

## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

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THE following are brief notes of a walking and climbing  
IN GLENISLA, excursion from Edinburgh to Braemar and back, on  
MAR, AND 16-20 April, 1897.

ATHOLE. The party—three in number—left Edinburgh on the morning of the 16th for Alyth. The real start was made from Alyth about 3. The route was right up Glenisla, except that, to save distance, the short track was taken, keeping to the westward of Kirkton of Glenisla, instead of going through it. The weather was fine, and the walk altogether enjoyable. Nightfall found us at the head of the glen, when most comfortable quarters were secured.

On the 17th, a start was made between 8 and 9 o'clock. The route taken was by the track which runs across the summit of Monega Hill (2917). The summit, where it flanks Canlochan glen, was deeply corniced, and the sides, though not precipitous, are steep enough and high enough to afford a very fine view as one looks over and down to the bottom of the glen below. Leaving the summit of Monega, and striking north-westwards, the next point was the Glas Maol (3502). The snow was unbroken and apparently deep, but not carrying, and the going was comparatively heavy. A wide expanse of country was spread out to the south, but northward the prospect was not so clear. But, at anyrate, most of the readers of these pages are much more familiar with the various peaks than the writer can pretend to be, so any attempt at enumeration may be spared. The plan of campaign was to keep the ridge, and, accordingly, steps were now bent towards Cairn na Glasha (3484). Approaching that top, the gully to the north-west was a very fine sight, with its deep ravine slopes and heavy snow cornice. The next top, Carn an Tuirc (3340), has no cairn, so far as could be seen, and it certainly does not deserve one. It raises in a very marked manner the question—what is a separate peak? Except, indeed, that, in common with many others hereabouts, it has no peak at all, nor anything approaching one. The descent was now made on Loch Callater, the level of which was struck near the cottage at the north-west end of the loch, and something like an hour and a half later found us at Braemar.

For the 18th, the idea had been Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuird, by Glen Sluggan. But the plans were altered, and the Dee crossed somewhat above the village, an approach was made by Glen Quoich, and the south top of Beinn a' Bhuird was attacked. The snow was agreeably hard, and the top (3860) was reached without difficulty, except a very high wind and drifting snow and hail. But once on the top, the wind was encountered in even greater strength, and the mist



came down to shut out everything. A regular blizzard blew, with benumbing effect. The north top was, of course, nowhere to be seen, and after crouching behind the cairn for about 20 minutes in the hope that the conditions would improve, it was reluctantly resolved to abandon the other top, and also Ben Avon, and to beat a retreat. The return was made by the Quoich, and the Dee was crossed by one of the bridges which at this season are open to all. The sleeping-place was Inverey.

On the 19th an early start was made (6 a.m.). The route taken was right up Glen Ey. For seven miles or so there is more or less of a road, though it cannot be said that much trouble has been taken as regards bridges. Two considerable streams have to be forded. Where the glen turns towards the west, the scene becomes very weird and deserted-looking, especially on a dull, misty, drizzling morning—now raining, now snowing—which was our experience. Once past Alltandhar Shieling the order is—go as you please and keep right if you can. Beinn Iutharn Mhor (3424) and Beinn Iutharn Bheag (3011) form a grand gateway at the very head of the glen. Through this opening, and up the low ridge to the S.E., we are again on the snow, and when the ridge is gained, the sight of the loch marked in the Ordnance map gives assurance that the right track has been kept. The next difficulty is to find Glas Thulachan, which is to be to-day's climb. But by the aid of map and compass the right direction is kept, and the top is reached at last (3445). The next objective is the An Lochain burn, and, in the prevailing conditions, a constant reference to the compass is for some distance necessary, in order to avoid adding to the fatigues of what was found to be in itself a sufficiently heavy day. At length Beinn a' Ghlo is made out, and one knows then where one is. The Tilt was forded at 12:30 at its junction with the Lochain, and Blair Athole was reached in due course. Altogether it was a most enjoyable expedition, barring the loss of the other Cairngorm summits, and the unfavourable weather on the last day.—JOHN BURNS.

THE spring excursion of the Club this year was to this BEN AIGAN. Banffshire eminence (which is fully described elsewhere), and took place on 3rd May. The general inclemency of the spring probably accounted for the small attendance, the party numbering only 23. The day, however, was fine, and the outing was voted a great success. The ascent was made from Orton station by way of Sheriffhaugh and the cleft with the "dendritic markings" referred to in the article, Mr. Lawrence, who joined the party at Keith, discovering several interesting specimens, which he freely distributed. On the summit the party were met by Mr. A. R. Stuart of Inverfiddich, Mr. W. M'Combie Stewart, St. Helen's, Craigellachie; Mr. A. Murison, banker, Aberlour; Mr. Macpherson, schoolmaster, Aberlour; and several other gentlemen. The descent was made to



Balnacoul, and profuse hospitality was tendered the party by Mr. A. R. Stuart at Birchbank, and by Mr. M'Combie Stewart at St. Helen's. Dinner took place in the Craigellachie Hotel in the evening—Mr. Robert Anderson, chairman of the Club, presiding, Dr. Cameron being croupier. Mr. Lawrence has favoured us with the following notes regarding the railway journey from Keith to Orton:—Shortly after leaving Keith station, the valley of Boharm is reached, the lands of Auchlunkart lying on the south side of the railway line, the property on the north side belonging to the Seafield family. In early times, the bottom of the valley had been one great swamp or lake, from Bridgend, near Keith, to where Mulben station now is. In the course of ages, the growth of vegetation in the lake had dried up the water, and formed what, in later times, was known as

“ The Big Moss o' Mulben,  
Where tappit stanes stand up like men ”

—these “tappit stanes” being large white blocks of quartzite which had been deposited during the ice age. This long stretch of valley or moss still forms a sort of natural watershed, and is partly drained to the east into the river Isla, and to the west by the Mulben Burn into the Spey. This burn, which drains not only the west end of the moss, but the north end of the Ben Aigan valley, was formerly called Orkil, and the lands on its banks were called Inverorkil. Leaving Mulben station, the railway line proceeds down through the glen of Inverorkil, cuttings for the line exposing the various strata. There are, first, the Ben Aigan quartzites; and then, about half-way down the glen, a small volcanic dyke, which can be distinctly traced on both sides of the cutting. Landed at Orton station, the Spey—by those proceeding to Ben Aigan—is re-crossed at Boat o' Brig, a place of historic interest; and the parish of Boharm, which is here reached, has also a most interesting history.

SUPPLEMENTING the article on “Mount Battock and MOUNT Clochnaben” (Vol. I., pp. 138 *et seq.*), I may give some BATTOCK AND details of a walk by Mr. Charles I. Beattie and myself GLENDYE. on 27th March. Starting from Aboyne at 8.30 a.m., on the arrival of the first train from Aberdeen, we walked to the Forest of Birse by the “Fungle” road, and then to Mount Battock by the footpath described in the article mentioned, though large accumulations of snow rendered the latter part of this footpath very indeterminate. We encountered extensive patches of snow on Mount Battock itself; but, on the whole, we found walking across snow a much easier and more expeditious way of reaching the top than clambering over grass and heather. The view from the summit, with the far-off mountains covered and the lesser hills streaked with snow, was more than ordinarily picturesque; Edzell and Brechin, it should be mentioned, are plainly discernible—their omission



from the description of the view in the article is inexplicable. Striking down the south-eastern slope of Mount Battock, we made direct for Glendye, and, walking across the valley—encountering on the way some of the moss-haggs and peat-furrows that infest this region—we came on a track alongside the Water of Dye. This track soon broadens into a path (marked on the O.S. map), which leads to Glendye Lodge. It is a long walk to that spot, but the walk is relieved by occasional pretty “bits” of the Dye. From Bridge of Dye to Banchory, by Strachan, is another long walk; altogether, our day’s walk may be moderately computed at 26 miles. The following is the record of our time, the rate of walking all day being comparatively easy:—Leave Aboyne, 8:30 a.m.; arrive keeper’s house at Auld-dinnie, 9:20; Forest of Birse (Old Castle), 10:30; Path on White Hill, 11:0; Water of Aven, 12:0; Base of Mount Battock, 12:20 p.m.; Summit, 1:10. Leave Summit, 1:40; arrive at track, 2:40; halt till 3:0; arrive at Glendye Lodge, 4:40. Leave Bridge of Dye (after halt), 5:0; arrive at Bridge of Bogindreep, 6:0; Strachan, 6:20; Banchory, 7:20.

—ROBERT ANDERSON.

AN Aberdeen party of three reached Inver Inn on 1st  
 BEN AVON May, with the view of ascending Ben Avon the follow-  
 IN MAY. ing day. The weather was wretched, but a start was  
 nevertheless made. Mist was in possession of mountain  
 and glen; but a hurricane dispersed the clouds, and the prospect was, for  
 a time, all that could be desired. Making our way up Glen Feardar, we  
 left the old cart road a little beyond Auchtavan, and by and by struck  
 a path which is marked with white-washed stones for the convenience  
 of belated sportsmen. The Gairn crossed, we were favoured with  
 frequent falls of snow. The climb was a continuous battle with the  
 elements; near the top of the ridge the weather was quite blizzardous.

The Clach was, however, reached, but there was little to be seen—  
 only an occasional glimpse of the snow-lined corries of Beinn a’ Bhuid.  
 The great black pinnacles of Ben Avon stood out in excellent contrast  
 to the surrounding snow. We enjoyed the storm effects despite our  
 physical discomforts, leaving the cairn with a keener appreciation of  
 the difficulties of winter mountaineering.—H. A. BARRY.

AT Easter this year my wife and I spent a few days in  
 BRAERiach the Rothiemurchus Forest. In such a chilly spring it  
 IN APRIL. was pleasant to hit upon a week of dry weather with  
 abundant hot sunshine. For much of the time the  
 wind was from the east, and keen; but that only made walking the  
 easier and pleasanter.

On Easter Sunday we walked up Glen Eunach to the Loch Bothy.  
 The view of the north face of the Cairngorms was very fine, and as we  
 approached Braeriach, the appearance of its snow-covered ridges and  
 corries was very tempting. We examined Coire Dhondail from below  
 and thought it too difficult to attempt. But the well-known northern



ridge looked very possible. Just where it ran into the main mass of the mountain, the snow looked very smooth and glazed, as if it were ice. We wished to go on the mountain in the snow if possible, and I decided to examine the ridge at close quarters the next day, and see whether we had any chance of doing so.

Accordingly, the next morning I was at the lower bothy by half-past ten, and shortly after began ascending the ridge. I came to the snow at about the 2500 feet contour, and was well pleased to find it smooth and firm, giving an excellent surface to walk on. I sat awhile in the lee of a great stone, with my plaid wrapped round me, and watched a snow-flurry come hurtling across Coire an Lochain. When this ceased, I resumed my upward path, and was not long in reaching the narrow place between the two corries. In this ascent I experienced a curious phenomenon, new to me, and of great beauty. The edges of my plaid, of my knickers, of my gloved hand, &c., were bordered, at the moment of beginning any movement, by a two-inch band of brilliant violet light. I had but a short time to notice this, for another snow-flurry enveloped me, and it was necessary to walk warily, especially as I now approached the ice-looking snow. In order to facilitate my descent, I cut great crosses in the snow with the spike of my stick, thinking they would guide me along the middle of the ridge. I found the doubtful snow perfectly safe and easy to walk on; and, as it was only about mid-day, I decided to go some distance towards the summit and see what the snow was like on the great plateau. By this time all the higher ground was wrapt in a rather dense mist, driving across from the south-west. This made it difficult to see the way forward, and I foresaw that it would make it even more difficult to see the way back, as the top of the ridge might not readily be found, and the steep edges of the corries must be avoided. To simplify matters for my return, I drove my stick deeply into the snow at each step forward, and turned it like a pointsman's lever, thinking to make tracks that I could follow on my return. An ice-axe would have been a more suitable weapon. Thus progressing somewhat slowly and laboriously, I worked upwards, bearing to my left, and keeping as keen a look-out as the weather conditions permitted. Ere long I perceived the snow cornice overhanging the Garbh Coire, and I knew that I had not borne enough to the left. I turned sharply in that direction, having no desire to go near the cliff edge in the mist, which seemed getting denser.

Again, a little later, I saw another snow cornice, and recognised by the dimly seen outline that I was very near the summit. Just as I was about to rejoice over this, the air was filled with dense, driving snow. I saw at once that but a few minutes of this would cover up my tracks, and leave me in a somewhat uncomfortable plight, and so I turned and fled. But in a hundred yards I had no tracks to follow, fresh snow covered up all my painfully-made marks, and I was without guidance to the top of my ridge. Bearing away to the right, so as to



cut almost directly across the wind, I trotted down the slope till I felt it becoming less steep, and then peered carefully about till I saw a prominent black triangle of rock that I had noted as a fair "leading cairn". From this it was not difficult, even in the mist and driving snow, to find the top of the ridge; though it was very obvious that with a north-east wind blowing snow against one, it would have been impossible. At the top of the ridge I crouched behind a friendly rock and lunched, eating freely of ice feathers to quench thirst. Then I skated down the ridge, following my cross marks which were quite easy to see. In the lower parts of the snow I found softer places, and once went through. When I got home I found I had rather badly bruised and blistered my heels, probably with kicking footmarks. These prevented my going again on the mountain.

After my return I looked up the *C.C.J.* (vol. i., p. 189) and found there Dr. Gordon's account of an appearance of colour phenomena, also on Braeriach, similar to what I saw. I wrote a note on the matter to *Nature* of May 13th, and some interesting correspondence followed.

The phenomenon, is, in all probability, purely subjective. The retina, after receiving the impression of a certain colour—in my case the ruddy-brown of my clothing—perceives the complement of that colour when suddenly turned to the white snow. This has been utilised in the familiar advertisements of Beechbury's Soap, &c. One correspondent of *Nature* asserts that the phenomena is identical with "St. Elmos' fire". This is not in the least probable, as, for the production of such electrical phenomena, a perfectly dry and frosty atmosphere would be necessary, whereas while my experience lasted the air was not dry, and the falling snow clung to my plaid and melted on it.—  
C. G. CASH.

BONFIRES were lighted on a large number of hills in  
 JUBILEE Aberdeenshire and the north on the night of Jubilee  
 BONFIRES Day, 22nd June. An exact enumeration of the hills  
 on which this form of Jubilee rejoicing took place  
 would be difficult, but mention of the following has been made in the newspapers:—Blue Hill, Clochendichter, Brimmond, Hill o' Fare, Cairn William, Cairnballoch, Syllavethie, Cushnie, Dunnideer, Tillymorgan, Tap o' Noth, Clashmach, Knock, Durn Hill, Cowhythe Hill, Bin Hill, Hill o' Doune (Banff), Balloch and Muldearie (Keith), Ben Rinnes, Ben Aigan, Ben Newe, Braigach (Strathdon), Tillypronie, Knock Hill (Blalack), Coyles of Muick, Craigowan and Craiglourighan (Balmoral), Craig Choinnich (Braemar), and Carr Hill (Mar Forest). Bennachie, Buck of the Cabrach, and Mormond are the three most conspicuous hills that were not utilised for this species of "demonstration", though many people climbed the first and the third to see the bonfires in the surrounding country, and there was some discharge of rockets. Buchan, comparatively hill-less though it be, made a fairly good show. There were



bonfires on the Hill of Ythsie, Hillhead (Methlick), Brucehill (New Deer), Hill of Knaven (Old Deer), Pitfour, Aikey Brae, Turlundie, (New Pitligo), and the Hill of Troup. There were three in the neighbourhood of Fraserburgh—on the Corbiehill, on the Hill of Rathen, and at Cairnbulg; but the parish of Longside apparently beat the record, for it had no fewer than four—on the Market Hill (near the village), the Hill of Rora, the Hill of Auchtydore, and at Inverquhomery. The pile on the Tap o' Noth is described as a "monster bonfire". The material used comprised 23 cart-loads of trees and a large supply of tar and paraffin, and "the fire was built on scientific principles". "Never", we are assured, "was such a blaze seen on the Tap, and it was seen from afar". The bonfire pile on the Knock Hill was an imposing structure of over 20 feet high and about 20 feet in diameter at the base, composed partly of empty tar barrels and partly of brushwood. Three tall trees, forming a tripod-stand about 17 feet high, had been first erected, and round these trees, in thorough workman-like fashion, the tar-barrels and brushwood had been splendidly worked in. A tar-barrel was placed in the centre, and petroleum was lavishly used to ensure a blaze. To the pile on the Bin Hill of Cullen 70 loads of materials had been contributed; while in the carrying of wood for the Ben Rinnes pile, no fewer than 50 men were one day engaged.

Some idea of the prevalence of bonfires on the night of the 22nd may be gained from the statements of the number of fires seen from various heights. From Mormond upwards of 50 are said to have been seen, and 56 from the Knock. Over 20 were visible from Ben Rinnes; and on Ben Aigan as many as 27 were counted "away to the north, east, and south". Forty were seen from the Hill of Cotburn, Turriff; and one observer declares that from the top of the Hill of Knocksoul, situated between the parishes of Leslie and Tullynessle, he counted over 100. Probably, however, the best "range" of bonfires was that with which spectators stationed on the Nelson Tower at Forres were favoured:—"Beacons were seen burning brightly from the lofty peak of Ben Wyvis in the west, the south Sutor of Cromarty and the Ord Hill of Caithness in the north, the Doorie Hill at Burghead, and the Bin Hill of Cullen on the east".

THE following members have been admitted since  
NEW December last, in addition to those added at the  
MEMBERS. Diamond Jubilee celebrations:—Messrs. Robert Connon,  
Thomas H. Lillie, M.A., LL.B., and Alexander J. Smith.

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## REVIEWS.

THE following passage in the recently-published "Life of DR. JOWETT and Letters of Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol, ON Oxford", may be quoted :—"Lord Camperdown (then LOCHNAGAR, Lord Duncan), who was with Jowett at Braemar in 1862, tells how one Sunday there was spent. Jowett decided to climb Lochnagar, and fixed on Sunday for the expedition. Lord Duncan expected to start early, but Jowett insisted on going to the Kirk. No guide being found available on the Sabbath, they had to make their own way, and the shades of evening were falling ere they had descended far from the summit. Jowett got very tired with stumbling in and out of the peat hags, and his companion had to support him, while feeling apprehensive that they had lost the path. He would only take one sip from the spirit flask. At this point they heard the floundering of an animal, which for a moment they supposed to be a deer, but Lord Duncan went up to it and discovered that it was a pony with the saddle turned right round. He put the saddle straight, but Jowett would not mount. However, the pony, kept moving by Lord Duncan, led them to the keeper's lodge at Callater. There, the ground being smoother, Jowett consented to mount, and they got back safely. The fact was that J. M. Wilson, of Corpus, who was at Braemar at the time, had heard of the projected expedition, and had expressed himself rather doubtfully as to its success. He had started to follow them on the pony, but had given up the chase, and, leaving the creature to its fate, had descended on foot".

THIS is a remarkable volume by Mr. W. B. Blaikie, published by the Scottish ITINERARY OF PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD STUART—History Society. The work is of such a JULY, 1745--SEPTEMBER, 1746. nature that infinite pains was necessary in the collection of facts as well as considerable judgment in giving them proper expression. The author has not been found wanting in either; indeed, he has favoured Scottish historians with an indispensable book of reference, as well as enabled the general reader to get a good grasp of the Prince's wanderings through the Highlands. Reference is made to the Cairngorm Club Journal in connection with "Prince Charlie's Cave", and the Club's excursion to Ben Alder—the turning-point in the Prince's southward retreat after the Battle of Culloden. A ten-inch map of Scotland, accompanying the volume, contains much valuable information to the Highland student.