Vol. IV. January, 1903. No. 20.

THE

Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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RULES.

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

II.—The objects of the Club shall be: (1) to encourage mountain climbing in Scotland, with special reference to the Cairgorm group of mountains; (2) to procure and impart scientific, topographical, and historical information about the Scottish mountains, their superficial physical features, minerals, rocks, plants, animals, meteorology, ancient and modern public routes giving access to and across them, and the meaning of their local place names, literature, and legendary, or folk-lore; (3) to consider the right of access to Scottish mountains, and to adopt such measures in regard thereto as the Club may deem advisable; and (4) to issue a Journal or such other publications as may be considered advantageous to the Club.

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

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

V.—The annual general meeting of the Club shall be held in December for the following business: (1) to receive the Treasurer's accounts for the year to 30th November; (2) to elect the Office-Bearers and Committee for the next

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JAMES H. BROWN.

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In Memoriam:

JAMES HAMPTON BROWN, J.P.

Born 4th April, 1851.
Died 16th August, 1902.

We again mourn the death, in his prime, of an enthusiastic member of the Club. James H. Brown was the most popular and likeable man in Ellon, where he had been in business over thirty years. But there were few districts in Scotland where he was not known, and with him to be known was to be loved.

Brown was a successful man of business. His energy was only equalled by his tact, and thus he was the *beau ideal* of a country banker. When he gave his support to any public movement, it was in no half-hearted manner; and, as a consequence, the result was usually success. "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country"; but this did not apply in his case. He received formal recognition of his public usefulness in being elected a member of the Town Council, and thereafter appointed a Magistrate. He was associated with all that was for the practical benefit of his fellow-townsmen; but his *magnum opus* was the erection of the Ellon Victoria Hall. It is mainly through his energy that this beautiful and important building is now the property of the community,

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practically free of debt. That hall will be his best memorial in the town where he spent the best years of his busy life; the opening of part of it as a Public Library he was not permitted to see.

Those who knew James Brown best loved him most. His friendship was valued by all who had the privilege of meeting him, either in public or in private life. When free of the cares of business, he was keenly interested in art and literature. He had many art friends, and it is to be noted that he did not long survive the death of his particular friend, Mr. G. W. Johnstone, R.S.A. He was much at home with the poets, and was a special admirer of Burns. It may be mentioned that he had determined a few months before his untimely death to form a little gallery of portraits of local artists, and had even ordered one or two portraits as a nucleus of his collection.

Brown was an enthusiastic golfer, and was a familiar figure at the Cruden Links and at Newburgh of an afternoon when he had a half-holiday. He was, however, well known on links in the south of Scotland, where his yearly appearance, along with friends from the north, was one of the pleasant fixtures of the royal game.

It is, however, as a mountaineer that we best knew our late friend. He valued his association with the Club and the opportunities it gave him of meeting kindred spirits on the hill. He has been described as one of the Club's "stalwarts," and well he deserved that classification. Frequently he declared that the bracing air of the mountains and the exertion to get into it was just what he needed to counteract his sedentary occupation. When he could not get away to the hills, he was content with a long walk. It added considerably to one's pleasure to have such a companion on our higher mountains; his feeling of enjoyment on such occasions was so keen that it was infectious. The day's work well done, what a happy evening the little band would spend together! Old climbs would be re-climbed, and stories of the hills made the hours fly. Each told of an experience in some remote glen more wonderful than the other, and all

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were interesting. Plans would be made for future ascents when a holiday for the little party could be arranged. Winter and summer were alike for such enthusiasts, who began the season on 1st January and recognised no close time, the mountains being as fascinating in winter as they were grand in autumn. Our *Journal* and the newspapers of the day are not lacking in references to Brown's hill expeditions, for he generally contrived to take part in ascents which somehow or other became pleasantly memorable. To that he himself contributed in no small measure; his invariable good humour and utter unselfishness made the best of temporary discomforts. One now reads "'Twixt Loch Ericht and Strath Ossian" in our third volume with different feelings, for it was Brown's last contribution to our pages, as well as his last important climbing excursion in the Highlands.

With such an apprenticeship in Scotland, it was no marvel that Brown longed for an acquaintance with the Alps, though it was not till last season that he started with serious climbing designs. He set out on Wednesday, 6th August, with his friend and fellow-clubman, Mr. William Garden, for a mountaineering holiday in Switzerland, the Bear Hotel at Grindelwald being their headquarters. The weather was bad on their arrival, as it continued for most of the season, but on Saturday, 16th August, it was so much improved that, on the advice of their guides, they made an early start for the Wetterhorn. They spent some hours at the Gleckstein hut, which is the starting point for the Wetterhorn, from the Grindelwald side, and they left this hut soon after two a.m. The guide was Knubel, of St. Niklaus, and his companion was Imboden, of the same place, who acted as second guide. Garden had been in the Alps in 1901, and had made successful ascents, including the Matterhorn and the Weisshorn.

The ascent was trying, because of the recent falls of snow. The upper couloir was particularly difficult. In the earlier part of the morning, when the snow retained

some of the night's frost, progress was satisfactory, but as the sun melted it, and it became soft and deep, the climb was very fatiguing. However, in due time the summit was reached, and the view from it was magnificent.

From the Saddle down to the upper couloir the quantity of soft snow made the descent rather trying, and it was not always very safe. There was the probability either of the party by their own weight starting an avalanche or of their being caught in one. It was the state of the snow and its quantity, and not the natural features of the mountain, which were the source of the greatest danger. Owing to so much extra step cutting having to be done, the party reached the summit of the Wetterhorn about an hour later than they had calculated upon, and consequently the lower couloir had to be crossed later in the afternoon than was intended, by which time the sun had rendered the new snow more treacherous, and liable to drop off the cliffs at the top of the couloir. Coming down the lower couloir, therefore, there was no slight anxiety, and every effort was made to get out of it as soon as possible. Imboden and Garden had got across the couloir, and had anchored. The danger of the position was quite appreciated, and Knubel remarked that no time must be lost in crossing, and urged Brown to hasten across. This he was just proceeding to do when an avalanche overwhelmed the party, and they were carried away with irresistible force, by three or four tons of soft snow, which originated from the cliffs some 1500 feet above, and had increased in its descent, which was, on an average, at an angle varying from 60° to 65°. They were hurled hither and thither, and tumbled over again and again, and were blinded by snow and threatened with suffocation. When the avalanche stopped, after sweeping them down over 1200 feet, Knubel and Brown were some 5 feet above Garden, and Imboden about 40 feet below him. The rope was cut to pieces even round Garden's waist, and knapsacks and ice axes were all gone. After a moment or two, Garden, more or less dazed by the

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terrible fall, rose to his feet, spoke to Brown, and by shaking endeavoured to rouse him, but in vain. Knubel was gasping for breath, and Garden tried to pour some wine into his mouth; but it was too late, and in a few moments he too died. Garden's attention was next turned to Imboden, whose mind was wandering, and who was crying aloud in mingled distress and fear. He attempted to move him out of the bed of the avalanche, but was not able to accomplish this. He himself struggled to some rocks on his left, and on the chance, which was very remote, of attracting the attention of someone, he shouted again and again at the top of his voice for assistance.

It happened that a German climber, with his guides, who had come over the mountain from Rosenlaui, appeared on the rocks above, and after three-quarters of an hour reached Garden, who had previously rushed across the couloir to a place of safety on the rocks to the right. They immediately went to the assistance of Imboden, and one of the guides carried him on his back to the side of Garden. They gave Garden to understand that they would hurry on and send up guides and succour, and meantime they left him alone with his two dead companions and with poor Imboden, who was quite delirious, from about three o'clock in the afternoon till after ten p.m. The evening closed in; the heavens became black with portentous clouds. Presently hail pelted furiously. The cold was intense. The moonlight tried to struggle through the darkness, but receded again immediately. No human sound broke the solitude except the piteous wailings of the half-demented Imboden. The lightning flashed and made everything around look ghastly. It was no dream, no nightmare, but terrible reality, and those hours of indescribable misery moved with the slowness of a lifetime. No outsider can enter the sacred enclosure of the inner being at such a time—the keen sensibilities, the vivid and crowded memories, the activities of a living conscience, the emotions true and deep and tender, the submissiveness mingling with the hope that life may yet be spared, and be lived as it never was before.

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Succour came at length. Guides carried the living and the dead with the skill and tenderness which always characterise them. From the hut, Garden walked, supported on either side by a guide, and with all his pains and bruises this must have been no easy task. Nature gave no relief to the gloom; rain poured in torrents.

It may be remarked as an extraordinary feature of the accident, and one which climbing experts have so far been unable to explain satisfactorily, that, though the party was roped by 100 feet of absolutely new Alpine rope, yet after the accident took place there was not a trace of it remaining round the bodies either of the two dead men or of the survivors. It was quite to be expected that the rope should be broken between the individuals, but that it should be cut off each of their waists, where it was tightly knotted, is an occurrence which must ever be a mystery, and that all the more so because no clothing was torn.

Brown's body was taken home to Ellon, and laid to rest in the old churchyard of Fetteresso. The very large funeral party started from Ellon by special train, and was joined *en route* at Aberdeen by more friends there, and at Stonehaven, the place of Brown's birth, by a considerable number of the inhabitants.

There is one trait of Brown's character which we have yet to mention specifically. He was one of the most generous of men and the most charitable. Not that charity which vaunteth itself, however; yet he literally "gave tithes of all he possessed." Only his more intimate friends knew of this peculiarity, and to them he declared that he prospered as he gave.

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KILLIECRANKIE AND THE OLD GLACIER OF GLEN GARRY.

By T. F. Jamieson, LL.D., F.G.S.

One of the most beautiful scenes in Scotland is to be found at Killiecrankie in the Perthshire Highlands, where the mountain stream of the Garry, after rushing through the narrow pass, is joined by that of the Tummel coming down from the wilds of Rannoch. Apart from the picturesqueness of its scenery and its historical associations with the battle in which Graham of Claverhouse lost his life, the locality is full of interest in other ways. On the east side of the river, near Fascally, the ground rises in a succession of heights to the noble mountain of Ben Vrackie, "the monarch of the Glen". The name is Gaelic, and means "the speckled hill", while the lower ridge between it and the river is called Meall Uaine, or the green hill. The Gaels have a great variety of names for a hill. Meall is generally applied to a bare round-topped one, while Ben appears to be reserved for the larger and loftier mountains; Craig is a craggy or precipitous one; Cairn a heap shaped like a pile of stones; Dun a fortified hill, and so on. The flank of Meall Uaine next the river, and not far from Fascally House, affords some very curious and interesting evidence of the former passage of a large glacier or stream of ice down the valley here. This hill has two ridges or buttresses of rock projecting from its side towards the river, and in the hollow embosomed between these two ridges there lies a great thick bank of earthy stuff, stretching up the side of the hill for many hundred feet above its base. This bank of earth has a very curious history which I may have some difficulty in getting my readers to believe.

In those valleys of Switzerland which are filled with streams of ice to a depth of many hundred feet, it occasionally happens that the glacier passes across the mouth of a small side gully or ravine, down which comes a

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streamlet of water in summer. This water, being dammed up by the flank of the glacier, forms a deep pool, in which there accumulates a thick stratified bed of mud, sand, and stones. The glacier, as everyone knows, carries along with it large quantities of rocky debris, derived from the cliffs that lie along it up the valley. Stones of all sizes roll down upon its surface from these cliffs, and are borne slowly onwards like the leaves and branches that fall into a river. Now, when these stones lying on the top and side of the glacier arrive opposite a pool of the kind I have mentioned, many of them tumble off the ice and drop into the pool, as also does much of the sand and mud which the glacier carries with it. All this mingles with the stuff washed in by the rivulet descending from the top of the side ravine, so that in course of time there is formed a thick stratified bed of mud and stones, in which are found specimens of all the rocks that occur up that side of the valley on which the pool is situated. Many of these will have their surface scored and scratched in the manner known to all students of the ice-world, for the glacier carries with it sand and stones embedded in the ice, and these are held so firmly and pressed so strongly on anything they come against that they act like the tool of an engraver upon the surface over which they slide, forming grooves, furrows, and long fluted scoops, while the finer sand acts like a polisher, glazing the rocks and marking them with fine needle-like scratches. As this action is characteristic, it affords, when observed in places where no glaciers now exist, a good proof of their former presence.

Now, in this little ravine on the flank of Meall Uaine, there are to be found all the indications I have been describing of the former existence of a great glacier descending the valley towards Pitlochry. The surface of the rock underneath the bank of earth shows by every score and line that it has been rubbed strongly by the ice all up the side of the hill. The strata consist of gneiss and mica schist, with some masses of quartz rock. The latter, owing to their hard siliceous nature, have retained the finer needle-like scratches, and are here and there even

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polished till they glance again. On the other kinds the scores are ruder, but all run in the same direction, namely, in the line of the main valley of the Garry.

The structure of the great bank of earth is clearly and extensively displayed by the action of two small streams which have cut their way past it. The northern one gives much the better section, as it cuts the bank from top to bottom down to the subjacent rock, showing the mass to be well stratified and to have been deposited in a pool of water, many of the beds being composed of the finest laminated silt. These alternate with others of a coarser description, studded with some big stones. In the channel of the rivulet there are blocks of all sizes up to 8 and 14 feet in length, which have dropped out of the bank, many of them well marked with scores and furrows by the ice. These afford samples of all the varieties of rock which occur along the Garry—gneiss, mica schist, quartz rock, horneblende schist, porphyry, primary limestone, and granite of different kinds—a perfect mineralogical museum, all tumbled down here off the old glacier ready for the geologist's inspection. The bottom of the valley at Fascally is about 400 feet above the sea, and for an altitude of 300 feet higher there is little to be seen on the top of the rock but a few patches of water-rolled gravel, so that we do not reach the foot of the bank of earth in the ravine until we are at an altitude of probably 700 feet above the sea-level and 300 above the river. From this point it stretches up the hill to an altitude of 1200 or 1300 feet, but does not thin out altogether until we get about 200 feet higher. It is remarkable how soon and how completely the action of the weather effaces the scores, scratches, and polish made by the ice, unless the rock is of a peculiarly resisting nature—except where the surface has been protected by a covering of clay, it is rare to find them. This, however, is just what we might expect. We see in any old churchyard how the letters and carving on tombstones gradually wear out. In some railway cuttings near Ellon the rocks, when newly exposed forty years ago, were clearly marked by the ice, but already I observe these

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marks are beginning to fade. Now, when we consider the vast period of time that has elapsed since the glaciers disappeared from this country, we cannot wonder at the marks left by them being no longer visible. The late Principal Forbes, of St Andrews, spent the summer at Pitlochry when I was there. He was the man who first made out the true nature of glacier motion, and his classical works on the Alps and Norway did much to clear up our ideas on the subject. I had the privilege of conversing with him on several occasions when I was rambling about near Killiecrankie. "I am surprised", said he, "that I have never observed any marks of glaciers on the rocks in this neighbourhood, for it is just the place where one might expect to find them. Here we have a convergence of Highland glens where there must have been a great congestion of ice, and yet the surface shows no sign of it". I had an ice scratched stone in my pocket, and pulled it out. "Oh, we have plenty of these. It is the rocks in place I allude to". Forbes, however, was then in bad health, and unable to ramble about or climb hills. He was sinking, indeed, under the malady which carried him off, alas, too soon. He was greatly interested in my observations on Meall Uaine, and in my notion as to how the great bank of stuff had been accumulated in a side pool hemmed in by the glacier. At first he was disposed to object. "It is too stratified to be a moraine". I then mentioned how Charpentier, in his "Essai sur les glaciers", describes similar occurrences in the Alps. "I have his work", said he, "in the house. Let us see what he says". The book was accordingly produced, and I turned up the passage, which is illustrated by a small wood-cut. Forbes was immediately struck by the great similarity of the case. "Ah", said he, "Charpentier was an excellent observer. His book has been far too little studied in this country".

The top of Meall Uaine is about 2000 feet above the sea by an aneroid measurement of my own, and it is iceworn even on the very highest point. The rock here is a hard siliceous gneiss, and the flutings or long shallow scoopings run in the same direction as those on the flank

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of the hill lower down, viz., from north-west to south-east. On the west shoulder I found hard quartzose strata worn by the ice into smooth bosses, with some far-transported boulders of granite and porphyry here and there on the surface. It thus appears that the whole hill from top to bottom was grazed by the ice. I found very clear marks about 60 feet from the top, all running north-west, and, as it would have required some considerable weight of ice to wear down the rocks on the top of the hill, the surface level of the sheet of ice must have considerably exceeded 2000 feet. In order to obtain further evidence on this point, I ascended Ben Vrackie, which by aneroid I made 2800 feet high. The Ordnance Survey, however, makes it 2757. This mountain is well worth a visit. Immense blocks of black horneblende are strewn over the lower slopes on the south side of the hill, which was the one I went up. Here the heather reached to about 2600 feet. On the north-west slope it stops at about 2200. Higher up, the slopes are green and grassy, with plenty of the Alpine Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla alpina*). The crest of the mountain is composed of black horneblende rock, some of which is massive and crystalline, some of a more schistose structure, containing seams of a black, fine-grained, curiously-wrinkled slate, which occurs in various other mountains in this neighbourhood. The rock on the top of Ben Vrackie is in tors or craggy piles, disintegrating into numerous blocks; but on descending the north-west shoulder to a level of about 2200 feet, I came upon strata of a more micaceous nature lying in rounded ice-worn bosses, which implied that the ice-sheet had reached up to them, leaving perhaps the part above sticking out as what the Greenlanders would call a Nunatak. Twelve miles to the west of this, on the great mica-slate ridge which divides the Tummel from the Tay, I found a shoulder of the hill iceworn and marked at a level by aneroid of 2220 feet, and far-transported boulders even higher. From these observations it would appear that the surface of the old ice-sheet in this quarter must have attained a level of probably 2500 feet. This would entirely

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submerge most of the hills, leaving the tops of those like Ben Vrackie sticking out as Nunataks, and the appearance of the landscape would have been like the interior of Greenland at the present day. All over Scotland we find evidence in harmony with this. No doubt people unacquainted with the progress of geological investigation during the last fifty years will have difficulty in believing that such a state of matters could have existed in this country. Nevertheless the proof is now so complete that there can be no doubt about it, and the geological proof is, moreover, fortified by a mass of other evidence drawn from the former range of the Arctic fauna and flora, which then extended far to the south of Scotland and the whole British Islands.

BEN MUICH DHUI.

O'ER broad Muich Dhui sweeps the keen, cold blast,
Far whirrs the snow-bred, white-winged ptarmigan;
Sheer sink the cliffs to dark Loch Etagan,
And all the mount with shattered rock lies waste.
Here brew ship-foundering storms their force divine,
Here gush the fountains of wild-flooding rivers;
Here the strong thunder frames the bolt that shivers
The giant strength of the old twisted pine.
Yet, even here, on the bare, waterless brow
Of granite ruin, I plucked a purple flower,
A delicate flower, as fair as aught, I trow,
That toys with zephyrs in my lady's bower.
So Nature blends her powers; and he is wise
Who to his strength no gentlest grace denies.

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

—(From "Lays of the Highlands and Islands").

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MY EXPERIENCE ON THE CAIRNGORMS.

By Thomas Ramsay.

Owing to the unfortunate postponement of the Coronation ceremonies on 26th June, my plans for that week, like those of many others, were upset. When, therefore, I got an invitation from friends in Aviemore to spend a few days with them, I gladly availed myself of the opportunity of visiting the district.

On Saturday, the 28th June, we made a party to Loch Morlich, and I had my first near view of the Cairngorms. It was a lovely day, and the whole mountain range was unusually clear. The path of the ascent to Cairngorm was pointed out to me, and by the aid of a field-glass I could see a party descending. The position of Ben Muich Dhui was also indicated, and I was so inspired by the scene that I mentally resolved that, if I could so arrange, I would climb both Cairngorm and Ben Muich Dhui.

Accordingly, on Monday (30th) I told my hostess I purposed spending a day on the hills, and though I was urged to take some refreshments with me, declined, expecting to be back in time for dinner. The morning was brilliantly fine, but somewhat sultry. I started at 10 a.m., walking through the Sluggan, and at 11.30 passed Glenmore Lodge.

Though I scarcely halted to look at the scenery while ascending, the view was as fine as any I have ever seen. Loch Morlich was like a sheet of glass, not a breath of wind rippling the surface, and the highest peaks being mirrored in all their grandeur.

At 1.40 I had reached the cairn on Cairngorm, and, after enjoying a look round, took my bearings (though I had no compass or map with me) according to the information I had gleaned on the way, and started without delay for Ben Muich Dhui. While it was quite clear overhead, I noticed mist gathering on the peaks behind, and heard

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the rumbling of distant thunder, but I pushed on, as I did not feel inclined to give in while all was clear above. I need not describe the route, as all Clubmen will be familiar with it. Suffice it to say, I hurried on regardless of the evidently approaching storm, but mentally noting my way while plodding through snow-wreath and burn.

I had eaten a biscuit or two which my worthy hostess had slipped into my pocket, and the weather being warm and close, I was overheated by the pace kept up, and naturally feeling very thirsty, I refreshed myself by lapping water from an icy stream, and rather injudiciously, while crossing a wreath, took a handful of frozen snow and involuntarily swallowed it, but at the time felt no ill effect from doing this.

At 3.20 I was at the cairn on Ben Muich Dhui, having tramped 17 miles since I had started. By this time the scene had completely changed. Overhead were dark, ominous-looking clouds, and the mist was gathering on the nearer peaks. Suddenly a flash of lightning gleamed forth, followed instantly by an awful peal of thunder, while down came the rain in torrents such as I had hardly ever experienced. In a few moments I was soaked to the skin, and, as there was no shelter, I immediately started to retrace my way, the thunder, lightning and rain increasing with every step. It was like incessant artillery, and a peculiar heat and sulphurous odour seemed to rise from the ground. I was never before in such a storm. I hurried on, naturally anxious to get back to Cairngorm, but at last I had to give in. The mist had become very dense, and, owing to the heavy clouds, it was much darker than usual before nightfall. I selected the most level piece of ground I could find in the semi-darkness, and made up my mind to go no further, merely confining myself to that plot, and doing "sentry go" there to keep up the heat, as I was chilled to the bone, and shaking from cold, hunger, and wet, besides suffering from the effect of having swallowed the snow.

Night was closing in, but, conscious that it was my foolhardiness that had brought me into this predicament,

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I determined to make the best of it. When the weather moderated for a little, I took off my jacket, and wrung out the wet as far as possible. I may mention that I was wearing my kilt.

Through all that night the drizzling rain never ceased. I kept pacing to and fro, swinging my arms across my chest to keep up the circulation, and occasionally lying down, and otherwise doing all I could to pass the weary hours, and once I almost sprained my ankle among the rough stones. I need not dwell upon my feelings during that night. I had not even the consolation of a pipe, everything was so damp. My watch ran down, as I had left my key behind me; and consequently I lost all record of time.

As dawn began to break, I realised I was almost in as sad a plight as during the night. I could not see more than a few yards in front of me, owing to the continued drizzling rain and dense mist. An hour or two thereafter I started to try and find my way to Cairngorm, judging, to the best of my ability, in which direction it lay. I could not recognise any feature of the ground which I had passed over, but by and by I struck a stream, which I followed, till I realised that it fell over a cliff. The weird and eerie sound of this waterfall I had heard in the distance during the night. From what I have since learned, I fancy I must have been near the precipices above Loch Avon. I retraced my steps, and some time thereafter came upon a large boulder, the only one that I had come across which could afford any shelter. Here I decided to rest for a time. When I did sally forth again, I always kept the direction in which the boulder lay in view, so that I could return to its protection, such as it was. I could find no means of descent, however, and more than once nearly lost my way back. The mist lay like a pall around me, and though sometimes it looked as if the sun might break through, I was doomed to disappointment, the rain continuing until, I thought, about 5 o'clock that evening. When occasionally the mist became less dense, the obscured boulders around me

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seemed to stand out like so many huge gravestones in a vast cemetery, and my eyes, with the continual strain of gazing into the impenetrable mist and rain, at times felt dimmed, and I imagined that I saw men indistinctly in the distance coming in search of me. I would then get up to make sure if this were so, but, alas! only to be undeceived. The thought would then occur that although a search party came out they might pass quite near without discovering me. This idea caused me several times to stand out and look round, but, never finding anyone, I was tempted to yield to the thought that unless the weather moderated my case was becoming hopeless. My mind was also disturbed about the anxiety of my friends. Of course, the dismal outlook on such a day helped to cause morbid thoughts, but when it cleared the depression passed off, although relief did not seem nearer.

In process of time, I realised that I should have to spend another night on the mountains. As evening approached, a freezing north-east wind began to rise, and as it increased in strength the cold became even more intense —it was excruciating. Looking about, I found a few loose stones, and these I carried to one end of the boulder, and built a little screen to shelter me still further, if possible, from the blast while I crouched below. When getting seriously chilled, I got up and sat in a crevice near by, which shielded my legs a little. This changing of position helped to divert me during the night, and I occasionally dozed.

After break of day on Wednesday (2nd July) morning, the sun occasionally lit up the mist, but as it had done the same the morning before, and never got further through, I feared it might be a repetition of the previous day. However, I came to the conclusion that I must make a final effort to get down. With that intention I left my shelter several times, only to return as the mist still remained. Again I started, and, after going some distance, came upon a grassy and mossy spot, where I sat down, and hoped for the sun to come out. I fell asleep, and on awakening heard the welcome sound of voices. I looked

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LOCH PHITIULAIS (PITYOULISH).

round, and, with thankfulness, descried two men approaching me from the direction of the boulder where I had spent the night. The relief of seeing some one was great indeed, apart from the satisfaction of knowing that I was saved from further anxiety.

I now learned it was 8 a.m. One of the men was an under-forester—M'Lean. They had been sent as a search party by my friends in Aviemore. Shortly after, the sun broke through the mist, and it turned out a beautiful morning. We made straight for the cairn on Cairngorm, about half-a-mile off, and in the direction in which I had been wending my way.

While descending, we met six other gillies on their way to join in the search. Two men had also gone up from Derry Lodge to Ben Muich Dhui, the forester at Mar Lodge having been wired to send out a search party from there also.

About two hours afterwards we reached Glenmore Lodge, where Mrs. M'Kenzie, the forester's wife, kindly made me a much-needed breakfast. Shortly afterwards, Mr. M'Kenzie brought out his trap, and M'Lean drove me to Achgourish, where, needless to say, my friends gave me a cordial welcome. For two days and nights I had seen no sign of life about me, except one or two ptarmigan, which helped to break the feeling of utter loneliness. Their mournful croak and the eerie noise of the distant waterfall were the only sounds I heard—adding, if anything, to the dreariness of the night. During all that time I had had practically nothing to eat, nor had I taken a flask with me.

I have had an experience I am not likely to forget, and need not moralise on it, as the moral is self-evident, but happily I have been none the worse of my escapade. I may add that, though the kilt may not be an ideal dress for mountain climbing, I must acknowledge that but for the thick folds around my waist I should have fared worse; besides, the pleating kept off the damp more than any other kit would have done.

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RONA'S HILL.

By Rev. George C. Watt, B.D.

Most folks have some region which appears to them as possessed of a special fascination. Horace had his pet spot, his "nook" that wore for him the fairest smile.

> "Ille terrarum mihi praeter omnes
> Angulus ridet."

And, although we may not have just the same likings as he had, there will be for us too some chosen spot which it will always be delightful to visit. Speaking personally, I find no region appear so attractive as the Larig Ghru with its surrounding magnificent mountains. I have wandered fairly far afield in my time, but I have seen nothing that appeals to me as do these mighty hills with their grand silence, their sterile and rugged slopes, their dark, mysterious tarns, their rushing burns, their lingering snow-wreaths, and the mists and clouds that, coming and going around their stately summits, add so much to their wonder and their glory. But although there is no region that has for me the fascination of the Cairngorms, there are yet other places that have no little attraction. I love the islands, brown and bleak as many of them are, that surround our coasts. I love them for their free atmosphere, for their girdling seas, for their bold headlands that rise from amid the "yeast of waves". It was my lot long ago to spend a year in the Shetlands, and perhaps it was the year spent in these remote northern islands that made me alive to the charm that lingers around so many of our island groups. I am not, however, writing at present of the attraction of our islands in general, or of the most northerly of them in particular, but of an ascent of Rona's Hill, the highest hill in the Shetlands, which I made well nigh forty years ago.

Rona's Hill, which rises to the height of 1475 feet, is on the mainland of Shetland and in the parish of Northmaven. It is in latitude 60° 32′ N. or thereabout, and in

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longitude about 1° 27′ W. Rona's Voe, one of the finest of Shetland voes, running from the Atlantic Ocean six or seven miles into the land, sweeps round its west and south sides, while its east side slopes well down towards Colla Firth Voe, which opens from Yell Sound. Rona's Hill, as seen from the east, is a brown hill, such as many of our familiar Scottish hills are. On its south-west side it appears, in its lower portions at least, far more rugged and picturesque. But as seen from any point of view, it it a fine, shapely hill, and rising, as it does, practically from the level of the sea, it presents the appearance of very considerable height. In the old days, when the hardy Shetland men went to the deep-sea fishing ("the haaf") in their six-oared boats, the top of Rona's Hill was often the only land that the Northmaven fishermen kept in view. They would be at least thirty miles off.

I first saw Rona's Hill early in the November of 1864. I had sailed from Lerwick in the smack "Gossamer"—there were no steamers plying among the islands in those days—and had been two days at sea when the smack reached Ollaberry, just as the short winter day was drawing to its close. I had to get to Hillswick, on the west side of the island, and seven miles away. There was not then (and there may not be now) any quite continuous road leading directly from Ollaberry to Hillswick, and I put myself under the guidance of an elderly fellow-passenger who was going the same way. In the darkness my guide lost his way—his own explanation was that he had been misled by the "trows" (trolls or spirits)—and we wandered about aimlessly for hours. We were able, in spite of the darkness, to make out the form of the big hill to the north of us, and, quite ignorant that Rona's Voe lay between us and the hill, I had intimated my intention of climbing a bit to see if I could discover from the hillside any light to which we could make our way, when a very distant light caught my eye. It was really miles away to the north-east, and we ought to have been going west, but it was a light, and we made for it. Fortunately, in trying to make our way to it, we came upon the house of

a kindly crofter, who guided us to our destination. His house was barely two miles from the point from which we had started!

My meditated ascent of Rona's Hill was not made that night therefore, but from that night I determined that one day I should make the ascent. It was months, however, before I accomplished my purpose. One fine day in August, 1865, having found a willing companion, I set out to climb the hill. Our point of departure was Northroe, where we were living. Northroe is on the east side of Northmaven Parish, and some three or four miles south from Fethaland Point, the extreme point of the mainland of Shetland. I believe that there is a good road now right from Fethaland, but such a thing did not exist in 1865. A road had no doubt been contemplated, and to the south of Northroe a few miles had some time or other been constructed, but the portion made had not been kept up: there were places here and there where one sank deep into the mossy subsoil, and it was, on the whole, better to keep to the moss, which professed to be only what it was. However, my companion and I were young, the road, such as it was, was familiar enough, and we went merrily on our way. Our direction for two or three miles was southward, and to the west of our route we had the "Byörgs" (I am not sure that my spelling is correct), strange slopes covered with fragments of red granite. At one point on our way we passed two large upright stones known as the "Giant's Grave". I was never able to discover any tradition connected with them, although I believe that there must have been some legend which has been lost. Further on we passed through a kind of small gorge or cleft known as the "Blue Hammer". A good man whom I knew was sorely beset there one night by the "trows". He saw nothing, he said, but his hair stood on end. We kept on along the west shore of Colla Firth Voe, and between the south-west angle of that voe and the head of Rona's Voe began our ascent. I am writing from memory, and it is not easy, after the interval of more than thirty-seven years, to remember all the

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minutiæ of a day's wanderings, but I think we did not find the climb particularly difficult. Of course, the ascent was fairly steep—we had to climb over 1400 feet in a little over two miles—but I can remember no specially rocky places, and only a few very marshy spots. What I do remember is the altogether wonderful view from the top. The summit itself is rather stony than rocky, the stone being a brittle red granite; but it is not the mountain top, but the unique and indeed splendid prospect which, under favourable circumstances, one has from it, that holds one's mind and lingers in one's memory. We were exceptionally fortunate in the day of our ascent. There was not a cloud in the heavens, the blue ocean met the blue sky in the far distance, and the hundred isles of the Shetland group, with the shining waters winding among them, lay beneath our feet. We saw, if my memory does not play false with me, the Muckle Flugga lighthouse, the most northerly lighthouse in the British Islands. We saw the large islands of Yell and Unst, and, if I do not mistake, some portion of Fetlar, the most easterly, save the Out Skerries, of the Shetland group. Lerwick was not visible, but we saw the island of Bressay lying across the sound from it, and though Bressay was from thirty to forty miles away, we could distinguish its corn fields by their yellow tinge. Looking towards the Atlantic, we saw the magnificent Bay of St. Magnus, curving finely towards us from between Eshaness and Papa Stour. There is no grander bay, I think, in the United Kingdom than this one, on whose broad bosom whole navies might easily float. In the south-west we saw the bold island of Foula, towering right out of the Atlantic to an altitude of 1372 feet. The whole island is little over three miles in length, and only between two and three in breadth, but, small as it is, its cliffs are so magnificent, so stupendous indeed, that were it more accessible it would draw to it an endless stream of admiring tourists. I believe that, to be seen in their full grandeur, these cliffs, rising in three gigantic steps over 1200 feet, should be viewed from the deck of a vessel sailing along the west

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side of the island, but, from any point of view, Foula is splendidly impressive.

But distant Foula, said by some to be the Thule of the ancients, was not the most remote island which we saw. Looking south, or a little to the west of south, we could discern, and quite distinctly so, although low on the horizon, the isolated Fair Isle, which, lying about midway between Sumburgh Head in Shetland and North Ronaldshay in Orkney, was little less than seventy miles away from us. The Wardhill, or Warthill, of Fair Isle is over seven hundred feet high, and a simple mathematical calculation will show that it should, under favourable conditions, be visible from the top of Rona's Hill, even without taking into account looming, which always increases the distance at which objects on the horizon are visible. Yet it was, I fancy, a comparatively rare experience that we had in seeing Fair Isle so clearly, for sea fogs, common enough in those latitudes, must often hide it from view.

Had we not a great reward for our little exertion? The Shetland islands are pretty remote, and to one who suffers from sea sickness, Sumburgh Roost is rather objectionable, but to any one who cares for a vision which will endure while memory lasts, I would say—See Shetland, and, without fail, climb Rona's Hill. My friend and I lingered long on the summit, and very reluctantly turned our faces homeward.

We did not return by the route by which we came. Looking to the north-east, we saw that the mountain sloped away towards the Bergs of Skelberry, which, as I have said, are locally called the Byörgs, and we made our way down along the slopes. To the north of Rona's Hill there is quite a chain of lakes of varying size, one of the largest and the most easterly of them being Roerwater. Out of this loch flows the burn of Roerwater, which falls into Colla Firth Voe. When we had crossed the burn we were little more than two miles from home, but we were hardly home when the weather changed, and rain fell in torrents. Only, our day had been more than delightful.

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SUNRISE FROM MOUNT KEEN.

By Will. Robertson.

It was with considerable doubt as to the success of the excursion that a party of four left Craigendinnie, near Aboyne, on a July evening, to climb Mount Keen, and witness, if possible, sunrise from the summit. All day the wind had been blowing fiercely from the north-west, carrying across the sky a continuous succession of threatening clouds, which broke every now and again in cold and biting showers. But this quartette had cycled far to keep the engagement, and, though the night was unpropitious, it was decided to carry out the arrangements.

The course led along the South Deeside road as far as the Bridge of Ess, and on every hand were seen traces of the improvements carried out by the late Sir William Cunliffe Brooks of Glentanner, showing a strange combination of eccentricity, wisdom, and artistic taste. The fading light was just sufficient to show the exceeding grandeur of the view from the bridge. The Tanner, rushing over its rocky bed; the richly wooded banks rising sheer out of the river and sloping away in terraces upwards to the hills, till in the gathering gloom they seemed to lose themselves in the clouds; and the square tower, mantled with ivy, silhouetted against the sky, combined to form a picture rarely equalled and, once seen, never to be forgotten. Passing through the "Golden Gates" which guard the entrance to the glen, the party bowled along a splendid road and soon reached the Mansion House, but the darkness prevented them from realising the wonderful beauty around, which a later visit revealed. Beyond the lakes, a closely-wooded avenue leads up the glen for several miles. The sound of the rushing waters told of the proximity of the Tanner, while now and again a partial clearance of the trees showed, against the sky, the beetling crags bounding in the narrow glen. In the upper

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reaches the trees disappeared, and, though the road became rough and soft, it was possible to cycle with safety as far as Bridge of Etnach. Farther on, seven miles above Glentanner House, at the ruins of the farm steading of Coirebhruach, a finger-post marks the commencement of the footpath to Brechin, which leads over the shoulder of Mount Keen.

Under ordinary circumstances, the bicycles would have been left at the Shiel, near Coirebhruach, where the driving road ends, but, as the intention was to return by Glen Mark, they were taken up the hill. The footpath crosses the Tanner here by a single plank, and, as the machines were carried across, the memory of a similar crossing of the Eidart in Glen Feshie was very vivid to some there. On that occasion the frail plank gave way, and precipitated two of the party, cycles and all, into the rushing, boiling river, full to the banks with the melting of the snows, a plunge that nearly cost them their lives. But this time they safely "walked the plank", and commenced the ascent of the hill. The clouds had now dispersed, and the hopes of a clear sunrise considerably increased. It was still dark enough, however, to make the task of finding the path and of carrying the machines up the first steep rise a sufficiently difficult one; but, after the plateau was reached, from which the central cone of the hill rises, the work was comparatively easy. The chief difficulty was the disposal of the cycles so that they might easily be found again, should they be hidden by the fog—a very likely contingency. After due consideration, they were left near a cairn almost due south of the summit, and from that point the ascent of the cone was made.

At 2 a.m., when the top was reached, it was light enough to give a general idea of the surroundings, but the cold was intense, and a westerly wind was blowing so strongly that the slight shelter afforded by the Cairn at the summit was gladly taken advantage of.

To the west, Lochnagar and the Cairngorms were completely hidden in a pall of inky blackness, but, in every other quarter the horizon was clear, although the sky

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generally was again overcast. The reflection of the grey morning light on Lochs Kinnord, Davan, and Aboyne showed their positions, and they served as landmarks for identifying the various hill-tops now becoming visible.

Ben Rinnes was hidden behind Morven, but The Buck of the Cabrach, the Tap o' Noth, Knock, and Bennachie stood out sharp and clear; and the coast-line, from near Fraserburgh to Aberdeen, could be distinctly traced. Glimpses of the sea near Montrose, and again to the south of Arbroath, brightened up the southern view, and the flashes of the Bell Rock Lighthouse had been specially interesting during the darkness of the early morn. The nearer Forfarshire hills were well seen, and, in the distance, the rugged outline of Beinn a' Ghlo closed in the view to the west, where the thick pall still rested.

As the time of sunrise approached, the colouring on the hills to the north attracted attention—shade after shade of brilliant colours chasing one another in quick succession down the hillsides. This was most strongly marked on Sgarsoch and the Coull hills, the brightness of which formed a striking contrast to the wild and threatening aspect of Morven and the Eastern Cairngorms.

Clouds of fog were now driving across from the direction of Beinn a' Bhuird, and it seemed as if the sunrise was after all to be obscured, and another added to a somewhat long list of disappointments. As the wind struck the hill on the west, the fog formed in heavy clouds which rolled up and completely enshrouded the summit. But as fast as they formed on the west they were torn to pieces on the east by the fury of the wind. Oftentimes the fog seemed to conquer, and the hopes of a clear sunrise disappear. Yet the grandeur of that great fight would have amply repaid the trouble of the ascent.

A few minutes before sunrise, however, the fog cleared away and showed the whole heavens one grand expanse of blue. Immediately, all were entranced by the vision of the orb of fire, as it rose beyond the sea and bathed the whole landscape in a flood of golden light. Turning away, with difficulty, from the glimmering sheen on the water,

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the unusual sharpness of the shadows thrown by the hills commanded attention. From the top of the Cairn, the shadow of Mount Keen could be traced as a huge isosceles triangle lying across the Capel Mounth, with the apex resting on Beinn a' Ghlo. At this time a thin filmy cloud formed and remained about fifty yards off to the south-west, and an exhibition of the "Spectres of the Brocken" still further rewarded the climbers. Their images were thrown on to this cloud—giant figures, somewhat contorted in form, but clear and distinct. A gentle movement of the cloud seemed to give life and motion to the "spectres". To add to the grandeur of the sight, a complete circle of rainbow light was formed round each figure as the sun rose higher in the heavens. Of necessity each person saw only one halo, that round his own shadow; for, when several people view a rainbow, no two of them see the same one. Each sees a rainbow whose centre lies in a line drawn from the sun and extended through the spectator's eye. So, in this case, while each of the party saw a halo, it was that immediately in front of himself, and encircling his own shadow. The vision lasted about a quarter of a hour, when the cloud dispersed, the "spectres" vanished, and the party were left alone on the hilltop.

The descent was commenced about 4.30 a.m., each one well pleased with the good fortune attending the visit. On reaching the plateau the journey was continued along the hillside and down the "Ladder", a precipitous path, into Glen Mark. The meadow, near which the Ladder Burn enters the Mark, and on which the Queen's Well stands, was crowded with deer, chiefly stags. On the approach of the party, they crossed the Mark and climbed up the almost perpendicular and lofty crag on the opposite side, where, to the ordinary eye, no foothold was possible.

After visiting Lochlee, Tarfside, Gannochy Bridge, and Fettercairn, the Grampians were again crossed at Cairn o' Mount, and Aboyne was reached in the afternoon, at the conclusion of a very successful and enjoyable expedition.

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HEATHER.

By Rev. George Williams, F.S.A. (Scot.).

"Moors red-brown wi' heather-bells".

"Its royal tints croon oor auld hills—
The heather dings them a'".

"On the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still".

Not more seductive to the curler is the call, "The ice is haudin'; look alive, man", or to the lover the striking of the trysting hour, than the blaze of beauty, lighted up by the bloom of the heather, is to the mountaineer. When moor and mountain have clothed themselves in their garments of beauty, a strong impulse seizes all that delight "to brush the heathy fells" to be afield. With all such it will not be amiss to have a word or two about the three plants known as heather.

They are *Calluna vulgaris*, or Common Ling (ling is not a common term among us), *Erica cinerea*, or fine-leaved Heath, and *Erica tetralix*, Cross-leaved Heath, or Bell Heath. The word "heather", like heathen, means a dweller on the heath or waste moorland. Heath and heather are both common in combination with other words. Not a few of the names of our moorland birds contain these terms as a sort of first name—*e.g.*, heath- or heather-bill, heath- or heather-cock, heather-lintie, -pipit, -peeper. We have heather-ale, -beer, -bred, -besom, -cowe, -faced, -plants, -moor, -soil, -reenge, -rope, with the plant names, carlin-heather, heath- or heather-bell, heath-berry, -grass, -pea, -whin, &c. An almost unknown bard of Galloway, David Davidson, whose "Thoughts on the Seasons" was published in London, in 1789, speaks of his great contemporary, Burns, shortly before passed away, as "heather-headed"—

"Sic sangs as thae, the heather-headed bard
Of Scotland ranted as he trode the glebe,
And Caledonia's taste thought it nae shame
To croon the o'erword".

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Our speech is adorned with other expressive metaphors taken from the plant—"Heather and dub", meaning rough and ready; "to set the heather on fire", to cause a commotion. In our topography we have such names as Heatherbrig (on Bennachie), Heathcot (near Aberdeen), Hedderwick (1696), in Keith-Hall, Heatheryfield (in Cairnie), Heatherygall (in Glass), Heatheryhillock (in Gartly), Heathercliff, Heathfields (several). Drumnaheath (Kintore) has a different origin.

The Gaelic fraoch (heather), or the adjective, gives us Freuchie, Freugh, Frew. There is a Fifeshire Fruix, which, like the Perthshire Frews, seems to be an English plural termination added to the Gaelic word—the lands broken up into parts are in this way described collectively. There is hardly a heather-cowe growing in all the Frews at the present time; but it is hard to say what the district may have been like when the plant was known as fraoch. Near Loch Freuchie is the hill "Carn Bad an Fhraoich", as well as a place called Auchnafree. Rules of Gaelic aspiration account for the termination "ree" in place-names, as Baile an fhraeigh (Balanree), the town of the heather; see for illustration the more probable alternative meaning of Tyrie, in the recent edition of Pratt's "Buchan", "the heather-house".

A friend of ours once desired an itinerant musician to play his favourite air, "Craigellachie Bridge". The performance was brought to a premature finish by the loud and angry protest of the listener, "Stop it, I say, this instant, and do not for ever destroy my favourite tune". For a similar reason I leave this subject of roots and place-names, lest, peradventure, the reader be tempted to think the less of heather itself thereby.

Calluna vulgaris (*C. erica*, according to some floras) is pre-eminently the plant of our hillsides. When minutely examined, the leaves are found to be somewhat downy, to be arranged in four rows on opposite sides of the stem, and furnished with a pair of spurs each. The flower is very small, shortly stalked, drooping, and of a purplish pink colour. It has received its generic name, *Calluna* (καλλύνω sweep), from the fact that besoms were made of it.

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On the drier and sunnier spots of the hill-face may be observed here and there ruddy crimson patches covered with the fine-leaved heath (*Erica cinerea*). Its drooping purple bells are clustered together on the top of a slender stem, "a dense whorled raceme". Its minute leaves are arranged in whorls of three, and are keeled. The *Erica tetralix*, or cross-leaved heath, delights in damper soil than its sister. Its leaves are narrow and downy and arranged in fours; hence its name, *tetralix*, or cross-leaved. The flowers are in terminal umbels or clusters, and the flower-stalks are of a whitish colour, caused by the down that covers them. This is one of our most delicate and pretty plants, and its rose-tinted flowers, almost white at the base, never fail to delight the hillside rambler.

Dried heather retains its colour for several months, and serves in the vase to project pleasant August into dismal December. What turnips and grass are to the cattle rearer, heather is to the sportsman. Its tops and seeds constitute the main food of the grouse and black-cock. As it is a perennial herb, with a lifetime of about a dozen years, the scrogs in favourable situations may attain a length of nearly three feet, and, near the hills, play an important part in the economy of the household as fuel and as thatch "to keep out the drap" on rainy days.

A not unimportant service in domestic economy rendered by heather is expressed by the finer quality and the higher price of the distinctive honey known as heather honey. Bee-keepers in August frequently convey their "skeps" many miles that the workers may be nearer the needful material for turning out the superior article and in larger quantities.

According to Dickie, heather may be found from sea-level to a height of 3300 feet, showing that altitude has little effect on its distribution. Heavy fines were inflicted on moor-burners. According to Scottish law, "no man make muir-burn after the first of March till all the corns be shorn, under the pain of fourty shillings to the lord of the land of the burner, or fourty days' imprisonment".—James I., Parliament I., cap. 20.

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In the days of yore a woman was fined so many marks by the Kirk Session of her parish for some misdemeanour she had been convicted of. A long-headed elder did not agree with the sentence, but spoke out, "The jade 'll never pay ye; she's nae guilty o' payin' ony ane; gar her pu' a feow birns o' fine swack heather to make the kirk water-ticht". This alternative was more pleasing to the delinquent—"Thank ye, Mains; I'se dee that, weel-a-wat. Lat me ken fan I'm to hae 't ready. Ye'll be inten'in' ca'in't". And the woman went her way rejoicing.

One of the unpleasant experiences of the hill-climber arises from the presence of peat-haggs. If the weather be in anywise damp he may have to paddle and puddle through a soft crust of peat. If the black stuff be too porridgy to support his weight, he may at any moment find himself "tuavin'" like a fly among jelly. Though dry as dust, this disagreeable material greatly impedes locomotion, and will draw from the pedestrian, as he looks at himself in the mirror, the remark of The Wee Wiffukie, "This is nae me". Everyone that has dug peat or has seen the digging of it in the moss knows that the surface is useless for fuel, and has to be removed to get at the good article beneath. This surface is a coating of decaying and decayed heather, which has not gained solidity enough for fuel or for one to walk over comfortably, and is a form of heather the climber will steer clear of as much as possible.

It is strange that heather, the carpet of the elves frequenting the hillside, plays almost no part in the superstition or folklore or our country. It is not mentioned in "The Folklore of the North-East of Scotland". Neil Munro's story, "The Secret of the Heather-Ale"—"the ale, the fine ale, the cream of rich heather-ale"—can scarcely be regarded as belonging to the category of superstition. The writer's grandfather pulled a birn of heather off the summit of Elfhillock, which he carried to the house as an offering to the women then engaged baking cakes. His present was not an acceptable one. Having mentioned where he got the heather, "Tak' it back,

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laddie", they exclaimed, "tak' it back at aince"; and he did so, laying the cowes carefully down as he got them, lest the fairies, incensed at the act, should interfere with the happiness of the inmates. But, in this instance, it was the place whence the heather was taken that involved the superstitious ideas, and not the plant itself.

One feels angry, if not amused, at Burt's outburst on the contemplation of our scenery (Burt's Letters):—"There is not much variety in it, but gloomy spaces, different rock, heath, and high and low. To cast one's eye from an eminence toward a group of mountains, they appear still one above the other, fainter and fainter, according to the aërial prospective, and the whole of a dismal, gloomy brown, drawing upon a dirty purple, and most of all disagreeable when the heath is in bloom. Those ridges of the mountains that appear next to the other—by their rugged, irregular lines, the heath and black rocks—are rendered extremely harsh to the eye by appearing close to that diaphanous body, without any medium to soften the opposition; and the clearer the day the more rude and offensive they are to the sight".

It would seem that none of our great poets has tuned the lyre to the praise of heather. Chaucer, Wordsworth, and Burns have won its secrets from the heart of the daisy, and told them. "The broom, the broom, the yellow broom, an ancient poet sang it". Elizabeth Barrett Browning gives us "Lessons from the Gorse". Tennyson lectures on the humble "Flower in the crannied wall", and which of our poets has not sung of the rose? But which of heather? Although, however, our greater writers have overlooked it, yet we possess many spirited verses from our minor bards glorifying the humble herb. John Nicholson writes on a Highland dell,

> "Where purple heath and azure hare-bells grew;
>
> . . . .
>
> Like a great chalice in the hand of God,
> That grand old glen brimm'd o'er".

Professor MacLaggan writes—

> "Up amang the purple heather,
> No' a flow'r that man can gather

Frae garden fair
Or greenhouse rare
Can beat the bonnie bloomin' heather".

A Highlander pleads (Carrick)—

"Heather beds are saft and sweet,
Mo laogh geal, mo laogh geal;
Love and ling will be our meat
Amang the Hielan' mountains.
. . . . .
Neither house nor ha' hae I,
Mo laogh geal, mo laogh geal,
But heather bed and starry sky,
Amang the Hielan' mountains".

An unknown bard, John Ballantine, has given us some lines full of feeling on the subject—

"I cling to the braes, like the bud to the thorn,
For 'mang their heather knowlets sae free was I born,
An' the hame o' my youth is my lov'd hame still,
'Neath the kindly shade o' a heather hill.
And when nature fails, row'd in my plaid,
I'll lay me down on a heather bed,
And leesome I'll wait till kind Heaven wills
To waft me awa frae my heather hills".

Emily Brontë has pictured a spirit in Heaven so discontented with the uncouth surroundings, and grumbling so incessantly at her hard lot there, that the angels lost all patience and flung her out to fall on the soft heath on the top of Wuthering Heights, among homelier sights and sounds, where she came to herself "sobbing for joy". But for aught we know the Everlasting Mountains may wear the purple tinge which makes our hills here familiar and beautiful to us!

Although heather is widely distributed ["Europe (Arctic), W. Siberia, Azores, Greenland, Newfoundland, and N. U. States (very rare)".—Hooker's Flora], yet many of our minor writers of verse give Scotland the style, "Land of the Heather", *par excellence*—"Thy heather, thy thistle are sacred to me"; "O for the bloom of my own native heather"; "Ken ye the land o' the heather?"; "If spared to reach oor heather-land"; "Leeze me on our heather-land"; "My Heather Land" (title of a song by Thom)—

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"The dew-water'd blooms
Of Scotia's red heather droop over their tombs";

"Isna Scotia's heather-bell
The glory o' the year?"

"Scotia's e'e is proud to see
Our Hielan' hills an' braes o' heather",

and so on. The above half-score of citations are from songs and poems of our minor bards, showing how closely and generally our country and heather are associated. John Imlah says—

"The broom an' whin, by loch an' lin,
Are tipp'd wi' gowd in summer weather;
How sweet an' fair! but meikle mair
The purple bells o' Hielan' heather.
Hey for the Hielan' heather!
Hey for the Hielan' heather!
Dear to me, an' aye shall be,
The bonnie braes o' Hielan' heather".

A poem, entitled "Scotch Heather", is given among Robert Bird's "Law Lyrics", two verses of which might be quoted—

"Bright purple bloom of Scotland's hills,
Garb of her mountains, glens, and rills,
At sight of thee my bosom fills
With memories proud
Of tartans, thistles, snuff, meal-mills,
And mist-wet clouds.

. . . . .

But why should thy small purple flower
Be dyed with blood in peaceful hour,
On moors, where men who creep and cower
With guns resort
To pour on birds a leaden shower
And call it sport?"

As Scotland has been somewhat loosely associated with heather, as if it, and not the thistle, were our national badge, so has heather got associated with our hills, as if there were none of our hills without its covering, and as if the seaside were an impossible or unlikely habitat for it. There are many hills where it is not found, and it may be seen in all its glory within a few yards of the sea-beach. White heather has a meaning for the lover and friend,

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and is eagerly sought after. Plants of it, usually found at considerable heights, are often transferred to our gardens, to die there, not because the barometric conditions are against it, but because the soil is unfavourable. Given favourable soil and a little attention, good results may be expected.

Of the adjectives qualifying heather, in some of our authors, are: *purple* (Hugh Haliburton), *bonnie, braw, red, russet* (Clough), *brown*, "moors *red-brown* wi' heather-bells" (Burns), *green, halesome* (Imlah), *rank, hardy, fragrant* (from "The Gadie rins"), and Janet Hamilton has "the hinny breath o' the hether-bells glaffin' on the breeze". The late Queen wrote of hills as "beautifully heather-coloured". Robert Bird has "climbed 'mong hairsts of heather, deep and wide". John Stuart Blackie tells us that

"The braes of Mar with heather glow";

and Freeland mentions how

"In heathy wildness,
On bed of budding heather
In dreams a' night he lay".

Whoever has read our late Queen's "Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands" will recollect how a sprig of white heather, picked on Craig nam Ban, "the emblem of good luck", lent its aid to the bashful suitor, and so played a part in the close union between the Royal Houses of our Native Land and of the Prussian Fatherland.

F. Edward Hulme, in "Familiar Wild Flowers", states that a golden-yellow dye is made of the crushed heather shoots and stems. They are boiled in alum-water, and exposed for three or four days to the air. "Used alone", he adds, "it gives various tints of yellow and orange; with oak bark a rich brown, with cochineal tints of scarlet". He also mentions that a strong decoction of it is used in Scotland in tanning leather.

In the November number of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Dr. W. G. Smith has an article on "The

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Origin and Development of Heather Moorland", being a review of a German work by Dr. Paul Graebner—*Die Heide Norddeutschlands*—in which he assures us that "the monograph of Dr. Graebner is one of the standard books of reference on heather vegetation, and will repay careful reading".

THE HEATHER-FLOWER.

The swing of the heather's beneath my feet:
  Oh, the heather-flower so red!
The westerly wind is warm and sweet,
And far below me the waters meet
  That rise on the mountain-head.

No grey mists mantle the steep hillside:
  Oh, the heather-flower is red!
All day I will wander the moorland wide,
Where the blackcock calls, and at eventide
  The heather shall be my bed.

And the rocky fells are wild and stern,
  But the heather-flower is red;
The honeysuckle and maiden-fern
And foxglove grow by the winding burn,
  All drenched with the dews night-shed.

Oh, bonny the hills where the ash-tree grows,
  Where the heather-flower is red!
And in summer shine, or in winter snows,
Or in autumn fall when the drooping rose
  Sinks down to the dank earth dead.

'Tis ever the land I love the best,
  The land of the heather red.
So I'll wander now on the rolling crest
Of the lonely moor, till into the west
  The feet of the day have fled.

Lawrence B. Jupp.

(In *Chambers's Journal.*)

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BEN CRUACHAN.

By A. L. Bagley.

After a torrential week lost at Luss, I took the early steamer up the lake to Ardlui, thence the coach to Crianlarich, and from there the train to Taynuilt. There was the usual storm while we steamed up the lake, but it was mercifully fine as we drove from Ardlui to Crianlarich; all the afternoon it poured in the usual style. I had come to Taynuilt in order to ascend Ben Cruachan, just as I had gone to Luss to ascend Ben Lomond, and it really seemed as though I were doomed to disappointment here also, for during the next two days there was the same continuous succession of violent storms. There was an aneroid barometer in my lodgings, from which, however, I was unable to extract any crumb of comfort; indeed, the indicator sank so low that I was seriously afraid that it would go right round, and come up on the other side: and what awful convulsion of nature might then be expected to follow? However, I am thankful to say that I was spared *that* dreadful portent, for the third morning (Monday, September 21st) was, to my great amazement, fine when I arose, and seemed likely to remain so, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of the barometer to adhere to "very stormy". Of course I took advantage of this remarkable state of things to set out for Ben Cruachan, and was rewarded by a fine day, perfect except for a haze that crept up soon after mid-day. I may remark *en passant* that this was the only day in my fortnight's holiday on which there was no rain.

I suppose most people are aware that Ben Cruachan is a twin—that is to say, there are two principal peaks of almost identical height and only about half-a-mile apart. There are, however, several subsidiary peaks lying between Dalmally and the twin main peaks, and, indeed, Ben Cruachan is really rather a small mountain range than a

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single mountain, as there are about half-a-dozen peaks which exceed 3000 feet, and several others which closely approach that magic height. My idea was to ascend from the Dalmally side and traverse the whole range from end to end, omitting the outlying peaks of Ben Vourie and Meall Cuanail; and I will now proceed to relate how I successfully accomplished that meritorious design.

I left Taynuilt by the 8.42 train for Loch Awe station, and walked thence along the Dalmally road to the point where the path to Ben Cruachan strikes off. I say "path", because both guide-book and natives speak of one; but as a matter of fact such paths as exist—and there is any amount of them at first—all lose themselves in the bogs, in which the unwary pedestrian runs considerable risk of losing himself also. Probably, however, the bogs were very much worse than usual, owing to the persistent heavy rains of the past few weeks; at any rate nobody who has ascended Ben Cruachan by this route, and with whom I have compared notes, seems to have suffered from the bogs as I did, and many men appear hardly to have noticed them. I have, however, a painfully clear recollection of the manner in which I bounded gracefully from one comparatively solid tuft of heather to another, varied by occasional ungraceful flounderings when an apparently solid tuft turned out a delusion and a snare, and did its level best to drag me down with a hideous squelch into the sloshy depths. This sort of thing is a fatiguing exercise, and offers, moreover, no compensations; so I was very glad to reach the foot-bridge over the burn, just beyond the point where the two burns meet, and to find somewhat more solid ground on the other side, from which the actual ascent now begins.

From here two ridges, either of which may be taken, ascend very steeply to two peaks, each just about 3000 feet high; from these two peaks the ridges drop a few hundred feet, and then ascend more steeply still to a central peak, 3272 feet, which has no name bestowed upon it on the maps, although it must surely possess one.* The two ridges,

* Stob Dlamh.

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converging on this central peak, thus form a gigantic semicircle, enclosing a wild and desolate corrie, the rock walls of which are for the most part grandly precipitous. I do not know that there is any choice between the two ridges. I chose the right-hand one, and, when I was half-way up, I thought the other looked much finer, and wished I had followed it; but I have not the slightest doubt but that, if I had chosen the left-hand one, I should have been similarly dissatisfied. At all events I reached the central peak of this semicircle, dominating grandly the magnificent corrie, at 12.30, having left the Loch Awe station at 9.10, and from this central point there seemed nothing to choose between the two ridges.

But when you have attained the summit of this peak, although it is considerably over 3000 feet in height, and although it has taken you rather over three hours of fairly hard work to accomplish, you must by no means imagine that you have ascended Ben Cruachan. On the contrary, you have hardly begun to ascend him, for this is merely one of the half-dozen outlying subsidiary peaks, and the real twin summits have not yet been visible. Now, however, as you step on the summit of this 3272 feet peak, the easternmost of the twin summits bursts upon you in all its beauty and terror. Far away, a couple of miles or so across an awful boulder-strewn wilderness, with the most frightful precipices falling sheer into Glen Noe on the north, rises a needle of rock, a miniature snowless Matterhorn; this is the real summit of Ben Cruachan, the western twin-peak, hidden behind it, being about 80 feet lower. The emotions with which you regard it will, of course, depend upon your appetite for climbing; if you are a scansorial artist (it sounds rather like a tailor, but I merely mean a climber) of the first water, you will gloat over the sight and burn for the fray; if you are a humble pedestrian and hill-walker your heart will sink into your boots, and you will wonder why you came. I am free to confess that I belonged at this time to the latter category, and indeed, even now, can hardly claim to have graduated in the higher division; I had then never ascended any mountain except

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Snowdon, up which mountain I had been personally conducted, so to speak. As I sat there and gazed upon that rock-needle, my heart distinctly failed me. I wondered how I should get up, and whether, if I succeeded in getting up, I should ever come down again. However, it looks, of course, at a distance of two miles, very much steeper than it really is, and I found no great difficulty in the ascent.

From the 3272 feet peak one descends several hundred feet, then ascends another of 3312 feet (Drochaid Glas), making the third peak of 3000 feet or thereabouts, then comes another descent, and finally a mile or more along the ridge, with a clean-cut edge falling away to Glen Noe in the frightful precipices already alluded to. From these first three peaks, I had revelled in the most magnificent prospect that I have ever beheld: a sea of mountain tops all around, more mountains, I suppose, in the one view than I had ever seen in my life before. Behind and far below lay Dalmally, half-hidden by trees in the sylvan Strath of Orchy; behind that was Ben Lui, with hundreds of encircling mountains, which I could not identify, though I believed that I recognised Ben Lomond amongst, or rather beyond, them; Loch Awe looked more like a river than a lake, with its 20 miles of graceful curve. In front the greater part of Loch Etive was hidden by the twin peaks of Ben Cruachan, but a little corner was visible, with a tiny dot, which I suppose was the little lake steamer making its way across; beyond the low island of Lismore was the Sound of Mull, with the mountains of Morven and Ardgour to the right, and those of the island of Mull to the left; a group of fine mountains headed Loch Etive; beyond, the huge, unshapely head of Ben Nevis, and, farther still, other mountains without end faded away into the dim and distant north. Never before had I seen such a glorious view, and but very seldom since.

Unfortunately, as I picked my way along the ridge, I became aware that a thick haze was gradually creeping over the scene. I was very much afraid, too, that rain was approaching; but none came, nor was I ever actually in

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the clouds, for which, with those awful precipices on my right hand, I was very thankful. But a curious filmy haze slowly blotted out the whole view, and when I stepped on the summit of the eastern and loftiest peak at 2 o'clock, there was absolutely nothing whatever to be seen, which was a great disappointment. As it was very cold up there, and there was no view, I did not linger, but hurried on as fast as I could along the ridge which connects the twin summits, and up the western and last peak, which I reached at 2.45. By this time the sun was out, and the wind had died down, and I sat for about ten minutes on the summit, finishing the remains of my lunch, and hoping that the haze would disperse, which, however, it did not. While I was sitting there, a man appeared on the other summit, which was clear of the haze; and we stood there, one on each twin summit, the only visible evidences of life. I waved my stick at him, and drank his health in my last remaining drop of whisky.

When I left the summit at about 3 o'clock, I thought I had plenty of time, but I found the descent took longer than I had expected. When I got to the end of the wilderness of boulders, which lay for miles around the summits, I found that the whole mountain side was one gigantic bog, and for the next hour I had a terrible time of floundering and struggling, similar to that which I had gone through earlier in the day. However, I descended to the road near the Bridge of Awe at last, and reached my comfortable little room at Taynuilt at 6 o'clock, feeling very well pleased with myself.

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WISE WORDS ON CAMPING, AND A SHORT WAY WITH SNORERS.

By One who hath enjoyed the One and suffered the Other.

To dwell awhile in a Tent upon some great Hill is a pleasant thing, so it be rightly gone about. For there shall the weary man forget his Cares and the sad man his Troubles, and he that is neither, remembereth not that he shall one day be both. Only take not with you one that is in Love. For if a man keep a Diary, he may be reproved; and even if he snore, he may be cured; but how shall he be made bearable to his friends if he be in Love? I say, beware of such.

In choosing ground whereon to pitch thy *Tabernaculum* or Tent, there is much Thought to be taken; for if it be too high it will be difficult to come at, and if it be too low it will be come at too easily by Those who are carried swiftly about from place to place in chariots. Moreover, there must be water to be come by, both for refreshment and for cleanliness; but beware of pitching too near any Stream, lest it overflow upon thee. Neither is it well to pitch upon a sheep-track, for the Sheep is but a foolish creature, and will turn neither to the right hand nor to the left from his path, but will disturb thy rest with his Lamentations. But choose you a soft, level *glebula* or turf (but if it slope gently it will do no harm) far removed from Highways, yet not too far, and hard by some rushing Brook, whose pure waters do leap over its rocky Bed, whereon no Weed may grow for the swiftness, and whose gentle Gurgling shall woo thee to sleep in spite of much Snoring. Such streams do often run forth into sweet, still Pools, where a man may bathe; and, look you, there is nought that doth refresh both Body and Mind in comparison with a Bath at dawn in a Waterfall on a mountain side, albeit there are many who choose rather to enjoy it later.

See well to it that there be no dead sheep in your

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stream, for this unsavoury Beast delighteth so to order his End that you shall not be aware of him till after many days.

Though all this be observed, yet may your Camp be but a Spot and a Blemish on the face of the Earth, if it be not kept orderly and tidy withal. This is a little matter, but of great moment. Be not led astray by those who build great Inns on the top of a mountain so that much people do come together from the uttermost parts of the Earth to eat and to drink there, and consider not what manner of place it is which they have defiled.

In the cutting of Bread upon a camp table there is much spilling of Drink, and he who sitteth at the lower side thereof shall receive it in his Bosom. In observing this there is Wisdom.

A foul Pipe is a grievous Thing in a Tent, and they who use sucn are more to be avoided than many bad Drains. Dottels also are an abomination.

Take example by the patience of the Candle, and swear not when the Wind extinguiseth her. Surely she is the more put out of the twain, yet remaineth silent.

A Slug in the grass is a sweet Thing for contemplation while he gambolleth circumspectly; but when he leapeth into the Soup he is hardly to be borne.

Speak not vain words, saying, "To-morrow we will rise early and work hard till the evening." It were pity thou shouldest forswear thyself.

The Washing of Plates and Dishes is a Weariness, and if, by going forth to carry water from the stream, thou cause it to fall unto thy Friend: well. But do not so too often, lest, whilst thou art gone, he betake himself to his Journal, and thou, on thy return, be constrained to do the Washing also.

He who walketh upon the Ground-sheet with his climbing-boots is a mischievous Fellow, and, when Rain falleth, he shall repent him of his Error.

A *Rhonchissator* or Snorer is a pestilent Thing in a Tent, and there be few who can abide him, even among those of his own kind. It avails nothing to reproach him

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with his Trumpeting; for, look you, he will deny it—snore he never so rombustiously. Seek out, therefore, a stout, lusty Bull Frog—one much given to Chanting by Night—and tie him fast by the Leg at bed-time over against where thy Friend sleepeth. Your Amphibian shall presently begin to warble forth—for he hath a merry Soul—and if the Snorer be sleeping you must wake him lovingly; whereat he will be angry, for he is a selfish Beast and likes not to be kept from his Sleep. After he hath endured for a while, he will go forth from the tent in great anger to make an end of the Noise, and you shall lie at your ease while he tumbleth over Ropes and stumbleth over Stones and slippeth into Pools, and slideth down Steep Places—and all this while good Master Bull Frog shall keep him in heart with his Bellowing. It may chance that your Friend shall step upon him unawares in the darkness, and so make an end of him and his Song together; then must you have your two Frogs the next night, and, if so be these perish also, three or more the night after that. But he must be a Great Snorer indeed if two will not suffice to bring about his Healing. Or, being affrighted at the approach of Man (and this is the more likely) the Reptile shall peradventure hold his peace till your friend hath given up the search and returned to his Bed. Then he incontinently lifteth up his Voice again, so that the very hills do ring with it. Now this is a great Bitterness to your Snorer, for he can bear with no Noise save his own, so he shall go forth again in a Rage to put his rival to silence. Now, if all go well, and your frogs be in good voice, he shall certainly get him no sleep that night, nor will you either. Nevertheless, if he be brought to perceive, in some sort, what manner of a Plague he hath been to his bedfellow, your Loss will be Gain; for so shall you both return home from your Journey much refreshed, and fall to your Labours with a will, even as new men.

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DUNSINANE.

By William Barclay.

> "O'er the brow of Dunsinane the summer sun glows,
> O'er the brow of Dunsinane the summer wind blows,
> And fair is the landscape that's spreading beneath
> The brow of Dunsinane, the hill of Macbeth".

Dunsinane Hill is situated in the parish of Collace, eight miles north-east of Perth. Starting from the Fair City, the visitor gets the benefit of the tramcar as far as Scone, 2 miles. Should he prefer to walk, he has simply to cross the Perth Bridge and follow the high road to New Scone. At the first milestone a glimpse is got of our hill, peeping over the intervening ground. The road now runs on through the somewhat straggling village of New Scone, and thence into the open again. By diverging a little from the road at the fourth milestone, a magnificent view is got of Dunsinane with the Giant's Hill—one-inch O. S. Black Hill—behind. Immediately beyond the fifth milestone is Balbeggie; here a road will be observed branching off to the right. Two miles farther on, this road forks, one branch going on to Kinrossie and Collace, the other, the one to the right, running by the base of Dunsinane and the Giant's Hill to Abernyte and Inchture.

Although not the highest, Dunsinane certainly is—from a historical standpoint at least—the most important summit of the Sidlaw range, which separates the Carse of Gowrie on the south from the broad and extensive valley of Strathmore on the the north. Being somewhat distant from the line of railway communication, it is seldom visited by the ordinary sightseer. The hill itself is readily distinguished from its neighbours, the Giant's Hill and King's Seat, by being smaller, more conical in shape, and green to its very summit. It rises to a height of 1012 feet above the level of the sea.

Before ascending the hill, the traveller should not fail

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to depart from the road a little and pay a visit to the "Lang Man's Grave". This is a large, flat, coffin-shaped stone, seven and a half feet long, lying in the angular embrace of the two roads which meet under Dunsinane. Near it is an upright stone about six feet high. These stones are not seen from the road on account of the young plantation that has sprung up around them. Numerous stories are current as to who the "Lang Man" was. One of them says that when Macbeth was attacked in his castle on Dunsinane he fled up the Giant's Hill, where, being hotly pursued by Macduff, he threw himself over the rocks, was killed, and buried at the "Lang Man's Grave".* Another and more reasonable explanation is that given by Knox in his description of the "Basin of the Tay". It is to the effect that an uncommonly tall man from the neighbourhood of Dundee was attending a fair at Scone, and, on his way home at night—probably intoxicated—he either committed suicide or was murdered here, and was buried at the place which has since been known as the "Lang Man's Grave".

The traveller has now before him the conical front of Dunsinane, rising less than 500 feet above the level of the road, separated from the higher and steeper slope of the Giant's Hill by a deep, narrow, and somewhat rocky cleft. No great effort is required to ascend the hill, and an easy walk up its verdant slopes lands one on the summit before he is aware of it; and then what a glorious prospect is spread out before him! The summit is cup-shaped, overgrown with clusters of nettles, and presents unmistakable evidence of having been crowned at some time by a fort or castle of some importance. Tradition has it that Macbeth first of all built his castle at Cairnbeddie, in the parish of St. Martins, distant about three miles from Dunsinane. Before it was euphonised, the name was written Caer Bed, or Caer Beth—*i.e.*, the Castle of Macbeth.

When Macbeth had murdered the good King Duncan and ascended his throne, it was there that he built his castle

* Forsyth's "Beauties of Scotland", Vol. IV., pp. 319-321.

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and resided for the first ten years of his reign. The site was a plain, but he first raised a circular mound about 77 yards in diameter and 250 in circumference, considerably above the level of the surrounding ground; on this he built his castle, and surrounded it with a moat 30 feet in breadth. Judging from the size of the base, it must have been a structure of some magnitude. We find in the Statistical Account that "about 24 years ago (1818) a great quantity of earth was removed from one side of this mound, and horse-shoes, apparently those of ponies, were found in great abundance, likewise handles of swords and dirks". It was when Macbeth began to think he was not sufficiently secure in Cairnbeddie that he built his other and more formidable castle on the Hill of Dunsinane. We are told that Dunsinane signifies "the Hill of the Ants", and that this name originated from the crowds of men and beasts that swarmed upon its sides, and from their great activity during the building of the castle. But as it is highly probable that this hill had originally been fortified by the ancient Britons, and that Macbeth had naturally taken advantage of the great accumulation of stones, &c., there is no doubt that the labour of constructing his castle would thereby be very much lessened, and hence the above derivation is considered fallacious. True it is, that in the Irish language, which is akin to the Gaelic, *Dun-seangain* does signify "the Hill of Ants"; *Dun-sinin*, in Gaelic, signifies a hill resembling a nipple, and there is not the least doubt but that this hill, from certain directions, does resemble that part of the human anatomy.

His castle on Dunsinane occupied an oval area, 210 feet long and 130 feet wide, and was defended by both a rampart and a ditch, right round the summit of the hill. About a century ago, excavations were conducted here by the celebrated Dr. Playfair, and resulted in the discovery of part of the strong wall with which Macbeth had encircled his castle. Principal Playfair, in his "Description of Scotland", says regarding this:—"In penetrating horizontally seven yards into the ruins of this rampart, I lately (1819) discovered a part of it as entire as when it

was originally constructed. Founded on the rock, it is neatly built of large stones. If the rubbish on the outside were removed, this would be one of the most remarkable monuments of antiquity in Britain. At the foot of that wall there was a level walk of considerable breadth, and 231 yards in circuit, secured by a parapet and ditch. Having diligently explored the area of the fortress, now three feet below the surface, and cut a deep trench across it, I found no vestige of buildings in it; so the temporary houses were probably composed of wood. In one corner great quantities of charcoal, bones of black cattle, sheep, and hares, were dug up, but none of the human body". These ramparts and ditches can be seen quite distinctly to this day, and to the best advantage from the neighbouring slopes of the Giant's Hill. Further excavations made in 1857 brought to light a doorway leading to an underground chamber, and a beautifully worked bronze finger ring in the form of a spiral double serpent.

In looking at the surrounding landscape, doubtless the first object towards which the visitor will turn will be Birnam Hill; and, as he casts his eye across the broad, fertile valley of Strathmore, he can picture to himself what must have been the feelings of Macbeth as he gazed on that same scene, then moorland and moss, and beheld

"Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane come".

At our feet on the north is the great valley of Strathmore, stretching from Crieff to Stonehaven, with many towns and villages scattered here and there among its "waving fields and pastures green, with gentle slopes and groves between".

Eastwards, the view is partly obscured by the large mass of the Giant's Hill, but over the southern face of that hill we have the city of Dundee, rising from the water's edge and creeping up the slopes of the Law and Balgay Hills, the Tay Bridge connecting the shires of Fife and Forfar, and, beyond, the broad bosom of the ocean. To the south we have part of the fruitful Carse of Gowrie fringing the estuary; more distant is the "Kingdom of

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Fife", Norman's Law, Largo Law, and the two Lomonds forming the prominences. Next come the Ochils, culminating in Ben Cleuch (2363); lower down the Fair City nestles at the foot of Kinnoull Hill.

The remaining half of the circle is one huge amphitheatre of hills, cleft by their numerous glens—Turrett. Sma' Glen, Little Glen Shee, Glen Garr, Birnam, Glen Shee, Glen Isla, and Glen Clova. In front are the southern offshoots or spurs of the great Grampian chain, but behind is one continuous line of the pride of Scottish hills, towering aloft in wild and rugged grandeur. On the western horizon we have Ben Vorlich (3224) and Stùc a Chroin (3189), with Ben Chonzie (3048) above Glen Turrett; then come Ben Lawers (3984), Carn Mairg (3419), Schichallion (3547), and Farragon (2559); Ben Vrackie (2757) and Ben Vuroch (2961), with Beinn Dearg (3304) and Beinn a' Ghlo (3671) behind. Over Blairgowrie is the conical Mount Blair (2441), backed up by a semicircle of giants, including Glas Thulachan (3445), Carn Bhinnein (3006), Carn Geoidh (3194), the Cairnwell (3059), Creag Leacach (3238), Glas Maol (3502), Cairn na Glasha (3484), Mayar (3043), and Driesh (3105). Behind Alyth is the Cat Law (2196)

A dip of about 400 feet separates Dunsinane from the Giant's Hill, but it is an easy walk from one to the other. To the south the Giant's Hill presents a very steep front, but on the north the slope is more gradual, and is covered with short heather. The summit is grassy, of considerable extent, and presents three distinct eminences, the highest of which rises to a height of 1182 feet. The view from here is just a repetition of what was seen from Dunsinane, except that it is slightly enlarged; Auchterhouse Hill (1399) and its neighbour Craigowl (1493), the highest point of the Sidlaws, are now within view, as are also the river Tay, from the mouth of the Earn right out to sea, and the villages of Abernethy and Newburgh, in the shadow of the Ochils. A nice bit of moorland separates us from the King's Seat, about a mile distant. The King's Seat, the highest and most prominent of the three hills, is

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the only one that is honoured with a cairn. It is detached from the others, and rises from a broad base to a conical point at an elevation of 1235 feet. The hill was at one time crowned with a watchtower, which probably served as an outpost to guard Macbeth's Castle on the adjacent hill of Dunsinane; and to the proximity of this castle is no doubt due the name of King's Seat. The towns of Forfar and Kirriemuir are now added to our view. A descent can be made either to the north or to the south whereby the traveller may join the railway on the one hand at Woodside or Coupar-Angus, and on the other at Inchture; and thus end an excursion, which for diversity of view and historic associations can hardly be excelled in all broad Scotland.

THE MOUNTAINS.

Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement!
  Still moving with you;
For, ever some new head and breast of them
  Thrusts into view
To observe the intruder; you see it
  If quickly you turn
And, before they escape you surprise them.
  They grudge you should learn
How the soft plains they look on, lean over
  And love (they pretend),
Cower beneath them.

Robert Browning.

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THE ALTITUDE OF FOREST TREES ON THE CAIRNGORM MOUNTAINS.

(*Read at the Andersonian Naturalists' Society, Glasgow, 7th November*, 1902).

By Hugh Boyd Watt.

In the region of the Cairngorm Mountains is to be found the finest wild forest scenery in the country, in respect both of extent and of natural features. From the hill-slope above Boat of Garten, for instance, the prospect is such as no other district in the country can show. That fine river, the Spey, is immediately below the eyes; across it are the massed and serried ranks of the pine trees of the Forests of Abernethy and Rothiemurchus, extending for miles up and down the river, and stretching up the hills, which culminate in the principal summits of the Cairngorms. This great background, far in the distance, dwarfs by its size and remoteness the woodlands at its base. They seem, in proportion, only dense plantations such as may be seen on any hillside, and it is perhaps not until the forests are actually visited and passed through that their extent is properly appreciated.

I do not know that the history of these woodlands has yet been told with any fulness or scientific accuracy, tradition, legend, and imagination—all admirable things in their proper places—having been too much drawn upon. Nor will this side of the subject be taken up here, this paper being limited to some observations, recently made, on the kinds of trees found on the Cairngorms, and particularly as to the altitudes at which they grow.

It may be said generally that about 1700 feet above sea-level represents the line above which only few or exceptionally situated trees occur, and these only of a very few species. It might be more accurate to say that 1500 feet is the limit; about this height the Abernethy

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and Rothiemurchus Scots pines die out. In Glen Feshie, and on the Don above Cock Bridge, and in Glen Quoich, the highest pines are also at about 1500 feet. In Glen Dee they stop at about 1300 feet, and in Glen Lui, at Derry Lodge (alt. 1386 feet), there is a detached clump of fair-sized pines. At Braemar, Creag Choinnich (alt. 1764 feet) is wooded nearly to the top, chiefly with Scots pines and larches. The only other tree which attains the heights just named is the birch, which seems better able than the Scots pine to hold its own, and even gain ground. In some places—such as Glen Quoich—the wreck of the pines, blown down and decaying, while not unpicturesque, is in some aspects painful. The fallen pines seem not worth clearing away, and a new plantation at the height-limits named is quite unusual. There is a dense one of Scots pines in Glen Lui (alt. about 1300 feet), carefully fenced, well grown, and healthy looking, but such a plantation cannot be said to add to the beauty of the spot. The birch, on the other hand, cannot be other than beautiful, and one of the finest and most extensive birch woods known to me is at Braemar. Many of the houses in the village of Braemar are built in clearings in this wood, trees frequently being left standing at and around the houses. By the side of the Dee the birches are tall, and many are above the average size; but when an altitude of 1500 feet is reached, they have become beautifully small and well proportioned—regular dwarf trees. There are thousands not over six feet in height. They ascend in almost unbroken numbers to an altitude of about 1700 feet on the side of Morrone, and sweep along its northern slopes from about Corriemulzie to Glen Clunie—a distance of more than two miles. It is somewhat curious how they immediately die out in Glen Clunie, and from near the Croft of Muickan, till the Spital of Glenshee is reached (about 14 miles), not a group of forest trees is to be seen. The Morrone Wood is a characteristic Highland native wood, with an undergrowth of heather, juniper, and bracken. Amongst the birches are occasional aspens, occurring up to 1500 feet,

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and Scots pines come in in places, but the wood is a typical birch one. Since I made these observations, I have learned that Macgillivray knew this Morrone Wood (previous to 1855), seemingly much in the same state then as it is now (*Natural History of Deeside and Braemar*, 1885, p. 172). This writer's remark that "the whole tract along the river from . . . Birse to the Linn may be considered a birch forest" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 164-5), is at variance with Lord Cockburn's observation made in 1846. The last-named remarks on the equal profusion of the birch and Scots pine near Castleton (*Circuit Journeys*, 2nd ed., 1889, p. 305). Macgillivray, however, seems to have looked on the Scots pine as not a native of Braemar (*Op. cit.*, pp. 17 and 361). The present conditions are that by the Dee at and above Braemar the Scots pine is predominant, and by the time the Linn is reached the trees are almost entirely of this species. Hazel and alder occur by the river side above Braemar, and at or near the village (alt. 1110 feet) are well-grown and flourishing examples of the lime, great maple, elm, horse-chestnut, beech, and larch. A dark copper beech is right in the village. These last named species must all be noted as introduced, not native. I did not observe any oaks higher up than about 700 or 800 feet.

Through the kindness of Miss J. G. Watt, I had some observations made at Tomintoul (alt. 1160 feet) this summer on forest trees. These, along with my Braemar notes, may be concisely given in the form of a list of species observed at an altitude of 1100 feet and over. This limit is fixed because it covers both Braemar and Tomintoul, and not because any scientific value attaches to an elevation of 1100 feet. Nor can any deduction or inference be safely made from the list as to the limits up to which the species named can grow on our mountains. It is, in short, an "observational", not a theoretical list.

Near Tomintoul, at a height of about 1200 feet, is an interesting peat-moss. It is being cut for fuel, and shows a depth of some ten feet in places. In it are found trunks of large trees; the species I have not ascertained, but the

probability is that it is the Scots pine. The local story is that this wood was burnt by our "auld enemy" the English in "Queen Anne's time". It is much more likely that this and the remains of other burnt woods frequently found in the Highlands are evidences of the primitive methods by which the earlier inhabitants cleared the land for their own purposes.

List of Species of Forest Trees noted at 1100 feet and upwards.

No.	Common name	Latin name	Height
1.	Lime	*Tilia europæa*	1100-1200 feet.
2.	Great Maple	*Acer Pseudoplatanus*	" " "
3.	Laburnum	*Cytisus Laburnum.*	" " "
4.	Wild Cherry	*Prunus Avium*	" " "
5.	Rowan	*Pyrus Aucuparia*	1100 feet.
6.	Hawthorn	*Cratægus Oxyacantha*	" "
7.	Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*	1100-1200 feet.
8.	Elm	*Ulmus montana*	" " "
9.	Birch	*Betula alba*	up to 1700 "
10.	Alder	*Alnus glutinosa*	1100-1200 "
11.	Hazel	*Corylus Avellana*	" " "
12.	Horse-Chestnut	*Æsculus Hippocastanum*	1100 feet.
13.	Beech	*Fagus sylvatica*	" "
14 & 15.	Willows	*Salix* (2 species at least)	1100-1200 "
16.	Aspen	*Populus tremula*	up to 1500 "
17.	Scots Pine	*Pinus sylvestris*	" " "
18.	Larch	*Larix europæa*	over " "

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EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

A Winter Day on Bennachie.

Most of the members of the Club know Bennachie, or, if they don't, they ought to be heartily ashamed of themselves. In my opinion, no one should be admitted to membership who has not been on the top—in fact, on all the tops—of Bennachie. I admit I have a peculiar liking for Bennachie, that "King of common hills". But to our tale. My friend and I left Aberdeen with the 8.5 a.m. train on New-Year's Day, and in due course arrived at Pitcaple. We spent little time in the vicinity of the station, for there was nothing very attractive—everything appeared to be wrapt in slumber. We were at the Maiden Stane and into the Woods of Pittodrie in a comparatively short time, the morning wind making our ears tingle. But what a refreshing and invigorating effect it had as compared with what we had felt in the city!

We had not gone far up the hill road when snow began to make its appearance, at first in little patches; but very soon we found that the road was practically snowed up, while here and there the snow had been blown into beautiful, fantastic shapes. The surface of the snow was, on the whole, quite hard, but occasionally we found ourselves on a soft bit, where we floundered, sometimes disappearing almost out of sight, until we got on to the hard snow again. On arriving at the Oxen Craig we had a remarkably good view in some directions; the hills to the north were white from top to bottom. Tap o' Noth looked extremely pretty in his mantle of snow; and away among the Cairngorms we could see Ben Avon—huge always—in his winter's garb. The lower Deeside hills were practically free from snow. We could not see a single speck on Clochnaben or Kerloch, but "Morven of snow" was true to his tradition.

We were a little surprised to see great numbers of grouse on Bennachie, for, although we have been there often, we never before came across many; but this we attributed to the fact that the adjacent hills to the north were entirely covered with snow, while Bennachie was almost clear on the slopes. Bidding Oxen Craig farewell, we made our way to the Mither Tap. There was a good deal of snow on the plateau.

On arriving at the peat road on the descent, we were surprised to discover two young men floundering in the snow, making their way to the summit, and, as we thought, not a little disappointed to find we had been up before them. We arrived at Inveramsay in good time for our train, reaching Aberdeen early in the afternoon.—H. A. B.

The following account of Balmoral appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*

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of 27th August:—It has not before been pointed out that when Queen Victoria purchased her Highland estate she was not the first of her Royal race who owned it. The earliest appearance on record of Balmoral—Bouchmorale it is then called—shows it to have been the property of King James II. of Scotland. This was when Master Richard de Forbes, a canon of Aberdeen, chamberlain of "all and singular the lands pertaining to the lord the King in the Kingdom of Scotland, and specially in that part" (the Earldom of Mar), delivered his accounts at Edinburgh, on 11th July, 1451. These accounts for Mar are subdivided Strathdon, Strathdee, Cromar, and Mukvale, *i.e.*, Glenmuick; and Bouchmorale, a £5 land, like Abergheldy, a £10 land, figures in the second of these. Trouble about this time had fallen out between the King and Thomas, second Lord Erskine, *de jure* 18th Earl of Mar, over the Mar lands. In 1459 the former bestowed the Earldom on his fourth son, Prince John. He died in 1479 unmarried, and the King gave the Earldom to his second son, Alexander, Duke of Albany, three years thereafter. The third James in 1486 bestowed it on his son, Prince John, and in 1562 Mary Queen of Scots gave the Earldom to her brother James, Earl of Moray—all which grants were eventually declared to have been inept. Notwithstanding, Balmoral for considerably over 100 years had belonged to members of the Royal Family, and came again to the Sovereign exactly 50 years ago by purchase from the Duke of Fife's father. It comprises about 11,000 acres, extends from the Dee to the summit of Lochnagar, the mountain celebrated by Byron, joins the estates of Abergeldie and Birkhall, and the three estates constitute one demesne extending eleven miles along the Dee. Balmoral is a compound Gaelic name, signifying the house by the big cliff or rock.

BALMORAL.

KING LEWANIKA, of Barotseland, South Africa, one of the Coronation guests, paid a visit to Deeside in the end of July. One incident of his visit is noticeable as containing an exquisitely natural touch. It was thus chronicled by the *Free Press*:—"King Lewanika was charmed with the scenery between Aboyne and Ballater, and as the train entered the moor of Dinnet his enthusiasm was unbounded. Rising from his seat and stepping to the window of the saloon as the train dashed over the moor, with the heather in rich bloom, King Lewanika lifted his arms in admiration, and exclaimed, 'Oh! Africa, Africa! The Matoka Hills!' It may be explained that the scenery at this particular part does recall to those who have been in the neighbourhood of the Zambesi the rugged scenery of that region, and the view which suddenly opened out to the South African must have seemed to him like a glimpse of home". A party of Fijians (native armed Constabulary) journeyed to Balmoral two days later; and we were informed that they also discovered a likeness between Deeside scenery and the scenery of Fiji, particularly where the Girnock joins the Dee.

DEESIDE SCENERY AND FOREIGN COMPARISONS.

The Barmekin of Echt.

The Barmekin has been visited by the Club (*C.C.J.*, I., 46), and has been described in the *Journal* (III., 169). Mention, therefore, may be made of an article in the *Free Press* (17th September), in which the author, "J. M." [Mr. John Milne, LL.D.], advances the following theory to account for the dykes and dry ditches which have occasionally been reckoned a Roman or a Danish camp:—"All the circumstances to be seen about the Barmekin point to its having been a common fold for the tenants of an estate to which their cattle were driven at night when at hill pasture in summer. The dykes and ditches served the double purpose of keeping in the cattle—not an easy matter sometimes—and of enabling the watchers to defend them against a large company of Highland thieves, with whom the only choice lay between stealing in summer and starving in winter. The great ditch between the stone dykes had also afforded some shelter to the watchers against the inclemency of the weather". Another of the author's conclusions is that the Barmekin was constructed very long ago, "perhaps before the time of Christ", and ceased to be used three hundred years ago.

The Gaick Catastrophe.

During the past summer, a cairn was erected in the forest of Gaick, about 14 miles from Kingussie, to mark the spot where Captain John Macpherson of Ballachroan and four attendants were overwhelmed by an avalanche of snow on the Christmas of 1799 (old style). (See *C.C.J.*, III., 192, 260).

Coronation Bonfires.

An attempt was made (*C.C.J.*, II., 186) to enumerate the bonfires lighted on hill-tops in Aberdeenshire and the North on the night of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 22nd June, 1897. It was not very successful; and much less success must attend any attempt to chronicle the bonfires in commemoration of the Coronation of Edward VII. The bad weather that prevailed throughout the spring and far into summer had the effect of discouraging intending bonfire-makers; for instance, the proposal of the Committee of the Club to discharge fireworks from the summit of Ben Muich Dhui had to be abandoned, owing to receipt of advices that the path from Glen Derry was inaccessible, being blocked with snow. The postponement of the Coronation from the date originally fixed (26th June), owing to the King's illness, also had its effect, and many projected bonfires were given up. A few were lighted several days later—generally on Monday, the 30th. Notes we took at the time mention principally hill-tops in Kincardineshire and Forfarshire. The Aberdeenshire bonfires seem to have been limited to the following:—Hill of Dunnydeer, Insch, June 30; Fraserburgh Links, June 30; Hill of Belnagoak, Methlick, July 1; Allanshill, Tyrie, July 8; Cairnhill, Rosehearty, July 10. The Coronation took place on Saturday, August 9th; and the following bonfires were chronicled:—On Deeside—Durris; Learney Hill, Torphins; Tillyching Hill, Lumphanan; Hill of the Tom, Logie-Coldstone; Pittendarroch, Tarland; one of the

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Glen Tanner hills overlooking Dinnet; Craggan House, Morven; Craigendarroch, Ballater; Glenmuick; Coyles of Muick; Craig-na-Ban and Craig-Gowan, Balmoral; Craig Choinnich, Braemar; and Carr Hill, Mar Forest. Central Aberdeenshire—Brimmond, Bennachie, Oldmeldrum, Old Rain, Hill of Johnstone (Leslie), Quarry Hill (Rhynie), Rothienorman, Hill of Bridgend (Auchterless), Upper Cotburn and Birchen Hill, Craigston (Turriff), Old Tryst Hill, Cuminestown; Broom Hill and Hill of Cranloch, Ythan Wells; Hill of Lessendrum; and Clashmach, Huntly. Donside—Muir of Syllavethy, Tullynessle; Hill of Corse and Hill of Wark, Leochel-Cushnie; and Kildrummy. Buchan—Aikey Brae, Pitfour, Market Hill and Auchtydore, Longside; and New Deer. Banffshire—Balloch Hill, Keith; Troup Hill, Gardenstown; Davidston Hill and Knowe of Newton, Cairnie; Hill of Boghead, Inverkeithney; Buckie (several places); and Knockolochy, Tomintoul. A huge bonfire that had been built on the top of Cromdale Hill was lighted on the Friday night (August 8); and there were also bonfires at Daugh of Cromdale, on the Braes of Castle Grant, and near Nethy Bridge. A bonfire on Ben Nevis was lighted on Coronation Day—" amidst snow and sleet", the report said.

The reports, as a rule, were all dreadfully prosaic; only two that we saw attempted anything in the nature of picturesque description. Somebody wrote to the *Banffshire Journal*—" A most magnificent view of bonfires and fireworks was seen on Coronation night from the Hill of Gourdas, Fyvie, the calm, clear air showing with distinction every article of fire above the horizon from Pennan to Aberdeen, and from Peterhead to Huntly. Such a panorama will not be easy to forget". And a correspondent of the *Free Press*, writing of the bonfires on Deeside Hills, as seen from the bonfire at Durris, said—" The sight from the hill was such as to give the lie to Macaulay's words in 'The Armada' that

> " 'Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er again shall be',

for

> " 'That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day'.

Like the time of yore, ten or a dozen large fires blazed on as many hill-tops up and down the Dee valley, while fireworks rose from many places—from Aberdeen in the east to Aboyne in the west. The displays at Aberdeen were continuous, while beautiful rockets rose from Crathes, Banchory, and further west—apparently about Torphins—and from Skene in the north. The fire was well burned out ere the rain came on and drove the unwilling rejoicers home".

Mountain Law.

There is an unwritten law of the mountains—a code which regulates the use of private property by mountaineers. It prevails particularly in the Alps and in the mountains of the Northern States and Canada, and was recently described by the *New York Nation* (11th September) in these terms:—" The mountain hut and the forest camp, although absolutely unpoliced and practically beyond the jurisdiction of statute law, are

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protected by a sentiment which amounts to law and yet has no recourse against breaches of the custom of the region. You may leave your valuables on a trail in the North-West secure of finding them again, and you may, under well-understood restrictions, use any camp in the woods of Maine or Canada. Similarly the mountain shelters of the Appalachian or Alpine Clubs, or those erected at private expense, are free to all who traverse the mountains. And the rules for their use by the casual occupant are so explicit as to have the value of law, and as binding as if a thousand penalties and precedents enforced each article. . . . Under this code most of the meannesses and crimes that are incident to civilisation vanish. It is as if the vast solitariness of the forest and the mountain reproduced itself in a kind of largeness of soul in the woodsman and mountaineer. He feels more vividly than the man in the multitude the solemnity of any act that concerns another individual. In town you cannot safely leave an overcoat on the rack with the door ajar; in the North Woods you may leave in an open shack the best gun that the forges of England, Belgium, or America can produce, and passers-by, who perfectly know its value, will hardly give it a second look".

The Dee as a Water Supply.

The proposal to utilise the Avon as a water supply for Aberdeen still remains "in the air", and the municipal authorities appear disposed to continue using the Dee. Mr. Charles Hawksley, C.E., London, has furnished a report (published in the Aberdeen papers, 15th September), which partly dissipates the fears entertained regarding the pollution of the river by sewage. Owing to the wide bed and shallow depth of the Dee, and the frequent breaking up of the stream by rocks and pebbles, the water flowing along it (he says) "is kept thoroughly aerated, so that organic impurities reaching the river in its course are quickly removed by oxidation". Mr. Hawksley's own proposal is to remove the intake from Cairnton, Banchory to a point above Ballater, below the confluence of the Gairn and the Dee.

"Summer" Weather on the Cairngorms.

It was duly recorded, as a very singular incident, that all the Cairngorm mountains above 2000 feet in height were thickly coated with snow on the morning of Thursday, 24th July. "The oldest inhabitant", it was said, could not recall a similar occurrence at this time of year, the snowfall being no mere shower, but a heavy coating which remained on the hills throughout the day.

"Record" Climb of Ben Nevis.

Looking to the prospective closing of Ben Nevis Observatory, and to the fact that no authentic record for women climbers had been established on that mountain, Mr. William Swan, Fort-William, himself a well-known hill-climber, signified his intention of presenting a gold medal to the lady competitor who, during the past season, made the ascent of Ben Nevis in the shortest time. The first competitor in this somewhat novel race

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started from the Post Office, Fort-William, on Saturday morning, 19th July, at 7.59 a.m., but as only a few knew of the exploit, no crowd assembled to see her off. Her name is Miss Elizabeth Tait, and she follows the occupation of postwoman, traversing the somewhat remote glens between Corrour, in Perthshire, and Luibult, in Lochaber. She had thus excellent opportunities of training for her mountaineering feat, and her performance fully justified the confidence placed in her. Arrangements had been made for telegraphing the time of her arrival at the summit, and a considerable number were not a little surprised to learn on receipt of the telegram that the plucky postwoman had accomplished the task in 1 hour 59½ minutes—half a minute under two hours—reaching the Observatory a minute and a half before ten. The distance from the Post-Office at Fort-William to the Observatory is seven miles, and when the steep gradients on the mountain are taken into consideration it will not be surprising to learn that the average climber takes four hours in the ascent. The second competitor was Miss Louisa Cameron (aged about 22), Glenmallie, Achnacarry, who first made the ascent on 18th September in 2 hours 17 minutes, in unfavourable weather conditions, and then, on 30th September, reduced her time by 14 minutes, making the ascent in 2 hours 3 minutes—3½ minutes more than Miss Tait.

An Elevated Colony of Sand Martins.

This delicate little bird is not one which may be expected to be found nesting at any great height above sea-level. Last summer (1902) there was a colony of about 30 nests in the sand and gravel bank of the Lui Water, about one mile and a half below Derry Lodge, at an altitude of over 1300 feet above sea-level. This is the highest point at which I have seen this bird nesting, although doubtless it may do so at still higher places, given a similar situation and suitable shelter.—H. B. W.

Ballater to Loch Lee.

The walk from Ballater to Loch Lee affords excellent "sport"—there is the charm of crossing the watershed between two great counties; there are hills to be climbed and ridges to be dodged; plateaus to be endured and steep crags to be admired. Two deer forests are in the way, and, therefore, this excursion should be made so as not to interfere with the rights of others. The real start has to be taken from a point near the Linn of Muick. A little to the east of the Linn is a rocky, tree-clad height with no name (but a 1500 contour) on the one-inch map; this is Auchnacraig Hill, a prominent point as ones goes up the Muick side. It is necessary to get on the south side of the crag; once there, the traveller will be astonished at the great extent of pasture with larachs (Auchnacraig, Clashmuick, etc.) indicating its former cultivation. Allt na Wheillie is now the guiding mark, the west side of which should be kept till the upper forking, where the county march should be made for in a bee-line, or as nearly so as one can. The Burn of Fasheilach should now be

struck about half-a-mile above its mouth, and so the Water of Mark is reached. The Mark, already a considerable stream, flows in a very narrow glen, and should be followed southwards, and upwards, for about half-a-mile. The Mark crossed, a direct course has to be made for the Water of Lee at the Lee stable—a new building a little to the east of "n" in "Glen" on the O.S. map—where an excellent driving road will be found of service. This road keeps by the left bank of the Lee and along the north side of the loch. The Lee stable passed, the monotony of flat, grassy hills is exchanged for picturesque rocky heights. Monawee (2276), on the north side of the glen, is interesting to botanists, as the broom on its southern slope was produced over half-a-century ago from seeds carried by sheep from the low country. The Water of Unich and the Lee meet a long mile west of the loch; the former stream is the larger, and has falls which are well seen from the road.

The backward views are the best as one goes up alongside Allt na Wheillie; Ben Avon, and, by and by, other Cairngorms, tower above the horizon, and Lochnagar also is well seen, with Broad Cairn and Cairn Bannoch.

Our Fourteenth Annual Meeting.

The Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Club was held on 23rd December, 1902—the Chairman, Mr. Robert Harvey, presiding. The following were appointed Office-bearers and Members of Committee:—President, The Right Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L., LL.D., M.P.; Vice-Presidents, Alexander Copland and Robert Anderson; Chairman, Robert Harvey; Secretary, A. I. M'Connochie, C.A., 115 Union Street, Aberdeen; Treasurer, T. R. Gillies, advocate, 181A Union Street, Aberdeen; Committee—James Connor, John Croll, George Duncan, James A. Hadden, John M'Gregor, William Porter, James A. Ross, Rev. Robert Semple, James Smith, and John Wallace.

It was remitted to the Committee to fix the excursions for the current year. It was reported that the Summer Excursion of 1902 had been a failure—the only such instance in the Club's experience. Continuous and heavy rain and dense mist compelled a halt at Lochbuilg Cottage; and in the return drive the tributaries of the Gairn were forded with considerable difficulty.

The following new members have been admitted:—George Watt, M.D., John Ledingham, and John A. Nicol. Rev. Robert Lippe, LL.D., has been elected an Honorary Member.

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REVIEWS.

The Highest Andes.

Sir Martin Conway, the well-known mountaineer (See *C.C.J.*, III., 126, 195), has just published "Aconcagua and Tierra del Fuego: A Book of Climbing, Travel, and Exploration". It deals mainly with an ascent of Aconcagua, in Argentina, believed to be the highest peak in the two Americas, one authority making it 22,867 feet and another 23,100 feet above sea level. This peak was first scaled on 14th January, 1897, by Mathias Zurbriggen, a Swiss guide attached to an expedition formed by Mr. E. A. Fitz Gerald; and, a few weeks later, the ascent was accomplished by another member of Mr. Fitz Gerald's party, Mr. Stuart Vines (See *C.C.J.*, II., 315, and III., 132). Sir Martin Conway achieved the third ascent on 5th December, 1898. He was accompanied by two Swiss guides (only one of whom reached the summit), by a porter, and by an invaluable Andean guide named Aniceto Olavarria—a born mountain climber. One night was spent near the foot of the mountain, a second about 16,000 feet above sea level, and a third at 18,500 feet. Aconcagua, in spite of its immense height, is "entirely devoid of all ordinary dangers; indeed, from bottom to top there is not a step of any difficulty whatever upon it. Nowhere need the rope be attached; there is not a single step that a child could not take. The ascent is a mere question of strength and endurance, physical and constitutional". But such endurance! The strain was terrible. The temperature was often 25 or 27 degrees below freezing-point, and one of the guides almost lost his legs, if not his life, by frostbite; whilst the rarefaction of the air at the enormous altitude reached made breathing an intolerable effort, and partially stupefied both the leader and his faithful Swiss Maquignaz:—"As the stones gave way beneath our feet we often fell violently to the ground, and lay panting like wounded men unable to rise. Our breathing became louder and louder. It was a relief now and again to empty the lungs with a groan and refill them with a more than ordinary volume of the thin air. Arms had to be kept well away from the sides, to leave the lungs more free for expansion. . . . We seldom spoke, unless to exchange a word of sympathy". At last they reached the almost level summit, but could not venture to linger on it, for the weather was rapidly changing for the worse, so, without going on to the absolutely highest point—about a hundred yards away, and a few feet above their position—they hurried back as fast as possible. The view from the summit is thus described by Sir Martin Conway—"To the south was Tupungato, a majestic pile of snow, over which even more majestic clouds were presently to mount aloft. To the north was the still grander Mercedario, beheld round the flank of the final rocks. In the west were the hills dropping lower and lower to the Chilean shore, and then the purple ocean. To the north-east, like another ocean, lay the flat surface of the Argentine pampas. Elsewhere the Cordillera, in long parallel ridges running roughly

north and south, stretched its great length along, crowding together into an inextricable tangle the distant peaks, partly hidden by the two near summits which alone interrupted the completeness of the panorama". Dawn, as witnessed on the mountain slope at a height of 21,000 feet, seems to have been a much more brilliant spectacle—"The coming of dawn was hidden from us by the interposing mountain, so we lost all sight of the rich unfolding glories of the East. But from the moment the sun peeped above the invisible horizon we were magnificently recompensed, for it poured forth upon the world beneath us a flood of fiery radiance, save where interposing mountains flung out their long shadows. Its effulgence visibly permeated the air over the Pacific. Standing as we did on the shaded side of Aconcagua, and at no very great distance from the summit, we saw its great cone of purple shade reach out at the moment of sunrise to the remotest horizon, more than two hundred miles distant—not, be it observed, a mere carpet of shadow on the ground, but a solid prism of purple immersed in the glimmering flood of the crystalline sky, its outer surface enriched with layers of rainbow-tinted colour. We could see upon the ground the shadows of other mountains; but Aconcagua's shadow, in which we stood, alone revealed itself as substantial—not a plane, but a thing of three dimensions. With the rising of the sun the remotest point of the shadow slowly dropped upon the ocean and travelled towards us, till it reached the Chilean shore, hurried over the low hills, dipped into the Horcones Valley, climbed the slope up which we had come, and finally reached our feet. Then, as we raised our eyes to the crags aloft, lo! the blinding fires of the Sun God himself burning upon the crest and bringing to us the fulness of day!" Sir Martin Conway returned home by the Straits of Magellan, and made an excursion to Mount Sarmiento (7000 feet) in Tierra del Fuego, but made only a partial ascent of the mountain. We learn with regret—from a statement in the preface—that this book is the last record of his own mountain explorations that Sir Martin Conway will write.

THE "LESSON" OF THE MOUNTAINS.

THAT very striking romance, "The History of Sir Richard Calmady", by "Lucas Malet"—a very striking study of mental pathology, it might be termed—contains a number of fine descriptions of natural scenery, particularly woodland scenery, and an exceedingly novel presentment of the "utility" or value of mountains from the intellectual or spiritual standpoint. The heroine has been contending that land should not be allowed to lie idle—that it should "work". "What about such trifles as the few hundred square miles of desert or mountain range?" asks the hero. "Oh, I've no quarrel with them—with deserts and so on", is the reply. "They're uncommonly useful things for mankind to knock its head against—invincible, unnegotiable, splendidly competent to teach humanity its place. You see we've grown not a little conceited—so at least it seems to me—on our evolutionary journey up from the primordial cell. We're too much inclined to forget we've developed soul quite

comparatively recently, and therefore that there is probably just as long a journey ahead of us—before we reach the ultimate of intellectual and spiritual development—as there is behind us physically from, say, the parent ascidian, to you and me. And somehow those big open spaces remind one of all that. They drive one's ineffectualness home on one. They remind one that environment, that mechanical civilisation, all the short cuts of applied science, after all count for little and inevitably come to the place called *stop*. And that braces one. It makes one the more eager after that which lies behind the material aspects of things, and to which these merely act as a veil".

Poetry in Praise of Pedestrianism.

A little volume of verse, mostly humorous and satirical, published in the autumn by Messrs. Methuen & Co.—"Second Strings", by A. D. Godley, an Oxford University Don—contains some amusing lines on the superiority of "Shanks His Mare" to horse-riding, cycling, and motor-car-driving. We quote a verse, which, though relating to scenery in the neighbourhood of Oxford, has quite a general application—

"O yet there's many a grassy path and many a lonely way
By woodland green and silent stream and hamlets old and gray—
In Cotswold hills and Chiltern woods is many a still retreat
Which no one knows but only those who walk upon their feet.
With addled wits the student sits, confusing of his brain,
And some they ride and some they row (and some they go by train),
But give to me mine ancient boots, and far from here we'll fare,
Across the lonely country-side, on Shanks His Mare!"

The author includes mountaineering among his recreations, and one of his poems is titled "Switzerland". The "mountain feeling" is well expressed in these lines—

"Place me somewhere in the Valais, 'mid the mountains west of Binn,
West of Binn and east of Savoy, in a decent kind of inn,
With a peak or two for climbing, and a glacier to explore—
Any mountains will content me, though they've all been climbed before.

. . . .

Though the hand of Time be heavy: though your ancient comrades fail:
Though the mountains you ascended be accessible by rail:
Though your nerve begin to weaken, and you're gouty grown and fat,
And prefer to walk in places which are reasonably flat—

. . . .

Yet I hope that till you die
You will annually sigh
For a vision of the Valais with the coming of July,
For the Oberland or Valais and the higher, purer air,
And the true delight of living, as you taste it only there!"

The Cairngorm Club

Continued from page 2 of Cover.

year; (3) to fix the excursions for the ensuing year; and (4) to transact any other necessary business. Special general meetings shall be held whenever deemed necessary by the Chairman, or on a requisition by at least ten members of the Club. General meetings shall have power to deprive of membership of the Club any member who may, in the opinion of the Committee, have misconducted himself.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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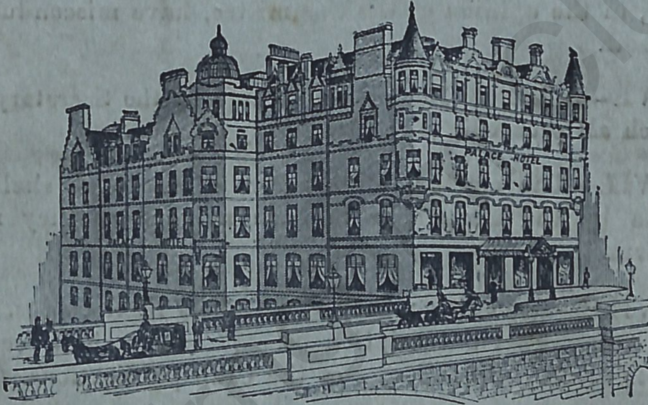

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