

Vol. II.

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No. 8.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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Cairngorm Club Journal

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ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE

VOL. II.

ABERDEEN
THE CAIRNGORM CLUB
1899

PRINTED AT THE ROSEMOUNT PRESS, ABERDEEN.

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RULES.

I.—The Club shall be called “THE CAIRNGORM CLUB”.

II.—The objects of the Club shall be: (1) to encourage mountain climbing in Scotland, with special reference to the Cairngorm group of mountains; (2) to procure and impart scientific, topographical, and historical information about the Scottish mountains, their superficial physical features, minerals, rocks, plants, animals, meteorology, ancient and modern public routes giving access to and across them, and the meaning of their local place names, literature, and legendary, or folk lore; (3) to consider the right of access to Scottish mountains, and to adopt such measures in regard thereto as the Club may deem advisable; and (4) to issue a Journal or such other publications as may be considered advantageous to the Club.

III.—Candidates for admission as members of the Club must have ascended at least 3000 feet above the sea level on a Scottish mountain.

IV.—The management of the Club shall be vested in a Committee, consisting of ten members, in addition to the following Office-Bearers—a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer—five being a quorum.

V.—The annual general meeting of the Club shall be held in December for the following business: (1) to receive the Treasurer's accounts for the year to 30th November; (2) to elect the Office-Bearers and Committee for the next

year; (3) to fix the excursions for the ensuing year; and (4) to transact any other necessary business. Special general meetings shall be held whenever deemed necessary by the Chairman, or on a requisition by at least ten members of the Club. General meetings shall have power to deprive of membership of the Club any member who may, in the opinion of the Committee, have misconducted himself.

VI.—A Minute-Book shall be kept by the Secretary, in which all proceedings shall be duly entered.

VII.—The election of members of the Club shall be made by the Committee in such manner as they may determine.

VIII.—The entry money of members shall be 10s. 6d., and the annual subscription 5s. Members shall receive copies of all current issues of the Club publications.

IX.—The annual subscription shall be payable in January. Members not in arrear may retire from the Club at any time on sending notice in writing to the Secretary or Treasurer.

X.—The Committee shall have power to elect suitable persons to be Honorary Members of the Club. Honorary Members shall have no voice in the management of the Club, but otherwise shall have all the rights and benefits of ordinary members.

XI.—No change shall be made on the Rules except at a general meeting of the members, called on seven days' notice. Intimation of any proposed change must be made in the notice calling such meeting, and any alteration proposed shall only be adopted if voted for by at least three-fourths of the members present at the meeting.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. II.

JANUARY, 1897.

No. 8.

THE HORIZON FROM BEN MUICH DHUI.

BY ALEXANDER COPLAND.

THE endeavour to put upon paper the outline of the distant hill view seen from the summit of Ben Muich Dhui is no joke. If anyone thinks otherwise, let him try to conscientiously perform the work. There is no hotel in the neighbourhood of "The Cairn" where the observer can put up, and that foxes' hole under the Shelter Stone may serve for protection on a wet night, but a protracted lodgment there is not to be thought of. The "artist" who will do the view from Ben Muich Dhui must needs wander many "a weary fit", and put up with disappointment after disappointment from capricious weather before he can accomplish his object. Now, much of this labour and discomfort might have been saved. Why did not the accomplished staff employed on the Ordnance Survey do this work? They had ample opportunity and first-rate capacity for it. Look at their splendid performance in the matter of the maps they have produced. They are admirable pictures of the country, marvels of artistic skill and accuracy. In the old days of the "Great Trig" the giants of the Survey, we are told, were perched the most part of their time on the summits of our mountain ranges. They beheld from thence "the marvellous multiform aspects of nature", and evidently had distant views, the very thought of which makes one envious; and yet they never appear to have thought it would interest the public to have pictorial reproductions of the hill horizon as seen

from our highest mountains. If they are to resume their work, if they are to revise their maps as, ten years ago, Lieut.-Colonel Pilkington White suggested they should be employed to do, so as to keep them from swelling the ranks of the unemployed, let them at the same time not neglect to give the public the "horizons" as seen from our most elevated Scottish mountains.

We have frankly avowed our appreciation of the maps produced by the Survey, yet it must be allowed that, owing to their very excellence, they have created a disadvantage. They have, in large degree, superseded the fraternity of guides to the mountains. Happily the bicycle and the motor car, as at present constructed, cannot tackle Corrie Etchachan, and a superannuated guide may still occasionally be seen with his ponies in Glen Derry, conveying ladies to the summit of Ben Muich Dhui. But ladies also now, one-inch map in hand, do the Larigs without masculine escort, and scramble up the stony slope of Coire Clach nan Taillear in corrugated foot gear. It was otherwise in the days when our departed friend, John, or Johnnie Downie, of Tomintoul, Braemar, was in his *potistawtar*, forty or fifty years ago. There were no Ordnance maps of the district then, and few were so daring as to attempt Ben Muich Dhui without a guide. Of course, on reaching the summit of the mountain then, as now, the absorbing object of interest was Ben Nevis—that is, provided it could be seen, which was not always the case. We have heard that John's topography was not faultless. Tradition tells of a heated discussion which ensued on one occasion between the members of an English party and John, as to which of the distant detached mountain masses was the monarch not only of Scottish but of British mountains, and we have been told that, as often happens in such cases, both parties were wrong. The observers had a map which an amused spectator saw they did not place according to the mariner's compass, and hence they could not locate Ben Nevis. John, on the other hand, had somehow transferred his allegiance from the monarch who was entitled to it, to some less distant but more imposing eminence. The pacificator attempted, by properly placing

the map, to reconcile the differences, but he scarcely succeeded, as John set tradition above and beyond any map, and whether up to the day of his death he was convinced of the precise location of Ben Nevis, is more than we know. Now, had our friends the Sappers made an outline from south to west, as we have imperfectly attempted to do, how easy could the party have feasted their eyes upon the blue outline of Ben Nevis, and returned to tell their friends and neighbours of their felicity. Some clever people can, of course, make out, by map and compass, Ben Nevis from Ben Muich Dhui on a clear day, but it is not given to every one to accomplish that, and a pictorial outline would be helpful. Indeed, it is marvellous the mistakes people make with maps, even Ordnance maps. In Jubilee year, for example, a party of ladies and gentlemen was discovered painfully clambering up the slope of Beinn a' Chaorruinn in the mistaken belief that they were ascending Ben Muich Dhui! The leader of the party had somehow imagined Glen Derry was Glen Dee, and the water of the Derry that of the Dee, and so the day being far spent Ben Muich Dhui was unattainable. The feelings of that leader may be imagined, but not felt, as our informant heard one of the ladies, in a somewhat loud aside, make the stinging remark, "You're a pretty guide"! He must have been a husband or a brother. Again, an amusing instance of the misleading tendency of maps occurred to a party that set out from Braemar for Kingussie, *via* the summit of Ben Muich Dhui. The day was beautiful and the prospect charming, as they trekked among the pines of Glen Derry; yet that same party was descried, at eight p.m. of the same day, at the east end of Glen Luibeg, inquiring the direction of Kingussie! They were told their faces were set for Braemar, when it dawned upon them that they had seen the landscape they were gazing upon in the morning, and to Braemar they had to return. Now, had either of these parties put themselves under the guidance of John Downie, such misadventures could not have happened. But John was despised in his latter days by the Sassenach stranger. We remember an occasion, however, when he had his revenge. John had been sent for to

guide a party to Ben Muich Dhui when he was well through the seventies. To those who did not know the stuff he was made of, his appearance was an anxiety for such a tramp. The party—a lot of hearty English young fellows, soft and juicy—when they surveyed the proffered guide, demanded of “Boots” if he meant to insult them by selecting a decrepit old man to walk with them. “Boots” said John could do the tramp, and was well accustomed to do it, and John interposed with his cheery “Try me, gentlemen, try me”! As it was a case of Hobson’s choice, they did try him, and John used to relate with glee that before the “Englishmen” were half up Corrie Etchachan on that hot day they were “pechin’ aifter him like a flock o’ hens”, and Flodden was farther avenged.

But “pechin’”, we are obliged to admit, is not confined to Englishmen by those who essay the ascent of Ben Muich Dhui. We prefer the long summer day for our visits, leaving to the stalwarts of the Club the fierce joy of Christmas or New-Year’s Day climbs. If the reader care to accompany us on a sketching excursion we will start *via* Glen Luibeg on a bright morning in June. The morning of our selection must be preceded by one or two days of drenching rain and wind to clear the air. Then, with a serene bright sky above and a gentle breeze below, Mar Forest is an earthly paradise. Crossing the foot-bridge over the Derry Water and, facing westwards, the snow-splashed bosoms of massive Beinn Bhrotain and Monadh Mòr bound the western view. Carn Crom on the right hand, and the steep, pine-covered slope of Sgor Dubh on the left, bound the eastern entrance of Glen Luibeg. The foot-path lies along the left grassy bank of the clear, sparkling, dancing waters of the Luibeg. The invigorating air is scented with perfumes from the grouse heather and the ancient pines pencilled by Robson and sung of by Blackie. The deer have retired to their lairs in the corries after a night’s browsing on the rich meadow grass of the glen, and animal life is represented by the sleek black kine of the forester and his faithful collie, who gives warning of the approach of the stranger. But, though unseen, the forest is not tenantless. The cuckoo makes solitude

melodious with his name-call from dewy morn till latest eve, the wagtails are darting after insects among the grass or among the stones at the edge of the stream, and the chaffinches ring out their primeval ditty of "Ring, ring, rattle, chuck wido," and "Ring, ring, rattle, Jack White" as clear and cheerfully as their predecessors sang centuries ago. Perchance we may see the nimble squirrel swiftly circle upwards to a safe perch on his favourite pine, or an adder in the grass or heather make off from our unsympathetic presence. These sneaking reptiles are by no means uncommon here. Last June we killed three adders—two in Glen Luibeg and one in Glen Lui—the largest measured 26 inches. There is a popular fallacy that these creatures sting, possibly originated by mistaking the long vibrating tongue which the reptile protrudes for a sting. Their weapons of offence—and very effective they are—are fangs. When the creature is in its ordinary peaceful mood the poison fangs lie flat on the palate in the upper part of the mouth. They are tapered to a very fine point, are exceedingly sharp, and perforated. When battle has to be done, the enemy erects his fangs by a powerful muscle provided for that purpose, and as there are poison bags at the root of each fang the bite presses the root of the fang upon the poison bag and the poison is squirted into the wound. The thing, you will perceive, is cleverly and naturally accomplished, and without any "mechanique", as the professor of legerdemain would explain. Insect life is manifested by the active movements of the green and gold spotted tiger beetles, *cicendella campestris*, which, like flies, are constantly alighting on and taking flight from the path in front of you, and on the heather you may perceive the beautiful large caterpillars of the emperor and the oak egger-moths. Butterflies and bees are busy among the flowers, which are spread in wealthy and endless variety around the lichen-draped rocks and boulders, and the rich colouring of the mosses which mark the breaking forth of springs, and the variety of tint on the scarred sides and summits of the mountains are at once the admiration and despair of the painter. Is not this world with its uncultivated wastes—which cannot be cultivated—a magnificent and glorious

creation—a wonder beyond all belief and wonderment if merely the fortuitous product of chance.

Crossing the moraines at the eastern inlet to the glen, a walk of about two miles brings us to a gorge on the right, bounded on the east by Carn Crom and on the west by Carn a' Mhaim, through which the Luibeg water from the north is flowing. Keeping the left bank of the stream we soon see before us the long green Sron of Ben Muich Dhui, and two miles farther brings us to the point where the waters of the Allt Carn a' Mhaim and the stream coming from the glen to the right of Sron Riach unite, and form the Luibeg Water. The ground at the base of the Sron is boggy, and our elevation above sea level at the meeting of the waters is about 1850 feet, so that we have about 2446 feet perpendicular to ascend. A few hundred feet of ascent takes us beyond the soft ground and heather, and we reach protruding masses of weathered granite about the 3000 feet line. While taking a breathing space here, and surveying the expanding mountain range to the south, it may be proper to remind the Club that, although this route may be allowable in early summer, it should not be taken towards the shooting season, because the appearance of strangers there at that season is certain to disturb the deer and spoil sport. The route by Glen Derry, *via* Corrie Etchachan, to and from the summit of Ben Muich Dhui, is available at all seasons, and there is little difference in distance either way, so there is all the more reason to consider and respect the rights of the noble proprietor of the deer forest, who has most readily granted any reasonable request that the Club or its members have asked of him. Let us give an example of how easily deer are disturbed. While resting here with a friend well versed in knowledge of the habits of the deer, we saw a troop of stags in single file passing from Glen Carn a' Mhaim to the eastern glen, bounded by Derry Cairngorm. They had to cross the line of our ascent over a bare stretch of gravel. Although the deer were far below us on the slope, and the wind was blowing from them in our direction, our friend remarked that they would detect our having been there.

Sure enough the leader of the herd, when he came to our line of march, made a dead halt, sniffed the ground, and, tossing his head aloft with disturbed aspect, set off at the trot. The others, each and all, when they reached the tainted spot, followed suit. Possibly, had they actually seen us, they would not have been so much put about, but, seeing us not, yet scenting us, the hidden mystery had a disturbing tendency. A friend, considering the matter from the standpoint of the deer, imagines that we—that, of course, is mankind, not us personally—carry a bad smell about us, and are, in short, endowed with the odour of teufelsdröck. We are loth to admit that, and trust a more satisfactory explanation may be found for our offence to deer.

A question often put to the excursionist on his return is—“Did you see any deer”? The answer is frequently in the negative—that there was none to be seen. That is, however, frequently not the case. The cause of failure on the part of the excursionist was the want of the educated eye, and some little knowledge of the habits of the animal. On a bright, warm morning in summer, and in the early part of the day, the deer will be well up among the corries and the grassy spots by the sides of streams. If you look well towards such places you will see them moving, leisurely feeding, or appearing like groups of brown, red, or dun bundles dotted about. An English tourist, returning with us from Ben Muich Dhui, and enthusiastic about the splendour and grandeur of the scenery, complained of just one drawback to his complete satisfaction. He had not seen any red deer in his travels. While he was speaking we directed his attention to a herd on the green plateau half-way up the side of Cairngorm of Derry, many of whom were apparently enjoying an early afternoon *siesta*, and he went home to flat, uninteresting Lincolnshire rejoicing. Above the plateau towards the summit of the Derry Cairngorm a sportsman one day fired at a stag and evidently hit. The herd made off over rising ground and stones out of sight, and the wounded stag among them. Upon topping the ridge and scanning the expanse of stony ground beyond, the stag was at length descried standing still among a mass of large

scattered blocks. The shot had broken the bone of a fore-leg, and the leg dangling, hanging by the skin, had caught between two large stones, and securely moored the poor animal, which was mercifully then and there despatched. Young deer are sometimes made pets of, but often turn out unsatisfactory. A good many years ago a hind calf was brought up in this forest which developed a somewhat wilful and skittish disposition. It would, when displeased, use its fore-legs like a practised boxer, and its enormities culminated when, in gratifying that taste for finery which is inherent in hinds, it found its way one day unperceived into Old Mar Lodge, ascended the stairs, and ate some of the window curtains.

It is advisable, if at all inclined to drink, that you "slock" before leaving the stream at the foot of the mountain, as running water will not be found on our route until you reach about 3600 feet on Sron Riach. There are, however, perforations—pot holes in the protruding granite—which you will pass more than 600 feet below that elevation, where goblets of distilled water, wonderfully clear and cool, may be dipped into, and, mixed judiciously, the liquid will be found refreshing on a hot day. Some of these "cuachs" we measured and found their diameters to run from one to two feet, and their depths from six to fourteen inches, curiously and symmetrically turned out by the agency of wind, gravel, stones, and water. Consider what the force of the wind must be while at work of this kind.

By the time we have reached the 3000 feet contour line vegetation, except in sheltered spots, has given up the struggle for existence. The moss campion, however, blushes unseen in sunny nooks, or among sheltering stone blocks, along with *Azalea procumbens*, and the crowberry blooms and abundantly ripens its fruit among the massive debris, exposed to the sunny south 3500 feet on Sron Riach. Here you may disconcert Reynard stalking ptarmigan by your unexpected appearance, and you are likely to be diverted by the antics of that unsophisticated bird when she wishes to avoid an introduction to her numerous family. On such occasion, you will witness a deliberate intention

to deceive and lead you astray, and, if you have any sense of humour, your fancy will be hugely tickled. Mother Ptarmigan assumes a very dowdy deportment, as with draggling wings she tries to make you believe she is unable to take flight, and that you may easily capture her. She invites you to do so. She is perfectly aware that she is humbugging you. Men, no doubt, "were deceivers ever", but so were and are ptarmigan. Poor things, between the fox, and the eaglé, and the elements, they seem to have a hard time of it, and yet they continue to croak among the solitudes of our stony mountain tops. One day an eminent botanist, clambering among the rocky fissures of The Devil's Point, saw a white bird flash past him, and before he could demand of a companion what kind of bird it was, a mighty rush of wings was upon him, and a golden eagle in hot pursuit swept into the air away from its quarry, which was saved by the presence of humanity. The eagle came unwittingly within a few feet of the botanist, and he was so excited by the magnificence of the spectacle, that he declared loudly it was worth his while to come all the way from London to witness the incident, although he had seen nothing more. We have several times seen eagles among the Cairngorms, but not the raven for many years past.

At 3578 feet on Sron Riach you look down upon Lochan Uaine 450 feet below, where, in the month of June, we have seen massive slabs of ice covering its surface. The range of precipice here rapidly rises to 4095 feet at the corrie of the Sput Dheirg, and forms the massive rocky crest fronting the dome of the mountain, well seen from the carriage road at Inverey or at the Carr Rock opposite Glen Quoich. You now perceive, a short distance to the west, on the steep slope, the outcrop of a spring from Sron Riach, which speedily forms a burn, falling westwards down the mountain to join the Allt Carn a' Mhaim. Among the stones surrounding this spring the parsley fern may be found in sturdy bunches. Keeping to the right and still ascending, we speedily top Sron Riach and reach an extensive sandy plain slightly depressed, drained by the Allt Clach nan Taillear, which flows through the corrie of that name and

joins the Dee in Glen Dee. Between the south bank of this stream and the rocky crest of the Sput Dheirg you may light upon several spots where the digger for cairngorms has been prospecting, and may pick up among the debris fractured specimens of the crystal. Also, on the banks of this stream and the flat ground on either side you will find growing abundantly the smallest willow in Great Britain, *Salix herbacea*. The jilted troubadour who resolved to hang his harp on the willow tree and set off to the wars again, would have found some difficulty in accomplishing his purpose here, as the branches of this willow rise only about half an inch from the ground. An attempt was made recently to deprive Scotland of the honour of growing the smallest tree in the world. It was published abroad—aye, even in Aberdeen newspapers—that Iceland had that pre-eminence, because there birches grow some three feet high! Compare that with the height and growth of *Salix herbacea*. We have now only about 300 feet more to ascend to reach the Cairn, and that is easily attained, because the distance makes the slope gradual. The roofless walls of the Sappers' Kitchen are soon in view, and after that the Cairn, in the neighbourhood of which, in October last, in detestible weather—snow-drift and sleet—we encountered a far-travelled mouse vainly seeking shelter.

THE VIEW FROM THE CAIRN.

Section I.—From South Westwards (0° to 90°).

The bearings of distant objects obtained by the Ordnance Survey staff from their station on Ben Muich Dhui (the Cairn) were referred to an approximate south meridian line. We thought it might be convenient to adhere to this arrangement in our endeavour to trace the horizon as seen from the same point, and we have done so. From the elevated stand-point of the spectator, with no interposing higher summits in the immediate neighbourhood south, west, and northwards the distant view is necessarily extensive, varied, and interesting. To the east the view is

interrupted by the high elongated range of Beinn a' Bhuid, and to some extent in the north-east by Cairngorm. Southwards—according to the record of the Trigonometrical Survey—the view extends to Says Law (1739), in the Lammermuir Hill range (bearing from the Cairn 335°), 93 miles distant, and northwards to Ben-a-chielt in Caithness (940) (bearing 187°), 87 miles distant. The eastern recorded bearing (247°) is that of the Hill of Dudwick (562) in Buchan, 66 miles distant; and westwards we have Ben Nevis (4406) (bearing 70°), distant 54 miles; and Mam Sodhail (3862) (bearing 105°), distant 57 miles. In the gaps in the outline, however, between Ben Nevis and Creag Meaghaidh and between Ben Alder and Ben Nevis, it is evident that the westward view extends far beyond the latter mountain.

Looking due south, Loch Loch is seen cradled in the hollow to the east of the picturesque mass of the Beinn a' Ghlo mountains (3671), distant 17 miles. The Ochil Hills, distant upwards of 60 miles, outline the horizon in the gap between Ben Vuroch and Beinn a' Ghlo, with Bencluch (2363) (bearing 3° west of the loch) observable if the view is ordinarily clear. Ben Vrackie may be picked out over the depression in the middle of the Beinn a' Ghlo range. In the near foreground, the summit of Carn a' Mhaim (3328) protrudes beyond the edge of the dome of Ben Muich Dhui, inviting attention. Along the south side of this mountain lies the western portion of Glen Luibeg. Glen Dee also runs along its western range, bounded on the west by Beinn Bhrotain and The Devil's Point of Cairn Toul. Glen Geusachan extends westwards between the northern slope of Beinn Bhrotain and the backward running ridge from The Devil's Point. Looking southwards over the broad back of Beinn Bhrotain (3797), An Sgarsoch extends westward to the peculiar termination of Carn an Fhithleir (3276). Looking from thence southwards along the sky line, we perceive the top of Ben Chonzie (3048), 46 miles away. Tending westwards, the conspicuous twin conical summits of Ben Vorlich (3224) and Stuc a Chroin (3189) are visible 55 miles distant, over the extended

line of hill range. Further westward, Ben Ledi, with its neighbour Ben Vane, 64 miles off, is dominated by the nearer mass of Ben Lawers (3984) (bearing 30°), 42 miles distant. In front of Ben Lawers, the conical outline of Schichallion (3547), 34 miles away, is backed to the right by the ridge of Carn Mairg; while over the skyline, west of Ben Lawers, several isolated hill tops peep—one of which, the one immediately west of Ben Lawers, we take to be Ben Lomond. Proceeding along the ridge, we reach Ben More's symmetrical cone, with his twin brother, Am Binnein, distant 60 miles, peering above the extended summit of Meall Ghaordie (3407), 48 miles distant. Further westward, Ben Laoigh (Lui) (3708), between which and Meall Ghaordie, however, we think we see the outline of Beinn Chaluum (3354) of Mamlorn Forest. Westwards still, beyond Ben Laoigh, we get among the lofty summits of the mountains between Glen Orchy and the head of Glen Lyon, and ultimately the noble mass of Ben Cruachan (3611) at the head of Loch Awe, distant 70 miles, is before us. Still west, and we are among the Black Mount mountains, until the rising mass of the summit of Cairn Toul beyond Coire an t-Saighdeir, interrupts the view. Between the high up-standing crest of Cairn Toul and Sgor an Lochain Uaine of An Garbh-choire, some interesting mountain masses come into view. First we have Beinn Udlaman (3306), 30 miles distant, in the gap between which and Ben Alder (3757) (bearing 60°), we think we see Buchaille Etive Mor. Then we have the Glencoe Mountains, and several lofty ranges, beyond which Ben Nevis towers. In the gap between it and the nearer mass of Creag Meaghaidh (3700), 36 miles distant, there is a range of distant mountains, which we take to be about Loch Shiel. Over Braeriach, which now fronts us, there is a gap or sneck between the north end of Creag Meaghaidh and Carn Liath, called "the window", which is distinctly perceivable. We have now due west, in front of us, the Fuar Gharbh-choire, or Dee Corrie, of Braeriach, down which the infant Dee leaps from the extensive table-land of the mountain, where it takes its rise upwards of 4000 feet above sea level. Beyond this

depression, looking westwards, we perceive, peering beyond the western outline of the depression on the broad bosom of Braeriach—the gathering ground of the Dee—the edge of the black precipitous range of Sgoran Dubh, which bounds the west side of Loch Eunach. Beyond it there is a far distant mountain range, which invites attention. The detached mountain masses in this range we have not as yet been able to locate, and must reserve for a future opportunity.

While we have laboured to trace this portion of the horizon—from south to west—as viewed from the summit of Ben Muich Dhui, as carefully as time, weather conditions, and our own unskilled endeavours would permit, we are only too sensible of its imperfections. Indeed, to accomplish the work as its deserves to be done, requires a trained hand and eye, with plenty of time, suitable weather, and accommodation near the summit of the mountain; as otherwise, however near the observer may be located to his point for observation, the journey to and from it will occupy at least eight hours of the day.

A DAY ON THE SGÒRAN DUBH RIDGE.

THE Sgòran Dubh ridge is the most north-westerly section of the Cairngorms. It lies between Glen Eunach to the east and Glen Feshie to the west, and is probably the least visited of any part of the Cairngorms. This is perhaps partly because there is no very direct access to it except by Glen Eunach, the road up which is claimed as private by those interested in the deer-stalking, and partly also because the guide books say little or nothing about it. But the ridge is eminently worth a visit, both for its own sake and for the fine views to be obtained from it. For details of these latter I refer readers to Munro's article on page 26 of Volume I. of this Journal, and for a general account of the ridge to McConnochie's article on page 38 of Volume II.

For several years the Sgòran Dubh ridge had attracted me from a distance. As seen from the Feshie side, its bold lateral ridges, its crags above Lagganlia, and such gorges as that of the Garbhlach make fine mountain-scapes. But finer are the aspects it presents to Glen Eunach. The long ridge of Inchriach borders the northern half of that Glen, while the southern half, in which the loch lies, is literally walled in on the west by the dark crags from which the ridge gets its finely descriptive name. Across the loch are the answering steeps of the west side of Braeriach, and from the track up Coire Dhonndail perhaps the finest view of the Sgòran Dubh is to be obtained, heightened in effective detail by a sprinkling of snow. From the northern part of the Learg Ghruamach track, a little south of Carn Elrick, is a striking view of the highest points of the Sgòran Dubh ridge, seen over the lower ground between Carn Elrick and the Sron na Leirg; and as seen from here one may appreciate the difficulty that has been felt as to their proper naming.

And here we may as well at once say that the Ordnance Surveyors appear to have fallen into considerable error in this matter, and, of course, have been followed by most map-

makers and writers treating of the hills. Even the C. C. map is wrong, and only in M'Connochie's recent article, already referred to, do some tops get their proper names. We shall take occasion to note these errors as we proceed.

These various views of the ridge, and this discussion as to their proper naming, together with their innate attractiveness as a distinct individual section of the Cairngorms, led to my making a visit to them during the past summer, in company with my wife and the amateur Photographer.

As seen from the neighbourhood of beautiful Loch an Eilein, the most northerly spur of the ridge shows a distinct pathway leading most invitingly upwards, and it seemed desirable to use this pathway if possible. But information as to it was scarcely to be obtained, and one evening the Photographer and I devoted some time to preliminary explorations. We judged that the pathway must come out somewhere on to the driving road leading east from Loch an Eilein, and, finding a foot-track by the side of the small stream about one-third of a mile from the loch, we followed it towards the ridge, and after several false leads found one of its ramifications leading in the right direction. We followed it far enough to see that it was the track we wanted, marked it at its chief turns so as readily to follow it on the morrow, and then returned to finish our arrangements for the outing.

It may be well to note here that this track follows the left bank of the burn for a few yards, then crosses it, and runs due east for about a hundred yards; then turns towards the hill, and after it has begun to rise sharply, zig-zags up its west side. It is hereabouts somewhat intermittent, but on the whole gives very much help in the ascent, which otherwise would be very difficult in the long heather.

We failed to make an early start, but 9:30 saw us pass the Loch and take to the track through the heather. This was deep, in places very deep, the morning was hot, the path steep, rough and intermittent, and the flies—oh! the *Rothiemurchus* flies—so many, so busy, so persistent; our backs carried hundreds, and our faces and heads were haunted by scores. We were thankful when, after some hard

work, we reached our first little "top", cleared the trees, got a touch of breeze, and lost our tormenting attendants.

And now we were fairly on our way, having risen some 900 feet from the level of the loch, and being well on the ridge, the ups and downs of which we intended to follow. In front of us rose Cadha Mor, a fairly easy slope of not very rough ground; two deer approached us, making for the Coire Buidhe on our right, and were soon lost to view. At the top of Cadha Mor (2313), we found a cairn with a slender fallen staff, which we re-erected. Here we were glad to sit awhile and cool down from the exertion of the ascent. At this height also we could appreciate the beauty of the day; for sunshine, a moderate breeze and very clear air, all went to make an ideal walking day.

A slight descent from Cadha Mor and a more rapid ascent over easy ground covered with moss, short grass and scattered heather, brought us on to the next top, which it seems ought to bear the name Inchriach, though this name is printed on the O. S. maps considerably to the south of the top. Here for some distance the going was over rough granite blocks; but in front was the "Argyll Stone" (2766), and to it we quickly made our way. The "Argyll Stone" is a natural granite tor, rising some twelve feet above the plateau, and bearing a stout staff, which was decayed and fallen. We paused awhile to look at the widespread panorama, and then, passing the cairn close at hand, went on to the "Atholl Stone", nearly a quarter of a mile further south. This is another tor, smaller, but more curiously shaped. The eastern side overhangs, and the shelter has been increased by rough walls on the north and south sides; in the recess so formed a large block of stone makes a good seat, screened on all sides but the east. The O.S. 6-in. map calls this stone "Clach Mhic Ailein". Now "Mhic Ailein", or Macallum, is a well-known name of Argyll, and it seems as though the surveyors had applied the name to the wrong tor. The Atholl Stone is scarcely to be seen from the surrounding lower land, while the Argyll Stone is so prominent as to be a well-marked feature of the Inchriach ridge.

Leaving this higher level, still walking southward, we

descended somewhat rapidly. The warmth and the dryness of the air had induced thirst; further, lunch time was felt to be approaching, as it was now past mid-day, and as we reached the *col* we looked eagerly for springs. In a pretty, sheltered nook we found abundant water, evidently much frequented by deer, and at the well-eye we drank, and near it we rested awhile. This spring is the source of the Allt Ruigh na Sroine of Glen Eunach.

There now lay before us the towering bulk of Sgor Dubh Mhor, with a clearly-marked track leading towards its cairn-crowned top. Our way lay near the top of the steep crags and screes that drop into Glen Eunach along its western side south of Loch Mhic Ghille-chaoile, and the view into and across the glen was very fine. The going was easy, though the ascent was decided, and just when we began to feel the pull getting steeper and heavier, a fine mass of rock showed itself immediately to our left. This was obviously Sgor Dubh Bheag (3443), a subsidiary peak of Sgor Dubh Mhor, and to it we turned aside. It proved to be a noble pile of rock, dropping very steeply into the glen, with an admirable platform on the top from which to enjoy the superb view of Loch Eunach and Braeriach, and with also a fine buttress running out on its northern side, from which a good near view could be obtained of itself. The Photographer insisted on a prolonged halt here, while he took pictures. The rest of the company fell in with his suggestion amiably, and we spent some time in keen enjoyment. But the greater height was yet to win, and we pushed on. At one point the track skirted the very edge of the steep fall, and walking was cautiously done. A few yards below I saw a fine spring in a steep gully, but as the thirstier member of the company was far ahead we did not visit it. Now the track gradually bore away from the crag edge, the surface became barer and rougher, and we found the top of Sgor Dubh Mhor with its cairn (3635), not suggesting at all its fine, craggy edge, but showing only a rounded swelling top. Here a somewhat longer halt was made, and map and compass called into requisition, while we emulated Munro, and tried to localise and identify the surrounding moun-

tains. The view on such a day is exceedingly fine, both in the strongly marked nearer features and in the distant outlines delicately pencilled along the horizon. The Ordnance Surveyors have omitted to name Sgor Dubh Bheag, and do not put any name to Sgor Dubh Mhor. On their maps "Sgòran Dubh" is printed about a mile to the south of Sgor Dubh Mhor, and is applied to the next top, now seen ahead beyond an easy dip. This top is the striking Sgor Ghaoith (3658) (the windy peak), which we found well named, for the breeze was stronger and keener there than anywhere else that day. As we approached it two eagles rose from it, flew towards us, and then, as taking umbrage at our intrusion, sailed swiftly and easily away towards Glen Feshie. On the Sgor we found traces of their presence in small scattered feathers. It is said that they breed on the crags below this peak. The crag stands out as a bold rocky pinnacle, falling very steeply to the level of Loch Eunach, the drop being more than 1900 feet. Close to the peak is a small shelter hut for keepers, and a semaphore signal post, by which the whereabouts of deer could be signalled to the loch bothy. We sat awhile on the topmost rock, where the eagles had preceded us, and enjoyed the impressive view of the Eunach Corrie, with its enclasping precipices. Then the Photographer scrambled down and out on to a buttress to get a picture of the peak, while we others pushed on to find more water. We soon descended an easy grassy slope quite near the crag edge, and came among the head waters of the Allt na Coire Odhar, the stream that throws itself down into the S. W. corner of the loch. Here we found abundant fine springs, and settled down by one of the nearest and finest, in a little grassy hollow. Near by was a ruined bothy which was at one time used by deer-stalkers. The spring by which we rested is called Fuaran Diotach (the breakfast well).

When we left this we approached the end of our ridge walk, for the ridge itself now joined round the south end of the Eunach Corrie with the mightier mass that includes Braeriach and Cairn Toul, and so merged into the great plateau that lies between the Feshie, the Geldie and the Dee.

At the south-west corner of the Eunach Corrie we descended by "Ross's Path", named after Horatio Ross, who was in his day one of Scotland's most ardent sportsmen and able shots. The upper part of this path speedily becomes very steep, and needs careful walking in the descent. But a little lower the gradient is less steep, and by the time it meets the stream we saw above, it is almost on the level. Just here it becomes very indefinite for a short distance, but by turning due east for a hundred yards we reach the tops of its second part, where the excessive steepness is overcome by zig-zagging. Thence it drops by a fairly easy gradient to the north end of the loch. All along this part of our walk we were delighted by getting many pretty pieces of white heather.

When we reached the outlet of the loch, there remained but the steady march down the glen along the admirable driving road. This we made with great satisfaction, as our expedition along the Sgòran Dubh ridge was successfully made; and we turned now and again to look back at the corrie, and saw it grow darker and darker as the gloom of evening and of threatening clouds fell on it. But no rain came, and the contrast with the bright sunshine of the earlier part of the day did but heighten the pleasure of our memories.

TWO DONSIDE HILLS :
COILLEBHARR AND LORD ARTHUR'S CAIRN.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

AN Aberdeen newspaper, in its report of the last Lonach Gathering, described Strathdon as a "mountainous country". Possibly the reporter had in view a poetical description of that annual event :

"Lonach's a mountain in Strathdon
Whaur mony a Highland ploy gaes on
At tossin' caber, puttin' stone,
And hammer flingin',
And dancin' to the pipe and drone,
Whilst Don rins singin'".

But poets are not always to be trusted for accurate description; and to designate Strathdon mountainous is to take liberties with the language, if not with the district. The precise application of the term "mountainous" is perhaps a little arbitrary; and with dictionaries defining a mountain as an elevated mass higher than a hill, and a hill as a natural elevation of less size than a mountain, it is a little difficult to know where to draw the line. But where the elevations seldom exceed 2000 feet, are generally wooded, even on the summits, and are totally devoid of rock faces, it seems preferable, on the whole, to assign them a rank lower than that of mountains and to call them hills; and so to the category of hills must be relegated the Donside eminences.

"Upon the whole, the mountains of this parish are much inferior in picturesque effect and rugged outline to the sister district of the head of the Dee". So wrote the minister of Strathdon in the "New Statistical Account"; and the comparison holds good for the whole of Donside, from Alford to Corgarff. I may perhaps be pardoned for here reproduc-

ing what I have elsewhere said* on the contrast between the scenery of Deeside and that of Donside :

“In the matter of scenery, Donside stands to Deeside very much in the relation depicted in the familiar simile—‘As moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine’. The scenery of Donside, speaking in general terms, is of a paler cast than that of Deeside ; it is mild, almost gentle, in comparison. There are Donside Highlands, it is true, but they lack the altitude and the bulk of the Deeside Highlands. The essential difference between the natural features of the two river valleys may be broadly defined by saying that, while the Dee is enclosed by mountains, the Don is surrounded by hills. While the Dee (limiting the comparison to the main pedestrian route, the stretch between Ballater and Braemar and the Linn) is dominated by Lochnagar on the one side, and a succession of Bens, from Beinn a’ Bhuid up to Ben Muich Dhui, on the other side, the valley of the Don (say from Alford to Colquhony or Corgarff) is conspicuously marked only by The Buck of the Cabrach on the one hand and Morven on the other. In other words, you lack on Donside the grandeur of the mountain masses that so prominently confront you on Deeside”.

The lesser altitudes of Donside, however, are attractive— if not for their height, at least for the view obtainable from their summits. They are, indeed, favourably situated in this respect, lying, as they do, on the outer edge of the hilly and mountainous region of Aberdeenshire. The long line of Bennachie is the frontier barrier, the plain of the Garioch and the level lands of Buchan stretching away to north and north-east, summit rising on summit to west and south ; and the Donside hills are adjacent to this barrier, and present much the same landscape features from their summits, particularly that picturesque contrast between arable plains on the one side and mountain and valley on the other. This, at any rate, holds good of Coillebharr (pronounced—and, indeed, commonly written—Callievar) and Lord Arthur’s Cairn, the two hills at the western extremity of the Vale of Alford—a district famous agriculturally for the excellence of its farming and the rearing of choice herds of polled cattle,

* “Some Donside Hills” in the *Daily Free Press*, 30th May, 1896.

but noteworthy also for its natural features, the valley being entirely enclosed by hills—the Braes of Forbes and Bennachie on the north; Cairn William, the hill of Tillyfourie, and the Corrennie hills on the east; the heights that bound Cushnie on the south; and, as has just been mentioned, Coillebharr and Lord Arthur's Cairn on the west.

Coillebharr (Caillevar or Callievar; “the hill of wood”—Coille or Caille, a wood, and Var, a hill) is 1747 feet high. It is situated on the south side of the Don, and may be ascended with ease from Bithnie, a farm at its foot, the road to which, running off the public road from Alford to Mossat, crosses a wooden bridge over the Don near one of the entrances to Littlewood Park. Traversing a field abutting on the farm steading, the hill is at once tackled. More than one track through the grass and bracken may readily be discovered, and the ascent presents no difficulty. The ridge reached, the grass and bracken give place to heather; and a long detour has to be made to attain the summit—partly through and partly alongside a plantation of firs—but a regular footpath clearly indicates the route. I have heard the ascent called steep, but, walking very leisurely and without any great exertion one Saturday afternoon, I accomplished it in 45 minutes; and I am convinced that it could be done in much less time than that. The following description of the view from the summit of Coillebharr is given in a foot-note to the account of Alford published in the “New Statistical Account”:

“A magnificent and exceedingly varied view is obtained from the summit of Callievar. Immediately under the eye of the spectator there is seen the richly cultivated and ornamented Vale of Alford on the east, traversed by the clear river Don, and bounded at the opposite end by the rocky-summited Benochie. On the west, close at hand, are the contiguous cultivated valleys of Kildrummy and Towie with the remains of their two ancient castles celebrated in history and song. On the south, the eye, obtaining many peeps into cultivated valleys near at hand, commands in the remote distance a splendid range of sixty miles of the loftiest Grampians, extending westward from the shore of the Mearns, and including Mount Bettach, Mount Keen, Lochnagar,

Benmuckduie, Benavon, and Cairngorm. On the north, it commands much of the varied surface of Aberdeenshire in that direction, with views of the Moray Firth and German Ocean beyond”.

It is only necessary to add to this excellent description an enumeration of the principal mountain-tops observable from the summit. Included in the view are—Bennachie and the hills enclosing the Vale of Alford already specified, Cairn-mon-earn, Kerloch, Clochnaben, Mount Battock, Mount Keen, Morven, Lochnagar, Ben Avon, Ben Muich Dhui, Cairngorm, Ben Newe, The Buck of the Cabrach, Tap o’ Noth, the Knock Hill, the Binn Hill of Cullen, Tillymorgan, Brimmond, and the Hill of Fare. The village of Alford is distinctly seen; as are also Castle Forbes and Clova House.

Coillebharr, as its name implies, was at one time completely wooded, but most of the wood was cut down a number of years ago by the present Lord Forbes, who has, indeed, denuded the Braes of Forbes and other large portions of the “Vale” of the plantations that formerly covered them, to the serious deterioration of the landscape. Lord Forbes, however, is owner of part only of Coillebharr, the other portion being on the estate of Brux, the property of his brother, the Hon. Atholl Monson Forbes. A “dry dyke” on the northern face of the hill constitutes the boundary march. It is said to have been built by a former laird of Brux, of whom this story is told:

“He was ‘out’ in 1745, and to disguise himself, after his return, became a builder of stone dykes, as the traveller may see from specimens he built, and from the inscription on his grave-stone. It is related that one day, when occupied building his dykes, the soldiers in search of him came up and inquired ‘If he could tell them whether the Laird of Brux was at home’. Without any appearance of alarm, he quietly answered—‘He was at home when I was at my breakfast’. The soldiers, thinking he would probably still be there, went to the house, and as soon as they were out of sight he gathered up his tools, and concealed himself, probably in a large cave, still shown, and known as Jonathan’s Cave”.*

* “A Guide to Donside”.

One of the largest of many bonfires in Aberdeenshire commemorative of the Queen's Jubilee was that which was lighted on the top of Coillebharr; and on that occasion between 60 and 70 others were visible from the summit. The old church and churchyard of Forbes, it may be mentioned, are to be seen, close to the Don, on the north side of the river, just before reaching Bithnie.*

Lord Arthur's Cairn (1699 feet) is the highest summit of the Correen Hills, a range of low, moorland hills on the north side of the Don, extending from the river to Clatt and Knockespoek. It may be ascended from various points. I have myself ascended it by the three following routes:—“Straight up” from Littlewood Park—the speediest way, but perhaps the steepest (done quite easily, though, in an hour from Bithnie bridge); from the farm of Logie, west of Littlewood Park—probably the easiest way; and from the farm of Edinbanchory, still further west—which is certainly the longest way, but suited a companion and myself, as we happened to be walking down Strathdon to Alford, and at once “took” the hill on crossing the bridge of Mossat.† The ascent by any of these routes, however, is not very formidable. The stiffest bit of the Littlewood Park route is the ascent of a groove in the hill side that was probably made for and used as a timber “shoot”; and, going by this route, you have to find a gate through a fence of wire-netting, or—(tell not the

* “There are pond burrows on the slope of Callievar, on the Bithnie side near the top; these are Pictish dwelling remains. The old Don and Deeside road passes from Bithnie Bridge over by Tibberchindy. Near the summit of the ascent above Tibberchindy, on the road side, are remains of faultds or buchts for resting cattle. I have heard that Evan Cameron, the last of the caterans in this district, resided there”. (Information supplied by Mr. A. M'Creadie, Schoolmaster, Alford.)

† The ascent by this route is described in the *Free Press* article previously referred to. Another easy ascent, I am told, is by Old Strathlunach and Manabattock.

Near Logie, and between the road and the river, lies a large flat stone called the “Boar Stone of Forbes”, marking the spot where, according to tradition, the first of the family slew a wild boar “For Bess”; hence the family name and the three boars' heads on the family coat of arms. Two versions of the legend are given in the Donside Guide.

people at Littlewood Park!)—clamber over the fence. The hill presents much the same natural features as Coillebharr—it is grassy on the lower slopes, the grass giving way to heather as you near the summit. The summit, however, is completely bare of trees, and is crowned by the ruined walls of what is said to have been a “summer-house”—it must have been a rather rude one. A few yards distant in a north-westerly direction is a slight hummock of earth, stones, and grass—a “mark” of the Ordnance Survey.

The view from the summit of Lord Arthur’s Cairn is practically identical with that from Coillebharr, with, however, some variations, the Hill of Mormond, for instance, being visible from the former and not from the latter; Ben Rinnes is also seen from Lord Arthur’s Cairn, though, curiously enough, not at the very summit. On a clear day, the view extends from Cullen to Montrose; the smoke of Aberdeen may be discerned, though not the city itself, but the Black Dog—(rather, the Hill of Tarbathie)—and the sands of Newburgh are quite distinguishable. The feature of the view, however, is the prospect of the distant Cairngorms—the long line of Ben Avon, with the succession of protuberances that mark its various tops, the upper shoulder of Ben Muich Dhui, and the crest of Cairngorm; grandly beautiful if seen on a clear summer day—perhaps more picturesque if seen with a sprinkling of snow on them, on a day in early autumn.

From the summit, Lumsden Village can be easily reached. A “bee-line” can be made for it, the general direction being to keep in line with the top of The Buck. Those desirous of following a track may be advised that there is one close by a rather curious feal dyke that runs along the hillside a little to the west of the summit. During the descent to this track, one can readily espy, on a north-eastern slope of the hill, a now disused quarry, from which an erst-while famous “Correen stone” was wont to be excavated—a species of mica slate, largely employed at one time for pavement for halls and kitchens, and possessing the peculiar characteristic of exuding moisture on the approach of wet weather. The track crosses the hill mid-way between six shooting

butts, enlarges into a cart track, but rapidly deteriorates, forming what is plainly a water-course in winter time. I once came down this track—which skirts a large plantation destroyed by an accidental fire a year or two ago, the bare trunks of the trees standing out grim and gaunt on the hill side—and found it an exceedingly rough path. It meanders through a plantation that is equally rough, being literally a jungle of whins and undergrowth; and lands you ultimately at the farm of Park of Brux, which a farmer's boy told me was a mile from Lumsden—I found it nearer two, which is a matter of course! The best plan is to swerve to the right when the track begins to get rough; by doing this and then skirting some fields, you find a path through a plantation that ultimately lands you in Lumsden Village.

“Lord Arthur's Cairn”—whence the name, so strikingly suggestive of some important incident or interesting remembrance? A vague reference is made in the “Statistical Account” (1840) to “the points of Coreen at Lord Arthur's Seat and Lord Forbes's Cairn”, but no explanation of these names is volunteered. Were there two hills of these respective names, or did the writer make two names of the same hill represent two hills? There is an evident confusion on the subject; and, accepting the real name of the one hill as Lord Arthur's Cairn, there is an equal confusion as to the origin of the name. A “Souvenir of the Montgarrie Bridge Bazaar” published last July under the title of “The Vale of Alford, Past and Present: A Short Historical Narrative”, contains the following:

“There had also been a battle fought near what was then called the Glaschine Hill, on the estate of Brux, in the fourteenth century, when an English army, 3000 strong, commanded by Lord Arthur Cummin, was defeated by the Scots, 1100 strong, under the command of Sir Alexander Gordon of Huntly. Lord Arthur Cummin was slain, and his body was interred in the heath. A cairn was erected over it, and the hill now bears the name of Lord Arthur”.

But another—and really much more probable—story connects the hill with the prolonged feud between the

Forbeses and the Gordons. The Correen Hills formed the frontier between the respective territories of these two clans; and, on one occasion, the Forbeses crossed the hills in order to make an incursion into the Gordon territory. They encamped on the brae-face overlooking the glen in which Knockespoock is situated. The remains of the camp are still visible—on the old hill road from Aberdeen through the Cabrach to Huntly, &c.—and this leads to the inference that the spot had often been used as a camping-ground. While the Forbeses were in camp, a strong body of Gordons attacked them, and forced them to retreat. In the conflict that took place, Lord Arthur Forbes of Brux, who headed the Forbeses, was severely wounded, and his followers proceeded to convey him across the hills to Brux. He died on the way, however; and, from this incident, and probably in connection with some memorial erected at the spot, the hill on which he expired came to be called Lord Arthur's Cairn. But there are several versions of the tradition. The description of the parish of Forbes (written about 1725) in "Macfarlane's Geographical Collections" (MS.) refers to Lord Arthur's Cairn—"where some of the family of Forbes was slain by the Leslie's". And the following occurs in the recently-published work on "The Church and Priory of Monymusk", by Rev. W. M. Macpherson—"In 1572 the Gordons attacked and defeated the Forbeses at Druminnor, a very ancient seat of the family, when Arthur, Lord Forbes' brother, was killed".

It is just possible, though the opinion is only offered tentatively, that "Lord Arthur's Cairn" may bear some relation to an incident in the life of Arthur Forbes of Logie, a son of William, 7th Lord Forbes. Arthur's elder brother, John, 8th Lord Forbes, had married, while still Master of Forbes, Lady Margaret Gordon, daughter of George, 4th Earl of Huntly. Lord Forbes having repudiated the marriage—probably on account of religious differences—a fierce encounter took place between the rival clans of Forbes and Gordon at Tillyangus, in the parish of Clatt, in the year 1572—

"The Gordons, under the command of two of the Earl's

brothers, attacked their hereditary enemies, the Forbesees, within their rude entrenchment, on the White Hill of Tillyangus, and, after a sanguinary contest, still visibly marked by a number of graves or cairns, the Gordons carried the encampment of their opponents, slew Arthur Forbes, son of Lord Forbes, commonly called Black Arthur, from his dark complexion, and continued the pursuit to the gates of Castle Forbes (now Drumminor), the family seat of the numerous clan Forbes. This skirmish is the subject of traditionary notice by the aged chroniclers of the parish, and is recorded in a manuscript memoir of the house of Forbes, now in the possession of the Honourable Lord Forbes".*

The year 1572 is generally given as the date of this fight, but it would really appear to have taken place in 1571—

"The tent day of October, the yeir of God 1571 yeris, the fedill of Tilliangwiss was strikin be Adem Gordoune and Arthowir Forbes, bruder to my Lord Forbes, quhair the said Arthowir was slayne, with syndrie oderis of his kyn ; and on the oder syd, Johne Gordone of Buiky, and syndre hurtt on bayth the sydis".†

The 17th October, 1571, is the date given in the New Spalding Club volume on the "Records of Aboyne", edited by the Marquis of Huntly. According to Smith's "History of Aberdeenshire", there is a well on the north-west face of the White Hill of Tillyangus, which marks the place where "Black Arthur" of Forbes was slain.

* "New Statistical Account of Aberdeenshire" (Clatt).

† "The Chronicle of Aberdeen" in the "Miscellany of the Spalding Club".

THE BRAEMAR HIGHLANDS AFTER THE '45.

THE second volume of "Historical Papers Relating to the Jacobite Period", recently published by the New Spalding Club, contains some exceedingly interesting reading for those accustomed to resort to "the playground of the Cairngorms". Colonel Allardyce, the editor of the work, has embodied in this volume a number of documents dealing with the suppression of the rebellion in the Highlands. They are mostly reports from officers of the various "posts" that were established to over-awe the Highlanders; and, while they furnish interesting details of the localities and of the work engaged in, they are also highly entertaining, owing to the singular views occasionally expressed, and the quaint language in which, as a rule, these views are couched.

One of the most notable documents in the collection is a "Memorial concerning a cross road from Inverlochry, by Ruthven of Badenoch, and through Braemar to Aberdeen". This road is urged as a necessary complement to "the present patent and fine Roads lately made from South to North thro' the most inaccessible Mountains in the Highlands of Scotland", "which surprizing performance (never once thought practicable in former Ages) will justly eternize his Majesty's Name in that Kingdom". Alas! for the loyalty of the memorialist, the roads have perpetuated the name of their maker, General Wade, and not the name of George II. ! The "inaccessibleness" of the Grampians, "for want of fit passages and Roads, either across, or on each side of them", had, in the opinion of the writer, been a national blessing at one time. It prevented "a Total Conquest of the British Island" by the Roman legions; it frustrated the expeditions of Adrian and Severus; and, later, it checked the conquest of Scotland by Edward I. of England. But this very inaccessibleness proved a source of trouble to the Scottish Kings, who had difficulty in repressing "the frequent Commotions and Insurrections of the Turbulent Highlanders and Borderers". Hence—

“Malcolm the 3rd, King of Scots, one of the wisest of their Princes, did build a Strong Castle in the Brae of Mar, in the very center of the Grampians, call'd the Castle of Kindrochit, and that out of pretext of a Summer Residence, for his diversion of Deer-hunting, but in effect to bridle the Stubborn disposition of the fierce and lawless Inhabitants, and more particularly the Stance of the said Fortress, was pitched upon as most necessary by reason of the inaccessibleness of that Country and its central Situation, which made it always remarkable for being the Commonplace of Rendezvous of the whole Turbulent and disaffected People of those parts, there being equal expeditious access to the same in some few Days from the several remotest Corners of the Highlands, and where they could rest securely, without fear of being attacked even by much superior Numbers, and the Inhabitants themselves by reason of their situation, were still amongst the first and last in Arms, in all Insurrections time out of mind”.

Then follows an account of the building (in 1628) of Braemar Castle and of its burning (in 1689); and, having regard to a newspaper controversy a few years ago as to whether the present Castle (built in 1748) was an entirely new structure or super-imposed on the old walls, it may be well to quote what the memorialist (probably writing about 1747) says of the ruins—“The whole Vaults, Mason and Iron Work being entire (as it is still at this day) and nothing wanting but Roof, Josting and Flooring, in a Country that abounds with Fir-wood and Slate”. Coming, then, to his proposal for a cross road, the memorialist furnishes sundry arguments in its favour, which culminate in the following:

“There is one other weighty Reason and Consideration, not as yet mentioned or taken notice of (which of itself) besides the many former convincing Arguments would be sufficient Motive for leading the said Road from East to West, and Garrisoning the Castle of Braemar as aforesaid, which is that now since the Family of Gordon and Seaforth are happily converted from Popery, and consequently that Religion visibly upon the decline in their Countries, and most of the Northern Bounds. The Brae of Mar is the only remaining part of the Nation where Popery flourishes most, where there will be more than two hundred people hearing Mass all at once, and sometimes three or four Priests and Jesuits convened together, with their Superior at

their head, in full defiance of the Government and the Laws and disregarding the Ministers of the Established Church, whose pains to suppress them is fruitless, since by far the greatest part of the Commons are of the Roman Faith, and not to be forced into a decent and legal behaviour by the smaller number, and all this occasioned for want of a Garrison in the said Castle of Braemar, there being no Soldiers to be call'd for nearer than about 40 miles for suppressing such illegal and Tumultuous meetings”.

The suppression of sedition, however, does not seem to have concerned the authorities so much as the putting down of the “ Depredations of the Thieves of Rannoch, Lochaber, and Glengary”, though in some of the reports the thieving—cattle-raiding, to wit—is ingeniously associated with rebellion. It is described as “ a Scheme Artfully contrived, to Nurse and encourage the barbarity and idleness of these people, and may be called the principal spring of Rebellion”, the addition being made that “this practice of Thieving is the sure and known Means of training up a number of people to the use of Arms, who on the least prospect of plunder are ready to join in any Rebellion or Tumult”. Several descriptions are given of the passes and routes by which raided cattle were driven—descriptions that are perfectly accurate, though some of the names of places seem to have been written phonetically. Here is one of these descriptions :

“The Thieves from Rannoch, Lochaber, and Glengary in driveing Cattle from the Counties of Angus, Mearns, Aberdeën, and Bamff, usually take the following Routes. Those who Rob from the two first Counties drive their Plunder through the Glens of Clova, all along the Mountains South side of the River Dee, and must pass near Glenclunie or Glenshee, so as to fall into the Hills of Athole or the Forrest of Guiley, and in either of these Routes must afterwards cross the Chain betwixt Dalwhinnie and Dalnardocho, unless alarmed and driven Northward towards Ruthven.

“The Thieves in conveying their Plunder from Bamff and Aberdeenshires, if from the Country twixt Dee and Don, they must go through the Forrest and mountains of Morvaine, then by Loch Bulg, and from thence to the Forrest of Guiley or Mountains of Marr, and so fall into the former Route.

“Betwixt Don and Spey they must pass through the Mountains of Glenoughty and Glenavin, and afterwards fall into the

Mountains of Abernethy, or further South take the Route formerly mentioned, but at any rate all the plunder from the four Shires, must pass betwixt Ruthven of Badenoch and Blair”.

A more detailed description of the various routes followed by the “thieves” is given thus :

“When Cattle are Stolen from Angus or Mearns, or from any part of Aberdeenshire South of Dee, they generally come through the Hills betwixt Glentamar and Glensesk, Then through the Hills of Glenclova and Corryvooe and cross the Carnvalg betwixt Glenshee and Glenclunie, Next through the Baddoch, Glentatnick, Cornriogh, Glenbeg, Glenmore, and Glenfearnell (which are all betwixt Braemarr and Braes of Angus).

“After they bring Cattle the length of the Braes of Clova, they sometimes turn through Glen Callader and Ballochbuee, and crossing Dee below Invercauld, pass through the Hills betwixt Invercauld and the Water of Gairden, then through Glenluy and Glenguissich, and at Stromwoldick, and then into the Hills of Badenoch.

“When Cattle are Stolen from any part of Aberdeenshire betwixt Dee and Don, they generally drive them through the Hills and Forrest of Morvine, and pass at Altnashein or Loch Builg, near Ribbalachlagan, betwixt Gairnside and Inchrory, then they go into Glenavin and Cross the River of Avin at Loch Avin, afterwards pass through the Braes of Glenfechy into the Hills of Badenoch”.

To control these routes, a company of soldiers, having its headquarters first at Tarland and afterwards at Braemar Castle, was divided into posts, stationed at Inchrory, Ribbalachlagan, Dubrach, Glenclunie, Spittal (spelled *Spittle*) of Glenmuick, and Clova. The posts were either increased or shifted—probably the latter—for mention is made of one at Spittal of Glenshee; an officer patrolling in this district complains that “Its a most Dismal Country as I ever saw, being full of boggs”—he “Cross’d some very High Mountains”.* But cattle reiving was not the only offence

* This reminds the writer of a remark once made to him in Sutherlandshire by a member of the Ordnance Survey staff—“What ! You’ve come here to see the country ? Why, there’s nothing here but rocks, and locks (*sic*), and mountains”.

dealt with by the Hanoverian soldiers. An officer at Braemar apprehends a man for wearing the plaid "contrary to Act of Parliament"—"this fellow came past the Castle in his plaid with all the assurance imaginable"—and sends him to Aberdeen, "to be punished as the law directs". The result is not satisfactory, from the point of view of the officer, who thus writes :

"In my last report I mentioned to you that I had taken up a Man for wearing the Plaid and had sent him to Aberdeen, as Mr. Farquson of Inver Cald did not act as a Justice of the Peace. The Sergt. who went with the Prisoner is now return'd, and informs me that he carry'd the prisoner before the Sheriff of the County, with his plaid on as first taken. The Sheriff said in the prisoner's behalf, that it was only a Dyed Blanket, and not a Plaid, the Sergt. ask'd the Sheriff if the people might wear their Plaids if Dyed, the Sheriff told the Sergt., that the intent of the Act of parliament, was not to oppress the poor, and dismiss'd the prisoner, notwithstanding the Sheriff's Judgment, I shall take up all persons that I find wearing those Dy'd Blanketts as the Sheriff is pleas'd to call them. . . .

"Since my last I have taken up and sent to Aberdeen another Highlander, for wearing a Plaid of different colours, which I think the Sheriff cannot well call a Blanket, as he was pleased to call the other".

A detailed examination of these reports, however, would take us too far afield; and perhaps sufficient has been said to indicate the interesting nature—topographically and otherwise—of the documents given in Colonel Allardyce's new volume.

THE MOUNTAINS OF SCOTLAND OVER 2000 FEET.—No. I.

I.—THE CAIRNGORMS.

Section I.—Western Cairngorms.

(1) SGORAN DUBH, &C.

O. S. SHEET.		NAME.	HEIGHT	POSITION.	PARISH.	NOTES.
6 inch.	1 in.					
Inverness, 103	64	Sgor Ghaoith - - - -	3658	Overlooking middle of W. side of Loch Eunach	Duthil-Rothiemurchus—Alvie	O. S. mistakenly calls this "Sgoran Dubh", and misplaces "Sgor Ghaoith" $\frac{1}{2}$ m. to the S.
Inverness, 88	"	Sgor Dubh Mhor - - - -	3535	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. N. of Sgor Ghaoith - - - -	"	Not named on O. S., the name "Sgoran Dubh" being applied to Sgor Ghaoith.
"	"	Sgor Dubh Bheag - - - -	3443	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. N. of Sgor Dubh Mhor - - - -	"	Not named on O. S.
"	74	Inchriach - - - - -	2766	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. N. of Sgor Dubh Mhor - - - -	"	The Argyll Stone is close to the top, and the Atholl Stone about $\frac{1}{2}$ m. further S.
"	"	Cadha Mhor - - - - -	2313	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. N.N.E. of Inchriach - - - - -	Duthil-Rothiemurchus	On O. S. 2343 is shown $\frac{1}{2}$ m. to S.W.
"	"	Creag Pheacach - - - -	2225	1 m. N.N.W. of Inchriach - - - - -	"	On O. S. 2262 is shown $\frac{1}{2}$ m. to S.W.
"	"	Creag Phulach - - - - -	2249	$\frac{1}{4}$ m. W. by N. of Inchriach - - - - -	Alvie.	
"	64	Meall Buidhe - - - - -	3185	1 m. N.W. of Sgor Ghaoith - - - - -	"	This top is named only on the C. C. map.
"	"	Geal-chàrn - - - - -	3019	1 m. N.W. by N. of Meall Buidhe - - - - -	"	
"	74	Creag Mhigeachaidh - - - -	2429	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. N.W. of Geal-chàrn - - - - -	"	
"	"	Meall Tionail - - - - -	2678	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. W. of Meall Buidhe - - - - -	"	
Inverness, 103	64	Càrn Bàn - - - - -	3443	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. S.S.W. of Sgor Ghaoith - - - - -	"	
"	"	Meall Dubh-achaidh - - - -	3268	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. S.W. by S. of Càrn Bàn - - - - -	"	
Inverness, 118	"	Meall Tionail - - - - -	3338	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. S. of Meall Dubh-achaidh - - - - -	"	
"	"	Meall nan Sgliat - - - - -	2500	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. N.W. of Meall Tionail (3338) - - - - -	"	Contour only given in 1 in.
"	"	Druim nam Bo - - - - -	3005	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. S.W. by W. of Meall Tionail (3338) - - - - -	"	[back from the Crag.
"	"	Creag na Gaibhre - - - - -	2411	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. S.W. by W. of Druim nam Bo - - - - -	"	The height is that of a signal post a little
"	"	Creag a Chreagain - - - - -	2000	Continuation to S.E. of Creag na Gaibhre - - - - -	"	Contour only given in 1 in.
"	"	Diollaid Coire Eindart - - - -	3184	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m. E. of Meall Tionail (3338) - - - - -	"	
"	"	Cluas na Crosgaich - - - - -	3079	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. E. by N. of Diollaid Coire Eindart - - - - -	"	

(2) BRAERIACH, CAIRN TOUL, &C.

O. S. SHEET.		NAME.	HEIGHT	POSITION.	PARISH.	NOTES.
6 inch.	1 in.					
Inv. 89, Ab. 76	64	Braeriach - - - -	4248	N. Lat. 57° 4' 43", W. Long. 3° 43' 38" - 2½ m. W. by N. of Ben Muich Dhui	Duthil-Rothiemurchus— Crathie-Braemar	Lies on the Inverness-Aberdeen county march. A second, lower cairn unnamed and unheighted lies a little to the E.
"	"	Sron na Leirg - - - -	3875	5/6 m. N.E. by E. of Braeriach - -	"	On 1 in. only 3839 is shown ¼ m. to N.N.E. There is an unnamed cairn on the Sron about ¼ m. to the N., and at about 3760 ft.
Inverness 89	74	Càrn Odhar - - - -	2368	2½ m. N.W. by N. of Sron na Leirg -	Duthil-Rothiemurchus	
"	"	Càrn Elrick - - - -	2435	1 m. N.W. by N. of Càrn Odhar - -	"	
"	"	Càrn a Phrisghuibhais -	2000	2½ m. N.W. of Sron na Leirg - - -	"	Contour only given in 1 in. ; 6 in. shows cairn, but gives no height.
Inv. 89, Ab. 76	64	Coire an Lochain (Top above) - - - -	4036	¾ m. W. by S. of Braeriach - - -	Duthil-Rothiemurchus— Crathie-Braemar	This top seems to bear no name on any map. On Inverness-Aberdeen county march.
Inv. 104, Ab. 76	"	Eunach Cairn - - - -	4061	¾ m. S.W. by S. of previous top - -	"	This top is named only on the C. C. map. On Inverness-Aberdeen county march.
Inv. 104, Ab. 87	"	March Cairn - - - -	4149	¾ m. S. by E. of Eunach Cairn - -	Duthil-Rothiemurchus— Alvie—Crathie-Brae-	This top is named only on the C. C. map. On Inverness-Aberdeen county march.
Aberdeen 87	"	Cairn Toul - - - -	4241	N. Lat. 57° 3' 15", W. Long. 3° 42' 35" 1½ m. S.S.E. of Braeriach - - - - 2 m. S.W. of Ben Muich Dhui - -	Crathie-Braemar [mar	A second cairn, 4227, lies 1/12 m. S.
"	"	Sgor an Lochain Uaine	4095	¼ m. W.N.W. of Cairn Toul - - -	"	O. S. maps do not give its height ; 1 in. shows [4000 contour.
"	"	Coire an t-Saighdeir (Top)	3989	¼ m. S. by E. of Cairn Toul - - -	"	
"	"	The Devil's Point - -	3303	1½ m. S.E. by S. of Cairn Toul - - -	"	
Ab. 87, Inv. 104	"	Monadh Mòr - - - -	3651	2½ m. S.W. of Cairn Toul - - - -	Crathie-Braemar—Alvie	On Inverness-Aberdeen county march.
Inverness 104	"	Leachd Riach - - - -	3250	1 m. W. by S. of Monadh Mòr - - -	Alvie	No height given on O. S. maps ; 1 in. shows 3250 contour.
Aberdeen 96	"	Beinn Bhrotain - - -	3795	1½ m. S.E. by S. of Monadh Mòr - -	Crathie-Braemar	The name is printed on 6 in. sheet Ab. 87. There are two cairns very near together, both shown on sheet Ab. 96.
"	"	Càrn Cloich-mhuilinn -	3087	1½ m. S.E. of Beinn Bhrotain - - -	"	
"	"	Càrn Fiaclan - - - -	2500	¾ m. E. of Càrn Cloich-mhuilinn - -	"	6 in. gives no height ; 1 in. shows contour, but gives no name.
"	"	Càrn Fiaclan Crionn -	2250	¾ m. E. of Càrn Fiaclan - - - -	"	6 in. gives no height ; 1 in. shows contour, but gives no name.
"	"	Duke's Chair - - - -	2010	1½ m. S. of Càrn Cloich-mhuilinn - -	"	
"	"	Carn Geldie - - - -	2039	1½ m. E. of Duke's Chair - - - -	"	Cairn Geldie in 6 in.

Section II.—Central Cairngorms.

(1) CAIRNGORM, &C.

O. S. SHEET.		NAME	HEIGHT	POSITION.	PARISH.	NOTES.
6 inch.	1 in.					
Inv. 89, Ba. 43	74	Cairngorm - - - -	4084	N. Lat. 57° 7', W. Long. 3° 38' 34" - - 3¼ m. N. by E. of Ben Muich Dhui - -	Abernethy-Kincardine —Kirkmichael	Lies on the Inverness-Banff county march. Overlooks N. side of Loch Avon.
Inv. 89, Ba. 47	"	Stac an Fharaidh - - - -	3421	¼ m. S.S.E. of Cairngorm - - - -	Kirkmichael	Named only on C.C. map; overlooks N.W. corner of Loch Avon.
	"	Stag's Rock - - - -	3250	1¼ m. S. by W. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	
Inv. 89, Ba. 48	"	Fiacaille a Choire Chais [above]	3737	½ m. W. of Cairngorm - - - -	Abernethy-Kincardine —Kirkmichael	Lies on the Inverness-Banff county march.
"	"	Coire an t-Sneachda (Top)	3832	1 m. S.W. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	Lies on the Inverness-Banff county march.
"	"	Fiacaille Coire an t-Sneachda - - - -	3925	1¼ m. S.W. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	Lies on the Inverness-Banff county march.
"	"	Cairn an Lochain - - - -	3983	1½ m. S.W. by W. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	Lies on the Inverness-Banff county march; named only on C.C. map.
Inv. 89, Ba. 47, [Ab. 76]	"	Carn na Criche - - - -	3931	2 m. S.W. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	Lies at the meeting point of Inverness, Banff, and Aberdeen, and of Duthil-Rothiemurchus, Kirkmichael, and Crathie-Braemar. There is a small cairn; name not shown on any map.
Inverness 89	"	Creag na Leacainn, S. Top	3448	2¼ m. W. by S. of Cairngorm - - - -	Abernethy-Kincardine —Duthil-Rothiemurchus	Creag na Leacainn overlooks the E. side of the N. part of the Learg Ghruamach. The 6 in. shows 3379 midway between the cairns. The South Top is known locally as the Lurcher's Rock.
"	"	" N. Top	3365	¾ m. N. of Creag na Leacainn, S. Top	"	
"	"	Creag na Chalamain -	2579	11/12 m. N.N.W. of Creag na Leacainn, N. Top - - - -	"	
"	"	Castle Hill - - - -	2366	½ m. N.N.W. of Creag na Chalamain	"	
"	"	Airgiod-meall - - - -	2118	¾ m. N.E. of Castle Hill - - - -	Abernethy-Kincardine	
"	"	An t-Aonach - - - -	2117	2 m. N.W. by N. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	
Inverness 89	"	Cnap Coire na Spreidhe	3772	¾ m. N.E. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	6 in. prints the name too far N. [ridge.
Inverness 74	"	Sron a Chàno - - - -	3317	1 m. N. of Cnap Coire na Spreidhe -	"	6 in. prints the name on the N. part of the
"	"	Carn Lochan na Beinne	2500	1¼ m. N. by W. of Sron a Chàno - - - -	"	6 in. gives 2204, but 1 in. shows 2500 contour.
Inverness 75	"	Mam Suim - - - -	2394	3¼ m. N. by E. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	
"	"	Stac na h-Iolaire - - - -	2250	¼ m. S. of Mam Suim - - - -	"	
"	"	Creag na Gall - - - -	2000	1 m. N.W. by W. of Mam Suim - - - -	"	6 in. gives 1935, but 1 in. shows 2000 contour.
"	75	Ben Bynac - - - -	3574	2¾ m. N.E. by E. of Cairngorm - - - -	"	O.S. mistakenly marks the summit "Caip-
"	"	Little Bynac - - - -	3000	1 m. N.W. of Ben Bynac - - - -	" [-Kirkmich'l	Not named in any map. [lich".
Inv. 75, Ba. 48	"	A' Choinneach - - - -	3339	6 1/12 m. S.W. by S. of Ben Bynac -	Abernethy-Kincardine	Lies on the Inverness-Banff county march.

(2) BEN MUICH DHUI, &c.

O. S. SHEET.		NAME.	HEIGHT	POSITION.	PARISH	NOTES.
6 inch.	1 in.					
Ab. 76, Ba. 47	64	Ben Muich Dhui - - -	4296	N. Lat. 57° 4' 15", W. Long. 3° 40' 4"	Crathie-Braemar—Kirk-michael	Lies on the Aberdeen-Banff county march
		N. Top	4244	$\frac{3}{4}$ m. N. of Ben Muich Dhui - - -		
Aberdeen 87	"	Coire an Spùt Dheigr (Top	4095	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. E.S.E. of Ben Muich Dhui - - -	Crathie-Braemar	Overlooking Lochain Uaine "
"	"	Sròn Riach - - - (of)	3534	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. S. of previous top - - -	"	
"	"	Càrn a' Mhaim - - -	3329	$2\frac{1}{2}$ m. S. by E. of Ben Muich Dhui -	"	
"	"	Ceann Crionn Càrn a' Mhaim	3250	Ridge running N.N.E. from Càrn a' Mhaim - - -	"	Overlooking E. side of S. part of Learg Ghruamach.
Aberdeen 96	"	Sgòr Mòr - - -	2666	$2\frac{1}{2}$ m. S. by E. of Càrn a' Mhaim - - -	"	
"	"	Creagan nan Gabhar - - -	2250	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. N.W. by N. of Sgòr Mòr - - -	"	
"	"	Sgòr an Eòin - - -	2250	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. W. of Sgòr Mòr - - -	"	
"	"	Sgòr na Cùile - - -	2140	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. S.S.W. of Sgòr Mòr - - -	"	
Aberdeen 97	"	Sgòr Dubh - - -	2249	$\frac{5}{6}$ m. E. by N. of Sgòr Mòr - - -	"	
"	"	Leachd nan Uidhean - - -	2000	$1\frac{5}{12}$ m. S.E. by E. of Sgòr Dubh - - -	"	
"	"	Carn Mor - - -	2057	$\frac{5}{6}$ m. S.E. by E. of Sgòr Mòr - - -	"	
Ab. 76, Ba. 47	"	Cairn Etchachan - - -	3673	$1\frac{1}{2}$ m. N.E. by N. of Ben Muich Dhui	Crathie-Braemar—Kirk-michael	Lies on the Aberdeen-Banff county march ; named only on the C.C. map.
Banff, 48	74	Beinn Mheadhoin - - -	3883	$2\frac{5}{6}$ m. N.E. of Ben Muich Dhui - - -	Kirkmichael	
Ab. 77, Ba. 48	64	" S.W. Top	3750	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. S.W. of Beinn Mheadhoin - - -	Crathie-Braemar—Kirk-michael	Lies on the Aberdeen-Banff county march.
"	"	" S. Top	3551	$\frac{3}{4}$ m. S. of Beinn Mheadhoin - - -	"	Lies on the Aberdeen-Banff county march ; overlooking N. side of lower Coire Etchachan. [Avon.]
Banff 47 and 48	74	Stacan Dubha - - -	3000	$\frac{5}{6}$ m. W. of Beinn Mheadhoin - - -	Kirkmichael	Overlooking upper part of S. side of Loch Avon
Banff 48	"	Stac an Luich - - -	3250	$\frac{1}{2}$ m. N. of Beinn Mheadhoin - - -	"	Overlooking lower part of S. side of Loch Avon
"	"	Sron Ghorm - - -	3700	$\frac{1}{4}$ m. N.N.E. of Beinn Mheadhoin - - -	"	
Aberdeen 88	64	Derry Cairngorm - - -	3788	$1\frac{11}{12}$ m. E.S.E. of Ben Muich Dhui	Crathie-Braemar	
Aberdeen 77	"	Creagan a' Choire Etchar	3000	$11\frac{1}{12}$ m. N.N.E. of Derry Cairngorm	"	Overlooking S. side of lower Coire Etchachan
Aberdeen 88	"	Carn Crom - - [achan	2847	$1\frac{11}{12}$ m. S. by E. of Derry Cairngorm	"	
"	"	Creag an t-Seabhaig - -	2000	$\frac{5}{6}$ m. S.E. by E. of Carn Crom - - -	"	

C. G. CASH, F.R.S.G.S.

BEN LAOGHAL.

BY ALLAN CAMERON.

"It's a far cry from Aberdeen to Ben Vorlich" lately wrote the genial chairman of the club, but it is a much farther cry from Aberdeen to Ben Laoghal. This prince of Scottish mountains—for prince it deserves to be called on account of its graceful outline—rears its head almost in the extreme north-west of Scotland. Grierson characterises it as "one of the most picturesque mountains in Scotland", and he was not without experience. Even the "Statistical" writer refers to it in glowing terms, at a time, too, when mountains were not generally considered particularly worthy of attention. He described it as a "noble hill", "the queen of Highland mountains . . . presenting towards its base an expanded breast of two miles in breadth, and cleft at its top into four massy, towering, splintered peaks, standing boldly aloof from each other".

While cycling through the centre of Sutherlandshire in the early days of July, the writer was much impressed by the imposing precipices of a mountain away to the north, and on a nearer approach, so awe-inspiring did they become, that it was determined, if next day were favourable, to make a closer acquaintance with them. Tongue Hotel was made the head-quarters for the night. In that northerly clime, in the height of summer, darkness is slow in coming, and the evening was spent in watching the fine effects of the northern sun on the five conical summits of the mountain, then recognised to be Ben Laoghal (Loyal). Though its highest summit, An Caisteal, is only 2504 feet in height, yet its nearness to the sea, and its "splendid isolation", render it the most imposing natural feature of a very fascinating neighbourhood.

Next morning opened brightly, not a cloud obscured the sky, and everything betokened a glorious day. Consulting

a guide-book, I learned that the Ben was eight miles due south, and inaccessible from the Tongue side. A good road runs direct from the hotel almost to the base, and the eight miles were soon cycled over, and the machine left at a shepherd's cottage nestling at the base of the mountain. The guide-book was right; the summit facing Tongue was found to be a mass of almost perpendicular rock, rising to an altitude of nearly 2400 feet. None of the Cairngorm precipices looks so terrible as this towering mass, its height seemingly increased by its narrowness. This peak, like the others, tapered upwards, its summit a rocky platform of a very limited extent. I made the ascent by keeping this precipice on the right, making the best of the way up the grassy slopes. The incline was exceedingly steep, hands as well as feet having to be used. However, a steep climb has its advantages, compared to a long trudge over gentle slopes, and in two hours after leaving the hotel, I stood on the summit of the first peak. About a quarter of a mile due south rose An Caisteal.* The dip between was not deep, half an hour only being required to cover the distance. The day had fulfilled its early promise; the air was perfectly clear, and in every direction the view was unobstructed. Wind there was none, and the short time at disposal was occupied in locating the mountain peaks of this beautiful but desolate county. A glance over the rock facing southwards was enough to make one shudder. Sheer down went the precipice, an unbroken wall seemingly as great as that towering northwards. This was the precipice seen on the previous day while speeding along the shores of Loch Laoghal. On the summit were numerous pot-holes, perfectly circular and almost polished. They were very similar to those on Ben Avon, the largest being about 18 inches in diameter and elbow-deep with water. On account

* "On looking at Ben Laoghal from this quarter [Loch Laoghal—on the east], that part of it called the castle is seen, but no more of its peaks; and its appearance accounts for the name, for as viewed, from this side, it is surmounted by notches resembling those embrasures made for cannon in fortifications".—Grierson's "Autumnal Rambles among the Scottish Mountains", 3rd ed., 1856.

of the isolated position of the mountain, the view was very extensive. Directly west rose Ben Hope (3040), presenting a huge semicircular corrie towards Ben Laoghal. South-westward, a range terminating in Ben Hee (2864) closed the view in that direction. Twenty-four miles south-west towered Ben More Assynt (3273); while the view to the south was blocked by a long mountain wall, prominent on which were Ben Dearg (3547) (still snow-patched), and Ben Wyvis (3429). Almost exactly south, and twelve miles away, rose the huge mass of Beinn Cleith-bric (3154). This mountain occupies the centre of Sutherlandshire, and is on the direct road between Lairg and Tongue. Away to the east rose the twin summits—Ben Griam Mhor and Ben Griam Bheag, much resembling the Fife Lomonds in shape and relative position, but considerably higher. Morven (2313), some thirty miles off, was distinctly seen, and a look along the valley to the south of this mountain revealed the finely-shaped peak of Ben Rinnes, dim in the distance. Northwards the Atlantic sparkled in the sun, and to the north-east the rocky Dunnet Head was plainly visible. Even the Orkney Islands were boldly outlined. The scene was an ideal one, and it was not without a feeling of reluctance that the descent, the first thousand feet of which was very steep, was begun. Half-way down, a small loch, occupying the base of a huge corrie, was reached, out of which tumbled a brawling burn. The burn leapt in glistening foam, hundreds of feet down the steep slopes. This part of the Ben, facing the north-west, is birch clad, and walking was unpleasant owing to the dampness of the ground. Soon the shepherd's hut was reached, and a few minutes sufficed to bring me once more to Tongue Hotel. I had left at ten o'clock, and it was now only half-past two. That evening, on a journey of twenty-five miles eastwards along the Atlantic coast, Ben Laoghal presented ever new and, if possible, lovelier outlines. The day was a red-letter one among the many spent on the hills of Scotland.

THE WHITE MOUNTH IN WINTER.

BY ALEXANDER MCKENZIE.

“When ye White Mounth frae snaw is clear,
Ye day o’ doom is drawin’ near”.

IN the days when the mountain chain on the south side of the Dee was familiarly known as “The Mounth”, Lochnagar, even then recognised as the monarch of the range, was peculiarly entitled to the name “White Mounth”—snow naturally resting longest on its summit. Even at the present day, the deer forest which embraces Lochnagar is known as “The White Mounth Forest”.

While Lochnagar is fully appreciated in summer and autumn—as the pages of the Journal bear evidence—and a succession of tourists visits in thousands its river base, and hundreds ascend either by “the Ladder” from Ballater or Glen Callater from Braemar, yet in winter few penetrate the corries of the White Mounth, or climb its snow-clad slopes. Nevertheless, its winter glories appeal to the lover of nature, and will richly reward the climber. The dangers of a winter ascent are more fanciful than real, and even the real will yield to ordinary prudence. As we left Ballater on a beautiful January afternoon, winter had drawn its brush across the land with due regard to altitude. The village itself was snowless; the Coyles of Muick had their little peaks of serpentine and grass almost untouched by the winter months, but Conachraig was not without drapery, while Lochnagar was dazzling in its alpine-arctic garb. Great lines of snow filled the rocky gullies of the eastern corrie, and the Cac Carn Beag overlooked, with shrouded dignity, the strath of the Dee. We lingered on the bridge of Ballater drinking in the beauties of the scene, appreciating them as only imprisoned townsmen, with the liberty of a couple of days, can revel in the stern grandeur of the Highlands. But the sinking sun warned us that if

we wished to enjoy a day-light walk up Glen Muick, we must be jogging, and so with knapsack on back we pushed on to Inschnabobart.

The early morning was clear and crisp, and seemed to invite one to the open to enjoy its bracing qualities. But such invitations are, alas, too often treated like good resolutions, and it was not till eleven o'clock that we stepped off the road on to the pony path at Allnagiubhsaich Lodge. The first halt was made in Clashrathan, at Cameron's Well. The sheltering snow protected the spring, with the result that the temperature of the water was warmer than anticipated, and so reminded us of certain springs which have the reputation of being cold in summer and warm in winter. The Cuidhe Crom now attracted attention, for it began to coquet with a storm on the summit. There seemed to be occasional falls of snow, and soon the prospect was obscured by mist. Anon a glimpse would be obtained as though to lure us upward, but, fair or storm, we had determined to put the White Mounth under foot. A "short cut" was made across Clashrathan, halting again at the Fox Cairn Well. One of our party has had to search under snow for this Well in mid-winter; this January day, however, it was as open and exposed as in July. With the ascent of the Ladder, our first little difficulty began; the path was mostly filled up with snow, here and there concealing little patches of ice. A new course had to be struck, but the top of the plateau was reached with little extra exertion. Sheltered heretofore by the mountain itself, we now, however, found ourselves fully exposed to a blast which, for the remainder of the ascent, demanded continual attention to the maintaining of our equilibrium. The wind blew with vehemence across the deep corrie, at the bottom of which the loch reposed under a covering of ice. There was exceedingly little snow on the wind-swept summit, but treacherous sheets of ice had to be dodged and negotiated with the utmost care. The top was reached only to be immediately left, for prospect there was none, and with the thermometer at 33° there was little inducement to linger at an altitude of nearly four thousand

feet. Concerning the density of the mist and its bewildering effects, it will be sufficient to record that the party, guided by a forester to whom the summit of Lochnagar was as familiar as Fleet Street to a London journalist, unexpectedly found itself almost on the brink of a precipice—another instance of misplaced confidence. Once more under the crest of Cuidhe Crom we were in shelter, observing with a grim satisfaction that the mist had disappeared, leaving the top quite clear. Suddenly Glen Muick was filled with a golden glory, for the uncovered sun seemed to pour down on the glen, filling it with, as it seemed, clouds of fire. Strath Girnock shared in this magnificent display. We reached the road before four o'clock, and although of course the grand light effects had vanished, they had left an impression on us which will not soon be effaced.

Beyond a few deer under the 2000 feet line, there was exceedingly little animal life seen. Several grouse were startled in the heather, while far up the mountain, one or two ptarmigan flew, ghost-like, into the storm, croaking weirdly as they fled.

The following March found us once more in Glen Muick. Despite the exceeding "softness" of the day, we set out for the Cac Carn Beag, following the stereotyped route as far as the foot of the Ladder. Thence climbing the saddle between the Meikle Pap and Cuidhe Crom, we descended towards the head of the loch, with the view of making the ascent by the Black Spout. Walking among the boulders and through soft snow was toilsome enough, and a halt was accordingly made at the "forking" in the Spout. It was while seated there that the party witnessed one of the most interesting incidents that can be seen on a mountain—the fall of an avalanche. The day was now comparatively dry, but the precipices were dripping with water, and one sank at least a foot at every step in the snow. There was a gentle south-westerly breeze, but the corrie sheltered us from the wind, and generally perfect stillness prevailed. The loch was completely covered with ice, rendering the scene more death-like. At times, however, great rumbling noises were heard in the neighbouring gullies as though

heavy express trains were rushing through tunnels; but nothing could be seen. Then there would be utter silence, only to be broken in a similar manner. As the day was young, we lingered at the "forking", and soon the pranks of nature ceased to startle us. But a greater noise than we had yet heard—a noise which is best described as a mixture of the previous sounds with that of artillery added—brought us to our feet in an instant. Barely two hundred yards to the eastward, snow and debris were pouring or rather rushing down a narrow gully with a velocity which seemed to us at least ten times greater than that of the Falls of Muick, which we had observed in the walk up the glen. The gully left, the avalanche spread itself all over the talus at the head of the loch, only the extreme softness of the snow preventing its finding a bed on the loch. It was a magnificent sight; the terrible rapidity with which the gully seemed to vomit the avalanche was most impressive. We had scarcely recovered from the excitement when another avalanche, but on a much smaller scale, came plunging down the Cac Carn Mor branch of the Black Spout. It was unaccompanied by stones. A little of the snow diverged from the line of descent, spent as it reached our halting-place.

Taking these incidents as hints, we resumed the ascent, the angle of which soon rose from 30° to 50° . At the top, where an overhanging snow-cornice had to be cut away, the angle increased to between 70° and 80° . We returned by the top of the corrie, admiring the picturesque appearance of the snow-clad crags, and observing with considerable interest the points where the avalanches had started.

The following morning, we examined the crags with a telescope, and found that at least one half of the snow had disappeared—most probably in a similar manner to what we had witnessed the previous day.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

LAST year's summer excursion of the Club was the BEN VORLICH furthest away from the Cairngorms of any yet arranged, AND and, as an experiment, it turned out all that could be STUC A CHROIN. desired. The party left on Monday, 13th July, by the 6.50 A.M. Caledonian train, in a saloon carriage, picking up accessions to its number at Laurencekirk and Perth. The party was still further augmented at Comrie, the railway terminus, where the carriages, which had come up from Crieff, were entered, and a pleasant drive of about eight miles through most delightful scenery brought the Club to St. Fillans, at the foot of Loch Earn, where luncheon had been arranged. Thereafter the drive was resumed and the Earn crossed, and the road on the south side of the loch entered. The richness of the foliage, the glimpses of the loch through the green setting of the trees, and the lovely summer day, added a charm to the drive which will make it remain a pleasant memory for many a day. An eight-mile drive from St. Fillans brought the party to Ardvorlich House, at the entrance to Glen Vorlich, the point from which the mountains were to be ascended, and where the carriages were to wait the descent. From the road at Ardvorlich the cairn of the Ben is clearly visible, and the task of raising oneself from the level of the loch to the top of Ben Vorlich with the thermometer somewhere in the "nineties" looked somewhat formidable. For a time the company kept well together, but it was soon seen that if the programme was to be completed by including Stuc a Chroin a little more progress would have to be made, so those who desired to "do" both points struck out, leaving the others to take matters more leisurely. As will be seen from the map which accompanied Mr. Murray's article in last number, the hill rises in a gradual slope with here and there a steeper part between levels, the path near the top running close to and round a deep precipice forming the north face of the hill. This face has a long tail of scree descending from the top. The actual summit is very narrow, and is bounded on the south side by a precipice if anything even steeper than the northern one. The view, which had been gradually opening up during the ascent, was very good, except to the east, where a heat haze shut out the prospect in that direction. Northwards Ben Lawers, Ben Chonzie, and the more distant Schichallion were seen to great advantage, with the waters of Loch Earn lying at our feet. North-westwards the towering summit of Ben Nevis was clearly visible, and a range of hills lying between brought the eye down to Glen Ogle with its serpentine marking representing the Callander and Oban railway.

South-westward Ben Lomond, with the other mountains in the vicinity, formed a group easily recognisable. South-eastward Stirling Rock, Abbey Craig, and the Ochills appeared through the slighter haze which was spreading from the east. The stay on the top was necessarily brief, yet sufficient to hold a meeting of the Club for the purpose of admitting new members.

Descending to the saddle between Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin, a few minutes were spent at a snack lunch, and the members who had elected to do Stuc a Chroin commenced their climb, which, as Mr. Murray says, consists of a series of wriggles, for nothing short of all-fours sufficed to reach the top of the rock face, lying as it does at an angle varying between 50 and 70 degrees. However, carefully and, of necessity, slowly, the point was gained, and from this second stand of vantage the party looked back on the summit of the Ben and its steep, rocky, southern slope. Making a short detour, the descent was rapidly made, and Ardvorlich reached as the last of the second party were arriving. The time for the round was exactly six hours. The return journey to Crieff was made by St. Fillans, and through the policies of Ochtertyre. The Club dined at the Commercial Hotel under the genial presidency of the chairman, Mr. Robert Anderson. Crieff was left for Aberdeen the following morning at 10:37.—A. M. MUNRO.

ON 11th July, J. W. Davidson and the writer ascended Ben Ledi (2875) from Callander. There are two or three routes to the summit, but we took the longest, though most picturesque, one—by the Pass of Leny. This route is well detailed in "Baddeley". On quitting the Pass and crossing the Leny, a path is struck which leads gradually up to the main ridge of the mountain at its southern extremity—a somewhat long detour, rendered necessary by the rocky escarpment on the east side of the Ben, overlooking Loch Lubnaig. The path is very "intermittent", however; and, finding eventually that we had strayed from it, we made direct for the ridge up a grassy slope, thus cutting off a large part of the detour, though, most probably, saving nothing in time. The ridge gained, two hills intervene ere the summit is reached—two of the most deceptive hills we have ever encountered, for, though looking very formidable at a distance, they are surmounted with remarkable ease. Ben Ledi is grassy to the very top, and the whole ascent is therefore easy; we accomplished it in three hours from Callander, walking rather leisurely. The summit is crowned by a large cairn, replacing one erected to mark the Queen's Jubilee, which "was laid in ruins by a number of senseless and evil-disposed young scamps". The day was warm, and a thick haze prevailed; so that we had, practically, no view, though we loitered on the summit for an hour, deluded by occasional indications that the atmosphere was likely to clear. For an account of the prospect—on a clear day—readers must be referred to guide-books, local and other; Baddeley describes the view as "fine and more varied

than that from the generality of Scottish summits". During the ascent of the lower slopes, however, we had several glimpses of the remarkably fine view down the Pass of Leny to Callander Bridge, which is said to be "as truly Turneresque a prospect as any in Britain". We descended the western slope of Ben Ledi, by Gleann Casaig, to Glen Finglas, making for Achnahard and Duart, two farms at the confluence of the two glens. From Duart, crossing the Finglas, we ascended a ridge, and then, gaining another ridge behind that, found ourselves above the Trossachs, with an excellent view of Ben Venue, Loch Katrine, and the mountains beyond. We descended on the Trossachs Hotel; afterwards walked to the pier at the foot of Loch Katrine; and then walked to Callander by Lochs Achray and Vennachar—a walk on the beauties of which there is no need, at this time of day, to expatiate. The whole day's round may be set down, moderately, at between 24 and 25 miles; it occupied us, in one way or other (halts included), 12 hours.

ON the following day we walked from Callander to GLEN ARTNEY. Crieff, the Club's head-quarters for the Ben Vorlich and Stuc a Chroin expedition. The route lies mainly through Glen Artney, part of a deer forest of the same name, in which, it appears, the Prince Consort shot his first stag, but much better known, no doubt (and still more famous, one may safely add), from the pursuit of another stag—the pursuit immortalised in the opening canto of "The Lady of the Lake", which, beginning "In lone Glen Artney's hazel shade", ended "In the deep Trosach's wildest nook". (By the way, we saw no hazel shade; it probably existed only in Sir Walter Scott's imagination.) Leaving Callander at the east end of the village, we walked for some distance along an ascending road skirting the Crags of Callander. We diverged a little to view the Bracklinn Falls, one of the "sights" of Callander; and as the Falls are constituted by the Keltie Water—along which our route was to be for some miles—it naturally occurred to us to follow up the stream. This was easily done, by the help of a foot-path, for a little distance; but, the foot-path suddenly ending at the edge of a tangled bit of wood, we ascended to the ridge above and resumed the road. We parted with this road about three miles further on, just after crossing the Keltie by a wooden bridge. Here a little foot-path or track may be discerned, turning abruptly to the right. Like the path up Ben Ledi, however, it is exceedingly "intermittent"; but, pushing up the glen for some distance beyond a somewhat striking cairn (evidently a boundary mark, a large stone at the base bearing on two sides the names "Ancaster" and "Aveland"; both titles of the peer who owns the glen), a regular track will be struck which can be followed without difficulty. The glen is wider and of "softer" aspect than the glens with which we are familiar in the Cairngorm region; long pasture grass is the feature and not heather, and the enclosing hills are green, not brown—grass-

covered to their tops. After crossing a stream by a wooden bridge the track ascends, widens out and improves, and winds round to the left. In a short time the shooting lodge of Auchinner is passed—a “palatial summer residence”, as it is denominated in a Callander guide-book—and below the lodge a friendly direction-post points the road to Comrie, the road, at a little distance on, crossing the Ruchill Water. To Comrie is seven good miles from this point, and Crieff is six miles beyond Comrie; but the roads to both places are excellent walking ones and picturesque as well, the Comrie-Crieff road (south side) especially so, long stretches of it being like an avenue. A fallacious notion seems prevalent at Callander that Comrie is only 12 miles distant; it strikes us as being nearly half as much again. At anyrate we consumed nine hours on the journey from Callander to Crieff, but then we were not bent on “establishing a record”.—ROBERT ANDERSON.

were the objective of the Club's autumn excursion on
 COILLEBHARR Monday, 28th September, the day's programme embracing
 AND ing the ascent—as a criminal indictment would phrase
 LORD ARTHUR'S it—of “one or other, or both of them”; the double
 CAIRN “feat”, it may be added, was quite easy of accomplishment. Exceedingly bad weather prevailed during the
 previous week, which probably accounted for the excursion to the Vale of Alford being participated in by only 27 individuals. It rained in torrents on the Sunday, besides, but the Monday proved a remarkably fine day, and particularly fine for walking, there being just a sufficient touch of autumnal sharpness in the air to prevent over-heating and compel steady “going”. Proceeding by an early train to Alford, the party was joined there by Mr. George Wilken, Waterside of Forbes, and Mr. George F. Barron, Meikle Endovie, and then drove to Littlewood Park. The bulk of the party (who ascended both hills) then proceeded to Coillebharr (or Callievar); the remainder drove on to the farm of Logie, thence ascending Lord Arthur's Cairn. Both parties re-united on the summit of the latter hill, though one or two members drove or walked to Lumsden Village from Littlewood Park by the public road. The two hills are described elsewhere, so that it is only necessary to add that a formal meeting was held on the top of Lord Arthur's Cairn, at which a candidate was admitted a member—with the due performance of the customary “rite”. Thereafter, Mr. Robert Anderson, the chairman of the Club, who presided, conveyed the thanks of those present to Mr. Wilken and Mr. Barron for the assistance they had rendered in piloting the respective parties up the two hills and the valuable topographical and historical information they had supplied. He also made a complimentary allusion to the presence of Captain Pirie, M.P. Walking then to Lumsden Village, the party dined at the “Lumsden Arms”, the Club again enjoying the abundant hospitality of “mine hostess”, Mrs. Smith. A pleasant drive to Gartly in the shades of evening, and a

rapid railway journey to Aberdeen, brought an exceedingly pleasant excursion to a close. It may be noted that the day's programme was regulated by a "time-table" prepared by the chairman, who had previously gone over the ground, and that this "time-table" was faithfully kept without any unnecessary speed being exacted.

ON 28th September last the writer, accompanied by
DESCENT OF Messrs. Alexander W. Christie and W. A. Henderson,
BEN MUICH made a novel descent of Ben Muich Dhui. Starting
DHUI BY THE from Lynwilg, and driving to Auldrue, we made (at
PRECIPICES. 10 o'clock) for the slope of Creag a' Chalamain, reaching
the top of Creag na Leacainn at noon. Fresh snow
was lying on the hills from a height of about 2000 feet, and at a depth
of several feet where it had been blown into wreaths. From Creag na
Leacainn we struck for the cairn of Ben Muich Dhui, holding well to
the crest of the hill, but keeping the deep gorge of the Larig full in
view the whole way. The weather was excessively cold, and after
passing the cairn of the Ben, which was crusted over with ice, at 2
o'clock we took a short rest for lunch at the 'Engineers' hut. Derry
Cairngorm was the next item in our programme, and to reach it we
took, in the first instance, a direct line for the rocky top of Coire an
Sput Dheirg (4095), the highest point in the range of precipices forming
the south-eastern face of Ben Muich Dhui. To reach Derry Cairngorm
from this point two ways were open: we could either keep along the
top of the precipices, round the end of the corrie and so on, keeping
Coire Etchachan to the left, or we could take the more direct way and
drop from the top of the precipices, keeping Lochan Uaine on our
right, into Coire an Sput Dheirg (which really forms the upper end of
Glen Luibeg), and then make our way from the foot of this corrie to
the summit of Derry Cairngorm. We chose the latter route, and
descended the precipices by an interesting rocky gully, then filled at the
top with soft snow, the ascent of which would afford some rock climb-
ing of a mild description. The gully leaves the summit a short distance
to the left of the highest point of the crags; it is quite narrow and
V-shaped at the top, but forms a perfectly simple means of descent.
Reaching the burn of the corrie at 3.40, we climbed the rough side of
Derry Cairngorm in less than half an hour, arriving at the summit at
4.5. From the top we held along the ridge to Carn Crom, whence we
dropped into Glen Luibeg on our way to Inverey.—GEORGE DUNCAN.

ON 8th November last, a party consisting of Mr. Wm.
BEN NEVIS Brown, Mr. Raeburn, and the writer made the ascent
IN NOVEMBER. from Fort-William, the intention on starting being to
climb the Carn Dearg Buttress, the second of the four
great rocky ridges on the north-east face of the mountain which con-
front the climber as he walks up the Allt a' Mhuilinn. Leaving Fort-
William a little after 7 o'clock A.M., we held up Glen Nevis, and joined
the Observatory path, having in front fine views of Stob Ban (3274)

and Sgor a' Mhaim (3601), the peaks that guard the top of the glen. We followed the path till we came in sight of Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe, where, at an altitude of about 2000 feet the first snow was encountered. The lochan itself was almost frozen over, and it was bitterly cold as we walked round the base of Carn Dearg (3961), the western spur of the Ben, into the glen of the Allt a' Mhullinn. We kept well up the side of the glen, and in a short time had the precipitous rocks of the Castle Ridge above us, with, in front, our proposed point of attack, and further off we could distinguish the outline of the remaining two great ridges, the sharp "Tower" Ridge, and the more massive North-East Buttress. On reaching the foot of the Carn Dearg Buttress we began to prospect for the ascent, only to find—as, indeed, we had for some time suspected might be the case—that owing to the condition of the rocks the ascent of the mountain by any of its north-east ridges was quite impracticable. A slight rain on the day before, followed by a sharp frost, had glazed the whole surface of the rocks with a thin, but extremely slippery, coating of ice to such an extent that absolutely no hand-holds, not to speak of foot-holds, could be got. We accordingly had to give up all idea of a rock climb, and resolved instead to reach the top by one of the gullies. Ultimately we chose gully No. 4 (*S.M.C. Journal*, Vol. III., p. 318), one of several gullies which lead to the summit from Coire na Ciste, the corrie lying between the Tower Ridge and the Carn Dearg Buttress. Shortly after passing the lochan of this corrie we found the snow begin to harden, and the angle of ascent to increase to such a degree that the rope became essential for safety, and for a considerable distance we had to use our ice axes with an assiduity that soon drove away all sensations of cold. At one point in particular, within 150 feet of the top of the gully, when the angle was about 70°, and the snow, or rather ice, was, to use the words of our hard-working leader, "as hard as adamant", the ascent required a good deal of caution.

We reached the summit about one o'clock, and paid a visit to the Observatory, where we were hospitably received by the observers. The average depth of snow on the top was, they told us, 17 inches, but in some places it was blown to a much greater depth than this. Our stay on the top was prolonged by a careful observation of the "Observatory" gully, with its branch, the "Gardez l'Eau". The latter is manifestly impossible, and the ascent by the former was pronounced by Brown, after we had let him down about 60 feet, to be also impracticable. We made a leisurely descent by the western slopes, joining the path a little above the pay-box, and reaching Fort-William about six o'clock.—GEORGE DUNCAN.

THE three newspaper paragraphs which follow, will be read with varying feelings :

EAGLE.

On Saturday last, Mr. Farquhar Macrae, game-keeper, Kinlochewe, scaled one of the precipices of

Slioch, and found an eagle's nest with two eggs in it, which he took away with him.

A Galashiels tradesman has had an extraordinary adventure with an eagle on the hills between Steele Road Station and Riccarton Junction. It happened between twelve and one o'clock, when the sun was shining in a cloudless sky. He was startled by an unaccountable shadow, and almost on the instant he was struck on the head, and his hat knocked off. On looking up he saw a large eagle hovering over him, and poising for another swoop. Fortunately, he had an umbrella in his hand, and with it he managed to defend himself. The eagle swooped upon him nine or ten times, but he always succeeded in driving it off. The express train from the north passed along about this time, and the eagle flew off.

The other day an example of the golden eagle was trapped in the neighbourhood of Achinduich, in Sutherlandshire, where the species still nestles, and where lingering examples of the wild cat are now and again found. The trap grasped one of the legs of the bird immediately above the tibial joint, the bone and the softer parts, with exception of the tendon, being entirely separated by the jaws of the trap. Having been three days a prisoner, and consequently three days without food, the stomach on dissection was found to contain only a small portion of rabbit fur. The bird, a male, nevertheless weighed 7 lb. 5½ oz., being considerably over the average weight of the male, which in this species is considerably smaller than the female. The bird measured 33¼ inches from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail, and 76 inches from tip to tip of the extended wings. Not the least interesting feature of the Sutherlandshire bird is the plumage, the tail being in the last stage of the immature state. Had the bird survived the autumn moult, the tail, which at present is white at the base, bordered with brownish black at the extremity, would have been of a uniform clouded brown. The tail is 14 inches long; extended it is fan-shape, the brown border repeating the circular line. On the central feather the black extends 4¾ inches along the shaft, while on the side feathers it advances 6½ inches; that is to say, the coloured band is longest on the side feathers, which are the shortest in the tail, and narrowest on the central feather, which is the longest. In this state the plumage is most prized by collectors. Except a few small feathers sprouting on the back of the head, and which are much darker than those which are full grown, the bird shows no signs of moult. The plumage attains its perfection in December—if a bird that is always in moult can ever be said to be in perfect plumage.

NEW
MEMBERS.

THE following members have been admitted since June last :—Messrs. Andrew D. Ruxton, Oswald H. M'Lean, Alexander Moncrieff, Robert H. Urquhart, William Garden, Robert Murray, and William M'Ewan.

was held on 16th December, 1896—the Chairman, Mr. Robert Anderson, presiding. The Office-bearers and Committee were re-elected.

OUR EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING The excursions for the current year were fixed as follows :—Spring Holiday—Ben Aigan ; Summer Holiday—Beinn Mheadhoin and Derry Cairngorm ; Autumn Holiday—Morven. For the purposes of a Club Meet, on the occasion of the Summer Holiday, the headquarters of the Club will be at Inverey from Friday to Wednesday.

The question of celebrating the 60th year of Her Majesty's reign by a display of fireworks on Ben Muich Dhui and Lochnagar was referred to the Committee.

The meeting unanimously and cordially resolved to present the Secretary, on the occasion of his approaching marriage, with a cheque for ten guineas out of the funds of the Club, accompanying the present with their best wishes.

REVIEWS.

THE "CONTOUR" ROAD BOOK. THE main idea of this book—to present a series of "elevation" plans of the roads throughout Scotland, mileage being indicated as well as height—is commendable. Primarily, the book is meant for cyclists, but pedestrians may occasionally find it serviceable, though, of course, no contour is indicated beyond (for example) the Linn of Dee or Cock Bridge. One of the most striking contours in the book is that of the road from Edzell to Banchory, which goes over the Cairn o' Mount.

THE VALE OF ALFORD, PAST AND PRESENT. is referred to in the article on "Two Donside Hills". Compiled as "A Souvenir of the Montgarrie Bridge Bazaar", held last summer, it gives a brief account of "The Vale", historical, topographical, and geological, with, of course, some notice of the hills by which the valley is enclosed. This notice, however, is about the briefest and baldest conceivable; the author of the article mentioned must have gone elsewhere for the facts he has collected. The modesty of the compilation, it should be acknowledged, is commendable in these days when the inordinate "puffing" of localities is all the vogue. The Vale of Alford, we are assured, has never been the birthplace of poets, warriors, or statesmen of renown, "yet in its own humble sphere it has done its best". Good old Alford!

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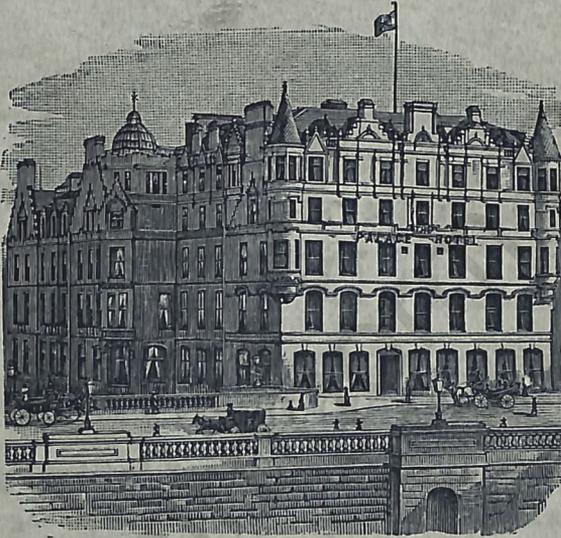
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