

PLACE-NAMES WEST OF BRAEMAR.

W. M. ALEXANDER.

THE following is a survey of the place-names occurring in the Dee valley between Braemar and the White Bridge, a stretch of some 10 miles. It is made out in the form of an itinerary, going up one side of the valley and down the other, leaving the side glens out of account. All the names shown on the 6-inch Ordnance maps are included, together with such names as have been gathered locally at various times. A number of the latter are here printed, I rather think, for the first time. The meanings given are those which are reasonably certain, or were formerly clearly known to the old Gaelic speakers of the district. The Gaelic sounds are represented approximately. The stressed syllable is printed in capitals, *e.g.*, BRAEMAR; ch is as in "loch"; y as in "yet"; ae is the vowel in "day." Strictly, the sounds would require more exact representation than this; but the finer points about them are here overlooked.

On emerging from Braemar village, the road overlooks the Dee, which there turns northwards. The pool in the river below the turn is the Polla (POLLA); a part of it was called the Polla Caol, or Narrow Polla. The first house at the bend of the road thereafter had the name of Allagirk (ALLAGIRK; perhaps, meadow of the hens, referring to the haugh below it). A short distance farther on is the Mill of Coull (Moolin HOOL; perhaps, back mill). The next place is Dalgowan (Dalgowan; smith's haugh). A mile farther on is the noticeable bend in the road with a fine view to the west. This is the Car, the Car Prop being the cairn on the eminence above it; the word is probably *car*, a bend, referring to the turn of the road. Alternatively, taking the high level path from Braemar to the Car Prop, you have had Morrone on the left. Morrone is a distorted name. The Gaelic was Mor-bheinn, big hill, the same name as Morven. The present form came, it would seem, from a fanciful interpretation, Mòr Shròn, big nose, which was

given currency in the earlier O.S. maps. On the face of Morrone is Coire na Muic (Cornamook; corrie of the pigs) At the west side of it is the Prince's Cairn, a modern name.

A burn crossing the road beyond the Car is Alltachlair (AlltaHLAR; burn of the plank-bridge). Places on the arable land thereabouts are, or were, Arderg (ar-DSHERRIG; red height); Tomdhu (TamDOO; black hillock); Balintuim (BallinDOOM; town of the hillock). The last is beside the bridge of Corriemulzie. Corriemulzie (Corriemoolye) is a name which has not been satisfactorily explained. Presumably it had referred to the corrie up on Morrone where the burn rises; but that corrie, where there is a peat moss, is called Coire nam Freumh (Corna-vRAEIV; corrie of the tree roots). Beyond Corriemulzie bridge there is a knoll, partly wooded, on the right; this is Tom Liath (TamLEE; grey knoll). On the left, amongst the trees, stood what was called New Mar Lodge, before the present Mar Lodge was built. Farther up, on the left, is the farm of Braegarie (BraegARRIE); and continuing up in that direction is the short way into Glen Ey. This way goes through Glac Anthon, with Tom Anthon the small height just beside it. (Glack-yowNTen, Tom-yowNTen; Anthony's Pass, Anthony's hillock.) These names come from a tale about a man called Anton, who murdered a smith at Corriemulzie, and who met a deserved fate at Tom Anthon. The road now descends to the bridge, a little beyond which, on the left, is the Gallows Tree, now dead and artificially supported. The tale is that a victim there prophesied that the tree would be standing after the last Farquharson had lost his land. This prophesy has long been regarded as fulfilled, there being no more Farquharson lairds, of male line of descent, on upper Deeside. It is to this tree that the tradition attaches, and not, as stated in some guide-books, to an old tree beside Inverey Castle. The road hereabouts was called Mildorroch (MildORROCH; the dark mile), having been through thick trees for nearly a mile. We now come to Inverey village. The east part of it is Muckle Inverey, which is separated from Little Inverey by the Ey water. On the right are the remains of Inverey

Castle, and on the fields a little west of there, the site of a former chapel. The wooded hill on the left is Creag an Fhithich (Craig NYEETH; raven's craig).

Beyond the Ey bridge, at the first turn of the road, is a well, with a stone inscribed Tobar N. Mhoire, *i.e.*, St Mary's Well. On the right is, or was, Bealaney (BellanEI; perhaps, mouth or crossing of Ey). At the next turn of the road, on the left, is a small hillock, Cnoc nam Muilt (Knokna-MOOLTSH; hill of the wethers). Behind it is a small pool, Pol Eachainn (Pol ECHIN; Hector's pool). Near the last house in Little Inverey a small peaty stream crosses the road. This is Féith Dhubh (Fae GOO; black burn). The road presently passes close to the Dee. Here the moor on the left is Sliabh Fhearchair (SLEE-OO ERRACHER; Farquhar's moor). It takes its name from Farquhar Cam, *i.e.*, Crooked Farquhar, progenitor of the Deeside Farquharsons, who was drowned in the river here. The hill on the left is Creag a' Chait (Craig HATSH; cat's craig), and the part of it facing the Linn of Dee is Creag Bad an Eas (Craig pit-NYESS; craig of the bluff of the Linn). The Linn of Dee itself was in Gaelic usually called Eas Dé (Ess DSHAE; waterfall of Dee). The Lowland word, Linn, appears to have been an importation.

Continuing along the south side of the river, we come in about a mile and a half to the site of the farm of Dalvorar. (DALVORAR; lord's haugh). There are remains of the two Dalvorars, the Little and Big. The stream off the hill here, called Dalvorar burn on O.S., is properly Allt Leth; some say Leth-Allt. (Allt-LYAE, LYAE-allt; the words mean Half-Burn, whatever the significance.) The tops above it are Carn Dearg (Carn DSHERRIG; red cairn), Carn na Moine (Carn na MONE; cairn of the peat-moss); and, farther back, Carn Liath (Carn LEEA; grey cairn). Some 3 miles from the Linn of Dee we reach the Dhubrach, marked only by some traces of buildings. (Doobrach; O.S. writes Dubh-bhruaich, *i.e.*, black brae, which is probably the meaning). This place, which faces the junction of Dee and Geldie, is associated with the well-known story of the murder of Sergeant Davies. The Geldie meets the Dee

at the White Bridge, a translation of Drochaid Geal (Drohit GYAL; same meaning). A short way up the Dee is the Chest of Dee, Ciste Dhé (Keest Yae; so called perhaps from the box-like shape of the rocks there). Starting down the north side of the Dee, the first trace of houses, on the left, is Tonnagaoithe (Tonna-*GOOIE*; windy back-end). The road then rises to some knolls where there are remains of another croft, Tomnamoine (TomNAMONE; hillock of the moss). As will be seen by looking at them, these places have been long extinct. Traditionally, they were the most westerly crofts on Deeside; and any remains of old houses to be found farther up the Dee or Geldie represent only summer sheilings or stalkers' bothies. The whole of the large hill mass on the left here, which stretches over to the Luibeg, is called Feith nan Sgor; (Fae nan SKOR; moss-burn of the crags). The considerable burn up there which has given its name to the hill, itself takes its name from the crags at its western end, which overlook the upper Dee. Near Tomnamoine this burn tumbles down the rocky hillside into the Dee. It is there called Allt nam Easain, or Allt Leum Easain (Altnam^{ESSAN}, Alt-lyem-^{ESSAN}; burn of the waterfalls, or jumping the waterfalls). East of it is a rocky face called Creag Phadruig (Crek FARIG; Patrick's craig). Farther back is the east top of Féith nan Sgor, overlooking the Linn of Dee. This top has some dubious names on the maps. Thus the latest O.S. map has Carn an 'Ic Duibhe, which would mean Cairn of Macduff. The name for it which I have heard is Carn an t-Uidhear (Carn *TOOYER*; perhaps for cairn of the traveller, stranger).

We now cross the Lui bridge. The gamekeeper's house a little to the east of it used to be spoken of as the Muileann Shaibh (Moolin HA-*EE*; saw mill). This was commemorative, not of the saw mill which has operated there in recent years, but of one which had been there more than a century ago. Approaching Mar Lodge, the house on the right is Clabokie (Cle-*BOXIE*; goblin's den). The hill on the left, a conspicuous hill from the Braemar side, is Creag Bhailg (Creg VALLIK; the last word ordinarily means a bag or

sack, but its significance here is not clear). The extensive wood on the face of Creag Bhailg, now cut, is called Doire Bhraghad on O.S.; but the old people used to decline to accept this name.

The present Mar Lodge was built about forty years ago; it occupies the site of an older lodge which previously stood there. The flat land where it stands is Dalmore (DALMORE; big haugh). Before the Fife family came, in the later 18th century, Dalmore was owned by lairds of the name of Mackenzie; and hence several Mackenzies living about Braemar have had the nickname of "the laird" down to recent times. There was said to have been a Shenval, *i.e.*, old town, of Dalmore somewhere nearer the river than the present lodge. At the east end of Dalmore are some wooded hillocks called collectively the Craggan (diminutive of Creag). Between there and the Quoich is a wet place, a small loch in winter. This is Lochan a' Chreagain, the Craggan Loch. At the roadside beside it will be found a well, which has a picturesque name. It is Fuaran 'ic Choinnich nan Gruaig (Foo-aran ihk HONYICH nan GROOIG; the well of Mackenzie with the locks of hair, or ringlets). The person referred to was one of the Mackenzies of Dalmore, who met his death here in a local combat.

Across the Quoich (Coich) is the farm of Allanquoich (Allancoich; meadow of Quoich). The shoulder of the hill above it is Carn Dearg (Carn DSHERRIG; red cairn). Farther on, nearly opposite Braemar, is a house, previously a farm, Allanmore (AllanMORE; big meadow). The main hill behind it is Carn na Drochaide (Carn DROHIC; cairn of the bridge). There is another hill of this name on the Cluny side of Morrone; the meaning is unexplained. Finally, the rocky bluff at the east end of it, which faces Braemar Castle, is Creag Chleirich (Crek HLERRICH; the cleric's craig).

In conclusion, a few names about the village of Braemar may be noted here. The village itself, it may be remarked, was in Gaelic always referred to as Baile Chaisteal (Bal HASHTel; the Castleton). The steep fields across the road from the churchyard are still called the Cromarans, Cromrins

(Na Cromaran; meaning unknown). The pool in the Cluny behind the Union Bank is Pol Chais (Pol Hash; meaning uncertain). The park where the games are held was Moine nan Gall (Mone na GALL; lowlanders' moss). Beside Dalvreckachy, which is the manse, there is a semi-island in the Cluny called Ellenmaun (Ellen na VYANG; kids' island). Beyond that is the golf course, which used to be Croft Muickan (Crotsh VYUHKAN). The last word suggests mickan, which is the Deeside name of an umbelliferous plant common in these upland meadows. The botany books call it, more portentously, *meum athamanticum*.