

Vol. VI.

July, 1909.

No. 33.

THE  
**Cairngorm Club Journal.**

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

CONTENTS.

Night and Morning.....	Rev. D. C. Maokay.
A Fortnight among the Cairngorms.....	William C. Welsh.
Three Days in Atholl.....	_____
Holiday Excursions among the Cairngorms.....	James Stewart.
The Cairngorm Parishes and the (Old) Statistical Account of Scotland.....	C. G. Cash, F.R.S.G.S.
A Holiday on the Hills.....	J. Reid, M.A.

EXCURSIONS AND NOTES:

The late Mrs. Gruer—The late Mr. Donald Macdonald—Four Cairngorms by Night—Deer Watchers—Club Excursions—New Members.

---

ISSUED TWICE A YEAR.

---

PUBLISHED BY

THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.

AGENTS:

ABERDEEN: D. WYLLIE & SON.

**PRICE ONE SHILLING.**

*Nos. 1, 20, and 25 are out of print.*



# The Cairngorm Club.

---

---

PRESIDENT,	-	H. E. The Right Hon. JAMES BRYCE, D.C.L., LL.D.
CHAIRMAN,	-	JAMES A. HADDEN.
TREASURER,	-	T. R. GILLIES, 181a Union Street, Aberdeen.
SECRETARY,	-	A. I. M'CONNOCHE, 88 Devonshire Road, 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 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

*Continued on page 3 of Cover.*



THE  
Cairngorm Club Journal.

---

---

Vol. VI.

JULY, 1909.

No. 33.

---

---

NIGHT AND MORNING.

At the hour of midnight dread  
Came the peal of thunder crashing,  
And anon the lightning red,  
O'er the scene abruptly flashing  
Showed the river's ample bed  
Roll with waves in fury splashing,  
For the rain in torrents fell.

Hour by hour went slowly by,  
Still the storm continued raging,  
And the wind rose wild and high  
In its fury mad engaging  
With the oak that rustled nigh ;  
But the oak fierce battle waging  
Stood its post of vantage well.

Now across the fertile plain  
Flowed the river's flood dilated,  
But still thicker fell the rain,  
Till the sky, disintegrated,  
Tried to rouse its voice in vain,  
And the thunder's roar abated  
And came fainter from the hill.



Though the rain had almost ceased,  
In the west the clouds were scowling  
When the day peeped in the east,  
And the sound of thunder growling  
Faint and further, still decreased.  
Now the wild winds ceased from howling,  
And all nature's voice grew still.

Down the hill-side rude and steep  
Now the streams come madly dashing,  
O'er the rocky ledge they leap,  
In their fury, foaming, splashing ;  
Down their hollow beds they sweep,  
Chafing wild and brightly flashing  
Where the dawning dyes them red.

Higher up the lazy mist  
From the mountain slopes is stealing,  
By the rosy sunlight kissed,  
And the wild curlew is wheeling  
Where so late the lightning hissed,  
And the thunder's roar was pealing  
Round the mountain's rugged head.

Many a moorfowl prunes his quill  
Deep amid the purple heather,  
Many a blackcock cackles shrill,  
Turns and trims a ruffled feather,  
And again across the hill  
Sounds his welcome to the weather,  
Glad to greet the fair bright day.

Soft the timid rabbits creep,  
But, before they leave their cover,  
Scan the scene with cautious peep ;  
Now they bob along, now hover,  
Now at last they plunge them deep  
'Mong the blades of dewy clover,  
'Mong the sweetly scented hay.



Like a beacon o'er the hill  
Glow the sun in radiant glory,  
Sweet the mavis tunes its bill  
Down among the brushwood hoary,  
And the woods begin to fill  
With the strains of warbled story  
Told in words unknown to men.

Lavish notes each minstrel proud  
O'er the vocal vale is flinging,  
While responsive from the cloud,  
Far above the lark is singing.  
Thus in chorus sweet and loud  
Nature's voices all are ringing  
From the forest, hill and glen.

Hark! the distant matin bell  
Chimes the hour of life awaking.  
Far through glade and dewy dell  
Mellow mingled sounds are making  
Matchless music sweetly swell;  
From the hollow dingles breaking  
Echoes answer everywhere.

Thus, when tempests cease to roar,  
Day appears more brightly shining;  
Thus, when troubled life is o'er  
And we cease from our repining,  
Day shall dawn that knows no more  
Tempest, darkness, or declining,  
"For there shall be no night there."

MARYDALE.

D. C. MACKAY.



## A FORTNIGHT AMONG THE CAIRNGORMS.

BY WILLIAM C. WELSH.

On Saturday, 4th July 1907, my brother Douglas and I started from Aberdeen for our usual fortnight's outing on the Cairngorms. By nightfall we had encamped at the foot of Coire Etchachan, on an island formed by the burn flowing down the corrie. The night turned out a trifle misty.

Sunday was far too warm for tramping with packs, so we dawdled about. At ten o'clock we caught sight of some men making up the corrie, but they were too intent on their climb to pay attention to us. About one o'clock we took our cameras and held for a deep cutting in Beinn a' Chaorruinn, through which flows the Glas Allt. The cutting proved of great interest botanically, its sides being covered with many plants of different kinds. We spent some time here, and after climbing to the summit plateau we lay down and had a sun bath. Thence we descended into the Larig an Laoigh, near the Dubh Lochans, and so "home" over the shoulder of Beinn Mheadhoin. As we arrived in sight of our camp we descried three figures descending the corrie. At 7.30 p.m. we packed up, and made for Loch Etchachan. The night, however, was too delightful to be spent inside, so we had a scramble round the loch, and in our peregrinations came upon the remains of some planking with rings for mooring. This we took to be what was left of the boat and its accessories which had been destroyed by vandals a good few years ago. On the opposite side of the loch we found more wreckage. The crags were magnificent in the twilight, but the snow was not nearly so plentiful as we had seen it in former years. On the circuit we startled a pair of ptarmigan. When we returned to the tent we tried some photographs of the loch and crags and the crescent moon. In the background was Ben Muich Dhui, black and grey, snow-



clad in parts, while the loch itself was smooth and clear with the reflection of the crags and snow and moon. There was not a cloud in the sky.

At 4 a.m. on Monday voices were wafted to our ears, and when we looked out at the ventilator we saw two figures starting the climb of the Ben. The day turned out a broiling one, so after taking panoramic views of the loch we lay on the rug outside the tent and wrote. We happened to turn round and caught sight of some one making for Loch Avon. We called, and he waved his hand, continuing on his way. The sky now became overcast and the wind cool, so we seized our opportunity and trekked up the hill. At the Cairn we found information to the effect that that morning a gentleman from Elgin, accompanied by an Aviemore guide, had been on the summit. These were the two we had heard and seen at Loch Etchachan. The opposite side of the Larig Ghru was quite clear and distinct. Snow was not so plentiful as it usually is at this time. On Lochnagar we could see huge black rain clouds, and we inferred from their increasing bulk and deepening black that we were soon to receive part of the storm. With as much haste as possible we pitched our tent, selecting a spot a few yards from the Cairn. Just as we had gathered our paraphernalia under canvas and secured water from an adjacent snowfield, mist and rain came. After a meal we lay down and waited for night, as the rain fell and the mist thickened.

On Tuesday morning, mist and rain were still with us, so we remained another night here. How hard the bed was! Our bodies bore the marks of the unsympathetic and hard sand for many days. Wednesday morning brought nothing better. The mist was denser than ever, but luckily there was no rain. We therefore determined to strike camp and make for Cairngorm. In a short time we reached a snow-field which we started to cross, but to our astonishment we never seemed to get any nearer the end of it. We could not see beyond five yards or so, so thinking we had come on some of the Feith Buidhe snow-fields we turned to climb back. In turning we must



have made a mistake in the direction, for we climbed and climbed and still the snow stretched above us. At last, however, we reached the upper edge of the field, and skirting it we proceeded on our way, but soon realised that we were "lost." As Cairngorm was our objective we held on in a direction, now north, now north-east, and after a weary wander found ourselves at a cairn on the edge of a precipice. The mist in the corries made the overhanging crags appear huge and threatening. We came to the conclusion that we were probably on Cairn an Lochain, and so followed the head of the crags. Suddenly the mist lifted and revealed Speyside with Loch Morlich gleaming blue, its rim of golden sand making a pretty frame. On the other side we could faintly distinguish the Feith Buidhe and the Garbh Uisge snow-fields. So far so good; but soon all was blotted out. We stumbled on towards the top of Cairngorm till we landed on an outcrop of rock, when up went the mist again and we found ourselves overlooking the Garbh Allt and the outlet of Loch Avon! We retraced our steps, and once more entered the mist. Soon something loomed out in front of us; we had actually arrived at the Cairn! The biting wind, however, made us move on, and we did so towards the Avon. About the 3,700 feet level we camped by the side of a mossy burn. The mist had now lifted, and we spread our clothes out on the ground to dry. After surrounding the tent with clumps of moss to keep out any wind, we got under canvas and took our first meal for the day between 3 and 4 p.m., feeling much refreshed by it after our wanderings. The mist again enveloped us and rain poured in torrents, but we were cosily encamped. Every now and then we heard the call of ptarmigan.

Thursday brought little difference in the weather, so we took late breakfast and started for the Saddle. A scramble over the rocks led us down to the Garbh Allt, where we wandered for a time. We attempted panoramic views of the Loch from the Saddle. This done, we forded the outlet of the Loch to reach the Beinn Mheadhoin side, where we saw half a dozen seagulls. The results of the



winter's storms were everywhere—fresh debris from the crags sloping down to the water's edge, often in parallel lines. Three wild ducks came flying over the loch, and footprints of deer were numerous, and on the sands were a few names written by means of a stick. There were no signs of anyone near the Shelter Stone, but we came upon roots of juniper and fir, evidently brought there with the intention of being used for firewood; there was also a supply of heather for a mattress. On the Dairymaid's Field, the scene of last year's "At Home," plants of butterball and violets were in flower. The marsh marigold was still in bloom, while the saxifrage was blossoming like so many stars. The procumbent willow also carpeted the ground. Not far from us we saw a solitary wasp. On the climb back to Cairngorm fresh falls of rock were evident. Arrived at the top of the crags we reconnoitered some deep gullies where beech ferns were growing in profusion. We roused a flock of ptarmigan, probably those that had been calling the night before. Camp was soon sighted; the night was, if possible, more misty. We were very warm at first, but towards the small hours of Friday morning we were shivering.

At about half past two I happened to look out at the ventilator and found the sky clear and the valleys filled with mist, so we put on our shoes, and, taking cameras, made for the summit of Cairngorm. The air was bitterly cold and we could almost hear our blood pumping through our bodies.

When we arrived at the cairn, Speyside lay before us bathed in fleecy clouds of mist. The summits of the Cairngorms rose up from the mist, black and brown, with fields of snow glistening here and there. The sands round the coast could also be discerned, but faintly. But now without warning we were enveloped in a thick wall of mist, and as we were almost stupid with the cold, we made a rush for the tent, and, throwing ourselves down, we were soon sound asleep. At about 7.30 we made ready for breakfast. The wind was howling round us, the flaps of the tent being every now and then raised by its force. Packing our rucksacks, but leaving food and a few odds



and ends we did not require, we made a start for Aviemore. Almost as soon as we left, down came a thick driving wet mist. The wind increased in force till we could not hear each other speak. No time was wasted, for we were soaking, so we pegged on till we struck the Larig Ghru. After crossing the foot-bridge over the burn we were surprised to come upon a small tramway stretching through Rothiemurchus as far as we could see; it was used for conveying cut timber to a saw mill not far from Coylum Bridge. Following the tramway for some distance we struck off to the right and had a bath and a change of raiment. We were rather tired, so we decided to train from Aviemore to Boat of Garten, where we were to spend the week-end with friends from Aberdeen.

Saturday saw us at Loch Vaa, an exceedingly pretty spot. On the road home we found the marsh speedwell and the burnet saxifrage, two plants easily mistaken for others.

Sunday was dull and overcast, so we decided on a walk across the moor. By the road-side I found a pocket book with papers of considerable value, some £2000.

Monday saw us ordering bread, etc., which we packed in our rucksacks, after which a start was made for Loch Eunach. On the way we called on the owner of the pocket-book; it had never been missed! Crossing the river, we arrived at Coylum Bridge, and then paid a visit to Aviemore before finally starting for the hills. We had run out of photographic plates, but not one could be obtained in Aviemore, so we had to return empty-handed.

Our route lay up Glen Eunach, and by the time we arrived at the upper bothy mist and rain had begun to fall, so we hastily selected a spot for camping.

Tuesday turned out fine, so we decided to have a scramble round the loch. The mist as usual followed us, and we had two blinding showers of rain.

On Wednesday as we were packing for Cairngorm, Cameron, the watcher, came on the scene and shewed us a spot on the Sgoran Dubh crags where eagles had been nesting. We then trekked up Coire Dhonndail, while



Cameron made for the Coire Odhar path to repair it. When we arrived on the plateau we found that there was no snow in the vicinity of the Wells of Dee. Near the summit of Braeriach we saw a hare which had almost dispensed with its winter colouring. As the snow-field over the zigzag path to the Larig Ghru was too steep, we had perforce to scramble downhill anyhow. We took it very leisurely up Ben Muich Dhui, and on the plateau came upon a specimen of white moss campion (*Silene acaulis*.) At this point my right heel began to feel too painful for walking with the shoe on, so I went barefoot till we reached our previous camping ground on Cairngorm. We found it under water, so we chose a higher level, and soon had the tent up for the night.

We started on Thursday for Braemar for a supply of photographic plates. We raced down to the Saddle and plunged across the Avon into the Larig an Laoigh. We tore on through it at full speed to Derry Lodge, thence making for Braemar, where we deposited our exposed plates for safety. We accepted the offer of a bed in Braemar and started again for our camp on Friday.

Rain of course came with us, and by the time we had arrived at Derry Lodge we were thoroughly soaked. After we had entered Glen Derry, my heel again became painful, so I walked barefoot over a path ankle deep in water. The wind so drove the rain into our faces that we had to turn our backs to the blast every now and then in order to clear our eyes. Our first obstacle of any magnitude was the Glas Allt, which was a foaming torrent of yellowish-brown water. No stones were visible, so we had to cross by pitting our strength against the current. We got through safely, but soon mist and darkness came down, and the storm became so bad that we saw it would have been madness to proceed any further. We turned back to Derry Lodge, which was reached in due time. Robertson, the Corroul watcher, had just arrived, soaked like ourselves, so we hung our clothes in front of the bothy fire while we were togged in Duff tartan.

After a most comfortable night, we breakfasted and set



off once more for Cairngorm. The storm was still continuing, though not so fiercely as on the previous night, but by the time we were in the glen we had become soaked once more. We got over the Glas Allt, but then there was the Coire Etchachan water, a veritable waterfall from sky-line to valley. After a most exciting tussle we got safely across. It was now plain going to the Shelter Stone, but when we should have the Garbh Uisge Water facing us, what should we do? With difficulty I obtained a footing in the stream; with still greater difficulty I moved my legs. The water was swirling round my waist, and the current was causing the boulders to shift. My eyes were on the opposite bank, and with legs wide apart I slowly manœuvred across.

Douglas, however, thought he saw an easier spot, but had to give it up. He then selected the inlet to the loch, but found it about a dozen feet deep, on which he came back to the place where I had crossed. I tried to give him a few directions, but in the awful din it was impossible to make myself heard. As soon as he entered the water the current lifted him off his feet, landing him on the wrong bank. He tried again, and slowly moved towards me, but lost his balance, and was again swept off his feet. By this time I had re-entered the water to lend him a hand; by catching hold of my stick he in a manner righted himself, but in so doing hauled me into the centre, though between the two of us we at last got across. With benumbed limbs and sodden clothes we started to climb Cairngorm. The mist was so thick that we could not see the loch; however, after a desperate struggle we surmounted all obstacles and arrived at our tent. Our "home" was still standing in the midst of the storm, but in a pool of water. It was indeed fortunate that we had returned to Derry the night before, for all our belongings were running in water. Our intention had been to meet the Club at this time, but, as we learned afterwards, the excursion planned to take place that day had been abandoned, on account of the weather.

We were hungry, very hungry, and we had no matches,



but they would have been of little use to us. Our only food then for such an emergency was a drink of water and meal, with which we were much refreshed. With all haste we packed or rather rammed the clothes, etc., into our rucksacks, and set off for Inverey. Not wishing a repetition of the forenoon's experience, we struck across Cairngorm on to Ben Muich Dhui, landing on the track leading from the summit to Coire Etchachan. The rest was easy, and after plunging across the Etchachan Water half-way down the corrie, we entered Glen Derry. At 4.15 p.m. the rain stopped, and on arriving at Derry Lodge at 4.50 we found Fraser and Robertson enjoying a game of golf. They had had no rain since about 12 o'clock! After tea we set off for Inverey.

On Sunday we paid a visit to the Colonel's Bed and the vicinity, and on Monday we trekked to Braemar *en route* for Aberdeen. This was a fortnight full of episodes beneficial to our health and strength; a severe test also of our endurance. It was, I think, an ideal holiday; may we have many more such!



### THREE DAYS IN ATHOLL.

ATHOLL has ever been a notable district in the Highlands, its "Blair" in the neighbourhood of the confluence of the Tilt with the Garry possessing considerable historical interest. Probably that chapter closed with the battle of Killiecrankie; now we think of the vale as one of the most picturesque in Scotland, or as the training ground of the Scottish Horse. Blair Atholl itself is a most insignificant village, but as a centre for leisurely exploration of hill and glen it has numerous charms.

The Fender, a Tilt tributary, is best known from its falls, just above old Bridge of Tilt, but they by no means exhaust its attractions. The stream rises on Beinn a' Ghlo, away to the north of Carn Liath, a popular summit which the good people of Blair generally call Beinn a' Ghlo to the enquiring tourist. In the lower and middle part of its glen the burn cuts deeply into the rock, and the road is of the steepest possible nature; one wonders whence "Fender" is derived. It is really three Gaelic words much corrupted, the key being in the first, "Fe," a contraction (and at the same time the pronunciation) of the frequently occurring "Feith," a bog. As one climbs the long brae, Blair is seen to advantage, and Ben Vrackie, so familiar to visitors to Pitlochry, bulks largely in the prospect. Loch Moraig now looks so natural that there is no suspicion of artificiality, and Carn Liath, with its shapely cone, stands dominant over all. The Fender, with its twists and bends, may be half-a-dozen miles in length, and it comes as a surprise to learn that an erstwhile parish, Lude—absorbed into Blair Atholl before 1632—flourished by its banks. Kirkton of Lude is still a place-name, and the ruins of the ancient church (some twenty-five feet in length) yet mark its individuality.

Much of the high ground between Glen Fender and Glen Tilt was of old under cultivation, as grassy slopes and



silent larachs testify. Now the pasture is devoted to sheep, and so one crosses over Meall Dail-min (1743 feet), descending into Glen Tilt, without seeing a human face. It was in these solitudes—on the Tilt side—that the War Office recently experimented with a flying machine; all that now marks the once jealously guarded region is the shed which gave shelter to the aeroplane. Down below, the Tilt is crossed by Gilbert's bridge, so named from Gilbert Robertson, who after his return from Culloden settled in Glen Tilt, a cottage having been here built for him. A retired shepherd now passes his time at the bridge, and the pedestrian would do well to have an interview with him. He knows much of Atholl, and his remarks on the salmon of its rivers and the deer of its forests cannot fail to interest the tourist. One would fain tarry in Glen Tilt, or trace its lively stream to its source, but that celebrated glen requires a long day and a chapter to itself.

A deep-cutting burn, Allt Slanuchaidh, here enters the Tilt from the west; it should be placed on the left, though we were induced to go by the other side over Meall Reamhar. We observed several goosanders, the greatest trout poachers that scour the streams; our friend told us of his supposed discovery of a nest at the root of a tree, but on putting in his hand there was an otter "glowering" at him! As we crossed Glen Tilt we saw a handsome golden plover dash against a wire fence, with the result that it dropped dead, its beak broken.

The walk—it could scarcely be called a climb—from Glen Tilt to Glen Bruar was made in the most leisurely manner. The temptation to loll on the heather and admire the vale was not to be resisted. A herd of deer, about 250 in number, took quite half an hour of our time as we watched with the glass their disturbed movements on seeing us. The most of them were hinds; indeed we picked out only about half-a-dozen stags, and they were somewhat prominent as they stood apart, higher up on a grassy patch. The bulk of the hinds seemed exceedingly nervous, and moved hither and thither, as apparently aim-



lessly as an alarmed ant colony, though we were at a distance of at least a mile. The stags appeared to ignore their unreasoning terror, remaining steady long after the females became excited. As we descended into the glen of the Bruar a similar herd on the south-western slope of Beinn a' Chait (2942 feet), so frequently mentioned by the inevitable Scrope, called for our attention, but they fed on regardless of our presence.

Thus we entered Glen Bruar and the well known ancient right-of-way, the Minigaig Pass, which, said the Andersons, "should not be attempted by the pedestrian without a guide." A driving road now serves part of the way, and so with an ordnance survey map and a compass the tourist need not now fear danger in ordinary weather. We struck on Allt Hecchan, a tributary of the Bruar, at the upper end of "the Duke's road," where a bothy,  $5\frac{3}{4}$  miles from Blair Castle and at an altitude of 1486 feet, is conveniently situated. For the remainder of the distance to Bruar Lodge one has to be content with the almost disused track of the pass, while the glen driving road may be seen on the other side of the stream.

We had intended continuing our journey that afternoon over the hills to Gaick, but our host at Bruar Lodge would hear of no such proceeding, his principal objections being the lateness of the hour and the softness of the snow on the high ground. We were rather disappointed, but gracefully yielded, for the shooting box is at a height of just 1500 feet at the base of the famous Beinn Dearg—the red hill—of Atholl, and there was much of interest to see and hear in such surroundings. A peregrine falcon had built an eyrie a short distance from the lodge, in a position impossible for man without the help of ropes; moreover a guard of long icicles then effectually protected the nest from intruders. A curious and unexplained fatality had just befallen a big heron; our dog scented it in the heather where it lay dead, a broken wing being the only apparent wound. The beak of the heron is one of the most deadly weapons we know, so we carried off the head of this particularly fine specimen as a trophy.



The walk next forenoon down the glen to Struan station was one to be remembered, for we had the company of our host for part of the way. Some grouse feathers among the heather by the roadside suggested a tragedy; "Oh, yes! the other morning I disturbed an eagle as she was feeding on the grouse." Further along a buzzard had recently killed a lamb by tearing open its jugular vein. As we made for the Falls of Bruar, we had the good luck to get within thirty yards of an eight-pointer. We stood still and watched him feeding till such time as he raised his head; after a second or two's surprised staring at us he bolted incontinently. Some score or more of years ago, when we had less appreciation of scenery, we visited the Falls of Bruar; even then we admired them, how much more so now!



## HOLIDAY EXCURSIONS AMONG THE CAIRNGORMS.

BY JAMES STEWART.

A DESCRIPTION of the region of the Cairngorms in "Ben Muich Dhui and his Neighbours," and various articles in *The Cairngorm Club Journal* awakened in me a longing to visit the district. I wanted to climb the mountains, to wander through the glens, and to behold with mine own eyes

"The grizzly cliffs which guard  
The infant rills of Highland Dee."

The first attempt to gratify this wish took the form of an all-night tramp with a friend, during a Saturday night and Sunday morning in August of 1907, from Blair Atholl to Aviemore, by the way of Glen Tilt, the Larig Ghru, and Rothiemurchus Forest. We left Blair Atholl at 7 p.m., and arrived at Aviemore between 9 and 10 next morning. On this occasion I got my first glimpse of the Golden Eagle in his native element; likewise my first view of Ben Muich Dhui as he glowered, dark and forbidding, out of his abode of cloud. I saw for the first time the tremendous gorge of the Larig; the mighty precipices of Braeriach; the cliffs of the Lurcher's Rock whose fang-like pinnacles appeared to rend the clouds; and the dark-green forest stretching for miles over the plain beneath. This variety of magnificent scenery, as viewed through the driving rain, made an impression on our minds that will not be readily effaced.

That excursion made me determined to spend a few days in the district as soon as an opportunity presented itself, and the first Saturday in July of last year found me established in a cottage close to Loch-an-Eilein. Sunday I spent in climbing Creag Dhu, and in lazing around the loch. Monday broke warm and bright, so, accompanied by all the winged insects in the forest, I



set off for Braeriach, *via* Glen Eunach. I intended to climb that mountain, descend into the Larig, and ascend Ben Muich Dhui, but a great deal of time was spent on Braeriach, exploring the mountain and admiring the magnificent panoramic view of the country which stretched on all sides to the far horizon. The idea of attempting to climb Ben Muich Dhui had to be abandoned for that day, and the Angel's Peak and Cairn Toul were successfully negotiated instead. The next morning I climbed Cadha Mhor, walked along the ridge to Sgoran Dubh, and descending into Glen Feshie arrived back at the cottage by way of Kinrara.

The last day of my visit came, and I had not so much as been even to the foot of Ben Muich Dhui, so I decided to make an attempt then. Near the entrance to the Larig rain began to fall heavily. At the large cairn, just before the track crosses the burn for the first time, I overtook two gentlemen and a boy with a bicycle laden with camping materials. The bicycle was being used as a means of transport, one of the men pulling it by means of a rope attached to the front forks, and the other pushing and guiding it by the handle-bar. They told me that it was their intention to go to Blair Atholl, and that they had been informed by a gamekeeper, whom they met in the forest, that there was a comparatively good path right through the pass; but at the time I came up with them they were beginning to be sceptical on this point. As they looked fatigued with their exertions, I offered to assist; and, shouldering their camping outfit, carried it along the narrow track, then over the screes at the Pools of Dee to a spot near the base of Cairn Toul where they proposed camping for the night. I afterwards heard that they arrived at Blair Atholl, without any further difficulty, three or four days later. By the time I left the party, the mist was lying thick on the hillsides, so I gave up all thought of attempting to make an ascent. The next day, while waiting at Aviemore station for



my train, I saw the whole group of mountains standing out bold and clear against the sky.

I again visited the district in the beginning of August, arriving on a Friday night. On the Saturday, accompanied by a young man from the house where I was staying, I set out with the intention of climbing Ben Muich Dhui. As on the previous occasions when I had been in the Larig, rain fell heavily, but we plodded onward almost to the Pools, deciding to climb by way of the March Burn. Whilst negotiating the last difficult part, we were assailed by a heavy blizzard of wind, hail, and sleet. There was absolutely no shelter, and as we were on the south side of the stream at a point where its banks were much too steep to attempt to crawl into the course of the burn, we had to lie as flat as possible against the rocks, and cling like leeches till the force of the gale abated. We then scrambled on to the top of the ridge, from which point it had been our intention to walk in a southerly direction to the summit of the mountain. As, however, the dense mist which overhung the Ben now began to settle down rapidly, there was nothing for it but to descend into the valley as speedily as possible. We found white heather in abundance and gathered a goodly bunch of it, the most of which has found its way to foreign climes, there to reawaken dreams of Scotia's heather hills in the breasts of several of her exiled sons and daughters. Wild fruits, such as blaeberrries, crowberries, and cranberries, were also growing in profusion.

Saturday, 10th October, found me, accompanied by a friend, paying another flying visit to Rothiemurchus. Sunday morning saw us directing our steps towards the hills. The day was exceedingly warm, and the tramp through the rugged defile of the Larig was suggestive of a trek over a desert. Going right over the *col* almost to where the burn that comes down the mountain joins the water from the Pools, we climbed to the cairn that surmounts the broad, flat summit of Ben Muich Dhui. The extent of the view was certainly limited, for though



the mountain itself was clear, the clouds hung fold upon fold on the surrounding heights ; but the air of mystery thus imparted was, in a measure, recompense for the lack of a distant view of the country. A stay of about ten minutes' duration was made on the summit, after which we commenced our downward journey as the clouds shewed a disposition to settle on our mountain top. When we had descended about half-way, the clouds suddenly lifted from the summits on the western side of the Larig, disclosing a magnificent view of the great corrie of Braeriach with its stupendous cliffs over which the burn tumbles, looking like a silver thread against the dark rocks. The pointed summit of the Angel's Peak, and cone-shaped Cairn Toul with Lochan Uaine sparkling like a gem in its bosom, completed a picture of mountain scenery which could scarcely be surpassed. A rapid descent brought us to the Pools, and by-and-by the mist came down and enveloped us in its chill, grey folds, as we trudged homewards. Darkness fell rapidly, and when the blackness of the night was aided by the sombre forest it was a trying task to keep to the foot-track, and we were glad indeed when the cairn at the finger-post was reached. Once on the driving road our difficulties vanished, the clouds were dispelled, and the moon shone forth bright and clear. The forest took on a strange, soft beauty ; the air was cool, and fragrant with the odour of pine and juniper ; an intense silence, broken only by the music of the rippling burns, the hoot of an owl, or the bellow of some distant stag, pervaded the land. The remainder of the journey was negotiated in fine style, but we slackened our pace the better to admire the beauties of Loch-an-Eilein, which rippled and danced in the moonlight.



THE CAIRNGORM PARISHES AND THE (OLD)  
STATISTICAL ACCOUNT OF SCOTLAND.

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

I

SIR JOHN SINCLAIR of Ulbster, Baronet, (b. 1754, d. 1835), Member of Parliament, traveller, and student of political economy and commerce, was one of Scotland's busy patriots. Having conceived the idea of compiling a "Statistical Account" of Scotland on a parochial basis, he issued in May, 1790, to the clergymen of all the parishes in Scotland, a schedule of questions, asking information on all the many topics that should be treated of in such an account. The first list of questions numbered 160, and there was a supplementary list of 6, and another of 5. These questions are given, together with the history of the whole work, in its 20th volume. Sir John was so far fortunately successful that within two years of the issue of the questions he had received 525 parish descriptions, and within four years 798. But the remainder were got with difficulty; some, indeed, by dint of persistently repeated applications were extorted from the clergy, but in 25 cases they were prepared by 'statistical missionaries,' who were sent to gather the desired information. The work was printed as the material came to hand, so that the parishes are scattered through the volumes in no topographical order. The first volume appeared in 1791, and the twenty-first in 1799.

The work is a remarkable example of what can be accomplished by the co-operation of many willing workers acting under the control of one competent head. Some of Sir John's remarks are worth quoting. "On my arrival at Edinburgh, in May 1790, to attend the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, of which Assembly I was a Lay Member, and with the leaders of which, I



lived on terms of intimacy and friendship, it fortunately occurred to me, that I might prevail upon that respectable body, to furnish such information, respecting the general state of Scotland, as might enable me to give a sufficient idea of the political situation of that part of the British empire. My original intention was, to have drawn up a General Statistical View of North Britain, without any particular reference to parochial districts; but I found such merit and ability, and so many useful facts and important observations, in the communications which were sent me, that I could not think of depriving the Clergy, of the credit they were entitled to derive, from such laborious exertions, and thence was induced, to give the Work to the Public, in the manner in which it has been printed." "The most natural mode of obtaining information, and the one which I originally adopted, was that of printing and circulating Queries, as many individuals might be inclined to send answers to any questions put to them, who would not take the trouble of drawing up a regular Report. I accordingly addressed a Letter to the Clergy, and enclosed Queries in it." "Many people were at first surprised, at my using the new words, *Statistics* and *Statistical*, as it was supposed, that some term in our own language, might have expressed the same meaning. . . The idea I annex to the term, is an inquiry into the state of a country, *for the purpose of ascertaining the quantum of happiness enjoyed by its inhabitants, and the means of its future improvement*; yet as I thought that a new word, might attract more public attention, I resolved on adopting it, and I hope that it is now completely naturalised and incorporated with our language." "Experience, however, soon proved, that altho' considerable progress might thus be made, yet that it was impossible to expect, without still greater exertions, the unanimous assistance of so numerous a body as the Clergy of Scotland. Many circumstances prevented unanimity on such an occasion. Some disliked the scheme from the beginning, or, having rashly given an opinion against it, before they had thoroughly understood its nature or object, were ashamed



afterwards to retract. Some were prevented by old age and bodily infirmities, some owing to family distress, and some by the jealousy of their parishioners, who thought that the whole was a deep laid scheme, set on foot by Government, with a view to taxation; whilst the tenants, in many country parishes, did not much relish the inquiries which were made into the produce of the soil, the value of their cattle, &c., apprehensive that their landlords, might avail themselves too much of that information. In short, from a combination of such circumstances, after writing many thousand letters, and the exertions of above two years, I found, on the 1st of June 1792, that no less a number than 413 accounts were still wanting." "At last, on the 1st day of January 1798, or seven years, seven months, and seven days, from the commencement of the attempt, an account of every parish in Scotland, was either given in, or might be relied on, in the space of a few days." "I cannot conclude, without returning my warmest acknowledgments, to the many respectable characters, by whose assistance I have been enabled to complete this Work. By their exertions on this occasion, they have immortalized themselves, and the order to which they belong; and the greatest compliment that in future can be paid to any body of men, will be, that they are as learned, as able, and as public-spirited, as those members of the Church of Scotland, who assisted in drawing up the Statistical Accounts of the different parishes in North Britain, and enabled the person who engaged in so bold an undertaking, to accomplish a Work, unequalled, in regard to the success with which it has been attended,—the number of persons therein employed,—the extent of useful information which it contains,—and the various important advantages to be derived from it."

Sir John was quite entitled to compliment his colleagues and himself on the quality of their work, for the "Statistical Account" is a monumental and a model work. It affords a strikingly vivid picture of the condition of Scotland at the time when it was written, a time of much change in many parts of the country, and it offers also



much that interests the antiquarian and the student of folk-lore.

We print here, with small omissions, the accounts given of the parishes that lie round the Cairngorm Mountains, Rothiemurchus (vol. iv., 1792), Abernethy and Kincardine (vol. xiii., 1794), Crathie and Braemar (vol. xiv., 1795), and Kirkmichael (vol. xii., 1794), following as closely as possible the text of the original, but carrying footnotes up into the text.

**ROTHIEMURCHUS.** By the Rev. Mr. Patrick Grant.

*Name, Situation, Soil, &c.*—The parish of Rothiemurchus was united to Duthil in 1625. Sir James Grant of Grant is patron. The name in Gaelic is *Raat-mher-ghiuish*, ‘great plain of fir.’ It is situated in the county of Inverness, Synod of Moray, and presbytery of Abernethy; extends 7 miles from E. to W. upon the south banks of Spey; 4 miles in breadth. Bounded by the parish of Duthil on the N. from which it is separated by the river Spey; on the W. by Kingisich; on the S. by Athol and Braemar; on the E. by Abernethy. The nature of the soil near the banks of Spey is deep and fertile; but, in general, is shallow. There is an inexhaustible quarry, more properly a mountain, of limestone, in the centre, with abundance of fuel. There are 2 small lakes, abounding with char. Lochnellan, one of them, exhibits a scene most picturesque and romantic, and by the situation of the surrounding hills are formed 5 very remarkable echoes. Upon a small island in Lochnellan, is a castle, built time immemorial; the walls of which are still entire.—To the birds common in this country may be added, in the parish of Rothiemurchus, tarmagans, the only inhabitants, through all seasons, of the tops of the highest mountains.

*Population.*—The amount of the numbers at present is 280, all of the established church.

*Agriculture, &c.*—Number of cattle, 180; sheep, 2300; horses, 95. There being a number of wood manufacturers, the parish does not supply itself with provisions. The land-rent is £300; wood, at an average, £300.

*School, Poor, &c.*—The only school is that established by the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge. The salary is £10 Sterling. That, and the perquisites, amount to about £15. The number of scholars seldom exceeds 30.—The number of poor is 7. The annual contributions for their relief do not exceed £3; and there is no other fund.

**UNITED PARISHES OF ABERNETHY AND KINCARDINE.** By the Rev. Mr. John Grant.

*Name, Extent, Soil, Surface, Climate, &c.*—The name is



descriptive of the situation of the church, with respect to the river *Nethy*, being near the entrance of it into the Spey. Abernethy, or the *Inver*, or termination of Nethy, is in Gaelic, Aberneich. The meaning of the name *Nethy*, or *Neich*, is not known; that of *Kinchardine*, or *Kinie-chairdin*, is the "Clan of Friends." In what follows, both parishes must be frequently mentioned under the name of Abernethy.——[Footnote.] About one half of it is in the county of Murray, the other half in the shire of Inverness. The middle part being in Murray, and the two extreme parts of it in Inverness-shire. It is a little remarkable, that at the south east point of this parish, between Glenloch and Glenbrown, the shires of Inverness, Murray and Banff meet; so that when standing on the Bridge of Brown, one may throw a stone into any of the three counties.——It is 15 miles in length, and from 10 to 12 in breadth, and about 30 miles from the sea at Inverness, Nairn, or Findhorn. The surface is very much diversified with corn-fields, woods, and mountains. The soil is various; some parts deep, others thin and dry, some wet and cold. A stretch of about 3 miles of low deep land and meadow, on the bank of the Spey, is often overflowed in times of flood. The Spey here runs smooth and slow, and of course the overflow is so too. Although many hundreds of acres are in this situation, and would increase greatly in their value, if free of this encroachment; yet it appears doubtful if embankments could save the ground; and still more problematical, whether the acquisition would be worth the expense, which behoved to be very great, on account of the great height to which the Spey rises at certain times. What increases the difficulty is, the great body of water which, in time of floods, comes from the mountains in the Nethy and smaller rivulets, and which would come in behind the embankments; besides, the proprietor has a great deal of land on the other side in the same predicament, so that double embankments would be necessary. The arable land bears but a small proportion to the uncultivated. A great proportion of the surface is covered with woods, much of it in hills, mountains, and rocks. The ground rises towards the mountains, and the air and climate vary accordingly. Healthy every where. The people in general enjoy health to a degree that is not exceeded in many parts of the kingdom. The small-pox is the only disease that is remarkably fatal. Inoculation is not general, though, upon the whole, peoples prejudices against it are much removed.—— [Footnote gives instances of longevity.]——

*Rivers and Lakes.*—The only river of any note, besides the Spey, is the Nethy, which, rising in the high hills, intersects the parish, running through or near the fir-woods, for about 7 miles, and empties itself into the Spey. In dry weather, it is very inconsiderable; but after rains or thaws, it swells so as to bring down loose all the timber that is cut in the woods, either to the saw-mills



or to the Spey, whence it is sent in rafts to the sea at Garmouth. There are several lakes in Kinchardine; the most considerable of which, is the oval bason in Glenmore, nearly two miles diameter. It is in the bottom of the glen, surrounded with fir-woods, rising gradually towards the mountains. Here is a pleasant scene in a fine summer day. In Glenmore likewise, there is a green loch, in extent about one acre, full of small fat green trout. At the foot of Cairngorm, is Loch Aven, from whence the river of that name issues, containing plenty of trout, but dry and indifferent ones to eat.

*Cave and Mountains.*—At one end of this loch, surrounded with vast mountains, is a large natural cave, sufficient to hold a number of men secure from snow, rain or wind. People often lodge here for nights, some for necessity, others when hunting or fishing. It is commonly called Chlachdhian, or the “Sheltering Stone.” Of the whole range of mountains in view of the parish, the *Cairngorm*, (or blue mountain), is the most remarkable. Stones of value are sometimes found at and near it, but rarely now, and that sometimes by chance or accident; at other times, by digging for them. Some pretend to know the vein where they may most likely be. It is an employment not worth following. Numbers of stones of variegated colours, and regular sides, as if cut by the lapidary, are found above ground, particularly after thaws or floods, which wash off the surface, but when examined, seldom worth anything. These high mountains, to the south of the parish, occasion much cold and frost. Cairngorm is seldom free of some snow any time in summer. On the tops of these high mountains, there is very little pasture, but a downy foggy cover on the rocks. The fir-woods never grow up the sides of these high hills, or approach the regions of cold. Cairngorm commands an extensive view. Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness, are seen from it.

*Woods, and the Progress of Manufacture.*—Besides a great deal of birch and alder, there are two very large fir-woods in these parishes, almost meeting in one place. The fir-wood of Abernethy, belonging to Sir James Grant, is of great extent, and of an exceeding good quality, and very thriving; but it is kept from coming to a great size, by a constant manufacture, for about 60 years backward. Before then, the making of deals by saw mills was little known, and less practised. The first and early method of making deals, was by splitting the wood with wedges, and then dressing the boards with the ax and adze. A high room in Castle Grant appears to be floored with deals made in this way, and never planed. The marks of the adze across the boards are still visible. And though this floor appears to be of great antiquity, such is the superlative quality of the timber, that it may continue as sound as it is now hundreds of years hence. This floor has another mark of antiquity, the nails appear all to have been made by a country-smith, ac-



cording to the times ; the bonnets being as broad as a small half-penny. Afterward the country-people got the small-framed saw. There being no demand for deals, neither did they know how to send them out of the country, the heritors took anything they could get for the wood that was manufactured. It is not a very long time back since the Laird of Grant got only a merk a year, for what a man choosed to cut and manufacture with his axe and saw ; people now alive remember it at 1s. 8d. a-year, afterwards it came to 3s. 4d. and then the Laird of Rothiemurchus, commonly called Maccalpin, brought it up to 5s. a-year, and 1lb. of tobacco. Brigadier Alexander Grant, (who died in 1719), attempted to bring some masts from his woods at Abernethy to London. But though a man of great enterprize in his military profession, did not persevere in this, owing to the many difficulties he had to encounter, such as the want of roads in the woods, skill in the country-people, and all kinds of necessary implements. About the year 1730, a branch of the York-building Company, purchased, to the amount of about £7000 of these woods of Abernethy, and continued till about the year 1737 ; the most profuse and profligate set that ever were heard of then in this corner. This was said to be a stock-jobbing business. Their extravagancies of every kind ruined themselves, and corrupted others. Their beginning was great indeed, with 120 working horses, waggons, elegant temporary wooden houses, saw-mills, iron-mills, and every kind of implement and apparatus of the best and most expensive sorts. They used to display their vanity by bonfires, tar-barrels, and opening hogsheads of brandy to the country-people, by which 5 of them died in one night. They had a Commissary for provisions and forage, at an handsome salary ; and, in the end, went off in debt to the proprietors and the country. But yet their coming to the country was beneficial in many respects ; for, besides the knowledge and skill which was acquired from them, they made many useful and lasting improvements. They made roads through the woods. They erected proper saw-mills. They invented the construction of the raft, as it is at present, and cut a passage through a rock in Spey, without which, floating to any extent could never be attempted. Before their time, some small trifling rafts were sent down Spey in a very awkward and hazardous manner, 10 or 12 dozen of deals, huddled together, conducted by a man, sitting in what was called a *Currach*, made of a hide, in the shape, and about the size of a small brewing-kettle, broader above than below, with ribs or hoops of wood in the inside, and a cross-stick for the man to sit on ; who, with a paddle in his hand, went before the raft, to which his currach was tied with a rope. This rope had a running knot or loup round the man's knee in the currach, so that if the raft stopt on a stone, or any other way, he loosed the knot, and let his currach go on, otherwise it would sink in a strong stream ; and



when, after coming in behind the raft again, and loosing it, he proceeded again to make the best of his way. These currachs were so light, that the men carried them on their backs home from Speymouth. There is one of them now in the parish of Cromdale below this. The York-building Company had 18 of the currachs in their employ at first, with which they made little progress, till Mr. Aaron Hill, one of their number, constructed the large raft, as it is at present, consisting of two or three branders or spars in the bottom, joined end to end, with iron or other loupes, and a rope through them, and conducted by two men, one at each end, who have each a seat and oar, with which they keep the raft in the proper direction. It is pleasant to see a number of them going down at once; each of them carry down variously, according to the quality of the timber, from £10, £15, to £20 worth; and at an average, the expense of each raft to Speymouth, is about £1, 10s. At present, there are 4 saw mills in Abernethy.

*Glenmore Wood.*—About 8 years ago, the Duke of Gordon sold his fir-woods of Glenmore, in the barony of Kincardine, for £10,000 Sterling to an English Company. There were some inferior companies tried it formerly, but were not successful. It appears pretty certain now, that this Company will succeed in bringing away all the wood within their contract, before their lease is out, which was 26 years; and it ought to be the wish of every well-thinking person, that they may have profit in the end, as they do much good to the country. They are regular and just, and carry on their business in every department of it with much exertion and propriety. This was the oldest, the largest, and the best quality of fir wood in Scotland, and the best accommodated for water-carriage to the Spey, by means of the loch before described, that is in the heart of it, and out of which a river issues, that brings down even their masts loose to Spey, a distance of 5 or 6 miles. The quantity of spars, deals, logs, masts and ship-timber, which they send to Garmouth or Speymouth yearly, is immense, and every stage of the process of manufactory, brings money to the country; generally once a year, they send down Spey a loose float, as they call it, of about 12,000 pieces of timber, of various kinds; whence they send it to England, or sell it round the coast. For some years, they have sent great numbers of small masts or yards to England to the King's yards, and other places, and have built about 20 vessels of various burdens at Garmouth or Speymouth, all of Glenmore fir. Among others, there is one now on the stocks, above 500 tons.—[Appendix gives the name of the firm as Messrs. Dodsworth and Osbourne.]—Without doubt, these manufactures raise the price of labour and other articles, and make servants for the farmer more difficult to be got. The fir-woods of this country exceed all the natural fir-woods in Scotland put together, with comparison. Sir



James Grant's woods of Abernethy, of many miles circumference ; next, the Duke of Gordon's, in Glenmore ; then Mr. Grant of Rothiemurchus's, who is supposed to have more trees than either of them ; then the Duke's again ; after that, the Laird of M'Intosh's in Glenfishy, all in a line, of about 20 miles in length, on the south side of Spey, and all having the advantage of abundance of water to bring them to Spey. Besides, Sir James Grant has another wood, of an excellent quality, on the other side of the country, or the river Dulnan.—

[Footnote.] *Quarupeds and Birds, &c.*—Red-deer, roe, foxes, hares, moorfowl, partridge, tarmakan, eagles, hawks, and the other birds common in the Highlands of Scotland, abound here.—

*Population.*—According to Dr. Webster's report, the population then was 1670. The exact number in this parish at present is 1769, . . . .

*Produce, and State of Husbandry.*—The animal productions consist of black cattle, sheep, some goats and horses. The principal proprietor does not encourage great sheep-farms, nor are there any large tracts laid waste for such flocks. It is computed, that two or three farms in Abernethy, which are wholly given to sheep, and what the English Company have in their own possession in Kincardine without tenants, had about 200 inhabitants when let in small farms. However, the sheep are greatly increased of late years, and the farmers endeavour to keep as many cattle as formerly ; so that, like Pharaoh's kine the one consumes the other. The sheep are almost all of the black-faced kind, though few have the breed genuine, but crossed. By the tenants increasing their number of sheep, and still striving to keep up their former number of black cattle, neither the sheep can be expected to be sold fat, nor the cattle in general in decent marketable condition ; by which means they must always be sold at prices inferior to what they would fetch if properly grazed ; so that the parish in general is only a nursery for raising lean cattle and sheep, to be fattened elsewhere.

—[Footnote suggests that cattle and sheep should not be fed together on the hills ; sheep should feed on the hills, and cattle in the lowlands. Also more horses should be reared.]—The crops here are barley, oats, rye, potatoes, chiefly the small black oats ; on some farms pease and a good deal of white oats. The crops here are often precarious, and frequently misgive to a very distressing degree. There are only 5 farms in the parish in any degree of improvement : On these there are good houses, offices, and some good enclosures, limed and prepared with green crops for grass, which answers well. Pease grow well in limed fields here. These farms have the advantage of the best climate in the parish. They are ploughed with English or Scotch ploughs, according to the ground. Upon these, there are good horses, oxen, carts, and the other modern



implements. The want of hard wood in the country is a drawback; because, without it, there can be no durable instruments of husbandry. There are several neat farm-houses built of late through the parish; but the farms themselves in general are in no better state than they were 160 years ago. The braes, or Highland parts of the parish, are not subjects for the modern improvements in husbandry, but they might be much benefited by liming, the limestone and peats being near their fields in one quarter, but hitherto that has not been attempted. The absurd ridiculous method of run-ridge still takes place in a great part of the parish. ———The produce of the parish is corn and potatoes; it never maintains its inhabitants, and often, when a failure happens in the crop, falls far short; some often buy meal for 6 months in the year. . . . attention ought to be given to increase the value of cattle, because all depends on the returns from cattle, sheep, wool, butter and cheese, for paying rent, servants, &c.

*Language.*—The common living language of the people, in which they converse, do their business, and are instructed, is the Gaelic; and the names of places are all Gaelic ones.

*Rent and Heritors.*—The valued rent is £1553, 16s. Scots; the gross land-rent of the two parishes, besides the woods, is about £1500, Sterling. ———The heritors are two, Sir James Grant and the Duke of Gordon. The Earl of Moray has the superiority of these lands in the parish, of Sir James Grant's, which are in the county of Elgin, one of the many instances of feudal absurdity, which separates the superiority from the property.

*Stipends, Schools, Poor, &c.*—Sir James Grant of Grant is patron. The stipend is only £64; a process of augmentation is now depending. The glebe about 5 acres of middling land. The manse and offices lately repaired. The church of Abernethy is elegant, and the church of Kinchardine, 8 miles from Abernethy, a very good sufficient plain house lately repaired; both church-yards well enclosed with a wall and hedge, and a belt of wood about 3 yards broad.—There are two schools in the parish, and a catechist from the Royal bounty. The parochial salary is 200 merks, and a good school-house. The Society's salary in Kincardine is £9, and one of the best school houses in the Highlands.—There is no parochial fund for the poor, but the weekly collections in the church, which will not exceed £6 a-year at an average, there being no residing heritors. These collections are not sufficient to buy shoes for the poor, for the half of the year. ———[A subsequent footnote says that such highland shoes as the people here wear have increased within these 20 years from 10d. and 1s. to 3s. and 3s. 6d. the pair.] ———They live on the farmers, by begging from door to door. It is in this way the parishioners give their charity chiefly, which they do very liberally. . . . This is a heavy burden upon the tenants,



and calls upon heritors to contribute to their relief.—[Footnote mentions the disadvantage of the method of engaging servants half-yearly, and the comparative dearness of peats as fuel.]——

*Antiquities.*—There is a large oblong square building near the church, called Castle-Roy, or the Red-Castle, on side 30, the other 20 yards, the height about 10. It never was roofed, has no loop holes, and only one entrance to the inside. Neither history nor tradition gave any satisfying account of it.

*Eminent and Remarkable Men.*—[Two are named, the Hon. John Grant, late Chief Justice of Jamaica, and John Roy Stuart, of the Scots Grays.]

*Roads and Bridges.*—It was only about the year 1764, when the present proprietor Sir James Grant entered to the estate, that roads were begun in this part of his estate, called Strathspey, which is about 30 miles in length. Since which period, he has made above 130 miles, when the whole is added together. The roads in this parish, are remarkably good, and going on yearly, by means of the statute-labour. The great roads are made through these parishes by Sir James Grant and the Duke of Gordon. Cross roads are now going on, which will prove highly serviceable. The Duke of Gordon has made one uncommonly good cross-road, from Glenmore to the Spey, for his English Company. There is one excellent bridge, built about 25 years ago, by Sir James Grant on the river Nethy, at his own expense, and 2 smaller bridges to the east by him, with some assistance from the county of Inverness. Another bridge is begun, on a very troublesome rivulet, near the church of Kinchardine on the Duke of Gordon's property, with assistance from the county of Inverness. . . . .

*Manufactures.*—There are no manufactures in these parishes, but that of wood, as has been already mentioned. . . . .

*Miscellaneous Observations.*—The size of the people is generally very good ; at an average 5 feet 6, 8, and 10 inches, and many above that height ; hardy and active in their persons ; generally sagacious and well informed according to their station ; frugal and economical, and in general very sober. There is no whisky still in the parish, because there is no grain for it. None have been condemned for a capital crime, since the days of the regality jurisdiction. They make hardy, clean, tractable soldiers when in the army ; numbers of them are excellent marksmen. Their chief attachment is to Highland corps, which Government ought to make always as provincial as possible ; this would increase their attachment, and their spirit to a degree that none can understand but such as know their tempers. A man that is harsh and austere, and fond of severity and punishment, is not fit to command a Highland corps ; but their officers, do them justice, speak to them in a discreet friendly manner, and encourage them by a little familiarity, and they find them re-



spectful, attached and obedient. The vagabonds that are recruited in cities and towns, ought never to be allowed to mix with them. The method adopted by Government of late, in making their Highland Fencibles provincial ones, is a wise measure, and will answer the end proposed. It is peculiar to this parish to have two heritors, who have got each a Fencible regiment. The Duke of Gordon, and Sir James Grant, and who have not only raised them in three weeks and a few days, but have each of them supernumeraries, for additional companies, in forming a considerable part of second battalions, if Government should need them; and all recruited in an easy, discreet, smooth manner, without force or compulsion. Men so pleasantly got, and so content when well used, cannot miss of giving satisfaction to their officers, and may be relied on by the nation. The people here are loyal to a degree that cannot be surpassed; amazingly attached to their King, because they like his character and his virtues, and that he is a good man. Political or religious fanaticism have got no footing here; of course it is very easy to live in peace among them. There are no religious sectaries here, the people being all of the Established Church. Their language, their garb, their social situation, their climate and modes of husbandry, have kept them hitherto a people different in character and manners, from the inhabitants of the low country, and from being misled by the doctrines of those itinerant fanatics that infest the coast. The poisonous doctrines of political pamphlet writers, have made no progress among them; yet many of the people here seem often much dissatisfied with their condition in some respects. What they complain of chiefly is, the method followed in letting their farms when their leases are expired. It is seldom that the tenants are called on to renew, till within a few months of the term of removal, and then perhaps, left for years in suspence, before they are settled with, and tried for some addition every year; and every year receiving a summons of removal. The offers received are generally kept private; and when they get a lease, it is only for 15 or 19 years, which they think too short. The effects of this method are very bad, both for master and tenant. For during the last 2 or 3 years of the lease, they are under apprehensions of being removed, and of course plough up what they ought not, or would not, if they were certain of continuing; and all this while, careless about the repairs of their houses and buildings. By these means, they either hurt themselves, if they continue, by renewing, or their successor if they remove, and the proprietors interest in either case. Besides, that while people are kept long in suspence, it occasions much unhappy anxiety, and restlessness of mind.—[Footnote suggests various improvements in the method of arranging leases.]——

*Cattle markets.*—The people here, as well as in many parts of



the Highlands, have but too much cause to complain of losses sustained by the failures of little drovers. It is thought, by some, that this might be prevented from being so frequent. The common method of buying cattle is, for any one that attempts droving to call a market for himself when he sees proper. The necessity, ignorance, or greed of many, induce them often to venture their cattle, for a shilling or two more a-head, with a man that would be ruined if he lost a crown a-piece by his parcel at Falkirk. Sales are by these means often partial, and seldom general,—picking a few beasts here and there out of parcels. . . . Considering what a fatiguing, hazardous business droving is, men that pay well ought to be much sought after, and much encouraged.—[Footnote, admittedly out of place, complains of the insufficiency of ministers' glebes in general, and in the Highlands in particular.]—

*Progress of Civilization.*—It is worth observing, what change there is in the modes of thinking of the people within these last 45 years. Two events have contributed, in a remarkable manner, to a better way of thinking, and submission to order and government. The rebellion of 1745-6 in its good effects, and the subsequent abolition of the jurisdiction act. Previous to that period, property was chiefly protected by force, and the existing laws known in theory, but little regarded in many parts of the Highlands. Thieving was a trade in many countries, and carried on on a large scale, with much contrivance and sagacity, and countenanced sometimes in private by those who undertook, for a certain pay called *black meal* [*sic*], the protection of neighbouring districts. President Forbes of Culloden paid his proportion of this assessment, before the 1745, to a certain person to the west of him, whose power and influence were so great, that he would have ruined his estate if he had refused to comply. The land of Moray being, it seems, always a land of plenty, seems to have been devoted to be plundered. The people to the west appear to have claimed a right to a share of the productions of it. They used to regret, that their corn-stacks would not drive like their cattle.—

[Footnote.] There is a remarkable correspondence between Allan Cameron of Lochiel, and the Laird of Grant about 140 years ago, wherein the principles of the times are clearly seen. The correspondence is published in Sir John Dalrymple's Collection of original papers and letters. The story is briefly thus: a party of the Camerons had come down, to carry a *spreath* of cattle, as it was called, from Morray; they unluckily carried off the cattle of Grant of Moynes in Nairn-shire. Moynes complained to his Chief, the Laird of Grant, and he sent a party after them, and after a sharp conflict, brought back the cattle. Lochiel writes a letter to his friend the Laird of Grant, regretting the misfortune, asserting that when his *friends went out*, they did not intend to trouble his Honour's land; nor did they know that Moynes was a Grant, otherwise they would not have gone near him, or troubled him more than any man in Strathspey, but they went to Morayland,



he says, "where all men take their prey." Lochiel mentions the number of killed and wounded of his friends in the skirmish ; and says, they were all so much taken up about the curing of their friends, that they could not attend to any business for the time. But when that was over, he was willing to refer the whole to their mutual friend Seaforth, which was done ; and it does not appear, that Seaforth had much difficulty in making the two chieftains as good friends as they were before. A little after this period, the Laird of Grant was obliged to build a stable within his court, to prevent his own brother from taking away his best horses. This stable was taken down about 40 years ago. The incumbent remembers when the people of this country kept out a watch in the summer-months, for protecting their cattle, and these watches kept up by a round of duty, and reliefs at certain periods. In this country, where that business was not followed professionally for some time past, the people in several places and passes were often obliged to be discreet and hospitable to these intruders, as they went to the low countries, and no doubt there were connivers and aiders among them, who knew very well for what they were so.——

The humiliation produced by the defeat of the undertaking of 1745-6, and the wise plan of employing the Highlanders in 1757 in the public cause, contributed by degrees to introduce loyalty and submission to the laws into the very seats of disaffection and rapine. The conduct of the people, when employed in support of the nation, showed that they were only misled at home. It is to be regretted, that so many thousands of these now loyal brave people have been forced to a foreign shore by necessity, for want of employment, habitation, or ground to subsist on. However advantageous the sheep-farming may be, it is possible it may be overdone ; and if ever that happens, it will be found to be impolitic in every sense, as it is cruel in many places at present. It is dangerous in these times to drive poor people to desperation, or it may make many disposed to join in tumults and riots, who would never think of them if they had a home and the common necessaries of life. To increase our gratitude for the protection afforded by our constitution to the lives and properties of individuals in these countries at present, we will mention the blessings we enjoy by the abolition of the jurisdiction-act in the year 1748. That delegation of feudal power was dangerous in the extreme, because it was generally abused. When we consult the traditional history of the country for a century and upwards past, and the extraordinary conduct of some of these despots, the bailies of regality, and the precariousness of life and property often within their jurisdiction, one is excited to grasp with fondness the Government that has annihilated their dangerous power. They often punished crimes, by committing greater ones themselves. They often, no doubt, tried by jury ; but some of them, at other times, in a summary, arbitrary, and extraordinary manner.—— [Footnote gives instances of the arbitrariness and grasping cruelty of certain Bailies, and one instance of revenge.]——



## UNITED PARISHES OF CRATHY AND BRAEMAR.

By the Rev. Mr. Charles M'Hardy.

*Name, Situation, &c.*—Crathy is of Gaelic derivation, probably from *Cruaidh-achadh*, "hard or stony fields," as the parish, in general, is rocky, and full of stones; or from *Craoibh-achadh*, "fields or ridges, intersected with wood." The ancient name of Braemar was *Ceann-androchait*, which, in Gaelic, signifies "bridgend." There is no certainty at what period they were united. They are situated in that district of the county [*sic*] called Marr, in the very middle of the Grampian hills. They are distant from Aberdeen about 50 English miles. The length of both parishes from E. to W. is about 40 miles, and about 20 in breadth; the inhabited part of which is about 30 miles long, and from 6 to 10 in breadth. The parish of Braemar is supposed to be more elevated above the level of the sea, and farther removed in every direction from the coast, than any other parish in Scotland.

*Climate, Soil, Produce, &c.*—The climate is healthy, and many of the inhabitants live to a good old age. The principal distempers are fevers, gravel, rheumatism, and colic. When a malignant kind of the small pox prevails, it carries away a number of children; yet the body of the people are not reconciled to inoculation. The soil is various; in some parts a light loam, in others a thin clay; but, in general, shallow and sandy; yet, when properly cultivated, produces, in a favourable season, good crops. The ordinary crops raised by the country people, are, oats, bear, and potatoes. Turnips and clover, with rye grass, are cultivated by a few gentlemen. There was very little lintseed, till of late, sown in these parishes, although it was found to answer exceedingly well, for this reason, that there was no lint-mill in the county; but that grievance is now, in a great measure, removed, as Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld has built a lint-mill at Castletown of Braemar. The consequence is, that the people, in general, sow more lintseed; and from the advantages they derive from this branch of farming, it is probable that, in a few years hence, another lint-mill, at least, will be necessary in this part of the country. As there is no map of the parishes, it is impossible to say what number of acres are in tillage. Oats are sown in April, or sooner, if the season permits, then lintseed, and potatoes, and bear from the beginning to the middle of May. The time of harvest is extremely variable; beginning sometimes about the 15th of August, and sometimes not till the 1st or 5th of September.

*Mountains and Minerals.*—The greater part of the two parishes is mountainous. Some of the mountains are probably the highest in Scotland: Of this description are the mountains of Loch-na-



garaidh, on the S. side of the parish; Binn-na-baird on the N.; and Binn-na-muick-duidh on the W., &c. Upon these mountains, and others connected with them, there is snow to be found all the year round; and their appearance is extremely romantic, and truly alpine. On them are found pellucid stones, of the nature of precious stones, equally transparent, beautiful in their colour; and some of them, particularly the emerald, as hard as any oriental gem of the same kind. The most common are, the brown, of different shades, and next the topaz. There are also beautiful amethysts and emeralds, though these are rare to be met with, particularly the latter; and what is remarkable, amethysts only are to be found on Loch-na-garaidh; emeralds, topazes, and the brown on Binn-na-baird; topazes and the brown kinds only on Binn-na-muick-duidh [*sic*], and the other mountains in these parishes. The first of these stones that attracted notice, and were cut by a lapidary, were found on Cairn-gorm, in Strathspey, but connected with the above ridge of mountains, which gave rise, though very improperly, to the general name of Cairn-gorm stones. Both the parishes abound with granite of different kinds, and various shades, which is used for building. It is very hard in its nature, and when polished, looks as well as marble. There is limestone in great profusion. On Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld's property, in the parish of Braemar, is a little quarry, from which are brought almost all the slates made use of in this country.

*Forests, Woods, &c.*—The greater part of the united parishes of Crathy and Braemar, have been originally King's forest, and known by the name of the Forest of Marr. This forest, with those of the Duke of Atholl, and Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld in Perthshire, and the Duke of Gordon in Badenoch and Glenaven, constituted the principal part of the great northern Caledonian forest. In the deepest mosses or morasses, within the immense range of extensive forests above mentioned, there are to be found large logs, or roots of wood (even where there is not a tree now to be seen standing), which affords the most incontrovertible evidence, that they have formerly been over-run with timber.

The only part of the forest of Marr, which is now used as kept forest, is in Braemar. The Earl of Fife and Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld, have, each of them, extensive forests, which are well stocked with red and roe deer. From the great care and attention which has been paid to these animals for some years past, they are now so numerous and domesticated, that they are to be seen in numbers from the windows of the houses of Invercauld and Marr-Lodge. At the latter place, about the beginning of May, 100 stags have been seen at once feeding on the lawn. The soil of this



country, in general, is favourable to the growth of forest trees. Besides birch, a kind of poplar, known by the name of quaking ash, the alder, the roan tree, or mountain ash, a species of the willow, &c. &c. There are, in these parishes, extensive natural fir woods, belonging to the Earl of Fife, Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld, Mr. Gordon of Abergeldie, and Mr. Farquharson of Inverey; as also, large plantations of Scotch firs, and other trees. Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld alone has planted above 14 millions of the former, and upwards of a million of larch, with a great variety of others. Mr. Gordon of Abergeldie has planted Scotch firs to a very considerable extent, besides other trees; and the Earl of Fife has also made plantations of Scotch firs, and other kinds.

*Rivers, Lakes, &c.*—The Dee is the principal river. It has its source on a hill called Gaibh-chor-Dhe [*sic*], in Lord Fife's forest; and running through the united parishes of Braemar and Crathy, and a great many other parishes, with vast rapidity, empties itself into the German ocean at Aberdeen, at the distance of about 90 miles, in a straight line from its source. If the windings of the river were measured, it would be little short of 50 more. It produces salmon and trout in great plenty, with some pike and eel. Several small rivers and rivulets fall into the Dee before it reaches Crathy, particularly the Geallaidh, the Luidh, the Eidh, the Coich, the Cluanaidh, &c., which are all well stored with excellent trout: the Cluanaidh produces salmon. In the parish of Braemar, there are many lins or cascades, particularly those of Coich, the Mulzie, the Garrabhalt, &c.; but the lin that deserves most notice, is that of the Dee, not so much on account of the height of the fall, as the singularity of the rivers being confined for upwards of 60 yards between two rocks, within so narrow a space, that some persons have been fool hardy enough to step from the one rock to the other. The principal lakes in the parishes, are Loch Callader and Loch Bhrotachan, both on Mr. Farquharson's property, and well stored with excellent trout. Loch Callader produces fine little salmon, of about 7 or 8 lbs. weight, and some eel. It will be above 2 miles in circumference. Loch Bhrotachan is smaller, but produces large delicate red trout.

*Animals.*—The quadrupeds are horses, cows, sheep, swine, red and roe deer in abundance, foxes, martins, pole cats, wild cats, white and brown hares, badgers, otters, &c. The fowl are, eagles, hawks of different kinds, kites, black cock, grouse or moorfowl, and tarmagan; besides every other species common in the Highlands of Scotland. There are in the parish of Crathy, 529 horses, 919 black cattle, 5591 sheep. In the parish of Braemar, 466 horses, 930 black cattle, and 9000 sheep. In both



parishes, 995 horses, 1846 black cattle, and 14,591 sheep.—  
[Footnote] It is to be observed, that the above falls short of the real numbers, as the people would not give up an exact account, lest government might have it in contemplation to tax them.—Besides the above, there are about 800 or 900 black cattle grazed in the summer season, and about 2000 of the above number of sheep sent to other places to be pastured through the winter.

*Population.*—The return to Dr. Webster in 1755, was 2671 souls. In the parish of Crathy, there are 700 Protestants, 150 Papists, and 164 children under 7 years of age. Total 1024 souls. In the parish of Braemar, there are 455 Protestants, 580 Papists, and 192 children. Total 1227. In both parishes, 2251 souls. . . .

*State of Property.*—The proprietors of these 2 parishes, of whom Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld is the principal, are 8, viz. The Earl of Fife, James Farquharson, Esq. of Invercauld, William Farquharson, Esq. of Monaltry, James Farquharson, Esq. of Balmeral [*sic*], Charles Gordon, Esq. of Abergeldie, William M'Donald, Esq. of Rincaton, the Reverend Thomas Gordon of Crathynaird, and John Erskine portioner of Achallader. One heritor resides constantly, 3 occasionally; and there are 4 who do not reside at all. The valued rent of both parishes, is 3347l. 16s. 8d. Scotch. The real rent 1826l. Sterling.

*Price of Labour and Provisions.*—The general wages of day labourers of every description, are double what they were 20 or 30 years ago. The wages of male servants, about 30 years ago, were from 1l. 15s. to 2l. a-year; at present they are from 4l. to 6l. a-year; maid servants, at the above period, had from 1l. to 1l. 10s. a-year. Now they get from 2l. to 3l. About 30 years ago, a fat cow, which at present costs from 5l. to 6l., could have been purchased at 2l. 2s., or 2l. 10s.; a fat wedder that sells now for 12s. or 14s., could have been bought then for 5s. or 6s., and other butcher meat in proportion. Poultry, &c. now sell as under, viz. a live goose from 2s. to 2s. 6d.; ducks from 8d. to 10d., hens 6d., chickens 3d. each, eggs 1½d. the dozen, milk 2d. the Scotch pint, butter 9d. the lb. of 28 ounces, and cheese from 4s. to 6s. the stone of 28 English lbs. [There is a footnote on Lady Sinclair's dairy]. Barley sells from 15s. to 20s., oats from 12s. to 16s. 8d. the boll; potatoes from 4d. to 8d. the peck, and wool from 9s. to 20s. the stone, of 30 lbs. English. The fuel commonly made use of is peat, turf, heath, and sometimes fir and birch.

*Manufactures.*—The only branch of manufacture in this country, is the spinning of linen yarn. Lint is imported from Aberdeen at the expense of the manufacturing company, and left with the shopkeepers in the united parishes; and they are allowed



a certain profit for the trouble of giving out the lint, and taking in the yarn. The common price paid for the spinning, is from rod. to 1s. 3d. the spindle. This brings a considerable sum of money into the country; by which the greater part of the poorer families are supported, and enabled to pay the rents of their houses, and small crofts of land. The women, in general, spin with both hands.

[A long footnote tells how Lady Sinclair taught and encouraged spinning 'on the little wheel' about the middle of the eighteenth century; "previous to this, lint was spun on the rock or distaff only, and wool on the big wheel."]

*Exports and Imports.*—The exports are wood, black cattle, sheep, butter, cheese, wool, woollen cloth, &c. The imports are oatmeal, salt, iron, linen, flax, leather, lawns, muslins, &c.

*Language.*—The language generally spoken is the Gaelic. Most of the people, however, understand so much of the English, as to be able to transact ordinary business with their neighbours of the Low Country. It was once thought an object of political attention to use means for eradicating this ancient language from the Highlands of Scotland. It is to be presumed, that the Legislature now entertains very different views. For experience has fully evinced, that there are no better soldiers in the day of battle than the Highlanders, and that honour, humanity, decency, and good order are not incompatible with the use of the Gaelic, and of tartan plaids and philabegs. All names of places in the country, whose etymology can be traced with certainty, are Gaelic.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The present stipend is 820 merks, with 20l. Scots for furnishing communion elements. . . . . There are 2 churches, one in Braemar, and one at Crathy. The church of Braemar is a very neat, decent church, with a most excellent church-yard wall round it, built with stone and lime. It is supported almost at the sole expense of the Earl of Fife and Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld. The church of Crathy, though kept in repair at the joint expense of all the heritors of the 2 parishes, the Earl of Fife excepted, is in very bad order, and too small. The church-yard wall is in the same situation. . . . .

There are 2 Roman Catholick priests who reside constantly in Braemar, besides 1 who comes occasionally to the parish of Crathy.

*Schools, Poor, &c.*—There are 2 schools, viz. the parochial school, situated near the church of Crathy, with a salary of 100 merks, besides session-clerk fees, and other quarterly payments; and one of the Society's schools in Braemar, with a salary of 14l. Sterling, and other perquisites.——The number of poor who receive supply is upwards of 70. The funds for their support are the weekly collections, the interest of 120l. at 5 per cent., and the



rent of a gallery in the church of Crathy, amounting in all to about 26l. Sterling. The late John Farquharson of Invercauld, and father of the present proprietor, mortified 5000 merks for the purpose of maintaining and educating some poor boys of the name of Farquharson at the charity schools.

*Roads and Bridges.*—The military road from Blairgowrie to Fort George goes through the parishes of Braemar and Crathy, which was completed in 1749, at the expense of government. Bridges were likewise built over all the rivers and rivulets upon this line of road, at the same expense. The county roads are made and kept in repair by the statute-labour. The service is indeed, for the most part commuted, and every man, between 16 and 60 years of age, is obliged to pay at the rate of 1s. 6d. yearly. The proprietors employ a proper road grieve, with a party, to work on days-wages, till the sum arising annually by this commutation is expended; and it is found, from experience, that there is more road made by this mode, and to much better purpose, than when the people performed their statute-labour. I cannot pass over this article of improvement, in justice to the memory of the late Mr. Farquharson of Monally, without mentioning how much the public in general, and this county in particular, are indebted to his disinterested and public spirited exertions. That gentleman, with a laudable spirit of patriotism, was the first person who undertook made roads in Aberdeenshire, which he carried on with exertion, and at a great expense, to a considerable extent, for several years before the 1745. Having, however, unfortunately engaged in the Rebellion, and being kept a prisoner for 18 years in England, the country was, during that period, deprived of his services. On obtaining his liberty, he immediately renewed his public spirited improvements, wherever he had any influence, but chiefly in the 5 parishes of Braemar, Crathy, Glenmuick, Tullich, and Glengarden (which, indeed, form a separate and distinct district of this county); and from that time till his death, which happened in the year 1790, he continued with unremitting attention, and at great expense, to forward the building of new, and the repairing of old bridges; the making of new, and repairing former roads; in which he was ably supported by Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld (whose abilities in directing and executing roads are very uncommon), and, in some degree, by all the gentlemen in the county: so that, upon the whole, it may with great propriety be asserted, that during the last 25 years, no part of the Highlands of Scotland, of the same extent, has gained more in roads and bridges by private subscription, than the 5 parishes above described.

*Advantages and Disadvantages.*—The 2 parishes of Crathy



and Braemar, in general, have many, perhaps more, advantages within themselves, than some of the neighbouring parishes; and the people, though not very industrious, are yet intelligent, humane, obliging, and much given to hospitality. But still much might be done to better their circumstances, were such branches of manufacture as the country is calculated for, established and carried on by persons of experience, ability, and spirit. As the soil is very favourable to the growth of flax, and as there is a great deal of wool annually exported, it is to be presumed, that the manufacture of woollen and linen cloth would be attended with the greatest success. There are likewise some good situations for bleachfields.

There is one disadvantage which this county in general labours under, and that is, the want of moss roads. The mosses, for the most part, lie at a distance of 2 or 3 miles from the tenants, and over almost inaccessible hills; by which means they are obliged to carry home their fuel on horseback. This makes them keep a greater number of horses than their farms can well bear; consequently the horses are of a small size: but were proper roads to be made, the tenants in general would keep larger horses and fewer of them, and would provide wheel carriages. This is clearly evinced upon the estate of Monaltry. The present proprietor, merely to accommodate his tenants, in the year 1790 and 1791, carried on and finished a very complete road to an inexhaustible moss. It is carried over the summit of a high hill, yet so well directed, that the acclivity is scarcely felt: the expense, no doubt, was considerable; but the consequence is, that since that period most of the tenants have provided themselves with carts, and, in a few years hence, it is very probable, the whole tenants on the estate will do the same.

Another disadvantage, which prevails in some places of the country, is the personal services of the tenants. Wherever the tenants are expected to thrive, personal services should be dispensed with and commuted. That which has longest kept up, is the providing a certain quantity of fuel for the master, yearly, with some long and short carriages. This interferes much with the labours of the husbandman, as his whole time is employed in providing his own and his master's fuel, from the time the seed is sown till the beginning of harvest. Thus he loses all that time in which he ought to provide manure for his land; and though there is limestone in great profusion near, or perhaps upon, his farm, yet he can derive no benefit from it. Several of the proprietors, however, have commuted their services. Were this mode generally adopted, and the tenants encouraged to build decent houses, it would conduce much to the comfort of the farmer, and the interest of the landlord.



There is a third disadvantage, and which is exceedingly pernicious, not only to this county, but almost to the whole North of Scotland; and that is, the depredation made on the sheep, game, and poultry by foxes and other vermin. There was a scheme planned some years ago by Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld, and carried into execution by him and the other heritors, for the preservation of sheep, game, and poultry, and for the destruction of foxes, wild-cats, pole-cats, eagles, hawks, &c., from which the parishes of Braemar, Crathy, Glenmuick, Tullich, and Glengarder, derived more real benefits, than perhaps from any other improvements that could be introduced into this county. It commenced the 15th January 1776; and before that period, the destruction of sheep was so great, that it is thought the value of the sheep annually killed by vermin, in the above parishes, was nearly equal to half the rent paid to the proprietors. The scheme was this: The heritors entered into a private subscription among themselves, out of which a premium was paid for every animal or bird that was brought in to the cashiers, by such persons as were authorised by the association to carry arms for the destruction of foxes, etc.; and who had been previously sworn not to kill game: and, it is believed, that out of more than 100 persons, who had warrants for this purpose, not one of them ever trespassed in that respect. The whole subscriptions in the 5 parishes amounted to about 40 guineas a-year; and the scheme continued for 10 years, with so great success, that during that period there were killed 634 foxes, 44 wild-cats, 57 pole-cats; 70 eagles, 2520 hawks and kites, 1347 ravens and hooded crows;——[Footnote.] For the first year, the premiums extended only to foxes, eagles, gosacks, and falcons; the second year, wild-cats, pole-cats, small hawks, and kites, were added; and the third year, ravens and hooded crows were also included.——besides all those which were destroyed by poison, or died of their wounds: and sheep were then in perfect safety to pasture at all times and seasons to the very boundary of where the scheme extended. Unfortunately, however, for this county, some of the heritors (for reasons best known to themselves) withdrew their subscriptions. The other subscribers were obliged, 8 years ago, to give up the scheme; the consequence of which is, that the destruction of sheep has gradually gained ground, and game of all kinds decreased in the same proportion. It is much to be regretted that the scheme was dropped; but the experiment has sufficiently evinced the following fact, viz. that if such an extensive track of mountainous country as the 5 parishes above described, where there is a great deal of wood, and where foxes and other vermin poured in from neighbouring countries as



mountainous as this, derived such real advantages from a scheme carried into execution on such a contracted scale as 40 guineas a-year; still greater advantages must be derived from a scheme of this kind, if it was extended over the whole Highlands of Scotland.

A fourth disadvantage is, the distance from a port [? post] town, which is 50 miles in any direction.——[Footnote.] I see with pleasure a branch of the post-office extended lately from Aberdeen to Kincardine O'Neil; but this country can derive little or no benefit from it, being still 33 miles distant from the Castletown of Braemar. Was the extension of this branch to be carried to that place, this whole country, instead of sending a man weekly to Cupar Angus for letters and newspapers, would put all their letters into this office to go round by Aberdeen, which would bring an additional revenue of 3d. at least, for every single letter, and would, it is presumed, more than indemnify government for the expenses incurred in the establishment of it. ——

*Antiquities.*—There is, upon the estate of Castletown of Braemar, the ruins of an ancient castle, built, as tradition reports, by King Malcolm Kenmore for a hunting seat. By the vestiges which still remain, it is obvious, that there was a very considerable building. The house stood on the top of a rock on the E. side of the water of Cluanadh; and the King having thrown a drawbridge across the river, to the rock on the opposite side, the parish of Braemar derived its original name of *Ceannandrochart* from that circumstance. On a little mound in the Haugh of Castletown stands the castle of Braemar. It was originally the property of Farquharson of Invercauld, and given to a second son of that family as his patrimony. About the end of Queen Mary's reign, these lands were exchanged with the Earl of Marr for the lands of Monaltry, and, soon after his accession to the estate, he built the present house. King William, after the Revolution, took possession of it for a garrison, and put some troops into it to keep the country in awe; but this had not the desired effect, for the country being of the opposite sentiments at the time, besieged the garrison, and obliged the troops to retire, under silence of night, in order to save their lives; and to save themselves from such troublesome neighbours for the future, they burnt the castle. In this state, it continued till the year 1715, when the whole Marr estates were forfeited. About the 1720, Lords Dun and Grange purchased from government all the lands belonging to the Erskine family; and about the 1730, John Farquharson of Invercauld, bought the lands of Castletown from Lords Dun and Grange. About the 1748, Mr. Farquharson gave a lease to government of the castle, and an enclosure of 14 acres of ground, for the space of 99 years, at 14l. Sterling of yearly rent; upon which the house was repaired (the walls being then



sufficient), and a rampart built round it, and it has, since that period, been occupied by a party of soldiers. At the expiration of the lease, or the evacuation of the troops, the house, with the enclosure, returns to Invercauld's family, without any melioration whatever.

On the lands of Monaltry, and on the N. bank of the river Dee, in a narrow pass, where there is not above 60 yards from the river to the foot of a high, steep, rocky hill, stands a cairn, known by the name of Carn-na-cuimhne, or Cairn of remembrance. The military road is carried along the foot of this hill, and through this pass. The tradition of the country is, that, at some period, the country being in danger, the Highland chieftains raised their men, and marching through this pass, caused each man lay down a stone in this place. When they returned, the stones were numbered; by which means it was known how many men were brought into the field, and what number was lost in action. Since that period, Carn-na-cuimhne has been the watch-word of the country. At that period, every person capable of bearing arms, was obliged to have his arms, a bag, with some bannocks in it, and a pair of new mended shoes always in readiness; and the moment the alarm was given that danger was apprehended, a stake of wood, the one end dipped in blood (the blood of any animal), and the other burnt, as an emblem of fire and sword, was put into the hands of the person nearest to where the alarm was given, who immediately ran with all speed, and gave it to his nearest neighbour, whether man or woman; that person ran to the next village or cottage (for measures had been previously so concerted, that every one knew his route), and so on, till they went through the whole country; upon which every man instantly laid hold of his arms, &c., and repaired to Carn-na-cuimhne, where they met their leaders also in arms, and ready to give the necessary orders. The stake of wood was called Croishtarich. At this day, was a fray or squabble to happen at a market, or any public meeting, such influence has this word over the minds of the country people, that the very mention of Carn-na-cuimhne would, in a moment, collect all the people in this country, who happened to be at said meeting, to the assistance of the person assailed.



A HOLIDAY ON THE HILLS.

---

Away from the din and the dust to the heather !  
Away with the roe to the Moor and the Ben !  
Where freedom and freemen cradle together  
As ever they will while mountains remain.

Away to the hills clad in heather and beauty,  
Where the struggles for freedom were won by our sires ;  
The sons like their sires weigh life less than duty,  
With courage that only the freeborn inspires.

The evergreen pine with perfume will greet you,  
And barking of deer from corries and glen,  
In their haunts the modest-plumed ptarmigan meet you  
Afar from the strife and the turmoil of men.

'Tis there on the hills you may gather fresh roses  
To blush in your cheek while a heart beat remains ;  
'Tis there 'mid her fountains Hygeia disposes  
New life-giving draughts to course through the veins.

J. REID, M.A.

*Backhill,  
Castle Fraser.*



## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.



By the death at Inverey, on the 20th March, of Mrs. Gruer of Craigview, there has passed away one whose kindness and hospitality will long be

remembered by more than one generation of Aberdeen mountaineers. Mrs. Gruer lived in her native glen all her life, and amid the hills and woods she knew and loved so well she kindly helped many a sorefoot traveller. Her husband, James Gruer, farmer and sheep dealer, died some dozen years ago. After his death she kept up the croft for some years, but with increasing age and infirmity she found herself unable to attend to the land, and the once prosperous steading has of late years borne a rather desolate appearance. Mrs. Gruer is survived by three daughters; one of them is in London, but the two at home have cheered her in her widowhood. Many a traveller, tired after a weary tramp from Rothiemurchus or Atholl, will long retain happy memories of her never-failing kindness. It seems singularly appropriate that she should have been laid to rest under the shadow of Morrone, when it was white with the long winter's snow, as her clear eyes were wont to scan the snowy lines of the hills with more affection even than when, in summer, they were purple with heather.

THE older members of the club will much regret to hear of the death of Mr. Macdonald on 9th May. He had an intimate knowledge of the

Western Cairngorms and was much in sympathy with the club's objects. By his death there has been removed one of the few that remain of the genuine old Highland caste. Born seventy-three years ago on Deeside, where his father, a native of the parish of Laggan, served for many years as an eminent deer-stalker in Mar, Mr. Macdonald came to Badenoch when quite a young man. On retiring from forest duties, Mr. Macdonald's father settled on the farm of Balchroick, where he died about fifty years ago, when Donald, being the eldest of the family of three sons and eight daughters, took up the management of the farm. His mother lived with him for thirty-five years after his father's death, after which two of his sisters took charge of the household. His brothers, as well as four of his sisters, predeceased him some years ago. As a neighbour and friend, Mr. Macdonald could hardly be excelled, the outcast and the stranger being invariably welcomed and sheltered at Balchroick. Of his hospitality poor wanderers took ample advantage, often going to Balchroick to the number of two or three at a time. An extensive reader of sound literature, and possessed of a retentive memory and sociable disposition, his company was always



instructive and interesting. As clerk of the School Board of Insh, as well as in other public capacities, Mr. Macdonald was held in great respect by all with whom he came in contact. He was always willing to help at social entertainments, and his masterly exposition of Highland violin music will not soon be forgotten by those who were privileged to hear him play.

A FRIEND and I left Aviemore about 8 p.m. on 4th July last, for Braeriach *via* Glen Eunach. The cairn was reached but not left before it was dark. With a little difficulty the route for the top of

FOUR  
CAIRNGORMS  
BY NIGHT.

Cairn Toul was followed over the Angel's Peak. The descent was made by Lochan Uaine; the echo at the top of the corrie could scarcely be better. It is at the dip between Cairn Toul and the Angel's Peak, as one stands a little over the crest and facing Cairn Toul. By the time the loch was reached it was broad daylight. We chose a bad line for the lower descent to the Dee. Then up Ben Muich Dhui over grass at first, but soon on boulders. The cairn was reached in mist shortly after 5 o'clock, as we had taken it leisurely. We were not the first that morning, for a party of four had been there at 3 o'clock, as was carefully recorded on over a dozen cards that had been left for the next comers to post, to prove that the quartette had been on the summit of the Ben.

On leaving the cairn of Ben Muich Dhui our troubles began, all arising from not implicitly following, in the thick mist, the map and compass. After a good deal of wandering we descended by the east slopes over much snow—I had never seen so much in July in Scotland before. Then turning to the left (north) we found ourselves above the rocks at the west end of Loch Avon. We descended nearly to the loch by a stone shoot; then up to Cairngorm, taking four hours between the tops of Ben Muich Dhui and Cairngorm.

The descent was made by Loch Morlich and Glen More. By this time everything was bathed in sunshine, and the scene, particularly at the loch, was a dream of beauty. We reached Aviemore platform in time for the forenoon train, though it was in the station before us. This of course is nothing to boast of as to either time or extent, seeing that six Cairngorm tops are now the recognised minimum, but we managed to enjoy ourselves thoroughly.—J. B.

SURELY there is no more lonely occupation than that of a deer watcher in a great forest, his season sometimes extending for a third of the year. The deer watcher is absolutely alone; unlike the shepherd DEER WATCHERS. he has not even a dog, unlike the lighthouse keeper he has nobody to relieve him. Should his bothy be in a glen where there is a right-of-way he may be favoured with the sight of an occasional passing tourist, but it is no part of his business to be unnecessarily seen by outsiders. Where his hut is on the march between two forests, or in a retired glen where mountain climbers trouble not, he is certainly secluded enough, and it may be that only his telescope reveals a human being for a whole week. Some watchers are allowed Sunday off, but even with this concession they are pretty much left to themselves.



Great opportunities are thus afforded for the study of red deer and their movements, and one can in a measure understand the often confident way in which stalkers express themselves as to coming on deer during the stalking season. Your deerstalker must be caught young and pass through various grades before he is considered competent to have a beat under his care, and to be sent out with the charge of a sportsman. Many watchers are expert fishers, and so the rod is often taken along and trout relieve the terrible monotony of their daily meals—not that fresh trout are always as much esteemed in the country as in town. The deer watcher is sensible enough to adapt himself to his calling, which after all has a charm of its own, and so soon begins to enjoy his solitary work.

His hours are early, but he can never be up before the deer, and like them he too can indulge in a siesta on the heather. Most watchers have had some peculiar experiences at night, though ghostly visitants are a thing of the past, even in the Highlands! Our first meeting with a deer watcher was much to our own relief. Our party had got benighted on the hills and having lost all sense of direction were beginning to feel rather uncomfortable. Suddenly one of us spied a faint glimmer; it was at once made for, though that entailed the fording of a river, but as we had been drenched earlier in the day that was a matter of small concern. In the circumstances we received a hearty welcome, and as our knapsacks were not altogether empty and there was much firewood and peat, we did not lack for comfort despite the absence of spring mattresses. Our host used an old bag as blind; on this occasion a corner had slipped down and to that we were indebted for the friendly beacon.

The talk was naturally of midnight adventures, but Donald was slow to speak much of such things, but after some punch he was more communicative. He had had his night terrors early in his career, but after the explanation of the first he became little inclined to trouble much about such matters. For several nights he had heard queer noises outside, most unaccountable they seemed. At last he summoned courage to venture forth, and there was a hind with her fawn, who it appeared frequented the immediate neighbourhood of his bothy at nights for the excellent pasture which surrounded it!

A less welcome visitor knocked him up at one in the morning—an escaped prisoner who took a hill route to put the police off his track. He spent the night in the bothy, and after breakfast went on his way—let us hope rejoicing, at all events he was grateful to his host. Another caller was a climber who had made a miscalculation as to the position of a more pretentious bothy, and so was glad of Donald's hospitality—and this was the beginning of a long friendship.

Donald's most peculiar experience, however, was a call one dark night in October from two men with two ponies. The men were gillies from a neighbouring forest who had lost their way so thoroughly that they were going south when they imagined they were walking in a contrary direction. That professional hillmen should lose themselves so close to their own glen created a bad impression on Donald, but they were of course entertained as well as circumstances permitted, resuming their search for venison early next morning. The story as Donald told it did not correspond with the



somewhat mysterious manner in which it was narrated, and it was only after some pressing that the denouement was given. It seemed he did not like their general appearance, though why he could not say, so when daylight came he was glad to get quit of them. And then he felt he had not heard the last of them—that came several years after, when first the one and then the other committed suicide in the same glen.

THE Spring Excursion was held on 3rd May to the Cromdale Hills, but full opportunity was taken of the week-end by several members. The

party took train to Cromdale, thence ascending to the CLUB "Jubilee Cairn," Creagan a' Chaise (2367 feet), the EXCURSIONS. highest point of the range. This summit is just within the basin of the Avon, though close to the meeting point of three counties—Banff, Elgin and Inverness. The horizon was not quite clear, but an excellent prospect was obtained, particularly of the snow-clad Cairngorms and of Morven of Caithness. The Rev. John M'Cowen, the minister of Cromdale, whose sudden death a few weeks thereafter has been so generally deplored, shewed the clubmen no small kindness, and under his guidance visits were paid to several interesting places in the parish. The Club dined at Nethy Bridge Hotel, the Chairman (Mr. James A. Hadden) presiding. The battle of the Haughs of Cromdale was fought over again, and reference made to the information in a certain volume that the prospect obtained from Creagan a' Chais is "the best view in Britain."

Ben Rinnes was again tackled as a Saturday Afternoon Excursion (the Eleventh), when Aberlour was the Club's base of operations on 5th June. The party drove to the foot of the hill and found the climb most interesting. Snow still lay in the corries and gullies, and the higher mountains had much white. The Club dined in the Aberlour Hotel, Mr. John McGregor in the chair, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. James A. Hadden.

Cairngorm was arranged for the celebration of the Club's coming of age on 26th June, Nethy Bridge being the headquarters. As, however, the Journal goes to press a few days before that date, an account of the proceedings cannot be given till next

NEW MEMBERS. Number.

THE following gentlemen have been admitted members of the Club :—Mr. Alfred A. Longden, Art Gallery, Aberdeen ; Mr. Fred R. Coles, National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh ; and Mr. John Dickson, Solicitor, Huntly.



*Continued from page 2 of Cover.*

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

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

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

VIII.—The entry money of members shall be 10s. 6d., and the annual subscription 5s. Members may compound future Annual Subscriptions by payments as follows:—members entered before 20th February, 1890, £1 1s.; members of fifteen years and over, £1 11s. 6d.; ten years and over, £2 2s.; five years and over, £3 3s.; and new members £5 5s., including entry money. 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.



