

Vol. II.

July, 1898.

No. 11.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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ISSUED TWICE A YEAR.

PUBLISHED BY

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.

AGENTS:

ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

No. 1 is out of Print.

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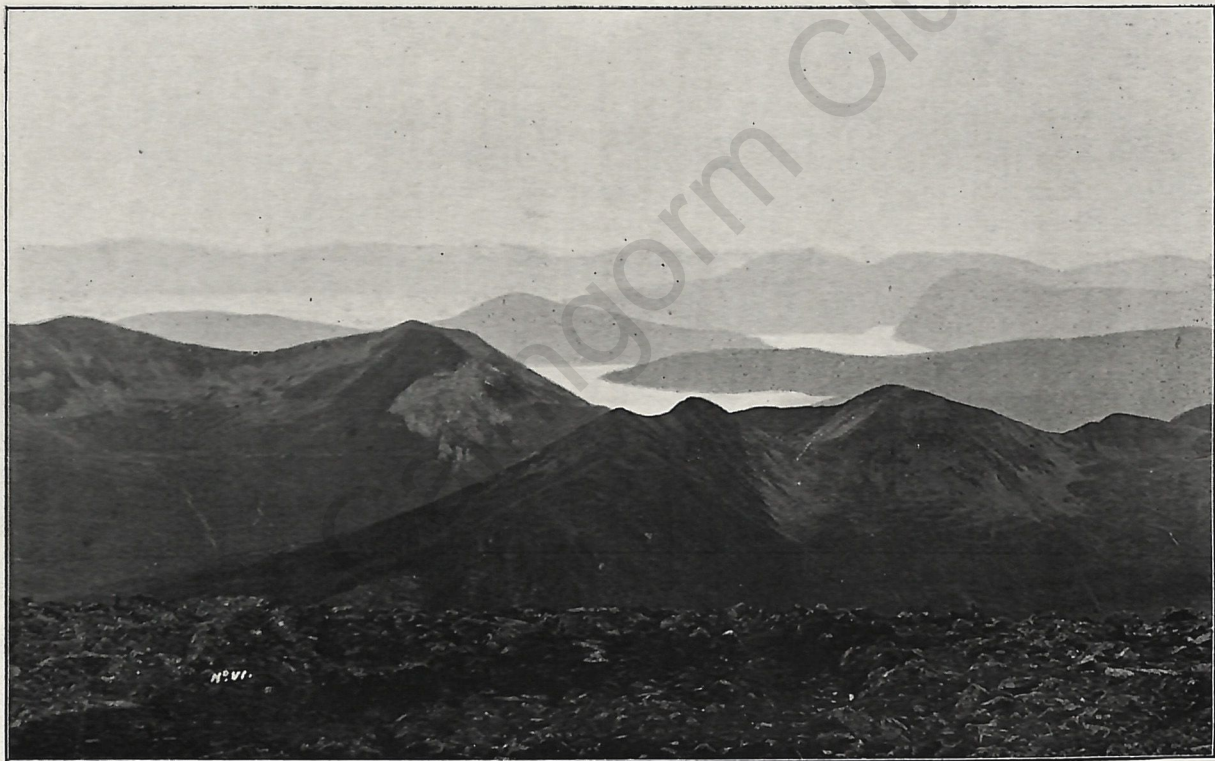
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THE S.S.E. VIEW FROM BEN NEVIS, WITH FOG IN THE VALLEYS.

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LIFE AND WORK AT BEN NEVIS OBSERVATORY.

BY JOHN S. BEGG, M.A.

THERE is a peculiar, and in my eyes an excellent, custom at Edinburgh University, that those who have graduated Master of Arts with Honours in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy are given the chance of spending one of the so-called summer months—June, July, August, and September—at the Ben Nevis Observatory, in order to relieve the regular staff, who need their holidays as badly as most people. I took advantage of this provision of my Alma Mater, and it was arranged that I should act as observer throughout September of 1896, along with a more experienced fellow-student. On 1st September I left the Low Level Observatory at Fort William about 9 a.m. with the assurance that, if I was in at all good form, I should reach the summit about 1. As it happened, I was not in good form, and consequently I cursed the apparent endlessness of that stony bridle-path, with its successive zig-zags up the mountain side, long before I reached the large, broad plateau which one has to cross before facing the last stiff few hundred feet, named from the builder of the Observatory Maclean's Steep. However, I did arrive at last about four o'clock, feeling more dead than alive, and much too tired to take any interest in my surroundings. Next day my duties commenced, and it was arranged that through-

out the month my companion should take the long night watch from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. inclusive, as well as the 2, 3, and 4 p.m. observations. I was to take the rest, so that we had each our twelve observations daily, though there is little doubt that I had the more enviable lot of the two.

Before leaving on 1st October I had taken such a fancy to the place that I had volunteered to return in the middle of October and take ordinary observer's duty till Christmas (an offer which was accepted by the authorities), so that, after a fortnight's holiday, 17th October found me again on the summit after taking about six hours to ascend. I had gone somewhat out of my way in order to get a fuller view of the magnificent cliff which forms the northern side of the mountain, dropping from the summit sheer down to a depth of from 1500 to 2000 feet. Both the summit cairn and the Observatory are situated within a few feet of this precipice, and, by looking over the edge of a wooden landing-stage built on its very brink for the purpose of tipping over the Observatory refuse, one gets a thrilling idea of its awful height. On this particular day in October its whole face, as I saw it from a spur of the Ben opposite to it, presented a weird and Arctic appearance. Alternate snow, thaw, and frozen fog had transformed its face into a white sheet, relieved in its monotony by gigantic icicles and huge light green slabs of ice, all shining dazzlingly in the bright sunshine.

At the outset it seems fitting that I should rectify four errors that many people seem to fall into as regards the Observatory:—(1) that it is entirely supported by Government; (2) that it is an astronomical Observatory; (3) that in some vague way the work has to do with the weather forecasts which appear in the daily papers; (4) that Ben Nevis is pointed in shape, with a narrow summit.

As to the first, the expenses of the Observatory are certainly partially defrayed by an annual grant from Government, but public subscriptions defray the greater part. (2) The Observatory is in no sense whatever astronomical; there is not a single instrument of the kind in the place, with the possible exception of a telescope, which is em-

ployed for observing the views on a fine day. The work is purely meteorological—*i.e.*, connected with the weather. (3) The work done there has nothing to do with the forecasts issued nightly from London. Several Scottish stations do send nightly reports to London, and very valuable they are, but Ben Nevis is not one of them. (4) The summit of “the Ben” (as those who have lived there usually and affectionately term it) is not a real peak, but is practically flat, there being an area of about 70 acres, any point on which is hardly appreciably lower than the Ordnance Survey cairn.

The advantages for scientific purposes of the summit station on the Ben are twofold—(1) It is worked in conjunction with a sea-level station at Fort William, close at hand, and (2) “it is situated in the track of the south-west storms from the Atlantic, which exercise, particularly during the colder months of the year, so preponderating an influence on the weather of Europe”.

The permanent staff consists of four men, two to attend to the Low Level Station, and two for the summit, and these four interchange places when a spell of settled weather makes it safe to do so, in order that the life of none of them may become too monotonous. In addition to these four observers, there is a roadman, who looks after the bridle-path, which, from base to summit, has been made and is kept in condition at the expense of the Scottish Meteorological Society, who levy, therefore, a just tax of 1s. per head on all persons using this path to ascend the mountain. A male cook on the summit does the work of a general servant, with this difference from the ordinary “general”, that he is treated as one of the family—a small one, indeed, consisting of the two observers and himself.

In the summer months, and in future possibly in winter also, observations are regularly taken by a young Edinburgh meteorologist at a hut half-way up the hill, at a height of 2200 feet, built originally for the convenience of the roadman for shelter when working on the path. At all three stations the observations regularly taken are—atmospheric pressure (*i.e.*, height of the barometer), temperature,

humidity, rainfall, direction and force of wind, rainband, and amount of cloud and sunshine. At the base station at Fort William, situated about two miles by road from where the bridle-path begins to ascend the hill, nearly all these elements are recorded continuously by the most ingenious automatic methods, chiefly photographic.

At the Summit Station, where frost, drifting snow, and frozen fogs clog and form huge accretions on all outside instruments exposed for long to the weather during nine months out of the twelve, automatic registration, with its delicate apparatus, was very soon found to be out of the question, and the more laborious, though almost as satisfactory, method of hourly observations, night and day, was resorted to, and that has been the daily routine now for fifteen years.

The Observatory is built of wood, each room having double wooden walls, padded in between with felt. On to this, however, is added, both for comfort and for stability, a stone wall varying in thickness from 4 feet at less exposed parts to 10 feet round the base of the tower. All the windows are double to prevent draughts. The tower, so often to be mentioned, is an indispensable part of the building, for, the roof being flat and the wind nearly always fairly strong, snow does not lie deeply on the roof, but gets blown off, and collects all round the house. Also, if the snow is drifting badly, the main entrance gets completely blocked, and it is useless attempting to clear it till the weather changes, as the snow drifts in quicker than it can be shovelled out. But by climbing up an inside ladder to the tower, and opening its door, we reach the roof by a few wooden steps, whence, either by a few more steps, or, if the snow is deeper, by a jump, we reach the hard upper surface of the snow-covered mountain, and thence, a few yards off, the thermometer-box and the rain-gauge. And though it is not exactly pleasant to step out of that tower door in the middle of the night to face for a few minutes drifting snow and a wind blowing steadily 90 or 100 miles per hour, still, as the poet says, "Variety's the spice of life that gives it all its flavour"; and such an experience is preferable to being

boxed up for days together without any means of exit; and, in addition, you have the satisfaction of feeling that you are doing your duty as a Briton should. As, however, this tower was not erected till the summer of 1884, "occasional interruptions in the observations occurred during the first five months on to April, 1884. As the season advanced, the interruptions became less frequent, and from 7th May, 1884, the observations have been made without the break of an hour, except for fourteen consecutive hours, from 6 p.m., 21st February, 1885, to 8 a.m. of the 22nd, this period being signalised by a storm of such unprecedented severity as absolutely precluded the possibility of any egress to the instruments" (Trans. Royal Soc., Edin., Vol. XXXIV., p. 29).

The house, excepting the tower, is one-storied, and consists of office, kitchen, four "bunks" called bedrooms, and—what constitutes half the building—store-rooms for coke, paraffin, and food. All these are brought up during the summer months, when the hill is practically free from snow, in daily instalments on ponies' backs, and it is a rare thing to get a pony up with the luxury of fresh meat between the end of September and June. For the greater part of the year, therefore, the observers exist on beef, mutton, tongue, salmon, turnips, peas, peaches, prunes, tomatoes, and milk, all tinned, along with tea, coffee, sago, rice, etc., bread, potatoes, onions, ham, dried fish, and dried apples. There being no springs on the summit, our drink in summer was rain water, and in winter melted snow, both being much more palatable than I expected. It is a rule of the Observatory that, with the exception of a small bottle of brandy kept, in case of emergencies, in the medicine chest, no intoxicating liquor is to be found on the summit—a rule which is strictly adhered to, with very rare exceptions.

As to animal and vegetable life, of the latter it may be said that it is non-existent, for, with the exception of a little moss here and there and one poor solitary flower once plucked by an observer, there is no trace of vegetable life above about 3500 feet, nothing but hard, jagged boulders and banks of small loose stones called "scree". Animal

life is scarce; but snow buntings and ravens are frequently seen on or near the summit. White weasels and stoats make their abode there also, and two of the latter now standing stuffed in the Meteorological Office at Edinburgh were caught inside the Observatory. Foot-prints of hares and foxes are frequently to be seen both over the summit and on the Observatory roof. One early morning in winter the observer on duty was sitting by the stove in the office when he suddenly felt impelled to turn round and look at the window. On doing so, he saw two bright eyes, which peered at him for a moment through the darkness and then vanished. A weird experience; but when he went out for his next observation he found the mystery explained, for outside the window and over the roof were the marks of a fox's feet. Deer and ptarmigan, though common lower down, never venture so high as the summit. Hawks and eagles have been observed, but not at close quarters. House flies are found inside the Observatory, and in May and June the surface of the snow sometimes swarms with small black insects, chiefly coleoptera and aphides.

In the matter of dress, as can be imagined, the observers, being cut off from all civilisation for most of the year, are not very particular. Comfort and not elegance is aimed at, and in cold, stormy weather the appearance of an observer outside is something of a cross between that of a North Sea pilot and an Arctic explorer. In all weathers, unless it be exceptionally fine, or when he puts on his snow shoes, the observer discards his ordinary boots, and wears long sea boots reaching to the knee. If the weather be wet he dons his oilskin coat and trousers and his capacious sou'wester. If it be cold and drifting hard, he puts on his Icelandic stocking, a marvellous thick worsted arrangement, which covers up all the head and neck except the eyes and nose, and even over this a sealskin bonnet with flaps does not make him too warm. If the sun shines brightly, he puts on his blue snow goggles to prevent snow blindness, and if the snow be soft he changes his sea boots for moccasins, and straps on to them his large, and at first unwieldy, snow shoes. Add to these items mufflers and gloves, and you have a fair idea of his outfit.

When he returns from his observations, his walk, or his tobogganing into the warm office, he discards these things, and appears just like an ordinary Scotsman, minus collar and tie, and plus, probably, a bristling beard, which he cultivates while there as an additional protection for cheeks and throat against cold.

The mean annual temperature, *i.e.*, the average of those 100,000 odd observations taken since the opening of the Observatory in November, 1883, is 31.3 deg. F., *i.e.*, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a deg. below freezing point, and 16 degs. lower than the mean annual temperature of Fort William. The highest shade temperature recorded—67.0 degs.—was in June, 1887, and the lowest in January, 1895— $\frac{1}{2}$ deg. above zero: This will doubtless surprise many readers who may have frequently heard of temperatures several degrees below zero being recorded at many places in Scotland, and indeed it is one of the most curious weather phenomena of the Ben that the very type of weather which brings hardest frost at low levels, namely, cloudless and calm with thick hoar frost, is the type which brings the finest and mildest weather on the Ben; so that it is quite a common thing to find in such weather—"anticyclonic" as it is called—the ordinary state of matters reversed, and the temperature on the summit several degrees higher than at sea-level. All will remember the few days of severe frost we enjoyed in this district before last Christmas from the 18th to the 23rd of December. Fort William also was visited with a very keen frost then, but throughout the whole period the summit was basking in a clear sky without haze or rime, light winds, brilliant sunshine, very dry air, and a temperature several degrees higher than at Fort William.

The mean temperature of July, the warmest month, is 40 degs., being the same as that of Spitzbergen for the same month. There has only been one month since the Observatory opened in which snow has not fallen, and in which the temperature has not at some time or other fallen below freezing point, and during two Januaries—those of 1895 and 1897—the temperature never once rose over freezing point.

As to the very dry air to be found at times on the summit, the term on which the interest of the whole subject rests is "Relative Humidity". The relative humidity of air at a certain temperature is the proportion expressed as a per centage of the amount of water vapour actually present per cubic foot to the amount required to saturate the air at that temperature. Hence when the air is saturated with fog or mist, we say its relative humidity is 100, and any per centage below 50 means what we usually call very dry air. Before the erection of High Level Observatories the lowest relative humidity ever observed was 11 per cent. at Djeddah, in the Arabian desert. That certainly is very low, and much lower than will ever be observed at any low level station in Britain. But the curious thing is that during spells of anticyclonic weather—such as the one we enjoyed before Christmas—relative humidities as low as 11 are by no means rare on Ben Nevis, and a minimum of 6 per cent. has actually been observed. In such dry air I have frequently seen and heard the snow on the summit evaporating away with astonishing rapidity, though the temperature was perhaps below freezing point, and no visible melting took place. Were this the normal state of weather on the Ben, it would indeed be an unmixed delight to spend one's days there, but, unfortunately, these brilliant days are very much the exception; for the summit is enveloped in cloud, and the air consequently saturated, on an average, four days out of five.

The rainfall on the Ben is also remarkable. The mean along the Firth of Forth is 26 to 30 inches; 32 at Aberdeen; 92 at Sligachan (Skye); and 75 at Fort-William; while the fall on the Ben reaches the large annual mean of 134 inches, including melted snow, which is reduced by melting to about one-tenth of its original bulk. Six or seven inches is considered a large month's rainfall at most Scottish stations. In one September over 43 inches fell on the Ben. A rainfall of an inch per day is considered very heavy at low levels. On one day over seven inches fell on the Ben. The snow post on the summit never registers a very great depth, for two reasons—(1) It is placed in a position



BEN NEVIS—THE SUMMIT IN WINTER.

Reproduced from a photograph by Mr. John S. Begg, M.A., by the kind permission of the Directors of Ben Nevis Observatory.

where the snow has been found least liable to gather in drifts, so that much greater depth would be found in places whither the snow has been blown by the almost continuous wind; and (2) the great bulk of precipitation occurs not, as one might expect, in the form of snow, but in the form of rain or sleet, the heavy plumps always coming down during the thaws which every now and then make life so disagreeable on the summit. Hence the greatest depth of snow on the summit, as recorded in *The Scotsman* and other newspapers—occurring generally in April—varies according to the nature of the winter from 7 to 12 feet only.

More remarkable even than the rainfall is the tremendous velocity which the wind at times attains. On the night of the memorable Tay Bridge disaster the wildest gusts fell short of 100 miles per hour. "Windy Friday" is still remembered in Edinburgh as a day of phenomenal storm, when cabs and carts were blown over and people lifted off their feet in the streets, and the maximum velocity registered was 98 miles per hour. I have cited these two instances in order to give an idea of the terrific wildness of the hurricanes which sweep over the summit, where velocities of over 100 miles per hour have been frequently observed. For the first two years, when such storms passed over the Ben, the two observers used to go out roped together for greater security, but it has been found that even in the strongest gusts perfect safety can be secured by crawling, or, in extreme cases, lying down flat. While on the matter of storms, I shall quote an extract from the Observatory log-book for February 21 and 22, 1885, when the great storm, which interrupted observations for fourteen hours, swept over the summit:—"Feb. 21, at 1 p.m.—Rain gauge found blown away to near the edge of the cliff, not put out again to-day. At 4 p.m. the note book for the observation was torn in two and blown away. After 5 p.m. no temperature readings were taken, as the lamps could not be kept alight, and the observers could not stand against the wind. At 6, 7, and 8 p.m. the observer went out at the tower door with a long rope, and had to be hauled back. After that the observer did not go out. At 10 p.m. the outer

glass of south window in tower was seen to be broken, probably by a flying piece of ice, many of which were heard rattling on the tower like stones. Feb. 22—First temperature reading taken at 8 a.m. Thermometer box found badly choked with drift, and with about half its back outer louvres smashed. The top joint of snow post was also broken. The snow was much blown away by the wind, the general height being lowered several inches—even the hard crust on top was broken up”.

Of peculiar optical phenomena observed on the Ben, the chief are fog-bows, coronæ, and glories. The first occur when the sun breaks through thin dispersing fog which is sinking below the level of the summit; an arch similar to a rainbow is then frequently observed. Coronæ or coloured rings round sun or moon, are sometimes observed at low levels, but never in such brilliancy as from the mountain top when a scud of thin fog passes between the observer and the sun or moon.

A glory, however, is the most striking of such phenomena, otherwise called the “Spectre of the Brocken”. Many a time have I seen that beautiful effect when the setting sun cast my shadow on a fog or cloud bank to the eastward, my form being distinctly outlined on the white cloud sheet, and round my head, what one does not associate with this earthly existence at all, a brilliant, many-coloured halo.

One of the most striking phenomena to be observed at high level stations is the formation of snow crystals from fog. “As Ben Nevis is situated in the path of the Atlantic cyclones, with their vapour-laden wind systems, the formation of snow crystals on the Observatory and all surrounding objects exposed to the drifting fogs, when the temperature is below freezing point, proceeds often at an astonishingly rapid rate. The forms and arrangements of the crystals vary with the surface to which they adhere, but all belong to the feathery or fir-cone type. On a flat board they gather first and most abundantly near its edges, forming a beautiful border round it, while the centre remains clear. On the other hand, a round post shows an almost uniformly disposed mass of crystals all over its windward

half. The rate of growth of the crystals varies with the density of the fog and the speed of the wind. On one occasion a post four inches square grew into a slab of crystalline snow of about five feet broad and one foot thick in less than a week, strong south-easterly winds with low temperatures prevailing during the whole time" (Trans. Royal Soc., Edin., Vol. XXXIV., p. 39).

A gale on the summit is bad enough, but a thunder-storm is infinitely worse, and is indeed the only real danger to which observers are exposed. Fortunately they are not common, and occur as a rule in winter; the worst type being when the thunder cloud settles on the hill-top. It is first of all seen approaching with lightning flashing from it; when it envelopes the summit in the form of mist no lightning is seen, no thunder is heard, but the telegraph needle clicks vigorously and almost continuously. The worst is yet to come, for the moment the cloud moves off the summit a flash and a crack like a pistol shot breaks from all prominent metallic objects in the Observatory, such as wires, stove-pipes, and kitchen utensils. On one occasion a flash from the stove knocked down and stupefied one of the staff who was seated at a desk close by, while another such flash set fire to some of the woodwork between the office and the kitchen. On another occasion the telegraph instrument was wrecked, being smashed and twisted almost beyond recognition.

The other electrical phenomenon of St. Elmo's Fire is quite harmless, though very peculiar. It occurs chiefly at night, and in winter, with a westerly wind. It is very seldom seen at low levels, though sailors have occasionally observed it at the top of ships' masts. When it occurs a noise something between a hiss and a crackle is heard continuously. The top of the lightning conductor, the kitchen chimney cowl, the wind vane, and even the tip of the observer's pencil emit a bluish flame, while the observer's hair glows, and, if he looks upward, he feels a prickly sensation on his face. Beyond causing in certain persons slight headache, this phenomenon is known to be perfectly harmless, but its source or cause is as yet a mystery.

June, July, August, and September are the months during which tourists climb the mountain, and their name is legion. I am quite sure throughout September we had on an average from fifteen to thirty per day. If they wanted refreshments they did not get them from the Observatory, but at a so-called hotel, a wooden erection open during the summer months only—for it is quite buried in snow in winter—with four small bedrooms, to enable tourists, if they choose, to stay all night to see the sun rise. Unfortunately, they usually arise only to say, "We viewed the mist and missed the view". With so many people coming and going, and with plenty of work to do also, the month passed quickly, but without special excitement.

One piece of advice I may offer to any reader who should ever intend climbing the Ben, and who wishes a good view—Don't go up in August, which has been, with only one or two exceptions, a month with large rainfall, much mist, and little sunshine. I was at some pains during my stay on the Ben to draw conclusions from the fourteen years' observations as to the best week on the whole in June—the best month—for visitors to ascend the hill, and I found that the week from the 18th to the 24th of June inclusive was, on the average, the warmest, driest, calmest, clearest, and sunniest, though I am sorry I cannot guarantee a good view even then.

The first half of September, 1896, was mild, but in the middle there came a change; winter was on us, and for the last fortnight the snow was never off the summit, frost was frequent, and the mean temperature was just a trifle above freezing point. Between six and seven one evening towards the end of the month my friend was standing on the Observatory roof when he heard a cry coming from the foot of Maclean's Steep. He and the cook at once set off to see what was wrong, and found at the foot of the steep three ladies, one of them over sixty at least, bent, and old-looking, and quite exhausted. She had determined to get to the top, and had left Fort William that morning, with her companions, about nine o'clock. My friend managed to put some spirits in her in both senses, and got her safely to the

top, where she spent the night in the hotel, and was "as fit as a fiddle" next day.

It was about this time, too, I had my first experience of night duty, and a charming one it was. My companion had gone down to spend a farewell evening with the gentleman who was observing at the half-way hut, and, as he did not return quite when I expected, I had, of course, to take duty till he turned up. Luckily it was a beautiful night; though in September, the summit and for a considerable distance down the hillside was white with snow, the sky was cloudless, the wind light, and the moon full. To keep myself from falling asleep between observations I alternated cups of strong coffee with strolls down the hillside in the moonlight. After the 6 a.m. observation I mounted to the flat top of the Observatory tower, and, wrapped in a rug, for it was freezing hard, I waited for the sunrise, nor had I to wait long. The east grew brighter and brighter, till I was rewarded by the sun's rim appearing and shooting across a ray of greeting to me, first of all things animate or inanimate throughout the length and breadth of Scotland. It gave me a curious feeling of kinship to the sun; he seemed so really to be smiling and shining on myself alone as I stood there in the calm stillness, looking down on billow after billow of green hill or rocky mountain top stretching for mile after mile into the far-off horizon. Then for the next few minutes I observed the white snow on the summit turned to the most delicate pink. The other snow-clad peaks around me still looked cold and forbidding, untouched by the warm sun; but first one and then another received the impress of his rosy finger-tip, and seemed to grow kindly and warm at the touch—a lovely scene indeed, and I thanked my companion, on his return, for extending his time so opportunely.

Just a few days after returning to the Observatory in October I had rather an unpleasant experience. As I have said, on the north side of the mountain is a perpendicular cliff; the west side has a comparatively gentle slope, and is the side from which the ascent is usually made; the south side again is fairly steep, and towards the S.E. dips into a

huge, precipitous, cauldron-shaped hollow. After two o'clock dinner, having three hours to spare before my next observation, I thought I would take a stroll down the south side. I got down a good bit all right, finding the snow soft and capable of giving a good footing, when, without any warning, I found myself on a much harder snow-slope, where I slipped my foot, fell on my back, and slid. The exasperating thing was that there was nothing apparently to stop my sliding till I should pop at a nice speed into the uninviting cauldron below. However, as I was sliding quicker and quicker, wildly trying to plunge my ice axe into the hard surface to check myself, I espied right in my course the providential jagged top of a narrow rock sticking up above the snow. As I was sweeping past this I hugged it with my right arm as I never hugged anything before or since, and I had gathered so much momentum that I swung right round it; but I was safe, though I had still that hard, cold, forbidding-looking slope to ascend. It was fortunate indeed I had my ice axe with me, as with it I had to cut steps all the way up the slope until I reached the soft snow again. It had taken me, I suppose, less than a minute to go down that slope; it took me an hour to go up.

In the end of October I had my first experience of a bad gale. I was awakened as usual in time to take the 5 a.m. observation, but, when I got outside the porch, I found I had something to battle with. The wind was northerly, and came in gusts. The result was that I would bend forward with every muscle strained to resist a gust of, say, 80 miles an hour, when the wind would suddenly drop, and I, of course, would drop too, flat in the snow; also, the soft, fresh-fallen snow was blown in blinding, swirling sheets of drift all round me, so that by the time I reached the thermometer-box I was practically blind, and had to tear lumps of icy drift out of my eyes before I could see by the aid of my lantern where the box was.

The first week of November was brilliant, cloudless skies, and air very dry; but the fortnight in the middle of the month was one of the most disagreeable, as regards weather, one could imagine. With the exception of one day through-

out that fortnight we never saw more than ten yards in front of us; thick, soaking mist; with the temperature mostly above freezing point; heavy showers of rain and sleet, and occasional gales from the S.E., reaching one day a velocity of 100 miles per hour. The house, too, leaked badly, and the floors both of office and kitchen were pretty much covered with basins, pails, etc., to catch the water. That fortnight would indeed have been a wearisome one had it not been that we had loads of work to do, and when we got tired of that, a good library or a game at cards to resort to. However, about the 23rd, the mist rolled away, and once more we revelled in the sunshine. Such a revolution, in fact, did this delightful change in the weather work in our spirits that we got quite excited, ending by dancing on the roof the Highland fling. Never did I realise before how true were the words of the preacher—"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun".

The mist, though it had left us, did not disappear, but sank below the level of the summit, and for the next few days we scored over our low level friends. For we were perched entirely above the clouds, which stretched like a white, billowy sea uninterruptedly round and below on every side, as far as the eye could scan, and that, in clear weather, is about 100 miles. At times the sheet of cloud sea would sink somewhat, so that the other mountain tops of Scotland, east and west and north and south, peeped through like islands in the sea; at other times it would rise till Ben Nevis alone of Scottish peaks kept its head above the snowy billows, and then indeed we felt that in splendid isolation we held the highest office in the United Kingdom. During these few days the weather at Fort William was raw, cold, and overcast, with occasional drizzle, while we were revelling in a brilliant sun, shining from a perfectly clear and hazeless sky, through air so dry that the snow disappeared quickly by evaporation. The weird beauty of the night time under such circumstances I shall never forget, and I shall do my best to describe one particular scene. I had just taken the 7 p.m. observation, and the

air was so delightful that I took a constitutional up and down the Observatory roof. The lightest of southerly airs blew gently and caressingly, and prevented the stillness of the whole scene from becoming oppressive. Above, the sky was cloudless; below, the clouds were sinking like great white lakes into the hollows between the hills. From the bosom of one of these lakes to eastward rose the moon, and while it was rising the upper half was as gold, while the half still in the cloud was red as blood. But not till it had risen quite above its white bed and shone with all its pale splendour in the opal sky did one feel the full charm of the scene. Over all the clear blue island mountain tops around it seemed to cast a fairy-like shimmer; and in that calm and impressive stillness, far, far above the noise and feverishness, the sin and misery of man, cut off from it all by those white sheets of cloud, amid the everlasting hills, bathed in the soft, ethereal moonlight, one's spirit felt linked to the eternal and at rest.

In the next day or two the clouds below gradually dispersed, and November ended with cloudless weather above and below. There had been so much sunshine, fresh weather, and dry air throughout the month that when December opened the boulders were showing through the snow on the summit—an unusual occurrence for the time of year.

On 28th November a pony was brought up almost to the summit with, among other things, thirteen legs of fresh mutton, which were a very great treat; so much were they appreciated, in fact, that we had them for breakfast, dinner, and tea, at the rate of one per day!

On the morning of the 29th November, between five and six, while I was sitting in the office, I was startled by a tap at the window. It was, of course, quite dark outside, but I took my lantern and went out, when I found two men standing shivering; they had not been able to find the door, so I took them in and gave them breakfast, and thereafter one of them told me—the other had gone fast asleep in the chair—that they had been drinking at Fort William the night before, and while in



BEN NEVIS—THE OBSERVATORY.

Reproduced from a photograph by Mr. John S. Begg, M.A., by the kind permission of the Directors of Ben Nevis Observatory.

their cups had made a bet with their companions that they would climb the Ben. They had been guided by the marks of the ponies' hoofs where the path was covered with snow. Thereafter, during that day—a Sunday—four or five other visitors ascended the hill, the most interesting of whom was a ragged Irishman, a workman at the Ben Nevis water-works, who, having heard that the observers wore out their old clothes on the summit, came all the way to beg for an addition to his own wardrobe.

I returned again to the summit in the beginning of April, 1897, for a few weeks, and found the Observatory practically buried, *i.e.*, no jump was required to reach the surface of the snow from the roof, and the summer hotel was invisible. April is often one of the most wintry months on the Ben, and it will give the reader an idea of this when he knows that for the first three weeks of April, 1897, the temperature never once rose above freezing point, and the weather was stormy, with much fresh snow. Whenever it cleared at all, we all set to work and dug out the windows, so that we might enjoy daylight till the next heavy fall came on, when the windows at once got blocked, and we had to resort to lamplight, sometimes for days together. On the 21st, however, the weather cleared, temperature rose, and, till I left at the end of the month, the weather was of that perfect kind previously described. The roadman was now able to ascend the hill with letters. His arrival is always hailed with joy and excitement as, owing to bad weather, the observers are sometimes five or six weeks without letters or newspapers, though if any important letter is lying below it can be wired up.

During this spell of fine weather, we had the good fortune to witness a wonderful mountaineering feat. At the western extremity of the northern cliff the hill takes a sharp bend, and another cliff runs out to the north-eastward, and at this bend of the V-shaped precipice there is, therefore, an almost perpendicular narrow corrie or gully running right down for about 2000 feet. Up this, with ropes, ice axes, and all the other paraphernalia of the Alpine climber, came three members of the English Alpine Club.

It certainly seemed a rash and foolhardy experiment, but their coolness and courage were rewarded, after six hours' hard work, by their reaching the summit in safety, when the four of us greeted them with a hearty cheer and all-round hand-shaking, and finished up with a merry meal in the Observatory kitchen.

The sun by the end of April shines, of course, pretty strongly, and the last day I spent on the Ben before coming down I shall remember always as one of the most delightful of my life. How charming it was to sit on the dry, powdery snow on a sun-exposed slope, lazily dreaming away the time, basking in the sunlight, and enjoying the glorious view to the west; the calm expanse of Loch Linnhe, in the distance the jagged peaks of Skye, the green hill-tops elsewhere rising through the soft blue haze, the peace and stillness and quiet harmony of everything; no sounds save now and then the croak of a raven, or the bark of a fox, or far, far down in the smiling valleys, softened by the distance, the plaintive bleating of the lamb for its mother, the hoarse call of the red deer, or the subdued murmur of some distant waterfall. Could anything be more soothing, more inspiring, more refreshing both to mind and body? True, there was a charm in returning to lower levels, a charm in the varied colouring after the perpetual white glare of the snow, a charm in the old familiar sounds and sights of a country springtime, a charm, too, in seeing fresh faces of men, and more particularly of women; but when all is said, the impressions which I will bear with me always of my few months on Ben Nevis are among the most delightful of my life, thanks not only to the novelty and interest of the work, but also to the unfailing kindness and courtesy of all those officially connected with the Observatory.



"A BIT OF THE BORDER."

SOME SOUTHERN SCOTTISH UPLANDS.

By T. R. GILLIES.

WHEN a respected friend in high repute as a Topographer informed us that he was about to make an expedition to the sources of some of the principal rivers in the south of Scotland, and gave us the chance of accompanying him, we closed with the offer at once, without ever thinking of inquiring what the object of his expedition was. Enough for us that it was to be an excursion across hill country, and that there were objects of interest and scenery on the route which could not fail to make it attractive. This included a journey through the upper parts of Tweeddale, Annandale, and Eskdale, and the lower part of Liddesdale; and it was agreed, making a virtue of what was, considering the line of march, almost a necessity, that it should be an easy-going pedestrian excursion—a proposal acquiesced in by the less responsible part of the expedition, with a special stipulation as to the easy-going aspect which the walking tour should assume—born of a desire to linger for a while amid the pleasant scenery of the pastoral hills of southern Scotland. To the Topographer we left the study of the hydrography and archæology of the district traversed. He may, possibly, at a future time publish the result of his investigations; but meanwhile, as the route is a comparatively unfrequented and unknown one, a short account of it from a holiday point of view may be perhaps acceptable.

Leaving Edinburgh on a Monday morning in the month of July, we took the train out for a short distance, and started from Broomlee Station, some sixteen miles from the metropolis. A short walk from Broomlee Station brought the expedition to West Linton, on the old Edinburgh road. The only object of interest here was the ancient statue on the top of Lady Giffard's Well (erected 1666), which forms

an appropriate ornament in the centre of this irregularly-built and rather picturesque village. The well itself was rebuilt not many years ago, and the weather-beaten old effigy looks all the more archaic now that it has been placed on a modern pedestal. The Topographer—in pursuance of his hydrographical investigations—contemplated a visit to the Heaven Aqua Well—a once famous mineral spring near the turnpike to the north of the village; but he was persuaded to take its virtues (pronounced equal to those of Tunbridge) for granted, and, crossing the river Lyne, we set off on our way to Dolphinton. The road leads through an unfrequented and sparsely-populated country, consisting of moorland pasture, varied here and there by woodland and cultivated fields. On the right the Mendick Hill rises above the surrounding heights, and soon in front a distant view is to be had of Dolphinton Hill, which, with Tinto and Walston Hill, forms a connecting link between the Pentlands and the Highlands of Galloway.

At Dolphinton numerous Roman and Druidical remains are pointed out. If half of them are genuine, the Roman population of this district must have been twenty times as numerous as its present inhabitants. The Topographer was sceptical, and hinted that the plentiful supply of Roman camps and forts arose from the fact that the district is a pastoral one, in which old sheepfolds were numerous. The walls gradually tumble down, are overgrown with grass, and the result is a distinctly marked *prætorium*. That many genuine traces of the Roman occupation have been found in this part of Scotland is unquestionable, but if all the Roman camps and tumuli that are pointed out be genuine, the whole Roman army must have been here. What they found to make it worth their while to entrench themselves here, and how they managed to live, it would be interesting to know. Tumuli and mounds formed by the action of the water are frequently pointed out as ancient works; and as to ruined sheepfolds, it is "*Prætorium* here, *prætorium* there" all the way to the border, though some patriarchal shepherd in the district would probably "mind the biggin' o't". We did not go out of our way to see any of the

Roman or other ancient remains, and contented ourselves with a casual stare at such as happened to come in our way. These were quite numerous enough.

On the route towards Biggar are some excellent views of the surrounding hill country. Passing the beautifully situated Edmonston House, we arrived at Biggar late in the afternoon, and having made ourselves comfortable at the Elphinstone Arms, and had a short rest, daundered out to see the lions of the place. The first of these is Boghall Castle, of which only three corner towers remain. These, with a fourth, which has now disappeared, marked the corners of the enclosure or curtain wall that surrounded the inner castle—a common form of stronghold in ancient times. Boghall Castle was held for the Commonwealth against General Leslie's army. It has been reduced to its present sorry dimensions less by the destructive effects of the elements than by the vandalism of people in the neighbourhood, who used the stones to build drains and dykes.

The "Cadger's Brig" is an ancient footbridge over Biggar Water, where it passes the town, and it is said to have got its name from an incident that occurred at the time of the "Battle of Biggar", of which Blind Harry gives an account. The night before the battle, Wallace, disguised as a cadger, had visited the English camp, with the view of getting information as to the strength of the enemy. His disguise was successful, but after his departure suspicion was aroused, and he was pursued. He turned on his pursuers at the bridge, and, killing one of them, made good his escape to the Scottish camp, which is said to have been pitched on the side of Tinto Hill, several miles distant.

Biggar Kirk, an old collegiate church, built in 1545, is an interesting specimen of ecclesiastical architecture, and some parts of it have recently been restored. The restoration, however, has been very judiciously carried out, and the architectural features of the church and tower have been admirably preserved.

Biggar Water, a tributary of the Tweed, is at one part of its course on the same level as the Clyde; and, indeed, in times of flood, some of the surplus water of the Clyde

finds its way into the Biggar Water. The expedition, emphatically declining the Topographer's proposal that we should accompany him a mile or two up Biggar Water to a certain "Wee Well" that he had heard of, and the water of which he wished to test, turned into sleeping quarters.

Next morning, undeterred by a steady downpour of rain, we took the train down to Broughton, and, crossing Biggar Water, started to visit the source of the Tweed. After a walk of a couple of miles, the valley of the Tweed opens out on our left, and the ruins of Drummelzier Castle, with a background of hills and trees, is our first view of Tweeddale. Soon we are by the side of the river itself, clear and beautiful, even as seen through the rain. One gazes for the first time on the upper reaches of the "shallow, brawling Tweed" with an interest which arises from something more than the mere natural beauties of the scenery—great though these are—for the poetical and historical associations which are connected with the Tweed account to a great extent for the position which it holds as the most interesting of Scottish rivers. The poet, listening to the murmur of its current—

" Heard something more in the stream as it ran
 Than water breaking on stones.
 Now the hoofs of a flying mosstrooper ;
 Now a bloodhound's bay half caught ;
 The sudden blast of a hunting horn ;
 The burr of Walter Scott.

.
 but for the ballads and wails
 That make passionate dead things, stocks and stones,
 Make piteous woods and dales,
 The Tweed were as poor as the Amazon,
 That for all the years it has roll'd
 Can but tell how fair was the morning red ;
 How sweet the evening gold".

Our first point was the Crook Inn, near Tweedsmuir, some eight or nine miles off, and it rained pretty steadily all the way thither, Culter Fell, and the hills surrounding it, being almost entirely hid in the mist and rain-clouds.

The scenery now becomes more mountainous—not rugged like the hills of the north, but soft and green, the hills being clothed with grass to the very top, and rising one behind another in curved outlines. Cultivated fields get scarcer as we go on, and soon there is nothing to be seen but sheep farms, and not a sound to be heard but the occasional call of a ewe that has missed its lamb or the more feeble voice of a lamb calling for its mother.

At the Crook Inn, a favourite resort of anglers, quite a modern building, and a much more commodious house than one would expect to find in such a place, the expedition halted, changed their wet garments, and ordered dinner. The sun having now broken out, we enjoyed the passing gleam with something of the rough epicureanism of Burns's "Jolly Beggars":—

"Sae merrily the banes we'll pyke
And sun oursel's about the dyke,
And at our leisure, when ye like
We'll whistle owre the lave o't".

The "banes" consisted of some toothsome mutton chops (one can always depend on the mutton in this locality) discussed in the dining-room of the "Crook", after which we hitched our chairs up against a fence in front of the inn "fornent the sun", where, with the peace-inspiring pipe, we compensated ourselves for the hardships and discomforts of the forenoon by dawdling away the afternoon. The Topographer unearthed a stray volume or two of the Waverley Novels from the inn library, and gave a much-appreciated series of readings from "Old Mortality" and "The Antiquary". Specially appropriate in this district, where one can hardly walk a mile without running against a *soi-disant* "Roman Camp", was the interview between Edie Ochiltree and Monkbarns.

The road past the Crook Inn is the old coach road from Edinburgh to Dumfries, and, after walking along it for a mile or so, we came to the "Bield", a well-known inn in the old coaching days. Its comfortable appearance and picturesque surroundings suggested a further halt, so we deposited our knapsacks and sauntered down to the side of

the Tweed, where the Topographer, having accidentally gone in with his boots on, consoled himself with a bathe in a fine pool at the bottom of a narrow, deep chasm under the bridge. Crossing the river, we came to the Tweedsmuir Church, which occupied a picturesque site close to the foot of Talla Water. It is scarcely worth while mentioning that there are remains of a Roman camp here. The Topographer examined the water of the Talla, now added to the Edinburgh water supply. He pronounced it when unmixed to be somewhat "hard", though clear, and consisting almost entirely of spring water.

We next proceeded to visit the remains of a "Druidical Temple", half a mile or so further up the side of the Tweed, and of which a few large stones are now all that remain. A more modern tradition records that from this spot Little John, hiding behind one of the big stones, shot a gigantic border reiver on the side of the river, whose death-place is marked by a cairn of stones. Either the little man or the traditionary historian must certainly have drawn a long bow, for the distance is about a third of a mile. Tweedsmuir Kirk, the "Bield", nestling among the trees, the bridge and the cottages adjoining it, make a very pleasant view as seen from the "Druidical Temple", and we spent a good part of the evening reclining on the bank, listening to the bleating of the sheep, on the "green hills far away", and watching the beams of the setting sun gradually leaving one top after another as the shadows crept upwards, or gazing on "the silver Tweed" as it rippled past the foot of the bank on which we reclined. The Tweed in its upper reaches is a lightsome river, flowing briskly and noisily over a shallow stony bed with but few still pools. If one were to imagine a presiding genius for it, as the ancients did in giving a tutelary deity to each stream, or our ancestors in making them the abode of water kelpies, he would be a cheerful and beneficent one, quite distinct from the personation of the Esk or the Till, or any other comparatively slow-running stream. The difference of character is recognised in the old stanza, which seems to impute a malevolent genius to the deep, slow-running stream:—

“Says Tweed to Till,
‘What gars ye rin sae still’?
Says Till to Tweed,
‘Though ye rin wi’ speed
An’ I rin slaw,
For ae man that ye droon,
I droon twa’”.

Returning to the “Bield”, and having ascertained that there was nothing to be seen at the ruins of Oliver Castle on the hillside behind—at which we were considerably relieved, as, otherwise, the Topographer would, from a sheer sense of duty, have dragged the expedition up to it, and thus spoiled the *dolce far niente* of the evening—we made a comfortable evening meal, and, after smoking a final pipe down on the banks of the Tweed, retired early to rest.

The Topographer was up betimes next morning pursuing his hydrographical studies, and the rest of the expedition also turned out at a creditably early hour. The rain was too steady to admit of a start till 9.30 a.m., when, encouraged by a temporary cessation of the downpour, we set out for Tweedshaws, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles further on, and close to the source of the Tweed. The rain came down heavily at intervals, and we were glad to reach the shelter of the shepherd’s cottage at Tweedshaws about noon. The road winds up through a beautiful pastoral country, but very quiet and lonely. We met no one but a solitary tramp by the way. Indeed, tramps were almost the only passengers we met during nearly the whole tour. They seem to prefer the unfrequented roads. Probably they find the people in out-of-the-way places more unsophisticated and inclined to believe the stories of distress and hardships with which they seek to move the hearts of the charitable. Some of them are comparatively quiet, and carry small pedlar’s wares, which they seek to dispose of. But many of them are unruly characters, and no shepherd in these lonely districts cares to leave his wife and family without the protection of a good collie dog. Otherwise some “sorner” or masterful beggar may come up and be violent and insolent in his demands. A tramp who had been at Tweedshaws a day or two

before our visit had attempted to take shelter in the stable against the will of the collie dog, who had a pup there, and, with a fairly deep impression of her teeth on his leg, he had to beat a speedy retreat. He sought shelter at the next house—a few miles distant—where, no doubt, he made capital out of his mishap. This wandering, roving life seems to have a strong fascination for these poor tramps, who will endure almost any hardships rather than settle down to a regular calling. What becomes of them in winter is a mystery. But all through the summer you will find them—tinkers, pedlars, gaberlunzies, beggars—wandering alone or in pairs over the most unfrequented parts of the country. They do not look particularly happy some of them, but they must have some strong yearnings for freedom of existence to endure the hard life which they lead. And better this than falling back into the slums of some of our large towns, which, in all probability, is the only alternative open to them. Indeed, we—also on the tramp—look upon them in some degree as brethren who are indulging that same tendency to revert to a simpler form of existence, which more or less animates every human being. And if they have sacrificed more of the conventionalities of life in giving way to that tendency, it only shows that they are truer to the “great, glad, aboriginal instincts” than we can pretend to be.

The shepherd of Tweedshaws and his wife were both from home, but their daughter—an active and intelligent young lass—has evidently been accustomed to see strangers hospitably treated in her father’s house, and soon set before us an appetising lunch—crisp cakes, well-baked scones, fresh and butter milk, butter, cheese, and a large supply of gooseberry jam—which rapidly diminished before the attack of the expedition.

The obliging dominie of Tweedshaws directed us how to find our way to the source of the Tweed, which, now a very small stream, wimples down the glen at the back of the house; and in a hayfield, about a fourth of a mile further up, we come to the very source—a small spring well, which one could cover with a broad-brimmed hat. Here, at a height of 1784 feet above sea level, the “silver Tweed”,

clear and cold, has the first beginning of its course of 96 miles through some of the fairest scenery of southern Scotland. About half a mile further up is "Tweed's Cross", an imaginary point on the ridge which separates Tweeddale from Annandale; and close to the road on the same ridge is the march where the three counties of Peebles, Lanark and Dumfries met—a threefold watershed as well as a threefold boundary:—

"Where Annan, Tweed, and Clyde
Rise a' oot o' ae hillside".

The view from the top of Tweeddale is one befitting the chief watershed of the south of Scotland. Behind are the hills of Tweeddale, whilst to the east Hartfell and the hills of Moffatdale, in front a long range of hills with the kenspeckle outline of Queensberry Hill in the background, and to the westward the Lowthers and a long stretch of hills make up an impressive panorama.

Walking on a mile or two we come to the edge of "The Deil's Beef Tub"—the huge ravine, wild and solitary, where the Annan has its source. The scenery on the Annandale side is much more rugged than that of Tweeddale; indeed, in the whole tour we did not again come across any district so green and fertile as the upper part of Tweeddale, or one where the hills were so completely covered to their tops with fine pasture. The view, looking down Annandale, was more varied in its features. The rugged sides of "The Deil's Beef Tub" gave place to smoother slopes, and trees and cultivated fields appeared further down; and soon the lower part of Annandale, stretching across a breadth of several miles of fields and woodland, lay spread before us.

The afternoon's walk to Moffat was made under more favourable circumstances as regarded weather, and the only incident was the discovery, under the dry arch carrying the road across a deep ravine, which we explored, of another couple of tramps preparing to camp out for the night. They had a fire lighted, and their preparations for tea were in progress. In answer to our inquiries, they assured us that this was one of the best "ludgins" in the district.

(To be concluded in next Number.)

ROTHIEMURCHUS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE CENTURY.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

ROTHIEMURCHUS lies so close to the Cairngorms that no apology need be made for calling attention to a most interesting account of it and of the adjoining districts furnished in a recently-published work—"Memoirs of a Highland Lady", the autobiography of a Miss Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus, afterwards Mrs. Smith of Baltiboy, in Ireland. This lady was the eldest child of Sir John Peter Grant of Rothiemurchus, who was M.P. for Great Grimsby and Tavistock, and afterwards a judge in Bombay. She was born in 1797. Her recollections of Rothiemurchus dated from childhood. She was partly brought up and educated there, and her connection with Speyside continued of the most intimate character, despite occasional residence elsewhere, till the time she left for India with her parents. Her attachment to the place was unbounded. "Our beloved Duchus", she writes—(Duchus, she explains, is a Gaelic word having much the same significance as domain; the crest of the family is an armed hand holding a broadsword, with the motto, "For my Duchus")—"Our beloved Duchus, through all the changes of our lives, has remained the spot on earth dearest to every one of us. . . . No other spot ever replaced it, no other scenery ever surpassed it, no other young happiness ever seemed to approach within a comprehensible distance of our childhood at Rothiemurchus". And there is quite a pathetic picture of her last walk in the Duchus with her youngest sister—"When we heard that green gate clasp behind us, we gave way, dropped down on the two mushroom seats and cried bitterly. Even now I seem to hear the clasp of that gate; I shall hear it till I die; it seemed to end the poetry of our existence". (Mrs. Smith, it may be perhaps well to mention, died in 1885).

The natural characteristics of Rothiemurchus were the same in the early years of the century as they are to-day, and Mrs. Smith's first description of them in the "Memoirs" corresponds in the main with any description that might be essayed now. "The 'wide plain of the fir trees', which lies in the bosom of the Grampians, cut off by the rapid Spey from every neighbour, has its beautiful variety of mountain scenery, its heights, its dells, and glens, its lakes and plains and haughs, and it had then its miles and miles of dark pine forest through which there were little clearings by the side of rapid burnies, and here and there a sawmill". But there was evidently more forest, and at the same time there were fewer clearings—more nature and less cultivation; Mrs. Smith states that the forest measured in extent nearly twenty square miles. Here is a picture of the region as it was in 1813:—

"Rothiemurchus at this period contained four large farms—the Doune, where we lived ourselves, to which my father was constantly adding such adjoining scraps as circumstances enabled him now and then to get possession of; Inverdrue, where lived his great-uncle, Captain Lewis Grant, the last survivor of the old race; the Croft, where now was settled his cousin James Cameron; and the Dell, occupied by Duncan Macintosh, the forester, who had permission to take in as many acres of the adjacent moors as suited his husbandry. Quantities of smaller farms, from a mere patch to a decent steading, were scattered here and there among the beautiful birch woods, near swiftly-running streams, or farther away among the gloom of the fir forest, wherever an opening afforded light enough for a strip of verdure to brighten the general carpet of cranberries and heather. The carpenter, the smith, the fox-hunter, the saw-millers, the wheel-wright, the few Chelsea pensioners, each had his little field, while comparatively large holdings belonged to a sort of yeomanry coeval with our own possession, or even some of them found there by our ancestor the Laird of Muckerach, the second son of our Chief, who displaced the Shaws, for my father was but the ninth laird of Rothiemurchus; the Shaws reigned over this beautiful property before the Grants seized it, and they had succeeded the Comyns, lords not only of Badenoch but of half our part of the north besides. The forest was at this time so extensive there was

little room for tillage through the wide plain it covered. It was very pretty here and there to come upon a little cultivated spot, a tiny field by the burn-side, with a horse or a cow upon it, a cottage often built of the black peat mould, its chimney, however, smoking comfortably, a churn at the door, a girl bleaching linen, or a guid-wife in her high white cap waiting to welcome us, miles away from any other spot so tenanted. Here and there upon some stream a picturesque sawmill was situated, gathering its little hamlet round; for one or two held double saws, necessitating two millers, two assistants, two homes with all their adjuncts, and a larger wood-yard, to hold, first the logs, and then all they were cut up into. The wood manufacture was our staple, on it depended our prosperity. It was at its height during the war, when there was a high duty on foreign timber; while it flourished so did we, and all the many depending on us; when it fell, the Laird had only to go back to black cattle again 'like those that were before him'. It was a false stimulus, said the political economists. If so, we paid for it".

A journey to Rothiemurchus was a serious business in the years before Waterloo. Made—as the Grant family generally made it—from England in a barouche, with long rests at the inns, the horses doing but few stages in a day, it must have taken weeks—it took three days alone to reach Rothiemurchus from Perth. The Highland portion of the journey, from Tayside to Speyside, embracing the wilds of Drumochter and the high hill-pass to Dalwhinnie, was desolate and dreary in the extreme, as indeed it is yet, even by railway; and the last stage, too, was far from pleasant. "A mile on from Pitmain were the indications of a village—the present town of Kingussie—a few very untidy-looking slated stone houses each side of a road, the bare heather on each side of the Spey, the bare mountains on each side of the heather, a few white-walled houses here and there, a good many black turf huts, frightful without, though warm and comfortable within". There was then a lack of roads, and the journey had to be prolonged two or three miles past the burn at Lynwilg, towards Aviemore, the Spey being crossed at a ford at Inverdrue, there being a ferry and a carriage-boat a little higher up the stream for use when the river was in flood. Thus difficult of access, Rothiemurchus

was far removed from communication with the outer world: "the south of England was far away, letters were long on the road". The post, it seems, used to go round by Aberdeen to Inverness and on to Grantown by a runner, where another runner received the Rothiemurchus bag and brought it three times a week to the Doune. It is curious in this connection to note the "great improvement" recorded in 1813—a stage-coach was then started to run three days a week between Perth and Inverness. "Our bag was made up at Perth and dropped at Lynwilg at Robbie Cumming's, whose little shop soon became a receiving-house for more bags than ours. It was quite an event; we used to listen for the horn; on still days, and when the wind set that way, we could hear it distinctly as we walked on the flow-dyke round the farm. At one or two breaks in the wooding we could see the coach, a novel sight that made us clap our hands". The residents at Rothiemurchus were so remote from markets, too, that they had to depend very much on their own produce for most of the necessaries of life. From cattle and sheep were obtained, not only the chief part of their food, but fleeces to be woven into clothing, blanketing, and carpets, horn for spoons, leather to be dressed at home for various purposes, hair for the masons, etc. "We brewed our own beer, made our bread, made our candles; nothing was brought from afar but wine, groceries, and flour, wheat not ripening well so high above the sea". Whisky-drinking was common in the district—in quantities that would now be reckoned excessive. In the pantry at the Doune, a bottle was the allowance per day for such messengers or visitors whose errands sent them in that direction. All the men engaged in the wood manufacture drank whisky "in goblets" three times a day. "A dram all round" marked anything extra. "That dram was the Highland prayer, it began, accompanied, and ended all things".

The "Memoirs" deal chiefly with life at the Doune—the reconstruction of which is duly chronicled—and at Kinrara, then occupied by the Duchess of Gordon; and they contain many vivid descriptions of the social gatherings of

the time, harvest-homes, "floaters' balls", and the like, and one particularly good account of the congregation that assembled in the old church of Rothiemurchus and of the manner in which the service was conducted. The book, indeed, is more a picture of the mode of life and the social relations existing in "the old days, the days that are no more" than anything else. One notices, with some surprise, very little allusion to the mountain scenery that surrounds Rothiemurchus—no mention, for instance, is made of a mountain ascent; and deer-stalking or deer-shooting never flits across these pages, although there is an occasional reference to the "Twelfth" and to shooting-parties. Devotion to sport was apparently not a characteristic of the Whig laird of Rothiemurchus, and mountain climbing in his day had not become either a pursuit or a pastime. Yet one lady at least, prior to the date of our author's reminiscences, had made the ascent of Cairngorm, and from the Doune, too, and in company also with this Mr. Grant of Rothiemurchus. (See *C.C.J.*, Vol. I., p. 375). Lacking accounts of mountain ascents, we must, perforce, be content with such glimpses of the mountains—and they are but glimpses—as are afforded in Mrs. Smith's entertaining pages:—

"The birch woods began to show a little after this, but deserted the banks about that frightful Kincaig, where began the long moor over which we were glad to look across the Spey to Invereshie, from whence all the Rothiemurchus side of the river was a succession of lovely scenery. On we went over the weary moor of Alvie to the loch of the same name with its kirk and manse, so singularly built on a long promontory, running far out into the water; Tor Alvie on the right, Craigellachie before us, and our own most beautiful 'plain of the fir trees' opening out as we advanced, the house of the Doune appearing for a moment as we passed on by Lynwilg. We had as usual to go on to the big boat at Inverdrue, feasting our eyes all the way on the fine range of the Cairngorm, the pass of the Larig between Cairngorm and Braeriach, the hill of Kincairn standing forward to the north to enclose the forest which spread all along by the banks of the Spey, the foreground relieved by hillocks clothed with birch, fields, streams, and the smoke from the numerous cottages. Our beloved Ord Bain rose

right in front with its bald head and birch-covered sides, and we could point out our favourite spots to one another as we passed along, some coming into sight as others receded, till the clamour of our young voices, at first amusing, had to be hushed. We were so happy!

“The small farms in Rothiemurchus lay all about in various directions, most of them beautifully situated; the extent of the old forest was said to be sixteen square miles, and it was reckoned that about ten more were growing up, either of natural fir, or my father’s planted larch. The whole lay in the bosom of the Grampians in a bend of a bow, as it were, formed by the mountains, the river Spey being the string and our boundary. The mountains are bare, not very picturesquely shaped, yet imposing from their size. Many glens run up them, all richly carpeted with sweet grass peculiarly suited to the fattening of cattle, one or two of these ending in a lake dropped at the bottom of a screen of precipices. One pass, that of Larig, leads to Braemar, Lord Fife’s country, with whose lands and the Duke of Gordon’s ours march in that direction. Several rapid streams run through the forest, the smaller burnies rattling along the rocky beds to join the larger, which in their turn flow on to be lost in the Spey. The Luineag and the Bennie are quite rivers, the one rises north from Loch Morlich in Glen More, the other south from Loch Eunach in Glen Eunach; they join above the bridge of Coylum and form the Druie, an unmanageable run of water that divides, subdivides, and sometimes changes its principal channel and keeps a fine plain of many acres in a state of stony wilderness. The vagaries of the Druie were not alone watched by the crofters on its banks with anxiety. There was a tradition that it had broken from its old precincts on the transference of the property to the Grants from the Shaws, that the Grants would thrive while the Druie was tranquil, but when it wearied of its new channel and returned to its former course, the fortune of the new family would fail. The change happened in 1829, at the time of the great Lammas floods so well described by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder. We used to laugh at the prediction!

“Besides the streams, innumerable lochs lay hid among the pine-trees of that endless forest. On one of these [Loch an Eilein] was the small island completely occupied by the ruins of the Comyn fortress, a low long building with one square tower, a flank wall with a door in it, and one or two small windows high up, and a sort

of a house with a gable end attached, part of which stood on piles. The people said there was a zig-zag causeway beneath the water, from the door of the old castle to the shore, the secret of which was always known to three persons only. We often tried to hit upon this causeway, but we never succeeded.

“A great number of paths crossed the forest, and one or two cart-roads; the robbers’ road at the back of Loch an Eilein was made by Rob Roy for his own convenience when out upon his cattle raids, and a decayed fir-tree was often pointed out as the spot where Laird James, the Spreckled Laird, occasionally tied a bullock or two when he heard of such visitors in the country; they were, of course, driven away and never seen again, but the Laird’s own herds were not touched. It has been the fashion to father all moss-trooping throughout the Highlands on Rob Roy, but there was a Macpherson nearer to us, and a Mackintosh equally clever at the gathering of gear—Mackintosh of Borlam”.

Other legends of the district are preserved in Mrs. Smith’s volume. The original possession of Rothiemurchus by the Grants is itself based on a legend. In 1570 the Chief of the Clan Grant presented his second son, Patrick, with the moor of Muckerach—(on the road from Dulnain Bridge to the church of Duthil and Carr Bridge)—on which he built a tower or castle; and the Shaws having displeased the Government by repeated acts of insubordination, their lands were confiscated, and the Rothiemurchus portion presented to the Laird of Muckerach, “gin he could win it”—which (as Mrs. Smith naively puts it) “without more ado he did”. The Shaws proved troublesome for a few generations, and their last chief, killed in a fight between the two clans, was importunate even in death, for his corpse was continually raised, until the laird of Rothiemurchus buried it deep down within the kirk beneath his own seat, “and every Sunday when he went to pray he stamped his feet upon the heavy stone he had laid over the remains of his enemy”. The “great man” of the Rothiemurchus Grants was a Patrick Grant, surnamed Macalpine—a kind of despotic sovereign, who went about with “a body of four-and-twenty picked men gaily dressed”, and dispensed (and executed) speedy justice, not only over his own small patrimony, but over all the country round. He left a widow (a

second wife), who was sadly persecuted by the wife of his eldest son and heir, and who made public her grievances in this peculiar fashion:—"Once after the service in the kirk was over, she stepped up with her fan in her hand to the corner of the kirkyard where all our graves are made, and, taking off her high-heeled slipper, she tapped with it on the stone laid over her husband's grave, crying out through her tears, 'Macalpine! Macalpine! rise up for ae half-hour and see me richted'!" So much for the legendary lore in the family history: the legendary lore of the district may be illustrated by the following story regarding Glen Eunach:—"Fairy tales belong to this beautiful wilderness; the steep rock on the one hand is the dwelling of the Bodach of the Scarigour, and the castle-like row of precipitous banks on the other is the domain of the Bodach of the Corriegowanthill—titles of honour these in fairy-land, whose high condition did not, however, prevent their owners from quarrelling, for no mortal ever gained the good graces of the one without offending the other, loud laughing mockery ever filling the glen from one potentate or the other, whenever their territories were invaded after certain hours".

There is an interesting tradition given in the Notes about the Doune:—

"The Doune hill is supposed to be inhabited by one of the numerous Brownies of tradition. This one was a friendly little fellow, who used to come out nightly from his hill and work hard in the kitchen, tinkering the pots and pans, in return for 'the cream-bowl duly set'. But one unfortunate night the laird was kept awake by the hammering, and cried out peevishly to the Brownie to stop his noise and be off with him. The Brownie, in high dudgeon, retired within his hill, and has never resumed his service at the Doune, though he is supposed to account for the occasional disappearance of milk left standing in the offices. He may still be heard at work inside the hill, and there is a belief that in time his resentment will subside, and he will return to his former haunts. One of the babies of 'the family', born in 1843, was peculiar-looking as a new-born child from having marked features and unusually long dark hair; at first sight of her, one of the old women who had come for the occasion cried out, 'Eh, sirs! it's the Brownie come back again'!"

Space prevents any notice of the portions of the book dealing with the social relations of the people in the time treated of; but the details furnished are most interesting, and are recorded with much piquancy and humour, but also with great good feeling and intense appreciation of the old ways. Alas! these old ways have long since departed. The few grandees shut themselves up rigorously in their proud exclusiveness. Those who could have perpetuated a better tone are gone, their places know them no more. Our former wise occasional reunions are matters of history; each section appears now to keep apart, unnoticed by the class above, and in turn not noticing the class below". The prophecy of an aunt of Mrs. Smith has come true—"that, with the progress of knowledge, all the old feudal affections would be overwhelmed, individuality of character would cease, manners would change, the Highlands would become like the rest of the world, all that made life most charming there would fade away, little would be left of the olden time, and life there would become as uninteresting as in other little-remarkable places".

THE CLUB AT BENCLEUCH.

By the Rev. GEORGE WILLIAMS, F.S.A.Scot.

“ What hills are like the Ochil hills ?
There's nane sae green, tho' grander ;
What rills are like the Ochil rills ?
Nane, nane on earth that wander ”.

MONDAY, the 2nd of May, was like a piece of nice, warm, and tender meat sandwiched between two slices of soaky bread. It was preceded and succeeded by sad, bad weather for mountaineering ; but, being itself favourable, the reader will want no further assurance that the excursion to Bencleuch was an enjoyable one. The writer, who was honoured with an invitation as the Club's guest, was frequently at his barometer, both on Saturday and Sunday, and was much delighted to find that Monday was fine.

After breakfast at the Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling, we drove to Alva, passing within a few yards of that most conspicuous of all our Scottish monuments, which was erected on the Abbey Craig some thirty years ago in honour of Wallace. The tower is between two and three hundred feet high. We had the town of Bridge of Allan, locally called “ the Bridge ”, or “ the Brig ”, on our left. Bridge of Allan is associated with health and mellow breezes, although the extent of its churchyards and cemetery is somewhat suggestive of the contrary.

We got a fine view of the sloping hills of Cleish and Saline in the distance. Passing Airthrey Castle, we thought of the two Haldanes, who sold their possessions and gave the money and themselves to the cause of evangelical religion in last century, and to whom we owe not a little of our religious liberty.

The Cairngorm and other northern mountains are all so old that their comparative ages are seldom thought of and seldom taken any account of ; but it is otherwise in this

neighbourhood. On the south side of the Forth basin, the Campsie Fells with outliers extend from near Loch Lomond to Stirling. It might appear that this range was connected with that of the Ochils, the connecting links being Craighforth, Stirling Castle Rock, and the Abbey Craig. They are, however, of very different ages. Craighforth, standing grand in green, is an extension into the Forth basin—an outlier—of the South-western range. These hills are made up of porphyritic lava-formed rocks; so also is Craighforth. Stirling Castle Rock, 420 feet above sea level, and Abbey Craig, not quite so high, are dolerite of the calciferous sandstone period, and have been revealed to us by denudation. The Ochils are lavas, tuffs, and agglomerates, set up, or, rather, laid down on the Old Red Sandstone Lake. The South-western range of hills, rendered respectable by such peaks as the Meikle Bin and King's Seat, are vastly younger, although not a whit prettier, than the venerable Ochils, which, again, are very much younger than the great mountains towering up in the west and north.

Stirling Castle Rock furnishes a good example of the "crag and tail" feature. The "crag" faces the west, whence the ice came, while the "tail" slopes towards the east, the direction taken by the departing ice. As we were descending the path in Tillicoultry glen, a large boulder of the conglomerate or plum-pudding kind, carried from the Braes of Doune by the ice-sheet, was seen and examined by several of the company.

The fifty feet sea beach, a prominent feature of the Forth valley, was pointed out as indicating a former level of the sea. The remains of several of the large Greenland whale have been exhumed from the carse clay, and canoes and weapons of war have been found embedded in it, giving evidence that *terra firma* has attained its present level in comparatively recent times.

We come to Menstrie, once the property of the Earl of Stirling, a statesman and poet of the time of James VI.—

"There's Alva, and Dollar, and Tillicoultry;
But the bonny braes o' Menstrie bear awa' the gree".

"That's Tullibody", said one of the company, and we

spoke of Sir Ralph Abereromby, and of that other worthy connected with the district, over whom the devil, or some other malignant spirit, exulted:—

“ Deedle, linkum, dodie !
I’ve gotten druncken Davie’s wife,
The Smith o’ Tullibody ”.

Alva is reached at last. It is a seat of the spinning industry, and, to all appearance, seems to be a thriving town. Mineral veins were discovered here last century, and two of them were worked with some success for cobalt and silver. It is said that the Communion cups of Alva Church were made of the native silver. But the silver industry of Alva did not prove a profitable one, and has long ago been given up. Was it Alva or the Leadhills to which the story of the “two holes” applies? Probably to both. “Do you see that hole”? asked the laird; “well, out of that hole I took £10,000”. Coming to another such hole, the laird dryly remarked, “an’ I put £10,000, sir, into that hole”.

Walking slowly up the Ben from Alva, and with downcast eye, we were in a position to pay some heed to the flora of Benclouch, which, as far as we are concerned, may be dismissed in a single sentence. We were not sufficiently well acquainted with the rarer plants to make any noteworthy finds; besides, it was only the first week of May, and a rather cold spring, so that only three or four hill flowers were out. We noticed *Carex praecox* within 50 feet of the summit; *Viola canina*, very dwarfish, at about 1,500 feet of elevation; and what will the genial and intelligent Senior Vice-President (who did and said so much to make the excursion a success) say to us if we include in our list a *Potentilla fragariastrum*? Of course, we saw almost no heather on this hill. Had it not been for the ewes that had lately completed the big work of the season, with the result playfully skipping at their feet, the occasional loyal and royal salute of a mountain lark, and the weird scream of the plover, we observed little of animal life during our climb.

The summit has an elevation of 2,363 feet. In an article compiled from the account of the O. S. Triangulation of Scotland, and contained in the “Journal” (Vol. I., p.

165), our situation relative to other prominent mountains is sufficiently well defined. We are there authoritatively informed what we ought to have seen, if the clouds and sky had been more propitious and the blustering wind more pitiful. Our view, however, from the summit was not unimpressive:—

“A tumultuous waste of huge hill-tops”—

but one would have liked the wind to have been less wintry and watery, that one might sit down and drink it slowly in.

Most lordly among his peers stood Ben Lomond, with the Cobbler, Ben Vane, Beinn Ime, and the Arrochar Ben Vorlich at his back. Ben Ledi (a name which is persistently and poetically explained as “the hill of God”, but which is more correctly and characteristically interpreted as “the hill of slopes”, Beinn Leathadich), flanked by Ben Venue, Ben A’an, and the Hills of Balquhidder, immortalised by Scott, Tannahill, and Stevenson, and presiding over and contributing to the grandeur of Scotland’s grandest scenery, is a most “kenspeckle” feature in the landscape. Ben More and Am Binnein were readily recognised. Rugged Stuc a Chroin and Ben Vorlich (*vide* “Journal”, Vol. II., p. 11) were distinct landmarks to the spectator. We failed to see Ben Nevis, which ought to have been visible over the shoulder of Meall Ghaordie. Ben Lawers, Perthshire’s highest mountain, like everything truly great, was plain and unassuming; Ben Chonzie was more prominent, being nearer. Schichallion will always demand the mountaineer’s attention from the scientific researches aided by it; but, if we saw it at all, we were not impressed by its form. The Sidlaw Hills, “the Sidlies”, and the Fifeshire Lomonds seemed at our feet. Towards the east a fair view of Loch Leven, sacred to anglers, and in whose isle Queen Mary was kept prisoner, was obtained. The Bass Rock, Berwick Law, Calton Hill, and Arthur’s Seat were invisible. We were all struck by the “clear winding” Devon, as it slowly and laboriously pushed its way to the Forth. The numerous towns and villages on both sides of the Forth, whose bosom bore quite a fleet of sailing vessels, proved that we were looking upon one of the richest, if not one of the finest, landscapes of our native land.

The view towards the south has been given by a member of the Club, as seen on a previous visit:—"We noted Dun Rig, on the borders of Peebles and Selkirk, and Hart Fell, on the march between the former county and Dumfries; while Tinto, in Lanark, almost due south, had for more than an hour appeared spectral over the broad expanse of flat land between it and the Ochils. . . . Goat Fell, 68 miles off, was seen obtruding his shadow-like pow, faint, yet perfectly distinct". (*Vide* also "Journal", Vol. I., p. 73.)

Some Club business having been satisfactorily transacted, we bade good-bye to the summit of Benleuch and made for Tillicoultry.

The burgh of Tillicoultry is pleasantly situated, and owes much of its prosperity to the burn by whose banks we descended. We observed several large woollen factories all driven by this stream. Freestone and coal found in the neighbourhood help to make this a thriving place. A little to the north of the town, on a rugged and steep basaltic height, we observed the ruins of a circular fort or castle, described in one of the earlier volumes of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries.

The drive from Tillicoultry to Stirling was made by the south side of the Abbey Craig, and thus we got a good view of Cambuskenneth Abbey, which, by the way, was in ancient times known as the "Church of St. Mary in Stryvelin". Stirling was entered *via* the Old Bridge, which, for its beauty, historical associations, and antiquity, was greatly admired. This bridge was the scene of the battle in which Wallace and his Scottish band defeated the English invaders in 1297. With the exception, perhaps, of a portion of the West Church, this old bridge is the most venerable and interesting erection in or near the town of Stirling.

The company dined at the Golden Lion Hotel at six o'clock, delighted with their visit to the Ochils—the most distant "one-day excursion" in which the Club, in its corporate capacity, had taken part.

LOCH MHIC GHILLE-CHAOILE :

A TRADITION OF THE CAIRNGORMS.

By the Rev. DONALD McDUGALL, B.D.

THE tourist about to ascend Braeriach, the highest, with the exception of Ben Muich Dhui, of the Cairngorm group, will probably start from Aviemore, passing by Loch an Eilein, in Rothiemurchus, on his way to Glen Eunach, whence the ascent is easily made. The most convenient point from which to ascend is near the junction of the burn which comes down from the mountain and joins the Bennie about two miles from the head of Glen Eunach. Near the confluence of these streams, and on the left bank of that which flows from Loch Eunach, is a small lake, marked on the Ordnance Survey map as bearing the somewhat peculiar name of Loch Mhic Ghille-chaoile—a Gaelic expression which literally means “the Loch of the Lanky Man’s Son”. The person here alluded to as being lean, or lanky, was in reality a tall, slender, wiry, active person, possessing these characteristics in a much greater degree than any others in the place. The son inherited the father’s physical peculiarities, with the addition that he was specially noted for his swiftness, and in feats of agility and running few could approach him. The loch here specified obtained its name, according to local tradition, from a somewhat tragic incident in which this fleet and courageous man lost his life, close by the banks of the lake.

Cattle raids were then common, and it was no unusual sight to witness Lochaber reivers passing stealthily along secluded mountain glens to escape observation, carrying off their unlawful prey to their homes in the west. A party of these raiders made their appearance in Glen Eunach on a Sunday morning, and their predatory intentions were soon disclosed to the herdsman in charge of the cattle sent to the

glen for grazing during the summer months. He at once set off to procure the necessary assistance, and went direct to the church of Rothiemurchus, where he knew most of the people would be assembled at worship. He without delay made known the unwelcome intelligence that Lochaber thieves were engaged in collecting and driving off their cattle in Glen Eunach. The service was immediately brought to a close, and most of the men present set off in pursuit. Mac Ghille-Chaoile, who had oftener than once rendered good service on similar occasions, sped across the hills to the scene of action, and was soon far ahead of the others who were bent on the same errand. He knew well the direction the thieves were likely to take, and he made all possible haste to intercept their progress before it should prove too late. By the time he crossed over into Glen Eunach he found the cattle all collected together in one spot, ready to be driven across Coire Odhar into Badenoch. He came up with the robbers at the little loch which from henceforth was destined to bear his name. Loud and angry words passed, and a scuffle immediately ensued, in which he was mortally wounded and in a few minutes expired. Dreading apprehension for the murder thus committed, and finding that as yet none of the murdered man's friends was in sight, they hurriedly took up the body, carried it to a retired spot above the loch, and concealed or buried it in a hollow, known as Coire Bo' Chraig, where it remained undiscovered for several weeks. His companions, on arriving at the place, found all their cattle safe, but no trace of their companion, or of the plundering invaders whose lawless project he had so successfully thwarted, although at the expense of his own life. After a vain search throughout the glen, they were obliged to return home without any tidings as to what had become of him. The place where the body lay hid was only found out some five or six weeks afterwards, through information given by a Lochaber woman who visited the district, and told the people the account which she had heard in the west regarding the manner of his death and the disposal of his body. The tidings, although of a sad and sorrowful character, enabled his relatives and friends

to give him decent burial in the churchyard. From that day forth, the loch where he met his fate has borne the name by which it is now known—that of “Loch Mhic Ghille-chaoile”.

It may be remarked, as tending in some measure to confirm the general truth of the story, that in recent years an old, rusty dirk, or skian-dubh, was found by the side of the loch, which, not unlikely, may have been the very weapon by which the unfortunate victim was killed, or one which he carried about his person, and had dropped on receiving his death wound. The reivers, after committing the murder, immediately decamped on concealing the body, and set out for their own country, where, to all appearance, they managed to escape the punishment which their crime deserved.



THE CAIRN, BRAERIACH.

THE LARIG GHRU.

BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

ON the walls of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy in London this year was hung a fine water-colour drawing of the Larig Ghru. It attracted much attention by its vivid representation of this remarkable cleft through the great mountain mass of the Cairngorm range. From the platform of the railway station at Aviemore the tourist may obtain a grand view of the massive and long-extended plateaus of Braeriach and Cairngorm, with this gloomy Pass opening between them, filled with writhing mists or dark shadows, or, when the sun shines directly into it, disclosing its rocky sides moistened by the melting of the snow-wreaths in the clefts above, lit up with a dazzling silver radiance. But the distance is too great to form there a true conception of its savage sublimity. You must actually enter for a considerable distance into the rugged jaws of the Pass itself before you realise its wild grandeur; and the painter of the Highland landscape alluded to must have taken his view-point from a spot very close to the foot of the mountains, which commanded not only the mouth of the Pass, but also the magnificent scenery in the narrow windings of the interior.

The Larig Ghru, or, to give it its full name, the Learg Ghruamach—or Savage Pass—separates between the eastern side of Braeriach and the western slopes of Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm. It pierces the great Cairngorm range from south to north, and is the principal route by which the pedestrian can cross from Speyside to Braemar. It used to be much frequented by drovers and shepherds, who transported their flocks and herds from the hillsides of Aviemore and Kingussie to the markets of Castletown on the Dee. But since the opening of the Highland Railway between Inverness and Perth these markets have been dis-

continued, and the surplus sheep and cattle of the district have been sent to the large towns and cities of the south. Consequently, the Pass has fallen into desuetude as a great public road, and is now used almost exclusively by adventurous tourists who wish to penetrate into the sublime solitudes of the Cairngorms. There never was any road worthy of the name in its palmiest days—only a species of bridle track; but, such as it was, it was kept in the best repair of which it was capable. But since its abandonment to the summer tourists, it has been allowed to revert to the wildness of Nature; and were it not for the zealous efforts of members of the Cairngorm Club, who have taken the matter in hand, it would by this time have become impassable. They have in many places smoothed the roughest parts of the track, and in others indicated its course, where it would otherwise have disappeared in bog or rocky desert, by the erection of stone-men as guides. Especially welcome are these rude cairns amid the vast bewildering heaps of *debris* that have fallen from the lofty cliffs on both sides of the Pass at its highest point, and meet together in the narrowest parts, and bar the way.

A gang of labourers employed for a few weeks would have removed all these difficulties of the route, and made it easy and pleasant for the tourist, either on foot or on horseback. But there are no public funds available for this purpose. Indeed, it is not considered desirable by the powers that be that the track should be maintained at all. It would be considered a piece of good fortune if it should disappear altogether, and these solitudes be entirely unvisited, so that the deer forests through which it passes might not be disturbed. For many years the Pass was closed to pedestrians, lest they should scare the game; and it was only after many unpleasant struggles that the Scottish Rights of Way Society succeeded in opening up a through communication between Aviemore and Braemar, and establishing the public right of way through this defile, which they had held from time immemorial, although for a time it had been foolishly suffered to pass into abeyance. But though the freedom of passage was ultimately conceded, it was restricted to the

narrowest line consistent with going through at all. No margin on either side of the track was permitted, and the pedestrian has in consequence to plant his feet in the exact footsteps of his predecessors, and so make the ruts ever deeper and more trying. In this way, the path is the most difficult and tiresome of any path in Great Britain. It is a pity that a more generous interpretation was not given to the licence allowed, so that the arduousness of the passage might have been somewhat mitigated. No one visiting this sublime solitude for the sake of the wild scenery would wish to inflict the slightest injury upon the sport of the huntsmen. Their interests would have been as sacred to him as his own; and the likelihood is that, treated with a generous trustfulness, he might be even more zealous of the rights of the proprietor than, as human nature is constituted, he can be at present.

The entrance of the Larig is about six miles from Aviemore. It is a delightful road all the way from the station, but it becomes especially romantic when you pass Polchar House, the residence of Dr. Martineau, and the Manse of Rothiemurchus, and pursue it beside a streamlet shaded with beautiful birch trees, hanging down their long, graceful tresses overhead. Mr. MacWhirter, who resided in the locality a few years ago, found among these birches charming studies for his facile pencil of the "Lady of the Woods". Entering by a gate, over which the Scottish Rights of Way Society has fixed a board indicating that this is the commencement of the public road to Braemar by the Larig, you skirt the northern shore of Loch an Eilein, embosomed among picturesque old fir forests, and overshadowed by the bare, round mountain mass of Cadha Mor, one of the outer spurs of the Cairngorm range. On the little island of this loch, which was originally a crannog or artificial lake-dwelling, there is a ruined castle, built by the Wolf of Badenoch, and covered with luxuriant ivy. The stumps of the huge fir trees from which the timber for the roofing and flooring of this castle was obtained, may still be seen on the margin of the bog, from which the people of the neighbourhood obtain their peats—preserved as hard

and undecayed as ever, after the lapse of all these centuries. On the top of one of the towers the osprey or sea-eagle, one of the rarest of our native birds, has built its nest. For several seasons the bird abandoned the locality, as it was not only persecuted by the crows, who stole the materials of its nest, but also frightened by the shouts of visitors, starting the curious echo reflected from the walls of the castle. But recently the pair came back; and I was fortunate enough last summer in seeing the male bird catching a large trout, and soaring up into the sky with it, held parallel to its body, with one claw fixed in the head and the other in the tail. After making several gyrations in the air, with loud screams, it touched its nest, only to soar aloft again, still pertinaciously holding the fish in its claws. A seagull pursued it, and, rising above, attempted to frighten it, so that it might drop the fish; but the osprey dodged the attacks of the gull, which finally gave up the game, and allowed the gallant little eagle to alight on its nest in peace, and feed its clamorous young ones with its scaly spoil. Loch an Eilein is one of the loveliest bits of scenery in this part of Scotland, and when the hills and open parts of the woods are crimson with the heather in full bloom, almost changing the water of the loch, by the magic reflection, into wine, contrasting with the rich blue-green of the fir trees, there is not a fairer sight to be seen in all the land.

Passing along the richly-wooded shore of this charming loch, you come at length to another index board of the Scottish Rights of Way Society, in the heart of the forest, where two ways meet. One of these ways leads through Glen Eunach to the wild loch of the same name, lying between Braeriach and Sgoran Dubh, in the very lap of the mountain solitude; and the other through the Larig to Braemar. Turning to the left, therefore, you speedily traverse a well-made road through the luxuriant heath and gigantic juniper bushes which form the underwood of the forest. On some of the young fir trees you notice the white, resinous exudations of a kind of gall—if one may call it so—the work of the larva of a moth called *Retinia resinana*. It is fairly widespread in Scotland, though nowhere

abundant; but in Norway it is exceedingly common in the pine woods. Sixteen square miles of the old, aboriginal forest of Rothiemurchus were many years ago cut down, and their place occupied by young plantations, which have nevertheless attained to a respectable size. Here and there, in the depths of the forest, you come upon the relics of the mighty past: trees of enormous height and girth, whose red trunks, armoured with thick scales, like a cuirass, from head to foot, and knotted and tortuous branches, clothed with masses of blue-green needles, maintain a sturdy defiance to the shock of the tempest, and the quiet, insidious ravages of decay. The huge boles of the living trees, like Nature's own tallies, record in the mystic rings in their inmost heart the varying moods of the passing seasons; while the roots left behind in the ground, where their neighbours have fallen, still preserve their red, resinous freshness, and, when cut into splinters, burn on the hearth with a delightfully bright, perfumed flame.

The dense masses of vegetation in this forest strike one with astonishment. Not an inch of soil but is covered with a tangled growth of heather, blaeberry and cranberry bushes, and juniper; and, feeding parasitically upon the underground stems, are immense quantities of yellow *Melampyrum*, or cow-wheat, and pale, ghostly spikes of *Goodyera*—a kind of orchis. The mosses are in great variety, and in extraordinary luxuriance; the rare and lovely ostrich-plume feather moss growing in the utmost profusion on the shady knolls. There are innumerable ant-hills of various sizes, some being enormous, and must have taken many years to accumulate. You see them at various stages. Some are fresh and full of life, crowded with swarms of their industrious inhabitants. But many are old and deserted, either half grown over with the glossy sprigs of the cranberry, or completely obliterated by the luxuriant vegetation. All through the forest you see little mounds covered with blaeberry and cranberry bushes, which clearly indicate their origin. They were originally ant-hills. Each particle of them was collected by the labours of these insects. If you dig into them, you will find the foundation

to be composed exclusively of pine needles, and you can trace the tunnels and galleries made by the ants. It is a curious association this of plant and animal life—a kind of symbiosis! The struggle between the two kinds of life is seen here in a most interesting way. The wave of the undergrowth of the forest, in its slow, stealthy, irresistible progress, encroaches upon the ant-hills, and forms at first a ring around their base. Gradually it creeps up their sides, and you see one-half of the ant-hill covered with cranberry bushes and the other half retaining its own characteristic appearance of a heap of brown fir needles, with the ants swarming over them, busy at their work. But the vegetable wave still advances, and finally extinguishes the last spark of animal life on the mounds, and rolls its green crest over their buried contents. In this remarkable way, the soil of the forest is formed by a combination of the labours of plant and animal life. The remains of both form its constituent elements; and it is a curious reflection that in after ages, when the forest decays, and its site is converted into a peat bog, part of the substance of the peat, from which the future human inhabitants of the locality will dig their fuel, will have been formed by the labours of the ant!

The direct opening of the Larig Ghru is at the point where a stone-pillar and a guide-post stand, on the upper side of the main road through the forest, about three miles above Loch an Eilein. Were it not for these patent indications, the obscure entrance would often be missed by the stranger. For nearly a mile the path passes through a scraggy fir forest, its narrow course almost concealed by the luxuriant heather meeting over it from both sides. The quality of the ground varies continually, from soft peat bog to hard granite gravel and rough boulders, and one has to walk by faith and not by sight, getting many rude shocks and sudden trippings from unseen and unexpected obstacles. In wet weather this part of the route is altogether deplorable, and is the occasion of so many disasters that one becomes utterly reckless, plunging on, heedless of the sodden state of one's shoes and the draggled wretched-

ness of one's clothes. The track mounts continually upwards, until at last you rise above the straggling forest into the wide, open moorland, with a grand view all around, and the free air of heaven playing with grateful coolness on your heated face. Here you pursue your way over huge moraines, the relics of the ancient glaciers that once swept over this region, and converted it into an undulating strath of the most surprising labyrinthine heights and hollows. The path takes you along the edge of these great mounds, where their broken sides slope down precipitously to the channel of the burn that foams and roars over its boulders far below. It is a magnificent spectacle, and the sound of many waters, that comes up to you, and seems to fill all the hushed, listening air like the shout of a multitude, is very inspiring. The sides of the moraines are covered with masses of blaeberry and cranberry bushes, loaded with their purple and scarlet berries; for, whatever may be the failure of the wild-fruit harvest in the low grounds, where sudden frosts and blights in spring and early summer are so apt to wreck the richest promise, an abundant crop may always be gathered here, above the risk of such casualties.

You get fairly into the mouth of the Pass when you see directly opposite to you, on your right hand, the bare, conical hill of Carn Elrick, which rises to an imposing altitude at this point. It is the "sanctuary" of Rothiemurchus Forest, where the deer escaping into it are not allowed to be shot. It looks like a grand, solemn Sphinx, set to guard the portals of a mountain region of mystery and romance. The path winds along the desolate foot of Castle Hill, a rugged spur of the Cairngorm range, to the left. Here and there the last solitary firs of the forest contend with the elements, and are twisted and dwarfed, and sometimes bleached into skeletons, by the severity of the struggle. But you hardly notice them, for they are extinguished by the universal magnitude of the inorganic masses and forces around. From this point the Pass opens up a wide, treeless waste of utter solitude; the dim and indistinct track here and there marked by a cairn. Terraces of moraine

matter, broken and gleaming white in the sunshine, indicating the different levels at which the stream formerly ran, bank up its course; and little rills, coursing down the mountains from both sides, fall into it to swell its volume. This region has never been animated by human life. It is above the zone of cultivation. No ruin of hamlets, with nettles growing round the cold hearthstones, cluster on the spots where the turf is softest and greenest among the heather, to testify of forcible evictions and heart-broken farewells, and of the new homes of exiles far away across a world of seas. The peace here is not the peace of death, to which man's works return, but the peace of the primitive, untamed wilderness. From time immemorial the region has been dedicated to the noble pastime dear to the old kings and chieftains of Scotland. Large herds of red deer frequent the corries; but you may wander for days over the boundless waste without seeing a single antler, when all at once you may behold on the ridge over your head a score or two standing motionless gazing at you, with their horns piercing the sky-line like skeleton boughs. It is a grand sight, but it is only momentary, for, scenting danger, they disappear over the shoulder of the mountain, noiselessly like a dream, into the safe shadows of another glen.

At the large boulder, surmounted by a stone-man, which crowns the highest point of the Pass you have yet reached, and which commands a splendid vista, looking back, of the richly wooded scenery of the Spey around Aviemore, the defile contracts, and you have on the one side the great precipices of Braeriach, and on the other the rugged, frowning buttresses of Creag na Leacainn, which look as if they threatened to fall down and crush you. These rocky jaws of the Pass are composed of red granite, which looks in the heaps of broken *débris* at the bottom of the defile what it really is, but up in the overhanging cliffs has taken on a dark purple bloom by weathering, which completely disguises its true character, and in stormy weather assumes a most gloomy and forbidding appearance, greatly enhancing the savage aspect of the gorge. Granite, wherever it occurs, is always characterised by a special type of

scenery. It usually exhibits a tame uniformity of outline, unrelieved even by the great height to which it is often elevated. Owing to the ease with which this rock may be decomposed by the weather, and the protection which the angular rubbish thus formed gives to the surface, being constantly renewed as often as it is wasted away by the elements, it forms long, uniform, gently-inclined slopes. But, owing also to its being traversed by innumerable vertical joints, this rock forms savage corries and dizzy cliffs, which the decays of Nature only make more precipitous, as they remove slice after slice from their faces. Thus the different angular exposures of the rock to the wasting powers of Nature at the front and at the back of Braeriach, for instance, have given rise to the widely different appearances of the hill from those two points of view, which so astonish the visitor. The smooth, undulating slopes and table-land on the west side of the hill, contrast in a remarkable manner with the vertical walls into which the mountain breaks down all at once on the east and north sides, descending sheer for two thousand feet into the profound, mist-hidden glens. There is no other rock which combines these apparently incongruous features on the same range—the grandeur of lofty precipice and the smoothness of sloping shoulder and level top.

About a mile farther up the Pass you have to cross over the stream, at a point where an enormous avalanche of angular masses of rock has poured down the left side of the hill into the valley. Through this cataract of stones you hear the loud rumble of an unseen cataract of water falling from the heights, and forming one of the tributaries of the stream at your feet. The spot makes a kind of *cul de sac* or a recess on the route, where you can get shelter from the wind, soft materials for a couch to lie upon, fuel to kindle a fire, and plenty of the coldest and most delicious water, all inviting you to rest awhile and make ready an *al fresco* meal. Around you are bushes of the rare bog whortleberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*), mingling with the common blaeberry, but easily distinguishable from it by its more straggling habit, and by the glaucous

or gray-green colour of its leaves. Its berries are very like the blaeberry, only of a somewhat flatter shape, and with a more refined taste. In this favoured corner of the Pass you may gather in abundance on the slopes in the neighbourhood the rare and interesting cornel, the *Cornus suecica* beautiful alike in its flowering and fruiting stage. It has a large, brilliant, white, strawberry-like blossom, but in the centre is a dark purple tuft, almost black, which gives it a very singular appearance. The apparent white petals are actually bracts, which remain on the plant when the flowers are fertilised, and gradually go back to the green colour of the ordinary leaves, as is the case in the Christmas rose. The dark purple tuft in the centre consists in reality of the true flowers. In autumn the foliage of the cornel fades into beautiful red and orange tints, and the blossoms give place to one or more large transparent scarlet berries. In its fruiting stage it is a very striking and conspicuous plant, and cannot fail to attract the eye even of the greatest novice in botany. I remember finding in this spot several dwarf specimens of the very rare *Saxifraga rivularis* in flower growing on the mossy stones forming the steps by which you cross the stream to the other side, nourished by the constant spray of the descending waters; and I daresay a diligent search in the vicinity would be rewarded by finding this flower in abundance. On the shady, broken parts of the bank I observed a magnificent sheet of the somewhat uncommon lichen, the *Baeomyces icmadophila*, with its gray-green crust covered with hundreds of pale pink, fleshy apothecia, exhaling a peculiar, pungent odour. It was the finest and largest specimen I ever saw.

The stream above this spot for a considerable distance disappears below the ground, and the channel where it should flow is covered with blaeberry and whortleberry bushes. Higher up you see it again pursuing its rejoicing course in the light of day, and in unabated fulness, over stones covered with the softest and richest mosses of the most vivid green and golden colours. These mosses in the bed of the stream give to the music of the waters a peculiarly subdued and muffled tone, like a prolonged sigh,

which greatly increases the feeling of melancholy in the forlorn waste around. The path here passes over ground peculiarly bare and hard and storm-scalped. Hardly any vegetation grows on it, save the hoary, woolly-fringe-moss *Trichostomum*, the white reindeer lichen, the brown alpine cudweed, and grotesque tufts of club-moss. The stones are blackened with various species of *Gyrophora*, or Tripe de Roche, looking like fragments of charred parchment, which crunch under your tread into black powder. Nothing can exceed the loveliness of the lemon crust of the *Lecidea geographica*, the geographical-lichen, which spreads over the granite boulders everywhere in great, well-shaped patches, looking like maps with its glossy black apothecia and little, waving cracks. Its vivid yellow colour contrasts in the most charming manner with the vivid red of the surface of the granite stone on which it grows. This is the most arctic, antarctic, and alpine lichen in the world, and marks the extreme limit of vegetation everywhere; and, like most alpine lichens, it becomes brighter and lovelier the higher up you go. It is a perfect feast of beauty to the eye that can appreciate it, all along the track in this region. In the beds of the clear, cold rills that cross your path you see the most wonderful crimson, golden, emerald, and even black mosses, some of them rare, and one particularly very rare, growing profusely, the *Hypnum trifarium*, which I had never seen elsewhere than high up in alpine bogs on Ben Lawers. These variegated mosses and hepaticæ shelter the roots of starry saxifrages, yellow and white, and keep the coolness and crystal clearness of the waters for the thirsty lips of the perspiring traveller.

Beyond this point you enter on a region of extreme desolation. The stream that has been your companion all along has disappeared. You are now on the watershed of the Pass, about 2750 feet above the level of the sea. On your left hand the south-west side of Ben Muich Dhui rises up to the lofty sky-line in almost perpendicular slopes of granite detritus, on which hardly a speck of grass, or lichen, or moss is seen. They stand out against the clear blue cloudless sky, when the sun on a

bright day is shining full upon them, with the most intense scarlet radiance, like a mound of newly-burnt slag at the mouth of a mine. The course of a side stream, descending from the heights in a series of white cascades, breaks the uniformity of these great slopes, and is supposed to form the true source of the Dee. There is another stream which disputes the honour with it, viz., the Garrachory Burn, which rises in two or three small springs called "The Wells of Dee", near the top of the east shoulder of Braeriach. The one stream is about as large as the other, and contains an equal volume of water; so that there is no reason why the source of the Dee should not be attributed to the highest mountain in the district instead of to the second highest. The right-hand side of the Pass is formed of the rugged precipices of Braeriach, that look fearfully black and stern, in striking contrast with the bright red slopes of Ben Muich Dhui on the other side. These are indeed

"The grisly cliffs that guard
The infant rills of Highland Dee".

Immense heaps of rough and crowded blocks of stone that have fallen from these cliffs obstruct the way, and being often sharp, and set on edge in all varieties of awkward positions, the footing is exceedingly precarious, and the progress over them must be slow and cautious. The stonemen of the Cairngorm Club are an immense help in the perplexing intricacies of the track. Here and there cases of alpine verdure occur among the leafless cairns, where the weary eye is refreshed by seeing frequent gray-green rosettes of alpine cudweed (*Gnaphalium supinum*) upholstering mossy ground, tufts of glossy dark green alpine rue, and in one or two places clusters of the rare and striking *Saussurea alpina*, with its pale blue composite flowers, and large, handsome leaves, reminding one of the name of the great Swiss naturalist who first ascended Mont Blanc. In hollow basins among these heaps of detritus are the three principal Pools of Dee. They are evidently formed by the perpendicular stream that falls from the shoulder of Ben

Muich Dhui, and is lost for a time under the cairns, to reappear at intervals in these sheets of water, where the ground is unobstructed. They are circular in shape, and of considerable size, with a margin of mossy verdure at the foot of the rampart of boulders hemming them in. The water is of a greenish-gray colour, like snow water, and is extremely cold even on the hottest day. It is so transparent that, though of great depth, the Pools look quite shallow.

Clambering over the last barrier of wreckage from the cliffs, you come down on the other side to the source of the Dee. There you see the river rushing full-bodied and complete at once from under the huge mass of moss-covered stones, proclaiming its freedom in a loud, confused roaring. You obtain a long vista of the other side of the Pass, with the narrow, rugged path gleaming white at intervals, as it winds down to the cultivated glens and straths beside the swift river. Amid an array of giant mountains unequalled in Scotland within a similar area, forming the guardians of the Pass on either side, your eye catches the magnificent, steep sides and conical top of Cairn Toul, which fills up the whole southern side of the gorge. You sit down beside the clear waters, that give such a sense of overflowing, unfailing fulness, and yield yourself freely to the thoughts and feelings that arise in your heart. You feel that there is a spell upon you which it would be sinful to disturb. The imagination of a *Doré* could suggest nothing more wildly desolate than this secluded fountain-head of waters, with the mountain-streams murmuring around it, and the vast, solitary peaks rising above it, shutting it out from all except the sun for a few hours at mid-day and the stars at night. Nothing can exceed the loneliness of the place. One coming here alone would almost thank his shadow for the suggestion of companionship which it afforded. But what a field for meditation to one who is in league with the stones of the field, and who can interpret the mysterious signs in which the dumb mountains speak to him! The stream has the voice of a sibyl uttering mystic oracles; and an occasional alpine bird, flitting about, made almost tame by its ignorance of man, soothes the listening

air with its tender twitter, and makes the place where it is seen and heard the very soul of the loneliness. How full of significance does every stone become; and how touching is the mute appeal of each alpine flower by your side! You feel yourself a small and unheeded atom in the midst of the overwhelming masses of matter around you; and yet you feel, at the same time, that you belong necessarily to the heart of things, and supply the element of consciousness to them all, and are folded closely round in the arms of Infinite Love. In all your life you have never been so alone with Nature, in the very heart of it, as here. You seem to hear the very pulse of the earth, to feel something of the eternal leisure of the mountains. Nature lays her cool, calm hand upon the tumult of your heart, and, while she humbles you and makes you poor in your own esteem, she exalts you and enriches you with her wealth of grand suggestions.

It is indeed an interesting experience to stand beside the source of any river, from the majestic Nile and the storied Tiber, down to the humble Dee. There is a mystery about its origin in that spot which captivates the mind, and recalls all the romance and tenderness of "youth and buried time". You follow in imagination from this point the noble river, which has no superior in Scotland for the clearness of its waters and the uniform swiftness of its current, along its whole course downward, till it reaches the inhabited valleys, and brings the blessings of the lonely hills to the homes and haunts of man. And you think that, as the waters flow now, while your image is reflected upon them, so they will continue to flow, through sunlight and starlight, when you are far away; and new generations, with new thoughts and feelings, will come to visit their romantic cradle when your own memory has sunk into oblivion. I have painted the scene in a calm summer's day; but what must it be in winter, or in a storm, when the shallow waters are changed into raging torrents, and the wind is shrieking fiercely among the rocks, and the sky is blotted out with dark clouds, and the corries are filled with swirling mists, and drizzling rains, and blinding snow! Such a Walpurgis scene it is not for man to behold!

THE HORIZON FROM BEN WYVIS.

Tabular List of Mountains, &c., which may be seen from the summit of Ben Wyvis, prepared by Mr. Alexander Copland from Bartholemew's Maps.

NOTE.—When using the Mariner's Compass to locate a Mountain, it is necessary to take the magnetic deviation into account—the needle at present pointing about $18\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ West of true North. By Captain Ligard's Chart of 1882, the magnetic variation in Aberdeen Bay was set down as $20^{\circ} 45' W.$, decreasing annually $9' 10''$. For true North, therefore, the Compass Needle should point $18\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ East of N.—that is about half-way between the points N. by E. and N.N.E., and so on round the Compass.

Compass Direction	MOUNTAIN.	COUNTY.	LOCALITY.	Height, in Feet.	Distance, in Miles.
0	Corrieyairack	Inverness	Lochaber	2992	43
1	Creag Meaghaidh	"	Loch Laggan	3700	50
2	Beinn Creachan	Perth--Argyl	Glen Lyon	3540	76
3	Cnoc Dearg	Inverness	Strath Ossian	3433	59
4	Beinn a' Chaoruinn	"	Lochaber	3437	52
5	Ben Doireann	Argyll	Glenorchy	3523	80
7	Ben Laoigh (Ben Lui)	Perth	Tyndrum	3708	88
8	Stob Choire an Easain Mhoir	Inverness	Loch Treig	3658	60
10	Clach Leathad (Clachlet)	Argyll	Kingshouse	3602	73
11	Stob Coire an Easain	Inverness	Lochaber	3750	60
12	Binnein Mor	"	Glen Nevis	3700	64
13	Ben Staray	Argyll	Loch Etive	3541	80
14	Aonach Mor	Inverness	Glen Nevis	3989	60
14	Aonach Beag	"	Lochaber	4060	62
15	Carn Mor Dearg	"	"	4012	61
15	Ben Nevis	"	" Fort William	4406	62
15	Beinn Tee	"	Glen Garry Forest	2856	46
16	Sron a' Choire Ghairbh	"	Loch Lochy	3056	48
19	Beinn a' Bleithir (Ben Vair)	Argyll	Appin—Ballachulish	3284	75
20	Beinn a' Baach Ard (Ben Vacher)	Inverness	Glen Strathfarrar	2820	17
28	Sgor Domhail	Argyll	Ardgour	2915	71
29	Sgurr nan Conbhairean	Inverness	Clunie Forest	3632	40
29	Gulvain	Inv.--Argyl	Lochiel Forest	3224	57
30	Spidean Mialach	Inverness	Glen Quoich Forest	3268	47
31	Scour Garioch	"	Glen Kingie	3015	51
32	Sgurr Ruadh	"	Glen Strathfarrar	3264	20
33	Garbh Leac	Ross-Inv.	Glen Clunie	3673	40
35	Sgurr nan Ceathramhan	Inverness	Glen Affric Forest	3614	39
37	Sgurr na Ciche	"	Glen Dessarry	3410	56
37	Carn Eige	"	Glens Cannich and Affric	3877	34
37	Mam Sodhail (Mam Soul)	"	"	3862	34
40	Sgurr na Lapach	"	Glen Cannich	3773	28
40	Sgurr Fhuar Thuill	"	Glen Strathfarrar	3439	21
42	An Rìabhachan	"	Glen Cannich	3896	30
42	The Saddle	"	Glen Shiel	3317	47
44	Ladhar Bheinn	"	Moydart	3343	57
48	Ben Sgrìol (Ben Screel)	"	Loch Hourn	3196	52
50	Scur of Eigg	"	Island of Eigg	1289	80
52	Lurg Mhor	Ross	West Monar Forest	3234	30
52	Bidean an Eoin Dearg	"	"	3430	27
56	Aismheall (Ashival)	Argyll	Island of Rum	2552	80
56	Sgurr Chaoruinn	Ross	West Monar Forest	3452	28
57	Sgurr Mhuillinn (Scour Vullin)	"	Strath Conon	2778	15
61	Moiruisg	"	Glen Carron	3026	15
63	Blathven (Blaven)	Inverness	Island of Skye	5042	65
65	Sgurr na Banachdich	"	"	3234	70
66	Sgurr nan Gillean	"	"	5167	67

Compass Direction	MOUNTAIN.	COUNTY.	LOCALITY.	Height, in Feet.	Distance, in Miles.
69	Beinn Bhan	Ross	Applecross Forest	2936	44
70	Sgurr Rnadh	"	Glen Carron	3141	33
78	Fionn Bheinn	"	Strath Bran	3060	20
80	Leathach	"	Torridon Forest	3456	39
80	The Storr	Inverness	Island of Skye	2360	60
81	Ruadh Stac Mor (Ben Eay)	"	"	33 19	32
82	Ben Alligin	Ross	Torridon	3232	38
82	Baca Ruadh	Inverness	Island of Skye	2091	62
85	Beinn Edra	"	"	2003	62
86	Bathais or Bus Bheinn	Ross	Shieldaig Forest	2869	38
89	Slìoch	"	Loch Maree	3217	28
89	Quiraing	Inverness	Island of Skye	1779	63
90	Meallan Rairigon	Ross	Fannich Forest	3109	15
91	A' Chailleach	Cromarty	"	3276	20
92	Beinn Lair	Ross	Gair Loch	2817	30
96	Sgurr Mohr	Cromarty	Fannich Forest	3637	16
98	Beinn Dearg Mhor	Ross	Strath-na-Sheallag	2974	27
109	An Teallach (4 summits)	"	Dundonnell Forest	3483	27
117	Beinn Aonachair	"	Strath More	2915	17
122	Beinn Dearg	"	Loch Broom	3547	14
126	Eididh nan Clach Geala	"	"	3039	16
131	Ben More Coigach	Cromarty	Coigach, Loch Broom	2438	32
134	Seana Bhragh	Ross	Strath Mulzie	3000	17
138	Cul Beag	"	Loch Lurgan	2523	32
142	Cul Mor	"	Loch Veyatie	2786	33
146	Suilven (The Sugar Loaf)	Sutherland	"	2403	36
150	Canisp	"	Assynt	2779	35
154	Quinag	"	Loch Assynt	2653	41
158	Glas Bheinn (Glasven)	"	"	2541	38
160	Coinnemheall (Coinveall)	"	Glen Cassley	3234	33
162	Ben More (Assynt)	Ross-Suth	"	3273	33
162	Ben Stack	Sutherland	Loch Stack	2364	47
164	Ben Leoid	"	Glen Coul	2597	38
165	Arcuil (Arkle)	"	Loch Stack	2580	48
167	Foinne Bheinn (Foinaven)	"	Strath Dionard	2980	50
168	Meallan Liath	"	Loch More	2625	44
169	Grann Stocach	"	Strath Dionard	2630	54
170	Beinn Spionnaidh	"	"	2587	55
174	Ben Hee	"	Reay Forest	2864	40
179	Ben Hope	"	Strath More	3040	50
182	Beinn Thutaig (Ben Hutaig)	"	Tongue	1345	60
183	Carn Chuinneag	Ross-Crom	Alness	2749	9
185	Ben Laoghal (Ben Loyal)	Sutherland	Tongue	2504	50
189	Beinn Cleith Bric (Ben Klibreck)	"	Strath Naver	3154	38
190	Beinn's Tomaine (Ben Stomino)	"	Loch Laoghal	1728	51
196	Creag na h-Iolaire (B. Armine)	"	Clyne	2278	39
197	Carn Bhren	Ross-Crom	Strath Carron	2080	12
198	Meall Urair (B. Armine)	Sutherland	Clyne	2300	39
200	Ben Armuinn (")	"	Strath Naver	2300	39
201	Creag Mhor	"	Strath na Seilga	2338	37
205	Ben Griam Mhor	"	Strath Beg	1936	48
206	Ben Griam Bheag	"	"	1903	50
213	Meall Beag	Ross-Crom	Loch Glass	2121	5
213	Knockton Heights	Caith-Suth.	Strath Beg	1416	48
216	Cnoc Coirona Fearna	"	Kildonan	1434	47
218	Cnoc an Eireannaich	"	"	1698	47
219	Cnoc Salislade	Sutherland	Strath Ullie	1581	45
219	Ben Alisky	Caithness	Strathmore	1142	56
220	Morven	"	Langwell Forest	2313	50
221	Meall Mor	Ross-Crom	Loch Glass	2419	5
221	Beinn nan Coru	Sutherland	Glen Dunrobin	1706	31
221	Beinn Smeoral	"	Strath Brora	1592	36
221	Creag Scalobdsdale	Suth-Caith.	Strath Ullie	1819	46
222	Maiden Pap	Caithness	Langwell Forest	1587	52
223	Ben Lundie	Sutherland	Strath Lundie	1462	29
223	Ben Chol	"	Kintradwell	1767	37
223	Beinn Dobhrain	"	Glen Loth	2060	40
223	Beinn na-h-Urrachd	"	Strath Ullie	2046	41
224	Beinn a' Bhragie	"	Golspie	1256	29
224	Scaraben	Caithness	Langwell Forest	2054	52
225	Beinn-na-Meilich	Sutherland	Strath Ullie	1940	39

Compass Direction	MOUNTAIN.	COUNTY.	LOCALITY.	Height, in Feet.	Distance, in Miles.
225	Ben-a-Cheilt	Caithness	Latheron	942	62
225	Creagan Oir-airidh (Hill of Ord)	Sutherland	Near Ord of Caithness	1324	45
228	Beinn Tharsuinn	Ross		2270	11
236	Dornoch	Sutherland	Dornoch		25
236	Doire Leathann	Ross-Crom	Strath Rusdale	2089	11
240	Meall an Tuirc	"	Alness—Loch Glass	2049	5
242	Cnoc an-t Sabhail	"	Edderton	1000	18
244	Cnoc an-t Sabhail	"	Strath Rory	1238	16
245	Tain	"	Tain		21
246	Tarbat Ness	"	Tarbat		33
250	Kinrievie Hill	"	Rosskeen	1252	15
254	Beinn na Diolaide	"	Alness—Loch Glass	1651	6
258	Caishlan	"		1715	8
264	Knock Fyrish (Monument)	"		1483	9
265	Lossiemouth	Elgin	Drainie		48
266	Burghead	"	Duffus		40
267	Invergordon	Ross-Crom	Invergordon		15
268	Cromarty	Cromarty	Cromarty		20
270	Bin of Cullen	Banff	Cullen	1080	64
272	Hill of Mormond	Aberdeen	Strichen	769	34
274	Knock Hill	Banff	Ordiquhill	1409	67
277	Hill west of Findlay Seat	Elgin	Rothies	1019	51
278	Meikle Balloch	Banff-Abd	Keith	1099	64
280	Ben Aigan	Elgin	Boharm	1544	54
282	Towie Hill	Banff	Botriphnie	1108	60
284	Tillymorgan Hill	Aberdeen	Culsalmond	1249	78
286	Foudland Hill	"	Insch	1529	75
287	Bennachie	"	Oyne	1698	80
288	Hill of Noth	"	Rhynie	1851	69
290	Ben Rinnes	Banff	Aberlour	2755	53
290	The Buck	Aberdeen	Cabrach	2368	66
292	Fort George	Inverness	Ardsier		20
292	Cook's Cairn	Banff	Cabrach	2478	59
293	Corryhabbie	"	Inveravon	2563	57
294	Threestone Hill	Abd-Banff	Cabrach	2065	62
297	Carn Eachie	Banff-Elgin	Cromdale Hills	2316	49
299	Carn Mor	Abd-Banff	Glen Livet	2636	59
299	Kerloch	Kincardine	Strachan	1747	92
300	Morven	Aberdeen	Dinnet—Ballater	2802	70
303	Mount Battock	Kin-Forfar	Forest of Birse	2555	88
305	Hill of Cat	Abd-Forfar	" "	2455	82
306	Braid Cairn	"	" "	2907	81
307	Brown Cow Hill	Aberdeen	Glen Gairn	2721	62
307	Mount Keen	Abd-Forfar	Glens Mark and Tanner	3077	79
308	Geal Carn	Inverness	Abernethy	2692	52
309	Carn Glas	Inv-Nairn	Strath Dearn & Duthil	2162	36
312	Ben Avon	Abd-Banff	Cairngorms	3843	68
313	Inverness	Inverness	Inverness		18
314	Beinn a' Bhuid	Abd-Banff	Cairngorms	3924	57
314	Ben Bynac	Inv-Banff	"	3574	53
317	Cairngorm	"	"	4084	52
320	Ben Muich Dhui	Abd-Banff	"	4296	54
322	Braeriach	Abd-Inv.	"	4248	52
326	Sgoran Dubh	Inverness	"	3658	50
327	Carn Ban	"	"	3443	51
329	Beinn a' Ghlo	Perth	Athole Forest	3671	67
334	Beinn Dearg	"	"	3304	61
344	Carn Maing	Inverness	Monadh Liath Mountains	3087	42
345	Schichallion	Perth	Rannoch	3547	72
348	Carn Maing	"	Glen Lyon	3419	74
349	Meall Garbh	"	Breadalbane	3661	77
350	Ben Lawers	"	Loch Tay	3984	79
352	Beinn Udlaman	Inv-Perth	Drumochter Forest	3206	58
352	Ben Vorlich	Perth	Comrie	3224	93
353	Stuc a' Chroin	"	"	3189	94
355	Ben Alder	Inv-Perth	Loch Erich	3757	59
358	Aonach Beag	"	Ben Alder Forest	3646	58
359	Beinn Eibhinn	Inverness	Strath Ossian	3611	59
360	Beinn Heagsarnich	Perth	Loch Lyon	3530	79

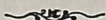
TABULAR LIST, No. I.,

Of Mountains and Hills within the radius of 0° (South) and 90° (West), most of which may be seen from the Cairn on the summit of Ben Muich Dhui.

Compass Direction	MOUNTAIN.	COUNTY.	LOCALITY.	Height, in Feet.	Distance, in Miles.
0	<i>Loch Loch</i> - - - - -	Perth	Athole Forest - -	1500	15
0	Bencleuch - - - - -	Cl'ckm'nan	Ochils—Tillicoultry -	2363	60
0	Carn nan Gabhar - - - - -	Perth	B. a' Ghlo—Athole Forest	3671	16
0	Ben Vrackie - - - - -	"	Moulin - - - - -	2757	22
0	Braigh Coire Chritunn-bhalgain	"	B. a' Ghlo—Athole Forest	3505	17
10	Carn Liath - - - - -	"	" " - - - - -	3193	19
16	Ben Chonzie, - - - - -	"	Glen Almond - - - - -	3048	46
16	Devil's Point, - - - - -	Aberdeen	Mar Forest—Glen Dee -	3303	3
18	Carn a' Chlamain - - - - -	Perth	Athole Forest - - - - -	3159	15
20	An Sgarsoch - - - - -	Abd.-Perth	Mar and Athole Forests	3300	10
20	Ben Vorlich - - - - -	Perth	Comrie - - - - -	3224	55
24	Stùc a' Chroin - - - - -	"	" " - - - - -	3189	56
24	Ben Ledi - - - - -	"	Callander - - - - -	2875	62
26	Beinn Bhrotain - - - - -	Aberdeen	Mar Forest—Glen Dee -	3795	5
28	Beinn a' Chait - - - - -	Perth	Athole Forest - - - - -	2942	17
28	Meall Gruaidh - - - - -	"	Breadalbane—Loch Tay	3280	39
29	Carn an Fhìdeir (Carn Ealar) -	Abd.-Perth	Mar and Athole Forests	3276	11
30	Ben Lawers - - - - -	Perth	Breadalbane—Loch Tay	3994	42
31	Meall Garbh - - - - -	"	" " - - - - -	3661	40
32	Schichallion - - - - -	"	" Rannoch - - - - -	3547	32
32	Carn Maing - - - - -	"	" Glen Lyon - - - - -	3419	35
33	Beinn Dearg - - - - -	"	Athole Forest - - - - -	3304	16
35	Carn Gorm - - - - -	"	Breadalbane—Glen Lyon	3370	37
35	Am Binnein (Stobinain) - - - -	"	" Glen Dochart - - - -	3827	60
36	Ben More - - - - -	"	" " - - - - -	3843	60
38	Meall Ghaordie - - - - -	"	Breadalbane - - - - -	3407	47
40	Beinn Chalunn - - - - -	"	Mam Lorn Forest - - - -	3354	56
42	Beinn Heasgarnich - - - - -	"	" " - - - - -	3530	52
44	Beinn Laoigh (Ben Lui) - - - -	"	Tyndrum - - - - -	3708	66
45	Beinn Doireann - - - - -	Argyll	Glen Orchy - - - - -	3523	56
48	Beinn Creachan - - - - -	Prth-Argyl.	Glen Lyon - - - - -	3540	51
52	Monadh Mor - - - - -	Abd.-Inv.	Glen Geusachan - - - -	3651	5
52	Ben Cruachan - - - - -	Argyll	Loch Awe - - - - -	3689	72
56	Clach Leathad (Clachlet) - - -	"	Kingshouse - - - - -	3602	56
60	Meall Tionail - - - - -	Inverness	Glen Feshie - - - - -	3338	8
60	Marcaonach (Athole Sow) - - -	Inv.-Perth	Drumochter Forest - - -	3185	29
60	Beinn Udlaman - - - - -	"	" " - - - - -	3306	30
61	Buchaille Etive Mor-Stob Dearg	Argyll	Glen Etive - - - - -	3345	55
62	Ben Alder - - - - -	Inverness	Loch Erich - - - - -	3757	35
64	Aonach Beag - - - - -	"	Ben Alder Forest - - - -	3646	36
67	Binnein Mor - - - - -	"	Lochaber - - - - -	3700	52
68	Beinn a' Clachair - - - - -	"	Ben Alder Forest - - - -	3569	35
69	Stob Choire an Easain Mhoir - -	"	Loch Treig - - - - -	3658	45
70	Aonach Beag - - - - -	"	Lochaber - - - - -	4060	52
70	Ben Nevis - - - - -	"	Fort William - - - - -	4406	55
71	Aonach Mor - - - - -	"	Lochaber - - - - -	3999	52
73	Sgor Dhomhail - - - - -	Argyll	Ardgour - - - - -	2915	73
74	Meall Dubh-achaidh - - - - -	Inverness	Glen Feshie - - - - -	3268	7
78	Creag Meaghaidh - - - - -	"	Loch Laggan - - - - -	3700	37
80	Carn Ban - - - - -	"	Glen Feshie - - - - -	3443	6
80	Carn Liath - - - - -	"	Loch Laggan - - - - -	3298	33
82	Gulvain (Gulvain Mor) - - - - -	Inv.-Argyl.	Lochiel Forest - - - - -	3224	63
87	Geal Charn - - - - -	Inverness	Monadh Liath Mountains	3036	27
88	Corrieyairack - - - - -	"	Lochaber - - - - -	2922	36
88	Sgor na Ciche - - - - -	"	Glen Dessarry - - - - -	3410	68
89	Sgurr Mor - - - - -	"	Loch Quoich - - - - -	3290	64
90	Sgoran Dubh - - - - -	"	Loch Eunach - - - - -	3658	6
90	Sconr Gairoch - - - - -	"	Loch Quoich - - - - -	3015	60
90	Ladhar Bheinn - - - - -	"	Moydart - - - - -	3343	73

NOTE.—Allowance must be made for magnetic deviation ; see page 311.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.



THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN EVER CLIMBED. AN extremely interesting account of the expedition of Mr. E. A. Fitzgerald, which left England in the autumn of 1896, has appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*. The main object of the expedition, the ascent of Aconcagua in Argentina, a mountain of the Andes range of nearly 24,000 feet elevation, was accomplished by two of the party—Zurbriggen, the Swiss guide, and Mr. Vines. The news of their success was to have been heliographed to a peak twelve miles off and 14,000 feet lower down, but a cloud hid the sun from those on the summit; a thunderstorm washed away the line of the telegraph connected with a temporary station to which the message was flag-signalled on their descent, so the announcement eventually reached London in 30 hours instead of 10 minutes as was fully anticipated. Of the difficulties and adventures encountered, it is impossible in a few words to give much idea. "Not once or twice" members of the party were carried away by icy torrents, though no fatalities occurred; whirlwinds of dust, struggles over crumbling ground, and mountain sickness, were everyday experiences; water for drinking had to be carried up 19,000 feet, and there thawed periodically as required; mountain streams were proved to be poisonous by the severe internal punishment that followed the only occasion of testing them. Mr. Vines was attacked by typhoid; Mr. Fitzgerald suffered likewise, and, after recovering and nursing his friend, underwent a painful surgical operation for an abscess under one eye. All this took place before the ascent proper began. A vivid extract is given from Zurbriggen's journal, describing the ascent of a neighbouring peak:—"Wind like Niagara. Seems north-east. Tent almost blown down every minute. All kept awake for the rest of night. Cold intense. Wind comes right through tent, sleeping-bags and all. We wake at about 6.30 and say nothing. Wind outside tells us it is madness to go higher. No mortal could live in hurricane at zero. Minimum temperature last night, 5 degrees. Aneroid got slept on, and went all wrong". Some shooting also was managed by one or two of the party; Mr. Philip Gosse, grandson of the great naturalist, made noteworthy botanic and other collections, and over 1000 photographs were obtained, one being a panorama, 9 feet long, taken with a new French surveying camera.

A LECTURE on this subject was recently delivered
 MOUNTAINEERING by Mr. E. A. Baker, B.A., at the Midland Railway
 IN BRITAIN. Institute, Derby, before an appreciative audience.

This great recreation of men great in science and letters has, owing to the recent extensive publication of mountaineering literature, come to be better understood by the public at large ; and has ceased to be the exclusive pursuit of the favoured few possessed of deep purses and long vacations. It has in fact been brought within the compass of men of most modest means. Mr. Baker's object was to show that a man need not go to the Alps or the Caucasus in pursuit of this sport, but might get excellent practice, and even occasional adventure, within the limits of our own isles. The lecture fell roughly into four sections, the first of which, "Mountaineering in Derbyshire", might suggest to the uninitiated the famous chapter on "Snakes in Ireland". As a matter of fact, however, the lecturer showed by the aid of some fine photographs, taken expressly for the purpose, that near our doors we have an excellent training ground, where the first principles of the craft may be practised and limbs may be jeopardised to the aspirant's heart's content. From Cratcliffe Tor, Kinderscout, etc., Mr. Baker transferred his audience to Wastdale Head, which he called the English Zermatt. Here he described most of the favourite climbs of that famous centre of English climbers, illustrated by slides mostly from plates taken by those unsurpassed mountaineering photographers, the brothers Abraham. The Cairngorm region, the highest mountain mass in the British Isles, was next dealt with, some of the incidents in a recent excursion there being very entertaining. There was less technical climbing here, but the somewhat arduous tramps and the fine views of crag and forest and glen would appeal all the more to the lay mind, while there was a sufficient spice of adventure to make the record out of the ordinary. Finally, Mr. Baker dealt with that paradise of British climbers, Skye. A land of splintered ridges, deep and glistening lochs, wave-worn cliffs, and uncertain weather, it is an ideal place for the enthusiast ; its sparse population, treacherous climate, and uninviting crags calling forth most of the qualities, save snowcraft, required in much more lofty and extensive regions.

We have received the following letter :—

THE HEATHER
 IN THE
 LARIG GHRU.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

EDINBURGH, *May*, 1898.

Many times have I bemoaned, as has many a man and woman, the misery of the passage through the long heather of the northern mile of the Larig Ghru. Many times also have I agreed that "something should be done", and that someone ought to do it.

Well, this spring I suffered from influenza, and went to Aviemore to recruit. My lack of strength forbade me to go on the hills, but one day I strolled to the entrance of the Larig track, and for want of

nobler occupation, I began rooting up the obstructive heather. Less than an hour of this work nearly broke my enfeebled back, and sent me weary and aching to my bed. But the next morning I felt that the un wonted exercise had given me the tone and vigour I was in search of, and I returned to the task that day and each of my remaining days of holiday. The net result of my exertions is that for some 600 paces the track is wide enough for two people to walk on, and is quite free from obstruction. If this attack on the long-standing difficulty can be followed up, there is the possibility of an easy access to that delightful pass, and the removal of what has been for years a great drawback to the exploration of a very interesting piece of country.

I am, &c.,

A YOUNGER BROTHER.

THE YORK BUILDINGS COMPANY. THIS company is so often referred to in writings about the Cairngorms and the Cairngorm region (see, for example, *C.C.J.*, Vol. I., p. 367) that we may reproduce from the *Inverness Courier* the following summary of an address on "The Work of the York Buildings Company in Abernethy in the Eighteenth Century", delivered by Dr. Asher Forsyth to the Inverness Field Club:—"The Company was originally founded in 1679 for the purpose of raising the Thames water for the supply of London, but it extended its schemes, and between 1719 and 1730 it had expended over £300,000 in the purchase of forfeited estates in Scotland. In 1728 the directors purchased from Grant of Grant a large part of the best and choicest fir woods in Abernethy for £7000. They made a brave start with their operations under the direction of a Colonel Horsey and Aaron Hill, the poet. The timber was made into rafts and floated down the Spey. It was expected that the trees would be suitable for mainmasts for first-raters, but it turned out that they were not adapted for this purpose. There was plenty of good building timber, however, and it was thought this would still pay, but the directors turned their energies in a different direction, that of ironworks, the wood being employed for charcoal. The iron ore was found about four miles from Tomintoul, and transported to Abernethy. The enterprise, however, did not pay, and had ultimately to be abandoned. The material left behind, which could not be removed, was appropriated by the residents, and little trace now remains of what must have once been a mine of industry in the Highlands". The history of the Company, it may be added, is recounted in a pamphlet by Dr. David Murray, published in Glasgow in 1883.

LANDSCAPE AND LITERATURE. SIR ARCHIBALD GEIKIE, the Director-General of the Geological Survey, and author of a most interesting and useful work on "The Scenery of Scotland", delivered the Romanes Lecture (of 1897) at Oxford. He took as his subject "Types of Scenery and their Influence on Literature", his purpose being to inquire how far it might be possible

to trace from each of the leading types of scenery that distinguished the British Isles an influence upon the growth of English literature. Shakespeare's plays, for instance, presented not a few reminiscences of the Warwickshire woodlands, and the placid rural quiet of the Colne Valley inspired some of Milton's lyrics. Similarly, Cowper, Thomson, Burns, and Wordsworth reflected in their poetry the scenes with which they were familiar. One passage may be quoted entire—"The scenery of the Western Highlands of Scotland was first brought prominently before the world by the publication of the so-called poems of Ossian, in studying the landscape of which they soon learnt that it belonged unmistakably to Western Argyleshire. The grandeur and gloom of the Highland mountains, the spectral mists that swept round the crags, the roar of the torrents, the gleams of sunlight on moor and lake, the wail of the breeze among the cairns of the dead, the unspeakable sadness that seemed to brood over the landscape whether the sky be clear or clouded—those features of West Highland scenery were first revealed by Macpherson to the modern world. That revelation quickened the change of feeling already begun in regard to the prevailing horror of mountain scenery. It brought before men's eyes some of the fascination of the mountain world, more especially in regard to the atmospheric effects that played so large a part in its landscape. It showed the titanic forces of storm and tempest in full activity and yet there ran through all the poems a vein of infinite melancholy. The pathos of life manifested itself everywhere, now in the tenderness of unavailing devotion, now in the courage of hopeless despair".

THE following new members have been admitted :—

NEW MEMBERS. Messrs. John S. Begg, M.A., William G. Melvin, Frederick J. Hambly, F.I.C., George M. Thomson, and A. C. Waters.

OUR post town, while on Corryhabbie, was Huntly ; and one or other of the men was sent there for letters and bread, when they could be spared for the purpose. THE WORK OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEYORS. The distance in a right line was eighteen miles, which Captain Colby considered to be equivalent to twenty-four.

Wednesday, 21st of July, 1819.—Captain Colby and Robe returned to camp, having explored all the country along the eastern side of the counties of Inverness, Ross, and Caithness, as well as the mainland of Orkney, and having walked 513 miles in twenty-two days.

Friday, 23rd of July.—Captain Colby took me and a fresh party of the soldiers on a station-hunt, to explore the country to the westward and northward of west. Our first halting-place was to be Grantown, at a distance of twenty-four miles ; and Captain Colby having, according to his usual practice, ascertained the general direction by means of a pocket compass and map, the whole party set off as on a steeple-chase, running down the mountain side at full speed, over Cromdale, a

mountain about the same height as Corryhabbie, crossing several beautiful glens, wading the streams which flowed through them, and regardless of all difficulties that were not absolutely insurmountable on foot. Sometimes a beaten road would fall in our course, offering the temptation of its superior facilities to the exhausted energies of the weary members of our party; and in such cases freedom of choice was always allowed them. Captain Colby would even encourage such a division of his party and the spirit of rivalry which it induced, and took pleasure in the result of the race which ensued. Arriving at Grantown in about five hours and a half, we dined there, and proceeded afterwards along the valley of the Spey, by the high road, to the Aviemore Inn to sleep. The distance travelled by us that day was calculated at thirty-nine miles.

Saturday, 24th of July.—Started at nine o'clock. I was dreadfully stiff and tired from the previous day's scramble, and with difficulty reached Pitmain (thirteen miles) to dinner. The country helped me considerably, for it was beautiful—Rothiemurchus, on our left, being one of the loveliest places that I had seen. A good deal of brynnny mountain ground, richly clothed with wood and plantation, rises immediately at the back of the house; to the right are green rocky hills, and not a tree to be seen.

Garviemore Inn, distant eighteen miles by the road, was to be our next stage, and I really thought it was more than I could possibly accomplish that day, but Captain Colby said it was not. It was his intention, however, to leave the beaten road immediately, and, crossing a rough boggy tract of country to the northward, to gain the summit of Cairn Dearg, a mountain of about 3500 feet high, and about ten miles distant, and having built a large pile of stones upon it, to proceed thence again across the country to Garviemore, making the distance, of course, considerably greater and the journey much more laborious, as I thought, than by the road. I petitioned strongly, therefore, to be excused from accompanying him, and to be allowed to proceed quietly along the road with the sergeant and another man, who, being equally tired, had also blistered their feet, and to whom it was on that account allowed; but Captain Colby would not excuse me, and I had no alternative but to make the attempt, feeling sure that I should eventually be left upon the ground or carried home upon the men's shoulders. Captain Colby judged, however, from accurate observation and long experience, and he was right. I kept pace with him throughout the remainder of the day, and arrived at the inn at half-past eleven at night, much more fresh than at the end of our first stage the day before. The second day on such a journey is generally the worst, but the first had broken me in. I could have proceeded further if it had been necessary, and never experienced anything like fatigue throughout the remainder of the excursion. The distance travelled that day was forty miles.—From "Memoir of Life of Major-General Colby", by Lieutenant-Colonel J. E. Portlack.

REVIEWS.

DR. CRAMOND, Cullen, has published a little "Guide to GUIDE TO Grantown and District" (30 pp.)—of more use, however, to the average holiday loungeur in the region than GRANTOWN. to the ardent and active mountaineer. The Cairngorms, indeed, are thus summarily dismissed—"Cairngorm, Ben Muich Dhui, Braeriach, and other summits of the Grampian range are visible from Grantown, and the ascent can be performed in one day"—the ascent of each it is to be presumed; yet Dr. Cramond is a schoolmaster!—"but travellers inexperienced in mountaineering usually take a local guide". It's a bit Dryasdust-ish, this guide; full of details, details—one searches it in vain for an attempt even at a description of the many beauties of the section of Speyside with which it professes to deal.

IN the August number of *Chambers's Journal* was an DEER-FOREST article under this title—virtually a notice of Mr. ROMANCE. Grimble's work on the "Deer Forests of Scotland", published by Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co. Some things mentioned in the article are interesting and noteworthy. "There seems no reason to doubt that thirty-three stone, weighed quite clean, is the highest authentic weight recorded of any slain deer; and the credit of the record is Lord Greville's, the scene the forest of Glenmore, and the date 1877". Beinn a' Ghlo was once tenanted or haunted by a witch, the last year in which she "is known to have held converse with men" being 1773. In the course of a feud between Cumyn of Badenoch and the M'Intoshes of Tirinie in Glen Tilt, the castle of the latter was attacked, and the whole household butchered save an infant asleep in its cradle. This "young M'Intosh" grows up, of course, to wreak vengeance. "In due course he attacked Cumyn's stronghold with success, and chased the murderer to Rannoch, and thence to Glen Tilt, where he despatched him with a well-directed shaft beside a small loch near the foot of Beinn a' Ghlo. A cairn called Cumyn's is believed to commemorate the event". This same M'Intosh, it is said, was in the habit of holding his court enthroned upon a boulder in the middle of the Tilt. "This chair, however, was luckily seldom uncovered by the water, for whenever the chief held a court he ganged a man".

OUR indebtedness to *Chambers's Journal* was great last BRAERIACH. year. The November issue contained an article on Braeriach by Rev. Dr. Macmillan, who is also a contributor to our own pages. The article is partly descriptive of the scenery in and around "the third highest mountain in Great Britain", and partly descriptive of an ascent of Braeriach by the author, who was holidaying in the Rothiemurchus region last autumn. It is deserving of special commendation for the specification of the flora on the summit of Braeriach and on some other Cairngorm tops.

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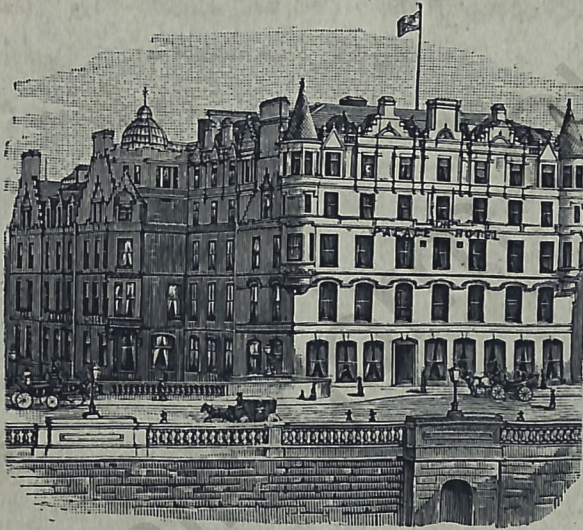
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