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No. 13.

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

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JULY, 1899.

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THE CLOVA HILLS.

BY GEORGE DUNCAN, M.A.

CLOVA is perhaps best known as one of the stages and a convenient halting-place on the pedestrian routes from Forfarshire to Ballater and Braemar. To Ballater an undisputed public track leads over the Capel Mounth and past Loch Muick ; another public path goes by Bachnagairn ; and it is now matter of ancient history how the public right-of-way from Clova to Braemar through the picturesque valley of the Doll and over the Tolmount was vindicated through the exertions of the Scottish Rights-of-Way Society.

But Clova is more than the mere *terminus ad quem* or *terminus a quo* of a right-of-way. It is a centre from which much interesting hill work may be done, either among the near-at-hand hills that cluster round Glen Doll, or the further-off summits of the Lochnagar and Glas Maol ranges.

Clova can, however, hardly be described as a "climbing centre" in the sense in which that term is understood by the modern mountaineer. There is to be found in the district none of these impossible rock faces and inaccessible pinnacles that attract the votaries of Skye and Glencoe. It is true that in the Winter Corrie of Driesh and on the rocky promontories of Craig Rennet and Craig Maud some

not contemptible scrambling may be had. But, on the whole, it is the "hill walker" who prefers the gentler pleasures of a Cairngorm ascent to the sterner excitement of a rock climb that will be most strongly attracted by Clova and its hills.

And, indeed, for the hill walker Clova has many attractions. The hills are all within easy range of a most comfortable hotel. Few of the nearer tops, it may be, are much over the magic limit of 3000 feet, which separates the mere hill from the dignified mountain. But nearly all of them, situated as they are just on the fringe of the highlands, command most extensive and diversified views ranging over the pastoral districts of Forfar and Perth, far as the eye can reach, on the one hand, and, on the other, over the undulating uplands of the neighbouring Benchinnans, and the more distant monarchs of the Cairngorm range. It is also to be noted that to anyone who has a knowledge of botany there is probably no spot in the Highlands of Scotland more fruitful of interest than the hills of Clova. They have been visited by the most distinguished botanists in Britain, and there are to be found on them numbers of the rarest plants, including some that have not been discovered in any other district in the kingdom.

One of the greatest charms of Clova for the *dolce far niente* mountaineer lies in the proximity of its hills to the base of operations. There are no long dusty roads: you step at once, as it were, from the hotel door on to the heather. And once a steep ascent is won, and a cairn is reached, you may walk along the ridge, or "riggin" as it is locally called, for miles, passing from cairn to cairn, with kaleidoscopic change of view, and visiting half-a-dozen tops by the way.

Take, for example, a circuit which may be made, embracing the mountain tops of Driesh (3105) and Mayar (3043). These tops are the highest peaks of a range that extends along the south-western sides of Glen Clova and the valley of the Doll. Right opposite the hotel is Cairn Inks (2483), the second hill of the range, and, although the inclination is fairly steep, it is a very easy hour-and-a-half's climb to the

cairn, even although one is not in the best of condition. Looking back, as one nears the top, Loch Brandy may be seen on the eastern side of the glen, embosomed in the surrounding hills, Boustie Ley, The Snub, and the Green Hill, and by the time the cairn is reached, the conical top of Broad Cairn, the huge mass of the White Mounth—white enough as the writer saw it on one of the last days of April—and the graceful outline of Cac Carn Beag and the Cuidhe Crom are full in view to the north-west.

When the top of Cairn Inks is reached the hard work of the day is done. An easy ridge walk, with gentle ascents to the succeeding cairns, is what lies before. Keeping the glen well in view, the Bassie (2691) is first reached, from which a detour may be made to the left to Hill of Strome (2778), a rather undefined top, without a cairn. From Hill of Strome, Driesh may be easily reached in about three-quarters of an hour, and here a complete change of view takes place. Near at hand is Mayar; but, beyond, the whole range of Creag Leacach, the Glas Maol, and Cairn na Glasha attract attention, and on the north-east the peaked outline of Mount Keen stands out prominently above the surrounding hills.

From Driesh along the ridge on to Mayar is about an hour's walk, the dip between the two hills being only between three and four hundred feet; and from Mayar it is easy to continue the walk over Craig Rennet and Craig Maud which jut precipitously into Glen Doll, on to the head of that Glen, till Jock's Road is reached. The return to Clova may then be made by the delightful path through Glen Doll which has been well described in an interesting article by the late Mr. W. J. Jamieson, entitled "By Glen Doll and the Capel", which will be found in one of the early numbers of the Journal. This walk, however, may be shortened by turning back at Mayar to the col between that hill and Driesh, whence an easy descent may be made down Corrie Kilbo by a stalkers' path on the left side of the corrie, which will lead the visitor to the right-of-way path near the House of the Doll. Or, the right side of the corrie may be taken, and, rounding the steeply conical

outpost of Driesh that lies between Corrie Kilbo and the Winter Corrie, one may rapidly descend to the low-lying haughs along the side of the Esk and ultimately reach the highway, which, starting at Braedownie, the farmhouse near the mouth of Glen Doll, runs through Glen Clova on to Kirriemuir.

This leads me to say a word as to the corries of Driesh. As one walks along the three miles of turnpike from the hotel to Braedownie—the only bit of road that need vex the visitor—the steep sides of Cairn Inks and the Bassie guard the way on the left for a couple of miles or so. The first break in the rampart is Corrie Farkel, which lies, as it were, between the Bassie and Driesh. From the road the corrie looks as if it might contain possibilities; but a nearer inspection proves disappointing. Its easy slopes and grassy banks form a great contrast to the dark precipitous gorges of the Winter Corrie, which forms the next break in the ridge. This Winter Corrie is indeed *the* feature of Glen Clova. Lying just at the head of the Glen, and flanked as it is on the right by a towering pinnacle of rock, it forms an impressive landmark. This pinnacle is just at the angle between Glen Clova and Glen Doll, and the next corrie in order is the Corrie Kilbo already mentioned. It is full in view as one walks up the first part of Glen Doll; and in this corrie, it may be mentioned, some of the rarer botanical specimens are said to be found. Then, still further up Glen Doll, we have Corrie Fee—which is, however, a corrie of Mayar—with the rocks of Craig Rennet on its right.

Another of the Clova walks to be noted is that to Tom Buidhe (3140), and the Tolmount (3143). Leaving the hotel, we take first the turnpike to Braedownie, passing in about half a mile the mouldering remains of the old castle of Clova, which local tradition reports to have been destroyed in the days of Oliver Cromwell. Not so many years ago considerable remains of the old “peel” existed; but the gradual process of decay, and the fall only a short time ago of a large portion of the walls have left very little now to attest its former extent. A more effective reminder of the past, speaking of the “clearances” of by-

gone days, comes from the ruined shielings that lie here and there along the road side. But the three miles and a "bittock" of road soon pass, and as we near Braedownie the bluff headland of Craig Mellon lies straight before us, with at its base the white House of the Doll nestling cosily in its shelter of pine.

At Braedownie, as we have said, the turnpike ends, and there is a choice of hill paths. To the left of Craig Mellon lies our route by Glen Doll; the path on the right leads by Bachnagairn to Broad Cairn, and about a mile up this path, near the point where the Capel burn joins the Esk, the track over the Capel Mounth to Ballater branches off. Taking the Glen Doll path then—and it is in going *up* this path from Clova that one is probably most impressed by the cliffs and gorges of Craig Rennet and Craig Maud—one soon reaches the zig-zags of Jock's Road (who Jock was, by the way, no tradition seems to indicate), and at the point where a finger post marks the way to Braemar, the route to Tom Buidhe turns to the left. From this hill one of the finest views in the district is to be got. The mass of Cairn na Glasha and the Glas Maol shuts out the distant view on the west; but on all other sides the view is superb. To the north-west the whole Cairngorm range from Beinn Bhrotain to Ben Muich Dhui and from Ben Muich Dhui to Beinn a' Bhuird and Ben Avon stands out magnificently. Nearer at hand on the north are Fafernie, Cairn Taggart, Cairn Bannoch, Broad Cairn, and, above all, the white peak of Lochnagar; while, far away, forty miles off, in the lowlands of Aberdeenshire, the Mither Tap and other tops of Bennachie may be clearly distinguished. From Tom Buidhe to the Tolmount is only a step—three-quarters of a mile as the crow flies—and here a repetition of the view, in some respects improved, may be got. From the Tolmount it is but another step to Crow Craigies, a distinct top, lying to the east, 3014 feet high. In a long summer day it would not be a great matter to walk on from the Tolmount to the Spital of Glenshee by way of Cairn na Glasha, the Glas Maol, and Creag Leacach; but in the shorter spring day, with soft snow on the ground, the return

journey to Clova either by way of Loch Esk and Bachnagairn or by Jock's Road and Glen Doll completes a fair day's walk.

But possibly the finest walk from Clova is that to Broad Cairn (3268). The turnpike road is followed as before to Braedownie, and then with Craig Mellon on the left, we take the path "that takes you to the Paradise o' Pines at Bachnagairn"—to quote a well-remembered line of the Poet Laureate of the Club. Bachnagairn—a ruined shooting lodge—passed, the "yellow winding footpath" that takes you to Bachnagairn from the other side is gained, and it is easy then to reach the top of the Cairn. The most notable feature of Bachnagairn, however, it may be noted *en passant*, is not its pines of which our poet sings, but its waterfall, a magnificent cascade on the Esk of at least 60 feet in height, quite close to the remains of the old shooting lodge. The extended view from Broad Cairn, particularly towards the Cairngorm range, and the steep descent from the Cairn to the Dubh Loch must be fresh in the memories of the many members of the Club who visited the mountain on the Spring Holiday of 1896.

Among the nearer hills to Broad Cairn, are Cairn Bannoch and Fafernie, there being only about a mile between their tops. From Fafernie, one might drop to the Tolmount path and reach Clova again by Glen Doll and the White Water.

All the routes that have been sketched, it may be noted, on the map, lie on the western side of the Glen. On the eastern side, it is not a great walk across the hills to Invermark, Lochlee, and the picturesque hamlet of Tarfside, with Mount Keen in the background. But nearer at hand, affording an easy walk for a lounging day, is the range of hills that form the eastern rampart of Glen Clova, Red Craig, Ben Reid, Boustie Ley, along with the Snub and the Green Hill, encircling Loch Brandy. The loch, which has a circumference of about a mile and a half, and lies at an altitude of over 2000 feet, is reached by a path from the hotel, and appears to be the stock "place of interest" in the neighbourhood to which the attention of tourists is directed. It is,

however, a charming spot, and whether it is seen on a summer day or under lowering skies with the swirling mist curling up the dark rocks behind it, Loch Brandy will not be readily forgot.

Such are some of the possibilities of Clova as a holiday centre. It must be noted in conclusion—as a practical consideration—that while Glen Clova itself is largely under sheep, Glen Doll is a strictly preserved deer forest, and that some of the routes sketched, such as the walk down Corrie Kilbo, would not be possible, and should not be attempted, during the shooting season. Deerstalkers and shooting tenants have their rights as well as mountaineers. In the spring and very early summer, however, it will be found that there are few or no restrictions; and, of course, the Glen Doll path and similar walks are always open to the pedestrian.



BEN NEVIS, FROM BANAVIE.

THE CAIRNGORMS.

BY WILLIAM C. SMITH, LL.B.,

Sheriff of Ross, Cromarty, and Sutherland.

It is assuredly true in many senses that there is nothing new under the sun that shines upon the Cairngorms. The hills stand there precisely as they did when my father made a sketch map of them in 1840. The colour zones on Loch Avon grow bright and dark just as they did when

CARN A' MHAIM.

DEVIL'S POINT.



IN GLEN DEE.

Photo. by

Mr. J. J. R. Macleod, M.B., Ch.B.

the neighbourhood was haunted by that most boisterous of poets, John Wilson. Gharbh-choire burn raves white from sky to glen just as it did when John Hill Burton slumbered sedately on its bank. But then, as all sound metaphysicians inform us, the Object is only a small part of the act of Perception. It may, therefore, be impossible for us to realise the world of solitude and romance that existed in

the pre-tourist and pre-mountaineering days. We can faintly imagine (because it has been described by a master hand) the feelings of adventure and excitement with which Frank Osbaldistone and Mr. Nicol Jarvie approached the Highland hills: "While I gazed on this Alpine region, I felt a longing to explore its recesses, though accompanied with toil and danger, similar to that which a sailor feels when he wishes for the risks and animation of a battle, or a gale, in exchange for the insupportable monotony of a protracted calm". Such emotions can hardly now be experienced upon the Aberfoyle branch of the Stirlingshire railway. It is even difficult fully to sympathise with the pathetic narrative of "the poor student of King's College, Aberdeen", William Macgillivray, who, as he tells us in his delightful "Natural History of Deeside and Braemar", in September, 1819, slept in the great corrie of Braeriach on his way to Kingussie and Fort-William: "about midnight I looked up and saw the moon with some stars. They were at times obscured by masses of vapour which rolled along the summits of the mountains. I was near the upper end of a high valley, completely surrounded by enormous masses of rock. Behind me, my face being towards the mouth of the valley, there rose at its upper end a high mountain involved in clouds; on the right hand was another in the form of a pyramidal rock, and contiguous with it a peak of less elevation; on the left hand, a high ridge running from the mountain in the north-west, and terminating at the mouth of the valley in a dark conical mass; and straight before me, in the south-east, at the distance of nearly a mile, another vast mountain". We cannot now envelope Cairn Toul, and the Angel's Peak and the Sron na Leirg in the same delightful mystery; but I have always thought with respect and admiration of that poor student who marched into the centre of this difficult and unknown country, not even knowing that the Learg Ghruamach lay before him; bivouacked on his "scanty store of barley bread"; and at sunrise, after his sleep upon the heather, ascended the rocks of the Gharbh-choire and drank from the true sources of the Dee. If, however, we cannot enter fully into the life

of the past, we may be permitted to record some of our own impressions, although these contain absolutely nothing novel from the point of view of science or even of sport.

My first experience of the Cairngorms was of the nature of a defeat. We had left the Castletown in good time on a Saturday morning in late September. The day was doubtful, but inviting: we knew nothing of the country. Our pace must have been slow, because after a lazy lunch near Derry Lodge, we were not half-way up the Luibeg, intending to ascend by the Allt Carn a' Mhaim, when the



DERRY LODGE.

*Photo. by**Mr. John M'Gregor.*

winds came, and the floods descended, and beat upon the two wretched human insects, struggling along each with a 15 lb. knapsack. With the obstinacy natural to Scotsmen, I believe we should have struggled on, had we not met something even more influential than the wind. This was Ranald Macdonald, assistant keeper, then living in the Luibeg Cottage. He had been watching our contortions through a glass; he had orders to stop us; his humanity, too, was excited, for the ghost of the Feith Buidhe only knows what would have become of us, had we proceeded to

the ridge. It was a terrible night, and, personally conducted by Ranald, we retreated, but not ingloriously, to Luibeg Cottage, there to be dried and fed and put to bed in a box. Like Kitchener, and other brave conquerors, Ranald was kindness itself; and next morning his sister gave us a breakfast consisting of milk-porridge served with cream, the memory of which still remains with us as a fragrant oasis in the arid wastes of human life. We then made the ascent by Corrie Etchachan in fair light, but increasing cold. The corner peep down into Luibeg was practically the last

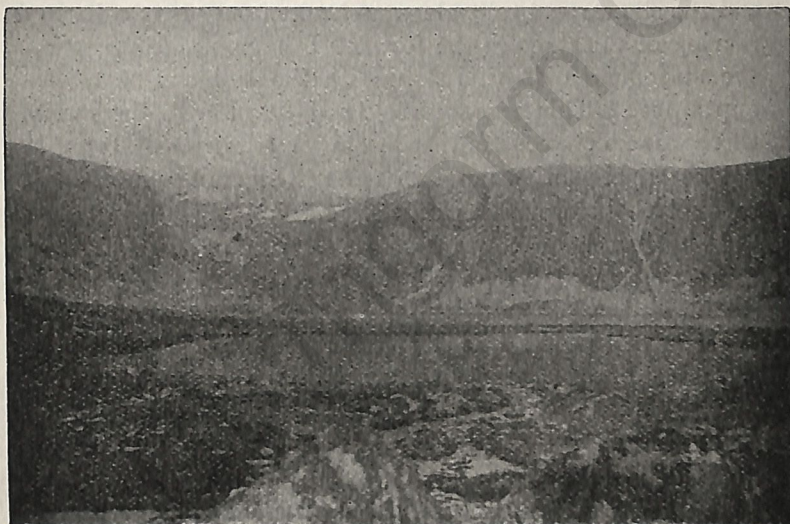


Photo. by

LOCH ETCHACHAN.

Mr. J. J. R. Macleod, M.B., Ch.B.

light we had, for before the pony-shelter was reached, a dense freezing mist caught the whole ridge, and I decline to say how many hours we spent, "in hopeless mazes lost", wandering from the rocks of Loch Avon to the Glenmore Corries. It is all very well to laugh—and now I could probably find my way about blindfold—but if an utter stranger wishes an unpleasant sensation, let me recommend him, after a whole evening's straying, to try the Fiacail Coire an t-Sneachda in impenetrable mist with the thermo-

meter about 20°. Nothing could be easier than this way down, but as we saw nothing but yawning abysses of black, we prudently retreated up the rock and along the ridge, and then about 6:30 p.m. the clouds lifted for one glorious instant, and we saw Loch Morlich and its woods lying in strong colour, and a plain road there by the burn of Creag na Leacainn and the cottage of old Grace Gordon at Rie-aonachan at the corner of the black pines. Before we reached the yellow sand beach of the Loch, the night had totally changed. It was a clear and splendid star-light, overhead the Cairngorm was glittering in new fallen snow, and the silence and solitude were broken only by the hoarse roaring of the stags in the forest. I have never forgotten the strangeness of this scene or the suddenness of its appearance. This was before Lord Stamford's days, and there was no chance of a bedroom in Glenmore. It must have been 11 p.m., when two exhausted tramps presented themselves before Mrs. Cumming's Inn at Lynwilg, and at least half an hour elapsed before it was possible to overcome the sound sleep and Sabbatarian principles of the establishment.

My next attack was also from the Braemar side, and consisted of a leisurely walk, in fine weather, up to the Pools of Dee, from which we crossed by the Feith Buidhe to the Shelter Stone. The rain began to fall as we descended the rocks, but with our good plaids and plenty of heather, we spent a comfortable night in this cave, once the resort of poachers and occasionally used by outlaws; and we achieved a great triumph by producing a hot soup for breakfast the following morning. There are few things in this world more suggestive of absolute purity than the sunrise on Loch Avon. The intense radiance that comes up the narrow glen from the east, the limpid clearness of the water of the lake, the lovely glow of the golden granitic gravel, are things that cannot be forgotten. No wonder dear old Sir Thomas Dick Lauder chose this as the scene of one of the leading events in that immortal romance, "The Wolf of Badenoch". It is true the good baronet lays on his colours rather thickly. The Feith Buidhe becomes

“an extensive plain covered by a hardened glacier”. A precipitous zig-zag leads down the cliffs between two foaming cataracts. As you drop with precarious footing from one pointed rock to another, the crags hang over your head as if threatening to part from their native mountains; and it is only by a desperate leap over one of the cataracts that you escape total destruction. All that makes a nice,

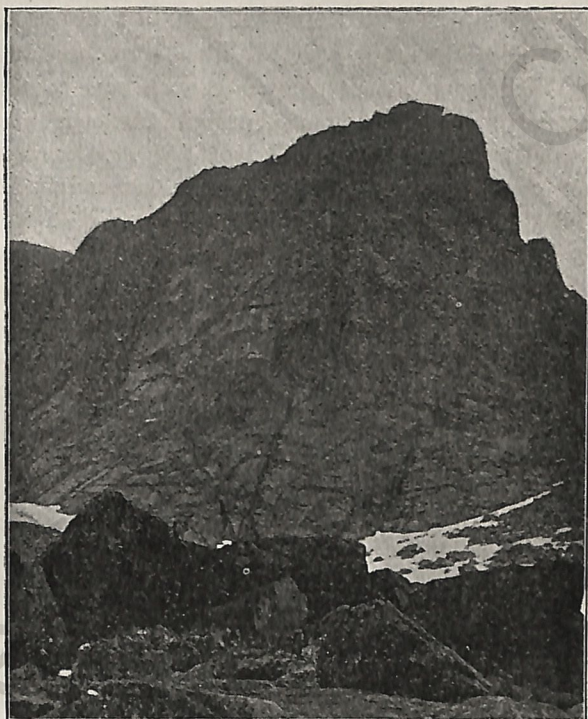


Photo. by

THE SHELTER STONE CRAG.

Mr. A. F. Dugan.

romantic setting for Sir Patrick Hepborne and the fair page, Maurice de Grey, but it is unnecessary to say that, except when there is ice-glazing, the walk down by the big slabs over the Garbh Uisge is the simplest thing in the world. When there was a good deal of snow on the upper part of the cliff, I have seen a man go over and rattle down on the rocks below, without any serious consequences.

What the pale shade of Sir Thomas is justly entitled to complain of is the ever-increasing accumulation of tin pots, not now containing preserved meat, just in front of the Shelter Stone, which seems to call for proceedings under Section 381 of the Burgh Police Act, 1892. Perhaps, however, the Stone is not yet a populous place within the meaning of that statute! It would be but a modest sacrifice to the spirit of solitude, if visitors to Loch Avon could be induced to put their rubbish out of sight. The fallen rocks and the big, fruitful blaeberry bushes are too beautiful for such desecration. There are many ways northwards from Loch Avon, the most interesting being up into Coire Domhain or into Coire Raibert, which lead to the crest of the Cairngorm, and there command the best views of the Spey country. The contrast is remarkable between the soft, yellow grass of Raibert and the rocks beyond the crest. The worst is, undoubtedly, that across the Saddle into the Garbh Allt, which combines in an unprecedented manner all the horrors of stone and bog. On the occasion I speak of, we followed the example of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, and descended the south side of the lake to the ford on the road from the Dubh Lochans, and then struck north by the breezy Learg an Laoigh, round the back of Bynac. This was a perfect day, and not knowing even the road down to Abernethy, we struck over the side of the Tulloch of Garten, so as to make a bee-line for the old inn at Boat of Garten. I should not mention this route, had it not brought us on the moor to a well of great depth and of exquisitely cold water. A rough board had been erected by its side, bearing this inscription: "O fuaran, O goil: *splendidior vitreo, dulci digne mero, non sine floribus*". I have never seen this well since, and I should much like to know by whose pious hand these lines were inscribed. Flowers there were in plenty; we translated *merum* into Lochnagar, and thought the mixture perfect. Horace, at the Bandusian fountain, could not have felt happier. I have now a tolerably intimate knowledge of the Cairngorm system and the forests that surround it, and especially of Braeriach and Cairn Toul, but I always look back to these first skirmishes as the best of all.

SCHICHALLION.

SUIDHE CHALLAN—THE STONY SEAT.

CELESTIAL pyramid, whose massive whole
Makes that of Cheops dwindle to a mole,
While thy confuséd cairn, flung high in air,
All split and shattered, weather-worn and bare,
Flouts the mean laboured heap of formal style
That crowns the height of Gizeh by the Nile.
Primeval man has looked upon thy peak
Whose lofty cone has made his fancy speak,
And fondly named thy form the "Maiden's Breast";
Or else "of Fairy Queen the thronéd rest";
Or hunters in thy butt, who watching stop,
"The mountain of the rough and rocky top".
When Romans from the south swept o'er our land,
At thy sheer base their legions made a stand,
Thinking to conquer thee of small avail,
Their baffled arms arrest at "Fort of Gael".*
When Wallace from the rage of Saxon hordes
Sought the repose thy shielding side affords,
A night he safely passed in "Seomar na Stainge",†
Nor subtle enemy upon him sprang.
Whence grandly viewed, thy hardy crest on high
Towers royally unto the Scottish sky.
Then at thy feet, by fair "Dun Alastair",
Bruce and his Queen sought refuge from the war,
Until the mounted Sassenach‡ through the glen
Attacked the royal host beneath thy ben.
But yet at "Iompech"§ they turned and fled,
Leaving their fallen who on the heather bled.

* Fortingall.

† "The chamber of the ditch"—a curious relic of a miniature fort about a mile east of Kinloch-Rannoch.

‡ Glen Sassen is named from the fact that the English came that way to attack Bruce.

§ "Iompech" means a turning. The Gaelic is now corrupted into the unmeaning place name "Tempar".

Then shouts of triumph from "Dalchosnie"* rose
 Through Donach's† timely help to rout the foes.
 Still stands the "Clach na Boile"‡ in the field
 To tell that Highland hearts can never yield.
 Upon that battle ground thou still look'st down,
 Impassive, calm, majestic, grey Schichallion!
 Ride on in azure, monument of trust,
 Like jewel fixed upon the round earth's crust.
 And while that orb upon its axis turns,
 Still plunging through the star-sown sphere that burns,
 Be thou a beacon fired by solar beam,
 Blazing thy radiance over loch and stream;
 And as the voice from Memnon's statued face,
 So may'st thou ever teach the Scottish race,
 Whether at home, or scattered o'er the sea,
 The grand perpetual lesson of our sires, "Be free"!

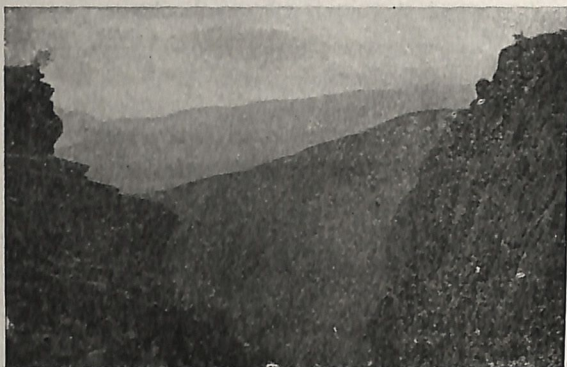
COINNEACH MATHANACH, IX.

GLENDEVON,
St. Andrew's Day, 1898.

* "Dalchosnie"—the field of triumphant shouting or hosannah.

† "Donacha Reamhor", Big Duncan, Chief of Clann Donnachaidh.

‡ "The stone of frenzy", situated at the base of Dun Ailean, on the Innerhadden Estate.



PRECIPICES, BEN NEVIS.

OUTLYING NOOKS OF CAIRNGORM.—No. V.

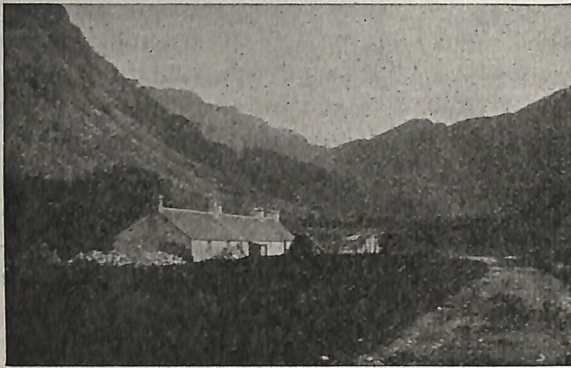
BY THE REV. WILLIAM FORSYTH, D.D.

FOXES have always been found on Cairngorm.

ARCHIE'S They had their dens in the rocks and corries,
CAIRN. and from there, like the caterans, they made
their raids on the flocks and fields below.

There are several references in the Court Books of the Regality of Grant to the destruction of foxes. In 1706 it is "Statut and ordained that each person who killed a fox should receive 20s. Scots and the skin", but some years afterwards this was considerably increased. (See *C.C.J.*, Vol. II., p. 211.) After Courts of Regality had ceased to exist, a Fox-hunter was appointed, who was paid a certain sum for his services, to which each tenant contributed. The last of the fox-hunters in Abernethy was John Fraser, Drum, who died in 1865. On one occasion Fraser was complained of as negligent. Some days after he appeared at Mr. Forsyth's, the Dell, accompanied by his pack, fox-hounds, lurchers, and terriers, and adorned with fox tails all over—fox tails sticking out from his coat pockets, fox tails hanging from his waistcoat, fox tails decorating his bonnet! Such an argument was irresistible. The Garbh-choire was a great haunt of foxes. When driven from this, the fox crossed by Coire na Spreidhe to Bynac. Then when driven from Bynac, it took refuge at Caochan-na-saobhaidh, above the Glas-allt, where there was an impregnable den. It is said that a certain preacher, who had been grieved by the hard-heartedness of his people, said that it was as hard to get the devil out of T—— as to drive the fox from the Garbh Allt. Some eighty years ago, two men, Archibald Fyfe and Alexander Fraser, commonly called "Foxie Fraser", were watching a fox-den at Glai-bhothain, a deep ravine near Stac na h-Iolaire. Fyfe's gun slipped from his hand, and in his endeavour to recover it,

pulling it up the bank, it went off, and he was mortally wounded. There was some suspicion of foul play. It was said that the men were rivals in love, and otherwise, and that Fraser would have been glad to have had Fyfe out of his way. But the wounded man survived long enough to declare that his comrade was not to blame, and that the shot had been entirely accidental. The gun that had caused the death was held to be unlucky, and it was cast into Loch-ghobhlach, a little loch between Allt-bheithir and Sleighich. The cairn marks where the fatal accident took place. Another accident happened at Sron a' Chano. Two of the Smiths of Rynuie were out in search of ptarmigan. The one was going along the top, and the other at the foot of the cliff. Lewis, the one at the top, somehow missed his footing, and fell down the steep precipice, opposite Allt a' Choire Dheirg, and was killed. The names of the burns running into the Nethy from the east may be given. First is *Allt a' Choire Dheirg*, from the Barns of Bynac; next is *Allt a' Choire Dhuibh*, from a spring at the foot of Bynac; next is *Dubh Allt Mhor*, from the west side of Carn-riagach; next, *Dhubh Allt Beag*, from Lag-na-laoigh; next, *Lairg-laoigh* and *Stron-choir*, with its two branches, *Bheur-mhor* and *Bheur-bheag*; next, *Luirg* and *Allt-bheithir*, from Slugan-damh-dhuibh. The hill between is Carn-dire-larig.



ACHRIABHACH, GLEN NEVIS.

ALLT AN LOCHAIN UAINE.

[TRANSLATION.]

(See *C.C.J.*, Vol. I., page 329.)

AT the burn of Lochan Uaine
I sheltered once from harm ;
Although the place was cauldriفة
My shiel was wondrous warm ;
Though down the mountain gorges
Came wind and drifting storm,
The burn of Lochan Uaine
To soothe me had a charm.

CHORUS—

My bonnie gold-curled maid! again
Be blithe, show no dismay,
For though I go beyond my ken
I'll come another day.
When antlered stags across the glen
Are roaring for the fray,
I would not give thy kisses then
For the Indies far away.

In the glen one night abiding,
With bleating kids around,
In the rough-built little shieling
Methought I heard a sound
That seemed to counsel caution
As it passed along the ground,
And warning give that searchers
My lone retreat had found.

Uprose I then bewildered,
My head remained not low,
And all my poor belongings
I bundled tight to go ;

O'erhead the "Colonel's daughter" *
 That vanquished every foe
 Said, "Be not thou affrighted,
 In fleeing be not slow".

I tramped by every streamlet
 From Lui to Carn a' Mhaim,
 Well marking lest pursuers
 Might at them bide their time.
 The sun into the heavens
 Had not begun to climb;
 I was ware of "red dogs" † watching
 Ere it shone on peaks sublime.

I hearkened how, all speechless,
 Burn unto burn replied,
 And to the One who rules me
 With fitting words I cried—
 To Him that brought the waters
 From the rocky mountain side;
 And me through Him that saved us
 No evil shall betide.

* His rifle, referred to as the "Colonel's Daughter" as it was a present from the laird of Rothiemurchus.

† "Red dogs" = foresters.

MOUNTAINS VISIBLE FROM ARTHUR'S SEAT.

NAME.	Height in Feet.	POSITION.	Distance in Miles.	DIRECTION.	Degrees West of North.	GUIDE LINE.
Ben Lomond - - - -	3192	E. side of Loch Lomond - - - -	59	W. by N.	73	Towers of Free Church College.
Ben Venue - - - -	2393	S. side of Loch Katrine - - - -	53½	W.N.W.	68	Between St. George's and Tron Churches.
Ben Ledi - - - -	2875	N.W. of Callander - - - -	48½	W.N.W.	63	Left of Fettes College, over north approach viaduct of Forth Bridge.
Ben Vane - - - -	2685	W. of Loch Lubnaig - - - -	52	W.N.W.	62½	Over Dumyat.
Dumyat - - - -	1375	S.W. extremity of Ochils - - - -	31	W.N.W.	62	Over Fettes College.
Am Binnein - - - -	3827	Braes of Balquhidder - - - -	60	N.W. by W.	61	Just to right of Fettes College.
Ben More - - - -	3843	Braes of Balquhidder - - - -	60½	N.W. by W.	60	Just to right of Am Binnein.
Ben Vorlich - - - -	3224	S. side of Loch Earn - - - -	49½	N.W. by W.	57	Left-hand end of Cramond Isle.
Bencleuch - - - -	2363	Highest point of Ochils - - - -	28½	N.W. by W.	55	Right-hand end of Cramond Isle.
Ben Lawers - - - -	3984	N. side of Loch Tay - - - -	57½	N.W.	44	Left-hand end of Inchcolm.
Meall Garbh - - - -	3661	E. peak of Ben Lawers - - - -	58	N.W.	43½	Left-hand end of Inchmickery.
Ben Chonzie - - - -	3048	N. of Comrie - - - -	47	N.W.	43	Right-hand part of Inchcolm.
Schichallion - - - -	3547	S. of River Tummel, between Lochs Rannoch and Tummel	60½	N.W. by N.	35	E. pier at Granton.
Meall Dearg - - - -	2258	N. side of Strath Bran - - - -	48	N.W. by N.	31	Chancelot Flour Mill.
Ben Dearg - - - -	3304	W. side of Glen Tilt - - - -	69	N.N.W.	22	} To the left of the steep scarp of Benarty.
Ben Vrackie - - - -	2757	E. of Pitlochry - - - -	58	N.N.W.	21	
Beinn a' Ghlo - - - -	3671	E. side of Glen Tilt - - - -	63½	N.N.W.	20	
W. Lomond Hill - - - -	1713	} Between Falkland and Loch Leven {	21	N. by W.	15	
E. Lomond Hill - - - -	1471		20½	N. by W.	7	
Lochnagar - - - -	3786	S. of River Dee, E. of Braemar -	68	N.	5	Over entrance to Leith Harbour. To right of Leith Martello Tower. E. end of new dock extension at Leith.

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

GLEN FIDDICH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

THE Spring Excursion (1899) of the Club to Corryhabbie was the means of introducing members to the beauties of Glen Fiddich and to some of the historical—and legendary—features of the neighbouring region. For the benefit of non-attending members—and perhaps of members attending the excursion as well—it has been deemed advisable to set down a few notes on Glen Fiddich and the neighbourhood, more especially as the excursion—as is recorded elsewhere—resulted in disappointment, no view being obtained from the summit of the hill.

CORRYHABBIE.

Corryhabbie is a hill at the head of Glen Fiddich, in Banffshire, on the border of the parishes of Mortlach and Inveravon. It is, to speak colloquially, “a long stretch of a hill”, and it practically forms one of the “walls” or sides of Glen Rinnes, while Glen Livet lies away to the west of it. The river Fiddich rises on its south-eastern slope, at an altitude of 2,300 feet; and the Corryhabbie Burn, rising on the western side of the hill, unites with the Favat Burn and forms the Dullan, which flows through the lower part of Glen Rinnes. The Dullan is absorbed in the Fiddich at Dufftown, and the Fiddich joins the Spey at Craigellachie, after a total course of about 19 miles. The ascent of Corryhabbie from Glenfiddich Lodge is easy, there being a bridle-path to the ridge of the hill. Alongside the lower part of the bridle-path (the part, *i.e.*, nearest Glenfiddich Lodge) runs an old road, now little better than a track, leading from Glen Rinnes to the Cabrach; and it was along this road—so goes the story—that the Earls of Huntly, Angus, and Erroll marched their army to the battle of Glenlivet, fought against the Earl of Argyle at Alltacoil-eachan, on 4th October, 1594. The bridle-path ultimately

turns sharply to the left (or south), and the ascent becomes much steeper. When the ridge is gained, it is seen to consist of a long and wide plateau rising gently from north-east to south-west, a similar long ridge—that of Cook's Cairn—running parallel to it, but separated by the valley of the upper waters of the Fiddich. There are two cairns on the summit of Corryhabbie—a western one (called the Duchess's Cairn), 2393 feet, and an eastern one (dubbed for the nonce, when the "Cairngormers" were there—whether correctly or not—the Duke's Cairn), 2563 feet. Despite the comparative inferiority of this altitude, an extensive view of mountain tops is gained from the summit of Corryhabbie; and Mr. Alexander Copland prepared for the use of attending members a detailed list of the principal mountains observable, which will be found on the following page.

The following interesting statement relating to the refraction on Corryhabbie is given in the "Account of the Principal Triangulation" of the Ordnance Survey:—

"The heights of Corryhabbie, as deduced from Knock, Cowhythe, and Ben Muich Dhui, separately, are 2582, 2559, and 2571, the mean differing by 3 feet from the most probable height . . . [2568·9]. Yet on comparing this with the height of Ben Nevis, a very large discrepancy is brought out. The true difference of height is 1837·4 feet, whereas nineteen observations at Corryhabbie give 1957·4 feet for the difference of height, and fourteen observations at Ben Nevis give 1948·4, either of which, notwithstanding the number of observations, must be more than a hundred feet greater than the truth: the distance is very nearly 80 miles. A similar effect is observed in comparing Corryhabbie with other distant stations, all tending to show an unusual amount of refraction at Corryhabbie. This extraordinary refraction may perhaps be satisfactorily explained by the circumstance that the top of the hill is an extensive flat".

This plateau consists of loose fragments of quartz rock, very imperfectly covered with vegetable matter. The survey station was on the highest part of the hill, about 2 miles south of Glen Rinnes Kirk, and about 1.5 miles south-east of Cook's Cairn, and was indicated by a stone pile 13 feet high and 46 feet in circumference at the base. The centre

Mountains and Hills to be looked for from the summit of Corryhabbie in Glenfiddich Forest—elevation above sea level 2563 feet. The directions in which the mountains and hills may be seen are true polar, as derived from Bartholomew's maps, 2 in. to the mile; the distances from Corryhabbie are measured in straight lines from its summit.

Compass Direction	MOUNTAIN.	COUNTY.	LOCALITY.	Height, in Feet.	Distance, in Miles.
0	Letterach	Banff	Inveravon	2583	5
1	Driesh	Forfar	Glen Clova	3105	34
4	Lochnagar	Aberdeen	Balmoral Forest	3768	26
7	Carn Mor	Abd--Banff	Inveravon	2636	7
11	Glas Maol	Forfar	Canlochan Glen	3502	33
15	The Cairnwell	Abd--Perth	Glens Cluny and Beag	3059	33
18	Carn Geoidh	"	Glen Thalnich	3194	33
21	Carn Liath	Aberdeen	Glen Slugain	2821	21
24	Glas Thulachan	Perth	Glen Lochy	3445	35
28	Ben Avon	Abd--Banff	Cairngorms	3843	19
32	Beinn a' Bhuidr	"	"	3860	21
43	Ben Muich Dhuid	"	"	4296	26
48	Cairngorm	Inv--Banff	"	4084	23
52	Ben Alder	Inverness	Loch Ericht	3757	61
62	Ben Nevis	"	Fort William	4406	78
68	Carn Maing	"	Monadh Liath Mountains	3087	44
76	Sgor na Ciche	"	Glen Dessary	3410	88
84	Meall Fuarvounie	"	Loch Ness	2284	52
87	Mam Sodhail	Inv--Ross	Glen Affric Forest	3862	72
92	Sgurr na Lapaich	"	Glen Cannich Forest	3773	70
103	Sgurr a Mhuillin	Ross	Strath Conon	2778	66
108	Sloch	"	Loch Maree	3217	84
115	Ben Wyvis	Ross--Crom	Wyvis Forest	3429	57
118	Beinn Dearg	Ross	Braemore Forest	3547	72
123	Suilven	Sutherland	Loch Veyatie	2399	90
132	Ben More (Assynt)	Ross--Suth.	Glen Cassley	3273	83
136	Ben Leoid	Sutherland	Glen Coull	2597	88
140	Ben Hee	"	Reay Forest	2870	86
144	Beinn Cleith Bric	"	Strath Naver	3154	76
148	Ben Laoghal	"	Tongue	2504	86
152	Ben Smeoral	"	Strath Brora	1592	58
157	Beinn Dobhrain	"	Glen Loth	2060	58
158	Ben Rinnes	Banff	Glen Rinnes	2755	4
164	Morven	Caithness	Langwell Forest	2313	64
167	Scaraben	"	"	2054	62
174	Ben-a-Cheilt	"	Latheron	942	68
208	Bin of Cullen	Banff	Cullen	1050	25
218	Lurg Hill	"	Grange	1028	23
223	Knock Hill	"	Ordiquhill	1409	23
236	Bin Hill (Huntly)	Aberdeen	Cairnie	1027	17
247	Mormond Hill	"	Strichen	769	47
260	Tillymorgan Hill	"	Culsalmond	1249	23
268	Tap o' Noth	"	Rhynie	1851	13
282	Bennachie	"	Garioch	1619	25
295	The Buck	"	Cabrach	1588	9
298	Coreen Hills	"	Auchindoir	1588	16
290	Cairn William	"	Monymusk	1489	25
296	Blue Hill	"	"	467	44
305	Hill of Fare	Kincardine	Banchory-Devenick	1545	30
314	Kerloch	Aberdeen	Midmar	1747	36
328	Mount Battock	Kincardine	Strachan	2553	32
332	Hill of Cat	Kin--Forfar	Forest of Birse	2435	29
338	Morven	Abd--Forfar	"	2662	16
342	Mount Keen	Aberdeen	Tullich, &c.	3077	27
353	Ben Tirran	Abd--Forfar	Glens Mark and Tanner	2860	34
357	Boustie Ley	Forfar	Glen Clova	2868	32
360	Carn a Bhacain	"	"	2442	15
		Aberdeen	Glen Gairn		

was marked by a large, flat block of quartz, of about 4 cwts., with a hole 4 inches deep and 15 inches in diameter bored in it, and by the frame which supported the instruments being left in position. The observer was Corporal Jenkins, R.S.M., who was on duty at Corryhabbie from 6th September to 21st November, 1850.

GLEN FIDDICH.

Glen Fiddich, as its name implies, is the glen of the Fiddich, and the road—a good carriage road—from Dufftown to Glenfiddich Lodge, a shooting-box of the Duke of



GLENFIDDICH LODGE.

Photo. by

Rev. R. Semple.

Richmond and Gordon, follows the course of the river (on its left bank), and, for the greater part, runs close to the stream, accommodating itself to its windings—has perforce to do so, owing to the abrupt rise of the adjacent hillsides. The distance is about six miles. Half-way up the glen, where the road to the Cabrach deflects to the left, is the entrance to the deer forest of Glenfiddich, the road up the glen from this point being private. From this point, too, the scenery becomes very picturesque, the glen narrowing, the river winding, and the enclosing hills being abundantly covered with birches and pines, while masses of the higher

and barer hill-tops show themselves beyond. Given summer—bright sunlight and the trees in foliage—and the glen is charming; and even on a cold, bleak day of an exceedingly late spring it is by no means devoid of attractiveness. The scenery, however, though essentially Highland, is of a milder character than that ordinarily associated with the Highlands; and one readily concurs in the remark—which, indeed, would naturally occur to an observer given to noting distinctions—that “Nature in Glen Fiddich does not clothe herself in rugged grandeur; but the scenery is nevertheless peculiarly impressive”. This rather limited specification is to be found in an Elgin volume, “The Round Table Club”, written by the late Mr. James Brown, editor of the *Elgin Courant*, who, however, made up for any lack of enthusiasm it exhibits by the following description, which is certainly not wanting in exuberance:—

“I have seen the Glen in summer, and its impressive features yet abide in undiminished freshness in my memory. In imagination, I see endless fringes of silver birches on my right hand and on my left, their green foliage opening up before me, and reaching still further on, as I walk up among the endless windings of the Glen. Here tumbles one brawling burn into Fiddich; there another, skirted by bracken-covered banks, and, leaping over a rocky bed, the water glittering like crystal in the mid-day sun. As one stands on the carriage drive, staff in hand, looking up the courses of these burns, clumps of birches and green spots are to be seen, making a charming contrast with red-blooming heather. The trees, planted by Nature, become more stunted as they rise higher above the bottom of the Glen. They seem to creep up the hill-sides as if to steal a march on the winter's storm. But they are arrested. The spirit of the tempest says to them—‘Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther’. The trees, dwindled down to mere shrubs, show the limit above which nothing but heath and Alpine plants can live. At last, even the heather dies out, and a carpet of moss is found, which becomes broken up in fragments, leaving bleached masses of granite exposed to the severity of the climate. But the bare scalps of mountains are not seen from the bottom of Glen Fiddich. Above, and stretching away beyond the natural forest, the mountains seemingly bear the heavens above one's head”.

Glen Fiddich is, in its way, famous for a visit paid to it by the Queen in the autumn of 1867—a visit described in “More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands”. Her Majesty, who was accompanied by Princess Louise and Lady Jane Churchill, left Balmoral on the morning of Monday, 24th September, journeying by Gairnside, Tornahaish, Cock Brig, the Lecht, Tomintoul, Glen Livet, and Tomnavoulin. From this last point the record of the journey proceeds:—

“We drove on for an hour and more, having entered Glen Rinnes shortly after Tomnavoulin, with the hills of Ben Rinnes on the left. There were fine large fields of turnips, pretty hills and dales, with wood and distant high hills, but nothing grand. The day became duller, and the mist hung over the hills; and just as we sat down by the roadside on a heathery bank, where there is a very pretty view of Glen Livet, to take our tea, it began to rain, and continued doing so for the remainder of the evening. Lindsay, the head keeper, fetched a kettle with boiling water from a neighbouring farmhouse. About two miles beyond this we came through Dufftown—a small place with a long, steep street, very like Grantown—and then turned abruptly to the right, past Auchindoun, leaving a pretty glen to the left. Three miles more brought us to a lodge and gate, which was the entrance of Glen Fiddich. Here you go quite into the hills. The Glen is very narrow, with the Fiddich flowing below, green hills rising on either side with birch trees growing on them, much like to Inchroy, only narrower. We saw deer on the tops of the hills close by. The carriage-road—a very good one—winds along for nearly three miles, when you come suddenly upon the lodge, the position of which reminds me very much of Corndavon, only that the Glen is narrower and the hills just round it steeper. It is a long shooting-lodge, covering a good deal of ground, but only one story high. We reached it at half-past six, and it was nearly dark. Sir Thomas [Biddulph] received us, but we had missed the Duke [of Richmond and Gordon]”!

More was missing—the luggage; and it did not turn up even at one o'clock in the morning, when Her Majesty was compelled to go to bed under unpleasant conditions. “My maids”, she writes, “had unfortunately not thought of bringing anything with them, and I disliked the idea of

going to bed without any of the necessary toilette. However, some arrangements were made which were very uncomfortable, and after two I got into bed, but had very little sleep at first; finally fatigue got the better of discomfort, and after three I fell asleep". The Royal party remained two days in Glen Fiddich. On the Wednesday the Queen and Princess Louise went down the Glen, and had a look at Auchindoun, and on the Thursday they went up the Glen (on ponies) for about four miles. Her Majesty says:—

"The scenery is not grand, but pretty; an open valley with green and not very high hills, some birches, and a great deal of fern and juniper. After about three miles the Glen narrows, and is extremely pretty; a narrow, steep path overhanging a burn leads to a cave, which the Duke said went a long way under the hill. It is called the Elf House. There is a small space of level ground, and a sort of seat arranged with stones, on which Louise and I sat; and here we all lunched, and then tried to sketch. . . . Then we rode up to the left, another very steep and narrow path, for a short while on the brink of a steep, high bank, with the Fiddich below. We emerged from this ravine and came upon moors in the hills (the whole of this is "the forest"), and rode on a mile and a half, till near the head of the Livet, on the right of the Suidhe, a high, bare, heathery, mossy hill; Cairnna-Bruar to the left. Here we had a fine view of Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuid, and this was the very way we should have ridden from Tomnavoulin".

The return journey to Balmoral—by precisely the same route—was made on the Friday. There is a funny account in "The Round Table Club" of how the Glen Rinnes people turned out to see the Queen, and the feelings they experienced when Her Majesty "booed graciously":—"Fin Her Majesty fixed her een on's an' nodded her heid" (says "Saunders Macgregor") "I didna fin' the grun' anaith my feet, an' Eppie, puir creatur', maistly sat doon a'thegither. Fin she cam' till hersel', she said, 'Ay, ay, man, an' that's the Queen, is't?—jist like ony ither 'oman, a little wifie like mysel', nae muckle better dressed'".

AUCHINDOUN.

On the walk or drive up and down Glen Fiddich an ex-

cellent view is obtained of the ruins of Auchindoun Castle. They form, indeed, a prominent feature in the landscape, occupying, as they do, a commanding site—a limestone rock, 200 feet high, overlooking the Fiddich. The grim, gaunt walls, with their gaping windows, towering above all surroundings, have a somewhat startling effect, the contrast with the placid landscape of cultivated fields and wooded slopes being peculiarly strong; and this pictorial contrast enables one to realise how far we have travelled—and improved—since “the Gordons had the guidin’ o’t”. For

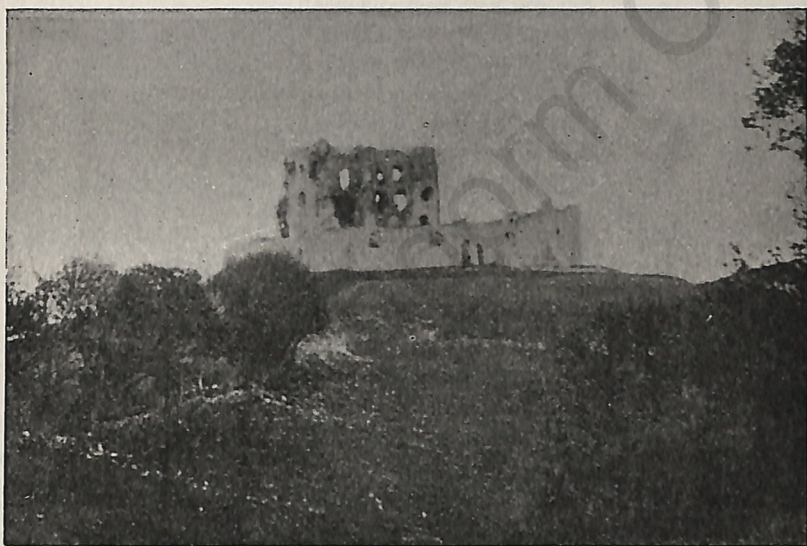


Photo. by

AUCHINDOUN CASTLE.

Mr. W. G. Melvin.

Auchindoun, after several vicissitudes of ownership, ultimately became a stronghold of a branch of the Huntly Gordons, and it was from this castle that Sir Adam Gordon, the sixth son of the fourth Earl of Huntly, sallied forth in 1571 to burn Towie Castle, in Strathdon. The story is told in the well-known ballad of “Edom o’ Gordon”, which the late Professor Veitch described as “one of the most natural and human-hearted ballads possible in the circumstances of the old wild life” :—

“It fell about the Martinmas time,
When winds blaw sharp and cauld,
Says Adam Gordon to his men,
‘ We maun draw to some hauld ’.

“What hauld, what hauld, my merry men,
Shall our encampment be ?
I think we’ll go to Towie house,
To see the fair lady ’ ”.

The dramatic incident of the tragedy that followed is, of course, familiar:—

“Then loud cried out the daughter dear—
She was both neat and small,
‘ O row me in a pair of sheets,
And let me o’er the wall ’.

“They rowed her in a pair of sheets,
And let her o’er the wall ;
But on the point of Gordon’s spear,
She got a deadly fall ” !

Auchindoun Castle itself was burned some twenty years later, it is said, in 1592—though the precise date is matter of dispute; and the burning is recorded in a rather poor ballad, the alleged antiquity of which is open to doubt:—

“ As I came in by Fiddich-side,
In a May morning,
I met Willie MacIntosh
An hour before the dawning.

“ Turn, Willie MacIntosh,
Turn, turn, I bid ye ;
If ye burn Auchindoun,
Huntly he will head ye ’.

“ Head me, or hang me,
That winna fley me ;
I’ll burn Auchindoun,
Ere the life lea’e me ’.

“ Coming o’er Cairn Croom,
And looking down, man,
I saw Willie MacIntosh
Burn Auchindoun, man.

“ Light was the mirk hour
At the day dawning,
For Auchindoun was in a flame
Ere the cock crawling ”.

Auchindoun is mentioned in a ballad, titled "The Battle of Balrinnis", descriptive of the battle at Alltacoileachan in 1594, already referred to:—

"Those Lords* kept on at afternoon
With all their weirmen wight,
Then sped up to the Cabrach soon,
Where they bade all that night.
Upon the morn, when day was light,
They raise and made them boune,
Intil ane castle that stood on height;
They called it Auchindoun".

The battle resulted victoriously for the "Lords", but disastrously for Auchindoun—

"This deed sae doughtilie was done,
As I heard true men tell,
Upon a Thursday afternoon,
Sanct Francis' eve befell.
Good Auchindoun was slain himsel',
With seven men in battell,
So was the laird of Lochenzell,
Great pitie was to tell".

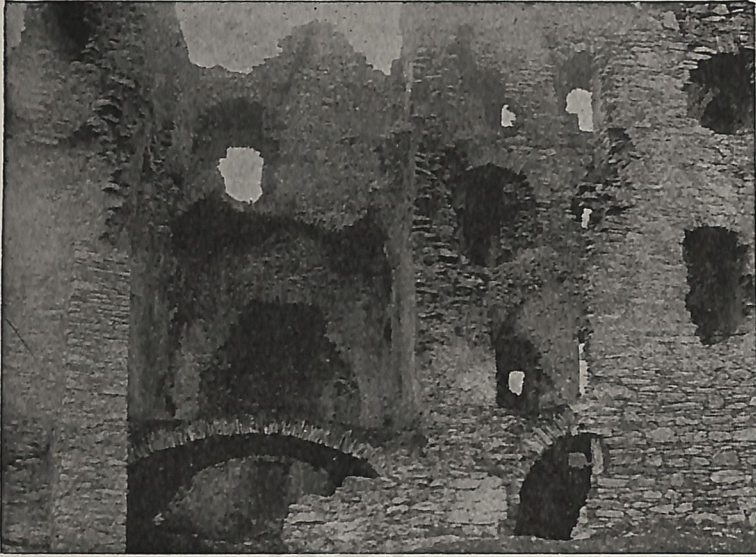
Mention is also made of Auchindoun in the ballad commemorative of the battle of Cromdale in 1690:—

"As I came in by Auchindoun,
A little wee bit frae the toun,
When to the Highlands I was boun',
To view the Haughs o' Cromdale,
"I met a man in tartan trews,
I speered at him what was the news;
Quoth he, the Highland army rues
That e're they came to Cromdale".

Auchindoun Castle, by the way, has a connection with a sensational episode in the history of Aberdeen—the "kidnapping" of the civic dignitaries in the Covenanting times (1644), when the lairds of Haddo and Gight and other "young Royalists" of the day carried off the Provost (Patrick Leslie), a Baillie, and the Dean of Guild. "Surely it is to be marked", the worthy Commissary Clerk Spalding wrote, "the like seldom has been seen, that so few

* Lords Huntly and Erroll.

men so pertly and publickly should have disgraced such a brave burrow, by taking away their provost and the rest,



AUCHINDOUN CASTLE—INTERIOR.

Photo. by

Mr. W. G. Melvin.

men of note, without any kind of contradiction or obstacle" ! The unfortunate city representatives were "taken and had to Strathbogie" (the Marquis of Huntly's seat) and "transported therefrae" to the Castle of Auchindoun, where they were kept close prisoners for five weeks until Argyle's march westwards made it prudent for the Gordons to set their captives at liberty.

DUFFTOWN.

Dufftown is conveniently situated for pedestrians who desire to ascend Ben Rinnes or Ben Aigan, to explore Glen Fiddich, Glen Rinnes, or Glen Livet, or to make excursions to the Cabrach or Speyside. Although it claims to be a "city", on the preposterous (and quite erroneous) notion that the parish in which it is situated, Mortlach, was a bishopric eight centuries before the town itself was called into being, it is little more than a village. It is pleasantly situated on a hill-top, with plenty of hill-tops around it,

notably the Meikle and the Little Convals; and it consists, in the main, of two cross streets, an old-fashioned tower, once used as a jail, standing at their intersection. Dufftown, in fact, dates only from 1817, being then founded by James Duff, fourth Earl of Fife—hence its name. Keithmore, two miles east of the town, was the property of Alexander Duff, whose eldest son, Alexander Duff of Braco, became the ancestor of the Fife family and the founder of its once extensive landed estates; they show you the tomb of this Duff—"Creely" Duff as he was called—in the Parish Church of Mortlach. The church is redolent of history of the legendary sort. A loyal Dufftownite will have you believe that this church was the "mother" of the Cathedral Church of St. Machar, Aberdeen, a Bishopric of Mortlach having preceded and subsequently been absorbed in the Bishopric of Aberdeen, the first Bishop of Mortlach having been appointed by Malcolm II. in 1010, and the fourth occupant of the see transferred to Aberdeen in 1136. The whole story is a fiction of Hector Boece, and has been completely demolished by modern investigation, antiquarians of acknowledged repute declaring that there never was Bishopric or Bishop of Mortlach. The church itself, however, is said to be—and probably with perfect accuracy—the oldest place of worship still in use in the north of Scotland. Its walls are believed to date from the eleventh century, and a mark on one of them is said to indicate the point from which, in accordance with a vow made by Malcolm, the church was extended "three spear-lengths". This pleasing story, too, rests solely on the authority of Boece. The Scots, according to this veracious chronicler, were engaged in a conflict with the Northmen or Danes on Dullanside, just below the church, and "being likely to be beaten, Malcolm looked up to the chapel dedicated to St. Moloc, and lifting up his hands prayed to God for aid, vowing that if it were granted he should erect there a Cathedral Church and found a Bishop's see". A Runic stone—the Stone of Mortlach—in a field below the church, is said to commemorate Malcolm's victory. In the neighbourhood of the church the Dullan flows through a pretty ravine;

there are curious rock formations known as the Giant's Chair and the Giant's Cradle, and a little waterfall called the Linen Apron. Near Dufftown, and particularly observable as the train approaches the railway station, are the ruins of Balvenie Castle, on an eminence a little below the confluence of the Fiddich and the Dullan. This edifice is said to have belonged successively to the Comyns, the Douglasses, and the Stewarts of Athole; the motto of the



BALVENIE CASTLE.

*Photo. by**Mr. W. G. Melvin.*

last-named family—"Furth Fortuin and Fil thi Fatris"—is inscribed on a scroll on the front of the building.

BEN RINNES.

Ben Rinnes is the one "mountain" of this region. A Club ascent of it was made on 28th September, 1891, and the following general description of the hill was given in a "monograph" issued at the time:—

"Ben Rinnes attains an altitude above sea level of 2755 feet—the highest hill in the district for many miles round. The summit culminates in a rocky protuberance known as the Scurran (or Sgoran) of Lochterlandich—Lochterlandich being the name also

of a farm about a mile and a half south-east of the "Scurran" in Glen Rinnes, the glen drained by the Dullan. Besides these "Scurran" there are one or two of note—the Scurran of Morinsh, fully half a mile to the west-north-westward; and the Scurran of Well, fully three quarters of a mile north-westward of Scurran of Lochterlandich. The mass of Ben Rinnes—sometimes called Bel Rinnes by the natives—is considerable, while the outline viewed from most points is graceful, the three rocky tops named giving variety to it. These tops are all composed of disintegrating granite, and resemble in that respect the rocky summits of Ben Avon and Bennachie".

The view from the summit is one of the finest and most extensive in the north of Scotland. According to one of the interlocutors in "The Round Table Club", it embraces eleven counties—Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, Nairn, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, Perth, Kincardine, and Stirling—and extends from the Pap of Caithness to Ben Nevis; and another of them describes it thus:—

"We can see here from Schichallion to John o' Groats--at least one hundred and twenty miles north to south. From east to west our view extends from Ben Alder to Buchan Ness, almost across the kingdom. What a vast and varied prospect! Hills, hills! Bennachie, the Buck of the Cabrach, Morven, Ben Aigan, the Knock Hill, the Tap o' Noth. Hills, hills! It were an endless task to name all we see in that grand panorama of mountains. Here one feels an elevation of soul, as well as of body. We look down upon the world—upon sea and land, and hill and dale—upon the works of nature, and upon those of men".

Reference should be made to an interesting article on "Sunrise on Ben Rinnes", by the late Mr. Allan Cameron, in a previous issue of the Journal (II., 233); and it only remains to mention the weather forecast associated with the hill—

"A mist on Ben Rinnes may wear awa',
Wi' a mist on Ben Aigan we're sure o' a fa'".

THE LARIG GHRU IN APRIL.

BY EDWARD MASON, MUS. BAC.

It was a merry, albeit a rather fatigued and footsore, party that lunched at noon on 19th April last by the side of Loch Phitiulais. There were five of us: the writer and wife; brother George, a youth of sixteen; R——, whose modesty and good temper are only equalled by his keen appreciation of the beauties of nature and the length of his stride; and the writer's devoted dog "Rover", the companion of many a mountaineering excursion. As we lingered by the loch-side the mist, which had enshrouded the hills all morning, lifted, and revealed to our eyes the first glimpse of the snow-clad heights we were destined to cross on the morrow. It was, of course, too late to start for Braemar that day, so we trudged leisurely on to Coylum Bridge, where we hoped to find accommodation for the night as well as information about the state of the Larig Ghru. We obtained neither; so we continued our walk to Lynwilg Hotel, through Inverdrue, where we saw, not without envy, a band of gipsies encamped for the night. Our genial landlord informed us that the Pass *might* be managed, and did not attempt to dissuade us from the enterprise; would that he had!

We left Lynwilg the following morning, at 8.30, under somewhat Arctic conditions—a blizzard in miniature, with occasional gleams of sunshine. Back we went to Coylum Bridge, and there entered the Glen Eunach road—the more direct route by the Spey ford not being negotiable. Auldruie passed, the path was easily traced, as it presented the appearance of a rivulet! To avoid this was tiring work, as the alternative was wet, knee-deep heather, with a soft carpet of saturated sphagnum below. Still we got along; the magnificent white pall in front drew perceptibly nearer, while the brown valley behind slowly receded. We had a snap-shot at the Alpine scene, the last for the day, for soon the route began to assume a rougher aspect, and stumbling

became general. A result was that much violence was done to the camera, and it declined to take further notice of the outer world—to the loss of our readers and others!

We reached the snow-line by noon, toiling through indescribable slush. Snow was still falling, but, happening on a huge boulder, we got to leeward for shelter, and lunched. Truly that was a "cold" collation! Thereafter came our severest trials: we found our way blocked by a mighty pile of granitic detritus stretching from high up the hill-sides down to the bottom of the Pass. For an hour and a half we endeavoured to conquer this barrier. Patches of soft snow lay over and between the boulders, so there were many involuntary plunges—sometimes to the knees only, oftener to the thighs, and occasionally even to the shoulders. Frequently stopping to help each other out of tight places, we attained the top of the barrier, only to find that it was absolutely impossible to descend the other side. Painfully retracing our steps, we tried other routes, but with the same result. We now cursed the folly of our undertaking—especially with a lady in the company. Why had we allowed her to come? Her plight was truly deplorable; frequently she had to be lifted bodily out of the hidden pitfalls between the boulders. Yet, though wet, benumbed, and bruised, she was not dispirited. At this critical juncture George suggested that, as we could not get *over* the difficulty, we might get *round* it by climbing up the mountain-side. With a sigh of relief, we thus put the miserable bouldery pile behind us. The descent proved a very awkward operation, falls being more numerous than ever, till at last we took to sliding as best we could. So disgusted were we with our experience of boulders that we went down to the burn to see if we could wade up its course (we were already quite wet), as did the soldiers, under similar conditions, in the late Tirah campaign. But finding that the bed of the stream was as rough as the mountain-side, we abandoned the attempt. Ascending again, we crossed wide stretches of snow of great depth, relieved occasionally by the dark face of a huge projecting rock. It was past two o'clock, yet we were more than two miles from the summit

of the Pass. The sun now broke out through the clouds, beating down so fiercely upon us that we were soon sunburnt. The heat loosened white patches on the hill-sides, and then set free great stones, which came thundering down to the bottom of the Pass. Disturbed by the noise, the ptarmigan, the solitary inhabitants of the region, took flight, crying hoarsely as they sped along. These were the only sounds that broke the intense and awe-inspiring stillness.

Our progress was very slow. At every step we sank to the knees, sometimes even deeper; so it was five o'clock ere we reached the col. We had taken five hours to the last three miles! Here we finished our sandwiches, cheering one another with the reflection that we had no more climbing. Our thirst was intolerable; we had not had a drink since we had left the stream three hours ago, nor could we hope for one till we should reach the Pools of Dee. Resuming our journey, we found the slope pretty steep, but the going good, as the deep drifts of snow were here frozen hard for about an inch from the surface. As for the Pools, we saw nothing of them, but guessed their position from hollows showing here and there traces of ice, to which, of course, we gave a wide berth. As soon as we saw water we began to covet it, so R—— volunteered to fetch a supply. Creeping cautiously towards the stream, he approached close to its margin, when the overhanging snow gave way, and he went with it! Thereafter came hateful slush and miserable bog. Countless streams poured down from the mountains, and had to be leapt or waded. Soft snow also overhung some of them, into which we often disappeared as we attempted to cross. The condition of the lady, brave as she was, can only be imagined. George was, as usual, in front, endeavouring to catch sight of the path. His joy was great when he discovered it, and, river-bed though it was, he stuck to it grimly and patiently. At eight o'clock we were abreast of the Devil's Point, where the slight ascent in the path nearly placed us all *hors de combat*. We were becoming utterly exhausted, and but for a little brandy and water, with some morsels of food, we

should have been unable to proceed further. It was now getting dark, and the frost was keen. "Rover" was a mass of icicles; our clothing was frozen stiff. Cold and exhausted, we toiled on, while our vivid imaginations, quickened by anxiety, presented to our gaze numerous houses in the valley below. As we drew nearer, these buildings melted into misty shadows beneath the feeble light of the moon. A direction post—welcome omen to travelling humanity—changed into a tree! With considerable difficulty we forded the Lui Beg, as we failed to see the foot-bridge. We proceeded in a most helpless and hopeless condition; despair began to seize us. Moving aimlessly forward, we came to the river once more—here so wide and deep that fording was beyond all question. But the darkest hour had come; the dawn was at hand, heralded to us by the distant barking of a dog. By-and-bye we saw a light, from which we reasoned that there must be a house and a road to it. After a time we found the way, and on telling our pitiful story were instantly admitted. The good people promptly attended to our wants, and, under genial influences, our spirits soon revived. We learned that we were at Luibeg Cottage, and that it was marvellous we had so reached it. The thermometer that night fell to 14° F., showing 18° of frost; so had we not found shelter, it would have been a very serious matter, as, moreover, there was a heavy fall of snow during the night.

The snow had not left off in the morning when we bade farewell to our hospitable entertainers. *En route* for civilisation we presented sorry figures—clothes torn, boots with toes out and parted soles, while some of us limped painfully. The lady showed unmistakable signs of nervousness for a time; R— had a stiffened tendon for a week; the writer had to bear the trials of rheumatism—a lighter toll than might have been expected after such exposure and hardships. But the views had been truly magnificent; we had seen Nature in a grim Arctic mood, in her clothing of purest white, calling to our minds the noble words of the Benedicite:—"O all ye works of the Lord; O ye Sun and Moon; O ye Winds of God; O ye Fire and Heat; O ye

Frost and Cold ; O ye Ice and Snow ; O ye Mountains and Hills ; bless ye the Lord : praise Him and magnify Him for ever" !



ON AONACH BEAG.

THE MENTEITH HILLS.

BY THE REV. GEORGE WILLIAMS, F.S.A. SCOT.

WHOEVER is acquainted with that charming book, Dr. Brown's "Horae Subsecivae", will recollect the dainty manner in which the author has handled the girl-queen's residence in Inchmahome. Poor Mary! Tradition would make her out to have been a ubiquitous wanderer, planting trees, and tending bowers here, there, and everywhere, and consecrating by her presence bedrooms and windows in baronial halls and castles throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Near this isle, in the Lake of Menteith, where Mary when a mere child spent a week or two in the dead of winter, and where she is said to have had a child-garden, is the stretch of hills to be brought under the notice of our readers.

Baillie Nicol Jarvie must have seen them when he paid his eventful visit to Aberfoyle. They extend from the Clachan to Callander. Although the highest of the Hills of Menteith has an elevation of only 1401 feet, and can be surmounted almost without pausing, yet their situation, in the centre of Scotland's finest scenery, makes them well worth our consideration.

Hills, like prophets, are not without honour, "save in their own country". We are ready to own acquaintance with the distant, albeit failing to recognise worth at our very doors. The Menteith Hills are not generally known; and yet most persons that have ascended them have brought back an astonishing report of having seen fourteen lochs. We have been up several times without having seen all the traditional or conventional fourteen, but let us pay all due respect to tradition. For the sake of the soil or of the marl they contained, several of the fourteen have been drained, as the Loch of Letter, which appears

from an old map to have been as large as the Dhui Loch in the vicinity, and others of the number have been shaded from observation by the trees recently planted to fringe their shores.

Living within a two hours' walk from the summit, we could wait for a convenient season. We did not expect to see the fourteen lochs; but, if it were only to see Loch Katrine, which, to all appearance, would rather come our way and leave Glasgow dry; Lochs Achray and Vennachar, with the surrounding objects mirrored from their surface; the palmate Drunkie; Loch Lubnaig, bending itself round to embrace Ben Ledi; the Lake of Menteith, or Loch o' Port, whose comeliness and homeliness contrast with the variety and bustle suggested by rocks and fields and trees; and Loch Ruskie,

“ Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith ”,

the trouble of ascent would be repaid with lordly munificence.

We had several strings to our bow; and, with a flourish of trumpets, in the shape of aneroid, compass, prospect-glasses, map, our “Hayward”, vasculum, geological hammer, shepherd's crook, &c., we set out one dewy morning in May to do the unknown Ben Gullipen, and renew our acquaintance with Ben Dearg.

We were a lad of eighteen, of an inquiring turn of mind, and the writer. On the way to the Dhui (Doo) Loch—seldom “Loch Dow”, as in the maps—our talk was of place names:

Ruskie means “rough”. The isle in its loch contains the ruins of the castle of Sir John Menteith, the betrayer of Wallace. If Dr. Munro, of Crannog fame, were here, he might discover evidences of a previous habitation under the foundation of Menteith's Castle. We cannot pronounce an opinion on such matters; but, sinking to the knees in a grey clay when fishing for perch here, we thought there might be reason for inferring the presence of diatoms in this loch. It is 444 feet above sea level.

Why, do you ask, is this parish called the Port of Menteith?

This is a big question. Teith is from the same root as Tay, Dee, &c., and means flowing water. Menteith is "the moor of the Teith". As to Port, perhaps (for in this line *perhaps* must be used extensively) it was in Roman times the port or gate to and from the Highlands. Seeking a derivation, however, in the solid ground of history, we should say that the parish as a whole has been called Port, or the Port, from the holding in it of that name. In 1466 James III. erected Port in Menteith into a burgh of barony, and about the same time Port is associated with other holdings in the immediate neighbourhood—Arntammy, Monyvreckie, Gartmulzie, Mullen, &c. In 1500, Buchquhopil, Torry, Drungy, Boquhassil, Doletter, and Portbank are mentioned as holdings in Menteith. We have the present Portend to explain matters for us. The monks passing their days in the Priory of Inchmahome knew the landing place at Portend as *the port*. This was their landing place, their port; next, it became a farm; then a burgh of barony, and hence a name which has been appropriated by the parish.

If these derivations be deemed unsatisfactory, we have still another. Slovenly speech turns the Tscheepurt pass between Monyvreckie and Callander into the Teapot pass (tiobairt, a fountain). Sound the letter *r* more emphatically, and modify the first syllable just a little, and you get "the port"!

We should expect the majority of place names here to be Gaelic, for in Aberfoyle public worship was conducted in that language till 1772, while in Callander the men and women of last generation used it. So Letter means slope, *cf.* Dullater, "the black slope" on the other side. Auchrig is connected with royalty, for there are here a height called Tomanrigh; a cup-marked (?) stone; a stone with the impress of a very large foot upon it, known as Samson's thumb; and a huge slab of conglomerate supported by sides of the same, and forming a palace, where, as far as strength and majesty go, any monarch might reside. Jackdaws have now claimed for a nesting-place the Palace of the Skellachan. Ben Dearg is so called from the reddish colour

of the conglomerate here. Ben Gullipen, called Guilbneach, is "the whaup's hill", and Drunkie the "trysting place".

An English tourist, having crossed the Guallann from Drymen, pronounced the Menteith people to be most intemperate; "they have a Loch of Port, another of Whisky (Ruskie), another Drunkie, and then their drink becomes Vinegar (Vennachar). All these I saw and testify to".

At the farm of Castle are the ruins of an old tower, said to have been built by Sir John Menteith, but never completed. It was formerly known as Casteal na Clod, "the castle of divots".

We ascend the Letter Hill, and mark the Cock Hill running towards Callander. The stance of the Cock Hill Fair has kept the name of the hill within the range of local knowledge.

Ominous cairns here and there on these heights indicate where luckless travellers have lost their lives to winter's anger or the murderer's avarice. In these lonely passes and wild places, men lawless and reckless as the celebrated Rob Roy made their evil gains. A cattle dealer and drover were robbed and murdered here, and the two cairns a few yards apart mark the spot. At another cairn a pedlar fell under the knife; and at another a smuggler was slain in a scuffle, and his body was hidden in that bog, &c.

The Tiobairt, a strong spring of pure water near Glenny, was the scene of a skirmish between the Grahams of Menteith and the Stewarts of Appin, soon after the battle of Pinkie. The Stewarts were returning from the fight or from some foray in the south, and passing through Menteith they came to a house where a wedding was about to be celebrated, and where, in consequence, a tempting feast was laid out. With scant ceremony the hungry strangers helped themselves, and resumed their journey northward, without saying "thank you". The Earl of Menteith, who was one of the invited guests, was wroth on arrival at the house, and resolved they should pay for their dinner or leave it on the moor. He and his followers pursued them, and overtook them at Tiobairt na Reil. He upbraided them for their malversation, and indignantly challenged them—

“ Yellow-haired Stewarts of smartest deeds
Who would grab at the kale in your sorest needs”.

A Stewart finished the stanza—

“ If smartness in deeds is ours by descent,
Then I draw, and to pierce you this arrow is sent”.

A sanguinary engagement ensued, wherein nearly all the Grahams were slain, and Donald Stewart, with a single comrade, escaped under cover of night to tell a sad tale in Appin.

In more settled times than those, and in a generation accustomed to more definite and childlike language in their devotions than ours, a Monievreckie farmer never neglected in harvest to put up the petition, “ O God, be Thou pleased to stay the wild blasts of Balloch dhui till such time as our corn is all safe in the band ”.

Ben Gullipen is stated in some maps to be 1744 feet high. Depending on our map rather than on the aneroid, we were all at sea when preparing the rough draft of this article; and, hardly daring to express our doubts, we blundered along, making the best of it. A trustworthy map marks the height 1357 feet. The Letter Hill is 1270; Ben Dearg, 1401; and the Craig of Monievreckie, 1254 feet high. On the east side of this craig is a frightful precipice, where the boldest mountaineer will find “ a foeman worthy of his steel”. The Craig of Port also is precipitous. At the local games a good prize was given to the man first at the summit. It was an event of go-as-you-please, and all-fours were resorted to for a considerable part of the stent. On several occasions the prize was gained by a titled baronet, who, however, holds his honour by the will of the people and not by the word of the sovereign.

In the glack between Ben Gullipen and Ben Dearg lies Lochan Balloch, surrounded by its rocky circlet. However much difficulty it may have had in cutting its outlet, this loch might be made to discharge itself by the way of Ruskie and the Goodie without much trouble. The sharp sand around its banks was used in former days by field workers for covering “ the straits ” wherewith hooks and scythes were sharpened. Lochan Balloch is the property

of G. A. Cox, Esq. of Invertrossachs. Invertrossachs (locally "trosshachs") has displaced the former name, Drunkie. The height between us and Loch Drunkie is Craig Bhacain, "the rock of hindrance", and another is Meall Gamhainn, "the stirks' hill". At Invertrossachs, in the autumn of 1869, Her Majesty the Queen resided for a few days with several members of the Royal Family.

The most striking feature of the southward view is the belt of carse that crosses the middle of Scotland, with the Forth worming and winding its way through it like a thread of silk. This waist-band is sixty miles long, and from eight to sixteen broad. Houses and hamlets, sunny copses and fertile fields, are a pleasing sight in contrast with the broad, black flat of Flanders Moss; while the Earl's Seat beyond the Kippen and Gargunnoch heights lifts up its head to look across at us; the monument on Abbey Craig, with its historic and patriotic suggestions; the old castle of Stirling, on its rock of dolerite, as couchant lion watching and warding all beneath; the gaunt tower of Gartincaber rejoicing in its fresh whitewash; the Cleish and Saline and Pentland Hills on our left, with the heights on both sides of the Clyde on our right, not distinctive enough to be differentiated at this distance—so fair a prospect

"Wot I nowher noon".

Six battlefields are before us—Stirling Bridge, 1297; Bannockburn, 1314; Sauchie Burn, 1488; Gartloaning, near Gartmore, where Lords Lennox and Forbes attempted to avenge the murder of James III.; Sheriffmuir, 1715; and Falkirk, 1746.

Resting on the brae-side are Kippen, made glorious by sunshine reflected from its extensive vineries, and Buchlyvie, whose inhospitable baron has not greatly impaired its fair fame. Aberfoyle, once worth visiting, is not seen. There are its slate quarries, with Ben Venue at their back. Away in the distant west and north are seen the crests of mighty Bens, which we take to be Ben Cruachan, Ben Laoigh, Ben Nevis, Meal Ghaordie, Lawers, Vorlich, Chonzie, &c.; but we must not be too sure of our most intimate friend's identity when he is far away.

Returning home by the roundabout way of Coilantogle and Callander, let us discourse on the geology of these Hills of Menteith.

The geology of the Hills of Menteith deserves more than a passing notice. Although the survey of the district has not been completed, and sheet 38 has not, therefore, been published, yet the Officers of the Survey are most courteous and always ready to render help where help is needed, and to them the writer owes much of the information in what follows.

A line drawn from Inch Caillaoich in Loch Lomond, through Aberfoyle and Leny House near Callander, to Comrie divides the district into two geological areas. This line coincides with "the great fault" or dislocation, extending from Dumbartonshire to Stonehaven. The Lower Old Red Sandstone has been brought down against an older set of strata, conveniently termed the Central Highland metamorphic rocks, by this fault. This metamorphic strip may be divided into two groups of rocks, the relations of which to each other have not been determined yet, and raise questions not yet answered. A narrow belt, nowhere exceeding half-a-mile in breadth, lies next to this line of fault, consisting of a series of igneous rocks, radiolarian cherts, graphitic schists, limestone grits, and conglomerates, which, according to the Reports of the Director General of the Geological Survey, are probably of Lower Silurian age (Arenig), and identical with the rocks at Ballantrae. The rocks lying north of this belt consist of slates, phyllites, schistose grits, &c., arranged in bands more or less parallel with those already mentioned. The well-known Aberfoyle slates correspond with one of these bands, while a broad belt of schistose grit forms the conspicuous mountains of the district, Ben Lomond, Ben Venue, Ben Ledi, Stuc a Chroin, and Ben Vorlich.

A small outcrop of the Loch Tay limestone, with its accompanying mica schists and igneous intrusions, occurs in the neighbourhood of Strathyre, and extends through Balquhidder, to Glen Dochart and Loch Tay. Near Letter and Auchrig may be seen an old lime-kiln. The limestone

found here, formerly quarried in Aberfoyle and converted into lime for agricultural purposes (a tenant in Braendam in 1763 is required, by terms of his lease, to carry lime from Lenny or Ballochinduy), is probably a calcareous fault-breccia and not an ordinary sedimentary limestone.

The continuity of these bands is more or less interrupted by a series of faults approximately of a north and south direction. The best known of these faults is the "Loch Tay Fault", extending from Loch Drunkie on the south to Ardeonaig on Loch Tay, which, in its course, skirts the western shore of Loch Lubnaig, crosses it at Ardhullarie More, and coincides with the trend of Glen Ample. Many of the minor features of the district are determined by one or other of these dislocations.

The representatives of the Lower Old Red Sandstone cover a belt of ground, stretching from the Great Fault south-east to Kippen and Killearn; the beds occupying the lowest geological horizon are exposed along the southern margin of the fault about three miles south-west of Aberfoyle, where a vertical band of andesitic lava is seen in contact with the rocks to the north of the fault. It also occurs at intervals along the southern margin of the fault, as far as the River Earn, and is well seen in the section of the Kelty, north of Callander. This lava represents a portion of the great volcanic series of the Ochils.

For upwards of a mile southwards from the fault, the conglomerates and sandstones overlying these lavas are inclined to the south-south-east. They form the series of heights flanking the Highland hills from Conic Hill and Guallann to Aberfoyle, the Menteith hills from Aberfoyle to Callander, and the Braes of Doune and Uamdh Mhor from Callander to the north-east. As the observer proceeds further south, the angle of inclination gradually diminishes, and the beds are repeated by occasional minor folds, till a point is reached about three miles from the "Great Fault". This is the centre of a great synclinal fold, the axis of which coincides with a line drawn from the Flanders Moss to Drymen on the one side, and Braco on the other. The strata occupying the centre of this fold, which are softer

than the overlying rocks, form a hollow, while the outcrops of the lower and harder strata form the hills mentioned towards the north and the Ochils on the south.

The Menteith district is in that zone of the Old Red overlying the Ochils and Sidlaws, the beds below them being characterised by *Parkia decipiens*, and the beds above by *Psilophyton*. The conglomerates here contain specimens of rolled pebbles of the underlying conformable volcanic rocks, which proves that some of the Old Red mountains rose far enough above the waters of the Old Red "Strathmore" to permit of their denudation.

The highest beds of these Lower Old Red Sandstones in this district have yielded plants in tolerable abundance, though, as a rule, in a very fragmentary condition. On the farm of Earn (near Braendam), however, there is a quarry from which fine specimens of *Arthrostroma gracile* and *Psilophyton princeps* var. *ornatus*, were obtained five or six years ago by Officers of the Geological Survey.

A dyke of basalt (quarried near Aberfoyle and on the Braes of Doune, near Argaty, as road metal), probably of tertiary age, traverses the district.

A more recent period is represented by the rounded hills, smoothed and grooved rocks, giant boulders far from their native places, the gravel, sand, and clay dropped in heaps elongated in the direction of the ice-flow—well observed on the Torry and Lenniston muirs.

A prominent feature of the Forth valley is the fifty-foot sea-beach, which extends from Gartmore to the Forth Bridge, and may be seen on both sides of the river. After the change of sea level indicated by this raised beach, extensive tracts of peat moss seem to have come into existence.

We can refer to nothing very peculiar in the botany of the Menteith hills. The Glenny glens shelter *Herb Paris* and other rarer shade and moisture-loving plants. *Drosera anglica*, *Lythrum salicaria*, *Oenanthe crocata*, &c., find a habitat near the Lake of Menteith. *Valeriana pyrenaica* and *Claytonia perfoliata* have established themselves at Braendam. The cragginess of the Craig of the Port is

tempered down by the profusion of purple bells displayed in the summer months by the Foxglove. The *Alchemilla alpina*, so common on Ben Ledi, is here conspicuous by its absence.

Dr. White's "Flora of Perthshire", recently edited by Dr. James W. H. Trail, of Aberdeen, will indicate to the botanist what he may or may not expect to find in this Lower Forth district.

Though the fauna of the Menteith hills is not extensive, foxes and, perhaps, an occasional badger may be met with among the crags. We saw a raven soaring over the hill tops, and looking earnestly for some "awal" ewe or weakly lamb, and we may be told by some shepherd, gamekeeper, or poacher, that he once saw an eagle here, or saw a man that saw one once.

The Hills of Menteith may be reached by the Caledonian Railway (Callander station), or by the Forth and Clyde Branch of the North British (Port of Menteith station). They are more easily reached by Callander, but from Port of Menteith the tourist has the advantage of a walk along the margin of the Lake, with a fine chance of visiting Inchmahome and its ruins of a Priory, and Inch Talla and its ruins of an earl's palace, *en passant*. Come or go by what route soever he may, we are confident the tourist that loves rocks and lochs will long remember our rich blend of mountain and lowland scenery, and he will not wish, with the famous Glasgow Baillie, that his "boots had been fu' o' boiling water when he drew them on to visit the Rob Roy Country".

Enthusiastic mountaineers do not need to be reminded that there is no healing for a fevered life so efficacious as the mountain air and mountain dew. The strength and majesty and beauty of the mountain invade the human spirit, and chase away anxious cares and coward fears. On the commanding height we dream restfully for a little space; "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help".

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

CORRYHABBIE HILL, which was selected for the Club's spring excursion on 1st May last, is fully described elsewhere, so that the chronicler for the day is absolved from all necessity of entering into topographical details. Probably the fact that the hill is little visited and is not very readily accessible led to a comparatively large attendance of members of the Club and friends, the company numbering 50. Proceeding to Duftown by an early train, the party, by special permission of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, drove to Glenfiddich Lodge, noting on the way, of course, the ruins of Auchindoun Castle. From the lodge to the summit of Corryhabbie is a walk of three miles—"three good miles", as many of the pedestrians remarked as they plodded along the rough bridle-path, which at times was deep in water and at other times thickly covered with snow, and then across the long and comparatively level plateau, rather wet and spongy and coated with soft snow. The summit had hardly been gained, however, when the mist descended and obscured the view; and the party may be said to have seen little except Ben Rinnes and Glenrinnos on the one side and Cook's Cairn on the other. The customary formal meeting was held at the cairn on the summit—Rev. Robert Semple, the Chairman of the Club, presiding. Mr. Copland, deprived of the opportunity of "showing" the mountains enumerated in his list, read (from Dr. Longmuir's "Speyside") an interesting account of the battle of Glenlivet. The party then descended, but were speedily overtaken with still denser mist, which developed into rain, and it was not until they were well clear of the higher summit that they were relieved of these disagreeable features of the day. Misfortune, indeed, dogged the steps of the Club all day. A suggestion that, on account of the mist prevailing, the party should keep well together in the descent was disregarded, with the consequence that one or two "stragglers" swerved a little from the route, and had to be recalled into line by vigorous hallooing. And an accident to one of the carriages as it was setting out on the return journey from Glenfiddich Lodge, the occupants being "spilled", put an effectual damper on the rest of the day's enjoyment.

IN connection with the Corryhabbie excursion, several members of the Club improvised a "meet" for the week-end at the Craigellachie Hotel. The "meet" proved a success, the company (which included wives and mothers, sons and daughters; also a grandson and granddaughter of one of the party) numbering 18, and consolidating harmoniously; but its main purpose—the ascent of Ben Rinnes—was left to be accomplished by a very small contingent. A look at the hill, indeed, was sufficient to scare most people—it was entirely covered with snow, down almost to its base;

and a Craigellachie "authority" spread further alarm by declaring that the snow was several feet deep and was soft and not "bearing". Five resolute "stalwarts", however, determined to make the ascent, or, at least, attempt it, and would not be dissuaded, despite all dolorous prophecies—even a prophecy that they would return wet to their thighs: with them, as their leader put it, it was a case of "Pike's Peak or bust!" as the early American frontiersmen used to say. As a matter of fact, the "Pike's Peak" of Lower Speyside was gained without any bursting—with comparative ease, and almost with dry feet. The adventurous five walked to the Benrinnes Distillery and ascended the hill from that point, making for the rocky protuberance known as the Scurran of Well, and then along the ridge to the principal summit, the Scurran of Lochterlandich. There was plenty of snow, it is true, but it amounted to little more than a sprinkling—or, let us say, coating—on the grass and heather; and nowhere, except where collected in wreaths, did it cover one's boots. Soft on the slope of the hill, it was hard on the top, with large patches of ice; and at no time was the "going" disagreeable. The day was dull and overcast, with masses of cloud of the "leaden hue" that M. Taine used to describe as the permanent characteristic of British skies, and as accounting for the average British melancholy and moroseness. The view was thus necessarily restricted, the horizon being limited, but many of the hills and mountains enumerated for inspection from Corryhabbie on the following day were easily picked out, most of them—and, in particular, the Cairngorms—being covered with snow. Spectacularly, the best effect was produced by the huge mass of Ben Wyvis and the graceful outlines of Suilven, which, with their white covering, stood out in beautiful relief against the dark haze of the horizon; while, near at hand, the "peppering" of snow on lesser hills, such as the Convals, and the peculiar effect of the Scurrans, with their "weathering" protruding above the masses of snow, contributed greatly to the general picturesqueness of the scene. A contemplated descent into Glenrinnes with the idea of walking back by way of Dufftown was abandoned after the party were half down the hill; and, instead, the descent was made to the Batchach, a large tract of boggy ground having to be traversed, distinctly wetter than the snow-covered slopes already traversed. Then the burn of Aberlour was struck, and the return journey to Craigellachie was easily accomplished by means of a good road, the Linn of Ruthrie, near Aberlour, being inspected on the way. The "outing" occupied eight hours—easy going; and the party returned in a condition that completely falsified all the predictions of the "croakers"—nothing wet about them but their boots.—R. A.

ON 29th April last five members of the Club started on their THE annual Spring Holiday tramp with the view of walking from BUCK. Gartly, *via* the Buck, to Dufftown, there to meet the main party, and join in the excursion to Corryhabbie. Leaving Aberdeen by the 3.45 train, Gartly was duly reached. It had been the intention to proceed to Lumsden, but on learning that the hotel

there was filled up, it was resolved to stop for the night at Rhynie, where excellent accommodation was obtained. The Tap o' Noth presented an inviting appearance for a preliminary climb, but after "high tea" had been prepared and done justice to, there was only time for a smart walk of a few miles before nightfall.

After an early breakfast next morning, a start was made on the long walk amid a rattling shower of hail. Proceeding along the turnpike in the direction of Lumsden Village, the Kirk of Kearn is passed on the right; then the road to Craig Castle; further on, and just about 300 yards before coming to Lumsden, the road to Clova House is taken to the right. The latter road skirts the policies, and leads between the mansion house and home steading, and, after a turn to the left, the hill road diverges to the right, and passing through a belt of wood, takes a sharp rise, and, being rather like the dry bed of a mountain burn, walking becomes a little stiff. Over a stile at the edge of the wood the moss road is then followed leading away to the right, and now we have the top of the Buck in sight (see *C.C.J.*, Vol. I., p. 400). Looking backward for a few minutes, a fine view is obtained of Kildrummy, with Coillebharr beyond. Pursuing the course, however, it is desirable to take the rising ground to the left, and make for a hut which appears on the sky line, in order to avoid the moss on the low ground in front. Snow was lying thickly on this side of the hill all the way to the top, but it afforded clean walking, although care had to be exercised to keep clear of bog holes. A wire fence may be observed on the ridge, and this is followed direct to the top. The Buck has a sharp cone, covered with rough boulders and weather-worn rock. No water could be found to provide the medium for a cup of warm "Liebig", so the only resource was to cram the kettle full of snow and use the spirit lamp. Although without sunshine, the air was beautifully clear from north-east to south-west, but a haze prevented any prospect in other directions. Taking the hills in the circuit indicated, the following were clearly recognised:—Bin of Cullen, Knock, Mormond, Foudland, Bennachie, Mount Battock, Mount Keen, Driesh, Lochnagar, and the Cairngorms—those in the south-west and west being very heavily coated with snow, Lochnagar making a particularly grand picture. The descent was made on the opposite side, the wire fence still serving as a guide. This side is rather steep, so level ground was soon reached. Taking a course in front of a shooting lodge, and passing the School of Cabrach, we held for the Deveron, and had a pleasant tramp to the Richmond Arms at Ardwell, that great resort of fishers. Resuming the tramp, the road through the Balloch was taken, and then the Fiddich was reached. Passing down the lower end of the Glen on the way to Dufftown, Auchindoun Castle arrests attention owing to its picturesque position.—J. H.

PERHAPS the Editor will allow me space for a few
 A WEEK-END remarks upon Mr. Skea's paper under this title in the
 IN January No. of the Club Journal. At the outset I
 GLEN GAIRN. may say that, having gone over the same ground
 spoken to by Mr. Skea, his description appears to me
 excellent. It is written by one who can thoroughly enjoy an outing

among our lonely hills and glens, and who can depict his thoughts and feelings to others. But my present object is to point out a few slips in the natural history portion of the paper which the writer has fallen into. First, on page 322, he says "early in our walk we noticed the first harvest-home gatherings of the fieldfare". Let me say that the bird he saw was not the fieldfare. This species visits Scotland annually, but is never seen with us in July, the date of Mr. Skea's journey. This bird does not breed in Britain, and its journey thither does not take place until late in autumn. Unquestionably the bird seen was the missel-thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), which, after the nesting season, is to be seen in numbers upon the hillsides and cultivated fields along our valleys. Second, page 324—"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 effect. We can remember when the starling, like the plover, swallow, and wagtail, were only visitors. . . . 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". This, sir, is a most extraordinary and unwarrantable charge. First we are told that the sedge-warbler, siskin, and skylark were noticed to be "decreasing". The sedge-warbler within the past twenty or thirty years has been steadily increasing within Aberdeenshire. The siskin and skylark have been decreasing, but certainly not by the action of the starling, but by that of man. The first has been preyed upon by the bird-catcher, to satisfy the demands of the wealthy with poor siskin prisoners; so that now the pretty bird is only to be seen in our more distant wooded glens, where it does not *pay* the human prowlers to follow them. The second is decreasing because of the hundreds of thousands that are annually murdered to meet the epicurean demand for lark pie. And to say that the starling is able to possess himself of the "house and home" of the jackdaw is simply nonsense. Then as to your essayist remembering when the starling, like the plover, swallow, and wagtail, were only visitors, I have to say that the plover and wagtail are, and have been, permanently resident with us since their history was first written. Then we are told that the starling is "an egg-eater", "a murdering Moor", and that he is hated accordingly. What proof can the writer give for such a charge? Emphatically I say none. But even suppose the charge of murder were true, why hate him? If every creature is to be hated that preys upon another for food, it is to be feared man's record will be very black indeed; for what living creature does he not "murder" for his own use, from the ox, sheep, deer, and grouse, down to the cheery little robin and the wren? If this, the taking of food, is "murder", man is unquestionably the most remorseless, in which case your essayist must hate himself above all other living beings. But the starling is no murderer nor egg-eater: his food consists of flies, beetles, grubs, worms, a

little fruit and corn, and he is a most useful servant to the flock-master; for those who are really acquainted with the starling's habits know well how he may be seen busily engaged picking the parasites that lurk among the wool of the sheep, while the latter lie complacently chewing the cud, or wandering leisurely over their grazing ground. The charge of egg-eating is utterly groundless, and it is shameful to make such charges; for in too many instances it leads the thoughtless to acts of cruel persecution against this and many other useful birds. Your essayist should read the late Charles Waterton's ideas regarding the starling. No one gave more attention to the habits of birds than he, nor wrote more truthfully what he knew. See also the sayings of the late T. Edward on the same subject. Third, page 324—"We renewed acquaintance with many of our summer visitors; amongst others the golden and tufted plovers and the common peewee". May I ask, who is this "tufted plover"? Fourth, page 325, it is said there were seen "an oyster-catcher, in all the glory of his pied plumage, and a spotted woodpecker, refulgent in his blood-red hackle". In the first place, the spotted woodpecker has no blood-red hackle. A small spot of red there is on the back of the head, but in no sense can it be called a hackle; nor, secondly, could this bird be seen at the date referred to. It does not now breed with us, and is only an occasional visitor during winter. The dotterel is also said to have put in an appearance. I doubt this exceedingly. It is much more likely that the bird observed was the redshank (*Totanus calidris*), or the common sandpiper (*Tringoides hypoleucus*). The dotterel is very rare, and is now only known to breed very sparingly, in a few places in Scotland, always on the mountain tops, and certainly not in such a locality as Glen Gairn.

And, lastly, page 335—"Crawling like crabs on our backs, feet foremost, we descended from our precarious coign of vantage". It may be said that crabs do not crawl on their backs, and such a style of writing is only calculated to perpetuate error.—GEORGE SIM.

THE
LARIG GHRU.

THE route through the Learg Ghruamach has already been described in the *C.C.J.* (Vol. I, p. 319), but as that description is somewhat general, a more detailed account of the route may perhaps be of some use. This account is supplied from notes taken during a walk through the Pass, on 6th August, 1896, the journey being made from Aviemore to Braemar. Starting from Aviemore railway station, you first walk to Coylum Bridge (two miles): there is no difficulty as to this part of the route. Just before reaching the bridge, a little iron gate will be observed on the right-hand side, adjacent to which is a direction post of the Scottish Rights of Way Society intimating that the path on to which the gate opens is the Larig Ghru path. You follow this path for half a mile or so, and then take the first track on the left-hand side (disregarding mere footpaths); this track is indicated by a small heap of stones on its right-hand side. It makes—almost in a direct line with the Larig, the peculiar V shape of which is here very prominent—for a small wooden house; goes past the front of the house, and then over a tiny burn (by a wooden plank) to a large iron

gate. On the other side of the gate, you find that the track degenerates to a mere footpath. Passing through a wood, it skirts the edge of an open bit of woodland—becoming a little indeterminate, however—and reaches a small iron gate in a wire fence near a burn (the Allt na Beinne Moire). Beyond this gate, the path wends along the fence to a dry-stone dyke, along the dyke for some distance, and then across another open space of moorland to a plantation filling the gap in the direction of Glen Eunach. The path now winds through this plantation in a somewhat erratic fashion, the track being through long heather (an “awful” track in wet weather: a few minutes of it sufficed to completely “soak” a party of us on a rainy day three days before). It ultimately reaches the Bennie, skirts the burn for some time, and then crosses a grassy plateau (becoming here a little faint) to a direction post (painted white). At this post, the path joins the track from Kinrara and Polchar; and a few yards on along this track—welcome after the one through the long heather—you cross a wooden bridge over the Bennie, at a distance of about two miles from Coylum Bridge. (This point may also be reached by continuing along the path entered at Coylum Bridge and turning to the left at Cross Roads—certainly a preferable route in wet weather). There is a nice little bit of scenery at the Bennie bridge, the brawling mountain burn being picturesquely set amid firs; a little above the bridge may be noted the junction of the Bennie and the Larig Burn, along the right bank of which our path now takes its way, shortly widening into a cart track. It crosses a long level meadow, passes a house on the left-hand side, and gradually ascends till—about a mile from the Bennie bridge—it reaches a point where three tracks unite, marked by a direction post. The Larig Ghru path turns sharply to the right (southward). The path in front takes you round to Loch Morlich; where the path to the left goes the present writer averreth not. If you reach this point, you are safe; for whatever doubts may have beset you in getting to it, once you take the path to the right you are in the “gut” of the Pass and cannot go wrong—you must either go on straight through the Pass (practically speaking), or turn back; at anyrate, you cannot miss your way. Leaving the tripartite junction, the Larig Ghru path gradually ascends the ridge on the right-hand side of the ravine through which the Larig Burn here flows (our left-hand side, of course). The first mile or so of this path—a narrow track through thick heather—is positively “beastly”, even in good weather, for the ground, being peaty, is very soft and very dirty. The track gradually improves as it ascends, however. It makes a long detour round the left-hand side of a very conspicuously-marked landslip; and, passing a very prominent cairn of stones, it descends to and crosses the Larig Burn—about three miles from the tripartite junction. From this point, you follow the track as best you may; but as you soon enter on a region of stones, you are very apt to lose it, notwithstanding the aid of a large number of direction cairns. You make your way slowly but steadily to the summit of the watershed in the Pass, which divides the Spey Valley from the Dee Valley,

admiring as you walk on (if you have any eye for the grand and the picturesque) the dark granite precipices on your left which, washed almost continually by dropping water, glisten in the sunshine like slate as viewed from Aviemore and thereabouts; then the succession of long slopes of red screes; and then a burn tumbling headlong down a shoulder of Ben Muich Dhui, and disappearing you know not where. Four miles of this varied route will bring you to the Pools of Dee—out of Inverness-shire into Aberdeenshire. You will have been fortunate if you have escaped rain until this stage is reached; if you get rain then, you are indifferent, for though you have still a



THE LARIG GHRU ENTRANCE—A MILE FROM BENNIE BRIDGE.

Photo. by

Mr. W. E. Carnegie Dickson, B.Sc.

long walk to Braemar, the most toilsome part of your journey is done, and you can now "pad" on at any rate you please. Down Glen Dee you go—with a light heart, and at a rattling good pace—past Braeriach, Cairn Toul, the Devil's Point, and Glen Geusachan, and across Glen Luibeg to Derry Lodge—a distance of eight miles, good. Braemar, as everybody knows, is 10 miles further on, so that the Larig involves a walk of fully 30 miles. A keeper gave me the distance between Aviemore and Derry Lodge as 18 miles, but I cannot figure it out in detail at less than 20. Making fairly good speed in the latter half of the walk, I accomplished the journey from Aviemore

to Braemar in 11 hours. The "Contour Road Book" gives the following distances:—Aviemore to Coylum Bridge, $1\frac{1}{2}$ m.; Summit (2771 ft.), $9\frac{1}{2}$ m.; Derry Lodge, $17\frac{3}{4}$ m.; Braemar, $27\frac{3}{8}$ m.—R. A.

As Lochnagar is in the happy hunting ground of the Club, I send the notes of a walk across it, as they may be of interest. Driving from Ballater to Allnagiubhsach, I started the ascent at 1.15 p.m. along the track. Leaving this just below the point where the Gelder track joins it, I struck straight across the moor, and up Cuidhe Crom (3552). Thence I visited

Cac Carn Mor (3768) and Cac Carn Beag (3786). I was now enjoying hail, sleet, snow, and all uncharitableness, and this in June! After returning to Cac Carn Mor, proceeding by compass, I kept too much to the south, and landed on the moor of Creag a' Ghlas-uilt (3450, probably 3500). From here I walked over the plateau of Carn a Choire Bhoidheach (3630), which is the large 3500 feet contour south of Lochan an Eoin on Bartholomew's map. There are no cairns on either of these two last tops. I now descended westwards to the col (3296), whence Carn an t-Sagairt Beag (3424) was ascended. The height of the col between this top and that of Carn an t-Sagairt Mor is 3156 feet. From the top of Carn an t-Sagairt Mor (3430) I proceeded along the ridge to Fafernie (3274), then on to Cairn Bannoch (3314). I next visited Cairn Gowal (3242), about one-third mile S.E. of Cairn Bannoch, and then going E.N.E. for about the same distance I arrived at Creag an Dubh Loch (3100), and gained a good view of the Dubh Loch. There are no cairns on these two tops. A gentle rise gave easy walking to the top of Broad Cairn (3268), and then the rain began again. Retracing my steps, I crossed the head of the Gowal Corrie, and walked over Creag an Gowal (3027)—no cairn. The descent was made to the Allt Gowal, keeping the great slabs of Creag Gowal on the right. The glen is extraordinarily wet walking. Four miles walk brought me to Braedownie, the track having been picked up at Bachnagairn. As my watch had stopped after leaving Allnagiubhsach, I now learned the time, and found it past 9.30 p.m. Four more miles brought me to the Milton of Clova. My walk down Glen Clova had been made less monotonous by the company of three curlews. Glen Clova looked extremely well in the gloaming, and a spur of the Driesh loomed up magnificently.

I thus walked easily over every top of the Lochnagar mass, except Meikle Pap and Little Pap. In Mr. Munro's tables this makes five separate mountains and eight separate tops; in all 13 tops. It sounds a tremendous day, but in reality it is nothing of the sort. The time taken from Allnagiubhsach Lodge was $9\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

The heights and other details I have gleaned from Mr. M'Connochie's "Lochnagar", and from Mr. Munro's Tables of Mountains over 3000 feet and his paper on "Dark Lochnagar", both in the *S.M.C.J.*

The next day I ascended the Driesh (3105), and followed the flat western ridge to Mayar (3043). The western slope of Mayar merges into the great plateau of Finalty Hill. A descent was now made into

Glen Isla, and, after fording the river, I made for the pass between Monamenach and Black Hill, about 2000 feet, and down Glen Carnach to Glen Shee. The road was gained by means of a wobbly suspension bridge that gave the most dangerous work of the whole day. Two miles walking brought me to the Spital of Glen Shee at about 7 p.m.—EDRED M. CORNER.

ON 16th April last the writer, along with a Clubman, SGOR GHAOITH left Lagganlia, Glen Feshie, for the ascent of these AND summits *via* Allt F'hearnachan and Ciste Mhairearaid. CARN BAN. The snow-line was well defined at a uniform altitude of about 1800 feet. Brilliant sunshine, with an occasional slight snow shower, was experienced in the ascent, but when the top of Carn Ban was neared a furious gale had to be faced, and the mist closed in on us. The cairn was quite visible, but the staff was encrusted with frozen snow. At times there was a peep of distant mountains, but even Cairn Toul was generally dimly visible.

Proceeding to the top of Coire Odhar, we were fortunate in getting a striking view of Loch Eunach during a temporary absence of mist. The snow-line being about 150 feet above its level, it was quite clear of ice; the morning's snow looked not unlike a fringe of lace below the 1800 feet contour. The loch-front of the Sgoran was topped by deep snow, which had the appearance of having recently parted with its cornice. Sgor Ghaoith was reached in dense mist, and the wind blew so hard that we had to throw ourselves on the top to await the chance of a peep at the loch below us. We had a momentary prospect, but it left a great impression on the writer. The cold was intense, so we quickly hurried down the Crom Allt Mor—wrongly named on the map Allt nam Bo—and so found our way by Allt Ruadh to Lagganlia; time for the round, 7½ hours.

The snow was soft, with occasionally a hard "patch" difficult to account for. A good few white hares were seen in Ciste Mhairearaid, and ptarmigan, of course, were observed, but the most interesting sight was a flock of over one hundred snow buntings enjoying themselves at an altitude of about 2000 feet near the right bank of the Crom Allt Mor.—ALEX. ROSS.

THE AVON from the Avon instead of from the Dee, to which brief WATER allusion was made in last number, has led to an animated—and, in some respects, amusing—controversy in SCHEME. the *Free Press*. The scheme has been assailed by "A. C.", who may be readily identified as one of the past Chairmen of the Club, and who, despite all his banter and humour and jauntiness of style—mayhap on account of these very qualities—has proved a formidable critic; and Mr. Thomas Jamieson, the author of the scheme, has rushed to its defence with a readiness of resource and a fertility of argument—and statistics—that have demonstrated his ability to hold his own, even against a doughty foe. "Catchment areas", "feeders", "filtration", "evaporation", and the like have been hurtling about in the air, along with a mass of information—or allegations—concerning Loch Avon and the Cairngorms, more or less

interesting. Unfortunately, the disputants don't agree; and at the moment of going to press it is not quite decided whether Glen Avon in winter time is an Arctic region or an Elysium of mildness.

MR. ROBERT ANDERSON writes:—I see that Mr. Thomas Jamieson, in one of his letters on the Avon water scheme (in the *Free Press*, 20th May), says—
 A WALK DOWN GLEN AVON. “Very few have seen the beautiful sparkling streams that feed the Avon above Inchrory. With the exception of myself and my companion, and I think of Mr. M'Connochie, I doubt if any Aberdonian has ever traversed the whole glen (Glen Avon)”. If Mr. Jamieson will absolve me from expressing any opinion as to the suitability of



THE LINN OF AVON.

Photo. by

Mr. James Milne.

the Avon for the Aberdeen water supply, I don't mind confessing that I once walked down Glen Avon from the Shelter Stone at the head of Loch Avon to Inchrory and then on to Tomintoul, and I don't mind making the further confession—the lapse of years providing absolution in other quarters—that I and my companions were virtually arrested for trespass. My companions! Alas! they are all gone! They were three fellow-journalists—B. H. Rodger, of the *Evening Gazette*; W. J. Jamieson, of the *Journal*; and A. K. Moore, of the *London Morning Post*; the two former were capital pedestrians—Moore, a very brilliant and very genial fellow, rather leant to Dr. Johnson's notion that a walk down Fleet Street was preferable to any other form of walking exercise. We spent the night of Satur-

day, 9th August, 1884, under the Shelter Stone. About four o'clock in the morning, Jamieson and I, finding sleep could not be wooed on the very rough bed of boulders—not bolsters—that the Shelter Stone provides, got up and ascended Ben Muich Dhui to see the sun rise; but all we gained was a succession of studies in mist—very beautiful in their way though. Rejoining our companions, the four of us started down Glen Avon. I am afraid my recollections of that walk have long since been obliterated; I retain simply a general impression of a very wild and picturesque glen, with majestic hillsides. We began by walking down the right side of the Avon—to speak of a right “bank” would be ridiculous, for we had to do all manner of dodging to avoid rough ground. At last we espied a path on the

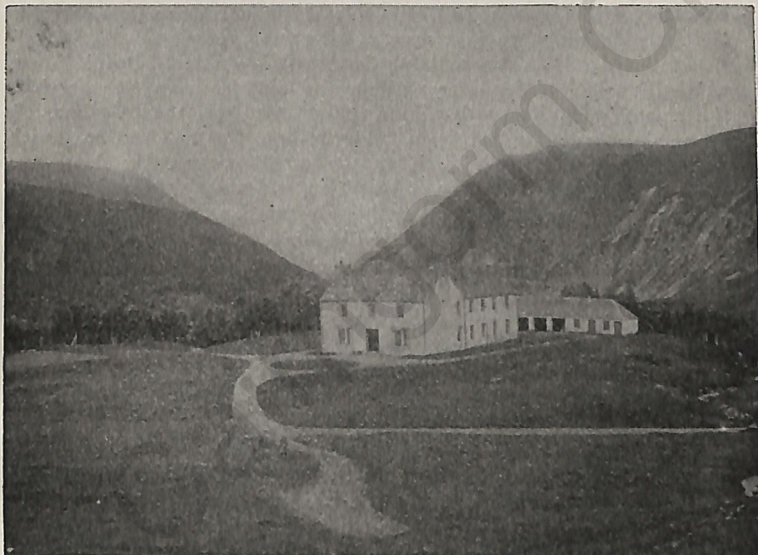


Photo. by

INCHRORY.

Mr. James Milne.

left bank. No sooner were we abreast of it than off went our boots and stockings, the Avon was forded, and then—then we encountered a formidable notice-board intimating that the path—a good bridle-track—was strictly private, the exclusive property of his Grace the Duke of Richmond and Gordon. Like all good mountaineers, we simply resolved to follow it till we were stopped. In all probability we should have been stopped at a shieling half-way down the glen had the occupant been at home, but, fortunately for us, he was absent—there was nobody about the place, though, in our innocence, we wanted to see somebody to learn how far we were from Inchrory. It is a long walk down the glen (some 10 or 12 miles, if not more); but at last we got near Inchrory. Then the path forked, and then arose

the inevitable discussion—Should we go to the right or the left? The left was chosen for some reason or other, and in a short time we found ourselves so far wrong that we were on the edge of the lawn of Inchroly Lodge, on which a party of ladies and gentlemen were gaily disporting themselves. Moore—the “Cockney”, as we designated him—was sent forward to convey our apologies and ask a direction to Tomintoul. We were placed in charge of a gillie—an act of courtesy that we highly appreciated. How we were “taken in”! The gillie led us to the cottage of the gamekeeper, and blandly informed that official that “Here’s four men come doon the glen the day”! A very angry man was that gamekeeper. “What”! he exclaimed, “Come doon the glen the day! Twa days afore the Twelfth! Ye’ve scared a’ the deer”! Our “Cockney”, in respect of the alien character of his speech, had been selected as our spokesman early in the morning when we first scented danger on seeing the “Private” notice-board. He immediately responded—“Deer! Deer! Wye, we’ve been lookin’ for deer all dye, and ain’t seen any”! At this, the assembled gillies gave a loud guffaw, and we, the “Cockney’s” companions, could not refrain from smiling, for well did we know that our presence in the glen was sufficient to drive the deer out. The gamekeeper got angrier and angrier, and we maintained a stolid silence, allowing him to exhaust his objurgations. Finally, he intimated that we should have to give him our names and addresses—a request that was immediately complied with. The four newspaper addresses made him angry again. “This is a plant”, said he; “you know there has been trouble about keeping Glen Avon private”. We disclaimed all such knowledge and all such intention as he had insinuated. Then he cooled down, and said he was only executing his orders, and, if “trouble” ensued, he was not to blame. We politely said we understood that; “and now”, we added, “kindly show us the way to Tomintoul”. No “trouble” did ensue—for one thing, the sporting tenant of Inchroly was then Lord Richard Grosvenor (now Lord Stalbridge), the chief Whip of the Liberal party, and “access to mountains” was coming to be spoken of as a part of Liberal policy. We subsequently learned that it would not have mattered which turn we took at the “fork”; had we taken the path to the right we should have landed at the gamekeeper’s—an ingenious contrivance, this forked path, for trapping trespassers. Must I own that I have since been “arrested” in much the same way for walking—quite innocently—through a deer preserve and scaring the animals off their favourite feeding-ground? But that is another story, as Kipling would say, and cannot, I am afraid, be told yet awhile.

REVIEWS.

“THE GOOD REGENT: A CHRONICLE PLAY”, by Professor BRAEMAR Sir Thomas Grainger Stewart, Edinburgh, was published IN the end of last year. A scene in the play is located on POETRY. “An eminence near Braemar—before a pavilion, October 30, 1562”, and is reminiscent of the fact that Queen Mary bestowed the earldom of Mar on her natural brother, James Stuart, afterwards Earl of Moray (the Good Regent). Moray does not seem to have been long in possession, the Erskines establishing their succession to the original Earls of Mar; but Sir Thomas Grainger Stewart takes advantage of his casual ownership to introduce descriptions of the region of Mar. He makes the Countess of Moray address her husband thus—

“ Is this domain,
All this, our own? In such a day, which seems
A second summer time, how passing fair
Is all the scene, these mountains and their glens,
The clear-cut outlines of the lofty peaks,
The wooded valleys dark with sombre pine,
Lit up by their red boughs! See, how the sun
Makes bright these golden birches! Mark the hues—
The russet brown of heather and the green
Of mossy hollows; while that winding stream
Glints in the sunshine, and the mountain tarns
Sparkle like bright eyes in the lonely moor”.

To which the Earl replies—

“ All ours, Her gracious gift.
You see that broader plain from out whose midst
Rises yon fortalice beside the Dee.
From there and onwards by Achallater,
And up the pass that leads to Angus braes,
And by Glen Shee is ours. The other stream,
By Corriemulzie, Inverey, Craigan,
By fair Dalmore, and on to that great hill,
The mighty Ben Muich Dhui, whose high head
Looks o'er the kingdom; then down by the Dee
By Invercauld, Kirkton of Crathie there,
And fair Balmoral, home where we might spend
Sweet days among our folks, remote from towns;
And Abergeldie, down towards Banchory,
Those mighty hills and lovely vales, are ours”.

ACROSS THE CAIRNGORMS IN WINTER is the title of an article that appeared in *The Sketch* on 1st February last. It briefly describes a walk through the Larig Ghru from Rothiemurchus to Braemar on 5th January—in mid-winter, that is, with snow on the ground, and with an occasional snow-storm on the way. The plucky pedestrians, in fact, were chased by blizzards. Fifteen minutes after leaving the summit of the pass, they looked round and saw “that the whole place had been simply

blotted out by a blizzard"; and, after leaving Glen Dee for Glen Lui Beg, "another blizzard swept down on us, and the Devil's Point, at the foot of which we had been standing ten minutes before, became almost completely invisible". The article, it is well known, was written by Mr. A. L. Danson, of Balliol College, Oxford (son of Rev. J. M. Danson, D.D.), who, two months later, accomplished the feat of walking from Cambridge to Oxford (82 miles) in 24 hours.

OUR PRESIDENT
AND THE
ALPINE CLUB.

Mr. JAMES BRYCE, M.P., who has been President of the Cairngorm Club since its formation in 1889, was recently elected President of the Alpine Club, the premier of all mountaineering clubs. His election was seconded by Mr. Leslie Stephen, the author of "The Playground of Europe", who recalled the early days when Mr. Bryce's famous essay on "The Holy Roman Empire" (1862) had brought him the warm approval of Professor Freeman. "I remember Mr. Bryce telling me", said Mr. Stephen, "that Freeman warned him against me as a seducer of youth. I did my best to



seduce Mr. Bryce. Freeman thought it quite right to travel in Switzerland in order to investigate the history of federal institutions, but necessary to forget that there were such things in Switzerland as mountains. I used to forget that there was anything else". Mr. Bryce has been a member of the Alpine Club for twenty years.

A caricature of Mr. Bryce as "The Chamois" (*Rupicapra Bryceii*) appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* a few weeks ago. It was accompanied by the following amusing description—"The chamois is very fond of climbing high mountains and getting on constitutional points where you cannot always follow him, because he knows more about them than you do. If you try to stop his mountain paths he gets dangerous. He often occurs on the Swiss Alps".

REVISED maps are now being issued by the Ordnance Survey, and the sheet for Aberdeen (77) has recently been published. The chief alterations are the marking of new roads, and the indication of the miles on the main roads, and of post offices and telegraph offices; and the spelling of some of the names has also been altered, and several altitudes added—*i.e.*, Tyrebagger, 497. But the revision, after all, is very slight. The dis-used name of Arthurseat, for instance, is retained, and the title Duthie Park is not substituted; no new names in the Cults district are introduced, and Bieldside even is not named. On the other hand, Belhelvie Church would seem to have dropped out of existence. The 6-inch map may be better, but the 1-inch map is no very great improvement on its predecessor.

"NIGHT
ON THE
GHRUAMACH
PASS".

THE following sensational and highly exaggerated description of the Larig Ghru appears under this title in "Scotland, Picturesque and Traditional: A Pilgrimage with Staff and Knapsack", by George Eyre-Todd—we are exceedingly sceptical of its describing an actual walk:—"Above the Linn of Dee there is only the wild mountain country, the home of the eagle and the deer. A path goes northward through the Learg Ghrumach and the Rothiemurchus Forest to Aviemore. It need not be tried, however, except by the boldest and strongest mountaineers; and even they should start upon it in the early morning. The road runs up Glen Lui, and, after leaving the Duke of Fife's shooting-box of Derry Lodge, there is no human habitation for eighteen miles. Among these glens, the loneliest corries in Scotland, the track is only to be made out by the practised eye; and in the later part of the season, if a slip were made or a leg broken, the wanderer would have the pleasant prospect of lying probably for several weeks before anyone else came that way. There is also the danger—no slight one in the rutting season—of being attacked and overpowered by some furious stag. To be overtaken by night on that mountain pass is an experience not to be forgotten. From corrie to corrie in the gathering darkness echoes the strange and eerie belling of the deer; and high overhead on the steep side of Ben Muich Dhui a long, hoarse roar

once and again betokens the fall of a stone avalanche. Besides these there is no sound but the rushing of the lonely waters at the bottom of the pass. Sometimes a fine sight is to be seen as one comes suddenly round a shoulder of the mountain and surprises a herd of deer. Instantly, on the appearance of danger, the stag gallops to the front. At his back, the hinds run together, like the members of a foraging party surprised. Then they go off finely in single file over the brow of the next knoll, and disappear. Higher up the pass even the belling of the deer is heard no more—their last sentinel has been left behind; for they gather in the green bottoms of the corries at night to feed. Still higher, and the path narrows to a chasm, and walking ceases. For miles one has to scramble along the steep sides of old avalanches and screes, sometimes among great boulders where hands and knees have to be used, sometimes along precarious slopes of loose gravel where every footstep threatens to set the mass moving and bring the whole mountainside down to bury the adventurer. Stones loosened by the foot on these sliding screes go rushing downwards, starting an avalanche on the way, till they hurl themselves with an ominous plunge into the black tarns at the bottom. On the left of the narrow pass rise the precipices of Braeriach, and on the right those of Muich Dhui, the second highest mountain in Scotland. Screes and ancient boulder-falls from the two meet and fill up the bottom of the chasm. By these the stream is dammed into tarns and pools; and these tarns are the Pools of Dee. The Learg Ghrumach is said to have been one of the routes used by Highland cattle raiders and drovers in ancient times; but beasts and men must have been strangely nimble, and must have had strong motives for getting from one part of the country to another in haste when this was found a convenient road. If the passage along these tremendous boulder-falls is difficult during the day, it is much more so at night, when, if the expected moonlight is obscured by mists that drift lower and lower on the precipices overhead, it is apt to become almost alarming. Fatigue, however, is not felt in that rare mountain air; and, with a well-filled flask and a pocketful of chocolate and oatcake, the pangs of hunger can be staved off successfully enough. At last the summit of the pass is reached, close on three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the march is crossed into Inverness-shire. Not even the tinkle of a rill is to be heard here; and amid the shadows of night and the solitude of the mountains a great solemnity presses upon the heart. There is a long tramp yet of a dozen miles and more, through heather hags and across the beds of burns. But by-and-bye at intervals, to an eye accustomed to the hills, a line of exposed shingle over a knoll face, or a bare bit of rock among the heather, betokens the place where former feet have trod. These traces lead far down among the scattered trees and wide heather spaces of the Rothiemurchus Forest, and there the path is found—a mossy ride, carpeted for miles with warm pine-needles. Here the burns run quietly through hollow ways; and the mystery of the night, with its shadows and its drifting scents of fir and fern, the stillness broken only at times

by the stir of some wild creature among the grass-tufts, strikes the wanderer with an elfin charm. Once and again, perhaps, in the dimness of the clouded moonlight, a shadow passes silently across an open space, and seems ghostly enough till one remembers that these forest glades are favourite couching-places of the deer. At last a human dwelling is reached, a forester's house among the woods, with all asleep without and within. Away on the left, below, through the trees, appears the white shimmer of water—Loch an Eilein, 'the loch of the island'. Three miles farther, through a forest country, with sleeping cottage and clachan here and there in the shadow, and the road crosses the rushing Spey. Then there is the wakening up of a sleepy host at the Inn of Linwilg, and the satisfaction, most perfect, after a long mountain climb, of sinking to sleep with a single sigh the moment the head touches the pillow".

LOYAL
LOCHABER, by W. Drummond-Norie (published by Morison Brothers, 52 Renfield Street, Glasgow), is a volume, "historical, genealogical, and traditionary", which has deservedly met with an exceedingly favourable reception from the Ness to the Thames. The author is quite at home with his subject, and carries out in a most satisfactory manner the task he thus imposes on himself:—"It has been my endeavour to collect, in the compass of this volume, all that is of most interest in the authentic history and traditionary lore of Lochaber, and to rescue from possible oblivion its many old-world stories and quaint legends, which another generation will probably have forgotten amid the inrush of the questionable civilising influences of Sassenach tourists". Hillmen will have one grumble at the author—the almost infinitesimal space devoted to description of the numerous mountains of Lochaber; while "the general reader" will miss a map of the district. The latter must be a simple omission, for the book is profusely illustrated—the four small Ben and Glen Nevis views we reproduce giving no indication either of the size or quality of the illustrations.

The excerpt which follows is from the Introduction. It is an excellent piece of word-painting: we should say here that the author makes his own brush contribute to the value of "Loyal Lochaber":

"Lochaber! Unsympathetic indeed is the man, be he Highlander or Lowlander, Gael or Sassenach, who does not experience a thrill of pleasurable emotion, tinged perhaps with sadness, when this name falls upon his ears; what visions of lofty mountains lifting their mighty summits to the clouds does it not conjure up before the imagination; we see as in a dream stretches of purple moorland, dotted here and there with snow-white sheep; blue sparkling lochs embosomed among the hills, reflecting in their mirrored surface the brown sails of the fishing boats; turbulent rivers rushing merrily along over rocks and pebbles, making sweet music as they go to join the sea; foaming cataracts tumbling noisily from deep corries in the mountain sides, sending up clouds of smoke-like spray, in which all the colours of the rainbow gleam; wee murmuring burns, where the brown trout love to dwell, flowing between banks all thick with

ferns and foxgloves, their tuneful voices helping to swell the great harmonious Lobgesang to the Almighty.

"If this is the vision, how much more beautiful is the reality. Let us take our stand upon the great green hill of Meall an t-suidhe, that forms, as it were, the first step in the toilsome ascent of giant Ben Nevis, and is appropriately named 'the hill of sitting or resting'; here let us pause for a few moments and survey the magnificent prospect that lies before us. The air around is fragrant with the scent of wild thyme and bog myrtle, with which the ground at our feet is covered; great clumps of purple heather, growing here in wild luxuriance, give the one touch of local colour that is wanted to harmonise with the tints of the surrounding vegetation. Among the heather the bees go humming merrily as they extract the honey from its tiny bells. The sheep are grazing lazily in the shade of the great lichen-covered boulders, or, perched upon some inaccessible crag, nibble the short sweet grass they have discovered in the clefts of the rocks, regardless of the precipice yawning at their feet. A great silence, like the silence of some immense cathedral, is all about us, broken only at rare intervals by the shrill scream of an eagle, as it swoops down from its rocky eyry upon its unsuspecting prey in the glen beneath; this and the occasional harsh crow of the grouse cock among the heather, are the only sounds that fall upon our ears".

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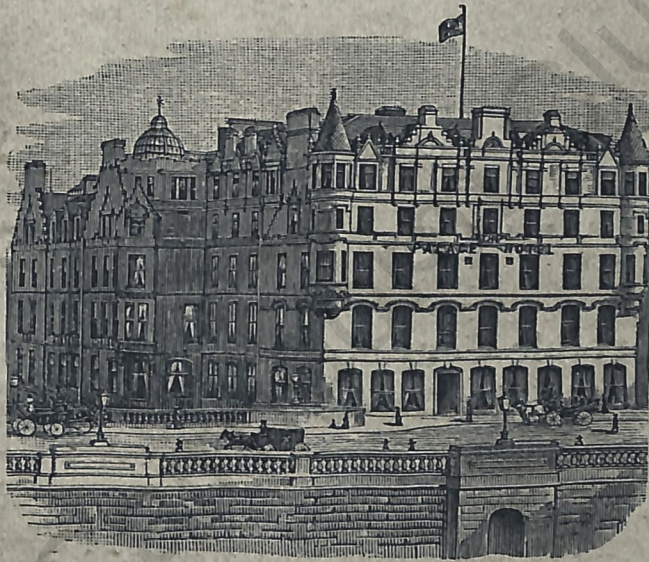
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