

THE Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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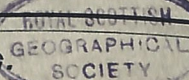
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THE SHELTER STONE CRAG.

THE
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BEN ALDER.

BY WILLIAM GARDEN.

IN Volume I. of this Journal, and there at page 213, Mr. John Clarke gives an interesting and well-detailed account of an expedition made by the Club to Ben Alder in July, 1894.

To recapitulate Mr. Clarke's article—the party “set sail” from the Dalwhinnie end of Loch Ericht, landed at Alder Bay, and thence made the ascent, descending by the Coire Gleadhreach Beag to the Bealach Dubh, and thence *via* Loch Pattack to Lochericht Lodge, where their “vessels” were waiting them for the return journey to Dalwhinnie.

I trust that the members of the Cairngorm Club generally, and particularly those who have read Mr. Clarke's article, will pardon me if I venture to give an account of another ascent of this interesting and rather inaccessible mountain. To those who demand an excuse for such a liberty may I plead that our “attack” was made from a different starting-point, was entirely an “overland” route, was made partly during the night, and during a very severe thunderstorm, which complicated matters considerably.

The subordinate in a large and busy legal firm in Edinburgh who would pursue the unrivalled pleasures of mountaineering to any great extent during the limited space of a week-end, without incurring a breach of office

hours and the consequent penalties, must be prepared to banish at once from his mind such luxuries as going to bed; and the silent hours of midnight must find him doggedly negotiating—it may be with uncertain step—some treacherous peat-bogs or mountain steep, if he would conquer the envied peak. Such were the arguments which Mr. Gibson and I had used, when, on Saturday, 24th July, 1897, we found ourselves in the Fort-William train which leaves the Waverley at 3.50 p.m.

The previous week had been hot and sultry, and as we rushed through Corstorphine and our view expanded, huge masses of copper-coloured clouds could be seen towering above the Pentland Hills, and looming over the flats of Lanarkshire—sure heralds of a coming storm. It was only when we were leaving Gortan station on the West Highland line, however, and when we began to cross the weary wastes of Rannoch Moor that the forked lightning commenced to play freely, and to convince us that the storm was already on us. Rannoch station was reached about 8.45 p.m., and with many silent misgivings (on the writer's part at any rate) we got out on the dreary platform, where already the large rain-drops were beginning to make their impression. A few passengers viewed us curiously from out the spacious saloons which are run on this line—well adapted for enjoying the unique scenery of the country regardless of the elements; and, as the train moved off and left us on the lonely moor, no doubt some would remark—"Who are these arrayed so strange?" "Why those ropes and hob-nailed boots?" and indeed, justifiably perhaps, "Are these men sane?" The train is gone; and here we stand on the deserted platform of Rannoch station (if a station it may be called), surrounded on all sides by the watery peat-hags of the great moor, and with nought to break the silence but the boom of distant thunder and the dying murmur of the train as it toils up to Corroul. With the parting train our last and only escape from the storm is gone. There were (then at any rate) no houses at the station to shelter us, and, to return to Edinburgh within the time at our disposal, we

must catch the 10 a.m. Sunday train from Inverness to Perth, timed to reach Dalwhinnie about 1 p.m. Keeping prominently in view, therefore, that we had only 16 hours to traverse an unknown country, we at once started off in an easterly direction along the Camasericht road, and this road we followed to its junction with the Corrou path. It was becoming very dark and the storm was now full on us. The rain fell in sheets, and the growing darkness was only relieved every now and again by an occasional flash of lightning. Under such conditions it was with no little hesitation that we prepared to pilot our course over the



BENALDER COTTAGE.

wastes lying between us and the south end of Loch Ericht. A hurried examination of the map showed us that our course lay by the south shore of Lochan Sron Smeur and the north side of Lochan Loin nan Dubhach. Feeling fairly confident we should be able to see those small sheets of water in the gloom, we bade good-bye to the road and plunged into the mysteries of the moor, keeping a northerly direction. Some may still remember the great storm of that night; I do not think *we* shall soon forget

it. As we ploughed along in the dark, every other minute the whole of the eastern horizon was illuminated with magnificent displays of sheet lightning lasting several seconds, and in the foreground long fingers, as it were, of forked lightning would seem to come tumbling down from the zenith towards the earth, and find a resting-place in the bogs and hillsides—a weird sight indeed, and not without its dangers in this exposed place. At last we reach the Allt Coire a' Ghiubhais, where it flows into Lochan Loin nan Dubhach. This small stream we carefully followed for about a mile—only too glad to have some sure guide. Shortly a flash revealed to us clearly the broad expanse of Ericht, and we decided to steer in that line as best we could. This proved a very troublesome bit of work, for the heather is deep and the ground exceedingly rough, and many a tumble we had. After half-an-hour of this going, we reached the shore of the loch. The rain had now stopped somewhat, and, though we were simply wringing, the exertions of pulling through the long heather had made us very warm and fatigued. Arrived at the loch we felt comparatively sure of making out Benalder Cottage—“Benalder Lodge” in the unrevised one-inch map. The west shore of the loch consists of large boulders and shingle, and, immediately beyond, deep heather. We tried both, but eventually took to jumping from stone to stone along the shore as best we could. Presently we saw a large object on our left standing out in the darkness, and making for it we found it to be a house, or rather a small wooden hut. At once we concluded it must be M'Cook, the forester's at Benalder Cottage, and we were surprised to find all in darkness, as we had warned him we should arrive that night. We walked round, groping for the door, and eventually found it. We knocked; but got no reply. We must have made a mistake, and so we resumed our jumping process on the boulders along the shore. Continuing this disagreeable and tedious advance for some ten minutes or so, we were agreeably surprised to find, on rounding a foreland, the glimmer of a distant light, and aided by another grand flash we could now take in the whole

situation. Here were Alder Bay and M'Cook's house on the hillside at last. But our troubles were not quite ended yet, for between us and the welcome light lay the Uisge Aulder—a mere stream usually, but now a raging torrent. We walked up this stream from the loch side, endeavouring to find a fording place; but, though dark, the roar of the water told us that we should probably search in vain. At length we found a fixed plank which we traversed astraddle, and very carefully. At ten minutes past midnight—the river crossed—we were shaking hands with Mrs. M'Cook, who had quite abandoned any hope that we had started. She had thoughtfully put a lamp in her window, and thus given us a guide for two miles almost. But for this we should certainly never have found the cottage, for somehow we had got into our heads the idea that it was much nearer the loch side than was actually the case. Mrs. M'Cook was sole occupant, her husband having very kindly gone out with a lantern to look for us towards the Dalwhinnie direction, having mistaken our starting-point.

Under the lamplight, and before the roaring peat fire we were sorry-looking beings in all conscience—soaked from head to foot, smeared with mud by our many falls in the bogs, and our eyes blinking in the strong light like those of an owl that has suddenly been surprised by the light. But the good lady of the house supplied us with hot tea, and, after a sumptuous meal, we got into bed, while Mrs. M'Cook devoted her attentions equally to turning our soaking garments before the fire, and to a *Scotsman* which we had been able to transport with us comparatively intact. At 3.15 a.m. we were roused, and, stiff and sleepy, we struggled into our still wet clothes. Refreshed by warm tea and a light breakfast, things became more cheerful. At 3.45 we bade adieu to our kind hostess, and betook ourselves to the slopes behind the house, keeping the burn on our left. It was now daylight, of course, but it was again pouring very hard, and the mist rolled round us on all sides, so that our view was practically as limited as during the night. It was a question now whether we should tackle the Ben and possibly lose our

way, or keep the loch side and make sure of our train at Dalwhinnie. But the temptation was too great, so on we went, knowing that as long as we kept to the burn we must ascend, so far at any rate, in the right direction. We passed Prince Charlie's "Cave". How many had he in Scotland can anyone say? It is merely a collection of huge boulders huddled together among a luxuriant growth of brackens. We could find no separate "chambers" referred to by Mr. Clarke, but we confess that there was no temptation to make a careful investigation. We were Jacobite enough, however, to heave a sigh for the poor Prince if he had to take refuge in such a place—were it only from the elements.

We continued in a north-easterly direction, following the burn to its source. At this point the weather was very thick, and, with the disappearance of the stream, we had to make another appeal to our map, and set our compass for some new landmark. How it poured here! We felt very wretched, and in a forlorn condition proceeded to steer very slowly in a northerly direction, and so ascended in a slanting course the slope, which, up till now, we had climbed face on. We had no aneroid, but I should say the burn ended about the 2750 line. Very soon we came on more gentle slopes and stony ground, and reached what was undoubtedly the edge of the steep rock-face which drops into the Bealach Beithe. Once here the trouble ends for a time, because, to reach the top, this ridge must be followed for about three-quarters of a mile, the summit cairn (3757) being some 50 or 60 yards in from the ridge at that distance. Cheered with these thoughts (excellent in theory), we went on in faith, keeping well to the ridge, but always taking sufficient care not to venture too near the edge from which the mists came surging up in long black masses, and mingled with the whiter cloud which scoured the slopes to the left, clearly showing that there were considerable depths below. As we followed the ridge we passed several little cairns, which are marked in the six-inch map, and are 3531 feet, 3597 feet, 3577 feet, and 3503 feet respectively at the top

of the Sron Bhealaich Bheithe. Past the last of these cairns we had nothing to remark till we reached the top of a very fine gully which apparently led down to the Garbh Choire. We should now be very near *the* cairn, and it was time to keep a sharp look-out in the driving mist which might readily prevent its detection. Still we went on, but no signs of it, and, as we began a gradual descent, we had surely passed it. So we turned, and, keeping in from the ridge a bit, came back in the direction we had come. The wind, previously on our backs, now came straight at us, which, with driving sleet, made a sharp look-out difficult. However, in a very few minutes after we had "wheeled about", we saw an insignificant cairn for which we made a rush, and which, by its insignia of broken bottles, old meat cans, and other signs of civilisation, convinced us that it must be *the* cairn. Here I may devote a few words to the general lie of the mountain.

Standing at the cairn, and looking south, one should see the gently-sloping ridge by which we had come up. It drops precipitously into the great corrie on the left, and slopes away in a broad plateau to the right, reminding one very much of the top of Braeriach, and all the more so on account of the little stone men dotted all along the crest. Looking south-east the precipitous northern face of Beinn Bheoil, on the other side of the Bealach, should stand out prominently. In a north-easterly direction again a continuation of the ridge which we had just quitted should carry us along to the top of the Garbh Choire Bheag, and so on by a series of corries till Coire Gleadhreach Beag is reached. And lastly, to the north and west, who can tell what one might not have seen, from the great unshapely masses of Creag Meaghaidh on Loch Laggan-side to the great Ben himself. But a heavy hailstorm was not calculated to develop our imagination, so we made a rush for the ridge again and crawled under a ledge from which we watched the hailstones pattering on the rocks without, and then rolling over into the corrie beneath us. In this primitive shelter we partook of a second "breakfast", which consisted of sandwiches done to a pulp by the rain, and a few figs and

raisins. As we devoured this, the weather improved considerably, and a sudden rent in the cloud showed us Loch a' Bhealaich Bheithe, and another, shortly after, the far north end of Loch Ericht itself. We took courage, and at 7.45 we began to descend into the steaming depths of the corrie. A few fair "pitches" are to be found here, and possibly all along the corrie face.

Our expedition was really made to find out what sort of climbs (if any) were to be had in the corrie, but, so far as we could make out, they were not of a very high-class order. We would fain have made some practical experiments, but, having been so handicapped with the weather and consequent loss of time, we keep prominently in view our train and the unknown ground still to be covered.

Loch a' Bhealaich Bheithe reached, a grand spectacle awaited us. The darkness of the night and chilly morning hours were replaced by the cheering rays of the morning sun, which (as Mr. Virgil would have put it) reached the very marrow of our bones. The entire corrie was lit up with the eastern sun, and relieved by great bands of white mist slowly rising and floating over the corrie on to the plateau we had just quitted. At the south end of the loch there is a fine gully or chimney from which the Allt Bealach springs and flows into the loch. Again, at the extreme north end of the corrie, there are two magnificent buttresses which are referred to in an early volume of the *S.M.C. Journal*. These two buttresses loyally guard the left-hand side of the entrance to the Bealach Dubh, and, looking back on them from near Loch Pattack, they have a most imposing appearance. Having admired this great view, we reluctantly left the north end of the loch, and hurried along the burn from the loch to the point where it joins the Culrea Burn, where we struck a fairly good path which we followed to Loch Pattack, where we turned sharply to the right. At this loch we had another halt. The view here certainly repaid us for the discomfort of the night. The waters of Pattack sparkled at our feet, and in the east the morning mist rolled up the sides of the Western Cairn-

gorms and revealed them in all their rich and characteristic blueness, only seen at this season after heavy and continued rain. Again, looking back, our vanquished peak was now wide-awake, and displayed himself and his sunlit corries by way of a special favour. At this point the two sentinel buttresses and the Bealach Dubh corrie beyond impressed us very much, and, had weather and time permitted, we should certainly have explored them before leaving.

At 10 a.m. we reached Lochericht Lodge, but—less fortunate than Mr. Clarke and his party—no “vessel” was in waiting to take us the remaining six miles of our journey. All was silence on this bright Sunday morning, and no signs were showing that the forester had yet betaken himself from the Land of Nod.

At 11.30 we were in the waiting-room at Dalwhinnie station, getting into the contents of a very important parcel which we had sent on to await us. As we steamed south that glorious afternoon, we said farewell to the distant Ben, of which we caught a glimpse soon after leaving the station, standing out clear and blue at the far end of the loch. At 5.30 p.m. we were once more under the shadow of Arthur’s Seat, having been away only about twenty-six hours.

BALLATER TO LYNWILG.

BY WILLIAM SKEA.

It was in lovely July weather that the forenoon train from Aberdeen set us down at the familiar little terminus at the foot of Craighendarroch. We had partaken heartily of the Athenæum's well-served "golfers' luncheon" before leaving the city, so all we had to do in Ballater was to sling satchel on shoulder, "shape our course", and "put our best foot foremost", to use the phraseology of the united services. Our preliminary spin was from Ballater to Inverey—a fairly effectual leg-stretcher. But then we had all that travellers could desire—high spirits, good weather, Highland air, and congenial company. It being one of the "objects of the company" (*vide* all prospectuses) to break ground wherever possible, we chose the south road, this leafy switchback highway being new to some of us.

To anyone in love with Nature the south Deeside road offers absorbing tit-bits at every step. There is always the invigorating scent of pine trees, overborne for a moment only by the redolence of birches and limes, while passing that ancient seat of a Gordon sept, now a demesne of Queen Victoria—quaint old Abergeldie. In the higher underwood that skirts the road, heather, juniper, blaeberry, bracken, and thorn-rose are everywhere prominent. Lichens cling to every dyke and stone. Now and again the delicate swaying streamers of the pendulous birch touch our bonnet as we pass under them, and the mountain-ash with its load of newly-formed berries presents a contrast to the deep green of the foliage. Wild flowers, grasses, and ferns grow close up to the path, and here and there form a beautiful carpet for the traveller's feet. Of feathered game we saw pheasant, partridge, black cock, and snipe. The song of every variety of native bird may here be heard, from the rasping staccato of the homely rook to the tender trill of the robin. We stopped to drink from a spring at the foot of a stone fence—evidently a recognised drinking-fountain for the wayfarer—when out of a mossy

joint of the dry-stone dyke there popped a wren, no bigger than our thumb. We examined the hole, which was just head-height above the well; it contained a tastefully built nest, in which, doubtless, Jenny had reared a little family.

Daylight was waning when we left the hostelry at Inver, after partaking of a well-earned meal. It was too dark to distinguish the Clunie Stone, and the Lion's Face was lost to view as we pushed along. "The visitors" in Castleton and Auchendryne were beginning to put out their lamps for the night when we passed westward. The last five miles of our journey might meet the Biblical description of the mortal years that exceed three-score-and-ten, being accomplished by labour and sorrow. We were glad, towards midnight, to throw off our shoulder-straps in our tiny "digs"; and we went to sleep "without rocking". The man who has tramped 26 miles of Highland road has earned a night's repose as honestly as any village blacksmith.

Just before five o'clock we rose refreshed, but with our muscular system in a rather dissatisfied mood; nor was this revolt of Nature quite reduced to the *statu quo ante bellum* when we had passed the Linn on our second day's journey. Our programme for the day included Glen Dee, Cairn Toul, Braeriach, the Larig, and a drive through Rothiemurchus to Lynwilg.

By the way, the woods about the Linn—indeed, all the woodlands from the Linn to the Quoich—form a happy hunting-ground for the entomologist. We have netted a great variety of winged creatures in these woods, including several dragon-flies of handsome proportions. And the botanist will find many treasures in the corrie of Allt an Leum Uisge. The Glen Dee road bridges this burn, about two miles beyond the Linn. The burn, which rises between Carn Mor and Leachd nan Uidhean, has its source at an altitude of 2000 feet in the boggy plateau out of which rises Sgor Mor, from the summit of which a glorious view of the Cairngorms and Beinn a' Ghlo is sometimes obtained. But, tell it not in Gath—at anyrate, not at Mar Lodge—when you ascend these heights, for they are the

“sanctuary” of Mar Forest. Besides being rich in ferns, lichens, and every variety of mountain plant, this corrie and its surroundings are exceedingly picturesque in the features formed by rock and falling water.

After passing the Chest of Dee there is not much that is striking in the scenery of Glen Dee, and it is not until a turning of the glen brings the Devil's Point into view that the pedestrian's interest revives, after the dull monotony of the preceding hour or two. At mid-day we were abreast of Glen Geusachan, and Charlie Robertson saluted us from the door of his hut (Corrour) as we passed on the opposite side of the Dee. We thereafter made tracks across the glen, and, fording the Dee, prepared for the ascent of Cairn Toul. The weather was still favourable, and we chose the line of the Soldier's Corrie for our ascent, perhaps the most direct, if not the easiest approach to the cairn. The work proved stiff enough, and, between heat and sheer fatigue, one of the party had to lie prone on the mountain side for fully half-an-hour. Of heat, however, we had not long to complain, for, on reaching the “stone region” (2500 feet), the temperature suddenly fell, and in a few minutes, notwithstanding that it was the 15th of July, we were buffeted by a violent snowstorm. Later, when climbing among the huge stones near the summit, the snow gave place to hail, which lashed our hands and faces.

We could not see beyond a few yards; to consult our chart was to destroy it, and only by “dead reckoning” did we succeed, after some difficulty, in finding the cairn, in the lee of which we found some shelter from the storm. Happily, we had not stood here for twenty minutes when the storm abated, and for some time the sun shone out with great brilliancy, and so clear was the atmosphere that we could see the mica shining in the stones on the top of Carn a' Mhaim on the opposite side of Glen Dee. Alas! this happy state of affairs meteorological was not of long duration. In a few minutes mist clouds came surging up the mountain sides and blotted out every bit of ground except that on which we trod. Once upon Cairn Toul summit we had

intended to follow the winding crest to Braeriach, there to descend into the Larig. But the mist brought with it bewilderment, and, after several vain attempts to carry out this programme, we were obliged to "cut" Braeriach, and get down into the Larig as quickly as possible. In our descent we made many stumbles, the first landmark that we recognised being the pale green water of Lochan Uaine, into which we had almost stepped unawares. We scrambled down to the Garchory, and ultimately found ourselves in the Larig late in the afternoon.

In passing between Ben Muich Dhui and Braeriach we left the mist behind us, and now there opened up before us an expansive glen, rich in verdure, and evidently most prolific in red deer. We must have seen a thousand head ere we reached the end of the path. At this point came the greatest disappointment of the day. It was here we had arranged for the Lynwilg conveyance; but instead of 9 o'clock it was now 10.30, and we saw the fresh wheel-marks where the conveyance had waited. Now, however, it had gone, and we "were left lamenting". Darkness fell on Rothiemurchus Forest; here and there there are clearings, and at one of these we were brought up by a sudden exclamation from one of the party—"Hullo! here's Coylum Bridge". We all looked, and in the indistinct light believed we saw something resembling the roadway and parapets of a bridge, though the scene was unfamiliar. Two of the party set out in the direction of the so-called bridge, but the white parapets and road were only openings among the trees. But the real Coylum was at last reached, and we stepped out with renewed vigour towards Aviemore. We arrived at Lynwilg, wet and footsore, not to say thoroughly exhausted, at 1.30 a.m. We knocked loud and long at the inn before getting any response; at last a window-sash was lifted, and a lady *en déshabillé* asked us what we wanted. In silence we were admitted to a back parlour, and there regaled with milk and scones. We slept that night—or rather what was left of it—as only weary travellers can sleep.

THE BLACK MOUNT.

BY EDRED M. CORNER, M.B., B.Sc., F.R.C.S.

IN No. 14 of the *Cairngorm Club Journal* Mr. A. C. Waters has recorded a few days' holiday that we had together in Lochaber. We parted on the 23rd of February, 1898, he returning home whilst I went on further journeyings alone. On a cold but beautiful morning two days later I drove very early from Fort William to Kinlochmore, at the head of Loch Leven, and, as I could not get put up at the keeper's house, crossed the ridge of Aonach Eagach, north of Glen Coe, and slept at the Clachaig. From this delightful little inn, placed in the depths of Glen Coe, another beautiful day gave a most pleasurable journey over Bidean nam Bian (3766), the monarch of Glen Coe, to the Kingshouse Inn, whence I made my first acquaintance with the Black Mount.

Although readers of this *Journal* are well acquainted with the White Mount of the Eastern Highlands, but few know of the Black Mount of the Western side. The group of hills that is called by this latter name is situated on the south-west of the Moor of Rannoch, and forms the eastern boundary to Glen Etive, and is also in the deer forest of the Marquis of Breadalbane. They may be approached from two inns, each of which is well situated. For comfort the Inveroran Inn upon Loch Tulla can be most warmly recommended, whilst the Kingshouse Inn has the glories of Buchaille Etive Mor to tempt rock-climbers.

Four mountains form the Black Mount, and two of them are many-headed. They form two natural groups, the north and the south, that are separated by a saddle, about 2100 feet high. The more northern group consists of the Clachlet (3602) and Meall a Bhuiridh (3636), the highest in the Black Mount, between them being a drop of about 500 feet. Meall a Bhuiridh is the eastern spur, unnamed in

Bartholomew's map. The Clachlet has four other tops upon its northern ridge which are, proceeding northwards, Mam Coire Easain (3506), a nameless top (3600), Stob Glas Choire (3207), and finally a small peak, which forms the imposing north-western buttress, as seen from Kingshouse, Sron a' Greise (2952).

The winter view from Kingshouse is extremely grand, and, as the inn is 800 feet above sea-level, the air is most bracing. The Western Highlands, in February, 1898, had given me eleven consecutive days of sunshine and frost! But the forbearance of the weather was now used up, and it was under most gloomy auspices that I left the Kingshouse one morning just before 8. The ordinary coach road towards Inveroran was followed for a mile or two, and then came a long trudge over the moorland towards the eastern ridge of Meall a Bhuiridh. It was here that the weather broke up entirely. As the higher ground was reached, the rain changed to sleet, and a furious wind rose up. As a result of the cold and rain, the snow had an icy surface that rendered walking an ungraceful and laborious pastime. When climbing alone one should be particularly careful; and yet how often the lonely mountaineer disregards all rules! As it would have taken far too long to cut steps up this long slope, I ascended it by digging my axe in, and floundering up two or three steps at a time. After many slips and much exertion the ridge was gained, only to find all prospects of ease and comfort blown away by the gale, with its sleet and ice. The summit of Meall a Bhuiridh was soon reached, and much more quickly left behind. At the col between this mountain and Mam Coire Easain, the gale was less furious, and, though I was still in a kind of witches' frolic of mist, time could be fairly comfortably spent in restoring feeling to one's nose and ears. The ascent of Mam Coire Easain from the col consisted of kicking steps up a steep slope of hard snow, followed by the manipulation of a cornice. When once the summit plateau was reached the fun began again. What were the exact tops and cairns visited I cannot truthfully say. But after stumbling upon that of the Clachlet, all thoughts of

ascending Stob Ghabhar vanished, and I slipped and slithered my way into Corrie Ba, which lies on the eastern side of the col, connecting the northern and southern groups of the Black Mount. It is a peaceful and flat-bottomed corrie which afforded a pleasant change from the warfare of the elements higher up. The rain still continued, but I could now indulge in some refreshment. The coach road was joined at Ba Bridge, and followed for some five miles to Inveroran.

At Inveroran I intended to stay and vanquish Stob Ghabhar next day, but fate decreed otherwise. The former landlord had just departed, and the new one was just going in, the house being entirely dismantled. Mr. Cameron, the new landlord, kindly set me in front of a fire and gave me some tea; my wet condition being no obstacle, as no carpets or anything were yet down. The thought of some seven or eight miles of road to be traversed was not a pleasant idea to a man wet through already. Shortly, it was discovered that there was a train southward bound, due in about 35 minutes at the Bridge of Orchy, three miles off. The station was on my way, and, in any case, the sooner the ground was covered the better. Therefore the pace was considerably forced, and that train was caught. But before it had started I had wired to that friend of all mountaineers, Mr. Stewart of Tyndrum, for "warm bath, dry clothes, and dinner". That evening I spent in great comfort, being arrayed in my landlord's clothes--though I must confess that I could not fill them.

Such was my experience of the northern group of the Black Mount, and it was not until April, 1900, that I was able to attack the southern portion. The attack was made in the company of two friends, inexperienced in mountain travel, who had been decked out from my wardrobe, plus the gloves, boots, and ice-axe of a friend departing south. It was a dull morning as we left Inveroran, and, passing the keeper's house, we followed the north bank of the Linne nam Beathach, and then that of the Allt Toaig. The mist soon became our constant companion, and in it we crossed the col between Stob Ghabhar and Stob a' Coire

Odhar of Beinn Toaig, reaching the great north-eastern corrie of the former. We progressed up this corrie and found the lochs frozen over, but in the mist discovered ourselves on Sron nan Giubhas (3174) instead of Stob Ghabhar. The rim of the corrie was followed round, and in cold and mist we thought what fools our friends at home would think us. In one place the ridge grew narrow, and one of the party, whose first experience it was, was much impressed by seeing the slopes on either hand plunge steeply into the weird greyness of the mist. Later, our timorous friend was also much impressed by the beautiful cornices that fringed all the corries. Try as we would, he would not be convinced of the pure and unadulterated beauty of our surroundings. Stob Ghabhar is 3565 feet high, and is the 55th highest mountain in Scotland, and equal to the highest mountain of the British Isles, out of Scotland, Snowdon. Westward from the cairn is an undulating ridge with two tops upon it, Sron a' Ghearrain (3240) and Stob a' Bruaich Leith (3083). Along this ridge we walked until, after some five hours of mist, we yielded to our friend's feelings and agreed to descend. But then the question of where to descend cropped up. Before us was a steep snow slope, visible for a few feet—and then blending with the soft greyness of the mist. Our companion gently murmured "Not there", and the influence of the rope, both moral and physical, had to be employed. Shortly afterwards we could indulge in long glissades, going very gently and on the rope. First, one anchored, and let the others down to the full length of the rope, about 90 feet; then the bottom man took a hitch round his axe, and the others gently slid past him until they were brought up. When the mist was left and the road reached, our friend breathed freely once again, and after dinner expressed the opinion that climbing was not so bad.

Next day was very lazy, and was mostly spent in watching cows and smoking. When left by myself I had time once more to ascend Stob Ghabhar. This time I walked up its easy south-east shoulder, Aonach Eagach (3272), and from the summit had my only view from the

Black Mount. But a beautiful view it was. Mist and cloud curled and uncurled round Bidean, the Buchailles, and all the grand Lochaber hills. The scene was ever changing; now all the hills were dark and gloomy, and now again a tiny shaft of sunshine would make some monarch's mantle of snow glitter. What a wonderful mass is formed by the conglomeration of peaks called Bidean nam Bian. It is full of grace, majesty, and beauty, making a glorious picture picked out in black and white. Over the Glencoe hills stood out Ben Nevis' broad white brow, whilst eastward from it stretched a splendid array of peaks and ridges, peerless on the Scottish mainland. How one's heart rejoiced to pick out, recognise, and name many an old and trusted friend. There were the two shapely cones of Stob Choire an Easain Mhoir and Stob a' Choire Mheadhonaiche, the twin queens of Loch Treig. East of this loch the hills and ridges lose their outlines and grace to culminate in the undulating moors and gentler slopes of the Eastern Highlands. Yet no one can deny for one instant that the latter have beauties of various kinds which their more shapely western brethren lack. The Highlands of the West are blessed with more beauty and variety of shape, and have great and glorious lochs scattered through almost every glen and corrie. With such characters, these hills win back, again and again, the climber to their tops and ridges. The greater rainfall of the West materially aids in the production of finer landscape pictures, just as it has been pointed out the wetter climate of Norway does as compared with that of the Alps.

THE VIEW FROM BEN MORE AND AM BINNEIN.

By WILLIAM BARCLAY.

“On high Ben More green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,
And copse on Cruchan-Ben”.



AM BINNEIN FROM BEN MORE.

THE Perthshire Ben More (3843) is so situated that it can be approached either from Glen Dochart or from Balquhidder; the former is the shorter and the better route—Crianlarich station being only about three miles from the base. Our rendezvous is Ben More Farmhouse, from which the hill rises in a steep unbroken slope. It is generally advisable not to leave the road until the burn is crossed, as some difficulty may be experienced should it be found in spate. From Luib the ascent is more gradual, but it is considerably longer.

On the first Saturday of July I alighted at Crianlarich at 10.30 a.m., and 11 o'clock found me at the Farmhouse, right under the shadow of the Ben. The lower reaches were extremely soft and grassy; indeed, it was not until I was about half-way up that I could walk with any degree

of comfort. The route followed was up the eastern side of the huge corrie scooped out of the northern face of the hill. Slowly I crept up the side of the hill, every step bringing fresh peaks into view, until I had before me a magnificent panorama of mountain, moor, and loch.

Away down at my feet I could trace the rippling waters of the Tay, right from its source on Beinn Laoigh, past Crianlarich, on through Lochs Dochart and Tubhair, until it was finally lost on the ample bosom of Loch Tay. On the opposite side of the glen, Beinn Dheiceach (3074) and Meall Chuirn (3007) presided over the stretch of low, brown hills lying between Glen Dochart and Glen Lochay, the deep brown of the heather being relieved by the sparkling of numerous lochans scattered here and there over the moorland. The long grassy slopes left behind, ground of a more rocky nature was reached. Two hills on the south-western horizon now demanded attention; these were the distant Paps of Jura. The walk to the summit, which was reached at 12.45, was exceedingly easy.

The western face of the summit is composed of huge rocky protuberances, split here and there into fissures, where one may find shelter in a storm. The cairn is not on the highest part of the hill. Three years ago I was here, but under somewhat different atmospheric conditions—in the midst of a terrific snowstorm. But this is one of those ideal days that one meets with occasionally: clear and bright; not too warm, the heat of the sun being modified by a gentle breeze.

The view on such a day as this is naturally very extensive and varied, partly Highland and partly Lowland, extending from Ben Nevis to the Lammermuirs, and from the Sidlaws to the Island of Mull. Looking southwards, a small part of the prospect was blotted out by the cone of Am Binnein. Away in the distance, over the eastern shoulder of that hill, I could see—with the glass, of course—a town, with many chimneys and spires, which, on consulting the map, I found to be Paisley. A strip of water, corresponding to the Clyde, lay sparkling in its immediate front. Looking over the western shoulder of Am Binnein,

Ben Lomond (3192) occupied the centre of attraction, his scarred and shattered sides having a very inviting appearance. A little farther west, and overlooking narrow Loch Long, Ben Arthur (2891), Ben Vorlich (3092), and the rest of the Arrochar Alps presented a scene truly Alpine in character. Over the summit of Ben Lomond, on the western side, I could discern in the extreme distance the stately head of Goat Fell (2866), 57 miles away. Looking over the break between Beinn Laoigh and the head of Loch Lomond, the distant Paps of Jura rose high and clear beyond the sparkling waters of the Sound. In the nearer foreground were the mountains to the east of Glen Falloch—Stob Garbh (3148), Cruach Ardran (3250), Beinn Tulachan (3099), Beinn a' Chroin (3101), and Beinn Chabhair (3053). Over Crianlarich, Beinn Dubh-Chraige (3204), Beinn Os (3374), and Beinn Laoigh (3708) gave rise to the head-streams of the mighty Tay. A little to the north the high flat mass of Beinn Bhreac-liath (2633) and Beinn Udlaidh (2529) completely filled the triangle between Glen Orchy and the Oban and West Highland railways. Farther on, Ben Cruachan (3611) and neighbours shut out the view in that direction. Away on the horizon, over the summit of Beinn Laoigh, Ben More (3185) in Mull, 55 miles distant, was sharply outlined against the western sky. Northwards still, the great labyrinth of mountains at the head of Glen Etive and Glencoe rose up for inspection; overtopping these, and right over the north end of Loch Tulla, the king of Scottish mountains reigned supreme.

The next stretch, to the north, was one great sea of mountains, ranged one behind the other, as far as the eye could reach. I will not attempt to describe the individual tops in this direction; a far more experienced eye than mine would be required to carry out that task with any degree of accuracy. To begin with, I had the great chain of mountains running up the eastern side of Strath Fillan, and encircling the head of Glen Lyon, starting with Beinn Chaluum (3354), Beinn Chaorach (2655), Beinn Odhar (2948), and running right on to Beinn a' Chaisteil (2897),

Beinn Dorain (3523), Beinn an Dothaidh (3267), Beinn Achallader (3399), Beinn Creachain (3540), and Ben Vannoch (3125). Away in the north I could single out Ben Alder (3757) from amid a whole host of giants. In the foreground, and right opposite, I had Beinn Dheiceach (3074); over Killin were Meall Ghaordaidh (3407) and Meall Tarmachan (3421); next came Ben Lawers (3984), the giant of Perthshire, with Carn Mairg (3419) and Schichallion (3547) peeping over his shoulder. Over these, in the extreme distance, I could see the faint outline of the Cairngorms, nearly 60 miles distant. This was the only direction in which there was the slightest particle of haze, and I learned afterwards that it was a bitterly cold day on Ben Muich Dhuì.

Looking over Loch Tay, a huge mass of mountains, which I took to be Lochnagar (3768), Glas Maol (3502), and neighbours, showed patches of snow still lingering in their corries. To the south of Loch Tay I had the great hump of Ben Chonzie (3048), and right over the hollow of Loch Earn I could see, in the vicinity of Perth, two or three summits of the Sidlaws—Murryshall, Kinnoull, with St. Mary's Monastery, and Moncrieff Hill. Next came the whole range of the Ochils, from Abernethy right on to Stirling, Benacleuch (2363) and the two Dumyats breaking the monotony. Overtopping these were the Lomonds, in Fife, 50 miles distant. In the middle distance, Ben Vorlich (3224), and his rugged neighbour Stuc a' Chroin (3189) presented their well-known figures; a little farther round was Ben Vane (2685), and then Ben Ledi (2875) with its long ridges sloping away down to Loch Vennachar. The Kilsyth and Campsie Hills also showed face over the Menteith Hills. Farther west, Ben Venue (2393) stood guard over Loch Katrine. Looking down the valley of the Teith, I could see Stirling snugly reposing 'neath the shadow of its hoary castle. To the east, Wallace's monument on Abbey Craig formed an imposing pile. A little to the west was a great cloud of smoke, which I found to proceed from the ironworks in the neighbourhood of Falkirk. Beyond Stirling was the

broad bosom of the Forth—bridled by that triumph of engineering, the Forth Bridge—stretching right away to the ocean, the white pillar of the Inchkeith Lighthouse standing sentinel amid its sparkling waters. Looking over the Forth Bridge, at particularly bright intervals, I had disclosed to view the castle and spires of “Auld Reekie”, backed by Arthur’s Seat and the Lammermuirs, and a little to the west, the gentle undulations of the Pentlands.

Between Ben More and Am Binnein there is a dip of 1000 feet, over broken ground, covered with loose stones; at the bottom I came upon good water, so I rested a few minutes and had lunch. The distance, as the crow flies, between the summits is a little over a mile. There is no cairn on Am Binnein, the highest point (3827) being marked by three stones lying together. The view is practically the same as that obtained from Ben More, with the exception of Goat Fell, which is shut out by the intervening peak of Ben Lomond. But a much more extended view is got of Ben More and the other mountains of Mull. Looking backwards, the rocky protuberances on the summit of Ben More are seen to advantage.

From Am Binnein a ridge runs right away down to the head of Loch Doine in Balquhidder. I followed this ridge to Stob Coire an Lochain (3497), then struck eastward to Stob Creagach (2966), thereafter descending to the foot-path in Monachyle Glen, which leads past Monachylemore to the Balquhidder road between Loch Doine and Loch Voil. A pleasant walk in the cool of the evening, by the romantic waters of Loch Voil, brought to a close one of the finest days I have ever experienced on the hills. A visit was paid to Rob Roy’s grave in Balquhidder Churchyard, and the journey continued to Lochearnhead station, where I got a train at 9 p.m.

An iron cross at the foot of Cuidhe Chrom of Ben More marks the spot where, on 3rd January, 1874, Mr. D. Bower Mitchell, merchant, Dundee, was killed. He and Mr. Cannon started from Crianlarich Hotel about 11 a.m. on that day, leaving the turnpike at Benmore farm. They

duly reached the cairn, where they had lunch. The weather at this time was clear on the low ground, but occasionally mist crept over the top, somewhat obscuring the view. After a rest the two friends began the descent, and when about 800 feet from the summit, and while walking on parallel lines twenty paces apart, Mr. Cannon turned to one side and saw that Mr. Mitchell was slipping on the snow. Mr. Cannon warned him not to do this as the place was dangerous; but Mr. Mitchell replied that he could not help it. These were the last words he was heard to utter. Immediately afterwards, on again turning to see how he was getting on, Mr. Cannon observed that Mr. Mitchell had disappeared. The body was recovered the same night at the foot of the precipice.

MEALL NA CUAICH.

BY JAMES H. BROWN.

MEALL NA CUAICH is a round-topped mountain (3120) in Inverness-shire, about five miles north-east from Dalwhinnie. Neither the name nor the situation is given on the one-inch map, but the summit is within the 3000 contour immediately to the east of Loch na Cuaich.

We had arranged to spend a short winter holiday among the mountains of Badenoch, and so reached Kincaig station on the afternoon of 29th December last. "It has been raining here for thirteen months", was the disheartening reply to our remark on the "soft" weather, and, later, Dalnavert's observation, however witty in a way, that the roads were all a "general wade" did not raise our spirits. Leaving the station we took a path along the left bank of the Spey, which, with the Feshie, was in semi-flood. In the distance, on the opposite side, the deep green of the pines contrasted with the brown heath of the lower hills, capped in grey mist. About a mile down the river we crossed to the right bank by a foot-bridge, and a short walk across the haugh landed us at Dalnavert. This was the last possession of the Shaws; here also the local volunteers of the early part of last century had their headquarters.

Our programme for next day was to cross Meall na Cuaich from Dalwhinnie to Gaick Lodge, and go down Glen Tromie to Kingussie. The cold during the night had warned us of a change in the weather, and we were rejoiced to see the hills covered with snow to the 2000 feet line, and to feel the ground hard under foot. Arriving at Dalwhinnie at 9.20, we negotiated the Truim by the railway bridge, and thence struck across the moor over Allt a' Choire Chaim and Allt a' Choire Chais to a point near the lower end of Loch na Cuaich. It would probably, however, have been better to go farther along the railway, and so keep closer to Allt Cuaich. Just above the confluence of Allt Coire na Cuaich with the latter stream there is a big grassy patch about half-a-mile in length,

almost covered with *larachs*, indicating that it had once been a favourite resort of the inhabitants of the district with their flocks during summer.

We reached the base of the Meall about 11.30, and, having passed the *larachs*, commenced the ascent from the south side, thus avoiding the steep slope overlooking Loch na Cuaich. We had soon a grand view of Ben Alder and Creag Meaghaidh, both, of course, masses of pure white. As the sun shone on their giant forms, revealing their corries and fissures, a prospect of grandeur and magnificence not to be easily surpassed was presented to us. As we got nearer the summit the half-moon, which had been overhead all day, seemed to rest on the cairn. The top was reached about 1.15, and, after a short halt, a start was made for Gaick. Mist now enshrouded us, and we floundered not a little in the soft snow, though we kept by the wire fence as much as possible to the watershed between Bogha-cloiche (2945) and Meall na Cuaich. By this time the day was so far advanced that it was evident our programme was out of the question, so we contented ourselves with a climb up Coire na Cuaich. Here a pair of ravens "went forth to and fro", croaking loudly, and apparently challenging our right or perhaps our sanity in entering their solitary domain at such a time. The centre of this large corrie is somewhat precipitous, so our ice-axes were useful in the descent.

Daylight had faded into moonlight when we reached Loch na Cuaich. Thereafter we kept closely by the left bank of Allt Cuaich, the moon standing us in good stead as we jumped some tributary burns and crossed others by wire fences. We were not sorry when we came on the railway, and so to an end of our little difficulties.

Along both Allt Cuaich and Allt Coire na Cuaich we observed splendid specimens of moraines, especially on the right bank of the former. One of the moraines on Allt Cuaich had the appearance of an immense railway embankment. Some on the south slope of the Meall were at a height of about 1600 feet, and everywhere there was evidence that the kingdom of ice had, long years ago, ruled supreme.

A DAY ON BRAERIACH.

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

THE three Aberdeenshire stalwarts and the Englishman [see *C.C.J.*, III., 122] met at 7.30 on a mid-August morning, near Loch an Eilein, and spent a hot, hazy, breezy day in an enjoyable stroll over Braeriach. The walk to the lower bothy of Glen Eunach was made somewhat heavy by the strong southerly breeze, which, however, kept us from becoming too much heated. We had made, many times, the usual ascents of Braeriach, and decided to try a new one that promised to introduce us to some interesting fresh ground. Accordingly from the bothy we turned along the glen of the Little Bennie, a glen that seems to have no distinctive name, though it is surely worthy of one. There is an intermittent track on the north side of the stream and considerably above it for about two-thirds of the length of the glen. Then, as Coire Ruadh is opened out, the easiest walking is in the hollow, and close by the stream. Near the separating ridge between Coire Ruadh and Coire na Bennie the stream is underground, except in very wet weather, but beyond this ridge is again visible—and very welcome!

We now were in the remotest section of the glen. The hollow is richly grassed with a thick, soft turf, and is evidently a favourite haunt of the red deer, a small herd of which retreated before us. The meadow land is surrounded by a scree of fallen stones, and among these ferns are luxuriant and beautiful—parsley, oak, beech, lady, and sweet mountain ferns abounding. The upper part of the corrie, towards the ridge of Braeriach, is grim and stony, and has two deep pockets that invite closer inspection. Having rested awhile by the musical stream, and enjoyed sandwiches (and pipes), we made our way up to the lowest point of the neck joining Sron na Leirg to the main mass of Braeriach. Here we expected to find rough and difficult

going, but were agreeably dissatisfied. Evidently the deer took the route that commended itself to us, and they had trodden out a rough staircase that made the ascent extremely easy. We saw many Alpine flowers, notably fine patches of Mountain Chickweed, Scurvy Grass, and Moss Campion. We knew that hereabouts Alastair Tailleir had his summer dwelling, in which he watched for the deer, while making-up mythical clothing. And truly Alastair was a man of right good taste in the matter of scenery, for his lodge in the wilderness—the exact site of which we could not determine, though one of us had once previously seen it—commanded a thoroughly typical Highland mountain-scape—corrie and glen, crag and meadow, heather and rushing stream. When we reached the top of the ascent, and were just able to look across to the other side of the Larig Ghru, we became aware of two stags lying on the hillside, their bodies not visible to us, but their heads and horns finely silhouetted against the sky. One of them had but a single horn, the other a good pair. We lay still, and through the field-glass had a long look at them, for they were not quite 360 paces away, and they did not know of our presence. When we rose, they ran away, but in a leisurely manner, and with many halts and backward glances.

A few minutes later we were on the narrow ridge of Braeriach, and looking into and across the mighty rift of the Garbh Coire, with Cairn Toul and Sgor an Lochan Uaine towering up on the other side, and the Lochan Uaine itself nestling darkly in its remote hollow, its surface now and again shaken into shimmering brightness as eddies of the breeze struck down on to it. But the general haziness prevented any strong contrasts of light and shadow, and the prevailing impression of the outlook was that of dark solemnity and massive grandeur. In all conditions of weather, bright or dark, calm or storm, rain or snow, this Garbh Coire is supremely impressive; the sense of remoteness, of the magnificence of outline and size takes possession of the feelings of the beholder perhaps more completely than anywhere else among our Cairngorms.

For an hour we walked leisurely along the finely scarped ridge, turning from side to side to note its narrowness—it is at its narrowest not more than 35 feet across—scrambling warily out on some of the pinnacled buttresses, the better to gaze into the depths below, passing the two cairns, and so making our way to where the infant Dee throws itself over a cliff some 600 feet from the plateau into the hollow of the Garbh Coire Dhe. Here we sat and took our mid-day lunch, and watched through the field-glass a herd of a dozen deer at rest in the quiet of the inner corrie, and quite unaware of human beings far above them.

Then we followed the Dee up to its sources in the “Wells of Dee”. These were in fairly full flow, though the most southerly stream was partly underground. The most westerly one was very full and strong, but sorely disfigured by the debris of the lunch of previous visitors. It is greatly to be regretted that we have not more of the fine old Greek reverence for the beauty and purity of springs; and one is filled with indignation to find that people have defiled with decaying bones and soiled paper a spot so worthy of respect, if not reverence, as the highest stream source in the country. We cleaned up the place as well as was possible, and cursed and prayed for the evil-doers. May they see this, and repent! Hereabouts we saw many ptarmigan, young ones that looked on men as a strange curiosity, and older ones that warily kept their distance. We also smelt and heard deer, but could not get a sight of them. Then we crossed the great plateau to the head of the zig-zag pony path, and lay awhile on the heather to enjoy the wide expanse of Glen Eunach. We had in full view all five of its lochs—Eunach, an t’Seilich, na Bennie, mhic Ghillie Chaoile, and nan Deurt—and beyond and above them the ridge of the Sgoran Dubh, scene of our adventure of a year ago. Then in the warmth of the afternoon glow we dropped into the glen, and by 6.30 had reached Loch an Eilein, and parted. There was but one note of regret about the day’s proceedings—we saw no white heather.

THE BIN OF CULLEN.

BY W. CRAMOND, LL.D.

THE Bin of Cullen is well known for its beauty, its accessibility, and the wide prospect it commands. Though rising not more than 1050 feet, it furnishes a view of parts of no fewer than ten counties. From it may be seen the Moray Firth and almost its whole coast line, while the northern parishes of the counties of Elgin and Banff can be examined in minute detail. Towards the south and west a magnificent panorama of mountains meets the eye.

The distance from Cullen to the summit is a little over three miles, a carriage road leading to the top. Entering the grounds of the Countess-Dowager of Seafield, at the mouth of Cullen Burn, we follow the course of the burn, passing the Battle Haugh and Cullen House, until we meet the Glen Burn, which leads us in a south-westerly direction up the glen to the base of the Little Bin, passing on our right the gardens and the trout-breeding ponds. We keep the Little Bin on our right and reach the top by an easy ascent in a zig-zag direction. The Glen Road is the most romantic part of the grounds of Cullen House, and, at certain seasons of the year, not many glens on a small scale will rival it in beauty. The abundance of holly (*cuillion* in Gaelic) accounts with little doubt for the origin of the name. Fine beech and fir trees of large size may be admired on the way.

The Bin is flanked on the right and the left by the Little Bin (802 feet) and the Hill of Maud (900 feet). The Bin shows a conical appearance, regular and graceful. Till nearly halfway up it is covered with wood, chiefly firs, which look sombre by contrast with the bright green of the larch and the beech; it was planted with wood about 1770. It is situated in the Parish of Rathven, and distant, as the crow flies, from Cullen $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, Buckie $3\frac{3}{4}$, Keith 9,

Portsoy 7, Banff $12\frac{3}{4}$, Lossiemouth $15\frac{1}{2}$, Elgin 16, Forres 28, Ben Rinnes $22\frac{1}{2}$, Cairngorm 47.

The height of the Bin being 1050 feet, we have nearly 40 miles as the distance of the visible horizon, but allowance must be made for refraction, which varies with the state of the atmosphere. In general, the addition for refraction of one-eleventh will give the correct distance. The nearest points on the opposite shore are in the vicinity of Brora and Helmsdale, at a distance of 43 miles, and thus within the visible horizon—the fact being that the rocks can be seen to the water's edge. Within a radius of 43 miles are comprised the eastern shores of Ross, including the Sutors of Cromarty, while almost the whole of Banffshire and Aberdeenshire falls within this circle—Aberdeen being at a distance of 46 miles.

NORTH-EAST.—Starting from Troup Head in Gamrie, the eye ranges over a wide expanse of sea as far as the outer limit of the Moray Firth. Nothing can be more beautiful than to see this Firth, calm as it often is as a mill pond, and dotted over with vessels reflected in the clear water. What looks like the Orkney Islands appears to be the first land to catch the eye. As the nearest of them—the Pentland Skerries—are 71 miles distant, they would require to be about 500 feet high to be visible, so if the keeper of the lighthouse there could raise his lighthouse some 300 feet he would have the satisfaction of getting a view of the top of the Bin.

NORTH-WEST.—In this direction are seen the hills of Caithness, Sutherland, and Ross, rising blue and faint on the horizon. The first certain indication of land is slightly to the west of due north, where the land at Moss Head, and again near Wick, rises dim and distant. This being situated at a distance of 55 miles, owing to the curvature of the earth we cannot see nearer the sea level than 80 to 100 feet. Then in succession appear Sarclet Head, Occumster, Lybster, Latheron Hill, Dunbeath, Dunbeath Castle, after which the striking heights of Braemore, Maiden Pap, Morven, and others come in sight. Then Helmsdale is seen, and near this part we can make out the cliffs, here

100 feet high, while behind are seen farmhouses, fields, and dykes, and a bridge which is very prominent. Further south, lofty hills bound the view until Dunrobin Castle is reached. Here we enter the Dornoch Firth, on the eastern shore of which is a long, narrow, low-lying peninsula, crowned with buildings and terminated by the lighthouse at Tarbet Ness. Then we have the Sutors of Cromarty, two woody hills rising boldly from the sea, and at this distance like massive piers at the entrance of a mighty harbour, while, looking up the Firth, we distinguish the church spires and almost every building in Invergordon, at a distance of 47 miles. After the Black Isle, the land seems to trend towards the east.

WEST TO EAST.—Turning the eye now along the coast in a direction from west to east, what strikes us at once is the immense stretch of level ground, which, though in general undulating, appears from this position singularly level, and especially in front of us, laid out in small fields with the regularity of a draught-board. It extends in length from Nairnshire to Troup Head, upwards of sixty miles, with a breadth of five miles or less. It is well wooded, and the numerous towns, villages, and farmhouses give indication of the fertility of both land and sea. The coast is in general bold and rocky—the cliffs in the east rising to a perpendicular height of 600 feet. Little of Nairnshire is visible owing to its extreme flatness and the intervening heights of Morayshire. Entering upon Morayshire, we see near the western boundary—but only in imagination, for trees and hills conceal the view—the Findhorn flowing through its charming scenery towards the sea. Somewhat nearer appears the Nelson monument on Cluny Hill. Burghead Point then rises prominently to view, but the town itself is hidden from sight. Coming along the coast, we distinctly see Hopeman, with the church near the middle of the town, while further round the coast the eye meets the Covesea Lighthouse. Two miles east is seen Lossiemouth, to the north of which lies Branderburgh. The streets lie north-west and south-east, and we can make out the appearance of the houses and

see the people moving about in the streets. From Lossiemouth along the shore the yellow sands are seen curving round. To the south we see the Duke of York's Tower on the Knock of Alves. Proceeding by the smoke of the railway train, we arrive in a short time at Elgin, which cannot be mistaken, for its Cathedral—"the Lanthorn of the North"—marks it out at once. The various church spires, the Duke of Gordon's Monument, Anderson's Institution, and many of the houses come into view. Northwards of Elgin, over the Black Hill of Moray, we view three sheets of water nearly in line behind each other. These are the Loch of Spynie, the River Lossie, and the Loch of Cotts. The farmhouses of Morayshire may be all individually examined, but we pass on to the Spey. For many miles from its mouth it is seen with the naked eye like a silver thread till lost among the hills. At its mouth lie Kingston and Garmouth, in which, being little more than eight miles distant, every house can be distinctly made out. South we see the Red Church of Speymouth. Crossing the Spey we are in Banffshire, which stretches from east to west about thirty miles, almost the whole extent being spread before us. Following the line of the Spey we get into the woods of Fochabers. Nothing of the town itself is seen except two church spires springing from among the trees, and there is another spire further to the north. About three miles east is the position of the Burn of Tynet, with its Old Red Sandstone deposits and the finest fossil beds in the north. Where the coast line curves there lies Portgordon. The Tynet separates the parishes of Bellie and Rathven. The latter contains upwards of 23,000 acres, and can be all seen from the Bin except the part hid by the Hill of Maud, which rises immediately on our left. This parish includes on the east Portknockie, the Links of Cullen, and the greater part of the grounds of Cullen House. A beautiful bird's-eye view is obtained from here of Buckie. The Roman Catholic and other churches bulk largely in the view, also the Public School, and last, but not least, the splendid new Harbour. The church of Enzie, the distillery of Inchgower, and the

whole course of the turnpike road from east to west are well seen. Eastwards appear the village and church of Rathven, and overlooking them the Public School. Nearer us is seen the Main Drain, a formidable undertaking for draining the land between Woodside and Cullen, which cost no less than £10,000. Portessie and Findochty, though built at the foot of high cliffs, are not altogether hidden from view, but Portknockie, being on higher ground, is still more visible. Here is the Scar Nose, the furthest north point in Banffshire, which, like an old veteran, has stood in the forefront of many a fierce fight, but has not escaped scatheless, as its wild look and shattered form abundantly testify. Near this part the violence of the waves has wrought fantastic results. To the west is Farskane's Cave, where the last proprietor, having come out in the rebellion of 1715, deemed it prudent to live five or six weeks in this, the safest part of his estate. To the east are several caves, one of which has been celebrated by George Macdonald in his "Malcolm". The Royal Burgh of Cullen, it may be remarked, includes a large part of the parish of Rathven, its western boundary extending from the top of the Bin to the coast close to the east of Findochty, and its southern from the same point to the Mill of Towie. South of Portknockie lie Seafield Church and Manse and the Public School. Between us and Cullen is Cullen House, with its extensive and beautifully kept private grounds. These extend in all to a length of nearly three miles, with a breadth as great, and comprise a rich variety of scenery. The district around here was always well wooded, for hither came Kings Alexander II. and III. to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. On more than one occasion Edward I. visited it, although for a different purpose. The road may still be seen, south of the turnpike, along which passed Queen Mary and her suite. Another century and we have Montrose mercilessly ravaging and burning in all directions. Still another century and the rebels are seen bearing off as plunder all the valuables of Cullen House, to be followed, however, soon by the Duke of Cumberland and his army. West of

the Seatown and the Harbour rise the three Kings of Cullen, whose hard quartzite has resisted the waves, while the softer strata have been washed away. The regular streets of Cullen next come into view, and east thereof is Portlong (the ship harbour). Coming inland we find the charming village of Lintmill, which derives its name from the linen manufacture which was carried on here till it could no longer compete with cotton in the end of last century. Then come the Crannoch Hill and Loch, and the cliffs overhanging the old Castle of Findlater. The cliffs also hide the village of Sandend and the part of Portsoy to the north of the Catholic Church. Numerous farmhouses occur all along till we reach Whitehills, where a good part of the village and the adjacent wild rocky headland come into sight. The slope of the town of Banff is unfavourable for being seen from this direction, but the Gallow Hill and the houses on the north-west are seen. No place could lie better exposed to our view than Macduff. Here it is seen rising from the sea like a miniature Constantinople, almost every house and every tombstone in the Churchyard being visible. The road from Banff to the town, on which people may be seen moving up and down, comes into sight a good way below the Church. We follow the high cliffs of the parish of Gamrie—cliffs almost unequalled in Scotland for picturesqueness—to the bend of the land at Crovie. The houses of Crovie, many of them with their gable ends to the sea, are clearly seen, with the road ascending from the village, and on the height above is Northfield, also a windmill, &c. It is in this direction that Fraserburgh lies. Then comes Troup Head bounding our vision.

SOUTH-EAST.—Looking from the Bin in a south-easterly direction, three successive lines of heights meet the eye. The nearest is formed by the Towie Wood, Cotton Hill, Hill of Summertown, and the Lurg in the Parish of Deskford; then come Durn, Fordyce, and Knock Hills; and, lastly, Hill of Alvah, Hill of Ord, and Culvie Hill. Beyond these, King-Edward and Gamrie form a striking background, and bound the view. Between the Bin and the

first line of heights lies the beautiful valley of Deskford, drained by the Burn of Deskford. The chief object that strikes the eye is the Kirktown, where are the tower of Deskford, the old and new Churches, the Manse, the School, and Schoolhouse. North-east of the Kirktown is a charming ravine, with the picturesque Poma Linn. South are the village of Berryhillock and the farm of Mains of Skeith; here also is the site of the ancient Castle of Skeith, the residence of the Abercrombies. The lime-kilns, active and extinct, at the various farm-towns, indicate the presence of a bed of limestone traversing the parish. In the next valley is the village of Fordyce, and we clearly see the Churches, the School, the Castle, the remains of the old Church, and the U.F.C. Manse. The chimneys only of the Established Church Manse are visible. Durn Hill is 651 feet high, and has a triple rampart on the summit. The Knock Hill (1409 feet) is said by some to be the *Mons Grampius* of Tacitus. It is six and a half miles distant, and forms a most noticeable feature from the Bin. Over this line of hills, woods and fine-looking farms come into view. The most prominent object is the Hill of Alvah (464 feet) a landmark to mariners, slightly to the north-west of which is seen very clearly, as the ground slopes towards us, the old Castle of Inchdrewer, the residence of the Lords Banff, one of whom was here burned to death in 1713; another the fifth Lord, was drowned in 1738 in the Bay of Cullen at a rock within our view. Further to our right a singularly bare building is visible, the Church of Ord, near the Hill of Ord (570 feet). The top of Culvey Hill (865 feet) with its irregularly shaped woods, is well seen. We now come to Gamrie and King-Edward, parishes which rise from the valley of the Deveron. To the south of Macduff are seen woods, farms, and roads. Over the top of Durn the first object to meet our view is Gavenwood, and near it Corskie. On the higher ground are the houses about Boghead, Whitestones, and the Longman Hill.

SOUTH.—Passing, in our survey, the massive shoulder of the Knock, we encounter an endless succession of hills. Slightly to the left of the Knock is the direction in which

Aberdeen lies, but not even by smoke does it give any indication of its presence. Somewhat to the right is the *Bin* of Bennachie. Over the Lurg is the Bin Hill of Cairnie, covered with wood, with farm-towns fringing the border. Right over the nearest height rise the Little Balloch and the Meikle Balloch, the boundary of Aberdeen and Banffshires, along the base of which runs the train to Keith. The Glacks of Balloch are between the two, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Keith. On the top of the Balloch tents used to be pitched at the time of Summereve's (*Malrubius*) Fair, as Keith had no accommodation for the great crowds that flocked to this market. Tap o' Noth (1851 feet) is the most prominent object in the horizon. It is in the parish of Rhynie, and remarkable for possessing on its top the remains of a vitrified fort. A convenient hollow in the hill of Aultmore enables us to get a good glimpse of Keith. The Catholic Church shows first on the right; then come numerous houses and trees. Roads are seen diverging to the south, while beyond it lie Caird's Wood and the Wood of Aultmore. In the horizon is seen, six miles distant from the Tap o' Noth, The Buck (2368 feet). To the left of The Buck a striking height rises in the far distance, Mount Keen (3077 feet), on the borders of Forfar and Aberdeenshires. Cairngorm is visible, and Ben Muich Dhui will probably also be seen.

WEST.—Next is seen the outline of Ben Rinnes (2755 feet) against the sky, its commanding presence at once arresting attention. On the side next to us it rises steep and abrupt, and, from whatever part it is visible, it never loses its distinctive character. Coming northwards, we see the wild peaks of the hills of Inverness and Ross-shires. The view of Ben Wyvis (3415 feet) and the hills to the south compares not unfavourably with the prospect from the Righi, and, given a favourable light, the picturesqueness and impressiveness thereof cannot be said to be much inferior. With this grand mountain we close our survey.

In Memoriam:

CHARLES M'HARDY,

Born 1850. Died 1900.

By ROBERT ANDERSON.

MR. CHARLES M'HARDY, of Messrs. Ellis & M'Hardy, coal merchants, died at his residence, 2 Polmuir Road, Aberdeen, on 1st December, 1900, aged 50. He was an original member of the Club, and was a member of the Committee from the start of the Club in January, 1889, till December, 1899, when he voluntarily resigned. My impression is that the last excursion he attended was the one to Corryhabbie in May, 1899. The occurrence may be regarded either as fortuitous or as fatalistic, for the region was M'Hardy's "calf country". He was born at Bridgehaugh, in Glenfiddich—it was with no little pride that he showed some of us the house; and his father was for many years the Duke of Richmond's gamekeeper at Blackwater Lodge. Cook's Cairn and Corryhabbie, Glenfiddich and Glenrinnies were thus familiar ground to him. Here, undoubtedly, M'Hardy learned to "walk"; here he acquired the long, swinging stride, the indifference to distance, the disregard of fatigue, and the patient endurance of all kinds of weather that are characteristics of the class in which he was born and bred. I still have a vivid recollection of a week-end spent with him and a large party of "chums" at Blackwater, now many years ago, and of a long and toilsome walk over the hills to Glenrinnies and back, in which only the hardiest of us engaged, the M'Hardys, *père et fils*, being the guides. Since then, I have met Charles M'Hardy on many a Club excursion, and always found him the same hearty, genial soul, with a keen delight in walking and mountaineering; one instinctively admired

his physique and vigour. He was an enthusiastic member of the Club, and took a warm interest in its affairs; and he joined in many excursions to the Cairngorms outside the "official" ones of the Club, some of which are recorded in the *Journal*, some of which live only in the memories of those who took part in them. He was a prominent member of the Aberdeen Highland Association; and I believe he was as popular and as much esteemed when dressed in the kilt as when, attired in knickerbockers and with a knapsack and mackintosh, he "turned up, ready for a tramp". Alas! we shall see his manly figure no more—never again hear his genial voice!

THE HILLTOP.

YONDER the hilltop rises; were you there
How opulent a prospect would unfold—
Forest and field beneath the morn outrolled,
And summits climbing skyward like a stair!
About you and above you lucent air;
Around your feet the gleaming kingcup gold,
And little vestal violets, snowy-stoled;
And near, in shadowy nooks, the maidenhair.

In the adjacent boughs the boon of song—
Bird-harmonies with leafy interludes,
Guides to content and calm, sequestered moods;
And far, so faint and far you cannot ken,
The oppressive city with its moiling throng,
The clamour, and the ceaseless surge of men!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

[From *The Critic* (New York), January, 1901.]

THE ARGYLL STONE.

BY THE REV. D. M'DOUGALL, B.D.

ON the summit of the mountain ridge running parallel to the Spey, between Glen Eunach and the Spey valley, may be seen a large boulder, or block of stone, known as the Argyll Stone. It is situated on that part of the ridge which at present goes by the erroneously applied name of Inchriach, and is a conspicuous object in the landscape as seen from the strath below. How this mass of rock came by the name of "the Argyll Stone" is a problem not readily solved by one who is a stranger to the country and unacquainted with the incident from which the name originated, especially as it is many miles away from the nearest portion of Argyll territory. The rock, however, has borne the above designation from the time of James VI., and obtained it, as told hereafter, in connection with one of the political troubles of that monarch's reign, in which the then Earl of Argyll took an active, though not very successful, part. This event was an alleged attempt by the Earl of Huntly and one or two other noblemen to restore Catholicism as the recognised religion of the country, when the Earl of Argyll was sent at the head of a large force to check the movement, and, if possible, to secure the arrest of Huntly and the Earl of Erroll, the leaders of the rising. History records how that Argyll, with a vastly superior force, was completely routed by Huntly and Erroll's men at the Battle of Althochlachan, in Glenlivet, in October, 1594, and compelled to retreat with all possible haste to his own dominions. The Highlanders on being defeated, in order to escape pursuit by Huntly's cavalry, sped westwards through the mountain passes, keeping the high ground to avoid all danger of pursuit by the enemy. There was little inclination to halt until they felt themselves comparatively safe on friendly

territory as they approached Badenoch. Travelling all night, hunger and fatigue constrained them to rest a little and partake of some refreshment to enable them to prosecute their journey. Their first halt since quitting the battle-field was on the northern portion of the Sgoran Dubh ridge, wrongly called "Inchriach", its proper name being "Creag Dubh". There, beside this block of stone, they partook of such a humble repast as the scanty means at their disposal afforded. From this ridge they could easily keep a look-out on all sides of them, and readily discern signs of danger from pursuit at a great distance; and could thus make their escape betimes, should the foe be on their track. But Huntly was unable to follow up his advantage, and allowed the fugitives to retreat without molestation. Such of the Argyll Highlanders as rested on Creag Dubh, finding that they were now in comparative safety, resolved to rest for a time and breakfast at their leisure. It was usual with every Highlander, when engaged in any warlike expedition, to carry a little oatmeal rolled up in a piece of cloth, or small bag, to use as occasion required; and sometimes a bannock or two of home-baked bread formed part of their equipment, on which they could at any time make a hurried repast. Of such materials they made their homely breakfast on this occasion, sitting or lying around the stone, which, in memory of that incident, has ever since been called "The Argyll Stone."

Their frugal meal had, no doubt, a very refreshing, invigorating, and cheering effect upon the fatigued and worn-out Highlanders. After resting for a time they leisurely descended the hill towards Glen Feshie, where they further enjoyed such hospitalities as the cottagers of the glen could bestow on them. Indeed, so pleased were they with the reception accorded them that not a few of their number stayed behind in the glen for several weeks after the greater portion had taken their departure for their homes in the west. They were probably made to feel, through the kind attention and good offices bestowed upon them by the native population, that they were as comfortably situated

as if among their own kith and kin in Argyllshire. Not having much to lose, and having had no real interest in the enterprise in which they had been engaged, they speedily forgot their cares and troubles, and were soon quite at home amongst their new-made friends and acquaintances. In company with the native residents of Glen Feshie, the evenings were devoted to mirth, music, and dancing, and other pleasing festivities. The place of meeting was the old Black Mill of Invereshie, where many happy evenings were spent. One of the Argyll Pipers, who had stayed behind with his clansmen, composed in honour of their place of meeting a "Strathspey", known by the name of the *Muileann Dubh*, or Black Mill—a piece of music which to this day retains its popularity among all lovers of Highland music and dancing. The Mill itself has been celebrated in song, the verses setting forth its merits associating it with many things curious, fanciful, and uncommon.

[The Argyll Stone can be seen from Aviemore railway station. It should be shown (writes Mr. Cash) in my sketch (Vol. II., p. 367) between 21 and 22, half-way down from the top of what is there called Cadha Mor (really Creag Dubh), to where the Sgoran Dubh Mor slope meets it.]

DUNDEE LAW.

BY ALEXANDER ELLIOT.

THE geographical compass that was recently erected on the summit of Law Hill through the instrumentality of ex-Bailie Mathers, Convener of the Recreation Grounds Committee of Dundee Town Council, has not only been found interesting in itself, but, judged from an educative standpoint, it has proved exceedingly popular. Since its erection, especially on holidays and Sundays, the pillar on the capital of which the compass and accompanying chart are fixed has been surrounded by crowds of visitors, the majority of whom, for the first time probably, became acquainted with the names of specific objects and places, with their relative distances, forming conspicuous features in the magnificent panorama of hill and dale, of field and flood, to be seen from a position so elevated. In the opinion of the majority of the citizens the selection of the Law Hill as a point of observation could not be improved upon. In fact, there are few cities favoured with an eminence so admirably adapted for such a purpose, be it physical or astronomical, and its distance from the centre of the city should form no obstacle to those who take an interest in such matters, or who may be desirous of entering upon a systematic scientific study. The radii from the Law extend to close on thirty miles, comprehending a wide expanse of varied and attractive scenery. The hill rises from the shores of the Tay in a series of undulating ridges to an altitude of 571 feet above the sea level. It is a conspicuous landmark, and stands out prominently almost in the centre of the Dichty Strath.

Apart from its physical aspect, the Law teems with archæological association; and if we are to pay heed to tradition and antiquarian research, we must accept the theory that it was a position of military importance at a

very remote period. It has been described as a place of security used by the ancient Picts; the Romans with their usual judiciousness in securing points of vantage selected and fortified it according to the idea of the military architecture of the time; and latterly it was occupied as a castellated fortress by Alpin, King of Scots, prior to and at the time he engaged in the fatal battle on the plain to the north (subsequently designated Meric Moor, but colloquialised into American Moor), which led to his overthrow and decapitation by Brude, King of the Picts. That there is truth in these statements or not, it would, in the light of the limited information possessed by historians, be hazardous to assert or deny. At the same time it must be admitted that the upper surface of the hill has all the appearance of having at one time been surrounded with embattlements, and there is every probability that it had been in possession of the Picts, Romans, and Scots alternately—as the one people obtained by force of arms supremacy over the other. It may be of interest to state that a Pictish burial ground was discovered on the south-west shoulder of the hill about sixty years ago. That the Law and neighbourhood in later years became the scene of fierce encounters is matter of history. Thomson and Maclaren, in their "History of Dundee", referring to the Law, say that "in the neighbourhood great quantities of human bones have been turned up by the plough and spade in all directions—unequivocal evidences of the destructive ravages of war; but unfortunately no records survive from which any particular account can now be given of the sanguinary conflicts that must have occurred about the Law Hill while Edward I., Montrose, and Monk entrenched their forces upon its summit".

There is another interesting detail which should not be overlooked. In the days when telegraphy was not, and when the fiery cross and the beacon were the media by which the alarm of impending warfare was given, the Law Hill was used as a site on which the warning fires were lit. Dr. Small, a well-known divine of the 18th century, in his sketch of Dundee in 1792, records that "on the top of the

Law are the remains of a fortified post. The ditch is yet visible. Though the whole enclosure, which is of square form, is not of the structure of the towers, which have been supposed to have been cemented by the force of fire, one small part of it has been thus compacted. Probably on this the fires for alarming the town were lighted, and, by frequent lighting, some of the stones have been put in fusion". Between fifty and sixty years ago the stones to which Dr. Small refers were to be seen. They either have been removed, or in the course of time have become covered with earth and grass, as they are not now visible. It may, however, be pointed out that the geographical compass stands within a few yards of this historic spot. The Castle of Dudhope, the ancient seat of the Scrymgeour family, who held the hereditary dignity and office of Constable of Dundee, occupies a commanding site at the extreme southern base of the hill. It was from this old pile that Claverhouse—Bonnie Dundee—marched with his troops over the west shoulder of the Law, ere long to meet his fate on the momentous field of Killiecrankie. If the Law itself is full of stirring incident, not less so are its surroundings. There is not a hill or dale or strath from the Sidlaws on the north, Kinnoull and Shakespeare's Dunsinane on the west, the Carse of Gowrie and the Tay on the south-west and south, and the spurs of the Sidlaws extending far away to the east until they are lost in the shadows of Kincardine, that have not a tale to tell of the "ringing clash of arms as when our fathers fought". The object Mr. Mathers had in view when the compass was erected was twofold—in the first place to enable sightseers to ascertain the location, the altitude, and the distance of the most prominent hills and places of interest from a given point; and in the second place to stimulate the intelligent portion of the community to become better acquainted with the details—historic or otherwise—of the neighbourhood in which they reside—a recreation which would be full of intellectual gratification to those who engaged in it.

The view from the Law Hill is as comprehensive as it is picturesque, and as the spectator stands beside the

pedestal he can fix within the radius of his vision eminences of note, the exact distance and exact height of which he can at once determine by consulting the indicator. Cast your eyes on a clear day towards the Bell Rock. The lighthouse stands like a pale spectre where the sky and the waters meet, and the chart tells you it is $23\frac{1}{4}$ miles away. Look southward through the glack that divides the estates of St. Fort and Tayfield, on the shore of Fife, and you discern St. Andrews, the most conspicuous objects being the antique tower of St. Rule on the one hand and the famous bay on the other. The distance is 12 miles almost due south. Fifeness, looming mistily in the far, far away, tests the eye at 26 miles. A few miles westward, but on the same line of vision, your attention is arrested by two dome-shaped eminences towering skyward and dwarfing the hills in the foreground into pigmies by comparison. These are the Lomond Hills—East and West. That on the east keeps guard over all that remains of the erstwhile Castle of Macduff, the Thane of Fife of Shakespeare, and the semi-ruinous home and hunting-seat of the Stuart Kings and Queens—Falkland Palace; whilst that on the west looks south upon Loch Leven and its castle, where the ill-fated Queen of Scots was imprisoned, and the “auld-waird” sleepy town of Strathmiglo on the north. At the extreme west can be seen the Pictish tower and town of Abernethy, the reputed Camelon of ancient days, and nearer, shimmering in the sun, are the roofs of Newburgh, with a magnificent foreground of a great embayed river. Nearer at hand is Norman Law, a prominent hill close to the seat of the descendant of the standard-bearers of Scotland—Mr. Wedderburn of Birkhill. It rises to 850 feet above sea level. Closer, and almost “lipping” the waters of the Tay, sheltered in a cosy nook on the Fife shore, are still to be viewed, in the shape of decaying stone and lime, relics of the Abbey of Balmerino, founded by Queen Ermergarde, mother of Alexander II., about 1230. The Queenly founder, at her death, was buried before the high altar. Balmerino is about four miles distant. Woodhaven, the old watergate from the northern shores of Fife,

to which particular reference is made in Scott's "Antiquary", has been shorn of its ancient prestige, and now forms a stop-gap between the rapidly developing villadom of Newport and Wormit. Tayport (in days of yore—Port-on-Craig) on the south and Broughty and its Castle on the north form the guardians of the Tay, each being about four miles distant.

The Tay Bridge is an object so familiar to all, and its history is so well known, that it would be superfluous to refer to it; but no one can look upon the structure without thinking of its predecessor—the "thread across the Tay"—and its fall, an event which took place on the evening of Sunday, 28th December, 1879. Let the spectator turn northwards. The character of the scenery is entirely changed. Instead of ranges of verdure-clad hills fringed by an expansive river, the eye is carried to the

"Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood".

Over the hills and far away the vision stretches for 44 miles to the striking peak of Schichallion, which rears its lofty head, like unto an inverted sugar cone, 3547 feet into the Highland air. Along the same line Ben Chonzie, 38 miles off, is fairly conspicuous. It has an elevation of 3048 feet. Mount Blair, a great rounded pyramid 2441 feet high and 24 miles distant, is beheld due north through a rift in the Sidlaws. Ben Muich Dhui is more difficult to trace, and the eye has to traverse $48\frac{1}{2}$ miles before its rugged top can even be dimly outlined. These are a few of the giants of the mountain race whose summits may be seen in clear weather from the point of the compass, and there are others of an equally imposing character, particulars about which the spectators will no doubt verify for themselves from the source at hand.

The Sidlaws are the most striking objects at closer view. They consist of a long stretch of irregular heights extending from Kinnoull Hill, on the north bank of the Tay in Perthshire, to the Redhead, in Forfarshire, and even impinging upon the confines of Stonehaven, in Kincardineshire. These rugged elevations form part of what is known

as the Lowland Screen. Seen from Fifeshire, they have the appearance of a brown mountain barrier, drawn out like a huge rampart to give protection to the beautiful valley of Strathmore on the north, and the equally beautiful, if less extensive, valley of Strathdichty on the south. The highest peak of the range is Craigowl, a bare, barren hill, rising to an elevation of 1493 feet. Auchterhouse Hill, which is close to the village of that name, is the next highest, its elevation being 1399 feet. These hills, and the neighbouring Balkello, are about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Law. Kinpurnie, topped with the ruins of an old observatory, the Craggs and Lochs of Lundie, and King's Seat are all familiar to the eye, their heights and distances being recorded on the indicator. On the east, the most conspicuous feature in the landscape is the Panmure Testimonial, the "Live and Let Live" monument. It was erected by the tenantry on the estate of Panmure in 1839, and its elevation from the ground is 105 feet. From the south angle of its base a wide view can be obtained. The visitor can see at a glance the East Neuk o' Fife, the grey towers of St. Andrews, the Old Steeple of Dundee, the Redhead, near Auchmithie, and the venerable ruins of the Abbey of Arbroath. The Monikie Reservoirs belonging to Dundee are situated about a mile north of the Monument. We have enumerated a few places of interest that can be observed from the Compass. Add to these the many historic mansions that cannot fail to interest, such, for instance, as Rossie Priory, Fingask House, with its Royal and Jacobite traditions; Castle Huntly, at one time the residence of the Glamis family; the townlets of the Carse; Broughty, Monifieth, and Carnoustie, and the extending suburbs of Dundee.

Could a site better adapted for all the purposes of an observatory be obtained? It is understood that Mr. Mathers is interesting himself in this direction; and it has now been definitely ascertained that by the will of a deceased gentleman, a native of Dundee, the sum of £5000 can be applied to the carrying out of the scheme. That sum is certainly too limited for the erection, equipping,

and maintaining an observatory; but it would go a long way, and the ex-Bailie is sanguine that with a little help from the elastic Common Good, and substantial aid from persons who have a taste for scientific study, especially in the way of meteorology and astronomy, the whole scheme might ultimately be launched, and sufficient funds subscribed to keep it in good working order. A plateau on the west side of Balgay Pleasure Grounds has also been suggested as a suitable site; but, although it possesses many advantages, especially in the way of access, it is, with these exceptions, secondary to that of Law Hill. The whole question, however, is in its first stages of consideration, and there is no doubt, when the mind of the public is thoroughly awakened to the importance of having a scientific institution of this class in their midst, they will give no uncertain opinion as to the position it should occupy.

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD.

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-
fortune,

Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need
nothing,

Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criti-
cisms,

Strong and content I travel the open road.

The earth, that is sufficient,
I do not want the constellations any nearer,
I know they are very well where they are.

WALT WHITMAN.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

QUEEN VICTORIA
AND
LOCHNAGAR.

THE death of Queen Victoria is now too remote an event—it took place on 22nd January—to call for special reference; and there is all the less need for indulging in any retrospect as Her Majesty's relations to the Club and her position as a Deeside landed proprietor have already been fully alluded to in our pages. (See *C.C.J.*, II., 396.) It may perhaps be well to point out, however, that a great deal that found its way into print at the time of the Queen's death in the shape of "incidents" of Her Majesty's life at Balmoral was purely fictitious. In particular, prominence was given to a "well-faked-up" story which will not bear a moment's examination. It was solemnly stated that "There is a tradition which avers that when snow appears on a certain part of Lochnagar the laird of Balmoral dies", and that "No snow has been seen on this part of the mountain since the late Queen became land-lord until the present year". This is the sort of legend to be at once accepted by the credulous, more especially as it has a family resemblance to well-known instances of the summer's drought being gauged by the decrease or disappearance of snow in certain mountain corries. We have made some inquiry, however, and can find no trace of such a tradition as that alleged, nor any evidence of the professed natural phenomenon—which, to those of us who know Lochnagar, would be something like a miracle. There can be no part of Lochnagar that would not be covered with snow in a snowstorm of ordinary severity and duration. A correspondent we consulted settles the matter plainly and decisively—"I have seen Lochnagar spotlessly white—yes, even painfully so—hundreds of times, and I do not think that any disposition of such snowstorms as we have at Balmoral would allow of any part of the mountain not being covered with snow, unless perhaps the under sides of overhanging precipices. There are corries on Lochnagar which I believe retain snow all the year round—at any rate, I always find snow in them—but for a certain spot never to have been covered with snow till now is an impossibility". Our correspondent proceeds to call for the continuous observations which have determined the existence of the un-snow-covered portion of Lochnagar; but, obviously, that is asking for too much. Suffice it to have slain the legend. Returning to the Queen, let us quote a sentence from an article on "Lochnagar in March" in the *Aberdeen Free Press*, 20th March:—"Among the many good deeds of Queen Victoria, it must not be forgotten that the Lochnagar track was made at the orders and the expense of Her Majesty".

THE QUEEN'S LOSS TO DEESIDE. SPECULATION has been rife—and will probably remain rife for some time—as to the probable influence on Deeside generally of the death of the Queen and the consequent disappearance of one of the attractions to the average tourist, for it is undoubted that the rush to Balmoral was to see “Her Majesty’s Highland Home”. The quid-nuncs will have it that one of the immediate results will be the extension of the railway from Ballater to Braemar; but if Edward VII.—or the Duke of Cornwall and York, who, it is said, is to make Balmoral a summer residence—prove more favourable to this project than Queen Victoria we shall be surprised. These be mundane things, however; let us have a sample of the sentimental. Among the many elegies on Queen Victoria written at the time of her death was one in Doric by Mr. William Allan, M.P. for Gateshead, of which the following stanzas may be quoted—

“Ye streams an’ rills—oh, quat your glee!
Join in the dirge o’ dool sae hie
That rises frae the silvery Dee—
Oor Queen will come nae mair.

“Ye win’s that roon’ Balmoral sweep
Ower ilka turret, tower, an’ keep,
Moan nicht an’ day wi’ sorrow deep—
Oor Queen will come nae mair.

“Frae Aberdeen to Lochnagar,
Frae glens an’ corries roon’ Braemar,
This cry o’ grief is heard afar—
‘Oor Queen will come nae mair’.”

THE BUCK. I ASCENDED The Buck of the Cabrach on 19th May from the Cabrach or north-west side, walking up from the farm of Powneed alongside a wire fence known locally as “Powis’s fence”. This slope of the hill is further west than that ascended by the Club in the September 1895 excursion, the start on that occasion being made from the farm of Silverford, on the Rhynie road. The ascent is easy; and from a spot between two cottar houses which may be taken as the base of the hill I reached the summit—without any undue exertion—in 40 minutes. Possibly a sharp northerly wind kept me going steadily. The day was a little dull, but there was a fairly good view from the top, Lochnagar and Ben Avon being particularly fine in their coatings of snow, and all the lesser hills, ranging from Mount Keen to the Binn Hill of Cullen, being perfectly discernible. The afternoon became brilliant, the clouds disappearing and being succeeded by bright and warm sunshine; but by that time I was off the hill and making a number of calls in the Upper Cabrach. I walked up from Huntly through Glass on the previous day; and I returned to Aberdeen the day after from Duftown, walking thither by the Braes o’ Balloch and Fiddichside—the veritable Braes o’ Balloch of the song of “Roy’s Wife”, for is not Aldivalloch a farm in the Cabrach, visible from The Buck? The Richmond Arms Hotel at Ardwell, Lower Cabrach—once known as

the Grouse Inn, but now enlarged—is a convenient hostelry for one spending such a week-end as this.—ROBERT ANDERSON.

LOCH ERICHT is a large Highland loch situated partly in Perthshire and partly in Inverness-shire.

It is one of the wildest and most magnificent lochs in Scotland, presenting all along its shores scenes of lonely grandeur and sublimity, the mountains rising from the water's edge to great altitudes, their sides scarred by mountain torrents. The surface when measured by the Ordnance Survey officers in 1872 was found to be 1153.4 feet above the level of the sea; it is thus one of the most elevated of the larger Scottish lochs. It is known to anglers as the home of large *Salmo ferox*, as well as of trout said to be equal in quality to those of Loch Leven. It trends in a north-east and south-west direction, and is broadest near the southern end, narrowing gradually towards the northern end. It is over 14½ miles in length, and over one mile in maximum breadth; the mean breadth is about half a mile, being 3½ per cent. of the length. Its waters cover an area of over 4600 acres, or nearly 7¼ square miles. The deepest part of the loch is in the southern broader portion, where, about 3½ miles from the foot of the loch there is a small central depression, about one-third of a mile in length, and covering about 58 acres, in which the depths exceed 500 feet, the maximum being 512 feet.—*Scottish Geographical Magazine.*

THE author of a recently-published work, "Kings of Rod, Rifle, and Gun", thinks the following EXTRAORDINARY WALKING FEAT. feat, "for its grotesque combination of madness, endurance, and pluck", stands unsurpassed in the annals of sport:—"One night, while a large party of sportsmen were assembled at Blackhall, in Kincardineshire, then the seat of Mr. Farquharson, Sir Andrew Leith Hay bet Lord Kennedy £2500 that he would get to Inverness on foot before him. Off they started at nine o'clock at night in their evening costume, thin shoes and silk stockings. Sir Andrew Leith Hay went by the coach road *via* Huntly and Elgin. Lord Kennedy, with Captain Ross as umpire, struck straight across the Grampians. Amid pouring rain they walked all night, next day, and the next night, reaching Inverness at 6 a.m. on the third day. Sir Andrew Leith Hay, who had chosen the longer, but far more comfortable, route, did not arrive till four hours later".

IT seems to be reckoned a grievance in some quarters that, despite its proximity to the "Aberdeenshire Highlands", Aberdeen itself cannot be classified as Highland. Why anybody except members of the Aberdeen Highland Association should desire such a classification is past finding out. To talk of the "Highland blood" of Aberdonians, for instance, is simply preposterous. The whole history of Aberdeen has been anti-Highland; its associations and leanings have been essentially Lowland. The idea of identifying the city with the land of the Gael must be attributed solely to the

modern craze that is called the "Celtic revival"—and perhaps in reality it would be found more due to the latter-day adoption of the Highland dress than to the revival of Gaelic language and literature. The idea of Lord Aberdeen, whose Whig ancestry is irreproachable, posturing as "Chief" of the Highland Association is well-nigh ludicrous; but his lordship had the sense, at any rate, to abandon the pretension that Aberdeen is in any degree Highland. This was done very ingeniously, Sir Walter Scott being cited as an authority, from the passage in "Waverley" in which Callum Beg repudiates the insinuation that Waverley and he had come from the Highlands—"Ye're a Highlandman by your tongue?" "Na; I am but just Aberdeen-a-way". By way of enforcing the conclusion of Sir Walter Scott, a correspondent of the *Evening Gazette* (28th March) cited the old "Highland line" marked on a map of Scotland divided into clans, in the 16th century, by T. B. Johnston. The boundary thus delineated touched the line of longitude 3° W. in the north-west corner of Forfarshire, "and followed that line due north across the Dee, just west of Craigendarroch, through Ballater, and along the water-shed which separates Dee and Don; and then turned N.N.W. and W.N.W., south of Elgin and Findhorn, till it terminated on the Moray Firth, near Nairn. North and west of this line was all regarded as Highlands, with the exception of Caithness. Anyone who cares to follow this on a map may satisfy himself that Aberdeen is fully 35 miles, as the crow flies, outside the Highland line".

WE went to Aviemore on April 4th. Snow was
SNOW NOTES, lying on the railway track at the summit level. At
APRIL, 1901. Aviemore all the high ground was covered with a
continuous coat down to the upper edge of the
forests, *i.e.*, about 1500 feet. Twice snow showers covered all the
low ground, but the snow melted off in a few hours. During the
eighteen days of our stay we saw a notable and almost continuous
diminution of the snow covering of the high ground, and in many
parts, particularly on exposed ridges, the dark earth showed through
the snow. On April 9th I went by Glen Eunach to the Argyll Stone.
There was no snow lying in the hollow of the glen as far as I ascended
it. When I had quitted the track, near the Allt Ruigh na Sroine, I
did not come on to snow till I reached about 2000 feet. Above this
it lay in large, discontinuous patches, but the ridge itself was clear.
I left the ridge at its north end by the Coire Buidh that overlooks
Loch an Eilein. All along the lip of this corrie was a heavy snow-
wreath, the surface of which was very steep. All the snow was in
good condition for walking, and only in parts of the wreath did I find
it at all soft. On the 17th I went up the Larig Ghru as far as the
watershed. Here I reached snow at the 1750 contour, and found it
much greater in quantity than I have previously seen it. After the
first half-mile I found it unbroken, except for a narrow strip along
the edge of the ridge usually occupied by the intermittent track.
The snow was in capital walking condition, but seemingly I was the
first person to go far up the pass. At the watershed the depth of the

snow must have been great, for a notable ridge of rocks crossing the pass just at the watershed was buried, and the large cairns in its neighbourhood were invisible. Indeed I barely found enough exposed rock to serve as a dry seat, while I took a rest, a lunch, and a look at the Deeside view. The three upper Pools of Dee were quite invisible. The lowest one, the big one, was visible, but I could not determine whether its surface was water or ice. The day was brilliantly fine; the sun, especially with its reflection from the snow, would have been overpoweringly bright if I had not worn darkened glasses; the overhead sky was absolutely clear; and while I sat the wind was at rest, and I enjoyed the most delightful silence, broken only by the ticking of my watch, the faint rumble of a train at Aviemore, some eight miles away, and the tinkle of fragments of snow falling down the steeps.—C. G. C.

THE FIFE LOMONDS were visited by the Club on 6th May last. The party left Aberdeen at 6.20 A.M., and, after a halt at Dundee for breakfast, reached Falkland Road station at 10.2 A.M.

The walk to the top of the East Lomond was then commenced; on the summit a meeting of the Club was held, and several members admitted. The Chairman, Mr. William Porter, J.P., then read a paper giving a quaint description of Falkland in olden times. Thereafter the West top was climbed, the members being met there by a contingent from Kirkcaldy. The weather was unfavourable for an extended prospect, a persistent haze (which developed into rain on the descent) limiting the view. The Club dined at Liquorstone Hotel, Falkland, Aberdeen being reached about 10.5 p.m. The following brief description of the Lomonds was issued to the members previous to the excursion:—The Lomonds Hills of Fife form an isolated ridge on the borders of Kinross-shire and Fifeshire. The west and north fronts are steep and rocky, the east and south smooth and gently sloping; the ridge forms an undulating plateau at an average height of 1250 feet. The principal summits, which are about three miles apart, are West Lomond (1713 feet) and East Lomond (1471 feet). They are conspicuous landmarks and command extensive and beautiful views. About a mile south-west from West Lomond are the remains of a hill-fort; the East Lomond is surmounted by similar remains. East Lomond formed one of the stations in the great Trigonometrical Survey. Carlyle thus describes a visit he, along with Edward Irving, paid to it:—“Another time military tents were noticed on the Lomond Hills (on the eastern of the two). ‘Trigonometrical Survey’, said we, ‘Ramsden’s theodolite and what not; let us go’. And on Saturday we went. Beautiful the airy prospect from the eastern Lomond far and wide. Five or six tents stood on the top; one a black stained cooking one with a heap of coals close by—the rest all closed and occupants gone, except one other, partly open at the eaves, through which you could look in and see a big circular mahogany box (which we took to be the theodolite) and a saucy-looking, cold, official gentleman diligently walking for exercise,

no observations being possible, though the day was so bright. No admittance, however. Plenty of fine country people had come up to whom the official had been coldly monosyllabic, as to us also he was. Polite, with a shape of contempt; and unwilling to let himself into speech. Irving had great skill in these cases. He remarked—and led us into remarking—courteously this and that about the famous Ramsden and his instrument, about the famous Trigonometrical Survey, and so forth, till the official in a few minutes had to melt; invited us exceptionally in for an actual inspection of his theodolite, which we reverently enjoyed, and saw through it the signal column—a great broad plank, he told us, on the top of Ben Lomond, sixty miles off—wavering and shivering like a bit of loose tape, so that no observations could be had. We descended the hill *re facta*". The following are the officially recorded observations from the East Lomond in the "great Trig":—Allarmuir Hill, Carnethy Hill, Tinto, Bencleuch (22 miles), Ben Lomond (55), Ben Lawers (44), Glas Maol (44), Mount Battock (52), Craigowl, Kerloch, Red Head, Kellie Law (17), Largo Law, Lumsden (46), Says Law (35), Calton Hill (20), and Dun Rig (46). (See *C.C.J.*, Vol. I., p. 168.) From the West Lomond a good view will be obtained of Loch Leven and its famous castle, where Mary Queen of Scots was kept for some time in captivity.

THE Deputy Coroner for Carnarvonshire held an inquest on 9th April last, at Capel Curig, touching the death of Mr. Percy Octavius Weightman, of Liverpool. The principal witness was Mr. Milton, of College Avenue, Crosby, who stated that he and deceased and others, making a party of five, came down to Capel Curig on Thursday evening for the purpose of mountain-climbing. Witness and deceased were expert climbers. On Sunday they left Cobden's Hotel at eleven o'clock and drove to Gwerngoch Ucha, at the bottom of Moel Tryfan, near Ogwen Lake. They successfully climbed the gully they had selected, and had lunch on the top, which was reached about half-past three. After lunch they intended to descend the *arête* to Ogwen. The weather was then misty with sleet. After a while they came to the conclusion that they had missed the main ridge, and waited awhile to discuss the situation and to allow the fog to lift. During this wait deceased said he would go round the ridge and look about a bit. Taking his ice-axe with him, he went round about thirty feet below the party, and they never saw him alive again. About half an hour after deceased had left them witness went to look for him. He traced his footsteps in the snow, and came to a ledge, where he saw marks indicating that deceased had slipped over the edge. The remainder of the party then roped themselves together and went down the gully. Witness did not tell the others that he had seen marks which led him to think that deceased had slipped over the ledge for fear of agitating them. In about an hour's time they found the deceased. Witness unroped himself and went close to the body, which he found head downwards, jammed between some rocks, about 700 feet from where

the marks indicating the slipping off the ledge were found. A doctor who examined the body said that deceased must have been killed instantly. His skull was fractured, and he must have struck the rocks many times in the course of his appalling descent. It was about half-past five when the party reached the body. They found it impossible with the means at hand to remove it, and returned to the Royal Oak to get assistance, but it was decided, in view of the stormy state of the weather, that nothing could be done that night, and at four o'clock on Monday morning they returned to the spot and recovered the body, which was removed to Cobden's Hotel. The jury returned a verdict of death by misadventure, and expressed their sympathy with deceased's relatives.

THE following new members have been admitted :
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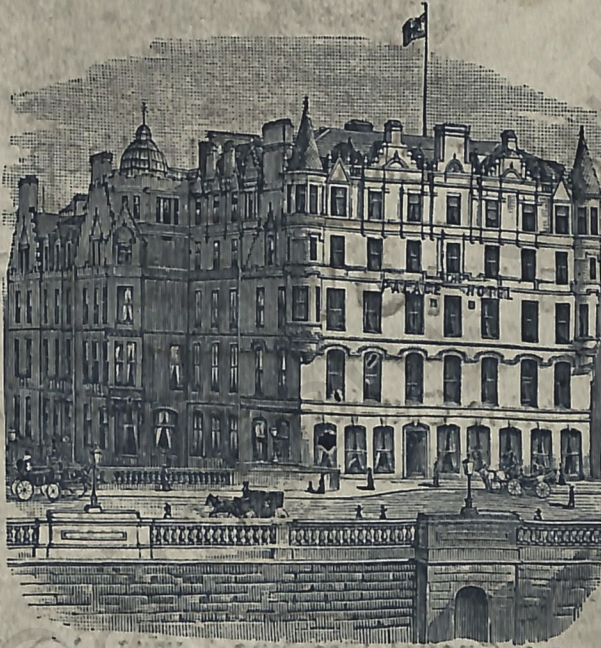
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