

THE HORIZON FROM BEN MUICH DHUI.—No. II.

BY ALEX. COPLAND.

IN our first paper on this subject (*C. C. J.*, No. 8, Vol. II., January, 1897) we expressed a desire that the staff employed on the Ordnance Survey had, in addition to providing the excellent maps constructed by them, also furnished panoramic views of the hill horizons seen from the summits of our loftiest and more frequently visited Scottish mountains. The remark called forth a mild rebuke from our artistic friend, Mr. J. G. Murray, who kindly sent us a sight of the splendid panoramic view of the Grampian Mountains as seen from the summit of Benacleuch, the loftiest Ben of the Ochils, near Stirling. That admirable picture, it appears, was drawn and engraved by Colour-Sergeant James Gardner, R.E., of the Great Trigonometrical Survey, so long ago as January, 1820. It was republished by Messrs Maclure & Macdonald, of London and Glasgow, in 1876. So soon as we saw this re-issued view we wrote to the publishers for a copy, and were fortunate in obtaining one of the few left. The view embraces the magnificent mountain range from Ben Lomond in the west to the Forest of Athole in the east, and as far to the north-west as Ben Nevis. The mountains are depicted with skill, care, and artistic detail. The engraving measures 6 feet 3 inches long by 10 inches deep, and its existence induces the repetition of the suggestion, that when the Ordnance Surveyors again pitch their tents on our highest mountain ranges to revise their work, they will satisfy the demand for views similar to the magnificent production of Colour-Sergeant Gardner.

Having seen the survivors of the Club's July excursion among the Cairngorms disappear from Glen Lui into the Doire Bhraghad homewards on the day following the excursion, the writer rested during the remainder of the day

with the view of qualifying for a night ascent and a sunrise view from the summit of Ben Muich Dhui. Leaving our comfortable quarters at Glen Luibeg about eleven o'clock at night, we took the foot-path through that glen for the mountain. The night was calm, the sky mottled by slowly floating clouds, with a full moon rising over the distant hill ranges eastwards. Tramping alone through the ancient pines of Glen Luibeg, truth to tell, was somewhat eerie, and we would have been glad of the company of the forester's dog "Derry", but that frolicsome collie was no night walker, and declined to go with us. But for the sound of the rushing waters of the Luibeg, and the tinkling and purling of mountain rills hastening to join it, nature seemed sunk in repose, with the stars keeping night watch from above. In the blue sky over the ridge of Cairngorm of Derry a large planet blazed, and the spangled heavens were strewn with innumerable, scintillating stars. The scarred slopes of Carn a' Mhaim, on the left side of the glen, advanced from obscurity and again retired from view as the moon became unveiled and veiled again by passing clouds. The recesses of the glens on the east and west of the "Green Foot" of Sron Riach were shrouded in mysterious gloom. Desolation and solitude bore heavily upon our resolution to go onwards and upwards, and only a sense of duty and the determination to be through with it, having once begun, kept us from turning back.

Crossing the forks of the streams where the "Green Foot" divides the two lateral glens we leisurely began the ascent, resting from time to time as occasion required. Having plenty of time, the grassy hollows among the protruding rocks on the brow of the first ridge of Sron Riach invited a longer rest than ordinary, and we may have indulged in forty winks. Awakening, we had the consciousness, neither bred of pricking thumbs nor yeuky nose, but all the same real, that something mortal was approaching, although we saw it not. The moon was hid by clouds, and, resting in deep shadow between two large stone blocks, we lay still. By and by we could dimly perceive a nebulous form silently, cautiously, and making long halts, approach-

ing as if reconnoitring. Ultimately it came so near that we could dimly make out our visitor to be a stag. We lay perfectly still gazing at it, and are confident it did not make us out. When, however, it came to the ground we had trod on in ascending, it silently melted into the surrounding darkness. Its movements left the impression that in the darkness its powers of vision were not much, if any, better than our own. We had the advantage, being in concealment.

By the time we got among the big stones which are so plenteously strewn on the top of Sron Riach the dawn was lightening the cone of Cairngorm of Derry, and the ptarmigan were signalling to each other our approach. We caught none of them napping or otherwise. Looking down on Lochan Uaine not a smile or ripple moved its upturned face. It placidly mirrored the crags that surround its mountain cradle. On the verge of the highest precipice north of it a few stags were leisurely cropping the scanty verdure among the stones, unconscious of our presence. Getting unperceived to the steep slope below them, and out of their range of vision, we ascended by the source of the Allt Carn a' Mhaim, and when we topped the ridge the deer, taken by surprise at our early appearance, made off.

When we reached the southern slope of the expansive sandy basin where the Allt Clach nan Taillear takes its rise, the morning sun had begun to crown with radiance the hoary peak of Cairn Toul. This too early arrangement we were not prepared for, and were disposed to resent. By the almanac kept at Glen Luibeg—not a Zadkiel nor any astrological humbug—but a real “Moore’s Belfast”, our luminous friend had, for some reason or other, got out of his ocean bed half an hour too soon, and had thereby taken an unfair advantage of us. We intended that the “Guvnor” should see us dutifully posted at the cairn when his phiz appeared above Ben Rinnes, but, instead of that, to our disgust, here was he with a face beaming as bright and sunny as if he had already had “his morning”, or a cup of Tokay, before beginning his daily tramp. Under the circumstances, we failed to raise our

morning anthem "Hail! Smiling Morn"! being in a funk, as we felt we had a right to be. We therefore solaced ourselves with a dram. We afterwards found out that there was no intention on the part of the old gentleman to take advantage, and that an almanac suited for the low country is not adapted for the summits of the Cairngorms, which require an almanac of their own. The fact is that the sun, who is none of your eight-hours-a-day worker, gives the top of Ben Muich Dhui a last radiant touch before knocking off at night, and retouches his lofty poll first thing in the morning. Glen Luibeg, and places further down the country, must therefore wait until the high places of the earth are first attended to.

We got to the cairn a short time before four a.m., and what a glorious sight was displayed! There was neither cloud nor vaporous haze in the crisp mountain air to dim or interfere with the distant view in any direction. The sunlight was lighting up the corries of the mountains from Lochnagar, Carn an Rìgh, all round to Ben Nevis and beyond. The peaks, rocks, and outlines of the far-distant mountains stood out clear and clean as etchings. And what a wondrous wealth and variety of colour was spread abroad. Look where you would admiration and delight with the prospect could not be restrained.

THE VIEW FROM THE CAIRN.

Section II.—From West to North (90° to 180°).

In our first section we reached the Fuar Gharbh-choire of Braeriach, with the infant Dee bounding over the edge of the precipice fronting us. West therefrom part of the summit range of Sgoran Dubh is seen over a slight depression in the table land of Braeriach, where the Dee takes its rise. Away further to the west from thence, and a little to the south of due west, the famous mountain and Pass of Corrieyairack, about 36 miles distant, is observable. Beyond them the mountains in the far-distant regions of Glens Garry and Quoich and the Knoidart Hills, scenes of the

romantic adventures of Prince Charlie, may be descried. This picturesque region, which witnessed the enthusiastic beginning and the wretched, fugitive close of the young Chevalier's military career, must always have interest for those who have read his marvellous adventures and escapes; while admiration of his heroism and of the incorruptible loyalty and fidelity of his unfortunate adherents will ever strongly touch sympathetic chords in the human heart. We frankly admit that between Corrieyairack and the brow of the precipice of Braeriach, shutting out the western distant view, we can make no pretension to accurate naming of the distant summits. If the reader spreads out a good map of Scotland, such as Bartholomew's, he may imagine, because he finds only a few lofty Bens plotted down in the direction we are considering, that accurate naming of the mountains seen in the far west from Ben Muich Dhui should not be a difficult matter. But let him study Bartholomew's reduced Ordnance Maps (2 miles to the inch) and he will find that the crowd of giants above the 3000 feet line stand so close together, in the direction mentioned, that hours of study will not result in confidence. Those only who know the form of the distant mountain summits can, with certainty, localise them. As a help to localisation we have prepared a table of the principal mountains and hills from 88° to 180° , giving approximately the true polar compass direction from the cairn on Ben Muich Dhui, as taken from the maps referred to. We have also given the heights above sea level of the mountains in the list, their distance in miles measured in straight lines from Ben Muich Dhui, the counties in which they are situated, and their localities. That all the mountains named in the list can be seen from Ben Muich Dhui we do not believe, but undoubtedly a great many of them can be seen, and could be named, by those who know them. Any assistance to complete the outline of the hill horizon in that respect will be much esteemed. In any case, the outline and tabular list will provide a useful object lesson for judicious discriminators.

TABULAR LIST

Of Mountains and Hills within the radius of 88° (West) and 180° (North), most of which may be seen from the Cairn on the summit of Ben Muich Dhui.

Compass Direction	MOUNTAIN.	COUNTY.	LOCALITY.	Height, in Feet.	Distance, in Miles.
88	Corrieyairack - - - -	Inverness	Lochaber - - - -	2922	36
90	Ladhar Bheinn - - - -	"	Moydart - - - -	3543	73
91	Spidean Mialach - - - -	"	Glen Quoich - - - -	3268	58
92	Gleourach - - - -	"	" - - - -	3395	60
93	Sgurr a' Mhóraire - - - -	"	" - - - -	3365	63
94	Maol Cheann-dearg - - - -	Inv.—Ross	Cluny Forest - - - -	3542	60
95	Ben Sgrìol - - - -	Inverness	Loch Hourn - - - -	3196	63
96	Carn Maig - - - -	"	Monadh Liath Mountains	3087	67
96	The Saddle - - - -	Inv.—Ross	Glen Shiel - - - -	3278	67
97	The Cuchullins - - - -	Inverness	Skye - - - -	3378	100
97	Sgurr a' Bhealaich Dheirg - - - -	Inv.—Ross	Glen Shiel - - - -	3378	65
98	A' Chailleach - - - -	Inverness	Monadh Liath Mountains	3045	20
98	Sgurr nan Conbhatrean - - - -	Inv.—Ross	Ceannacroc Forest - - - -	3636	55
98	Sgurr Fhuaran (Scour Ouran) - - - -	Ross	Glen Shiel - - - -	3505	65
99	Garbh-leac - - - -	Inv.—Ross	Glen Clunie - - - -	3676	57
100	Carn Sgulain - - - -	Inverness	Monadh Liath Mountains	3015	20
100	Sgurr nan Ceathramhan - - - -	"	Glen Affric Forest - - - -	3614	57
101	Beinn Fhada (Ben Attow) - - - -	Inv.—Ross	" - - - -	3383	62
103	Sgurr nan Ceathramhan - - - -	"	" - - - -	3771	60
105	Mam Sodhail (Mam Soul) - - - -	"	" - - - -	3862	57
106	Carn Eige - - - -	"	" - - - -	3877	58
108	Tom a' Choinich - - - -	"	" - - - -	3646	54
109	Tuill Creagach - - - -	Inverness	Glen Cannich - - - -	3452	53
111	An Riabhachan - - - -	Inv.—Ross	Glen Cannich Forest - - - -	3696	58
112	Sgurr na Lapaich - - - -	"	" - - - -	3773	56
112	Meall Fuar-mhonaidh - - - -	Inverness	Loch Ness - - - -	2284	36
115	Sgurr Choinnich - - - -	Ross	West Monar Forest - - - -	3266	64
116	Sgurr a' Chaoruinn - - - -	"	" - - - -	3482	63
117	Bidean an Eoin Deirg - - - -	"	" - - - -	3430	62
118	Maolte Lunndaigh - - - -	"	East Monar Forest - - - -	3294	60
120	Sgurr a' Choir Ghlais - - - -	Inv.—Ross	Glen Strathfarar Forest	3554	54
121	Sgurr Ruadh - - - -	"	" - - - -	3254	51
123	Beinn a' Bha'ach Ard (Ben Vacher) - - - -	Inverness	" - - - - and Glen Orrin	2826	48
125	Sloch - - - -	Ross	Loch Maree - - - -	3260	76
126	Sgurr Mhuillin (Scour Vullin) - - - -	"	Strath Conon - - - -	2778	58
127	Mullach Coire Mhìc Fhearchair - - - -	"	Dundonnell Forest - - - -	3320	74
127	Sgurr Ban - - - -	"	" - - - -	3194	75
128	A' Chailleach - - - -	Cromarty	Fannich Forest - - - -	3276	69
130	Sgurr Mòr - - - -	"	" - - - -	3637	66
135	Beinn Dearg - - - -	Ross	Braemore Forest - - - -	3547	68
138	Little Wyvis - - - -	"	Strath Garve - - - -	2497	55
141	Ben Wyvis - - - -	Ross--Crom	Wyvis Forest - - - -	3429	55
146	Carn Chuinneag - - - -	Ross	Glen Calvie - - - -	2749	60
149	Coinnemheall (Coinveall) - - - -	Sutherland	Glen Cassley - - - -	3234	86
150	Ben More (Assynt) - - - -	"	" - - - -	3273	85
153	Beinn Tharsuinn - - - -	Ross	Strath Rusdale - - - -	2270	55
155	Ben Hee - - - -	Sutherland	Reay Forest - - - -	2864	90
158	Ben Hope - - - -	"	Strath More - - - -	3040	95
161	Beinn Cleith Bric - - - -	"	Strath Naver - - - -	3164	85
162	Ben Laoghal - - - -	"	Tongue - - - -	2504	95
164	Beinn an Armuinn - - - -	"	Strath Naver - - - -	2338	81
168	Ben Lundie - - - -	"	Strath Lundie - - - -	1462	65
169	Beinn nan Corn - - - -	"	Glen Dunrobin - - - -	1705	67
172	Beinn Smeoral - - - -	"	Strath Brora - - - -	1592	70
173	Beinn Chol - - - -	"	Kintadwell - - - -	1767	69
173	Beinn Dobhrain - - - -	"	Glen Loth - - - -	2060	73
177	Beinn na Meilich - - - -	"	" - - - -	1940	72
178	Morven - - - -	"	" - - - -	2313	80
180	Creag an Oir-airidh (Hill of Ord)	Caithness Sutherland	Langwell Forest - Near Ord of Caithness -	1324	73