

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

CONTENTS.

Looch Treig and its Neighbourhood.....	T. F. Jamieson, LL.D., F.G.S.
On Ben Ledi.....	Fred R. Coles.
An Autumn Evening.....	F. E. Ross.
Mount Assiniboine.....	William Garden.
From the Beaully Firth to Loch Duich	Rev. R. M. Cairney.
Christmas Monday on Ben Vorlich and Stuc a' Chroin.....	H. MacRobert.
The Ptarmigan.....	Rev. D. C. Mackay.
Lochnagar in April and May.....	S. P. Gordon, F.Z.S. and Harry Johnston.
The Capercailzie in Rothiemurchus....	C. G. Cash, F.R.S.G.S.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES:

The Club at Cairn William—A Mountaineering Veteran—The Love of the Hills—Broad Cairn and Lochnagar—Bennachie—Morven—Accidents on Ben Nevis—April Snow Notes.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Mount Assiniboine—From the Beaully Firth to Loch Duich (3)—A Ptarmigan's Nest—Lochnagar in April and May (2)—An Lochan Uaine.

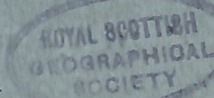
ISSUED TWICE A YEAR.

PUBLISHED BY

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.

AGENTS:

ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.



PRICE ONE SHILLING.

No. 1 is out of Print. A copy wanted; please state price to the Editor.

The Cairngorm Club.

PRESIDENT,	- -	The Right Hon. JAMES BRYCE, D.C.L., LL.D., M.P.
CHAIRMAN,	- -	JOHN M'GREGOR.
TREASURER,	- -	T. R. GILLIES, 181a Union Street, Aberdeen.
SECRETARY,	- -	A. I. M'CONNOCHIE, 115 Union Street, Aberdeen.

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

Continued on page 3 of Cover.



MOUNT ASSINIBOINE (11,860 FEET),

“THE MATTERHORN OF THE ROCKIES.”

THE
Cairngorm Club Journal.

Vol. V.

JULY, 1905.

No. 25.

LOCH TREIG AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

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

ONE of the most attractive spots in the Scottish Highlands is to be found at Loch Treig in Inverness-shire. Not only is the scenery very grand, but there is a combination of remarkable features that lends an additional interest to the locality. We have here an example of a lake that seems to have been formed by the action of a glacier scooping out a long narrow basin by the erosive action it exerts on the rocky floor of the valley along which it moves. Most people have probably never thought of asking themselves how lakes came to be formed, but the question is one which has been much debated among geologists. Many of our Scottish lakes appear to have originated in the way I have mentioned. In such cases we find that the lake occupies a deep hollow space in the rocky bottom of the valley, along which a glacier moved during the age of ice. Now what could have formed such a basin? Running water could not do it. Rivers in the long course of ages can carve out valleys, but a river cannot dig out a basin hundreds of feet deeper than the ground at the lower end of it. Some of our lakes have been formed by accumulations of moraine-debris left by the old glaciers, acting as a dam, which has blocked the exit of the water from the valley above. But in other cases no such block is to be found, for the stream flowing out of the lake is seen to pass along a rocky channel much higher than

the deep bed of the lake. Furthermore, when we come to consider the general distribution of lakes, we are struck by the fact that they abound chiefly in regions that were formerly overspread by the ice, and are especially numerous in countries that are known to have been occupied by glaciers, such as Scandinavia, Switzerland, Scotland, and the lake district of north England; while they are comparatively absent in tropical regions. No doubt, however, there are lakes that have been formed in other ways, such as by a sinking of the ground caused by subterranean movements; but such lakes are far less numerous, and generally of greater dimensions and wider in shape. The great prevalence of lakes in valleys that are known to have been formerly occupied by glaciers is a suggestive fact pointing to a connection between the two. Robert Chambers seems to have been the first to maintain that ice had been the agent in carving out the hollows in which our lakes lie. When travelling through Sutherlandshire about sixty years ago, he was much impressed by what he saw there, and he read a paper on the subject at the meeting of the British Association at Glasgow in 1855, and contributed an article to the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal* about the same time. "We find," he says, "along the mountain sides, and on the gneissic platform whereon the [sandstone] mountains rest, ample memorials of the work of ice, in longitudinal hollows containing *lakes*, all in the same direction as the major axes of the hills, in smoothings, scratches and transported boulders. A geologist acquainted with the glacial phenomena sees that ice has been the agent here. He is forced to own that what his science calls denudation has been wrought on a great scale, not by water as heretofore supposed, but by ice. It required water invested with the increased mechanical powers which it derives from congelation to carve out those prodigious gaps, and sweep away so much of the disengaged matters."—(*Edinburgh Papers,—Ice and Water*. p. 9—1861)

Chambers, however, did not pursue the subject, and it attracted little attention, so far as lakes were concerned, until Professor Ramsay took up the question in a very

interesting paper to the Geological Society of London in 1862, after which it became the theme of much discussion in geological circles.

Loch Treig is a beautiful specimen of a Highland lake, and is a very deep one. This is shown by the fact that it never freezes, but I am not aware whether its actual depth has been properly ascertained yet. At its lower end there is a great quantity of gravelly debris which helps to retain the water, but is not sufficient to account for the deep basin occupied by the lake itself. Much of this gravel has probably been ground out of the bottom of the rocky basin by the ice. Loch Treig is about five miles long in a north-south direction, and about a mile broad at its widest part. Near its outlet into Glen Spean it tapers to a narrow point owing to the near approach of the mountains, which are about 3,000 feet high on each side. A glacier therefore filling the basin of the lake would, on issuing out into Glen Spean, be very much compressed by the narrowness of the gorge, and consequently would act more powerfully on the rocks over which it had to force its way, so that here we might expect to find some tokens of its former presence. Accordingly we observe that the rocks all round the outlet on both sides have a character that attracts attention even at a great distance, being ground down into rounded masses well scored in many places by the action of the ice. One bare surface of gneiss which I observed, about thirty yards long, was beautifully smoothed and covered with parallel scratches, scores and flutings, all running straight from end to end. The preservation of these markings, however, it is right to mention, is exceptional; for in most places only a few of the ruder scores remain, and often none at all. On the angle of the hill at the west side of the lake this ice-worn character of the rock is well marked up to a height of more than 1,000 feet above the lake, and I traced it up to 1280 feet (by aneroid). Not that I can affirm this to be the upper limit, for on the mountain on the opposite or east side of the gorge I found the scoring fade away so gradually at these great heights, owing to the weathering of the rocks, that I was unable to satisfy myself where it ended, perched

boulders and rounded surfaces occurring much higher; and even up to the top, which I made out to be 3,055 feet high, the gneiss rock, although it runs in nearly vertical stratification, is nevertheless so free from any loose fragments on its surface, and is so rounded in outline, as to indicate that the denuding agent had flowed over even it. Nowhere have I seen such impressive evidence of intense abrading force as these rocks present all about the outlet of Loch Treig. The rounded masses are so extensive as to form hills several hundred feet high, and are so smooth and bare that over large spaces even the moss and heather have completely failed to get a footing on their surface.

Agassiz, the Swiss geologist, who first made known to us the former existence of glaciers in this country, and who visited this scene in company with Dr. Buckland, was so struck by what he saw here that he says, "I do not believe a locality exists where the facts indicate in a more special manner the cause which has produced them."

There is, however, still more convincing evidence pointing to the same conclusion in a remarkable series of fine moraines left by the Treig glacier when it issued out into Glen Spean, and these the tourist should not omit to see.

There is a footpath or pony road going eastward from the mouth of Loch Treig along the foot of the hill towards Laggan. Go along this track for a mile and a half from Fersit and you will find yourself at the summit level of the road where it crosses these moraines. Here they start out from the hill into the low wide moor that occupies the bottom of Glen Spean, and from this point they may also be traced slanting far up the slope of the hill towards the gorge of Loch Treig, showing plainly how the pent up ice had dilated on issuing from the narrow outlet between the two mountains that border the lake. These traces should be followed up to the shoulder of the hill, and a wonderfully curious sight it is; but for the present I would ask the traveller, who has come along the base of the hill to the point I have mentioned, to cast a glance out over the moor, Sliabh Lorgach, and he will observe two long narrow mounds running far out into the plain with a gentle

curve. These are the moraines left by the right flank of the Treig glacier as it debouched into Glen Spean. Outside these a series of older hillocks of similar origin may be traced for a considerable distance, showing that the glacier had been at one time of still greater extent, but the two I have mentioned are so large, so continuous, and so well defined as to indicate a long abode of the ice at their margin. The outer one is the larger, rising in some places sixty or seventy feet above its base, and forming a narrow steep-sided mound like a railway embankment. Big stones of all sizes, up to fourteen feet in length, stick out of its surface, mixed with smaller debris of mica-schist and gneiss. The inner moraine runs alongside this one, in some places approaching so close as to mingle with it, in others receding 200 yards or more. It contains less small debris, and is often wholly composed of large blocks of stone, many of them five to ten feet, some fifteen to twenty-five, in length, which give it a very striking appearance, forming a long pile of stones like a ruined pier or breakwater. These two moraines range far out into the moor, becoming gradually less regular, and merging into the boulder covered surface. Their curve seems to indicate that the right flank of the glacier must have crossed the channel of the Spean near a place called Gortain, its front pressing on to the base of the hills on the north side of the Spean, where there are two crescent-shaped moraine mounds running eastward from the spur of Creag Dhubh to near Beinn a' Chaoruinn, apparently a continuation of the two lines I have described, the whole forming a great horseshoe curve several miles in length. These fine moraines, together with the iceworn rocks at the mouth of the lake, afford about as good evidence of the former existence of the Treig glacier as a fossil skeleton does of the former existence of the living animal.

The moraines on the shoulder of the hill at the east side of the Treig particularly attracted the attention of Agassiz. He could never forget, he says, the impression he felt at the sight of these terraced mounds of blocks. "It seemed to me as if I was looking at the numerous moraines in the neighbourhood of Tines in the valley of Chamounix."

Any one who wishes to satisfy himself as to the former existence of glaciers in this country cannot do better than betake himself to Loch Treig, and study the evidence to be found in that neighbourhood. The district has been well mapped by the Ordnance Survey, and a special survey was made of the fine moraines I have been describing. These will be found laid down on sheet 142 of the six inch scale map of Inverness-shire "with gravel beds and lines of boulders."

The line of railway which runs along the side of Loch Treig gives facilities now for reaching the district, which formerly lay rather out of the way of tourists. Many of the corries and glens between Loch Treig and Ben Nevis are of a wonderfully wild and savage nature, almost unequalled in that respect by anything in Scotland; of these I may mention Coire Laire on the west side of Loch Treig. The upper end of this corrie where it meets the Larig Glen is a very fine sight; and so is the Larig Leachach farther west, and still more so Coire an Eoin on the east side of Aonach Mor. These are too little known, and will well repay exploration. And here I may mention that the best time for visiting these western localities is during the end of spring or in early summer, when dry east winds prevail; for during autumn the weather is often dreadfully wet there, especially when south-westerly gales occur.

The lowest of the three parallel roads of Glen Roy extends into Glen Spean, and may be described running along the side of Beinn Chlinaig and past Inverlair on to the Treig, where it has left its mark on the gravel hillocks of Fersit and that neighbourhood. It may also be traced along the front of Creag Dhubb, on the opposite side of the valley. It in fact extends all the way eastward to Loch Laggan, and beyond it to the col or watershed at Makoul, where the outlet of the old glacier lake finally was, as Sir Thos. Dick Lauder first pointed out. Owing, however, to the rough broken nature of the ground, and the circumstance of its being little above the bottom of the valley, the parallel is difficult to trace in its eastward extension beyond the Treig. Here then we have another remarkable feature at

Loch Treig in the occurrence of this parallel road along the exit from it. But there are other circumstances which combine to render the locality one of surpassing interest to the geologist at least. The great Treig glacier not only protruded right across Glen Spean, but rose to a great height on the hills along the north side of that valley. The explanation of this is to be found not in the relative height of the mountains, but in the meteorology of the district. The rainfall and precipitation of snow are much heavier on Ben Nevis and the drainage basin that feeds Loch Treig, than they are on the hills along the north side of Glen Spean and the Loch Laggan district. Hence in the age of ice the result was bigger glaciers, which encroached on and invaded the drier district to the north-east, and left tokens of their former presence in the big stones which they brought along with them and dropped after the ice melted. There is a tract of syenitic greenstone that was swept by the right flank of the Treig glacier, and which has given off an immense quantity of great blocks which the glacier has left along its track. Many of them lie on the north side of the Spean, on Meall Clachach, which means "the hill of stones," no doubt so called from this circumstance. They are also to be found on Creag Dhubh, where there is one big fellow, fifteen feet long, on the very brow of the hill, which may be descried from the Bridge of Roy four miles off. The mineral nature of these fragments being different from that of the rocks on which they now lie, shows that they have been transported for some distance, and enables us to track the course of the agent which carried them, just as the granite blocks on the Jura mountains of Switzerland show the former spread of the Rhone glacier.

ON BEN LEDI.

BY FRED R. COLES.

IN these globe-trotting days few ramblers would condescend to notice a hill whose summit does not touch the 3,000 feet contour-line. "Ramblers," said I? Has not the very essence of that fine old epithet vanished? Is not the idea of rambling eclipsed, annihilated by the hum-drum pages of your Bædeker, and the severe punctualities of train, and steamer, and that latest of peace-killing locomotives,—the motor-car? No one rambles nowadays, treasuring the opportunity of a rare holiday, and filling it with the simple delight in nature. Our very holidays are stamped express! The Swiss Alps, even, have lost to some extent that olden sense of altitude and danger, in the estimation of the accomplished mountaineer. And, for the many who are not mountaineers in any sense whatever, there will soon be electric cars carrying lazy and luxurious loads of so-called sight-seers on many another mountain besides the Righi.

Yet the spirit of adventure, in the truest acceptation of the term, still glows in the breasts of some rare souls to whom a day amid the Perthshire hills comes as a draught of exhilarating delight, restorative and memorable for all time. So, at least, thought two of us—free for one glorious day to ramble whither we liked, and, being naturally fond of a combination of wildness and beauty, Perthshire and Ben Ledi swam across our mental vision. Where else, the wide world over, will you find just this perfection of those two potent landscape characteristics? Add to this that to one of us early and dear associations hallow the scenery around Callander, and that to the other the ascent of Ben Ledi meant his initiation into the art of hill-climbing, and you have reason enough to understand something of the thrill of excitement with which we trod the Leny road, on one of the sunniest afternoons of July.

What an eye-filling picture as we near the Pass, and, with the delicate veil of midsummer haze magnifying its noble contours, the Sentinel of the Highlands looms in front, purple-grey and lofty!

We took it very easy, loitering when the birchen shadows welcomed us to rest, lying prone on the bog-myrtle-edge of the road near Coire a' Chrombie, gazing with a renewal of passionate delight on every scar and crag, blue, hollow and sunlit precipice,—so familiar once—of yonder superbly modelled Stank Hill, whose base sleeps to-day in the steel-blue stillness of winding Loch Lubnaig.

What colour, what Mendelssohnesque architectonic phrasing, so to speak, glorifies that hill:—an expanse, at once so broad, so high, and so replete with rocky secrets, that, were Ben Ledi not at hand, it would hold us with its fascination for this one whole day.

We struck up athwart Creag an t'Sionnaich (are there any foxes there now, we wonder?) and so, over deliciously damp mossy slopes, into the Stank Glen, spending a refreshing half-hour all but in the linn at the foot of the great fall—sprayed over by its musical downpour. Quitting its cool shades with regret, we slowly wound our way to a point beyond Creag na Caorach, where the huge boulders of Steall Buidhe—the torrent yellow-red with iron oxide—confront and frown fantastic upon the intruders. We cannot by this route be said to “climb Ben Ledi straight,” as did the Grahame; but it is, in part, straight enough and rocky enough to force into play muscles that neither walking nor even rowing completely exercise. And if you “want it taken out of you,” strip yourself of those superfluties which Princes Street exacts as indispensable parts of your costume; sling jackets at the ends of your sticks, and then, pressing upwards against an angle of sixty degrees, you will in ten minutes' climbing derive more benefit than a course of Turkish baths can afford, and under what invigorating conditions.

The boulders and split conglomerate fragments, moreover, lie in such interminable confusion, their edges so concealed by mosses and patches of the Mountain Lady's Mantle, that

a careless step might end in a sprain or fracture. Towards the upper fort-like rock barrier, on reaching the height of about 2,300 feet, where all the west was shut out by the great semicircular ridge forming the summit of Ben Ledi, we stayed our climb. Only the loftiest hill tops appeared above the level banks of grey mist now rapidly growing into shape out of the inchoate haze that had beautified the day.

For that we care not; we do not climb this hill for mere extent of view, or to number the peaks visible; we are not attempting a record against time; we are prepared to sleep on the summit, if need be, and we hug ourselves with the thought that it is all novelty, strenuous delight, the manliest sport known, and that not one of our friends knows of our adventure. What poor things seem cricket, and cycling, and that mania for hunting lost balls called "gowf," when we are high up among clouds and crags!

From the coign of vantage above suggested, however, the whole great broadened-out expanse of the Stank Hill sleeps in serene sunshine, curving north-westwards into the shadowy mysteries of Creag na h'Iolaire (eagle's crag), where the gloom is broken by a single long strip of silver; that is the Sput Ban or White Spout. What a sight that great hollow must be after an October storm!

To-day the merest zephyr is stirring, hardly stirring, the brown-golden capitals of the rushes, and the only sounds are mellow bleatings from those far away dots of white which are so commingled with stones that, till they move, we don't recognise them as lambs. Little wonder the lonely moorland shepherd folk call stone circles "the grey wethers!"

Hark! there is another sound; a quick reiterated note, hardly melodious, more as if a thin metal rod were made to strike the edge of a rock five or eight times in a second. What creature breaks the silence, and adds this monotonous ditty to the tinkle of the rivulets as they sing through the sedges towards Loch Lubnaig? There it is—a Ptarmigan is it, taking alarm at our approach?

Here are the dewy, damp Hypnum beds, and Sphagnum-turbaries; we greet once again—after long years—such beautiful plants as the Starry Saxifrage, and the Green

Spleenwort, and the Alpine Dock (*Oxyria reniformis*); and there, in the wettest of cushiony mosses, starts up the deep violet-petalled Butterwort (*Pinguicula Lusitanica*), its viscous fleshy leaves set flat, like a vegetable starfish, and within those sticky over-curling leaf edges there are the helpless midges and their bigger congeners half-dissolved and ready to be speedily absorbed.

Turning the flank of a quite precipitous range of towering rocks, right above, a huge half-detached pinnacle, oddly resembling Meg Merrilees, threatens us with instant dismissal. By canny manoeuvring we succeed in circumventing her and reach a point above, whence her precarious and airy posture seems more unsubstantial than ever—almost as if a good push would send her clattering into the valley a thousand feet below.

But the waning light warns us; we are yet only at the base of the summit corrie, with six hundred feet of rugged ridge-work before us. And what a ridge it is! Not for danger, be it understood; Helvellyn beats it for that. Not even for the view, but for itself, its beautiful sweeping upward curve to Mullach Buidhe, thence away in a deep semicircle, south and south-east, to the gently ascending line of the summit; and what a depth! six hundred feet, sheer, do the cauldron-like sides of this corrie drop down—rock, from top to base; scarred, water-riven, frost-split, and yet, as a whole, converging in sternest radiations from periphery to centre.

As we followed the curve round the final quarter of a mile, we donned the superfluous garments; and at the cairn we rested, wrote post cards (which there was no means of despatching till next day) and consumed the edible contents of our knapsacks with the consciousness of a well-earned meal.

Out of the east, between far Ben Voirlich and the high moorlands near Comrie, the mists were swiftly stealing upon us; double-topped Ben Vane, on the north-west, showed almost black against the sheeny sunset; distant cones of ghostly grey seemed to suggest Ben More and Ben Lomond; and, due north, in a hollow between much greater heights,

Ben Sithean, the Fairies' Hill, was being wrapped up in a white witchery of cloud that every minute grew higher and higher, transforming this one hill into a snowy Alp in miniature. Is it so every night, we wondered? Why should that one hill, a mere hillock of 1800 feet among the Bens encircling it, attract to itself such a wealth of mist? No one can tell. It is Nature; that is all we can say. Why, again, should that dark and deep cavern-like mountain-side on the south of Ben Bhreac suddenly, in one instant (it seems), be cleft in twain by a long sword of flashing white mist? Who sheathes that sword again, and leaves the mountain recesses gloomier than before? Why in one valley should the mist sleep as it were, level as a lake, whose wavelets just fret the rocky darkness into a serrated shore, while, in another valley hard by, the same mist rolls up like smoke from an abysmal deep? It is Nature, and we know nothing.

At seven minutes after sunset we began our descent; first over Meall Odhar, and then, leaving the frail fence that marks the track to Coilantogle, ran down an easy slope to be abruptly brought to pause almost on the verge of Creag Ghorm, at whose base, 1000 feet below, the mist was already bewilderingly thick.

During the afternoon no signs of the precipitous Creag Ghorm were visible, the whole east shoulder of Ben Ledi being shrouded in haze. This sudden break in our downward course, therefore, was rather more than a surprise; it was a shock with a thrill in it, not to be felt anywhere else! And the crags extended right and left in one unbroken phalanx, the extremities vanishing in the mist. What were we to do? As we stood awe-struck, the vast column of mist seemed to compress itself, becoming whiter and denser, and then the filmy edges of Creag Ghorm waxed hard and sharp and stood out black as Erebus. We stood on the very brink of the planet itself—the next step, were that possible, would land us in the gulf! . . . And, for one fearful moment, we felt the weird fascination of the unfathomable abyss . . . to fling ourselves over. Just at this psychical moment, however, the sharp bang of a shutting door was heard—this is fact not fancy. "We are not so far away after all," said I, in reassur-

ing tones; "that must be the good folk of Coire a' Chrombie closing up for the night. How the mist carries the sound! Still, the house is almost a mile away, and 1800 feet lower than where we are standing. It will take us all our time to reach the road before it is quite dark." As I spoke, the vast white nothingness in front diminished; and, far away, it seemed, to the south, the crags appeared to "run out" into the level of the slope on which we stood, and, in the broad hollow below, the channel of the Coire a' Chrombie burn could for a brief moment be espied. For it we made, down to it we scrambled, across it we struggled in the fast deepening dusk; and, after numerous slight mishaps and slips in the boggy ground, safely reached the road after ten o'clock. We had just reversed the method of the Grahame and had clomb *down* Ben Ledi straight!

Without the least intention of marring our own reminiscences of this noble Perthshire hill, some points of interest with regard to its nomenclature may be glanced at. In nearly all the older books, and necessarily therefore in all modern guide books, the meaning of Ben Ledi is given as "Mountain of God." In Robertson's Gaelic Topography of Scotland there is a page which is instructive as showing to what lengths a pet theory will carry a man. Robertson's pet theory was that the Druids inhabited Scotland in Pagan times. Here is the account of Ben Ledi:

"Beinn-le-dia or 'the hill of God,' that is the god Bel or Baal, who thus had this mountain specially dedicated to him; and, according to the universal tradition of the country, it was here, on Beltane-day, that the whole people of the adjacent country assembled to worship this deity, and receive from their Druids the *Teine eigin*, that is 'the need fire or fire of exigency;' the heathen custom being to put out their fires throughout the whole neighbourhood, and have them relighted from the sacred fire of the god Bel, on his day, namely, on the Beltane day or first of May, which was also considered the first day of summer, when this solemn meeting took place on the top of Ben Ledi. Any one who has ever been at its summit must have noticed how very different it is there from almost every other Highland

mountain ; instead of a mere heap of bare stones or rocks, it is remarkably verdant, having been evidently cleared of stones and smoothed by the hand of man, which is fully accounted for by its Gaelic name, and which though undoubtedly given more than two thousand years ago it is still at this hour [in] the language of the Highlanders of Scotland Another clear corroboration in regard to the heathen sanctity of this mountain is, that on its north side, there is a hollow called in Gaelic *Coire an Fhaidh*, or 'the prophet's dell,' being undoubtedly of Pagan origin, as no one in Christian times could possibly pretend to foretell future events ; but it is most consistent with the heathen name given to this mountain."

A most ingenious, though, we venture to think, quite illogical conclusion !

Let us examine this pretty theory. First, if the word for God, *Dia* or *Di*, did exist in this mountain name, the stress would have been laid upon it, and the name would have been sounded something like Ben-le-Dée. But it never is so accented. Next, *le* does not mean "of" but "with ;" and it does not occur in any place-name in Scotland, in the sense ascribed to it by Robertson. Again, who knows what language the pre-historic Pagans spoke ? It is merely assumed that it was Gaelic. Then, *Di* being, according to the Robertsonian hypothesis, the word for "God," it is of course Bel, and, because Bel, or Baal, was the God of Fire and Heat, therefore, these Pagans of ancient Callander not only assembled on this mountain summit to light fires, but actually smoothed the summit for this purpose ! Lastly, to make the picture complete, the Robertsonian hypothesis plants a Seer or Prophet (Druid of course !) in the corrie we have just been describing, which this Gaelic writer, unlike his accurate ancestors, miscalls a "dell," forgetful of its depth, its savage ruggedness, its perpetual exposure to every storm and countless torrents all the year round ! Why, even the sternest of the early Christian anchorites would blench at the bare thought of dwelling *there* !

A modern Gael of a very different mental calibre has supplied an excellent and suggestive explanation of the name Ben-Ledi. The latter half of the name is a corrupted form

of the word *Leoidean*, which is the plural of *Leathad* or *Leothaid*, a declivity, a ridge. The name would thus read Mountain of ridges or slopes. How accurately this describes Ben-Ledi, all who make the ascent from the south will readily acknowledge, remembering, at the same time, Scott's perfect line, "There, ridge on ridge, Ben-Ledi rose."

The summit corrie, cauldron-like, and tempest-battered as we have shown it to be, bears possibly a choice of epithets in the Gaelic, neither of which is remotely connected with a Prophet or a Druid. One suggested explanation is that the name is *Coire nam Fiadh*, Corrie of the Deer; and the other *Coire nan Aidh*, the root idea being that of vastness, terrible-ness—again, not an inappropriate epithet for this great deep circular corrie.

Precisely a mile to the N.N.W. of the summit of Ben Ledi lies a small sheet of water, *Lochan nan Corp*, about which a gruesome tale is related. Many years ago a funeral party started from Glenfinglas, in midwinter, to lay the remains to rest in the little churchyard of the Chapel of St. Bride at the foot of Loch Lubnaig. They wound their way up through Gleann Casaig, meaning to descend by Stank Glen, probably the easiest hill-route then accessible. Whether out of a spirit of adventure, or through being bewildered, the whole party, numbering at least several scores, set foot on the frozen surface of the Lochan. The ice gave way suddenly, and every one was drowned. Hence the name *Lochan nan Corp*, the Little Loch of the dead bodies. Take that as one out of many weird and thrilling incidents recorded as having occurred on these cold and lonely heights. What others could not some of the older folk have told! Even now, if you grow acquainted with the shepherds, there will be stories enough and to spare—felt all the more keenly as the rock, or the glen, or the waterfall by which the fairies danced, or some human tragedy was enacted, is pointed out by the simple speaker, as you ramble with him amid the rocks and mosses of Ben Ledi.

AN AUTUMN EVENING.

By F. E. ROSS.

A CALM, grey afternoon during that brief season when Nature, like an aged man serenely waiting for Death, lies in quiet expectation of the approaching winter's sleep. A level place at the meeting of several paths, near a tarn in the heart of the mountains; a weather-worn finger-post, and a rough shelter of stone walls built in the form of a cross. The air is still; the grey clouds hang in long motionless horizontal masses, covering the whole sky save one narrow band of pale yellow above the Northern horizon. The surface of the tarn, unbroken by the smallest ripple, reflects a clear, unwavering picture of the surrounding hills; the very streams are hushed. A vague suspense broods over mountain and valley, lake and river. A feeling of inertia, which can be dispelled only by active movement, creeps around the senses. The distant lakes appear dull, grey and unreal—like holes torn in a picture of green fields and dark brown woods. An occasional gleam of pale sunlight, struggling weakly through the canopy of cloud, warms the flanks of the distant hills into a dull russet; except for this their prevailing tint is a cold, uniform grey. Nearer at hand the green-carpeted dales are fringed with sombre woods of bronze, and above these, creeping up the bare hill-sides and around the crumbling crags and boulders which protrude from the slopes, are patches of bracken, coloured like clean, dull copper. A great precipice, dark and forbidding, frowns over the tarn—its summit vague in the mist, its face split into pinnacled towers and turreted bastions by deep ravines and chasms.

As evening comes, the clouds sink lower till the hill-tops are buried and the valleys covered in as with a rafted ceiling. A spark of light far away below shines out of the deepening twilight where a village stands in the midst of

green meadows at the foot of the valley ; and beyond, between the shadowy hills, a spectral cloud of mist lies on the bosom of an unseen lake.

The twilight is fast fading into night. In the deep shade of the mountain-side looms a vast door-like chasm with a lintel of cloud, profoundly cavernous, filled and over-flowing with the uttermost blackness of darkness—the very portal of Erebus and Nox. On every side vague dark shapes appear—dwindle—and vanish ; shadows become rocks—rocks melt into shadows. Dry land turns into water under foot. Everything is unreal, intangible, ghostly. Distant objects seem near, and near ones distant. Is that a figure seated there—some Ophelia with long white garments trailing in the stream ? It is but the gleam of falling and broken water. Whence came that long-drawn sigh ? It was but the whisper of the air among the bracken.

The blackness which seemed to be pouring like dense smoke out of the great Portal has now spread over all the mountains around. The sky is but little less dark, and progress has become a mere blind, downward stumbling, guided only by the star in the village. The gloom deepens as the ground sinks between the hills, but the descent gradually becomes less steep and stony as the valley widens. Presently the noise of stumbling footsteps ceases. Soft turf is underfoot ; still, leafless trees overhead. In the intense stillness of the night, a man's voice sings softly—

“ Peace breathes along the shade
Of every hill ;
The tree-tops of the glade
Are hush'd and still ;
All woodland murmurs cease,
The birds to rest within the brake are gone.”

The lodestar in the village shines near and bright now. As the little church in the fields is passed, with its grey belfry rising just above the tops of the black yew-trees, and a new tomb gleaming between their stems, the voice is singing—

“ Be patient, weary heart,—anon
Thou too shalt be at peace !”

MOUNT ASSINIBOINE.

BY WILLIAM GARDEN.

It is a far cry from Cairngorm to the great system of the Pacific Cordillera, and, once there, it may be said with truth that we are far from the field that should furnish food for this journal. On the other hand, however, it may be fairly enough argued that, should a would-be loyal member of this Club desert, even but for a season, for him his only hills—the Cairngorms—then he will do well to expiate his transgressions by instantly giving an account of his wanderings in the leaves of his mother-club journal.

Up to the present time Mount Assiniboine has perhaps been the most talked-of mountain in the Canadian Rockies, owing to the striking photographs and fascinating descriptions of Mr. W. D. Wilcox. Mount Assiniboine (11,860 feet) is the loftiest peak in the Canadian Rockies south of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It lies about twenty miles in a bee-line south-west of Banff, though the exigencies of valley and pass demand a route of some fifty miles. It stands upon the ridge of the great Continental Divide, a conspicuous landmark for miles round, towering fully 1,500 feet above any of its immediate neighbours. It commands attention by its majestic outline and striking character, and has been dignified by the title of "The Matterhorn of the Rockies," from the remarkable resemblance which it bears, from certain aspects, to the Swiss monarch. Before Mr. Outram scaled the peak in August, 1901, for the first and only time, three previous attempts at least had been made to ascend this picturesque and fascinating mountain. In 1898, Mr. Bryant of Philadelphia and Mr. Steel of England made a reconnaissance to about 10,000 feet by the N.W. arête. In 1900, two brothers, named Walling, from Chicago, attempted an ascent by the north face, with three Swiss guides, but failed to scale the first great limestone wall. Again, in the summer of 1900, Mr. Bryant made another assault, accompanied by

Mr. Wilcox and two guides. Passing round the mountain, they camped on the south-west side, and ascended by the easy south-west ridge to 10,750 feet. From this point the difficulties, especially from avalanching snow, appeared insurmountable, and, after ascending 100 feet or so further, they abandoned the attempt.

The news of this last defeat fired Outram afresh with desire to visit Assiniboine. It may be interesting to note that Outram's mother was the eldest daughter of the late Patrick Davidson of Inchmarlo, so that he may be claimed as an Aberdonian. In August, 1901, then, he started off from Banff, a station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, with the Swiss guides Häsler and Bohren, pitching his base-camp somewhere in the vicinity of the photograph here reproduced. From what he had learned, the north-west arête or ridge seemed the route most likely to prove successful. Accordingly, he ascended from his base-camp with the trapper, Peyto, and the two guides, carrying a tent, blankets, and provisions, to an altitude of over 11,000 feet. Here, however, a dense mist had settled down which did not lift though they waited an hour, and as they were on entirely unknown ground and apparently confronted by an impossible rock-wall between them and the true summit, they were compelled to retreat owing to the intense cold. They descended therefore to their tent by the way they had come up, and, rather than bivouac at this high altitude in the present weather conditions, which was their original intention, in the event of being defeated, they decided to descend again to the base-camp with all their paraphernalia.

Next morning promised a magnificent day, and so, starting at 6 a.m., rapid progress was made to the col, which was reached two hours later, the former route being followed but with the advantage of now being able to see ahead. A careful traverse to the left over steep ice proved a simple way for negotiating the rock-wall which, but the day before, looked as if it would prove a final barrier to their further progress by this ridge, and by 12.30 they stood on the summit of the noble pyramid. At 7.15 p.m. they were once more at the base-camp, having descended by the north face,

thus making not only a first ascent but a complete traverse of the mountain. A detailed account of Outram's ascent will be found in the "Century Illustrated Magazine" for September, 1903. He says of the climb—"It reminded me more than anything of the Dent Blanche in fairly bad condition with verglas. On the south-west side it cannot be called a very severe ascent, only about 700 feet are difficult at all for practised mountaineers; but the north side will always, I think, provide a climb equal in interest (though only 1,500 feet of the highest order), to almost any peak in Switzerland."

My friend who accompanied me to Canada in 1903 had left Scotland resolved to attempt the ascent of Mount Assiniboine. By constant travelling we reached Banff on the morning of the fifteenth day after leaving Aberdeen. There, by careful arrangement beforehand, we met our Swiss guides Christian Häsler (who had made the first ascent with Outram) and Hans Kaufmann, a well-known Grindalwald guide, Bill Peyto, a famous trapper, his two cow-boys, and our faithful cayoooses, or mules, and the next morning we started off—a goodly company—seven men and seven horses with three tents and provisions for ten days. After fording streams and cutting at one time through dense timber, and at another crossing bare and rugged lofty mountain passes, we reached the spot in the photograph which was to be our base-camp, and which my aneroid made out to be 7,175 feet, just at the timber line, and within a mile of the base of our mountain. The weather among the mountains is fickle here as at home. It had favoured us so far, and time was precious. Our camp pitched, we at once commenced to prospect, and we were not long before we both agreed that the manifest route for attack was by the north arête, by which Outram had descended. The morning after we arrived in camp, therefore, my friend and the guides made an early start by candle-light at 3 a.m., though the original intention was to have had an 'off-day' to recruit for the effort, for we had had three very hard days' work since we left Banff. I felt sure of their success as I bade them farewell. As dawn broke I saw them cross the upper ice-fall; with the telescope I saw them negotiate with success the last

tricky bit of work on the great limestone band beneath the summit peak, which indeed was the only part we suspected might prove troublesome from our previous day's examination. Finally, at 10:30 a.m., I saw my friend triumphantly waving his hands as he stood on the summit itself, just 7½ hours after he had left me, and so the second ascent of the great peak was an accomplished fact, and the first ascent had been made by the north arête, which Outram had believed at one time to be impossible. Coming down by the same route they were in camp again by four o'clock in the afternoon, having been just thirteen hours away. To me it seemed a long time, though I put in the time watching them with the glass, prospecting with the trappers, and photographing, trying the while to persuade myself that the mountain looked best from the foot, though this I fear I failed to do!

It was an excellent climb, and though not so much difficult or sensational, yet, from the rotten nature of the rocks, it demanded constant care and attention. I subsequently found that the character of the limestone rocks of which these mountains principally consist is, from a climbing point of view, totally different from the rocks of the Swiss Alps. The strata run the wrong way, so to speak. Indeed the rocks are like books in a book-shelf lying upon their sides, so that, when any outward strain is put upon them, they pull out in long slabs in the most alarming manner, and are in consequence most treacherous. Each hand- and foot-hold has to be thoroughly tested before weight is put on it, and all this means additional time and care. Assiniboine climbed, we retreated next day to our second camp at the head of the Simpson Valley, and the day following, abandoning our tents and horses to the mercy of the trappers, the guides and ourselves set off by lamp-light at 3 a.m., and made a forced march of over forty miles on foot into Banff, which we reached about six in the evening. Next day we caught the west-bound train, and spent our remaining fortnight exploring the lofty peaks round Lake Louise and Mount Sir Donald and others in the Selkirk Range still further west. The further west one goes the more luxuriant the vegetation becomes. On the Pacific side of the great mountain chain what impressed me most was the

gigantic size of the cedar and hemlock trees. A humid climate and a very heavy rainfall have clothed the lower slopes of the mountain giants with far nobler trees and a more luxuriant undergrowth than exists on the eastern slopes of the Rockies, where the hot prairie winds have rather a tendency to check what scanty growth exists.

In conclusion, a word of comparison of this vast mountain system with others may not be out of place. The continued fine weather, which had favoured us, gave us every opportunity to enjoy fully the magnificent and unique scenery, and to gauge more correctly than we could otherwise have done the merits and possibilities of the Rockies as a mountaineering field. Regarded as a whole, and from the severely 'greased-pole' point of view that Mr. Ruskin lamented, it may be said at once that they can hardly, in this respect, become serious competitors with the Swiss Alps, the lofty summits of Suanetia, or the still more gigantic Himalaya; indeed the majority of the peaks will not test the skill of the modern Alpine gymnast very severely. The chief obstacles to the climber at present are the distance of the mountains from his base, and the impenetrable character of the forests through which he has to fight his way. In future days, when trails are cut to the foot of the peaks, when the easiest routes to the summit are discovered, and the contempt, bred of familiarity, supervenes, it is possible that a good many of them may be lightly esteemed by up-to-date mountaineers. Nor, perhaps, from an æsthetic standpoint can it be maintained that the Alps of Canada possess quite the grandeur or stateliness of their European compeers. For instance, it is doubtful whether there are any mountain landscapes in the Rockies that can vie with the view of the Jungfrau from Interlaken, the Italian side of Mont Blanc, or Monte Rosa, or the Matterhorn. On the other hand, they have a remarkable individuality and character, in addition to special beauties of their own which, I think, Switzerland cannot rival. The picturesque landscapes in the valleys, the magnificence of the vast forests, with their inextricable tangle of luxuriant undergrowth, and the wreck and ruin of the fallen tree-trunks, the size, number, and exquisite colouring of the

mountain lakes—in these respects the new Switzerland stands unrivalled.

In the Alps there are few lakes of any size surrounded by high glacier-clad mountains, but in the Rockies they may be counted by the score—gems of purest turquoise blue, in matchless setting of crag and forest scenery, glacier and snow, storm-riven peak and gloomy mysterious canyon. Last, but not least, in the free and wild life of the backwoods can be found absolute freedom from all taint of the vulgar or the commonplace; and the sense of mystery and of awe at the unknown—things which are gone for ever from the high mountain ranges of Europe—yet linger around the crests of the Northern Rockies.

Gradually, year by year, these things are getting appreciated by the outside world. Canada, as all the world knows (or should know), is now entering on a new era of commercial, agricultural and industrial development. Vast tracts of country are being opened up in the great North-west. Settlers are pouring in from the States and elsewhere, and the whole country is progressing by leaps and bounds in wealth and material prosperity. Coincidentally with this advance in riches, there is growing in the west a taste for natural beauties, an appreciation, hitherto dormant, of the fair things of the earth, which in its turn is proving a new source of wealth. The Canadian Pacific Railway has, with accustomed shrewdness, learned that even glaciers, if utilised with skill, may have a commercial value. A growing horde of tourists all along the railway is the result; while—most happily for those who shun the society of their fellow-wayfarers, and long for the silent solitude of the forest, and the grandeur and the keen air of the great peaks—a tent and an outfit will always afford an easy means of escape from that over-civilisation which, as some of us think, is already sufficiently burdensome in our home surroundings.

FROM THE BEAULY FIRTH TO LOCH DUICH.

BY REV. R. M. CAIRNEY.

WE sallied forth from Beauly one afternoon last July on a good stout touring wheel.

Our kit (packed on a Turner rear carrier) included maps, compass, some strong twine, spirit lamp, cocoa, Pitman's banana biscuits, etc., with toilet brushes on a miniature scale, and a change of underwear. Strapped in front we carried a pair of stout moor boots and a poncho, and felt ready for anything. Not speed, but efficiency and comfort were our aim.

Two miles of tree-lined road through Lord Lovat's well-wooded and well-tilled lands brought us to Kilmorack church, and the deservedly famous gorge and falls of the same name. The Beauly is not a large river, but it is never, even in midsummer, without a fair volume of water, owing to the number of considerable lochs which overflow into it. The view of the lower falls is not the best, but with the farm steading and the mill a pleasing picture is made up. A few hundred yards further on is a notice-board, directing the tourist down a field side to a charming summer-house perched upon a bold bluff which looks down precipitously upon the deep pools of the upper falls in the gorge beneath. Here we sat down to a dainty afternoon tea with buttered bread and cakes. A giant silver fir, that might be a couple of hundred years old, makes a noble roof over the tea tables laid out *al fresco*. The ladies who provide this elegant refreshment are descendants of two generations of ministers of Kilmorack parish, and have been granted the use of this romantic summer-house by the present incumbent. The house is a substantial stone structure like a little tower, and was built by the grandfather of the ladies as a quiet retreat for study. We sat dreamily feasting eyes and ears and all our senses, physical and moral, in that scene compacted of grandeur and luxuriant beauty. The roar of the rapids, reduced by summer drought and subdued by distance beneath,

was like an organ pedal accompaniment to the song of finches and mavis overhead; and the scent of firs and flowers was sweet. When we resumed our way westwards we found that the sun had run much of his day's race while we worshipped in this sweet temple of nature.

We now ascended Druim Pass. From Teanassie House, where a glimpse of Beaufort Castle roof is seen, to Aigas House, is romantically beautiful, and well worth coming to see for itself. The road is here cut through the old red sandstone conglomerate rock for a considerable distance. The steep banks of the Beaully are thicketed on both sides. Vegetation is luxuriant and varied, and rich colours abound. The Beaully glen should be a paradise for botanists as well as landscape painters. We passed the Eilean Aigas, an island in the Beaully, in which stands a house noteworthy as having been lent as a residence by the Jacobite Lord Lovat to the brothers Sobieski—two grandchildren of the "Pretender." A short run brought us to the entrance to Erchless Castle and then to Struy village. A quaint old village it is! The Catholic Faith is a conservative one, and seems to have cast a spell of old fashioned "content with things as they are" over this little green spot. The peace of still life reigns. Even the children are quiet as well as respectful. The main road here grows its *quota* of grass for the cows to graze in their saunter homewards. The old one storeyed Catholic school, with its diamond-paned windows peering out from its thick mantle of ivy, sits sleepily on a carpet of bright green turf, that through age is springy to the foot. The little inn, which has only a porter and ale licence, is surrounded by a kitchen garden. A few low thatched cottages make up the rest of the village. As we pass out of it, two marks of more modern and much less picturesque life frame the quaint old picture, the new post office and the three storeyed, slate-roofed, new board school for protestants. We pursued our way singing Sir Walter Scott's *Captive Huntsman*, "My hawk is tired of perch and hood."

A run of seven miles along a good and pleasant road brought us to Invercannich Hotel which is called sometimes Glen Affric Hotel. Our river, which for the last seven miles

has borne the name of the Glass, is here augmented by the Cannich, which rises on the north side of Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan and flows through Loch Lungard and Loch Mullardoch. At Cannich it passes between high perpendicular walls of rock in a very picturesque manner. The rock looked, in the distance, like conglomerate. Glen Cannich (glen of the "cotton grass") is, I believe, worth a tramp for a few miles to lovers of glen scenery, but declining soon to bleakness, it bears no comparison with Glen Affric.

Evening was now advancing rapidly, so we pushed on to reach Achagate where we hoped to get quarters for the night. Two miles beyond Invercannich we passed on the left the road which, crossing the Glass, leads to Guisachan House, in the heart of Guisachan Forest. Our road now enters the Chisholm Pass, ascending rapidly from Fasnakyle up the course of the river Affric. We heard the roar, but did not venture far to explore the beauties, of the Dog Falls. Danger boards bearing the legend, "Keep back, rocks undermined, sometimes give way," took away our nerve. As far as Achagate we had for companion a native lad mounted on one of the tall ponies which had been through the campaign in Africa with Lord Lovat's Scouts. When we reached Achagate, ah!—we learned to our chagrin that we had been forestalled by some guests just arrived from England. We were hospitably entertained to a good supper, but had to turn out again, and face the six miles that lay between us and Affric Lodge—the next human habitation.

After Achagate the road becomes merely a well-made bridle path. Horses do not require that the hillocks and the gullies of the mountain torrents should be levelled; nor are bridges absolutely necessary. We therefore did not find any such luxuries; it was a dark ride, and extremely lumpy, though by day and with plenty of time it would have been beautiful. Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin, deeply set among hills, was exquisite even under the stars. Grand old pines and fairy-like ashes and birches, with the sturdy alder, clothed its sides, and it lay among them placid, reflecting the brighter stars. But that stony switchback road, crossed by a score of mountain torrent-beds, required, in the dark,

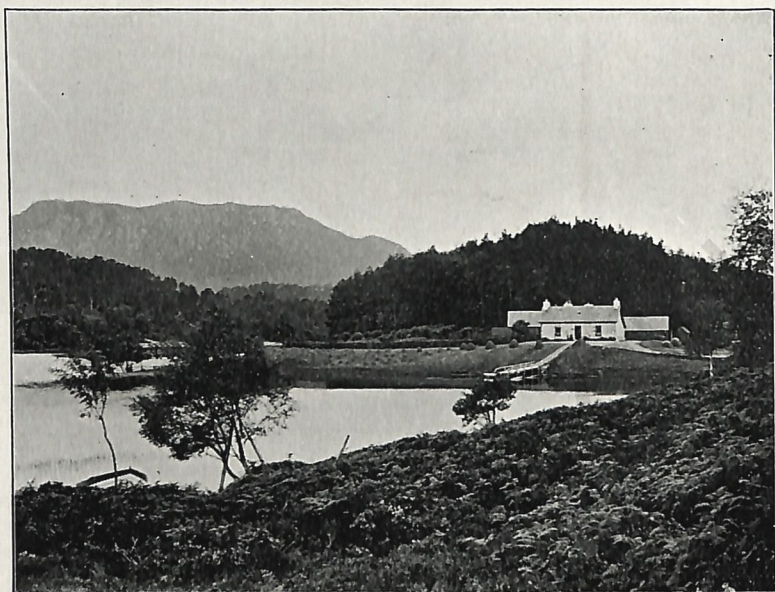


Photo by

AT LOCH AFFRIC.

Arthur Simpson.

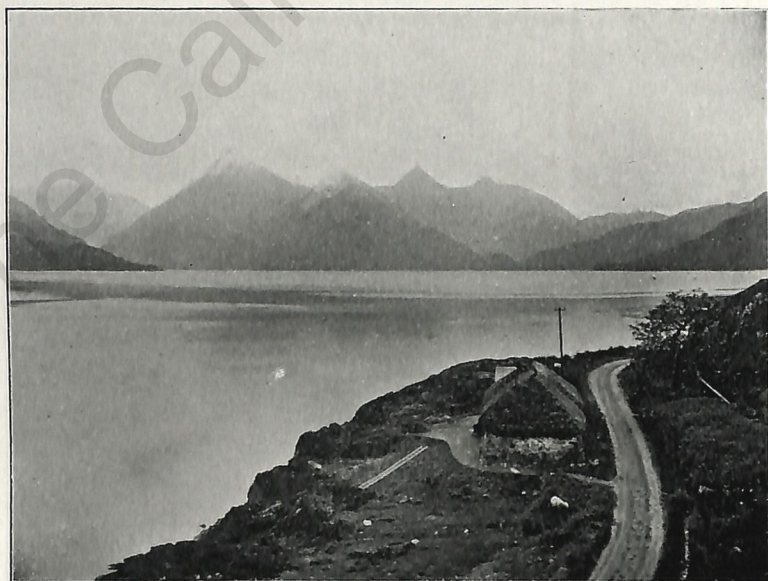


Photo by

LOCH DUICH AND THE FIVE SISTERS OF KINTAIL.

Arthur Simpson.

constant vigilance. We plunged along, alternately laughing and wincing over occasional spills, reaching a cottage at Affric Lodge about ten o'clock. Here, pity for our weary condition, consideration of the fact that the next house is Alltbeath, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles further, and that the path is a good deal worse than what we had already experienced, opened the door of hospitality. Affric Lodge is a beautiful shooting box, built on a neck of land which almost divides Loch Affric into two near its eastern end. The lodge is on the western side of the peninsula and looks westward up some $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the loch; our cottage on the other side of the peninsula faced eastwards. Just below is the boat slip and a little pier, and the eastern section of the loch stretches away for a mile or so in full view. It was near midnight when I looked out, and the large round moon had risen, glowing yellow, above the dark hill range of Guisachan, and fell in a lane of golden beams along the lake. Jupiter shone like a lamp not far from her, and cast his reflection also upon the placid mirror. A few stars twinkled between the floating islands of fleecy clouds, while the silhouette of the dark hills upon the deep blue sky completed a picture of holy calm and rare beauty. After such a scene, sleep came upon me like a mantle of peace.

In the morning we enjoyed the splendid panorama of lake and mountain giants in the west. We readily distinguished Tigh Mor, Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan, Mam Sodhail, Beinn Fhada, and Sgurr Fhuaran, a notable assemblage of Highland magnates.

Breakfast at seven, a Highland farewell, and we were off, having for new companion the Rev. A. E. Robertson. That distinguished mountaineer had been early astir, having ridden that morning from Cannich Hotel. We trundled our machines in Indian file along the switchback bridle path to Allt Coire Leachavie. There Mr. Robertson left us, to proceed to Alltbeath, while we set our faces for the summit of Mam Sodhail. One comfort of these Highland solitudes is their very solitude. You may bathe where you list, and leave your property on the hill side for a day without fear. There are no intruders on one's privacy save red deer and flies, and

no thieves to ride away with one's wheel. From our starting point to the summit of the Mam (3862 feet) is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles as the crow flies, there being a fairly good foot track following the course of the Leachavie on its left bank. We set out from the 1,000 feet level, and found it an easy climb for the first 1500 feet. The steepness of the ridge of Sgurr na Lapaich (3401 feet) causes the Coire Leachavie to be very stony, slabs and boulders being strewn thickly over the whole corrie. Here and there the stream dashes over ledges of white and grey quartzite into deep pools. At about the 2000 feet level, three ledges of gleaming white quartzite make a rather pretty waterfall. A patch of snow still clung to the upper shelf, and, all but covering the water-course, made a pretty reflection in the deep pool below. The day was hot, and the chance of such a shower bath was too tempting. A little higher the track crosses the stream, and thereafter the climb becomes rather stiffer, and the corrie begins to close in all around. At about the 2800 feet level a little well of the coldest water we ever tasted springs up. Here the climb is decidedly stiff, and but for the winding track would be ladder-like. The ridge of the corrie is narrow and strewn with weathered slabs of gneissic rock that look as if they were the tumbled-down remains of a cyclopean building. A patch of strikingly green grass, long and succulent, appears from under a broader patch of snow, some fifty yards wide, at what might be the highest source of the Leachavie. On the ridge, the view both ways was clear. On the south-west the long foot of Ceathreamhnan lay just below, and on the east the corrie of Leachavie stretched out at full length.

A few minutes' climb now brought us to the stone hut, erected for his deer watchers by the late Mr. Winans, the well-known American millionaire, who tenanted this and neighbouring forests for several years. In the ruined hut were a few hundredweight of coals, some rusted pots and kettles, and other relics of camp life.

A few minutes more over bare slabs of schist, and we are at the huge tower-like cairn. A built-in recess commands a splendid view of Carn Eige (3877 feet,) and Glen Fiadhach.

The view north-east is of the ridge that forms the north side of Glen Fiadhach, beginning at Carn Eige, and coming to a bold point in Tom a' Choinich. The bedding of the rocks which form this ridge stands out, and adds to the gaunt appearance of this limb of the Mam Sodhail group. All around, the scene was impressively grand; ridges and peaks were all bare and rocky, and only in the far distance below was there much appearance of wood and verdure. On the north and the west of Carn Eige, a little speck by the side of the stream indicated a keeper's cottage not far from Loch Lungard, which was just hidden by Beinn Fhionnlaidh. Ten miles from everywhere, and shut in all round by mountains, this cottage looked solitary enough for a hermit. A housewife in such a situation must needs develop such a genius for forethought and executive skill as would be a valuable contribution in the boardroom of our War Office.

Away further to the north, the peaks of Monar and Coulin, and the rugged caps of Torridon and Loch Maree appeared in the far distance like solidified waves of a lumpy sea. North-east, over the ridge of Glen Fiadhach, I could make out Ben Wyvis, and beyond it the gleam of the Cromarty and the Moray Firths. Eastwards the whole length of the romantic, wild Glen Affric, with Strath Glass and the Beaully, was stretched out before us—the whole vale, on account of our elevated position and the visual angle it gave, apparently rising as it receded into the eastern distance. Lake and mountain and luxuriant woodland made up a picture whose charm could scarcely be exceeded. South-eastwards the view was closed in by the masses of the Monadhliadhs and the Cairngorms. I thought I made out Ben Muich Dhui, Beinn a' Ghlo, Schichallion and Ben Alder. There, without a doubt, nearly due south, rested Ben Nevis, in soft blue haze, looking the calm giant that he is. The whole land in this direction and round to the west was swathed in the poet's veil of mist, half concealing, half revealing, the beauties of sea, loch, and bold escarpment alternating. Further westward the bold bluffs of the Coolins penetrated the thin haze like the heads of black cattle above the night fog on a meadow. In the foreground the view most attrac-

tive (to me) was the long north-east leg of Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan. The name means a hill of four quarters, and is very descriptive. It is a common formation; four fairly rectangular ridges of one, two, or three miles in length will culminate in a mountain peak. Sometimes there are only three, frequently only two ridges; and, when the latter is the case, the hill generally has the appearance of one long ridge like Beinn Fhada. But there are many in the schistose regions made up of the four. I suppose this formation is the natural result of an upheaval of the strata where the main force has been on a certain point of limited area. As the crust was lifted up at this point it rose in three or four ridges at graduated height and generally yielded to fissure along the line of the ridge summit. Perhaps the process might be illustrated if a padded pole were made to force upwards a thick pie-crust of tough paste, somewhat brittle on the upper surface. If these hills be due to the foldings caused by shrinkage of the earth's crust—as is most probable—the above explanation will apply equally well as local results of the great general movement, the uplifting force being in that case properly a resisting force of concentrated power at these points.

Reluctantly we left the cairn at 5 p.m.—a full hour later than we had intended—and to make up time ran down the hill at our best, reaching our bicycles at 6.5. While heating a cup of cocoa we watched a beautiful little green beetle creep along the bridle path. Its colours were very bright and glanced in the sun, but we had not enough entomological knowledge to name it. After a hurried repast we pushed on to Alltbeath. Our path no way improved; I thought the notice boards forbidding motor cars and motor cycles were scarcely required. Pity the motors or rather the motorists who should attempt this mountain path! We pushed past Alltbeath and made for Camban, where we got a royal reception. Our host had spied us on the way a mile or two before and calmly waited our approach at the east foot of Beinn Fhada. The strains of a pibroch greeted us while yet half a mile from the lonely little cottage, and the curtain of darkness that crept down the gloomy valley of the Fionn ceased to depress.

Our hostess had a huge supper of porridge and thick cream ready for us on the table before we had got the bog wiped off bicycle and clothes and hands. After supper and a chat by the big kitchen fire, a good rub over our motor muscles with embrocation and a pick of salycilate of soda doctored us for as sound a sleep as ever we had. My last recollection was the distant roar of the Fionn among its bare and lonely rocks.

Next morning we bathed in the Fionn and lounged about, drinking in the mountain air till eleven o'clock, when we had lunch and started up Beinn Fhada (Ben Attow). The Ben is 3,385 feet in height, but we were already over 1,100 feet up, that being the elevation of Camban. A pretty stiff climb, frequently on hands and knees, brought us on to the ridge; here the bedding, mica-schist, was seen sharply broken and presenting a rough razor edge along which we walked in full view of the valleys on either hand. We observed many large garnets of remarkably bright colour and lustre in the schist. I succeeded in getting out half of one which was as large as a full sized haricot bean. Its colour and lustre were equal to those of a second-rate ruby. Such indeed it was pronounced to be by a jeweller to whom we subsequently showed it. Mr. Alfred W. Gibb, B.Sc., Lecturer in Geology for Professor J. Arthur Thomson, Aberdeen University, to whom I afterwards forwarded it, kindly analyzed it and pronounced it, on both chemical and geological grounds, only a large and unusually bright garnet. Mr. Gibb was not altogether surprised to learn that there appeared to be many such fine crystals on Beinn Fhada, he having heard before of large crystals of garnet being found on the hills that border Ross-shire. It was an elevating as well as elevated walk for nearly a mile to the highest point of the Ben. Sheer away on the north the precipitous corrie falls down nearly to the lonely Loch a' Bhealach. The actual precipice must be quite 1,000 feet. The slope on the south is also steep and terraced down to the glen, which is some 1,400 feet above the sea level. The Fionn flows eastwards from the watershed. We could trace its waters till they merge in the river Affric and its loch, thence away eastwards through Strath Glass, almost

till they reach the Cromarty Firth. The waters of the Croe of Kintail rush and tumble down westwards by the Allt Granda and then between the bright green sides of Gleann Lichd to mingle with the Atlantic in Loch Duich. But Gleann Lichd is hidden from us between its steep mountains. The clouds, which had been rather low in the morning, were now lifted above the tops of the hills and carried along by a fair southerly breeze. On the south and west were the Five Sisters of Kintail, while on the west and north the mighty teeth of Scotland's harrow showed even more grimly than from Mam Sodhail. On the north-east with the blue patch of Loch a' Bhealaich in the foreground, our big friend of yesterday looked bigger than ever over the shoulder of Sgurr nan Ceathreamhnan. Further east the Eden-like Glen Affric with its two turquoises—Loch Affric and Loch Beinn a' Mheadhoin—set in dark pine forests and golden grey hill-sides, stretched away till lost in the thickening haze of distance. The effect of this most lovely view was heightened by the frightful crater-like corrie of Beinn Fhada, weird, black and of great width, that swept sheer down beneath our feet. The distant view is very much the same as that from Mam Sodhail, except that the Sgurr Fhuaran group and the western escarpments are of course added to the panorama. Having started so late in the day, we had not time to continue our walk along the magnificent ridge to its western termination, two miles further, nor to scramble down upon the remarkable terraces of rock and scree which mark the bedding of the strata. Under a declining sun we retraced our steps quickly. About a thousand feet down we passed right through a small herd of deer grazing in the moss in a sheltered hollow. Having their wind, we came upon them so suddenly and quietly on the mossy ground that they did not observe us till we were in their midst. Another hearty Highland supper—this time of fresh trout and cocoa—and we tumbled in again to our comfortable and sweet smelling bed, pleasantly tired.

The morning broke rather misty, but with sufficient light to be promising. To-day we intended crossing the moors and the hill-foots to visit the famous Glomach Falls. After

breakfast, to wait developments, we sat on the dais at the west gable of the cottage. Beinn Fhada towered straight up on the right, but only a little of its huge mass was visible, for a feathery mist rose and fell, occasionally reaching within a few hundred feet of us. Ciste Dubh (3,218 feet) and the three legs of Sgurr a' Bhealaich Dheirg (3,378 feet) across Gleann Fionn on our left showed a little more under the mist, for a light breeze came up the glen and lifted it. Sgurr Fhuaran was fast showing his peak, black as ink, through a rift in the pale pinky mist. The Fionn roaring as it runs added its music to the morning song of the birds. Suddenly Beinn Fhada was all aflame—grass patches and heather suffused, through the agency of the mist, with flashes of pink and green light that suggested fairyland. Anon Gleann Fionn became filled with a soft creamy light, and now the very summit of Sgurr a' Bhealaich Dheirg, streaked with snow patches, pierced right through the thin veil. The sun was rapidly gaining the mastery, and we started assured of a hot summer day. We rounded the north foot of Beinn Fhada, for the lone Loch a' Bhealaich, at about 1,500 feet level. Near a huge boulder we passed the carcass of a red deer, the fifth we had come across since we left Beaully, and chancing to look up towards the sun, which had now completely dispelled the mist, we saw, between us and it, a large bird with spread wings high up and motionless as a boy's kite. It came nearer without apparently moving a wing, and we now saw to our delight that it was a golden eagle. We lay down to observe it while it soared in the sun, evidently watching us. When we got up to proceed, it followed, but always in the sun, so we could not get a fair look at it. We again lay down for half-an-hour and rested with one eye upon our magnificent friend. Getting bold, it made a long swoop down, but when about a hundred yards from us it turned abruptly, showed its back for an instant glancing in the sunlight, and flew away out of sight. Neither human habitation, nor any trace of life, beyond a few voiceless insects, is to be seen at Loch a' Bhealaich. Some exquisitely beautiful blue butterflies skimmed the still waters, a great dragon-fly swooped hither and thither, something like water beetles bubbled in the sand of the shallow

reaches, and fat trout, three or four ounces in weight, leaped quietly in the deeper reaches. All else was still vegetation. A sandy bay half covered with pond grass made the clear water look tempting, so we doffed our clothes and had a delicious bathe while the spirit lamp boiled our cocoa for lunch. Half-way along, a picturesque island suggests a fairy castle, and beyond it to the north the land approaches on either side till it makes the loch a narrow strait. Behind us on the south the dark corrie of Beinn Fhada loomed black and precipitous in the shadow of its own brows, its wild proportions heightened by a patch or two of snow. We were in the mood for idle dreams as we lay our lazy length in the sun. Nothing to worry, no appointment to keep, and no destination that *must* be reached! Only to do what inclination prompted. It is true that we had had thoughts of going as far as the Glomach Falls, but our reported foot-track had melted away among boulders, and the loch was, as we lay on its banks, as an enchanted lake. So with half-closed eyes and dream-filled ears we revelled in well earned *dolce far niente*, while the sun went two hours or more on his appointed course. A council with map spread out satisfied us that there was no time now to reach the Falls and be back in a decent time, so we turned our steps homeward, and had an early evening meal of tea, rice and cream, eggs and scones with fresh sweet butter. Mountain air gives an unlimited appetite.

Friday dawned late and dark. A gentle dropping from the eaves warned us that the balmy south-west breeze had brought its full complement of moisture. We dressed in a grey light and went out, only to see nothing but our cottage and the wall opposite. It was not raining, but everything dripped wet; a dense blanket of mist enveloped all. This was disappointing, and put an effectual damper on our plan to ascend Sgurr Fhuaran. We took a leisurely bath in a pool of the Fionn where it had cut a channel for itself through some five feet of hard peat. Several tree trunks protruded from the peat banks and told the strange tale that this high land had once—many centuries ago but subsequent to the great epoch of the Glacier-boulder-till—been clad with a forest. At last,

after lunch, we decided to descend the Allt Granda, and wait for better weather at Shiel Inn.

Such a heavy mist as this meant no good views, and moreover promised a drenching rain when we should get to the lower levels. It is nine miles of hard going—harder a good deal than we anticipated. We had fared better had we not loitered the forenoon away.

For the first mile the bridle-path admitted of walking beside our wheels, but when we came near the watershed it turned and twisted among and over the boulders of terminal glacier moraines, which like colossal mole-heaps fill the bed of the valley at this part. The track here and on to the stalker's cottage in Gleann Lichd became generally so narrow and tortuous, and the rain, which now poured in torrents, made it so slippery in the steeper parts that we had to manœuvre our heavily laden cycles very carefully. A sudden turn of the track to the right, after a mile of this, brought us to the verge of the defile of the Allt Granda—a scene to be remembered. On the left was a wall of some 500 feet of bare mica-schist rock with smooth surface, which a glint of pale light through the rain made to shine like the ghost of silver. This rampart wall is so nearly perpendicular that scarce a blade of green grows upon it. The strata are evidently here tilted almost at right angles to the horizontal. Down in front the Croe tumbles away at a very steep angle. The track clings to the right hand of the defile, following a sharp angle made by a noisy torrent which comes down Beinn Fhada, leaping over the terraces of screes that almost shut out the sky and looking as if it would throw its spray on our heads. This stream is crossed by a strongly made foot-bridge. The track shows in fact some signs of careful making at this point. It sweeps round again by a sharp turn, doubling upon itself as it clings to its side of the ravine, which now approaches the left bank. As we followed it round we had a splendid view up the ravine. The waters of the Croe were seen in full view, leaping and dashing down from pool to pool in the rock ledges and making one long fall of over seventy feet, broken into rushes and pools and mares-tail sprays. The whole scene was exceedingly wild and grand,

and gave just a sensation of giddiness to one of us. In one mile we had made a descent of 900 feet (1 in $5\frac{1}{2}$). Down below the augmented stream finds a more level and a quieter bed, and the gorge opens out into a narrow glen. Cheering is the light green of its little meadows, and sweet the sight of the cottage of the stalker in Gleann Lichd. We crossed the river at the cottage by a neat chain foot-bridge, and, getting on to the cart track, ploughed our way, still through a drenching rain, towards Morvich. Wet to the skin, through waterproofs and all, we passed through the deer-fence gate at Morvich, and, hey presto! on to a sand-papered racing track, the main road round the head of Loch Duich. Just as we did so the clouds began to clear off with astonishing suddenness, and the sun broke out. Luxurious by force of contrast with what we had just experienced was the two miles glide to Shiel Inn.

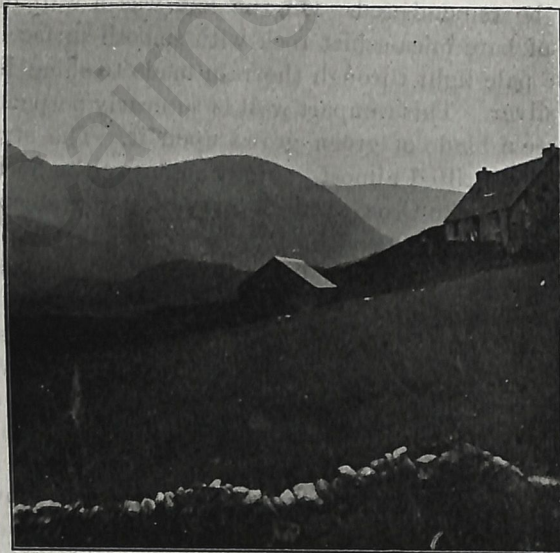


Photo by

AT CAMBAN.

George W. Buchanan.

CHRISTMAS MONDAY ON BEN VORLICH AND STUC A' CHROIN.

BY H. MACROBERT.

WE had left Edinburgh by the 7 o'clock train from Princes Street in the chilliness of a winter morning, and it was only as we drew up at Callander station that we began fully to realise the perfect promise of a day which the pale emerald sky held out to Mackenzie and myself. A worthy member of the S.M.C. had given us some words of wisdom as to our route ere leaving town, but the crispness of the morning was too much for our youthful spirits, and, neglecting that advice, we alighted at Kingshouse at 9.35 a.m., having left our luggage at Strathyre station in charge of the hotel porter.

The heavy falls of snow which had been experienced throughout Scotland during December had led us to anticipate much sport, not only on Stuc a' Chroin, but also on her more placid if better known neighbour Ben Vorlich. It was therefore with much disappointment and no little incredulity that our sleepy eyes viewed the bare rocky bluffs of Ben Ledi's eastern face. Here, if anywhere, we argued, the snow should be lying, but beyond a few patches and one or two couloirs not a vestige was to be seen. We endeavoured to console ourselves with the thought of Stucky's greater height, but I could see that my friend was anxious notwithstanding his fair words. Moreover, his desire for corroborative evidence in the shape of Am Binnein's snow-clad cone led to most amazing contortions of body and face in his vain endeavour to see round corners! Morning mists, however, lay thick over Balquhiddie, quite obscuring the view, and we could therefore only hope for the best. We had been advised to train to Lochearnhead, and from that point strike over the hills into Glen Ample, but our desire to be afoot proved too strong for us, and accordingly, as already stated, we left the train at Kingshouse.

It was a perfect morning as we strode swiftly over the

frozen ground and up the grassy slopes glittering with hoar frost. Mackenzie had the rucksack with the provisions and rope, whilst I ambled along with a light camera. Profiting by the former experiences of others, we had an ice-axe apiece, and by general consent the sobriquet "Stucky" was strictly tabooed. As is usual, in the first 1000 feet the views claimed a large part of our time, but in this case there was ample justification. Behind us to the west lay Balquhiddy with the white mists still nestling in the hollows; at the head of the valley Am Binnein stood out clearly against a pale sky, its upper slopes streaked with snow and shimmering in the morning sun, while below all was still in shadow. Words cannot describe the infinite charm and beauty of a Highland landscape in its winter aspect. The gorgeous colouring and the perfect gradations of light and shadow are a revelation to the town dweller. There was no lack of excuse therefore for two panting climbers eager to pause awhile and have a breather, and it was with no little satisfaction that we finally surmounted the crest dividing us from Glen Ample, and called a halt in the bright morning sun. Before us lay Ben Our, Ben Vorlich (3224 ft.) and Stuc a' Chroin (3189 ft.) perfectly clear, but almost devoid of snow! It was certainly disappointing, but there was no time to be lost, so off we went at a smart trot, and soon we were indulging in copious draughts from the Ample Burn in spite of some misgivings as to their future effects. It was 10.40 when we started up the long slopes to Vorlich, and progress was now steady if somewhat slow. Mackenzie still acted the part of baggage-mule, notwithstanding my very feeble protestations, and the dogged way in which he plodded up and along was really heart-breaking to his "Herr" following patiently in the rear. We halted for lunch at the burnside in full view of the fine precipices and gulleys of Stucky, and noted with satisfaction that the latter were full of snow, while the rocks were glazed with ice and in a formidable condition. Thin wisps of mist were now, however, waving round the summit of Ben Vorlich and ever and again obscuring the warm rays of the sun. The sudden fall in temperature caused an abrupt termination to our varied lunch, and, ere we had donned our mits and

helmets, great clouds of mist were surging up from Gleann an Dubh Choirein, and rolling over the Bealach, obliterating all landmarks and chilling us to the bone. At full speed we breasted the final slopes of Vorlich, and finally came out above the mist a few feet short of the summit. Here the bold front of Stuc a' Chroin frowned savagely at us over a veritable cauldron of seething mists, making a perfect picture for the eager photographer. The camera was accordingly unpacked and the operation performed, but unhappily with indifferent success. We reached the cairn at 12.30.

The view was magnificent and fairly clear on all sides save the S.E. Ben Lomond was prominent in the S.W., then "Jean" could just be descried peeping out from behind Narnain. Ben More and Am Binnein with their graceful contours carried the eye N.W. to Ben Chaluim and the Killin hills, while due north the Ben Lawers group stood out with startling clearness. To the N.E. and E. the eye roamed over loch and hill to Ben Chonzie. Nowhere was there much snow to be seen. What there was of it on Ben Vorlich took the form of a miniature cornice on the south side. Some time was spent on the summit basking in the sun and devouring the remains of our interrupted lunch. This consisted of the usual heterogeneous collection carried by mountaineers—dates, raisins, apples, chocolates, &c. Banana sandwiches were voted a failure.

We started off for Stucky about 1.15, the mists having in the meantime entirely disappeared. Two short glissades on snow frozen as hard as concrete hastened our descent to the col. Our future plan of campaign was here under discussion, and we eventually decided to try the more northerly of two long sinuous gullies on the east face, whose lower ends terminated in a large patch of snow. To reach this a long traverse across slippery ground was necessary, but this was accomplished without mishap.

The ascent of the gully was begun at 2.15. The condition of the snow rendered step-cutting necessary throughout, so we accordingly roped and set off, taking it in turns to cut up the fifty odd feet allowed by the rope. The rocky walls which hemmed in the gully were hung with icicles and

covered with hoar-frost, and so close together as somewhat to limit the outward view. For it must be remembered that a view is of no little consideration to one standing with chilled feet in the ice-steps which are gradually filling up with the icy fragments streaming from under the axe of the busy worker above. As the sun gradually sank in the west, we looked down from our snowy staircase into the ever deepening gloom of the valley, and again across to the graceful ridge of Ben Vorlich, glowing blood-red in the rays of a winter sunset. Such views, however, were not for the leader; other matters absorbed his attention. The first serious obstacle was an awkward little pitch of not more than ten feet. The direct ascent of this proved too much for the leader, and accordingly the second man's axe was called into requisition, and a slippery but short traverse made out on the north wall. Thereafter a cautious wriggle put the leader into comparative safety, where he was soon joined by the baggage-animal. From here the slope steepened considerably, and for 150 feet must have been over 55° . At the head of this we encountered a second pitch in the form of a half-frozen waterfall. After much kicking and scraping Mackenzie managed with the aid of my head to spread-eagle himself on the crest of the ridge. Whilst endeavouring to shuffle on to a place of safety he incautiously let go his axe. His frenzied shout of despair roused me from visions of Strathyre Hotel and warm baths to the horrible reality. As the erring weapon shot past I fielded it with the precision of a "short-slip." Later when I handed it back to its owner there were tears of gratitude in Mackenzie's eyes; truly his axe is his fetish!

It was now twenty minutes to four and the top not yet in sight. We decided therefore to traverse out when opportunity occurred, and so make our way with all possible speed to the summit. It was not, however, until after another quarter of an hour's step-cutting that the leader was enabled to make his way out on to the south side of the gully, which was now no longer precipitous but comparatively simple. Thereafter a short scramble landed us on the crest of the ridge some 100 yards north of the summit. Our

exertions were rewarded with another perfect view, a sunset over the Western Highlands.

“The sun has gane down o'er the lofty Ben Lomond,
And left the red clouds to preside o'er the scene.”

Coming as we did from the comparative gloom of the eastern face, the effect of the gorgeous colouring was all the more pronounced. We had, however, little time for æsthetic reflection as it was now 4.10, and the last train was due to leave Strathyre at 6.54. So once more we set off at a trot, and were soon slipping and plunging down the icy slopes to Glen Ample. As the gradient eased off we gradually bore to our left, and finally flung ourselves, tired and breathless, on the heathery banks of the Ample Burn, a little before 5 p.m. The great black hill between us and our longed for haven loomed up like a veritable nightmare, and it was two weary travellers who panted and stumbled up through the heather and over the slippery rocks amid the gathering gloom. When at last, after many pauses, we finally surmounted the ridge, the lights of Strathyre twinkled a cheery greeting from the darkness of the valley, and roused our flagging spirits to one last effort. At 6.15. we strode jauntily into the Station Hotel, to find to our disgust that our only watch had gone slow, and that the real time was 6.30. Nothing daunted we proceeded to do a lightning change, and at 6.45. I sat down alone to the tempting repast provided by mine host. As my friend delayed his coming I felt constrained, with true Scottish economy, to take his share of the viands in addition to my own. This I did to my entire satisfaction, the tardy one appearing just in time to realise what he had missed ere rushing out to the station.

What need to expatiate on the glorious feeling of *dolce far niente* as one curls oneself up in the corner of the carriage and drowsily ruminates on the adventures and incidents of the past day! Pleasures of reflection are among the chief pertaining to the mountaineer, and sweet are the fancies of the dreamer as the rhythmical swaying of the carriage wafts him into the arms of Morpheus.

THE PTARMIGAN.

BY REV. D. C. MACKAY.

AMONG birds that inhabit our higher elevations the ptarmigan is, unquestionably, the first to be noticed. No doubt other birds may be met with occasionally as high as this species, but no other is so essentially a denizen of the heights. There is no other bird, indeed, which nature has furnished with the means of maintaining life in such lofty situations independently of season or weather. The haunts of the ptarmigan are so remote that it is not generally so well known as many a less interesting bird whose home lies beyond many lands and seas. Again, the creature's scheme of protective colouring is so perfect, and its reliance on this favour of nature so implicit, that it generally succeeds in evading detection on the part of those who, at a time, may chance to visit its far-off home. I believe I should not be far wrong in hazarding the proposition that there are many amongst us who though flattering themselves that they are fairly familiar with most of our higher summits have never even seen a live ptarmigan. The very name of the bird begins with a mystery; for no one can give the date or the reason of the accession of that initial P. The designation comes from the Gaelic *tarmachan*, a term whose radical significance seems to occasion some controversy among Gaelic etymologists. Coming from this source, the word appeared first in our language under the form "termagant," or "termigant" as it was spelt by James I. Later on the P crept on for no assignable reason, unless it be, indeed, to assimilate the name to that of many other strange birds which open the battery of their scientific nomenclature with the prefix "pter"—from the Greek word for a wing. But the ptarmigan has nothing to do with Greek, and has as little right to the initial P as it has to the name imposed upon it by a fearless school-mate of mine, who, encountering the strange word in a lesson, straightway dubbed it

“petermargan,” and was sailing on in blissful confidence when pulled up by didascalical authority.

In appearance the ptarmigan bears a close resemblance to its cousin on the lower levels, the red grouse. No doubt the complete dissimilarity in colour constitutes, of itself, a considerable difference; but, apart from this external and accidental variance, the two species have many features



Photo by

A PTARMIGAN'S NEST.

S. P. Gordon, F.Z.S.

and characteristics in common. Like the red grouse, the ptarmigan is short and stout in build; it has also a similar bill, which is short, thick, black and slightly curved; it wears similar hose of rough white hair or small feathers, only, in the case of the ptarmigan, these are thicker, and the final hairs often nearly conceal the spurs. It is also equally nimble on the wing, though, at first sight, the plump, round

body does not seem to be particularly well adapted for flight. There are, besides, several other less obvious points of resemblance between the two, such as monogamy and anatomical structure. In size it is rather smaller than the red grouse. But, now that we have been introduced by its better known relative, let us approach our hero in person.

The most striking point in the ptarmigan is, undoubtedly, its varying colour. At the time of writing—*i.e.* in the month of June—it is about to assume its summer dress, which consists of a pale brown or ash colour on the upper parts of the body, varied with darker spots and streaks of orange. On the head and neck these spots or bars are more pronounced and are intermingled with a certain amount of white. The under parts of the body and the wings are white, except the shafts of the quills, which always remain black. As the autumn advances, this dress is gradually replaced by the winter vesture, which is practically a pure white. In the male bird a bar of black extends from the eye to the bill. Books of reference inform me that this bar is absent in the female, though I must confess that I have never personally noted this absence; still, I have no doubt that the books are correct, especially as the presence of this dark amongst the predominating white must, certainly, be a much more noticeable feature than its absence. Apart from this and the black quills of the wings and some of the feathers of the tail, the winter plumage is as white as that of the whitest sea-gull. But this interesting animal has still a third dress to assume during the course of the year. This it dons at the approach of the breeding season, the prevailing hue seeming, then, to be a blend of the other two, a fact which probably led to this third moult being so long ignored, the spring plumage being naturally looked upon as the period of transition merely between the two extremes though it is richer and more glossy than either; but it has, at a comparatively recent date, been definitely ascertained that it is a distinct plumage, so that there are, really, three well defined moults in the year.

In all this we have one of the most wonderful examples of the protection which nature provides for her helpless

children. If the prevailing tints which the hills wear in summer were mixed up together, the result would probably be something very similar to the summer dress of the ptarmigan. The truth of this statement readily comes home to anyone who has been directed to look at that flock of ptarmigan just under the big boulder quite near, and has utterly failed to locate them until they moved. When they squat close among the ashy, grey rocks it requires a well trained eye or a good glass or both to detect them. With a glass one is sometimes surprised to discover a bright, little eye where all seemed to be cold hard stone. But one might argue that as the summer wanes the rich lichen with which the rocks are clothed will fade and grow light, and then the birds will be better revealed in their darker hue amongst it. No, no, nature is not to be caught thus napping in her vigilance over her children. As the lichens fade on the rocks the summer dress of the ptarmigan also fades, and the first stray threads of the winter coat appear. And yet later on the summits may be nearly white of a September morning with a light shower of snow, and now also this wonderful animal, keeping pace with its surroundings, is as pale as the hill-side becomes under the first cold grasp of winter; and, finally, at the dead of winter it becomes as white as its home on the snowy peaks. In the light-hearted days of spring it wears its richest dress, but who has not noticed that it is precisely then that the tints on the high hills are the brightest—just when the tender, new vegetation is breaking through and vivifying the sodden growth of the year that is dead?

No doubt, we have in nature other examples of a perennial adaptation to a varying medium, but none, I think, that is so artistically or so accurately carried out, and none that so infallibly demonstrates the providential care that is lavished upon these creatures that are so destitute of any means of self-defence.

The ptarmigan lays eight or ten eggs of a pale yellow or almost a cream colour dappled with blotches of light brown. They are generally laid towards the end of April in a nest that is merely a hollow in the bare ground, lined roughly

with grass or other vegetable matter. As soon as the young are hatched they are ready to scuttle off and bustle about with their mother in search of food, and they know their nest no more.

The food of the ptarmigan consists of a very slender species of heath (the crowberry?) which grows plentifully on the highest ridges. I regret that I cannot give its correct name; it is not given to every man to be a botanist or a naturalist with a long list of classical labels ready to be affixed to any fauna or flora he may encounter. For this reason I have avoided the use of these obscure terms in this article, and have not been tempted to call the ptarmigan (even within brackets) a *lagopus* or any other names of indecorous sonority. The bird itself is extremely simple in its speech, limiting its vocal efforts to a low, harsh croak. This sound may sometimes be heard among the rough boulders and rocks about the tops of the hills, while all the time the author of it completely evades detection. If really disturbed the birds will sometimes run and creep about, showing very little sign of fear. When they take to the wing they generally get up in a body, there is an instantaneous glitter of their light feathers as they make off, then almost immediately they wheel together and away they go, *en masse*, across the glen to the top of another range of mountains.

LOCHNAGAR IN APRIL AND MAY.

IN APRIL—BY SETON P. GORDON, F.Z.S.

IN late summer, when the winter's snows have disappeared from its vast precipices, Lochnagar is certainly "dark," but this could not have truthfully been said of it when we made the ascent in April.

Before the sun was well up the writer, accompanied by a friend, left the cottage where we had been staying overnight, resolved upon reaching Loch Dubh, a small circular loch at an altitude of about 3,000 feet, nestling in a western corrie of Lochnagar.

At first, walking was comparatively easy, our way for some distance leading through a large pine forest, where incidentally we discovered several old nests of grey crows, which are very numerous in this locality.

At about 2,000 feet we reached the snow, at first in small patches only, but gradually increasing until huge snowfields had to be traversed, on which the sun was shining with blinding brilliance.

Several burns were crossed, not without some risk, as the snow had formed in immense wreaths over their courses, and for long distances the only evidence of the proximity of water was the sound of it rushing far under our feet.

Luckily for us, the snow was as yet very hard beneath the surface, but even as it was, great care had to be exercised when crossing these "snow-bridges."

About half-way to our destination, we noticed a small flock of common gulls flying across from the hill. These gulls nest regularly on the shores of a small loch just beneath Loch Dubh, called Lochan-an-Eoin, but on reaching this loch the cause of their departure was quickly discovered, for it was completely frozen over, and the shores were as yet hardly suited for nesting purposes, being covered with deep snow drifts! The gulls were evidently an advance guard sent up to report to the main colony as to the condition of

their summer quarters, and were returning with the news that nesting there was out of the question.

At last Loch Dubh was reached, after five hours steady walking, and some idea of the difficulties of the journey may be gathered when it is stated that the distance from our starting point was only about six miles. The southern side of the loch is bounded by a lofty precipice, down which every now and again an avalanche came rushing, and the loch itself lay still beneath a thick sheet of ice, which was strong enough to bear us. Several ptarmigan were put up, and while we were at the loch they kept up their hoarse croaking all around. We also noticed several wheat-ears flitting about amongst the snow, which seemed rather remarkable, as they are summer visitors, arriving in the spring when all frost and snow have as a rule disappeared. A golden eagle too came soaring round with outstretched wings and settled on one of the rocks of the precipice, evidently on the look-out for ptarmigan.

During the climb, the giant hills to the west had been constantly hidden by snow showers, but while we were at the loch, the clouds suddenly lifted all round, and a splendid view of the Cairngorms was obtained. Ben Muich Dhui stood out completely shrouded in white, as also Braeriach, conspicuous by its immense precipices. To the north lay Ben Avon, famous for the huge granite tors on its summit, and Beinn a' Bhuid with its extensive corries, where snow usually lingers all through the summer. To the east the view extended down to the North Sea, about 50 miles distant, but so much heather was being burned in this direction as to render the sky quite hazy and somewhat restrict the view.

The return journey was uneventful, save that two grouse and a ptarmigan were flushed together, which is believed to be rather an unusual occurrence, and several herds of deer were also seen, which watched us suspiciously from a distance.

IN MAY—BY HARRY JOHNSTON.

The first of May of this year dawned, dull, misty and rainy, once more foreshadowing a day of rain for the Aberdeen Spring Holiday.

Some two dozen members of the Club, bound for Lochnagar, left Aberdeen by the 8.5. a.m. train to Ballater, thence driving to Allt-naguibhsaich Lodge, which was reached as 11.30. An immediate start was made for the hill, the first halt being at the Fox Cairn Well. On restarting, the party crossed the first field of snow, and unfortunately it now



Photo by W. Watt.

became evident that so far as obtaining a good view was concerned the excursion was doomed to failure, for the mist became denser and denser, until it was a matter of difficulty to discern anything clearly at the distance of more than a few yards. "The Ladder" was completely covered with snow, so a bee-line was made for the plateau above, the party ascending in single file, [the "step-maker" being the club member with most inches in the accompanying photograph—Ed., C. C. J.] The final climb to the top was absolutely

featureless, being a blind stumble in the mist over the snow, with an occasional glimpse of a huge snow cornice overhanging the deep precipitous corrie.

The Cac Carn Mor reached, the usual meeting of the Club



MR. ALEX. CAMERON.

took place, and a candidate who had been admitted on Braeriach last July was duly initiated, according to the ancient rites and ceremonial of mountaineers. It was intimated that Mr. Alexander Cameron, His Majesty's stalker at Allt-na-guibhsaich Lodge for the past 27 years, was to retire on a well-earned pension at Whitsunday, and it was unanimously agreed that the Club and a few hill-climbing friends should present him with a gold Albert as a slight acknowledgment of his unflinching courtesy to all moun-

taineers who passed through his gate on the way to Lochnagar. The presentation (it may be here mentioned)

was duly made on 29th May, the subscriptions permitting of a gold brooch being also handed to Mr. Cameron for his niece and housekeeper, Miss Mary Kennedy.

The descent was then begun, and was accomplished without any untoward event, except that on "the Ladder" one member, losing his balance, made a brilliant glissade down the snow head first, stopping so naturally at the foot that some who saw only the finish were of opinion that it was a premeditated performance, and were inclined to congratulate him on his pluck and daring.

Alltnaguibhsaich Lodge reached, a rapid drive brought the party to Ballater, where they dined comfortably and well at the Invercauld Arms Hotel under the presidency of the Chairman, Mr. M'Gregor. The return railway journey was commenced at 7.30, and the day's outing, most enjoyable notwithstanding the mist, was brought to a close.

THE CAPERCAILZIE IN ROTHIEMURCHUS.

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

THE Capercailzie is the largest game-bird of the British Islands. It was formerly common in Scotland, but became extinct at the end of the eighteenth century. In the middle of the nineteenth century it was re-introduced into Perthshire, and has gradually spread throughout a considerable range of the southern aspect of the Grampians and in some of the Highland valleys.

Last year a single bird made its appearance in Rothiemurchus. The first report of it came from Jock Mackintosh, the local butcher, who one day drove furiously into Inverdrue from the Coylum Bridge road, filled with the mingled terror and glory of a strange tale. He had been attacked by a golden eagle, which, attracted by the odour of the flesh in his cart, had clawed and threshed at his head and shoulders; he had laid about him vigorously with his whip, thereby driving off his assailant—and his horse. Jock's story aroused enquiry, and it soon became evident that there was some unusual and unusually large bird in the wood on the south side of the road and up the brae beyond the Tinkers' Corner. Mr. Dempster, the schoolmaster at Inverdrue, made careful investigation, and through his field-glass saw a fine capercailzie strutting about like a turkey-cock, talking to itself, and quite deserving its popular name of 'Cock of the Woods.'

Of course, when once the comparatively harmless nature of Jock's assailant became known, others went to see it, and several of them had a rather warm reception. The school-children had several battles royal with the bird, which would come on to the road as they passed, and attack them. One good man, who vaingloriously boasted himself not a little before the event, was tumbled over, and came rolling down the bank in wild combat with the pugnacious bird. Even a keeper's stick was not enough to daunt it, but was furiously pecked at. There seemed to be no mate with the cock, and

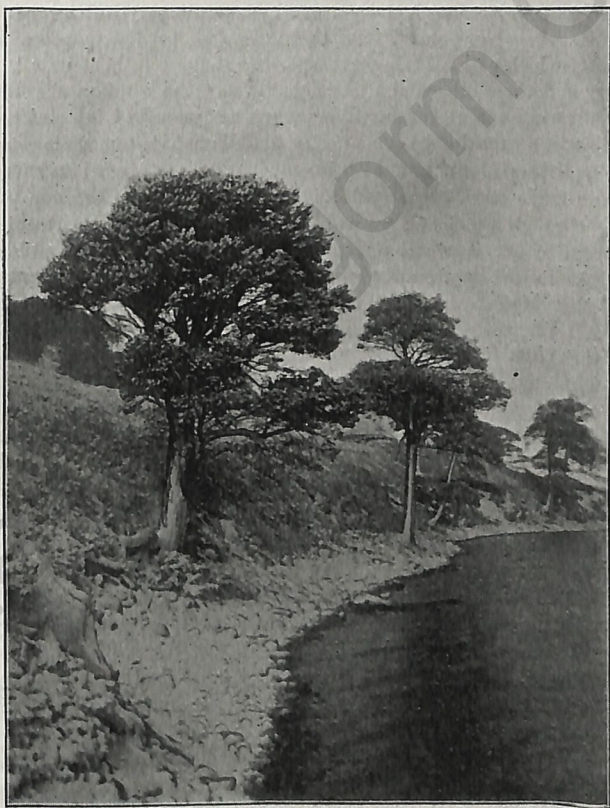
its unusually fierce disposition suggests that it was perhaps a 'rogue' cock, carrying on a solitary life apart from the rest of its species.

During last summer I had no opportunity of seeing it, for on the only day when I was in its neighbourhood, I found seven tinkers searching for its whereabouts, and I deemed it wise to know nothing of any 'big bird,' and came away. This spring, however, being in the same district, I went one day to see whether I could get a sight of the bird. I left the forest foot-path near the site of the old Free Church and walked towards Inverdrue. Almost at once I saw the bird some hundred yards away, standing at attention on a little plateau not far from the Coylum Bridge road. As I slowly and quietly approached, the bird saw me, and began to strut about much as a turkey-cock would. It uttered a curious cry, and accompanied the cry with a curious gesture. It carried its head very high in the air, the beak pointing nearly straight up, and exclaimed, "Cok! cok!" Then lowering its head, it swept it downwards and forwards, and raised it again, during this movement continuing its cry with a curious guttural exclamation which sounded remarkably like "Good-afternoon." These gestures and cries were repeated many times in somewhat rapid succession. Still approaching, I halted several times to look at the bird through the field-glass, and had a very good sight of its characteristic plumage, the glossy bronze-green of the breast, the brown speckled wings, each with a large white spot on the shoulder, the ring of white spots on the under surface of the proudly spread tail, and the striking patch of rich crimson over the eye. Truly he was a fine bird, and carried himself right gallantly. I was not afraid of his attack—for had I not met and overcome the previously unconquered bully turkey-cock of a Highland farm?—but I advanced cautiously, for I came as a spectator, not as a combatant. Somewhat to my surprise, however, the bird would not allow me to approach nearer than some twenty feet, but retreated with loud and angry cries. As I continued to advance, it took wing, and alighted in a tree some fifty yards to the south; when I still followed, it flew over my head, and crossed to the north side of the road. Hearing

children shouting at it there, I crossed the road, and the children ran away. The bird was perched in a large fir tree, and when I got too near, it flew back to its little plateau, where I left it.

The next day I went again, taking my wife to see the new visitor. We approached as I had done on the previous day, and when we came near the bird's plateau we heard the sounds of strife at the road fence. Here was the bird carrying on a fight with yesterday's children, who were throwing sticks at him. When the children saw me, they ran away, and the bird began to return to his plateau, but would not approach nearer than he had done on the previous day, and after a short promenade with much vocal protest he again flew away as he had previously done. I left the field-glass with my wife, and went to drive him gently towards her, so that she might have a close view. When I had made a circuit, I approached his tree from the remoter side, and he flew towards her, alighting in a tree near the edge of his plateau, and being well within her view. Wishing to get him if possible yet closer, I made another detour, and very slowly approached the tree. The bird stood on it indignantly watching me and scolding till I got very near, and then flew down, alighting within a few yards of my wife. I called out to her that she would be safe if she would keep her walking stick towards him so as to guard against attack, and began myself to approach more quickly. The bird, while down on the ground, was for a few moments without sight of me, and, seeing only a somewhat defenceless woman, he at once put on all the airs of a swaggering bully, and approached her in full strut with loud and rapidly repeated cries. I advanced now at the run, still shouting to my wife to keep her stick towards him. But when I leapt up on to the plateau my shouts of advice changed into shouts of laughter; for these two, at barely two yards distance, were slowly circling round a small tree, glowering at each other; the bird, with head raised, eyes gleaming, tail uplifted, and wings wide-spread, was fairly dancing and screaming with the rage of battle; the lady, divided between delighted interest and apprehension, with field-glass and stick close hugged, was warily keeping

the tree as a protection, and exclaiming with rising emphasis, "No! no! birdie! No! no! birdie!! No! no! birdie!!!" My swift entry on the scene broke up the comedy, the defeated bird quickly retired, and the lady, with a gasp of relief and delight, apostrophised him with exclamations of admiration: "Oh, you beauty!" He still strutted about, but at the statutory distance, and after watching him for some time longer we came away, one of us at least thoroughly satisfied as to the magnificence of the battle array of the Capercaillie.



AN LOCHAN UAINE, GLEN MORE.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.



ON 3rd June, a party of considerably over a score, leaving the dust and smoke of the city behind, boarded the 1.20 p.m. north train on the fourth of the Saturday afternoon excursions. Occupied as most of

THE CLUB AT us were in recalling former outings and admiring the CAIRN WILLIAM. verdant scenery around us, the journey to Kintore seemed very short. At the station we packed ourselves into a big brake, which with a little persuasion was induced to hold us all. The secretary and three other dauntless spirits faced the wind on the box, the former drawing our attention to anything we passed of interest. Hall-forest Castle, a ruined old keep; pretty little Kennay, famous for its laird and its quarries; Monymusk with its ancient church-tower; and above all the green fields and hedges and scurrying pheasants of the fine pastoral country through which we passed, made the drive an interesting one.

Arrived at our destination, Arneedly, we found our guide, philosopher and friend for the day awaiting us, the genial baronet of Monymusk, with his obliging land-steward. We immediately began the ascent of Cairn William, 1,469 feet above sea-level, such an easy climb that most of us managed it without a pause and in very good time. One young lady, used to hill-climbing, led the van most of the way and reached the top first. Here we appreciated to the full the advantage of having Sir Arthur Grant with us, to point out the outstanding features of the magnificent view displayed before us—Lochnagar, Morven, Ben Rinnes, Beinn a' Bhuid, Ben Avon, and on a lower level Bennachie. Tap o' Noth, Hill of Fare, Brimmond, etc., dominated the horizon, and set the old hands recounting former mountaineering exploits, to which we juniors listened with respectful credulity. Away in the S.E. hung the smoke of Aberdeen, but on our mountain height an exuberantly fresh wind was playing havoc with the ladies' hair and everybody's headgear, and the city haze seemed a very dim and distant thing.

Beneath us, embowered in greenery, Cluny Castle and Monymusk House reared their stately piles. Sir Arthur, in answer to an intelligent query of the veteran of the party as to why our hill had a respectable English name, while most of those around were Gaelic and unpronounceable, informed us that it *was* originally a Gaelic word, of which the present cognomen is a corruption. At his suggestion most of us walked to another crest, about a mile further on, from which we had another view, even finer if possible, of the smiling Vale of Alford. The village, nestling snugly in the middle distance amidst its green fields and woods, the Don winding like another serpentine and disappearing here and there from our

view, and in the foreground the house and grounds of Castle Forbes made a charming picture of peaceful beauty that I think none of us is likely to forget. Feeling well repaid for our walk, we tramped back to the cairn across the granite boulders and the heather, through which the early summer flowers were peeping prettily. Here an interesting sight awaited us, a grouse's nest among the heather, with ten white and brown flecked eggs, a precious find guarded from danger by the land-steward, who looked anxiously at the pedal extremities of some of our gentlemen, and breathed a sigh of relief when all were safely on the downward grade.

We descended by another track, a pause being made at an early stage to enable the photographer of the party to do his best with us, blown about as we were. The pretty, Boer-marked, Basuto pony ridden at intervals by Sir Arthur, seemed to resent the proceedings, but of course was included in spite of protest. Down we went, to the farm-house of Pitfichie, where an ample tea was provided by our host. The cup that cheers was rapturously welcomed by the ladies, and if the gentlemen were less outspoken they made up for that by the heartiness with which they partook of the good things provided. When at last all were satisfied, the chairman, Mr. John McGregor, proposed a vote of thanks to Sir Arthur for the many kindnesses shown the club that day. This, needless to say, was heartily accorded. The laird of Monymusk was then enrolled as an honorary member, and acknowledged the honour done him, and expressed the pleasure he had had in being of service to the club.

After exploring the adjoining castle ruins, we wended our way to Paradise, where under stately aisles of forest giants, with fresh vistas of greenery ever opening before us, we wandered on—and might have been wandering yet—when “Right about turn!” commanded the secretary, whose time seemed to be fully occupied keeping other people in order, and we meekly turned. Our brake was waiting for us, and, after a grateful farewell to Sir Arthur and McWilliam, a short drive took us to Monymusk station, where the time of waiting was variously spent in “tittivating” and getting weighed gratis, a chance not to be missed. For most of us there now remained a short journey to “The Third City” or its suburbs; for one veteran enthusiast, a walk home from a neighbouring station of over 24 miles!

On this excursion we were all enthusiasts, and no wonder. Showers were prophesied, but the clerk of the weather was much better than his word, and shone on us all the time. So with good weather, good escorts, good company and good victuals we spent a very enjoyable afternoon, and have inscribed Cairn William indelibly in “our book of memories.”—G. S. ADAM.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—Some time ago I made the acquaintance of Mr. H——, whom I have learned greatly to respect on account of his straightforward character and for the singular ability he possesses of thinking for himself, and of giving lucid and forcible expression to his convictions. In the course of a recent visit to him I was struck by a framed photograph of large dimensions, which shows Mr. H—— seated on a rock and environed by crags. On

V. E

enquiry I learned the history attaching to this picture, a story which, I think, is a record worthy of being made known to your readers. In August, 1899, when Mr. H— had entered on his 76th year, he found opportunity for the first time of making the ascent of Lochnagar. He left home at 6 a.m. and walked to the nearest railway station, a distance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Arriving in Aberdeen at 9 o'clock, he was engaged at business till 5 p.m. ; then took train to Ballater, and on arrival there paid a hurried visit to Bridge of Gairn, returning to Ballater. At 10 o'clock the same night he started off *via* Glen Muick with four companions on the mountaineering expedition proper. The ascent was somewhat difficult owing to the darkness, but in spite of this the summit was reached before sunrise. Then their toil was amply rewarded by the glory of the sunrise, and later on by the clearness of the view, though for some time after the coming of day mist filled up the hollows. On the summit the amateur photographer paid homage to the veteran of the company by taking his picture singly in an environment altogether novel to him. This is the picture which in an enlarged form now adorns the home. Two or three hours were spent on the top, the descent being made *via* the Falls of Garbh Allt and Bridge of Dee. Inver Inn was reached about 2 o'clock. The distance thus covered by our veteran and his companions from the time of their starting from Ballater may be reckoned at 26 miles. Mr. H— was prepared to walk back to the starting point, but better counsels prevailed, and the excursionists posted for the distance that remained. "I was none the worse," said Mr. H—, "not even tired." He is justly proud of his achievement, which he professes himself able (even in his 81st year) to repeat, and any one who views his hale and vigorous person is readily disposed to take him at his word.—Yours faithfully, W. C.

MR. WILLIAM CARNIE, in his "Reporting Reminiscences" (Vol. I., p. 69) reproduces the following lines :—

THE LOVE OF I hae some auld acquaintances I aye was blithe to see,
 THE HILLS. I wonder how they're lookin' now they're far awa' frae me ;
 Oh, weel I ken my Native hills, I hae them in my e'e,
 They're Cairnmonearn, and Clochnaben, and bonnie Bennachie.
 My Native hills, my Highland hills, wi' summits bonnie blue,
 My noble auld acquaintances ! still warms my heart to you !
 And when it's cauld, may ithers rise to gaze wi' joyfu' e'e,
 On Cairnmonearn, and Clochnaben, and distant Bennachie.

"These leal-hearted lines" (adds Mr. Carnie) "are quoted from some delightfully simple verses that, headed with the old adage as motto—

Clochnaben and Bennachie
 Are twa landmarks in the sea,

appeared in the *Scotsman*, early in 1854, above the initial 'A.' I wonder who he was. Some exile with Sir Walter's longing in his heart—"It's hame, and it's hame that I wad be!"

ON 31st December A. B. Duncan and I climbed Broad Cairn by the long gully mentioned in the *S.M.C.J.*, Vol. VIII., p. 56. It was interesting

BROAD CAIRN AND LOCHNAGAR. enough under the intensely frosty conditions, but presented no difficulty. We returned to Inchnabobbar by the fine walk above the south edge of Loch Muick. There was comparatively little snow on the hills in the neighbourhood. On New Year's day a terrific blizzard put serious work out of the question. We struggled up Lochnagar by the ordinary route. The view of the great corrie enjoyed from the top of Meikle Pap for intervals of seconds in the face of the hail and wind was superb.—H. STEWART.

IN view of the popularity of the ascent of this hill, the rocks forming the Mither Tap have been strangely neglected. Among various scrambles two

BENNACHIE. are deserving of notice, (i) the ascent by the long crack running up the central bastion to the top. This is difficult at the foot, and at the middle, where a traverse, not particularly easy, may be thought desirable owing to steep and slippery grass; (ii) the ascent by the business side of the aiguille known as the Nether Maiden. Thence cross the path and gain the top by an interesting route up the N.E. end of the eastern division of the crag.

These scrambles are too short to repay adequately a long journey made with the express object of climbing. But the pleasure of a visit is very much enhanced by the interesting sport which they offer.—H. STEWART.

A FRIEND and I climbed Morven on the last day of 1904. There was no snow on the low grounds, but the hill was white after about 1000 feet, and at the top there was about three inches of snow. The

MORVEN. fence running over the top had about an inch of snow on each of the wires, standing out at right angles to the posts. There was a slight mist on the summit, but still we had a fairly good view. The Buck of the Cabrach was heavily coated with snow, and also all the Cairngorms. Lochnagar was white, but Mount Keen had but little snow. Although fine and frosty on Morven it looked very dark towards Aberdeen, and we learned afterwards that it had rained almost the whole day there. During the climb we saw numbers of mountain hares and grouse, but no ptarmigan. The descent was somewhat prolonged owing to one of the party losing the path, in consequence of which a search party had to be organised, but at length the foot was reached in safety.—S. P. G.

A DISTRESSING and somewhat peculiar accident occurred on Ben Nevis on 6th April last, by which Rev. A. E. Robertson, Edinburgh, the well-known mountaineer, was severely injured. Notwithstanding

ACCIDENTS ON BEN NEVIS. that the day was a most unsuitable one for climbing, there being an almost continuous fall of snow, accompanied by thunder and lightning, Mr. Robertson set out alone to make the ascent of Ben Nevis. He succeeded in reaching the summit, and on his downward journey the severity of the blizzard which prevailed made him rather keep further to the south than the line of the bridle path in order to avoid the cliffs, but owing to the mist and driving snow he had unconsciously deviated further than had been his intention. He distinctly

recollects that the thunder and lightning seemed very near, and that the steel of his ice-axe hissed with electric sparks, doubtless St. Elmo's fire. It is Mr. Robertson's belief that a flash of lightning struck either his ice-axe or the ground near where he was, thus rendering him unconscious. On falling he must have been hurled with terrific force down a thousand feet over the frozen boulders strewn upon the hillside, but of what actually took place he has not the faintest recollection. He can recall nothing until he found himself making for the path from the direction of Glen Nevis, and at an altitude considerably over a thousand feet lower than the point where he calculates he was rendered unconscious. He had lost his cap and ice-axe, his clothes were torn, and blood was oozing freely from his wounds, but, as already stated, he managed by a supreme effort to walk unaided to Fort William, which was distant nearly three miles. Mr. Robertson, has, we are glad to say, now quite recovered, but bears more than one mark of his terrible accident.

Another serious accident occurred on Ben Nevis on 9th June last. One of the marines on H.M.S. Highflyer, then lying in Loch Linnhe, off Fort-William, made the ascent, and must have fallen over a declivity, as he sustained a severe fracture to the skull and other injuries. How he managed to reach Fort-William is a mystery, as he was found unconscious on the public pier there between five and six a.m. He was at once taken on board his vessel, where he underwent an operation and the wound in his scalp was stitched.

WE went to Loch an Eilein on April 14th, and remained there till 27th. The hills were all in mist till the 17th, but it was sufficiently evident that there was no continuous deep snow on them below

APRIL SNOW the plateau, though every corrie was well wreathed, and
 NOTES. those of Braeriach carried much snow. On the 18th, 21st, and 23rd there were snow showers at the Loch level, and as these, in alternation with brilliant sunshine, travelled across the country with a N.E. wind, they afforded spectacles of great beauty as seen from such elevations as Ord Bain or the Cats' Den. The snow did not lie on the low ground at all, but several times the hills were powdered to about the 1,500 ft. level. On the 25th somewhat milder conditions supervened, bringing rain, and all snow below 3,000 ft. was in evident thaw. I did not go to the high ground, but there was no appearance of thaw as far as I could judge from below.—C. G. C.

Continued from page 2 of Cover.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Article I. The Club shall be organized for the purpose of promoting the interests of the community and shall be known as the Club. The Club shall have the right to acquire, hold, and dispose of real and personal property, and to sue and be sued, and to enter into contracts. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.

Article II. The Club shall be organized in accordance with the following provisions: (1) The Club shall have a minimum of ten members. (2) The Club shall have a maximum of fifty members. (3) The Club shall have a minimum of five officers. (4) The Club shall have a maximum of ten officers. (5) The Club shall have a minimum of five members of each sex. (6) The Club shall have a maximum of ten members of each sex. (7) The Club shall have a minimum of five members of each race. (8) The Club shall have a maximum of ten members of each race. (9) The Club shall have a minimum of five members of each religion. (10) The Club shall have a maximum of ten members of each religion.

Article III. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.

Article IV. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.

Article V. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.

Article VI. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.

Article VII. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.

Article VIII. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.

Article IX. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.

Article X. The Club shall have the right to elect and appoint officers and members, and to discipline and expel members. The Club shall have the right to borrow money and to pledge its property as security for the same. The Club shall have the right to make and alter its bylaws, subject to the approval of the members.