

## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

CORRYHABBIE HILL, which was selected for the Club's spring excursion on 1st May last, is fully described elsewhere, so that the chronicler for the day is absolved from all necessity of entering into topographical details. Probably the fact that the hill is little visited and is not very readily accessible led to a comparatively large attendance of members of the Club and friends, the company numbering 50. Proceeding to Duftown by an early train, the party, by special permission of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, drove to Glenfiddich Lodge, noting on the way, of course, the ruins of Auchindoun Castle. From the lodge to the summit of Corryhabbie is a walk of three miles—"three good miles", as many of the pedestrians remarked as they plodded along the rough bridle-path, which at times was deep in water and at other times thickly covered with snow, and then across the long and comparatively level plateau, rather wet and spongy and coated with soft snow. The summit had hardly been gained, however, when the mist descended and obscured the view; and the party may be said to have seen little except Ben Rinnes and Glenrinnos on the one side and Cook's Cairn on the other. The customary formal meeting was held at the cairn on the summit—Rev. Robert Semple, the Chairman of the Club, presiding. Mr. Copland, deprived of the opportunity of "showing" the mountains enumerated in his list, read (from Dr. Longmuir's "Speyside") an interesting account of the battle of Glenlivet. The party then descended, but were speedily overtaken with still denser mist, which developed into rain, and it was not until they were well clear of the higher summit that they were relieved of these disagreeable features of the day. Misfortune, indeed, dogged the steps of the Club all day. A suggestion that, on account of the mist prevailing, the party should keep well together in the descent was disregarded, with the consequence that one or two "stragglers" swerved a little from the route, and had to be recalled into line by vigorous hallooing. And an accident to one of the carriages as it was setting out on the return journey from Glenfiddich Lodge, the occupants being "spilled", put an effectual damper on the rest of the day's enjoyment.

IN connection with the Corryhabbie excursion, several members of the Club improvised a "meet" for the week-end at the Craigellachie Hotel. The "meet" proved a success, the company (which included wives and mothers, sons and daughters; also a grandson and granddaughter of one of the party) numbering 18, and consolidating harmoniously; but its main purpose—the ascent of Ben Rinnes—was left to be accomplished by a very small contingent. A look at the hill, indeed, was sufficient to scare most people—it was entirely covered with snow, down almost to its base;

and a Craigellachie "authority" spread further alarm by declaring that the snow was several feet deep and was soft and not "bearing". Five resolute "stalwarts", however, determined to make the ascent, or, at least, attempt it, and would not be dissuaded, despite all dolorous prophecies—even a prophecy that they would return wet to their thighs: with them, as their leader put it, it was a case of "Pike's Peak or bust!" as the early American frontiersmen used to say. As a matter of fact, the "Pike's Peak" of Lower Speyside was gained without any bursting—with comparative ease, and almost with dry feet. The adventurous five walked to the Benrinnes Distillery and ascended the hill from that point, making for the rocky protuberance known as the Scurran of Well, and then along the ridge to the principal summit, the Scurran of Lochterlandich. There was plenty of snow, it is true, but it amounted to little more than a sprinkling—or, let us say, coating—on the grass and heather; and nowhere, except where collected in wreaths, did it cover one's boots. Soft on the slope of the hill, it was hard on the top, with large patches of ice; and at no time was the "going" disagreeable. The day was dull and overcast, with masses of cloud of the "leaden hue" that M. Taine used to describe as the permanent characteristic of British skies, and as accounting for the average British melancholy and moroseness. The view was thus necessarily restricted, the horizon being limited, but many of the hills and mountains enumerated for inspection from Corryhabbie on the following day were easily picked out, most of them—and, in particular, the Cairngorms—being covered with snow. Spectacularly, the best effect was produced by the huge mass of Ben Wyvis and the graceful outlines of Suilven, which, with their white covering, stood out in beautiful relief against the dark haze of the horizon; while, near at hand, the "peppering" of snow on lesser hills, such as the Convals, and the peculiar effect of the Scurrans, with their "weathering" protruding above the masses of snow, contributed greatly to the general picturesqueness of the scene. A contemplated descent into Glenrinnes with the idea of walking back by way of Dufftown was abandoned after the party were half down the hill; and, instead, the descent was made to the Batchach, a large tract of boggy ground having to be traversed, distinctly wetter than the snow-covered slopes already traversed. Then the burn of Aberlour was struck, and the return journey to Craigellachie was easily accomplished by means of a good road, the Linn of Ruthrie, near Aberlour, being inspected on the way. The "outing" occupied eight hours—easy going; and the party returned in a condition that completely falsified all the predictions of the "croakers"—nothing wet about them but their boots.—R. A.

ON 29th April last five members of the Club started on their annual Spring Holiday tramp with the view of walking from BUCK. Gartly, *via* the Buck, to Dufftown, there to meet the main party, and join in the excursion to Corryhabbie. Leaving Aberdeen by the 3.45 train, Gartly was duly reached. It had been the intention to proceed to Lumsden, but on learning that the hotel

there was filled up, it was resolved to stop for the night at Rhyndie, where excellent accommodation was obtained. The Tap o' Noth presented an inviting appearance for a preliminary climb, but after "high tea" had been prepared and done justice to, there was only time for a smart walk of a few miles before nightfall.

After an early breakfast next morning, a start was made on the long walk amid a rattling shower of hail. Proceeding along the turnpike in the direction of Lumsden Village, the Kirk of Kearn is passed on the right; then the road to Craig Castle; further on, and just about 300 yards before coming to Lumsden, the road to Clova House is taken to the right. The latter road skirts the policies, and leads between the mansion house and home steading, and, after a turn to the left, the hill road diverges to the right, and passing through a belt of wood, takes a sharp rise, and, being rather like the dry bed of a mountain burn, walking becomes a little stiff. Over a stile at the edge of the wood the moss road is then followed leading away to the right, and now we have the top of the Buck in sight (see *C.C.J.*, Vol. I., p. 400). Looking backward for a few minutes, a fine view is obtained of Kildrummy, with Coillebharr beyond. Pursuing the course, however, it is desirable to take the rising ground to the left, and make for a hut which appears on the sky line, in order to avoid the moss on the low ground in front. Snow was lying thickly on this side of the hill all the way to the top, but it afforded clean walking, although care had to be exercised to keep clear of bog holes. A wire fence may be observed on the ridge, and this is followed direct to the top. The Buck has a sharp cone, covered with rough boulders and weather-worn rock. No water could be found to provide the medium for a cup of warm "Liebig", so the only resource was to cram the kettle full of snow and use the spirit lamp. Although without sunshine, the air was beautifully clear from north-east to south-west, but a haze prevented any prospect in other directions. Taking the hills in the circuit indicated, the following were clearly recognised:—Bin of Cullen, Knock, Mormond, Foudland, Bennachie, Mount Battock, Mount Keen, Driesh, Lochnagar, and the Cairngorms—those in the south-west and west being very heavily coated with snow, Lochnagar making a particularly grand picture. The descent was made on the opposite side, the wire fence still serving as a guide. This side is rather steep, so level ground was soon reached. Taking a course in front of a shooting lodge, and passing the School of Cabrach, we held for the Deveron, and had a pleasant tramp to the Richmond Arms at Ardwell, that great resort of fishers. Resuming the tramp, the road through the Balloch was taken, and then the Fiddich was reached. Passing down the lower end of the Glen on the way to Dufftown, Auchindoun Castle arrests attention owing to its picturesque position.—J. H.

PERHAPS the Editor will allow me space for a few  
 A WEEK-END remarks upon Mr. Skea's paper under this title in the  
 IN January No. of the Club Journal. At the outset I  
 GLEN GAIRN. may say that, having gone over the same ground  
 spoken to by Mr. Skea, his description appears to me  
 excellent. It is written by one who can thoroughly enjoy an outing

among our lonely hills and glens, and who can depict his thoughts and feelings to others. But my present object is to point out a few slips in the natural history portion of the paper which the writer has fallen into. First, on page 322, he says "early in our walk we noticed the first harvest-home gatherings of the fieldfare". Let me say that the bird he saw was not the fieldfare. This species visits Scotland annually, but is never seen with us in July, the date of Mr. Skea's journey. This bird does not breed in Britain, and its journey thither does not take place until late in autumn. Unquestionably the bird seen was the missel-thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), which, after the nesting season, is to be seen in numbers upon the hillsides and cultivated fields along our valleys. Second, page 324—"Here, as elsewhere, we noted the increase of the starling, and the decrease of the sedge-warbler, the siskin, and the skylark. We fear the former is the cause and the latter the effect. We can remember when the starling, like the plover, swallow, and wagtail, were only visitors. . . . We regard the starling as a murdering Moor and a destructive Vandal, and hate him accordingly. Not only has he turned the once-familiar jackdaw from house and home in the chimney-top, and himself become a pest there, but, being an egg-eater, he threatens with extermination some of the most lovable feathered creatures of our countryside". This, sir, is a most extraordinary and unwarrantable charge. First we are told that the sedge-warbler, siskin, and skylark were noticed to be "decreasing". The sedge-warbler within the past twenty or thirty years has been steadily increasing within Aberdeenshire. The siskin and skylark have been decreasing, but certainly not by the action of the starling, but by that of man. The first has been preyed upon by the bird-catcher, to satisfy the demands of the wealthy with poor siskin prisoners; so that now the pretty bird is only to be seen in our more distant wooded glens, where it does not *pay* the human prowlers to follow them. The second is decreasing because of the hundreds of thousands that are annually murdered to meet the epicurean demand for lark pie. And to say that the starling is able to possess himself of the "house and home" of the jackdaw is simply nonsense. Then as to your essayist remembering when the starling, like the plover, swallow, and wagtail, were only visitors, I have to say that the plover and wagtail are, and have been, permanently resident with us since their history was first written. Then we are told that the starling is "an egg-eater", "a murdering Moor", and that he is hated accordingly. What proof can the writer give for such a charge? Emphatically I say none. But even suppose the charge of murder were true, why hate him? If every creature is to be hated that preys upon another for food, it is to be feared man's record will be very black indeed; for what living creature does he not "murder" for his own use, from the ox, sheep, deer, and grouse, down to the cheery little robin and the wren? If this, the taking of food, is "murder", man is unquestionably the most remorseless, in which case your essayist must hate himself above all other living beings. But the starling is no murderer nor egg-eater: his food consists of flies, beetles, grubs, worms, a

little fruit and corn, and he is a most useful servant to the flock-master; for those who are really acquainted with the starling's habits know well how he may be seen busily engaged picking the parasites that lurk among the wool of the sheep, while the latter lie complacently chewing the cud, or wandering leisurely over their grazing ground. The charge of egg-eating is utterly groundless, and it is shameful to make such charges; for in too many instances it leads the thoughtless to acts of cruel persecution against this and many other useful birds. Your essayist should read the late Charles Waterton's ideas regarding the starling. No one gave more attention to the habits of birds than he, nor wrote more truthfully what he knew. See also the sayings of the late T. Edward on the same subject. Third, page 324—"We renewed acquaintance with many of our summer visitors; amongst others the golden and tufted plovers and the common peeweeet". May I ask, who is this "tufted plover"? Fourth, page 325, it is said there were seen "an oyster-catcher, in all the glory of his pied plumage, and a spotted woodpecker, refulgent in his blood-red hackle". In the first place, the spotted woodpecker has no blood-red hackle. A small spot of red there is on the back of the head, but in no sense can it be called a hackle; nor, secondly, could this bird be seen at the date referred to. It does not now breed with us, and is only an occasional visitor during winter. The dotterel is also said to have put in an appearance. I doubt this exceedingly. It is much more likely that the bird observed was the redshank (*Totanus calidris*), or the common sandpiper (*Tringoides hypoleucus*). The dotterel is very rare, and is now only known to breed very sparingly, in a few places in Scotland, always on the mountain tops, and certainly not in such a locality as Glen Gairn.

And, lastly, page 335—"Crawling like crabs on our backs, feet foremost, we descended from our precarious coign of vantage". It may be said that crabs do not crawl on their backs, and such a style of writing is only calculated to perpetuate error.—GEORGE SIM.

THE  
LARIG GHRU.

THE route through the Learg Ghruamach has already been described in the *C.C.J.* (Vol. I, p. 319), but as that description is somewhat general, a more detailed account of the route may perhaps be of some use. This account is supplied from notes taken during a walk through the Pass, on 6th August, 1896, the journey being made from Aviemore to Braemar. Starting from Aviemore railway station, you first walk to Coylum Bridge (two miles): there is no difficulty as to this part of the route. Just before reaching the bridge, a little iron gate will be observed on the right-hand side, adjacent to which is a direction post of the Scottish Rights of Way Society intimating that the path on to which the gate opens is the Larig Ghru path. You follow this path for half a mile or so, and then take the first track on the left-hand side (disregarding mere footpaths); this track is indicated by a small heap of stones on its right-hand side. It makes—almost in a direct line with the Larig, the peculiar V shape of which is here very prominent—for a small wooden house; goes past the front of the house, and then over a tiny burn (by a wooden plank) to a large iron

gate. On the other side of the gate, you find that the track degenerates to a mere footpath. Passing through a wood, it skirts the edge of an open bit of woodland—becoming a little indeterminate, however—and reaches a small iron gate in a wire fence near a burn (the Allt na Beinne Moire). Beyond this gate, the path wends along the fence to a dry-stone dyke, along the dyke for some distance, and then across another open space of moorland to a plantation filling the gap in the direction of Glen Eunach. The path now winds through this plantation in a somewhat erratic fashion, the track being through long heather (an “awful” track in wet weather: a few minutes of it sufficed to completely “soak” a party of us on a rainy day three days before). It ultimately reaches the Bennie, skirts the burn for some time, and then crosses a grassy plateau (becoming here a little faint) to a direction post (painted white). At this post, the path joins the track from Kinrara and Polchar; and a few yards on along this track—welcome after the one through the long heather—you cross a wooden bridge over the Bennie, at a distance of about two miles from Coylum Bridge. (This point may also be reached by continuing along the path entered at Coylum Bridge and turning to the left at Cross Roads—certainly a preferable route in wet weather). There is a nice little bit of scenery at the Bennie bridge, the brawling mountain burn being picturesquely set amid firs; a little above the bridge may be noted the junction of the Bennie and the Larig Burn, along the right bank of which our path now takes its way, shortly widening into a cart track. It crosses a long level meadow, passes a house on the left-hand side, and gradually ascends till—about a mile from the Bennie bridge—it reaches a point where three tracks unite, marked by a direction post. The Larig Ghru path turns sharply to the right (southward). The path in front takes you round to Loch Morlich; where the path to the left goes the present writer averreth not. If you reach this point, you are safe; for whatever doubts may have beset you in getting to it, once you take the path to the right you are in the “gut” of the Pass and cannot go wrong—you must either go on straight through the Pass (practically speaking), or turn back; at anyrate, you cannot miss your way. Leaving the tripartite junction, the Larig Ghru path gradually ascends the ridge on the right-hand side of the ravine through which the Larig Burn here flows (our left-hand side, of course). The first mile or so of this path—a narrow track through thick heather—is positively “beastly”, even in good weather, for the ground, being peaty, is very soft and very dirty. The track gradually improves as it ascends, however. It makes a long detour round the left-hand side of a very conspicuously-marked landslip; and, passing a very prominent cairn of stones, it descends to and crosses the Larig Burn—about three miles from the tripartite junction. From this point, you follow the track as best you may; but as you soon enter on a region of stones, you are very apt to lose it, notwithstanding the aid of a large number of direction cairns. You make your way slowly but steadily to the summit of the watershed in the Pass, which divides the Spey Valley from the Dee Valley,

admiring as you walk on (if you have any eye for the grand and the picturesque) the dark granite precipices on your left which, washed almost continually by dropping water, glisten in the sunshine like slate as viewed from Aviemore and thereabouts; then the succession of long slopes of red screes; and then a burn tumbling headlong down a shoulder of Ben Muich Dhui, and disappearing you know not where. Four miles of this varied route will bring you to the Pools of Dee—out of Inverness-shire into Aberdeenshire. You will have been fortunate if you have escaped rain until this stage is reached; if you get rain then, you are indifferent, for though you have still a



THE LARIG GHRU ENTRANCE—A MILE FROM BENNIE BRIDGE.

Photo. by

Mr. W. E. Carnegie Dickson, B.Sc.

long walk to Braemar, the most toilsome part of your journey is done, and you can now "pad" on at any rate you please. Down Glen Dee you go—with a light heart, and at a rattling good pace—past Braeriach, Cairn Toul, the Devil's Point, and Glen Geusachan, and across Glen Luibeg to Derry Lodge—a distance of eight miles, good. Braemar, as everybody knows, is 10 miles further on, so that the Larig involves a walk of fully 30 miles. A keeper gave me the distance between Aviemore and Derry Lodge as 18 miles, but I cannot figure it out in detail at less than 20. Making fairly good speed in the latter half of the walk, I accomplished the journey from Aviemore

to Braemar in 11 hours. The "Contour Road Book" gives the following distances:—Aviemore to Coylum Bridge,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Summit (2771 ft.),  $9\frac{1}{2}$  m.; Derry Lodge,  $17\frac{3}{4}$  m.; Braemar,  $27\frac{3}{8}$  m.—R. A.

As Lochnagar is in the happy hunting ground of the Club, I send the notes of a walk across it, as they may be of interest. Driving from Ballater to Allnagiubhsach, I started the ascent at 1.15 p.m. along the track. Leaving this just below the point where the Gelder track joins it, I struck straight across the moor, and up Cuidhe Crom (3552). Thence I visited

Cac Carn Mor (3768) and Cac Carn Beag (3786). I was now enjoying hail, sleet, snow, and all uncharitableness, and this in June! After returning to Cac Carn Mor, proceeding by compass, I kept too much to the south, and landed on the moor of Creag a' Ghlas-uilt (3450, probably 3500). From here I walked over the plateau of Carn a Choire Bhoidheach (3630), which is the large 3500 feet contour south of Lochan an Eoin on Bartholomew's map. There are no cairns on either of these two last tops. I now descended westwards to the col (3296), whence Carn an t-Sagairt Beag (3424) was ascended. The height of the col between this top and that of Carn an t-Sagairt Mor is 3156 feet. From the top of Carn an t-Sagairt Mor (3430) I proceeded along the ridge to Fafernie (3274), then on to Cairn Bannoch (3314). I next visited Cairn Gowal (3242), about one-third mile S.E. of Cairn Bannoch, and then going E.N.E. for about the same distance I arrived at Creag an Dubh Loch (3100), and gained a good view of the Dubh Loch. There are no cairns on these two tops. A gentle rise gave easy walking to the top of Broad Cairn (3268), and then the rain began again. Retracing my steps, I crossed the head of the Gowal Corrie, and walked over Creag an Gowal (3027)—no cairn. The descent was made to the Allt Gowal, keeping the great slabs of Creag Gowal on the right. The glen is extraordinarily wet walking. Four miles walk brought me to Braedownie, the track having been picked up at Bachnagairn. As my watch had stopped after leaving Allnagiubhsach, I now learned the time, and found it past 9.30 p.m. Four more miles brought me to the Milton of Clova. My walk down Glen Clova had been made less monotonous by the company of three curlews. Glen Clova looked extremely well in the gloaming, and a spur of the Driesh loomed up magnificently.

I thus walked easily over every top of the Lochnagar mass, except Meikle Pap and Little Pap. In Mr. Munro's tables this makes five separate mountains and eight separate tops; in all 13 tops. It sounds a tremendous day, but in reality it is nothing of the sort. The time taken from Allnagiubhsach Lodge was  $9\frac{1}{4}$  hours.

The heights and other details I have gleaned from Mr. M'Connochie's "Lochnagar", and from Mr. Munro's Tables of Mountains over 3000 feet and his paper on "Dark Lochnagar", both in the *S.M.C.J.*

The next day I ascended the Driesh (3105), and followed the flat western ridge to Mayar (3043). The western slope of Mayar merges into the great plateau of Finalty Hill. A descent was now made into



Glen Isla, and, after fording the river, I made for the pass between Monamenach and Black Hill, about 2000 feet, and down Glen Carnach to Glen Shee. The road was gained by means of a wobbly suspension bridge that gave the most dangerous work of the whole day. Two miles walking brought me to the Spital of Glen Shee at about 7 p.m.—EDRED M. CORNER.

ON 16th April last the writer, along with a Clubman, left Lagganlia, Glen Feshie, for the ascent of these summits *via* Allt F'hearnachan and Ciste Mhairearaid. SGOR GHAOITH AND CARN BAN. The snow-line was well defined at a uniform altitude of about 1800 feet. Brilliant sunshine, with an occasional slight snow shower, was experienced in the ascent, but when the top of Carn Ban was neared a furious gale had to be faced, and the mist closed in on us. The cairn was quite visible, but the staff was encrusted with frozen snow. At times there was a peep of distant mountains, but even Cairn Toul was generally dimly visible.

Proceeding to the top of Coire Odhar, we were fortunate in getting a striking view of Loch Eunach during a temporary absence of mist. The snow-line being about 150 feet above its level, it was quite clear of ice; the morning's snow looked not unlike a fringe of lace below the 1800 feet contour. The loch-front of the Sgoran was topped by deep snow, which had the appearance of having recently parted with its cornice. Sgor Ghaoith was reached in dense mist, and the wind blew so hard that we had to throw ourselves on the top to await the chance of a peep at the loch below us. We had a momentary prospect, but it left a great impression on the writer. The cold was intense, so we quickly hurried down the Crom Allt Mor—wrongly named on the map Allt nam Bo—and so found our way by Allt Ruadh to Lagganlia; time for the round, 7½ hours.

The snow was soft, with occasionally a hard "patch" difficult to account for. A good few white hares were seen in Ciste Mhairearaid, and ptarmigan, of course, were observed, but the most interesting sight was a flock of over one hundred snow buntings enjoying themselves at an altitude of about 2000 feet near the right bank of the Crom Allt Mor.—ALEX. ROSS.

THE AVON WATER SCHEME. The proposal to take the water supply for Aberdeen from the Avon instead of from the Dee, to which brief allusion was made in last number, has led to an animated—and, in some respects, amusing—controversy in the *Free Press*. The scheme has been assailed by "A. C.", who may be readily identified as one of the past Chairmen of the Club, and who, despite all his banter and humour and jauntiness of style—mayhap on account of these very qualities—has proved a formidable critic; and Mr. Thomas Jamieson, the author of the scheme, has rushed to its defence with a readiness of resource and a fertility of argument—and statistics—that have demonstrated his ability to hold his own, even against a doughty foe. "Catchment areas", "feeders", "filtration", "evaporation", and the like have been hurtling about in the air, along with a mass of information—or allegations—concerning Loch Avon and the Cairngorms, more or less

interesting. Unfortunately, the disputants don't agree; and at the moment of going to press it is not quite decided whether Glen Avon in winter time is an Arctic region or an Elysium of mildness.

MR. ROBERT ANDERSON writes:—I see that Mr. Thomas Jamieson, in one of his letters on the Avon water scheme (in the *Free Press*, 20th May), says—  
 A WALK DOWN GLEN AVON. “Very few have seen the beautiful sparkling streams that feed the Avon above Inchroary. With the exception of myself and my companion, and I think of Mr. M'Connochie, I doubt if any Aberdonian has ever traversed the whole glen (Glen Avon)”. If Mr. Jamieson will absolve me from expressing any opinion as to the suitability of



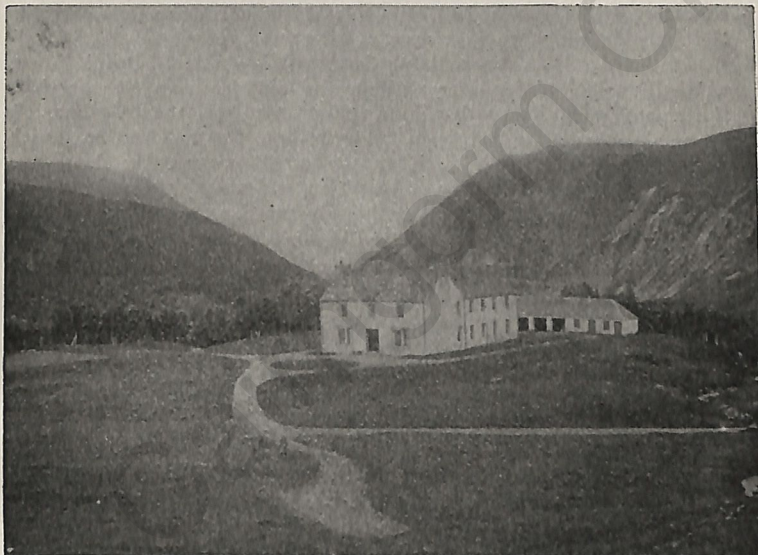
THE LINN OF AVON.

Photo. by

Mr. James Milne.

the Avon for the Aberdeen water supply, I don't mind confessing that I once walked down Glen Avon from the Shelter Stone at the head of Loch Avon to Inchroary and then on to Tomintoul, and I don't mind making the further confession—the lapse of years providing absolution in other quarters—that I and my companions were virtually arrested for trespass. My companions! Alas! they are all gone! They were three fellow-journalists—B. H. Rodger, of the *Evening Gazette*; W. J. Jamieson, of the *Journal*; and A. K. Moore, of the *London Morning Post*; the two former were capital pedestrians—Moore, a very brilliant and very genial fellow, rather leant to Dr. Johnson's notion that a walk down Fleet Street was preferable to any other form of walking exercise. We spent the night of Satur-

day, 9th August, 1884, under the Shelter Stone. About four o'clock in the morning, Jamieson and I, finding sleep could not be wooed on the very rough bed of boulders—not bolsters—that the Shelter Stone provides, got up and ascended Ben Muich Dhui to see the sun rise; but all we gained was a succession of studies in mist—very beautiful in their way though. Rejoining our companions, the four of us started down Glen Avon. I am afraid my recollections of that walk have long since been obliterated; I retain simply a general impression of a very wild and picturesque glen, with majestic hillsides. We began by walking down the right side of the Avon—to speak of a right “bank” would be ridiculous, for we had to do all manner of dodging to avoid rough ground. At last we espied a path on the



*Photo. by*

INCHRORY.

*Mr. James Milne.*

left bank. No sooner were we abreast of it than off went our boots and stockings, the Avon was forded, and then—then we encountered a formidable notice-board intimating that the path—a good bridle-track—was strictly private, the exclusive property of his Grace the Duke of Richmond and Gordon. Like all good mountaineers, we simply resolved to follow it till we were stopped. In all probability we should have been stopped at a shieling half-way down the glen had the occupant been at home, but, fortunately for us, he was absent—there was nobody about the place, though, in our innocence, we wanted to see somebody to learn how far we were from Inchrory. It is a long walk down the glen (some 10 or 12 miles, if not more); but at last we got near Inchrory. Then the path forked, and then arose

the inevitable discussion—Should we go to the right or the left? The left was chosen for some reason or other, and in a short time we found ourselves so far wrong that we were on the edge of the lawn of Inchroly Lodge, on which a party of ladies and gentlemen were gaily disporting themselves. Moore—the “Cockney”, as we designated him—was sent forward to convey our apologies and ask a direction to Tomintoul. We were placed in charge of a gillie—an act of courtesy that we highly appreciated. How we were “taken in”! The gillie led us to the cottage of the gamekeeper, and blandly informed that official that “Here’s four men come doon the glen the day”! A very angry man was that gamekeeper. “What”! he exclaimed, “Come doon the glen the day! Twa days afore the Twelfth! Ye’ve scared a’ the deer”! Our “Cockney”, in respect of the alien character of his speech, had been selected as our spokesman early in the morning when we first scented danger on seeing the “Private” notice-board. He immediately responded—“Deer! Deer! Wye, we’ve been lookin’ for deer all dye, and ain’t seen any”! At this, the assembled gillies gave a loud guffaw, and we, the “Cockney’s” companions, could not refrain from smiling, for well did we know that our presence in the glen was sufficient to drive the deer out. The gamekeeper got angrier and angrier, and we maintained a stolid silence, allowing him to exhaust his objurgations. Finally, he intimated that we should have to give him our names and addresses—a request that was immediately complied with. The four newspaper addresses made him angry again. “This is a plant”, said he; “you know there has been trouble about keeping Glen Avon private”. We disclaimed all such knowledge and all such intention as he had insinuated. Then he cooled down, and said he was only executing his orders, and, if “trouble” ensued, he was not to blame. We politely said we understood that; “and now”, we added, “kindly show us the way to Tomintoul”. No “trouble” did ensue—for one thing, the sporting tenant of Inchroly was then Lord Richard Grosvenor (now Lord Stalbridge), the chief Whip of the Liberal party, and “access to mountains” was coming to be spoken of as a part of Liberal policy. We subsequently learned that it would not have mattered which turn we took at the “fork”; had we taken the path to the right we should have landed at the gamekeeper’s—an ingenious contrivance, this forked path, for trapping trespassers. Must I own that I have since been “arrested” in much the same way for walking—quite innocently—through a deer preserve and scaring the animals off their favourite feeding-ground? But that is another story, as Kipling would say, and cannot, I am afraid, be told yet awhile.

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## REVIEWS.

“THE GOOD REGENT: A CHRONICLE PLAY”, by Professor BRAEMAR Sir Thomas Grainger Stewart, Edinburgh, was published IN the end of last year. A scene in the play is located on POETRY. “An eminence near Braemar—before a pavilion, October 30, 1562”, and is reminiscent of the fact that Queen Mary bestowed the earldom of Mar on her natural brother, James Stuart, afterwards Earl of Moray (the Good Regent). Moray does not seem to have been long in possession, the Erskines establishing their succession to the original Earls of Mar; but Sir Thomas Grainger Stewart takes advantage of his casual ownership to introduce descriptions of the region of Mar. He makes the Countess of Moray address her husband thus—

“ Is this domain,  
 All this, our own? In such a day, which seems  
 A second summer time, how passing fair  
 Is all the scene, these mountains and their glens,  
 The clear-cut outlines of the lofty peaks,  
 The wooded valleys dark with sombre pine,  
 Lit up by their red boughs! See, how the sun  
 Makes bright these golden birches! Mark the hues—  
 The russet brown of heather and the green  
 Of mossy hollows; while that winding stream  
 Glints in the sunshine, and the mountain tarns  
 Sparkle like bright eyes in the lonely moor”.

To which the Earl replies—

“ All ours, Her gracious gift.  
 You see that broader plain from out whose midst  
 Rises yon fortalice beside the Dee.  
 From there and onwards by Achallater,  
 And up the pass that leads to Angus braes,  
 And by Glen Shee is ours. The other stream,  
 By Corriemulzie, Inverey, Craigan,  
 By fair Dalmore, and on to that great hill,  
 The mighty Ben Muich Dhui, whose high head  
 Looks o'er the kingdom; then down by the Dee  
 By Invercauld, Kirkton of Crathie there,  
 And fair Balmoral, home where we might spend  
 Sweet days among our folks, remote from towns;  
 And Abergeldie, down towards Banchory,  
 Those mighty hills and lovely vales, are ours”.

ACROSS THE CAIRNGORMS IN WINTER is the title of an article that appeared in *The Sketch* on 1st February last. It briefly describes a walk through the Larig Ghru from Rothiemurchus to Braemar on 5th January—in mid-winter, that is, with snow on the ground, and with an occasional snow-storm on the way. The plucky pedestrians, in fact, were chased by blizzards. Fifteen minutes after leaving the summit of the pass, they looked round and saw “that the whole place had been simply

blotted out by a blizzard"; and, after leaving Glen Dee for Glen Lui Beg, "another blizzard swept down on us, and the Devil's Point, at the foot of which we had been standing ten minutes before, became almost completely invisible". The article, it is well known, was written by Mr. A. L. Danson, of Balliol College, Oxford (son of Rev. J. M. Danson, D.D.), who, two months later, accomplished the feat of walking from Cambridge to Oxford (82 miles) in 24 hours.

OUR PRESIDENT  
AND THE  
ALPINE CLUB.

Mr. JAMES BRYCE, M.P., who has been President of the Cairngorm Club since its formation in 1889, was recently elected President of the Alpine Club, the premier of all mountaineering clubs. His election was seconded by Mr. Leslie Stephen, the author of "The Playground of Europe", who recalled the early days when Mr. Bryce's famous essay on "The Holy Roman Empire" (1862) had brought him the warm approval of Professor Freeman. "I remember Mr. Bryce telling me", said Mr. Stephen, "that Freeman warned him against me as a seducer of youth. I did my best to



seduce Mr. Bryce. Freeman thought it quite right to travel in Switzerland in order to investigate the history of federal institutions, but necessary to forget that there were such things in Switzerland as mountains. I used to forget that there was anything else". Mr. Bryce has been a member of the Alpine Club for twenty years.

A caricature of Mr. Bryce as "The Chamois" (*Rupicapra Bryceii*) appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* a few weeks ago. It was accompanied by the following amusing description—"The chamois is very fond of climbing high mountains and getting on constitutional points where you cannot always follow him, because he knows more about them than you do. If you try to stop his mountain paths he gets dangerous. He often occurs on the Swiss Alps".

REVISED maps are now being issued by the Ordnance Survey, and the sheet for Aberdeen (77) has recently been published. The chief alterations are the marking of new roads, and the indication of the miles on the main roads, and of post offices and telegraph offices; and the spelling of some of the names has also been altered, and several altitudes added—*i.e.*, Tyrebagger, 497. But the revision, after all, is very slight. The dis-used name of Arthurseat, for instance, is retained, and the title Duthie Park is not substituted; no new names in the Cults district are introduced, and Bieldside even is not named. On the other hand, Belhelvie Church would seem to have dropped out of existence. The 6-inch map may be better, but the 1-inch map is no very great improvement on its predecessor.

"NIGHT  
ON THE  
GHRUAMACH  
PASS".

THE following sensational and highly exaggerated description of the Larig Ghru appears under this title in "Scotland, Picturesque and Traditional: A Pilgrimage with Staff and Knapsack", by George Eyre-Todd—we are exceedingly sceptical of its describing an actual walk:—"Above the Linn of Dee there is only the wild mountain country, the home of the eagle and the deer. A path goes northward through the Learg Ghrumach and the Rothiemurchus Forest to Aviemore. It need not be tried, however, except by the boldest and strongest mountaineers; and even they should start upon it in the early morning. The road runs up Glen Lui, and, after leaving the Duke of Fife's shooting-box of Derry Lodge, there is no human habitation for eighteen miles. Among these glens, the loneliest corries in Scotland, the track is only to be made out by the practised eye; and in the later part of the season, if a slip were made or a leg broken, the wanderer would have the pleasant prospect of lying probably for several weeks before anyone else came that way. There is also the danger—no slight one in the rutting season—of being attacked and overpowered by some furious stag. To be overtaken by night on that mountain pass is an experience not to be forgotten. From corrie to corrie in the gathering darkness echoes the strange and eerie belling of the deer; and high overhead on the steep side of Ben Muich Dhui a long, hoarse roar

once and again betokens the fall of a stone avalanche. Besides these there is no sound but the rushing of the lonely waters at the bottom of the pass. Sometimes a fine sight is to be seen as one comes suddenly round a shoulder of the mountain and surprises a herd of deer. Instantly, on the appearance of danger, the stag gallops to the front. At his back, the hinds run together, like the members of a foraging party surprised. Then they go off finely in single file over the brow of the next knoll, and disappear. Higher up the pass even the belling of the deer is heard no more—their last sentinel has been left behind; for they gather in the green bottoms of the corries at night to feed. Still higher, and the path narrows to a chasm, and walking ceases. For miles one has to scramble along the steep sides of old avalanches and screes, sometimes among great boulders where hands and knees have to be used, sometimes along precarious slopes of loose gravel where every footstep threatens to set the mass moving and bring the whole mountainside down to bury the adventurer. Stones loosened by the foot on these sliding screes go rushing downwards, starting an avalanche on the way, till they hurl themselves with an ominous plunge into the black tarns at the bottom. On the left of the narrow pass rise the precipices of Braeriach, and on the right those of Muich Dhui, the second highest mountain in Scotland. Screes and ancient boulder-falls from the two meet and fill up the bottom of the chasm. By these the stream is dammed into tarns and pools; and these tarns are the Pools of Dee. The Learg Ghrumach is said to have been one of the routes used by Highland cattle raiders and drovers in ancient times; but beasts and men must have been strangely nimble, and must have had strong motives for getting from one part of the country to another in haste when this was found a convenient road. If the passage along these tremendous boulder-falls is difficult during the day, it is much more so at night, when, if the expected moonlight is obscured by mists that drift lower and lower on the precipices overhead, it is apt to become almost alarming. Fatigue, however, is not felt in that rare mountain air; and, with a well-filled flask and a pocketful of chocolate and oatcake, the pangs of hunger can be staved off successfully enough. At last the summit of the pass is reached, close on three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the march is crossed into Inverness-shire. Not even the tinkle of a rill is to be heard here; and amid the shadows of night and the solitude of the mountains a great solemnity presses upon the heart. There is a long tramp yet of a dozen miles and more, through heather hags and across the beds of burns. But by-and-bye at intervals, to an eye accustomed to the hills, a line of exposed shingle over a knoll face, or a bare bit of rock among the heather, betokens the place where former feet have trod. These traces lead far down among the scattered trees and wide heather spaces of the Rothiemurchus Forest, and there the path is found—a mossy ride, carpeted for miles with warm pine-needles. Here the burns run quietly through hollow ways; and the mystery of the night, with its shadows and its drifting scents of fir and fern, the stillness broken only at times



by the stir of some wild creature among the grass-tufts, strikes the wanderer with an elfin charm. Once and again, perhaps, in the dimness of the clouded moonlight, a shadow passes silently across an open space, and seems ghostly enough till one remembers that these forest glades are favourite couching-places of the deer. At last a human dwelling is reached, a forester's house among the woods, with all asleep without and within. Away on the left, below, through the trees, appears the white shimmer of water—Loch an Eilein, 'the loch of the island'. Three miles farther, through a forest country, with sleeping cottage and clachan here and there in the shadow, and the road crosses the rushing Spey. Then there is the wakening up of a sleepy host at the Inn of Linwilg, and the satisfaction, most perfect, after a long mountain climb, of sinking to sleep with a single sigh the moment the head touches the pillow".

LOYAL  
LOCHABER, by W. Drummond-Norie (published by Morison Brothers, 52 Renfield Street, Glasgow), is a volume, "historical, genealogical, and traditionary", which has deservedly met with an exceedingly favourable reception from the Ness to the Thames. The author is quite at home with his subject, and carries out in a most satisfactory manner the task he thus imposes on himself:—"It has been my endeavour to collect, in the compass of this volume, all that is of most interest in the authentic history and traditionary lore of Lochaber, and to rescue from possible oblivion its many old-world stories and quaint legends, which another generation will probably have forgotten amid the inrush of the questionable civilising influences of Sassenach tourists". Hillmen will have one grumble at the author—the almost infinitesimal space devoted to description of the numerous mountains of Lochaber; while "the general reader" will miss a map of the district. The latter must be a simple omission, for the book is profusely illustrated—the four small Ben and Glen Nevis views we reproduce giving no indication either of the size or quality of the illustrations.

The excerpt which follows is from the Introduction. It is an excellent piece of word-painting: we should say here that the author makes his own brush contribute to the value of "Loyal Lochaber":

"Lochaber! Unsympathetic indeed is the man, be he Highlander or Lowlander, Gael or Sassenach, who does not experience a thrill of pleasurable emotion, tinged perhaps with sadness, when this name falls upon his ears; what visions of lofty mountains lifting their mighty summits to the clouds does it not conjure up before the imagination; we see as in a dream stretches of purple moorland, dotted here and there with snow-white sheep; blue sparkling lochs embosomed among the hills, reflecting in their mirrored surface the brown sails of the fishing boats; turbulent rivers rushing merrily along over rocks and pebbles, making sweet music as they go to join the sea; foaming cataracts tumbling noisily from deep corries in the mountain sides, sending up clouds of smoke-like spray, in which all the colours of the rainbow gleam; wee murmuring burns, where the brown trout love to dwell, flowing between banks all thick with

ferns and foxgloves, their tuneful voices helping to swell the great harmonious Lobgesang to the Almighty.

"If this is the vision, how much more beautiful is the reality. Let us take our stand upon the great green hill of Meall an t-suidhe, that forms, as it were, the first step in the toilsome ascent of giant Ben Nevis, and is appropriately named 'the hill of sitting or resting'; here let us pause for a few moments and survey the magnificent prospect that lies before us. The air around is fragrant with the scent of wild thyme and bog myrtle, with which the ground at our feet is covered; great clumps of purple heather, growing here in wild luxuriance, give the one touch of local colour that is wanted to harmonise with the tints of the surrounding vegetation. Among the heather the bees go humming merrily as they extract the honey from its tiny bells. The sheep are grazing lazily in the shade of the great lichen-covered boulders, or, perched upon some inaccessible crag, nibble the short sweet grass they have discovered in the clefts of the rocks, regardless of the precipice yawning at their feet. A great silence, like the silence of some immense cathedral, is all about us, broken only at rare intervals by the shrill scream of an eagle, as it swoops down from its rocky eyry upon its unsuspecting prey in the glen beneath; this and the occasional harsh crow of the grouse cock among the heather, are the only sounds that fall upon our ears".