

OUTLYING NOOKS OF CAIRNGORM.—No. III.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM FORSYTH, D.D.

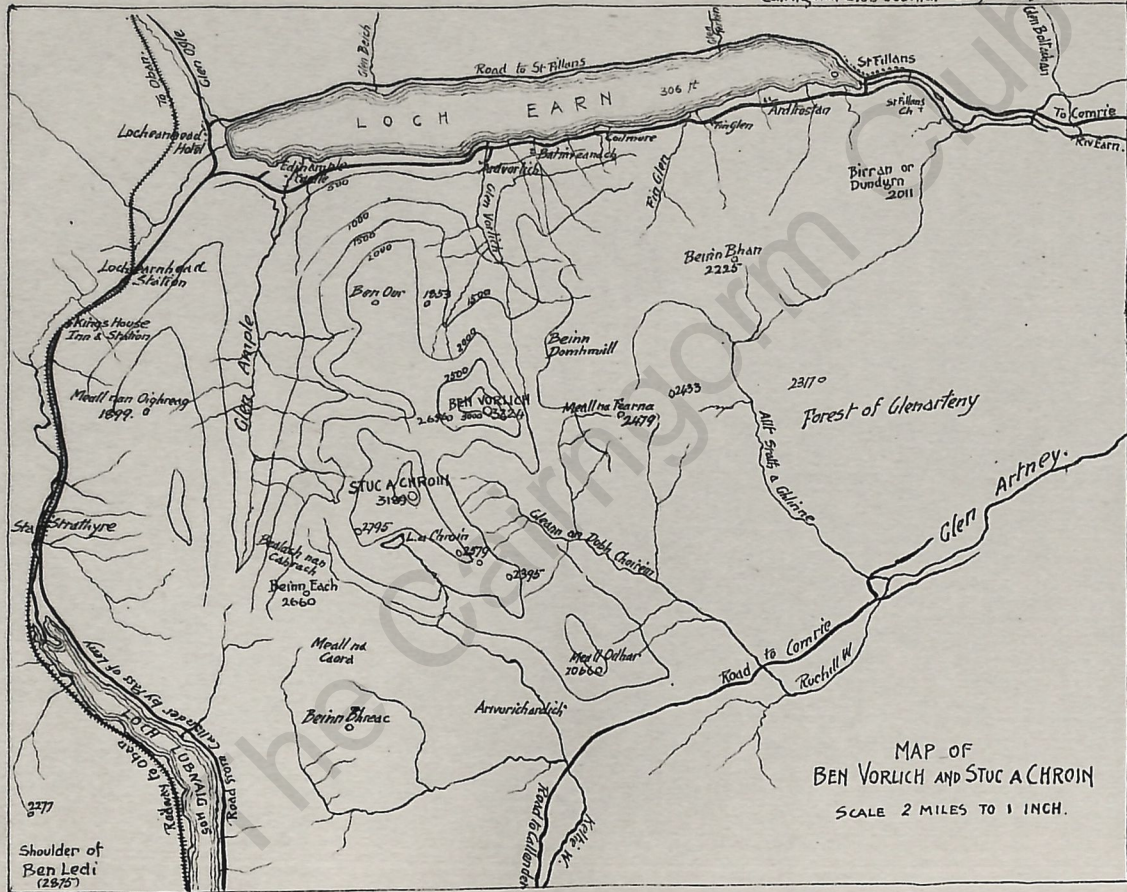
CAIRNGORM stones have been found here
CREAG and there among the hills. Sometimes, and
NA FEITH especially after heavy rains, one may be
BUIDHE. picked up in the bed of a torrent, or in
loose gravel, but these are generally of
little value, though they may serve as specimens. The best
have been got by digging. Experts can tell from the kind
of rock and the quartz veins where they are most likely to
be found. Various places are pointed out, such as the
Garten Quarry, where valuable finds were made. The late
Mr. James Grant, Brainedin, Abernethy, commonly called
"Rebhoan" from his having been born, and having long
resided at that old sheiling near the Green Lochan (see
C.C.J., Vol. I., p. 134), was one of the most successful
"diggers" of recent times. Some thirty years ago, I spent
a summer's day with him on Cairngorm. He showed me
various places where he had found stones, and in particular
one very curious spot where he had discovered quite a
treasure. It was on the shelving rocks of the Feith Buidhe.
Here there is a narrow gully, broken by ledges and falls.
On the left side, about a third of the way from the top of
the cliff, there is a hole or "pot" in the rock, about eight
feet deep and three feet wide. When Grant discovered it
the "pot" was full of sand and *debris* of granite and spar,
and when he had cleared this out he came upon great spoil
of crystals of all sizes and degrees of purity. Amongst
them was one upwards of 50 lbs. in weight, which was
afterwards purchased by the Queen for £50. Grant also
showed me a place where he had found specimens of the
green topaz; and he said that from the character of the
rock, he was satisfied that by following the vein and
blasting good crystals might be obtained. There is a
strange story as to the finding of a green stone.

(*i.e.*, The Carlin of the Stones) came from "CAILLEACH the Lowlands of Banff. It is said she had NAN CLACH", dreamt of finding a precious stone in Glen Avon. Perhaps she had heard the legend of the crystal that was sometimes seen sparkling brilliantly in the cliffs above Loch Avon. Be that as it may, she could not rest; so one summer she set out for Cairngorm. Long she sought—but in vain—

"Time passed on, while still her lonely efforts found
No recompense. Derided, and at length
By many pitied as insane of mind".

But strange to say her quest was at last successful. She found a splendid beryl. It was about the size of a wine glass and of rare beauty. Through the good offices of the parish minister a purchaser was found, and the widow's purse was filled and her heart made to sing for joy. But the finding of the stone took such hold of her mind that she could not rest. Year after year she returned to the hills, making her home for a while at one of the nearest crofts, but often passing whole nights alone under the Shelter Stone. It was a surprise to tourists and visitors to come suddenly on this weird woman digging at the foot of some precipice, or searching the bed of some winter torrent. Once the late Lord R. and a party fell in with her in Glen Avon. Lord R. said he wondered she had courage to go about in such a wild place alone. She answered, "Why should I be afraid? I never see anything worse than myself, and God is as near me here as in the plains". This reply puts one in mind of the famous saying of Howard: "The way to heaven is as near from Grand Cairo as from England". She found many stones on Cairngorm, but never again one like the beautiful beryl. One summer she was missed from her accustomed haunts; let us hope she had found "the pearl of great price" and entered into rest.

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N
 Loch Earn 306 ft
 Glen Vorlich
 Ben Vorlich 3224
 Stuc a Chroin 3199
 Lochan
 Sea Level
 Cross Section of Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin.
 S
 Ben Road to Callander

MAP OF
 BEN VORLICH AND STUC A CHROIN
 SCALE 2 MILES TO 1 INCH.

Shoulder of
 Ben Ledi
 (2875)