VOL. 23 APRIL 1944 No. 135

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

EDITED BY J. H. B. BELL



	PAGE
Sligachan and some Early Visitors . . . G. D. Valentine	117
Ben A'n . . . John B. Nimlin	134
Recent Rock Climbs on Ben Nevis . . . B. P. Kellett	139
Long Days among the Scottish Mountains . . . Allan Arthur	153
Days with Friends . . . Charles W. Parry	162
The Scottish Mountains in Art. . . John F. A. Burt	172
Reflections on Laoigh and Neighbouring Hills . . . C. E. Andreae	177
New Climbs in Arran . . . G. C. Curtis and G. H. Townend	180
Proceedings—New Year Meet; Annual Meeting; Library	187
In Memoriam . . . Walter A. Reid. LL.D.	190
Notes—Reviews—J.M.C.S.	191

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
SYNOD HALL, CASTLE TERRACE, EDINBURGH, 1

Agents: EDINBURGH, Douglas & Foulis; GLASGOW, Wm. Porteous & Co.

PRICE FOUR SHILLINGS NET.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

WE are glad to be able to issue a somewhat larger *Journal* in 1944. There is plenty of evidence that interest and activity in the Scottish mountains continues unabated. Unfortunately, owing to rising costs, we have been compelled to raise the price of the *Journal* from 2s. 6d. to 4s. It is the first move in this direction since the beginning of the war, and may be regarded as fully justified. We have every hope of issuing our next number in April 1945. An apology is due for printing " The S.M.C. and the War " list on this page. Crowding out of our inside space made this unavoidable, as particulars of this list are usually late in arriving. Please assist in keeping it accurate and up to date.

The Hon. Slide Custodian wishes to point out that it is essential that no slides be removed from the Club Room without giving him notification of the date of removal and the catalogue number of all slides taken.

Please send all notices to the Hon. Editor, Dr J. H. B. BELL, The Knowe, Clackmannan, before February 1945. All correspondence *re* Sales or addresses to which *Journals* are to be sent should go to the Assistant Editor, Mr DONALD MACKAY, 113 Comiston Drive, Edinburgh, 10. A complete list of the Office-bearers and Committee appears on the page facing the back cover.

THE S.M.C. AND THE WAR.

Revisions and Extensions to Former Lists

J. Dawson . .	Major, R.A.M.C.
Arthur Dixon .	Captain, R.E. (attached War Office).
E. Elton . .	P.O.W.
J. W. Glen .	R.A.F.
C. C. Gorrie .	Major, R.E.
R. M. Gall Inglis .	Lance-Cpl. (Wireless Experimental Centre, India Command).
J. L. Innes . .	R.N.V.R.
G. Gordon Jackson .	Major, R.A.S.C.
K. G. Jackson .	Major, R.A.
W. Lawson, Jun. .	R.A.F.
W. Ross McLean .	R.N.V.R. (rank which carries gold braid on cap peak).
G. R. Roxburgh .	Major, R.A.
Colin M. Steven .	Lieut., R.A.M.C. (Invalided out.)
T. E. Thomson . .	R.A.F.
T. Harry Tilly . .	Pilot-Officer, R.A.F.
J. D. B. Wilson .	Pilot-Officer, R.A.F.



W. W. Weir, F.R.P.S.

LOCH CORUISK

(From where Sir Walter Scott first saw Loch Coruisk)

"A scene so stern as that dread lake,
With its dark ledge of barren stone."

THE SCOTTISH
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB JOURNAL

VOL. XXIII. APRIL 1944. NO. 135.

SLIGACHAN AND SOME EARLY VISITORS.

By G. D. Valentine.

" Montibus aviis
Prodest vagari."
—Dr JOHNSON: " Ode upon the Isle of Skye."

THE first word I find written of Sligachan is a wild one. In 1395 Donald, usurping Lord of the Isles, the same who fought at " the red Harlaw," thinking or choosing to think that he had a claim on lands of the Macleods, sent his fierce and formidable brother, Alexander, to take possession. The landing was at Eynort, the march by Drynoch, the encounter at the head of Loch Sligachan, where the invaders were routed with great carnage. The victors decapitated the slain, and bore the bleeding trophies to Dunvegan; there the warder displayed them. This burst of savage warfare is no ill beginning to the record of a glen so dark. Then the mists sink over it once more.*

The lonely spot is but seldom spoken of. In 1549 Dean Munro, who knew the country well and, it is believed, once dwelt on Raasay, noted Sligachan river as one of five where salmon were slain, and also the sea loch as being one of three principal in the island in which there was good take of herrings. Slight as the mention is, it gives a hint that we may fairly take. The trade in herring was then a great one; the fisheries drew boats from distant shores; their stations were for a season lively scenes, what with the busy fleet, what with the huts and

* " History of Skye," Alexander Nicolson, 1930. I am under considerable obligations to this excellent book.

camps along the beach. It is not likely that they had any hostelries, for they required none, bringing all they needed on their vessels.

Some of our Highland inns are of long though undefined antiquity, but not so much in the Islands. The fashion was for the rare travellers to be received into private houses, the better of these, by the way, being amply stocked with wine. In 1609, at a Court held by the Bishop of the Isles, preceded by cogent Governmental persuasion, in which the prison played its part, and attended by the Skye chiefs among others, a number of admirable acts called the "Statutes of Icolmkill" were made, including one for the establishment of inns. The fate of good resolutions is proverbial. An economic change which took place not long after was perhaps more helpful. Within a few years the first drove of black cattle was tramping on its way from Skye to Crieff and Falkirk; the business quickly grew to be a great one.* These beasts on their long, slow journey southward made tracks and inns. The gillies might wrap themselves in their plaids to lie down with the herd, and might feed on oatmeal and onions, but they would not go without their dram, of which, no doubt, they partook with something of the exuberance of the more modern cowboy, while their masters would desire better quarters and a place to birl over their bargains. All the animals from the north of Skye must pass round the end of the Coolins and over the ford at the mouth of Sligachan river, whence a moderate journey took them to the narrows at Kyle Rhea, to swim across in strings trailing behind the ferry boat. The trade would require a place of rest near the ford, since around it for many a mile stretches, in a phrase of Johnson's, "a most dolorous country."

The first inn was at Sconser, on the site of the present lodge. Here in 1745 Sir Alexander Macdonald and the Macleod met young Clanranald, and made the great refusal to join the Chevalier. It is known to have been in the eighteenth century a place of much business and

* Nicolson, *op. cit.*, pp. 145 and 272.

had a post office, one of two in Skye. Doubtless passengers would usually cross the short ferry over the mouth of the loch, while cattle were driven round. Dr Johnson was there in 1773. He writes: "There are no houses (in Skye) where travellers are entertained for money"; "there is, however, one inn by the seaside at Sconser." As Johnson passed through Sligachan, we may infer that he saw no inn there.

It is on record that when the hunt was up after fugitives from Culloden, a party of militia was stationed at Sligachan. While making a detour to avoid these over the knolls and marshes between the present roads to Portree and Drynoch, Prince Charlie suddenly plunged up to the shoulders in a bog, a filthy and perilous incident which will not provoke laughter in those who have experienced the same.

To realise what the country was like then, we must forget macadamised roads and recollect how Dr Johnson, even in 1773, as soon as he left Inverness, was constrained to hoist his ponderous mass upon a Highland sheltie, with certain misgivings not only on his own part but on that of his guides. "It is very disagreeable," he observed, "riding in Skye. The way is so narrow, one only at a time can travel, so it is quite unsocial; and you cannot indulge in meditation by yourself, because you must be always attending to the steps which your horse takes." All who have met with a cavalcade of equestrians threading the track towards Coruisk will agree as to the lack of opportunity for indulgence in meditation. Let those who shower imprecations upon it remember that this is a fair sample of what all these paths once were.* It may surprise some to hear that for several days each spring a band of men, led by John Mackenzie, worked to put this one in order; but there is nothing more destructive to such order than the hooves of ponies. In North Uist, though there is now a good wide road, such is the force of habit that I have often seen a procession

* "Saxa qui tollit, tollit viam," Sligachan Hotel Visitors' Book.

of country people riding along it, each mounted on his garron, following in single file. That was once the mode everywhere. As for humbler wayfarers, it is significant that one of the obligations of hospitality was to provide for washing the feet of visitors.* Here is a curious sidelight on travel in these days—Macleod had a tenant who was bound, in addition to his rent, to be ready to carry the chief's baggage as far as Sligachan.†

So late as 1805 a tourist, Stanhope, tells us that there were no roads in Skye, but the inhabitants had then at least got the length of talking about them, and before 1825 those which served the island's turn for a century had been constructed, the last stretch save one to be completed lying between Sligachan and Sconser.‡

The care of the cattle, "little black sprightly things," had its effect on the life of the hills. For two months from mid June they were sent to graze on the remote pastures, a pilgrimage made to the sound of laughter and of Gaelic songs. Such scenes are still familiar in the Alps and in Norway. The name of Coire na Banachdich, probably the Glen of the Dairymaid, may indicate where one or more of these lonely summer shielings stood. Colin Phillip tells us that the ruins of two could be seen there and another in Coir' a' Ghreadaidh.§ Hugh Miller in 1854 visited in the island of Eigg what must have been one of the last of the shielings, and his description is so pleasing that I cannot refrain from mentioning it, though it is too long to quote in full.‖ Under a cliff a pathway scarce visible led to the low-roofed erection of sod and stone, with a door in the centre some 5 feet high, but with no window, rising on the grassy slope immediately in front of the vast continuous rampart. There was a turf fire at one end, while the other was occupied by a

* Nicolson, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

† Kindly communicated by Mrs Osbaldeston-Mitford, *née* Macleod.

‡ Nicolson, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

§ S.M.C. "Guide Book to Skye," p. 21.

‖ "Cruise of the 'Betsy,'" pp. 81, 82. Since writing the above I have heard that there were recently, and perhaps are, some shielings in the Lews.

bed of dry straw, spread on the floor from wall to wall, and fenced at the front by a line of stones. In the middle space were the utensils and produce of the dairy—flat wooden vessels of milk, a butter churn and a tub half-filled with curd, while a few cheeses, soft from the press, lay on a shelf above. Three young women lived there in solitude for several months every year, making butter and cheese for their master. One of them, a girl of eighteen, embrowned by the sun, more than merely good-looking, entertained the stranger with a bowl of mingled milk and cream. The others were out at the milking. The climber would have seen, had he been there to see, more than one such hut on the Coolins, "pauperis et tuguri congestum cespite culmen." The girls would hardly wander far. The peaks and wilder ravines must have been quite deserted—with one exception, if local tradition may be believed: it tells of a fugitive from justice, a murderer, who made a den in the recesses below Bidein.

Soon after the opening of last century the trade in black cattle gradually died down. Sheep displaced them and have since held the ground. The summer shielings mouldered back into the hillside. The new sheep were not like the old. These were the "little" sheep, of which a few are or were lately to be found in Soay; those the "big" sheep, black-faced or Cheviot. We mark the advance of industry, always from quality to quantity. The little sheep gave sweeter mutton and softer wool, but much less of either. Sheep also drove out the goats, of which most crofters once kept a few. Anderson's "Guide to Skye" (2nd ed., 1842, p. 452) mentions that "on the rough sides of Glen Sligachan are raised large flocks of goats."

Sheep ramble higher amidst rocks than cattle. There is a discrepancy between the accounts of climbers. Some dwell on the utter solitude of these mountains, devoid of all creatures, human or animal. Others speak of meeting shepherds near the summits and of sheep, lean, agile beasts, following the wildest ledges. Perhaps the extent to which the high corries were grazed may have

varied. For myself I have never found them occupied. It is part of the duty of a shepherd to walk the boundaries at certain seasons, when the flock is gathered, and to chase in stragglers. There is no doubt but that at times all the main ridge of the Coolins, save in one or two places, has been perambulated by these unchronicled mountaineers.

The hirsel has long been confined to the farms, Glen Brittle and Camasunary, the ground about Sligachan with the Red Hills being given over to deer, numerous, though shy, in the sporting season. They soon discover and leave the corries that are being shot over, using certain well-known passes across the chain. Later in autumn they are bold enough; the hoarse roar of challenging stags can often be heard from the hotel door. They were not always in such numbers. In 1835 the forester said that when he first came, fifteen years before, there were scarce a dozen, but that there were then three hundred or more.* Had it not been for the highly rented forests, the red deer might well now have been extinct in Skye, if not in the whole country.

Sligachan is said to mean the place of shells, for what reason I am at a loss. There are oyster beds in neighbouring lochs, but none here, and the great stretch of shining sand, laid bare by the tide as it ebbs, is singularly free from shells. The stream, disemboguing on this expanse, divides into many shallow runs and brackish pools, a pleasant place over which to wander, scaring the herons and luring the sea trout, and also an easy passage across the river. There is an old ford for carts just above the mouth. Before the bridge was built, this shore would be the natural site for an inn, and I have been told that the original building was hereabouts, half a mile nearer the sea than now, on the banks of the Allt Dubh, at a spot where there is still a heap of stones; the tradition is confirmed by a map published in 1824.†

* "Excursions through the Highlands and Isles of Scotland," by the Rev. C. Lesingham Smith (1837), p. 56.

† I have to thank our Assistant Editor, Mr Mackay, for this reference; also for directing me to Smith's book.

I can find out nothing about this public house, no doubt both poor and obscure. Anderson's "Guide" (1st ed.) warns the traveller that it was "uncomfortable."* The "tolerable" inn at Sconser was available still and much later (at least till 1856). When Smith arrived at Sligachan in 1835 he found a recent building, infinitely superior to the old one; it is safe to assume that this was on the present site, at the junction of the two roads, then completed. It is so shown on a map dated 1842. Smith enjoyed extremely the humble luxury of a peat fire, while the clean napkin on the table, and the fine coloured tea-things invited him to a sober meal of stewed meat, kipper salmon, and oatcakes. His breakfast was very extensive, with countless mutton-chops and eggs. When he expressed a fear that his clothes might be soaked in his ramble, the landlady encouraged him by promising that he should have the loan of one of her own gowns.

Seven years later this inn is one of very few described by Anderson in his second edition as good. Still it must have been but a small place. Macleod's rent roll shows that it was let in 1845 at the very moderate sum of £11. 10s.† As the fame of Skye grew, it became the overcrowded resort of tourists, and about a generation later was much enlarged. Lovers of the mountains began to use it not merely as a house of call but as a summer home, where they would settle down for weeks. This was what may be termed its classical period, when Nicolson, the Pilkingtons, the founders of our Club, and others of their kind were its familiar frequenters.

Men like Johnson might talk in English or write in Latin of vagabondage on the trackless mountains, but, plain truth to tell, from the track few deviated one furlong. Pennant indeed, daring in his antiquarian zeal, ascended to the cairn on Beinn na Caillich, said to be the grave of a Norse princess, while Boswell in mere

---

* Quoted by Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

† I am indebted to Mrs Osbaldeston-Mitford for examining the rent roll.

wantonness danced on Duncaan. Save for such casual sallies the geologists were the first to penetrate the wilderness. Before 1800 Robert Jameson had wandered along the lower slopes above Loch Brittle to examine the rocks; continual clouds prevented him from venturing higher.* A pioneer more thorough was Macculloch, whose tediousness and tactlessness have obscured merit. Some things he wrote raised a storm in the Highlands, of which the echoes linger faintly still; but though he might be an ungrateful, sneering guest, he was a conscientious plodding explorer, and in his own subject did most of the spade work or, shall I say, hammer work. When he first found Loch Coruisk the spot was one, he claims, "which, excepting the shepherds of Strathaird, mortal foot had scarce trod." I shall not fill my page with his many words.† Nor will I incur the penalty invoked by him on those who decry that account, of writing one myself; indeed, it contains passages of considerable eloquence, but I hint a doubt whether he was a faithful reporter when he wrote, and wrote on a lovely day, "Here the sun never shone since the creation."

Macculloch may have anticipated by a year or two the visit made in 1814 by Sir Walter Scott under the conduct of Macleod, but he was incapable of conferring on the solitary lake such fame as the stroke of the Wizard's wand bestowed. On a happy occasion Leah said: "A troop cometh." Sir Walter, standing on the torrent-torn shore, might have repeated the auspicious exclamation that hailed the birth of Gad. The men of taste made speed to see for themselves savage beauties which had thrilled a popular poet. No mute inglorious band: important people and voluble, but not mountaineers. They came by boat on Loch Scavaig. The guide-book writers, who knew their public, had given warning that it was imprudent to visit these scenes by land.

The Rev. Lesingham Smith was of other mould. We left him at a frugal meal, endeavouring without

* His account may be read in "Early Descriptions of Skye," by William Douglas, *S.M.C.J.*, 5, 210.

† Condensed by Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-214.

success to count his mutton-chops. What a picture to contemplate in our days! Already he had been driven back in an attempt to reach Loch Coruisk by sea; a storm frightened his boatmen, not himself. Now he set out on foot, accompanied by Lord Macdonald's forester. They diverged from the path to see Harta Corrie, and he makes the just remark that while the forms around were extraordinary, the colours were still more so. Smith is a clear narrator; whatever he mentions can be recognised. Overtaken by a bitter shower, they sheltered behind what was evidently the Bloody Stone, thus receiving only half their due portion of rain. The path was rejoined and the foot of Loch Coruisk reached by the way now usual. They went on to its head, and made the journey in two and a half hours from Sligachan. Surely a sturdy walker! The forester, plainly impressed by his agility, turned to him and said: "A shepherd told me that it was possible to get up the rocks just above, and much shorter than to go round. I've never been over myself. If you like, we'll try." After a council of war the forester led on, taking the direction in which he had seen a hunted deer escape. At first they succeeded admirably, if laboriously. "We now came to a steeper part, where we were obliged to crawl upon our hands and knees, and I here found my umbrella a sad nuisance; but the forester's two dogs were much worse, for they were constantly in my way. Sometimes we climbed up a cleft in the bare rock, just like a chimney; and sometimes one was obliged to push the other up; and he in return pulled up the first. A single false step would have hurled us to destruction, and there was, moreover, very great danger that the first man would loosen some stone that might sweep down the hindmost. I once pushed down a tremendous rock, the percussion of which against the crag below sent up a strong smell of sulphur; fortunately for the forester he was above me. In the midst of these difficulties we arrived at a spot where the crag rose up so smoothly and perpendicularly that it was vain to attempt ascending it; we were obliged, therefore, to turn back a little and 'angle round,' as he called it.

But in the end we surmounted every obstacle, and stepped forth proudly and joyously upon the very topmost crag." * A vivid description of the view follows, on the one side into the "infernal chasm" from which they had just emerged, on the other over Lota Corrie to the "grotesque" peaks and ridges. "You are the first gentleman," said the forester, "that ever made this pass; nothing but a shepherd or a red deer has ever been here before us, take my word for that." The descent to Harta Corrie, as we know, is easy. Smith had to mourn for a pair of faithful friends, "his thick shoes, which had borne him through great part of Switzerland, over crag and glacier, through streams and snows; but the precipices of Coruisk were too much for leather to bear."

I think this may fairly be called a bit of real rock work, harder than anything recorded in the Coolins before; but what strikes me most is that it was done not to make the world wiser or better, or even for the glory of reaching a summit, but entirely for sport. Here was a genuine pioneer in the cragsman's art. A few lines may be spared to sketch such a man. He was a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and had been mathematical lecturer, but was not resident at the time of his tour. Sufficiently endowed with means and leisure, he had wandered widely; he not only knew Switzerland and Italy but had penetrated into the Tyrol. Many passages in his book reveal him as a stout and enterprising pedestrian, undaunted by weather, ready to carry all he needed in his knapsack if necessary, though not by choice. A Gloucestershire native, he expanded when he met another of his county. Indeed, he seems to have been a frank and delightful fellow, who made friends wherever he went. He intimates that he was easily pleased, and proves it, too, by having a good word for the path up Glen Sligachan!

In the next year, 1836, another University don, but a very different one, visited Sligachan. J. D. Forbes †

---

* Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

† *S.M.C.J.*, 3, 309, by Sir Geo. Adam Smith.

(1809-68), so celebrated for his researches in Heat and as the originator of the Glacial Theory, added one wild leaf to his carefully cultivated laurels by being first to ascend a peak in the Coolins. The son of Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo and a wonder child, he became Professor of Natural Philosophy in Edinburgh at the phenomenal age of twenty-three. Forbes was a savant in the grand style, like De Saussure or Cuvier. Proud of his literary taste and of his eloquence, in which he took lessons from Mrs Siddons, cold in demeanour and, as a biographer delicately puts it, "somewhat over-sensitive about his claims to scientific reputation," involved in many Olympian controversies, he is described by a friend as having "a dignified and commanding presence and gentle and refined manners, wielded by a will of rare strength, purity, and elevation." A determined traveller in the pursuit of knowledge, he came to Skye and, undeterred by the appearance of inaccessibility, resolved to ascend Sgùrr nan Gillean, then supposed to be the culminating peak. He took counsel with Lord Macdonald's forester, doubtless the same who guided Smith. I think his name deserves to be remembered: it was Duncan Macintyre. His advice was that, while he had made repeated unsuccessful attempts, he knew of another way to try. By this, now the usual route for tourists, the top was reached on 7th July 1836. Forbes had then little if any acquaintance with mountains, but during the following years he travelled extensively in the Alps, especially in Savoy, as described in his book, published in 1843, so that when he returned to Skye in 1845 his practised eye noted phenomena to be unhesitatingly ascribed to the action of moving ice. His paper on the geology of Skye was read in December to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and published in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*, vol. 40, p. 76. Being scientific, it deals but briefly with his personal experiences, yet is the only known account.* He mentions, however, that in May 1845, having mounted with Duncan Macintyre

* Reprinted so far as material by Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-218.

on Bruach na Frithe, he suggested that they should try to scale the nobler peak from the west. It was no sooner proposed than attempted. They scrambled deep down into Lota Corrie, thence up the face to the top, though, seen from a distance, the ascent seemed almost perpendicular. Looking from the front a steep slope often appears so. This side of the hill is seldom visited; it is out of the way and devoid of interest, but by report is not harder than the part Forbes had previously climbed.

He carried a barometer and approximately fixed the height, till then varying with the strength of the imagination. His measurement, between 3,200 and 3,220 feet, is a little in excess of the accepted figure, 3,167 feet. The error was due to a falling glass.

Forbes says that he had walked completely round the group and had also intersected it in several directions. He noted how rough and safe the rock was. His exploration must have been thorough, since he made an excellent map of the range, published as an appendix to his paper, and also, on a very small scale, in Black's "Guides," 1854 and 1856. Earlier cartographers, as Professor Collie wittily said, possessed the faith which moves mountains. In Arrowsmith's map (1807), Forbes points out, the lake of Coruisk is unnoticed and the hills are put in at random. Macculloch naturally did not omit the lake, but his hills were no better. What others had only viewed, Forbes studied.

Is it worth mentioning that in 1859 C. R. Weld, A.C., made the ascent of Sgùrr na Stri ?* With a little "angling" (happy word!) it is only a walk, but his enthusiasm at what he saw from this eyrie allures me. It is an outlook tower commanding a unique view. On one side the eye plunges almost vertically to the sea, from this height an intense and sombre blue in its depths, a lively green in its shores and shallows. Perhaps a brown-sailed fishing boat from Soay glides below, or in our modern days more likely a poaching trawler. Turning round, you see over the basin of Loch Coruisk the

* Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 228, 229.

whole chain of the Coolins sweeping in a great circle from Garsbheinn to Sgùrr nan Gillean, distant enough to be embraced in a single glance, yet so near that every ridge or gully lies distinct. Weld particularly noted the pinnacle deemed inaccessible. To the right, apparently looming close at hand above, is the wall-like side of Blaven. Unluckily, Sgùrr na Stri is the sanctuary of a deer forest; there ramblers have no welcome.

One man's name is peculiarly and, through Sgùrr Alasdair, permanently associated with the Coolins. On him, as in duty bound, I shall ask leave to pause for a while. Alexander Nicolson was born in 1827 at Husabost, a beautiful spot on Loch Dunvegan, where his father was tacksman and held ground stretching to Glendale, an estate more substantial in extent than in value. Thence, he tells us, he used to gaze upon the distant hills "with unspeakable awe and admiration." * Sent to Edinburgh University to train for the ministry of the Free Church, he found "that the officer's uniform in that excellent body was painfully tight," and declined the dress. He became an excellent scholar, an authority on Gaelic, hardly less expert, it is said, in Greek, lectured a little on logic, and supported himself for a time by that precarious instrument, the pen. Called to the Scots Bar in 1860, he made no figure as a pleader, but found occupation in law reporting, until appointed in 1872 Steward Substitute of Kirkcudbright, "that not unpleasant office," which he preferred to the Celtic Chair at his old University. His wit, his jovial brilliancy, and a happy knack of rhyming gave him great social popularity in Edinburgh. At any dinner he would sing a set of verses written that afternoon, which never failed to kindle uproarious laughter, his greatest hit being the "British Ass," a ditty not quite forgotten. An enthusiastic Celt, he made himself conspicuous in the staid city by the vigour with which, dressed in the kilt, he led off the New Year's game of shinty. His spirited lines on Skye are too familiar to quote.†

---

* *S.M.C.J.*, 2, 99. † Printed in full in *S.M.C.J.*, 2, 107.

Pleasant as his office in Galloway was, it is to be feared that he missed the genial society of the capital, and felt himself rather an exile both there and at Greenock, whither he went in 1885, retiring, not regretfully, four years later. Contrary to a common assumption, Nicolson never was Sheriff of Skye, nor did his father's tack come into his hands, but he kept in constant touch with the island, not only when on vacation but by membership of two roving Commissions, the first on Highland Education, the second on Crofting. During one of his last holidays at Sligachan, in 1885, he wrote in the Visitors' Book, "Here a day is worth two in most places." His retirement was spent in Edinburgh, where at one o'clock on 13th January 1893, without the smallest warning, he dropped down dead.*

Sir Archibald Geikie described him as a "big-boned Celt, with a look of strength and kindliness in his large and strongly marked features." Another friend wrote of him: "He was a big man with a big heart, which was ever in the Highlands or, more particularly, in the Hebrides."

He had the "perfervidum ingenium Scotorum."

A fatality seemed to attend on Nicolson. Though he wrote beautifully, far better, as we can now see, than many once esteemed contributors whose articles have become unreadable while his still sparkle with life, yet he failed to catch the ear of the great public. At the bar he was admired by all—except the solicitors. Even as a Sheriff he was never quite in his element. It is rather pathetic to read in the Sligachan Visitors' Book, "Here I feel really at home." There and where else? What is the explanation of this uniform half success? I do not think it difficult to find. Nicolson's character had originality, not quite amounting to genius, but enough to make him different from others. Hence, in spite of his admitted talents, he was instinctively mistrusted by those who wanted to have the usual things

* *Scottish Law Review*, 9, 38; *S.M.C.J.*, 2, 254 (Professor Veitch).

deftly done in the usual way, and it is these who make professional reputations, either in law or in literature.

Nicolson's more intimate acquaintance with the Coolins began in 1865. He thought when he saw Sgùrr nan Gillean near at hand that it ought by rights to have been 10,000 feet high. A son of Duncan Macintyre's guided him to the summit, from which he looked with "a shuddering joy." Then, being ambitious of returning by a new way, they proceeded very carefully down a pinnacled ridge toward the west till they came to a cleft, now known as Nicolson's chimney, down which they made a "vermicular descent."

In 1873 Nicolson returned to wander far and wide over the hills; once overtaken by mist he slept amidst them; remembering such a night he wrote:

> "Here wrapped in my plaid on the heather,
> I envy no monarch his bed;
> Come, dreams of the hills and the Highlands,
> And visit in slumber my head."

At this time he reached the loftiest height in the Coolins. Accompanied by a shepherd, A. Macrae, who "seemed to glide up the hillside like a cloud," he passed over Sgùrr Dearg, and descended "a chasm into a deep stony corrie, with a small dark loch at its lower end, from which on the previous day I had obtained out of the midst of driving mist a single glimpse of this same peak, one of the wildest objects I ever saw." He seems to have toiled up the tumbled stream of stones that falls down its side and over the rocks to the summit. "The climb was stiff and warm, and some judgment was required to find a way and still more when it came to circumventing the peak. We did it, however, without much difficulty: one or two places were somewhat trying, requiring good grip of hands and feet, but on the whole I have seen worse places." *

The next year brought Nicolson's most remarkable achievement, the ascent of Sgùrr Dubh on 6th September 1874. He mentions that it was reputed to be inaccessible.

---

* "Good Words," 1875, p. 458.

After visiting some young artists who were camped at Loch Coruisk, he began, in company with a friend, this his hardest adventure at four o'clock in the afternoon, in hope of a full moon. They clambered over enormous blocks of stone on the banks of the "Mad Stream," persisting in spite of a shower, which drove them for a while to take shelter under a ledge of rock, and of mist on the ridge; this rolled away before the top was attained. "The last quarter of the ascent was very hard work and not quite free from danger. It was about seven when we found ourselves on the summit, a very narrow rocky ridge, but covered at the highest point with a thick bed of spongy moss. We had not much time to admire the view, as the sun had just set behind the black battlements, though we hoped to have twilight to last us to the bottom of the corrie on the other side. It did suffice to light us to the 'first floor' but no more, and even that we found no joke. The descent was tremendously blocked with huge stones, and the tarn at the bottom of the corrie is surrounded with them. About half-way down we came to a place where the invaluable plaid came into use. My companion, being the lighter man, stood above with his heels well set in the rock, holding the plaid, by which I let myself down the chasm. Having got footing, I rested my back against the rock, down which my lighter friend let himself slide till he rested on my shoulders." By this primitive substitute for a rope, by creeping along the shelves, and by wriggling on the brink of a cascade, they got down and down. "From eight to half-past ten was almost total darkness, for though the moon rose about nine, and we could see her mild glory in the depths below, we were all the way down in the deep shadow of the peak behind us. My very finger-tips," says Nicolson, "were skinned from contact with the rough-grained rock. But the difficulties of the descent were compensated when we got, with thankful hearts, into the full flood of moonlight on the last floor, the valley above Coruisk." * Their escape was, it will be

* "Good Words," 1875, *loc. cit.*



June 1936

SGÙRR ALASDAIR MASSIF

B. H. Humble

noted, through Coir' an Lochain, a glen more abrupt than that up which they went. To find a way safely in the dark and without previous knowledge over such country was no mean feat; here were determination and self-reliance.

The merit of Nicolson was not chiefly that of the expert rock climber. Even at his date other men were more skilful in forcing their way up precipices, and now some of his descriptive touches might provoke a smile in the adepts. He was a cragsman and a mountaineer, and something more. He was the first who made the Coolins his domain. A native of Skye, not a tourist, from his youth he had looked on them with admiration and desire. When his time came, he wandered amidst them where none had ever been before. He knew them and he loved them in every aspect. He had been there when "from the dark canopy that overhung Coruisk came crashing peal upon peal of thunder, shaking the wilderness": had watched while the storm passed over, "and then, oh! what a sight was the seething cauldron and its black environment, with the mists rolling down and flying up and winding about and struggling like persecuted ghosts." He had wasted there many a summer's day, "contented" with the silence. "There is life and movement perpetual in the glorious inspiring air, whether it sighs in the zephyrs or roars in the gale; there is life and music, wild but sweet, in the voice of the streams that rush down the corries; there is an ever-changing life in the play of the clouds that float serenely through the blue sky or hurry frantically across the riven peaks or descend softly like darkness into the bosom of the hills."

After Alexander Nicolson the highest of all the Coolins has been called Sgùrr Alasdair. He himself renounced the honour, but the name has been established by universal approbation. It was his due, and will be for him a lasting memorial.

BEN A'N.

By John B. Nimlin.

BEN A'N is one of the most effective features in the panorama of the western Trossachs. In the view from Loch Achray or the northern side of the Duke's Road there is no doubt of its importance in that rich landscape of forest, hill and loch, backed by the simpler contours of distant mountains. The rocky cone, rising abruptly from the surrounding birch woods, singles it out from its neighbours, a distinction well supported by its other attractions. It has a summit which, although only 1,750 feet in height, gives a width of view to surprise the most optimistic climber. It has a line of ascent completely free from dull stretches, and if this particular route is chosen only a few yards of bog need be negotiated in the whole climb. On the upper slopes where the birch woods thin out there are many little glades perfectly contrived for peaceful camp sites, and well sheltered from northern winds. Thus Ben A'n might well be dismissed with full honours if it were not for the presence of that rocky cone and its implications to the rock climber.

This upper cone is flecked with enough scars and bald patches to draw the cragsman's gaze from the purely æsthetic features of the scene. On closer inspection these group themselves into three tiers of rock, broken by cracks and shallow gullies and separated by sloping terraces of heather. They have an upward tilt from west to east and extend for the full width of the southern slopes. Ranging from 30 to 80 feet in height, they support a vigorous growth of stunted trees, creepers and brambles. On occasion these trees make first-class belays. The rock itself is firm, the holds are small but definite; the crags, having a southern aspect, dry quickly after wet weather. There are enough recorded routes to give a full day's climbing of a fairly high standard, and there

is still a fair area of crag to be sampled, measured, adjudged and recorded in a guide book.

It will be clear, however, that Ben A'n is no place for daring adventure on dizzy heights. It has no far distant summit urging haste; no towering crags demanding hours of hard endeavour. For one thing, there are too many heather couches set in tempting corners of the crags; too many fine views to be studied over a pipe of tobacco. Indeed, the memories of these leisurely smokes in the heather are just as deeply graven in the writer's mind as his best adventures on the crags. He cannot think of a better tribute to the charms of Ben A'n.

The Approach.

The best route to the summit is from the east. The main road is left at the fence which separates the woods from the grounds of Trossachs Hotel. A track runs up through the woods, keeping parallel to the fence for some distance, then swinging left to the left bank of a deep-cut burn. Higher up, where the track goes between two birch-clad knolls, a crossing is made to the right bank. Beyond this burn is the boggy stretch already mentioned, then follows a wide stretch of open ground beyond the woods. The burn is again crossed, and the final cone lies ahead, across a plateau of bracken and heather. This stretch ends at another burn beside a grassy camp-spot known as "The Glade." After crossing this burn the path divides. The pedestrian route slopes up to the right through a shallow corrie and circles the top of it to approach the summit from the north-east. The left branch of the track slants across to a conspicuous ash tree which grows against the first tier of rock.

The Climbs.

Notation and Classification.—The climbs are listed in the most suitable order of approach from 1 to 12. The length of each is approximately given. Author's classification letters are as follows: M., Moderate; D., Difficult; V.D., Very Difficult; S.A., an easy (amiable) Severe; S., Severe—in increasing order of difficulty. A 100-foot rope should be used. Grading corresponds to accepted standards on dry rock.

1. "The First Thirty." D. 30 feet.

A few yards right of the ash tree there is a shallow gully bounded by a rocky bluff. The face of this gives a straightforward climb on good rock. It should be descended in the same line as a limbering-up exercise.

2. The Ash Wall. S.A. 50 feet.

Behind the tree is a narrow flake which may be climbed direct, or reached by a traverse from its right end. From top of flake a steep wall leads to a shallow depression. Thereafter route goes up a steep wall to a good ledge. It is quite a tense section on small but sound holds. An alternative line of ascent begins to the right of the shallow depression, but this is vegetatious and likely to spoil the full flavour of the climb.

From ledge above the wall another 20 feet of climbing on polished slabs leads to foot of Route 4, but to reach 3 a slight deviation is made to the left.

3. The Birch Wall. S. 40 feet.

The first section is on very thin holds to a shallow angle with no resting place. A delicate move is now necessary to cross to the left of the angle, where larger holds lead up to a sturdy rowan. This tree gives both a belay and a name to route 4.

4. The Rowan Rib. D. 35 feet.

This is a bluff of rock with a steep, almost overhung base, but the holds are mainly large.

The heather slopes above this route mark the top of the first rock tier. From here a leftward slant leads up to a small hawthorn at the foot of the next rock tier.

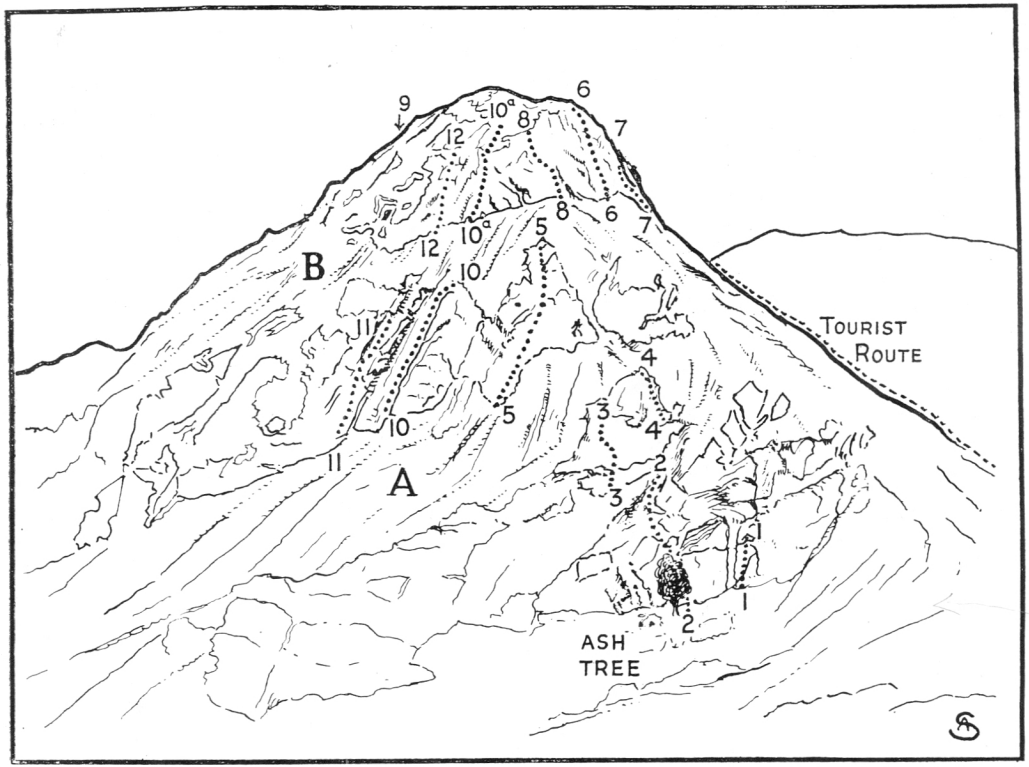
5. The Hawthorn Rib. D. 130 feet.

The route is rather indefinite until it narrows and steepens between two light-coloured slabs. It has many ledges and large holds, and may be extended to 130 feet of climbing. The slabs also have well-marked routes across them.

The second heather terrace is now reached, and a rightward slant will lead to the final rock tier. Here the crag bends from south to east, and at its corner is a rock face bounded by two shallow gullies.

6. "The Last Eighty." S.A. 80 feet.

The climb goes straight up this face. The first few feet are overhung and strenuous, and the whole climb has a fine exposure. The



SOUTH FACE OF BEN A'N.

1—1 First Thirty.
2—2 Ash Wall.
3—3 Birch Wall.
4—4 Rowan Rib.
5—5 Hawthorn Rib.
6—6 Last Eighty.
7—7 Rent.
8—8 Oblique Crack.
9 Record Slab.
10—10 Right-hand Gully.
10a—10a Continuation above Terrace.
11—11 Left-hand Gully.
12—12 McLay's Chimney.

A. Lower Terrace.

B. Upper Terrace.

last section, a little hanging rib to the right of a shallow groove, is most exhilarating on small but well-cut holds.

6a.

A variation to the lower section starts a few feet up the right-hand gully. This is a horizontal traverse, starting from a small holly to a point about half-way up the "Eighty." From the top of the "Eighty" a minute's walk takes one to the summit of Ben A'n.

7. The Rent. S. 30 feet.

This route is just beyond the right-hand gully. The name describes a strenuous groove, and sometimes its effect on a climber's garments. It is a straight, hard climb with few positive holds, and the narrow groove allows little freedom of movement. Jamming tactics with the inside arm and leg are the most successful. The holds improve for the last few feet. From the grassy recess at the top another smaller groove leads to easy ground. The two pitches combined are 50 feet.

8. The Oblique Crack. V.D. 70 feet.

This climb lies to the left of the "Eighty."

Ravens nested here in recent times and reared at least three broods, despite the ever-increasing traffic up the chimney. The edge of the nest was actually one of the "key" footholds, and it took some nerve to draw oneself up to the nesting ledge under the close and baleful stare of three lusty young ravens. Finally the nest was destroyed on the principle of *kindness through cruelty*.

The climb goes up to some jammed stones with a shallow cave above. Then an awkward slab is tackled on the left. After this comes a vegetable section finishing in a steep 20-foot wall.

9. The Record Slab. M. 20 feet.

This is an easily inclined slab which runs up the south side of the summit rocks. The usual object is to scale it in record time; a soft landing ground helps to promote such a practice. It has been climbed in around eleven seconds in boots, and in a fraction over eight seconds in rubbers. The spectator gets the most fun, especially when a performer slips and tries to infuse some dignity into a *belly-glide*.

To reach the remaining climbs, the twin gullies first explored by the pioneers, it is best to descend to the lower heather terrace and traverse westwards.

10. The Right-hand Gully. S.A. 100 feet.

The gully rises above a steep grass slope. For 50 feet it consists of fairly easy rock and a vile growth of briars and brambles. Above this the gully steepens abruptly into a chimney. This is climbed on good rock to an overhang, where a tricky move is made to the right by jamming tactics between a thin flake and the wall. Vegetation at the top of wall adds to the difficulties of this section. Beyond this the gully rises at an easy angle to the upper terrace.

10a.

Across the terrace rises a continuation of the lower gully. At 30 feet an overhang is passed on the right. Then follows a 40-foot stretch of steep heather, topped by a vegetable pitch of 15 feet which is dangerous rather than difficult. Above this is another short stretch of heather and a short chimney.

11. The Left-hand Gully. V.D. 100 feet.

This is a pleasant climb. The first pitch, 15 feet, is vegetatious and inclined to dampness. The next section is a 15-foot chimney on the right which finishes on a short arête. A short variation is to pass the chimney to a steep wall of 20 feet, which offers fine holds and also lands on the arête. Next, an awkward thicket of holly, etc., has to be penetrated to reach a short, strenuous chimney. The final pitch is a fine 25-foot chimney, excellent for back-and-knee climbing. Above this the gully becomes ill-defined and ultimately peters out on the heather terrace.

12. McLay's Chimney. V.D. 90 feet.

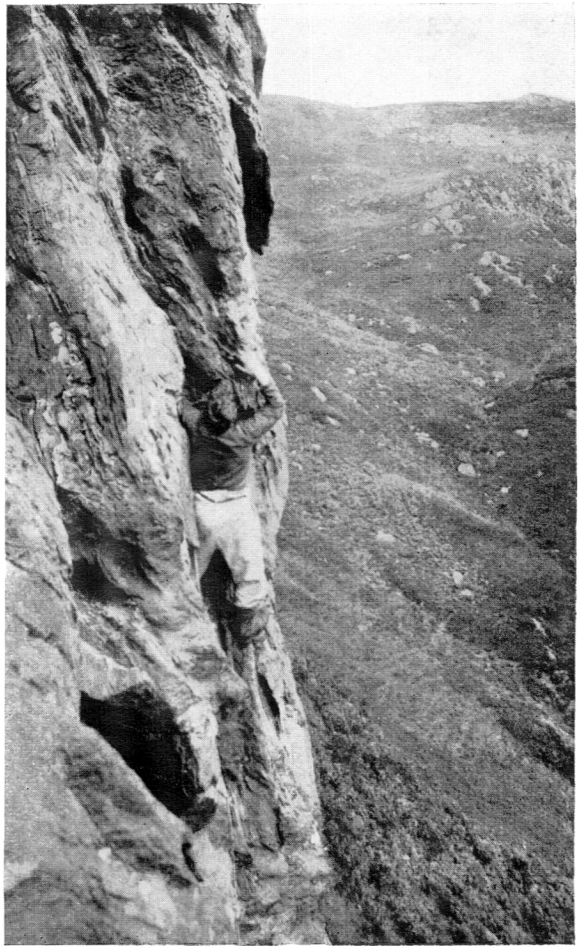
This is a straight chimney with a natural arch half-way up. It is easily identified from the final terrace by the great jammed rock forming the arch. It gives fine back-and-knee climbing.

First Ascents.

No. 2, W. White, 1930. Nos. 3, 6, 7, J. B. Nimlin, 1937, 1930, 1934. No. 8, H. Raeburn, 1898. No. 10, W. W. Naismith, 1898. No. 11, Gilbert Thomson, 1896. No definite records of the others, but all appear to be modern routes.

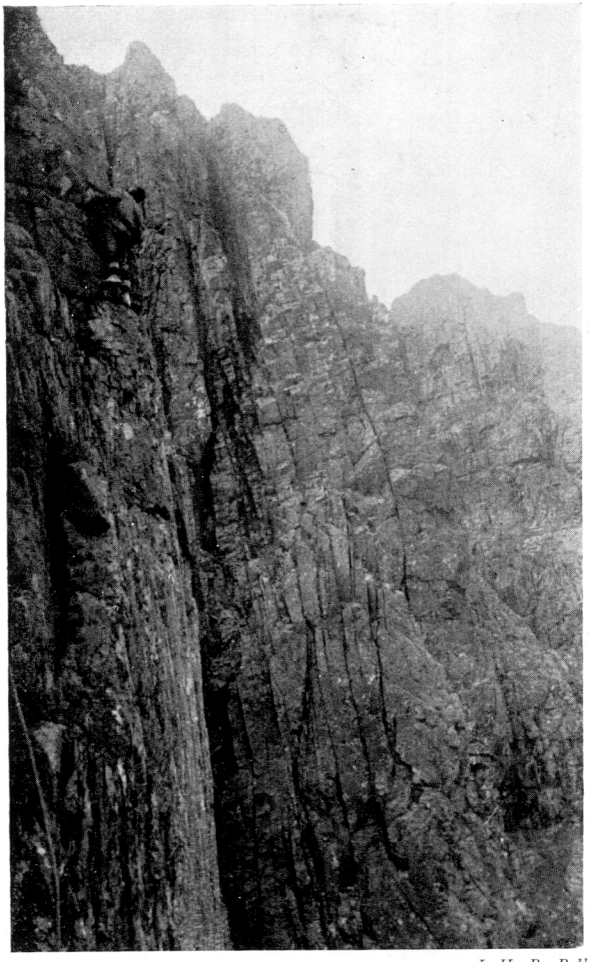
Bibliography.

" Ben A'an," H. C. Boyd, *S.M.C.J.*, 4, 155. " The Cliffs of Ben A'an," W. W. Naismith, *S.M.C.J.*, 5, 52. " The Trossachs Group " (" Guide Book " article), *S.M.C.J.*, 6, 238.



John B. Nimlin

BEN A'N—"THE 'RENT"
(From half-way up "The Last Eighty")



August 1943 *J. H. B. Bell*

CARN DEARG, NORTH WALL—ROUTE B
(B. P. KELLETT leads the crux)

RECENT ROCK CLIMBS ON BEN NEVIS.

By B. P. Kellett.

THIS article is intended to serve as a supplement to the 1936 edition of the " Ben Nevis Guide," bringing details of rock climbs up to date as at August 1943. The subject-matter is divided into four parts: (1) First ascents made during 1943. (2) First ascents made before 1943 but not hitherto recorded in " Guide " or *Journal*. (3) Further notes on climbs already recorded in " Guide " or *Journal*. (4) An index of the rock climbs so far recorded on Ben Nevis, arranged in approximate order of difficulty, and classified on the same basis as that adopted in the Fell and Rock Climbing Club " Guides."

Naturally this classification only purports to be a matter of personal opinion; many of the routes on Ben Nevis are so seldom climbed that it is not easy to ascertain what is the general opinion of their comparative difficulty. For the sake of completeness, climbs which I have not personally investigated are included in the index, marked with an asterisk; in such cases the opinions of the original parties have been taken as to their classification group, but they are not arranged in order of difficulty within the group. Throughout the article I have specifically mentioned all occasions on which I have not personally investigated a climb. Lengths of pitches are usually estimates and subject to considerable error.

The following abbreviations are used:—G., Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide, " Ben Nevis," 1936. *J., Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal. J.* 135, the present number of the *Journal*. Objects in photos are identified by giving their Cartesian co-ordinates in inches, *e.g.*, Photo G. 26, 1·5, 2·3, refers to the point found by measuring 1·5 inches right from the bottom left-hand corner of the photo on p. 26 of the " Guide," and then 2·3 inches perpendicularly upwards from the point so reached.

Reference should be made to the *Journal* for accounts of the following climbs:—

Volume 21.

South Trident Buttress, 1936 Route, 136, 434; Left Edge Route, Rubicon Wall, 202, 434; Douglas Boulder, West Face, 203; Rubicon Wall, Variation Finish, 287; Observatory Ridge, West Face, 352; Intermediate Gully (left of Raeburn's Buttress), 427.

Volume 22.

Observatory Buttress, N.W. Face, 68. Evening Wall, Carn Dearg Buttress, 248; Compression Crack (leading to Raeburn's Buttress), 248; The Comb, Tower Face Route, 249; The Comb, Hesperides Ledge, 250; Great Tower, Ogilvy's Route, 266; The Orion Face Routes, 367; The Girdle Traverse, 373.

Volume 23.

Central Rib, Creag Coire na Ciste, 44; Indicator Wall, 46; Route 1 Variations, Carn Dearg Buttress, 51; No. 2 Gully, 109.

I. First Ascents made during 1943.

The North Wall of Carn Dearg.

SUGGESTED NOMENCLATURE.—North Wall is the steep face to the left of Cousins' Buttress (Photo G. 26, 3·0, 2·0). It is divided into upper, middle and lower sections by Green Terrace (3·0, 2·3) and Broad Terrace (3·0, 1·5) respectively. The middle section contains two further terraces: (*a*) Flake Terrace (2·8, 1·7), of which the left-hand end is reached by Macphee's Climb, and the right-hand end by Easy Chimney, starting from Broad Terrace. This terrace was first explored by Lüscher (G. 38; *J.* 16, 93-99). (*b*) Diagonal Terrace cannot be seen on the photo; it starts as a narrow slabby rock ledge just above the right-hand end of Broad Terrace, and slants obliquely across the middle section, ending as a grassy terrace just below the left-hand end of Green Terrace. Lüscher's Climb starts up the slabby lower part.

There are five ways of reaching Broad Terrace from below: (*a*) The lower half of Macphee's Climb finishes at the left-hand end of the terrace (G. 38). (*b*) The Easy Way slopes up from right to left to end at the same place. (*c*) Flake Chimney is described on the opposite page. (*d*) The 8-foot Wall, which is reached either from right or left by easy scree gullies (G. 36). (*e*) The Direct Start to Harrison's Climb (G. 36).

1. ROUTE A (300 feet).—Very severe. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 2nd July 1943.

This climb, which starts about half-way up Diagonal Terrace, was the result of an unsuccessful attempt to identify the upper part of Lüscher's Climb. At the "narrow short ledge leading to the left" (G. 37) no 10-foot slab could be discovered. Instead the ledge was followed left for about 30 feet to an open chimney; Lüscher said that this chimney was wet, and that he did not even try it (*J.* 16, 98). It might be possible to reach this place directly from below, thus giving the climb an independent start.

1*st Pitch* (25 *feet*): The steep wall forming the right side of the open chimney is climbed to a platform with thread belay. 2*nd Pitch* (25 *feet*): Easy climbing to the right leads to a stance and belay below a steep and exposed 50-foot slab with two thin vertical cracks. 3*rd Pitch* (90 *feet*): After a few feet straight up, the cracks are reached by a long and difficult step left. Fifty feet up the left-hand side of the slab, followed by 35 feet of easier climbing to the right, lead to a stance and belay in a right-angled corner with vertical right wall and slightly overhanging left wall. There are difficult ways off to the right at the top and bottom of this pitch. 4*th Pitch* (20 *feet*): The corner is climbed mainly by bridging on very small holds, and Green Terrace is reached; the crack at the back of the corner is not much use. 5*th Pitch* (150 *feet*): Easier climbing, mostly up pleasant slabs with intermediate stances but no good belays, leads to a cairn 20 yards down from the col at the top of Waterfall Gully.

2. ROUTE B (100 feet).—Very severe. First ascent B. P. Kellett, J. H. B. Bell and Miss N. Forsyth, 11th August 1943.

A continuation of Macphee's Climb up the steep wall below which the latter ends; it starts at the right-hand end of Flake Terrace, below a big recess.

1*st Pitch* (15 *feet*): The Crevasse. From the projecting flake step on to the steep wall, which is climbed on poor holds to the recess. This pitch was probably climbed by Lüscher (*J.* 16, 98). 2*nd Pitch* (20 *feet*): Walk right to a belay in the top right-hand corner of the recess. 3*rd Pitch* (45 *feet*): Traverse right, round the corner and on to the steep face, which is climbed to a seat beside a spike belay. The pitch is delicate and exposed. 4*th Pitch* (20 *feet*): Easier climbing to a block belay on Diagonal Terrace. A direct finish to Green Terrace may be possible from here.

3. FLAKE CHIMNEY (100 feet).—Moderate. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 10th August 1943.

A very deep chimney starting just to the right of the

Easy Way up to Broad Terrace. Its left wall is formed by a huge flake, and its top is almost completely covered in with chockstones. The exit is through a window in the flake; scrambling then leads to Broad Terrace.

4. MACPHEE'S CLIMB, DIRECT FINISH (20 feet).—Difficult. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 6th June 1943.

Instead of making the awkward exit from the broken-up crack (G. 38), it is easier and more direct to follow the crack to its top.

5. THE GREAT BUTTRESS * OF CARN DEARG, ROUTE 2 (500 feet).—Severe; rather exposed. First ascent B. P. Kellett and W. A. W. Russell, 9th June 1943.

Consists of an upward traverse from the top of the initial 40-foot chimney on the second section of Route 1 to the right-hand edge of the buttress, which is then followed to the top.

1*st Pitch* (25 *feet*): From just above the top of the 40-foot chimney (Photo G. 16, 8·8, 2·4) cross the slab on the right to a very small stance on its far edge; good belay. 2*nd Pitch* (30 *feet*): Easier climbing up right to a good stance and belay. 3*rd Pitch* (50 *feet*): Up a smooth easy-angled slab, then traverse right to the flake below a conspicuous green patch under a big overhang (Photos G. 16, 8·9, 2·6, and G. 26, 0·5, 2·2). 4*th Pitch* (40 *feet*): Straight up above the flake, then cross the loose and slushy vegetation to a platform with inconspicuous thread belay low down. 5*th Pitch* (100 *feet*): Traverse right to a platform with poor belays. 6*th Pitch* (30 *feet*): An easy traverse right to a platform on the edge of the buttress (Photos G. 16, 9·6, 2·8, and G. 26, 1·2, 2·6). 7*th Pitch* (100 *feet*): Scrambling up the edge of the buttress. 8*th Pitch* (70 *feet*): Start up a wide, shallow chimney with loose rock in the middle; step over its right wall to a small stance above an overhang, then go up the slab on the right of the chimney to a flake. 9*th Pitch* (40 *feet*): Traverse back left into the chimney, which is followed to the top, just to the left of the final groove of Evening Wall (Photo G. 26, 1·2, 3·0).

6. MOONLIGHT GULLY BUTTRESS, RIGHT-HAND CHIMNEY (400 feet).—Very difficult. First ascent G. Scott, E. M. Hanlon and B. P. Kellett, 25th July 1943.

This is the small buttress in two sections between No. 5 and Moonlight Gullies. The climb goes up the

* The Great Buttress, as an alternative name for Carn Dearg Buttress, is appropriate and used in the "Guide."

most northerly of the parallel chimneys on the buttress (Photo G. 32, 0·9, 4·3). Two hundred feet of climbing, followed by 100 feet of scrambling, lead to the top of the lower buttress. The chimney continues to the top of the upper buttress, giving a further 100 feet of easy climbing.

South Trident Buttress (Routes 7, 8).

7. BOTTOM TIER, 1943 ROUTE.—Severe. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 25th July 1943.

Starts up the small gully into which the 1934 Route traverses. It crosses the 1934 Route, and climbs a steep wall on good holds; the 1934 Route goes further left here, climbs the right wall of the gully, and traverses back right to reach the same place. Walking then leads to the large ledge half-way up the buttress with a very large block leaning against the wall (G. 49; Photo G. 40, 2·0, 3·4). From this block the route goes straight up to a very steep groove, which is followed to its top, just to the right of the final cairn of the 1934 Route; the "Guide" says that this final pitch is the obvious route, but looks almost impossible.

8. MIDDLE TIER, GROOVE CLIMB.—Very difficult. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 25th July 1943.

The climb goes up a groove in the wall above the terrace dividing the two lower tiers; at its top is a little pinnacle, very conspicuous from below (Photo G. 48, 1·5, 3·5). The exit from the deep cave at the top of the groove is quite difficult; above this there is a choice of routes to the top of the Middle Tier.

9. CENTRAL RIB, CREAG COIRE NA CISTE, THE FINAL TOWER (50 feet).—Very difficult. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 10th July 1943.

This was not led on the first ascent (*J.* 23, 44). Apart from a few loose holds the rock is excellent.

10. THE COMB, TOWER FACE ROUTE.—A further variation up the steep wall between the original route and the Chimney Variation (*J.* 22, 249); it is rather harder and more direct than either of these. (B. P. Kellett, 18th July 1943.)

The Tower Ridge (Routes 11-14).

11. BROAD GULLY ROUTE.—Easy. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 24th July 1943.

Starts up a broad scree gully to the left of Pinnacle Buttress (Photo G. 60, 1·2, 1·5) and finishes on the crest of the ridge, just below the foot of the Little Tower.

12. THE ITALIAN CLIMB.—Severe. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 24th July 1943.

The climb goes up the long gully on the west side of the ridge, mentioned on p. 65 of the " Guide " (Photo G. 61, 2·6, 1·1, and *J.* 20, 264, where it is marked " c ").

The initial chimney is very wet and mossy, and is probably the hardest part of the climb. Half-way up is a stance and belay below a shallow cave; the 10 feet above the roof of this cave are rather trying, as the chimney is here too open for back-and-foot.

From the top of the chimney a walk leads to a cave at the back of the cleft. This pitch, which is about 25 feet, is climbed by going up the steep rib on the right of the cleft, and then making a delicate traverse left to where a long but easy stride can be made across the gully. The pitch was climbed in socks; it should always go under reasonable conditions, as the holds are neither mossy nor in the watercourse.

To regain the chimney on the right, an awkward swing has to be made across a smooth slab. This chimney is very mossy, but not particularly difficult.

Above the top of the chimney the gully bifurcates. The longer and wetter right-hand branch gives easy but very poor climbing, finishing on the crest of the ridge just below the foot of the Little Tower. Exit from the deep cave at the top of the left-hand branch looks impossible.

13. SECONDARY TOWER RIDGE, 1931 ROUTE, VARIATION START.—First ascent B. P. Kellett, 19th June 1943.

" This ascends a series of shallow grooves or chimneys " (G. 64); this description of the original route is rather misleading; it actually starts up the right-hand of two deep wide chimneys, which join higher up above all difficulties. In this variation the left-hand chimney was climbed to about half its height, and a traverse was then made on to the left wall, which was climbed until the chimney could be regained above an overhang (Photo G. 61, 2·2, 0·9, and *J.* 20, 264).

14. LOWER EAST WALL ROUTE.—Moderate. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 29th May 1943.

Starts some way below the foot of the Great Chimney, surmounts a short overhang, and then follows easy ledges right, gaining the crest of the ridge at the top of the first steep section above Douglas Gap.

North-east Buttress (Routes 15-17).

15. INDICATOR WALL VARIATION.—Moderate. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 1st August 1943.

The upper terrace can be reached directly from below without traversing into the gully (*J.* 23, 46). This is more direct and no harder than the original route.

16. ORION FACE, UPPER TRAVERSE.—Easy. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 27th June 1943.

A descending traverse from the top of Epsilon Chimney to the top of the little buttress, above and to the right of the Basin (*J.* 22, 370). From here a level traverse leads on to Observatory Ridge.

17. BAYONET ROUTE DIRECT.—Severe. First ascent B. P. Kellett, 22nd May 1943.

A direct ascent of the overhanging rocks above the small recess (G. 90). Rather harder and much more direct than the original route.

II. First Ascents made before 1943, but not hitherto recorded in "Guide" or *Journal*.

1. BAIRD'S BUTTRESS.—Very difficult. First ascent P. D. Baird and E. J. A. Leslie, 18th June 1938.

Shortly after the actual buttress is reached on Raeburn's Buttress Climb, it is crossed by the terrace used on the Girdle Traverse (*J.* 22, 375). This is followed left across the gully to the foot of a steep buttress (Photo G. 26, 3·6, 2·6). The climb starts up a vertical crack, which is in two sections; above this the angle eases off, and the ridge ends near the top of Raeburn's Buttress.

2. NELSTROP and BYROM'S CLIMB.—First ascent B. Nelstrop and J. H. Byrom, 30th April 1940.

The route could not be identified and the following

description is taken from the Climbs Book at the C.I.C. Hut:—

"Probable new route on Carn Dearg near Macphee's and Lüscher's climbs. Start in deeply-cut chimney, reach ledge after 60 feet, walk right 100 feet, and after a short easy pitch climb long stiff chimney to big blocks, and short steep wall to small ledge. Move right and climb very steep and exposed clean slab to belay in 70 feet, and then up nasty looking crack on the left to easy ground. We have insufficient knowledge of cliff to claim the first ascent, but no scratches or cairns were seen, and much loose stuff had to be cleared out of chimney."

3. MOONLIGHT GULLY BUTTRESS, DIAGONAL ROUTE.—Moderate. First ascent I. H. Ogilvie and J. Ward, 1st August 1936. A diagonal route across the buttress from left to right.

4. NUMBER 3 GULLY BUTTRESS, THOMPSONS' ROUTE.—Difficult. First ascent S. and P. Thompson, 23rd September 1941.

"The high platform at the top of the gigantic wall" (G. 53) is reached from the foot of No. 3 Gully by means of a shallow indefinite gully. From the high platform the summit plateau is reached by scrambling up to a square mossy corner, just to the right of the 40-foot chimney.

5. GREAT TOWER, ROTTEN CHIMNEY.—First ascent H. I. Ogilvy and C. F. Rolland, 20th June 1940.

Descent of a rotten chimney facing the Comb. It is not certain which of several such chimneys this is.

6. GREAT TOWER, OGILVY'S ROUTE.—Very difficult. First ascent H. I. Ogilvy and N. P. Piercey, 23rd July 1940.

The climb is between, and parallel to, Macphee's Route and the Chimney Variation of Pigott's Route. *1st Pitch* (20 *feet*): Up bulging rocks to a block belay in a corner, which can also be reached by traversing left from the small recess on Pigott's Route. *2nd Pitch* (50 *feet*): Up a steep slab with good holds.

7. OBSERVATORY BUTTRESS, DIRECT FINISH.—Very difficult. First ascent W. M. MacKenzie, A. M. Mac-Alpine, W. H. Murray and J. K. W. Dunn, 30th August 1936.

Above the platform with " a very large slab leaning against the wall for a thread belay " the route goes up " the slabs on the left," which were attempted in vain in 1931 (G. 78). This platform is on both the Direct and Ordinary Routes, and the variation gives a harder and much better finish to both these climbs.

8. OBSERVATORY RIDGE, DIRECT ROUTE.—Very difficult. First ascent G. C. Williams, J. L. Aikman and A. R. Lillie, 31st August 1930.

The route goes straight up the steep part of the ridge, which is avoided on the right in the Ordinary Route.

9. OBSERVATORY RIDGE, LEFT-HAND ROUTE.—First ascent J. H. B. Bell.

The route has not been climbed by the author. It was used as a descent of the lower part of the ridge, and was found to be fairly easy. The finish of the descent was not far from the foot of Zero Gully. Route is probably rather indefinite.

NEWBIGGING'S ROUTE, VARIATION STARTS.—The foot of the upper grooves has been reached from the foot of Raeburn's Arête by two distinct routes. Neither has been climbed by the author, and the following accounts were given by members of the original parties :—

10. LEFT-HAND VARIATION.—First ascent E. J. A. Leslie and P. D. Baird, 19th June 1938.

" A route up the N.E. Buttress to the left of Raeburn's Arête. Start (cairn) on a small ledge ; 25 feet to a bigger ledge ; 100 feet up a grassy groove. Then traverse right over a little arête at the first possible point. Then up grassy grooves to the left of the wall of Raeburn's Arête to easy rocks below First Platform."

11. RIGHT-HAND VARIATION.—First ascent Miss N. Ridyard and Miss A. Smith, and Miss N. Forsyth and Miss J. Smith on two ropes, 7th July 1938.

" We thought we were doing Raeburn's Arête when we left the ground. We climbed straight up from a cairn to a big grassy right-angled corner. Traverse right and step up on to a slab with an overhanging wall on the right. Cross the slab to the crack below the overhang, thread belay. Climb what remains of the slab, veering left to avoid the overhang. Then there were long pitches up ribs, veering left." Apparently the slab is the crux, and the standard was considered to be very difficult.

III. Further Notes on Climbs already recorded in "Guide" or *Journal.*

1. COUSINS' BUTTRESS.—The "Guide" seems to confuse two distinct ways of reaching the pinnacle at the top of the lower buttress (G. 34). (1) *The Easy Way.*—Climb the easy gully to its bifurcation, and then walk left on to the top of the buttress. (2) *The Original Route.*—Well below the bifurcation of the gully, traverse left on to a grassy ledge half-way up the buttress. From here to the top of the buttress the climbing is steep and distinctly difficult.

2. HARRISON'S CLIMB, DIRECT START.—Once the snow in the upper coire has melted, this chimney is not particularly wet. It is much easier than the upper chimney (G. 36).

3. LÜSCHER'S CLIMB.—The upper part of this climb could not be identified. As far as the "narrow short ledge leading to the left" (G. 37) the route seems fairly obvious, as does the continuation left to an "open chimney with smooth walls," mentioned in the original *Journal* article (*J.* 16, 98), but not in the "Guide." The statement in the "Guide," that the route farther to the left looks impossible, does not appear in the *Journal*, but was based on additional and much later information supplied by Dr Lüscher; it is misleading, since the ledge (Diagonal Terrace) can be followed round to the pinnacle on the Staircase Climb. The upper part of Lüscher's Climb appears from his description to lie to the right of this chimney, but no break in the vertical wall could be discovered.

4. THE COMB, PIGOTT'S CHIMNEY.—"The climb goes up a conspicuous chimney a few feet short of the easterly end . . ." (G. 55). Actually it is from the north-westerly (right-hand) end of the broad shelf that Pigott's Chimney starts, only a few feet short of Green Gully. The chimney can be climbed direct, but rotten rock in the top half makes it safer to traverse left on to the face and climb steep rocks to the "narrow long grass

ledge with cairn " (Photo G. 61, 4·75, 2·2); the whole pitch is severe and the start strenuous.

Shortly above this is a 90-foot slab, and then nothing but scrambling to the top of the Comb.

5. THE ALTERNATIVE FINISH TO RUBICON WALL (*J.* 21, 287) appears to be the same as the finish to LEFT EDGE ROUTE (*J.* 21, 202 and 434).

IV. Classified List of Climbs.

Very Severe.

North Wall, Route A, *J.* 135.
Orion Face, Alpha Route, *J.* 22, 370.
Orion Face, The Long Climb (Alpha-Delta Routes), *J.* 22, 370.
North Wall, Route B, *J.* 135.
Rubicon Wall, G. 79; *J.* 21, 287 and 434; *J.* 135.
Left Edge Route, Rubicon Wall, *J.* 21, 202 and 434; *J.* 135.
No. 2 Gully, G. 56; *J.* 23, 109.
*Orion Face, Beta Route, *J.* 22, 371.

Severe.

The Italian Climb, G. 65; *J.* 135.
The Slav Route, G. 82; *J.* 20, 233 and 399.
South Trident Buttress, 1943 Route, *J.* 135.
The Comb, Pigott's Route, G. 54; *J.* 22, 249; *J.* 135.
The Great Chimney, G. 69.
Bayonet Route Direct, G. 90; *J.* 135.
Gardyloo Gully, G. 75.
Compression Crack, below Raeburn's Buttress, *J.* 22, 248.
The Great Buttress, Route 1 (Carn Dearg), G. 41; *J.* 23, 51.
The Great Buttress, Route 2 (Carn Dearg), *J.* 135.
Evening Wall, Carn Dearg Buttress, *J.* 22, 248.
Cousins' Buttress, G. 34; *J.* 135.
South Trident Buttress, 1934 Route, G. 48; *J.* 21, 432.
Raeburn's Buttress, G. 33.
Great Tower, Bell's Route, G. 73.
Great Tower, Cracked Slabs Route, G. 73.
*The Girdle Traverse, *J.* 22, 373.
*South Trident Buttress, 1936 Route, *J.* 21, 136 and 433.
*Observatory Ridge, West Face, *J.* 21, 352.
*Orion Face, Zeta Route, G. 87; *J.* 22, 368.

Very Difficult.

Staircase Climb, G. 39 and 40.
Raeburn's Arête, G. 91.
Great Tower, Ogilvy's Route, *J.* 22, 266; *J.* 135.
The Castle, G. 30.
Macphee's Climb, G. 38; *J.* 135.
Direct Start, North Trident Buttress, G. 46.
Great Tower, Pigott's Route, G. 72.
Central Trident Buttress Direct, G. 47.
Eastern Climb, G. 92.
Direct Finish, Observatory Buttress, *J.* 135.
Indicator Wall, *J.* 23, 46; *J.* 135.
South Castle Gully Direct, G. 32.
Platforms Rib, G. 86.
Observatory Ridge Direct, *J.* 135; *J.* 19, 230.
Ruddy Rocks Route, G. 89.
Jubilee Climb, G. 47.
Douglas Boulder, N.W. Face, *J.* 21, 203.
Douglas Boulder Direct, G. 62.
Baird's Buttress, Carn Dearg, *J.* 135.
North Castle Gully Direct, G. 29.
Newbigging's Route, G. 92.
Green Hollow Route, G. 91.
North Gully, Creag Coire na Ciste, G. 51.
The Comb, Tower Face Route, *J.* 22, 249; *J.* 135.
South Trident Buttress, Groove Climb, *J.* 135.
N.E. Buttress with Raeburn's Eighteen-minute Route, G. 83 and 89.
Central Rib, Creag Coire na Ciste, *J.* 23, 44; *J.* 135.
Moonlight Gully Buttress, Right-hand Chimney, *J.* 135.
*Newbigging's Route, Right-hand Variation, *J.* 135.
*Intermediate Gully (near Raeburn's Buttress), *J.* 21, 427.

Difficult.

Observatory Ridge, G. 81.
Harrison's Climb, G. 35; *J.* 135.
Observatory Buttress, Direct Route, G. 78; *J.* 135.
Great Tower, Macphee's Route, G. 72.
Great Tower, Recess Route, G. 73.
Observatory Buttress, G. 77; *J.* 135.
Green and Napier's Route, G. 89.
Great Tower, Pigott's Route, Chimney Variation, G. 72.
Great Tower, Western Traverse, G. 74.
Pinnacle Buttress, G. 66.
Glover's Chimney, G. 66.
Orion Face, The V-Traverse, *J.* 22, 371.
Douglas Boulder, East Ridge, G. 62.
Basin from Slav Route, Lower Traverse, *J.* 22, 369.
Right-hand Wall Route, G. 87.

Secondary Tower Ridge, 1931 Route, G. 64; *J.* 135; *J.* 19. 337.
No. 3 Gully Buttress, Thompsons' Route, *J.* 135.
Tower Ridge and S.W. Ridge of Douglas Boulder, G. 57 and 63.
*Observatory Buttress, N.W. Face, *J.* 22, 68.

Moderate.

North Trident Buttress, G. 45.
Moonlight Gully, G. 44.
Slingsby's Chimney, G. 86.
Hesperides Ledge, The Comb, *J.* 22, 250.
Orion Face, Epsilon Chimney, *J.* 22, 369.
East Wall Route, G. 70.
Castle Ridge, G. 27.
Garadh na Ciste, East Ridge, G. 65.
Lower East Wall Route, Tower Ridge, *J.* 135.
North Wall, Flake Chimney, *J.* 135.
Moonlight Gully Buttress, Diagonal Route, *J.* 135.
*Observatory Ridge, Left-hand Route, *J.* 135.

Easy.

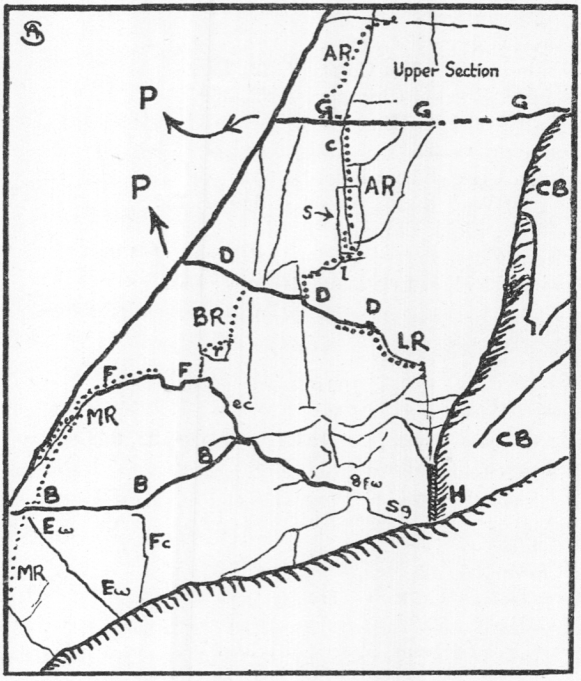
Goodeve's Route, G. 68.
Secondary Tower Ridge, 1934 Route, G. 64.
Raeburn's Easy Route, G. 56.
Basin from Slav Route, Central Traverse, *J.* 22, 368.
Orion Face, Upper Traverse, *J.* 135.
No. 3 Gully Buttress, G. 53.
Broad Gully Route (Tower Ridge), *J.* 135.
Tower Gully, G. 75.
Ledge Route, G. 42.
Tower Gap East Gully, G. 71.
No. 3 Gully, G. 52.
Eastern Traverse from Tower Gully, G. 70.

Unclassified.

*Castle Ridge, North Face, G. 27.
*Lüscher's Climb, G. 37; *J.* 135.
*Nelstrop and Byrom's Climb, *J.* 135.
*Great Tower, Rotten Chimney, *J.* 135.
*Newbigging's Route, Left-hand Variation, *J.* 135.

(Note by Editor on several routes marked *. On Mr Kellett's standards Orion Face, Beta route, contains one V.S. pitch which almost elevates the climb to this standard, for the pitch is very short. Mr Kellett says that the V.S. allocation to the "Long Climb" depends partly on its length, and that Delta route, its upper half, is really a good severe by itself. Zeta route is a very amiable severe. The Girdle Traverse is unclassifiable, because so variegated and long. It has a short section of nearly V.S. grade. Observatory

Ridge, West Face, should be well up the severe list, and Observatory Buttress, West Face, a good difficult. The 1934 and 1936 routes on the lower crag of South Trident Buttress are about equal in difficulty. I disagree with the grading of Hesperides Ledge on the Comb. Exposure at corners and some looseness of holds, vegetation and lack of belays make it, I think, a difficult.)



KEY TO DIAGRAM

CARN DEARG, NORTH WALL (FROM CASTLE RIDGE)

Ledges and Prominent Features—

H, Start of Harrison's Climb; CB, Cousins' Buttress; G, Green Terrace; D, Diagonal Terrace; P, Arrows in direction of Pinnacle, Staircase Route; F, Flake Terrace; B, Broad Terrace.

Routes Marked—

MR, Macphee's; BR, Route B; AR, Route A; LR, Lüscher's.

Smaller Marks—

Sg, Scree Gully; 8fw, 8-foot Wall; Fc, Flake Chimney; Ew, Easy Way; ec, Easy Chimney; r, Recess Route B; s, Slab Route A; c, Corner Route A; l, The Ledge.

SOME MEMORABLE AND LONG DAYS AMONG THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINS DURING THE LAST FIFTY YEARS.

By Allan Arthur.

(*Written at Tomdoun, March* 1943.)

AT the 1942 Annual Meeting the Editor made an appeal to members for contributions to the *Journal*. At the close of the meeting a wit of the Club, who shall be nameless, put into my hand a book which he said he had taken out of the Library in my name, adding that he had done this for my education and emulation.

This book, "Autumnal Rambles among the Scottish Mountains," by the Rev. Thomas Grierson, A.M., Kirkbean (2nd Edition, published in Edinburgh 1857), interested me considerably. It starts off in Arran in 1840 and records the exploits of a pre-Disruption parish minister who, notwithstanding the almost total absence of travelling facilities, and no doubt without neglecting his parish duties, found time to worship in many temples not made with hands. Our General Guide Book Editor, the one-time occupant of the Manse of Rannoch, will need to look to his laurels!

Such, then, are my reasons for writing the following article, which is a chronicle, from notes mostly recorded at the time, of "Joyous days upon the mountainside." The style may be somewhat abrupt and condensed on account of the number and variety of expeditions described. Many long and arduous expeditions are already recorded in the *Journal*, but any satisfying collation of these would require more time and space respectively than could be devoted by the author or allowed by the Editor. So the narrative is bound to be somewhat personal, which I regret, as it only deals with those expeditions with which I am familiar at first hand.

My first ascent was Ben Lomond in 1889, and as I had been twice on both tops of Cruachan before 1892 (there being some doubt then as to which was the higher top), all these in the company of my father and brother

David, my experience of mountaineering could be said to have begun in 1892. During the succeeding fifty years I have had the great privilege of climbing our Scottish mountains many times, often for whole days alone or with such stalwarts of the S.M.C. and mountaineering fraternity as W. W. Naismith, Godfrey Solly, George Sang, F. S. Goggs, Inglis Clark, John Rennie, Harold Raeburn, W. G. Macalister, J. R. Young, also with Willie Ling, Arthur Russell, Harry MacRobert, G. T. Glover, P. J. H. Unna, Bob Jeffrey, Sandy and Jack Harrison, Howard Somervell, and many others happily still with us, most of whom I could call intimate friends and from whom I have gained and learned much, and to whom I hope my friendship has given some pleasure.

The following are recorded in order of time, and where no companions are mentioned I was alone.

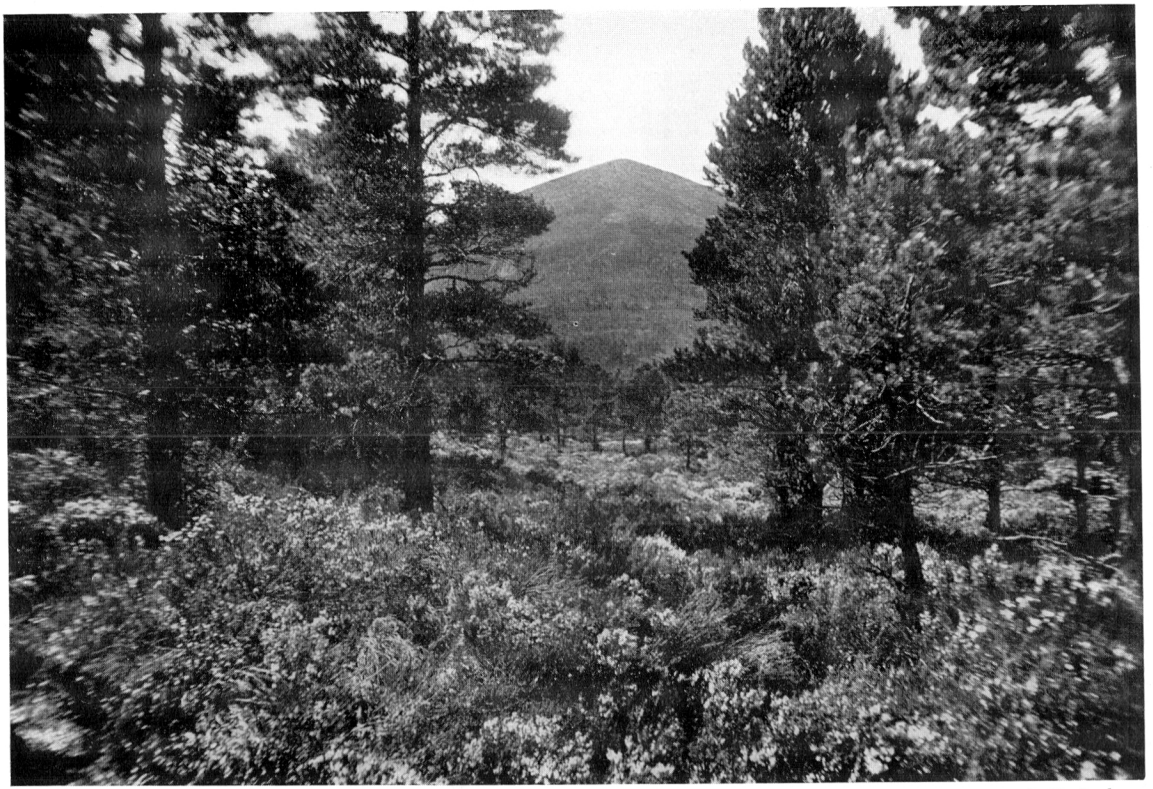
One Week in July 1897.—The Cairngorms from Nethy Bridge with my brother David. By Forest Lodge and the Nethy to Cairngorm and Macdhui, where on the top we met Dr Reith and Rev. J. Fairley Daly, and via the Pools of Dee and the Larig to Upper Tullochghru for tea, where the Dalys were staying, thence by Aviemore and Boat of Garten to Grantown and back to Nethy. We completed 50 miles and climbed two of the highest of the Scottish bens in 18 hours.

By Coylum and Glen Eunach to Braeriach and back to Aviemore. 30 miles, 10 hours.

Bynac and A'Chòinneach by Ryvoan. 20 miles, 10 hours.

September 1909.—With Dr David Yellowlees from Luib to Balquhidder via Ben More and Stobinian on a day of perfect visibility, when Ruchill Hospital and Glasgow University were distinctly seen, also Ben Nevis, Skye, and the Cairngorms. 15 miles, 8 hours. We were given a very high tea by a shepherd's wife, who, after she had prepared it, left us to close up the house—true Scottish hospitality.

Alone from Tyndrum to Crianlarich over Ben Lui, Beinn a'Chleibh, Lui, Oss, and Dubhchraig. 15 miles, 5,000 feet, $6\frac{3}{4}$ hours.



August 1919

J. H. Buchanan

CARN ELRICK



August 1919

THE POOLS OF DEE
(Looking South)

J. H. Buchanan

From Lawers Hotel, over Meall Gruaidh, Meall Garbh, An Stuc, Ben Lawers, and Beinn Ghlas.

From Tyndrum to Bridge of Orchy; road at 659 to top of Beinn Dòrain (3,524), 65 minutes, and over Beinns Dòthaidh and Achaladair. 14 miles, 5,300 feet, 6½ hours.

Four Days, Easter 1911, *Ridge Walking*.—With F. S. Goggs and A. W. Russell (see *Journal*, Vol. 21). Much snow and cold blizzards. From Aultbea (Mrs Scott), Ben Attow, Sgùrr-nan-Ceathreamhnan and An Socach (3,017). 15 miles, 6,500 feet, 9 hours.

From Aultbea to Ben Ula Lodge (Mrs Finlayson) by Creag a' Chaoruinn (3,462), Mam Sodhail, Carn Eige, Tom-a-Chòinich, and Toll Creagach. 16 miles, 5,000 feet, 8½ hours.

From Ben Ula Lodge, Russell with Finlayson carrying skis. Goggs and I by 1,000-foot gully roped on perfect snow to Creag a' Chaoruinn (3,195), considerable instruction of Finlayson on ski-ing, and on to An Socach (3,503), from which Russell and he returned. With Goggs to An Riabhachan, roped as we traversed the cornice in a howling blizzard to Sgùrr-na-Làpaich and Bràigh a' Choire Bhig, floundering in mist and snow, 18 inches of which fell in 7 hours, and so down to bath, supper, and bed. 14 miles, 5,200 feet, 10 hours.

With Goggs left Lodge 7.43 A.M., slap up Beinn Fhionnlaidh (3,294) 9.5, and glissaded from cairn down Central Gully and back for breakfast at 9.53. Goggs always was an early starter and hard goer.

July 1912.—With W. W. Naismith from Sligachan. Motored to Glen Brittle House 11 A.M., Cioch Gully by traverse from east side up terrace, and main crack route to Cioch. By West fork of East Gully to ridge of Sron na Ciche to Sgùrr Sgumain to Bad Step to Sgùrr Alasdair and along scree to Bealach at Coire-an-Lochan, Sgùrr Dubh na Da Bheinn, and Dubh Mòr, along main ridge south; did new climb on Caisteal-a'-Garbh Choire; over Sgùrr nan Eag and Garsbheinn to Mad Burn and Loch Scavaig, and from Coruisk by Druim Hain ridge to Sligachan and a five-course hot dinner at midnight. 25 miles, 7,500 feet, 13 hours.

Glamaig (2,537). Very hot day after tea, urged on by W. W. N. to beat the Gurkha's return record of 55 minutes (see " Skye Guide "). Left hotel 6.2 P.M. Top 6.58. Hotel 7.25. Well done, the bare-footed Gurkha, who suffered less from the heat.

September 1912.—Cowal with W. W. N., wet and misty day. From Kilmun. Good scrambling on three pinnacles worthy of further investigation at 1,400 feet above Coylet, Loch Eck and Clach Beinn (2,109) and Ben Mhor (2,433), and via Bernice by boat and Ardentinny to Blairmore. 20 miles, 10 hours.

January 1913.—Ben-y-Gloe with W. W. N. and J. R. Y. on skis from Blair Atholl. 16 miles, 3,100 feet, 9 hours.

Easter 1913 (*S.M.C. Meet*).—From Glenmore Lodge with George Sang on skis and starting with F. S. Goggs and H. M. D. Watson on foot. Cairngorm and Macdhui on very icy surface and dense mist to Derry Lodge. Fourteen-pound rucksacks and ice axes—bad for good ski-ing. Were hospitably put up by keeper Fraser and entertained to interesting stories of all the Crowned Heads of Europe whom he knew as men. Returned on a lovely day by Glen Geusachan, over Càrn Bàn Mòr and Sgòran Dubh Mòr. Lovely run off the latter to Loch an Eilan and Aviemore. Two days, 41 miles, 7,500 feet, 20 hours.

A large S.M.C. party of eleven left Aviemore 7.40 A.M. (Goggs was there); via Loch an Eilan to Lower Bothy and Braeriach, Angel's Peak, and Cairn Toul. Eighteen inches new snow from the north, which would have given perfect ski-ing conditions. Huge cornices, slides of which are now in the Club Collection. Glorious sunny day. 21 miles, 5,000 feet, 11 hours.

Alone from Novar Arms Hotel, Evanton, 6.30 A.M. over Fiachlach (3,018), Tom a' Choinnich (3,134), Ben Wyvis (3,429), An Cabar (3,106), and down to Achterneed Station 1.15 P.M. and caught the 1.20 train home. Much hard snow. Lovely day. Had words with a keeper, but he was too slow to intercept. 21 miles, 4,100 feet, 6¾ hours.

Easter 1916.—Four 4,000-foot Munros in 6½ hours. Left Alexandra Hotel and drove 5 miles in trap to path

to Wade's Road. Left road at 8.25 A.M. with six others, who spent most of the glorious day on Aonach Mòr and returned the same way. Everything over 1,200 feet had 6 inches of new snow and the views were superb, so I went on to Aonach Beag, great glissade to Col at 2,650, and up very narrow and sharp arête to Carn Mòr Dearg and via Ben Nevis (in mist above 3,500) and a 1,500-foot glissade down the Red Burn; got back to the hotel at 2.55 P.M. for tea and the afternoon train. As there were 5 feet of snow on Aonach Mòr it could be reckoned over 4,000 feet. 13 miles, 7,000 feet, 6½ hours.

August 1916.—From Lochearnhead 9.20 A.M. by motor bike to Carnbanemore in Glen Lyon. Left road at 10.30 A.M. Creag Mhòr, Carn Mairg, Schiehallion, Carn Mairg from the north, Meall Garbh and Carn Gorm down to Carnbanemore 5.15 P.M. Home 7.50. Cycled 56 miles. 18 miles, 8,300 feet, 6¾ hours. Wonderful day and views.

August 1917.—From Connel Ferry and by motor boat to head of Loch Etive 12.5 P.M. Meall nan Eun, Stob Coir' an Albannaich, Glas Bheinn Mhòr and Ben Starav to Taynuilt 10 P.M. Fine day of 13½ hours. 25 miles, 8,000 feet, 9 hours.

June 1918.—Ballachulish Hotel (Mrs Fearnside) over good pinnacles on ridge of Sgòrr Dhonuill and Sgòrr Dhearg to Creagan Station. Very wet day and thick mists. 16 miles, 5,000 feet, 6¼ hours.

March 1919.—6.30 A.M. train from Taynuilt. Knocked up Robert Stewart at Tyndrum for breakfast. Left 8.15 in deep and soft snow for Carn Creag, Creag Mhòr and Beinn Heasgarnich and back by glen to Crianlarich 4.45 P.M. 18 miles, 5,250 feet, 8½ hours.

June 1919.—With T. Howard Somervell from Sligachan to Garbh-bheinn. Traversed Clach Glas and Blaven by gully to left. Down scree gully to 1,050 contour and back over Marsco on very steep and slippery grass slopes to Sligachan. Grand day. 15 miles, 6,000 feet, 11 hours.

June 1921.—9.40 A.M. With my brother, Dr J. W. Arthur of Kikuyu, from Sligachan by Bealach to Glen

Brittle House, where we lunched with Lord Macdonald. Cioch by direct slab route west side to top. Traversed to East Gully, and by difficult pitch up between left wall and chock stone to Sgumain. From this top everything was in dense mist. Up Bad Step to Alasdair, Thearlaich, Mhic Coinnich, and by Inaccessible Pinnacle to Dearg and along main ridge over Banachdichs, Ghreadaidhs, an Dorus, Mhadaidh and Sgùrr Thuilm, and by scree gully and slopes to burn and back over Bealach to Sligachan 11 P.M. A strenuous and long day. 20 miles, 9,000 feet, 13⅓ hours.

Easter 1922.—With Harry MacRobert on skis from Lower Bothy on 18 inches of new snow and perfect conditions. Braeriach by corrie and cornice above Loch Eunach in dense mist, and down to lower Bothy for lunch, with hot tea made by Greig. Cleared up, so ascended Sgòran Dubh Mòr and had a glorious run down to the woods, thence carried skis back by Loch an Eilan to Aviemore. 19 miles (12 ski-ing), 5,000 feet, 12 hours.

Easter 1923 (*S.M.C. Meet*).—With Godfrey Solly. An Teallachs from Dundonnell to Glas Mheall Mòr, Bidein a' Ghlas Thuill, Sgùrr Fiòna, Lord Berkeley's seat and along narrow ridge over four towers to Sàil Liath and down by Lochan Thuill to hotel. Great day on ice and in mist. Solly extraordinary. 15 miles, 5,500 feet, 9½ hours.

Easter 1925 (*S.M.C. Meet*).—Much snow. Perfect weather. Stob Bàn, Sgùrr a' Mhaim, Ben Nevis by Castle and Castle Ridge, Carn Mòr Dearg, Binneins Beag and Mòr, An Garbhanach and Stob Coire a' Chairn, Am Bodach. Three and a half great days. 45 miles, 20,000 feet, 28 hours. With Solly, Barlow, the Harrisons, and others.

August 1930.—Four 4,000-foot Cairngorms in 11½ hours. Very hot day. Thin mists on tops. No views. From Grantown by car to Coylum 9.45 A.M., and via Larig and Lurcher's crag face and Cairn Lochan to Cairngorm. Contoured above Loch Avon precipices and by Loch Etchachan to Macdhui, and by Allt a' Choire Mhoir to the Larig (2,300 feet), and up by boiler plates and Loch an Uaine to Cairn Toul and Angel's Peak. Bathed in

Wells of Dee at 4,000 feet, and by Braeriach back to Coylum 9.15 P.M. 25 miles, 8,000 feet, 11½ hours.

August 1933.—Traverses of Clach Glas and Blaven both ways. Two glorious hot days and superb views.

From Loch Slapin by Sgùrr nan Each to Garbh-bheinn going south and back to Loch Slapin. 8 miles, 5,000 feet, 4½ hours.

From Loch Slapin and by An Stac and Lochan to Blaven, going north over Clach Glas and down to Loch Slapin. More difficult this way, especially descent of Blaven. 6 miles, 4,000 feet, 3¾ hours.

August 1934, *through Glen Tilt and the Larig Ghru.*—Left Blair Atholl at 3 A.M. in bright moonlight till 4.30 A.M., when it set near Bridge of Tilt. By Forest Lodge to a good breakfast (8 to 9 A.M.) 2 miles beyond Falls of Tarf. Hundreds of deer, salmon sporting in the river, and much activity in bird life in the hours before dawn. Fine views of Schiehallion and Ben-y-Gloe. White Bridge 10.30 and up by the Dee and Corrour Bothy (where H. V. Morton spent a memorable night in "Scotland Again") for lunch (12 to 1 P.M.). Bathed in Pools of Dee. Tea (5 to 5.40 P.M.) in clearing above Iron Bridge, arrived Aviemore 7 P.M. Full moon. Glorious sunny day with cool N.W. wind and superb views all the way. Ideal for such a memorable expedition. 40 miles, 3,500 feet, 13¼ hours.

Easter 1935 (*S.M.C. Meet at Kinlochewe*).—Motored from Inverness. Bridge of Grudie 11 A.M., Sàil Mhòr by 1,000-foot snow gully and east along Beinn Eighe Ridge to Ruadh-Stac Mòr alone, and from there with Colin Russell to Spidean Coire-nan-Clach, thence, with the others, over "Black Men" to Sgùrr Bàn and Creag Dubh, and hotel 7.30 P.M. Glorious and heavy day, perfect visibility and much snow above 2,000 feet. 15 miles, 4,200 feet, 8½ hours.

August 1935.—From Coylum Bridge by Pools and March Burn to Macdhui plateau, and by Feith Buidhe to Shelter Stone, and by plateau to Cairn Lochan and Lurcher's Crag to the Larig and Coylum. With my son and daughter. 20 miles, 5,000 feet, 11 hours.

June 1936.—From Clachaig 3.15 A.M., over An t-Sron 5 A.M. Sunrise when above buttresses of Bidean nam Bian, on to top, and back over Stob Coire an Lochan to hotel 6.45. Perfect morning and visibility. 8 miles, 4,000 feet, 3½ hours.

Easter 1939 (*S.M.C. Meet*).—Seven new Munros. 13 miles, 7,000 feet, 11 hours. From Cluanie with Bob Jeffrey. Car to 6 miles down Glen Shiel. Ascended Faochag, Sgùrr-na-Sgine, Creag nan Damh, Sgùrr an Lochain, Leathain, Maol Chinn-Dearg, Aonach air Chrith, Druim Shionnach, and Creag a' Mhàim to road in the dark where Good Samaritan Arthur Dixon ran us home. A perfect day in lovely winter conditions.

August 1940.—Cycled to Lower Bothy with Kenneth Dunlop. Left 11.35 A.M. by path on east side of Loch Eunach to Devil's Point 3.30 P.M. N.-W. gale with heavy rain arose against us, and in dense mist we crossed Cairn Toul and Angel's Peak (had we not already been there we would have sworn it was "Devilish" Point), and were blown down to screes above south end of Eunach and had a "sair fecht" to come by the Lower Bothy, but were refreshed there with hot coffee by a hiker and his wife. A trying ordeal. 15 miles, 4,000 feet, 11 hours.

August 1940.—Left Coylum 10.30 A.M., meaning to climb Macdhui from the Larig. Mist from N.W. was thick at the col, so went on to Pools of Dee for lunch. Weather appeared better on Braemar side, and as two hikers turned up from Corrour Bothy going to Aviemore, decided they could advise my people that I was going to Derry Lodge and would be late home. Set off over Càrn a' Mhaim to Lui Beg, where the gamekeeper gave me tea. It was a fine afternoon and evening, with cold strong head-winds till I got down to the clearing, where it was quite dark; arrived Aviemore 10 P.M. Thus was the Larig Ghru crossed to Derry Lodge both ways in one day. 34 miles, 5,100 feet, 10¾ hours.

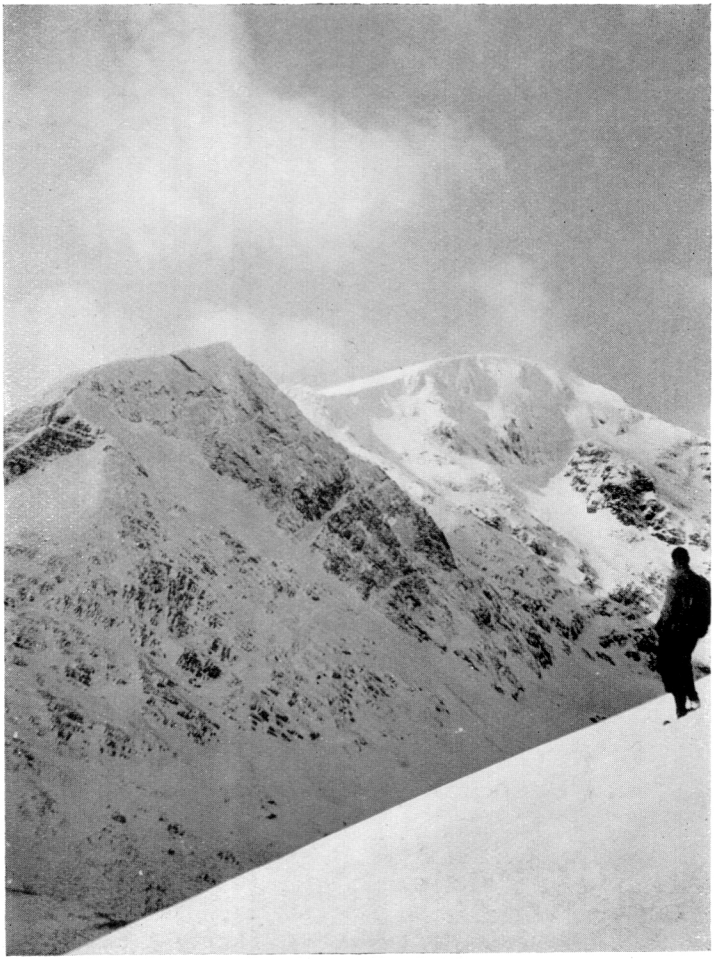
June 1942.—With my son, from Fort William on a fine day with cold wind, up Glen Nevis, through the gorge to Steall, and up N.E. ridge of Sgùrr a' Mhaim, Stob Bàn, and Mullach nan Coirean to Polldubh, and



Easter 1939 *Allan Arthur*

EASTER MEET—CLUANIE

Standing, left to right—R. JEFFREY (President), S. POINTON TAYLOR, and behind him (nose only) P. J. H. UNNA, F. D. CAMPBELL ALLEN, Mrs MACDONALD (Proprietrix), W. N. LING, G. T. GLOVER, ARTHUR DIXON, HUGH GARDNER and J. F. A. BURT. *Kneeling, left to right*—N. L. HIRD, and ALLAN ARTHUR.



Easter 1937 *Allan Arthur*

THE AONACHS
(From the Easains)

back footsore to the Palace Hotel. 24 miles, 8,000 feet, 10½ hours.

New Year 1943 (*S.M.C. Meet*).—From Crianlarich on a perfect winter day with deep soft snow, with Bob Jeffrey and Sandy Harrison. Over An Caisteal alone and on to Beinn a' Chroin, and chased the sun all the way up Cruach Ardrain, but he beat me and set half an hour before I arrived. Bitterly cold. Down N.W. ridge to col, then into the corrie, where I was lucky to strike a snow track, which I soon lost in the dark. And so back for tea as the dinner gong sounded. 13 miles, 5,250 feet, 9 hours.

The 47 expeditions recorded above are only a few of well over five hundred, covering about two-thirds of the Munros. These include ascents, in different summer and winter conditions: on Braeriach, 22, thrice on skis; Cruachan, 20; Ben Lui, 18; Ben Nevis, 15, once on skis by the Allt a' Mhuilinn and Carn Mòr Dearg arête, and once by the Gardyloo Gully without skis; Cairngorm, 12, once on skis; Cairn Toul and Ben More, 10 each; Macdhui, 9, once on skis; Sgòran Dubh Mòr, 9, twice on skis; and Bidean nam Bian, 7; and many of the others several times.

Sir George Adam Smith, a keen mountaineer and an original member of the Club, wrote in his diary in the early eighties: "I have learned this year how to climb; it is a great art; it is a splendid discipline; it is a glorious risk. To myself it is a great deliverance. All the year round I am in a groove, then I go to Switzerland with my ice axe and rucksack on the rack and maps in my pocket and I am a boy once more. That is only the prospect of the hills, but when you are on them what a health, and what a glory it is! A gymnastic for every muscle in your body, and for anything that corresponds to muscle in your mind, an imperial vision for the eyes at every step."

And what is the conclusion of the whole matter? Keep fit, be abstemious, or, better still, a total abstainer; live a clean life always; and above all, look ever upward to the hills—our glorious heritage—as the Psalmist did, for inspiration and encouragement.

DAYS WITH FRIENDS.

By Charles W. Parry.

IN these days, when climbing is a rare luxury even for mountaineers, we are fortunate people who can keep alive the spirit of the hills by means of diary or photograph album. I count myself among such in that I can revive many of my finest days by a glance at my photographs or even by receiving a letter from someone with whom I may have passed many of the best days of my life on the hills. Indeed, the mere recognition of handwriting has more than once sent me off on some old climb before I have even opened the letter. Such a day-dream may be associated with danger, humour, beauty of scenery or, best of all, with companionships that time and absence only seem to make stronger.

Only recently, while still convalescing from an illness that has made further climbing an impossibility for me, I received such a letter: when I had read it I fell into one of those introspective moods wherein one recalls so clearly the series of incidents, trifling perhaps in themselves, which have meant so much in the course of a climbing career. I was tempted to put on paper some of the many events recalled to my mind—a rambling sort of affair I'm afraid it will appear, but it may serve to amplify the series of articles on Scottish-Alpine climbing which appeared in the *Journal* some time ago, and to illustrate, from personal experience, the kind of pitfalls that await the young guideless climber in his first seasons abroad. It may seem tragic at first sight that an active climbing career should have been cut short by a trifling accident, but I have learned to get more out of the past in retrospect than I did even at the actual time. In the following pages I have endeavoured to recapture the spirit of those days when I was active in Scotland and the Alps. Perhaps I may assume an unusual licence in mentioning Alpine climbs in the days in which we are now living, when one must either climb in retrospect or not at all. That, at all events, is my excuse for the writing of this article.

I suppose times of crisis, which usually arise in bad conditions of weather or ground, impress themselves most on one's mind. I have a vivid recollection of a forced descent of the Tower Ridge when climbing at one of our Easter Meets with F. S. Smythe. J. H. B. Bell and E. E. Roberts were on another rope. We had ascended in fine conditions; indeed, I had been up the ridge in summer conditions a day or two previously in perfect weather, but below the little Tower a violent storm of sleet and wind arose. The temperature fell rapidly and the sleet froze to the rocks as it fell. My glasses frosted instantly, and although I could not recognise a friend at ten paces without them, I had to remove them and chip every single hold clean. Moreover, the wind was so violent that we could do nothing but cling to the rocks for minutes at a time, till a lull in the gale allowed us to move in reasonable safety. This sort of experience proved quite invaluable in Alpine climbing, though one is usually very chary of venturing on a big ascent in anything but settled weather. Sometimes, however, this rule is broken, justifiably or otherwise. I have lasting memories of a traverse of the Grépon with J. H. B. Bell in 1929, a season of very unsettled weather.

We had arrived at the Montanvers to be told that the mountains were, at the moment, in fairly good condition, but that there was no certainty whatever as to what the weather on the next day might be like. We therefore decided, if it should prove to be a good day, to bag a good peak, and although I had not been on a hill for six months I agreed to the Charmoz-Grépon traverse. Our departure from the hotel in the early hours was agreeably spiced by the hotel porter running after us to tell us on no account to miss the traces of an unfortunate climber who had, on the previous day, fallen out of the Mummery Chimney—"He is all-l-l-l the way down the couloir." This in no way improved our opinion of the porter, more especially when we found that he had left all bread and rolls out of the provisions and we were perforce compelled to eat highly concentrated *saucisson* or meat without the staff of life, or go hungry. There is nothing that I know so annoying as to have to go hungry on the

hills through carelessness, and nothing that so quickly saps the reserves upon which one has occasionally to rely. We gave up the Charmoz, chiefly owing to finding ourselves too far to the right to make it worth while descending to the correct route. After Bell had led the Mummery Chimney I took over the lead at the Râteau de Chèvre. But the lack of sustenance had its effect; in the final chimney I learned the unwisdom of doing a difficult peak in poor condition, and confess that I was more nearly "off" than I have ever been in my life. Indeed, I never remember being completely all out on a climb before, though I have been on more difficult places. Although this traverse should be well within the powers of a good rock-climbing party, lack of food and poor training made it, for me at all events, as hard a climb as I wanted for a first day out.

I have a charming memory of escaping from the clutches of an enthusiastic but unskilful climber who wished me to lead him up the Crowberry, by descending a water-pipe from my bedroom window at the Ballachulish Hotel during one of our Meets. But I was caught on the last day. My stalker ran me to ground in the garage, and there was nothing to be done but bow to the inevitable. Above Greig's traverse A. P. A. Robertson and I awaited the start of our self-invited third. The rope moved first to one side, then to the other, then back again with never a sign of moving upwards. Indeed, we had one or two fairly hefty tugs to withstand during these rather puzzling manœuvres. A hailing match produced the information that our companion was "searching for a new route"! Robertson raised a questioning eyebrow; I nodded down to him and we both took a firm grasp of the rope and placed ourselves securely. Accompanied by a stream of loud and emphatic protests, our explorer soon arose from the depths to our ledge. He appeared to have done more rotating than climbing, for he was festooned with rope in every direction. Mercifully the last knot, about the size of an apple, held firm, or he would have unwound himself like a bobbin to the extent of the 20 or 30 feet of loose rope wound round him in spirals. But when it was all over

and I found that our friend had, after many years, accomplished one of his life's ambitions, I felt a little ashamed of my deception and very glad that I had helped to realise a cherished dream.

On another occasion, in Skye this time, Robertson and I found ourselves above the last vertical pitch that leads to the Cioch by the Cioch Gully. I was holding Robertson in an abstracted sort of way, for he was well placed, while he was rapidly crimsoning under the considerable strain of lifting a 12-stone companion most of the way up the pitch, slimy under a heavy coating of moisture. The latter had not made use of the crack but attempted the almost holdless wall on the left. The resulting strain on Robertson may be imagined. When about two-thirds of the way up the pitch our third suddenly found a minute hold which enabled him to take a small part of his weight for a moment; feeling the very slightly lessened tension about his middle, and being somewhat nervous he immediately let out a yell, "Take in the *slack!*"—a remark that had an effect on Robertson that can hardly be described.

Another very real form of danger is the insidious effect of relaxed tension, and the reaction it has on one's senses. Bell and I had ascended the Dent Blanche in 1928 after a hard plug in soft snow across the Ferpècle glacier. It was obvious from the moment that we reached the Wandfluh, up a steep little ice-slope and a much longer snow-slope above it, that a storm, already covering the Matterhorn, was coming rapidly in our direction. As a result we moved throughout together, and rapidly mounted to the summit to the accompaniment of louder and louder peals of thunder from the Tiefenmatten direction. In two hours and twenty minutes from the glacier we had bagged our peak and were started on the descent, when I let go my axe to make use of a handhold. I had thought the cord loop was round my wrist, but learned differently when, after several gigantic leaps, my excellent axe disappeared for ever down the Ferpècle face. The heat was suffocating, but we had to hurry, for the snow-slope above the ice-slope must by then have softened a lot, and to descend such a place without an axe is the reverse of pleasant.

The storm just missed us, but the glacier was hotter than ever. A thick white mist arose; we could see it approaching stealthily up the valley, so we hastily took bearings on the Bouquetins. Bell directed me by compass from behind when I showed the usual tendency to circle to the left, but after about two hours of this we began to have doubts of a night out. The glacier surface, consisting of furrows about 15 inches high and 2 feet apart, lay across our line of march. Walking was extremely exhausting, for if one lifted a foot over the ridge into the next hollow, it meant a continuous high-stepping march; if one attempted to walk on the furrows, the very soft surface gave way and a fatiguing effort at recovering one's balance followed. It was one of the longest and most unpleasant stretches I have ever crossed. We could see nothing but a wall of white mist merging into the snow of the glacier till the eyes ached with trying to focus a single object. When the situation began to look serious, for we had noticed in the morning many small crevasses which by now ought to be near us on our right, a slight clearing overhead showed us the unmistakable summit of the Bouquetins, and that our path had, in fact, been very accurate. It was now obvious that we should get back without a night out, and to the resulting reaction from strain we attributed what followed.

Our walk had degenerated to a monotonous trudge in the insufferable heat when I was suddenly and without warning pulled flat on my back and dragged along the snow. I have never laid claim to any great presence of mind, but so instinctively does the mind work that I had turned round and dug my crampons into the snow before I had realised what had happened. Indeed, my first thought was one of annoyance that I had been tripped up when I was so fatigued, and I wondered where Bell was. There was no sign of him, and I clearly remember thinking, "Where on earth has he got to?" We were climbing on line at the time, and that one thickness withstood a heavy shock, for Bell had gone down into a hidden crevasse about as far as 15 feet. If the edge had been hard snow I might not have been able to get my heels into the ground in time. After we had discussed

matters by a series of yells, I tied a loop at the other end of the line, for I was carrying the spare length, and threw it down the hole. With the help of this and by using his crampons (which were strapped to his rucksack, points outward) as a "back" hold, Bell was able to climb out, but I had a tremendous pull to free the two ropes, one held in each hand as he ascended, since they had frozen to the grooves they had cut by pressure.

A few days later Bell and I set off to climb Mont Blanc de Seilon direct from the Seilon glacier, in spite of the misgivings of M. Métrailler, the proprietor of the Arolla bazaar. We had bought so much stuff from him that he soon began to refer to us as his *meilleurs clients*, and he got us much surreptitious information from the guides about our prospective climbs and the state of the mountains. But fear of losing his *meilleurs clients* led him to invent many a tragic party which had attempted just the particular climb we proposed to do, among its members a *monsieur*. This unfortunate *monsieur*, on every occasion, "*est tombé—il s'est cassé la tête!*" This became a great joke to us, and when our Mont Blanc de Seilon expedition was mentioned M. Métrailler instantly started, "*Oh, c'est très dangereux—ça; je vous dis, il y avait un monsieur——*" He then recollected that the ridge we proposed to ascend had only twice been climbed before, and on each occasion the great guide Bovier of Evolène had led the climb. Clearly no *monsieur* in *his* party had been allowed to *casser* his *tête*, and local pride and patriotism overcame the fear of losing his *meilleurs clients*. We had a marvellous day. The ridge was in perfect condition and we were able to straighten out the previous routes, which had diverged to the left 300 feet below the top, arriving exactly at the summit cairn. The Ruinette looked invitingly near, but we had little rest on our summit. A guide, the late Antoine Georges, who had recently been along the ridge with "a *monsieur* who goes like a guide," had told Bell that they took four hours between the summits, so we pushed rapidly on. Frequently we changed the lead when a difficulty arose and an easier alternative showed itself, and we were thus always on the move. In just

under two and a half hours we were on the summit of the Ruinette. There we spent one of those unforgettable hours in complete idleness, of which the memory remains for ever a consolation and an inspiration.

Our descent was unorthodox. Getting bored with the crumbling nature of the south ridge, we took to the face above the Giètroz glacier and found a world of unstable blocks and stones at such an angle as to cause us to marvel that they did not avalanche. They did, when we were about half-way down, but we had not been altogether unprepared, and at the first sound of movement, high above us, we took shelter under an overhanging boulder while all the rubble in Switzerland seemed to hurtle past. We finished that descent by a more friendly snow-slope, and regained the Col de Seilon after some trouble with the crevasses on the glacier, which persisted in lying, contrary to all practice of respectable glaciers, *along* the direction of flow. Whymper and Finch, I believe, mention this peculiarity of the Giètroz glacier.

I was reminded by a photo on the walls of my room of a day on Stob Ban spent in cutting up and down the gullies of the north face, purely for practice, one unusually severe winter when really hard ice could be found in many places. The Black Shoot of Ben Eunaich was one vast ice-bulge (we discovered the Beaver Buttress instead) and even the Tower Ridge would not go in the short hours of daylight. But there was no danger from stones in our gully on Stob Ban. When Bell and I did the Nonne we had a very hard spell of cutting to clear the gully before the sun got on the rocks, and a bare ten minutes after we reached the top we could hear the ominous hiss of the first descending stones, loosened by the warmth.

A traverse of the Matterhorn by the Zmutt arête with Bell, in 1928, recalls a grand day with the same companion on Nevis when we ascended the Observatory Ridge and descended the N.E. Buttress. We missed the Opening Ceremony of the C.I.C. Hut by walking up the Ben with Ormiston Chant (clad Bond Street fashion even down to his shoes, and with no axe) and descending the Tower Gully. We had to cut away the cornice and cut steps

right down to the bend, but the climb consoled us for missing the ceremony, and the Rev. A. E. Robertson did his best to appease our ravenous appetites.

These are the sort of days which remain fixed in my mind. Even now, a shade of colour in the sky at sunset or a particular sound or scent will recall many an incident of pleasure and humour. I never hear a vacuum cleaner without recalling the Col du Géant, at which hostel Smythe, Harrison and I spent some ten days in 1929, the association of ideas being provided by a gentleman who consumed vast quantities of macaroni by the simple process of inserting one end into his mouth and sucking forcibly till the other end disappeared. A bivouac on Mont Maudit at 13,000 feet on an ice-shelf took me back to the first Meet of the J.M.C.S., when we bivouacked beneath the Narnain Boulder, though the danger from sleep-walking on the latter occasion was less obvious.

The prospect of having to climb in really fantastic conditions led Fritz Suter and me to arrange a code of signals by means of the rope. We had made a very fast ascent of the Finsteraarhorn, and while I entered particulars in the tin box on the summit Fritz went off to a projecting buttress where he proceeded to make the most appalling row until he attracted the notice of the hut-keeper thousands of feet below: "Otherwise he will never believe we have been so fast." But we had been aware, ever since striking the ridge, that storm was near, and on the ice-slope above the Hugisattel we were almost tempted to stop, even without shelter, so violent were the conditions. It was clear that, after cutting a dozen or so steps, Fritz would be practically out of sight and hearing, and we had to arrange a plan for me to let him know when the rope was nearly out and for him to give me the signal to descend when he had made a real good step. Fritz took the rope a short distance from my waist and, giving one sharp tug, said, "When I do so, you will join me." "Don't worry," I answered feelingly, "I'll join you all right if you tug like that, and I'll come down a lot quicker than you!" In the end we used an additional light line for signalling, with a spare loop to avoid jerks. Fritz told me afterwards that

he had once climbed with a companion who, coming off his holds on steep rock, discovered he had tied a slip-knot. "I learned some very strong English words that day," he said, and added "he always uses the overhead noose now!" That seemed to me also to have a somewhat ominous sound about it.

In 1935 Smythe, Macphee and I ascended to the Italian Hut on the Matterhorn via the Schönbühl Hut and the Col Tournanche, intending to traverse the Matterhorn the next day. The moral of this story is presumably that one ought to make up one's mind and not allow oneself to be influenced by others, for we found ourselves swayed by the presumed expert opinion of the Italian guides in the hut, who said that the mountain would not be safe, and the fact that a Swiss guide and a lady of middle age had set off, apparently without a care, at 4.30 A.M. At 8.30 we were still undecided. The weather looked bad, but Macphee could not get over the fact that "That old woman can do it, and here we are." I confess I felt much the same, but Smythe had a damaged wrist. However, we started—far too late in view of the conditions we met. Late in the afternoon, after a very difficult traverse of the peak, now in really bad condition, we found ourselves at the Solvay Refuge. I was loth to go on, for I had been down the Swiss Ridge with Bell in 1928 and knew its length; under the conditions prevailing I felt we had not nearly enough time to get off the ridge before dark, and there we waited for two days and nights. To those in search of new recipes, I recommend Smythe's description of our menu in "The Spirit of the Hills," but, as he put it, "After eating we lay down; we felt safer that way."

I hope that these rather disconnected reminiscences will inspire others to get out their diaries and recall their own experiences. Even a random phrase may rekindle the lamp of memory in those who read, and in bringing back their own best days on the hills, enable them to live over again some of the finest hours of a lifetime. As far as I am concerned, the friendships I have made on the hills and the philosophy I cannot even express to myself which I have learned among them have more

than compensated me for any misfortunes that have come my way in following what I believe to be the finest sport in the world.

LIBYAN MIRAGE.

THE blue night wind falls into sleep; afar
In star-accented darkness glows the moon,
Throwing the gaunt gun shadow over sand
Storm-swept since dawn, and now strangely still.
Quietly the infinite far horizon clears,
Straining to shape that dim uncertain line,
To end the endless flat unevenness
Of sand, moon shadowed, curve upon lingering curve
Flowing from space and time; flatness of gold
And blue; the blue and gold, green-merging;
Green moorland slopes adew as night mists rise
To whirl into the vortex of the dawn.
Green springtime paths to well-remembered rocks
Soaring in stern and friendly dignity
To peaks oft-trod and ever new. Morn-bathed,
The sun-spurge glistens by the waterfall;
The purpling crags are lit by eastern fire,
Which surges upwards to ignite the snow.
The snow! Dear God, the snow! It gleams, then flames
With icy fires which leap—and die. For now
The birth-pang quiets, and the day lies still
Except for a murmuring moan among the reeds,
A slight and rising rustle from the grass
Which draws the mist cloaks closer round the hills,
Veiling summit and corrie; now the moors
Are blurred, and glimmer faintly through their shroud;
And still the rising wind, and still the mist.
A sudden gust stings closely; and in the mouth
The bitterness of sand.
Fitfully glints the moon,
And the rippling shadow of the gun is grey,
Grey on the writhing desert sand. The sand . . .

J. C.

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINS IN ART.

By John F. A. Burt.

LONG ago I remarked casually to the Editor that, so far as I knew, the *Journal* contained no consideration of our hills as they appeared to the landscape painter. Now, at a time when fate has with exquisite accuracy placed me in circumstances which preclude any hope of doing the job with the slightest pretensions to adequacy, he bids me make good the defect. I am separated from all libraries, including my own: I have not been in a picture gallery for years, and have no opportunity of revisiting old friends or filling in gaps in my knowledge, far less of seeking out such comparatively recondite pieces of evidence as the "Ben Arthur" plate in Turner's *Liber Studiorum*. I am thrown back on a memory notoriously impressionistic rather than visual or factual; and, in any case, I am no art expert. If I obey the Editor's behest, it is only in the hope that my errors and omissions will provoke someone better placed and better qualified into giving the subject the consideration and the treatment it deserves.

I am tempted to the historical approach, starting out from the excited romanticists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, whose awestruck vision exaggerated the concavity and perpendicularity of every contour, so that they made our mountains proliferate rather stylised *aiguilles*, more suggestive of kirk steeples or the *Penitentes* of a South American glacier than of anything the hills can show to cooler vision; and ending up with the mountain equivalents of the modern figure-studies which seem to draw their inspiration either from a child's box of bricks or from the smooth and simplified convexities of the inner tube of a motor tyre. But these things belong rather to the history of art in general than to our specific subject or the interests of the *Journal*.

When a hill climber looks at a pictorial representation of a mountain known to him, what does he wish to

see ? If he is to establish any friendly contact with the painter's mind he must be mainly interested to discover what impression the mountain has made upon the artist—to see and feel what the artist has seen and felt: that, after all, is what pictures are for. If he is fortunate, he will find that he now sees in his mountain a deeper, richer, more splendid meaning than his own eyes had revealed to him:

> "*For, don't you mark ? We're made so that we love*
> *First, when we see them painted, things we have passed*
> *Perhaps a hundred times, nor cared to see.*"

Such might well be the experience of anyone who knows the Arran hills when he first comes upon the sombre magnificence of Sir D. Y. Cameron's "Cir Mhor."

Or the experience may be less spiritual but more intimate, when one realises that the artist's reaction to the mountain has been the same as one's own—it is like discovering that a stranger knows one of one's favourite climbs and values it for the same reasons as oneself; or like seeing the portrait of a friend and realising that the artist has seen and lovingly portrayed some characteristic expression or attitude. That is very much my own reaction to Horatio McCulloch's "Glencoe."

But if our mountain picture does neither of these things it can serve no purpose that a coloured photograph would not fulfil more accurately. Either the artist has nothing to say about the mountain that is worth our listening to, or we are not tuned in to receive his message. The former is, I think, the explanation of one's dissatisfaction with the landscapes of Peter Graham and the more lamentable of his imitators: there is something more to a Scottish hill than the presence of Highland cattle, heather and bog-water in the foreground, with a rugged schistose slope, lit up by one misty sunbeam, in the middle distance. It is all true enough, in a way, and pretty enough; but the emphasis is cloyingly misplaced—and the iteration is damnable. It is like a Burns orator who keeps on interminably about Highland Mary.

The latter case is more complex. The picture of our old friend may not be intended as a portrait. It

may be a pattern, an "arrangement," like Whistler's "Carlyle," or Cameron's "Sgùrr nan Gillean"; or the mountain may be a mere figure in a picture of something else—Turner's "Ben Arthur," to judge from the small reproduction I have seen, is secondary in importance to the stormy sky in which it is set; or it may be a mere part of a background frieze, like MacTaggart's Jura peaks dancing lyrically beyond a dancing sea. As a matter of fact, compared with the other things which seem to me particularly worthy of faithful portraiture—human beings, trees, and ships—mountains (the Matterhorn from the Riffelsee regrettably excepted) are very seldom made a subject of portrait-painting. So the mountaineer, faced by a picture in which mountains figure, may be misled as to what the artist is trying to say to him, or repelled by the absence of details which seem to him to be relevant and important—much as sailors have been known to condemn canvases which presented a ship without showing the true lead of every rope in the rigging.

First, there is the question of shape. For myself, there are certain mountain forms in themselves so perfect that to distort them, or to produce some heedless approximation to them, seems a wanton outrage—as if one were to draw the Parthenon and deliberately or fecklessly falsify the proportions. Buachaille Etive from Kingshouse, Cir Mhor from Sannox or Rosa, Slioch from halfway down Loch Maree will serve as examples of what I mean: if any artist alters these perfect contours to meet the needs of his design I am liable to think the more poorly of the design. Yet one has only to look at Lawton Wingate's Arran sketches, D. Y. Cameron's illustrations to "Highways and Byways in the West Highlands," and a host of pictures in any of our annual exhibitions, to see that many distinguished artists view the actual shapes of our mountains with rather airy disdain.

Then there is the question of anatomy. I do not think any hill-lover can easily be *en rapport* with the mind of an artist whose canvas effaces or denies the bony structure of a mountain which appears in it. I do not

mean that in a picture of Buachaille Etive, for example, one should be able to trace the successive pitches of the Crowberry: what is photography for? But if the lower part of the Crowberry is tacked, like a piece of cloth, on to the upper pitches of the Curved Ridge, or if the Crowberry Tower rises from a grassy glacis, or the whole mountain suggests that it is made of quartzite overlying sandstone, then I think the mountaineer has grounds for complaint rather more valid than those which used to provoke "The Tailor and Cutter" into acrid comment on the sartorial impossibilities in Royal Academy portraits.

Again, the artist's individual technique—the limitations imposed by his own ineluctable sense of how his materials can best be handled—may cause his message to fail, wholly or in part, of reaching the hill-lover's eye because of a divergent sense of what is fitting in the matter of surface textures. Sir D. Y. Cameron's "Cir Mhor," as I have said, is an unforgettable artistic, emotional, and even spiritual experience. Yet, by a sort of reversal of the artistic necessity which impelled Mr Epstein to give to his bronze of Cunninghame Graham a skin texture reminiscent of Warty Bliggins the Toad, he has invested this boulder-bristling peak with smooth, stately curves that suggest draperies rather than Arran granite. I do not offer this by way of carping criticism, but as an explanation of why an unquestionably great mountain portrait fails, in the case of one sympathetic beholder, to achieve a complete and rounded conviction.

An artist might well reply that it is not his business to meet the preconceived specialist demands of mountaineers any more than of tailors or mariners: that he is concerned only to put on to canvas, by the means he feels bound to use, the thing he feels bound to say. Yet was there ever an artist—a real artist—who did not wish to be understood? And who is more likely to understand the mountain painter than the mountaineer? Each shares a love for the mountains themselves: each (dare one say it?) may have something to teach the other. And these things which come between the mountain lover and the

mountain picture—are they really the strength of the picture or merely its weakness? For myself, I have never been able to believe that the weak and inept drawing of the bowl in Van Gogh's "Sunflowers," or the faulty perspective of his rush chair, came from the strong, the sane side of his genius. I know the modern horror of "mere representation," but is a painted mountain necessarily more artistically satisfying for being unclimbable—or, for that matter, a painted coat for being unwearable and unbuttonable, or a painted ship for being unfit to sail except upon a painted ocean?

[Several references in past numbers of the *Journal* to the artistic aspects of mountain form and colour, mainly concerning the Cuillin perhaps, are contained in the following volumes and corresponding pages: 3, 119 and 193; 4, 115 and 259; 5, 212; 9, 304.—Ed.]

SCOTLAND, 1926.

When you see from afar the golden sun
Setting fire to the western hill,
And you rest from your toil on the "top" you've won
In a world so silent and still;
The weakening hues of departing day
Withdraw in silence and fade away.

The hills that were bright in the midday glare,
The waters that shone like gold,
The glorious rocks you have made your stair,
And the summit that now you hold;
Are losing their shape in approaching night,
In fusion of purple and greyish light.

Not a breath pervades the scented air,
Not a cloud the wondrous sky;
Not a note to disturb the listening ear,
Nor a sight to distract the eye;
But a peace and quiet, and stillness meet,
Enfolding the earth beneath your feet.

C. W. P.

REFLECTIONS ON LAOIGH AND NEIGHBOURING HILLS.

By C. E. Andreae.

IN September of last year it was possible to make my biennial visit to the Scottish hills, a visit which in the past has often, alas, been severely restricted. This particular occasion was more fortunate, however, and a short afternoon training walk from Crianlarich up Fiarach was followed by a good day in rather showery weather on Ben More and Stobinian.

Solo hill-walking is conducive to reflection. In the clean mountain air and familiar surroundings my thoughts turned rather smugly to distant tropic climes and dreary districts where the monotonous and featureless countryside makes one cry out for the sight of a hill. Memories arose, too, of days when the incoming mail brought news of an S.M.C. Meet and stirring tales of remote snow-capped summits hard-won in dirty weather—tales which produced nostalgic dreams that for a time obliterated local surroundings, until maybe they were rudely shattered by the appearance of the steward boy with broken pieces of crockery: "Look, massa, dis ting he broke for my hand, he spoil altogether." Yet I would not have it otherwise; African life has ever increasing interest and even charm, and the exile—if such term may be applied—serves only to make the hill country more worthwhile when revisited. The only regret is that circumstances have prevented my attendance at Meets, except for a solitary occasion at Bridge of Lochay at Easter 1926.

Musing thus, the familiar twin peaks were traversed and the steep descent negotiated from Stobinian to the watershed between the Ben More and Inverlochlarig burns. Rain fell and the weather was deteriorating, but the tops still called, and in a little while I was looking into Coire Ardrain from the top of Stob Coire Buidhe.

It was a hard pull-up all the same, and the invitation from Ardrain's summit evoked no answer from leaden feet. Rather did thoughts of tea and a hot bath gain sway, and thither tired footsteps led with unerring gait.

Two days later, on a glorious autumn morning, I walked up from Crianlarich into the Coninish glen, bound for Beinn Laoigh and Dalmally. The gradual unfolding of the view as the track winds its way up from the railway brought back vivid memories of a brilliant March day in 1922 when three of us had walked up that same rough road for the first time. Our attention had been fully taken up with Meall Odhar straight ahead, which looked very impressive under plenty of snow and was at first mistaken for Laoigh. Then, to our amazement, light mists disclosed a dazzling white crest that appeared over a shoulder of Beinn Dubhcraig, a crest far higher, far more scintillating, more ethereal than anything we had seen hitherto, supported by great snow-clad battlements that fell away in massive steps to the west. Our original error in identification seemed to enhance the thrill of seeing this superb mountain unfolding itself before our eyes. We were in our teens then, when the enthusiasm of youth is at its height; yet for me that enthusiasm has in no way abated, and hills revisited to-day bring back all the old thrills as vividly as ever. On that occasion we had made for a subsidiary couloir which led up to the north shoulder, but much fresh snow had made the surface unstable, and a cold, unpleasant hour had been spent on loose rocks before the sunshine was regained on the ridge above. By then it was growing late, and with the summit beyond our reach we turned back from the 3,000-foot level, tired but happy, and fully determined to pay a return visit at the earliest opportunity. This was done the following year, the summit being reached by way of the central couloir.

Days such as these tend to dispel all consciousness of the outer world, so that wars and rumours of wars, petty strife and industrial argument seem no more than a myth. Yet, alone in the glen below the great bastions

of Laoigh, I could not help thinking of the dark days of 1940 when Hitler's hordes were blasting all before them and it seemed that no power on earth could stop them. I was in Africa at the time, but my thoughts had turned to the hills of the homeland: chaos might reign and the cup of human suffering might be full beyond comprehension, but here at least was something beyond the power of man's hand to destroy! Somehow that thought provided a sheet anchor for mental stability in anxious times, and it is in a spirit of homage and gratefulness that I return to those old friends whose strength and repose is eternally the same.

And so, wandering up the track in warm sunshine, I watched cloud shadows race each other over the hillside as though they had no care in the world; but the wind was freshening from the south-west, the shadows grew in size, and from a haven high up on the north-east shoulder I saw the patches of sunlight finally disappear. A little later, at the summit, the well-known features were shrouded in mist, and, without a compass, a little exercise in navigating by wind brought me safely over the wilderness that is Beinn a' Chleibh and down the long ridge to Socach, whence a 3-mile walk led into Dalmally.

There a chance meeting with A. C. Russell gave rise to an expedition, together with two other hotel guests, to the Cruachan massif. Taking train to Taynuilt, we came back over six of the main tops—all except Meall Cuanail and Beinn a' Bhuiridh. It was unfortunate, particularly for a first visit, that we were in mist the whole time above 2,700 feet, and we saw nothing, except for brief glimpses on the Horseshoe, just before rain set in for an all-night session. Impressive gullies that fell from the western end of the ridge into Glen Noe could only be imagined, and a cold searching wind on the upper face of Stob Dearg resolutely denied us any shelter for a late lunch; but discomforts and disappointments were quickly forgotten in the face of the happy recollection of just another day on the hills.

NEW CLIMBS IN ARRAN.

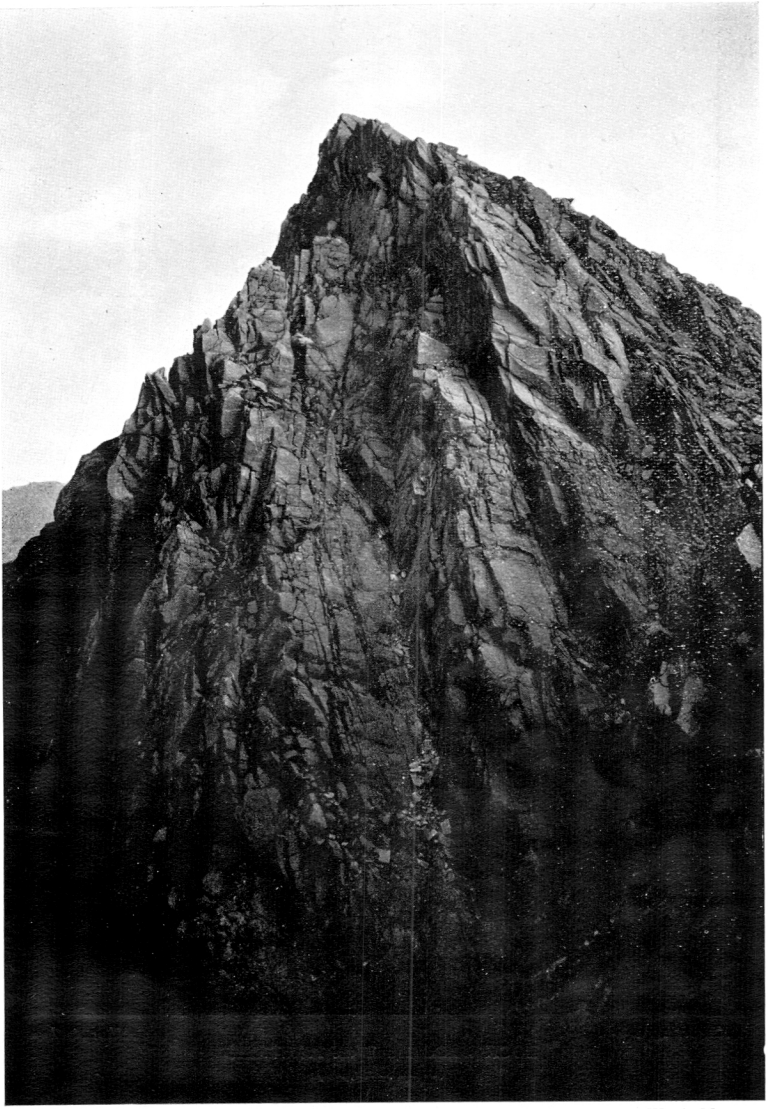
By G. C. Curtis and G. H. Townend.

DURING a summer spent within easy reach of Arran we have realised that the island has been greatly neglected as a climbing centre. Though most of the gullies have been climbed or attempted, the buttresses, which give good climbs, have hardly been touched. A notable exception is the South Ridge of the Rosa Pinnacle, which, by virtue of its length of continuous rock, fine situations and technical interest, must surely rank among the greatest buttress climbs in Scotland.

The most obvious series of buttresses lie on A'Chir. Here the general angle is easy and slab climbing prevails, with occasional chimneys. The best climbs are Slab and Flake route and Pagoda Ridge: the latter name is suggested by the successive tiers of slabs, each overlapping the set below. Boundary Route and Giant's Staircase are also well worth doing. In comparison, the main face of Ben Nuis is steep, smooth and uncompromising. We followed what appeared to be the most hopeful line up the central face, but were forced to make a most unpleasant escape two-thirds of the way up.

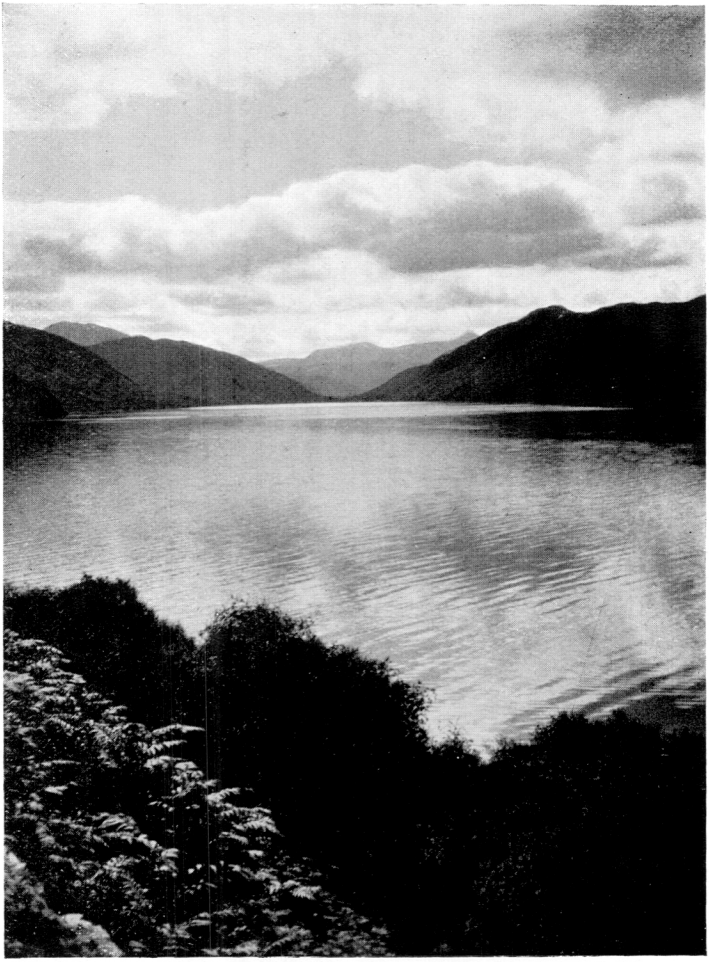
We have little fresh to report on the North-East face of Cir Mhor, but can recommend the South face as offering the finest climbing in the island. In addition to South Ridge and Easter Route * (we have not yet done the latter), the route up the East Wall of the Rosa Pinnacle has all the features of a classic climb. It is the line of least resistance up a very steep face 400 feet high and gives continuous, clean and interesting climbing with magnificent situations. After sunset, on the first ascent, we came to an impasse 50 feet below the summit ridge. Had there been no way round this obstacle we

* For Easter Route see *Journal*, vol. 22, p. 71; for the South Ridge of Rosa Pinnacle see *Journal*, vol. 22, pp. 320 and 387; and vol. 23, p. 112.



W. A. Mounsey

CIR MHOR—NORTH-EAST FACE



August 1931 *Allan Arthur*

LOCH BROOM and the FANNICHS
(From Ullapool)

could not have descended the climb in the dark and would have had to spend the night out. Caliban's Creep is a fine route, on a smaller scale. The apparent blocking of a very exposed section of the ridge by a smooth wall, and the tiny hole which solves the problem, give it a character all its own. Prospero's Peril, which is technically harder, has a fine finish.

In view of the prevailing dampness in Arran, it is worth noting that all the following climbs, except Prospero's Peril and the Nuis route, are practicable in boots. In the accounts all stances which lack a belay have been specially noted, unless the following pitch is easy enough to need no safeguard. The pitch lengths are merely estimates, but may serve as a rough guide. The remaining initials used are those of Messrs H. K. Moneypenny and H. J. Dunster, who learned their climbing on these rocks.

Ben Nuis—a Face Route.

The lower part of the face, left of Gully 4, was climbed by G. H. T., G. C. C. and H. K. M. on 27th June 1943. The route is very severe (stockings), and as the last pitch traverses dangerous grass it is not recommended. The description is included because this appears to be the easiest line up the face.

Start about 30 feet left of Gully 4, and scramble for about 150 feet up a grass chimney to a ledge beneath an overhang.

1. 60 feet. Work right, up a narrowing ledge traversing a wall. The final pull-out is loose and lands one on a wide grass ledge.

2. 60 feet. Climb a short slab by a delicate step above the belay. The wall ahead is split by a vertical crack; avoiding this, walk left under an overhanging corner. The second man may be belayed here by passing his rope behind a blunt knob and thence to the third man.

3. 30 feet. The V-chimney round the corner is deceptively difficult —G. C. C. spent an hour in gardening the finish. Emerge on the right, then descend ledges for 20 feet to a very small belay.

4. 80 feet. Traverse the topmost ledge to the right with difficulty, and step up. Climb a little crack on the left, on good holds. Sloping grass leads up to the foot of steep slabs. No belay.

5. 30 feet. Traverse right, crossing a ribbon of rock 3 feet wide. More grass leads to turf stances. No belay.

6. 90 feet. Pitches 3, 4 and 5 traverse beneath a band of steep rocks which crosses the face at this level, and upward progress had seemed impossible. The climb was therefore finished by a severe and exposed traverse across insecure grass ledges into the top of Gully 4. If anyone ever repeats this climb, we suggest that the leader be lowered into Gully 4 (more than 100 feet below) whence he can make a detour and safeguard the final traverse from above.

A'Chir.

(The buttresses are described in order from left to right.)

Buttress left of Gully 3, *Boundary Ridge*.—The left-hand boundary of the A'Chir face is a vertical wall which cuts off the buttress to the left of Gully 3. This edge of the buttress was climbed on 4th July 1943 by G. H. T., G. C. C., H. K. M. and H. J. D. on two ropes (both pairs leading through). The climb is about 400 feet long and is of difficult standard. It starts at the bottom left-hand corner of the buttress.

1. 100 feet. An easy chimney and some scrambling lead to a belay.
2. 30 feet. Climb a short crack to a shelf. Stance and belay on the rib above on the right.
3. 60 feet. In preference to the severe slab above, return to the shelf and continue to a big ledge. Belay 30 feet up the grass.
4. 100 feet. A gently inclined crack is followed by interesting scrambling up the edge of the buttress.
5. 60 feet. A scoop followed by an easy crack lead to a dissected platform beneath a wall. A much better alternative is to climb the deep chimney on the left: it is awkward to enter (standard, " very difficult ").
6. 50 feet. Walk right, past a little pool, and climb the low wall above by a line of pocket holds.
7. 20 feet. A short chimney-problem leads to the summit ridge.

3-4 *Buttress, Impostor Crack*.—The diagram of A'Chir (p. 24 of the S. M. C. " Islands Guide ") has a footnote which says " the two cracks to the left of 4 do not appear to be possible." The right-hand crack was climbed by G. H. T. and H. J. D. on 12th September 1943 and was found to be very difficult.

Scramble up the crack to the foot of the first chockstone.

1. 100 feet. Climb over the chockstones and scramble up the crack until an overhanging cave blocks the way.

2. 40 feet. Traverse right across an awkward slab to the foot of a short chimney. The chimney leads to a large block bridging the crack.

3. 100 feet. Scramble up the crack and climb the chockstones. (The top of Gully 4 may be gained from this point.)

4. 40 feet. Starting from the top of the chockstones, climb the crack on the left wall and traverse left to a large belay.

5. 40 feet. Traverse left a few feet and gain the summit ridge by an easy chimney.

4-5 *Buttress, Pagoda Ridge.*—After the first two pitches, this route lies up the left-hand edge of the buttress between 4 and 5 gullies. It is severe and about 600 feet long, and was first ascended by G. H. T. and G. C. C. on 23rd May 1943. The climb starts at the lowest point of the buttress, near the right-hand side.

1. 80 feet. Climb the left edge of a smooth slab, then another slab for 15 feet to a broad ledge. Traverse left with difficulty across the slab on the left to a belay under an overhang.

2. 100 feet. Continue the traverse left to the edge of Gully 4. (This point is easily accessible from Gully 4.) Climb the edge of the slabs overlooking the gully for 30 feet to a side belay.

3. 80 feet. Continue up the edge to a heather ledge.

4. 60 feet. Walk up the heather. Enter a short crack by traversing left, and climb it to a heather terrace.

5. 30 feet. A rising traverse right leads to spike belays beneath a jutting-out corner.

6. 80 feet. Climb the spikes and turn the corner (avoid a descent to the right). Traverse right, across a sloping shelf; the holds diminish until a loose block is passed. Gain the slab above, then work left to the edge. Stance in a 6-foot chimney, apparently containing a thread belay.

7. 100 feet. Climb pleasant slabs finishing left, and then steeper rocks to a platform.

8 and 9. 150 feet. Pleasant but easier climbing up the edge overlooking Gully 4.

6-7 *Buttress, Slab and Flake Climb.*—The buttress between 6 and 7 gullies was climbed on 19th September 1943 by G. H. T., G. C. C. and H. J. D. The climb is severe and about 350 feet long. It starts precisely at the bottom left-hand corner of the tremendous slab which forms the foot of the buttress.

1. 30 feet. Climb the slab to a good belay on the left edge.

2. 15 feet. Climb the edge (severe, even with combined tactics).

3. 40 feet. Zigzag up, right and then left. Stance behind a large detached flake (accessible from Gully 6).

4. 20 feet. Wriggle behind the flake and climb its right-hand edge to a broad terrace.

5. 20 feet. From the left edge of the terrace climb a chimney slanting right.

6. 15 feet. Climb the left wall. Combined tactics were used to reach the first hold.

7. 20 feet. Walk right, past a short crack, then climb a low wall on pocket holds. Belay through an eyehole.

8. 100 feet. Work right, up grass, then follow a rock ledge back left. (Well to the left is an obscure thread belay). Climb a slab to a thin flake belay.

9. 20 feet. Climb the corner above to a large rock ledge.

10. 40 feet. Climb a pile of blocks. A short slab and a traverse right lead to a rounded block belay.

11. 50 feet. Climb the easy wall above to the summit ridge.

7-8 *Buttress, Giant's Staircase.*—This obvious line of chimneys up the middle of the buttress between 7 and 8 gullies was climbed by G. H. T. and H. J. D. on 12th September 1943. The standard is very difficult.

1. 50 feet. Climb a chimney to a grass ledge.

2. 100 feet. From the top of the grass ledge climb a 60-foot chimney to a flattish section. Traverse right to a broad heather ledge and follow it back left.

3. 40 feet. Another chimney. Small but good holds are found near the top.

4. 30 feet. Climb a chimney until a traverse right, across a slab to a heather stance can be made. No belay.

5. 20 feet. Climb the steep slab above to the top of the chimney.

South Face of Cir Mhor.

Caliban's Creep.—The chief features of the south face of Cir Mhor are three buttresses separated by wide gullies, the centre buttress being the great South Ridge of the Rosa Pinnacle. The left ridge starts some 300 feet higher up. The standard probably reaches "very difficult." It was climbed by G. C. C. and G. H. T. on 25th July 1943.

1. 50 feet. To the right of a small square-cut overhang, slabs give access to the ridge.

2. 50 feet. Cross the shattered-looking steep wall above from left to right on plentiful holds and enter an easy chimney.

3. 30 feet. The chimney ends on a platform.

4. 50 feet. The ridge narrows to a single slab which abuts against a smooth vertical step in the ridge.

5. 50 feet. Creep through a hole on the right and emerge on a ledge behind a large metastable boulder. Continue up and round the corner and belay in a deep chimney. Throughout this pitch the exposure is great and the rock scenery magnificent.

6. Climb the chimney: it is the lower edge of a deep fissure in a large glacis. About 200 feet of scrambling, mainly in chimneys, finishes the climb.

East Wall Climb.—The chimney which makes this route possible splits the great east wall of the Rosa Pinnacle: it becomes double near the top, enclosing the apparent summit of the pinnacle, a large acute-angled block. The route was followed by G. C. C. and H. K. M. on 26th September 1943. It is severe (strenuous) and gives about 600 feet of continuously interesting climbing with magnificent situations. All the stances and belays are good. Approaching up the wide gully east of South Ridge, the first real break in the smooth walls of the upper half of the Rosa Pinnacle is a terrace running steeply up from left to right across the face.

1. 60 feet. Climb the chimney which cuts into the terrace on the right. An overhanging block divides the top section: climb the right fork.

2. 60 feet. Emerge on to a grassy slope (honeycombed with underground passages) and ascend into a right-angled corner.

3. 40 feet. Step through the corner into a recess. Climb a large block by a through route on the left.

4. 50 feet. Climb a grassy groove above the right-hand end of the block: it is awkward to enter and a shoulder was taken. Climb easy grass to the level of an obvious incut ledge crossing the steep face on the left.

5. 30 feet. A delightful and exhilarating traverse left, using the ledge as handhold.

6. 50 feet. Climb the undercut groove above: a shoulder may be required to start it. The deep-cut main chimney lies ahead, up grass.

7. 80 feet. Climb the chimney to a platform where another chimney crosses it.

8. 50 feet. Do not turn right, but continue the main chimney to a platform.

9. 20 feet. Climb over the first group of chockstones: the top one is loose but can be used with care.

10. 20 feet. A through route leads to a stance with magnificent views (the Eyrie), immediately under the acute-angled block. (The main chimney was explored to a point about 40 feet below the summit ridge, but the finish looked most repulsive.)

11. 50 feet. From the Eyrie step right to the foot of a steep crack, which might give a direct finish. Instead, cross a gap on the right, most easily by a stomach traverse. Belay on a grassy ledge a few feet farther on.

12. 90 feet. Work right, up a little chimney and grass to a gap behind a short spur.

13. 30 feet. Beyond the spur an almost vertical unbroken chimney leads up from the scree far below. Climb its easier but strenuous final section to the summit of the Pinnacle.

Prospero's Peril.—The third buttress on this south face, east of South Ridge, is divided into two parts by a diagonal break half-way up. The lower section (Prospero's Prelude, H. K. M. and G. C. C., 26th September 1943), provides about 400 feet of easy slab climbing. It is also a pleasant approach to East Wall and Easter Route from Glen Rosa. The upper section, climbed by G. H. T. and G. C. C. on 25th July 1943, is very severe (rubbers) and about 400 feet long.

1. 40 feet. From the lowest point of this upper section bear slightly right and gain a slab. Climb the slab until a severe traverse right can be made into a crack, which is climbed to a grassy stance. The leader may protect himself by lassoing a spike. An alternative on the left is also hard.

2. 100 feet. Climb a narrow chimney.

3. 100 feet. Easy climbing, first up chimneys, and then a broad slab to a poor stance on its edge. Belay.

4. 50 feet. Continue up the slab to a belay under a small overhang.

5. 50 feet. Traverse left for 10 feet. Climb a knee-width groove and then a slab for 30 feet.

6. 100 feet. Traverse left up a narrowing slab to a foothold on the vertical wall of the gully. The slab above is attained by two delicate and exposed steps to the right. The stance is 50 feet higher.

Note on Cir Mhor, North-East Face.—On 7th June 1942 G. C. C. and H. K. M. climbed Gully B1, which after two fair pitches degenerates into grass, and on 3rd May climbed from between these pitches into Gully B2. There seemed no chance of traversing back on to the B1 B2 rib, and it would be interesting to know exactly where the 1912 route went ("Guide," p. 42). Instead, Bell's cave pitch made an enjoyable finish.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1944—CRIANLARICH.

THE maximum attendance was fifteen, and the weather was good with the exception of Sunday, 2nd January. Unfortunately, the President was unable to attend because of the illness of his wife. The Sunday was the high water and wind mark of the Meet. Heavy rain fell unceasingly and the wind blew at something like gale force :

> "The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last ;
> The rattlin' show'rs rose on the blast,"

yet all ventured forth—six and two young Canadian soldiers who had come for ski-ing—for Ben More, and most of the others for low-level exploration. All were properly soaked in a very short time, and of the Ben More parties only Murray and Jack McLean achieved the summit. Victor Russell and the Canadians turned only a little short of the top, and Blackie turned with them, while Jack refused at about 2,500 and pulled Sandy Harrison down with him. Stewart—Tulachan—almost to the top. The excellent drying accommodation in the hotel was taxed that night beyond capacity. Miss Kilpatrick and her staff attended to our comfort in their usual efficient manner.

The first arrivals were Ling and MacDonald on 29th December, and Hird and Turnbull came next day, when Ling and Hird did Cruach Ardran ; MacDonald, Dubhcraig etc. ; and Turnbull, Meall Damph. Others blew in and out as the week-end passed, and the record runs :—

31*st December*.—Ling and Hird—Fiarach ; Murray and Arthur—Cruach Ardran ; Hunter, Hutchison and Geddes—Ben Cheadhaich.

1*st January*.—Ling and Hird explored Loch Dochart ; Murray—Ben More and Stobinian ; MacRobert, Harrison, McLean, Russell, Arthur, Stewart and Jack—Stob Garbh ; McDonald and Blackie—walked.

3*rd January*.—Arthur, Harrison and Stewart—Ben More and Stobinian ; Blackie and Geddes—Stob Garbh ; Murray and McLean—Cruach Ardran and Stob Garbh ; Turnbull returned from Kingshouse, having climbed Meall a Bhuiridh with Bell and A. Hendry (J.M.C.S.) *en route* ; they had been at Kingshouse for two days

for the purpose of carrying out some exploration work for the "Guide," but Turnbull reported that nothing had been achieved in this connection owing to hopeless weather conditions; Hunter—bus to Inverarnan and walked back.

4th January.—Arthur, Stewart, MacLean and Miss Macfarlane (L.S.C.C.)—Ben Laoigh.

Those present were: *Members*: Ling, H. MacRobert, Turnbull, Sandy Harrison, Arthur, Hird, Murray, Jack MacLean, MacDonald, Hunter, Hutchison, Blackie, Geddes and Jack. *Guest*: Victor Russell—full of beans and very welcome. J. S. M. J.

ANNUAL MEETING, 1943.

THE Fifty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Central Hotel, Glasgow, on 4th December 1943, at 5 P.M. Mr Robert Jeffrey presided over an attendance of about 15 members. After approval of the previous Minutes the reports of Office-bearers were submitted and approved, and they were thanked for their services. Present Office-bearers and Committee were re-elected. Points from the business were as follows:—

HON. TREASURER.—Transfer of £500 to a new Reserve Fund was made out of Revenue Account Balance. Transfer to Revenue from Commutation Fund was now at a flat rate of 10s. per member. Committee authorised a further investment of surplus funds in Government Securities. This was subsequently effected in 2½ per cent. National War Bonds.

HON. EDITOR.—The April 1944 *Journal* was to be somewhat larger and an increase in price would be necessary to the general public. Material and paper for a 1945 issue were likely to be assured.

HON. SECRETARY.—The membership now stands at 272. There had been no deaths. Dr Rickmers was removed from the list. Messrs A. J. Cox, P. A. Fletcher and J. D. B. Wilson were elected and have been accorded a welcome to the membership of the Club. Over 70 members are serving with H.M. Forces, and 3 are prisoners of war. A message of greeting was sent to these.

GENERAL GUIDE BOOK EDITOR.—Sales during the year totalled 1,771 copies, as against 1,585 last year. All paper copies are to be bound, and a further increase in price was authorised. Meanwhile there is no prospect of reprinting any Guide Books and stocks are low. (At the end of February the position is that General, Skye, Islands, Central, Western and the Cuillin Map are all out of print.)

HON. LIBRARIAN.—Books borrowed have been few. No Club Room Meetings have been held. Mr George Donald was thanked for his welcome gift of several volumes to the Library. The Com-

mittee authorised the expenditure of £10 on book purchases for the Library.

C.I.C. HUT CUSTODIAN.—Hut nights for the year were 371, and the troops had 131 nights in addition. Club members only accounted for 31 nights. Several repairs were necessary, but could not meanwhile be carried out. Fuel stocks were exhausted. A party of troops had ascended Tower Ridge in full equipment, carrying rifles.

OUR HONORARY PRESIDENT.

Members will be gratified to learn that Sir John Stirling Maxwell has accepted the Honorary Presidency of the Club. His acceptance was delayed by the going astray of an earlier letter to him. The following letter was received from him on 1st March by Mr Robert Jeffrey, our President:—

> DEAR MR JEFFREY,—I write in reply to your kind letter of the 24th to say that I shall be very proud to have the honour of acting as Honorary President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club.
>
> Since my health broke down nearly three years ago I have been quite unable to walk, so I am afraid there are no more Munros for me.
>
> I wish you had a more efficient President, but I will gladly do anything in my power to help the Club.
>
> When you have an opportunity please tell the members how very much I appreciate the honour they have shown me.—Yours sincerely, JOHN STIRLING MAXWELL.

THE LIBRARY.

The Honorary Librarian acknowledges with thanks the presentation of the following volumes to the Library by Mr G. R. Donald:—

"Over Welsh Hills," F. S. Smythe.
"Alpine Ways," F. S. Smythe.
"Mountain Jubilee," Arnold Lunn.
"Upon That Mountain," Eric Shipton.
"Escape to the Hills," W. A. Poucher.

The publishers, Messrs Chapman & Hall, have presented Mr W. A. Poucher's "Scotland Through the Lens" (Rannoch to Lochaber).

As books are now printed in limited editions which sell very rapidly, it is unusual for us to receive Review copies. The Librarian will be grateful to members who present books to the Library at this time.

In Memoriam.

WALTER A. REID, LL.D.

1859-1944.

DR REID, who was one of the best known of our older Aberdeen members, died on the 14th January 1944. He joined the Club in 1908 and attended a number of the Club Meets. He had a great love for the hills and was a strong walker even in his later years, as is shown by the fact that in his seventy-fifth year he walked from Invercauld to Inchrory over the summit of Ben Avon to see the sunrise, a distance of nearly 20 miles.

He contributed two articles to the *Journal*, viz., "The S.M.C. in Clover Again" (vol. 13, p. 337), which gave a racy description of the seond Club Meet at Lindertis, and an article descriptive of the Mounth Roads across the Lower Cairngorms (vol. 15, p. 150). He had several seasons abroad. In 1911 he visited the Brenta Group of the Dolomites and climbed the Cima Tosa (10,420 feet), etc. In 1912 and 1913 he was in the Zermatt area and secured the Matterhorn. In 1921 he was in the Pyrenees and climbed the Pic d'Aneto (11,170 feet), the highest of the Maladetta group, and several other peaks. And in 1926 he climbed the Jungfrau from the upper terminus of the Jungfrau railway; his long description of this expedition in the *Cairngorm Club Journal* (vol. 11, p. 304) is exceedingly interesting and rather amusing.

Dr Reid was an Accountant by profession, was one of the most prominent citizens of Aberdeen, and will long be remembered as a generous benefactor to many of the Aberdeen hospitals and institutions.

J. A. PARKER.

NOTES.

The Cairn on Ben Lawers.

THE picture of the 1878 cairn on Ben Lawers reproduced in the *S.M.C. Journal* for April 1943 appears in a small book, "Rambles in Breadalbane," by Malcolm Ferguson, published in Glasgow in 1891. The book consists of reprints of a number of newspaper articles, and the illustration in question appears to be a reproduction from the rough type of woodcut used for newspaper illustration at that time, hence its disappointing lack of detail. But it is a very interesting picture, as probably most hillmen have heard the tradition of a cairn having at one time existed on Ben Lawers high enough to bring its altitude above the 4,000-foot line. This is mentioned in such reference books as "The Gazetteer of Scotland" and "Chambers' Encyclopædia." It seems to have been understood that the erection of this cairn was the work of the Ordnance Survey. I have not been able to find any actual evidence to support this, but in Ferguson's book the claim is specifically made that the cairn of 1878 carried the highest point on the Ben above the 4,000-foot line. A party of Royal Engineers was actually encamped on the summit of Ben Lawers for several months in the summer of 1852 in the closing stages of the Great Triangulation of the United Kingdom, but there is no hint that they left behind on the conclusion of their work anything more than the "pile of stones" prescribed in the official instructions to protect the marks identifying the site of Ramsden's great 3 in. theodolite. Ben Lawers was an important centre in the network of the Great Triangulation, being linked by direct sights to stations in Jura (80 miles away), Ben Nevis, Sgùrr na Lapaich, Ben Macdhui, Hartfell, Ben More (Mull), Glas Maol (Glen Isla), Merrick and other peaks. It seems to have been in the course of this work that the estimated height of the hill was reduced from 4,015 feet (probably Roy's figure of 1,774) to 3,984 feet, bringing it from seventh place to ninth among Scottish heights.

The 1878 cairn is stated by the builders to have had a circumference of 45 or 50 feet at the base. This means a diameter of 16 feet, and this figure is roughly confirmed by the dimensions of the broad-shouldered individual seated to the left of the base of the cairn and close to it. It would be surprising if room could be found for a structure of this size on the actual summit of Lawers, and the photograph suggests that it was not on the actual summit but on the ridge to the south, as what appears to be the actual rock summit is seen in the right background of the picture. It follows that the site of the cairn was several feet below the summit level of 3,984 feet. It also appears from the angle of the sides (55°) that the height of the cairn was 12 feet, not 20 feet as claimed by the builders, so that it did not achieve its object of surmounting the 4,000-foot level.

The builders of the cairn expressed the hope that the massive

and well-proportioned (but hastily erected) structure would remain for many years, but in the *Cairngorm Club Journal* of January 1898 W. E. C. Dickson remarks that it had already " fallen into a state of collapse," and I cannot recall any sign of it in 1905. It seems probable that this early failure was due to the rather treacherous nature of the weathered phyllite on which it was founded; once the ground began to slip beneath the load (some forty tons) the dissolution of the cairn would be rapid. I have a clear recollection of spending some hours beside the cairn in 1923 in bright sunshine, alone above a world of slowly heaving white cloud. The cairn was then a fairly well-built affair, perhaps 10 feet high, with sides having only a slight batter, and it was on the actual summit. I looked at it with a critical eye, having regard to the tradition of its great height. Now it, too, has disappeared, leaving only some relics of its lower courses clinging around the natural summit rock. In its place is the concrete pillar set up in the course of the Ordnance Survey's new triangulation completed only about five years ago.

H. R. J. CONACHER,
10th June 1943.

Marsco, W.-S.-W. Crag, 19th July 1943.

During a geological examination of this mountain an ascent was made of the conspicuous crag on the west-south-west side facing Harta Coire. Part of this crag is seen in profile from Sligachan.

From near the middle of the central re-entrant, or amphitheatre, slabs and grooves were followed upward for *c.* 250 feet to a scree patch. This route avoided sundry grassy areas to the right and provided interesting climbing. A line was then taken slanting upward to the right over a rocky and grassy glacis, which formed a discontinuous rake for about 200 feet (small cairn placed on rock ledge). The continuation of this was along an upward sloping grassy terrace for some 180 feet to the shoulder above the prominent central buttress of the crag. From a cairn placed at the foot of the wall rising above the shoulder a way was made upward for *c.* 200 feet over good rough rock with excellent holds, providing climbing moderate to difficult in places. But a good many variations of route are possible on this upper wall. Moreover, on a crag so extensive as this, when taken as a whole, many other routes of all shades of difficulty will be possible and of some 500 to 600 feet in length.

The rough, almost gabbro-like, texture of the granite or granophyre of this crag is due more to the well-formed and resistant felspar crystals on weathered surfaces than to any other quality. According to Harker's Memoir, the rock is of normal coarse, drusy granophyre, and the peculiar hybrid rock marscoite, a mixture of gabbro and granite, is not in evidence in this crag. The nearest actual marscoite is to be found in restricted outcrops 500 yards north-west of the summit of Marsco, where it is associated with modified gabbro,

and also 300 yards north-east of the summit. It is a rock of quite unusual interest that provides evidence of the way in which the later granophyre (a species of granite) of the Red Hills has invaded the gabbro and been partially absorbed by it.

[Insertion in " Climbers' Book, Sligachan."]

Creag Dallaig, Glen Thaitneich, Glen Shee.

This crag was visited on 30th January 1944 and found to provide some good short climbs and scrambles. The pinnacle can be ascended by means of a chimney on the south side or on the north-west side, as recorded by Norman Collie in 1908 (*Journal*, vol. 10, p. 145) (see also " Cairngorms Guide," p. 48). From the top of the pinnacle the climb can be continued over a sharp arête, and if a steep pitch is surmounted the top of the crag can be reached over easy rocks. The climbing is mostly on sound quartzite and pink porphyry.

N. E. ODELL.

The Four Highest Cairngorms.

In July 1943 a party of 5 officers and 81 other ranks of a fully mechanised unit stationed in north-east Scotland started on an expedition from Glen More Lodge, Loch Morlich. All were volunteers, and the intention was for the whole party to climb Cairngorm and Ben Macdhui, and a certain number would climb all four peaks. The majority of the party had climbed Ben Macdhui in October 1942, when on a two days' expedition from Coylum Bridge to Derry Lodge through the Lairig Ghru and back over the summit of Ben Macdhui. Dress was optional and haversack rations were carried.

The night before the expedition started was spent on the shores of Loch Morlich near Glen More Lodge, which was reached by motor vehicles. The next morning réveillé was at 06.00 hours, breakfast at 07.00 hours, and a start was made at 08.45 hours. All the officers and 38 other ranks climbed all four peaks in very bad weather—rain and a blizzard of sleet, with low clouds and very poor visibility. The time was fifteen hours, Glen More Lodge being reached at 23.45 hours. The pace, of course, was that of the slowest of the 43.

The routes were as follows: Path from the Lodge across the Allt Mòr, following the stream by the left-hand path, leaving Allt-Aonach on the left and up the ridge to the summit (4,084 feet). Along the plateau to Ben Macdhui (4,296 feet), passing Cairn Lochan, then down into the Lairig and up Coire Odhar to the summit of Cairn Toul (4,241 feet). Along the high-level plateau to Braeriach (4,248 feet), passing Sgòr an Lochain Uaine, down into the Lairig, then north by the Pools of Dee and the track through Rothiemurchus Forest and so back to Glen More Lodge.

R. W. B. CUNNINGHAM.

Neck Gully Exit from Crowberry Gully (Buachaille Etive).

The route follows the left-hand branch exactly, from the fork in Crowberry Gully above Thincrack Chimney.

Pitch 1 (35 feet).—The start is deep inside a narrow cleft. The climb goes up; working outwards again to a stance formed by jammed boulders on the outer edge of the cleft.

Pitch 2 (25 feet).—A traverse into the extreme back of the Gully is followed by a short rise to a wider and easier slope leading into another chimney.

Pitch 3 (40 feet).—The start is again deep inside the cleft, which is climbed facing right. A move out and back again is made to reach a constricted stance formed by jammed stones some 15 feet below the Great Capstone.

Pitch 4 (40 feet).—The stance is vacated, possibly with some inconvenience to No 2, and strenuous climbing leads to a small cavity immediately beneath the capstone which, owing to many shortcomings, is not a suitable place for a stance. A running belay can be fixed provided the leader can overcome the force of gravity by performing an ignominious wriggle on his stomach up the sloping floor. The slope itself would be harmless were it not for its extraordinary covering of black mud, which acts as an excellent aid to gravity on contact with the somewhat moist exterior of the gully climber. From this stage the walls are virtually holdless, making it necessary for the Gully to be spanned and the traverse outwards for a distance of 12 to 15 feet accomplished in true back-and-foot style. The best line for the traverse seems to be high up under the roof, with the result that difficulty is experienced in extricating the head and shoulders from beneath the capstone; when, however, this is done the climber can fully appreciate the open nature that the climb suddenly adopts. Much perseverance is needed to retain contact with the opposing walls whilst the move up over the front of the capstone is made. In this situation of some delicacy it is disappointing to discover that the customary jug handhold adorning many similar easier pitches is entirely missing, with the consequence that backing has to be continued for a further short way, until small holds on the left enable a landing to be effected with difficulty. Familiar ground is thus attained.

This climb was achieved on 16th September 1943 by Messrs B. N. Simmonds and A. C. Marriott of the Polaris Mountaineering Club, Nottingham. Mr Simmonds considers the crux to be similar to but harder than that of Walker's Gully on Pillar.

REVIEWS.

Scotland Through the Lens (Loch Tulla to Lochaber). By W. A. Poucher. Published by Chapman & Hall, 1943. 18s. net. 119 pp. text and 80 illustrations.

This is a charming book of mountain pictures, size almost 10 inches by 7 inches, on semi-matt-coated paper. They are a selection of 400 taken by the author on a three weeks' tour in April from Bridge of Orchy to Fort William. The author does full justice to the mountains and their snow scenery. He climbs on Bidean nam Bian, Aonach Eagach, Beinn-a-Bheithir, the Mamores and Ben Nevis. If a criticism must be made it can only be that three weeks will not persuade these glorious hills to bestow all their choicest secrets, that Mr Poucher was unfortunate in getting too little snow for the full display of the glories of Ben Nevis especially, and that some of the scenes he has captured could do with a clearer brilliance of reproduction. He gives a detailed statement of his methods in an appendix.

Upon That Mountain. By Eric Shipton. Published by Hodder & Stoughton, 1943. 12s. 6d. net. 222 pp., 31 illustrations, 4 maps.

This is a condensed volume dealing with the numerous expeditions as well as early climbs engaged in by the author. He succeeds in expressing his personality pretty clearly throughout the book, and gives a very satisfying picture of the real purpose of mountaineering and exploration. His preference for the small rather than the great expedition and his perfection of the technique of the small expedition, even in such inaccessible country as the northern Karakoram, is a healthy return to the true spirit of mountain adventure.

I found his earlier chapters, before his Kenya days, rather unnecessary. I was appalled by the conditions of his Ruwenzori venture and completely captivated by the zest for life and enjoyment which runs through the whole narrative of the Nanda Devi and Shaksgam expeditions. There is perhaps too much Everest in the book, but the net result is one of the most compact and stimulating climbing books in our language. The full-page illustrations are beautiful, but titles might be fuller. The maps would have been better with more names and route lines.

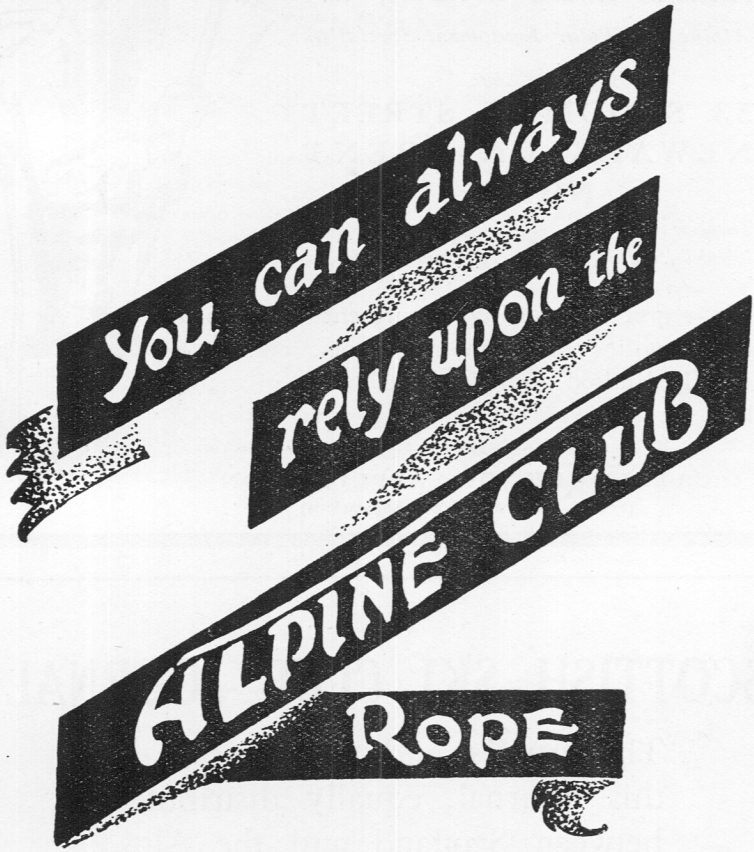
THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

Glasgow Section.—This year has been one of steady improvement in most aspects. Climbing activities have been very wide and ranged from Wales to Sutherland—that is exclusive of oversea members whose rather wider range extends from the Rockies to the Himalaya. Twenty-one new members were enrolled during the season, a favourable index of the increasing interest in climbing. Lectures on a variety of mountaineering topics have been held from time to time, and attendances at them were most encouraging. Official meets have been re-instituted and the holiday from annual subscriptions has been terminated. Far from waiting for the end of hostilities to resume active climbing, the Section appears already to be anticipating that fortunate event.—A. C. D. SMALL, Secretary (266 High Street, C.4).

London Association.—The past year has again been successful as regards all our activities. There are less new climbs on the sandstone outcrops of Kent and Sussex, but the proportion of *very severes* has increased. What remains is probably of this standard, and new outcrops are not likely to be found. Mountain visits were limited to North Wales and the Lake District. Along with a Climbers' Club party some very severe routes were done, including Central Buttress and the Pinnacle Direct on Scafell, Gimmer Crack, etc. Some new variations in North Wales fell to the same party later in the year. The Association has expanded into the spelæological field—to big caves in Somerset and in the exploration of newly discovered caves in Devon. In the London area are only old mine workings and dene-holes, but they have provided variety. Refusal of the Club Committee to recognise us as a *Section* has caused disappointment.

The following members have been active: F. K. Elliott, M. W. Erlebach, R. G. Folkard, G. S. Johnstone, E. C. Pyatt. The following are serving with H.M. Forces: B. V. Fox, T. J. A. Smith, E. R. Zenthon (abroad), H. J. Turnbull (Navy), L. Edwards, R. G. Folkard, and J. M. Hartog.—E. C. PYATT, Secretary (96 Priory Gardens, Highgate, N.6).

Edinburgh Section.—No information as to activity is forthcoming. The Secretary, GORDON SCOTT (Royal Dick Veterinary College), seldom replies to correspondence.



Sole Makers :

ARTHUR BEALE LTD.,
194 SHAFTESBURY AVE.,
LONDON, W.C.2
Temple Bar 9034/5

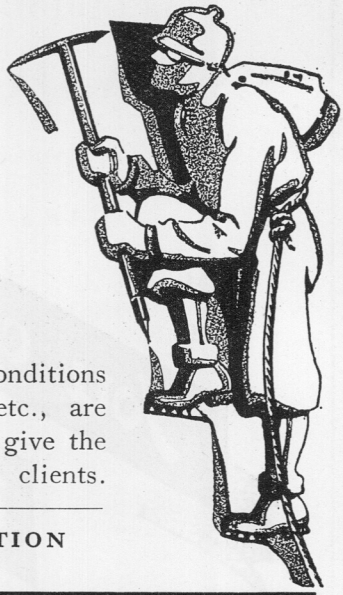
ROBERT LAWRIE LTD.

Late of 38 **BRYANSTON STREET**
MARBLE ARCH, LONDON, W.1

Alpine and Polar Equipment Specialists

War-time Address
53 STODMAN STREET
NEWARK-ON-TRENT
NOTTS

Telephone - - - - - - - - - NEWARK 766
Inland Tel. and Cablegrams - "ALPINIST," NEWARK



We regret that owing to present conditions our supplies of Climbing Boots, etc., are strictly limited—but we continue to give the best service possible to our pre-war clients.

CATALOGUE ON APPLICATION
(Fee 3d. Board of Trade Regulations)

THE
SCOTTISH SKI CLUB JOURNAL

The articles and photographs in this Journal, equally distributed between Scotland and the Alps, are of interest to all mountaineers.

Publication has been suspended for the duration of the war

Some copies of previous issues are available
Price 2/6 each, post free
and may be obtained from
Mr C. N. FRASER, Hon. Editor
16 Royal Circus, Edinburgh, 3

CLIMBING GUIDES TO THE
SNOWDON DISTRICT

Editor: G. R. SPEAKER

Published by **THE CLIMBERS' CLUB**

1. **CWM IDWAL.** New Edition (1940) By J. M. EDWARDS.
2. **TRYFAN.** (1939) By J. M. EDWARDS and C. W. F. NOYCE.

PRICE 4S. EACH, POST PAID

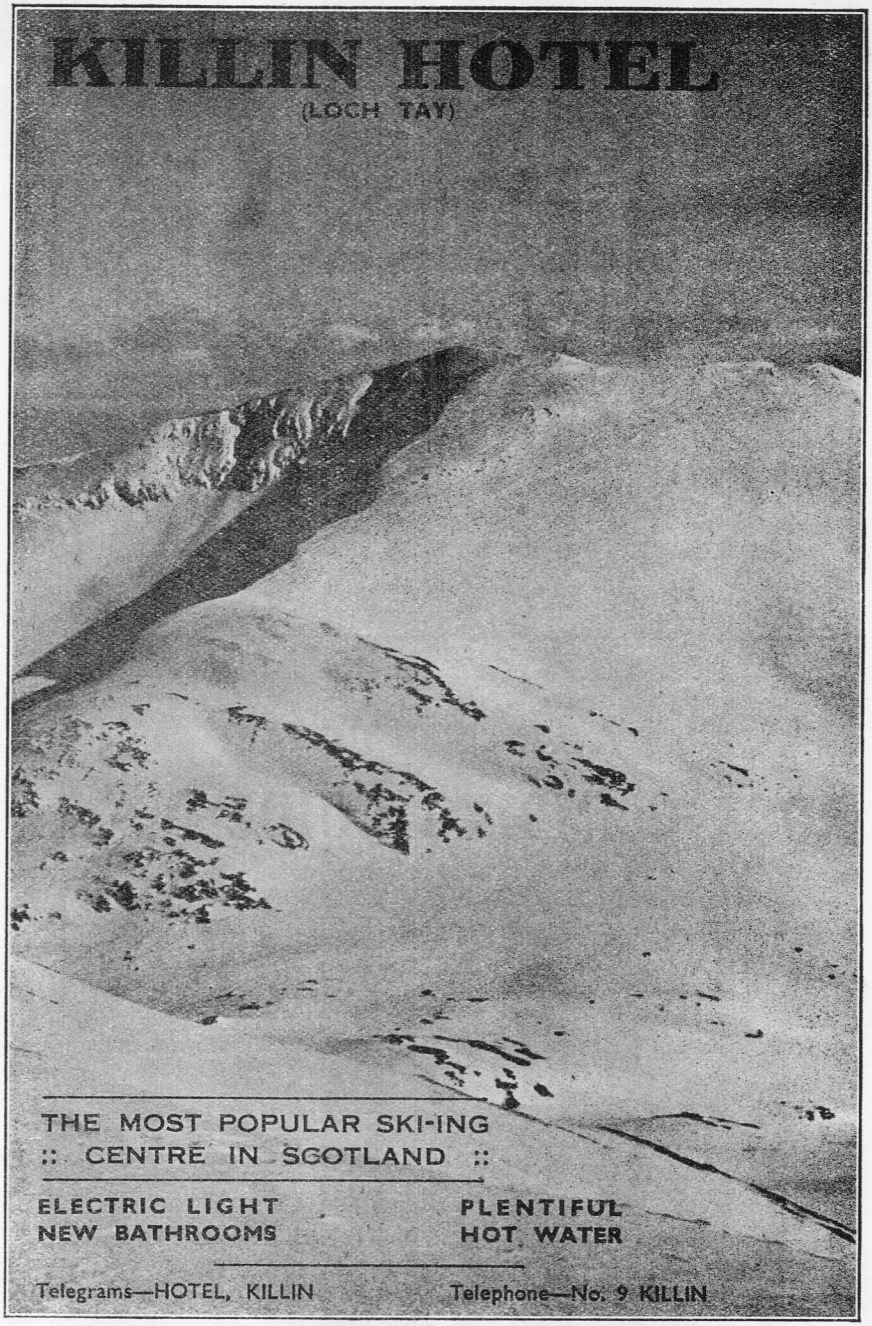
Obtainable from
THE CLOISTER PRESS LTD., HEATON MERSEY, MANCHESTER
or from any bookseller

LAKE DISTRICT
ROCK CLIMBING GUIDE BOOKS

Series completely rewritten
General Editor: H. M. KELLY
In Cloth Boards

1. Pillar Rock and Neighbourhood, *by* H. M. Kelly. *Published* 1936. 2/6
2. Scafell, *by* A. T. Hargreaves. *Published* 1936. 2/6
3. Langdale and Doe Crag. *Published* 1938. 3/6

Obtainable locally, retail, at Chaplin's Library, Keswick, or at "Lake District Herald" bookshop, Ambleside; or by post from The Cloister Press Ltd., Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire.


KILLIN HOTEL
(LOCH TAY)
THE MOST POPULAR SKI-ING
:: CENTRE IN SCOTLAND ::
ELECTRIC LIGHT
NEW BATHROOMS
PLENTIFUL
HOT WATER
Telegrams—HOTEL, KILLIN
Telephone—No. 9 KILLIN

"The Good Companions!"



ESTABLISHED 1863

Climbers know us...

and have proved the great durability of all our equipment. It has always been a matter of pride to us to set up and maintain the best possible quality and design in all our camping and climbing goods. Stocks are naturally restricted now, but that quality is still as high as you've been used to expect from

BLACK'S
GREENOCK

Showrooms:
22 GRAYS INN ROAD, LONDON, W. C. I.
98 MITCHELL STREET, GLASGOW, C. I.
Head Office:
7 JOHNSTONE ST, GREENOCK.

Scottish Mountaineering Club.

OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 1944.

Honorary President.

Sir JOHN M. STIRLING MAXWELL, Bart., K.T.

President.

ROBERT JEFFREY.

Vice-Presidents.

J. S. M. JACK, 1939.
GEORGE R. DONALD, 1939.

Hon. Editor.

Dr J. H. B. BELL, The Knowe, Clackmannan.

Hon. Secretary.

J. LOGAN AIKMAN, 121 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, C. 2.
Telephones: Central 1864 (office), Milngavie 1759 (house).
Telegrams: "Actuary," Glasgow.

Hon. Treasurer.

JOHN G. OSBORNE, Kilknock, Davidson's Mains, Edinburgh, 4.

Hon. Librarian.

G. G. ELLIOT acting for E. A. M. WEDDERBURN.

Members of Committee.

W. B. SPEIRS, 1937.
G. G. ELLIOT, 1937.
DAVID MYLES, 1937.
J. F. A. BURT, 1938.
IAIN H. OGILVIE, 1938.
R. T. SELLAR, 1938.
NORMAN L. HIRD, 1939.
E. W. HODGE, 1939.
D. G. KELLOCK, 1939.

Hon. Custodian of Lantern Slides.

G. G. ELLIOT, 121 Pirniefield Grove, Leith, Edinburgh, 6.

Club Room and Library.

SYNOD HALL, CASTLE TERRACE, EDINBURGH, 1.

Charles Inglis Clark Hut.

O.C. Hut, D. J. S. HARVEY, 65 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2.
Telephones: Douglas 3615 (office), Western 5855 (house).

Hon. Assistant Editor.

D. MACKAY, acting for R. M. GALL INGLIS.

Guide Books General Editor.

Rev. A. E. ROBERTSON, 17 Cluny Gardens, Edinburgh, 10

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB GUIDE BOOKS

***General.** Cloth Covers.

Ben Nevis. Cloth Covers. **8s. 6d.** Post, 6d.
Revised Edition now ready.

***Island of Skye.** Cloth Covers.
Including 3-inch to the mile map of the Cuillin.

Cairngorms. Cloth Covers. **12s. 6d.** Post, 7d.

***Western Highlands.** Cloth Covers.
Deals with the district West of the Caledonian Canal and South of the Dingwall – Kyle of Loch Alsh Railway.

Northern Highlands.
Revised Edition. Cloth Covers. **7s. 6d.** Post, 6d.

***Central Highlands.** Cloth Covers.
Dealing with the district bounded on the South by the L.M.S. Railway from Oban to Dalmally, and the Moor of Rannoch; on the West by the Caledonian Canal; and on the East by the River Spey and Highland Railway to Ballinluig.

***The Islands.** Cloth Covers.
Dealing with Arran, Mull, Rum, Hebrides, etc., but excluding Skye.

***Map of the Cuillin Hills.**
Mounted on Cloth.
Reproduced for the Scottish Mountaineering Club from the 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map of Scotland with the sanction of H.M. Stationery Office.

Ben Nevis Panorama, 2s. Post, 2d.

Guide to Cobbler Climbs.
Stout Paper Covers. **1s. 3d.** Post, 1d.

* *Temporarily out of print.*

All the above publications are profusely illustrated and those in print may be had from :

Messrs DOUGLAS & FOULIS, 9 Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2
Messrs WM. PORTEOUS & CO., 9 Royal Exchange Place, Glasgow
OR ANY BOOKSELLER

INQUIRIES regarding space for Advertising in this Journal should be addressed to : Mr DONALD MACKAY, Hon. Assistant Editor, 113 Comiston Drive, EDINBURGH, 10

BACK NUMBERS

of the

S.M.C. JOURNAL

Are still obtainable

Price, 2s. 8d. Post Free

Only Nos. 1 to 12 (Vols. 1 and 2) are out of Print

* * *

INDEXES—Price 2s. 8d., post free
Vols. 1 to 10 ; 11 to 20

Obtainable from the Assistant Editor,
113 COMISTON DRIVE, EDINBURGH, 10

or from

Messrs DOUGLAS & FOULIS,
Booksellers and Librarians
9 Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2

Printed in Great Britain at THE DARIEN PRESS, *Edinburgh*