

# THE Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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THE  
Cairngorm Club Journal

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Cairngorm Club Journal

EDITED BY  
ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE

VOL. III.

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THE CAIRNGORM CLUB  
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**RULES.**

I.—The Club shall be called "THE CAIRNGORM CLUB."

II.—The objects of the Club shall be: (1) to encourage mountain climbing in Scotland, with special reference to the Cairngorm group of mountains; (2) to procure and impart scientific, topographical, and historical information about the Scottish mountains, their superficial physical features, minerals, rocks plants, animals, meteorology, ancient and modern public routes giving access to and

across them, and the meaning of their local place names, literature, and legendary, or folk-lore ; (3) to consider the right of access to Scottish mountains, and to adopt such measures in regard thereto as the Club may deem advisable ; and (4) to issue a Journal or such other publications as may be considered advantageous to the Club.

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

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

V.—The annual general meeting of the Club shall be held in December for the following business: (1) to receive the Treasurer's accounts for the year to 30th November ; (2) to elect the Office-Bearers and Committee for the next year ; (3) to fix the excursions for the ensuing year ; and (4) to transact any other necessary business. Special general meetings shall be held whenever deemed necessary by the Chairman, or on a requisition by at least ten members of the Club. General meetings shall have power to deprive of membership of the Club any member who may, in the opinion of the Committee, have misconducted himself.

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

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

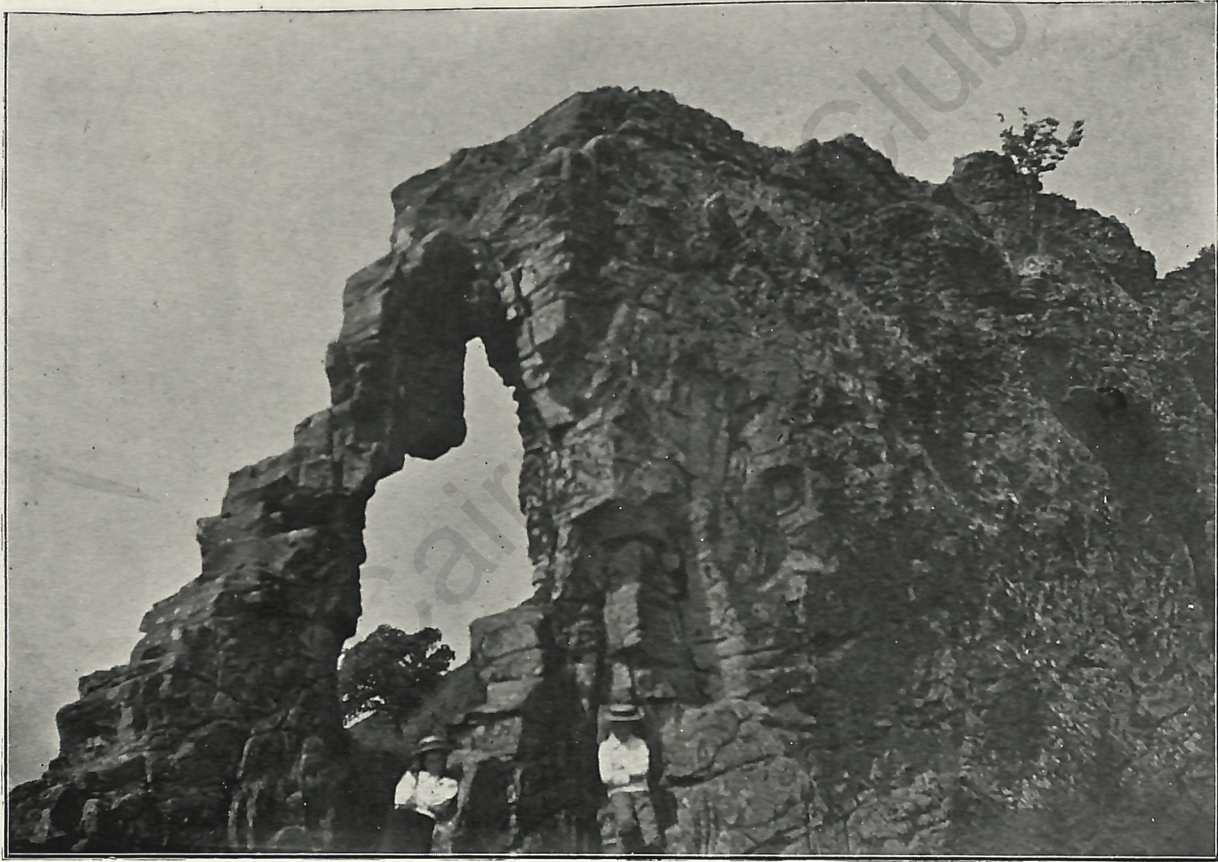
VIII.—The entry money of members shall be 10s. 6d., and the annual subscription 5s. Members shall receive copies of all current issues of the Club publications.

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

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

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





*From a Photo.*

THE WISHING ROCK, NEAR FIUNARY.

*By T. R. Gillies.*

THE  
**Cairngorm Club Journal.**

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Vol. III.

JANUARY, 1900.

No. 14.

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LOCHABER IN FEBRUARY.

By A. C. WATERS.

IN February last I was induced to join E. M. Corner for a few days' climbing in Lochaber. I had no previous experience of winter climbing, and an ice axe was to me a wonderful and mysterious weapon. I brought mine to King's Cross Station carefully shrouded in brown paper, and took the earliest opportunity of concealing it in the luggage rack. Corner, with the moral courage of a man who has climbed on snow before, brought his openly and unblushingly; thus, in spite of my modesty, the curious might know to what special variety of lunatics we belonged.

We arrived at Spean Bridge about noon on the 17th, and forthwith made several daring ascents—on paper. The morning of the 18th, however, found us in grim earnest. We had decided that Stob Ban (3217) must be our first victim, and at 8.15 we started with rope, rucksack, and axes to attack him. The weather was promising—but what it promised is another matter. We did our best, at least until we were clear of the houses, to look as if we generally started in a cold drizzle, and rather preferred it than otherwise. By the time that our wanderings across the moor had brought us to the Larig road the drizzle had changed to sleet, which in its turn gave way to snow. We kept to the

road beyond the top of the pass, and until we reached a foot-bridge (marked 1544 feet on the map) over a burn a short distance past an unoccupied hut. Here a halt was called for our second breakfast. It was a somewhat chilly banquet, and we were not tempted to linger unduly. The next section of the journey was through soft snow of uncertain depth. Our occasionally erratic gait was due to these uncertainties, and not to errors of diet at the recent meal. As we plunged on, the wind increased, the slope grew steeper, and the snow under foot firmer. The snow that was not under foot got into our eyes, and plastered our clothes and our faces. Of this I took but slight heed, for Corner was kicking steps, and my one aim in life was to fit my boots into them. The axes were, of course, absolutely necessary to steady us, but in one place only was the snow so hard as to necessitate the cutting of a few steps. The cairn was very welcome when it appeared a few yards ahead out of the general whiteness, but we repressed the desire to linger in its neighbourhood; for, although the weather was improving, the wind was furious and bitterly cold. A suggestion that we should return by way of Claurigh was not received with enthusiasm by the novice of the party, and was, therefore, withdrawn. Thus far we had not used the rope; and had we both been keen to glissade we should not have used it now. I, however, flatly declined to be initiated into the art by launching untethered into space. We accordingly went in couples until the slope eased off. The plunge across the soft snow was taken much more quickly than before, and we soon regained the footbridge. In the meantime the snow had ceased, and the clouds had begun to break up. From this point we strolled back at leisure, taking one more rest on a big boulder, from which we watched the changing sunset tints. We found that the road led us almost directly to the spot where the railway crosses the Spean, and from there to Spean Bridge. The 1-inch Ordnance, and Bartholomew's map may have been correct in pre-historic times, but they certainly do not show the road as it exists now.

A bigger day's work was projected for the 19th. This

was no less than to tramp across the moor into the big corrie between Aonach Beag and Sgor a' Choinnich Beag, to climb the latter mountain (3175), and to return over Sgor a' Choinnich Mor (3603), Stob Coire an Easain (3545), and Beinn na Socaich (3000 contour). The weather was magnificent: overhead a brilliant sky; under foot a frozen moor, which was all good to walk on; and hardly a breath of wind even on the tops. The start was made at 8.20. We got on the snow slopes about mid-day, and remained on snow until dusk. The views were clear and splendid all day. As for the sunset colours over sky and snow—there can never have been quite such a gorgeous display before, nor can there ever be again. We deeply pitied the millions of people who had missed the one great chance of their lives. But the colours faded long before we were off the slopes of Beinn na Socaich. We were on the right bank of the Cour, and we had to get on the left bank. More than once both of us clearly saw a bridge not far ahead, and each time that bridge resolved itself into detached rocks on our approach. At last, to our relief, a bridge suddenly sprang into existence close to us; on the other side was a track, and although this was sometimes difficult to keep in the faint light, we never lost it for long. At about 7 p.m. we crossed a stream on stepping stones, near Lianachan. Here a final halt was called, during which the coil of rope, which had been thrown on the ground, froze stiff. Nothing more remains to be recorded than the dogged perseverance with which we tramped on until 8.20, when we reached the hotel and our dinner.

The 20th was by common consent devoted to loafing and watching the hills from a distance. It was as bright and clear as on the previous day, but the light breeze had given way to a gale, which was whirling the snow aloft from the ridges and cornices in enormous spirals. Meanwhile plans were laid for the next three days. Our original intention had been to make the farm-house at Moy our headquarters, and Creag Meaghaidh our main object of attack. But they were unable to take us in at Moy; hence our migration to Spean Bridge. Still Creag Meaghaidh

and other heights near it must be climbed; and the only available plan of campaign involved leaving Spean Bridge by train at 7.45 a.m., and returning at 8.15 p.m. Lest I should seem to insist overmuch on our virtues, let it be recorded once for all that we caught that early train on each of the three mornings.

On the 21st we went by rail to Tulloch, walked about a mile beyond Roughburn, and then struck up towards Coire na h-Uamha. A fine-looking ridge runs up from the Coire to the middle top (3394) of Beinn a' Chaorruinn. There was a choice of routes to the summit: we could shape a course which was practically all snow, or we could take the rocky edge of the ridge. And here I seized the opportunity of buying some experience. I unhesitatingly voted for the rocks, as things one could trust to, while snow might play no end of tricks. So we started. First there was a small snow slope—150 or 200 feet. And, having chosen the route, I gallantly led the party. We roped (for the safety of the second man, of course); and after kicking steps for a part of the way, I proceeded to cut them for the remainder. Corner made remarks about these latter. I will not go so far as to say those remarks were unfit for publication; but, as I have reason to believe that they were intended for private circulation only, they shall not be repeated here. There may be methods of cutting steps without tiring one's wrists; I must have been using some other methods. At any rate, we had hardly reached my goal—the rocks—(after which all would be easy)—when I was willing to let Corner take a turn, just to warm himself. We reached the rocks; and then a few new factors entered into the problem. The snow became shallow, and underneath it was frozen turf, which is as hard and as slippery as anything in nature. In addition to this, the rocks were coated with ice, excepting where the east wind appeared to have removed the glaze. I think Corner was happy then. He worked the way to the top without a rest, except when he anchored himself in order to give me the "moral support" of the rope in following him. It was, however, a thoroughly enjoyable scramble: difficult enough for the inexperienced, and possibly

dangerous to the careless ; but we were not careless, and one at least of us was capable of leading the way. On reaching an exposed shoulder of the ridge, we suddenly encountered about a gale and a half of wind, but the mountain soon sheltered us again. On the top the wind was tremendous ; and when we reached the north summit (3422) we found ourselves in the midst of a witches' frolic, such as we had seen from a distance on the previous day. The descent was started from the south top (3437), and we reached the road at Roughburn. We knew that tea awaited us at the station-master's house at Tulloch ; and, better still, we knew we had time to drink it, and to stretch our legs afterwards.

On the 22nd we hired a trap at Tulloch, and drove a little beyond the lower end of Loch Laggan, arranging that the trap should meet us at Moy in the afternoon. Our way was up the Coire Coille na Froise. It was a toilsome trudge, and we took very little rest until we reached the lochan at the head of the Coire, which lochan was frozen over. We were at first puzzled as to the position of the outlet. At last it dawned on us that we had been walking on the snow which covered the burn. This point settled, we encamped for lunch, breaking a hole in the ice for our water supply. On the opposite side of the lochan is a large gully, which was, of course, full of snow. Corner set the example of walking straight across the lochan to the foot of the gully. The lower part of the gully (for about 200 feet) was easily walked up by kicking into the snow, but after that the slope became steeper and the surface harder. We, therefore, roped, and Corner led the way, his step-cutting this time being subject to expert criticisms based on my own practical knowledge. A short rush through soft snow at the top brought us within an easy walk of Meall Coire Coille na Froise (3299). From this point we had a wonderfully clear view of the Cairngorms. The range from Braeriach to Cairn Toul stood out well, while behind them Ben Muich Dhui marked the sky line. We visited seven out of the eight tops on Creag Meaghaidh, including, of course, the principal summit (3700), and finishing with An Cearcallach (3250). Corner added Crom Leathad (3441) to his score. The descent was made to Moy.

Our exploits on the 23rd can scarcely be termed heroic. The train took us to Corroul (1354), from which we walked up and down the easy slopes of Carn Dearg (3084), Sgor Gaibhre (3128), and Sgor Choinnich (3040). One would hardly guess that these round-topped humps, nearly surrounded as they are by greater heights, form part of the main watershed of Scotland; but a glance at the map will show that the water which flows down one side finds its way by Lochs Ericht and Rannoch to the Tay, while the water which flows down the other side joins the Spean by way of Lochs Ossian and Gulbin. There is one other thing to be said for the Corroul Hills. They afford a very fine view in profile of the several ranges between the south end of Loch Treig and Ben Nevis, the greater but more distant mountains towering in succession over those which are smaller but nearer. This, our last day, was really a lazy one. Indeed, it was necessary to prolong our rests, in order to fill out the time. I am afraid it must also be confessed that we were not altogether disinclined for those rests. Still, we may fairly claim that the aggregate of work done within six consecutive days was creditable. The interest and enjoyment were more than worth the journeys to and from London, and we went back, as we have always done, with a deepened love for the Scottish mountains.

## A NIGHT IN THE LARIG.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

"Vague miles of moorland behind us lay  
Scarce traversed ere the day  
Sank, and the sun forsook us at our need,  
Belated.

All night long, . . . . .  
Skies and waters were soft and deep:  
Shadow clothed them, and silence made  
Soundless music of dream and shade:  
All above us, the livelong night,  
Shadow, kindled with sense of light;  
All around us, the brief night long,  
Silence, laden with sense of song".

—SWINBURNE.

How I came to spend a night in the Larig (Learg Ghrumach) is, like all misadventures in the mountains, a little inexplicable on calm reflection. I suppose over-confidence was largely accountable for the occurrence—over-confidence, combined with miscalculation (or rather, perhaps, neglect of calculation) of time and distance, particularly time. Nightfall is comparatively early in September, and due allowance had not been made for that circumstance, for it was on Friday, 1st September last, that the mishap of getting benighted in the Larig befell me—a mishap, the discomfort and danger of which were doubled by my having dragged my wife into it. A night out on a hillside is (or ought to be) nothing to a man, but the experience has a different complexion when you unwittingly subject a lady to participation in it. The romance of the situation is then extinguished by the remorse you feel for the plight into which you have brought your companion.

After all, the programme projected for the day on which we got benighted, though a big one, was perfectly feasible—provided sufficient time were allowed. Driving from Loch an Eilein to Glenmore Lodge by the forest road to



Coylum Bridge, we were to ascend Cairngorm, walk over to Ben Muich Dhui, descend into the Larig, and walk along the Pass to Auldrue, and back by the forest road to Loch an Eilein. Our first misfortune lay in not making an early enough start, due to the reluctance of one of us (I shall not say which) to get up "at an ungodly hour in the morning". We did not set out till 10 a.m., and did not begin the walk from Glenmore Lodge till 11.30. Then, when we got to the point where the track up Cairngorm leaves the private path to the forest, a gillie politely conveyed to us an equally polite request from the Marquis of Zetland that we would halt for half an hour so as not to come in view of a herd of deer his lordship was stalking. It would have been churlish to refuse, but, alas! that sacrifice of precious time to the interests of sport involved us in "a night out" in the Larig! Deerstalkers and other "gunners" will please note that not all pedestrians are the "spoil-sports" so often imagined.

Not forcing the pace, and lunching *en route* (and during a heavy shower of rain), it was 3 p.m. before we reached the summit of Cairngorm. Here, a companion left us—to make faster walking, as he was to cross Ben Muich Dhui and go on to Inverey. The afternoon being exceedingly fine, we walked rather leisurely over the ground between Cairngorm and Ben Muich Dhui—not quite the level plateau, by the way, that it looks as viewed from either summit. We gave up our original intention of going to the top of Ben Muich Dhui, and made instead for the depression leading to the Allt Choire Mhoir, descending by the side of the burn, and reaching the Larig about 6 o'clock. We finished what eatables we had with us at one of the Pools of Dee (again in another heavy shower of rain), and then walked steadily along the Pass, quickening our pace as the gloom of nightfall began to descend on the narrow ravine through which we were making our way. It soon became a race against time—a race to get out of the Pass before complete darkness overtook us. We duly got past the dark, beetling crags of the Lurcher's Rock—which takes more time to do than one would think—and we crossed the

Larig Burn in the fading light about half-past 8. It was with a sigh of relief that, having thus cleared the defile, we got on to the high ground on the right bank of the burn, but the satisfaction was of very short duration. Gradually, we lost all sight of the track, though managing somehow to keep on it or in its direction for some time—now losing it, then regaining it. My knowledge of the general line of the path enabled us to get past the two or three knolls on the left-hand side—one, it may be remembered, scarred by a landslip; but, shortly after doing that, we were obliged to give up the attempt to make further progress. We were undoubtedly off the track, and could not possibly recover it in the darkness. We were on very rough ground—clumps of heather of uncertain height and width alternating with still more dubious bits of bog and large stones and tree-roots; a false step in the dark might have involved serious consequences. A halt must be made—there was no other alternative. We should just have to wait where we were till the light of morning revealed the path again, or at least enabled us to make our way in safety. So, moving a little up the hillside on our right, and, eschewing the heather, which was too wet to permit of our lying on it, about 9.30 we selected as suitable a stone for a night's repose (!) as we could find, and there we sat down, to spend the hours intervening before morning with such fortitude and complacency as we could command.

What a predicament! Here we were (as I judged at the time, and as was revealed next morning) opposite Carn Elrick, and just outside the line of straggling trees that marks the limits of the forest. We were only two miles from the post that indicates the entrance to the Pass; and had we but gained that well-known point, we could readily have made our way home, even in the dark, by the forest road—a road with which we had become perfectly familiar. Oh! for that half-hour so light-heartedly surrendered to oblige Lord Zetland! We were, of course, lightly clad, and had no "wraps" except mackintoshes; our boots and stockings were soaking wet. Spirits we had none (probably a good thing on the whole, though a "nip" would have been

very acceptable), and, as has been indicated, our meagre luncheon had long since been exhausted. I had several cigars remaining of a handful given me by an Aberdeen friend with whom we parted at Glenmore Lodge, but I had expended my matches in looking for the path. Fortunately, one was left, and, lighting a cigar, I indulged in what the Americans call a "chain-smoke", lighting a second cigar from the first, and so on. The best cigars, however, provide little alleviation of a weary wait for daylight, and of the discomfort of resting (!) on a hard, cold stone. But they helped materially, along with the sweet influences of the night, to assuage the rather angry feelings with which I first contemplated the situation. Disappointment, irritation, mortification—I experienced all in turn; but these feelings gradually gave way to something like philosophic calm. "What can't be cured must be endured" is a maxim of universal application; and, "stranded" in the Larig at night by mischance, you must e'en put up with it till morning. So long as it did not rain, no serious result was likely to ensue to two healthy people, fortified by a fortnight's life in "the open" in Strathspey. The night, fortunately, was exceedingly mild, stars were in the sky, and, though clouds occasionally swept along, causing some anxiety, they passed overhead with never "a spit" in them. There was a delicious stillness, not sensibly marred—in a sense, even added to—by the soft murmuring of the Larig Burn and a little contributory coursing down a corrie opposite us, the two streams, curiously enough, sounding different notes. One by one, distant lights in the Spey valley were extinguished; and then, amid the all-prevailing darkness, shone out fitfully at times bright, flickering, white or bluish-coloured lights at various spots, which I am assured could only be attributable to ignis fatuus, or "will o' the wisp"—I declare it was worth sitting out a night in the Larig to witness this natural phenomenon. Now and again, the melancholy "toot" of a locomotive whistle would be heard, and the roll of a train on the rails would be distinctly borne on the air. Beyond these sounds, and the occasional call of a bird, nothing else broke the stillness. The absolute quiet was of

itself sufficient to induce slumber, but the hardness of the couch and the chilliness of the early hours were antagonistic, and, at the best, we only dozed, even if we did that.

The proverbial "darkest hour before the dawn" was duly experienced, and then daylight broke. With its appearance, a little after 4 o'clock, we "got up", but only to be reminded that there is light in the sky long before there is light on the ground. We had to wait fully half an hour before the light was sufficient to enable us to see our way. Then we speedily regained the track—only a few yards distant, of course—and, making our feet our friends, and walking at a swinging pace, we reached our temporary quarters a little after 6 o'clock. I have only to add that neither of us suffered in the slightest degree from our night's exposure in the Larig, which we are now disposed to regard as rather an enjoyable adventure, fraught with new experiences.

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#### MOUNTAINEERING.

God's hills, high places where is found solace  
For jaded mind and aching heart, and where,  
Above the heat and turmoil, rid of care,  
We hold communion for a little space  
With higher things; and, standing face to face  
With duty and with life, our lucent eyes  
Drink in the majesty, and recognise  
The clear-flashed truth that there is plenteous grace  
Below, around, above. So scaled the Christ  
The lofty Hermon, crowned with winters' snows,  
Thereon to keep with helpful spirits tryst  
And get fresh courage and a brief repose—  
The Mountaineer in glist'ring raiment trod,  
And was declared to be the Son of God.

G. W.

## A WEEK-END IN GLEN MUICK.

“ Lands may be fair ayont the sea,  
But Hielan' hills and lochs for me ”.

LOCHNAGAR, Cairn Bannoch, and Broad Cairn have received not a little attention from Club members, but their glories are inexhaustible, and a long day on these heights admits of numerous and pleasant variations. We were fortunate in having Inschnabobart for headquarters; its situation as a base for negotiating the White Mounth leaves little to be desired.

As time was limited and impedimenta heavy, Sluie-vannachie was induced to hand over—possibly not without a certain misgiving—to a hill quartette, on a certain afternoon last August, a decent horse and an irreproachable dog-cart. The reins were presented to the Magistrate, who did not, it may be mentioned, quite disgrace himself on the box-seat, but the animal had evidently been in Glen Muick before, and was no stranger to the ford. “The merciful man” hurries no man's cattle, at least going up a glen; the pace, however, on the return journey was not quite so deliberate, for we had to catch the first train. But even then there was no cause for alarm, as seven stags we passed, just outside the south end of the Linn wood, did not think it necessary to move from a succulent patch scarcely thirty yards off the road.

The prospect of a long day on the hills generally entails a lengthened sederunt the previous evening; the present occasion was no exception to custom. After dinner a modest bowl of punch was brewed by the Accountant, and soon thereafter smoke and conversation filled the little parlour. We discussed the Gaelic language—perhaps the more freely as none of us understands it; we revelled in Highland lore; and as for mountaineering experiences, an outsider might have taken us for Alpine guides who had not confined their professional feats to their own country! We varied our

enjoyment by a late walk to the head of Strath Girnock, for the evening was tempting, and the perfume of pines and birches irresistible. The bloom of the heather, too, quite captivated us. The world seemed very good then, and the recollection of that walk is a pleasant memory of our little holiday.

We were up betimes the following morning, and discussed leisurely and seriously a sumptuous breakfast, the foundation of the day's work being oatmeal in one shape or other. The hillman climbs on his breakfast, for, as a rule, he has given up carrying meat sandwiches. Jam sandwiches, cunningly made, are now preferred for lunch—a function which need not be completed at one halt. We entered the Lochnagar path in the best of spirits. The Eagle's Eyrie passed, a bee-line was made across Clashrathan, and we feasted on blae- and crow-berries—the former an exceptionally rich crop. Nor were we without a good many tufts of white heather, which seemed more abundant than usual.

Making for the Saddle between Cuidhe Crom and Meikle Pap, we descended to the loch—mist coquetting with the summit of the crags the while. A pleasing incident was afforded by a little herd of hinds with fawns as they picked their way over the boulders on the right shore of the loch. We had unwittingly stalked them to pretty close quarters, and so had an excellent opportunity of admiring their grace and nimbleness. Across scree and over incidental crags, we rounded the head of the loch, and made for the mouth of the Black Spout. There was much to look at and admire. The Botanist was in clover, finding great spoil. Parsley Fern has surely a nursery here: it looked so temptingly beautiful that we plucked more than we carried home, its delicacy being partly lost when the plant was torn from its mountain setting. We also observed with interest "London Pride", all the more so when the Botanist told us that it is known in Ireland as "Dublin Pride"—Scotland being most unaccountably left out in the cold! Fortunately (as the Advocate reminded us) there are several Scottish M.P.'s in the Club, so doubtless this grievance will in due time receive proper attention. The trenches and gullies were eloquent

to us, while higher up the weathering of the rocks afforded matter for speculation. The Magistrate picked up a fair specimen of a smoke-coloured Cairngorm among some recently-fallen *debris*, and as the others were not so fortunate, they naturally suggested the virtues of Socialism—but in vain!

Near the top of the Black Spout a jutting rock is encountered; here our party divided, taking right and left respectively. The rock seemed insignificant enough, yet it sufficed to keep the one half of us in doubt for several minutes as to the safety of the other. For suddenly those on the right heard a rumbling and a roaring, succeeded by a fall of *debris*. No answer was returned to their shouts of inquiry—as they were not heard; so there was a certain relief when the *debris* was not followed by a man or two. It appeared that the “explorers”, finding themselves faced by a bank of wet clay, had retraced their steps, with the result that they sent down stones and gravel which had been loosened by the recent rains.

The plateau gained, we held across to the Poacher's Well and lunched. A man with a spade would be welcome there, and in half an hour would materially improve the outflow of the spring. As we rested we saw that the Cac Carn Beag was holding a reception, a large company having just come up from Ballater. The weather was not propitious for a perfect prospect from the summit, but we had hardly turned our faces Braemar-wards when the sun came out, and the day really began. Our programme had not been firmly drawn out, and so we accused the Accountant, who had now taken the lead, of simply following a shepherd who was on his way to Glen Callater with half a dozen lost sheep, which we had assisted in finding. So a halt was called, and the strolling hillmen took counsel together on the heather. As we sat we looked towards the head-streams of the Muick, and the Advocate referred to the grim tragedy which—if tradition is to be believed—took place there. One of these burns is known (in Gaelic) as the Burn of the Two Birch Trees; there a laird of Abergeldie overtook two caterans with some of his cattle. He dealt out summary justice to

the reivers, for the trees were suggestive to one who had the power of pit and gallows.

We now came down from our 3250 feet of elevation, and, as the spirit of the mountains was on us, four big boys let loose from school, scampered to the Dubh Loch Burn, and lolled on its banks, or lay in its broad, rocky channel, where it is uncovered by water. But Cairn Bannoch had to be ascended, and so with fresh vigour we soon started on a go-as-you-please climb to its summit. Some of us kept as long as possible by a lively runnel, for the sun was broiling, and cooling drinks were grateful. The shadow of the cairn was appreciated, while numerous cloud-berries and other trifles (such as the Least Willow) in the immediate vicinity seemed to excite the Botanist.

The walk thence to Broad Cairn is over an excellent golf course, smooth enough in many places for "a coach and four". We kept pretty much by the county march—on our right the head-streams of the South Esk, on the left the Dubh Loch (not visible here). The precipices, "stark and grim", of this tarn are not, of course, seen to advantage from the south; we had to indulge in backward glances for them, as well as for a peep of the loch itself. We were not favoured with an appearance of the Spectre Stag; the day was yet young:

" And to this hour, old shepherds say,  
When moon and star succeed to day,  
Is seen upon the Dubh Loch's scaur  
The Spectre Stag of Lochnagar".

We made short stay on Broad Cairn, but if time had permitted we should have crossed over to Loch Esk, which lay so temptingly a "lang mile" to the south. The first part of the descent towards the east is over boulders, but that accomplished, it may be taken at a run. But when Loch Muick first came into view, far below us, we had to halt, for the remembrance of such a scene must be well secured in the treasure-house of one's memory. The Journal, however, has already described this neighbourhood; we content ourselves, therefore, with saying that the first glimpse of Loch Muick was the grandest feature of a notable day. As



we neared the end of our circular mountain tour we were the better able to enjoy the magnificence of nature, for we felt "fitter" than when we started, and the buoyancy of our spirits astonished even ourselves. Verily, mountaineering is something more than a pastime.

In the stillness of the evening the Allt an Dubh Loch and the Glas Allt made a pleasant noise as we made for the Black Burn by the Bachnagairn path. The Glasallt Shiel looked charming—that goes without saying; it is nowhere seen so well as from the upper track on the south side of Loch Muick. The loch was without ripple, and as the sun settled down in the west the home-stretch was glorious.

We raced down the zig-zag to the Black Burn Bridge, the Advocate leading, the Accountant a good second; but the former occasionally left the course, ignoring the path—a circumstance which brought the Botanist to the front with a little anecdote. An Englishman, with his stalker, was returning to Glen Muick after a day's sport at Bachnagairn. The gillie had naturally had a severer day's work than the sportsman, who, as it happened, was a capital walker. The two kept closely together in the homeward walk, and the Highlander soon began to realise that he was being challenged. Darkness was coming on, and so he bided his time. When the zig-zag above the Black Burn Bridge was reached the gentleman was allowed, apparently, to get in advance; nevertheless, when he got to Lochend, he was astonished to find his stalker sitting at the door of the little shiel. Donald had, favoured by darkness, dispensed with the zig-zag, and thus was able to get ahead of the Sassenach.

We kept "a trot for the avenue", spite of our long day. Indeed, as is generally the case with hillmen, we returned at a smarter rate than we had cared to use in the morning; but, then, we wanted dinner, and Miss Cooper knows how to cater for hungry men.

JAMES H. BROWN.

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

## THE ORDNANCE SURVEY AND THE CAIRNGORMS.

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

THE Ordnance Survey publishes maps of the Cairngorms in three forms:—6-inch, 1-inch outline, and 1-inch hachured. The forms are here placed in the reverse order of their satisfactory character. The 6-inch maps are deplorably defective for all the higher ground; they show no contours; they give a very inadequate and often misleading selection of heights; when they represent crags they do so in a curiously indefinite and incomplete manner; they are decidedly lacking in place-names; and, generally speaking, they are quite disappointing to the mountaineer. The Ordnance Survey explains these facts by saying that the intention was not to produce a topographical map, but only a map to show the civil divisions of the country, and to facilitate transactions in land. The two forms of the 1-inch map are much more satisfactory; indeed, the hachured map is a really admirable specimen of orographic cartography, its only real drawback being the smallness of its scale. But in the Cairngorms both these small-scale maps suffer from lack of place-names, many more of which should and easily could appear.

Now, one of the prime requisites of a mountaineer is a good map of his district, and it seems quite certain that we who are interested in the Cairngorms shall not get a satisfactory mapping of our ground unless we bring pressure to bear on the authorities, and ourselves lend not a little assistance. And who are the authorities? Well, the Ordnance Survey is at present under the control of the Board of Agriculture, the head of which is Mr. Long, M.P. for the West Derby division of Liverpool; the Director-General of the Survey is Colonel Johnston. Between these two stools we rather seem likely to come to the ground, for obviously the gentleman at the Board of Agriculture is not

necessarily an expert in maps, or specially acquainted with or interested in the Survey that has been put under his charge; and the Director-General is an executive officer, holding his office for only a limited time, with, apparently, no power of initiative, and bound by that red tape that hampers all our officials. Of course, in our admirable Constitution everything is done under the supervision of the High Court of Parliament, and if our M.P.'s who vote the supplies—insufficient, alas!—for the Survey, knew enough about the matter, there might be some hope that they would demand and insist that all our land should be adequately and beautifully mapped. There need be no doubt as to the entire ability of our Ordnance Surveyors to produce maps of any degree of excellency that may be demanded. The service that produces the 1-inch hachured map can produce if needful a 6-inch hachured map—and the British Association has asked that it shall do so.

Among our readers are many who can bring pressure to bear on M.P.'s—possibly there are M.P.'s themselves—and to all we appeal for help in this matter. The thing most needed just now is the adequate mapping of the higher ground on the 6-inch scale, and every opportunity should be taken to show up the present defective condition of the Ordnance Survey maps in this respect.

But short of this much may be done. The maps of Scotland are now undergoing revision, and the Cairngorm district is being worked at. The Surveyors are quite willing to receive suggestions and information; and all who have knowledge that might be useful should at once send in their notes to the Secretary of the Cairngorm Club, who will forward them to the proper quarters.

As suggestive of what may be done I propose to narrate briefly some of my own action in this direction. I had long been much dissatisfied with the inadequate mapping of the Cairngorms, and after some correspondence with the Ordnance Survey office and the Board of Agriculture, in which I found myself vainly beating the air, I began to compile an ordered series of criticisms of the maps of the district I knew best—*i.e.*, the Central and Western Cairn-

gorms. It may perhaps not be amiss to place on record here some of the errors of omission and commission that I noted; similar mistakes may have occurred elsewhere, and should be pointed out wherever possible. One of the most surprising has already been referred to more than once in the *C.C.J.*—the misnaming of the chief tops of the Sgoran Dubh ridge. There is as yet no map published on which the names “Sgor Ghaoith”, “Sgoran Dubh Mor”, and “Sgoran Dubh Beag” are correctly placed. Then on the northern part of this ridge appears as a *mountain* name “Inchriach”, really the name of the *low moorland* to the west of it. The name “Garbh Coire” is placed high up on the ridge between the summits of Cairn Toul and Sgoran Lochain Uaine. The well-known corries on the north face of Braeriach, and the no less striking ones on its south face, are left unnamed. The curious gully along the south-east side of Creag a’ Chalamain has a direction approximately N.E. and S.W.; it is mapped at an angle of  $60^\circ$  with this! The cairn that stands on the edge of the Lurcher’s Crag is mapped as if nearly 200 yards back from it! These and very many such I submitted to the officers in charge of the revision, and I was pleased to find that my action was appreciated; the specific points were inquired into; errors were admitted and corrected; omissions were in most cases supplied, and the revised maps will thereby be to some extent improved. Now, there are many members and friends of the Club who can do as I did, with, in many cases, fuller knowledge, and consequently greater result.

During this last summer holiday I had the pleasure of meeting some of the Surveyors on the ground, and spent one day actually working with the Superintendent Surveyor in Glen Eunach and on the Sgoran Dubh ridge. One morning in the early part of August we drove from Inverdrueie to Loch Eunach, having an interview on the way with some road-mending gillies, who had vague notions as to the functions and powers of Ordnance Surveyors. We set up our plane table at a known spot in the glen, where the driving road crossed a stream, and thence fixed the positions of the tops of Sgor Ghaoith and of Sgoran Dubh Mor and

Beag, not previously accurately placed on the Ordnance Survey maps. Near the upper bothy we repeated this process, and also definitely located the corries whose names were to be added to the map. Then following Ross' Path, we similarly determined the positions of the Cailleach and the Bodach, and the lower limit of the crags falling from the Sgoran Dubh ridge. We then went up on to the ridge itself, and from the summits successively of Sgor Ghaoith, Sgoran Dubh Mor, and Sgoran Dubh Beag, we checked the directions previously taken by others to well-known points. Proceeding further north, we came to the neighbourhood of the two tors of doubtful name, the Argyll or Atholl Stone and the Clach a' Chuidsich. We could not, of course, determine the rightful naming of these—can anyone?—but we did at all events determine within small limits their positions on the map.

Thus in the course of one day's very pleasant strolling I had the satisfaction of helping to secure a number of corrections and improvements in the map of that one district. Other members and friends of the Club may as easily and pleasantly accompany Ordnance Surveyors at their work, and place their special knowledge at their service.

My little article will have amply served its purpose if it shows the need of such work, and if it stirs up other helpers in the ways I have indicated, so that our maps of the Cairngorms may eventually become really complete and satisfactory.

## SITHEAN NA RAPAICHE, MORVERN.

BY T. R. GILLIES.

"I back this view from the highest hill in the parish for extent and varied beauty against any view in Europe. It is the Righi of Argyllshire. . . . I know not where to find a more magnificent outlook over God's fair earth".

"Reminiscences of a Highland Parish", by NORMAN  
MACLEOD, D.D.

EVEN making some allowance for the enthusiasm of a West Highlander where his own country is concerned, and the partiality of Norman MacLeod for the surroundings of his boyhood's home at Fiunary, the above strong testimony might reasonably induce the tourist to find his way to the top of the ridge that lies between the Sound of Mull and Loch Sunart. The Morvern district, however, though passed by streams of tourists every season, is hardly ever visited. Visitors are not greatly encouraged in this deer-foresting region, and, with the exception of the cliffs and cascades near the ruins of the old Castle of Ardtornish (*Ard Thor n' Eass*, "The high cliff of waterfalls"), the appearance of Morvern as viewed from the Sound of Mull is not specially interesting. But inland the scenery and the outlook in all directions are very striking and attractive, and the culminating attraction is certainly the view from the summit of the ridge referred to—Sithean na Rapaiche (1806)—better known to Morvern folks as "Shian". The parish of Morvern forms a peninsula, and there is no doubt that at one period the part to the westward of the line of Loch Aline, Loch Arienas, and Loch Durinemast, which now drain into the Sound of Mull, and Loch Teacuis, which is an arm of Loch Sunart, was an island, and that these lochs represent what is left of an arm of the sea. The ancient beach line with fossils of many sea shells can still be distinctly traced here and there. The prevailing rock of the region of which Shian is the highest

point is trap, the mountains being mostly tabular in shape, and the precipitous sides exhibiting regular trap columns. To the south of Shian there is a curious piece of rock, of which we give an illustration. The vein of which it forms a part can be traced from the shore into the rising ground leading up towards Shian. One portion of it, about three feet in thickness, sixty feet long, and rising to a height of about thirty feet, stands by itself above the level of the ground. An old legend makes it out to be part of a bridge that a famous witch of that quarter proposed to build across the Sound of Mull. It was to be a bridge of two arches, with a centre pier on the island in the middle of the Sound. A large cairn near it was supposed to be material that she was collecting for the job. She was carrying the stones in a creel commensurate in size with the magnitude of her undertaking, but when she reached the place now called Cairn-na-Caillich ("The Old Wife's Cairn") the bottom of the creel came out, and the stones fell where they now lie, and she gave up the bridge business in disgust. The rock is now better known as "The Wishing Rock", and a less ancient superstition is that anyone scrambling through the hole in it will have a wish fulfilled.

Shian may be ascended from this side as well as from Loch Sunart, but the ascent along the ridge from near Loch Aline is more gradual, and gives a better opportunity of viewing the near surroundings on the west and north. In selecting this route we had the additional attraction of securing the company of the doctor who is responsible for the physical well-being of the twenty miles or so of which the parish consists. He determined that we should see not only Shian, but Beinn Bhan and Aonach Beag and Aonach Mor, as stepping-stones to the high altar of Shian, and to prepare our minds for its supreme impressions. Relying on Bartholomew, who has placed the name of Aonach Mor somewhat too westward, we skirted its summit, leaving the doctor to surmount it alone. He would have none of Bartholomew, and certainly scored by reducing us to the dilemma that Aonach Mor was where he said it was, or that the witch of Mull must have carried off the Shian to build another bridge across the Sound.

The route by Acha Fors and Beinn Bhan gives some fine views into the valley of Loch Aline and the river Aline and on the other side of the valley westward to Glais Bheinn and the well-named "Table of Lorne", which shows its flat top between two neighbouring round summits. To the northward, across the lower part of Loch Arienas, the openings of Glen Geal and Glen Dubh stretch up in the direction of the top of Loch Sunart, and as we move onwards towards Aonach Beag, we can look down on the upper part of Loch Arienas and the precipitous cliffs overhanging the ruined clachan, of which now only a few patches of stone are left. The rocks here are in fairly regular columns, and go almost sheer down for seven or eight hundred feet. A bird's eye view of Loch Arienas and of the houses at Durinemast, with the smaller loch of the same name beyond it, and a fine sweep of the upper part of Loch Teacuis, can be had from here, though not visible from the top of Shian. Keeping along a little to the north of the top of what we were afterwards compelled to admit was Aonach Mor, we soon saw the upward sweep of the top of Shian right in front, and though on the way up we needlessly expended what little breath we had to spare in arguing from the map that it was Aonach Mor, the grand outlook westwards and in every direction—except that of Aonach Mor—settled the conviction in the most sceptical mind that it *was* Shian, and that it deserved every word of praise that Norman MacLeod gives it in the description from which we have quoted. The first thing that strikes one is the extent of the view. Southward the twenty miles of the Sound of Mull winding along between Morvern and Mull forms a magnificent foreground—with specimens of almost every variety of shipping moving up and down. On the other side are the white houses of Salen and Aros, and further west Calve Island, imperfectly hiding Tobermory. Over the isthmus from Salen appears Loch na Keal (Loch na "Gee-oul" is as near as the doctor could bring our Lowland tongues to the Gaelic pronunciation), opening out past the islands of Eorsa and Inch Kenneth towards Iona and the open Atlantic. A little further north Tiree and Coll break the horizon of the sea,



and, still further north, Muck and Eigg, and Rum, with its high-coned mountains, to the left of which the island Canna peeps out. Further north it is somewhat cloudy, and Skye is, as usual, in a mist. The coast of Sleat and the Sound are visible, and in a bright interval the doctor announces a brief glimpse of the Coolins. Nearer, however, the view is bright enough. Across the mouth of Loch Sunart the hills of Ardnamurchan are prominent, and Ben Hiant raises its crest against the sky. The shores of Kilhoan Bay form a verdant contrast to the rocky hills behind, and the north shore of Loch Sunart further west also furnishes a green fringe between sea and mountain. The islands of Oronsay and Carna—the one grass-grown and the other rocky and bare—with several smaller rocky islands, guard the entrance to Loch Teacuis, and behind these Loch Sunart winds away between the mountains and out of sight. To the north-east Ben Resipol is a conspicuous landmark, and further north a perfect wilderness of mountains in Moidart and Morar and Knoydart, with glimpses of lochs here and there, furnish a land view quite as striking in its way as the sea view. The view inland is cloudy in the direction of Ben Nevis and Glencoe, and the *soi-disant* Aonach Mor (which means "The Big One") asserts its right to the name at least by shutting out a good slice of the view in that direction. Further round, however, and following the line of the east end of the Sound of Mull, where the ebbing tide is sweeping out with the force of a mighty river past Ardtornish and Duart Point to the Firth of Lorne, Oban is visible through between Lismore and Kerrera, and beyond it Ben Cruachan and the grey "Shepherds of Etive Glen", and a sea of hills in the district of Lorne. Further round the mountains of Mull fill up the view, and complete the circle of the outlook from Shian. Going back we kept a more southerly course, giving a fine view of the rocky ravines at the top of the Savory Burn and of two picturesque mountain lochs, and arrived at Loch Aline after a rough tramp of about nine hours.

## BEN CHONZIE.

By WILLIAM BARCLAY.

“To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,  
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been ;  
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,  
With the wild flock that never needs a fold ;  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean ;  
This is not solitude ; 'tis but to hold  
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled”.

—BYRON.

BEN CHONZIE (“the hill of the cry of the deer”, or “the hill of weeping”) was my destination, when on a beautiful autumn morning I left Crieff at 10 a.m. A mile from Crieff on the Comrie turnpike the road for Glen Turrett strikes off to the right, and leads through a fine avenue to Glen Turrett Distillery. A short distance beyond this is the entrance to the charming grounds of Ochtertyre, which, thanks to the present owner, Sir Patrick Keith Murray, are open to the public every day, Sunday excepted. Our road now crosses the Turrett, and follows the left bank of the stream until we come to the falls of Barvick. Entering the small gate, we can view the falls. The large gate is the entrance to Glen Turrett, while the broad road conducts us past some cottages, and thence into Ochtertyre grounds. Immediately on entering the gate the road begins to ascend, and continues so until we are within sight of Loch Turrett.

About half a mile up a small notice board directs us to the Falls of Turrett; and well worthy of a visit they are. A footpath leads us down to the water's edge, just opposite the great boiling cauldron. A small bridge spans the stream just under the falls, by which we can return through the grounds, forming a capital little circular tour for a Saturday afternoon. But it was too early in the day for me to think of turning; so I got back to the road again, and

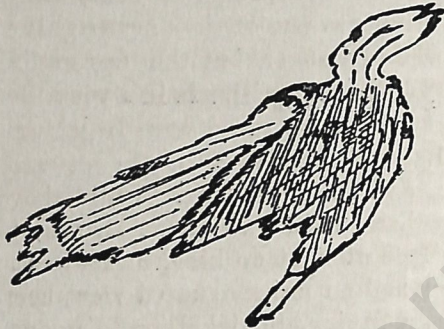
was not long in reaching the open moorland. Looking backwards a glorious prospect meets the eye. The whole of Strathearn lies spread out before us, with the town of Crieff in the near foreground. As I got higher up I saw that the hills around Loch Turrett were shrouded in mist—not a very promising sight, as I was bound for the highest of them. In another half-hour I had reached the loch itself. Loch Turrett (one mile by a quarter of a mile) has been made classic by Burns in the song “Blythe, blythe, and merry was she”, and in the poem “On Scaring some Waterfowl on Loch Turrett”. A particular rock on the western side of the loch is still pointed out as “Burns’ Rock”.

The loch, from which the town of Crieff derives its water supply, has a situation something like that of Loch Avon, only it has not the wild appearance of the latter. It is surrounded on three sides by towering heights, namely:—Carn Chois (2571), Auchnafree Hill (2565), and Blue Craigs (2535). Glen Turrett Lodge—a castellated shooting lodge—is situated at the north-eastern corner of the loch; and here the road ends. The people at the lodge advised me to follow the burn right up to Lochan Uaine (1523), and then to strike up one of the corries. Once on the ridge, they said, I should have an easy walk to the summit. Taking their advice, I followed a small track until it led me into a piece of soft boggy ground, full of peat holes, in the vicinity of this little lochan. From here I struck up the corrie on the right, and walked along to the cairn on Moine Bheag. From this hill, which forms, as it were, the keystone of the glen, you obtain the finest view of Glen Turrett, being able to trace the burn from its source, right away down the glen, until it is lost in the woods at Ochtertyre. Retracing my steps, I crossed a piece of boggy ground, then, passing a small cairn, I walked along the top of the precipice that adorns the southern face of the Ben, and thence to the summit (3048), which I reached at 2 o’clock. The cairn at one time had been a pretty large one, but part of it has collapsed, and lies in ruins. Two fences, forming, no doubt, the march between the neighbouring estates, meet here.

By this time the mist had all rolled away, and I had a glorious day. Looking down the glen, I could follow the road, winding along the loch side, and over the moorland, until the eye finally rested on Crieff. From here right round to the head of Loch Earn was a blank, everything being blotted out by the all-encompassing heat haze, while from there on to Ben Lawers was one of the finest sights I ever beheld. Nothing was to be seen but the tops of the highest hills sticking up like so many islands in a great sea of mist. The most familiar tops I noticed were Ben More, Am Binnein, Beinn Laoigh, the twin peaks of Ben Cruachan, Beinn Dorain and Ben Dheiceach, while above Killin I had the Tarmachan cliffs. The next stretch, to the north, was entirely free of mist or haze, and was the only direction in which I had an uninterrupted view, comprising Ben Lawers, Carn Mairg, Schichallion, Tarragon Hill, Ben Vrackie, Ben Dearg, and Beinn a' Ghlo, with the great mass of the Cairngorms behind. From Ben Vrackie southwards was another great blank; in fact, I had no view at all to the south. Should the traveller have no desire to return by the way he has come, it is but a step from here down to Glen Almond, through which he may pass on the one hand to the shores of Loch Tay, or on the other to the Sma' Glen. From the Sma' Glen, by turning either to the right or to the left, he may return to Crieff, or go on past Amulree to Aberfeldy or Dunkeld. Leaving the cairn, I kept along the western slopes, and dropped down to the Turrett Burn, a little above the shooting lodge.

## THE ROTHIEMURCHUS FOREST FIRE.

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



IN August, 1899, the beautiful neighbourhood of Loch an Eilein was visited by the most serious scourge that can attack a forest region. It was some years since a forest fire had occurred in this district, and visitors

had become so accustomed to the quiet picturesqueness of the scenery that the thought of the possible devastation of it by fire caused much alarm and consternation, and rumour magnified the actual fact into a disaster of terrific magnitude.

As it seems desirable to place on record a fairly accurate account of the fire, and as I was spending my summer holiday at Inverdrue, the Editor has asked me to make a report on the matter.

On Thursday, 24th August, I went to Aviemore Station to meet the mid-day train. The new station buildings were gayer than usual, for there was a bazaar at Grantown, and groups of brightly-dressed ladies, evidently on their way thither, made an animated picture in the sunshine. In the party from the Croft were Mr. J. P. Grant, the Laird of Rothiemurchus, and his wife, Lady Mary Grant. While taking a turn along the platform I noticed a drift of smoke away to the south, apparently arising from the low ground beyond Ord Ban. Mr. Grant saw the same thing at the same moment, and ran up on to the bridge across the line, returning in less than a minute to say that there was a fire at Loch an Eilein. I went up on to the bridge, and formed the opinion that the fire must be some distance further south

—probably in the moor beyond Loch Gamhna. This surmise proved correct.

Mr. Grant at once sent off his trap to gather the estate workmen, and hurried to get another vehicle to carry himself to the fire. I quitted the friends I had met in the train, mounted my bicycle, which fortunately I had with me, and rode as fast as I could the four miles that lay between the station and the far side of Loch an Eilein. On the way I passed one body of men hurrying to the fire, and beyond the lake overtook and joined another that was led by the grieve. This was the first body of workers to arrive at the scene of action.

Loch an Eilein occupies the triangular hollow that is enclosed on the north-east by Tullochgrue, on the north-west by Ord Ban, and on the south by Kennapol and the northern end of the Sgoran Dubh ridge, the ancient Monadh Ruadh. The prominent northern mass of this ridge is the Creag Dubh, from which runs out towards Loch an Eilein the rugged Creag Fhiaclach, which is continued at a less elevation by Creagan bun Suinn. In the hollow between Kennapol and Creag Fhiaclach lies the remoter and smaller Loch Gamhna, which sends its surplus waters into Loch an Eilein, and beyond Loch Gamhna is the Inchriach—an open moorland, draining south-west to the Feshie. The parish boundary between Duthil-Rothiemurchus and Alvie crosses this moor a little north of the watershed, and the same boundary separates the estates of Rothiemurchus and Mackintosh. These topographical details are necessary to the understanding of the progress of the fire, and they may be more clearly followed by reference to the accompanying map, which has been compiled from material supplied by the Ordnance Survey, by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

I resume my story. We hurried round the west side and upper end of Loch Gamhna, the smoke becoming denser as we proceeded, and we first met the fire along the south bank of the more easterly of the two small streams that join about 150 yards south of the lake. The fire was here raging among long heather, but was naturally checked by the

stream and the damp ground near it. The griever at once said that we must beat it out along the line of the water, and so prevent its passing from the heather to the woodland on the north of the stream. I had a large sheath knife with me, and with its help we were soon armed with boughs of juniper, and fell to with vigour. We were only six in number, one of us an old man and one of us a boy, but in a few minutes the laird joined us, the other body of men came up, and the fire was beaten down and held in check. For the moment we thought we had gained the victory; but, alas! someone chanced to turn his head from the stinging smoke, and saw that the fire had been blown across the gap into the wood, and that large columns of smoke showed rapid extension there. Most of the men were called off to fight the enemy in this new and more dangerous attack, while a few were left on guard along the stream. I was one of this latter group, and while engaged in preventing the fire from getting any fresh crossing, I found that we had been joined by others who had come from farther south. These proved to be members of a shooting party that had been out on the Inchriach Moor. From one of them I made inquiries as to the probable origin of the fire, and was told that they had seen the fire first about twelve o'clock, while they were sitting at lunch, that it was then close to them and small, but that they did not know what to do! However, my informant had learned what to do since then, and, stripped to his shirt, was doing good service with a "scrog". Another member of this party, who shall not now be more closely indicated, but who ought to have known better, was content merely to look on and do absolutely nothing to assist in the needful work. Had the members of this shooting party "known what to do", and done it, it is probable that the fire would have been confined to a few square yards.

But it was now late on Thursday afternoon, and the fire was rapidly extending in the wood. The wind was brisk from the south-west, and so the fire was carried along the hollow through which runs the old Rathad nam Meirleach, the Thieves' Road, along the east side of Loch Gamhna. This hollow contained an extremely luxuriant growth of

heather and juniper, and certainly juniper supplies astonishingly good fuel. It is startling to see the almost explosive rapidity with which fire leaps all over a large bush of juniper. It became evident ere long that the fire bade fair to push its way on past Loch an Eilein, and spread into the wider Rothiemurchus and Glen More forests beyond. If this had occurred, the result would have been of the most serious character. But Mr. Grant, the tenant-farmer of the Dell, saw this danger, and directed the men to beat out the lower front edge of the fire, and so compel it to burn upwards on the Creagan bun Suinn. This was done, as much as the intolerable heat and choking smoke would allow, with the result that by night the whole of the west face of the crag presented not a little of the aspect of a very active volcano, and the top of it was strongly marked out by a line of flames, but the fire had not passed beyond its northern end.

The scene as viewed from the opposite shore of Loch Gamhna, where I rested awhile a little before midnight, was very impressive. The usual stillness and peacefulness of that remote spot were invaded by the hoarse roaring and hissing of the fire, pierced now and again with surprising distinctness by the high-pitched voices of the workers. I quite clearly recognised the voice of the laird himself, and could hear every word of his orders, though he was at the least the third of a mile away. And silhouetted against the glow of the flames could be seen the figures of the men, and the steady rise and fall of their "scrogs".

Of course, men could not work at the high pressure that was absolutely necessary unless they were well supplied with food, and this matter had been at once most efficiently attended to by Lady Mary Grant. She loaded her trap with suitable food and drink, and herself continually brought up the supplies as near to the workers as it was possible for her to get. The human mind is curiously prone to levity even in serious circumstances, and I was not a little amused to find myself humming—

" When a man's afraid a beautiful maid  
Is a cheering sight to see"—

not that any man, or boy either, was afraid, but that it was

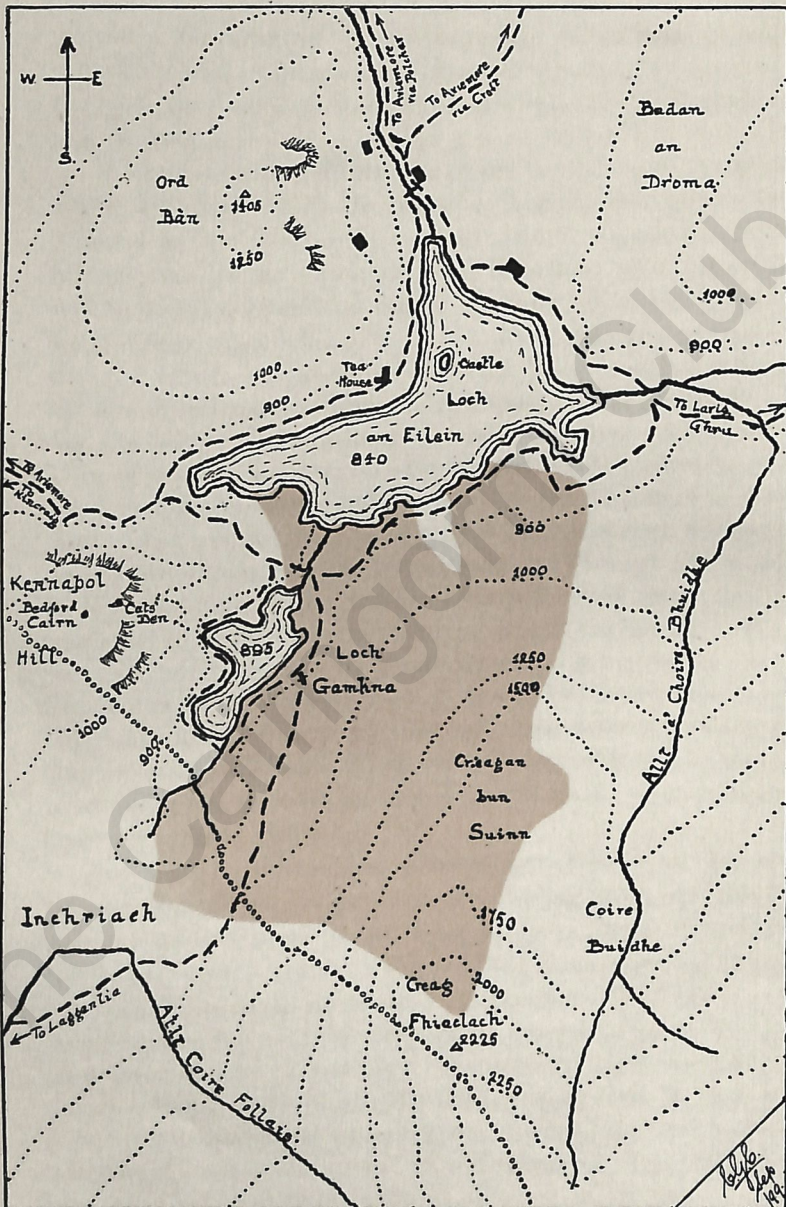


certainly encouraging to see the Lady of Rothiemurchus cheerfully and energetically taking her womanly share of the work, and smiling bravely on the edge of the threatening disaster.

When I retired on Thursday night, as the wind had died down there seemed reason to hope that the fire might be confined to the Creagan bun Suinn, and it was satisfactory to find on Friday morning that this was so. But the southerly wind freshened again during the forenoon, and the fire regained much strength, and for a time it was feared that the efforts of the workers would be in vain, and that the fire would escape from their control. But about mid-day the wind suddenly veered, and blew from the north. This, of course, checked the advance of the fire towards the great woodlands, but re-awakened it on the moorland at the head of Loch Gamhna. Here only a few of us were keeping guard, preventing the fire from spreading through the moss to the west side of the valley, where it could more easily reach the parts of Rothiemurchus in which are houses. We worked hard here, and were on the whole being fairly successful, when we were startled by the news that the fire had crossed to the west between the two lakes, and had attacked the woods on Ord Ban. This was getting within our guard in an alarming manner, and we hastened to the place of new and very serious danger.

But when I reached the nearest part of Loch an Eilein I found that the report greatly exceeded the facts, and that, for the time at all events, the danger was averted. But the fire had crossed to the west side of the stream flowing from Loch Gamhna to Loch an Eilein—a place that had apparently been left unguarded—and a space of about a dozen acres was burnt. Thanks to the prompt and energetic action of some visitors, notably some ladies, who happened to be on the spot at the time, and who beat at the fire themselves and summoned assistance, the progress of the fire at this place was completely stayed.

The northerly wind was now freshening, the progress of the fire towards the great woods was checked, but the danger in the opposite direction was thereby increased, and more



THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LOCH AN EILEIN.

Contours ..... Roads ----- Parish and Estate Boundary .....

The burnt area is coloured Red. SCALE: 3 in. = 1 mile.

men hurried to the march, where the fire was making rapid progress through the long heather on the east side of the hollow. While keeping guard at one dangerous point where the fire threatened to get across to the west side, I was greatly relieved to find that the promise of a falling barometer was likely to be fulfilled. The sky to the south-west rapidly darkened, the rumble of thunder was heard from the direction of Kingussie, and soon we were on the edge of a thunder-storm. I mounted my bicycle and fled away, leaving the welcome rain to do efficiently what human power had been striving to accomplish.

That night there was a great thunder-storm, the rain fell abundantly, and any serious extension of the fire became improbable. But still around the edge of the burnt area much smouldering went on, and flames broke out when the wind freshened, while huge columns of smoke arose from the whole of it for several days. But the heavy rains that fell on the following Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday served to wet the ground sufficiently to secure us against any renewal of the general conflagration.

On Tuesday, 29th August, the Procurator-Fiscal held an inquiry, presumably with the object of ascertaining the cause of the fire, and especially whether it was due to incendiarism. Though no report of this inquiry and its results has been published, it is generally understood that no satisfactory explanation was arrived at. The common opinion at first was that a burning match or wad was the originating cause, and, as a shooting party was on the ground, this seemed not unlikely. But the members of the shooting party strongly, not to say indignantly, deny responsibility, and those most competent to judge hold them exonerated. It is, however, certain that no other visitors were in the part of Inchriach where and when the fire began, and so the origin of the fire remains unexplained.

And now it is possible to survey the ground, and see what damage has really been done. On the accompanying map the red tint shows the burnt area. It will be seen that this lies between the east side of Loch Gamhna and the south side of Loch an Eilein on the one hand and the slopes

of Creag Fhiaclach and Creagan bun Suinn on the other. The total area affected is about 450 acres, and throughout this, with but little exception, all the undergrowth of grass, heather, and juniper is completely destroyed. The still green patches remaining in the damper hollows serve but to intensify by contrast the blackness of the surrounding desolation. The trees are variously affected. There was practically no timber of any size or value in this part of the forest, as it mostly consisted of young pine, suitable at present only for pit-props. Many of these trees are killed, and must be felled and sold as soon as possible. But still many trees retain their greenness, and may survive if their roots are not too much damaged. This is especially the case in the low ground along the shore of Loch an Eilein. It seems probable that the immediate monetary loss may not exceed £200.

From the point of view of the visitor in search of the picturesque the damage is not so serious as might be feared. For the present the crags of Fhiaclach and Creagan bun Suinn present great areas of blackness and desolation, but it is likely that next season will see these largely covered with green growth, and the fresh grass and young heather will almost certainly attract the deer in larger numbers than before. Indeed, in many places among the damper spots the heat of the conflagration has actually promoted the growth of the grass and sedge, which in a few days thrust up a vigorous crop of bright green blades, bearing aloft their shrivelled and blackened tips; and I have seen several deer in and around the burnt places.

The green oasis abutting on the middle of the south side of Loch an Eilein is a curious feature. Here a small stream trickled down from Creagan bun Suinn, and the dampness around it was sufficient to fend off the fire from its little hollow. This place was visited by deer even while its immediate surroundings were still freely smouldering.

Walking across the burnt tract with some visiting friends I got a curious memento of the fire. One of my friends exclaimed that he saw the charred body of a bird lying among the ashes. But on taking it up he found that

it was only a piece of fir-root about the size of a pigeon, and looking just like a bird that had retained much of its plumage in spite of the fire. The resemblance was very striking, and everyone who saw it at a small distance thought that it was a poor bird that had met its death among the blazing heather. A small sketch of this object appears as the initial to this article.

Of course, rumour dealt freely with the fire, and some very curious statements appeared in some newspapers, where both the magnitude of the fire and the strength of the working parties were greatly exaggerated. It may be as well to say that probably not more than fifty men in all worked at the extinction of the fire, including the few visitors who helped, and the men sent by the Duke of Richmond and Gordon to prevent the fire from passing to his property. The most curious reports of the affair were probably those in the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Chronicle* of 26th August. We quote the *Daily Mail's* report, leaving our readers to solve for themselves the topographical puzzles therein presented:—

#### “SCOTCH MOUNTAINS ON FIRE.

“Fire broke out in the Rothiemurchus forest on Thursday evening, and, fanned by a slight breeze, it rapidly assumed extensive proportions.

“The spot where the outbreak occurred is at Inchreach, on the Mackintosh of Mackintosh's estate. So rapid was the progress of the flames that before many hours they had reached the estate of Sir John P. Grant, and laid hold upon the woodland surrounding Lochanecklan [*sic*].

“Here the heather and fir trees blazed fiercely throughout the night, the red-glowing mountains presenting a wonderfully weird sight. The mountain known as Sanctuary Ida [*sic*] resembled a volcano, huge smoke clouds rising from its conical summit.

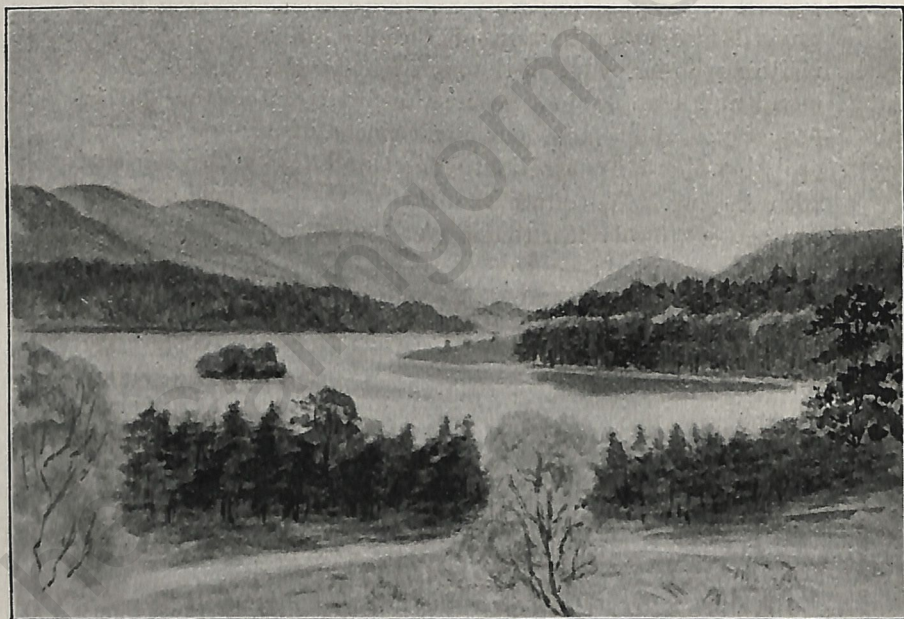
“As one result of the outbreak Loch Guan [*sic*], formerly one of the most picturesque spots in the Highlands, is simply a pool amid a mass of ruin and devastation [!].

“Though fully 200 [!] men were engaged in trying to stay the progress of the flames, the whole forest of Rothiemurchus, one of the largest in the country, is practically burned out [!].”

## LOCH AN EILEIN AND ITS CASTLE.\*

BY ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

THE writers of "The Statistical Account of Scotland" were not generally given to concerning themselves with descriptions of scenery, or directing attention to particular points of beauty in their respective parishes. It is, therefore, re-



LOCH AN EILEIN.

freshing to find the gentleman entrusted with the account of Rothiemurchus thus referring, in 1792, to the Lochs in his parish:—"There are two (*sic*) small lakes abounding with char. Lochnellan, one of them, exhibits a scene most

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\* Illustrated (plan excepted) by Mrs. A. I. M'Connochie from photographs by Mr. W. E. Carnegie Dickson, B.Sc.

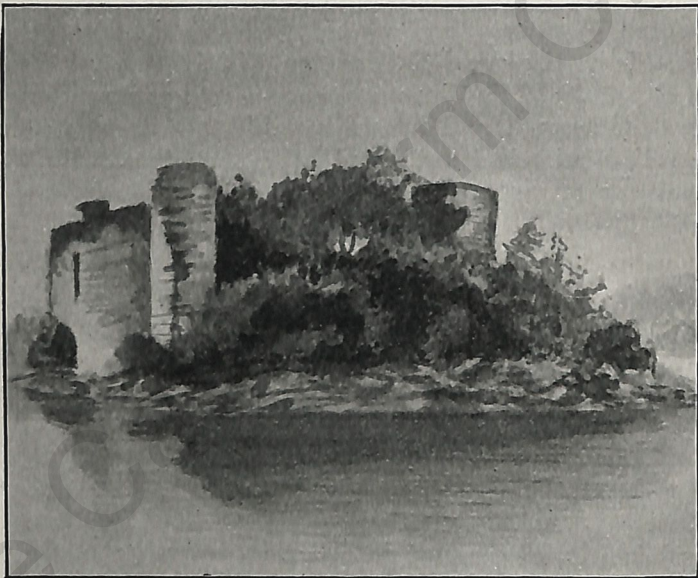
picturesque and romantic, and by the situation of the surrounding hills are formed five very remarkable echoes. Upon a small island in Lochnellan is a Castle built time immemorial, the walls of which are still entire". Later writers have not failed to recognise its peculiar beauties.

Loch an Eilein is one of nature's gems, the setting of which is absolutely perfect, while the "composition" of the scene has been described by artists as faultless. Situated at the base of the Cairngorm mountains, in the Forest of Rothiemurchus, it is impossible to conceive a spot more favoured by nature, and which, while within a couple of miles of the Highland Railway and the Great North Road, is so sequestered that its appearance is quite unexpected by the stranger. The Loch is insignificant in size, being scarcely a mile in length, and little more than a third in breadth; yet we have no hesitation in describing the view as the finest of its class we have seen in our travels. We are by no means unmindful of the beauties of Loch Lomond or Loch Katrine, but neither of these famous Lochs presents such attractions as those of the Rothiemurchus lake. Briefly, its principal charms are the mountains which encircle it and the pines which fringe its banks. There are also two minor beauties, if one dare so term them: the shore is delightfully irregular, forming numerous little bays, thus dispensing with the straight line so obnoxious to nature; and, as the name implies ("the loch of the island"), it rejoices in the poet's desideratum—

"But every lake without its isle  
Is Beauty's cheek without its smile".

Let us take our stand at Boat Bay, near the outlet of the loch, and note the salient points of the landscape. Looking across the water we see no fewer than four parallel ridges, off-shoots of the Cairngorms, formed respectively by Sgoran Dubh, Braeriach, Ben Muich Dhui, and Cairngorm, the summit of the latter being also in full view. Cadha Mor, the northern termination of the Sgoran Dubh range, bounds the loch on the south side; on the north-west Ord Ban, a fine hill bristling with pines and birches, stands between it and the Spey; on the south-west—the upper end—the bold

Kennapol Hill frowns on the lake below. The north-eastern shore is unconfined by mountain or crag, though even there high ground overlooks the scene. As befits a portion of the ancient Caledonian Forest, there is no lack of trees on the hill-slopes, which descend almost to the water's edge. A sluice may be observed at the outlet; it was in use during timber-felling times to dam up water for floating trees to the Spey, and which at one time also drove a meal mill in the vicinity. The char, for which the loch was once noted,

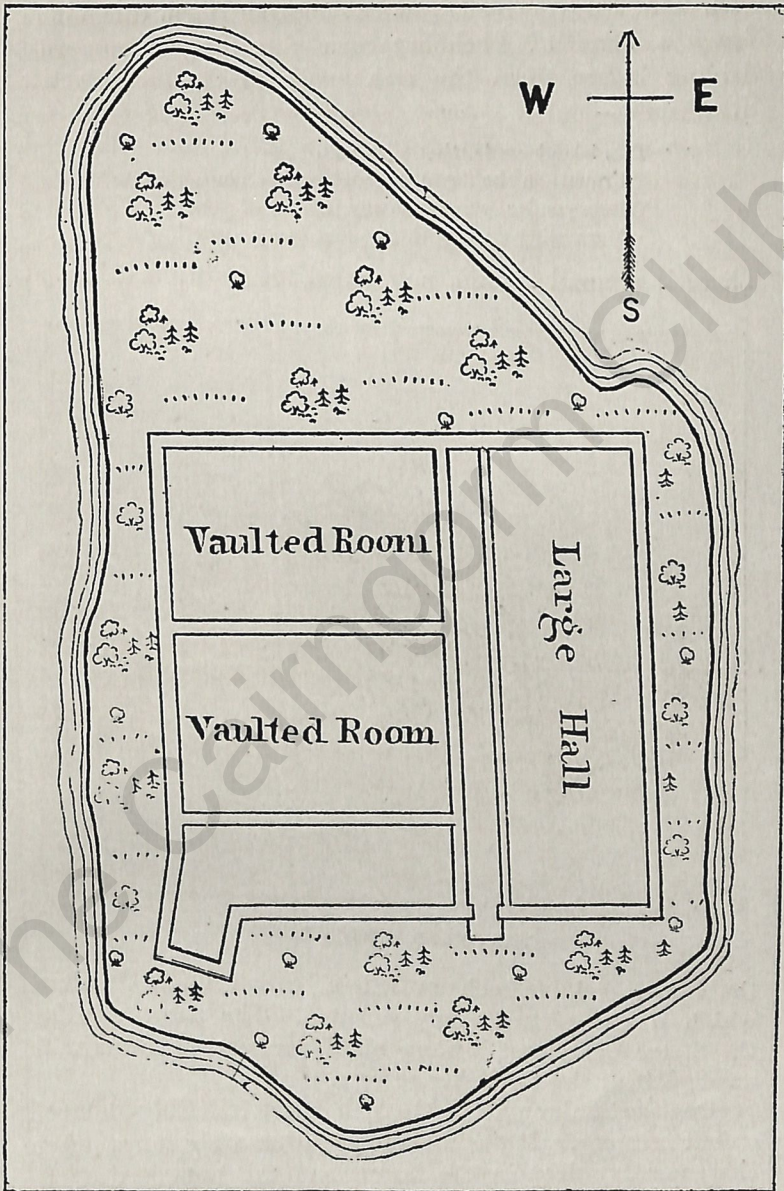


THE CASTLE FROM THE S.W.

have long disappeared, as they have in other parts of the parish—thanks to the greedy oyster-catcher.

A change in our standpoint by crossing the outlet and viewing the loch from the lower end, as shown in the first illustration, dispels the peculiar effect of the four mountain ridges, but adds fresh beauties to the prospect. The hills which more immediately grasp Loch an Eilein in their embrace are here in full view, and the lake, with its tiny island, is seen to the best advantage. We trace the line of the road known by the suggestive name of Rathad na Meir-



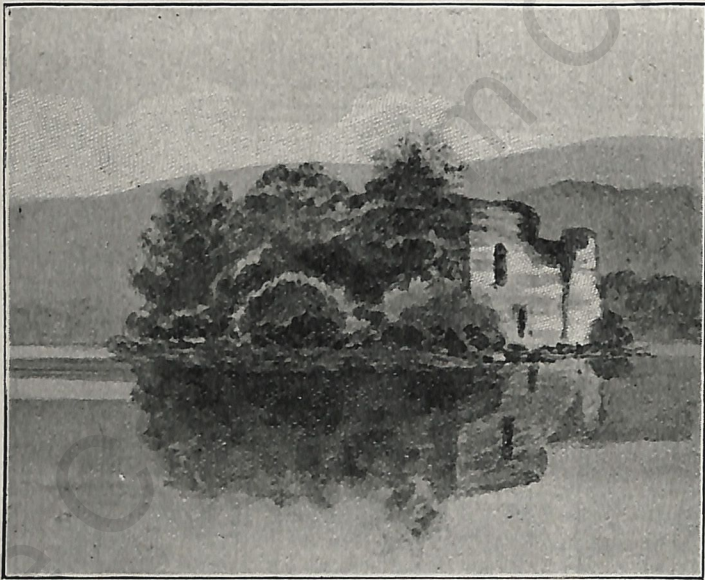


Rough Ground Plan of Castle and Island.

lich, "the thieves' road", and it does not seem difficult to fancy a band of Lochaber men returning homewards, driving before them the rich spoils of the more fertile Strathspey—

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

There is a small lochlet, now noted for its water-lilies, at

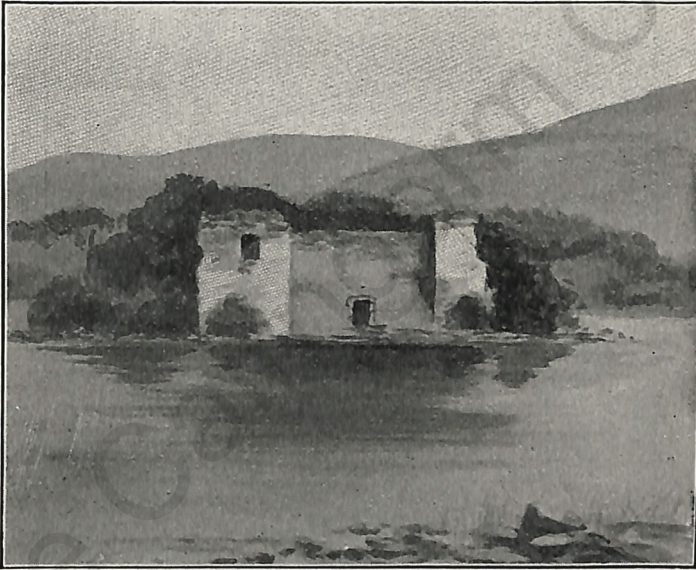


THE CASTLE FROM THE N.W.

the upper end of Loch an Eilein, called Loch Gamhna, which is also picturesquely situated. The name signifies the Steers Loch, and it has probably some connection with an exploit of the Lochaber reivers.

One particular visit to the loch seems indelibly stamped on our memory. It was in January, after a big storm, when the snow lay deep in the forest, and the branches of the pines drooped with the weight of their burden. As we struggled through the snow in our walk round the loch, it did not require much effort of the imagination to fancy

ourselves in the backwoods of America. The fanciful resemblance was increased when we met a horse harnessed to a forked fir tree denuded of its branches, with the carcass of a deer lashed to the trunk. Behind, with axe on shoulder, plodded a noble specimen of a Highland gillie. The poetry of the scene was not marred when the forester explained the incident. Several days previously he had shot a hind in a rather inaccessible position in the Cat's Den, and was now taking this primitive method, on the abatement of the



THE CASTLE FROM THE W.

storm, of conveying home the quarry; at the same time the pine would be useful for fuel.

The island, which very considerably enhances the beauty of this charming sheet of water, is stated to be artificial. Be that as it may, all evidences of art have long disappeared, and nature alone seems entitled to the credit. It is almost completely covered with the ruins of a Castle, "built time immemorial"; tradition even is silent as to the date of its erection. We only know that it was a ruin nearly three hundred years ago, and that *Asplenium ruta*

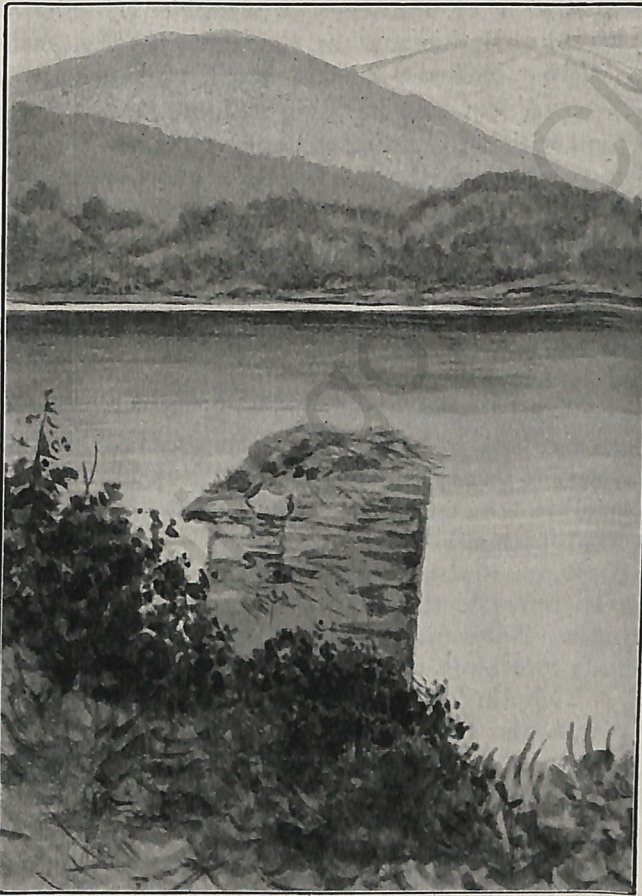
*muraria* (Wall Rue) has long found a home on it. Shaw, in his "History of the Province of Moray", writing in 1775, is exceedingly meagre in his description, devoting only a single sentence to this historical spot:—"The principal seat was a fort in a loch, called Loch-an-elan, the walls



THE CASTLE ENTRANCE (INTERIOR).

whereof do still remain". Rothiemurchus was granted in 1226 for a forest in exchange for other lands, by Alexander II. to Andrew, Bishop of Moray. This prelate "mortified it to the Bishop of Elgin for furnishing lights and candles", the Bishop leasing it to the Shaws, who held possession of Rothiemurchus for about a century. The Shaws were, how-

ever, ousted by the Cumins, who made the Castle their chief stronghold. In the course of time the Cumins also disappeared, and the Grants came into possession. The notorious Wolf of Badenoch occasionally resided here—a circumstance which adds to the interest taken in the ancient



THE OSPREYS' TOWER.

building. Later we read that fugitives from the defeated army at the battle of Cromdale vainly sought shelter within its walls. It is an odd coincidence that the Wolf of Badenoch should have set fire to Elgin Cathedral, the "Lantern of the North", the candles for which were

originally covenanted to be supplied from a district where such an evil son of the Church had a lair. Historically there is nothing more to tell about this exceedingly interesting ruin; probably our curiosity will never be fully gratified.

Mrs. Smith of Baltiboys, a daughter of Sir John Peter Grant of Rothiemurchus, thus describes the Castle in the recently-published "Memoirs of a Highland Lady":—  
". . . A low, long building with one square tower, a flank wall with a door in it, and one or two small windows high up, and a sort of a house with a gable-end attached, part of which stood on piles. The people said there was a zig-zag causeway beneath the water from the door of the old Castle to the shore, the secret of which was always known to three persons only. We often tried to hit upon this causeway, but we never succeeded".

One tenant gives place to another; the royal wolf has been succeeded by the osprey, and so interest has increased in the ruin. It is barely twenty years since particular notice was drawn to the sea-eagles' breeding-place here, but the eyrie has been in existence for a century or more. In 1832 that enthusiastic and literary Highlander, Robert Carruthers, gave a short description of Rothiemurchus, in which he refers to the "eagle" as a regular occupant of the Castle. Naturalists have bewailed the tendency to exterminate rare birds, but they themselves are sometimes to blame. Tempting offers for eggs or birds are frequently made, with the result that ospreys have almost deserted this country. All honour, therefore, to the Grants of Rothiemurchus, who protect these noble birds, and whose services have been deservedly recognised by the presentation of a medal from the Zoological Society. The ospreys' "season" extends from April to September, and during their residence no boat is permitted on the loch. In by-past years they have suffered much from man's avaricious attentions; now, however, they make their annual sojourn without molestation, affording, as they brood and rear their young, considerable pleasure to those visiting the district. There is also a loch in the neighbouring parish where a few

years ago ospreys had an eyrie in a great pine, but they were subjected to such systematic persecution that they have quite forsaken it. In order to protect them as much as possible from thieving visitors, a sympathetic forester festooned the trunk of the fir tree where they nested with barbed wire, but, alas! this precaution was ineffectual.

The Castle is sufficiently near the western shore to permit a close watch upon the operations of the ospreys. The nest is on the southern tower—the only part of the ruin threatening an early collapse. Seen from the bank the nest appears rather imposing, but it is really an insignificant structure. It consists of a few twigs arranged without much symmetry on a little grass-covered mound on the top of the tower, and suffers between September and April from the impudent attentions of a flock of jackdaws, who would fain dispute the occupancy of the building with the nobler birds. The walls are of considerable thickness, their tops covered with rubbish, grass, and ivy; within and around mountain-ash, birch, willow, barberry, and rose trees grow so luxuriantly that there is scarcely a square foot of bare ground on the islet. A plentiful crop of nettles bears testimony to the erstwhile presence of man. The entrance is only about five and a half feet in height by three feet in breadth; inside there is a small courtyard, with, on the south, the "Ospreys' Tower", on the north two vaulted rooms. The southerly vault had contained an oratory, while over the other was the so-called "Lady's Room", with a small window, shown in one of the illustrations. The Castle had been almost square, the west wall having a frontage of about 73 feet; the other main walls are now practically fragments of fallen masonry, rendering precise measurements rather difficult. There is a central staircase, two feet wide, in a six-foot wall on the east side of the North Vaulted Room; about thirty steps, more or less perfect, still remain. The Castle is built of schistose limestone, and appears to have been erected on a platform of stones, with shallow water close to the foundations. It is difficult, however, to speak with certainty on this point owing to the ruinous condition of the building.—*Reprinted (with slight alterations) from "The Scots Pictorial".*

## MOUNTAINEERING PARAPHERNALIA.

BY LUI BEG.

CIRCUMSTANCES frequently impel one to write absurdly. "The air we breathe", the speed at which we live, are both inconsistent factors to this end. Our much-vaunted "nation of shopkeepers" contains a high percentage of fools. Some men are born fools, while others have foolishness thrust upon them. Among present-day writers, for example, there are those who write "with a purpose", and others who think they have a "mission", but most people commit their thoughts to paper in total ignorance of the subjects they profess to know. Parenthetically, I may explain that I invariably use a fountain pen! The ignorant class of litterateurs have the good fortune to be the more successful, because, perhaps, they are in a majority. My sympathies, up to the present, have been with minorities, but that is no sufficient or prudent reason why I should not, once in a while, throw in my lot with the greater number. A brief, but thoughtful, consideration of these "circumstances" compels me to disfigure several sheets of paper now. My qualifications may be equally briefly and thoughtfully stated. I am not a mountaineer, in the Club's accepted form. True, I have "done" Lochnagar, Ben-nachie, and the Blue Hill, but climbing these mountains is in the eyes of Cairngormers, I am told, looked upon as mere child's play. Yet, although literally I have not been "over hills and over mountains", I "read" all the proof sheets of that excellent guide, counsellor, and friend, "Ben Muich Dhui and His Neighbours". Need I adduce further "proofs" of my ability to discuss "Mountaineering Paraphernalia"?

Let others rave about the "excessive lonesomeness and the aspect of desolation on every hand"; be it mine to tell of the equipment, necessary and unnecessary, for hill-



climbing peregrinations. Thus will I cater for the comfort of novices—like myself. Thus will I increase the Club's membership; and, for the third and last time, thus will I encourage the faint-hearted, and make the stout of heart quail!

Mountaineering is not without its dangers; it has also one or two compensating advantages. The lion has not yet lain down with the lamb, or if it has, the lamb has in every case been provided with an *inside* berth. But that by the way, and to rank as an aside. In planning out a hill excursion, very many things have to be considered, the chief being the "trappings" needful. In this connection it may be well to warn the unsophisticated climber against taking ladies with him when he to the hills does lift his eyes. Ladies are, in the abstract, estimable enough companions, but for mountaineering purposes they are *de trop*. Besides, "strait-laced" people are safer at home, and home is woman's grandest, noblest sphere! Imagine a procession of serving maids carrying endless loads of japanned tin travelling cases for the safe custody of feathered hats, ribboned bonnets, and frilled dresses up to the only hotel—the Shelter Stone—on the higher Grampian range! And then, look at the limited accommodation. There is not even a bathroom. The single bedroom has to do duty as kitchen, sitting-room, parlour, and drawing-room. What reasonable lady could ever put up with such accommodation? It will thus be seen that ladies are an impossibility, or at least impeditive, on the hills. And now, having disposed of the fair sex, it may be a bit brusquely perhaps, but, it must be conceded, with a due regard for their safety and well-being, as well as the general fitness of things, let us turn once more to the subject on hand.

One of the first requisites for a well-regulated topographical expedition is a compass. Now, there are compasses and compasses, but there are two special kinds which I recommend without fear or favour. These are spring, or divider compasses, and the beam compass. The old-time mariner's compass is now entirely obsolete, and more people have been led astray in trying to "box" that article than the

world wots of. Maps—those of the Ordnance Survey, because of their “confusion worse confounded” propensities—are also considered a desideratum. These are now mostly used, however, by hill-climbers who wilfully desire to lose themselves. Applied in conjunction with a pair of the compasses before referred to, the map at times gives an indication of the distances traversed. Maps are also highly prized on account of the pleasant discussions which they originate when the leader of a party “don’t know w’ere ’e are”. No healthy-minded mountaineer’s kit is complete without a copy of the “Club Journal”—No. 1 being preferable in consequence of the difficulty of procuring it. [This gives us the opportunity of a free ad.—“No. 1 is out of print”—ED.] Bicycles are indispensable. If the party is large, nothing looks more picturesque than a hastily constructed fence of “bikes”—at the foot of a hill. The uncanny things help to ward off game. Hill-climbers have been known to carry their machines from Derry Lodge to Nethy Bridge, the tracks, in many places, not having yet been cinder-laid. Cameras are also now looked upon as part of the equipment. Not more than twelve plates, or films, out of every dozen have ever been known to be spoiled through under- or over-exposure. Field glasses are a *sine qua non*, though ninety-nine times out of every hundred, in consequence of mists and rain, they are never used. For ornamental purposes an Alpine-stock, or shepherd’s crook, is carried in the hand. Frequently, however, on coming to a “stiff part”, these have to be thrown away. One cannot crawl on all fours in anything like a dignified fashion hampered with a stick. A supply of light refreshments, liquid and solid, consisting of cold Birss tea, tinned meat, and a chunk of stale bread, is by some considered needful. A cunningly-devised domestic utensil, aptly named a “pocket pistol”, does duty as liquor holder, at the beginning of the journey. At the foot of the hill—on the other side, you know—there is rarely a single shot left in the locker! The “tea”, it should be stated, must be taken in medicinal proportions, and for that purpose an ordinary, common tea spoon will be found useful. Solids are invari-

ably rolled up in bits of old newspapers, and stowed in botanical cases. "Men are not always what they seem", neither are botanical cases; and it is not wise to judge a man by his botanical case. A ragged coat may cover a large and warm heart, and an old-fashioned hat frequently indicates a loving nature and a life-long friendship; so, I repeat, never judge a man by his b.c. Knapsacks are perhaps strongly reminiscent of John Brown of "No. 99" fame, but they are very fashionable, and no up-to-date mountaineer would ever think of setting out minus his knapsack. In addition to their "usefulness", knapsacks give a picturesqueness to the wearer, and they may, therefore, be classed under the heading of "ornamental as well as useless". The foolhardy pedestrian of the mountains invariably carries an ice axe, with which to hew his way through the enormous icebergs to be found on the Upper Deeside hills. With his "battle" axe he improvises ornamental staircases, which he ascends and descends with precision and dexterity. Another necessary adjunct is the geological hammer, which should be artistically placed in a side pocket, with the handle delicately arranged, so as to be obtrusively observable to all and sundry. The hammer is rarely if ever required for other than purely decorative purposes, but it gives to the owner a business-like appearance, and greatly furthers a study of the science of geology! Odd bits of string and some pins should be carried in the mountaineer's pockets. One never knows when an accident may occur, and these "first aids to the wounded" come in handy.

And now, if you please, a word or two as to the necessary costume. Knickerbocker or kilt suits only are permissible. Long "trews" do not show off the human form divine, and, indeed, are decidedly bad form. "Tacketty" boots are worn by many, but those who desire wet feet are counselled to wear thin shoes, hand-sewn, and without either iron or brass sprigs. Delicate people generally take thin waterproof coats or capes with them, but the case-hardened mountaineer braves the elements without any covering of the kind. Indeed, he has been known to take off his coat or jacket and

carry it over his arm. A last word of advice to the uninitiated previous to his ascent. The inexperienced one is counselled to set out "with a light foot and a jaunty step". If he can whistle, he should strike up a lively air, without fear of giving offence to a stray gamekeeper, even should he be climbing on a Sunday! It is not necessary to give explicit directions when to "turn off" the jaunty step or to cease whistling. A stiffness in the mechanism of his pedal extremities, and an unaccountably sudden stoppage of his "breathing requisites", are fairly sure indications when he should "settle down to work". Smoking may be substituted for whistling; and a good old seasoned pipe is most recommended. Cigars are on no account to be used, as the smell of burning cabbage disturbs and distracts the game.

Although it is outwith the province of this paper, I may be allowed a sentence or two as to weather conditions. I have come to the conclusion, notwithstanding expert opinion, that the weather has nothing whatever to do with a practical study of the topography of the country. If you essay the attempt in summer, you are sure to accomplish the "climb" either under a broiling sun, or in pouring rain. If in winter, it invariably snows; so that the "conditions" are of no account whatever. In all weathers the amateur or professional mountaineer must put "a stout heart to a stey brae", "keep his powder dry", and not forget any part of his Mountaineering Paraphernalia.

## THE HORIZON FROM BEN MUICH DHUI.—No. III.

BY ALEX. COPLAND.

THIS Number completes the outline of the horizon as viewed from the Cairn on the summit of the highest mountain of the Cairngorm range. In describing it we have to go back to due North  $180^{\circ}$ , and at  $182^{\circ}$  we have Scaraben in the far distance across the sea in Langwell Forest, Caithness, 80 miles away. Further away to the right at  $187^{\circ}$  Benacheilt, in the same county, 86 miles distant in a straight line, may be descried under favourable weather conditions. Then looking across the western shoulder of Cairngorm, in the direction of the protruding eastern portion of the coast of Caithness, we have between us and the sea the western portion of the "Laigh" of Moray, with its sea coast line at the mouth of the Findhorn, extending eastwards in the direction of Burghead, and westwards towards Nairn. In the middle distance we may distinguish the town of Grantown, and farther north-eastwards Forres by its smoke. The big dome of Cairngorm interrupts the sea view, as also do the Cromdale Hills, but between them the streak of salt water and coast line mark Spey Bay and its surroundings. The rift between Cairngorm and A'Choinneach discloses the south end or head of Strath Nethy, where the river Nethy leaves its cradle between these mountains, and whence it flows northwards through Abernethy Forest to the Spey. Over the summit of Ben Bynac, beyond A'Choinneach, the conspicuous sloping ridge of Ben Rinnes rises, and in the far distance, in the hollow between it and Meikle Conval, near Dufftown, the Bin Hill of Cullen may be descried. Farther to the right rises Corryhabbie, with his brother of Glen Fiddich deer forest, Cook's Cairn. Then over the stony crest of Beinn Mheadhoin, Letterach and the Threestone Hill carry the horizon still farther to the right, till the sky line is pierced by the conical summits of Tap o' Noth and the

Buck of the Cabrach. Keeping along the blue ridge of distant uplands, about midway between the Buck and Bennachie, the Hill of Dudwick, according to the Ordnance Surveyors, may be seen, its bearing being given by them as  $247^{\circ} 9' 36''$ . The well-known form of Bennachie cannot be mistaken, and in front of it we have Coillebhar of Alford. Coming back to our immediate foreground of Beinn Mheadhoin, we have Beinn a' Chaorruinn, between which and Beinn Mheadhoin lies the eastern Larig or mountain pass between Braemar and Strathspey—the Learg Laoigh. This pass, before the advent of railways, was the route of the post-runner between Braemar and Strathspey; but there was no parcel post in those days, nor postage at the rate of a penny per letter, so that the postman's budget was conformable to his route, which is none of the smoothest. In front of Beinn a' Chaorruinn on the sketch projects the frowning, yet picturesque, gothic-arched precipice of Beinn Mheadhoin, which forms the north side of Corrie Etchachan, and once seen lives in memory for ever. Eastwards, to the sky line rises the huge mass of Beinn a' Bhuird, its rocky culminating peak, the North Top, protruding over the extended ridge of that mountain. A little to the north of this peak, and farther to the east, Ben Avon's highest summit asserts its right to be seen.

These four sketches, completing the outline of the hill horizon as seen from the Cairn on the summit of Ben Muich Dhui, may be helpful to the hill climber, now that the occupation of the ancient guide to the mountains is gone. In their preparation persevering efforts were made, often under disappointing weather conditions, to make the outlines as accurate as an amateur at such work could fairly accomplish, but no claim is made to scientific delineation nor artistic treatment.

In connection with this section the Tabular List of Mountains and Hills observed within its radius is subjoined. As the bearings given are polar, allowance for deviation when using the magnetic compass must be made.

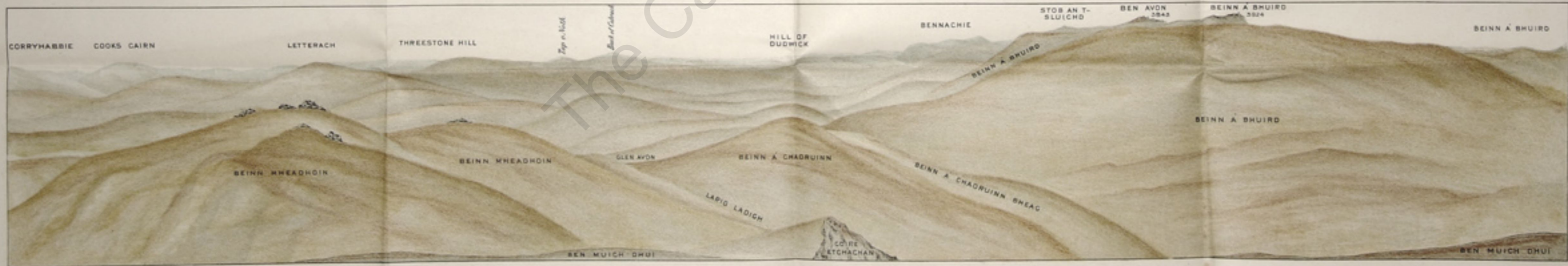
THE HORIZON FROM BEN MUICH DHUI.

SECTION 3.

FROM NORTH TO EAST 180° TO 270°.



OUTLINED BY ALEX. COPLAND.  
THE CAIRNGORM CLUB, ABERDEEN.



TABULAR LIST No. III,

*Of Mountains and Hills within the radius of 180° (North) and 270° (East), most of which may be seen from the Cairn on the summit of Ben Muich Dhui.*

Compass Direction	MOUNTAIN.	COUNTY.	LOCALITY.	Height, in Feet.	Distance, in Miles.
0	Scaraben . . . . .	Caithness	Langwell Forest . . . . .	2054	80
182	Benacheilt . . . . .	"	Latheron . . . . .	942	86
187	Cairngorm . . . . .	Inv.-Banff	Cairngorms . . . . .	4084	3
198	Baddoch . . . . .	"	Braes of Abernethy . . . . .	1863	13
200	Cairn Tuarneir . . . . .	Inverness	Cromdale Hills . . . . .	2250	16
202	Carn Eachie . . . . .	Elgin-Banff	" " . . . . .	2316	20
204	Findlay's Seat . . . . .	Elgin	Glen Rothes . . . . .	861	38
206	Carn Bheur . . . . .	Inverness	Abernethy Forest . . . . .	2636	9
214	Ben Rinnes . . . . .	Banff	Inveravon . . . . .	2755	28
215	Ben Bynac . . . . .	Inv.-Banff	Cairngorms . . . . .	3574	6
216	Geal Charn . . . . .	Inverness	Abernethy Forest . . . . .	2682	10
216	Bin of Cullen . . . . .	Banff	Cullen . . . . .	1050	50
223	Corryhabbie . . . . .	"	Glen Fiddich Forest . . . . .	2563	26
227	Cook's Cairn . . . . .	"	" " . . . . .	2478	27
232	Beinn Mheadhoin . . . . .	"	Cairngorms . . . . .	3883	3
233	Letterach . . . . .	"	Glen Livet . . . . .	2583	23
236	Carn Mor . . . . .	Abd.-Banff	" . . . . .	2636	21
237	Threestone Hill . . . . .	"	Glen Bucket . . . . .	2065	27
239	Tap o' Noth . . . . .	Aberdeen	Rhynie . . . . .	1851	36
240	Buck of Cabrach . . . . .	"	Cabrach . . . . .	2368	30
241	Beinn a' Chruinnach . . . . .	Abd.-Banff	Kirkmichael . . . . .	2536	17
242	Carn Ealasaid . . . . .	"	Strathdon-Cockbrig . . . . .	2600	17
247	Hill of Dudwick . . . . .	Aberdeen	Ellon . . . . .	572	66
248	Beinn a Chaorruinn . . . . .	Abd.-Banff	Cairngorms . . . . .	3553	4
250	Coillebhar Hill . . . . .	Aberdeen	Alford . . . . .	1747	33
252	Bennachie . . . . .	"	Garioch . . . . .	1733	45
254	Stob an t-Sluichd . . . . .	Banff	Cairngorms . . . . .	3621	8
259	Ben Avon . . . . .	Abd.-Banff	" . . . . .	3843	9
263	Ben a' Bhuid (N. Top) . . . . .	"	" . . . . .	3924	6



## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.



MR. ROBERT ANDERSON writes:—Mr. Duncan, in his article Jock's on "The Clova Hills" (*C.C.J.*, III., 5), raises the old question ROAD. of who the "Jock" was that gave his name to the road leading from Glen Doll to the Tolmount. I find the following in an article "To Glen Clova and Back", written by me in June, 1890:—"Who was Jock, and how came he to leave his name here? Well, there is a story about it, but I forget the details—something about a Jacobite fugitive who used this tortuous pass to obtain supplies while hiding in the hills". Unfortunately, I cannot now remember where I read (or heard) this story.

ON 4th September last a party of four—three Aberdeenshire stalwarts and an Englishman—spent a MIST ON THE Sgoran Dubh. wild, misty day on the Sgoran Dubh ridge. Leaving Loch an Eilein a little before 9 a.m., we visited the starting-place of the recent Rothiemurchus Forest Fire; noted the extraordinary abundance of the "cranberry", so-called—really the "cowberry", the fruit of *Vaccinium Vitis-idaea*—in the low ground of Inchriach; and made our way through the woodland and over the moss by the Allt Coire Follais to the Argyll Stone. Here we found ourselves but little below the clouds which were rapidly driven along by a heavy south wind. Quitting the friendly shelter of the "tor", we walked against this wind past the smaller stone known variously as the Athole Stone or as the Argyll Stone, and had not a little discussion as to the proper naming of the two tors. The northern one, first visited, near the cairn, is the bigger, and is at the higher elevation; it is readily seen from the neighbouring lowlands, and is generally spoken of as the Argyll Stone. The southern one, smaller and at less elevation, is less easily recognised from below; but it is curiously shaped [see *C.C.J.*, II., 88], and there is very good authority for applying the name "Argyll Stone" to it. It is very desirable that the question of the naming of these tors should be settled.

Well, leaving this to be dealt with by more competent people, we pushed on to Sgoran Dubh Beag, where we just touched cloudland, and had a very interesting view down into Glen Eunach, with its canopy of mist cutting off all the higher ground. Then we went on over Sgoran Dubh Mor and to Sgor Ghaoith, in a roaring wind that made conversation impossible, and a mist that closely circumscribed our view. At the "Windy Peak"—how apt the name appeared—we discussed our future proceedings, and a motion to return by the crag edge was somewhat grudgingly agreed to.

But the views down the numerous striking gullies soon justified our decision, and we had many notably fine bits of crag to look at. Before reaching the Sgoran Dubh Mor, we worked out on a huge projecting mass, and found ourselves quitting the lower edge of cloud-

land, with Loch Eunach stretching on either hand below us, and between us and it a fierce wilderness of crags and splintered pinnacles that would need the pencil of a Doré to do justice to them. Certainly there can be but few, if any, finer and wilder pieces of rock scenery in the Cairngorms.

Quitting this reluctantly, and with hearty thanks to the proposer of the crag walk, we regained the edge of the main crag; re-passed Sgoran Dubh Mor and Beag; again visited the two tors of disputed name; had a look into the Coire Buidhe that faces towards Loch an Eilein; and then returned by our outward route.

We quite agreed that, though in mist and wind mountain tops may lack comfort, and for the inexpert even safety, they do gain in eeriness and sublimity; the crags look higher and steeper, the gullies more profound and savage, and the whole mountain region seems more remote from our ordinary surroundings, more retired from the common affairs of life, and correspondingly more impressive, and charged with a deeper spiritual influence.

“He who ascends to mountain tops shall find  
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow.  
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,  
Gathers around these summits, as to show  
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below”.

HELL'S LUM is situated about the centre of the crags between the Feith Buidhe and the Coire Domhain Burns; Brown's Gully lies between Coire Domhain and Coire Raibert, but nearer the former. (CAIRNGORM). The Lum is a fine example of a “chimney”, but an ugly fissure to approach in mist. At right angles to the main cleft, on its eastern side, is a smaller crack of interest to geologists; the cleavage is not smooth, both sides being adorned with several rows of rock “teeth”. The appearance is as if the granite were in horizontal layers, and each layer had broken through along a zig-zag line. This is a quite unusual appearance in such a cleft, and it is to be hoped that some expert geologist will examine it, and report on it in the columns of this Journal. The Lum may be recognised from the neighbourhood of the Shelter Stone. A few years ago there was a fox's den in the upper part of the Lum.

Brown's Gully, which is almost due north from the Shelter Stone, is the most direct route from the head of Loch Avon to the summit of Cairngorm, and is preferable in some respects to that by Coire Raibert. Seen from Maghan na Banaraich, the gully (which is marked, but not named, in the 6-in. map) does not appear particularly inviting, the more so as it is partially choked up by fallen stones. But the difficulties vanish as they are tackled; only care must be exercised in the ascent lest the leader should inadvertently send down stones on his followers. The climb takes about three-quarters of an hour, and reminds one somewhat of the Black Spout of Lochnagar. The ascent was made by Mr. James H. Brown and the writer on 2nd September last, on which date, it may be mentioned,

there was a considerable patch of old snow on the rocks between Garbh Uisge and the Feith Buidhe Burn.

AN exceptionally heavy rainstorm in the Western Cairngorms on Friday, 3rd November, flooded all the hill rivers with extraordinary rapidity, and caused the Spey to swell at an unusual rate. The Feshie, in particular, was in great spate, one old residenter on its banks, who remembered the floods of 1829, declaring that never since that memorable date had he seen the Feshie in such large volume. Nearly all the footbridges from the top of Glen Feshie to the Spey were washed away, and even the great arch of Feshie Bridge seemed at one time as if it would not eventually be capable of giving passage to the great body of water that swept along. Old flood-marks were entirely submerged, and islands and knolls that had remained dry during two generations were covered, the tree tops only being visible. Great damage, of course, was done. One of the features of the flood was the remarkable rapidity with which it occurred. The water rose many feet in a very short time; within half an hour it was in such flood as no one living along its course had ever seen before.

MEMBERS of the Club who participated in the excursion to Ben Cleuch in May, 1898 (see *C.C.J.*, II., 289) may be interested to learn that it is proposed to construct an electric railway from Alva to the summit of the Ben (2363). The route is thus described:—The starting-point of the railway will be immediately behind the Rhoders Farm, where it is proposed to erect a station. From this point a gradual ascent will be made along the face of the Ghouls towards the Silver Glen, in the neighbourhood of which a return will commence westward, rounding the slope of the Middle Hill immediately above, and in full view of Alva Glen. An easy entrance will thus be effected to Glen Whinnel, parallel to which and to its head the line will proceed. The next landmark of the zig-zag course is the Alva moss, where a heading will be made towards Ben Cleuch, almost in a direct line. From the summit of Ben Cleuch, the highest mountain in the Ochil range, it is said that portions of 23 counties are visible, and the addendum is made that “the view, for extent and grandeur, has not its equal in the British Isles”. Of how many view-points is not such an assurance given with equal glibness and quite as little certitude! There is also a project to erect a sanatorium and hotel on or near the summit of Ben Cleuch.

THIS scheme has been kept more or less prominently before the public of Aberdeen during the past six months, and the “literature” of the subject has received several notable additions. The *Free Press* of 24th July contained an interesting article on “The River Avon from its source to Inchroary”, as an accompaniment to a visitation of the Glen Avon region made by the Town Council; and on 5th October the local papers published the joint report of Mr. W. Dyack, C.E., Aberdeen, and Mr. G. G. Jenkins, C.E., Aberdeen, on the feasibility

of the scheme. These engineers said they had "no hesitation in arriving at the conclusion that the inhabitants of the city of Aberdeen would be fortunate in obtaining such a pure supply of water as can be had from this source". Analyses made by Mr. Thomas Jamieson, F.I.C., showed that the water of the Avon was chemically of exceptional purity ("In regard to purity", said Mr. Jamieson, "I am of opinion that the water of the Avon above the Loin Burn must rank as first in the kingdom"); the gathering area was estimated at about 12 miles in length by an average width of about three miles, extending to 22,540 acres; and the gaugings of the flow of the river, the rainfall observations, and the capabilities of the drainage area assured an ample quantity of water to meet a supply (for a population of 300,000 in Aberdeen 50 years hence) of not less than 20 million gallons daily. The engineers propounded three different routes for an aqueduct, estimated to cost respectively £857,900, £950,500, and £1,019,000. A "General Review of the Situation" by Mr. Jamieson appeared in the *Free Press*, 6th October. Mr. Jamieson contended that the aqueduct need cost only £500,000.

AN AVON TRADITION. SPEAKING at a "use and wont" ceremony at the inspection of the Murtle water supply on 5th July, Mr. Thomas Jamieson related a tradition in regard to the

Avon as indicating the quantity of water in the river, and giving, at the same time, a clue to its name. "The famous Fingal" (he said) "whose time goes away back to the shades of antiquity, is said to have had a wife who was a bit of a giantess, and she determined to try to leap the Linn of the Avon by way of a boast. Being a risky thing at any time, she would not have attempted this in a high state of the river, which would have been an absolute impossibility; but she might have thought it possible at its normal flow. She tried it, but failed, and was drowned, and her body was carried two miles down the river, where her grave is still pointed out. Fingal in his grief desired to associate himself with the river that had carried away his wife, and he called it the water of Fingal. The Gaelic word for water consists of half a dozen letters or more, but it is pronounced something like 'Ah', and the Gaelic for Fingal is 'Fhinn'; hence the sound of the name given was 'Ahfinn', which easily ran into 'Avon'". We don't profess to be proficient in Gaelic, and we dislike to discredit tradition, but isn't the name Avon simply derived from the Gaelic word Abhuinn (pronounced Aven or Awen), meaning a river?

DEATH OF MR. O. GLYNNE JONES. FATAL Alpine accidents were numerous during the past season, and one of the most serious and lamentable occurred on 28th August, when Mr. Owen Glynne Jones, a noted mountaineer, met his

death along with three guides in making the ascent of the Dent Blanche. The accident happened at an altitude of 14,100 feet, or about 160 feet from the summit. Mr. Jones, another Englishman, Mr. Hill, and the three guides were all roped together. At a very critical part of the ascent, the leading guide slipped and

fell back on the others; and four of the party were precipitated into the abyss below, the rope snapping in front of Mr. Hill, who made his way back to Zermatt with great difficulty. Mr. Jones—who was Physical Science Master in the City of London School—was a very prominent member of the Alpine Club, and it is said of him that he “knew the Alps almost as well as the London policeman knows his beat; he had ascended the Matterhorn, Mont Blanc, and all the other big peaks”. He was the author of “Rock Climbing in the English Lake District” (see *C.C.J.*, II., 397).

THIS famous mountaineer appeared in Aberdeen on SIR WILLIAM 16th November, when he lectured on “Climbing in the  
MARTIN Bolivian Andes”. Sir W. Martin Conway, besides  
CONWAY. scouring the Alps “from end to end”—to quote the title of one of his best-known books—has made a reputation for himself in the Himalayas and in the exploration of Spitsbergen. His feats in the Andes were performed in September and October, 1898, when he successfully accomplished the ascent of Illimani (22,500 feet high), and reached an altitude of 23,000 feet on Mount Sorata, when an impassable crevasse stopped his further progress. His lecture was a highly interesting one. Mr. Bryce, M.P., presided—very appropriately, being President of the Alpine Club—while Sir William Martin Conway, besides being a member of the Club, is the editor of the “Alpine Journal”. By the way, Sir William contributed a series of articles on “The South American Alps” to *Harper's Magazine* during the past year: the one describing “Climbing Mount Sorata” appeared in the November number.

THE LARIG GHRU interesting walk, which may be worth recording.  
AND I left Inverdrue at 7 a.m., intending to walk  
THE GARBH COIRE. round the top of the crags of the Garbh Coire.  
At 8 I was at the final Larig post, and saw with satisfaction the clouds clearing off the higher tops, and giving, as I thought, promise of a good day. At 9 I crossed the Allt Druidh or northern Allt na Leirg Ghru, and at 10 passed the watershed, leaving Inverness-shire and entering Aberdeenshire. Here I was somewhat disappointed to meet with driving mist and fine rain, and to see that Cairn Toul was enveloped in cloud more than half-way down.

My next half-hour was spent by the Pools of Dee, and I noted with some care the curious surface configuration of the ground thereabouts. From the steep mountain slopes on either side—Ben Muich Dhui on the east, Braeriach on the west—the falling screes have made five marked ridges across the hollow of the pass. In the four hollows so formed lie the four Pools of Dee—in earlier days often called the Wells of Dee. These pools are generally said to be formed by the March Burn, which falls down from the plateau on the north side of Ben Muich Dhui; but a little careful observation will show that the ridge between the first and the second pools is the alluvial fan of the March Burn, so that much, if not all, of the water of the uppermost pool must be otherwise supplied. The lower part of the fall of the

March Burn is hidden in its alluvial fan, but its water obviously reappears in the second and succeeding pools, and it is one of the main sources of the head waters of the Dee, though not *the* main source. The second pool is a very small one, and was quite dried up during the drought of August; its retaining barrier is so very rough that a pathway has been made through it by the removal of stones. The third and fourth pools are much larger, and the ridge separating them is rather low. The fourth pool is really a fine lochan, more than 100 feet in diameter, and affording a delicious bath on a hot day. Its waters are very cold, and so extremely clear as to be very misleading as to depth. On both these accounts the bather therein must use special caution.

As I had swum in this pool only a few days before, I did not delay there, but pushed on to the Garbh Coire. There is another small pool on the west side of the track, made by a streamlet from the eastern Coire Ruadh of Braeriach. As I passed this, just west of where the southern Allt na Leirg Ghru escapes from its last barrier and flows in full stream down the widening valley, I saw a small herd of stags, one with the velvet hanging in long, ragged streamers from some noble antlers.

At 11 I sat by the side of the river Dee in the Garbh Coire, and took a small lunch. Then, selecting carefully what looked like, and proved to be, a fairly easy route, a little to the west of the outflowing stream, I scrambled up to the Lochan Uaine of Cairn Toul, and reached the edge of its waters just before mid-day. Up there the day was distinctly chilly, the wind, mist, and rain all combining to "damp" one's ardour. But I had long intended to swim in this lochan, if ever opportunity offered, and so, braving the untoward weather, in a few minutes I was disporting myself in a bath whose physical elevation (over 3000 feet) was well matched by the lowness of its temperature. While resuming my garments I wondered how many men had swum in that lochan, and how many had swum at such an elevation in this country.

As I walked round the lochan I was somewhat surprised to find that its outlet is underground. Only in very wet or very windy weather does water leave it on the surface. At its upper end the lochan receives a brisk mountain stream that falls several hundreds of feet from a small, higher corrie, in which are several little pools of water. A wild, desolate place is this upper corrie, lying under the summit of Cairn Toul, and receiving avalanches of huge stones from its crags; and doubly wild and desolate on that day, with mist driving across it, and hiding all the upper parts of its surrounding rocky walls. Just as I entered it, having come up by the side of the stream, an eagle swooped down from the driving mist near the Angel's Peak, and, passing not more than thirty feet over my head, sailed out with widespread wings over the Garbh Coire.

At 1 o'clock I was on the plateau behind the Angel's Peak, and exposed to the fierceness of the wind that was roaring across from the west. I made direct for the edge of the crags, and followed them

as a safe guide all the way round the Garbh Coire. It was tantalising to get only peeps of the depths below; but perhaps the gullies, some black with sheer, wet rock, some red with granite detritus, gained in impressiveness, as they ended in whirling mist, leaving their full depths to be imagined. Certainly, I thought, this walk must be done again in fair weather. Several times have I been on these crags when the air was clear, but only this once have I walked all round.

At 1.30 I was again visited by the eagle. This time the bird paused in its flight, and slowly circled round quite near me, as if meditating attack. I promptly cleared my cape from my right arm, and swung my walking-stick into a convenient attitude for defence; but after a short investigation the splendid visitor resumed its flight, and I turned to walk on, but not without often looking back to guard against a sudden attack from the rear. The bird had been so near me that I plainly saw the hooked point of its beak, and the markings in the colour of the plumage of its face.

The wind and rain were so fierce and heavy that I could not safely expose my map, and so had only a somewhat general and indefinite idea as to the locality of the many gullies and projections I passed. It is to be regretted that the large-scale (6-inch) Ordnance Survey map does not show these in detail. Indeed, this is a general weakness of this map—so good for the low ground, so amazingly poor for the high ground. The Garbh Coire crags afford a fine field for a piece of topographical mapping of a striking kind, and we are surely entitled to look to the Ordnance Surveyors to supply it.

Soon after my second visit from the eagle, I caught the sound of the mighty roar of the falls of the Dee, where the stream drops in a series of cataracts some 600 feet into the Garbh Coire. When, at 2 o'clock, I reached this stream, I sat awhile in the lee of a big rock and had my second lunch. Then in a perfect hurricane I went over the summit of Braeriach, passed the second cairn, and rounded the head of the northern Coire Ruadh. Then I got on to the Sron na Leirg, and followed it to the north, passing its cairn just after 3. A few minutes before this I got below the cloud level, and had distant views of the Moray Firth and of many mountains whose tops were in the clouds.

I kept somewhat to the west on the ridge so as to visit the Lochan Duibh in the old "sanctuary". Here in the days when the forest timber was being cut the stream, Allt Choire Odhar an Lochain Dhuibh, was dammed up to form a reservoir, from which a large body of water could suddenly be released to float the timber down the Allt Druidh to the Spey. The embankment still exists, but the sluice is no longer in place. A few yards east of the site of this artificial lochan are several small, dark pools, doubtless the Lochan Duibh that gave name to the stream and the corrie. Presumably the stream flowed through the lowest of these lochans, which was merged in the artificial one; it has no obvious connection with the others.

Going northwards from here, I dropped down along the east side

of Carn Elrick to the bank of the northern Allt na Leirg Ghru, or Allt Druidh, and so by Auldrue (the same name in a debased form) made my way back to Inverdrue (the same name again), which I reached at 6 in the evening.

BEFORE Sheriff Robertson in the Aberdeen Sheriff Court to-day, William Gavin, underkeeper, Knockes-pock, admitted having contravened the Wild Birds Act by shooting an osprey on 22nd May last.

Mr. Fellowes Gordon of Knockes-pock, who was in Court, explained that the osprey was shot by his instructions. He was aware of the fact that an unusually large bird was flying about the estate, but none of them had the slightest idea what it was. None of them had seen an osprey, and he thought it might be a buzzard. He had no idea that they were contravening the law. He also remarked that he had never seen the osprey since it went into the hands of the police.

The Fiscal—Oh, it's all right—(laughter).

Sheriff Robertson observed that it did not much matter whether the bird was a buzzard or an osprey, because he understood that buzzards were also protected by the same Order. He fancied that a gamekeeper ought to know an osprey or ought to take the risk of not knowing the bird. It was a very great pity that this bird was shot—(Mr. Gordon—We very much regret it)—because it was one of the rarest birds that was to be found in Scotland now. He imposed a penalty of £1, with the alternative of five days' imprisonment.—*Evening Gazette*, 13th July, 1899.

SPORT IN GLENAVON FOREST. THE following interesting communication from "A Correspondent" appeared in the *Banffshire Journal* of 9th August last:—"I observed in the newspapers that last season a notable stag was killed in Glenavon Forest, weighing over 20 stones, by Mr. Godman, the lessee of the forest. It is now sixty-one years since Glen Avon was converted into a deer forest by the late Lord Henry Bentinck, who rented Glen Avon for about thirty years, and during that long period I never heard of a stag of the same weight being killed there. When I was deer-stalking with that notable sportsman, the best stags we got were only about 17 stones, and very few of them touched that mark, but the forest was handicapped at that time by the presence of over a thousand fine widders in the best grass of the forest, which was a means of keeping the deer to high grounds. Without good grass, the hinds cannot raise good calves, and without good calves, there cannot be good stags, as the suckling season has an influence over the future growth of the best. Lord H. Bentinck was one of the greatest sportsmen that ever came to Scotland, not only as a deer-stalker, but also as an excellent shot at grouse. He one day, with his own gun, shooting over dogs, killed 149 brace of grouse in one of the beats attached to Glen Avon. His guns and rifles and field glasses were the very best. Glenavon Forest is notable for its fine water. The south side of the forest supplies the very finest and



purest water that Scottish hills can yield all the way up to the foot of Ben Muich Dhui”.

CAIRNGORM AND LOCHNAGAR were, respectively, ascended by the Club on the Summer and Autumn Holidays. The official programme was on each occasion duly carried out, though the weather on both excursions left something to be desired.

*Cairngorm:* The headquarters of the Club were the Boat of Garten Hotel, the party driving from the hotel on the evening of 10th July to Glenmore Lodge *via* Aviemore. The ascent was made in the early morning of the 11th, with the intention of seeing the sun rise; but Sol declined to be interviewed till nearly noon. After breakfast at the Marquis's Well, a visit to Oiste Mhairearaid, and the initiation of a candidate, the party descended to Glen More.

*Lochnagar:* The ascent was made on 25th September from Altna-guibhsaich Lodge—the party having driven from Ballater. The members dined in the evening at the Invercauld Arms Hotel—Mr. Alex. Copland presiding, Professor Cameron being croupier.

TYPES OF MOUNTAIN SCENERY was the title of an address delivered by the President of the Club, Right Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L., M.P., to the members, on 22nd November last. It will appear in *Journal* No. 15.

Mr. Mathieson, of the Ordnance Survey, has kindly offered to address the members next spring on “O.S. Maps and their Construction”.

OUR ELEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING was held on 21st December, 1899—the Chairman, Rev. Robert Semple, presiding.

The following were appointed Office-bearers and members of Committee:—President, The Right Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L., M.P.; Vice-Presidents, Alexander Copland and Rev. Robert Lippe, LL.D.; Chairman, William Porter, J.P.; Secretary, A. I. M'Connochie, C.A., 115 Union Street, Aberdeen; Treasurer, T. R. Gillies, Advocate, 181A Union Street, Aberdeen; Committee—Robert Anderson, Professor Cameron, D.D., John Croll, George Duncan, George F. Duthie, Robert Harvey, John M'Gregor, J. A. M'Hardy, James A. Ross, and Rev. Robert Semple.

The excursions for the current year were fixed as follows:—Spring Holiday—Mount Keen; Summer Holiday—Mount Blair; Autumn Holiday—Hill of Foudland.

Rev. Robert Semple was thanked for the very satisfactory manner in which he had discharged the duties of the chair during his term of office.

The following new members have been admitted:—John Cook, James Shearer, Miss Jack, William B. Brown, J. H. Jamieson, William M'Queen Smith, and Colonel Sir John Farquharson, K.C.B.

## REVIEWS.

MR. WILLIAM CADENHEAD, the veteran versifier of RECOLLECTIONS Aberdeen, has issued—for private circulation only—OF BRAEMAR. a poetical brochure—"Recollections of Braemar: Years Ago and Now". He recalls the days of his youth, when he

"dwelt all fancy free,  
By the upper reaches of Highland Dee,  
In the village known both near and far  
By the grand old upland name, Braemar",

and spent the evening time "in Hunter's cosy hostelry"—the Fife Arms, if we mistake not. But our genial poet is no mere *laudator temporis acti*; he can still enjoy Braemar, if climbing Ben Muich Dhui is forbidden him, and he also finds that the evening time

"Is rich and prime  
On the new as the olden holidays"

That he can rhyme as effectively as of yore is evidenced in the lines in which he catalogues the hills:—

"When the laverock had sprung from his dewy bed,  
And the mists of the morning had mounted and fled,  
The breezes that kissed my glowing cheeks  
Came fresh from a hundred mountain peaks,  
The names of which take the mind by storm—  
As Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm,  
Beinn a' Bhuid, Braeriach—which few can par—  
Cairn Toul, Ben Avon, and Lochnagar—  
That cluster around and guard Braemar".

MENTION was made in the *C.C. Journal* (I., 337) of the formation of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club in 1892. The Club has now begun the publication of a *Journal*, the first number of which appeared in July: like our own, the *Journal* is to be issued twice a year. The Yorkshire Ramblers, however, seem to go further a-field than the Cairngormers, and no fewer than three of the articles deal with mountaineering in Norway and the Alps. Still, they do not neglect their own district, and, accordingly, we have articles on "The Caves and Pot-Holes of Yorkshire", Gaping Ghyll, and Deep Ghyll. The Yorkshire *Journal* opens well, it is exceedingly well illustrated, and we wish it a long and brilliant career.

THE CLIMBERS' is the organ of the Climbers' Club, which was formed in London on 6th December, 1897, the first general meeting being held on 28th April in the following year. The Club includes a large number of prominent English (and other) mountaineers, and has as its first President Mr. C. E. Mathews, F.R.G.S. A good idea of the strength of the Club may be gathered from the fact that the *Journal* is issued quarterly. Mr. E. Raymond Turner, Rutland House, Epsom, is Editor; the price is 4s. per annum.

is the title of a book just published, in which Mr. E. A. FitzGerald records a mountain ascent still greater than any accomplished by Sir W. Martin Conway—the ascent of Aconcagua, in Argentina, 23,100 feet high. A brief notice of this ascent has already appeared in the *C.C.J.* (II., 315). Mr. FitzGerald did not himself succeed in reaching the summit of Aconcagua, being overcome when within 400 yards of the top by the rarefied atmosphere and mountain sickness; but the ascent was accomplished on 14th January, 1897, by Mattias Zurbruggen, the Swiss Guide, and in February by another member of Mr. FitzGerald's party, Mr. Stuart Vines, accompanied by Lanti Nicola, one of the Italian porters. Mr. Stuart Vines, who contributes a couple of chapters to the book, says he "hesitated to leave a spot that overlooked the two greatest States of a mighty continent, affording a view over nigh 80,000 square miles of mountain, sea, and land; to peaks to north and south fully 200 miles beyond Mercedario and Tupungato, unknown to me by name, but that rose out of the endless Andes, to right and left, at the lowest estimate 500 miles apart—

'Where Andes, giant of the Western Star  
With meteor standard to the winds unfurled,  
Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world'".

THE influence of Wordsworth on the modern delight in and appreciation of natural scenery is now a somewhat hackneyed theme; but the *Spectator* reverted to it one day last summer (5th August) in its endeavour to find a reason for the annual exodus of jaded city folk to the country. "Whole classes of society, that only a few years ago never thought of anything more than an occasional day in a country, and a visit to the old family home, now scour vast areas—Wales, Scotland, Switzerland, the Rhine—in search of the glories of Nature". The change, in the opinion of the *Spectator*—and in the opinion of most people who have reflected on the subject—is "mainly due to the poetry of one man of genius", Wordsworth. He it was "who impressed for all future time the idea of the sublimity of Nature, the idea of her interaction with the mind of man, of her healing power, of her revelation of the divine".

Boat of Garten, Strathspey.

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**POSTING. GOLFING. CYCLING.**

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*Trout Fishing on Spey Free.*

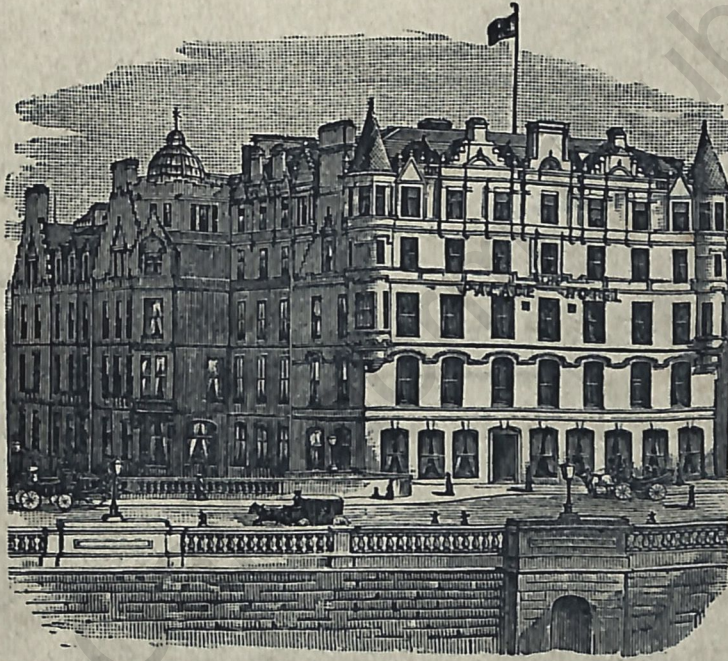
GEORGE GRANT, PROPRIETOR.

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