

companions who had joined us for the day, and stepped out briskly for our conveyance at Alltnaguibhsaich, and were once more driven to Ballater, all delighted with our first Easter Meet.—W. M. MCPHERSON.

FROM STRATH TUMMEL TO GLEN MUICK.

WE found ourselves in Atholl on the first day of our Easter Meet at Ballater. On looking at Bartholomew's "Braemar and Blair Atholl" sheet, we perceived that to join our clubmen we had to traverse this map almost from corner to corner, and some ingenuity had to be exercised to plan our route from Strath Tummel to Glen Muick. It was Good Friday, but the day was like the opening of Spring, bright as an Easter morn. As we climbed up the steep path through the budding trees from Killiecrankie station, the whole country-side seemed to have awakened from its winter sleep. The birds were singing rapturously, the lambs were playing in the meadows, and higher up the curlew and the grouse were breaking the silence of the long winter. Our route lay over the summit of Ben Vrackie, and as we climbed this fine little mountain we looked westward to Loch Tummel, and onward to where Loch Rannoch seemed to lose itself in the "wide and wasted desert" of the moor.

The Perthshire hills were carrying much snow, and Ben Lawers looked specially alpine. As we reached the summit of Ben Vrackie, the huge Beinn a' Ghlo blocked out the northern prospect; yet with such a foreground we were content to lose the sight of our parent mountain range, which is hidden by the "Mountain of the Mist." What a different scene met us when we looked away down the Tay valley past the busy little town of Pitlochry, into the green meadows and rich land of the Great Strath. We held on our course, dipping down into Glen Brerachan, and soon got on to the main Pitlochry-Kirkmichael turnpike. We tramped along this road to Straloch, where we came to a humble-looking house of entertainment, in the shape of a cottage with

an ale and porter licence. We asked for tea, and were doubtful if we should enjoy ourselves much; but appearances once more proved deceptive, and in this old world little inn we had one of the most delightful meals that it has been our good fortune to enjoy. The kitchen of the inn was a quaint room; rough rafters—black with the peat smoke of decades—lined the roof, and the dresser, adorned with pewter mugs of all sizes, was a sight to gladden the heart of a disconsolate antiquarian. We could not linger long over our hostess's buttermilk bannocks, as we were anxious to get to the Spital of Glenshee that night. We held on the road until Knochdhu, and then struck northward by the right-of-way. The path is somewhat indistinct, and but for the many admirable guiding posts of the Scottish Rights of Way Society, one might very easily find considerable difficulty in striking the correct col that lands one at the Spital.

An hour-and-a-half's sharp walking brought us to the top of our path, and we were glad to see the well-known outline of Beinn Gulabin, silhouetted against the fast fading western sky. As we began to dip down into Glen Shee the darkness came on. The night was very calm, and the eerie effect of the curlew's plaintive call, combined with the comfortable sight of the lamp in the Spital, twinkling away down in the valley below, made a picture that we shall not soon forget.

We reached our resting-place, and thus completed the first stage in our march northwards towards our colleagues.

For our next day's journey we had various routes open to us. We might have taken the ordinary Devil's Elbow road to Braemar, or mounted over Glas Maol to the Tolmount, and so to Glen Clova via Glen Doll. These ways were, however, both known to us, and we sighed for new glens. We had recollections of the glories of the Caenlochan Glen, as we once saw it from the plateau on the summit of Glas Maol; and that fleeting glimpse of the magnificent spot had left a strong desire to make closer acquaintance with the head stream of the Forfarshire Isla.

We crossed the Shee by a small, wooden foot-bridge behind the Spital, and scrambled up the Craig of Rinavey, past the Croft of Kerrow, where two ancient Gaels were somewhat startled at our proposed ramble at this early season. They were relieved to see that we had what they called a "sketch" of the country in the shape of a Bartholomew half-inch map.

The excellence of these maps for the motorist or the cyclist is too well known to need any commendation, but the scale is not large enough to give full significance to the contour lines. For this kind of work the official one-inch maps of the Ordnance Survey are, in our opinion, more reliable—a fact which of course is due largely to the greater scale, and not at all to any inaccuracies in Bartholomew's epoch-making publications. From Rinavey we dipped into the Allt an Daimh valley, and climbed up over a steep col which took us into Glen Brighty. Down this beautiful glen we tramped to the Tulchan, on Glen Isla, and thence we turned northward up the Isla. The glen here is wild in character—especially so in early spring, as the wood around is mostly larch, and the bare, gaunt appearance of the brown trees, many of which had fallen victims to the storms of winter, adds a sombre feeling that would be escaped in summer. Some three miles above Tulchan we came to a well-built cairn at the road side, with the inscription, "Bessie's Cairn, 1852."

This puzzled us. Who was Bessie? Was she some sweet milkmaid who had made this lonely glen echo with her herding song, and who had come to an untimely end in this wild spot? No, Bessie was none other than the Marchioness of Londonderry, who loved to paint, from the spot where the cairn is erected, the glories of the Caenlochan Glen. We tramped on to the entrance to this glen, and feasted our eyes on the magnificent buttresses that flank both sides of the wonderful pass. The northern side is dotted with straggling larch trees, and the hills all around were deep under snow, while right at the head of the glen stood huge Glas Maol, a spotless dome of white—a veritable Mont Blanc.

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