### THE

# Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

### ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.

AGENTS:

ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.

### SKYE-SLIGACHAN.

# SLIGAGHAN HOTEL.



Column Pithin easy driving distance of the Terminus of the Highland Railway, Kyle of Lochalsh Station. Nearest Hotel to Loch Scavaig and Loch Coruisk.

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

Beautifully situated at the foot of the Cuchullin Hills. Ponies and Guides for Loch Scavaig and Loch Coruisk.

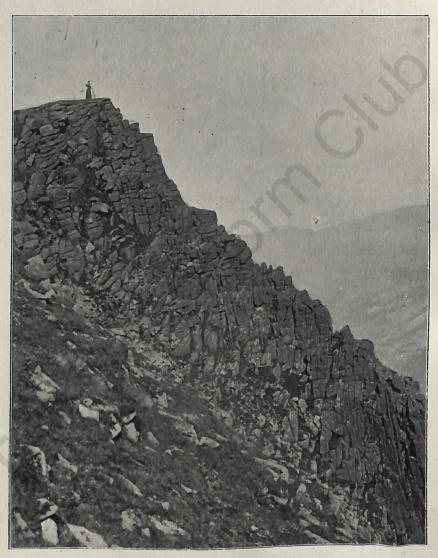
Parties living in the Hotel have the privilege of good Sea Trout Fishing on the River Sligachan; also good Loch and Sea Fishing.

Boats Free of Charge. Boatmen 4/- per day.

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

Post and Telegraph Office adjoining the Hotel. Posting.

WM. SHARP, Lessee.



SGOR GHAOITH.

## Cairngorm Club Journal.

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### A WEEK-END IN GLEN GAIRN.

By WILLIAM SKEA.

In these days of rapid cycling the pedestrian mountaineer must be content to be classified, with the traditional "Buchan train", amongst those sixth-day works of Creation described as "creeping things". Pedestrianism, however, has charms which easily place it above cycling, alike as means of exercise and of recreation-mental and For, while the cyclist overworks certain of his muscles, and is almost constantly on the outlook for "good road", the pedestrian exercises every sinew and organ of his body; and, if he has an eye to the study of nature, he has ample time and opportunity to con her ever-open book. "But", replies the cyclist, "who that has at most only a week-end of leisure has the patience to foot each mile of road wearily in twenty minutes, when in five he can cover the distance on wheels"? This argument must be met as Dickens' Mr. Dick met the criticism that his favourite room was "not big enough to swing a cat in". Mr. Dick ingenuously assured his critic that he "really did not want to swing a cat". In the same sense the mountaineer does not want to break any time record, his object being to keep in the open, inhale mountain air, and enjoy mountain scenery and solitudes.

To the city man of average physique there is, in our opinion, no better means of recuperation than moderate mountaineering—the Highland glen, with its scents, sounds, and sights; the pleasant odours of birches, pines, and heather, the songs of birds, the hum of insects, the chattering of burns, the rush of the linn—what could be more recreative? What more bracing than the mountain breeze, or more invigorating to nerve and limb and lung than the ascent of the rugged corrie? What more likely to compel a man to "examine himself" than the solitudes of the moorland and the mountain?

At anyrate, it was to obtain recreation and exercise that we resolved to spend a July week-end in Glen Gairn—with Ben Avon's summit as the apex of our expedition. Apart from a few pounds of the necessaries of life, we made no special provision for the journey; and this was how it fell out:—Left Aberdeen at 12.20 on Saturday afternoon, reaching Ballater at 2.30, and, after finally adapting our satchels, walked out of Ballater as the steeple clock was striking 3. At 3.30 we stood face to face with the well-known "Poller Legend", at the Deeside end of the upper Glen Gairn road, namely:—

Gairn Shiel			•	5 miles.
Corndavon				$10\frac{1}{2}$ ,,
Loch Builg		•	•	131 ,,

Behold, then, the finger-post of the path, which, with sundry halts of from 20 to 60 minutes' duration here and there by the way, we worked out in time thus:—

Gairn Shiel			5 p.m.
Corndavon		 	7.50 ,,
Loch Builg	•		9.30 ,,

As the reader may observe, we took ample time on the journey. Yes, we looked well around us. Early in our walk we noted the first harvest-home gatherings of the field-fare, where the hay had been lately reaped, while, among the rich woodlands that skirt the roadside in the lower glen, we watched the ongoings of Robin, Wren, Titling, and Co.



We counted no fewer than twenty different species of song birds in the first five miles. There were all the elements that go to make up the happy hunting-grounds of the small feathered tribes—rocky hillsides, banks of sand, waste lands, tilled fields, pastures with flocks, wild underwood, thorn roses, furze, broom, bracken, foxglove, bog-myrtle, meadow-queen, goose-foot, sedgy grasses in moss and mireland, cairns of stones, dry and turf dykes, springs of clear water, lichened walls and mossy banks, brooklets with rushes and forget-me-nots, minnowy burns, overgrown with arnscrub and hazel, woodlands with ferns, heather, blaeberries, "aitnachs", rasps, and brambles.

Here, as elsewhere, we noted the increase of the starling, and the decrease of the sedge-warbler, the siskin, and the skylark. We fear the former is the cause and the latter the We can remember when the starling, like the plover, swallow, and wag-tail, were visitors only; but, during the past quarter of a century, Mr. Starling has plainly indicated that he has "come to stay". Now, we hold that the incursion of this aggressive feathered nomad is on a par with the invasion of Spain by the Moors, or that of Ancient Italy by the Goths and Vandals-not to speak of the conquests of Cæsar and William of Normandy. We regard the starling as a murdering Moor and a destructive Vandal, and hate him accordingly. Not only has he turned the once-familiar jackdaw from house and home in the chimney-top, and himself become a pest there, but, being an egg-eater, he threatens with extermination some of the most lovable feathered creatures of our countryside. Indeed, none but birds that possess the instinct to conceal their nests, either by imitation of the nests' surroundings or by the choice of secret places, can survive his depredations.

We renewed acquaintance with many of our "summer visitors", including a red-poll (from the sunny south); swallows—three species (from Timbuctoo); wag-tails—two species (from Algiers and Morocco); a graceful cross-bill (from "Norroway o'er the faem"); golden and tufted plovers and the common peeweet (from "the Continong");

and the cuckoo (from goodness knows where). The restless ouzel, hunting on his stepping-stones in the river bed, entertained us where the road came near the bank; and an oyster-catcher, in all the glory of his pied plumage, and a spotted woodpecker, refulgent in his blood-red hackle, each disported proudly near our path in honour of our visit; while the curlew, the heron, and the dotterel each put in an appearance, to show us the latest steps of a Highland Fling consistent with the dignity of their long-drawn-out proportions. But the most friendly of all was a family of red grouse. Our path for the moment lay through the heather, and we were walking briskly forward when, a couple of yards on our left front, a moor-cock rose with an impatient "Tut, tut, tut"! He took French leave to a considerable distance, while we might have stepped upon his devoted mate and interesting family of nine, who croodled in the heather, within reach of our right hand. The gorblings swarmed about the mother-bird-several under her wings and tail, two on her back, while three were content with the imaginative protection afforded by burying their heads among her feathers. With steady, questioning eye the hen-grouse gazed at us for a second or two, then reluctantly cleared her wings of her beloved, tyrannical young ones, and manœuvred to direct our attention from the wingless cheepers to her own devoted head. She cringed up close to our boots, then, looking at us over her shoulder, crept slowly along the path. We smiled, but refused to follow; the young birds made off to cover in all directions, but we had only to stoop to pick one up-a sturdy little fellow, with bright, fearless eye. The mother-bird became She literally groaned in agony of mind, and, unable longer to look upon the sight, took wing. At once our sympathies were with her, we laid down our captive near the nest, and hardly had we quitted the spot, when Mother Grouse-whose flight was really only another pretence-completed her circuit of a little knoll and returned ere we had quite moved off, calling excitedly upon her scattered darlings.

Glen Gairn is not now a populous place. We met only

six persons in the whole length of the glen, and we saw not a score during the two long summer days that we spent therein. Indeed, Glen Gairn tells again the now old story of the depopulation of the Highlands. Thirty odd farms and crofts in the upper clearings-whereon generations of healthy lads and comely lasses were reared in years gone by—have long since been thrown back into a state of wild nature, to raise grouse and red deer for the entertainment of the sportsman. Though not strikingly picturesque, yet it is a bonnie glen, and presents many points of interest to the pedestrian. It is fairly well wooded-birches and pines mostly prevailing. As far up as Gairnshiel and Wade's Bridge there are a few quiet homesteads and well-tilled farms; thence to Corndavon are sheep pastures. Beyond is moorland, and mountain deer forest. The whole glen is resplendent with a profusion of wild flowers. We gathered the grass of Parnassus on the bank by the roadside, and we saw rare ferns and other plants that would have gladdened the heart of the botanist. Though the miles are long in Glen Gairn—as where are they not when measured by the Gael?—we had not a weary or uninterested hour while we were traversing it. About three miles up the glen, in the glac through which the Tarland Road passes, the pedestrian gets a fine view of Morven and Culblean; and, if the reader desires topographical and geological variety, he will find it There are bits of folk-lore too. easily in Glen Gairn. Rineatan, about nine miles from Ballater, once belonged to a scion of the clan Macdonald, a branch now represented by the Macdonalds of St. Martin's, Perthshire. Captain Macdonald, who had served in the army during the Napoleonic wars, sold the estate to the Farquharsons of Invercauld some half a century ago. He parted with it, doubtless, with a good Scottish grudge—if we may judge by the postscript of the bargain, in which he reserved to himself and his successors the grim right of sepulture in the tomb of the Macdonalds of Rineatan. It would not appear, however, that much use has been made of this mortuary reservation. for the spot in question looks quite neglected. It is hidden from the eye of the casual traveller in a remote corner of a

wood some little distance behind the old mansion house, but it is still known to residents in the glen as "Macdonald's Aisle". The pedestrian who is not specially interested had better not follow the high road where it loops round upon the old mansion house of the Macdonalds, else he will certainly miss the footpath through the meadow, which shortens the road by a mile.

Nor was Glen Gairn without its surprises to us on that first day of our expedition. At Rinloan, about half-way up the strath, there was wont to be an hostelry, for the "entertainment of man and beast". Since the glen became depopulated this public-house had ceased to be remunerative. and it hardly needed the influence of "the shooting tenant" (who dreads the possibility of poachers being harboured unawares near his preserves) to put an end to the licence. At anyrate, there has not been an inn at Rinloan for a number of years, though the house once known as "the public" still stands there. It is occupied by Mr. Duncan Davidson, one of the best-known old inhabitants of Glen Gairn. is a merchant and a farmer, but he serves the community in other useful capacities besides. We had calculated upon getting a loaf of bread at Mr. Davidson's shop, but our hopes fell when we found a locked door. It appears that a merchant in these remote places does not stand behind the counter to await his customers. He fears not their going elsewhere. We were giving a final knock on the shop door and looking hopelessly around, when our eye fell upon a neat white bell-tent standing on a trim green near a group of houses on the opposite side of the road; and, our eye wandering back again to the shop buildings, fell upon the legend "Studio" painted on one of the doors. "Hallo"! thought we, "this is no ordinary ferm-toon"; and we proceeded to make investigations. We soon found Mr. and Mrs. Davidson "at home". First we were regaled with milk and scones; and, our wants expanding, we afterwards enjoyed a hearty tea. In the course of table-talk they informed us that the "Studio" without was the property and sanctum of their son, Mr. Duncan Davidson, junior, and that the tent upon the lawn was one of his "freaks".

artist was absent in pursuit of landscape subjects, but we were ushered into the studio by Mr. Davidson, the elder. It is a square room, all the size of the wooden building, welllighted and comfortable, with every appearance of earnest, tasteful work. Under the orthodox northern light stood the artist's easel, bearing a large canvas in oils\* of a study on Loch Avon side, partly finished. Standing on the floor or hanging on the walls were specimens of original landscapes, genre work, and copies. There was ample evidence, too, that Mr. Davidson had studied portraiture. What surprised us most, however, was a couple of life-sized figure studies of male and female models vigorously drawn in These pictures occupied prominent places on two separate walls. No sooner did we catch sight of them than our lips involuntarily uttered the word "Paris"! "Had the artist studied in Paris, then"? "Aye, he was there a whilie". From any of the well-used easy chairs one could reach handily to a tobacco pipe; and, on a small table in a corner, lay a fiddle and bow, the case for which had been thrown on the floor. Huddled, as it were, in a corner we found a rude but effective lay figure, composed of rough bits of wood, the arms and legs being deftly linked to the trunk with iron wire. Altogether the room had a distinctly hybrid aspect of the Latin Quarter and Bohemia. On the following evening, when we had returned from the mountain, we again called at this oasis in the desert, and smoked a pipe with the young artist himself. He has good looks, is an interesting conversationalist, and not ashamed to tell you that he can hold the plough as well as he can paint in oils and water-colours. Mr. Davidson is to a large extent self-taught, yet his work in the field of art is meritorious, and the aggregate annual sales of his pictures in this remote place produce a handsome sum.

We were near the Kirk of Glen Gairn when we got our first glimpse of Ben Avon. The sun was high above him,

<sup>\*</sup> This picture has since become the property of Mr. Thomas Jamieson, F.I.C.—the scene being of special interest in connection with his recent proposal to tap the Avon, near Inchrory, for the benefit of Aberdonians, instead of patching up the Deeside aqueduct.

and lighted up his rugged rock-crests and green corries with brilliant effect. His massive, majestic proportions dominated the whole landscape, and impressed us with his superiority over the hills-Culardoch and others-which just then formed the sides of the glen. But this illuminated view of his grandeur did not lay hold of our minds as did that we enjoyed several hours afterwards, when, in the gloaming, we opened up the Loch Builg valley on our right front, and, under his own weird shadow, viewed Ben Avon's immense outline in sombre silhouette. The setting sun, in a glorious halo of molten gold and silver, was poised above the black rocks of Clach Bhan on the extreme right, and threw back a great search-light shaft among the hilltops. Perhaps it was the splendid glamour of that sunset that made us select Clach Bhan as the summit of our first ambition of the morrow. At all events, the scene became vividly pictured on our memory, and we thought upon its vanished glories as we brewed a modest night-cap of whisky-toddy, and betook ourselves to the best apology for a bed which we could find in the now gloomy wilderness of Glenavon forest. Once we were roused by the near approach of a herd of hinds. We had gone to rest near their favourite drinking fountain. When we got up to look at our disturbers, they vanished, like children of the mist, into the grim shadows of the glen, though we could trace their course for some distance by the crackling of the heather under their nimble feet. It is dreich work wooing Morpheus when one has neither bedroom nor bed. Yet, at last, weary with our long march, we were lullabied into a deep snooze by the swish of the burn in the corrie, the lapping of Loch Builg's black waters, and the weird sough of the night wind.

"The sleep of the just" is the luxury of the poet, not of the mountaineer, who, when he has to improvise a bed, must be content to sleep by sections. Now it is an arm from the elbow downwards, again it is a leg from the hip, with occasional forty-wink snatches of the whole man. In our many waking intervals during that night we thought of the genial sunshine in which, a few hours previously, we

had ascended the glen, and the warmth of that bright memory helped us to shake off the shivers which in these wild places come with the "wee short hour ayont the twal". Anon, in the absence of moon and stars, we would glower into the black Inferno which a murky midnight makes of a Highland solitude, and bitterly think of things inhospitable and of Maud Muller's "might have been"! Baillie Nicol Jarvie was right. One need not expect to find the comforts of the Saut Market on the apron of Ben Avon. So, we were fain to pull our bonnet over our brow, and make the best of the situation. At length there appeared a faint indication that the sky was still overhead. Slowly a grey light began to diffuse the darkness. And we were beginning to distinguish the outlines of our surroundings, when suddenly there was a fluttering among the birches close by. A little scream of alarm followed; and then one of Nature's tragedies was enacted before our eyes. Two tiny birds darted out of cover, followed by a lusty hawk. The chase was swift and terrible. In eager flight the little warblers rose into the lift of the summer dawn, and their pursuer, keen as a rapier-thrust, darted upon his prey. struck the nearer of the two, but, his hold failing, the little victim fell dead upon the moor below. On sped the ruthless hawk, without casting a look after the fallen one. a twinkling he overtook its mate, and with it, like a spirit of evil, vanished from our view. Thus even now, through every species of living creature, the natural law of might is the practical law of right, just as it was in the days of "pit and gallows", and of Highland katerans.

It was getting on for five in the morning when a cold northerly breeze induced us to "rise and shake our feathers", preparatory to the ascent of Ben Avon. Of course, we were already "dressed". The loch looked sulky. There was no sun, the weather being decidedly dull. Midway up the corrie a pack of red hinds and their dappled calves were bleating in welcome to the day. Yet we were not cheerless as we busied ourselves making tea for breakfast. And that meal over, we had a refreshing "wash-up" in the clear cold water of a rill that came bustling off the

mountain side. Then, slinging our knapsacks on our backs, we began our second day's wandering in the wilderness in good form. Of course, we exploded again the theory that Loch Builg pours all his waters down through Banffshire into the Avon and the Spey. We think there can be no doubt that the low-lying lochlets at the Aberdeenshire end of Loch Builg are partially fed from that loch; and we noted that the bottom of the tarns nearest the head of the loch is literally alive with springs created by the pressure of water from Loch Builg, which stands above the level of these lochlets.

We have already forecast our route. The first part of our second day's programme was to ascend, via Meall na Gaineimh, to Clach Bhan at the north-east end of the mountain. Therefore, our course lay along the old bridle road in Glen Builg. The first thing of interest offered us on our way, apart from the loch itself, was "The Soldiers' Cairn". The saga goes that two Jacobite fugitives from Culloden, on their way home to Glen Gairn, perished here of cold and exhaustion during a snowstorm, and when found were, soldier-like, buried where they had fallen. "Oh, wae's me for Prince Charlie"! what a hullabaloo that rebellion of his did cause on this tight little island! We confess to a fond love of the romance of the '45, and to a respect for the gallantry of most of the Highlanders devoted to the "bonnie" Prince. Still, we felt no disaffection towards the House of Guelph when, with a requiescat in pace, we placed a stone upon that lonely cairn on the bleak shore of Loch Builg.

Having passed the loch, and come within sight of Inchrory, we re-forded the Builg Burn, and, about nine o'clock, began our ascent of Meall na Gaineimh. An hour and a half afterwards we came in sight of the black rocks of the Bhan. Clach Bhan is by no means the highest peak of Ben Avon, but it is perhaps the most interesting of the many rocky protuberances which distinguish the crest-line of that mountain. A keen, cold, north wind met us on the summit, but we buttoned our jackets, and briskly scaled the rocks. All the basins contained water—clear, but pith-



less to the palate. The number of these font-like perforations on Clach Bhan is legion. Not many years ago the Clach was the "Mecca" of the Gaelic wives of the surrounding glens, near and far. Tradition also associates the wife of Fingal with Clach Bhan. One of the many crevices in these rocks contains a wonderful chamber, half roofed over with a massive shelf of stone, and floored with an unbroken slab about fifteen feet square. The floor slants up into the open half of the chamber, and slopes gently down into a pool of crystal-clear water which fills the covered half. This curious apartment is known by the name of "Lady Fingal's Bath". Where the waters come from and whither they go cannot be determined at a glance; but there it is, an inviting bath of clear cold water. How Lady Fingal occupied herself among these mountains, and where she resided, the legend tells not; although we are told that the poor lady lost her life by drowning at the Linn of Avonthe foaming waters of which we can see yonder, like a white kerchief spread on the heather of the glen, 2000 feet below where we stand. Hallo! our thoughts on Lady Fingal are suddenly scattered by a furious shower of hail, borne down upon us upon the back of the north wind. No matter; the accommodation afforded by Clach Bhan is equal to our Turning an angle of the rock, and hurrying along an open corridor, we find perfect shelter from the storm in a low-roofed chamber formed by an overhanging shelf of rock. The inner portion of the floor of this hospitable grotto is formed of a bed of granite pellets, clean and dry; and along the front, in the open, is a mat of rich mountain vegetation-heather, lichens, grasses, and tiny flowering plants. "The storm without may roar and rustle" since now we lie in perfect comfort, our feet inward on the pellet bed, which is obligingly adaptable, and our chest and elbows resting on the sweet-smelling carpet of greenery. Here we lay and smoked till the elements ceased to rage and the sun smiled again on the rugged summits of Ben Avon. It was still, however, so disagreeably cold in the wind on the mountain crest that we resolved to descend a few hundred feet on the lee side for shelter. It was de-

lightfully calm and pleasant walking at an elevation of over 3000 feet. Except where we had occasionally to cross a corrie, the ground under foot was for the most part as soft and elastic as a Turkey carpet. After passing on our right the grey crags that overhang Lochan nan Gabhar, we stepped out on our long walk to the highest summit of the Ben. The panorama of mountain scenery that lay around us is poorly described as magnificent. Many of the summits visible were evidently in the turmoil of storm, while the action of the clouds for many miles within the radius of our vision was particularly interesting, and at times strikingly beautiful. After surveying in an occassional few minutes' halt the scenes behind, and all around us, our eyes delighted to come back again to Lochnagar, on our left front. During our walk along the ridge of Ben Avon we watched Lochnagar in all the varying moods of its "steep frowning glories", and now and then we could see beyond it eastwards as far as the Hill of Fare and Cairn-mon-earn, with all the bigger hills-Morven, Mount Keen, and the others—in the middle distance. We spent five hours on this grand mountain solitude, where the only living creatures to be met with are

"The wild flock, that never needs a fold"

—the red deer, the ptarmigan, and a blithe, though solitary, snow-bunting. At an elevation considerably over 3000 feet we saw a young ouzel. We were crossing a corrie filled with snow, which the mountain torrent had tunnelled, and at the upper end of the snow-bed the lonely birdie was hopping on the stones in the bed of the stream. On our appearing he vanished down the tunnel, and we were prepared to descend to the foot of the snow-bed to see him once again, but he studied our convenience, for he bobbed up from a "skylight" in the snow, and showed us his lovely breast of frosted silver ere he vanished into his whitewalled dungeon.

"This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores untold".

Perhaps the most impressive mountain scenery of the

day was that we obtained when, approaching the Aberdeenshire boundary, we again ascended to the crest of the mountain, and faced those two great lines of Cairngorm "stalwarts". In the front rank is Stob an t-Sluichd, heavily corniced with snow, standing shoulder to shoulder with Beinn a' Bhuird, whose gloomy precipices overhang Dubh The great gulf between us and them is bridged by that extraordinary backbone of Nature yclept "The Sneck". Behind them in more extended line rise Ben Bynac, Cairngorm, Beinn Mheadhoin, and Ben Muich Dhui —the latter black in the centre of a storm. It was blowing "great guns" when, at one o'clock in the afternoon, we reached the highest top, and on all fours scaled the rocks. to the cairn. To have stood upright would have been to risk being swept off like flies before the gale. In lee of the cairn, however, we sat serenely surveying the wonderful scene, at an elevation of nearly 4000 feet. Crawling like crabs on our backs, feet foremost, we descended from our precarious coign of 'vantage, with our faces towards the "Ben of Storms". At this moment we remarked that, had we chosen any other of the Cairngorms for our expedition that day, we certainly should have experienced bad weather, and very likely should have got little or no view. Could these storm-fiends have heard that exultation in our good luck? Subsequent events. suggest an answer in the affirmative. For, hardly had we settled down, half an hour afterwards, to our well-earned luncheon at one of the wells of the Gairn, when, on looking back to the pinnacle of rock that we had just quitted, our eyes fell upon three of the scouts of the enemy of mountaineers. They were pillars of mist, tall as a steeple, and as active as Bashi-Bazouks. They were whirling and gesticulating as if enjoying our discomfiture. "Let us. pack up quickly", we said, "and begone while yet we can see our way". We lost not a moment; yet in less time than that the enemy was upon us in force, the mist surginground us as if a steam boiler had burst under our noses, and the landscape everywhere was quite extinguished. While packing our satchels we held a brief council of war.

should we proceed? We were about equal distance from Inver Inn and Rinloan. The decision was in favour of the latter. We were sure of our line of retreat, for we had stopped to lunch in the cup of the Allt an Eas Mhoir, and that burn is the ladder into Glen Gairn. With us, as with the Highlanders on campaign, it was "bundle and go", and we went with spirit. The mist had been quickly followed up by a pattering rain, which developed, in five minutes, into a heavy snowstorm; and before we had descended a thousand feet we were making snowballs off our chests and shoulders. The corrie was heavily charged with old snow in cornices overhead and in gullies below; but the path was clear, and within an hour and a half we were in the open glen.

There is little else to tell. We passed three herds of hinds in Glen Gairn ere we reached the driving road. We had seen four herds of hinds and two of stags on the mountain, for "the monarch of the glen" does not herd with his consorts in the nursing time. It is a long walk from the top of Ben Avon to Rinloan, but we accomplished it by steady, measured walking, and when we arrived, at 6.30 in the evening, the good folks gave us a hearty Highland welcome. We enjoyed a sumptuous evening meal, a cheery gloaming hour of crack, and we slept the sleep delicious which is the privilege of the healthy mountaineer. After breakfast next morning we walked eight miles into Ballater, in time for the 10.15 train, and were duly deposited on the platform at Aberdeen at five minutes past twelve.

The Club is indebted to Messrs. G. & W. Morgan, Aberdeen, for the use of the two blocks, "Ballater and Craigendarroch", and Loch Builg". These illustrations are from the handsome volume "Queen Victoria's Highland Home and Vicinity", recently published by them.

### BEINN DEARG.

### By Alex. Inkson M'Connochte.

"Dearg" is an adjective frequently applied to hills; the Beinn Dearg is a Ross-shire mountain, twin, in height, to Schichallion (3547).

Seen from the Fannichs (C.C.J., Vol. II., p. 22), Beinn Dearg is most attractive, possibly all the more so that its position evidently places it beyond general reach. Yet it can be negotiated in a week-end excursion from the head-quarters of the Club, and the member who makes it his first Ross-shire ascent will be rewarded beyond expectation, and will have humbled ideas of the prospect from the summits of his favourite Cairngorms. Beinn Dearg has a commanding position on the watershed of Scotland; Loch Broom acts as receiver for the Minch of its western slope streams, while the Cromarty Firth performs that office on the other side for the Moray Firth.

The long Garve and Ullapool road affords comparatively easy access to Beinn Dearg, albeit there is only one inn between the extreme points. The mail coach, necessarily heavily subsidised, is not without advantage to the mountaineer who has fixed on Aultguish Inn, ten miles from Garve, as his base of operations. Between the Inn and the point (six miles) where it is necessary to leave the turnpike, milestones are more frequent than houses, and the telegraph poles have to be protected from the attacks of the deer during the rutting season. It is an ideal district, therefore, it will be perceived, for a townsman's holiday. The ten miles from Garve Station may be considerably curtailed by the pedestrian who uses the "short cut", part of the old main thoroughfare, which, passing over a long hilly moor, has the additional advantages of utter solitude and inacquaintance with Macadam or his Aultguish Inn is situated on the right bank of works.

Glascarnoch River, known lower down as Black Water, a tributary of the Conon, which enters Cromarty Firth near Dingwall. The route between Garve and Aultguish Inn, following the windings of the river, has been described as "pretty", the next nine miles being designated "dreary", while the remainder to the coast passes "through some of the finest and most remarkable scenery in the Western Highlands". We do not quite agree to the middle portion being called "dreary" without qualification. True, it is almost houseless and treeless, and the hills are low and bare; but the desolation is attractive, and the view of the Challeachs, even from the Inn door, sufficiently inspiring for a very minor poet! Indeed, the prospect up the glen, from a hillman's point of view, is superb—he seems placed at the gate of a mountaineering paradise. As we approached the Inn, even dull, shapeless Ben Wyvis was for a time resplendent in gold and bronze. For the setting sun turned the western sky into gold and silver, and lighted up the slope of Ben Wyvis; as it sank, the line of light on the Ben crept higher and higher, till only the crest reflected the departing glory. At last it vanished altogether, and Ben Wyvis was colourless—till another day.

We made a leisurely start for Beinn Dearg, for it was not till 10.15 that we set out from the Inn. It would have been fruitless, however, to start earlier, for mist coquetted with the hilltops and danced on the snow-patches till noon. We left the turnpike at Torrandubh Bridge, afraid (needlessly as it happened) to go further westward and utilise a convenient bridle-path leading towards Loch a' Gharbh Raoin, a featureless tarn which could be easily enlarged. There are several larachs at the head of the loch, which only add to the solitariness of the scene. From this sheet of water we made for another—Loch nan Eilean—by its burn Allt Loch nan Eilean, a succession of little pools and miniature cascades, apparently much frequented by hinds and fawns. Loch nan Eilean is quite unlike its Rothiemurchus namesake; its banks are almost sterile, being bouldery and bare, and frowned on by the crags of Beinn Dearg. The islands are little bits of low rock. Resuming

the climb, we ascend by the trickling streamlet which feeds this tarn, and, the top of the ridge reached (nearly 3000 feet), a mountain view bursts on us-hills beyond hills, shapely peaks and jagged rocky contours. The summit of the mountain now faces us, with its fine southern corrie, Coire Beinn Dearg, still splatched with snow, and having tiny tarns at its base. We make a little detour, however, the sooner and the better to see the sight of the neighbourhood, Coire Granda, with its dark blue loch below-Loch a' Choire Ghranda. We look down and across a fearsome gorge, cleaving Cona' Mheall (3200) from Beinn Deargdeep, narrow, and precipitously rocky; truly a magnificent and terrible scene. Lingering long, we gaze on the unrippled loch, entranced with the majesty of the corrie. We could not avoid connecting the English adjective "grand" with the name, but later we learned that it meant "nasty".

The last few hundred feet of the ascent are somewhat steep—we thought of the ascent of Stuc a' Chroin from Ben Vorlich, though the hands are less in request on Beinn Dearg. As for the view from the cairn, we are utterly unable even to attempt a catalogue; we missed the Vice-President with his Dolland, his Theodolite, and his Maps! Suffice it to say, that we were in heaven for an hour, and mentally feasted on hilltops as we had seldom banqueted before. Southward and eastward there was a triple line of peaks; westward the Atlantic cut deeply into the coast by Loch Broom and Little Loch Broom, cunningly commingling land and water. The Challeachs and the Fannichs we have already referred to; we would only particularise certain hills to the northward of Ullapool-Ben More of Coigach, Cul Mor, Suilven, Canisp, and Ben More of Assynt.

The summit of Beinn Dearg yields an abundant crop of stones. All was lifeless around us, except for a mother ptarmigan with two chicks, which we unwittingly disturbed near the cairn; but we could see several herds of deer in the distance. There are, by the way, three cairns—the centre one is the cairn, and is an excellent specimen of its class, still retaining part of the staff; the eastern suits

the Glascarnoch view; the western commands Loch Broom We spent an hour at these cairns, and could have enjoyed another, but the weather had been extremely sultry, and frequent rests had been necessary. The summit was left. at 4.15, and we picked our way down a great scree slope on Creag Dhubh Mhucarnaich and by Allt Beinn Dearg, a burn to the north-westward of, and parallel with, Allt Loch The former streamlet runs over great shelvnan Eilean. ing rocks, which form a rather precipitous "channel". And so we came to Allt Mhucarnaich, as the upper part of Allt a' Gharbh Raoin is known; but there was some rather "mixed walking", as "Bobs" would call it, before we could take advantage of the bridle path that we had avoided in the morning. At 6.40 we struck the turnpike near Loch Droma-to be precise, at telegraph pole No. 280. which is a few yards west of a communicative milestone: "Dingwall, 29; Garve, 16; Ullapool, 16". Loch Droma is a long, narrow sheet of water in Dirrie More, with black mossy banks, recently planted with firs. We took to the road in excellent form, and had even "a trot for the avenue", for we reached our Inn at 8.20. We met no one the whole day.

### SOME SOUTHERN SCOTTISH UPLANDS.

### By T. R. GILLIES.

(Concluded).

About ten o'clock on the morning after our arrival at Moffat we started (in the usual shower of rain) to find our way across to the head of Eskdale. Walking up Moffatdale a mile or so, we struck off to the east, near Drumcrieff, on a mountain track which runs up by Craigbeck Hope, across the head of Wamphray Glen, and over the shoulder of Loch Fell, known as the "Cowt Road" or "Colts Road". We should not like to take a colt up, and still less down, the part of this road which lies on the east side of Wamphray The origin of the name we know not. Glen. suggestion of the dominie at Davington, that it is so called because it is such an "awkward road"—in allusion to the Scottish expression "as awkward as a cowt"—is chiefly commendable for its ingenuity. Possibly the idea of the strength or activity required on the part of the traveller who uses this road may have originated the name. Walter Scott gives this as the explanation of the by-name of the Northumberland chief, known as "The Cout of Keeldar". The popular epithet of "cout" is "expressive of his strength, stature, and activity". The word is possibly derived from the Scottish verb to "cow"-i.e., to surpass or overcome.

About half a mile up the glen leading from Moffatdale we enjoyed the only blink of sunshine we were privileged to see that day, and, seated by a limpid burn, indulged in an "eik" to the after-breakfast smoke over the hitherto unlooked-at morning papers. As we proceeded across the hills, where the purple heath was in full glory, the road, at first a sort of rough cart track, gradually degenerated into a footpath, and we soon arrived at the west side of Wamphray Glen, and, descending into the glen itself, reached the pièce

de resistance of the Cowt Road-a stiff climb up the ridge or shoulder of Loch Fell, which slopes down into the head of Wamphray Glen at an angle of 45 degrees or so. just when the expedition had reached the most exposed part of this ridge, far from shelter of any description, Jupiter Pluvius lost all sense of moderation. A thunderstorm among the hills is impressive, and we should not have cared to miss the spectacle, but the deluge of rain that descended was the heaviest we ever saw. Camped down under umbrellas and huddled in waterproofs, we "tholed" the worst Looking across Wamphray Glen, we could see the clouds slowly travelling along, below and in front of us; and, away down in fair Annandale, the sun was shining brightly all the while, and lighting up the fresh green fields far as the eye could reach. Across on Hartfell the dark clouds hung all day, and that seemed to be the stormcentre from which the thunder came.

As the weather showed no signs of clearing, we got under weigh again, and struck across the head of Loch Fell (2256 feet in height) towards the head of Dryffe Water. Passing it we reached the watershed between Annandale and Eskdale—a flat and somewhat boggy expanse. Here, as so often happens in Highland districts when a path gets into boggy ground, the track disappears entirely, and we floundered as best we might through the marsh, and between the spongy nature of the ground and the stilldescending rain were completely saturated. Crossing to the north of the source of the Black Esk, we reached one of the minor tributaries of the Garwald (which is itself a tributary of the Esk), and, in spite of the wet, halted for lunch by the side of the stream. Not that there was much demand for water; the expedition had been too well soaked to care for water in that way. Even the Topographer, who had been pursuing his hydrographical investigations under rather disadvantageous circumstances, could only pronounce the contents of the stream to be very fair waterfor mixing purposes. It was a time, in short, when the most rigid teetotaler would have known that the hated alcohol was a medicine to be used ad libitum.

We had resolved to make for Davington, which is a few miles nearer the source of the Esk than Eskdalemuir; so, striking down the side of the stream, we reached the main branch of the Garwald, and on its banks came to a shepherd's cottage—the first house of any sort we had passed for ten miles. Knocking at the door, the shepherd's wife hospitably invited us inside, and, in reply to our inquiries, informed us that the distance to Davington was "better than a mile". This, as the Topographer remarked, showed how fond they are of walking in Eskdale. They would need to be; for they are many miles from the nearest railway station, and there are no coaches in Eskdalemuir, and no means of locomotion except walking will do for the long glens and "hopes" at the top of which the shepherds' houses are often situated. In districts nearer the railway, however, walking is going out of fashion among the villagers. When the Topographer went into the abode of a rural shoemaker to get a projecting nail removed from his boot, it was evident that the shoemaker's wife, when she found we were on a walking tour, entertained a high respect and admiration for us. "Noo-a-days", she said, "the folk about here wad raither wait three oors for a train than walk twae miles. It's jist doonricht pride and laziness". And we think that she meant what she said, and that her lament over the degeneracy of modern times did not originate in any regret as to the effects which the abandonment of pedestrianism would have on the demand for shoe leather--especially as neither the "souter" nor she would hear of any payment for the repairing of the Topographer's boot.

We afterwards found, however, that the distance to Davington was very much "better" than a mile. The shepherd's wife measured her mile as the crow flies—across a considerable hill. But when the expedition reached the side of the Garwald, now swollen with the thunder spate, "where ford there was none", no bridge was to be seen. Back we went to the guidwife to see where the bridge was; and, with many apologies, she explained that there was no bridge, and that she had "clean forgot" the effect the heavy rainfall had had on the Garwald, which was running swift,

deep, and turbid, with a force that would have carried away anyone attempting to ford it. So, instead of a mile across hill, we had to go rather "better" than two miles down to get a footbridge, and then strike across the hill to Davington, which we reached about 7.30 p.m., after having been on the tramp for nine hours. We found there was no inn or lodging-house in the locality, but got very comfortable quarters in a shepherd's house. The shepherd's wife was very kind and attentive, and soon had our wet clothes drying before the kitchen fire, whilst "ben the hoose", having made ourselves comfortable with a change of raiment from our knapsacks, we were soon paying assiduous attention to a well-spread table. The rain had now abated somewhat, and, as our boots were too thoroughly soaked to be available, and it was too wet to go out with slippers for that gentle evening stroll which is the best "rest" a pedestrian can have after a day's walking, the stock of boots belonging to our pastoral host was turned out for inspection, and a selection made from it. The Topographer got a pair of wooden clogs, which were about an inch too short for him, and in which he hobbled along in such an extraordinary fashion as to excite the sympathies of the village dominie, who came out to commiserate with him on his evidently footsore condition. We had an interesting crack with the dominie about the places in the district, about which he seemed to be well informed. In this part of Eskdale there is not much breadth of a valley, as the hills close in on each Some three miles to the north, Ettrick Pen, as it is called (though it is a much more prominent feature in Upper Eskdale than on Ettrick-side), rises to a height of To the west is Loch Fell, and on the east a 2269 feet. range of lower hills dividing Eskdale from Teviotdale. The scenery in general character is much like that of Tweedsmuir, and the whole district is laid out in sheep farms.

Next morning we started to walk down Eskdale to Langholm, and, reversing the circumstances of the previous day, had a more pleasant experience of what a Moffat man called the "partial weather", for we had it dry nearly the whole day, whilst all around there seemed to be a heavy rainfall.

Loch Fell, where we had crossed the hills on our way from Moffatdale, was black with thunder clouds, and we could hear the thunder on either side of us. Three miles from Davington we came to Eskdalemuir Church and School, and the two or three houses forming the village. They are situated in one of the most picturesque parts of the dale, where the beauties of hill and wood and stream combine to form one of the pleasantest of the many pleasant scenes through which the expedition passed. A short distance below Eskdalemuir Church we crossed the Esk, and took the road on the east side, which is not only a shorter route to Langholm, but also gave us an opportunity of seeing the Druidical remains by the side of the Esk, a mile and a half below Eskdalemuir Church, consisting of two large circles of stones—one almost complete, and the other in a fair state of preservation. Remains of a number of Roman camps are also said to exist in this neighbourhood; but these we did not visit.

The road on the east bank of the Esk keeps well up the side of the dale, and affords a very good view all around. But after a few miles walking we descended to lower levels, and crossed the Esk once more. Two miles further on we came in sight of the old-fashioned Bentpath Inn-a roadside hostelry at which we had resolved to break our journey. Indeed, it was Hobson's choice, for all the way from the head of Eskdale to Langholm there is not another house of entertainment. Near it is the village of Wester Kirk, of which a school and schoolhouse and library form the most conspicuous buildings. The school seemed to be well frequented, and we made the acquaintance of some of the children, who walked several miles along the road on their way home, turning off finally into some of the glens or "hopes" that open into this part of Eskdale. We had already passed two schools-one at Davington and one at Eskdalemuir—so that Eskdale is fairly well provided with schools. Indeed, considering the thin and widespread population of the whole district from Tweedsmuir to the Border, the schools are numerous, and much better than one would have expected. And they are well taken advantage of.

No compulsory clause is required here, for the parents all seem alive to the advantages of education. But some of the children have a long way to go to school, and the younger ones cannot be trusted with safety to find their way. A heavy rain may change a burn across which they walked almost dryshod in the morning into a foaming torrent by the time they come back; and more than once young school children have lost their lives in this way. And, of course, in winter the chance of a sudden snowstorm is a still greater danger. The long walk seems to be the last thing that would be considered an obstacle. children are fond enough of outdoor exercise. dominie, in a parish that shall be nameless, was kind enough to leave his school for a short time to accompany us across the hill and point out one or two places we wanted to know about, he had hardly turned his back before the schoolboys made out by a back door, and rushed down to the burn, shouting and whooping, to engage in the amusing sport of "guddling". The dominie smiled apologetically, and explained that the most of the bigger boys were away at the sheep-clipping, and that he was not very strict with the few that were attending the school. What the school Inspector would have thought if he had made a "surprise visit" is matter of speculation. Probably he does not go into these out-of-the-way places oftener than he can help.

Passing several beautifully situated mansion houses, with finely laid-out policies on the banks of the Esk, we came at last to the brow of the hill, whence Langholm Lodge and the town itself—with Langholm Hill and Monument in the background—make up an excellent view. Descending by the road which skirts the enclosing wall of the policies of Langholm Lodge for more than a mile, we entered Langholm about 6.30 p.m., where the work-people, having ceased their labours for the day, were standing about their doors, and eyed the expedition with considerable curiosity as we proceeded through the town to our hotel in the Market Square.

Langholm, like most other cloth-manufacturing towns in the south of Scotland, owes its prosperity to the develop-

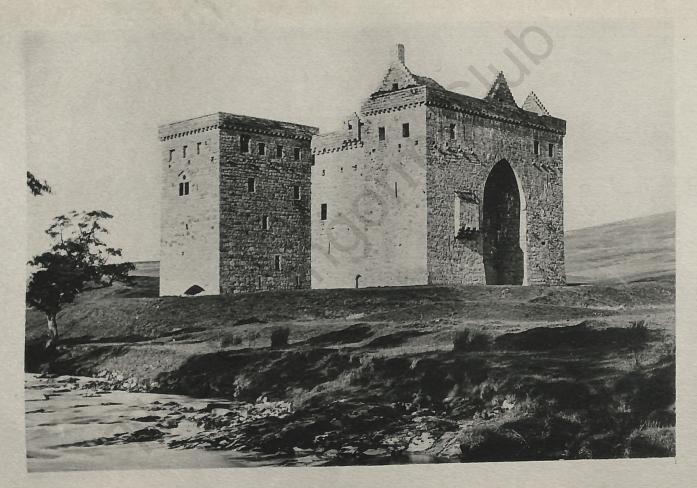
ment of an industry which was at first prosecuted on a most limited scale—a small cloth mill, employing a few hands, and erected for the purpose of supplying the wants of the scattered pastoral population of the district. The excellent and substantial fabrics produced, however, soon made a wider market for themselves, and Langholm, with its plentiful water supply, has been meeting a constantly increasing demand for its manufactures all over the world. It is a thriving place; and in the new part of the town a number of good houses have been built of late years. Besides the monument on the top of the hill to General Sir John Malcolm, there is another in the Market Square to his brother, Sir Pulteney Malcolm.

Next day we made an early start on our way to Liddesdale and Hermitage Castle. Our route lay down Eskdale, past Gilnockie, where, on the left bank of the Esk, is the tower of the Hollows, the residence of the well-known Borderer, Johnnie Armstrong, who was hanged by James V., along with his retinue; past Cannobie and the lea, where "there was racing and chasing" after young Lochinvar and the runaway bride; then, crossing the Liddel (which is here the boundary between Scotland and England), we got the Carlisle train at Riddings Junction, and went north with it to Steele Road. A walk of a couple of miles across country brought us to the Hermitage Water at Newlandsa shooting lodge belonging to the Duke of Buccleuch, who Hermitage Castle is also his property. has estates here. His Grace seems to own most of the land about here, and probably about half of our route was either on or in the immediate neighbourhood of his property. Sometimes a whole parish owns his sway. The Topographer, a pretty fair Conservative on some points, made some rash remarks about the land laws, and the system which allowed so much of the national soil to get into the hands of one proprietor. There can be no doubt that the Buccleuch estates are well and liberally administered in the present generation, but he reminded us of King James's rebuke to the Laird of Buckscleuch, who urged him to demolish some powerful Border neighbour as a reiver:-

"Now haud thy tongue, Sir Walter Scott,
Nor speak of reif or felonie,
For had every honest man his awin kye,
A right puir clan thy name would be".

On application to the gamekeeper at Newlands, we were entrusted with the key of the Hermitage Castle, and, leaving our knapsacks in charge of the keeper's wife, we continued our journey to the Castle itself, about a mile and a half further up the Hermitage Water. The Castle, which is situated on the east bank of the stream, is perhaps the best preserved specimen in existence of the old strongholds, the ruins of which are still to be seen here and there in the Border districts. It is said to have been originally built in 1240 by Alexander II. The building as it now exists consists of a double tower with connecting walls, and outside are the remains of a moat and rampart. The present noble proprietor has caused good care to be taken of the building: and without, of course, attempting to renew any part of it, he has had the masonry kept in repair by pointing it, and otherwise preventing its further destruction. ancient tower has, necessarily, many traditions connected with the wild "riding times". It was here that William Douglas starved to death Sheriff Ramsay, an ancestor of the present Earl of Dalhousie, in 1342. According to tradition also, William de Soulis, a tyrannical lord and reputed sorcerer, held sway here, until his exasperated and oppressed vassals, having lost all patience with him, seized him and boiled him in a cauldron of molten lead. On the top of the adjoining "Nine Stane Rig" are pointed out the stones which supported the iron bar on which the cauldron was hung. The lead was said to have been obtained by stripping the roof of the Castle, and, according to the story, he was wrapped up in a sheet or two of lead before being placed in the cauldron.

The Castle occupies a strong position for commanding the approach to the upper part of Liddesdale, and before the days of artillery would, if properly garrisoned, have been practically impregnable. As there is a well inside the building, the only thing required for standing a long siege would



HERMITAGE CASTLE, LIDDLESDALE.

be plenty of provisions. It must, however, have taken a good many cattle and plenty of meal to keep the larder stored, and a "Feast of Spurs", with the enemy at the door, would be an unpleasant sort of entertainment. When the coast was clear, however, and the countryside and its cattle open to him, the old Border reiver probably took this peculiar feast with as much equanimity as a hungry man could be expected to do. Walter Scott of Harden has been out coursing or hunting perhaps all day, and returns empty-handed, calling loudly for his dinner. His wife has placed a dish on the table, which, on being uncovered, discloses—a clean pair of spurs; and she adds a touch of that other spur before which the boldest of Border reivers might well quail:—

- "'Are ye sae keen set, Wat? 'Tis weel, Ye winna find a dainty meal; It's a' o' the gude Rippon steel— Ye maun digest it manfullie.
- "' 'Nae kye are left in Harden glen, Ye maun be stirrin' wi' your men; Gin ye soud bring me less than ten I winna roose your braverie'.
- "' 'Are ye sae modest ten to name?
  Syne, an I bring na twenty hame,
  I'll freely gie ye leave to blame
  Baith me and a' my chyvalrie.
- ""To horse! Young Jock shall lead the way,
  And soud the Warden tak' the fray
  To mar our riding, I winna say
  But he mote be in jeopardie.
- "' Let ilka ane his knapsac lace, Let ilka ane his steil-jack brace, An' deil bless him that sall disgrace Walter o' Harden's liverie'.".

And next morning some yeoman by the foot of the Cheviots would be lamenting the loss of a string of cattle carried off by the mosstroopers, or perhaps rousing his neighbours, and setting off in pursuit—with but small chance of coming up with the reivers, or recovering the stolen cattle.

The Topographer, still bent on hydrography, explored the Hermitage Water above the Castle, and one good result of his investigations was the discovery of an excellent bathing pool. After a refreshing dip in it, we returned to Newlands, and having seen the kennels, where were some fine setters and retrievers, shouldered our traps again. The keeper obligingly came with us a short distance to show us a short cut over the hills to Riccarton Junction; and, although the sky was somewhat threatening, we resolved to take that route. We started over the hill, getting as we ascended a last view of the Hermitage Castle and the valley of the Hermitage, and the Nine Stane Rig lying on the other side of the valley on our left. But a slight premonitory shower warned us of what is coming, so it was

"Fare thee weel, sweet Liddesdale, Baith the hie land and the low",

and across country and over fences we made a straight track for the station at Riccarton, which we reached just in time to escape a deluge of rain, and, taking train for Edinburgh, brought to a close a pleasant and much-enjoyed excursion among the hills and dales of southern Scotland.

### THE CLUB AT BEN WYVIS.

### BY ALEXANDER COPLAND.

Since the formation of the Club, in the Jubilee year 1887, we have had many opportunities, in our excursions, of familiarising ourselves with what may be termed the internal features of the Cairngorms. Each member of that lofty group, six in number, towering upwards of 3800 feet above sea level, has been specially visited, and their stern, wild grandeur gazed upon at close quarters and described. We have also in our excursions to Ben Rinnes, "the Buck", Bennachie, Morven, Mount Battock, Mount Keen, Lochnagar, Beinn a' Ghlo, and Ben Alder, boxed the compass from north-east to south-west around the group, obtaining distant views of the varying outlines of its members. Our summer excursion of 1898 to Ben Wyvis promised another and an important standpoint for a view from the north-west of the north-west presentment of the Cairngorms; and from the apparent bulk of the "Mountain of Storms" as seen from them, a confident expectation was formed that the barrier which bounds the view from Ben Wyvis in a south-eastern direction would maintain its lofty eminence and extended bulk, and be in all respects a mountain horizon of magnificent proportions.

Tuesday, 12th July, was fixed for the ascent of Ben Wyvis, but, as usual, when the summer excursion is arranged for a mountain at a distance requiring more than one day for its attainment, those who could spare the time were glad to avail themselves of the facilities afforded by the railway companies at midsummer for spending a few days among the mountain scenery in the district to which the excursion had to be made. On the afternoon of the previous Saturday, therefore, the reporter (honorary, of course) joined an advance party bound for Strathpeffer Spa, and its curative waters. We were informed that the Strath-

peffer Hotel was to be the Club's headquarters, whatever that may mean, but on arriving there at a late hour in the evening our utmost exertions only accomplished the getting of the lady of our party into a pigeon-hole of a bedroom for the night, and the rest of us had to put up with the prospect of the *al fresco* quarters of Jeanie Macalpine of the Clachan of Aberfoyle Hotel—a heather bed, curtained by the clouds.

We travelled in one of the luxurious corridor carriages of the Great North of Scotland Railway Company, via the The weather was exceptionally fine even for an exceptionally fine season. The clear blue sky bore here and there a slowly-floating cloudlet—no Banff Baillies or was streaked with long stretches of mackerel cirrii. sea, responding to its canopy, mirrored far and wide a deeper blue, upon whose pulsating bosom lazily floated, like gigantic birds, fishing boats with brown-tanned lug-sails. The rocky shore or pebbly beach framed perfect seascapes, whose soft, hazy distance suggested the coasts of Sutherland and Caithness, with their far-off mountains outlined in the haze. On we careered at express speed, past Cullen, Buckie (suggestive of the toothsome "smokie"), over the Spey, with its bewildered water channels scattered among its wide wastes of stones and gravel, on to the Cathedral City of Elgin, with its lofty, ruined monument to the execrable memory of the Wolf of Badenoch. train was handed over to the Highland Company, but the Great North, anxious for our comfort, sent a special conductor along with us all the way to Inverness.

Before we reached Forres, with its lofty monument to Nelson on the Witches' Hill, the opposite shore of the Moray Firth attracted our attention. The Sutors of Cromarty (the *Portus Salutis* of the ancients), whose connection with Saint Crispin we have failed to trace, defined the entrance to the far-famed refuge of the Cromarty Firth. At length Ben Wyvis, stretched out in all his afternoon glory, lay before us, his ample bosom showing patches of snow. The run along the southern shore of the Firth was delightful, and Inverness was reached in time for a com-

fortable cup of tea, with something to it. After refreshment, and as we had an hour or two to look about, we sauntered towards the Castle Hill, inspecting by the way the Palladium of the Celtic capital—the Clach-na-cuddin or "stone of the tubs"—now placed under a handsome fountain in front of the Town Hall. The Hielan' shoeless and stockingless lasses in former days rested their tubs on this "Clach" when engaged carrying water from the source of their domestic supply—the River Ness. Captain Burt avers that in his time—the beginning of the eighteenth century the lasses' legs were not washed so often or so well as they might have been, but if he had had to carry the water as far from the river as the Clach-na-cuddin is now placed, he also might have been sparing of the water. We were unable to carry away a chip of the famous "Clach", although the stone is not enclosed in a glass case. Near the "Clach" is the passage leading to the Castle Terrace, on one side of which passage is the Free Library, located in a building which we mistook for a model lodging-house. terrace two Russian guns point in the direction of Ben Nevis, but the Observatory on that mountain is safe, so far as we could judge from the appearance of the cannon. statue of sweet little Flora Macdonald is to be placed here so soon as the subscribers shall decide whether she shall stand shod or shoeless. We shall be pleased with her either way. Before descending from the Terrace we discovered the "Islands", where on grand occasions of the Judges' visits on circuit the Magistrates entertained "the Lords" with salmon and whisky punch—a hogshead of whisky being required for the feast, Tomnahurich (the hill of the fairies) now converted into a cemetery, the Caledonian Canal, and the croft-clad hillside leading on to Craig Phadric, with its vitrified Fort; and recollecting that on the slope of the Castle Hill was fought the "Battle of the Cheeses", and reflecting on the waste of life, as well as of cheese, that then and there took place, we wended our way to the Railway Station, to be entrained for Dingwall.

Dingwall—Baille a' Chaille ("Kail town")—famous in ancient times, as now, for cabbage, is famous also for its con-

nection with one of the greatest statesmen of modern times. We started for Dingwall at 8 p.m., or thereabouts, and reached that station late, as usual, and Strathpeffer later. On our route we were brought into contact with a new Highland industry. At some of the stations the carriage windows were besieged by bare-legged Highland loons holding up bunches of the white and yellow water lilies for a quid pro quo. The evening was so serene, the sky so clear, and the temperature so refreshing as to induce the party unanimously to approve the suggestion, made not by the youngest member, that, coming so far, it would be imprudent to risk a view from Ben Wyvis upon one chance, when we could have two. Therefore, having reached "our headquarters" after diligent quest, and pigeon-holed the lady of the party as already mentioned, we indulged in cups of Mocha all round, and before the midnight hour set out to discover Ben Wyvis.

The sky was brilliantly bejewelled with stars, but there was no moon. Our party numbered five, none of whom had ever been on Ben Wyvis during daylight, let alone during the darkness of night. However, the word "fear" had no place in our vocabulary, although we confess to "anxiety". With the instinct bred of mountaineering, and the aid of lucifer matches and maps, we piloted our way to Achterneed. Then, along the parallel-terraced cart roads which score the crofted brae of Botlacks, silently and in Indian file, we tracked through broom and briars up hill, until we reached a cart road trending north-westwards, through a plantation along the west slope of Druim a' Chuilein. Thus, without deviation or distraction, we kept the regulation route. About a mile and a half from Achterneed the road bifurcated—one prong stretching north-westwards for Strath Garve between Little Wyvis and An Cabar of Ben Wyvis. The other fork, the more forbidding of the two, struck northwards; and instinct impelled us to take it. This was the darkest point of our march; and, strange to say, on the return journey, one of our party, going ahead of the main body in good daylight, when he came to the bifurcation took the wrong fork, and went on his way towards Strath Garve in place of Strathpeffer, until, by a lucky chance looking back, he saw the main body in the distance marching in the contrary direction to that which he had taken, and had a hot time of it in recovering his lost ground and rejoining the party. Our route to the hill was now a peat road-soft and springy to the foot, and, thanks to the exceptionally dry season, pleasant enough walking, except where one had to circumvent pools or cross them on stepping stones. By-and-by we came to a moss burn, whose Stygian colour even the darkness made visible, and we could not drink. We kept along a footpath on its left bank, and were now assured by the long, lofty outline in the sky in front of us of Ben Wyvis. We stretched ourselves on the heather refreshingly for a while, and marked the gradual lighting of the sky above us, indicative of the approach of dawn. Resuming our journey, the foot track by the moss burn—the Burn of Skiach—landed us in a morass abreast of the south-western 2669-feet slope of Ben Wyvis in front of An Cabar. Crossing the morass, we ascended the slope in front, but owing to the rich pasturage on it, in which the foot sank at every step, found it toilsome work until we reached the harder ground near the 3000-feet plateau. The sun rose upon us as we traversed the plateau, and by a sheep and deer fence-which was carted here!—we made for An Socach (3295 feet), to get the fine view from thence, the route along the fence being carpeted with thick, soft grass.

The morning was all that could be desired for a distant view—bright, clear, and caller. The waters of the Firths of Dornoch and Moray shimmered in the sunlight—the long spit, terminating in Tarbat Ness with its lighthouse, protruded seawards between them, and offered contrast. Cromarty Firth showed a wide, circular basin at its southwest end, with the sleeping, smokeless town of Dingwall on its margin. Similarly blinking in the sunlight of early morning, Invergordon and Cromarty dotted its northern and southern shores. The Black Isle spread out, in its rich garniture of woods and cultivated fields, between it and the Firths of Moray and Beauly. To eastwards,

southwards, and westwards, a glorious prospect lay unfolded, gradually rising from the sea to lofty mountain

ranges that kissed the sky.

About three-quarters of a mile north-west of An Socach the cairn called "The Monument" (3429 feet), seen crowning the ridge at the north-west end of the great corrie (Coire Mhor), indicated the culminating point of the mountain range. Towards it we now proceeded. While doing so we noticed a numerous herd of red deer trooping in single file up the east side of the corrie from the rich pasturage in the low ground, where they had been spending the night. They were getting beyond the region of tormenting flies. They ascended in a slanting direction, and on reaching the mountain table-land disappeared north-eastwards in the direction of Loch Glass. The view from the cairn was extensive and magnificent. In the bright, clear morning light, looking eastwards, the south coast line of the Moray Firth from Fort-George to Branderburgh, near Lossiemouth, with its stretches of yellow sand from Nairn to Burghead margined the blue waters. The Bin Hill of Cullen, due east (270°), conspicuously asserted itself, as did the Knock Hill, about 5° south of east. Findlay Seat, dominated by Ben Aigan, indicated the windings of the Spey near Craigellachie. Farther south-east the modest cone of the Tap o' Noth appeared above the rising ridge of hill ground trending westwards, and then the Buck, Ben Rinnes, and Corryhabbie (293½) were noted. Westwards from Corryhabbie the horizon in variegated outline rose till Ben Avon, with his familiar granitic stucs and tors, stood out sharply against the sky. Beinn a' Bhuird led on to Cairngorm, and the gash in the mountain barrier between it and Braeriach, lighted up by the morning sun, with the lofty dome of Ben Muich Dhui beyond, clearly revealed the Learg Ghruamach. The mountain summits seen to the westwards of these being much crowded, and not so familiar, we did not particularly note. Westwards from the Cairngorms the higher summits of the Monadh Liath range, Carn Sgulain, Carn Balloch, and Carn Mairg, and the Geal Charn—all above the 3000 feet line—led in the direction

of the Great Glen-the trough of the Caledonian Canal. Before reaching these, however, with good glasses and careful search we might have distinguished, over the Monadh Liath range, in the far distance, the summits of Carn an Fhidleir, Beinn a' Ghlo, and Beinn Dearg of Athole Forest. At about 356° Ben Alder was seen, and, almost due south, the equally conspicuous mass of Creag Meaghaidh. Stob Choire an Easain Mhoir of Loch Treig led on to the culminating mountain masses dominated by Ben Nevis, their peaks, snow-fields, and vast rocky precipices and corries revealed clear as etchings by the bright sunlight shining straight into them. We gazed long, and again and again, on the marvellous view of the "Mountain of Heaven". Sweeping round south-westwards a maze of mountains, seen for the first time from this standpoint, baffled identifi-More time and patience than we could afford to give would have been required for such a task. Beinn a' Bhaach Ard, and the lofty mountain summits between Glen Orrin and Glen Strathfarrar, then occupied our attention, and beyond them the lofty masses of Mam Sodhail, Carn Eige, and the peak of Sgurr na Lapaich at 40°. Although we could not discern the islands of Eigg and Rum, we had a very distinct view of the peaks of the Cuchullins in Skye. Moruisg of Glen Carron, and, nearer, the threepeaked mountain whose central peak is named Sgurr a' Mhuilinn of Strath Bran, were close and conspicuous objects. So was Loch Fannich, almost due west, Ben Slioch beyond, and immediately to the north of the Loch the eight giants of Fannich Forest, A' Chailleach (3276), Sgurr Breac, Sgurr nan Clach Geala, Meall a' Chrasgaidh (3062), Sgurr Mor (3637), Beinn Mhor, Meallan Rairigidh (3109), and An Coileachan (3015). Moving north-westward the trident-shaped group of An Teallach, with its acute cone, dominating Strath-na-Sheallag and Dundonnell Forests at the head of Little Loch Broom, arrested attention. Still farther north-west, but in the near distance, the cone-shaped summit of Beinn Dearg towered above all the hills of Dirrie More, Strath More, and Strathvaich Forest. Still farther north-west, at 146°, the sugar-loaf-shaped mass of Suilven,

beyond Rhidorroch Forest and the Cromalt Hills, conspicuously asserted its presence, flanked on either side by its loftier conical-shaped neighbours Cul Mor in Coigach to the south and Canisp north-east. Farther north, at about 155°, Quinag, to the north of and towering above Loch Assynt, recalls the fate of the great Marquis, a fugitive lurking among the islands in the loch, devouring his gloves from hunger, and treacherously captured there and delivered to his enemies by the Laird of Assynt for-not thirty pieces of silver-but for forty bolls of oatmeal! round the twin lofty summits of Coinnemheall and Ben More (Assynt) demand attention and admiration. ing the horizon circle northwards to Beinn Thutaig (182°) of Strath Melness, at the Kyle of Tongue, we noted from Quinag, at about equal distances northwards on the circle, Ben Leoid, Ben Hee, and Ben Hope—the latter, however, considerably farther to the north than Ben Hee. Then, about 186°, Beinn Laoghal, due east of Ben Hope, and about 189° the lofty range of Beinn Cleith Bric, with its conical peak, Meall an Eoin, the loftiest summit in Sutherlandshire, north by east of Ben Wyvis. The Ben Armuinn range, due east of Beinn Cleith Bric, led the view farther eastwards to the cones of the Ben Griams (Mhor and Bheag), and to Morven, the Maiden Pap of Caithness, and to Scaraben at 224°, and the sea. Truly the view, for extent of mountain horizon, variety of outline, and rugged grandeur and beauty, could not be surpassed. Seated on the cairn, again and again we slowly swept with our field glasses the vast circle, ever discovering new features and points of interest as the sunlight, by the diurnal motion of the earth, lighted up new corries and passes among the mountains.

But you cannot fill empty stomachs with mountain views, however fine, and the feeling of vacuity which began to steal upon us, and which Torricelli declared nature abhorred, recalled us to a sense of the situation, and to the fact that we had to tramp seven to eight miles to Strathpeffer to a late breakfast or an early luncheon, if we would pacify the inner man. There was no water on the top of the mountain, but there was snow in hollows on the brow

of the corrie, and the patriarch of the party endeavoured to utilise it to "infuse" a cup of tea. The attempt could hardly be called a success. The snow was so long in melting that the impatient party despaired of ever seeing the water bubble and boil by the spirit lamp. And they declared that snowballs made with such snow might be carried undiminished to Balmoral or even Windsor in the egg boxes which the railway companies now convey at reasonable rates to alleviate agricultural distress, so that the Countess of Cromarty may, at trifling expense, send to the Queen her feudal tender for Ben Wyvis as often as it may be demanded.

About 9 a.m. we set our faces in the direction of Knockfarrel and the "Cat's Back". Looking back towards the cairn and the eastern side of the great corrie, we saw the large herd of deer returning in a disturbed manner towards their former quarters in the corrie, and by-and-by two human figures reached the cairn. Their appearance accounted for the movements of the deer. About a mile from the cairn, at the upper end of a hollow bounded on the east by An Socach, we came upon a well of running, drinkable water—the first we had seen upon the mountain. Dr. Manson, in his book on Strathpeffer, describes this well as being "a huge spring of the purest and coolest of cold water, issuing from the side of the mountain, and yielding some 4000 or 5000 gallons an hour", and at this rate he states the well would supply a population of 4000 with from 24 to 30 gallons a day each. He must have seen the well under different conditions from those existing at the time we liquidated at it. However, the water was refreshing, cool, and clear, and there was as much as the party could comfortably carry away. We rapidly descended the hill in the direction of the Skiach burn, along which we had approached the mountain, raising loud protests from lazy muirfowl disturbed while sunning themselves among the We recrossed the extensive peat moss, finding it, as the Rev. John Noble did sixty years ago, very "spongy", but, fortunately, for the most part tolerably dry. We accept unreservedly his statement that it is easily consumed. As for the hard and black peat, which he also described and explained, "than which there is scarcely any fuel better fitted for keeping up a mild and gentle heat", we had more heat by a long way than we wanted, for the sun with tropical intensity broiled us, and the flies tormented us to such a degree that any of the other plagues of Egypt would have been thankfully accepted in substitution.

At length we reached our headquarters, after picking up the lost member, who, by mistake, struck off by the wrong fork in the direction of Strath Garve, and, after ablution and cooling, joined the numerous and fashionable gathering at luncheon in the dining-room of the hotel. In the afternoon some of the party, not quite satiated by Ben Wyvis, got on Druim na Chait and Knockfarrel. Others rested under the verandah or in retirement. As for the reporter, while taking his ease in the shade, a lady friend dropped as from the clouds into a seat beside him, and, putting her soft, friendly palm into his, remarked, "There are nae feels like auld feels"; but, with the curiosity of Mother Eve, she required an account of the midnight march and the day's dawning on the mountain. That midnight march and day's dawning and glorious prospect from Ben Wyvis will live in the memory of each of the party while life endures. It is true thoughtless people, who have never spent a night in the wilderness with the sky above and the heather beneath them, cannot understand the intense feeling of loneliness and dependence which is borne irresistibly into the soul of the wanderer as he lies looking upwards at the innumerable worlds that silently circle in the heavens above, gazing, as it were, in pity down upon him; and on a mountain apart, when the dawn steals on and morning breaks, and the rising sun reveals a new world in its freshness and beauty as "in the beginning", when the Omnipotent willed it, and the seraphs sang for joy, the entranced mortal, and yet immortal, cannot restrain natural feelings of thankfulness and adoration.

On Monday morning, at a reasonable hour, the music of a German band seductively invited to the Pump Room

for a draught of the delectable hot or cold. We were proof against its blandishments. We are told by Dr. Manson, in his book already referred to, that the nasty, drumly, stinking spa water acts upon the human body like "spring cleaning" and "whitewashing" in domestic economy. It may be so, but, like the Rev. Mr. Spalding, who didn't like London, we don't like "spring cleaning". We would rather be out of the way when that annual domestic frenzy takes possession of our womankind. As to "whitewashing", we believe it, not because we saw ghostly-looking patients stalking among the trees of the Strath, but because he assures us that the Strathpeffer water contains from 60 to 65 per cent. of sulphate and carbonate of lime, and the corpus must be black, dark, and dirty indeed that a drench such as that will not sweeten and whiten.

As the main body of the Club were to leave Aberdeen that morning for "the Strath", each member of the vanguard followed his own devices until dinner time. Along with a genial friend, now entered into rest, the writer spent the day in a run by railway to and from Lochalsh. It was a delightful outing. The day was fine, and, having Bartholomew's maps of the district with us, we noted the outstanding interesting features of the magnificent scenery to be seen from the railway. That in four short months from that time one of us should be listening to the solemn lament of the organ over the mortal remains of the other would, on that day, have been a most unlikely thought. Yet so it fell out, and well for us is it ordered that we know not what a day may bring forth. After luncheon, we crossed by ferry-boat the dark, swirling waters of the Kyle of Lochalsh to the ruins of Castle Maol, and, for a joke, spent ten minutes in the Isle of Skye, returning in time for the afternoon train.

Tuesday morning broke dubious, notwithstanding our earnest wishes for a fine day on the hill. The day was pleasant enough for the vale of Strathpeffer, but there were floating clouds lower down the hills than we liked, and the parties who made the night ascent congratulated each other that they had not missed that opportunity. After break-

fast, appearances began to look more hopeful, and the expedition resolved to make the ascent. Accordingly we were turned out in front of headquarters and photographed. This precaution was taken in order, presumably, that if we went amissing we might be identified when found, and be restored to our friends. The force numbered eleven, and, if the pony and its attendant are added, the number, by good fortune, totalled thirteen, which is a baker's or fisher's dozen, and an odd, and, therefore, a lucky, number. made rather an imposing array as we set off armed with cammachs of various forms and suitable dimensions, to the envy of the gouty and rheumatic frequenters of the Pump Room. It is a pleasant walk by Castle Leod's splendid old trees, which line the road towards Achterneed. little village, with its snod, white-washed, and trimlythatched cottages and little gardens ablaze with flowers, and the crofters' cottages on the hillside beyond the railway line, formed a perfect picture of rural comfort. crofts were originally allotments to the veterans who returned unscathed from the American War of Independence. When young men they were embodied by Lord Macleod. who fixed a day for his tenantry to meet him at Castle Leod, when the rent-roll of the estate was produced, and the factor arranged the number of young men that could be spared from each homestead, and they had to march to the sound of the drum; no volunteering in those days. Our route by daylight was the same as by starlight on the preceding expedition. We were not, however, the only party for the summit of the "Mountain of Storms" that day. A gentleman with guides and two ladies on hill ponies preceded us; but, they being well mounted, though we kept our distance, we could not overtake them. We crossed the Skiach burn-what a name !--as before, and held along the footpath on its left bank till we got to the foot of the hill, getting, as we began the ascent, a whiff of drizzling mist, which boded ill for our view from the summit. On reaching Dr. Manson's spring of "the purest and coolest of cold water", we lunched, and were joined by a forester by appointment of the secretary. We then held on for the

cairn at the summit, and, when near it, encountered the party which had preceded us returning. There was a strong mist-laden north-west wind blowing when we reached the summit, which completely obscured the view in that direction. The coast line and mountain range from the Bin of Cullen to the Cairngorms were dimly seen, as was the horizon westwards to Loch Fannich with its surrounding mountains, but, farther north, the view was left to imagination and to Dr. Macculloch's graphic description of the grand scenery of the Sutherland mountains. began to get wet, cold, and uncomfortable at the cairn, so we made tracks for Strathpeffer. On our way along the broad shoulder of the mountain we encountered the rather rare bird the dotterel, magnified by the mist to the dimensions of a "cushie doo". Save one or two grouse, other noticeable birds we saw none. We got down from the clouds as soon as possible to sunshine and comfort on the lower ground. While plodding along the footpath by the Skiach burn, our doucest and most well-behaved of ponies suddenly upset all our notions of propriety by taking a bath in the burn. Fortunately, before ablution she slid her rider upon the soft grassy bank over her head as deftly as a baker slides to a cooling tray the "bap" or four-pound loaf just drawn from the oven. The moment after she was on her back in the burn, with her four feet in the air, like any exuberant coal-horse enjoying a Sunday in the country. The surprise and alarm at this unexpected aquatic feat passed off so soon as we understood that no harm was done, and that this was one of pretty Fanny's Without other noticeable incident, we reached Strathpeffer, having spent a fairly enjoyable day among the scenery in this delightful part of the country.

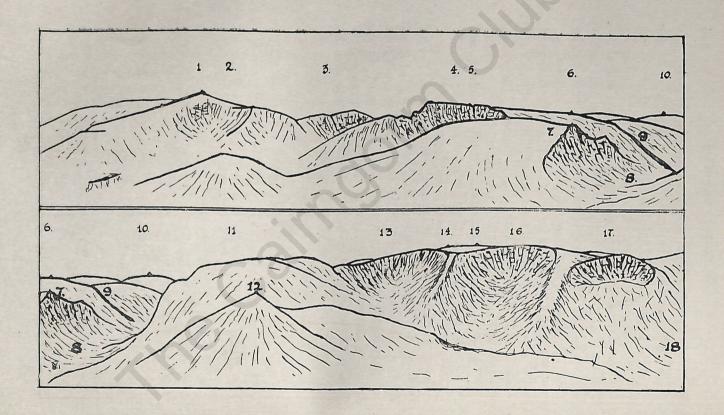
In "Anderson's Guide to the Highlands" (3rd Edition, 1850), Ben Wyvis is said to be composed of slaty gneiss, with numerous large veins of horneblende and granite, intermixed with garnets. Its flora is not particularly interesting. It is a great lump of a mountain. Some say it resembles a horseshoe, others a huge hay-stack. The two objects are not very like each other. We suggest that "it

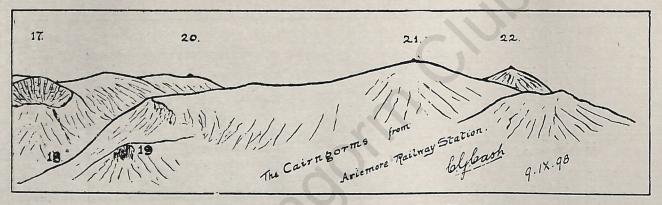
is without form, and void". The upper ridge, above the 3000 feet line, extends about two miles from one extremity to the other. The extent of high ground above 2600 feet, measured from north-east to south-west, may be set down as not less than five miles. The sides of its biggest corrie—Coire Mhor—though steep, are grassy, and looked as though they could be climbed at any part. There is none of the "steep frowning glories" of dark Lochnagar or Coire Brochain of Braeriach, or the black rocky tusks of Sgoran Dubh here.

The meaning of the name of the mountain mass is as much a matter of dubiety as its form. Some will have it Ben Uaish—the "mountain of storm or storms", although Dr. Morrison, while so naming it, admits that it is by no means so "stormy" as its name would imply; and in that remark we concur. In "Anderson's Guide to the Highlands" (1st Edition, 1834) the name of the mountain is spelled Ben Weavis. Another calls it Beinn Uabhais-that is "stupendous mountain". But are there not many mountains scattered about bonny Scotland as much entitled to be called Beinn Uabhais as the "king of the Ross-shire moun-We think there are. tains", if not more so? a Little Wyvis as well as a big one. The infant, 2497 feet in height, lies south-south-west of An Cabar, and is separated therefrom by a short, narrow glen, gouged out by the Allt a' Bhealaich, which flows into the Black Water and ultimately into Loch Garve. Each of the Wyvises has three little lochans in its curtilage, or bosom.

In the olden time the Forest of Wyvis was held by the Munroes of Foulis under the snowball feudal tenure before mentioned; and it is recorded that Mary Queen of Scots was the last Scottish monarch who demanded its fulfilment, no doubt as a joke, when she visited Inverness in her royal progress through her dominions. It is further recorded that the Munroes, adherents of the House of Hanover, sent some snow from Ben Wyvis to Inverness in compliment to the Duke of Cumberland, to cool his wine after Culloden. An old Highlander—a Jacobite, of course—hearing of this after the Duke's death, drily remarked that the snow "would maybe be more useful to the Duke now".

Sheep-farming was introduced on Ben Wyvis about 1790, to the great indignation and resentment of the country people who occupied the hill ground rent free, and who considered that they had a hereditary right to grazing there. When the sheep-walks were established a local rebellion took place, and soldiers of the 42nd regiment had to be sent from Edinburgh to quell the disturbance. names of some of the grazings on the hill are interesting, and may serve as hurdles for breaking the shins of lovers of local place-names. Here are some of them: -Ballachladdich, with Kianlochninochin, Altitudinem, Lubreacht. Inrichnidow, Reballochoilie, Corriennafoile, Corrinadog, Corrienastrach, Carnafearanvorar, Frarich-gillandrish, and others fully as trying to the jaws of the Sassenach. forest now belongs in property to the Countess of Cromarty. who owns the portion fronting south-south-west and south and east towards Dingwall. Mr. Shoolbred, of the great Tottenham-Court Road house, in London, owns south-west and north till he marches with Mr. Ferguson of Novar. who, by east and south, marches with the Countess. withstanding the sheep, there is no lack of red deer on the ground, as Mr. Shoolbred's game-book shows.





# OUTLINE VIEW OF THE CAIRNGORM MOUNTAINS

#### AS SEEN FROM AVIEMORE RAILWAY STATION.

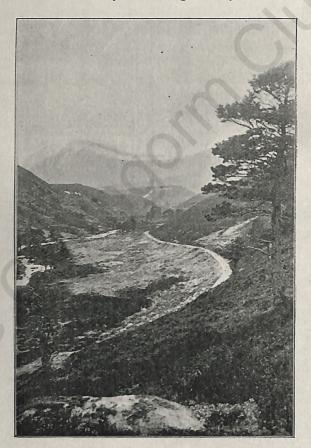
- 1. Cairngorm (4084 feet).
- 2. Coire Cas.
- 3. Coire an t-Sneachda.
- 4. Coire an Lochain.
- 5. Cairn an Lochain (3983 feet).
- 6. Carn na Criche (3931 feet).
- Creag na Leacainn or The Lurcher's Rock (3448 feet).

- 8. Larig Ghru.
- 9. The March Burn.
- 10. Ben Muich Dhui (4296 feet).
- 11. Sron na Leirg (3839 feet).
- 12. Carn Elrick (2435 feet).
- 13. Coire Bennie.
- 14. Braeriach-East Cairn.
- 15. Braeriach (4248 feet).

- 16. Coire Ruadh.
- 17. Coire an Lochain.
- 18. Glen Eunach.
- 19. Cadha Beag.
- Braeriach—Eunach Cairn (4061 feet).
- 21. Cadha Mor (2313 feet).
- 22. Sgoran Dubh Mhor (3635 feet).

### SGORAN DUBH AND ITS SPECTRE.

A STEADY, gentle rain, combined with a low-lying mist, threatened to make a *dies non* for the hills as we walked up Glen Eunach from Coylum Bridge. By the time Cross



IN GLEN EUNACH.

Roads was reached the rain had left off, and there was hope that the mist would rise, so we held on to Loch Eunach. The mist, however, clung to Braeriach and Sgoran Dubh, and a climb seemed out of the question. We turned our backs on the former mountain with no little disappointment, and proceeded to take a stroll round the loch. It was beautifully still, reflecting both hills and mist on its surface. The recent rough weather had considerably added to the great bank of gravel at the north end, and a herd of deer had evidently just left the shore. Proceeding along the pony-path, we halted for lunch opposite the mouth of the Coire Dhondail Burn. The mist was only about 500 feet above us, and the weather indications were still unfavourable for mountaineers.

Then came an inspiration—we resolved to explore some of the gullies of Sgoran Dubh, and, possibly, make the ascent to Sgor Ghaoith. The height to be surmounted from the loch (1650) is 2008 feet, an angle of 35° making an incline of about 2 in 3—the base line from loch to Sgor being only 2850 feet.

The first 200-300 feet was heather-clad, but had a steepness which made every step tell. Rock reached, we found ourselves on a narrow ridge, with gullies to right and left —the whole face of the hill is scarred with gullies, each generally with its trickling streamlet. The rock, much broken up, lies in vertical ribs, with a rather serrated appearance. They are generally exceedingly narrow, the divisions between the gullies being frequently reduced almost to vanishing point. As we got higher the rocks became steeper, and occasionally presented an impassable face, rendering divergences, not to say retreats, necessary. The difficulty of the ascent was often increased by the nature of the granite, which in many places was rotten, yielding to both hands and feet. Again, trouble was experienced with smooth, water-worn rock which afforded no hold whatever. At one stage a descent seemed almost imperative, when, fortunately, a crevice was detected just wide enough to admit the fingers, and the dreaded retreat was avoided. More than once we found ourselves on shelves where a deer had evidently spent a day or two in very confined quarters, but probably afraid to change its position.

"The terrors of the unseen" added to our troubles.

II. BB

The mist clung pertinaciously to the slopes of Braeriach and the Sgoran, rising masses being apparently replaced by accessions from below. Generally, however, there was a middle space clear; above the cloudy layer which rested over the loch there was clear atmosphere for from 300-500 feet, over which dense mist reigned supreme. quently the two layers of mist threw out "skirmishers" which crept and crawled towards each other-now and then threatening a general engagement. It was difficult to account for the motions of the mist, as no wind could be felt. But amidst all the changes the summit of Braeriach remained covered, and even its western face was never wholly in view. Coire Dhondail, especially, was a playground for the mist, and presented quite a lively appearance as its snow patches appeared and disappeared, and its torrents shone like silver threads. At times breaches would appear in the mist, and Braeriach seemed to burst out, looming as a Mont Blanc at least. Quite close to us the mist amused itself with the rocks, coiling round their "teeth". resemblance of the pinnacle "A Challich" to an old woman was striking as the mist suddenly unfolded and left the human-like figure outstanding.

The noise of the burns on their way to the loch had a peculiar effect in the general stillness. The stream from Lochan nan Cnapan was particularly noisy, but its tones varied with our position on the rocks and the density of the mist. The tiny burns in the gullies made a noise quite disproportionate to their size, as they took flying leaps in their downward flight. The stags added to the music, as, hundreds of feet below and, of course, invisible to us, they

called for the hinds.

The 2008 feet of ascent seemed interminable, progress was so slow, but at last, three-and-a-half hours after leaving the loch, we found ourselves on the ridge, about 220 paces to the north of Sgor Ghaoith. We found the ridge (3600) scalloped with snow, whereas the snow line on Braeriach was about 3000 feet—the steepness of Sgoran Dubh accounting for the difference.

There was, of course, no prospect from Sgor Ghaoith;

we were quite satisfied with the rock climb. The summit of the Sgor is cairn-less, but readily recognisable: the illustrations (from photographs by Mr. W. E. Carnegie Dickson, B.Sc.) render description unnecessary. The peaks



SGOR GHAOITH.

of Sgoran Dubh have long been a bother to hillmen; even the Club map is defective; but this sketch, by another contributor, Mr. C. G. Cash, F.R.S.G.S., will enable members to correct their copies.



THE SUMMITS OF SGORAN DUBH, AS SEEN FROM LARIG GHRU, NEAR CREAG A' CHALAMAIN.

1. Sgor Ghaoith (3658 feet). 2. Sgoran Dubh Mhor (3635 feet).

3. Sgoran Dubh Bheag (3443 feet).

The walk along the flattish summit was enjoyable; the upright position was a relief after our long crawl, and we could congratulate ourselves on having opened up a new (though by no means popular) route. But the event of the day (29th October last) was just about to happen.



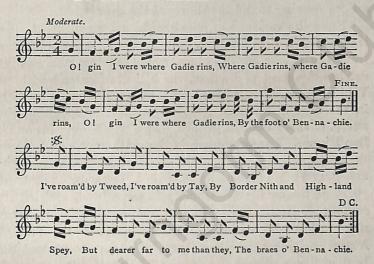
CAIRN ON SGORAN DUBH MHOR.

As we walked towards Sgoran Dubh Mhor we observed that the old semaphore was still standing, but the little wooden hut for the "watcher" had been blown to pieces. Of course we made a halt

at Sgoran Dubh Mhor, and as we sat at the cairn, looking towards the Lurcher's Rock, we were again It seemed to have attracted by the action of the mist. ceased its lively gambols, and settled down to more dignified movements, taking its course down the glen, Suddenly brilliant which it seemed to fill completely. colours were projected on the mist, and the cry was, "Look! a rainbow". But the words had scarcely been spoken when the "bow", after a momentary horse-shoe appearance, assumed a circular shape, and each saw his figure in the centre, enlarged (apparently) to titanic proportions—the "Spectre of the Brocken" was before us. The display was, needless to say, extremely interesting, and we were favoured with several appearances of the The hour was 4 p.m.; the sun had just phenomenon. burst out behind us, and the mist kept moving downwards in front. The "Spectre" at times fluttered and became indistinct, but re-formed again and again—possibly we had about four minutes altogether of the display. Then the mist supply failed, the glen cleared, and only the shadow of Sgoran Dubh Mhor was visible on the skirt of Braeriach.

# THE CLUB AT BENNACHIE.

BY THE REV. ANDREW GALLOWAY.



Since 1871, when the writer was "settled" in Oyne, he has climbed Bennachie, on an average, three or four times a year. But one of his pleasantest roamings over the hill was as the guest of the Cairngorm Club, on 26th September last. The programme on that occasion was comprehensive, and did justice to the attractions of Bennachie:—Walk from Oyne Station; an inspection of the "Waterspout", Oxen Craig, Craig Shannoch, Mither Tap, Maiden Castle; dinner at the Home Farm of Pittodrie—thanks to facilities afforded by Mr. Diack; and an inspection of the "Maiden Stane o' Bennachie" en route to Pitcaple Station.

Bennachie is a short hill range of about five miles, east and west, situated in the old earldom of the Garioch, near the centre of Aberdeenshire, and about 20 miles north-west of "the Silver City by the Sea". Although the "Garioch" means "the rough district", its productiveness early earned for it the title "the meal girnal" of Aberdeenshire. The

10ft.

hill range is bounded on the south by the Don, and by the Gadie on the north, the chief summits being Oxen Craig (1733) in the west, Craig Shannoch (about 1600) in the north, and Mither Tap (1698) in the east. Owing to its comparative isolation, Bennachie is seen from a radius of 40 miles, the Mither Tap having long been a landmark for sailors steering round the shores of the county.

From the various summits a wide and magnificent view is obtained in clear weather. As the eye sweeps the horizon from the smoke of Aberdeen round against the sun, it catches the coast of Buchan, the hill of Mormond with its White Horse, Troup Head, and even the Caithness hills in the blue distance of fully 70 miles. Continuing the sweep, one sees the Bin, Knock, Tap o' Noth, and, far away, Ben Rinnes. Further round, in the south-west, and towards the south, Cairngorm, Ben Muich Dhui, Lochnagar, Clochnaben, and others are easily identified. Towards the east and north of Bennachie the country is more level, and highly cultivated; but towards the west and south hills and crags rise in close and varied profusion. Through the Vale of Alford one traces the silver flow of the Don; south-east the Loch of Skene gleams in the sunshine; while off Newburgh there is a peep of the German Ocean; and off Portsoy is seen the Moray Firth.

From several parts of the hill little rills, or "gills", as they are locally called, run northward into the Gadie, and southward into the Don, and in their course are utilised in driving the wheels of thrashing mills.

The hill is easily ascended from all sides, the favourite starting-places being the Railway Stations of Pitcaple and Oyne. Leaving the last-named, we soon cross the old Aberdeen road, which

"Cam' in by Dunnideer,
An' doon by Netherha'",

ran along the north side of the hill, and passed near the Church of Chapel of Garioch and Balquhain Castle. Along this old road the clans marched to Harlaw in 1411. Near where we cross the old road tradition speaks of a stiff struggle having taken place between the Laird of Harthill

with his followers, and a party of the Gordons, carrying twelve waggon-loads of treasure from the Cathedral of Old Aberdeen to Strathbogie.

Passing the old Beeches, we work our way over very indifferent footing up the west side of Oxen Craig to Shannoch Well, the lunching place of many a sportsman and "the rest-and-be-thankful" of many a perspiring tourist. We are here at an elevation of upwards of 1000 feet, and a fine view is had towards north and west. But move a hundred yards up, and examine the great and recent cleft in the hillside. In the early afternoon of 9th August, 1891, a waterspout burst over the side of the hill a few hundred yards further up. For a time a great volume of water rushed down the peat road, washing out the gravel, and carrying immense quantities thereof and of stones down through the woods, and in the bed of the road to the levels below. Arrested at what is known as the Little Cut of '29, the waters, pent up to a great depth, at length burst, at right angles, through the east bank, tore down the hillside to the Gill Burn—the great torrent bearing with it trees and soil and boulders, and wearing out a wide gap in a rocky bed, in some places 40 feet wide and 30 feet deep. From markings on the trees at the side of the Gill Burn, the seething, roaring stream must have been eight to ten feet deep in some parts. lessly ruined peat road, and the enormous quantity of sand, gravel, stones, and boulders lying everywhere in endless confusion, testify to the fearful force of the water, whose sound resembled rumbling thunder.

The remainder of the ascent to the top of Oxen Craig is easily accomplished, and the splendid view obtained of hill and vale will reward the climb. The small oblong socket, seen in the rock, held for a short time the memorial stone which marked the spot where the half-witted Robbie Dawson perished in a snowstorm in November, 1856.

We now cross over, through heather and numerous wild plants, to Craig Shannoch ("the hill of foxes"), having on our right the peat moss, still largely drawn upon. This high mossfield has yielded up a few articles of antiquity, most of which are in Edinburgh Antiquarian Museum. Craig Shannoch looks out boldly to the north, and is best seen from the valley of the Gadie. The stones in some places have a "masonry like appearance", and in one place lightning has left its mark. Down the rocky front of the craig is Harthill's Cave—so named from the tradition that the Laird of Harthill in 1644 here watched the burning of his Castle, which is a little to the north-east.

Approaching the Mither Tap, around which interest greatly deepens, and which is visited by thousands from all



Photo. by

THE CLUB ON OXEN CRAIG.

Rev. Robert Semple.

quarters, the Nether Maiden—a bold and detached mass of rock, layer upon layer, illustrating in a striking manner the process of weathering—catches the eye, and lends a distinctive feature to the "Tap". This summit is most easily reached by a detour towards the east, striking what is called the "Maiden Causeway", and stepping softly over toppled-down stones by the old entrance into the Fort, so notable a feature of the Mither Tap. (For a detailed description of the Fort, see Miss Maclagan's "Hillforts, &c., of Scotland";

an abbreviated account is given in "Bennachie").\* Suffice here to say that the summit of the Mither Tap was early and strongly fortified, most probably by the ancient Caledonians, on hearing of southern invasions threatening to over-run and conquer all the north of Scotland also. whole structure of the fortification, with its enormous outer and inner encircling stone ramparts, in some places 26 feet thick; its round "houses", the largest of which has a diameter of fully 50 feet; its semicircular terrace of 600 feet, and its other buildings and arrangements, reflects credit upon its architect, who had taken full advantage of the natural configuration and strength of the hilltop. work exhibits as much care and tact as that of the best "dry stone dyker" of to-day. The "hands" employed must have been numerous; the time of erection long; the labour entailed in collecting and transporting the stones, which average in size 18 inches by 12 inches, and are wonderfully uniform, must have been immense. The undertaking is herculean, and, with its high and broad walls, and its coigns of defence, the Fort, if well manned, must have been well-nigh impregnable. A libertine Baron of Balquhain is reputed to have abducted and carried thither such handsome maidens as he fancied; and tradition makes it also the hiding-place of Lord Pitsligo after the fatal field of Culloden in 1746.

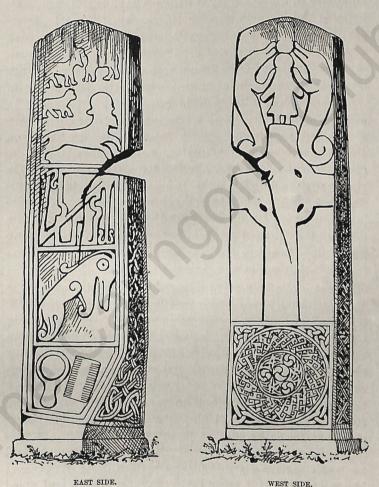
Report says that a well-made and distinctly-seen cause-way—long known as the "Maiden Causeway"—once stretched from the Mither Tap down the north-eastern side of the hill, and into the woods of Pittodrie; that it was 14 feet broad, and was of Roman origin. Just outside the north-east entrance to the Fort, and on the wind-swept height, there are broad stones, which seem to have been laid in the moss; but, if such a "causey" once existed down the hillside, it has sunk out of sight under peat and heather. We are safe in rejecting the old legend that—aided by the Prince of Darkness—a rejected wooer of the Maiden of

<sup>\*&</sup>quot;Bennachie", by Alex. Inkson M'Connochie, 2nd Ed., 1897. Aberdeen: Lewis Smith & Son.

Drumdurno managed, in an afternoon, to "lay a causey up the Craigs of Bennachie" ere the light-hearted, lilting girl finished baking her firlot of meal. And we may similarly treat the story that it was the work of the Baron of Balquhain, to facilitate his flight with his hapless victims. But probably the builders of the Fort did lay a kind of causeway, that they might the more easily transport the vast quantity of uniform stones they required, and which must have been gathered from a wide area. The "causey" would also help them in their hurried retreats in danger, or in their sallies forth to repel invaders.

On a now wooded knoll, a few hundred yards north-west of Pittodrie House, and quite adjacent to the old Aberdeen road, are the remains of a circular Castle ("Maiden Castle"), about 90 feet in diameter, apparently originally defended on the south side by a moat, and on the north side by the steepness of the rock. It could never have been a formidable structure. Its low grass-grown foundations now afford a refuge for "that feeble folk, the conies, which make their houses in the rock".

The "Maiden Stane o' Bennachie." is one of the most remarkable of the Sculptured Stones of Scotland. It stands by the roadside about half a mile to the west of the Church of Chapel of Garioch; is placed east-south-east and westnorth-west; is almost erect, and is supposed to be sunk six feet in the ground. Above ground it is  $10\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, about 2 feet 10 inches broad, and on an average 12 inches thick. Its north edge is enriched with endless bands or ribbons of interlaced work of loose, open knots, forming apparently throughout a symmetrical pattern, similar to the interlacings on the edge of the monument at St. Vigean's in Forfarshire, and on several other cross-bearing stones. Its south edge is enriched with St. Andrew's Crosses from top to bottom. Its eastern side is divided into four com-In the uppermost may be traced portions of four quadrupeds, none of which we can easily identify. In the next is one of the most frequently recurring figures, viz., the double V, or Z, floriated at the extremities, which is so often represented—as in the Logie, the Insch, and other stones—cutting through the bands which connect the two discs on these stones. Here, however, its parallel lines are perpendicular, as in the stone at Newton, at Arndilly, and



THE MAIDEN STANE.

elsewhere. In the third compartment is the figure, as many take it, of an elephant rampant with the trunk cast over the back—a very frequently-found symbol. In the lowest com-

partment we have what appears to be a single disc or mirror with handle and a comb—figures also very often found. Whether—as Dr. Moore ("Ancient Pillar Stones of Scotland") tries to prove-most, if not all, of these figures are Buddhist in their origin, we cannot say. It is generally believed they are religious symbols, each with its own signification. Dr. Joseph Anderson ("Scotland in Early Christian Times", Second Series, p. 183) says:—"The Divine Bestiary has enabled us to see how it was possible for the apparently incongruous representations of beasts and mythical monsters to have been appropriately placed in association with the Cross, the Scripture subjects, and other symbolical representations of Christian import, both on churches and on monuments". Again, on page 178, he says: - "The mirror and comb had a ceremonial use in the ritual of the Church, and thus acquired a symbolic significance". "The ceremonial comb was required at the celebration of a Bishop's Mass". "Bede notices the gift of a mirror of silver and comb of ivory sent with his blessing from Pope Boniface to Ethelburga . . . in the year 625". Figures similar to some of those now mentioned and others are found in caves along the northern shore of the Firth of Forth. In these caves lived hermits, such as St. Serf. They were a resort for pilgrims, who frequented them for religious exercises, and the figures had religious significance. On the west side of the Maiden Stone we have, above the highly ornamented concentric circles in the lower compartment, a large figure of the cross with short arms, and the angles of intersection rounded off by the usual circle. Above the cross is the figure of a man, and on either side of him a figure of some grotesque animal.

Discarding the theories (1) that this singular and ancient stone fixes a march between the Earls of Mar and Buchan; (2) that it bears the figure of a woman and bread girdle, representing the Garioch as the Land of Cakes; (3) that the stone marks the place where the daughter of the Laird of Balquhain fell in a rencontre with the Laird of Harthill; (4) that here the libertine Baron of Balquhain—lured from his fortress on Bennachie—was slain in 1420;

or that (5) the stone is the hapless Maiden of Drumdurno petrified on her bridal day, under the grasp of the mysterious builder of the "causey"—may we not rather believe that the stone marks a religious rendezvous in the transition age between Paganism and Christianity? Its east side, with its Pagan symbols, but with altered application and interpretations, and its west side, with the figure of the Cross—the great emblem of the Christian faith—might well be an illustrated text-book. The human figure may represent the patron saint of Scotland. Let it be remembered that, within a radius of two or three miles, we have a large number of "Druid Circles", some of them within view of the stone, and may we not hold that these were centres from which the worshippers could gather at this stone in response

to signal fires?

That in more recent times Bennachie was the centre of stirring scenes may be inferred from the number of castles and family seats quite near. At one time it was a Royal forest; and up to the year 1859 it was a commonty, to which the inhabitants of Oyne had access for peats, sods, stones, and pasturing cattle and sheep. But envious eyes were fixed upon the hill, and proceedings were taken for its division among the surrounding landlords, notice being served upon any supposed to have an interest in the matter. But no organised action or opposition was offered, and the decree of the Court of Session went out in due form. There has often been talk of testing the legality of the division of the commonty, but practically nothing has been done. Lawabiding tourists and mountaineers and holiday-seekers, in yearly increasing numbers, "do" Bennachie without molestation; and unless-after the ensuing spring, when the proprietors will have had forty years' possession-restrictions are imposed, we presume that the general public will enjoy at least their present rights and privileges.

In the meantime let the attractions of Bennachie draw towards the well-known and favourite hill increasing hosts of visitors; let the legends and folk-lore associated with it while away spare hours of old and young; and let the song of Bennachie and the Gadie be sung, in any of its versions, and especially in those of Imlah and Park, wherever the Scottish heart beats, wherever the Aberdonian may roam.

DID not the Egyptians of old place on the board at their festal gatherings a "Memento Mori"? Was it with a like



good intent that on your table the other day, under the shadow of Bennachie, you set this cinerary urn? Whatever were the reasons for placing it there, they are good for having it here. When Byron's gardener brought to him the old monk's skull, which he had just dug up in the garden of Newstead, it was solid,

large, and round, and on to London the poet sent it, to be made into a drinking cup. On its return to Newstead it was like unto tortoiseshell, and his lordship hailed it as a chosen vessel. I don't think you could, with any comfort to your guests, have made a water vessel of any kind of this urn. It was found by Mr. Diack on the Home Farm of Pittodrie, on the N.E. slope of Bennachie, and is one of many found in and around the district. In shape and ornament it is like others got some years ago in Maryculter. On several of these the ornament was of the tightened rope impression. On this it is of the broad thumb type. It is a matter of regret that no one has vet devoted some little time to the study of these Aberdeenshire cinerary urns. Their general unity of form and ornament point to a oneness of class. Who made and used these ancient coffers? Are they of the age or older than the Stone Period? We will gladly put space at the command of anyone who may feel inclined to take up this subject.

# THE RIDGES OF GLEN NEVIS.

By Edred M. Corner, B.A., B.Sc.

As is well known to members of this Club, there are eight separate mountains in Scotland over 4000 feet high. of these are situated in the region which is the special care of the Cairngorm Club, and the other three are in Lochaber. Ben Nevis has been dealt with by Mr. Brown (Vol. II., p. 1) with respect to its rocky features, and Mr. Begg (Vol. II., p. 253) has given an interesting account of the life in the Observatory at the summit. Of Aonach Beag I have given a short account (Vol. II., p. 226). The last of the monarchs of the Scottish mountains, and also the least, is Carn Mor Dearg (4012), and of this no description has been given in the Journal. It is my intention to bring this hill into notice, and give an account of some days that I have spent on the north and south ridges of Glen Nevis. After the excellent paper of Mr. Brown's above referred to, and the many articles in the Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal, it would be foolhardiness on my part to attempt any account of the climbing facilities or difficulties. fact that no notice is taken of these in this paper is therefore explained.

I made my first acquaintance with Ben Nevis on 19th June, 1896. The clouds were low down on the hills of Glen Nevis, and there was more than a suspicion of rain as I walked up the north bank of the Nevis. The track up the mountain begins at the farm of Achintee, where waterlogging refreshments are bought by tourists to aid (?) them in the ascent. The path skirts up the southern flank of Meall an t-Suidhe till it reaches a gorge down which flows Allt Dearg. Round this gorge it makes a great horse-shoe, and then winds up the south-eastern slopes of Ben Nevis until the ridge near the summit is reached. The northern end of the horse-shoe, just by Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe, is the place where the track is left in order to traverse round

the foot of Carn Dearg and get into the magnificent northern corrie. I found the top of Ben Nevis enjoying its summer in thick mist, sleet, and snow, with half a gale of wind. The ridge from here to Carn Mor Dearg under these circumstances is very difficult to find, especially by a newcomer. In the attempt to do this I fell into the natural mistake of getting to the top of the North-east Buttress and climbing about there for an hour and a half. My temperature was reduced below comfort point, and so I returned to the summit and its hotel, and heated myself by means of hot bovril. The return was made by the track as far as Lochan Meall an t-Suidhe, and the Glen Spean road joined at the birthplace of Long John whisky, whence there was a walk of about two miles to Fort William. On June the 24th I thought I would find the missing ridge joining Ben Nevis and Carn Mor Dearg by reversing my route and ascending the latter hill first. This is a method extremely commonly practised in prospecting, but it is not often that in an ordinary hill walk one is reduced to that level. Passing again by the font where the dew of Nevis is christened, I made up towards Allt a' Mhuilinn, subsequently crossing it and taking to the easy, grassy slopes of Carn Beag Dearg. black precipices on the opposite side of the corrie were over modest, and would only allow me to see their wet, black feet, though here and there a glimmer of white could be seen higher up. This was the only view that I had of these precipices during my stay.

On reaching the cairn of Carn Beag Dearg (3264) I was enclosed in the mist, from which I did not emerge until I was half-way down Ben Nevis to Fort William again. There is a delightful feeling in walking along the ridges alone when surrounded by the flying intangible greyness of the mist. The solitude of the mountains is then fully appreciated, and everything in sight wears a ghostly appearance. The wind makes music in the rocks and cairns, sometimes piping joyously, but more often singing a sad dirge, to which the weird, looming forms of the rocks make a fitting audience. It was with feelings such as these that I made my way along to Carn Dearg Meadhonach (3875). Quite close to

the cairn a pinnacled ridge runs down into the corrie between this peak and Aonach Mor. Up to this point, with the exception of one very small dip, the ridge has risen nearly the whole way. But between here and Carn Mor Dearg there is a slight depression. The summit of Carn Mor Dearg is a fairly narrow ridge, a few yards long, from the southern end of which a ridge descends somewhat steeply to the saddle connecting it with the Aonachs. Beyond Carn Mor Dearg the ridge narrows considerably, and sweeps round to the south until it abuts on Ben Nevis. The ridge has been described as "delightfully narrow", but offers no real difficulty. Care must, however, be taken to avoid loose stones. for the slopes are steep on either hand, and especially to the north. The best way is to keep to the sky-line. where there are several little scrambles over rocky towers. The lowest part of the ridge is about 3400 feet, and there are one or two small summits on it. Where it abuts on Ben Nevis one is landed on a slope of rock and scree, and thence, passing some cairns, the summit is reached. route is entirely south of the North-east Buttress, and is separated from it by a gully. The reason why this ridge is difficult to find in the mist is because one has to leave the edge of the precipices of Ben Nevis and go down a stony slope just south of the North-east Buttress, past some cairns. The view from the summit extended for a circle of some 20-50 yards. Still, one was amply repaid by seeing the mist whirling in spirals down the dark, mysteriouslooking gullies and hearing the gusts roar up from their The descent was made by indulging in the depths. "bumpy delights of the path".

My next visit to this district was on 27th December, 1897. On the 28th I set out and followed the track to the upper part of the horse-shoe, where the half-way hut is placed. I now took to the snow slopes and made straight for the ridge. The snow was very soft, and a strong wind that it was impossible to face swept across the southern slopes of Ben Nevis. After some time I got tired of this, and, turning my shoulder to the wind, made for the Carn

This ridge must not be confused with the Dearg ridge. one I have described above, which lies on the other side (east) of the mountain, whilst the ridge I made for follows the line of the precipices of Ben Nevis round to Carn Dearg. As there was a large cornice I could not get near enough to the edge to examine the rocky walls from above, so was merely blown by the wind to the cairn of Carn Dearg (3961). Feeling hungry and that I deserved some sustenance, I proceeded to try and undo my rucksack. But it was not to be, for the buckles had got wet through with the rain below, and now were sheeted with ice. sides, my fingers, though gloved, were stiff, and had hardly any sensation in them. So, cold and disconsolate, I descended as fast as possible to below the snow-line, where, with some coaxing, I was at last able to get at my larder. During the remainder of the descent it was interesting to note the snow squalls flying along the southern ridge of Glen Nevis. Next day, as it rained hard, I crossed over a low pass from the Loch Leven road to Glen Nevis. 30th December I again ascended Ben Nevis, this time by one of the northern gullies. On New-Year's Day, after driving up Glen Nevis to Achriavach, the ascent of the southern Carn Dearg was accomplished. It was a most beautiful day, and Glen Nevis was filled with white, woolly mist, which later in the day rose and disappeared. summit of Carn Dearg (3348) has a cairn; it is separated from the southern slopes of Ben Nevis by a drop of 200 feet or so. The ascent of Ben Nevis from here was easy, and the descent was made by glissading from the near end of Carn Mor Dearg arête into the great northern corrie of Ben Nevis, traversing under the foot of Carn Dearg, and reaching the track just below the half-way house.

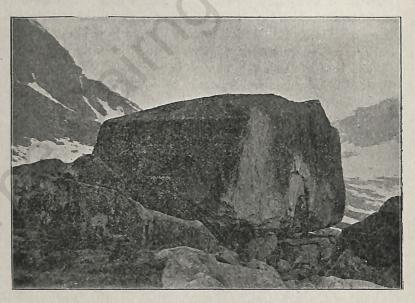
On January 3rd an early start caused us to set out in the morning starlight, and again we followed the ridge round over Carn Mor Dearg to Ben Nevis. The sunrise as we were breasting the slopes was very beautiful, all the hills to the north being clear and rosy. Later the warm glow touched the snow patches on the black precipices of Ben Nevis, making them look far less savage than they do with completely white drapery. The traverse of the Carn Mor Dearg arête in the snow was really easier than in summer. It took about one-and-a-half hours from summit to summit, but photography was responsible for some of it. In one place the snow had frozen into a true arête, which necessitated step-cutting. The gorgeous colours of the sunset, from green to crimson, formed a fitting ending to the day that had begun with so fine a dawn. This completes the brief account of my five ascents of Ben Nevis.

As the reader who may be unfamiliar with this group of mountains will undoubtedly be vexed in mind as to the numerous "Carn Deargs", I give the following topographical note. The mountain mass is divisible into two partsthe Ben Nevis group on the west, and the Carn Mor Dearg group on the east. These two groups are connected by the long, narrow Carn Mor Dearg arête. The Carn Mor Dearg ridge runs about north-north-west and south-southeast, and, beginning with the most northerly, its summits are Carn Beag Dearg (3264), Carn Dearg Meadhonach (3875), and Carn Mor Dearg (4012). The western group consists of Ben Nevis (4406), from which a ridge runs westward and, finally curving to the north, ends in Carn Dearg (3961), which is about west-north-west of the Ben Nevis cairn. South-west from Ben Nevis is another Carn Dearg (3348), from which a northern ridge abuts on the southern Thus there are five Carn Deargs aspect of Ben Nevis. neighbouring on Ben Nevis.

The south ridge of Glen Nevis forms the Mamore Forest. These hills are of different aspect from the northern ridge in that, with the exception of Mullach nan Coirean and Coire Dearg, they consist of white quartz, which contrasts well with the green of Glen Nevis, the black of Ben Nevis, and the red of Carn Mor Dearg and Mullach nan Coirean, thus giving Glen Nevis the most exquisite colouring. The southern hills are also lower. On 21st June, 1896, I sauntered up Glen Nevis, keeping to the carriageroad. Down in the glen it was intolerably stuffy and enervating; so my desires for the fresh air of the ridges

increased, but my horror of the necessary toil did so also. As I was longing for a long day on the hilltops of Mamore, I adopted a plan which I have not infrequently been reduced to. I firmly assured myself that I really should accomplish only one top that day, and, as it was yet early, I need not hurry. The best place to lounge about on was at a low pass on the hills close at hand. By this deception I arrived at the pass, which was only 750 feet high. After a good rest I allowed my curiosity to urge me to the next top, just over a thousand feet. From here I was very disgusted to find another drop to 750 feet. At the second col I said to myself that now I really was ascending my day's mountain, and toiled slowly on, with frequent halts at springs and otherwise. In this way I passed Sgor Chalum (1823), and arrived at a beautiful spring. It was pleasant in the cooler air to calculate the foot pounds of work done, think of the hours it took to do it, bask in the sun, and assure yourself that sometime you will reach the top. this way I beguiled myself in five hours to the top of Mullach nan Coirean (3077). In fairness to myself, I must say that it is about eight miles to the top, and that about five of these consisted in pounding up and over the vagaries of a ridge beginning at 750 feet. From the summit a beautiful view and cool breeze awoke me from my lethargy, and, in a few minutes, I started down the grassy ridge to the next top, that of Coire Dearg (3004). The ridge here is narrower and stony, and great screes descend, especially to the south. The saddle between these two tops was about 2875 feet. Walking along the ridge to the next saddle (2850) I ascended the grassy northern shoulder of Stob Ban, and on to the summit (3274). The summit is a narrow quartz ridge, with a splendid drop to the north-east, which face is seamed with steep gullies. The top of Stob Ban is the finest peak in Mamore, and is well seen from the entrance of Glen Nevis; the summit ridges of Gearanach and Binnan Mor are very fine and narrow, I believe, though I cannot speak from experience. The time from Mullach nan Coirean was 14 hours, and was very fair. But the indiscretions of the morning had given rise to great thirst. At the col between this and the next hill I saw two tiny lochans, so I ran hard to gain them, arriving extremely hot only to find about four tadpoles to every cubic inch of water. The descent was 800 feet, the height of the col being about 2550 feet. A far sadder, and, I hope, wiser, man, I ascended the easy slopes of Sgor an Iubhair (3250 Partially retracing my steps, I descended to the foot of the ridge which runs out northwards from here. The height of the col is about 3000 feet, and the character of the ridge changes from a flat quartz and grass surface to a sharp, narrow, grassy ridge. The sky-line is beset with little grassy towers and pinnacles. The drop to the east is steep, and that to the west a little less so. summit of this ridge is about 3300 feet, and is not marked Between the summit and Sgor a' Mhaim with a cairn. (3601), the north end of the ridge, is another col, in the ridge leading to which is a small break. The passage of this break was made quite easy by means of a jammed but wobbly stone. I have heard tales of a more difficult pas-It is the only place where it is necessage of this break. sary to use one's hands, and, if so desired, is easily avoided. The height of the col is about 3000 feet. The ascent of Sgor a' Mhaim is made from the col by a grassy slope. arrived at the top at 5.45, that is to say, three-and-a-quarter hours from the top of Mullach nan Coirean. The view was There was not a cloud in sight, and every hill stood up sharp and well defined. Close at hand were the quartz ridges of Mamore and the Stob Coire Claurigh group, then the Aonachs, Carn Deargs, and Ben Nevis. To the south Bidean nan Bian looked magnificent with the sun shining on the snow in its gullies. Ben Cruachan, Beinn Laoigh, the Black Mount Hills, showed up, then the twin peaks of Ben More and Am Binnein, with the Braes of Balquhidder, and, further round, Ben Lawers, Carn Mairg, and Schichallion's graceful cone. The Cairngorms showed as long, low-lying ridges, and, nearer to hand, was the Ben Alder group; whilst, to the north, was a sea of summits, and, to the north-west, the jagged outline of Skye and then Rum could be seen, and, still further south, Ben

More, in the island of Mull. I spent over an hour enjoying this view, some divinity ordaining that a spring should rise at the summit and help to wash down the remaining "much-worn stick of chocolate" "encrusted with all kinds of additional nutriment from the bottom of one's pocket". Then there was tobacco to stay hunger and add to comfort. Reluctantly the top was left, and the descent made by the north-west ridge until the road was struck just above Achriavach. The 6-7 mile walk down Glen Nevis was most enjoyable in the cool of the evening, and I arrived at Fort William at about 9.15. The eastern summits of the Mamore Forest are difficult of access. The easiest way to get at them would be by stopping at the shepherd's house at Steall, about nine miles above Fort William.



THE SHELTER STONE.

## THE HORIZON FROM BEN MUICH DHUI.-No. IV.

### BY ALEX. COPLAND.

No. 4! you say; but what has become of No. 3? quires explanation, and explanation shall be given. intended to give No. 3 at this festive season, but the "bestlaid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley". Three times during the month of July last did we ascend Ben Muich Dhui-once during the night-to complete the outline of No. 3, but the weather conditions baffled us. The heat haze entirely shut out distant views of the horizon. The excursions, however, were not labour lost. They were recreative, health-giving, and were undertaken in hope of And did they not afford opportunities for cultivation of patience and perseverance?—gifts or graces of which not many of us possess superabundance. Of course they did. Besides,

> "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, There is a rapture on the lonely shore".

By the month of October, and towards its latter end, the declining sun, by toning down the solar heat and cooling the atmosphere, once more tempted us to make another attempt. By the last week of the month the moon was full, the nights wholesome, and the barometer steadfastly pointed to set fair. With renewed confidence, therefore, on the morning of 27th October we took our place in the train for The day was delightful, and the surroundings beautiful. The valley of the Dee, at all times lovely, save in a Scottish mist, looked gorgeous in its autumn dress. The trees were in full leafage, and what a variety of The limes were dressed in delicate splendid colours! lemon, the rowans in scarlet, the pines in sombre green, interspersed with larches, changing to neutral dun tints, the birches in graceful clumps on the low ground, or scattered up the hillsides, figured the russet slopes with yellow

The river, a broad blue swiftly-flowing stream, wound out and in along the bottom of Strath Dee, responsively reflecting the sky. The distant mountains stretched away, bloomed by the picturesque translucent atmosphere which glorifies our Highland hills. A bright sun in a clear sky illuminated all. If you want to see the valley of the Dee in its greatest glory, go to it in autumn before the leaf falls. The journey by coach from Ballater to Braemar was very enjoyable, and we reached our quarters feeling that our day had been well spent.

The morning of 28th October looked inviting, although light fleecy clouds toyed around the shoulders of the mountains; but we trusted they would move onwards and upwards as the day advanced. And so, making as early a breakfast as daylight would permit, we set out for Corrie Etchachan. The squirrel in dark winter sable was frisking round the tree trunks, but otherwise the forest was tenantless, so far as we saw, though ominous sounds in the distance indicated deer. Coming to the ridge immediately south of the Dam, we beheld groups of stags and hinds feeding in detached parties along the banks of the Derry, and we tried as much as possible to avoid disturbing them. Crossing the footbridge, and walking rapidly along the footpath northwards, we hoped to escape observation, but the deer soon discovered and stood gazing at us. although we gave no indication of hostile intent, some nervous, timorous things among the hinds began to trot, and shortly the whole caravan, to our vexation, kept parallel with us up the glen. We were disgusted with their want of sense, and did not wish their company. Not until we reached the "Fountain of the Mountain Maiden" were we able to slacken speed by having outwalked the mob. All this time the roaring of stags on either hand was incessant. The glen sounded like a cattle market for noise, but there was variety in the roarings. The royals, of course, roared in a royal fashion, and some of the roars, truth to tell, were so near, loud, and defiant as to make us reflect upon our chance of escape if any "monarch of the glen" should feloniously assault us. And we should like to know what all the roar-

ing was about! Besides the roaring a good deal of fighting goes on among the stags at this season. Your swashbucklers among them show off before the hinds, who probably enjoy a spar between two stags as much as the Roman ladies delighted in gladiatorial combats in the circus. We witnessed a brief passage-at-arms ourselves between two stags-no doubt the outcome of a love affair. They took up positions, and went for each other with a display of thrust and parry and agility in leaping aside to avoid well-aimed blows that would have done credit to any The duel was bloodless on this two maîtres d'armes. occasion; honour was satisfied without serious hurt. It is not always so. A forester, some years ago, walking along a forest road one morning, came upon the carcase of a fine stag, lying stark, but warm. Careful examination did not disclose the cause of death, but, on skinning the deer, it was found that two tines of an antler of the adversary had struck just underneath the shoulder to the heart, and the days of his roaring and love-making were ended.

As we entered Corrie Etchachan the sun was shining brightly, and the day was still young, but the light mist clouds, which still crept along the upper edges of Coire an Lochain Uaine of Derry Cairngorm, and the grand rocky escarpment of Beinn Mheadhoin, while they increased the impressiveness of the scenery, boded ill for a distant view from the summit of Ben Muich Dhui. Towards the top of Corrie Etchachan we came upon masses of fresh snow in rocky hollows, the first gatherings of the season, beautiful in purity and whiteness. Loch Etchachan looked desolate and solitary, without sign of life on its bosom or around its snow-streaked rocky shore. The southward ascending footpath was occasionally covered by patches of recently deposited snow, and from among the stones and snow a small flock of ptarmigan took silent flight. By the time we reached the Sput Dearg, at the head of Glen Lui Beg, the mist was rushing up from it as from a huge chimney, and the glen below was filled by a sea of rolling, churning, swirling vapour. Detached masses of mist chased each other northwards over the wide sandy plateau which has to

be traversed to reach the ruins of the Sappers' Kitchen and the Cairn. On reaching the summit beautiful views of the sunlit glens beyond the mountain gorges could be seen, but every mountain top was for brief space clear, then rubbed out by mist in rapid succession. The south-west aspect of the Cairn was cased in ice, and the stones strewing the mountain top were fronted with miniature snow ridges deposited by the wind blowing from that direction. stunted herbage, barely a couple of inches above ground, frilled the mountain summit with a snowy efflorescence, as though these plain, humble grasses and carices had bloomed a brilliant white. Half an hour's stay at the Cairn, during which the weather conditions became gradually more and more unpropitious, was quite enough, and obliged us to leave for home without putting pencil to paper. Fortunately we had Section 4 in a forward state, and we now offer it with this explanation and apology for its untimely appearance.

### TABULAR LIST No. IV.,

Of Mountains and Hills within the radius of 270° (East) and 360° (South), most of which may be seen from the Cairn on the summit of Ben Muich Dhui.

Compass	MOUNTAIN.		COUNTY.	LOCALITY.	Height, in Feet.	Distance,
270	Beinn a' Bhuird		Aberdeen	Braemar	3860	6
277	Kerloch		Kincardine		1747	44
278	Peter Hill		Aberdeen	Forest of Birse	2023	40
280	Clochnaben Cock Cairn	-	Kincardine ForfarAbd		1900	40
281 282	Hill of Cat		FortarAbu	Forest of blise	2435	32
283	Beinn Bhreac		Aberdeen	Mar Forest	3051	4
283	Mount Battock		KinForfar		2555	36
284	Braid Cairn	:	ForfarAbd	Glen Tanner	2907	.28
285	Mount Keen		A2-11	Glen Mark—Glen Tanner	3077	27
288   289	Cairngorm of Derry - Carn na Drochaide -		Aberdeen	Mar Forest Braemar	3788 2681	9
290	Fasheilach	144	11	Glen Muick -	2362	24
291	Conacheraig Hill			Balmoral Forest	2827	20
293	Meall Coire na Saobhaidhe	Loch- nagar.	11	11 11	3191	17
294	Meikle Pap	Loch	11	11 11	3211	19
295   298	Cac Carn Beag Cairn of Corbreach -	17 g	u	" "	3786	18
301	Carn an t-Sagairt Mor-	, -	"	Glen Callater	3571 3430	17
302	Broad Cairn		ForfarAbd	Glen Muick	3268	19
503	Cairn Bannoch		11	"	3314	18
504	Mor Shron		Aberdeen	Braemar	2819	Î
504	Fafernie		ForfarAbd	Glen Callater	3274	1 10
305	Knaps of Fafernie -	- 6	11		3059	1'
309   310	Tolmount Tom Buidhe	0 1	Forfar	CI	3145	18
312	Driesh		Foriar	Glen of the Doll Glen Clova	3140	19
314	Mayar		11	oten Clova	3105 3043	20
315	Carn an Tuire		Aberdeen	Glen Callater-Glen Clunie	3340	10
316	Cairn na Glasha		Forfar-Abd	Glen Clunie	3484	1
320	Carn Crom Glas Maol		Aberdeen	Mar Forest	2847	1
320   324	Creag Leacach		Forfar F'rfarP'rth	Canlochan Glen	3502	18
324	The Cairnwell	4 7 1 10	AbdPerth		3238	18
328	Socach Mor		Aberdeen	Glen Ev -	3059	16
530	Carn Geoidh		AbdPerth	Glen Thalnich	3194	16
332	An Socach	- 10-	Aberdeen	Glen Ey	3059	13
334	Carn Bhinnein	-	Perth Dieta	Glen Thalnich	3008	15
534	Sidlaw Hills Largo Law	-	F'rfarP'rth Fife	Tana		45
334	Meikle Says Law -		HaddBer.	Largo Lammermuirs	943	65
338	Carn Bhac		Abd Perth	Glen Ey	1750 3098	93
338	Beinn Iutharn Bheag -		II CI UII	"	3011	13
539	Carn Liath		Aberdeen	"	2676	3
543	Beinn Iutharn Mhor -		AbdPerth		3424	12
344	Glas Thulachan		Perth	Glen Lochy	3445	15
345	West Lomond		Fife	Strathmiglo	1713	60
346	Sgor Mor		Aberdeen	Mar Forest	2666	5
346	Carn a' Mhaim		Dout h	Clean Man Class	3329	12
349	Carn an Righ Carnethy Hill	: :	Perth Edinburgh	Gleann Mor-Gleann Beag Pentland Hills	3377 1890	13
350 353	Carn nan Slonnach		Perth	Glen Fernach	2750	1
356	Carn Geldie		Aberdeen	Glen Dee	2039	1
357	Ben Vuroch	-	Perth	Glen Fernach	2961	1
360	Ochil Hills	-	Perth, &c.		1 _	6

Note.—Allowance must be made for magnetic deviation when using compass ; see page 311.  $A. \ C.$ 

## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

- REEN-

THE 8th September last was the fiftieth anniversary of THE QUEEN'S the Queen's first visit to Balmoral; and the fact at BALMORAL least may be recorded in our pages. Her Majesty JUBILEE. owns territory that has been included in the wanderings of the Club, and she has on more than one occasion -notably in the excursions to Lochnagar (by Glengelder) and to Broad Cairn-granted special facilities for the Club driving through her grounds. We may, therefore, even at this late date, join in the congratulations expressed on the occasion of her fifty years' residence on Deeside, and join also in the sincere wish that she may be long spared to visit her home in the Aberdeenshire Highlands. occurrence of the "jubilee" was utilised by the Aberdeen newspapers to furnish descriptive sketches and historical accounts of Her Majesty's Deeside possessions. The subject, in some aspects, has been frequently treated, and is, perhaps, a trifle too familiar—at any rate, not much that is new was evolved. And yet there seems room for writing a fuller account of Balmoral than has yet appeared—there is more than one hiatus in its history susceptible of being filled up. We may, however, present the leading facts. Balmoral was originally part of the great earldom of Mar, but in the beginning of the seventeenth century it passed into the hands of a family of Farquharsons—a branch of the Farquharsons of Inverey. The last Farquharson of Balmoral was a Jacobite, and was indicted for high treason for his participation in the 1745 rising. He died without issue a few years after, and the estate of Balmoral fell to the Farquharsons of Auchindryne and Inverey, who sold it, along with these properties, to the second Earl of Fife in the end of last century. Somewhere about 1830 Balmoral was taken on lease by Sir Robert Gordon, at one time Ambassador at Vienna, a brother of the Premier Earl of Aberdeen; and he considerably extended the old Castle. He died in 1847, and the lease then fell into the hands of Lord Aberdeen, who assigned it to Prince Albert. Although the lease had several years to run (it was for 38 years from 1836, according to one authority), the Prince bought the estate in 1852, the purchase price being £31,500. At his death (in 1861) Balmoral became the property of the Queen; and in 1878 Her Majesty largely extended the estate by buying Ballochbuie Forest from the late Colonel James Ross Farquharson of Invercauld. The present Castle was built

in 1853-6. The Queen is also proprietor of Birkhall, in Glen Muick, and has a lease of Abergeldie. Her Deeside property comprises over 40,000 acres, and extends along the right bank of the Dee for half a dozen of miles, sweeping back to and including a portion of Lochnagar.

MOUNTAINEERING introduction to
AS A Lake District ",
PASTIME. mans, 1897):-

THE following excellent passage occurs in the introduction to "Rock-Climbing in the English Lake District", by Owen Glynne Jones (Longmans, 1897):—" Mountaineering satisfies many needs; the love of the beautiful in nature; the

desire to exert oneself physically, which with strong men is a passionate craving that must find satisfaction somehow or other; the joy of conquest without any woe to the conquered; the prospect of continual increase in one's skill, and the hope that this skill may partially neutralise the failing in strength that may come with advancing age or ill health. Hunting and fishing enthral many men, but mountaineering does not claim the sacrifice of beasts and fishes. Cricket and football are magnificent sports, yet there is something repulsive in the spectacle of five thousand inactive spectators of a struggling twentytwo, and the knowledge that the main interest of many players and observers is of a monetary character does not tend to convince one of the moral benefits that these sports can offer. The mountaineer does not reap any golden harvest by his exertions-even if he writes a book on his subject. He does not exhibit his skill to applauding thousands; and his vanity is rarely tickled by the praise of many. He must be content with the sport itself and what it offers him directly. Probably the scientific mountaineer gains most. He is certain to acquire rare and valuable knowledge of facts in zoology, botany, or geology, if he starts with the necessary intellectual equipment. The physicist's mind is perpetually exercised by the natural phenomena he witnesses; mist bows, Brocken spectres, frost haloes, electrical discharges of the queerest description, mirages, all these offer him problems of the most interesting kind. The man who knows something of geology is a useful member of an exploring party. The expert in mountain weather does not exist; perhaps he does not dare to, or perhaps the subject is too complicated for a nineteenth-century scientist. However this may be, it is worth while paying a little attention to meteorology and noting the quality of weather that follows any definite condition of the wind, the barometer, or the atmospheric temperature".

was held on 19th December, 1898—the Chairman, Rev.

OUR TENTH Robert Semple, presiding.

Annual Office-bearers and Committee were elected as on page V.

Meeting The excursions for the current year were fixed as follows: Spring Holiday—Corryhabbie Hill; Summer Holiday—Cairngorm; Autumn Holiday—Lochnagar.

The Club voted a guinea towards the funds of the Scottish Rights-

of-Way Society.

#### REVIEWS.

THE Hon. Stuart Erskine, second son of Lord Erskine, BRAEMAR. a gentleman of literary proclivities and somewhat eccentric views-he favours a "Legitimist Restoration", or some nonsense of that kind-resides occasionally in Braemar. thinks there is a lack of serviceable guide-books to the village, and he has accordingly favoured the world with a little brochure of 100 pages, entitled "Braemar: An Unconventional Guide Book and Literary Souvenir". It is "unconventional" certainly, for it has no earthly claim to be called a guide book-it gives no information whatever as to what is to be seen in and around Braemar. Mr. Erskine, however, to judge from his preface, declines to tout for the mere tourist or mountaineer; he prefers to interest the summer visitor, and so serves up for the delectation of that rather frivolous person a réchauffé of the history of Braemar, drawn from all manner of sources-from the "View of the Diocese of Aberdeen", mistakenly attributed to the pen of David Wedderburne, to the New Spalding Club volumes on "Historical Papers relating to the Jacobite Period", the editorship of which by Colonel Allurdyce is omitted to be mentioned. He dilates at some length on the Jacobite Rising of 1715. Everybody, of course, knows about the raising of the standard on the "Braes of Mar" and how the gilt ball at the top of it fell off, presaging disaster; and doubtless many people have seen the brass plate in the dining room of the Invercauld Arms Hotel which marks the spot where the standard was raised-a mound (Mr. Erskine calls it a "rocky eminence"!) removed a number of years ago when the hotel was enlarged. Perhaps, however, everybody is not so familiar with the fact that the Earl of Mar who raised the standard was a "collateral ancestor" of Mr. Stuart Erskine-a fact that may help to explain that gentleman's enthusiasm for the cause of the Pretender. Mr. Erskine deplores the decadence of the Braemar Highlander, who wears the degrading trousers and speaks more English than Gaelic; and he prays Heaven to keep the railway away from the village and to prevent the village itself being modernised and "improved". These are about the only "views" in this "unconventional" guide book, and they are far from original. The book, in fact, is only serviceable as a "literary souvenir", bringing together what is at present buried in a number of books. The most interesting portion—far and away—is a chapter on the Topography and Antiquities of Braemar, contributed by Rev. John G. Michie, Dinnet—an acknowledged authority. Mr. Michie furnishes a story that we do not remember to have seen before:-"In one of the earliest trigonometrical surveys, Ben Macdhui was represented as being several yards higher than Ben Nevis, which so delighted the Earl of Fife (James, the fourth Earl) that he seriously contemplated building a tomb for himself on its highest point. But before he had time to carry this whim into execution, a more accurate survey had found that the Braemar giant was some twenty feet lower than his Lochaber rival, at which the Earl was so provoked that he determined to put the matter beyond doubt by erecting a tower fifty feet high on the summit of his favourite mountain, so that when he chose he could retire thither and become the highest man in Great Britain. It is to this fancy that Saunders Laing, the author of the poem on the Dee, refers when, apostrophising the great Ben, he says or sings—

'And dost thou think some future day
To entomb our Fife's ennobled clay '"?

[See C.C.J., Vol. I., p. 322. Ed.]

is the title of an article in the November number of
Hill-Climbing the Grammar School Magazine by a "Cairngorm
Club F.P." [Former Pupil is meant]. The author
suggests—very sensibly—that walking should be

begun when one is young, and he prescribes two preparatory courses prior to blossoming out as a "Cairngormer"—the first, a round of the heights near Aberdeen, the Baron's Cairn, the Blue Hill, and Brimmond; and then, a wider radius, including Bennachie, the Tap o' Noth, and the Buck of the Cabrach, and the lower Deeside hills—Cairn-mon-earn, Clochnaben, Mount Battock, and Mount Keen.

MR. THOMAS JAMIESON (a member of the Club, by the
Way) has suggested that the Aberdeen folks—greatly
perturbed at present by reports that the Dee is becoming contaminated by the sewage poured into it—
should take their water supply from the Avon, tapping

the river at Inchrory and conducting the stream required to Corgarff, and then down Donside and Deskrieside, Towie and Cushnie, to Midmar, and so on to Aberdeen. The idea, first ridiculed as too ambitious, has "caught on" and been favourably received, but engineers have yet to report on its practicability. Everybody knows that

"The water o' A'an, it rins sae clear,
"Twad beguile a man o' a hunner year",

and it is not surprising to learn that it is purer and more free of deleterious matter than the Dee at the Linn or even at the Pools, and than Loch Katrine or Thirlmere. The proposal has led some one to break out into poetry (in the Daily Free Press) in praise of "Sweet Avon", in the style and to the tune of Burns's "Afton Water"—longo intervallo, we are obliged to say. The opening lines are not bad—

"Dash briskly, sweet Avon, atween thy broon braes;
Dash briskly, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise:
Thy water's sae clear that ilk stane may be seen;
Dash briskly, they await thee in 'braif' Aberdeen".

But in the subsequent verses the parody is not so well sustained—
"Loch Avon! we view thee with awe and delight—
Grandeur and beauty are joined in our sight;
Muich Dhui's watch-towers, Cairngorm grim and grand,
Beinn Mheadhoin's fearsome cliffs, all encircle thy strand".

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