

The expedition described was accomplished about two years ago, so that the accuracy of all details cannot be vouched for; but the principal facts are related with sufficient precision to show that this old drove road, in general use as the way from Athole to Badenoch long before the present Drumochter route, is still easy to traverse, and leads the wanderer into regions now but seldom trod by man.

For more particulars, Alexander's *The Cairngorms* and back numbers of *The C.C.J.* should be consulted.

G. T. R. W.

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### THE UNKNOWN SOUTH.

In Miss Carswell's "Life of Robert Burns" (London: Chatto & Windus) there is a very interesting account of the departure of William Burns (the father of our national poet) and his brother Robert from the Mearns.

ONE morning before sunrise, when spring was well advanced, William and Robert put on the new suits of grey homespun their sisters had made ready for them, drank down their thin porridge, thrust their horn spoons into the folds of their dark blue bonnets, shouldered the bundles that contained their patched working clothes, and said their good-byes. It was in the highest degree unlikely that they would ever see their father again, a fact of which both he and they were fully aware.

When they had walked all forenoon they reached the crest of Garvock Tap (*sic*), whence they could see backwards to the Clochan-hill lands and over the Mearns, where all their ancestors had lived. It was the last time either of them would look upon it. So far their way had been the same, so they had each other's company for the "twal hour" repast, and together they set to upon the mess of boiled beans they had brought with them from home. But after this their roads would divide. Looking forward toward the unknown South, they felt no elation. It was not as if they were in their first youth, and there was so much failure behind them that failure might only too possibly lie before as well for either or both. When at length the brothers parted William was outwardly the calmer, as he seemed the older man. But all his life he remembered the intensity of his feelings at that moment on the hilltop. Many years later, attempting to describe the scene to his children, he made use of what for him was the extreme word, anguish.