

## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

“WATERSPOUT”  
IN  
GLEN DEE.

THERE was an extraordinary “waterspout” in Glen Dee, between the Devil’s Point and Carn a’ Mhaim, on 10th July last. That afternoon, between one and two o’clock, the “watcher” at Corour saw a huge balloon-like black mass burst on the top of the Devil’s Point. Thereupon the air was darkened; there was much thunder—the noise was like a long continuous tearing of calico—and rain fell. But the rain was not in showers; the heavens seemed literally opened. The hill slopes were torn up, especially on the east side of the glen, the deep gashes and furrows made by the ’29 flood being utilised and enlarged, and many new channels made. Stones and boulders in great numbers were hurled down Carn a’ Mhaim, some of them measuring over fifty cubic feet. One of the channels is twenty feet broad, and about eight feet deep, and contained, it was estimated, about six times the volume of water in the Dee at Corour. One gravel-spread stretch was found to be 190 paces in breadth. So great was the force of the water from Carn a’ Mhaim that the Dee was dammed back just below the Corour hut, and the river, to the wonder of many, was not free from discolourment for a week. It was all over in a few hours, but the scaurs on the mountains will be eloquent for generations. The Larig was only affected (north to south) for about a quarter of a mile, so the storm area was exceedingly limited. It may be mentioned that a little of the “waterspout” found its way down the *east* side of Carn a’ Mhaim.

BRAEMAR  
AND THE  
EARTHQUAKE.

JUDGING from the following letter—which appeared in *The Scotsman*—the earthquake that visited several parts of Scotland in September was hardly felt at Braemar:—

CLUNY COTTAGE,  
INVERCAULD, 19th September, 1901.

SIR,—As it may be of interest to know over how wide an area the earthquake of this morning was felt, I venture to inform you that we were awakened at 1:30 this morning by a prolonged shaking of the house, followed by a low distinct rumble. The same was felt at Braemar Castle, but so far I cannot hear that anything was noticed in Castletown itself. Braemar Castle is two miles higher up the Dee than this house, the village an eighth of a mile beyond the Castle. . . . . I am, &c.,

LOUISA E. FARQUHARSON.

Several members of the Club felt the earthquake at Inverdrue, Rothiemurchus. It was also felt on both sides of the Monadhliadhs.

RAINFALL  
IN THE  
CAIRNGORMS.

THE utilisation of the Avon for the water supply of Aberdeen is still being actively discussed. Three articles on the subject appeared in the *Aberdeen Daily Free Press* during September. In one of these an attempt to estimate the rainfall on the Cairngorms is described. The writer—who, we have reason to believe, was

Mr. Thomas Jamieson—stated that he was at the trouble two years ago to place a rain gauge on Ben Muich Dhui above the 4000 feet line, and, later on, at the 3000 feet line. On 16th August, 1899, the gauge showed  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches of rain for 34 days, equivalent to 38 inches per year; and on 30th November  $55\frac{3}{4}$  inches for 106 days, equivalent to 185 inches per year. (The rainfall at Braemar for these two periods was .07 inches and 14.66 inches respectively.) On his next visit, in the spring of 1900, the writer found that the prolonged winter frost had cracked the gauge, and the rainfall had leaked out. A new gauge was set up on 5th June, 1900; and the following records were subsequently taken:—On 13th September, 1900, 36 inches for 100 days, equivalent to 131 inches per year; and on 24th June, 1901, 108 inches for 284 days, equivalent to 140 inches per year. (The corresponding rainfall for Braemar was 10.49 inches and 28.96 inches.) The summation of the four records yields a rainfall of 201 inches for 524 days—an average of 140 inches per year. This is nearly identical with the rainfall on Ben Nevis, exact observations over fourteen years showing that the average rainfall on Ben Nevis is 141 inches annually.

**ECCENTRICITIES OF THE RAINFALL.** THE following excerpt from the article alluded to will be read with interest, and similar instances of what may be termed “eccentric” rainfall could be given by others accustomed to walking in the Cairngorms:—“Everyone who is familiar with these mountains knows how excessively greater is the fall on these high lands—we might almost say cloud-lands—as compared with the lowlands in their vicinity. They also know how varied is the rainfall—a heavy downpour suddenly falling on one mountain, while the neighbouring one receives not a drop. The writer may give two instances. Standing on the summit of Braeriach, a dense black cloud was seen discharging a deluge of rain on the neighbouring mountain of Cairn Toul, which is close at hand, separated only by a narrow glen; on Braeriach only the fringe of the cloud fell in the form of a moderate shower, whereas on Cairn Toul, and especially on its southern flank—the Devil’s Point—the deluge was so heavy as not only to swell the streams into small rivers, but even the paths were changed into running streams. Another instance may be given. A party recently came through Glen Tilt to Bynack Lodge; a carriage from Braemar was to meet them there and convey them to Braemar. The horses forded the Bynack easily as usual, and were put up to feed, but before they had fed, ready to return, the Bynack had changed to a foaming, surging torrent, rendering it impossible for the horses to re-cross. They had to remain there some days, and the party, after just managing to cross a high wooden footbridge, had to walk to Braemar”.

**SUBTERRANEAN WATERFLOWS.** MR. JAMIESON puts on record a singular fact regarding the river Avon. At the Marl Pool, just below Inchrory, we have, he says, only a portion of the Avon, a large portion having gone down and disappeared into subterranean channels. “Such disappearance”, he

goes on to say, "is well known to be a most frequent occurrence in limestone districts, but one would hardly expect to find it in a granite district. Strangely enough, however, just at Inchrory the granite gives place to gneiss, and between these two hard formations there is a long line of softer limestone, stretching from Loch Builg down the line of the Avon to Tomintoul. A surveyor of the Geological Department has mentioned to the writer that the Builg Burn loses its water in subterranean channels, and finds it again a little lower down. The writer was informed by a well-informed native frequently fishing in the Avon from his boyhood, that the Avon seemed to lose part of its water about Inchrory, and the writer has proved that this is actually the case; a large part of the water disappearing somewhere about Inchrory, and this occurrence he has had confirmed by the measurements of a professional engineer".

THE CAIRNGORMS  
IN JUNE.

THE writer and two companions had a pleasant week's tour early last June with intent to secure photographs. On the first day we traversed Glen Tilt from Blair Athole in brilliant weather.

There were several snow patches visible on the Beinn a' Ghlo group, but they were insignificant compared with the long white-speckled sides of the Cairngorms as seen from the Geldie. Tuesday we spent in Glen Dee. On Wednesday we started on the familiar Corrie Etchachan route, leaving it at the loch for a descent to the Shelter Stone. The weather, until then favourable, gradually changed, and mist and rain or snow alternately played on us for the remainder of that day. Instead of ascending by the Garbh Uisge as intended, we returned to the path we had left. A much wished-for exposure at the cairn of Ben Muich Dhui was rendered impossible by the strong wind and blinding snow. Beyond the hut there was almost total darkness, and we cautiously returned and groped our way down towards Lochan Uaine. Several of the long snow slopes on that side were crisp and hard, as one of us demonstrated by a slip and an involuntary slide from top to bottom. The return was down Glen Luibeg. Thursday was our biggest, most favourable, and most successful day. It included Glen Luibeg, and Glen Dee as far as the Pools. From the Pools we angled over the shoulder of Braeriach to Coire Bhrochain, and thence to the Garbh Coire Dhe. Snow was everywhere in abundance, the "infant Dee" running under a snow tunnel for a long distance after its descent into the corrie, while the crest of the Garbh Coire had a fine snow cornice. It had been intended to cross over to Lochan Uaine of Cairn Toul on the return; but before we had left Coire Bhrochain it was evident that time would not permit of this, so we had to be content with a long-focus view of the Lochan from the Braeriach side. From the Garbh Coire we sought and joined the Glen Dee track again, "and so home". On Friday we exchanged the Dee for the Spey. The weather was hot and cloudless. Like the stags, we wished for a higher altitude, so we kept high up on the east side of Beinn Mheadhoin. We crossed the Avon by a refreshing wade, swept over

the Saddle and up Cairngorm, whence we descended to Glen More. On Saturday we made a good few exposures ere we reached Aviemore, where we transferred our burdens and ourselves to the tender mercies of the railway. Our camera was a half-plate, stand, with euryscope, telephoto, and wide angle lenses. We carried 9 dark slides holding 18 plates, and we managed to expose that number on an average daily, many of which turned out satisfactory negatives.—W. CRUICKSHANK.

THE CLUB'S autumn excursion (September 23) was to the Bin of Cullen. The view from the summit of the Bin (as fully described by Dr. Cramond in the last number of the *C.C.J.*) extends practically from Bennachie to Wick, from Buchan to Ben Wyvis—to adopt the summary of another writer—but it was greatly curtailed, owing to the haze that prevailed. The coast line of the Moray Firth and the adjacent hills, such as Ben Rinnes, Ben Aigan, the Knock, Corryhabbie, &c., were distinct enough; but there was difficulty in locating The Buck of the Cabrach and Mount Keen, while the Cairngorms were totally obscured. Ample compensation, however, was afforded by the walk to the Bin and back by a different route, the extensive and diversified policies of Cullen House, presenting “a series of living pictures that charm by their beauty and variety”, being thus traversed. A little too much time, perhaps, was spent in the inspection of Cullen House and the gardens before the walk was begun; and on the way to the Bin a section of the party in front moved on so rapidly that the party in the rear, losing sight of them, took a wrong road. No serious mishap occurred, however, and the two sections reached the summit much about the same time. The day's arrangements were superintended by the Chairman, Mr. William Porter, J.P.—ROBERT ANDERSON.

NOTE ON THE forest with Dr. George Henderson, one of the STAG'S FUNGUS. most delightful companions I ever met. He had just returned from India, where he had been one of Sir David Forsyth's expedition which crossed the Himalayas. Climbing a brae where the turf was broken, we picked up something like a nut, round, brown, and hollow. Dr. Henderson said, “What is this? It looks like a truffle, but there can be no truffles here”. I said that I did not know what it was, but that it was not uncommon, and that I had heard roe-deer were very fond of it, and would scent and dig it up, as swine searched out truffles. Years went by, and one day, passing through a wood, I came upon a place where there had been turf-cutting, and here I found quite a store of the curious Earth-nut. I asked an old man about them, and he said that they were called in Gaelic “Buntata-nan-Earb”, “the roe-deer's potatoes”. Being desirous to find out what they were, I wrote to my friend, the late Dr. Alex. Stewart, of Ballachulish, well-known as “Nether Lochaber”, who was everywhere regarded as a great authority on all matters connected with Natural History. Dr.

Stewart wrote: "Many thanks for the Earth-nuts, *Buntata-nan-Earb*, a name for them I never heard before, and the origin of which, as you give it, is *most interesting*. These Earth-nuts are not common in the West Highlands, although they do occasionally occur. They are much more common in your Strathspey country and in some parts of the mid-Highlands of Perthshire. They are of the species *Bunium Bulbocastanum*, the *chestnut-like* Earth-nut, a first cousin of the *Braonan*, a much commoner species—*Bunium flexuosum*. By and by, I hope to have something to say concerning all these edible Earth-nuts". I had still doubts notwithstanding this confident reply, so I wrote to Dr. Keith, Forres, our leading botanist in the North, and sent him specimens. Dr. Keith replied: "'Nether Lochaber' is wrong for once. It is really a *fungus*, belonging to the same order as the Truffle. Its botanical name is *Elaphomyces granulatus*. Perhaps it is not so rare as it seems, as, owing to its underground mode of growth, it must often escape detection. Its discovery is sometimes due to accident, but sometimes also to another fungus—a fleshy-coloured one—which often grows upon it, and appears above ground. What you have heard of the roe-deer's fondness for it seems to be true. I had not heard of this before, but I find Fries says 'Edulis non est; sed cervi, lepores, ut ferunt, et certe sues eodem vescuntur', and this belief was embodied in the earliest names which were given it, *Tuber cervinum*, *Cervi boletus*, and is still embodied in its modern name *Elaphomyces* (the Stag's Fungus). I have not met with it more than once, and should be glad of further specimens". When I communicated Dr. Keith's opinion to "Nether Lochaber", he replied: "I am not quite convinced that my identification was wrong. I am now sending specimens to the Professor of Botany at Cambridge, and we shall hear what he says". Unfortunately, Dr. Stewart was shortly after taken with death illness, and I heard from him no more. His busy pen is now still, and he has passed where beyond these voices there is peace, but I shall always associate *this fungus* with his memory.—WILLIAM FORSYTH, D.D.

A FOOT-RACE from the base to the top of Ben Nevis took place on 1st October. It was RACE TO THE TOP OF BEN NEVIS. organised by Mr. J. Y. Buchanan, F.R.S., a Director of the Ben Nevis Observatory, who acted as physicist with the Challenger Expedition. His object in arranging the race—for which he offered as prizes a handsome gold medal and several substantial monetary awards—was to ascertain the dynamical value of the race to science. The difference of elevation between Achintee Farm, from which the competitors were started by the Observatory Superintendent, and the finishing point on the summit is 4300 feet, and if a competitor's weight in pounds be multiplied by this height, the number of foot pounds of work which he has done is obtained, while if the product is divided by the number of minutes required to make the ascent, the average rate in foot pounds per minute at which he had been working during the ascent will be ascertained. Seven competitors took part, and the following

were the names, weights, and times of the prize-winners:—1. Ewen Mackenzie, Fort-William; weight, 12 st. 6 lb.; time, 1 hour 8 mins. 19 secs. 2. Duncan Rankin, Lochyside; weight, 11 st. 12½ lb.; time, 1 hour 18 mins. 44 secs. 3. Donald Cameron, Lochyside; weight, 10 st. 4½ lb.; time, 1 hour 20 mins. 54 secs. It is worthy of note that the winner worked at exactly one-third of a horse-power during the ascent.

UP BEN NEVIS  
ON A  
MOTOR-CYCLE.

A NOVEL exploit took place on Ben Nevis on Saturday, 19th October, when Mr. Dudley Grierson, London, ascended that mountain on a motor-bicycle. He made the attempt from Fort-William on the Friday afternoon, but owing to the tyres of the machine becoming punctured he only reached the Half-way House, at an elevation of about 2000 feet. Leaving his machine there overnight, he returned to Fort-William and walked up to the hut on Saturday, and proceeded from there astride the bicycle. To anyone acquainted with the ruggedness of the Ben Nevis path the self-imposed task of the cyclist would almost appear to be unattainable, but by perseverance and skill he rode his machine with safety up to an altitude of over 3000 feet, where, on account of the soft snow and darkness, he had to dismount. Determined, however, to reach the summit, he shoved the cycle from this point up to the Observatory, and as the machine weighed nearly 200 lbs., the difficulty of the task will be at once evident. The last part of the performance was undertaken in a heavy fall of snow, which in some parts was drifted to a depth of two feet, completely obliterating the bridle-path in places. Mr. Grierson appeared to be quite fresh on his arrival at the Meteorological Station, where, owing to the courtesy of the observers, he was put up for the night. He returned to Fort-William the following evening, riding his machine occasionally coming down the mountain, but dismounting where soft snow drifts had formed. The tyres of the bicycle were considerably cut up, but otherwise the bicycle sustained no damage. Mr. Grierson's performance, it seems, was undertaken to disprove the averment that Ben Nevis could not be ascended on a bicycle.

OUR THIRTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING was held on 20th December, 1901—the Chairman, Mr. Porter, presiding. Office-bearers and Committee were elected as on page ix. The excursions for the current year were fixed as follows:—Spring Holiday—Clochnaben; Summer Holiday—Ben Avon. Mr. Porter was thanked for the efficient manner in which he had discharged the duties of the chair for the past two years.