a rather ticklish slab, with hand holds only, had to be traversed to the left, after which a difficult descent had to be made down a rock face requiring great care. Looking down, we were full of doubt, for below the wall some steep grass led to a corner beyond which we could not see. From the left the great overlapping boiler plates of the Rosa Pinnacle swept down to meet the perpendicular wall of our gully, and led us to fear that we would find the angle too steep for farther progress. After excellent sport, we reached the corner, and found, as we feared, a steep slope covered with green slime in great part, but in any case possessing only the most visionary of holds. Safe hitch there was none, but it seemed possible that a traverse might be made about fifty feet below the corner, along a narrow ledge to the left. To cut a long story short, the writer was lowered on his back over the slime till the whole rope was paid out, and, having untied, was left spread-eagle, still in the same position, till Raeburn

endeavoured to make a safe descent by the rope. It was soon evident, however, that to descend was only to court disaster, and the rope was again lowered and tied on. Turning over on the face, the writer found the ascent of the slope excellent exercise for the nails and finger tips, and to this day his Harris tweed bears testimony to the tinctorial power of the native dyes which poured in a slimy stream down (or up) his sleeves.

The ascent of the rock wall, the traverse along the hand-hold slab, and the tortuous passage through the cave loomed discouragingly before us, but they proved less difficult than was expected, and in due course the gathering night found us at Brodick, which we had left nearly twelve hours before. Having only returned the previous week from a holiday in the neighbourhood of Cortina, the experiences of this delightful day could not fail to raise in my mind comparisons between our Scottish rock climbing and that obtainable in the Dolomite region of the Tyrol. The impression of the visitor who first beholds the stupendous pinnacles of the southern peaks is that their ascent must either be absolutely impossible, or at least so dangerous that none but madmen would attempt it. A closer acquaintance with the rocks soon dispels this idea, for although the angle remains incredibly steep, yet, as in Skye, numerous chimneys afford excellent holds, and most of the peaks are attainable by routes which will present no serious difficulties to those accustomed to Scottish climbing. One might even go further, and say that a holiday spent on our own Scottish mountains may prove a much more severe test of a climber's ability than the ascent of many of the renowned Dolomite peaks. The absence of guides, the more polished nature of our rocks, the more severe climatic conditions, the frequently fatiguing distances that have to be covered in reaching the climbing ground, call forth reliance, discretion, and endurance to a greater degree than guided ascents in the favoured regions of the Tyrol.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the St Enoch's Hotel, Glasgow, on Friday, the 10th December 1897, at six o'clock. The President, Mr H. T. Munro, was in the chair.

The Honorary Treasurer submitted his accounts for 1897, showing that the Income amounted to £85. 7s. 1d., and the Expenditure to £57. 6s. 8d., leaving a balance of £127. 19s. 10d., as compared with £99. 19s. 5d. at the corresponding date last year. Of this balance, a sum of £100 had been lent to the County Council of Lanarkshire, at a minimum rate of interest of 2½ per cent. The accounts and statement were unanimously approved.

In room of Mr Munro, whose term of office now expired, Mr R. A. Robertson was elected President. Mr A. E. Maylard was elected Vice-President in succession to Mr Robertson; and Professor Norman Collie, Messrs Munro and Walter A. Smith, were elected Members of Committee, in room of Mr Maylard, and of Messrs Maclay and Rennie, whose term of office now expired. The other Office-bearers were re-elected.

The Honorary Secretary reported, in terms of Rule XVI., that at the recent ballot the following new members were elected:—Harrison Barrow, Edred Moss Corner, Thomas Gibson, James Gall Inglis, Rev. James Miller, Harry Squance, Alfred Williams, and Claude Wilson. He further reported that the membership at the beginning of the year was 139, of whom 2 had resigned, and 3 had lapsed through non-payment of subscription, leaving 134. The addition of 8 new members made the membership at present 142. During the year the Club had lost one of its honorary members by the death of Professor Forster-Heddle.

The following donations to the Library were reported:—Weston's "Japanese Alps," from Mr Horace Walker; "Scenery of Switzerland," from Mr F. C. Squance; "Year-book of the Norwegian Turistforening," for seven years, from Messrs Maclay and Naismith; and a set of twenty-four framed photogravures of Swiss guides, &c. (from "Pioneers of the Alps"), from Mr J. H. Cunningham. The Secretary

was instructed to minute the thanks of the Club to these gentlemen.

As the number of complete sets of the *Journal* was now very limited, it was resolved that from 1st February next, the present arrangement for their sale should be superseded by the following :—The first three volumes to be sold at £5. 5s. per set, any surplus of the third volume being sold at £1. 1s.

The Honorary Editor reported the continued progress of the *Journal*, and asked members to assist in maintaining its character. Mr Lamond Howie drew attention to the illustrations, which were a strong feature in it, and suggested that the Committee might wisely sanction further expenditure in this direction.

The following places were selected for Club Meets :—

New Year.—Fort-William.

Easter.—Ballachulish.

Dr Inglis Clark suggested that occasional social meetings (at which papers might be read) might be held in Glasgow or Edinburgh, say three or four times a year. The matter was left in the hands of the Committee.

After some discussion, the meeting decided to alter Rule XI. so as to read—

“The Annual General Meeting for the election of Office-bearers and the transaction of other business connected with the Club shall be held alternately in Edinburgh and Glasgow on the first Friday of December.”

THE NINTH ANNUAL DINNER was held immediately after the meeting, when thirty-five members and four guests were present. The toasts were :—

The Queen	-	-	-	-	President.
The Navy, Army, and Reserve Forces	-				President.
The Scottish Mountaineering Club	-				President.
Kindred Societies	-	-	-	-	Prof. G. A. Smith.

Reply—C. Pilkington.

The New President	-	-	-	-	W. Brunskill.
The Guests	-	-	-	-	J. S. Napier.

Reply—Prof. R. Lodge.

EXCURSIONS.

THE S.M.C. ABROAD IN 1897.

MR WALTER BARROW was at Moos Bad, among the Sexten Dolomites, and was charmed with the scenery of the Fischeleinthal. His climbs included the Dreischüsterspitze, Einser Zwölfer, Elfer and Hochbrunnenschneide. Mrs Barrow took part in the last-named expedition.

MESSRS H. C. BOWEN and C. W. PATCHELL were climbing during August and the first half of September in the Oberland and Valais Alps without guides. They ascended the Blümlisalphorn and Balmhorn from Kandersteg, crossed over to Ried by the Lötschen Pass, and from Ried to Visp by the Baltschiederjoch. At Arolla they climbed the Petite Dent de Veisivi by the arête, and the Pigne d'Arolla. Crossing from Ferpècle to Zinal by the Col du Grand Cornier, they climbed from the latter place the Pointe de Zinal, the traverse of Les Diablons, Lo Besso, and the Bieshorn. The weather was always catchy and uncertain, and after the beginning of September it became almost hopeless.

The Rev. COLIN CAMPBELL, D.D., had a good season, and accomplished the following ascents :—Scesa Plana (9738 ft.) from Sceives. Küblis to Schruns, by Gruben Pass. Patenen to Ardetz, by Vermunt Pass and Gletscher. The Weisskugel (12,272 ft.) from Graun, *up* the steep E. face, all ice, (*see* Conway's "Alps from End to End"), crossed Piz Languard from Pontresina into the Val del Fain by Fuorcla da Prünas, and Diavolezza Tour (both guideless). Piz Kesch (11,228 ft.) from Bergün. Grande Dent de Veisivi (from Arolla side). Dolin (9764 ft.) guideless.

DR INGLIS CLARK accomplished the following fine Dolomite climbs :—Spitzkofel (Lienz Dolomites), Dreischüsterspitze, Zwölferkofel, Kleine Zinne, Monte Cristallo (from Schluderbach), Croda da Lago (by both routes), Cinque Torre (with Mrs Clark, a guideless ascent). Several other peaks ascended—70,000 ft. of actual climbing in all.

DR NORMAN COLLIE spent August and part of September with a party of mountain explorers among the Canadian Rockies. Among completed ascents were the following peaks :—Mount Lefroy (11,400 ft.), Mount Victoria (11,500 ft.), Mount Aberdeen (11,100 ft.), and Mount Sarbach (11,100 ft.). A sudden break in the weather prevented the ascent of a group of loftier summits W. of Mount Sarbach, some of them between 14,000 and 15,000 ft. A large ice-field ("Fresh-field Glacier") was discovered by the party.

DR JOSEPH COLLIER was at Arolla, whence he ascended the Pigne d'Arolla, "Satarna Needle," and Petite Dent de Veisivi, and traversed the Za and the Aiguilles Rouges, all guideless.

MR E. ALEISTER CROWLEY ascended the Pic Coolidge, and crossed the Brèche de la Meije in the Dauphiné, and afterwards proceeding to Arolla, traversed without guides the Aig. de la Za (descending the rock face) and Mont Collon (by N.N.E. arête, descent by W. face).

Mr G. B. GIBBS was in Sweden, in the province of Jemtland, and ascended two mountains, viz. Areskutan (about 5,000 ft.), and Storsyl, the highest point of the Sylfjellet range (first ascent by an Englishman). Mr Gibbs speaks highly of the Swedish Climbing Club and of their excellent huts.

Mr W. WICKHAM KING traversed the Grépon, Mont Collon, and the Aiguilles Rouges, and crossed the Col des Maisons Blanches and the Col de Scilon. Broken weather prevailed while he was in the Alps.

MR HOWARD PRIESTMAN spent some weeks in the Lofoden Islands (with Mr Geoffrey Hastings and another friend), and made the following ascents among the wild peaks on the west side of the far-famed Raftsund, viz., the Troid Sadel (3,261 ft.), Store Troidtind (3,432 ft.), and Isvandtind (3,061 ft.), all from a camp on the lonely Troid Fjord; eastern peak of the Blaafield (3,200 ft.), from a camp on the Grund Fjord; and the Langstrandtind (3,160 ft.), and Svart-sundtind (1,054 ft.), from Digermulen by boat. With the exception of the Store Troidtind (ascended by Miss Jeffrey, of London, and a Trondhjem gentleman in 1890), all of these climbs are believed to be first ascents.

MR DRUMMOND was climbing at Courmeyer, Prof. Kennedy was at Breuil, Mr R. A. Robertson at Montanvert, and Mr Squance at Saas Fee.

The weather prevailing in the Alps last summer was uniformly bad—almost as bad as the previous year—and greatly interfered with climbing.

GLENCOE.—While spending a few days at Clachaig this past September, I was fortunate in getting weather very different from the usual Glencoe order. My very first day on Bidean, ascending by the gully behind Collie's pinnacle, gave a view almost perfect, the Coolins were exceptionally clear, as were also the hills in South Uist and Barra, fully ninety-five miles distant. Another magnificent day was spent on Buchaille Etive Mor. Leaving the road six miles from Clachaig, the cairn was easily reached in an hour by the mouth of Corrie Tulachan, and then taking a straight line for the top. The walk along the ridge to the Dalness summit occupied about 1½ hours, and thence by a steepish descent to the Larig Ghartain the path through the Larig Eilde was soon reached.—A. W. RUSSELL.

BEINN BHEITHIR, the Sgor Dhearg summit of which was explored, so far as mist would allow, one very stormy day. Apart from the main ridge running west to Sgor Dhonuill, which occasions a descent of several hundred feet, and the whole south face of which is

a rough steep scree slope, there are four other ridges connected with Sgor Dhearg. Of these the most westerly is a long prominent ridge running due north from the Sgor Dhearg cairn, but affording no climb. Of the other three ridges, which belong rather to a subsidiary summit with a cairn situated about half a mile farther east, and just over 3,000 feet, that to the south appeared much broken up, but might give a climb; that to the north circles round towards Ballachulish village, and is merely a walk; the third, however, runs east, and is both steeper and narrower,—the rock on this ridge is mainly loose shale, but owing to the dip being from S. to N., *i.e.*, across the ridge, ledges can always be found round the south side. There is, however, only one really steep pitch, but of no great height.—A. W. RUSSELL.

BEN NEVIS.—Ascent of N.E. Buttress and descent of Tower Ridge.—Three members of the club, Messrs Douglas, Fraser, and Raeburn, had a good day on Ben Nevis on 24th October. Leaving Fort-William at 6.45 A.M., they reached the foot of the N.E. Buttress (keeping the path almost to the halfway hut) in three hours. The ascent of the buttress took $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours, and some time was spent on the summit of the hill. Leaving the top *via* the Tower Ridge at 1.35 P.M., they took $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours to reach the foot, the Tower itself being responsible for $1\frac{1}{4}$ hour of the total, and the traverse of the 700 foot pinnacle at the bottom having to be omitted for want of light. From the foot of the rocks a leisurely walk back by the same route followed in the morning brought them to the Station Hotel at 7.40. The conditions of weather and rocks were, as one of the party remarked, A.P.—absolutely perfect!—HAROLD RAE BURN.

THE COBBLER.—On Saturday, 20th November 1897, Dr Inglis Clark, Messrs Inglis, Raeburn, and Naismith, were on the Cobbler. The two last-named found a short new climb on the Northern Peak. Starting from above the bottom pitch in the prominent gully on the Arrochar side of this peak, they scaled the rocks to their right, and after crawling on “all-fours” round a corner where hold there was none, and negotiating some easier places farther up, they emerged from the face at the head of the said gully. On the top they met Dr Clark and Mr Inglis, who had just come up by the right-angled gully between the two “beaks,” which was not easy owing to its moist condition. The united party then proceeded to gambol along the mountain ridge, over the Central and S.E. Peaks, taking a look at every rock and cliff that seemed to offer the prospect of a scramble. Mistress Jean was approached by the route discovered by Mr Bell’s party in 1895 (Vol. IV., p. 65). The weather on the 20th November was lovely everywhere excepting on the Cobbler, where a wet mist made the rocks cold and slimy; but in spite of numbed fingers, the climbers enjoyed themselves.—W. W. N.

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

ROCK-CLIMBING IN THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT. By OWEN GLYNNNE JONES, B.Sc. Lond., Member of the Alpine Club. Longmans, Green, & Co. 1897.

THE appearance of this work marks the latest development of rock-climbing in England, and enables us to compare it with the point reached on our own side of the Border. In Scotland the field is wide, exploration is comparatively recent, centres are remote, many of the best things are practically inaccessible save to local enthusiasts, and it must be long, in spite of our efforts, before all is known and recorded. In England, on the other hand, nearly all the best rock-work can be reached in a moderate day from Wastdale. For the last fifteen years a steadily increasing band of ardent mountaineers has been engaged within this limited area, discovering, and turning into climbs, all possible—and impossible places. The result of this concentration of skilled labour on a small district has been naturally the creation of a very high standard of difficulty. Rock passages which would be voted impracticable if they came in the course of an extended Alpine expedition, have been made the goal of special efforts, and have yielded to persevering assault. Of all the rock explorers who, since the early '80's, have sought Wastdale, no one knows the district better than the writer of the work before us. To a natural aptitude, such as few can hope to rival, he joins experience gained during many seasons in the Alps and elsewhere, and he now shows us that he can remember and describe as well as he can climb.

The book is not a compilation from the notes of others, but is almost entirely a record of personal adventure. With a few small exceptions, duly noted, every expedition has been undertaken by the writer himself. Most of them have been made many times, at all seasons, and in all weathers. To climbers actually at Wastdale, the MS. book there has long been a source of information and inspiration, and knowledge of the Lake climbs has been widely extended by Mr Haskett Smith's invaluable little handbook. This handbook, however, as every one knows, has its self-imposed limitations,—there are blanks in it left for later comers to fill. In particular, the great climbs on the Ennerdale face of the Pillar Rock, which was so long Mr Haskett Smith's happy hunting-ground, are not described at all. There was therefore ample room for a volume like the present ; and so good a use

has been made of the opening, that it seems likely that this will remain the standard work on the subject.

The most valuable feature of the Introduction is a classified list of the chief expeditions in the Lake District. Such an order, as the author wisely says, can never be final. Mountains vary from day to day, and so do men. The muscles which, on your first morning at Wastdale, may almost refuse their office in Kern Knott's Chimney, may, before the week is over, land you safely at the top of Collier's exit from Moss Ghyll. The leader's work out of the Savage Gully to the scree slope above, on a dry day is a stiff scramble, but on a wet one may tax a good man's powers to the utmost. But, allowing this, the classification given on pp. xxii. and xxiii. should be of the utmost value to the aspirant, and is of great interest to those who know all, or nearly all, the expeditions enumerated. The main body of the work deals, in eighteen chapters, with every climb of note in the district. Six chapters are devoted to Scawfell Pike, Scawfell, and Great End; six to the Gable, that dearest mountain of them all to every lover of its glorious outline and its fascinating detail; one to the Screes; and one to the Pillar, whose attractions are here for the first time made accessible in print. Pavey Ark, Doe Crag, and Combe Ghyll receive a chapter each; and the final pages describe a few miscellaneous problems, the chief being the great Great Gully in Sergeant Crag, Langstrath. We are glad to see that Steep Ghyll is let severely alone. If we had our way the upper pitch of that treacherous chasm should be bricked up from top to bottom, or lined with concrete and broken glass. The amount and accuracy of the detail in the descriptions is wonderful, but is partly explained by a casual reference of the writer's to his knowledge of shorthand. If every climbing scribe were master of this rapid gift, his fancy truly might be brought to flutter on a clipped wing, but, oh! the profit to the tempers of his companions. Few men can be counted on to wait uncomplaining in a shower-bath at the foot of a pitch while the leader, seated high and dry in the cave above, captures his first impressions by means of laborious script!

In a book of which every page is interesting to the climber, perhaps the passages to which most men who know something of recent exploration will turn first are those which tell the story of the author's two most notable achievements in the Lakes, viz., the climb from Deep Ghyll to the Low Man of the Scawfell Pinnacle, and the conquest of Kern Knott's Crack. These rank with Haskett Smith's first unaided ascent of the Napes Needle, and Collier's famous climb on Scawfell which bears his name, as amongst the most brilliant and daring of successful ventures in their kind that have ever been made.

The style of the book—mountaineers are still expected to exhibit a style—is bright, clear, and eminently workmanlike. It is inevitable that a detailed description of a severe climb which one may read in a few minutes, should, so to speak, condense the agony which in the actual expedition is spread over a space of hours. This, however, is a good fault, if it causes the enthusiastic novice to pause before he

commits himself even to Deep Ghyll on a dry spring morning. The tone is modest, and previous explorers receive their due, sometimes with a generous interest, as in the case of the C. gully in the Screes, where they are credited with a pitch above their deservings. Nor is a dry humour wanting to the page. There are some anecdotes from the store of that great-hearted pioneer, J. W. Robinson; and in his own reminiscences the author's laugh is always good-natured, and sometimes (as on p. 40) against himself. A few verbal slips and misprints can be easily corrected in a second edition; they occur mostly in the Introduction, which perhaps was written under pressure. In the diagram of the face of Scawfell, on p. 46, Tennis Court Ledge is lettered as if it had some mysterious connection with Mickledore. On the other hand, the confusion in earlier books between the Eagle's Nest and the Arrowhead arêtes is cleared up in Chapter X.

The illustrations, thirty in number, form a great feature of the book. They are well reproduced in collotype, from photographs by those bold climbers and skilful artists the Messrs Abraham of Keswick, already well known to Scottish mountaineers by their work in Skye and elsewhere. Many of the present plates are real works of art, and all illustrate the text as they are meant to do. Perhaps the most beautiful is the Ennerdale face of The Gable. The least successful is the Mickledore Ridge. As a picture of rock scenery we are inclined to prefer the Great Chimney in Deep Ghyll. The view of the First Pitch in Doe Crag Great Gully is fine, but is rather spoiled by the figure at the top engaged in carefully belaying what looks like a length of Atlantic cable for an invisible follower.

Altogether, author and illustrator are to be heartily congratulated on a book which should find a place on every climber's shelves. Old frequenters of Wastdale, turning its pages, will live over again days of their own upon the fells, and many to whom Wastdale is only a name will be drawn to come and see for themselves. May newcomers be fit though they be not few, may the best mountain inn in Britain never become a "fashionable hotel," and may Mrs Tyson and her hospitable household still, in the rush of new friends, keep a corner for the old ones.



THE CARN DEARG BUTTRESS OF BEN NEVIS.

From a Photo by W. L. Howie.

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

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SIXTEEN HOURS ON BEN NEVIS, JANUARY 1898.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

THOSE renegades, who, deserting the New Year's Meet of the S.M.C. at Fort-William, formed opposition camps at Callander, Dalmally, Inveroran, and Spean Bridge, were in the end heavy losers. To get perfect weather at Fort-William is at any season a rarity, but to get it at the New Year time, and under wintry conditions, is a chance that comes but once in a lifetime. Yet so it was on this occasion. It is true that on the Saturday a gossamer mist occasionally touched the summit, but even this only served as a background, on which were displayed fog bows, glories, &c., while from the elsewhere unclouded sky there descended a shower of infinitely small ice-crystals, scintillating and sparkling in the bright sunshine like so many minute diamonds. It was, however, reserved for Monday to be the crown and termination of this glorious Meet. On Sunday signs of an impending change were visible, but the wind was northerly, and after depositing an extra coating of snow on the Ben it gradually subsided, and a starry night ensued. Let those who maintain that the S.M.C., though it inculcates early starts, rarely acts up to its convictions, now hide their diminished heads, for the whole available force, six in number, were seated at the breakfast-table on Monday morning shortly after 6.30 A.M. Indeed some of us are inclined to think that but for the unending sallies of the irrepressible Penney and our late President, not to mention lesser lights, it might have been possible to start for the

mountains before 7 o'clock. But the words of wisdom were too good to miss, and so it came about that it was 7.25 A.M. before Mr T. Gibson (a new member) and the writer emerged into the darkness.

A keen frost held sway, and as we trudged over the crackling path our spirits rose to a high pitch. Above, the stars sparkled in the dark zenith, and even Meall an t-Suidhe could only faintly be discerned against the eastern sky. Not a bird chirruped, and Boreas had not a breath left in him. In fact, it was a perfect morning. Rounding into Glen Nevis, there rose the peaks of the Mamore Forest in front of us, snow-clad, but weird and gloomy as they guarded the head of the valley. Gradually the dawn advanced, and as we ascended higher and higher an ever-widening horizon proclaimed still "a perfect day." Those only who have beheld the dawn from some high vantage point, as in Switzerland, can fully realise the glory displayed as the gradation from pale yellow, through orange to rose and red, mounted from the horizon upwards and upwards. A long range of snow-clad peaks extended from Morven in the south to Sgurr na Lapaich or farther in the north, and these were flushed with the oft-praised Alpine glow. But what was more glorious still was the rich orange-brown rose-red of the uncoated lower hills, as they simply glowed under the fiery glance of Old Phœbus. Never before had I appreciated the opinions held by our artist member, Mr Alfred Williams, that the period when the colouring of Scotland is richest is when the withered bracken and heather cover our hills, and before gentle spring has ever wooed a single blade of grass from its winter sleep. I now realised the truth of this opinion, the more so when the sun's rays lighted up a crofter's patch near Loch Eil, making its green colouring seem almost vulgar by contrast.

As we turned into the valley flanked by the great precipices of the Ben, and on the other side by Carn Mor Dearg, the scene was wild and wintry in the extreme. The sun had lit up the eastern face of the north-east buttress, but of this we were only aware by the reflection on the snow slopes at the head of the valley. A huge eagle issuing from the crags at Carn Dearg made his way across, with the measured

beat of his mighty pinions, until, circling higher and higher, his plumage alternately appeared black or golden as the sun's rays struck on its nearer or farther aspect. On the new-fallen snow were numerous footprints of stoats, foxes, &c., while snow-buntings and a ptarmigan cheered us on our way. Our goal was the Observatory gully, which, from our Saturday's inspection, was fairly free of cornice; but as we ploughed our way through the dry shifting snow, and felt our ears tingle with the intense frost, we were fain to confess that, under these snow conditions, ours was a hopeless task. We were anxious to leave by the afternoon train, and so it came about that, when the camera fiend of the party called a halt near the foot of the Tower ridge, it was decided to ascend the Carn Dearg ridge by the small gully second from the great buttress. By referring to the accompanying excellent illustration of the Carn Dearg buttress the reader will have no difficulty in identifying the route. As the eye passes in succession the Castle ridge and the great buttress, with its unclimbed gully, it comes to where an obvious snow gully leads up into a large snowfield extending to the sky-line. This has been ascended by Dr Collie, and perhaps by others. Farther along, and above some steepish rocks, will be seen a snow terrace running across the face, and cutting the Carn Dearg buttress in two. Below this terrace the gully is not well defined, but in its upper continuation it appears in the photograph as a definite line of snow, merging into a triangular patch overhanging the upper part of the great gully. From our point of view the lower ice-covered rocks presented no difficulty, while the rib of snow seemed to be part and parcel of the great snowfield above. It would be a rapid climb, although we might possibly miss the train. Our provender was based on a short day, if we except a supply of apples, dates, figs, raisins, and chocolate. As we took a last draught from the still unfrozen river in the valley, we were warned by the partial freezing of the water in the cup that the temperature was low, and that a hasty climb would not come amiss. Crossing from the Tower ridge to the rocks immediately below our gully, we had a taste of the sport in store for us, as the powdery snow

over the frozen surface made foot-hold precarious. If powdery, then so much the drier; if frosty, then so much the cooler, and in this philosophical frame of mind we set foot on our rocks at 11.15 A.M. We roped at once, and from this moment till we set foot on the summit found it necessary to strictly follow the golden rule, "One man only moving at a time." Although not really difficult, the icy condition of the rocks made progress slow, and when an extra steep pitch was encountered we endeavoured to find an easy traverse in either direction. Our evident route, however, was up, and excellent sport was obtained where a steep ice-filled crack led on to steepish snow above. This was not surmounted till the leader used the shoulder of his friend as a stepping-stone, and cleared the ice away from some satisfactory rock-holds. At length a very distinct snow ledge was reached, easily recognised in the photograph, as it crosses horizontally to the rocks of Carn Dearg, and here we finished our sandwiches, filling up the centre with a layer of snow in default of water. To our surprise we found the time 2.30 P.M., and abandoning all hope of catching the train, we consoled ourselves with the prospect of sunset on the top.

From our position we had no view of the snowfield, and our memories conveniently retired into the background, so that we regarded the somewhat pinnacled crags above us as near the sky-line. We now entered the gully proper, and as a rule took only two ropes length of step-cutting at a time, so as to make rapid progress. It was soon apparent that we were ascending on a snow bridge, with fairly hard surface, at times covered with loose snow, so that in places we cut right through to the hollow beneath. The angle in no place exceeded 55° , and for the most part good solid steps could be cut, but at other places the ascent was most tedious, and required some care on account of the loose snow. As we were shut in by rocks, we still cherished our hope of sunset on the top, and just as the last rays left the top of Carn Mor Dearg we arrived at the final steep pitch, leading, as we hoped, to the sky-line. This proved difficult, and required some shoulder work, but our feelings may be guessed when we stepped on to a steep slope of

shifting snow, and found ourselves faced by a cliff of considerable height. The sun had now set (about 4.30 P.M.), and the moon shed but a faint light, so that our position was none of the choicest. A glance upwards revealed that the rib of snow ran to the left upwards on the face of the cliff, and was, to all appearance, cut off on the right by a precipitous slope, so that easy access to the snowfield behind was uncertain. Climbing up the treacherous slope of snow, two or three solid holds were obtained on some blocks of rock, and it was seen that a possible exit could be made from the upper part on to the snowfield, but as this would be over a mass of glistening ice, it was left as a last resort. Anchoring himself as well as possible, with good foot-hold and axe driven into the ice, the leader manipulated the rope, while his friend prospected on the unpromising rock slope below. Fortunately not many minutes elapsed ere the cheering opinion that a possible route could be found along some narrow snow ledges made him quit his breezy, elevated, and insecure position with alacrity. The ledges proving practicable, we in due course found ourselves in the snowfield above the middle portion of Dr Collie's gully, and our course became comparatively plain. Rising above us for several hundred feet was the great snow slope, at no serious angle. To the left, a great ice-fall, perhaps 200 feet wide by 300 feet high, barred the way. To the right, the narrow termination of Collie's gully seemed risky in our somewhat famished condition, showing as it did icy rock slopes in pitches. Clearly our road was straight up, and as we gazed, the dazzling snow under the moonlight threw out in strong contrast the black sky above, with its sparkling stars. This was, however, no time for sentimentality, for the wind had increased in force, and veering to the south-west, was hurrying before it heavy masses of cloud, which already obscured the Tower ridge. The scene was nevertheless grand in the extreme, and the sight of these snowy rocks will never be effaced from our memories. Our minds would have been quite at ease but for a threatening "something" at the skyline, which, on nearer approach, turned out to be a magnificent cornice. About 200 feet below this a council of war was held, and

we decided that the only practical way was to go boldly up and try to escape to the right. As measured later, the cornice seemed about 25 to 30 feet in height, with, at parts, dependent icicles. It extended for about 250 feet, somewhat crescentic in shape, and, in places, showed a vertical wall where the projecting portion had fallen away. To the right, a rib of steep rock led up to the horn of the cornice, covered in the upper part by snow or ice. As this looked incapable of foothold, we made straight up for the overhanging portion. Gibson considerably doing the whole of the step-cutting, we were soon ensconced on a narrow ledge of dry snow below the cornice. It was a splendid position, about 18 inches wide, and as the cornice here projected nearly 6 feet beyond us, we were fairly sheltered from the icy blast (23° F.) which had buffeted us and nearly blown us from our footsteps at times. Lying on our faces, we took a final glance at the weird scene below. A slope of snow fell for perhaps 500 feet to the rocks beneath, but the grandest sight was the roof of a great crag, which, projecting like some storm window into the valley, was covered with unbroken snow shining like polished silver in the moonlight. Farther, the "Tower," and even the north-east buttress, occasionally showed through the driving clouds. But we were still below the cornice, and the approaching storm hurried us on. Creeping along on our faces, we traversed the gradually narrowing ledge, at times finding the space overhead just sufficient to admit of passage. But at last, within 25 feet of the end of the cornice, we found the ledge too narrow for farther progress, and making as secure an anchorage as possible, one of us traversed along, holding to the ledge with both hands, and succeeded in finding fair foothold in the snow. Reaching the steep rib before-mentioned, some careful steps upwards were made, the skyline was reached, and a few minutes later we were both on the top and shook hands as we hurried off to the Observatory. It was past 8 P.M., and we felt strongly tempted to make straight for Fort-William, but nine hours of constant step-cutting or kicking make a considerable inroad into one's power of endurance, and already the fragrance of

choice Pekoe presented itself in imagination to our nostrils. Suffice that about 8.30 P.M. we descended the Observatory snow staircase, and were welcomed by the hospitable inmates as their latest visitors on a winter night. After suitable refreshment we despatched a reassuring telegram to the hotel, and started for Fort-William. As we emerged into the blast, the moon was shining brightly, for the scouts of the storm had already passed, and the main army was still lingering to the south. Deep down in the valleys the clouds were swirling about, and, far over, the peaks of Mamore and Glencoe were shrouded in partial nightcaps. To the north all was still clear, and the snowy uplands glistened in the moonlight. But we could not wait, the impetuous blast would not allow us, and sliding, glissading, or running, we soon left our friendly shelter far behind, took a peep over into Coire na Ciste, and hurried down towards Fort-William. We reached the "Alexandra" at 11.35 P.M., and 11.45 P.M. found us in unceremonious garb enjoying the excellent dinner which, even at that late hour, Mrs Doig had provided for us. So ended in peace and safety one of the most interesting and romantic expeditions in which I have ever had a share. Well it was for us that our guardian moon befriended us so brightly, for a couple of hours later the storm had burst, and when the unwelcome summons to rise for the early train brought us back to daily life, the torrents of rain which dashed on the windows made us inwardly rejoice that we were "here, not there."

THE CLIFFS OF BEN A'AN.

BY W. W. NAISMITH.

"WHAT *can* have possessed the Club to fix the New Year's Meet at Fort-William?" was a remark made by more than one member last Christmas. Although we were of course bound to uphold the decision of the General Meeting, it *so happened* that Messrs Douglas and Maclay and the writer had each several unanswerable reasons for not joining the Meet, as we should have liked to do. With some of us the weight of increasing years argued that midwinter days were too short to let us reach the north side of Ben Nevis in time for a climb. Moreover, Douglas and I had but a single climbing-day at our disposal, and Maclay wished to explore the Trossachs mountains in the interests of the "Climbers' Guide."

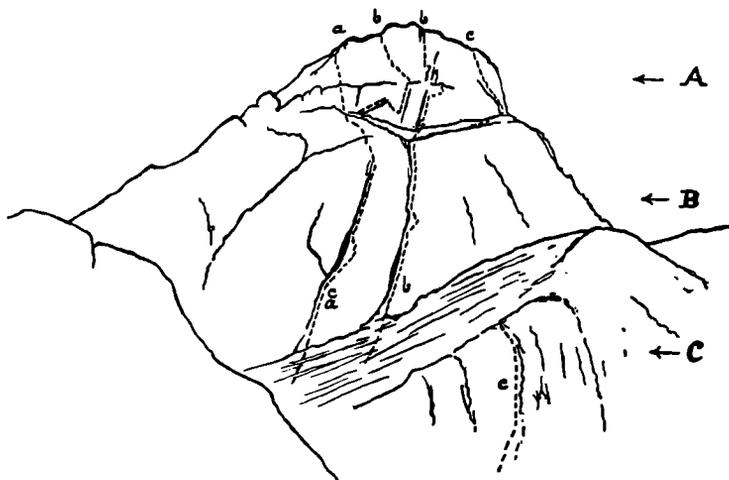
The last day of 1897 accordingly found us ensconced in the "Dreadnought" at Callander. Next morning, although cloudy, was fair and mild, and the birds were singing as if spring had already come. Nothing in the aspect of the surrounding hills suggested winter. "The Hill of God" had only one small snow wreath under its eastern summit-ridge, while Ben Venue was clear of snow.

Ben A'an has the inestimable boon to a lazy man that he can drive to its very foot, and start his climb if desired from the back-step of his dog-cart. We may claim to have practically done so on this occasion, for within a few yards of where our trap deposited us at the end of Loch Katrine, my companions pointed out a desirable ice-ground promontory of quartzite rock, which rose steeply from the roadside to the height of about a hundred feet. This crag, though not actually the "far-projecting precipice" scaled by Fitzjames after the unfortunate demise of his "gallant grey" (*that* is apparently the promontory two or three hundred yards farther up the loch), gives an excellent scramble, and as no mediæval ladder was available, we were glad to make use of the rope.

After a good half-hour's exercise, having got our muscles

into working order, we made our way leisurely through the wood to the rocky southern face of Ben A'an. This side of the mountain has been well described by Mr Boyd (Vol. IV., p. 156). The precipitous part of the face, which begins immediately above the tree zone, is about 300 feet high, and is divided into three tiers of cliffs of nearly equal altitude, though probably the middle tier is slightly higher than the others.

The lower section dwindles to nothing towards the west, and is not so steep as the two upper sections, from which



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.

it is separated by a broad stretch of rough ground sloping upwards to the east. Between the middle and upper tiers of cliffs a well-marked terrace of sloping grass crosses the whole face horizontally.

From a little distance off it looked as if the face would go anywhere without difficulty, and we even began to ask ourselves whether this was really Ben A'an, and if so whether this was its steep side; but we were quickly reassured on getting up to the foot of the middle cliffs. For some reason or other—whether owing to the amount

of heather clinging to the rocks, or because Ben A'an has no steep sky-line when seen from the south—it was extremely difficult to realise that we were looking at one of the steepest hillsides to be found on this side of Glencoe. Some hours later, when we altered our standpoint and surveyed the hill from the east, from a point half-way between the top of Ben A'an and the Trossachs Hotel, its appearance was wholly changed, and our respect for Ben A'an suddenly doubled.

The two prominent gullies in the middle tier of cliffs visited by our friends in 1896 were easily recognised, and we naturally decided to try the right-hand gully, which had not yet been climbed. As it was soon evident there was a "nasty bit" to circumvent, and as steep chimneys are places after Maclay's own heart, Douglas and I were quite unanimous in choosing him as leader. Right well did he justify the choice. The *crux* of the ascent consisted in getting past some rocks projecting over the "nearly vertical chimney" which Mr Boyd speaks of, and, when that was accomplished, reaching the lowest of a group of small saplings six feet higher up on the right-hand side of the gully. No practical help could be given to the leader while struggling with this difficulty. All we could do was to hitch his rope round a stout tree some height up the left-hand wall. The vertical chimney immediately below the obstacle needed care. It was trickling with water which chilled one's hands just where they were most required. A splinter of rock about two feet long—a jammed block probably—stuck out over the chasm towards the right-hand wall, which at that point was rather smooth, with no specially good holds. The only safe method of getting past was to slip one's head and shoulders between the splinter and this wall, and then wriggle upwards through the narrow wedge-shaped opening, until one could pass the left arm round the spike of rock, then sit upon it, and lastly, put the left boot against it; but as the top of the splinter sloped outwards, it offered no proper foot-hold. During the whole of this process, which took some time, one had to utilise what holds there were for the left hand and the right foot. At one stage the only decent handhold to be

got was by inserting the open hand into a crack three inches wide, and then half turning the arm and clenching the fist, you braced your hand against the sides of the cleft. To people unacquainted with the multifarious uses to which the human body can be put in rock climbing, this may seem an odd sort of hold, but the dodge described is often serviceable when dealing with the vertical cracks which abound among granite blocks, such as those in Arran.

As soon as the stem of the lowest tree was grasped all real difficulty was at an end, as the angle of the slope eased off considerably, and ten feet farther up a young birch tree provided a reliable hitch. When Maclay was firmly placed, I followed, grateful for the rope held in our leader's strong hands. Then it was sent down for the rucksack and ice-axe—for we had brought one axe in case of need—and finally the Editor's smiling face appeared as he successfully emerged from the trap-door. Looking past his head, the next thing to be seen was the rough ground below the gully 200 feet beneath us. Although none of the party were particularly corpulent, it took us "all our time" to squeeze through the narrow aperture. How a stout gentleman, whose waist measured more than about thirty-six inches, would manage at this place I cannot imagine, unless he could arrange to be temporarily elongated through the influence of fear. One has sometimes heard of a man's *heart* migrating to his boots, but even that displacement would not reduce his girth.

Two more lengths of a 60-foot rope up very steep heather—a plant which seems to flourish on Ben A'an in utterly impossible places—and one or two outcrops of rock, brought us to the grassy terrace, and the first section of the cliffs was vanquished. Maclay regaled us with cold tea while we studied the upper rocks.

Douglas and I afterwards attacked a shallow, broken gully—the most prominent one apparently—which started directly above the top of the gully we had just quitted. It looked simple enough from below, but we did not get up without some little trouble. For twenty or thirty feet it went all right, but then an overhanging pitch forced us to

follow a wet sloping ledge to our right, at the end of which was a young tree. Then steep heather for forty feet brought us to another pitch 15 feet high. This was a wet "vegetable" climb, dangerous rather than difficult, as the holds were untrustworthy. We left this place in a much tidier state than we found it, though that remark would not apply to ourselves. After that more heather, and a final little chimney brought us out close to the summit.

We had left Maclay investigating a crack in the rocks considerably to the left (west) of us, and though to our repeated shouts of how he was getting on the answer always came back that he was "all right," we judged by the mass of rocks and vegetation he was throwing down that his route had not proved entirely plain sailing. We accordingly descended at once to rescue him, but were quickly relieved of all anxiety by his joining us, radiant with the discovery of a long straight chimney that had given him a capital climb. His first route was too risky, so he had traversed, with the help of a hitched rope, into this chimney, which was about twenty yards to the west of our gully, and may be recognised by a natural bridge half-way up. The "archway" under the bridge was partially blocked with *débris*, and had to be cleared. The chimney is narrow, and though fairly steep, Maclay reported it as not difficult, as he could generally make use of "back and knee."

The quartzite rocks of Ben A'an, where clear of vegetation, are good for climbing purposes, being much rougher than the mica schist of the West Highlands. Even when wet they give a fair grip, and are a great contrast to the slimy, lichen-covered rocks of the Cobbler. It seems likely that many good climbs are still waiting to be discovered, especially among the upper rocks of this southern face.

Returning to the top, we feasted on the gorgeous view (to say nothing of jam sandwiches). At our feet Loch Katrine, calm as a mirror—

" In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light ;
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land."

On Saturday, 22nd January, Ben A'an was attacked by another party, consisting of Messrs Raeburn and J. S. Napier, who discovered a sporting chimney near the eastern angle of the upper cliffs. I am indebted to Raeburn for the following details of their route:—They ascended the lower rocks—in which no previous climbs are recorded—by an ill-defined gully (*c* on diagram). The middle rocks were climbed by the left-hand gully. On reaching the grass terrace they followed it till they were about 100 yards east of the route taken by Douglas and myself, and climbed a deep crack running obliquely up the rocks. There were plentiful holds in the crack, but the rock was rather treacherous. After mounting eighteen feet, they encountered some jammed stones, with a small cave above them. The cave was carpeted with grass, and had room for only one man at a time. Then an awkward sloping slab presented itself, the overhang of the right-hand wall of the chimney here forcing the climbers outwards. At this critical point an undergrip was found for the right hand in a crack, also a tiny hole at the top of the slab just big enough for the middle finger of the other hand. Cautiously hoisting the body by these means, the left foot was swung round, and placed in a toe-hold on the outside of the slab. The hands were then transferred to a block embedded in steep earth. A short way above this place were some hazel bushes and a small oak, and the rock climb practically ended; but the party had still to ascend twenty feet of a very steep slope, chiefly vegetables or bare clay. The whole climb was seventy or eighty feet.

GLEN FINLAS TO GLEN FALLOCH.

BY JAMES MACLAY.

ON 3rd January 1898, after parting with Naismith and Douglas at the Dreadnought, I left Callander to cross the hilltops from Glen Finlas to Glen Falloch. I left at 8.45 A.M. (about two hours too late, as I afterwards found), drove to Brig of Turk, and walked up Glen Finlas. At 10.45 I found myself at the foot of Meall Cala. During the drive the pink morning glow showed beautifully on Ben Ledi and Ben Venue, and the morning was calm and bright, but by the time I reached the top of Meall Cala a mist was gathering all round me. This soon settled down everywhere to a level of about 2,000 feet, and later on seriously interfered with my movements. The ascent of Meall Cala (2,203 feet) was a walk, and was completed at 11.55 A.M. There is a dip of about 400 feet between it and the flat top, marked 2,269 feet on Bartholomew's map, which I reached at 1 P.M. after a halt for lunch. From this place it was obvious that my next point, if I was to cross the important tops, was the hill overlooking Loch Doine. This is unnamed, and without a height on Bartholomew's map, but is evidently between 2,500 and 2,600 feet high. To reach this I had to skirt the sources of Glen Dubh. The top was successfully gained, notwithstanding the mist, at 1.50 P.M.

To reach Stob a Choin was my next task. It was plain from the map that the easiest way was to skirt the watershed between Loch Katrine and Lochlarig Glen, keeping round the south end of the ridge between Inverenty Burn and the burn to the west. The conformation of the country here was hummocky and was puzzling in the mist. Presently, however, getting below the mist, I sighted Loch Katrine, and found myself overlooking the broad glen that is drained by the Strone and Letter burns. I crossed one small glen and came to another, which I imagined was the west branch of the Strone Burn—not recognising that I had got there rather too soon. I ascended the stream to its

source and tackled the hillside, thinking I was on Stob a Choin. This, however, was a mistake, and almost before I knew I was across the ridge and saw a deep glen beneath me on the other side. At first I took this to be the glen that descends to Inverlochlarig, and thought I was looking across at where Ben a Choin should be, but presently I realised I had only reached Invernenty Glen. I had got astray among the tops marked Taobh na Coille on the map.

This was a disappointment, and being a long way down the glen, I decided, in order to save time, to descend where I was, climb the intervening ridge, and descend to the col at the head of the Inverlochlarig Burn. It was about 3.30 P.M. before I reached the col, having lost about an hour and climbed and descended an extra 1,000 feet.

It was now almost sunset, but I pressed on up Stob a Choin and reached what I took to be the lower summit (2,766 feet *) at 4.35 P.M., and the higher (2,839 feet) about 4.45 P.M.

Without pausing here I descended to the Allt a Choin. I seemed to see the little loch that nestles in this glen well away on my left. I think, however, I must have got a glimpse of Loch Katrine, and have been deceived by the mist and the gloaming as to its distance, as once in the glen I found I was some way below the little loch instead of above it as I thought I was. I passed the loch and crossed the watershed to Lochlarig Glen, but it was dark by the time I reached the glen.

It had been my intention to ascend Meall Mor and proceed along the ridge, but this I now had to abandon. It was a long and slow trudge along the hillside to the Larig beside Sithean a Chatha. At first I used my lamp, but presently I found that the moon, though concealed, gave just sufficient light to pick my way, so I put it out again. Ben Chabhair loomed grandly on my right wreathed in mist, but he was hard to get past.

* This I was not satisfied of, and from information supplied by Mr Scott Moncrieff Penney, I now think my first top must have been one not shown on the map, intermediate between the 2,766 feet point and the summit.

I reached the Larig about 7 P.M., and here I made a most unaccountable mistake. I thought I had safely crossed it, and was proceeding downwards, when the surroundings struck me as not what they should be. Looking back, I saw Parlane Hill in front, just as it had been half an hour ago, and my compass told me I was going east instead of west. I had succeeded somehow in facing right about.

Retracing my steps to the Larig, and proceeding more cautiously, I ere long found myself overlooking the upper end of Glen Gyle. It was a rough traverse in the dark along the hillside to the col at the head of Glen Gyle, but once there all real difficulty was at an end. I followed the course of the Allt Innse more closely than I would have done in daylight, and in consequence was continually getting into boggy ground. The steep descent into Glen Falloch took some engineering in the dark, and progress was very slow. Eventually, however, I reached Beinglas farm in Glen Falloch about 9.30 P.M., and by 10 P.M. I was received within the doors of the hospitable inn at Ardlui. This I had fondly hoped to reach by 7 P.M., and I should probably have done so had the day been clear.

One object I had in view in this walk was to ascertain if there was any climbing to be had among these hills. Naturally, owing to the mist, my opportunities of observation were limited, but so far as I could discover there seemed to be no pitches of any great height. Stob a Choin seemed to be more rocky than the others, but even there the rock pitches I noticed were short.

THE BLACK MOUNT AT NEW YEAR.

BY F. CONRADI SQUANCE.

ON the 30th December 1897 three members of the Club, Messrs Penney, H. Squance, and the writer, arrived at Bridge of Orchy Station by the morning train. A wet and windy drive brought us to Inveroran, and after a short stay at the inn a start was made at 11.45 for the north-east corrie of Stob Ghabhar, by way of the deer path by the side of the Allt Toaig.

The snow-line was struck just on the col between Ben Toaig and Stob Ghabhar, at an altitude of about 2,200 feet, and after going some distance into the north-east corrie, so as to get a view of the face of Stob Ghabhar, a descent was made by the side of the burn flowing from the lochan and across the moor to the Kingshouse road, which was reached just as the daylight failed, a walk of rather more than an hour bringing us back to Inveroran at 6.15.

On Friday, the 31st December, starting from Inveroran at 9.25, the same route was taken to the north-east corrie, and the ascent of Stob Ghabhar commenced by the lower couloir (*Journal*, Vol. II., p. 127). With the exception of a small hard patch near the bottom, the snow in this couloir was deep and very soft, the progress consequently slow, and for the leader somewhat hard work. On arriving at the top, a traverse was made to the bottom of the upper couloir, but the appearance of this, together with the fact that snow in a floury state was pouring down the centre, was quite enough to satisfy the majority of the party. Returning to the line of the lower couloir, the ascent was completed by the "upper snow-field," the snow for the last 100 feet being hard, and the final 10 or 12 feet being up a snow wall lying at an angle of from 75 to 80 degrees.

A long halt for lunch, the soft snow in the lower, and the visit to the upper couloir having taken up a long time, the top was not reached until 4 P.M.; and as Penney was anxious to catch the evening train for Fort-William, he hurried off at once, the remaining two proceeding at a very

leisurely pace down by the south-east shoulder, and reaching the inn at 7 o'clock.

At dinner we were joined by Gilbert Thomson and Dr Collie, who had arrived from the south, and who told us that Penney had duly caught his train at Bridge of Orchy for Fort-William.

The morning of New Year's Day was more promising than either Thursday or Friday, and 8.30 saw us again under weigh for the north-east corrie. Nearing the end of the deer path, the party divided—H. Squance following the others in a leisurely manner, with the intention of watching the progress of the more energetic members. The snow was in better condition, and rapid progress was made, Friday's steps being utilised as far as half-way up the lower couloir. From this point, however, drifting snow had obliterated all our traces, and fresh steps had to be made in the soft snow. The bottom of the upper couloir was reached at 11.55, and the rope was put on, Thomson leading. The soft snow at the bottom was soon exchanged for harder snow lying on ice. About 60 feet up, what in summer would apparently be a small "pitch" caused by a jambed stone in the centre of the couloir, was easily passed by keeping to the snow close under the vertical south wall. Rapid progress was made up to the foot of the ice-fall, where it became necessary to cut large steps through the snow and well into the ice beneath. At the bottom of the steeper portion Collie relieved Thomson, and working diagonally across the foot, attacked the final portion, which consisted of an almost vertical pitch 10 to 15 feet high, at its extreme northern corner. It was at once evident that unless a way could be made up the ice a retreat would be inevitable, as the rocks on the north side were hopelessly impassable, covered as they were with ice and a thin coating of snow, while those on the south side are either vertical or overhanging. This short pitch for a long time defied all Collie's efforts to force a way up. At length, however, after the attempt had been nearly given up, a large portion of the ice having been cut away, it became possible to get satisfactory hand-holds between the rock and the ice, and the difficulty was overcome.

Above the fall the slope eased off to an angle of about 40 degrees, and with the leader anchored the other two passed the steep piece without much difficulty.

From here the snow was fairly firm, although after the first two had passed, the steps showed a decided tendency to give way under the writer, letting him through to the ice beneath, and making him feel glad of the "moral support" of the rope. A few minutes, however, sufficed to bring the party to the top.

It was now 2.15 P.M., the ascent of the couloir having taken two hours and twenty minutes, of which the steep pitch of 10 to 15 feet accounted for at least an hour.

From near the top of the lower couloir we had been enveloped in a light mist which blotted out all view, and consequently no long stay was made at the cairn.

After descending about 400 feet of the southern slope, however, we got clear of the mist, and to the south and west had magnificent views, Ben Cruachan in the distance being especially fine. After a short halt for photography and lunch, the shoulder was followed almost to the glen, and Inveroran reached at 4.20, thus ending a memorable climb.

After a somewhat hasty dinner, Thomson, who was obliged to return home, started off to walk to Bridge of Orchy to catch the evening train for Glasgow.

The *Journal* only records one previous *complete* ascent of this couloir (Vol. IV., p. 307), and we were naturally pleased with our success. Considering, however, the condition of the ice and rocks, it certainly would not have been possible but for the fact of our having had a first-rate leader.

The greater part of Sunday was spent in quietly strolling through the remains of the old forest lying between Inveroran and Bridge of Orchy, large numbers of deer being seen, including many fine stags.

A hard frost set in on Sunday night, and Monday opened fine and bright. A start was made at 9.30, with the intention of ascending the Clachlet. We found, however, on making inquiry, that Mr Macintyre, the head forester, could not himself give us the necessary permission, so once more we turned up the glen. We continued along

the road for about half a mile beyond the first deer path, and then struck off to the right, leaving the farmhouse of Clais-gobhair on our left. Gradually mounting over the moor, we eventually struck the second deer path, which runs up to the head of the depression between Stob Ghabhar and Meallan Araich. From here we had a splendid view of the mountains lying in the Loch Etive neighbourhood, the peaks of Cruachan closing the prospect in that direction.

We now turned due north, and mounted over snow slopes in excellent condition to the ridge connecting Stob Ghabhar with Meall Odhar. On arriving at the top, a magnificent prospect to the north opened before us. Immediately at our feet lay Glen Caolain, while towering above the hills in the foreground rose Bidean nam Bian and the Buchailles, the view being closed on the right by the Clachlet; beyond these again were Ben Nevis, Aonach Beg, Stob Coire Claurigh, and Stob Coire an Easain Mhor; while to the left of Bidean in the far distance lay the Coolins. By this time, however, the mist had covered most of the hills to the south, and before long it was upon us. Instead, therefore, of going to the top of Stob Ghabhar, we skirted the north-west side, and when some 200 feet below the top, had splendid examples of "glories" (see *Journal*, Vol. III., p. 85), our shadows being projected upon the mist, and each surrounded by a rainbow-coloured circle, the shadow of the head being the centre. Although we could each see the three shadows, each one could only see his individual "glory," those round the shadows of his companions being quite invisible.

Passing to the north of the top, we struck the ridge at the top of the north-east corrie. Keeping along this, we began the descent by the ridge of Sron nan Giubhas. After following this for some little distance, we turned due south, and by steep and soft snow descended into the north-east corrie, some little way below the lochan.

The view from here over the Moor of Rannoch was wonderful, the variety, softness, depth, and purity of the colouring being such as can hardly be seen later in the year—indeed, one member of the party said that it was

well worth while making the journey from London for the sake of this one view.

From here a slight ascent brought us again to the now familiar col, and the descent was again made by the deer path, Inveroran being reached at 5.30.

On Tuesday we joined the morning train at Bridge of Orchy, meeting members of the Club returning from Fort-William, and hearing of their doings on Ben Nevis, especially of an attack on one gully which was not completed until 8 P.M.

At Ardlui we were also joined by Mr Maclay, fresh from a tramp across the hills from Callander.

Thus ended our New Year's holiday, and if we were disappointed in views from the tops, we were perhaps more than compensated by the richness of the colouring in the glens, and especially by the effects of light and shade each day over the Moor of Rannoch, and which effectually disabused our minds of any idea which we might have formed of it as a "dreary waste."

THE LOCH TREIG HILLS AND BEN NA LAP.

BY EDRED M. CORNER.

ON January the 4th, the last day of the New Year Meet at Fort-William, Mr Munro and I had decided to make a raid on the summits round Loch Treig. But when we were called at 6 A.M. the weather was too miserable to entice us out. Consequently the afternoon train carried Mr Munro home, whilst I got off at Roy Bridge. I found the hotel in a frightful muddle, as the old tenant was gone, and a new one had been in possession about four days. Had I not arrived about an hour after my telegram, they would have refused to put me up, as the proprietor told me he had done to a party of the S.M.C. from Dundee. The weather improved during the evening and night, so that when I caught the early train to Tulloch in the morning all the hills were clear, and there was a sharp frost. At Tulloch I experienced the good that the Club has done, for I was able to pass the porters, navvies, &c., and they only gave a casual glance at my ice-axe. Following the railway line for some distance, I crossed some bumpy ground, followed by a short steep pull up frozen snow, and gained the top of Sron na Garbh Bheinne (no cairn). From here to the top of Stob Coire Sgriodain the ridge is broad and very bumpy, and was covered with soft deep snow. The top of Stob Coire Sgriodain is adorned with a cairn, and is 3,210 feet high, in Munro's tables ranking as a separate mountain. A broad ridge, with a drop of about 300 feet, leads to the top of the crags above Glac Bhan (3,132 feet; no cairn). Separating these two hills from Cnoc Dearg was a broad basin filled with soft drifted snow. A somewhat toilsome wade through this resulted in my arrival at the top of Cnoc Dearg, which has a large cairn with a stake stuck into it (3,433 feet). The distant view, especially to the south and south-east, was very fine, thus forming a sequel to the north and north-west view I had enjoyed a few days before from Carn Mor Dearg. The near view was rather tame, as the Ben Alder group are rounded hills of no very imposing

appearance. Exception must be made of Ben a Chlachair, which from here presented a very steep southern face, which appeared to have very little snow on it. Stob Choire an Easain Mhoir and its twin peak presented bolder outlines, and were well covered with snow. A gentle descent and rise placed me on the broad level top of Meall Garbh (3,197 feet), which has no cairn. With the aid of four or five glissades I rapidly reached the burn, Feith a na Ealaidh. In this little glen, shut out from the wind, the weather seemed like summer, and I spent some twenty to thirty minutes enjoying the scene. The ridge of Ben na Lap was now gained, after a short steep pull up a heathery slope, and I saw that my beautiful day was ended, for clouds were remorselessly sweeping up from the south, and the hills on the other side of Loch Ossian were soon covered. The ridge of Ben na Lap is a long one, I should say at least one and a half miles, as can easily be seen on Bartholomew's map. I felt convinced that it was really longer, as I walked up it in the wind, sleet, cold, and mist. Still the cairn was reached at last (3,066 feet) about 4.15. A rapid descent was made to Loch Ossian, to which some glissades in the mist lent excitement. To round the west end of the loch was no easy matter in the fast increasing darkness, for the crossing of burns and the like, when you could not estimate the solidity of your landing place, after a time begins to pall. Still it was a fitting preface to the subsequent flounder across a short piece, a good mile, of the Moor of Rannoch before Corrou was reached. Here I was regaled with tea whilst waiting for the train.

January the 6th I spent getting wet up Glen Roy, and on the 7th again caught the train to Tulloch. The road was followed for about a mile towards Roy Bridge, and the Spean crossed by a bridge. A track leads from here through Inverlair, where I left it, and went straight up into the glen above. The foot-track lies on the west of Allt Laire, and some distance above it. Two sleet storms varied the walk, and crossing the burn by a foot bridge about 1,000 feet up, I soon took to the hillside, and struck the ridge just south of Meall Cian Dearg. All the morning the ridges had been

smoking, and the greatest sinner of all was an old friend, Stob Choire Claurigh. When the ridge was gained I fully appreciated this, and continued my way knee-deep in driving snow, which every now and then rose well above my head. The walking was good, as most of the new snow had been blown away. The summit of Stob a' Choire Mheadhoniache, which is flat and stony, is graced with a cairn (3,610 feet). Both this and the next peak are separate mountains. In the lee of the cairn I commenced my well-earned lunch, but at the end of the third mouthful a most infernal blizzard began. I quickly bundled on my rucksack and started down to the col. Now I repented not having a woollen helmet, for I could only face the wind and snow for about five steps at a time, and it was tremendously cold. At the col the storm had largely subsided, and the mist cleared a bit. The drop to the col must be about 600 feet. A little greater rise up at times a very steep slope of frozen snow brought me to the summit of Stob Choire an Easain Mhoir, with a well-built cairn, the height being 3,658 feet. The weather now allowed me to take some lunch in comparative comfort, and the driving mist yielded me some beautiful views. The descent was made by the west-north-west shoulder. This rapidly steepened, and I found myself busily cutting down a very steep slope of old snow which had been laid bare by the wind. Half an hour of this exercise enabled me to finish the descent with sitting glissade. A somewhat lumpy ridge reaches to Learg nan Leacan, which track I struck just above the point marked 1,544 feet. The road was covered with about four inches of snow, so that the rate of movement allowed me to compare the summer and winter appearances of this pass. Without hesitation I can affirm that the winter view is infinitely more beautiful. During the descent I was struck with the grace of Stob Ban (3,217 feet), a southern spur of Stob Choire Claurigh, and sincerely regretted that it was out of my grasp for this holiday. One other beautiful feature occurred during the descent. Dark murky clouds were blowing around the hills, causing them to wear a very mysterious appearance, when suddenly a bright ray of sunshine shot down on to the snowy crest

of the graceful Binnein Mor, making it a shining and glittering monarch of the dark and gloomy Mamore.

As to getting home after dark, a look at the map set my mind at ease, for there was a well-marked drove-road running down from the Spean Bridge track to Dalnabic, opposite Roy Bridge. Consequently I smoked and watched a herd of deer on Stob Coire Gaibhre until about 4.30, and then, as it was beginning to get dark, set off to find the track. I could not find it, but at last discovered a miserable sheep track, which had a great predilection for water and small burns. This is the track marked with a pair of parallel lines in Bartholomew's map, and which is not worthy of being marked as a foot-path. I followed it until it began to sweep round to Dalnabic, and then made straight down to the Spean. In darkness, I found the bridge, about a mile east of Roy Bridge, and arrived at the hotel at 6 P.M.

On January the 8th I desisted from climbing, in order to see the great shinty cup tie between Lochaber and Ballachulish, which the former won, and nobody was seriously hurt. The afternoon train bore me away, to degenerate in mind and body in a smoky city, with no Whangie or Salisbury Crags to stop the process of decay.

TWO CLIMBS ON THE TARMACHANS.

BY HAROLD RAEBURN.

THE mountaineer traveller by the line of the Callander and Oban Railway, glancing back north-eastwards for a view of Ben Lawers, as the train slips down the descent from Glenogle summit to Killin Junction, has his eye first arrested by the rocky peaks of the Tarmachans. If the season be winter, or better, early spring, and the weather clear, the grand cone of Ben Lawers will be seen towering up to the sky from the shores of Loch Tay, in beautiful free running curves of dazzling white.

A few miles nearer, and more directly north, the Tarmachan group, though their highest summit, Meall nan Tarmachan, is nearly 600 feet lower than Lawers, show by the numerous black rents in their snowy covering that they possess steep rock faces on their south-east sides.

These hills form a well-marked group of four peaks, extending for about three miles in a north-easterly direction from above Killin, and cut off from the Ben Lawers *massif* by a deep depression through which runs the road leading from Loch Tay to Glenlyon at Bridge of Balgie. The Lochay valley forms their boundary on the south-west, while on the north-west they are separated by a shallower depression—the Lairig Breisleich—from Meall Ghaordie (3,407 feet) and Beinn nan Oighreag (2,978 feet). On the south their slopes fall down to the shores of Loch Tay, the lower parts clothed in woods of larch, with beech and other hardwoods also. It is several years ago since I first looked at the Tarmachans with an eye to a climb, but it was not until February of this year that an opportunity presented itself of trying one, the said opportunity being possibly assisted by the remark of the Editor of this *Journal*: “I say, Raeburn, you’ve got to ‘do’ the Tarmachans. When are you going to do them?”

Diligent readers of the *Journal* will remember the charming paper by the former Editor on the Tarmachans (Vol. I., p. 270). His party, however, had not attempted any of the rock faces.

My idea at first was to take two days to the hills, utilising the first day for an exploring and topographical walk, and the second to an attempt to ascend the highest and steepest line of crags discovered on the preliminary investigation. I succeeded in inducing Mr Lawson to fall in with this idea. Fortunately, as it turned out, we were saved the trouble of the topographical walk, as a fortnight previous to our visit the Messrs Russell had made a round of the whole four summits (see note in present volume), and we were greatly indebted to the interesting photographs and explanatory notes given us by Mr A. W. Russell. They saved us the intense discomfort we should have experienced on the ridges under the conditions we met with, and enabled us to devote all our time to the rock faces.

Coming up to Killin by the morning train from Edinburgh on the 19th of February, Lawson and I left Killin Hotel at 10.45 *en route* for the Tarmachans.

The nearest summit to Killin is Creag na Caillich (2,990 feet), about three miles due north. This possessed, according to Russell's note, a good face to the south-east, and when the hills are, as they were now, covered with snow from the 1,000 feet level upwards, Creag na Caillich looks very well from Killin, the amount of black showing that the rocks are steep, and, in fact, overhanging in many places. Crossing Lochay Bridge, we turned up the valley for a couple of hundred yards, and then passing through a gate, struck up a timber path through a wood of larch and beech. The rise is very steep at first, but shortly after leaving the wood, the foot of Coire Fionn Lairige is entered, and the crags of the Caillich loom ahead. For the purpose of a traverse of the Tarmachan ridges, or even for the Caillich face, our route is, however, not to be recommended, as the "going" down in the hollow is very bad, full of long rough heather, and abounding in bogs. It would be much better to keep the road for nearly a mile to where a small stream enters the Lochay, and ascend the left bank of this burn, bearing to the right to gain the ridge of the Tarmachans. The weather up aloft had been far from promising when we started, and about twelve it began to snow heavily,

of course just when we had got within photographic distance of the face. There was besides a considerable depth of soft new snow above the 1,000 feet level, and though we were well sheltered in the corrie from the north-west wind, we could see by the way the snow came swirling over the tops that quite a respectable breeze was tearing over the ridges. The Creag na Caillich consists of several tops. The crag visible from Killin is not the actual top, which is about half a mile farther north, but it contains by far the best rocks, and we therefore selected it for our climb. The steep rocks do not, I think, exceed 400 feet in height. Below them broken rocks and scree descend for perhaps 400 feet to the corrie.

Looked at from the south, a prominent ridge of rock will be observed overhanging in many places a narrow gully or chimney which runs up its south side. This chimney we fixed upon as our climb, and after scrambling up the snow-covered scree and boulders below, we entered its lower end at 1.30, and roped.

It proved under the conditions fairly stiff from the start, but went all right for about half the height. Here it is crossed by a horizontal ledge running across the face for a considerable distance. Above this ledge the angle steepened considerably, and finally became, as we judged, impracticable, the ice which covered the more sloping rocks lower down forming fringes of icicles to the overhanging edges of these upper crags. A traverse, therefore, became necessary. We first took our right hand direction along a broad but steeply sloping ledge beneath a great overhanging black crag, the home of a pair of ravens, which flew around croaking uneasily. This refused to go, however, so we had to retrace our steps, and after working along some distance to the left, finally reached the top a few yards to the left of the line of the gully.

Owing to the bad conditions, a good deal of ice as well as loose snow covering the ledges and rocks, the sun was getting low as we reached the summit, not that it had been visible at any time since noon. In the lee of the rock we had been sheltered, though it had been snowing steadily for several hours, but as we topped the ridge we were at

once smitten by a piercing blast full of driving snow flakes, so that we departed as hurriedly as we could, and trotted down the ridge to the larch wood without even delaying to bag the actual peak of Caillich.

This mattered the less, as until some one constructs a ten-foot cairn upon it, it lacks that height of attaining the mystic elevation which would enable it to obtain the honour of a position in Munro's tables.

The morning of the 20th February opened with a cloudless blue sky, hard frost, and a slight powdering of hail on the lower grounds. High up in the north-east the snowy peaks of the Tarmachans and Lawers glistened in the morning light with a dazzling brightness, while we noticed that the snow-line had crept down a couple of hundred feet, showing that there had been heavy snow on the heights during the night. We had resolved to attack this time the other extremity of the Tarmachan range, for we had observed that the north-east spur of Meall nan Tarmachan itself was called on the map Creag na Lochan, and a lochan or tarn at high levels almost invariably involves a climb of some kind above it. Lawson also recollected noticing some rocks above the loch while walking over from Glenlyon a number of years ago. We therefore turned to the right on crossing the Lochay Bridge, and took the road down Loch Tay. We kept this for about two miles, and then struck off uphill by a cart track towards a double stone man planted on the first ridge. This gained and the track lost, we slanted across the south slope of Meall nan Tarmachan, making for the road that runs through the pass. It would have been wiser to have kept the road some distance farther, for about half a mile further on, near Tomocrochen, a cart track (shown as a dotted line on the map) leaves the road, and climbing steeply up for some distance, crosses the shoulder, and joins the main road about three-quarters of a mile below the loch. The going up here was very heavy. The fresh fall of last night lay several inches deep on the old slightly crusted snow beneath to the depth of 8 or 10 inches, and the combination proved extremely fatiguing among the long heather and bog holes of our short cut.

By this time clouds had begun to drift over from the north-west, and a strong and bitterly cold wind had arisen. We had not felt it down by the loch, but we could see by the extremely vigorous manner in which Lawers and the Tarmachans were "smoking their pipes" that a ridge walk would have been a trying experience. Presently a short sharp snowstorm drifted over, and when we gained the south shore of Lochan na Lairige the outlook was thoroughly wintry, the snow driving down the pass and sweeping over the frozen surface of the loch like sand on the seashore. We were rejoiced to observe, however, that above the loch rose a fine range of snow-draped cliffs, facing, like the Caillich Crag, to the south-east, so that we should be sheltered from the wind while attempting a climb on them. With heads well down we fought our way across to the lee of the rocks, and presently the squall blew over, out came the sun, and we had breath and leisure to prospect for a climb.

This range of cliffs is not the main mass of the Creag na Lochan, but rather a spur which strikes off the Tarmachan ridge in a north-east direction, south of a small stream which has its source in Lochan Taribh. It presents a steep face to the south-east for nearly half a mile. The highest part is to the south-west on one's left, facing it, and from there it falls rapidly to the shores of the loch, about half-way up. It forms a distinct top of itself, as it is cut off from the main ridge by a deep little col or pass. The lowest cliff again is cut deeply into by a wide gully running obliquely up it. This gully now presented in the bright sunshine a most beautiful sight. For, about half-way up the overhanging rocks on its upper edge were festooned with enormous icicles and ice masses, dividing the gully longitudinally into two, the one outside, the other inside of a glassy colonnade. Gigantic icicles also hung from the crags in other places, and the sloping rocks, bare of snow, were covered with massy sheets of ice. Close to the highest part of the face—here perhaps 600 feet high—a narrow and wonderfully straight chimney ran right from near the foot to the top. This was to be our climb, and we christened it upon the spot the "Arrow" Chimney. Seen from a little

distance the angle looked very steep, but as the chimney carried a narrow ribbon of unbroken white up the whole height of the cliffs, we did not apprehend any great difficulty. We were reckoning without the black overhanging pitches concealed under the fair white surface. Even to gain the foot of the chimney we found it advisable to rope and exercise some caution, as several ice slopes had to be cut across.

After a halt here for lunch, we started the climb at 1.30 P.M. At first it appeared likely that the start would also be the finish. No less than three times were we beaten back at the point of the bayonet of ice, as it were, in our attempt to storm the first pitch, and the position was only finally carried by a strategic flank movement up steep grass ledges covered with snow a good way out on the left wall, then a scramble on hands and knees through a dark cave, a determined assault with the ice-axe on the screen of icicles at the entrance, and we mounted the chockstone of the first pitch through a hole behind it, and the outworks were won. Then came a steep corner with grass ledges, and the gully widened out and the angle lessened. Presently the rocks closed in again, the formation strikingly resembling the chimney of yesterday, our right-hand wall being a straight edge of overhanging rock, while the left was more open walls of rock and ledges of earth and grass, now of course covered with ice and snow.

The climbing now became distinctly severe. The snow was much too soft to permit of steps being cut in it; it had all to be cleared out of the angle of the chimney before any holds could be discovered. This involved the sending down of great quantities of snow on the second man. Lawson endured this gallantly, and I endeavoured as well as I could to accede to his modest request to "make the blocks smaller." Four pitches now followed in rapid succession—rapid, that is, in distance, though far from rapid in time. Twice was the 60-foot rope out to its full limit before even a tolerable hitch could be found. The angle at which the snow lay in this chimney was very deceptive. It rather *adhered* in places, where a few blows of the axe would reveal a com-

plete hollow with water dripping from the chockstone overhead, or sheets of green ice covering a nearly perpendicular slimy mossy wall. Progress was only to be made in such places by cutting holds for the left hand and left toe in the somewhat thin and rotten ice on our left wall, and thrusting the right knee into the angle of the chimney, while the right hand wielded the ice-axe with as much vigour as was possible in such a cramped position. Gradually we fought our way up, but gradually the sun sank and the cold increased. At length, however, we were rejoiced to note that the swirling snow-filled eddies from the weather side of the ridge began to strike us, telling of the summit near, and at last but one pitch remained to conquer.

The strain of four and a half hours' almost incessant plying of the ice-axe thereupon seized the triceps of my right arm with cramp, and the pitch, though comparatively easy; was only overcome by the aid of a shoulder from Lawson. At six exactly we emerged from the summit of the Arrow Chimney, and met the icy north-west blast. Right glad were we to fling ourselves to the lee side of the ridge, hasten along it, and down the steep snow slopes of Meall nan Tarmachan, ere the last traces of daylight faded from the western sky. We gained the hotel two hours later, and did ample justice to a late dinner.

Keen frost set in about four o'clock, and in the upper part of the gully there must have been fully 15°. The steel of the ice-axes could not be touched with ungloved fingers.

On the whole I am inclined to think that this chimney would be fairly easy in summer. Under the conditions met with, it proved quite sufficiently exciting.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

NEW YEAR'S MEET—FORT-WILLIAM.

BY H. T. MUNRO.

WHEN Fort-William was selected for the New Year's Meet, it was thought by many that the winter attractions of that splendid centre would lead to a record muster ; and so it did, though not in the way expected, for the Meet was the smallest yet held. We heard of members all along the Callander and Oban Railway, at Inveroran, and even at Spean Bridge, but for some reason or another they came not to Fort-William.

E. M. Corner, with the enthusiasm of new membership, was the first to arrive on the 28th, but owing to the weather he did little until the Meet officially began. The evening train on the 30th brought two more new members, Thomas Gibson and James Gall Inglis, and also H. T. Munro, who had travelled from the south of England to attend the Meet, and was the only office-bearer present. The next night Inglis Clark and Scott Moncrieff Penney arrived by the late train, the latter having had two days at Inveroran. On the 31st, Corner, Gibson, and Inglis ascended Ben Nevis by Gully No. 3. It rained or snowed more or less all day, and in the lower part of the gully they found the snow somewhat soft ; higher up step-cutting was necessary. The only difficulty encountered was the cornice at the top ; new snow had banked up a few feet below it, and as it lay on the old snow at a very steep angle, it wasna just tae lippen til. The Observatory was reached at 5 o'clock.

New Year's Day will be remembered by all who were on the hills. A slight frost had set in in the night, and the day was as near perfection as could be. A start was made about 8.15, Messrs Inglis Clark, Gibson, and Gall Inglis intending to try the Tower ridge, but tempted by the perfect weather and photography they merely ascended by the pony track, or as much of it as was not under snow. Penney, Corner, and Munro drove to Polldubh in Glen Nevis, and climbed Ben Nevis over Càrn Dearg (3,348

feet). After the usual hospitable entertainment at the Observatory, the two parties descended to the Càrn Mòr Dearg arête, glissaded into the corrie, and made their way home under the grand north-east cliffs, and by Lochan Meall an-t Suidhe. On 2nd January, Gibson alone went to the hills, doing Stob Bàn, and round by the ridge to Mullach nan Coirean.

Monday, 3rd, was even a more perfect day than the 1st. Messrs Inglis Clark and Gibson made an early start at 7.25, again intending to attack the Tower ridge, but changed their plans and climbed a new gully of extreme difficulty. They were nine hours in the gully, working hard all the time. The Observatory was only reached at 8.15, and a private telegram forwarded to the hotel from the low-level Observatory was received just as the rest of the members were arranging for a search party. If it had not been for the bright moonlight the night must have been spent in the gully.

Corrier, Penney, and Munro ascended the Càrn Deargs, and then crossed the arête to Ben Nevis. The passage of the arête took just an hour and three-quarters, but photography and the glorious views were responsible for a good deal of wasted time. The rope was used more as a precaution than from necessity, though at one or two points—notably a very sharp snow arête up which steps had to be cut—moderate care was needed. While on the arête a party of four was observed cutting up from the corrie to a point close to the highest portion of the arête where it abuts on Càrn Mòr Dearg. They were hailed, and proved to be a party from Spean Bridge, consisting of Messrs Hill and Walker and two friends. Farther up they reached rocks which gave them some difficulty, being glazed. The ascent from the corrie to the arête was stiff, and occupied five hours. The Deargs were crossed by moonlight, and Spean Bridge reached at a late hour. Meanwhile the former party reached the Observatory at 4 o'clock, and witnessed a sunset which will live in the memory of all who saw it. A golden glory surrounded with clusters of blood-red and indigo clouds; the snow-capped peaks dyed a rich carmine, and wreathed in fleecy vapours, some of which were tinted a soft

rose colour and others a pale green. To the east the sky was delicately graduated from the zenith to the horizon with from rich gold to the palest green, while to the west the mountains of Rum and the Cuillins, Golvain, and Sgòr na Ciche, and all the wild western hills, stood out from a sky of deep olive green—gorgeously beautiful, but not promising for the morrow. We found the Observatory temporarily deserted, as one of the inmates had dropped his ski over the precipice, and the other two had lowered him down with all the rope they had—some 200 feet or more—which proved just about 20 feet too short. Accordingly we attached our 60-foot rope; he was again let down over the cliff, and returned in triumph with his ski. It was therefore 5.30 before we left the top. We were able to race down over good snow to within a few hundred feet of the loch, and then a brisk walk down the path brought us to the hotel for 8 o'clock dinner, Gibson and Clark arriving about 11.30.

Next morning mist and torrents of rain. And so ended a Meet remarkable alike for its smallness and the glorious weather enjoyed, and which was voted by all present an unqualified success.

THE EASTER MEET—BALLACHULISH.

BY H. T. MUNRO.

EASTER, like the New Year, was mainly notable for the meagreness of the muster at the official Meet; for while there were climbing parties at Banavie, Fort-William, Clachaig, Kingshouse, Inveroran, Kinlochawe, &c., only ten members and two guests put in an appearance at Ballachulish—considerably the smallest Easter Meet yet held. The party consisted of Messrs R. A. Robertson (President), D. Campbell, W. A. Smith, W. Inglis Clark, H. G. S. Lawson, James Parker, F. Conradi Squance, W. Lamond Howie, J. Gall Inglis, and H. T. Munro; with E. B. Robertson and W. N. Ling, guests.

The weather on the whole was disappointing, for though parties were on the hills every day, Friday was the only really fine day—April weather, with a decided preponderance of showers, prevailing during the rest of the Meet. Seldom had any of the party seen the big hills as free of snow at Easter time. What there was, however, notwithstanding the mildness of the weather, was in good condition and granular, and some excellent glissading was obtained.

Munro was the first to arrive, and on Thursday, 7th April, traversed all the peaks of Beinn a Bheithir in mist and pouring rain. Taken along the ridge the ascent is quite simple, but subsequent parties (on the Friday and Sunday) proved that excellent scrambling can be got on the mountain, notably on the big buttress which faces the hotel; and as it is not under deer, and in the season numerous steamers touch at Ballachulish, it may well be worth the attention of members in summer.

On Friday the whole party profited by the glorious weather to ascend Bidean nam Bian, some climbing by Stob Coire an Lochan, while Maclay, Inglis Clark, and Gall Inglis climbed a fine gully on Aonach Dubh, and Naismith and Douglas left a card for Ossian in his cave on their way to the top. Every one was on the highest summit

at least once during the day, several twice, and the Messrs Robertson three times. The mountain was visited every day of the Meet, and some good snow work and glissades were got round its upper buttresses. On Monday a determined though unsuccessful attack was made on the "Church Door" of Bidean.

The Aonach Eagach ridge, on the north side of Glencoe, was traversed by three parties, and was voted the finest summit ridge out of the Cuillins. The ascent to it, if taken from either extreme end, is easy, but the two first parties struck up the face, and experienced some little difficulty. The ridge itself is finely broken up, and in places very narrow, and the cliffs on the north even steeper than those to the south.

Monday saw the departure of most of the party, but Conradi Squance, Inglis Clark, and Munro remained to do the Aonach Eagach ridge on Tuesday, and were rewarded by a fairly fine day.

A word must be said as to the comfort of the hotel, which has recently passed under new management, and is capable of accommodating half the Club.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CLIMBING IN SKYE.

[To the Editor of the *S.M.C. Journal*.]

SIR,—I am sorry that Dr Inglis Clark should have invited any adverse criticism of his interesting paper on Cir Mhor in the last number of the *Journal* by certain remarks upon climbing in Skye which seem to me to be neither particularly relevant nor well founded. With apparent approval he quotes Mr Raeburn as saying, "I would not trust a climber who had only climbed in Skye. . . . The Skye climbing, as far as my experience goes, is ridiculously easy, with the exception of the gap on the Alasdair-Dubh ridge and the lower portions of the rocks near Coruisk" (page 33). Later on these immoderate assertions are referred to as being "explained" by a disquisition about the word "difficult" which I frankly confess I do not understand. If the writer only means that "difficult" is a relative term, *cadit quæstio*. The dictionary is the best evidence of that.

I demur very strongly, however, to his estimate of Skye climbing as "ridiculously easy, &c.," or at all events to the use of loose language such as is calculated to convey the impression that the Skye climbs generally are intended to be stigmatised as such. If Mr Raeburn, in the rôle of a modern Johnson, used that description, I am very much surprised; if the remark is only Boswell's, it is bad enough, and should not be allowed to go unchallenged in a journal which is so full of authoritative testimony to the opposite effect.

It is of course a commonplace not worth dwelling upon that the Coolin climbs are generally much easier than they look, and that those of the mainland and of Arran are usually the exact opposite. It may also be admitted that this is chiefly due to the character of the Coolin gabbro, which is exceptionally good and reliable, broken up so as to admit in most places of an almost infinite choice of routes, and "weathered" into the most magnificent foot and hand holds. Any one travelling along the main ridge of the Coolins will be much impressed with those characteristics. Comparing his impressions of the Pinnacle Ridge from Sligachan Inn with the reality, he may come home, if he is a "previous" person, and say that the Coolins are "ridiculously easy." If he has also paid for a guide to take him over that perfectly easy ridge, he may reach in his disappointment even higher flights of invective. I have known such cases. But it is of course most unreasonable to sum up the Coolins as a whole on the strength of a few climbs which are easier than they look and are

reputed to be. It may at once be conceded that, for the fairly experienced rock climber, the main ridge of the Coolins is, with a few exceptions, distinctly easy. But let me ask Dr Inglis Clark, seeing that he has come forward as a champion of Arran: Is it easier than the circuit of Glen Sannox, or the A'Chir Ridge? Or, to pass to the mainland, how does it compare with the horse-shoe ridge of Cruachan or the circuit of the Ladharr Bheinn tops? These are the sort of climbs (really stiff tourist routes) with which one must compare "ridge wandering" in the Coolins, and not with a gully on Cir Mhor face, the Ben Nuis precipice, the Tower of Ben Nevis, or the cliffs of Lochnagar. Compared with those other climbs that I have named, the Coolin ridge, even making full allowance for the fact that it is swept and garnished, and greatly simplified from what it must once have been, would be regarded as a distinctly difficult tourist route, and I refer Dr Clark, in proof of this assertion, to his own descriptions on pages 196 and 197 of Vol. IV. of the Journal.

"Ridge wandering," however, is only a part, and now the least interesting part, of climbing in Skye. When once the main ridge has been left, there is literally no limit to the difficulties a bold climber may find himself confronted with; and I venture to make this assertion, that for variety and interest of climbing, from the "ridiculously easy" to the extremely difficult, there is no finer climbing ground in Scotland than the Coolins, or, at all events, a better has not yet been discovered. It is a mistake also to suppose that the rock in Skye is always good and reliable. Interspersed with the soundest gabbro you find upon the faces a form of trap which is smooth, treacherous, and very much shattered. Sometimes, as in trap dykes, that form of rock is a distinct assistance; at other times, when burdened with baggage or climbing in water-worn gullies, it is extremely troublesome; sometimes it "pounds" the climber altogether. Speaking from a considerable experience of Skye climbing, I have come across nearly every variety of the ordinary climbing rocks (viewing them from the climber's and not the geologist's standpoint), except thoroughly rotten and vegetable rock; and if the climber desires slabs that are worse than those of Arran, my advice is, let him try some of the lower slopes of Coruisk or Harta Corrie on the Mhadaidh side; if, on the other hand, his taste lies in gullies, he will find the "water pipe" of Sgurr na Fheadain *not* "ridiculously easy"—in fact, a certain climber said, and still says, that it is impossible; and if he should be ambitious to try conclusions with some of the faces, I recommend him to try the Corrie Labhain face of Sgurr Alasdair and the Coruisk faces of Dearg, Mhic Coinnich, and Mhadaidh. If he thinks those "ridiculously easy," I should not like to be roped to him in a really difficult climb. Dr Inglis Clark's mistake, I venture humbly to think, lies in comparing things that should not be compared. Granted that the Pinnacle Ridge and some other well-known Skye climbs are easier than the Ben Nuis precipice, there is *lots* else in Skye more difficult

than either that is yet feasible, and lots that neither Dr Inglis Clark nor any one else is ever likely to climb.

And yet it seems to be suggested that this infinitely rich centre is not a good school for the climber (for that is the only construction that can be reasonably put upon the statement that a climber is not to be trusted who has climbed only in Skye). This is not only "profanity," it is perilously like nonsense, as to which I will only say that if a climber has not the sense to know that he must treat different rocks differently, he ought to give up climbing altogether, and go in for something that puts less tax upon his intelligence.

I have tried to make those remarks as impersonal as possible, but I find that names have crept in in spite of my best efforts to exclude them. That suggests to me saying that Raeburn and Dr Clark must fight out the question of ultimate liability between themselves. I think there is sufficient reason to call both as defenders, but I apprehend that each may have a defence to state. The one may say, "I was only quoting," the other may repudiate the accuracy of the quotations. That, however, is a personal matter, and is of no general interest. The important point is that the Coolins have been slandered, and as a humble member of the climbing public I have ventured to record my protest. If in doing so I have said anything unduly derogatory to two respected members of the Club, the memory of many pleasant days spent at Sligachan and Coruisk, and of many a tough encounter with those grand old hills, when the very last impression left upon my mind was their "ridiculous ease," must be my excuse. Any knowledge I have of rock climbing was first learned in Skye, and I am not aware that I had to unlearn anything when I went elsewhere. Of course I must admit that my knowledge of the sport generally is not to be compared with Raeburn's, but if the latter's experience of the Coolins has not enabled him to discover the number of stiff climbs to be had there, it is not wide enough to justify him generalising on the subject.—I am, yours, &c.,

WILLIAM BROWN.

[*To the Editor of the S.M.C. Journal.*]

SIR,—Mr Brown's lengthy letter hardly requires serious answer from me, more especially as I understand Mr Raeburn is dealing with some points contained in it. I shall therefore confine myself to asking your readers to again peruse my paper on Cir Mhor, especially the part dealing with the word "difficulty," and its bearing on climbing in Skye. I think any one with a desire to rightly understand my remarks will consider that Mr Brown's letter is an example of "much cry and little 'oo."

It has occurred to me that you, sir, have been short of copy for the *Journal*, and that Mr Brown's letter has been written to fill "an aching void." It is satisfactory to have his assurance as to the efforts he has

made to confine himself to his subject, and to avoid personal matters, for if he had allowed himself free rein, I fear the *Journal* itself would not have been sufficient to contain all he had to say.

W. INGLIS CLARK.

[*To the Editor of the S.M.C. Journal.*]

SIR,—Is it the echo of a Coolin south-wester that I hear, howling and shrieking up the great chasm of Coruisk, and shaking the huts till they quiver and lift, and their strong timbers groan again before the blast? But no; after all it is only a storm in a teacup, blowing from an entirely opposite quarter, and raised by your correspondent over a couple of remarks of mine regarding the general character of Skye climbing quoted by Dr Clark in his paper on Cir Mhor.

I never sympathised very much before with the great lexicographer with whom your correspondent so flatteringly compares your humble servant. His abrupt speeches, such as "Sir, you are an ass," appear to be, to put it mildly, somewhat rough and rude; but possibly, if we were able to turn back the clock of time, put ourselves in the Doctor's place, and hear the whole conversation which led up to the above remark, we might be inclined to think that after all Johnson was perfectly justified.

It is far from my intention or desire, however, to assume any oracular Johnsonian attitude in the matter. I can only express my regret that anything I said should have touched the—however abnormally developed—"Skyeatic" nerve of any climber. I should have thought, however, that Dr Clark's philosophic reflections would have clearly indicated to any one who read the article, unless in a desperate hurry, the sense in which the "pegs" were used; but as this appears to be not the case with your correspondent, perhaps a few words of explanation would not be amiss.

To begin with, the conversation between Dr Clark and myself from which the remarks were quoted, dealt with Skye and the Coolins only as a minor and subsidiary side issue. Chiefly the discourse was of those vastly magnified Coolins of the Southern Tyrol, and their tremendous precipices and pinnacles of almost incredible steepness, yet many of which, as Dr Clark experienced, present no insuperable difficulties to the enterprising climber. All this "foreign" matter, you, sir, as a patriotic Editor, quite rightly suppressed. We talked of the Dolomite guides, and their wonderful activity on rocks, and I expressed curiosity as to how they would treat the very different conditions usually met with in Scotland. I inclined to think, as I do still, that their training would make them at first rather dangerous to follow, say in Arran, in working out new climbs.

Similarly, I would not trust the judgment of an entirely Coolin-trained mountaineer, especially if of a naturally rash and "previous" disposition, in such an enterprise, however good a rock climber he might be. Rock climbing after all is only a part of mountaineering, even more important is judgment in selecting possible routes and a

general knowledge of the difficulties likely to be met with on widely differing geological formations.

With regard to the other remark, I am surprised at the ignorance expressed by so learned a mountaineer as your correspondent as to the meaning in a climbing sense of "difficult." I fear that we should search in vain in any dictionary yet published for the verb "to go" as applied by mountaineers to a climb, or for such a definition of "A. P." as was so neatly given by an official of the S.M.C. in a recent issue of the *Journal*. If we turn to "Mountaineering," by Dr Claude Wilson, we find "difficult" and "easy" rocks explained thus:—"Handholds and footholds are spoken of collectively as holds, and when these are firm and plentiful the rocks are said to be easy; on 'difficult' rocks the holds are scanty, or are so small or so awkwardly placed, that it requires considerable skill to make use of them." It is no argument against the general application of this to Skye climbing to select, as your correspondent does, a few of the most difficult climbs, several of which have only been done once, or at most twice, and that by exceptionally skilful climbers.

As Mr Brown himself says, in his useful *résumé* of Skye climbs (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. IV., p. 195): "The development of rock climbing in Skye has followed, for the most part, the line of the ridges." No one would dream of asserting that there are not difficult rocks and difficult climbs in Skye. An impossible climb is not a climb at all. The great ice-worn slabs of the lower corries were especially excepted in my conversation with Dr Clark from the—in my experience—generally easy character of the rocks; but though I ventured to speak of the even "ridiculously easy" climbing when compared with the steepness of the angles, I never *said* anything so "perilously like nonsense" as Mr Brown when he *wrote* of "the present-day climber who *runs* over the Pinnacle Ridge."

There are numerous other points which invite criticism in the long, and, may I say it, somewhat discursive epistle of your esteemed correspondent, but I refrain. I cannot help expressing my admiration, however, for the "intelligence" and lightning-like adaptability of Mr Brown. Even the best professional climbers of the Tyrol or Switzerland sometimes express considerable diffidence as to their powers when first transferred to unfamiliar conditions.

There is but one point more, and I have done. Why should your correspondent turn on the pathetic stop and talk of the "grand old hills" being "slandered"? No one disputes their grandeur or their age—though in the last respect, by the way, they are but as yesterday compared with many mainland mountains. The Coolins are splendid hills, first-rate climbing has been done on them, and there are years of first-rate climbing still to do, when climbs we to-day call difficult will be thought easy. But the gabbro of the Coolins is *too* good, it makes one discontented with one's powers on smoother rocks. It is the very luxury of British climbing, and therefore, in my opinion, is not the best place for the training of the novice.

H. RAEBURN.

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.

WASTDALE AT CHRISTMAS.—Unable to join the S.M.C. Meet at Fort-William this New Year, the writer thought that the next best thing to do was to pay a flying visit to Wastdale Head—that happy hunting ground of the English climber at festive Christmastide—and taste the rocky fare so abundantly provided in that favoured spot for the delectation of the rock-climber. In the result a couple of most enjoyable days were spent in sampling Great Gable and the Pillar Rock.

With regard to the climbing and its quality, I cannot do better than fully endorse all that Mr Naismith has so happily said (Vol. IV., page 174). The rock is usually of first-rate climbing quality, and totally unlike the schist of the Central Highlands, or even the granite slabs of Arran. The climbs are usually, as in Skye, easier than they look, owing to the abundance of ledges, chimneys, and good hitches.

The weather at Christmas was unseasonable, the frost quite breaking up on Christmas Eve. There was consequently little or no ice or snow except in some high north aspect gullies. Wastdale Head Hotel has the disadvantage (or advantage?) of being somewhat difficult to reach. The route I took on the 24th of December, up Borrowdale and over the Styhead Pass, is not to be recommended to a stranger, unless he arrange to get over in daylight. Driving up from the West Coast stations of Drigg or Seascale is undoubtedly the easier method of reaching headquarters. If the climber is also a cyclist, he could utilise his own air-shod steel steed to overcome the 14 miles of good road between the hotel and the railway. Certainly a visit, flying or otherwise, is to be recommended to all S.M.C. members, and a climber is sure of a hearty welcome from the first-rate climbers and thorough sportsmen who make Wastdale Head Hotel their headquarters at Christmas or Easter.—H. RAEBURN.

AONACH MOR AND BEN NEVIS.—Messrs H. Walker, H. G. Walker, and H. Hill, with a friend, had two days' climbing at New Year time from Spean Bridge Hotel. On the 1st January, crossing over from the Fort-William road, the party struck the valley of the river Cour,

and followed up the glen with the intention of climbing Aonach Beag by its north-east ridge. On reaching the foot of the ridge, time was so far gone that it was decided to make for the saddle between Beag and Mor, and return home over Aonach Mor. The snow was dry and powdery, and the last 400 feet were heavy going. The cornice gave some trouble in passing, and one large slip carried the party back a few feet down the slope. Once over, the going was firm and easy over Mor and An Nid. Fortunately the moon gave enough light to save much damage being done in crossing the moor to the keeper's house, after which there is a good road.

On the 3rd January the same party left the Fort-William road, a little to the north of Inverlochry Castle, and made for the great corrie on the north of Ben Nevis. The morning was clear and frosty, and the going capital. The sunrise effects were grand, and for once it seemed as if a very large amount of sunshine was being registered on the Ben. The intention was to strike the ridge connecting the Ben and Carn Mor Dearg at the head of the glen, but the rocks, insufficiently covered with snow, being glazed and lying the wrong way, forced the climbers somewhat to the left of it. What with step cutting, traversing to avoid glazed rocks, gullies filled with powdery snow, and latterly having to send the first man on to find anchorage from which to help up the rest of the party, the climb, which began in earnest about noon, was not finished till 6.30, when the ridge at a height of about 3,750 feet, on the south side of Carn Mor Dearg, was struck. By this time the moon was shining brightly, fortunately for us. After that a rush was made over Dearg, Meadhonach, and Beag, retracing the footprints of Mr Munro's party, whom we had hailed on their way to the Ben. Spean Bridge was reached about 10.30, to the great relief of our landlady. The state of the snow and rocks made this a very sporting climb. At one time it seemed as if a night out was among the possibilities. Both sunrise and sunset effects were magnificent, although, curiously enough, the party never saw the sun that day. The cliffs on Ben Nevis by moonlight looming through the mists had a very weird effect.

H. H.

THE TARMACHANS.—My brother (R. R. Russell) and I found these hills quite worth the visit we paid them on 5th February last. With the intention of having time for a long day on the hills we took the night train north, and got away from Lix Station (head of Glenogle) shortly after two; the moon high and clear, and the frost keen. Passing through Killin, we kept the Glen Lochay road for nearly a mile beyond the bridge, and leaving it at 3.30, gained the summit of the first steep slope about 1,100 feet, and got a closer view of the hills; the moon, however, had by this time passed behind a heavy threatening bank of clouds in the west, and the view was indistinct. After a brief halt we started for Ben nan Eachan by Coire Fionn Lairige, but

finding the going very heavy through the heather and soft snow, we made for Creag na Caillich, the most southerly of the four summits constituting the Tarmachans. Although this is the lowest of these, being only 2,990 feet, it appears to give the best rock work, its eastern face rising abruptly for several hundred feet with a considerable overhang at places. We reached its summit at 6.40, and after a quarter of an hour left in a heavy snowstorm for Ben nan Eachan, which, rising to a height of fully 3,300 feet lies almost due north-east of Creag na Caillich, from which it is separated by a dip of quite 200 feet. From a distance there appeared to be some climbing on the south face of this hill, but the driving snow and mist prevented us getting any view of it as we approached. The S.W. ridge of the hill is steep, but afforded no excitement beyond some patches of ice and glazed rocks, and the cairn was reached before 8. Meall Ton Eich (2,821 feet) is the highest point on a ridge, which running in a northerly direction from Ben nan Eachan, contains several gullies to the east but of unknown quality. Meall Garbh, the next summit, about 3,350 feet, lies almost due east, and after a steep descent of nearly 400 feet and subsequent slight ascent we reached its west face, which at first rises steep and rocky, and thence gained the big rock forming the summit before 9, or forty minutes from Ben nan Eachan. Meall Garbh seems to offer no rock climbing other than a few gullies on the east side of the ridge running south. The snow had previously ceased, and the sunrise down Loch Tay was very fine, all the hills being white, and with the exception of Ben Lawers, free of mist. Leaving again at 9.30, another half-hour easily brought us to the cairn of Meall nan Tarmachan (3,421 feet), which lies to the N.E. of Meall Garbh, and occasions a descent of some 200 feet. Owing to the depth and softness of the snow we gave up thoughts of Meall Ghaordie, and descended to Killin.

A. W. R.

BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR.—A party of seven—Messrs Bell, Collinson, Glover, Green, Higginbotham, Napier, and Raeburn—spent Easter 1898 at Kingshouse. All the climbs done were on Stob Dearg of Buchaille Etive Mor. Five new routes were found on its north-east and south-east faces.

The references below are to the articles and illustrations in the *Journal*, Nos. 20 and 21, under the titles of "Four Days on Buchaille Etive Mor" and "The Crowberry Ridge."

9th April.—Glover and Collinson ascended the gully just on the left (east) side of the "Curved Ridge." One pitch near the top gave some trouble.

10th April.—Glover and Collinson traversed diagonally across the south-east face of the mountain from the side of the great chasm mentioned on page 101, Vol. IV., towards the Tower at the head of the Crowberry Ridge. From the base of the Tower they reached the summit by the wide snow-filled gully on its south side.

Raeburn and Green ascended the gully just on the right (west) of the Crowberry Ridge. At the very top where the gully forks they were forced to take to the branch farthest from the Crowberry Ridge. The gully gave a fine climb, with one sensational traverse, and the scenes throughout, with the tremendous overhanging wall of the Crowberry Ridge, were very striking.

Napier, Higginbotham, and Bell attacked the great central buttress which descends from the top towards Kingshouse Inn. They started up a tongue of heather and broken rock on the right (north) of the precipitous lower cliff of the buttress. They then traversed across the face to the left by a heathery ledge. This traverse brought them to a small stream just above the point where it plunges over for a long slide down the steep lower rocks of the buttress. They then followed generally the line of the stream at first on its south side, and came out on to the upper rocks of the "Curved Ridge." This route offered no difficulty. They then climbed the Tower at the head of the Crowberry Ridge by its east side, a very steep climb of about 100 feet, ending at the cairn.

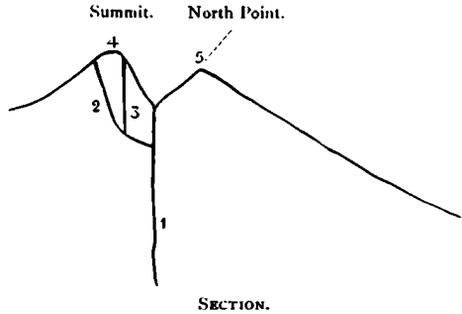
11th April.—Napier and Glover ascended the Crowberry Ridge, and descended by the gully on its east side. This gully was mentioned by Mr Naismith as "probably the quickest way from Kingshouse to the top of the mountain." It was found to present no difficulty.

Although the quantity of snow was exceptionally small for the time of year, it was sufficient to give a good deal of assistance in the gullies, which will probably be found more difficult in summer. In particular the climbers in the great gully on the west of the Crowberry Ridge would expect to find a series of very formidable pitches when the gully is clear of snow.

J. H. BELL.

WALES.—Messrs Barrow, Brunskill, C. E. Martineau, two ladies, and I had a splendid day on Good Friday, when we ascended the north gully of Tryfean, described by Jackson in Vol. IV., *S.M.C. Journal*, p. 316; but when we reached the upper part of this gully we made apparently a new route for about the last 100 feet. The following section will show our route:—(1) North gully; (2) previous variation of top of north gully; (3) summit; (4) northern summit; (5) steep face with a small chimney, up which we went, and arrived at a point on the ridge a little to the right of the summit—Brunskill (leader). I think this route is new, as there were no nail marks, and we had to pull away stones to make handholds. We descended by the left-hand side of the south gully. It poured with rain on Saturday and Sunday. Sunday night we decided to start, wet or fine, for Lliwedd. We went on our bicycles from Capel Curig in the rain on Easter Monday, and it continued to rain all day. The men of our party started up the central gully of Lliwedd, and then on to the western buttress by a traverse described in Mr Haskett Smith's book, and thence by steep rocks to the summit. The handholds are good, but the rocks are steep, and are

tilted so that the climbing has to be carefully performed. The worst piece is after the traverse, where the ascent is up some smooth slabs where the handholds are far apart. It is a very nice climb. From Lliwedd we ascended Snowdon (Y Wyddfa) in a snowstorm, and descended by the zigzag. Tuesday, Barrow led Martineau, my sister, and myself along Crib Goch, down a chimney near the Crazy pinnacle, and up Clogwyn y Person. The latter is a jolly climb, but the handholds and footholds are so good that there is no difficulty. There was no ice and very little snow.



It may interest members to hear that a new hotel will be built by next Christmas at the top of Llanberis Pass, on the site of the Gorphwysfa Inn. Only a few can get into the Pen-y-Gwryhd Hotel, and so this will be a great addition to the hotel accommodation. It will be erected and kept by Mr Cobden, who is well known in cricket circles, and now keeps the Cobden Hotel, Capel Curig.

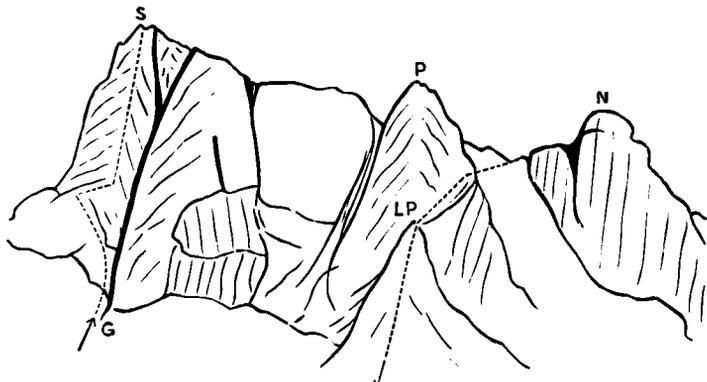
W. WICKHAM KING.

GARBH BHEINN OF ARDGOUR ("GARVEN,")—In the account of the climb which Mr Brown and I had on this mountain there is a slip which might puzzle future climbers. On page 313, Vol. IV., the account reads:—"A large and conspicuous gully descends from the summit of the mountain. . . . We selected the *north* wall of this gully for our ascent, as it seemed to be the true crest of the buttress." The word "north" here is a mistake. Our ascent was by the south wall.

The accompanying rough sketch and explanation may help to clear the matter up. The sketch was made beside the burn in Glen Iubhair, to the east of the mountain, and about 2,500 feet below the summit. This accounts for the undue prominence of the pinnacle (P), which stands forward, and thus appears from below to be higher than the ridge behind it.

Our route is marked by a dotted line. From the top the pinnacle (P) is so little prominent that we imagined that the lower pinnacle (L P) must be the "inaccessible" point of which we had heard. The traverse of this point is an interesting but not difficult scramble.

Two days after our ascent the mountain was ascended by Messrs Haskett Smith and Hastings. Mr Haskett Smith told me that they started climbing in the great gully (G), then got out with difficulty on to its right (north) wall, and reached the summit by it. The gully itself was found to be too wet. In dry weather, if possible at all, it



GARBH BHEINN OF ARDGOUR.

S.—Summit, 2,980, by aneroid. G.—Great gully. P.—The pinnacle.
 N.—North peak, 2,680, by aneroid. L.P.—The lower pinnacle.

would give a grand climb of about 1,200 feet. The climb of the pinnacle (P) direct from the lower pinnacle appears possible and interesting. The rocks of the north peak are very steep. Climbs on it would probably be difficult. The face between the great gully and the pinnacle could be ascended almost anywhere. The gully just on the south of the pinnacle looks very easy.

J. H. BELL.

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A REVERIE.

BY NORMAN COLLIE.

“ . . . Restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past.”

ON winter evenings, when out of doors the fogs and dirt of London reign supreme, it is the wisest course to sit at home in one's arm-chair, warmed by the blaze of a comfortable fire, to watch the smoke curl upwards from one's pipe, and, with some favourite book for a companion, to read, to doze, to think; then, tired with the usual action of the day, the book falls on to one's knees, and pictures of all sorts and conditions float lazily through the tobacco mists in front of one's mental eye.

I have been told that effects are due to causes. Perhaps these undisciplined wanderings of my brain may be only a necessary result of a good dinner; perhaps the quiet content that I feel may be caused only by a spirit of contradiction—a knowledge that, instead of the arm-chair and desultory brain wanderings, exact, well-regulated thoughts should be concentrated on necessary labour. Do I not know that before to-morrow I ought to answer that letter of six pages, wherein a fond parent has asked me, whether, in my opinion, Science might be the proper career for Tommy (of tender years), who already (most marvellous fact) has shown a marked interest in fireworks, and who also has sacrificed a new suit of clothes on the altar of Chemistry. Personally, all my sympathies are with Tommy; for even he, in the first attempts of early youth,

has found that these things which he ought not to have done are often very pleasant; and I—I am still sitting in my arm-chair with the fixed intention of leaving that letter unanswered—for the present. But as my thoughts wander, an uneasy feeling begins to assert itself. Why are people so fearfully energetic? Why did that fond parent spend goodness knows how long in writing that letter? Why have I to spend goodness knows how much longer in answering it? A weary world, truly! Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, and worries and bothers are for ever at one's elbow—*me misere!* Ah! a quotation wanders by. I nod acquaintance to it. When at home it may be found in an "Ode to the Terrestrial Globe," by another miserable wretch—

"It's true my prospects all look blue—
But don't let that unsettle you!
Never you mind.
Roll on!" *(It rolls on.)*

Then, at once, I remember those lines on golf that occur somewhere in "Paradise Lost," but I am too lazy to find the context—

"So eagerly with horrid voice the Fiend
Cries 'Fore!' as he o'er the far bunker drives
The errant ball; it with the setting sun
Dropp'd from the zenith like a falling star,
Alas! untruly urged, it lies in Hell."

By this time my pipe is out. Where are these matches? I know the last time I saw them they were on the corner of the table. I shall look for them presently. In the meantime, my thoughts have taken a fresh plunge, and I follow them with a feeling of languid interest. Where on earth are they going? I see the head political officer of the Gilgit district playing golf on the Maidan above Astor, amongst the stately pines on the Himalayan mountains, whilst ranged round me are the snow-peaks and the glaciers.

Those wonderful mountains! What magnificent outlines, what grandeur, what mystery, what! . . . stop! Can I be growing sentimental? It must have been the

Stilton or the sardines that have produced this particular physiological sensation. Yes, without doubt, the sardines, for now do I remember having read long ago, in a goodly book of right pleasant and entertaining anecdotes, a story, a most sentimental story, all about two Sardines, who lived and loved amongst the purple waves of the roaring Adriatic. But that is another story.

However, the sensation is passing, and my thoughts have flown back naturally to the subject of dinners. Yes, many dinners—what a subject!—glorious, unapproachable, exhaustless dinners! I could write pages, volumes, in praise of dinners; but not for the vulgar, not for the uninitiated, that surely were sacrilege. Dinners that with subtle and insinuating address came and went, leaving behind them fascinating and precious memories, even though “good digestion did not wait on appetite.” Dinners, too, eaten under the stars—yes, now I think of it, that *was* a dinner, when four of us ate a whole sheep, and only a sheep, after two weary days and nights spent starving on the icy slopes of Nanga Parbat. Mountaineering, truly thou art a marvellous and goodly provoker of hunger: to those in search of sensations—of sensations with a fine, keen, and healthy edge to them—big boisterous sensations not to be denied—to those favoured mortals, thou, O Goddess of Mountaineering, art propitious!

Sometimes, however, these ecstasies, these inspired emotions of mind and body, may be pushed rather far; but the recoil comes, and with it contrast which is always agreeable. The memories of these unpleasant Alpine half-hours grow faint as one sits in a satisfying arm-chair—they are easily discounted in process of mental dissipation, by which one cheats one's self; and, finally, it is easy to believe that there is no sport like the supreme sport of mountaineering. Of course, this conclusion is fallacious—conclusions usually are—but then it is one's brain (poor thing) that is responsible for it, not one's self.

Again my thoughts are interrupted. Outside in the cold, the rain, and the darkness some poor wretch is making night hideous by attempting to sing—

“There is a 'appy land, for, for awye.”

Most true! most philosophical! The Islands of the Blest usually are some distance off. We have been told by the poet that they are to be attained neither by omnibuses, nor are they approached by

“A ram-you-damn-you liner with a brace of bucking screws ;”

therefore why disturb the darkness, oh most miserable one! by dismal reiteration of a well-known fact? But still the song moans out its Cockney dialect false notes and falser sentiment, and the singer drenched to the skin, starved with probably only one desire, and that for drink, goes her way. I hear the melancholy music die into the distance. What are her sensations? Of a truth they cannot be pleasant; but with those few coppers changed into the equivalent of alcohol at the nearest public-house, perhaps she also may

“Life’s leaden metal into gold transmute,”

and cheat herself into the belief that life is worth living. That last sentence, now I come to read it over again, seems perhaps a trifle cynical; seems, it can be only “seems,” for I am sure my brain could not be guilty of such offence. Are we not told that things often “are not what they seem”? Have I not heard the late Poet Laureate accused (and by a Scotchwoman too) of writing slang?—

“Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west.”

My thoughts, too, are “sloping” in a westerly direction. I am on a personally-conducted tour—my brain is in command, and I am a spectator. I am being shown vistas of the metamorphosed past and the indeterminable future blended together, till I cannot tell whether these things have been or are to be.

I see long stretches of Rannoch Moor with Buchaille Etive fronting the lonely heather land, bold and massive, the sentinel of wild Glencoe; again I pick my way up its precipitous face with Collier and Solly. Now I am on the summit of Ben More in Mull; below lies a ridge smothered in snow and ice. I am trying all I can, with words of sweet persuasion, to entice Phillip down it, obviously the shortest route to the next summit, A Chioch; or I am on the shores of Loch Earn, listening to Hinxman, who also, with words

of sweet persuasion, is trying to make me believe that Loch Morar was excavated by a glacier—how things change! Phillip, without doubt, in those days, believed that I was totally ignorant of mountaineering; whilst now, perhaps, Hinxman thinks that I am equally ignorant of the truth. Whether my brain means the truth about Loch Morar, or about Hinxman's statement, or about my own, I really don't know. I am hurried on; I see myself footsore and weary, wandering through Ardgour and Moidart, or across from Invercannich through Affric's wild glens down to Shiel House, by the western sea; now I am glissading down Beinn Alligin, or hacking my way through a cornice, apparently hundreds of feet high, on Aonach Mhor, my companion Travers meanwhile slowly freezing on the brink of an A.P. ice slope, the daylight waning, and our retreat cut off. Then comes a glimpse of the platform at Kingshouse Station. I am addressing winged words to Colin Phillip, and he is engaged in a contentious refutation of my argument. The subject is not at all interesting—only the comparative usefulness of painting and photography as a means for reproducing mountain form; but the result is most disgraceful, for presently we are seen sitting at different ends of the platform waiting for the train, and thinking—well, it doesn't matter what we thought. Was it yesterday, or when, that all these things happened? Still, it cannot be so very long ago that Phillip climbed Sgurr Alasdair. Would that I had possessed a camera on Sgurr Alasdair, just below the summit, for then would I have shown Phillip that photography at least was capable of very faithfully reproducing his manly and superior form, as he was seen approaching the cairn, even though it might be useless in giving us the true proportions of inferior mountains. Neither do I think that I should be overstepping the bounds of prudence should I assert that Colin Phillip has a marked dislike for stone walls. I have hopes, however, that some day a happy combination of the despised camera—the stone wall and Phillip—may yield interesting results. Little did Phillip think, that evening at Kingshouse, a time would come when the poor maligned camera would turn—turn its eye on Phillip, and on that

stone wall, and wink with malicious pleasure. But in spite of winged words, weary feet, and endless eggs and bacon, these were fine times—from Sutherland to the Galloway Highlands, from Mull to the mountains on Deeside, Colin Phillip and I have wandered in fair weather and foul. But, suddenly, what a horrid, a false, an utterly false suggestion is paraded out in front of my mental vision by that cynical brain of mine—"You are getting old," it says, "your hair is turning grey; never, never again can you do these things!" I really must keep it in a better humour. It must be suffering from indigestion (those sardines certainly were smothered in oil). I wonder whether a cup of really nice coffee would soothe its sarcastic spirit. And just as we were getting on so nicely, too. A great deal, though, may be done with kindness. Often after dinner I have found that "coffee deferred maketh the brain grow sick." We will see.

Skye again, and the Coolin. Where was it that I read that those "grand old hills" had been "slandered"? What an idea! If people choose to indulge in "profanity, perilously like nonsense," on the subject of the "ridiculously easy" nature of Skye climbing, and "tourist climbs," and "the gabbro of the Coolin being too good," I shall wax ribald. Fancy comparing the sport to be obtained from the bald decomposing granite slabs at the head of Glen Sannox with the enjoyment that can be derived from the bare-faced, bad "boiler plates" above Coruisk. "*Parva componere magnis.*" Only the modern mountaineer could be guilty of such enormities! Truly, during the latter years of the century—

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new."

The progressive, democratical * finger of the "New Mountaineer" is laid with equal irreverence and mockery on Sgurr nan Gillean and Cir Mhor, and this spirit of irresponsible criticism "fulfils itself in many ways." It is not the first time that the "grand old Coolins" have been "slandered." Have they not been called "inferior moun-

* "They are still within the line of vulgarity, and are *democratical* enemies to truth" (Brown's "Vulg. Errors").

tains"? ("Modern Painters"). Their glory is fast departing. Now the climbers "run" over the Pinnacle Ridge, and no doubt the next generation (if they have wise fathers) will take their maternal grandmothers up the inaccessible summit of Sgurr Dearg. One by one the recollections of all our most cherished climbs will be punctured, flat and unprofitable as a collapsed bicycle tyre they will rotate over the rough roads of bygone memories, whilst that progressive democratical finger will guide the new nickel-plated, pneumatic-cushioned, electrically-driven modern mountaineer on his fascinating career. Yes, I knew I should be sarcastic. But to return. I am still sitting in my comfortable arm-chair, and looking at my own fingers to see whether they possess a progressive democratical appearance.

Before me passes the vision of a mountain, a beautiful many-headed mountain, hidden away from democratical enemies of mountaineering, and without the line of vulgarity. Carefully enclosed on its western face lies a corrie named Coire Mhic Fhearchair. I see a party wandering up its glacier-worn entrance. At its head the mist lies low down, but not low enough to hide the precipices that encircle the lochan in its centre. On the right, snow-filled gullies sweep with graceful curves from a dome-shaped peak.

But it is the rock escarpment at the back of the corrie that fascinates their gaze. As the mists begin to clear one by one, they suggest climbs on its face, for there are 1,250 feet of bare rock in front of them, broken up into three distinct buttresses with two splendid gullies dividing them. At last they choose the right-hand gully, and having roped themselves, proceed to cut steps up the steep snow that has drifted into it and obliterated any perpendicular pitches there may be. I am sorry that there were no perpendicular pitches—it is most unfortunate; for I should like to see that party performing all these daring feats so well known to the professional rock-climber. "How things began to look rather blue." "How for a minute or two one of the party remained spread-eagled on the face of a cliff almost despairing of getting up, the desired crack being a good two feet out of reach, till, with a supreme effort, he was

propelled from below by a sudden and powerful jerk, his outstretched fingers seize the desired crack." They are saved! Nor can I describe how "the heavy man of the party, his finger tips playing upon the face of the cliff with the delicacy of touch of a professional pianist, his every movement suggestive of the bounding lightness of the airy thistle-down," followed. No, I am sorry I have no such blood-curdling adventures to relate, nor such poetical fancies wherewith to eke out a plain story. I see that party merely climbing up that gully, in a most uninteresting yet simple manner, by cutting steps. They come to where it ends against a perpendicular and overhanging cliff at least a couple of hundred feet high. Only a paltry 200 feet, but they stop, none of the party being sufficiently muscular to propel the leader with a jerk upwards that paltry 200 feet. They therefore climb out to their left, along a narrow and somewhat broken ledge, on to the middle buttress, where a place is found large enough for them all to sit down. They gaze upwards at the last 300 feet that separate them from the summit, but it is steep, very steep, A.P. Also, it is late in the afternoon; so they comfort themselves by building a cairn and eating all these delicious things that are so good on a mountain side—meat sandwiches which have remained from lunch, and taste so full of mustard and so delightfully dry; old, old prunes encrusted with all kinds of additional nutriment from the bottom of some one's pocket; a much-worn stick of chocolate, or perhaps an acidulated drop—on such fare does the hardy mountaineer feed. I see them once more in the gully, but they descend more rapidly than they climbed up it, for the more daring of the party glissade down the lower part, and so home.

On the morrow, however, I see three of the party again setting forth for that precipice. This time, instead of approaching it from the north-west by the Allt Toll a' Ghiubhais, they hire a "machine," and drive as far as the foot of Sgurr Bàn on the southern side; then mounting to the peak just to the west of Sgurr Bàn by a well-made deer path, they soon arrive at the summit of the middle buttress, overlooking Coire Mhic I'hearchair. They climb out to



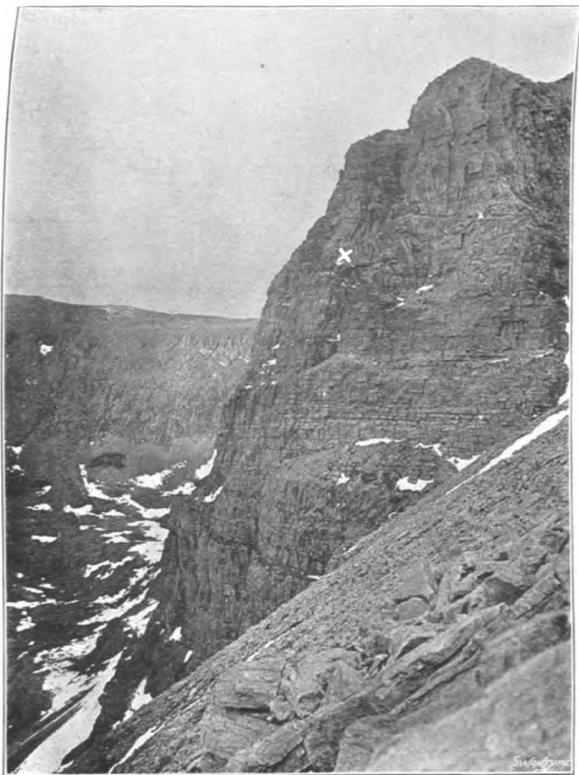
CLIFFS OF COIRE MHC FEARCHAIR BEN EIGHE.

(From a photograph by R. Lunn.)

the very end of the nose and look down, straight below, and only 300 feet away is the little cairn built on the preceding afternoon, but, as I have remarked before, that 300 feet is very steep. A photograph taken from the most southerly of the three buttresses, so as to get the middle buttress in profile, shows the angle of the last 200 feet to be about 85 degrees, not quite but very nearly A.P. However, they think that they may as well see how far they can descend. The rocks on the left-hand side (southern) of the buttress are obligingly broken up, so that by a series of small climbs the party are enabled to get from one small platform to the next, always edging towards the outside of the buttress. At last they all congregate together. A perpendicular slab, which has partly come away from the front of the crags, bars their way to the right, and below a quite perpendicular drop of about 200 feet on to the ledge below quietly but firmly impresses on them the fact that that way is not for them. But always in mountaineering, just as things become quite hopeless and "bluc," then it is the duty of the person who describes the adventure to appeal to the feelings of the public (who, presumably, are unacquainted with that particular climb). It is his duty to picture these unfortunate individuals, fearful that their retreat is cut off, yet unable to proceed; how, having dangled on the ends of ropes, swinging backwards and forwards in the breeze, they return to the ledge baffled; or having climbed on each other's shoulders, they find "the desired crack two good feet out of reach," and there is not always one in the party powerful enough to "propel" the leader "from below by a sudden and powerful jerk, so that he can with outstretched fingers clutch that desired crack." But still, with a little imagination, we can see these things. A good imagination is necessary, I may say very necessary, to the enthusiastic climber; much pleasure is otherwise lost.

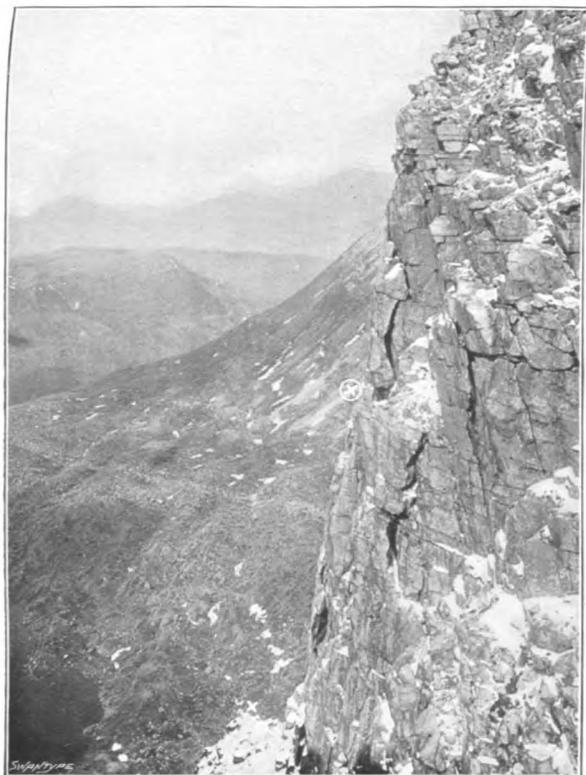
The party I see, evidently has none of this precious imagination. They are obviously wasting their opportunities most shamefully on that rock face. I see one of them climb out on to the face just under the great loose slab, and disappear round the corner; then the rest follow, and find themselves on the topmost of a series of ledges, and about

200 feet above the small cairn below. I will not describe that traverse, but will merely mention that the party seem quite pleased with it. Then they begin the descent. First they get down a narrow slit between a slab and the buttress, and with a drop of about ten feet get into the next ledge. Next they have to climb down another slab, bulging over into space, or a perpendicular gully gives them an interesting piece of climbing. About 120 feet from the bottom they build a small cairn, and then, without much further difficulty, they finally find themselves where they had ended their climb on the afternoon of the day before. They do not, however, descend to the bottom of the gully, but about half-way down, traversing out to the left, they make for the ridge connecting Sail Mhòr with the rest of the mountain. It is now evening, and I ought, if orthodox, here to insert a description of the sunset, to become suddenly poetical, talk about "The sun-god once more plunges into the baths of ocean." The sea too is always useful at such moments. "Banks of sullen mist, brooding like a purple curtain," &c., sounds well; and one must not forget "the shadows of approaching night," they form a fitting background for the gloomy and introspective spirit which ought to seize upon one at this particular psychological moment. "The tumbled fragments of the hills, hoary with memories of forgotten years," come next, with a vague suggestion of solitude, which should be further emphasised by allusions to "the present fading away, and being lost in the vast ocean of time, a lifetime being merely a shadow in the presence of these changeless hills." Then, to end up, mass the whole together, and call it an "inscrutable pageant"; pile on the shadows, which must grow blacker and blacker, till "naught remains but the mists of the coming night and darkness"; and if you have an appropriate quotation, good, put it in! What the party really did was to hurry down into Allt a Choire Dhuibh Mhòr, and haste with more or less empty insides to the "machine" and dinner.



THE CLIFFS OF COIRE MHC FEARCHAIR, I.

X Shows position of Cairn.



THE CLIFFS OF COIRE MHC FEARCHAIR, II.

⊗ Shows where the traverse was made, and
X The Cairn from which the climb starts

SOUTH-WEST ROSS.

BY THE LATE PROFESSOR HEDDLE.

[The representatives of the late Dr Heddle, in forwarding the MS. of this paper, intimated that it was written for the *Journal* of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and that they hoped, although it was unfinished, that it might prove useful to our members.]

IN the concluding paragraph of an all too brief paper on "Strathcarron as a Climbing Centre," Mr Lionel Hinxman says: "To the south-east of Strathcarron lies the as yet unexplored country about the head waters of the Ling; and further afield still, the glorious mountain region of Loch Duich and Kintail."

Writing in the *Mountaineering Journal*, Mr Hinxman may be taken as here speaking as a mountaineer, and not as a geologist, when he uses the word "unexplored"; but I speak as both, when I say that with scarce an exception I have been at the top of every 3,000 feet peak of the district named, and *that* in almost every case with a 4-lb. hammer at my side, and a 14-lb. one over my shoulder; and that in the district named I have found several new localities of minerals, and several interesting rocks, now in the Museum of Science and Art, Edinburgh. This was done a considerable number of years ago, and I therefore hardly think that the district can be said to be "as yet unexplored."

The only summits of sheet 82 of the Ordnance Survey, which can be at all said to lie in this district, which I have not surmounted are Creag Dhubh, 3,102 feet, and Carn nan Gobhar, 3,251 feet, immediately east of Sgurr na Làpaich; and of sheet 72, Tuill Creagach, 3,452 feet; Beinn Fhionnlaidh, 3,294; and Creag a' Choir Aird, 3,188. These are, the first to the east, the second to the north, and the third to the west of the great Carn Eige ridge, which dominating ridge I traversed from end to end.

Though I know three friends who have been up many of the peaks of the district, yet as we may take it from Mr Hinxman's expression that these hills are not generally

known, I may describe certain of the traverses taken to visit them.

A good many years ago Professor Knight mentioned to Colin Phillip that while passing along the Dingwall and Skye railway he had seen to the south a cluster of hills which he thought must be among the highest in Scotland. Naturally Colin Phillip tried to find them out, and their approachability—equally naturally he told me—and equally naturally we both tried who would be at the top of them first, if we could not go together.

These hills were Bidean an Eòin Deirg and its appendages. They were found to be singularly non-come-at-able. From the north they were no distance from the railway—getting out at Glencarron Station—but there was no tying a second walk on to the first; and Strathcarron Hotel, some thirteen miles from the point of descent, seemed the only feasible sleeping quarters. To the east and the south they were shut off from mankind by a foreign sportsman; to the west lay Mr Hinxman's "unexplored" land—then very much more unexplored.

Many years before this I had contemplated—nay, set my heart upon doing the whole length of the Mam Sodhail ridge in a single walk. I saw quite well where to start from—I did not see in the least where to get sleeping quarters; and I conceived that the walk was one which would call for a very strenuous effort.

On trying to get things made easier, I found every difficulty put in my way. This, past experience told me, ensured success. A study of the map showed how the two longed-for walks could be made part of one traverse, if some other walks and desirable climbs were thrown in between.

The Rev. Mr Peyton was my companion. We met at Glen Morrision, and hired for Clunie Inn.

As it was, I think, our first traverse of the year, it was necessary before crossing the country, as we intended, right over to Auchnasheen, to get into condition, so we got out of the trap near Lundie, on Loch Clunie, and tackled Sgurr nan Conbhairean (pron. *Conavern*). There was not much to detail. We found true boulders at 1,285 feet, and

went over Carn Ghluasaid, 3,140 feet ; Creag a' Chaoruinn, 3,266 feet ; Carn a Glass Bhealach, 3,238 feet ; then up the corrie and to the Cairn of Conavern, 3,636 feet. This is a prominent, well-marked hill. It was rather misty, so that its well-isolated peak did not command so fine a view as we looked for. Mam Sodhail and Carn Eige were massed together to confusion ; the south cliffs of Sgurr nan Ceathramhan (Cearanan) stood well forward, and grandly lighted ; the loftier Garbh-leac obscured the western hills ; but the Maol Cheann Dearg ridge and the Saddle especially were grand. The huge bulk of Wyvis to the east did not improve the view. The manner, however, in which Conavern dominates over, and seems with its outlier, Tigh Mor, to hold Glen Doe in its grasp, is the finest feature of the hill. It falls very rapidly from the summit to the height of 1,500 feet.

The descent of the hill took us over the ridge of Drochaid, 3,258 feet ; and from this we fell to 2,300 feet at the Bealach Coir a Chait. In this bealach I found a porphyry dyke differing from any other in Scotland. A climb of 1,373 feet along a fine smooth ridge took us to the fine summit of Garbh-leac (Cralec), 3,673 feet. As the shades of night were falling, we fell too, along a smooth unbroken and very convenient slope to the altitude of Clunie Inn, 728 feet.

The next day we devoted to the central peaks of the Maol Cheann Dearg range. Having driven down to the site of the old battle, we ascended, winding through a series of grassy knolls, to the summit of Creag nan Damh, 3,012 feet. This, though in the line of the ridge, is a somewhat isolated hill, having the Bealach Duibh Leac, about 2,400 feet, on the west, and a dip down to 2,250 feet on the east. Ascending from this dip we reach the summit of Sgurr Beag, a conical top of 2,925 feet. The ridge now becomes much narrower ; indeed here and there it has so slipped away into the north valley that the wire fence has to be crossed to the south side, the fence itself spanning gaps like a suspension bridge. The next height reached is Sgurr an Lochain, 3,282 feet. This is a finely formed and dominant cone, with a lake at its north-east foot. It is very much

the finest hill of the centre, if not of the whole of the range; and as its northern slopes are steep, from the valley of Glen Shiel it ever wears a gloomy frown. The dip between the last-mentioned hills is about 500 feet. A somewhat smaller dip intervenes between this and Sgurr an Doire Leathain (3,272 feet), which has a bifurcated and somewhat flat top. The ridge now falls for a time, and only ascends some 400 feet to Sgurr Coire na Feinne, 2,938 feet. From this there is a nearly continuous rise to a nameless flat-topped hill, 3,214 feet. As we had been informed that the ridge from the east was impassable, we descended to the summit level of Glen Shiel from the last-named point. On a more recent occasion, however, the writer, walking from the east, passed over the tops Creag a Mhaim, 3,102 feet; Drùm Sionnach, 3,222 feet; Aonach air Chrith, 3,342 feet; and passing along the so-called impassable spot, connected his line with that presently described on the summit of the nameless hill. The so-called impassable bit could hardly be called bad, at least to any one with a good head. It was traversed in almost a gale of wind, which occasioned some little risk. It should be mentioned that the sanctuary of the more easterly forest lies to the north of this nameless hill; so that in the descent to the valley one should keep some way down the eastern sides of the descending spur.

Fine specimens of black mica (Haughtonite) are obtainable in the central portions of this ridge.

The views all along of the nearer hills—The Saddle, Sgurr a Mhóraire, Gleourach, and Spidean Mialach, also of Sgurr a Bhealaich Dheirg—are fine; but even the highest point is not sufficiently lofty for a distant view. By this traverse, and the more recent one which I have mentioned, I completed the ascent of every peak of the range.

The next day being Sunday, and my friend having intimated his intention of making his tabernacle among the hills, I suggested a similar sweep of the northern range, namely, the connecting Saileag which I had already done with Carn Fuaralach. This seeming somewhat too ambitious to him, I proceeded alone, to find him finishing the writing of a sermon upon my return.

I walked up the Clunie valley to about the watershed,

and from this made a long side-footed stretch to the top of Saileag, 3,124 feet. This is a round-topped meaningless hill. Turning eastward along the ridge, I soon reached the old cairn on the flat top of Sgurr a Bhealaich Dheirg, 3,378 feet. Colin Phillip had sent me a drawing of a spur which runs north-east from this flat top; the ridge of which was encased in snow, with a top edge so spare as to be impassable. I passed along it now that it was not so clad. It was rough, but nothing beyond the roughness of large loose blocks. The rock which supports the new cairn called for a pull up, but when up I saw that it might have been turned. I found the height at this cairn to be 3,396 feet. On this side, and when seen anywhere from the north, this is a very picturesque hill, more so than any of the range, not excepting Sgurr Fhuaran. There is a fall of nearly 900 feet between this hill and Aonach Meadhoin, which is 3,284 feet; the second peak, half a mile to the west, being 3,241 feet. From this last I descended by the spur which runs directly to the Clunie Inn, having at the height of 2,745 feet seen in a cave the only fox which I ever directly met among the hills.

These three traverses having been considered sufficient for establishing our wind, and ridding us of unnecessary fat, we upon Monday started upon the great traverse.

The first day was a mere walk to Alltbeath, in Glen Affric, and but a short walk too; but now both knapsacks (and full ones too, for we were invaders carrying our stores with us) and hammers had to be carried. We were also deeply sunk in the trench between the hills, so that there was little enjoyment, and but little to observe.

One thing was an enormous land slip, which has come down from the ridge of Cralec and Gearetan. This has actually pushed its plastic front up the opposite slopes of the valley, from which front the water had slunk back, leaving the termination of the flow at a higher level than its central portions.

At Alltbeath everything was provided for us, and the keeper next day engaged to carry both our knapsacks and the larger hammers, for the day abandoned, over to Loch Mullardoch.

This was the walk which I had thought of for years, and I stoked up with determination, until I had a very full head of steam on.

The keeper walked with us as far as the col, at the head of the Allt Coire Ghaidheil. This is at a height of 2,400 feet, and five miles from Alltbeath.

From this point the cliffs midway from the Socach and Ceranan, on the north side, looked so fine that, though at the cost of lengthening our tramp, we walked back along the north slope of Socach to get a better view of these. We went as far as to get a little lake as a foreground to Ceranan and its northern Stucs.

Regaining the col, we ascended Carn Coulavie, the first peak of the ridge, finding the walking firm and dry. The day was hot, and much evaporation was evidently taking place all to the south of the long ridge, which drains by many streams into Loch Affric. The height of this summit is 3,508 feet. An inappreciable rise to Ciste Dhubh, the second height, succeeds. This point is 3,605 feet. The hill is flat-topped so far, and a little farther; but there is a small cliff with the "Ciste" to the south of the summit. From this point a line of stone blocks, with larger ones at intervals, marks the way as far as the rounded but somewhat pyramidal head of Sodhail. There is a rock terrace about 150 feet from the summit, upon the west side of the pyramid, upon the south end of which lies a quantity of coal. There are also traces of the foundations of houses. Mam Sodhail is 3,862 feet. The cairn is a large one. A green glass bottle with several cards lay on its flat summit. Ours were added, and returned to us by a stranger, who heard our name at a dinner, about two years after. He had broken the bottle. *We did not become further acquainted.* A dip of some 400 feet succeeds, followed by an ascent of equal amount, when the culminating summit of Carn Eige was reached. The walking was smooth as a street for a mile or more, when a massive but flattish dome was come to—Creag na h'Eige. Should any one desire to cut off half, and that the much more toilsome half of the journey, he can descend by easy and smooth slopes from this point, directly on the head of Loch Mullardoch.

The last-named height is 3,753 feet, and the ridge continues to fall in altitude, until at a point 3,701 feet in height its character suddenly changes. It becomes very narrow, and a number of rough but not very lofty aiguilles succeed each other, almost as far as the rounded Sron Garbh, which has a height of 3,723 feet.

It was mentioned above that much vapour had in the earlier part of the day been rising from the southern slopes of the ridge. By the time that Carn Eige was surmounted a cold north-westerly wind was blowing transversely to the ridge, which was bathed in a blaze of light. The ascending vapour was condensed into a white mist at the edge of the southern slope, and was rolling off in volumes for the whole time during which this part of the traverse was made. Upon this mist our shadows, intensely black, were cast, accompanying us step for step the whole time, and at a distance from ourselves of only a few feet. As usual, in Scotland, each head was surrounded with a glory. It puzzled me at the time, and it puzzles me still, to account for the fact that when I ran a short distance down the northern side, and then slowly ascended, the upper arches of this glory should appear before any part of the shadow was seen; that is before the particles of moisture which formed the rainbow ring were in a straight line with the sun and the eye of the observer.

On no other occasion on which I have seen the Brocken was the shadow so close; hence on no other occasion were the motions of the individual so faithfully and sharply imitated. There was little of companionship, however, in these "spirits of the mountain," as Mr Peyton called them. There did not seem to be an idea in their heads, and one could not get a word out of them. I know not whether the mimicry of sound or the mimicry of motion is the more highly organised, but I incline to give it to "viewless echo," and the performances of the motion-mimic were marvellous both in accuracy and in speed. Step for step, stoop for stoop, and if I turned to address my friend, round went my double and stood at the attention. Truly, we were being shadowed. It was the only instance in which listeners could *not* hear "no good of themselves." And yet these

two negatives did not here make an affirmative—what we said in praise of their performance did not seem to move them one bit. I could not get the better of him, and I could not drop him. A sprint at quite six miles was a dead heat—a race ended in an absolute neck and neck. If imitation be the highest flattery, never were such flatterers as these. But their presence was an intrusion, and their persistence was irritating; so grasping my alpenstock by the end, with a cry, “Be off,” I struck at my *alter ego* with my partisan. Heavens! I saw my weapon pass right through his body, and not instantaneously, but simultaneously, I both saw and felt his pass through my own, from side to side. “Felt”—yes, a sense of emptiness about my middle, as if I needed to be stuck together again. I had some rounds of boxing with him, but could make nothing of him, he was so quick in his returns; and yet they were not returns, for his style was so identically my own that he seemed to strike identically the same blows, only he used his left hand when I used my right, *and vice-versâ*. My blows never seemed to get home upon him. I saw his land often, just when I thought that I had landed one; but I felt no crunch, each was the ghost of a blow. His perception of my intention was marvellous. If I guarded, so did he. If I retreated to draw him on, he adopted simultaneously the same tactics. If he winded me, he seemed to be equally winded, and unable to follow up. It was most perplexing. I will back the Brocken as a boxer against the kangaroo.

Highlanders always regard the appearance of the Brocken as the prelude to a catastrophe, and it nearly was so in the present case.

There is a drop of about 600 feet in passing eastward from the Sron. This had here apparently, from nearly top to bottom, been laid with stone steps, and that in admirable fashion. The foundation, however, was altogether insecure, so that at several spots they had been slipping over the cliffy slopes to the south. An iron fence lay immediately on the south side of this stair. Putting a foot, I suppose uncautiously, upon one of the steps, away went a couple, thundering over the cliff, and shooting me through

the wire fence. This I clutched just in time, but could get no footing from the stone shivers slipping over the slope. Many of the supports of the posts of the fence had already slipped over, and were just hanging by the wires. The sudden tug thrown on them by my superadded weight one by one brought others away, till the whole seemed likely to follow, bearing me to destruction. It was a case calling for gentleness and calmness. The wire was not barbed, so I could hang. Testing his foothold, with perfect deliberation, Mr Peyton made his way as far as the ground seemed firm, I meanwhile working my way hand over hand laterally along the wire—a grip by the collar, a deep bedding of the alpenstock, a simultaneous very slow heave, and I lay nursing a knee which had got a rap from a third step which had gone after its fellows. *The shadurus had disappeared!*

The last hill in the course laid down by us, Tom a Choinich, has three summits in the line of the ridge, with dips between each. Leth Chreag, the first, is 3,442 feet; Tom a Choinich Beag, 3,499 feet; Tom a Choinich itself being 3,646 feet.

During the greater part of the walk the Lochs Lungard and Mullardoch had lain at our feet, backed by the huge bulk of the Riabhachan and the magnificent Sgurr na Lapaich. We descended from Tom a Choinich, and when nearly down asked ourselves, "What of the walk?" Notwithstanding the knee-knock, it was only four o'clock, and we were as fresh as pippins. We had done ten points, marked on the 6-inch map, the lowest of which was 3,442 feet; had eaten only a few raisins, and had not turned a hair. It was just an instance in which the body responds to a determined call upon it by the mind. At the same time, the walk is quite an easy one. There are 800 feet to be taken off the heights to start with, and with all the wanderings after boulders, only eighteen miles of distance. It would be a decided improvement on this walk to strike directly north from Alltbeath, by the track, and take the Socach into the sweep. This would add 600 feet of climbing, but it would cut off two miles of distance, and add another top over 3,000 feet. We slept at the shepherd's at Coire na

Cuillean, and started next morning to climb Sgurr na Lapaich and the Riabhachan, our knapsacks being again carried for us. The bearer accompanied us for 1,500 feet up the steep slope, which overhangs the loch. Thence he passed through the bealach, between the above-named hills, to the head of Loch Monar. We ourselves after this turned to the right, over the flat behind the Mullach, and so got to the southern extremity of the ridge called Braigh a Choire Bhig. This has a southern peak, 3,303 feet, and a mile farther north a second, Sgurr na Clachan Geala, 3,504 feet. The view in the immediate eastern foreground of this height is very rich. There is a spur, Creag a Chaoruinn, of over 3,000 feet in altitude, which shoots out, on each side of which a lake is embosomed. Carn nan Gobhar backs the northern lake with finely contoured slopes, while the woods of Glen Cannich, with Loch Car, lie beyond that to the south-east. The ground falls about 200 feet to the north of this, and in this hollow I found a bed of solid crystalline sahlite. The summit cone, indeed the whole hill, has fine outlines, and with its somewhat peculiar greenery, leaves an impression of pleasing combination of form and colour. It is quite *sui generis*, but one of the finest hills in Scotland. From its altitude of 3,773 feet it dominates all the ground to the east and north. Loch Monar, with a crescentic range of hills, and an occasional sprinkling of woods, presents a scene of considerable grandeur, while the sweep of Strathfarrar, with its winding rivers and occasional lake, has a richness which is only surpassed by Glen Affric. To the west the great transverse mass of Riabhachan somewhat cuts off the view; to the north the grand peak of Eoin Deirg, the second object of our walk, shows itself at last—the central, but not the greatest height of a long range.

The west side of Lapaich falls very rapidly to the col, 2,600 feet, and a somewhat rough ridge takes us to the first summit of Riabhachan, 3,606 feet. It required some determination to go away from our route, for nearly a mile, to reach the highest point, 3,696 feet, as a terrific thunderstorm had burst out all around us during our ascent of the ridge; we were already drenched, and the hill itself was entirely

uninteresting and ugly. From the summit we turned north for our five-mile tramp across the moor to Pait. This descent should be made by the north-west spur, crossing the headwaters of the Allt Riabhachan while still rivulets, and descending by the north slopes of Beinn Bheag. Unfortunately we had taken neither the Allt Riabhachan nor a possible thunderstorm into consideration. We went back upon our tracks, and descended by what appeared the more direct spur, the northern one; it was an uninterrupted downpour the whole way, and when we got opposite to Pait, the Allt was about 80 yards wide, and a raging torrent. After roaring ourselves hoarse, we had to stand about half an hour until a boat was brought round to us on the loch shore.

During the night our hospitable hosts at Pait had *all* our clothes washed, and passed warm into our room. We crossed the loch at nine, when, alas, my companion got a maggot into his brain. This was that he must be back at his clerical duties a day sooner than arranged, and so Bidean an Eoin Deirg must be given up. The hill was lighted up in splendour—the tints were perfection; we were at the foot with an inviting spur leading direct to the top; we had walked for six days directly to get at it—truly it was trying. But we could not well part—Peyton is a man in ten thousand—we must accommodate ourselves to each other in this world. But, oh, these maggots!

A guide for the track to Glencarron Station—twelve or thirteen miles—was got. We passed along the shores of Loch Mhuilich, under the cliffy side of the hill; as we approached the head of the glen the summit cone, with a magnificent buttress running down to the north-east, came into full view. There is not from this point a grander hill, or a more solid or well-defined buttress in all Scotland than this. *Oh, them maggots!*

I need hardly say that when we got back to Dundee, it was found that the expedited return was altogether unnecessary.

The impression of the spectacle from Strath Mhuilich, the bastion-like cliffs of Bidean an Eoin Deirg, stretching for nigh two miles with its terraced terminal buttress, was

so persistent, that my desire to see more of this hill was intensified, and I not long after resolved to attempt its assault from the east. As the Home Rulers insisted upon a companion, I associated myself with a young friend in my second attempt.

The Inn at Struy Bridge being still open, we made that our starting point, and I trusted to get a night's quarters at Reidh Cruaidh.

NOTE TO PROF. HEDDLE'S PAPER.

The Club Library has lately been enriched by a most valuable bequest from the late Professor Forster Heddle, namely, his maps of Scotland—some 86 in number—with his routes traced upon them. There can be little doubt that Professor Heddle had climbed far more Scottish mountains than any man who has yet lived, and the interest therefore of his marked maps can hardly be exaggerated. No district was unknown to him, and scarcely any high mountain unclimbed by him; and wherever he went there went not merely the trained geologist, but the truest lover and keenest observer of nature, and above all of the Scottish mountains.

Professor Heddle, who was born at Melsetter, Hoy, Orkney, in 1828, early commenced his excursions among the mountains, for when at Merchiston Castle School he began the collection of Scottish minerals which became the great object of his life. It is now the property of the nation, and may be seen at the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art. In 1851 he graduated M.D. at Edinburgh, and five years later became Assistant to the Professor of Chemistry at St Andrews. In 1862 he succeeded to this Chair, which he held for a period of twenty-three years. He died on 19th November 1897.

It is a satisfaction to some of us who were members of Committee in 1893 to remember that it was decided to admit a limited number of Honorary Members to the Club, mainly because we desired to do honour to Professor Heddle. It is said that he appreciated this act of the Club as much or more than all the many distinctions which, in the course of his long and useful life, had been conferred upon him. In honouring him we honoured ourselves, by numbering him among our first Honorary Members.

One article only from his pen has hitherto appeared in the pages of the *Journal*. In May 1893 his very charming article on Beinn à Bhuird, Ben Avon, and their neighbours, was published. In addition to the pleasure we have derived in reading it, the topographical information which it gave has doubtless been most useful to Members.

A melancholy interest attaches to the paper now given, for it is the very last thing which the Professor ever wrote. As will be seen, it is unfinished, and of course unrevised. It has been thought best to

print it exactly as written, without any additions or corrections, and all those who read it with the 6-inch maps or the tables of 3,000 feet mountains in Vol. III. before them, will see that this article was written by one who not only had an intimate acquaintance with the country, but was also able to add much, out of his own knowledge, to existing maps. The district described is one of the most interesting, if one of the least known, in Scotland; and there can be little doubt that the information given will prove of the greatest use to subsequent visitors.

Some remarks in the article have vividly reminded the writer of his first meeting with Professor Heddle. Together we shared the box seat of the mail from Kingussie to Fort-William on 15th October 1883. It was my first visit to Lochaber, and Professor Heddle was going to attend the opening of the Ben Nevis Observatory on the following day. What an agreeable travelling companion he was! What a fund of information, and how pleasantly he told it! One remark I have often thought of in subsequent years. He had been talking of the labour which so much mountain climbing involved: "But the hardest work is done in my own library, studying maps, piecing together routes, and planning walks."

When in December 1896 I called to ask him to respond to the toast of "The Highland Hills," at the forthcoming dinner in Edinburgh, he told me that his climbing days were over, that he had no longer the physical strength or health requisite. His love of the mountains, however, was unabated. No one who was present at that dinner, and who listened to what, though not the principal toast, was undoubtedly the speech of the evening, will ever forget the graceful eloquence of that soul-stirring address, breathing the very spirit of the mountains. It is indeed a privilege to have heard it, and to have known Professor Forster Heddle.

H. T. M.

A SUMMER NIGHT ON THE GLENSHEE HILLS.

BY H. T. MUNRO.

THE month of May 1898 was, in Forfarshire at least, extraordinarily fine—almost rainless, and with clear crisp air. Tempted by the lovely weather, I determined to have a day—I could not well spare more—on the mountains, and of course managed to select the one bad day of the month. I chose a district which was easily accessible to me, and which at the same time has received little attention in the pages of the *Journal*, namely, the mountains lying to the west of the Glenshee-Braemar road, and numbering fourteen “tops” of over 3,000 feet. Twelve of these were given in a note on page 39 of Vol. II., written in anticipation of the proposed meet at the Spital of Glenshee, a meet at which only Mr Rennie turned up, and the other two, Càrn Bhac and its N.E. shoulder, are best reached from Inverey on Deeside. As I had already crossed Beinn Iutharn Mòr (Ben Uarn), Mam nan Càrn, and Glas Thulachan (Vol. I., p. 103), and on another occasion, in company with Mr Stott, had ascended Càrn Aosda and the Cairnwell (Vol. I., p. 242), my object now was to bag the rest of the covey.

Who has not regretted the hour lost in the morning? How often have we found, or rather how seldom have we *not* found, that we have either had to leave some of the programme unfulfilled or else to make a race of it with daylight? One of the few advantages of midsummer over winter climbing is that one is independent of time, as there is no night. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 30th May, I bicycled up, by rough cross-country roads, against a strong head-wind, from Lindertis to the Spital of Glenshee. After a rest I started walking at 11 P.M. The moon, though nearly full, was little noticed beside the half twilight of the sun only a short distance below the northern horizon. Very impressive the silent mountains looked in the dim light as Glen Beag was ascended, every feature showing, yet all the details softened. A little after mid-

night, at the point—1,499 feet—where the Braemar road makes a sharp turn to the east four miles from the Spital, I took to the heather-covered slopes of Càrn nan Sac, the summit of which was reached in an hour and a quarter. I had purposely been going very slowly, for although even at midnight there was no difficulty in seeing the ground, still if the mist came down and the compass and map had to be used a little more light would be required. I may as well say at once, that my “times” cannot be taken as a guide, for with literally the whole day before me I had no need to hurry.

The 1-inch O.S. gives only a 2,750 feet contour for Càrn nan Sac; the 6-inch, however, shows the height 3,000 feet. The summit, which is very flat, is marked by a single upright stone. There is very little drop between this and Càrn Gcoidh (3,194 feet, with a big cairn), which is the dominant peak of the Cairnwell range proper, a dip of some 800 feet or more separating this range from the western portions of the group. Up to this, the night, though somewhat cloudy, had been fine; now, alas, the snow began to fall, at first only in small fine powder, but soon in heavier showers, and the mist, though never thick, enveloped the tops. The N.N.W. wind was cold, but, though steady, was not strong—in fact, the reverse of the wind described by the Irishman, who said, “There was not much wind, but what there was blew very hard.” On Càrn Bhinnein (3,006 feet), which is a pretty little hill with a fine rocky natural cairn, and, though lower than many of his neighbours, forms a good landmark from all around, the mist and snow cleared off for a little. This, though a good “top,” is a very doubtful mountain, the depression between it and the last hill, Càrn Gcoidh, not being great. A steep but easy descent of about 1,000 feet led to the Easgaidh burn, which was followed up to where—a mere trickle—it leaves the little Loch nan Eun (Loch of the Birds), at a height of 2,600 feet. This little loch, not half a mile across, has a great local fishing reputation. It appears also to be the nesting-place of a considerable number of gulls who seemed very busy and talkative. Alongside a boathouse the proprietor of the Spital Hotel has built a small but substantial hut, very

air-tight, and with a fireplace. Here, in the summer time, anglers often spend the night, and in the short days it might be invaluable to mountaineers who wished to explore this group of mountains. The door is always left unlocked. On the floor I found fragments of the shell of what I believe to have been the black-headed gull's egg, though those I saw on the loch were not, I think, blackheads.

From here I struck west by south, keeping at about the same elevation, over moss and heather, until reaching the base of Càrn an Rìgh, "The King's Cairn." This mountain, which from a distance has a fine blunt cone-shaped appearance, is, like all in this district, very easily ascended. It is the western flank of the group, facing Beinn à Ghlo. It is 3,377 feet high, with two large cairns close together, and after Glas Thulachan and Beinn Iutharn Mòr is the highest of the range. Returning to the bealach my next point was Mam nan Càrn, the slopes of which I had skirted on my way from the loch. It is unnamed, except on the 6-inch map, but is marked on the 1-inch map by a height of 3,217 feet. A hundred and fifty yards to the S.S.W. of this point, however, the 6-inch map gives a height of 3,224 feet. It is a long, almost level ridge, extending east and west, and although the depression between it and Beinn Iutharn Mòr, which lies to the north of it, is not great—only some 300 feet—its nearly equal height and its bulk almost entitle it to the rank of a separate mountain. So flat is it though, that without its very small cairn it would be difficult to "locate" its summit.

By this time it was after 7 A.M., and though the snow showers were frequent, the sun often shone through, and the day steadily improved. The mist never descended much below 2,800 feet; and though the views to the north and west were limited to a few miles or less, and the tops in these directions never clear, Lochnagar and the Forfarshire hills were often entirely free of cloud.

The dip between Mam nan Càrn and Beinn Iutharn Beag though marked is not very great. The latter, which has a small cairn, is 3,011 feet, and should really be considered a subsidiary peak of the former, although it is named on all the maps, which the former is not. My next

point was An Socach, to reach which there is a descent of 700 feet. This is a long broad ridge, rising slightly at the west and east ends, which are respectively 3,059 feet and 3,073 feet. The name, which means "The Plough," is not inapt. The west end has no cairn; the east has a large one. On the 1-inch map the name "An Socach" applies to both tops; on the 6-inch and Bartholomew's, however, "An Socach" is only the west top, while the east is called "Socach Mòr," which name on the 1-inch map is placed $\frac{3}{4}$ mile east of the top.

The lower slopes of all these mountains are heather covered; higher up, short grass with quartzite scree intermixed. Here and there are scree slopes on the sides, though generally of small extent; of living rock and crags hardly any. The summits, as has already been indicated, are wide and flat-topped, covered with short grass, good to walk on, with quartzite cropping up through. On the whole I have never seen mountains—not even the Monadhliaths—which offer less attraction to the "Ultramontane"; yet, notwithstanding the conspicuous absence of lochs and crags, the wide expanse of rounded grassy tops, the beautiful air, the distant views, with the broad plain of Strathmore to the south, and the restfulness of the scenery, combine to give these Eastern Grampians a charm of their own.

The day had so much improved that I debated long whether I would not strike N.W. across Glen Ey to Càrn Bhac, &c.; but I had still a long journey before me, so descended in a S.S.W. direction, and, practically without any intermediate rise, reached the col between Càrn Bhinnein and Beinn Iutharn Beag, which I had crossed earlier in the day, and then sauntered down the glen, dawdling along in the bright hot sunshine to the Spital, which was reached at 2.15. My times were:—

Spital, 11 P.M.

Càrn nan Sac, 1.30 A.M.

Càrn Geoidh, 2 A.M.

Càrn Bhinnein, 2.55 A.M.

Loch nan Eun, 4.30 A.M.

Càrn an Rìgh, 6.15 A.M.

Mam nan Càrn, 7.15 A.M.
Beinn Iutharn Beag, 8 A.M.
An Socach, 9.40 A.M.
Socach Mòr, 10.10 A.M.
Spital, 2.15 P.M.

Of this time nearly two hours were spent in halts, and the remainder might have been much shortened. During the day a good many deer, a large number of grouse and ptarmigan, and an eagle were seen.

After a couple of hours at the Spital, just as I started on my ride home, the wind faced right round to the S.E., so as to blow against me the whole way ; and not only that, but heavy showers of rain reduced the road, already rough, to the consistency of porridge, so that I only reached home at 8 P.M. I have nothing more to add. There are some emotions too sacred to be minutely described in print, such, for instance, as the beatitude induced that evening by a bottle of "the boy" and a post-prandial cigar.



Photo by W. Lamond Howie.

DAWN—GLEN COE FROM SGURR DHONUILL.

THE MOUNTAINEER AS A SEARCHER AFTER
THE BEAUTIFUL.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

“ And fear not, * * * ! that, when winter comes,
These solitary mountains will resign
The beauty that pervades their mighty frames
Even like a living soul. The gleams of light
Hurrying in joyful tumult o’er the cliffs,
And giving to our musings many a burst
Of sudden grandeur, even as if the eye
Of God were wandering o’er the lovely wild,
Pleased with His own creation ;—the still joy
Of cloudless skies ; and the delighted voice
Of hymning fountains,—these will leave awhile
The altered earth :—But other attributes
Of Nature’s heart will rule, and in the storm
We shall behold the same prevailing Power
That slumbers in the calm, and sanctify,
With adoration, the delight of love.”—JOHN WILSON.

THE mountaineer is essentially a searcher after the beautiful. It is true that this is not his only object in ascending summits or visiting mountainous districts. Readers of Mr Maylard’s interesting paper on “Climbing considered in its Physiological Aspects,” will remember that he has there shown how complex and beneficial are the results of mountaineering on our muscular and nervous systems. In the belief of some, these purely physical results are the only aim of those who scale precipitous cliff or narrow arête *en route* for the summit. With others, the climber is credited with a mad ambition to imperil his life, while heart and nervous system are strained to the utmost by the excitement of imminent danger. These different opinions represent portions of the truth, but are far from giving a fair picture of what goes on in the mind of the climber. First of all, then, the climber is a lover of the beautiful, for the impelling desire is to see the fair or grand features of God’s earth from some supreme altitude, where man and his works form no feature of the view. Along with this comes the glorious exhilaration of body

and mind consequent on exercise in a pure atmosphere. Finally, the rock climber finds in his pursuit such a fascinating exercise of balance and concentration, and of judgment in considering probabilities and possibilities, that while he in no wise undervalues the scenic importance of his climb, he may count his time well spent, even though he reaches the summit when the storm clouds cap the mountain, and his first instinct is how best to get home again.

It is not to be wondered at that the general public has but a faint appreciation of mountain scenery, for, to the vast majority of people, the upper reaches of mountains are untrodden ground, and the characteristics of such landscapes are inevitably unknown. Little does the average person dream of the vast and soul-inspiring panorama laid out before the climber who braves our wintry blasts, or of the more rugged chisellings of nature which are so dear to the eye of every true cragsman. Such treasures are only known and appreciated by the few—those who have seen them often, and learned to love them. Does not the rock climber enter the very laboratories of nature, and into sanctuaries which have never before perchance met the gaze of man, and, in so doing, gain a delight and a stimulus which to him are far more even than the physical refreshment he undergoes? I confess, that though the overcoming of difficulties is in itself a great reward in a rock climb, yet to me far more than these are the views of yawning chasm, fretted pinnacle, stupendous cliff, or goblin cave, which in the well-earned moments of pause meet the eye. But the searcher for beauty has a wider field than these chaotic scenes. Has he not the distant landscape, spreading out softly and indefinitely till it merges in the dome of heaven itself? The clouds too,—one of Scotia's charms,—are they ever seen to the same advantage as from the mountain tops? There the great cumuli, rolling on like fervid chariots, or towering aloft like ranges of snowy Alps, look as they never look to the dweller in the plains. In the clear light of these altitudes, how the reality of these cloud-forms sink deep into our very being, and raise emotions which, because the least earthly, are allied to the noblest in our nature!

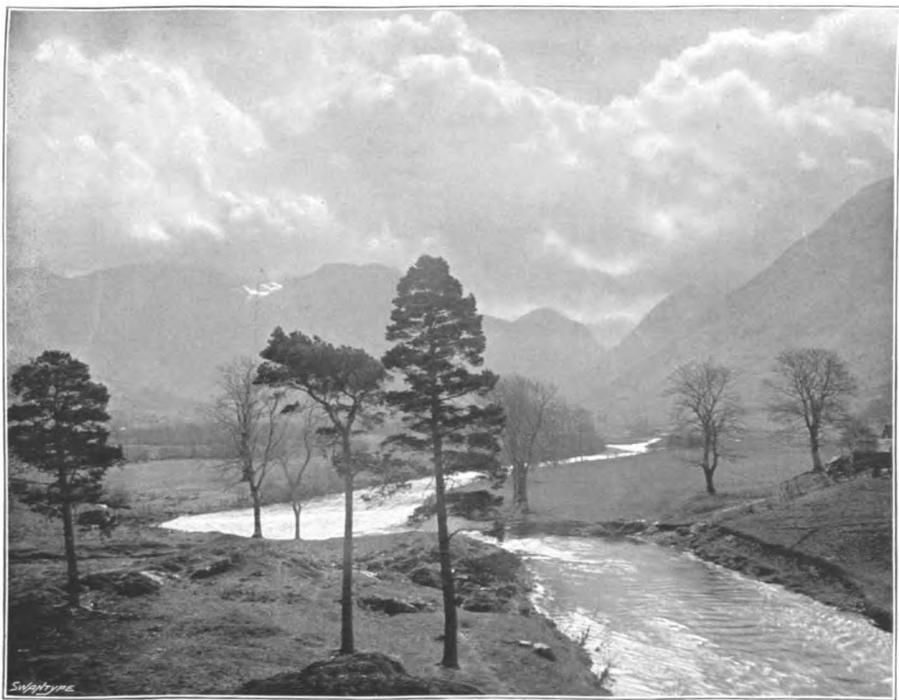


Photo by W. Lamond Howie.

NOON—LOOKING UP GLEN COE.

The four photographs reproduced in this number—three of them secured by Lamond Howie at the Easter Meet of the S.M.C. at Ballachulish, and the fourth obtained during a recent visit to Skye—exemplify in their several ways this wider field of beauty. The view from Sgorr Dhonuill looking eastward, “Dawn,” embracing the upper reach of Loch Leven and a suggestion of Glencoe, is not only beautiful but it is instructive, giving us, as it does, a bird’s-eye view, showing how ranges of mountains give rise to subsidiary ranges, on a plan applicable alike to the highest Alps and to our own Highlands. From such view-points considerations of absolute height above the sea level are the least distracting; and as judgments are comparative, one can, in the mind’s eye, invest these Highland hills with additional height at sweet pleasure, and feel that they bear their added dignity with ease and honour.

The photograph of Sgorr Dhearg at sunset recalls to our imagination scenes the brilliance of which have no counterpart in the baser machinery of life, and dull and torpid indeed must the man be who can witness such cloud effects, and resume his toil for money, without nobler impulses thrilling through his life and making him sounder in mind as in body. At such a place the imagination is excited by the deep and dark corrie, from which the mountain screes rise gently to the summit snow-fields. Here at any time may be witnessed the untiring labours of the Great Artificer, as corrie and crag are moulded and chiselled to His plan. There, right across the loch, and beyond the lower hills, rises the snowy dome of Ben Nevis itself, which, from its extended outline, obscures from this point of view the other snow-covered Lochaber tops. Away to the west, on the brim of the Atlantic, the ruddy glow of the Red Coolins is intensified under the streams of golden light pouring through the cloud-bars from the setting sun, so that they seem like hills of glowing copper floating on a sea of living gold. All this, and far more, meets the eye at such a time, and sinking into the memory forms for itself a treasure-house from which not even the ravages of time or misfortune can filch it away.

The third of Mr Howie’s photographs has seized the

spirit of Glencoe ; not indeed the gloom and desolation of shattered ridge or impending cliff, but the picturesqueness of the spot which in the past was the scene of one of the most tragic and brutal episodes in Scottish history. Here indeed we see Glencoe as the wild Highlanders who dwelt in its strath knew it, the vast Bidean and its ramparts being to them the abode of mountain spirits, ready to wreak vengeance on the daring intruder. Below, the turbulent and beautiful Cona runs by its green banks as of yore ; and although the ancient forests have been depleted, noble Scotch firs, singly and in clumps, brave the mountain blasts and maintain the continuity of the race. After all, any words from human tongue or pen can only draw attention to our treasure-houses of beauty, and the best among us feel that our impressions of these great works of nature, fresh from the hand of God, are so deep, so overpowering, that our tongues fail us if we attempt to describe them.

The photograph of the dominant peak of Blaven, assailed as it is by the advanced guard of the coming storm, forms a fitting close to the peaceful scenes already referred to. From below, at such a time, all seems darkness and gloom, and the heart of man forebodes all manner of disaster. Not so with the mountaineer, for from his high vantage point, although the billowy foam has already been driven against the beetling crags, and the valley perchance is blotted out of sight, the summit is still basking in the summer sun, and its aspect is none the less beautiful, because it illustrates the contrast of peace and storm, or sunshine and rain. It is then, when the distant islands or uplands stand out in the transparent atmosphere, and an ethereal blue lends enchantment to the scene, that the enthusiastic mountaineer is tempted to exclaim, " This is the very gate of heaven ! "

Most of us have felt that in order fully to enter into and appreciate the musical themes and harmonies in some complex symphony, the eyes must be closed and entire attention given to the feast of sound. Analogies occur with taste and smell. Those who have to use these senses in the detection of subtle flavours, or in the analysis of unaccustomed combinations, often find it necessary not only to shut the eyes, but even to pursue the research in a

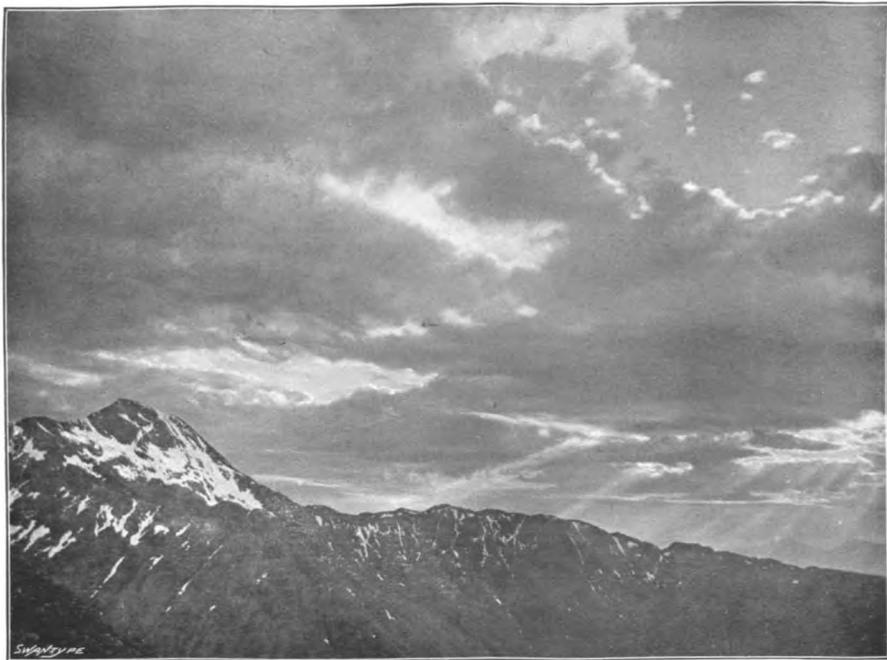


Photo by W. Lamond Howie.

SUNSET—FROM BEINN A BHEITHIR.

silent room. Why is this? May it not be because their "secretary," their unconscious self, cannot attend to too many things at the same time, and demands the absence of the less important? Now, on the mountain side, or in some great corrie, there is an awesome silence, broken only by the fitful voices of torrent or waterfall; and, in the absence of wind, this calm of nature puts the mountaineer in the best position to drink in and appreciate those beauties abounding on every hand. Here, after a toilsome ascent, he rests amid the shattered temples of a mountain priesthood. The restraint of man's presence has been left far away in the great city; even the distant valleys but indicate that man may have been there. Here no hum of busy industry is heard, here are no conventionalities of fashion, here if anywhere the impulse of adoration comes as a relief, man's romance and nobility have their widest expansion, and the great cliffs and corries and clouds gather round, the grandest of witnesses to a Creator's power.

A WEEK'S CLIMBING IN THE BEN NEVIS DISTRICT.

BY W. DOUGLAS.

A WEEK'S campaign on our central hills was organised by Mr Bell to take place in the early part of July, and, after much correspondence, it was finally decided that Ben Nevis and its neighbours were to be the scene of our exploits, so that two climbs—which had long defeated the most determined assaults—might be included in the programme. These were: "The Church-Door of Bidean" and "The Carn Dearg Buttress."

Mr Naismith and I were the first to begin work. We met about noon at Tulloch Station on the first (climbing) day of the week and cycled to Moy, on Loch Laggan, where we put up our bicycles for a few hours. Quitting the high-road, we were soon breasting the grassy slopes of mighty Creag Meaghaidh. The heat was great, and the clegs and other flying torments were having a grand time at our expense; but by-and-by the mists came rolling up from the west, blotting out the landscape and dispersing the buzzing multitudes. The mist became exceedingly dense, and we wandered for more than an hour in an aimless sort of way about the great summit plateau, looking for the cairn which was not to be found, all the while discussing the joys of mountaineering as illustrated by this day's proceedings. My companion actually committed himself to the statement that if he had, at that moment, to decide whether he was to give up mountaineering or golf—he had no doubt but the former would go by the board. A few days later, with the glamour of Ben Nevis and Garbh-bheinn still fresh, he indignantly repudiated making any such admission. It is very amusing sometimes to see how easily one can get completely "wandered" in a thick mist. Here we were on one of the simplest mountains of Scotland, and yet unable to find the top. The reason was obvious, both of us had trusted to the other to steer a correct course, and neither had taken the trouble to do so until we had completely lost our bearings. The cairn was now as



S. Inglis Clark

Photo by W. Inglis Clark.

BLAVEN IN THE CLOUDS.

difficult to find as the proverbial needle in a bundle of hay, and we gave it up for the larger mark of the great cliffs of Corrie Arder. This has a black line of beetling crags extending to about half a mile in length, and these were not to be so easily missed. However, we first came to the lovely little Coire-na-Froise—in shape very like a miniature Corrie Arder—and had not a momentary lifting of the mist revealed its small dimensions we should have gone away thinking we had reached and looked down into the great corrie itself. From here a course due north brought us, in a quarter of an hour, to the cliffs of the real Corrie Arder; but alas! the mist was so dense that nothing of their grandeur could be seen. Descending again to Moy, we picked up the Fort-William evening train at Tulloch, in which we found the rest of the party—Messrs Bell, Maclay, and J. S. Napier.

By half-past six next morning we were, before breakfast, outside the hotel, anxiously scanning the clouds and bringing all our knowledge of weather lore into requisition, which resulted in prophecies of the most diverse description. The mists were low on the hillsides, but the day was warm, and though the rocks were likely to be wet, we surmised they would not be difficult. We had all been on the north face of Ben Nevis so often that we deemed it an impossibility not to hit off the ridges we wanted, and some of us were so foolhardy as to announce that they could find a way to any point on the face even if they were blindfolded; but it was not without some animated discussions that the foot of the Carn Dearg Buttress was hit off, and Napier and I found ourselves in the tin-pot gully before we had any idea we had got half so far.

From there we had a delightful scramble on the Tower Ridge, renewing our acquaintance with the various bits of interest that abound on that rib of rock, and then we made our way to the Observatory, where, as usual, we got a kindly welcome from the observers. The other party had had a difficult climb, and reached the summit about two hours after we did in great spirits at having wiped out the Red Cairn Buttress. Mr Naismith gives the following details of the route:—

CARN DEARG BUTTRESS.

On 12th July 1898 this buttress was ascended by Messrs Bell, Maclay, and the writer, from its northern side, or, more strictly, from its N.E. angle. The buttress runs east from the top of Carn Dearg, and ends in an impossible cliff. The south side of the buttress has been climbed by a ledge from gully No. 5, but no ascent of the north side has been recorded hitherto.

Looking at the buttress from the valley, it will be seen that the rocks to the right of the impossible cliff are divided into two tiers of precipices, which again merge into a single vertical wall near the foot of gully No. 6 (see Map in Vol. III., p. 318). The part where the cliffs are so divided is apparently their only vulnerable point. A gully there runs down the mountain, from which issues the small waterfall mentioned by Mr Raeburn (Vol. IV., p. 245).

We put on the rope at the foot of the waterfall, and, bearing away to the right round a right-angled promontory, gained a shelf with some grass on it. On our left was an A.P. wall; on our right a sheer drop into the valley. The ledge soon terminated, but from the end of it a natural rock staircase rose in several giant steps. The first "step" was not difficult, although it had to be climbed from the outside. The top of this step was carpeted with grass, and just accommodated two men. The rise of the next step measured about eight feet, and slightly overhung. Hoisted on Maclay's willing shoulders it was easy enough for the leader to get up those eight feet, but the difficulty was to know what to do when he got there. For some time he lay helplessly on his stomach, propped up with one boot against a small projection on the side wall, and possessed with the notion that any attempt to stand upright would result in his slithering downstairs. The rock he reclined on sloped downwards, and was moreover wet and slimy. No handholds were visible. There was however a continuous crack a few inches wide separating the "stair" from the cliff. The crack was here filled with gravel and grass, and by dint of much prodding a couple of holes were dug in it, which gave tolerable holds. With a shoulder from Bell, Maclay joined me, and, wedging his left foot into the crack, shoved me up the next rise. It was not five feet in height, but the rock above it was even more wet and sloping than its predecessor, and to be quite frank, it was a place where a railing would have been of great service! Once up this bit a broad platform was reached, which afforded safe anchorage while the others came up. A comparatively easy scramble, finishing with a chimney, brought us to the top of the cliffs. A small cairn was left there, as well as at the head of the "staircase."

Changing ends, we mounted steep grass to the foot of the upper rocks at their lowest point. This was a well-marked col connecting an isolated pinnacle with the higher cliffs on our right. We were cut off from the col by a low wall—only some 12 feet high at one place—but although we spent an hour over it, and stood on one



CARN DEARG BUTTRESS, BEN NEVIS.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| A. Castle Ridge. | B. Castle. |
| C. Carn Dearg. | P. Pinnacle. |
| S. Staircase. | W. Waterfall. |



AONACH DUBH FROM CLACHAIG.

- | |
|------------------------------------|
| A. Easy route. |
| B. Line of ascent at Easter, 1898. |

another's *heads*, it proved too much for us. By descending a short distance Bell and Maclay eventually forced their way up rather difficult slabs farther to the left ; and then an obstinate person, who still hankered after the 12-foot wall, was hauled up it like a sack of coals. From the col Bell led us straight up a steep chimney 60 feet high. The top of the chimney is nearly on a level with, and close beside, a cave with two openings, which marks the head of the waterfall gully. We there untied, and in a few minutes struck the crest of the buttress 500 feet or so below the summit of Carn Dearg, and followed the ridge to the top. It is quite simple, and only one or two places involve any real climbing.

From Carn Dearg we proceeded to the Observatory, and met Messrs Douglas and Napier, who had come up by the Tower Ridge in much less time than we. The weather had now dried up, and we descended the N.E. buttress in record time ($1\frac{1}{2}$ hours), with Maclay as sheet anchor.

Wednesday.—Another early start saw us spinning over the magnificent road to Corran under a blazing sun and blue sky. Crossing the ferry, we continued along the Loch Sunart road as far as the entrance to Coire an Iubhair, where we arrived, after various halts for bathes and punctures, about noon. Here we left our bikes reposing in a clump of tall brackens by the roadside, and tramped up the long Glen Iubhair. A pathway by the side of the stream leads onwards and upwards, but occasionally the paving-stone-like bed of the burn offered a more novel and better roadway.

About two miles from the road the splendid rocky face of Garbh-bheinn comes into full view. At this point, beside a boulder where the stream forks, we deposited the rucksack, and amid a buzzing multitude of clegs and other flying creatures of all kinds, we held a prolonged debate as to what was to be done. Mr Bell pointed out the routes previously followed by Mr Brown and himself, and by Mr Haskett-Smith's party. The weather was simply glorious, every crack and cranny, and every stone, gully, and grassy patch were in clear view. Mr Maclay and I were greatly taken with *the* ridge. This lies to the south of the big gully that descends from the summit and cuts deeply into the face of the mountain. The climb begins from the highest grassy rake on the ridge, and Mr Bell suggested that this might be more easily reached from the back than

by following the side of the gully all the way from the foot. We took his advice, but as things turned out we were not at all sure that he had not been having a rise out of us. The gully Maclay and I selected looked easy at first, but as we ascended higher the floor became steeper and smoother, and the wall on our right more perpendicular. It was all we could do to pass certain pitches in the gully, while a traverse to the right did not look at all pleasant, so, reflecting that *the* ridge was still there to descend by, we climbed the gully till it ended near the top of the mountain. This gully was more of the nature of a water slide, and although the angle was gentle, yet from the absence or minuteness of the holds it gave a very good little climb.

At the top we were joined by the others. They had found no difficulty in ascending the pinnacles from the outside, and were exceedingly jubilant over the "precipices" they had come up. They laughed to scorn the idea of there being any place hereabouts without "holds," for they had found they could not put their hand anywhere but their fingers had slipped round the most magnificent grips.

It is seldom, nowadays, when climbers climb in all weather conditions, that they are favoured with a perfect view, but to-day we were rewarded for many days of mist and rain. The view we got surpassed any I have had for some years, both for distance and for the way in which the hills and lochs and seas composed themselves into pictures. From Skye to Arran, from Cruachan to the Black Mount, the Cairngorms, and Glencoe, and on to the Inverness and Ross-shire giants, all was perfectly distinct—the glitter of sea and loch between lending a richness to the scene such as the scenery of Scotland is seldom without.

We all—a long line of five—descended the splendid ridge and had a most interesting, not to say amusing, climb. We continued it right down to where the ridge ends on the lowest part of the grassy rake. The climb was full of good things,—slides down rock walls, back and foot work in chimneys, hand traverses round awkward corners, abounded all over it,—and kept the last man on the rope in a perpetual state of excitement. He had not that

perfect faith in our ability to "field him" that we tried to instil, and certainly the leading man picked out a most interesting route and gave those who followed a most lively time. Garbh-bheinn is certainly one of the most perfect little mountains in Scotland.

When we returned to the boulder at the head of Glen Iubhair at a late hour, the contents of the waiting rucksack soon resembled the crawfish of Uncle Remus, for in a few minutes "dey wuzn't nuff left fer ter tell dat it'd bin dar." From the boulder we reached Ardgour Hotel in little more than an hour; a rapid walk down the glen, not to speak of a cycle race when we joined the road, let us cover the ground more quickly than is usually the case.

Thursday.—Some one said something about "lying on their backs," and as the day opened wet and misty we had every inducement to do so; but as the morning advanced the clouds began to roll off the hills, and three of the party becoming energetic, cycled to Loch Sunart with the idea of getting some minerals from the Strontian mines. We saw two of them no more, the joys of cycling proving more attractive than the Chasm of Buchaille. In the afternoon Bell and I moved our camp to Kingshouse, where we were joined later by Messrs Maclay, Boyd, and G. T. Parker.

Friday.—The weather gave us no excuse for "lying on our backs" to-day, and it was spent in Bell and Maclay's leading a party up a portion of "The Chasm of Buchaille Etive,"* where fearful things were done for six hours. In

* The chasm is a great gully lying S.E. from the summit of Stob Dearg. The climbing in it begins at a height of 1,100 feet (only 300 feet above Kingshouse Inn) in a great gorge running through the lower heather-clad slopes of the hill. The party on this occasion only reached a height of 1,850 feet. They were five on the rope, which made the going slow, but they were climbing with only one short interval for six hours. The weather had been dry for more than a week, and indeed it is doubtful whether any progress could be made in the gully, except under the best conditions, as the route often was up the watercourse. Just at the place where the party stopped, a very striking couloir branches out of the gully on the north, and in the gully itself, just above them, was a pitch of really terrific aspect, approaching 100 feet in height. At the late hour, and after the

the evening we all gathered up for the night at Clachaig—that most delightful of all little Highland inns. Our party was now up to six again, for although Maclay had gone home, it had been added to by the arrival of Mr Raeburn, and Mr Graham Napier turned up from Bridge of Orchy before midnight.

Saturday.—This was to be the great day of the expedition, for it was decided that the Church-Door was this day to be opened, or for evermore to remain shut, therefore when we awoke to consciousness, it was with some uneasiness that we heard winds whistling round the house and heavy blasts of rain dashing against the skylight. “Regular Glencoe weather,” was the morning’s greeting, and gloomy thoughts were entertained as to what the rocks of The Upper Right Hand Buttress would look like. However, after breakfast things began to look better, and when Raeburn decided to leave his camera at home the weather actually became cheerful.

This Church-Door climb, being under Bell’s special protection, is by him described elsewhere in this number. Parker and I, coming to the conclusion that six on a rope were more than were required to open the door, most self-sacrificingly agreed to “sit out” and watch the fun from the opposite buttress where a grand view could be obtained. While the sun shone, “lying on our backs” was most agreeable, but during the somewhat prolonged intervals of shade, and inaction on the part of the climbers, it became a bit monotonous, and we had recourse to the many boulders that lay close at hand, where we not only rivalled, in our estimation, the deeds of daring being done by the Church-Door party, but kept ourselves warm enough to enjoy this wonderful exhibition of climbing as practised by the modern mountaineer.

After the climb was done, a descent was made over Stob Coire an Lochan to Aonach Dubh. The glen was reached by an easy route, and as easy routes are not

“gruelling” they had already had, they made no attempt to climb it. It will certainly prove a very tough obstacle, and may be impassable in the direct route. It can be turned by climbing out of the gully on the south wall and back beyond the pitch.—J. H. B.

plentiful on this side of the hill, it is marked on the accompanying photograph. The photograph was taken last Easter from Clachaig Hotel, by Mr Howie, with a long focus lens. Maclay had told us of a good climb he and some others had had last Easter somewhere to the south of this route, and as the line of it is not easy to follow from description, he has been good enough to mark the route on the photograph also. The climb was partly in the gully and partly on the face, and is interesting, as there has not been much climbing recorded on this side of the mountain. As will be seen from the photograph, the cliff is divided into three tiers of rocks. The lower tier was ascended on the north side of the gully, as the gully itself seemed to have a pitch that might be difficult if not impossible. The second tier was ascended by the gully just above a most unpromising waterfall, and in the third tier a spur by the side of the gully to the south of that previously followed gave a fine climb. It was a steep knife-edge arête, and reminded the climbers of the outer edge of the Pic Robbieson, though, of course, on a much larger scale.

Sunday morning was wet and misty, but, with long intervals of drizzle between the showers, it was not till the afternoon that the weather turned hopelessly bad, when it proved an out-and-outer. Four of us tried a new ridge on Aonach Eagach, which we had "prospected" on the previous evening. It lies the last of the narrow ridges on the mountain side before a great gully cuts off the big eastern buttress of Meall Dearg. This ridge, for want of a better name, we christened "The Blackberry Ridge." We left the road about half a mile beyond the shepherd's cottage in Glencoe, and "took the hill" with the gully on our right. We struck the rock about 1,900 feet up, and had a capital climb. The crest of the ridge was followed throughout with the exception of one pitch, above a little cave with a natural window above the door, the lower part of which was turned on the left.

The main ridge of Aonach Eagach is a most interesting one, and more nearly resembles a Coolin ridge than any I have seen on the mainland hills. We followed it westwards for about two miles, till, in the driving rain and mist, we

had enough of climbing over "Sgurr nan Gillian, after Sgurr nan Gillian." We then shot down a steep scree slope, and came out of the mist just above the middle of Loch Triochatan, and reached Clachaig shortly after 6 P.M.

The night was still wild, and the rain was flying along the road in ribbons. This fact impressed Raeburn and me more than the others, for we had still to get to Fort-William that night *en route* for home. We gave it as long as we could to "clear up," but the longer we waited the worse it got, so at 8.30 we reluctantly donned our wet garments again, and arrived at Fort-William without mishap some two and a half hours later.

After our departure, I understand the party spent a wet Monday in leaving cards for Mr Ossian, and Tuesday they occupied in climbing the Crowberry Ridge of Buchaille Etive in perfect weather. Mr Boyd on his way home secured some excellent photographs from the top of the Cobbler.

So ended one of the pleasantest holidays we have ever enjoyed.

THE "CHURCH-DOOR" BUTTRESS ON BIDEAN NAM BIAN.

BY J. H. BELL.

THE Church-Door or right-hand buttress under the summit of Bidean nam Bian has already often been mentioned in the *Journal*, and described in detail in Mr Raeburn's paper, "A Wet Day in Glencoe," but, as it has at length yielded to repeated attacks, I have been asked to tell its history from the beginning, even at the risk of some repetition.

The buttress was christened the "Church-Door" by Mr Tough, from its appearance when seen end on, though it should be said that some think the resemblance fanciful.

The Church-Door is the western of two rock buttresses which stand at the head of Coire nam Beith. Between the two is a great gully, with a fine pinnacle at its foot (Collie's Pinnacle). The eastern buttress is rather higher and almost as steep as the western, but it is not so well defined. On its eastern side it gradually tails off to the scree, while on both sides of the Church-Door are quite impassable cliffs, so that an ascent can only be made by the face. It is this fact that there can be no shirking of its difficulties, and no doubt as to whether they have been fairly met and conquered, which gives its character and interest to the climb. From one place on the Glencoe road near to the west end of Loch Triochatan, the whole buttress is in view, and it must be admitted that as seen from there it looks quite insignificant as compared with the frowning black face of Aonach Dubh and the shapely pinnacle of Stob Coire nam Beith. Yet though on both of these cliffs there are many places that are difficult, and many that are impossible, there is no record of any continuous and defined climb at all rivalling the Church-Door as a climbing problem.

The first idea of climbing the buttress occurred to Messrs Collie, Solly, and Collier, in March 1894. An entry in the Clachaig visitors' book simply records that they "tried the right-hand precipice at the head of Coire nam Beith, but were unable to climb it." At Easter 1896 another strong party, Messrs Hastings, Haskett-Smith,

and Bowen, attempted it unsuccessfully ; and since then no attempt has been made under winter conditions, though on one gloriously fine day at Easter 1897, when Mr Boyd's photograph was taken, there were more than a dozen members of the A.C. and the S.M.C. on the mountain.

In July 1895, an attempt was made by Messrs Brown and Tough. They were not able to make much progress upwards, but succeeded in climbing down some distance from the top, and saw a grassy ledge which, if it could be reached from below, they thought might be a means of reaching the top. In September 1896, having heard about the buttress from Mr Tough, Messrs J. Napier, G. Napier, E. W. Green, and myself journeyed to Glencoe to attempt the climb. We spent our first day climbing Stob Coire nam Beith in a thick mist, at first under the impression that we were on the Church-Door, and it was not till five o'clock in the evening, after we had reached the cairn of Bidean and descended again to Coire nam Beith, that the mist lifted and we saw the buttress then almost straight above us. The next morning we were able to go straight to the climb ; but a sharp snowstorm while we were lunching at the foot of the rocks rather cooled our enthusiasm, and I think that if any one had suggested that it was hardly a day for climbing steep rocks, the remark would have met with approval. However, nobody spoke, so with cold fingers we tossed up for order, roped together, and began to prospect the climb, with Green leading.

From the photograph it will be seen that near the centre of the buttress there is a projecting rib of rock, on which the snow lies. At the end of this rib is a vertical cliff. Previous parties had tried to get on to the rib from the right (west) side. On the east side of the rib, facing Collie's Pinnacle, is a flake of rock almost detached from the rib by a crack, through which daylight can be seen. It appeared that it might be just possible to reach the rib by means of the crack on the lower side of the flake, but before attempting it we went up the great gully far enough to see the upper side of the crack. It looked much more promising ; so, starting just opposite the upper end of Collie's Pinnacle, we climbed on to a ledge about fifteen feet up, and then from



Photo by Herbert C. Boyd.

BIDEAN NAM BIAN.
+ The Church Door Buttress.

the ledge up into the crack. There is only just room for a man in the crack. Our leader, Green, who is five feet seven, and thirteen stone, filled it exactly; and J. Napier, who was second, got stuck, through trying to climb it with a knapsack on. Once in the crack, it is easy to climb vertically upwards to the top of the flake. Then there is a rather awkward corner to turn in order to get on to the rib, and just beyond the corner a projecting rock gives another rather delicate bit of balancing. Afterwards, for about a hundred feet, the climbing is easy. Then a chaos of rocks is reached. Green climbed to the highest point of this jumbled mass, and attempted to climb the cliff above, but could do nothing with it. While he was trying this I was exploring at the other end of the rope, and had discovered a ledge on the eastern wall of the buttress. The ledge is formed by two huge boulders, which have fallen and jammed between two great pillars of rock. The ledge is quite horizontal, and covered with moss. At first it is about six feet wide, but gradually narrows to about two feet. On the outside of the ledge there is an absolutely vertical drop of 200 feet (by aneroid), and at one place on the inside, next the wall of the buttress, there is a hole through which the scree below can be seen. Just beyond the narrowest point the ledge slopes upwards at a moderate angle over smooth slabs to the foot of a vertical chimney about twenty feet high. There was then some snow lying on the moss. I went cautiously along to the end of the ledge, and found a good, though small, hitch there, but I did not at all like the look of the slabs and chimney beyond, with their coating of snow-covered moss, and the certainty that a slip meant a plunge off the ledge. We turned back, to try to find a rather less sensational place; but after trying to climb straight up at more than one place, and an attempt to get into a shallow gully on the west side of the rib, we gave up the climb and descended. Green and G. Napier then skirted round the foot of the buttress to see if there were any other possible routes, while J. Napier and I went to the top by the great gully, and then descended about sixty feet. Just below the place we reached there was a pitch which we thought could only be passed by throwing a rope

round a projecting spur, but below this the way seemed easy to the top of the chimney above the ledge we had been on.

The next attempt on the buttress was exactly a year later, by Messrs J. Napier and Raeburn. They had a hopelessly bad day with rain, sleet, and wind, and only got up as far as the top of Green's chimney, as they thought it better, under the conditions, not to turn the corner just beyond.

At Easter this year Raeburn and I cycled down from Kingshouse to try the buttress again. Glencoe again gave us of its worst. The ride down from Kingshouse to Clachaig can easily be done in good weather in an hour. On that day it took two hours of the hardest work I have encountered. We had to walk our bicycles most of the way up the gentle rise to the watershed against furious gusts of wind and sheets of rain. Messrs Naismith and Maclay were staying at Clachaig, and we hoped to persuade them to join us, but we were delayed so much that they had started out before we arrived. We heard at Clachaig that Dr Clark and Mr Squance were expected up from Ballachulish, and waited in the hope of getting their help and their rope. Shortly before eleven they arrived, and with great good nature agreed to waive their plans and join in with ours. The weather had then improved a good deal, but with the late start, and the snow-covered rocks, we had little hope of doing the climb, and devoted the day to prospecting from the top. Our object was to reach a grassy ledge which led to the top of the chimney, the foot of which we had reached from below.

The toss of the coin sent me to the front, and after trying several places I found a 15-foot corner which gave access to the ledge. Raeburn came down to the top of the corner and helped me down with the rope, while Clark anchored him from above, and Squance danced about on the summit to try to keep warm. He was seen from the Glencoe road by Naismith and Maclay, who imagined that it was a dance of triumph, but were puzzled by there being only one man, and by his prolonged gesticulations. Our 120 feet of rope was just sufficient to let me down to

the top of the chimney, so that we had the whole climb prospected. We had no thought of attempting the ascent that day.

On 15th July a large party—Messrs Boyd, Douglas, G. Napier, G. T. Parker, Raeburn, and myself—gathered at Clachaig, with the Church-Door as our chief aim and object. The weather had been very fine, but the morning of the 16th was threatening, and seemed to promise that the elements would again protect the buttress; but this time it was only a threat, for the weather steadily improved, and by the time we were on the buttress the sun came out, and the rocks were fairly dry. Our party was reduced to four, as Douglas and Parker agreed to sit out and watch proceedings. We had divided the climb into two sections, and tossed for the lead. I was to lead up to the ledge, and it fell to Raeburn to try to get over the crux above it. In about an hour we reached the ledge, and Raeburn went forward to tackle the chimney. There are three jammed blocks close together in the chimney, and three or four feet above the highest of them is a big jammed block with a hole behind it. The lower blocks shove one out very awkwardly in the attempt to get over them. Raeburn climbed up to them, measured the difficulty, and then retreated for a rest. The place was evidently very stiff, and we had one more try at the other places which we had attempted before, but again could make nothing of them. We then returned to the ledge, produced 100 feet of string from our rucksack, tied a stone to it, and tried to throw it over the big jammed block. The first shot went pretty near, and this encouraged us to keep on, but after about half an hour of stone throwing we had to give it up. Raeburn then took off his boots and prepared for another attempt. I went forward to the end of the ledge to try to field him if a slip should occur, while Napier jammed himself in the hole in the ledge, worked Raeburn's rope over the small hitch, and anchored me. This time Raeburn was successful, and wild cheers broke out from us on the ledge, and from Douglas and Parker, who were watching the proceedings from the top of the eastern buttress. I then followed, and then the rucksack with its precious cargo of

Raeburn's boots. We had one ice axe with us, which we sent up at the same time on the string. The string was not very strong, and the weight considerable, so that Raeburn naturally got somewhat excited at the thought of his boots taking a plunge to the foot of the buttress. However, they arrived safely. We had now only the 15-foot corner to pass. It proved difficult. With a little assistance in balancing from a rope above it can be done comfortably, but without the rope Raeburn thought it would be risky, so descended and struggled up a chimney close beside the corner. The chimney he thought quite as difficult as the one below, but it was not in so sensational a situation. Once up the chimney, he traversed to the top of the corner, and we followed up it. Napier, with a longer reach, got a hold which none of the rest of us could reach, and could have done it safely without a rope. Probably there are other possible routes here. Another chimney, a little further from the corner than the one Raeburn went up, looked feasible, and it may be possible to climb almost straight up from the top of the chimney above the ledge. From the top of the corner thirty feet of easy climbing took us to the top of the buttress, and a fresh outburst of cheering announced that a very obstinate opponent had been overcome.

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.

GEARR AONACH,—the spur of Bidean nam Bian, which projects into Glencoe nearly opposite “The Study.”—At Easter 1898 Messrs Naismith, Maclay, and Boyd made an ascent and descent of the cliff of this mountain which faces the Glencoe road. From a solitary birch tree, on a terrace some 500 feet above the river Cona, they went straight up to the top over rocks that from the Glencoe road had seemed so steep and smooth as to be hardly feasible, but which proved comparatively easy, owing to the excellence of the holds. The descent followed a course parallel to, and only thirty or forty yards to the east of the line of ascent.

THE COBBLER—CENTRAL BUTTRESS AND SOUTH PEAK.—The Editor of the *Journal* has shown (see Vol. IV., p. 279) what mountaineering with cycles on bad roads is like. An example of exactly opposite conditions was the delightful day Rennie and I had on 3rd July, when we performed the operation known in the west as “running the lochs,” and sandwiched into it a couple of new climbs on the ever fresh and interesting trinity of peaks known as the Cobbler.

Leaving Helensburgh about 8.15 A.M., a stiff pull and walk of a mile and a half took us to the watershed of Loch Lomond. Then came long and luxurious coasts—I was almost saying glissades—down towards Luss, with ever-widening views of Scotland’s loveliest loch opening out before us. From Luss the road runs close to the loch’s edge, following the shores at almost dead level, and with a surface in most places as smooth as a racing track after the rain of the previous day. The wind was from the N.W., and a fresh breeze, but the screen of trees on this beautiful road and the high mountain barrier on our left sheltered us considerably.

We did not hurry, so that it was some two hours after leaving Helensburgh that we passed by Tarbet, and rising to the watershed of Lochs Lomond and Long, exchanged the view of Ben Lomond, which we had been admiring for the last hour, for a picture of the peaks of our objective mountain, Ben Arthur. Leaving the cycles at Arrochar Hotel, we donned hobnailers, and left at eleven for the Cobbler.

The party which visited the hill last November (Vol. V., p. 41) had prospected from the top a route on the south peak which appeared feasible, and this we resolved to attempt first, before passing on to explore a section of the mountain hitherto totally neglected, the buttress of the central peak.

The south (or S.E.) peak of Ben Arthur is roughly quadrangular in shape, having four distinct faces, which are approximately N., E., S., and W. The arête connecting it with the central peak abuts against the west face, and affords the shortest route to the summit. A ridge in line with this arête runs up to a considerable height on the east face; but even in 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 south face is apparently hopelessly steep, while the north face looks little less so. No record of any climbing on this latter exists, except on the occasion mentioned in the *Journal* (Vol. IV., p. 65), when Messrs Naismith and Napier turned the N.W. angle of the west face a few feet below the summit, and ascended from thence on the north face.

A shallow chimney passes up the centre of this northern face, but is so steep, and so destitute of holds, that Rennie and I unhesitatingly rejected any idea of an attempt to ascend it. Standing at the foot of this chimney, however, a sloping ledge leads off to one's left, and this we selected as our route. The start is perfectly easy, but after fifty feet or so have been gained, 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, we turned the angle of the northern face, about half-way up, below some overhanging rock, and entered the gully on the east leading up to the junction of the east ridge with the face. Here we joined the usual route, and traversed the summit.

On the whole, our route has little to commend it. It is, while slightly dangerous from the fewness and badness of the hitches, and the treacherous nature of the mossy ledges, unsatisfactory in that it does not offer a real solution of the northern face problem, joining the ordinary route a good way below the summit.

After traversing the central peak by the arête, we started to explore its northern buttress, and were fortunate enough to discover a very interesting little climb thereon.

The col between this buttress and the northern peak forms the usual approach to the Cobbler ridge from the corrie facing Arrochar, and a well-marked path leads up to it. A sheep track crosses this path about 200 feet below the top of the central buttress, and gives access to a large patch of grass about one-third up the face.

Rennie and I took this sheep track, and by it gained the foot of a well-marked, though here shallow gully, that runs up from here to the summit. The first 100 feet was an easy scramble, then the gully passed into a large cave, and came temporarily to an end. The walls of the cave were rather far apart, and the roof projected considerably,

but a good height up on our right wall a small ledge ran along it, and appeared to offer a means of getting above the obstacle.

After a considerable amount of feet and shoulder and contortionist work the ledge was gained, and the leader passed round the right edge of the cave, and entered an upper and smaller cave. This upper cave was illuminated by a side window, but unfortunately of too small diameter for the passage of even a medium-sized mountaineer. However, the window sill gives a grand hold, and an interesting traverse, where the arms have to do the bulk of the work, led us round by our right and up a small chimney, where the holds are small but good, into the upper continuation of the main gully. The climbing was now practically ended, and a short thirty-foot scramble led us out very near to the highest part of the buttress. The whole climb is perhaps 200 feet from the sheep track. Taken from the foot of the lower rocks, it would probably be not less than 300 feet.

An hour's easy going from the summit took us back to the water's edge, where we patented yet another new route. The tide was very low, and we simply made a bee-line for Arrochar Hotel, across the sand flats and mussel beds of Loch Long head.

On our journey back I will not dwell except to say that the ride will live long in my memory at least as a perfectly luxurious one. With lovely scenery and lovely weather—for the squalls we had encountered on the Cobbler were soon left behind—and last, but not least, a strong breeze at our backs, we swept down the Long Loch, climbed over Whistlefield Hill and the fine road by the Gareloch rapidly unrolled behind our wheels as we sailed merrily back to Helensburgh, which we reached shortly before eight, well satisfied with the day's run of the lochs.

HAROLD RAEURN.

THE ROSA PINNACLE OF CIR MHOR, ARRAN.—On 6th August the writer, with two friends, attempted to climb the gully to the west of this pinnacle, and which has already been described in a paper on Cir Mhor in the January number. A point was attained within 6 feet of that reached by the writer in descending on a former occasion, but it was felt that to attempt either an ascent or a descent without the protection of a rope was not justifiable for any of the party. Attention was then turned to the Rosa Pinnacle. The opinion had been hazarded that it would afford excellent sport, and this I can endorse, although we were hopelessly pounded and forced to return. Our first attack lasted $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and was made from near the bottom on the west side. Some awkward slabs were ascended by lassoing the pinnacles above, but progress was arrested at a sensational corner which no amount of coaxing made more easy. So also a steep slippery chimney with a crack for the right hand would have none of us, and later inspection showed the overhanging character of the rocks above. A second and, for a time, more hopeful attack lasted nearly four hours. Reaching a

sloping narrow grass ledge, an irregular but always sporting route took us up the face of the cliff and in a direction approaching the summit. A sort of subsidiary arête seemed to lead up to the very summit, and comparatively rapidly we reached within a hundred feet of the sky-line. A kind of "Bell's groove" (see Vol. V., p. 32) had to be climbed, some 25 feet high, and at a very steep angle, affording, however, a good crack for the fingers. Though perhaps quite as sensational as its neighbour on the Sannox face, it was by no means so difficult, but it led on to a very steep groove, with overhanging block, whence we could see that our climb was fruitless, and that we had really been ascending a mere finger of rock placed on the great boiler-plate. As we were still about 40 feet from the summit, and only a narrow vertical crack was available, a reluctant descent was imperative. The groove required care, especially by the last man, and our progress to the bottom was only delayed by secondary attempts to traverse to our cave route of last year by the aid of a long-hitched rope. Ascending Cir Mhor further to the west, we climbed down part of the cave route, and photographed the pinnacle. From the views obtained, the possibility of ever ascending the pinnacle on the west side has been removed from the pale of discussion as far as the writer is concerned.

W. INGLIS CLARK.

THE COOLINS.—*June 1898.*—Messrs Parker and Robertson with Dr and Mrs Inglis Clark spent a very enjoyable fortnight at Sligachan. The weather, which up to the 16th had been uniformly fine, became intermittent after the arrival of the party, affording only one perfect day during the visit. On the other hand, magnificent cloud effects were observable nearly every day, and genuine "Skye weather" was absent. The various members showed unusual activity, as the following condensed summary of their climbs will show. The whole party ascended Sgurr nan Gillean by the Pinnacle route, but were forced to abandon the western ridge, owing to stress of weather, and return by the tourist route. Ascending Bruach na Frithe from Fionn Choire, the party descended into Lota Corrie with the intention of climbing the Bhasteir Tooth. Owing to an advancing storm Clark and Robertson alone attempted the ascent, but were caught near the top in a perfect hurricane of wind and rain and forced to descend. Mrs Inglis Clark with Mr Falcon and John M'Kenzie ascended Alasdair by the Sgumain ridge, the bad step on the latter being found sufficiently trying. Dr and Mrs Inglis Clark ascended to the west ridge of Sgurr nan Gillean from Bhasteir Corrie by a sporting gully, traversed the "Gendarme," and reached the summit of Bhasteir. Owing to a storm they abandoned the attempt to reach Bhasteir Tooth. They also ascended the now popular Eagle's Nest chimney, with its upper twenty feet of back and knee work. Messrs Parker and Robertson traversed Clach Glas, ascended Blaven, and returned by the long stone shoot. Parker, Robertson, and Clark entered Tairne-

lear Corrie in drenching rain, struck the col on Sgurr Thuilm, and traversing the fine ridge, added three peaks of Mhadaidh, as well as Ghreadaidh to their list. A momentary improvement in the weather led the photographers to reascend Mhadaidh, so that Sligachan was only reached about midnight. They also made the circuit of Corrie Labain from Glen Brittle (where by the kindness of Mr Laidlaw they were put up for the night) by Sgumain, Alasdair, and Tearlach, avoiding Mhic Coinnich by descending the stone shoot and reascending to the ridge. Passing along the picturesque and sensational ridge, the "Inaccessible" was reached at too late an hour to permit of its ascent. Parker and Robertson ascended Sgurr nan Eag and Garsbhcinn by Coire Ghrunnda, passing over by Coire an Lochain to Coruisk and back to Sligachan. Clark and Parker had a long day from Sligachan, by Coruisk and Scavaig, traversing Dubh Bheag, Dubh Mhor, and Dubh Dabheinn to the famous gap on Tearlach. While endeavouring to find a hitch for the rope, Mr Falcon opportunely came to their assistance by lowering a rope, and no difficulty was felt in making the ascent, the descent to Brittle being by way of the stone shoot.

Finally, after the departure of the others, that inveterate "peak-bagger" Robertson climbed Banachdich, and in so doing added another to the long list of seventy-four "Munro's" ascended by him since 1st May 1898.

W. I. C.

THE COOLINS.—*August* 1898.—A number of Club members were at Sligachan during August, and several new climbs and variations were accomplished. Among the more generally interesting were two new routes on the main Coolin ridge, viz., on the face of Sgurr Mhic Coinnich, and the west face of the Bhasteir Tooth. At each of these places a way has been discovered of scaling the rocks directly from the col, without making any detour as hitherto. The climb along the main ridge would appear to be practically completed. The January number will contain detailed notes of those and other new climbs.

SOME WALKS IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS.—Hoping at last to have a good climbing holiday in Skye, I joined a friend, A. C. Waters, at Braemar, to undergo bodily penance before daring to worship at the shrine of the Coolin. Unfortunately I was not allowed to get further than this training, but as a good deal of work was done, I have made those short notes.

June 11th.—Starting at 7 A.M., we drove to the Cairnwell Pass, from whence we ascended Glas Maol (3,502 feet), passing over Meall Odhar (3,019 feet). In order to view the Caenlochan Glen, we ascended Little Glas Maol (3,184 feet). Rounding the head of this glen, we ascended Cairn na Glasha (3,484 feet), Waters also taking in Druiam Mor (3,144 feet). After ascending Tom Buidhe (3,140 feet), Tolmount (3,143 feet), and Carn an Tuirc (3,340 feet), we descended to Loch Callater and home to Braemar.

Next day we drove to Lui Beg, and starting the following morning at 6 A.M., we crossed over into Glen Dec, fording the Dee at the bothy under Cairntoul. It was a fearfully close, stuffy morning, and the walking was very toilsome. The first top taken was that of Coire an t-Saighdeir (3,989 feet), thence to the top of Cairntoul (4,241 feet). The distant view was hazy in the extreme. We now journeyed over Sgoran Lochan Uaine (4,095 feet), the two tops of the south plateau of Braeriach (4,149 and 4,095 feet), Braeriach (4,248 feet), and on to the top of Sron na Leirg (3,875 feet). In descending to the Learg Ghrumach I had the luck to have a glissade over 200 feet long—and in June! The ascent of Ben Macdhuì was steep and toilsome. Passing over the south top (4,244 feet), we arrived at the north top (4,296 feet). The descent was made over the top of Sput Dheirg (4,095 feet), traversing Sron Riach, and then home to Lui Beg. The following day was spent in ascending the south-west top of Ben Mheadhoin (3,750 feet) from Loch Etchachan. The top of Ben Mheadhoin (3,883 feet) was then reached, and the descent made over the top north of Coire Etchachan (3,551 feet) to Glen Derry. We now indulged in some short days, such as Meall Odhar and Glas Maol, Cairnwell (3,059 feet), Cairn nan Sac (3,000 feet), Carn Geoidhe (3,194 feet), among the hills west of the Cairnwell Pass.

Parting with my friend at Ballater, I drove to Allnaguibsaich Lodge, and followed the track up Lochnagar to where it joins the Glen Gelder track. From here I struck up Cui the Crom (3,552 feet). On my arrival at the summit, rain began. Hail and sleet varied the walk to Cac Carn Mor (3,768 feet) and Cac Carn Beag (3,786 feet). On leaving the last, I had another summer experience, in being plastered with snow for ten to fifteen minutes. During this snowstorm I got a little out of my reckoning, and on to the top of Creag a Ghlas Uilt (3,450 feet). I now walked over the following hills: Carn a Choire Bhoidheach (3,630 feet), Carn an t-Sagairt Beag (3,424 feet), Carn an t-Sagairt Mor (3,430 feet), Fafernie (3,274 feet), Cairn Bannoch (3,314 feet), Cairn Gowal (3,242 feet), Creag an Dubh Loch (3,100 feet), Broad Cairn (3,268 feet), Cairn Gowal (3,027 feet). The walk down by Allt Gowal is extraordinarily wet. Cairn Gowal presents a fine lot of slabby cliffs when seen from here. There is a four-mile walk from here to Braedownie, and then another four along a good road to the Milton of Clova. This day was not an extraordinarily toilsome one though the tops bagged are many, viz., five mountains and eight tops, making thirteen "Munro's" in all. Glen Clova in the evening light looked very fine, and one spur of the Driesh loomed up boldly. For boulder-climbers the district of Allt Gowal should form a very happy hunting ground. The following morning was hot and fine, so that it was with considerable exertion that I reached the summit of the Driesh (3,105 feet). The ridge between it and Mayar is broad, and has several tops upon it. Mayar (3,043 feet) is a better shaped hill, and westwards falls into the great plateau between it and Finalty Hill. The height of Finalty is 2,954 feet, but the cairn is not placed on the

summit of the great plateau, which must therefore approach closely Munro's line of respectability.

From Finalty Hill I descended into Glen Isla, and after fording the Isla struck up the hillside for the pass between Monamenach and Black Hill (2,000 feet approximately). A gentle descent into Glen Shee, and then two miles of road-walking, brought me to the Spittal. Next day I had a toilsome trudge down to Blairgowrie, where I caught the train for Blair Atholl. Cross-country walking has one disadvantage, and that is the absence of clean shirts. This want is more keenly felt in summer than in winter for obvious reasons. I left the Atholl Arms at 8 A.M. on a hot, close morning; the heat of the morning was rendered worse by my wearing a sweater, the result of the exigencies of the wash. In consequence I found the road west of the Fender Burn very steep. I followed it to its summit, and then struck up the steep heather slope of Carn Liath. At the top of this slope is a dilapidated cairn, a short way off the true top (3,193 feet). From the cairn a narrowish grass ridge, with two graceful curves to left and then right, leads to the col between Carn Liath and Braigh Coire Chruinn-Bhlagain. Where it abuts on the latter peak it forms the narrow side to a corrie. A short easy pull up the slope, which sweeps to the right and then to the left, brought me to the white-quartz cairn of the Braigh Coire Chruinn-Bhlagain (3,505 feet). From here a drop over a small secondary ridge brings one to the col, and an easy ascent leads from here to the top of Airgid Bheinn (3,250 feet).* It is an easy walk to the top of Carn nan Gabhar, the culminating point of the ridge, from here. There are three cairns on the top, the middle being the highest. Compared with Carn nan Gabhar (3,671 feet), Airgid Bheinn looks higher than 3,250 feet. On the top of Carn nan Gabhar I found plenteous traces of fresh snow, such as I had had four days before on Lochnagar. I followed the northern ridge, which ends with a very steep grass slope. An eleven-mile walk down Glen Tilt brought me to Blair Atholl. These few days' walking had brought about a first-rate condition of body, but a wicked telegram took me to home again before I could utilise this training in climbing. The total "bag" was twenty-three mountains and twenty-one tops.

EDRED M. CORNER.

ARDLUI BOULDER.—S.M.C. cyclists, after a spin along the "bonny banks of Loch Lomond," may perhaps like to vary the exercise by stretching their arms. If so, they will find an excellent boulder about a mile south of Ardlui, and a quarter of a mile north of the Pulpit Rock, which gives a good little climb of twenty feet. It lies beside some trees, midway between the railway and the road. It is fifty yards distant from the latter, and visible from it. The Pulpit Rock can also be ascended from one side, but it is hardly worth calling a climb.

W. W. N.

* When on this summit, on 4th June 1898, Mr Munro and I made the height 3,490 feet.—ED.

DEPTH OF SNOW AT BEN NEVIS, 1897-98.

The following heights were observed at the snow-gauge on the 1st and 15th of the month during the winter of 1897-98 :—

1897.		Inches.	1898.		Inches.
Dec.	1	- - - 14	Mar.	1	- - - 77
"	15	- - - 24	"	15	- - - 70
			April	1	- - - 69
			"	15	- - - 73
1898.			May	1	- - - 70
Jan.	1	- - - 25	"	15	- - - 77
"	15	- - - 39	June	1	- - - 58
Feb.	1	- - - 32	"	15	- - - 22
"	15	- - - 52			

Snow disappeared from the gauge on 24th June. The maximum depth at gauge was 77 inches on 1st March and 15th May.

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.

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

THE ALPINE GUIDE: THE WESTERN ALPS. By the late JOHN BALL, F.R.S., &c. New Edition, reconstructed and revised on behalf of the Alpine Club by W. A. B. Coolidge, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, &c. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co. 1898.)

MR JOHN BALL, who was the first President of the Alpine Club, and editor of the well-known "Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers" series, as well as of the "Guide Books to the Alps," died in 1889. Shortly afterwards the Committee of the Alpine Club decided to republish his guide books as a fitting memorial to one who was not only distinguished as a pioneer climber and explorer, but who, by his position as a naturalist and man of science, had largely contributed to raise the status of mountaineering, then in its infancy, from being merely an athletic pastime to its present wider character as an aid to art, botany, geology, and other sciences, as well as a training school for explorers in mountain ranges throughout the world.

The appeal for subscriptions to cover expenses was liberally responded to, but the gentleman who first undertook the honorary editorship was unable to make much progress, and on his withdrawal in 1893, Mr Coolidge accepted the onerous duty. Unfortunately illness and other circumstances delayed his work, and it is only now that we have the first volume, which deals with all the Western Alps, and covers the ground from the Lake of Geneva on the north to Nice on the south, and from Grenoble on the west to the Simplon and Lago Maggiore on the east.

Ball's Guide was first issued in 1863, and the third edition appeared in 1870. It is thus obvious to all who know the Alps that if a new edition were to be issued after so long an interval as twenty-eight years, much of the work would require to be rewritten—hotels, roads, and railways have enormously multiplied, new climbing centres have developed, and, from the traveller's point of view, the whole character of many districts has been entirely changed.

In comparing the new edition with the original we at once notice that the introduction has been omitted, and that Mr Coolidge gives in its place a very valuable list of books, periodicals, and maps relating to the Western Alps, and a list of Club huts. Older climbers may have a lingering regret for the chapters on the means of travel in the Alps, and on the natural features of the country, but we think the

omission was wise. The chapters are entirely out of date, and to have rewritten them would have made the volume unwieldy, while as a record of the development of mountaineering they can still always be referred to. Following the lines of the earlier editions the book is divided into six chapters, dealing respectively with the Maritime, Cottian, Dauphiné, Lower Savoy, Graian, and Pennine Alps, but the last chapter, which includes the districts round Chamonix and Zermatt, is necessarily very much the longest. The book is also divided into twenty-one sections, making it possible for any traveller to have the portions relating to any district he wishes to visit bound up separately in a convenient size for the pocket.

We have not been able to study the whole of the new work, but if the reference to the well-known range of the Saasgrat (pp. 509 and 542), and some other sections which we have carefully read, may be taken as samples of the whole, it is clear that the editor's work has been well and thoroughly done. So many routes have been made between Zermatt and Saas that it is almost impossible to describe all in an ordinary guide book, but here most of them have been referred to, and others are suggested, and sufficient information is given to afford the traveller an idea of the comparative pleasures and difficulties of the several routes. At the same time, we are surprised to find no mention of the Durrenhorn or the Balfrin-joch, and no mention of the Hohberghorn in the index.

The maps, ten in number, attached to the book are probably the most accurate maps of the Alps yet published. They are, however, on so small a scale that climbers cannot afford to dispense with larger maps, but these should be carefully examined, and corrections noted on the larger maps before guideless expeditions are made, particularly in the Italian Alps.

On the whole, we consider the book a valuable and up-to-date contribution to the literature of the Alps. It is true that the peculiar charm of Mr Ball's writings, one might almost say the poetry, has suffered by the inclusion of new matter written in a different style, but it is a compensation to have within easy reach of all the benefit of the unrivalled technical knowledge of the Alps which the editor possesses.

The traveller will find much valuable and interesting information as to the towns and lowlands, without all the details of many other guide books, and many useful hints as to the best known climbs, without being limited to the bare particulars of the climbers' guides.

It is published at a very moderate price, and as we understand that the date of the issue of the subsequent volumes depends partially upon the sales of the first volume, we hope those of our readers who have not yet a copy will get one without delay. To do so will not only support the object of the Alpine Club in honouring the memory of Mr Ball, but will make it easier to plan holidays, and will add a valuable book of reference to any Alpine library.

PLACE-NAMES IN GLENGARRY AND GLENQUOICH, AND THEIR ORIGIN. By EDWARD C. ELLICE. (London : Swan, Sonnenschein, & Co. 1898.)

UNDER this somewhat prosaic title, Mr Ellice has written a most delightful and entertaining little book, in the hope, as he says, "that it may encourage the people of these glens to keep up the old local traditions." It is far from being, as its title might imply, a mere dictionary of names, for it is brimful of anecdote and story relating to incidents which have given rise to many of the names in this remote region, and his explanations of the descriptive names hit off the topographical features of the country in a very striking manner. The book contains some queer portraits of men associated with the locality, and a reproduction of the one-inch O.S. map. We would have liked to have seen some views of the landscape, but this we could hardly expect in a book that costs the modest sum of half-a-crown. Perhaps a little more care might have been bestowed on the index, in order to have made it more useful as a book of reference, for a casual glance does not explain why such names as Allt Allan (p. 20) and Allt nan Atha (p. 21), &c., should be left out, while others of no more importance are included ; and there is nothing in the text to show that Sgurr a Mhorraine of the index is the same as "Scoor a Voror or Sgurr a Mhoroch" of the text.

The following example of one of the place-names, taken at random from many in the book, gives an idea of how the names have been treated :—

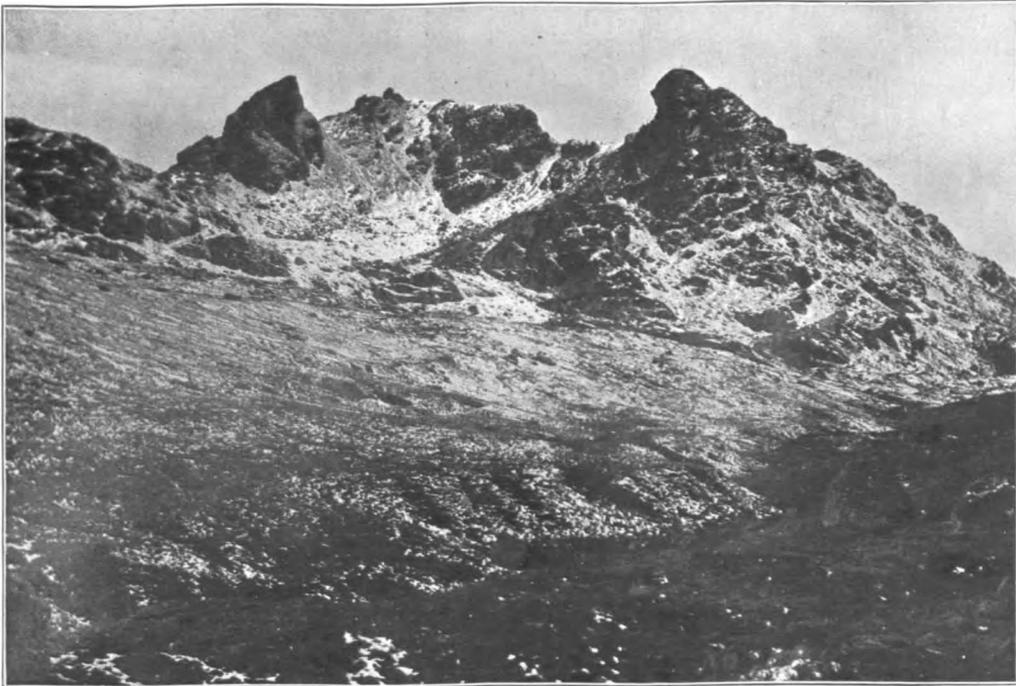
"LOCH HOURN.—Either Loch Iuthairn, the Loch of Hell ; or Loch a' Chuirn, the Loch of the Cairn. The generally accepted meaning is the Loch of Hell. The pass from Glenquoich to Loch Hourn is a most notable one ; the wild nature of the moor, the magnificent groups of rocks, and the dark and rugged hill-tops, all combine to form an ideal impression of the Corrie of the Graves and the Lake of Hell. Landseer loved to come here and paint his rocks, still called after his name. It was among these hills that Sir R. Murchison and Sir A. Geikie, then a young man, traced the movements of the glaciers of bygone ages. Sir John Lubbock writes in no uncertain strain : ' In Great Britain,' he says, ' I know no better illustration of ice action than is to be seen on the road leading from Glenquoich to Loch Hourn, one of the most striking examples of desolate and savage scenery in Scotland.'

"A famous international race was once run from Loch Hourn to Invergarry under the following circumstances :—Glenarry was one day at Loch Hourn, and drove home in four hours' time ; on arriving at Invergarry House, he informed the family tutor of his quick drive, when the latter, a Mr Green, an Englishman, at once undertook to do the distance as quick on foot. Glenarry bet him £20 he would not—and a day was named for the race. Later on, a Glenarry man,

Somerled Macdonell, was backed against the tutor, and, not contented with this, Mr M'Rae, commonly called 'Glenquoich,' wagered that he would get an 'old wife' off his farm who would beat the pair of them.

"On the appointed day, Peggy Fraser (wife of Angus Fraser), the tutor, and the Highlander were all in their places, and at the words 'One, two, three, and away,' the two men started off up the brae; Peggy, however, not understanding what was meant, was left at the post, when a 'Bi falbh, Pheigi!' ('Be off, Peggy!') from her excited husband, sent her racing after the others. The Glengarry man took the lead from the first, but the steep ascent from Loch Hourne caused his nose to bleed, and he had to stop at a burn to wash, which allowed Mr Green to get a long way ahead; however, Somerled remembered the saying that, 'If a MacDonald shed blood at the commencement of an enterprise, he would be sure to succeed,' and was soon off again after his opponent. In the end the Highlander won easily, doing the distance, about twenty-seven miles, in three hours forty minutes. The tutor also won his wager, coming in about five minutes under the four hours; but poor Peggy had enough of it after the first seven miles, and stopped at Glenquoich. A Gaelic song was, however, written in her honour, by Allan Dhu of Glen Loyne. On the arrival of the competitors at Invergarry House, Glengarry's wife stood at the front door ready to receive them, and revive them with 'bizzed porter' on meal."

Far be it from us to question the meanings given to many of the place-names in this book, for every person is entitled to a theory of his own when it comes to a question of what a corrupted Gaelic name originally meant, and one explanation is just as likely to be right as another. Mr Ellice has been very happy in his rendering of most of them, and we have to congratulate him on producing such an admirable little book, and it is one, we feel sure, that will do much to fulfil the objects for which it is written.



THE COBLER.

H. Raeburn.

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

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THE COBBLER CLIMBS.

By H. C. BOYD.

THE late Mr Mummery laid down three stages in the natural history of an Alpine peak in the eyes of the climber. The earliest stage is when it is regarded as "hopelessly impossible"; for some time after its ascent has been achieved it is spoken of as "the most difficult climb in the Alps"; and finally, it descends from its pedestal of inaccessibility, and becomes "an easy day for a lady." Similarly, we find that in mountaineering descriptions there are successive stages of development. When a hill is comparatively unknown, the writer feels it proper to speak impressively, and in a vague and general fashion, of the majesty of its form, the beauty of its colouring, the grandeur of its view; the most obvious route to the summit is alone described. But the day comes when all this is taken for granted. The mountain has been climbed and re-climbed again and again; every ridge and gully has been explored; all the possible and impossible routes up its faces have been mapped out and named with scientific precision; they are divided and subdivided into the "climbs" and "variations" of mountaineering classification. Some may regard this as an evolution downwards, robbing the mountain of its ancient dignity; but such is not the feeling of the true climber. Just as each line that marks the character in the face of an old and familiar friend makes the face the dearer the longer and more intimately it is

known, so it is in the case of a mountain. Has Cir Mhor fallen in the estimation of the climbing world since the day of "new routes" on its northern face was inaugurated? Has the majesty of Ben Nevis been lowered now that all its noble ridges have been familiarised to mountaineers? Rather should we say that the distant veneration in which these peaks were formerly held has been transformed into the feeling of intimacy with which we regard our closest friends.

The Cobbler has long been familiar to all lovers of the hills, but it is only within the last year or two that it has passed into this inner circle of friendship. When the New Year Meet of the Club was held at Tarbet four years ago, the Cobbler was naturally the chief centre of attraction; and the climbing that it afforded in those beautiful winter days was afterwards well described by Mr Maylard in an excellent article. Since then, however, the grey old rocks have become much better known to members of the Club. Many new climbs have been discovered, some of which have been recorded in scattered notes in these pages; others have remained unrecorded; and though it cannot be claimed that the climbs on the Cobbler have yet been exhausted, the time appears to have now come when the chief climbs that are known may fittingly be gathered together under one connected description.

At this time of day it is almost superfluous to observe that the Cobbler boasts of three peaks—the North Peak, the Centre Peak, and the South Peak—all of them offering climbing of the most interesting nature, and of every shade of difficulty. Mr Maylard, in his reference to the popular nomenclature of the peaks, believes that the term "Cobbler" is applied to the northern peak; but in this I think he is mistaken, and misses the whole significance of the name. In reality it is the central and highest peak that bears the name, and gives it to the whole mountain; and it does so on account of the very striking resemblance of the topmost blocks, as seen from Arrochar, to a little cowed figure sitting with his knees gathered up, like a cobbler bending over his work. The likeness is usually lost in a photograph, and is totally lost when seen from close at hand.

He faces north, and over against him sits the ponderous and altogether disproportionate figure of "the wife." It is only her head and shoulders that we see—formed by the tremendous overhanging rocks of the northern peak—like an old woman in a mutch, stooping with age. Read Alexander Smith's description, in the "Summer in Skye," of the domestic relations of this ancient couple, sitting for ever, in sunshine and in storm, unmoved and unchanged, brooding over the mystery of the years, and you can never afterwards look up at the quaint old outlines, sharply defined against the sky, without being impressed with a curiously vivid sense of personality. The south peak is popularly called "The Cobbler's Last." Among mountaineering men it is now rather familiarly known as "Jean, the Cobbler's Lass"; and a shapely peak it is, a very pinnacle of pointed rock, springing from the depths of the corrie, on which side it is still perfectly virgin, and long will remain so. I have seen this pinnacle rising over the shoulder of Ben Narnain, when half enshrouded in mist, look like some wonderful peak in the Dolomites, one might fancy miles away.

As we approach the corrie, wending our way up the Buttermilk Burn, we pass numbers of large blocks of stone that have been shaken from the rocky sides of Ben Narnain in the course of ages. There are at least three that are specifically known as "The Boulders"; and few mountaineering parties nowadays, bound for the Cobbler, can resist the temptation to turn aside at this point to indulge for an hour in the fascinations of "bouldering." The last and the largest of these is a huge rock, with a great flat top, spacious enough for a dinner party, which is not, however, easily reached. There is no easy way up. The easiest is probably on the south-east side; and some of the sides have hitherto defied every effort of the most expert of our climbers.

But we must not linger too long over the problems of the boulders. There is sufficient work to be found on the peaks themselves to claim a whole day's undivided attention. We shall take them in their order, beginning on the north.

1. *The North Peak* is in some respects the most impressive of the Cobbler tops, and it also possesses the advantage of offering the largest number of distinct climbs. The peak may be divided into two sections. The right-hand section, which faces north-east, is cleft by a deep gully, with practically vertical walls, a very conspicuous feature of this part of the mountain. There are two pitches in it, one at the bottom, and another about half-way up; but otherwise the ascent of the gully, which is of moderate inclination, presents no difficulty whatever. To the right of the big gully, the face consists of a series of terraces, with horizontal grassy ledges running along short bluffs of rock, intersected here and there by small gullies or chimneys. No very definite climbs here present themselves, though no doubt much interesting scrambling might be had. A good climb was, however, found by Messrs Naismith and Raeburn on 20th November 1897, by a route which keeps near to the right wall of the big gully. The climb commences, just above the basal pitch of the gully, by a "stomach traverse" out to the right, along a small sloping ledge, below an overhanging wall. This constitutes the chief difficulty of the climb, and leads on to the broken face already described. Thereafter the route upwards may be varied according to fancy, but the climber will find several very steep rock pitches that will test his powers.

Passing to the left-hand side of the big gully, we see a narrow crack or strip of grass running obliquely upwards to the left across the face, commonly called "Maclay's Crack." It is gained by means of a little chimney, about eight or nine feet high, at the foot of the gully. Some little distance up, the crack widens into a small grass platform, and here the route divides. The left branch, one of the earliest climbs discovered on the peak (Vol. III., p. 351), 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, 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.

The next portion of the face consists of sheer impracticable precipice. For about fifty yards from the base of the big gully no feasible routes present themselves, till the angle of the rocks is rounded, and a view of the south-east section of the peak is obtained. From this point of view the appearance of the two huge projecting rocks or "beaks" that form the summit is very striking and remarkable. The higher one especially—that on the right hand (Fig. 1, *B*)—appeals strongly to the fancy. In profile it resembles the

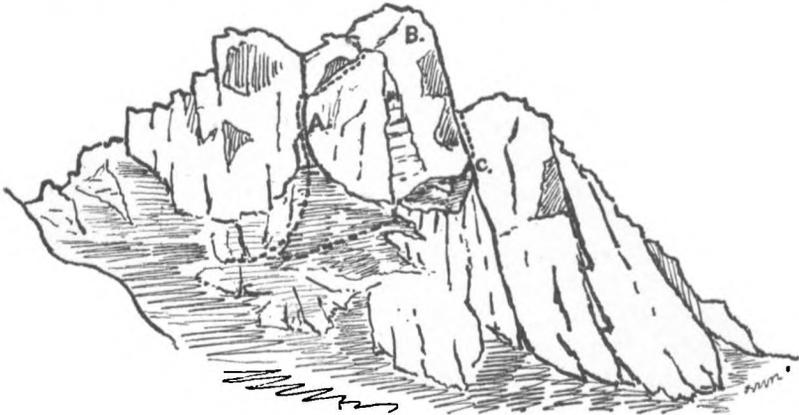


Fig. 1.—NORTH PEAK—SOUTH-EAST SECTION.
A. Right-angled Gully. B. The Ram's Head. C. The Ram's Head Gully.

head of a ram, or again, as Polonius might say, it is very like a calf. From directly below it shows itself as an enormous wedge of rock, jutting out overhead, and looking at times like a great wave bending over to break. Immediately to the right of it a very conspicuous vertical gully—which, for the sake of convenience, we may call Ram's Head Gully (Fig. 1, *C*)—cleaves the peak from top to bottom. The ascent of the gully has been attempted by the left wall (Vol. IV., p. 248), but the climbers were brought to a complete stop about a quarter of the way up, and beyond this point the chimney is so excessively smooth and steep as to be quite hopeless. In its upper-

most portion the gully eases off to a gentler slope, and this portion has been climbed by the route indicated in the illustration. The principal difficulty of the climb is to reach the gully from the small heather patch immediately below the Ram's Head, and this is done by crawling along a very narrow ledge, at the point marked *C*, underneath an overhanging bluff, 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.

Between the two beaks is a shorter gully (Fig. 1, *A*), commonly called the "right-angled gully." It starts from a large grass patch about half-way up the face, and for a time all is plain sailing. Then the climber is confronted with a most formidable wall of about thirty feet high, which has hitherto only been ascended with the assistance of a rope from above. A more feasible route may be followed by a broad grass ledge, running out to the right, and up a steep wall of about twelve or fifteen feet in height, provided with capital holds (Vol. IV., p. 248).

2. *The Centre Peak* may be gained from the North Peak by following the intervening ridge, or it may be ascended from the corrie by the easy grass slopes that strike the ridge immediately to the right of the top. Half-way between the two peaks, however, there is a considerable range of cliff which will attract the climber, and invite him to the discovery of new routes, as little attention has hitherto been paid to the climbs that it may afford. On the extreme right the cliff is quite vertical, if not even overhanging; but to the left it is considerably broken up by numerous grassy slopes and ledges, and is of easier gradation. Messrs Raeburn and Rennie have accomplished at least one climb on this portion by a pretty steep chimney close to the right-hand edge.

Every visitor to the Cobbler is familiar with the singular rocks that form the actual summit, with their two natural windows, between which the topmost block is poised—looking, from the northern ridge, like a rude sarcophagus, or, from the top of the South Peak, like a rather

dilapidated chimney can. Viewed from close beside the cairn the rock shows in profile a striking resemblance to a human face, which has led some to the belief that in this face is to be found the explanation of the name of the hill, though why the face should be that of a cobbler rather than that of a blacksmith, or any other equally respectable person, I have never yet heard suggested.

There are at least three distinct ways of climbing on to the top. The one usually followed is by the window nearest to the cairn, entering from the left-hand side (Fig. 2, *C*),

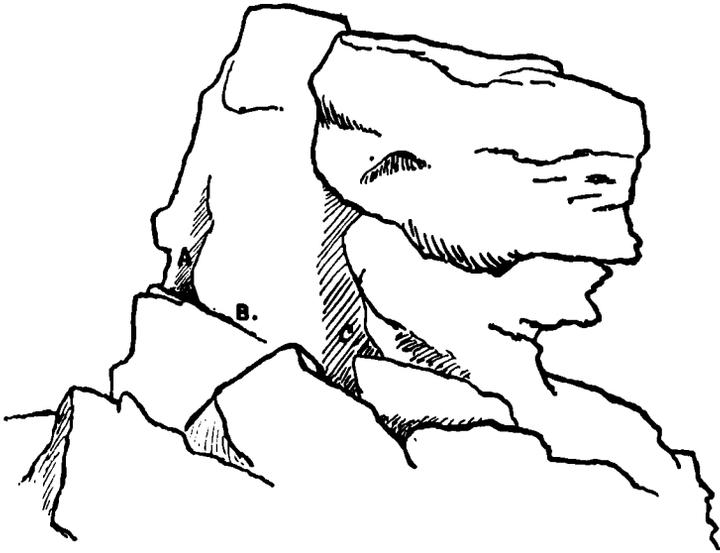


Fig. 2.—THE SUMMIT OF THE COBBLER.
A. Upper Window. *B.* M'Gregor's Ledge. *C.* Lower Window.

then along a broad ledge, which is quite easy, though it looks a little sensational, and up by the back or east end. Another, which is a favourite one with those doing the "traverse of the three peaks," ascends direct from the col between the South Peak and the Centre Peak, up very steep rocks, affording first-rate climbing. The third route, by the M'Gregor Ledge (Fig. 2, *B*) (so named after Mr J. W. M'Gregor, who first achieved the climb), and the Upper Window (Fig. 2, *A*), is, though short, much the most difficult. The farther end of the ledge is broad, and forms the sill of

the Upper Window ; the hither end tapers off into nothing. The difficulty is to get on to the ledge, as there are no holds above, and the rock overhangs ; there is a considerable drop below, against which the rope is of little avail. The right hand can get a good hold in a recess low down, but the hold has to be abandoned in committing the body to the ledge. Once you are on the ledge, there is nothing for it but to wriggle and see that you don't fall off ; and you will probably be thankful if you have the moral support of the rope in assisting you to preserve your balance. The rope should be held through the window rather than from directly above (Vol. IV., p. 65).

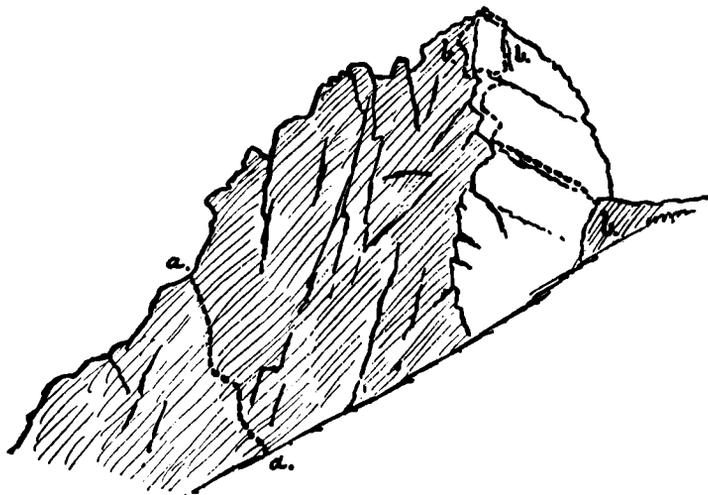


Fig. 3.—THE SOUTH PEAK.
a. The Traverse. b. North Face Chimney.

3. *The South Peak* used to possess some claims to inaccessibility, which are now gone. The entire northern face, however (shown in shadow in Fig. 3), looks so excessively difficult and forbidding that it has hitherto repelled all attempts to climb it, and on that side at least the peak will probably long remain unclimbed. The character of 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 most apparent route is by the grass ledge which, commencing near the foot of the cliff, runs up to the left, and presently widens to a broad patch of grass and moss. Before reaching this point a broken band of vegetable growth will be observed striking upwards to the right, and leading to a nearly vertical chimney; but the angle is exceedingly steep, the moss and grass look very insecure, and there would appear to be a total absence of anchorages or hitches. The place looks a most unattractive one, and is probably impossible. Even the broad grass patch is not quite so easy as it looks, and certainly there is nothing attractive about it. The route *a, a*, indicated in Fig. 3, which traverses the patch to its highest extremity, and crosses the sky-line to the easy grass slopes of the east face of the peak, is the only one which has hitherto been attempted on this side, but obviously it can hardly be regarded as an ascent of the north face.

The east face consists of a steep grass slope, about which there is no difficulty. The western face is, in its lower portion, inaccessible, but the upper portion is traversed by one or two grass ledges that present interesting lines of ascent. One of these starts from the level of the col, and 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 twelve-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 northern face (Figs. 3 and 4, *b, b*).—Vol. IV., p. 65.

Finally, we come to the south-western face, forming the right section of Fig. 4; the angle between it and the western face lies in the line indicated by the dotted route *c*, to which reference will presently be made. The most popular of the various routes up "Jean" is on this face (Fig. 4, *d*). A broad grass ledge commences at the angle of the face, about the level of the col, and runs out along the face

on the right. This is followed to the end, when a shallow chimney, changing presently to a grassy ledge, will be observed sloping obliquely upwards to the left. It leads to the nearer end of the upper ledge on the western face, described in the last paragraph. Then turning once more to the right, a scramble up one or two steep rock pitches lands the climber on the top. For long this was the only accepted route up this side, but in September last Messrs. Naismith and Rennie patented two interesting variations. The first of these, *c*, follows the angle between the two faces, and ascends direct from the col by a forty-foot climb up good rock to the upper ledge, where it joins the route *d*.



Fig. 4.—THE SOUTH PEAK FROM THE WEST.
b,b. North Face Chimney. *d,d.* Ordinary Route. *c* and *e*. Routes of
 26th September 1898.

This, as being the most direct of all the routes, has much to commend it. The other route, *e*, starts from the extreme end of the lower ledge, and leads up a crack or chimney, which is rather difficult.

The Cobbler is quite unique among the mountains of the Southern Highlands. It has a character all its own, and it exercises a fascination over its votaries which never ceases, but is renewed with each successive visit. Moreover, its easy accessibility from Glasgow makes it one of the most popular of our hills for western climbers, and a favourite selection for single-day excursions. Why, the Cobbler *could* be climbed in an afternoon from Glasgow—

that is to say, a rush to the top and down again—though no truly reverent mountaineer would ever dream of treating it in such a spirit. For him the longest summer day passes all too soon, lingering among the old grey rocks—whether it be spent in following out the old routes, or laboriously working out the possibilities of new ones, or lying idly on the bare bald summits, dreaming over the magic mountain land stretched around, with its chaos of shaggy hills and rocks and peaks, and far below the lonely majesty of the glens, and the quiet beauties of the winding lochs.

AUGUST AT SLIGACHAN.

BY G. BENNETT GIBBS.

I. SOME NEW CLIMBS.

PERHAPS it is unwise to say the Coolins have been slandered, but at all events it comes as a shock to one who wishes to reverence these hills, however old, to find on his arrival at Sligachan that they are treated with a familiarity almost bordering on contempt.

This expression can hardly be called too strong when one hears "mountain gymnasts" or "strong men" talking about "straightening out the ridge," and referring to fair peaks and peakesses as "Sandy," "Charlie," "Gerty," and "Mick," and in a hundred ways prying and burrowing into the secrets of the mountains, and even drawing their teeth! Is it to be wondered at that the spirits of the hills retaliate, and in a way that would make, if recited, very interesting reading were a "horrors list" to be added to the *Journal*? Indeed, if there were many such seasons as this last, it would become the duty of the Committee to seriously consider whether a certificate from the St John's Ambulance Association should not be a necessary item in the qualifications for membership.

"But to my tale." The month of August 1898 was phenomenal at Sligachan, both for the number of members of the S.M.C. who foregathered there, and the number of fine days enjoyed. From the second to the last day of the month, no day passed without two members at least being present at dinner; and during the same period there were only five or six days on which the weather was so bad that no expedition beyond the neighbouring boulders could be attempted.

The members present in the order of arrival were:—On the 2nd, J. Maclay, G. A. Solly, and G. P. Baker; followed on the 6th by W. Douglas, W. W. King, and W. W. Naismith (a portentous array of W.'s); G. B. Gibbs on the 15th; H. Raeburn on the 26th; followed by A. W.

Russell and W. Garden on the 27th; and A. Fraser on the last day of the month.

The science of bouldering, coupled with that of geology, received much attention, as might be expected from the presence of certain names in the above list. To the most distinguished stone was given the name of "Matterhorn," and one side (is it the Furggengrat?) withstood successfully all the blandishments of the combined faculties, till it fell to Raeburn after many encounters. Up to that time a "stone man" was to be seen there marking a *defeat*. Other boulders were called "Sligachan," "Haystack," &c., and are near the hotel. Another good stone was overhauled in Fionn Choire; while one of the buttresses of the bridge came in for a little manipulation, and the climbing of it was found to produce a nice sensation.

Sea trout were plentiful in the few days of spate, and midges always. In writing of the "mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles" of Glen Sligachan, Mr J. B. Baddeley says in the visitors' book, "We forgi'e 'em a'—a' but the midges."

Some dozen of new routes and variations have been recorded in the hotel Climbing Book, and authentic "nail marks" or "stone men" left to indicate the direction taken. The Coolins are thus seen to be either getting worked out, or developing very rapidly, and the presiding genius at the inn is in doubt whether to give most welcome to the coming or speed to the parting climber. In the meantime, a certain member of the A.C., who some ten years ago declared that until there was a Swiss hotel at Sligachan, Skye should see him no more, may safely be advised to try again. Indeed, the first party to arrive this August, after a little walk over Alasdair, Sgumain, Tearlach, and round Loch Coruisk, returning at 1.30 A.M., found dinner still waiting!

To enumerate the several new climbs in the order of accomplishment, with the names of their authors, may not be without interest and use to the readers of the *Journal*, although it may prove a long story.

The first arrivals, in addition to many standard climbs, quickly added a new route to the Pinnacle Ridge, under Maclay's guidance, by a steep and rather stiff gully from Loch Coire Riabhach. They also discovered a novel route

from Tearlach, round by the foot of Loch Coruisk, to Sligachan, where they established a precedent for an early morning dinner,

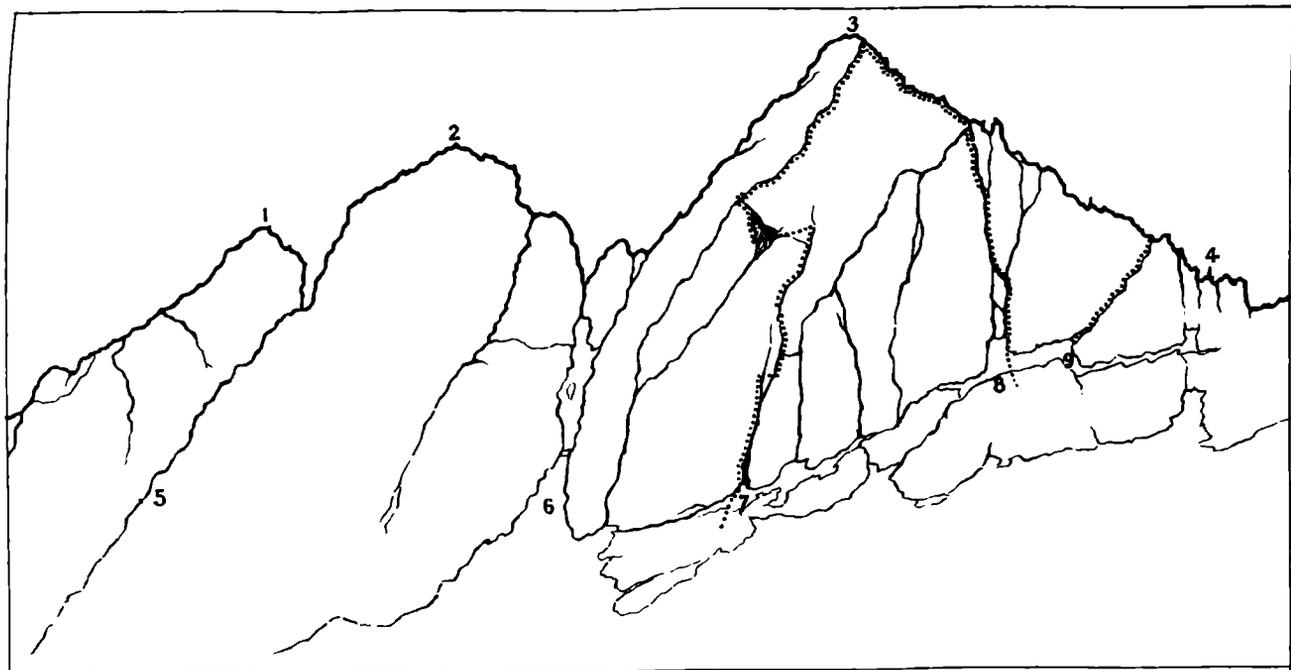
On the 8th, Douglas, King, and Naismith ascended Sgurr Sgumain by a gully from the lochan in Corrie Labain, and gained the top by a short climb, probably new. Crossing the screes, they climbed into the Alasdair-Dubh gap, did both sides of the gap, and King did a new variation at the foot of the long side. From thence they went over Tearlach to Mhic Coinnich, on which a new and direct route was found by King. They returned by the Mhic Coinnich-Dearg col, round by the head of the Coruisk glen, and over the Druim na Ramh ridge to the Gory Stone, and so to bed.

On the 12th, King and Naismith, after trying the big gully from Bhasteir Corrie, between the third and fourth pinnacles of Sgurr nan Gillean, made a way up the face of the fourth pinnacle past the obstruction.

On the 14th, King, accompanied by Messrs J. F. Dobson and A. M. Mackay, the latter now a member of the Club, made another attack on the third and fourth pinnacles' gully, but their plans fell through.

On the 15th, Naismith, with the two last-mentioned climbers, ascended a "forked chimney" in the Bhasteir Corrie side of Sgurr nan Gillean. The divide occurs 100 feet from the start, and the left-hand (true right) branch, which overhangs, was climbed for 25 feet by "back and knee"; an interesting, and at the same time, safe climb. (See Diagram.)

Not content with this, they went on to the Bhasteir Tooth, and our worthy Treasurer, who, it seems, when not engaged in collecting subscriptions must be "bagging" something, proceeded to pick up the last part of the Coolin Ridge that required "straightening out." Assisted by Mackay, from the col (A) below the overhanging part of the Tooth, some ledges were followed along the south-western face. From the termination of one of these a sort of open chimney runs up about 15 feet to a higher ledge (with a large stone lying on it), which leads to the bottom of another short and rather indefinite chimney. The hand-holds in the latter are



SGURR NAN GILLEAN FROM COIRE A' BHASTEIR.

1. *Third pinnacle*
2. *Fourth pinnacle*
3. *Summit Sgurr nan Gillean*
4. *Tooth of Sgurr nan Gillean (Policeman)*
5. *"3^d & 4th Gully" - attempted on 12th & 14th Aug.*
6. *Easy gully*
7. *"Forked chimney" - on 15th Aug.*
8. *Jammed Block chimney - on 18th Aug.*
9. *Nicolson's Chimney.*

not too large, but there is a good hitch 20 feet up. A few feet above that, the chimney narrows to a crack and divides, one portion going up vertically, and the other, which was followed, running obliquely across a nearly A.P. face to the right. This crack gives splendid hand-holds and ends on the edge of a good platform (B), 6 feet or so below the line of the back of the Tooth, and about 80 feet from its summit. Before doing this climb the party had inspected the upper part with a rope from the top. The crack was first pointed out as a possible road up the Tooth by Douglas, while camped near the Bealach a Leiter, and engaged in demolishing a "jam piece." Though sensational, as any climb on an open face of such steepness is bound to be, the route described is not really difficult, and it has the advantage of saving the long descent by the Lota Corrie screes involved in the old route.

On the 16th, Naismith (who now had "a feather in his cap," if anything so weighty as the Tooth may be so designated, although *he* made light of it) took the writer to the Thunderer Corrie (Tairneilear), where we spent something like three hours investigating the "deep gash gully" in the face of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh. To get above the lowest pitch, we were obliged to climb the side of Thuilm-Mhadaidh ridge, and make a long traverse back into the gully, only to find the second pitch too much for us. The leader climbed to the roof of the cave by "back and foot," and worked out to the front, but found it impossible to pass the dependant foremost block. What could be seen of a third higher pitch was discouraging, although from the top of the gully when entered from the Mhadaidh ridge the higher reaches seemed moderately easy. As we had not had much actual climbing up to this point, and the day being perfect, the leader no doubt thought it a pity that the writer's hands should not have the approved "strawberry" appearance by the next day. He accordingly armed himself with a pair of gloves, and led the way along the ridges as far as Bruach na Frithe. The sun setting far away in the Atlantic was a consoling sight, and one to be remembered, but my companion gained his point and the rocks the points of my fingers.

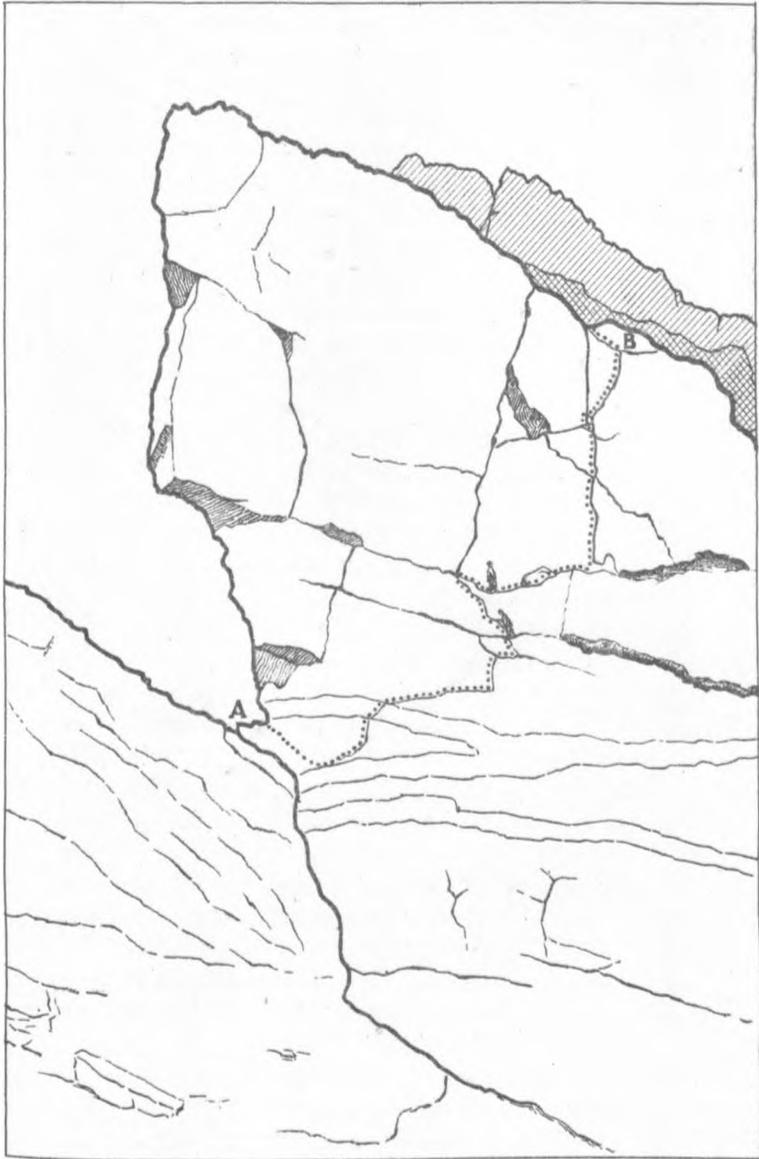
By the 17th, King, who had been laid up with a strained

thumb for the last day or two, was nearly right again, and he came out with us. It may be an axiom in logic that one thing leads to another, in the same way that things look farther off at a distance. At all events, something had been working in Naismith's mind since two days. It came out after taking us down his new climb on the Tooth, when he led the way round to the other side, and *proposed to make a traverse of the rock* by going up from there. But that's another story, which will be found at the end of this paper.

The 20th saw Dobson, Gibbs, and King in Corrie Ghreadaidh. The climb along the broken and somewhat rotten ridge dividing the head of the corrie proved a new and interesting approach to "Miss Gerty." It appears the top of her ladyship's head has two knobs, the bump of reverence being distinctly lacking. This want on her part is perhaps the cause of the above irreverent appellation by which she is known to a surgeon member of the Club. Descending into the northerly half of the corrie by An Doras, and turning up into the corner to the left made by the dividing ridge, a well-marked gully, running to the top of the mountain, was ascended, which also appears to be new to climbers.

On the 22nd, an idea which King "had been whambling in his wame wi' his toddy" came to a head this morning, and he took the writer and John Mackenzie to inspect the Dearg pinnacle, in view of a possible route to the top by the south-western side. We went by way of Corrie Banachdich, and attacked the large gully in the central face. It contains four good pitches, the uppermost proving rather ticklish, especially for our clansman, who, with a small sack on his back, found it very difficult to move through a notch between two of the blocks forming the front of the highest pitch. A dry weather climb.

Arrived at the top of Sgurr Dearg, we found the weather changing, and clouds descending upon us. However, after locating what seemed to be a feasible climb, the two of us proceeded to the top of the pinnacle, and let down the face a 60-foot rope. It was essential for the pioneer of a climb such as was proposed that he should have some safeguard



NAISMITH'S NEW ROUTE ON BHASTEIR TOOTH.
from col. A. to platform B.

from above, and we were not armed with engines powerful enough to project a rope over the ridge in a so-called legitimate way, so we simply anchored ourselves and let the rope dangle. After a time King caught sight of the end emerging from the mist some thirty to forty feet above him. We managed to tie on another rope, and then just reached the waiting weary man below. But by this time the rain was coming down "regardless of expense," and the wind was making such havoc of our vocal communications—seeing each other being impossible—that we all felt it wise to give up the attempt on so serious a piece of work, and made the best of our way down to Glen Brittle. At the farm there Mr Laidlaw's housekeeper made us welcome for the night.

John Mackenzie has a tender conscience. We asked him to stay over till next day when we could perhaps polish off the climb prospected. It took some time to persuade him, and the only thing that we could discover to make his return to Sligachan that night in any way imperative, was that he had promised to return a tin-opener that evening! However, the rain, which so often proves a softener, in the present case turned hardener, of a conscience, and John started out with us next morning in bright sunshine and half-dried clothes. Lovely light clouds, albeit of a rather watery look, hung on the hills, and made us yearn for a stay of some days to enjoy the scenery of Glen Brittle. May Mistress Sharp be soon allowed to plant her little house there!

Once more on the top, we found the clouds again in possession, and decided to wait till their chill presence was dispersed, and they allowed us to see better what we were going to attempt. In answer to King's Tyrolean jodels, and the reiterated chaff of "Lazily, lazily, drowsily, drowsily," the sun at length gave us a cheery look, and the anchors proceeded to shelter themselves as well as possible on the top of the pinnacle, and let down a jointed double 60-foot rope for the aspirant to tie on. Abraham's photograph of the "Pinnacle, East side" (No. 48) shows the climb very well, only it is necessary to remember that the actual dip of the mass is not only towards the north but also towards the

south-west. The line of ascent follows a very slight crack running straight (not vertical) to the top of the ridge, the termination of several broken-off flakes or slabs of rock, and so forming in places an angle or half chimney which is of material assistance to the climber. A reference to the photograph shows where this angle *is not*, and that portion constitutes the hazardous part of the climb. The actual climbing was accomplished in about fifteen minutes. There is an excellent hitch just below the line of the ridge, with an almost spacious ledge for the operator. The climb must be at least 100 feet, but in no part was there any hauling on the rope, and King expresses a decided opinion that the ascent should not be repeated without the moral support of a rope from above, as a slip would be most serious.

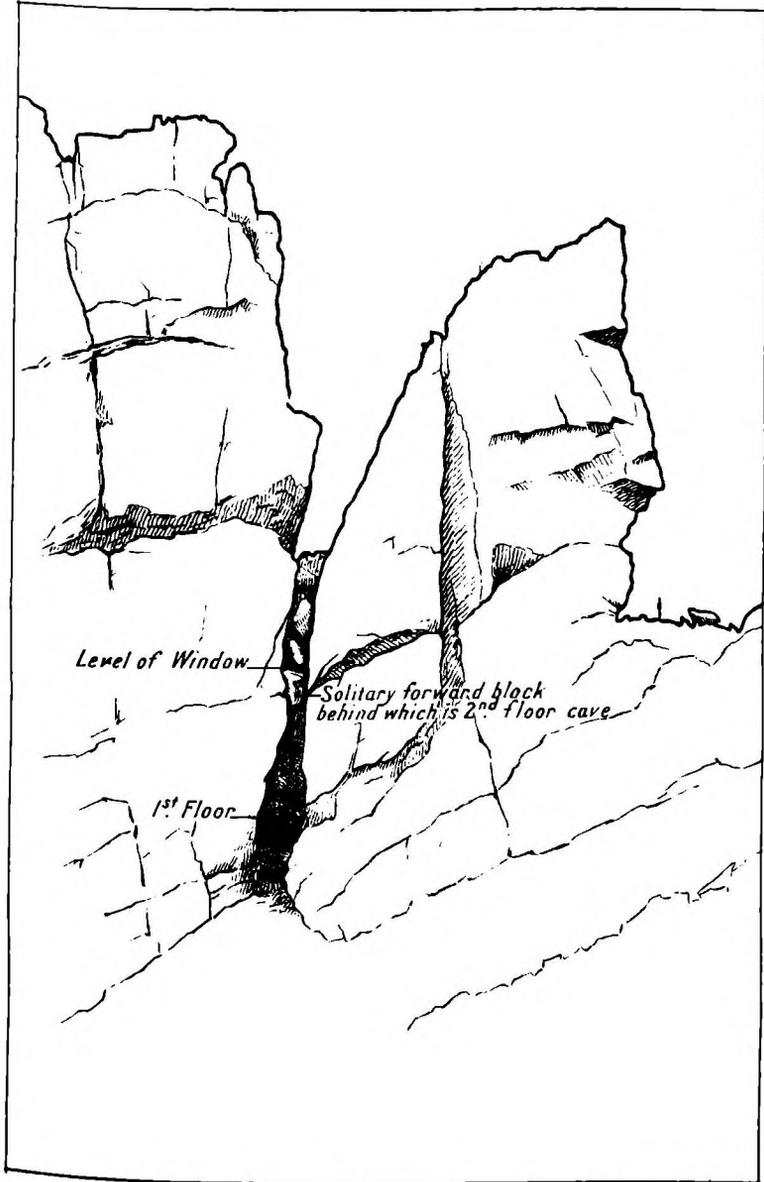
After the storm that swept out the last days of August had passed, Raeburn and Fraser made a new way up out of the impossible pool in the Bhasteir Corrie ravine. For 120 feet it is very steep, but not difficult, and goes up on the right-hand wall looking up, and begins rather farther up than the left-hand exit.

Raeburn also examined the cliffs of Sgurr nan Each, but found them outclassed by their neighbours, and scarcely worthy of the time devoted to them.

II. THE BHASTEIR NICK GULLY, OR TWELVE HOURS IN A CAVE.

Those favoured mortals who have been blessed with a view of the tops of the Western Coolins from Sligachan, cannot have failed to be impressed by the almost startling outline of the hills, from Sgurr nan Gillean on the left to Sgurr a' Bhasteir on the right, nor to have particularly noticed the Bhasteir Rock, with the Tooth springing from its base on the right hand.

A closer inspection of the nick between these last two points has led to a supposition that at one time it was much deeper than it now is, and that the wearing away of a trap dyke had left a gap admitting of a passage from the screes of the Bhasteir Corrie to those of Lota Corrie without much



FRONT VIEW BHASTEIR NICK GULLY.

difficulty, perhaps more easily than that of An Doras gap northward of Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh. However this may have been, the gap is now filled with the fruits of denudation from the rocks above on both sides, and is completely given up to the preservation of jammed stones.

The *Blasteir Nick Gully* thus formed, lends itself particularly to the formation of caves one above another, and may be said to consist of at least three main floors or stories, with an "attic"—"the highest room of a house"—and a "cockloft, a room above the attic," as Johnson has it. For purposes of ventilation the second floor is provided at the very back with a special chimney leading to the top of the gully. It also has a window (looking out into the gully) at the end of a recess left by a huge block that covers in most of the front door of the cave, where it abuts on the right-hand wall. In front of and above the level of this floor, and at a distance of from 15 to 20 feet, is a solitary jammed stone (hereinafter called "front block"), which can be reached from above by descending through the upper chambers to the third floor, and continuing down in front of the wedged stones (see section).

In the history of the conquest of this gully, it is believed that Dr Clark was the first to investigate it from the top, descending to the third floor.

On the 17th August, in company with W. W. King and the writer, Naismith succeeded in getting into the cave of the second floor, the actual effort required being briefly described as "a muffin struggle."

From the floor of this cave, and on the true left wall of the gully, a rapidly diminishing mossy ledge, with an overhanging roof, runs to the under edge of the front block. An hour quickly passed in the interchange of opinions, the leader's "What like?" frequently prefacing some profound inquiry on the possibilities of the situation according with the laws of gravity. It was agreed that if a rope could be passed over the front block, the traverse from the cave along the mossy ledge might be safely done, or a possible climb, from the ground floor up the left wall of the gully to the same block, rendered secure.

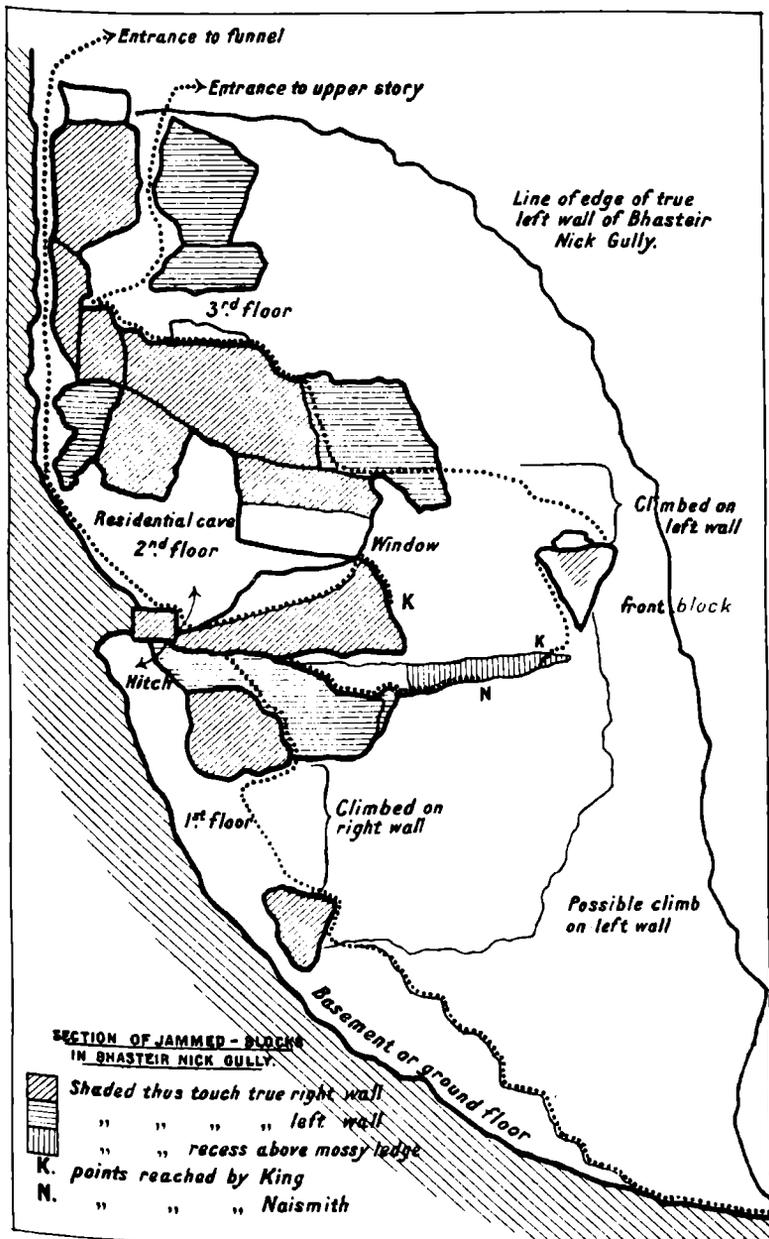
The day following, the same party returned to the

attack, armed, in addition to ropes, with various pieces of string and spare boot-laces. The leader, agreeably with his custom, was hoisted on the shoulders of the long man, and landed in the cave, the writer following. About three hours were then spent in getting a safe location on the mossy ledge from which efforts could be made to fling a stone (on the end of the aggregate of string and laces) over the front block ; and, when these failed, in endeavouring to squeeze through the window abutting on the true right wall, in order to get a better position for throwing the stone, but all to no purpose. Meanwhile, on the screes below, majesty and the midges were engaged in a heated argument as to which possessed the most patience, and numbers were telling.

At the end of these hours, the judgment of the leader now was that even with a rope over the front block the traverse out to it would be "awful." So we descended to the basement, had lunch, and then went for the Jammed Block chimney, a new climb on Sgurr nan Gillean, which proved consoling. That night, to our great regret, Naismith left us.

Six days later, the 24th, the survivors made another attempt on the stronghold, provided with one of those instruments without which no true geologist is complete. As the result of observations with this hard-headed adornment, the window before mentioned was considerably enlarged, and the blocks forming the framework, so to speak, induced, by the persuasion of the rope, to run down on to the floor of the cave, and from thence to take a header on to the screes below, to the no small edification of John M'Kenzie and his personally-conducted party on the Pinnacle Ridge. It was not, however, without some trouble that these stones were removed. In days of old, kings sat on the stone (at Scone); on this day, by an unexpected slide, the stone sat on the King, who presented the appearance of a cobbler horribly overburdened with a huge lap-stone, which effectually prevented him from continuing his occupation till it was firmly fixed again !

The window at length being made large enough to sit in, a stone on the end of a string was successfully thrown



over the front block, whose top seemed to be just above the level of the window sill, and at a distance of not more than 20 feet. The stone hung down into the gully, just touching the left wall. Another light stone on yet another string was thrown from the floor of the cave, catching the dangling one, and slipping to the bottom, both twisted together, and by careful angling the ends were brought to hand. The end of the upper string was tied on to a rope and gently drawn over the block, but alas! when the rope had been pulled a short way over, it got jammed in a corner and refused to come either way. It was 5 P.M. by this time, and it became necessary to descend and go round by the ordinary way to the top of the gully and release the rope. This was done, and King removed an obstructing small stone, and left the rope in a position to run freely. He then descended on the inner side of the front block, and was able to get a foot on the mossy ledge, running from the, by this time, residential cave, and within 4 feet of the point reached by Naismith from below. Returned to the top, we made the second descent of the new climb on the Tooth, determined to have another try at the gully next day, having advanced matters two stages further, viz., (1) making a window from which a rope could be thrown, and (2) in throwing a rope over the front block.

The 25th was fairly bright, with a high wind blowing from the wet quarter, portending rain, as the local non-prophesying "trap"-ist agreed. The army of two was augmented by John M'Kenzie, and the assault commenced before 1 P.M. Not more than an hour was occupied in throwing another rope over the anchoring block, to act as a bannister in case the climber should be completely thrown out by the overhang of the wall above the mossy ledge. There were thus two ropes over the block with their ends in the cave. One was to be fixed as a bannister, the other was to act as a travelling rope, in a noose of which the leader could be steadied from each side as well as being held by the connecting rope of the party.

These things completely arranged by about 2 P.M., lunch was discussed, and it was while so engaged that attention was directed to the strong draught of cold air

coming from the back of the cave. On previous days, the wind being light, this feature of the situation had not been remarked. But now King, who has a nose for aeronautics (as witness his "highway" in the inaccessible pinnacle), faced the cold air, went to the head of the cave, thrust *his* head into a kind of rabbit burrow and gradually disappeared, all but his boots! It is probable that some heathen deity was called upon to witness, by his next remark, that there was a way straight up to daylight, but a very narrow one. This discovery was hailed with quiet satisfaction by more than one member of the party, in whose mind the unco lot of ropes over the front block looked not altogether reassuring—unchancy, in fact.

As this new outlet was very narrow, we instinctively abandoned the lunch, and our leader from descending to the similitude of a cobbler went a step lower, and became a veritable chimney-sweep. He ultimately made a small hole, through which he wriggled into a funnel. Very few minutes after his total disappearance, we heard a joyful jodel high up in the free air, and the climb was done, by *him*.

The next order was to cast off the ropes and follow up, but before it could be obeyed the leader began to descend the funnel, clearing the loose stones from under him as he came down, intending to make the ascent of the gully by the outside route as well, now that the ropes were all in order.

"Sed revocare gradum . . .
Hoc opus, hic labor est."

On reaching the bottom, the sweeping operations were found to have been so effective as to block up the passage. Then commenced herculean labours on the part of the monarch of the situation in order to remove these impediments, while his subjects in the cave beneath were alternately employed in fixing for him a short length of rope round the most obstinate block, and then running back to the window seat, so as to escape the probable rush of stones down the floor of the cave resulting from the efforts of the incarcerated Titan; for it was clear he could not squeeze through the crevice left at the bottom, and the way his muscles were developing with the exercise, would

he ever be able to wriggle through the narrow opening at the top? *

If on a former occasion the patience of sovereignty was straining at a gnat, it was now straining at a stone as large at least as the hump of a camel, that would not pass through the eye of the chimney, and which took upwards of two hours to persuade into a fairly secure position on one side. The two remaining members of the party now squeezed through with a "pop," and all reached the top of the gully about 6 P.M., just as the first rainstorm in twelve days was commencing.

So the gully was at last completely conquered, and the traverse of the Tooth could be made. This, however, was not done that day, as the wind and rain, beating on Naismith's new route, made the descent by that way unsafe.

It was not till 28th August that the traverse was first accomplished by H. Raeburn and the writer, when the length of the funnel was estimated at about 40 feet.

As the result of impressions somewhat roughly forced upon us in the descent through the various chambers of the gully, and the peculiarities of its construction, we have been led to consider whether it would not be right for the Club to provide a kind of architectural notice, to be placed at the foot and also at the top, "No bow-windows in this house"!

* The greatest lifting power was obtained by bringing the two ends of the rope up the back and over one shoulder, where they were grasped by the hands, bending the knees, pulling the rope tight, and then straightening slowly up; a safe method, as it does away with the evil consequences of a possible jerk.

A NOVEMBER EVENING ON LOCHNAGAR.

BY HAROLD RAEBURN.

ONE may speak of evenings with a magic lantern, evening hours with the poets or with a detective novel, but for real thrilling interest and mystery there is nothing to be compared with a dark and misty November evening on "The steep frowning glories of dark Lochnagar." Such at any rate was the experience of three S.M.C. members, Messrs Lawson, Rennie, and Raeburn, on the 12th November 1898. How did we come to find ourselves there at such a time? Simply enough, by the will of Queen Victoria. Not that I venture to affirm that the Queen was so inconsiderate as to order us to climb the Lochnagar cliffs at a late hour on the afternoon of that Saturday, but owing to Her Gracious Majesty putting forward her departure from Balmoral from the 19th to the 11th of November, we were unable to get up from Aberdeen by the early express, and were forced to content ourselves with the 8.5.

Dropping time thus at the start in a solid lump of four and a half hours, we continued the process on a minor scale all the way to the corrie.

"In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom," saith the proverb, but "In the multitude of bicycles there is sure to be something go wrong," is a saying with a deal more in it. And so it proved in our case, for though we left the Invercauld Arms at Ballater at 10.15, it was not till two hours later that we started up the excellent path which leads from Altnaguibhsaich to the summit of the mountain.

As the old saw has it, "*Veni, vidi, vici*," but though in our case we came, and we eventually conquered, there was no saw in the whole expedition, unless it was the knife, well worn enough now, to do duty for a saw, with which in imagination we could cut the fog. Shortly after leaving Ballater, we had entered the clammy folds of the mist, which wet-blanketed us the rest of the day. Thanks to map and compass, however, we, some two hours after the

start, entered the upper or east corrie, but rather high up on the shoulder of Cuidhe Crom.

We had some rough scrambling over the Titanic scree which here clothe the hillside, gradually descending. Pausing a while for lunch, to our ears was borne the sound of many waters roaring in the depths below.

This we imagined must proceed from waterfalls in the corrie, but some time later we suddenly came to the edge of a vast precipice, and there, some thousands of feet vertically below us, a great inland sea rolled its huge breakers with a crash against an ironbound coast. Lochnagar! and to our shouts the cliffs above gave back a guiding sound.

Our object now was to gain the foot of the great gully named the "Tantalus" (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. IV., p. 220). This, we knew, lay between the "Black Spout" and the Tough-Brown Ridge. To the end that this should not be missed, we traversed some perilous, steep slabs slanting into the breakers, and rounded the great south bay of our inland sea till well to the west. Slanting back uphill, we soon gained the foot of the cliffs.

Presently we came to a vast gloomy ravine. Such a place could only be the Black Spout; then we knew that 100 yards of easting would place us at the foot of our gully.* It did, and after struggling up 60 feet or so of old but soft snow we came to the first pitch and roped up. In order to protect our "aristocratic fingers" from contact with the vulgar soil we also donned gloves.

Though it may appear impolite to accept the assistance of some genial old icicle, or to place one's fist between the rough and moist palms of a couple of sturdy chockstones without first removing gloves, yet in gully climbing one often prefers even to stand on the shoulders or head of our neighbour than on ceremony alone.

It was now 3.15, and already the light was failing, but

* It would appear that the gully we climbed is not the Tantalus gully attempted by Messrs Clark and Shannon; that seems to lie to the right of the one we climbed. Ours can be readily recognised by its having the great wall of the ridge climbed by Messrs Brown and Tough on the left-hand side the whole way up.

we made good progress for a while, as the angle of the gully was not severe. Then, after swarming up a curious projecting arête, formed by fallen blocks in the centre of the gully, we came to a halt in a small cave under a great overhanging block which choked the whole width of the gully. Above this pitch after pitch, at such an angle as to form one great pitch, extended as far and farther than we could see.

The part immediately overhead was in two tiers, and the leader cautiously scrambling up the left wall found himself in a shallow niche under the great block. To the right, the gully wall overhung; on our left, a promising series of small ledges on the face of the cliff allowed of ascent to a point where one could see the top of the block, but an eight-foot traverse on a vertical wall with neither toe nor finger holds is allowed to be impossible. To the left of the great block was jammed between it and the side of the gully a small block, but its upper edge was several feet beyond the outstretched finger tips. This was evidently a case for a back, and the second man came up.

A kind of hitch was found for him round a big loose block at the back of the niche, and the first man tried the pitch from his shoulders, but still that upper edge was a good two feet distant.

What was now done was, I fear, unorthodox in the extreme, but Lochnagar appears somehow to lend itself to the unorthodox in climbing, and we can plead the demoralising influence of the heterodoxy of the ridge on our left.

The ice-axe was now employed, first to clear away the earth and stones from the upper edge of the block, then the pick was hung upon the edge, the right hand of the leader found a crevice which admitted of its being inserted and half-clenched, then pushing down with the right arm and pulling hard with the left, the body was raised high enough to allow of the left hand being thrown up to catch the edge of the jammed block; instantly the right hand joined it, then a pull, and the right knee was thrown up on the slope of the overhanging chockstone, the body thrust for a second against the slope of the left wall, while the hands were

transferred to an upper block ; it proved firm, and a hitch was found about 10 feet higher up the gully. The ice-axe, the moment the steady pull was relaxed, slipped off, and bounded away down the gully and was lost.

The second man then passed the pitch, stepping lightly from the airy pinnacle of the last man's head, who then followed, actuated solely by the gentle moral suasion of the rope.

Above us still towered a series of gigantic boulders, crowned by a great projecting mass, which seemed utterly to bar escape.

It proved otherwise, however, and we found that, though he could not be climbed, he could readily be circumvented, by crawling underneath to the left, where a small chimney left a gap in the defences. There now lay before us but a wearisome toil up deep soft snow, and over an incipient Bergschrund, and at length we found ourselves on the summit of Lochnagar.

It was now 4.45, and already practically dark, so we bundled up the ropes, and made off at once ; but fickle fortune, which had befriended us all day, now deserted us.

We weakly refused to face the slight rise over Cuidhe Crom, which would have taken us to the path, and, once started on the down grade, *facilis descensus!* Rennie's lamp was lit at 5.15, after many struggles with wind and wet, and giving up all idea of finding the path we turned south, and made for the valley of the Muick. After toiling for hours over screes of boulders, beside which the worst and largest of Skye and Glencoe are but a handful of pebbles, we eventually struck a burn. Numerous boulders had struck us before, but they were of no use as guides ; here, however, was an infallible guide to lower regions, and, better still, to prospects of dinner.

We followed the stream, and the twinkling will-o'-the-wisp of Rennie's lamp, not without tumbles over various objects ; among others, we tumbled across a couple of deer, which bounded with widely open eyes out of the circle of yellow light cast in the fog by the flickering candle.

Gradually we found the ground becoming steeper and more broken, and then our guiding stream disappeared

with a crash over a fall, leaving us crawling across the face of an "absolutely perpendicular" precipice, whose awful height could only be faintly guessed by the roar of the waterfall, its sound deadened by distance floating up to us from vast unknown depths in the appalling chasm. Still on we struggled, as in some horrid nightmare, toiling ever, but for ever rooted to the same spot, a spot whose circumference—a bare 60 feet—we carried along with us, attached to the flame of the friendly light.

One of us now made the happy suggestion, "As we do not know when we may have dinner, why not have afternoon tea?" It was served on the spot, and consisted—in the absence of liquids—of bread and jam, chocolate, raisins, and, last but not least, acid drops.

Tea over, we resumed our march in a much more contented frame of mind, and presently the joyful sound of a dog barking was heard. Soon we came upon birch trees, then a wall; this climbed, we scrambled through a wood, and dropped upon a deer path. A few minutes along this, and at last we came upon a road. We could now locate where we were. The dog had barked from the Glasallt Shiel. We had come down the left bank of the Glasallt; on the other side, though we knew it not, an excellent deer-path runs up a long way.

We were not long in getting down to the Hut, and remounting our cycles sped off for Ballater and dinner. This we sat down to at 10.45, after an adventurous journey in the rain and pitchy darkness, whose hairbreadth escapes would alone furnish materials for another paper.

Next morning Rennie and Raeburn returned to the corrie in quest of the lost axe. Lawson, whose pedal extremity, as well as that of his cycle, had suffered injury, *thought* he would have to stay at home; but though we found him in the hotel on our return, he had in the interval beaten us and our cycles by *walking* to the summit of Lochnagar and back again, starting considerably after us.

What a difference to-day and yesterday! The furious rainstorm of last night at Ballater had been six inches of snow above the 2000-foot line. Clouds rested all morning on the lofty summit of Lochnagar, its cliffs and gullies

picked out in sharp contrasts of black and white, all green obliterated. From the depths of the mists eagles were screaming, one occasionally soaring out on almost motionless pinions. The black tarn lay still and mirror-like in the depths of the corrie, reflecting the blue sky and the white sailing clouds. But in the afternoon, as we returned unsuccessful in our search, the last of the mists had finally vanished, the great rocks stood up sharp and clear against the evening sky ; and our last look of the corrie of Lochnagar was on a scene of calm cold beauty and grandeur, which will linger long in our memories.

“Oh, light and warm stood out the western sky,
Above the gathering shadows of the shore,
And drew the outlines of the mountain hoar,
Each rugged ridge and summit sharp and high,
Upon the Titan canvas of the Lake.”

BENS LAOGHAL, HOPE, AND CLIBRIG.

BY H. T. MUNRO.

A LONG projected tour in Sutherlandshire, on which a friend well acquainted with the country had undertaken to guide me, was finally arranged to take place immediately after the Easter Meet of 1898. Alas for well-laid schemes! A telegram summoned me to Forfarshire before our trip had well begun. But as the Editor has peremptorily demanded that I shall write a description of it, I must e'en try, although in very truth our route and experiences so closely resemble those of Mr Cameron Swan, described in his article, "In the Land of the Mackays," that I am inclined merely to refer to *Journal*, Vol. IV., p. 43, and say, "Them's my sintiments."

The day after the Easter party broke up—Wednesday, 13th April—it rained as it seldom rains even at Ballachulish, and yet the next day I learnt that there had only been a slight shower at Inverness! When, therefore, I awoke on Thursday morning, the 14th, at Banavie, I was agreeably surprised to find the sun shining brilliantly on the big Ben, on whose north-east precipices I cast many a longing glance, and wasted more than one plate—a heavenly morning followed by a glorious day. The beauties of the canal had never been so appreciated before. Landing at Laggan Locks, at the north-east end of Loch Lochy, I intended to bicycle on in front of the steamer to Fort Augustus; but finding, on reaching there, that I had much time to spare, I eventually went as far as Drumnadrochit, where, having been misinformed as to the hour at which the boat was due, the last mile was a neck-and-neck race, ending in a dead heat. That ride along the north shores of Lochs Oich and Ness will not be soon forgotten. The distance extremely clear after the rain; light clouds throwing lovely shadows on the hills; everything sparkling and bright, and smelling of spring; the birches which fringe the lochs already well out in leaf—quite as advanced as I found them in Forfarshire a week later; and the primroses! well, they rivalled Devonshire; the banks were yellow with

them. I learnt afterwards that on this day in Forfarshire, usually so dry, it had poured in torrents. In the evening I bicycled out from Inverness to Beauly, and took train to Tain—the farthest I could get.

Next morning my friend, who had come through by the night train from Edinburgh, joined me, and together we travelled to Lairg. At the hotel, which is at the foot of Loch Shin, and nearly two miles from the station, we had a great rearrangement of luggage. *N.B.*—The charges for forwarding luggage by the Sutherlandshire mails are somewhat high, so pedestrians and bicyclists would do well to make up brown paper parcels of not exceeding 11 lbs. each, and forward them by parcel post. The mail routes, too, are rather inconvenient, for they all radiate like a star from Lairg; and therefore, if you are going, as we were, to one extreme point, such as Tongue, and then on to another, such as Durness, your luggage, unless you carry it, would have to come all the way back to Lairg, and there make a fresh departure. For my part, I sent a huge portmanteau on to Durness, which, as it turned out, I did not see again until I had been home some days; and carried in my rucksack or on my bicycle 31 lbs. weight.

The morning was dull and grey, and about 1 P.M., when we finally got away from Lairg, the rain commenced, very slight at first, and never very heavy. Still it was enough to wet us, and spoil the views. We had a strong head wind too; so that with very soft roads, and a heavy weight to carry, it was hard work even on the level, and one had to walk up the slightest hill. Loch Shin, at this end at least, is an uninteresting sheet of water. The road soon bears away from it, and ascending Strath Tirry, crosses a dreary moorland. The scenery of Sutherland differs widely from that of other parts of the Highlands. Mountains, as well as houses, are few and far between. The country is a wide stretch of peat and heather, undulating rather than mountainous, and the few landmarks are many miles apart. Every hundred yards or so along the road the County Council has placed an iron post with a red painted iron flag to show the road when the ground is covered with snow, for, be it remembered, this is the mail route, not

dependent on tourists and summer visitors, and three days a week, fair or foul, sunshine or snow, summer and winter, the mails travel this way to Tongue; on the other three days they come along the coast from Thurso. In clear weather the distant views of the isolated, fantastic-shaped Sutherlandshire peaks must be fine. On the two occasions, though, when I bicycled or walked the weary thirty-seven miles from Lairg Inn to Tongue, it was *not* clear weather. Dimly we could see to the west the great mass of the Assynt Ben More, still heavily snow-clad, and the faint outlines of what must have been Ben Leoid and Ben Hee.

For fourteen miles from Lairg (sixteen from the station) the road climbs steadily until it crosses the watershed at an elevation of 850 feet, about a mile beyond the Crask. Here is a small inn, with a license, clean, but not to be counted on for much in the way of food. Ben Clibrig can be easily ascended from here, so that with a bicycle, or even taking the morning mail and walking back, there should be no difficulty in doing it in the day from Lairg. In this latter case, however, I should recommend going on to Altnaharra, ascending the mountain from there, and descending to the Crask (see below). From the summit of the road a long continuous descent of 600 feet in seven miles leads to the little village of Altnaharra, at the head of Loch Naver. Nowhere in Scotland have I seen such extensive moraine heaps as in this seven-mile ride. There is a comfortable inn here much affected by fishermen. The original plan had been to sleep here, climbing Ben Clibrig in the afternoon; but the bad weather, combined with a rumour of a dance at Tongue that night, which had attractions apparently for my bachelor friend, induced us to push on. A long four-mile rise takes one to another watershed, and then a descent to Loch Laoghal, the shores of which we skirt for some miles. Here we are on the slopes of Ben Laoghal (Loyal), but owing to the weather I am unable to describe its appearance from this side. On the loch the wild geese remain all the year, and seem no wilder than mallard. Then a final climb, and a steep descent to Tongue, with lovely views over its Kyle to the northern sea. We had then a ride back of two miles to the south to

the large sheep-farm of Ribigill, beautifully situated at the base of Ben Laoghal, where we were hospitably welcomed by Mr Mitchell and his family.

On Saturday, the 16th, the weather seemed determined to make amends for its behaviour of Friday, for a more lovely day it would be impossible to choose. We started for a leisurely ascent of Ben Laoghal. A short two miles to a shepherd's cottage, where the track ceases, and the ascent actually commences. Laoghal presents to the north a fine outline, consisting of four granite peaks, which throw down steep crags to the heather-covered plain. The highest summit, An Caisteal, 2,504 feet, lies behind the northernmost or left hand of these, which is called Sgor a' Chonais aite. We climbed by a broad, easy gully on the face of the latter. Once I tried some rocks to the side; but though the angle was only slight, there was absolutely no hold for the hands or feet, and I fancy any climbing on the north-west face would be hard, the dip of the granite being the wrong way. An Caisteal, a great block of rock, is quite easily ascended from the north; but to the south and east for a few hundred feet is very precipitous—in places absolutely unclimbable—though doubtless some good short climbs might be got on it. How can I describe the glories of the view? South-east, rising from the flat moorland, are the two Ben Griams, the one flat topped, the other pyramidal; beyond them Morven in Caithness. To the north-east, over Dunnet Head, the coast line of South Ronaldshay, sixty miles away. Then the cliffs of Hoy and the mainland of Orkney. At our feet the sandy Kyle of Tongue, with Rabbits and Roan Islands at its mouth, and the northern ocean extending beyond. Due west, and only six miles off, Ben Hope, the northernmost mountain of 3,000 feet in Scotland, from here showing a broad, long, and not very interesting outline. To the right of him Grann Stacach and Beinn Spionnaidh, and the low hills beyond, which shut out the view of Cape Wrath. South-west the mountains of "The Forest," *i.e.*, Reay Forest, Foinaven (Fionne Bheinn), Arkle (Arcuil), Meall a Chuirn, Ben Hee, &c., crowded together more after the fashion of the central Highlands. Next Ben More Assynt and his

group, with to the left of them the fantastic peaks of the Teallachs, fifty miles away. On the southern horizon the mountains of the Freewater Forest in Ross-shire; while much nearer, indeed only a dozen miles off, is Ben Clibrig. The afternoon was dawdled away basking in the warm spring sunshine, and revelling in the view. Certainly Laoghal is a striking mountain; but it may be doubted whether it would have attained its present celebrity if it were not for its isolation.

On Monday, the 18th, the morning began with a sharp shower; but as it had been solemnly decided that Ben Hope was to be the main object of our tour, and to be climbed at all costs, and whatever else was missed, we made a start as soon as it cleared up. From Tongue to Kinloch the distance is four miles (from Ribigill two miles). We left Kinloch at 11 A.M., and one and three-quarter hours' walk over the moor brought us to the base of the mountain between two little lochs, which are only a few yards apart, though there is a difference of thirty or forty feet (?) in their elevation. Fifty-five minutes more placed us on the summit. Therefore, though the distance looks considerable on the map, Ben Hope can very easily be done from Tongue, where there is a good inn. I do not know any mountain of the height (3,040 feet) which can be climbed with less exertion. Short grass and rounded blocks of schist lying at an easy angle lead one rapidly to the summit. The mountain, as before implied, is a long ridge stretching north and south. The western face descends very steeply in the direction of Loch Hope, though I can hardly agree with Mr Swan, who speaks of its "great western precipice." This face might be easily ascended almost anywhere, though some long and narrow rock ribs should give climbing with magnificent, though perhaps somewhat rotten, holds. Our view, I regret to say, was very circumscribed, the mist just touching the top of the mountain. I am inclined to think Mr Swan is right in his opinion as to the route followed by Cordiner in 1776. It would be impossible for him to ascend Ben Hope without passing between the lochs, and he would certainly have mentioned them, as they are characteristic.

Next day came the unwelcome summons which cut short my tour, and after a morning spent in sending and receiving telegrams, having parted with my friends, I bicycled over, again with a strong head wind, to Altnaharra, determined at least to do Clibrig before returning home.

Wednesday, 20th April, was unfortunately very hazy, with mist on the tops; however, the day was fine. The ascent of Ben Clibrig (Cleith Bric), 3,154 feet, should be easily done in two and a quarter hours from Altnaharra. I took a little longer, for not having the Ordnance map, and the top being in mist, I purposely struck the ridge somewhat too far to the north-east for fear of missing the true summit. The mountain consists of a long ridge, with several small round summits running from north-east to south-west. The highest point, Meall an Eoin, is about the centre. Three-quarters of an hour's walk over a boggy moor should place one at the base of the mountain, which can be easily ascended straight up. Mr Swan is mistaken when he speaks of the "precipitous north-western flank of Klibreck." From the coach road it looks steep, but I believe one could almost lead a pony up any part of it. Certainly the slope is everywhere quite easy. I would gladly have descended to the Crask, and so avoided the long grind up the road from Altnaharra, but I had of course to return for my bicycle, and reached the inn after four and a quarter hours' absence. In the afternoon I reached Lairg, and so ended a tour which, as originally planned, was to have included all the mountains of Sutherlandshire.

It should be mentioned that both Ben Hope and Ben Clibrig are in deer forests.

ASCENT OF BEN STARAV FROM GLEN COE.

BY WILLIAM GARDEN.

IN Volume II. of the *Journal* we have an interesting account by Mr Dewar of an ascent of Ben Starav from Dalmally, and in the same volume we have also a note of an ascent from Inveroran *via* Glen Kinglass.

I now propose to give a short account of an ascent from "the other side," *viz.*, Glen Coe. Mr Duncan, Dr Crombie, and myself, having had a week's climbing in Glen Coe, during which we had been so much impressed with the majestic peak of Starav, and his neighbour Stob-Coire-an-Albannaich—so well seen from the top of Bidean—that we decided to devote the last climbing day at our disposal of a month's holiday in the Highlands, to explore one of the principal peaks of the interesting group familiarly known as the Black Mount Forest.

We had considerable doubt as to the most suitable route for arriving at the foot of the Ben from Glen Coe, as none of them seemed to offer special facilities. After some discussion, however, we decided to make the traverse into Glen Etive by the small pass which lies between Beinn Maol Chalum and Meall a' Bhuiridh. This pass is just below 2,000 feet at its highest point; and we afterwards learned that it had been used in the early part of this century as a drove-road, but from the nature of the ground this seems hardly credible. This route, although it involved a considerable amount of extra climbing, afterwards proved to be the most direct. Accordingly, on Monday, the 12th September last, we made a start from Clachaig Inn at 6.10 A.M. We crossed the small wooden bridge, immediately to the south of the hotel, and walked in a south-westerly direction, keeping the base of An-t-Sron (a spur of Bidean-nam-Bian) on our left. We followed to its source a tributary of the Coe which comes down the valley between Bidean and Aonach Dubh a' Ghlinne. This stream runs in a very rugged bed, and gives clear proof of being at times a roaring mountain torrent, throwing its debris in all directions. We crossed it, im-

mediately above its junction with the stream which comes down Glen Leac na Muidhe, and followed the march fence which runs almost in a straight line to the top of the bealach we were making for. The going was bad and, in certain parts, the incline is distinctly steep. After an hour and a half or so of pulling up this glen, we reached the summit of the pass, and walking round the foot of a rocky eminence on the left, we crossed over into the watershed of the Allt Charnan.

The view which now met us was indeed one of unusual grandeur. In the foreground, lay the broad valley of Glen Etive with its river flowing on, like a silver thread, towards the sea; and for a background towered the huge masses of Stob-Coire-an-Albannaich on the left, and Ben Starav on the right, their rocky surfaces both glistening in the bright morning sun, who unfortunately was soon about to hide himself for the remainder of the day. After hurriedly glancing at the view, we descended rapidly for 300 or 400 feet, and crossing the Allt Charnan, we followed it down on the right-hand side to Invercharnan (a small shooting lodge), which we reached about 8.40 A.M. We found the last mile or so before we reached Invercharnan a fairly heavy piece of work, the rains of the previous fortnight having converted the glen into an absolute swamp. Here and there, however, we could see what seemed to be unmistakable signs of what had been the old drove-road, but these are fast disappearing. After leaving Invercharnan we struck the road immediately opposite the small school-house, and, after having spent some time in looking for the foot-bridge over the Etive, we crossed it about a quarter of a mile on the left-hand side of Coileitir, the gamekeeper's house. We then made our way through some birch trees and thick bracken, keeping along the side of Ben Carrick until we came to the Allt Mheuran, a large stream which we crossed a little below its junction with a tributary flowing from the northern corrie of Ben Starav. We were now in a position to decide upon the best route for the ascent, and, for the information of our members, I may explain that Ben Starav may be best described to be a long saddle running from north to south, and having a

large and well-defined corrie on its northern face. We were now, then, at the foot of this corrie, and by turning up to the right we gained the top of the long saddle.

After a few minutes' halt for a second breakfast, we continued along the saddle, but the morning, which up till now had been bright and clear, had changed, and clouds rolled up on all sides, enveloping the upper flanks of the mountain in dense mist. We continued along the saddle, which became more and more a well-defined ridge, and made a steady ascent, although the mist was getting so thick that we could not exactly tell what was before us. Every now and then we passed the top of a fine gully, which reminded us very much of those we saw on the south side of Stob-Coire-an-Lochan of Bidean-nam-Bian, and the ridge became more and more rugged as we ascended. For the better part of an hour we followed this ridge, and I must say it was a deceptive one, but at last we reached what was undoubtedly the cairn at 12.10, after twenty minutes' stiff going against a biting cold wind with heavy sleet and rain.

The cold was so intense and we were so wet that a few minutes' halt at the cairn was quite enough for us ; and, as there seemed to be no signs of the weather improving, we retired by the same route as we had come up. When about half-way down, however, the mist occasionally lifted, and we had one or two wonderful glimpses of the Buchaille Etives and the other hills in that district, which proved to us that Ben Starav is probably one of the best view-points for these mountains, as nothing comes between to exclude them. Glen Etive looked particularly grand, backed up by the rugged Bidean, which looked his best. We were glad, however, that we decided not to make the circuit by Stob-Coire-an-Albannaich (the original plan), as we would probably have had some difficulty in making out our way in the mist, but the saddle between Starav and Glas Bheinn Mhor seemed to us a fairly simple one, and there is not much of a "drop" between Glas Bheinn Mhor and Stob-Coire-an-Albannaich. I would therefore recommend this variation of the route to any one going to Ben Starav from Glen Coe. After running down the hillside at a good

speed to get up the circulation, we again reached the Allt Mheuran at a point about a mile below where we had crossed it in the morning. We halted, and had lunch by the burn-side, which is exceedingly beautiful here, and all the more so being in heavy flood. We were much impressed with the wildness of the scenery, the country being quite new to us. We reached the bealach on the Glen Coe side about 4 o'clock, and Clachaig shortly after 5 P.M. From the top of the pass it simply poured, and, by the time we reached Clachaig, we were in a wretched condition, what with rain and plunging every now and then well up to the knees in the bogs. Mr Gourlay, who always proves a kindly host, and has a keen sense of humour, was at the door to meet us, and after some considerable persuasion, he was inclined to admit that we had reached the top. We had no doubt about the matter whatever!

I can with safety recommend the attention of members to Ben Starav. Apart from his own particular beauties, and those of the surrounding country, there are undoubtedly some very good scrambles to be had on the rocks in the great northern corrie, in which we saw one or two chimneys which would have delighted the hearts of some of our members, and more particularly those for whom "church doors" and such-like "places of worship" have special attractions.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held in the Central Hotel, Edinburgh, on Friday, the 2nd December 1898, at six o'clock. The President, Mr R. A. Robertson, was in the chair.

The Hon. Treasurer submitted his accounts for 1898, showing that the Income amounted to £87. 5s. 4d., and the Expenditure to £78. 16s. 9d., leaving a balance of £136. 8s. 5d., as compared with £127. 19s. 10d. at the corresponding date last year. The accounts and statement were unanimously approved.

In room of Mr Colin Phillip, whose term of office now expired, Mr J. Rennie was elected Vice-President ; and Mr James Maclay and Mr Harold Raeburn were elected Members of Committee, in succession to Professor Coats and Mr Hinxman, who retired by rotation. The other office-bearers were re-elected.

The meeting unanimously confirmed the alteration of Rule XI., which had been made provisionally by the Committee as follows :—" The Annual General Meeting . . . shall be held alternately in Edinburgh and Glasgow on one day within the first fortnight of December, and preferably on the first Friday of that month."

It was arranged that the New Year Meet should be held at Killin, and that if suitable arrangement could be made, the Easter Meet should be held at Kinlochewe, failing which, at Tyndrum. It was remitted to the Presidents, Messrs Munro and Naismith, and the Secretary, to make arrangements accordingly.

The Hon. Secretary reported, in terms of Rule XVI., that the following gentlemen had been elected Members of the Club :—George Percival Baker, George Tertius Glover, Alexander Mitchell Kellas, Herbert Kynaston, William Norman Ling, Alexander Morrice Mackay, George Thomson Parker, Oscar Rohde, Robert Reid Russell, and George Sang. He further reported that the membership at the beginning of the year had been 142, of whom 4 had resigned, leaving 138. The addition of the 10 new members made the membership at present 148.

THE TENTH ANNUAL DINNER.

AT THE DINNER, which took place after the meeting, there were present fifty-four members and guests. The President was in the chair, and in proposing the now ten years old toast of "The Club," gave a judicially balanced estimate of the joys of mountaineering, from which, while he dwelt with emphasis upon its robust physical characteristics, he excluded all sentiment and poetry, which he was inclined to think dwelt only in the region of post-prandial reminiscence. He dwelt with satisfaction upon the increased membership of the Club, but remarked that Scotland would require to see to it that the proper proportion of Scots and Sassenachs was maintained, and that the balance of power was not turned in favour of the bold scramblers from south of the Solway, who had been coming into the Club (and they were very welcome) in increased numbers during recent years. He concluded with a panegyric on the Scottish hills, which he was inclined to think would have been more generally appreciated in Scotland if they had been placed anywhere else—fashionable Switzerland, for instance. Mr W. Brown proposed the "Alpine Club," which was responded to in a witty and eloquent speech by Mr C. E. Mathews, one of the founders and an ex-President of the Alpine Club, a veteran of forty-five years' standing. He said that it was only natural that the Scottish Mountaineering Club should honour the Alpine Club, for the latter was the parent institution; and was it not written in Scripture, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land"? He referred with satisfaction to his own long connection with mountaineering, which began five years before the Alpine Club was founded, and had taken him during that period no fewer than twelve times to the summit of Mont Blanc. He disagreed with the President when he said that there was no poetry in mountaineering, and in conclusion, humorously remarked that they would be glad to hear that, like Lady Godiva at the end of her journey, he was now nearing his *close*. Sheriff W. C. Smith gave the "Highland Hills"—a toast which, from its poetic associations,

demands, and on this occasion received very eloquent treatment. He said that two years ago the distinction had been officially taken between "Mountain Climbers" and "Hill Walkers," but he wished the Club had adopted the attitude of the Cambridge undergraduate who, when asked to enumerate the major and minor prophets, answered that he emphatically declined to draw any invidious distinctions. He also vigorously disputed the President's dictum that there was no poetry in mountaineering, quoting Byron's famous description of Mont Blanc as completely applicable to Ben Nevis, and maintaining that the spirit of the hills counted for much in Scottish patriotism. He had recently accepted a commission from Her Majesty which gave him authority over the most mountainous of the Highland counties. "Fannich is mine," he exclaimed; "I have full civil and criminal jurisdiction in Mulloch Coire Mhic Fhearchair, and even over the corrie of Meall a' Chinn Deirg, which has recently been translated as 'the bald hill with the red head.'" Referring to these and other "sporting" corners of his jurisdiction, he declared that he accepted the appointment mainly that the objects of Scottish mountaineering might thereby be furthered, and humorously went on to assure the company that the interests of property and the law of the land would weigh as nothing against the legitimate claims of their sport. The learned Sheriff concluded with some observations in Gaelic, which he explained were not fit for publication.

Other toasts were "Hill Walkers," by Mr Fraser Campbell, replied to by Mr W. T. Munro, and "The Guests," proposed by Dr Inglis Clark, and responded to by Mr Macphail, advocate.

With the Club song by Mr Rennie, and some excellent glees and solos by the Edinburgh Male Voice Quartette, a most enjoyable and interesting evening fled all too soon; occasion being taken before "Auld Lang Syne" closed the proceedings to send a message of greeting to Mr Stott in New Zealand through Mr Fraser Campbell, who is shortly to proceed there on a visit.

EXCURSIONS.

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

THE S.M.C. ABROAD IN 1898.

DR INGLIS CLARK had another capital season among the Dolomites. His successful expeditions comprised the following peaks:—Saas Rigais and Grosse Fernedathurm in Geislerspitze, Marmolata, northern Vajolett Thurm, sensational eastern Vajolett Thurm, Kessel Kogel (Rosengarten group), Funfingerspitze. He also made what is believed to be the first ascent of a peak in the Puez Gruppe, which afforded climbing of a highly sensational and difficult character. Mrs Inglis Clark took part in the first four climbs, and also ascended the Plattkofel and Tschierspitz.

DR JOSEPH COLLIER visited some of the less-known Austrian mountains, and *inter alia* ascended the Reichenspitze and Gabelkopf in the Reichenspitze group, the Cima Tossa and Crossan di Brenta in Brenta Dolomites, and the Adamello, Corno Bianco, and Cima Millero in Adamello group.

PROFESSOR COLLIE, with two friends, spent six weeks mountaineering and exploring in the Canadian Rocky Mountains that lie N.W. of Laggan Station, on the Canadian Pacific Railway. A permanent camp was pitched on the Athabasca Pass (about 7,000 ft.), whence were climbed Athabasca Peak (11,900 ft.), The Dome (11,650 ft.), Diadem Peak (11,550 ft.), and many minor virgin mountains. The Dome has a special interest as the apex of the Canadian Rockies, the snows on its rounded summit draining into three oceans—the Atlantic, Arctic, and Pacific. The party continued the plane table survey which was started last year.

MR E. ALEISTER CROWLEY was camping with friends above the snow-line during the whole month of July in very indifferent weather. The tents were pitched below the Dent Blanche, beside the Schönbühl Glacier, at a height of 11,500 feet.

THE REV. J. FAIRLEY DALY spent five weeks at Grindelwald and Pontresina. Besides glacier and other smaller expeditions, he ascended the Wetterhorn, the Jungfrau, and the Piz Bernina. The

top of the Jungfrau was reached at 7.30 A.M., and a magnificent view enjoyed—clear from horizon to horizon.

MR JAMES DRUMMOND was at Zermatt, and climbed Castor and Pollux from the Felikjoch, the Matterhorn, the Dent Blanche, and the Lyskamm, the last being ascended by the Lysjoch, and descended to Gressonay.

PROFESSOR KENNEDY spent six weeks in Switzerland and the North of Italy, engaged chiefly in photographing among the High Alps, in connection with the bringing out a second edition of Moore's "The Alps in 1864."

MR HENRY G. S. LAWSON was at Arolla and Zermatt during July. Though hampered by frequent falls of snow, we understand that he accomplished many of the big climbs at both places.

MR C. C. B. MOSS visited the same two popular centres, and accomplished the following climbs, viz. :—Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla, Dent Perroc (both guideless), Petite Dent de Veisivi, Unter Gabelhorn, Rimpfischhorn, and Matterhorn.

MESSRS C. W. PATCHELL and H. C. BOWEN and a friend were at Zermatt and Arolla in August. They crossed the Alder and Hinter Allalin Passes, climbed the Lyskamm, Monte Rosa, and Matterhorn.

Without guides they crossed the Cols d'Hérens and de Bertol, and climbed the Aig. de la Za by W. face, traversed S. peak of Aiguilles Rouges, and climbed the Dent des Bouquetins. Mr Bowen afterwards crossed Cols de la Serpentine, du Mont Rouge, and de Seilon. Weather on the whole very good.

MESSRS HOWARD PRIESTMAN and WALTER BARROW had a good season, as the following list of expeditions indicates :—1. Grimsel to Concordia Hut *via* Oberaarjoch, Rothhorn Sattel, and Grünhornlücke (stumped on Finsteraarhorn by gale). 2. Castelfranco Weissthör (nearer Cima di Jazzi than Old Weissthör). 3. Over Turlo Pass to Alagna, on the top of which pass they met forty cyclists pushing their "machines"! 4. Lyskamm, ascended by Colle delle Fronte and S.W. arête, and descended by Lysjoch (very little cornice this year). 5. Monte Rosa traversed from Gnifetti Hut *via* Lysjoch, Grenzglescher, Grensattel, and Grenzgipfel; descent by ordinary way. 6. Matterhorn (in bad condition).

Mr Barrow afterwards crossed the Forcletta and Meiden Passes and ascended the Blumatt (alone).

MESSRS CHARLES PILKINGTON and HORACE WALKER were climbing with other friends, but were unfortunate in missing what fine weather was going. "No new expeditions—twice driven back by wind when near the tops of mountains."

DR T. K. ROSE climbed the Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla, Aiguille de la Za, Dent Perroc, Petite Veisivi, La Roussette and Vuignette, and traversed the Dent du Midi—all without guides. He also crossed from Courneyeur to Chamonix over the Dôme du Gôûter, being driven back from Mont Blanc by furious wind.

NEW EXPEDITIONS IN NORWAY IN 1898.

LYNGEN FJORD DISTRICT.—For many years mountaineers interested in Norway have known that the region between latitude 66° and 70°, all well within the Arctic circle, would richly repay any party of climbers who should choose this somewhat distant field for their mountain playground.

This was sufficiently proved on a visit made in 1897 by Messrs Hastings and Woolley, when Jæggevarre, the Mont Blanc of northern Europe, was climbed by the former gentleman.

This year two separate parties made the peninsula between Lyngen and Ulfs fjords the scene of their mountain exploration, and each met with a large measure of success. Mrs Main and her guides climbed many new peaks, and traversed several hitherto untrodden glacier passes. These, however, do not immediately concern the S.M.C.

The other party, however, is connected with the Club, and consisted of Messrs Hastings, Haskett-Smith, Slingsby, and Hogrenning, a Norsk porter, an excellent climber, who proved in every way a success. Several of the mountains attain the height of 6,000 feet, and they not only have the same geological formation, but have many of the principal characteristics of the Coolin hills in Skye. The corries, it is true, generally have glaciers, many of which terminate in weird mountain tarns, which bear on their glassy surfaces flotillas of little icebergs. In fact, nature has developed here her wildest and most eerie forms, and the brilliance and beauty of the colouring are not a whit behind that of Skye. What more can be said?

The new peaks and passes made by the last-named party are as follows :—

Kjostind, on 12th July, by Messrs Slingsby and Hastings.

Stortind, on 15th July, by the whole party, with the addition of Herr Caspari.

Strupenskar, on 17th and 18th July, by the whole party, also with Herr Caspari. This most remarkable glacier pass was full of surprises, and the interest never abated. A lake, about 1½ miles in length, formed like the Märjelen See by the damming up of the waters of a lateral valley by a large glacier which projected beyond its mouth, was discovered, and gave the party a good many little adventures.

Hringhorn and Store Isskartind, also the Pass of Isskar, on 21st July, by Messrs Haskett-Smith and Slingsby, with Hogrenning. A delightful expedition, where two fine rock peaks were climbed, and a very difficult descent was made from the Isskar Glacier to the west.

Store Jægervandtind, on 23rd July, by the whole party. A capital climb by a steep glacier on to a broad rock ridge which narrowed off to smaller dimensions, and led to three pretty peaks of the Sgurr nan Gillean character.

Storebotntind, on 25th July, by the whole party. This noble mountain, the best ascent of the series, was climbed principally by a

steep snow gully on the W. face, from a high glacier. The southern arête was reached about 200 feet from the top. Here the climbers were forced down on to the E. face, where a good rock climb led to the top, five minutes before midnight. The descent was made to the Kopangshæ, from which a new pass was made over to the head of the Stortindalsbræ.

Fugleskar, on 9th July, by the whole party, who were drawn, as if by a magnet, step by step in doubtful weather up the grand Fornæsbræ, and through a dark portal to a scene where the ice-world is superlatively grand.

Fornæstind, on 1st August, by the whole party. This peak, the Romsdalshorn of the north, was considered by the natives to be inaccessible, but can be climbed by several different routes. Many severe difficulties were met with and overcome, but they arose from the fact that the climbers went wrong in a fog, and lost five or six hours by doing so.

WM. CECIL SLINGSBY.

THE CASTLE, BEN NEVIS.—This forms what really is a fifth buttress on the great N.E. precipice of Ben Nevis and Carn Dearg. It lies between the Castle Ridge and the Carn Dearg Buttress, and is cut off from both of these by large gullies, that on the Carn Dearg side being especially fine from a scenic point of view, its walls rising almost sheer to a great height. The Castle is well shown in the photograph illustrating Dr Clark's paper on Ben Nevis in the *Journal* for May 1898.

Under the impression that the Castle had never been climbed, Gibson and I arranged a party for an attempt in September last. Gibson was to train from Inverness to Kingussie, and from there cycle on to Fort-William on Friday evening, 9th September; while I, landing at Arisaig on my way home from Skye, cycled thence to meet him at the Alexandra. Next morning we were to do Ben Dearg and Nevis *via* the Castle.

In cycling affairs it is a question whether roads, wind, or weather is the most important point to be considered in its influence upon pace. It rained. A strong S.W. wind blew. Gibson had the benefit of the first two in his teeth, and tolerable roads; I had a side wind, and intolerable roads—roads completely demoralised under the evil influences of wet weather and the new railway works. I crawled into the Alexandra at 11.10 on Friday night, Gibson arrived an hour and a half later; and on Saturday we contented ourselves with a stroll up Glen Nevis and a little bouldering.

Next day we felt better, and started for the Castle at 7.35. By 10 we were below the ridge, enjoying a second breakfast of crowberries and blaeberreries, growing here among the screes in enormous quantities. From here we had a good view of the lower part of the Castle, the mist now lifting to a height of about 3,000 feet. In the photograph before mentioned will be noticed, at the foot of the Castle, a very steep

portion on which no snow lies. This forms a small cliff running across from gully to gully. It is actually overhanging at most places. Without looking for easy starts, we resolved to tackle it right in the centre, and accordingly the leader, after considerable exertion, managed to ascend the steep wall. The balance was difficult, and the second man, hampered by the weight of the rucksack—no hitch for the rope directly above being obtainable—preferred to try it at another point more to the left, where a small chimney forms a recess in the wall. This went all right, the only drawback being the necessity of forcing a passage through a considerable body of water which was hastening down it. After this the climbing was easy for some distance. The actual crest of the buttress lies well over on the N. or Castle Ridge side, and about half-way up we made an effort to gain this, but failed ignominiously. The whole character of the rock here is somewhat exasperating. It consists of great slabs placed one above another at an angle often just too steep to walk up, holds and hitches poor or wanting. We were now forced to traverse somewhat to our left, and entered a line of trap dyke cleaving the porphyry slabs. This terminated at the top in a chimney, which the leader found decidedly difficult. Not a single satisfactory hold to be got, every little ledge had the same downward inclination. A way was finally made out to our right on to the slabs, here at an uncomfortably steep angle and wholly destitute of holds. By kneeling on the steps and utilising every ounce of friction grip on the edges of the "risers" above, the steep part was passed, and a good place for a hitch was obtained about 50 feet above the chimney. From here the climbing was easy, and we gained the summit about 30 yards N. of the highest peak. The mists had been gradually rising along with us, and now rested merely on the summit of Carn Dearg, so we had fine views of the splendid rock scenery of this part of the mountain, and could see the route on the Carn Dearg Buttress taken by the conquerors of its N. side on 12th July 1898 (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. V., p. 128).

After tea in the hotel, and a visit to the Observatory, we descended the N.E. buttress, taking nearly two hours to it, and getting a real taste of Skye near the foot in a perfect waterspout which broke upon the ridge, covering every rock in a few minutes with a rushing sheet of water, while in every gully plunged and roared huge waterfalls, the white spray flying in dense clouds far into the air. Never even in Skye have I seen anything to beat this Nevis rain.

After returning home Mr Naismith pointed out that the Castle had already been ascended by a party composed of Messrs Brown, Maclay, Naismith, and Thomson, at the Easter Meet of 1896. The reference will be found in the *Journal* for May 1896, and is to the effect that "the discomfited party afterwards crossed gully No. 1, and found consolation in ascending the Castle." I think that probably the true crest of the ridge might be gained low down by means of a traverse out of the Castle Ridge gully on the N., as the general dip of the rocks seems to be E.

During the ascent we came upon a newly killed water vole lying on the rocks. It was the black or melanic variety, and had probably been dropped by one of the eagles which haunt the mountain.

H. RAEBURN.

THE NARNAIN CAVES.—Climbers of the Cobbler, who may still have some superfluous time and energy left after doing that mountain, may do worse than pay a visit to the Narnain Caves. Cracks or crevasses rather than the generally accepted idea of what caves ought to be, they have evidently been formed by a great landslip. They are to be found at the second range of small cliffs up from the valley on the left bank or E. side of the Allt Sugach, which comes down from the Narnain Corrie to Sugach on Loch Long head, at a height of about 500 feet above sea-level.

The largest crevasse is now completely open to the light of day, and forms a small cañon cutting off a small cliff from the hillside, its edges covered with long heather, and with a few rowan trees growing from its sides. At the bottom of this a crack goes down an unknown depth into the rock, but the aperture is rather narrow. On the upper side of the great crevasse lies a small plateau, which is literally shivered by cracks running in different directions, but generally parallel to the cañon. Some of these cracks are narrow enough to be covered by flat slabs of rock, placed there probably to prevent sheep falling in; others are much wider, partly open and partly choked by fallen boulders and debris. The deeper of these may be about 40 feet, and some interesting back and foot work may be found in them. They were discovered by a party consisting of Messrs Green and M'Gregor in October 1895. Mr J. S. Napier pointed the locality out to me from a window of a train on the West Highland line near Arrochar, and my curiosity was aroused by his description of them. They are quite worth the small detour from the direct Cobbler route necessary to reach them.

H. RAEBURN.

THE STORR ROCK (2,360 FEET) AND THE OLD MAN OF STORR.—There does not appear to be any mention of the Storr in the pages of the *Journal*, but these rocks are well worth notice, not perhaps so much in a climbing sense—though in that respect they would certainly repay investigation—as for the extraordinary rock scenery they present. Admirers of the bizarre and eccentric in rock form would find here a multitude of the most strange-looking rock pinnacles in Scotland, standing up from a green slope below a fine striking wall of almost vertical rock, seamed with great chimneys of most formidable aspect. On 1st September 1898, A. W. Russell and H. Raeburn visited the Storr and the Old Man from Sligachan. Riding our cycles as far as Portree, we thence walked by the direct track by Lochs Fada and Leathan, reaching the Old Man in about two hours and a quarter. We will not venture to assert the Old Man will never be ascended, but we were

quite content to look at him without making an attempt. The Old Man is a wonderful obelisk of trap rock, 160 feet high and about 40 feet in diameter. It actually overhangs its base almost the whole way round, so that it has the appearance of dangerous instability at close quarters. The Old Man is only one, though the largest, of a number of other rock pinnacles. One, which we called the Old Woman, looks possible of ascent; another presents the appearance of a ruined castle; and another, farther to the S., has a summit which shows the outline of a begging dog. We made the ascent of a small pinnacle near the Old Man, but the wind was blowing half a gale from the S.W., and it was no easy matter to hold on. Time did not permit of a close examination of the great chimneys of the Storr, but probably some of these might "go" if properly investigated.

H. RARBURN.

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

THE ANNALS OF MONT BLANC: A MONOGRAPH. By CHAS. EDWARD MATHEWS. (London: T. Fisher Unwin. 21s.)

AT this time, when the Club has so recently realised the charming personality of the author, the publication of Mr Mathews' book comes to us with an added interest. Those of our members who were present at our Annual Dinner last month, and had the pleasure of listening to the splendid address in which Mr Mathews replied to the toast of "The Alpine Club," will easily understand the enthusiasm which has inspired this sumptuous volume.

Twelve times, Mr Mathews tells us, has he stood on the summit of Mont Blanc, and, familiar as he is with most of the seven ways to the top, the charm of this mountain still continues to exercise for him an ever-constant and irresistible fascination. Although the author forewarns us in the preface that we are not to look for a record of personal adventure in this book, yet it is with a sense of disappointment that we lay the book down without finding any allusion to his own ascents, for when the author writes with a free hand, as he does in the chapters describing the "Formation of the Alpine Club" and his "Gleanings and Reflections," he gives us a glimpse of what he can do in the way of personal narrative when he tries.

"The Annals of Mont Blanc" is a solemn and weighty book, such as is befitting the chronicles of the greatest of our Alpine giants. Beginning with legendary lore, it goes on to relate in detail, with

copious extracts from contemporary writings, the early struggles of pioneers to reach the summit, and gives an account of all the ascents from the first in 1786 to that of Albert Smith in 1851. The controversy as to whether the chief credit of the first ascent rests with Balmat or Paccard is most ably treated, and the evidence, both *pro* and *con*, given at length. The author weighs the evidence most judiciously, and his summing up "that every reasonable man must now admit that both the pioneers were equally entitled to the honour and credit of the undertaking," ought to give universal satisfaction.

The fatalities that have occurred are not forgotten, and the volume ends with a bibliography of the mountain. This latter is arranged alphabetically; to our thinking it would have been more interesting had it been arranged chronologically, but this is a matter of opinion.

This history of Mont Blanc is written by one of the old school of climbers, who has an intense admiration for the struggles of the early pioneers, and is not in much sympathy with the rock-climbing gymnast of the present day, for the Chamonix Aiguilles are not even mentioned; but notwithstanding, it is a notable book, and one that ought to find its way into the library of all true lovers of the Alps.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS OF THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR 1897. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. 1s.

This Memoir, in which the members of the Geological Survey give an account of their stewardship, appeals not only to the scientists and practical men more immediately addressed, but has points of interest also for the general reader, who, while his soul may revolt from the formidable compound names in which geologists delight, owns willingly to the fascination of theories of glacial action and the more imaginative branches of the science. Specially interesting, however, is the information here collected for the Scottish mountaineer, who, if he pursues his sport intelligently, desires to know all about glacial action, striated rocks and moraines, and in respect that his more or less valuable life is frequently entrusted to the cohesive properties of gabbro, granite, and other rocks, is better to have a competent knowledge of their character and construction.

As often happens, it is apparently not to the spontaneous action of Government, or their far-seeing regard for the public welfare, that we are indebted for the Geological Survey, but to the individual enterprise of an illustrious geologist, Henry Thomas De La Beche, who, in the beginning of this century, inaugurated and carried on at his own expenses a detailed examination of the rocks of Devon and Cornwall, and thus set the example which, after years of patient persistence, secured the support of the Treasury, and induced that stony-hearted department to accept his ideas and labours as the basis of a Public Survey. The first recognition Mr De La Beche received was his appointment, in 1834, to affix geological colours to the

Ordnance Maps of Devonshire, with portions of Somerset, Dorset, and Cornwall. Next, in 1835, he was formally admitted to a place on the estimates by a grant of £300 "to defray the additional expense which will be incurred in colouring geologically the Ordnance County Maps;" and before he died, he had the satisfaction of seeing his cherished ideas blossom into a Government Survey for Great Britain, with an organisation containing a Museum, Mining Record Office and School, with a Laboratory and Courses of Geological Lectures, over which he was himself appointed, in 1851, Director-General, with a staff in England, Ireland, and Wales. In 1854 the operations of the Survey were extended to Scotland, when Mr C. Ramsay broke ground in East Lothian.

Such, briefly stated, is the origin of the Geological Survey. The work which it carries on being still a living force in our midst, is understood and appreciated by many to whom the name of its distinguished author is absolutely unknown; but the details which are here given of the organisation of the Survey, the number and variety of its publications, the multiplicity of its operations, and the pains which are taken to ensure accuracy and thoroughness in its results, will more than confirm its reputation as a very efficient and well-managed Government body.

Some details concerning the development of the work carried on by the Survey are specially interesting. It appears that in the earliest Surveys of England and Wales, the maps employed were the 1-inch Ordnance ones, and this circumstance, coupled with the fact that the importance of the surface deposits, known as "drift," had been at first rather overlooked by geologists, led to the early maps being confined to the rocks beneath the deposits, called "Solid Geology." By the time, however, that the Survey's work in Scotland, and the six northern counties of England had commenced, the 6-inch maps were available, and by their greater roominess, enabled the mapping of those districts to be carried out in such a way as to include the complicated surface "drifts," whose paramount importance in relation to soils, and great geologic interest as records of the Glacial Period, were now more clearly perceived. The consequence is that Scotland has been mapped throughout with reference to both "solid" and "drift" geology; and while the 1-inch Survey of England and Wales is now completed, there are still unsurveyed portions in Scotland, consisting of the central mountains of Sutherland and Ross, with most of Inverness-shire, the western parts of Argyllshire, and most of the Western Isles.

The troubles of the Surveyor in the Highlands of Scotland are pathetically described, though all good members of the Club will be of opinion that he *ought* to enjoy the "rugged and lofty" mountains, the climate "wetter and more boisterous than almost anywhere else in Britain," and "the climbing the same cliff, the scouring the same crag, and trudging over the same moor again and again, before he begins to perceive any solution to the problem he has to solve." In spite, however, of those obstacles, we find that Mr Hinxman, in Strathspey and

Badenoch, completed the examination of 57 square miles of country, and 263 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of geological lines, and that Mr Harker, whose acquaintance some members will remember to have made at Sligachan, surveyed 44 $\frac{3}{8}$ square miles of the Coolins, and traced no fewer than 565 miles of lines, or about 12 miles in every square mile of surface. This is excellent work, but it should also be stated that the volume of it, in both cases, seems to be considerably above the average.

With the details of the field work overtaken by the various Surveyors, it is impossible to deal. It is voluminous, and the record of it is too learned for the unscientific mind to follow. The eye turns lovingly to the worst Gaelic place-names as they appear side by side with the names of those awful rocks, "granulitic quartzose mica-schist," "micro-poikilitic," "garnet-epidote-amphibolite," and others that would exhaust the printer's type to refer to. Happily, however, a bowing acquaintance with those high-sounding names is not indispensable for following some of the excellent descriptions that occur throughout the Memoir, amongst which may be mentioned Mr Hinxman's interesting account of the glacial history of Badenoch and the wide basin of the Spey. That and other articles of a similar kind will repay the reader the labour of wading through much that is dark and inscrutable, and will incline him when he closes the book to acknowledge that the country is well served by the Geological Survey, and that the Survey itself is fortunate in its staff.

W. BROWN.

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EARLY DESCRIPTIONS OF SKYE.

COMPILED BY THE EDITOR.

1549. Dean Munro.	1814. Sir Walter Scott.
1654. Tim. Pont.	1836. J. D. Forbes.
1703. M. Martin.	1841. Jas. Wilson.
1746. Prince Charlie.	1841. Lord Cockburn.
1772. T. Pennant.	1849. Rev. T. Grierson.
1773. Johnson and Boswell.	1857. C. F. Mackintosh.
1800. R. Jameson.	1859. C. R. Weld.
1811. Dr K. Macleay.	1859-99. Magazine articles, &c.
1811-21. J. Macculloch.	

THE difficulty of obtaining authentic information as to what was said and written about Skye and the Coolins in pre-mountaineering days, must often have been felt by those who wondered how this marvellously fine and striking mountain scenery had impressed our early travellers.

Personally, I have often wondered whether the familiar and now classical ascent of Sgurr nan Gillean by J. D. Forbes, and the equally well-known visit of Sir Walter Scott, were the only references to scenery which in recent times has attracted so wide an interest and attention. It seemed very unlikely ; yet the references, if they existed at all, were evidently planted deep in books seldom read or quoted from, and I was anxious therefore to see what a diligent search amidst the dust of early tour books would unearth. I have made the search, and, so far as I have been able to discover, the following are the only references bearing on the subject. Some, although uninteresting, are

included to preserve the chronological sequence ; and others, chiefly remarkable for the absence of instructive information, are given verbatim, in the hope they may amuse readers who are interested in the early history of the Coolins.

1549.

Donald Munro, High Dean of the Isles, who, in his official capacity, visited Skye in 1549, gives the following description of the island :—

SKY. North fra the ile Soa Urettill, be twa myle of sea, lyes the grate ile of Sky, tending from the south to the north to forety twa myles, roughe and hard land ; that is to say, from the south poynt of Sleitt¹ to the north poynt of Trouternesse,² and eight myle braid in some places, and in uther places twalve myles braid. In this ile there is twalve paroche kirkes, manurit and inhabit, fertill land, namelie for aitis, excelling aney uther ground for grassing and pastoures, abounding in store, and of studds in it, maney woods, maney forrests, maney deire, fair hunting games, many grate hills, principally Cuilluelum³ and Glannock.⁴ Within this ile ther is gud take of salmant upon five watters principally, to wit, the water of Sneisport,⁵ Sligachan, Straitswardill,⁶ Ranlagallan, and Kilmtyne, with seven or aught uther smallar watters, quherupon salmont are also slayne. In this ile there is ane freshe water loche, callit the loche of Glenmoire, quheron ther is abundance of salmont and kipper slane. Within this iyle of Skye there is five castills ; to wit, the castill of Dunbeggan,⁷ pertaining to M'Cloyd of Herray, ane starke strengthe, biggit upon ane craig ; the castill of Dunnakynne, pertaining to Mackynnoun ; the castill Dunningill, pertaining to the said Mackynnoun ; the castill of Camns in Sleit, pertaining to Donald Gromsone ;⁸ the castill of Dunskey, pertaining to the said Donald Gromsone ; and the castill of Donntwyline,⁹ pertaining to Donald Gromsone lykeways. Within this ile ther is seven sundry countreys : to wit, Slaitt, pertaining to Donald Gromsone ; Straytsnardill,¹⁰ per-

¹ Sleat. ² Trotternish. ³ The Cuchullins ; in Bleau's Atlas, Culluelun. ⁴ Glamaig ; in Bleau's Atlas, Klammaig Hills. ⁵ Snizort. ⁶ Strath Suardal. ⁷ Dunvegan. ⁸ Donald Macdonald of the Isles, commonly called Donald Gorme Macdonald of Slate. This personage was restored by Queen Mary to the lands of Slate (forfeited by his father Donald, b. 1537, who styled himself " Lord of the Isles "). He died in 1585. Burke's Bart., p. 639, 1859 ed. ⁹ Duntulm ; in Bleau's Atlas, Dun tuillym. ¹⁰ Strath Suardal.

teining to M'Kynnoun, quhilk lies next the Sleit; Menzenise,¹ pertaining to M'Cloyde of Herrays; Brachedill,² pertaining to the said M'Cloyde; Watterness, pertaining to M'Cloyd of the Lewis; and Trontieness,³ pertaining to Donald Gromesone. Into this ile ther is three principal salt water loches; to wit, Loch Sleigachan, Loch Downort,⁴ and Loch Sleippan.⁵ In thir three principal loches there is a guid take of herrings. For by thir three principal loches, there is thirteen salt water loches also within this ile, to wit, 1. Loche Skahanask,⁶ 2. Loche Emorte,⁷ 3. Loche Vrakdill,⁸ 4. Loche Kensale⁹ serloss, 5. Loche Dunbegan, 6. Loche Gorsarmis, 7. Loche Aarnoffort, 8. Loche Snasporte,¹⁰ 9. Loche Portri, 10. Loche Ken, 11. Loche Nadalae, in Sleit. The uther twa loches my memorey is fayled of them; but in mony of them ther is guid tack of herrings sometymes, but nought so guid by far as in the three first loches. This iyle is callit by the Erishe Ellan Skyane, that is to say in Englishe the Wingitt ile, be reason it has maney wyngs and points lyand furth frae it, through the devyding of thir loches.—*Vide* Hume-Brown's "Scotland before 1700," pp. 254,255.

1654.

Timothy Pont (1560-1630?) was the first projector of a Scottish atlas, and, as is stated in Bleau, he went over the whole country on foot, visiting all the islands with their hostile and barbarous inhabitants. The map "The Yle of Skye," which was published in 1654, is a most extraordinary production, and it is almost impossible to trace in it any likeness to those of the present day. However, some well-known names appear, such as "Culluelun or Gulluin hills," "Bretil," and "Scafaig"; and in his description he says, "Hinc à Septentrione in Meridiem porrigitur *Skia*, omnium insularum circa Scotiam maxima: quadraginta duo millia passuum longa, alibi octo, alibi duodecim lata, in montes pluribus locis se attollens."*

1703.

Martin Martin was a native of Skye, and factor to the Laird of Macleod. At the request of Sir Robert Sibbald he travelled over the Western Islands to collect information

¹ Minginish. ² Bracadale. ³ Trotternish. ⁴ Ainort. ⁵ Slapin.
⁶ Scavaig. ⁷ Eynort. ⁸ Bracadale. ⁹ L. Greshornish. ¹⁰ L. Snizort.

* Bleau's Atlas, p. 127.

regarding the condition and habits of the islanders. In 1703 he published the result of this tour, entitled "Description of the Western Isles of Scotland," and it was the perusal of this book which gave to Dr Johnson a desire to go to the Hebrides.

There are several Mountains in the Isle [of Skye] of considerable height and extent, as Quillin, Scornificy, Bein-store, Bein-vore-scowe, Bein-chro, Bein-nin, Kaillach, some of them are covered with Snow on the top in the Summer, others are almost quite covered with Sand in the top, which is much wash'd down with great Rains: All these Mountains abound with Heath and Grass, which serve as good Pastorage for black Cattle and Sheep.

The Quillin, which exceed any of these Hills in height, is said to be the cause of much Rain, by breaking the clouds that hover about it, which quickly after pour down in Rain upon the quarter on which the wind then blows.*

1746.

Prince Charles Edward Stuart, according to Captain Malcolm MacLeod's account in the "Lyon in Mourning," landed at 'Nicolson's rock,' not far from Portree, and spent the night of 2nd July in a cow-byre near Scorobreck. He remained concealed there till the next evening, and at dusk, starting with MacLeod in the disguise of his servant, he walked "along the ridges of high hills, through wild muirs and glens," to Elgol on Loch Scavaig, where he arrived early on the following morning. MacLeod's account of the journey is not without local colour. He says that "the Prince looking about him, and seeing nothing but high hills all round them, said, 'I am sure the Devil cannot find us, now;'" and also, "In their way to this place [Elgol] the Prince in the night time happened to fall into a boguc almost to the top of the thighs, and MacLeod behoved to pull him out by the armpits and thereby was bogued himself."

The route followed, as shown in the "Itinerary," appears to have been from Portree by the head of Loch Sligachan, Glen Sligachan, between Glamaig and Marsco, the head of Loch Ainort, and down Strathmore to Elgol, where he got a boat for Mallaig on the morning of the 4th July 1746.

* "Description of the Western Isles," p. 138.

1772.

Thomas Pennant visited Scotland in 1772, accompanied by the Rev. T. Lightfoot, the botanist, and a Welsh artist of the name of Moses Griffith. The result of their travels appears in two large volumes, of which Dr Johnson says, "He's the best traveller I ever read; he observes more things than any one else does." In passing Broadford, Pennant made the ascent of Beinn na Caillich, and as this is the only time that he refers to the mountains of Skye, it is all I am able to quote from his bulky volumes. This hill was also climbed by Jameson (about 1800) and Macculloch (about 1811). The latter criticises Pennant's account, and says, "Were I to describe the view from Ben na Caillich, I should not do it half so outrageously as Pennant has. In truth, it is as little interesting as well possible." Perhaps the difficulties which Macculloch in his descent got into, when he spent "the longest ten minutes of all my life," may have biased his criticism.

July 18, 1772. Walk up Beinn na Caillich, or, the hill of the old hag; one of those picturesque mountains that made such a figure from the sea. After ascending a small part, find its sides covered with vast loose stones, like the Paps of Jura, the shelter of ptarmigans; the top flat and naked, with an artificial cairn of a most enormous size, reported to have been the place of sepulture of a gigantic woman in the days of Fingal. The prospect to the west was that of desolation itself; a savage series of rude mountains, discolored, black and red, as if by the rage of fire. Nearer, joined to this hill by a ridge, is Beinn-na-grain, or, mountain of the Sun; perhaps venerated in ancient times. Mal-more, or, the round mountain, appears in the north. The serrated tops of Blaven affect with astonishment: and beyond them, the clustered height of Quillin, or the mountain of Cuchullin, like its hero, *stood like a hill that catches the clouds of heaven.* The deep recesses between these Alps, in times of old, possessed *the sons of the narrow vales, the hunters of the deer;* and to this time are inhabited by a fine race of stags.*

1773.

Dr Johnson and Boswell, when they visited Skye in the autumn of 1773, have little to say of the hills or of the

* "A Tour in Scotland, 1772," vol. i., p. 287.

scenery. Boswell, however, remarks of Johnson, that "once he said, as he looked on the black coast of Skye—black as being composed of rocks seen in the dusk—'This is very solemn.'" Of the weather in Skye Johnson says, "It is not pleasing. Half the year is deluged with rain. From the autumnal to the vernal equinox a dry day is hardly known."

1800.

Robert Jameson visited Skye about the end of last century, collecting material for his "Mineralogy of Scotland," which was published in 1800. The following extracts refer to the Coolins:—

Rue-dunan, where we landed after leaving Canna, is situated at the bottom of the Cullin mountains, and at the head of Loch Brittle. The mountains rise here with the utmost grandeur; but the continual covering of clouds, prevented me from investigating them with so much accuracy as I wished. I found, that the sides of the loch, and the lower part of these mountains, were composed of basalt; but the superior parts appeared to be wholly of sienite and hornblende rock, traversed by basalt veins. The faces of the mountains were bare, steep, and rugged, and were much traversed by open fissures.

[After making his way northward from Rudh an Dunain by Grula, Talisker, Dunvegan and Uig, he rounded the head of Skye, and from Loch Staffin crossed the hills to Kingsburgh. From there he reached Broadford by Portree and Sconser. The following is the account he gives of his ascent of Bienn na Caillich.] . . . After leaving the house of Cory, on our way up the mountain, the first object which attracted our attention, was a fine white calcareous marle, which forms a bed of considerable thickness. . . . As we continued our ascent, the mountains became more steep, and we observed the crop of blue and white marble, which formed a striking contrast with the brown burnt-like aspect of the heath. . . . As we continued ascending, the marble disappeared, and also the heather; the mountain side being now covered with loose stones, which rendered our further progress difficult and tedious. This debris is formed by the breaking down of the granite which forms the hill to its summit. . . . After scrambling over this debris, which covers so considerable a part of the mountain, we came to a green spot; from whence, the ascent is easier. We now hastened with eager step towards the summit, and soon reached the cairn, which is upon the most elevated part of the mountain. Here, our most sanguine expectations were more than realized, every faculty for a while seemed arrested, until we could burst into an exclamation on the vastness of the scene, and on the mighty and eternal power of him who framed so great a work. Before us, were

many great vallies bounded by lofty mountains, whose steep sides were red, owing to the powerful influence of the elements, and furrowed by many torrents which collect during the dreadful storms that often reign in these wilds. At a greater distance, the dark, lurid and terrible summits of the Cullin mountains retiring in majesty among the clouds, thus dimly seen, adding much to the sublimity of the scene. To the north, we observed below us the low part of the island, with the isles of Rona, Rasay, Scalpa and Pladda : Towards the east and south, the rugged mountains of the mainland appeared stretching in all the grandeur of Alpine wildness to the point of Ardnamurchan ; and nearer, the isles of Eigg and Rume added to the variety of this interesting prospect. We stood long enraptured with the wonderful scene ; but the darkening of the sky admonished us to shorten our stay, and hasten again to the valley. The clouds were now seen driving through the glens, covering the mountains with a dark veil ; soon all was lost in grand confusion ; what a few minutes before was clear and distinct was now a troubled scene of tremendous mountainous peaks, shooting above the dark clouds, and reddened valleys dimly seen through the driving mist and rain. We took the lea side of the mountain, and soon reached the house of Cory.*

1811.

K. Macleay, M.D., published in 1811 an account of the Spar Cave of Strathaird, then one of the principal sights in Skye, in which he says, "The mouth of this cave has been known to the people in the vicinity, time out of memory. But it was not till June 1808 that it was explored by the persevering zeal of Mrs Gillespie at Kilmoree."

1811-1821.

John Macculloch, M.D., travelled in Scotland from 1811-1821, and his two books on the geology and scenery of Scotland are now so well known that I need only refer to them. Of Skye, he says that no measurement of the height of any of the Coolins has been made, and that such was the general state of the weather it prevented him from supplying that defect. It must indeed have been bad, if that alone spoilt the "seven attempts in five successive summers to ascend the Cuchullin hills."† From his most

* "Minerology of the Scottish Isles," vol. ii., pp. 72 and 92.

† "A Description of the Western Islands," vol. i., p. 266.

voluminous descriptions, too long to quote in full, the following extracts, telling of the discovery of Loch Coruisk, are perhaps the most interesting.

I had no reason to be disappointed with Scavig . . . but . . . suddenly, on turning the angle of a high rock, a valley burst on my view, which, in a moment, obliterated Loch Scavig, together with all record of all valleys that had ever left their traces on the table of my brain.

The name of this extraordinary place is Coruisk, the water of the hollow, or the hollow of the water, I know not which. . . . So suddenly and unexpectedly does this strange scene break on the view, so unlike is it to the sea-bay without, so dissimilar to all other scenery, and so little to be foreseen in a narrow insulated spot like Sky, that I felt as if transported by some magician into the enchanted wilds of an Arabian tale, carried to the habitation of Genii among the mysterious recesses of the Caucasus. . . .

It was a lovely day when first I found this place ; which, excepting the shepherds of Strathaird, mortal foot had scarce trod. . . . We set out at length to walk round it ; we advanced ; still we advanced ; but still the distant boundary was as grey and as misty as before. The forms remained unchanged, the lake was the same, the rocks varied not, the mountain summits did not subside. The men began to think they were enchanted, and that, after half-an-hour's walking, they had not moved from the spot ; but, on turning round, we found we had left the entrance far behind, though the termination was as distant as ever. We proceeded for an hour, and still it was unchanged ; growing on all hands, as if it expanded before our efforts to measure it, and still retiring as fast as we advanced. My rough fellows, little given to metaphysical reasonings, did not well know whether to be frightened or astonished ; they looked at each other, and at me, and around, and I found, in the course of the evening, they considered the place "no canny." At the upper extremity, when we at length reached the lake, the scene became somewhat changed. Still the western barrier was grey and misty and distant. Here the sun had never shone since the creation ; and a thousand reflected lights, mingling with the aerial tints, gave a singular solemnity to the huge irregular masses which now rose overhead, deeply cleft by the torrents that were now at length audibly foaming down the black precipices, and which, gradually diminishing till they were lost in the misty mountain summit, seemed to have their sources in the invisible regions of the clouds.

There is a singular contrast in the views from the two extremities of this valley. The eastern being most open, it seems at all times of the day to announce the rising of the sun ; while, in looking toward the western end, we felt as if it had been long set. Thus, when in the middle, on looking alternately at each, the break of a bright day is contrasted with the twilight gloom of evening. It is when evening has actually come on, that the western end seems involved in the deepest

shadows of night ; while, from the contrast, the day still seems bright over the entrance of the valley.

Wishing to witness the effect of night, and finding the men unwilling to risk themselves in this enchanted ground, I left them with the boat, and ascended the eastern hill as far as it was accessible. The clouds of evening soon began to settle over the Cuchullin, and to overshadow the valley, which now extended in all its length beneath me, no longer deceiving, but deep, broad, and distant. As clouds after clouds continued to arrive from the western sea, their huge leaden masses began to curl round the mountain top, and the whole was soon involved in one mysterious shadow, concealing entirely those forms which even the morning lights had but dimly shown. The glassy surface of the lake still served to define its figure ; and a few vivid lights reflected from the overhanging curtain of clouds tinged the nearer shores and promontories by which it was bounded, conducted the eye gradually on to the place where all objects at length disappeared, and beyond which the valley seemed interminably prolonged into the regions of endless night. When I returned to the boat, I found it moored against the rocks, but the men were gone. It was now nearly dark ; the mountains were all confounded in undistinguishable blackness, and their outlines alone were discernible on the dark grey sky. It was in vain to call where there were none to hear ; it was impossible to seek after the men, as I could no longer find my way among those deep shadows where some chasm or cavern seemed to open at every step ; and to carry off the boat alone was out of the question. I sat down on the rock, watching the waves that curled against it, and listened to the sound of the distant cascade of Scavig, which, coming by fits on the breeze, rendered the universal silence more impressive. At length three of the men appeared ; they had gone in search of me, fearing that I was lost ; and it was easy to see, by their joy at finding me, that they had been under considerable alarm. I had forgotten that the lake was considered the haunt of the water demons ; but I was soon reminded of it by the arrival of the fourth man, who came back shortly after, running as if the kelpie had been at his heels. It was not till he found himself once more in the boat that he seemed to consider himself safer. " Ech ! " said he, as he came to his breath again, " this is an awfu-like place." We discovered that he had taken fright when he found himself left alone, and that, leaving the boat to its fate, he had set out to seek his companions. As we rowed back to our vessel, I observed an unusual silence and air of mystery among the men, while they pulled as if an enemy had been behind them, looking about at every moment, and then at each other, till, as we gained the opener sea, their terrors seemed to disappear. But as I paced the deck afterwards, I overheard much serious and fearful talk ; in which was distinguishable, among some praises of my courage, no small wonder at the incredulity of the infidel Southron in thus venturing alone among the spirits of Coruisk.

In spite of all my patriotic attempts, I suspect that the knowledge

of this place is still limited to half-a-dozen persons exclusive of yourself and me. But as travellers become more adventurous, and as Englishmen discover that the people of Sky have the usual proportion of legs and arms, it will become known. Then the loungers and the what-thens will return angry and disappointed ; dinnerless, perchance, and dry within, and wet without, grumbling at their guide, complaining that it is nothing like what they expected, with much more such matter as I have often heard and expect again to hear. Then I may answer, but only in my own words, "Since you decry my account, why did you not write it yourself?"*

1814.

Sir Walter Scott, while collecting material for his "Lord of the Isles," visited Coruisk in 1814, and the account of that visit, here printed, is taken from his diary which appears in his "Life," vol. iv., p. 310. The poetical description of Scavaig and Coruisk will be found in the "Lord of the Isles," Canto III. In vol. x. of the twelve-volume edition of his Poetical Works there is a picture of Loch Coruisk by Turner, who, it is said, "but for one or two tufts of grass might have broken his neck, having slipped when trying to attain the best position for taking this view." The picture, though quite incorrect as a portrait of Coruisk, is wonderfully true, as only the works of a great genius can be, in representing the *idea* of the scene.

25th August 1814. We were now under the western termination of the high mountains of Quillen, whose weather-beaten and serrated peaks we had admired at a distance from Dunvegan. They sunk here upon the sea, but with the same bold and peremptory aspect which their distant appearance indicated. They seemed to consist of precipitous sheets of naked rock, down which torrents were leaping in a hundred lines of foam. The tops, apparently inaccessible to human foot, were rent and split into the most tremendous pinnacles : towards the base of these bare and precipitous crags the ground, enriched by the soil washed away from them, is verdant and productive. Having passed within the small isle of Soa, we enter Loch Scavig under the shoulder of one of these grisly mountains, and observe that the opposite side of the loch is of a milder character softened down into steep green declivities. From the depth of the bay advanced a headland of high rocks which divided the lake into two recesses, from each of which a brook seems to issue. Here Macleod had intimated we

* "Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland," vol. iii., pp. 473-483.

should find a fine romantic loch, but we were uncertain up what inlet we should proceed in search of it. We choose, against our better judgment, the southerly inlet, where we saw a house which might afford us information. On manning our boat and rowing ashore, we observed a hurry among the inhabitants, owing to our being as usual suspected for *king's men*, although, Heaven knows, we have nothing to do with the revenue, but to spend the part of it corresponding to our equipment. We find that there is a lake adjoining to each branch of the bay, and foolishly walked a couple of miles to see that next the farm house, merely because the honest man seemed jealous of the honour of his own loch, though we were speedily convinced it was not that which we had been recommended to examine. . . . Returned and re-embarked in our boat, for our guide shook his head at our proposal to climb over the peninsula which divides the two bays and the two lakes. In rowing round the headland, surprised at the infinite number of sea-fowl, then busy apparently with a shoal of fish ; at the depth of the bay, find that discharge from this second forms a sort of waterfall or rather rapid ; round this place were assembled hundreds of trouts and salmon struggling to get into the fresh water ; with a net we might have had twenty salmon at a haul, and a sailor, with no better hook than a crooked pin, caught a dish of trouts during our absence.

Advancing up this huddling and riotous brook, we found ourselves in a most extraordinary scene : we were surrounded by hills of the boldest and most precipitous character, and on the margin of a lake which seemed to have sustained the constant ravages of torrents from these rude neighbours. The shores consisted of huge layers of naked granite, here and there intermixed with bogs, heaps of gravel and sand marking the course of the torrents. Vegetation there was little or none, and the mountains rose so perpendicularly from the water's edge that Borrowdale is a jest to them. We proceeded about one mile and a half up this deep, dark, and solitary lake, which is about two miles long, half a mile broad, and, as we learned, of extreme depth. The vapour which enveloped the mountain ridges obliged us by assuming a thousand shapes, varying its veils in all sorts of forms, but sometimes clearing off altogether. It is true that it made us pay the penalty by some heavy and downright showers, from the frequency of which, a Highland boy, whom we brought from the farm, told us the lake was properly called the Water Kettle. The proper name is Loch Corriskin, from the deep corrie or hollow in the mountains of Cuillin which affords the basin for this wonderful sheet of water. It is as exquisite as a savage scene, as Loch Katrine is as a scene of stern beauty. After having penetrated so far as distinctly to observe the termination of the lake, under an immense mountain which rises absolutely from the head of the waters, we returned, and often stopped to admire the ravages which storms must have made in these recesses when all human witnesses were driven to places of more shelter and security. Stones, or rather large massive fragments of rocks of a

composite kind, perfectly different from the granite barriers of the lake, lay upon the rocky beach in the strangest and most precarious situations, as if abandoned by the torrents which had borne them down from above; some lay loose and tottering upon the ledges of the natural rock, with so little security that the slightest push moved them, though their weight exceeded many tons. These detached rocks were chiefly what are called plum-pudding stones. Those which formed the shore were granite.

The opposite side of the lake seemed quite pathless, as a huge mountain, one of the detached ridges of the Quillen, sinks in a profound and almost perpendicular precipice down to the water. On the left-hand side, which we traversed, rose a higher and equally inaccessible mountain, the top of which seemed to contain the crater of an exhausted volcano. I never saw a spot on which there was less appearance of vegetation of any kind: the eye rested on nothing but brown and naked crags, and the rocks on which we walked by the side of the loch were as bare as the pavement of Cheapside. There are one or two spots of islets in the loch which seem to bear juniper or some such low bushy shrub.

Returned from our extraordinary walk and went on board. During dinner our vessel quitted Loch Scavig, and, having doubled its southern cape, opened the bay or salt-water Loch of Sleepin.*

1836.

J. D. Forbes was the first climber to visit the Coolins, and in his "Geology of the Cuchullin Hills" he has left us a record of the earliest ascent of Sgurr nan Gillean, and this is reprinted here verbatim. He remarks of the Coolins that "their distance from countries usually visited is the least obstacle to their examination;—their tops penetrating an almost ever stormy atmosphere, their bases bathed by a wild and ever-chafing ocean, and their sides and peaks presenting more appearance of inaccessibility than perhaps any other mountains in Britain." At the time of his visit there was no accurate map of the Coolins, and he endeavoured to rectify this by compiling one for himself. This map, which is wonderfully correct, is reproduced on a very small scale in Black's "Guide to the Isle of Skye, 1854." Forbes, in criticising previous maps, says of Arrow-smith's (the most complete then in existence, published in 1807), "that the lake of Coruisk is unnoticed, and the hills themselves are put in absolutely at random. Nor has Dr

* "The Life of Sir Walter Scott," vol. iv., pp. 310-315.

Macculloch much improved matters in his enlarged map of the island contained in his 'Description of the Western Islands.' The lake is there, but this is all that can be said. In short, I am aware of no attempt to trace the topography of these remarkable hills." From the accuracy of Forbes's map one can quite believe that he had a most extensive knowledge of the Coolins, and one gathers that this was so from his remark that "it is quite possible to walk completely round the Coolin group." He says, "I have done so, as well as intersect it in several directions."

At the end of his paper on the "Geology" is appended a most interesting article "On the Traces of Ancient Glaciers in the Cuchullin Hills," in which is stated that "having hitherto taken no share in the discussions raised as to the proof of glacial action in this country, and being as much indisposed as ever to embark in a theory which offers such evident difficulties, I yet feel it to be a duty to make known what I have observed in connection with it among the Cuchullin Hills; phenomena so singular and well marked as to require a steady and patient consideration in whatever way they may be attempted to be explained, and which I am compelled to admit (whatever geological causes, now unsuspected, may hereafter be discovered), must now be unhesitatingly ascribed to the action of moving ice, rather than to any other kind of agency with which we are acquainted."

The ascent of Scur-na-Gillean was deemed impossible at the time of my first visit in 1836. Talking of it with an active forester in the service of Lord Macdonald, named Duncan Macintyre, whom I engaged to guide me to Coruisk from Sligachan, he told me that he had attempted it repeatedly without success, both by himself and also with different strangers, who had engaged him for the purpose; but he indicated a way different from those which he had tried, which he thought might be more successful. I engaged him to accompany me, and the next day (July 7) we succeeded in gaining the top; the extreme roughness of the rocks (all hypersthene) rendering the ascent safe, where, with any other formation, it might have been considerably perilous. Indeed, I have never seen a rock so adapted for clambering. At that time I erected a cairn and temporary flag, which stood, I was informed, a whole year; but having no barometer, I could not ascertain the height, which I estimated at 3,000 feet. In 1843, I was in Skye with a barometer, but had not an opportunity of revisiting the

Cuchullins; but in May 1845, I ascended the lower summit, nearly adjoining, marked Bruch-na-Fray in the map, and wishing to ascertain the difference of height of Scur-na-Gillean, I proposed to Macintyre to try to ascend it from the west side. It was no sooner proposed than attempted. It was impossible to do otherwise than descend deep into the rugged ravine of Loat-e-Corry, which separates them, which cost us a severe scramble, and then face an ascent, which from a distance appeared almost perpendicular; but aided by the quality of the rocks already mentioned, we gained the Scur-na-Gillean from the west side, although, on reaching the top, and looking back, it appeared like a dizzy precipice. My barometrical observations were unfortunately rendered somewhat unsatisfactory by the comparison of the height of the mercury at starting and returning to our fundamental station at Sligachan Inn. There appeared to have been a great fall during the ten hours that I had been absent; and in such circumstances, interpolation for the height of the barometer at the lower station is always uncertain and inconclusive. A very rigorous comparison which I have made of all the readings of the barometer before, at the time of, and after, the observations, do not allow me to attribute any probable error to the observations themselves, nor any probable injury to the barometer, which seemed to have as good a vacuum after my return as before; but another check remained. My friend, Mr Necker, foreign member of this Society, being then resident at Portree, and having a barometer similar to mine (on Bunten's construction) which he observed from time to time, and with which mine was compared some days after, and found to agree to within .012 inch, kindly allowed me to make use of his observations. Though the barometer was falling at Portree (ten miles distant) at the time, there did not appear to have been the great and sudden change which I observed. Nevertheless, fully acknowledging the difficulty, I am disposed to think that some local rarefaction, not unfrequent in climates so agitated, and in localities so mountainous as Skye, produced the fall in the barometer which I observed. But to make the best use of my opportunities, I have computed the height of the Cuchullin hills on two suppositions: first, by an interpolation of the apparent change in the height of the mercury at Sligachan; and, secondly, by direct comparison of my observation on the summit of the Scur-na-Gillean with Mr Necker's almost simultaneous observation at Portree. The first computation gives 3,193 feet for the height above Sligachan Inn; the second 3,115 feet above Mr Necker's house at Portree. But the first is 30 or 40 feet above the sea-level, the latter 80 or 90: the result, therefore, is nearly coincident, and it is probable that the true height of Scur-na-Gillean is between 3,200 and 3,220 feet. Bruch-na-Fray is probably about 40 feet lower.* [The Ordnance Survey height of Sgurr nan Gillean is 3,167, and of Bruach na Frithe 3,143 feet.]

* Black's "Guide to the Island of Skye," 1854, pp. 54-56.

1841.

James Wilson, brother of Christopher North, wrote a description of his visit to Coruisk which he made in company with Sir Thomas Dick Lauder in the summer of 1841, and of which the following is an abridgment:—

The cutter getting under weigh took us towards the head of Loch Scavaig, passing close along what our great novelist has named the "grisly mountains," the sides of which were enlivened by small silvery torrents, one of which is named *The Mad Stream*. . . . This is the wild and rock-surrounded lake so raved about by George Dick Lauder, the Rev. John Thomson, Turner, and other great artists past and present, of modern times. . . . We landed and made our way over some broken and disjointed ground on the right hand to the mouth of a brawling river which here pours itself into the sea, not with that look of quiet and subdued expansion which usually marks the "meeting of the waters," but with a hurly-burly briskness, as if it thought to astonish the receiver-general. The mountains seemed now to rise and menace us, they looked so dark and surly. There was no human dwelling within our view, indeed none exists at all at the head of this Loch Scavaig owing to the fearful force and rapidity with which the winds descend from the ravines, thinking no more of carrying off the roof of a hut into the air, than if it were of thistle down.

[They walked to the head of Loch Coruisk] either pacing along the smooth summits of those sloping masses, or threading our more devious way like an otter or wild cat among gigantic stones as big as churches. . . . On gaining the head of the lake, we found that Sir W. S. and others, who had taken a casual distant view from the lower end, had erred here also in describing the great mountain masses, which seem to terminate the view, as descending directly into sullen waters. On the contrary, after working one's way to an upper margin of the lake, and ascending an intervening ridge of rocks or giant stones, the pleased pedestrian finds himself looking down upon a small quiet grassy plain of more than half a mile in length through which the feeding river wanders.*

1841.

LORD COCKBURN.

KYLE RHEA, SKYE, *same day, i.e., 3rd September 1841, 2 P.M.*—Here we are in Skye, as proud as Columbus when he first landed in America. . . .

This ferry, though boasted as the best in Skye, is detestable, at least for carriages, and as ill-conducted as possible. But what can a ferry be for carriages, where ours is only the third that has passed this

* "A Voyage Round the Coasts of Scotland," vol. i., pp. 216-222.

year, and the object of the landlord of the ferry-house on each side is to detain instead of advancing the passenger, and where, when at last it is seen that they can carry it on no longer, the only machinery for putting the vehicle on board consists of dozens of lazy and very awkward Highlanders, all scolding in Erse, who almost lift it and throw it into the groaning boat.

BROADFORD, SKYE, *3rd September 1841, Night.*—The first six or so of the twelve miles to this are a continuance of the same striking mountain scenery. There is a still worse ascent immediately after leaving this side of the ferry. It is a worse road, rises as high, or nearly so, and is in one place steeper, altogether more formidable. We hired two leaders for it, and without them, our making it out would have been very doubtful. So far as we have gone, these two hills and the *ascent* up Glencoe (which however we came *down*) are the only three places where there can be any pretence for putting more than two horses to a light chariot with six people, besides the driver, and all their indispensable luggage.

The last six miles next this open and descend into a commonplace pastoral country. But (observe this *but*) there is from that descent a good view of the landlocked sea ending with this Bay of Broadford, and bounded on all sides, except round its upper end, with good stern hills. This (the upper) end or head of the bay, is flat and mean. But all below is beautiful. Perfectly treeless, hard looking, and bare, but still capable of all the beauty that a bright sun can bestow on calm water, and on silent massive hills. The day has proved excellent.

I thought Broadford had been a *town*,—not a *toon*, but a real *town* or respectable village. But I find that it consists of three houses, the inn, the school, and “*the shop*,” near which there are a dozen or two of hovels, not standing together, however, so as to form even a *toon*, but scattered at distances, and all so like the black moss they stand on that till we came up to the holes which are termed the doors, and saw the ragged human rabbits looking out of the warren, we did not take them to be houses.

As soon as we arrived, I called on Mr Mackinnon of (or *on*) Corry, who lives half a mile from the inn, and with whom I had been in correspondence about getting to Coruisk, &c. He had expected the whole party to have gone and taken up their quarters at his house, but the word “*you*” used in his letters, and “*I*” by me in mine, produced a misunderstanding which gave him only me individually, and this only to dinner. However, the badness of this inn, which is only not just so bad as Shiel House, and therefore might have had so much the less fun, joined to Corry hospitality, have made us resolve to be his guests from and after to-morrow morning.

CORRY, NEAR BROADFORD, *Sunday, 5th September 1841, Night.*—Well! I have seen the Spar Cave, part of the Cuillin Hills, and Coruisk, the two last the objects of all this travel. But let me proceed regularly.

Frank and I breakfasted yesterday morning a little after six, and

left this in our own carriage at seven, with cloaks and a basket of provisions, and drove about five miles, in a south-westerly direction, past the old kirk of Strath, and till the road stopped at the sea. It is a good road, and it is impossible for a person who sets off upon it, and goes on, to avoid reaching the sea. It is necessary to have a boat bespoke there, for there is no village, and no proper boat can be got upon chance. The minister, who lives (but not in the manse, for there is none) close by, can always provide one if properly applied to, but a better way is to engage a boat and four men from Broadford, and to *cart* the boat across the five miles if necessary. Corry did this for me, so I found my bark and my crew waiting for me. I sent back the carriage, with directions to return to the same place at six in the evening.

So we got on board, and set off from that place (I never heard its name), which is at the head of Loch Slapin. It was a strong, clumsy fishing-boat, with no mast, sail, or rudder. The crew consisted of three men and a boy—only one of whom spoke English. The boy rowed as well as any of the men, and they were all civil and merry.

The day was perfect and the sea like glass. They said that the distance to be rowed was 16 miles going and 16 coming ; but I should think 14 nearer the truth. The course lay down Loch Slapin and up Loch Scavaig, these two being adjoining lochs, separated by one promontory.

We coasted down along the *west* side of Slapin, a space of about seven miles, rarely 100 yards, and often not so many feet, from the shore, over water so clear that we often fancied we saw the monsters of the deep. The hills bounding the loch are not striking, either in their height or forms. But the more distant eminences, blended as they were, were beautiful, and would have been so even without the aid of the islands, which, however, very powerfully contributed to the composition of the scene. But in truth it was difficult to withdraw one's eyes from the objects that were close at hand. The whole shore along which we were passing is lined by a perpendicular, though not an absolutely continuous wall of rock, into which the sea has eaten by washing off the soil till it has formed a barrier against its own further encroachments. It was low tide, yet the water was deep enough for the boat to sail close up to the rock, so that there is no beach. Without quarrying and smoothing no bathing-machine could work on all the seven miles along the west side of Slapin, except at one place near the upper end. The line of rock varies in its height, from 20 to apparently 200 feet. The average, I should think, must be about 100 feet. The rock is all laid in horizontal laminæ, and is separated vertically into detached pieces at almost every 50 or 100 feet or oftener, so that it is not an unbroken wall, but a long series of detached and horizontally laminated masses, cut into all sorts of forms, from great solid lumps to tall pillars, and worn into all sorts of curious appearances. The fissures between the cliffs are often cleared out entirely so as to leave no roof, but in other places a roof is often preserved, or in other words a cave is formed, and into every

crevice the fresh sea entered and laved the pebbly bottom and the clean sides. Even in the interstices and on the tops of the fantastic rock, such is the general severity of the storm or the want of soil, that there is scarcely any vegetation, insomuch that the rowers stopped to point out a crack in which a single ash had attempted to root itself, for which it is now bleached nearly white. It is all strangely worn rock, which, though at last the employment becomes idle, it is impossible to give up observing and wondering at.

We passed close by the Spar Cave, which I did not know we were to do, and so yielded to the rowers, who seemed to think it ominous that any stranger should pass their wonder without entering. Not thinking of this as a part of the day's work, we had brought no lights, and had to send for candles to a house not far off, but which I never saw. We wasted an hour on this piece of nonsense. It is not worth describing; even MacCulloch, who saw it when its stalactites were unbroken, thought it insignificant. Now that *not one* remains, the whole charm, which was in its sparriness, is gone, for in its mere dimensions it is nothing. There is no dirt in it, I mean no mud, but it is very wet, a pool of about 30 feet has to be crossed on a Celt's back, a steep and slippery inclined plane of about 40 feet has to be scrambled up on one side, and down on another, a feat requiring skill even from the guide; and after all this splashing and straining, and wetting of hands and feet, there is nothing whatever, absolutely nothing to be seen. The only way to deal with it would be to shut it up for a century or two, and let the dropping reconstruct the white figures, which alone can ever give it any interest. At present the only reward for going in consists in the pleasure of getting out. And indeed I suspect that even in its best days, the outer entrance was always the finest part of the show. It consists of a fissure between two rocks, which, were it not open to the sky, would have made a cave worth entering. I paced it as well as I could, and it seemed to me to be about 500 or 600 feet in from the sea, that is, in depth; about 40 wide, and about 150 or 200 high; each side being of solid rock, and either quite perpendicular or leaning inward, and every tide brightens its sea weed and channelly floor.

But my thoughts were of Coruisk, which is pronounced here *Coruis'k*. So we proceeded and were now near the point which we had to double in order to get into Scavaig.

Ever since we reached Kyle Rhea, we had been excited by glimpses of the summits of Cuchullin, and were so in Slapin this very morning. At last, after rounding that point, at the distance of about seven or eight miles, across a sheet of calm bright water, the Cuillin Hills stood before us!—seen from their bases to their tops—some of their pinnacles veiled in thin vapour, but most of them in the light of a brilliant meridian sun. I gazed in admiration, and could not for a long time withdraw myself from the contemplation of that singular assemblage of mountainous forms.

The Cuillin range extends to eight or ten miles, but the portion

before me was not probably above from two to three. But I am told it is the best portion, and may safely be taken for the whole. I had two full hours to observe them during our approach, which lay *up* and *across* Scavaig; but indeed, their features and characters may be apprehended in a very few minutes. Black, steep, hard, and splintered, they seem to stand amphitheatrically, and rising from the very level of the sea, their irony and shivered tops stream up to the height, MacCulloch says, of 3,000 feet (but I suspect that this is too much), and are fixed in every variety of peak, and precipice, and ridge, and pillar, made more curiously picturesque by forms so fantastic, that were it not for their position and their obvious hardness, it might almost be supposed that they were artificial.

There was a considerable shower as we advanced, and the whole scene was wrapped up. I began to fear, but it cleared away in a quarter of an hour, and confidence returned with the sun.

On looking round, I found new ground for admiration. Loch Scavaig, in the middle of which we were, I saw to be one of the finest sea bays I had ever beheld. The *eastern* side is bounded by a hill, which till it actually reaches the Cuillin, is low and pastoral, and the grass (such as it is) comes down to the shore, the belt of rock I have spoken of ceasing at the point of Slapin. But on the opposite or western side, the whole shore was lined with the same stern barrier as Slapin, above which the mountains rose high, and hard, and sharp, till they too fell into the Cuillin range. Towards the north end the loch is enclosed by these Cuillin mountains. The southern, and far wider end, is locked in by several islands; of which Eigg, Rum, and Soa are the largest, and these, and the projecting promontories of the mainland of Skye, group most beautifully. I was particularly struck with Rum, which I don't recollect having heard praised for its shapes. But it is very striking, both in itself, and as a part of the general landscape. It is not equal, or nearly equal, to Arran, either in height or in form; but it is the only island I have yet seen that can justly remind us of that one. The beauty that shone over all these objects was the beauty of mere light and form: for there was little visible vegetation, not one tree, no verdure, no apparent house, no ruin, no sound. But the positions and the forms of the objects were admirable, and a depth of interest was impressed upon the whole circle around me, by its universal hardness and sterility, which no softening could have increased.

So we went on, till, almost palpitating with anxiety, we were landed on a rock at the head of the loch. I found an oar lying in some heather, and on looking round saw a boat seemingly deserted, on the beach, and eight barrels at a little distance. These, I learned, were the still ungathered store of a poor fisherman, who was drowned three days before, in trying to cross the stream which flows out of Coruisk, when it was in flood.

The level of Coruisk is not, I should suppose, more than from 30 to 50 feet above that of the sea; and the fresh loch is not above half

a mile from the salt one. The space between them requires scrambling, for it is rocky and boggy. I bade the boatmen remain with the boat, to rest and refresh themselves, and went forward, and in a few minutes stood on the side of Coruisk.

I was foolish enough, considering what I knew, to feel a moment's disappointment at the smallness of the cupful of water. But it was only for a moment. And then I stood entranced by the scene before me. Subsequent examination and reflection were necessary for the details, but its general character was understood and felt at once. The sunless darkness of the water, the precipitousness of the two sides and of the upper end, the hardness of their material, consisting almost entirely of large plates of smooth rock, from which all turf, if there ever was any, has been torn by the torrents; the dark pinnacles, the silence, deepened rather than diminished by the sound of a solitary stream,—above all, the solitude,—inspired a feeling of awe rather than of solemnity. No mind can resist this impression. Every prospect and every object is excluded, except what are held within that short and narrow valley; and within that there is nothing except the little loch, towered over by the high and grisly forms of these storm-defying and man-despising mountains.

On withdrawing one's mind from the passive impression of this singular piece of savage wildness, and looking to particulars, I could not help being certain that the lake was not three miles long, which some state it to be, and I doubt if it reach even to two. MacCulloch's test, of the time he took to walk round it, is quite fallacious, because the walking strip, extending to about 100 yards in breadth, between the water and the hills, is covered with large rocks and bits of bog, and getting over these (for it is not walking) is difficult and precarious. However, he may be right, for the largeness of the hills makes the water seem smaller. Besides two or three specks—just showing themselves above the water,—there are three islands, seemingly about a quarter of an acre in size, all low and covered with shrubs, heather, or stunted grass. The lake lies from north-west to south-east, which I mention because MacCulloch's description is somewhat confused by his calling its direction from east to west. Each of the hills seems to consist of one stone. They are not rocky mountains, but mountainous rocks. Hence the sharpness into which they have been cut, and hence the large plates, or rather fields, of smooth stone which the two sides exhibit. I need scarcely say that there is no path, no grazing, no human symptom. When it rains the sides must stream with water. But the surfaces are so steep that it soon runs off, and when I was there, there was not a rill either to be heard or seen; except one, which ran down an open grassy slope on the east side of the lake towards the lower end. The hills enclosing the upper end may, on being examined, be found to be not at all semicircular, or to have any approach to that form, but as seen either from the sea or Coruisk, they seemed to be curved inwards, and part of the seclusion of the place appeared to be owing to their doing so.

Some things are stated which misled me, because they are not correct. It is not the fact that the loch is set in a frame of actually perpendicular rock, like a wall, and that hence it has never been approached by even a shepherd's foot except from the sea. The hills may, *in one sense*, be called walls, and they are very *steep*. But they are not *perpendicular*, and have *no wall-like appearance*. They are not steeper than the turfy hills forming the left bank of the River Awe, on which I saw sheep browsing very comfortably last September. It is the hardness, not their steepness, that makes the access difficult. Yet, hard though they be, I thought I saw places where even I could have found my way out; and Mackinnon assures me that the shepherds find their way in by the hills, whenever it is necessary. At the open and grassy slope a horseman might trot both up and down, at least in so far as steepness is concerned.

Then it is said that there is no vegetable life. Scott won't admit either mosses or heathbells. This may be fair enough in a fancy piece, but it is bad in a portrait. There is abundance both of mosses and of heather. I picked up about a dozen of the ordinary wild-flowers of Scotch hills and valleys. The sweet gale or bog myrtle is in profusion; MacCulloch makes the islands shine "with the brightness of emeralds." This, to be sure, is on the flat, but even on the "solid wall," as MacCulloch calls the steep hills, there are thousands of fissures, and generally where there is a fissure there is accumulated rubbish, and where this is there will be vegetable life, and so there is here. There are also hollows on the islands.

These exaggerations are unnecessary for this place; enough of stern sterility and of calm defiance remains.

After lingering over the solitude for above an hour, it being now three, and other four hours' rowing before us, I withdrew from a scene which far less than an hour was sufficient to comprehend, and which once comprehended, there was no danger of forgetting. So turning backwards and descending, a few steps, what had given me Coruisk, deprived me of it—suddenly and utterly—and we proceeded homeward bound.

As our bark receded from the shore, the Cuillins stood out again, and the increased brilliancy of the sun cast a thousand lights over Scavaig, and over all its associated islands, and promontories, and bays. The eastern side of everything was dark, while the opposite sides shone more intensely in front of the evening sun. One horn of the curved Cuillins, though quite clear, seemed almost black, while the opposite horn was blazing. The dark side of Rum was towards me, but its outlines, like all the other shaded summits, were made distinct by the glow behind them. And as far as the eye could reach, bright spots, especially light-touched rocks, attracted it; and almost the whole line of wall by which the eastern shores of everything but Scavaig were barriered was gleaming in the distance. It was a glorious scene.

I should feel it as a sort of sacrilege to prefer, or even to compare

anything to the Firth of Clyde. But one great difference between the sources of its beauty and that of Scavaig was forcibly impressed upon me. How much does Clyde owe to human association, to culture, to seats, to villages, to towns, to vessels! The peculiarity of the interest in Scavaig arose from the total absence of all human interference. The scene would have been the same had man not existed.

As we sailed close by the shore of Scavaig and near the point of Slapin, the rowers stopped to point out five huts. It was there, they said, that the drowned fisherman had lived, and where his remains were lying, preparatory to their being interred in a burying-place (not a churchyard) about two miles off, next day. I thought of Steenie, and felt as if I were ashamed of enjoying an evening which was probably closing so bitterly over these poor hovels.

On coasting along Slapin again we found the many herds of nice, clean, free goats we had shouted to in the morning almost all in the same nooks. And I was even more satisfied than before, that if the people would but examine the innumerable openings in that line of rock, instead of one spar cave, they would probably find several.

We landed at half-past six, and found the carriage waiting.

The only error of this day's work, but it was a material one, consisted in my mode of returning. I ought to have been directed to go from Coruisk up Glen Sligachan, and to have slept at Sligachan, nine miles from Coruisk and sixteen from Broadford. This could have been done either by walking the nine miles, or by getting a pony sent to a place occupied by a Mr Macmillan, near Coruisk, and the carriage should have met me at Sligachan. The walk or ride down the glen would have shown me the whole of the Cuillins. Mackinnon (called Corry here) says he did not advise this, because after what I did see, the rest is immaterial. But he was clearly wrong.

Another mistake was in not letting me know till this forenoon, when it was near church-time, that there was a view from the high, but very accessible hill hard by, of almost all Skye. A "red Lord," as it seems the Skye Erse calls the Justiciary Judges, would not abstain from church in so small and noticing a place, but I was told I could ascend after it came out; and when it did come out—being three—I had no time. So I lost my view.*

1849.

The Rev. Thomas Grierson spent a week in Skye in 1849. He left Glasgow on the 28th August, at 6 A.M., in the "Pioneer," and got to Oban by the Crinan Canal the same evening. From Oban he sailed in the "Tartar," and

* "Circuit Journeys," pp. 114-127.

arrived at Broadford the next morning. He visited the Spar Cave and Loch Scavaig, and says of Coruisk :—

On landing [at Scavaig] we soon found ourselves, after a rocky scramble, on the margin of Loch Corruisk, without exception the most terrific scene I ever witnessed. . . . Some of us scrambled nearly to the upper end of the loch, two miles off, after which, and settling with our boatmen, my friend and I set off for Sligachan, while the rest of the party returned in the boat. From Loch Corruisk the ascent is very abrupt, over a spur of the Coolins, which we crossed opposite to Lot-o'-Corry; and let any man visit that scene; if he be really anxious to witness the sternest and most impressive that Scotland can boast. The rocks, which are completely naked, are very dark and metallic-looking, their surface being incrustated with crystals, which occasionally glance vividly in the rays of the sun; and there are huge blocks here and there, placed in the most singular positions. From this dark den issues the stream that reaches the sea almost a mile below the inn at Sligachan. The whole of this glen is magnificent; but, there being next to no track, and night fast approaching, we had some difficulty in finding our way to the inn, where we arrived between nine and ten, considerably indebted to the moon. . . .

The Spar Cave, Loch Corruisk, Glen Sligachan, the Storr and Quirang are the main objects worthy of attention; and if I were to particularise which of all these interested us most, I would decidedly say Loch Corruisk. It is the most sequestered and inaccessible of all Scottish lochs. Dark, deep, and desolate, it reflects the lofty Coolins from their highest pinnacles down to the very water's edge. In this pellucid mirror "auld Nature's sturdiest bairns" may survey their dingy charms from head to foot. But in storms and tempest, when foaming cataracts dash from the precipices, when the forked lightning darts from the splintered crevices, and a thousand echoes reverberate the crash of thunder, what imagination can conceive a more tremendous scene? The powerful pencils of Turner and Horatio M'Culloch have indeed been splendidly employed in delineation, but as they could not be actually present in the elemental strife, many features of it must have been omitted or misrepresented. In crossing over from the head of the loch to the source of the Sligachan, the tourist may safely assert that he has witnessed a scene unrivalled in Her Majesty's dominions. . . . M'Culloch and others have stated that many of them [the Coolins] have not and cannot be climbed; and very probably when M'Culloch wrote his tour, no one excepting shepherds had ever been among them; but I have the best authority (the ministers of Strath and Portree) for asserting that an active, cautious, persevering pedestrian, may, without imminent danger, reach all the highest points of the Coolins.*

* Grierson's "Autumnal Rambles," 3rd ed., pp. 142 and 158.

1857.

Charles Fraser-Mackintosh relates in "Antiquarian Notes," Second Series, 1897, p. 281, that

"upwards of forty years ago I had occasion to visit the Outer and Inner Hebrides on legal business. . . . By the time Kyleakin Ferry was crossed it was dark, and then the weary drive to Broadford towards Portree was intolerable. The day had been wet all along from Dingwall, and the evening in Skye pitch dark. Next day, however, broke beautifully, and I resolved to take the opportunity of visiting the Spar Cave and Coruisk, and to rejoin the main road at Sligachan. The drive up Strathwordill was delightful, and so was the sail from Loch Slappin, by the cave, and to Loch Scavaig. . . . I have seen Coruisk since, and been more impressed with its grim surroundings than by the loch itself. Some days afterwards, at a dinner table in Stornoway, an English woman with some literary pretensions said that it resembled a huge ink-pot—a simile I have never forgotten."

1859.

C. R. Weld spent a holiday in Skye in 1859, and the following extracts are taken from his "Two Months in the Highlands," published in 1860. He was a member of the Alpine Club from July 1859-1868, his qualification being that he was author of "The Pyrenees East and West." He was also at one time the Secretary of the Royal Society.

The day after my arrival [at Sligachan] was Sunday, and although the weather was as bad as can be conceived, I contrived, in the spirit of hoping and enduring all things, to get through the day. Twice, availing myself of the retreat of the storm blasts in the gorges of the hills, I went out, but had scarcely walked a hundred yards from the house when the enemy was down upon me with a fury that sent me reeling back to the hotel. . . . You will perhaps wonder why I should remain so long in such gloomy quarters. The answer is easy. The Cuchullin Hills and their lakes are the great lions of Skye, and it was to see these that I was principally induced to visit that island. . . . On the third morning my prospects brightened. . . . I mounted a pony, and accompanied by a guide started for Camasunary, from whence I purposed taking a boat to Loch Scavaig. . . . The farmer [at Camasunary] is proprietor of one small boat which fortunately I found disengaged, and hiring it and four men, I left my pony in charge of the guide and embarked for Loch Scavaig. . . . My boatmen landed me near the mouth of a river that dashes brawling into the bay, and assuring me that I could not miss the way to Loch Coruisk,

I started for the famous lake. . . . When I had completed the circuit of Loch Coruisk, I sat down where I could take in the vast sweep of dark precipices overhanging the lake. The clouds, here never or rarely at rest, were drifting grandly amidst the serrated peaks, which towered aloft like huge distorted cathedral spires. Not a living thing was visible, and, in striking contrast to the motion above, the bosom of the dark lake was dead and still. [Next day he made the ascent of Sgurr na Stri. Of this he says,] I was the more delighted at the success of my enterprise because the idea of ascending this peak was all my own; neither friend nor guide-book having given me a hint respecting its great advantages as an eyrie. . . . Now, turning to the north, and sweeping the horizon from east to west, what do we see? Peaks and pinnacles, jagged crests and fantastic outlines; a wilderness of weird shapes, dark, solemn, and awful. Giant Sgor-na-Gillian is there, the monarch of the Cuchullins; and hear it, brother members of the Alpine Club, another peak a little to the south, laid down by enterprising Captain Wood on the Admiralty chart as being 3,212 feet high and *inaccessible*. At a recent meeting of this club the excellent president drew the attention of the members to certain peaks of continental mountains deemed inaccessible, but here, according to the Admiralty surveyor, is one in the British Islands never trodden by the foot of man. Surely some bold member of the Club will scale this Skye peak ere long, and tell us that it was but a stroll before breakfast. [This pinnacle was not climbed till 1880, when Messrs Pilkington made the first ascent.]

Other books and magazine articles have appeared relating to Skye and the Coolins, of which the following is a list:—

- A Summer in Skye, by Alex. Smith, 1865.
 The Hebrid Isles, by Robert W. Buchanan, new ed., 1883.
 The Ancient Volcanoes of Britain, by Sir Archibald Geikie. 2 vols., 1897.
 Malcolm Ferguson. Rambles in Skye, 1883.
 The History and Traditions of the Isle of Skye, by Alexander Cameron, Solicitor, Lochmaddy, 1871.
 MacCaskill, Lady A. Twelve Days in Skye. 2nd ed., 1852.
 Alpine Journal, XIII., p. 433. The Black Coolins, by C. Pilkington.
 „ XV., p. 422. The Rocky Mountains of Skye, by Clinton Dent.
 Scotsman, June and July 1872. Some Notes on Skye, by Alex. Nicolson. Three papers.
 Good Words, 1875. The Island of Skye, by Alex. Nicolson.
 „ 1894. A Legend of Skye, by G. E. Wyatt.
 Blackwood's Magazine, 1859. How we went to Skye.
 „ „ 1862. A Skye Lark.

- Blackwood's Magazine, 1889. Camped Out under the Coolins, by Col. Pilkington White.
- Cornhill Magazine, 1895. Sligachan and the Coolins.
- The Royal Physical Society Proceedings, 1886. The Birds of Skye, by Rev. H. A. Macpherson.
- The Royal Physical Society Proceedings, 1897. The Age of the Earth, by J. G. Goodchild.
- The Cairngorm Journal—
- Vol. I., Sgurr nan Gillean, by W. Tough.
 - „ Hill Climbing in Skye, by Professor Adamson.
 - „ Three Days in Skye, by David Crombie.
 - „ Sgurr Dearg and the Inaccessible Peak, by W. Tough.
- Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal—
- Vol. I., Three Days among the Cuchullins, by W. W. Naismith.
 - „ Sgurr Alasdair, by Charles Pilkington.
 - Vol. II., A Day in the Cuillins, by A. E. Maylard.
 - „ Skye and Sgurr nan Gillean in 1865, by Alex. Nicolson.
 - „ On the Height of Some of the Black Cuillins, by J. Norman Collie.
 - „ Easter in the Cuillins, by J. H. Gibson.
 - „ The Pinnacle Route, by W. W. Naismith.
 - „ Sgurr Dearg Pinnacle, by W. Brunskill.
 - „ The Coolins, by W. W. Naismith.
 - Vol. III., Bidean Druim nan Ramh, by W. Tough.
 - „ Accident in the Coolins.
 - „ Bhastier and Bhastier Tooth, by F. W. Jackson.
 - Vol. IV., Clach Glas, Skye, by F. W. Jackson.
 - „ Sgurr Dubh, Skye, by W. Douglas.
 - „ The Coolins in 1896, by W. Brown.
 - „ A Chuilionn, by Norman Collie.
 - „ Gars Bheinn, by J. Rennie.
 - Vol. V., The Climbers' Camp at Coruisk, by W. Douglas.
 - „ August at Sligachan, by C. B. Gibbs.
- Royal Society Transactions, 1888. History of Volcanic Action in Britain.
- Field—A Day's Hill Climbing in Skye, 5th October 1895.
Three Days' Climbing in Skye, 16th November 1895.
- Graphic, 13th August 1898.
- Ferdinand Zirkel, Geologische Skizzen von der Westküste Schottlands [Zeitschrift der Deutschen Geologischen Gesellschaft, 1871, vol. xxiii., pp. 1-124.]
- Temple Bar, September 1883, vol. lxi., p. 75. Notes of a Wanderer in Skye.
- Temple Bar, June 1883, vol. lxxviii., p. 276. Skye: An Account of a Winter Ascent of Bruach na Frithe (in January).
- Household Words, April 1852, vol. v., p. 98. A Clouded Skye.
- St James' Magazine, 1866, vol. xv., p. 495; and vol. xvi., p. 78. Three Weeks in Skye, by James Leitch.

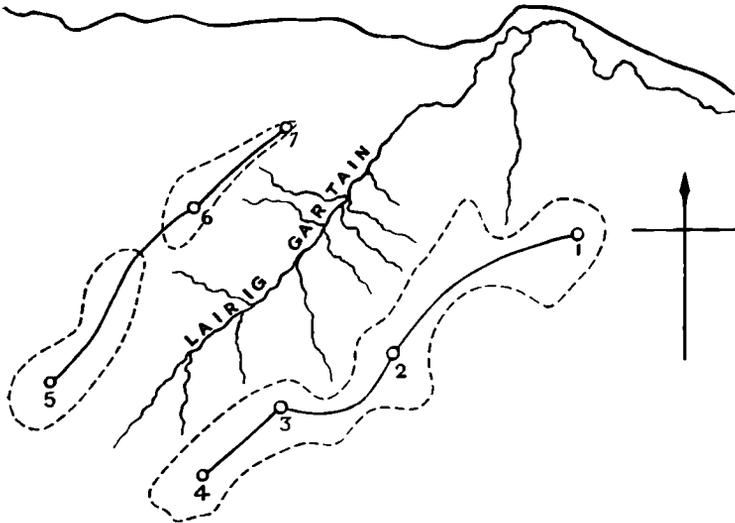
THE BUCHAILLES OF ETIVE.
(SHEPHERDS OF ETIVE.)

BY J. H. BELL.

Beuchaille Etive's furrowed visage
To Schihallion looked sublime,
O'er a wide and wasted desert
Old and unreclaimed as time.

—PRINCIPAL SHAIRP.

THIS group of mountains lies in the angle between
Glencoe* and Glen Etive. It has two nearly parallel



THE BUCHAILLES OF ETIVE.

Scale one inch to mile. Dotted line shows 2,500 feet contour.

ridges called the Buchaille Etive Mor and the Buchaille
Etive Beag.

* Quite strictly Glencoe (the valley of the Coe river) does not begin till the watershed is reached, four miles from Kingshouse; but by custom the whole valley from Loch Leven side to the Moor of Rannoch is called "Glencoe."

The highest point of the group lies in the apex of the angle between the glens, and the ridge of the Buchaille Etive Mor runs from it for about three miles parallel to Glen Etive. The ridge of the Buchaille Etive Beag lies about one and a half miles to the west. It is separated from the higher ridge by a deep valley, the Lairig Gartain. To the west of the Buchaille Etive Beag there is another deep valley, the Lairig Eilde, through which there is a path from Dalness in Glen Etive to Meannarclach in Glencoe (4 miles, col 1,650 feet). There are seven peaks in the group:—

BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR.

1. Stob Dearg (red peak), summit of Buchaille Etive Mor, 3,345 feet.
2. Stob na Doire (peak of the copse), 3,250 feet.
3. Stob Coire Altruim (peak of the corrie of the sanctuary), 3,065 feet.
4. Stob na Broige (peak of the shoes), 3,120 feet.

BUCHAILLE ETIVE BEAG.

5. Stob Dubh (black peak), summit of Buchaille Etive Beag, 3,129 feet.
6. Stob Coire Raineach (peak of the corrie of the ferns), 3,029 feet.
7. Stob nan Cabar (peak of the antlers), 2,547 feet.

Centre.—Kingshouse Inn is practically the only place from which to ascend these mountains. Either ridge may be traversed easily from Dalness, and a descent made to Glencoe, but Dalness must be reached from Kingshouse, except in the season when the Loch Etive steamer is on, and as that part of the group is deer forest, an ascent cannot be made in the summer time from Dalness.

It is possible to ascend from the Clachaig Inn, in Glencoe, but there are six miles of road to cover before taking to the hill.

Kingshouse Inn is sixteen miles from Ballachulish, on

Loch Linnhe, and thirteen miles from Bridge of Orchy Station on the West Highland Railway.

In the season the coaches between Loch Etive and Ballachulish pass within one mile of the inn. A trap can be ordered, by letter to Inveroran Inn, to meet the train at Bridge of Orchy. In the winter a letter addressed to Kingshouse takes an uncertain time to be delivered.

View.—Stob Dearg is the dominating peak of the group, and in every respect one of the finest mountains in Scotland. It is generally called by the name of the whole ridge—Buchaille Etive Mor. It rises without any intervening minor heights in one steep slope from the great plateau of the Moor of Rannoch. To the moor it presents a grand cone of broken black rock. The finest views are to be had in the early morning, when the level rays of the sun stretch across the moor and light the eastern face of the mountain. The strong points of the view from the summit are the wide expanse of the Moor of Rannoch, and glimpses of Loch Leven and Loch Linnhe to the north and the south of the Bidean nan Bian *massif*.

The mountain prospect, though very extensive, is somewhat monotonous, as none of the nearer mountains have from this point of view any striking character or shape. From a rather lower height, for instance from the col between Stob Dearg and Stob na Doire, the Bidean nan Bian *massif* shows a fine bold outline, particularly if silhouetted on the evening sky.

From Stob na Broige, though much that is seen from the higher peak is lost, a full-length view of Loch Etive is gained.

During an ascent of the east face the grand rock ridges in the foreground add immensely to the view.

Usual Routes.—Any of the peaks of the group may be ascended in almost any direction without serious climbing, except Stob Dearg on its east and north sides.

To ascend Stob Dearg, avoiding the cliff, follow the Glencoe road for three miles, from Kingshouse to Altna-

feadh—cross the Coupall River by a footbridge,* and strike up into the corrie opposite (Coire nan Tulachan). After a somewhat rough scramble up the corrie the ridge will be reached, about half a mile to the west of the summit, and at a height of 2,900 feet. There is no difficulty in following the ridge to the summit. In descending, return to this col, and the route can be then varied by going down on the Glen Etive side by Corrie Cloiche Finne, or the walk may be continued over the other peaks of the ridge.

The way down by Corrie Cloiche Finne cannot be missed, but the corrie is a particularly rough one.

If the walk is continued along the ridge, about two hours from Stob Dearg will be found easy time to reach Stob na Broige. Another two hours' easy going will take one down to the Lairig Gartain (1,600 feet) and up again to the summit of Stob Dubh. The descent to Glencoe may then be made along the ridge of Buchaille Etive Beag in about two more hours.

Climbs.—The formidable appearance of the great eastern cliff of Stob Dearg long protected it, and it was not till March 1894 that a very strong party, Messrs Collie, Solly, and Collier, made the first recorded ascent. Since then nearly a dozen different routes have been found, several of which present no serious difficulty. The face is so much broken up, and so much variation is possible, that most of the climbs are rather interesting scrambles among grand rock scenery than definite climbing problems. The huge rock buttress called the "Crowberry Ridge" is an exception, and for about 600 feet it is a very strictly defined climb.

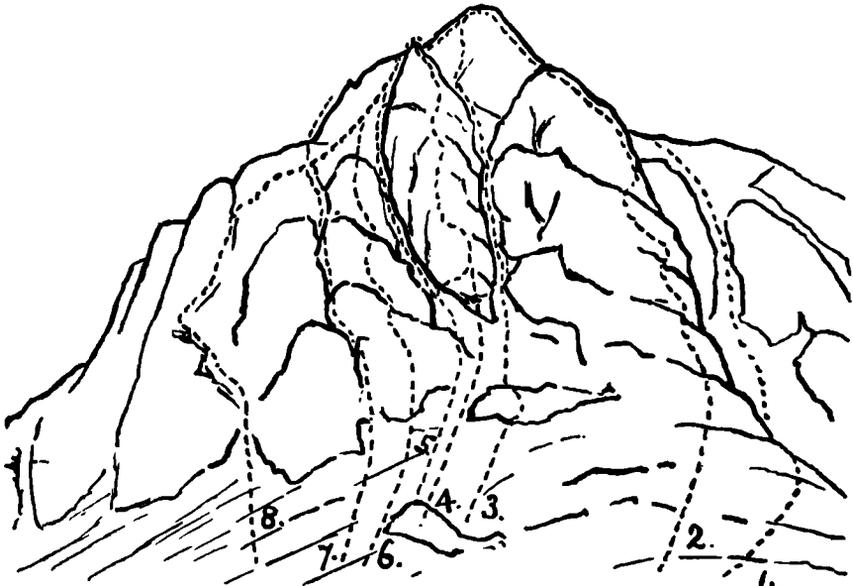
Many variations of and connections between the routes described below will no doubt be found possible.

The limits of the cliff are well defined—on the N.E. by a broad and deep gully extending the whole height of the rocks, and on the S.E. by a gully which has been called the "Chasm," from the great ravine which it forms low down on the face of the mountain.

* Climbers going to the east face should note that when the burns are in spate the Coupall River can only be crossed by this footbridge or by the bridge on the Glen Etive road.

The climbs are enumerated below in order, from the N.E. to the S.E., and may be identified from the accompanying diagrams :—

1. *Gully A : The Great Gully.*—This gully has been frequently ascended. There is no record of its first ascent. Often in winter it is quite filled up with snow, and becomes a walk. In summer time it is not so easy. There are numerous pitches, and at one place “a hundred feet of wet rock



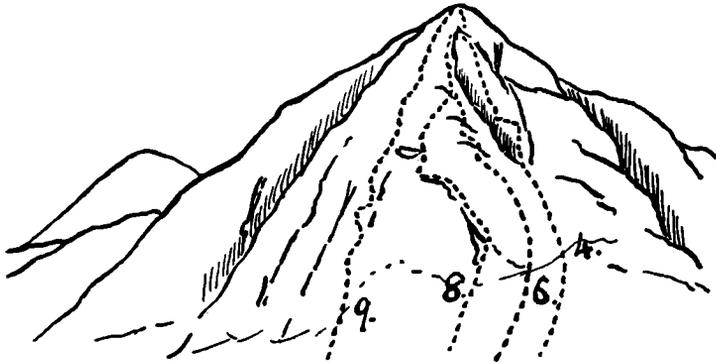
BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR. N.E. FACE.

1. Gully A : The Great Gully. 2. The Northern Buttress. 3. Gully B. 4. The Crowberry Ridge. 5. Gully C : The Easy Gully. 6. The Curved Ridge. 7. Gully D. 8. The Central Buttress.

garnished with watercresses and other aquatic plants” has to be passed. Under thin snow the gully has been found difficult, and might become very difficult.

2. *The Northern Buttress.*—This is the huge rounded buttress on the east of the Great Gully. It was first ascended by Messrs Brown, Rose, and Tough, July 1895. Their route kept close to the gully, and is described as not difficult.

3. *Gully B.*—Ascended by Messrs Green and Raeburn, April 1898. It is possible to get out of the gully at several places on the west side and traverse on to the northern buttress. On the east side the gully is overhung through most of its length by the great wall of the Crowberry Ridge, and if the gully proper be followed close to this wall it gives a fine climb. Messrs Green and Raeburn had a good deal of difficulty in passing one pitch, and at the very highest fork in the gully they were obliged to take the branch farthest from the Crowberry Ridge. They are of opinion that the snow in the gully helped them a good deal, and would expect to find several very formidable pitches in summer.



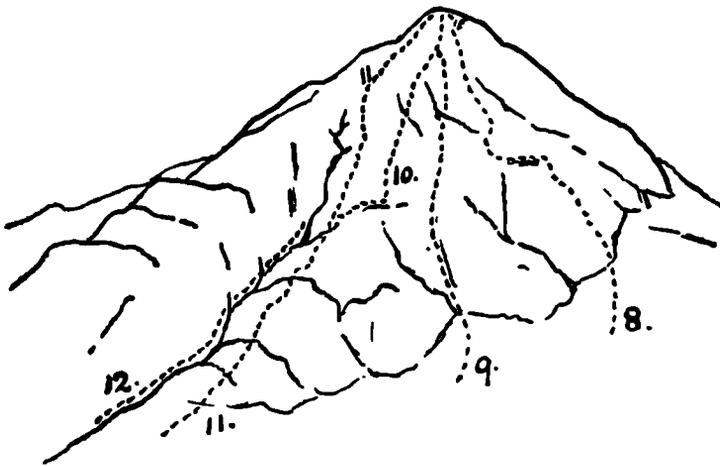
BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR.
From Kingshouse Inn.

4. The Crowberry Ridge. 6. The Curved Ridge. 8. The Central Buttress.
9. Collie's Climb.

4. *The Crowberry Ridge.*—In many ways the best climb yet found on the mountain. First ascended by Messrs Douglas and Naismith, August 1896, and described by Mr Naismith in the *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. IV., p. 151. He says there: "Both sides of the ridge are sheer walls . . . at the lower end also the rocks which form the crest of the ridge are nearly unbroken for 300 feet . . . To the right of the high cliff the rocks slope upwards more gently, abutting against the loftier portion of the ridge like a lean-to shed against a higher building. . . . A shallow gully or groove

that ran up the middle of the lower rocks evidently offered the best prospect of success." Starting in this groove the climbing is interesting and fairly difficult for about 350 feet, till the crest of the ridge is reached—after that it is easy. The ridge ends in a fine tower of rock, connected to the summit rocks of the mountain by a small grassy ridge. This "Crowberry Tower," which is a very prominent object on the mountain, has been ascended in three ways:—

(1.) From the narrow neck connecting the "Tower" to the summit rocks of the mountain. (2.) From the Crow-



BUCHAILLE ETIVE MOR. S.E. FACE.

From Glen Etive Road, one-third of a mile below the Bridge.

8. The Central Buttress. 9. Collie's Climb. 10. Chasm—Crowberry Traverse.
11. Chasm North Wall Climb. 12. The Chasm.

berry Ridge. (3.) By its eastern face. Climbers ascending the mountain by any of the routes 5, 6, 7, 8, approach the "Tower" from the east, and its direct ascent gives a very steep climb of about 100 feet, ending in a vertical chimney 40 feet high.

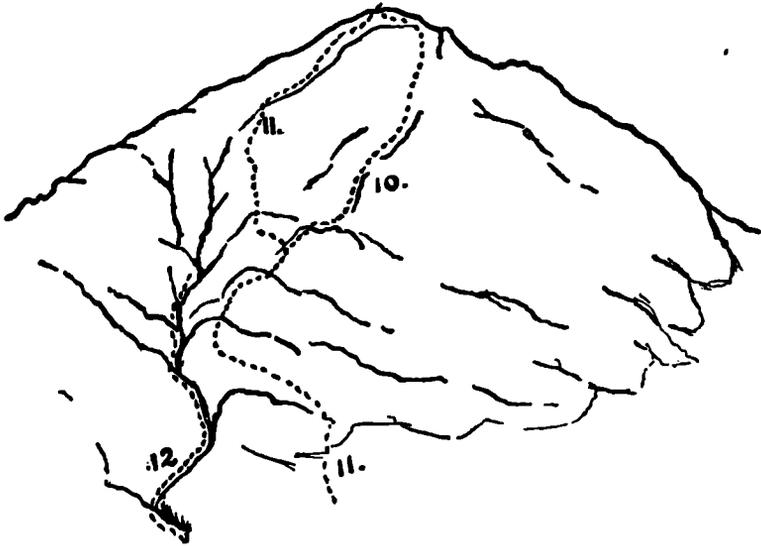
An easy traverse off the Crowberry Ridge can be made below the "Tower," on the east side, to the head of the "Easy Gully."

5. *Gully C: The Easy Gully.*—Descended April 1898, in snow, by Messrs Glover and Napier. They were without

ice-axes, and the gully is steep enough to need very careful going. The next day a party with ice-axes glissaded down the gully.

6. *The Curved Ridge*.—Ascended by Mr G. B. Gibbs, July 1896, and described by him as quite easy, and as “a kind of staircase with occasional landings and plenty of choice.”

7. *Gully D*.—Ascended by Messrs Collinson and Glover, April 1898. One pitch near the top gave some trouble,



BUCHAILLE ETIVE CHASM.

From Glen Etive Road, three-fourths of a mile below the Bridge.

10. Chasm—Crowberry Traverse. 11. Chasm North Wall Climb. 12. The Chasm.

and again, as in Gully B, the climbers thought that they were helped a good deal by the snow.

8. *The Central Buttress*.—Ascended April 1898, by Messrs Bell, Higginbotham, and Napier. Directly in a line towards the summit, looking from Kingshouse Inn, there is a great cliff which has been called the “Central Buttress.” The face of the cliff is broken rather more than half-way up by a heathery ledge. This ledge can be reached by a tongue of heather and broken rock on the right (N.) of

the precipitous lower cliff of the buttress. A traverse can then be easily made across the face of the cliff to a point where a small stream plunges over for a long slide down the steep lower rocks of the buttress. Then following generally the line of the stream, the upper rocks of the "Curved Ridge" will be reached.

The Central Buttress is at an angle in the cliff. From the Great Gully (A) to the Central Buttress the cliffs face generally to the north of east, beyond the Central Buttress they face to the south of east.

9. *Collie's Climb.*—This route is interesting, as it is the way by which the eastern face was first ascended, and also because it takes the cliffs at nearly their highest point, and almost in a straight line from Kingshouse to the summit. This part of the cliff is not furrowed by deep gullies as the N.E. section of the cliff is, so that it is difficult to define any particular route. Dr Collie says, "The climb was fairly easy throughout, and affords a pleasant rock scramble that can be varied to the right or left, just as one pleases." Looking from Kingshouse a rib of rock may be seen a little to the left of the Central Buttress. The climb starts in a shallow gully just on the left of this rib, then mounts on to the rib, and then slants slightly to the right towards the summit. When there is snow on the mountain it is not difficult to pick out the ribs and gullies, but in the summer time all this part of the face has one uniform, sombre, and precipitous appearance.

10. *The Chasm—Crowberry Traverse.*—Ascended April 1898, by Messrs Collinson and Glover.

11. *The Chasm North Wall Climb.*—First ascended, December 1895, by Messrs Bell, M'Gregor, J. Napier, and G. Napier.

12. *The Chasm.*—Not yet completely ascended.

The "Chasm" is really the only well-defined object on this part of the mountain, and is the key to all the remaining climbs which have been done. The climber who skirts to the south, along the foot of the rocks, will suddenly find himself stopped by this remarkable gorge. If the north wall of the gorge is ascended for a short distance a traverse (10) can then be made diagonally across and up the face of the

mountain towards the Crowberry Tower, or (11) the ascent of the north wall of the "Chasm" can be continued. For this climb only one direction is needed, "Keep the gully close on the left." A bold detached pinnacle of rock will be surmounted on the way. Under favourable conditions neither of these routes presents any difficulty.

After deep fresh snow in November 1895, the latter was found impracticable, and six weeks later, on the last day of December, quite sufficiently difficult. Up to the present time there is a record of only one attempt to ascend the bed of the "Chasm" itself (*S.M.C.J.*, Vol. V., p. 131).

"The party on this occasion only reached a height of 1,850 feet. The climbing begins at a height of 1,100 feet (only 300 feet above Kingshouse Inn). They were five on the rope, which made the going slow, but they were climbing with one short interval for six hours. The weather had been dry for more than a week, and indeed it is doubtful whether any progress could be made in the gully except under the best conditions, as the route often lay up the watercourse. Just at the place where the party stopped a very striking couloir branches out of the gully on the north, and in the gully itself, just above them, was a pitch of really terrific aspect approaching 100 feet in height. It will certainly prove a very tough obstacle, and may be impassable in the direct route. It can be turned by climbing out of the gully on the south wall, and back beyond the pitch." Climbing in the "Chasm" suffers from the usual discomforts of gully climbing, but even up to the point reached it gives a lot of good climbing, and if it can be completed it will be an exceptionally long and interesting climb.

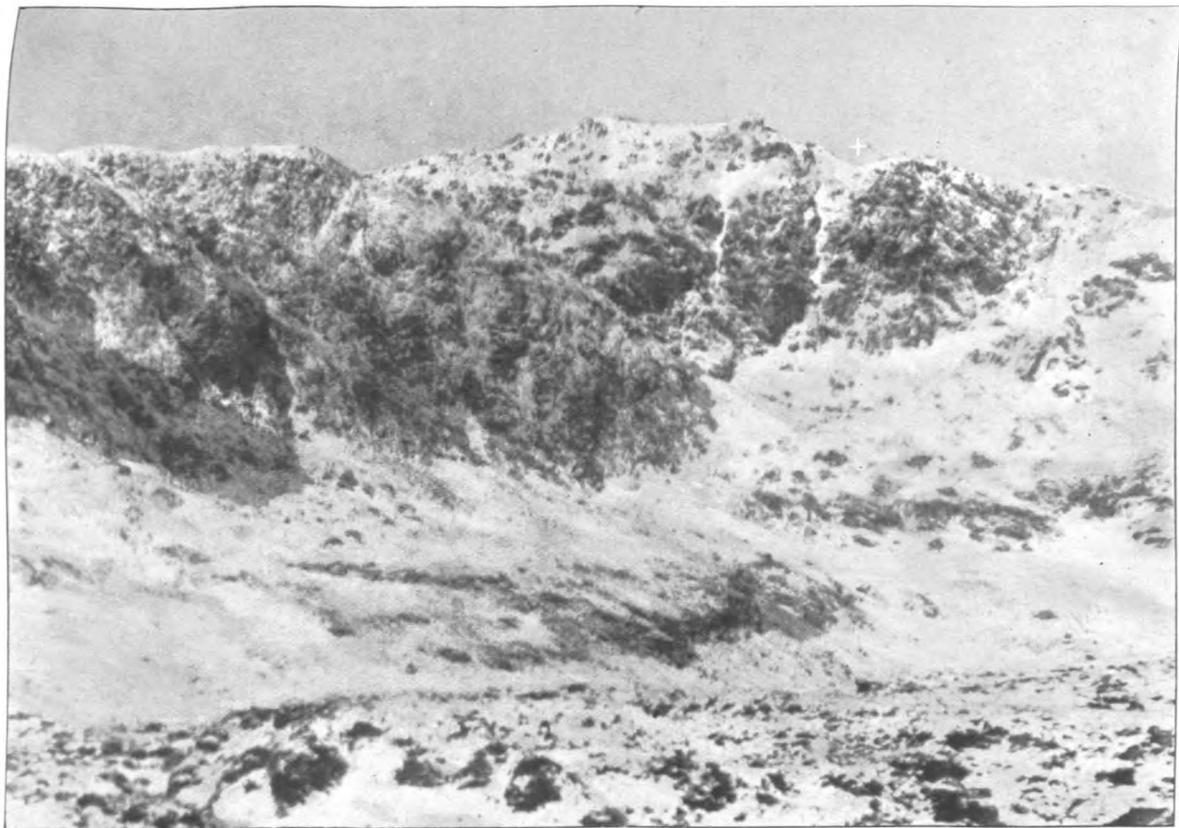
To the man who is about to climb the Buchaille for the first time I recommend the "Crowberry Ridge" as combining rock climbing sufficiently difficult to be interesting, with the pleasing sensations of climbing on a well-defined and precipice-sided ridge. If he wants a rather easier climb I would suggest any of the routes 6, 8, 9; while I recommend the "Chasm" to the man who wants a long and severe rock climb, salted with that uncertainty as to the issue which is needed for the perfection of mountaineering as a sport.

Whatever the route he take, if he be favoured with a fine day, it will be strange indeed if in the evening he does not feel pleased with himself and all around him—the lonely and comfortable inn, the great moor, with the fresh wind ever blowing over it, and the grand rocky hill.

A WINTER CLIMB ON THE TARMACHAN
CLIFFS.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

IT was an act of faith when J. G. Inglis and the writer started for Killin on 29th December 1898. The weather was changeable, and a raw drizzle only seemed to forecast uncomfortable conditions. As the iron steed, however, hurried us past Falkirk, the fast waning light disclosed a clear sky through a rift in the heavy clouds, and by the time Dunblane was reached, the stars shone brightly above. At Lochearnhead our eager glances descried the slopes of Ben Vorlich sprinkled with snow to perhaps a thousand feet from the loch, and the railway sleepers bore testimony to the hardness of the frost. No wonder then that our spirits rose, and that after satisfactorily refreshing the inner man at Killin Hotel, we could not refrain, even with slippered feet, from sauntering out, in the crisp starlight, to gaze on the snowy Tarmachans, the hope of the morrow. Man's hopes are not always doomed to disappointment, the pessimists notwithstanding; and furtive glances at the moon through a chink in the shutter led on with confidence to the early breakfast before seven o'clock. We were soon afoot, for though our plans were quite indefinite, and no heroic climb in store for us, we were bent on enjoyment, the pleasure that needs leisure and time for its full fruition. Besides, there were two camera fiends in our party, and as these are currently credited with adding 100 per cent. to the length of a journey, no day could be too long for us. Prior to last year the Tarmachans were a mere name to us, and had it not been for the experiences of Messrs Lawson, Raeburn, and Russell, as disclosed in last May number of the *Journal*, we would have been doing our duty at Tyndrum, where the powers had ordained our meet. But we were now "on the loose," and the Tarmachans were ours, or so much as we chose to appropriate, and as the moon looked down on us from the western heavens, our fancy now turned to Creag na Caillich and now to the



TARMACHAN CLIFFS, EAST FACE.

From a Photo by Dr Inglis Clark.

cliffs of Tarmachan itself. After several oscillations, we finally took the road to the right at Bridge of Lochay, and struck up the hillside by the first burn on our left hand. It was still dark, and as we crackled our way over bracken or rush, the upturned roots of many a forest king lent a weird aspect to the scene, and recalled the great storms of some years back. We were anxious to secure a favourable vantage point for the sunrise, and therefore sloped upwards gently towards the east to where a wider stretch of devastated forest disclosed the snowy ridges of Meall Chuirn on the right, the partly frozen surface of Loch Tay on the left, and the twinkling lights of Killin far below.

At last the car of Phæbus overshot the eastern horizon, and the snow-fields above were suffused with a glorious rosy light. The effect reminded me of that sunrise on Ben Nevis a year before, but the outlook was more circumscribed and the surroundings less imposing. Crossing the dyke which walls off the moor, we had good cause to bless the cold, as the bogs were well frozen, and progress easy and rapid. In the clear atmosphere every crack of Creag na Caillich lay before us, but we hankered after the Tarmachan cliffs, and passing northward, turned the ridge which slopes down gently from Meall Garbh, and were in sight of our goal. Here, extending for half a mile or more, was an attractive ridge of precipitous rocks, divided occasionally by more or less easy bealachs, and promising good sport. To the left, at the southern end, a well-marked knob, showing its steepness by the blackness of its rocks, offered good work, but as the cold was intense, we judged that difficult rock climbing was not for us that day. Our eyes wandered instinctively past several rocky buttresses to where a central part rose higher than the rest, and two narrow snowy gullies, starting nearly from the same point, embraced a central lozenge-shaped face of rock, and merged eventually in the snow-field above. Either of these seemed attractive, but the left-hand branch became rather indefinite among some black rocks which might be overhanging, so that the right one was our choice. Looked at from below it was apparently very steep, and having a vivid remembrance of previous exploits, there was a shadow of doubt

as to its feasibility. Making our way up to the base of the rocks, we roped at 1 P.M.; and at once fell to business, Inglis leading. At the start a steepish pitch of ice covered with powdery snow led to a ticklish corner, where the first obstacle was met with. Here a smooth steep slab on the right joined a vertical block on the left, and rising for about 18 feet, led on to a snow ledge above. In the absence of a good stand for the second man, the leader found considerable difficulty in getting up, and required to use as a step the ice-axe thrust into a crack. Once up, however, the real climb of the gully commenced, and shortly after we changed ends of the rope. From this point every step had to be cut, and patiently too, whether in ice, hard snow, or frozen turf. The angle frequently rose pretty high, where the water had poured and frozen over some projecting block, and progress was slow. At length a warning voice from the second man drew attention to approaching sunset, and not being desirous of gaining a reputation as a "moonlighter," I traversed on the northern face, and so shortened the ascent. We reached the top of the gully just as the last rays of the sun were tipping Tarmachan, about 3.30 P.M., and estimated the height of our climb at perhaps 400 to 500 feet. There to the north-east was Ben Lawers, showing boldly past the nearer peak of Tarmachan; but much though we would have wished to decipher the lineaments of distant mountains, the growing darkness was obdurate, and the summit of Meall Garbh was not yet attained. We found ourselves on the culminating point of a subsidiary ridge named Carn Creag, and separated by a shallow col from Meall Garbh itself. A few minutes brought us to the top of the narrow ridge, and from here the after-glow of the sunset was so glorious that a photograph was secured to serve as a reminiscence in after-years, when rheumatic limbs, or perchance "too, too solid flesh," forbid such experiences. The sun had sunk behind the Ben More group, and was already fast on its way to call another hemisphere to activity, but from the depression occupied by Loch Lomond there arose such a fervid golden light as might have been reflected from some vast cyclopean forge, where the artificers of rocks were

at work. Against this, Ben Lomond, Ben More, and Stobinian, with perhaps Cruach Ardran between, stood boldly up, appearing black by contrast, but still on closer scrutiny showing silvery from the ample folds of snow on their northern face. No cloud portended a coming change, or threatened to rob the twilight of its lingering force, if we except two long horizontal bars of vandyck which stretched from east to west. To the north all was dark, and twinkling stars proclaimed that the day's work must end. Glissading down to our little col, a rapid descent was made in a straight line for Killin, where we arrived at 5.30 P.M., refreshed and elated with our day's outing. From what we saw it is clear that much remains to be done before these finely shaped hills have yielded up their treasures to the climber. In addition to the range of cliffs referred to, there are some steep rocky faces on the south-east face of Tarmachan itself, which are only separated from the Carn Creag cliffs by a sort of bealach, and these will doubtless ere long attract the attention of the members of the S.M.C.

LEUM AN EIRANNAICH AND "ROB ROY'S PUTTING STONE."

BY J. GALL INGLIS.

ON the last evening of the Club Meet at Tyndrum there was some desultory talk around the fire on the subject of the hills lying between Balquhiddier and Luib. One or two members were agreed on the existence of crags in the neighbourhood of Creag MacRànaich, but nothing seemed to be known of them, so at the end of January Inglis Clark and the writer resolved to go up the Kirkton Glen from Balquhiddier, climb the ridge at its head, and traversing the ridge eastwards, return past Creag MacRànaich if time permitted. This route, we expected, would let us see the nature of the rocks indicated on the 1-inch map, with a view to further exploration if any good faces were found.

Taking the early train on the 28th, we were set down at Kingshouse platform about ten o'clock, and after depositing our wraps at the inn, we set off on the two miles' tramp lying between us and Balquhiddier Church. On reaching it, we found the scene so beautiful, and the conditions so perfect, that instead of pressing on, we paid a visit to the historic churchyard to do a little photography, and it was not till about 11.45 that we were ready to start up the Kirkton Glen.

Crossing the stone bridge just S.W. of the church we turned up the rough cart track which leads up the west side of the Kirkton Burn. Presently it crossed a wooden bridge, just below a little waterfall, beautifully crusted with ice, and then struck steeply up the glen for a quarter of a mile until some sheepfolds were reached; it then began to degenerate, and soon was nothing but an indistinct footpath, the course of which, however, was marked at frequent intervals by wooden posts. It is evidently a right of way over to Luib.

We were now able to take a general survey of the glen. On the east the grassy slopes of Meall ant-Seallaidh (2,792 feet) ran northwards for a mile and a quarter end-



LEUM AN EIRANNAICH.

From a Photo by J. Gall Inglis.

ing in a conical hump broken up with patches of rock, called Meall Fiodhain on the 6-inch Survey (2,500 feet contour, 1-inch O.S.). From this hill a long hummocky ridge, also broken up by rock patches, curved round to the west, ending in a fine vertical face slightly to the west of the centre of the glen. Beyond this the ridge was lost to sight behind the steep slope of grass and stones forming the western side of the glen, but it was evident that as far as the Kirkton Glen was concerned, there were no definite rock climbs except at the vertical face already mentioned. This face we resolved to visit although it took us farther to the west than we had originally intended.

We now followed the path up the glen, which is nearly level for about two miles. On ordinary occasions it is probably very wet, but now it was hard frozen. There had evidently been a good deal of rain before the frost set in, and numerous watercourses which had overflowed their banks were now sheets of the glassiest ice on which one was apt to go waltzing helplessly about: this made progress somewhat slow, and it was not till 1.30 that we reached the head slopes of the glen at the point where the burn forks into two branches. Then the climbing began up an easy slope of somewhat powdery snow. The path, now only traceable by the posts, still ran in the direction we wished to go, and we followed it for some time, but at last it began to bear away to the left towards Lochan an Eirannaich, and when we were only a hundred feet or two below our crag we left it, and struck up the hillside till we found ourselves looking up at the scene depicted in the accompanying photograph. So far as we could judge the top would be about 300 feet above us (later on the aneroid showed that it was 400 feet); the rock seemed smooth and slabby, and was free from vegetation except where streaked with snow. Several gullies, very steep, ran up it at various points, and on the south a long curving ridge ran from the foot to the top, affording a rock climb of about 250 to 300 feet. Altogether, it was plain that here was plenty work for the "non-salvationist" members of the S.M.C., and we almost began to regret having spent so much time at Balquhiddy. However, our attention was soon diverted by the rock

streaked with snow seen at the extreme lower left-hand corner of the photograph. No sooner had we gone a hundred yards farther than it resolved itself into the top of an enormous "boulder," or more strictly speaking, fallen rock, and forthwith all thoughts of exploring the cliff vanished for the time being.

After walking round the boulder we estimated that its height would be about 25 to 30 feet, but afterwards with some misgivings raised it to 40 feet, on seeing how small a man's figure looked in comparison. On its N.E. and S.W. faces it was absolutely vertical, or overhanging, nearly the whole way to the top, though several narrow cracks ran up them diagonally. The N.W. side sloped up at an angle of about 50 degrees or more, and seemed comparatively easy, but on nearer inspection the strata (of schist) were found to slope the wrong way, and to offer no holds whatever, so far as the snow permitted the rock to be seen, and it was clear that on that side also attack was useless. The slanting cracks were next examined, but were found to be of too sensational a nature for our liking, and so we came round to the S.E. side, where, though the rock overhung at first, a narrow streak of snow seemed to offer an easy escape from a platform about a third of the way up. On this side, the heather which covered the top of the boulder came some distance down the side. Many attempts were made to reach this platform, but every time we were beaten off, finding it impossible to hang on long enough by one arm to discover holds higher up by which to pull ourselves round the overhanging ledge at the foot. A rope thrown from the eastern side, over a slight projection and down a narrow crack, enabled us to get up a few feet, but after many attempts we found that our time and strength were exhausted, and there was nothing for it but to say *au revoir*, and push on to reach the top of the ridge which lay a short distance to the N.W.

An inviting snow slope about 100 feet high led up to the top of the ridge, but being pressed for time, we made for a place where a good deal of grass seemed to offer a quick and easy route. This, however, proved a delusion: about half-way up it gave place to hard frozen earth and

gravel, on which we had to go carefully. Presently we found ourselves compelled to make short but awkward traverses with only treacherous flaky rock to hold on to: a snow slope to the west proved hard frozen, and it was only after losing a good deal of time that we reached the summit and looked down into the valley of the Dochart. A dreary waste of heather and bog extended to Ben More and Stobinain, which loomed through the afternoon haze: Lochan an Eirannaich lay about a quarter of a mile to the S.W.; close to us, to the east, rose the back of our precipice, a broken face of grass and rocky ledges, easing off into a steep, somewhat broken-up, and snow-covered slope glittering in the sun. We now endeavoured to hasten eastwards towards Creag MacRànaich, but the hillside soon became too steep for safe rapid going in the powdery snow, and we saw that we must return by the way we came. But first we resolved to make a dash for the summit of the precipice, which was accomplished after some floundering in powdery snow-wreaths. On examining the aneroid, it registered 2,250 feet above sea-level, or 400 feet above the boulder, agreeing with the 2,250 feet contour on the 1-inch O.S. We did not linger on the top, for we had overstepped our time, and striking down a snow gully, reached the path we had quitted some hours before. Kingshouse Inn was reached at six o'clock, an hour late, and we sat down to our overdone dinner well satisfied with our day's outing. Our chief regret was the failure to conquer the boulder, but we resolved that we would tackle it another day, and this day came four weeks later.

On examining the 6-inch Survey it was found that the precipice is named *Leum an Eirannaich* (the Irishman's leap).

On the 27th February we again took the early train for Kingshouse, resolved that the boulder must be conquered then or never—by us at any rate! We set out from Kingshouse at 9.55 A.M. On reaching the Kirkton Glen, it was found that all the snow had disappeared save a few patches high up on the ridges. The ground, being only half frozen, was in the best condition for rapid going, and we reached the boulder at twelve o'clock. After fortifying

ourselves with lunch, we went round to try the N.W. side of the boulder first, but found it even more hopeless than on the previous occasion. Not only were there almost no holds, but such as there were broke away in flakes in the hand, and after ascending 10 feet by the aid of a friendly shoulder, the leader felt discretion the better part of valour and came down. An attempt was next made to sling a light rope over the top of the boulder with the aid of a stone, but this proved an ignominious failure, neither of us being able to send the stone more than three-quarters of the way up. Nothing remained but to try the S.E. side once more, and after throwing the rope over the projection, as formerly we delivered our first attack.

Grasping some excellent hand-holds and resting his feet on some sloping slabs underneath an overhanging ledge, the leader pulled himself up a foot or two, and hanging by one arm, back downwards, fumbled about for hand-holds higher up, and strove to get foot or knee into the narrow vertical crack in which the rope lay. This had been found impossible before, but on this occasion a determined effort accomplished it, and then it was easy to get on to the platform. It proved a good deal narrower and steeper than we had expected, and farther progress seemed almost impossible. The easy snow-covered streak we had seen on our last visit proved to be a rounded-off ledge, 6 inches wide, on a vertical face, with nothing but finger-tip holds; moreover, it sloped up at a steep angle. Above the platform rose a smooth, slightly overhanging face or slab of rock about 10 or 12 feet high: a narrow crack appeared on its eastern side, but it was barely wide enough to admit the foot, and it seemed as if we were no nearer success. However, the second man came up, and steadying the leader against the slab, enabled him to work up a few feet, and then throw a rope up the crack and over the slab; supported by this he next got his foot into the crack some distance up, and found an unexpected footing on earth inside, which enabled him to work his way upward with caution, for his position was somewhat sensational. Presently he found that the crack went in behind the slab; some large loose stones were cleared out, revealing hand-

holds behind, and at last his belt was level with the top of the slab, and he could put his hand on the heather, but there he stuck!—the top of the slab was a ledge only 3 inches wide, with a practically vertical slope of heather and moss above it, which rendered it almost impossible for him to rise out of the crack without being thrown off his balance. To add to the difficulty, a thin sharp projecting point of rock stuck out into the top of the crack, and caught in the clothes at the slightest upward movement; the heather was short and springy, and offered no safe grip for either axe or hands, and there the leader was forced to wait for some time, utterly unable to find how to negotiate the last 3 feet. At last in despair he burrowed beneath the vertical bank of heather at the top of the slab if perchance some hand-holds were hidden, and to his surprise found that the rock shelved rapidly downwards. Eagerly the turf was torn away and sent down with scant regard for the man waiting patiently below, and presently a groove 6 inches wide was revealed, into which the knee could be easily got. After much wriggling and kicking of heels in the air in a swimming posture, to work clear of the above-mentioned point of rock, the leader got his foot on a small projection on the outside of the slab; he straightened himself carefully, for there was not much to come and go upon, and next moment he was scrambling up the heather to the top—the boulder was conquered!

The second man now made a partial traverse of the ledge to the left already mentioned, having the support of the rope from above. He reported that the holds were good for at least two-thirds of the way along, and that probably the remainder could also be traversed safely by lassoing a projecting point of rock at the end of the ledge. He came back to the platform, however, and soon reached the top, his head and shoulders woefully besprinkled with the relics of the deceptive heather; then we threw ourselves down on the heather to rest ourselves after our hard work, and to enjoy the splendid view. The 60-foot rope was let down over the vertical north-eastern side, and then we found out why we could not sling the rope over the top: the boulder was 60 feet high! A small cairn was erected

on the top in honour of the occasion, and then we had to descend, as the afternoon was wearing on. No difficulty was found, as the slab affords a splendid hitch. We left the boulder at 4.25 P.M., and striking the path some distance down, wended our homeward way with feelings of exultation. Kingshouse was reached at 5.40 P.M., only an hour and a quarter after leaving the boulder.

The next party that visits the boulder will probably not find any great difficulty now that the groove at the top of the slab is cleared out. We were also handicapped on both occasions by Clark's having strained his arm, which prevented him taking a share of the leading. But at any rate the ascent of "Rob Roy's Putting Stone," as Clark has dubbed it, will ever be remembered by us with that feeling of satisfaction which is born of difficulties conquered by perseverance, even though they were only those of a 60-foot boulder!

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

NEW YEAR'S MEET—TYNDRUM.

1st January 1899.

THE New Year's Meet at Tyndrum was not favoured with the best of weather ; the mist lay heavily on the hillsides with a sullen persistency, and the snow, which covered them almost to the base, was soft, damp, and uncomfortable.

Friday was the only fine day, and the early arrivals enjoyed their outing to the full. On the other days rain and mist, varied by showers of snow and sleet, was the order of things.

Those who attended the Meet were Messrs Inglis Clark, Corner, Douglas, Drummond, Inglis, Maclay, Munro, G. Parker, Raeburn, Squance, and Thomson (members), and Workman (non-member).

The first to arrive was Dr Corner, who on Tuesday had for his opening climb a stormy experience on Beinn Oss, for he was caught in one of the biggest gales of wind that passed over Scotland this winter.

Friday was spent by Clark and Inglis on the eastern face of Meall Tarmachan, of which an account will be found elsewhere ; and Ben Lawers was visited by several members, all of whom afterwards joined the Meet at Tyndrum. The wind and driving snow of this day was keenly felt. On Monday ascents were made of Ben Lui, Cruach Ardran, and Beinn an Dothaidh, and on Tuesday a good climb was enjoyed by a party, led by Maclay, on the west face of Beinn a' Chaisteal, description of which will be found among the notes. This brought the Meet to a close.

THE EASTER MEET AT KINLOCH EWE.

30th March to 6th April 1899.

THE fates have of late years been unpropitious to our Easter Meets, and the Kinloch Ewe gathering proved, from the weather point of view, perhaps the most unfortunate of the series. Those members who went up on Thursday, 30th

March, and bicycled over from Achnasheen, enjoyed a beautiful ride, getting fine views of the promised land from the shore of Loch Rosque. The Friday detachments were less fortunate. Snow fell more or less all day, and was lying to sea-level about Dingwall, while those enthusiasts who were on the hill found enough soft new snow to make the going very heavy.

A change of wind to S.W. on Saturday morning brought a warmer atmosphere, as well as rain and mist, which lasted with little intermission for the rest of the Meet. These weather conditions were peculiarly unfortunate for the cameriferous people, who, for lack of objects of natural beauty to photograph, had to content themselves with grouping the Club in various artistic poses outside the hotel.

But bad weather has never yet been able to cast a gloom over an S.M.C. Meet, and the evenings, enlivened by Rennie at the piano, the sweet tones of the ex-President's flute, and last, but not least, the good old Club Song, were as genial and festive as ever. Fourteen members were present, including the President, Campbell, Inglis Clark, Douglas, Gibson, Glover, Hinxman, Inglis, Lawson, Ling, Mackenzie, Munro, Rennie, and Squance, and though many old familiar faces were missing, there was a good turnout of the younger members of the Club, speaking well for the future of these annual gatherings.

This is the first formal Meet that has taken place in West Ross-shire, and most of the time was occupied in reconnaissance work, the bad weather preventing much being done in the way of serious climbing.

Enough, however, was seen of the country to show the super-excellence of Kinloch Ewe as a climbing centre. Beinn Eighe and Liathach alone afford any number of first-rate climbs; while farther afield the two arêtes of Beinn Dearg, the east face of Alligin, Sgurr Dubh, the N.W. shoulder of Slioch, and the mountains round the Fionn Loch, are still waiting for explorers.

On this occasion Beinn Eighe was the favourite mountain. On Sunday the two arêtes of the N.E. peak that rises immediately above Kinloch Ewe were ascended

by different parties, the southern ridge affording a short climb over some fairly easy rocks, and some step-cutting across one of the few patches of old snow left on the mountain.

Half-way across the "Black Men" the two parties foregathered for lunch, and continued the scramble over those exceedingly dilapidated old gentlemen together. There is nothing particularly sensational in the climb itself, but the savage character of the splintered ridges, black gullies, and fantastic pinnacles that fall into Toll Bhan from the north side of the mountain crest is most impressive.

A direct ascent of the extreme eastern end of Liathach from Coire Dubh Mhor was made on Saturday by Lawson, Glover, and Ling. The route as a whole is not a difficult one, but the pitches between the successive terraces afford some interesting climbs. They followed the ridge as far as the top of Spidean Choire Leith, but had not time to cross the Fasarinen pinnacles, descending the steep southern face of the mountain to the road.

The same party on Sunday reconnoitred as much as they could see of the cliffs of Coire Mhic Fhearchair, but finding the weather too bad to attempt the buttresses, climbed Sail Mhor by a gully a little to the east of the great gully that forms so conspicuous a feature at the end of the mountain.

Munro, who arrived on Tuesday, took advantage of the only fine day during the Meet to climb some of the hills north of Loch Fada, including Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair and Sgurr Ban, from which he obtained glorious views of An Teallach and the peaks of Fannich.

Inglis Clark reports enthusiastically of the cliffs of Beinn Mhuinidh, above the head of Loch Maree. He reached the top with Glover by a route a little to the west of the waterfall, and describes the climbing as excellent—300 feet of vertical quartzite, with holds that (when cleared out with a knife) are satisfactory though small, and slope inwards.

The one and only ascent of Slioch was made in thick mist by Lawson and Ling before leaving on Monday.

Five Wild Swans were seen on Loch Crann, the small lochan at the head of Loch Rosque ; Ptarmigan and Snow

Buntings on Beinn Eighe, and Mergansers on Loch Maree. A pair of Ravens were nesting on the cliffs above the Fasach Glen ; and Gibson, by a daring first ascent of an A.P. fir-tree near the village, established the new and interesting fact of the nesting of the Common Rook in the Kinloch Ewe district.

Mention must finally be made of the excellent arrangements for our comfort, and the kindness shown us by Mrs Macdonald and her staff. The universal feeling expressed as we left the hotel was, "We must come back to Kinloch Ewe, and next year if possible."

L. W. H.

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.

ALLT NA MHUINIDH WATERFALL : WEST CLIMB.—The members of the S.M.C. who attended the Easter Meet had few opportunities of becoming acquainted with the fine climbing which abounds in the neighbourhood of Kinlochewe. It seems hardly credible that fourteen of us were there for three days, and not a single assault was made on the cliffs of Coire Mhic Fhearchair. Our only excuse must be that the weather throughout was bad, the summits of the mountains around persisting in veiling themselves in mists, which, however beautiful in their effects, are apt to spoil sport for the mountaineer.

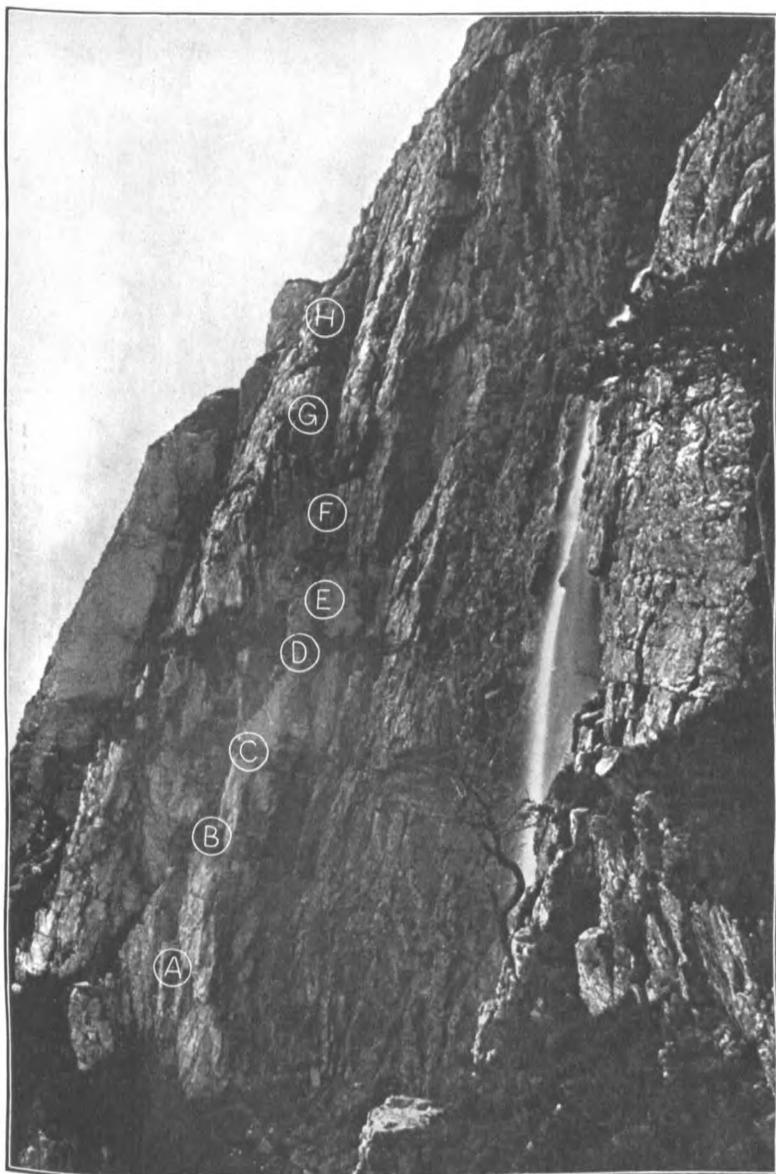
There is no doubt that the mountaineer can search after the beautiful, and it is due to this fact that the pleasant climb about to be narrated was discovered. The writer of the article in last September's *Journal*, acting on the advice of the President, sallied forth in his capacity as searcher, and returned with the news that there appeared to be a climb of real beauty within easy reach of the hotel. This he found on the cliffs of Allt na Mhuinidh, on the north shore of Loch Maree, about half-way between Kinlochewe and the foot of Ben Slioch. These cliffs are easily seen from the hotel, and are noticeable for the fine waterfall which runs almost down the centre of them. The best climbing is to be obtained on the western portion, up which our climb lay. The base of the cliffs is only about 600 feet above the level of the sea ; hence their only drawback, which consists in the amount of heather and general vegetable matter on all the ledges.

Inglis Clark having devoted a day to studying and photographing the waterfall and cliffs, made out a route on the latter which he thought would give the best climb. Next day, Monday, 3rd April, a start was made from the Kinlochewe Hotel, which must have reminded onlookers of the famous "Tartarin." There were three men, two of whom had large rucksacks, and the third—the writer—was tied up with 60 feet of Alpine rope and 60 feet "cable ply," and an ice-axe (to be used as a gardening tool). All this to attack a small bluff on the opposite side of the valley !

Leisurely strolling to the foot of the fall, we looked at the face to the westward of it, and saw that there were great possibilities. The route was pointed out to us by Inglis Clark, and, as climbs sometimes do, it looked harder than it really was. It commenced about 150 feet to the west of the waterfall, and we therefore made for this point. Here a small perpendicular crack, about 20 feet high, is flanked on the right side by a square pinnacle (A), rather rotten near the top, and on the left by a large buttress. Roping up, an unsuccessful attempt was made on the crack, but the way up proved to be for two men to get on to the top of the pinnacle, where there was just room for both to stand, the second man then giving the leader a shoulder low down, and steadying him until he reached some high hand-holds. These proving good, a pull up with the arms enabled a square foothold to be used, and a rest was taken about 8 feet above the pinnacle. At this point it was found possible to traverse to the left into the crack, which was wider than at the foot, and so up to the first tree, which was called, and used as, a hitch. Fortunately it was never called on to field anybody. The two rucksacks containing the cameras were then sent up, followed by the second man, with such ease that the leader imagined that he had overrated the severity of the first pitch. By this time it was found that the two men and two rucksacks were just a "driving fit" for the platform, so to make room for the third, the non-photographer suggested that the cameras should be turned down, and given a holiday. This being done, and the ice-axe being left behind with them, the third man came up the whole 40 feet without a pause. Leaving the tree platform at its left-hand corner, a continuation of the crack—here almost a chimney—led to the platform (C), which was a triangle, with sides about 18 feet, and made the first good resting-place, where it was agreed by all that the beautiful, both in rock scenery and hand and foot holds, had been sought and found.

The next move did not appear quite so easy, as the wall in front was vertical, with no grip for the toes. However, the route worked out all right by a traverse to the left, the first step being a very long one on to a ledge about 6 inches wide, the leader being steadied by the rope, which was hitched over a little finger of rock. Here and for some distance the "gardening" operations were immense, a lot of time being lost and a lot of balance needed before the heather was removed, which masked a lot of foot and hand holds. Some fifteen feet above the others, the leader halted on a broad ledge, the second man coming up and passing him, reaching the big ledge (E) by means of a steep face, which ended in a stomach traverse to the left, this traverse being not so sensational but more risky than "THE" stomach traverse, as one had to crawl along a ledge covered with heather, through which one's left leg dangled uncomfortably over the edge.

After all three were up, the big ledge was explored, and found to run right across the face towards the west, forming a terrace which



ALLT NA MHUINIDH WATERFALL.

A. Rotten pinnacle.
B. Tree hitch.
C. Long Step.

D. Stomach transverse.
E. Big ledge.
F. Overhanging cave.

G. Hitchless ledge.
H. Rounded transverse.

might have offered an exit on to an easy grass gully. However, it narrowed considerably at one point, and might not prove so easy as it at first appeared.

Seeking a way upwards, it was noticed that there was a crack, 12 inches wide (starting above a tree on the ledge), which was formed by a leaf of rock about 30 feet high detached from the main face. This appeared to overhang at the top; but having taken warning from the September number of the *Journal*, we tried something easier, which consisted in scrambling up broken rock to the right into a cave (F) with an overhanging roof, where there was just room for the leader to pack himself and meditate as to whether he could negotiate the next—a sporting—pitch; but before he could prove this, the second man came up, and seeing that the leader appeared so comfortably anchored, climbed up the face to the left of the cave, using the top of a small buttress as a hand-hold, and gaining support with one foot on the wall opposite. This landed him on a comfortable platform, from which a few feet of rather rotten work led to ledge (G), where he was followed by the writer, the third man having far the most trying position of waiting on the platform at the top of the cave pitch for a few feet, while the other two had all the fun above. The wall above was steep, with poor hand-holds, large but unstable, and some rather too sloping foot-holds. So as there was no possible hitch here, and a fall of the leader would have involved the collapse of the whole firm, safety was played for, and the route taken up a small open gully, starting from the right-hand corner of the ledge, the hand-holds being good near the bottom of this, and near the top being easy back and knee work. Above this was another rocky pitch, steep but well broken up, easily managed after the party had all reached the court at the top of the small open gully. The last interesting part of the climb consisted in leaving the above pitch at its top by a ledge to the left, as the foot-holds were very rounded (as if water-worn), and one had apparently the full face of the cliff immediately beneath; although as a matter of fact a slip would not have involved much disaster, as the heather court was below. After this the slope lessened, and easy routes led to the summit; but as the direct line involved another pitch, we took it, and the climb was over, having given us about 300 feet of sport, which had taken us nearly six hours to accomplish—of course an excessively slow performance—in a great measure being due to the amount of heather, &c., to be cleared away without an ice-axe or suitable weapon, but being also due to the fact that we enjoyed the view, and that the writer fed for the party at intervals. At the top we built a small cairn, and hurried down easy rocks some distance to the west, picked up axe and cameras, and made for home.

Although it is hardly likely that any one will climb here, unless kept off the larger rocks on Ben Eighe and Liathach by deer stalking or other special circumstances, yet if they do come I am certain they will not be disappointed, as the whole face is very steep, and the rock scenery throughout of the best, the quartzite of which they are com-

posed giving excellent grips wherever firm. Non-climbers ought all to come and see the waterfall, which more nearly approaches the Norwegian grandeur than is usual in Scotland; while as for the mere climber, any one who, like the writer, has often tramped on the Border hills, will see that there is more good climbing to be had here than on the whole of those almost "unmitigated mounds" the Cheviots.

GEO. T. GLOVER.

LEUM NA EIRANNAICH AND BEN LEDI.—On 15th April, my cousin, Mr Kenneth Inglis, my wife and I cycled from Strathyre to Balquhiddy, in order finally to decide on the climbing possibilities of the Leum. On reaching the "Putting Stone" (see page 248) we ascended the slope to the foot of the crag, which was hanging with icicles. These were a source of danger, lumps of ice constantly falling. We found the cliffs quite impracticable. The prominent right-hand recess overhangs badly, while the left-hand crack is vertical, and offers only rotten holds, and few of these. Anything else on this crag appears to be either easy and risky or impossible.

Descending to the Putting Stone, my cousin ascended it by the sloping traverse to the left, where a sure foot is necessary. Descending, he jumped from the corner on to the rock at the S.E. end. From this rock he made an ascent by an exceedingly risky and fatiguing overhanging crack, which leads upwards to the corner. The main crack on the west side was abandoned owing to the high wind. Mrs Inglis Clark reached the middle platform by the ordinary route, but the effort was so great that the upper chimney was not negotiated. The climbs on this boulder require very strong arms. On 17th April the same party endeavoured to find a sporting route up Ben Ledi. Boating to the opposite shore from Ardchullerie, on Loch Lubnaig, in company with Mr Raeburn, a fine boulder was discovered and climbed. Ascending directly to the rock tower on the skyline, nothing could be found justifiable, and an easy course was made for Ben Ledi, disclosing nothing sporting. The outlook was wintry, but beautifully clear, and the various snowstorms chasing each other over the mountains added greatly to the effect.—W. I. C.

BEINN CHAORUINN.—On 21st February, with a friend (non-member), I caught the early train from Spean Bridge to Tulloch. Following the road past Rough Burn, we crossed the low ridge south of Meall Badanach, and worked our way into Coire nan Uamha. The most noticeable feature in this corrie is a long black ridge with one large pinnacle near its lower end. Above the ridge ends at the summit of the middle top of the mountain. The lower part of the ridge was approached from the north by the second of the four snow streaks, shallow gullies. Here some step-cutting was necessary. As far as the big tower the ridge is almost horizontal. The lower part of

the tower was broken, and was easily ascended. We then skirted to the north side into a steep snow chimney. Foolishly we forsook the chimney before the top, and stood on the stool of repentance, namely, iced turf, in consequence. After this a number of little towers were passed, and the summit gained a few yards from the cairn of the middle top. Throughout the ridge is narrow with steep sides. The east wind had kindly cleared the rocks of ice, which, combined with the snow being in good condition, the rocks broken, and the tilt of the cleavage the right way, made the climbing easy. The ridge would be quite easy in summer.

Mr Munro, in a former number of the *Journal*, mentioned some gullies on the north top. There are more on the middle top, but they would give nothing more than a snow grind, steep at the top. They are more like grooves than gullies. The southern top (3,437 feet) has two cairns; the middle one and the northern (3,422 feet) none.—EDRED M. CORNER.

COIRE COILLE NA FROISE AND CREAG MEAGHAIDH.—On 22nd February an ascent was made into this corrie. The top of the Meall Coire Coille na Froise is rocky, and presents a face (700 feet high approximately) towards the corrie. This face consists of southern, middle, and northern buttresses, and two well-defined gullies in between. The southern buttress looks the best, and the middle one seems cut off from the summit by a small col. We passed on, as our object lay at the head of the corrie, where the lochan of the same long name was frozen over. The 6-inch Ordnance Survey map marked a large gully due west of this loch, and called it Astur Mor. The height of this gully is about 600 to 700 feet. On its south is a large rocky buttress of about 400 feet. We were disappointed in that the gully itself gave nothing more exciting than about 400 feet of step-cutting, and a little practice in dodging falling icicles. The corrie between Meall Coire Coille na Froise and An Cearcallach contains a few rocks, but offers nothing inviting. The corrie of the Moy Burn is rocky on its west side, but presents features of the snow and slab type, with hardly anything like definite gullies, ridges, &c. Of the glories of Coire Ardhoire a more mellifluous pen has already written, and as he asked for thanks for introducing such a noble corrie, I freely tender him mine. The northern corrie of Creag Meaghaidh contains rocks, but apparently little interesting climbing, whilst the western corrie contains none.

Cairns were only seen on the summits of Creag Meaghaidh and An Cearcallach. Even Crom Leathead, a separate mountain, had none.—EDRED M. CORNER.

THE TRACKS IN GLEN SPEAN.—In the course of two visits to Spean Bridge and two to Roy Bridge, I have been able to make some notes with regard to the tracks across the moor. It is this piece of

bog that prevents these two places being as popular as they might. Spean Bridge is really the one most suitable for getting at the hills. The Aonachs may be approached by the track through Lianachan. First, the Fort-William road must be followed for a little over a mile. The track is easily identified in that it passes under the railway. From Lianachan two tracks can be followed—one that goes straight up to the Coille Lianachain, and ends just above the wood in the glen between Stob Coire an Easain and the Aonachs. The other leaves the main track at the far end of a shed. It is indistinct at first, but follows the wall on the left, and continues until it crosses the Cour by a bridge just below the trees. By these tracks, both the Aonach group and the west end of the Easain group are easily reached. In order to reach the east end of the Easain group one has to get on to the road over the Learg nan Leacan, between Sgor na h'Innse and Stob Coire nan Cean. The track exists, as in Bartholomew's maps, from the pass to the point marked 723. The rest of the track in the map is a myth. It continues as an excellent road down to Dalnabie, two miles from Spean Bridge. Besides these there is a private road which crosses the Allt Loin and the Cour, and runs up on the east bank of the latter to Coire Coille; whether it proceeds into the great north corrie of the Easains I cannot say. It joins the road parallel and south of the Spean, about half-way between Dalnabie and Spean Bridge. At its beginning is a notice board signed by Lord Abinger. All parts of this great hill mass can therefore be approached without some hours of bog-trotting from Spean Bridge. Roy Bridge has no track directly from it, and it is also necessary to cross the bridge a mile above, unless the ford by the hotel is functional. I pointed out some time ago that the track Bartholomew marks from the Learg nan Leacan road to Dalnabie, east of the Cour, was practically a myth.

I have taken the trouble to write these notes, because the maps are extremely misleading with respect to the tracks they do mark, and many are not marked. And again, it is generally thought that Roy Bridge is more suitable than Spean Bridge. This is not so, and, moreover, the latter has the more comfortable hotel.—EDRED M. CORNER.

THE CORROUR HILLS.—South west of Loch Ossian lie three hills that pass Munro's standard. As they are rarely if ever visited, I send this somewhat deprecatory note. Their names are Carn Dearg, 3,084, Sgor Gaibhre, 3,128, and Sgor Choinnich, 3,040 feet. Their starting point is Corrou passing place, 1,300 feet approximately. They are extremely uninteresting, and their average slope would in no way disturb the equanimity of any determined invalid.

Carn Dearg has three cairns. The middle one is about eight feet high, and marks the true summit. Both Sgor Gaibhre and Sgor Choinnich are decorated with very puerile stone-men.—EDRED M. CORNER.

BEINN A CHASTEIL.—Corner, Parker, Maclay, and Workman left the hotel at 9.30 A.M., on 3rd January, for Beinn a Chasteil, to attack the cliffs on the west side.

Leaving the Inveroran road at Auch farm, they followed the track up Glen Chonoghlais to a little beyond the railway viaduct, and then struck diagonally up the hillside to the foot of the cliffs, which they climbed. Thence to the summit was a walk.

Owing to the broken nature of the cliffs the climb is not easily defined. Looking from the viaduct, there is a rocky buttress on the sky line. The climb commenced at the end of a smooth pitch of rock a little to the south of this buttress. At first it proceeded diagonally towards the north till a short chimney was reached about the side of the buttress. This was ascended, and the climb was continued on the rocks on the south side of a somewhat shallow gully, till the party emerged on the face of the hill above. The hillside is irregularly terraced with short steep and broken pitches between. Owing to the snow and the ice-bound condition of the rocks, the climbing was at places rather difficult, and it would be easier in summer.

The party left the viaduct at eleven, and the top (2,897 feet) was reached, in a driving snow shower, at 3 P.M. After traversing round the hill, a descent was made by the side of the large gully in the southern face, and some short glissades were enjoyed.

Taking the railway from the upper viaduct to where it crosses the road, the party returned to Tyndrum in a driving rain, and reached the hotel in a thoroughly soaked condition.

The rocks on the western face where the ascent was made afford considerable scope for scrambles, and there are two or three gullies which do not appear very difficult. Owing to its broken nature, climbs on the face would be difficult to define, and capable of indefinite variation.—I. MACLAY.

LIATHACH.—On 1st April, Lawson, Ling, and Glover ascended this mountain by E. face. Leaving Torridon road about 6 miles from Kinlochewe, they went up Allt' a C'hoire Dhuibh Mhoir for about $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles, reaching the end of a large extent of glacier-smoothed rock at about 1,150 feet (almost exactly between letters Dh in "Dhuibh," one-inch Ordnance Sheet 82). From here they struck straight up the face in S.W. direction; the face here consists of three tiers or bastions, separated from one another by terraces; the first tier was ascended by a number of steep little pitches, but could easily have been turned by a grass traverse on left-hand side; the second tier was ascended by a slight grassy gully inclining to left; this brought them to a wide grass terrace, probably affording an easy exit to south side; the route up the third and highest bastion lay up steep rocks to a small chimney, about 15 feet high, caused by the splitting away of a large leaf of rock; a cairn was made at the foot of this. Above the chimney, a short traverse to right hand, and a few short pitches brought them to the

last terrace ; only 30 feet of face remained. After ascending this and unroping, a scramble up easy rocks for about 200 feet brought them to the usual ridge route. The weather was extremely wet, S.W. gale, the rocks were found to be firm with fine rough surface ; in dry weather some good climbing should be obtained on this face.

The descent from the summit was to S.E. made straight down by a large corrie to the Torridon road, joining it at about 7 miles from Kinlochewe.

G. T. G.

BEINN EIGHE.—On 2nd April, Lawson, Ling, and Glover found an easy route from the loch in Coire Mhic Fhearchair to the summit of Sail Mhor. Leaving the loch at the end where the stream issues, a steep scree fan is seen on south side. Going up this into the couloir above, the right-hand side, consisting of rock and grass, was taken to, and a ridge was reached some 600 feet above the loch ; at one point a flat table of rock is reached, from which there is a magnificent look down into the couloir on the left-hand side ; the last part of the couloir looking from above to be A.P. From the table, the ridge steepens a good deal, but the rock is well broken up, although firm, and therefore no rope is needed ; in a few hundred feet the cairn on Sail Mhor is reached.

G. T. G.

INVERORAN.—On Friday evening, 31st March, Maclay, James A. Parker, and Gilbert Thomson, who had found themselves unable to get so far as Kinlochewe, made their way to Inveroran. They were accompanied by two non-members, Messrs William and Ernest Workman, the former of whom fished while the others climbed. The weather, as elsewhere, was bad. The snow on the hills was unusually little for the season of the year, and was disappearing rapidly.

On Saturday, the Stob Ghabhar couloir was visited. It was ascended for a short distance, and then the party took to the rib of rock on the right, and climbed it to the summit. The rib gave an excellent climb. The famous pitch in the gully was covered with a sheet of rotten ice, under which a considerable stream was flowing. As seen from the rocks, it appeared very doubtful if there was any sound ice in which steps could be cut. Below the pitch there was ice with a covering of snow. In descending, the wide gully which begins a little to the S.E. of the summit gave a glissade practically to the lochan, 1,200 or 1,300 feet, but it was very lumpy.

On Sunday, Parker and Workman climbed the three Clachlet peaks—Meall Bhuiridh, Mam Coire Easain, and Clach Leachad.

On Monday, the whole party climbed Beinn an Dothaidh, in a dense mist, which developed on the summit ridge into drenching rain. The mist prevented the selection of the best route, and the one hit upon did not afford much climbing. As a sort of compensation two of the party dropped over the top cornice, and proceeded to drive a tunnel through it, the other two meanwhile sitting behind some rocks and criticising the work. The wind and rain sent them from their

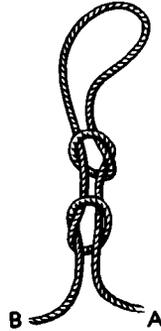
shelter to drive an opposition tunnel, the tunnelling being the most comfortable part of the day's proceedings. This note is the joint production of two members of the party, who are agreed that one tunnel was better planned, and better executed than the other. They differ as to which was which, and each has one supporter. On the descent, some boulders were found in the glen dividing the hill from Beinn Doireann, and were climbed in various ways. A return was made to the south by the afternoon train.

It should be mentioned that Inveroran Hotel is now open after a change of tenancy. The new management seems very satisfactory, and we received every attention.

THE MIDDLE-MAN KNOT.—Some discussion has taken place lately as to the merits of this knot, and the following notes supplied by Mr Bell will help one to understand wherein its merits and deficiencies lie.

If any one says "it is a slip-knot if both ends are not pulled," he is not quite accurate, for it is only if one of the two ends is pulled that it slips, and if the other end only is pulled, it does not become a slip-knot.

This is a rough sketch of a middle-man knot. If the loop is held and the end A pulled, the knot jams as it should. If the end B is pulled, the knot is a slip-knot. Practically, if care is taken to have the end A above the climber, there is very little chance of anything going wrong. The strain very rarely comes on the knot of the upper of two climbers. The rope is generally held in the hand, or else hitched above, while the pull comes directly on the knot of the man who is climbing. Of course in the case of an unexpected slip, when the rope was not held or hitched, the pull would come on the wrong side of the knot, but it will be found that, if the knot is made as I suggest, the ordinary work of the rope will jamb the two knots together so that a sudden jerk will not separate them far. If the knot is made with the slip side up, the ordinary work of the rope loosens the knot, and then if any extra strain comes on, it would be bad for the man. I have seen a man climbing with two knots 6 inches apart. If any place had come where he had to be hauled up, he would have got a bad nipping. He had the wrong end of the knot up.



MOUNTAINEERING IN JAPAN.—Mr Bell sends to the *Journal* the following extract from a letter received from his friend, Professor Hillhouse, of Tokio University, regarding the Japanese mountains:—

"I wish I could have been with you during your summer's climbing

in Scotland ; it quite makes my mouth water to read of the old names again.

"I have not had to give up mountaineering, but in Japan it is a very disappointing affair. The hills are high enough, and some of them are rough enough, but nearly the whole country is so thickly covered with long grass and undergrowth that one cannot leave made paths—what looks like a grassy slope a thousand yards away proves to be grass 8 or 10 feet deep, through which it is very difficult to force a way, and from which it is impossible to prospect. Most of the high hills have well-made paths to their summits, as hill-climbing is a religious virtue, and great numbers of pilgrims ascend the principal hills every summer. All the way up are stone images of saints, and rough stones with letters deeply carved and gilded, while at the top is a regular statuary. On very many hills there are huts at frequent intervals, where you can have bed, tea, rice, beer, cakes, &c., very cheaply.

"My first climb was Sengen Yama, 2,200 feet (700 only climbed, as the start is high up), from which I had a view of Fuji—my first glimpse. During my long summer holiday I walked in all 560 miles through the mountainous districts of Japan. I climbed Ontake (Honourable Peak), 10,200 feet, by an easy path : got lost in bamboo grass when attempting Koma-ga-take, and had to return : climbed the peerless Fuji twice within eight days, sleeping each time on the summit, where it was bitterly cold. Fuji is very easy : it is merely an enormous ash heap, and has no difficulties or dangers. There are ten or twelve huts on each of the four or five routes, and a whole street on the summit. The crater is 600 feet deep and about 1,500 feet wide. The walk around it is said to be 2½ miles. I climbed down to the patch of snow in its centre, much to the horror of the pilgrims, who considered it an impious act, and likely to result in an eruption. They stood on the edge and yelled at me in Japanese, to which I replied by giving one of my life-like imitations of an enraged bull ! We saw seventy pilgrims sleeping in a hut measuring about 25 feet by 12 feet, in open defiance of Board of Trade regulations. They lay in two layers ! Steam still issues from the side of Fuji, at the top, and at one of the spouts I found a small live mouse !

"I also climbed the semi-active volcano, Shivanesan (White Mountain), and saw spouts of good steam 12 inches in diameter roaring out in a way that would have made a Belleville boiler green with envy. There is a boiling lake of hydrochloric acid and alum at the top, and altogether it is an uncanny place !"

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

NEW CLIMBS IN NORWAY. By E. C. OPPENHEIM, Member of the Alpine Club. Illustrated by A. D. M'CORMICK, and from Photographs. T. Fisher Unwin. 1898.

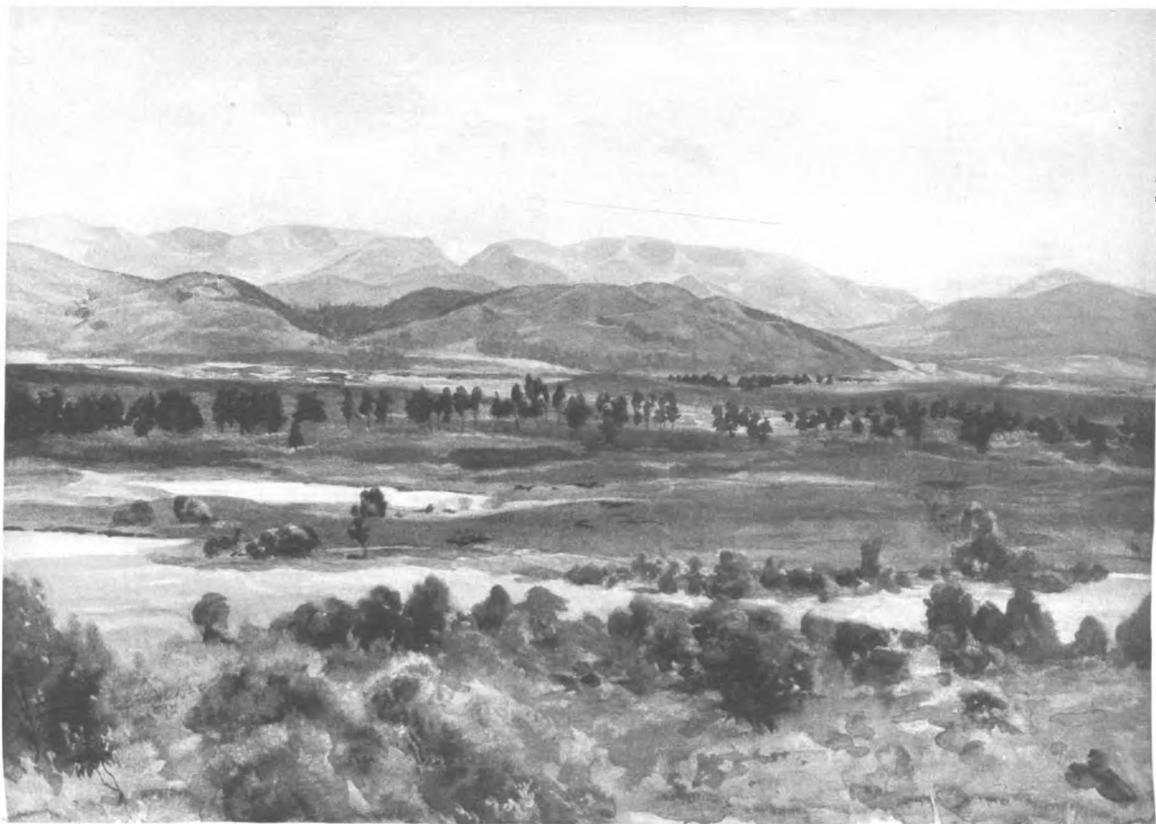
COMPARATIVELY few climbers visit Norway, and of these, so far as we know, no one has yet written a book on his experiences. Campbell's interesting booklet, published in 1871, is little more than a reprint of articles in the *Alpine Journal*, and his first object in visiting Norway was not mountaineering. Of travellers', tourists', and fishermen's tales there is no lack; but those who wish for printed information on Norwegian mountains must hunt for it through the volumes of Alpine periodicals, and may even have to go so far off their track as to become readers of *The Queen*, in which unlikely paper a lady climber has recently described her exploits. There was room then for a book on climbing in Norway; but we fear that those who look to the present volume to supply the deficiency will be disappointed. To be frank, the account of a season which might make a pleasant magazine article or so seems somewhat thin when it is spread out over 250 octavo pages. High spirits, humour, a keen enjoyment of a new country, and a happy gift of making the best of everything, are all in evidence, and all have their charm; but only consummate literary art could save so slight a tale from the charge of flimsiness.

The energies of the party were practically confined to a small peninsula in Söndmøre, between the Jorungfjord and the Sökelfvjord, which is full of fine mountains. The district was virtually unexplored, and the climbers made good use of their opportunities. *Die* provided them with headquarters, and those who have enjoyed Fru Stub's hospitality will be ready to endorse their warm encomium on the Hotel Union. The Söndmøre peasants are a simple folk as yet, and little spoiled by travellers, and alike in inn and saeter the writer seems to have been struck with the difference between the Swiss and the Norsk ideas of a bill for lodging and entertainment. As guide and interpreter the party had Johannes Vigdal; and to the climbing friends of the "Solvorn warrior" the descriptions of his prowess and his foibles will prove the most amusing things in the book. For their purpose they could not have selected a better man. A preliminary trudge up Slogen gave them a bird's-eye view of their chosen district, and a taste of the hopeless inaccuracy of the Government map.

Then, getting to work in earnest, they made (besides minor expeditions) new ascents of the Vellesaeterhorn, Urkedalstind, an unnamed top in Trandal, which they called Tranhulstind, Strömseimshorn, Middle Ringdalstind, Blaabraetind, and Raana by the N.E. arête. This last climb, of which chapter ix. contains a very graphic account, they considered the finest in their season. The Söndmöre ridges, when they are practicable at all, generally give very good rock-work, and Raana seems no exception to the rule.

The illustrations in the volume are partly from photographs, most of which, owing apparently to an accident which befel the plates, are not very successful. There are also some half-dozen sketches by Mr M'Cormick from photographic suggestions. Of these we prefer the view down the Trandal on p. 123. The view of Slogen from Urke at p. 39 is fine; but the impossible reeds, and the most un-Norwegian boat in the foreground, show the disadvantages of sketching at second-hand.

It is a pity that what the author himself calls (p. 149) his "characteristic impatience" has caused the proof-sheets to be so hurriedly read. We do not remember ever seeing so many verbal slips and misprints before in a book of this length. Besides the unjustifiable outrage of o for ö everywhere, we have counted some fifty other mistakes which a little trouble could scarcely have failed to remove. A map and an index would have added an appearance of solidity and seriousness to this breezy but happy-go-lucky record.



Photography by Allan & Sons, Glasgow

Colin H. Phillips

THE CAIRNGORMS FROM THE NORTH

THE SCOTTISH Mountaineering Club Journal.

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No. 30.

THE GEOLOGY OF THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINS FROM A CLIMBING POINT OF VIEW :

*With a Table giving the principal Hills, arranged according to the
Nature of the Rocks of which they are composed.*

BY LIONEL W. HINXMAN.

THE influence of the geological structure of a mountain on its form and character must be obvious, in a general way, to every one who has more than a passing acquaintance with the hills; while the climber acquires, early in his career, a practical knowledge of the differences in the nature and arrangement of the rocks as they affect his upward or downward progress.

In this paper an attempt will be made to indicate, with special reference to the climber's point of view, the geological characteristics of the different types that are found among the Highland Hills.

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to remind readers of the *Journal* that the Scottish mountains are mountains not of elevation, but of denudation, and have been carved out of an elevated table-land by the long-continued erosive action of the forces of the atmosphere. Nowhere is this better seen than from such a vantage-point as any of the lower hills on the north side of Upper Strathspey, whence the eye can follow the long line of the great mountain-plateau, deeply trenched by glen and corrie, that forms the summit of the Cairngorm range, and is continued at a lower level west of

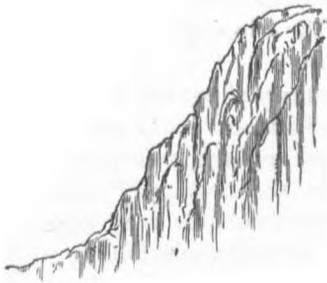
Glen Feshie in the flat-topped hills of the Gaick Forest. Passing westwards through regions of greater rainfall, and consequently more rapid denudation, we find the original land surface more and more broken up into separate peaks and serrated ridges, whose summits still, however, approximate to a common level; until on the seaboard of Sutherland and West Ross we reach the ultimate stage of erosion in those isolated pyramids of sandstone that rise above the rolling floor of Archæan Gneiss—itself a relic of a still more ancient plane of denudation. But although the forces of denudation have been the sole sculpturing agents, they have by no means acted uniformly. Each range and each peak has had impressed upon it an individual character, due to differences of material and internal structure. The form of a mountain may, in short, be said to depend primarily upon the nature of the rock or rocks of which it is composed, and secondarily upon the arrangement of the divisional planes, whether these be the original bedding planes in sedimentary strata, the foliation planes in metamorphic rocks, or the joint-planes found in rocks both of sedimentary and of igneous origin.*

A rock that is fairly uniform in texture and hardness yields equally in all directions to the wasting process, which, however, is always greatest towards the summit of the hill. In this way are produced symmetrical cones, such as those which cap so many of the sandstone mountains of the west. The quartzite Paps of Jura and the beautiful peak of Schiehallion are also well-known examples of this structure.

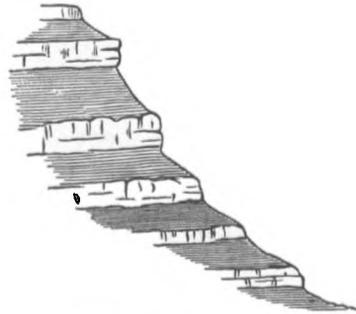
Rocks of unequal hardness weather unequally, the harder bands standing out in relief from the softer portions. Thus the scarped faces of a mountain composed of rocks of this nature are apt to be step-like in form, alternating with crag

* Divisional planes are the surfaces along which the rock most readily divides. Bedding planes are the surfaces of the successive layers of sediment as originally laid down. Foliation planes are the parallel and sometimes wavy layers in schistose rocks produced by subsequent alteration, and generally due to rearrangement of the minerals under pressure. Joints are divisional planes, due to shrinking, and separate the rocks into blocks of varying size. In sedimentary rocks they are usually at right angles to the bedding planes.

and slope ; while the summit ridges will present a succession of minor peaks and hollows, the depth of the serrations corresponding to the amount of difference in the resisting power of the successive bands of rock.



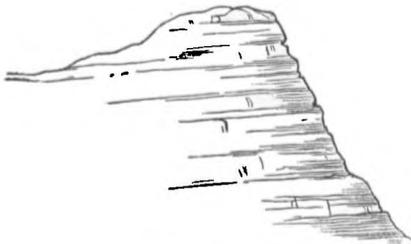
NEARLY VERTICAL STRATA.



ROCKS OF UNEQUAL HARDNESS.



ROCKS OF UNEQUAL HARDNESS.



DIP INTO THE HILL.



DIP OUT FROM HILL.

Arrangement of Divisional Planes.—Where the bedding planes are tolerably regular and inclined at moderate angles, the steep or scarp side of the hill is usually the same as that of the outcrop of the beds. The strata consequently

dip into the hill, an important factor in estimating the difficulty of a cliff face, while the dip slopes form the gentler slopes on the other side. Occasionally, however, the beds on the escarpment side dip *out* from the hill, when, if the angle of inclination be more than a few degrees, the difficulties of the ascent are of course greatly increased, and especially is this the case when the sloping ledges are covered with ice or snow.

Highly inclined, folded, and contorted strata, such as are generally found among the schistose rocks, produce very complex and irregular features, and the escarpments are usually much broken up. When the divisional planes are vertical or nearly so, although the footholds may often be good, the hand-grips are apt to be awkward, having to be taken in the same line with, instead of at right angles to the direction of the arms.

Joint-planes also play an important part in determining the features of a mountain. Usually running at high angles up the face of an escarpment, they form lines of weakness along which the denuding forces act with greater force. They thus give rise to gullies, which, in the form either of snow couloirs or rock chimneys, often afford a means of surmounting an otherwise impossible precipice. They are of still greater significance in mountains composed of igneous rocks, but will be referred to in that context later on.

The Scottish mountains fall naturally into three main groups, according to the nature of the rocks of which they are composed :—

GROUP 1.—UNALTERED OR SLIGHTLY ALTERED
SEDIMENTARY ROCKS—*Old Red Sandstone, Silurian, Torridonian Sandstone, Cambrian Quartzite.*

GROUP 2.—METAMORPHIC ROCKS—*Archæan Gneiss ; Schists, Slates, and Quartzites of the Central and South-Western Highlands.*

GROUP 3.—IGNEOUS ROCKS—*Granite and Porphyry ; Diorite, Gabbro, Basalt.*

1. The Old Red Sandstone rarely attains any considerable height above sea-level. Morven in Caithness, and Mealfourvonie on the north shore of Loch Ness, are the

only eminences belonging to this formation that reach 2,000 feet. They are composed of conglomerate, arranged in regular and nearly horizontal layers, are smooth and conical in outline, and present no features of interest to the climber.

More remarkable are the deep and narrow gorges, with vertical walls rising in some cases to a height of nearly 200 feet above the waters of the streams that have cut these deep channels for themselves along the parallel joints of the Old Red Conglomerate. Such are the gorges of the Ericht near Blairgowrie, the Isla, the Beaully River, and the Black Rock of Novar in Ross-shire.

Torridonian.—There are no mountain forms in Scotland more striking in appearance than those found in the belt of Torridon Sandstone that stretches along the western coasts of Sutherland and Ross from Cape Wrath to Loch Carron. The regular parallelism of the beds, and the steady dip of the gently inclined and often horizontal strata, combine to produce that architectural character for which they are so remarkable.

Long lines of mural precipice, which sometimes, as in Suilven, almost encircle the hill; rounded and terraced bastions, and pinnacled ridges, are constant features of these mountains. Their summits vary a good deal in character, presenting, now the flat top of Beinn Bhan of Applecross, now the spiry cones of An Teallach, or the sharp serrated ridges of the Fasarinen and Stack Polly.

The terraced cliffs are cut at frequent intervals by vertical joints, which give rise to deep gullies. These are often occupied by the streams that rise in the higher corrachs and pour down the face of the mountain in a succession of waterfalls. When dry, the gullies form chimneys of excessive steepness, usually terminating below in long stone shoots. The climbing on the escarpments, where possible, is usually good. The rock is firm and reliable and rarely slippery, while holds and ledges are plentiful, though the latter are sometimes a good deal encumbered with loose rocks fallen from above. The pinnacles afford plenty of good rock scrambling, and chimneys, presenting every degree of steepness and difficulty, abound.

Cambrian Quartzite.—This rock—a slightly altered

and hardened siliceous sandstone, follows the same line of country as the Torridon Sandstone. It usually occurs as a thin capping on the mountains of the latter formation, stealing up the slopes to the summits, or in isolated patches crowning the highest peaks, where its white colour forms a striking contrast to the warm red-browns and purples of the underlying sandstone. In a few cases only does this rock compose the whole or the greater part of a mountain, as in Fionbheinn and Arkle in the Reay Forest of Sutherland; the eastern peaks and ridges of Beinn Eighe at the head of Loch Maree, and some of the hills of Coulin and Achnashellach.

The rock is hard, splintery, and full of joints, and consequently breaks up readily into angular fragments of all sizes, which stream down the hill-sides in long scree slopes. The angle of these slopes is often so steep, and the condition of the blocks so unstable, that the foot of the climber is apt to set the whole mass in motion, making the traverse or ascent of the mountain-side a painful and tedious operation. Where the angle of the hill is too steep to retain the debris, precipitous escarpments, such as those that surround the northern corries of Beinn Eighe, are formed. These are usually in a very shattered and untrustworthy condition. Indeed, instability is the prevailing character of the quartzite mountains of the west, and great care is needed in negotiating bits of any difficulty.

2. *Metamorphic Rocks.*—The great majority of the Scottish mountains belong to this group, which includes, with the exception of the granite ranges of the north-east, almost every hill of any importance in the counties of Inverness, Perth, and Argyle.

The Archæan or Lewisian Gneiss occupies a considerable area in the west of Sutherland and Ross, and forms the whole of the Outer Hebrides. On the mainland it seldom rises to any great height. Ben More Assynt and Ben Stack in Sutherland, and the fine group of hills on the north side of Loch Maree, including Airidh à Charr, Ben Lair, and the Maighdean, are the only mountains of any importance belonging to this formation.

The gnarled and corrugated nature of this ancient rock,

and the absence of drift from the lower slopes, give a peculiarly rugged character to its hills. Their sides are usually broken up into a succession of rounded bosses and craggy steeps; but occasionally fine vertical precipices are developed, such as those that fall from Ben Lair to the dark waters of the Fionn Loch. The exceeding toughness and uneven surface of the gneiss make the climbing almost everywhere safe and easy, and there are few rock-faces up which a way cannot be found.

The crystalline schists and their associated slaty and quartzose rocks, constitute, as has been said before, the greater part of the Highlands; and include nearly every group of hills in the Central and South-Western areas.

The constantly varying nature of the schistose rocks and consequent unequal waste, combined with their folded and crumpled condition, produce a corresponding irregularity of feature in the mountains which they compose. The harder bands, weathering out, rise in rough knobs and broken crags from the smooth, grassy, or heather-covered shoulders and slopes formed by the softer beds.

Basin-shaped corries whose sides present an alternation of crag and steep grass slope are a frequent feature in these hills, but unbroken lines of precipice are seldom seen.

This is the general character of the schistose hills of the eastern and central districts, and they may be described briefly as giving good hill walks with plenty of rock-scrambling in the corries if the climber care to go in search of it, but which seldom obtrudes itself on his notice during a legitimate ascent.

West of the main watershed, however, where denudation has been carried further, and there is little drift to mask the hill-features, the schist mountains present an infinitely more bold and savage aspect. Here the softer bands are less frequent, and the jointing and contortion more pronounced. Hence we find along the west coast of Inverness-shire and Argyll an assemblage of mountain forms, differing much from each other in individual character, but alike in offering a combination of rocky corrie, rifted precipice, and buttressed ridge, that make

this region an almost inexhaustible field for the enthusiastic rock-climber.

The slaty rocks, softer and of even texture, produce smoothly contoured hills, generally covered with vegetation, and of no interest to the climber, though often of great beauty in the landscape.

The quartzite of the Central Highlands is a hard and crystalline rock, and like that of the north-west, breaks up into angular fragments that form loose screes on the hill-sides. The uniform texture of the rock does not favour the formation of craggy features, and smooth slopes crowned with conical peaks characterise the quartzite mountains of Perthshire and Aberdeenshire, such as Glas Meal, Schiehallion, and Ben y Ghlo.

3. *Igneous Rocks.*—Among the rocks of Igneous origin, the most important, both from the large area which they occupy, and from their mountain-forming qualities, are the Granites. They compose the highest and best known of the Scottish mountains—the Cairngorms, Lochnagar, Ben Nevis, Ben Cruachan, Ben Alder, and the Arran Hills.

The features of a granite mountain are in a great measure determined by the joints—*i.e.*, lines along which shrinkage has taken place during the cooling of the molten rock—and these, on a larger scale, play the part of the bedding in sedimentary strata. The vertical walls of slabby rock that fall sheer from the flat summit plateau into the wild corries of the Cairngorms are due to a system of parallel vertical joints. The water that percolates along these lines of weakness, freezes, and splits off successive slices of the rock, thus ever giving a fresh and clean-cut face to the precipice, and adding to the fallen blocks on the talus slopes and corrie-floor below.

A means of ascending these otherwise impossible cliffs is provided by another system of joints, also vertical, but more powerful and farther apart than the last, and running at right angles to the face of the precipice. Along these master-joints deep rifts and gullies are formed, in whose dark recesses the snow lingers far into the summer, and the ice-axe may be required at any season of the year.

A third system of minor horizontal joints is often present.

These joints run rudely parallel to one another, and at nearly equal distances apart, giving a markedly stratified appearance to the granite. The rock weathers more rapidly along these lines than elsewhere, accentuating the parallel planes of division, and producing that resemblance to piles of Cyclopean masonry which is so marked a characteristic of the isolated rock masses that rise like great castles on the summits of the Eastern Cairngorms.

The joint-planes are not, however, always so accommodating. On the precipices of Creag na Leacainn and Sgoran Dubh, and on some of the peaks of Arran, the climber is sometimes confronted with smooth slabs of granite set obliquely to his path, and sloping outwards from the hill. To cross these is often a difficult problem, requiring the application of friction over as large a surface as possible, and considerable use of the abdominal muscles.

Where, as is usually the case, the granite is coarsely crystalline, the quartz grains weather out in relief from the softer felspars, producing a rough gritty surface that gives excellent foothold. Hand-grips are not always so satisfactory, for, owing to the readiness with which the felspar, the chief component of the rock, yields to the action of the atmosphere, the sharp edges of the slabs are soon worn away, and become so completely rounded as to be grasped with difficulty.

Porphyry.—This rock is conspicuously developed in Ben Nevis, and forms the whole of the upper part of that mountain. It is finer in grain than ordinary granite, and weathers differently, producing sharper and more irregular features, and surfaces more broken up with cracks and crevices. It is this rock that composes the main part of those magnificent buttressed ridges that fall from the crest of the great north-eastern precipice—the last discovered, and probably the most interesting field for the cragsman on the mainland of Scotland.

A great part of the fine peak of Buachaille Etive (The Herdsman), and the craggy summit of Aonach Eagach, in Glencoe, also consist of porphyry.

Gabbro.—Occurs chiefly in the islands of the Inner Hebrides, where it forms the fine peaks of Rum, and the

wild range of the Cuchullins in the south of Skye. It is an intensely tough and hard rock, black in colour, and riven with joints in all directions.

The gabbro mountains usually present precipitous slopes of naked rock, with great slabs inclined downwards at a high angle. The summits rise into shapely cones, as those of Blaven, Halival, and Haskeval; or form narrow serrated ridges, bristling with sharp pinnacles, like those savage walls of black rock that tower above the gloomy depths of Loch Coruisk. A marked feature in the Cuchullin Hills are the dykes, or narrow bands of igneous rock of later origin, that run vertically up the mountain sides. Being generally composed of softer rock than the gabbro into which they are intruded, they wear away, leaving open clefts. These form gullies and stone-shoots on the face of the precipices, and deep nicks with perpendicular wall-like sides where they cross the ridges, thus accentuating the saw-like character and increasing the difficulty of following the sky-line of the mountain.

No rock could be more satisfactory to the climber than the gabbro. It is exceptionally firm and trustworthy, while the large crystals of augite that weather out in relief from the softer matrix produce a nutmeg-grater-like surface in contact with which the human body may almost defy the laws of gravity.

Basalt.—The basaltic rocks, the ancient lava-flows of the volcanoes of the Tertiary Period, cover a wide area in Skye, Mull, and Morven. The successive horizontal sheets in which they are disposed give them a regular bedded appearance; and this, combined with the unequal hardness of the different layers, causes them to weather out in terraces and stepped escarpments along the hillsides. The lower basalt hills are, like Macleod's Tables in Duirnish, strikingly flat-topped; but the summits of Ben More in Mull, a mountain of over 3,000 feet in height, are conical in form.

The many mural escarpments and fine sea-cliffs of the basalt area afford plenty of rock-scrambling, and isolated towers and pinnacles, like the strange rocks of the Quiraing in North Skye, will doubtless provide many interesting "rock-problems."

Dykes.—Besides forming the large masses described above, the igneous rocks also occur in narrow, wall-like bands, traversing the older formations. These dykes often run in a persistent straight line across hill and valley for many miles, and occasionally give rise to features of importance to the climber. When the dyke is composed of a rock softer than that which it traverses, it wears away more rapidly than the surrounding strata, and forms trench-like hollows and clefts like those of the Cuchullin Hills. When, on the other hand, the dyke is the harder of the two, it will appear as a rib, standing out in relief on the mountain side, and at the point where it crosses the crest of a narrow ridge may rise into formidable obstacles in the shape of *gendarmes* or “peelers,” such as the so-called “inaccessible” pinnacle of Sgurr Dearg.

Faults, or dislocations, by which one part of a mass of rock is let down against another, are a very common phenomenon in the Highlands. They do not always produce marked features, and may be invisible to an untrained eye. A fault is, however, always a line of weakness, along which denudation is inclined to act more readily than elsewhere. Hence the line of a powerful fault crossing a mountain ridge is generally marked by a fissure that may widen into a chimney or stone-shoot. Thus the two great clefts by which Suilven is cloven into three peaks mark the lines of two vertical faults that cross the mountain. In the neighbourhood of a fault the rocks are often in an extremely shattered and unstable condition, while the bedding planes are apt to suddenly change their angle and direction, and to dip sharply in towards the line of fracture. This is particularly the case among the Torridonian mountains of the north-west.

Glaciation.—The traces of the Glacial Period, though widely distributed throughout the Highlands, are mostly confined to the valleys and lower slopes of the hills, and do not greatly concern the climber. On the west coast, however, ice-scratched surfaces and perched blocks may be found on the shoulders and summits of some of the highest hills; while not a few of the quartzite mountains of West Ross exhibit glaciated dip-slopes so smoothly polished as hardly

to be crossed without the aid of the friendly but infrequent crack.

Of recent glacial phenomena there is still less to say. Scotland can boast no glaciers—not even a permanent snow-field. Our snow is an annual product, and better discussed under the head of “Snowcraft” than in a paper on the geological characters of the Scottish mountains.

In drawing up the subjoined table of the Scottish Hills, I have been indebted for much assistance to Mr Colin Phillip and to my colleagues on the Geological Survey.

A considerable portion of the Central and S.W. Highlands has not yet been geologically surveyed in detail, and it is possible that the classification of some of the Invernessshire and Argyllshire mountain groups may need some slight modification in the future. I shall be glad if any members of the Club who are familiar with the country not yet visited by the Survey will furnish me with any corrections or additions that may seem desirable.

For convenience of grouping, the country has been divided into six geographical areas, into which the different tracts of high ground seem naturally to fall. The only arbitrary divisional line is that separating the N.W. from and S.W. Highlands. It has not been thought necessary in every case to individualise each separate mountain or peak. Where mountains having the same geological character belong to a well-marked and closely connected group, they will be referred to collectively. There has also been no attempt made to fix a limit of height for the hills included in the table. Many hills comparatively low in altitude are interesting from their geological structure or beauty of form; while others, far greater in bulk, have nothing but their elevation above sea-level to recommend them.

DIVISIONS—

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. North-West Highlands | . | { West Sutherland.
West Ross.
West Inverness, north of
Loch Hourn and Glen
Garry. |
| 2. South-West Highlands | . | { West Inverness, south of
Loch Hourn.
Argyll. |

3. Eastern Highlands . . . { All country east of the rivers Spey, Garry, Tummel, and Tay.
4. Central Highlands . . . { All Highlands not included in the above 3 divisions.
5. Outer and Inner Hebrides.
6. Southern Uplands.

The N. and S. watershed of Scotland is taken as the dividing line between the Western and Central Highlands.

I. SEDIMENTARY ROCKS.

OLD RED SANDSTONE.

4. *Central Highlands.*

Caithness—Morven and Maiden Pap.
Beinn Griams.
Mealfourvie.
Uamh Mhor.
Monteith Hills.

SILURIAN.

6. *Southern Uplands.*

Hartfell. } Shales and sandstone.
Broadlaw. }
Lowther Hills. } Shales and greywackes.
Lead Hills. }
Pentland Hills (in part).

TORRIDONIAN—Sandstone, Grit, and Conglomerate.

1. *N.W. Highlands.*

Assynt . . .	{	Quinag (2 peaks capped with Cambrian quartzite).
		Canisp (capped with Cambrian quartzite).
		Suilven.
		Coul Mhòr (peaks capped with Cambrian quartzite).
		Coul Bheag.
		Ben More Coigach group.
Loch Maree district . . .	{	Stack Polly.
		An Teallach (3 tops capped with Cambrian quartzite).
		Sail Mhòr, Loch Broom.
		Beinn a Chlaidheimh (capped with Cambrian quartzite).
		Beinn Tarsuinn.
		Beinn Dearg Mhòr.
		Slioch.
		Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair (capped with Cambrian quartzite).
		Sgurr Ban (capped with Cambrian quartzite).
		Beinn Eighe (lower portion and northern spurs).
Torridon . . .	{	Leathach (3 tops capped with Cambrian quartzite).
		Beinn Dearg.
		Alligin.

N.W. Highlands—*continued.*

	Baosbheinn.	
	Beinn Damph (capped with Cambrian quartzite).	
	Beinn Bhan of Applecross.	
Achnashellach Forest .	{ Sgurr Ruadh. Meall à Chinn Deirg. Beinn Liath Mhor. Fuar Tholl.	Interfolded with Cambrian quartzite.

II. METAMORPHIC ROCKS.

QUARTZITE.

1. *N.W. Highlands.*

Sutherland .	{ Sgribhinn (of Cambrian age). Spionnaidh " Fionabheinn " Arkle " Glas Bheinn " Brebag " Beinn Eighe (greater part of). Sgurr Dubh, and other hills (of Cambrian age). Hills of the Coulin and Achnashellach Forests (<i>see</i> under Torridonian) (of Cambrian age).
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2. *S.W. Highlands.*

Mamore .	{ Stob Bhan. Sgurr à Mhaim. Binnein Mhòr. Binnein Bheag.
Loch Treig .	{ Stob Coire Claurigh. Stob Ban. Stob Coire an Easain Mhoir. Stob Coire Laoigh. An Caisteal. Paps of Jura.

3. *Eastern Highlands.*

	Corryhabbie Hills.
	Cromdale Hills.
Deeside .	{ Beinn Iutharn Mhor. Beinn Iutharn Beag. Glasmeal. Cairnwell. Cairn à Glasha. Tolmount. An Socach.
Athole .	{ Beinn y Ghlo. Carn à Chlamhain.

4. *Central Highlands.*

Schiehallion.
Cairn Maing.

SCHISTOSE ROCKS OF THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

(Including gneisses, mica-schists, quartz-schists, slates, and schistose grits. The age of these rocks is at present uncertain.)

1. *N.W. Highlands.*

- Beinn Fionn.
- Moruisg.
- *Beinn Attow (Fhada) group.
- *Sgurr Ouran group.
- Beinn Sgriol.

* On watershed of Scotland, and partly in Division 4.

2. *S.W. Highlands.*

- Ladhar Bheinn.
- Hills of Knoidart and Loch Hourn. {
- " Morar. { Some of
- " Moidart. { these may be
- " Ardgour. { archæan
- " Morven. { gneiss.
- " Loch Eil. }
- Beinn a Bheithir. {
- Beinn Buidhe. { Mica-schist and schistose grit.
- Beinn Voirlich. {
- Beinn Lomond. {
- Arrochar . { Beinn Ime. }
- { Beinn Vane. }
- { Beinn Arthur. }

3. *Eastern Highlands.*

- Glen Feshie { Meall Tionail.
- { Sgarsach.
- { Meall na Cuaich.
- { Cairn na Caim.
- { Hills of Gaick Forest.
- { Hills of Glen Ey Forest.
- { Mayar.
- { Driesh.
- { Beinn Vrackie.

4. *Central Highlands.*

- Sutherland . { Beinn Hope (mica and hornblende-schists).
- { Beinn Hee.
- { Clibreck.
- Braemore . { Meall Horn.
- { Beinn Dearg.
- { Hills of the Freevater Forest.
- { Beinn Wyvis.
- Fannich . { Sgurr Mhor. } Mica-schist and gneiss.
- { A'Chailleach. }
- { Sgurr Breac. }
- { Beinn Liath Mhor. } Mica and quartz-schist.
- { Sgurr na Clach Geala. }
- { Meall a Chrasgaich. }

Central Highlands—*continued.*

	Hills of Monar Forest, Hills of Glen Strath Farrar. Sgurr na Lapaich Group. Carn Eige Group. Hills between Glen Affric and Glen Clunie. Sgurr a' Mhuilinn. Corryairack. Monadliath Mountains. Creag Meaghaidh Range. Beinn a' Chlachair.	}	Gneiss, mica-schist, and quartzite.
Beinn Aulder Forest	{ Carn Dearg. Aonach Beag. Geal Charn. Beinn Eibhinn. Aonach Mhor. Aonach Bheag, and other mountains West of Loch Treig (partly quartzite). Boar of Badenoch. Beinn Lawers Group (mica-schist, slate, and lime- stone). Hills of Glen Lyon. Hills of Glen Lochay. Ben More. Stobinnein. Beinn Dothaidh. Beinn Doirean. Beinn Achallader. Stob Gabhar. Clach Leathad. Beinn Laoigh Group.		
Black Mount	{ Beinn Ledi. Ben Venue. Stuc a' Chroin. Beinn Voirlich.	}	Mostly mica-schist. Mica-schist and schistose grit.

LEWISIAN OR ARCHÆAN GNEISS.

1. *N.W. Highlands.*

Strathcarron .	Beinn Stack. Beinn Mhor Assynt (with Torridonian and Cambrian quartzite). Maighdean (capped with Torridon sardstone). Airidh a' Charr. Beinn Lair. Beinn a' Chaisgean Mhor. Glasbheinn and Sgurr a' Gharaidh.
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5. *Outer Hebrides.*

South Uist .	{ Hekla. Beinn Mhor. Hills of Harris and Park Forests..
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III. IGNEOUS ROCKS.

GRANITE (PORPHYRY, FELSTONE).

1. *N.-W. Highlands.*

Beinn Laoghal.
Beinn Stomino.

2. *S.W. Highlands.*

Ben Nevis Group (upper portion of Ben Nevis porphyry).

Beinn Cruachan Group.
Beinn Starav.
Beinn Chochuill.
Beinn Eunaich.

Glencoe	.	{	Buachaille Etive, Aonach Eagach, Bidean nan Bian (in part) Beinn Narnan	}	Porphyry.
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3. *Eastern Highlands.*

Ben Rinnes.
Benachie.

Deeside	.	{	Hill of Fare. Mount Battock. Broad Cairn. Cairn Bannock. Lochnagar.
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Cairngorm Mountains	.	{	Beinn Avon. Beinn a' Bhuid. Caiplich (Ben Bynac). Beinn a' Chaoruinn. Beinn Meadhoin. Beinn Macdhui. Cairngorm. Braeriach. Sgoran Dubh. Carn Toul. Carn Ban.
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Athole	.	{	Beinn Bhreac. Beinn Dearg.
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4. *Central Highlands.*

Geal Carn Mhor, Monadhliath.
Beinn Alder (partly gneiss).
Beinn Mholach?
Beinn Udlaman (part of).

5. *Inner Hebrides and Islands.*

Skye	.	{	Glamaig (felstone and granophyre). Marsco " " Red Hills " " Goatfell Group.
Arran	.	{	Goatfell Group.

6. *Southern Uplands.*

Cairnsmore of Fleet.
 Merrick and Kells Range (great part of).
 Criffel.
 Cheviot.
 Hedgehope.
 Kilpatrick Hills (porphyrite).
 Campsie Hills "
 Ochils "
 Eildon Hills (felstone).
 Pentland Hills (great portion of).
 Ailsa Craig.

DIORITE, GABBRO, BASALT, AND OTHER BASIC IGNEOUS ROCKS.

3. *Eastern Highlands.*

Aberdeenshire { Morven (diorite).
 Threestone Hill (diorite).

4. *Central Highlands.*

Moor of Ran- { Carn Dearg (diorite).
 noch . . . { Beinn Pharlagainn (diorite).
 Black Corries "
 Beinn Chonzie (part of).

5. *Inner Hebrides.*

Skye . . . { Cuchullins (gabbro).
 Quiraing (basalt).
 Storr Rock "
 M'Leod's Tables (basalt).
 Mull . . . { Ben More. "
 Haleval (gabbro).
 Rum . . . { Haskeval "
 Sgur na Gillean (gabbro).
 Mull . . . { Creachbheinn "
 Beinn Buy "

FOUR DAYS ON BEN NEVIS.

BY W. INGLIS CLARK.

THE public, when they think of mountaineers at all, regard them as a peculiar people. They seem so full of inconsistencies, that one can never be sure what to expect. The climbing fraternity is generally considered to be of Spartan mould and training, hence the uninitiated are surprised to notice that in the inevitable rucksack are to be found jams, fruits, acid drops, sardines, snaps, and other delicacies of the palate, and that, in fact, the mountaineer has a good eye for creature comforts. Then, again, should the layman watch the climber threading his way along some rugged crest, he notes that instead of leaping from pinnacle to pinnacle, as the popular fancy depicts him, his cat-like motions seem to indicate distrust and fear where the mere novice would hurry along with confidence. These peculiarities, however, as all readers of this *Journal* know, are simply the practical illustration that "he who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day," and that in order to make climbing legitimate sport, one must nurture and take care of the body to the utmost. I see the Editor stealthily drawing forward his waste-paper basket with his left foot, as he wonders what all this has to do with Ben Nevis; but if he will only delay the holocaust for a little, I shall refer to one other peculiarity which, exemplified in myself, gave rise to these notes. It is said that Sinigaglia, well known for his book on the Dolomites, never walks to his mountain climbs if he can help it, but on horseback passes over the intervening ground, and reserves his whole energy for the business on hand. Wise man! Even in our own romantic town the tradition lingers that distinguished members of the S.M.C. have been known to drive in a cab from Princes Street, when on a climbing expedition to the Salisbury Crags. It was while pondering on these matters, as I painfully toiled on various occasions from Fort-William up the bridle-path to our well-loved Ben, that the thought occurred to me that in the absence of a Club hut at the foot of the Tower Ridge,

an excellent if not better substitute could be found in the hotel on the summit itself. The project, of course, could only be practicable after the 1st June, and one would therefore lose the grander effects of winter and spring, but as a compensation the rocks would be free from snow and the ridges practicable. The occasion on which these thoughts took final shape was on 17th May, the day before the Queen's Birthday, when a merry if not too confident party, J. G. Inglis, Rev. J. W. Inglis, my wife, and myself, started for Fort-William. Many were the weather prophecies offered, and finally the writer was nearly annihilated as he muttered for the twelfth time, "A deep depression is approaching from the Atlantic, with westerly to north-westerly winds and rain." It is strange how men dislike the truth, and so every one pointed to this and that patch of blue sky as conclusively proving the mendacity of the Meteorological Office. At 6.30 A.M., however, our faces bore a resigned look, which was quite justified, for as we drove to the foot of the mountain path, numerous wisps of cloud threatened to blot out the summits of Sgor a Mhaim and Stob Ban. By the time the half-way loch was reached, the writer was permitted to refer to the meteorological forecast without protest, and we had barely reached a friendly boulder below the Castle Ridge ere the sleety rain began to descend in good style. As the clouds hurried along we got fleeting glimpses of the North-East Buttress, heavily sheeted to the foot, and of the Castle Ridge, plentifully sprinkled with snow. Difficult rock-work being out of the question, the party made their way up the gully leading into the great Castle Corrie, with the cliffs of Carn Dearg on the left and the Castle Ridge on the right. Impressive views of the Castle through the driving snow challenged an attempt at a photograph, but despite an impromptu waterproof studio, no result was secured. As the rocks became more and more coated with snow, our first idea to ascend the Castle Ridge was set aside, and we decided rather to ascend one of the deep-cleft gullies that isolate the Castle on either hand. Shortly after entering the Castle Corrie, we were puzzled by the very evident remains of an extensive avalanche, while rocky *débris* was liberally scattered on the



THE TOWER RIDGE FROM CARN DEARG.

W. Inglis Clark.

snow. No probable source of this was apparent, but as the southern Castle gully seemed to be frequently swept by avalanches, we took to the northern one as being free from such unwelcome intrusions. We were just passing the foot of the Castle, where a formidable overhanging wall cuts it off from the lower rocks, when our attention was directed to Carn Dearg, where, high above, a huge avalanche of snow, corniced ice, and rocks fell about 200 feet into a basin, and rebounding over the great cliff, was precipitated with a loud roar on the rocks, 400 to 600 feet below. In particular, one mass of rock, possibly 6 to 8 feet cube, fell with a crash on to the scree, and sent a shower of stones far and wide in the direction of the track we had just traversed. We found no difficulty in ascending the northern gully till about one-third of the distance from the top, as the snow was in good condition and the angle not excessive. At this point, however, a huge jammed block forced the leader on to the steep wall on our right hand, where a short struggle ensued with snow covered and rounded holds. Eventually, the obstacle being surmounted, the remainder of the party were soon plodding upwards to the top of the gully, where they arrived cold and wet from the pitiless blast as it drove the snowflakes before it. Below the jammed block we looked down into the semi-bergschrand which yawned at our feet, and estimated the depth of the crevasse at not less than 15 to 20 feet. In the absence of snow, the passage of this point might prove very difficult indeed, unless better holds exist below the snow level than were available above.

After passing round the summit of the Castle, an inspection was made of the head of the southern gully, where heavy cornices had already fallen off or were in danger of doing so. Under the conditions, the snow scenery was grand in the extreme, but photography was impossible. A most fatiguing trudge in deep soft snow at length brought us to the welcome shelter and hospitality of the Observatory, and later on the party returned to Fort-William. Although at this date the roof of the Summit Hotel only showed slightly above the snow, the succeeding anti-cyclone rapidly laid it bare, so that by 5th June the Hotel was open to

receive visitors. Some preliminary letters having established the identity of the Hotel proprietor with one of the genial observers, it was a sad trial of patience while necessary business prevented us from taking advantage of the brilliant weather and ascending to the top.

But fortune favours the brave, and when on Monday, 12th June, a wire from the Observatory announced "Atmosphere clear; warm; no prospect of change," my wife and I decided to start by the afternoon train and ascend that night. It was 10 P.M. ere we had disposed of our luggage in four rucksacks to be sent up on horseback next day. By the time we were sitting on the plank at the half-way hut, old Phœbus had long ago saluted Ben Slioch, said good-bye to Ben Loyal, and was hurrying past Shetland for his morning engagement about Ben Muich Dhui. The darkening night which held such secret shrouds over the silent valleys had been vanquished as we ascended into the clearer air, and with our more extended horizon, although the Mamore Forest and Glencoe brooded sullenly, we had companions enough, for Garsven of Ardgour, and the finger of Loch Eil pointing to Glen Finnan, and the peaks of Nevis and Hourn, were still tracing out the path of the sun, and zenith clouds faintly threw back the lurid light.

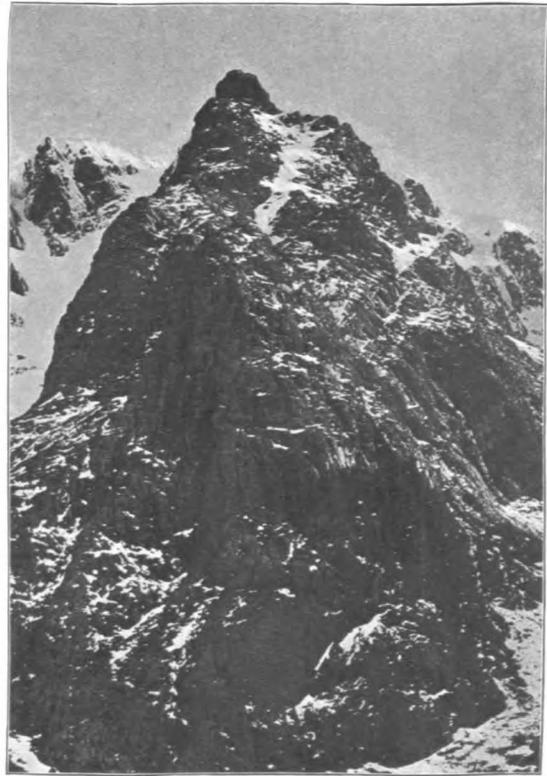
The night was warm, and the weight of a 20-lb. rucksack did not tend to minimise the temperature, while the spirits of the mountain seemed to be calling us to sleep, so that we hailed with no small gratitude the friendly light burning in the highest habitation in Britain. It was 1.20 A.M., and how weird it was to look over to the south, where all was black and gloomy. Then away to the north-east, perhaps about Inverness, where already a brilliant galaxy of yellow and red assured us of the dawn; and then in at the Observatory window, where faithful workers kept their hourly toil. It was all too glorious for sleep, and the hour passed quickly enough till 3 A.M., when the mighty sun, already for half an hour dallying with his night-cap, threw it off, and gazed on as glorious a scene as these islands can boast.

Far down in the valleys tossed a sea of fleecy billows,



THE TOWER, FROM THE SUMMIT.

BEN NEVIS.



THE TOWER RIDGE.

W. Inglis Clark.

called into existence by a short-lived northerly gale, and through this sea of clouds the mountain crests thrust their black rugged heads as if but half wakened by the morning sun. In vain did camera and focussing cloth attempt to depict the scene, for Boreas upset all arrangements, and called forth the choicest language that a scientific training enabled me to select. Enshrouded in flapping bed-clothes, with alpine rope and rucksacks to give ballast, we were compelled to see the kaleidoscope pass but half recorded, and the vasty spirits of the deep melt away in the clear light of morning. Our nocturnal journey and prowlings were but a bad preparation for serious rock-work, and so the day passed away in excursions to the Tower and other points of vantage. It is a common experience of climbers that when they revisit the scenes of former exploits they find the rocks changed for the better or the worse. Let the geologists, the philosophers, the cynics of the Club explain how it was that in 1896, when I crossed the gap on the Tower Ridge, I could have felt certain that it measured not less than 10 cubits long, with an average width of about 4 inches; while on this occasion I found that the Tower had bodily moved nearer the mountain, thereby reducing the gap to about 6 or 8 feet.

Wednesday, 14th, found us up with the lark, or at least with the snow-bunting, for the day had dawned when we were to attack the North-East Buttress, a long-cherished dream. All conditions were favourable, and the observer at 7 A.M. recorded a temperature of about 55° Fahr., so that it was with light hearts and a heavy photographic rucksack that we started down the eastern slope for the Carn Mor Dearg arête. The remains of some of the cornices still yielded a transient trickle under the rays of a hot sun, but there was no wind, and the stillness was unbroken, save for the distant murmur of the stream in the valley, and the growling of the screes beneath our feet. The North-East Buttress has already been so well described in the *Journal*, that it might seem unnecessary to refer further to it, the more so as I have no sensational adventures to describe. As Messrs Brown and Tough, however, tell of it in mist and storm and rain, so perhaps an account of it as we found

it on an ideal June day may not come amiss. This magnificent ridge of rock, the most easterly on Ben Nevis, presents from all points of view perhaps the grandest and most alluring sight in the whole mountain. As the great valley of Mhuillin is entered from the west, this buttress rises in stupendous precipices of apparently very sheer angle to the summit. Not only is the western face very steep, but the sky-line is broken up by pinnacle, tower, or overhanging cliff in a very attractive manner. If we descend from the summit of the Ben on to the Tower Ridge, the buttress still appears of enormous difficulty, and the rocks near the summit seem still more formidable. But perhaps the most impressive point of view is just opposite, on the slopes of Carn Mor Dearg, not too high up, but while the ridge still stands up like an isolated mountain, and is not yet merged in the overpowering *massif* behind. Here it appears as an isolated sharp cone, belted with rock, and near the summit seeming to be hedged round by a bristling set of slabby precipices. I had often passed by and looked at it with bated breath, for by all accounts it was only for the high priests of our sport. Yet now I actually proposed to attack it, aided and abetted only by my better half. I was the more encouraged to do this by the assurances of those who had climbed it, one of them having even dared to call it a "great impostor." Lest any one should rush in to accuse me of "slandering" these grand old rocks, I hasten to explain that it is only an impostor in looking more difficult than it is. As no one, however, has climbed it direct from the foot, and many points of the ridge are still regularly avoided, it has little cause to hide its head.

Although accessible by at least two gullies on the west face, it is more easily reached by the very prominent broken-up slope on the side approaching Corrie Lias. When covered with snow, this resembles a well-defined ledge sloping down gently to the left, and reaching the crest of the ridge near the point known as the first platform. So far the route is very simple, and is an easy scramble. Nor can it be said that after that point the rocks become difficult, even in the commonplace sense. There are corners to round and

narrow ledges to pass, but save for the sensational steepness of the west face, these would not call for comment. For lovers of a view the first platform can be most highly recommended. From here the lower part of the Tower Ridge and the rock scenery of Carn Dearg are most imposing. A little farther up the rocks rise precipitously and bar the way where a broad ledge leads round to the right. We, however, selected the steepish chimneys or stone-shoots sloping up towards the left, and after this for some time found the route capable of variation. Holding as much as possible to the right, but still on the left side of the arête, what a wilderness of fantastic rocks is presented to the climber—grotesque faces, sharp pinnacles, hollowed caves—but what especially delighted us were the beds of violet, saxifrage, and crassula, and the parsley and oak ferns, that nestled in their lovely freshness and charm in every sheltering spot. The blue sky with floating cumuli, the cool air, the overshadowing steepness of the buttress, the exquisite flowers, all reminded us of the Tyrol. The tinkling of the goat or cow bells was all alone absent from our surroundings. The rock is of excellent quality, and affords a secure grip to the hobnailers, so that the climb is in every sense charming. As we rise the views widen, but not of the Ben itself. Here the Easans show ghastly over Carn Mor Dearg, and through the col between the Aonachs. Aonach Beag, in the changing cloud light, presents gullies which contrast finely with its fresh green colouring, and farther south Binnein Mor and Beag stand up, proudly casting long shadows to the north-east. So far no difficulty was experienced, but at length a wall of rock was reached, which, crossing the ridge, runs along precipitously on the face of the cliff towards the Observatory. What did this correspond to in Brown and Tough's description, and how was it to be overcome? On the crest of the ridge it formed a sort of gendarme about 10 feet high, but almost vertical, and with practically no holds down below. To the right the rocks fall at an acute angle, and on the left the cliff affords uncertain holds. The usual course, and the simplest, is to take advantage of a friendly back and mount straight up, when good holds will be found at the top of the wall

and the obstacle passed. This, however, was not practicable. In this dilemma attention was turned to the right hand corner, where some have found it possible to circumvent the gendarme. As, this, however, looked rather awkward, a descent of about 10 feet was made to the right, where a narrow but easy ledge was found. From this a traverse was made to rocks somewhat resembling miniature Samson's Ribs, but at no acute angle; and after climbing up and crossing these, we reached a very steep chimney or corner corresponding in many ways to the 40-foot corner described by Brown, but apparently quite different. Here a new problem presented itself. We were on a secure platform, but the gulf below fell to an appalling depth, and the only evident course was to go up. Some nailmarks at the bottom indicated previous attempts, but no more were seen farther up, and some of the holds with undisturbed moss could hardly have been made use of before. A back was distinctly desirable, for the first comfortable holds are perhaps 7 or 8 feet up. However, as the rocks were dry and rough, pressure and friction grips proved useful, and soon the leader was standing about 30 feet up on a small ledge on the left wall (looking up), vainly endeavouring to raise himself on to the next ledge about the level of the shoulders. Suffice to say, that a friendly crack affords pressure against the foot, and the body can be raised gradually to the higher position, whence good holds and convenient ledges lead to a position of safety. The rucksack being now brought up, the 60 feet rope was found just long enough to give moral and a little physical support to my wife, who, manipulating the holds in correct style, was not long in congratulating herself on being near the top and past all difficulty. Turning to the left, we again struck the ridge, and after some easy rocks, a few minutes' scrambling led us to the summit and conclusion of our climb. Under such conditions the N.E. Buttress presents the fairest face, and no average climber need hesitate to attack it, but a slight alteration in the weather would add 50 per cent. to the difficulty, and under winter conditions it might be impossible to any. On the whole, I incline to place it first among the routes for moderate climbers who have a keen

eye for the grand, the picturesque, and the romantic. While the Tower ridge undoubtedly offers the finest climbing, and the views on either hand are sublime, yet these views are practically confined to the Ben itself. For myself, I prefer the more extensive outlook obtained from its eastern neighbour.

The Castle Ridge and gullies, on the other hand, are composed of less satisfactory rock, and do not afford such good foothold, although, as I shall point out later, nowhere on the Ben, nor indeed in Scotland, have I witnessed finer rock scenery than that to be found in the Castle Corrie of Carn Dearg.

Our last sunset on the Ben was, I suppose, but a sample of what may meet the eye on clear evenings when the sun sinks to rest. If, however, I can but stimulate more of our members to take advantage of this elevated Hotel, a few words will not be wasted.

The view from the summit during our stay had never been phenomenally clear, nor could it be said that the brilliant light showed off the mountain to the best advantage. In the glaring sunlight precipices shrunk by many hundred feet, and cliffs eased off many degrees of steepness, so that the rocks seemed less forbidding, and new possible routes opened up in unexpected places. The absence of clouds and rain also robbed the mountain of much of its romance, and made me more than ever appreciate the saying, that "Scotland is like a Scotch pebble; it needs to be wet to disclose all its beauty." On the evening in question a disappointing haze obscured the view; but strange to say, while it obscured it, it also made the most distant peaks stand up equally distinct with the near ones. A change of wind to the south-east had settled a pall of cloud overhead, extending to the western shores of the mainland, but leaving the glowing Western Hebrides under an unclouded sky. As the sun was obscured behind this black pall somewhere to the north of Skye, the unaided eye traced without difficulty the seamy corries of the Coolins; while Mhadaidh, Alasdair, Sgurr nan Gilleann, and even the Bhasteir Tooth were sharply depicted against a golden background. Suddenly the eye rested on what seemed to

be a rocket star far up in front of the black cloud, and as it slowly descended, it was difficult to realise that we were looking at the great orb through but a pin-hole in the cloud itself. As it sunk to the lower edge, a wonderful double corona appeared, which persisted till naught but a ruddy glow indicated the departing day. The disc of the sun was dark red, and could be gazed at without difficulty. For about three diameters a dusky red shot outwards. Beyond this was a dark ring, perhaps half a diameter in thickness, girt by a narrow circle of red, which again was surrounded by a dark cloud. Attention was divided between this wonderful phenomenon, the brilliance of the sea in front of Rum, and the startling colour of the rocks around us, which seemed actually to burn in the weird light. About half-past nine the last rim of the orb had sunk, but till midnight the red or yellow glow persisted in the higher reaches of our atmosphere.

Thursday, like its predecessors, was a brilliant day. The threatened change of the previous evening had expended itself during the night, and the general outlook was improved by the cumuli which prefaced the perfect blue of the sky. Making our way along Carn Dearg, we revisited the Castle Ridge, in order to correct the impressions obtained on the Queen's Birthday. The two gullies were still full of snow, but the cornices had practically disappeared, and the rocks were now dry. Our intention was to descend the Castle Ridge, strike the main gully below the fork, and cross over to the Carn Dearg Buttress, the better to photograph the Tower. The upper part of the Castle Ridge reminds one somewhat of the ridge of Bhasteir, but the rocks are decidedly slippery, and do not always afford sure foothold. Farther down progress was constantly delayed by the steep faces which occur on the ridge. From below it is much more easy to select the best route, but we frequently found ourselves trapped, and had to retrace our steps. Like the North-East Buttress, this ridge abounds in picturesque situations, while the violet and other wild flowers occur in great profusion. Ideal lunching spots occur at every turn, and at one place a little bed of blaeberreries, now in flower, occupied a hollow under

an overhanging rock, whence a thousand feet of precipice fell from our feet to the valley below.

The half has not been told of the delights of this route. From a climbing point of view it presents distinctly difficult situations, more especially if the climber carries 25 lbs. of baggage on his back; but it is generally possible to avoid the difficulties, and the grand outlook more than recompenses for the toil. In this Castle Corrie the leading feature is the Castle itself. Cut off on either hand by deep and gloomy gullies, it rises, more especially near the top, in horned and pinnacled precipices, which show finely against the sky. As seen from the Castle Ridge, about two-thirds up, with the snow-fields of Carn Dearg behind, and the vast buttresses falling in sheer or overhanging cliff to the left, it presents one of the sublimest rock spectacles in the British Isles. Unfortunately, when we descend to the fork of the gully, the Castle towers too high to be photographed; but on the other hand, Carn Dearg reveals pinnacles above its cliffs which can quite hold their own with Dolomite scenery. The photographer should, however, cross the avalanche screes to the corner of the Carn Dearg Buttress, and there ensconced at the foot of these stupendous walls, will behold the Castle and its compeers presenting a number of magnificent and bewildering scenic effects. Fortunately no difficulties need debar any one from visiting this spot, as the ascent from the valley is perfectly simple, short, and easy.

Leaving the Castle Ridge, and descending into the valley, now carpeted with flowers, we soon turned our backs on our favourite precipices, and returned to civilisation. A word should be said in commendation of the Summit Hotel to my fellow-members. The charges (previously arranged) were remarkably moderate, the food ample, fresh, and excellent, and our general comfort attended to in every way. The weather—aye, there's the rub—well, remember the proverbs, "The early bird gets the worm," and "Make hay while the sun shines."

N.B.—The sun shines most often between 1st and the 20th of June.

SPRING ATTEMPTS.

BY SCOTT MONCRIEFF PENNEY.

HAD I entered some hitherto unheard-of gully as the stars were setting, and, after a day well spent in gazing in admiration at the feet and feats of my leader, had emerged in triumph at the top as the moonbeams were beginning to strike my aching head, I should at once have offered the Editor an account of a proceeding worthy alike of the Scottish Mountaineering Club and of its *Journal*. As, however, I had only wandered to and fro on the earth, from the Heart of Midlothian to within sight of St Kilda, viewing with admiration many of our grandest mountains, or as much of them as was visible, but failing to reach even one "Munro" peak, it required an editorial request for an article to overcome one's natural reluctance to record failures. And yet, but with due diffidence as becomes the opinion of a member of a feeble and discredited minority, let it be said, I humbly hold that he who strives to get into touch with the different mountains of Scotland, may do as much to foster in himself and to encourage in others the love of mountaineering as he who is the greatest living authority on the threescore and-ten ways of ascending Ben Brakenek, and may be a not altogether unworthy, even if an utterly insignificant, member of the Club.

The first mountains whose acquaintance I sought to make last spring were those giants of the West—Ben Lomond and the Cobbler. They were both familiar to me from my childhood, and therefore unascended, as they are still. The former I used to see when of a ripe enough age to take walks with my nurse in the West End Park, Glasgow, and of intelligence enough to warn the birds to "keep off the grass" for fear of the police. The latter was pointed out to me when at a later stage I was taken for a sail "doon the watter" by my parents. Having now children of my own, though not so highly favoured, for they live in the "haary" regions of the East Coast, I thought I ought to be able to help them with their geography lessons by describing to them in detail the features of these

well-known hills. Accordingly I set aside the February week for this purpose, and secured the companionship of Mr Alexander Moncrieff, another of the innumerable number of members of the Bar who hail from the West, whose name is already familiar to readers of the *Journal* as the efficient coadjutor of one of our most distinguished, successful, and respected peak-baggers.

Cowlairs Station, shortly after seven o'clock on the morning of Monday, 6th February, with the snow driving into the waiting-room, was not cheerful, nor was the prospect much better as we overlooked our sporting ground from above Ardmay. But we had the satisfaction of feeling that at any rate we were doing our best to faithfully follow the precept and example of the Club in selecting wintry conditions for attacking the hills. Our baggage was handed over at the station to the porter of the Tarnet Hotel, where we had arranged to stay in view of our second day being devoted to Ben Lomond. We ourselves tramped along frozen roads to the Arrochar Hotel, where we found the breakfast we had ordered beforehand almost ready. After having done it full justice, we had a bracing walk round the head of the loch, snow having ceased falling, and struck across the moor to the Bhalachdin Burn, which we crossed, partly on ice, below the waterfalls. The walking in the valley above them was very unpleasant, and at times dangerous. The snow was soft and caked on our boots, while the marshy ground below was covered in places with sheets of ice like glass, upon which our feet slipped without the least warning, and in spite of the utmost caution. I had more than one sudden fall, as if I had been tripped up, and I began to fear the possibility of a broken wrist. At 1,700 feet, where the corrie opens up to the left, we were completely in the dark, and indeed remain so as to our exact whereabouts on our two consecutive days. Having been advised to make the circuit of the hill from the N.E. shoulder, we kept up the right hand branch of the burn, and then began to ascend what we believe to have been the skirts of the Cobbler's Wife. The snow was now in excellent condition, and we had an enjoyable climb up the slopes to a height of about 2,200 feet. Then the

angle began to increase, and considering it was our first day out, that we were guideless and viewless, and that we had a limited amount even of what could only by euphemism be called daylight, we resolved—one of us with characteristic caution, and the other mindful of a certain New Year's Day he had spent after dark on Ben Cruachan—to rest satisfied with our modest accomplishments. There was not much glissading to be had, but we varied the monotony of the descent by one or two mild boulder climbs, found the valley in an even more slippery condition than before, enjoyed the striking Alpine landscape with the black loch in the centre, followed the stream to the bridge at its mouth, revisited the Arrochar Hotel for tea, and reached that of Tarbet to find ourselves sole occupiers of its spacious halls. The food and accommodation provided, at Club rates, was all that could be desired, and even the billiard-room was made warm and available for our amusement. We were somewhat disgusted, however, after our forethought, at being told that there are no boats on Loch Lomond in winter, but a message was sent to a ferryman at some little distance to be in readiness to row us across to the Ben after breakfast.

Next morning was wild and squally. Exit any thought of Ben Lomond; enter proposal we should return home by the first train. But this, in spite of a sleet storm, was rejected as pusillanimous, and off we set once more for the Cobbler. A thaw had begun, but the early forenoon conditions were favourable, save the mist on the heights. The wind fell, the sleet stopped, while the snow in the valley was firmer, and effectively covered the ice below. This time we kept up the corrie and tried to steer for the Cobbler himself, but the fog was as dense as ever. We were more adventuresome than the day before, and not so easily deterred by the steepness of the slopes, notwithstanding that the character of the snow had changed. Better below, as we ascended it became soft and deep. Large steps had to be dug, and these only led to frozen snow below. The upper layer, too, showed a tendency to come away in masses. Step cutting became arduous, and for mutual support two on the rope were barely sufficient.

We were also evidently, even if on a practical road to it, 400 feet from the top, and the outlook was not reassuring, so once again—retreat. Much pleasure you must have had! sneers the Philistine, but, unless absolutely devoid of the sense of beauty, he would not again repeat the cynical remark could he but have stood beside us at the foot of the cliffs as we descended—within four hours' reach of Glasgow, be it remembered. Absolute silence, unbroken by wind or water, reigned. A field of spotless snow lay at our feet. A low wall of green ice, up which we could cut steps and climb, rose beside us, and a little distance off loomed the black slabs on which no snow could lie, supported, as it were, at their base by huge pillars of blue ice, some 8 feet high and 6 feet in circumference. Behind these we could stand, and, in anticipation of the slow thaw, and in relief of our unused energy, we amused ourselves for some time hewing them away. Oh, when will Scotsmen learn that they need not wait for summer and the Alps to study and enjoy Alpine scenery!

A fortnight later I was admiring the snowy outline of the Coolins from the Court House at Lochmaddy, where I was endeavouring to discharge the onerous duties of interim Sheriff-Substitute of that outlying part of Inverness-shire. Not a ripple was on the loch, and, across the for once calm Minch, Skye and its headlands stood out in a most enticing manner. I forthwith resolved, early though the season was, to have, if possible, at least one day with John Mackenzie before returning south. But first the hills of North Uist, of Benbecula, of South Uist, and of Harris lay nearer, though scarcely easier of access. To begin with their nomenclature is interesting. Often doubtful, it is generally Scandinavian or Celtic, and usually the former. For example, the highest mountain of South Uist is the inevitable Ben More (2,034 feet), but that of Benbecula is Rueval (only 409 feet), and that of North Uist, Eaval (1,138 feet). This affix "val," a variation of the Norwegian "Fjeld," and found in Scotland and England in the form "Fell" or "Field," is much the commonest. Thus we have, besides those already named, Stulaval (1,237 feet), and Easaval (800 feet), lying north and south of Loch

Boisdale, in South Uist ; Blashval (362 feet), a prominent little hill on which the Diamond Jubilee Cairn was built, Unival (458 feet), and Marrival (757 feet) in North Uist ; and Uisgnaval (2,392 feet), Oreval (2,165 feet), and Ullaval (2,153 feet) in Harris. Hecla, the name of a mountain of 1,988 feet in South Uist, and of one of 700 feet in Mingulay, at the extreme south end of the Long Island, is also Scandinavian, while the source of the name Clisham (2,622 feet), between Loch Tarbert and Loch Seaforth in Harris, the highest mountain in the Outer Hebrides, seems uncertain.

Doubt also attaches to the names of North Lee and South Lee, which lie between Loch Maddy and Loch Efort. North Lee (823 feet) resembles Arthur's Seat in appearance, though of a different and vastly older geological formation, and like a lion guards the entrance to Loch Maddy on the south. Nor is it without pitches towards its summit, which might puzzle some of the rock-climbers of the Club.

To its base, one day within a week of my arrival, I was ferried across. How long it would have taken me to reach it by land I cannot say, but Loch Maddy, the mouth of which is barely a mile broad, and the maximum length of which is only six miles, has a coast line of something like 360 miles ! The view from the top towards the north, east, and south is fairly extensive and pleasing, extending from the Sutherland, Teallach, and Torridon Mountains to the Coolins and on to Rum, faint in the distance. It is the outlook to the west, however, that gives real interest to the ascent. Such a prospect can be got nowhere else in the British Isles. It was not the red sunset colouring the wide Atlantic nor even the distant cliffs of lone St Kilda that excited my wonder, but the landscape or waterscape at my feet, for it was impossible to say whether land or water predominated. Comparison to a monster draughtboard, with the squares composed of water and land in about equal proportions, gives but a feeble idea of the surface of North Uist as seen from Lee. It looks as if it were hopeless to attempt to cross the island without a boat, for the road, which conducts to the west side, following the one line feasible, is only visible here and there, being in many

parts hidden by the numerous islands, knolls, and peninsulas. Even its passage has been made possible only by the building of numerous causeways, or "*sconsers*" as they are called, across the outflows of the fresh-water lochs, and woe betide the luckless fisher, sportsman, or pedestrian who tries to make short cuts across the watery maze-like plains of North Uist!

On my way to South Uist, a few days later, I had a further and less agreeable sight of the water-freaks of these remote islands. Benbecula, the sponge-like island between North Uist and South Uist, has at first sight a curiously Spanish name, but after all its termination is just another form of the familiar "Kyle," and the word, somewhat similar to Benderloch, apparently signifies the "land between the straits." Now these straits are fords at low tide, only while the "South Ford" is straight, and barely a mile wide, the "North Ford" is three and a half miles long, and very tortuous.

It was a fine moonlight night, and still some three hours from low water, when about half-past eight o'clock we drove gaily in our dogcart on to the wet sand and began the passage. My friend, who was driving, was well acquainted with the ground, and though he had previously nearly been drowned in the dark in the South Ford, he had never had a mishap in the North Ford. Nor had he ever, like so many of the inhabitants of these parts, spent a night on one of the islands with which, as distinguished from rocks, it is not too numerously studded. Accordingly he amused himself by trying to alarm me with the dangers consequent upon not steering the proper course, and the possibility of getting too near the Atlantic breakers. After a low narrow island called "The Caggan" had been crossed, the line of weed-covered stones began to disappear, a haze obscured the hills and any distant objects, and suddenly, while crossing one of the salt-water streams, the horse began to plunge, and we were evidently in a quicksand. There was nothing for it but to get out, knee-deep in the water, unyoke, and set off on foot carrying portmanteau, parcels, and wraps, leading the horse, and leaving the trap almost up to the axle in sand, and yet in a hole so circumscribed that we were able to stand close beside it

without sinking. At first, but in vain, we tried to retrace our wheelmarks to the island, and then made for Rueval (409 feet) in Benbecula, the only landmark we could see. When we at length reached a grass-grown islet, all danger was over, and our shouts attracted the notice of a crofter, who was putting his beasts to bed, but whose croft was separated from us by deep water. Presently, by a circuitous route, he reached us with two ponies and a rope, all of which he might have left behind, for when we again reached the dogcart it was so deeply buried that a spade had to be fetched. After an hour's hard work, aided by the nightly postman, who was crossing, and who came along to see what was wrong—we were only a hundred yards off the track—we got the trap out, and after midnight reached Gramisdale Temperance Inn, where the landlord sat up all night drying our clothes while we went to bed.

After breakfast we drove across Benbecula and over the South Ford without adventure, and in the afternoon, upon the conclusion of a meeting of the School Board of South Uist (of which the majority are Roman Catholic priests, who, in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the rate-payers, enforce the teaching of their own Catechism), I started from Howmore in the teeth of a strong wind for the top of Ben More. After two miles of the highroad, so as to avoid as far as possible the boggy country at the northern base of the hill, I struck up the left bank of a sluggish stream, the Abhuinn Gheatry, which rises well up the mountain side. The water-course now took the form of soft muddy slopes and deep ditches, by way of tributaries, which had to be jumped, but by slow degrees the ground became less flat, the stream more rapid, and I felt as if I was walking up a burnside in the southern uplands of Scotland. I had evidently chosen the proper route, and was rewarded by a delightful stroll; but the thick mist ahead warned me it would neither be pleasant nor profitable to prolong my walk to the summit, where I should also be again met by the wind from which I was for the time sheltered. In favourable circumstances two hours or two hours and a half should take one easily from Howmore to the top, but a whole fine day might well be spent

in roaming over the group, which extends some five miles from north to south.

My next expedition was northwards, this time by steamer and bicycle. Landing with some difficulty, owing to a heavy swell, in a ferryboat at Rodel, on the south point of Harris and famous for St Clement's Church with its tombs and sculptures, I had on the whole a capital ride of twenty-four miles to Tarbert. I had been warned of the steep hills in Harris, and they are not to be treated with contempt; but again it was the flats I found most annoying, the road at one part being merged in the seashore for half a mile, while at the same place two streams had to be waded, and a biting hailstorm saw fit to come on. The clearing after the storm was very fine—the sea green and white, and the range of snowy cloudless mountains north of West Loch Tarbert standing out so impressively as to make me almost resolve to propose Tarbert for our next Christmas Meet. The hotel, too, is very comfortable, only it is still somewhat inaccessible! The following morning I verified what appeared from the map, that less than an hour's cycling or less than two hours' walking north from Tarbert, along as wild and striking a road as any in the Highlands, takes one to within two and a half miles of the top of Clisham (2,622 feet), the highest and the most easterly, but only the first of the noble line of Harris mountains. My ride, however, being an early one, in order to be back in time for the steamer, they had not yet removed their nightcaps. Another road striking left at Ardhasig Bridge, three miles from Tarbert, leads by the northern shore of West Loch Tarbert along the base of these mountains to Amhuinnsuidhe (Avonsui) Castle, the seat of Sir Samuel Scott, which is situated on the sea towards the western end of the Forest of Harris. There must be many a grand walk and climb within its wild recesses!

And now for Skye and the Coolins! I crossed over a summer sea to Dunvegan one afternoon more like May than March, and before dark was shown through Dunvegan Castle, well worthy of a visit, both for its situation, its antiquity, and associations, and for its case of curios, its Jacobite relics, and its "thank-you" letters of Dr Samuel

Johnson and Scott, now framed and hung on the drawing-room wall. A dense fog next day delayed the steamer's sailing and my starting, and throughout marred, by obscuring the views, what even in dull cloudy weather is a splendid bicycle run by Loch Bracadale to Sligachan. "And is John Mackenzie at home?" I asked, before allowing myself to eat. "Oh, yes—at least he is at Portree." "But will he be back to-night?" I inquired. "Oh, yes." "Then I will stay until to-morrow; but are you quite sure?" "Quite sure; he is going to bury his mother to-morrow." I slept at Uig, and dreams of the Coolins, which I may never live to climb, did not unduly disturb my rest.

Snow showers next morning did not promise well for either cycling or climbing, but after breakfast I mounted my bike for a ride round the north end of Skye. How few of the hundreds who drive from Portree to the Quiraing ever take this circular tour round the fantastic and precipitous hills, of which the Quiraing is only one corner, by a coast road which passes Flora Macdonald's grave and Duntulm Castle, the ancient seat of her clan, overhanging the ocean, and which commands magnificent views of the greater part of the Long Island and of the mountains on the mainland from Gairloch to Kintail! It was bitterly cold, but bright and clear, the showers keeping at a respectful distance. After lunch by the wayside, I left my bike at the foot of the Alpine pass, which crosses the island from Staffin to Uig, and directed my steps towards probably the strangest collection of rocks and cliffs in Great Britain. Nature has hidden away these mysterious products of her Cyclopean workshop well, and the feet of sheep and of peat-gatherers have made paths which bewilder and misguide the would-be intruder. After my first ascent I found myself literally on the "Prison," looking down upon the proper portals, but shut off from them by inaccessible precipices. By a detour I got down, and having pitched upon a footpath better marked than before, I resolved to follow it wherever it might lead. I was not surprised at being taken to the foot of a steep gully filled with scree, for even after five-and-twenty years I had vivid recollections

of a veritable scramble on hands and knees, though ladies were of the party, so I promptly began to "skeel" up. I was without stick or axe, and my shoes were destitute of nails, but just at first everything seemed all right. Presently, however, as each stone I touched showed a tendency to go to the bottom, I began to think ladies must be better climbers than I gave them credit for being. The gully got steeper, a patch of green at the top seemed a long way off, and I could hardly believe that the base of the Needle Rock was so far away. At length I pulled myself up on to a tableland of grass, and with amazement saw the point of the Needle, some distance below. No doubt the conditions were all favourable for being duly impressed with the grandeur, loneliness, and awesomeness of the scene; but as I was quite alone, and not a human being knew where I had gone, I am not ashamed to confess that I felt somewhat eerie on my eery (excuse this reminiscence of Butters' Spelling Book), and disinclined to face the descent. As sheep were nibbling around, I thought there was probably some easier method of access than my gully. The true so-called "Table" was not far off, and to it I made my way, but the orthodox approach was still concealed from me. By dint of thrusting myself through a crack in the rocks I got to a gully where the foot-holds and hand-holds seemed better, and which I thought would "go" even for me. Right glad was I to get to the foot without mishap, but my pride had yet another fall, for if there is one thing more than another with which I credit myself, it is being able to find out and to point out to others the best possible route to any particular place, excluding of course routes up rock faces. It was therefore with disgust I discovered, as I stood at last beside the Needle (which I doubt even our most eel-like members being able to thread), that I had carefully avoided the easy central gully, and had, though not deliberately, ascended one side gully and descended another. Perhaps, in fairness to myself, I should explain that with suitable equipment, and at a later season of the year, my gully would probably present no difficulty whatever to our latest recruit. It still remains my last and almost my only successful "Spring Attempt."

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING :

RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE.

BY A. ERNEST MAYLARD.

TEN years almost to the day on which I now, in response to the Editor's desire, attempt to write something for the Journal, the "S.M.C." was founded. It's an old story how it all came about, and I have no intention of adding anything further to what is already so well known. But when one looks back over these comparatively few intervening years, thoughts arise which seem to afford material for reflection, if not also for speculation. As things go nowadays, ten years is quite long enough to produce changes sufficiently striking to create a marked contrast between doings at the beginning of a decade and those at its termination. The end of the period may, therefore, be taken as quite a proper time to venture upon a little stocktaking; and to see also how the material is likely to work itself out within the next ten years.

One almost smiles, in the loftiness of our present accomplishments, at the humbleness of our early ventures; and yet in that very humility, who would dare to say, they did not see the sowing of seeds that were certain to bear much fruit? The keynote of our initial attempts was hill-walking: the standard of our present performances is rock-climbing. The transition was a natural one; or should I not rather say, development would have perforce to be on such lines of variation as would entail novelty and increase of difficulty. The prime essential of any sport—and mountaineering it must be remembered is now numbered among the sports—if it is to maintain its place as such, or, with greater force, if it is to be pursued with increasing degree of interest and attraction, must possess within itself a certain amount of uncertainty coupled with periods of disappointment in order to enhance to a greater degree periods of agreeable surprise. Sport can never be considered a pastime of passive pleasure. Activity is one of

its foremost attributes, and an activity possessing in a special degree the features above depicted. Let me then now illustrate by a few practical examples the stages of development through which the Club's proceedings have passed from what once seemed to be its most striking features to what now apparently characterises its exploits.

I find on looking over some of the earlier numbers of the Club *Journal* articles penned by well-known and distinguished members of the Club in which their pedestrian performances are thus somewhat happily and picturesquely expressed:—"The wagtail trips daintily over the pebbles, a lingering swallow skims past overhead with low sweet twittering, a splendid old blackcock rises with huge commotion from the birch wood, the copse and thicket are gladsome with the noise of small birds;" or as in another place and by another hand:—"As we bowled along the smooth road beneath the grey cliffs of Stronchrubie, where the goats were picking their way along invisible ledges, the crisp morning air filled with the music of bird voices—the cheery crow of the grouse cock, the wild cry of the peregrine wheeling about the crags overhead, the whistle of curlew and greenshank along the river flats—produced in one that indescribable feeling of enthusiasm with which one starts for a mountain expedition in the Highlands."

If on the other hand I glance at some of the more recent contributions to the *Journal*, penned by no less distinguished members, I find the style changes to something after the following severe sort:—"Grasping some excellent hand-holds, and resting his feet on some sloping slabs underneath an overhanging ledge, the leader pulled himself up a foot or two, and hanging by one arm, back downwards, fumbled about for hand-holds higher up, and strove to get foot or knee into the narrow vertical crack in which the rope lay;" or again by another worthy pen:—"On our left was an A.P. wall; on our right a sheer drop into the valley. The ledge soon terminated, but from the end of it a natural rock staircase rose in several giant steps. The first 'step' was not difficult, although it had to be climbed from the outside. The top of this step was carpeted with grass, and just accommodated two men.

The rise of the next step measured about eight feet, and slightly overhung. Hoisted on M.'s willing shoulders it was easy enough for the leader to get up those eight feet, but the difficulty was to know what to do when he got there. For some time he lay helplessly on his stomach, propped up with one boot against a small projection on the side wall, and possessed with the notion that any attempt to stand upright would result in his slithering downstairs. The rock he reclined on sloped downwards, and was more-over wet and slimy. No hand-holds were visible," &c.

I might multiply extracts of this latter kind, but these may be taken as fair samples of the wonderful developmental progress which has taken place, more especially in the daringness of our conceptions and the prehensile propensities of our appendages!

One might almost say, in venturing to strike a contrast between these two periods, that the performances of members, as depicted by the earlier writers, possessed the finer and more delicate sentiment of art; while the latest accomplishments, so graphically described by lovers of hard facts, savour of the severer exercises of science. Was it that the earlier writers were struck more with what they saw than what they did; while those of the later period are more taken up with what they do than what they see?

But in seeking out for other points of contrast one cannot fail to be struck with the frequency with which such words as "slope" or "slopes" are met with in the descriptions of some of the Club's early expeditions. In those days of "peak bagging" it was either the summit was reached by an easy slope or a difficult one. Indeed one cannot resist the temptation which this reference suggests of indicating how it would be possible to distinguish three epochs or periods into which the decade might be divided.

Thus we should have the first few years mapped out as the period of "slopes"; then would come the "absolutely perpendicular" period; while the present would be best known as the "overhanging" period. If for brevity's sake we adopt the now conventional nomenclature of what represents the middle period we shall have the earliest division indicated as the "E.S." or "D.S." period, signifying

that the slope was easy or difficult ; the middle division as the "A.P." period ; and the last division as the "O.H." period. Are we not veritably the S.M.C., so why should we not have our E.S.'s, A.P.'s, and O.H.'s ?

Our worthy President, in his annual post-prandial oration, evidently had overhanging rocks, if not absolutely perpendicular ones, visibly before his mental eye when he said modern mountaineering had no poetry in it. It was refreshing, however, if not encouraging to some of us, to hear that doughty old climber, C. E. Mathews, refuse to allow that mountaineering possessed no poetry in its pursuit. Doubtless poetry still lingers, and ever will linger, in mountains, however much it may disappear from the necessary grotesque contortions of the mountaineer. In support, however, of our good President's contentions exists the fact that a great deal of modern mountaineering literature and modern mountaineering is destitute of much that once savoured of the poetical sentiment. Nor is it to be wondered at when the sole object of a particular expedition is to reach a special spot by some peculiarly inaccessible route. Deeply intent upon the special features connected with some hitherto unconquered obstacle and the way to surmount it are problems so engrossing to the climber's mind that he fails perchance to observe, as he proceeds on the initial stages of his expedition, the first primrose of spring peeping through the grass at his feet, or the delicately pencilled and drooping petals of the wood sorrel on the bank side. Am I growing out of fashion, or am I not up to date, because I venture to confess that somehow I miss and regret the increasing absence of some of those little touches of nature's beauties that serve to awaken mellow thoughts, and soften somewhat the hard facts associated with the bare and rugged rocks ? Do not, however, let it be assumed that I am impugning any of our recent writers, or implying that because they select a perfectly approved though somewhat cold and pictureless style, they themselves are destitute of any love of the beautiful or any sentiment of poetry. I merely say that I think we do not so frequently see these particular traits given expression to. Those of us, lack-a-day, who are growing

older and stiffer, somehow feel the need of some of those little pictures of nature that serve to recall happy bygone memories. The early morning walk over the frozen moor, the objects we observed, the sounds we heard, and the many changing scenes that constantly met the eye, are all no doubt very small matters in their way, but they become very dear to us as our memory travels back upon them; and possibly they may have been more deeply stamped in our brains, because more pleasure-giving, than that other little bit of the expedition, where we half perished in a "chimney" or got caught in a blizzard that froze "the marrow and the gizzard." The danger of deleting from mountaineering literature too much, shall we say, of its picturesque side, is possibly to incur the too greater infusion of the purely physical element; in other words, to make the ascent of a mountain simply an athletic performance, the feat of a gymnast. Most of us, I believe, would be sorry to see such a transition in our sporting ambitions; to feel, for instance, that the future eligibility of candidates for Club membership should turn upon the power to scale a house vent-pipe or a factory "lum." It is hardly possible to gauge how far the modern craving for novelty and excitement might lead, if the requisite attributes of the mountaineer became limited solely to purely physical exercises. That horrid nightmare of the present age, competition with or against time, that already pollutes so many otherwise healthy sports, would soon creep in to disturb our own peaceful and time-taking pursuit. As an extraordinary piece of long-windedness and physical endurance, the race by Hugh Kennedy from Banavie to the top of Ben Nevis and back in two hours forty-one minutes may be taken as an illustration, and lauded for what it is worth; but to consider such an accomplishment from a mountaineering point of view is perfectly revolting. I don't know why I have been led into this train of groundless fears, unless it be that those who do not know us, might themselves, after reading some of our recent articles, have come to conclusions somewhat after a similar style. It hardly behoves us to tell the truth, that the keenest rock-climbing is consistent with the deepest love of the beautiful, and that the two

positively possess an almost inseparable affinity ; yet it is the one combination that our critics can least appreciate. To them the mountaineering instinct exists solely in the love of going up hill, and usually by the steepest route. But I'm wandering from my theme, which is not so much to consider what others think about us, as what we may think of ourselves and own own doings.

If I have rightly gauged the present position and outcome of one line of development seen in progress within the last decade—that of rock-climbing—what are we to expect will be the object and ambition of that section of the Club members whose special forte is this particular branch of our pursuit? We have passed, as I have stated, from the period of “slopes” through that of the “absolutely perpendicular” to the “overhanging.” What next? Well, in the first place, I believe we have in reality advanced as yet but a very short distance into this last period. That in it there exists a very wide field for labour, and an unlimited scope for ingenuity, neither of which, indeed, are likely to be exhausted even within the next ten years. Again, the very nature of the work is such that only those who possess the energy and elasticity of youth, who are neither the husbands of wives nor fathers of families—in other words, whose bones are not brittle, nor their joints stiff, neither does the happiness of others depend upon the integrity of their own framework, will be able, or should attempt, to accomplish. This section of the Club, while it will constantly be recruited by the admission of new members, will in time help to swell the ranks of that other section, whose gradual reversion to the period of slopes will be evidenced by more passive performances, and the sober contemplation of those other attributes of mountaineering which appeal more to the senses of sight, hearing, and smell, than to the exercise of arm and leg. Thus, then, we may still hope that if youth, in its worthy search after the difficult and the dangerous, seeks to emulate the prehensile propensities of a fly or the pendulous performances of a monkey, old age will yet mellow with its sober reflections and less active pursuits such “O.H.” asperities as may remain unsoftened by traits of art or touches of poetry.

Now, my dear Mr Editor, I've done with these few thoughtful or thoughtless—whichever you please—reflections on the past, present, and future of Scottish mountaineering. I hardly know whether I have been serious or satirical, quite possibly a little of both. I love too well the beauty of mountain scenery; and yet I like that mental stimulus and absorption entailed in the conquering of some all but insurmountable obstacle, to make fun either of the one or the other. The truth is, as I have already indicated, that there is no need for a separation of the two sensations. Indeed, it is their happy combination that constitutes the very life blood of our existence. We may have reached a summit by every conceivable gully, chimney, shoot, ridge, face, or what not, yet we shall never exhaust the ever-varying beauties that that summit and its many approaches have in store for us in spring, summer, autumn, and winter. And if sometimes we limit our day's pleasure to some few feet of an overhanging rock, it only tends to show how many, perchance, may be the objects of interest which that particular mountain possesses for us.

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.

BEN DUBH CRAIGE.—On 7th July, with a friend, I set out to try and see what the Dubh Craige of the hill of that name at Tyndrum could offer in the way of climbing. The crags are at the head of the corrie between this hill and Ben Oss. They consist of the usual broken rock and terraces found on the crags of this district, and are about 400 feet high. The only defined climbs that they offer are on the east, a gully leading to the great northern ridge of Ben Dubh Craige, and on the west what looks like a chimney four “terraces” in height. We chose the gully, which was more dangerous, from falling stones, than difficult. A fresh fall of rock gave us at the top practically the only climbing of the day. The summit (3,204 feet) of Ben Dubh Craige was reached in heavy rain and mist. The descent was made by the long north-east slope, and the railway followed to Tyndrum.

EDRED M. CORNER.

BEN A CHAISTEL.—In the last number of this *Journal*, Mr Maclay sent a note on a climb we had on Ben a Chaistel at the New Year Meet. On Saturday, 8th July, with Mr J. O. Cuthbertson (non-member), I set off from Tyndrum, at about 11.15 A.M., for this hill. At the summit of the line, at the county march, we left the road, and followed the railway track. This brought us right under Ben a Chaistel, which lies at the top of the great horse-shoe curve of the West Highland Railway between Tyndrum and the Bridge of Orchy. I expect that many members have cricked their necks in trying to see its crags from the train. The hill rises in steep slopes from Glen Chonoglais on the west and Glen Coilleachan on the south; the north-eastern slope is gentle as is that to the saddle between this hill and Ben Fhuaran.

On the Glen Coilleachan face are several gullies and some broken crag. At the angle between the Glens Coilleachan and Chonoglais is a kind of tower, mostly grass and some rock. On either side of this

tower is a gully, that in Glen Coilleachan being a scree gully, and obviously easy. That in Glen Chonoglais was the one that we meant to try. The tower and these gullies are easily seen from the viaduct. The buttress ascended in January is farther up Glen Chonoglais. There are two or three ways of entering the gully, and we chose a trap chimney about 30 feet high. A few feet farther up we came on a very steep pitch about 60 to 70 feet high. The rock at the head consisted of very steep, wet trap, with very small holds. The northern wall consisted of steep rock and earth in its lower part, whilst the rock above overhung. The south wall offered a very steep, wet, vegetable climb. I first tried the north wall, endeavouring to traverse on to the upper part of the trap rocks in front. The exit was very uncertain, and so I traversed back, and examined a crack on the north wall, but this would land me in a very steep, grassy, half-funnel-shaped depression. I descended again into the gully, and began the dirty and unpleasant vegetable wall. In this way we traversed out of the gully on to a ridge which was followed for about 100 feet, and then the gully was regained. From this point on the gully was perfectly easy, though, owing to the idiosyncrasy of the hill, it required considerable exertion. One of the beauties of the policeman is his chest, but it is a matter of common observation that this frequently slips down. Similarly one of the beauties of a hill are its crags, and in Ben a Chaistel's case these have slipped down, leaving several hundred feet of steep grass and scree to be ascended before the summit can be gained. Both the January and July ascents impressed me with this feature. The true summit is cairnless, the cairn (2,897 feet) being farther east by about 100 yards or so. I walked up the long and easy south-east shoulder last December, continuing the walk over Ben Fhuaran (2,632 feet).

EDRED M. CORNER.

BEN CREACHAN, BEN ACHALLADER, BEN VANNOCH, AND BEN CHIURN.—On 10th July, our last day in Scotland, we (Mr Cuthbertson and the writer) determined to see as much as possible of the country by taking a long hill walk. The day promised to be a hot one as we hurried up the ascent from Tyndrum to the West Highland Station, and caught the early train north. As luck had it, we were allowed to get off at Gortan Passing Place. This is just 1,000 feet above sea-level. It was our intention to take a walk over the hills lying round the head of Glen Lyon. Going almost due south from Gortan, we struck up the grassy slopes of the north shoulder of Ben Creachan. The clegs and heat of the day were made tolerable by the breeze, and after some toil we reached the ridge, and followed it to the top of Coire Dubh (3,145 feet, small cairn). A slight descent followed by an ascent of 500 feet placed us at the large cairn of Ben Creachan. Whilst ascending, the loch in its north-west corrie looked beautifully blue, and had it been less than 1,200 feet below, would have urged us to bathe. From the summit was a grand view, Ben Nevis alone having an occa-

sional cap of mist, all the grand ridges between Fort-William and Loch Treig standing out grandly on the sky-line. One feature in this ridge attracted my attention, as I had never seen it before from a distance, viz., the pinnacled north-east ridge of Carn Dearg Meadonach, near Ben Nevis. The general features of such a view are well known. But a few features stand out uncommonly, such as the view up Loch Ericht and Ben Lomond's ridge, framed between An Caisteal and Ben Chabhair in Balquhider. Finest of all was the grand expanse of the Moor of Rannoch, with its hundreds of lochs sparkling in the sunlight and the ever-varying light and shade on its surface. Ben Creachan gives the best view of this great moor that I know, for it lies spread out at one's very feet, with its mountain walls all round. It seems easier to think of Principal Shairp writing his poem from such a point of vantage, where he could gain inspiration at every glance, than down on the surface of the moor. Besides, from here the Titan warders he calls on, Buchaille Etive, Schichallion, Ben Alder, and Ben Nevis, are all in view.

From the summit a drop of 500 feet and a short rise brought us to the long nearly level ridge of Meall Buidhe. The summit (small cairn, 3,193 feet) lies at its south end. After descending about 500 feet the saddle was gained, from which the slope of Ben Achallader rose steeply for a few hundred feet. This ascent was the steepest of the day, but soon gave way to a gentle slope leading to the summit (3,404 feet, cairn). The west side of Ben Achallader falls away extremely steeply, with a face of broken rock and terrace. The mountain has a long back running southwards, with a dip of about 200 to 300 feet and a rise to 3,288 feet, the south top, about a mile away. At the last point we decided to separate for about two hours or so, my companion preferring to sleep whilst I walked over Ben Vannoch and Ben Chium. A solemn compact was made that we should meet at the junction of the burns in Glen Chonoglais at 6 P.M. As the time allowed to me was not lavish, I started off rapidly, and descending 1,250 feet and ascending another 1,250 feet, gained the top of Ben Vannoch (3,125 feet, no cairn) in an hour. After a short halt I strolled to the col (2,795 feet), and ascended Ben Chium (3,020 feet, no cairn) in about twenty minutes. Continuing straight over the top, the descent was made over steep sree and grass, and the place of rendezvous gained three minutes after the time agreed on. A small meal was indulged in, and then a sheep drive on Ben Dothaidh watched, then some uncomplimentary thoughts of the "no longer companion," followed by some expressions indicative of the same. Finally, after an hour's waiting, he turned up, and said that he had overslept himself. Glen Chonoglais is a glen to walk down which usually necessitates about three wadings of the burn. The rest of the journey from Auch to Tyndrum has been done numberless times by members of the Club. Therefore its description may be allowed to sleep, as may also the members whilst walking over it.

The references in the *Journal* to this district are three in number. In Vol. I., p. 246, Mr Munro records crossing Ben Vannoch and Ben

Chiurn from Invermeran to Tyndrum ; Mr Coats, Vol. III., p. 127, had a long day over Bens Dothaidh, Achallader, and Creachan ; Mr Boyd had a climb on the N.W. faces of Achallader and Creachan.

EDRED M. CORNER.

MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE.

BALL'S ALPINE GUIDE: HINTS AND NOTES, PRACTICAL AND SCIENTIFIC, FOR TRAVELLERS IN THE ALPS: Being a Revision of the General Introduction to the Alpine Guide. By the late JOHN BALL, F.R.S., &c. A New Edition, prepared on behalf of the Alpine Club by W. A. B. COOLIDGE. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co. 1899.)

THIS General Introduction is packed with concise information right through its 160 pages, and can be read with interest by climber and tourist.

If the modern mountaineer does not go through as many physical hardships as the early pioneers, he is certainly expected to carry with him more book learning. The range of his knowledge must be wide. Sweetness and light are his—to be got up when reading for honours (pp. 112-116) as a sub-heading under climate and vegetation.

A glance at the names of the articles under scientific notes will show into how many subjects he is expected to dip more or less deeply.

Among the practical notes are pithy chapters on routes, mountaineering, guides and porters, inns and club huts, and an interesting article on "Life in an Alpine Valley," by the present Editor.

THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB JOURNAL. Vol. I., No. 1, July 1899. Edited by Mr Thomas Gray. To be issued twice a year. Price 2s. nett.

WE gladly welcome the arrival of another climbing magazine. The more the merrier! The Yorkshire Ramblers, like the S.M.C., the Cairngorm Club, and the Climbers' Club, have found it incumbent to record their achievements in print, and in the number before us they have laid down for themselves a high standard of excellence.

The objects of the Ramblers' Club are stated to be "to organise walking and mountaineering excursions, and to gather and promote knowledge concerning natural history, archæology, folklore, and kin-

dred subjects." From that description one might picture to oneself a company of learned men uniting for the promotion of science, and might almost conclude that the words "and mountaineering" had slipped in by mistake, or as an afterthought. We suspect, however, that if we could fathom the true intent of the founders, we should find that the fascinations of our glorious sport were the real motive, and that the natural history, folk-lore, &c., were merely added as a sort of veil of respectability. The Ramblers are not alone in this, shall we say, innocent hypocrisy; for the Alpine Club, and even to a small extent the S.M.C., have sought—without signal success—to impart a semi-scientific flavour to their climbing adventures.

Whatever the original intention of the Ramblers, we learn from Mr Bellhouse's account of the formation of the Club, that before it had been long in existence "it was easy to see in what direction the taste of the members was leading." The papers read before the Society "nearly all treated of mountaineering expeditions, and those which were entirely devoted to climbing secured the largest audiences." Started in October 1892, the Club has now fifty-one ordinary and nine honorary members, and possesses a Club-room in Leeds. A climbing record or other qualification is necessary to membership. Frequent meetings are held throughout the winter, when papers are read by members, and lectures given by distinguished strangers. In this the S.M.C. might do well to take a leaf out of their book. One of the meetings took the form of an exhibition of Alpine equipment. The Editor has, probably wisely, decided not to confine the Journal to expeditions within the British Isles. The genial President, Mr Slingsby, contributes a charming article on Mountaineering in Norway, which we could have wished longer. Some of us have from the Skineggan watched the sunset on the Horungtinder, and can share in his enthusiasm over some of the other scenes he depicts. Mr Charles Pilkington contributes a short paper on Alpine Mountaineering without Guides, and Mr Whympster describes "A New Mountain Aneroid." The Rev. L. S. Calvert relates an ascent of the highest of the Dents des Bouquetins, and Mr J. W. Robinson a new climb on the west wall of Deep Ghyll, directly opposite Mr O. G. Jones's difficult climb on Scafell Pillar.*

The subterranean form of "mountaineering"—meaning the exploration of the numerous caves formed by the action of water in the Carboniferous Limestone of Yorkshire,—which may almost be termed the *raison d'être* of the Club, is well exemplified by two interesting, not to say hair-raising, articles.

The volume before us contains no papers dealing with Scottish mountains; but we trust the Ramblers will find their way across the

* Almost as we write, the melancholy news reaches us of a terrible disaster near the summit of the Dent Blanche, in which Mr Jones and three guides have lost their lives. Mr Jones was widely known as one of the boldest and most skilful of rock-climbers, and his presence will be sadly missed at Wastdalehead.

Border, and we think we can promise them a hearty welcome at Sligachan or Fort-William. After all, if Yorkshiremen are not exactly brother Scots, they are the next thing to it; and do not their heathery moors breed as many coveys of grouse as Inverness or Perth?

The illustrations are first-rate, and the general get-up of the new magazine is excellent. We wish it a long life and a happy one.

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