

THE Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. III.

JANUARY, 1902.

No. 18.

NIGHTS AND DAYS ON THE CAIRNGORMS.

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

"'TIS not the distance but the pace that kills", and I have often thought that a mountain excursion would have in it much less of fatigue and much more of enjoyment if there were not so large an amount of physical exertion to be got through in so short a time, and if there were more opportunity of leisurely survey of interesting views. The inconvenience and comparative discomfort of early starting we all know, the greater inconvenience and even occasional disaster of over late return we may have experienced with dismay or read of with commiseration. I tried last year the experiment of an overnight start, sleeping for a time after dinner, and then starting my walk instead of making my customary retirement. Of course a walk through the darkness of night is possible only on a good road, and so this method is of limited application.

CAIRN TOUL AND BRAERLACH.—My first experience of it was at the end of July, on a night of full moon. I was at Coylum Bridge shortly after 10 p.m., and took the southerly road which in about seven miles leads to the head of Glen Eunach. After passing the east side of Tullochgrue I entered the woodlands of the Rothiemurchus Forest. Here I found the moonlight a doubtful benefit, for with the full moon in front and the strong shadows of the trees across the path it was often difficult to see the details of

the ground. At the "Outlook" I quitted the woodland region and entered upon the wilder glen proper. Here I noticed how curiously the moon lighted up blocks of grey granite lying on the black peat banks; indeed at one place I left the road and splashed stumblingly through a bog to investigate what I thought was a strangely steady will-o'-the-wisp. The glen was very quiet, except for the unresting rush of the water; besides it I heard the faint sighing of the wind, and those queer, eerie, inexplicable sounds that gently whisper through the darkness of those remote solitudes—sounds like voices, like laughter, like music, but all on a dainty, fairy-like scale; and I partly understood the powerful effect their accumulated influence might have on a sensitive imagination, and I could well believe the story told of a youthful watcher in this glen who fled from it in terror, and never again dared to spend the night there. When I had passed the lower bothy, three miles from the head of the glen, I saw that thick clouds enshrouded the higher hills; soon the moon was hidden, and I walked in darkness. Nearing the upper bothy, I quitted the glen, and struck up the eastern corrie, Coire Dhonndail. This was very dark, and in its upper part, where I entered the mist, I was quite unable to see the track or the deer that barked on either hand at my approach. The track makes zig-zags in order to surmount the rocks over which two burns fall. Guided by the sound of the waterfalls, I managed to gain the upper part of the track and surmount the only difficult bit of ground. This I cleared at 2.15 a.m., and started eastwards across the great undulating plateau. Here the darkness was complete; I could not even see the face of my compass, and, yielding naturally to the slope of the ground, I went somewhat too far south. The first burn I came across warned me of this, and, recovering from my divergence, I bore somewhat upwards, and soon reached the edge of the crags that overlook the huge cavity of the Garbh Coire, the great hollow between Cairn Toul and Braeriach. Following the crag edge to the south and east, at 3.45 a.m. I reached the summit of Sgor an Lochan Uaine. This

commands a superb view; but when I was on it I could see but a few feet in any direction, and was closely enwrapped in dense mist that was but gently moved by the slight wind. The silence was broken by only two sounds, the continual roar of the Dee falls, a mile away across the corrie, and the occasional croak of a ptarmigan somewhere below me. Quitting my elevated perch I followed the crag edge still eastward, but yet quite unable to see more than my immediate surroundings, and was soon toiling up the rough pile of granite blocks that constitute the upper part of Cairn Toul. I reached the summit cairn (4241) at 4.40 a.m., considerably after sunrise, but the mist shut out all direct sunshine, and made a dim, ghostly twilight. I remained on the top ridge of Cairn Toul for two hours, some of the time sitting in the lee of the cairn, then strolling to the southern cairn or to the northward horn of the mountain. I hoped the mist would clear away, but though the sun from 5.25 onwards made many attempts to break through, it did not do more than show a pale face, and I turned away disappointed, for the summit of Cairn Toul is one of the finest view-points in the Cairngorms. Dropping behind Sgor an Lochain Uaine, I returned to the Garbh Coire crags on its west side, and leisurely walked along their edge, having now in the thinning mist a better chance of looking down the many savage gullies with which the crags are seamed. When I reached the innermost recess of the southern part of the Garbh Coire I quitted the crag edge and made my way up to the March Cairn (4149). This I reached at 8.10 a.m. As I did so, a ray of brilliant sunshine streamed down; in a moment the mist was rent into rags; these disappeared in a very few seconds, and the whole plateau was clear, and quivering in a blaze of fierce sun heat. The sudden change from the chill and comparative darkness of the mist to the absolute clearness and brilliance of the intense sunlight and heat was dramatic and delightful. I had now no more need to walk warily, but could stroll at ease, and enjoy the fine views spread in every direction. My steps turned naturally to the adjacent Wells of Dee, the highest

and ultimate source of that river, and, I believe, the highest stream source in the country. Here at a height of more than 4000 feet the limpid water wells up in some half-dozen places from the granite gravel, and, sweet and cold, gives rise in a few yards to a burn of considerable size. At the highest well-eye I had years before arranged some granite blocks to form a seat, and there I now sat, took a meal, and then, wrapping my head in my cape to shut out the exuberant light and heat, I slept a well-earned and delightful sleep. In an hour I was again afoot, and returned to the edge of the Garbh Coire crags, a place that has a great fascination for me. In full view were all the giants, Ben Muich Dhui, Braeriach, Cairn Toul, and Cairngorm, with in several places patches of the winter's snow still persisting, though almost visibly diminishing in the great heat of the sun. Under the summit of Cairn Toul nestled the Lochan Uaine in its high basin. As I appeared on the crag edge I startled a few deer in the higher part of the corrie below, and, sitting on the edge, I watched them through the field glass as they trotted into the lower part of the corrie with many backward glances for the foe who followed not. Continuing my crag walk, I approached the Dee falls, whose musical roar filled the air. Looking into the depths of the corrie, my eye was caught by a curious shimmer of light on a pool of peaty water some 600 feet below me. Examining with the glass, I had the prettiest sight of the day. A score of deer were at their morning bath, and I watched the process with much interest. The deer stepped down into the pool, and, dipping their muzzles deep into the water, shook their heads about, at the same time trampling rapidly with their fore feet; thus all the head got a good sluicing. Then, lying down, they rolled back and forth in the water, kicking their legs, and throwing the water violently about. Then, springing up, they stepped out of the pool, and pranced about as if to shake themselves free from the wet. On their entry they were of a fine russet brown, but the peat changed them to a dull, sombre, almost black colour. One of them was a large stag, and whenever he was

approached by a smaller there was a fierce but brief collision, none venturing to return his attack.

The example of the deer seemed in some respects a good one, and in a few minutes I found a small pool in the Dee, and there, at an elevation of nearly 4000 feet, I took my morning dip, finding the rapidly running water much less cold than I expected; it had then been flowing for nearly a mile exposed to the fierce sun heat. It was now 10.30 a.m., and I was approaching the main mass of Braeriach. After looking down the Falls of Dee, and paying some attention to the curiously indefinite waterparting on this high plateau between Dee water and Spey water, I made my way eastwards up the slope to the Braeriach summit, passing a small mine from which Cairngorm stones had been dug, and from which a few days later a young companion got a very pretty little crystal. A few minutes after 11 a.m. I was at the summit cairn (4248), and, after arranging some stones to afford more complete shelter from the wind, I lay down for another hour's sleep. Then I had a stroll along the ridge of Braeriach, perhaps the finest mountain of the group. For a mile in length the mountain ridge is as the top of a gigantic wall, at its narrowest not twelve yards wide. On either side the ground falls precipitously, and huge buttresses of naked rock make a scene of superb grandeur and stern impressiveness. The near view of the Garbh Coire, with Cairn Toul and Sgor an Lochain Uaine on the other side, is singularly fine, and in the limpid atmosphere every detail was perfectly clear. Feeling that my experiment had received its ample reward, I turned away, quitting the mountain by the eastward of its northern arêtes, which is not so good a route, however, as the western one. Then leisurely walking down the valley of the Little Bennie, gathering white heather and wild berries as I went, I reached the glen road at the lower bothy, and by it returned, to find myself in good time for afternoon tea, and, thanks to the leisurely style of my 17½ hours' outing, not at all fatigued.

CAIRNGORM AND BEN MUICH DHUI.—I had been so

highly pleased with my night-and-day visit to Cairn Toul and Braeriach, that I decided to take the first clear night about the middle of August for a similar visit to Cairngorm and Ben Muich Dhui. Accordingly, one moonless night when the clearness of the sky and the brilliance of the stars suggested frost, I passed Coylum Bridge just before midnight, and took the road to Glenmore Lodge. The tingle of my hands and face plainly told of frost, and the bright tracks of meteors added to the glory of the heavens. Beyond Glenmore Lodge the usual path for the ascent of Cairngorm winds its way through a dense wood. I was not at all familiar with this part of my route, having rarely gone over the track, and it was perhaps as much by good luck as by good guidance that I safely cleared the wood, and reached the open mountain side about 2 a.m. The sky was even more brilliantly dotted with stars, the Milky Way was beautifully clear, while toward the east there was a forecasting of approaching day. The light was quite useless for walking purposes, and I simply practised the "heather-step" till more light came. Away to the north through the darkness of the distance came flashes of a lighthouse, in groups of six, that I afterwards identified as Tarbet Ness. When daylight began to strengthen I could see all the valley of the Spey and the low ground east of Boat of Garten filled with irregular pools of cotton-woolly mist. Then Loch Morlich, at the foot of Cairngorm, half covered itself with mist, and the line of its outflowing stream declared itself through the forest by a long white snake of mist. And now the eastern sky was rapidly getting bright, and the scattered wisps of cloud there were vividly touched with red and orange. At five minutes after four a.m. I reached the summit cairn of Cairngorm (4084), had a brief interview with the fat brown mouse that is resident guardian there, and had the misfortune to break my flask on a mercilessly hard granite block, and so lose my morning coffee. My attention was now almost entirely given to the sunrise, for the sky got brighter and brighter, and I was on the outlook to note both the time and the place of the sun's appearance.

According to the teaching of the C.T.C., the sun was due to appear about 4.53 a.m., but I saw its first peep at 4.42, and its disc was entirely clear of apparent contact at 4.47½. The first glance of the sun was at the north base of Tap o' Noth, and its last contact was with the summit of Buck of Cabrach, both these hills being a few degrees further north than E.N.E.

Walking now eastwards from the cairn, and descending a little on the northern face, I visited the Fuaran a' Mharcuis, the Marquis' Well, the highest spring on Cairngorm, and added a few stones to the "leading cairn" that marks its position. Then, still going in the same general direction, I descended into Ciste Mhairearaid, Margaret's Chest or Coffin. This is a small corrie overlooking the upper part of the Nethy, and is notable as always containing snow. I found three patches of snow in it, two of them small, and one that measured 286 paces in its roughly circular outline. Quitting the corrie at its southern side, I went to the south-east corner of Cairngorm that overlooks the outlet of Loch Avon. Here I was on ground that offered feeding for deer, and I kept a good look-out for them. I was rewarded by coming on a herd of seventeen. Only one of them was on foot, and it had evidently but just risen, for it was not yet 6 a.m. Lying behind some convenient rocks, I had a leisurely view of the deer, and by a sharp whistle brought several more to their feet. As they could see no cause for further alarm, and as the wind was blowing from them to me, they stretched their legs, and fell to nibbling the grass. But a second whistle and the wave of a handkerchief brought them all up in a startled clump, and when I stepped from my hiding into full view, they trotted down the hill-side and I saw them no more. I then went to the edge of the mountain overlooking Loch Avon. Here the mountain descends some 900 feet, in places precipitously and in places by steep gorges. The view of the lake as I strolled along the edge of the upland was very fine. Down in the hollow the air was evidently still, for the surface of the water was a perfect mirror, reflecting every little detail of

the surrounding rocks, and the varied colouring of plants, cloud, and sky. The trout were leaping freely, and from the opposite side swam across three grey birds. The highest rocks overlook the middle of the loch, and here, finding a very inviting corner, I lay amid the blaeberreries and slept for half-an-hour. Towards the upper end of the loch I descended one of the gorges, and had a pleasant swim in the beautifully clear water. At the head of the loch is a little space of comparatively level ground, thickly covered with varied grasses, heathers, and ferns, and intersected by the brattling lower course of the Garbh Uisge, the Rough Water, which, with its tributary the Feith Buidhe Burn, dashes over the steep rocks at the head of the glen. Crossing the Garbh Uisge near the loch, I made my way through fallen blocks to the famous Shelter Stone. Under this mighty tumbled fragment of a crag is a cavity large enough to shelter half-a-dozen people, and, though draughty and at times damp, it is in pretty frequent use by hillmen. Just inside the entrance passage my eye was caught by a paper under a "paper weight". This was a brief note from some recent visitors to "Dear next chap", inviting him to make use of provisions they had left, and greeting him with good wishes. Investigating their stores, I found they included an assortment of tinned meats, tea, sugar, a kettle, and a mug. I at once proceeded to remedy the loss of my cold coffee by making a large brewing of tea. I also sampled a most excellent "Cyclist's paté" contained in one of the tins. I now decided to return to the higher level by scrambling up along the right bank of the Garbh Uisge, an interesting and by no means difficult route. The whole slope was thickly covered with a great variety of Alpine and sub-Alpine plants, and the stream came down in a splendid series of leaps and dashes. Just after leaving the Shelter Stone I stepped into the shadow of the Sticil, the great crag from which it fell. The change from sunlight to shadow was so striking that I turned to look up at the crag, and saw a very beautiful sight. The top edge of the crag was outlined in a vivid silver band, and flying outwards over it were multitudes

of brilliantly shining silver sparks that fell through the air and disappeared as they entered the shadow. When I had finished my climb I went to the top of the crag, 1000 feet vertically above the Shelter Stone, and though I could see nothing to explain the display of "fireworks", I did get a most impressive view of Loch Avon and the corrie in which it is embosomed. I now turned my face towards the summit of Ben Muich Dhui, following the glen of the Garbh Uisge, a fine typical plateau glen, with several pretty lochans in it, and nine large patches of snow on its rocky sides. On my way I diverged to the east side of the little glen to look down on Loch Etchachan, near which comes up the path from Glen Derry. At the highest source of the Garbh Uisge, at mid-day, I sat for lunch, and while there saw four men coming up by the path. They startled, but did not see, two deer that ran across the face of the hill just above me. I was at the summit cairn (4296), some few minutes before the others came up, and found them to be youths not acquainted with the Ben and its surroundings, nor, apparently, with the friendly courtesy that might be expected at such a meeting. However, they accepted such information as I proffered, and one of them, thawing, thanked me for what I told them. And indeed it was a grand day for the summit. The air was of crystal clearness, and everything that ever can be seen from that height was perfectly in view. To specify what could be seen would be to catalogue most of Scottish mountains, but the supreme item was the Garbh Coire, surrounded by the crags of Cairn Toul and Braeriach, and opening into the long trench of the Larig Ghru. This scene cannot be described. It must be viewed, and the more one sees it the more does one want to see it again. I doubt whether it can be excelled in the country. My programme included a sleep at the summit cairn, but the presence of other visitors made this impossible, and though I tried to get a nap at the northern cairn, half-a-mile away, I found the couch too rough and the sun too hot. But from this neighbourhood I had a very fine view of the glens in which flow the streams forming the Garbh Uisge,

and the undulations of the great plateau. The afternoon was now wearing on, and it behoved me to turn my steps homeward. I crossed the plateau in a northerly direction, passing between the head waters of the March Burn and the Feith Buidhe lochan, waters flowing to the Dee and the Avon respectively, and then descended to lower levels along the stream at the back of the Lurcher's Crag. My last bit of rough walking was through the tiresome long heather in the northern mile of the Larig Ghru. Then smoother roads took me home to the refreshing bath and tea that pleasantly closed my long wanderings of 18½ hours.

In conclusion, in view of what has happened on Cairngorm since I was there, it may be well to say that not anyone and everyone should attempt such walks. No one should take chances on a mountain; and people who do not know a mountain, and who go without guide, without compass, without map, and without sufficient provisions, court disaster, and not seldom meet with it. Each year the Cairngorms take their toll of such foolish people, and yet each year fresh victims voluntarily offer themselves. Mountaineering, even of the mild type herein described, is a fascinating form of holiday play, and, rightly attempted, is highly beneficial to body, mind, and spirit. But, like all sports, it has its laws, unwritten though they be, and "outsiders" must not think they can rashly and carelessly violate these with impunity.

A FORTNIGHT AT INVEREY.

BY ROBERT ANDERSON.

“EVERY place is sanctified by the eighth sense, Memory”, says Robert Louis Stevenson in one of his letters, referring to a district he was revisiting; and, to be quite candid, I am afraid that during a fortnight’s holiday at Inverey in the recent summer-time I was more under the influence of this sentiment than of any other. I recalled memories instead of making additions to memory’s store; I was content to revel in recollections of former visits, and was not at all inclined to create a new series of reminiscences. Some readers will probably shrug their shoulders and suggest that I am getting old and lazy. There may be something in that. At any rate, I went to Inverey tired and a little depressed, bearing with me a troublesome “summer cold” which I had found it impossible to shake off. For nearly a week I simply rested—just lolled about, I may admit to my too candid critics—visiting spots within easy reach and leisurely reading Charles Reade’s “The Cloister and the Hearth”—a “solid” novel, of the good, old-fashioned type, containing reading enough to suffice for the period indicated. By the time I had finished it, I had got rid of my cold, and my lethargy too, and before I left Inverey I made one or two excursions in the neighbourhood, which may be sufficient excuse for jotting down the following rambling notes.

Many years, alas! have elapsed since I previously stayed for any length of time at either Braemar or Inverey; my more recent visits have been “flying ones”—visits of a day or a night, or of a week-end’s duration, *en route* to or from some excursion in the hills beyond. Latterly, indeed, I have taken a fancy for Speyside and the western side of the Cairngorms—nay, ’tis more than a fancy, I doubt; it is becoming a very decided preference.

But the old love for Deeside, I find, rapidly revives; due, in large measure, of course, to its inherent beauties, but stimulated, doubtless, by the associations that memory recalls—mountain excursions in the hey-day of youth, when life was probably brighter, the heart lighter, and the spirits more exuberant: excursions with friends most of whom are now removed by death or distance. Perhaps I feel, in the lines of Matthew Arnold—

“The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air”.

But, nevertheless, I repeat a familiar and favourite walk—that delightful one from Ballater to Braemar, taking the south road to Balmoral; and I soon swing in to the four miles an hour pace, despite the excessive heat of the day. This is a walk of which it may be confidently said “Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety”. Small is the perception of beauty in the man who fails to appreciate the wealth of loveliness unfolded in the sixteen miles traversed. What a succession of charming landscapes!—hillsides clothed with graceful birches and odorous pines, picturesque stretches of river and valley, magnificent views of Lochnagar, and, finally, the tree-lined road by Invercauld, with its sheltering slopes on one side, the river and its meadows on the other, and Ben Avon and Beinn a' Bhuid in the distance. Then, as a *bonne bouche* before reaching your final destination, there is the walk from Braemar to Inverey. This, surely, is one of the loveliest roads to be found anywhere—most certainly in Aberdeenshire. Three-fourths of it is practically an avenue, gradually rising high above the Dee and then descending to its level, the summit yielding an exquisite and well-known view of the valley, with its enclosing hills and the mountains in the background; the red-tiled roofs of Mar Lodge form a new feature in this landscape.

But the idea of walking—walking from Ballater to Braemar, or even from Braemar to Inverey! By most people, apparently, it would be dismissed as supremely ridiculous. Nobody seems to walk nowadays. The ubiquitous bicycle has penetrated even to these remote regions; and I and my companion, who have not yet succumbed to the ruling passion, are regarded as “cranks”—two eccentric individuals obstinately adhering to a quite exploded form of locomotion. Gamekeepers and ghillies cycle as well as their masters, the gun or fishing-rod slung across their backs; and I believe the general recourse to cycling has seriously affected the drawings of hotel-keepers and hirers. Judging from the stream of cyclists to and from the Linn of Dee on a fine day, one can very well believe it. This feature apart, Inverey is little changed. In Gibb & Hay’s book on “The Scenery of the Dee” (descriptive of the scenery as it was between 1850 and 1858) the villages or clachans of Muckle and Little Inverey are characterised as “with the exception of two or three more comfortable-looking dwellings, a pair of miserable little places, mainly consisting of mere hovels, built after the rudest fashion”; and a couple of illustrations enable us to realise the appearance of “these forlorn proofs of poverty and its attendant wretchedness”. Tomintoul to-day, I understand, resents the constant citation of Queen Victoria’s scarification of it as “the most tumble-down, poor-looking place I ever saw”; and probably the Inverey people will not care to be reminded of Mr. Andrew Gibb’s description—it is now so out of place. The “hovels” had disappeared long before my time, and I note little change in the aspect of the comfortable, albeit humble, cottages by which they were replaced. The proprietor’s curious prohibition of windowed rooms in the upper story—the feudal decree that upper rooms (if any) shall be lighted only by a skylight—this still remains in force. There is one well-known exception, which dates, however, from before the enforcement of this law. Several of the houses have been considerably improved of late, and one of them is actually fitted with electric bells. Inverey is progressing! Mr.

Andrew Gibb, were he living, would note progression—or would it be retrogression?—in other directions. He observed that at the Inverveys the kilt was the fashionable dress. Now, hardly a kilt is to be seen, not even on Sundays.* But the people are still the same kind, simple, good-hearted folks, with long memories, recalling incidents which one had well-nigh forgotten, and recalling them with a minuteness of detail that is quite wonderful. I had once more a chat with a venerable old lady who remembers the Moray floods of 1829; who readily furnishes particulars about the successive Duffs and Farquharsons who have reigned since that time, including that really great sportsman and shot, the Hon. George Skene Duff; and who describes for me the Braemar Gatherings of former days, when Atholl men attended from beyond Glen Tilt and Forbes men from Newe and Strathdon. I mention to her casually that I recently came across a tombstone in the churchyard of Old Deer to the memory of two young men drowned below the Linn of Dee in 1868, and I open a flood-gate of recollections of the incident.

From Inverey we made a number of excursions to well-known "sights" within easy reach—the Linn of Dee, the Falls of Lui, the Colonel's Bed, and the Falls of Corriemulzie. These, of course, are very minor excursions, not ranking as serious "walks", and any description of them would be entirely out of place in this *Journal*—besides, they are amply described in the guide-books. The Linn of Dee I find as reminiscent as the walk from Ballater to Braemar. You stand on the bridge and look westward,

* Since writing the above, I noticed that, in a paper read to the Gaelic Society of London on 17th October, Mr. J. S. Stuart-Glennie "bemoaned the decay of the Gaelic language in Braemar". Twenty-five years ago, he said, at the crofters' houses in Braemar, all the people spoke Gaelic. That was changed now. If he asked a question in Gaelic, it was answered in English, when the person addressed understood Gaelic. In the families of crofters where there were a dozen children, not a word of the old language was spoken. In Mr. Stuart-Glennie's opinion, this state of things is "very disheartening"; but then he is an advocate of "The New Celtic Movement"—the "Celtic Renaissance" it is sometimes called.

and lo! you feel as at the entrance to an enchanted region. You realise something of the sense of space and distance on a large scale. Before you stretch leagues of moor and hill and mountain—a comparatively unknown land, exciting all the pleasureable uncertainties of the unknown. Behind you are civilisation, population, culture, all the amenities of life; in front, wildness and desolation. The slavery of conventionality on the one side, freedom from all trammels on the other. It requires no great boldness to shake off—once in a way—the fetters of ordinary prosaic life and make an excursion into this tempting unknown land. You will have to cover long distances, you will incur bodily fatigue, you may have to endure rain, or tempest, or heat (and it is hard to say which of these is the most trying), but you will have your reward—in health, if in nothing else; in appreciation of Nature, if you are sympathetic enough. You will find in this apparently trackless forest before you three tolerably well-defined tracks—one by Glen Dee and the Larig to Aviemore, one by Glen Geldie and Glen Feshie to Kingussie, and one by Glen Tilt to Blair Atholl. Memories of walks along all three routes (along some of them more than once) rise before me—but suddenly my musings are interrupted, and I am brought back to the present and the practical by the discovery of my companion that the supporters on the Fife coat of arms on the bridge have been decapitated! This outrage may have been the work of storms, but I am disposed to attribute it to what the criminal authorities define as malicious mischief—the ineradicable propensity of youngsters to throw stones at any available mark; witness the damage done to most guide-posts. The mutilated figures, at any rate, present a sorry spectacle. The inscription on the other side of the bridge, recording the fact that the bridge was opened by Queen Victoria on 8th September, 1857, remains undamaged.

To a party of visitors who descended into the Colonel's Bed while we happened to be there I owe an apology—though I am afraid the *Journal* is about the least suitable medium for conveying it. I was asked the customary

questions about who "the Colonel" was and the meaning of his "bed", and I replied off-hand that the ravine was named the Colonel's Bed after John Farquharson of Invercauld, who was "out" in the '15, and took refuge here when a search for him was instituted by the Hanoverian troops. I was at the moment reading Mr. Terry's recently-issued book on the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, and the allusions there to Farquharson of Invercauld had led me to make this unwarranted assumption. The ordinarily accepted story is that John Farquharson of Inverey, the "Black Colonel", lay in concealment in the "Bed" for some time after the battle of Killiecrankie, though I see Mr. Andrew Gibb says—"Local legend avers that a Farquharson of Inverey, being pursued by his inveterate enemies, the Gordons of Abergeldie, found a refuge for several weeks within its dismal recesses"—an incident, I suppose, in the feud mentioned in the ballad of "The Barrone of Braickley"—

"Inverey came down Deeside whistlin' and playin',
He was at brave Braickley's yetts ere it was dawin'".

I daresay most readers who know the Inverey district are familiar with the little stream, the Connie, that runs into the Ey, after tumbling over a series of pretty little falls. Perhaps they have observed a small granite tablet on the face of the rock above the lowest fall, on which is inscribed—"William Roger died here 17th Sept. 1858, aged 16 years." Curiosity led me to investigate the history of the incident thus memorialised. William Roger, it appears, was the second son of Mr. John Roger, then a partner of Messrs. Pratt & Keith; but how the accident occurred by which he lost his life at this spot is not quite known—it was supposed that, walking on the ridge above, he had stumbled into the pool and been drowned. Wandering about the Connie-side one day, and having got beyond the plantation on its left bank, it occurred to me that we could return to Inverey by a "short cut", by simply ascending the ridge on our right, crossing it, and descending the other side,

which must inevitably land us on the Inverey road. "Short cut! Humph!" derisively snorted my companion, who from bitter experience has come to know the fallacy oft involved in the phrase; but we essayed it all the same. Well, the day was very hot, and it was a bit of a pull up the ridge, but we were amply rewarded when we reached the summit, for there lay before our gaze a magnificent panorama of the Cairngorms—Cairn Toul, Braeriach, Ben Muich Dhui, Ben Avon, and Beinn a' Bhuid. We returned to this admirable view-point more than once during our stay.

Gradually we went farther afield. One day we walked to Loch Callater, and another day to the Falls of the Garbh Allt—both guide-book excursions of which nothing need be said here, except to mention that, coming back from Loch Callater, you have a good view of the tors or knobs of rock on Ben Avon; we counted eight or nine of them. As to the Falls, I incline to the view that one waterfall is very much like another; certainly, after a week of viewing falls of all kinds, you do not "enthuse" over the Falls of the Garbh Allt, beautiful and beautifully-located though they be. The mention of waterfalls reminds one that A. H. Clough in "The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich" declares that

"At Castleton, high in Braemar, were the clippingest places for bathing;

One by the bridge in the village, indecent, the Town Hall christened",

and also that there were

"Up the water of Ey, half-a-dozen at least, all stunners".

The absorption of water from the Clunie to drive turbines to make electric light for the Braemar hotels has, I suspect, destroyed these "clippingest" bathing-places, just as it has impaired the beauties of the erstwhile pleasant little stream. The Linn of Dee, however, remains unaltered; but one may be a little sceptical about the bathing experiences there described in Clough's hexameters—

"So was it told, the Piper narrating, corrected of Arthur,
How under Linn of Dee, where over rocks, between rocks,

Freed from prison the river comes, pouring, rolling, rushing,
 Then at a sudden descent goes sliding, gliding, unbroken,
 Falling, sliding, gliding, in narrow space collected,
 Save for a ripple at last, a sheeted descent unbroken—
 How to the element offering their bodies, down-shooting the fall,
 they
 Mingled themselves with the flood and the force of imperious water.
 And it was told too, Arthur narrating, the Piper correcting,
 How, as one comes to the level, the weight of the downward
 impulse
 Carries the head under water, delightful, unspeakable; how the
 Piper, here ducked and blinded, got stray, and borne-off by the
 current
 Wounded his lily-white thighs, below, at the craggy corner”.

I was anxious once more to see Glen Feshie and the waterfall on the Eidart, so we made an excursion thither one day. I have already described the route in the *Journal*.* It takes you along the Geldie, the bed of which is strewn with rectangular blocks of stone, looking as if they had been quarried to order, so regular is their shape and so white do they appear in the strong sunlight. Then you cross a wide moorland, keeping your eyes very wide open for the track which the Club's map of the Cairngorms properly defines as “Indistinct”, and which, in all probability, you will never hit. You strike this moorland near Geldie Lodge, a Mar Forest shooting-box, situated in as lonely-looking a spot as one could well conceive, with nothing but moorland and mountain around, and not a tree to be seen—and you have to go far before you lose sight of it. Then, as you go on and on, you will see a stream emerge from the hills on your left and make a very sharp bend, at a very acute angle, flowing in the direction for which you are making. That is the Feshie. A little farther on, you will come to a stream in front of you, running into the Feshie. That is the Eidart. You cross the Eidart in a fashion that will try your nerves a little. A couple of rough timbers—tree trunks very rudely planed—are lashed together and thrown across from bank to bank a few feet above the level of the stream. There is

* See “Glen Feshie” (*C.C.J.*, I., 350).

no support, not even a bit of wire to hold on to (as I rather think there once was); you have to "walk the plank" as steadily as you can and as steadily as an intolerable number of protruding nails (flattened, but none the less disconcerting) will permit. Having safely accomplished this feat, we wended our way up the right bank of the Eidart by a footpath we discovered, soon reaching the waterfall, which I am inclined to think, however, is seen to best advantage (as I have hitherto seen it) from the left bank, from which also you can easily get to the edge of the basin into which the waterfall pours. Pursuing the footpath, we walked farther and farther up the burn-side, to find that there are more waterfalls above—quite a succession of linn and cascades and pools as the burn forces its way down through a tortuous ravine.

"Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't".

This diversion, of course, was leading us away from Glen Feshie, so ultimately we resolved to cross the Eidart and make for an adjoining hill-top, from which we might have an extended view over the region. This hill-top (2450 feet) is on the county march, the intangible but none the less real line separating Aberdeenshire and Inverness-shire and dividing the Glenfeshie deer forest from the forest of Mar. By the time we reached it, however, the day was far advanced, the bright sunlight had vanished, and the Glenfeshie forest and the hills of the Gaick forest were only dimly visible; but still an idea could be formed of the extent and variety of mountain scenery which here meets the eye. But indications of an impending rain-storm induced us speedily to quit our elevated position, and by the time we got out of Glen Geldie the storm burst—burst with such fury that we were glad to take shelter for a little time in one of the forester's houses at the mouth of the glen. When we set out again, the first fury of the storm had spent itself, but the rain was still heavy, the valley of the Dee between the Geldie

and the Linn being completely shrouded in gloom, nothing being visible beyond a few yards. With all the suddenness and capriciousness of a rain-storm in the hills, the rain ceased before we reached the Linn, the mist rose, and our "last lap" was walked amid the delightful freshness that follows a heavy rainfall.

Our principal excursion, however, was one made to Loch Avon, my companion having expressed a desire to see the Shelter Stone and also the river Avon. I pointed out that the one is at the head of the loch and the other at the outlet, and that, despite the comparatively short distance between them—a mile and a half or so—a good deal of difficult walking is involved in getting from the one to the other, while the route to either end of the loch is a particularly arduous one. But my companion was insistent, so one very fine morning we set out. I cannot remember walking up Glen Derry on a finer day—the sky a deep blue, without the slightest cloud; the hillsides bathed in glorious sunlight; Cairngorm of Derry and Beinn Mheadhoin outlined with remarkable vividness. But oh! it was hot—so hot that the idea of clambering up Corrie Etchachan at high noon was abandoned. We decided to make Loch Avon at its outlet instead of its head, and so proceeded to tackle the Little Larig (Learg an Laoigh). I do not think anything was gained by the change of plan, for the "pull up" to the col or watershed between the Derry and the Avon is well-nigh as stiff as that up Corrie Etchachan. The path is intermittent—very intermittent—on the Derry side, and when you strike it on the Avon side, you find it as rough and stony as the path through the Larig Ghru. But "it's dogged as does it"; and in mountaineering as in other things, patience and perseverance overcome all difficulties. In due time we passed the Dubh Lochans and came on the river Avon, and then followed it up to where it emerges from the loch. I need not expatiate on the walk up the loch-side, at the base of the precipices and screes of Beinn Mheadhoin, with the massive bulk of Cairngorm on the other side of the loch, and the waters of the Feith Buidhe tumbling down

the rugged slopes in front; the stern grandeur of this wild and lonely spot has been frequently described by other and more facile pens. We duly walked into the recess under the Shelter Stone. It was untenanted, but a kettle and a can at the entrance, let alone a number of empty preserved provision tins scattered around, betokened occasional occupation. We discovered a most unusual "empty"—a Stephens's Fluid Ink bottle! Well, I have been here before, and I have slept—or tried to sleep—under the Shelter Stone, but I never carried an ink-bottle here, neither, I am quite sure, did any of my companions; but, then, there is no accounting for tastes. Our inspection over, we climbed up on to the ridge in a hollow of which Loch Etchachan lies—and a stiffish climb it is, too—and descended Corrie Etchachan into Glen Derry, and "so home", in the words of immortal Pepys. Glen Derry is supposed—and truly—to be a very lonesome place, yet I picked up sundry scraps of paper which, when pieced together, constituted the draft (I presume) of a telegram in the handwriting of a member of the Club, ordering a trap to be waiting him at the White Bridge! Darkness overtook us before we got out of Glen Lui, but a brilliant full moon lighted us on the remainder of our way; and we duly reached Inverey without further incident, content and happy with the day's excursion, despite all its exertions and fatigue.

These rambling notes have spun out to an inordinate length, so I will forbear saying anything of my final excursion, regarding which, moreover, there are other reasons—and, to those who know the locality, obvious reasons—for remaining silent.

THE MONADHLIADHS.

ACCORDING to the one-inch map, Carn Mairg (3087) is the highest summit of the Monadhliadhs, but the six-inch awards that position to its near neighbour Carn Dearg, whose North Top has an altitude of 3093 feet, the South Top being 3025 feet.

Newtonmore is a convenient starting-point for a climb, the route being up Glen Banchor, along the north bank of the Calder. The lower part of that river's course is very beautiful, the channel rocky, and the sides tree-clad; but a short distance up the picturesque is left behind, and the glen is devoted to sheep. Dalballoch is the most remote inhabited house, and near it the head streams of the Calder meet—Allt Mada Coin from the west, and Allt an Lochain Dhuibh and Allt Balloch from the north. Carn Dearg lies between the two latter streams, and Carn Mairg is about a mile further northwards, its north-western slope being drained by the Abhainn Cro Clach, the head stream of the Findhorn.

After scones and milk at the cottage at Dalballoch, and a chat with the shepherd, we made our way by Allt an Lochain Dhuibh to Carn Dearg, though we are now inclined to favour the route by Allt Balloch. The former burn flows out of Loch Dubh, which is confined by rather rocky and precipitous hills. We did not walk up the glen quite as far as the loch, but made for our mountain at the saddle which connects the South Top with a lower summit, Carn Mhic Dhughail. Dalballoch left, we were favoured with showers; these gave way to a gale, which, however, failed to disperse the mist. The ascent of Carn Dearg is moderately steep, and the ridge is none too wide, so that it is not an ideal place for losing oneself in mist. To the right we had occasional glimpses of Gleann a' Bhealaich, its west side a long, steep, grassy slope, with occasional rocks showing through. The cairn at the South Top is only a few stones laid together, but that at

the North Top is a little more imposing. The prospect is said to be wide and varied; we had enough to do to steer by compass for Carn Mairg. There is a dip of about 200 feet with a tiny stream in the hollow. The cairn of Carn Mairg is close to the edge of a corrie which looked rather rocky and impressive in the mist. The view in these circumstances was practically *nil*, and had it not been for the sheep fence and the compass it would have been no easy matter to strike on the Abhainn Cro Clach. There is a little tarn—known to shepherds as Lochan Uisge—which is the most prominent of the innumerable rill-sources of the Abhainn Cro Clach, and striking on it we made our way down by the right bank of the main stream of the Findhorn. It is a long, wearisome bog, part of Coignafearn deer forest, though sheep seemed more numerous than deer. There is an old drove road which, starting from the rough glen track at Dalballoch, holds up Gleann Balloch, and, keeping by the east shoulder of Carn Balloch, ultimately drops into the glen of the Abhainn Cro Clach. But it is extremely indistinct, as it has almost ceased to be used as a right-of-way, and even when found is difficult to follow. We noticed a tempting bridle-path on the west side of the Cro Clach, but we kept to our rights, such as they were. The “bothy” marked on the map is now only a *larach*, the uppermost house being at Dalveg, a forester’s cottage about a mile below the confluence of the Abhainn Cro Clach and the River Eskin. There is a foot-bridge on the Findhorn about a quarter of a mile below Dalveg, which lands one on an excellent road on the west side of the stream. The shooting box of the forest is now near the mouth of Allt Feithbeanach; formerly it was at Coignafearn. We walked on to Coignascallan, where, though strangers, we received a hearty welcome.

ALEX. INKSON M’CONNOCHIE.

ON 29th August, 1899, Mr. David W. Pentland, of Edinburgh, and the writer started about 10.10 a.m. from Cluny Mains (quite close to Cluny Castle on the old coach road between Kingussie and Fort-William), not intending,

as may be imagined from that late hour, to do anything in particular, but "to do it very well"! We went leisurely through the birch woods that skirt the lower slopes of Binnein Mor (1794), and as we ascended we saw that the weather was to be very favourable for a view, so we "put in a step" and hastened through Strath an Eilich, and crossed the Allt Mada Coin about a quarter mile west of its junction with the Allt an Lochain Dhuibh. Here the Secretary's route and ours practically meet, and we accompany each other to the top of Carn Mairg *via* the ridge of Carn Dearg. The little Loch Dubh, set as it is in the midst of charming grassy steeps crowned with jagged rocks which, in parts, are really wild, at once attracted our attention, and this view became more impressed on us as we ascended to the Saddle of Carn Dearg, where we looked down on the loch—dark and black in its emerald bed. In mist the Carn Dearg ridge may look sharp, but in the fine weather conditions we had it was merely a broad ladder leading to the summit; and at 12.10 we were seated on the top enjoying an extensive and varied view. Behind us lay the deep Gleann a' Bhealaich on the right, and the "other" Carn Dearg (2892) on our left; and, in face, the stony Saddle running up to Carn Mairg, which shut out our prospect to the immediate north. After a quarter of an hour here, we resumed our journey, and in ten minutes reached the summit of Carn Mairg. Our view now to the north was grand and entirely unimpeded. We could distinctly see towards the neighbourhood of Inverness, and along the Morayshire coast. We could also see that, so far as one can judge at a distance, the country which the Secretary and his companions had now to traverse till they reached Dalveg must have been of a distinctly spongy nature—to put it very mildly. The whole place seemed to us to be a perfect bog; and of the bridle path referred to, or anything else that would go to show that the foot of man had ever trodden those great wastes, we saw absolutely no sign of any kind. Away to the south and west we had very grand peeps, such as the Ben Alder group and, on the south side of Loch Ericht, Beinn

Udlanan, with the lowlands of Badenoch as our mid-distant picture. Again, to the west rose innumerable peaks, including Ben Nevis and his neighbours, and the dark corries of the nearer Creag Meaghaidh. Regaling ourselves with a few sandwiches, &c., we bade Carn Maig adieu at 1.5; and here too we parted company with the Secretary's—I will not say thorny—path. We had arranged to meet friends at Loch Laggan Hotel as early in the day as we could; and the question now was how were we to get there as easily as possible. Well, it was obviously along the head waters of Glen Markie. There were two great advantages about this route—the descent was gradual and by another moderate climb we could get in an additional peak, a consideration—seeing that we had started the “peak-bagging” game—still dear even to certain members of that Club which now practically lives for the high art of balance! Topping that “other” Carn Dearg we descended, and varied the proceedings by having a most exhilarating “dip” in one of the natural baths (with shower complete) to be found in those innumerable rock-basins of the Red Burn, which, in turn, becomes the Markie. Then there followed a confessedly tiresome “grind” to Loch Coire nam Beith, and a slight pull up the east end of Geal Charn (3036), the summit being reached at 3.5 p.m. A fair scene now presented itself to the west. At our feet lay the broad and grassy valley of Upper Spey, Loch Crunachan, Glen Shirra, and the silver sheen of Loch Laggan, bathed in the afternoon sun of that ideal August day, when the “grouse” heather lends its richness to the dreary hill-side, and lightens up the expanse of boggy waste, and the already yellowing birk and bracken in the valley below give a mellowness to the picture of which no Alpine scene, be it ever so majestic, can boast. But we must push forward, for it is now 3.20; so we make tracks down the western grass slopes of the Geal Charn, keeping Beinn na Sgeith (2845) on the left, and, after a steady run, reach the foot-bridge over the Spey at Shirramore at 4.10, and Loch Laggan Hotel at 5.5.

WILLIAM GARDEN.

THE CLUB AT SCHICHALLION.

THE excursion of the Club to Schichallion on 8th July last was probably unique as regards the number taking part. A scrutiny of the Visitors' Book at the Station Hotel, Aberfeldy, will reveal the fact that up to the previous evening four members had taken up their quarters with the view of joining the general body who, according to the official programme, would travel on Monday morning.

Having partaken of dinner, we four were seated outside enjoying the evening air—deliciously cool and refreshing after the almost tropical heat of the day—and our conversation naturally turned to thoughts of to-morrow. Would the weather be suitable, and what number of members and friends would probably join us? Our genial and interesting host gave us much cause for comfort as regarded the first part of the question, but he was evidently much exercised and troubled regarding the second. We however suggested that he might assume, not having any official intimation to the contrary, that his resources would not be in any way overtaxed, and we were pleased to note that this assurance eased his mind, as with a cheery "Good night" he retired to rest—an example we very soon followed.

Monday found us early astir. All anxiety so far as weather conditions were concerned seemed unnecessary. The morning was cloudless and bright, betokening a repetition of the heat of the preceding days. No communication having been sent from headquarters, we decided to have breakfast, and over that meal discussed the desirability of making a start ahead of official time as one of the party was anxious to return to Aberdeen that night if possible. No sooner had we signified our intentions than our good host proceeded, with characteristic courtesy, to enable us to carry them out, and soon we were

seated in a comfortable conveyance drawn by a pair of "spankers", *en route* for Schichallion.

The drive over the fine old Wade bridge, giving a glimpse of the massive memorial to the "Gallant Forty-twa", on through Weem, and past the grounds of Castle Menzies, containing magnificent and varied specimens of arboriculture, and on to Coshieville, with massive Ben Lawers standing out prominently in the west, is perhaps as fine as can be had in all Scotland. Apart from personal considerations, the sight of the perspiring horses suggested a rest at Coshieville before taking the steep hill leading at right angles from Glen Lyon, and we accordingly sheltered ourselves from the sun's rays under the roof of this fine old hostelry. Proceeding on our way, we reached Tigh an t-Socaich after a stiff drive. We now left our conveyance, arranging to rejoin it at White Bridge.

Schichallion has already been described in the *Journal* (Vol. I., pp. 100 and 393). We found the ascent—although it cannot be described as specially difficult—exceedingly trying under the scorching sun, and this, coupled with the fact that we were well ahead of official time, induced us to make our progress upwards as easy as possible. Keeping well to the south side of the ridge (which runs east and west), we ascended steadily till we reached the mass of boulders crowning the hill, but from this point our progress to the top was rather tedious. Suffice it to say that we duly reached the cairn, and first directed our gaze to the point where the vehicles bringing on the main body of the members from Aberfeldy might have been visible. No trace of "reinforcements", however, could be seen. Although we were bound to admit that the view from Schichallion (3547) was not "so fine as one would naturally expect", we certainly were fortunate in having perhaps as extensive a view in all directions as the average visitor is ever likely to get. One of our party, whose knowledge of topography is extensive and accurate, pointed out Ben Nevis, Buchaille Etive, and the hills of Blackmount Forest to the west, while northwards Ben Alder, the Sow of Athole and the Boar of Badenoch, the

Cairngorms, Beinn a' Ghlo, and others, were clearly visible. The principal summits to the east were the Farragon Hills. To the south Carn Mairg (3419) and Ben Lawers blocked the view.

There being no "business" to transact on the summit, we formally congratulated the Club on the success of the excursion, took a last look around, and began the descent—startling some ptarmigan, who, no doubt, had been watching with interest what members of the Cairngorm Club did on mountain-tops, for the purpose of comparing them, we hope kindly, with others who might visit them, "having guns in their possession", later on.

One member of the party preferred to descend by the south-west face and along the Allt Mor, while the others (the wiser, he admits) proceeded to return by the route by which they had ascended. The "single" reported that his descent was "rapid", and that he brought down with him a few cart-loads of loose material. He admitted that what, looked at from the summit, seemed a plain where good progress could be made, was really difficult and tiresome, and even dangerous, owing to the length of the heather and the many holes and other obstructions. The quartette, however, reached White Bridge within five minutes of each other—the "single" first. Descending, the trio met two hillmen, and gathered from them that they had journeyed—not from Aberdeen—to join the excursion party.

After a rest and refreshment under the hospitable roof (such a roof!) of White Bridge Inn, we re-entered our conveyance, and had a most delightfully cool and pleasant drive back to Aberfeldy. Here our troubled minds were set at rest on learning that we should not be censured for making a start in advance of the official time, as, bar the party of two who had journeyed as stated, we had the honour and glory of dubbing ourselves for the day—"The Cairngorm Club".

A Cairngormer from an outpost, with his son, lured to Aberfeldy by the Club's programme, arrived there expect-

ing to find a crowd and carriages labelled "For Schichallion". Our disappointment was great when informed that an advance guard had gone, and no others were likely to join. Not to be done out of our mountain climb, we started as a one-horse affair with light hearts and in perfect weather, winding our way along the Tay valley to Coshieville, where the road forks, to the left through Glen Lyon, to the right Strath Appin; we took the latter. Here commenced a long and steep ascent through lovely scenery. We passed the Falls of Kiltney, the old historic Castle of Garth, Glengoulandie and White Bridge Inn (where it may be mentioned are extensive limestone quarries and kilns), past Loch Kinardochy to Tigh an t-Socaich, some seven miles from Kinloch Rannoch. Following the directions of a native we commenced the ascent by crossing the flat, keeping well to the south of the ridge, and found it comparatively easy going; but a scorching sun and not a breath of wind made it uncomfortably warm work. We, however, caught a cool current of air about the 3000 feet level, which made the remainder of our scramble delightfully pleasant, and in due course we were perched on the "tapmost touring height" of majestic Schichallion, surveying the beauties around. The heat haze seemed to thicken, and dulled our view, but with compass and "Bartholomew" we were able to locate and name the surrounding "eternal giants", and at the same time we jointly and severally expressed our sympathy for every other member of the Club who lost this opportunity. While on the summit surveying the above and the beyond, we made the acquaintance of a clergyman intent with hammer and chisel on what lay beneath. We parted, and meeting his companion, whose wind had gone out well down the mountain, he asked, "Did you see So-and-so?" "Yes!" "What was he doing?" "Manufacturing road metal!"

The return drive was delightful. What with a hot bath, a sumptuous supper, good bed and perfect repose, we departed the following morning with kindly feelings and a sense of having thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

THE KNOCK OF BRAEMORAY.

BY REV. GEORGE C. WATT, B.D.

IN a Geography of Moray and Nairn, which at one time at least was in use in the local schools, it is stated, if I remember rightly, that the Knock is the highest mountain in Morayshire. This it assuredly is not, for while it is hardly 1500 feet high—1493, to be exact—several of the summits of the neighbouring Tulchan range are over 1700 feet in height, and the Hills of Cromdale, along the ridge of which the county boundary runs, attain in many places a height of about 2000 feet, and at several points very considerably beyond this. But although the Knock is not the highest hill in Moray, and is not indeed a very high hill at all, it is a conspicuous object from many points of view, and, standing by itself and having a fine and graceful contour, it forms a striking feature of the landscape. Some thirteen or fourteen miles from the sea in a direct line, but rising well above all the intervening country, it commands a fine view of much of the beautiful and fertile "Laich of Moray". The Knock is a fairly long hill, three miles or more from north to south, and having its main slope from south to north. It is not generally a rocky or even a very stony hill, but is heath-clad to its rounded summit. It lay, doubtless, in the path of some of the subsidiary glaciers of the ice age, and had all its rougher and sterner features smoothed away.

The Knock is quite accessible, lying close to the high-road between Forres and Grantown-on-Spey. The most convenient station for the ascent is Dunphail, $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles southward from Forres. But as the climbing of the mountain is no great task for any one sound of wind and limb, it is an excellent plan to cycle out from Forres to the foot of the Knock. The road is not a level one certainly, but it is singularly beautiful, passing as it does through rich woodlands. At Sluie Lodge, between four and five miles

out from Forres, one might diverge a little to get a glimpse of the fine scenery of the Findhorn, than which there is nothing more romantically beautiful in Scotland. This, however, is only to be recommended to those who are pressed for time. The banks of the Findhorn should have at least a day to themselves. But whether one comes by road or rail, one gets, in the neighbourhood of Dunphail station, a singularly fine view of the Knock and its surrounding hills, with its beautiful foreground of fields and woods. The finest view, I think, of the hill itself is to be got from a point about $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles (by road) from Forres. There the road slopes rapidly down, and, in consequence, only the upper portion of the hill is seen rising from a screen of pines. The trees are not really very near the hill, but they seem to clothe its sides. Coming down the steep "brae" and turning at its foot to the right, one passes, on the left, the manse and the ancient and beautifully situated church of Edinkillie, crosses by the Glen-erney Bridge the picturesque and rock-strewn Divie, and begins to ascend once more. About half-a-mile beyond the tenth milestone the road passes between the farms of Tomdow and Tombain. Tombain is on the left, and is just at the foot of the Knock. Here one may begin the ascent, passing through a belt of self-sown trees, pines and larches, which are practically the only ones on the hill. Among these trees, and still more beyond them there lie many low cairns. What they are no one seems to know. There is a collection of similar cairns on an elevated moorland a few miles off in the parish. They are not the remains, I feel pretty sure, of old shielings, they do not seem to be glacial, and they can hardly be the results of some old time clearings. Some people think them burial cairns, but, so far as I know, not on any definite ground. After one has passed the cairns the way is up the heathery slope of the hill, the ground perhaps a little mossy and wet here and there, but presenting no real difficulty. An alternative ascent is to keep on the highway to a point between the eleventh and twelfth milestones, where the hill assumes a somewhat rocky character, and then begin

climbing. This point is easily found, one's attention being drawn by the few low crags and what appears to be a perched boulder. On ascending, one finds that this latter is really a large piece of the native rock, actually *in situ*, and that the crumbling away of the layers beneath it has given it its singular appearance. It is locally known as the "bonnet stone". This stone and the low crags beside it are of the prevailing gneiss of the district, and all around them the hard fern (*Blechnum spicant*) grows abundantly. After these crags have been passed, a slight depression is crossed, and the ascent continued through the heather. If one wants a fairly steep ascent the climb should be made from Lochenoun, on the east side, or from about a mile to the north of Dava station on the south side of the hill.

The view from the top is magnificent, and very amply repays the comparatively light exertion required in reaching it. Many counties, eight if not nine, are to be seen from the summit. In the immediate foreground, as we look toward the north, are the lower grounds of Moray and Nairn, fertile and beautiful, with many an undulation, with wood-covered heights and fine stretches of grass and corn-land, and, contrasting strangely with the rest of the landscape, the great sandhills of Culbin. Near us, beautifully situated on the banks of the Divie, is Dunphail House; further away, the Cluny Hill of Forres, with its Nelson's Tower and its handsome Hydropathic. We see quaint Findhorn rising, as it were, out of its broad estuary, and Burghead, with its bold, wave-washed, rocky headland. Nairn, too, with its conspicuous church towers and spires, is distinctly visible to the north-west, and nearer than it stretches the great Forest of Darnaway. Beyond all these the blue Firth of Moray spreads out its noble expanse of waters, and beyond the Firth rise conspicuous the mountains of the northmost part of the Scottish mainland—prominent among them, not so much for its height as for its fine and shapely form, the Caithness Morven. Ranging more to the westward, the eye rests for a time on the Sutors of Cromarty, on the huge and towering mass of Ben Wyvis, and on many a steep height of Ross-shire and Inverness-

shire. Then one turns to the nearer hills; west and south-west to the mountains of Strathdearn, in the heart of which the Findhorn rushes grandly along his rocky bed; and to the Hill of Aitnoch (1351) and Craig Tiribeg (1586), which lie near Lochindorb, and at no great distance from the Knock itself.

Lochindorb, which is mainly in Inverallan, but partly also in Edinkillie, and which Ardcloch touches at one point, is about three miles to S.S.W. of the Knock. It is the largest, indeed the only large, loch in Morayshire. Its surroundings are rather bare, almost dreary, one might be tempted to say, for the only trees on its shores are at the south end around Lochindorb Lodge. But it is really a fine sheet of water, and it has one island with the ruins of a very ancient and famous castle, the Castle of Lochindorb, once the stronghold of the Comyns, and later that of the terrible "Wolf of Badenoch". The view of Lochindorb from the Knock is by far the finest of it; indeed, seen from the hill, the loch, with its ruin-crowned island and wooded southern shore, looks very noble.

Looking from the Knock along the line of the loch, one sees a strange cleft in the rugged hills beyond it. This is the famous Beum a' Chlaidheimh (literally, "Bite of the sword") through which the road from Nairn to Carr Bridge passes. There are two traditions about this almost semi-circular cleft. One is that it was made by the Arch-enemy; another, and, I think, a very beautiful one, is that Satan was trying to crush some good men against the mountain-side to force them to abjure their faith, when they, trusting in Divine Providence, were enabled to cut for themselves, with their swords only, a way of deliverance. Beyond the Beum a' Chlaidheimh pass one sees the somewhat lofty hills southward of Carr Bridge closing in the fine view.

The most magnificent prospect from the Knock is, however, that which is obtained as one looks round the horizon from east to south. Four or five miles away, to the east and south-east, stretches the range of the Tulchan hills. These mountains are not rocky, yet they swell finely from

the moorland, and in autumn, when their sides are purple with the bloom of the heather, they possess a rare fascination. Beyond the Tulchans and a little to the south of east towers up stately and conspicuous Ben Rinnes, one of the noblest, though not one of the loftiest, of our Scottish mountains; and to the south-west of Ben Rinnes the Hills of Cromdale, also a fine range, show themselves well as a second imposing line of heights. And the background of all, though well to the south, is formed by the grand masses of the Cairngorms. Ben Avon is visible and Ben Bynac is well in view, and Cairngorm itself, though nearly thirty miles away, looks as if it were towering close at hand. Braeriach, of course, is well seen, and the top of Ben Muich Dhui, I think, comes into sight. But often as I have climbed the Knock, I have never been able to individualise the various peaks of the Cairngorms. I can only stand and admire. Whether the mountains are, as I have so often seen them, wreathed in white from summit to base, or half-hidden by mist and cloud, or bathed in glorious summer sunshine, they are ever to me a marvel and a glory. The Knock of Braemoray is worth ascending for the noble views to be had in every direction, but were it only to see the Cairngorms as they may be seen from it no one would climb the hill in vain.

In Memoriam :

WILLIAM BROWN, M.A., LL.B.,

Died 15th September, 1901.

IT is our melancholy duty to record the death, since our last issue, of a well-known member of the Club, Mr. William Brown, advocate, Edinburgh. Most of Mr. Brown's friends were aware that for some time his health had been far from satisfactory, though, up to the last, it was hoped that his exceptionally strong constitution would enable him to withstand the insidious disease that had attacked him. But such hopes were not to be realised, and we now mourn the removal of one, "dead ere his prime", who, if life and health had been granted him, would have attained to high distinction, not only in his own profession, but in wider fields of achievement.

It is not necessary here to recount in detail Mr. Brown's brilliant University career, or to do more than refer to his well-merited forensic success. No counsel of his years had heavier or more important cases, and his standing on the academic side of his profession was sufficiently shown by his election only a few months before his death to the important lectureship on Court Procedure in the University of Edinburgh. We would rather say something of the personal qualities that endeared him to his friends, and of his mountaineering career.

It was, we think, just about the end of his Arts curriculum at Aberdeen that Brown began to take long pedestrian excursions. These soon developed into still longer hill walks, and in these days, and for years after, his powers as a pedestrian were something appalling to weaker mortals. Winter expeditions over the Cairngorms, from Speyside to Braemar, marked a further stage in his progress, and, shortly after, he became a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and definitely took to climbing as his recreation. The evolution, in this way, of the hill-walker into the mountain-climber is happily

touched on in his interesting article on "Climbing in Scotland"—the last of many interesting articles he contributed to this *Journal*.

As a climber, Brown showed all his personal qualities at their best. Unflinching and determined in all he undertook, he was never more unflinching and determined than in his attacks on "the passionless resistance of the cliffs". As a comrade and companion, no man was more loyal to his friends. His grit, tried and proved in many a stiff climb, had, alas! its greatest trial and its most complete proof in his last pathetic struggle, while in the toils of his illness, to do justice to his work, and give his best to the clients whose interests were entrusted to his care.

Few of the climbing fields of Scotland were unknown to Brown. He had long been familiar with the Cairngorms in all their aspects; and he was as much at home on the ridges of Skye as on Ben Eighe, or in that "Paradise of climbers", Glencoe. He was one of the pioneers of climbing on Ben Nevis, where perhaps his most notable achievement was his—the first recorded—ascend of the North-East Buttress. Another feat of his was his well-known climb, along with Mr. Tough, right up the face of the middle precipice of the great corrie of Lochnagar. Since then, some of the gullies of the Lochnagar corrie have been climbed, and others have been attempted, but, as yet, no one has been bold enough to try to repeat this great climb. As a climber on rocks, Mr. Brown was indeed one of the most daring and skilful of his time. We have referred to his articles in these pages, but they are only a few of his many contributions to the literature of mountaineering, all marked by much literary grace, and by an inherited charm and felicity of diction, that marked all his spoken as well as written utterances.

In writing these lines, one feels all the pathos and truth of the old Virgilian lament, *funer inani munere*; yet it is a consolation to be able to add a stone to the cairn of remembrance of our departed comrade, and to express, in this way, however imperfectly, our tribute to his memory, and our sympathy with his sorrowing relatives.

LOST ON CAIRNGORM.

THE concluding sentence of a Note under the above title in Vol. I., p. 260 of the *Journal* is: "It would be difficult to imagine a more badly equipped or a more mismanaged hill excursion from start to finish than the above". This was written of the doings of a young Grantown company, but last September another Grantown party risked their limbs and lives in an even more wanton manner. The recklessness of those in charge in these cases is difficult to explain, and can be fully appreciated only by experienced hillmen. The thoughtlessness of the excursionists of 1894 may be excused on account of their youth; but not so that of the more recent adventurers. The amateur mountaineer who undertakes to lead a mixed company to the top of any of the Cairngorms, especially when young girls are in his temporary charge, has a grave responsibility, and must make his dispositions accordingly. We should say that he must make a start from the bottom *before* mid-day, and provide himself with a map and compass, it being of course presumed that he knows how to use each. He is not entitled to assume that mist will not appear till he has conducted his charge to the bottom.*

A party of twenty ladies and gentlemen drove and cycled from Grantown to Loch Morlich on 13th September last. Glenmore Lodge was reached at ten o'clock, but not left till noon—four ladies, however, preferring to remain below. Tea was to be ready for the climbers at 4:30, so they did not under-estimate their capabilities. The top of Cairngorm was reached about three o'clock, mist being entered into in the vicinity of the cairn. Apparently little attention had been paid to the nature of the ground as the cairn had been neared, for they were not able to recognise or remember the side on which it had been approached. The wind was therefore adopted as guide for

* See the last paragraph of page 326.—Ed.

the return journey. Occasionally the wind *does* blow in one direction for several consecutive days even on the summits of the Cairngorms, but it also frequently indulges in rapid journeys round the compass. However, it did lead the party down—but on the wrong side, though they were ignorant of that fact. They only knew that, following running water, they found themselves near the edge of a precipice. They had descended towards Loch Avon at the most dangerous point; had they been more to the west there would have been a safe descent by the Coire Raibert Burn, more to the east by The Saddle. As it was getting dark, the party held upwards again, halting at a shingle and boulder-strewn patch. Their feet were wet, and they had with them absolutely nothing to eat—everything had been risked on the afternoon tea arrangement. A rough dyke was erected as some slight shelter for the night, but the temperature did not permit of a long-continued lack of motion, even though the gentlemen parted with some of their raiment to the ladies—all wraps having been thoughtfully (?) left below. The party marked the close of the “day” by praise and prayer; we would fain hope that the leaders asked forgiveness for the great wrong they had done those dependent on them.

Shouts, whistles, and yells were occasionally indulged in, in the vain hope of rescue; the mist was even worse in the morning, and rain fell. A start was, however, made soon after 5 a.m., but the running water was again found to lead only to precipices. At 7 a.m. one of the party had the misfortune to slip on a boulder, receiving an ugly gash on the forehead. There was, however, help at hand, as there were no fewer than three medical students in the company. This accident, coupled with the general unfortunate position, had a depressing effect, and another night on the hill seemed not improbable. A wounded ptarmigan was captured in case the involuntary fast should have to be prolonged for another day. A consultation was held between eight and nine o'clock, and again prayer was made. Soon thereafter the mist partially lifted, and the lost party imagined they were

alongside the Nethy, but they were soon able to recognise Loch Avon. They estimated they were 300-400 feet above the loch, to which they slowly and carefully descended, probably by the Feith Buidhe of the Stac an Fharaidh. When they had passed the lower end of the loch, and had decided on following the Avon to Tomintoul—an extraordinary resolution—they heard a shout on the slope to their left, and their rescuer appeared.

As hour after hour passed at Glenmore Lodge without the return of the hill party, considerable anxiety was felt for their safety. At 8 p.m., as it was evident that they could not descend without some difficulty, Mr. Hector M'Kenzie, the head forester, sent three ghillies, James Munro, Lewis Grant (1), and Lewis Grant (2) to the top of Cairngorm with a lantern. They returned at 1 a.m. without result. These men, along with Mr. M'Kenzie, had to leave at 5 a.m. for a grouse drive at Dunachton—Mr. Cooper being lessee of that moor as well as of the deer forest of Glenmore. Dunachton was reached at 7 a.m., when Mr. Cooper, whose sympathy was of a practical nature, on being informed of the non-return of the climbers, sent his men back to Coylum Bridge in his motor car. Mr. M'Kenzie and the ghillies started from Glenmore Lodge, accompanied by two gentlemen who had arrived in search of their missing relatives. Two search parties were formed for the rocks above Loch Avon—one to descend to the Shelter Stone and return by Coire Lochan, the other to return by Mam Suim and Rebhoan. The latter party consisted of Mr. M'Kenzie and Lewis Grant (2). Before setting out Mr. M'Kenzie ordered telegrams to be sent to the Fife Arms Hotel, Braemar, and to the forester at Inchrory. He sent a man on horseback to W. Cameron, the "Watcher" at Rebhoan, directing him to go up the Garbh Allt (Nethy) to Loch Avon; and also a message for assistance from an adjoining forest—but this request received no attention. Such a plan of campaign was almost bound to be successful, and the Rebhoan "Watcher" had the good fortune to pick out the lost party with his telescope, finding them about a mile below Loch Avon.

His supply of food was eagerly devoured, and stimulants were given to such as required them. A snap-shot was then taken of the group, and thereafter, Cameron leading, Rebhoan was reached, *via* the Garbh Allt, about 6 p.m. The effects of the long exposure were evident, except in the case of the youngest member—a twelve-year-old boy. A waggonette picked up the party near Glenmore Lodge.

Had the weather been stormy the result to the ladies and the weaker members would have been very serious. It is such hare-brained excursions as these that bring discredit on hill-climbing, besides causing anxiety to friends and relatives, and expense to those on whom falls the work of rescue. Cairngorm, though it is over 4000 feet in height, is one of the easiest and safest mountains to climb we know, when the sun shines; but to those lost in the mist it is one of the most dangerous.

'TWIXT LOCH ERICHT AND STRATH OSSIAN.

BY JAMES H. BROWN.

I FOREGATHERED with a stalwart Clubman on a mid-summer holiday at Dalwhinnie, and we proceeded to the little piers near the head of Loch Ericht with the view of engaging a boat and rowers to take us to the far end. A strong south-west wind was blowing through a pretty thick rain, the loch was in no little commotion, and its gorge, filled with dark mist, looked not unlike a tunnel full of smoke. Fortunately we found no one hardy (or foolish) enough to embark with us, so we had to spend the night at Dalwhinnie.

The following morning was almost as uninviting, but both rain and mist ultimately cleared off. After some persistence, we secured an excellent boat with an experienced rower and a youngster. Baggage and provisions all aboard, we were afloat by noon, though it required some persuasion to get our crew to start. Probably it was more on our account than his own that the boatman recommended another day at Dalwhinnie; even when we did push off from the pier we found out later that we were expected to cry *Peccavi*, or its Gaelic equivalent. But there is no turning back for the Cairngorm Club; its programmes have always been duly carried out.

The boat shipped considerable quantities of water, for far as the eye could penetrate "white horses" were in evidence. Progress was extremely slow, sometimes almost imperceptible; the anticipated "delightful row" was a grim contest with wind and water. Half-a-dozen times at least we had to seek the shelter of tiny bays, or land to bail out the boat. Indeed at one stage we had seriously to consider the propriety of pitching our camp for the night, and resuming the voyage next day in more propitious weather. The passengers—at least one of them—had to take turn at the oars, though the stalwart did not

excel, to put it mildly, as a rower. Indeed, except for two very short "turns", he lay at full length on the softer baggage, showing his confidence in the result by sleeping a great part of the time, to which circumstance the writer is indebted for several extra blisters.

An interesting incident of our toilsome voyage was the appearance of a vessel, with furniture for a shooting-box, towed by two strong ghillies, assisted by an oarsman and a steersman. It was inspiring to see the towers as they jumped from boulder to boulder, half-walking, half-running through water, sometimes knee-deep. Ultimately, as we hugged the shore, we were overtaken by a shepherd who came aboard, leaving his dogs to follow on land. He gave us no small assistance, ending by bowing us into his humble cottage with Celtic grace and dignity. We were regaled by the women of the house with scones and milk; seldom have we enjoyed Highland welcome and hospitality more than we did on this occasion. We could only leave Stevenson's "Kipnapped" as a memento, not altogether inappropriate, of our visit.

Our toil was now practically over, for although we had still several miles to put behind us, the wind had fallen and the water was smooth and glassy. The lofty hills seemed more imposing in the twilight; and stars appeared and cast their reflection on the loch. The only signs of life were an owl flying overhead and a fox prowling on an adjacent ridge; while the rhythmic "cluck, cluck" of the oars alone broke the impressive stillness of the night. After a voyage of about twelve hours we reached our pre-arranged camping-ground. We had no lack of lunches during our compulsory rests ashore; now we had a great meal together—a combination of dinner and supper. We all felt we had earned it.

The following morning was dull, but to the hills would we, our boat landing us at Alder Bay. Keeping by the burn which passes Prince Charlie's Cave (familiar to the Club), we crossed over the watershed to Loch a' Bhealach Beithe. We clambered along the cliffs at the north-west end, and so had a fine view of the magnificent buttresses

of Ben Alder. Striking into Garbh Choire we began the ascent of the Ben over scree and boulders, but were overtaken by rain. A friendly boulder opportunely presented itself, under which we stretched ourselves for nearly an hour till the sun broke out. We resumed the ascent by the channel of the little stream, Allt a' Gharbh-choire, which comes down the corrie—a route which requires some caution. It is rather steepish, there are many loose stones, and some of the footholds are treacherous. Near the top we diverged to the right, and in a few minutes were at the cairn.

Holding westwards we dropped into the path near the Sluggan, and so descended to Loch Ericht, where our boatman was in waiting. The youngster had not been idle, for the camp was now in apple-pie order, and dinner was ready, the *pièce de resistance* being trout fresh from burns and loch.

Sgor Iutharna (c. 3400) ("Hell's Peak") was our objective for the second day. Setting out in lovely weather, we made for the Bealach Dubh. Striking up Allt Loch an Sgoir, the burn from Loch an Sgoir, we soon reached this fine mountain tarn, which is guarded by rocky precipices at the upper end. The gullies are rather overdrawn in the six-inch map, whereas Sgor Iutharna itself has scant justice. We leisurely lunched by the loch-side, and seldom is it given to hillmen to take a meal in better weather and more impressive surroundings. As we lolled on the heather we heard the bark of a hind apparently so near that we resolved on a "stalk". After some rather uncomfortable crawling, we found ourselves behind a big boulder on the other side of which, we were certain, lay Madame. How cautiously we "swarmed" up that boulder and peered down—and saw nothing! Stalking by sound was a failure, and there was even an end of the barking.

We retraced our steps about half-way down the burn, and started the climb of the Sgor from the west. At first the slope is grassy, but soon there is abundance of rotten rock of mica-schist and quartz. Thereafter one begins to realise the appropriateness of the name as well as the more

modern "Lancet edge"; one feels as if upon the edge of an immense cone divided in two. The side next the loch looks exceedingly precipitous, the opposite side, to the Bealach Dubh, has an easier slope, but still at a very steep angle. Hands as well as feet have to be used in the upper part—each pinnacle, as usual in such positions, seeming the last. Halts were necessarily frequent, and allowed the depths to be duly appreciated, but at last we stepped on to the grassy sward of the summit. We made the descent by one of the head streams of the Uisge Labhrach, and so returned home to our little camp.

The following day we traversed the broad stretch of wet but interesting moor that lay between us and Sgor Gaibhre (3128) ("Goats' Hill"). Skeletons of deer were, alas, not rare, and hinds with their fawns were numerous. The latter were at a frolicsome age, and not altogether disinclined to hold converse with us. But their mothers "kept their distance"; even when within 200 or 300 yards their colour so blended with the moor that there was difficulty in seeing them without a glass. The Loch Ericht front of the hill has a somewhat peaked appearance, and near the top we came on a foxes' den, where a vixen and her family had evidently recently been raided. The rain, which had been our companion all morning, was now succeeded by a thick mist, and, save a peep of Loch Ossian, we had none of the fine view which is said to be got from Sgor Gaibhre. On the homeward journey we paid a visit to Lochan a' Bhealaich, a moss tarn, loved of trout, and surrounded by heather. Inconvenient although it often is, what would the mountains be without mist! The day at last brightened, and we were favoured with grand dissolving views of long strips of white fleecy clouds.

Our delightful mountain holiday was now drawing to an end; the last day added two, Aonach Beag (3646) and Beinn Eibhinn (3611), to our "bag" of peaks. We had a fine view of the Glencoe mountains and Ben Nevis; a little down the western slope we had all Strath Ossian spread before us, as well as a portion of the Spean valley. Uisge Labhrach appears, at a distance, to fall into Loch

Ossian, but just stops short and turns to the north. On the Saddle between the two tops we came on a horse-shoe carefully placed on a stone. We learned afterwards that it had been there for many years. On this occasion—the first during these mountain rambles—we espied two human beings, one of them evidently a botanist. We discussed the position of the nearest railway station, and as they did not seem inclined to say where they had started from that morning we were equally uncommunicative on the situation of our tent.

The last morning was devoted to packing-up. Leaving the boat with the baggage to follow leisurely, we had a brisk walk to Dalwhinnie. The loch was at its best; there were many fishermen out with boats, not a few ladies plying the rod. The high hills with their birch and pine-clad slopes, Ben Alder towering over all, made a picture which it will take some time to efface from our memories.

BEN A'N.

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

THROUGH the introduction of Sir Walter Scott, everybody is acquainted with Ben A'n. One can hardly think of the hill, or utter its name, without being caught repeating the distich—

“While on the north, through middle air,
Ben An heaved high his forehead bare”.

It is variously spelt, Ben A'n, Benan, Ben An, Ben A'an, Ben Awn, Binean, Binnan, &c., but the name is really the same as our northern Ben Avon, and not “Binean” (a peak), which is the diminutive of “Ben” (a mountain), the syllable *an* being the masculine termination of diminutives, and *ag* of feminines. [“A Sketch of the most Remarkable Scenery near Callander of Monteath. By Margaret Oswald. 3rd Ed., Stirling. 1806”.]

I have long had a nodding acquaintance with this much seen, much sung, and much painted height. Every summer since 1879 I have visited the lake, from which it has probably derived its name; but I had never reached the top of the hill, being content to potter about its base, hunting for rare plants in the stream channels. Towards the end of last autumn I followed an impulse to pay Ben A'n a visit, which was all the more easily carried out owing to the circumstance that I could “sit and gang for'ad”, as far as Duncraggan. Duncraggan was famous, in a former generation, on account of its portly Kate (Mrs. Ferguson), a lady visited by the late Queen when spending a few days in the neighbourhood of the Trossachs in the autumn of 1869. My friend and I drove past “Samson's Putting Stone” without speaking of the ice-giant that perched it on the rock there. Coillie Bhroine was also passed without reference to the atrocious supernatural Highland Shelly which carried the children into a watery grave in Loch Vennachar—a circumstance accounting for

the name, "the wood of mourning". When we came to the well-known ford, we did not quote—

"This is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword".

Our first reference to Ben A'n, or Sir Walter Scott, during the journey was at the entrance to Glen Finglas. A road to the right branches off and leads up the glen. Glen Finglas was once a royal hunting-ground. It must ever be famous as the birthplace of Sir Walter's poetic fancy—"meet nurse for a poetic child"—having inspired his first original ballad, "Glen Finlas, or Lord Ronald's Coronach", which appeared in 1801. It is noteworthy that Perthshire furnished most of the materials wrought into his first novel. The young man had been drinking in, through all his senses, the romance and romantic scenery of a district subsequently rendered famous by "Rob Roy", "Legend of Montrose", and, above all, "The Lady of the Lake". To the honour of Scott it must be said that visitors to the Trossachs think of incidents connected with his fictions even more than of the scenes of natural grandeur characterising the locality. Only one thing gives renown to the Bridge of Turk, and it is duly expressed when Scott's lines are quoted—

"And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone".

The man in scarlet coat and shining buttons and white beaver hat, under whose guidance visitors are usually introduced to this paradise of tourists, never fails to point out the bleached bones of Fitz James's dappled grey. Glen Finglas was the birthplace of the Rev. James Stewart, Killin, his mother having been accidentally there at the time. Mr. Stewart was the first translator of the New Testament into Gaelic; his version appeared in 1765, and is said by judges to be both accurate and clear.

George Eyre-Todd, in "The Sketch Book of the North", tells a waesome and weird story of this glen. A party of an hundred men were conveying a corpse from Glen Finglas for interment in St. Bride's kirkyard, near Loch Lubnag.

The weight of the company broke the ice of an insignificant tarn on the side of Ben Ledi, over which they were passing, "and that single moment sufficed to leave sixty women husbandless in Glen Finglas below. No tablet . . . records the half-forgotten disaster". The "Scottish Tourist" (1832) has the same story: "the lake was frozen and covered with snow, and in crossing it the ice gave way, when the whole company, amounting to nearly 200 perished". Shame upon the more recent writer for curtailing the number! The author of a "Guide", 1890, assures us that the whole funeral party were drowned, and that "the inhabitants ever after gave up taking their dead to St. Bride, and formed a new burying-ground in their sequestered native glen". This story appears to have been got up to account for the name of the tarn, Lochan an Corp, though it requires the occasional carcase of a sheep merely to explain why the lochan should be called "the loch of the dead bodies".

Ben A'n owes its existence to the hardness and durability of the rock composing it. The schistose grit has resisted the mighty agonies and energies of erosion and denudation which have carved out hill and loch and glen in this picturesque district. The "forehead bare" is 1750 feet above sea-level, Meall Gainmheich to the north is higher by 101 feet, and Sron Armalte, behind the Trossachs Hotel, comes within 600 feet of its height. A writer in "The Merchant's Guide to Stirling and District" makes a singular mistake. "The land", he says, "rises in terraces, behind the Hotel, and terminates in the mighty Ben A'n, 1149 feet high". He should have said the "mighty Sron". Shearer's "Guide" warns us that the ascent of Ben A'n "is somewhat difficult and requires great caution, and to accomplish it with safety the day should be clear". The state of the weather is so important a factor in our life all through, that we have converted the old fashioned, and courteous and kindly wish, "Good morning!" "Good day!" or "Good evening!" into a plain matter of fact, or expression of opinion—"It's a good morning", "a rainy day", or "a dark night", &c.,

and such facts, or opinions, are duly reported to every passing stranger. Of supreme importance to the heath-hopper are the meteorologic conditions. A passing cloud will put his moral character to the test as truly as a pair of ill-fitting boots.

My day on Ben A'n was all that could be wished. The strong gale blowing when the top was reached was disagreeable, but harmless. One's sixteen-stone weight stands one in good stead in a pretty strong wind.

The first discoverer of the Trossachs was the Rev. James Robertson, minister of Callander (not Sir Walter Scott). He wrote the "Statistical Account" of the parish in 1791, in which he expatiates on the beauty of the scenery. "A Sketch of a Tour to Callander and the Trossachs", included in C. Randall's "History of Stirling" (1812), is attributed to him, from which we note, "the naked Binean rears his bare and battered head to the clouds, and echoes to the blast which wheels around his base". The Rev. P. Graham, D.D., in the "Sketches of Perthshire" (2nd Ed., 1812), writes:—"Its conical summit and great height seem to render it peculiarly liable to the attraction of lightening [*sic*]. James Stewart states that, after a violent thunderstorm which occurred in August about five years ago, he observed the rock on the summit of Binnan torn up by the lightening [*sic*] in furrows of a zig-zag direction, to the depth of several inches". In autumn, 1811, during a very heavy rain, an avalanche, torn from its southern side, and near its summit, "carried down an immense mass of stones and earth, with a noise like thunder; the path of its current may be easily traced from the road". This storm was reproduced, with variations, by the author of "The Scottish Tourist" (we quote from the 1831 edition)—"In the autumn of 1811, during an awful storm, an immense portion of it (Ben A'n) was thrown from its southern side, near the summit, to the base, with dreadful noise which filled the air with barbarous dissonance sufficient to have aroused echo in her most secluded cell". Such accounts of ruptures on Ben A'n have been caught and clothed in flamboyant style by the Rev. Charles Rogers, in his "Week

at Bridge of Allan":—"Benan terminates in a bare cone, and in its every feature exhibits the beau ideal of mountain sterility. Huge blocks lie scattered around, which have been precipitated from its crest, with a sound which, re-echoed from rock to rock, has made the air to tremble". The Rev. James Robertson, quoted by the compiler, or author, of "The Traveller's Guide through Scotland" (supposed to be a Rev. Joseph Robertson), and by James Mitchell in the dumpy "Scotsman's Library", was surely drawing the long bow when he recorded the following:—"On one side the water eagle sits in majesty, in sight of his nest on the face of Benvenu; . . . on the other, the wild goats climb, where they have scarce ground for the soles of their feet, and the wild fowls, perched on the trees, or on the pinnacle of a rock, look down, with composed defiance at man". The American eagle, to be sure, during the summer months, is not a *rara avis* here, but any other indications of the noble bird's presence would be hard to find. Tame goats, especially Nannies, are kept for their milk, and may be seen, but wild goats disporting themselves on Ben A'n would be a sight worth seeing—and the defiant birds are not in abundant evidence. This imaginary picture by the minister of Callander, the lady who wrote "The Sketch of the Remarkable Scenery", referred to above, has, no doubt following ketterin instincts, *lifted* body bulk, along with other booty. If she were alive she might well plead the excuse—"I am not alone in the practice of such predatory habits".

Viewed from the Menteith Hills, across Loch Venachar, Ben A'n is imposing and impressive. The forehead, bald, weather-beaten, and full of wrinkles and scowls, contrasts with the calm shining lake at its foot. The cone is so pronounced from this point of view that, were it not for the higher mountains seen in the background, we should regard Ben A'n as a veritable giant, grim, savage, and domineering over neighbours endowed with less force of character and less power. Although nearly twice its height, Ben Ledi displays an appearance tame and uninteresting in comparison with the humbler but more startling and fascinating hill.

From the summit one of the most beautiful sights is Ellen's Isle, resting on the silver lake, so called from the name of Scott's Lady of the Lake. We can think of it in comfort in this connection, rather than as being the scene where, during Cromwell's Scottish campaigns, another Ellen, a horrid Highland virago, is said to have killed a soldier swimming to land on the island. "Her great-grandson lives (1806) at Bridge of Turk, who, besides others, attests the anecdote". We are inclined to doubt the *bona fides* of this story. This great-grandson of Ellen Stewart's, attesting an event a century and a half after it took place, was presumably drawing on his imagination, while the "others" would follow suit. Ellen, who "carried a dagger below her apron and with one stroke severed his head from his body", was, we could well believe, a sorely maligned and misrepresented woman, and that, too, by her descendent and his neighbours. More likely was Ellen Stewart a mild-mannered and pitiful dame that, like her modern great-great-grandnieces and great-great-grand-children, would have gone out of her way to save the poor fellow's life rather than sned off his head with a *dagger*. Perhaps she merely caused him to *lose his head* by drawing her dagger sword-wise across his neck.

The view from the summit of Ben A'n is not extensive, owing to the proximity of loftier heights. Meall Cala, Ben Ledi, Ben Dearg, Ben Venue, the heights near Aberfoyle, and Ben Lomond prevent a long prospect. The so-called "Cobbler" and Ben Vorlich, beyond Loch Lomond, are, however, unmistakable. The most striking scene is that of the various lochs flashing pleasantly on the eye on a clear day. Almost the whole extent of Loch Katrine is in sight, with Loch Arklet in the West and Loch Conn in the south-west. Lochs Achray and Vennachar are in the south. The Pass of the Trossachs may be observed below, and to the south-west Bealach-nam-bo, the Pass of Achray, and the sluices. No villages were observed, except one, which from the direction we deemed to be Balfroun. Neither the Trossachs Hotel (formerly Ardeheanochrochan) nor Glenbruich can be seen from the summit.

FATALITY ON SGURR NAN GILLEAN.

MR. JAMES FRASER, a member of the Club, and Mr. Alexander Whincup, advocate, Aberdeen, left Aberdeen on 10th August last for a week's hill-climbing in Skye. This was not the first occasion on which they had gone on holiday together, neither of them being without experience of Scottish mountains. They were favoured with unusually excellent weather for Skye, and, among other climbs, had made an ascent of Sgurr nan Gillean,* Sligachan Hotel being their headquarters.

On Friday, the 16th, they set out from the Hotel for another climb of Sgurr nan Gillean, making the ascent from the Coire a' Bhastier side. The small scree plateau to the left of and below Nicolson's Chimney, about 200 feet below the summit, was reached without incident. Besides the Chimney several small gullies start off from this plateau, and run out on the main ridge below the summit, the one to the extreme left being the most conspicuous. The fatality occurred in a subsidiary gully between the one on the extreme left and the Chimney. A halt was made at 3:40 p.m. on this plateau to survey the surroundings and determine the precise line by which the summit was to be reached, though there was neither danger nor difficulty in the remaining portion of the climb. Hitherto Fraser had been leading; now Whincup started off by himself. He proceeded about fifteen yards, and, on reaching a point about sixty feet above the plateau, disappeared towards the right round a rock projecting from right to left across the gully. Directly after his disappearance he shouted to his companion to come along and assist him to get a hold for one of his feet. Fraser was about to respond, when he was startled by a loud shriek, and on looking up was horrified to see

* See Vol. I., "Sgurr nan Gillean", p. 57; "Hill-Climbing in Skye", p. 181; also "Three Days in Skye", p. 272.—Ed.

Whincup in mid-air to the left. He fell with such violence on the scree plateau, near Fraser's feet, that he was precipitated over a steep rock face, and fell heavily on the great scree slope below, in all a distance of not less than 200 feet. Fraser immediately descended, and found his unfortunate companion unconscious. The injuries to the head and body were so manifestly serious that Fraser lost no time in setting out for assistance, and reached Sligachan in about an hour.

Willing helpers were found at the Hotel, and a start was made without delay. The party included a doctor who was fortunately resident at the Hotel and four others, besides Fraser. The body was reached about 6:40; death was certified to have been instantaneous. The party, having improvised a stretcher from materials which they had brought along with them, conveyed the body a short distance downwards. Such, however, was the steepness and roughness of the ground that further progress, without more help, was found to be impracticable. Accordingly one of the party descended to Sligachan, and at 2 a.m. ten men arrived, being guided to the spot by a lantern which the watchers kept alight. The cold was found rather uncomfortable, and there was besides a scarcity of food till the arrival of the second party.

A fresh start was made at dawn, about 3 o'clock, and the Hotel was reached in five hours, the descent in the circumstances being exceedingly difficult and toilsome. Nothing was wanting in the arrangements made by Mrs. Sharp, the hostess, and her staff in the sad circumstances; and all the neighbours were prompt in rendering what assistance they could. The unfortunate accident cast a profound gloom over the island, and much sympathy was expressed with the deceased's relatives.

Appearances indicated that the deceased had been seized by a fit, and that this led to the fatality. Mr. Whincup's constitutional tendency to such seizures, it is proper to say, was quite unknown to his mountaineering companion.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

“WATERSPOUT”
IN
GLEN DEE.

THERE was an extraordinary “waterspout” in Glen Dee, between the Devil’s Point and Carn a’ Mhaim, on 10th July last. That afternoon, between one and two o’clock, the “watcher” at Corour saw a huge balloon-like black mass burst on the top of the Devil’s Point. Thereupon the air was darkened; there was much thunder—the noise was like a long continuous tearing of calico—and rain fell. But the rain was not in showers; the heavens seemed literally opened. The hill slopes were torn up, especially on the east side of the glen, the deep gashes and furrows made by the ’29 flood being utilised and enlarged, and many new channels made. Stones and boulders in great numbers were hurled down Carn a’ Mhaim, some of them measuring over fifty cubic feet. One of the channels is twenty feet broad, and about eight feet deep, and contained, it was estimated, about six times the volume of water in the Dee at Corour. One gravel-spread stretch was found to be 190 paces in breadth. So great was the force of the water from Carn a’ Mhaim that the Dee was dammed back just below the Corour hut, and the river, to the wonder of many, was not free from discolourment for a week. It was all over in a few hours, but the scaurs on the mountains will be eloquent for generations. The Larig was only affected (north to south) for about a quarter of a mile, so the storm area was exceedingly limited. It may be mentioned that a little of the “waterspout” found its way down the *east* side of Carn a’ Mhaim.

BRAEMAR
AND THE
EARTHQUAKE.

JUDGING from the following letter—which appeared in *The Scotsman*—the earthquake that visited several parts of Scotland in September was hardly felt at Braemar:—

CLUNY COTTAGE,
INVERCAULD, 19th September, 1901.

SIR,—As it may be of interest to know over how wide an area the earthquake of this morning was felt, I venture to inform you that we were awakened at 1:30 this morning by a prolonged shaking of the house, followed by a low distinct rumble. The same was felt at Braemar Castle, but so far I cannot hear that anything was noticed in Castletown itself. Braemar Castle is two miles higher up the Dee than this house, the village an eighth of a mile beyond the Castle. I am, &c.,

LOUISA E. FARQUHARSON.

Several members of the Club felt the earthquake at Inverdrue, Rothiemurchus. It was also felt on both sides of the Monadhliadhs.

RAINFALL
IN THE
CAIRNGORMS.

THE utilisation of the Avon for the water supply of Aberdeen is still being actively discussed. Three articles on the subject appeared in the *Aberdeen Daily Free Press* during September. In one of these an attempt to estimate the rainfall on the Cairngorms is described. The writer—who, we have reason to believe, was

Mr. Thomas Jamieson—stated that he was at the trouble two years ago to place a rain gauge on Ben Muich Dhui above the 4000 feet line, and, later on, at the 3000 feet line. On 16th August, 1899, the gauge showed $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches of rain for 34 days, equivalent to 38 inches per year; and on 30th November $55\frac{3}{4}$ inches for 106 days, equivalent to 185 inches per year. (The rainfall at Braemar for these two periods was .07 inches and 14.66 inches respectively.) On his next visit, in the spring of 1900, the writer found that the prolonged winter frost had cracked the gauge, and the rainfall had leaked out. A new gauge was set up on 5th June, 1900; and the following records were subsequently taken:—On 13th September, 1900, 36 inches for 100 days, equivalent to 131 inches per year; and on 24th June, 1901, 108 inches for 284 days, equivalent to 140 inches per year. (The corresponding rainfall for Braemar was 10.49 inches and 28.96 inches.) The summation of the four records yields a rainfall of 201 inches for 524 days—an average of 140 inches per year. This is nearly identical with the rainfall on Ben Nevis, exact observations over fourteen years showing that the average rainfall on Ben Nevis is 141 inches annually.

ECCENTRICITIES OF THE RAINFALL. THE following excerpt from the article alluded to will be read with interest, and similar instances of what may be termed “eccentric” rainfall could be given by others accustomed to walking in the Cairngorms:—“Everyone who is familiar with these mountains knows how excessively greater is the fall on these high lands—we might almost say cloud-lands—as compared with the lowlands in their vicinity. They also know how varied is the rainfall—a heavy downpour suddenly falling on one mountain, while the neighbouring one receives not a drop. The writer may give two instances. Standing on the summit of Braeriach, a dense black cloud was seen discharging a deluge of rain on the neighbouring mountain of Cairn Toul, which is close at hand, separated only by a narrow glen; on Braeriach only the fringe of the cloud fell in the form of a moderate shower, whereas on Cairn Toul, and especially on its southern flank—the Devil’s Point—the deluge was so heavy as not only to swell the streams into small rivers, but even the paths were changed into running streams. Another instance may be given. A party recently came through Glen Tilt to Bynack Lodge; a carriage from Braemar was to meet them there and convey them to Braemar. The horses forded the Bynack easily as usual, and were put up to feed, but before they had fed, ready to return, the Bynack had changed to a foaming, surging torrent, rendering it impossible for the horses to re-cross. They had to remain there some days, and the party, after just managing to cross a high wooden footbridge, had to walk to Braemar”.

SUBTERRANEAN WATERFLOWS. MR. JAMIESON puts on record a singular fact regarding the river Avon. At the Marl Pool, just below Inchrory, we have, he says, only a portion of the Avon, a large portion having gone down and disappeared into subterranean channels. “Such disappearance”, he

goes on to say, "is well known to be a most frequent occurrence in limestone districts, but one would hardly expect to find it in a granite district. Strangely enough, however, just at Inchrory the granite gives place to gneiss, and between these two hard formations there is a long line of softer limestone, stretching from Loch Builg down the line of the Avon to Tomintoul. A surveyor of the Geological Department has mentioned to the writer that the Builg Burn loses its water in subterranean channels, and finds it again a little lower down. The writer was informed by a well-informed native frequently fishing in the Avon from his boyhood, that the Avon seemed to lose part of its water about Inchrory, and the writer has proved that this is actually the case; a large part of the water disappearing somewhere about Inchrory, and this occurrence he has had confirmed by the measurements of a professional engineer".

THE CAIRNGORMS
IN JUNE.

THE writer and two companions had a pleasant week's tour early last June with intent to secure photographs. On the first day we traversed Glen Tilt from Blair Athole in brilliant weather.

There were several snow patches visible on the Beinn a' Ghlo group, but they were insignificant compared with the long white-speckled sides of the Cairngorms as seen from the Geldie. Tuesday we spent in Glen Dee. On Wednesday we started on the familiar Corrie Etchachan route, leaving it at the loch for a descent to the Shelter Stone. The weather, until then favourable, gradually changed, and mist and rain or snow alternately played on us for the remainder of that day. Instead of ascending by the Garbh Uisge as intended, we returned to the path we had left. A much wished-for exposure at the cairn of Ben Muich Dhui was rendered impossible by the strong wind and blinding snow. Beyond the hut there was almost total darkness, and we cautiously returned and groped our way down towards Lochan Uaine. Several of the long snow slopes on that side were crisp and hard, as one of us demonstrated by a slip and an involuntary slide from top to bottom. The return was down Glen Luibeg. Thursday was our biggest, most favourable, and most successful day. It included Glen Luibeg, and Glen Dee as far as the Pools. From the Pools we angled over the shoulder of Braeriach to Coire Bhrochain, and thence to the Garbh Coire Dhe. Snow was everywhere in abundance, the "infant Dee" running under a snow tunnel for a long distance after its descent into the corrie, while the crest of the Garbh Coire had a fine snow cornice. It had been intended to cross over to Lochan Uaine of Cairn Toul on the return; but before we had left Coire Bhrochain it was evident that time would not permit of this, so we had to be content with a long-focus view of the Lochan from the Braeriach side. From the Garbh Coire we sought and joined the Glen Dee track again, "and so home". On Friday we exchanged the Dee for the Spey. The weather was hot and cloudless. Like the stags, we wished for a higher altitude, so we kept high up on the east side of Beinn Mheadhoin. We crossed the Avon by a refreshing wade, swept over

the Saddle and up Cairngorm, whence we descended to Glen More. On Saturday we made a good few exposures ere we reached Aviemore, where we transferred our burdens and ourselves to the tender mercies of the railway. Our camera was a half-plate, stand, with euryscope, telephoto, and wide angle lenses. We carried 9 dark slides holding 18 plates, and we managed to expose that number on an average daily, many of which turned out satisfactory negatives.—W. CRUICKSHANK.

THE CLUB'S autumn excursion (September 23) was to the Bin of Cullen. The view from the summit of the Bin (as fully described by Dr. Cramond in the last number of the *C.C.J.*) extends practically from Bennachie to Wick, from Buchan to Ben Wyvis—to adopt the summary of another writer—but it was greatly curtailed, owing to the haze that prevailed. The coast line of the Moray Firth and the adjacent hills, such as Ben Rinnes, Ben Aigan, the Knock, Corryhabbie, &c., were distinct enough; but there was difficulty in locating The Buck of the Cabrach and Mount Keen, while the Cairngorms were totally obscured. Ample compensation, however, was afforded by the walk to the Bin and back by a different route, the extensive and diversified policies of Cullen House, presenting “a series of living pictures that charm by their beauty and variety”, being thus traversed. A little too much time, perhaps, was spent in the inspection of Cullen House and the gardens before the walk was begun; and on the way to the Bin a section of the party in front moved on so rapidly that the party in the rear, losing sight of them, took a wrong road. No serious mishap occurred, however, and the two sections reached the summit much about the same time. The day's arrangements were superintended by the Chairman, Mr. William Porter, J.P.—ROBERT ANDERSON.

NOTE ON THE forest with Dr. George Henderson, one of the most delightful companions I ever met. He had just returned from India, where he had been one of Sir David Forsyth's expedition which crossed the Himalayas. Climbing a brae where the turf was broken, we picked up something like a nut, round, brown, and hollow. Dr. Henderson said, “What is this? It looks like a truffle, but there can be no truffles here”. I said that I did not know what it was, but that it was not uncommon, and that I had heard roe-deer were very fond of it, and would scent and dig it up, as swine searched out truffles. Years went by, and one day, passing through a wood, I came upon a place where there had been turf-cutting, and here I found quite a store of the curious Earth-nut. I asked an old man about them, and he said that they were called in Gaelic “Buntata-nan-Earb”, “the roe-deer's potatoes”. Being desirous to find out what they were, I wrote to my friend, the late Dr. Alex. Stewart, of Ballachulish, well-known as “Nether Lochaber”, who was everywhere regarded as a great authority on all matters connected with Natural History. Dr.

Stewart wrote: "Many thanks for the Earth-nuts, *Buntata-nan-Earb*, a name for them I never heard before, and the origin of which, as you give it, is *most interesting*. These Earth-nuts are not common in the West Highlands, although they do occasionally occur. They are much more common in your Strathspey country and in some parts of the mid-Highlands of Perthshire. They are of the species *Bunium Bulbocastanum*, the *chestnut-like* Earth-nut, a first cousin of the *Braonan*, a much commoner species—*Bunium flexuosum*. By and by, I hope to have something to say concerning all these edible Earth-nuts". I had still doubts notwithstanding this confident reply, so I wrote to Dr. Keith, Forres, our leading botanist in the North, and sent him specimens. Dr. Keith replied: "'Nether Lochaber' is wrong for once. It is really a *fungus*, belonging to the same order as the Truffle. Its botanical name is *Elaphomyces granulatus*. Perhaps it is not so rare as it seems, as, owing to its underground mode of growth, it must often escape detection. Its discovery is sometimes due to accident, but sometimes also to another fungus—a fleshy-coloured one—which often grows upon it, and appears above ground. What you have heard of the roe-deer's fondness for it seems to be true. I had not heard of this before, but I find Fries says 'Edulis non est; sed cervi, lepores, ut ferunt, et certe sues eodem vescuntur', and this belief was embodied in the earliest names which were given it, *Tuber cervinum*, *Cervi boletus*, and is still embodied in its modern name *Elaphomyces* (the Stag's Fungus). I have not met with it more than once, and should be glad of further specimens". When I communicated Dr. Keith's opinion to "Nether Lochaber", he replied: "I am not quite convinced that my identification was wrong. I am now sending specimens to the Professor of Botany at Cambridge, and we shall hear what he says". Unfortunately, Dr. Stewart was shortly after taken with death illness, and I heard from him no more. His busy pen is now still, and he has passed where beyond these voices there is peace, but I shall always associate *this fungus* with his memory.—WILLIAM FORSYTH, D.D.

A FOOT-RACE from the base to the top of Ben Nevis took place on 1st October. It was RACE TO THE TOP OF BEN NEVIS. organised by Mr. J. Y. Buchanan, F.R.S., a Director of the Ben Nevis Observatory, who acted as physicist with the Challenger Expedition. His object in arranging the race—for which he offered as prizes a handsome gold medal and several substantial monetary awards—was to ascertain the dynamical value of the race to science. The difference of elevation between Achintee Farm, from which the competitors were started by the Observatory Superintendent, and the finishing point on the summit is 4300 feet, and if a competitor's weight in pounds be multiplied by this height, the number of foot pounds of work which he has done is obtained, while if the product is divided by the number of minutes required to make the ascent, the average rate in foot pounds per minute at which he had been working during the ascent will be ascertained. Seven competitors took part, and the following

were the names, weights, and times of the prize-winners:—1. Ewen Mackenzie, Fort-William; weight, 12 st. 6 lb.; time, 1 hour 8 mins. 19 secs. 2. Duncan Rankin, Lochyside; weight, 11 st. 12½ lb.; time, 1 hour 18 mins. 44 secs. 3. Donald Cameron, Lochyside; weight, 10 st. 4½ lb.; time, 1 hour 20 mins. 54 secs. It is worthy of note that the winner worked at exactly one-third of a horse-power during the ascent.

UP BEN NEVIS
ON A
MOTOR-CYCLE.

A NOVEL exploit took place on Ben Nevis on Saturday, 19th October, when Mr. Dudley Grierson, London, ascended that mountain on a motor-bicycle. He made the attempt from Fort-William on the Friday afternoon, but owing to

the tyres of the machine becoming punctured he only reached the Half-way House, at an elevation of about 2000 feet. Leaving his machine there overnight, he returned to Fort-William and walked up to the hut on Saturday, and proceeded from there astride the bicycle. To anyone acquainted with the ruggedness of the Ben Nevis path the self-imposed task of the cyclist would almost appear to be unattainable, but by perseverance and skill he rode his machine with safety up to an altitude of over 3000 feet, where, on account of the soft snow and darkness, he had to dismount. Determined, however, to reach the summit, he shoved the cycle from this point up to the Observatory, and as the machine weighed nearly 200 lbs., the difficulty of the task will be at once evident. The last part of the performance was undertaken in a heavy fall of snow, which in some parts was drifted to a depth of two feet, completely obliterating the bridle-path in places. Mr. Grierson appeared to be quite fresh on his arrival at the Meteorological Station, where, owing to the courtesy of the observers, he was put up for the night. He returned to Fort-William the following evening, riding his machine occasionally coming down the mountain, but dismounting where soft snow drifts had formed. The tyres of the bicycle were considerably cut up, but otherwise the bicycle sustained no damage. Mr. Grierson's performance, it seems, was undertaken to disprove the averment that Ben Nevis could not be ascended on a bicycle.

OUR THIRTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING

was held on 20th December, 1901—the Chairman, Mr. Porter, presiding. Office-bearers and Committee were elected as on page ix. The excursions for the current year were fixed as follows:—Spring Holiday—Clochnaben; Summer Holiday—Ben Avon. Mr. Porter was thanked for the efficient manner in which he had discharged the duties of the chair for the past two years.

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