

## THE MONADHLIADHS.

ACCORDING to the one-inch map, Carn Mairg (3087) is the highest summit of the Monadhliadhs, but the six-inch awards that position to its near neighbour Carn Dearg, whose North Top has an altitude of 3093 feet, the South Top being 3025 feet.

Newtonmore is a convenient starting-point for a climb, the route being up Glen Banchor, along the north bank of the Calder. The lower part of that river's course is very beautiful, the channel rocky, and the sides tree-clad; but a short distance up the picturesque is left behind, and the glen is devoted to sheep. Dalballoch is the most remote inhabited house, and near it the head streams of the Calder meet—Allt Mada Coin from the west, and Allt an Lochain Dhuibh and Allt Balloch from the north. Carn Dearg lies between the two latter streams, and Carn Mairg is about a mile further northwards, its north-western slope being drained by the Abhainn Cro Clach, the head stream of the Findhorn.

After scones and milk at the cottage at Dalballoch, and a chat with the shepherd, we made our way by Allt an Lochain Dhuibh to Carn Dearg, though we are now inclined to favour the route by Allt Balloch. The former burn flows out of Loch Dubh, which is confined by rather rocky and precipitous hills. We did not walk up the glen quite as far as the loch, but made for our mountain at the saddle which connects the South Top with a lower summit, Carn Mhic Dhughail. Dalballoch left, we were favoured with showers; these gave way to a gale, which, however, failed to disperse the mist. The ascent of Carn Dearg is moderately steep, and the ridge is none too wide, so that it is not an ideal place for losing oneself in mist. To the right we had occasional glimpses of Gleann a' Bhealaich, its west side a long, steep, grassy slope, with occasional rocks showing through. The cairn at the South Top is only a few stones laid together, but that at

the North Top is a little more imposing. The prospect is said to be wide and varied; we had enough to do to steer by compass for Carn Mairg. There is a dip of about 200 feet with a tiny stream in the hollow. The cairn of Carn Mairg is close to the edge of a corrie which looked rather rocky and impressive in the mist. The view in these circumstances was practically *nil*, and had it not been for the sheep fence and the compass it would have been no easy matter to strike on the Abhainn Cro Clach. There is a little tarn—known to shepherds as Lochan Uisge—which is the most prominent of the innumerable rill-sources of the Abhainn Cro Clach, and striking on it we made our way down by the right bank of the main stream of the Findhorn. It is a long, wearisome bog, part of Coignafearn deer forest, though sheep seemed more numerous than deer. There is an old drove road which, starting from the rough glen track at Dalballoch, holds up Gleann Balloch, and, keeping by the east shoulder of Carn Balloch, ultimately drops into the glen of the Abhainn Cro Clach. But it is extremely indistinct, as it has almost ceased to be used as a right-of-way, and even when found is difficult to follow. We noticed a tempting bridle-path on the west side of the Cro Clach, but we kept to our rights, such as they were. The “bothy” marked on the map is now only a *larach*, the uppermost house being at Dalveg, a forester’s cottage about a mile below the confluence of the Abhainn Cro Clach and the River Eskin. There is a foot-bridge on the Findhorn about a quarter of a mile below Dalveg, which lands one on an excellent road on the west side of the stream. The shooting box of the forest is now near the mouth of Allt Feithbeanach; formerly it was at Coignafearn. We walked on to Coignascallan, where, though strangers, we received a hearty welcome.

ALEX. INKSON M’CONNOCHIE.

ON 29th August, 1899, Mr. David W. Pentland, of Edinburgh, and the writer started about 10.10 a.m. from Cluny Mains (quite close to Cluny Castle on the old coach road between Kingussie and Fort-William), not intending,

as may be imagined from that late hour, to do anything in particular, but "to do it very well"! We went leisurely through the birch woods that skirt the lower slopes of Binnein Mor (1794), and as we ascended we saw that the weather was to be very favourable for a view, so we "put in a step" and hastened through Strath an Eilich, and crossed the Allt Mada Coin about a quarter mile west of its junction with the Allt an Lochain Dhuibh. Here the Secretary's route and ours practically meet, and we accompany each other to the top of Carn Mairg *via* the ridge of Carn Dearg. The little Loch Dubh, set as it is in the midst of charming grassy steeps crowned with jagged rocks which, in parts, are really wild, at once attracted our attention, and this view became more impressed on us as we ascended to the Saddle of Carn Dearg, where we looked down on the loch—dark and black in its emerald bed. In mist the Carn Dearg ridge may look sharp, but in the fine weather conditions we had it was merely a broad ladder leading to the summit; and at 12.10 we were seated on the top enjoying an extensive and varied view. Behind us lay the deep Gleann a' Bhealaich on the right, and the "other" Carn Dearg (2892) on our left; and, in face, the stony Saddle running up to Carn Mairg, which shut out our prospect to the immediate north. After a quarter of an hour here, we resumed our journey, and in ten minutes reached the summit of Carn Mairg. Our view now to the north was grand and entirely unimpeded. We could distinctly see towards the neighbourhood of Inverness, and along the Morayshire coast. We could also see that, so far as one can judge at a distance, the country which the Secretary and his companions had now to traverse till they reached Dalveg must have been of a distinctly spongy nature—to put it very mildly. The whole place seemed to us to be a perfect bog; and of the bridle path referred to, or anything else that would go to show that the foot of man had ever trodden those great wastes, we saw absolutely no sign of any kind. Away to the south and west we had very grand peeps, such as the Ben Alder group and, on the south side of Loch Ericht, Beinn

Udlanan, with the lowlands of Badenoch as our mid-distant picture. Again, to the west rose innumerable peaks, including Ben Nevis and his neighbours, and the dark corries of the nearer Creag Meaghaidh. Regaling ourselves with a few sandwiches, &c., we bade Carn Maig adieu at 1.5; and here too we parted company with the Secretary's—I will not say thorny—path. We had arranged to meet friends at Loch Laggan Hotel as early in the day as we could; and the question now was how were we to get there as easily as possible. Well, it was obviously along the head waters of Glen Markie. There were two great advantages about this route—the descent was gradual and by another moderate climb we could get in an additional peak, a consideration—seeing that we had started the “peak-bagging” game—still dear even to certain members of that Club which now practically lives for the high art of balance! Topping that “other” Carn Dearg we descended, and varied the proceedings by having a most exhilarating “dip” in one of the natural baths (with shower complete) to be found in those innumerable rock-basins of the Red Burn, which, in turn, becomes the Markie. Then there followed a confessedly tiresome “grind” to Loch Coire nam Beith, and a slight pull up the east end of Geal Charn (3036), the summit being reached at 3.5 p.m. A fair scene now presented itself to the west. At our feet lay the broad and grassy valley of Upper Spey, Loch Crunachan, Glen Shirra, and the silver sheen of Loch Laggan, bathed in the afternoon sun of that ideal August day, when the “grouse” heather lends its richness to the dreary hill-side, and lightens up the expanse of boggy waste, and the already yellowing birk and bracken in the valley below give a mellowness to the picture of which no Alpine scene, be it ever so majestic, can boast. But we must push forward, for it is now 3.20; so we make tracks down the western grass slopes of the Geal Charn, keeping Beinn na Sgeith (2845) on the left, and, after a steady run, reach the foot-bridge over the Spey at Shirramore at 4.10, and Loch Laggan Hotel at 5.5.

WILLIAM GARDEN.