

We struck over the north shoulder of Finalty Hill, and got on to the great plateau that stretches eastward to the Mayar. This was the hardest part of our walk. The snow was soft, and at every step we sank deep. We reached the summit about six in the evening. We had only about an hour more of daylight, so we had to abandon our original intention of climbing Dreish also. Our first move was to endeavour to get down to lower and less inclement ground. We skirted the precipitous buttresses that the Mayar throws out on Glen Fee, and crossed over to the head waters of the Kilbo Burn. We soon got down the glen into Glen Doll, and the short four miles to that most comfortable of all inns—"The Ogilvy Arms"—was soon covered. After such a day as we had had, the luxury of lying in one's bed in the inn, listening to the sound of the little stream that rushes by, is beyond description. We find but one fault—we do not hear the sound of running water for long, as there is no soporific like hill walking.

We were now within measurable distance of our goal—'tis but a two hours' tramp from Glen Clova to Glen Muick.

Next morning we retraced our steps to Braedownie, and held on by the Capel path towards Ballater. This path is always wet, and especially so in spring, and we were glad when we came in sight of the Muick, threading its tortuous course northward. We knew that some of the club were living in upper Glen Muick, and we called on our way down the glen, only to find that the party was on Broad Cairn, which we had been so near but a few hours ago before.—JAMES GRAY KYD.

#### BEN ALDER.

A SMALL section of the Club spent a few days in the Dalwhinnie district, and had an experience on Ben Alder which will be new to most local hillmen. Leaving Truim Bank Hotel after 8 a.m. on a fairly promising day (March 22nd), we took the driving road along the north-west side



of Loch Ericht for Benalder Lodge,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles off. A well defined path starts there through beautiful woods, which soon give place to bare and rather rocky hillsides, and eight miles further on we arrived at Benalder Cottage. It was now one o'clock, and after some refreshment we scrambled up to Prince Charlie's Cave, or rather the remains of what was once a cave. Proceeding slightly west of north the snow line was reached at a height of about 1,750 feet, and at about 2,000 feet a large herd of deer was passed. They veered off to the left, leaving long winding trails in the snow, and disappeared over the ridge. When 2,500 feet was reached, dense mist was entered, and ere the summit was gained we recognized that to return by Loch Patack might not be easy with so much snow on the hills. For half an hour we skirted the precipices of Loch a' Bhealaich Bheithe, trying to find a suitable place to descend, but in the mist found only crags and snow cornices everywhere. Ultimately we got into a corrie and worked slowly down steep snow slopes, the mist clearing as a lower level was reached. In the distance could be seen a depression between the cliffs indicating a couloir, the only opening. It was apparent that if it failed us we should have either to spend a night on the mountain, or to reascend the ridge. When we reached the top of the gully, the prospect was not reassuring, the narrow slope getting steeper and then seeming to lose itself in a drop, beyond which we could not see. We went cautiously, laboriously cutting steps, and regretting that no rope was available. After descending, perhaps 150 feet, the rocks to our left merged in the gully for a short distance, and as the slope was easier we made for the buttress. Hardly had we done this when, from the the precipitous crags to the right, a huge stone fell a few hundred feet, breaking into a hundred fragments and sweeping the gully. It was a wonderful escape. It was necessary again to enter the snow shoot, but the slope was now less steep and the going easier, and soon we finally quitted the gully, and reached the Bealach Dubh burn. Half an hour later darkness came on, and we were glad to reach Loch Patack, the path to that point being heavy and partly



under soft snow. The moon occasionally shone out clearly, and pressing on steadily, we regained Dalwhinnie after ten o'clock p.m. Beinn Udlaman, it may be mentioned, was the outstanding feature of the view during the day.—H. K.

LOCHAN DHU.

Oft from the world of work-a-day  
Where men all vainly peace pursue,  
To thy far shores my footsteps stray,  
Lochan, Lochan Dhu.

A sigh, a wish, a weary head,  
Laden with memories a few,  
Low on a kindly pillow laid,  
With thoughts of Lochan Dhu.

In one short moment I am back,  
Brushing the freshness from the dew,  
Where, rough and steep, the mountain track  
Leads down to Lochan Dhu.

Jealous and grim the great hills rise,  
So high no sunbeam steals to view  
From those far-hidden misty skies  
Above thee, Lochan Dhu.

No sound awakes thee from thy sleep ;  
From the wide world no sign comes through  
Of the strange folk who laugh and weep,  
Out yonder, Lochan Dhu.

Only the lonely eagle's scream,  
The calling of the sad curlew,  
Disturb the silence of thy dream,  
Lochan, Lochan Dhu.

Yet Peace, the Angel, passing o'er,  
Let one white feather as she flew  
Light on thy lone forsaken shore,  
Lochan, Lochan Dhu.

*Graphic.*

W. J. CAMERON.