

THE BRIMMOND HILL.

BY ALEXANDER COPLAND.

“Come hither, ye townsmen, soot-besoiled,
Who cower in dingy nooks”.

—*Blackie.*

IN ancient times, when the perambulation of the outer Marches of the Freedom Lands of the Burgh of Aberdeen was associated with the Wapinschaw, and its observance was enforced by legislative and ecclesiastical authority, the frequent fulfilment of the obligation rendered any invitation to the Brimmond Hill superfluous. For the Brimmond Hill is situated within the boundary of the Freedom Lands, and forms part of the ancient Royal Forest of Stocket, granted by Charter, along with the Burgh, to the citizens of Aberdeen by good King Robert I. (the Bruis). The King, however, was by all accounts, and notably by this transaction, a cautious, prudent man. He did not entirely quit his grip of the forest, for he reserved the right of hunting and the growing timber; and, as over-lord, he conditioned that the Burgh should pay him a yearly Feu-duty of £213 6s. 8d. Scots, a considerable sum in those days. Every citizen, therefore, in the olden time was familiar with the Brimmond Hill. The citizens had liberty to cast peats there, in the free moss, and many of them were douped free burgesses under its shadow, but, now-a-days, since coal has taken the place of peat, except for “reestin” fires and distillery purposes, some citizens, we are sorry to say, are as ignorant of the locality of the Brimmond Hill as they are of the latitude and longitude of Burriaboolagha. They do not take that patriotic interest in the patrimony of the town that the Paisley weaver took in the property of the nation, for when he visited the Channel Fleet, he politely left a message for the absent admiral, that one of his “owners” had been on board inspecting the flag-ship! To those, therefore, whether soot-besoiled or not, who have never set foot on the Brimmond Hill, we offer heartily the

above invitation, and, in addition, our services as guide, philosopher, and friend. As to our qualifications, if having witnessed four Ridings of the Marches, and having taken part in one, will be accepted as evidence of fitness, we shall endeavour to produce "minister's lines", certifying the same, if that is wanted. We do not, however, propose to ride to the hill, except so far by railway, as we are doubtful whether we could keep a seat on horseback as siccar as the dapper little gentleman of the press who was complimented at the "Ridin'" of 1840, by being told that he stuck to his saddle as if glued to it—the envious suggested, by bumbees' wax. No, we propose to train to Buxburn, whence, by the kirk road, the Brimmond Hill is only some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant. Of the various routes to the hill, this is the shortest, and the most easily attainable, by reason of the suburban train service. You may, of course, attack the mountain from the south and west sides by the aid of the Echt and Cluny coaches, but the train we have found most convenient.

Having de-trained at Buxburn, we take the Inverurie road and cross the Bucks Burn by a substantial stone bridge, which, we believe, was built by George Davidson of Pettens, burgess, Abredonensis, who, having no encumbrance—which means a wife and bairns—and being of a devout and benevolent spirit, biggit brigs, kirks, and kirk-yard dykes "at his ovin expenses", as a stone tablet to his immortal memory, built into the dyke of Futtie Kirkyard, proclaims to the present, as to the past, and will do to future generations. Mr. Davidson was moved to the building of this bridge, it is said, by seeing a fellow-creature drowned when attempting to ford the burn in flood. Looking at the ordinary size of this streamlet in summer you would not suppose the burn capable of committing such an atrocity, but let us explain to you that the Denburn, a sister brook, which rises south-east of Brimmond, about half a mile from the source of the Bucks Burn, and runs townwards at the back of the swelling ridge you see on our left hand, has several times, within living memory, done the same thing when a boiling, roaring, turbid stream was rolling through and below the Auld Bow Brig at the Green. Yea, even

since that burn was covered up by the railway, it was given in evidence by a scavenger, a witness in an action for compensation for damage by injury to mercantile property by flooding from the burn, that the flood brought down kail-runts, trees, bushes, neeps, causey-stanes, a woman and other combustibles! Mark the appropriate use of the word "combustible" as applied to woman!

A little beyond Bucks Burn Bridge, a road strikes off to the left, at the entrance to which is a direction-post bearing that the Kirk of Newhills is $1\frac{3}{8}$ miles distant, and you cannot fail to recognise the kirk and Brimmond Hill from this point, or a little further on this road, as there our elaborate sketch of the kirk and hill was made. It may not be uninteresting at this stage to give a short account of this kirk and parish—especially the parish—which bears a name as singularly inappropriate as the teetotaler who calls himself a "temperance reformer", or the picturesque mounds of quarry *debris* we lately passed by train, called the Dancing Cairns. We have never yet met a fellow-creature who could truthfully declare that in any ecstatic moment he had seen these cairns "reeling". Yet give a dog a bad name, they say, and you may hang him. So with Dancing Cairns. That name long ago stopped the use of stones from that quarry for the North Pier owing, it was said, to their unstable tendencies. So much so, indeed, that a local poet wrote of them:—

"Our pier can neither firmly stand,
Nor sober habits learn;
For why? The stones that it compose
Are all from Dancing Cairn".

In Popish times, before the dawn of the Reformation, there was no parish of Newhills. The district now comprehended in that parish (which was created in 1666) previously formed part of the large parish of Saint Machar, whose Parish Kirk or Cathedral was, and is, located in Old Aberdeen, where its two venerable towers still point heavenwards in grand serenity, and are daily kissed at evening-tide by the sinking western sun. The church, however, did not leave the remote outlying districts of the parish

destitute of religious rites and observances. These were provided for by chaplainries. At the Chappel of the Virgin Mary, near Craigharr, or Stoneywood, such provision was made for the faithful in this quarter, and at this chappel, it is recorded, "is a well reckoned medicinall, whither crowds flock about the beginning of May. It's said to be good for the stomach and for cleansing and curing any ulcerous tumours on any part of the body when bathed with it". This well was, and is, located in the old kirkyard of Stoneywood, and fortunately its virtues were not entirely destroyed by the Reformation. It is true that within the enclosure in front of the comparatively modern kirk of Newhills, as you will see in passing, there has been planted or sunk a common-looking iron pump, which may be serviceable for watering horses, but no one has hitherto been bold enough to assert that the water from that pump is good for tumours, or the stomach, or ulcerous sores, nor has anyone proposed that it should be flocked to about the beginning of May. It is obviously difficult to manufacture tradition of "medicinall virtue" in connection with mere pump water. Whereas, at the ivy-mantled Well of the Virgin in Stoneywood kirkyard, a maiden lady, who died within living memory, and whose name and history can be given, for many, many years brewed her tea and sold her ale—for she kept an alehouse and sold exquisite twopenny—from the water from this virtuous well. And here let it be noted that, although in 1793 there were three alehouses in the parish, the minister states "the people were distinguished for sobriety and temperance, and for their regular and decent attendance upon divine worship". Kirsty—the maiden lady referred to—found from experience that this water hadnae its marrow for maskin' tea. This fact will, no doubt, appear incredible to those who nowadays run daft and frighten people about germs, and microbes, and bacilli in everything we eat and drink. Certes, there are animalculæ—living creatures—in everything but guid Scotch whisky, for as much as it is miscalled by people who pretend they never taste it, yet keep a bottle "libelled" "Poison for rats", which the rats never get a chance of

tasting. But Kirsty's experience of the virtue of the water from the Virgin's Well is fortunately not exceptional. We have heard of a fountain in Bath, the waters of which were found to have miraculous curative efficacy, and it was much flocked to by fashionable people of both sexes, until some inquisitive, meddling person discovered and published abroad that its waters also were filtered through a graveyard, after which its popularity rapidly declined.

After the Reformation, Mr. George Davidson, before mentioned, impressed with the inconvenience which distance from the parish kirk subjected the people to in this remote part of the parish, acquired and mortgaged the lands of Capelhills, Kingshill, or Kepplehills—part of the ancient forest and Burgh lands—extending to five ploughs, or about 700 acres Scots, for the maintenance of a minister in this district, and he also built a small Chapel of Ease in 1663, the ruins whereof—the east gable, and some portions of the side walls—draped by ivy, you observe as we pass the auld kirkyard on our way to the hill. After Mr. Davidson's death, application was made to the Lords Commissioners for planting kirks (in 1666) for a disjunction of this district from the parish of St. Machar, and for its erection into a parish by itself; and as my lords were not asked for any endowment, and as all parties were agreed, the application was granted, the new parish was created, and was christened the astounding name of Newhills! Now, the material of which the hills in the parish are composed is granite, which surely no one will assert is a new formation like concrete or adamant stone. What, therefore, possessed the minister and people to adopt such an unsuitable name for the parish goodness knows—for several ministers give diverse accounts of it—but their doing so seriously injured the previously received standard of antiquity—"as auld as the hills"—which never since has had the same solidity and meaning attached to it.

Passing the schoolhouse, beside the auld kirkyard, we come in sight of some targets planted on the bosom of the hill, and, peradventure, may find a squad of shooters in the moss, ping, pinging away at the targets with ammunition

liberally supplied, and as liberally used. To get out of range we have to diverge to the left, and to seek the summit of the mountain by way of a small farm called Watchmanbrae, of which more hereafter. We are now upon the hill. In 1817 the Ordnance surveyors selected it for a station, and this is their description of it:—"Brimmond or Bremen Station is about six miles north-west of New Aberdeen, and about one mile west of Newhills Kirk, and is situated on a low heathy mountain, cultivated to within three-fourths of a mile of the top on its south side". The recorded "bearings" from this station, taken by the 3 feet theodolite of the Board of Ordnance, on 17th June, 1817, are given as follows:—

Mount Battock	-	51°	4'	38"·31	Overhill	-	-	-	220°	31'	35"·83
Buck of the Cabrach	106	34	44	·57	Layton	-	-	-	226	40	45·30
Knock Hill	-	-	145	3 31·73	Tarbathy	-	-	-	246	34	24·71
Mormond	-	-	194	22 32·98	Blue Hill	-	-	-	322	1	11·99
Hill of Dudwick	-	202	49	27·81							

As the physical features and location of the Brimmond Hill may profitably employ and exercise the faculties of those who desire to attain thereunto, so the modern name of this "low heathy mountain" may furnish fodder for the philologist. John Spalding wrote the name "Brymman" in 1624; the Town-Clerk wrote it "Brymound" in 1627. In Macfarlane's "Geographical Collections", 1725, it is given "Bruman *alias* Druman". In Kennedy's "Annals" we have it "Brimond" in the account of the Riding of the Marches in 1698, and in the Ordnance Map of the present day it is called "Brimmond". The residents upon and around the hill call it as frequently "Drumin" as "Brumin". One suggestion made to the writer was that the name of the hill may be derived from the Celtic words "Druim" a ridge, and "Moine", peats or moss. No doubt the ridge and peats or moss were conspicuous features in the olden time, and while the ridge continues as of yore, the moss is to some extent still in evidence. Yet, if these features furnished the name, it would have appeared something like Druim-na-Moine. Robertson, however, states that the English prefix "Drummen" is from the Gaelic "Druim", meaning a

ridge, and is found all over Scotland. "Bruman or Druman" of Macfarlane may attach therefore only to the ridge. A friend, who is an accomplished Celtic scholar, apparently inclines to that derivation. He writes "Brai'-dhruimin—the brae of the little back or hill ridge. I suppose the *d* of *druimin* being aspirated (dh), was rendered almost silent, the two r's having combined—run together—squeezing out the unaccented vowels *ai*. If this conjecture is right, it would explain how there was any doubt about the proper form of the name, which is given Brimmond or Drummond. Further, this derivation suits the accent, which is a most important point. The final *d* has no meaning any more than it has at the tail of the name Macdonald"! Heigho! why was the Tower of Babel allowed to be built? and why should Providence be again provoked by Eiffel and Watkin Towers?

THE VIEW FROM BRIMMOND HILL.

This low heathy mountain, having a summit 870 feet above sea level, with no overtopping hill for miles around, affords a standpoint, on a clear day, for an extensive and varied view. The writer had such a view on the spring holiday of 1894. The weather was that of April—sunshine and showers—smiles and tears—but there was always some point in the panorama bathed in sunlight, while it was interesting to watch the rain clouds marching on, rank after rank, watering the braird and young fresh green grass, or veiling for a brief space the slopes and summits of the distant hills. There were several pic-nic parties on the hill that day, and a troop of children were busy at the bottom of the north-east slope gleefully blazing the whins, and soot-besoiling their clean frocks and pinafores among the burnt whincows. Their happy shouts and laughter drowned the song of the lark and the peevish plaint of the peewit. Arcadia for a brief space was restored. On that day we commenced, by command of our secretary, the outline of the view from Brimmond Hill, which accompanies this paper; and long before its completion we fervently wished our feet in Nicol Jarvie's boots, with hot water in them, when

we undertook such a job. How often have we gone to this hill expecting a grand view of Beinn a' Bhuid and his neighbours, and found them shrouded in gloom, with their auld cloaks about them? How often have Mount Keen and Lochnagar declined interviews, and even "Bell Rinnes" turned cold and coy? In despair, one day we were tempted to lift the veil of futurity, and get our fortune read at a gipsy camp in the moss at the foot of the hill, where William Anderson's "gryte army of horss and foot" was smored, but two ferocious dogs intervened, and frustrated our rash intention. The sketch is the product of many painful efforts. It is intended to be accurate, but in so far as it differs from nature, we should like that any deficiency be attributed to nature rather than to the painstaking artist.

Taking, then, that outline in hand, the gentle reader will be so good as look eastwards, where he or she will have a sea horizon of something like 36 miles in distance—if the day is clear. Turning a little southwards, if the smoke of the Silver City prevent not, will be discerned, at (1), the tower at the point of the Breakwater, the Breakwater itself, and the North Pier, forming a small triangle, across which, at (2), the magnificent new tower of Marischal College rises high. Then still further to the right and southwards, at (3), Girdleness and its lighthouse, about seven miles distant in a straight line. South of that, at (4), the high land forming the south side of the Bay of Nigg is seen. We are now upon the eastern extremity of "The Mounth", or, in modern nomenclature, the Grampian Hills, where, at (5), is the nipple of Baron's Cairn. A little to the westward, and in the foreground, the five semi-circular fronts of Harper's Ironworks are conspicuous objects, looking like a small encampment, and if Mr. Routledge's massive moral sanatorium in their neighbourhood were lime-washed, like the jail of Inverness it might be deemed ornamental by the people of Torry. The Kirk of Nigg has to be diligently sought for, as the surrounding wood and the higher ground beyond interfere with its visibility from this standpoint. At (6), the high ground towards the Cove shows the tall chimney of a farm steading and other buildings. Farther

round westwards, at S.E., the Loch of Loirston, nestling among the woods at its north and south-east sides, gleams in the sunshine. Then, in the lower mid-distance to the north-west of the loch, the woods of Tollohill are indicated at (8); while up again on the ridge (9) marks our old acquaintance the Blue Hill. At (10), the ground dips towards Ardoe or Ardoch, and in the gap in the far distance the high ground about Portlethen with the kirk and farm buildings, &c., thereon, about 9 miles distant, are distinctly seen. Still westwards (11) marks the late Mr. Boswell's monument on the Hill of Auchlee, and (12) the Kirk of Cookney; here the sea horizon terminates. Westwards from this point to due S., and onwards to (13) Cairn-mon-earn, the train of the "Mounth" extends in a long, flattish ridge, topped occasionally by the dim outlines of distant hill ranges. We are now getting among the outliers of our Scottish Alps. Cairn-mon-earn is enchained to Kerloch (14) by a range of hills from 1100 to 1200 feet high, the chief of which are Mongour, Monluth, and Shillofad. In the gap bounded westwards by Kerloch the hills at the head of Cowie Water stretch across the vista in the distance. Then about S.W., at (15), we have in the distance in the next gap between Kerloch and Clochnaben (16) the distant outlines of the Cairn o' Mount Hills and the hills farther away, rising, ridge upon ridge, beyond the river North Esk. At (17) we have Mount Shade on the north-east of Clochnaben, and (18) and (19) give us Scolty and its continuation by the Hill of Goauch westwards. Due S.W., we have (20) the fine conical summit of Mount Battock, with (21) its *confrère*, the Peter Hill, at the eastern boundary of the Forest of Birse. Westwards from the Peter Hill the Forest of Birse Hills (22) lead on to the Braid Cairn (23) and the Hare Cairn (25), surmounting and overtopping both of which the shapely cone of Mount Keen, upwards of 30 miles distant, is easily discerned at (24). In the foreground we have the long dark range of the Hill of Fare (27) cutting off the views of the Panannich Hills and "dark Lochnagar", but not entirely, for see, peering over the ridge of the Hill of Fare, the faint outline of the Cac Carn Beag (26) with a bit

of the mountain in the neighbourhood of the Ladder. Descending from the ridge of the Hill of Fare westwards, at (28) we reach the Barmekin of Echt, and in the nearer foreground, eastwards of it, the Hill of Keir, which, with the Westhill of Skene and the woods of Easter Skene, hide from our view the Loch of Skene. These physical but picturesque obstructions are to be deplored, for a sight of the Loch of Skene seems to be a *sine qua non* to the sightseer on Brimmond. We can only indicate the locality of the loch, and explain that, like Aberdeen from Morven, it cannot be seen because it is not in sight. Content yourselves with the Loch of Loirston (7) and the Bishop's Loch (anciently Loch Goul) of Parkhill (57), both of which can be seen sparkling like silvered mirrors on a bright day. At (29) we have, nearly 50 miles away, Beinn a' Bhuird with its massive, extended, lofty, rocky crest and mantle of snow, and, at (30), Morven presents his ample and stately outline in front of Ben Avon, which, at (32), snow-lad and ermined by jutting rocks at 45 miles distance, impresses the spectator with its calm, stern sublimity as he gazes on its north-east shoulder sweeping downwards to Glen Avon. In front, and closing up the vista, is the range of mountains midway between Glen Gairn and Strathdon, N.W. of Morven, rising successively in Meikle Sgroilleach (2432), Allt a' Bhreabadair Hill (2456), and Mullachdubh (2129). Returning to the lower foreground on the left and beyond the Barmekin, we have the Hill of Mortlich (31), near Aboyne, and on the right-hand side of the Barmekin, at (33), Craiglich and the range of the Corse Hills. Then due west, at (34), we reach the Hill and Forest of Corrennie, with, at (35), peering over a depression on the sky-line, the rising moon-shaped summit of Sockaugh of Leochel-Cushnie, the highest hill between Dee and Don east of Morven. Sweeping round northwards to the beautiful wide strath between Corrennie (Tillyfourie) and Cairn William, through which the line of the Alford Valley Railway is formed, we see stretching across the end of the far distant vista a nearer and a far more distant terrace of hills. The far distant (36) is the lofty mountain range west of Glen Nocht

and Glen Bucket, comprising the Socach (2356), Carn Liath (2398), Carn Mor (2636), Letterach (2583), &c. The nearer ridge (37) is that of the Callievar Hills, which dip to the Don at Brux. Keeping still northwards, we reach, at (38), Tillyfourie Hill, the southern flank of Cairn William, and (41) indicates the latter mountain. Over the sky-line of Cairn William the Buck of the Cabrach (39) asserts his presence at 30 miles distance, and just in front of the Buck the semi-circular dome of Lord Arthur's Cairn (40) 23 miles away, is distinctly visible. Lord Arthur's Cairn is on the left bank of the Don in Tullynessle, right opposite to Callievar's wooded summit. At (42) the Hill of Pitfichie indicates the location of Paradise, and, crossing the Don there, we are upon Bennachie. You must, however, if the day is ordinarily clear, see topping the sky-line of Bennachie, a little northwards of Pitfichie, the outline of Ben Rinnes, at (43), upwards of 40 miles away. Then, still along the ridge of Bennachie, (44) gives us the Tap o' Noth, whose cone invites hearty recognition. Along the rolling ridge of Bennachie by the Watch and Oxen Craigs, at (45), we reach the Mither Tap, and, at (46), the well-wooded side of Millstone Hill, in darkest green, contrasts with the brown heath of the higher Ben. Then, in the north-west, at (47), (48), and (49), we scan the range comprising the Hills of Foudland, Skares, and Tillymorgan, celebrated for the weight, solidity, and staying properties of their thick, heavy slates. This native product is now supplanted by the light material shipped from Port Dinorwic and Ballachulish. Our horizon now becomes somewhat flat until it is broken, at (50), by the fine rounded outline of the Knock Hill, 35 miles away. A gentleman who has had exceptional opportunities of clear and distinct views from Brimmond assures us that with a powerful glass he has seen the sea and the Caithness Hills in this direction, and the Isle of May in the south-east. We have looked in vain for both, but then our opportunities have not been exceptionally good. Resuming our circum-bendibus, (51) brings us to the finely-wooded Hill of Tyrebagger. At (52), between it and (53) Dyce Quarries, we have visited the Standing Stones of Dyce, a fairly complete

and most interesting Druidical circle. Away north by east (54) indicates the Hill of Mormond, eastwards of which, in the far distance, Sterling Hill can be descried, and southwards down to (55) Collieston, the sands of Forvie, and the mouth of the Ythan, a wide stretch of the land of Buchan is spread out, while the extensive fertile, champaign country of Formartine in the nearer distance is streaked by woodlands and cultivated fields. Coming along the sand dunes bordering the sea coast, at (56), the white houses of the Coastguard Station at Belhelvie are projected against the sea, and in the middle distance, at (57), the Bishop's Loch shimmers among the woods of Parkhill. Still further round Tarbathy (58), the south-eastmost of the gravel mounds known as the Hills of Fife in Belhelvie, rises on a swelling green hillock above and beyond the woods of Scotston and Denmore. At (59), we reach the mouth of the Don, a little south of which the western towers of Saint Machar's Cathedral (60) and the wooded hill of Tillydrone are seen. The swelling contour line of the Spital and Gallowhill shows on its edge, projected against the sky, besides other objects, the pillars of the large new gasometer there erected. This completes our boxing of the compass. The village of Dyce on the wide plain north-east of Dyce Quarries, the paper-works of Stoneywood and Mugiemoos, the course of the Don eastwards therefrom, and the villages of Auchmill and Woodside are so close at hand and so easily distinguishable as to need no pointing out.

It may be of interest to state that besides the natural uses of mountains, the Brimmond Hill was, from its altitude, selected in the olden time as the site of a beacon. The following minute of the Town Council of Aberdeen bears upon that matter:—

"22nd August, 1627.—The quhilk day Mr. Thomas Johnstoun, Baillie Alexander Jaffray, and Mr. Alexander Jaffray, and David Adye, ar appointed be the Councell to go to the Hill of Brymmond, within the friedom of this burgh, and thair to mark and designe the most commodious pairt for setting up of ane fyir bitt to give notice to the countrie people of the approtcheing of foran enemies, as lykwayes to consider quhat pairt about the toune is most fitting for anye uther fyir bitt, and best ansuerable and most conspicuous to give show and

warning to the keipar of the fyir bitt on the said Hill of Brymmound, and ordaines the foirnamed persones to report thair diligence to the Councell, &c., &c."

Which remit these "sponsible" persones duly fulfilled, and reported that they "went to the said Hill of Brymmound, and thair designed and marked the most conspicuous pairt for the fyir bitt, and causit gadder and erect a large cairn of stones on the top of the hill, and set up the 'fyir bitt'", and they further recommended the "gavill" of St. Ninian's Chapel on the Castle Hill, which from 1566 did duty as a lighthouse by upholding a "gryt bowat" or lamp, as a suitable place for giving notice to the keipar on Brymmound. Though there is still on Brimmondside a small farm called Watchmanbrae, as we have already indicated, and the civic arrangement of the "fyir bitt" was made in 1627, few of the people in the immediate neighbourhood are aware of the meaning of the name of that croft. It was here that the keeper of the "fyir bitt" lived, and whence, in less than ten minutes, he could reach the summit of the hill to show his answering blaze. This croft was for a good many years occupied by the gravedigger of Newhills, and so it was suggested to the writer that the name Watchmanbrae was given to the croft, because the sexton, who protected recently-interred bodies from the resurrectionists, lived there!

Although there are tumuli scattered over the north-eastern verge of the hill, where there is a rich growth of grass and whins, there is no distinct record of battle in that quarter among ordinary combatants. Yet the historic glory of the hill would have been incomplete had it been utterly dissociated from the pomp and circumstance of martial gatherings. Fortunate it is that John Spalding, the careful and precise clerk of the Consistorial Court of the Diocese of Aberdeen, has put on record the following veracious account of what was seen upon Brimmond Hill about eight o'clock on the morning of the 12th February, 1643:—

"William Anderson, tennent in Crabstoun, told me [John Spalding] he saw ane gryte army as appeirit to him, both of hors and foot, about 8 houris in the morning, being misty, and visiblie contynewit till sone rising, syne vaneishit away in his sicht, with noyes, into ane moiss hard besyde . . . Quhilkis visionis the people thocht to be prodigious tokenis".

And well they might. But one would like to know what William Andersone was about the night before, and whether he beddi't. However, this army was got rid of after a fashion which fairly puts Captain Bobadil's method of destruction entirely out of court—smored in a "moiss with noyes"! There is no question about the moss. One writer tells us there was a vast deal of mosses scattered up and down through the parish. He further remarks that the parish was "miserably divided with mountains". Out upon him! what would he have had! A country as flat as a bannock!

The unimproved summit of Brimmond Hill extends about a mile from east to west, and rather more than a mile and a quarter from south to north. In the upper part of the hill the vegetation is short heath, grasses, and carices, with, in hollows among stones, ferns and stunted whins. Lower down, along the hillside, the heather thrives better, gets more vigorous, the whins become more assertive, and with the broom, also a luxuriant grower, flower gorgeous when in full bloom. Interspersed among the prevalent vegetation in the lower reaches is a plentiful variety of sub-alpine plants. The toiler on his holiday can here stretch himself on a fragrant blooming bed of heather, whence, at his ease, he can gaze upwards at the soft silent floating clouds, bask in the sunshine, and be fanned by the soft summer wind. If he takes interest in the "Common Good", with the aid of the small map prefixed to Cadenhead's excellent sketch of "The Territorial History of the Burgh of Aberdeen", he will, from Brimmond, be able to trace most of the lands of Garden or Kepplehills, Shedocksley, Tulloch, Kingswells, Foresterhill, Woodside, Kingshill, Bog-fairly, Rubislaw, and Hazelhead, feued by the town in 1556-7, for an annual sum of £263 6s. 8d. Scots, or £21 18s 10½d. sterling. (The fishings on the Dee from the Bridge downwards, and on the Don, from the cruives seawards, also went for an annual feu-duty of £329 3s. 4d. Scots, or £27 8s. 7½d. sterling.) These lands were all included in the Forest of Stocket. According to Mr. Munro in his carefully-compiled account of the Common Good, the annual

feu-duties from lands and fishings parted with by the Town amount to only some £70 sterling in all, whereas in 1888 the annual revenue which the properties represent amounted to not less than £40,000.

One of these properties, that of Kingswells, deserves more than mere mention on account of the Jaffray connection. One of the Jaffrays named in the Town Council minute of 22nd August, 1627, was the Laird of Kingswells, the father of the more celebrated Provost Jaffray of the days of the Commonwealth, a man held in high estimation by the Lord Protector, who played a prominent part in national as well as in local politics. The elder Jaffray was a shrewd, money-making man, opulent in his day, but "not being of the old blood of the toun", as Spalding explained, his promotion to the Provost's chair gave offence to certain amiable people, who took their revenge and manifested their feelings in a somewhat unusual fashion. "Mony lichtleit both the man and the electioun", writes Spalding, "not being of the old blood of the toun, but the oy of ane baxter, and, thairfoir, wes set down in the prouestis deas before his incuming (ane bakin pye) to sermon. This wes done diuers tymes, but he miskenit all and neuer querellit the samen". The Provost, though a somewhat determined and passionate man, took no notice of the damp, soft bombs, although, no doubt, the Charles Maydon of that time felt and looked unutterable things at this civic insult.

This property of Kingwells affords at the present day an example, now somewhat rare, of the system of leasing and managing landed property in this country a century ago. In 1788 the then proprietor of Kingswells, also an Alexander Jaffray, was in business and resided in Dublin, and he had a son of the same name also resident there. The lands of Kingswells were let in that year to William Black of Cloghill for sixty years, with the privilege of naming within three months before or after the expiry of the sixty years a life upon the duration of which the tenancy of the lands should continue. The lessee had right to sub-let, and also to assign the lease. A life was named at the time re-

quired, which still endures, and so the lease of Kingswells, upwards of 100 years old, is still running on. Besides that, there is this peculiarity. The owners of the property, the trustees of the late Dr. Francis Edmond, are sub-tenants of and pay rent to the lessees, who continue to pay the same rent as they did more than sixty years ago, and will do till the termination of the lease. The late Dr. Edmond acquired the property from Miss Jaffray, who resided in Old Aberdeen, and was the last of the Jaffrays. The lease referred to specially provided that the old Quaker burying-ground upon the property "should not be converted to the uses of agriculture and farming, but be sacredly preserved in its present condition for the sole purposes of interment as heretofore". And sacredly it is preserved to this day.

There is an abundant supply of excellent water on all the farms upon or around the Hill of Brimmond. On the north-east side, from the farm of Esseyhillock to that of Watchmanbrae, there are seven wells—a well to each farm and one to spare. No less than five burns take their rise on the hill or on its flanks, viz.:—Bucks Burn, at Denhead of Cloghill; the Denburn on Kingswells, within half a mile of the Bucks Burn; the Brodiach Burn, on south-west side of Brimmond; the Littlemill Burn, near the farm of Wineford; and the Goughburn, on the north-east of the hill.

As every patriotic son of Bon-Accord ought to know the location of the "Douping Stane", we cannot leave the hill without pointing that out. Proceeding north-westwards on the summit of hill, we pass a small cairn of stones, which has been disturbed probably by the antiquarians who were recently burrowing in Elrick Hill for a robbers' cave two miles long in fundamental granite! Let us assure them that the letters K.C. on the iron dent fixed in the centre of this cairn do not indicate the sepulchre of the king of the ancient Britons—"Old King Cole"—for he was buried in Kyle. It is simply a march indicator of lands belonging to King's College. Looking north-westwards from the brow of the hill, we see the farm steading of Tulloch, and a road running westwards therefrom until it forms a junction with a road running northwards past the farm of Wineford on

the west flank of Brimmond. A little beyond the apex of the triangle formed by the junction of these roads in a bit of rough ground—"ane little moss"—reposes No. 31, *the "aid to memory"*, a large boulder, the softness of which some amongst us still remember. Other stones have been used as "douping" stones at march ridings, for at these social gatherings there was in the olden time a good deal of conviviality, neighbourly feeling, and brotherly love. On such occasions there appears to have been a disposition to indulge in "douping" with unstinted liberality. In the good-natured confusion mistakes were no doubt made. But what did it matter, one stone was as good as another for the purpose.

From this point a good view of Elrick Hill is obtained, and one begins to understand that the complaint of the topographer that the parish is "miserably divided with mountains"—a complaint which no member of the Cairngorm Club could be expected to sympathise with—has some foundation. We consider the grievance endurable. The woodlands of Craibstone, and the ornamental belts on the sloping, undulating ground eastwards in the direction of the Goughburn, and the sheltering plantation in the neighbourhood of the Convalescent Home, established by Rev. Dr. Smith and his worthy lady, on a sunny knove in the vicinity of the crystal caller water of the Clashbog Well, richly variegated and beautify the landscape. The salubrity of the climate, brought about by draining and planting and cultivation of the soil, renders it somewhat difficult to understand worthy Mr. Brown's account of the rigors endured in his time. Writing in 1793, he says "the air is extremely sharp and piercing, and the most prevalent distemper—the rheumatism—is commonly attributed to the influence of the east wind, which blows here with unusual keenness". What would the good man say if he were now to wake up and see the cottage homes of his successor, Dr. Smith, cosily and comfortably smiling at rheumatism and the east wind, where the dwellers in dingy nooks, who have been drawn back from the gates of death, are strengthened and reinvigorated, and returned to the busy and industrial world until their appointed time?