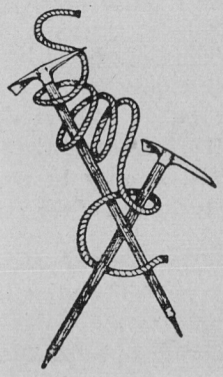
VOL. 24 APRIL 1951 No. 142

THE SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL

EDITED BY J. H. B. BELL



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

Agents:
DOUGLAS & FOULIS, 9 CASTLE STREET, EDINBURGH, 2
WM. PORTEOUS & CO., 9 ROYAL EXCHANGE PLACE, GLASGOW

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EDITORIAL NOTES

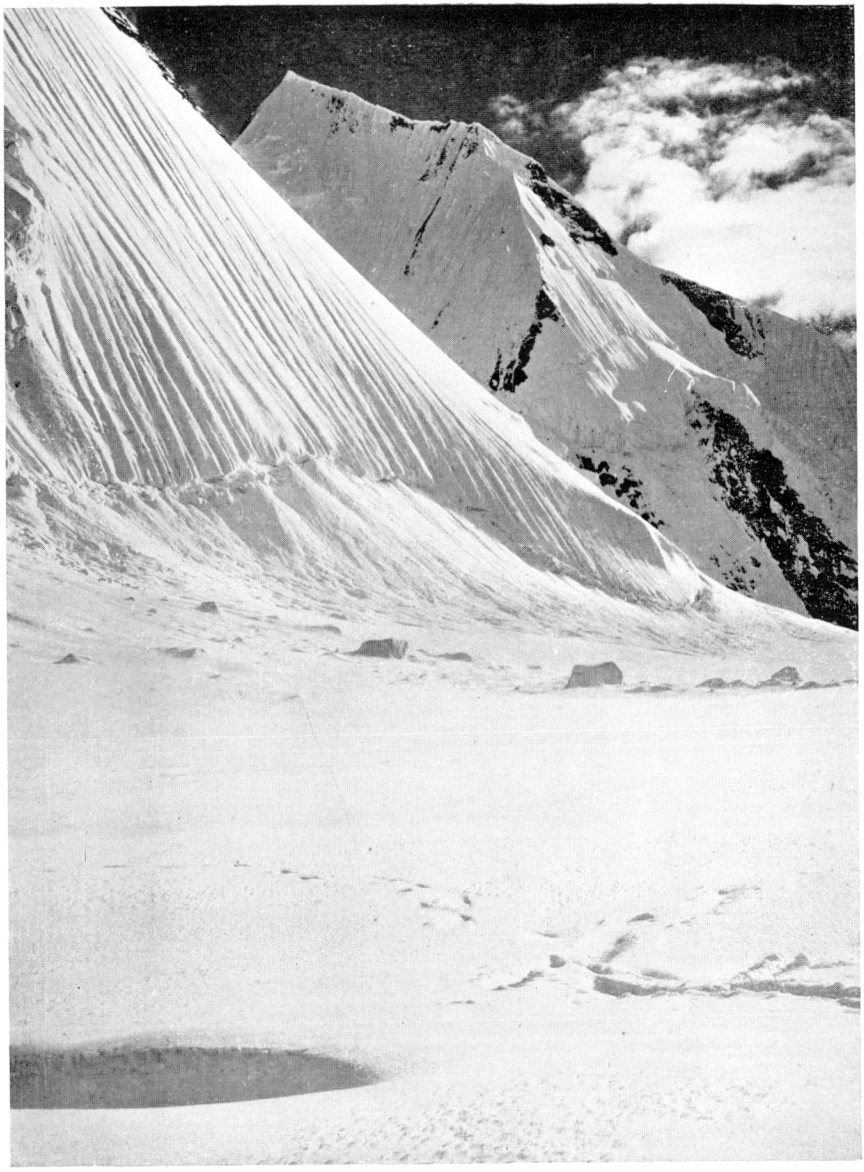
The Journal.—As printers continue to be very busy, it is necessary to have all matter in the hands of the Editor at least two months ahead of date of publication. This applies even to short items. In order to give the Editor a chance to build up a good number, the longer contributions should be offered much earlier. Send as much as possible by October, and all but the very last items by New Year.

Illustrations.—The Editor will be glad to consider photographs for illustration purposes. Usually these should be directly related to the text. Please *do not send* large photos to begin with. Small prints or negatives are ample for appraisal. They will be returned as may be requested. They are not required until towards the end of the year, as a rule.

Guide Books.—The *Central Highlands* Guide will be published later this year. The price is not yet known, but if members will send 12s. to the Guide Books General Editor, 36 Blacket Place, Edinburgh, before 31st July, they will receive one copy at members' preferential rate. Balance, if any, will be returned when copies are despatched.

Errata.—A list of Errata for Vol. 24 will appear along with Contents and Index with our next number. We shall print this in the autumn. Please bring any errata to the notice of the Editor before then.

Communications about distribution should not go to the Editor, but to **Mr P. E. MacFarlane, 217 Crofthill Road, Glasgow, S.4**; about advertisements, see page xv, to **Mr Wilson**; about Club affairs to Hon. Secretary, **Mr R. R. S. Higgins, 430 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, C.2**; only those for the Editor should go to **Dr J. H. B. Bell, 3 Park Place, Clackmannan.**



August 1950

Tom Weir

THE PANCH CHULI

From Camp IV at 19,000 feet on Upper Sona Glacier

THE SCOTTISH
MOUNTAINEERING
CLUB JOURNAL

VOL. XXIV. APRIL 1951. NO. 142.

THE SCOTTISH HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION

By W. H. Murray.

THE narrative of the expedition is already well known to members. Accordingly, I propose to take it for granted, begin with its end, and use the space saved from narrative to reflect upon the varied and practical aspects of mountaineering with which I could not otherwise have dealt. I choose food and equipment, weather, camps, mountains and climbing. In writing I have been oppressed with a sense of the utter hopelessness of compressing an experience of four months' continuous mountain action into four thousand words. Thus, I ask to be excused for omitting several matters of real importance to mountain travellers. These are: organisation and finance, fauna and flora, coolies, valleys and gorges, the conduct of the frontier trade with Tibet, the village life and economy of the Bhotias, and the whole foothill country. I feel a need to mention these, because the truth is that without them no description of an expedition in Kumaon can be either complete or even fully intelligible.

When Scott, Weir, MacKinnon and I came to the end of our expedition in September last, we remarked one outstanding feature of all Himalayan climbing—the high proportion of time spent on travel among the mountains to the time available for attacking the summits.

This we noted with no sense of dissatisfaction. Dr Longstaff had told us, "Mark your red-letter days by camps, not summits. (No *time* there)." We found he was absolutely right. High Himalayan climbing is not better than Alpine or Scottish. It is not so good, in the sense that altitude is against full enjoyment. But the travel *among* the mountains, surely it can have no equal in the world. It is full of uncertainty, varied difficulty, daily change of scene—always some new, unexpected encounter. It is wholly delightful.

I would be the last man to argue on this score against the attempt on great mountains. They give no man pleasure, but we must distinguish pleasure from enjoyment, which has a psychological basis. They make high demands on skill and resolution. They are exacting to a degree. We have to give our best to them. That may give us a retrospective joy, but if it gives pleasure at the time I have never experienced it.

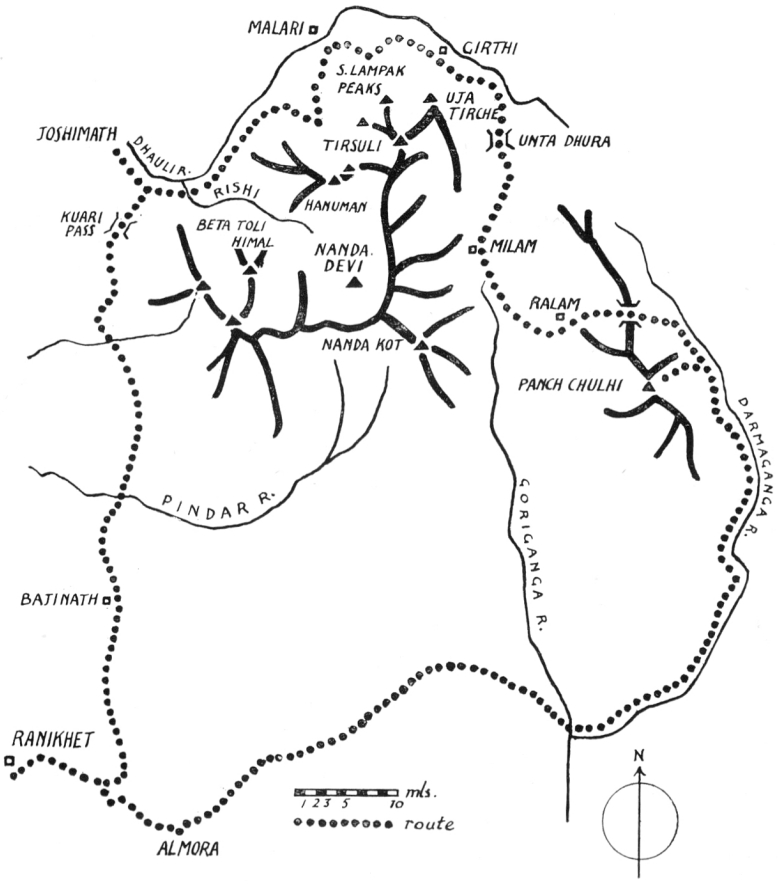
So travel is the thing, and to get our peaks much travel was needed. In broad outline, our plan of action, duly carried out in all its parts, was this:—

The angle of India between Tibet and West Nepal is called the Division of Kumaon, split vertically into the Districts of Garhwal and Almora. From the Tibetan frontier of Kumaon three great river gorges plunge south to India; these are the Dhauli, Gori and Darma, between which are great groups of unclimbed mountains. Our plan was to work over them from west to east, starting at the Dhauli:—

1. In May, cross the foothills 100 miles north from Ranikhet to the Dhauli. Thence penetrate the Rishiganga and Trisul Nala and attempt the first ascent of Bethartoli Himal (20,840 feet).

2. In June, go north up the Dhauli and explore the Lampak group of ten unclimbed mountains situated 18 miles due north of Nanda Devi.

3. When the monsoon breaks at the end of June, dodge it by crossing the main axis of the chain to the Tibetan side, where rainfall would be low. There, reconnoitre


MALARI
GIRTHI
S. LAMPAK PEAKS
UJA TIRCHE
UNTA DHURA
JOSHIMATH
DHAULI R.
RISHI
TIRSULI
HANUMAN
KUARI PASS
BETA TOLI HIMAL
NANDA DEVI
MILAM
RALAM
NANDA KOT
PANCH CHULHI
DARMAGANGA R.
PINDAR R.
GORIGANGA R.
BAJINATH
RANIKHET
ALMORA
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route
N

the north aspect of the Lampak group: base-camp on the Uja Tirche glacier, at the centre of a horseshoe of ten 20,000-footers, all unclimbed.

4. In mid-July, force the gorges of the Girthiganga, moving 32 miles eastwards from the Dhauli to the Gori. (We could find no record of that move having been made.)

5. In September, when the monsoon has ended, cross the Ralam Pass (18,500 feet), travelling 30 miles eastwards from the Gori to the Darma.

6. Reconnoitre the Panch Chuli (22,650 feet), a group of unclimbed mountains near Nepal.

High costs obliged us to set back these last two moves one month.

Essentially this was a plan of movement, involving 450 miles of mountainous travel in four months. It meant that we had to travel light and live on the country. Our total baggage as lifted by eighteen Dhotials at Ranikhet was precisely 1,000 lb., of which 440 lb. was food from Scotland. This we brought to supplement the native diet and to use at high altitudes. The main items were pemmican, cheese, chocolate, barley-sugar, butter, dried egg, dried milk, biscuits, Maggi soup, rolled oats, sugar, ham and honey. We found these supplies adequate; for in none of the valleys did we have trouble getting local food, which consisted of ata (wheat flour), rice, lentils, potatoes, occasionally onions and eggs, and often wild rhubarb. The ata, made into chapaties by the Dhotials, was our bread substitute. The quality was good. The old luxury expeditions, disdaining native foods, were harassed by piles, but on this expedition none of us had ever before consumed so much roughage. In the upper cis-Tibetan valleys we obtained a ground and roasted barley called tsampa, which made first-class porridge. We preferred it to porridge oats. Moreover, no cooking was necessary—one simply stirred in boiling water. It was the one food I missed on return.

Living on the native diet, then, turned out to be a great success but for one matter: for three months on end we were above 10,000 feet. The reduced boiling-point of

water made for slow cooking—a full hour for potatoes—and lentils defied us: their adamantine hearts never softened, however long Weir might woo them with fires fierce or languorous. In consequence, they gave us indigestion unless eaten in small quantity; this we had to learn the hard way. About once a month we felt a craving for fresh meat. On such occasions we bought a goat and shared it with the Dhotials. The meat was tough but good, the liver delicious beyond all telling.

Weir was our cook for all important dishes, although much cooking was done by the Dhotials. Firewood, either from trees or juniper, was always available up to base-camp heights (12,000 feet to 13,000 feet approximately). Our camps II, up to 16,000 or 17,000 feet were always supplied with juniper carried up by the coolies from base; so that primus stoves with high-altitude nipples (the flame "ghosts" without them) were used only for high camps at 18,000 and 19,000 feet. This meant a great saving in paraffin oil. We were able to last out the trip on four gallons as planned.

About clothing nothing need be said. For it was in all respects the same as for Scottish winter climbing. Equipment likewise, with the three normal Alpine additions—crampons, glacier cream, and snow-goggles. We used the crampons once only, on the ascent of Uja Tirche, when they saved us perhaps one hour in eighteen spent on the final snow-ridge. We carried them 17,400 miles to save that hour. But the hour was vital.

Our camping gear comprised a Black's *Bungalow* tent for base-camp, weight 18 lb. with flysheet; and three high-altitude tents—two of 12 lb. and one of 18 lb. for porters. Our tents were unusually light, but they proved themselves for work up to 20,000 feet. Each of us carried two down bags and a lilo. The lilo was small, stretching from head to hip. It was lighter than sponge-rubber, gave better insulation, and lasted out the trip—only just. An important addition was a light, spare groundsheet 12 by 12 feet for covering stores, or coolies, or even tents in heavy rain.

It is a weakness of high-altitude tents that the makers

do not proof them. But no tent should be taken to the Himalaya unproofed. During the monsoon, which in Kumaon comes at the end of June, rain or sleet fell as high as 18,000 feet. Only two of our high-altitude tents were proofed. The third, a new one made of excellent material, leaked so badly in monsoon rain that not even the coolies would use it.

In May and June we had some rain and cloud nearly every day, thunder-plumps in the afternoon and drizzle at night, followed by perfect mornings. So we rose daily at 5 A.M. and finished each day's work in the early afternoon. Frost came nightly around 12,000 feet, but only once, on Bethartoli Himal at 18,000 feet, was it more intense than the frosts of my Scottish winter camps. By day we had no frosts. Even in cloud, the sun's heat was extraordinary at 20,000 feet—with disastrous effects on the snow.

With the coming of the monsoon, this relative warmth by day at high altitudes grew marked. It was rarely that we ever had a use for balaclavas and gloves, and then only in snow-fall or sleet. At night, however, the balaclavas came into their own.

Our strategy in keeping north of the main axis during the monsoon was wholly successful. It is an enlightening fact that MacKinnon and I were never soaked to the skin on the mountains, while Scott and Weir were caught only once when reconnoitring the Panch Chuli. Rainfall was light. Cloud was our real enemy, because all the peaks that we planned to attempt were unknown. Rarely, indeed, was weather bad enough to prevent climbing, but first one must *see*. Thus, our first reconnaissance of the Lampak group from Dunagiri in June was largely thwarted by pre-monsoon cloud. Without more ado we made that strategic northward move. Based on the Uja Tirche glacier we never failed of occasional clear skies for reconnaissance, even when the monsoon had broken. Yet we had moved only 9 miles as the crow flies (a four-day journey over three high passes). Our reward was the first ascent of Uja Tirche (20,350 feet).

From start to finish of the expedition we had much

more cloud than we had ever expected, yet much less rain until we came south in late August. I had assumed that wind would be much less than in Scotland, because the Scottish hills are seaward mountains lying in the storm track of the north Atlantic hurricanes, whereas the Himalaya are very much inland. The assumption was more than justified. We had no high winds; indeed, a member of the Cairngorm Club would deny that they were winds at all. At high altitudes, however, a very little wind goes a very long way. But we had none of the rough and windy weather to which we had grown accustomed in Scotland.

Our camps, accordingly, were almost comfortable. Their routine went smoothly. The Dhotials did all the washing up, fire-kindling and stoking and much cooking under Weir's supervision. They helped to strike and pitch camps. In fact, they have spoiled us for life. Camping will never be the same until we go back. Reveille was sounded every morning by a whistling kettle on the head coolie's fire: a much more stirring call at 5 A.M. than the wailing pipes of a Highland regiment or Professor Dyrenfurth's notorious whistle. In the end, however, lack of privacy makes prolonged camp life a test of self-discipline. After several months of living in tents if men commit no murder it is entirely through fear of public opinion. I should cheerfully have slain every one of my companions at quite frequent intervals but for the need of subsequent explanation in Journals. Yet, although we damned each other heartily on occasion, the party never once quarrelled. This was because we started off by liking each other. If the members of an expedition are chosen *primarily* for any other reason—for scientific ability or climbing experience or talent in art—disaster! . . . These things are secondary.

On the Himalaya our red-letter days were determined by camps, just as Dr Longstaff had promised. Our introduction to high-altitude camping was our Camp III on Bethartoli Himal (20,840 feet) on 31st May. We pitched two tents at 18,000 feet on the crest of a rock ridge: a sensational position—for the ridge lay hard



June 1950

Tom Weir

CAMP III, NORTH FACE, BETHARTOLI HIMAL
At 18,000 feet

against the vast north-east face, ribbed thickly with ice. Platforms had to be hacked out of a knife-edge of snow and the guys anchored to the flanks, which fell at high angles. The cold was intense at sundown.

Neither here nor at any other time of our journeyings did we see colourful sun settings or risings, such as we can even begin to compare with the vivid beauty of those common to West Scotland during hard, frosty weather. The sky, indeed, had a magic clarity peculiar to rarefied air, a dazzling darkness of outer space, a gargantuan emptiness like that under the dome of some long-deserted palace, where sound echoes hollow. From across the Rishiganga came a shining of peaks that flashed like sharks' teeth—Changabang, Rishi Kot, Dunagiri—their names wound a soundless thunder-note across the empty Himalayan skies.

We had well-nigh a hundred camps in the Himalaya, and I slept well in no more than one or two. Providing that the body is at rest sound sleep seems unimportant on mountains. It certainly means nothing to my own health. But Camp III on Bethartoli was one of the worst. We had not yet acclimatised. On the way up a full breath had been needed to each step. Indoors, every wriggle, or even a check to the rhythm of breathing caused by a nearby avalanche, made us gasp. Our breath froze on the roof and fell on us (as snow-powder).

A few days later we had transferred our attentions to the neighbouring peak of Hanuman (19,930 feet). There we had our first bad weather camp, than which there is normally nothing more wretched on high mountains. But we remember this one with gratitude—even with something approaching pleasure. We attempted the summit from a camp at 16,000 feet, but a 400-foot chasm beat us on the east ridge at 19,000 feet. As we turned down the weather broke. We descended 1,000 feet on the ridge, then 1,000 feet down a snow and ice couloir; and finally, in dense mist and steadily falling snow, steered two hours by compass across the east face, over a tangle of boulder-fields and ridges. As darkness fell no tents had yet appeared. We thought our back bearing

must have been wrong and began to fear benightment. Then—a whiff of juniper smoke! Undoubtedly juniper. We turned into the wind. Within six minutes shadowy figures emerged through the gloom, each giving a delighted "Salaam sahib."

Despite the grey and trailing snow-veils, the raw cold and gloom of 7 P.M., the coolies had two fires going and tea ready. Soup, pemmican, tea, chapaties, biscuits and honey were served to us in our sleeping bags, while we relaxed and listened to the blatter of wind-driven snow on the canvas and remembered our grim prospects of thirty minutes ago. We felt uncommonly comfortable that night.

We had another camp of the same kind, which had yet a very different effect on us: on South Lampak (20,750 feet) near the Tibetan frontier. This one inaugurated the breaking of the monsoon, which caught us on the mountain's east ridge at 18,000 feet and for two days gave us hell. I do not exaggerate. Hell is a very real mental state. Our tents were pitched on a narrow snow-arête. On either side yawned drops of a thousand feet, in the grey gloom of which avalanches roared day and night like stags bellowing at our ear-drums; sleet hissed angrily on the canvas; and we, like Queen Victoria, were not amused. We did not even have appetites to satisfy, nor sleep to pass the time. No hearty curse stimulated the conversation, for that implies a deeply personal interest in something that is happening. We just lay, and occasionally wished we were dead. My diary records that MacKinnon and I discussed atheism, literature, the interpretation of history and sulpha drugs. This sounds well, but should not obscure the truth.

Thirty-five camps later found us on Panch Chuli (22,650 feet) near Nepal's west frontier—found us at 19,000 feet on the Sona glacier. We arrived there in dense cloud, having spent forenoon and afternoon threading crevasses in enervating heat *en route* to the upper glacier basin. At last we came out on a patch of flat snow, spread like a magic carpet at the very brink of



June 1950 *D. Scott*

NORTH RIDGE OF UJA TIRCHE

MacKinnon and Weir on one of the nine rock pinnacles at 18,000 feet, below the upper snow and ice ridge

a huge crevasse, which gaped blue and hazily profound as though it were a hole in the surrounding clouds. This was an ideal camp site, if safe. We hung around undecidedly until the mist lifted for a few seconds. We were just out of range of the debris falling from a great ice-cliff. We pitched Camp IV—height 19,000 feet.

Our ascent thus far earned us a great reward. The peak of Panch Chuli was right before our eyes, its upper ice-ridges so thin that we could see the sun shining through. Looking outwards, our eyes ranged over vast snow-fields and across the profound gorge of the Darmaganga lurking 10,000 feet below among the clouds, out to ranks of unknown snow-ranges, topped by towering cumuli and receding into the everlasting blue that roofs Tibet.

We were two days in that camp, the tent our sunshade, upon which an intensely fierce sun beat—beat upon the snows and reflected back with all the heat and glare of a furnace. Snow-goggles had to be worn part-time inside the tent; even then our eyes grew inflamed. By night, avalanches from the flanking walls fell near and often. Although our camp was a hundred yards beyond the farthest débris marks, one could not help wondering whether some greater fall might not sweep the site. By daylight we judged it safe: no further falls could be great. But, in the dead of night, every new crash and rattle made one wonder. We were glad to get away at dawn.

These, our high camps, often introduced us to a beauty well-nigh overwhelming in its splendour, but always in circumstances that demanded much sacrifice of the flesh. To get the one men must give the other. Except in momentary flashes of unexampled glory the high altitude game rarely seems worth the candle at the time. Its values are fully realised only later, after a descent to the less exacting levels on which man is intended to live.

We attempted nine mountains and climbed five. Two of these were simple training climbs—Jatropani (13,357 feet) and a peak (16,280 feet) in the Rishiganga. The remaining seven were mountains not hitherto attempted.

The first was Bethartoli Himal in the Rishi country. We had allowed twenty-one days for this attempt—six days to penetrate the Trisul Nala, five days for return, and ten on the mountain. As events showed, this would have been ample. One of our Dhotials unluckily dropped five days' ata over a cliff on the first pass. We had thus just five days for Bethartoli, and everything depended on our hitting off the correct route first time. We had a choice between its east ridge and its north, each by two alternative lines of approach on its lower two-thirds. We chose what seemed to be a fool-proof rock-ridge to the north col and were defeated above Camp II at 18,000 feet by a 200-foot gap.

The three days left to us were insufficient for Bethartoli by the promising alternatives. So we instead tried Hanuman (19,930 feet), which rises out of the Rishi Gorge. There, exactly the same thing happened. Just 900 feet under the summit a chasm on its east ridge stopped us. Neither had been visible on reconnaissance. The attempts were valuable in giving us information about Bethartoli Himal, which could be useful to a future party; in helping to acclimatise us, for none of us had been higher than Mont Blanc (15,780 feet) and we were accordingly handicapped above 17,000 feet by oxygen lack; and in showing us that even the 1,000 to 1 chance against a Dhotial dropping a load must be guarded against while traversing cliff-faces, by spreading as big a variety of food and gear among as many men as possible, and so never having, say, all sleeping bags in one load. We were, in fact, most fortunate in losing food: had we lost anything else—tents, sleeping bags, climbing gear or stoves—the result would have been catastrophic. We had been alerted also to the Himalayan scale and the rashness of placing trust on the evidence of inexperienced eyes. Snow conditions had been revealed as alarming.

The last two matters, of scale and snow, are worth noting. We learned not to estimate the difficulties of any Himalayan ridge by its average angle. On Bethartoli and Hanuman our chosen ridges did look easy, especially the latter from 7 miles through binoculars. But the



June 1950

UJA TIRCHE, THE NORTH RIDGE
From near Camp II

D. Scott

tiniest nicks and steps, rock or ice, which look trifling from the foot of the peak and may be invisible farther back, can turn out to be chasms and walls 200 or 300 feet high or deep. Few ridges *do* look gentle. For the most part they are steep, thin, jagged and raw. They are new mountains and wear a new look.

The swift effect of the fierce Himalayan sun on snow took us all by surprise. We thought that effects would be less between 17,000 and 20,000 feet than in the Alps. The reverse was the truth. In the Alps a mountaineer reckons that snow will not go bad on him before noon. In Kumaon it was getting dangerous at 8 A.M. and was bad by 9—in pre-monsoon days. Weir and I were caught in this trap between 8 and 10 A.M. in descending the flank of the Bethartoli ridge by a 1,000-foot "short-cut." Our lesson was thus learned rapidly and early on, to our profit.

On the Lampak group, 18 miles due north of Nanda Devi, we made a first ascent of two rock mountains of 17,830 and 16,690 feet. The latter gave us a splendid climb on its north ridge, up thin edges of milk-white granite, which reminded us all of the better parts of the Cuillin—like the west ridge of Sgùrr nan Gillean prolonged to 2,000 feet. Our two climbs had an ulterior motive: the reconnaissance of the big Lampak mountains to their north-east. Although defeated for a week by dense cloud the reconnaissance was successful. Weir and I caught a three-minute glimpse of these wonderful peaks and pronounced them impossible from the south. In this opinion I now find myself confirmed by André Roch.

The monsoon was nearly upon us, and so, north to the Uja Tirche glacier. Our ascent of Uja Tirche by its north ridge was in all respects an elegant route, testing us on its narrow crest, between 18,000 and 20,300 feet, with nine gigantic pinnacles, 2,000 feet of twisting snow, and two triangular ice-walls of 200 and 100 feet. On this climb we forced ourselves as strenuously as in the Alps, for we were now well acclimatised; we wasted no time and had only one halt of five minutes. Yet we spent nine hours getting up—with crampons; and nine

hours getting down—without. The descent was a harrowing experience. The ridge was basically ice, and now, in the afternoon, only too willing to shed its snow-skin. There were long stretches where cornices on the right-hand side forced us off the crest on to the steep and exposed left flank—the very place where the snow was most inclined to slide. The worst delays came at the ice-walls. For dangerous snow we had been prepared, but had not imagined that pure ice, as distinct from snow-ice, would rot also. This it did. We were involved in hours of downhill cutting. The steps, slashed shallow for crampons on the ascent, were now useless. On the long, lower ice-wall we had to cut a traverse across the face—two hours to a 200-foot run-out. The ice was wet and curiously brittle: steps had to be large. It is most important to note that, when MacKinnon used crampons on them, his edge-spikes split off the whole base of a step. (The rope stopped him 40 feet down.) His use of crampons would have been fully justified in the Alps. On afternoon ice, in the Himalayan monsoon, they seem not to be justified when the angle is so high that steps must be cut for the spikes.

The rest of the descent went well, for the snow froze again at sunset and a full moon lighted our way through the pinnacles.

Our next two mountains were South Lampak (20,750 feet) and Panch Chuli (22,650 feet). The first beat two attempts at 18,000 feet, an 800-foot buttress on its east ridge proving unjustifiably loose for its angle. The second, near Nepal, gave splendid mountaineering *en route* to its north col and ridge. We climbed to 19,000 feet on the upper Sona glacier, where access to the col was barred by 1,000-foot cliffs, which we judged unclimbable. We subsequently reconnoitred the correct route, which goes to the south col by the upper Meola glacier. To establish the high camps on that route we should have needed Sherpas or Bhotias, capable of difficult snow and ice work.

Himalayan mountaineering does demand strenuousness—reserves of energy and a willingness to expend

them. In this respect Alpine climbing is a more valuable training than Scottish. The Alps demand speed and punish the slack and listless and the slow. I can think of nothing more nastily dangerous in the Himalaya than having a slow or clumsy companion. It could not be tolerated. Few men can learn to drive themselves fast on difficult rock and snow until they have received their first smartening experience of some good Alpine climbs. Moving "fast" is simply the art of not wasting time. The Alpine glacier work is likewise most important.

For the rest, the Himalaya ask an all-round knowledge of rock, snow and ice of the very kind that Scottish mountains provide in winter. Our Alpine experience had not been extensive. Our Scottish experience had. It was on the basis of the latter that most of our work was done. A Scottish experience confined to summer rock-severes and winter ski-ing would be of small value in the Himalaya. The ascent and descent of long rock-ridges under snow, the ascent and descent of ice and snow climbs in the harder gullies, these are an invaluable training, but for which we should still be up on the summit of Uja Tirche, complete with our Simond crampons.

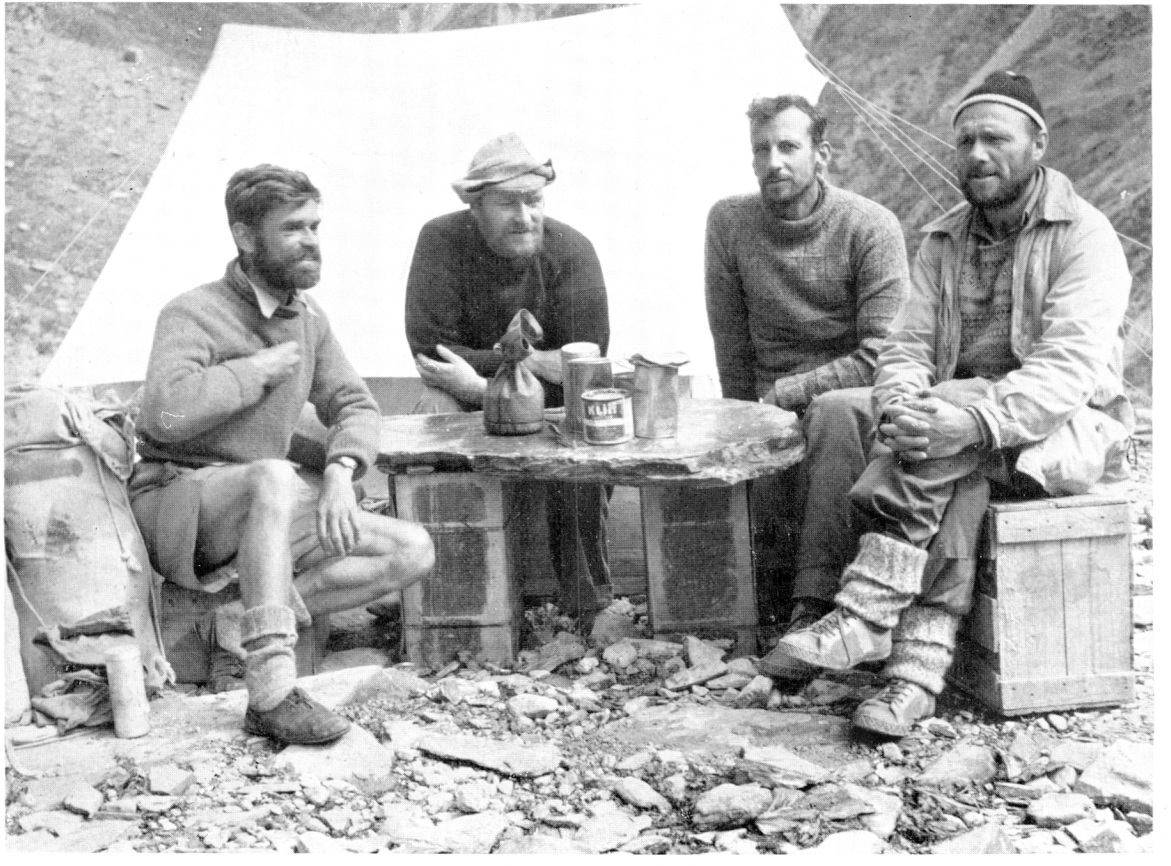
MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL AFRICA.

By A. L. Cram.

ANYONE who would climb the big mountains of Africa is inevitably a traveller, for the distances are very great, and needs must become an explorer, since the summits are remote behind seas of bush and rings of rain forest, badly mapped and hardly known. He must learn to cope with the primitive tribes and morose beasts inhabiting the slopes. Food, water and approaches raise problems of little moment in Europe, while the heavy rifle tends to take the place of the ice-axe, as the overgrowth and undergrowth take the place of snow and ice in colder climates. The methods of dealing with dangerous animals are more of an art and an intuition than a technique, and no hunter can confidently forecast a situation which may involve great beasts of savage and cunning disposition. An approach to high ground through thick cover keeps the mountaineer as much on the *qui-vive* as a passage below falling stones or ice.

In March 1950 I went on safari into the Wakamba country, not to climb but to learn the art of security in the bush that inevitably bars the route to mountains. Next to Alpine mountaineering, the pursuit of pachyderms ranks high as a pastime demanding stamina. The Wakamba, whose delight it is to poach elephants, using poisoned arrows at zero range, are delightful persons, fearless before wounded game—and a wounded elephant can be an awe-inspiring spectacle—and weavers of black magic when tracking. Elephants seem to stride along at 10 miles per hour for the mere pleasure of kingship over distance. For seven days and for 150 miles we followed an elephant herd through arid bush, before my trackers produced a bull elephant out of a dense thicket 30 feet away. It closed with us to its destruction, the Wakamba meantime fielding the spent cases for snuff-boxes as they sped from the ejectors, with an enviable *sang-froid* before the beast's majestic wrath. I was fortunate also to shoot rhino and buffalo, the latter, too, being on the offensive.

In August I went by car south through Masailand, where I nearly suffered a cut throat in a brush with some drunks. I walked over the great escarpments of Barkitabu, Subugu and Lemisikio (*c.* 8,000 to 9,000 feet) and crossed the Serengeti Plain on a compass bearing, by night. There is over 100 miles of floury ash on this plain, which behaves like a vindictive personality. I visited the biggest crater in the world, Ngorongoro (*c.* 9,000 feet) and climbed the adjacent peaks of Lemagrut and Oldeani (*c.* 10,000 to 11,000 feet). The combination of dense morning cloud and big game was a little disconcerting. Later, I went down to the immense salt lakes of Eyasi and Manyara with their vast game populations. Further south, along the Great Rift Wall, we hunted elephant and cast about on the Masai Steppe and along remote sand rivers. Many large herds, some of two hundred head, were found, but no ivory worth



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shooting was seen. The elephants were very nervous and made repeated attacks by cows and young bulls. Eventually one or two of these had to be shot as they charged, at ranges of a few yards. Lions were very close on many occasions and their pug marks everywhere on the sands near water. Unhappily, I caught some malignant fever, while deep in the bush, which nearly made an end of me in the seven days taken to reach a hospital.

Consequent sick leave afforded an opportunity to visit Mount Kenya (17,041 feet). With my house-boy Makario—now a tolerable climber—I visited, twice, the Tyndall Glacier, which is well crevassed, penetrating into the upper bay and prospecting an ice pass at the top, returning both times by the face of Point Piggot (16,300 feet) which is not dissimilar to the Lagan face of Sgumain. With R. Woodman and Makario, I ascended the two Western Terminal Points (*c.* 15,000 feet), resembling the traverse of Sgumain and Alasdair. Another day we walked up the ice to Point Lenana (16,300 feet) and on the following day went on to the south-east ridge of Mount Kenya itself. A face of moderate rock gave access high up to the ridge, which was covered with soft snow on ice. In my convalescent state I did not feel able to cut, and we returned, although no severities were seen. These must exist above the 16,300 feet we reached in seventy-five minutes, from the Top Hut, since parties going to the summit require twelve hours for the double journey. Kenya is a fine mountain resembling the Schreckhorn or Zinal Rothorn. The most difficult ridge is very like the ridge of the Finsteraarhorn above the Gemslücke.

During the year, shooting and walking led me to the great escarpment, widely separated, of Isthuria, Elgeyo, Limuru and Manga (*c.* 8,000 feet) and to the old volcanoes of Longonot, Suswa and Ol Doinyo Sabuk (*c.* 9,000 to 10,000 feet), as well as to the deep trenches of Kedong, Lamwia, Baringo and Kamnrok and the Great Rift itself. I was also able to make many visits to the great escarpment and forest of The Mau, where I ascended the highest peaks of The Mau, Melili and Ol Doinyo Eburru (*c.* 10,000 feet). The Mau is surely one of the most dark and fascinating, densely forested uplands to be found anywhere, with its teeming game, rare bongo, and rarer golden cats, as well as the big cats and elephant and buffalo. I revisited the Aberdare Range (*c.* 13,000 feet) and unnumbered high, rocky points where, in the half-light, parched by dust, desiccated by the heat, yet whipped by an icy wind, the still hunter is yet privileged to see the panorama of the great beasts about their lawless occasions, shrouded in their own dust in the desert or smashing through the dank forest in the clouds below the snowline.

CIRCUMPOLAR ICE.

1. The South Orkneys, 1948-50.

By D. H. Maling.

THE advent of a Scottish Himalayan Expedition reminds us of another, the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, nearly fifty years ago. This expedition was led by Dr W. S. Bruce and it was the first party to winter in the South Orkneys. After the *Scotia* returned home in 1904, the base was maintained by the Argentine Government as a meteorological station, which is still in operation.

The work of the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey on land is complementary to the marine investigations of the Discovery Committee and has extended the original discoveries of the British Graham Land Expedition during the years between the wars.

Bases were established at various places along the Grahamland coast, in the South Shetlands and South Orkneys. At first, the South Orkneys base was on Cape Geddes, on Laurie Island, only 10 miles or so from Scotia Bay where Bruce wintered, but this site proved unsatisfactory so that, in 1947, a year after it had been occupied, the base was moved to Signy Island.

The whole group of islands stretches almost 50 miles from east to west, but is seldom as much as 10 miles wide. The three main islands, Coronation, Laurie and Powell, are mountainous and heavily glacierised. The main peaks vary between 2,000 and 4,200 feet in height. There are also a number of smaller and lower islands whose ice cover is not so extensive. Signy Island, in particular, proved to be remarkably snow-free in summer.

We left England late in 1947, on what was the first trip of the *John Biscoe* in her new capacity as an expedition ship. We rolled down the Atlantic to the Falklands and, after collecting some last-minute necessities, we sailed south, across Drake Passage to the South Shetlands. We spent a few days unloading stores at Deception Island and then sailed for the South Orkneys.

Beyond Bransfield Strait and the northernmost tip of Graham Land we met ice. Not pack-ice, for it was February and a relatively warm summer, but thousands of tabular bergs from the shelf-ice fringing the Weddell Sea carried northwards by the current. We threaded our way for two days through bergs and then sighted the Inaccessible Islands, the western outliers of the South Orkneys.

It was a typical summer day when we arrived, overcast, with a strong westerly wind and intermittent snow. To the north-east great blue-green ice-cliffs along the shore led up to featureless white slopes disappearing into the clouds which shrouded the mountains. We rounded the southern point of Signy Island and sailed into Borge Bay. It was quite dark and only a flashing light from the base hut showed us where it lay. Next morning we went ashore at first light and were greeted by the men whom we were relieving.

The base has a magnificent situation. It lies on a rocky point on the south side of the bay, about 70 feet above sea-level. There are three huts, the main living quarters, a single-storeyed, single-roomed hut, measuring 22 feet in length and 14 feet broad, a Nissen store-hut and a small lean-to shelter which protected our petrol generator from the weather.

Three or 4 miles north lies Coronation Island, the greatest of the South Orkneys, with a great, icy mountain range and steep glaciers plunging headlong into the sea.

The *John Biscoe* stayed only twenty-four hours. The season was far advanced and there were other more southerly bases to visit, so we were unceremoniously dumped with about three tons of stores on the beach. The ground between the shore and the hut was too rocky and snow-free to use sledges, so everything had to be carried up the slope to the hut. Only three of us were left here. We were promised a fourth man, but, owing to the early arrival of the pack-ice, it was not possible for the ship to return to Signy Island before winter, and, with one exception, we comprised the smallest party which has ever wintered in these regions.

There was so much work to be done that it seemed impossible that three of us could do it all. Dick was a zoologist, Ralph the wireless operator, and I was the meteorologist, but these were purely honorary titles, for someone had to do the cooking, build the extension to the hut and carry boxes up from the beach. When it came to the scientific work it required all of us to cope with the elephant seals which Dick was studying, or carry the theodolite and tripod.

Most of our work was confined to Signy Island. The small party, the unreliable weather and the necessity of maintaining regular meteorological observations prevented us from going far afield. As I have said, Signy Island is low-lying (the plateau reaches 950 feet) and the permanent ice is relatively thin and stagnant. There was not much scope for mountaineering here; there were only a few places on the island where it was necessary to rope up and avoid crevasses. On the other hand, we had plenty of ski-ing and, apart from exciting runs down the rock-strewn slopes near the hut, we were able to clatter about on the rime-encrusted surfaces of the ice-cap. During the second year I did some glaciological work on the Signy Island glaciers, and this meant covering most of the higher parts of the island on ski twice or three times a week.

Soon after our arrival we rowed across Normanna Strait in our frail 14-foot dory * to investigate the approaches to Coronation island from the south. We had been warned that it was unlikely that we should find any landing places on this coast, and it certainly looked pretty impossible, but, fortunately, in the area nearest Signy, we found a small bay hidden behind a conspicuous cape, where a landing was simple and where a base camp could be placed above a sheltered shingle beach.

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* The dory is the type of rowing boat used by fishermen on the Newfoundland Banks and extensively throughout North America. It has a flat bottom and flat, sloping sides. It is considered by some to be impossible to capsize—but opinions differ. It only *feels* safe when half-full of water.

During the winter months of 1948, once the sea had frozen, we were able to make several one-day trips to establish triangulation stations on Coronation Island and reconnoitre possible routes across the island or towards the less mountainous west. At last, in September, it was possible to leave base for a few days. Dick and I took two sledges across the strait in relays and established the base camp in the shingle bay.

A day's prospecting northwards, by the only possible approach to a great valley glacier from this side, involved us in some climbing on steep snow slopes between the hopeless, vertical ice-walls of two adjacent glaciers. We started up the main glacier, but, before long, the weather began to deteriorate, and we were forced to return to the base camp. It was an impracticable route for sledges.

The following day we started westwards. We left our extra food and equipment (brought in case the ice broke up in our absence from Signy Island) and started up a gentle incline to a col at about 600 feet and half a mile away. Although we had only one sledge and not more than 300 lb. of equipment we found the uphill haul very exhausting, and it was late afternoon when we reached our destination. We camped, then deciding that we should require our ski after all, returned to the base camp for them. The return trip took less than three-quarters of an hour.

Bad weather kept us at this camp for two days, but the third was fine. We crossed a sheet of piedmont * ice leading to the next col to the west. We must have been learning to pull together, for we reached this col by evening and camped at about 800 feet in a rising gale. We had been travelling along the circumference of a circle and were still about the same distance from Signy Island, about 4 miles, as when we started. This was

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* Ice sheets, of which the main original mass was formed by the coalescence of the ice spreading out from two or more glaciers over a comparatively level plain, at the base of the mountain slopes down which the glaciers descend.

most fortunate, for that evening Dick found that he had been badly frostbitten in one foot.

The gale increased in intensity, and about midnight one of the poles broke at the ferrule, quickly followed by the other three. We lay in our bags, buffeted by the tent, until dawn. As soon as we could see we stuffed everything into our rucksacks and prepared to bolt for home. Luckily, we were below the cloud base and could choose the most direct route. At the coast we left the sledge and most of the equipment. Taking only rucksacks, we skied back over the fast-ice which was now moving slightly under the influence of the ocean swell. The ice did not break up, and a few weeks later we were able to go back and pick up the rest of our equipment.

Spring was heralded by the return of the seals, and for several weeks we helped Dick with his work on the pups. The ship returned and our party was increased to four. Throughout the summer and autumn we were confined to our island by the routine work on seals, birds and weather. During the winter we were able to go sledging again, this time for three weeks. This year we had a more satisfactory tent. Charlie Skilling, our Falkland Islander, came along as well.

We went eastwards along the sea-ice fringing Coronation Island, hauling two sledges in relays. The weather was bitterly cold (in the minus twenties and thirties Fahrenheit) and the surfaces bad. A week had elapsed before we reached the Divide at the south-east end of Coronation Island. Here we found that a tide-race had kept the sea open for much of the winter and, despite the low temperatures, young ice had only just formed.

We could not continue up the east coast without the risk of cutting off our retreat. We therefore made a base camp at the Divide and, by means of daily trips to the north and around the small islands in the vicinity, we were able to do a great deal of surveying and geological work.

We had one unpleasant experience when we attempted in descend a steep snow-slope between two glacier cliffs to Petter Bay. Our representative from Cambridge

University Mountaineering Club, an organisation with a certain reputation for getting benighted, missed the route in the gathering dusk and fog patches. After being extricated from one crevasse, and after he had narrowly missed falling down others in the dark, he reached one which appeared too wide to jump. It was just as well he didn't, for it was the brink of the ice-cliffs above the bay.

We reversed order and returned to the first crevasse along our footprints. From here it was necessary to try some other approach. There was a full moon, but it didn't help much, as the fog patches produced diffuse areas of white blindness. We were beginning to notice the cold, now that we were groping in the dark. When, at last, we stumbled over a conglomerate erratic we felt much like the Mole in the *Wind in the Willows*, for this was the key to our position on the glacier. We were soon down the slope, on level sea-ice, a short walk from the tent.

We returned to Signy Island by much the same route as we had taken on the outward journey, but devoted more time to examining the rocks along the coast. This time it was my turn to get frostbitten feet (sheer carelessness) but, luckily, it was the last day, and I was home for greater comfort during the three weeks they took to recover.

It was six months before we left the islands. The *John Biscoe* could not reach us before Christmas 1949, for the pack-ice formed an impenetrable belt around the islands. It was February before she arrived, two years and a few days after we had been left there.

2. Mountaineering in Greenland.

By H. I. Drever.

I MUST hasten to admit that I am a heretic who believes that mountaineering cannot be closely defined: that there may, in fact, be as many possible definitions as there are individual exponents.

That mountaineering is unmixed (with scientific inquiry) play is an observation we owe to Mummery.

And I have been attracted to this point of view since 1938 when first I had, in West Greenland, an opportunity to put it into practice in a somewhat unusual way.

Can recreational mountaineering be included, in undiluted or unadulterated form, in essentially " scientific " expeditions ? The answer to this question, of course, will depend on the simultaneous availability of spare time and good mountains. But it will also depend on the degree to which high-spirited and independent-minded mountaineers are prepared to identify themselves with the interests and aims of their expedition as a whole. If this is likely to involve too much hardship or sacrifice, my advice is simple : don't go.

Since the first world war many small British expeditions have gone out to East or West Greenland. This was made possible through the courtesy and co-operation of the Danish Government and their confidence in the quality of British expeditions. Almost without exception, the main object has been scientific inquiry backed financially by scientific and educational institutions. The members were expected to accept, explicitly or implicitly, a number of regulations or to sign a contract. The " expedition " was a purposeful, objective concept sustained and interpreted by a " leader." Its " success " tended to be measured in terms of its scientific and exploratory achievements. Financial aid could not be accepted as charity.

Many of these expeditions were finely conceived and finely manned. Nearly all of them had, among their personnel, mountaineers who were able to climb the mountains of a very beautiful country, for the simple joy of climbing, and, above all, of climbing virgin peaks. Mainly through the influence of J. M. Wordie, mountaineering became as integral an aspect of the expedition concept as any part of its scientific programme. The principle involved may simply be that all work and no play would make a rather dull, colourless and unauthentic expedition. A scientific expedition is a fusion, not a confusion, of work and play.

Two such small Greenland expeditions were essentially

Scottish: one in 1939, the other last summer. They differed from the normal type in one respect: I have never been able to accept a limitation that would exclude all but scientists, professional or otherwise, from Greenland. Two " unqualified " mountaineers were smuggled in before the war and two again last summer. All four were legitimately and appropriately disguised. But it was, of course, not all masquerade, and there was plenty of work for every member of these two expeditions.

Last summer, two weeks' mountaineering was firmly established on the agenda. There were three S.M.C. members, Drever, Ransley, Slesser, and Tennent from the J.M.C.S. Slesser and Tennent utilised a short delay in the settlement of Umanak to make a bold but unsuccessful bid to reach the top of the famous Umanak Mountain, previously climbed only once by two Germans in 1932. Ransley has kindly supplied the following note on his mountaineering excursion with Slesser to Upernivik Island.

3. Climbing on Upernivik Island.

By T. J. Ransley.

THE virgin peaks climbed on Upernivik Island, West Greenland, were grouped round the head of the previously unexplored Kungulertussoq Glacier, in the north-west corner of the island and in latitude 71° 20′ N. about.

On 25th August a striking peak, reminiscent of the Zinal Rothorn, now called Kakortok Napassuliak, 7,000 feet (2,089 metres), was climbed by its north-west ridge, a very narrow snow arête in bad condition. The last 60 feet to the summit was on difficult, but fine, red rock. On the following day a rock peak of 6,450 feet (1,875 metres), that was named Castor in consequence of its resemblance to a close neighbour of almost equal height, was climbed from the south-west. On the summit ridge a short traverse was made on snow across the top of the north face to avoid an overhanging step. This face of rock, snow, and ice fell for over 6,000 feet to the fjord beneath in about one mile.

A Greenland hunter accompanied the party up Kungulertussoq Qaga (5,300 feet) on 30th August. The west ridge was short and gave an easy scramble.

An unsuccessful attempt was made on Inugsuk, 6,600 feet (2,008 metres) on 31st August from the north. A col was reached by a steep ice slope from the glacier basin, but the party retreated when 1,000 feet below the summit, owing to great cold and a steep wall of doubtful slabby rock barring the way to the ridge above. But the summit was reached during a fourteen-hour day on 1st September by the long west ridge. Several difficult pitches were found on the upper part, including a *gendarme* and gap of particularly rotten rock. The summit block was severe.

In all cases descents were by the same routes as ascents, and all climbs were made from a camp on the true right (northern) moraine at 3,300 feet. Heights given in feet are uncorrected aneroid readings actually recorded, while those in metres are from the very rough map of the Danish Geodetic Institute.

THE FIRST SEASON IN THE ALPS.

By Alexander Harrison.

THE climber with a good Scottish experience both on snow and rock who intends to make his first visit to the Alps is confronted with a problem. Three courses of action are open to him: (1) He may collect a party of men with somewhat similar qualifications but without Alpine experience; (2) he may link up with men who have been to the Alps before; and (3) in either case he may decide to employ a guide.

In considering this matter he should take into account the different conditions which will be met on the high mountains as compared with those in Scotland or England. By far the most important difference is the existence of large areas of snow and ice at high altitudes and, above all, of glaciers. A good deal of practice in snow and ice can be obtained in Scotland, and especially on Ben Nevis.

There is, secondly, the difference in altitude. High altitudes have a most definite effect on the climber, especially at the beginning of the season.

Thirdly, there are the greater distances which have to be traversed over difficult *terrain* and the longer times which have to be allowed. We all know the story of the Swiss guide who greatly over-estimated the distance in this country. It has been told in various forms, such as the ascent of Crib Goch or Arthur's Seat. The converse applies to British climbers in the Alps. A few years ago I had with me a man who was out for his first season. On the first morning we went up a valley towards our hut, and there at the end of the valley were the peaks that we intended to climb. My young friend suggested that we should do two or three next day! In fact, we ascended one of them.

Arising out of this difference of length of time required for an expedition there is the question of starting times. At home the days are not usually very long and the time of starting is not so important, but abroad the position is very different, and, in addition to the length of expeditions, there is the effect of sun on snow and ice. It is usually essential to reach the top and be well down off the steep mountainside before the sun has exercised its full effect on snow and ice. The changes in temperature caused by the sun are extreme and take place in an hour or two, causing snow bridges, which were quite sound at night and during the early morning, to become rotten and dangerous; and *couloirs*, which were quite safe when the rocks were ice-bound, to be transformed into funnels for hurtling, death-dealing avalanches. A number of accidents have occurred to British parties through stone-falls since the end of the war. Some of these accidents might have been avoided by earlier starts. Only experience will give knowledge as to how best to tackle *couloirs*. Early starts are essential.

Route finding, both on the ascent and descent, for a guideless party unacquainted with a climb, is seldom simple. Precious hours can easily be lost by even a slight deviation. It is now the exception to find routes

marked by scratches. Rubber-soled boots have superseded nailed boots to all intents and purposes.

It is well worth investing in the guide books of the S.A.C. or the Vallot guides to Mont Blanc.

The time factor is also important in rock climbing. The whole party must learn to move together safely but quickly on easy rock. No member must endanger any of the other members by either dislodging stones or letting the rope do so.

A start by lantern is nearly always necessary on climbs of any importance, and it may not be easy for a party new to the climb to find the route by path, moraine, or glacier. This may mean considerable delay and the party may run behind time. Full provision should be made for this possibility.

Lastly, and by no means least, there is the question of weather. We in Scotland are accustomed to going on the hills in everything but the very worst weather. Nearly always we can find an easy way down, but conditions are very different in the Alps. There is usually no easy way down. If bad weather comes on the route is likely to be much more difficult. One must learn to climb down in good or bad weather.

Looking back over my own experience, I find that nearly all the difficult situations I have been in have been caused by bad weather. It cannot be over-emphasised how important it is to acquire experience of weather conditions, and to be cautious and not continue to climb when conditions look unpromising. A president of the Alpine Club has said, " When you know when to turn back you can go anywhere."

The late Norman Neruda, a famous climber of the older school, said the following: " *To the leader of a guideless party the technical difficulties of a snow mountain are most evident, and he will require the greatest skill and experience ere he can aspire to cope with them. In short, he will need an amount of skill and experience which cannot be learned in one or two seasons' climbing, as in the case of rock climbing. The highest branch of mountaineering is beyond all doubt snowcraft, and it*

requires a longer training for the mountaineer to become proficient as an ice-man than as a rock-climber." I believe that he is quite correct in what he says. Even long experience in Scotland does not give full knowledge of snow conditions in the Alps.

Glaciers are something quite apart from anything we know in this country. The study of snow and ice is a complete study in itself. The effect of frost and heat must be studied. Early in the morning the whole surface of the mountain and glacier is frozen hard. As the sun rises and warms the surface the consistency of the snow and ice is changed, until at midday the situation becomes altogether different. Ice slopes which, in the early morning, were covered with good, sound, hard snow, become death-traps under the midday sun, if not treated with care and knowledge. In the morning the snow adheres firmly to the ice, and, if sufficiently soft, steps can be kicked in it, or, if harder, it can be crossed in crampons; but, under the influence of the sun, the covering snow becomes soft and does not adhere firmly to the ice below. The snow must be cleared and steps cut in the ice below. At least one accident has occurred in recent times to British climbers who trusted to crampons on soft snow, instead of cutting steps into the ice below. Snow bridges which were firm and safe in the early morning become unsafe.

I remember one occasion when I nearly had an accident on an ice slope. I had not been in the Alps for several years. On my second day I slipped on a slope because I had not, in the short time, regained my knowledge which was dulled owing to the years of absence.

In other sports it is not considered undignified to take professional tuition, and I think the same holds good in mountaineering. A tremendous lot can be learned from a first-class guide, especially in snow and ice work, and in rock climbing as well. I have heard people say that they do not like the idea of being guided by peasants, but one will find that most of these guides are well-educated, shrewd men with great knowledge of the life of the country. Knowledge of the flora and fauna and

of the economy of the country will add greatly to the pleasure of a holiday. Most people would find a day spent with a shepherd on the hills or with a stalker in a deer forest an enjoyable experience. If one knows the language it should be the same in the Alps. Some of the most interesting parts of Lord Conway's book, *The Alps from End to End*, are the accounts of his conversations with the guides and the people of the valleys, on their way of life, their crops, their cows, their cheese-making, etc.

Supposing it is decided to engage a guide for a week or two, how is one to go about finding a guide who will be suitable, and what arrangements should be made about hotel accommodation, etc. ? There are bureaus in most Alpine centres, but it is probably best to obtain from climbing friends the names of guides with whom they have climbed, and whom they can recommend. This should be done well in advance because good guides are booked up early in the season. Arrangements can be made direct with the guide selected. A guide will usually be willing to take two amateurs, with good experience of Scottish climbing, on routes of quite a high standard of difficulty.

For single expeditions it will usually be possible to get in touch with a reliable guide through the management of any hotel at which one is staying. In France it is necessary to engage a guide through the *Chef du Bureau des Guides*, but even there it is usually possible to obtain the guide one wants.

As regards accommodation, there is the choice of firstly, camping out ; secondly, arranging for an inclusive *pension* rate at a hotel, in which case the hotel will supply the normal food for expeditions. Lastly, one can buy one's own food for huts, living in hotels when one comes down from expeditions. Camping out is not recommended for those who do not know the ropes. If the weather is good and most of the time is spent in huts, it will be cheaper to use hotels only when required ; but if the weather is bad and many nights are spent in hotels, it will be found to be less expensive if one takes *pension* terms. If the season is a busy one it might not always be easy to get casual

accommodation, especially if one comes down late in the day. Having a hotel room means that one does not have to pack luggage when one goes to huts, and it is pleasant to know that one can come back to it when necessary.

There is also the question of becoming a member of a national club. Membership of a club gives the right to accommodation in huts up to a certain hour (usually 6 P.M.), after which unoccupied beds are available to members and non-members alike. The occupation charge is less to members than to non-members. Railway fare concessions are given to members of the Swiss Alpine Club, as on the Gornergrat and Jungfraujoch railways. Fares on the Swiss mountain railways are high, so these concessions are material. The Swiss railways now issue half-fare concession vouchers with the rail tickets from this country to Switzerland.

Taking all things into consideration, I should say that the best way to start climbing in the Alps is to employ a guide. One will see the art practised with a skill to which no amateur can attain.

If it is not possible to employ a guide, then I should say go with other amateurs who have Alpine experience, and, as a last resort, go with men who have at least as good experience as your own. Even for men who have much guideless experience it is good to take a guide for one or two expeditions by way of a refresher course. One will learn anew the skill of a master of his craft.

In conclusion may I quote from Lord Conway: "*My advice to a beginner is this*; *let him spend his first season in one of the great centres, climbing under the tutelage of a first-rate guide. Having thus learnt the rudiments of his craft, let him boldly strike forth with a couple of amateurs, if possible more experienced than himself, and taking a series of easy expeditions, let him traverse the mountains of the Tyrol without guides. In succeeding years he will be able to pass through the higher or more difficult ranges, climbing always in good company, but only occasionally taking a guide. Three or four seasons of this kind of work will give him all the experience needed for mountain exploration in any part of the world.*

He will acquire a knowledge of the Alps as a range or region of mountains and not merely as a casual assemblage of crags affording gymnastic problems."

Notes on Guides, Clubs and Huts.

In Austria the guides are not so numerous as in Switzerland or France. I know that there is at least one guide in the Zillertal, and there is a mountaineering school in the Pitztal. In Austria the charge made by a guide for a period is about 130 Austrian shillings a day, the guide paying his own hut fees and providing his own food.

In Switzerland the charge appears to be between 30 and 40 francs a day. It may even be as high as 50 francs. In addition, there are payable the hut fees, food and any railway charges. I do not know what guides charge in France. If a guide is just taken for an individual expedition the charge will be in accordance with the tariff for the particular climb. This also applies to Switzerland.

The Club which operates in Austria is the *Österreichische Alpenverein* or Oe.A.V. The entrance fee to this Club at present rate of exchange is 7s. 6d. and the annual subscription 10s., but there are no reciprocal arrangements with the Swiss or French Clubs. In Austrian huts one has the alternative of a bed or a mattress. To members of the Oe.A.V. the charge is 5s. (Austrian) per night for a bed and just over 2s. (Austrian) for a mattress. To non-members the charge is double. The present official tourist rate of exchange is 70 Austrian shillings per £. In the Austrian huts the guardian provides good meals. They are, in fact, more in the nature of hotels than huts. The inclusive cost in a hut need not be more than 10s. sterling per day, but costs are rising.

The entrance fees to the various sections of the Swiss Alpine Club differ. Some sections have no entrance fee. In others it goes as high as 16s. 8d. The annual subscription also varies from about £2. 10s. to £3. 3s. The nightly charge in a Swiss hut is 1 Swiss franc to members and 3 francs to non-members.

The entrance fee to the French Alpine Club is only a few shillings and the annual subscription about £1 at the present rate of exchange. In French huts the charge is 70 francs to members and 200 francs to non-members.

In French and Swiss huts there is also a charge for firewood used by the guardian for cooking the climber's own food, and in France (and certain Swiss huts, especially in the Engadine) the hut-keeper will supply soup, food, wine, etc. It will be found that these are expensive. To save expense many local people bring their own spirit or primus cookers and do their own cooking. There is reciprocity between the French and Swiss Alpine Clubs.

To become a member of any of these clubs it is necessary to be proposed and seconded by members. This should not, however, present much difficulty to members of the S.M.C.

ROCK CLIMBING IN THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS.

A Review.

By Frank Cunningham.

THE purpose of this article is to relate more recent material to the 1936 edition of the " Northern Highlands Guide " as far as concerns rock-climbing, and especially those routes which have not been described in the *Journal*. Since the Northern climbs are but rarely repeated, classification is not easy, but an estimate has been made wherever possible.

When all the agreed difficulties of distance, transport and accommodation are allowed for, it is most remarkable how few climbs have, so far, been made. In common with most British climbing grounds, the earliest date from the late nineteenth century: the first in our area were on Suilven and Liathach in 1892 and 1893 respectively. It is significant that, since then, there have been only ninety-three recorded routes as compared with 211 in the restricted area of Glencoe. Though the leaders of these have included some of the foremost Scottish mountaineers, few have given more than sporadic attention to our area. Prior to the First World War, Glover and Ling, in particular, contributed outstandingly to the discovery of new routes. Perhaps the extent of their activity accounts to some degree for the hiatus which followed, for there was evidently no new route made in the whole of the twenties. The thirties saw some revival, and the aftermath of the recent war has seen a further increase in interest, if judged by the number of new climbs, but these are mainly the work of a mere handful. The overall picture, which must be emphasised, is a neglect of splendid opportunities, largely due to misapprehension. For this north-western area probably includes more rock than any comparable extent of Britain, *and much of it is far better than is frequently given out*. There are large-scale problems in abundance as yet untouched. The

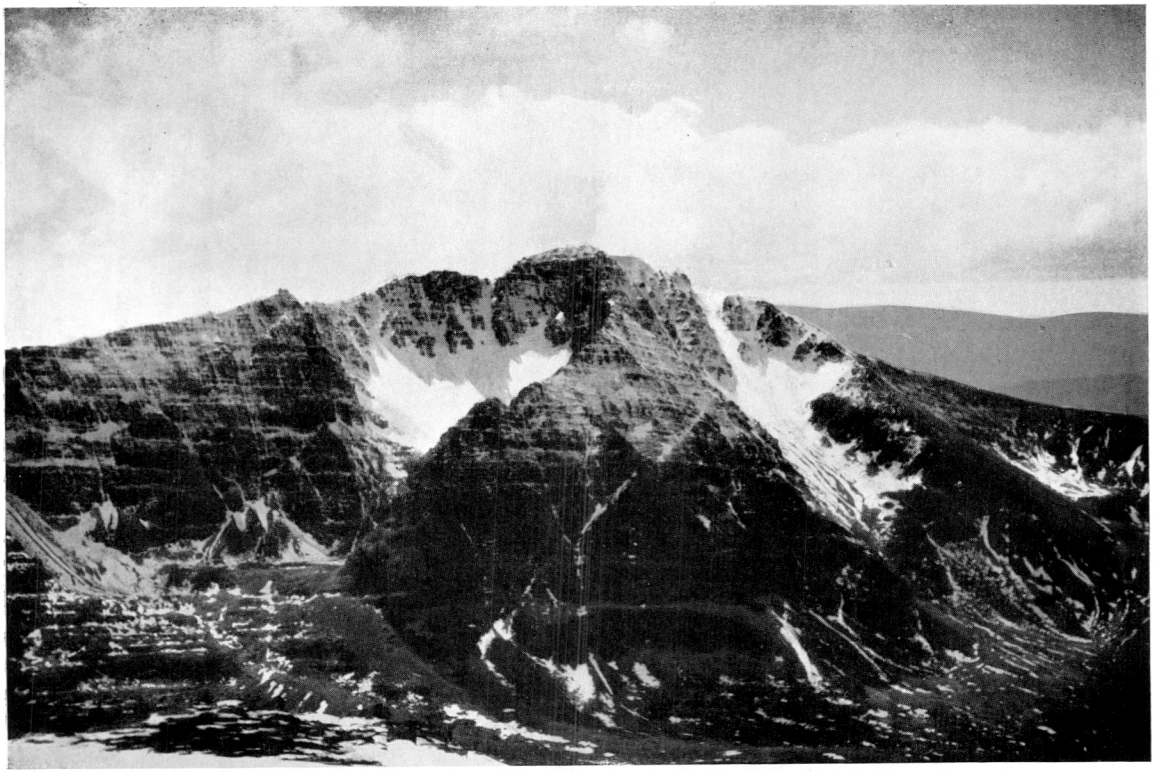
point is amply made if the reader will look, for example, at the description of Ben Lair in the 1936 Guide (p. 40), and then reflect that even this blatant challenge has never been taken up!

Applecross Group.

The two spurs of BEINN BHAN which enclose Coire na Poite are alike in that, above a col or series of cols at mid-height, they have steep arêtes. That of A' Poite is the less continuously steep, but has two *difficult* steps and was first climbed by A. Parker in July 1949. The *North Buttress* of A' CHIOCH which descends towards the lower lochan of Coire na Poite was climbed in July 1950 by S. Paterson and D. J. Bennet by a route which starts near the foot of a prominent chockstone gully (cairn) bounding the buttress on its left. This 500-foot route trends rightward over the usual Torridonian alternation of walls and terraces to A' Chioch top, and is of *mild-severe* standard. A more central route (to the right) looks more attractive and would be harder. SGURR A' CHAORACHAIN has received a little attention. Dr Bell (*S.M.C.J.*, 24, 131) describes a second variation start to the original climb (reaching the junction of the two previous routes directly from below) and an abandoned reconnaissance of the right profile. A. Parker has also been turned back here after getting beyond the half-way notch, well round the corner from Dr Bell's impasse. The gully on the north flank which comes to the col (*i.e.*, corresponds to Collie's on south side) was climbed in its lower reaches by J. Young and D. Cannon in 1950, but it was necessary to use a parallel gully to the right near the top.

Achnashellach Group.

The long buttress of SGORR RUADH, immediately south of the couloir across which it faces Raeburn's Buttress, was climbed in June 1948 by members of the Inverness Royal Academy Climbing Club. Apart from the lowest rocks, climbing is concentrated in the upper



April 1935

P. J. H. Unna

MULLACH AN RATHAIN (LIATHACH): Looking 220 degrees from top of Sàil Mhòr

section where the buttress narrows. At two-thirds of its height, just after negotiating a large detached block, is a pronounced gap (head of a branch from Robertson's Gully), and the climb continues right to the summit plateau. It has been named Academy Ridge. Standard—*difficult*. A number of attempts on the sensational Mainreachan Buttress of FUAR THOLL (commented on by Raeburn in 1904) have not found the solution. Apart from details in the existing Guide, the east face of *Beinn Damh* has been remarked on as deserving attention. Ludwig's climb (*S.M.C.J.*, 20, 215) is considered severe. A cairn has been built at its foot.

Torridon Group.

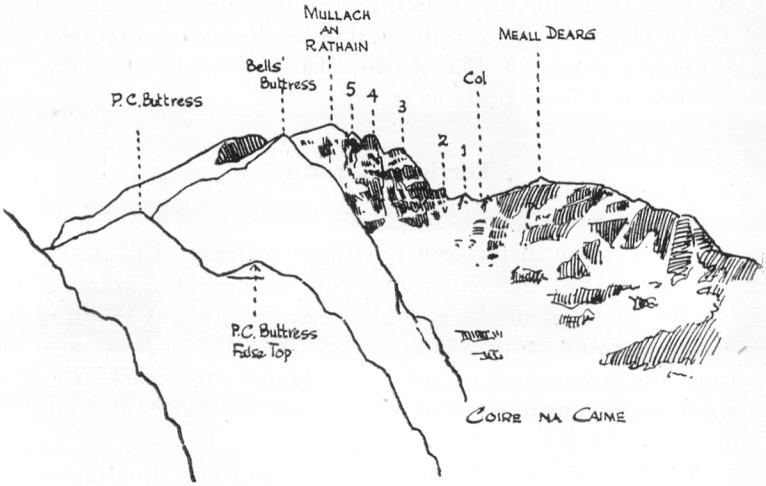
Liathach and Beinn Eighe are the lions of the district and have come in for continued exploration. LIATHACH has several additional routes of considerable variety. On the east end of the easterly peak Pigott and Wilding made a route approximately on the skyline, as seen from the lower part of the Coire Dubh Mor track, *i.e.*, right of the large area of slab below the original route here (*S.M.C.J.*, 5, 263).

This climb is very suitable as a traverse beginning and consists of two distinct portions, the lower on a complex shield of rock where the degree of difficulty varies with the amount of traversing, the upper a steep wall which contains a number of possible chimneys. Standard—*difficult* (at least).

Pigott's route looks like an arête from the lower section of the track, but is the edge of a considerable face, as is apparent from the stepping stones. The upper one-third of this face is a formidable wall which has been climbed in two places, first by a central line of chimneys (vegetation-crowned block at foot of first chimney) and, secondly, by a series of right-leading steps near the upper half of Pigott's route. The second is *difficult* and the first *very difficult* (F. F. and A. B. Cunningham, August 1949). There are ledges of considerable and unexpected breadth in this face, but the outward slope of the holds

and sunless aspect make any routes here harder than they look. Some of the walls look hard enough.

Pigott and Wilding (reference not known) also recorded routes on the north and south ridges of the main top (Spidean), the former an interesting scramble with some climbing of *moderate* standard for the purist. The latter is really a buttress, of some 400 feet, appearing from the Torridon road to support the summit,



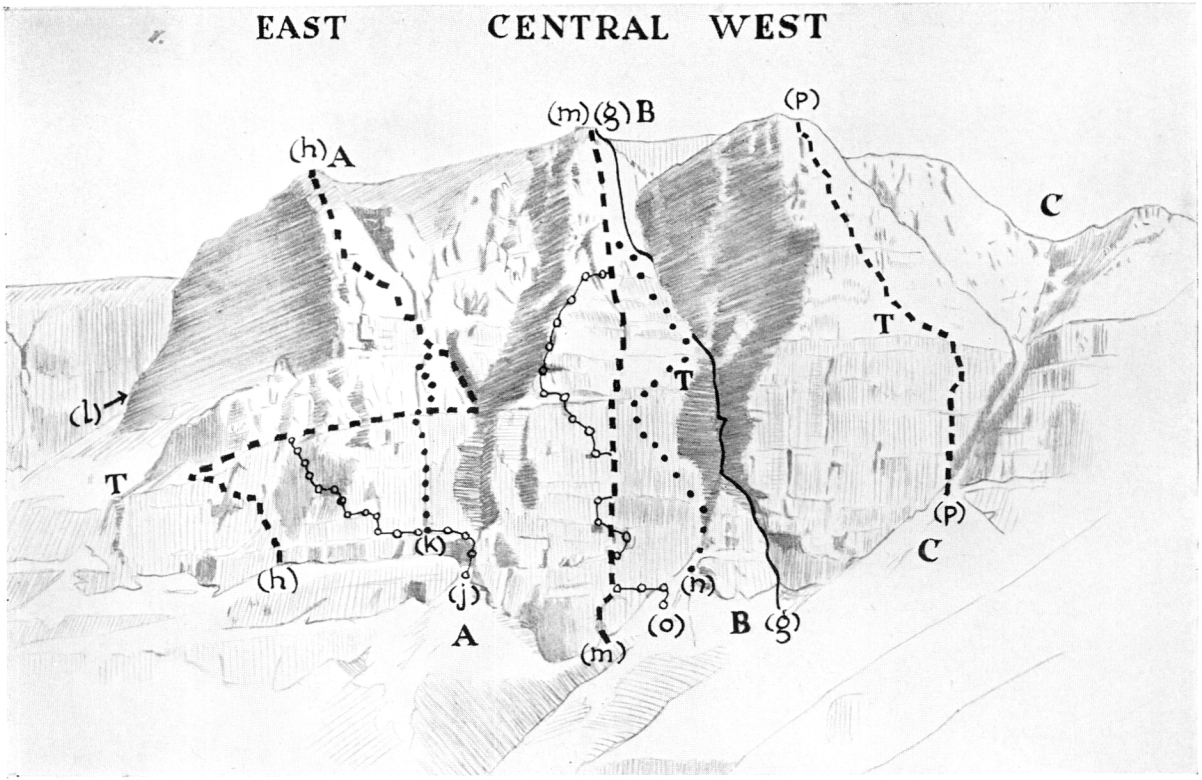
LIATHACH: MULLACH AN RATHAIN FROM AM FASARINEN.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are the Northern Pinnacles.

The route on Bell's Buttress is round the right profile shown and is not visible from this viewpoint. That on P.C. Buttress is approximately the right profile indicated.

and allows considerable variety of approach. The route taken (in descent) was apparently central and difficult. Tom Weir has made an unsuccessful winter attempt. This south buttress is very broken up on close acquaintance.

In Coire na Caime two new routes appear. Dr Bell has a splendid route on the right of the fluted buttress which faces Meall Dearg—now designated *Bell's Buttress —severe* (*S.M.C.J.*, 24, 130). The ribs left (east) of the first route are even steeper. *P. C. Buttress* is the next main feature of the corrie wall eastward. This looks imposing from below, but the lower five terraces are



F. F. Cunningham

BEINN EIGHE, TRIPLE BUTTRESS, COIRE MHIC FHEARCHAIR

A, B, C, Gullies (East-central, West-central, easy); T T T, Broad Terrace

l, Far East Gully; *h*, East Buttress, Original Route; *k*, Variation; *m*, Central Buttress, Original Route; *o*, Parker's Variation; *n*, Hamilton's Variation; *p*, West Buttress, Original Route

broken up by easy ledges. In the upper section, however, it steepens considerably, and the route lies to the right of centre up a precipitous tower (some loose rock) to a false top, beyond which scrambling leads to the main ridge—*difficult* (F. F. and A. B. Cunningham, August 1949).

Liathach has a lot to offer "first climbers." Several of the Fasarinen have big north cliffs; the corrie north-east of Spidean is everywhere steep, and there is a delightful exposure of rock at the head of Coire Dubh Beg.

BEINN EIGHE is, of course, mainly Coire Mhic Fhearchair, the only other promising locality being the cliffs on the east slope of Ruadh Stac Mor. *The Triple Buttress of Coire Mhic Fhearchair* is, without any doubt, in the very highest class. Its *East Buttress* has inadvertently received a lot of attention and the lower sandstone approach has been almost variationed out of existence. All these routes are *difficult* or *very difficult*, and it is suggested that the most useful is that which follows the narrow gully 30 yards left (E.) of East-Central Gully. There is a small cairn at the foot, and after an initial awkward scoop an unmistakable crack or chimney continues to the quartzite at a point whence the original East Buttress route is easily reached by traversing right to East Central Gully, or alternatively the block directly above can be climbed on small holds. The splendid quartzite wall on the east flank of East Buttress has one route on its extreme left. This is a straightforward, wide, 200-foot chimney with good holds, mainly vertical slices, where, in the upper section, it is necessary to traverse right, because of an overhang, to join a series of massive blocks. (Far East Gully—*difficult*.)

Central Buttress has two variations, if routes of their length and complexity (approximately 1,000 feet) can be so described. Hamilton's is mainly right of Pigott's; Parker's is left; all three probably coincide in the uppermost steep front of quartzite. I have followed up all three as nearly as possible, with the help, in the case of Parker's, of a minutely detailed photographic enlargement. Hamilton's variation does not get the best out

of the lower sandstone half of the Buttress and is distinctly hard on the quartzite when near West Central Gully. Parker's is the obvious route on the sandstone as seen from that gully, in essentials an alternation of ledge and pitch leading leftward continuously. Its quartzite section, apart from the final lift, is easier. All three routes are probably of the *mild-severe* order.

The history of *West Buttress* is as brief as it is significant. The original route is definitely severe on the sandstone; the lower quartzite is a good deal easier and leads, by two scree basins separated by steep walls, to the splendid final tower. The slab on its face, the "Door," is negotiated on its right to the final crack above its apex. A more direct route is desirable and should be of very high standard.

The Triple Buttress literally reeks with unaccepted opportunities for magnificent climbs, whether judged by length, difficulty or scenery.*

The east face of *Sàil Mhòr* is a typical Torridonian cliff, apparently all cliff from below, all grass from above, but is undeniably an impressive, worthwhile face. The three main gullies—Morrison's or No. 1 on the north (*easy*), Nos. 2 and 3 descending into Loch Coire Mhic Fhearchair—enclose two fine buttresses. That between Nos. 1 and 2 was reached from No. 2 above its third tier in the 1899 route (*S.M.C.J.*, 5, 264—*moderate*), and its upper portion gives an interesting climb. The three lowest tiers are steep, and the first bristles with overhangs. No. 2 gully is unclimbed in its upper half and lifts up in a precipitous multiple gully. The buttress between Nos. 2 and 3 gullies is the largest feature of the mountain and has plenty of steep rock. No. 3 gully is easy, but has also been reached by a subsidiary which has a difficult last 100 feet (*S.M.C.J.*, 11, 161).

The rampart of cliff east of East Buttress (Triple Buttress) is exceedingly steep and would repay investigation.

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* References to the above routes appear on the diagram, but routes *j* and *g* are not mentioned.

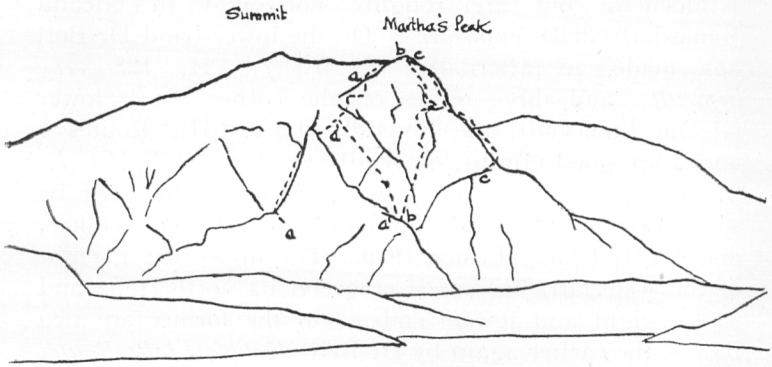
Loch Maree—Loch Broom.

This is at once one of the finest and least accessible areas of the country, and its undoubted possibilities for rock-climbing have met with little response. BEINN A' MHUINIDH, the most conveniently situated of the group, abounds in possible short climbs on good rock which can be reached within an hour of Kinlochewe Hotel (whence most of the rocks are visible). The rocks are disposed in two parallel bands which dip down towards Kinlochewe but are roughly horizontal in Gleann Banasdail (strike exposure). On the lower band Dr Bell has made an alternative (*S.M.C.J.*, 24, 128—*very difficult*), and three routes on the corner above lower Gleann Banasdail, the Bonaidh Donn. His Routes 1 and 2 are good climbs, especially the former (*S.M.C.J.*, 24; 129, 130—both *very difficult*); his third must be somewhere near the earliest climb here by C. W. Walker, and Inglis Clark, Easter 1910. The upper band, right of the waterfall, has small crags on its north (left) and south (right and lower) ends. On the former are two routes, the earlier again by Dr Bell (*Double Flake Route*, *S.M.C.J.*, 24, 129), is in the centre; the second is to the left—small cairn, yellow blaze on rocks, and is an entrenched gully which wanders rightward for 150 feet (*Zigzag Gully—difficult*; *S.M.C.J.*, 24, 239, F. F. and A. B. Cunningham, August 1949). The south crag has red and yellow stained walls about 100 feet high, and is the nearest rock to Kinlochewe. Other localities worth attention are immediately left of Dr Bell's *Route* 1, the untouched buttresses near the head of Gleann Banasdail, and the right side of the waterfall when dry.

SLIOCH, splendid mountain though it is, has little to offer the rock climber except the Stepped Ridge (*very difficult*, without digressions of original ascent) which, however, is well worth the trek involved. The Main Buttress on its right, so dubbed by the pioneers of the Stepped Ridge, was climbed in August 1949 (F. F. and A. B. Cunningham, *S.M.C.J.*, 24, 239). The first 100 feet is difficult, but above there is only interesting scrambling.

BEN LAIR, remarkably, is still *terra incognita*. Beinn Airidh Charr has no new routes, but the existing ones may be better located from the accompanying diagram which accords with the 1936 Guide photograph. Philip's variation, not mentioned in Guide, is detailed in *S.M.C.J.*, 20, 444. The 1910 route is considered *difficult*. A climb involving all three tiers of rock seems to be desirable on this face.*

On the line of mountains parallel to the sub-group just noted, viz., *Beinn a' Chàisgean Mor*, *A' Mhaighdean*



BEINN AIRIDH CHARR.

a, Glover's Route *b*, Ling's Route. *c*, Walker's Route. *a*¹, Philip's Route.

Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair, one new climb is recorded. Apart from the possibilities observed in the Guide there is apparently a fine gully of Clachaig proportions on the N.N.E. flank of *Beinn a Chlaidheimh*.

A' MHAIGHDEAN; Pillar Buttress, *very difficult*, June 1950, by Dr and Mrs J. H. B. Bell. This rises for 300 feet to a point close to the summit and projects in two masses towards Ben Lair. The climb is on the left of these and starts (cairn) with 80 feet moderate rock, then some more difficult short walls to the crux (150 feet up). A very steep slab just right of the centre of the buttress is climbed by two parallel cracks (*very*

* J. H. B. Bell, J. F. A. Burt and M. Matheson, Easter 1928, made a route here nearly on line of Philip's route for two tiers, but across to right on final tier and straight to Martha's Peak.



June 1950

GORM LOCH MOR AND BEN LAIR
Looking south from summit of A' Mhaighdean

W. S. Thomson

difficult). Above this is a grass ledge which appears to run right across the buttress at mid-height, and here is an old cairn. There follows 35 feet of easy rocks, a difficult crack and 20 feet of very difficult slab leading to an impasse which involved an awkward right traverse to the final pitch. This is a huge crack full of chockstones. The rock throughout is gneiss. Time, 65 minutes (fast, no halts). It is likely that the route by P. D. Baird (*S.M.C.J.*, 20, 90) may coincide with the upper part of this route above the old, moss-covered cairn; but the account is somewhat difficult to follow on the spot.

BEINN DEARG MHOR has a new winter route (Coire nan Clach, Central Gully—*difficult*) but is otherwise neglected. This follows the gully bounding the main Central Buttress (Glover's route, *S.M.C.J.*, 10, 3) on its right. Central Gully forks at mid-height, and the left fork taken has a difficult chockstone pitch just above this bifurcation (communication from J. Gibbons of University College, London, Mountaineering Club).

AN TEALLACH continues to excite more admiration for its scenery than its rock, though there are a number of new routes. The very helpful article by E. C. Pyatt (*S.M.C.J.*, 23, 309) brings An Teallach routes almost up to date. It is reasonable to assume that Sulphur Gully and the route taken by Mills and Gibson (*S.M.C.J.*, 23, 312) are the same, and to retain the name. The Ghuibsachan quartzite scarp on which the brothers Grant and Haining made two *severe* routes (*S.M.C.J.*, 23, 314) is a very accessible cliff, and while those climbs recorded are difficult to find, very similar routes may be made in almost infinite numbers. The rock is very reliable (there are no screes at the foot), but boots are not recommended, as the surface has little friction and holds are very small.

Corrag Bhuidhe South Buttress (changed from Corrag Bhuidhe Buttress as there is an unclimbed buttress to that peak which merits the name) is noted in the 1936 Guide as *difficult*. It can be *very difficult* if the minimum divergence is made, which means mounting the water-worn rocks directly from the loch, and negotiating a

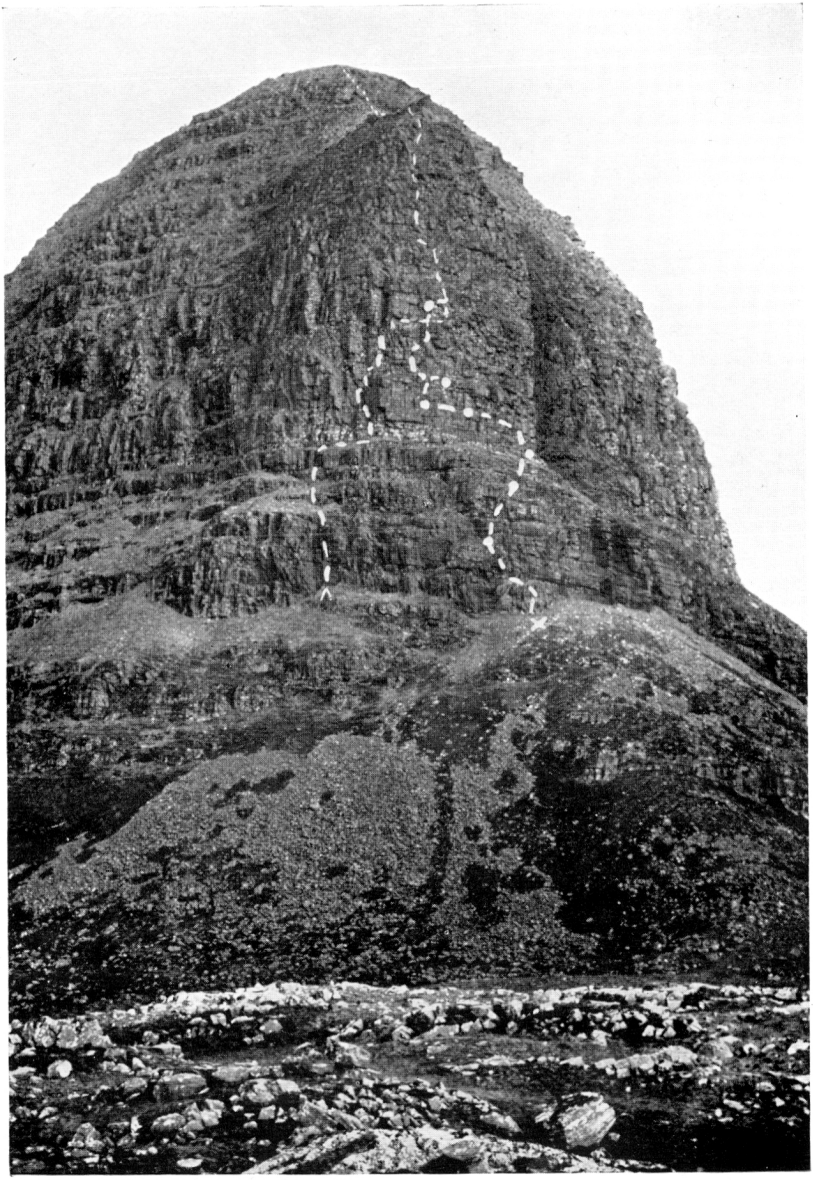
stretch of some 80 feet at three-quarter height, which is short of anchorages.

The crag just below the Sgùrr Fiona-Bidein a' Ghlas Thuill bealach (Fiona North Crag—*very difficult*; *S.M.C.J.*, 24, 239, F. F. Cunningham) was climbed in October 1948. The route is up the 200-foot corner of the buttress, which from below looks vertical and is steep. The first half is just left of the angle and involves negotiating a troublesome beak 40 feet above the screes. A right traverse is then made round the corner, and the route continued by a line of shallow chimneys and angles (see B. H. Humble's photograph, *S.M.C.J.*, 23, 309; nearest crag is Fiona North Crag).

The Far North.

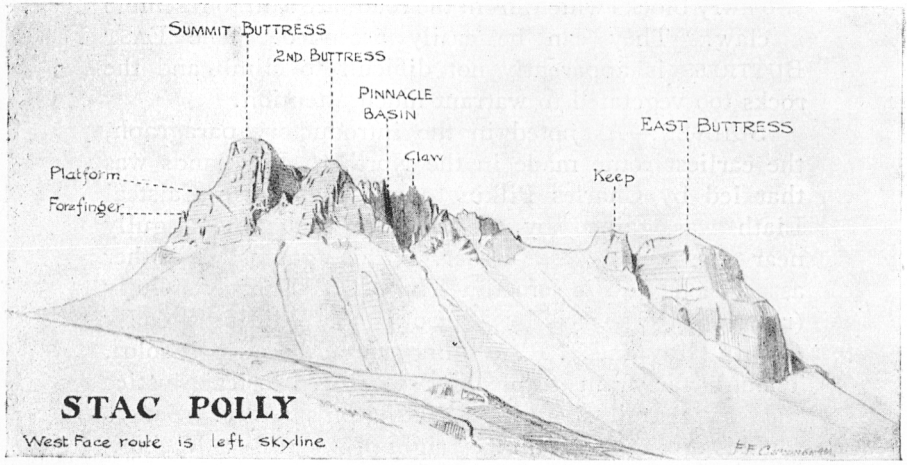
The area from Loch Broom northwards is even more remote than those previously considered and the new climbs correspondingly fewer. Indeed, it appears that only on Suilven, Stack Polly and Foinaven are there any recent ones at all! Two further attempts have been made by A. Parker and S. Paterson in 1949 and 1950 to finish the SGÙRR AN FHIDHLEIR nose climb, but after five hours' climbing had been taken to reach Baird's highest (*S.M.C.J.*, 20, 83) it was necessary to descend the set of slabs there and to traverse away to the right along a terrace. Parker considers that the unclimbed uppermost section will be very severe. It is of interest that, although Baird's description is quoted in the 1936 Guide, Ling himself (with Sang) reached a similar point previously (*S.M.C.J.*, 13, 169) and traversed along the same ledge as the 1949-50 party—not that used by Baird, which is slightly higher and less inviting.

STACK POLLY.—The West or Summit Buttress has occupied almost all the attention given to this remarkable mountain, and there seem to be a large number of routes off or about the left profile, as seen from the road. Several parties have climbed more or less directly up from the Platform above the prominent rectangular pinnacle, the Forefinger, and all have encountered in the upper reaches



SUILVEN, CAISTEAL LIATH
Gray's Route to left; Parker's on right

an awkward crack (*difficult*), variously dealt with by combined tactics, artificial chockstones, jammed handholds, but which can be overcome without such. Any route near the crest is steep and short of anchors. The Platform can be reached from below by a slab immediately to the right of the Forefinger or by an easy route starting farther right. A direct route over the Forefinger remains to be done. The earliest routes here were slightly off



the true crest, H. Walker's original in 1906 (*S.M.C.J.*, 9, 185) starting 50 feet left of the Forefinger, Solly's further left still (*S.M.C.J.*, 10, 179), Collie's to the right (*S.M.C.J.*, 9, 190—very rough sketch and no details). The south face of the buttress is steep, and it is possible to encounter very difficult pitches. There is an interesting straight gully on the extreme right of this face which gives a direct and difficult climb. The east face is the finest exposure on the mountain, but is as yet untouched.

Of the ribs on the north side, the most westerly (1st Rib Route—A. Slack, P. McGeoch, *S.M.C.J.*, 23, 111) provides an alternative climb to the summit. The lower double section of rib is taken on the right, then the crack between is followed. In the last 50 feet the rib merges into the face (*difficult*).

The 2nd Buttress is less absorbing, though an interesting route can be made up its south-east angle (*difficult*). East of this is a basin containing some of Stack Polly's finest pinnacles. Three of these have remarkable resemblance to the Sphinx, Tam o' Shanter, and Madonna and Child. The first two can be ascended with care, and there are plenty of nail marks, but the third is a formidable and unpromising shaft. The subsidiary ridge just east of the Pinnacles is capped by two awry blocks which, from the road, are said to resemble a claw. They can be easily ascended. The EAST BUTTRESS is apparently not difficult to climb and the rocks too vegetated to warrant much attention.

SUILVEN.—As noted in the introductory paragraph, the earliest route made in the Northern Highlands was that led by Charles Pilkington in 1892 when Caisteal Liath was gained by the awkward vegetatious gully near the south-west corner. This gully has other associations and is sometimes known as Ramsay's Gully (referred to as such by Raeburn), or Wilding's Gully (Robin Gray and J. R. Wilding each descended it solo). Though far from a pleasant place, historical justice suggests that it should be Pilkington's Gully. Sang's route is up the deep chimney right of the gully; Raeburn started on its left but crossed over. The best routes on Suilven are on the forbidding west face. A central route was made solo by Robin Gray (*Rucksack Club Journal*, viii, 46) in 1935 up a series of narrow grooves, and, while it was impossible to traverse much in the lower reaches, Gray avoided some of the upper difficulties which might be faced directly by a party. The route is still *very difficult*. A more difficult route right of this was made in 1947 by A. Parker and S. Paterson (Portcullis Route—has been ascended at least once since: standard, *severe* or perhaps *very severe* at crux). This starts near Pilkington's (?) Gully, and its formidable section is 200 feet up where a precarious traverse is made leftward on to the main West Face, followed by a severe vertical pitch.

Creag Dionard, Foinaven.

A. Parker and J. E. Young did a climb on the right-centre of the crag on 6th July 1950. The main feature of the route was a wide slabby shelf, slanting up the face from left to right at an easy angle. This is well seen in the photograph facing page 85 in the old "Northern Highlands" Guide—the right-hand waterfall impinges on the lower section of the slabs and drains off lower down in a second fall. A loose 30-foot chimney, above and to the left of the lower fall, was climbed to a shelf of heather and ash trees which led in 200 feet to the bottom of the slabs. These were followed without difficulty (250 feet). Above the slabs, a traverse to the right was made on shattered rock, until the angle eased and it was possible to climb up to a grassy rake which led to the top of the crag. Standard—*moderate*.

Easter Ross.

This implies the large area bounded by the roads from Ullapool to Kyle of Sutherland on the north and to Dingwall on the south. Although this includes by far the most extensive area of high ground in the Northern Highlands, it is not rock-climbers' country.

BEN WYVIS has a series of rock outcrops in Coire Feola and Coire Mor. On the west flank of the latter are four spurs, on the second of which (counting from corrie entrance, *i.e.*, south to north) is the largest exposure of the group. This is subdivided by an easy gully, Fox Gully, and a route has been made which incorporates the rocks on either flank (Double Route—*difficult*, F. F. Cunningham, September 1949). The start is on the right of the left section, where the rock is cleanest, up a large slab reached from between two flanking blocks. The slab has a turf-filled crack on each side. Near the top the edge of the right crack is used to pass an overhanging shelf. Here the difficulties are over, and a traverse is made across Fox Gully which is descended to the base of the right-hand buttress: this is easy.

The Coire Ghrannda cliffs of BEINN DEARG were originally climbed by Sang's party (*S.M.C.J.*, 12, 217—no details), and a *severe* climb was made in June 1946 by Dr and Mrs J. H. B. Bell, the full description of which (*S.M.C.J.*, 24, 127) gives a clear idea of what to expect here. The north flank of Beinn Dearg above upper Glen Lael deserves attention. The summit ridge of nearby Cona Mheall is an interesting scramble at its southern end. Drs Walker and Hendry made a climb on the Coire Ghrannda face of this end, following a prominent gully and then moving right to the most promising buttress (*moderate*).

There are no new climbs on the Fannichs. Barrel Buttress of Quinag is classified *very difficult*.

HILL CROSSING TO HARRIS.

By J. McCallum Young.

WITNESS a windy Sabbath morning at Uig, Isle of Lewis, and our share of it, a tantalising window view of hills and sky, green, blue, and white, like the traditional Dutchman's trousers, stealing to our ears through interminable Gaelic phrases, the boom of Atlantic surge over from the Gallan Head. Full of virtue, we've been attending the Free Presbyterian service at the hall perched on the lower slope of Mealasval; and now, in deference to us, the spate of that ancient language has abated and in King Jamie's idiom comes the closing prayer, "May these strangers, whatever their business in our midst, be watched and warded. Yea, even as at the last day they shall come from the north and the south, the east and the west, and many there be of the Mainlanders that will enter the Kingdom but some of the Islanders will be left out."

The Breidhnis folk in the congregation might well have retorted that, at the best of times, they had that feeling already of isolation and abandonment! As for ourselves, a strict Calvinist would have taken a dim view

of our business, whatever justification or sanctification the hills might bestow upon our idling.

However, as the " mainlanders " the next day crossed the last of the common grazing and struck up towards Cracaval, it was apparent that in hill-scrambling at least, the Outer Isles provided something different. To the west, beyond the line of cliffs a mile away, was the grey flecked sea, only broken to the north-west by the huddled group of Flannan Isles. Vegetation at a fairly low level became sub-arctic. In place of the greenery of fern and bracken, crumbling detritus and a scant sprinkling of grass began the ascent. Here there was no steamy valley nor stands of birch and fir to reconnoitre before a viewpoint was gained. At about 700 feet the hoary gneiss obtruded to provide smooth, rounded " plating " for the tops. A wet sea-mist deprived us at the summit of even a shadowy indication of St Kilda's whereabouts and, turning south, we made over the two Liavals to the narrow bealach that cuts so deeply into Griomaval as to form a most impressive wall of rock over 700 feet high.

Beside the lochan we were glad to avail ourselves of what is locally known as Magnus MacLennan's path where it squeezes itself between the water and the great boulders ; reminiscent this of the Cairngorm terrain. Much time was saved by following a long string of little cairns that looked, at a distance, like limpets stuck on the gneiss causeway. Murdo, the pathmaker, we were able to thank outside his croft at Airdveg that same night ; a lobster-fisher who had blazed this stony trail for upwards of 7 miles. The old man was very modest. He had done it in his youth as an access track when his only other line of communication, down Loch Thamanavay by boat, was cut off by sou'west gales. His family and the keeper's at the lochhead are the only natives of this desolate promontory. Any complaints we might have harboured about carrying three days' rations, plus our gear, about 60 lb., faded out at Magnus' casual mention of the bags of meal and potatoes he had manhandled over this same route, down the Alt Ruadh and the soggy circuit of Loch Thamanavay to his own door.

As we stretched the damp canvas of our bivouac in the lee of Airdveg's solitary thorn tree, cheery voices rang out from the old thatched cottage. These proved to be some of our Uig friends with a full day's crotal gathering behind them. Between Mealasval and over the Bealach na Raonasgail a curious summer harvest is won from the old Lewisian gneiss. Lichen (Gaelic : *crotal*) grows in silvery, wrinkled rosettes on a multitude of boulders. A handful at most is what each sizeable rock can yield ; but the crotal gatherers prospect for it assiduously, and who knows how much hill climbing and route-finding they put into the business. So the Uig party, a mother and two of her active brood, had three bags of the flaky substance, which would soon be seething along with sheep-wool in their Harris dyeing pot, 10 miles away.

Strong winds baulked us, at this point, of a quick and clean trip to the island of Scarp in the Airdveg coble. We had to accept the alternative, a diagonal route S.E. to a point half-way up Loch Resort, thence 3 miles to Crola, a croft at the lochhead within sight of our objective, the main Harris range. On the O.S. map it was merely a trudge, but to us on the spot a different proposition, since the sea's action and the bog had made a bewildering fretwork of coves, fresh-water holes and hidden slow-running streams. We had taken due heed of the stickiness of the trouble we might find there without local knowledge. Murdo, the crofter's son from Crola appeared, therefore, as our special *deus ex machina* to pilot us through the worst of the unmarked quagmire.

Dogging our guide's footsteps, as he took us at a fair pace on the far side of the Resort river, we began to wonder whether it was all a matter of excessive caution. Rannoch and Galloway were, after all, the places where the bottom really did fall out of the moor. Then it happened ! An area about 30 yards square of heather lurched and bobbed under our feet ; a trickle of bog-water showed at the edges. We were on a floating island of peat and heather root with, we estimated, 10 feet of black liquid below us. In the scramble to *terra firma*

Murdo's ready arm came into play, but not before one of us had slithered thigh-deep in the vicious stuff.

This involuntary plunge did more than make us wary of innocent-looking moorland: after it occurred, Murdo's tongue was loosened and he revealed himself as the possessor of some extraordinary native-born talents. Unspoiled by any dominie or school, he owed his early acquaintance with the alphabet to his sister. By the peat fire he had handled and obviously enjoyed Scott and even Carlyle. Browning he quoted to us with the respect due to a major prophet. All this love of learning literally transformed his face and we could scarcely credit that his life was divided between the lobster creels, the croft and the Morsgail post run. The few geologists and climbers who, from time to time, had made a contribution of chosen volumes to their friend Murdo's tiny library, must have been proud of the result.

South of Loch Voshimid we bade farewell to our scholar fisherman and set our feet on the "made" road that started at the hut by the S.W. end of the little loch. Three miles farther on we had a close-up view of the second of the great Harris Srons, the 1,608 feet, black Sron Scourst, seamed with gullies and set off by a striking overhang halfway up. The grazing sheep we noted on an adjoining ledge may have had gold in their teeth, as the seventeenth-century traveller, Martin, averred was a mark of the proper Harris variety; we never certainly got near enough to see!

Our last day on these hills we devoted to the straightforward ridges of Ullaval and Oreval. The weather was kind and the prospect for once a bonny one. Down over by the Clisham, faint trails of smoke marked where weavers were busy and whitish streaks on the heather showed their tweeds out drying in the sun. In the entrancing framework of Ben Luskentyre across Loch Tarbert, cloud-shadowed white sands lined the Taransay beaches.

Yes, treeless and wide open to the four winds, this land of Tormod and Torquil most certainly is, but the Viking-named little peaks in it are worth a second visit!

NATIONAL PARKS IN SCOTLAND—ANOTHER VIEW.

By John G. Osborne.

AN article, "National Parks in Scotland," in the last issue of this *Journal*, may lead readers to believe that the views expressed therein are generally held.

It appears that the author was then advocating, almost three years after the publication of the White Paper, that the National Parks Commission, when it is formed, should have powers to curb the operations of the Hydro-Electric Board, to control the Forestry Commission and to advise the Board of Agriculture. In other words, that a National Parks Commission should be in reality a Scottish Parliament. Perhaps even a dictatorship is implied, a dictatorship by someone whose guiding motives are to be no export of electricity to England (though it may not be used in Scotland if it means disfiguring a glen by industry), no expansion of forestry if it means altering the look of a valley or forcing an alternative route up a hill, and no expansion of sheep-farming which has been so profitable to Scotland over the past 150 years.

Just where are we to get the dictator, committee or board capable of this almost superhuman task if the present agencies—with presumably the best brains in the country available to them—have so signally failed in the eyes of this contributor? Certainly, the examples of this sort of board that we have had up to date, whether dealing with coal, transport, electricity or groundnuts, do not leave us with any ground for confidence.

To anyone genuinely interested in the regeneration of the Highlands, surely, if mistakes are being made in administration, the obvious way is to bring them to the notice of the local member of Parliament, the department concerned, or if they will not listen to an individual, then to one of the many societies who keep a watchful eye on all that pertains to the Highlands. But to try to influence

public opinion in such a way that a National Parks Commission (which is not yet set up and whose job it will be to create and administer National Parks) may be used to redress all the wrongs, real or imagined, of the Highlands does appear to go far beyond its legitimate purpose.

I do not intend to enter into any controversy on the Highland problem nor discuss whether it is indeed desirable to repopulate the glens. The same eye which admires the blue peat-reek rising from the repeopled cottages may well view with horror a neon sign put up in front of a local cinema erected to bring the people back to the homes of their fathers. The public, already groaning under oppressive taxation, may, or may not take kindly to the additional taxes required for the provision of health, educational and recreational facilities in those remote areas, or the subsidies required to maintain a few more cattle on a few more acres of hill-land for a few more months of the year in competition with the enormous resources of New Zealand or the Argentine. Far too many Committees and Royal Commissions have already made reports which have led to no solution. But, if the subject is now to be tacked on to National Parks, then good-bye to National Parks as such, and to the benefits they were intended to bring both to those who use them and those who live in them.

Surely questions of agriculture should be left to the Board of Agriculture. Its resources are immense and it is spending more on research and co-operation in agriculture than in any other industry. Nor must we forget the private efforts that are being made to find out whether cattle-ranching can be a success in the Highlands. Incidentally, should that turn out profitable, do not let us deplore and deride the success of these people in the same way as has been done in the case of those who pioneered the way to sheep-farming and brought prosperity to many a barren part of Scotland.

The former article takes exception to paragraph 7 of the White Paper, which gives the definition of National Parks. This is worth repeating, as it is without doubt

the foundation stone on which any construction of a National Park in this country must be built.

> " A National Park is an extensive tract of country of outstanding natural beauty, preferably also of scientific, cultural, or historic interest, owned or controlled by the nation, accessible to all as a matter of right under suitable regulations, and administered by or on behalf of the nation, to the end that its distinctive values may be preserved unimpaired for the enjoyment of this and future generations."

This description is almost word for word the definition framed originally by the Scottish Council for National Parks which was set up in 1942 under the chairmanship of Lord Keith, and was representative of all those bodies, governing, administrative, economic, educational, and recreational, who were in any way interested in National Parks, also of private individuals similarly interested. It devoted much time to this definition, and many drafts were required before agreement was ultimately reached and accepted by all the bodies concerned. As it has been adopted in all the reports issued since then, it is now about eight years too late to attempt to have it altered, should that even be desirable.

The S.M.C. has been represented on this Council from its inception, first by myself and later by Ian G. Charleson. Over all this period the S.M.C. representative has been voted to its committee, with the exception of the one year in three when he is ineligible. Other mountaineering clubs in Scotland have since joined and been able to add their weight to " mountaineering " opinion. The original brief from the club committee was that we, as a club, had little or no interest in National Parks, whatever our feelings as individuals might be, and that, though we had nothing to gain by their inception, the interests of mountaineering should be safeguarded as far as possible. The fact that this has been done is apparent from a perusal of the various reports which have been made from time to time.

How is all this going to affect our Club's activities ? Hitherto there is no doubt that we have had every facility

that we required and have provided ourselves with those not "laid on" by nature. Therefore, we have nothing to gain, and all our care will have to be that the privileges which we at present enjoy may not be taken from us. Had Glencoe fallen into the hands of National Parks, fortunately not now possible, it might well be that a Commission would rule that, as there had been so many accidents there, it should be roped off; or that climbing could only be done under certain restrictions. It may also well be that certain cliffs might be designated bird sanctuaries and all climbing forbidden during the breeding season. In fact, restrictions and impediments of sorts are bound to follow; as clubs, voluntary organisations and individuals come more under "authority" in the form of government sponsored bodies. This may be inevitable, but it is deplorable.

To return, however, to my first point: my attitude may seem narrow to some, but surely it is the only one we can take up as a club. There will be as many theories regarding the possibilities of bringing back the human life to the Highlands as there are members in the Club. These theories can, and should, be furthered by agitation at those centres organised in a democracy to hear them, *e.g.*, through political parties, at City and County Council elections, through one's member of Parliament, County Agricultural Committees and the rest. But it cannot be our function as a club to endeavour to co-ordinate these varying opinions on outside aspects of the case which do not affect the Club.

It is clear that Scottish National Parks, their functions, control and policy, is an issue which may concern mountaineers deeply and on which there are diverse opinions within the Club. The appearance of articles by Messrs Dunn (1950) and Osborne (1951) in the *Journal* commits neither the Editor nor the Club to either viewpoint. They are signed articles and, as such, express opinions which the Editor believes likely to interest readers of the *Journal*. The Club Committee is responsible for policy. It is undesirable to print correspondence on such issues, because *Journal* space is extremely limited and moreover, any publication would be too long delayed to be useful. Any correspondence, therefore, with the object of influencing Club policy should be directed to the Hon. Secretary.—THE EDITOR.

MOUNTAIN BIRD-WATCHING.

By George Waterston.

"The ptarmigan and raven
Far aloft above our haven"

A DAY on the hills can always provide additional pleasure to one who is able to identify the various plants and animal life seen. The interests of climbing and the observation of nature are very closely allied.

Many well-known mountaineers have made valuable contributions to our knowledge of natural history. F. S. Smythe always kept a sharp look-out for interesting plants; Harold Raeburn's diaries are full of notes on birds; and Tom Longstaff—that veritable "Don Quixote of the High Tops"—has made many useful notes on the natural history of the various mountain ranges which he has visited. The writer was particularly delighted to hear the many references to birds seen in the Himalaya by members of the recent Scottish Expedition. The tradition is being worthily upheld.

Of all living creatures, birds are the most attractive; and it is perhaps not surprising that they form the most popular group in natural history study. Indeed, at no other time has the interest in birds been so great as it is to-day. Like climbing, it is a healthy outdoor hobby and takes one into the wildest and most unfrequented parts of the country.

The first problem is learning how to identify your birds. This should not be too difficult, as the number of species you are likely to meet with on the mountains is comparatively small. It is largely a matter of experience allied to enthusiasm. You do not require expensive equipment to study birds; all that is needed is a good pair of binoculars and a reliable identification book. For the beginner, I would recommend "The Observer's Book of British Birds" published by Warne & Co. The plates and descriptions in this handy, pocket-size book should provide you with all the information you want.

In the winter, bird-life above 2,000 feet is sparse. Our knowledge of birds wintering at high elevations is somewhat scanty; and this is where climbers can assist by noting the elevation at which any particular species is seen at this time of the year. Ptarmigan seem to be our most robust mountain species; and, apart from the odd raven, they are often the only one to be encountered above the snow-line. Dippers can often be seen at fairly high altitudes in the winter—up some of the mountain streams.

It is, of course, in the early summer that we find most of the birds on the high hills. The silence of the hills in winter gives place in the spring to the beautiful liquid trills of the curlew; the jocular "Go-bek, Go-bek, Go-bek" of the red grouse; and on the high moorlands, the quiet, yet far-carrying, plaintive "Arr-tee-you" of the golden plover—newly back from the coastal estuaries where it has spent the winter in big flocks.

In the Strath, on the way up to the hills, peewits will be indulging in their wild, tumbling courtship flights. Wheatears, newly arrived from their winter quarters in Africa, may be seen "flicking" along the dry-stane dykes—flirting their white rumps. From some copses of trees you will probably hear the "pink-pink" of chaffinches and the quiet song of a robin. In the pines you may come across small "pockets" of tits and goldcrests busily searching for food. In a bit of marshy ground a snipe calls "chip, chip" and redshanks circle round with drooping wings and yelping cries.

Leaving the Strath behind, we enter the Glen proper with its shallow, rocky mountain stream. Here we may glimpse a small black bird, about the size of a starling, with a white "bib," whirring ahead of us up the course of the stream—following every twist and turn of its course. This is the dipper, one of our most attractive birds. It is also one of our most versatile birds. It sings throughout the year, builds a most cosy, domed nest of moss (usually beside a waterfall); and it can swim and even walk below the surface of the water. When perched in mid-stream on a boulder, it has a very characteristic habit of bobbing its head every now and again.

Up on some screes in a rocky ravine we may suddenly hear a pleasant singing. We shall probably find that this is a ring ouzel, a member of the thrush family. It is a summer visitor to this country and looks like a large blackbird with a white crescent-shaped bib on its throat. Ring ouzels build their nests on the heathery banks of steep ravines running down into the glen.

On a rocky scaur up on the hillside comes the harsh "craa, craa" of a carrion crow. The carrion crow is black all over. In the West Highlands it is replaced by the hooded crow which has a black head and wings, but a grey back and underparts. Both species have increased greatly since the war owing to the dearth of gamekeepers. The raven is a bird that may well be met with on high, rugged cliffs. It is much larger than the crows and has a distinctive, deep, guttural croak. The raven, like the crows, is becoming more numerous—especially in the West Highlands and Islands.

The buzzard is another bird which is on the increase, particularly on the west coast. The beginner, in his enthusiasm, is often prone to confuse this bird with its larger congener, the golden eagle. Both birds have a habit of soaring in spirals. The buzzard can usually be distinguished by its mewing call; the eagle is normally a silent bird. An eagle looks much blacker than a buzzard and, where comparisons are possible, is very much the larger bird. Its nest is a large structure, usually built on a ledge of a crag not far from the tree limit. Contrary to the popular idea, eagles do not nest right at the tops of the highest mountains.

Up on the high plateaux the number of species begin to thin out. The ubiquitous meadow pipits, which range from the lower moorland grazings to the deer grass summits, may be still with us. Records of this species at high altitudes would provide useful data to ornithologists, provided information is also given about the type of vegetation. The skylarks do not reach so high as a rule; but here again, information would be of value. Red grouse range over most of the heather hills, but are replaced in the alpine zones by their near relative, the ptarmigan.

The ptarmigan is a most attractive bird and is very much tamer than the grouse, often permitting an approach to within a few feet. In summer plumage it is very inconspicuous on the ground, its grey feathers blending very well with the mosses and lichens. On the grey screes of Schiehallion it can be very easily missed! It has a very curious, reptilian "croak," and you can often hear this croak quite close at hand and yet not be able to spot the bird.

The high, marshy heather plateaux are the haunt of that most attractive hill bird the golden plover. In full breeding dress, in black and spangled gold, it is a very handsome bird. Its sad plaintive call note has a remarkable ventriloquial quality. The nest is not an easy one to find.

On certain high, flat-topped mountains above 3,000 feet, we may be fortunate enough to come across the dotterel, a bird which has suffered badly in the past from unscrupulous egg-collectors. It can be described as a rare species. At its nest it is tame and confiding.

Another rare bird of the high tops is the attractive snow bunting, a true Alpine species. It is a bird of the screes, and is usually to be found nesting only above the 3,000-foot level in this country. The snow bunting cannot be confused with any other species; the male, in his breeding dress of black and white, is a beautiful bird. If you see a bird which looks rather like a skylark, except for white patches on each wing, then it is pretty safe to say that it is a snow bunting.

There is one rare bird which I have not yet mentioned—the greenshank. This is a bird which nests on high moorlands in certain favoured localities. Its fine, clear, triple call is probably better known to bird-watchers in autumn on the coastal estuaries. Similar in many ways to the redshank, it can be distinguished by its white rump and distinctive call.

Mention may also be made of several other species which, although not typical hill species, may yet be encountered by the climber. In patches of birch scrub or alder you are almost sure to come across a delicate,

small, green warbler with a pleasant, sweet song of falling cadence—the willow warbler. This is probably our commonest summer warbler and has a very wide distribution, wherever there are trees or shrubs. The lesser redpoll is fond of alder and birch, and particularly of young plantations of spruce.

The woods of Rothiemurchus contain many interesting species which should be looked for when on trek for the Lairig Ghru. They range in size from the tiny goldcrest to the majestic capercaillie. Interesting species to be sought for here are the crested tit, crossbill, and siskin. On the Spey and around the shores of Loch Morlich you are almost certain to hear the call of the common sandpiper in summer, or see it making a half-circle along the shore in front of you on quickly shivering wings.

The duck family is represented more fully in winter than in summer, both in quantity and in quality.

On *dubh* lochans on high marshy moorlands, climbers should keep a weather eye open for the red-throated diver which may have its nest somewhere round the edge. Large, deep, peaty tarns are much beloved by this species.

One cannot, of course, close an article on hill birds without referring to the cuckoo which is often common far up the hill glens in summer, making its presence known by its monotonous call.

There is still much to be learned about the behaviour and movements of our hill birds. Movements of birds on migration should be noted; we would like to know more about routes taken through our mountain ranges by geese and other species. Then there is the interesting occurrence of considerable numbers of swifts each summer, hawking insects around the precipices on Lochnagar. It has been hinted that they may possibly nest in fissures of the rocks; but, knowing the movements of swifts and the distances they can fly in such a short time, I cannot help feeling that this is unlikely to be the case.

THE SHELTER STONE OF LOCH AVON

New Year, 1950-51.

By Richard Brown.

IT has been an ambition of mine to bring in the New Year at the Shelter Stone. Two years ago four of us fought our way through deep, soft snow to a point 2 miles from the Nethy Bothy, where we quarried snow blocks and stretched out ground-sheets over them. This improvised sleeping accommodation proved unsuitable. The space was cramped and bitterly cold, with clothes freezing to the walls. There seemed to be no future in sleeping in a refrigerator, so we made some soup, packed our gear and retreated to the Nethy Bothy where, after chipping the ice off the floor, we got down to sleep.

This time conditions were better. James Russell and I left the Ryvoan Bothy at 10.15 A.M. on 31st December. We met Donald McIntyre and Malcolm Slesser *en route*, on skis and making for Corrour by Cairn Gorm. The snow was soft, but we made good time and soon reached the Garbh Allt by Strath Nethy. After some hard work, at times waist-deep among the boulder field on the Cairngorm side of the Garbh Allt, we inclined down towards the line of the river and found the going a bit easier. Snow was beginning to fall and the wind had risen. We reached the Saddle between Bynack Mor and A' Choinneach and eased the heavy packs from our shoulders.

Loch A'an lay below us, or at least where the map said it ought to be. The loch was completely covered, and two figures stood near the end of it. We joined them and reached the Shelter Stone along the centre line of the loch on a footing of about 18 inches of hard snow over its frozen waters.

It was now nearly dark—5 P.M. The entrance to the Stone was sealed with snow, and we had to tunnel our way inside. We cleared just enough snow to get the sleeping bags down. After melting some snow for water we had a most excellent meal of a soup containing many

ingredients, including pemmican, followed by a chicken. The dinner was rounded off with a mixture of rum and coffee accompanied by cigars—a most fitting meal with which to honour this winter haven of mountaineers. Snow was falling heavily and the wind had died down. Our roof, which had thawed during cooking, had now refrozen, and no more drips of water found their way down our necks. We got into our sleeping bags, sang songs and recited poetry. A mouse peeped out to have a look at us. It may have been the warmth or the noise or both that woke him up. He toured around some articles of food. We gave him a free hand for a bit, as it was the season of goodwill.

The New Year was then ushered in with age-old ceremony and refreshment. We had a very comfortable night's sleep and, after breakfast, packed up our gear and went outside. Much snow had fallen during the night, and our surroundings were both weird and fantastic. The Shelter Stone Crag and Creag Etchachan were plastered with ice. Much ice was also evident on the slabs over which the Feithe Buidhe and Garbh Uisge run down to the loch. Heavy cornices, estimated as about 15 to 40 feet high, draped the tops of the gullies of Creag Etchachan and were on each side of Coire Raibert. They were, however, in no condition for climbing. We walked back again over the centre of Loch A'an, whilst snow fell continuously, and we regained Ryvoan Bothy as darkness was falling. We heard that our club-mates had not reached Corrour on their skis: they had brought in the New Year in Coire na Ciste of Cairn Gorm in a snow hole. An unforgettable evening, I am sure.

And so ends another year and one more begins. The fact that Loch A'an becomes frozen over completely and is hard enough to walk over is interesting. It must also be a trifle disconcerting for anyone without a knowledge of the topography of the Cairngorms who visits that area in bad weather and working by compass, to find nothing but a vast snowfield where the loch ought to be.

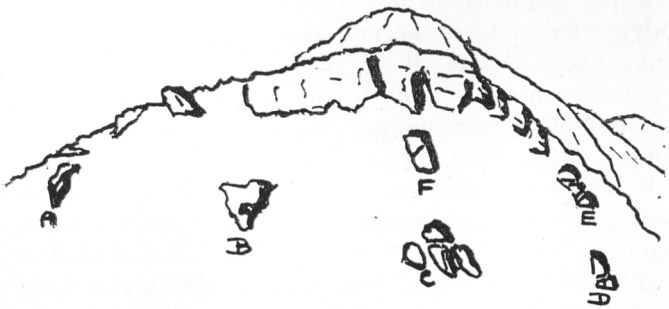
NEW CLIMBS.

THE ROCK PLAYGROUND OF LOCHABER.

By J. Ness.

THE Gorge of Glen Nevis has been hailed by many as one of the most wildly beautiful scenes in Scotland, and few mountaineers, on Mamore or Aonach bent, can have failed to revel in the magnificent rocky grandeur which confronts the eye at Poldubh.

Here Ben Nevis sweeps down in 1,000 feet to its southerly Carn Dearg, from whence it takes a second



THE POLDUBH CLIMBS; CARN DEARG ABOVE.

sweep of 2,000 feet to the final rugged projection above Glen Nevis. This projection we call Poldubh Crags.

In an area where the rock-climber's thoughts seldom stray far from the dominating north face of Nevis it is understandable that the Poldubh Crags remained, until 1945, just another commendable item in an impressive view. Closer inspection in that year, however, revealed that what appeared to be a multitude of insignificant outcrops were, by Lakeland standards, veritable buttresses bearing many a worthy route. In 1946 the first of the popular routes was pioneered and, by 1947, Poldubh was the summer evening rendezvous of the entire Lochaber mountaineering brotherhood. Facing south, the crags receive the summer sunshine until a late hour, while, with much of the rock almost gabbro-like in texture and abounding in short routes of every degree of severity,

this is indeed a mountain climbers' playground. From the bridge at the Lower Falls of the River Nevis the crags present a frontage along the northerly roadside for almost half a mile.

They provide ample scope for entertainment on an off-day from the high hills for climbers at Steall, Glen Nevis Hostel and Fort William. They have been particularly popular with the student climbers who frequent the area during the summer months. Owing to the highly intricate nature of the rock formations, a detailed sketch would complicate, rather than simplify, route-finding, and for this reason the positions are only roughly indicated. Nail scratches will identify the climbs. The bridge referred to is the one at the falls.

A. *Sheep Flank Wall* (200 feet, Difficult).—This commences almost opposite the bridge above scree, to the right of an overhanging base, by slab and crack and continues on a crest.

B. *Hangover Buttress* (200 feet, Severe).—This lies above large jumbled boulders about 200 yards along the road from the bridge. A large overhang is very prominent. Start on rib of lowest rock and continue to grassy ledge. Short wall is followed by traversing to right round an awkward corner directly above the overhang on minute balance holds.

C. *Cavalry Crack* (60 feet, Moderate).—This is to the left of the large, steep buttress with vertical crack (200 feet), about 400 yards along the road from bridge. It is rather vegetatious and was the result of an unsuccessful attempt to scale the long crack.

D. *Pinnacle Ridge* (150 feet, Very Difficult).—With two *severe* variations, lies about 600 yards from bridge and about 100 feet above the road. This small crag is identified by a vertical crack of 20 feet on left edge of the lower slab. The ordinary route commences at the lowest rocks, leading to a small tree at the top of a vertical crack. It continues up a shallow basin and traverses right on a large flake, then ascends the final slab direct. The vertical crack route is *severe*, as is the slab route to the right of the ordinary start.

E. *Pine Wall* (300 feet, Severe).—This lies several hundred feet above and to the left of Pinnacle ridge. It is identified by a pine tree at top of the second rock tier. The route commences up a rather holdless slab on the left to a ledge below a steep, reddish coloured wall on right. This is ascended by climbing out on to an overhanging corner and up easier rock to the pine tree. The final arching slab (60 feet) is climbed by a groove.

F. *Secretaries' Crack* (250 feet, Severe).—This block lies almost in the centre of the crags, and is easily identified by the oblong shaped face with the oblique crack running up to the right. The crack (70 feet) is climbed by complete entry with back and foot tactics (*difficult*). A traverse is made to the left at the top and the crest of the buttress ascended by delicate slabs.

Several other routes of a *severe* nature are to be found in this area, all of which have been pioneered by the Lochaber J.M.C.S. and members of C.U.M.C.

SKYE.

Sgùrr Alasdair.—Ghrunnda Face, Commando Crack (250 feet, Very Severe), was ascended by A. C. Cain (Leeds U.C.C. and F.R.C.C.) and B. L. Dodson (F.R.C.C.) in July 1950. Rubbers are advised. The climb starts below a crack running between two overhangs, about 100 yards left (north) of the Thearlaich-Dubh gap. It is also about 30 yards left of a large black gully, which is a prominent feature of the face.

1. 40 feet. Go up a rib, right of a crack for 10 feet and traverse into chimney on left, continuing up it to a pinnacle belay, high on left.

2. 60 feet. Climb wall on right a few feet and traverse into chimney. At overhang, ascend with difficulty to block belay on left.

3. 40 feet. Return to crack on right and climb to sentry box below overhanging chockstone with belay.

4. 40 feet. Through route used. Get on to nose on left and up to stance and belay.

5. 80 feet. Layback ascent of right-hand crack, then cross to left crack; difficult ascent followed by 20 feet of scrambling. Almost 100 feet of easier stuff leads to right, ending at top of Alasdair Stone Shoot.

Sron na Ciche.—Trap Face Route, variation (Very Severe in boots) needing 120 feet of rope; climbed by same party about same date.

From stance after rounding the corner from Mallory's Route ascend about 10 feet up the layback crack in corner. Ascend right wall of corner, working diagonally right to overhanging, undercut ledge at the right edge of a shallow chimney. Climb this and move right to shallow groove, ascended with difficulty until one moves back left into the corner. Climb this to stance and belay.

Sgùrr a' Mhadaidh, Tairneilear Face, Foxes' Folly (350 feet, Severe).—This was climbed by D. Leaver and A. Smee (Leeds U.C.C. and J.M.C.S.) in July 1950. It is a pleasant alternative to Slanting Gully when the latter is wet, and is on the buttress to its left.

1. 130 feet. Start from base of obvious trap dyke 20 feet left of Slanting Gully, climbing the dyke up to steeper rocks. A firm block belay is found near the gully.

2. 35 feet. Traverse up left until steep rock can be climbed upwards to the right, leading to broken slab under small overhang. Two small spike belays near.

3. 30 feet. Go up through overhang break above belay to steep slab leading to junction with Slanting Gully above wedged block.

4. 100 feet. Easy climbing on edge of gully to below final pitch below Foxes' Rake.

5. 50 feet. Use a crack to left of gully and reach the Rake. The climb then finishes up Slanting Gully.

Sgùrr Dearg, South Buttress, Central Route.—The first pitches of this climb follow the line of an obvious and impressive fault in the steep lower part of the buttress. The start lies in a corner at the centre of a wide, sloping, grassy terrace which lies immediately above the easy introductory rocks. The first pitch is the hardest; escape by a shelf on the left is possible at 20 feet, but the route continues up on the right over a steep slab forming a corner with the vertical wall on the left (belay at 50 feet). The next pitch zigzags by slabs, a chimney and a groove to a broken recess; whence another 50 feet by a corner and an overhanging chimney lead to the foot of a steep and obvious trap chimney rising to the right. Above this last obstacle easier rocks lead to the arête connecting the buttress to the mountain itself. The first pitch was at least *severe*, and the harder climbing

occupied some 250 feet: D. D. Stewart and D. N. Mill (both J.M.C.S.) on 15th July 1950.

Thearlaich-Dubh Gap.—The Coir' an Lochain side was ascended on 18th July 1950 by a party consisting of J. W. B. Barnes (Clinker M.C.), and D. Rich and H. S. Swift (Barnsley M.C.). It was named Aladdin's Route as several useful articles were found in it. First a 30-foot wall at the base of the chasm was climbed, followed by 100 feet of scree to the gully. A small rib was climbed, followed by a through route behind a chockstone. Two short pitches brought the party to the gap. (General standard: Difficult).

RUM.

During the course of a meet held on Rum by the Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club several new climbs were made. In following the descriptions given below, recent notes on Rum in *Journal* by J. G. Parish (Vol. 24, p. 42, with diagram) and W. H. Murray (Vol. 24, p. 133) may prove useful.

Ruinsval—Lower Tier.

1. *Demolition Crack*: *Direct Start*, 60 feet.—This lies in the deep V-shaped groove mentioned by Parish and joins the original route where it enters the "prominent right-angle corner." (Standard: Very Difficult).

2. *Cracked Rib*, 150 feet.—A few yards to the left of Demolition Crack lies a rib, split vertically by a crack and with an overhanging base. From a cairn the route goes up for 60 feet, past a heather shelf, to a recess under and just to the right of the rib (spike belay). A difficult left traverse now leads on to the rib, which is followed on the right for 40 feet to a shelf with a belay. The final 15 feet of the rib are climbed with difficulty on the left. (Standard: Very Severe).

3. *The Crack*, 120 feet.—This is the most prominent feature of Woden's Walk and gives an interesting climb. Start as for Woden's Walk, the crack continuing straight up where the "Walk" goes right. (Standard: Very Difficult). These three climbs were led by D. D. Stewart, with D. J. Bennet and S. Paterson on 18th July.

Trallval—Triangular Buttress.

Two routes were made up the " high-angle slab, about 100 feet high and 150 feet across," mentioned by W. H. Murray, which lies between the central gully and *Ptarmigan Crack*.

1. *Botany Crack*, 130 feet.—The start (cairn), is in a rectangular recess, guarded by a fine 20 foot pinnacle, at the foot of the slab. This recess is climbed to a good platform whence, from a point a few feet to the left, the crack rises to the top of the slab. The diversity of flora *en route* is remarkable. Stewart and D. J. Bennet on 20th July. (Severe).

2. *Zigzag Route*, 110 feet.—A few yards to the right of the previous start rises a peculiar serpentine crack. This is climbed, and the route then goes up to the left to a belay, then up to the right to a conspicuous overhung recess. The movement past the overhang is very difficult. Stewart and M. A. Mycroft on 20th July. (Severe). A short but interesting traverse was also made between the foot of Bloodstone Crack and the foot of the " slanting slab of 120 feet " to the west of that crack.

Trallval—Harris Buttress.

One new climb was made on this, the biggest buttress on the island, up the " not very definite rib, below which a rock is poised like a capstan " (W. H. Murray). This climb is one of the best on Rum.

Central Rib, 300 feet.—Start at the lowest point of the rocks, a few yards directly above the capstan. After the initial overhang, a groove and easier slabs lead to the foot of the rib where it becomes a definite and almost vertical arête. The next two pitches are very steep and difficult, but the climb holds close to the crest of the rib, usually just to the right of it, until a small but finely placed platform (cairn) is reached. Two more interesting pitches lead up slabs and steep corners to finish on a sloping grassy terrace (cairn). From here the upper slopes of the mountain can be reached either by a short wall directly above, or by easier slabs on the right. Stewart and D. J. Bennet on 22nd July. (Hard Severe).

BEN NEVIS.

No. 3 Gully Buttress, Gargoyle Wall (500 feet, Severe).—The gargoyle is well seen as a head on the right-hand rock ridge as one descends No. 3 Gully. The climb goes up the wall below and to the left of the gargoyle, then approaches the rock " head " by a traverse and continues above it by a series of walls.

Start at the front of the buttress, half-way between the gargoyle corner and the long gully which splits the front of No. 3 Gully Buttress. The actual start is below a steep flat wall cut by several ledges.

1. 90 feet. Up the wall by a zigzag route to a long ledge about 7 feet broad. Small belay.

2. 60 feet. Descend from the left-hand edge of the ledge for a short distance and enter a chimney. Climb the right-hand side of a huge bulging block and continue up the chimney to a stance and belay in an amphitheatre, almost level with the gargoyle, which is visible on the right.

3. 70 feet. Traverse to the gargoyle, easily at first, then across an awkward groove, and by a short gangway ascend on to the " head." (Fine position.)

4. 80 feet. Straight up the ridge above until a perched block is reached. Traverse right from here and up to a corner of very shattered rocks. Piton was left as a belay.

5. 35 feet. Climb the corner to a stance and block belay below a steep, exposed wall.

6. 40 feet. A crack in the wall, very hard, is climbed to a rock platform and belays.

7. 80 feet. Traverse left along the narrowing platform to the foot of an exposed chimney which cuts into the wall above. This is climbed on good holds to a stance and belay below a short chimney.

8. 60 feet. The chimney is avoided (but has been climbed) by a traverse to the left and then back to the right above it. A chimney directly above the avoided chimney leads to the top of the buttress.

First Ascent: 28th August 1950 by W. Peascod, B. L. Dodson, C. Peckett, J. Renwick, G. Graham Macphee.

Minus 2 Gully, 900 feet (Very Severe).—This is the central of the three long fractures that split the western face of the North-East Buttress. It was mentioned and named by B. P. Kellett in his articles in the *Journal*.

It is the second gully to the left of Zero Gully, and the route follows the gully (or chimney) throughout. The time taken for the first ascent was six hours.

1. 100 feet. Easy climbing.

2. 80 feet. The gully becomes steep and is climbed " back and foot " to a cave.

3. 35 feet. Ascend out and over the chockstone; difficult climbing leads to a stance and belay.

4. 30 feet. Slightly harder chimney climbing to a stance and poor belay, below a long chimney or groove which is topped by a large triangular black overhang, which will probably be greasy at all times.

5. 80 feet. Climb up to the overhang and, by using a hold above the bulge, work delicately round a protruding edge on the left to a stance and belays. This pitch was very hard in bad conditions.

6. 300 feet of pleasantly difficult rock chimneys, with belays when required, to the bottom of a series of steep, greasy chimneys.

7. 150 feet. The chimneys are climbed as direct as possible. The second one is ascended by the vertical left-hand wall until a flat, protruding step enables a move to be made back right into the true bed, above the slimy overhang. The chimneys end against a smooth wall with a large belay block on the left.

8. 70 feet. A crack on the left is ascended to where the gully opens out. There are two possible ways up from here: An easy-angled chimney or crack on the left, or a continuation to the right by a series of bulging chimneys. This latter route was taken.

9. 300 feet. Awkward overhanging chimneys lead to easier ground and eventually to the main ridge of the North-East Buttress.

First ascent; 29th August 1950 by W. Peascod and B. L. Dodson.

GLENCOE.

Winter Routes.—On 23rd February 1950 Professor Graham Brown and J. G. Parish made the first recorded winter ascent of the *Central Couloir* of *Stob Coire Altruim*, the third peak of Buachaille Etive Mor. The couloir cleaves the summit rocks on the north side and can be reached from the Lairig Gartain or the col between Stob na Doire and Stob Coire Altruim. The main summit buttress rises steeply for 300 feet, forming the vertical right wall of the gully. At 200 feet the gully forks and the left-hand branch was chosen. Two short pitches of snow-ice were found. The cornice was passed by the arête between the



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LOCH ETIVE AND BEN NEVIS FROM THE TAYNUILT PEAK

H. Gardner

two branches and was quite awkward owing to the steepness of the slope beneath. New snow considerably hampered the final exodus.

On 21st February 1950 Professor Graham Brown and J. G. Parish ascended directly to the summit of *Stob Coire nam Beith* from the pass leading up from Loch Achtriochtan to the corrie. On the route each ledge and crevice was covered with a thick layer of powder snow. The centre of the right-hand section of the Pyramid was ascended to a ledge, which runs obliquely upwards across the face at about 100 feet. The ledge narrowed and became a stomach crawl. Higher there was a mantelshelf and a vertical wall of about 20 feet. A snow arête led up to the flank of the Sphinx. Traversing a snow slope on the right, a 20-foot ice-pitch was ascended and a Y-shaped gully on the right of the Sphinx entered. The left fork was found to lead to the arête, which connects the Sphinx with the main mass of the mountain. The right-hand fork was found to be a very steep snow slope with a narrow exit leading into the amphitheatre at the top of the unnamed gully to the right of the Pyramid, from which the summit ridge was reached without difficulty.

Buachaille Etive Mor, Blaeberry Rib.—First ascent: J. R. Lees, J. G. Parish and R. J. Littlejohn, 24th August 1950. 200 feet. (Standard: Very Difficult.) Between Lagangarbh Buttress and Staircase Buttress there are two ribs of rock with steep walls on either side. The route follows the right-hand or west rib. There are three pitches of 50 feet, of which the first is slightly harder than the others. Between pitches 2 and 3 there is a horizontal section in which the rib narrows to a width of barely a foot. The only escape is into the gully on the left below pitch 3. Rock good. A pleasant and unusual climb.

Buachaille Etive Beag, Red Campion Gully.—First ascent: J. G. Parish, Professor T. Graham Brown, E. W. Scott and G. S. Boon, 19th June 1950. About 1,000 feet. (Standard: Hard, Difficult.) The southern flank of the Stob nan Cabar-Stob Coire Raineach ridge

is divided by four gullies, of which two are forked. They were numbered 1 to 4 from left to right. No. 3 Gully, which is forked, was named Red Campion Gully and the route followed the left-hand branch.

There are three or four moderate pitches below the fork. The first pitch in the left hand branch is a little more difficult, a runnel in steep slabs with a chimney finish. Fairly continuous rock scrambling interspersed between easy pitches follows, as the gully swings first to the right and then to the left among a profusion of flowers. The crux is a 30-foot chockstone pitch, turned on the left (good running belay below chockstone). The next chockstone pitch is turned by a grass ledge on the right-hand wall. Above this there are several easy pitches, as the gully appears to peter out. However, keeping left, a narrow chimney can be climbed by means of a through route under two chockstones. The final window lands the climber on the face of a buttress about 100 feet below the crest of the Stob nan Cabar-Stob Coire Raineach ridge. This is, so far, the most pleasant and interesting route to the top of Buachaille Etive Beag. The soft, black, intrusive rock which forms the bed of the gully is reasonably firm.

Gullies 1 and 2 were explored but found to be disappointing. The left fork of No. 1 Gully contains three short pitches of which two appear to be *severe*, and the right fork commences with an apparently insuperable overhang. The pitches above this, as well as those in No. 2 Gully, are open and vegetatious. The right branches of No. 3 Gully and No. 4 Gully have not as yet been entered.

A' Chailleach, South-East Gully or Red Funnel Gully.—First ascent: J. G. Parish, Professor T. Graham Brown, R. Fox, 28th August 1950. 500 feet. (Standard: probably just Very Difficult). 11 pitches. The Red Funnel Gully lies on the south-east aspect of A' Chailleach and finishes near the prominent nose of rock (we called it Granny's Nose) well seen on the skyline when looking down Glencoe from Lagangarbh. Beyond the long straight section of the new road across the summit of the pass, the old road is followed to a bridge. The gully is reached without difficulty by striking obliquely up the hillside for about 500 feet.

There are about six moderate pitches below the crux. The seventh pitch of 60 feet (90 feet to belay) was called the Red Funnel Pitch on

account of the manner in which the water cascades down the outward sloping upper rocks and collects in a spout near the foot. The route ascends slabby rock and heather ledges to the left of the waterfall to level with the top of the pitch. An airy traverse to the right, round a nose of rock, finishes with an awkward pull up on the far side. Pitch 9 is a deep cave with an easy exit at the back. Pitch 11 is a 100-foot groove composed of four shorter pitches, of which the final chimney is quite difficult. There are many shorter pitches, since in many places there is continuous rock work between the main difficulties.

There is a cairn about 100 feet above the finish of the gully, marking the level of traverse to Granny's Nose. Here there are possibilities of several routes of about 100 feet on excellent, firm, rough rock. We chose an easy route on the left of the overhang. The south shoulder of A' Chailleach is attained with little further ascent.

A branch of the gully, which enters on the right above Pitch 1, contains several pitches.

Beinn Fhada, Sron na Lairig.—This was deemed a suitable name for the prominent ridge bounding the east side of the corrie of Beinn Fhada, which is the true source of the Allt Lairig Eilde. It was ascended in November 1949 by Messrs J. Black and C. Montgomery, and Misses A. Williamson and R. McCulloch, all of the Glencoe Club. The height is estimated at about 1,000 feet, the standard was Moderate and the time three and a quarter hours. The snow cover increased from a few inches on the lower part of the ridge to several feet on the crest, mainly old hard snow with a new snow cover.

The lower part permitted much variation, but later the route was well defined. A prominent block, gained by a wide crack, marked the beginning of the crest. Thereafter, the ridge became narrower and snow-covered. At an exposed section of 80 yards a snow knife-edge was trodden down. At the final pitch there was a choice between a steep, exposed snow slope on the left, guarded by a small cornice, or by easier slopes to the right. Unstable snow on the left decided the party against this route.

Stob Coire nan Lochan, Dorsal Arête.—This climb, in Coire nan Lochan, is situated between Broad Gully and Forked Gully. The lower part of the climb is barely

perceptible from either of the two gullies, but as the climber gains height the arête becomes more defined. The first 100 to 150 feet is easily climbed. After this the narrowness of the arête demands more caution. The pitches are short, and good belays are to be had on the rock until the climb levels off. Here, the arête is extremely narrow, the base rock being no more than 12 to 18 in. thick, and the sides fall steeply into their respective gullies.

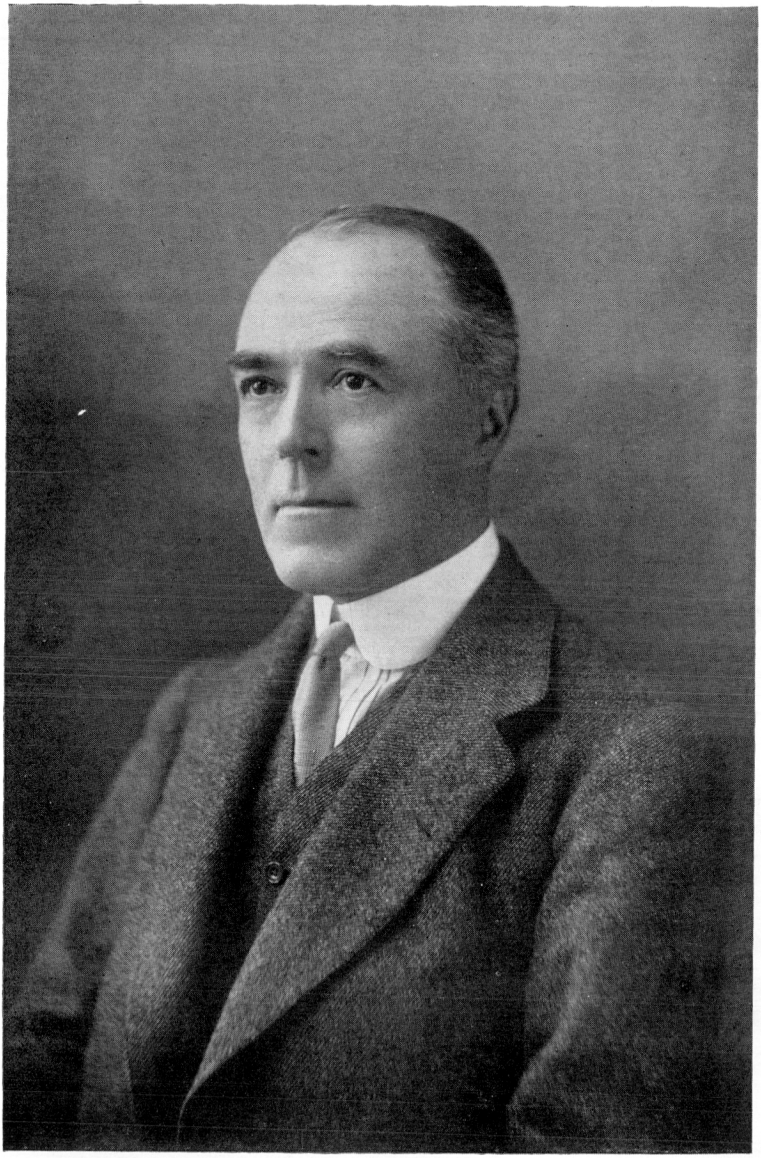
When the writer's party climbed it the level arête was a knife edge of snow-ice; great care was required to demolish it and retain balance at the same time. There is a further pitch above the arête. Owing to impending darkness the party were forced to cut steps down into Forked Gully.

The party consisted of J. Black, T. Shepherd, J. Allingham and J. Bradburn on one rope; the height was 300 to 400 feet. The ascent took 3 hours on 28th January 1951.

Sgoran Dubh.

No. 4 Buttress.—Mr Richard Frere, along with a friend, made a new route on No. 4 Buttress of Sgoran Dubh on 9th September 1950.

This follows the line of A. M. Mackay's route of 1902 on the buttress to the true left of the deep gully. When we reached the tower, which this party turned by means of a chimney on the right, we had some difficulty in choosing the route. Finally we attacked the tower direct by a 30-foot vertical face which led on to a sloping ledge running parallel to the crest of the tower. This ledge dies out and the route continues up a short vertical crack to the crest and over slabs to the top of the tower. The pitch is exposed throughout and could be possibly classified Very Difficult. Lower down on the buttress we found numerous interesting situations of a kind typical of Sgoran Dubh.



WILLIAM GARDEN

In Memoriam.

WILLIAM GARDEN.

WILLIAM GARDEN died in Aberdeen on 20th November 1950, in his eightieth year. Only son of the late F. T. Garden, Esq., advocate in Aberdeen, William Garden graduated at Aberdeen University in Arts and Law, and spent some four years in Edinburgh before returning to Aberdeen in 1899 to become a partner in his father's firm of C. & P. H. Chalmers. From that time until his death he was active in the business of the firm and seldom absent from work, except for a period of illness some four years ago and again for a short time before his death.

A man of simple tastes and with little liking for public affairs, William Garden had two, possibly three, main interests for his recreation. Mountaineering and music were undoubtedly his two great loves, but literature, chiefly historical and legal, claimed much of his time, especially in later years.

His pleasure in music was of a quiet and almost domestic type. For many years he was a member of a quartette of friends, meeting weekly to play chamber music for their own delight. William Garden was an able performer on the 'cello. He was also a piper of considerable ability, as many of his Scottish friends know.

His ruling passion, however, was centred in the sport and art of mountaineering. Truly may it be said that, in his day, William Garden was an international figure in his beloved sport. He climbed the heights in many countries, Switzerland, Norway, Canada; but his love of the Scottish hills and his knowledge of them was profound.

This love of the hills was no selfish passion. William Garden was for many years an active and enthusiastic member of three great climbing clubs, the Alpine Club, the Scottish Mountaineering Club and the Cairngorm Club. Of these, the two Scottish Clubs undoubtedly

held his greatest affection. He was a member of both from 1896 until his death, and in the affairs of both he played an active and leading part.

In the Scottish Mountaineering Club he served on Committee from 1904 till 1907, and again from 1929 till 1932. He was Vice-President from 1915 to 1919, and President from 1934 to 1936. In 1911, in collaboration with his great friend, the late James A. Parker, he compiled the Index of the *S.M.C. Journal*, Vols. 1-10. He was also the author of several important contributions to the *Journal*, including two Guide Book articles on the Cairngorms. In his earlier days he attended most of the Meets of the Club and was a pioneer in several difficult snow climbs in the Cairngorms and elsewhere, including an attempted ascent of the Douglas-Gibson gully of Lochnagar, in the company of Harold Raeburn.

In the Cairngorm Club he served on Committee from 1911 to 1921, and again from 1928 to 1930. He was President from 1925 to 1927, but his greatest work in the affairs of the Club was done while he was Secretary from 1932 to 1949. During that long period of office he conducted the affairs of the Cairngorm Club with most devoted skill under several Presidents. It may be said truly that he was the friend of every member. He did not contribute much to the *Club Journal*, possibly because of his activities as Secretary, but he was intimately associated with James A. Parker and others in the erection of indicators on Lochnagar and Ben Muich Dhui, and in the foundation of the Club library. There is no doubt, however, that his great contribution to the Club was his knowledge of the hills and of mountaineering. He gave freely and enthusiastically to anyone who cared to talk with him or who sought his advice. When he retired from active work as Secretary in 1949, the Club presented to him at the Annual Dinner, a composition of sketches of all the Presidents of the Club, as a token of the high regard in which he was held by all members.

In his younger days, as a member of the Alpine Club, his activities, in Switzerland and elsewhere in the sphere of rock and ice-climbing, were curtailed as a result of an

accident. In 1901, he had ascended the Matterhorn and the Weisshorn. In 1902, in a party including J. H. Brown and the guides Knubel and Imboden, he climbed the Wetterhorn from Grindelwald. The ascent took longer than had been anticipated owing to new snow, and the upper *couloir* was difficult, but they reached the top. On the descent, while crossing the lower *couloir* much later than they had intended, they took care owing to the possibility of avalanches. William Garden and Imboden had crossed and anchored, and Brown was in the act of crossing. An avalanche fell. The whole party was swept down 1,200 feet. Brown was killed and Knubel died a little later. Garden was injured and Imboden was severely concussed. They were rescued by a German climber and a guide.

This unfortunate accident resulted in Garden promising his father that he would not undertake any dangerous and difficult mountaineering again. Probably because of this, a few years later he did not complete the ascent of Mount Assiniboine, while he was a member of the first party to cross this 11,800-foot peak in the Canadian Rockies. Nevertheless, he brought back with him a great collection of fine photographs of the Rocky Mountains, which he delighted to show to friends and to recall the incidents of this phase of his climbing activities.

For a long time after he had given up strenuous snow and rock climbing William Garden loved to walk the Scottish hills. The effect of the mountains upon him was to make him young in spirit; and he was a wonderful companion, full of humour and reminiscence; with a great knowledge at his fingertips and a delight in imparting this to the younger mountaineers. The writer's most vivid recollections of him are those of a climbing holiday in the autumn of 1919 at Sligachan in Skye, in the most depressing weather with continual rain, when his instruction in the technique of rock climbing on Sgùrr nan Gillean, Blaven, Clach Glas and other peaks of the Black Cuillin, made a profound impression and laid a sound foundation for a wider knowledge of mountaineering.

William Garden will be missed by many friends. He had a solid quality in him which created a feeling of security, whether it was in the giving of an opinion or in the conducting of a party over the mountains. Certainly, in the Scottish climbing clubs, his great personality and commanding figure were an inspiration to younger generations of mountaineers.

DAVID P. LEVACK.

PERCY JOHN HENRY UNNA,
1878-1950.

IT was a shock to our members to hear that UNNA had lost his life on Beinn Eunaich. For some years his heart had been uncertain, and, as he was alone, it is likely that a temporary failure was responsible for the accident. He rests in the cemetery at Oban, in full view of the hills he loved so well.

His first Meet was at Fort William, New Year 1904, as a guest, and he joined the Club in 1905. He had been elected to the Alpine Club the year before. My first climb with him was at the New Year Meet 1907, in Arran. He attended Meets fairly regularly till 1913, after which there was a break of six years while he was serving in the Navy as Lieut-Commander in command of an auxiliary patrol vessel at Leith, and later in Egypt and the Bristol Channel.

From 1921 there was another break of nine years till 1930, for most of which he was abroad. After that he was able to resume his attendance, and in the next twenty years he attended twenty-six Meets, making a total of forty. He was on the Committee from 1920 to 1923 and was elected Vice-President in 1933, succeeding to the Presidency in 1936, an honour which he very much appreciated.

At the Meets, as at other times, he was always active and his knowledge of the Scottish hills was very comprehensive. In the evenings, too, he added to the gaiety of the gatherings with a boyish impishness, which

he always retained, and was always ready to raise some point which would lead to argument.

My first season abroad with him was in 1925, the S.M.C. Meet at Fafleralp, where we crossed the country from hut to hut to Grindelwald. The following year we were in Tyrol with J. W. Brown, and again in 1928. In 1929 we were in Maderanerthal crossing over to Linthal for the Tödi. We returned there in 1930 and traversed the Düssistock, then over the Splügen Pass and later to Maloja for Monte Cissone and Cima Rosso.

In 1931 we were joined by R. Corry for three weeks in the Zillerthal and Hohe Tauern districts. We continued to visit the various districts of Tyrol till 1938 when we had a season in Maderanerthal and Göscheneralp. In 1939 the party, now reduced to J. M. Davidson, Unna, and myself, were at Göscheneralp, where bad weather only permitted the ascents of the Gwächtenhorn and the Fleckistock, our last big peak, 11,215 feet.

Then came another break on account of the war, and it was 1947 before we could return to Maderanerthal, which we also visited in the following two years. By then we had to restrict our energies to walks in the valleys and up to huts. In 1949 Unna and I continued in Oetzthal and in 1950 we were in the Stubaithal, but these expeditions are described in the *Journal* (under "S.M.C. Abroad").

In his earlier days he was frequently out in the winter ski-ing, often alone, from hut to hut. He loved this life and had a wide knowledge of it.

Unna was educated at Eton and Cambridge. He was a civil engineer by profession. He was a sound mountaineer, both on rock and snow, a cheery companion on the hill. His passing will leave a sad blank in his large circle of friends. He had a full life. W. N. LING.

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL McLAREN, 1880-1950.

ALASTAIR MCLAREN was born on 25th July 1880 and died on 24th April 1950. His father was the Reverend David McLaren, M.A., Parish Minister of Humbie,

East Lothian, and his forbears had farmed Buchal, Alyth, Perthshire, for many generations. He was an only child and his mother died at his birth. He was educated at Blair Lodge, near Polmont, and then entered the estate office of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon at Fochabers, Morayshire, where he met and shook hands with the old Duke who had been A.D.C. to the Duke of Wellington. He served in the 2nd Seaforths in the South African War from early 1901 to 1902. In 1903 he visited the Lake District on his way home from Wales. The map he was using marked Sty Head Pass as a road, and he arrived at Wasdale Head, having carried his bicycle over Sty Head from Seathwaite. Although he had done no serious climbing before, he already possessed a great love for the hills and took readily to rock climbing, spending ten days doing many of the moderate and difficult courses in company with Dr Kirby and the present writer. In the following year his father died and, before taking the farm of Inverardran at Crianlarich, he lived for a time at Arrochar, where he made a very thorough exploration of the neighbouring hills and from time to time recorded new ascents on them.

He climbed in Norway in 1905 and at Arolla in 1907, but, apart from these two visits abroad, most of his mountaineering was concentrated in his beloved Highlands, along with visits to North Wales and the Lakes. Between 1904 and 1911 he was very active at all seasons of the year and took part in several first ascents, particularly in Skye, as the records of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* testify. He was one of the discoverers of the North Chimney of the Bhasteir Tooth and was also on the first traverse of the Main Ridge of the Coolin in 1911. Later in the same year he was again in Skye with a party of six, whose climbs in the Coolin were the subject of a paper read before the Alpine Club by J. M. Archer Thompson. He joined the S.M.C. in this year and later became a life member. During most of this period he farmed Inverardran, which he still held in 1914 when he joined the 8th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He was badly wounded at

Arras in 1917, having his left ankle shattered. Although he did not lose his foot, this wound rendered his left leg stiff and put a stop to serious rock climbing, although, after a few years, he was able to get about on the hills again.

He gave up Inverardran in 1918 after the death of his father's sister, Miss McLaren (Nan), who had brought him up and had always kept house for him. After his marriage to Miss Inglis he farmed in Mull from 1919 to 1924, and then lived at Connel Ferry for a few years before taking the farm of Succoth, Dalmally, in 1927. He finally retired to Edinburgh in 1937. Alastair was a true Highlander and delighted in every aspect of life among the hills. He spoke Gaelic fluently and was a fine piper and a singer of distinction. Steeped as he was in the history and folklore of his native country, he made an ideal companion. He was immensely strong and a bold and safe climber on both rock and snow.

He moved through the Highlands, a splendid and romantic figure which, in a curious fashion, seemed to shrink a little and to lose something vital whenever he came down to the cities and the plains.

L. G. SHADBOLT.

A. J. PATON, who became a member in 1922, died suddenly on 22nd January 1951 at the age of 69. Although in recent years he had not been so active on the hills as formerly he had continued to take an interest in the affairs of the Club and was a regular attender at the evening meetings in the Club rooms. He was a hill walker rather than a rock climber, but in 1922 he spent a holiday in Glencoe with Menzies, Lawson, Harrison and Morrison and in 1923 was also at Mary Campbell's in Glen Brittle with members of the same party and did some moderate rock climbs. Just before the 1914-18 war he had also spent some time in the Cairngorms with Lawson. This holiday included a week spent at the Shelter Stone. Paton was of a quiet disposition, but when he took up a definite view he was not easily moved from it.

A. HARRISON.

WE regret to announce the death of several other members of the Club, some of very long standing, about whom, owing to their removal from Scotland and having given up active climbing for many years, very little information is now available.

W. A. MOUNSEY, born in 1871, joined our Club in 1901. He climbed a good deal about that time, both here and in the Alps and was a member of the A.C. He often attended our Meets but, though he skied after 1904, had done very little climbing for many years. He died in February 1950.

E. M. CORNER, born in 1873, joined both our Club and the Cairngorm Club in 1897. He had a distinguished career as a surgeon and was a major in the 1914-18 war. He contributed very many notes and several articles to the *Journal*, many of the notes being of detailed topographical interest and concerned with the delineation of Ridges and Tops, but one article dealing with a most remarkable experience of an electric storm on the hills of Glen Ey (Braemar), where the electric discharge boxed the compass and sent his party to Glen Ey instead of southwards to Spittal of Glen Shee. He was a tireless hill walker.

Much less is known to our present membership about E. W. GREEN, who joined the Club in 1895, and died in January 1950. We have also to report with regret the death by accident of J. M. S. ROBERTS.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

ANNUAL MEETING, RECEPTION AND DINNER.

THE Report on the Sixty-second Annual Meeting has already appeared in the *Bulletin*. All three events took place in the North British Hotel, Edinburgh. Members should note that it has been decided to hold them on a Saturday in 1951

The Reception was the pleasant, informal function we all know so well; and next year, as it is to be on a

Saturday, we may hope for a larger attendance of younger members, if they can forego the lure of the Inter-City. The President, with his friendly, totally unmathematical smile, and his lady welcomed guests and members. Douglas Scott showed a splendid collection of his Himalayan coloured pictures and gave an interesting commentary on them, and on the experiences of the expedition, of which we hope to see and hear more as opportunity offers.

Professor Turnbull presided at the Dinner. We all regret his retirement under the two year convention, even though it frees him to devote himself to his distinguished researches on the work of Sir Isaac Newton. He proposed the toast of " The S.M.C." and reviewed its activities during the past year. This was the first Dinner in which Willie Ling appeared as an Honorary Member after his long, unique and distinguished attendance as a " common or garden." He proposed the toast of " The Scottish Himalayan Expedition " to which Bill Murray replied in the inspiring kind of speech which we have come to expect from him.

Then we were fortunate to have Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, O.B.E., D.F.C., M.P., whose work in developing and inspiring outdoorness is well known, to propose " Our Guests and Kindred Clubs," to which George Waterston replied. And so to the health of the retiring Honorary Secretary, Ian Charleson, who has served the Club with enthusiasm through five difficult years of post-war rehabilitation, feelingly proposed by Sandy Harrison, himself an ex-secretary.

There were 109 present at the Reception, 66 at the Meeting and 102 at the Dinner, and our ample thanks are due to the dinner committee and to Evershed Thomson.

J. S. M. J.

EASTER MEET, 1950—GLEN AFFRIC

THE wildest Easter week-end for many years greeted the Club on its return to Glen Affric after eighteen years. There was not one day on which the tops were clear;

the hailstones rattled like the shot in battle; the whirlwind and the blizzard froze the marrow and the gizzard; but, true to the spirit claimed by the Club Song, we none the less went up to the mountains in the snow. Evershed Thomson proved a most efficient Minister of Transport, and the conveyances up the glens were taxed to the limit of their capacity. It is many a long year since a 9.15 start was the general order of the day, but it enabled us to make the most of the day, and several long expeditions were undertaken. It was good to see Ling (attending his hundred and first Meet) and Unna still able for the high tops. Thanks are due to Mr Wotherspoon and his keepers for their co-operation, making the Meet such a success, not forgetting Mr Roberts and his hotel staff who attended to our creature comforts and to transport facilities as well.

The following twenty-seven members and four guests were present at the Meet at one time, place, and another : F. D. C. Allen, J. W. Baxter, W. G. Blackie, W. C. Carmichael, I. G. Charleson, M. H. Cooke, F. F. Cunningham, T. C. Dow, R. R. Elton, B. S. Fraser, D. J. Fraser, P. R. L. Heath, D. Henderson, R. R. S. Higgins, E. W. Hodge, R. G. Inglis, J. N. Ledingham, W. N. Ling, P. E. Macfarlane, G. G. Macphee, J. R. Marshall, R. W. Martin, G. Peat, T. E. Thomson, H. W. Turnbull, D. G. Turnbull, P. J. H. Unna (members) ; Dunlop, Hartog, Heddle, Hetherington (guests).

Expeditions.

Tuesday, 4th April.—Macphee—Sgùrr na Ruaidhe. Carn nan Gobhar, Sgùrr a' Choire Ghlais (all Glen Strathfarrar).

Wednesday, 5th April.—Macphee—Carn nan Gobhar and Creag Dubh (both Glen Cannich).

Thursday, 6th April.—Macphee and Hartog—Beinn Fhionnlaidh and Stob Coire Lochan of Mam Soul; Inglis—Sgairneach Mhor, Drumochter, en route.

Friday, 7th April.—Ling and Unna—Sgùrr na Lapaich of Mam Soul; Macphee—An Socach, Glen Affric; Thomson, Martin, Fraser Bros., Dow, Turnbull, Jr.,—Mam Soul, Carn Eige, Beinn Fhionnlaidh; Turnbull, Sen., Henderson, Blackie—Mam Soul and

Carn Eige only; Charleson, Elton—Mam Soul, Carn Eige, and Tom a' Choinich; Inglis—Am Meallan; Hodge and Allen—Exploring round Affric Lodge; Ledingham, Carmichael, Baxter—Meall Coire Lochain, Gairlochy.

Saturday, 8th April.—Ledingham and Carmichael—Tom a' Choinich and Toll Creagach; Baxter—Tom a' Choinich only; Inglis, Cunningham, Dunlop—Carn nan Gobhar, Cannich; Charleson, Fraser Bros., Dow—Alltbeath and a short way up Ceathreamhnan; Heath and Cooke " got lost " on Mam Soul; the rest of the Meet stayed at home!

Sunday, 9th April.—Thomson, Macphee, Martin, Elton, Marshall, Hartog—An Socach, Cannich, and An Riabhachan; the Turnbulls, Henderson, Macfarlane—3,559 foot peak of Riabhachan; Fraser Bros., Peat, Dow—An Riabhachan; Inglis, Cooke, Dunlop—2,500 feet on Tom a' Choinich; Higgins, Hetherington, Heddle—3,000 feet on Mam Soul; Hodge and Blackie walked round Loch Affric.

Monday, 10th April.—Thomson, Cooke, Heath—Sgùrr na Lapaich Cannich and Carn nan Gobhar; Ledingham, Carmichael, Baxter—An Socach, Cannich and An Riabhachan.

Tuesday, 11th April.—Carmichael and Baxter—Sgùrr na Lapaich, Cannich; Ledingham—Carn nan Gobhar and Creag Dubh, Cannich.

Wednesday, 12th April.—Carmichael, Ledingham, Baxter—Meall na Teanga, Loch Lochy.

NEW YEAR MEET, 1951—DALMALLY

THE 1951 New Year Meet has been overshadowed by the death on the hills of a Past President and one of our most enthusiastic members, P. J. H. Unna. Those who knew him intimately were aware that, for several years, he had been advised to go carefully on account of the condition of his heart. This, in fact, had got him into the habit of going alone, at his own pace, so as not to incommode any companions. He was the first arrival at the Meet and left the hotel on Wednesday morning, 27th December, for Ben Eunaich, saying that he would be back for tea. He had not returned at 8.30 P.M., when W. N. Ling arrived by train; so the latter arranged for the matter to be reported to the police at Oban, who organised a search party which left for the hill about 10 P.M. This consisted of two policemen and eight others including the hotel proprietor.

About 2 A.M., finding tracks in the snow above the point Stob Maol (*c.* 1,000 feet on 1 in. O.S. map), on the S.W. ridge of the mountain, they found that he had turned back about there and had fallen while descending. His axe was found somewhat lower and the body about 70 feet below the axe. He had fallen over a low outcrop of rock and was so badly injured that death must have been instantaneous. Although the mountain slopes were not by any means free of difficulty it was concluded that a man of Unna's experience would be fully aware of this and that the fall was almost certainly the result of a sudden heart attack.

The funeral took place at Oban on 30th December 1950. The President, ex-Presidents Ling, MacRobert, Jeffrey and Harrison, and Messrs Osborne, Hodge, Inglis, and T. E. Thomson went to Oban to represent the Club. That evening, after dinner, the President, Stuart Jack, made the following remarks to those present :

" I feel that we cannot allow to pass unnoticed the tragic accident that has robbed us of Unna, and, little as he would have liked it, cast a cloud over our Meet.

" Of course, he was the first to arrive, and we looked forward to his meeting us with that face so full of character, that kindly quizzical smile, and that insatiable love of argument.

" Yet, was it so tragic after all that he crossed the Great Divide, not in the city of London where he lived, but on the Scottish hills which he loved, for the preservation of whose unsullied sanctity he gave so generously and so quietly, and which were his spiritual home.

" As we go our ways on the hills, and as we sit round the fire in the evening, we shall remember him."

It was a well-attended Meet, 33 members and 9 guests being present at one time or another. The weather was favourable and everyone was made very comfortable by the proprietor of the Dalmally Hotel.

The following were present at one time or another : The President, J. S. M. Jack ; and Messrs D. S. Anderson, Donald Campbell, W. C. Carmichael, I. G. Charleson,

P. A. Fletcher, A. Geddes, A. Harrison, R. R. S. Higgins, E. W. Hodge, B. H. Humble, R. G. Inglis, R. Jeffrey, A. W. Laughland, J. N. Ledingham, W. N. Ling, J. Y. Macdonald, J. E. MacEwen, G. G. Macphee, H. MacRobert, A. I. L. Maitland, R. W. B. Morris, A. G. Murray, W. H. Murray, I. H. Ogilvie, S. C. O'Grady, J. G. Osborne, T. G. Robinson, W. A. W. Russell, R. N. Rutherfurd, T. E. Thomson, P. J. H. Unna, J. D. B. Wilson (members) and R. Heddle, W. T. McKinnon, M. Moffat, G. Plews, F. Wylie (all of J.M.C.S.) and C. G. Macdonald, P. McKellar, C. C. Spence, W. Turner (guests).

Expeditions.

Friday, 29*th December*.—Ledingham, Wylie and Moffat on Beinn an Lochan from Rest (Glencroe); O'Grady, Spence and Hodge in Glen Shira; Ling and Jeffrey walked to Socach.

Saturday, 30*th December*.—Anderson, Morris and Geddes were on Taynuilt top of Cruachan; Ledingham, Wylie, Moffat and McKellar (of New Zealand) were on Cruachan Horseshoe; Maitland and Carmichael arrived and visited Beinn na Sroine, 2,074 feet; O'Grady and Spence were on Stob Diamh; Wilson and Turner on Beinn a' Chochuill; Humble, Campbell and Charleson climbed the Central Gully of Ben Lui; the two Macdonalds climbed Beinn Bhuidhe.

Sunday, 31*st December*.—Osborne, Inglis and Thomson were on Meall Cuanail; Ogilvie and W. H. Murray went up Drochaid Glas by north ridge; Macphee, Laughland, Higgins, Plews and Heddle traversed Bens Eunaich and Chochuill; Ledingham, Maitland, Geddes, Carmichael, Moffat and Wylie ascended Ben a' Chleibh; Ling, MacRobert, Jeffrey walked 7 miles up Glen Orchy; the President and Hodge saw *felis sylvestris* in a trap; Harrison, Fletcher and A. G. Murray, from the old lead mine went over Sron an Isean, Stob Diamh, Drochaid Glas to main top of Cruachan, returning along the ridge to Stob Garbh and down by the mines. This course was also followed later by Robinson and Rutherfurd; the Macdonalds with McKinnon did Cruachan over Meall Cuanail and down a short gully climb; Charleson, McEwen, Russell, Wilson and Turner climbed a 600 foot gully involving a 30 foot ice pitch on north side of Pt. 3163 of Horseshoe. The snow was poor at finish. Return by the mines; O'Grady and Spence were on Ben Eunaich.

Monday, 1*st January*.—W. H. Murray and Ogilvie climbed Eunaich by east gully; Ledingham, Carmichael, Moffat and Wylie

were also on Eunaich; Harrison, A. G. Murray, Fletcher and Spence climbed Lui by Central Gully; the President, Osborne, Thomson and Inglis were on Eunaich; Higgins, Laughland, Plews and Heddle were on Beinn a' Chleibh. Laughland enjoyed a bathe.

On the return from the Meet, Charleson, Russell, McEwen and Wilson ascended Ben Chaluim. A. G. Murray and Fletcher were bound for Ben Vorlich (Sloy).

S.M.C. ABROAD.

P. J. H. Unna and W. N. Ling were in Tyrol for the month of July, and on the whole had good weather, though thunderstorms were apt to come on suddenly in the afternoons.

We went first to Ranalt in the beautiful Stubaithal, and after a training walk or two we went up to the Dresdner Hut (7,572 feet) for a couple of nights. Next day we went up the Eggessen Grat (1,000 feet) above the hut, and had a fine view. Next morning we crossed the Peiljoch (8,786 feet) to the Sulzenau Hut, where we stayed the night, and next morning had a beautiful walk back to Ranalt. We now moved on to Mayrhofen in Zillerthal, and went up to the Berliner Hut (6,749 feet). We ascended the Hornkopf (8,764 feet) and had a fine view of the glaciers. They have shrunk very materially since our last visit in 1937.

Another nice walk was up the Saurüssel (8,963 feet), with a fine view of the Schwartzenstein glacier. The weather now became unsettled. We went up to the Dominicus Hut for two nights, and then returned to Mayrhofen, where we met our fellow-member, Geoffrey Howard.

I had now to return home, while Unna, now untrammelled, crossed the Brenner and had an orgy of hut wandering in not good weather, six huts in eight nights, and thoroughly enjoyed himself.

A. Harrison, A. G. Murray and P. A. Fletcher arrived at Montroc le Planet above Argentière on 1st July. As a training walk they did the "three cols"—Col du Tour, Fenêtre de Saleinaz, Col du Chardonnet—from the Albert Hut. They next went up to the Argentière Hut, intending to do the Aiguille d'Argentière. Owing to a late start, there being no guardian at the hut, and bad snow conditions and loose rocks, the attempt was abandoned 500 feet from the top, and the party arrived back at Montroc at 11 P.M. They then did the Aiguille du Tour from the Albert Hut, returning to it on the following day, with Léon Bellin of Argentière as guide and doing the traverse of the Chardonnet under ideal conditions. Meanwhile J. Harrison arrived at Montroc on 8th July and was amusing himself with walks at lower levels. On 13th July the party transferred to the Hotel du Montenvers and visited the Couvercle, the return by the Pierre de Béranger made more interesting by a violent two-hour storm—the only bad weather encountered during three weeks. Next

day Murray and Fletcher met Léon Bellin at the Couvercle, and from there did the traverse of the Courtes. The two Harrisons went to the Bossons glacier by the high-level path from the Montenvers, which impressed them as one of the best walks in the Alps. At the beginning of the third week both the Harrisons returned home.

Murray and Fletcher went to the Réquin Hut, dumped their supplies and continued to the Col du Géant. On returning to the hut they met the Zermatt guide, Felix Julen, sen., with whom Fletcher had climbed the previous year. He was with two English climbers and bound for the Aiguille du Plan. Julen suggested that they should follow his party; the combined parties had a most enjoyable climb.

On the two guided climbs a porter was also taken, in accordance with the regulations of the Chamonix Guides when there is more than one climber. The porter was an *aspirant*, Gilbert Ducroz, an excellent climber. It is probable that, once one gets to know a guide, the regulation can be circumvented by private arrangement before going out. The first three weeks in July seem to be the best time for the Mont Blanc area, as the French holiday rush does not start until after the middle of July. During the first fourteen days the huts were almost empty, and even during the last week were never uncomfortably full.

Ian G. Charleson was at Zermatt with Dr C. A. Bunton, E. L. Harley and Keith Ingold from 21st to 31st July. They climbed the Pointe de Zinal, the Zinal Rothorn, the Wellenkuppe and Ober Gabelhorn. They also climbed four of the Monte Rosa peaks—the Nordend, Dufourspitze, Zumsteinspitze and Signalkuppe. From the Margherita Hut, with Bunton, Charleson traversed the Lyskamm. On 1st August, with Oskar Perron, he made an attempt on the Dent Blanche, but had to return to the Schönbühl Hut owing to bad weather. He then joined André Roch at Chamonix, and from the Réquin Hut they climbed the Dent du Géant and the Aiguille du Plan.

G. C. Williams had only a week's climbing in the Alps. He was in Göschener Alp district with three Swiss friends. They climbed the Salbitschyn by two routes—the east ridge which was not very difficult, and the south ridge which was severe and garnished with pitons. They then went to the Voralp Hut and climbed the Sustenhorn. Finally they did the Dammastock by the face from the Damma Hut. This was the last week of July, with frequent thunderstorms at its close.

G. J. Ritchie had three or four days of violent, bad weather at Chamonix which prevented any good climbing. Later, with J. Wilkinson and A. Brown Douglas, he encountered poor weather in the Dolomites. After one reconnaissance and a half-completed climb they ascended the south face of the Marmolada, getting a grand view after the blizzard (deep snow on summit after climbing in light rubbers). Later again, at Zinal, a traverse of the Diablons

ended in thunder and bad weather. In the St Maurice valley, under the Dent du Midi, there was dense fog for four days. He was accompanied by his wife and family.

D. H. Haworth was also in the Dolomites, at the beginning of July, with Hamish McInnes. He climbed the south face of the Marmolada, did the traverse of the Vajolet towers, the Ombretta, the Postgarten and one-third of the Nordwand of the Drei Zinnen.

W. B. Speirs was in the Alps for a period from 6th July with his wife. From Zinal they did several training walks—over the Pas de Forcletta to Gruben and then over the Augstbord Pass to St Niklaus, climbing the Schwarzhorn on the way. In perfect weather this afforded grand views of the Weisshorn and the Mischabel.

On 13th July, with Emil Perren, from the Rothorn Hut he climbed the Zinal Rothorn. Next day, from the same hut they climbed the Wellenkuppe and the Obergabelhorn, descending by the Arbengrat. On 20th July, with Mrs Speirs and Joseph Biner, he again climbed the Zinal Rothorn. After that the weather was unsettled, but Mrs Speirs climbed the Matterhorn with Emil Perren on the final day, while the writer, who had already climbed it twice, took photographs.

D. Easson spent twelve very enjoyable days in the Chamonix region during July in splendid weather. No big peaks were attempted. Along with Mr and Mrs J. Haining and R. Houston of the Lomond Club, he climbed the Aiguille du Moine, the main difficulty being route finding.

On another occasion the same party set off for the Torino Hut, in an attempt to follow the old route through the séracs of the Glacier du Géant. The party reached the Torino at 9 P.M. after spending six hours (in traversing the séracs) of delicate and exhausting work—an exciting and unforgettable experience.

Drummond Henderson had a fortnight in the Graian Alps in mid-July. During the first week from Val d'Isère he did smaller expeditions, including Rocher de Bellvarde, Rocher de Charvet and the traverse of the Col de la Bailletta. Then he ascended the Grande Motte (3,656 metres) from Val d'Isère, a sixteen-hour day. He climbed the Aiguille de la Grande Sassière (3,746 metres) from Le Seutchalet, and made an abortive attempt on Le Dome.

The complete party at Val d'Isère consisted of ten persons, including Russell Marshall, A. M. MacAlpine and Geo. Roger, together with six J.M.C.S. members, one of whom has now joined the S.M.C. (Dr G. Freeman).

J. R. Marshall was with D. Henderson on the Grande Motte and Grande Sassière at least (if not on several others).

G. S. Roger sends the following notes about the doings of his party:—

J. R. Marshall, A. M. MacAlpine, G. G. Freeman and G. S. Roger, from Val d'Isère crossed the Col d'Oin and climbed the

Cime du Carro, descending to the Carro Hut, making from there an easy ascent of Levanna Occidentale. From the Refuge des Evettes they climbed the Ciamarella (3,676 metres).

MacAlpine, Freeman and Roger crossed the Col de la Galise and Col Nivolet to the Vittoria Emmanuel Hut. Thence they climbed to the Gran Paradiso (4,061 metres), descending to Noasca. From Val d'Isère they climbed the Grande Motte (3,663 metres).

MacAlpine and Roger went on to Chamonix and up to the Couvercle Hut. They had time to climb on the Moine before a break in the weather, which prevented the completion of the ascent.

B. S. Fraser was in the Pyrenees during the first half of August along with John Whyte (S.A.C.). From Gabas (Basses-Pyrénées) they climbed Petit Pic du Midi d'Ossau; from Sallent (Alto Aragon) the Balaïtous by the Brèche Latour, with two nights at Refuge Campo Plano. From Ordesa three days were spent on *massif* of Mont Perdu—to Refuge Tuquerouye by Col de Mont Perdu, to Refuge de Gaulis via Marboré and Cylindre, with cave exploration through Grotte de Casteret and back to Ordesa by Cotatuero.

Spanish frontier regulations and transport peculiarities caused much uncertainty and delay but provided amusing contacts. Heavy packs had to be carried as food was obtainable only at Refuge de Gaulis. Mr Fraser will gladly help anyone with further information.

D. H. Maling, in addition to his experiences in the South Orkneys, visited the Falklands in March 1950, where he met a nucleus of climbers at Port Stanley. Two J.M.C.S. members, F. K. Elliott, Lieut. F. R. Brooke, R.N., and several members of the R.N.M.C. were present. They climbed on many quartzite outcrops.

He then went over to Puerto Arturo at the southern end of Whiteside Channel in Tierra del Fuego. Here were various "Munros." The higher peaks of the main Cordillera lie 20 miles south, beyond Admiralty Sound, which there was no means of crossing. Two grand days were spent on these hills, the main difficulty being dense, virgin forest in the lower 2,000 feet, and the shortness of the winter days.

After Mr Maling returned in September he visited the Pyrenees, near Cauterets, and later at the Hospice de France above Luchon. He was chased off the main ridge near the Port de Venasque by a thunderstorm, descending into Spain by mistake.

SCOTTISH CLIMBING ACCIDENTS 1950.

19*th February*.—George Higgins (N.) dislocated collar bone when ski-ing on Beinn Ghlas.

6*th March*.—Gerald Hartley glissading top of D Gully on Buachaille Etive Mor. Head injuries.

25*th March*.—Richard Peake (26) (N.) trapped in gully in Campsies.

26*th March*.—Denis Mace fell on Buttress 2 of Aonách Dubh. Fractured femur.

April.—R. Anderson (S.M.C.) broke leg when ski-ing on Meall a' Bhuiridh, Glencoe. Brought down to road by hand transport. Leg X-rayed and set in plaster following day, and returned to business day afterwards. *No rescue party. No press reports and no publicity. Everything done by members of his own party and no one else inconvenienced.* An example of how such a matter can be dealt with by a really competent party.

1*st April*.—Angus Dowder (C.U.M.C.), Glencoe. Hit by boulder. Right arm hæmatoma.

24*th April*.—Noel Bridgewater (35) (N.) found in Corrie Lenach, Luss Hills; dead. Missing since 4th March.

8*th May*.—Novice (11). Scrambling on scree at head of Loch Ainort, Skye. Fractured forearm.

4*th June*.—Alastair Edwards (18) (N.). Climbing alone in the Winter Corrie, the Driesh, Glen Doll. Fatal.

5*th June*.—J. S. McKendrick (35) (N.) rock-climbing alone, Shelter Stone Crag, Cairngorms. Fatal.

11*th June*.—Walter Buick (67) (N.). Burn of Sorrow, Dollar Glen; hill walking alone; fatal.

14*th June*.—Novice (23), Glen Brittle; climbing unroped; head injuries.

19*th June*.—Eight of a party of seventeen B.B. lost and benighted in foul weather on Ben Lomond (N.).

22*nd June*.—Some experience (24); climbing unroped on Bidein Druim nan Ramh; head injuries.

28*th June*.—James Francis. Fell on Archer Ridge, Aonách Dubh; rescued by Lomond Mountaineering Club; superficial injuries.

7*th July*.—Slight experience (20). In Coolins above Coruisk, unroped; severe lacerations.

22*nd July*.—D. Bennet (E.U.M.C.), Rhum; fractured right tibia and fibia.

22*nd July*.—Jacqueline Menez (French), Ben Nevis; severe sprained ankle.

26*th July*.—Mary Dunstin (28) (N.), in Harta Corrie, unroped; fatal.

6*th August*.—Miss C. Stewart (G.U.M.C.), Garbheinn; lacerations to leg, etc.

16*th August*.—Seven of a party from Allt Sheallach Holiday Home, Onich; all novices; got stuck on Stob Coire nam Beith. One fell; no severe injuries.

26*th September*.—Wm. Pinkerton (47) (N.) died of exhaustion in Lairig Ghru.

26*th September*.—James Mackay (N.) drowned in River Dee (companion of above).

29*th September*.—Alfred Martin, Cluny, Glenshiel; head injuries.

2*nd October*.—J. Bell (G.U.M.C.) (Falkirk). Crowberry Ridge; fracture right femur.

15*th October*.—J. B. Erskine (45), some experience; Stob Coire nam Beith; fatal.

12*th November*.—Party of three (N.) trapped in Elephant Gully of the Brack.

12*th December*.—Rear Admiral Lauder (R.N. Ski & M.C.), avalanched in a gully on Ben Nevis; fractured leg.

17*th December*.—Man benighted on Aonách Dubh; exposure; rescue party out.

17*th December*.—Mrs Moffat (Pinnacle Club), Aonach Eagach; fractured leg.

26*th December*.—Harry Beckett (36) (E.) broke ankle climbing Cuillins near Coruisk.

Harry Beckett (36) and Derek Dowling (17) (E.) left Sligachan at 9.30 A.M. for Glen Brittle. They did not say where they were going, nor were they expected in Glen Brittle. They had no ice-axes, no rope and only Beckett had nailed boots. They went over Druim nan Ramh to Coruisk and made for Bealach Coir na Banachdich, where there was 500 feet of hard snow. Nearing the ridge Beckett fell and slipped down about 200 feet, breaking his ankle. Dowling was lucky to find his way to Glen Brittle safely. Dr Macdonald of Carbost was called in to arrange for a rescue party. As the party available were mainly hill walkers with no experience of rock or snow climbing, and as the snow on the Glen Brittle side of the Bealach was very hard, a decision (rightly) was made to approach via Coruisk. The party went by motor boat to Loch Scavaig, manhandled a dinghy to Coruisk, and rowed to top of loch, found Beckett, who had slid down some way further, and returned by same route carrying the dinghy and injured man on the stretcher from Coruisk to Scavaig.

Both men were lucky to get off with their lives as they broke all the basic rules of the game. The rescue party had a very arduous time and deserve great praise for their efficient work.

27*th December*.—P. J. H. Unna (72) (S.M.C.), Ben Eunaich; found dead under a cliff; presumed heart failure.

(N. = Novice; E. = English; C.U.M.C. = Cambridge University Mountaineering Club; G.U.M.C. = Glasgow University Mountaineering Club; E.U.M.C. = Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club; B.B. = Boys' Brigade.)

NOTES.

Chancellor Gully.—Unfortunately the account of the first ascent in the 1950 *Journal* omitted a complete list of participants. They were J. F. Hamilton, T. D. MacKinnon, G. S. Roger and Campbell R. Steven (author of article).

Aonach Dubh, Glencoe.—G. J. Ritchie sends a preliminary account of what are possibly new climbs on the east face of Aonach Dubh, three routes in all. Ritchie, along with John Wilkinson (F.R.C.C.), after sampling W. H. Murray's routes, did three climbs, each about 300 feet in length, on rough, sound rhyolite. The routes are cairned and have four to five pitches each. The first is up the arête bounding the face on the north, with first pitch optional. The second is the gully running down at the back of the buttress. The arête is graded *difficult* with a harder first pitch. The gully is *difficult*. The third starts at a rough, white-flecked slab towards the left of the main face, zigzagging up with various grooves to a final, exposed, right traverse across the face, under the overhang by the right corner —a *hard, severe*. The climbs have, later, been repeated by members of Edinburgh U.M.C.

The Cuillin Main Ridge.—During the absence of his companion, D. D. Stewart (Edinburgh J.M.C.S.) traversed the ridge alone from Gars-Bheinn to Sgùrr nan Gillean on 5th July 1950, using *vibram* rubber-soled boots. Leaving camp at 11 A.M. in Coire Lagan, without watch or any food, he estimated that he reached Sgùrr nan Gillean about 7.30 P.M.

Sgurr nan Gillean.—R. G. Folkard (London J.M.C.S.) and his wife climbed the Third Pinnacle by the face on 3rd August 1950. He reports that the two difficult pitches are under-classified, especially the Cave Pitch where bridging was necessary. They made a variation, by traversing out below the Cave, on fair holds, to the left. They then climbed the steep wall, on very small holds. The variation was *severe* in stockings and harder than the normal cave route.

White Slab Route, Skye.—P. Vaughan (J.M.C.S.) writes of a variation made recently on the White Slab Route in Coir' a' Ghrunnda above the first 80-foot pitch. Where the normal route crosses to the right he went diagonally up to the left for over 50 feet until it was feasible to return to the right to the base of the Slab. The left-hand chimney was taken behind the White Slab and up easy rock to a fine wall, giving 200 feet of good climbing, the variation being of about *mild-severe standard*.

Creag an Dubh Loch.—W. D. Brooker and Morgan climbed the Labyrinth in early June 1950. They found it long and hard, but, in the topmost section, were unable to reconcile their experience with the original account (*J.* 23, 32). Only one other ascent has been made, that by S. Thompson and Mrs Thompson in 1944

(*J.* 23, 277). It would be of interest to solve the location of these variations, if possible with some close-range photographs.

Dr W. Inglis Clark.—G. T. Glover, who wrote the "In Memoriam," (*J.* 20, 3) had been unable at the time to include a statement of Dr Clark's age. He now wishes to place the information on record. The dates are 1856-1932.

The Munros and "Tops".—A regrettable error occurs in this item in the "Notes" section of the 1950 *Journal*. Where John Hirst appears in roman type there should be *Mr and Mrs John Hirst* in italics. We apologise for the mistake and offer them our congratulations for this unique marital achievement of completing all the Munros and "Tops." Mrs Hirst is an original member of the Pinnacle Club and a member of the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club.

The "Skye" Guide.—W. M. Mackenzie makes a request that those who make new routes on the Cuillin, especially if these are long or complex, should supply a sketch, as accurate as possible, for identification purposes. This procedure is equally desirable in other districts as well.

Ben Alder Cottage.—I have been informed by the Rev. A. E. Robertson that the rumour, current among climbers for many years past and quoted in my book, "Undiscovered Scotland," connecting the name of the stalker McCook with the alleged suicide at Ben Alder Cottage, is without foundation. McCook died in his bed at Newtonmore, honoured and respected. Mr Robertson assures me that he was a very fine type of Highland stalker, level-headed and sensible.

W. H. MURRAY.

REVIEWS AND BOOKS.

This My Voyage. By Tom Longstaff. (Published by John Murray, 1950. 25s. 324 pp., illustrated.)

As the author is probably the greatest living authority on climbing and exploration in the Himalaya and High Asia, the greater part of his book is devoted to these regions, but he has travelled extensively in other parts; and chapters are included on the Alps, Caucasus, Rockies, the Arctic and the British mountains. While retaining throughout the thread of his own personal experiences he has woven into his story descriptions of the peoples and histories, animals and flowers, as well as of the peaks, passes and glaciers of these regions. It is a most agreeable and delightful book and should appeal, not only to the mountaineer but to the ordinary reader who is interested in adventure in the remote and rugged regions of the earth. The only criticism to be made is that the story has been too much condensed, but that is probably unavoidable. The maps are excellent but the photographs are not up to modern standards.

ROBERT JEFFREY.

A Progress in Mountaineering (Scottish Hills to Alpine Peaks). By Dr J. H. B. Bell. (Published by Oliver & Boyd. 25s. net. 424 pp., 34 photographs, 10 maps, and numerous diagrams.)

As we had expected of him, Dr Bell has written a book, which is, in the strict sense, unique. It is a text-book on Scottish mountaineering and the elements of Alpine climbing, but only six of its twenty-two chapters deal with pure technique. The remaining sixteen display the technique in use on Dr Bell's own climbs, first in Scotland, then on the Alps. The construction is original, resulting in a most readable text, full of great and exciting climbs and those humble routes which are the daily bread of the beginner (and indeed of all mountain-lovers). This alliance of technique with description has been made with judgment. Right at the start the reader is taken, not into the school but on to the hills, those best of all teachers, and his heart rejoiced on the snow, rock and ice climbs of three famous mountains. Thus refreshed he turns to his schooling—then out on to the mountains again. One of the most impressive later chronicles is the working out of the new Orion Routes on Nevis—the juiciest and biggest plum ever picked off the Nevis cliffs. The book bursts with valuable ideas. The Alpine section alone is of real, practical value to beginners. The guidance it gives is so clear and definite, so full of common-sense, that I found myself wishing that something like this book had been in print before I myself started Alpine climbing. But alas, there was then *nothing* like it.

Dr Bell has been lucky with his illustrators. The photographs have sparkle. The maps by Mrs Bell are unusually bold and clear. Miss Joan Tebbutt's diagrams are a work of double art: technically true and of firm beauty.

W. H. MURRAY.

Undiscovered Scotland. By W. H. Murray. (Published by Dent. 18s. 232 pp., with 24 photographs, 14 maps and sketches.)

The expressive and sensitive writing which illuminated W. H. Murray's first book, "Mountaineering in Scotland" is again evident in this further record of mountain exploration. He visits the bold rock peaks and splintered ridges of Rhum, and catches the distinctive atmosphere of this lovely island; he pays rich tribute to the qualities of Garbh Bheinn of Ardgour by his descriptions of the first ascent of Great Gully and the abortive attempt on the Leac Mhor. His winter traverses of Liathach and An Teallach are recounted to the great credit of these somewhat neglected hills. The range of experience is not only wide, but varied. The Rosa Pinnacle of Cir Mhor on a hot, summer day, and a day of gale on the South-west Buttress of Sgùrr na h' Uamha; the Aonach Eagach by night against the spectacular play of the aurora borealis, the weary trek from Coir-uisg after a camping mishap. In the accounts of the Shelf climb on Crowberry Ridge and the retreat from the menacing wind-slab of Castle Buttress, Murray admirably conveys the acute tension of difficult action. The latter description, built up against a kind of Wagnerian background of impending storm, is a forceful piece of writing. The photographs are mostly excellent, bright and crisp as the narrative, and Robert Anderson's sketches are works of art.

J. B. NIMLIN.

The Hon. Librarian reports the receipt of the following three books:—

The Mountaineer's Week-end Book, by Showell Styles (Seeley Service, 12s. 6d., 407 pp.). This is a comprehensive mine of information on all things from the heights of mountains to the words and music of climbing songs. *Subterranean Climbers*, by Pierre Chevalier (Faber, 16s., 223 pp., 23 illustrations and 10 maps). This is a fascinating account of caving in South-east France, very practical and altogether excellent. *One Green Bottle*, a novel by Elizabeth Coxhead (Faber, 10s. 6d., 279 pp.), tells of the emancipation of a girl from a Birkenhead slum, by her enthusiasm for mountaineering and rock-climbing on the Snowdon range.

We also extend a hearty welcome to the first issue of the *Irish Mountaineering Club Journal*, August 1950. We noted the formation of this Club a year or two ago. The Climbers Club have produced an excellent *Guide to Cornwall*, by A. W. Andrews and E. C. Pyatt. This new venture is very well produced, describing climbing on sound, clean sea cliffs, with much auxiliary information about the district. *The Mountaineering Handbook* (publishing date May) by the Association of Members of the S.A.C. (168 pp., 90 illustrations, pocket size, 8s. 6d.), is a translation and mine of technical information for those proceeding to the Alps.

We also beg to thank kindred Clubs for sending us their Journals in exchange for ours. These should be more often consulted in our Library.

THE JUNIOR MOUNTAINEERING CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

Annual General Meeting, Dinner and New Year Meet.

THESE were held in Fort William with Lochaber Section as hosts. There were forty-five members and guests in the Grand Hotel where, after an excellent dinner, the toast list commenced. Certain S.M.C. members were prominent among the speakers and their humour was not lost on the convulsing audience.

The business meeting was carried through in similar strain, and one member, bent on a re-trial for the "Admission of Females" case, lost his motion, amid laughter, on the reading of a poem prepared beforehand for such an emergency. It is possible that the case for a Club Button was heard on the same grounds. The meeting closed with singing to guitar and piano renderings by club instrumentalists.

The Mamores and Ben Nevis were scenes of great activities during the following days.

Members may be interested to know the words of the composition read by Lochaber Secretary at the A.G.M.:

(To the tune "When the Work's All Done This Fall.")

THE A.G.M.

A band of happy climbers held their usual A.G.M.:
There was smoking, drinking, talking until nearly 10 P.M.
When our Secretary, bless his heart, got up to tell us how
He'd be obliged if we would take the female sex in tow.

Can you imagine Lagan Garbh or Steall some years ahead,
With curtains on the windows and breakfast served in bed.
You'll have to take your boots off whene'er you reach the door,
'Cos Miss or Mrs Somebody has scrubbed the kitchen floor.

The motion wasn't carried I'm very glad to say.
And though we have no women we've something just as gay:
Thus, when you meet our members upon the mountains high
The only thing around their necks is the J.M.C.S. tie.

Now this year's proposal is not for ties or socks,
Not even for a bonnet to wear upon the rocks:
It won't be very costly, there will be no need to cadge,
For the one thing that's missing is a J.M.C.S. badge.

J. WYNE.

Section Notes.

Glasgow Section.—The Section is in fine trim. At the close of 1950, after considerable pruning of dead wood, membership stood at 191. Some eighteen meets were run, mostly by private bus, the greater number being on the favoured Glencoe and Lochaber run, with diversions to Taynuilt, Killin, Glen Clova, and Arran. Private parties also did much at home and abroad, and considerable help was given by S.M.C. members to two parties who visited the Graians. Six evening meetings, together with a like number organised by the S.M.C., were shared by members of both clubs. Graham Brown and Winthrop Young were the heavyweight speakers, but equally enjoyable if more frivolous talks were provided by club members. The usual joint photographic competition, a very successful annual dinner, and a smoker were also held.

The S.M.C. have kindly made available their new Glasgow Club-room to the section, and this has been much used, although attempts to make an institution of an informal weekly evening there have been abandoned. The Club-room now houses the section library, to which substantial additions were given during the year.

The President is Leonard S. Lovat and the Secretary is J. Stanley Stewart, 10 Whitefield Road, Glasgow, S.W.1.

Edinburgh Section.—Membership is 71 and 5 Associate Members, and there are a number of applicants.

The Section is very active, week-end Meets having been held every three weeks, except in summer months when one Meet per month was held. There has not been a month without a Meet. Meets took place at Crianlarich, Glen Clova, Glencoe (four times), Kinlochleven (twice), Fort William (twice), Arrochar, Braemar (Linn of Dee), Dalmally, Kingussie, Glen Isla.

Members spent climbing holidays in the French Alps, Skye, and the North and West Highlands. One member traversed the Cuillin ridge in very good time, alone. He did not carry a watch. The S.M.C. lectures have been appreciated and well attended. It has been decided to run bus Meets fortnightly commencing 13th January 1951.

The President is Stanley Cairns and the Secretary is J. Ferrier, 3 Comely Bank Place, Edinburgh 4.

Lochaber Section.—The most outstanding feature of Lochaber Section's membership, now almost 50, is the increasing local

proportion. It was probably little known in the past that some 60 per cent. of the members were resident in the Scottish Lowlands and England, and that their climbing in the West Highlands was, in the main, carried out during holidays when they could once again join the Lochaber nucleus. As a result of the change in proportion, meetings, films, and slide lectures can be held with excellent attendances. During summer months evening meets were held in addition to week-end meets, it being no uncommon sight to see a dozen or so climbers leave Nevis Bridge for the mountains.

Financially, the Section is again sound after having spent some £70 in the Steall area on the completion of the new bridge and the improvement of Steall Hut. As both are increasingly used, it appears to have been worthwhile work. The Annual General Meeting of the Section was most successful, films and slides being shown by Mr Ben. H. Humble after the dinner and business meeting.

The President is A. MacKellaig and the Secretary is J. Ness, Armadale Buildings, Fort William.

Perth Section.—Hopes of continuing the successful meets of the previous season and of creating a new record of activity for the Section suffered a very severe set-back. Out of eleven meets arranged only three took place, as the others had to be cancelled through insufficient support. Lectures and other social affairs likewise had to be cancelled. Financial problems among younger members are believed to be partly responsible. Despite these set-backs the Section is going ahead arranging meets and canvassing recruits. Membership stands at 22 and finances are sound.

The President is W. S. Pethers and the Secretary is T. P. Kemp, 151 South Street, Perth.

London Section.—The Section had 51 members at the close of the year 1949-50. Climbing meets have been run monthly at local outcrops and a very successful week-end meet was run in Derbyshire. The committee are somewhat worried by the fact that support for all club activities comes only from a small percentage of the total membership. The programme is, therefore, to be widened for the year 1950-51. On the unofficial side the year has been very successful. Many parties have visited Scotland—Skye remains a firm favourite. The subscription and entrance fee remain unchanged at 10s. and 5s. respectively.

The President is R. G. Folkard and the Secretary is Dr J. P. Wiltshire, 16 Wimborne Gardens, Ealing, London, S.W.13.

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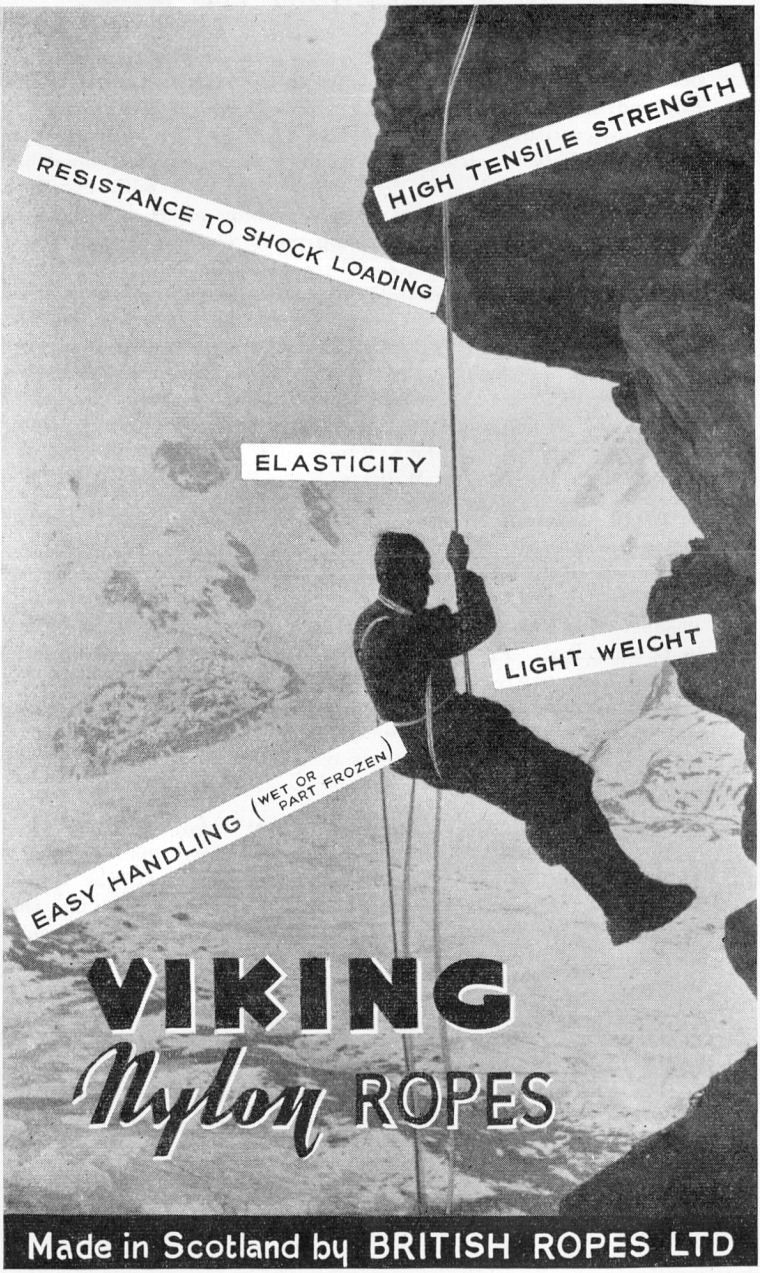
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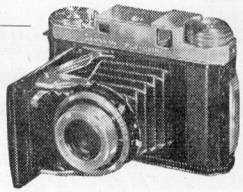

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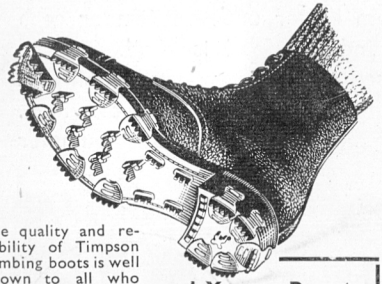

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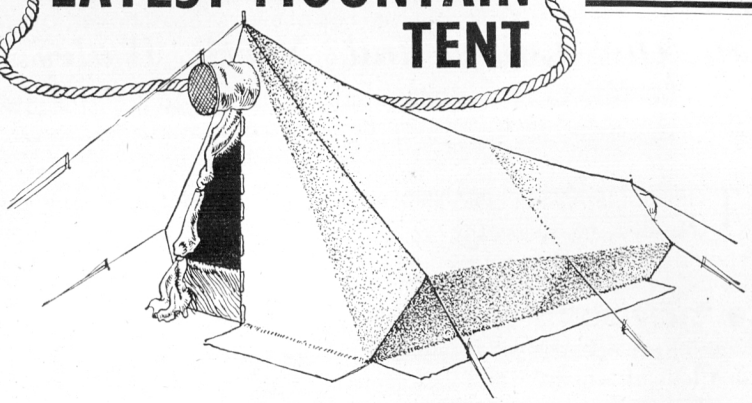

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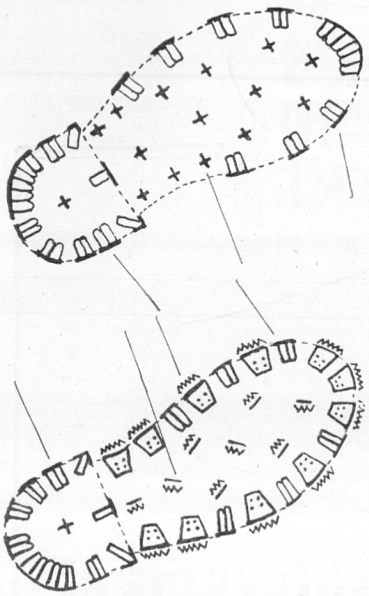

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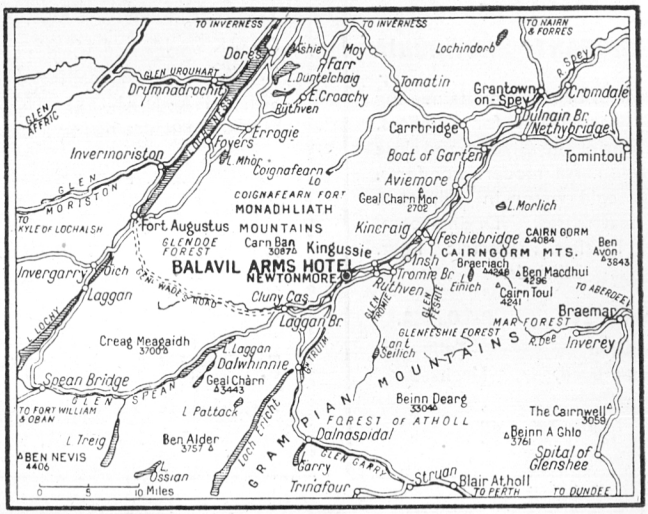

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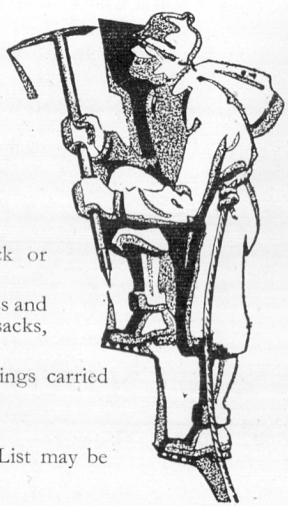

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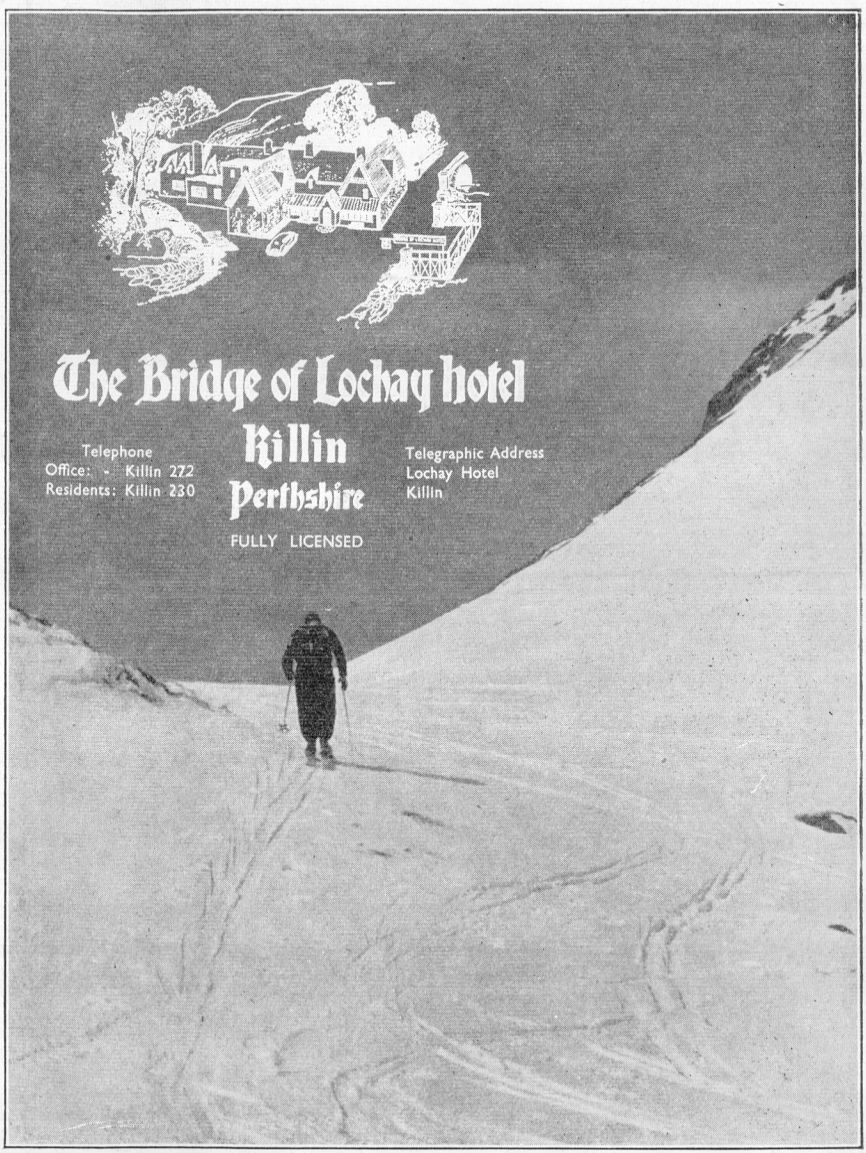
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