

THE  
**Cairngorm Club Journal.**

EDITED BY

ALEX. INKSON M'CONNOCHIE.

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# The Cairngorm Club.

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PRESIDENT,	-	H. E. The Right Hon. JAMES BRYCE, D.C.L., LL.D.
CHAIRMAN,	-	JOHN CLARKE, M.A.
TREASURER,	-	T. R. GILLIES, 181a Union Street, Aberdeen.
SECRETARY,	-	A. I. M'CONNOCHIE, 1243 Argyle Street, Glasgow.

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## RULES.

I.—The Club shall be called “THE CAIRNGORM CLUB.”

II.—The objects of the Club shall be : (1) to encourage mountain climbing in Scotland, with special reference to the 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 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

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A-WHEEL THROUGH THE HILLS IN WINTER.

BY REV. D. C. MACKAY.

THE reader who has neglected to keep a careful meteorological diary may find it difficult to credit the statement that we had three fine days last January. Nevertheless, it is so, and they fell on a certain Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. On the last of these memorable days I found myself "in the wilds of far Kintail" supported by a bicycle, whereas I was due in Cannich, Strathglass, on the following Saturday. The distance between the two places is about thirty-five miles—that is, on a computation about as rough as the road. I had originally intended leaving Kintail on the Saturday morning, but as Thursday turned out rather disappointing I re-adjusted my programme, and, in spite of the kindly advice of my host, I decided to start on the morrow at the break of day. Friends (?) advised me to put off until Saturday, and if the day proved unpropitious, I could then go round by road and rail! Ye who have seen the Stromeferry road, or who can see it even in contour, consider that this was seriously proposed as the first step in an alternative which was supposed to be pleasant compared with a journey "over the hills." After ten miles of this road I was to be allowed to rest over three hours in the train while it strolled along over sixty-three miles, mostly moorland. After that I should have only seventeen miles

on the Strathglass road to reach my destination—and the strath is so rugged and grand that it is impossible to dodge the scenery even on the high road itself. That night the snow appeared, and I told my host to “call me early.” When I woke next morning I had not been called and it was not early, though I found that my hospitable entertainer had been astir for some time. He told me that he did not mean to be a party to the folly of attempting to cross such hills in a winter storm. Though grateful (more or less) for his well-meant advice, I had known those hills under various aspects, and knew well where to lie low and evade their inclemency in case of special pressure, so I dressed, fed, and packed up, and then discovered that my kind adviser could not even see me off the premises as he had been suddenly commandeered by duty. However, I knew the ropes, but unfortunately I was disappointed in getting the boat on which I had counted to put me across the loch that rolled between me and my road. But in Kintail, where every man is ready to oblige and every second man has a boat, that was a small matter. I went to a likely cottage, knocked and hailed the inmates. The answer came back in strong Gaelic, “Get up, get up, there’s a gentleman at the door.” Two other doors were tried with similar results as far as expedition went, and before I had eventually contrived to get afloat I had the mortification to see my first-intended boatman parading afar by the shore.

The morning was not pleasant or promising. A strong rain-laden breeze from the west seized the crests of the ebbing waves and flung the spray unkindly in our faces as we rowed. Still the wind *was* from the west, and I was going to the east. Notwithstanding wind and wave we reached the further shore—the boatman turned his prow for home and the abandoned cyclist made for the hills in the grasp of the gale. For twelve miles at least there was a road which, though deteriorating mile by mile, still made cycling possible especially with such a power behind. In Killilan, where hills, whose nomenclature

entails an indiscriminate abuse of the alphabet, rise sheer on every side to a height of over 2,000 feet, the whole force of the storm seemed to be concentrated into the narrow glen of the Elchaig. The perspiration of the labouring blast showed in swathes and ripples against the green hillsides, but undismayed the bicycle swished along. With increasing elevation sleet appeared instead of rain, and it was high time to have rest and refreshment with kind friends at the Iron Lodge. On emerging after an hour under the kindly roof, the scene was white instead of green. Here, too, began the crux of the journey. At the famous Sgaird-lair the track rises more than 500 feet within a mile. Here there is no chance even of wheeling the bicycle, so angular and narrow is the path as it winds round bank and boulder, twisting and zigging and zagging and sometimes splitting in two in a vain endeavour to disguise the terrible steepness of the ascent. But with shoulder to wheel, all went well, especially as a strong shoulder had been lent for the occasion. The wind was now furiously belabouring us with a shower of miniature snow-balls. So furious grew the storm as we mounted, that we were fain to take shelter behind a triangular rock to await a mitigation. Nothing could be seen but the tearing drift of snow-flakes as the wind roared through the clefts of the corries. When the worst of this fury had been spent we resumed our way, and found that a number of stricken hinds had been seeking shelter around the corner of our friendly rock. Our path, faint enough even in open weather, was now no longer to be seen, but the day was brighter, and the lie of the land was sufficient guidance as to our general direction. He of the strong shoulder accompanied me still a few miles more over the wild and dreary watershed, and saw me safe across the Amhainn Sithidh, one of the head waters of the Cannich. From the other side he waved me farewell, and turned his face to the blast. By crossing this stream I got a much better path, leading from Benula Lodge to the west end of the forest. It had now been fair for some

time, but the snow was deep enough on the path to conceal all its asperities of surface. Here I made the agreeable discovery that there were others out in these wilds, for there on the path was a very recent track of a man and a horse. I assumed that they had gone after hinds, as the track went hillwards, in the direction opposite to mine. Here the undulations and the sinuosities of the path were often of a very pronounced description, as is the way with those bridle-paths on the hills, but I was able to ride most of the descents and parts of what might, on account of the contrast, have been mistaken for levels. This mode of progress was a little faster than walking; it also afforded a considerable amount of sport, sometimes threatening to break many more things than the monotony of the way. I had always to be on the alert, ready to spring off on the shortest notice where a frost-loosened boulder had rolled down and blocked the way, or where a merry streamlet went dashing through the path. Fortunately the bicycle was specially built in view of such experiences, and seemed on the whole to enjoy it as much as its rider. As I rode and hopped and walked along in this manner, I amused myself with a little practice *à la* Sherlock Holmes with regard to those who had gone to the hills. Thus I soon discovered that there were two men, one rather oldish who had taken to the saddle on attacking the steeper ground. As he rode, the old man carried a small rifle slung over his shoulder and a walking stick in his hand. As they rounded a bend in the path he had stopped his pony for a bit, while his companion spied at a few deer away up under a rock. There was nothing warrantable among them, however, and our friends went on, eventually scaring the deer as they were now nowhere to be seen. One of the men was a smoker, but he had lost the lid of his pipe shortly before; he also wore a full beard. At all events such were my findings from the following data: The age was betrayed by the step before the rider mounted, and by the fact that two rifles and two sticks were set against the bank while the

younger man went round to the other side of the pony, evidently to hold the stirrup—all this being revealed by the eloquent snow. Afterwards I saw also that the old man had been a-foot for about a mile only. Probably he was out of practice in the saddle, and so would naturally want a rest. As the smaller rifle rested against the bank, the shoulder sling had trailed in the snow, and when they came to the spying place the man with the glass had had only one rifle—the large one—and one stick to rest on the ground. I saw exactly where the deer had been by sighting along the mark left on the snowy bank where the glass had rested, and I noticed where the beard of the owner had fretted the snow. There were not many deer, as the glass had not ranged around but had been directed only to one point, and there was nothing worth while or some attempt would have been made, as the stalk should have been an easy one. As to the pipe-lid, I found it where the pedestrian, on lighting up, had thrown away the wad of paper that had secured the plug of tobacco remaining over in the pipe from a former smoke. I was sorry that I could not make out whether the old man ever took a whiff or not, and I am still wondering about it to this day. Probably I shall never find out, but at all events I did not allow him a draw on that part of the way where I retraced their steps. I trust they had good sport with the hinds, but that also must remain the secret of the silent hills. After many ups and downs, I came alongside Loch Lungard, where the path was very flinty and also very slushy. These conditions did not make for pleasant riding, but presently I noticed that at the edge of the loch there was a strip of nice, solid looking sand with only an inch or two of water gently lapping over it, so I turned my mount literally into the loch, and enjoyed a spell of good surface, though the going was heavy owing to the considerable resistance offered by the water. After a short distance a bank projecting into the loch compelled me to desist from my aquatic acrobatics, and just as I was regaining *terra*

*firma* I came face to face with a pedestrian of the professional sort—whence or whither bound or why, no man might tell, but his astonishment seemed to be greater than mine when he beheld the apparition of a cyclist calmly emerging, as it must have appeared, from the depths of the lonely mountain loch in the midst of a winter storm. In order to reassure him, I remarked that it was a fine day, but instead of vouchsafing an answer in the affirmative, or even in the negative, he merely stood and gazed after me. I reflected that probably the poor man was a bit eccentric! Thus I plodded along by the foot of the massive Beinn Fhionnlaidh, which gives its name to Benula forest and lodge. The two names are similarly pronounced, but the latter spelling, now commonly used, is merely a modern barbarism. At the lodge, the old name of which was Lub-na-damph, “a rough road is joined once more,” as the Contour Road Book informs us. True, it was rough, especially in winter, but still it was a road, and so was very welcome. The day was now bright and sharp, and promised hard frost in the evening. After a few miles of Glen Cannich, I again knocked at a hospitable door, and there enjoyed very grateful refreshments and a rest that was all too long. When I attempted to resume my journey, I found that the wheels simply refused to revolve, being stuck fast in the ice which had formed from the slush with which they were so completely encrusted on arrival. This was removed with an axe, and a spin down the first hill soon restored the wonted freedom to the wheels. The stars were now twinkling like merry eyes, and the moon already glorified the scene. The remaining run to Cannich was comparatively simple in spite of the snow. As I went, the deer streamed across the road, escaping hillwards from the river banks where they had been making the best of the bad foraging, some of the last comers being occasionally cut off in their flight when I had a good slope in my favour. And so the miles sped, down the long bare glen, through the birch woods, to Cannich and dinner.



## BEN NARNAIN AND BEINN DOIREANN.

BY JAMES STEWART.

SOME time ago I contracted a malady the symptoms of which manifest themselves periodically in an intense desire to roam over the mountains, and its hold upon me becomes stronger as the years roll by. As the holidays come round, I, in company with one or two kindred spirits, invariably hie to the hills, for, as the poet says:—

“The breath of those great mountains  
Is life and health to me.”

On Christmas Day of 1909 I formed one of a party of four who descended on Arrochar by the early train from Glasgow. The morning was very dark and rather unpromising on our arrival, but by the time we had rounded the head of Loch Long it was more hopeful. We turned on to the hill where Allt Sugach comes tumbling down from the corrie of that name. Even at this season the colouring of the hillsides was pleasing; the rich bronze tint of the withered brackens, together with the grey green hues of the lichen-covered rocks, prevailed at the outset, whilst higher up the pristine whiteness of the snow gave a lighter touch to the scene.

A short scramble up the burnside brought us within the crescent of the corrie, and the snow which had previously been present only as a beautiful vision began to assert itself in a more materialistic sense. Courses of streams and tracks of bog were cunningly hidden beneath a white covering, and at intervals some unlucky wight, trusting his weight to the apparently firm footing, would find himself crunching through the crust of a snow bridge, and plunging into a burn which had been tunnelling its way beneath, or sinking into a hidden morass.

The cliffs forming the wings of the corrie rose abruptly on either side, and in front of us, heavily coated in snow

from base to summit, rose the ridge which forms the top wall of the corrie, and which unites Crois with Ben Narnain. In a sky of intense blue there overhung this ridge a great white cloud; we afterwards discovered that it was snow blown from the breast of the mountain, which was high above the ridge. All around us little white puffs of snow, raised by wandering whirlwinds, were continually thrown up from myriads of rocky projections, like jets of steam spouting from a host of geysers. So much for the scene in front; looking backward we were charmed with a glorious prospect. Ben Lomond, an ermine robe about his shoulders, his forehead adorned with a single rose-coloured cloudlet, dominated the landscape. As we waited, the sun stole up behind the ramparts of cloud that hung beyond him, and crowned with gold the surrounding snow-clad heights, whilst fairy wands of light changed the stray cloudlets into apparitions of ethereal beauty. And while on high were visions of loveliness, yet the beauty of our surroundings was apparent even in the snow beneath our feet. We dwelt with pleasure on the graceful curves and fantastically fluted ornamentation into which it had been so cunningly shaped by the wind; to describe its marvellous gradations of shade is beyond my power.

After a spell of stiff climbing the summit of the ridge was gained; there we were exposed to the full fury of the blast, as it swept along keen and biting from the snow-clad mountain fastnesses of the frozen north, in search of more genial climes in which to soothe its bitter temper. As it tore along amongst the rocky pinnacles, it roared out a strange weird music which was at once fascinating and fearful. Then came a struggle up the last snow bank, during which we were subjected to a fusillade, the ammunition consisting of chunks of ice and frozen snow, which were hurled along by the gale. Amidst this bombardment we at length reached the cairn that marks the highest point of the hill, 3040 feet above sea level. Our exertions were rewarded by a vision entrancing beyond description. Glancing over the edge of the precipice we saw Loch Long

like a great blue sword cutting deep into the country. At the head of the loch the village of Arrochar, resembling a toy town, snuggled beneath its sheltering trees. Almost due south, and looking so near as to seem within easy jumping distance, Ben Arthur, the grotesque "Cobbler," and his Alter Ego looked festive in their Christmas garb; round towards the west was Beinn an Lochain, and skirting his base, in the depths of Glen Croe, the road wound its way to the shores of Loch Fyne. Our vision rested for a moment on Ben Ime, the highest mountain in the vicinity, then on Ben Vorlich, at the foot of which lies Loch Sloy, from which the Macfarlanes took their war-cry in the fighting days of old. Beyond these in all directions was a veritable sea of mountain giants, their snowy covering bringing out every corrie and crevice with an almost microscopical distinctness. And as we looked upon those stern old mountains, arrayed in the glory of winter, we could say with the poet:—

"Who sees them in their summer hours  
Sees but half their beauty,  
And knows not half their powers."

Lying amidst a circle of white hills, Loch Ard, reflecting back the deep blue of the sky, next held our attention; then we looked towards Loch Lomond, over which the lordly Ben kept guard. Long we lingered upon the mountain top, and let the feast of beauty sink into our souls, and reluctantly commenced the descent, which was accomplished without incident.

Beinn Doireann, whose fine pyramidal form as seen from the horseshoe bend on the railway between Tyndrum and Bridge of Orchy presents such a striking feature in the landscape, was our objective on the Glasgow Spring Holiday this year. At Bridge of Orchy station a dense mist overhung everything, and but for the station-master's putting us on to a fence that runs up the hillside to the corrie between Beinn an Dothaidh and Beinn Doireann, we should have had some trouble in discovering the

whereabouts of the mountain. After about fifteen minutes walk we emerged from the mist, and dispensing with the fence as guide, took a way of our own up a small snow-filled gully on the western face of the mountain within a few yards of the cliff, and so on to the top of the ridge. A cairn on a height in front caused some of us to think we had reached the summit in record time, but, like most other mountains, the great reaches that from below appear telescoped up into a little space opened out and stretched themselves before our eyes into their true proportions. From this elevation we glanced upward towards the higher slopes of Beinn Doireann, which we had yet to climb, then we looked down our line of ascent into Glen Orchy, a great cauldron of boiling mists, beyond which rose a wall of rugged mountains. The most prominent summits were Ben Cruachan, Stob Ghabhar and other crests of the Black Mount, and the great white mass of Ben Nevis towering over all. We crossed a snow-field which covered the whole top of the mountain and extended down into the large corrie on its eastern side. With the exception of about twenty yards on a narrow ridge leading to the summit of the mountain, which was frozen hard and slippery, the snow was in fine condition. This ridge was ornamented on one side by a large snow cornice, the other side sloped downward with startling steepness towards the valley, and we were just a little anxious till we got our novice safely beside the cairn.

Whilst we were seated by the cairn, a tall column of cloud rose silently and swiftly from Glen Lyon, waving its ghost-like arms over us, and breathing its chill damp breath on our faces as it floated upward; then it vanished as swiftly and as silently as it came. Excepting this momentary visitation, perfect atmospherical conditions prevailed, and a magnificent panorama of mountain scenery was grouped around. From the distant peaks of Arran in the south to mountains in the north lying away beyond the towering heights of Ben Nevis; and from the Paps of Jura and Ben More in Mull rising out of the western sea,

to the multitudinous summits of Beinn a' Ghlo, and the giant ranges of the Cairngorms on the eastern horizon, every mountain within that wide area was clearly defined. The vastness and grandeur of this scene, the feeling of space which it conveyed, no adjective or combination of adjectives can adequately express. In Glen Orchy the mists had rolled away, and in its depths were a microscopical station and line of railway, along which panted trains of Lilliputian dimensions. Truly man and his works fall into their true perspective when viewed from the mountain tops! Basking in sunshine at the foot of a range of snow-clad heights, Loch Tulla, surrounded by its fringe of forest, and one tiny islet floating on its bosom, made a pretty picture; whilst Glen Orchy, with its river meandering to Loch Awe amidst a host of "proud mountains," formed one of the outstanding features amidst a plethora of scenic beauty.

Traversing Beinn Doireann over its entire length, we descended into the corrie that separates it from Beinn an Dothaidh, where we rested awhile. As I sat amongst some withered heather, watching at times several ravens as they circled about the grim precipices that flank both sides of the corrie, and at times looking across the glen at a range of hills with a very decided snow-line along their sides, and a small lochan nestling at their feet; or listening to the music of many waters as they came tumbling down the hillside, bringing their tribute from the snow-fields on the mountain tops, I fell into a reverie. I wondered whether the spirit of the old Gaelic Bard did not dwell amidst the scenes that he loved so well, and of which he sang so sweetly:—

Ben Doran I saw yesterday  
And trod its gorges gray,  
Amidst its well-known dells and glens,  
No stranger did I stray.  
And think how joyful 'twas of yore  
To seek that mountain high,  
As the sun shone o'er the morning hoar  
And the deer were belling by.

## EASTER ON BEN CHONZIE.

BY WILLIAM M. DEAS.

ON the afternoon of Easter day 1910, the friends who had kindly motored me to the Inn of Amulree left me there with my knapsack. The early part of the day was unpromising, not so the evening. There was a keenish touch of frost, and as Amulree Hotel stands 900 feet above sea-level the "ingleneuk" was decided to be the most comfortable place at which to spend the evening. (*En passant*, Glenquach is undoubtedly the Glennaquoich of "Waverley," and "Amulree" sounds very like Uaim-an-Righ). About 8 o'clock, and just before moonrise, I was called outside, and had the good fortune to see a wonderful display of the Northern Lights—a display which called forth much comment from the following week's newspapers. This phenomenon is supposed, in autumn at least, to presage a storm which occurs as a rule three or four days later. On this occasion, however, it was followed by a week's beautifully dry and sunny weather.

Next morning there were eight degrees of frost and the ground was white. "Mine Host" had departed early in the morning for market at Perth, but I got the "weather" from a shepherd, and one can nearly always rely upon a shepherd's twelve hours' prognostication. His pronouncement cheered me much. The morning was bright and clear, with a sky only slightly flecked with filmy clouds. At 10.15 I left Amulree, and taking the road which runs westward along the southside of Loch Freuchie (resuscitated trout loch), I passed the old and now rather pathetically empty village of Auchnafauld. Immediately beyond the U.F. Church I left the "broad road" and took to the "narrow path," and to the hill, my aim being Auchnafree farmhouse in Upper Glen Almond. The wild and beautiful pass between the corries of Meall nam Fuaran (2361 ft.)

and Beinn na Gainimh (2367 ft.) contains two lochans. A fearsome and treacherous morass lies between them, by which I should not care to journey on a dark night. The first view of Auchnafree,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles distant, is obtained from the narrowest mountain cleft that I have ever seen. The day had become very hot, and Glen Almond in the hollow looked drowsy, with the smoke rising lazily from the farmhouse chimneys. Beyond, and to the southwest of Auchnafree, stands Ben Chonzie, 3048 ft. high, almost midway between Crieff and Loch Tay at Lawers. After getting directions from a shepherd, I took to the right at Glen Almond and splashed across the ford at the cottage  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Auchnafree. From this point up to the ridge, marked 2231 ft. on the survey map, the climbing was easy. Indeed Ben Chonzie is at any other time a very easy climb, but the last 800 feet of mountain were on this day for the most part covered with snow. The shepherd at Auchnafree had informed me that on the cold side of the hill the snow was hard and would bear my weight. I proved the truth of his words as I passed over the final ridge about 100 yards from the sharp snow crest, which, judging from the dip of the fence, here and there showed a depth of ten to fifteen feet or even more.

The view from the top of Ben Chonzie was one I shall never forget; it was on a spring morning unspeakably beautiful. There was not even sufficient wind to blow one's cap off, and I did not need to sit at the lee side of the cairn to eat my sandwiches nor afterwards to light my pipe. But for the endless number of heather burnings, the panorama of snow-covered mountains would have been perfect; nevertheless, the straight columns of smoke arising from them made the picture rather weird and fantastic. It seemed as if I could have tossed one of my biscuits on to Ben Lawers. The two twin peaks of Ben Voirlich and Stuc-a-Chroin and those of Ben More and Am Binnein were exquisitely outlined in sunshine and shadow. The view down Glen Turret towards Crieff finally drew my attention; but time was passing, and wishing to rejoin my friends at

Crieff I struck off down the spur to the west of Loch Turret. At this point it seemed to me strange that there should be so much snow on the south side of the mountain. The shepherd had made no mention of it. It struck me afterwards, however, that he must have thought that I should return to Auchnafree, or take the north side of Ben Chonzie till I got down towards Lochan Uaine, whence I might conveniently reach Glen Turret. Neither of these routes appeared to me attractive, and, but for a long and inconveniently broad snow slope of uncertain depth and certain softness and rottenness, the best way seemed that on which I had decided.

To test the narrower parts of the snow belt was tedious. There were treacherous murmurings of hidden brooks, and the snow offered no secure foothold, so seeking a part of the slope whose extent might be estimated with some certainty, I strapped my knapsack on my chest, and lying flat on my back glissaded rather moistly but withal merrily down the slope. The trough I cut was quite six inches deep, and was distinctly visible from a considerable distance. After a scramble over rather steep ground, during which the upper of one of my fishing brogues gave way, I reached Loch Turret.

By the shore of this picturesque loch I sat down to rest and watch the sunlit ripples of the water. But the sun was sinking behind Carn Chois, and unwillingly, and with many a backward glance, I left this charming place. For over six hours I had seen but one human being. Near Crieff I met the Glen Turret gamekeeper, who upbraided me with my folly, "forbye being alane," in trusting to the snow on the warm side of the hill.

Be that as it may, the small spice of adventure added to the pleasure of a well remembered day among the hills.



## THE CLUB'S SPRING MEET.

BY JOHN CLARKE, M.A.

THE Club's headquarters for the week-end, April 30th to May 2nd, were fixed at Dufftown, which is a very convenient centre for the district extending from the Deveron at the Cabrach to the Spey by Aberlour and Craigellachie. The region, though not of the altitude of the Cairngorms, abounds in hills of 2000-2500 ft., and is full of picturesque and interesting scenery. At so early a period of the year the higher mountains do not present very great attractions to those who have but a limited time to spare. They are covered deeply with snow, but in many places the snow is not firm, and the going is in consequence rather treacherous. This state of matters is transitional, having neither the charm of summer nor yet the grand features of the winter scene.

On Saturday, April 30th, a small party of the Club made the ascent of Ben Rinnes, descending by way of Aberlour and Craigellachie. The conditions on the higher slopes, say over 2,000 ft., were wintry in the extreme. Large quantities of snow, mostly soft but partially frozen, lay everywhere, almost forming a continuous snowfield. The peat-hags were filled up and at places difficult to negotiate, and there was an almost total absence of animal and even of vegetable life. A keeper, indeed, from Speyside was on the outlook on one of the peaks for a fox which had been committing depredations on the game, but that animal's intelligence would have greatly belied its reputation had Reynard ventured to show snout in such a blizzard. The views withal were very fine; that over the Moray Firth to Ben Wyvis and the northern hills was particularly impressive.

On Monday, May 2nd, a party of a dozen or so travelled by the morning excursion train from Aberdeen to Dufftown, where they were joined by a few members who

had spent the week-end at the Fife Arms there. A party of sixteen all told drove to Glenfiddich Lodge where they were met by Mr. Donald Lindsay, who was to be guide and conductor for the day. The destination was Coryhabbie—or as the old map has it, Corchabbie, a form more consonant with the local pronunciation—which is reached by an easy path from the Lodge. The ascent was made by thirteen members, but as one of the party remarked, Mr. Lindsay's presence was a sufficient guarantee against ill-luck, had any one happened to be a victim of the silly superstition popularly attached to the number. The company included two ladies who fully vindicated their claims as mountaineers.

The views enjoyed from the cairn of Coryhabbie were wide and varied, all the familiar Donside and Deeside hills being clearly distinguishable, while the central mass of the Cairngorms with their sparkling snowfields dominated the prospect toward south and south-west. The mass of hills to the west was less distinct; north the prospect was also a little blurred. Nothing could exceed the impressiveness of this ocean of mountains, all more or less completely snowclad, with their individual features of shape toned down, it is true, but showing in the sunlight reflected from their mantle of snow like a fairy scene. To leeward of the summit of Coryhabbie a meeting of the Club was, according to use and wont, duly constituted. Though there was no formal business to transact, the meeting was in a sense historic, for the Chairman intimated that Mr. McConnochie, the indefatigable Secretary, who has held that office since the inception of the Club in 1888, had informed him that this was to be the last Spring Excursion at which he could be present as Secretary. The Chairman added that he was confident that he represented the feelings not only of members present but of all the members of the Club, in giving expression to the very great regret that would be felt at Mr. McConnochie's impending resignation. The reasons, it may be added, are

wholly personal, due to Mr. McConnochie's removal of residence to Glasgow.

The descent was made by way of Glen Fiddich, where opportunity was given of observing the source of the Fiddich, or rather the second source, where it issues in force from the ground after a passage of a mile underground; the Elfhouse or Elvecave, a curious subterranean retreat, which extends in cavelike form beneath the rocks for a considerable distance; the remains of an eagle's nest which the shooting tenant, in default of local assistance, had with his own hands pulled down; together with other features of a very picturesque glen. The deer, too, were on all sides, very numerous and very tame. There are said to be 2000 in the forest, which includes the valleys of the Fiddich and the Black Water, and the annual bag is restricted to 60 stags and 70 hinds. At the moment the creatures were all rather out of condition, shedding horns and hair; the "dun deer" seemed a most suggestive designation. At the Lodge opportunity was given of examining some good heads, a curious water clock, and several interesting old prints and plans.

On returning to Dufftown the party dined together at the Fife Arms, and subsequently travelled by the return excursion train, arriving in town about 10 o'clock,

The weather throughout was glorious, the excursion was enjoyable in every respect, and not least in the drive, especially the homeward journey under the westering sun with the deep sloping shadows of the Glen. Everyone had had a good time, and we felt grateful that the Spring holiday had been favoured with such weather as had made it, not only to the Club but to so many thousands of our fellow townfolk, a recreation and refreshment to both body and spirit.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES FROM AVIEMORE.

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

*Corr.-Mem. Soc. Ant. Scot.*

THE stretch of country between Aviemore and Boat of Garten seems to contain a considerable number of relics of antiquity, cairns, stone-circles, and hill-forts. In a previous

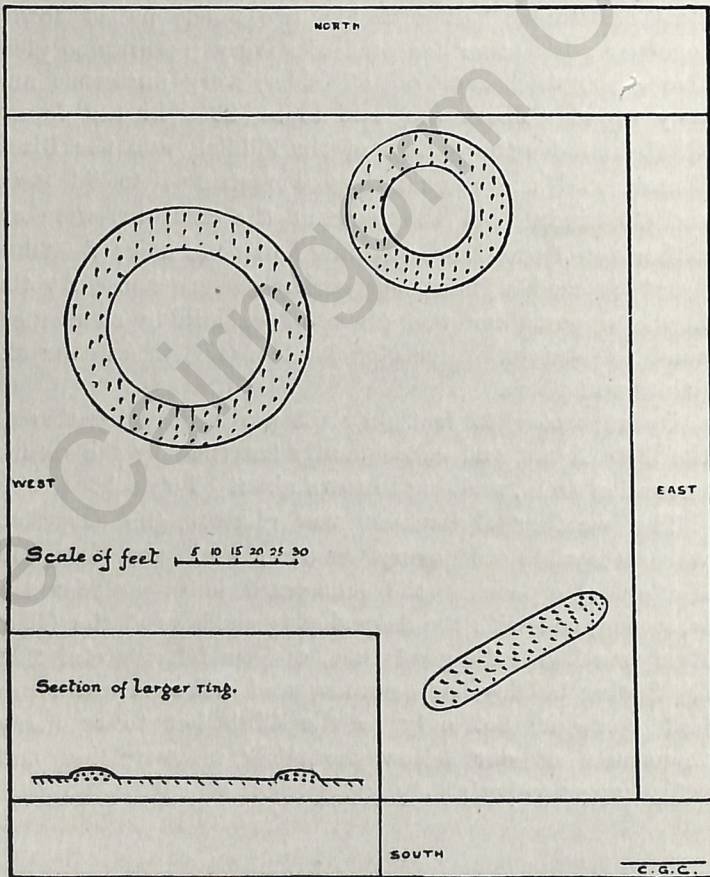


Fig. 1.—Cairns on Grenish Moor.

paper (Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot. XL. 245 and C. C. J., V. 151), I reported the survey of stone-circles at Aviemore and Grenish, as well as one at Delfour, and in this paper I wish to report on some cairns in the Grenish Moor, on the fort above Avielochan and that on Pityoulish Hill, and on the excavation of the Avielochan cairn.

*Cairns on Grenish Moor.*

The land along the east side of the highway running north from Aviemore is conveniently spoken of as Grenish Moor. Parts of it are under cultivation or grass, but much of it is heather-clad, and was till recently under timber. This moorland contains a large number of cairns, some separate and scattered, and some in groups.

In his history of the Province of Moray, Shaw gives an account of the Battle of Cromdale, fought in 1690, and says that some of the defeated clansmen were pursued up the valley of the Spey, and "on the Muir of Granish near Aviemore some were killed." Local tradition associates this incident with some of the cairns, and specially with a group in a hollow just south-west of Avielochan. This group (fig. 1.) can be seen from the highway, and consists of two ring mounds and a straight ridge. The ring mounds are sixty and forty feet in diameter respectively, the bank being about ten feet wide; the ridge is about forty feet long and eight feet wide. They are all quite obviously artificial, and seem to consist of a low piling of stones, now almost entirely hidden in turf and heather. There is no appearance of standing stones, nor, indeed, of any arrangement of the stones.

About a quarter of a mile to the N.E. of Loch-nan-Carraigean, and in a slight hollow about a hundred yards east of the old moorland road to Boat of Garten, I came across a number of cairns lying near together, and with the help of Mr. Robert Anderson, Editor of the *Aberdeen Daily*

*Journal*, I made a general survey of them (fig. 2). There are seventeen of them, fourteen circular, two long ridges,

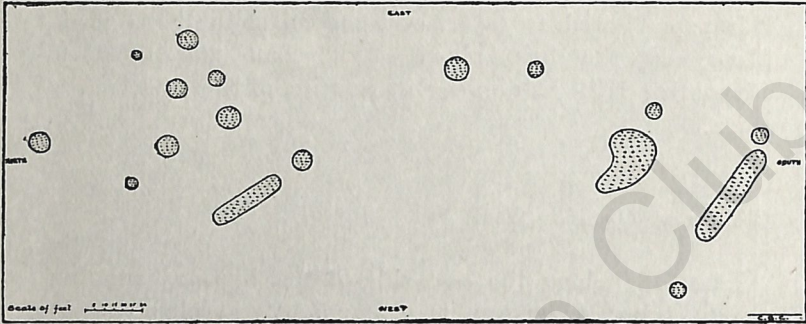


Fig. 2.—Cairns on Grenish Moor, N.E. of Lochnan Carraigeon.

and one "Africa" shaped in plan. The circular ones vary in diameter from five feet to twelve feet; the two long ones are forty and fifty-three feet long respectively, and seven and a half and nine feet wide. The "Africa" one is about thirty-eight feet long, and about twenty-five feet in greatest breadth. They rise but slightly above the surrounding surface, and are plainly made of piled stones, now largely overgrown with moorland plants. There is no appearance of any standing stones, nor any regular placing of stones.

Similar cairns occur scattered on the Tullochgrue, the partly cultivated hill in the Rothiemurchus Forest, usually in pairs. One of these was cut through by gillies quarrying for road material. Under the outside layer of turf and peaty earth, it showed a layer of largish pebbles laid close together and slightly domed, and then a layer some four inches thick of dark coloured earth resting on the pan earth. Examination of some of this dark earth revealed nothing of interest, nor did I see any appearance of charcoal in it. But examination of larger quantities might, of course, yield other results.

Another cairn attracted my attention. It lay in a wood on the west side of the highway, and very near a partly ruined little bridge on General Wade's military road, which

just here is very well defined. This cairn was more than twenty feet in diameter, was constructed of large stones, and had evidently been disturbed. Enquiry brought out an interesting bit of folk-lore. A man that dreams of finding money in a recognisable place will find money if he searches in that place. Accordingly someone having dreamed that he found money in this place searched the cairn—but did not find money, though he is said to have found human bones in a sort of cist constructed of slabby stones.

The notion of the existence of treasure in these cairns seems pretty general, and I rather wonder that so many of them remain undisturbed by searchers. When excavating at Avielochan I was several times asked, half jocularly, perhaps, whether I was searching for treasure; and on each occasion I took good care to explain that treasure in the sense of money or valuables was not to be expected in such places, but that their structure and arrangement gave interesting information, and that articles of archæological interest might be found, and should always be reported to competent authorities. It is pretty certain that interesting things are found at times, and that some of them fail to be reported. I had experience of such a case. On Mr. Mackintosh's farm at Avielochan there had long been an ancient cairn of very big stones, and this had gradually been covered by a pile of small stones cleared from the field. Mr. Alex. Sinclair, the county roadman, in whose cottage we were staying, a year or two ago removed all these small stones and used them as road-metal, thus revealing again the old cairn. Last year Mr. Mackintosh wanted to plough the part of the field occupied by the cairn, which seems to have been of considerable size, and he got Mr. Sinclair's help in breaking and removing the big stones. Under one of these stones Mr. Sinclair found a bronze pin, all thickly coated with verdigris. To see what metal it was made of, he beat out and spoiled the point of it. Finding it not gold he gave it to the farmer's son, Alec. When I heard of this matter, I asked to see the pin, and then to bring it to Edinburgh. It is figured here, and

seems to me to be slightly different in pattern from any previously shown in the Museum of the Society of Antiqu-



Fig. 3.—Bronze Pin found in a cairn at Avielochan.

aries of Scotland. It is four inches in length, and the head is round and flat, with projecting shoulders where it narrows to the pin. When first found the point was perfect. The metal is somewhat pitted and roughened by rusting. The pin is not unlike such as have been used for fastening a plaid or shawl when a brooch is not used.

At my request, Mr. Alexander Sinclair, the finder, and Mr. Alexander Macintosh, the owner, have consented to add the pin to the Museum collection.

On the Grenish Moor I saw and noted two other ring mounds. One was close to the west edge of Loch-nan-Carraigean. It had a diameter of about fifty feet, and was thickly covered with turf and heather. It was possible to imagine the existence of a small inner circle. The other ring mound was close to the main road-side, just opposite our cottage. Its diameter was about forty-eight feet, and the inside flat was not more than fourteen feet across. The western face seemed to show a few stones of large size bounding the lower part of the mound. The eastern part of the mound was broken by a gap about three feet wide, and at the northern side of this gap there seemed to be a low cairn about fourteen feet across. The whole is densely covered with turf and heather.

#### *Fort on Pityoulish Hill.*

Pityoulish Hill lies on the east side of the River Spey, nearly two miles in direct line and seven by the nearest road, from our quarters at Grenish. It is the most westerly part of the Nettin or Kincardine Hills, and its western face boldly overlooks Loch Pityoulish. The fort is situated on one of its small northerly knolls, at an elevation of about one thousand feet, that is some three hundred



feet above the low ground. The fort is circular, about twenty-eight feet wide inside. The walls seem to have been of dry stone masonry, and are now in almost complete ruin. No part remains standing more than about four feet high, but the quantity of stone scattered down the face of the knoll is enough for walls nine feet high. A curious feature of the site is that while it commands a wide stretch of open country *down* the Spey valley, past Boat of Garten, Nethy Bridge, and Grantown, its outlook in the opposite direction is entirely blocked by a neighbouring knoll. This next knoll, scarcely one hundred yards distant, while having the same northerly outlook, commands also the view across Loch Pityoulish and away beyond Aviemore. This seems to suggest that the fort was an outpost against invasion from the north and north-east. But I could not at all see what it was intended to defend, nor where the defenders were to obtain water.

*Fort on Tor Beag of Ben Ghuilbnich.*

This fort is on the west side of the River Spey, less than half a mile north-west of Avielochan, and overlooking the main road about half-way between Laggantygown and Avielochan farm-house. I was first told of it by Mr. Wm. Grant when I was visiting his cairn, and he pointed out to me the small hill on which it lay, though from below nothing can be seen of the fort, because of the dense growth of birch and juniper. When I went to see it I had the good fortune to meet with Mr. Mackintosh, on whose farm it is, and he accompanied me on my first visit.

The small Tor, or detached hill, is an outpost of Ben Ghuilbnich, from which it is separated by a deep and narrow ravine running down northwards. The hill-top is somewhat oval in plan, with a length of over two hundred feet. About twenty feet below the highest part, a terrace completely encircles the hill. The terrace is about six feet wide, and about seven hundred and thirty feet in circumference. It is entirely artificial, and in some parts towards the north-east the stones used in its construction can be

seen, but mostly it is plant covered. The access to the fort is from the south. Here a zigzag roadway, still fairly visible, leads up the most gently sloping part of the hill. In each of its two sharp angles is a massive block of granite, suggesting points of defence. At one section of the upper part of the road it is difficult to avoid thinking that the numerous rough stones lying on the hill-side below the road are the remains of a protecting wall, though there is certainly now no semblance of arrangement among them.

At the top of this access are the ruins of the defences of the entrance to the fort. Here the encircling terrace rises somewhat on each side, and narrows. In the plan (fig. 4)

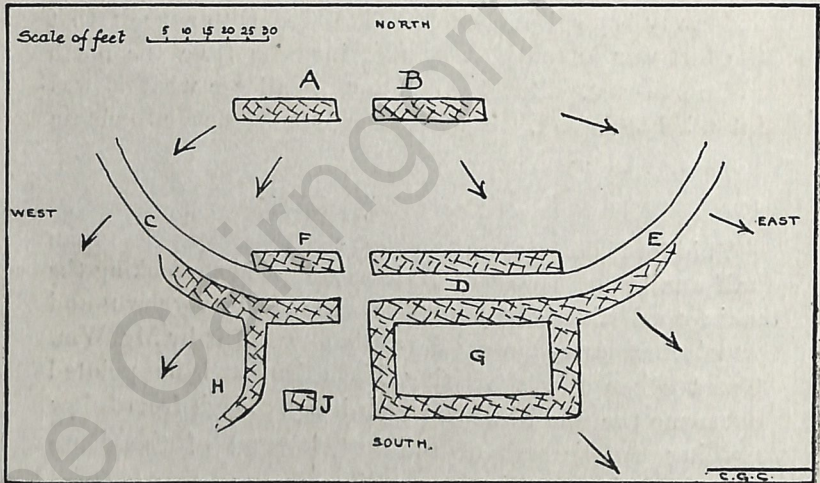


Fig. 4—Entrance to the Fort on Tor Beag.

C D E shows the run of the terrace. At A and B are the inner defence walls, that at A still showing stones built up wall-wise, all the others being in utter ruin. From A and B the ground falls sharply to the outer defence and beyond it, the fall being greatest on the east side. The arrows show the direction of the fall of the ground, which is least steep along the line of the entrance passage. At F the evidence of the existence of a wall is slight; all the other walls are quite well seen, though entirely ruined. At D the terrace becomes a narrow

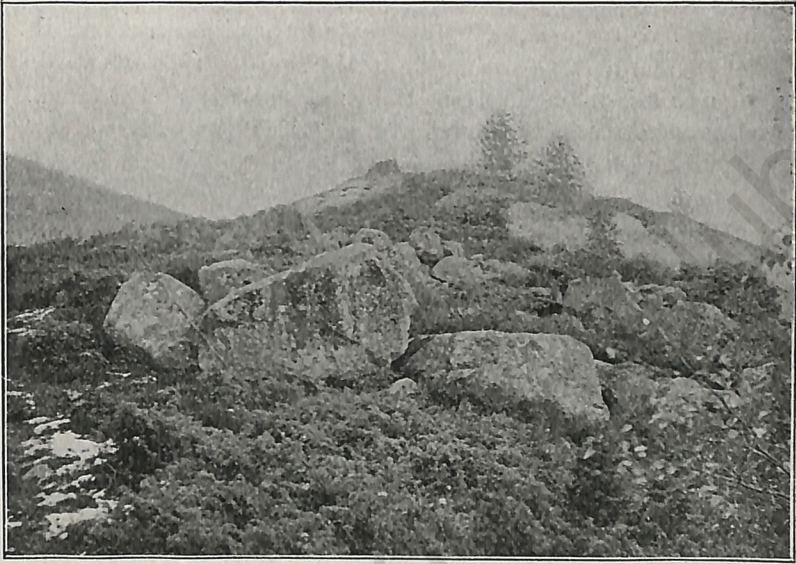


Fig. 5.—Entrance to the Fort on Tor Beag, looking inwards.



Fig. 6.—Entrance to the Fort on Tor Beag, looking outwards.

passage between walls, and outwards from it is the outline of a guard-room G. To the west of this the structure is less evident. The west wall at H seems to turn outward, though this may simply be the running down of the fallen stones. At J is an indefinite suggestion of wall, so that there may have been a defensive enclosure on this side of the entrance.

Many of the stones are of very great size, as will be seen from the views in figs. 5, 6, and 7. In the outer wall of the

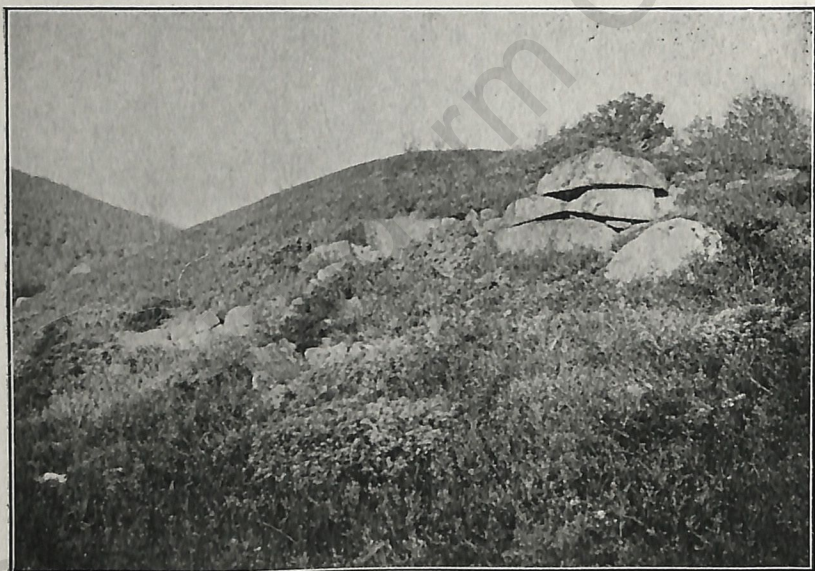


Fig. 7.—Inner Wall of Entrance to Fort on Tor Beag.

guard-chamber G, near the entrance passage, one stone probably measures eighty cubic feet, and would weigh about seven tons.

As far as I know, this fort has not previously been reported. But I was much interested to find in one of Sir Arthur Mitchell's diaries a note of it, and a very rough sketch of its entrance defences. Sir Arthur also had been struck with the large size of some of the stones.

*Cairns at Avielochan.*

The cairns are about three miles N. N. E. of Aviemore railway station, about a quarter of a mile east of the main road, and close to the west side of the Carr Bridge line of the Highland Railway. Hereabouts the land is largely under cultivation, and the cairns lie in the edge of a ploughed field, near the north-east corner of the Avielochan that gives them their name. They can be approached by a farm-road that leaves the highway just north of the

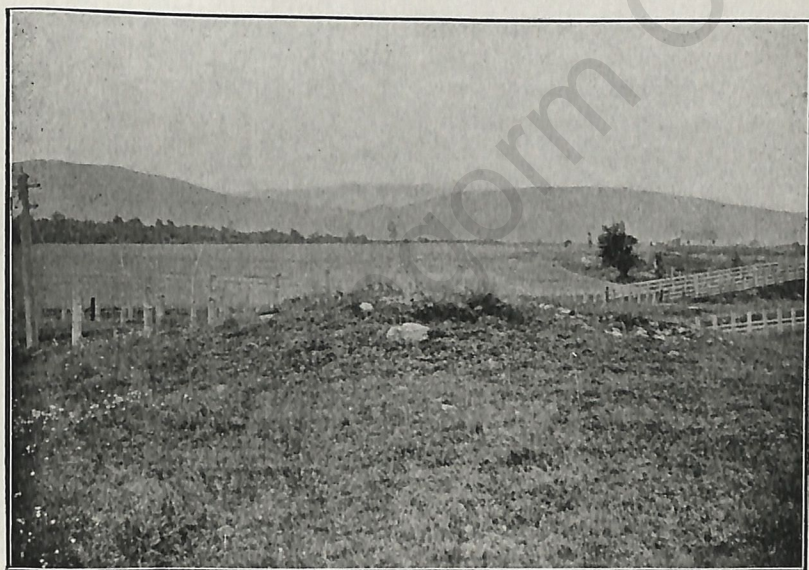


Fig. 8.—The East Cairn at Avielochan, unexcavated.

Lochan, and winds along its north shore to a bridge over the railway. The cairns lie about one hundred yards north of this bridge. The small knoll on which they are placed is mainly natural, but it has been added to by the stones gathered from the neighbouring fields, the soil of which is extremely stony.

The outlook from the cairns is in its main features like that from the Aviemore and the Grenish circles, except that to the north-east the distance is entirely blocked by neighbouring rising ground. There is one notable addition :

the fort on the hill behind Laggantygown, nearly half a mile to the north-west, can be seen ; but it is not obvious because of the surrounding birch and juniper. The view of the lower part of the central Cairngorms is blocked out by the nearer Pityoulish Hill, the little fort on which is easily picked out with a glass.

I first knew of these cairns in August, 1906, and then found them almost entirely hidden in grass and heather. The larger cairn, the west one, appeared to be about thirty-six feet in diameter, and showed the upper parts of eleven standing stones, in the south and west parts of the circumference. The smaller cairn, the east one, (fig. 8) about thirty-six feet away, was about twenty-four feet in diameter, and showed the tops of five stones, at about equal distances on the circumference. It is known that stones cleared from the fields have been piled near the cairns, and Mr. Wm. Grant, on whose farm they lie, has himself in his youth assisted in this piling ; whether any such stones have in this manner ever been piled on the cairns I do not for certain know, but I think not.

In April, 1909, when my wife and I were spending a holiday at Aviemore, we heard that a few days earlier the surfacemen of the Highland Railway had been removing many of the loose stones for railway ballast, and had thereby exposed much of the structure of the larger cairn. We visited the place, saw that this was so, and arranged to devote some days to the study of the exposed interior, in which there seemed to be some features distinguishing it from the circles we had previously examined. Together we made measurements and notes, and also I did not a little of labourer's work.

Mr. Grant, with whom I had previously talked about stone-circles, cairns, and such things, had himself been with the men removing the loose stones, and had secured, as far as he knew, that no placed stones had been interfered with. Hundreds of loose stones had been removed, almost entirely from the inner part of the cairn, thus exposing the inner faces of all the outer row of standing stones, and showing also the existence of an inner circle, and of a straight

passage connecting the inner circle with the outer. There is no appearance or tradition of there ever having been any outer separate megaliths. The surfacemen ceased their removal of stones when they had exposed the upper surfaces of the inner circle, recognising that these should not be interfered with. Unfortunately they have not exposed the upper and outer surfaces of some stones of the outer circle, and these still remain more or less hidden in a mat of turf, heather, and stones, so that their planning is incomplete.

As finally exposed (Fig. 9) the cairn shows the outer

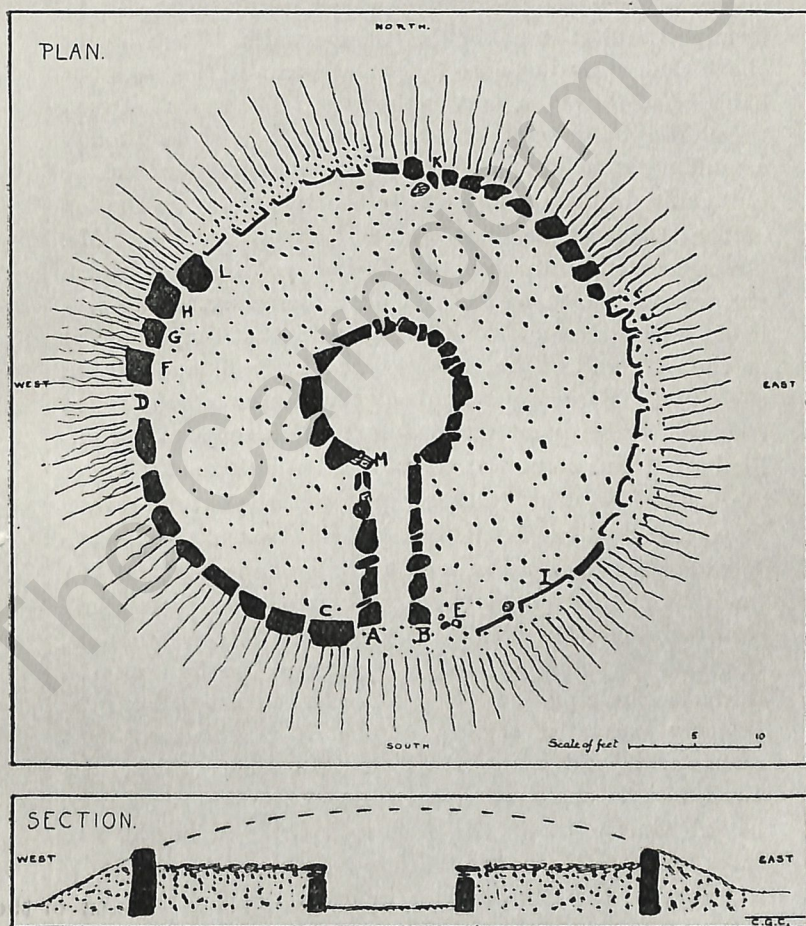


Fig. 9.—Ground Plan and Section of Chambered Cairn at Avelochan.

boundary of large stones set close together, from which a straight passage gives access to the circular chamber in the centre of the cairn. Measuring from inner face to inner face, the diameter of the outer bounding circle is about thirty-six feet, and that of the circular chamber about ten feet. The length of the passage is about thirteen feet, and its width rather less than three feet.

The outer bounding circle consists of about forty-four standing-stones. Two of these, A and B, at the outer end of the passage, looked in the spring like rounded bouldery masses of grey granite. They project well into the circle, forming the first stones of the passage walls. Their height above the exposed surface (about eighteen inches) was but half that of the stone next to the west. The space between them, the outer end of the passage, looked as though a bouldery stone had just been rolled out, and indeed a stone quite suited in shape and size to fill the gap lay on the top of the stones of the east wall of the passage. But Mr. Grant seemed quite sure that it had not been shifted in the excavation, though that looked to me extremely probable. Both he and the foreman said that they found it on the east wall of the passage, some little distance within the circle. For my own convenience in excavating I rolled it aside. Subsequent excavation made it seem rather unlikely that this stone was structural, but its size still leaves the matter doubtful. Other gaps are in the extreme west, D, where one stone is missing, and just east of the passage E, where the presence of a standing stone is doubtful. A small birch-tree grows there, and among its roots there seem to be only largish bouldery stones. The tallest stone, C, stands second west from the passage, the first west of the outer circle proper. It is three feet in height from the recently excavated surface of the ring, three feet eight inches wide, and about one foot eight inches thick. Its outer face is one foot nine inches above the top of the bank. On the whole the stones diminish in height both ways round to the north, but the diminution in height is not regular, and the variation in other dimensions is very irregular. Thus the stones immediately north of the gap



on the west side, F, G, H, are markedly larger than any others on the west side. The stone, I, in the south-east is horizontally the longest stone in the circle, and has been badly cracked longitudinally. A little to the east of the north point is a very small bouldery stone, K, much smaller than any other, and lying a little inwards from the line. In the north-west quadrant a stone, L, projects considerably into the circle, especially in its upper part, and markedly breaks the line. The stones to the south of it lean somewhat outwards, and this increases its apparent inward projection. In the east there is another break in the line of the curve, the inner faces of the stones of the south-east quadrant standing somewhat back.

The inner circular chamber at once attracted our special attention, because its appearance was different from that of the inner circles at Aviemore and Grenish. There the inner circles were of standing stones; here, before I began excavating, the appearance was of stones laid flat. Also there were the two lines of stones, also lying flat, connecting the inner circle with the outer. When I saw this circle in August, 1906, of course all these details were entirely hidden, being buried some feet deep in loose piled stones and earth. When we saw it in April, 1909, these loose stones had been so far removed as to expose the upper surfaces of the placed flat stones, but the loose stones and earth still filled the interior to a slightly greater height. In order to see what the structure and arrangement of this inner circle were, I asked and obtained leave to excavate as much as I wished.

Using a mason's trowel, for a spade was too unwieldy against such material, I began by making a trench across the inner mouth of the passage so as to ascertain whether it were in any way closed. The loose stones had to be lifted out singly, and were pitched into the ring between the circles; the peaty earth was similarly moved in a pail. In this manner I exposed the inner face of the north and east parts of the wall. The excavation was carried down through a most irregular and structureless pile of loose stones of very varied size. They seemed to have been

thrown in without earth, and the peaty earth had been added at the top, probably had partly formed there, for often I could see the earth running down into the inter-spaces of the stones, and very many of the stones were covered with yellowish mould, showing that they had not been earth-packed. We noticed that but few of the stones were at all flattish in shape. It was clear that there was not the material for the roof of a chamber, nor had the structure in any way the appearance of having been roofed, though I am told that the cairn is to be classed as a 'chambered cairn' of the Clava type. I continued my digging downwards till I reached the yellowish pan earth. The result was that I exposed the inner face of about half of a circular wall, which was made of rough dry stone masonry of stones on the whole flattish, but in some cases bouldery. The basal stones appeared to be set edgewise in the pan earth, and not merely to rest upon it, but I did not then dig any deeper. At the most northerly part, where I dug deepest, the inner face of the wall was exposed to a depth of three feet; just east of the passage I reached pan earth in two feet three inches.

In the very mouth of the passage, M, just above the pan earth, I found the appearance of charcoal, and carefully lifted the earth—nearly a double handful—showing this appearance. This earth I took away, dried, and sifted. From it I obtained about a quarter of an ounce of bits of charcoal, and half a dozen minute fragments of bone.

The stones shown in the plan are those of the upper surface. It will be seen from the photographs that the western half is in better condition than the eastern. In the western half the wall is well-set, and the top stones are so big and so well supported that the heaviest trampling failed to shake them. One or two top stones are obviously missing from the northerly place, and in the north-east the top layer is of smallish stones. The top stone in the east is cracked right through, but the cracks look old. On this stone there lay three small flattish stones, but it seemed doubtful whether they were structural, and I removed them.

The passage, three feet or less in width, runs due north and south between the southern points of the circles. The north-western corner stone of it is missing. The surface stones are varied in character, some being good straight-sided pieces, some large but bouldery, and some rather small. The west wall seems to have a series of supporting bouldery stones lying against the lower part of its outer side. I did not make a corresponding examination on the outer side of the east wall; there is, however, the suggestion there of a less complete backing. The space between the walls was all filled with loose stones and earth. I did not make any excavation there in the spring.

After returning to Edinburgh from the spring holiday, I reported what we had done to Sir Arthur Mitchell, Dr. Anderson, and Mr. Coles, of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and consulted with them as to what further should be done. They were of opinion that the inner circle and the passage should be entirely cleared out, but that the ring between the circles was much less likely to yield any information. The Council of the Society was good enough to promise payment for labour, as I felt that I did not care to face all the necessary digging.

Accordingly at the end of July we returned to Speyside, and resumed our investigations. I got the help of John Grant, the son of the farmer, a keen, intelligent, and active youth, and together we completed the excavation of the central circle, clearing out all the loose stones and earth down to the pan. A little above the pan, on the north-western part of the area, we found about a dozen of the stones flattish and lying somewhat like an irregular pavement. These we carefully cleared of loose earth before we lifted them, but neither above nor below them did we find anything of special character. In general we found that the layer of earth above the pan was what is usually described as 'black, unctuous earth,' and it contained fragments of charcoal, some large enough to be picked up, but much in tiny fragments. We gathered all the pieces large enough to be picked up. In the western part of the area, but well above the 'pavement,' John Grant found

two fragments of bone, the only two pieces of such relics that we saw. These I have submitted to the examination of a medical friend, who reports that there is not sufficient evidence in them to determine whether or not they are human.

At the west inner end of the passage I dug down into the pan earth at the base of the set stone, and found that its lower edge was about nine inches down in the pan. This seems to settle that the set stones were not merely placed on the pan, but that when the structure was being formed, the original excavation was carried through the soil and into the pan.

I excavated the passage completely down to the pan, but not breaking out through the surrounding banking. At about half the depth of the excavation and two-thirds of the length from the pit, I found a piece of a jet bracelet, flat on the inside, convex on the outer surface, and forming about a third of a circle of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. This has been very well shaped and polished, but it is somewhat stained and roughened, presumably by exposure to damp and soil. It has a notch roughly cut in its outer surface near one end, as though a string had been tied to it. The 'black unctuous earth' was present in the passage, as in the inner circle, and fragments of charcoal were found there also.

In the walls both of the passage and of the inner circle the appearance of dry stone dyke turned out to be somewhat fallacious. Really, in the lower part of the structure, the stones seem to be mostly slabs set on edge, and only the top layer is of stones laid flatwise, something like a coping. Both sets of stones, however, vary much, from well shaped slabs to bouldery masses. The lower part of the inner circle consisted of thirteen stones. Of course only the inner faces of these could be seen. Most of them looked like fairly well-shaped slabs, but three were mere round boulders. The largest one, in the west, presented a face thirty-six inches across; the smallest one, in the north-west, a bouldery one, was half this length. The lower part of the passage walls consisted on each side of

four seemingly well-shaped slabs. The two outer end stones of the passage, A, B, which in the spring had looked like boulders, proved to be granite pillars some four and a half feet high, their tops being about eighteen inches above the tops of the passage walls.

The plan and section (fig. 9) are drawn from our own measurements, and both they and our notes were carefully made on the spot. The plan and section show the present condition of the circle, after excavation. The stones drawn in full black are those that are exposed. Where the stones of the outer circle are still partly hidden under the bank, only their inner faces are indicated. The presence of loose stones between the circles is indicated by dots. In the section I have indicated by a curved broken line the approximate section of the whole cairn before it had been at all disturbed. The section of the unexcavated part is of course conjectural.

The photographs I owe to the kindness of two friends, Mr. Walter Dempster, Schoolmaster of Inverdrue, and Mr. Alexander Campbell, Shoemaker and Postman, Aviemore.

I was interested to compare this cairn with the circles at Grenish and Delfour. At Delfour the whole structure within the outer circle is hidden under a pile of loose stones; but it is on record in the New Statistical Account that there is an inner circle. Therefore a considerable part, if not the whole, of the loose stones must have been added since about 1845. As I was assured that no such addition had been made since about 1870, the time of addition is narrowed to a period of about twenty-five years. At Grenish the inner circle is mostly visible, but the ring between the two circles is entirely filled with loose stones. I do not think that the ground near this circle has ever been under cultivation, and there is no record at all of the collecting of the loose stones. Certainly there has been no recent addition, for in 1866, when the circle was visited by Sir Arthur Mitchell, the whole thing was in its present condition; and as it was then in a wood, it seems evident that its condition must even then have remained unaltered for a very long time.

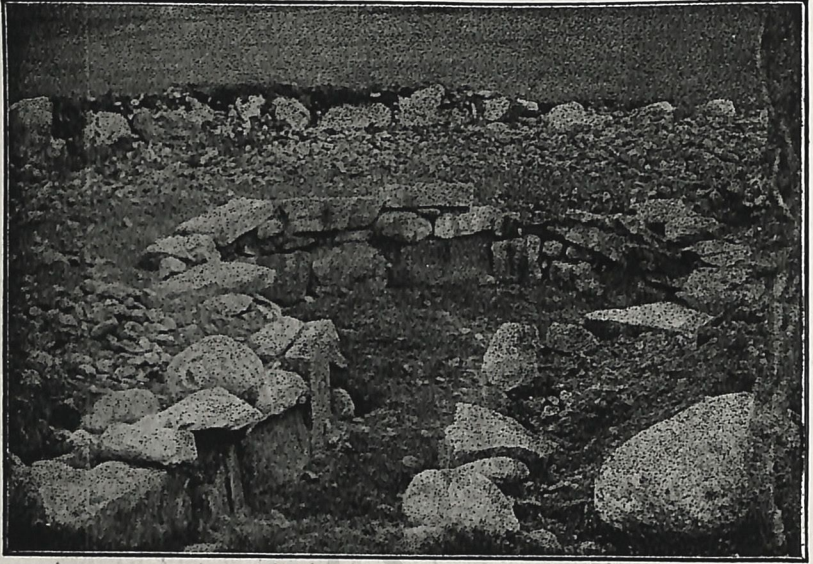


Fig. 10.—View, from the south, of the Chamber in the West Cairn at Avielochan, after excavation.



Fig. 11.—View, from the north, of the Chamber in the West Cairn at Avielochan, after excavation.

At Avielochan the whole structure has been for more than half a century in the buried condition. It seems quite unlikely that at any recent times loose stones have been piled *above* the cairns since their original construction, though stones cleared from the land have been piled in considerable quantities close to them, especially to the west and south-west.

These three structures seem to grade from the bare stone circle at Delfour, through the ring cairn stone circle at Grenish, to the entire cairn at Avielochan.

A TALE OF POST-TERTIARY TIMES.

By J. REID.

What Bennachie hast thou to tell  
Since placed to ward as sentinel  
The Ury, Gadie and the Don ?  
Of strangest wonders come and gone  
Dost recollect the fatal day  
Earth yielded to the Ice-King's sway,  
And snow and ice from steep to steep  
More than a thousand feet lay deep ?  
Demoniac Winter's lethal train  
In hurricanes swept o'er the plain,  
And chilling fingers, long and lean,  
Had strangled all where life was seen.  
Beneath the desolation dread  
Ice-shrouded lay the uncoffined dead ;  
And long the Ice-King ruled the land  
With crushing grasp of iron hand.  
At last the sun with sword of flame  
Struck at his heart nor missed the aim ;  
Home went the thrust, death in the stroke,  
His Kingdom into fragments broke.  
Ice-floe and berg were now set free  
To wander o'er a foaming sea ;  
They danced and whirled at random driven  
By surges and the gusts of heaven,  
And as they rolled, the ceaseless shout  
"Free ! Free !" from each and all rang out.  
They wakened Echo, whose refrain  
Pealed booming o'er the ice-rocked plain,  
Until a berg that prisoned lay,  
Chained to a rock far, far away,



Heard the glad sound athwart the sea,  
And in a transport to be free  
The rock from its foundations rent;  
And careless of the burden went  
Out on that sea indifferent where—  
For freedom's sun was shining there.  
It drifted, drifted, far and wide,  
Tossed to and fro by wind and tide,  
Then touched on Kemnay's hills of sand,  
And dropt the boulder on the strand.  
Anon no more that berg was seen,  
It was as if it had not been.  
But not that boulder there alone  
Tells of these evil days long gone.  
At Kemnay too still plain to-day  
Stretched out along the King's highway,  
The ice-plough turned a furrow then  
Which men of science call Moraine.  
What needs describe that furrow now,  
Last furrow of the Ice-King's plough.  
A naked mass of grit and stone  
In scree and cairns confusedly thrown,  
Till Nature's decorating hand  
But touched it with her magic wand;  
Then flushed all fair that barren waste  
With shrub and tree from base to crest,  
Where year by year the blithe birds sing  
Old anthems to the new-born spring.  
Thus few that see it now would say  
"We wish that relic swept away."

*Castle Fraser.*

## SNOW CLIMBING ON THE DEESIDE HILLS.

BY JOHN R. LEVACK, M.B.

THE vast snow mantle which clothes the higher hills of Upper Deeside every winter from December to June transforms these mountains into a magnificent playground for the mountaineer who wishes to practise the snow-climbing branch of his sport, and more than compensates for the lack of good rock-climbing, for the deficiencies of which these hills are notorious. The Deeside hills in winter form a veritable Switzerland in miniature, with the advantage that here the weather does not seriously count, and the danger of avalanches is practically absent. Winter ascents have been hitherto far too few, and it is the object of the present paper to stimulate interest in this branch of mountaineering amongst members of the Cairngorm Club.

Lochnagar will always remain the most attractive of the higher hills on Deeside, not only on account of its being the nearest and most accessible of these mountains from Aberdeen, but also on account of its individuality and beauty of form. Its cliffs are for the most part excessively difficult, or altogether impossible, to the rock-climber, and the numerous gullies which seam the rock-face have also been proved to be anything but safe places, even in summer, the only exception being the Black Spout, which is really a steep scree slope set deep into the face of the mountain, and offers no difficulty to an active hill-walker properly shod. This gully brings the climber out on to the summit plateau, close to Cac Carn Beag, and I would strongly recommend the Black Spout route to any ordinarily active hill-walkers who wish to ascend Lochnagar, the only precaution necessary being that one member of the party should have been over the ground before. This is advisable for the reason that near the top of the Spout the bed of the gully, which

Black  
Spout.

Cac  
Carn Beag



*Photo by*

LOCHNAGAR CORRIE, MAY, 1906.

*John R. Levack, M.B.*

otherwise consists of loose rock and debris, is here divided in two by a prominent nose of rock, compelling the climber to turn aside to get round it. The way lies to the right (north) side of the rock, up over one or two rock ledges; then an easy walk out at the top of the gully finishes the scramble, and the summit cairn is reached in two or three minutes. If the Black Spout route be chosen, one approaches the hill from Alltnaguibhsaich, along the Queen's path and across the "wilderness" to the foot of the "Ladder," that steep zig-zagging ankle-twisting abomination called, by courtesy, a path, which every climber who values his comfort and peace of mind should avoid. Having therefore crossed the "wilderness," and lunched at the Fox's Well, the climber follows the path up to the col or dip between the Cuidhe Crom and the Meikle Pap, whence a superb view of the whole corrie of Lochnagar is obtained. And as he crosses the saddle, and clambers down over the tumbled mass of boulders towards the head of the loch, this rare picture of rock scenery is constantly before him, whilst below lies the lonely loch, across which flit in endless succession eddying ripples as the breeze sweeps over its surface. Contrast this with the toilsome grind up the "Ladder," where the path is a more or less dry watercourse, rough, steep, and uneven, into which one has to stoop till one's nose nearly touches the rocks above and nothing is seen but the steps just ahead, and the way seems endless.

Down in the corrie everything is different, and time passes quickly as one picks one's way over the rocks, past the head of the loch, and across the steep screes to the foot of the Spout. A short rest and a lunch of jam sandwiches are advisable here, water being usually obtainable from a trickle coming down the gully. Then as one mounts up the steep slope of loose granite debris which forms the bed of the gully, and finds oneself flanked on either side by vertical walls of black rock, the feeling of being at last in the heart of the mountain comes home very forcibly to the climber. The return journey from the summit of the mountain is best made by skirting the top of the cliffs and

then descending by the "Ladder," or, preferably, by the rocks immediately to the north of it. Any party equipped with common sense and good boots can ascend Lochnagar by this route with perfect safety.

The above description of the Black Spout route should not, strictly speaking, come within the scope of a paper on snow climbing, but a knowledge of the way under summer conditions helps materially to understand the state of matters there in winter, when the "wilderness" is one of snow, the rocks leading from the saddle to the loch half or wholly buried in drift, and the scree up to the foot of the Spout a steep snow slope. Under such conditions our route can afford a first-class snow climb. All the gullies are now filled with snow or ice, but, as in summer, they are mostly inaccessible to the mountaineer, the principal exception being again the Spout, which is now simply a steep snow slope up which it is generally possible to kick or cut steps to the top, and, unless a really gigantic snow cornice is met with, no difficulty is experienced in completing the climb.

My first real snow climb was up the Black Spout some years ago, and naturally it is one I shall not forget in a hurry. We were a party of four, and we arrived at Ballater one evening in February. We set out again at 7 a.m., driving to Alltnaguibhsaich in pouring rain. As we neared the Hut, however, the rain ceased, and the higher tops became rosy as they caught the first rays of the morning sun. Snow showers swept across the glen at frequent intervals, and as we walked up the path and crossed the "wilderness" these showers became small blizzards and the wind a gale. Ultimately we reached the foot of the Spout, and had a rest and lunch in the beautiful little snow dell which always forms at the foot of the rocks between the Spout and Douglas' gully. The snow in the Spout was not very hard, and the leader could kick steps for some distance, but he soon had to scrape them with his axe when the surface became too hard to kick. Higher up the angle steepened and the surface became quite icy, so that step-cutting proper had to be done, and the

rope was put on. The serious nature of the work now on hand became apparent to the writer, who was the passenger, and therefore the particular care of each of the other members of the party. The leader's axe never ceased as he cut step after step in the frozen surface. One man only moved at a time, and so it happened that when ice-glazed rock showed through the snow, and the leader necessarily took some time to pick a way over those difficult stretches, the other three men stood in their steps like statues, with the picks of their axes dug deep in the frozen surface in case of a slip, patiently waiting till the order should be given to "come on." Near the top, where the big rock projects through the snow, we stood in our steps for what seemed an age; no word was spoken, and no sound broke the stillness save the chip, chip, of the leader's axe and the continuous hiss of the dislodged ice particles as they streamed down the slope past our feet. Ultimately we stood on the summit plateau, unroped, and walked on to the highest point. Storm-clouds swept the higher hills, and everything was clothed in white. Between the snow showers the sun shone brilliantly, and the sky was intensely blue. We looked across a snow-world, essentially Alpine in its grandeur and beauty. A descent by the ordinary route completed the day's outing.

Another time six of us went up the Black Spout in deep, soft, powdery snow. The ascent was simply a toilsome grind for two-thirds of the way, to a point where a lateral gully branches off to the left. Four of the party took the rope and climbed this gully, whilst the fifth member of the party and the writer continued up the main gully, as they did not consider the lateral gully a safe place for married men! We continued gaily to kick steps, thinking to have an easy walk out at the summit, but suddenly we came to the end of the snow, and were confronted with ice and frozen gravel, in which we tried to cut steps. Inexperience and the want of a rope defeated us, and we failed to get up. Many times we tried, and as many times did we slide back into the snow, helplessly and ignominiously. At last we gave in, leaving

behind us sundry shreds of skin and more than one blood stain in the snow from abraded knuckles and fingers. A reckless scurry down the soft snow in the gully landed us in the corrie, out of which we had to steer by compass, for, owing to a heavy and prolonged snow shower, we could not see five yards ahead. Our friends climbed their gully and descended the main Spout, taking one and a half hours to the icy stretch on which we had failed.

On March 21st of this year three of us had a magnificent day on Lochnagar. Driving from Ballater, we reached Allt-naguibhsaich at 8.30 a.m., and walked up the path, over the col, and down to the loch. We had intended to climb the Black Spout, but it was overhung by a gigantic cornice, the largest I ever saw, the cutting through which would probably occupy more time than we could afford, so we chose the steep face of the south-east corner of the corrie, where it drops in one unbroken sweep to the head of the loch. The angle rapidly increased as we mounted, till near the top it became perpendicular, and finally, a small cornice had to be cut away before we could get up. The surface consisted of recent soft snow plastered over old hard snow, and this meant laborious work for the leader, scraping away all the new snow and cutting deeply into the old before any foothold that could be trusted was obtained. Large quantities of snow, soft and hard, were dislodged by the leader's axe, and the middle man on the rope had difficulty in keeping himself from being smothered, whilst the third man, standing twenty feet lower down, plaintively reminded the leader that falling bodies gathered momentum, even on a mountain face. But the climb was a lovely one, and we were sorry when it was done. We wandered round to the main top, and once again enjoyed the view in brilliant sunshine. Everything that could hold snow was dazzlingly white, and all the peaks and ridges stood up for us to name them. A glissade down the east side of the Cuidhe Crom on the way home completed our enjoyment.

This eastern slope of the Cuidhe Crom affords good sport for the snow climber. If the snow be soft, ascent is easy by

kicking steps, but, if the slope be in shadow, as in the afternoon, the surface becomes icy, and ascent or descent may be quite exciting. The writer and a friend once attempted glissading down this slope under afternoon conditions, with disastrous results. We both shot downwards, utterly incapable of checking ourselves till we came to grief on some rocks lower down. Sitting, except on the softest of cushions, was a painful process for some days afterwards.

At the head of Glen Callater, a few miles west of Lochnagar, is a beautiful little corrie encircling a lonely lochan, Loch Cander. The cliffs of this corrie are for the most part unclimbable, but the numerous gullies which seam its face afford, in winter, excellent scope for the sport of snow climbing. Two years ago, a party of three Cairngormers climbed out of the corrie by one of these gullies, an 800 feet climb, up perfect snow, out on to a plateau from which much of Scotland was visible, a veritable fairyland in its winter garb.

Even the smaller hills round Braemar can be made to yield first rate sport to the snow climber under suitable conditions. Last February three of us spent a week-end in Braemar, when the temperature was in the neighbourhood of zero, and all the roads were more or less blocked with snow. We had to content ourselves with Craig Choinnich, and had seven hours' rope- and axe-work, first, in ascending the ice-covered perpendicular wall leading into the old quarry on the south of the hill, and, afterwards, in climbing the gully immediately to the west of the Lion's Face.

The great corries on the eastern face of Beinn a' Bhuid, the vast snow slopes and gullies which line and seam the shoulders of Ben Muich Dhui, Cairngorm, and Cairn Toul, and, best of all, the truly titanic Garbh Coire of Braeriach, all await the snow climber, and offer him infinite possibilities in the exercise of his sport.



## ROCK CLIMBING NEAR ABERDEEN.

BY H. G. DRUMMOND.

Oh, the wild joy of living,  
The leaping from rock up to rock.

*Browning.*

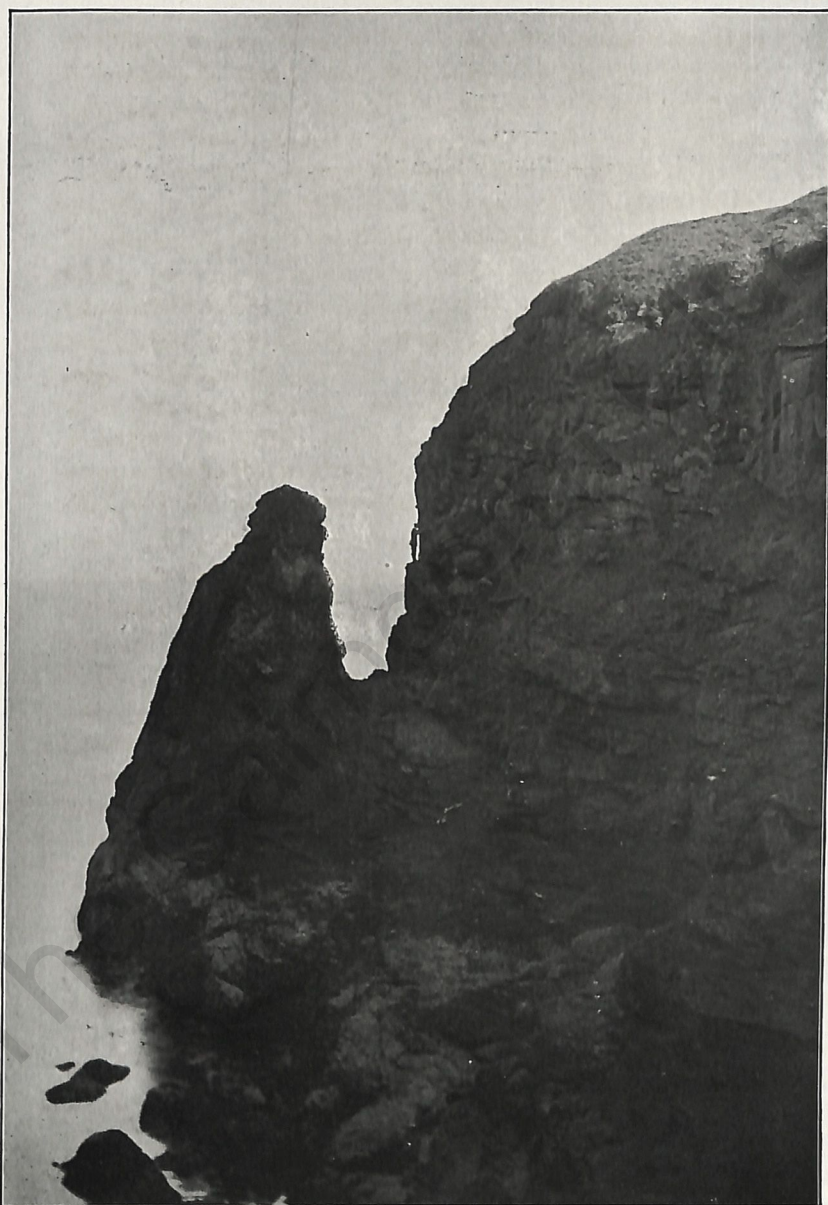
THE sport of rock climbing becomes every year more popular, and as the branch of mountaineering most readily obtainable in this country, one cannot wonder at it. Though probably the majority of the Cairngorm Club members look upon a good hill walk as the loadstone of their desires, there are yet a number to whom a scramble, necessitating the use of hands and feet, or a climb of not too great difficulty, gives an added zest to their day's outing.

To the south of the Bay of Nigg stretches a long range of cliffs, as yet but little explored from a climbing point of view, whose value as a training ground cannot be overestimated. True, there are no peaks to be ascended, if one excepts certain rocky pinnacles, but the essence of the sport lies, not in bagging peaks, but in struggling with and overcoming the difficulties and obstacles of nature, continued practice giving increase of skill and necessarily involving a corresponding increase in the difficulties which can successfully be grappled with and overcome. Among these cliffs, then, the happy climber may find corries, ridges, gullies, chimneys and cracks to his heart's content, all within easy reach. Geologically the region is somewhat of a puzzle and contains several different kinds of rock, some of which are good climbing material, others but indifferent. Generally speaking the best climbing is obtained where a granite outcrop occurs, as there the rock is sound, and being much weathered gives splendid hand- and foot-hold. Cliffs composed of rotten rock, such as is found near Muchalls, or where the climbs end up in steep grass, earth and gravel, are better left alone, or at any rate first done

with a rope from above. Roughly there are four sections of cliff where climbs are most easily obtained. The first stretches from the Coastguard station at Doonies Yawns to Long Slough; the second from Altens Havens to Souter Head; the third for about a mile and a half south of Cove quarries; and the fourth for some distance north of Newtonhill; but along the whole coast outlying climbs giving satisfactory sport can be found. The courses are necessarily short, none being more than 150 to 200 feet in height, but as much technical difficulty is often comprised in short stretches as in longer ones, and all grades of climbs, suitable for novice and expert, are obtainable, with the advantage, from the novice's point of view, that he can have the other than moral support of the rope if he wishes. The embryo mountaineer of Aberdeen who thinks of spending a climbing holiday in Skye, Glencoe or elsewhere, has therefore only himself to blame if he quits his native heath without some practice and knowledge of perhaps the most important branch of his craft. Many climbs have been done on these cliffs, but multitudes are still waiting to be conquered, so that anyone having the "wanderlust," may exult in the feeling of the explorer, that he has done some climb which has never before been attempted, even though it is not a Matterhorn.

It would be impossible here to give any list of those climbs that have been accomplished, but one or two of the more notable may be mentioned. As one proceeds southwards from the Coastguard station, a prominent headland is noticed surmounted by large boulders which give it the appearance of a human head and shoulders, somewhat resembling the north peak of the Cobbler from Arrochar. Beneath the "head" boulder, two easy climbs start from the shore. The first consists of an inside chimney containing a large wedged mass of rock, the top of which slightly overhangs, the route finishing over the "head" boulder. This might merit the name of "Jammed Block Chimney." The second climb commences immediately to the right of, and parallel with, the first climb. A sensational, though easy, traverse above the deep bay to the

right brings the climber to a nose of rock over which a short though steep pull lands him above the jammed block, the climb being finished up as before. Proceeding along past the farm of Doonies, a deep bay running right up to the railway line, called Long Slough, possesses a sharp knife-edged pinnacle, detached from the southern wall of the bay. The ascent of this pinnacle is difficult, and as the rock near the top is rotten, not to be recommended, though with three on the rope, the leader can be safeguarded. Its ascent cost six separate expeditions, and was made from the small col between it and the south cliff. On the south cliff slightly to the right of the wide chimney opposite the pinnacle, one of the best moderate courses on the coast commences. The route appears quite impossible from the other side of the bay, but a nearer view discloses a series of wide ledges running into each other at fairly easy angles, and with the exception of one short steep pull about half way up, leading directly to the top of the cliff. The climb is now considerably easier than at first, as an amount of loose material has been cleared away. Its descent is the only method of reaching the pinnacle col at high tide. The traverse of the Coolin-like ridge of Souter Head from end to end over its various summits gives a most enjoyable scramble, and will take a couple of hours if one or two of its many chimneys are negotiated *en route*. One remarkable through chimney starts at the back of a cave on sea level about half way along the ridge, giving pleasant back and knee work till the climber's head emerges like a rabbit, through a hole on the summit ridge. To make a complete exit, however, some of his outer raiment may very possibly have to be removed in order to reduce his dimensions. At Cove and Newtonhill several fine climbs can be done. But enough has been said to indicate to the climber where he may seek pastures new. Let him look for himself! He that seeketh findeth, and not least among his pleasures will be the fine combination of rock and sea scenery opened out before him during his explorations. The granite cliffs of Cornwall have long been exploited, why not those of Kincardine ?



*Photo*

*D. Gillies.*

THE PINNACLE AND SOUTH CLIFF CLIMB, LONG SLOUGH.

The figure on the sky line is immediately underneath the "steep pull" referred to in the South Cliff Climb.

## THE CLUB AT EASTER.

THE first official Easter Meet was held at Ballater, where the headquarters were the Invercauld Arms Hotel. Lochnagar was climbed on the 26th March, and Broad Cairn the following day. The Meet was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended, and probably such excursions will be more popular hereafter. The Club members wandered over a wide district of the Highlands at Easter, many small parties having been arranged for the occasion.

### LOCHNAGAR AND BROAD CAIRN.

ON Saturday morning we left the hotel at 8.10, with the Black Spout of Lochnagar as our objective. Driving by the King's Way, we found our first snow at Inchnabobart, and arrived at Alltnaguibhsaich at 9.30. When we left our conveyance and started our walk, in spite of a very cold wind blowing from the hills and a slight haze, the morning was fairly good, and kept on improving, the sun even attempting to come out. At Clashrathan we touched our first snow proper, and at this point startled a doe, while one of our members took a snapshot of what had once been an eagle's eyrie.

We made a short halt at the head of Glen Gelder to admire the Meikle Pap and get a glimpse of Lochnagar. So much snow lay about, that we elected to go round by the path rather than risk a short cut. We climbed the Meikle Pap, but were quickly driven off by the fierce gale raging on the summit. By glissading down, the loch was soon reached. It was frozen over, but much fissured, the ice being sunk a little, so we did not risk crossing it.

At this point, with the frozen loch in front, and scenery of the wildest description all round, we had a magnificent panorama, the corries being in full view, set off by the heavy massed clouds tumbled about by the gale above. Glasses were turned eagerly towards the Black Spout, and it was ultimately decided that the cornice seemed feasible;

the Spout itself looked innocent enough in its snow covering, and we advanced to the attack. One ice axe for the party gave those of us who were novices at snow work unlimited confidence, but we received a rude shock at the offset. We had to surmount a huge boulder, covered with ice, smooth as glass, and hard as steel, with ugly edges and an iron-bound loch as a landing-place, in case of a slip. We soon discovered that although our expert ice-axe pioneer did his best for us, we still required the ability of a limpet to follow him. By the time the base of the Spout was reached, we were considerably subdued, and a consultation was held to consider whether our former resolution should be confirmed or cancelled. As fate would have it, the snow within the Spout was not altogether ice, and so we decided to proceed.

Oh, that grand climb! that long wild climb! No sooner had we got beyond the reach of return, than our milky way turned to ice, then very soft again, and so on. Every step we took now increased the risk in the event of a slip, but we struggled on.

I have heard that "we once had a boat of our own," but if only on this occasion I had had an ice axe of my own our leader would gladly have paid me to exchange places with him. Hours passed thus, till, when nearing the top, I was seized with severe cramp in one of my legs. I said nothing to alarm my friends, but I grew very anxious; I changed my position, and squirmed and kicked, in the hope of throwing the cramp off, but nothing I could do moved it. Some other greater fright must have driven it away, for I do not remember its leaving me.

At last we reached the top, "all but the heel;" a ten-foot cornice had to be surmounted. Our guide, to protect us from his ice chippings, sent us under the cornice, where we passed the time, estimating how near it was to the point of falling upon us. In due course we were called to enter the breach; my stick, embedded in the wall, formed a four-foot step, from which the first member was pushed to safety. Number two was then half-pulled, half-pushed to the same desirable position. I followed, and of course my



*Photos by*

THE BLACK SPOUT, LOCHNAGAR, 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 1910.

*George McIntyre.*

stick, the foot-step, followed me ; then the fun began, and for the second time that day we sorely missed a rope. Our guide, who at this stage had inverted the order of procedure, now came last, and endeavoured to get out. After struggling for a short time to pull himself up, I was horrified to see him suddenly disappear from view—his foot-hold had given way. After several unsuccessful attempts to get him once more into our set, we were compelled to wait another good half-hour, till he cut a royal road for himself.

In a very short time we reached the cairn (3.45 p.m.). It was very hazy ; we saw nothing. It was also intensely cold, so we hurried down by the Glas Allt, and were charmed by the change of temperature. Following deer tracks on the ice, we crossed the burn in safety. When nearing the Falls we had an excellent view of about a dozen deer feeding in the gorge. At 8.40 we arrived at our hotel, after a glorious absence of twelve-and-a-half hours.

The next morning we again drove to Alltnaguibhsaich arriving at 9.30, thence walking by Glasallt Shiel. Several deer were seen and we had an interesting sight of an eagle as we set out to Broad Cairn. Following the path to the Dubh Loch we passed the Stullan Falls, which legend assigns as the place where the Marquis of Lorne proposed to his wife. Tramping on, we ultimately came upon the loch lying at the foot of our hill. The scene was a wild one ; the loch was frozen over, there was much snow, and the mist hung heavy on the tops. We tackled Broad Cairn, however, and had an exhilarating, though fairly heavy, climb through the steep snow. I had the glory of leading on this occasion—with the ice-axe—and was not long in learning that it was no joke to work the axe properly, even on this soft job. In the dense mist we were able to reach the cairn only by the aid of the "stone-men." Nothing could be seen, so we meandered east till Loch Muick came into view. Some fun was got when descending watching a dog chasing a white hare.

By the time we reached the bridge over the Dubh Loch Burn the mist was on us. At Glasallt Shiel we left three



companions who had joined us for the day, and stepped out briskly for our conveyance at Alltnaguibhsaich, and were once more driven to Ballater, all delighted with our first Easter Meet.—W. M. MCPHERSON.

#### FROM STRATH TUMMEL TO GLEN MUICK.

WE found ourselves in Atholl on the first day of our Easter Meet at Ballater. On looking at Bartholomew's "Braemar and Blair Atholl" sheet, we perceived that to join our clubmen we had to traverse this map almost from corner to corner, and some ingenuity had to be exercised to plan our route from Strath Tummel to Glen Muick. It was Good Friday, but the day was like the opening of Spring, bright as an Easter morn. As we climbed up the steep path through the budding trees from Killiecrankie station, the whole country-side seemed to have awakened from its winter sleep. The birds were singing rapturously, the lambs were playing in the meadows, and higher up the curlew and the grouse were breaking the silence of the long winter. Our route lay over the summit of Ben Vrackie, and as we climbed this fine little mountain we looked westward to Loch Tummel, and onward to where Loch Rannoch seemed to lose itself in the "wide and wasted desert" of the moor.

The Perthshire hills were carrying much snow, and Ben Lawers looked specially alpine. As we reached the summit of Ben Vrackie, the huge Beinn a' Ghlo blocked out the northern prospect; yet with such a foreground we were content to lose the sight of our parent mountain range, which is hidden by the "Mountain of the Mist." What a different scene met us when we looked away down the Tay valley past the busy little town of Pitlochry, into the green meadows and rich land of the Great Strath. We held on our course, dipping down into Glen Brerachan, and soon got on to the main Pitlochry-Kirkmichael turnpike. We tramped along this road to Straloch, where we came to a humble-looking house of entertainment, in the shape of a cottage with

an ale and porter licence. We asked for tea, and were doubtful if we should enjoy ourselves much; but appearances once more proved deceptive, and in this old world little inn we had one of the most delightful meals that it has been our good fortune to enjoy. The kitchen of the inn was a quaint room; rough rafters—black with the peat smoke of decades—lined the roof, and the dresser, adorned with pewter mugs of all sizes, was a sight to gladden the heart of a disconsolate antiquarian. We could not linger long over our hostess's buttermilk bannocks, as we were anxious to get to the Spital of Glenshee that night. We held on the road until Knochdhu, and then struck northward by the right-of-way. The path is somewhat indistinct, and but for the many admirable guiding posts of the Scottish Rights of Way Society, one might very easily find considerable difficulty in striking the correct col that lands one at the Spital.

An hour-and-a-half's sharp walking brought us to the top of our path, and we were glad to see the well-known outline of Beinn Gulabin, silhouetted against the fast fading western sky. As we began to dip down into Glen Shee the darkness came on. The night was very calm, and the eerie effect of the curlew's plaintive call, combined with the comfortable sight of the lamp in the Spital, twinkling away down in the valley below, made a picture that we shall not soon forget.

We reached our resting-place, and thus completed the first stage in our march northwards towards our colleagues.

For our next day's journey we had various routes open to us. We might have taken the ordinary Devil's Elbow road to Braemar, or mounted over Glas Maol to the Tolmount, and so to Glen Clova via Glen Doll. These ways were, however, both known to us, and we sighed for new glens. We had recollections of the glories of the Caenlochan Glen, as we once saw it from the plateau on the summit of Glas Maol; and that fleeting glimpse of the magnificent spot had left a strong desire to make closer acquaintance with the head stream of the Forfarshire Isla.

We crossed the Shee by a small, wooden foot-bridge behind the Spital, and scrambled up the Craig of Rinavey, past the Croft of Kerrow, where two ancient Gaels were somewhat startled at our proposed ramble at this early season. They were relieved to see that we had what they called a "sketch" of the country in the shape of a Bartholomew half-inch map.

The excellence of these maps for the motorist or the cyclist is too well known to need any commendation, but the scale is not large enough to give full significance to the contour lines. For this kind of work the official one-inch maps of the Ordnance Survey are, in our opinion, more reliable—a fact which of course is due largely to the greater scale, and not at all to any inaccuracies in Bartholomew's epoch-making publications. From Rinavey we dipped into the Allt an Daimh valley, and climbed up over a steep col which took us into Glen Brighty. Down this beautiful glen we tramped to the Tulchan, on Glen Isla, and thence we turned northward up the Isla. The glen here is wild in character—especially so in early spring, as the wood around is mostly larch, and the bare, gaunt appearance of the brown trees, many of which had fallen victims to the storms of winter, adds a sombre feeling that would be escaped in summer. Some three miles above Tulchan we came to a well-built cairn at the road side, with the inscription, "Bessie's Cairn, 1852."

This puzzled us. Who was Bessie? Was she some sweet milkmaid who had made this lonely glen echo with her herding song, and who had come to an untimely end in this wild spot? No, Bessie was none other than the Marchioness of Londonderry, who loved to paint, from the spot where the cairn is erected, the glories of the Caenlochan Glen. We tramped on to the entrance to this glen, and feasted our eyes on the magnificent buttresses that flank both sides of the wonderful pass. The northern side is dotted with straggling larch trees, and the hills all around were deep under snow, while right at the head of the glen stood huge Glas Maol, a spotless dome of white—a veritable Mont Blanc.

We struck over the north shoulder of Finalty Hill, and got on to the great plateau that stretches eastward to the Mayar. This was the hardest part of our walk. The snow was soft, and at every step we sank deep. We reached the summit about six in the evening. We had only about an hour more of daylight, so we had to abandon our original intention of climbing Dreish also. Our first move was to endeavour to get down to lower and less inclement ground. We skirted the precipitous buttresses that the Mayar throws out on Glen Fee, and crossed over to the head waters of the Kilbo Burn. We soon got down the glen into Glen Doll, and the short four miles to that most comfortable of all inns—"The Ogilvy Arms"—was soon covered. After such a day as we had had, the luxury of lying in one's bed in the inn, listening to the sound of the little stream that rushes by, is beyond description. We find but one fault—we do not hear the sound of running water for long, as there is no soporific like hill walking.

We were now within measurable distance of our goal—'tis but a two hours' tramp from Glen Clova to Glen Muick.

Next morning we retraced our steps to Braedownie, and held on by the Capel path towards Ballater. This path is always wet, and especially so in spring, and we were glad when we came in sight of the Muick, threading its tortuous course northward. We knew that some of the club were living in upper Glen Muick, and we called on our way down the glen, only to find that the party was on Broad Cairn, which we had been so near but a few hours ago before.—JAMES GRAY KYD.

#### BEN ALDER.

A SMALL section of the Club spent a few days in the Dalwhinnie district, and had an experience on Ben Alder which will be new to most local hillmen. Leaving Truim Bank Hotel after 8 a.m. on a fairly promising day (March 22nd), we took the driving road along the north-west side

of Loch Ericht for Benalder Lodge,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles off. A well defined path starts there through beautiful woods, which soon give place to bare and rather rocky hillsides, and eight miles further on we arrived at Benalder Cottage. It was now one o'clock, and after some refreshment we scrambled up to Prince Charlie's Cave, or rather the remains of what was once a cave. Proceeding slightly west of north the snow line was reached at a height of about 1,750 feet, and at about 2,000 feet a large herd of deer was passed. They veered off to the left, leaving long winding trails in the snow, and disappeared over the ridge. When 2,500 feet was reached, dense mist was entered, and ere the summit was gained we recognized that to return by Loch Patack might not be easy with so much snow on the hills. For half an hour we skirted the precipices of Loch a' Bhealaich Bheithe, trying to find a suitable place to descend, but in the mist found only crags and snow cornices everywhere. Ultimately we got into a corrie and worked slowly down steep snow slopes, the mist clearing as a lower level was reached. In the distance could be seen a depression between the cliffs indicating a couloir, the only opening. It was apparent that if it failed us we should have either to spend a night on the mountain, or to reascend the ridge. When we reached the top of the gully, the prospect was not reassuring, the narrow slope getting steeper and then seeming to lose itself in a drop, beyond which we could not see. We went cautiously, laboriously cutting steps, and regretting that no rope was available. After descending, perhaps 150 feet, the rocks to our left merged in the gully for a short distance, and as the slope was easier we made for the buttress. Hardly had we done this when, from the the precipitous crags to the right, a huge stone fell a few hundred feet, breaking into a hundred fragments and sweeping the gully. It was a wonderful escape. It was necessary again to enter the snow shoot, but the slope was now less steep and the going easier, and soon we finally quitted the gully, and reached the Bealach Dubh burn. Half an hour later darkness came on, and we were glad to reach Loch Patack, the path to that point being heavy and partly

under soft snow. The moon occasionally shone out clearly, and pressing on steadily, we regained Dalwhinnie after ten o'clock p.m. Beinn Udlaman, it may be mentioned, was the outstanding feature of the view during the day.—H. K.

LOCHAN DHU.

Oft from the world of work-a-day  
Where men all vainly peace pursue,  
To thy far shores my footsteps stray,  
Lochan, Lochan Dhu.

A sigh, a wish, a weary head,  
Laden with memories a few,  
Low on a kindly pillow laid,  
With thoughts of Lochan Dhu.

In one short moment I am back,  
Brushing the freshness from the dew,  
Where, rough and steep, the mountain track  
Leads down to Lochan Dhu.

Jealous and grim the great hills rise,  
So high no sunbeam steals to view  
From those far-hidden misty skies  
Above thee, Lochan Dhu.

No sound awakes thee from thy sleep ;  
From the wide world no sign comes through  
Of the strange folk who laugh and weep,  
Out yonder, Lochan Dhu.

Only the lonely eagle's scream,  
The calling of the sad curlew,  
Disturb the silence of thy dream,  
Lochan, Lochan Dhu.

Yet Peace, the Angel, passing o'er,  
Let one white feather as she flew  
Light on thy lone forsaken shore,  
Lochan, Lochan Dhu.

*Graphic.*

W. J. CAMERON.

## THE CLUB ON CARMAFERG.

BY JAMES W. H. TRAIL, M.D., F.R.S.

THE Club held its Thirteenth Saturday Afternoon Excursion on 11th May last, under the presidency of Mr. John Clarke, to Carmaferg (1724 feet), some three or four miles south of Aboyne. The route lay near the Aulddinnie Burn for the greater part of the way, with an easy climb of about half a mile from the burn to the top. The afternoon was very fine, the heat being tempered by a haze, which, however, limited the view, especially to the west. Morven and Mount Keen could be seen faintly outlined in part, all beyond being hidden.

Soon after crossing the Dee a fine herd of deer was passed near Craigendinnie, feeding on the low ground. By the wayside through the wood, in the Glen of the Fungle, the blue flowers of the common bugle (*Ajuga reptans*) formed bright patches; on the west slopes here and there the insect-catching butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*) and round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) grew in some quantity, but bore few captives on their leaves; and the white starry blossoms of the *Trientalis europæ* showed themselves on the grassy spots under the trees. A sawfly, (*Trichosma lucoun*) over three-quarters of an inch in length, somewhat like a large hive-bee, was noticed among birches, on the leaves of which its larva may be found—a clumsy green caterpillar coiled into a ring. When the larva is full grown it forms a brown oval cocoon, nearly an inch long, which is closely fixed to a birch twig.

By the burn, some distance up the glen, lay the skeleton of a young stag, the ill-formed antlers on the skull indicating that it had been weakly, and had probably been unfit to survive the severities of winter. A large part of one antler had disappeared, apparently gnawed off by deer.

Hanging from heather was found a perfectly formed nest of a wasp (*Vespa sylvestris*). The nest was about the

shape and size of a large lemon, and was entered by a round hole below. The grey papery wall was protected over its upper-third by a bowl-shaped covering of the same material. Among the heather also were numerous nests of large spiders (*Epeira cornuta*), consisting of pale silk balloons an inch or so in diameter, among a loose web of threads. In each was the spider watching over the safety of her ball of eggs, while ready to emerge through a hole in the lower part of the balloon to capture her insect prey. Other smaller dark brown hunting spiders were plentiful on the ground, spinning no web, but capturing insects by speed of foot. Many of the females carried circular flattened pale-brown bags full of eggs. They are devoted mothers, and will risk any danger on behalf of their eggs. If the bag is taken from one she appears quite careless of her own safety; but if the bag is placed beside her she at once seizes it, and takes refuge in flight. After the eggs are hatched the young spiders cluster on the body and limbs of the mother, giving her a strange ill-defined form as she runs actively about.

On the sandy parts of the rough track darting green forms might be seen, occasionally rising in flying leaps of a few feet, and again scurrying away rapidly. One or two were captured, and found to be tiger-beetles (*Cicindela campestris*), gracefully formed, about half an inch in length, dark green with metallic coppery or golden reflections, and from three to six dull yellowish spots or lines on each wing case. The popular name refers to the fierce nature of the beetle, which seizes, and devours small animals. Its larvæ live in burrows dug in the sandy soil frequented by the beetles, in burrows just wide enough for them to move up and down in by the aid of their hooked claws and of bristles and two hooks on a hump on the back of the eighth ring. When in want of food they wriggle to the opening of the burrow and lie in wait, ready to grasp with their strong jaws any passing insect.

The moors swarmed with the common "heath-moths," (*Ematurga atomaria*); but few other moths were on the



wing. The "Wood-tiger moth" was represented by a caterpillar and a cocoon.

The slope of the hill was covered with a monotonous growth of heather, among which the bright yellow flowers of the petty whin (*Gevista anglica*) made a pretty contrast. Near the top fir-clubmoss (*Lycopodium Selago*) was not uncommon.

The descent was made by most of the party by nearly the same route, and on the way a curlew's nest containing four eggs was found, and an adder about 18 inches long was killed. Its last meal was disgorged—a nearly perfect frog. In the descent of the other (east) side of the hill the small marsh marigold (*Caltha radicans*) was observed in marshy spots, among a profusion of delicately coloured mosses; and among the heather grew lesser tway-blade (*Listera cordata*) and winter green (*Pyrola media*); while the grassy heaths were gay with red, white, and blue varieties of milkworts (*Polygala serpyllacea*), tormentil, and other flowers.

A stroll by the Dee near Aboyne in the evening was rewarded by the highland micken (*Meum Athamanticum*) the little Teesdalia (*T. nudicaulis*) alpine lady's-mantle, (*Alchemilla alpina*), and other local plants; and the shingles showed abundance of the large blue lupine (*Lupinus nootkatensis*), first noticed as a seemingly wild plant in Scotland on rocks by the Dee at Aboyne in 1857. It is a native of Nootka Sound, on the north-west coast of North America. There is reason to believe that it owes its presence on Deeside to its introduction into the gardens of Balnoral soon after the purchase of the estate by Prince Albert. It has established itself all up and down the valley, and has altered the course of the Dee and the nature of the native vegetation in many places on its banks.

The excursion was greatly enjoyed by all fortunate enough to take part in it.

## A WEEK-END IN PERTHSHIRE.

ON the Aberdeen May Holiday, four men set out for two days' climbing in "the prettiest county of Scotland," all attracted by the mountains and ready to adopt the scientist's definition of a mountaineer, "he must be able to admire scenery from the point of view of the painter, the sculptor, and the physicist alike." Foregathering at Aberfeldy on Friday evening, we rested and laid plans for our first line of attack in the morning—Schiehallion. With a comfortably early start, we kept the road to Rannoch until reaching a shepherd's hut at Tigh-an't-Socaich, two miles from White Bridge. Here we left the road, skirting the plantation and going in a westerly direction over the green patches, with a gentle rise to the sky line (2500 feet), and then turning at right angles along the ridge which led to the top. There is a path for a part of the way, and the route was pleasant enough through heather or pasture until we got to the rocks on the summit. We could not trace the cone shape of the hill, for we were all along rising on a long ridge which narrows at the top, where it assumes majestic proportions with precipitous sides and offers a bold outlook to the west. The view of the surrounding country was grand. At that point we were just about the centre of Scotland; and though Schiehallion (3547 feet) is not as high as some of its neighbours, we beheld a magnificent panorama of mountains largely covered with snow, with soft sylvan scenery at our feet, looking on Lochs Rannoch and Tummel, and the rivers Tummel and Tay, with the rich timbering of the county around us. The near view was excellent, but the far view of the Cairngorms was not so good, owing to haze. Looking north-east over Blair Atholl we could distinctly see Glen Tilt with Beinn a' Ghlo on the right, while away to the north we could dimly make out the tops of the Cairngorm group—Ben Muich Dhui being some 32 miles distant. There was a good view to the south-east, for we

readily located the Lomonds of Fifeshire, distant about 45 miles. We descended to the shepherd's hut and made for Coshieville, to complete the "picnic" with tea and scones. That little Inn may have been once an attractive *couchez-ville*; however, we did not attempt to sleep there, but made for that charming little village, Kenmore.

Our objective on the following day was Ben Lawers, and it was new ground for some of us. We resolved to take the hill from Lawers Hotel, beautifully situated on Loch Tay. It was a beautiful morning, but it was misty on the high ground, and the top could not be seen. The direction was clear enough—north-west—but we resolved to ascend from the lonely Loch of the Wild Cat, Lochan-à-Chait (2250 feet), reaching the lochan by going round the eastern spur of the hill; thence we followed the burn coming from the great corrie on the eastern side of the Ben, hoping to get a good look of the corrie, and thence take the summit. In a thick mist and in varying temperature, the conditions varied considerably. With but glimpses of our surroundings we were pretty well confined to the varying conditions under foot, and lost a good deal of interest in consequence. Avoiding the straight route from the hotel, we had escaped long stretches of marshy ground, but we were in soft snow, frozen snow, and much soft ground caused by the rapidly melting snow higher up, and we had nasty bits of sloping ice on our way to the loch which required some engineering; it tried severely the boots of one of the party, for the nails were gradually dropping off, and locomotion became less easy. Turning from the loch upwards through a thick mist, and wading a foot or more in soft snow, we tried to get to the cairn by a bee line, making constant use of map and compass. We took a wrong turn, and instead of going direct up the nearest ridge, skirted the great corrie, and simply kept on quite content while we were still ascending, for the mist became thicker than ever. There was only one axe among the company, and it was requisitioned more than once to cut steps to facilitate progress. We had expected to see the great pyramid, whose apex is the cairn, but, alas, we got but

a feeble idea of its form or grandeur. On descending, we followed the narrow ridge closely, taking the general direction towards the hotel. Then as we were coming off the snow, still trusting entirely to our compass, in a moment we dropped below the mist (2500 feet), and there, three miles ahead, a glorious view of Loch Tay unfolded itself. The chief view was to the south and west, with, in the near foreground, Ben Vorlich and Ben More, and far west Ben Cruachan, which was remarkably clear at the time. There then remained an hour's trudge through the marshy pasture lands to the hotel. This is a centre for sheep farming, for we passed many sheep with lambs, and one sheep lying on its back and kicking its heels helplessly. The creature, of course, we set on its feet, realising proudly that the genuine mountaineer may be trusted to go anywhere, for he not only avoids doing harm but desires to be useful. The scene was charming, and recalled to us that Ben Lawers is declared to be high rather by the scooping out of the surrounding valleys than by upheavals, as with our Cairngorms. The height is officially stated at 3984 feet, but as the cairn is over sixteen feet the claim is made that Perthshire has a 4000 feet mountain—not to be behind Aberdeenshire. But the two hills visited do not bear comparison with, say, Lochnagar, in grandeur or in picturesqueness. All the same there is beauty in both, even though the contrast brings into greater relief the superior attractions of the glorious Cairngorms. A run through Fortingal and Glen Lyon by automobile completed a splendid outing, and we retain pleasing memories of the visit. We did not find Sir Donald Currie's grave at Fortingal, for it is unnamed, but we saw the old yew tree said to be 3000 years old.—J. B. M. and W. A. R.

## EXCURSIONS AND NOTES.

MANY members of the Club will be interested in the following letter from Mrs. McCook, dated 21st May, to the Secretary: "We were very pleased

to get your letter. It was so kind of you to write and ask BENALDER for us. I am sorry not to have answered it sooner, but we COITAGE. only call at the Lodge once a fortnight now, so we did not get your letter till Friday last. McCook was very ill last winter; he was laid up for five weeks with influenza. Perhaps you heard that the Laggan doctor, who visited him on the 9th January, a very stormy day, received a medal from the Carnegie Hero Fund; his two guides, Mr. Clark, Benalder, and my brother, J. Bain, also received a silver watch with inscription, and £5. I was ill myself for about a week, but I am glad to say we are both quite well again. We are having fine weather here at present, but the winter was very stormy. . . . ."

MOST people, if asked to name the best known mountain-climber, would, Sir Martin Conway states in *Fry's Magazine*, select Mr. Edward Whymper.

Many other men have climbed more mountains and THE bigger mountains than he, but in him is incorporated, for BEST-KNOWN the general public, the conquest of the Alps and the MOUNTAIN popularisation of mountaineering as a first-class sport. It CLIMBER. is now some fifty years since Edward Whymper began to climb. He was one of a band of pioneers who had the Alps almost to themselves when they first took to going there for an annual holiday. For every Alpine climber in 1859 there are perhaps in 1910 at least a hundred thousand tourists who spend the holiday season in the Alps.

Whymper, Sir Martin Conway adds, did not first visit the Alps as a tourist, but to make sketches of the mountains for a London publisher. One of the mountains selected was Mont Pelvoux, in Dauphiné. From sketching to an attempt at climbing was a natural transition for an active youth twenty years of age. The first attempt failed, but success was attained in the following year, and thenceforward Whymper was a mountaineer first and foremost, and came rapidly to the front among the small body of pioneers. His greatest triumph was to be first on the summit of the stupendous Matterhorn, and it is as conqueror of the Matterhorn that he will be remembered as long as people care to climb mountains.

After noticing Mr. Whymper's other feats on the Alps as well as on the Andes, and his books, Sir Martin Conway concludes his article by stating that Whymper has never been a hunter after conspicuity. There has been no pushing of himself into the newspapers, no search for advertisement of his great accomplishments. Only a paper in the *Alpine Journal* records his remarkable Greenland journeyings. "All his life long he has been a modest, steady, and efficient worker in the things he undertook to do. No

sentence in any of his books has had to be explained away. He enjoys, therefore, an enviable reputation as a serious writer, a bold explorer, and a man of iron will and nerve, who has worthily accomplished not merely feats of valour upon the mountains, but explorations and studies which have yielded valuable additions to human knowledge." It may be added that all Mr. Whymper's explorations have been carried out entirely at his own expense.—*The Westminster Gazette*.

OUR rendezvous was Beaulieu station, on a very unpromising day in the latter end of summer. We (three) were provided with cycles, and bed and sleeping-tent outfit, stove and cooking utensils, while each of us carries a rucksack, bulging out with blankets, rugs, etc. Our course is westward, the first halt being made at the Falls of Kilmorack. From a view-point overlooking the Falls the river Beaulieu is seen to great advantage as it issues from a narrow and deep gorge and plunges into the pool below. While we watch, we see numbers of salmon leap from this pool, but none of them then attempts the Falls, although that is quite a common feat to accomplish when moving up stream to the spawning grounds.

Resuming our journey, we pass Eilean Aigas, a rocky, wooded islet formed by the river, associated with the well-known Sobieski Stewarts, who claimed to be scions of the royal race. Just as a heavy shower threatens we come to a leafy grotto or bower in the wood by the roadside, and dismounting we find that it is a covered holy well, with a curious little cell behind it, surmounted by a wooden cross. The stone in front of the well is inscribed with many names of saints and dates, and a brass plate invites the visitor to pray for the repose of the soul of the holy father who built the well in bygone days. By the time we have deciphered all the inscriptions, the kettle is boiling, and presently, with a benison on the holy father, we are drinking tea and eating sandwiches. In a very short time the sky clears, and again we are a-wheel.

The Strath now opens out, and after a bit of welcome free-wheeling we reach the picturesque village of Struy. Beyond this point the road passes through scenery of a more pastoral character, and we are making good progress when bang goes a tyre! The repairing of this occupies some little time, and while it is being done we watch a hawk, poised on hovering wings. Suddenly he drops on his quarry like a bolt from the blue, and is hidden from view by some intervening trees, and as he does not reappear we know that another of nature's daily tragedies has been enacted. But the evening is wearing on, and we still have "some lang Scots miles" to go, so as soon as the tyre is right we resume our journey, passing Invercannich with its pretty little Roman Catholic Chapel, till we come to diverging roads, of which we take the one leading to the right and up the Chisholm's Pass to Glen Affric. Soon the gradient becomes too steep for our heavily-laden steeds, so we have to dismount and push. Upward and ever upward winds the road, displaying more effectively at every step the grandeur of the glen. We cordially endorse the opinion of Mr. Baddeley who says, "Glen Affric holds the first

position amongst the glens of Great Britain, as distinctly as Borrowdale stands at the head of her large, and the Derbyshire and Staffordshire Dovedale of her small, valleys." The hill-tops are shrouded in mist, and ever and anon great wisps of it come down to our level, and we begin to realise that we shall not be able to reach the head of the glen before darkness sets in. Suddenly, on turning a corner, we come face to face with a score of stags, which stare at us defiantly from a distance of about fifty yards, till at last one gives the signal, and they all bound away with exquisite grace, and are lost to view in the thick undergrowth. And now at every turn we come upon parcels of from two to six, some of them scampering away as soon as they see us, others gazing quietly at us till we are out of sight. We are in the saddle again and hurrying on, but we cannot pass the famous Dog Falls without dismounting. The road here comes close to the river, and the "bits" all about this point are exquisite in richness of colour and variety of rock contour. It is almost too dark to see anything now, except the notice boards warning visitors from going too near the edge of the undermined rocks; but we explored it more thoroughly on our return journey the following day.

Road and river have now reached the same level, and after a few miles we come in sight of Loch Beinn-a-Mheadhoin and begin to look around for a suitable camping ground. We are still passing through groves of native wood, and in the gathering dusk and mist the gnarled trunks of the fine old birches have a most weird and ghostly effect, while ever and anon we are startled by an antlered head appearing close to the roadside, or silhouetted for a moment against the sky as the mists disperse and close again. At the head of the loch we find an ideal pitch in the shelter of a "birkenshaw," and after a last look down the dark loch we turn in. Our tent is really "built for two," but it can accommodate three at a pinch, and if the couch would scarcely suit a sybarite, it feels quite luxurious to the weary trio who now woo the fickle goddess. The rain again comes down in earnest, and we began to worry about how we are to get home next day. At length, however, the rhythmic drip-drip on the canvas lulls us to sleep, and we do not wake till the sun was well up over the eastern hills, and streaming through the open flap of the tent. The sky is clear and the mists "folded their tents like the Arabs, and as silently stolen away." I would I had the pen of a William Black, or some such word artist, to paint the glories of that summer morning in the heart of the hills! The loch, which looked so black and uncanny last night, now laughs in a thousand ripples under the brilliant sunshine; the sweet-scented birches which a few hours ago looked like wraiths, now appear like white-robed brides adorned with countless gems, as the raindrops glisten on the tremulous leaves. Not a sound breaks the stillness, save the gentle lapping of the wavelets at the water's brim, while all around stand the everlasting, silent hills, some of them clad with verdure far up their slopes, while others stand stark and bare, their rugged outline sharply defined against the deep blue of the sky.

Leaving all our baggage in the heather on the roadside, after breakfast we mount and ride far into the mountain fastnesses. A few miles of

a fair road of a switchback nature brings us to our goal. The road ends at the approach to Affric Lodge, but we follow a footpath for about half a mile, then, taking to the heather, we climb a rocky eminence "until," to parody Scot, "an airy point we won, where gleaming in the summer sun, Loch Affric lay beneath us rolled, a burnished sheet of living gold!" What a magnificent scene! The clear sparkling waters of the loch stretch westward for miles, and are hemmed in on all sides by the giant hills, for here are grouped some of the highest mountains in Scotland. Immediately on our right, and dominating the point on which we stand, towers the fine peak of Sgurr-na-Lapaich, while over its shoulder we can see the snow-clad summits of Carn Eige (3877), and Mam Soul (3862). Other peaks equally fine, but less well known, extend to the westward, until away beyond the head of the loch, and seeming completely to block the top of the glen, stands the huge bulk of Beinn Fhada, while over its southern shoulder appears the fine, conical peak of Sgurr Fhuaran. The contours of the hills on the south shore of Loch Affric are not quite so striking, although in less grand surroundings they would look imposing, rising as they do to heights well over 3000 feet.

We reluctantly turn our backs on the loch and make a start for home. We are soon back at the spot where we had left our baggage, and after getting our loads firmly strapped, we get fairly under weigh. The conditions now are the opposite of those prevailing on the outward journey. Then everything was enveloped in mist; to-day everything is bathed in glorious sunshine. Yesterday we pushed our likes laboriously; to-day we merely sit in the saddle and steer, applying the brake when necessary; yesterday the glen seemed alive with deer; to-day scarce a sign of animal life is visible. In a very short space of time we are at the foot of the Pass and join the main highway again. Arriving at Invercannich, instead of taking the Beaully road, we strike off to the right, crossing the river and climbing the Kerrow hill for two or three miles. Then we have a splendid run down Glen Urquhart to Drumnadrochit, and thence by the side of Loch Ness to Inverness, where we arrive rather tired, but delighted with our little outing.—THOS. GEDDIE.

THOUGH in some respects the lecture on "The Highland Hills," delivered by Mr. William C. Smith, K.C., on 7th March, was "a new departure" in

the activities of the Club, it is by no means without precedent. Mr. Bryce, the President of the Club, gave an address on "The Preservation of Natural HIGHLAND HILLS. Scenery," in June, 1897; and, three years later, he lectured to the Club on "Types of Mountain Scenery." He also initiated the "Cairngorm Club Journal," started in July, 1893, with a paper entitled "Some Stray Thoughts on Mountain-Climbing."

Mr. Smith's lecture was an admirable one. As preliminary to a display of mountain views, it was at once concise and comprehensive; and it not only exhibited—what might have been expected from an ex-President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club—an extensive and intimate knowledge of Scottish mountains and a keen appreciation of their scenic beauties, but a no less remarkable acquaintance with their geological features. The easy



way in which Mr. Smith descanted on these last showed how familiar he was with that branch of the subject.

Nor was the saving grace of humour absent. It found many manifestations, particularly in the quotation of poetry of a serio-comic order. Here is a sample taken from the visitors' book at the Sligachan Hotel in Skye :—

Och ! the Coolin, that'll stand no foolin' !

The rocks at the bottom are terrible hard ;

The summits fine and airy, and the slopes contrairy,

Exhaust the vocabulary of an Irish bard.

Gabbro and granite, shure an earthquake began it,

They were pitched in wild confusion in these elegant nooks,

Rocks thrown at random, if you can't understand 'em,

You will find them all catalogued in the geology books.

Mr. Smith was perhaps just a trifle unfair to the memory of John Hill Burton in suggesting (if only figuratively) that he went down on his knees to the officers of the Ordnance Survey, imploring them to make Ben Nevis less high than Ben Muich Dhui. Burton tells the story himself in his little book on "The Cairngorm Mountains." He forgathered with the Survey officers on the summit of Ben Nevis at the time when the long disputed point as to which Ben was the higher was to be accurately determined ; "and before separating from these hermits of Her Majesty's Ordnance," he says, "I requested, if they had any influence in the matter, that they would 'find' for my favourite ; but duty is peremptory, and they were subsequently bound to reveal the fact that Ben Nevis had it by a few feet." Nevertheless, Burton continued to consider Ben Muich Dhui the superior mountain—in grandeur if not in height.

We left Aviemore at 5 a.m., on March 8th last, in promising weather.

ACROSS THE  
CAIRNGORMS  
IN MARCH.

Day broke as we entered Glen Eunach, which we found to be clear of snow, as were also Cadha Mhor and Carn Elrick. Few stags were seen, but hinds were numerous ; birds, with the exception of grouse, were scarce.

The Lower Bothy reached, we had a good look at Braeriach, and decided to follow the left ridge of Corrie Bennie. For three quarters of a mile the burn was open ; further up, the Corrie was well packed with snow. There had evidently been a considerable fall of snow overnight ; it was soft and holding. Sgoran Dubh now stood out boldly, clear of mist, with snow to the loch. On the flat at the head of Corrie Bennie we forced large wreaths of fine dry snow, which was raised in great clouds by a strong north-west wind, there blowing in all directions.

The snow deepened as the top of Braeriach was reached ; there was little or nothing of the cairn to be seen. We had grand views of Cairn Toul ; Lochan Uaine was of course covered with ice and snow. In the brilliant sunshine the precipices of Braeriach looked magnificent with their enormous snow cornices. The Falls of Dee were under ice and snow ; not a ripple to be heard—the roar of the wind overhead drowning all other sounds. The sharp razor-like ridge of the Angel's Peak looked

quite dazzling. The Gorchory Water was seen to be open a little below its confluence with the Lochan Uaine Burn. The Dee itself was open a quarter of a mile above the junction of the Larig Burn and the Gorchory Water—the latter appearing by far the larger.

Having descended into Glen Dee—it was considered prudent to give up the idea of visiting Cairn Toul—the temperature was found to be very warm, much more like June than March. We found no snow in the glen, only there were large wreaths in the gullies. We reached Luibeg at 6 p.m., and there learned that two Aberdeen men had climbed Ben Muich Dhui on New Year's Day.

It rained heavily overnight. In the morning we set out, up Glen Derry, for Ben Muich Dhui. In the beautiful sunshine Beinn Mheadhoin formed a pretty picture with its castle-like rocks. Near the Glas Allt, as we were remarking on the scarcity of birds, the song of the thrush was heard, the bird being seen on the top branch of an old fir about the furthest up the glen. The Glas Allt was covered with an enormous snow wreath; the Derry Burn was open for a few hundred yards above the confluence.

In Coire Etchachan snow lay deep, and numerous fox tracks were seen. Ptarmigan were so tame that we got within ten yards of them. They sat apparently quite unconcerned, dressing their feathers. Loch Etchachan was, of course, ice- and snow-bound. Dense mist now came down, but we diverged to the right, and had a glimpse of Loch Avon and the Shelter Stone Crag. As we made for the top of Ben Muich Dhui, the snow deepened and the wind was felt with increasing force. Some difficulty was found in locating the cairn, and we missed the Sappers' Kitchen altogether. Naturally in these circumstances there was no view from the summit. We descended by Sron Riach to Luibeg, which was reached in rain.

The following morning the barometer fell, but at 7 o'clock, despite the stormy outlook, we set out by the Larig Ghru for Aviemore. Deer were seen to be hurrying down for shelter, paying us scarcely any attention. Having crossed the Luibeg Water for the last time we got the full force of the wind, and were so blown about that we even contemplated a retreat and a return *via* Braemar. In the Larig walking was extremely heavy, sinking over the knees in soft snow. The Pools of Dee were reached at 1 p.m. After six hours' floundering it was curious to note that the two lower Pools had each an open strip on the Ben Muich Dhui side, about twelve feet by three. As we left the Pass, Carn Elrick was observed to be covered with snow to the base. Aviemore was reached at 6 o'clock in rain, but the outing on the whole was pleasant.—FINLAY MACKENZIE.

## REVIEWS.

Rev. Thomas Sinton, the minister of the parish of Dores, Inverness-shire, has already enriched the literature of the Highlands by a valuable work on

“The Poetry of Badenoch;” and he has just made a  
 LOCH LAGGAN worthy addition in “By Loch and River: Being  
 AND Memories of Loch Laggan and Upper Spey.” The  
 UPPER SPEYSIDE volume consists of a presentation of phases of life and  
 character in the Badenoch district in “the days that are  
 no more.” The author tells us that he has endeavoured to portray the  
 locality in which he was born and grew up, “as it gradually impressed itself  
 upon his mind, associated with human hearts and passing events, and teeming  
 with memories of the past.” Thus we have sketches in succession of Aber-  
 arder, Cor Arder, Ben Alder, the Braes of Laggan, and Kingussie; of “The  
 Township Well,” “The Fleecing Day,” “The Mountain Farm,” “The Muir-  
 land Burn,” and so on. Pleasant sketches they are, too—not merely descrip-  
 tive of the mountainous and romantic scenery evoked by the very mention of  
 the names, but embracing also much of legendary story and folk-lore and  
 reminiscences of individuals, some of them celebrated, and others having only  
 a local reputation. The sensations aroused by finding oneself lost on the hills  
 and suddenly confronted with unfamiliar scenery are well depicted in the  
 sketch, “A Spur of Drumalban;” while the walk in Cor Arder becomes  
 reminiscent of Prince Charlie, who passed down through the corrie on his  
 way to Ben Alder, where he remained in comparative security, enjoying the  
 hospitality of Cluny Macpherson. “How curious,” reflects Mr. Sinton,  
 “to know that this very footpath that we are now following was once  
 trodden, in anxious vigilance, by the royal fugitive and his guides! He,  
 like us, must have made his way over many a hoary old trunk, round many  
 a boulder, and across many a swampy dell and sparkling runnel—now low  
 down close to the burn, and anon scrambling up some rough bank.” Fancy  
 and imagination are thus skilfully employed to enhance legendary and  
 historical incident and give a flavour to personal recollections that are  
 wonderfully keen and extensive, as is exemplified in the “Annals of the  
 Village”—a charming picture of Kingussie in its early days. There are  
 abundant references also to Mrs. Grant of Laggan, the Dukes of Gordon,  
 the Cluny Macphersons, and other people associated with Badenoch. Alto-  
 gether, the volume is a delightful one, and cannot fail to be appreciated  
 by natives of the district depicted and by everybody interested in the pre-  
 servation of the ways and traits of bygone times.—R. A.

THE TRAMP is the expressive, if not over-dignified, name given to a new  
 monthly magazine evidently designed for mountaineers and pedestrians. It  
 calls itself “An Open Air Magazine,” and its contents

THE TRAMP. make a special appeal to all who cultivate the neglected  
 art of walking—though, happily, there are many signs of  
 a revival (or development at least) of this form of pleasant recreation.  
 There are articles dealing with the English Lakes, Donegal, Hitchin, the

New Forest, and Fontainebleau. Dr. E. A. Baker extols the Lake district as affording special attractions at Easter to walkers and climbers, and has something to say of the comparatively modern extension of mountaineering in Britain. The writer of the paper on Hitchin maintains that "A true tramp should love both town and country," and evidently addresses himself to the tramp "who dabbles in topographical antiquities." Lady Margaret Sackville outlines a long walking expedition through the New Forest, and incorporates a list of other suggested walks. The paper on "Donegal" is wholly irrelevant to a magazine of this sort. It is really a disquisition on Ireland and the Irish character, and particularly the native fondness for whisky. Next to nothing is said of Donegal, and all one learns of it is derivable from the accompanying illustrations. Contrast this paper with Mr. Arnold Bennet's delightful one, "Round the Forest of Fontainebleau," in which appreciation of the beauties of the forest and rural scenery is blended with gossip about the places to see and the places to avoid. Barbizon, he declares, to be utterly vulgarised, "like Stratford-on-Avon." "What," he asks, "would Rousseau, Daubigny, and Millet say if they could see it now? Curiosity shops, art exhibitions, and a very large cafe. An appalling light railway, and all over everything the sticky slime of sophistication!" *The Tramp* itself has fallen a victim to sophistication. It must needs have its quota of stories; and though they are good, one is impelled to ask why they should be here, and why there should be sections devoted to music and the play. A magazine of this kind ought to be "run" on its special merits, and keep to the purposes for which it is started. There is surely now a large enough constituency of "open air" devotees of all kinds to be content with papers on "The Art of Vagabondage," for instance, and willing to get its fiction elsewhere—if it wants it.—R. A.

THIS is the title of an interesting volume by George M. Reith, M.A., just published by T. N. Foulis, Edinburgh and London. Mr. Reith is surprised at Edinburgh being "wonderfully indifferent" to the "THE BREEZY priceless boon she possesses in having the Pentlands so PENTLANDS." near and so accessible, comparatively few of her citizens having ever set foot on their slopes; but there is nothing new in this complaint. Similar surprise is entertained by hill-climbers everywhere at the general neglect with which their favourite pastime is treated and at the lack of recreation and curtailment of human interest from which the "stay-at-home" suffer. Pedestrianism, however, is somewhat of a lost art, though there are, happily, indications of its revival; and, with all our modern talk of the charms of nature, there is immense room for their cultivation by personal perception. Every endeavour, therefore, to make people acquainted with what they are missing by their indifference and to instruct them in the matter of roads and routes, is to be appreciated; and a cordial welcome must accordingly be extended to Mr. Reith's volume. Its purpose, he says, "is to create and foster interest in Edinburgh's great natural playground by putting together, more or less discursively, notes and impressions, descriptive, historical, physiographical, anecdotal, collected in many a delightful ramble over the Pentlands during the last ten years." And with a modesty quite becoming, but altogether too depreciatory, he

adds that "it is to be regarded neither as a guide book to the hills, nor as an exhaustive treatise thereon, but simply as talk about them, reduced to something like order and system by following the main routes around and across the range." The "talk," however, would easily enough enable even a complete stranger to find his way, and this same stranger, unless he be a very dull fellow indeed, will discover Mr. Reith's very discursive discourse to be invariably entertaining and now and again mightily diverting. Like the Pentlands it eulogises, Mr. Reith's book is distinctly "breezy."—R. A.

*Continued from page 2 of Cover.*

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 5s. 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 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. The Committee shall also have power to elect qualified Minor Members, belonging to the household of ordinary members. Minor Members shall pay an annual subscription of 2/6, but shall have no voice in the management of the Club, nor be entitled to receive copies of the Club's publications.

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.

