

THE CLUB AT BEN WYVIS.

BY ALEXANDER COPLAND.

SINCE the formation of the Club, in the Jubilee year 1887, we have had many opportunities, in our excursions, of familiarising ourselves with what may be termed the internal features of the Cairngorms. Each member of that lofty group, six in number, towering upwards of 3800 feet above sea level, has been specially visited, and their stern, wild grandeur gazed upon at close quarters and described. We have also in our excursions to Ben Rinnes, "the Buck", Bennachie, Morven, Mount Battock, Mount Keen, Lochnagar, Beinn a' Ghlo, and Ben Alder, boxed the compass from north-east to south-west around the group, obtaining distant views of the varying outlines of its members. Our summer excursion of 1898 to Ben Wyvis promised another and an important standpoint for a view from the north-west of the north-west presentment of the Cairngorms; and from the apparent bulk of the "Mountain of Storms" as seen from them, a confident expectation was formed that the barrier which bounds the view from Ben Wyvis in a south-eastern direction would maintain its lofty eminence and extended bulk, and be in all respects a mountain horizon of magnificent proportions.

Tuesday, 12th July, was fixed for the ascent of Ben Wyvis, but, as usual, when the summer excursion is arranged for a mountain at a distance requiring more than one day for its attainment, those who could spare the time were glad to avail themselves of the facilities afforded by the railway companies at midsummer for spending a few days among the mountain scenery in the district to which the excursion had to be made. On the afternoon of the previous Saturday, therefore, the reporter (honorary, of course) joined an advance party bound for Strathpeffer Spa, and its curative waters. We were informed that the Strath-

peffer Hotel was to be the Club's headquarters, whatever that may mean, but on arriving there at a late hour in the evening our utmost exertions only accomplished the getting of the lady of our party into a pigeon-hole of a bedroom for the night, and the rest of us had to put up with the prospect of the *al fresco* quarters of Jeanie Macalpine of the Clachan of Aberfoyle Hotel—a heather bed, curtained by the clouds.

We travelled in one of the luxurious corridor carriages of the Great North of Scotland Railway Company, *via* the Coast line. The weather was exceptionally fine even for an exceptionally fine season. The clear blue sky bore here and there a slowly-floating cloudlet—no Banff Baillies—or was streaked with long stretches of mackerel cirrii. The sea, responding to its canopy, mirrored far and wide a deeper blue, upon whose pulsating bosom lazily floated, like gigantic birds, fishing boats with brown-tanned lug-sails. The rocky shore or pebbly beach framed perfect seascapes, whose soft, hazy distance suggested the coasts of Sutherland and Caithness, with their far-off mountains outlined in the haze. On we careered at express speed, past Cullen, Buckie (suggestive of the toothsome “smokie”), over the Spey, with its bewildered water channels scattered among its wide wastes of stones and gravel, on to the Cathedral City of Elgin, with its lofty, ruined monument to the execrable memory of the Wolf of Badenoch. Here the train was handed over to the Highland Company, but the Great North, anxious for our comfort, sent a special conductor along with us all the way to Inverness.

Before we reached Forres, with its lofty monument to Nelson on the Witches' Hill, the opposite shore of the Moray Firth attracted our attention. The Sutors of Cromarty (the *Portus Salutis* of the ancients), whose connection with Saint Crispin we have failed to trace, defined the entrance to the far-famed refuge of the Cromarty Firth. At length Ben Wyvis, stretched out in all his afternoon glory, lay before us, his ample bosom showing patches of snow. The run along the southern shore of the Firth was delightful, and Inverness was reached in time for a com-

fortable cup of tea, with something to it. After refreshment, and as we had an hour or two to look about, we sauntered towards the Castle Hill, inspecting by the way the Palladium of the Celtic capital—the Clach-na-cuddin—or “stone of the tubs”—now placed under a handsome fountain in front of the Town Hall. The Hielan’ shoeless and stockingless lasses in former days rested their tubs on this “Clach” when engaged carrying water from the source of their domestic supply—the River Ness. Captain Burt avers that in his time—the beginning of the eighteenth century—the lasses’ legs were not washed so often or so well as they might have been, but if he had had to carry the water as far from the river as the Clach-na-cuddin is now placed, he also might have been sparing of the water. We were unable to carry away a chip of the famous “Clach”, although the stone is not enclosed in a glass case. Near the “Clach” is the passage leading to the Castle Terrace, on one side of which passage is the Free Library, located in a building which we mistook for a model lodging-house. On the terrace two Russian guns point in the direction of Ben Nevis, but the Observatory on that mountain is safe, so far as we could judge from the appearance of the cannon. A statue of sweet little Flora Macdonald is to be placed here so soon as the subscribers shall decide whether she shall stand shod or shoeless. We shall be pleased with her either way. Before descending from the Terrace we discovered the “Islands”, where on grand occasions of the Judges’ visits on circuit the Magistrates entertained “the Lords” with salmon and whisky punch—a hogshead of whisky being required for the feast, Tomnahurich (the hill of the fairies) now converted into a cemetery, the Caledonian Canal, and the croft-clad hillside leading on to Craig Phadric, with its vitrified Fort; and recollecting that on the slope of the Castle Hill was fought the “Battle of the Cheeses”, and reflecting on the waste of life, as well as of cheese, that then and there took place, we wended our way to the Railway Station, to be entrained for Dingwall.

Dingwall—Baille a’ Chaille (“Kail town”)—famous in ancient times, as now, for cabbage, is famous also for its con-

nection with one of the greatest statesmen of modern times. We started for Dingwall at 8 p.m., or thereabouts, and reached that station late, as usual, and Strathpeffer later. On our route we were brought into contact with a new Highland industry. At some of the stations the carriage windows were besieged by bare-legged Highland loons holding up bunches of the white and yellow water lilies for a *quid pro quo*. The evening was so serene, the sky so clear, and the temperature so refreshing as to induce the party unanimously to approve the suggestion, made not by the youngest member, that, coming so far, it would be imprudent to risk a view from Ben Wyvis upon one chance, when we could have two. Therefore, having reached "our headquarters" after diligent quest, and pigeon-holed the lady of the party as already mentioned, we indulged in cups of Mocha all round, and before the midnight hour set out to discover Ben Wyvis.

The sky was brilliantly bejewelled with stars, but there was no moon. Our party numbered five, none of whom had ever been on Ben Wyvis during daylight, let alone during the darkness of night. However, the word "fear" had no place in our vocabulary, although we confess to "anxiety". With the instinct bred of mountaineering, and the aid of lucifer matches and maps, we piloted our way to Achterneed. Then, along the parallel-terraced cart roads which score the crofted brae of Botlacks, silently and in Indian file, we tracked through broom and briars up hill, until we reached a cart road trending north-westwards, through a plantation along the west slope of Druim a' Chuilein. Thus, without deviation or distraction, we kept the regulation route. About a mile and a half from Achterneed the road bifurcated—one prong stretching north-westwards for Strath Garve between Little Wyvis and An Cabar of Ben Wyvis. The other fork, the more forbidding of the two, struck northwards; and instinct impelled us to take it. This was the darkest point of our march; and, strange to say, on the return journey, one of our party, going ahead of the main body in good daylight, when he came to the bifurcation took the wrong fork, and went on his way to-

wards Strath Garve in place of Strathpeffer, until, by a lucky chance looking back, he saw the main body in the distance marching in the contrary direction to that which he had taken, and had a hot time of it in recovering his lost ground and rejoining the party. Our route to the hill was now a peat road—soft and springy to the foot, and, thanks to the exceptionally dry season, pleasant enough walking, except where one had to circumvent pools or cross them on stepping stones. By-and-by we came to a moss burn, whose Stygian colour even the darkness made visible, and we could not drink. We kept along a footpath on its left bank, and were now assured by the long, lofty outline in the sky in front of us of Ben Wyvis. We stretched ourselves on the heather refreshingly for a while, and marked the gradual lighting of the sky above us, indicative of the approach of dawn. Resuming our journey, the foot track by the moss burn—the Burn of Skiach—landed us in a morass abreast of the south-western 2669-foot slope of Ben Wyvis in front of An Cabar. Crossing the morass, we ascended the slope in front, but owing to the rich pasturage on it, in which the foot sank at every step, found it toilsome work until we reached the harder ground near the 3000-foot plateau. The sun rose upon us as we traversed the plateau, and by a sheep and deer fence—which was carted here!—we made for An Socach (3295 feet), to get the fine view from thence, the route along the fence being carpeted with thick, soft grass.

The morning was all that could be desired for a distant view—bright, clear, and caller. The waters of the Firths of Dornoch and Moray shimmered in the sunlight—the long spit, terminating in Tarbat Ness with its lighthouse, protruded seawards between them, and offered contrast. Cromarty Firth showed a wide, circular basin at its south-west end, with the sleeping, smokeless town of Dingwall on its margin. Similarly blinking in the sunlight of early morning, Invergordon and Cromarty dotted its northern and southern shores. The Black Isle spread out, in its rich garniture of woods and cultivated fields, between it and the Firths of Moray and Beaully. To eastwards,

southwards, and westwards, a glorious prospect lay unfolded, gradually rising from the sea to lofty mountain ranges that kissed the sky.

About three-quarters of a mile north-west of An Socach the cairn called "The Monument" (3429 feet), seen crowning the ridge at the north-west end of the great corrie (Coire Mhor), indicated the culminating point of the mountain range. Towards it we now proceeded. While doing so we noticed a numerous herd of red deer trooping in single file up the east side of the corrie from the rich pasturage in the low ground, where they had been spending the night. They were getting beyond the region of tormenting flies. They ascended in a slanting direction, and on reaching the mountain table-land disappeared north-eastwards in the direction of Loch Glass. The view from the cairn was extensive and magnificent. In the bright, clear morning light, looking eastwards, the south coast line of the Moray Firth from Fort-George to Branderburgh, near Lossiemouth, with its stretches of yellow sand from Nairn to Burghead margined the blue waters. The Bin Hill of Cullen, due east (270°), conspicuously asserted itself, as did the Knock Hill, about 5° south of east. Findlay Seat, dominated by Ben Aigan, indicated the windings of the Spey near Craigellachie. Farther south-east the modest cone of the Tap o' Noth appeared above the rising ridge of hill ground trending westwards, and then the Buck, Ben Rinnes, and Corryhabbie ($293\frac{1}{2}^\circ$) were noted. Westwards from Corryhabbie the horizon in variegated outline rose till Ben Avon, with his familiar granitic stucs and tors, stood out sharply against the sky. Beinn a' Bhuid led on to Cairngorm, and the gash in the mountain barrier between it and Braeriach, lighted up by the morning sun, with the lofty dome of Ben Muich Dhui beyond, clearly revealed the Learg Ghruamach. The mountain summits seen to the westwards of these being much crowded, and not so familiar, we did not particularly note. Westwards from the Cairngorms the higher summits of the Monadh Liath range, Carn Sgulain, Carn Balloch, and Carn Mairg, and the Geal Charn—all above the 3000 feet line—led in the direction

of the Great Glen—the trough of the Caledonian Canal. Before reaching these, however, with good glasses and careful search we might have distinguished, over the Monadh Liath range, in the far distance, the summits of Carn an Fhidleir, Beinn a' Ghlo, and Beinn Dearg of Athole Forest. At about 356° Ben Alder was seen, and, almost due south, the equally conspicuous mass of Creag Meaghaidh. Stob Choire an Easain Mhoir of Loch Treig led on to the culminating mountain masses dominated by Ben Nevis, their peaks, snow-fields, and vast rocky precipices and corries revealed clear as etchings by the bright sunlight shining straight into them. We gazed long, and again and again, on the marvellous view of the "Mountain of Heaven". Sweeping round south-westwards a maze of mountains, seen for the first time from this standpoint, baffled identification. More time and patience than we could afford to give would have been required for such a task. Beinn a' Bhaach Ard, and the lofty mountain summits between Glen Orrin and Glen Strathfarrar, then occupied our attention, and beyond them the lofty masses of Mam Sodhail, Carn Eige, and the peak of Sgurr na Lapaich at 40°. Although we could not discern the islands of Eigg and Rum, we had a very distinct view of the peaks of the Cuchullins in Skye. Moruisg of Glen Carron, and, nearer, the three-peaked mountain whose central peak is named Sgurr a' Mhuilinn of Strath Bran, were close and conspicuous objects. So was Loch Fannich, almost due west, Ben Slioch beyond, and immediately to the north of the Loch the eight giants of Fannich Forest, A' Chailleach (3276), Sgurr Breac, Sgurr nan Clach Geala, Meall a' Chrasgaidh (3062), Sgurr Mor (3637), Beinn Mhor, Meallan Rairigidh (3109), and An Coileachan (3015). Moving north-westward the trident-shaped group of An Teallach, with its acute cone, dominating Strath-na-Sheallag and Dundonnell Forests at the head of Little Loch Broom, arrested attention. Still farther north-west, but in the near distance, the cone-shaped summit of Beinn Dearg towered above all the hills of Dirrie More, Strath More, and Strathvaich Forest. Still farther north-west, at 146°, the sugar-loaf-shaped mass of Suilven,

beyond Rhidorroch Forest and the Cromalt Hills, conspicuously asserted its presence, flanked on either side by its loftier conical-shaped neighbours Cul Mor in Coigach to the south and Canisp north-east. Farther north, at about 155°, Quinag, to the north of and towering above Loch Assynt, recalls the fate of the great Marquis, a fugitive lurking among the islands in the loch, devouring his gloves from hunger, and treacherously captured there and delivered to his enemies by the Laird of Assynt for—not thirty pieces of silver—but for forty bolls of oatmeal! Farther round the twin lofty summits of Coinnemheall and Ben More (Assynt) demand attention and admiration. Following the horizon circle northwards to Beinn Thutaig (182°) of Strath Melness, at the Kyle of Tongue, we noted from Quinag, at about equal distances northwards on the circle, Ben Leoid, Ben Hee, and Ben Hope—the latter, however, considerably farther to the north than Ben Hee. Then, about 186°, Beinn Laoghal, due east of Ben Hope, and about 189° the lofty range of Beinn Cleith Bric, with its conical peak, Meall an Eoin, the loftiest summit in Sutherlandshire, north by east of Ben Wyvis. The Ben Armuinn range, due east of Beinn Cleith Bric, led the view farther eastwards to the cones of the Ben Griams (Mhor and Bheag), and to Morven, the Maiden Pap of Caithness, and to Scaraben at 224°, and the sea. Truly the view, for extent of mountain horizon, variety of outline, and rugged grandeur and beauty, could not be surpassed. Seated on the cairn, again and again we slowly swept with our field glasses the vast circle, ever discovering new features and points of interest as the sunlight, by the diurnal motion of the earth, lighted up new corries and passes among the mountains.

But you cannot fill empty stomachs with mountain views, however fine, and the feeling of vacuity which began to steal upon us, and which Torricelli declared nature abhorred, recalled us to a sense of the situation, and to the fact that we had to tramp seven to eight miles to Strathpeffer to a late breakfast or an early luncheon, if we would pacify the inner man. There was no water on the top of the mountain, but there was snow in hollows on the brow

of the corrie, and the patriarch of the party endeavoured to utilise it to "infuse" a cup of tea. The attempt could hardly be called a success. The snow was so long in melting that the impatient party despaired of ever seeing the water bubble and boil by the spirit lamp. And they declared that snowballs made with such snow might be carried undiminished to Balmoral or even Windsor in the egg boxes which the railway companies now convey at reasonable rates to alleviate agricultural distress, so that the Countess of Cromarty may, at trifling expense, send to the Queen her feudal tender for Ben Wyvis as often as it may be demanded.

About 9 a.m. we set our faces in the direction of Knockfarrel and the "Cat's Back". Looking back towards the cairn and the eastern side of the great corrie, we saw the large herd of deer returning in a disturbed manner towards their former quarters in the corrie, and by-and-by two human figures reached the cairn. Their appearance accounted for the movements of the deer. About a mile from the cairn, at the upper end of a hollow bounded on the east by An Socach, we came upon a well of running, drinkable water—the first we had seen upon the mountain. Dr. Manson, in his book on Strathpeffer, describes this well as being "a huge spring of the purest and coolest of cold water, issuing from the side of the mountain, and yielding some 4000 or 5000 gallons an hour", and at this rate he states the well would supply a population of 4000 with from 24 to 30 gallons a day each. He must have seen the well under different conditions from those existing at the time we liquidated at it. However, the water was refreshing, cool, and clear, and there was as much as the party could comfortably carry away. We rapidly descended the hill in the direction of the Skiach burn, along which we had approached the mountain, raising loud protests from lazy muirfowl disturbed while sunning themselves among the heather. We recrossed the extensive peat moss, finding it, as the Rev. John Noble did sixty years ago, very "spongy", but, fortunately, for the most part tolerably dry. We accept unreservedly his statement that it is easily

consumed. As for the hard and black peat, which he also described and explained, "than which there is scarcely any fuel better fitted for keeping up a mild and gentle heat", we had more heat by a long way than we wanted, for the sun with tropical intensity broiled us, and the flies tormented us to such a degree that any of the other plagues of Egypt would have been thankfully accepted in substitution.

At length we reached our headquarters, after picking up the lost member, who, by mistake, struck off by the wrong fork in the direction of Strath Garve, and, after ablution and cooling, joined the numerous and fashionable gathering at luncheon in the dining-room of the hotel. In the afternoon some of the party, not quite satiated by Ben Wyvis, got on Druim na Chait and Knockfarrel. Others rested under the verandah or in retirement. As for the reporter, while taking his ease in the shade, a lady friend dropped as from the clouds into a seat beside him, and, putting her soft, friendly palm into his, remarked, "There are nae feels like auld feels"; but, with the curiosity of Mother Eve, she required an account of the midnight march and the day's dawning on the mountain. That midnight march and day's dawning and glorious prospect from Ben Wyvis will live in the memory of each of the party while life endures. It is true thoughtless people, who have never spent a night in the wilderness with the sky above and the heather beneath them, cannot understand the intense feeling of loneliness and dependence which is borne irresistibly into the soul of the wanderer as he lies looking upwards at the innumerable worlds that silently circle in the heavens above, gazing, as it were, in pity down upon him; and on a mountain apart, when the dawn steals on and morning breaks, and the rising sun reveals a new world in its freshness and beauty as "in the beginning", when the Omnipotent willed it, and the seraphs sang for joy, the entranced mortal, and yet immortal, cannot restrain natural feelings of thankfulness and adoration.

On Monday morning, at a reasonable hour, the music of a German band seductively invited to the Pump Room

for a draught of the delectable hot or cold. We were proof against its blandishments. We are told by Dr. Manson, in his book already referred to, that the nasty, drumly, stinking spa water acts upon the human body like "spring cleaning" and "whitewashing" in domestic economy. It may be so, but, like the Rev. Mr. Spalding, who didn't like London, we don't like "spring cleaning". We would rather be out of the way when that annual domestic frenzy takes possession of our womankind. As to "whitewashing", we believe it, not because we saw ghostly-looking patients stalking among the trees of the Strath, but because he assures us that the Strathpeffer water contains from 60 to 65 per cent. of sulphate and carbonate of lime, and the corpus must be black, dark, and dirty indeed that a drench such as that will not sweeten and whiten.

As the main body of the Club were to leave Aberdeen that morning for "the Strath", each member of the vanguard followed his own devices until dinner time. Along with a genial friend, now entered into rest, the writer spent the day in a run by railway to and from Lochalsh. It was a delightful outing. The day was fine, and, having Bartholomew's maps of the district with us, we noted the outstanding interesting features of the magnificent scenery to be seen from the railway. That in four short months from that time one of us should be listening to the solemn lament of the organ over the mortal remains of the other would, on that day, have been a most unlikely thought. Yet so it fell out, and well for us is it ordered that we know not what a day may bring forth. After luncheon, we crossed by ferry-boat the dark, swirling waters of the Kyle of Lochalsh to the ruins of Castle Maol, and, for a joke, spent ten minutes in the Isle of Skye, returning in time for the afternoon train.

Tuesday morning broke dubious, notwithstanding our earnest wishes for a fine day on the hill. The day was pleasant enough for the vale of Strathpeffer, but there were floating clouds lower down the hills than we liked, and the parties who made the night ascent congratulated each other that they had not missed that opportunity. After break-

fast, appearances began to look more hopeful, and the expedition resolved to make the ascent. Accordingly we were turned out in front of headquarters and photographed. This precaution was taken in order, presumably, that if we went amissing we might be identified when found, and be restored to our friends. The force numbered eleven, and, if the pony and its attendant are added, the number, by good fortune, totalled thirteen, which is a baker's or fisher's dozen, and an odd, and, therefore, a lucky, number. We made rather an imposing array as we set off armed with cammachs of various forms and suitable dimensions, to the envy of the gouty and rheumatic frequenters of the Pump Room. It is a pleasant walk by Castle Leod's splendid old trees, which line the road towards Achterneed. This little village, with its snod, white-washed, and trimly-thatched cottages and little gardens ablaze with flowers, and the crofters' cottages on the hillside beyond the railway line, formed a perfect picture of rural comfort. These crofts were originally allotments to the veterans who returned unscathed from the American War of Independence. When young men they were embodied by Lord Macleod, who fixed a day for his tenantry to meet him at Castle Leod, when the rent-roll of the estate was produced, and the factor arranged the number of young men that could be spared from each homestead, and they had to march to the sound of the drum; no volunteering in those days. Our route by daylight was the same as by starlight on the preceding expedition. We were not, however, the only party for the summit of the "Mountain of Storms" that day. A gentleman with guides and two ladies on hill ponies preceded us; but, they being well mounted, though we kept our distance, we could not overtake them. We crossed the Skiach burn—what a name!—as before, and held along the footpath on its left bank till we got to the foot of the hill, getting, as we began the ascent, a whiff of drizzling mist, which boded ill for our view from the summit. On reaching Dr. Manson's spring of "the purest and coolest of cold water", we lunched, and were joined by a forester by appointment of the secretary. We then held on for the

cairn at the summit, and, when near it, encountered the party which had preceded us returning. There was a strong mist-laden north-west wind blowing when we reached the summit, which completely obscured the view in that direction. The coast line and mountain range from the Bin of Cullen to the Cairngorms were dimly seen, as was the horizon westwards to Loch Fannich with its surrounding mountains, but, farther north, the view was left to imagination and to Dr. Macculloch's graphic description of the grand scenery of the Sutherland mountains. It began to get wet, cold, and uncomfortable at the cairn, so we made tracks for Strathpeffer. On our way along the broad shoulder of the mountain we encountered the rather rare bird the dotterel, magnified by the mist to the dimensions of a "cushie doo". Save one or two grouse, other noticeable birds we saw none. We got down from the clouds as soon as possible to sunshine and comfort on the lower ground. While plodding along the footpath by the Skiach burn, our doucest and most well-behaved of ponies suddenly upset all our notions of propriety by taking a bath in the burn. Fortunately, before ablution she slid her rider upon the soft grassy bank over her head as deftly as a baker slides to a cooling tray the "bap" or four-pound loaf just drawn from the oven. The moment after she was on her back in the burn, with her four feet in the air, like any exuberant coal-horse enjoying a Sunday in the country. The surprise and alarm at this unexpected aquatic feat passed off so soon as we understood that no harm was done, and that this was one of pretty Fanny's ways. Without other noticeable incident, we reached Strathpeffer, having spent a fairly enjoyable day among the scenery in this delightful part of the country.

In "Anderson's Guide to the Highlands" (3rd Edition, 1850), Ben Wyvis is said to be composed of slaty gneiss, with numerous large veins of hornblende and granite, intermixed with garnets. Its flora is not particularly interesting. It is a great lump of a mountain. Some say it resembles a horseshoe, others a huge hay-stack. The two objects are not very like each other. We suggest that "it

is without form, and void". The upper ridge, above the 3000 feet line, extends about two miles from one extremity to the other. The extent of high ground above 2600 feet, measured from north-east to south-west, may be set down as not less than five miles. The sides of its biggest corrie—Coire Mhor—though steep, are grassy, and looked as though they could be climbed at any part. There is none of the "steep frowning glories" of dark Lochnagar or Coire Brochain of Braeriach, or the black rocky tusks of Sgoran Dubh here.

The meaning of the name of the mountain mass is as much a matter of dubiety as its form. Some will have it Ben Uaish—the "mountain of storm or storms", although Dr. Morrison, while so naming it, admits that it is by no means so "stormy" as its name would imply; and in that remark we concur. In "Anderson's Guide to the Highlands" (1st Edition, 1834) the name of the mountain is spelled Ben Weavis. Another calls it Beinn Uabhais—that is "stupendous mountain". But are there not many mountains scattered about bonny Scotland as much entitled to be called Beinn Uabhais as the "king of the Ross-shire mountains", if not more so? We think there are. There is a Little Wyvis as well as a big one. The infant, 2497 feet in height, lies south-south-west of An Cabar, and is separated therefrom by a short, narrow glen, gouged out by the Allt a' Bhealaich, which flows into the Black Water and ultimately into Loch Garve. Each of the Wyvises has three little lochans in its curtilage, or bosom.

In the olden time the Forest of Wyvis was held by the Munroes of Foulis under the snowball feudal tenure before mentioned; and it is recorded that Mary Queen of Scots was the last Scottish monarch who demanded its fulfilment, no doubt as a joke, when she visited Inverness in her royal progress through her dominions. It is further recorded that the Munroes, adherents of the House of Hanover, sent some snow from Ben Wyvis to Inverness in compliment to the Duke of Cumberland, to cool his wine after Culloden. An old Highlander—a Jacobite, of course—hearing of this after the Duke's death, drily remarked that the snow "would maybe be more useful to the Duke *now*".

Sheep-farming was introduced on Ben Wyvis about 1790, to the great indignation and resentment of the country people who occupied the hill ground rent free, and who considered that they had a hereditary right to grazing there. When the sheep-walks were established a local rebellion took place, and soldiers of the 42nd regiment had to be sent from Edinburgh to quell the disturbance. The names of some of the grazings on the hill are interesting, and may serve as hurdles for breaking the shins of lovers of local place-names. Here are some of them:—Ballachlad-dich, with Kianlochninochin, Altitudinem, Lubrecht, Inrichnidow, Reballochoilie, Corriennafoile, Corrinadog, Corrienastrach, Carnafearanvorar, Frarich-gillandrish, and others fully as trying to the jaws of the Sassenach. The forest now belongs in property to the Countess of Cromarty, who owns the portion fronting south-south-west and south and east towards Dingwall. Mr. Shoolbred, of the great Tottenham-Court Road house, in London, owns south-west and north till he marches with Mr. Ferguson of Novar, who, by east and south, marches with the Countess. Notwithstanding the sheep, there is no lack of red deer on the ground, as Mr. Shoolbred's game-book shows.