

CAT LAW.

BY JOHN RITCHIE, LL.B.

TRAVELLERS between Perth and Aberdeen who take any interest in the mountain ranges on the north side of Strathmore, have doubtless often been struck by the massive hill which dominates so much of the landscape, especially as one looks northward. "The stranger in these parts," who as a wise traveller prefers the company of a map to that of a newspaper, has little difficulty in identifying this great lazy looking hill as the Cat Law (2,196). It is not its height which gives it this prominence in the landscape, but while Mount Blair and other well known outliers of the Grampians stand well back from the Strath, the Cat Law on the other hand comes close up to it and is much higher than its neighbours which form the northern fringe of Strathmore. A reference to the map shows that the Cat Law is about six miles north-west of Kirriemuir, and that it lies at the entrance to Glen Prosen. Perhaps one also remembers the reference to this scene in the first chapter of "Auld Licht Idylls." "Another white blanket has been spread upon the glen since I looked out last night; for over the same wilderness of snow that has met my gaze for a week I see the steading of Waster Lunny sunk deeper into the waste. Unless that is Waster Lunny's grievous foddering the cattle in the snow, not a living thing is visible. The ghost-like hills that pen in the glen have ceased to echo to the sharp crack of the sportsman's gun, and only giant Cat Law shows here and there a black ridge, rearing his head at the entrance to the glen and struggling ineffectually to cast off his shroud."

The writer had hoped to join the Cairngorm Club in an excursion to the Cat Law which was, it is believed, projected sometime ago, but as this was apparently postponed indefinitely he set out with a friend one bright cold April day to walk to the top of this "classic" hill. We left Kirriemuir about nine o'clock, having secured seats on the Glen Prosen

post gig. Next time, however, we shall walk, as this would be almost as quick a mode of progression over the billowy highroad that approaches the glen. We had the fear, however, (quite unnecessary as it proved) that we might not be able to get back to Kirriemuir in time to catch the afternoon train. About an hour and a half after leaving Kirriemuir we reached a point near Muir Pearsie where the road takes a sharp turn to the right—an old ruinous cottage stands at the corner. We were tempted to make for the top of the hill on our right known as Long Goat (1,863) and to follow a ridge from that point to the top of the Cat Law; but instead, following local advice, we kept on in a westerly direction along a road running through the heather. We followed this till it crossed a burn, when we struck up to a ridge in front of us, and, descending this a little distance on the other side, we found a pathway which led up towards the top of the hill, keeping well up on the eastern side of the corrie down which the Burn of Corogle flows. We walked up this easy slope in the pleasant sunshine—sheltered to some extent from the cold wind blowing over the higher ridges—and rounding the top of the corrie we found ourselves on the summit of the Law about an hour and a quarter after we left the road. Great patches of snow lay on the sides of the hill, but the top was one great deep field of snow with the tops of several fences barely showing through the whiteness. A bitterly cold wind blew from the west, and after a hurried glance at old friends in the main range to the north, a glimpse of the glen to the north near Lednathie—where the sun is said never to shine during the winter months—and of the Loch of Lintrathen to the west, we beat a retreat. The view from the Cat Law on a bright summer day must be very good, but on the occasion of our visit, though the atmosphere was fairly clear in some directions, it was so cold that we had no inclination to delay our stay for the purpose of identifying the hills that were visible. An easy walk over Crankert (1,835), the highest point of the hill towards the south, brought us to the foot at West Pearsie in about an hour, and in a couple of hours more we were back in Kirriemuir.