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THE
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EDITED BY
ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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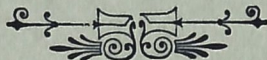
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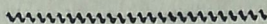


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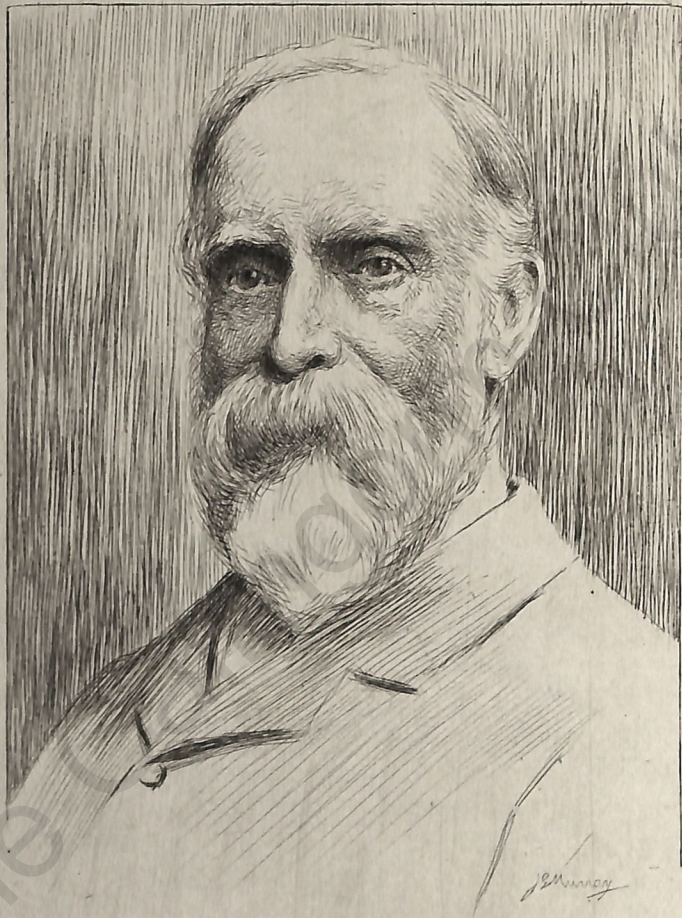
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GENTLEMEN ARE BOARDED DURING THE SEASON.



THE PRESIDENT-

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CLIMBING IN SCOTLAND:

BEN NEVIS.

BY WILLIAM BROWN.

MOUNTAINEERS divide themselves naturally, according to their respective tastes, into hill-walkers and hill-climbers. I do not mean to imply that climbers cannot or will not walk, or that they are insensible to the free and bracing delights of a mountain ramble. The distinction rather is that the climber finds in the mountains a more intense and absorbing form of exercise than mere walking can ever afford. Very often pedestrianism is undertaken for purely hygienic reasons—because it is healthy, and because, of all exercises, it is best suited to the energy of sexagenarian constitutions. But it is not a sport, because the element of competition or the incentive of a keenly pursued object is wanting. Climbing, however, supplies such an object in an intense and most fascinating form. “The passionless resistance of the cliffs” is the obstacle that calls forth the climber’s highest skill and endurance, and they are exercised in the most stimulating surroundings, in the bracing air and ozone of the great mountains whose tonic properties are stamped on the lives of all the great Swiss guides. If there is any difference, climbing is healthier than hill-walking because it is harder work and is so often practised upon ice and snow.

“But”, cries the pedestrian, “climbing is mere gymnastics; the nameless rapture that comes of communion with

the 'eternal hills' refuses to associate itself with the mechanical details of ropes and ice-axes; the reverent study of nature is impossible from the ledge of a precipice; the only faculty employed is the limpet-like one of holding on". This is all nonsense. No doubt there are rabid climbers as there are rabid golfers and walkers. I have known keen climbers who would climb in a coal pit; but they had difficulty in persuading anyone to accompany them. Very dull and unobservant must the climber be whose eyes are closed to the wondrous phenomena into the heart of which his sport carries him. The blackness and grimness of the resisting cliffs; the narrow and fearsome gullies with their black enclosing walls; the weird pinnacles that seem ready to topple into the valley below; the mist billowing up out of unimaginable depths; the sudden rift when the sun comes bursting through, and the eye looks backwards out of the gloom to a far-off sunlit valley with a pleasant stream meandering through it; the sweet contentment of a summer evening on the mountain top when the work is done and a pleasant consciousness of victory lulls every sense—the climber who cannot feel and revel in these things is a mere miserable apparatus of thew and sinew, fit to rank with the "scorcher" and the record-breaker.

One other stone the climber has cast at him, which is a missile dear to the non-climbing-public. "The end of climbing", it is said, "is a broken neck; its chief pleasure", it would appear, "lies in escaping it as long as possible". Without actually adopting the view that one's bed is the most dangerous of all places because more people die there than anywhere else, climbing, it may confidently be said, is very little more dangerous than a dozen other sports that could be named. It claims so many victims because so many tyros attempt to practise it before learning the rules of the game. The accidents befalling properly-equipped and experienced parties are infinitesimally few. In Switzerland you see persons crossing glaciers with goloshes and umbrellas. In this country a more healthy respect for steep places keeps Mr. Tripper from emulating such feats; but I have seen men slide down a steep snow slope, *sans* rope, axe, and even

stick, without a thought as to what might possibly be at the bottom. On the other hand, six years' mountaineering by members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club has produced only one accident—and that not a fatal one—though many of the climbs accomplished have been up to the best Swiss standard.

“‘Swiss standard’”! some one exclaims. “Who speaks of ‘Swiss standard’ as applied to our Scottish mole-hills? Where are the glaciers, where are the crevasses”? The criticism is partly just. Generally speaking there are none, though I have crossed with difficulty a crevasse on Buchaille Etive Mor that was six feet wide and of unsounded depths. But all the other Alpine phenomena are present on a more limited scale on our Scottish mountains in early spring—the frozen snow slope, the ice-paved gully, the glazed rocks, the powdery snow ready to slide down under a clumsy foot, the avalanche* even, and the deadly falling stones. The same care and the same skill are the conditions of safety; and the same glorious sense of obstacles overcome and perils successfully averted is the prize of victory.

It is in regard to rock-climbing, however, that our Scottish Bens can hold up their heads most defiantly against the “Horns” and “Spitzes” of Switzerland. Professor Adamson has lamented that the Scottish youth are not more devoted to this magnificent sport. It is very popular in England and Wales, but till recent years at all events has had little hold upon Scotsmen. The example, however, of the Scottish Mountaineering Club is changing this condition of things very rapidly. Year by year young and active walkers are falling within the sphere of influence exercised by club members, are deserting the chrysalis stage of their pedestrian youth and are becoming transformed into daring and skilful climbers whose near haven will be the Alpine Club. Skye, Fort William, Arran, and Glencoe see them every Easter attacking with vigour the ice-paved gullies and serrated rock ridges of the western

*In April of this year a party was twice struck and almost carried away by a genuine Swiss avalanche in a gully on Creag Meaghaidh

hills; and scarcely a season passes but some historical precipice, arrogant in its armour of traditional inaccessibility, surrenders to the assault of a determined party.

One of the most interesting chapters in the history of Scottish mountaineering is the conquest of Ben Nevis. The monarch unfortunately has come to be a "show mountain". Being the top of Great Britain it is in theory a most suitable spot for the "Proud Queen of Wilderness" to "plant her lonely throne", but alas! Man has selected it to plant an Observatory upon. Worse still, he has planted an hotel; and round the hotel has grown up a crop of broken bottles and sardine tins, the memorials of the 6,000 odd tourists that visit it every year.

On the far side of the mountain, however, remote from the *profanus vulgus*, stretches a range of stupendous precipices, the most savage thing of its kind in Scotland. Wrapped in the clouds which usually envelop them, they are revealed to the tourists who peer over their brink as an impressionist picture of eddying mist and unimaginable depths—which they forthwith proceed to sound by rolling stones down them.

The classic description of this great cliff has been written by Professor Geikie. "The glen", he says, "that lies far below on the south-west is overhung on its farther side by the vast rugged precipices of Ben Nevis, rising some fifteen hundred or two thousand feet above the stream that wanders through the gloom at its base. That dark wall of porphyry can now be seen from bottom to top, with its huge masses of rifted rock standing up like ample buttresses into the light, and its deep recesses and clefts into which the summer sun never reaches and where the winter snow never melts. The eye, travelling over cliff and crag, can mark everywhere the seams and scars dealt out in that long warfare with the elements of which the whole mountain is so noble a memorial".

In 1894 Mr. Edward Whymper wrote in *The Leisure Hour* (September number), that this great northern precipice had never been climbed. The statement, even at that time, was scarcely correct.

The first recorded ascent was that of the brothers Hopkinson, of the Alpine Club, who, in the autumn of 1892, descended the "Tower Ridge" after an ineffectual attempt to ascend it, and also ascended a ridge further east which it is thought was the "North-east Buttress". The situation of these ridges may best be indicated by mentioning that the cliff is weathered into three great recesses or corries separated from each other by four ridges, viz. (counting from the east) —"The North-east Buttress", the "Tower Ridge", the "Carn Dearg Buttress", and the "Castle Ridge". The first of these is the most continuously precipitous; the "Tower Ridge" is the narrowest, and at one point, close to the summit, the most difficult. The third is really a great bluff or headland, and has never been legitimately climbed; while the "Castle Ridge" is the lowest and easiest, but not the least interesting of the four.

The fame of the Messrs. Hopkinson's exploit was little known in the climbing world when, in March, 1894, Messrs. Collie, Solly, and Collier made the first successful ascent of the "Tower Ridge". It was heavily festooned with ice and snow, and was altogether in an intensely Alpine condition. The ascent took five hours of continuous work, and was described by Dr. Collie as the finest climb he had ever had in Scotland, resembling in several respects the Italian side of the Matterhorn. Up till Easter of this year the "Tower Ridge" had several times been re-ascended in summer when the rocks were free of snow; but no party had ventured upon it under Alpine conditions. Then, however, the occasion being the Easter meet of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, it was climbed by four parties, of which I had the good fortune to be a member of one. The immediately preceding party had encountered very serious difficulties. They got stuck for hours on the ice-glazed rocks of the "Tower", and only reached the top at nightfall after spending nine hours on the rocks. Our party began the climb by scaling a rock pinnacle at the foot of the ridge that had never been ascended from that side before. It proved extremely difficult, and an exciting series of adventures near the top, carried through in a snowstorm,

prepared us for the much-advertised perils of the "Tower". In all conscience they were sufficiently alarming. High overhead rose a sheer black and white wall of smooth porphyry and smoother ice. From its base a steep snow slope plunged dizzily into the mist. "Royal road" there was none; for plainly the upward journey could only be continued by scaling the wall or trusting our fortunes to some sloping snow-clad ledges that ran brokenly round a projecting corner to unknown dangers beyond. We spent nearly an hour balancing probabilities and making tentative sorties upon the wall and the ledges; then having decided definitely upon the former, never shall I forget the way in which R. led us straight up over ice, rock, and snow to the top. He cut a great part of the way with one hand up an ice-paved gully, the other being occupied in holding on to the microscopical projections by which we resisted successfully the operation of the law of gravity. This was the first time this wall had ever been climbed in winter, for the other parties all pinned their faith to the ledges.

Another climb which I remember well was on the "North-east Buttress". At Easter, 1895, it bore the character of being inaccessible, and the shining masses of blue ice which depended from its upper rocks fostered the delusion. Parties came out and looked at it, shook their heads, and went sadly home. I believe, however, that at that time it actually was well-nigh impossible.

But the month of May came with accounts from the Observatory of rapidly-melting ice and fast-vanishing snow. On the 20th, winter was represented only by a few grimy wreaths along the edge of the precipice. It was in these circumstances that T. and I, who had long yearned to vanquish it, prepared for an attack upon the terrible buttress.

Very early, owing to our respective arrangements refusing to square, we were forced to adopt most heroic measures. We took the night express from Edinburgh to Kingussie and attempted to cycle across to Fort William in the early hours of the morning. The Nemesis, however, of a punctured tyre punished us for this outrage upon sanity. My bicycle broke down, and I had to run 16 miles to Inverlair,

where we caught a train and so arrived at Fort William at 12:30 p.m. It was a thundery afternoon, and our punishment continued as we toiled up the steep grass slopes of Carn Dearg, floundered, tired and hungry, amidst the bogs and rocks of the Allt a' Mhuillinn glen, and finally came in a rainstorm and saturated garments to the foot of the "North-east Buttress" at 5:30. Without counting the possible cost we put on the rope and commenced the ascent. Several hours passed in comparatively easy climbing, till at 8:45 we were confronted, 200 feet below the summit, by a rock wall that, in our tired condition, we were absolutely unable to climb. An hour passed in fruitless attempts to turn it; a cold bivouac on the rain-splashed rocks seemed inevitable, and then, just as night was falling and our thoughts were reluctantly turning from visions of a warm supper in the Observatory, a way was found; we wriggled up a dark, slimy chimney above a nearly perpendicular precipice, and at 10:5 stood, victors, on the summit. The last hundred feet were climbed in pitch darkness.

The conquest of the "Castle Ridge" was accomplished under less sensational conditions. At Easter, 1895, a party, led by Dr. Collie, went quietly and easily up it, and I had the pleasure next day, along with two friends, of following in their footsteps. It is a delightful little climb; but, save for one place where the weight has to be trusted to a projecting stone of the most unstable appearance, there is no particular difficulty. As the stone, however, overlooks 1,000 feet of precipice, the mind of the climber is not entirely free from disturbing visions of "everlasting smash".

The "Carn Dearg Buttress" was climbed first on 9th June, 1895, but this climb can scarcely be considered as a legitimate ascent of it. Recently two attempts have been made to scale the cliff on its steepest side, but they have both ended at the same point. The party that passes it will probably reach the top.

It only remains to mention that the precipice is pierced by six snow gullies, all of which, with the single exception of the steepest branch of the Observatory gully, have now been climbed. In these great clefts ice-axes are indispens-

able even in summer, when adamantine relics of the winter's snowfall may still be found ; and if he values his life let the climber beware of the Maxim gun-like discharges of stones which the summer tourist rolls over the top, and which on Lochnagar also, last autumn, were found to be an unpleasant accompaniment of cliff-climbing there.

Climbing on Ben Nevis will go on increasing in difficulty year by year. New and more interesting routes will be discovered ; and the exploits of one season will be the commonplaces of the next. It is one of the finest climbing grounds in Britain, and the West Highland Railway has established easy access to it from every part of the kingdom. This is the golden age of climbing in Scotland, when all the joys of the unknown and the unexplored reward the venturesome mountaineer who penetrates their mysteries. You cannot, of course, eliminate all risk. Accidents will occur, and in proportion no doubt to the number and venturesomeness of the climbers. But an honest respect and regard for the obvious canons of the sport will enable any ordinarily prudent and vigorous man to spend years of healthful activity, realising on his own Highland hills most of the pleasures and excitements of the Swiss Alps.

OUTLYING NOOKS OF CAIRNGORM.—No. III.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM FORSYTH, D.D.

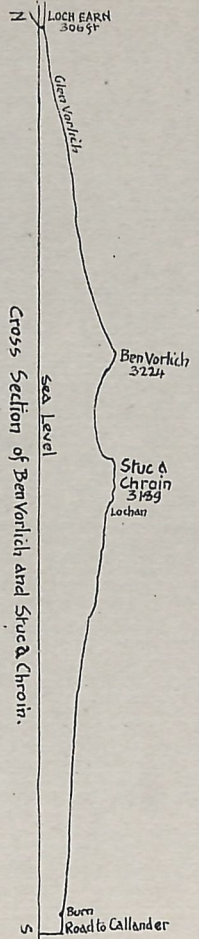
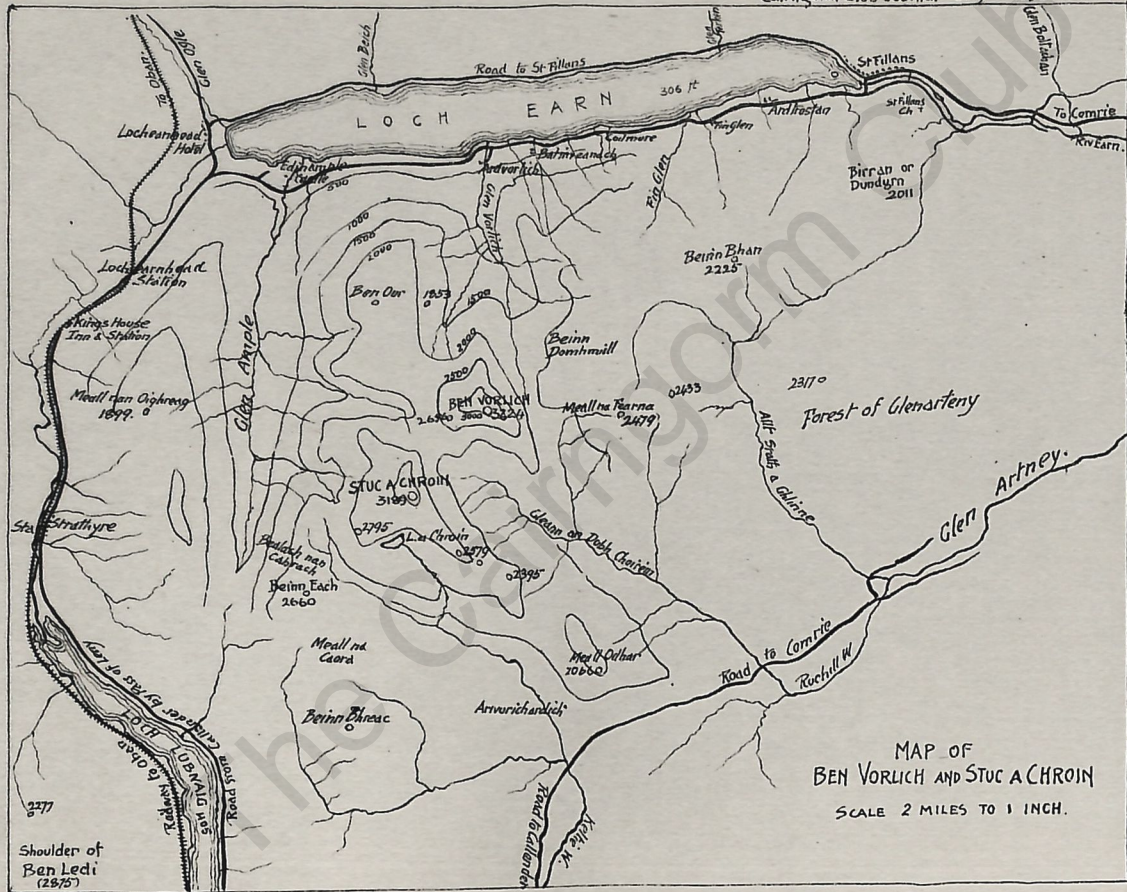
CAIRNGORM stones have been found here
CREAG and there among the hills. Sometimes, and
NA FEITH especially after heavy rains, one may be
BUIDHE. picked up in the bed of a torrent, or in
loose gravel, but these are generally of
little value, though they may serve as specimens. The best
have been got by digging. Experts can tell from the kind
of rock and the quartz veins where they are most likely to
be found. Various places are pointed out, such as the
Garten Quarry, where valuable finds were made. The late
Mr. James Grant, Brainedin, Abernethy, commonly called
"Rebhoan" from his having been born, and having long
resided at that old sheiling near the Green Lochan (see
C.C.J., Vol. I., p. 134), was one of the most successful
"diggers" of recent times. Some thirty years ago, I spent
a summer's day with him on Cairngorm. He showed me
various places where he had found stones, and in particular
one very curious spot where he had discovered quite a
treasure. It was on the shelving rocks of the Feith Buidhe.
Here there is a narrow gully, broken by ledges and falls.
On the left side, about a third of the way from the top of
the cliff, there is a hole or "pot" in the rock, about eight
feet deep and three feet wide. When Grant discovered it
the "pot" was full of sand and *debris* of granite and spar,
and when he had cleared this out he came upon great spoil
of crystals of all sizes and degrees of purity. Amongst
them was one upwards of 50 lbs. in weight, which was
afterwards purchased by the Queen for £50. Grant also
showed me a place where he had found specimens of the
green topaz; and he said that from the character of the
rock, he was satisfied that by following the vein and
blasting good crystals might be obtained. There is a
strange story as to the finding of a green stone.

(*i.e.*, The Carlin of the Stones) came from "CAILLEACH the Lowlands of Banff. It is said she had NAN CLACH", dreamt of finding a precious stone in Glen Avon. Perhaps she had heard the legend of the crystal that was sometimes seen sparkling brilliantly in the cliffs above Loch Avon. Be that as it may, she could not rest; so one summer she set out for Cairngorm. Long she sought—but in vain—

"Time passed on, while still her lonely efforts found
No recompense. Derided, and at length
By many pitied as insane of mind".

But strange to say her quest was at last successful. She found a splendid beryl. It was about the size of a wine glass and of rare beauty. Through the good offices of the parish minister a purchaser was found, and the widow's purse was filled and her heart made to sing for joy. But the finding of the stone took such hold of her mind that she could not rest. Year after year she returned to the hills, making her home for a while at one of the nearest crofts, but often passing whole nights alone under the Shelter Stone. It was a surprise to tourists and visitors to come suddenly on this weird woman digging at the foot of some precipice, or searching the bed of some winter torrent. Once the late Lord R. and a party fell in with her in Glen Avon. Lord R. said he wondered she had courage to go about in such a wild place alone. She answered, "Why should I be afraid? I never see anything worse than myself, and God is as near me here as in the plains". This reply puts one in mind of the famous saying of Howard: "The way to heaven is as near from Grand Cairo as from England". She found many stones on Cairngorm, but never again one like the beautiful beryl. One summer she was missed from her accustomed haunts; let us hope she had found "the pearl of great price" and entered into rest.

Cairngorm Club Journal July 1st 1896.



BEN VORLICH AND STÙC A CHRÒIN.

BY J. G. MURRAY, A.R.E.

LOOKING westward from the ramparts of Stirling Castle, the horizon presents a beautifully varied outline formed by the peaks of the Perthshire Grampians, and at all times and seasons this panorama is a grand spectacle. In the early morning when the sun lights up the hollows; in the evening when the hills are silhouettes of purple on a background of gold; in spring when snow-drifts linger in the corries; or on warm autumn days when their forms are dimly seen through the heat haze—each has its special charm as it throws a glamour of mystery and poetry around them. The long level carse through which the Forth winds its serpentine course adds dignity and grandeur to the mountains; fit theatre for the stirring and romantic scenes of bygone days.

Near the northern end of this panorama, two summits, Ben Vorlich (3224) and Stùc a Chròin (3189), attract, on account of their outline, the attention of the beholder. The one is the complement of the other—Stùc a Chròin a rugged ridge, Ben Vorlich a peak, surrounded by a group of lesser heights descending to Callander and the Braes of Doune on the south and Loch Earn on the north. To a mountaineer they seem most inviting, and are not disappointing on closer acquaintance, for they afford a variety of surface and angle, which at different seasons of the year should satisfy even the most exacting climbers.

There are several routes more or less advantageous for the ascent: from Callander along Keltie Water; from King's House or Lochearnhead across Glen Ample; from Comrie up Glen Artney; from Comrie to Ardvorlich, on Loch Earn, thence up Glen Vorlich. Ardvorlich may also be made for from Lochearnhead. The ascent by Glen Vorlich is the easiest, and one can drive to Ardvorlich either from

Lochearnhead or Comrie. Our party trained to Lochearnhead, walking to Ardvorlich. The walk is a beautiful one along the loch side, past the old castle of Edinample to the junction of the Vorlich Burn with the loch (306), where a memorial stone forcibly reminds one of highland excursions of a different class. The inscription runs :

“Near this spot we | re interred the bo | dies of 7 M'Donalds | of Glencoe killed | when attempting | to harry Ardvorlich | Anno Domini 1620”.

For the ascent up Glen Vorlich that glen is entered on the east side of the burn, passing Ardvorlich on the right, and crossing to the west side a little above the house. Thence a hill path keeps parallel with the stream, disappearing only when the slope becomes steep. The mountain rises right in front of the climber with the cairn visible most of the way. It looks so near that an hour might be considered a fair estimate for the climb ; but on a May day, under favourable conditions, it took our party two and a half hours to reach the summit, there being neither haste nor undue leisure. At the 1000 feet line a halt was made under the inviting shade of a big boulder. Away down at the glen-foot lay Loch Earn an intense blue, on the right the burn pursued its course with musical swish under a canopy of birchen boughs, while up on the hillside the cuckoo's call was borne with haunting cadence on the breeze. Between Loch Earn and Loch Tay rose low brown hills, intersected by Glen Beich and Glen Tarken, their bases fringed with wood adorned with summer's garb of green. Ben Chonzie, Schichallion, and Ben Lawers were visible with small patches of snow still lingering in their corries.

A fresh start made, the path by and by led over marshy ground, and though the “going” was easy, it did not require much imagination to conjure its appearance in wet weather. Beyond the 2000 feet line the ascent became rougher and steeper, the slope showing an angle of 35°, as the final climb, up Sgiath nan Tarmachan, with a small snow patch on the east side, was tackled. The appearance of ptarmigan warranted this name, while

mountain hares scurried up the brae-face. Nearing the summit the resemblance between this "Sgiath" and the "Sneck" at Ben Avon was most marked.

After a scramble a deer fence was reached along which we picked our way to the cairn, which stands on an exceedingly narrow ridge descending abruptly to the north and south. Here there is certainly little accommodation for a crowd of visitors, a circumstance which enhanced the sense of elevation frequently marred by a plateau-shaped summit. South-eastwards the Ochils were easily recognised with Bencleuch and the two tops of Dunnyat agreeably breaking the line. More to the southward Abbey Craig and Stirling Castle were visible; beyond, showing as a faint blue line, were the Pentland Hills. The beautifully wooded valley of the Teith running from west to east basked in the sunshine; across it, shimmering through the hazy heat, lay the Gargunnoch, Kilsyth, and Campsie hills, with Meikle Bin in the middle and Dungoyn at the western end—the only points breaking their flatness. South-westwards, over the top of Stùc a Chròin, part of Ben Ledi was visible; while still further westward the mountains around Loch Katrine as well as Ben Lomond and the Arrochar Alps were spread out before us. A little further round the Braes of Balquhiddy came into view with Loch Voil nestling at their base, the mighty Ben More and Am Binnein their crowning glory. Lochearnhead was just visible over the ridge with deep Glen Ogle leading right into the heart of the Western Highlands, where peak rose over peak in rapid succession till the eye rested with satisfaction on the huge snow cap of Ben Nevis.

The descent towards Stùc a Chròin by the deer fence is rather rough and entails a dip of 800 feet, at the bottom of which there is a barrier of boulders. Here two routes to the Stùc present themselves—one up the rock-face, the other a detour to the right, gaining the summit by a ridge. We selected the direct route which lay at an angle varying from 50° to 70° with jutting ledges, round which it was necessary to wriggle. As the crow flies it is little over a mile between the summit of Ben Vorlich and Stùc a

Chròin, but owing to the depth and steepness of the dip we required an hour and a half.

Three cairns adorn the summit of Stùc a Chròin, the middle one marking the actual top. It is much broader and flatter than Ben Vorlich with a long ridge running down towards Callander. The view is very similar to that from Ben Vorlich. On the south side, a little below the summit, lies a lochan from which issues one of the head streams of the Keltie, descending through a rocky gorge in a succession of waterfalls to Gleann a' Chroin.

A rapid descent was now begun in the direction of Callander, following the course of the burn to near Arivurichardich whence a straight course across the moor soon brought us to the road—a pleasant change after the long heather. A magnificent view is obtained of the Trossachs valley as the descent is made to Callander. When we reached the last ridge “the western waves of ebbing day” filled the long hollow and Loch Vennacher lay like a sheet of glass glittering in the sunshine. Here we rested, entranced by the scene, till the approach of train time demanded that we should hurry to the station.

BEINN BHROTAIN AND MONADH MÒR.

BY JOHN CLARKE, M.A.

LOOKING west from the neighbourhood of the Roman Catholic church in Braemar, or from below the Invercauld Arms Hotel, to the right of Creag à Bhuilg one catches sight of a long, and apparently low, ridge to the south of Cairn Toul: what its exact position is, and what its relation to other parts of the range, it is from either point impossible to say. Again, in the ascent of Morrone (Mor Shron), about Tomintoul, to the left of Creag à Bhuilg, appears a noteworthy peak, a little further on found to be but an outlier to a larger mass which is soon seen rising to the north. I had often wondered what exactly these heights were; apparently they belonged to some high mountain system not far from Cairn Toul, and I had set myself the task of answering on the first opportunity the question of their relation to it and to each other.

The weather, proverbially fickle and uncertain, is none of the best in the month of July, and it is not always practicable to take the advice offered me once by a Skye ghillie: "Oh", he said, "you ought never to start before about two o'clock, and then you will be seeing whether it will be fine". On the day selected I did wait as long as 9:30 before committing myself, and then, like "the course of empire", westward I took my way with all speed. By 10:30 my "Humber" had set me down in safety at the Linn, beyond which it did not seem prudent to attempt cycling; by 11:30 I was at the Bridge of Dee (the White Bridge of the Club's map), and ready to enter on the real business of the day.

Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mòr, to anticipate a little for the sake of clearness, form the southern members of the great mountain mass to the west of the Larig Ghru. The northern portion consists of Braeriach and its buttresses, and, roughly speaking, Cairn Toul is the centre. A parallel

range to the west borders on and faces Glen Feshie, and indeed these two ranges seem to stand back to back, there being no considerable depression between them, save where the great rent occupied by Loch Eunach forces its way right up between Braeriach and Sgòran Dubh, the extreme northern portions of the ranges respectively.

As few people have leisure to explore the whole district, it is natural for those who can afford only a day or two to select the higher and, in every way, grander peaks for ascent. In this way several peaks of very great interest receive less than their due share of attention. Sgòran Dubh itself, hardly inferior in interest to Cairngorm or Braeriach, is one of these, and Beinn Bhrotain is another. From the Bridge of Dee, some 65 miles west of that so familiar to Aberdonians, two routes are open for the ascent of Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mòr; the one is to cross the Dee, proceed along the right bank till a convenient spot is reached for diverging to the left hand for the ascent of Beinn Bhrotain, whence Monadh Mòr is easily reached, and the return made by Glen Geusachan and the Larig to the point of departure: or the route can be reversed. I adopted the latter course, first because I did not know, and from the summit was unlikely to be able to see, what the descent into Glen Geusachan was like, and, secondly, because it is a good principle, especially when one is alone, to reach one's furthest point as soon as possible, and thence to work homewards.

The Larig route, by which the way lay for the first few miles needs no description. The first two miles are rather dreary, the sparkling and tumbling river being the chief object of interest. The retrospect includes the Geldie, the entrance by the Bynack to Glen Tilt, and An Sgarsoch and Carn an Fhidleir in the distance, the latter peak being, however, soon lost. Then the view in front begins to open up, first the bold shoulder of Beinn Bhrotain, then the whole mass of the mountain, further on the Devil's Point and the shoulder of Ben Muich Dhui. Forging the Dee a short distance below the point where it is joined by the Geusachan Burn, I worked my way round the slope to the

left and got fairly into the glen. Glen Geusachan is a narrow and comparatively short valley; the sides are so steep as to be at places almost precipitous. The feature of it is distinctly the Devil's Point which rises very grandly to the north. The ascent could readily be made a little way up the glen; at the mouth of the glen and overlooking Glen Dee the mountain is faced with steeply shelving rock, covered in many places with water, and the ascent would, even where practicable, be very risky. Another danger of steep ascents was illustrated very forcibly when a large stone, dislodged no doubt by natural action, but from no very apparent cause, started in wild career down the steep slope.

“Down from yon cliff a fragment broke;
It thundered down with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way”.

Nearing the head of Glen Geusachan I saw that Monadh Mòr lay as a huge barrier in front, much in the position seen from Braemar. The ascent was to be accomplished either by gradually mounting toward the right by the Geusachan, or keeping straight on, by Coire Creagach, and making direct for the top, which, however, was not visible and could be located only conjecturally. The latter course seemed preferable, though the climb is very stiff and rough, bog, steep shelving and sometimes slippery rock, and streams all being abundant. These added to the zest of the climb, and in due course—at 3.15 of the clock—the top (3651) was gained in safety. The formation of the range had become clear during the ascent. Monadh Mòr is a long ridge, the continuation of Cairn Toul to the south; a deep “sneck” cuts it off from Beinn Bhrotain which lies to the south-east and is distinctly a mass, blunt and irregular in form, throwing out its roots toward the Dee, the Geldie, and the Eidart. In crossing from Cairn Toul to Monadh Mòr the route would lie by Lochan Suarach (the more correct form, I understand, is Loch na Stirtag or Loch Sturtack) and would hardly come below the 3000 feet contour at any point. The

"sneck" is hardly so high as this, but the descent being very abrupt on both sides, it looks a deep depression.

The view from Monadh Mòr is exceedingly interesting: it is much more extensive than would be supposed from the position of the mountain—in fact, it is clear in all directions save where Beinn Bhrotain blocks it to the south-east and the shoulder of Ben Muich Dhui to the north-east. The interest is in part due to the splendid contrasts of mountain and glen presented close at hand. Westward the view is uninterrupted as far as the eye can reach. Not to mention Cairn Toul, Braeriach, and Lochan Suarach, the Glen Feshie range, embracing Meall Tionail, Meall Dubh-achaidh, Carn Ban, and Sgòran Dubh, seems close at hand, then passing to the south-west and south by Beinn Dearg and Beinn a' Ghlo we come to Lochnagar and Mount Keen and so round to Beinn a' Bhuid. The glens are no less interesting, and in particular the valley of the Dee stretches out due east apparently in almost a straight line, and nearly the first object that strikes the eye is the village of Ballater.

But the day wears on, and it is a far cry to Braemar. Keeping right along the ridge and descending suddenly into the "sneck" I mounted Beinn Bhrotain at 4:50 without difficulty. That side of the mountain is, like many of the higher summits, notably Ben Muich Dhui, a mass of tumbled boulders. Care is necessary at times in order to avoid risk of sprains, but otherwise the footing is very firm and the walking pleasant. Not much requires to be said about the view from Beinn Bhrotain (3795). Though the summit is nearly 150 feet higher than Monadh Mòr yet the view is much inferior in interest. Perhaps it is that it has already been got and enjoyed, but there seems a further reason. There is not so much of the striking contrast observed from its neighbour, while to the south the effectiveness of the view, here unbroken, is rather spoiled by the great expanse of uninteresting moorland that stretches away toward Beinn a' Ghlo and the Ben Urns.

South of Beinn Bhrotain rises the subsidiary height Carn Cloich-mhuilinn (3087). It is the peak, at first sight a notable looking one, that was referred to as visible in the

ascent of Morrone. It may be reached from Beinn Bhrotain without difficulty by a ridge to the right (west), but the shorter and more direct way which I chose involves a slight ascent again. The formation of such an excrescence is interesting, but it is so much lower than its chief that the view is hardly an object after the higher one has been gained. Without loss of time, the hour being now 5:55, I sped down the slope over rather soft ground towards the Dee, reflecting that I had been well advised to choose the other route for the ascent. Keeping the right bank this time, as not much was to be gained by crossing, I reached the Bridge of Dee at 6:45, the Linn at 7:55, and Braemar at 8:35. The day had kept fine, and was in every way enjoyable, and I felt I had made a real accession to my knowledge of Cairngorm topography. It is to be hoped that in future the region will be visited more frequently as one well repaying the outlay of energy required to explore it.



THE CAIRN, BEN MUICH DHUI.

THE FANNICH HILLS.

BY GEORGE DUNCAN, M.A.

A KEEN desire to explore the Fannichs, kindled to some extent by the charm of their distinctive title, "The Ross-shire Alps", had long possessed us. Partly, too, the fact that nowhere could we discover any very detailed information regarding them, formed an attraction, and a visit to them promised, therefore, to have all the glamour of complete novelty, as well as to afford the satisfaction of exploring mountains which had been deemed worthy of an Alpine designation.

In truth, however, it must be said that the title, "The Ross-shire Alps", is, strictly speaking, somewhat a misnomer. For the Fannichs are situated not in the county of Ross, but in one of these patches of Cromarty with which the face of that county was variegated, and which are now united with it to form the new county of Ross and Cromarty. Nor can the Fannichs be claimed as the highest hills in the united counties, although Sgùrr Mòr (3637), the highest summit of the group, was also the loftiest peak in the old county of Cromarty. But in many ways, as we shall see, the Fannichs are a notable group, and well deserve a distinctive name, such as fancy has already applied to them.

The dearth of exact information about Fannich is explained to some extent by the want of any very near hotel accommodation. Achanalt and Achnasheen are the nearest inns, and lodging may sometimes be had at Lochluichart station, which is about eight miles from the nearest of the hills and from which there is a fairly good driving road to Fannich Lodge. On the occasion of our visit, however, we were fortunate in securing, through an introduction, quarters with the forester at Fannich Lodge, which is situated close to the edge of Loch Fannich, a loch about seven miles long, lying to the south and just at the base of the group.

It was a magnificently bright afternoon in the end of

May when we left the train at Lochluichart station, and the blue sky deluded us into (as it proved) a vain forecast of the perfect weather we were to enjoy! But that afternoon at least was perfect, and as we marched along the road which winds alongside the Fannich, or Grudie, river and leads past Aultdearg on to Loch Fannich we were full of bright anticipations. On our way we made a slight divergence, about two miles from the station, to see the waterfall on the Grudie, known as Rory's Leap, where the river, here of considerable volume, breaks through its rocky channel into a picturesque fall about ten feet high. Leaving the falls, a few miles of the road were quickly left behind, and after passing Aultdearg we were soon confronted by the rocky corrie (Garbh Choire Mòr, known locally as "the old wife's corrie") of An Eigin (the hill of distress), which forms the eastern outpost of the Fannich group. Seen from the road this corrie has a most imposing appearance and gives an impression of difficulty which makes the name of the hill not ill deserved. But, as we afterwards found, its appearance in this respect is somewhat deceptive. Winding round the base of An Eigin we were soon in full view of the loch, with, in the background, the graceful outline of Fionn Bheinn (3060), which lies on the southern side of the loch directly opposite to the western division of the Fannichs.

On our arrival at the Lodge dinner was speedily discussed, and although it was then wearing on to six o'clock, the evening was too fine and the hills were too inviting to permit us to rest. An Coileachan (the little cock), a hill just over the 3000 feet level (3014) and the nearest of the group, was, after deliberation, selected as the point of attack. From the loch the ascent seemed a short and easy one, but as we mounted ridge after ridge and crossed plateau after plateau we were gradually undeceived. At last after a climb of almost exactly 2200 feet (the loch lies at an altitude of 822), which we did in an hour and twenty minutes, the cairn was reached, and the view well repaid the unexpected exertion. The sky was still clear, and both the near and the distant views were distinct and well defined. On the east and close at hand was An Eigin, which is really a spur

of An Coileachan, and further east we could see the dark waters of Loch Luichart winding through the heather. At our feet was Loch Fannich itself, bounded close to the south by a range of hills of most disappointing height when viewed from the eminence we had reached, but with range upon range of magnificent tops in the background; and to the west we could easily distinguish nearly all the more notable of the Fannich peaks. Near us and almost in line were Meall Gorm (2998), and Meallan Rairigidh (3109), and further on was the rocky summit of Sgùrr Mòr. Further off still was what may be called the western range of the Fannichs (although even beyond them on the west there lies Sgùrr Breac and A' Chailleach (3275) the extremity of the group), embracing, in their order from the loch side, Torran Ruadh (1658), Sgùrr a' Chadha Dheirg, Sgùrr nan Each (the horse's peak, 3026), and Sgùrr nan Clach Geala (the peak of the white stones, 3581). Càrn na Crìche (3148), which lies at the head of Coire Mòr, the corrie between this range and Sgùrr Mòr, was not visible, but to the north-west the long, grey, peakless ridge of the expressively-named Beinn Liath Mhòr Fannaich filled up the near landscape. Among the distant hills was, of course, Ben Wyvis, and on the north-west was the huge mass of the Ross-shire Ben Dearg (3547), with its peaked dependency. But what struck us most in the distant view was the castellated outline of Slioch (3217-3260), rising abruptly from the shores of Loch Maree, with the white evening mist just touching its highest ridges, and more to the south-west the black rocky wall of Beinn Eighe and his neighbours in Torridon.

We halted long on An Coileachan, but at last the descent was reluctantly made by dipping westward into Coire Riabhaich (the speckled corrie), one of the three large corries which extend from the loch into the group. The other two, Coire Beag and Coire Mòr, branch more to the west, Coire Mòr running right up, as has been said, to Càrn na Crìche, while Coire Beag runs up towards Meallan Rairigidh, being flanked on the east by Creag a' Coire Riabhaich, which divides it, on the other hand, from the corrie of that name.

Next day the barometer had fallen, and even the near tops were invisible in the early morning. A start was made, however, about nine o'clock, and taking the deerstalker's path from the lodge we determined to make for Sgùrr Mòr. The track winds up Creag a' Coire Riabhaich, and is well marked until about 2000 feet. Along its course crystals of an amethyst colour, pretty, but of no intrinsic value, are occasionally picked up. At Cadh' a' Bhàillidh (the Baillie's gate), a sort of "sneck" connecting Creag a' Coire Riabhaich and Meallan Rairigidh, the path becomes intermittent, and continues so to the top of the Meallan. From Cadh' a' Bhàillidh we saw the full extent of the long ridgy back of An Coileachan, which had seemed to us on the previous evening so short an incline. Near the top of Meallan Rairigidh there is passed a neatly built hut, with a good stove, a convenience we have often wished some kind Providence would set down for the use of travellers on some of our high hills nearer home. By the time we reached Meallan Rairigidh, and had started to make along the ridge by way of Meall nam Peithirean, the hill of the watchers (the height of which is not given on the Ordnance Survey map, but which we made by the aneroid to be about 3200 feet), for Sgùrr Mòr, the mist had risen considerably, and we had good near views. On the north we passed successively Loch Gorm, Loch an Eilein, Loch Li, and Loch an Fhuar Thuill Mhoir (the loch of the big cold hole), all lying to the right in the valley between us and Beinn Liath Mor Fannaich. The tops of Sgùrr Mòr and Sgurr nan Clach were still, however, only to be seen dimly through the mist, and it was, indeed, not till we were actually at the cairn of the former that we realised exactly what manner of hill it was. Here a surprise waited us. We had toiled up the grassy slope on the south-east and had reached the cairn, when a startled exclamation from the foremost of the party, brought the other sharply up. Right beneath us to the north and with its brink not six feet from the cairn, yawned a rocky chasm, at least, as nearly as we could make out, a thousand feet deep. The mist was churning and boiling about us, one moment filling the chasm, the next lifting so

as to show us clearly the extent of the gulf below. On the other side we could now discern the black rocky cliffs of Sgùrr nan Clach (Eagan Tuill Bhig) and Sgùrr nan Each standing boldly out, and the peculiarly diversified characteristics of the Fannichs—their easy grassy slopes on the one hand, and their steep corries, studded with a profusion of black rocky pinnacles, on the other, began to impress themselves strongly upon us. The descent from Sgùrr Mòr to the adjoining eminence of Càrn na Crìche (so called from the fact that the old boundary between Ross and Cromarty crosses its summit) is steep, but it was soon accomplished. Beneath us, and to the north of Càrn na Crìche, was Loch a' Mhadaidh (the foxes' loch, 1830), and further off the green rounded summit of Meall a' Chrasgaidh (3062) and Loch a' Bhraoin, while in the far distance we could distinguish the Atlantic waters of Loch Broom, with its margin of yellow sand, bordered by green cultivated ground.

From Càrn na Crìche our route next lay to Sgùrr nan Clach Geala, a name arising from the numerous white quartz stones with which the prevailing blackness of its rocks is relieved. Here and further along the ridge (Cadha na Geute and Cadh' a' Bhocain), on to Sgùrr nan Each and Sgùrr a' Cadha Dheirg, which are connected by a "sneek" known as Cadha Dearg Mòr, we found the same characteristics as on Sgùrr Mòr—the gradual slope on the one side, and the steep jagged rocks ranging to a thousand feet high on the other. This feature is particularly well marked in Sgùrr nan Clach, the black rocks falling sheer away from the grassy sward at the top. To the west we had good views of Sgùrr Breac and A' Chailleach, and down the corrie, between them and ourselves, the western end of Loch Fannich and "the Nest" (Nedd), a hut near the head of the loch. From Sgùrr nan Clach, too, we could see the bottle-shaped Loch na Shellag in the Dundonnell Forest. From the top of Sgùrr nan Clach we made our way to Sgùrr nan Each, a peak of almost exactly the same type, but of less bulk. Thence, or rather from Cadha Dearg Mòr, we dropped by a somewhat tedious descent, much fore-

shortened in the view from the top, into Coire Mòr, down which we followed the course of the burn (Allt a' Coire Mòr), till within a mile of the point where it joins the loch. Here, opposite Torran Ruadh, hunger drove us to take what seemed to be a short cut for home, and, instead of following the burn down to the loch, and then taking the path along the waterside, we left the stream, and crossed on our way the Allt a' Coire Beag. Thereafter we made in a straight line for our headquarters through a tract of country honey-combed with peat hags and moss pots, the only recommendation of which was that it served as a splendid foil to the admirably smooth hill walking we had experienced in the early part of the day.

All this time the barometer had been steadily falling, and, going to bed that night, we had sorrowful thoughts of the morrow, which even the preliminary tumbler of toddy failed entirely to dispel. And the morning fully justified our prognostications! Everything was shrouded in mist, and a persistent rain was falling. But we determined to defy the elements, and set out by the driving road along the loch side for the rocky corrie of An Eigin, which we had so much admired on our way from Lochluichart. The story goes that one winter seven deer were killed here by being driven over the rocks at the top of the corrie by an old woman with a blanket—hence the local name already mentioned. The fate of the deer, however, did not prevent us from resolving on the ascent, more especially as we had been told that deer, more fortunate than the seven, frequently ascended and descended the corrie, and we knew that wherever deer could go, man could safely venture. In the end, the corrie turned out to be rather disappointing, although its average angle is about 50°. The rocks are certainly steep, but right up to the top, which is at least 1600 feet above the level of the loch, there is a fairly wide passage through which the ascent is made. Little or no "hand and foot" climbing is necessary, indeed the last two or three hundred feet is quite smooth and grassy, a somewhat dangerous bit to negotiate, perhaps, during a dry and hot season, but quite simple in a wet day.

Having safely accomplished this corrie, we made for An Coileachan, the top of which is reached from An Eigin by a very gradual ascent over stony ground. By this time the weather had somewhat improved, and we made the descent to Loch Gorm in high spirits; debating, as we went, the possibility of making our way along the chain of lochs, beginning with Loch Gorm and ending with Loch an Fhuar Thuill Mhor, to the foot of the great corrie of Sgùrr Mòr, and thence making the ascent to the cairn. On arriving at Loch Gorm, however, which is the largest of the chain, and about a mile in circumference, our attention was immediately arrested by a magnificent range of perpendicular pillared rocks, fully a thousand feet high, rising in tiers up from the loch, and forming the north-eastern cliff of Meall Gorm (Creag Dhubh a' Gorm Locha). We at once gave up all thought of Sgùrr Mòr, the more readily as the weather now appeared hopeless, and resolved to try the ascent of Meall Gorm by the rocks. After making our way to the foot of the cliffs round the margin of the loch, or as near it as the rocks, which come right down to the edge of the water, would allow, we chose what M'Connochie proclaimed to be a feasible route, and up we went, hand and foot, to a point about five hundred feet above the level of the loch. Here our progress was checked by a sharp turn which had to be made, with perilously little foot-hold, right above a most uninvitingly steep precipice. It was deemed prudent to retreat, and we descended to the loch at a considerably slower pace than we had ascended. We were determined, however, not to be baulked of our ascent, and veering slightly further round the loch, we came upon a corrie (not named on the Ordnance Survey map, and which has no local name so far as we could gather), which promised some sport. Seen from the foot it seemed to run well up towards the summit of Meall Gorm, but this view gave only a limited conception of its character. The further up we climbed the narrower and deeper it got. At five hundred feet up, or so, it became quite V shaped, excessively steep, in places quite perpendicular, and with only space for one o make the ascent at a time, the rocks on either side over-

hanging at heights ranging from twenty to fifty feet. So bad was it at some places that even the faithful collie, who had hitherto followed us tamely, whined and growled in remonstrance, and had to be literally pushed up in front. We could well believe the foresters afterwards when they told us deer were never known to make the ascent by this pass. Towards the top the corrie widened out, ending in a comparatively easy slope, which led us to the summit. The height of the corrie is about 1200 feet and the average angle about 60°. The difficulty of the ascent was greatly increased by the prevailing rain, which made the rocks most disagreeably wet and slimy. The corrie, however, was clear of snow, therein differing from many of its neighbours.

At the top of the corrie the Meall was swathed in mist. Not one of the surrounding peaks was to be seen, and as the rain now became rather penetrating, we resolved to descend, which we did, for the second time, by Coire Riabhaich, arriving at the lodge in a sadly soaked condition, which necessitated one of the party appearing at dinner in habiliments which, to say the least of them, were more picturesque than appropriate.

Next day the remorseless barometer was lower than ever. But our holiday in Fannich was over. We had arranged to vary our route back by walking over Fionn Bheinn to Achnasheen—how that was accomplished, however, must be another story! It was a raw and cheerless morning as we rowed across the loch, after bidding adieu to our kind hosts, but, as we tried vainly to make out the crested peak of Sgùrr Mòr through the mist, and took our last look at the dark corries of Sgùrr nan Clach, we felt that, despite rain and mist, our exploration of the Fannichs would be remembered as one of our finest and most instructive excursions.

SOME GRAMPIAN AND SUTHERLAND RECOLLECTIONS.*

BY JAMES MACAULAY, M.D.

ONE of the articles in the last number of the Journal it was a great pleasure to see. It was an account of "A School-Boy Walk over the Pentlands". The writer says that "the school-boy who is entered at the Pentlands between 9 and 12 years of age may find his way to the top of Ben Muich Dhui or Cairn Toul in all the greater comfort when he is 18 or 20". On further inquiry I found that this Pentland excursion was made by boys from my own old school, the Edinburgh Academy. All the places mentioned, Colinton and Bonaly, Habbie's Howe and the Glencorse reservoir, awakened memories of my own school-boy days, seventy years ago. I can only say that a muster of as many as five and twenty Academy boys, on a summer Saturday forenoon, for a Pentland Hills excursion, is a very pleasant fact to know. And this in times when there is so great a mania for mere athletics! The pursuits of natural history give as much healthy exercise as rougher sports, and will yield in after life more gratifying recollections. The senses and the brain get exercise, as well as the limbs and the muscles. Nor is there any lack of joyous or even boisterous fun, as the record of this Pentland trip shows. May there be many more of such holiday rambles! At Eton and Rugby and Harrow there are always a number of boys who are proud of their Museums, and who delight in getting new specimens

* Our readers will doubtless welcome this chapter of reminiscences from the pen of the respected and venerable octogenarian Dr. Macaulay, Editor for many years past of *The Leisure Hour*. He writes with true Highland instinct, under the influence of the best traditions of the north, and there are many points on which all mountaineers are in deepest sympathy with him. At his great age he can hardly hope to botanise again among the recesses of the Clova mountains, but we trust he may long continue able to enjoy a pleasant autumn holiday among his native heather.—*Ed.*

for them. To be a field naturalist need not imply any neglect of common games and sports. And let it be remembered that the most distinguished travellers and the best of mountaineers, from De Saussure and Von Humboldt to Conway and Whymper, have always been naturalists as well as climbers; and by their descriptions of *living* objects and of human life have made their books lively and popular.

It was this early love of natural history that brought to me the privilege, a few years later, when attending the Botany class as a medical student, to be included in special expeditions led by the Professor. Robert Graham was the Professor in those days. William Jackson Hooker was still at Glasgow, before he was appointed Director of Kew Gardens. At Edinburgh University, Baird was then Principal, Hope held the chair of Chemistry, and the veteran Jameson that of Natural History, as well as the Curatorship of the Museum.

My first expedition to the mountains of Forfar and Aberdeen was in 1831. There were no railroads at that time. We travelled on the top of the mail-coach to Forfar, and thence on foot to the Clova mountains. Old James Macnab, the head gardener, and the helper of the Professor in his classes at Inverleith Row, acted as manager and treasurer of the excursion.

Our number in this expedition was sixteen. It was necessary to limit the number, to lessen the chance of separation in travel, and to make sure of supplies or accommodation for all. There were only seven or eight students, of whom I was the youngest, and among them was the much-loved and accomplished Edward Forbes, who, after a life of busy movement and great distinction as a traveller, and as head of the School of Mines in Jermyn Street, came back to Edinburgh to occupy, for too short a time, the chair once filled by Jameson. Others among the students rose to honourable though less eminent rank, but it was by the elder men of the expeditions that their records were made bright and their memories fragrant. Here are some of them:—Sir William Jardine, Bart.; Prideaux; J. Selby, J.P., of Twizell House, Northumberland; Dr. Kaye Greville,

author of the "Flora Edinensis"; Martin Barry, M.D., a quaker, whose adventurous ascent of Mont Blanc was made in times before Alpine trippers became common; Dr. Green, a physician of Boston, U.S.A., who shouted with enthusiastic delight on first seeing a daisy; James Wilson of Woodville, brother of John Wilson, the more celebrated but not more cultured brother, known to fame as "Christopher North";—these were among the seniors of our expeditions—sportsmen, or experts in science, in whose company it was a delight and a privilege to travel.

Of the last named, James Wilson, a memorial volume was published, nearly forty years ago, by the Rev. Dr. James Hamilton, of Regent Square. The dry humour, quiet manner, and wide knowledge of James Wilson are well described in the once-famous book of Mr. Lockhart, "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk". His brother-in-law, Sir John M'Neill, of Persian and Imperial renown as a diplomatist, tells that Wilson at first under Jameson was tempted to the study of geology and mineralogy, but his own tastes and his love of open air pursuits led him to prefer entomology, ichthyology, and all departments of zoology, and he became the first naturalist of his times in Scotland. Who would believe that he wrote nearly a thousand pages of the "Encyclopædia Britannica", under a dozen headings, from "Angling" to "Zoophytes", covering the entire range of the Animal Kingdom? To "Constable's Miscellany" and "The Edinburgh Cabinet Library" he was also a large contributor. Such a man was a welcome addition to Professor Graham's botanising excursions. With the young students he was a great favourite, to whom he was always ready to give information and advice on subjects with which Graham, a man of like geniality and disposition, was less familiar. Humour and good sense, cheerfulness and gravity, poetry and piety, were blended in happiest proportions in James Wilson. Dr. Greville was his closest comrade, both being keen anglers and entomologists. There were others who combined sport with zoology, and one who cared for sport alone, but one of the most agreeable of the whole party, Captain Graham, R.N., a brother of the Professor.

Let the Editor indulge me by allowing a single extract from Dr. Hamilton's "Life of James Wilson", a book which contains numerous letters about the excursions. He writes to his wife from Clova, 5th August, 1831 :

" We reached Forfar about 3 p.m. There we hired a cart for our knapsacks, and also bought thirty or forty threepenny loaves and a round of cold beef, and started on foot for this little hamlet, which is situated in a wild secluded valley, through the centre of which flows the South Esk. At Forfar we had previously regaled ourselves on cheese and bread and ale ; and in the course of our pedestrian progress in the evening we got bannocks and milk in a cottage by the roadside. It was past 10 before we got to Clova, where we regaled ourselves on tea and bread, and went to bed thereafter. The bed, for the greater part of the party, consisted of a layer of hay upon the floor, with a blanket or two over the top of it. I was voted into one of the two beds properly so called, out of respect, I suppose, to my years and reverend character ; and although I resisted this indulgence for some time, I was forced to submit to the kindness of my fellow-travellers. I was much refreshed by a sound sleep, and awoke about a quarter-past six with the unaccustomed feeling that I had got enough. My neighbours were by this time stirring in the adjoining room ; so I got up, and we breakfasted a little after seven. Most of the party started for the hills to collect their plants, and I took my rod and fished up the river about three miles and back again, and killed five dozen of trouts. Two others who tried angling killed three dozen between them ; so we had a pleasant addition to our dinner. I returned to the house in good time, but it was towards seven before the botanists descended from the mountains. They got many rare and curious plants, the arrangement and pressure of which presented a busy candle-light scene for some hours in the evening".

The " mountains " ascended by the botanists it is not possible for me now to name or to spell correctly, having at hand no Ordnance Survey map or report. But on many a separate and far-distant height were gathered " rare and curious plants ". These are still in my herbarium, not always with the exact habitat noted, only " Clova mountains " as the central place whence excursions were made that took long summer days to accomplish. The inspection of these

plants recalls the happy days when they were searched for and discovered. To name two or three only:—*Lychnis Alpina* was found in profusion at the very top of a lofty mountain, amidst the weather-worn debris of what had been once solid granite. Of *Saxifraga rivularis*, and *Saxifraga nivalis*, the habitat in both cases is given "Lochnagar". *Azulea procumbens*, the dwarfed representative of a lovely tribe, was found on many a hill. The *Potentilla alpestris*, *Juncus triglumis*, and scores of others, of various degrees of rarity or beauty, from the lovely flowers and ferns to the lowliest lichens and club-mosses, are among the specimens in my "hortus siccus". One of them, *Lycopodium alpinum* is marked as coming from the "Clova and Cairngorm" ranges. The upland lochs and streams furnish aquatic spoils. Some of us were not such keen collectors as the regular botanists, and we found greater pleasure in observing the names and the uses made of the commonest plants by the mountain people. It was interesting also to hear on the spot what plants were badges of clans. *Erica tetralix* is the badge of the Macdonalds, and *Erica cineria* (more frequently found white than its cross-leaved neighbour) is that of the Macalisters, just as *Myrica gale* is the badge of the Campbells in Argyllshire. Hawthorn is the plant badge of the Forfarshire Ogilvies. To Sir John Ogilvy of our Clova days we were indebted for courteous permission to trespass over all his domains, and to share his rights of property on field or flood. James Wilson, in one of his letters, tells of his going to "a romantic shooting-hut of Sir John Ogilvy about a thousand miles up in the air", where he was regaled with milk and whisky, and was fortunate enough to capture fine specimens of very rare beetles! More welcome plants to come upon were the berry-bearing ground-bushes upon which grouse, blackcock, and ptarmigan feed, such as *Arbutus alpina* or *Rubus chamaemorus*.

In the Sutherland expedition of 1833, the sportsmen of the party were more comfortable and independent of the botanists of the Clova mountains. They had a long car, mounted on wheels, for the capital roads, and this car was

dismounted and used as a boat when a loch or river or fiord tempted the anglers. Graham and his foot-travellers ranged the whole county up to the extreme corner, the *ultima thule* of "Cape Wrath". Ben Hope is one of the grandest, though not one of the loftiest of the Scottish mountains; the Kyle of Tongue is not inferior to the loveliest of Norwegian fjords; Lochs Shin, Craggie, and Eribol are as dear to anglers as they are charming to artists; and the whole of the coast scenery, with gigantic cliffs and sea-worn caves, is a worthy part of the sea-girt "Caledonia, stern and wild". All the places on the route to Dunrobin Castle and Invergordon have long been familiar to travellers, and to guests of the Sutherland family, but in my herbarium many less known names appear. Altnaharrow, Inchnadamf, Cashel Dhu, Dornoch, Ben Loyal, Scourie, and many other habitats of plants are given, both on the Sutherland property and in "the Reay Country". Nor did the botanists get all the rarities. Sir William Jardine and Mr. Selby secured for their museums some fine specimens of birds, such as the black-throated diver—gorgeous creatures, as large as geese, and extremely rare in this country. Splendid salmon and the great loch trout (*salmo ferox*) were caught by the anglers everywhere.

In population and in wealth the growth of all Scotland has been immense during the century drawing to a close, but in the highlands there has been depopulation. On this subject, however, I must restrain myself. The readers of this Journal may differ on many questions, but all must regret to know that the men of other times have been cleared away to give place to sheep-walks and deer-forests, and will join in the words of Robert Burns:

"Farewell to the highlands, farewell to the north,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the highlands forever I love".

THE BENCHINNANS.

BY THE REV. J. G. MICHIE.

WHERE are these mountains, and whence have they derived their name—a corruption of Bin-chichin—are questions that have lately given rise to various conjectures. Some have contended that the name applies to the semicircular range that bounds the Loch Callater basin, consisting of Cairn Taggart, Cairn Bannoch, Knaps of Fafernie, Tolmount, Cairn na Glasha, and Carn an Tuirc. Others hold that the range is not in Aberdeenshire at all, but wholly in Forfarshire, and lies at the southern base of the higher Grampians, and does not include any of the above-named summits. These seem to be the leading suggestions, but various modifications are also contended for. But only one or two members of the Club would seem to have been successful in hitting on the original Benchichins. It almost provokes a smile to hear some of our recent tourists or mountaineers talk of the Benchinnans as if the name were a well-known designation of some equally well recognised mountain or range of mountains; or it may be that they use the term to show that they are more deeply learned in the Alpine nomenclature of the district than the natives to whom that name has never descended. Or it may be also that they have been misled by some shepherd or forester who would not willingly plead ignorance of the name of any of his native mountains, and when asked about one he has never heard of before, exercises his imagination and speedily finds a locality for it. Seeing there are so many possible sources of error, it is little wonder that much confusion has arisen in regard to the name in question. It may be safely asserted that twenty years ago hardly a single shepherd or forester ever heard of mountains called the Benchinnans. Some may now have heard of them from learned tourists; but however learned none will accuse them

of inventing the name. Where then do they find it? It is not in the Ordnance Survey maps—where almost every known name has a place—nor in any of our modern Deeside maps.

Robert Edward, in his "The County of Angus, 1678", speaks of ". . . the very lofty mountains of Binchichins; and this vast ridge (being indeed the Grampians of Angus) forms the boundary between Angus and Aberdeenshire for the space of 19 [Scottish] miles". This spelling of "Binchichins" agrees with that in Gordon's map, with which Edward was probably familiar. This map was constructed by the eminent scholar and geographer, Sir Robert Gordon of Straloch, and contributed by him to "Blaeu's Theatrum Orbis Terrarum", by the author of which it was published in Amsterdam, in 1654. It comprehends the whole district between the River Spey and the South Esk, and is accompanied by a Latin description in which, however, there is no mention of the BINCHICHINS, for thus the word is spelt on the map, which, as was to be expected, has numerous defects and errors, but gives a representation of the topography of the country that is highly instructive in many respects. Both map and description are given in "Collections of the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff" (Spalding Club). Benchichins, as written in the map, points very clearly to its own derivation. It is evidently an attempt to give as nearly as possible in English the pronunciation of the Gaelic *Beinn-Cichean* or *Cichin*, which means the *mountain with the paps*. This may be held to be sufficiently clear; and if so, no hill or range of hills will less answer to the description than those with which the name has latterly been popularly associated, whether in gazetteers or in maps, such as that of Knox's Basin of the Tay (1831), where "Binchinman Hills" is given as the name of the range separating the counties of Aberdeen and Forfar, between Glas Maol and the head of Glen Mark. There are no features on them that would at all justify their being called paps. In the group that surrounds Loch Callater, there are excrescences and sharp points on several summits that might by a stretch of figurative language be so termed.

But the Celtic mind was particular on these matters ; and while it saw the semblance of a pap on Bennachie, and hence gave the hill its name, it saw only *cairns* on the Tolmount range, and has so designated their summits.

Where then shall we find these paps or papped hills to correspond with the name Binchichins ? We turn again to Sir R. Gordon's map to observe where he places them, and at first glance they seem to lie to the S.W. of Loch Muick. This would place them, as buttresses of the higher Grampians, near the centre of the Braes of Angus. The name in Gordon's map is in the plural number, as it is also in the Gaelic, from which it is derived, but the plural there does not refer to the *ben* or mountain, but to the *ciche* or pap. It is one mountain with two or more paps.

Evidently there is a mistake somewhere, and a closer inspection of the map shows where it lies. There are on it two distinct features, well marked and named, Loch Muick and Loch Garr, *i.e.*, the tarn of Lochnagar, and the mistake consists in placing the latter to the west instead of to the north of the former. But there is no mistake in this, that the Binchichins are placed directly between these two lochs. And what do we find in that locality ? It is just there that the two paps—the Meikle Pap and the Little Pap of Lochnagar—are situated. The old Gaelic name, now obsolete, has given place to its English equivalent, “the Paps” ; and here, without doubt, were the Binchichins of Sir Robert Gordon's time ; and here, *if anywhere*, ought to be placed the Benchinnans of the present day. In this conclusion I am pleased to learn that I am accompanied by the Editor, to whom is due the merit of first seeing, or at least of giving public expression to the fact, that the name Binchichins is, like Bennachie, due to the topographical features which have now received the English designation of the Paps. I think it very likely that in the time of Sir Robert Gordon (1654) Lochnagar was not known by that name, but that the range from its summit southward to Loch Muick, between Glas Allt and Allt na Giubhsaich, was known as the Binchichins, or the ridge or mountain with the paps on it. Minor features received particular names.

It would, however, be most unwise to go back on these old and obsolete names, and try to re-establish them again. Everything noble, grand, sublime, historic, and poetic, is associated with the name Lochnagar, now given to the mountain. Let the old name Binchichins die in peace.

Black
Spout.
Summit.



LOCHNAGAR, FROM THE WEST SIDE OF MEIKLE PAP.

THE CAIRNGORM MOUNTAINS.

III.—THE WESTERN CAIRNGORMS.

BY ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

“Here brew ship-foundering storms their force divine,
Here gush the fountains of wild-flooding rivers ;
Here the strong thunder frames the bolt that shivers
The giant strength of the old twisted pine”.

THE Western Cairngorms are even better defined than the Central group, from which they are separated by the Larig Ghru, while, on the west, they are confined by Glen Feshie. The northern boundary is the River Spey, the southern the Geldie, with a portion of the Feshie. The Western division ranks second in importance from the point of altitude, being culminated by Braeriach (4248) and Cairn Toul (4241). These mountains were long more familiar as viewed from Ben Muich Dhui than by actual ascent, but latterly they have received more intimate attention from hillmen. Their attractions are numerous and varied, and he who would know the Cairngorms well must become familiar with the mighty mountain-mass between the Larig and Glen Feshie, with its lochs and tarns, its corries and precipices, and its immense plateaus. There is no lack of the grand and picturesque, and the various members of the group will afford mountaineers every variety of climbing. Among their other attractions must be added that of a great river source—for the Dee rises on the summit of Braeriach.

Braeriach is situated on the Aberdeen-Inverness march, in the parishes of Crathie-Braemar and Duthil-Rothiemurchus, being drained by the Dee, the Eidart, and tributaries of the Bennie—marked on the O.S. maps “Alt na Beinne Moire”. It stretches Spey-wards to Carn Elrick (2435), a conical hill in the angle between the Bennie and the Allt na Leirg Gruamaich, presenting a particularly bold front to the Larig, while it is separated from Cairn Toul by the well-known An Gharbh-choire, the huge corrie, almost



BRAERIACH, FROM CAIRN TOUL.

approaching the dignity of a glen, so familiar to Ben Muich Dhui visitors. Cairn Toul is in the county of Aberdeen, and is bounded on the south by Glen Geusachan, in the angle of which glen with the Dee is its rocky dependency, the Devil's Point (3303), while an exceedingly prominent peak, Sgor an Lochan Uaine (known also as the Angel's Peak), faces the great corrie. Between Glen Geusachan and Glen Geldie, Beinn Bhrotain (3795) bears sway, having for a minor summit Carn Cloich-mhuilinn (3087).

Sgoran Dubh (3658) is the most important of the other tops of the group, which is almost broken up into two subdivisions by Glen Eunach. Sgoran Dubh faces that glen, but is mainly drained by streams which run to the Feshie. Cadha Mor (2313) is the northern end of the Sgoran Dubh chain and looks across to Carn Elrick. Sgoran Dubh has a lower height (3635) and the Argyle Stone (2766) between it and its northern extremity, both lying on the march between the parishes of Duthil-Rothiemurchus and Alvie. In the latter parish, and drained by Feshie tributaries, Carn Ban (3443), Meall Buidhe (3185), Geal-charn (3019), and Creag Mhigeachaidh (2429) may be named as forming a sort of background to Sgoran Dubh. The remaining Feshie hills are (working from Carn Ban in an opposite direction), Meall Dubh-achaidh (3268), Meall Tionail (3338), Diollaid Coire Eindard (3184), and Monadh Mor (3651)—the latter on the Aberdeen-Inverness march and partly draining to Glen Geusachan.

The Western Cairngorms may be best ascended from Speyside, but Braeriach and Cairn Toul are so situated that they are also easy of access from Braemar. In the latter case starting from Derry Lodge the mountaineer will follow the path up Glen Luibeg and its continuation on the south side of Carn a' Mhaim and so enter the Larig. Cairn Toul may then be attacked by fording the Dee and walking up Glen Geusachan; or by a more direct (and necessarily steeper) route, holding a little farther up the Larig before crossing the Dee and making a course to the summit from Allt a' Choire Odhar or Allt Coire an t-Saighdeir. Cairn Toul may also be ascended from An Garbh-choire—the

steepest of all the routes. Braeriach will be most conveniently ascended from Derry Lodge by keeping to the Larig till the neighbourhood of the Pools of Dee is reached where a zig-zag track leads up (the Larig) Coire Ruadh to the summit, passing a lower cairn on the way. Or a course may be struck up An Garbh-choire (crossing Allt na Leirg Gruamaich near its junction with the "infant Dee", the Allt a' Gharbh-choire), thence clambering over boulders to the corrie. There are several recognised routes to Braeriach from Speyside, the best of which is the excellent driving road from Aviemore, up Glen Eunach to the lower end of the loch. Thence a path leads from a bothy up Coire Dhonndail (on the east side of the loch), the top of which reached a short mile to the east leads one to the lip of An Garbh-choire, which should then be rounded from the left. Cairn Toul is also very conveniently reached from the top of Coire Dhonndail the route thence being almost due east. A little short of the loch bothy a zig-zag track gives a direct eastward route to the top of Braeriach, while another route is by leaving the road at the Little Bennie bothy, at the junction of the Little Bennie with the Bennie, thence making for the narrow ridge between Coire an Lochain and Coire Ruadh. The most direct route for an ascent from Glen Feshie is by Allt Fhearnachan and over Carn Ban eastward, which is the route also generally taken from Kinraig and Kingussie.

Sgoran Dubh is easy of access both from Glen Eunach and Glen Feshie. By the former glen the ascent may be made almost at any angle—the most gradual climb by crossing the Bennie between the two bothies, the steepest by starting right away from the west side of Loch Eunach, and another by keeping on the path along that side of the loch, and making the ascent by Coire Odhar—a round-about route, but with attractions, and steep towards the top of the corrie. From Glen Feshie there are two routes—up Allt Fhearnachan and thence holding northwards, or up Allt Ruadh, and its head stream Allt nam Bo, the southerly branch of the latter leading right to the summit.

The direct route from Aviemore to Braeriach, Cairn Toul,

or Sgoran Dubh, is by Glen Eunach, joining the glen road at Coylum Bridge (Vol. I., p. 320), and the course is southerly the whole way. The glen, however, can scarcely be said to be entered till Carn Elrick has been placed on the left, and Cadha Mor on the right, and then the pines on the Rothiemurchus forest will have been left behind—a few stragglers only being found beyond the northern face of these guardian hills. The conical form of Carn Elrick with its steepish symmetrical slopes will be readily recognised from a distance, while a nearer view, with the Bennie brattling at its base, past pines and birches, will by no means disenchant the visitor. The well-defined north-facing corries of Braeriach will have impressed him as he starts from Aviemore, Sgoran Dubh next demanding attention as its long steep front comes into view. The road crosses to the right bank of the Bennie a little above its junction with Allt Ruigh na Sroine, the “Sron” being a hillock where, some seventy years ago, there was a shieling from which the half-witted inhabitant mysteriously disappeared. The Allt Ruigh na Sroine rises near the Argyle Stone in the vicinity of which it is said that the Earl of Argyle halted with his army before the battle of Glen Livet, where he encountered and was defeated by the “Popish Lords”, headed by the Earl of Huntly, in 1594. Tradition says that Argyle breakfasted here on the occasion. In some maps it is named the Earl of Athole’s Stone, Athole having accompanied Argyle. According to the “New Statistical Account”, an Earl of Athole fleeing took shelter behind a large stone on Inchriach, of the Sgoran Dubh range, called, in allusion to this event, Clach Mhic Allan, the Earl of Athole’s Stone. Soon after passing a well (Dr. Quain’s) on the left, we reach the Little Bennie bothy. On the opposite side of the Bennie (but invisible) is Loch Mhic Ghille-chaoile (the loch of the slender dark lad). Here a party of cattle-lifters was overtaken, and in the skirmish which ensued one of the pursuers was killed—hence the name of the loch. A few years ago an old rusty dirk was found close to its banks. Proceeding up the glen the Bennie will be observed, after issuing from Loch Eunach, to flow sluggishly through the moor.

Behind the loch bothy a picturesque waterfall may be noticed.

Loch Eunach (*eunach*, abounding in birds) resembles in many respects the more famous Loch Avon. It is a narrow sheet of water, over a mile in length, hemmed in by Braeriach on the east and Sgoran Dubh on the west, and precipitous rocks at the upper (the south) end. A burn from Lochan nan Cnapan descends over these rocks in a series of cascades; another stream, the Allt a' Choire Odhar, also makes a rapid descent, from Carn Ban, into the head of the loch. The "setting" of Loch Eunach is magnificent; situated at an altitude of 1650 feet, the precipices of Sgoran Dubh tower 2000 feet above it on the one hand; on the other the higher, though less steep, Creag an Loch of Braeriach, seems to crush against the south-east end of the loch. Under certain aspects Loch Eunach is a formidable rival to Loch Avon*; but each has its special grandeur and beauty. The former impresses one most in winter or spring before snow has left the upper line of rocks on the Sgoran. Then when the mist curls up the crags, alternately exposing them to view and hiding them from sight, or giving but partial vision of their gloomy mass, the scene around Loch Eunach cannot be excelled among the Cairngorms. Char are to be found in the loch in great abundance, no less than twenty dozen having been caught by one rod in a few hours, and trout are also plentiful. There is excellent feeding ground for deer at the head of the loch, particularly in Coire Odhar. In the beginning of the present century all around this neighbourhood was a great sheep-grazing district, and the remains of several shepherds' huts may still be seen, the mountains and glens here, and for a considerable distance into Aberdeenshire even, being let to Badenoch farmers. Curiously enough, deer were plentiful in Rothiemurchus previous to the beginning of the century, *but they had to give way to sheep*. A boulder about twenty tons in weight, on the right bank of the Lochan nan Cnapan Burn, near

*Indeed Robson, the artist, says that its "bold and dreary shores rival in grandeur those of Loch Avon".

where it enters the loch, which had at some remote period fallen from the Boddach (a towering rocky face of Creag an Loch), was in 1873 turned over and moved along a good few yards towards the head of the loch. An avalanche, doubtless, had been responsible for the latter movements. A Grant of Rothiemurchus was born at the head of Loch Eunach in a summer shieling, the ruins of which are still visible close to the large stone just mentioned, receiving the name, from the place of his birth, of John of Coire Odhar. He entered the army, and having made a moderate competence, left money to build Coylum Bridge and a house at the head of Loch Eunach, *which should always have meal in it*. As Loch Avon has Lochan Buidhe for a feeder, Loch Eunach has Lochan nan Cnapan. The latter word is descriptive of the situation—"knaps" abounding in the neighbourhood. At the north-west end of Loch Eunach several moraines may be observed.

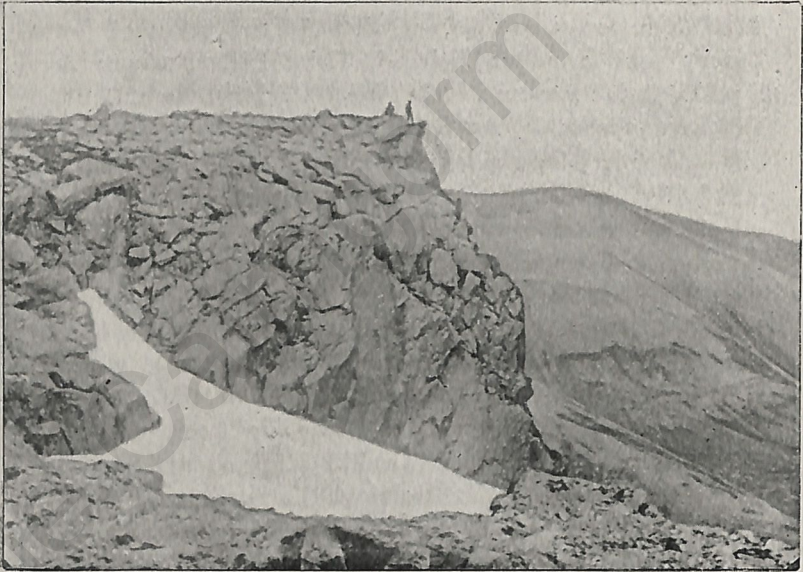
Braeriach is remarkable for its great extent of gravelly summit plateau and for its stupendous corries. Making the ascent by Loch Eunach, the mountaineer is favoured with its western corries—Coire Bogha-cloich, Coire Clach, and Coire Dhonndail—the track towards the summit leading by the east side of the loch through the latter corrie. Coire Dhonndail is of considerable dimensions and affords a steep climb, especially in the upper portion. As the ascent is made, Loch Eunach and the frowning front of Sgoran Dubh will afford of themselves good and sufficient excuses for frequent halts. The track comes to an end at an altitude of about 3500 feet—when indeed there is little further use for it, for the "going" thereafter is easy, and the ascent has practically been accomplished. An Garbh-choire is generally made for, and, the edge of that stupendous rift reached, the mountaineer will be fain to explore all along its lip to the cairn. Below him will be seen, as a silver thread, the "infant Dee," hurrying into Glen Dee; on the right Cairn Toul, with Lochan Uaine perched on its shoulder; Ben Muich Dhui's huge mass is just opposite; while the highest point of Braeriach will be observed to the left. Two lesser cairns mark the county boundary—March

Cairn (4149), the highest point in the district of Badenoch, at the meeting-point of three parishes, Crathie-Braemar, Alvie, and Duthil-Rothiemurchus, and Eunach Cairn (4061) about due east from the middle of Loch Eunach. It is near the latter cairn that the Wells of Dee are to be found, in an interesting spot the slight detour to which should not be omitted. The main sources of the Dee are springs in the gravel at heights of over 4000 feet, and are often covered with snow, even in the month of July. It is matter of surprise to observe the steady and considerable springs of water from these wells, so unlike the sources of many mountain burns that are only to be found in oozy ground. Round about the Wells may be seen innumerable little gravelly channels, or "tear tracks" (the particles of disintegrated granite reaching often the size of peas or hazel nuts), that add their quota to the infant river when a rain-storm sheds its water. The young river, reinforced by a lesser stream from the direction of the summit cairn, leaps over the Fuar Gharbh-choire and thus forms one of the finest and highest waterfalls in the Highlands. Snow often lingers on the lip of this corrie, and then the descending stream is seen to advantage as it finds its way under a snow-arch, re-appearing and disappearing again under the thick wreaths which the sun has not been able to melt. To the north of Fuar Gharbh-choire, which is indeed only a division of An Gharbh-choire (*the Rough Corrie par excellence*), the summit of the mountain is particularly flat, and it is difficult there at times to determine whether the water flows Spey- or Dee-wards. Coire an Lochain is immediately to the north of Fuar Gharbh-choire, and holds Loch Coire an Lochain, a typical mountain tarn, distinguished as the largest of its size in Scotland at such an altitude (3250). The lochlet is frozen for a great portion of the year, but at other times, when a strong wind is blowing, the water is dashed against the sides of the corrie. A tiny burn rises almost on the boundary line between Aberdeen and Inverness, and, flowing northwards, falls almost perpendicularly over the precipice to the lochlet. At the source of this burn the ground is gravelly and flattish, the water apparently issuing from

five wells, so the name recently proposed for it, Coig-fuarain, may be considered not inappropriate. East of Coire an Lochain is Coire Ruadh, a finely-shaped boulder-lined corrie, east again of which is Coire Bennie. These are the three north-facing corries so distinctly seen from the neighbourhood of Aviemore, and are, especially Coire an Lochain, often patched with snow till late in the season. Away to the right (east), on the county march, is Sron na Leirg (3875), a huge rocky "nose" facing the Larig, and to the east of Coire Bennie. At the top of Coire Bennie is a small circle of stones, the remains of a shelter, known in Gaelic as the Tailor's Cove, from a tailor having lived there for some time. A little to the north of Coire Bennie and Sron na Leirg is Coire Odhar, where Allt Druidh finds its source. This burn, the head stream of the Inverness-shire Allt na Leirg Gruamaich, flows through a lochan before it descends on the Larig. The remains may still be seen at the mouth of this lochan of a sluice which was in use to dam up water when the trees in the Rothiemurchus forest were cut down. There is a good deal of flattish ground between the Larig and Glen Eunach, and, indeed, little effort would be required to empty the lochan into the latter glen. At one time the ground here was the sanctuary of the forest, and at the end of the season as many as between 2000 and 3000 deer might occasionally be seen together. The name "Druidh" appears again twice—in *Auldrue*, the ruined hamlet at the north foot of Carn Elrick, and in *Druie*, the name of the united stream of the Bennie and the Luineag.

The ascent of Braeriach by Allt a' Gharbh-choire (the Garchary for short) is not without interest when one happens to be in the Larig. The cairn may be directly made for from the junction of the stream from the Pools with that from the Wells, or the Garchary Burn may be kept till it forks at a height of 2750 feet. Near the lower fork, where the streamlet from Lochan Uaine enters, the water may, when wind is blowing, be observed to leave that lochan in the form of spray; it has a fall of almost a thousand feet to the Garchary. From the upper fork the

cairn lies to the northward—a route both stony and steep, but neither difficult nor dangerous. Not so the ascent as made on 17th July, 1810, by Dr. Skene Keith,* who describes the Garchary as “tumbling in great majesty over the mountain in a chain of natural cascades, about 1300 feet high. It was in flood at this time, from the melting of the snow, and the late rains; and what was most remarkable, an arch of snow covered the narrow glen from which it tumbled over the rocks. . . . We approached so near to the cataract as to know that there was no other lake or stream; and then we had to climb



THE SUMMIT OF BRAERIACH.

among huge rocks, and to catch hold of the stones or fragments that projected, while we ascended at an angle of 70 or 80 degrees”. Professor Macgillivray also describes an ascent by this route made in September, 1819, by “a poor student of King’s College, Aberdeen”, “the poor student” being himself. He had spent a cheerless night

* “Agricultural Survey of Aberdeenshire”.

† “Natural History of Deeside and Braemar”.

near the upper fork (2750), and in the morning held to the northward, by the larger stream, which led him to a "magnificent corrie, in the form of a deep hollow scooped out of the great ridge . . . the sides formed of sloping rocks of vast height. The rivulet came tumbling down the centre in the form of a cataract. Here the rocks were most abrupt; but I determined to proceed—at least to attempt the ascent. Before I reached the base of the rocks, I felt very weak, and was obliged to halt every now and then. However, I proceeded, and at length, being well accustomed to rock-climbing, found myself on the very summit of this vast mass of rock". He also mentions coming on "an immense mass of snow, frozen so hard that it did not even give rise to a rill" in the same corrie on 14th August, 1850.

Braeriach (the contracted form of Braigh-riabhach)—the streaked, speckled, or brindled brae or mountain—is the third highest mountain in the British Isles. The cairn is built on a small platform of stones and overlooks Coire Bhrochain, another sub-corrie of An Garbh-choire. Coire Bhrochain is steep even to overhanging, and perhaps that may be the reason why the Royal Engineers placed their cairn a few feet from the very highest point of the ground! The name signifies "the gruel or porridge corrie" and is said to have been so called from a herd of deer having fallen over the precipice here and been reduced to "brochan"! The view is in many respects similar to that from Ben Muich Dhui, but westwards and Spey-wards the prospect is more extended. The nearer views are particularly worthy of notice—Ben Muich Dhui across the deep (2200 feet), narrow Larig, with the tiny river rushing along in the bottom of the glen; the foot-track a mere scratch but perfectly distinct. Then looking across to Cairn Toul, only $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles to the south-south-east, one seems to feel the magnitude and wildness of An Garbh-choire. Lochan Uaine looks the picture of solitude in a setting of desolation. At our feet we seem to have Badenoch and Strathspey, with numerous lochs shining brightly in the foreground. Cairngorm presents its cone to our gaze, and among the other summits of the group may be particularly named Beinn Mheadhoin,

Beinn a' Bhuid, Ben Avon, and Sgoran Dubh. But the distant prospect is enchanting and affords ample room for speculation. Mountains press on mountains as billow follows billow, so that "admiration is raised to enthusiasm and seems to expand with the extent of the prospect"; almost the whole land seems devoted to mountains. Beginning with Ben Rinnés in the north-east we look across the Moray Firth to apparently continuous lines of mountains, one towering behind another, from Caithness to Inverness. Among these may be named Ben Wyvis and Mam Sodhail. To the westward Ben Nevis may be picked out from a herd of giants that seems at this distance to press on him—among them Creag Meaghaidh, Ben Alder, and the mountains of Glen Coe. More to the south Ben Cruachan stands sentinel over Loch Awe, and Beinn Laoigh gives birth to the chief head stream of the Tay. Ben More and Am Binnein, the twin peaks whose distant outline is so familiar to mountaineers, may also be distinguished; nearer is the bulky Ben Lawers overlooking Loch Tay, and an indication of the presence of Schichallion. Still nearer and almost due south the summits of Beinn a' Ghlo form an imposing group, eastward and a little to the north of which the Ben Uarns and Glas Thulachan may readily be discerned, as well as Glas Maol and his fellows, with the classic Lochnagar in the south-east.

Cairn Toul, as seen from Glen Dee or Ben Muich Dhui, has quite a different appearance compared to the shape it presents as viewed from Moine Mhor or the heights to the west. In the former case there is a long steep front to the Larig, extending from the Garchary to the Devil's Point; in the latter Cairn Toul shows only its double-cairned top, so that the "barn" shape, to which many contend that it owes its name, is irresistibly impressing.

Cairn Toul is frequently ascended from Braeriach (and *vice versa*) by following the edge of the corrie. The walk round the corrie affords excellent opportunity of viewing to advantage the magnificent prospect, far and near, presented from such an elevated plateau. In clear weather there is not the least difficulty in passing from the one summit to



CAIRN TOUL, FROM BEN MUICH DHUI.

the other; in mist, however, even when provided with a compass, the route will be found not so easy to follow as may have been anticipated. The last mile or so of the "walk" entails a scrambling over boulders ere the cairn can be negotiated, and includes Sgor an Lochain Uaine (4095)—a "sgor" which considerably adds to the picturesque outline of Cairn Toul, whether seen from the east side of the Larig, or from Braeriach, or the neighbourhood of Carn Ban.

From Glen Dee the Glen Geusachan route is almost monotonously easy, gradually landing one, without any very steep climbing, at the cairn. The mouth of Glen Geusachan, however, presents one or two features of interest. The Dee is crossed just above the confluence with the Geusachan Burn, and, unless the river be in flood, its fording can be accomplished dry-shod. The Devil's Point, as here seen, is entitled to its designation. It is a great rocky pointed mass, rising precipitously from the Larig, to which it presents a seemingly inaccessible face. It may, however, be ascended from the Larig along Allt a' Choire Odhar—there is a rough track for some distance—starting from a watcher's bothy known as Corrou; or it may be taken from Glen Geusachan parallel to the tributary burn to the west of the top (Vol. I., p. 397). Beinn Bhrotain's steep front commands the other side of Glen Geusachan, and, as we turn northward in the glen, Monadh Mor also slopes to our left. Almost on the county boundary is Lochan Suarach (the more correct name, experts contend, is Loch na Stirtag, frequently corrupted to Sturtack). It is a small lochlet, situated at an altitude of 2840 feet, rather bleak, with mossy ground in the vicinity, and a little grassy patch of an islet near its centre. Deer may frequently be observed feeding around it, or in warm weather splashing in its blue water, from which issues a head stream of the Geusachan. But for a rough, steep climb, through a wilderness of boulders, try the ascent of Cairn Toul from the Larig, passing through Coire an t-Saighdeir (the soldier's corrie) with its fissured crags. This route is direct, presenting the rougher and steeper side of the mountain to the climber;

the descent may be varied by re-entering the Larig *via* Lochan Uaine—quite as steep a route.

Cairn Toul being wholly within the Aberdeenshire march, and not on the county watershed, may be regarded as an example of “some of the highest and most imposing summits, instead of occupying the crown of the ridge, being found in lateral subordinate ranges, or even in the mere spurs or offsets of the great chain of Alps”*. It ranks fourth among Scottish mountains, being only seven feet lower than its neighbour Braeriach. It is the most shapely peaked of the higher summits of the Cairngorms, and is marked by two cairns about 150 yards apart. The higher is the northern one, but the southern is only fourteen feet lower. There is a remarkable corrie almost on the very top, shaped like a gigantic saucer and visible at a great distance. To the south of the “saucer corrie” is Coire an t-Saighdeir, where the snow bunting breeds and is frequently seen. But not a nest has been found there spite of persistent efforts to obtain one, a circumstance easily accounted for by the size and number of the boulders that line the corrie. The appearance of Cairn Toul from Ben Muich Dhui has been thus described by the Rev. James M. Crombie† :

“But, of them all, our eye lingers longest upon Cairn Toul, which is, undoubtedly, the noblest looking of the mountains in Braemar, and differs from all the others in its summit being peaked. Taken in connection with the nearest ridge of Braeriach, and viewed from the western extremity of the mountain, where its whole outline from the base is distinctly visible, it presents a picture of sublimity which probably nowhere else we could look upon nearer than the Alps—to some of which, before the snow has disappeared from its summit, it bears a great resemblance. Its corries, the largest of which is visible before us, with the small circular loch of Uaine in its bosom, form the richest botanising ground in the district for Alpine plants ; and were we to spend a night upon the hills, and commence our search early in the morning, we would find that before sunset we had collected a rich

* See also *C.C.J.*, Vol. I., p. 342.

† “Braemar : Its Topography and Natural History” (1861).

harvest indeed—a richer, probably, than any catalogue of their flora yet contains”.

“Two Days and a Night in the Wilderness”,* gives an interesting account of an excursion to Cairn Toul:

“Keeping along the north side of the glen, and gradually shogging up the south flank of Cairn Toul, we turned northwards at Buidheanach of Cairn Toul, and following and keeping well above the Geusachan, we gradually wrought up towards the source of the burn. . . . Our view to the far west was bounded by Ben Nevis, while in the near foreground and below us lay, on the opposite side of the glen, Lochan Suarach. An extensive tableland extended to the west of this loch, and in the far distance we could discern, through the haze, shining like ingots of gold and silver, Loch Laggan, and several small lochans in its neighbourhood beyond the line of the Highland Railway. . . . Keeping a little to the south-east, we soon reach the edge of the ridge, and look down upon the Dee from the edge of the Coire an t-Saighdeir, 2100 feet right down. The corrie is semicircular, of vast extent, with fissured crags, and steep stony slopes. Its concave bottom is covered with blocks and stones, and the vegetation appears to be of the scantiest. We keep along the ridge and make for the peak, which, so far as we can discern by what we are climbing amongst, consists of a huge mass of blocks of granite, of all shapes and sizes. Millions of tons of stones are here piled one above the other. The view was extensive to the south-east, south-west, and north-west. We could see Morven, Mount Keen, Lochnagar, Carn an Tuirc, Glas Maol, Beinn Iutharn, Beinn a’ Ghlo, and other Bens far to the south and south-west. But in the east it was interrupted by the summit of Ben Muich Dhui, and on the north by the precipitous ridge of Braeriach. . . . The view was restricted by the haze, and so we did not linger long, but prepared to descend to Lochan Uaine. . . . The descent from the cairn to this Lochan . . . is about 1200 feet, and the walls of the corrie are exceedingly steep, with much of the disintegrated granite as difficult to walk among as scoriae. We had to spread out and climb parallel to each other, as the stones set loose by our progress often went thundering down before us, and would have been dangerous to one climbing below another. . . . We made for the north

* By Alexander Copland and T. R. Gillies.

edge of the corrie, so as to descend to the Garchary, but found ourselves on a high, rocky, precipitous ridge, with water pouring over deep shelving rocks, and after climbing down several hundred feet we could get no farther, and had to climb back again and seek another outlet. This was ultimately found, and we got to the glen below, not without difficulty and danger, the descent being about another 1200 feet, and exceedingly steep”.

Sgoran Dubh is the generally accepted name of the short but steep range on the west side of Loch Eunach, but the Ordnance Surveyors have been unfortunate with their nomenclature. In the six-inch map the words “Sgoran Dubh” are placed a little to the north of the height “3658”, while “Sgor Ghaoith” is written in similar letters to the south of that height and a little to the west of the crags, on a bouldery knoll in the parish of Alvie, a knoll which has no existence except on this map. Sgor Ghaoith (the windy sgor—an excellently fitting name) should be placed at the “3658” height and the words “Sgoran Dubh Beag” deleted from the Club Map of the Cairngorm Mountains. The Hon. Mrs. Murray* visited Glen Eunach in the end of last century and evidently refers to Sgor Ghaoith when she mentions “Scor-i-grui”. The minister of Elgin contributed an article on the Province of Moray in the Appendix to Pennant’s “Tour in Scotland”. He writes:—“Of the mountains in this province [Moray] I shall name but two or three: the *Carngorm* in Strathspey *Benalar* in Badenoch *Scorgave* in Rothiemurchus”, “Scorgave” being a form of Sgor Ghaoith. In Robertson’s map (1822) the principal summit on the west side of Loch Eunach is properly marked, and is named in his accompanying list “Scorgie Hill”, and at the present time this peak is locally known as Sgor Ghaoith. Sgoran Dubh Mhor (3635) is situated as marked on the Club Map; while the real Sgoran Dubh Bheag is an unheighted peak a short distance to the north and several hundred feet lower in elevation. The distance between Sgor Ghaoith and Sgoran Dubh Mhor is about three quarters of a mile. We shall use

* “Guide to the Beauties of Scotland”, 3rd ed., 1810.

the general name Sgoran Dubh when referring to the range, particularising the summits as occasion requires.

The Glen Eunach route to Sgoran Dubh is the same as that to Braeriach, as far as the lower end of Loch Eunach. Seen from the neighbourhood of the lower bothy, the two Sgorans—Mhor and Bheag—have the appearance of being almost equal in altitude, while Sgor Ghaoith is considerably depressed and seemingly is of much lower elevation. It is only from a few points, and with careful observation, that an accurate estimate of the relative heights can be obtained. Little wonder that the shepherds, predecessors of the foresters, discussed and differed among themselves as to the relative heights of the peaks overlooking Loch Eunach. Perhaps the easiest route from Glen Eunach is by "taking the hill" from the glen a little short of the loch and thus reaching Sgoran Dubh Mhor, but the more ambitious mountaineer will be inclined to make the ascent direct from the loch. As seen from a height of about two thousand feet, on the Coire Dhonndail path, this route would seem to many to be quite impracticable, but the apparent impossibilities and dangers vanish when tackled at close quarters. Indeed the summit may thus be reached in at least a dozen ways and an excellent bit of "sporting" climb will be experienced. The walk along the Corrou path (on the west side of the loch) is a most enjoyable one, affording capital near views of the crags. This path zig-zags up the steep at the upper end of the loch and lands one on the plateau at the head of Coire Odhar, whence the route to the summits of the range is easy. At the top of Coire Odhar, at a height of about 3300 feet, may be observed the remains of a shooting bothy; on the other side of the burn is a very fine spring, Fuaran-diotach (the breakfast well), from which Cairn Toul is visible. The corrie below, to the north of Coire Odhar, is Coire na Cailleach. The latter corrie extends a little beyond Sgor Ghaoith; a particular rock is still pointed out as the Cailleach* (opposite the Boddach of

* A name which was indeed sometimes applied, in the forms of An Cailleach and Sgor na Cailleach, to Sgor Ghaoith itself.

Braeriach), and is noted as a breeding place for eagles. The northward continuation of Coire na Cailleach is known as Coire Mheadhoin. The ascent of Sgoran Dubh from Glen Feshie is of quite a different character, for the climb is gradual, as the range presents a precipitous face to the east only. Glen Feshie may be left at Achlean, a farm near the junction of Allt Fhearnachan with the Feshie. There is little chance of passing by Achlean unwittingly or unobserved, for it is the residence of a noted fox-hunter (Clark), whose numerous dogs*, deer-hounds, fox-hounds, collies, and Scottish terriers, are certain to give passers-by a kindly, if noisy, welcome; and it may be well to mention that their master possesses a most intimate knowledge of the Western Cairngorms. An excellent pony-path leads up the north side of Allt Fhearnachan, towards Carn Ban. Or Glen Feshie may be left at Ballachroichk (940), near the junction of Allt Ruadh with the Feshie. When the track on the north side of the beautiful gorge formed by Allt Ruadh has disappeared, Allt nam Bo† should be made for and struck at a height of about 2000 feet and Coire Gorm entered. This corrie, the upper part of which is steep, gives birth to the southerly head stream of Allt nam Bo, which leads directly on to the summit of Sgor Ghaoith. Between Sgor Ghaoith and Sgoran Dubh Mhor, at a height of about 3550 feet, may be seen the remains of a semaphore, with the watcher's box adjoining, for signalling the position of deer to the sportsmen in the glen below. The use of this contrivance has long been given up.

If the ascent of Sgoran Dubh from Glen Feshie be somewhat commonplace, not so is the view which unexpectedly bursts on the climber as he steps out of Coire Gorm to stand on Sgor Ghaoith. The ascent seems to come to an abrupt termination; another step, in mist, and an awkward fall would be experienced. For Loch Eunach lies 2000 feet below, and though the upward climb from it

* Some of them lineal descendants of those used by Landseer as models when he painted in Glen Feshie.

† The natives say that this name applies only to another tributary lower down and that the correct name is Crom Allt Mor.

is safe and laborious, *facilis descensus Averni*. The earliest recorded ascent from Glen Feshie was in the beginning of the century by Colonel Thornton*, an eager sportsman who saw more than game when he was hunting. His account of the ascent—probably made by Allt Fhearnachan—the dangers and difficulties of which, like all mountain ascents a hundred years ago, he ridiculously overdraws, is so interesting that one or two extracts may be given :

“Up the Vale of Feshie is an extreme wild view ; at ten o'clock, we were at the foot of the mountain, the heat intense [August 6], the mercury standing at 84° F. A severe labour we had to ascend the mountain, as steep as the side of a house : rocky, and sometimes boggy . . . At twelve o'clock, we got up to the first snow, and, before one, we thought we were near the mouth (*sic*) of Glen Eunach, and then, depositing our champaign, lime, shrub, porter, etc., in one of the large snow-drifts, beneath an arch, from which ran a charming spring, we agreed to dine there . . . They then kept moving forward, according to my directions, over large stones, which was not effected without frequently making use of both hands and feet, and taking the greatest care not to allow the horses to turn their heads round . . . They at last arrived at the top. It is impossible to describe the astonishment of the whole party when they perceived themselves on the brink of that frightful precipice, which separated them from the lake below ! They remained motionless a considerable time, equally struck with admiration and horror. The mountains above them, to the right, chequered with drifts of snow, and differing but little from it in colour ; the immense rocks to the left, separated by large fissures, the safe abode of eagles ; and even the precipices around, appeared to them truly majestic ; nor is this saying too much, for such is the impression they naturally inspire . . . Yet the eye having dwelt awhile on these frightful, naked piles, is soon relieved, and feels an agreeable composure from the scene beneath, where the lake, like a sheet of glass, reflects, in its extensive bosom, all the objects around ; this, bordered by soft, sandy banks, where fine, but partial verdure, scattered over with small herds of cattle, grazing and bleating ; and a single *bothee* : the temporary residence of the lonely herdsman ; softens, in some

* Thornton's "Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England and great parts of the Highlands of Scotland", 1804.

measure, the unpleasant idea of danger, which is apt to arise; while the solemn silence, interrupted only by the hoarse notes of ptarmigants, increasing at the approach of strangers, or by the dashing of the never-ceasing cascades, soothes the mind with the most agreeable emotions”.

The sporting Colonel made a similar excursion ten days later:

“Went up again to Loch and Glen Eunach. After a pretty good walk of three hours, we ascended, and saw the lake below us, said to be full of *char*, and on the cloud-cap't mountains above are found *ptarmigants*, *cairvanes*, and some *dotrel*. We dined at possibly the coldest spring in the world, running most rapidly, and had very good punch made with shrub, brought from Invereshie”.

The view from Sgor Ghaoith, though restricted as compared to that from the giants of the Cairngorms, is extensive, and has its own grandeur. Again the near prospects excel the more distant—the loch below enchants one, and the corrie'd side of Braeriach is laid bare, as it were, to the gaze. Cairngorm is also in sight, and the upper valley of the Spey forms a natural picture to which the eye returns again and again*. Sgor Ghaoith is cairn-less; not so Sgoran Dubh Mhor.

Sgoran Dubh is backed by several lower hills, which, owing to their position, require little notice. Geal-charn is to the north-west, and overlooks Creag Mhigeachaidh—a crag which seems a fitting sentinel for the north-west boundary of the Cairngorms. Seen from Kincaig its steep tree-clad and scarred slope is not unimposing, and, indeed, a climb to the summit—continued possibly to Geal-charn—is remunerative enough on an afternoon when time will not permit of a more extended excursion. Meall Buidhe is on the west side of the source of Allt na Criche—Sgoran Dubh Mhor, its immediate neighbour, being on the east side—by which stream the descent from Sgoran Dubh may be varied. Fully half-way down this burn it enters on a gorge not unlike that of the Allt Ruadh; while on the

* See Vol. I., pages 36 and 306.

low ground there is a natural paddock for hinds. Provision is made for the entrance, at will, of stags, who, whoever, enter only to find themselves prisoners. Allt na Criche enters the Feshie near Lagganlia, and the lower part of its course, sluggish and uninteresting, is in striking contrast to its upper and middle reaches. The summit of Carn Ban is rather uninteresting—as a summit—but its surroundings quite redeem its character. On the north it is approached by Coire Ruadh, a steep heathery corrie of Allt Ruadh; on



THE CAIRN ON SGORAN DUBH MHOR.

the west Ciste Mhairearaid of Allt Fhearnachan has to be climbed; while Moine Mhor, the great moss, stretches from Carn Ban on the north to Diollaid Coire Eindard on the south. The "moss" is, indeed, of enormous extent, and one marvels to find such a flat at so great an altitude. It has its use, however, and adds to the value of the Glen Feshie forest, for in the hot days of summer and autumn the deer

may be seen cooling and disporting themselves in its stagnant pools.

Ciste Mhairearaid—Margaret's coffin—contains snow till very late in the season. "Margaret", who was jilted by Macintosh of Moy Hall, and who cursed his family to sterility, is said to have died here in her mad wanderings*. According to another account she had lost her way, when "at the peats", from Rothiemurchus; and yet another tradition contends that she died in the neighbouring corrie, Coire Fennach, and that the funeral party only rested in Ciste Mhairearaid. Cairngorm also has a corrie of that name.

The summits of the Western Cairngorms to the south and south-east of Carn Ban have no connection with Sgoran Dubh and may be classed in two divisions—west and east of the Eidart (or Etchart). This stream, rising on Braeriach, Carn Ban and Sgor Ghaoith, is the principal tributary of the Feshie, and indeed it is even contended that it should bear its own name to the Spey. West of the Eidart we have Meall Dubh-achaidh, Meall Tionail, and Diollaid Coire Eindard; to the east there are Monadh Mor, Beinn Bhrotain, and Carn Cloich-mhuilinn.

Meall Dubh-achaidh may be classed with Carn Ban, but deserves particular notice from the grand corrie—Coire Garbhloch—which leads up to it from Glen Feshie. The gorge cut by Allt Garbhloch is one of the most noted features in Glen Feshie, and cannot fail to be noticed as one proceeds along that glen. It is rocky, steep, long, and narrow, and thus meets all the requirements of picturesque grandeur which are generally associated with Highland corries, and is worth a visit for its own attractions—a circumstance only comparatively recently found out by visitors to the district. It has a sub-corrie, Coire Feunach, between it and the top of Meall Dubh-achaidh, a halt in which affords perhaps the best view of the scene. Here the hillman may frequently have an unpremeditated stalk, coming on a little herd of deer as unexpectedly to them as to himself, and will marvel at the sudden transition from

* Macbain's "Badenoch : Its History, Clans, and Place Names".

the moss of Moine Mhor to the crags of the corrie, with the stream falling headlong from such an elevation that one is inclined to estimate the height not in feet but in a fraction of a mile. The lower angle formed by the Feshie and Allt Garbhlach was at one time a place of considerable resort, for it was the site of a market claiming to be the origin of the great Falkirk Trysts. In the present day such a position for a cattle market seems rather absurd, but on reflection a good deal is to be said for the convenience of the situation, being on one of the main drove routes between the Highlands and the south. From Glen Feshie the market was removed to An Sgarsoch in Glen Geldie; thence to Crieff and latterly to Falkirk—though by what stages we cannot precisely say. The further north the market was held the more the southern dealers objected, for they asserted that occasionally the Highlanders turned homewards with both cattle and money! A short distance below the market stance the Feshie is crossed by Polluach Bridge at a rocky gorge; a few yards below the bridge (right bank) is the site of an old burial ground.

An ascent of Diollaid Coire Eindard and Meall Tionail is described in the last Number by Mr. Robert Anderson, while Mr. Clarke in the present deals with Beinn Bhrotain and its more immediate neighbours. Carn Geldie (2039) and Duke's Chair (2010) lie to the south of Carn Cloich-mhuilinn on the left bank of the Geldie. Duke's Chair is a modern name; the reference is to the Duke of Leeds who rented the forest of Mar. Concerning Carn Geldie there is an interesting tradition* in connection with a laird of Dalmore who buried a bag of gold in the Garchary. He removed the treasure, however, to Coire na Craoibh Ora (*C. C. J.*, Vol. I., p. 330), but on learning that there were certain lands for sale in Cromar he set out there with his gold. Overlooking Cromar from Culbleen, there was then little to be seen but log and loch, and so he turned back, exclaiming, "God forbid that I should throw my gold into the water". Thereafter he hid it near the top of Carn Geldie,

* "Legends of the Braes o' Mar", by John Grant, 1876.

covering it over with a huge stone, on which he cut the figure of a horse's shoe. And there it still remains. True, an ancient shepherdess came across the stone and stuck her distaff into the ground beside it and then went for help, but on her return at the head of a party of men, lo! the whole hillside appeared bristling with spindles. In course of time a Grant, known as Taillear Ruadh, also came across the marked boulder, but when he returned with his friends the stone was not to be seen. Stupid tailor! Had he only placed a piece of money on it he would have had no difficulty in finding the spot the second time. The treasure is reserved for a Ruadhraidh Ruadh, a Red Roderick, a Mackenzie both by the father and mother's side; he will come on it some misty evening while searching for a strayed ox.

“ With frowning front Craigellachie, with awful brow Cairngorm,
 Tower giant-guardians of the Strath, and shield it from the storm,
 Where roams she by Kinrara's woods, Loch Alvie's silent shore,
 The fairest on the banks of Spey—the Maid of Aviemore.
 Loch an Eilein on thy lovely banks, ah! would I had a home,
 With her in fond companionship through all my days to come.
 Let vain ambition crave for state, and avarice covet store,
 Much more were mine had I but her—the Maid of Aviemore”.

Reference has more than once been made in these articles to Aviemore as a starting point for Cairngorm ascents, and as a centre for mountain exploration it possesses many advantages. The immediate surroundings are charming, while the varied views of the Cairngorm mountains are full of interest. The undoubted gem of the locality is Loch an Eilein. Situated in Rothiemurchus at an altitude of 840 feet above the sea level, having an irregular circumference of about three miles, bordered by pines and birches and enclosed by mountains, and its ancient, hoary, ruined castle on a little island (said to be artificial), Loch an Eilein is possibly not equalled, certainly it is not excelled, by any similar sheet of water in the Highlands. Indeed the scene, as viewed from the west margin, opposite the castle, is said to form an almost faultless composition. It is sheltered on the south-east by Cadha Mor, the opposite side

being protected by Ord Bain (1405), on which, in olden times, signal fires were lighted. The latter hill is beautifully wooded, and an excellent view may be had from the summit. The prospect embraces Ben Nevis, but Badenoch and Strathspey are the chief features in the landscape. Half-a-dozen of the neighbouring lochs are visible, and the forests of Glen More and Rothiemurchus are seen as a great wooded flat extending from the Pass of Rebhoan to Ord Bain.

The castle, famous as a retreat of the notorious "Wolf of Badenoch", is now better known as the breeding place of the Osprey. Occasionally the birds desert Loch an Eilein for a season or two, and have been known to nest by the side of Loch Morlich, but now every effort is made to induce them to return annually to Rothiemurchus. The nest is a large pile of twigs—some of them of the dimensions of branches, of which there is a good cart-load—the accumulation of at least half-a-century, and may be seen, with the birds, from the shore. A little to the west of the castle there is a very good echo. The defeated at the battle of Cromdale, a few miles farther down the Spey, vainly sought shelter within the castle, which was a ruin before the middle of the seventeenth century,

"This island castle, that with ruin hoar
Frowns on the forest, thro' whose silent glade
Winds yonder secret pathway, which, of yore,
Marauding clans with frequent booty made".

A sluice at the lower end formerly enabled the water to be stored up, and the extended boundary thus caused may yet be seen in several places. A road leads round the loch, but is not now passable for vehicles on the south side. There is a small lochlet at the upper end, called Loch Gamhna, in a picturesque situation somewhat marred by the devastation caused by the woodman's axe. It is skirted by an old road, Rathad-na-meirlich (the thieves' road), along which the Lochaber men frequently made cattle-lifting excursions into Strathspey. Hence, possibly, the name of the loch, which means the Stirks' Loch. Loch an Eilein, it may be mentioned, is a favourite

pic-nic resort, and is frequently visited by mountaineers on the return drive from Loch Eunach. The Doune is the mansion house of Grant of Rothiemurchus, and is situated on the right bank of the Spey about two miles south-south-west of Aviemore station. The situation and aspect of Rothiemurchus are unsurpassed. Abounding in mountains and glens, and diversified with brattling burns, mountain tarns and lochs, and clad here and there with pine and birch, the beautiful, the picturesque, and the sublime are so harmoniously blended that the very name, Rothiemurchus, suggests all that is attractive in highland scenery. A sept of the famed Clan Chattan, the Shaws, formerly possessed the district. Indeed, tradition has it that Shaw Sgorfhiachlach (Shaw of the buck teeth), whose dust, it is believed, lies in the Rothiemurchus churchyard (about half-a-mile south from the Doune), was at the head of the party of the Clan Chattan, who in 1396 fought so ferociously on the North Inch of Perth. The Shaws also from this quarter, to the number of fourteen, fought at Harlaw in 1411 on the side of Donald, Lord of the Isles. As shewing the deadly strife that sometime subsisted between the Shaws and the Grants, who ultimately acquired the district, tradition says that one of the latter on his death-bed asked to be buried near the gate of the Rothiemurchus churchyard—the Shaws' burying ground being well within—so that at the resurrection he might have an opportunity of making good his escape from his inveterate enemies!

Lynwilg, about two and a half miles from Aviemore, with its inn near the northern shore of Loch Alvie, is also a convenient as well as beautiful rendezvous for the Cairngorms—especially the Western portion. The Spey may be crossed at Aviemore, or at a private ferry at Kinrara—even forded there upon occasion. The Tor of Alvie is well known, were it only for its graceful 90 feet monument to the last of the old Dukes of Gordon, as well as a cairn to the memory of the Highlanders of the 42nd and 92nd Regiments who fell at Waterloo. On the south side of the Tor is Kinrara, beautiful Kinrara, the favourite residence and the burial place of Jean, Duchess of Gordon.

Kineraig (the station for the lower part of Glen Feshie) is conveniently situated for the ascent of the Western Cairngorms. Creag Mhigeachaidh as seen from the station—which has one of the finest positions on the Highland Railway—appears a bold sentinel for this extreme corner of the Cairngorms, while the Sgoran Dubh range stands prominently out. The Spey is now crossed by a wooden bridge which takes the place of a ferry familiar as “Boat of Insh”. The road leads by the ancient church of Insh and the lower end of Loch Insh (721), past Invereshie House (Proprietor, Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bart., of Ballindalloch), to Feshie Bridge. Here the right bank Speyside road crosses the Feshie—continuing down the river by Coylum Bridge and Nethy Bridge—at a picturesque point, the bed of the river being rocky and the banks lined with trees, reminding one somewhat of the Bridge of Feugh. A driving road leads up the right bank of the Feshie as far as Achlean—where the stream may be forded and the drive continued to Glenfeshie Lodge—passing Lagganlia and Ballachroichk. Evident “short cuts” (three) for pedestrians may be observed between Insh church and Lagganlia.

Kingussie, the “capital” of Badenoch, as Cairngorm headquarters, is the extreme point in that direction and is quite outside the district dealt with in these articles. The drive (10 miles) to Glenfeshie Lodge is, in the tourist season, exceedingly popular, whether the lodge, with its grand surroundings, is the objective, or the starting point for a mountain excursion. The glen road is joined opposite Achlean.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

ON 6th May between seventy and eighty members and UPPER GLEN friends attended the Spring Outing of the Club, which MUICK AND was one of the most successful and pleasant of the BROAD CAIRN. lesser excursions with which the season is usually commenced and terminated. The weather was bright and warm. The places, which the courteous permission of Dr. Profeit, Her Majesty's Commissioner, had rendered it possible to visit, were quite out of the beaten track and new ground to the great majority of those present, whilst arrangements had been made to suit members who wished to vary their route or to make the Club Excursion the *finale* of a "Saturday to Monday" holiday. The main body left by the first Deeside train for Ballater, where a string of brakes and



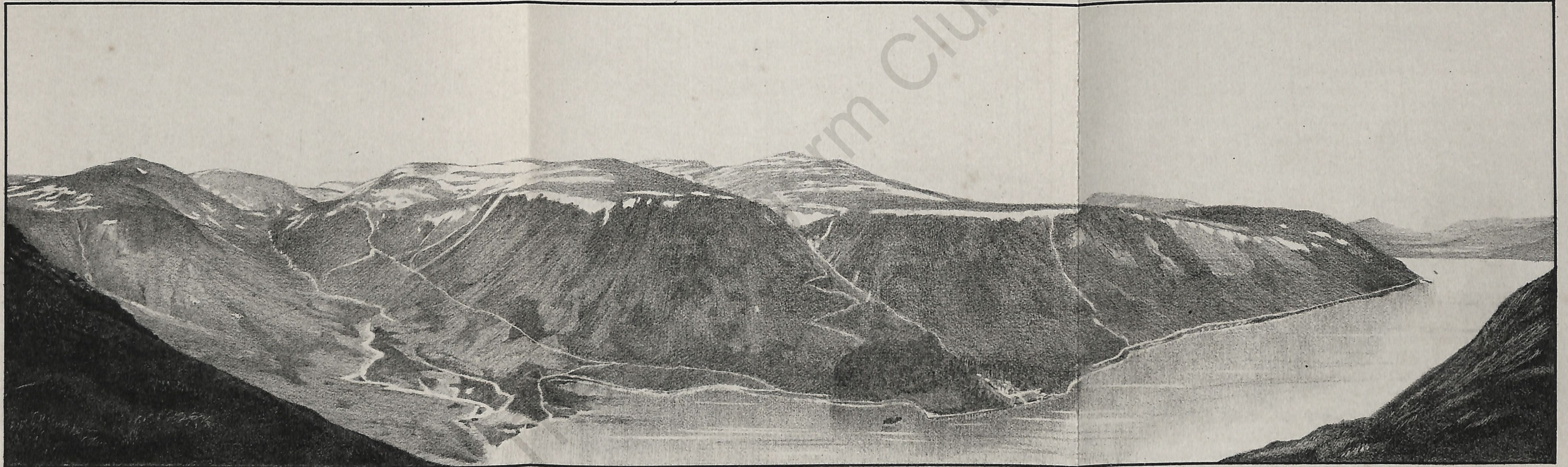
ALLTNAGIUBHSAICH LODGE.

waggonettes was marshalled by Sluievannachie, ready for the twelve-mile drive to Glasallt Shiel near the head of Loch Muick. At Ballater the party was reinforced by a contingent of members who had spent the week-end at Pannanich. Driving through Ballater and across the bridge and passing Braichlie, the south Deeside Road was followed across the Muick to where, near the site of the old Castle of Knock, a private road diverges to the left towards Birkhall and along the north side of Glen Muick. After a short halt at the Falls of Muick, the journey was resumed to Inschnabobart, where the Chairman of the Club and several others, who had come across from Inver, joined the party. After passing Alltnagiubhsaich Lodge and along the north shore of Loch

Broad Cairn.

Lochnagar.

Conachraig Hill.



Glasalt Shiel.

PANORAMIC VIEW LOOKING ACROSS LOCH MUICK.

Muick, the drive ended at the Glasallt Shiel. Starting onwards by the path leading to the Dubh Loch, and accompanied by Mr. Campbell, the Queen's forester at the Shiel (who, despite his years, was as light-footed and wiry as anyone present), the party struck across Allt an Dubh Loch, some distance below the loch from which it tumbles, and were soon negotiating a stiff and by no means easy climb up the rocky flank of Broad Cairn. At the top they were re-inforced by several members who had walked up from Milton of Clova by Bachnagairn. The usual meeting was held with the customary ceremonies for the admission of new members. The view—especially of the Cairngorms, the higher peaks of which were still almost entirely covered with snow—quite repaid the trouble of the climb, although a slight haze somewhat interfered with the distinctness of the more distant points. A newspaper article published in 1893 thus describes the view :

“The top is rocky and almost comes to a point, the cone shape being very apparent. ‘Broad’ is a corruption, and has no reference to breadth, the root of the term being found in ‘Braemar’ and ‘Breadalbane’. ‘Broad Cairn’ would thus signify ‘the cairn of the hilly country’. The view was good, though the atmospheric conditions were not perfect. To the east there were Mount Keen, Mount Battock, and Clochnaben ; to the south Driesh and Mayar, dividing Glen Doll from Glen Prosen, with Craig Rennet overhanging the former glen ; and in the far distance the West Lomond of Fife was visible. Westward there were Cairn Bannoch, Carn an Tuirc, Tolmount, Tom Buidhe, Cairn na Glasha, and Glass Maol ; the Ben Urns at the head of Glen Ey ; and a multitude of lesser dignitaries. North-westward there were Ben Avon, Beinn a’ Bhuid, and the central mass of the Cairngorms. To the north Lochnagar was, of course, a prominent mass, but the highest point is here invisible, the summits seen being Little Pap, Cuidhe Crom, Cac Carn Mor, and the two Cairn Taggarts. The sea was observed in the neighbourhood of Montrose. Close at hand was the plateau of the Capel Mounth, as well as a bit of Loch Muick, with Bennachie in the distance. Loch Esk, a little over a mile south, is a convenient point from which to ‘box the compass’. The West Lomond was seen between it and Mayar, the latter mountain, however, obstructing the view of the East Lomond. Mayar is a grassy, symmetrically shaped hill, with a distinctly marked summit (3043). Driesh, though a little higher (3105), is indebted to its fine corries for its picturesque appearance. It forms a continuous ridge with Mayar”.

The party returned to the Dubh Loch path and so back to the Glasallt. Some of the elderly and of the less energetic members found, at lower levels, less arduous exercise than that offered by Broad Cairn. The Dubh Loch, with its frowning precipices fringed with piled-up boulders, was visited, and the Glasallt Falls. The ordinary tourist does not often have an opportunity of seeing either of these. The surroundings of the Dubh Loch, especially on the side next Broad Cairn where there is a wall of solid rock 800 feet in height, are as grand and impressive as any Highland loch can boast. The Glasallt Falls, consisting of a torrent pouring down in an almost perpendicular stream upwards of a hundred feet in height above a shorter cascade, are also well worth a visit, and command a very fine view of Loch Muick and the Glasallt Shiel six hundred feet below. Several members followed the track across Lochnagar to its junction with the path from Glen Gelder to Allnagiubhsaich Lodge, rejoining the party at the latter place on the return journey. Others gave themselves to investigating the entomology and

botany of the glen. No new discoveries were made, but quite a wealth of specimens of moths and butterflies were found on the wing, as well as larvæ and pupæ. The botanical members were agreed that the season was almost a record one for the earliness in flowering of sub-alpine plants in this not particularly early locality. The return drive was by the same route as that taken in the morning, and after enjoying a well-earned and well-served dinner, under the presidency of Mr. Anderson, the Chairman of the Club, at the Invercauld Arms Hotel, the members left Ballater for Aberdeen at 7.15.—T. R. GILLIES.

THE Chairman of the Club (Mr. Robert Anderson), AN EXCURSION while on a holiday in London last year, was invited to IN SURREY. accompany an excursion of the Saturday Field Club which had been specially arranged in compliment to him. The excursion—to Leith Hill, Surrey—took place on Saturday, 19th October. Mr. Anderson, who had been staying at Reigate over the Friday night, walked to Dorking (six miles) early on Saturday morning, and joined the members of the Field Club there, accompanying them in the train to Holmwood, whence the party walked to Leith Hill. This is the highest hill in the south of England, its natural elevation of 965 feet being increased to 1000 by the erection of a tower 35 feet high. From the summit of the tower may be had (according to a little Description purchased at its base) "one of the most magnificent and extensive views in existence, commanding several hundred miles; towns, churches, and the most conspicuous objects being distinctly visible in many counties, including those of Surrey, Sussex, Hants, Berks, Oxford, Bucks, Herts, Middlesex, Essex, and Kent, and, by the aid of a glass, Wiltshire—a circuit of 200 miles". The party returned to Dorking by a circuitous route, along woodland paths and through lanes, and, before returning to town, dined at the White Horse Inn, under the genial presidency of Mr. Tom Nanson, the President of the Field Club. During his stay in London, Mr. Anderson had several other walks in the vicinity of the metropolis—from Dorking to Golsham, from Maidenhead to Cookham, and from Wendover to Tring; this last in the near neighbourhood of the Chiltern Hills. A "Cairngormer" misses the hills and mountains of the north, but rural England has beauties of its own.

BRAERIACH, Sgoran Dubh, Carn Ban, and the lesser GEOLOGICAL hills that rise above the lower part of Glen Feshie, NOTE.—THE form the western extension of the great mass of igneous WESTERN rock known as the Cairngorm granite. CAIRNGORMS. This rock varies little in character, and in the mountains above-named is similar in appearance and composition to the granite of Ben Muich Dhui, Cairngorm, and Ben Avon.

The crags of Coire Odhar at the head of Glen Eunach are composed of metamorphic rock—a fine-grained flaggy gneiss or mica-schist. The

boundary between this rock and the granite runs S.S.W. from Coire Odhar across the plateau of the Moine Mhor to Allt Garbhlach; and then, turning to the N.W., crosses the western slopes of Meall Dubhachaidh to the alluvial flats of the Feshie above Achlean.

The difference in character between the two rocks is well seen in the precipices on the south side of Allt Garbhlach, where for some distance the upper part of the cliff is gneiss and the lower granite.

The glacial phenomena seen in these mountains are very striking. Each of the high corries on the north side of Braeriach has its independent system of lateral and terminal moraines; and the long flat-topped gravel terraces in Glen Eunach, due to the action of water as well as ice, will attract the attention of the most casual observer. A fine series of moraines is also to be seen on the plateau round Lochan nan Chapan (the lochan of the hillocks).—L.W.H.

A PARTY who visited the Western Cairngorms in the last days of May found the snow still present in huge quantities, on the more sheltered gullies in the corries of Braeriach. The forbidding cliffs which abut on the Garchary were accessible at many points by means of the snow, and would have afforded many excellent climbs—the snow being peculiarly hard and firm, with here and there a suspicion of ice. The snow was in capital condition for standing glissades on the easier slopes, a state rather infrequent on Scottish mountains.

As several writers on the Cairngorms have referred to this subject the following experience may be interesting:—On 2nd September last I was one of four visitors to the Shelter Stone, on leaving which, at 4:15 p.m., we proceeded by Coire Domhain. When not much more than half-way up we saw a flock of eight goats at the foot of the crags on the south-west side of the burn. Taking alarm at our approach, they made for the top of the corrie. I endeavoured to catch up with them, but though unsuccessful had a close view. My companions informed me that one of the kids had actually been cut off, for it crossed the corrie behind me and in front of them.—C. G. CASH.

THE Highlands of Scotland are the decayed stumps of mountain teeth. When you see old mountain stumps of this sort lying about a continent you may be sure, said Professor Bonney at the Royal Institution yesterday, that they mark territory of extreme old age.

Once upon a time the Scottish Highlands were part of a vast chain of mountains separating the Arctic Sea from the Atlantic. The present Scandinavian ranges, the Irish and Welsh mountains, those of the Ardennes, the Vosges, Auvergne, and Peninsular Spain, are of the same date, and represent the mountainous peaks of a dead and gone continent, which pushed its frontiers right out into the Atlantic ages before those modern productions the Alps were ever thought about.

Three huge rivers descended from the northern heights of this lost Atlantis, and brought down as freight most of the land of England as we know it to-day. Sunshine, frost, wind, hail, and rain have gnawed away at these tremendous mountain ranges for incalculable ages and reduced them to pigmies. Central Europe was a vast sea studded with islands in the great reptile age, when the cheerful ichthyosaurus paddled about as lord of creation—giant volcanoes belched forth molten lava like a row of beacons along the Atlantic coast of Scotland and Ireland. The ages crept on. Land and sea fought incessantly for the mastery, and finally, after a period of mist which the geologist cannot peer into, we find Nature ringing up the curtain on the birth of the Alps. The very newest mountains of Europe are the Alps, the Apennines, the Pyrenees, and the Carpathians. They are still fairly well in the vigour of manhood; that you can tell from their towering height, although the file of Nature has already scraped enough off them to level up many of the richest gardens of Europe. If you ask Professor Bonney or any other geologist how he comes by all this prehistoric history, he will tell you that it is written in unmistakable characters in the Book of Rocks. There are whole chapters of this book missing, many pages are blotted and torn, and the earliest leaves, including the title-page, are quite undecipherable. But there is enough left to give us a vivid picture of the great panorama of Nature as a whole, just as clearly as if we had the time machine of Mr. Wells working backwards. Perhaps the most interesting process which has been at work moulding the wrinkled front of Earth throughout the ages is that of mountain building. Our globe of fiery matter is always cooling and always shrinking as it cools. The hardened crust upon which we have our being tries to shrink too, like the skin of a withering apple, and the result is much the same—puckerings and crumplings which we call mountain ranges for ever pushing their way up, only to be planed down again by the resistless wear and tear of frost and rain. If you could cut a long slice through the great Alpine chain and expose the strata to view there you would trace the foldings and crumplings that have thrown the ancient sea bed heavenwards into the regions of eternal snow.—*The Daily Graphic*, May 28th, 1896.

THE following members have been admitted since
 NEW MEMBERS. the publication of the List:—Mr. Robert C. Jackson,
 Mr. James D. Mackie, Mr. William Yule, Mr.
 Archibald Aitken, Mr. Robert Aitken, Jr., Rev. William Borland,
 Mr. A. M. Munro, Mr. George T. Lynam, Mrs. Gillies, Mr. James
 Reid, Mr. Thomas Jamieson, Mr. Peter Crombie, Mr. Charles Gordon,
 Yost, Miss Nellie Aitken, Mr. Thomas Hector, Captain Pirie, M.P.,
 and Mr. David A. Farquhar.

The Club is again indebted to Mr. J. G. Murray for several Sketches, and to Mr. W. A. Hawes for permission to reproduce several photographs—especially the Panoramic View across Loch Muick.

REVIEWS.

ALPINE NOTES AND THE CLIMBING FOOT by George Wherry, a member of the Alpine Club, and surgeon to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge (Cambridge: Macmillan & Bowes), is a title that naturally excites a feeling of anticipation that, even in these latter days, someone has something new to say on that well-worn topic, the Alps. He must be a daring writer, as well as a fearless and "eccentric" climber to challenge comparison with the giants who already hold the field. Dr. Wherry does not court this comparison, for in his preface he disarms criticism by stating that his "notes" were mostly written in pencil in the railway carriage on his way home from his annual holiday in the Alps.

The "notes" are the kind of memoranda a man might make when scenes and incidents are fresh in his mind, wherewith he might in after years help himself to recall his days of toil and pleasure on Alpine heights, and, to a certain extent, they may serve to recall similar delights to a mountaineering public. That is the most that may be claimed for them, and they can scarcely be looked upon as a serious contribution to Alpine literature. The writer gives "notes" on five seasons' work in the Alps, during which he did most of the good climbs from the usual centres. In telling his story Dr. Wherry unaccountably works backwards from 1895 to 1891—a method which seems to have no advantages, but considerable drawbacks.

It is when the reader comes to the chapter on "The Climbing Foot" that he naturally looks for the main purpose of the book, but here it is to be feared most will meet with woeful disappointment, for which, in this case, the preface has not prepared him. Dr. Wherry has observed what every amateur of any experience has noticed that a Swiss guide is able to go "face forward, and whole-footed up a slope, while the amateur following, and coming to the steep part cannot plant his whole foot upon the slope, but has to go on his toes, or else turn sideways". From this he goes on to remark that, "it seems possible that the angle made by the foot with the leg, may be more acute in the guide who has climbed from childhood, and that in the case of the guide's feet there may be some structural difference, both hereditary and acquired, actually permitting more freedom of movement at the ankle-joint which neither muscular action nor power of balance could ever give to the amateur". Dr. Wherry then starts out on a scientific search for the "climbing foot", and finds it forthwith in infants, but, unfortunately, we do not now live in the "arboreal" period, and children have a habit of learning to walk, and the "climbing foot" soon disappears, nor does it emerge again even where it is most expected, for, according to the author's finding, the angle made by the foot with the leg in the case of the guide differs in no degree from that made by

the experienced amateur in like circumstances. We should certainly have felt happier if, as a result of all his experiments and investigations, Dr. Wherry had discovered the existence of the "climbing foot". Instead the reader has to accept the mysterious quality of "balance", the possession of which explains the wonderful surefootedness and power of endurance of the experienced guide, and from the Alps the writer flies off to the pampas with a long quotation from Darwin about the wonderful power of horsemanship possessed by the Gauchos. Most of this dilatation upon so called "balance" seems to us to savour of "padding" when the whole secret of the special skill of the Swiss guide may be found in his life-long and constant training, which has perfected all the different groups of muscles which are called into play in climbing, and completely attuned them to the work demanded from them. Every branch of sport illustrates in a similar way the value of training.

The chapter "On Accidents", which concludes the book, adds nothing to what has already been written on the subject, and likewise contains a good deal of irrelevant matter.

A SIXPENNY pamphlet, containing 48 widely-printed THE SCOTTISH pages, can hardly be expected to deal exhaustively MOUNTAINS. with the Scottish Mountains: one rather admires the courage of the author, Mr. W. J. Millar, C.E., in even attempting their enumeration, far less their description, in that space. The difficulty is got over by grouping the mountains in regions and giving the briefest and baldest account of the various ranges. Our Cairngorms are allotted just sixteen lines of description, and the same number of lines as to how to reach them. Though defined as an "interesting group of mountains", the district in which they lie is said to be "more out of the way for the ordinary tourist than the greater part of our other fields for mountaineering". The value of which remark is sufficiently gauged by the suggestion that the ascent of Lochnagar is best accomplished (from Braemar) by ponies, "as, unless for good walkers, the distance is too great to be done on foot"! The pamphlet is published by William Hodge & Co., Glasgow.

CLIMBING IN THE BRITISH ISLES: THIS is the second volume of the series (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., price 3/6), and is a hand-book which the climber in these parts can ill do without. Wales (written by Mr. W. P. Haskett *Wales and Ireland*. Smith) very properly has the greater part of the volume devoted to it, but Ireland (written by Mr. H. C. Hart) receives due attention. It is not very plain, however, why both are combined in one Index.

Ireland does not claim "such arenas for cliff-climbing as the Lake District, or the Cuchullins in Skye", but is not without mountain attractions. Many readers will no doubt be surprised to learn that "Macgillieuddy's Reeks can hardly be appreciated in less than a week's

exploration. Even after three weeks spent amongst them, we have wished for more. Donegal alone requires lengthened attention, and there a much longer period will be profitably spent".

The illustrations are both numerous and good.

MR. WILLIAM BLACK'S latest novel, "Briseis", is WILLIAM BLACK partly devoted to Deeside. Its opening incident, ON DEESIDE. indeed—on the very first page, in fact—occurs on Scolty Hill, Banchory, very thinly-disguised as Scoulter Hill, Sanchory; and we are presented with an exceedingly graphic word-picture of the "spacious and varied panorama" observable from the summit—"The fertile pastures of Glen Dye—the outskirts of Glen Tana Forest—the vast, undulating billows of the Grampians, shining here and darkened there with sunlight and velvet shadow; while on the remote horizon-line rose the peaks of Loch-Na-Garr, the snow on them of a dim and burnished gold through the distant haze". Crathes Castle is also introduced as Grantly Castle, the ancestral seat of the hero; but very soon the scene of the story is shifted to Glen Skean—very obviously Glen Spean—and then to London, and Deeside is not revisited by the characters. The book may be commended for study in "descriptive" writing.

THIS is the title of an article in the May number of WALKING: *The Country House*, by "A. G. Howard"—a trans- A LOST ART. position of a name that many members of the Club could readily resolve into its proper form, Howard A. Gray, now of the *Daily Post*, Birmingham. The article is pleasantly—not to say jocularly—written; and repeated mention is made of walks in the Cairngorms. Of walking as an art, especially as compared with cycling, the article says—"The cyclist misses a great deal, in addition to having chosen the less health-giving pastime. In the cultivation of sound lungs and broad shoulders the pedestrian has no rival. He gets all the delightful smell of the country, which the cyclist cannot catch whizzing along in a swift atmospheric current: He gets all the pretty detail of woods and fields and ditches and animal life, of which the wheelman has only a blur. Then it is obvious that the man on his feet can turn aside and see the corners of Nature, and, perhaps finest of all, is the subtle and always exquisite pleasure of feeling the proud independence of having covered the ground by one's own unaided locomotion. The walking man is the most self-contained man of all".

AN article under this heading appeared in the London BITS OF *Echo* of 2nd April, which contained some wonderful WILD BRITAIN. distortions of Cairngorm names. The Larig Ghru and Glen Lui were doubled up into a fearsome compound—"Loui-More-Beg"; and the writer, in his walk down Glen Tilt, discovered some entirely new places—"the corries of Cairn Gelly and Ben Abou". The article contained "descriptive sketches" almost as distorted as the names. Here, for instance, is a truly wonderful

account of "Loui-More-Beg":—"Perhaps the loneliest and most desolate of all walks in the Highlands is that from the summit of Ben Macdhui in the Cairn Gorm on the way towards Braemar. For several miles it is a scene of weird desolation. Neither beast, bird, nor insect is to be seen or heard. Beneath a dark precipice on the left is a lonely tarn, of inky blackness. Not a dimple breaks the glass-like surface, scarcely a blade of grass is visible; nothing but here and there a tuft of stunted heather. It is too bleak and stormy for even the Scottish fir. The few puny specimens that struggled for dear life, perhaps half-a-century ago, are bleached with the winter storms, and white as ivory. Lower down the slope we come to an indigenous forest of this magnificent tree. Their huge crimson-barked boles are crowned with dense flakes of dark green foliage. The elegant roebuck has his home here, and one startles the capercaillie from its roosting-place in the branches. On the opposite slope, less than a century ago, was the vast forest of Rothiemurchus. High up on the shoulders of the mountain the ptarmigan finds its home, its plumage admirably harmonising with the heather and scanty herbage in summer, and changing to snow-white in winter".

IN the "Thorough Guide Series" (London: Dulau and SCOTLAND. Co.), by Mr. M. J. B. Baddeley, B.A., though not written for mountaineers, is nevertheless an invaluable book for them. Indeed "Baddeley" gives in convenient form hill information and maps which cannot, as yet, be obtained elsewhere in such a handy shape. Till such time as mountaineering Journals overtake all Scotland—a work of years!—"Baddeley" will be continually referred to by hill-men. As a tourist's guide the work is invaluable; local information and routes are tersely and conveniently put. The maps (Bartholomew's) are numerous and worth the cost of the book. There are three volumes—Part I., Edinburgh, Glasgow, and the Highlands (8th Ed., 1895); Part II., The Northern Highlands (5th Ed., 1894); and Part III., The Lowlands (3rd Ed., 1894).

The author is to be congratulated on the general accuracy of his statements. It is, of course, impossible in such a work to ensure absolute correctness, but we believe, from having checked not a few routes, that the tourist will have little to complain of on that score. Such information as is given both as to the pronunciation and the height of Bennachie need not, however, be repeated in the next edition; there is no inn at Pitcaple; and the Buck of Cabrach is only a hill—not "a famous deer-forest".

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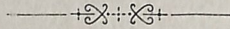
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men staying at the Hotel can have.

SKYE.

SLIGACHAN HOTEL.

NEAREST HOTEL TO LOCH CORUISK.

“Sligachan in Skye is the rock-climbing centre *par excellence* of the British Isles.”—*See* Badminton Library, Vol. “Mountaineering,” p. 342.

Beautifully situated at the foot of the Coolin Hills. Parties living in the Hotel have the privilege of good Sea-Trout Fishing on the River Sligachan ; also good Loch and Sea Fishing.

Boats Free of Charge. Boatmen, 4s. per day.

Parties landing at Coruisk can have Ponies or Guides sent to meet them at Camasunary, or the hill above Coruisk, by sending letter or telegram the day previous.

POSTING.

Post and Telegraph Office adjoining Hotel.

W. SHARP, Proprietor.