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THE ATTRACTION OF THE HILLS.

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So many of the Scottish hills have been climbed, and so many accounts of these climbs have been published, that I cannot pretend to offer anything new or original to this Journal. But the glorious attractions of the hills and the response of the human spirit to these attractions abide for ever with undiminished strength. There are no doubt many motives urging men to the hills: the joy of adventure, the beauty of form and colour, the training of nerve and muscle. But one of the strongest is the love of solitude, at least that solitude which is shared by two or three. "The infinite composure of the hills, and large simplicity of this fair world." Nothing is quite so refreshing as to be "far from the madding crowd," away from the mean anxieties of the struggle for existence and the dull monotony of social conventions. As Whitman says:—

"Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose."

The idea is copied in Stevenson's famous "Vagabond" song:—

"Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me:
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway nigh me.

Bed in the bush with stars to see,
 Bread I dip in the river—
 There's the life for a man like me,
 There's the life for ever."

There is certainly a Bohemian element in every well-constituted mind and character. It breaks out in unexpected quarters, from the staid Professor, the over-worked physician, the man of business, the man of science. Even the massive and dignified Dr. Chalmers once said to the Story children at Roseneath in his broad Fifeshire accent: "Noo, let us abāāndon oorselves to miscellawneous impulses!" As the years pass, it perhaps becomes more difficult to find a true solitude. The railway whistle shrieks through the passes of Aberfoyle and Killiecrankie, and across the quaking bogs of Rannoch, and one reads of ridiculous attempts being made to drive a motor up Ben Nevis. In England a National Trust has been formed to preserve a few bits of amenity here and there. The example had already been set by the United States and Canada. But in mountainous Scotland things are not so bad. The Aluminium Company has diminished the flow of Foyers and destroyed the peace of Kinlochmore. But, as Palgrave wrote of Nature in the mountains of Savoy, although men

"Tame heaths to green fertility,
 And grind their roadway through the hill
 With lurid forgelights in the glen!
 Yet still some relics she reserves
 Of what was all her own:
 Keeps the wild surface of the moor,
 Or, where the glacier torrents roar,
 Reigns o'er grey piles of wrinkled stone."

It would indeed be intolerable if the mountains of Scotland were in this sense to become civilised, or if the inhabitants of Scotland were to be excluded from habitual intercourse with the high places of their country. But, fortunately, from Assynt to the Cairnsmore of Fleet, and from Lochnagar to Cruachan and Nevis, there is yet left ample room for the climber, the artist, the poet, the botanist, the geologist. These and all others, who are capable of

exercising common sense, have no difficulty in going where they wish to go.

One of the most attractive features of this study of solitude is, not the peaks or summits of the great ranges, but the bye-ways that take you from one watershed to another. It is possible to traverse Scotland without troubling the modern highways and without leaving the grass and the heather. For various reasons of business and sport there was a network of subsidiary roads, now no longer used. There was the whole system of drove roads, before local markets for sheep and cattle were superseded by the railways and the central marts. There was the more ancient system of Thieves' Roads, by which the bestial taken in a foray were driven, often a great distance, to the home of the successful thief. An example is the Bealach nam Bo on the side of Ben Venue above Loch Katrine. At a later date many of these through country roads were utilised by the smugglers, and men still living can remember the long lines of shelties or ponies, with ankers of illicit whisky and other contraband goods on their backs moving through the hills from East to West. One of the finest of the old drove roads was that from Braemar by Loch Callater and Jock's Road down the White Water to Clova. The sheep not sold at Braemar were by this route regularly taken over to Cullow, near Kirriemuir, in Forfarshire and there again offered for sale. It seems strange that the public right of way from Braemar to Clova should ever have been contested, for not only were the sportsmen interested, like the Ogilvys of Clova, Lord Southesk, and Mr. Gurney, quite clear about the existence of the market drove road through the forest of Glen Doll, but it was proved that at an earlier period the Catholic population of Clova went over to the Braemar Church by this very route. The whole line of country was of course the happy hunting ground of the botanist (see the books of Wm. Gardiner, and Wm. Don's "Flora of Forfarshire," 1854), but the botanist is, like the painter and the geologist, re-

garded as a privileged person, and even his habitual presence is attributed to the toleration of the proprietor. The witnesses examined in the Glen Doll case included an old man, perhaps the last surviving specimen of an ancient Scottish institution, the "whip-the-cat" or travelling tailor, who went from house to house, making or mending clothes, and receiving board in part payment of his services. Apart, from the climbing possibilities of Glen Doll, it is a highly attractive glen; the great corrie of Glen Fee, the big sharp rocks of Craig Rennet and Craig Maud, the steep rough zig-zag up Jock's Road, the glittering water-falls of Craig Lunkart and the Feula, the weather-beaten shieling, whose hospitality many an artist and man of science has acknowledged, the stretch of soft-pleasant walking in the valley of the White Water, and the descent from the bare ridges of Tolmont to the stern shores of Loch Callater and the Castleton, make up one of the best walks in Scotland.

Another ancient road, now seldom traversed, is the Minikaig Pass, or direct route from Blair in Athole to Kingussie in Badenoch. It is considerably shorter than the westward curve of the Inverness coach road, now followed by the Highland Railway, but it rises at least 1,000 feet higher than the Drumochter Pass. On one occasion I left the night north train at Blair about 2 a.m. and succeeded in catching an early afternoon train at Kingussie. This road ascends from Blair House by Glen Banvie and Glen Bruar. Some three miles north of the Bruar Lodge it climbs steeply to the 2,600 feet level, and for several miles still northward it keeps a steady horizontal, and then rapidly descends the Allt Bhran to Glen Tromie, which it may be said to reach at Inver na Cuilce, the confluence of the reeds. It does not proceed to Tromie Bridge, but across the Meall Buidhe direct to Ruthven. As you ascend northwards, in Bruar, you are not far from the Beinn Dearg which figured so largely in the report of the Tullibardine Commission on the Athole Deer Forests and to which the unhappy politicians were conducted upon ponies. Probably this route was used for

cattle and other purposes, but there is no doubt it was also improved and used as a marching road for detachments of military on their way to Ruthven Barracks in Badenoch. One of the 17th century manuscripts contains this passage: "Ther is a way from the yate of Blair in Atholl to Ruffen in Badenoch maid be David Cuming Earle of Athoill for carts to pass with wyne, and the way is called Rad na pheny, or way of wane wheills it is layd with calsay in sundrie parts." A Gaelic word "fe(u)n" is still used in Athole for a certain kind of wheeled conveyance. In another place it is said "Monygegg Item the stryp that crooketh so oft upon the heid of the wild Month and hills of Mynygegg, is called Keuchen vin Lowib, it runneth to Athoil and falleth in Breur and Bruer in Garry." This is the Caochan Lub of the modern atlas, the burn down which the pass descends southward and which unites with the Allt na Cuil to form the Bruar Water. Caochan Lub just means "meandering rill," the "stryp that crooketh so oft." Whether the road built by David Cumming, "the way of waggon wheels," is the Minikaig, or not, I have no means of absolutely determining, and I invite controversy. I think there are signs of "calsay" in most parts of it, although the high level is now of course soft. The wine carts present a difficulty, but for a long time this was the only road. The maps of Moll, *circa* 1725, show the road prominently, but nothing at all in the line of the Dalnacardoch road subsequently made by Wade before 1745. In the first map of the Commission of Highland Roads and Bridges Minikaig seems to figure as a county road. The later maps of Taylor, Skinner, Ainslie, Thomson, and Stobie, also show the Minikaig, although Thomson makes it strike the Tromie Water at a higher point.

The Earl of Athole referred to was probably that David who early in the 14th century built Blair and married Joan Comyn, to whose people the Castle of Ruthven at one time belonged. At the end of the previous century there had been a dispute between a previous David, Earl of Athole and the Comyns as to the building of Blair, and,

according to Fordun, the King acted as arbiter in the matter. The statement of the brothers Anderson in their well-known guide to the Highlands that the Minikaig Pass descends by Glen Feshie to Loch Insh is, it is thought, inaccurate. The Minikaig route started from Blair itself; in crossing to Bruar it passed the Carn Mhic or Mac Shimi, the place at which a fight occurred between the Murrays and Simon Lovat (on some maps called Lord Lovat's Cairn); and its natural destination is the Castle (afterwards the Barracks) of Ruthven. Of course, once the "way of waggon wheels" was established, other routes were connected with it. Thus instead of following the Allt Bhran into Tromie one can either go straight north by the Allt na Dhubh Chaitan (the burn of the black cats) to Inveruglas and the village of Insh; or pass a little to the east of the Allt na Cuilce and the Loch an t' Sluic to Sir George Cooper's Shooting Lodge in Glen Feshie. These, however, are offshoots of the original Minikaig. It is quite true, as Anderson states, that the shortening of the road south from Badenoch to Athole is greater if you start from Invereshie. But this has nothing to do with the identification of the original Minikaig. Anderson describes another road which starting from Kingussie proceeds through the Forest of Gaick to the water of Bruar, and which he says is higher and more dangerous than the Minikaig and not so direct. He repeats legends about soldiers being lost in the snow, and gives a date, 1 January, 1799, for one ghastly and circumstantial story of a party of sportsmen and stalkers being destroyed by lightning, the skeletons found long afterwards still grasping their guns. This is, perhaps, the tragedy referred to by Mrs. Grant of Laggan in one of her famous letters. There is of course a modern road going to Loch an t' Seilich (the loch of the willows) and further up into the forest of Gaick, and there is a modern road from Calvine up the north side of the Bruar Water to the Lodge. But there is no evidence of the use of any ancient route through Gaick. The origin of the name Minikaig is a little obscure. Dr.

Watson, of the Royal High School, Edinburgh, in a note in the *Celtic Review*, v. p. 340, says it is : mion + gag, or a little cleft, and this is accepted by Professor Mackinnon. Such authority must be taken as conclusive, but the explanation is not satisfactory from the geographical, or pedestrian, point of view. There is no "little cleft" about it. The pass is along the open side of a hill, and its characteristic feature is the extraordinary distance for which it preserves a level. There is also a Gaelic word, min, which means smooth or level. It must be kept in view, however, that all this part of the Grampian range has always been known, and is still known, as Monadh Miongaig, or, as some old maps say, the Mountains of Menegegg. The district is, of course, traversed by a profound cleft passing through the line of the two lochs above Loch Seilich.

Another field of interest open to mountaineers is what may be called the literary antiquities of the subject. Aberdeen is the home and breeding-ground of great antiquaries, and so it is not surprising to find that the Macfarlane Geographical Collections (a series of manuscripts in the Advocates' Library) were in 1907 edited for the Scottish History Society by a distinguished Aberdonian, the late Sir Arthur Mitchell, who himself had probably the largest and most complete library of topographical works relating to Scotland. The mere catalogue of these occupies a substantial volume. These collections of Macfarlane consist partly of the descriptions made by various hands for the use of Sir Robert Sibbald, and partly of descriptions made by the great Timothy Pont, Sir Robert Gordon of Straloch, his son James Gordon, the parson of Rothiemay, Sir John Scot of Scotstarvet, David Buchanan, and others. In the second volume of Mitchell's printed edition occurs a paper in James Gordon's handwriting called "Noates and observations of dyvers parts of the Hielands and Isles of Scotland." Some of these were probably the work of Pont, but Gordon says that in June, 1644, he got at Aberdeen from Campbell of Glenurchay himself "the Noats of distances of places about the head of Loch Tay, Loch Erin

(Earn), L. Dochart, Glen Urchay, etc." Gordon did not slavishly accept the authority of the great Pont, for with regard to the Notes on Badenoch, he says:—"This is wryten out of Mr. Timothies Papers, and in it thur manie things false." The distances given are of great interest, being mostly of course under-statements according to modern imperial measure. Thus:—"Loch Tay 10 myl the nearest way betwixt Balloch and the Kirk of Kylvyn." Taymouth always appears as Balloch in these papers, and Inchaddin is supposed to be Kenmore.

The true distance from Kenmore to Killin by either side of the loch is not less than 15 miles. The length of the old Scottish mile is generally stated at 1,984 yards, much the same as the knot or nautical mile, therefore about $\frac{9}{8}$ of the statute mile. Ten Scotch miles would therefore be about 11.25 statute miles. "Castell Cheul-Cheurn and Finlarig, 26 myl, the way is up Dochart river to the Kirk of Strafillen." Finlarig is at Bridge of Lochay, and the Castle referred to is Kilchurn on Loch Awe. The modern pedestrian would call this more than 30 miles. "Crowachan Bain the hiest hill in all Lorne or the neighbouring countreyis and Binnevis in Lochabir 24 myl." Here again, even the the black crow would have a much longer flight. "St. Johnstoun (i.e. Perth) and Ballach at the foot of Loch Tay are distant 26 myl, if you go be Dunkeld and follow the river, but be the nearest way throw Glen Almond it is only 18." Shade of Timothy Pont! Railways and mainroads are no doubt apt to distract the mind from the shorter routes, although the adventurous motor car has done something to restore a proper perspective. It is true the road by Amulree and Glen Almond is much shorter than by Aberfeldy and Dunkeld, but the distances given are only about 70% of the true figures.

Again, we have a full and detailed description of the "Coryes and Sheels in Glen Lyon," a magnificent glen too little visited. One of the earliest references to Glen Lyon in Celtic literature is "Fingal built 12 castles in the crooked glen of rough stones;" and the ruins of these castles remain to this day. "On the southsyd, first is Aldagob, 3 myl

long, just agains Sestell (Chesthill); it falleth out of Bennen, and Bhellach-nacht a cory upon the north syd of Bin Lawers." This is the beautiful glen which may be approached by a zigzag path from Fearnan on Loch Tay; it is part of the sheep farm of Borland, and gives a fine waterfall almost opposite Chesthill. Almost every point in Lyon is of interest. There is Roro, or Ruaru, formerly occupied by the Macgregors, from which one Macgregor was hunted by the Campbells with black bloodhounds as far as the Dubh Eas, the waterfall above the Inn at Lawers. There is Balnahannaid, where a mill was built by St. Eonan "of the ruddy cheeks," who also built the church at Balgie, which in these papers appears as "Balna-heglis" with the Kirk "of Bremond." This "heglis" is of course the same as Eccles, or ecclesia. The list of "Sheels or Sheellings" gives an interesting glimpse of the economic conditions in the 17th century. In many parts of the Highlands there was a regular summer migration to the Sheallings, as to the Sennes or mountain pastures in Switzerland. Such was Killin in Glen Fechlin above Foyers; and such the great shealing called Finglen, or Finnalairbeg, upon the Corrie Cheataich (or Misty Corrie) in the ancient forest of Binteaskernich or Bentaskerly on the South of Loch Lyon. It is related of an old woman in Glen Lyon, who died only in 1840, that, in referring with rapture to her early visits to this Shealling, she would say: "Finglen of my heart, where there would be no Sunday!" a very natural protest against the old fetish of the Scottish Sabbath, an incubus on social health and morality equally condemned by reason and scripture.

Of equal interest are the occasional lists of forests, e.g., "Maim Laerne is the King's forrest very riche in deer, lying upon Brae Urchay, Brae Lyon and Brae Lochy 10 myl of lenth." Now, this name is confined to the upper part of Glen Lochay. Elsewhere in an account of the Dulnan Water this passage occurs: "From Duthell eastwards there is a great forrest belonging to His Majesty called the Leanach which formerly was well replenished with deer and roe, but much neglected

by reason they pasture much cattell there which brings in money to the Laird of Calder who is Forrester!" Wicked Forester! Here and there one is struck by the breadth of view of these early geographers. What could be better than this definition of Ben More? "Bin Moir whose mouth and skirts distinguisheth Glen Dochart from the head of Forth and Brae Glen Fallacht." Dochart is Tay water, Balquidder is Forth water, and Falloch is Clyde water. Here and there also, there is a flash of enthusiasm beyond the mere geographer. Thus of Loch Maree, known as "the fresh Loch Ewe," "Dochart, Brochaig, and Garriff fall in Loch Ew, by sum it is called Loch Mulrui, this fair loch is reported never to freze, it is compas'd about with many fair and tall woods as any in all the west of Scotland, in sum parts with hollye, in sum places with fair and beautiful fyrrs of 60, 70, 80 foot of good and serviceable timmer for masts and raes, in other places ar great plentie of excellent great oakes, whair may be sawin out planks 4 sumtymes 5 foot broad. All thir bounds is compas'd and hemd in with many hills but thois beautifull to look on thair skirts being all adorned with wood even to the brink of the loch for the most part." This should encourage the afforestation people! The name Mulrui is supposed to come from St. Maelrubha, who was patron of the chapel to the Virgin on the Eilean Maree in the lower part of the loch. The fact that the head of Loch Maree is known as Kinlochewe suggests that Loch Ewe was the oldest name of the loch; indeed it is said that the salt Loch Ewe at one time formed part of the same loch. The upper part of the loch may then have been called after St. Maelrubha, who died in Applecross about 722, and in modern times this may have been unconsciously adapted to Maree.

Occasionally in these ancient manuscripts one meets direct statements as to the meaning of place names. Thus in the paper on Koryes in Rennach (Corries in Rannoch), we read, "North-west from the head of Loch Treyig (Treig) at the head of Glen Evisch is the great moss of Monyredy, or moss of armour, so cald be-

cause sumtime the Earle of Mar, his men flying from Maconeil did throw away thair armour in this moss. This Monyredy betwin Nevish water and the water of Rha being four myle long and falleth in Loch Treyig. This water of Rha cumeth out of Kory Rha." The name of Monyredy has disappeared from the map, but the place is well-known, not far east from the Pass of Steall by which one enters the head of Glen Nevis. The water mentioned comes down from the Stob Coire Easan on the north. A similar historical origin of a place name occurs in the Bealach Spainnteach in Glen Shiel, where the wretched Spanish expedition of 1719 disappeared.

Not less interesting are the legends which are recorded by these geographers. In the undated account of Strathspay, the anonymous author says of Glen More—"The people of this parish much neglect labouring, being addicted to the wood, which leaves them poor. There is much talking of a spirit called Lyerg that frequents the Glen More. He appears with a red hand in the habit of a souldier and challenges men to fight with him, as lately in '69, he fought with three brothers one after another, who immediately dyed thereafter." There is reason to believe that this spirit is not dead. At all events, only four or five years ago, a learned Professor, who was crossing Beinn Muic Dhuie alone, was pursued all day by an invisible foe whose step on the granite he constantly heard behind him. Again, speaking of the Clanphadrick Grants of Tullochgorum and Inverellon, the same writer says: "In old there frequented this family a spirit called Meg Mulloch. It appeared like a little Boy, and in dark night would hold a candle before the good-man, and show him the way home, and if the good-wife would not come to bed, it would cast her in beyond him."

I must now close these Notes by expressing the hope that the Cairngorm Club has a long and vigorous future before it.