

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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The Cairngorm Club.

RULES.

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

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

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

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

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

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THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

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TWO EXCURSIONS TO WESTER ROSS.

BY ERNEST A. BAKER, M.A.

WESTER ROSS should be one of the finest mountaineering districts in Britain, witness Munro's list, were it not cursed with a climate utterly beyond competition in the way of fogs, rain, and general perversity. There is a legend among very old inhabitants that once upon a time six weeks of continuous fine weather were enjoyed in Kintail. One likes to reverence old tradition, but at a' events it is very hard to get any person under middle age to hazard a definite statement on the vexed question. Three seasons ago, a climbing friend of mine went to Glen Shiel with an imposing list of peaks in his pocket-book, the majority of which he purposed bagging. For a week he sent me day by day the most depressing letters imaginable on the subject of Scottish weather; he also delivered himself of divers half-hearted rhapsodies on the glories of waterfalls in spate; but when word came that he had decamped to a more blissful clime, he could not report a single authentic peak captured. Undeterred, nevertheless, by his gloomy experience, I set off next summer to the same spot, being fortunate enough to secure as my comrade a member of the Cairngorm Club, who is warranted sound and weather-tight, and an excellent companion under all sorts of climatic conditions.

A wet holiday always begins fine—this is one of the safest forecasts I am acquainted with. The walk across

Mam Ratagain was delightful; the celebrated view of Loch Duich was all that the guide books declare, and more, too; and when Mac met me at Shiel Inn, we flattered ourselves that the Kintail weather office was going to make special arrangements for our benefit. Even till an advanced hour next day the deceptive appearances continued, and we managed to bag three genuine Kintail peaks—Sgurr Leac nan Each (3013 feet), Sgurr na Creige (3082 feet), and the Peak of the Saddle (3317 feet)—all in one morning, ere the normal state of things prevailed again. Then our day's programme was rudely curtailed. Sgurr Fhuaran (Scour Ouran) had to be given up for the present, and we returned to Shiel Inn in the humid condition that is expected of guests at that weather-beaten hostelry. We durst not put our noses outside the door next day; but, still sanguine, prepared ourselves by careful attention to each item on the culinary programme for whatsoever adventure the morning might bring forth. We were going into a hungry land, and, whether we attempted more peaks, or took the nearest way to the Highland Railway, there was no knowing when we should get another square meal.

The morning began as wet as ever, notwithstanding which we started out, quitted the road near Dorusduain, and ascended the savage glen that leads to the bealach above the celebrated Glomach Falls. Our further movements depended entirely on the chances of the weather; beyond this our plans were a blank. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Even a rainy southwester had one thing to its credit; it swelled the falls immensely beyond their ordinary grandeur, and far beyond the chary praise accorded them by the guide books. Ross is above all others the county of waterfalls, and the Falls of Glomach are the finest in Ross. We turned down into Glen Elchaig well satisfied with our day's excursion, even if this were to be the end of it. But it was not the end. Glen Elchaig began with bogs, spates, and drenching rain; it finished with rainbows and sunshine. At Killilan, where the river Ling quietly ceases to be a stream, and

subsides into the placid reaches of Loch Long, we took out the map again, and planned schemes of further exploration. Beyond the remote sources of the Ling, whose broad, deep waters swept past us black as ink, there was a picturesque arrangement of 3000 feet contour lines, that attracted us in spite of their distance and the inhospitable look of the intervening glens. With little hesitation we turned upstream, and in a mile left behind us all trace of human existence, save a few old larachs and desultory evidences of a track that may have been coeval with them. Evening had begun, and there were nine miles of uncertain length between us and a solitary house that might or might not be inhabited, the only possible resting-place from Killilan to Glen Carron. The mountains were folding themselves up in the mists; the desolate glen of the Ling grew darker and longer, and the incessant roar of the pent-up river louder and more melancholy as we went further into the wilderness. Our ships were burnt, and, if the stalker's cottage proved a delusion, a night on the heather was the sure alternative. Often the track died away completely; there were formidable burns to cross, stony and moraine-heaped hill-sides to skirt, and just as darkness came down we had to struggle through a narrow pass, full of rank heather and bracken taller than our heads, where we floundered about almost helpless.

Among the frequent communications I have read on the subject of aids to endurance, I have seen little or no reference to the extraordinary value of the common "bull's eye". We had laid in a small but adequate supply of this admirable confection at Loch Duich, and for many a long and dreary mile we kept up our strength and spirits by its means; for the "bull's eye" not only has valuable nutritive properties, but the act of sucking it supplies the mind with an object of interest when the road is tedious and scenery lacking. It was dark when we reached the critical spot where we conjectured the house was to be found, but our search was not crowned with success immediately. At last we saw its humble roof nestling under the base of a rough and heathery hill;

howbeit there was no gleam of light in the window, and no smoke issuing from the chimney. We knocked, and waited impatiently. The house proved to be tenanted, and when at last the door was opened, we received a cordial welcome.

Next day we continued our journey up the fast dwindling river Ling to the col where it rises, under the slopes of Sgurr Choinnich and Sgurr a' Chaoruinn, the peaks we were bound for. The weather was intermittently good and bad, which is as evil a state as any for mountaineering, because it prevents one from giving up the job altogether and making at once for a more comfortable level. By the time we had mounted to the stony tableland that forms the base of our peak, the rain drove us to seek some manner of shelter, and all we could get was a fragment of a ruined wall that seemed to be part of the forest march between Monar and Achnashellach. Ragged cloud masses with dark streamers of rain went stalking through the glens, and at last it was borne in upon us that if we meant not to lose our peaks after all, we must climb in defiance of weather; and before long we reached the top.

In the immensity of earth and sky through which the eye ranged from our lofty and isolated ridge different kinds of weather were chasing each other with wild rapidity. Moruisg, directly facing us, was now wholly enveloped in floating veils of mist, and now the veils were torn to shreds and flung adrift on the winds. The mists surged up again and again to the topmost summits with magical swiftness, and were dissipated just as quickly. They swarmed over Lurg Mhòr, giving its void and shapeless mass an indefinable grandeur. We turned again and again to admire the slender pyramid springing from its western shoulders, Bidein a Choire Sheasgaich. But all the wreckage of the drifting clouds seemed ultimately to be borne over peak and glen and piled up against the mighty barrier of An Riabhachan, beyond the head of Loch Monar, whose far-extended bulk, vaster and more chaotic than Lurg Mhòr, obstructed our view of Mam

Sodhail and Carn Eige, the crowning heights of all these wild ranges. Through the dishevelled clouds that enwrapped An Riabhachan a big snow-wreath and a long white gully, gleaming where we thought the sky would have been, gave us an idea of its towering height.

No cairn marks the highest point of Sgurr Choinnich. The top is a longish ridge, and the omission at first caused us some doubts as to which end was actually 3260 feet high. Between it and Sgurr a' Chaoruinn, the summit of the whole range, there is a gap 500 feet deep, the descent of which on our side was rocky, skirting the great precipice at the head of the corrie. A cold white mist came rolling through this gap. A climb of some 800 feet took us to the summit of Sgurr a' Chaoruinn, and we were gratified to behold a cairn of such size and build as made amends for Sgurr Choinnich's lack in the one thing that gives a proper finish to a mountain. But the central peak has none of the grand outlines of its brother peaks, being humpy and flat-topped, though it commands a view of several mountains we had not yet seen—little-known summits that overtopped ours to the east. But the peak we stood on merits a certain dignity as marking the watershed of Scotland; a few yards to our left the streams were beginning to run towards Skye and the Atlantic, while to the right they ran down to the great glens whose rivers seek the North Sea.

Our fondly-nursed design of going on to the eastward peak of Bidein, and so capturing three peaks, before making off towards the Highland Railway, was not smiled on by the destinies; we had to be content with a brace. For the best part of a week we had been free from the odious tyranny of the time-table; but now, even here, 3452 feet above sea-level, we were to feel its bondage again. My comrade pulled one of these hated documents out of his pocket and coolly announced that he must catch the Aberdeen train at 6'30. Figuratively, and only figuratively, we came down from the clouds at once. Not merely was Bidein out of our reach, but there was hard work before us to arrive at a railway station in time, so

little were we acquainted with the neighbourhood. Rain had sodden everything; burns were in spate, bogs in spate, and whilst we cautiously avoided the sudden performance of a glissade on the slippery moss, we turned an anxious eye towards the distant river, which appeared to cut us off from the only practicable side of the glen. When, however, we reached the dreaded bank we got across with only a slight wetting.

An hour later we were looking back towards the peaks we had come down from, and we saw them on their highest and grandest side towering magnificently at the head of the glen. Soon they were out of sight, and then we bade good-bye to the desolation and savagery that had been our companions for two long days. Westwards we looked across the woods and streams and lochs of Glen Carron to the hills of Coulin Forest, a stately group of rocky domes and ridges encircling a deep black corrie, with the Torridon peaks lifting still loftier heads above their highest crest. And so we ended our days of peak-bagging as all mountaineering holidays should end—with the sight of fresh peaks challenging us to climb them. My friend caught his train at the expense of his tea, for Craig Inn had for twenty years been nothing but a name on the map, and I sought the house of an amenable forester, where I got a much-needed meal, and had my clothes dried, before catching the last train to Loch Alsh on my way to mountains in the south.

Last July we made another attempt to climb the Kintail peaks, endeavouring to outflank the weather by approaching the district from the other side. We left the Highland Railway at Beauly, where we hoped to find a mail-coach waiting to take us a score miles on our road. But the mails were not due to start for another three hours; so, rather than cool our heels at Beauly, we set off on foot, westward ho! The coach did not overtake us at the twelfth milestone as we hoped: nor for many miles further. It gave us ample leisure to admire the Falls of Kilmorack, and the grandeur of the Druim, the deep-cut

pass through which the Beauly rushes tempestuously after ten miles of leisurely wayfaring in Strath Glass. The Beauly has many disguises and noms-de-guerre. It begins as a fine and stalwart burn, with the name of Gleann Fionn attaching to it, under Càrn Fuaralach, away among the west coast giants. A day or two later we were to fish and bathe in the deep pools of Gleann Fionn. Then it becomes the Affric, a king of Highland rivers, with Lochs Affric and Beinn a' Mheadhoin, majestic twain, expanding out of it. Rushing in a series of smoking linns through the barriers of Glen Affric, it suddenly assumes a most pacific character as the river Glass, ambling quietly along between tilth and meadow. Last of all it takes the name of Beauly, and sweeps in a final paroxysm of fury and foam down to Kilmorack, whence it marches on with the dignified step of age to its last rest. The river has from time immemorial marked a highway from east to west, and it was to be our lot to follow it on foot right to the other side of Scotland. We had walked seventeen miles, and reached the teetotalised hotel of Cannich, better known as Glen Affric Hotel, ere the belated coach overtook us, and then we preferred tea to a lift of two or three miles only. That night, after each doing our thirty miles and odd, with heavy rucksacks and climbing boots as handicap, a somewhat rash beginning to a week on the tops, we found sleeping quarters in Glen Affric, in a favourable position for attempting Mam Sodhail and Carn Eige next morning. But we had paid no heed to the forecast, that a bright, hot day is often the preliminary to a spell of wet weather. Though the morning began gaily enough, it soon put on a sullen look; the mountains muffled themselves closer and closer in mist, and rain sprinkled us as we walked along the bottom of the southern Sgurr na Lapaich, and turned up the adjoining corrie. A thousand feet below the summit we found ourselves in the mist; but the way was obvious. We climbed out of a marshy corrie when the stalker's track died away, and reached a narrow ridge connecting our peak with Sgurr na Lapaich. Once we caught a glimpse of the deep glen that runs in

from Glen Affric to the foot of the final peak, and a drearier view could not be imagined. On the map this Glen Fiadhach looks a convenient way of approach to the two crowning summits of the range, but let mountaineers beware of its trackless bogs and interminable rubbish-heaps. A tarn at the head of it was almost encircled by great drifts of snow; other drifts gleamed through the cold, wan mists.

After a rest in the shelter of Mam Sodhail's very commodious cairn (3862 feet), we made a false start for Carn Eige (3877 feet), and in the mist found ourselves four hundred feet down the same ridge we had ascended. Disgusted with this mishap and with the total extinction of the view, we gave up the rival peak, and turned west along the main ridge, after a visit to the dismantled house under the summit, which appears to have been occupied by deer-watchers in the reign of Mr. Winans. We bagged Ciste Dubh (3606 feet) but missed Carn Coulavie (3568 feet); and when the mist allowed us to discover our whereabouts, we found ourselves coming down a precipitous spur into the next corrie, that of Allt Coulavie, with the head of Loch Affric beneath us. All trouble, it seemed, would be over as soon as we reached the bottom of this rocky slope; but the corrie was embanked at the outlet by another steep slope, across which we were glad to avail ourselves of the deer-tracks marking the more practicable routes.

The two ends of Glen Affric are an extreme contrast. At the Dog Falls the framework of the glen is invisible, the hills being shrouded with trees right to their summits, and the river foaming along under birch boughs that interlace overhead; above Loch Affric, the Scottish fir has driven out the birch, and then fallen a victim to the harsh climate of the mountains. Nothing is left at last but

“The bones of desolation's nakedness”.

At Alltbeath, below the point where the roads for Loch Duich fork, we could get only the lightest refreshment, but at Camban, the most westerly house in the glen,

situated between the range culminating in Sgurr Fhuaran and the long mass of Beinn Fhada, we were lucky enough to secure comfortable quarters, and tarried there two nights.

Beinn Fhada (3383 feet) had long been a special object of desire to both of us, and we started up the slopes at the back of the house next morning without delay, in spite of a thick mist. Camban is the most favourable point for an ascent of the "Long Mountain" of Kintail, if, that is, you want a climb devoid of incident. Nothing interesting happened until we had spent nearly two hours loitering and snoozing at the cairn; then the curtain rolled up and the play began. It was as if we saw the world re-born out of thick darkness. First the mountain we stood upon was revealed to us, as something more than an uncertain extent of barren ground. Right at our feet the earth broke away in a profound corrie, and in front of us the broad ridge split up into pinnacled masses of sheer rock that towered over gulfs immeasurable of steaming mist. Across the mighty rift of Gleann Lichd, 3000 feet deep, and apparently a half-mile wide, so hard was it to judge of the distances, peak after peak clove the mist, Sgurr Fhuaran the highest and grandest; and beyond were the Glen Shiel peaks, and those of Knoydart, peeping over each other's shoulders, with glints of blue sea in unexpected places between. Kintail and the adjacent districts simply bristle with three-thousand footers, and few were missing from this wild panorama. A sea of stormy clouds was eddying and tossing along like a tidal current, just over them, but only the most distant mountains, the Coolins and those north of Mam Sodhail, had their heads enveloped.

We studied all the approaches to Sgurr Fhuaran from the vantage ground of Beinn Fhada, as we returned westward; but rain came on again in the evening, and in the morning it was a question whether we should try the ascent, or make the best of our way down Gleann Lichd and round the mountain to Shiel Inn. We determined to make the venture, and half-way up Coire Dhomhain

began to plume ourselves on a triumphant day, for the storms had passed over, and all the peaks of Beinn Mhòr, the "Five Sister of Kintail", were lit up with sunshine in a semicircle before us. But excess of gallantry was our undoing. We were not content with Sgurr Fhuaran, the handsomest of the Sisters, but were rash enough to challenge them all. Sgùrr nan Spainteach received us with a pronounced rebuff, one of the worst storms of wind, rain, and mist we had encountered. Our reception by the next member of the family circle was still more unpleasant, and we did not summon up courage to approach the third. Very glad we were, when we had descended a thousand feet, and the mist began to thin, to find that we were coming into Glen Shiel.

Mac left me at Shiel Inn, as I wanted to have another try at Sgurr Fhuaran next day, if the weather changed. As it did not change, I followed him up, and bade him farewell again at Strome Ferry, whence I adjourned to Plockton to dry my clothes, and rest. The sandstone and quartzite peaks of Coulin Forest, which we had admired from a distance last year, were my next object, but they too proved unattainable. A deluge of rain kept me indoors till mid-day, and when the train reached Achnashellach at noon, a series of violent storms had not quite spent its force. There were intervals of splendid sunshine, but from all the peaks around Coire Làir storm signals were fluttering all day, and I was heartily thankful later on that I took the moorland walk across to Torridon instead of the sky-line.

Beinn Eighe and Liathach are two of the most astonishing mountain shapes in Scotland, more astonishing because of their strange unlikeness to each other. In sunshine Beinn Eighe is the perfection of grace and strength combined, as in some colossal work of architecture, beautiful curves linking peak to peak, and sinking down to the glen in lines of flawless symmetry. But the whiteness of the quartzite gives the mountain a weird and unsubstantial look, especially in mist and storm, when it is now blotted out altogether, and now comes looming through the pallid

obscurity like a ghost. Liathach is a tremendous contrast. One compares it instinctively with Tryfaen, the most abrupt and pyramidal of southern peaks; but Liathach is much bigger and more imposing than Tryfaen. Needless to say, I was fascinated by its gloomy grandeur, enhanced by the masses of wind-shattered cloud that drove across the precipices, making them appear tenfold steeper and more appalling. The mail-gig had turned up in the nick of time, and saved me from being overwhelmed by a thrashing squall that caught us just before we entered Torridon. That little village, the nearest place for Liathach and Ben Alligin, was deprived of its inn many years ago, whether in the interests of temperance I do not know, but certainly not for the advantage of tourists, who are rigorously discouraged. The "Temperance Hotel" is not a thriving place of entertainment. In this tiny hostelry, little more than a cottage of one storey, nestling under the crags of Liathach, I spent the gloomy evening, looking across the storm-swept waters of Upper Loch Torridon to the misty and sombre hills of Shieldaig Forest, and listening to the rain-torrents lashing the roof. Liathach, I feared, was perfectly hopeless unless the weather made a sudden revolution; but I was resolved not to miss Beinn Eighe, whatever might betide. Next morning, the peat-moss at the foot of Liathach was flooded and awash with the water that had fallen in the night, and the mountain was wrapt in mist. Beinn Eighe was a shade better to look at, and at all events offered none of the unavoidable difficulties involved in a direct ascent of the other mountain from the glen.

It was in this glen that a friend of mine was stopped some time ago on the King's highway by a forester, and interrogated as to his movements, for the noxious tourist is watched here with a jealous eye, and the geologist, the mountaineer, and the poor misguided lover of nature are treated with about as much courtesy as the deer-stealer. But I was set down by the mail-driver at the deserted cottage under Beinn Eighe's slopes, without interference, at a discreet distance from certain sentinels who seemed to

be patrolling the road. Dodging a squall or two, I reached the 2000 feet level before the mist got me in its clutches, and the rest of the way to Spidean Coire nan Clach (3220 feet) was easy to find. Then a brisk succession of storms kept me prisoner for half-an-hour, at the abating of which I turned west along the ridge in search of Sail Mhòr (3217 feet) and Ruadh Stac Mor (3309 feet), both of which in the teeth of a tremendous gale, with rain and fog, I managed to locate and ascend. Between these peaks I passed twice along the edge of Coire Mhic Fhearchair, whose stupendous cliffs were a chief reason for my anxiety to explore Beinn Eighe; but the mist was so thick I could not see anything. The worst experience of the day was getting down from Ruadh Stac Mor, the Loch Maree route appearing to me, perhaps wrongly, an easier way than to return over all the other peaks. The upper part is a slope of loose quartzite, in big, jagged, shifting blocks and splinters, most of which had to be dealt with individually, and oftentimes nearly gave me the worst of it. After many hundred feet of this, a craggy slope begins, which was very slippery after the deluge. When I began to hope the bottom was near, I found myself all of a sudden on top of a sheer wall, for this end of Beinn Eighe is based on the same terraced sandstone as Liathach. Only after many ineffectual tries did I reach the bottom of this awkward cliff; but it proved the only difficult bit, and would not have been so serious but for the howling tempest. Crossing a delectable stretch of bog, where I started two blue hares, I came to the burn, which, as I expected, was in heavy spate, and cost me some trouble to ford. But then it was a pleasant surprise to find that the pony track up Glen Grudie had been extended to twice the length shown on the map, sparing me the horrors of a trackless two miles of inundated hillside.

Next day, with the usual irony of things, for it was the last of my peak-bagging trip, was one of the finest days of the whole summer, and unfortunately it had to be devoted to small game, to wit, Slioch (3260 feet) and Sgurr

a' Thuill Bhain (3053 feet). However, Slioch is a good peak for a view, and I spent an hour at the cairn very agreeably, looking at the peaks we had gathered in during our two expeditions, and at the vast number of ranges that still defied us, all illuminated and their features sharply defined by such a light and colour as we had never enjoyed in our closer acquaintance.

The Cairngorm Club

STORM ON THE GARBH COIRE CRAGS.

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

THE name Garbh Coire, signifying the Rough Corrie, is one of frequent occurrence in the Scottish Highlands. As is usually the case in early place-names, the word is descriptive, and is obviously applied for the purpose of topographical identification. There are, of course, many corries that are characterised by roughness, and hence the frequency of the name Garbh Coire. But among the Cairngorms *the* Garbh Coire is Garbh Coire Dhe, the one lying between Braeriach and Cairn Toul. This corrie is one of the most impressive features of this mountain group, and is, I believe, the mightiest corrie in Scotland. Its bounding mountains are the third and fourth highest in the country, Braeriach 4248 feet, and Cairn Toul 4240·5 feet; to the north-west of Cairn Toul the Angel's Peak or Sgor an Lochan Uaine, one of its subsidiary "tops", reaches an elevation of over 4000 feet, and right opposite the mouth of the corrie is the vast bulk of Ben Muich Dhui, 4296 feet. The edge of the surrounding crags is throughout most of its five miles extent at an elevation of about 4000 feet, falling below this only at the west of the Angel's Peak, where for a quarter of a mile it does not quite reach 3750 feet. The bottom of the hollow of the Garbh Coire lies between 2750 and 2000 feet, and most of the vertical distance from the upper edge to this lower level is accounted for in the nearly thousand feet of crags and screes that ring round this gigantic hollow.

The corrie measures, lengthwise, from south-west to north-east, two miles, and its greatest breadth, between the summits of Braeriach and Cairn Toul, is a mile and three-quarters. Surrounding the central hollow, the part below 3000 feet, the corrie has four well-marked subsidiary corries, which indeed constitute its grandest features. These are, in the north-east Coire Bhrochain, in the north-

west Fuar Gharbh-Choire, in the south-west An Garbh-Choire, and in the south-east Coire an Lochan Uaine. An Garbh-Choire may be considered as the upper part of the main hollow, for from the base of the crags and screes at its western extremity there is no notably sudden change of level all along it, and its general direction is in line with the length of the central corrie. Fuar Gharbh-Choire lies mainly above the 3250 feet contour, and drops somewhat suddenly from about that level to the main hollow. Coire Bhrochain lies at a slightly higher level, its lip being about 3300 feet, and the drop from it much deeper and steeper than from Fuar Gharbh-Choire. The Coire an Lochan Uaine is the most markedly enclosed, being a well-formed basin, with the lochan in its hollow at about the 3000 feet level.

These four subsidiary corries differ remarkably in their condition as to water. The Coire Bhrochain contains no water, except the small peaty pools so common throughout the corrie, and it sends out no effluent stream. An Garbh-

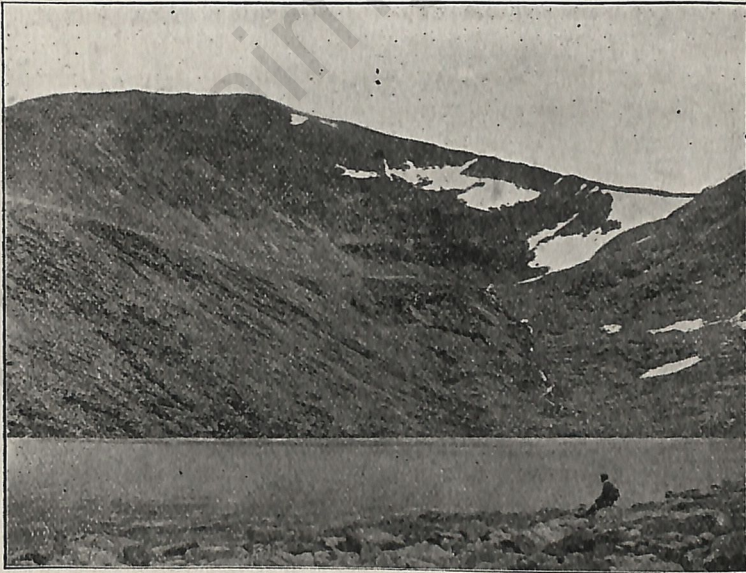


Photo by

LOCHAN UAINE OF CAIRN TOUL.

James Simpson.

Choire has numerous springs in the western part of its hollow, at the base of the crags and screes, and the stream they form follows the main line of the central hollow. The Coire an Lochan Uaine, as its name indicates, contains the Lochan Uaine, which is one of the specially fine features of the corrie, nestling darkly, in spite of its name, at the base of the great northern crag of Cairn Toul. Into this lochan there falls a small stream, fed by the springs of this crag; its effluent waters escape mostly underground, and form a strong burn that makes a noisy cascade down some 550 feet of the almost craggy declivity from the well-marked lip of the corrie to the main hollow, where, at the 2250 feet level, it joins the main stream. The Fuar Gharbh-Choire is the most interesting of the four in this connection, for over the north-western corner of its surrounding crags leaps the Allt a' Gharbh-Choire, the head stream of the Dee, but half-a-mile old. For some 700 feet this stream dashes down a scarcely climbable crag, making a fine cascade, whose musical roar fills the air throughout the corrie, and whose long white gleam forms a marked feature in the view of the corrie from Ben Muich Dhui, and can be seen even from Lochnagar. In two-thirds of a mile from the crag edge, flowing to the south-east, the stream meets that from An Garbh-Choire; it abruptly changes its direction eastward, and, after receiving the waters from Lochan Uaine and those from the Pools of Dee, swings southwards, and assumes by common consent the name Dee. There has been not a little controversy as to the most suitable naming of these upper waters, but I think those best acquainted with the streams and their surroundings are in agreement with old MacGillivray that the Allt a' Gharbh-Choire is the true head stream of the Dee.

I had paid several visits to the crags of the Garbh Coire, and hoped that during the summer holiday of 1903 I might supplement these by a leisurely walk all along their top edge. But the weather was so utterly unreliable that I did not for some time venture on such an expedition; the barometer seemed to be dancing a jig, as "depression" after "depression" came in close order from the Atlantic.

But just at the end of August there came a promise of better things; the barometer rose steadily for thirty-six hours, and I decided to take the offered chance. I rose before dawn, found the barometer still rising, breakfasted by lamplight, and sallied forth from Inverdruie. The early morning was very quiet and grey, and I thought it looked not unpromising. As I followed the southward road from Coylum Bridge, the sun peeped over the southern flank of Meall a' Bhuachaille, and threw into beautiful flecks of light and shade the irregularities of Craigellachie. The blackcock were apparently newly awakened from sleep, and I put up a number of them in the edge of the wood beyond Whitewell, where they are often to be seen. Beyond the cross roads I saw several deer, but they did not trouble to move far away, contenting themselves with standing at gaze at a distance of about 150 yards.

As I passed the lookout point in Glen Eunach and opened up the view of the Sgoran Dubh, I saw that the clouds were just touching their tops, and for the next few miles I watched with some interest the rising and falling of the curtain, hoping, but in vain, to see it finally rise and disappear. When, at 8 a.m., I entered Coire Dhondaill, the summit of Sgor Ghaoith had not once emerged, and I had to take what comfort I could out of several very good pieces of white heather, some pretty specimens of the Alpine Speedwell (*Veronica alpina*), and the soaring flight of a golden eagle across the upper part of the corrie.

Above Coire Dhondaill is a useful leading cairn of perhaps somewhat small size, and as I sat awhile at this to look around, I began to suspect that the day would not prove so fair as I wished, for all the sky was covered with heavy billows of cloud of a distinctly threatening lead-grey colour. From the cairn nothing can be seen of the great plateau of Braeriach and Cairn Toul, because the cairn, quite properly, is set just in the depression that leads to Coire Dhondaill; but there was a fine view across to the Sgoran Dubh, and to the uplands of Carn Ban, &c., to the south of it, and on this sky-line a few stags made a

pretty picture. Further to the south, beyond Lochan nan Cnapan, was the hollow that drains to the Eidart; near the loch was a small herd of deer, a score or so in number, which began moving southwards when they saw me.

I kept a little below the 3500 feet level, and walked eastwards along the sloping hillside, keeping just above the numerous stone-slides that make progress so difficult and slow. As I crossed the first slight ridge, and came



Photo by

WHAT'S THAT?

Major Grant.

amongst the head waters of the Linneach, a tributary of the Eidart, I could see the beginning of Glen Geusachan, below Beinn Bhrotain, and at the next little ridge I brought Lochan Suarach into the foreground. Near the upper waters of the Geusachan were several groups of stags, and as I advanced they gradually clumped together, and then moved in a long file down the eastern side of

the stream. A long-drawn line of deer trotting thus, and halting occasionally to look back, makes an attractive and characteristic item in so truly Highland a scene. I now turned a little towards the upper part of the ridge, where the going is probably a little easier, and as I approached the south side of the Angel's Peak I saw that its top and that of Cairn Toul were in the clouds, and that Coire Bhrochain, which now came into view across the Garbh Coire, was filled with mist. When I came to the Garbh Coire edge above Coire an Lochan Uaine, I saw that the mist was down on all the tops and ridges that rose above about 3800 feet, and so formed a sort of canopy right across the Garbh Coire and Glen Dee.

On the very edge of the corrie, some little distance up the slope of Cairn Toul, is a well-built but roofless shelter, looking straight across the Lochan and into Coire Bhrochain. Here, about 10.30 a.m., I sat and lunched, and studied the curious effects of the driving mist. Billow after billow floated along in the wind, and the effect was somewhat that of looking under a waving tent-roof, which rose and fell, revealing and hiding in turn plateau, crags, tops, and glens. The topographical revelation was not the same for two minutes in succession, and the continual change in visible detail was of extreme interest, as attention was always on the stretch to recognise what came looming through hazily, or at times showed clearly at a distance through an unexpected gap, and my previous knowledge of the district was severely tested, and not a little increased. From my seat I could see the two largest Pools of Dee and the stream that flowed from them, but I could not see the Falls of Dee into the Fuar Gharbh-Choire, as the north-east buttress of the Angel's Peak just hid them.

I doubted much whether it was worth while to ascend Cairn Toul. On a previous occasion I had had quite enough of cold and mist on its summit. But, in order to carry out my programme, I went on, and was lucky in having the top clear for some twenty minutes. I visited both Cairns (4240·5 and 4227 feet), and did some small

scrambling in search of plants on the steep slopes overlooking Glen Dee. The persistent overhanging curtain of mist prevented any distant or large view, but perhaps made more noticeable the things that were revealed. Thus I noticed that, besides the Dee Falls, now in full view and resonant, I could plainly see the water on the flat just to the north of them, where the watershed between Dee and Spey is so difficult to determine. I saw very clearly part of the driving road in Glen Lui, just south of Derry Lodge; and, looking away to the north, made out the shape of Lochindorb, which showed just above the sky-line of Sron na Leirg. The summit of Braeriach was free from mist for a few minutes. In my descent I kept as close to the crag edge as possible, for my programme was to walk all round the Garbh Coire, and this was the beginning. I found another built shelter, some 150 feet higher up than my first one, but not nearly so well constructed.

As I approached the Angel's Peak, passing above the Coire an Lochan Uaine, I saw the top of Cairngorm clear for a short time, but while I was on the top of the Peak the mist canopy was resting on all the Garbh Coire crags. Quitting the west side of the Angel's Peak, and passing an old cairngorm mine, I noticed that where the crag edge falls below 3750 feet (its lowest marked point is 3713·5 feet), the slope into the Garbh Coire seemed less impossible of ascent or descent, and I was accordingly not surprised to find here a plainly-marked track by which deer make their way between the depths of the corrie and the heights of the plateau. I think this is the only place where deer could get up and down. The track head is just opposite the source of the eastern head waters of the Linneach.

It was now mid-day, and I became conscious that the wind was getting colder and heavier, but as it was blowing from the east of south, and so at my back, it caused me no inconvenience. The ground now rose to the inner, western, corner of An Garbh-Choire, and I paused some time to gaze down the great gullies among the black-green rifted rocks. Turning to look in the opposite direction under

the heavy mist curtain, my eye was caught by the view, at some seven miles' distance, of the upper portion of the Feshie, the part that, according to the physiographers, has been "captured" from the Geldie.

Having rounded the inner corner of these gullies, I followed the crag edge some little distance, getting the wind in my face, and then, planting my walking-stick as a marker, I turned away from the crag to visit the March Cairn (4148·8 feet). The air was too misty to make any view possible from it, for the clouds were just touching the plateau, but I had previously noted that, standing at it, one can see the four summit cairns of Ben Muich Dhui, Braeriach, Cairn Toul, and Cairngorm. Returning to my walking stick, which looked very small and slight at a distance of some 500 yards, I resumed my crag walk, now across the wind, which was getting still colder and stronger. About 1 p.m. I was approaching the projecting horn that divides An Garbh-Choire from Fuar Gharbh Choire, and here I was surprised to come on two sheep. They also seemed surprised, but did not move far away, nor show much alarm. Sheep occasionally get wandered among the hills—I have previously found them on the Sgoran Dubh—and lead a half-wild existence, as do also goats in larger numbers on the plateau of Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm.

With the wind blowing in my face, I found some difficulty in looking down into the corrie, as the air, of course, came rushing up from it and lashed my beard against my face. Two tiny snowflakes of most beautiful and perfect construction fell on my sleeve, and gave me both a pleasurable moment in examining their delicate pattern, and some anxiety as to what they foretold. I soon saw that rain and snow were falling on the south side of the corrie, and then could see large rain-drops rushing horizontally through the space, and swiftly rising as they reached the near crag edge, and my face received many stinging blows from the flying pellets of snow. Rounding the projecting horn, I turned somewhat away from the blast, and proceeded about a quarter of a mile further along the crag,

looking down now into the Fuar Gharbh-Choire, which to my mind then fully deserved its title of Cold Rough Corrie. Building a tall stone-man as a marker, I struck off across the plateau to visit the Wells of Dee, a place to which I have made several pilgrimages, but not previously one in such wild weather. For it now became evident that I was in for a bad storm. The wind was roaring, rain and snow were falling freely, or rather being driven almost horizontally along, the mist was thickening, and all the air was darkened. I could not see enough to get a good line for the Wells, and struck the stream quite 100 yards too low down—in fact, below the place where it disappears in the gravel. I followed it up, and sat awhile for a small lunch and rest by the uppermost well. It was cold and cheerless, and I was not sorry to be on the move again, battling with the wind in the return to my stone man. Though it was snowing and raining, I did not venture to put on my cape, for I feared it would act as a balloon, and I needed all my steadiness of foot to walk the crag top in such a wind. By the time I reached the Dee Falls, I found it quite difficult to walk on the rough ground, the gusts of wind were so violent. Cairn Toul and the Angel's Peak were quite hidden in the storm-cloud, though, curiously, Ben Muich Dhui showed clear for a few moments. The head of the Dee Falls was unapproachable, for the wind flung the water far and high in drenching and blinding sheets and masses.

I now debated with myself what was best to do. The storm was rapidly increasing in violence; the wind was bitterly cold, and the hard blown snow smote the face with the sting of small shot. It was quite impossible to look into the wind, even had there been any view; but view there was none, except of the rushing grey mist, through which lay the remainder of my intended crag walk. I was tempted to turn tail, and make my way off the plateau by its north-west corner. But I had with me a pair of heavy gardening gloves, which quite protected my hands, and I had put on a broad-brimmed hat so as to get shade from the hoped-for sunshine. So, thinking that the experience

of walking the Braeriach ridge in such a storm would be worth having, I pulled the hat brim hard down so as to cover completely the right-hand side of my face, and, holding it there with my right hand, started again. I had, however, scarcely realised the fury that the storm would reach on the now rising ground. My walking-stick was diverted from the spot where I intended to plant its point, and, as I lifted a foot in my stride, I felt the leg distinctly pushed aside by the hurricane. In some of the rougher places, where balance was necessary to make walking possible, I could not walk erect, but was compelled to go down on all fours! At 1:30 p.m. I came to the edge of the Coire Bhrochain, turned north again, and moving now with the wind, was rushed up on to the top plateau of Braeriach, the wind roaring and hissing up the great gullies in the corner with a most impressive volume of sound. Here I crouched for a few moments' breathing space before venturing to attempt the summit cairn. I had been along the narrow Braeriach ridge several times, and had no doubt that I should succeed in getting along it in safety, but with such a dense cloud, such a storm of snow and rain, and such a tremendous wind, it needed all the strength and care that I could give it. At the cairn I squatted for a few seconds, but it was quite impossible to do more than take a hasty peep at my watch and note that it was 2:5 p.m. Then I fought my way along that narrow ridge, seeing nothing on either side, so dense was the cloud, and trying to do nothing but keep right ahead. The thing was a nightmare of wild turmoil, and I have no recollection of anything along there but the dogged, strenuous effort to keep my line and not be blown over or buffeted out of it by the fierce blasts that leaped roaring from the many gullies. When I thought I had gone far enough, for I could see nothing to guide me, I began working cautiously to my left, and soon found that I was all right, and descended through the lower portion of the cloud into the head of Coire Bennie. As soon as I got some little shelter from the wind, I put on my cape, for I was getting very wet. Then I rested for a few moments at the source of the Little Bennie.

But rain was now falling in torrents, and I thought it best to push on. I halted only once, to gather some plants that I had noted in the corrie on a previous visit. As I got lower in the more open part of the glen of the Little Bennie, the wind and rain increased if possible, and, being now somewhat tired, I was several times forcibly shoved aside from the little track I was following, so sudden and violent were the gusts. However, the day's work was drawing to a close; I was wet through, safely off the hill, and on the way home; I had had my "ploy", and nothing remained but a steady tramp in, luckily on a fair road and with the wind at my back. The wind and rain continued with unabated violence all the evening, and when I got in I found some explanation in the fact that the barometer had fallen six-tenths of an inch within twelve hours.

AT CREAG NA H' IOLAIRE.

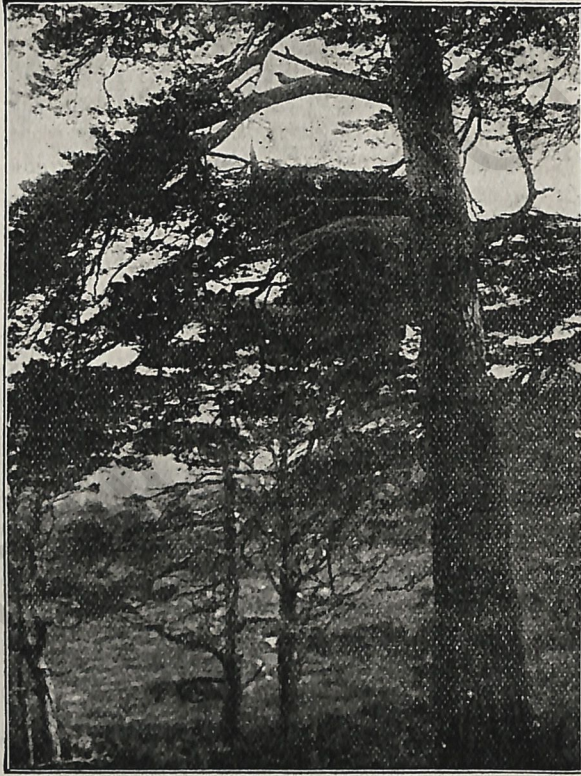
FRANKLY, to begin with, the names used in this story are coined, with the intention of concealing the localities referred to. Otherwise the story is true.

There was reason to think that Golden Eagles had been nesting not very far from our summer holiday quarters in the Highlands. More than one Eagle had been caught in a fox-trap, and we had seen a specimen caged and querulous. Cautious enquiry led to no very definite information, but it became evident that the nesting site was known to the gamekeeper, who apparently had received instructions from his employer that all information was to be withheld from "summer visitors" and others. This was, of course, all right, for if the nesting-place were widely known, then egg-collectors might commit depredations, or the young birds might be carried off, and so our Eagles would cease from among us. I was glad to find that the Eagles were to be protected, but I was not at all willing to remain out of the secret. Accordingly I devoted one day to a careful search of a likely tract of mountain land, and was rewarded by finding the nest and seeing one of the birds.

I cycled along the main high-road to the neighbourhood of a mountain that I may call Carn na Criche. Leaving my cycle in a place of safety near the mountain foot, I started straight up the brae face. I knew that near the summit and on the far side were crags that offered suitable nesting places, and my plan was to approach these in succession as stealthily as I could, in the hope that I might find the nest somewhere among them. The search had in it all the elements of excitement that accompany a "stalk", and called for wary movement and keen watchfulness, for an Eagle is a more difficult creature to find than a deer, as it is more easily concealed, and has much

greater freedom and speed of motion. Nevertheless, I thought it not unlikely that human wit would be equal to the task of discovering the bird and the nest.

When I approached the summit region of the hill, I focussed my field-glass for a probable distance, and, keeping a good look-out, lest the Eagle should see me



A BALMORAL EYRIE.

Photo by

Seton P. Gordon.

before I saw it, I moved cautiously and slowly from one crag to another. For some time I did not see any crag that looked a very likely place; then on the far side of the hill I found one much higher and steeper than any I had previously visited. Peering round an intervening tor, I vainly searched this crag with the glass. But I was looking obliquely across the crag, not commanding it very

thoroughly, and I determined to fetch a compass and approach it from behind, and so come to it from above. With this intention I began to work round its near end, taking my way through a little slochd in the hill. I was then close to the far or inner side of Carn na Criche, and I saw that in a few yards, and before turning towards the crag I was making for, I should clear the last ridge of my hill and look from it across the glen to its bigger neighbour, which I may call Creag Dhu. I was actually above the Lochan na Beinne that lies high up among the peat hags in this glen, and if I moved forward I should see, and might be seen from, the near outlying face of Creag Dhu. So I crawled forward til I could peep over the col, and there, right on the face of Creag Dhu, was a fine crag, much more likely to be a Creag na h' Iolaire, Eagle's Crag, than the one I was stalking. It was, of course, necessary to examine this new crag before showing myself on the sky-line. So I put the glass on to it, by good luck on to the very centre of it, and even at the very moment I did so an Eagle dropped from that middle point towards the lower edge of the crag, sailed silently, darkly, and swiftly away to the end of the crag, followed the bend of the hill, and disappeared. My search was rewarded, for there, at the very spot from which the bird had dropped, was the nest, plainly to be seen even across the glen—a large pile of sticks on one of the many jutting ledges of the crag. Before moving forward, I searched all round with the glass, to assure myself that no other bird was in sight.

I had now no further need of concealment or caution, so I rose from my crouching position and resumed a more natural mode of progression. As I began the descent of Carn na Criche into the glen, the Eagle I had just seen appeared again, soaring high up so as to overlook the crag I was quitting and the glen I had to cross. After a few slow circles of observation it sailed away, and I did not see it again that day, though many times I looked around and above in case it should re-appear. The general dark brown of the Eagle is a good protective colour as seen

against the broken ground of a crag face, and I have no doubt that even so large a bird might easily escape notice as it silently floats along. The only point of colour that caught my eye was the yellow of the beak; this was quite noticeable, as the sun was shining from behind me and full on the bird.

Dropping rapidly down the hillside, I passed the head of the lochan, made my way among the peat hags and pools in the flat, and reached the foot of my Creag na h' Iolaire. Here I got a nearer view of the nest, and could see that it was a largeish pile, probably about two feet high and five or six in diameter. Many sticks had fallen from it, so many that I half feared the nest had been disturbed. It was situated some thirty or forty feet above the base of the crag, and after two or three attempts I was able to climb up to within about ten feet of it. Here a plain rock face stopped me. Descending again, I scrambled round one end of the crag, and got up to the heathery flat above it. Here were many fluffy feathers of the Eagle—the bird is always more or less moulting—and I found also a few feathers of larger size worth carrying away. Carefully working along the crag edge, I was able to get down on to two small ledges nearly over the nest. But these ledges were wet and slippery, and gave but unsafe standing; there were no handholds in the rounded rocks above, and so I could get but a very imperfect view of the nest. It was enough, however, to show me that the nest had not been disturbed and was still in use. From above, the nest was quite inaccessible without the help of a rope, and there was nothing near to which a rope could have been attached—nor had I a rope. But I had no special desire to approach the nest any nearer, for the young birds or bird had flown some weeks before. If there had been young in the nest, I should certainly have tried hard for a close view of them.

I have already indicated that my line of approach to the Creag na h' Iolaire, being across the glen at its base, was quite open to the view of the Eagle when the bird was at the nest. I had therefore now to study the detailed

topography of the rough hill-side behind the crag, and make out a line of approach from a different quarter, so that it would be possible to reach either the top or the bottom of the crag without coming within the ken of the bird. This I did to my entire satisfaction, and then, having impressed the necessary detail well on my memory, I managed to establish also a reasonably easy connecting route with a steep hill-track to which access could readily be got from the highway. This done, I felt that for purposes of observation the Eagles and their nest were then mine.

A few days later—the delay being caused by persistent bad weather—I took my wife to see the new sight. The day was one of brisk and somewhat chilly wind, brilliant sunshine, and occasional showers. We sheltered under trees from one heavy shower before we left the highway, and nearly gave up the expedition. But the returning sunshine encouraged us to proceed, and, accordingly, quitting the highway, we entered on the hill path, and, after a steep, stiff pull up, found ourselves far above the level of human habitations, and during a resting halt enjoyed a wide view over mountain and glen, river and loch. Then we struck up the brae through the heather, following the easy line selected on the previous day, and approached the hill-top below which was the Eagle's Crag. As we entered the final slochd silence was the order of the day; no speech was allowed above a whisper, and but little of that; feet and sticks were carefully kept from contact with stones; the field-glass was taken from its case and adjusted to a probable focus; and with all senses on the alert we cautiously crept forward. The critical rock at the extreme near end of the base of the crag was reached, and I had just turned to indicate to my wife that she should step in front of me and peep round it, in the hope that the Eagle might be at home, when we heard the curious, melancholy, musical yelp of the bird. At once we both crouched low in the heather, and with upturned eyes watched, and in a few moments saw an adult Eagle, in all the darkness of its mature plumage,

float above the crag, calling as it flew. For some little time we had this intermittent view; then again creeping cautiously forward we gradually brought the front of the crag obliquely into view, and saw that the bird was floating to and fro over and near its nest. Then flying to the far end of the crag, the bird alighted on the top, and there to our delight we saw a second bird already perched. Bringing now the glass into action, we had an extremely good sight of the two birds. I suppose, however, that the sunlight glinted from the bright metal—field-glasses should be all dull black except the actual lenses—and we saw the first bird at once looking towards us. With but a moment's delay it rose again on wing, and sailed over the crag edge, and we saw it no more.

But still keeping low down among the heather and rocks, we watched the second bird. After looking about as if to seek what had alarmed its companion, it also took to wing, and we were charmed to see that it was a young bird in its immature plumage—perhaps the most attractively handsome condition of the bird. The under surface of its widespread wings was very light-coloured, appearing white against the darker plumage, and the narrower part of the tail had a band of the same colour across it. As the bird floated and turned in the brilliant sunlight, it made a marvellously fine picture, in which the splendid beauty of its form and colour was combined with the power and majestic dignity of its movement. After a few gyrations, seeing nothing to alarm it—for we kept low and still—the bird returned to its former perch at the distant end of the crag, and we saw it there plucking and tearing with its beak at some food that it held down with its claws. When we moved from our place of concealment, at once the bird rose, displaying again its beautiful plumage, and sailed far away to a pine wood on a distant hill-side; here it dropped among the trees and was lost to our view.

Congratulating ourselves on our good luck, we then scrambled along the crag edge to the top, looked down towards the nesting ledge, saw where the bird had been dining, and picked up several feathers, one of them more

than a foot long. Suddenly the sunshine was blotted out, the wind became very cold, and we had to shelter behind a rock while a heavy rainstorm swept over the country. This, though unkind, was not out of keeping with the wildness of the place; and the march of the rain columns across the glen and up the hill was a fit match for the powerful flight of the Eagles. When the storm had passed, we made our return journey, gathering some white heather and also some of the deep mountain red that so worthily matches it, and adding them to our Eagle plume as a memento of our day at Creag na h' Iolaire.

GLAS THULACHAN.

GLAS THULACHAN (Grey Hillocks) (3445) as every hill-walking schoolboy knows, is one of the highest summits in the Eastern Grampians, and is situated about mid-way between Glen Tilt and the Blairgowrie-Braemar Road. It is a very prominent hill as seen from the south, and I had long desired to climb it. As the Spital of Glenshee is probably the best point from which to approach it, I made my way to that comfortable biggin' and on a warm morning at the end of May, 1903, I set out for the hill. It was the most prominent object in the western landscape as I stood before the Invercauld Arms, though the summit is not completely seen from that point. There is nothing slender or elegant about Glas Thulachan. A great mass of a hill, it fills up an extensive triangular space, bounded by Gleann Lochaidh on the south, by Gleann Mor (separating it from Carn an Rìgh and Ben Uarn) on the west, and on the east by the deep cut of Glen Ghailneiche, which parts it from Carn Bhinnein and Beinn Gulabin.

I did not make any inquiry as to the best course to take for the ascent, but crossing the bridge to the north of the hotel I walked along the road which skirts the foot of Beinn Gulabin. Following this road towards Socach, I forded the Allt Ghlinn Ghailneiche—to find that a few hundred yards further up than the ford there is a bridge of which I might have made use. I then began climbing up the grassy slopes on the east side of the mountain. The excessive heat made even the nearer hills show very indistinctly, and as I toiled up the easy ascent at the back of Creag a Chaise I did not feel that my trouble was likely to be rewarded by much of a view from the summit. On reaching the top of the first ridge, I kept on by the side of a wire fence, and made my way in a northerly direction to round the head of a little valley running southward.

Several large patches of snow lay on the opposite side of this hollow, and on one of these a solitary deer wandered backward and forward, evidently enjoying the coolness. I heartily wished I could join it, but walking at a leisurely pace I reached the prominent point which marks the head of the valley referred to, in an hour and a half from the foot of the hill. From this point the summit of the mountain showed at what still seemed a great distance to the north-west, but it proved not to be so far away as it appeared. It is much more striking as seen from the east than from the west. As with most of the other mountains in this part of the Grampians, the summit is rounded, but a great precipitous corrie on the eastern side gives it a special character and distinction of its own. The walk towards the summit was very easy and pleasant going over short heather; indeed there is a great absence of rocks and stones on this hill. I soon joined again the friendly, companionable fence which leads right to the summit, and in about an hour I was at the insignificant little heap of stones which marks the top. Glas Thulachan is worthy of a better cairn than this, even though the corrie had to be quarried to get stones for it. This corrie was an impressive object on the right hand as one approached the summit, the black rocks being barred with great strips of snow. At the bottom a herd of deer lay stretched out on an extensive expanse of snow. From their air of quiet contentment the temperature seemed to suit them.

A great improvement had now taken place in the day. There was no very distant view to be had, but a cool breeze was blowing, and the nearer hills stood out clearly in the sunshine. I lay down on the heather and spent a happy hour in gazing on many old friends. The noble mass of Carn nan Gabhar stood out on the south-west; then came Carn Chlambain on the west side of Glen Tilt, Carn an Righ close at hand, with An Sgarsoch seen just over it, Cairn Toul and Ben Muich Dhui through the opening between Carn an Righ and Ben Uarn Mhor, Ben Uarn Bheag with Beinn a'

Bhuird and Ben Avon seen to the north of it, and Loch nan Eun, beloved of fishers, nestling at its feet; to the east rose the fine little peak of Carn Bhinnein and the round shoulder of Carn Geoidh, with, on its southern side, the patch of snow that clings to it so tenaciously till late in the summer. Beinn Gulabin, Beinn Earb, Meall a Choire Bhuidhe, and Ben Vuroch filled in the picture towards the south. There was no distant view southward, which was a disappointment, and even to the northward the Cairngorm summits were not very clearly seen through a slight haze.

I should have liked to cross to Carn Geoidh and the Cairnwell, but the thought of the dip of 2000 feet to the intervening valley and of the scorching heat when I got there destroyed the good resolutions of the morning. Carn an Righ looked very tempting across Gleann Mor and could easily have been reached in about an hour, as the dip is not great. However, in a discreet fashion, I struck southward along the ridge to the east of Clais Mhor, and reached Glenloch Lodge (a shepherd's dwelling) in about an hour and a quarter from the top. A further walk of about an hour and a quarter brought me once more to the Spital of Glenshee, which was reached soon after four o'clock. The sun shone with quite unreasonable ferocity as I trudged down Gleann Lochaidh, and springs were scarce. There is a good one, however, in the roadway a little before the burn is crossed at some stepping-stones. Let no thirsty traveller pass it without a loud "gaudeamus".

Probably a better course to take for the ascent of the mountain is to go up by the line I took in descending, *i.e.*, to walk up Gleann Lochaidh to the Lodge or a little past it, and then ascend by one of the long, easy ridges which the mountain throws out towards the south. This would probably prove less circuitous than the route I took.

A SUMMER NIGHT ON BEINN A' GHLO.

BY JOHN RITCHIE, LL.B.

"It is high praise to say of this characteristic group that close acquaintance deepens the impression made upon everyone who has admired from a distance the compact, abrupt, and withal massive peaks of Beinn a' Ghlo". In such terms one of the members of the Cairngorm Club who took part in the summer excursion of July, 1893, has recorded his admiration for this fine mountain, and there are few who will not echo his sentiments. The appearance of Beinn a' Ghlo, with its summits towering up so close to each other and the deep dark corries between, is most striking from some point not too distant, as from Ben Vrackie for example, but even from a position much further off it remains a notable feature in the landscape. It is a beautiful sight as viewed from Perth Bridge on any clear day in early summer, when its snow-clad summits glitter in the sun.

I have been up most of the Perthshire mountains, but none of them is so attractive to me as Beinn a' Ghlo. Thus the recollection of a delightful day with William Barclay, in October, 1902, when we made a round from Blair Atholl to Pitlochry, over the four summits of Beinn a' Ghlo and Beinn Bhuirich suggested the idea that a night excursion over part of the same ground would be a pleasant experience on some mild evening in May or June. Accordingly, arrangements were made with two friends, M. and F., for setting out from Perth on an afternoon in May, but rain, which in Scotland nowadays continually maketh sad the heart of man, effectually prevented our leaving home at that time. We then fixed on 14th June, and happily that day proved bright and sunny, so that we confidently looked forward to a genial and balmy night on the mountain, as we set out for Blair Atholl. On our arrival there, however, a chilly feeling in the air indicated that the night might

probably turn out less satisfactory than we anticipated. This fear was confirmed by William Barclay, whom I met at Blair Atholl station on his return from a long excursion to An Sgarsoch and Carn an Fhidleir. On these hills, he informed me, he had encountered during the day a violent snowstorm, which lasted for hours, and coated the Cairngorms in white. However, we comforted ourselves with the belief that the cold snap was passing northward and that we should escape it.

We left Blair Atholl at 11:20 that night, and soon found ourselves swinging along in fine form over the well-known



BEINN A' GHLO, FROM THE SOUTH.

road past Loch Moraig to the foot of Carn Liath. The air was bracing and tonic in the extreme, and as we walked along we all agreed in thinking that this was unquestionably the proper time of day to start on a hill walk. In about an hour we reached the bothy on the left-hand side of the road, and struck across the heather. We soon found the little pathway which, skirting a stone dyke, leads uphill towards a number of shooters' butts. The ascent of Carn Liath by this route is specially suitable for a night

climb. As the hill-slope begins to rise quite near the road, the traveller is saved the possible excitement of floundering in peat bogs in the darkness.

The faint glimmer of the rising moon had been visible as we walked along the road, and now she mounted high over Ben Vrackie, casting a beautiful light on the intervening moorland. We climbed steadily without interruption through the still air. All was quiet save for an occasional gust of wind which blew round the shoulder of the mountain, and the stamping of some sheep which stood silhouetted against the sky-line, angrily protesting against this unseasonable intrusion. Everything promised a delightful night on the hills, and I thought of the pleasure of the walk down the long ridge from the summit of Carn Liath to the Cromalton Pass. As we drew near the top of the mountain, however, the wind became more threatening, and mist began to wreath the hillside. Passing the first guide cairn, we reached the summit about half-past one, and were glad to cower down in the shelter of the cairn on the top till the sleety rain which now began to fall should have passed by. After sitting beside the cairn for about ten minutes, we struck out towards the ridge which leads from Carn Liath towards the next peak, viz., Braigh Coire Chruinn Bhalgain. This fine ridge is familiar to all who have walked over Beinn a' Ghlo, and is one of the most attractive features of the mountain. It forms a narrow neck, leading one, as it appears, right into the heart of a wild mountain group, and the view looking into the northern corrie of Carn Liath is not readily forgotten. The rain had now ceased, and though the hour was still early there was enough light to enable us to enjoy the grandeur of the surrounding scenery. Other conditions, however, were to make the meditative enjoyment of a fine view more than ordinarily difficult. We had not proceeded more than a hundred yards from the cairn when we got a taste of what was in store. A perfect gale of bitterly cold wind came thundering down on us. We struggled along the ridge as best we could, finding it difficult to keep our feet owing to the force of the storm. The

wind blew without intermission, and, as it seemed to have been passed through a refrigerator ten times refrigerated, we were soon chilled to the marrow. No clothing seemed to afford any protection as the blast swept in at the right side, circled gaily round our bones, and then went howling down the slope to the left.

When we had descended for a considerable distance, the wind seemed to change and blow out of an opposite quarter. We groaned at the thought of its impish ingenuity, but a little reflection showed that it was not the wind that had changed but that a turn in the direction of the ridge (unobserved as we staggered blindly along) had now exposed our left side to the gale. The natural formation of the ground thus played the part of a turnspit, and, when we had been "done brown" on one side, it effectually turned us round on the other. We were not sorry to reach the foot of the hollow between the first and second peaks, and to have a short respite in the famous Cromalton Pass of litigious memory.

The climb from this point to the top of Braigh Coire Chruinn Bhalgain is a gradual and very easy one, and for a time the wind gave us a rest. The mountain stretched before us, lying cold and grey in the light of the approaching dawn, while in the west there was a sky of a blue colour—between cobalt and indigo. As we drew near the summit, however, we got into thick mist (of which we had hitherto had very little), and we were harrassed by the same piercing wind. The cairn on this peak is, however, specially suited for a shelter, and we speedily esconsed ourselves behind it, feeling, as F. said, "starvation warm". It was now nearly three o'clock, and it seemed certain that there would be no sunrise view for us. As this had not been our object in setting out, we were not greatly concerned, and we set ourselves to enjoy our morning meal as best we could. It was so utterly uncomfortable, however, that we resolved to finish our breakfast at Bealach an Fhiodha, where we could have a good supply of water; and, after a stay of ten minutes, we were on our way to the next peak. The mist occasionally cleared as we marched

along, and we were rewarded by some fine glimpses in the direction of Glen Feshie. Suddenly the curtain to the north-west was drawn aside, and An Sgarsoch and Carn an Fhidleir stood out clear to view, with the rolling moorland that lies between them and Glen Tilt. All this country was white with a thin coating of newly-fallen snow. The deep cleft of Glen Tilt was a striking object in the nearer foreground, the steep sides showing a dull deep green colour amid the prevailing white. At another moment the mist partially cleared in the valley on our right, and Airgiod Bheinn with its very steep western slope was dimly seen, looking grander than ever in the uncertainty of its outline.

Beinn a' Ghlo may be compared in shape to a very roughly-formed letter H. One limb is formed by Carn Liath and Braigh Coire Chruinn Bhalgain, while Airgiod Bheinn and Carn nan Gabhar make up the other. The connecting link between these long limbs is a short ridge, which we were now approaching. To reach it we kept on past the summit of Braigh Coire Chruinn Bhalgain, in an easterly direction, till in about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour we reached a collection of very large stones. Here a gentle descent leads to the connecting ridge referred to. Baker and his friend (*C.C.J.*, Vol. IV., p. 16) evidently missed this ridge by keeping on too far to the north-east, till the valley between them and Carn nan Gabhar became deeper and not so easily crossed.

When crossing this connecting ridge we passed near the pools from which Glas Leathad rises, and we would gladly have seated ourselves by these to complete our scanty breakfast, as these pools supply almost the only water to be found on the upper ridges of the mountain. A rest here was not to be thought of, however, as a bitterly cold wind was blowing through this pass as elsewhere, and drove us on like some tormented spirits in Dante's *Inferno*.

We climbed slowly up from the col to the ridge between Carn nan Gabhar and Airgiod Bheinn. Behind us, on the ridge we had just left, lay great wreaths of last year's snow, while in front of us the whole mountain was white

with hoar frost and newly-fallen snow, the older patches showing white through the thin veil which had just fallen. As he gazed on the wintry scene, F. very appropriately wished us "all the compliments of the season". We reached the top of Carn nan Gabhar about 4:20. The mist did not lift, and we had to forego even the view of Loch Loch, which can be seen from the slopes of this hill. We waited for about 20 minutes in the hope that the mist would rise, but we were doomed to disappointment; so we set out on our homeward journey, and made for Airgiod Bheinn. The sun now shone out, and we were able to take a few photographs as we walked along the ridge; while a backward glance gave us the mortification of seeing Carn nan Gabhar clear of mist and standing out boldly in the morning sunshine. In the valley to our right, on the other hand, a swirling sea of mist still rose and fell, on which, as on a lantern screen, we had the pleasure of seeing ourselves reflected for a few seconds like giants of the Brocken. Airgiod Bheinn was reached at 5:10, and we sat down to remove some of our Arctic trimmings. A little gathering of icicles hung from the points of our caps, while our stockings were covered with small nuggets of ice.

We had a fine view to the south from this summit, the Lomonds and other well-known hills being easily seen. But the prospect is inferior to that which is to be had from some of the other peaks. Accordingly we did not spend much time here, but commenced our last descent. We were not familiar with this side of the mountain, and, as the slope was steep and stony, we took a considerable time to reach the valley to the east. Along this valley runs the Rathad nam Ban Righ (The Queen's Road), recalling the visit of Queen Mary to this district in 1564. She was present at a "royal hunting" which took place at Loch Loch, and doubtless she travelled by this route on her way to and from the scene of the hunt. After tramping along this old road at a leisurely pace for about an hour, we struck our road of the previous night at a point several miles to the east of that at which we had left it to climb

Carn Liath. It was now 7:30, and we lay down by the roadside and slept peacefully in the warm sunshine—a pleasant experience after the never-ending snell winds of the night. We then strolled in very leisurely fashion back to Blair Atholl, which we reached just before mid-day, heartily agreeing that we had had what the Irish would call a “quare fine time”, and that we must have many another tramp over Beinn a' Ghlo.

LOCH-AN-EILAN.

A SONNET.

THE mountain tops rise into spectral mist;
The wind is moaning in the forest fir;
The steel-blue waters scarcely are astir,
That darkly mirror those gaunt hills, cloud-kissed,
And gently lap that islet's mantling green,
Where stand the castle ruins, old and gray,
Silent and grim, that rang with old-time fray—
The terror of a wild, long-dead Has-been!
Foamless and dark the shadowed waters sleep;
While on the mountain tops the wind shrieks shrill,
And, rioting in passes scarred and steep,
Strikes the black Larig with a death-like chill.
But here the silent waters darkly keep
Lost untold stories, safely hidden still.

J. D.

Kingussie, September 3, 1903.

—*The Scotsman*, September 12, 1903.

THE CHARM OF THE HILLS.

THE year that has just faded into the past is a year to be remembered in mountaineering annals. It is unique in history for the number of accidents that have happened to climbers. The snows and the precipices of the Alps have claimed a lamentable number of victims; and in England the tragic calamity at Scafell is still fresh in the minds of men. As we reflect upon these accidents, and as we read of the deaths of climbers, some in the bloom of youth, some in the pride of manhood, all suddenly and without warning removed from this world, to thoughtful minds it is surely not unprofitable to consider for a moment wherein lies the charm of the hills.

In the works of older writers of this country we find little mention of the beauty of mountain scenery; still less appreciation do we find in the names of the mountains themselves. Our Gaelic forefathers did not overtax their imaginations in giving names to the omnipresent hills. On the rare occasions on which they did bestow a name suggesting to us something more than the idea of size and shape, it was to emphasise not the beautiful side, but the terrible. We remember the Ben Uarns and the Learg Ghrumach, the hills like Hell, the pass that chills one's blood. To them, indeed, a cultivated field was one of the most beautiful sights in nature. They shared Bailie Nicol Jarvie's ideas. The hills were gruesome, to be shunned at all times, and above all in the time of winter. In that season, no doubt, men had often to traverse the glens and moors; but they did so against their will. Their eyes were shut against the wild magnificence of Nature. Their thoughts were like Elrignore's in "John Splendid":—"We were lost in a wilderness of mountain peaks; the bens started about us on every hand like the horrors of a nightmare, every ben with its death-sheet; menacing us, poor insects, crawling in our pain across the landscape". To them his idea of Glencoe would have appeared natural

and reasonable:—"I glanced with a shiver down its terrible distance upon that nightmare of gulf and eminence, of gash, and peaks afloat upon swirling mists. It lay, a looming terror forgotten of heaven and unfriendly to man (as one would readily imagine), haunted for ever with wailing airs and rumours, ghosts calling in the deeps of dusk and melancholy, legends of horror and remorse. 'Thank God', said I, as we gave the last look at it—"Thank God I was not born and bred yonder. Those hills would crush my heart against my very ribs". And save a few of high poetical nature we meet with no characters in fiction or in real life like Allan Stewart in "Kidnapped", or like the exquisitely drawn llama in "Kim", whose heart, as he toils through the sweltering plains of India, is athirst for the snow and the hills of his far-off home.

In modern times, however, there has come a great change. It is not only poets who feel the mystic charm of the mountains; over countless others of high and humble station this charm exercises a great influence; and in their hearts there is awakened a deeply sympathetic chord at the story of Sir Walter Scott's homecoming from the sunny shores of Italy, of his eyes filling with tears as the distant outlines of the Eildons burst upon his view. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin": and that Cecil Rhodes should wish to be buried on the heights of the Matoppos seems to us most natural—for the remains of a great man, a great resting-place. To-day, not only are men in increasing numbers every year attracted and fascinated by the grandeur of the mountains, but there are also clubs and journals which owe their existence to, and which foster, a love for the everlasting hills.

"Two Voices are there: one is of the Sea,
One of the Mountains; each a mighty Voice".

Of these voices, calling continually to men to leave for a while the smoke and dust, the toil and worries of the present world, and to taste of the freshness of the world while young, it would be hard to say which is the mightier.

Yet one difference between the sea and the hills may be briefly noticed. As we think of the sea, we cannot avoid thinking at the same time of man, of his weakness and of his power. For on every sea we find traces of man, alike in the Pacific, with its far-separated coral isles, and in the cold Arctic, choked with fogs and towering icebergs. Everywhere and at all times on the sea is to be found toiling the hardy race of man. There flash the beacons of lighthouses; there go the ships; and there are countless leviathans of iron and wood taking their journey therein.

The hills, for the most part, do not suggest to us thoughts of man, and bear few traces of his power. Man comes, and climbs, and vanishes: compared with him they are eternally the same; and this it was that impressed so deeply the mind of the shepherd boy watching his flocks on the hill-sides of Judaea, with the deep blue eastern sky or the twinkling stars above him, and led him long afterwards to speak of the hills as everlasting.

The solitude, then, and the silence of the hills attract men rather than repel them. They are glad to escape from the mental strife and feverish hurry of modern life to the pines and the purple heather, to a silence unbroken save for the murmur of the tumbling mountain burn, or the lowing of cattle far down in the glen, or the mournful wail of a whaup. Below they see the ploughman in the fields, the white flock of sheep on the green hill-side, and on the banks of the silver river a lonely fisher; above lies a waste of rocks and heather, the home of the wild deer and the eagle, where

“Only the mightier movement sounds and passes:
Only winds and rivers,
Life and death”.

Thither they gladly bend their way, enjoying the light of the sun and the beauties of this delightful world. Through the heather, over the rocks—and at last they gain the summit. All round them stretch the hill-tops, some sloping gently to the sky, others looming up with frowning crags and dripping precipices. Here the sheen of a loch

through the pines; there the whiteness of falling water: near at hand a rocky corrie still specked with snow, further away the fertile fields of the lowlands; and away in the dim distance, where earth and heavens meet, a yellow strip of sand, and then the grey sea.

Some indeed at such a moment might wish for the power to see further and better, to catch a glimpse of the trout rising on the loch, or the tanned faces of fishermen in their boats at sea. To me the scene is quite satisfactory. In seed-time or in harvest, in summer or winter, the eye exults in an equally charming prospect. Here men are able to commune with Nature, and to receive the undefinable bliss that Nature bestows upon them that love her. Such blessings they receive. Do they pay nothing in return? Alas! we read of continual accidents, of a slip of the foot, of a stone giving way, and, without a moment's warning, a fall, a cry, and then silence. Is it Nature, then, that we must blame for these deaths? Does she exact such a terrible penalty?

The reason is to be found, rather, in the nature of man. The spirit to do something, to accomplish something, lies deep in the human heart: and surely this spirit and the deeds that it inspires serve to refute in a great measure the arguments of those unhappy critics who tell us that men have degenerated physically and morally. Of this spirit are heroes made; to this spirit Scotsmen and Englishmen owe a great part of their success; and however some may blame those daring and dauntless climbers who, in attempting to storm the castle walls of Nature, lose limb or life, of such men thoughtful minds cannot but feel proud. In the hills, as on the sea, one learns to look death in the face. The lovers of hill scenery are in the vast majority of cases men serious, yet genial, men who appreciate and love the beauty of this world, and yet do not fear to leave it. As Wordsworth says—

“The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains”.

The hills indeed bear testimony that the race of man is still sturdy, that his blood still runs strong. And to the

few young men who censure those fighters with Nature, Matthew Arnold's lines may well be commended—

“While the locks are yet brown on thy head,
While the soul still looks through thine eyes,
While the heart still pours
The mantling blood to thy cheek,
Sink, O Youth, in thy soul!
Yearn to the greatness of Nature”.

Man, it has been said, is craving continually for what is good. Therefore by the beautiful world around us we are chastened and purified, sometimes, it may be, unconsciously. And this purifying and elevating power is to be found nowhere more strong than in the glens or green recesses of the hills. There, indeed, men find

“In Nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of their purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of their heart, and soul
Of all their moral being”.

Even when afar off one looks upon the hills towering into heaven, coloured now with the blush of heather, now with the ruddy tint of snow on a winter evening, with their shapely outlines clear against a red autumn sky, or dimly seen through drifting mist, even afar off one is filled with “thoughts that lie too deep for tears”—with thoughts such as filled the mind of Coleridge as he gazed on the mighty slope of Mont Blanc, moulding in his mind the Miltonian music of “The Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni”—

“O dread and silent Mount! I gazed on thee
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought; entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.
Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks, and secret ecstasy. Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my hymn.

“Thou, too, hoar Mount, with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God”. H. S.

TRACES OF OLD GLACIERS ALONG THE
FEUGH AND AVEN.

BY T. F. JAMIESON, LL.D., F.G.S.

"I MIND it well in early date", when I was a boy at the Grammar School of Aberdeen, some sixty years ago, wandering about among the mounds of gravel and stones on which much of the town is built, and wondering how they came there. In those days we had nothing to explain or account for such features except Noah's flood, and the visions of a drowned world which it called up were anything but cheery. Since that time, however, the progress of Geology has given us clearer notions regarding the causes which have produced the present character of the surface.

During the last stage of the glacial period, or age of ice, the frozen stream which came down the valley of the Dee reached the present coast-line, and protruded some distance beyond it, with a breadth of several miles. The right flank of this glacier rested on the hills of Nigg, and its left in the parish of Belhelvie, near Tarbethill. The hills of Nigg and their extension westward being higher than the ground on the opposite side of the Dee had the effect of shunting the stream of ice a little to the north, so that it flowed out to the coast across what is now the lower end of the Don valley. This is well shown among other things by the marks left by the ice on the surface of the granite rocks at the quarries of Cairnery and Persley. I don't know whether these marks are now as visible as they were when I examined them many years ago, but at that time they were clear and distinct, and ran from south-west to north-east, pointing right across the Don, corresponding in direction to the general strike of the valley of the Dee in the lower part of its course. Well, it was during the decay and melting of this great stream

of ice that there were laid down great mounds of gravel and stones, such as the Broad Hill, the Castle Hill on which the Barracks are built, and others now covered by the streets and lanes of the city.

Such mounds constitute what are called the moraines of the glacier, being the gravel and stony rubbish carried along by the ice and laid down at its termination. In great mountainous rocky valleys, like those of the Alps, the moraines are of a rougher description, abounding in huge blocks of stone sometimes as large as cottages; but in regions where the hills are smaller and less precipitous the stuff is of a more gravelly nature, especially where it is washed down by the water produced by the melting of the ice.

Now, when the valley of the Dee was occupied by this great ice-stream, its tributary valleys had, of course, theirs also, and my object in this paper is to draw the attention of the Cairngorm Club and the readers of its *Journal* to a very interesting locality which well deserves a visit from them.

At Banchory the Dee is joined on the south side by the river Feugh, whose head-streams, the Aven and the Dye, take their rise at the foot of Mount Battock (2555 feet). On walking up the Feugh for about a couple of miles we meet with a distinct moraine on the south side of the river, at a place called Mill of Cammie. This moraine consists of a multitude of tumuli, or hillocks, of gravel and stones, protruding across the valley, some of them planted with trees. These mounds were left by the end of the glacier of the Feugh, after it had been joined by that of the Dye and the Aven, and indicate a considerable halt of the retreating ice at this spot, for it is only in those places where the end of the glacier remains for some length of time that any great accumulation of stuff is able to take place. Where the ice recedes rapidly there is no time for much to gather. A succession of warm seasons causes a great melting of the ice and a speedy retreat of the glacier, while a succession of cold, snowy years has the opposite effect, and keeps the ice at

its place, or even makes it advance beyond its former position. It is generally found that glaciers retreat in this fashion, pausing here and there for a time so as to leave great heaps of rubbish, and receding over other spaces without leaving any noticeable quantity.

A little west of Mill of Cammie there are a few more mounds, one of them of large size; then an interval occurs without any, until we come to the mouth of Glen Dye, which is about two miles further up the Feugh than the junction of the Cammie burn. Immediately after passing the mouth of the Dye, numerous great mounds make their appearance, which seem to have been left by the united ice-streams of the Feugh and the Aven. The great size of the moraine here marks a long pause of the ice at this place. The quantity of débris is enormous, especially on the south side of the Feugh, where it forms a range of large mounds composed of gravel and stones. One of them, called the Dunimore (*i.e.*, the big hillock), rises to a height of about 120 feet above its base. This is at the mouth of little Glen Dye, up which the road goes, and not far from Cuttishillock, where a market was formerly held. Burns, in one of his famous songs, alludes to this locality—

“In coming by the Brig o’ Dye,
At Dartlet we a blink did tarry”;

and he (or one of his editors) says that the Dye is “a small river in Kincardineshire, near the birthplace of the poet’s father”. I can’t find this *Dartlet* of the song anywhere on the maps, and would be glad if someone could tell me where it is, for I fancy there must have been actually some farm or house that bore the name. On the north side of the Feugh, opposite the Dunimore, some characteristic moraine hillocks are to be seen, corresponding to those on the south side, though smaller. The base of Dunimore mound is at an altitude of about 300 feet above the sea.

The river Aven, which joins the Feugh a little above this, is a small stream, flowing along a deep, narrow, lonely glen between Clochnaben (1900 feet) and Peter Hill

(2023 feet). Near the entrance of Glen Aven, at an altitude of about 450 feet, there is a very characteristic crescent-shaped moraine, but of no great size, with some large granite blocks on the top of it. There it lies, clear as a sunbeam, just as the glacier left it. There are no habitations or cultivated land in Glen Aven. Its water, therefore, ought to be pure and well suited for a town or village supply, unless there should be too much peat on the hills around it. I walked over Peter Hill, which I found to be composed of reddish granite, intersected by some dikes of felspar porphyry running nearly N. and S. or N. 15° W. The principal ice-stream, I think, must have come down the Aven, as it is encompassed by higher hills than the Feugh or the Dye, and flows north-east along a deep, shaded glen, little exposed to the influence of the sun. But the Feugh has a much wider basin. The rocks on the south side of the Feugh, along its lower part, are mostly of granite, but on the north side gneiss and other crystalline schists are more common. In accordance with this, the moraine débris at the mouth of the Dye and Mill of Cammie is composed mainly of granite, whereas, in that on the opposite side of the valley, gneiss and schist prevail. Here I may mention that it is a characteristic of glacier action to keep the débris of each side of a valley distinct from that of the other side.

On the north side of the Feugh, nearly opposite Mill of Cammie, is Bowbutts, which must have been a rendezvous in olden times for practising archery. High up on the hill of Scolty, facing the mouth of the Cammie, there are gravel hillocks and great quantities of large stones which the natives have collected along their fields into wide consumption dykes. These stones had no doubt been brought there by the left flank of the glacier which lodged the moraines on the other side. I was told that the soil up here is better and more productive than it is lower down, near the base of the hill.

I walked up Glen Aven nearly to the foot of Mount Battock, but saw no more noticeable moraines, which would seem to indicate that the ice had shrunk steadily

after retreating within the entrance of the defile at Peter Hill, and had finally melted away without leaving any remarkable mounds. The hillsides in Glen Aven are smooth and steep, and clothed with heather, and there is some peat moss on the flatter spaces near the top of the hills. The surface of the granite all along here is too much weathered and disintegrated to retain any of the polish and scratches made by the ice rubbing over it. On a low ridge near the base of Peter Hill, where the glacier must have pressed heavily, the rock is a good deal bared and rounded, but none of the finer markings are left. In regard to the absence of these traces so general on the surface of the rocks here and elsewhere on Deeside, I may observe that a great many thousand years have elapsed since the glaciers disappeared from this country, so that it is no wonder we don't now find any remains of this impression left by them on the rocky surface over which they passed. The mineral quality of much of our granite is such that it yields somewhat readily to the action of the weather, as may be seen on the older tombstones in our churchyards. But where it has been covered by some depth of clay, there is more chance of the glacial dressing being preserved, especially if the stone is of a hard, close-grained texture. Accordingly, in some of our quarries, when the rock is newly "tired", the ice-marks may still be seen, as at Cairncry, Persley, Cove, and some other places. In the West Highlands they may often be observed even on the bare rocks, if these are of a hard siliceous nature. This is owing to the greater intensity and longer continuance of the glaciation in that quarter, for, as the rainfall in the western glens is two or three times as great as it is in Aberdeenshire, the fall of snow was formerly in like proportion. On the top of Ben Nevis there is sometimes as much rain in one month as we have in a whole year. The moraine mounds, however, are an almost imperishable feature, and often seem to preserve their original figure and appearance nearly unchanged.

The bottom of the Feugh valley from Mill of Cammie to near Finzean is wide and flat, covered with small

gravelly débris spread out by the spates. These flat spaces are often met with in valleys from which a glacier has retreated. The plain of Ballater is another such instance. The interesting character of Glen Feugh and its branches lies a good deal in the evidence they afford of the great development which the ice attained during this last stage of its history, even in valleys encompassed by hills of no great height. They also present a fine field for investigation within easy access from Aberdeen, so that a good deal may be seen even in a single day's visit. I hadn't time to explore the upper reaches of Glen Dye and the Feugh. No doubt they also would well repay examination.



Photo by

LOCH AVON FROM THE SADDLE.

James Porter.

BEINN DOIREANN AND SOME NEIGHBOURS.

BY WILLIAM BARCLAY.

ON 19th May, a friend and the writer journeyed by the early morning train from Edinburgh to Bridge of Orchy, which was reached at 8:35. From the station we made direct for the summit of Beinn Doireann, which rose above us in one steep, unbroken slope of nearly 8000 feet. The lower part of this slope was grassy and moist, the middle scree-covered, while the upper had a heavy coating of snow. It was warm work toiling up this steep, under a blazing sun, but we had ample excuse for frequent halts—the ever-increasing vision of snow-capped peaks. In the foreground, and most impressive of all, Stob Ghabhar and the Clachlet, with Loch Tulla at their base, formed a suitable picture on which to expend plate number one. As we neared the summit, we were welcomed by a covey of ptarmigan, just changing into summer garb. The cairn (3523) was reached at 10:10, and here we remained for nearly an hour, admiring the vast array of snow-covered hills which rose in every direction. To the south, and just across the Chonoghlaish glen, Beinn a' Chaisteil and Beinn Odhar had some snow lingering on their summits. A little farther off, Beinn Chaluim showed its twin peaks very nicely, and in the extreme distance Ben Lomond towered above the loch at its base. Then the Beinn Laoigh group, only eight miles away, was very fine, carrying a heavy mantle of snow. In the gap between Beinn Os and Beinn Dubh Chraige, the summit of Ben Ime was seen. Almost due west the great mass of Ben Cruachan, with its many tops, occupied a position between the waters of Loch Awe and Loch Etive. Just a glimpse of the latter was got through Glen Kinglass, but to the north of this glen we had Ben Starav and the many other fine peaks leading round to the splendid mass of Stob Ghabhar and the Clachlet. Over the northern

slope of this last, just the summit of Sgor a' Mhaim could be seen. Further round from these again, we had the well-known form of Ben Nevis, the finely-shaped Binnan More, Stob Coire an Easain, Stob Coire an Easain Mhoir above Loch Treig, and a whole host of others, which we had not time to identify. Most of these hills, be it remembered, were clothed in spotless white. Over Beinn an Dothaidh stood Cnoc Dearg, and just to the right of that, but far away, we recognised Creag Meaghaidh. Then the Ben Alder group occupied our limit of distinctness in this direction; the next part of the circle only showed great masses of white indistinctly through a haze. It was not till we came to Schichallion that we could recognize friends, but what a tame appearance that mountain has from this point! Carn Maing was not worth looking at, simply a great undulating plateau. Both these hills were almost devoid of snow. In the immediate foreground Beinn an Dothaidh, Beinn Achallader, Beinn Creachan, Beinn a' Chuirn, and Ben Vannoch encircled Loch Lyon on the west, and Beinn Heasgarnich and Creag Mor overlooked it on the south. Meall Ghaordie peeped over the slope of Heasgarnich, and more distinct were the tops of Ben Lawers. Ben Vorlich and Stùc a Chroin, although barely visible, were easily recognised; and who could mistake Ben More, Am Binnein, or Cruach Ardran? No matter in what direction we were engaged, the eye always seemed to turn instinctively to the north-west, and no wonder! for in that direction lay the cream of Scotland's hills, all in Alpine condition.

We now left the summit, and traversed northwards, descending over immense and almost unbroken snow-fields to the col (2050) between this hill and Beinn an Dothaidh. There was comparatively little snow on the southern slopes of the latter, but the north face was heavily corniced. Some time was spent in photographing, and then we made for Beinn a' Chuirn. This necessitated a dip of 1600 feet, followed by a fairly steep ascent to the summit (3020, cairnless), which was passed over, and the walk continued to the cairn (3125) on Ben Vannoch at

2.10. Only a small dip separates these tops, so slight that the traverse was done in twenty minutes. From Ben Vannoch one obtains a fine view of Beinn Creachan just to the north, and, by descending a little to the south, an equally good view of Loch Lyon and the upper part of Glen Lyon is also got. On the other side of the loch Beinn Heasgarnich rises to a height of 3530 feet, and yet is a much forsaken mountain.

Beinn Doireann, Beinn an Dòthaidh, Beinn a' Chuirn, and Ben Vannoch are all grass-covered, and under sheep, although we did see a herd of deer on Beinn Doireann. Our time was now rather limited, so we did not stay long on Vannoch, but descended to the "road" in Glen Chonogh-lais, and followed it—our own road—down to the railway track. The O.S. map indicates that the stream should be crossed three times: thirteen would be nearer the mark. We crossed it a few times but soon got tired of that game, and just continued down the left bank of the stream. It took us an hour and a quarter to do these four miles, and, as we had yet another four to cover, and a train to catch, we did not waste any time, but continued down the line towards Tyndrum. Sleeper-walking does not come in well after hill-walking; the stride is altogether out. However, we stuck to it, and had three minutes to spare before our train came.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.



A RETROSPECT of the past mountaineering season affords sad reading. Never in the history of the Alps have disaster and death been so frequent on these mountains. The official figures give the total number of accidents as 148, and the victims at 196, of whom 136 were killed outright and 60 more or less gravely hurt. These figures constitute a record, beating last year's total of 124 fatalities. The passion for collecting flowers, such as edelweiss and rare Alpine plants, which generally grow in inaccessible and dangerous places, is stated to be the chief cause of accidents. The desire to break and create records by climbing virgin peaks, reputed to be inaccessible, and to make an ascent in a few minutes less than it has ever been done previously, comes second on the list of causes. These are the principal reasons given by the statisticians, but it would not be difficult to add half-a-dozen others, commencing with foolhardiness and want of proper training.

CAN any information be given as to this bird nesting on Lochnagar? I had no word of this, and was accordingly rather surprised and much interested to find three pairs haunting the highest summit, Cac Carn Beag (3786 feet), on 7th July, 1903. They kept going in and out of a crevice in a crag near the north-east end of the high precipices which encircle the great Corrie. The spot could not be got at, but it was well seen in the brilliant sunshine of one of the finest summer days I have ever experienced on our Scottish hills. The birds were under observation for about an hour, and it can scarcely be doubted that they were nesting. There can be few, if any, other breeding places of this species in the British Isles over 3700 feet above sea-level, and I should be glad to hear if it is established—*i.e.*, known for some time. Swifts are abundant in Braemar in the summer, nesting in the village.—HUGH BOYD WATT.

THE gulls which breed at Loch nan Eun are of the species *Larus canus*. I make the elevation about 2550 feet. About 150 birds were seen there on 11th July, 1903. It is something of a puzzle how such a large colony makes its living—there must be a severe struggle for existence in such high quarters. I found about six pairs of these gulls nesting at a still

higher elevation this summer, viz., at the Sandy Loch, Coire Lochan an Eoin, Lochnagar, at about 2600 feet. Two young birds were on the water on 7th July, unable to fly. This pointed to retarded nesting, as compared with lower situations. This summer there was also a pair of Common Gulls, with young, on the lochans at the south end of Loch Builg (1586 feet) on 13th July. I was informed that this was the first time they had nested there. In connection with these observations, it may be recalled that all that Mac-Gillivray knew of this species in Braemar was a report of its having been seen at Crathie (see "Natural History of Deeside and Braemar", 1855, p. 409). Considerable numbers frequented the Dee at Braemar this summer. Mr. George Sim, in his newly published "Vertebrate Fauna of 'Dee'" (1903, p. 183), knows it as a hill-nesting species. Its relative, the Blackheaded Gull, is the common species nesting in inland places.—HUGH BOYD WATT.

INTELLIGENCE was received at Portree on Monday night that a gentleman visitor at the Sligachan Hotel was missing on Sgurr nan Gillean. Although the search parties had

FATALITY ON
SGURR NAN GILLEAN. been making every effort to discover his whereabouts, no trace of him was found until 11.30 a.m. yesterday, when his body was found in a gully at the foot of the hill. The unfortunate gentleman was Mr. Malcolm Allen (25), of 26 Highbury Quadrant, London. He had arrived at Sligachan Hotel only last Saturday in company with a friend. On Monday, both gentlemen essayed the ascent of Sgurr nan Gillean without the assistance of a guide. The weather was favourable for the purpose, and both were experienced mountaineers. When nearing the summit of the mountain, Mr. Allen, feeling rather tired, decided not to proceed any further, and informed his companion that, after a short rest, he would return to the hotel. His friend, having reached the top, returned to the hotel, when, to his dismay, he found that Mr. Allen had not put in an appearance. The worst fears as to Mr. Allen's safety were not then entertained, as it was thought that he had lost his way in a thick fog that had in the meantime enveloped the mountain. Search parties were, however, immediately organised, and carried on the search in relays throughout Tuesday. Although these were led by experienced guides, no trace of the missing man was discovered until yesterday. The body was examined by a medical gentleman, who formed one of the search party, who gave it as his opinion that the cause of death was compound fracture of the skull; death had been instantaneous.—*Aberdeen Free Press.*

THE Coroner for West Cumberland held an inquest yesterday at Wasdale on Stanley Ridsdale (23), London, bank clerk; Richard Broadrick (31), Master at Fettes College, Edinburgh; Henry L. Jupp (29), bank clerk; and A. E. W. SCAWFELL. Garrett, clerk at the Guardian Assurance Office, who were killed on Scawfell on Monday. The evidence showed that several parties started from Ritson's Hotel, Wasdale

Head, to explore the wild and grand scenery on the famous mountain. William Edward Webb, of Highgate, London, who was with another party, left his bag on Rake's Progress, and, on returning for it, in the descent his party found Mr. Ridsdale, terribly injured, but alive, at the bottom of a deep ghyll, his comrades being dead. They were roped, and the rope was intact, Mr. Garrett being first, Mr. Broadrick second, Mr. Ridsdale third, and Mr. Jupp fourth. Mr. Ridsdale said, "I have broken both my legs and my back. Go and look after the other chaps". He said they had been climbing nearly five hours when the fall occurred. Presumably one of the party slipped and dragged his friends with him in a vertical fall among the boulders below—a probable distance of 300 or 400 feet. When told his companions were dead, Ridsdale asked, "Cannot you resuscitate them?" Help arrived from the hotel five hours afterwards, Mr. Webb sitting alone in the dark with the sufferer until 10 p.m., when Ridsdale was placed in a hurdle. In the descent the two lanterns were extinguished, and, for the next two or three miles, the party had to literally grope their way over dangerous rocks and loose stones with Ridsdale, who suffered great agony. Twice a mountain torrent was crossed, and a gap was broken in a huge wall to expedite the descent, but about an hour after the start the unhappy sufferer passed away, notwithstanding the close attention of two doctors. It was daylight before the rescuers returned to the hotel. The bodies of Broadrick, Jupp, and Garrett were brought down next day. Broadrick, who stood six feet three in height, became tired in the ascent, and just before the accident changed place with Garrett in the lead. The rope was 160 feet long, each man having about 40 feet. The exact cause of the accident can never be known, but the impression prevails in the dale that the wind, which was strong, fitful, and gusty, had something to do with the disaster, although Mr. Webb does not think so. The deceased were all expert climbers. One at least was not recognised, his skull being crushed down on his chin. Another had a broken neck, while all the bodies were limp and distorted out of all shape. The Coroner, in summing up, said in recent years the climbing of dangerous places seemed to have obtained a strange fascination for people, and it was difficult to understand what pleasure they derived from it. This was a pure accident, and nobody was to blame. A verdict of accidental death was returned.—*Aberdeen Free Press*, 24th September, 1903.

THE August number of the *Strand Magazine* had an article on "The First Ascent of Mount Bryce". "Mount Bryce" is in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, and projects westward from the continental watershed. It was named in 1898 after MOUNT BRYCE. Mr. James Bryce, M.P. for South Aberdeen, who was then President of the Alpine Club. The writer of the article—Rev. James Outram—is also connected with Aberdeen. He is the eldest son of Sir Francis Outram, Bart., his mother being the eldest daughter of the late Mr. Patrick Davidson of Inchmarlo.

ACCORDING to a newspaper paragraph which appeared early in July, two Glasgow gentlemen, Messrs. Inglis and Innes, traversed the Larig, from the Aberdeenshire side to Aviemore, trundling their bicycles with them. Leaving Derry Lodge at 2 a.m., the travellers accomplished the difficult journey in 16 hours, the rate of progression in the Pass being about one mile per hour. The bicycles had to be carried for miles.

IN one of the chapters of his "Life of Gladstone", Mr. Morley supplies "little pictures" of Mr. Gladstone's life as Minister-in-Attendance at Balmoral in 1863, gathered from letters to Mrs. Gladstone. In one letter, Mr. Gladstone says—"This place is on the whole very beautiful and satisfactory; and Deeside at large has lost for me none of its charms, with its black-green fir and grey rock, and its boundless ranges of heather still almost in full bloom". In another he records—"Walked 24½ miles. Found it rather too much for my stiffening limbs. My day of long stretches is, I think, gone by". He was then 53. He subsequently mentions having "a fine hill walk of over three hours" and a nineteen mile walk to Lochnagar, which was very wet. "The Queen", he writes, "sent me a message not to go up Lochnagar (top) if there was mist; and mist there was, with rain to boot. I find the resemblance to Snowdon rather striking. It is 3800 feet; we went up about 3300". He ascended Lochnagar again six days afterwards—"Our party drove to Loch Muick, and then went up, some of us on ponies, some walking. I walked it all, and am not in the least tired, but quite ready, if there were need, to set out for it again. We saw towards the north as far as Caithness. I could not do all that the others did in looking down the precipices, but I managed a little. We had a very steep side to come down, covered with snow and very slippery; I was put to it, and had to come very slow, but Lord C. Fitzroy, like a good Samaritan, kept me company. The day (October 6) was as lovely (after frost and snow on the night) as anything could be, and the whole is voted a great success". Ten years later, however, he walked from Derry Lodge to Kingussie, 33 miles. "Think", he wrote to his daughter Mary, "of my walking a good three and thirty miles last Monday, some of it the roughest ground I ever passed".

ACCOMPANIED by three noted Italian guides and a topographer, Dr. and Mrs. Bullock Workman spent the summer months in exploring the portion of the Himalayas lying to the west and south-west of the Hunza Nagar Valley, and on August 12 last they surpassed the world's record for high climbing for their respective sexes. Mrs. Workman herself held the previous record for women by her ascent in 1899 of Koser Gunga, a peak of the Karahoram Mountains, 21,000 feet high, and the record for men was

the ascent of the highest peak of the Andes, Aconcagua, 23,083 feet. The main camp for the party was pitched at the head of the Chogo Loongma glacier, from whence a high snow peak was approached by successive stages. The final night's camp was fixed at an elevation of 19,355 feet, and steps were cut out a thousand feet higher for the next day's work. Starting at 3 a.m., Dr. and Mrs. Bullock Workman and guides ascended the final cone of the first peak over steep ice-slants rising at an angle of 65 degrees, and they reached the summit, 21,770 feet in four hours. The peak was found to be connected by a ridge with two higher ones, the first of which was scaled by noon. Its altitude is 22,563 feet, or more than 1500 feet higher than Mrs. Bullock Workman's own previous record. Dr. Bullock Workman and two guides went on to attack the second peak, and though time did not permit of their reaching the top, 24,486 feet, they gained an altitude of 23,394 feet, or 111 feet beyond the previous world's record. The party reached their camp at 7 p.m., after 15 hours' walking. Their work for the past season includes the first exploration of four large glaciers and ascents of five new peaks and snow passes varying in height from 17,000 feet to 19,000 feet.

I SPENT the last fortnight of July (1903) at Aviemore, and had ideal weather, not one really bad day during the whole time. I found an exceptional amount of snow on the hills, all the north-facing corries showing patches. The greatest amount was in Coire an Lochain of Braeriach, and the corrie of the same name on Cairngorm.

CAIRN TOUL IN JULY. Around the head of Loch Avon were immense snowfields; that side of Ben Muich Dhui, in fact, showed more white than black. The whole of the west side of Coire Domhain was also buried in a deep wreath of snow. The Garbh Coire, of course, had its usual plentiful supply, the Dee tunnelling its way through the snow for about 50 yards. The morning of the 29th was rather dull and unpromising. The mist was also low down; but I determined to make the best of it. In company with a friend, I passed Coylum Bridge at 7, and walked up Glen Eunach to the Loch bothy. The familiar notice-board at the entrance to the glen has now been removed, and replaced by another—a more generous one—which grants to the visitor the use of the private paths, and permission to explore the mountains and glens of the forest any time throughout the year, except during the shooting season—12th August to 13th October. Similar boards are erected at different parts of the forest of Rothiemurchus. By the time we reached Loch Eunach the morning had not improved much, and as we climbed the Coire Dhondail path rain came on. Soon the mist closed in, and the rain became heavier, so we lay down behind a big stone for nearly three-quarters of an hour. It was bright sunshine when we reached the top of the corrie, although the mist was not very far off. Our course was now south-eastwards, in the direction of Monadh Mor, where, on this fine piece of ground, drained by the head-streams of the Eidart, we

spent the whole forenoon. The place was swarming with deer, and it was nearly 2 o'clock before we thought of moving. Our original programme—Monadh Mor and Beinn Bhrotain—was then out of the question, so we proceeded by Allt Linneach up the slopes of the Angel's Peak. Numerous deer were also seen here, and at one place we found the stream tunnelling under the snow for about a hundred yards. On the summit we met with a cold north wind and driving clouds of mist, but the peeps into the "depths" were very fine. We continued our walk to Cairn Toul, and, on crossing the head of Glen Geusachan, we observed a magnificent herd of deer, 185 stags, moving slowly downwards. The faces of Monadh Mor and Beinn Bhrotain opposite also showed a good deal of snow. When ascending the remaining distance of Cairn Toul, we had fifteen minutes clear view southward—a good view, all the noteworthy tops being recognised, even as far as the Lomonds in Fife. But when the summit was reached (3.45) we were again in gloom, a gloom which never lifted. We left the cairn at 4 o'clock, and descended into Glen Dee, a very steep and treacherous route, and one which requires a good deal of care, as all the blocks covering the slope are loose and sitting on edge, merely waiting the least touch to send them thundering down the slope. The glen was reached at the junction of the two head-streams of the Dee (1976), the mist having stuck close to us all the way. We crossed both streams, and got on to the path at 5.45, just as rain came on once more. Then came the walk to Aviemore; and what a walk it was, through the Larig Ghru, in thick mist and gathering night, against a strong, cold wind, and rain in torrents. The very deer stood in wonderment at seeing human figures on such a night; but we stuck to it manfully, passed the Pools of Dee at 6.10, Auldrue at 8, and reached home at 9.—W. BARCLAY.

THE 1903 Summer Excursion of the Club was made to Ben Lomond, *via* Aberfoyle. The main party left Aberdeen for "the clachan" on the afternoon of 17th July, making the Bailie Nicol BEN LOMOND. Jarvie Hotel their headquarters. An early start was made the following morning, driving by the north side of Loch Ard to the neighbourhood of Loch Dhu, the tail-piece of Loch Chon. Thence an excellent path crosses the ridge to Gleann Dubh. A halt was enjoyed at Stuc a' Bhuic, one of the two houses at the head of that glen—Comer is the other—and the milk supply considerably reduced. The ascent was then made by the left bank of Allt Mor. An hour was spent on the summit, and the superb view enjoyed—the trigonometrical points are given at page 165 in Vol. I. of the *Journal*—Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine being seen to particular advantage. The horizon was wonderfully clear, except to the southward. A message was found on the top from several of the members who had travelled *via* Glasgow, and so made the climb from Rowardennan. The descent was made by the same route, most of the members returning to Aberdeen the same evening, but two or three remained over the week-end and paid a visit to Ben A'an and Loch Katrine.

INTEREST in the somewhat novel contest of ascending Ben Nevis against time was revived yesterday, when a race took place from the Post Office at Fort-William to the

ASCENDING BEN NEVIS summit of the mountain and back. Three "AGAINST TIME" competitors took part in the race, viz.:—

Ewan MacKenzie, Blar-mae-Hfoldach, Fort-William; Hugh Kennedy, Achnacarry; and Robert Dobson, a member of the Maryhill Harriers. The day, while somewhat sultry, was otherwise an ideal one for the exploit, and large crowds of people assembled to witness both the start and the finish of the mountain race. At 12.30 the competitors were started at the Post Office, and the three kept pretty well together till the base of the mountain was reached, where, owing to the narrowness of the path, single file had to be resorted to. Up to the half-way station, MacKenzie and Kennedy were not far separated, but at this point the former put on a spurt and soon outdistanced his companion, Dobson meanwhile being well in the rear. The previous best record for the double journey has for some time been held by MacDonald, of Leith, his time being 2 hours 18 minutes, and many surmises were indulged in as to the prospect of this record being beaten. MacKenzie reached the goal almost in eight minutes less than the time occupied by MacDonald. His different times were:—Ascent, 1 hour 27 minutes; descent, 43 minutes 6 4-5 seconds; total, 2 hours 10 minutes 6 4-5 seconds. Kennedy, who arrived second, took 2 hours 20 minutes 21 3-5 seconds. Both these competitors, although toil-stained by their arduous performance, were quite fit, and, after a bath and a rub down, appeared none the worse for the exploit. Dobson retired at an early stage of the race, having found hill-climbing entirely different work to the cross country running to which he is accustomed. The prizes consisted of a gold medal, several pieces of silver plate, &c., and these were presented in the evening. To the uninitiated such an accomplishment may not appear to be of much moment, but when it is borne in mind that the distance covered is equivalent to 15 miles, and that the average gradient on the mountain is about 1 in 5, some idea of the nature of the feat will be apparent. To cover the above distance on the flat in the time MacKenzie took would be no mean performance, but when it is a case of avoiding boulders, bogs, and ravines, and piloting one's way through mist, the value of the performance is greatly enhanced. MacKenzie, who is about thirty years of age, is in the employment of the Scottish Meteorological Society as road-man on Ben Nevis. He is over six feet in height, of robust constitution, and from the nature of his calling he was in first-class training for the climb.—*Scotsman*, 29th September, 1903.

THE Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Club was held on 22nd December, 1903—the Chairman, Mr. Robert Harvey, presiding. The

following were appointed Office-bearers and Members of Committee:—President, The Right ANNUAL MEETING. Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L., LL.D., M.P.; Vice-Presidents, Alexander Copland and Robert

Anderson; Chairman, John M'Gregor; Secretary, A. I. M'Connochie, C.A., 115 Union Street, Aberdeen; Treasurer, T. R. Gillies, advocate, 181A Union Street, Aberdeen; Committee—John Clarke, John Croll, George Duncan, J. A. Hadden, Robert Harvey, William Porter, James A. Ross, Rev. Robert Semple, James Smith, and John Wallace. Mr. Harvey was thanked for his conduct in the chair during his term of office.

The Spring Excursion was fixed for Coyles of Muick; the Summer for Sgoran Dubh and Braeriach. It was resolved to have a Saturday afternoon excursion to Cairn-mon-earn on 16th April; the question of other such excursions being remitted to the Committee.

The following new members have been admitted:—W. M. M'Pherson, John H. Will, William Davidson, J. D. W. Stewart, and H. Stewart.

REVIEWS.

"THE VERTEBRATE FAUNA OF 'DEE'", by George Sim, A.L.S., has just been published by D. Wyllie & Son, Aberdeen (price 12s. 6d.).

THE
VERTEBRATE
FAUNA OF "DEE".

This volume fills up the blank, left by arrangement, in the Harvie-Brown—Buckley Series of Scottish Faunas, and is, of course, destined to become the standard work for the North-East of Scotland. Mr. Sim may be said to have given a lifetime to his subject, and he now shows his competency to deal, in formal order, with the intricacies and subtleties of the Fauna of the district which he has made peculiarly his own. The mountaineer will find much to interest him in the Fauna of "Dee"; without some knowledge of Natural History, hill-climbing is robbed of half its charms.

"MOORS, CRAGS, AND CAVES OF THE HIGH PEAK AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD" is the title of a handsomely-got-up, illustrated book just published by John Heywood, Manchester (price 6s.

MOORS, CRAGS, AND CAVES. net). The author is our contributor, Mr. Ernest A. Baker, M.A., whose acquaintance with the Peak

District is excelled by none, and he has the advantage of being able to make his descriptions interesting to others than expert climbers. Scotland need not grudge Derbyshire its Moors and Crags, but when it comes to a question of Caves, that English county shows the utter poverty of Scotland in underground climbing. "Right in the centre of England, midway between Sheffield and Manchester, at the threshold of the world's most populous cluster of manufacturing towns, there lies this broad area of wild country, as lone and untamed as any south of Cheviot". Peakland culminates in Kinder Scout, which in a number of places rises above the 2000 feet level, where now and again tourists and keepers do not see things in the same light. Winter climbs are apparently much in

favour in the Peak District. Cave-work has attained to the dignity of being recognised as a sport. The exploration of caves has its own peculiar fascinations, discomforts, and dangers, and therefore can never lack devotees. "First, of course, must be put the beauty and sublimity that lie concealed in the subterranean darkness. . . . A stream on the surface of the ground is a beautiful, or may be a grand object; but put the same stream in a deep cavern, or a stream that is not half so big and powerful, and the impression it makes on the senses of those who see and hear it, is incomparably greater. . . . Then there is the zest of possible discovery."

THAT the literary praise of walking is not extinct may be gathered from the following passage by a modern writer, Halliwell Sutcliffe, in "A Bachelor in Arcady":—"Your walker is
 A MODERN VIEW. always a sociable fellow; he has the freemasonry of one who takes men and weather as he finds them, and he will talk—by stream, or highway, or in the cosy, firelit tavern-room—for as long as you need his company. He can be happy alone, content with company; he carries in his knapsack a flask, a bit of cheese and bread, a stray addition to his toilet, and with these he can start out and know himself the rarest thing in the world of men—a freeman. He has had no freedom of the city granted him, but a more honourable privilege, and one seldom gained—the freedom of the country—has long since been conceded to him. Consider how few fetters he carries of the sort we willingly put on under the name of worldly prosperity; he has left his house behind him, and has no care of gear; he can climb with the sun, and take his bite and sup at noon by some cool moorland stream, and afterwards move downward till the gloaming light warns him that the sun and he must go to bed. He may be far from house or inn; what matters it? If the night be fair, he will take the stars for roof; if wet, there is rarely a hill slope so forlorn but it has a byre of some sort dotted here and there. He is free in his very carelessness as to his lodging-place, and the men who are tied by the needs of blankets and a roof seem little short of serfs to our Freed-Man of the country".

THE portion of the Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide Book appearing in the September number of that Club's *Journal* is devoted to the Central Cairngorms. It extends over 40
 GUIDE TO THE pages, and is very exhaustive and correct. Due
 CAIRNGORMS. acknowledgment is made that a great deal of the information given about the view from the summit of Ben Muich Dhui has been got from "the very admirable and unique series of articles dealing with the subject" [in the *C.C.J.*] "and tables prepared by Mr. Alexander Copland, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Cairngorm Club. Mr. Copland has, after countless disappointments, owing to weather conditions, and consequently with untiring energy and great labour, made complete sketch maps of the horizon from Ben Muich Dhui, for which all interested in the mountains of Scotland must ever be indebted to him".

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.

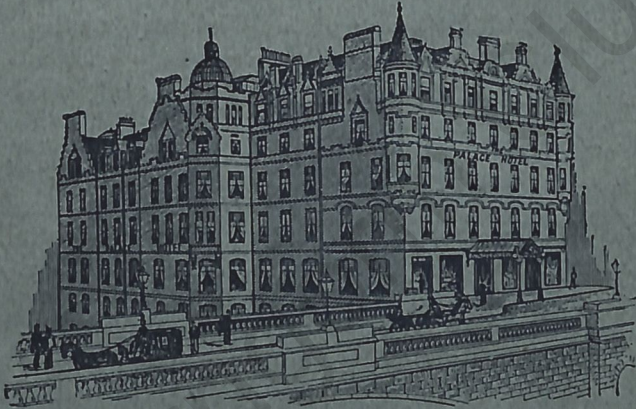
XI.—No change shall be made on the Rules except at a general meeting of the members, called on seven days' notice. Intimation of any proposed change must be made in the notice calling such meeting, and any alteration proposed shall only be adopted if voted for by at least three-fourths of the members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

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