

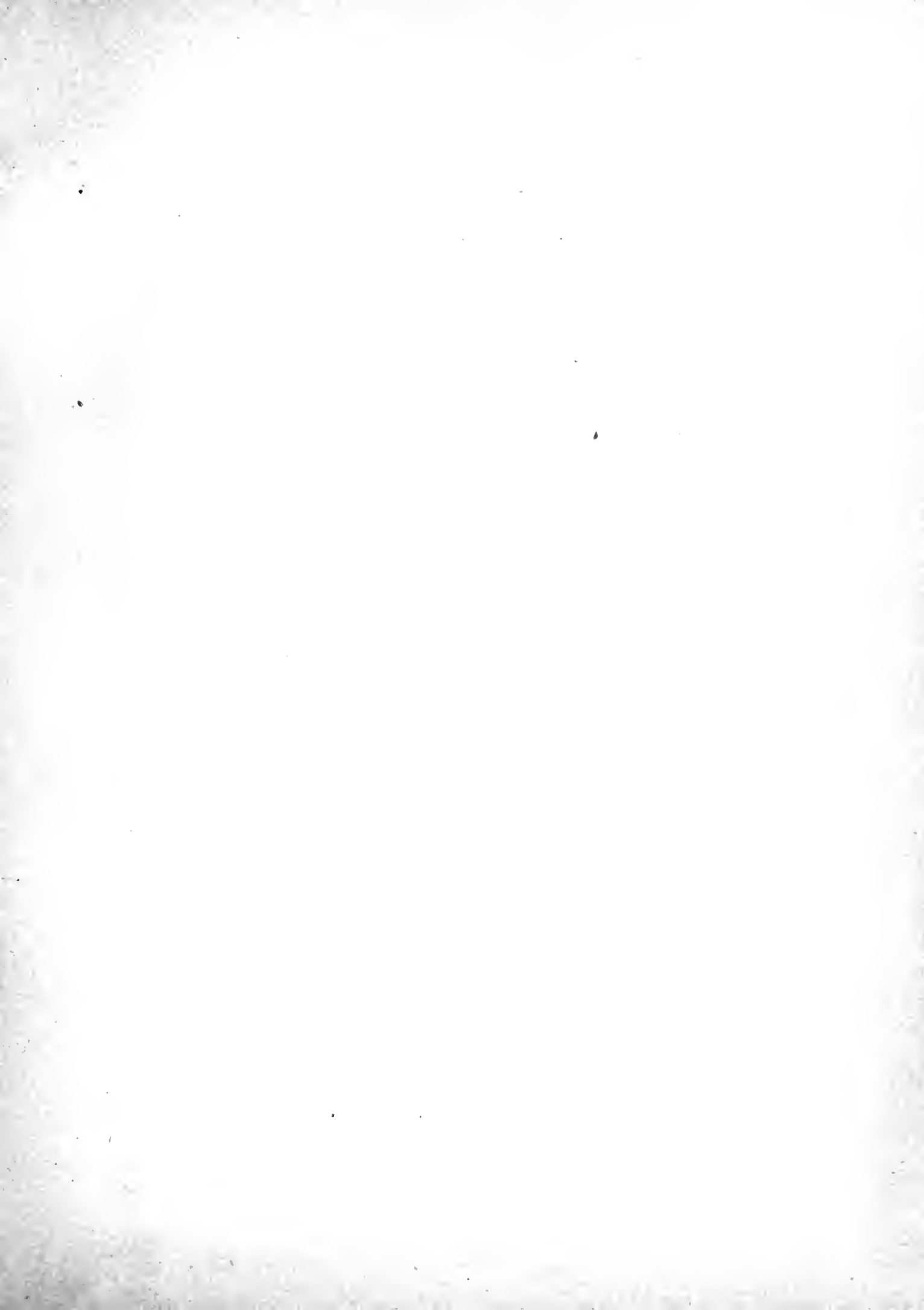
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THE DEER FORESTS  
OF  
SCOTLAND

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THE DEER FORESTS  
OF  
SCOTLAND

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

BY

A. GRIMBLE

AUTHOR OF

"DEERSTALKING," "SHOOTING AND SALMON FISHING"  
AND "HIGHLAND SPORT"

ILLUSTRATED

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## PREFACE.

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THE kind reception given to my book of "Deer-stalking," in 1888, by deerstalkers as a body, coupled with the fact that sportsmen in general passed a favourable verdict on "Shooting and Salmon Fishing" in 1892, and on "Highland Sport" in 1894, has induced me once more to put pen to paper on a subject for which I think there is still room in the literature of sport, for, as far as I am aware, no one has hitherto attempted to describe or relate the anecdotes and statistics of the Scotch Deer Forests. Before, however, proceeding further with these pages, I wish to say, as I have previously said in each of my other books, that I wholly disclaim any pretension to literary merit. I write as a sportsman for sportsmen, resting my hopes of success not at all

on neatly turned ear-pleasing phrases (would that the gift were mine), but solely on the ability to state in plain simple words a number of facts and fancies collected together on a subject in which I know many brother-sportsmen are greatly interested. In "Deerstalking" I tried, to the best of my power, to describe the habits and wily ways of the wild Red Deer of Scotland, and how best to circumvent them; for these reasons in that book I wrote entirely of stag and stalker, saying but little that gave any idea of the wilds, the morasses, and wastes of moorland and mountain, over which the red deer range in unmolested freedom for ten months of every year. In a word, my "Deerstalking" treated of the inhabitants of a territory without describing the nature of the country in which they lived: for this reason those gentlemen who have read my "Deerstalking" need not be under any apprehension when perusing the following pages that they will be likely to meet with old matter dressed up in a new form for book-making purposes. To

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speak with absolute correctness, I ought not to style myself the "author" of this book; "the collector of these notes" would be the better term, as the real authors are the forest owners and renters themselves, with nearly every one of whom I have been more or less in correspondence. At the present moment there are just 130 deer forests in Scotland, covering 2,552,383 acres, and of each one I hope to say something reliable, for the information in all cases has been derived from the very best of sources, viz., either from owner or renter, and further afield I have not sought to go, having received an early caution from a forest owner, who wrote me to the following effect when kindly sending the particulars of his own forest: "You should be careful about keepers' and gillies' information; one man near here I found adding in a newspaper report two stone and some points to a stag killed on his ground, and he laughed and said it was necessary 'to make things good for the papers.' Some stalkers about here also allow *a stone* if a stag is left on the hill for a night."

The reader will see for himself that the knowledge gathered has in some instances been more copiously given than in others, but in all cases my best and most grateful thanks are due to the ladies and gentlemen who have so courteously and so kindly helped me, for without their friendly aid I should have felt it almost impossible to put these pages together in a sufficiently interesting and authentic form ; and now, at the end of my task, my earnest hope is that in them no one will be able to find anything to which they can fairly take exception. In a very few cases I have not been able to get any information given me, and in these circumstances I have stated this has been the case, while merely mentioning of such forests that which is public property and known to everyone who cares to make enquiries.

The wild, romantic, and beautiful scenery of the deer forests quickly imbues in most men a feeling of admiration, romance and desire of being able to soar above mere prose, so as to describe in verse those ever-changing beauties of nature with which

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this sport brings him into daily contact, and I can hardly recall to mind any of my friends who have been much on the hill, who have not confessed to having had their feelings, chivalrous, poetic, and romantic, quickened and enhanced as “they sat by the mossy fountain on the top of the hill of the winds,” while searching with their glasses the depths below for those whose “skins gleam red in the sunshine.” Granted that the presence of a good stag in front of one does away with every feeling of romance or enjoyment of beautiful scenery, yet it often so happens that stags are not visible for many an hour—or the stalker may be called on, as is so often the case, to “play patience” and endure the tedious monotony of a long wait on a lying deer, let us say on the banks of the Sword Loch of Corrou; surely then it will help him to pass such time more quickly and pleasantly if he be acquainted with the story of how the loch won its name, and so enabled to recall to life and picture to himself the curious scene, such a mixture of treachery with chivalrous

confidence, that was once enacted on the banks of Loch-an-Claimadh. With regard to these stories, most of them founded on actual fact, for there is no deer forest in the north, or hardly a hill in any of them, but what has at one time or other been a witness to deeds and events, a knowledge of which could not fail to make the country more interesting to those pursuing their sport therein ; therefore, as far as I have been enabled to do so, I have mentioned all such details of bygone days, and regretting not to have been qualified to do more in the same direction, I take this opportunity of humbly suggesting to forest owners and renters that they would derive additional pleasure from their days on the hill if they were to make themselves "well acquaint" with the traditionary incidents of the old times of the particular forests in which they are interested. The counties, together with the deer forests in each, have been dealt with alphabetically, but no mention has been made of rentals, for many are never let, while those that have tenants are subject to variations just

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the same as other marketable things, and I can only assure anyone thinking of renting deer ground that he will speedily discover that to find out "how much to pay?" is the easiest part of the business.

It has been a custom with me to dedicate my books to some kind friend who has given me happy days with deer or grouse or salmon, but death, alas! has been busy in their ranks, for first Sir Robert Bateson Harvey, then Henry Spencer Lucy, and lastly, in October of this year, my old friend Colonel John Hargreaves, for so long the renter of Gaick Forest with Glentromie grouse shootings, have each joined the great majority, and the longer I live, the truer I find the saying that "the deaths of our friends are the milestones of our lives." Yet, however, I am loth to abandon my old habit, and therefore I dedicate these pages to His Grace the Duke of Westminster as a trifling acknowledgment of the kindness shown me by him, the Duchess and all their family at Lochmore, where this past season I had the good fortune to stalk over

one of the most wild and beautiful parts of Sutherland. For over thirty years the Duke has been the renter from the Duke of Sutherland of four forests rolled into one, namely, Lochmore, Stack, Ben Hee, and Gobernuisgach, or the whole tract of ground once known as "Lord Reay's country;" and I doubt if any gentleman has a better knowledge of deer and forest management generally, and this, combined with an almost too chivalrous regard for the deer themselves (for from the moment a stag roars at Lochmore he is safe from the rifle, and stalking is discontinued some time in the *first week* of October), has ended in producing an average yearly kill over the whole ground of nearly two hundred of the heaviest-bodied stags to be heard of in Scotland.



THE  
DEER FORESTS OF SCOTLAND

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

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CHAPTER I.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

IN this county there are only five deer forests, but as they spread over an area of some 230,000 acres, it will be seen that, though numerically small, they are very large in extent. Taking them then in alphabetical order, there comes first:—

HER MAJESTY'S FORESTS OF BALMORAL, BALLOCHBUIE,  
AND ABERGELDIE.

THIS latter ground is rented from Mr. Hugh Mackay Gordon, and the three forests together represent an area extending to about 50,000 acres of lofty mountains covered with moss and grey

granite boulders, broken up by corries of green grass; the less high hills being heather-clad, and these again having their bases clothed with wood consisting of Scotch fir and patches of birch bordering on two sides with the open forest, and as the shelter thus offered covers some 15,000 acres of ground, it more than takes the place of a sanctuary.

The forest marches on the south and east with Glenmuick, and on the north and west with Invercauld. The highest hills are Loch-na-gar, 3,800 feet, which being interpreted by Gaelic scholars is by some said to mean "The Moaning Rock," and by others "The Loch of the Rock;" then comes Cuidhe-Crom, 3,552 feet, "Crooked Wreath," followed by Cairn Taggert, "Priest's Cairn," 3,430 feet, and many hills nearly as high. Clearing was commenced in this forest in 1848, although for many years previous to that there were always deer on the ground. It will carry three rifles every day of the season, and sometimes towards the middle of

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October there is a deer drive. The head forester's name is Donald Stewart, and the usual kill of stags is a little over 100, which show an average of 15 stone without heart or liver.

This being the first time that the weight of deer is mentioned in these pages, I will ask my readers to understand that in all subsequent allusions to this matter "quite clean or clean" will refer only to beasts weighed without heart or liver, and in the remainder of these pages wherever the weights of deer are mentioned and not stated to be "clean," the different methods of taking the weight will be duly stated, and, moreover, my readers will find this subject of the various modes of weighing more fully discussed in the chapter on the Forest of Achnacarry.

The widest head killed in Her Majesty's forests has measured  $35\frac{1}{2}$  inches across, and the thickest horn  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches in circumference immediately above the coronet, which, though a good stout horn, is not anything extraordinary. Golden eagles frequent the

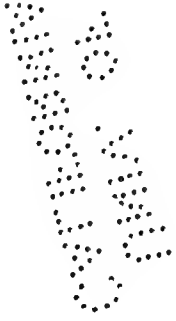
forest in plenty, often nesting in the giant firs, which they seem to prefer to the precipitous cliffs usually chosen by them. During the last decade pole-cats have been sometimes killed, but they now appear to be extinct; badgers are still to be found; while foxes, as in most other forests, are inconveniently plentiful and difficult to keep down. To compare the sport of one forest with that of another is not my province, but with regard to the deer grounds of the county under discussion, I think I may safely assert that in respect of climatic conditions they rank before all others, and that on the summits of the Aberdeenshire hills less rain is to be encountered, and more bracing, finer, health-giving air is to be met with than can be found anywhere else in all Scotland.

FOREST OF GLENMUICK AND BACHNAGAIRN.

GLEN-NA-MUIG, "The Stormy Glen," or according to some Gaelic scholars "The Glen of the Pig"—*i.e.* the ancient word for the wild boar—belongs to Sir Allan



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Mackenzie, and extends to over 19,000 acres. It is somewhat long for its breadth, and on the east and north-east marches with Invermark forest; on the south with some sheep ground and Glendoll forest, which continues to bound it on the west; on the north it runs with Balmoral. At one time this property was owned by the Gordons of Aboyne, and tradition says—although I vouch not for its accuracy—that one day the laird of Aboyne met the laird of Invercauld, both being belated in pursuit of deer, at a small farm-house on Glenmuick, and finding a pack of cards, they began to play. Fortune was dead against the laird of Aboyne, who, exasperated by an incessant run of bad luck, eventually staked as his last coup the property of Glenmuick against a corresponding extent of Invercauld, and losing the game, Glenmuick passed into the hands of Invercauld, from whom it was purchased by the late Sir James Mackenzie in 1870. That gentleman planted large stretches of low-lying moorland with larch, spruce and Scotch fir, which thriving wonderfully well affords

at present splendid winter shelter for the deer ; it likewise offers the foresters an easy chance of hand feeding during very severe winters, and although this sort of feeding is never very satisfactory, as it is rarely that the beasts in sorest need get the food so given, yet it is better than nothing. Sad to relate, the big stag is a selfish fellow, for not until he has had his fill will he allow his weaker kin to join in the feast. When this forest was first made in 1870 it yielded only twenty to twenty-five stags each season, but now it gives from sixty to sixty-five, with an average weight of 14 stone quite clean, and the heaviest stag ever got on it scaled 19 stone 11 lbs. Owing to the narrowness in some places, this ground requires extra care, with great knowledge of the wind ; but it is fine ground to stalk over, and the present owner, Sir Allan Mackenzie, in one day was once fortunate enough to get seven stags, averaging 16 stone 3 lbs., in five different stalks.



## FOREST OF GLEN TANA BY ABOYNE.

THIS forest, the property of Sir William Cunliffe Brooks, takes its name from the river Tana which runs through it: Tana signifying "small" or "shallow," as compared with the mighty Dee in which it loses itself about a mile above Aboyne suspension bridge. It is not to be called Glen "Tanner" as if it were the haunt of the hide dresser or the Cockney glen of sixpence, and neither is it spelt with an *r* as if it were "Annar Mariar." Tana is a Gaelic word, and there is the same one with the same significance in Welsh, viz. tanen—likewise tonos in Greek and tiny in English. With an area of some 22,000 acres, it is about thirteen miles long by some seven at the greatest breadth, the low-lying parts being splendidly timbered, chiefly with Scotch fir, which portions are well fenced off from the arable lands around Aboyne. From these low-lying lands the forest gradually spreads to the west and south-west until it reaches the 3077 feet summit of Mount Keen, where it marches with Invermark Forest.

From time immemorial there have been deer in Glen Tana, and in the old days more than once it has been attempted to extirpate them or drive them clean off the place, but though the whole country side gathered together and formed a compact line, and although there was a great slaughter, the plan failed and the deer returned, to become as numerous as ever. For the last ten years the average kill has been sixty-one stags, scaling 14 stone clean. The normal character of the horns is broad, strong, and wild, and the heads of many good royals adorn the splendid ballroom of Glen Tana House.

At one time the fastnesses of Glen Tana were favourite sites for the operations of the illicit still, but as the amount of the fine increased *pari passu* with the activity of the excisemen, these stills gradually disappeared, and nothing now remains but a few ruins of these attempts to get cheap whisky. I have had the pleasure of spending a few days at Glen Tana, and it is not possible for me to leave this forest without making mention of all the other sport this grand

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place offers. Of grouse and every other description of shooting there is ample, while of fishing there is perhaps the very best in all the kingdom, for upwards of a thousand spring fish have been killed by the rods on this water in one season, and any keen sportsman could commence at Glen Tana on the 11th of February, the opening day of the Dee, and till the next 11th of February came round he could have either rifle, gun, or rod in his hands, with first-rate sport every day of the year. Truly a sportsman's paradise!

## FOREST OF INVERCAULD.

OF this forest, belonging to Mr. A. H. Farquharson, I have not had any authentic information given me. Having applied to the owner and a gentleman who once rented it, and receiving no answer from either, I did not think it right to go out of my way to collect information which may perhaps have been withheld on purpose, though more probably it has been done by inadvertence, for both gentlemen have many

important matters to occupy their attention; therefore I proceed on my way, much regretting that I am unable to say more of this ancient and well-known forest than that I have read it is 18 miles in length from east to west, and from 4 to 5 miles wide.

#### FOREST OF MAR.

THIS splendid forest, belonging to the Duke of Fife, is one of the most ancient, if not actually the oldest, of all the Scotch forests. It consists of 70,000 acres on the north side of the Dee, with other 40,000 acres on the south side. It marches with the forests of Glenmore, Glenavon, Glenfeshie and Atholl, and in addition to a large sanctuary, there is a considerable extent of wood on both sides of the Dee for wintering. The forest is full of high and rocky hills, and of these Ben-mac-Dhui, 4,298 ft., and Cairn Toul, 4,241, are the two highest. Ronald McDonald is head forester over the whole, while his brother Ewan has charge of the ground on the south side of the Dee. It will carry five rifles every day of the stalking season, and

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with a favourable wind as many as seven have often been out. Towards the end of the season a deer drive takes place at times, and also occasionally deer are "moved" when they are in places where it is not possible to stalk them. The annual kill of stags is about 200, of 14 stone clean, while in the low ground stags of 17 and 18 stone are got each season. The Duke of Fife is himself a very keen hard-working stalker, and I doubt if any other gentleman of the same age as His Grace has ever killed more stags to his own rifle.

## CHAPTER II.

## ARGYLLSHIRE.

## FOREST OF ARDTORNISH BY MORVEN.

OF this little forest no authentic information has reached me of the numbers or weights of the stags killed. Belonging to Mr. T. V. Smith, it is situated on the Sound of Mull; Loch Aline bounds it on the west; the waters of the Sound on the south, and Loch Linnhe lies on the south-east, and thus these lands form a peninsula, although not a very pronounced one. On the north-east they march with the deer ground of Kingairloch, and on the north-west with the sheep-walks of Morven. Although the highest hill does not exceed 1,600 ft., yet the beauties of this property are great, the distant views afforded by an island-dotted sea more than compensating

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for the somewhat desolate-looking surroundings of the mainland.

THE BLACK MOUNT BY TYNDRUM.

THIS magnificent and ancient forest, the property of the Marquis of Breadalbane, extends to some 80,000 acres, the eastern and southern boundaries being entirely under sheep; on the west and north-west the property marches with the forests of Dalness, Etive, and the waters of Loch Etive; on the north it runs for a long distance with a narrow strip of sheep ground, on the other side of which lie the well-known forests of Mamore, Corroun, with Benevrich and Rannoch, a buffer state which, as the rutting season begins, the stags are incessantly crossing on their travels from one deer ground to the other.

In these pages I have endeavoured to keep as much as possible to the spelling considered correct in the county containing the deer forest under discussion, and as a simple illustration of the difficulties which

beset the speller of Gaelic names I will take the prefix "Ben" borne by most of the high Scotch hills, which some Gaelic specialists maintain means mountain, while others hold that "ben" is merely a corruption of "ban," pale, and is applied to only those hills that continue snow-capped longer than the surrounding ones. Gaelic spelling and pronunciation likewise vary greatly according to the county, and as proof of this may be mentioned the different methods of spelling and articulating the Gaelic for the "red mountain," for spelt in Perthshire "Ben Derg" and pronounced "Ben Jerig," in Ross-shire these become "Beim Dearg" and "Bin Jarrack"; again, in Perthshire, a very good Gaelic scholar taught me to say "Fie-eh," as correct for Feidh, deer, while an equally well informed Ross-shire authority vowed that "fay" was the only correct method of articulating the word; and so, finding that a smattering of Perthshire Gaelic would not help in Ross-shire, I gave up any attempt to acquire a small knowledge of the throat-breaking, nostril-stretching language.



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In the Black Mount there are many high, rocky and precipitous hills, of which Stob Ghabhar (3,563 feet) and Ben Staray (3,541 feet) are the highest, and around the bases of all these high hills are splendid corries. As a rule, and in all ordinary seasons, this forest yields 100 stags to the rifle, but the seasons of 1893 and 1894 were phenomenal, and as showing what a great difference a good or bad season makes to even a very old forest, Lord Breadalbane has very kindly given me the following particulars of these two seasons.

The stalking season of 1893 in the Black Mount was one of the wettest ever known there, and the incessant rain with the accompanying mists so interfered with stalking that but eighty-four stags were put into the larder, with an average weight of 13 stone 6 lbs. 14 ozs., of which the heaviest was 17 stone, and the lightest but 9 stone. In this forest, however, it is the invariable rule that everything shot is entered into the book, whether laid low by mistake or not, the deer being then weighed quite

clean without heart or liver, and the average at the end of the season is struck so exactly that *ounces* are counted, which is the only instance I have met with of such accurate weighing. In many forests small beasts killed by accident are not entered in the deer book, and of course such an omission greatly increases the average of weight. The winter of 1893 was one of the worst ever experienced in this forest, and upwards of 140 good stags were found dead, many of them with very fine heads, while as to the young stags that perished, it was not possible to make any estimate, as the horns were all that were left to tell the tale of the fate of their bigger brethren. The stalking season of '94 that followed this severe winter turned out to be one of the driest ever known, and for the greater part of the season the wind blew from the north-east, which is the worst possible one for this forest, and but seventy-four stags were killed, with an average weight of 13 stone 10 lbs. 10½ ozs., of which the heaviest scaled 16 st. 8 lbs., and the lightest 11 st. 4 lbs. It was

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also remarked that both in season '93 and '94 the heads, usually so famed for their size and wild beauty, were decidedly below the average. In the dry season of 1894 the weather was so fine that it made the deer very hard to approach, as they did not frequent their usual haunts; also in this season it was a noticeable fact that nearly all the misses were caused by gentlemen shooting low, and Lord Breadalbane when in conversation with the forester of an adjoining forest, without first mentioning the matter, heard from him that he also had never seen so many misses as during that season, all of which he likewise attributed to low shooting, and the fact may perhaps be accounted for by some peculiarity of light caused by the remarkably dry season; the matter is certainly worthy of the deerstalker's attention, for if gentlemen who are known to be trusty with their rifles miss many fair chances, it may be taken as certain that there is some good reason to account for it. In 1894 Lord Breadalbane had a chance of testing the weight of a stag

before and after the gralloch; it was shot on September 25, and weighed as he fell 18 st. 9½ lbs., but when clean he scaled only 13 st. 8 lbs., leaving 5 st. 1½ lbs. as the weight of the gralloch, including heart and liver, which is somewhat under the usual estimate of one-third of the gross weight. Mr. Scrope, however, estimates the gralloch as one-fourth the entire weight, and probably it varies according to the size and condition of the animal. It is somewhat remarkable that each of the seasons '93 and '94 in the Black Mount should have been decidedly below the average, while accounts from other forests reported great numbers of heavy deer to have been got, and perhaps it was late in the season, and after stalking had been discontinued in the Black Mount, that the numbers were obtained; for some forests depend almost entirely on the last ten days of the season to make up the bag, and then of course many stags which are far run are bound to be killed. In the Black Mount the stalkers have the strictest orders not to stalk stags.

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that are not in perfect condition, and such an order (although it greatly improves the breed of deer, and is much to be commended and where possible imitated) cannot fail in early rutting seasons to reduce the number of stags killed. The golden eagle breeds securely in the Black Mount, and although most of the old naturalists speak of the "eagle-stone" as possessing both magical and medicinal properties, and assert that from the eagle downwards no bird of prey can hatch their young without a stone in the nest, the ornithologists of the present day make no mention of these stones, and it would be interesting to find out how such a tradition arose.

In the old days of clanship during the period when feuds were incessant, the Black Mount, like almost every other part of the Highlands, was not exempt from scenes of strife. It was in the mountain fastnesses of these lands that the proscribed clan Macgregor took shelter after they had nearly exterminated the Colquhouns of Luss at the battle

of Glenfruin in 1603, when they were led by their chief Alexander Macgregor of Glenstrae.

For this the Macgregors were outlawed, Alexander, their chief, was taken prisoner and treacherously done to death in Edinburgh. Tradition tells that some years prior to the death of this gallant man, his son, while out after deer one day in the Black Mount, met the young laird of Lamond travelling from Cowal to Inverlochy, and together they dined at a house lying between Tyndrum and King's House. During the evening they quarrelled, dirks were drawn on both sides, when Macgregor was killed, whereon Lamond fled, hotly pursued by the attendants of the young laird, but outrunning his pursuers, he reached the house of Alexander Macgregor, the very man whose son he had just slain, and without mentioning what had happened, he so earnestly begged protection, that the chief pledged him his word that whatever he had done, no harm should befall him as long as he was with him. Then arrived the pursuers to inform the father of the true state of affairs, but Alexander,

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considering his word was pledged, would not allow the slayer of his own son to be harmed, and restored young Lamond to his people unhurt, an act for which the name of Alexander Macgregor of Glenstrae has rightly been handed down to posterity as a typical example of a gallant Highlander's unswerving determination to keep his plighted troth at all hazards. Some sixty years later there appeared on the scene a descendant of this Alexander, the celebrated "Rob Roy," but I cannot discover that he was ever in the Black Mount, and indeed his energies always appear to have been turned more to his neighbours' cattle than to their deer.

CONAGLEN BY ARDGOUR.

THIS small forest, belonging to the Earl of Morton, extends to between ten and eleven thousand acres, with a highest altitude of 2,300 feet. It is situated near the head of Loch Linnhe on the western shore and due south of Loch Eil. No authentic information has been obtainable.

## DALNESS OR ROYAL FOREST BY TAYNUILT.

THIS forest, one of the most ancient of all the deer forests, having been afforested as far back as the time of James IV. of Scotland, belongs to Mrs. Elizabeth Mary Stuart, and consists of some seven to eight thousand acres of a most mountainous district, embracing the western ridges of the Grampians. These secluded and almost inaccessible fastnesses with their lovely corries have ever formed a natural home for the red deer, imparting also a wildness to their heads which greatly enhances their beauty, and the fine stout long brow antlers of the stags of Dalness, that have broken out of the forest during the rutting season, can still be traced in the surrounding deer grounds. Stalking is not commenced before the 1st of September and is ended on 10th or 12th of October, according to the year; the stags average 16 stone quite clean, and as some twenty of these good beasts may be got each season, it is certainly one of the best small forests in Scotland. The highest altitude in Dalness is 3,345 feet, but the whole forest is composed



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of hills nearly as high—very steep and very stony. Of late years it has not been let, and it is essentially a young man's forest, for each day in it is nothing more or less than stalking a succession of gigantic sugar loaves, and the stalker has no sooner toiled to the top of one hill than he finds he has to descend and mount a fresh one equally high and equally steep. From the nature of the ground many shots have to be fired nearly directly down hill, but, nevertheless, it is a grand little forest for anyone who is still on the right side of fifty.

GLEN-ETIVE FOREST BY TAYNUILT.

THIS is a small forest belonging to Mr. E. S. Greaves, situated at the head of Loch Etive and marching on the north with Dalness; the remainder of the forest marches on the other three sides with very rough sheep ground. It has not been afforested many years, and I have not been able to obtain any authentic information as to the number of deer killed each season.

## FORESTS OF KINGAIRLOCH AND GLENSANDA BY ARDGOUR.

THIS forest in the Morven district marches on the south-west with that of Ardtornish, the remaining boundaries being sheep ground. It belongs to Mr. J. B. Sherriff and is at present rented by Mr. Henry Platt of Gorddinog. The total extent is some 32,000 acres, Glensanda having been afforested about ten years ago and Kingairloch at two different times since, and except where Glensanda marches with Ardtornish it is mostly low ground. Kingairloch rises abruptly from the sea shore of Loch Linnhe to a considerable height, and on it there are two splendid corries which being kept as a sanctuary hold deer of all sorts the whole year through. Owing to Mr. Platt's careful nursing, he is reaping his reward in sparing the heaviest stags and best heads by an annually improving increase in weight. Up to the present time thirty stags have been the season's total, but Mr. Platt hopes to make this up to thirty-five, which number he considers will be the maximum. The

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stags stay chiefly in Kingairloch, while Glensanda is more useful for keeping hinds and nursery purposes. The deer are weighed quite clean, and a stone is then added to the weight for the heart and liver, and thus estimated they averaged 14 stone for season '94, the heaviest of the lot weighing 19 stone 2 lbs.

FOREST OF JURA BY PORTASKAIG.

THIS beautiful western isle, described by Sir Thomas Turner in 1640 as "that horrible island only fit for the habitation of deer and wild beasts," now contains the largest, best and most southern of the island deer forests. Owned by Mr. James Campbell of Jura, it has been rented for many years past by Mr. Henry Evans of Derby, who has taken the greatest pride and interest in the deer, while from the unrivalled facilities an island forest offers for the purposes of observation, he has been enabled to throw considerable fresh light on their natural history, and the result of these investigations Mr. Evans has garnered together in the shape of a small book called

“Jura Red Deer,” which, although never purchaseable, has been freely distributed amongst his personal friends and others interested in the matter.

This book lies before me as I write, and having the author’s full permission to make use of it, I have not hesitated to avail myself of the kind offer. Jura Forest—and some authorities say that “Jura” means “deer island”—consists of 27,000 acres divided into four sections. On the west coast lies “Scrinadale,” 4,500 acres, and to the south of that section lies “Inner,” 7,000 acres. On the east side of the island are “Gatehouse,” 7,000 acres, and “Largy,” 9,000 acres. Gatehouse is bounded on the north by Loch Tarbert, a sea loch which nearly divides Jura in two.

On the extreme south the divisions of Inner and Largy are bounded by the sea-girt sheep ground of Ardfin, 9,500 acres. To the north of the Gatehouse section lies the sheep ground of Corrienaheira and Tarbert, the two together covering some 24,000 acres. The winters are occasionally severe, but artificial

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feeding cannot be resorted to owing to the difficulty of distributing the food over so large an area. With regard to the age of deer, Mr. Evans puts the outside duration of a stag's life at thirty years, which I believe is much more in accord with the facts than the reports and traditions of stags and hinds that have lived to attain ages varying from fifty to over one hundred years. Mr. Evans bases his theory of the length of stag life chiefly on the fact that in every forest where they get the chance of living long enough, it is common to kill them with some or even all their front teeth missing, and he contends that an incomplete mouth is an absolute indication of the first sign of decay; and as it is proved that stags begin to lose their teeth even at fourteen years old, it is probable that they do not attain a greater age than thirty years. On the sheep ground of Tarbert Mr. Evans shot a stag he had seen every season for sixteen years; this beast had been caught and marked as a calf by Mr. D. Fletcher, the tenant of Tarbert, so no possible mistake could be made, and when he fell in

his sixteenth year he had already lost one tooth and was rather lean. Little appears to be known about the longevity of hinds, but as apparently they are quite as hardy as stags, do not fight, grow no horns, and do not run down very low in condition every season, there is a possibility that they are naturally longer lived than stags, and also they are not often picked up dead or killed with missing teeth.\* It is possible that wood stags maintain their prime longer than those living on the open hills; certain it is that they come to maturity more speedily, and a remarkable instance of this rapid growth of a wood stag happened in Jura. A calf stag having lost its mother, strayed on to the Ardfin enclosures and pastured amongst the crops on the farm, and became well known to all about the place. On the 30th August, 1872, when he was eight years old, he was shot by mistake in a mist and then weighed perfectly clean 26 stone 4 lbs.; his head was what could be called a good head, but nothing

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\* It will be seen later on that two cases are mentioned in the mainland forests of hinds having lost their teeth.

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more. As to hill stags, there is but little doubt that these attain their prime at twelve years old, and this they maintain for five years, when they begin to "go back." That this is correct I quite believe to be the case, and I remember killing a stag at Corrour which old Allan MacCallum, the veteran stalker there, told me he had known for nearly twenty years. This beast weighed 17 stone 10 lbs. quite clean, but neither horn was more than 7 inches in length, while five of his eight front teeth were missing, and his face was nearly white. He was only fairly fat, and well do I remember old Allan saying that five years ago he would have been 20 stone at least. With regard to the age of Jura hinds, there was rather a tame hind with very peculiar ears, and Mr. Evans knew her for twenty-two years, and she was a large hind with a calf by her side when she first came under observation. During the twenty-two years she reared twenty calves and was yeld but once. In November of 1889 she fell over some rocks and broke her neck, but she was then looking very ragged and feeble,

and had with her a poor and sickly calf, which did not long survive its mother. As she was put down as five years old when first observed, she must have been twenty-six or twenty-seven years old at the time of her death, but in spite of her advanced years she had a perfect set of teeth. Mr. Evans' theory of the age of deer does not at all agree with Mr. Scrope's assertion that "stags live to 150 and even 180 years;" and in support of his theory Scrope quotes the case of Captain Macdonald of Tulloch in Lochaber, who dying at the age of eighty-six knew the white hind of Loch Treig for the last fifty years of his life, while his father knew her for an equal time, and his grandfather knew her for sixty years of his time, which seems to make this white lady to be 160 years old. In further support of his belief Mr. Scrope also quotes the old Highland saying as if he fully believed in it, that

"Thrice the age of a dog is that of a horse,  
Thrice the age of a horse is that of a man,  
Thrice the age of a man is that of a deer,



Thrice the age of a deer is that of an eagle,

Thrice the age of an eagle is that of an oak."

The first two propositions contained in this wisdom of old days are nearly correct, but the third makes deer live to over 200 years! eagles to over 600 years!! and oaks for some 2000!!! Therefore the probable explanation of the reputed long-lived hind of Loch Treig is that there was a succession of white ladies, always supposed to be one and the same animal.

There is no doubt that healthy hinds continue to breed nearly as long as they live, and the result in calves will be satisfactory or the reverse according to the exposed or sheltered nature of the ground during severe winters, and more calves will die that are born of poor hinds than of those belonging to well-conditioned ones, which is established by the fact that the Inner division of Jura, which is the most exposed breeding-ground, shows only twenty-eight calves alive to every hundred hinds in the February following their birth. On Largy division, which is the choicest, best sheltered ground of

the forest, the return is forty-five calves to every hundred hinds; in arriving at this result, Mr. Evans has reckoned as "hinds" all the female deer of one year old and upwards, and it is to one hundred of these that the rate has been calculated, as it was thought this method of reckoning was less liable to error than attempting to deduct the yearlings and two-year-old hinds and ascribing the calves to the balance left, though, of course, the calves must be due to that balance, whatever it may be.

In Jura hinds usually breed when twenty-eight months old, and present the forest with their first fruits when three years old, and I believe the same rule holds good for the deer forests of the mainland. With regard to woods for winter shelter, Jura is not too plentifully provided, the sheep-ground of Ardfin being best off in this respect. In the early Jura winter the sea blasts wither up the herbage, while, on the other hand, the spring feeding is ready much earlier than in the mainland forests. March and April are, however, the months most fatal to

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deer, and, as will be seen, the four divisions of the forest differ very much in fertility. In the month of February, 1890, in the Inner district of 7,000 acres, there were counted 426 hinds, 118 calves, together with 150 stags of all sorts, which gives 10 acres to each deer on the best breeding-ground in the forest. On the same date the Scrinadale section of 4,500 acres showed 133 hinds, 61 calves, and 96 stags of all sorts, or one deer to  $15\frac{1}{2}$  acres. On the 7,000 acres of Gatehouse there were counted 220 hinds and 96 calves, with 194 stags, or 14 acres to each deer, and in addition to this there are usually some fifty good stags from Gatehouse which winter on the sheep-ground of Corrienaheira. In Largy division, of 9,000 acres, the count was 170 hinds, 80 calves, and 250 stags, or one deer to 18 acres. From these figures it will be seen that Inner and Scrinadale, both on the west side of Jura, give a total of 559 hinds, with 179 calves; while Gatehouse and Largy, both on the east side of the island, give 398 hinds, with 176 calves, and the great contrast in fertility shows

right well how much the situation and lie of a forest have to do with the well-being of deer. Wherever the sea-shore is favourable the Jura deer, like horses and sheep, eat a great deal of seaweed, and likewise they devour all horns and bones of dead deer pretty quickly, and are not even at all particular how soon they begin on them, for Mr. Evans once found a large piece of deer's hide the size of a pocket handkerchief chewed full of holes in the stomach of a stag he shot. Twice also has he seen stags with large pieces of skin and leg-bones entangled in their horns, and he relates how one of these bone-carriers was the terror of his friends, for when he trotted or galloped the leg-bone rattled with a great noise against his horns ; thus one day, on getting wind of Mr. Evans and his stalker, this stag in dashing off set several others on the run : these were urged to top speed by the music "bones" played behind them, the result being a desperate, but ludicrous, race, till at length hunter and hunted disappeared over the sky line. On the Inner beat, in 1888, a fine stag was found dead

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with the skull of a calf firmly fixed in his mouth, and several times others have been picked up dead, choked by bones, and nearly always these have been stags, so that it is an error to suppose, as is sometimes thought, that only hinds eat bones and horns.

Mr. Evans is a great advocate of heather burning in a forest, and having pursued this plan for the last six years, he has found a considerable lessening of mortality ; therefore, with this knowledge to guide them, other forest owners might well give heather burning a trial. In addition to the husk parasite Mr. Evans has observed five other varieties in the island. Neither fluke nor sturdy are rare in deer of all sorts, while stags especially are liable to be infested by a very large worm adhering to the throat and lower part of the tongue. This worm, usually found in the spring, is nearly as thick and as long as the little finger, with a most repulsive, leech-like appearance, and for a long time nothing quite certain was known of how it came to be in the stags' throat.

The so-called "bark" of a suspicious hind is a

sound but too well-known to deerstalkers, but Mr. Evans relates that on four different occasions he has heard a stag bark as loudly and as often as a hind, and of this I have never before heard, and I imagine it will be news to many.

There was at one time rather a heavy death-rate amongst the deer of Jura, where there is an average rainfall of 65 inches per annum, but such mortality could not be attributed to wet weather only, for there are other forests in the north where the downpour is much heavier; therefore Mr. Evans has come to the conclusion that many deer die of the hair-like lung-worm causing the disease called "husk," and in 1890 two freshly dead stags were found with their lungs full of these parasites, which makes it a matter for regret that dead deer are seldom found fresh enough to permit of any prolonged and close examination. Recently Mr. Percy H. Grimshaw, when pursuing his investigations on this parasite in Ross-shire, has established the fact that this worm is the child of the bot-fly. Deer also suffer from warbles pro-

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duced by some insect probably of the gad-fly type, for each warble contains a grub, and there is a perforation of the skin immediately above the warble. It is highly probable that a careful study of parasites, accompanied by special knowledge, would result in discoveries sufficiently important to warrant great alterations in the management of sheep and deer, which might eventually lead to the permanent reduction of the present heavy death-rate prevailing amongst these animals. Mr. Evans is confident that burning considerable tracts of heather almost entirely checks parasite mischief; but of course there must be a limit to this remedy, as in burnt ground there is hardly any feeding for the first winter after burning, and, therefore, good judgment as to where and how much to burn is essential to the success of this plan.

That the mortality in all deer forests is heavy may be taken for granted, the following having been the death-rate in Jura, which, from its position, should be better off in this respect than the forests of the mainland :—

In Jura the search for dead deer is carried on strictly and continuously, and if this were not done, it would be quite easy to overlook many, for it is surprising how quickly the bodies disappear, only to leave behind them for a short time a gruesome carpet of hair ; so consequently the search, unless carried on systematically, is nugatory, and many foresters will declare it is rare to find dead deer on their grounds simply because they do not half search for them.

In the ten years from 1879 to 1888 the bodies of 222 stags, 326 hinds, and 443 calves were found ; or a total of 991 deer, which, as it is not likely that every carcase was discovered, gives a death-rate of fully one hundred deer a year. Those gentlemen who rent forests for one season only too often appear to think that stags grow out of the heather, and accordingly they shoot every good one they get a chance at, and then take their departure, bequeathing their leavings to the next tenant, who in his turn will again strive his utmost to kill the best beasts he can



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get at; thus a forest that changes hands often is almost sure to suffer a deterioration in the quality of its deer, and I would suggest to those forest owners who let by the year that they would do well to have a strict agreement with the tenant, not only as to the number to be killed but also as to their *quality*, a condition which should apply equally to stags and hinds. In a satisfactory forest the most important feature must ever be the possession of a full complement of fine healthy hinds, and such a result can only be arrived at by abstaining from killing them; as soon as the desired result has been reached, then it can be maintained by exercising great care in not selecting the flower of the flock for slaughter; better by far to kill sixty ragged poor hinds than thirty of the fattest and best. Of course overstocking must be guarded against, but it would be better protection to kill weakly hinds and even weakly calves than to reduce the numbers of strong healthy matrons. The Jura hinds average 8 stone 12 lbs. quite clean, while with regard to twin

calves, Mr. Evans is of opinion, after long observation, that they only occur but once in several hundred births.

Mention must now be made of an extraordinary curiosity of the Jura Forests, called "the cromie stag," Gaelic for "crooked." In Jura only do these stags exist; how they got there or whence they came no one knows, but there they have been from time immemorial, and confident I feel either that they are a distinct race, or that some stag from foreign lands once managed to get to Jura in days gone by and left his mark behind him. Even in Jura these "cromies" are very scarce, living only in certain parts of the island, where perhaps three or four "cromies" may be seen to one hundred others, and the whole forest may not contain a score of them. In twelve years Mr. Evans has shot but eleven, and for several seasons past none at all, although by this it must not be inferred that absence from the larder means absence from the hill, for, thanks to Mr. Evans' care, there are still



THE MOUNTAIN DEER



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“cromies” in Jura. The horns of the “cromie” slope backwards and are set on the head at a totally different angle to those of the ordinary stag; likewise the beam is seldom round like the usual horn, but tends to varying degrees of flatness, and in a cast horn, kindly sent me by Mr. Evans, that part above the coronet is nearly quite flat. I consider these “cromie” heads so curious, so interesting, and so difficult to convey any idea of by words, that I have deemed the head of the “crooked one” well worthy of illustration, and the drawing shows most accurately the remarkable features of the best “cromie” head ever got in Jura, and though at first sight it may appear ugly as compared with that of the usual monarch of the glen, I am sure all deer fanciers will eventually agree with me in regarding the head as a wild and beautiful one, while the sight of it cannot fail to arouse speculation as to its origin. According to the season, the average weight of the Jura stags varies from 14 stone to 14 stone 7 lbs., but this does not include

the small stags of the Paps and Scrinadale, and other very stony hill-tops. Throughout Jura the deer carry very heavy coats of hair, much more so than those of the mainland, but the small fellows that frequent these stony hills are extra hairy, and from living so much in mist they have become light in colour, and very similar to the Harris stag both in body and horn; they are most excellent venison, while as showing how small they are, it may be mentioned that a very pretty royal from the Paps weighed but 11 stone clean. Mr. Evans is of opinion, in which I agree, that only a certain number of stags are born to the purple, but be that as it may, in Jura any vigorous monarch is more often than not safe from the rifle, being preserved for breeding purposes, while endeavours are made to collect the shed horns. By this system of searching for cast horns Mr. Evans has discovered that even "royals" have their bad years, and that their heads increase or diminish in glory, according to the season. It must not, however, be supposed that no royals have been

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killed in Jura during the last ten years, for that is not at all the case, albeit certain favoured ones have been spared. Mr. Evans states that he had a three-year-old very tame six-pointer stag, the grandson of a Ross-shire hind, and as he had one ear cut off to render him bullet proof, there can be no possible doubt as to his identity. This stag passed *two* years as a knobber instead of one, and then threw out six points the next year, which is a somewhat awkward fact for the cock-sure division of observers. Mr. Evans also possesses a fossil stag antler, dug up in Jura gravel, which clearly demonstrates that the Jura red deer are pre-historic. To improve the breed, deer have been introduced from Athol, Black Mount and Kildermorie Forests, and how they have increased since 1844 may be imagined, when in that year it is a fact that Mr. Campbell's forester searched from Ardfin to Screeb, a distance of eight miles, before he could find a shootable stag for the Duke of Argyll's wedding, while the forester of that date declared there were not sixty stags

on the whole of the ground, which now yields sixty good beasts each season. In taking leave of this bonnie island forest, which the kindness of Mr. Evans has enabled me to deal with at length, I cannot refrain from expressing a strong opinion that that which he has found beneficial and good for the welfare of his island deer will also be found equally advantageous for their relations on the mainland.

FOREST OF LAGGAN, LOCHBUIE, ISLE OF MULL.

THIS small forest on the south side of the Isle of Mull extends to a little over 6,000 acres, situated on a very pronounced peninsula. It is the property of Maclaine of Lochbuie, and possesses a small sanctuary, while the hills in it run from 1,500 feet to nearly 2,000 feet high, with rocky, stony summits, and bases covered with a mixture of fine grass feeding, natural wood and heathery corries. Although there have been Maclaines and deer in Mull from the days of Noah, this ground has only been absolutely



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cleared of sheep for the past eight years, the present owner having introduced fresh blood from the Black Mount and Ashridge and Vanol Parks. The place carries one rifle comfortably, but as for the last few years all the best stags have been kept for breeding purposes, the average weight has not exceeded 15 stone, weighed quite clean. On the deer ground there are also some wild goats and four-horned sheep from St. Kilda, while both species of the eagle nest annually in the rocky hills. The sea views to be enjoyed by the stalker are superb, the Isles of the Sea, Scarba, Jura, Colonsay and Isla, all appearing in the panorama. The Maclaines have ever played a stout part in the feuds and wars of days gone by; Eachuin, their chief, fell at Flodden in a gallant attempt to save the life of King James from the arrows of the English bowmen, the clan fought for Montrose, and, almost needless to say, were "out" in 1715. These, however, are matters that will not appeal so much to the deerstalker as the following telling poem of the

chase by the Marquis of Lorne. It speaks for itself and needs no praise.

THE WILD REVENGE OF HECTOR MALCOLM;  
OR, A LEGEND OF THE MACLAINES OF LOCHBUIE, ISLE OF MULL.  
A POEM BY THE MARQUIS OF LORNE, K.T.

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PART I.

Dark with shrouds of mist surrounded  
Rise the mountains from the shore,  
Where the galleys of the Islesmen  
Stand updrawn, their voyage o'er.

Horns this morn are hoarsely sounding  
From Lochbuie's ancient wall,  
While for chase the guests and vassals  
Gather in the court and hall.

Hounds whose voices could give warning  
From far moors of stags at bay,  
Quiver in each iron muscle,  
Howl, impatient of delay.

Henchmen, waiting for the signal,  
At their Chief's imperious word,  
Start, to drive from hill and corrie  
To the pass the watchful herd.

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Closed were paths as with a netting,  
Vain high courage, speed, or scent ;  
Every mesh a man in ambush,  
Ready, with a crossbow bent.

“Eachan,\* guard that glade and copsewood !  
At your peril, let none by !”  
Cries the Chief, while in the heather  
Silently the huntsmen lie.

Shouting, by the green morasses,  
Where the fairies dance at night,  
Yelling 'neath the oak and birches,  
Come the beaters into sight,

And, before them, rushing wildly,  
Speeds the herd of driven deer,  
Whose wide antlers tossed like branches  
In the winter of the year.

Useless was the vassal's effort  
To arrest the living flow,  
And it passed by Eachan's passage,  
Spite of hound, and shout, and blow.

“Worse than woman ! Useless caitiff !  
Why allowed you them to pass ?  
Back ! no answer ! Hark, men, hither,  
Take his staff, and bind him fast.”

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\* Gaelic for Hector.

Hearing was with them obeying,  
And the hunter's strong limbs lie,  
Bound with thongs from tawny oxen,  
'Neath the Chieftain's cruel eye.

“ More than two score stags have passed him ;  
Mark the number on his flesh  
With red stripes of this good ashwood.  
Mend we thus this broken mesh ! ”

“ Ah ! Lochbuie ! faint and sullen  
Beats the heart, once leal and free,  
That had yielded life exulting,  
If it bled for thine and thee.

“ Deem'st thou that no honour liveth,  
Save in haughty breast like thine ?  
Think'st thou men, like dogs in spirit,  
At such blows but wince and whine ?

“ Often, in the dangerous tempest,  
When the winds before the blast,  
Surging, charged like crested horsemen  
Over helm, and plank, and mast,

“ He, and all his kin before him,  
Well have kept the Clansman's faith,  
Serving thee in every danger,  
Shielding thee from harm and skaith.

“ Mid the glens and hills in combat,  
Where the blades of swordsmen meet,

Has he fought with thee the Campbells,  
Mingling glory with defeat.

“ But, as waters round Eorsa,  
Dark and deep, then blanch in foam,  
When the winds Ben More has harboured  
Burst in thunder from their home ;

“ So the brow fear never clouded,  
Blackens now 'neath anger's pall,  
And the lips, to speak disdaining,  
Whiten at revenge's call !”

## PART II.

Late, when many years had passed him,  
And the chief's old age began,  
Seemed his youth again to blossom,  
With the birth of his fair son.

Late, when all his days had hardened  
Into flint his nature wild,  
Seemed it softer grown and kinder,  
For the sake of that one child.

And again a hunting morning  
Saw Lochbuie and his men,  
With his boy, his guests, and kinsmen,  
Hidden o'er a coppiced glen.

Deep, within its oaken thickets,  
Ran its waters to the sea ;

On the hill the Chief lay careless,  
While the child watched eagerly.

'Neath them, on the shining ocean,  
Island beyond island lay,  
Where the peaks of Jura's bosom  
Rose o'er holy Oronsay.

Where the greener fields of Islay  
Pointed to the far Kintire,  
Fruitful lands of after ages,  
Wasted then with sword and fire.

For the spell, that once had gathered  
All the chiefs beneath the sway  
Of the ancient royal sceptre  
Of the Isles, had passed away.

Once, from Rathline to the southward,  
Westward to the low Tìree,  
Northward, past the Alps of Coolin,  
Somered ruled land and sea.

Colonsay, Lismore and Scarba,  
Bute and Cumrae, Mull and Skye,  
Arran, Jura, Lew's and Islay,  
Shouted then one battle cry.

But those Isles that still united  
Fought at Harlaw Scotland's might,  
Broken by their fierce contentions,  
Singly waged disastrous fight.

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And the teaching of forgiveness  
Grey Iona's creed became,  
Not a sign for men to reverence,  
But a burning brand of shame.

Still among the names, that Ruin  
Had not numbered in her train,  
Lived the great Clan, proud as ever,  
Of the race of strong Maclaine.

And his boy, like her he wedded,  
Though of nature like the dove,  
Showed the eagle spirit flashing  
Through a heritage of love.

Heir of all the vassals' homage  
Rendered to the grisly sire,  
He had grown his people's treasure,  
Fostered as their hearts' desire.

Surely safety guards his footsteps,  
Enmity *he* hath not sown ;  
Yet who stealthily glides near him,  
Whose the arm around him thrown ?

It is Eachan, who has wolf-like  
Seized upon a helpless prey !  
Fearlessly and fast he bears him,  
Where a cliff \* o'erhangs the bay.

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\* Called to this day "Malcolm's Cliff."

There, while the sea-birds scream around them,  
    Holding by his throat the boy,  
Eachan turns, and to the father  
    Shouts in scorn and mocking joy :

“Take the punishment thou gavest,  
    Give before all these a pledge  
For my freedom, or thy darling  
    Dying falls from yonder ledge !

“Take the strokes in even number,  
    As thou gavest, blow for blow ;  
Then dishonoured on thine honour,  
    Swear to let me freely go.”

Silent, in his powerless anger,  
    Stood the chief, with all his folk,  
And before them all the ransom  
    Was exacted stroke for stroke.

Then again the voice of vengeance  
    Pealed from Eachan's lips in hate :

“Childless and dishonoured villain,  
    Expiation comes too late !

“My revenge is not completed !”  
    And they saw, in dumb despair,  
How he hurled his victim downward  
    Headlong through the empty air.

Then they heard a yell of laughter,  
    As they turned away the eye ;



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And they gazed again, where nothing  
Met their sight but cliff and sky!

For the murderer dared to follow,  
Where the youthful spirit fled  
To the throne of the Avenger,  
To the Judge of Quick and Dead.

There are deer more or less all over the island of Mull, and it is satisfactory to relate that their numbers are increasing. At Glenforsa Colonel Greenhill Gardynne, whose Glenforsa check of brown, blue and white is hardly discernible from a rock, has always deer on his ground, and has at various times mingled fresh blood from the parks of Windsor, Powerscourt, and Stoke, and this property is well suited to a forest, as there are many rough and high hills in it, the two tallest, Dun-dha-gavith (the hill of the two winds) and Ben Tulla (the hill of rich soil), each rising to 2,000 feet, with their bases full of fine corries and well-wooded slopes.

At Gruline (which was formerly part of the Glenforsa estate) Mr. Melles also always has deer, no less than fifty-two being in sight at once one

day last spring. On the mainland of Argyll there are likewise many grounds on which, although not afforested, a good few stags are annually got. Of these, the chief are Strontian, at present rented by Colonel Henry, Belsgrove, let to Sir R. M. Brooke, and Ardshellach, let to Lord Howard of Glossop; the yield of these three grounds, which march with each other and belong to Sir Rodney S. Riddell, being some thirty to forty stags annually. Also on the shootings of Ardgour, Achdaliu, Acharacle, and Craig by Dalmally, a fair number of stags are killed each season.

## CHAPTER III.

## BANFFSHIRE.

## FOREST OF GLENFIDDICH, BY DUFFTOWN.

THERE are but two deer forests in this county, both belonging to the Duke of Richmond and Gordon. Prior however to 1745, the Earls of Huntly owned all the country lying between Ben Avon in Banffshire, right across Scotland to Ben Nevis, a distance of some seventy miles, and in this tract were included the districts of Glenmore, Glen Feshie, Gaick, Drumchalder, Ben Alder, and Loch Treig, in all some 200 square miles. This vast property the Earls of Huntly ruled with absolute power, and severe were the penalties these chieftains made against deer poaching; men were hung for the offence, and history relates that one John Our, being detected

in "honest theft," as deer stealing was then called by the poachers, had one of his eyes put out and his right arm cut off, but surviving these barbarities by the aid of a strong constitution, and having an ineradicable love for the chase, he yet in spite of his crippled state managed to kill many more deer. This vast property eventually became split up between the predecessors of the present Marquis of Huntly and those of the present Duke of Richmond and Gordon, whose ancestor was a son of a sister of one of the Lords of Huntly, and by degrees the western parts of the estate were sold. The forest of Glenfiddich, which lies some dozen miles south of Craigellachie on Speyside, is retained by the Duke for his own use. It takes its name from the Fiddich, a tributary of the Spey, which rises in and runs through the whole forest, which extends to some 25,000 acres of moor and moss, with some small quantity of wood. Although entirely surrounded by sheep farms, these lands contain some high and rough ground, Corryhavvie being over 2,500 feet,

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and Cook's Cairn just under that height. It has been a forest from time immemorial, and will easily carry two rifles every day of the season, while as it is very carefully shot, no sanctuary is required. No driving is done. Lovat mixture is the best coloured cloth to wear, and the annual average kill is fifty stags, which are weighed clean, but information has not reached me as to the mean weight.

FOREST OF GLENAVON BY BALLINDALLOCH.

THIS fine forest, of which the late Lord Henry Bentinck was for a long time the tenant, is at present rented by Mr. Godman, and marching on the north with the forests of Abernethy and Glenmore, on the south it runs with those of Mar and Invercauld. It contains 40,000 acres of wild rocky ground, in which lie some of the highest hills in Scotland, and on their steep sides several pairs of eagles nest each season.

Ben Macdhui, 4,296 feet, Cairn Gorm, 4,084 feet, and Ben Avon, 3,845 feet, together with many other

hills nearly as high, are all within the confines of this property, the lower lying portions of which abound in fine corries and splendid pasture. The estate, which was cleared in 1841, hardly grows any wood, but quiet and shelter are offered the deer in a sanctuary of some 5,000 acres. Three rifles can go out daily, while just at the end of the season a fourth can join in the sport. No driving is done, and the limit of eighty-five stags is nearly always reached by fair stalking. At the foot of Cairn-Gorm lies Loch Avon, in close proximity to which is the celebrated "shelter stone," in which a dozen men can rest, and here in the days of Highland feuds and cattle lifting many good Highlanders, intent on bloodshed or pillage, passed their nights. For some twenty miles the Avon River, renowned for the clearness of its waters, runs through the forest till it reaches the Lynn of Avon, near the forest lodge, and there each autumn congregate many spawning salmon from the Spey.

## CHAPTER IV.

## BUTESHIRE.

HERE there is but a single forest, the celebrated one of Arran, belonging, but a short time past, to the late Duke of Hamilton, and left by him to his infant daughter, the Lady Mary Louise Douglas-Hamilton. Although there have ever been a few deer in Arran, it was first regularly afforested in February, 1859, and in that month Captain Robert Sandeman took to the island, for the late Duke, fourteen hinds in calf, along with six young stags from Knowsley Park, and now deer are more or less over the whole property, although they stay chiefly between Brodick Castle and the Lodge of Dubhgharadh, in which latter part there is the sanctuary of some 3,000 acres, while at Brodick a quantity of natural

birch, Scotch fir and larch plantation affords splendid wintering.

Grey cloth is best suited to the ground. The highest hill is the well-known Goatfell, 2,866 feet, or the hill of the wind. No driving is done, and the average kill is 45 stags, with a mean weight of 17-stone 4 lbs., heart and liver included. Having started his forest in February, 1859, the late Duke, whom I had the pleasure of knowing for many years, and who was a fine rifle shot, commenced stalking in 1862, and up to 1880 he killed many very big stags, of which the heaviest weighed 29 stone 8 lbs. From that date both heads and bodies began to get smaller, and since then fresh blood has been introduced on nine different occasions. John Mackenzie, the head forester, has been in Arran with the late Duke for over thirty years, and he relates that prior to 1879 there had not been an eagle's nest in the island for many a day, when in that year a pair returned to nest on Goatfell, and since that date there has always been one or two pair,



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which shows how quiet and preservation will tell eventually, for needless to say these birds are strictly preserved. While speaking of the preservation of these splendid birds, and indeed of all rare birds, I cannot refrain from expressing my detestation at the ways of some of our bird stuffers and egg dealers, who send circulars to foresters, keepers, gillies, and shepherds, containing a printed list of the birds and eggs they require, with the price they will pay for the same marked against each variety. Many of these circulars must fall into the hands of poor men, to whom the offer of a pound or more is of considerable import; many, however, must fall into the hands of men above want and holding responsible positions, and I would advise the employers of such to ask them to forward all circulars to them, and then I think if the senders were "gibbeted" in *The Field*, that it might perhaps make some of their customers fight shy of dealing with them, and thus the fear of loss of trade might force an abandonment of this odious plan of tempting servants and others to supply

them with specimens of birds that without preservation will eventually become extinct. In December, 1894, the late Duke turned down a wapiti hind, and though at first the ladies of the red deer family were mortally afraid of her, they became good friends by degrees, and it only remains to be seen if she will breed.

A remarkable feature of the island is the absence of foxes, stoats or weasels, neither ever having been known to exist there, but badgers are in plenty, all having sprung from a single pair turned down by the late Duke.

The grand hall at Brodick contains a splendid show of horns, while the lodge of Dubhgharadh on the west side of the island presents a most unique and remarkable appearance, as it is covered outside with over two hundred pairs of horns. It is on this side of the isle that stalking is commenced, and continued later at Brodick as the season advances, where many wild stags come into the park and appear quite tame, but well they know that there

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they are never interfered with, and that they can come and go as they please ; the moment, however, they regain the hill they resume all their cunning and wildness.

## CHAPTER V.

## CAITHNESS.

## FORESTS OF BRAEMORE AND LANGWELL BY BERRIEDALE.

THIS fine ground, the only afforested part of the county, belongs to the Duke of Portland, and the two estates together contain some 40,000 acres, covering about 63 square miles. Up till 1880 Braemore was a separate estate, when it was purchased and cleared by the present Duke, and added to Langwell proper, on which last-named ground afforesting had been commenced in 1857, and ultimately completed in 1864, and on both properties very large sums have been expended. The interior of this forest presents a continuous succession of hills and valleys, following the course of the Braemore and Langwell streams, and though the valleys are narrow,

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steep and rugged, they are yet clad with fine pasture, while many of their bases are well wooded with natural birch and hazel, affording good winter shelter for the deer. Although the hills do not display peaked and jagged outlines, they are yet steep and sterile, rising to their highest altitude of 2,313 feet on the summit of Morven, or the Big Hill. The lowest forest ground is chiefly peat, moss and heather, well cut up with water-courses, which are frequently the only friendly cover the stalker finds, and along which, clad in the yellow and white mixture found best suited to the ground, on hands and knees the stalking party must make their way to the quarry. On the north the forest is bounded as well as sheltered by an almost unbroken range of high hills, comprising the Skerabins, or Hill of Scars, 1,500 feet. The Maiden Pap, Morven, and Cnoc-nearnach, or Hill of the Irishman, so named from a tradition that a native of the Emerald Isle once perished on it. Between Morven and Torbreach, and near the top of the forest, there is a sanctuary of some 2,000 acres.

Donald Ross, the genial and veteran stalker, who first went to Langwell in 1848, is now pensioned off, and Archibald McEwan reigns as head forester in his stead. The ground will carry four rifles every day, who make up the bag by fair stalking only, and depending on the fineness of the season, the total kill varies from eighty to one hundred stags, scaling on an average 16 stone each, with heart and liver included, and in this number there are always some royal heads. In 1888 a melancholy event occurred here, for on the 26th of August of that year Sir John Rose, while out after deer, died on the hill. Up to the moment of his sudden death he had been in his usual good health, but on that day, after firing at a stag, he dropped down and expired from apoplexy.

The following further particulars of Langwell will be of interest to sportsmen, as they show the length of time required to make a forest under favourable circumstances, and how speedily efficient and persevering preservation of grouse produces the desired result.

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These notes are collected from a statement made by Donald Ross for the present Duke of Portland, to whose kind courtesy I am indebted for them and all else I have to say about this forest.

Donald Ross came to Langwell as gamekeeper in 1848, the estate then belonging to Mr. Donald Horne. As Ross naïvely observes, gamekeepers in the north at that period were not so numerous as at present, and one man would often be expected to look after 40,000 acres of ground, and Donald himself well exemplifies how that one man with his heart in his work can accomplish wonders.

In 1848 pole-cats, now quite extinct, were plentiful in Langwell; wild cats abounded, and these, if not quite done away with, are so nearly gone that the capture of one is quite a remarkable event. At these vermin Donald went with a will, for during the first year of his service he destroyed fifty pole-cats, twenty-eight wild cats, five foxes, two otters, one marten cat, and over two hundred weasels, together with a number of ravens, "hoodies," harriers, falcons, and

various other hawks : a wonderful total ! The grouse bags in Langwell at that time ranged from nine to eighteen brace a day to two guns. The whole estate was under sheep, while few deer frequented it, and but some half-dozen, hinds included, were got each season. In 1857 the late Duke of Portland bought the property and at once began to afforest it. In 1859 the game bag for the season was four red deer, two roe, sixty-nine hares, one hundred and eighty-eight rabbits, seventy grouse, and seventeen part-ridges, while in the two following years it was much about the same. From 1868 to 1875 Viscount Galway and the Hon. G. Monckton shot Langwell. In 1868, nine years after being cleared, Lord Galway had twenty-four stags and Mr. Monckton twenty-six, or, fifty between them ; but as in those days Langwell did not possess a weighing machine, no mention can be made of weights. In 1871 Lord Galway got forty-two stags and Mr. Monckton fifty-one ; the ninety-three averaged 14 stone 5 lbs., with heart and liver included, and the best twenty beasts gave a



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mean weight of 18 stone 5 lbs. In addition to the stags, 1,115 brace of grouse were shot, which speaks volumes in favour of preservation as compared with the eighteen brace a day only sometimes got in 1860. In 1877 the forest was not shot, and but twenty stags were killed by Donald by the Duke's orders, and distributed amongst the tenantry and others. In 1878 the Earl of Cork and his party got 45 stags and 1,600 brace of grouse, and again in 1879 49 stags with 2,000 brace of grouse. From this it will be seen that Langwell Forest developed itself well and speedily.

From 1858 to 1868 but 43 stags were killed in the nine seasons, and then the fun began, as already related, with a score of 50 for the tenth season. In 1868 there were between 900 and 1,000 deer of all sorts on the ground, as compared with about 120 in 1859. In this rapid increase it must not be overlooked that in those days there was no railway in Kildonan Strath, and thus Langwell profited to some extent by the Sutherland deer coming into the freshly

cleared ground. As showing how far deer will travel when there is no barrier against them, such as is made by a railway, Donald mentions that in 1873 a three-horned stag was shot in Langwell by Mr. Monckton which had been shot at in Inchbae forest by Garve, in Ross-shire, in 1868; there is no chance of any mistake, for Donald Ross knew the stag well, and so it turned out did his brother, John Ross, who was at that time stalker in Inchbae to my old friend, Major Vaughan Lee. The railway having cut off the interchange of blood with other forests, park deer from Welbeck were introduced to Langwell in 1877, and right well they have answered their purpose.

## CHAPTER VI.

## FORFARSHIRE.

## FOREST OF CAENLOCHAN BY ALYTH.

THIS forest, formerly the property of "the gracious gude Lord Ogilvie," so styled in the ballad of the battle of Harlow, fought in 1411, now belongs to his descendant, the present Earl of Airlie, and is now let to Mr. G. W. Henderson. It extends to a little over 9,000 acres, and was first cleared of sheep about sixty years ago, while as it marches with the forests of Glencally, Glendoll, and Invercauld, the deer can wander from one to the other as they choose, and thus the interchange of blood is continuous. A striking feature of the ground is the large glen running north, through the centre, which, on nearing the head of the forest, divides

into Glencannes on the east and Caenlochan on the west. This forest contains the highest hills in the county, of which Glass Maol, 3,502 feet, is the most lofty. There are 400 acres of well-grown plantations for winter shelter, and the ground, in favourable winds, will carry two rifles each day, who should get, by fair stalking, 50 to 60 stags each season, averaging 13 stone 12 lbs., weighed with heart and liver included. This property has been owned by the Ogilvies from almost time immemorial, and at one period the tenants of the Earl were bound, by a clause in their agreement, to bring in to Cortachy Castle all deer killed in Caenlochan from the spot where they fell, but as there is an ancient foot and bridle-path belonging to the ground, and passing right through it, this was not probably such an onerous condition as may at first sight appear. In days gone by this path was much used by cattle lifters, and it was on this track that one Mudie of Crandart and his five stepsons, Grewar by name, once surprised and slew with their broadswords a

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much larger force of raiders. All the caterans but one fell before the sword of Mudie, and the solitary rascal that escaped fled, vowing vengeance; he was as good as his word, for a short time afterwards three of the Grewar brothers were surprised by the relations of the vanquished men; they immediately fled, and separated for greater security; one fleet-footed brother saved his life by hiding in the rocks of the Dhu Loch, near Loch-na-gar; a second, equally active, secured his retreat by leaping the Altoetch Burn, swollen on that day by heavy rain to an impossible size, and the spot still goes by the name of "Grewar's Leap"; the third brother had nearly made good his escape when he trod on a patch of frozen snow, near the top of Monega, and slipping, he fell right down to the very feet of his pursuers, who quickly killed him, and that spot in the forest is yet called "Grewar's Gutter." At one period there was a good deal of poaching in this forest, carried on by otherwise quite respectable people, and when any of them were caught in the

act a fine was usually imposed by the forester's employer, which was paid without a murmur, and there all proceedings ended.

Whatever may be the origin of the Airlie drummer-boy, he is at times reputed to quit Cortachy Castle and play his tattoo round Tulchan Lodge in Caenlochan Forest. One tradition is to the effect that a drummer-lad having in some way angered an ancient Earl of Airlie, he was ordered to be shut up in his drum and thrown from the walls of Cortachy, and ever since that deed the drummer-boy never fails to beat his tattoo at Cortachy or Tulchan Lodge whenever disaster or death is coming to the "bonnie house of Airlie."

There is also a legend, in Caenlochan, that one McCombie once surprised, caught, and carried off a mermaid to his house at Crandart, where his captive began to negotiate for her freedom, and McCombie demanded, as his price, some fore knowledge of the time, place or manner of his death; whereupon his prisoner, pointing out a large stone on

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the hill, told him he would surely die with his head immediately above it. To make certain of defeating this prophecy, which McCombie regarded as indicating a violent death, he took up the stone and built it into his cottage wall. Some years later McCombie fell ill, and his couch being moved from one room to another, he died in his bed, with his head over the very stone, as predicted by the captured mermaid!

FOREST OF GLENCALLEY BY GLENISLA.

THIS small but good little forest of 3,000 acres, formed in 1872, belongs to Sir John Kinloch of Kinloch, and at present is rented by Mr. C. B. Lambert. It marches with Caenlochan and Glendoll, and on it are the high hills of Finalty (3,000 ft.), and Bywalps (2,900 ft.). It carries one rifle nicely, whose average kill should be 27 stags of 15 stone each, without heart or liver. A royal head or two is usually got each season, and, in addition to the cleared ground, there is 5,000 acres of good grouse shooting.

## FOREST OF GLEN DOLL BY KERRIEMUIR.

THIS forest is owned by the heirs of Mr. Duncan Macpherson, and is usually let. It extends to a little over 10,000 acres, and marches with Bachnagairn, Glencally and Caenlochan. There is a small sanctuary, and later on there will be good wood for wintering, but it is too recently planted to be of any immediate use. The highest hills are Tombaie, the yellow hill, and Tolmont, the peat hole, both about 3,000 ft. high. It will carry two rifles, and 40 stags is the annual kill, all got by fair stalking, with an average weight of 14 stone, heart and liver included. The late General Craelock, whose drawings of the deer forest are so well known, rented this forest in 1890, and it is very fully described in his deer stalking book.

## FOREST OF INVERMARK BY BRECHIN.

THIS forest, the property of the Earl of Dalhousie, is at present jointly rented by Lord Hindlip and Lord Dudley and spreads over some 20,000 acres



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of forested land, in addition to which there is about 10,000 acres of extra good grouse ground. On the west and south-west these lands march with Glenmuick, Glendoll, and the Hunthill sheep walks ; on the south-east they spread away up to the summit of Mount Keen, 3,000 feet, on the watershed of which hill the boundaries run with the forest of Glen Tana. There is a good road from Brechin to Invermark Lodge, a distance of twenty-two miles, over which I made several pleasant journeys in the autumns of 1884 and 1885, when the late Sir Robert B. Harvey leased this forest and I had the good fortune to be one of his guests. About a mile before reaching the present house of Invermark the road passes the ruins of the old castle, formerly a stronghold of the Lindsays and most picturesquely placed on the banks of the North Esk.

The forest is divided into three beats ; over the southern one John Mitchell, the head forester, used to preside when I was at Invermark ; John Macgregor ruled over the north beat, and a third man

had charge of the middle one. It is a fine open "rolling" country and without any very rocky hills; some of them are yet thought by many to be quite high enough before the top is reached. They range from 1,500 feet up to 3,000 feet, but they are big "lumps" of hills and do not rise to jagged peaks; for this reason they are in places somewhat bare of stalking cover, and more often than not long shots have to be taken—that is, at distances ranging from 120 to 200 yards.

There is no sanctuary and no wood for wintering, and many of the Invermark deer seek shelter in the dense woods of Glen Tana and Glenmuick, while a few come down to the grouse ground at Invermark, and the banks of the North Esk, on which there is a certain amount of natural wood. The forest will carry three rifles daily. The south beat is the best, and between the other two there is nothing to choose. There are good pony paths in the forest, and the one that winds up "The Drum" is of a nearly sensational character. This

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hill being of the shape of half a sugar loaf cut through lengthways, the path zig-zags along the face, and each time a turn is taken the pony track comes very close to the edge of a precipitous descent, down which if the pony slipped it would be good-bye to all things.

Many royalties and celebrated men have stalked in this forest, and Her Majesty has passed through it and over the summit of Mount Keen on her way to Balmoral, and at the foot of the ascent "Her Majesty's Well" still remains as a memento of her visit. On the occasion of royal visits it has sometimes been the custom to have just one deer drive, but as a rule all the stags are killed by stalking; they do not run very large either in body or horn, and the average kill is about fifty, weighing just under 14 stone clean. To judge the Invermark stags of the present by the horns of their ancestors which decorate the various rooms of the Lodge, the deer of to-day must have deteriorated very much during the last twenty or thirty years,

for the old heads are far finer in all respects than any that can now be seen in this forest. In the early part of the season large bags of grouse are made in the deer ground round the heather-clad bases of the high hills, and the deer do not seem to mind the noise of the shooting, &c., in the least, for when first disturbed they merely trot off to some high grassy top, and there they will stand watching the proceedings of the shooters in the valley.

## CHAPTER VII.

## INVERNESS-SHIRE.

## FOREST OF ABERNETHY, BY NETHY BRIDGE.

THE Dowager Countess of Seafield is the owner of these lands, which were first cleared in 1869, and spread over 26,000 acres, about one-third being wood, affording a vast tract of fine winter shelter for the deer. The forest marches with that of Glenmore, and contains many high hills, chief amongst these being Cairn-gorm (4,084 ft.). The yearly total is 60 stags a season, showing an average of 14 stone each, weighed with heart and liver included, and here one of the best beasts of recent years was shot in 1892, by Mr. Payne—a fine fourteen-pointer of 18 stone.

In or about the year 1630 this forest was the

scene of bloodshed, as one James Grant, of the Carron family, having in some feud made matters unpleasantly uncomfortable for himself, escaped to these regions, and, collecting a party of fellow desperadoes, he proceeded to harry all the district round about, and especially the lands of his chief enemy and relation, Grant of Ballindalloch. As a nephew of his, John Grant, of Carron, was one day cutting timber with seven or eight others in Abernethy forest, Ballindalloch suddenly pounced on him with a force double in numbers and thoroughly armed, and, under pretence of seeking James Grant, John Grant's party was attacked and John himself was killed after a desperate resistance, for he and his companions sold their lives very dearly. Sir R. Gordon, the historian of those days, in his remarks on this encounter, quaintly says: "Give me leave heir to remark the providence and seccrait judgement of the Almighty God, who now hath mett Carron with the same measure that his forefather, John Roy Grant of Carron, did serve the ancestor of

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Ballendallogh (being the eleventh day of September) the verie same day of this month was Carron slain by John Grant of Ballendallogh, many yeirs thereafter. And, besides, as that John Roy Grant of Carron was left-handed, so is this John Grant of Ballendallogh left-handed also ; and moreover it is to be observed that Ballendallogh, at the killing of this Carron, had upon him the same coat of armour or maillie-coat which John Roy Grant had upon him at the slaughter of the great-grandfather of this Ballendallogh, which maillie-coat Ballendallogh had, a little before this tyme, taken from James Grant in a skirmish that passed between them. Thus wee doe sie that the judgements of God are inscrutable, and that in His own tyme He punisheth blood by blood."

FOREST OF ACHNACARRY BY FORT WILLIAM.

THIS fine and historical property, belonging to Cameron of Lochiel, is at times let for the season, but is also often kept by the proprietor for his own sport. Those parts of the lands of Gulvain which

scene of bloodshed, as one James Grant, of the Carron family, having in some feud made matters unpleasantly uncomfortable for himself, escaped to these regions, and, collecting a party of fellow desperadoes, he proceeded to harry all the district round about, and especially the lands of his chief enemy and relation, Grant of Ballindalloch. As a nephew of his, John Grant, of Carron, was one day cutting timber with seven or eight others in Abernethy forest, Ballindalloch suddenly pounced on him with a force double in numbers and thoroughly armed, and, under pretence of seeking James Grant, John Grant's party was attacked and John himself was killed after a desperate resistance, for he and his companions sold their lives very dearly. Sir R. Gordon, the historian of those days, in his remarks on this encounter, quaintly says: "Give me leave heir to remark the providence and secrait judgement of the Almighty God, who now hath mett Carron with the same measure that his forefather, John Roy Grant of Carron, did serve the ancestor of



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Ballendallogh (being the eleventh day of September) the verie same day of this month was Carron slain by John Grant of Ballendallogh, many yeirs thereafter. And, besides, as that John Roy Grant of Carron was left-handed, so is this John Grant of Ballendallogh left-handed also ; and moreover it is to be observed that Ballendallogh, at the killing of this Carron, had upon him the same coat of armour or maillie-coat which John Roy Grant had upon him at the slaughter of the great-grandfather of this Ballendallogh, which maillie-coat Ballendallogh had, a little before this tyme, taken from James Grant in a skirmish that passed between them. Thus wee doe sie that the judgements of God are inscrutable, and that in His own tyme He punisheth blood by blood.”

## FOREST OF ACHNACARRY BY FORT WILLIAM.

THIS fine and historical property, belonging to Cameron of Lochiel, is at times let for the season, but is also often kept by the proprietor for his own sport. Those parts of the lands of Gulvain which

subsequent replacement of the sheep ; this somewhat remarkable fact, which certainly is not the case with other sheep grounds, is accounted for by the protection afforded to the deer by the thickness of the old wood and old heather, and the further guard against all disturbance provided by the water boundary of Loch Arkaig side. This method of working answers well when Achnacarry is let for the season, as thereby is afforded a very large extent of what is practically, though not strictly speaking, forested ground, while even if anything should go wrong the tenant has to deal with the landlord only, and not with third parties. Loch Arkaig, which is some fourteen miles long, bisects this ground, and by the aid of a steam launch it forms an exceptionally useful and pleasant way of sending sportsmen to and from their beats on either side or at the far end of the loch. Achnacarry and that part of Gulvain going with it yield an average of about sixty stags each season ; a greater number could doubtlessly be killed, but it is rarely that

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more than two rifles go out except quite at the end of the season, and then perhaps, if the wind is in the right air and the house full of guests, a third is sometimes given a chance. Also with regard to the number of stags killed, it must be borne in mind that the number of stalks to be got each day is somewhat curtailed by the fact that at Achnacarry there are no paths up the hills so as to shorten the time taken by each party to reach the scene of actual operations. Neither does the owner of Achnacarry pick his guests on account of their being good shots; a bad one is as welcome as a good if he be but a keen sportsman.

The stags weigh exceptionally well, and the average, after casting one or perhaps two small beasts killed by accident, has for some years past been over 16 stone, including heart and liver, which are always weighed here on the ground that they are edible, and brought home for the express purpose of being eaten.

In the season of 1894 the seven best deer made

19 stone, and twenty-one of them were just over 17 stone. These good weights the owner of Ach-nacarry attributes in a great measure to the fact that most of his neighbours have joined him in a compact not to shoot stags out of season or "far run" or even "run" at all, and on the 10th of October stalking is ended.

With regard to Lochiel's method of weighing, viz., with heart and liver left in the carcase, there are also many gentlemen who follow this system; at the same time it should not be overlooked that part of the poch-a-buie—the tripe—is also brought home for eating, and yet that is never by any chance included in the stag's weight. I am sure all stalkers will agree with the idea that there should be but one recognized method of weighing deer, and if such a plan were adopted, then in future there never could arise any misapprehension as to a deer's real weight. It will be seen from a perusal of these pages that there are more people who weigh their stags "quite clean"—that is without heart,

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liver or lungs—than there are of those who include these in the weight; this then being the case, may not the question be put as to whether the minority should not yield gracefully to the majority in a matter of no real importance? Certainly, as regards the forest with which I am now dealing, it could not possibly make any difference, for sixty stags of over 16 stone with heart and liver, or sixty stags of over 15 stone without heart or liver, is distinctly a very fine average which is not often surpassed. Of course in a forest where beasts average a little over 13 stone, with heart and liver, it will sound perhaps better to speak of them in this way instead of alluding to them as a little over 12 stone without these appendages!

By ceasing to stalk strictly on the 10th of October, and in early seasons even a few days sooner, the calves become the offspring of the best sires of the forest and not of some chance and perhaps small stag, who steps into the shoes of the big one that has been killed. Some time ago a very curiously marked

stag suddenly appeared in Achnacarry; he had a perfectly white face, and after every enquiry had been made from the neighbours, it could not be discovered that he had ever been seen before, although he was a full-grown beast with six points—not a very big stag, but yet not a very small one. For ten years he remained in Achnacarry, with the exception of one season, the eighth, when he was not seen; at the end of the ten years he disappeared as suddenly and as mysteriously as he had come, and has never been seen or heard of since. If killed, it must have been poachers' work, for all the neighbours knew of him, so that no rifle was ever pointed at him, and although the deer-stealer may perhaps have accounted for his vanishing, it is after all not so remarkable as his first sudden appearance, and where he came from must ever remain a puzzle, for no one could have failed to notice a beast so strange, as the whole front of his face from forehead to tip of nose was so purely white and so conspicuous that even at a good distance he could be seen

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without a glass when it was necessary to use one to find his companions.

It is not possible to write of Achnacarry without recalling to mind scenes of strife and warfare, both historic and clanish. For nearly two centuries the Camerons and the Mackintoshes were at bitter enmity, and countless were the combats, large and small, that took place between these rival clans. The renowned Sir Ewan Cameron had a great deal to do with gaining the battle of Killiecrankie, as before the fight commenced he went round to his men individually, exacting a promise from each to conquer or die, and the rush of the Lochaber men was the decisive moment of the day. The hero of so many fights died in his bed at the age of ninety.

Of this chieftain tradition relates that, being overtaken by darkness on a winter's day while crossing some hills when on a warlike expedition, as he and his followers laid themselves down in the snow-covered heather, he detected one of them making a large snowball to serve him as a pillow, whereupon

Sir Ewan upbraided him bitterly with his effeminate desire to make himself comfortable! This gallant gentleman also, when out on a skirmish with the Fort William garrison, becoming detached from his men, was surprised by an English officer of much greater size and strength, who called on Sir Ewan to surrender. That, however, was the last thing to be thought of, and the two closed with equal fury; at length Lochiel struck his adversary's sword from his hand, when both closed and fell to the ground, where for long they wrestled in deadly grip. Bit by bit the weight and strength of the Englishman began to tell, until at last, being fairly above Lochiel, he stretched out his neck to make himself free to draw and use his dirk, when the chieftain, seizing the opportunity, sprang at the throat of his foe like a dog, and biting it right through, he held on so tightly that he brought away his mouthful and killed his man.

Sir Ewan was worthily succeeded by his grandson, though his father was still living, and only died one year before him—"the gentle Lochiel," who suffered



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so severely in that ill-fated attempt of 1745 to restore Prince Charlie to the throne of his ancestors. In that year Achnacarry was plundered and burnt by the Duke of Cumberland's soldiers, and, like his prince, the gentle Lochiel had to hide in the hills. For eight days Prince Charles Edward lay hidden in the wood of Torvuilt, opposite the ruins of Achnacarry House; while later, on August 26th, 1746, Captain George Munro, of Culcairn, a brother of Sir Robert Munro, met his death on the banks of Loch Arkaig by a bullet from the musket of Dugald Roy Cameron, a devoted adherent to the Pretender.

FOREST OF AFFARIC BY BEAULY.

THIS is one of the most western of the six Chisholm forests, as it reaches nearly to the sea at Loch Duich, on the west coast. It covers some 30,000 acres, and marches on the south with sheep ground; on the west with Kintail; on the east with Guisachan; and on the north with Braulen. In season 1895 it was rented

by Mr. Arnold Morley, but I have not been able to collect any reliable details of what sport he or any previous tenants have had, although I have heard that in 1894 well over one hundred heavy stags were got, a large number, taking into consideration the extent of the forest. When, in 1893-4, Mrs. Chisholm's factor gave his evidence before the Highland and Island Commission, he stated the three forests of Affaric, Glen-Cannich, and Erchless held nineteen peaks, all reaching an altitude of over 3,000 feet, while the combined acreage of these three properties was stated to be 80,000 acres, let to three tenants at 1s. 6d. an acre, or £6,000 a year, but I doubt if this rental has been maintained.

FOREST OF AMHUINSUIDH AND ARDVOURLIE BY  
STORNOWAY.

THESE two grounds, for Ardvourlie has been joined to Amhuinsuidh for over twenty-two years, extend to some 55,000 acres, and are the property of Lady Farquhar. Cleisham, the highest hill,

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rises to 3,200 feet, but the whole ground is hilly, rocky, entirely devoid of all timber, and of a peculiarly barren, sterile appearance. Owing to the amount of rocky ground, the stalker here will do best to clothe himself in mixtures of light blue and grey. Deer drives are never resorted to, as four rifles can go out daily; the stags are weighed with heart and liver, and scale about 12 stone 4 lbs.; seventy five is the usual total kill, and although it will be noticed that the weights are very small, as compared with those of the mainland, the venison is excellent; indeed the Harris stags appear to be of an altogether smaller breed than the Ross-shire deer, and even if some of them were transplanted to English parks, and given the full benefit of fine pasture and good climate, it is very doubtful if they would increase to the size of the stags of the mainland. They are very thickly coated with hair, and often are lightish in colour, while naturally their horns are in proportion to their bodies; but a Harris royal is usually as pretty a small but strong wild

head as one could wish to see. Eagles nest each season in this forest, and under the watchful eye of Frederick McAulay, the head forester, they are never molested. Although Stornoway is the post town of Amhuinsuidh House, so beautifully placed on the sea-shore, it is more easily reached by those coming from the south by steamer from Oban to East Loch Tarbert.

FOREST OF ARDVERIKIE BY KINGUSSIE.

OF this place I have not been able to collect any authentic details. In my map of the deer forests it is put down as containing 26,990 acres, with the greatest altitude 3,569 feet. On the south-west it marches with the forest of Ben Alder—the only forest which it joins—so that probably the deer of Ardverikie and those of Ben Alder are one and the same animal, and the stags of this latter place are famed for their bodies and heads. Ardverikie is always let each season, and has had a good many tenants during the last twenty years. It belongs to Sir James

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W. Ramsden, by whom it was purchased some twenty years ago, together with Ben Alder, from Cluny Macpherson.

It was in this forest that Landseer painted a series of frescoes on the walls of the old Ardverikie House, comprising studies of his celebrated pictures, "The Challenge," "The Stag at Bay," "Children of the Mist," "The Dead Stag," and "The Forester's Daughter." When the old house was burnt down, the whole of these perished, but photographs of the originals still remain in the possession of Sir George Macpherson Grant, of Ballindalloch. In connection with the destruction of old Ardverikie House may be mentioned the curious coincidence that it should have been burnt down on the very day that Landseer was buried.

FOREST OF ARISAIG BY FORT WILLIAM.

THIS is a small forest owned by Mrs. Nicholson, and at present let to Mr. R. G. Dunville. It is situated on a peninsula, and covers between three

and four thousand acres, but I have not been able to collect any reliable details.

It was in this forest that Prince Charles Edward found himself on July 18th, 1746. On that day he arrived at the summit of a hill at the eastern extremity of Arisaig, called Scoorvuy, and, having rested there, he started afresh on that wonderful series of hair-breadth escapes and wanderings which only terminated when he was safely at sea, on his way to France.

FORESTS OF ARNISDALE AND LOCH HOURN BY GLENELG.

THESE two properties, owned since 1890 by Mr. Robert Birkbeck, and purchased in that year from Mr. Baillie of Dochfour, march with the forest of Glenquoich and the Glenelg and Ratagan estates of Mr. Baillie. The Loch Hourn ground covers some 14,000 acres of very steep, broken, high, rocky, sterile country. The grazing is excellent, while the natural woods offer perfect wintering for deer. These grounds were cleared of sheep in 1890, and being a new forest, at present only thirty stags are killed

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on Loch Hourn during the season ; they are, however, exceptionally heavy ones, the top-weight of the lot scaling 20 stone 7 lbs., clean. The Loch Hourn division is kept by the proprietor for his own sport, while Arnisdale is let each season, the present tenant being Mr. Sellar, and it yields, off much the same extent and nature of ground, a nearly similar kill as Loch Hourn.

Both these forests are subject to the very heavy rainfall of over one hundred inches a year, deep lies the snow in winter, while the cold is often so intense as to freeze the salt water of Loch Hourn. The hills rise so abruptly from the sea that within half a mile of the shore they reach 2,000 ft. in height, and there are several peaks that exceed 3,000 ft. In some of the valleys the sun only shines during the longest days of summer, while at Loch Hourn head, as early as November, the sun sets at one o'clock, and in winter this is, indeed, a country in which the would-be weather-wise "might easily perish by conceit of their own fancied knowledge." Often also hay may be

seen rotting in the fields in November, and before the place was cleared of sheep, many hundreds perished annually during the winter months. Like all other gentlemen who purchase new property, Mr. Birkbeck has spent considerable sums in improvements, the crofters especially benefiting at his hands, for he has greatly bettered their houses, which were in a dreadful plight when he took possession ; none of their dwellings were water-tight, chimneys and windows were rare, roofs and walls were rotten, and in wet weather the floors were deep in mud. Now, however, water-tight houses with slate roofs are everywhere, and Mr. Birkbeck's crofters are fully alive to all the kind works that have been done for them, while many of them are employed at good wages by the generous-hearted proprietor of these two estates.

FOREST OF BALMACAAN BY INVERNESS.

THIS fine forest, on the banks of Loch Ness in Glenurquhart, is owned by the Countess Dowager



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of Seafield, and leased to Mr. Bradley Martin. It spreads over some 28,000 acres of grassy corries and fairly high hills, of which the highest is Meal-fourvie, 2,284 feet. In addition to the excellent pasturage, there are some 2,000 acres of wood, with good grazing in them. It is bounded on the east by Loch Ness; on the west by the forest of Invermoriston; while the other marches are sheep walks. It was first afforested in 1857, and was cleared solely because it was found impossible to let the grounds to any sheep-farming tenant. Three rifles can go out daily, and it now yields an average kill of sixty-two stags of 14 stone, heart and liver included.

The late Earl of Seafield killed many heavy stags of upwards of 20 stone, the fine heads of which now hang on the walls of Balmacaan House; and here, too, General Hope Craelock often stalked, and on this ground took place many of the scenes and adventures so vividly illustrated in his "Book of the Deer Forests." The present tenant has spent considerable sums of money on the place,

and by his banker's book it was proved before the last Deer Forest Commission that his expenditure had averaged over £10,000 a year during the whole period of his tenancy.

In Balmacaan, which is Gaelic for "The town of the son of Hector," also occurred one of those deplorable tragedies of conqueror's cruelty, common to the history of all nations, as after the battle of Culloden a party of fugitives, having taken refuge in a barn, were surprised by some of the Duke of Cumberland's soldiers, who surrounded their refuge, set fire to it, and either burned or killed the whole party, with the exception of one MacLean, who made good his escape and alone lived to tell the tale.

On the confines of this forest, on the shore of Loch Ness, are the ruins of the celebrated Castle Urquhart or Urchard, and the loch itself, according to traditionary legend, was formed in the following manner: At one period the great glen, which now lies under the waters of Loch Ness, was a beautiful and fertile valley, containing a wonderful spring,

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which having been blessed by one Daly the Druid, its waters became for ever after an unfailing remedy against all disease. The Druid, when bestowing this healing power on the waters of the spring, placed a stone over it, strictly enjoining that whenever it was removed for reaching the water it should immediately be replaced, or desolation would overtake the valley the day his commands were disobeyed; thus his words became law with the people of the vale, and year by year passed away in peace and plenty. One fatal day, however, a woman went to draw water, when just as she had removed the sacred stone, a cry came from her cottage close by that her child had set his clothes on fire, and back she flew to save her infant, but forgetting to replace the stone. On this the waters of the spring rose rapidly in such a great volume as to overflow the valley, driving the dwellers therein to take refuge on the hills, until from all sides arose their cry of lamentation. "Tha loch nis ann!" "Tha loch nis ann!" "There is a lake now!" which has remained ever since,

while to this day the splendid sheet of water is called Loch Nis or Loch Ness.

Incredible as this story of course must be, it may yet however be true that at one time Loch Ness did not exist, for beneath the waters of Lochnell near Oban, some thirty years ago, there could be seen on still bright days the remains of a sunken village some fifteen feet below the surface. Nothing is known in the neighbourhood as to how this village became submerged, but there is the fact for certain, and that which has occurred on Lochnell may also have happened on a large scale to Loch Ness.

Early in the 13th century Castle Urquhart was captured by King Edward and the English after a protracted siege ; later on it became the chief stronghold of the Lords of the Isles, while after their defeat at Harlaw to Sir Duncan Grant was entrusted the command of the castle and the restoration of order in those disturbed and out-of-the-way districts. The Grants of Strathspey were originally a Strath Enrick family, of whom tradition says that they lost

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their last possessions at Foyers on Loch Ness in the following manner: the bride of Gruer Mor of Portclair went forth, as was then the custom of newly married women, to receive the presents of her friends. At Foyers she was grossly insulted by Laurance Grant, and the matter being reported to her husband, he at once started to punish the offender, sailing from Portclair with several galleys full of fighting men. Grant and his clan rowed out to meet them, when a desperate fight took place in the bay to the west of Foyers, to this day known as "Camus Mhorbh Dhaoine," "The Bay of the Dead Men."

Grant was eventually defeated, pursued, overtaken and slain, at Ruidh Laurais, "Laurence's Slope," above Ruiskich, and Gruer seized and retained Foyers. The clan Ic Nian at that time held castle Urquhart, and long and stoutly they and the Macdonalds of Glenmoriston fought against the Grants and the men of Strathspey, whom they roused to fury by surprising and slaying a small party of

their men, whose heads they cut off and sent to John Grant, the chief of the clan, better known by the name of the "Red Bard." Slowly but surely the power of the Grants won the day, and The Bard taking possession of Urquhart Castle ruled the whole district with a strong hand, and history states that in 1502 he sold the king "sixty-nine marts with skins for £71 2s. 0d." Later on in 1509 the properties of Urquhart and Glenmoriston were bestowed on The Bard in recognition of his services by a grateful monarch, and all went pretty well until 1513, when one Sir Donald Macdonald of Lochalsh, who revived and claimed the title of the Lord of the Isles, being at enmity with the Grants, collected his forces and seized Castle Urquhart, together with a great booty, while for the following three years he forcibly held the lands. At the end of this period the Grants once more prevailed and returned to Castle Urquhart, but in 1545 their possessions were again seized by John of Moidart and his friends, who committed depredations so serious that it took the glen several

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years to recover therefrom, and to this day the natives speak of the incursion as "The Great Raid." In 1581 there appeared in the person of the reigning John Grant, known as "Big John of the Castle," a chieftain remarkable alike for his personal strength and his influence with his neighbours. Many are the tales still extant of his extraordinary strength, one being to the effect that when challenged to combat in Edinburgh by a very strong Englishman, he shook hands with him, as was customary at the outset of combats, and then and there by pure force he squeezed the hand of the Englishman into such a jelly that it ended the fight, a feat, however, which within the last sixty years has been imitated by a noted Cornish wrestler. On another occasion when Big John of the Castle was in London, he proved himself a man of resource as well as of sinew, for on some gentleman referring with a sneer to "the fir candles" still in use in Glen Urquhart, Big John at once made a wager with the scoffer that he would produce from his Highland

property a finer candlestick and more brilliant light than could be found in London; the wager was duly made, and Iain MacEobhain Bhain was sent for from the wilds of Glen Urquhart, a man distinguished alike for his wit, grace and fine figure. At the appointed time Big John's opponent appeared with a splendid silver candelabrum holding a great quantity of the best wax candles, when in reply to a signal from Grant, MacEobhain stepped forth from behind a screen, arrayed in full Highland costume, holding a blazing torch of pine in each hand, while the delighted and astonished spectators with one accord proclaimed "Big John" the winner of the wager. Sad to relate, the name of this great man is associated with the contemptible plunder and murder of a pedlar in Glenmoriston.

FOREST OF BEN ALDER BY KINGUSSIE.

THIS is another of Sir James Ramsden's forests of which I have not been able to gather any information as to very recent doings. It contains 28,880 acres,



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and marches with the forests of Rannoch and Corroun on the south and west, Loch Erricht bounds it on the east, and Ardverikie on the north. It is very rugged, sterile-looking ground, and Ben Alder rises to 3,757 ft., while at about 2,500 ft. above sea level there is a loch called Beallach-a-bhea of some two miles in circumference, full of good trout.

In the days when I used to stalk at Corroun many and long were the spies I had into this ground, and at that time (1880) plentiful were the stags to be seen on it. Well, also, do I remember meeting the late Mr. Gretton in the train going north from Perth in the days when he paid a big rent for Ben Alder, and how greatly I was amused by his naïve admission, "that when he took to stalking he had no idea it would interfere so much with racing." The Leger week had just ended, and Mr. Gretton was going up to the forest for a few days, only to hasten back to the south to his more favourite pastime, and after telling me this, he finished up by saying, "I mean to have a deer drive one day whatever way the

wind may blow or Clarke may say." Three days later Mr. Gretton did have his drive, for on that same day I was shooting grouse at Corrou, on the sheep ground of Ben Alder glen, when suddenly in many places in the sky-line there appeared large herds of trotting, frightened, galloping deer; I think from five to seven hundred beasts of all sorts must have been put on to our ground, while later I heard Mr. Gretton had insisted on his drive in spite of a bad wind and all the entreaties of Edward Clarke, the then head forester. Poor Clarke! for nearly forty years he had been in Ben Alder, till in the winter of 1888 he met with his death from an accident in the forest he was so devoted to; for when out after hinds with his son in the winter snows on the nearly precipitous sides of Ben Alder, as bad fate would have it, they sat down side by side on some snow-covered heather, and the next second they were both rolling headlong down the hill in the midst of a small avalanche. The son escaped with a severe bruising and a broken leg, which caused his progress in search of help

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to be very slow, for in order to reach assistance, he was compelled most reluctantly to leave his father, who was still breathing ; a terrible snow-storm then came on, and when at length the search party arrived near the scene of the disaster, much precious time was wasted in seeking out the exact spot where poor Clarke had been left ; which, when it was at length found, only disclosed, on the removal of the snow, the forester's body frozen stiff beneath its white shroud.

Ben Alder, afforested in 1838, had the Marquis of Abercorn for its first tenant, and since then, in addition to others, Lord Henry Bentinck, the Earl of Zetland, Mr. Gretton and Baron J. W. H. Schröder have each been tenants of this forest. For many years it yielded from ninety to one hundred stags each season, a total which has not of late years been maintained. In 1886, when Baron Schröder had it, he killed, with a view to nursing, but thirty-one stags, which made the fine average of 16 stone clean, and by degrees, under

his good management, the number of the slain was worked up to fifty or fifty-five stags of the same very heavy weight.

It was in this forest that Cluny Macpherson hid for so long in the time of the Pretender, as for nine years after Culloden he laid low in huts, caves and vaults in this district, while during all that time a heavy price was placed upon his head. A good part of these years of concealment he passed on Ben Alder in a singular natural retreat known as "The Cage," and here, when Prince Charles Edward escaped from the Western Isles, he was entertained by Cluny for some three months as well as circumstances would permit.

When the Prince arrived in Ben Alder he was actually in rags, but his devoted host soon put matters right for him, Charles Edward then passing his spare time in the study of Gaelic ; while, as he had for companions both Cluny and Cameron of Lochiel, whose trusty Highlanders kept them well supplied with the necessaries and even some of the luxuries of life, it is

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probable these three months passed in "The Cage" must have been the pleasantest and most cheerful time the Pretender had experienced since the fatal day of Culloden.

When at last Cluny made up his mind to follow the example of so many of his other brother chieftains by seeking safety in France, he went to take leave of Mr. Macdonald of Tulloch, an old deerstalking friend, and on Cluny saying how much he wished to kill one more deer in Ben Alder ere he quitted his beloved country for ever, Macdonald and he at once proceeded to put the plan into execution; arriving in the forest, they soon discovered a solitary stag, but, on getting nearly within shot, something alarmed him, and he bolted off full-tilt for about two miles; then suddenly stopping, he seemed to be considering whether there was any real cause for alarm; at the end of the pause he abruptly wheeled about and most deliberately cantered back to the very spot he started from, where he was shot dead by Cluny, who looked upon the manner of his last

stalk as being a very good omen for the time to come, in which he was not wrong, as proved by future events.

It is impossible to read the accounts of Clunie's adventures, during the nine years of his wanderings, without being impressed with the chivalrous daring of his character. Clearly he was a firm believer in the old Highland saying of: "Better trust to a bulwark of bones than a castle of stones," and if ever there was a chieftain who was both "steel lord and skin lord," Cluny Macpherson was he. The old Highlanders used to call those chieftains "steel" lords who kept and held their lands by the sword; the "skin" lords were those who relied on their title-deeds engrossed on parchment to prove their rights.

One of the most ancient stories in connection with Ben Alder relates to the days when wolves were common in the mountain fastnesses. At that period a Mr. Macpherson of Breakachy having charge of this forest, was one day in quest of venison accompanied by a servant when they came

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on a wolf's den, the master promptly asking his man whether he would choose to enter and destroy the cubs or remain outside to keep guard against an attack from the old ones, should they return; the man electing to stay without, his master forthwith crept into the lair, and had no sooner disappeared from view than the old wolves were seen approaching, whereupon the man at once took to his heels without even warning his laird of the danger. Macpherson, however, being a strong, active man and well-armed, killed the old wolves one after the other, and then coming out of the cave, he saw his servant a long way off, and dissembling the contemptuous anger he felt at his servitor's cowardice, he recalled him and continued his way, merely saying that as it was now late he intended to remain for the night in a forest bothy near by. It was quite dark by the time this was reached, and Macpherson, who entered first, stretched out his hand to gather some dry heather from the bothy bed in order to get material for a fire, when to his surprise he found his fingers resting

on the face of a dead man. Hiding all feelings of astonishment, he turned to his servant, saying, "I don't like the comforts of this bothy; we shall get better in the other one a short distance off," and accordingly they sallied forth in search of this fresh shelter, which being duly reached and a fire lit, Macpherson, pretending he had left his powder-horn on the bed of the first bothy, sent his man back for it, and it may be readily guessed what a terrible shock the dead body gave to the nerves of this faint-hearted retainer, who fled back at top speed to where he had left his master, but on regaining the hut he found to his great dismay all was dark and empty, for Macpherson had set off home as soon as he saw his valiant man depart for the powder flask. Tradition says the fright nearly cost the man his life, "for he fevered and was many weeks before he recovered."



## FOREST OF BOBLAINE.

THIS is a small forest of Lord Lovat's, let with Beaufort Castle to Mr. Lucas Tooth. It is similar ground to Farley, but has a larger area, and probably contains the biggest wood in Scotland, of 2,500 acres in extent. It marches with Lord Seafield's and the Eskadaile shootings, but I have no particulars of the number of stags killed.

## FOREST OF BRAULEN BY BEAULY.

THIS is one of the seven deer forests owned by Lord Lovat, and was afforested in 1835 by the grandfather of the present Lord. The late Lord Lovat was in the habit of letting Braulen and Struy as a whole, and in those days the two combined went under the name of Forest of Glenstrathfarrar. Braulen, rented for the season of 1895 by Mr. J. W. Baxendale, covers about 30,000 acres, in which are many fine bold corries, and altogether it is a big-featured ground of one long wide glen, with the sky-

line the march on either side. Scour-na-lappich, the Ridge of Mires, and Scour na Corrie Glas are both well over 3,500 feet, and there are many other high hills in the forest. It marches with Struy on the north, with Glencannich on the south, and Patt and Monar on the west. On the south side of the glen, opposite the lodge, there is a large sanctuary, while the slopes of some of the hills are well wooded for wintering, although many of the Braulen deer descend to the lower ground of Struy for winter shelter. The kill is limited to ninety stags, which average about 14 stone 10 lbs., clean. Braulen was at one time one of Mr. Winans' chain of forests, which reached from sea to sea and practically made one vast sanctuary, out of which Mr. Winans had the deer driven into Braulen, where he killed them. When the late Lord Lovat first let Glenstrathfarrar to Mr. Winans, there were fully 1,200 stags of all sorts in the sanctuary, while during the last two years of his tenancy Mr. Winans killed, by driving, 188 and 220 stags.

## FOREST OF CAENNOCROC (NORTH) BY GLENMORISTON.

THIS is a good forest, belonging to Mr. J. M. Grant of Glenmoriston, and is at present let to Lord Tweedmouth, who works it in conjunction with his own forest of Guisachan. Cleared early in the century, it consists of some 21,000 acres of fine corries, excellent grazing and good stalking ground, the highest point of which is Sgur-nan-Coubhairean, 3,682 feet. There is a good-sized sanctuary and a small amount of wood, which is, however, not much used by the deer for winter shelter, as the lower lying woods of Glenmoriston offer better quarters, to which most of the North Caennocroc deer wend their way in hard weather. This forest will carry three rifles, and, independently of Guisachan, should yield upwards of seventy-five heavy stags each season.

A rising ground near Caennocroc is still pointed out as the scene of the battle in 1647 between the Camerons and the Gordons, led by the Marquis of Huntly; and according to the glen tradition, Huntly.

being severely wounded, owed his life to the kindness of one Macdonald, of the Glenmoriston race of Mac Iain Chaoil, who carried him on his back off the battle-field. For this service the Marquis was so grateful that he inscribed over the gate of his castle the words, "Cha bhi Mac Iain Chaoil a mach, agus Gordonach a stigh," "A Mac Iain Chaoil shall not be without and a Gordon within."

Also in this forest, close to the public highway, there is still to be seen the cairn that marks the spot where the gallant young Roderick Mackenzie fell. The son of an Edinburgh jeweller, he took up the cause of the Stuarts, and, after Culloden, was hiding on the lands of Caennocroc, when he was surprised by a party of the king's soldiers, and bearing some personal resemblance to Prince Charles, he was at once shot down in order that they might gain the £30,000 reward that was placed on the Prince's head. This devoted adherent made no attempt to deceive the soldiers, and drawing his sword, refused to surrender alive, and expired exclaiming: "You have murdered

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your Prince!" an act of self-sacrifice that went a long way to ensure the Prince's safety, as for some time it was believed Mackenzie was really the true "adventurer from France"; and, until Government was undeceived, the watchfulness of the pursuers was much slackened.

FOREST OF COIGNAFEARN BY INVERNESS.

THIS magnificent sporting property, belonging to the Mackintosh of Mackintosh, spreads over 38,500 acres, of which nearly 30,000 acres are afforested, the remaining 9,000 acres being good grouse ground, an adjunct which it is certainly most desirable to have in connection with a forest, for even "deer always" are apt to become monotonous, and there is many a forest I know of from which I would knock off three or four thousand acres of low-lying good heather ground to turn them into grouse shooting. Coignafearn has a large sanctuary of some five miles long by three wide, while plenty of birch wood with juniper offers shelter in severe

weather. This fine tract of country quite won all the sporting instinct and nature of that charming writer, the late Mr. St. John, who in his beautiful book, "The Wild Sports of the Highlands," devotes a whole chapter—"The River Findhorn"—to what is now Coignafearn forest, and he ends it by saying: "I wonder Mackintosh does not turn this into a deer forest, for which it is specially adapted." This was written about the year 1850, but it was not until 1883 that Mr. St. John's suggestion was carried out. Situated in the Monadhliah mountains, the forest is a splendid stretch of wild ground full of springs, burns, tarns, grassy corries, while no less than three good-sized rivers rise in and flow through it, viz., the Croclach, the Eskin and the Dalveg, the three eventually forming the Findhorn, of which this forest is the watershed. Coignafearn is at present rented by Mr. J. Bradly Firth, where a previous tenant, Mr. Holland Corbett, once killed three thousand brace of grouse entirely over dogs. It is high ground, the house itself being 1,100 ft. above sea level, while

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many of the hills run to over 3,000 ft. More than two rifles seldom go to the hill, and the usual kill is from 38 to 40 stags, which in the season of '93 averaged 15 stone 2 lbs. clean.

Some time about the middle of the sixteenth century a tragedy, arising out of the following circumstances, took place in the fastnesses of Monadhliah mountains. Some of the clan MacNiven having insulted a daughter of Cluny Macpherson, a very large force of that powerful sept surprised the MacNivens, and in a furious battle nearly the whole of this latter clan was killed; only eighteen men survived, who, escaping to the recesses of the Monadhliah mountains, built themselves a strong house, to which as a further protection they added a secret room built behind the back of the fire-place, thus gaining additional safety with warmth at the same time, and in this secret den these eighteen men lived undiscovered for some years, getting their subsistence by lifting cattle and poaching deer. At last their house was found out, while the frequent cattle

thefts began to make people think these outrages might in some way be connected with the missing MacNivens. Therefore it happened that one Alexander Macpherson, a heavy loser by these constant depredations, determined to try to find out something about the inhabitants of this mysterious house ; accordingly he feigned illness until his beard had grown, and then disguising himself in other ways, he arrived at the suspected house late in the evening, pretending he had lost his way and was starving. The door was opened by an old woman, who freely offered him plenty of food, while sternly refusing shelter. But Macpherson proved such a good beggar, that at length he got leave to lie down in a corner, where, curling himself up, he feigned sleep. Towards midnight the eighteen MacNivens returned from a foraging expedition, and not noticing Alexander, they pulled back the slab by which they gained the secret room. Alexander having been a witness of the whole thing, then slipped off and returned to his home with all speed, and summoning the



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neighbours far and near, he retraced his steps next day, when the whole of the remaining MacNivens were killed after a desperate resistance.

FOREST OF CORRIECHOILLIE BY FORT WILLIAM.

THIS forest belongs to Lord Abinger, and in compliance with his wish I give but such meagre details of it as are published for the benefit of the world at large in the last blue book of "The Highlands and Islands Commission." Before that somewhat prejudiced, one-sided tribunal his lordship's factor stated that Corriechoillie consisted of 22,500 acres of wild, broken, high and sterile ground, the highest part of which reached an altitude of 3,990 feet. Afforesting was commenced in or about 1870 and finished in 1883, the ground now yielding forty stags, but no mention was made of weights. The arable lands adjoining this forest have been protected from the deer by some nine miles of wire fencing. The autumns at Fort William are very wet, the average rainfall for the year being about 75 inches,

April being the driest month, while the bulk of the moisture descends from September to February, which must interfere somewhat with the pleasures of stalking just at the very best of the season. It was through Corriechoillie that Montrose marched into Glen Nevis with his army on the 1st of February, 1645, to fight the battle of Inverlochy with the Duke of Argyll, whose army, panic-stricken by the first onset, fled in all directions and were much cut up by the victorious Highlanders, many of the fugitives being overtaken and killed in Corriechoillie.

CORROUR WITH BENEVRICH BY KINLOCH RANNOCH.

THESE lands were purchased not very long ago by Sir John Stirling Maxwell from Colonel Walker, and extend to over 30,000 acres of every description of ground, which, until the recent railway to Fort William was brought through the moor of Rannoch, was always a "remote and inaccessible" part of Scotland.

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The hill of Benevrich—Ben-y-vricht or Ben Vreek—the Corrie of Corriecraegacht or Corriecraegus, and the braes of Loch Treig have ever been famed for their deer, and it was of this ground the old Scotch hunter-bard sang when so pathetically bemoaning in Gaelic his old age, in the well translated poem commencing—

“Great was my love in youth and strong my desire  
Towards the bounding herds,  
But now broken and weak and helpless,  
Their remembrance wounds my heart.”

In days gone by when I stalked at Corroun with the late Mr. Henry Spencer Lucy, the whole ground was not afforested. Corrie Craegus, Corrie Vallich, Corriena-cloich, with the Green Face, which joined Ben Alder and Rannoch, were cleared ground, and there the most of our deer were got, but Ben Eibhinn, 3,611 feet, and Ben-na-lapt, 3,060 feet, have both been put under deer since those days, so that probably the present kill is nearly double to what it was then, when two rifles used to average twenty-five stags a season, scaling about 14 stone 12 lbs. clean.

The heads were unusually stout, wild, rough and black, for before Mamore was entirely wired in by the late Mr. Thistlethwaite, the hinds of Corroun found mates from there, from the Black Mount, from Ben Alder and Arderikie, so that no forest could possibly be better placed for incessant change of blood, and the "hind ground" of Corroun was ever doing good service as a nursery to the young stags of all those adjoining forests. In the rutting season so incessantly continuous was the coming to and fro of stags that Allan MacCallum, the head stalker, who during the season lived chiefly at Corroun Lodge, ever kept an early look out over "the flat" of Corroun, across which the Black Mount deer were accustomed to travel, and more than once Allan was in time to arouse his master and get him into the pass leading to Corrie Craegacht for which the deer usually made, but as on these occasions Mr. Lucy, forced into a hasty toilet, merely pulled on his knickerbockers and hurried a covert coat over his nightshirt, while thrusting his stockingless feet into

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his "hardy brogues," he thus presented an appearance at which we had many a hearty laugh.

The celebrated hunter-bard already quoted was one Donal MacFinlay, who lived in Fersit, on the very spot now occupied by the shepherd's house; he passed his days on the hills of Loch Treig and tells how in Corrie Chreagaich and Dhulochan he killed wolves as well as deer with his arrows, for no other weapon did Donal ever use. He died at a very old age at Inverlair, not far from Fersit, and in accordance with his last request he was buried, wrapped in a deer hide, on the brow of a hill overlooking Loch Treig, where, as he said, "the deer could couch on his bed and the little calves rest by his side"; and to this day where breathes the deer-stalker who could wish for a more suitable or pleasanter resting-place?

At the east end of Corroul, and now, I believe, in view of the railway, is the celebrated Loch-an-Chlaidhamh, or Sword Loch. The story of how it won this name is so interesting and so well authenticated that

no excuse need be made for relating it here. In the middle of the 16th century Cameron of Lochiel then owned Benevrich with Corrou, with most of the adjacent lands ; a long-standing dispute existed, however, with the Earl of Athol as to their marches and the grazing rights of certain of the eastern slopes of Benevrich, which were then, even as they are now, famed for their rich pasturage ; therefore many, but sanguinary, were the petty fights over this disputed point which were continually taking place between the followers of the two lairds. It happened that Lochiel and the Earl of Athol met by chance in Perth, when the Earl expressing his regret at the constant loss of life entailed by the dispute, proposed they should both meet on the property in question, each bringing but two retainers, to endeavour, on the spot and in a friendly manner, to settle the boundaries. Lochiel at once consented to such a reasonable offer ; a date was fixed, and the day before the meeting was arranged to take place he started with his two followers in order to

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be in good time at the appointed rendezvous. On his way he was met by the wise woman of Moy, who, on hearing his errand, ordered him to turn back and gather together "three score and five" of his stoutest men, and to take them with him. In those times no one dreamt of disputing the commands of a reputed wise woman or witch, therefore Lochiel did as he was bidden, and marching off with his men, he concealed them in a hollow close to the trysting place. Before leaving them to meet the Earl, he explained the purpose of his journey to his retinue, and then showing them the cloak he wore had a grey outside with a red inside, he said he would meet the Earl with the grey side out, while if there should be any sign of treachery he would instantly reverse it to the red side, on which signal his men should promptly advance to his aid.

At mid-day the parties duly met, each with his two followers; then began the discussion, which, starting amicably, eventually developed into hot words; suddenly the Earl waved his bonnet, at

which signal fifty fully armed Athol men bounded into sight from behind a hill that had hidden them. Lochiel sternly asked the Earl what these men might mean, and received for reply: "Oh! these are just fifty Athol wedders come to graze on Benevrich, so now, Lochiel, as you are powerless, you must submit to my terms for the settlement of dispute." In the meantime Lochiel had taken off his cape and turned it inside out, at which signal his sixty-five men darted into sight as he replied to the Earl, "And here are sixty-five Lochaber dogs, each one thirsting to taste the flesh of the Athol wedders." As it happened, the Lochaber men were nearer to the Earl than his own men, so seeing at a glance that it would be folly to engage a superior force with the certainty of being killed himself, he frankly admitted Lochiel had outwitted him, and immediately agreed to yield all points in dispute, while then and there he swore on the hilt of his sword—in those days the most solemn Highland oath that could be taken—that he would give up all claim to the



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grazings of Benevrich, in token of which he hurled his sword into the loch, "to remain for ever as an acknowledgment of this compact." This done, each side having fraternized, departed to their homes with mutual good wishes. In the year 1826 this very sword, or all that remained of it, was picked out of the lake in a season of great drought, by the son of the Caimb herd, who took it to a collector of curiosities, the Rev. Dr. Ross of Kilmonivaig. The story, however, got wind, and presently the reverend gentleman was waited on by twelve stout Lochaber men, who demanded back the sword as a relic which no one had a right to remove, and having obtained it, the remains of the old weapon, of which nothing remained but the basket hilt and a few inches of rusty blade, were once more deposited in the loch with great solemnity.

Prince Charles Edward, when making his way from Lochaber to shelter in the Cage of Ben Alder with Cluny Macpherson, passed a few days in Corrou, in a bothy on a hill called Mealaneach ;

here Lochiel with two attendants was also hidden, and the Prince was for some time in danger of meeting his death at the hands of his devoted adherent, for they were at first taken for foes, and Lochiel being wounded in the ankle, resolving to sell his life dearly, the muskets of the bothy party were actually levelled at the prince and his friends before the mistake was happily found out. No trace of this bothy now exists on Mealaneach, and many a good stag has been killed on this hill since those days. It is very stony, rocky, broken ground, where, if a solitary stag chanced to be lying down, only very good and sharp eyes could detect him. It was on this hill on one Sunday in August, when taking a stroll with Mr. Lucy, that we both saw the best head either of us had ever seen on a living stag. We each had our glasses with us and got within a hundred yards of him, but he passed on to Corriecregach without being aware of the two pairs of envious eyes fixed on him, or the murmured expressions of our bad luck in not being able to follow him up then and there. Next

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morning we were both out at break of day, but never again did we see this splendid head of fourteen points, each of which was a real big one, neither were we ever able to hear of any record of his death. Sir John Stirling Maxwell is now building a new house on the shores of Loch Ossian in the centre of the ground ; there is a railway station close by, probably the inevitable hotel will follow, while the absolutely solitary hills and glens I knew so well will sooner or later become the resort of the tourist and the angler.

## FOREST OF CUCHULLIN BY SLIGACHAN, ISLE OF SKYE.

THIS forest, belonging to Macleod of Macleod, and rented at present by Mr. M. B. Byles, covers some 35,000 acres, on which there is much high, rocky and broken ground. It is, however, only a forest in name, for, although the corries are splendid and well suited for deer, the tourists from Sligachan are all over the ground on their way to Loch Coruisk, Scur-na-Gillian and Corrie-na-Creiche, and

during the months of August and September the ground is never quiet; added to this, there are also sheep on some parts, so that it may be easily guessed that chances at deer are not plentiful, and from four to five stags a season is the most to be expected, and these, too, not very good ones.

This ground is more often called Glendrynoch than the Cuchullin Forest, and poor as the stalking may be, the other sport, in spite of the very wet climate, is good; for in addition to a fair bag of grouse, black game and ptarmigan, a heavy score of woodcocks and snipes can usually be made.

#### FOREST OF CULACHY.

THIS forest, of about 9,000 acres, marches with that of Glendoe; it has a small sanctuary, good wintering woods, and the highest ground of 3,000 feet is reached on the summit of Corriarrick. When the wind is right two rifles can go out, and thirty stags a season is the usual kill. It has been occupied by the present proprietor, Mr. M. K. Angelo, for the

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past eighteen years, who has been both tenant and owner, as he purchased the property when it reverted to the Lovat estate on the death of Frazer of Abertarf, who was a direct descendant of the well-known Simon, Lord Lovat.

This is the only forest in Scotland where "cold" deer are habitually killed by deerhounds, for out of the thirty stags got in season 1895 nearly one half were taken with dogs. The deer are sometimes approached with these hounds just in the same way as if a "rifle" were making the stalk; at other occasions, when the wind is favourable and the deer hidden from sight, the hunter can trust to the scent of the hounds, which is wonderfully keen; as they near the quarry, the dogs, straining at the leash, are permitted to see where the deer are, and then instantly made to lie down. It now requires no small amount of skill with patience to slip the hound at the desired stag, which cannot be done until he separates himself sufficiently from the herd so as to allow the dog to see him—and him only. A

good hound, once having had a view of his quarry, will never change his stag, and it is marvellous to see how truly they hold to the original beast they have been slipped at, even though he may have forced himself into the midst of a herd of other deer in the hope of baffling pursuit.

These hounds of Mr. Angelo's, when used only after wounded deer, soon learn to pick the wounded one out of a herd, and as they possess the ability to kill, are much quicker and more powerful than trackers, collie or ordinary Scotch deerhounds, a wounded beast is put out of his misery in less time than would be required by the ordinary hound. In this coursing of cold deer only one dog is slipped, the other being let go as soon as it is seen the first hound has gone right; the second dog is then sure to follow the first, and as they are not slipped at deer in very unfavourable places, a good view of the chase with the eventual kill can usually be obtained. These hounds of Mr. Angelo's are the result of long and careful breeding for power combined with speed.

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In height and weight they far exceed the ordinary Scotch deerhound, while retaining all the supple activity of the breed. A Siberian sire and an Irish wolfhound mother have given dogs—"Goth" to wit—of thirty-four inches high at the shoulder, weighing, when in running condition, 135 lbs., or nearly ten stone. Although these dogs are of splendidly fierce aspect, yet withal their manners are most gentle, until slipped at a stag, and then their ferocity and courage are truly remarkable. Mr. Angelo has also another breed in "Bran II." from an Irish wolfhound dog in the possession of Lord Caledon, from a mother of the same species, which run up to thirty-two inches at the shoulder and weigh 130 lbs. Now Scotch deerhounds have been bred to reach thirty inches, but when so large they are rarely of any use in the field; twenty-eight or twenty-nine inches is their best size, so therefore it can easily be imagined what an advantage any dog would have when standing five or six inches higher and yet possessing equal speed.

Mr. Angelo is likewise a great believer in the

benefits to be derived by deer from feeding off fresh pastures, and he has sub-divided his forest into five portions. From No. 1 division the deer are excluded and Highland cattle turned in; the season following these are replaced by sheep, and the cattle are put on to No. 3 division; then the sheep are removed from No. 1 to No. 2, and the deer re-admitted to No. 1, and to this fresh pasture almost the whole of the deer in the place will gather; thus there are successions of cattle, then sheep, then deer, on each division of the forest. In addition to the benefit to the deer, there is also by this method of management a reduction of forest rent, as ground suited to cattle and sheep fetches even yet a fair price.

During the extremely severe weather of January, 1895, Mr. Angelo noticed that very large numbers of deer came into a hillside covered with thick whins, and that not only did they shelter here, but they lived on the whin bushes, which fact may perhaps give a hint to those gentlemen in whose forests trees will not thrive, for I believe the whin will prosper any-



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where when once it has laid hold of the soil. In days gone by the country people used to keep utensils and implements specially for bruising and breaking up the gathered whins, which their cattle then devoured with avidity.

FORESTS OF DUNDREGGAN (THE MEADOW OF THE DRAGON), INVERWICK AND SOUTH CAENOCROC BY GLENMORISTON.

THESE three properties all belong to Mr. Grant of Glenmoriston, and are let as one to Mr. J. G. Bannatyne. The two first-named consist of 11,200 acres of forest and some 7,000 acres of grouse ground and wood. South Caennocroc is about 12,000 acres of cleared ground, with a little over 3,000 acres of grouse ground. The forest marches with Invermoriston, Inchnacardoch, Glenquoich, and North Caennocroc. Part of the ground has been for ages under deer, and indeed as regards this particular portion there is no record that it has ever been anything but deer forest. It will carry three

rifles; the bag is made solely by stalking, and averages sixty-five stags of about 15 stone, but of how they are weighed I have no information.

FOREST OF ERCHLESS BY BEAULY.

A BEAUTIFULLY situated but small Chisholm property, of which some 8,000 acres are under deer. On the north it marches with Scatwell Forest, on the south with Urchany, on the east with sheep ground, and on the west with Corriehallie. Erchless—written also Erglass, Earghlas and Easterglass—means in Gaelic “the grey valley,” and here in his castle, in 1689, the Chisholm of those days manfully resisted a siege by his enemies, and it is of this hero the story is told that on hearing some rival chieftain spoken of with the prefix “the” attached to his name, he proclaimed loudly and with indignation that only three people in the world were entitled to such distinction, namely, “the King, the Pope, and the Chisholm.”

## FOREST OF FARLEY AND URCHANY BY BEAULY.

THIS small forest of Lord Lovat's is let to Major Paynter, and contains some 4,500 acres of open moor and planted ground. It marches with Erchless deer ground on the west, while in all other directions a deer fence divides it from the low-lying grounds adjoining. The kill is limited to 35 stags, which average 16 stone clean.

## FOREST OF FASNAKYLE OR FASNAKOIL BY BEAULY.

THIS is another of the Chisholm properties and is let to Sir John Edwardes Moss. It covers about 31,000 acres of ground admirably suited to deer, and marches with the forests of Glencannich, Affaric and Knockfin. There is no regular sanctuary, but it is usual to avoid one of the favourite hills for deer early in the season, and in addition to this many of them being fringed with birch wood for miles, also afford good wintering; it was in these very woods Prince Charles Edward hid for three days when hard

pressed to escape from the royal troops at Fort Augustus. There are several high hills, of which the highest rises to 3,400 feet. As a rule, the forest carries two rifles all through the season, though towards the end of the time and in good wind a third can be sent out. This forest has a history of its own, as from 1880 to 1893 it formed one of the Winans group, and on good authority I am told that during all that time no shot was fired on it, and that, as far as the actual killing of deer on this ground was concerned, it had a twelve years' jubilee, although probably the deer were at times driven off it into Beaully forest, for Mr. Winans' deer-drives; thus many fine beasts were produced, but, nevertheless, during all these twelve years in-breeding was telling its tale, and for one good stag that was reared, there were half-a-dozen poor ones which never came to anything. In 1893, when Mr. Winans gave it up, Mr. W. H. Walker rented it, and got from one hundred to one hundred and twenty of the best stags in the forest,

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which was more than the ground would fairly stand. Sir John took it for 1894, which was a very late season in this forest, for on the 3rd of October he saw a seven-pointer still in full velvet; in that season he was limited to seventy-five stags, and having killed sixty-seven by the 27th of September, he stopped on that date owing to the beasts being then already far run. In 1895 up to the 16th of September, Sir John had but fourteen stags and but two real good ones in the lot. It was in this district that that good sportsman, the late Mr. Edward Ross, commenced his career as deerstalker, when in 1854 he killed his first stag in Glencannich. In those days none of the Chisholm property was afforested, but beyond the head of Loch Affaric Mr. Ross on his first day out fell in with some of the real big ones in a very steep and wild corrie beyond Cralich, his first shot resulting in a splendid royal of 20 stones clean; he slept that night in a wooden bothy at Alt Beg, and was out at dawn next day, when he again had

the good luck to fall in with this herd of "great gentlemen" in some very rough broken ground, on which in four shots he got four others of the herd, two of which were also royals. Five shots and five stags, three of which were monarchs, as may well be supposed made a great impression on the lad of seventeen, as indeed it ought!

THE FOREST OF GAICK, OR GAIG, OR GAWICK, BY  
KINGUSSIE.

THIS forest, together with the others of the Badenoch district, is of great antiquity, the whole of them at one time having belonged to the Earls of Huntly. Two hundred years ago that nobleman owned Gaick, Glenfeshie, Glenavon, Glenmore, Drumochter, Ben Alder, and the Loch Treig district right up to Fort William, or some 220 square miles of truly magnificent property. In those days none of the forests were appropriated entirely to the deer, for the tenants were allowed to put up shielings on the edges of the deer grounds, and their cattle

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could pasture where they listed all the day through, on the strictest understanding that every beast should be herded back to the shieling each evening, and any that were left in the forest were liable to be pointed, only to be recovered by the payment of a smart fine, all of which regulations worked very well in those days.

After 1745 the whole of the Badenoch forests except Gaick were let as grazings, but this forest the Duke of Gordon kept in his own hands as deer ground until 1788, when it also was let as a sheep walk, and so remained until 1826, when it was once again placed under deer.

Gaick covers between twelve and thirteen thousand acres of fine stalking ground, and now belongs to Sir George Macpherson Grant of Ballindalloch, who bought it in 1830 from the Duke of Gordon, and as showing what a desirable forest this is, it may be mentioned that since that time it has had but five tenants. For the last twenty-one years it was held by the late Colonel John Hargreaves, of Maiden

Erlegh, that staunch friend and good sportsman, who early in last October died at Glentromie Lodge, in the country he loved so well, and Gaick is now held by his sons. The other previous tenants have been Sir Joseph Radcliffe, Captain Littledale, Lord Lilford and Mr. Edwards Moss.

The forest lodge, of which a drawing is given, is quite a unique building of the old days, which, however, is to my mind more in keeping with its wild rugged surroundings than any more modern or prettier style of architecture could be; while once inside a house of this sort the interior will usually be found more solid, warm, and comfortable than the present-day shooting box, for on entering the hospitable doors of Gaick Lodge the scene quickly changes, and it can be recognized at a glance that the very thick walls must not only keep the lodge warm, but offer sure protection from and resistance to the fierce gales that periodically sweep the valley with such force as to make even this stout building rock, shake and quiver like a ship







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struck by a big sea. Stern, white, angular and uncompromisingly plain, Gaick forest lodge stands out by itself against a background of peat, heather, and green hill, towards which it turns its pallid front. Near the back of the lodge is the sanctuary of some two square miles on the shore of Loch-an-t-Seillich, by some erroneously called Gaick Loch, in which the natives vow there dwells a giant species of fish called Dorman or Dormain; powerful fellows with very big heads, who, the legend says, pass their lives in trying to hinder the salmon from the Tromie from entering the loch, but in this they are not always successful, for Mr. John Hargreaves tells me he has caught salmon above the loch. Facing the house, but further up the valley, are Loch Vrotten and Loch-an-duin. At the back of the first-named loch the Doune hill rises sharply from the waterside to 1,000 feet, and has a remarkable appearance, as it is somewhat in the shape of a house, but there are many higher hills in Gaick, amongst them "Stac-meall-na-Cuaich," "the hill of the cup,"

“Bogha-Cloiche,” “stoney bow,” and A Chioch, “the pap,” are each just about 3,000 ft. high.

The forest is divided by a natural conformation of deep ravines into three distinct beats, north, east and south; of these the east is the best, and over it Edward Ormiston, the head forester, most ably presides, for no gentleman could wish a better, bolder, more brilliant stalker, or pleasanter companion on the hill. The south beat, when I was last at Gaick, was well cared for by one “David,” while “Big John” did the honours of the north division, and each of these men was above the average of stalkers. Gaick is splendidly suited to deer, being joined on all sides but one by other fine forests, for on the west and south-west come the recently cleared grounds, belonging to the Duke of Athol, of Stronphadrig, South Dalnamein, and Glas Choire. On the south-east, Glen Bruar and Atholl join in, while Glenfeshie runs on the north, and this latter forest divides Gaick from Mar by but a narrow slip of land. The annual kill varies a good deal, according

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to the wind that prevails during the stalking season, and ranges from forty-five to sixty good stags, with a mean weight of 14 stone 7 lbs., clean. During the twenty years Colonel Hargreaves had Gaick he killed just under a thousand stags, which makes an average of a fraction of close upon fifty stags a season. The worst winds for this forest are long spells of south and south-easterly ones, while breezes that continue to blow from north and north-west are the best. The present lodge has been built nearly a hundred years, and near it may still be seen the ruins of old Gaick Lodge, which, being placed too near the over-hanging brow of the steep hill on the left of the illustration, was in 1800 destroyed by an avalanche, by which Captain John Macpherson of Balachroan, together with his four attendants and some deerhounds, were all killed, for they had most unfortunately sheltered in the house only that very night in order to avoid the fury of a hill snow-storm in which they had been overtaken when out in pursuit of the hinds. The body of Captain

Macpherson was found lying face downwards on his bed, but so great was the force of the rush of snow and stones that it not only laid the house low, but carried the bodies of the four servants to a considerable distance from the ruins. About half way up the steep ravine, called the Gairb Gaick, which divides the south from the east beat, a track called Comyn's road runs into it at right angles, and at this spot, somewhere about 1390, Walter Comyn of Badenoch, a descendant of "The Wolf," met with his death. Tradition has it that this Walter, who inherited all the fierce tyrannous nature of his ancestor, Buchan the Wolf of Badenoch, had commanded a number of his farm girls to appear, clad in nothing warmer than the garb of mother Eve, at one of his farms at Ruthven, where they were to reap a field of corn. On the day fixed for the carrying out of this infamous project, Walter Comyn started on horseback to travel through Gaick to reach Ruthven, where he was to witness this outrage on maiden modesty, but his advent was

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represented only by his horse, which arrived bathed in blood, while from a stirrup there hung one of Comyn's legs still in its boot. A search was at once made, and his body was discovered at the spot where this ancient track descends sharply into the Gairb-Gaick ravine, and seated on it and busily engaged in tearing it to pieces were two large eagles; and though there is nothing surprising in these birds making a meal from a dead body, yet the country folk, one and all, agreed that they were two of the mothers of two of the girls who were to have reaped the corn, and that magic power had been granted them to assume eagle shapes on purpose to attack Comyn, and defeat the accomplishment of his barbarous design, while to this day the fate of Walter is yet proverbial amongst the Highlanders, for when any of them are much incensed, without the means of revenge, it is not uncommon to hear them utter, "May the fate of Walter in Gaick overtake you." At the time of the avalanche there was an idea then prevalent, which is even now not

entirely exploded, that babies could not come into the world unless the mother had plenty of whisky, and at the time of this catastrophe one of the Gaick foresters was returning from the purchase of a cargo of whisky (carried *outside* him) for his wife when he met the party in search of Captain Macpherson, and having joined them, it is almost needless to say the whisky did not reach the wife. The baby was, however, born all right, and without the help of spirits, was duly named Donald Macpherson, and lived to become head forester in Caennocroc, where he died not so very long ago, for he lived to a great age.

Stories of witches and fairies are rife in every forest, and indeed for that matter all over Scotland, Gaick being no exception to the rule, and the following two may serve as specimens for this forest and all the others:—A noted deerstalker was out early one morning in the forest, and observing some deer at a distance got near them, but without being quite within shot; on taking a peep at them over a knowe, he was astonished to see a number of tiny



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women, dressed in green, milking the hinds, one of whom had a hank of green worsted thrown over her shoulder, at which, while she was milking, the hind made a grab and swallowed it. The fairy in a rage struck the hind with the leather band which she had been using to tie its hind legs during the milking, calling out at the same time: "May a dart from Murdoch's quiver pierce your side before night." Now Murdoch was no other than the silent witness of this scene, and, fearing to be detected, he turned the other way and departed to seek venison elsewhere. Later on in the same day he killed a hind, in which, when he gralloched her, he found the identical hank he had seen the deer swallow in the morning. On another occasion this same Murdoch, who appears to have been somewhat favoured by the fairies, had got within shot of a hind on the Doune Hill, and as he took aim he saw it was a young woman, and not a hind, that stood before him. He at once lowered his weapon, when immediately the thing was once more a deer, and this happened several times. When, how-

ever, the sun set, he again took aim, and on firing the object fell dead in the actual shape of a deer. Murdoch being then suddenly overpowered by sleep, laid down in the heather to rest, when in a few minutes a voice thundered in his ear: "Murdoch, Murdoch, you have this day slain the only maid of the Doune!" and, jumping up, he retorted: "If I have killed her, you may eat her!" while he at once bolted off as fast as his legs would carry him. In the present prosaic days this story sounds uncommonly as if stalker Murdoch had a weakness for the whiskey bottle, but be that as it may, his successors claim that the celebrated Mr. Sheridan was descended from one of Murdoch's daughters. Another commonly prevalent superstition was the belief in a Leannan Stieth or fairy sweetheart, and all those stalkers who passed their days and nights in the forest were credited with such a connection, from which the earthly wife was ever supposed to be in great danger on account of the evil wishes and designs of the fairy one.

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Glentromie Lodge, about eight miles from Gaick, and only three from Kingussie, is usually let with the forest, and with this there goes some 11,000 acres of most excellent grouse shooting, the two places combined making one of the best of the many fine sporting estates of Scotland.

FOREST OF GLENCANNICH BY BEAULY.

THIS is one of the Chisholm forests, of which I regret having no particular information. On the north it marches with Monar and Braulen, on the west with Attadale and Patt, on the south with Benula and Fasnakyle, and sheep ground bounds it on the east. The glens of Affaric and Cannich are both very steep and narrow, and Longart at the head of Glencannich is perhaps the wettest place in all Scotland, and for this reason the river Glass, a tributary of the Beauly, is subject to most violently sudden floods from heavy rains or melting snow, which renders any cultivation of the low-lying lands on the banks of the river not only

most unprofitable, but nearly impossible, while the washing away of roads and bridges is a common occurrence.

FOREST OF GLENDOE BY FORT AUGUSTUS.

THIS good forest, formed in 1877, belongs to Lord Lovat, is rented by Colonel A. H. Charlesworth, and consists of some 18,000 acres of fine deer ground, of which the west beat is very steep and rocky, while that to the east is fine open undulating hill. Murligan wood, sloping to the shores of Lochness, affords splendid wintering, while the loch itself forms a good water march on the north of the forest. On the west Mr. Angelo's deer ground to Culachy comes in, while on the other side it joins the sheep grounds of Killin shootings, and one of Sir J. Ramsden's moors. The highest hills are Carn-na-hullin and Meal-na-caca, from which latter hillside issue springs nearly as potent as those of Hunyady, and hence the Gaelic name, which is not translatable to ears polite. In the middle beat is

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a sanctuary of considerable extent, zealously looked after by Rory Chisholm, the head forester. The usual kill is from forty to forty-five stags, which average the fine weight of 15 stones 6 lbs. clean. During the life time of Mr. Edward Ross, he and the present Lord Lovat shared this forest between them, and one day when stalking together they approached a stag in Corrie Arrick on a side wind, when, having got to about three hundred yards from their quarry, the beast laid down, and they had to wait on him; suddenly the deer sprang up to bolt full tilt towards them, a proceeding which was followed by bang! bang! from the opposite side of the corrie, while two bullets smacked on the rocks not very far above the heads of the lawful stalkers. The poacher had clean missed his stag, which came galloping full tilt past Lord Lovat, who killed him dead, and after running up to cut the throat, but without waiting to perform the gralloch, the whole party dashed off in pursuit of this daring fellow, but Lord Lovat's shot had of course given

him warning, so what with the good start he thus got and aided by the broken nature of the ground, the would-be deer-slayer managed to escape scot-free. In this forest Mr. Edward Ross made a remarkable piece of good shooting at a fourteen-pointer, who after a difficult stalk got wind of the party when they were some 150 yards distant; off he galloped best pace, and when at about 180 yards Mr. Ross sent in his first bullet, the "smack" of which could be heard as it struck the stag, who, however, did not stop, but turned end on, giving no further chance till about 250 yards off, when an opening at length presenting itself Mr. Ross fired again, and the stag fell dead. On reaching the spot, it was seen that the first bullet had passed through the heart, while the second one had almost exactly followed the same line, for the two bullet-holes were not an inch apart.

Old Murdoch, who was forester in Glendoe until old age forced him to retire from active service, relates a pretty story of the kind-heartedness of the

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late Lord Lovat. One day when out stalking, and being near to Murdoch's hill-bothy, he went in, as was his wont, to have a chat, when, whilst sitting at the open door, there appeared a very fine stag feeding over the sky-line not 300 yards distant. Lord Lovat sprang to his feet to seize his rifle whilst saying to Murdoch, "Look at that splendid stag! It is more than a royal." To this the veteran replied, "Yes, my lord; he is just a grand fourteen-pointer, and o'er yon knoll he comes most days about this hour, until at last I've learnt to look for him and treat him as a friend." On hearing these words Lord Lovat at once laid aside his rifle, simply saying, "Well, Murdoch, it will never be levelled against any friend of yours;" and thus to please his old servant he denied himself a chance such as few deerstalkers would have been able to resist.

During the occupation of Fort Augustus by the Duke of Cumberland's army, the hills of this forest were silent witnesses of many cruelly savage reprisals on the Highlanders by the royal soldiers. Indeed, the

whole immediate district around Kil Chuimein, or the present Fort Augustus, became but one hundred and fifty years ago the scene of atrocities which, if historians are to be believed, nearly equalled those Armenian horrors against which all civilized Europe is at present indignantly protesting.

FOREST OF GLENFESHIE BY KINGUSSIE.

THIS most excellent forest, so seldom in the market, belongs jointly to The Mackintosh and Sir George Macpherson Grant of Ballindalloch; this last-named gentleman owns the larger portion, but unless the two properties are let as one, Glenfeshie would not be the good forest it is. Mr. Macpherson of Ballindalloch purchased his part of the forest in 1812 from the Duke of Gordon. For the past four seasons it has been rented by the Baron J. W. H. Schröder, and covers some 38,000 acres, in which however is included about 12,000 acres of grouse and low ground shooting. More than two parties are never sent to the forest, which is essentially



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a stag ground, the number of hinds being comparatively small, as they prefer the lower lands of Mar, Atholl, Gaick and Glenbruar, which almost surround Glenfeshie. The late Mr. Ellice was here the introducer of the well-known "Glenfeshie Mixture," a shepherd's plaid with a large red check running through it, which, though here not now much used, still remains a favourite cloth in the adjoining forest of Invereshie, while later on, when Mr. Ellice bought Glengarry, it became the standard pattern for that ground also. The stalking is not difficult, as, although many of the hills are high and exceed 3,000 ft., the stags are more often found round the bases than on the tops of these very tall ranges. Brae Riach, "the brindled top," an admirable description, is 4,248 ft.; Monadh Mor, "big mountain," 3,651 ft.; Meall Tionail, "the gathering hill," 3,338 ft.; and Carn Ban, "the pale cairn," 3,445 ft., while there are many others nearly as high.

At the present time the season's kill is between 105 and 110 stags, weighed with heart and liver

included, while for the past four years they have averaged about 14 stone, although every care has been taken not to kill small beasts. The present lessee attributes this shortness of weight to two causes: first, the grazing is not so good as could be wished; and, secondly, owing to the small number of hinds, all the best stags desert the forest as soon as the rut commences, to make for the adjacent ones, in which the bulk of the hinds are quartered. Since Baron Schröder has had Glenfeshie, his best season was in 1893, when he got several fine stags of from 19 to 16 stone, one of which had a splendid head of thirteen points, with a span of 34 inches inside and 38 inches outside measurement.

Since 1892 there has been a beautiful white hart in this forest, which has grown into a fine beast with a good head, but up to July, '95, he had not made his re-appearance, albeit the Baron has no doubt of seeing him again, as he has the assurance of all his neighbours that they will not touch him. In a case

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like this it would almost make the enthusiast wish that the old law of death to the poacher, of Henry III. and even later monarchs, should be revived in favour of this beautiful creature. Before Baron Schröder ruled in Glenfeshie, Sir Charles Mordaunt had it for fourteen years, and I can testify to the many splendid trophies from this forest that adorn the walls of Walton Hall, Sir Charles' house in Warwickshire. In a letter to me Sir Charles describes Glenfeshie as "a perfect place for all-round sport," and states that to him it will ever remain "*Ille terrarum mihi praeter omnes angulus ridet,*" which is a pretty use of a quotation that also shows Sir Charles has not forgotten his Horace.

In this forest Landseer painted many pictures, being especially fond of studying the deerhounds bred by old Malcolm Clark the Fox-hunter. At one period there were two sets of huts in the glen, in one of which, on the Mackintosh portion, Landseer painted a group of deer with a suspicious hind on the plaster above the fireplace; but as the huts came to be

disused, this chalk drawing was left exposed to the damp, and though the remains of it are still to be seen, they are in a very dilapidated condition. The other of these huts was for a long time occupied by Georgina, Duchess of Bedford, who was greatly attached to the place, and so much so that when the Mackintosh proposed to sell some of the pine wood, she purchased most of the finest trees, and her mark, consisting of a tablet with her coronet and initials, may still be seen identifying some of them, although, horrible to relate, many of these badges have been removed by tourist visitors to the glen.

Landseer's well-known pictures of "Waiting for the Deer to Rise" and "Stealing a March" are both scenes in Glenfeshie, and the former contains the three portraits of Captain Horatio Ross, Charles Mackintosh, the stalker, and a then well-known character in Badenoch, one Malcolm Clark, commonly called Callum Brocair—"Malcolm the Fox-hunter"—who is drawn holding the nose of a deerhound.

The following story of this man's great strength

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is still often spoken of in the district :—Captain Ross and Clark had followed a herd of deer on to Cairn Toul, where they put them into a precipitous hollow above Lochan Uaine, from which they could only make good their escape by ascending the steep face very slowly. As the stags came into shot, they fell one by one, until five had bitten the dust, when the firing was brought to a standstill, because, in the heat and hurry of loading, a bullet was rammed down the rifle barrel before the powder had been put in. On examining the slain, Captain Ross was so pleased with one of them that he turned to Clark, saying, “I would give twenty pounds to see this stag taken home whole.” Clark replied that it should not cost the Captain that sum, so, bending down, with the help of his master the big stag was hoisted on to his shoulders, which he then carried to such a place as a pony could come to, when the stag was put in the saddle, eventually to be laid out later in the presence of the Duchess of Bedford, on the green in front of the Doune House, at Rothiemurcus. This deer

scaled 18 stone, and the other four were all brought to the pony in halves!

FOREST OF GLENGARRY.

THIS nice forest of 17,730 acres is the property of Mrs. Ellice, whose husband, for over forty years the well-known member for the St. Andrew's Burghs, purchased it from the late Lord Dudley, in 1862, for £120,000, the then Lord Ward having previously purchased it from the Marquis of Huntly for £91,000, the Marquis being the first "stranger" owner of the estate after Macdonnell of Glengarry was forced to part with his hereditary property. It was afforested in 1866, and the whole ground is admirably suited to deer. Much of it is high rocky heights, Coire Ghlais and Ben Tee each being 3,000 feet, while large quantities of sheltering woods run along the shores of Lochs Lochy and Garry, out of which latter lake flows the Garry, so famed for its early spring salmon fishing, which is perhaps the best in Scotland. Loch Garry also bounds this forest on the

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north, while Loch Lochy is another water march on the east, the sheep-ground of Lochiel surrounding it on south and west. There is a small sanctuary rising from the shore of Loch Lochy, which is taken good care of by John McLennan, the head forester. The best-coloured cloth is the Ellice plaid, a black and white check with large red squares running through the web. The ground carries two rifles comfortably, and though, when it is found necessary to push the stags out of the dense woods on the edges of the forest, an occasional drive is perforce resorted to, the bulk of the deer are killed by stalking. The usual kill is forty-five stags, averaging 14 stone, clean.

When Mr. Ellice purchased this property he built a good house on Loch Oich, which Mrs. Ellice retains in her own hands, together with the forest, and keeps up all the many hospitable kind usages of her late husband. From Invergarry House the forest is easily accessible, as carriage roads and pony tracks have been laid out for this special purpose. On the

shores of the north end of Loch Lochy was fought, in 1544, the celebrated battle of Blar-nan-leine, or "The Field of Shirts," in which Lord Lovat and his eldest son, together with three hundred Frasers, were routed and slain by the Clanronald. That day, the 3rd of July, being unusually hot, both sides stripped to their shirts before commencing the fray, in which five hundred of the Clanronald men were faced by but three hundred of the Frasers, tradition relating that only four of the Frasers with ten of the Clanronald survived the contest, while had it not been that later on eighty of the wives of eighty of the slain men presented eighty fatherless sons to the clan Fraser, there would have been great danger of the total annihilation of this old sept.

FOREST OF GLENMORE BY AVIEMORE.

THIS nice forest, formed in 1859, and covering some 15,000 acres, is the property of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, by whom it is at present let to the Earl of Zetland. On three sides it joins other



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forests, while on the fourth the deer are fenced off the low-lying lands ; it touches Abernethy on the north, Rothiemurcus on the south, and Glenavon on the west. There is a sanctuary of some 2,000 acres, with about an equal portion of very old fir wood, in which not only the stags of Glenmore, but also large numbers from the surrounding forests, pass the winter. In the centre of the wood lies Loch Morlich, on the bank of which stands a very large fir tree, for many years used as a nesting-place by the ospreys. Their last appearance was in 1893, when, in spite of all precautions, they appear to have been wantonly disturbed, and since then they have not again visited Loch Morlich. Most of the ground is very high and wild, as may well be supposed, when the highest hill is the well-known Cairn-gorm, of 4,084 ft. The ground carries two rifles, and should yield 50 stags each season, but of late years this number has not been obtained, only because the ground has been lightly shot and not from any scarcity of deer, for the present lessee, the Earl of Zetland, is

as much devoted to fishing as to all other sport, as is witnessed this autumn of '95 by his capture of a 54 lb. salmon from the Tay early in October—a time which is just the very best for the hill. Fifty-four-pounders are, however, extremely rare, and there are but few deerstalkers who are also anglers who would not prefer to kill a monster to the rod in preference to “a real big one.” with the rifle.

Tradition says that the forest of Glenmore is haunted by a fairy knight known as Lhamdearg, or “Red Hand,” but, as his last authenticated appearance was in 1669, it is more than likely that something has happened to the knight, or that the whiskey of the district is less potent, and belated stalkers can return home in the dark fearlessly.

#### FOREST OF GLENQUOICH BY INVERGARRY.

LIKE Glengarry, this famous forest, of 46,347 acres, also belongs to Mrs. Ellice. The two estates are contiguous, the whole at one time forming the ancient possessions of the Macdonnells



Archibald MacEwan  
1876

GLENQUOICH LODGE



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of Glengarry. For the past twenty-five years this forest has been rented by Lord Burton, and at his hands it has had careful nursing, with all the benefits and advantages of large outlays in numerous improvements, for even in the single matter of roads alone upwards of a hundred and thirty miles of carriage drives and pony tracks have been made, by which means the lodge on the shore of Loch Quoich has been placed in communication with all parts of the deer ground. The bulk of the lands of Glenquoich are very high and extremely steep, the bases of the hills being well covered with rich pastures. The very highest ground is reached on the summit of Glourvach (3,396 ft.) at the back of the lodge, while there are upwards of a dozen other hills over 3,000 ft.

Glenquoich marches on the west with the deer grounds of Loch Hourn, while on the north-west and north it runs with Clunie Forest, Glengarry comes in on the east, and Glen Kingie on the south. This last-mentioned property, of nearly 16,000 acres, belongs to Lochiel, being quite a good forest in itself; Lord

Burton rents it to join it on to Glenquoich, and it was on these lands that he killed the famous twenty-pointer of 1893. At the back of Glenquoich Lodge is a sanctuary of several thousand acres, together with a few hundred acres of plantations, while in sheltered situations in other parts of the forest are numerous detached woods of natural birch. The greater part of these lands have been frequented by deer from time immemorial, but until about fifty years ago Eastern Glenquoich was not actually cleared, while later on in 1878 the western portion followed.

James Henderson fills the place of head forester to the satisfaction of all, while stalkers and gillies are uniformly clad in a neat brownish check, which experience has proved to be the most suitable for the ground. Three rifles, who are expected to kill all deer by fair stalking, can take the hill daily, and though no limit as to number is imposed on Lord Burton, and though more deer could doubtlessly be got, he contents himself with a modest annual kill of one hundred good beasts, which for many years past have maintained the

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fine average weight of 15 stone clean. On the walls of Glenquoich is displayed as fine a collection of modern horns as can be seen in all Scotland, some distinguished for their great span, others for their uncommon massiveness, and again there are those with exceptionally long and graceful points. Here hang royals in plenty, a fair lot of fourteen-pointers, a few of sixteen, and one—the king of the whole collection—has twenty tines. This last-mentioned head Lord Burton laid low in 1893, in a somewhat curious way. Early in that season, and before stalking had fully commenced, he and a party were crossing the hills from Glenquoich to Loch Nevis, when coming suddenly on a company of stags, and seeing that there was no way of getting round them, or of approaching nearer without abandoning the trip to Loch Nevis, Lord Burton, who had his rifle with him, determined to try a long shot at fully three hundred yards, and dropped the stag dead, whereupon a gillie was sent off to do the gralloch, while the party resuming their route, it was not till he arrived home that Lord Burton

knew he had got a head the like of which has, perhaps, never before been seen in Scotland. The Honble. Nellie Bass and Mr. Baillie of Dochfour were both witnesses of this good shot, and when they were married, the people of Glenquoich and Glengarry gave them as an appropriate wedding present the head and figure of the great stag most correctly modelled in silver.

When the Macdonnells owned this fine tract of wild country for over two hundred years, it was the scene of incessant bloodshed and strife ; for the Clan Ranald and the Clan Mackenzie of Kintail were ever at loggerheads, and neither appears to have had sufficient preponderating force to deal to the other a death-blow. That the Macdonnells were entitled to be proud of their sept is quite certain, for, after the Campbells, they were the most numerous and powerful of all the others, and so greatly was this fact impressed on one ancient chieftain of Glengarry, that on an occasion when he unexpectedly arrived at a feast given by a neighbour, apologies were made to him



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that he had not been placed at the head of the table, and to these his answer was, "No matter—wherever Glengarry sits, that is the head of the table." An assertion of "I am cock of the walk," which was allowed to pass unchallenged.

From time immemorial the Macdonnells were a hunting and a fighting race. They joined Montrose, and were "out" in 1715 and 1745. The last of the clan who ruled at Glengarry was Col. Alexander Macdonnell, who adhered strictly to the dress and mode of living of his ancestors; he was a typical Highland chief, and as Fergus MacIvor he figures in "Waverley." His son, finding his estate hopelessly encumbered, sold it to the Marquis of Huntly, and he and his family, together with a large number of the clan, emigrated to Australia.

#### FOREST OF GUI SACHAN.

THIS forest, which is about twenty-two miles from Beaully, covers some 16,000 acres, and belongs to Lord Tweedmouth. It disputes with Glen Urquhart

and Assynt for the honour of the death of the last wolf destroyed in Scotland, which was in 1743. Of the kill of stags or their weights I have been unable to obtain authentic information; but as a further instance of how stags ramble and roam, it can be stated that Lord Tweedmouth shot a stag in this forest the morning after it had been stalked at Beauly, a distance of fully twenty-two miles as the crow flies.

FOREST OF INCHNACARDOCH AND PORTCLAIR  
BY FORT AUGUSTUS.

THIS is a very easily-walked forest of Lord Lovat's, formed in 1870, and now let to Col. Charlesworth. It covers about 15,000 acres of rolling slopes, somewhat like exaggerated Sussex downs, the highest ground being 1,800 feet. It is bounded on the south by Loch Ness, whose wooded shores give splendid wintering; on north and east it marches with Glenmoriston, while Inverwick (also called Dundreggan) meets it on the west. The kill is

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limited to forty-five stags, which average about 14 stone 8 lbs., clean.

FOREST OF INVERESHIE, OR SOUTH KINRARA, OR  
INCHRIACH, BY KINGUSSIE.

THIS small forest, rented, together with the grouse and low ground shootings, by Mr. Heywood Lonsdale, belongs partly to The Mackintosh and partly to Sir George Macpherson Grant of Ballindalloch, and unless the two grounds go together—when united they make some 9,000 acres—neither would be of much use as deer forest, although when joined, as they are at present, they yield an average kill of twenty-five stags a season, with a mean weight of 14 stone, clean. Invereshie marches with the forest of Glenfeshie on the south, and with that of Rothiemurcus on the east and north-east; there is no sanctuary, but abundance of old natural wood and thick juniper for wintering. The hills are high, somewhat peaked, and with stony tops. Sgorr-an-dubh, the “black peak,” is 3,635 feet, and Sgorr

Gavith, the "windy peak," is 3,358 feet. The cloth called Glenfeshie mixture, already described, is chiefly used, and suits the ground exactly, which will carry one rifle comfortably. The first tenants of Invershie were Mr. Farquharson of Finzean and Mr. Barclay of Urie, the former gentleman once killing with one dog and a flint gun seventy-five brace of grouse in the day!

FOREST OF INVERMORISTON BY GLENMORISTON.

THIS ground, of 10,700 acres of good stalking, belongs to Mr. J. M. Grant of Glenmoriston. Glen-mhor-essan, "the glen of the great falls," has been cleared for many years, carries two rifles, and is at present rented by Captain A. H. O. Dunnistane, and to him and his friends it gives from twenty-five to thirty stags each season, which work out, taking one with the other, just under 15 stone, but how weighed I have not been able to ascertain. As a rule, several royals are got

each year, and the walls of Invermoriston House show heads running up to seventeen points.

It was mainly owing to the true aim of a Glenmoriston man that the Highlanders charged with such confident fury at Killiecrankie; for just before the battle began Lochiel, who was supposed to have the gift of foretelling events, was questioned as to what he thought of their chances. "That side will win who first spills blood," answered he; and on hearing that prophecy Iain à Chragain turned to a noted Glenmoriston deerstalker, shouting to him, "Do you hear that? Do you hear that?" while pointing out an officer of General Mackay's, who, mounted on a white horse, had rashly galloped out of his lines to survey the scene of the forthcoming battle. The stalker instantly firing, the gentleman fell from his horse shot through the heart, while on seeing this happy omen the hillmen with exulting shouts rushed to the fray.

There have always been deer in Invermoriston, as is proved by the name of the mountain stretch

lying between Affarie and Corrie Dho in Glenmoriston, which for centuries has been called "Tigh-Mor-no-Seilg," "the great house of the hunting." In 1746 Glenmoriston House, with every cottage near by, was destroyed by the Duke of Cumberland's orders, a proceeding which forced the numerous Highlanders of those parts to seek safety on the hill-sides. Amongst these was Patrick Grant, together with three of the Chisholms, two of the Macdonalds, and a Macgregor. These "seven men of Glenmoriston" fled to the hills, binding themselves together by a solemn oath never to yield to the English, but to stand by each other to the last drop of their blood. They were all strong, active men, and making their home in the Cave of Uamh Ruaraidh na Seilg, "the Cave of Roderick the Hunter," in Corrie-Sgrainge, they commenced to lead a life of adventure, losing no chance of harming any small parties of soldiers or Whig Highlanders. They pillaged convoys, shooting the guards, and in carrying off the proceeds they

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murdered one Robert Grant, a Strathspey man, whose head they fixed on a tree close to the high road at Blairie, where it stayed until well on in the present century. When Prince Charles Edward escaped from the Western Isles, to commence his wanderings on the mainland, he was forced to seek shelter in Glenmoriston, and had to place himself in the hands of these seven men, who entertained him to the best of their ability, and after binding themselves by a great oath to stand by the Prince until he was out of danger, asked that "their backs might be to God and their faces to the Devil" if they did discover to man, woman or child that the Prince was in their keeping. This oath they observed so well that not until a whole year after the escape of Charles to France was it so much as known he had been amongst them.

FOREST OF KINVEACHY BY BOAT OF GARTEN.

THIS is one of the Countess Dowager of Seafield's properties, at present let to Sir Spencer Maryon

Wilson, being entirely surrounded by the grouse moors and sheep grounds of the Duke of Richmond. It was first cleared in 1875, the highest point of the 11,000 acres of which it consists being reached at the summit of Carn-sleam-huinn, 2217 feet, while of the total area no less than ONE-THIRD is thick wood, offering a vast dense shelter to the deer. Two rifles can go out, who should kill twenty stags a season, which will average 14 stone, with heart and liver included. In the season of 1891 the present tenant had the good fortune to secure one of the best beasts shot in Kinveachy in recent years, a heavy stag with fourteen good points.

FOREST OF KNOYDART BY ISLE ORNSAY.

THIS estate is of surpassing wildness and beauty, being full of steep, narrow glens, with high hills peaked, jagged, and fantastic in outline, with their tops nearly sterile. Sgur-na-liche is the highest ground and rises to 3,610 feet, but there are five more hills of over 3,000 feet, and twenty-



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one that exceed 2,000 feet, while as a good part of this ground is sea-girt, with the hills close to and rising abruptly from the salt water, it can easily be imagined the walking is severe, while even the most "hardy brogues" soon wear out during a month's stalking here. At one time, for more than two centuries, Knoydart was the property of the Macdonnells of Glengarry; the late Mr. James Baird bought it in 1857, and was succeeded by his nephew, Mr. John Baird, in 1876, with whom it was once my good fortune to stay at Inverie House to stalk over these romantic hills. In 1893 my friend sold Knoydart to Mr. E. S. Bowlby, of Gilston Park, Hertfordshire, and each of these three proprietors spent largely on the place. There are some 50,000 acres under deer, with a fine house at Inverie, on Loch Nevis, and a good lodge at Barrisdale, but it is from Inverie House that the bulk of the stalking is done. The present owner limits his kill to one hundred stags, which average 15 stone clean, but in the season of 1894 he contented himself with just

over half this number, as the severe winter destroyed many good beasts, no less than thirty-eight having been found dead, and of course all the carcasses were not discovered; of these fifty stags shot in '94, five were royals, nine had eleven points, and twenty-one had ten. Knoydart marches on the land side with Glenquoich and North Morar, having, in addition to a small sanctuary, some useful woods for wintering. From the earliest days of the Macdonnells Knoydart has seen a great deal of clan warfare. In 1643 Alexander Macdonald, (the celebrated Colkitto of John Milton), a Highland relation of the Earl of Antrim, landed in Knoydart with a force of Irish for the assistance of Montrose, and joining him, they shared in all his victories and formed part of his troops when the Marquis made that remarkable forced march over the snow-clad hills between Fort Augustus and Ben Nevis, which the day following led to the surprise and nearly total annihilation of Argyll's army at Inverlochy. The last bloodshed that took place in Knoydart was

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in 1745, when an officer of the King's forces, in command of a detachment of soldiers pursuing the fugitives from Culloden, sought shelter from the fury of a storm in a lonely hut in Knoydart. Only the woman of the house and her infant were at home, and the child beginning to cry, the officer exclaimed, "Curse that child! If it lives it will only grow up to be a rebel like its father;" on hearing this, the sergeant of the party at once passed his sword through the child, the distracted mother being a witness of the brutal deed. When the storm subsided the soldiers departed, with their officer mounted on a white horse, but he, fearing pursuit and vengeance from the father of the murdered child, shortly after starting dismounted and proceeded on foot, in the meanwhile placing on his own horse a prisoner he was taking to Fort William. That which this gallant officer feared shortly happened, for the outraged father, who had fled to the hills at the approach of the soldiers, returned home as soon as they had departed, and vowing vengeance, he

pursued them until he headed the detachment, when, as they came up to him, he at once shot the rider of the white horse dead. He saw his mistake too late, but escaping scot-free, he again came up with his persecutors, when the officer, thinking that all was safe, having resumed his horse, also paid the penalty of his cruelty, and the injured father once more escaped.

In the time of the Armada one of the Spanish ships was wrecked on the Knoydart shores, and to this day there are a race of Catholics settled there, who show all those well-marked peculiarities of feature which belong to the Spanish race.

FOREST OF MACDONALD, OR SCONSER, BROADFORD.

THIS is an ancient forest of nearly 10,000 acres, belonging to Lord Macdonald, and at present let to Mr. A. H. Sharp, in whose rental is included the wages of four keepers, all rates and taxes, and the up-keep of the lodge. It is mostly rough, bare, black, moorland ground, cut up by precipitously rocky

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hills, of which the highest is 2,600 ft. It is bounded on the north by Loch Sligachan, on the east by the Sound of Raasay and Loch Ainort, and on the west by Macleod of Macleod's ground of Glen Drynoch. There are no crofters on this property, but the tourists are very troublesome, keeping the deer constantly on the move, and spoiling many stalks, so much so that the average kill is but twelve stags a season. Deer are said to swim to and from the Island of Skye to the mainland across Loch Alsh, and also even to come from Applecross in Ross-shire, swimming first to Raasay and from thence to Skye. This property has been in the hands of the Macdonalds of Sleat for several centuries, and although there have been other claimants to the proud title of "Macdonald of the Isles," the honour rests at this day with the present owner of Sconser. From towards the end of the year 1590 numerous were the clan warfares these Macdonalds took part in, especially with the Macleans of Dowart, and in 1591 each of these chieftains was condemned to

pay a fine of £4,000 to the king, as a pledge that they would keep the peace, but the penalties were shortly forgotten, and a year later the Macdonalds and their neighbours, the Macleods, fought a desperate battle on the hill of Benquillin, when the latter clan was nearly cut to pieces. The Macdonalds joined Montrose, and were "out" in both 1715 and 1745; and the then chief was the first to commence the battle of Sherrifmuir; they likewise did much to protect and shelter Prince Charlie, when he arrived at Mugstot, in the north of Skye, the residence of Sir Alexander Macdonald, after a perilous voyage from Benbecula, disguised as Betty Burke, the Irish maid-servant of the celebrated Flora Macdonald.

FOREST OF MAMORE, OR KINLOCHMORE, BY ONICH.

A FOREST celebrated for the size of the horns and weight of its deer, belonging to Mrs. Cameron Campbell of Monzie, by whom it is let to Sir Charles Mordaunt, the previous tenant for many years having been the late Mr. A. F. Thistle-

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thwaite, who enclosed the forest with wire. Though there have always been deer on this ground, it was only in 1852 that it was afforested. It spreads over 35,000 acres of high, stony hills and grassy corries; the two highest points being Beinnein Mhor, the "big peak," 3,700 ft., and A Ghruagach, "the maiden," 3,442 ft. There is a sanctuary of about 4,000 acres, and good woods on the sea-shore of Loch Leven, and hence the deer, having the protection of this low-lying cover, rarely suffer much even in the most severe winters. Up to the time of his death, the late Col. Campbell of Monzie kept the forest in his own hands, and many were the fine beasts he got, for he was a good and keen stalker, while probably no man, gentle or simple, had a better knowledge of deer than he had.

Here in the autumn of 1862 a somewhat curious and laughable adventure was witnessed by the Colonel, who, having wounded a good stag near the top of Corrie Gail, bade Jamie Macpherson slip the deerhound. The stricken beast made its way

to the foot of the corrie, and plunged into a large deep pool of the river Nevis. It happened that the Achreach forester was about at the time, and seeing what was likely to happen, he raced down to his side of the pool, while Jamie being on the other side with the baying hound, the stag swam round and round, till, on nearing Jamie's bank, he at once jumped plump astride the animal, "Just like the rash little man he was," as Mrs. Campbell is well warranted in saying. Jamie was then carried about till he managed to open his knife with his teeth, and forgetting that he could not swim, in sticking the stag he scuttled his own ship, and would assuredly have been drowned had not the other man, by dashing into the water as far as he could venture, just managed to reach Jamie with his stick as he was sinking. The river Nevis was, however, eventually fatal to the poor fellow; for a little time after this adventure, and purely to save himself a short walk to a bridge, he lost his life when attempting to jump from stone to



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stone at a bad place when the river was in high flood.

Mamore marches with the forests of Corrou, Inverlochy and Black Corries, but unless the fence put up by Mr. Thistlethwaite has been partially removed, these adjacent forests can be of no use to Mamore as far as interchange of blood goes. The present tenant is limited to seventy stags, the bulk of which are got by stalking by two rifles, and give a mean weight of 15 stone 6 lbs. clean, while in good seasons the average runs as high as 16 stone.

In connection with the owner of Mamore and Meoble forests I must not omit to mention that Mrs. Campbell has been spirited enough to have translated into Gaelic for distribution amongst the Highlanders a pamphlet on the deer forests, most ably and impartially written by Mr. Malcolm, the well-known and popular manager of Mrs. Ellice's estates of Glengarry and Glenquoich, and to him my best thanks are due for the greater part of my information concerning these two last-mentioned forests.

In the above description of Mamore I have alluded to Mrs. Campbell of Monzie as the owner of the forest of Meoble, but this is hardly correct, as that part of her estate is let as a sheep farm, the tenant clearing a portion of it before the commencement of the stalking season, to ensure some good few heavy stags to his shooting tenant.

FOREST OF MORAR BY FORT WILLIAM.

THIS estate, afforested between 1880 and 1885 and so well-known for its very heavy deer, is one of the Lovat properties, and on it the present lord killed his first stag. It covers some 13,000 acres of very steep rocky ground, the highest point of which is Sgur-na-natt, or "the hat hill," of nearly 3,000 feet; there are many fine grassy corries, and the absence of any wood for winter shelter is in a great measure compensated for by a small sanctuary, and the fact that the lower grounds of the forest descend to the salt water shores of Loch Nevis, where neither frost nor snow ever hold long sway. On the east and

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south-east it marches with Meoble, on the north-east with Lochiel sheep ground, while it touches Knoydart on the north. The kill is limited to thirty-five stags a season, which average nearly 16 stone clean, and in 1893 the present tenant, Mr. F. W. Gill, of Oswestry, made a remarkable bit of stalking and good shooting, as after getting up to a company of ten big stags he killed eight of them, which averaged 17 stone 7 lbs. clean.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century this ground of Morar witnessed many battles and single combats between the members of the Glengarry clan and that of the Mackenzies of Kintail; and later on, in 1745, after Culloden, Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, hid himself here for a considerable time in a hollow tree. It was also in Morar, at the south end of Loch Nevis, where the present estates of Knoydart and Morar join, that Prince Charles landed, when making his escape from the Isle of Skye, and so hot was the pursuit in these out-of-the-way regions, that he was forced to pass three nights in the open

air, and on the fourth, having placed himself under the guidance of John Mackinnon of Morar, Charles had a most narrow escape of capture whilst being rowed further down the loch to a place of greater security, for, coming suddenly round a corner of rock, they found themselves in the presence of a party of militia who had just landed, but before the soldiers could regain their boat, such a good start was got that the Pretender's party were enabled to save themselves by running ashore at a spot where a dense wood came down to the water's edge, in which they made a successful escape. The prince then sought shelter with Macdonald of Morar, taking the place of Mackinnon's servant on the journey. On approaching a swollen ford, Mackinnon, being anxious to keep Charles dry, asked their guide to carry "this poor sick fellow" across, a request which was angrily refused, the man saying, "The deil be on the back he comes, or any wretched fellow of a servant like him, but, sir, I will carry you over with pleasure;" to this kind offer Mackinnon replied, "No, by no means,

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so if the lad must needs wade, then I will wade with him to see he comes to no harm," so taking Charles by the arm, they proceeded to ford the swollen waters. On reaching Morar House, they found Macdonald living in a hut, his own mansion having been destroyed by the king's soldiers, and Charles, fancying he was not too welcome, continued his journey to Borobol.

## FOREST OF ROTHIEMURCUS BY AVIEMORE.

THIS ancient forest is one of the few of which I have not been able to collect any reliable information. It is owned by Mr. Sheriff Grant, rented by Mr. Hargreaves Brown, and covers some 19,000 acres of well-wooded, fine-looking deer ground, the greater part of which can be seen from the Highland railway, as the train runs from Kinbraig to Aviemore. It was near the old castle of Rothiemurcus that the Marquis of Montrose pitched his camp when pursued by the Duke of Argyll, from whence he made a masterly retreat into the forest of Abernethy. Rothie-

murcus is still famed for being one of the very few places where the nearly extinct osprey yet breeds, as on Loch-an-Eilean they continue to nest on a small island in the middle of a lake; here also, in 1526, there took refuge one James Malcolmson, who had murdered his kinsman, Lauchlan Mackintosh, "a verrie honest and wise gentleman;" the water-girt shelter, however, was of no avail, for during a dark night Lauchlan's friends crossed to the isle, surprised, and slew the assassin.

#### FOREST OF STRUY BY BEAULY.

THIS is another of Lord Lovat's forests, of about 18,000 acres of big-featured high ground, very similar to Braulen, and now let on a long lease to Mr. Douglas H. Barry. Cleared in 1885, it is wholly surrounded by other deer grounds, for it marches with Braulen on the west, Strathconan on the north, Erchless on the east, and Cannich with Fasnakyle on the south; there is no absolute sanctuary, but the hill of Carn Ban, 2,410 feet, is kept quiet till



From the *Thorburn*  
1876

MR D H BARRY'S THREE-HORN





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late in the season, and added to this, on each side of the glen there is some six miles of wood. It carries two rifles, but takes a third during the last few days of the first fortnight in October. The kill is limited to sixty stags, which are weighed with heart and liver, and owing to careful nursing, combined with good management, a steadily increasing gain of weight is being established, for while in Mr. Barry's first year, of 1892, the average was but 13 stone 6 lbs., it has been steadily increased, until in 1895 it reached 14 stone 5 lbs.; an improvement which the lessee is hopeful of augmenting for several seasons to come. On the 9th of October, 1893, Mr. Barry had the good fortune to secure a remarkable three-horned stag, of whose head an illustration is given; his curious head proved his death-warrant, for he was much run when shot, and only killed for the sake of the extraordinary horns, each one having a distinct coronet, the right horn being 26 inches in length, and the two left ones 22 and 22½ inches. In October, 1895, Mr.

Barry also had the luck to lay low the heaviest stag got in this forest for very many years, which scaled 20 stone 10 lbs.

The house of Struy—Gaelic, Strui, Streams—is built near the junction of the Farrar with the Glass, and close to it is the ford of Ath-nan-ceann, “the ford of the heads,” which derives its name from a fight which took place there about two hundred years ago, when some of the clan Fraser being detected by a number of the Chisholms in a cattle-raiding expedition, the opposing parties actually met in the water, when in a fierce contest the Chisholms were victorious, although next day so many heads of both victors and vanquished were found in the ford that hence its name.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## PERTHSHIRE.

## FOREST OF ATHOLL BY BLAIR ATHOLL.

I CANNOT but feel the greatest diffidence in dealing with this magnificent tract of country, for it has already been most ably and elaborately treated of by Mr. Scrope in his "Days of Deerstalking."

In addition to the splendid sport it affords, the estate abounds in historical recollections mixed up with traditions of clanish warfare and adventures, on which subjects alone a whole volume could easily be written. This is certainly one of the oldest, if not actually the most ancient, of all the Scotch forests, for there have been deer and Murrays in Atholl from time immemorial. As is well known, Queen Mary witnessed a great hunting in Atholl in 1563, when,

in addition to a number of deer, five wolves were included in the spoils of the day. Mr. Scrope states that in his time, 1838, the whole property extended to 135,451 imperial acres, of which 51,000 acres was forest, the rest being sheep ground, while he estimates the total head of deer of all sorts to have been between five and six thousand. It is probable that in the above-mentioned estimates there is included the areas and deer of the forests of Fealar and Glenbruar, both of which being now let to tenants, leaves the Atholl forest of to-day to extend over some 35,000 acres of as fine deer ground as could be desired, of which the most prominent features are the two big hills of Ben Derig or Dearg—"The Red Hill"—(3,338 ft.), and Ben-y-Gloe (3,670 ft.), which of itself contains no less than twenty-four separate corries, and even as in Scrope's day, it is still supposed to be the abode of a witch who, feeding on live snakes, has the power of assuming the shape of hind, eagle or raven, together with the ability to drive cattle into morasses, destroy roads or bridges, and commit other damages,

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which, however, the forces of Nature can usually accomplish but too well without the aid of witchcraft.

The cloth worn as the most suitable to this forest is a peculiar slate-grey, which varies very much in appearance according to the light in which it is viewed, but doubtlessly well adapted to sunshine and shadow on stony ground. The "Atholl grey" was introduced about one hundred years ago by the fourth Duke, whose foresters' dress then consisted of an Atholl grey swallow-tailed coat, "vests to match" (as my tailor's bill puts it), red and green Tartan hose, with an Atholl Tartan kilt, the whole being topped by an Atholl bonnet—a sort of Balmoral one, with a red, green, and white diced band, identical with the regimental ribbon of the old 25th King's Own Borderers, now the Scottish Borderers. When the present Duke succeeded in 1864, he substituted black and red worsted hose for the Tartan ones, modernized the cut of the coat, while an Atholl grey stalking-cap, with peaks fore and aft and ear-flaps, took the place of the bonnet, and

Atholl now remains the only forest where the use of the kilt is still strictly adhered to. During the present Duke's time this small alteration in dress, together with the abolition of deer drives, have been the only changes made in the forest management since rifles and spyglasses first came into use. Towards the end of the fifteenth century saltpetre was being burnt on the hill, one Angus Baillie, of Uppat, having the credit of killing deer early in that century with his "glasnabhean," or mountain match-lock, although the rifle's helpmate, the spyglass, did not come into use before 1777.

When Mr. Scrope stayed in Atholl, deer drives on a large scale often took place, and spirited indeed are his descriptions of them, while equally entertaining also are his narrations of the adventures and hardships to be faced by the stalker; but whether he discourses of stalking or driving, one cannot but notice the great number of stags he and his friends wounded, only to be eventually secured after a lengthy pursuit, and it has always seemed to me that

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these plentiful but not immediately fatal injuries must have been the fault of the high trajectory of the single-barrel rifle of those days, and probably if Mr. Scrope or his friends had been armed with the modern weapon, there would seldom have been any need to slip so many deerhounds. Times have altered also in other respects since Mr. Scrope's day, for I am quite certain there is not now living man or boy, who, for fear of spoiling sport, would of his own free will follow the example of Harry Lightfoot, Scrope's novitiate friend who chose to take the hill quite unarmed on the first day of his deerstalking career. Mr. Scrope makes us envious by telling of Atholl stags of twenty-four and up to twenty-seven stone in weight, but except in one instance he does not state whether this was clean weight, while when he does mention the manner of weighing it was "as the stag fell;" for it is related how one of the Dukes of Atholl killed a wood stag at Dunkeld which scaled 36 stone 6 lbs. before the gralloch. A few pages later Mr. Scrope estimates this as amounting to

6 stone 6 lbs., which, if correct, brings the clean weight of the above-mentioned stag to 30 stone, and thus the one shot by Lord Greville in Glenmore, on October 2nd, 1877, which was verified to be 33 stone clean, still remains the heaviest Scotch stag I can ever hear of. I rather think Mr. Scrope's estimate of the weight of the gralloch is under the mark, and that as a rule in good-conditioned beasts one-third of the total weight is more nearly correct ; thus a stag scaling 18 stone as he falls will rarely turn the beam at anything over 12 stone 7 lb. ; but as only on five occasions have I ever seen the whole carcass weighed, I may not have had opportunities sufficiently numerous to speak with confidence, and the foregoing remarks are derived solely from the small experience already mentioned. The beasts that I saw weighed, however, were fine, fat, healthy stags of from 18 to 27 stone gross weight ; and this being the case, I cannot see why the weights shown by these few should be incorrect when applied to larger numbers.

Old Blair Castle stood several sieges, and was



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the scene of many tragedies. Early history tells how it was stormed by Angus Og, Lord of the Isles, who took the earl and countess prisoners to Isla, releasing them very soon after their arrival. In 1509 Allan Macruari or MacRory was beheaded in the courtyard of the castle in the presence of the Scottish king, but history does not record the reason. When Sir William Murray of Tullibardine came into the family estates in 1416, he married a daughter of Sir John Colquhoun of Luss, and the union being blessed by seventeen sons, it is from them that the bulk of the numerous families of Perthshire Murrays are descended. Tradition states that these seventeen sons all lived to be men, and they one day went with their father to attend the king's court, at Stirling, "each with a servant, and their father with two." These thirty-seven men made a brave show, but as a law had just been passed forbidding anyone to go about with a large following, the Laird of Tullibardine was challenged on the subject by the king, who, when he learnt that they were only his sons, with a

servant apiece, was so pleased with the matter that he presented each of them with small lands in heritage.

In 1689 the Atholl men fought for Dundee, performing prodigies of valour at Killiecrankie, although not with their chief at their head, as he did not join the Viscount. An Atholl laird, Stewart of Ballechin, pursued the enemy so hotly, while wielding a tremendous broadsword, that at the end of the fight his hand had become so swollen that it could only be released from the basket hilt by sawing away the fret-work. Some traditions state that on Dundee's being mortally wounded he was carried to Blair Castle, and died there ; but the best authenticated records say that he was watering his horse, close to Urrard House, when a bullet, fired from one of the windows, laid low the gallant soldier, who, on receiving the wound, was carried to the inn at Blair to expire there ; but be that as it may, one of the most treasured relics in Blair Castle is the breast-plate, pierced by the fatal ball, just as Dundee wore it when he fell.

I regret I am unable to give my readers the

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average annual kill and weights reached in this forest in the present day.

FOREST OF CRAGANOUR BY KINLOCH RANNOCH.

A PROPERTY of Sir Robert Menzies, on Loch Rannoch side, recently afforested, and at present rented by Mr. E. N. Buxton. It covers some 12,000 acres of ground, of which 2,000 acres are sanctuary. The place is somewhat too much in its infancy as a deer-ground to say anything for certain of the kill of stags; it works well in any wind, and is expected to yield from fifteen to eighteen stags, which by degrees should be increased to twenty-five or thirty.

FORESTS OF DALNACARDOCH AND STRONPHADRICK BY  
BLAIR ATHOLL.

A GROUND of the Duke of Atholl's, afforested about eight years ago, extending over some 15,000 acres of fine wild hills and corries, and marching with Gaick and Glen Bruar on the north, the other boundaries

being sheep-ground. It carries one rifle comfortably, but I have no information as to what sport it has hitherto yielded; but in any case it cannot yet have arrived at its best.

FOREST OF FEALAR BY PITLOCHRY.

THIS property, of about 14,000 acres, joins Atholl Forest, and is really a part of it, and belongs to the Duke. It holds a great number of hinds, is very easy walking, and is best worked by one rifle, while the bag varies so considerably that no fair average can be stated; but as many as sixty-three stags, with a mean weight of 14 stone 11 lbs. clean, have been got in a season.

FOREST OF GLENARTNEY BY COMRIE.

BELONGING to the Earl of Ancaster, who keeps it in his own hands, this is a very ancient royal forest of some 20,000 acres, the highest ground on which attains an altitude of 3,210 ft.

It is the most southern of all the mainland forests;

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sheep grounds surround it on all sides, the nearest cleared lands being those of the Black Mount, some twenty-five miles distant. I have no authentic information of the total annual yield of stags from this forest, but as the property is never in the market, and not likely to be, the omission is one which will not be of much importance to my readers. On the Callender end of the ground, a portion of the hill of Uam Var, made so well known by Sir Walter Scott, forms part of the forest, and the opening scene of "The Lady of the Lake" is laid here, when the hunted stag, who

"Deep his midnight lair had made  
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade,"

is used as the means of introducing FitzJames to the Lady of the Lake.

In this hill of Uam Var is a great den or cave, reputed in remote ages to have been the abode of a saint, and in later years used as the abode of a very different sort of people, who were either cattle-lifters or robbers. It was in Glenartney in 1589 that

some of the proscribed Macgregor clan, when on a poaching expedition, murdered one John Drummond of Ernoch, a royal forester, an incident which forms the foundation of Sir Walter Scott's "Legend of Montrose," and a barbarity that likewise led to many desperate encounters between the Macgregors and the clan of the murdered man.

FOREST OF GLENBRUAR BY BLAIR ATHOLL.

A GROUND of about 10,500 acres, marching with Gaick, Atholl and Glenfeshie. It belongs to the Duke of Atholl, and was let to Major E. H. Baldock for the season of 1895. There are but few corries on it, and a good deal of stalking has to be done over peat bogs, while, as much of this sort of ground is very bare, long and snake-like flat creeps are often the order of the day. The bag here varies very much according to the prevailing winds of the stalking season, while it likewise makes a great difference to the total whether the nearest adjacent

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ground of Atholl is much worked or kept quiet, as all the best stags are there ; thus with both conditions unfavourable, it is possible to go to the hill for many days in succession without seeing a shootable beast. The last tenant was limited to forty-five stags and got but twenty-four, which averaged 14 stone 8 lbs. clean. Major Baldock met with a curious experience in the month of this last September, for having wounded a stag, he lost sight of him after a long pursuit, and only came up with him late in the evening quite in the dusk, when the stag was seen on the sky-line going very slowly and stopping every now and again. The next day the Major was obliged to drive to Struan in the morning, so telling his stalker to start off to try and find the beast, he ordered him, if successful, to send word back to the house by mid-day. When Major Baldock returned, he found the stalker there to say that having made out the stag, he had left a man to watch him, whereupon the Major started to stalk the stag ; as he got near, the animal laid down, when, after waiting on him for

half-an-hour, the poor beast suddenly rolled down the hill stone dead!

FOREST OF RANNOCH LODGE, KINLOCH RANNOCH.

THIS is another of the properties of Sir Robert Menzies, which has been cleared for a considerable time. It is fine wild ground with several very large bold corries, holding both stags and hinds, and one rifle can go out in any wind, although at the end of the season a second rifle can usually take the hill when it blows from a suitable airt. The whole estate is some 24,000 acres, beautifully placed at the head of Loch Rannoch, of which 12,000 is forest, marching with Corroun and Ben Alder, with a sanctuary of 2,000 acres, the remainder being sheep and grouse ground. Five hundred acres have recently been planted on Loch Ericht side, where the trees are doing well, which, when once the deer can be admitted, will prove a great shelter to them. The limit at present is thirty stags, which with heart and liver average about 15 stone 7 lbs., and this



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number should always be got, and it is not the fault of the forest if the maximum be not reached.

The lodge was built in 1803 at the far end of Loch Rannoch, and looks on to one of the finest views in all Scotland, although the hurricane of November, 1893, has made the background appear somewhat bare for the moment, as no less than sixty acres of wood, planted when the house was built, were laid flat. It would be inconsistent to take leave of the Rannoch Forest without reference to the clan Menzies, who have been established there for many centuries. They fought for Bruce at Bannockburn; many of them were "out" in 1715, and notably one laird—Menzies of Culdares—who, being taken prisoner at the battle of Dunblane, on receiving a free pardon, felt himself in honour bound not to join the rebellion of 1745; in order, however, to show he was still devoted to the cause, he sent a valuable horse as a present to Prince Charles. The Highlander who had charge of the animal was arrested, and though offered his life if he would divulge the name of

his master, he nobly preferred death to betraying his trust. It was a descendant of this Menzies of Culdares that first introduced the larch into Scotland in 1737, and from two plants he gave one of the Dukes of Atholl come all the immense larch plantations that now flourish in that district. The present Sir Robert Menzies is well known as one of the most hardy and skilful deer stalkers of the north, and I believe I am right in saying that never yet has he availed himself of a seat on pony back either to get to or return from the forest, and as that book from which those who have titles to their names cannot escape, says that the popular baronet was born in 1817, his powers of endurance are rendered the more remarkable, and all good sportsmen will join with me in wishing health and long life to the "gael us dearg au suas," or "the red and white for ever," which was the old Menzies' battle-cry and is descriptive of their tartan, to my mind the most handsome of them all.

## FOREST OF TULLADH-A-BEITHE BY KINLOCH RANNOCH.

THIS is another of Sir Robert Menzies' recently-made forests on Loch Rannoch, marching with Camsericht, Rannoch Lodge, Loch Ericht, and Craganour. It covers some 14,000 acres of ground, well sprinkled with hills, woods and plantations on the Loch Rannoch side ; the low ground, on which grouse are shot for the first two months of the season, makes excellent wintering for the deer, while the high ground on Loch Ericht side gives good stalking for one rifle, although it does not work well in an east wind. The tenant is limited to eighteen stags, which are usually got, and average 15 stone with heart and liver. The forest lodge on the shores of Loch Rannoch, which was built nearly fifty years ago, has since then never been a season empty, and has had but three tenants, the present one being Mr. T. Weller-Poley, who, on October 12th, 1890, killed an eleven-pointer stag, which may be said to have

been charging him. He had to risk moving some hinds in order to get near the stag; as the ladies ran together, some small stags came in to join them, on which the big one stopped, promptly chased them out, and rejoined the hinds, who were all standing staring in the direction of the hidden stalkers; on the big stag seeing this, he, evidently supposing the hinds were looking at other stags, started off full tilt for the spot where Mr. Weller-Poley was concealed; the beast came straight at him full trot, stepping very high, and was but thirty-five yards off when he was shot in the chest. Here also the present tenant, whilst shooting grouse on a high beat, saw one of his retrievers kill a small BLACK rat, which no doubt was one of the original British rats, and it is to be regretted that it did not receive the attentions of the taxidermist.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ROSS-SHIRE.

FORESTS OF ACHANALT, STRATHBRAN, AND LOCH  
ROSQUE BY DINGWALL.

THESE three estates are the property of Mr. Arthur Bignold. Achanalt extends to 4,500 acres, Loch Rosque to 11,000 acres, and Strathbran to 14,500 acres, making altogether some 30,000 acres of excellent deer ground, and the Parliamentary return, which put the acreage of these three properties at 45,000 acres, is altogether erroneous. These three estates, now rolled into one, are bounded by the river Bran on the south, by the forests of Loch Luichart and Fannich on the north, and the sheep grounds of Kinlochewe on the west. Achanalt was first afforested in 1879, Strathbran came next in

1887, followed by Loch Rosque in 1880. The three properties are excellent examples of what can be done with deer in a short time, for when Mr. Bignold first bought the property, there was nearly as good a chance of meeting with a Red Indian as of coming across a red deer. The Strathbran section holds, at the western end of Loch Fannich, the beautiful Cabuie Glen, together with a large part of "The Cailleach," or Old Woman Hill. The highest ground of the forest is in the Loch Rosque division, where an altitude of 3,060 feet is reached. During the last ten years the proprietor has planted some five million trees on the low grounds, while in addition to this the Achanalt part contains the natural birch wood of Chuillim, which, extending for fully three and a half miles, is celebrated for the large stock of black game it holds, the numbers of woodcock breeding there every season, and the nesting of the golden eye and goosander on the wooded shores of Loch Chuillim.

The Loch Rosque beat is under the charge of

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Donald Mackintosh, the head forester, who has lived at Achnasheen for over thirty years. Duncan Fraser and John Mitchie look after the Strathbran portion, while Kenneth Gillanders takes care of the Achanalt section. In the Long Corrie of Ben Fin there is a large joint sanctuary for the three grounds, into which the deer begin to gather in May, and out of which they do not break until the first week of the October following; and in this corrie, early in September of 1894, no less than 870 stags were counted, besides knobbers and hinds, amidst them being a remarkably fine hummel, who has been on the ground for the last three seasons. This forest will carry three rifles, but not for every day of the season; all deer are got by fair stalking, the average annual kill being from seventy to eighty stags (in 1895 it was eighty-three stags), which, with heart and liver included, show a mean weight of 13 stone  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lbs., but this total takes in the weights of some small beasts, shot by accident or by novices, which it would have been better to omit taking any notice of. The entire stock of

deer belonging to the three grounds is somewhere between 1,800 and 2,000 head, while up to the present only two stags have been killed weighing over 20 stone. One was got by Count Szapary of 21 stone 6 lbs., and the other, with only six points, scaled a stone heavier. In an enclosed portion of the Chuillim wood Mr. Bignold has a nice herd of wild Japanese deer, the produce of some beasts given him by Lord Powerscourt some ten years ago. They are somewhat smaller than fallow deer, and are remarkably savage to strangers of their own species, for on two fresh stags being introduced to the herd, they were both promptly killed. At present these deer have not been turned wild on to the hills, but as they are very fleet of foot, quick of eye, and possess the most sensitive of noses, they should make exciting and difficult stalking whenever that time comes. With this herd there was also at one time a pair of Axis deer, imported by Mr. Bignold from the Himalayas, but the experiment did not turn out satisfactory, as the stag invariably killed his



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offspring (dropped at Christmas time) as soon as they arrived at or about two years of age; the old stag is now dead, and the hind alone remains. In the unenclosed part of this Chuillim wood there is likewise a herd of about two hundred fallow deer, free to roam where they like, and fresh blood has been introduced from Windsor Park. Amongst this herd there was at one time a white doe, well authenticated to have been twenty years old, who, after reaching that age, died from starvation through the loss of her teeth, this being one of the few instances of any beast dying of hunger on this ground, for the wintering is so good as to render such distressing occurrences most rare. The clearances made by Mr. Bignold have had the effect of opening up to deer a most extensive and continuous chain of forest ground, and they can now wander from north to south (or vice versâ), from the southern boundary on the river Bran to the northern extremity of the forest of Rhidorrach, a distance of forty miles as the crow flies; again, from the western march of

Loch Rosque to the eastern boundary of Ben Wyvis Forest a similar chance is offered to the deer of travelling over a like distance, stretching from east to west. On the hill of Ben-y-vich, in 1894, there was a pair of dotterels, supposed to be almost the last of this race in the north of Scotland; in the Faden Burn, on the west end of the ground, the golden eagle and the peregrine frequently nest, whilst among the rare small birds Ray's wagtail may be mentioned. In the winter of 1891 a sad accident happened in the enclosed deer park at Strathbran. With the tame deer there was a royal red deer stag, who had been taken as a calf out of Corrie Reoch in Fannich by John Maclennan, the forester there. It had been hand-fed with milk, and eventually turned out into this park, and was eleven years old at the time of the tragedy. In December, 1891, poor John came across the hill from Fannich early in the morning to reach Strathbran, and in order to avoid a very small detour he jumped the deer fence, and crossed the park where he well knew

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this stag was, while at the same time he was equally aware he was a dangerous beast. The rash man had not even so much as a stout stick with him, and had gone but a short distance ere he was attacked and killed, his cries for help being heard, but not understood, by some women in the road. His cap was found where the struggle began, some sixty yards from his body, and clearly he had fought hard for his life, for Maclennan was a strong man of over six feet. The poor fellow was found lying with his head on his arm, very little knocked about, and pierced but in two places, one wound being in the stomach and the other in the heart. He lies buried in the churchyard of Lochbroom, and his epitaph, affixed by Mr. Bignold, is, "Tot cervorum victor non senectuti sed cervo cessit." Previous to the death of Maclennan one of Mr. Bignold's foresters, Duncan Fraser, had had three-quarters of an hour's fight for his life with this very stag, who surprised him quite unarmed, whereupon Duncan instantly jumped plump on to the stag's

head, holding on by the horns, and being a strong man, he contrived to keep his seat, while the stag kept carrying him round the enclosure. At last his cries for help were heard by a shepherd, the father of the John Maclellan this stag killed shortly after, who, armed with a spade, made haste to the rescue, and as good luck would have it, as he reached the gate of the enclosure the stag with Duncan came close past it, so the shepherd opening it smartly, Duncan bounded off his unpleasant steed, to make a dash for the opening, through which he just managed to squeeze in time for them to close it in the face of the infuriated beast. Once in safety, Duncan was so utterly exhausted by the prolonged struggle that he fainted clean away, and it was some time before he recovered sufficiently to proceed to his house.

FOREST OF ACHNASHELLACH, "THE FIELD OF STORMS,"  
BY ACHNASHELLACH.

THIS forest, nearly surrounded by other deer grounds, was purchased not very long ago by

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Mr. Emerson Bainbridge, from Lord Wimborne, who became the owner in 1871. It covers a large extent of high, rough ground, but I have not been able to procure any reliable information. "The Field," which is rarely incorrect, states that twenty-eight stags were killed in this season of 1895, but from other equally trustworthy sources I hear that the ground was very lightly shot, and that this forest, when harder worked, is capable of making a far better return from the 25,000 acres over which it extends. Corrie Vanie is a large and celebrated corrie on this ground, and it was from here that the stags were driven when, on October 5th, 1870, Mr. Tenant, the then occupant, gave a deer drive to the Prince of Wales, which resulted in the death of nineteen good beasts.

FOREST OF ALLADALE, ARDGAY.

THIS fine ground of some 40,000 acres is the property of Sir Charles Ross of Balnagowan, and is let to Sir H. B. Meux, who joins it on to Deanich. On the east it marches with the forests of Amat and

Glencalvie, on the south and south-west with Deanich and Corriemullzie, and the Langwell sheep ground on the north and north-west. It contains no sanctuary, but there is a fair quantity of wintering woods on some of the lower slopes, while, if it is let on a long lease, no limit is made as to the kill, but on the other hand, if the let is a short one, then the proprietor imposes a limit, which is a reasonable and sensible way of dealing with long and short leases. For many years this ground has been more or less a forest, and the sheep have been cleared from time to time as was deemed expedient. The hills run up to 2,700 ft. The forest will carry three rifles, and yields from sixty to sixty-five stags of from 15 to 16 stone clean weight.

FOREST OF ALINE, STORNOWAY.

BELONGS to Lady Matheson, and is at present rented by Mr. H. Holmes. It has an area of some 10,000 acres of chiefly burnt ground with but little heather, and thus the prevailing tint of the ground is

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one to which a light yellow cloth is most suitable. The absence of either sanctuary or wood for winter shelter the deer remedy for themselves in severe weather, by shifting on to the adjacent forests of North Harris and Morsgail, according to the direction of the wind. The greatest altitude is 1,600 ft., which is reached on the summit of Lienthaid, Carnnabhal is 1,240 ft., and Beinn-na-Mhuil—the hill of the mile—is 1,200 ft. This ground was first afforested about fifty years ago, only again to be put under sheep, and then, in 1890, it was once more cleared. It easily carries one rifle, with a limit of fifteen stags, which, like all the other Lewis stags, are handsome little fellows, scaling about 12 stone clean, with small, prettily-shaped horns usually carrying a number of points.

I shall here take the opportunity of dealing very shortly with the remaining forests in Lewis, and for a description of the character of the ground and the size of the deer my readers can turn to the account of Lady Farquhar's forest of Amhuinsuidh, in North

Harris, which is a part of the county of Inverness. In addition then to Aline, Lady Matheson owns four other forests in the island. Park covers some 41,000 acres; Morsgail, 20,000 acres; Scaliscro but 3,140 acres; while Arnish, a small home forest, or rather a big deer park to Stornoway Castle, extends but to 2,776 acres. I regret to say that of none of these four grounds have I been able to procure good information.

FOREST OF AMAT BY ARDGAY.

THIS is a very small forest, touching Alladale on the west and Diebiedale on the south, the other boundaries being sheep and grouse ground. It belongs to Mr. Ross of Pitcalnie, and is at present let to Mr. F. T. Gervers.

FOREST OF APPLECROSS BY LOCH CARRON.

THIS vast property, at one time the home of the clan Macdonnell of Glengarry, was purchased *en bloc* by the Duke of Leeds. It then consisted of 144,000



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acres, which the Duke bought for £135,000, or 18s. 4d. an acre. Later on the property was resold in several lots. In 1871 Lord Wimborne bought Achnashellach and Glenuaig, Mr. Ogilvy Dalgleish took Coulin, while Lord Middleton in 1861 became the owner of Applecross proper. The forest is a peninsular one, Loch Carron bounding it on the south and Applecross Sound on the west, while the other sides march with the forests of Glenshieldaig, Ben Damph and New Kelso. It is rough, stony, high ground, Ben Bahn being 2,936 feet, with several other hills ranging from 2,000 feet upwards. The grounds of the crofters, who are on this estate a really happy family, are carefully wired off from the forest, and Lord Middleton has spent over £100,000 on the whole place since he bought it. I have heard on fairly good authority that from seventy to eighty stags are killed each season, but as the rainfall of these parts is returned at 60 inches a year, I should imagine that the numbers of the killed must vary very much, for in seasons where a good part of this

rainfall came in September and October the bag would perforce suffer a considerable reduction.

FOREST OF ATTADALE, OR BENDRONAIG, BY STRATHCARRON.

BELONGING to Sir Kenneth J. Matheson, and rented by the Baron W. Schröder, a brother of the lessee of Glenfeshie, the cleared ground of this estate covers some 15,000 acres, in addition to which there is other 13,000 of grouse ground. The proper appellation of this forest is undoubtedly Bendronaig, for it is called after the big hill of that name which, rising to an altitude of 2,612 feet, lies in the midst of the deer ground, but owing to the Attadale shootings being let with the forest, the whole place by degrees has become known as Attadale.

Although the ground is steep and rocky, the grazing is good; the bag varies from thirty-five to forty stags of 14 stone clean, but the number killed is affected more or less by winds and seasons. It is said that Prince Charlie passed a night on Bendronaig while waiting for news of a scout he had sent to

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Poolewe to look for the arrival of a ship in which he expected to escape; this messenger tradition states was killed on his road, after passing a night at a house in Gairloch, where he rashly opened his sporran to pay for his entertainment, displaying thereby several pieces of gold; the man of the house, McLean by name, saw them, and resolving to make them his own, pursued the scout and shot him dead. It was in trying to get tidings of this messenger that Prince Charlie came to Bendronaig, where he passed the night in a deep burn at the south-west end of the hill. The murdered man was wearing a suit of yellow cloth at the time of his death, and for many years afterwards it was remarked in Gairloch that McLean and his family were to be seen wearing pieces of the same material. There can, however, be no doubt that McLean did not know he was murdering a messenger of Prince Charlie, for such an office would have secured free pass to anyone all over the Highlands, no matter how much gold the messenger had carried about with him. The proprietor of this estate

has spent very large sums on repairs, improvements, plantings, buildings, and river embankments.

FORESTS OF BEN DAMPH AND NEW KELSO, TORRIDON.

PURCHASED some years ago by the Earl of Lovelace from Mr. Duncan Darroch, these properties now belong to Captain the Hon. Lionel Fortescue King. The two forests make up 18,000 acres—Ben Damph being 12,500 acres and New Kelso 5,500 acres—of high rocky ground, with the hills standing out singly, their sides much cut up by watercourses, while on the very high ground there is but little feeding. The valleys and burn sides afford excellent grazing. The forests which to-day are known as Ben Damph and Torridon were cleared by Mr. Duncan Darroch in 1872, and up till 1885 that gentleman stalked the whole ground himself. In that year the Ben Damph portion was sold to the late Earl of Lovelace, who at once set to work to build a fine house on it, making roads, pony tracks, boat-houses, plantations, fences, otherwise spending

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largely on the place, as is the wont with most purchasers of new properties. In 1888 New Kelso was bought by the Earl from Sir Kenneth Matheson, of Ardross, while as it joined Ben Damph on the east side, it was added to that forest, which marches on the north with Torridon, on the east with Coulin, Achnashellach, and New Kelso sheep-ground, while on the west Loch Torridon forms a water boundary, on which are the woods of Ardmore, which cover, together with the other woods on the shore of Loch Damph, the deer frequent in numbers during hard weather. The greater part (4,000 acres) of the hill of Ben Damph (3,000 feet) is devoted to a sanctuary. The ground carries two rifles until the end of September, and will then take a third in suitable winds. A cloth the colour of Aberdeen granite, in fact, a "Black Mount mixture," harmonises best with the prevailing tint of the surroundings; from thirty to forty stags are got each season, weighing, one with the other, 14 stone; heart and liver included. Some royals are killed

each year; the horns, however, appear to grow more to beam than to points, a fine specimen of this description of head being got in 1894—a very massive nine-pointer with a 37-inch span. In 1890 Mr. E. B. Jenkins shot a remarkable three-horned stag, with the right horn quite natural and of large size; the left was nearly as large, but grew down over the cheek, while a third horn sprang from the base of this left one, growing in a natural position to a length of seven inches. This malformation was doubtless the result of an injury, but though the beast had all the appearance of a three-horned animal, it cannot be called a true three-horn, as there should be three separate coronets on the head ere such a distinction can be claimed. At Ardmore and Balgay there are small lodges for the use of stalkers or fishers, as occasion may require, for in addition to the deer the fish at Ben Dāmph are also a strong point, and salmon and sea trout are in plenty.

## FOREST OF BENMORE BY ARDGAY.

THIS property, belonging to Sir Charles Ross, of Balnagowan, and at present let to Mr. A. H. Heath, covers about 45,000 acres, of which upwards of 40,000 acres have recently been put under deer. The hill of Benmore, from which the forest takes its name, is nearly in the centre of the ground, and rising to a height of over 3,200 feet, a number of fine corries lie around the base. On the north these lands touch the Duke of Westminster's forest of Glen Coul; on the west the sheep-grounds of Tumore narrowly divide it from Glencanisp forest; the eastern and southern marches also run with lands devoted to the production of mutton, on which there are always a good few outlying deer. The place carries three rifles, with a limit of sixty stags, which will average about 15 stone 7 lbs. clean.

On this ground the present Sir Charles Ross put in a smart piece of stalking. He left his forester to watch a lying stag, while he went on about a mile to spy over the ridge they were then on; while

Sir Charles was away, the stag the forester was watching got up and moved off, and the man not liking to lose sight of him went on also, and thus when Sir Charles returned he found himself quite alone on the hill, and being unable to "pick up" his man by the aid of his glass, he turned short round and continued his way into the forest, where he soon found two stags, which he stalked, killed, and gralloched for himself, and then before he came home late that evening he got one more stalk at a small herd, out of which he killed three, thus leaving five good stags on the hill for the ponies to fetch home next day, the heaviest of which was 21 stone and the smallest 16 stone. All five of these beasts fell on such steep ground that they had to be cut in halves, and carried by the gillies to a spot accessible to the ponies, sent from Inchnadamph.

FOREST OF BEN WYVIS BY EVANTON.

THIS well-known forest, so closely associated with the name of that devoted admirer of deer, the late



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Mr. Horatio Ross, consists at the present time of some 20,000 acres, part of which was first cleared in 1857, more in 1869, and finally the whole in 1881. The ground is remarkable for the conformation of the very high hills it contains, for Ben Wyvis is 3,429 ft. ; An Sveach, 3,295 ft. ; Tom-an-Chonnich, 3,134 ft. ; and Corrie Grand, 3,017 ft., while there are many others of over 2,000 ft. ; now all these "big fellows," unlike the bulk of the high grounds of Scotland, are neither rocky nor precipitous, but are great, bold, "rolling" hills, having grass-clad sides, with stretches of mossy ground round their bases.

This forest, purchased by Mr. Walter Shoolbred, in 1885, from Mr. Colin Ross, marches on the north, north-east, and south with the sheep grounds of Swordale, Castle Leod, and Novar ; while on the remaining sides it joins the forests of Inchbae and Kildermorie. In the main valley, and close to the new lodge the present owner has built at the head of Loch Glass, there are three nice stretches of birch wood for winter shelter. The ground will

carry two rifles each day of the season ; all deer are got by fair stalking, the average kill being fifty to fifty-five stags, which weigh, one with the other, 14 to 14½ stone, heart and liver included. Charles Mackenzie, the present head forester, together with his father John, both stalked for Mr. Horatio Ross, who entertained a sincere friendship and a high opinion of them. It is almost needless to say that when Mr. Shoolbred took over the property "Old John" remained in welcome possession of his cottage at Corrie Vackie, at the door of which he may still usually be seen in the morning, spyglass in hand, and ready for a chat with any sportsman making his way to the forest. On the east beat here Mr. Shoolbred had a somewhat remarkable day on the 30th September, 1893. Up to lunch time he had three separate stalks, each of which owing to shifting wind was unsuccessful, and then, while seeking a sheltered spot to rest in for a short time, he saw the tops of a stag's horn coming towards him, and there was barely time to drop down and get the rifle out of

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the cover before he came into view, and was promptly killed. The spyglasses were not idle during the short luncheon sit, and soon showed that in a corrie in front of the party there was a fine royal busily engaged in herding a lot of hinds. The other stags were broken into small lots, some feeding, some roaring, others rolling in the "poll buiridh," and plenty skirmishing with each other, so that there was nothing for the stalking party to do but to wait, watch, and hope that some of them would move to better ground. After a long wait two of the stags left the corrie to make their way towards the hill the party were on. As they neared the foot, one stopped and commenced to rub his horns on an old stump of a tree, but the other again came straight at Mr. Shoolbred, and was knocked over in due course. It was then naturally expected the second stag would be seen galloping away, but he was so taken up with tearing at the tree stump that he never heard the shot; at last, tiring of his amusement, he commenced to look about for his companion, when not seeing him, he came

trotting on after him, only also to fall dead within ten yards of the friend he sought. Thus Mr. Shoolbred got three good beasts on the same hill without stalking either of them, of which the two last each weighed over 16 stone, while carrying respectively ten and nine points.

FOREST OF BRAEMORE BY GARVE.

SIR JOHN FOWLER purchased this property from Mr. Duncan Davidson of Tulloch, in 1865. At that time no part of the 44,000 acres of which it consisted was in forest, while some fifteen stags was the usual annual kill, obtained chiefly from the east side of the ground, where the corries of Beinn Dearg afforded food and shelter, which never failed to attract stags. During the years of 1866 and 1867 the daringly placed house of Braemore was built, and while this was in course of construction about 23,000 acres of ground had been cleared. With reference to the erection of the house, which stands some 750 feet above sea-level, the people of the



BRAEMORE

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district were so surprised at seeing the loftiness of the selected site that regrets were freely expressed amongst them that Sir John's relatives were not consulted as to his state of mind, so that a stop might be put to the audaciously insane proceeding of building a house in such a spot, and at such a height above the level of the valley, which the people regarded as the only proper place fit for a habitation. The first visitors to Braemore included several remarkable men, and amongst them figure the names of John Gould, the ornithologist; Edward Duncan, the artist; John Campbell of Isla, Sir William Harcourt, Sir John Millais, Sir Richard Owen, and Sir Edwin Landseer, and the great artist stalked several times in this forest, although he had then nearly retired from active service on the hill. When Sir Edwin arrived at Braemore he had already commenced his famous picture of "The Ptarmigan Hill," a commission from Sir John Fowler, and the Gordon setters, which are such a prominent feature of the canvas, were both drawn from a dog the

artist himself selected from the Braemore kennels, and carried off with him to the south to study from at his leisure. The visitors' book is one of the features of life at Braemore, and from the day of its commencement Lady Fowler has taken much interest in its yearly progress. Amongst other matters are two beautiful drawings by Landseer; a series of sketches by Millais, one of which illustrates an unsuccessful day's stalking, while another shows the adventures of a day on the hill, shared by Sir William Harcourt and himself. In 1869 Sir Roderick Murchison, the distinguished geologist, spent three weeks at Braemore, and revisited the scene of his labours on the west coast forty-two years earlier. His remarks in "the book" run as follows: "Adieu, Braemore, where the cordial reception of kind host and hostess have made an indelible impression on the old Silurian! Forty-two years have lapsed since (when in company with Professor Sedgwick) I hammered the rocks at Ullapool, and now, by the active assistance of Sir John, and the aid of his



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handy steam yacht, I have been enabled to place all the great rock formations, which are exposed on the shores of Loch Broom, in their true order of age and succession, from my Fundamental Gneiss (Laurentian), through the grand massive rocks of Benmore, the Lower Silurian Quartz rocks and Limestone of Ullapool, up to the overlying Grey Gneiss of Braemore (Metamorphic Lower Silurian), on which the mansion stands, and from which, looking northwards, the spectacle commands, in one unrivalled view, all the glorious geological series." The aforesaid book does not say if Sir Roderick was a deer slayer, but the above remarks have suggested to the author that possibly he would have given a novel, interesting, and perhaps puzzling description of a stalk, from his own point of view.

In 1869 Millais again enriched the visitors' book with a drawing showing the effect of a Noah's flood at the lofty site of Braemore House; then in the year following the names of Mr. Samuel Morley and Sir William Harcourt appear in the book,

on which occasion great pains were taken by Mr. Morley's host to make him thoroughly understand the difference between the restricted capabilities of a mountainous Highland estate and the wild statements given to the world by his Radical friends of hundreds of thousands of acres kept out of cultivation, and withdrawn from civilisation, for the benefit of the deer and the indulgence of the sporting proclivities of the wealthy Conservative. Mr. Samuel Morley, having been blessed with a liberal share of common sense and quick perception, soon recognised the hollowness of these most fancifully erroneous assertions, and so much was this the case that at the present time Mr. Arnold Morley, his son, is himself a keen forest-renting stalker. In 1873 Sir William Harcourt wrote the following lines in the Braemore book, and while those who are of his political way of thinking can find no fault with them, the sentiments so prettily expressed are likely enough to cause a kinder feeling for the "big man" in the hearts of those

who, like myself, most widely differ with his views political :—

“ When the dull dreary session is over,  
And Patriots twaddle no more,  
How blithely I breathe the brave breezes  
Which blow round the braes of Braemore.

“ Though ‘The Broom’ like our Gladstone meanders,  
Or foams down with froth in a spate ;  
Though the stalker, like Dizzy, in ambush  
For his prey is aye lying in wait ;

“ Yet here may we cast away care,  
And reck not of sorrow or strife ;  
But in jollity, friendship, and love,  
Rest awhile from the labour of life.

“ How sweetly the years fleet away !  
Seven summers are gone—aye, and more—  
Since I first viewed with wonder and joy  
The beautiful Strath of Braemore.

“ Yet here, as the summers return,  
Midst friendships so faithful and true,  
I find kindness which never knows change,  
And beauties that ever are new.”

In 1874 Earl Cairns, then Lord Chancellor of England, first visited Braemore, and during this time the official “Chaff-wax” came to obtain the

Chancellor's seal to official documents, when Sir W. Harcourt wrote the following description of the incident:—

“BRAEMORE, Sept. 28, 1874.

“A singular scene occurred one evening, there being occasion to affix the Great Seal, which the Lord Chancellor always keeps in his own custody, to authorize patents. The official ‘Chaff-wax’ was busily occupied in melting the wax in the covered court where the deer are brought home, and it thus happened that by lamp light the unusual spectacle was observed of the solemnity of sealing being performed in the centre of a group of ponies laden with the Chancellor's dead deer. We are unhappily left to imagine how the pencil of Landseer would have illustrated so novel a Highland picture.”

Beneath these remarks Lord Cairns wrote as follows:—

“About this date a great seal was for the first time seen on this part of the coast, and was allowed to depart, not only unmolested, but thankful and

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happy, carrying away impressions of Braemore more lasting than any which it made while there."

The area of ground under strict forest is 23,000 acres, nearly surrounded by the deer lands of Strathvaich, Inverlael, Kinloch-luichart, Fannich, and Dundonnell. In 1865 and 1866, upwards of five million trees were planted on the eastern slope of the valley, which have now grown into a good plantation of 1,000 acres. The sanctuary on the western extremity of the forest covers some 2,500 acres, and holding in itself shelter, solitude, and fine grazing, it makes an unusually good one, for in addition to its self-contained capabilities, the deer are also within easy reach of the grassy slopes of Beinn-Aonaclair, on which they can take their fill during the night, and ere day breaks regain the loneliness of the sanctuary. The highest ground on the estate is at the summit of Beinn Dearg, 3,547 feet above the sea level, but there are many other surrounding hills which rise to nearly 3,000 feet. From the period of afforesting in 1865, the average kill has

been sixty stags a season, all of which are got by fair stalking, and though a greater number could be obtained, yet as sixty is considered the proper quantity, it is never exceeded, except perhaps by one or two, while the average weight, in which all small beasts are included, works out at 14 stone clean. In 1868, Major Holmes had the good fortune to secure a very fine royal head with most perfect symmetrical equality of both horns, and when Mackay, the Inverness taxidermist, returned it to Braemore, he volunteered the information that "it was the finest head of many thousands which have passed through my hands in modern times." This head had a span of  $37\frac{1}{2}$  inches outside measurement, with a circumference of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches round the coronet, the horns measuring 26 inches in height, taking a straight line from the centre of the forehead.

Mr. Robert Fowler, Sir John's brother, met with a remarkable adventure when stalking in Braemore, the like of which I have never heard of. He and McHardy, the head forester, who has been there

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upwards of thirty seasons, having got up to some stags, Mr. Fowler fired both barrels, killing dead with the first, but wounding only with the second. On walking up to the dead quarry, they were greatly surprised to see another beast lying quite close by him; their first impression was that the one bullet had been fatal to the two, but on nearer inspection it was seen, by the rise and fall of his sides in breathing, that this stag was not only alive, but totally unhurt, and merely indulging in a very sound sleep. After watching him for a few minutes, it was decided to try to catch him, for he was but a three-year-old staggie, and not worth putting into the larder, so simultaneously master and man seized him by the hind legs, when after a sharp but short struggle the stag broke loose, which was indeed a pity, as I believe the capture of a stag in such a manner would have been an unequalled performance, and had Mr. Fowler and McHardy only seized hold of a horn piece instead of a leg, it is more than likely they would have

been triumphant, for even one strong, heavy, resolute man getting such a hold of a stag has him at a great disadvantage, as the longer the horn the greater the leverage offered for twisting his neck. It was a curious coincidence that Mr. Arthur Fowler, Sir John's son, later on also surprised a sleeping stag, and got within a yard or two of him before the beast woke. Braemore Forest will carry two rifles each day, although when the wind is in the east greater care is required than when it blows from any other quarter; this, however, is generally the case all over Scotland, there being some peculiar property in a sharp east wind that will often make deer very restless, and indeed at such times they will gallop off at full tilt for no discernible reason. The whole of this forest is so scattered with huge boulders, big stones, and rocks, that a grey cloth similar to "The Black Mount Mixture" is best suited to the ground. Remains of whiskey stills are here, as in other forests, pretty numerous on the hills, though perhaps the most



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interesting relics of olden days are the mounds of scoriae, found in spots where iron was smelted on a small scale to provide the rude weapons of the ancient inhabitants. These mounds are common in many parts of Ross-shire, and in those days there was doubtlessly sufficient wood for smelting the small quantity required, but as there is no iron ore on or anywhere near the spot, the question naturally arose as to whence it came. When Sir William Siemens was at Braemore, he was greatly interested in this problem, and after a very elaborate investigation by chemical analysis, he came to the conclusion that the north of Ireland was the only place capable of furnishing the particular ore which, when smelted, would form the scoriae he had analyzed.

Although eagles are strictly preserved in this and the surrounding forests, and though they do not diminish in numbers, yet certainly they do not increase, and probably as long as high prices are offered for their eggs they are not likely to. Near Braemore House are three ancient stones placed

eighteen feet apart, the spot being called "Rory's Leap," after a fine, active, gigantic fellow who had a home and wife at Ullapool, although he, being of a restless, unruly nature, was generally to be found in Perth, where he was ultimately put in prison to keep him quiet. Just at that time there was living in Perth a quarrelsome, giant Frenchman of whom the people were much afraid, and it was suggested that Big Rory of Ullapool should be released and introduced to the foreigner, which being done, the two quickly came to loggerheads, when Rory, challenging the bully, killed him in fair fight—an act for which he received a permanent pardon, whereupon, like a good husband, he started away for home, and arriving at this particular spot of "Rory's Leap," on catching sight of his native village, he was so overjoyed that he gave three tremendous bounds forward, each of them covering eighteen feet, which splendid performance, inspired by ardent affection, has been remembered from that day to this, and the stones placed on the exact spots

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indicated by his heel-marks still keep this great deed fresh in the memories of the dwellers in and around Ullapool. The old road alluded to in the "Statistical Account of Scotland," published in 1845, by Blackwood, passed through Braemore for about eleven miles, and until its construction nearly a hundred years ago no road, except a shepherd's track, existed between the Cromarty Firth on the east coast and Loch Broom on the west coast. In many parts of this road the bends and angles were so sharp that it seemed an impossibility for anything on wheels, as we understand them, to be taken round such abrupt curves, but in "Burt's Letters from the Highlands of Scotland," in 1754, there are drawings of carts in use at that time, very small in size and with wheels not more than a foot in diameter, which would obviously be able to turn at any angle, however sharp. It was not till about forty years ago that the excellent mail coach road was made that now runs through Braemore to Garve. The wild cat, the pine marten or sable, as well as the pole cat, together with badgers and

otters, are still in Braemore, but all three of the former animals have become very rare.

The hedgehog is quite a recent visitor, and is supposed to have been imported in baled hay; foxes, as in other forests, are much too numerous, the annual kill of old and young being some fifty. Then coming down to "small deer," the natives assert that the old British black rat still exists, an animal much to be preferred to his ordinary brother of every-day life. In January, 1892, Braemore and the adjacent county was visited by a flood, scarcely less destructive to roads, bridges, and river-beds than the great Morayshire flood of 1829, so vividly described by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder. On January 2nd snow began to fall in the Braemore district, and continuing nearly incessantly until the 8th, an average depth of nearly two feet was accumulated, while the drifts on the hills and in the valleys were of course of a far greater profundity; all wheeled traffic became entirely suspended, and the mails were carried on horseback. On the 16th a gentle thaw set in, continuing

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until the 27th, when a much warmer temperature with a high wind was followed by extraordinary torrents of rain. It was in the midst of the pitch-dark night of the 28th that the dwellers in the Loch Broom strath were woke from their sleep by the alarming roaring of the river Broom, which told them, only too plainly, that a flood of unusual violence was raging. The morning light exhibited the valley in a plight that will never be forgotten ; the whole strath was one vast lake ; Inverbroom House with many smaller ones were half submerged by the tearing flood, on which great trees, together with the bodies of cattle, sheep, and deer, were borne along at intervals, while for weeks afterwards the road between Loch Broom and Garve was rendered nearly useless, as every bridge on it had been washed away, so that passengers progressed but slowly from point to point only by exchanging conveyances at every broken bridge.

The history of the Braemore plantation, already mentioned as holding five million trees, and covering

one thousand acres, may be of use to forest owners contemplating the formation of woods. The one under discussion was planted in 1865-6, on the eastern slope of the valley of the Broom, and commencing at an elevation of but fifty feet above the sea, it rises to an altitude of one thousand feet. The trees are chiefly Scotch pine and larch, although in the best soil, on the lower ground, a variety of hard wood trees were put in, such as ash, oak, elm, copper beech, birch, maple, sycamore, rowan, and chestnut, each being given a chance of seeing how they would fare in the Braemore soil. The height of the now thirty-year-old trees varies from a maximum of fifty-one feet, a larch, to a minimum of fifty inches in height, with a maximum girth of sixty-six inches to a minimum of six inches. This extraordinary variation is due to the richness of the low level soil as compared with nearly total absence of any soil at all at the highest points. The deer were kept strictly out of this plantation until the trees had reached a height of about fifteen feet, when they were

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admitted to all parts of it, greatly to their gain in the luxuries of deer life. Alder, Scotch fir, birch, aspen poplar, and holly are indigenous to Braemore, and all these self-planted trees are found in places suited to their requirements. Speculation has ever been rife as to how the vast ancient forests disappeared, which at one time so evidently covered so much of the ground that is now heather and moss, and the following remarkable letter appears to offer a better and simpler solution of the problem than any other explanation of the matter.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM GEORGE, EARL OF  
CROMARTIE, TO DR. HANS SLOANE, SECY. R. SOC.

*November 13th, 1710.*

“In the year 1651, I being then about nineteen years old, and occasionally in the parish of Lochbrun (Lochbroom), passing from a place called Achnascaild in Dundonnell to Gruinard, I went by a very high hill, which did rise in a constant steepness from thence to the sea; there is a plain about half a mile round,

and from it the hill rises in a constant steepness for more than a mile in ascent.

“ This little plain was at that time all covered over with a firm standing wood, which was so very old that not only the trees had no green leaves, but the bark was totally thrown off; which the old countryman, who was in my company, told me was the universal manner in which fir woods did terminate, and that in twenty or thirty years after the trees would ordinarily cast themselves up from the root, and that they would lie in heaps till the people would cut them and carry them away. They likewise did let me see that the outside of these standing white trees, and for the space of one inch inwards, was dead white timber, but what was within that was good solid timber to the very pith, and as full of rozin as it could stand in the wood. Some fifteen years after I had occasion to come the same way, and called to mind the old woods which I had seen. Then there was not so much as a tree, or appearance of the root of any kind, but in the place thereof, the whole bounds where the wood



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had stood, was all over a plain green ground, covered with a plain green moss. I asked the country people, who were with me, what had become of the wood, and who carried it away. They told me that nobody was at the pains to carry it away, but that, it being all overturned from the roots by the winds, the trees did lie so thick and swarving over one another that the green moss there (in the *British* language called fog) had overgrown the whole timber, which they said was occasioned by the moisture that came down from the high hill which was above it, and did stagnate upon that plain; and they said none could pass over it, because the scurf of the fog would not support them. I would needs try it, and accordingly I fell in to the armpits, but was immediately pulled up by them.

“ Before the year 1699 that piece of ground was turned into a common moss, where the country people were digging turf and peat, and continue to do so. The peats, as yet, are not of the best, and are soft and spongy, but grow better and better, and, as I am informed, it does now afford good peats.

“ This matter of fact did discover the generation of mosses, and whence it is that many mosses are furnished with such timber.”

From the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society.  
Number 330. (April, May and June, 1711.)

The Forest of Braemore having offered the use of such a splendid name to conjure with as that of the late distinguished geologist, Sir Roderick Murchison, the author feels it would be throwing away a chance if he failed to avail himself of the opportunity of saying something about the geology of Braemore which will apply equally to all the forests of the west coast, as well as to many of those on the east. The whole of this ground belongs then to the Upper Gneiss or Lower Silurian series of rocks, which are stratified, and at the synclinal and anti-synclinal ridges are flexured and contorted in a very remarkable manner. The composition of the rocks is quartz, felspar, and mica, which in some parts is highly garnetiferous. Where it takes the form of mica slate it splits into laminæ

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of such regularity and thickness as to be valuable for the floors of houses and the roofing of buildings, although being laminated and not amorphous, it cannot be utilised for the corners of structures requiring sharp regular edges. One characteristic of the Gneiss and Mica Schist formation is the production of abrupt deep ravines, and in the Coire Hallach Ravine and Falls in Braemore the depth is 250 feet, while in the narrowest part the width does not exceed 60 feet. No fossils have been found in this portion of the Silurian rocks, or in the lower parts of the Silurian series, except in the Laurentian Gneiss, and then only the somewhat mythical "Eozoon."

The same reasons which have induced the author to mention a little of the geology of the west coast have also led him to dip lightly into a short description of the flora of this district, and for all information on this head he is indebted to the kindness of Mrs. Arthur Fowler, who is herself an ardent botanist. Nearly all the commoner varieties

of British field flowers may be met with in the Braemore meadows, but many less familiar species may be found, amongst which the following are worthy of notice. In the beds of the burns the earliest of the spring flowers may be found in the Purple Mountain Saxifrage (*Saxifrigis oppositifolia*), whose rosy bell often appears before the end of February, while the hills are yet white with snow.

The Rose Bay or French Willow Herb (*Equilobrium angustifolium*) is still occasionally found, although Macculloch, writing in 1824, says it was then very plentiful on Loch Broom. The Cloud Berry (*Rubus chaemaemorus*), together with the Dwarf Comel (*Comus snectica*), so common in Norway, are both found at an altitude of 2,000 feet, and not far from the same spot also grows the Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*) and the Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dortinamea*). The Floating Barweed (*Spargannum natans*), a plant peculiar to the north, grows in the Horne Loch near Braemore House. A patch of the rare and diminutive trailing Azalea (*Azalea*

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*procumbens*) may be seen on one of the highest hills, while nearer the sea-level grows the Greater Skull-Cap, Pale Butterwort and sweet-scented Orchis, together with the tuberous Bitter Vetch, the roots of which, Pennant says, were eaten by the Highlanders. The deep ravines of Braemore are the homes of many kinds of ferns, such as the Black Maiden Hair Spleenwort, Green Spleenwort, Brittle Bladder Fern, Wilson's Film Fern, Beech Fern, and Oak Fern. Only on one occasion has the very rare Forked Spleenwort Fern (*Asplenium septentrionale*) been found, when some ten years ago the head forester brought home a plant of it which he found on some steep rocks, 3000 feet over the sea level, and indeed at these high altitudes grow many tiny plants that have not as yet been accurately identified.

FOREST OF CLUNIE BY INVERGARRY.

THIS property belongs to Mr. J. E. B. Baillie of Dochfour, and was occupied for upwards of twenty

years in conjunction with Glenquoich by Lord Burton. It is at present let to Mr. Frank Bibby, together with the grouse ground of Ratagan, which consists of about 10,000 acres, on which, although wired off from the forest proper, there are always deer. The cleared portion consists of nearly 14,500 acres of chiefly high, steep ground, several of the hills being over 3,000 feet; on the east it marches with Caennocroc, on the south with Glenquoich, and on the north with Kintail. The tenant is bound not to kill deer after the 12th of October, and limited to fifty stags, which have the reputation of weighing well.

FOREST OF CORRIEHALLZIE BY BEAULY.

THIS is a nice little forest of some 7,000 acres (in addition to which there is a fair extent of grouse ground), belonging to Mr. Gillanders of Highfield, and let to Mr. G. H. Cheetham. It is good for ten or a dozen stags, and marches with Scatwell on the north, with sheep ground on the north-east,

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Erchless on the east, Achany on the south, and Struy and Patt on the west.

FOREST OF CORRIEMULLZIE, BRIDGE OF OYKEL.

A SMALL recently cleared forest of fairly steep and grassy ground, with a very bad road to it from Oykel Bridge. It belongs to Mr. W. E. Gilmour, is at present let to Sir Arthur Chichester, and should yield from twenty to thirty stags, as deer from Rhidorrach, Alladale, and Deanich can come to and from it as they choose.

FOREST OF COULIN BY ACHNASHEEN.

THIS ground formed the eastern extremity of the great Applecross property, purchased some fifty years ago by the late Duke of Leeds from the Mackenzie family; at various times, later on, portions of this large estate were sold by the Duke, Coulin, which has changed hands several times, being amongst the number. Lord Elphinstone built the present house, lying between Loch Clair and Loch Coulin, when he

held this estate some thirty years ago ; after keeping it for ten years, he parted with it to Lord Wimborne, who in his turn sold it some five years back to the present owner, Mr. J. Ogilvie Dalgleish, of Errol Park, Perthshire. This gentleman, in addition to greatly improving the home grounds, roads, and stalking paths, has also planted about 800 acres to improve the wintering. The extent is about 15,000 acres, the high ground being rocky and steep, for Ben Liath Mhor rises to 3,051 feet, while all portions which are under 1,000 feet give fine feeding. In addition to Coulin proper Mr. Dalgleish has a further 5,000 acres of the Kinlochewe estate, rented from Sir Kenneth Mackenzie. The sanctuary is large and contains a 3,000 feet hill, quite green to the top, with the base surrounded by birch and old Scotch fir, offering warmth and shelter in all winds.

Coulin marches with Achnashellach on the south, Ben Damph on the west, Torridon on the north, and Kinlochewe on the east, and yields from thirty to forty stags, according to the season, while as



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the grazing is extra good, some unusually heavy ones are got each year; they are weighed clean after being left on the hill all night, and in 1893 there was one of 23 stone, another of 22 stone 8 lbs., while the average weight of the thirty-four stags put into the larder in that year was 15 stone 8 lbs. Owing to the nearly incessant rains of 1894, the condition of the deer of that season was inferior, the heaviest stag scaling 18 stone 10 lbs., with the average a good bit below that of 1893. The ground will carry two rifles every day, all deer being killed by stalking. On the "off days" salmon and sea trout are a strong point at Coulin, as they come up out of Lochmaree into Lochs Clair and Coulin in great numbers.

FOREST OF DEANICH BY ARDGAY.

THIS is one of Sir Charles Ross's forests, which, marching with Inchbae, Inverlael, and Strathvaich, is let together with Alladale on a lease to Sir Henry Bruce Meux. There are about 20,000 acres of fine

stalking ground, which yield, on an average, forty stags each season, having a mean weight of 15 stone 7 lbs., weighed clean.

FOREST OF DIBIEDALE BY ARDGAY.

THIS ground, with an area of 11,000 acres, cleared in 1849, is the property of Sir J. Kenneth Matheson, and is at present let to Sir Greville Smythe. It consists of two main glens running parallel east and west; the one covered for the greater part with grass, and known as Glen Dibiedale, the other with heather and patches of birch wood, and called Corrievaligan, the west end of which is of a rocky nature, interspersed with mosses.

On the south it marches with Kildermorie, on the west with Inchbae, on the north-west with Alladale, and on the east comes the grouse moor that goes with Dibiedale. There is a well-placed sanctuary of 2,000 acres. The highest hills are Cairn Coinneag (2,749 ft.), "the conical hill," a coinneag being a conical-shaped wooden cup used in old days for

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drawing water; "Beinn Tarsuinn" (2,330 ft.) lies across and at right angles to the two glens already mentioned, and hence the name, which is Gaelic for "across." The first tenant of this forest was the well-known Horatio Ross, who held it from 1849 to 1865; then from 1866 to 1875 the owner, Sir Alexander Matheson, kept it in his own hands, when, in 1875, Sir Robert Loder took a lease of the forest, and his average kill for ten years was thirty-nine stags, the greatest number got in any one year being fifty. In 1887 the forest was taken by the present tenant, that good sportsman, Sir Greville Smythe, who has made a large collection of heads on it, the finest of which is a grand thirteen-pointer, followed, however, by many royals.

FOREST OF DRUMRUNIE, OR COULMORE, BY ULLAPOOL.

ONE of the properties of the Countess of Cromartie, afforested in 1876, and let to Mr. Sydney Platt of Bryn-y-Neuadd, Llanfairfechan. It has an area of 35,000 acres of very precipitous, steep, rocky ground,

but with corries full of good grazing, while the numbers of the lochs are almost uncountable. On the north it marches with Glencanisp, on the west with the sheep grounds of Inverpolly and Coigach, on the east with Rhidorrach, and on the south with other sheep walks. On the north side of the hill of Coulmore (2,700 ft.), "big shoulder," is the "Green Corrie," which is kept as a sanctuary, and as the nature of the ground renders stalking in it nearly an impossibility, this corrie is sometimes "moved" towards the end of the season. It carries two rifles, with a limited kill of forty-five stags, which average close on 15 stone clean.

It was a most remarkable thing that Mr. Platt, although the renter of various good forests since 1882, only got his first shot at a royal in this forest in 1893, under the following curious circumstances:— Mr. Platt found his quarry early in the day in company with several other good stags, and his stalker at once declared the royal to be a newly-arrived stranger, for he was restless, uneasy, declining to settle with the others, and keeping always on

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the move. The party followed him all day, until at length he lay down close to the Glencanisp march, from out of which forest he had no doubt come. It was then past six o'clock, with naturally a rapidly fading light, so there was nothing for it but to "whistle him up," when Mr. Platt brought off a shot which rarely succeeds, killing him dead at two hundred yards.

FOREST OF DUNDONNELL BY ULLAPOOL.

A FOREST of Mr. H. Mackenzie's, rented last season by Mr. Wythes of Copped Hall, Essex. It covers some 23,000 acres of very rough, precipitous stony ground, with the highest altitude reached at nearly 3,500 feet, and over the whole of it the walking is very severe. In season 1891, fifty-one stags were killed, with an average weight of 13 stone 7 lbs. clean; but whether this number accurately represents the yearly average for the last few seasons I am not able to say.

## FOREST OF FANNICH BY LOCHLUICHART.

THIS is also one of Mr. H. Mackenzie's forests, extending over an area of between seventeen and eighteen thousand acres, on which the highest ground rises to 3,600 feet. Lord Ormathwaite, and then the late Sir Robert Harvey, both held this forest for several years, and had good sport in it; recent clearances, however, having offered the deer of these parts finer, fresher grazing, Fannich has suffered somewhat by the formation of the new forests. From the top of this high hill, which is the backbone of Fannich and divides Corrie Bheag from Corrie Rioch, the sea can often be seen on either side, and here, at an elevation of about 3,000 feet, is a stone shelter, put up by the late Sir Robert Bateson Harvey. The ground carries two rifles, and is most difficult to stalk on, as, owing to the punch-bowl shape of many of the corries, the wind always blows in eddies. In this season of 1895 it was rented by Mr. Taylor, in conjunction with the adjacent forest

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of Kinlochluichart, and "The Field," without mentioning weights, states he got twenty-five stags on it. In connection with this forest there is the story of the "wild man of Fannich," which has given rise to the supposition that it is our clothes and not our bodies that give that taint to the breezes which the deer so easily scent from afar. The story of the wild man relates how a "softie" of those parts escaped from his friends, at the end of one October, and his crank being that he was a beast of the fields, he concealed himself in a cave in Fannich, and after divesting himself of all clothing, he found that the deer soon allowed him to approach, and eventually to herd with them. Here, for nearly a year, this mad but hardy being remained undiscovered; but his body became so covered with hair, and so matted with dirt, that it formed a kind of garment for him; he was eventually discovered by a stalking party in the midst of a herd of deer, in the September following his disappearance, and being captured, was returned to his friends.

## FOREST OF FLOWERDALE BY GAIRLOCH.

THIS property, of some 10,000 acres, belongs to Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch, and since 1874 it has been rented by Mr. S. W. Clowes. The hill of Ben Dearg, of about 2,000 acres, was afforested in 1847, the remainder of the ground being cleared in 1877 by the lessee, who made paths, tracks, put up foresters' cottages, built stables and boathouses, at a considerable outlay. This gentleman, now unfortunately a victim to bad health, was a good specimen of the "all round" sportsman, for, in addition to being master of the Quorn, a good game shot, and fisherman, he was one of the few gentlemen who could, and did, stalk and gralloch entirely for himself; while, moreover, he was one of the very first to use the double-barrelled breech-loading rifle against deer. Mr. Clowes's place at Flowerdale is now taken by his son, Captain A. H. Clowes, who carries on the forest in the same way that his father did. Flowerdale consists chiefly of very rocky ground,



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with plenty of steep-sided corries, the lower parts of which are covered with patches of very long old heather and pasture. On the west it marches with Shildaig, and near this boundary its larch wood of Chosag affords good wintering, Torridon comes in on the south, Kinlochewe on the east, and then the estate, crossing Loch Maree, runs up to Letterewe and Ardlair on the north and north-east.

The highest hills are Bein-an-Eoin, "bird or ptarmigan hill" (2,801 ft.), Bus-bhein (2,869 ft.) and Ben Dearg, and along the watershed of these two last-named hills the forest march runs for some miles. The ground carries one rifle until the last fortnight of the season, while up to that date it is more of a hind than a stag forest. The total kill for the last twelve years has been exactly 203 stags, or, in round numbers, eighteen per annum, the heaviest of which has scaled 18 stone, while the average weight works out at but 12 stone clean. This low weight, however, must be put down to two causes: first, everything with horns that has been shot has been weighed

while secondly, owing to the fact of a number of novices at stalking, not all very young, having been visitors to Flowerdale, a lot of small beasts have been knocked over in the unrestrained ardour of the new hand, backed up by a kindly desire on the part of the more experienced "to blood" the novitiate and make him a stalker for the rest of his days. At one end of the ground, on the shore of Loch-na-h'Oidhche, "lake of the night," which holds heavy brown trout, there is a fairly good bothy for the use of those stalking that end of the forest; it has been christened "Poch-a-biue," "the yellow bag," and is interesting as having been originally built by an Englishman, Captain Inge, some time in the thirties, who was one of the very first of the Sassenachs to come north in search of sport with the red deer. Before this bothy was put up the deerstalkers used to sleep under the shelter of a big rock close by, and the long heather they used as bedding yet remains under it. The true wild cat—not the tame cat turned wild—still exists in this part of Ross-shire. Eagles of both



CALF ATTACKED BY EAGLE



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sorts are yet common, and in relation to one of these birds there is a curious, but by no means incredible, story told by the inhabitants of this district, to the effect that an eagle having swooped down on the back of a roe buck feeding outside a wood, the terrified animal dashed back to the thick cover in the hope of shaking off his assailant. The eagle was nearly swept from the back of his quarry by coming into violent contact with the first tree past which the roe dashed, and then, as attacked and attacker approached another tree, the eagle gripped the stem with one of his claws, while keeping his hold of the roe with the other. So great, however, was the speed and impetus of the maddened, stampeding roe, while so firm was the hold of the eagle, that the bird was split up and torn clean asunder, one half of it remaining firmly fixed to the tree, while the other moiety continued to hold on to the roe.

## FOREST OF GLENCALVIE BY ARDGAY.

THIS forest, formed by Mr. Robertson of Kindeace, in 1845, and sold by him to the present owner, Mr. William Allis Smith, covers close on 5,000 acres of good ground, which, wedge-shaped in formation, runs from east to west for some eight miles along the adjacent forests of Dibiedale and Alladale, whilst on the north and south it meets the deer-grounds of Deanich and Amat. The highest ground is about 2,300 feet; Knock-na-tuppet, "the woman's tippet," is 1,500 feet, with its base well wooded with some four hundred acres of thick cover, in which, during hard winters, from seven to nine hundred stags gather together. It carries one rifle comfortably; the deer are killed only by stalking, and will average, clean, 13 stone 7 lbs.; a moderate shot will get 20 beasts, and a better one 30, which latter number the owner got this season of 1895. On this estate there is also good salmon fishing in the Carron and Calvie, for in 1893 Mr. Allis Smith got eighty to his own rod, and in 1895 fifty-two.

## FOREST OF GLENCARRON BY ACHNASHEEN.

THESE forests of Glencarron and Glenuaig, or Glen Fhiodhaig, owned by Lord Wimborne, are situated in the parishes of Lochcarron and Coulin, the former with an area of 8,100 acres, and the latter with 7,060 acres, both being at the westerr end of Strathconan, while on the other sides are the forests of Achanalt, Coulin, Achnashellach, and Monar. The average kill is about forty-five stags, which, with heart and liver included, vary in weight from fourteen up to eighteen stone. The house overlooks the Carron river (in the upper part of which there is salmon fishing), and has the advantage of a private station on the Dingwall and Skye Railway, within a few minutes' walk. Some of the forest hills rise to over 3,000 feet, while many of the lower slopes are covered with old Scotch fir and natural birch. Loch Sgamhain, out of which the Carron flows, signifies "Lungs" in Gaelic, and a somewhat curious legend is told to account for this

odd name. The story runs that some children, once playing on the loch shore, seeing an animal like a horse, climbed on to its back for a ride; one by one they mounted, but as each seated himself on the beast their fingers stuck fast to the hide, and they were held prisoners, while the animal dashed off towards the loch. One little fellow threw himself off, only to reach the ground with the loss of his fingers, and then running off home, gave the alarm, but no trace of horse or the other children could be found. On the following morning, however, the lungs of the other boys were found floating on the loch, and hence it took its name. Like many other parts of the north, this forest, there can be no doubt, was formerly densely wooded, traces of old trees being found in all parts, but how or when these woods were destroyed will ever remain an open question, although in the account of Braemore Forest there will be found a plausible theory for their disappearance.



## FOREST OF GLENSHIELDAIG BY LOCH CARRON.

THIS forest, of upwards of 11,000 acres, belongs to Mr. J. S. Murray, and lies between the deer-grounds of Applecross on the south-west, and those of Ben Damph on the north-east. I have not been able to gather any particulars of the number of stags killed, but whatever that may be, their weights will, in all probability, be the same as those of the stags of the two adjacent forests.

FORESTS OF INCHBAE, STRATHIRANNOCH AND TOLMUICK,  
BY GARVE.

THIS is a long narrow ground of about 21,000 acres, belonging to Mr. W. D. Mackenzie, of Farr, and contains the great wood of Dhucaille, of some 5,000 acres in extent, in which red, fallow, and roe deer dwell together. It is at present let to Mr. J. C. Williams, who joins it on to Strathvaich Forest, which he has held since 1887. This gentleman treats both places in a thoroughly sportsmanlike manner, as he does not try to kill an excessive

number of stags; he stops stalking quite early in October, rarely killing more than five or six beasts in that month, although rightly enough he pursues the deer with energy in August and September, seldom getting less than twenty fat beasts in the first-named month, which are carefully picked for good bodies with clean horns, and for many seasons he has killed fat stags prior to the 12th of August. In season '94 Mr. Williams watched a stag finishing the operation of getting rid of his velvet on the 31st of July, and leaving him on that day to finish his toilet in peace, he killed him, quite free of velvet, on the 4th of August. From the two forests of Inchbae and Strathvaich from ninety to one hundred stags are taken each season, of which about forty come from Inchbae. The tenant does not have his deer weighed, except he himself sees it done, and thus only the big ones are taken to the balance; these are weighed with heart and liver, and 17 to 18 stone are counted good stags, while about every third year one of 19 stone is got, and

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since 1887 only one has turned the scale at 20 stone. Mr. Williams, however, spares many of the finest heads, neither does he permit his foresters to pick off the best hinds in the winter, and by these means he has greatly improved his stock of deer, both in numbers and in quality—an example which more of the forest renters might follow with advantage.

In 1892 a most vexatious piece of bad luck happened here to Mr. Mackenzie, when in the dusk he fired at a stag in Glen Kyllachy, and the bullet striking the base of the horn, the stag escaped. Mr. Mackenzie having had this stag in view for some time, was therefore able to recognise him again three days later in Macleay's shop in Inverness, when he turned out to be a splendid fourteen-pointer, who carried the mark of Mr. Mackenzie's bullet on his horn, whilst vexatiously enough the beast proved to be the second best head got in Scotland that season.

## FOREST OF INVERLAEL AND GLENBEG, BY LOCHIBROOM.

THIS estate of 14,000 acres of forest, cleared in 1882, together with some 6,000 acres of grouse ground, belongs to Sir Arthur Mackenzie, and is now let to Mr. A. G. Wood. It is bounded on the west by Loch and River Broom, while on the other sides it is surrounded by the forests of Braemore, Strathvaich, Deanich, and Leckmelm.

The kill of stags for the years 1890 and 1891 was respectively 34 and 29, and an approximate guide to their weights may be gathered by referring to those obtained in the surrounding deer grounds.

## FOREST OF KILDERMORIE BY ALNESS.

A FOREST of 25,000 acres, cleared some fifty years ago, belonging to Mr. Walter Shoolbred, and purchased by him in 1890 from Mr. Munro-Ferguson, the greater part being let to his brother, Mr. Frederick Shoolbred. It contains some high hills, Carn Chumineag being 2,749 feet, and Ben

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Ean and Mheal Mhor are each over 2,400 feet. The low ground is limited, while neither wintering or grazing is any too good, as there are vast stretches of moss ground. On the south and south-west it marches with Wyvis and Inchbae, on the north-west with Dibiedale, the other boundaries being sheep ground. The stalking season is a short one, as the stags do not come into Kildermorie in large numbers until they are seeking the hinds, so that the kill has to be made in a short time, for by the terms of the lease stalking terminates on the 10th of October, the usual season's total being forty-five to fifty stags, weighing an average of 14 stone, with heart and liver.

KINLOCHEWE BY ACHNASHEEN.

BELONGS to Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, and is let to Mr. W. M. Cazalet. There are 20,000 acres of cleared ground in addition to a large extent of grouse shooting. On the north it marches with Letterewe, the east and north-east boundaries are sheep ground,

Flowerdale joins it on the west, and Torridon and Coulin on the south and south-west; it is very rocky, steep ground, off which in 1895 thirty-five stags were killed.

FOREST OF KINLOCH-LUICHART BY DINGWALL.

THIS forest, the property of Lady Ashburton, my map of the deer forests puts at just over 20,000 acres, but from other good sources it is estimated at from 42,000 to 45,000 acres, including some 10,000 acres of grouse ground. It marches with Fannich on the west, with Braemore and Strathvaich on north and north-east, with sheep ground on the east, and Achanalt on the south. The house, barely a mile from the station, is finely placed, looking over Loch Luichart and on to some of the highest hills of the forest, which rise to 3,000 feet. It is a long narrow estate, with a flat boggy strath running through it, a give and take ground, off which the deer are easily shifted and equally as easily put on to from the adjacent forests, a matter which renders the stalking more exciting

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and difficult than is the case when the sport is pursued on places with a squarer formation. There is one very large fine corrie kept as a sanctuary which is always full of good stags at the beginning of the season, so that on the management of this corrie depends a great deal of the Kinloch-Luichart sport. Should it be left quite quiet and no disturbance made near it until the stags begin to break out in small parties to seek the hinds, then a good few of these big fellows may be got, but on the other hand, should there by any mischance be any disturbance of this corrie earlier in the season, then away go the bulk of its occupants to the grounds of Strathvaich and Achanalt, which they seem to prefer to those of Fannich or Braemore on the west and north. In the season of 1892 thirty-seven good beasts were got, the heaviest of which was 17 stone, while the lot averaged 15 stone clean. In 1895 Mr. Taylor had this forest in conjunction with Fannich, and "The Field" states his total kill was fifty-seven stags, but does not mention any weights.

## FOREST OF LECKMELM BY LOCH BROOM.

THIS property, of about 10,000 acres, belongs to Mr. A. G. Pirie, who purchased it, in 1879, from Colonel Davidson of Tulloch, and commencing to clear it in 1882, he has always retained it in his own hands. It lies on the north side of Loch Broom, and running in a direction from south-west to north-east, forms an oblong-shaped ground of about nine miles long by four at the widest parts. On the north it marches with Rhidorrach, on the south-east with Inverlael and Glenbeg, while on each side of Leckmelm there is an unbroken stretch of thirty miles of afforested lands. The highest altitude is reached on the summit of Mealldhu, 2,205 feet, the next highest hill being Beineiltach, 1,800 feet, the base of which is well wooded, while as it offers splendid shelter in all seasons, it is kept as a sanctuary.

When the ground was first afforested, a number of hind calves were reared as a breeding stock, which are still carefully preserved and fed during



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winter. The ground works best on a westerly wind ; the annual kill at present is fifteen stags, which vary in mean weight, according to the season ; in 1887 the average was 15 stone 6 lbs., and in 1892, 14 stone 9 lbs. ; in each case heart and liver being included.

About the year 1590, Leckmelm was the scene of a desperate fight between the proscribed Caithness clan of Gun and the Earl of Sutherland's men. The former were seeking refuge in the Western Isles when they were overtaken by the Earl's men "at a spot called Leckmelm," and were eventually defeated with such great loss that but few of the Clan Gun remained to tell the tale.

FORESTS OF LETTEREWE, FISHERFIELD, AND ARDLAIR  
BY ACHNASHEEN.

THIS property, originally belonging to the Mackenzies of Gairloch, was bought from them by Mr. Meyrick Bankes, a Liverpool gentleman, who used to stalk it from his yacht, in harbour at Poolewe, while in conjunction with the deer he kept a large head of

sheep, well known for their excellence of quality. Mr. Bankes, however, got many good heads and heavy beasts during his time, but dying in 1880, he left Letterewe House with the policies to his widow, while the remainder of the forest with Fisherfield was willed to one of his daughters, who married a French gentleman of the name of Liot, and Mr. and Mrs. Liot-Bankes are the present owners of the property, which they let to Mr. J. F. Laycock, while they themselves reside in a beautifully-placed house on the shores of Loch Maree. This ground was first let clear of sheep in 1883, to Mr. Charles Perkins, who spent large sums in buildings, improvements and forest paths, to which Mr. Laycock has also added considerably. Including the lands of Ardlair and Fisherfield, the forest has an area of about 45,000 acres, many parts of which are very steep, rough walking, while other portions afford both excellent grazing and shelter. The stags mostly winter on the slopes of the Loch Maree hills, or on the low grounds near the sea, while the hinds chiefly

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affect the Strathnashellag side. It is a forest that can be stalked in all winds, but as usual an easterly one is the worst. Mr. Laycock gets his bag entirely by stalking; he uses no dogs, and the deer are usually brought home the same day they are killed. Three and sometimes four rifles can take the hill, and their average each season, since Mr. Laycock has had Letterewe, has been just under one hundred stags, the best season being one hundred and twelve, which showed a mean clean weight of 13 stone 5 lbs., but this would have worked out much higher had a good few "rotten" and bad stags not been included in the list, which, although they were only killed off to make room for better ones, were yet weighed and taken into account.

In the season of 1895 Mr. Laycock, who was yachting during the stalking time, sent a friend up to Letterewe with a limit of forty stags, which were, of course, easily got. There are many hills, ranging from 2,800 to 2,000 ft. On the south the forest marches with those of Flowerdale and

Kinlochewe, the rest of the boundaries being sheep ground.

Mr. Laycock's best day in the forest since he first took it, in 1889, has been seven stags, and the heaviest stag in that time was killed by Mr. Perkins on the Maighdean, a ten-pointer of 20 stone 2lb. On Christmas Eve, 1890, Mr. Laycock shot a very old, perfectly milk-white hind that had been on the ground long before he came. She was only shot from a conviction that she would not last through the winter, for she had been barren for the three previous seasons, although in the years in which she had calves they were always of the ordinary colour. This remarkable beast has been set up whole by Rowland Ward. Mr. Laycock also got a light-coloured royal stag, which was incorrectly spoken of as "the white stag." This beast he had previously missed, and altogether he had been shot at nine times ere he received the fatal bullet. On the very steep slope of the Maighdean Mrs. Mitchell Innes, the lessee's sister, made a remarkable bit of good shooting as she was

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slithering after the stalker down the south side of this hill. Some stags below them got their wind, and breaking in all directions, Mrs. Mitchell Innes picked out two of the best, killing them right and left, when going at full gallop in opposite directions, and though the beasts were rightly struck, unfortunately they rolled down the very steep hill, both being much smashed up. It was in this forest that the celebrated deerstalker, Black Finlay Macrae, lived with his master, Mackenzie of Gairloch. It was his duty to keep the larder well supplied with venison, which for many years was an easy matter; after a time, however, Finlay began to find a great difficulty in getting stags, and eventually he discovered that some poacher was ever in front of him in most of his stalking trips, so much so that venison became quite scarce in his master's house, while reproaches were heaped on him for his want of skill. For a long time Finlay had thought that the poacher was a certain Big Donald Kennedy, and at last one morning he surprised him in the act of gralloching a newly-killed

deer, so, creeping close up to him, Finlay called out :  
“ Well, Donald, the sport has been yours, but the deer must be mine !” Donald sprang to his feet, grasped the knife already in his hand, while answering : “ It will just be the best man who will get it !” Finlay also having drawn his knife, the two closed and were instantly locked in a struggle for life, which resulted in Big Donald being left dead on the hill. Finlay at once returned home, and fearing the revenge of Kennedy’s relations, who were powerful and numerous, he, his wife, child, and father started off that night for Glen Strathfarrar, which they reached in safety by dint of carefully hiding all day and travelling only in the dark, and then choosing a convenient place, they built themselves a hut at the foot of Sgur-na-Lappich, in which they hoped to pass the time till the excitement caused among Big Donald’s relations had subsided. Some months later, when Finlay was out stalking, five of the Kennedys suddenly appeared at his hut and killed Finlay’s father and child while they were at work in a field near by. When Finlay

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returned home and saw what had happened, he in his turn vowed vengeance, so setting out quite alone for Gairloch, he discovered who the five men were, and got a friend to point him out their dwelling. Thither he wended his way towards evening, and watching their house until he had counted them all inside, he waited patiently until midnight; then he crept to the unbolted door, and entering noiselessly, in three blows he killed three of the Kennedys before they were awake. The other two made a desperate fight, but eventually they also were slain in fair combat; then setting fire to the house, Finlay departed again to his wife and home at the foot of Sgurna-Lappich. Shortly after this, when Finlay was working in his field, seeing six men approaching, he at once divined their mission, but being quite unarmed, he walked boldly up to them, to be met with the question: "Do you know which is the house of Black Finlay?" To this he replied, "It is just where I left it." "You know him then?" asked the party. "No doubt," answered the intrepid Finlay, "for I keep his

cattle." "Then show us where he is!" cried they, whereupon Finlay led the way into his house, on reaching which he called out to his wife, who had seen the approaching party and quickly guessed their advent boded no good, "Is the man of the house at home?" With ready wit she said, "He is on his bed, so you can come in if you want him, for maybe he will not rise for ye." On hearing this the whole party entered the house, when Finlay, springing to where his gun and dirk laid, turned and cried: "The man of the house is here—who seeks him?" The strangers, taken by surprise, hastened to break out of the small room so as to get a better chance of attacking Finlay, but a ball from his gun killed the first, the butt-end slew the next two in two successive blows, and closing with the other three in a hand-to-hand fight, favoured by the cramped space, he mortally wounded two more of his assailants, while the third fled unhurt to the hills. Two such daring deeds, coupled with the slaying of eleven strong men by his single hand, earned Finlay such a reputation and respect that he was ever after



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allowed to rest in peace, so that eventually he returned to the service of his master in Gairloch, while to commemorate his prowess the highest hill in the district was called Ben Fionnlaidh, or Ben Finlay, a name which it keeps to the present day.

On this estate of Letterewe some very remarkable proceedings were taken in 1840 by Mr. Bankes, for the destruction of a boat-shaped monster called "The Beast," which the natives declared dwelt in a loch on the property called "Loch-na-beiste," after the monster. In the year above mentioned a deputation of Mr. Bankes' tenants waited on him for the express purpose of begging him to undertake the destruction of "the beast," and although, as may easily be imagined, he at first turned a very deaf ear to the suggestion, he eventually yielded later on to the sworn testimony of one Sandy McLeod, an elder of the kirk, who together with two other most respectable people who were with him jointly and severally vowed they had seen "the beast," which evidence being quickly corroborated by that of

other people equally credible, Mr. Bankes allowed himself to be persuaded to take steps for the destruction of the monster. An attempt was forthwith made to draw off the water from Loch-na-beiste, which resulted in reducing the depth to six feet, except in one part where there was a hole of some fifteen feet deep, and this was therefore the only place in the loch which held sufficient water to hide "the beast." Into this fourteen barrels of raw lime were poured at once, a proceeding which caused the death of most of the trout in the loch, while the "great beast" remained undiscovered, and from that time forward no further attempts have been made to molest him.

#### FOREST OF MONAR BY BEAULY.

THIS ground belongs to Mr. Stirling of Fairburn, who keeps it in his own hands. It has an area of some 20,000 acres, entirely surrounded by other forests; Achnashellach lies on the north; on the west and south are Attadale and Glencannich, and

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on the east come Struy and Strathconan. I have not been able to obtain any reliable information as to the number of stags got, or their weight, but report says that fifty to sixty are killed each season. The highest ground rises to 3,452 feet.

PATT, KILLILAN, RIOCHAN, AND GLOMACH BY BEAULY.

THESE lands, of some 15,000 acres, are the property of Sir Kenneth Matheson, who at one time let them to Lord Lovat, who sub-let them to Mr. Winans. The grounds march with the forests of Glencannich, Attadale, Monar, and Braulen, and are very steep and interspersed with large mosses. The lodge is an out of the way place, some thirty miles from Beaulay, the last six miles of the journey being most easily performed in a boat on Loch Morar. The lands of Patt and Riochan are the chief haunts of the hinds, while those of Killilan are the abode of the stags, and thus sport is assured from the middle of August to the end of the season. It carries two rifles, who should get from forty to

fifty stags, which in good years average 15 stone clean.

THE FOREST OF RHIDORRACH, BY ULLAPOOL.

THIS fine deer ground—the pioneer of the Ross-shire forests—is the property of the Countess of Cromartie, and extends over some 40,000 acres of rocky hills, deep glens, bold corries, and occasional flats, interspersed with many a loch. Of these lands, 25,000 acres are under deer, the remaining 15,000 acres being grouse shooting over sheep ground skirting the cleared portion on the west and north; as however the forest proper is not fenced off in any way, deer are to be met with over the whole place. The big glen of Rhidorrach, “the dark forest,” on the south side of which is a sanctuary upwards of three miles in length, runs from east to west for some ten miles through the centre of the ground, the lowest level of which varies from a mile to a mile and a half in breadth, and consists of one uninterrupted stretch of magnificent green pasture.

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On either side of the glen the hills are covered at their bases with woods of birch and fir; as the wood ceases, they rise in more or less steep or undulating slopes, until in some parts they reach an altitude of 3,000 feet. Amongst these tall hills may be mentioned those of Knockdamph, the "hill of the stag"; Benvrick, the "speckled mountain," and Beneiltach, the "hill of the hinds." On the south these lands are skirted by the deer ground of Leckmelm, while Corriemulzie joins it on the east. Three rifles can go out daily, to whom William Sutherland, the head forester, strongly recommends cloth of green and yellow mixtures as best suited to this ground, where the bag is made entirely by stalking. In 1895 the tenant, Mr. Molyneux Clarke, killed fifty-three stags, while the average weight of beasts for the years 1893, 1894, and 1895 worked out at 14 stone 12 lbs., quite clean, which is a matter to be proud of. A previous tenant of this forest, Captain T. S. Starkey, late of the 9th Lancers—"Tom" Starkey of his

intimates, and with whom I had several friendly tussels behind the traps in the days when he shot pigeons so successfully—witnessed a curious incident in Rhidorrach, when on one occasion he had wounded a stag, which, going slowly off, while bleeding freely, was seen to be attacked by a fox!

In the days of Mr. Hay Mackenzie, of Cromartie—the great-grandfather of the present proprietrix—and long before Rhidorrach was regularly afforested, there were a number of very heavy stags on the ground, for Mr. Mackenzie had his deer fed by hand all through the winter, with the result that stags could be seen there as early as May with royal heads from which the velvet was nearly ready to drop. Two of these big fellows became comparatively tame, and were christened “Bill” and “Bean,” one of them having a most remarkable head, and easily known anywhere. This beast, imprudently straying beyond the bounds of safety, became the victim of a noted deer poacher, who, having disposed of his ill-gotten meat, became fearful of

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parting with the head on account of its marked peculiarities. Suspicion at once fell on Poacher Finlay, and Mr. Hay Mackenzie used all sorts of persuasion to recover the head of the missing stag, until at length he was reduced to offering the thief five pounds with a free pardon—a liberal bid, which procured him the restoration of the lost trophy. Mr. Mackenzie eventually gave this head to the Lord Londonderry of that period, which to this day is a treasured ornament of the walls of Mount Stuart in County Down; that this is a reputation well earned may readily be supposed when it can be stated it had nineteen fine points, a span of 40 inches, a right horn of 32 inches in length, with a circumference of 7 inches just above the coronet, the left horn being but a trifle smaller, and a drawing of it still hangs in the dining-room of Rhidorrach.

FOREST OF SCATWELL BY MUIR OF ORD.

THIS ground, cleared for upwards of the last twenty years, belongs to Sir W. J. Bell, and extends

to some 10,000 acres, of which about 2,000 acres are wood. It marches with the forests of Strathconan and Corriehallie, the highest ground being on Carn William, 2,300 feet. With a favourable wind two rifles can go out, while considering the fact that this ground is on the extreme outside limit for deer, and that it is the lowest possible for them in the district, the kill of twenty to twenty-five stags of 14 stone each season is a remarkably good one, a triumph chiefly due to the fine feeding, coupled with good shelter, afforded to the deer during the winter. As large numbers of hinds from other forests come in to Scatwell to drop and rear their calves, Sir William proves himself a good neighbour by not permitting any hinds ever to be shot.

FOREST OF SHIELDAIG BY ACHNASHEEN.

THIS is one of Sir Kenneth Mackenzie's forests and has been let to Mr. Charles Rudd for several years past, who gave it up at the end of season



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1895. It marches with Torridon and Flowerdale, its 7,600 acres being devoid of wood, or any hill higher than 2,400 feet. It will carry one rifle, but no information has been procurable as to the total kill or weights, though probably the latter are similar to those of Flowerdale and Torridon.

FOREST OF STRATHCONAN BY MUIR OF ORD.

THE whole of this estate of some 73,000 acres was purchased in 1839 by Mr. Balfour of Whittinghame, who in 1841 commenced to clear the sheep off portions of the ground, until, in 1877, the forest covered 27,500 acres, when Mr. R. H. Combe purchased it, and like Mr. Balfour, he maintains the same kindly friendship with his tenants and neighbours. The forest is most wild and rugged, there being many hills over 3,000 feet, while as the strath is unusually steep and narrow, it is subject to violent storms and floods. This ground has yielded more than one hundred stags in the season, but the number was found to be greater

than it would fairly stand, and the kill has been judiciously reduced to seventy-five or eighty.

These lands were the scene of the defeat of one of the Lords of the Isles by the Mackenzies, who were routed with great slaughter. Later on the forest was again a witness of one of those Culloden atrocities, then so prevalent amongst the victorious soldiery of the King of England, for a party of fugitives from the battle-field, having taken refuge in a cave on Strathconan, were surrounded and smoked or burnt to death by means of large piles of lighted heather placed at the entrance of their hiding-place.

#### FOREST OF TORRIDON, BY TORRIDON.

AN ancient charter of 1584 shows that these lands then belonged to the Macdonnells of Glengarry, while up to the present day nineteen families of that name still dwell in Alligen on Loch Torridon. It was one of these Macdonnells who, when on a marauding expedition to one of the Western Isles, being hard pressed for food, came on a party of

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natives just finishing the out-door cooking of a savoury meal in a large pot suspended over the fire from a tripod. The Torridon man dashed rashly into their midst armed with nothing better than an oak cudgel, and raining blows on every side, the surprised natives fled in all directions. Thrusting his oak staff through the handle of the pot, the famishing hero swung it from off the fire on to his back, making off to his friends with his prize, quite regardless of scorched shoulders.

For this exploit he received the name of Darach or Darroch, which is Gaelic for oak, and from this dashing Highlander are descended the present-day Darrochs — one of them, Mr. Duncan Darroch, being now the owner of Torridon Forest.

In 1610 the Mackenzies were in possession of Torridon, and at Loch-an-Fheidh, on the west side of Sgur Dubh in Torridon, a sanguinary battle was fought between them and the McLeods, resulting in the nearly total extinction of the latter-named clan, whose killed were buried where they fell, and their

graves are still pointed out. The present Torridon Forest covers 11,600 acres, which consist almost entirely of high rocky peaks with deep valleys, although near the house there is a growing plantation which will shortly afford the deer better winter shelter than they get at present, which they have hitherto found in the very deep valleys lying between the many high and rocky hills. Amongst these may be mentioned Liathgach, or the Blue Hill, 3,456 feet; and Ben Alligen, or the Jewel Hill, 3,232 feet; while there are several others just over or just under 3,000 feet. In accordance with the prevailing rockiness of this ground, the best colours in which the stalker can array himself are a Black Mount mixture, or a very light green Lovat cloth. The annual kill is thirty stags, which for the past twenty years have averaged, weighed with heart and liver, 12 stone 10½ lbs., no allowance ever being made if any stag happened to be left a night on the hill. About 1880 a rose-coloured starling or pastor was shot here, which is now

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in Mr. Darroch's possession at Torridon; while later on in 1887 Her Majesty made that part of Scotland supremely proud by a stay of a week at Gairloch—a matter which is duly and happily recorded in “More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands.”

## CHAPTER X.

## SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

FORESTS OF BEN HEE AND CORRY KINLOCH BY LAIRG,  
GLENDHU, GLENCOUL, AND BEN STROME BY KYLE  
STROME, GOBERNUISGACH BY LAIRG, LOCH MORE  
BY LAIRG, STACK BY LAIRG.

THE whole of these lands belong to the Duke of Sutherland, although for nearly the last thirty years they have been rented by the Duke of Westminster, who keeps the properties of Lochmore, Ben Strome, Glendhu, and Glencoul in his own hands. On the north these lands march with the forests of Stack and Gobernuisgach, on the east with Ben Hee, on the west with the sea and Scourie sheep-ground, and on the south with Assynt. Lochmore Lodge, of



LOCH MORE LODGE

*From the "Impressions"*





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which a drawing is annexed, is beautifully placed at the west end of the loch of that name, with a grand look-out on to the stony slopes of the summit of Ben Arkle, which rises to 2,500 feet. The house was enlarged and nearly rebuilt in 1866, when the present Duke of Westminster, then Lord Grosvenor, took over the whole of the Reay Forest from the late Lord Dudley, which ancient hunting ground of the Lords of Reay then consisted of the properties at present forming Ben Hee, Gobernuisgach, Lochmore, and Stack, which have long ceased to exist as a whole, and no single one of them can now lay claim to the title of "the Reay" forest. From the time it came into the Duke of Westminster's hands he has spared no pains to improve the deer, and in this he has been highly successful, for when he took it, in 1866, the whole ground yielded 130 stags, averaging 15 stone 7 lbs. quite clean, a very fine mean weight, on which it might have been thought impossible to improve, but nevertheless, in 1894, that good year, the same ground yielded 188 stags, making the

very remarkable, unsurpassed average of 16 stone 6 lbs.; and here also it may be as well to mention that both at Lochmore and Kyle Strome the weighing is most carefully done, while it is but seldom that two consecutive days pass without the Duke himself visiting the larder to witness the performance.

The following statistics will show how quickly deer increase with proper treatment and care. On the 23rd of October, 1884, the Duke ordered a count to be made over the whole ground, by each forester on his respective beat, with the following result:—

	Stags.	Others of all sorts.
Ben Stack and Ben Arkle .	112	177
Ben Hee . . . . .	145	607
Altnarynie, a beat on the north shore of Lochmore	269	405
Gobernuisgach . . . . .	209	410
Lone . . . . .	78	156
Sheep-ground . . . . .	54	126
	867	1,881

Early in November of 1894 another count took place, which resulted as under:—

	Stags.	Others of all sorts.
Lochmore Side . . . .	35	300
Lone . . . . .	159	347
Altnarynie . . . . .	109	543
Stack and Ben Arkle . .	146	239
Kyle Strome . . . . .	233	128
Glendhu . . . . .	221	300
Glencoul . . . . .	220	138
Gobernuisgach . . . . .	180	642
Ben Hee or Merkland . .	128	800
	<u>1,431</u>	<u>3,437</u>

This shows an increase in ten years of 564 stags, together with 1,556 "others of all sorts." It must not, however, be overlooked that soon after 1884 the greater part of what is described in that count as sheep ground was cleared, and appears in the reckoning of 1894 as Kyle Strome, Glendhu and Glencoul. The forest ground at present held by the Duke will easily carry four rifles, and even five can take the hill at the

same time. The home beat and Altnarynie are worked from Lochmore; Ben Strome beat can be worked either from there or from the Duke's other lodge at Kyle Strome, the two being some eight miles apart, and a tramp over the ground separating the two lodges, rifle in hand, with William Elliot as stalker, on a nice fine clear day, is all that the most ardent lover of sport or admirer of scenery could desire. I had the good fortune to make this happy journey on the 26th of August of last year (1895), and a finer combination of land and sea scape it would be hard to find. In addition to that I had three shots, making one abominable miss and killing two good stags, which weighed that same evening 17 stone 2 lb. and 15 stone quite clean; both of them, at this early date, were also absolutely free of velvet, not even having rags hanging about the coronets, but while the horns of the smaller stag were quite black and burnished, those of the heavier deer were still whiteish. That day I saw many other stags clear of velvet, and in season 1893 perfectly clean horns could be seen as early as July 20th.

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The beats of Glencoul and Glendhu are respectively at the heads of sea lochs of the same names, and, extending to some 35,000 acres, they are most pleasantly and luxuriously worked by the "More Vane," "Big Witch," a screw steam yacht of about 65 tons; not the least pleasant part of the day spent in these distant forest beats was the steam to the head of Glencoul, there to meet John Elliot, a brother of the before-mentioned William of that ilk. Both at Lochmore and Kyle Strome the delights of punctuality were assured, and the boat of the "More Vane" was ever ready at the quay, with steam up to the very minute ordered, and, reader, in spite of the fifty to sixty inch rainfall of these parts, of which during my stay I got more than a fair allowance, there can yet be most splendid, brightly sunny days in these high latitudes, when in the fresh beauty of such a morning, with glorious views all around, with sea-birds diving and flying about in all directions, the ten mile steam to our respective destinations (for one rifle was disembarked at Glendhu, the other going

on to Glencoul) was the very pleasantest way of reaching a forest beat that it has ever been my lot to experience. At the end of the day the return home in the dusk, with the after-glow of the sunset showing the black outline of the hills against the pale sky, while the throb of the screw, the hiss of the water surging white from the stern, the dim ghostly forms of a couple of dead stags lying on the deck, and the weird call of the various sea-divers startled by the yacht, all tended to send one home in a peculiarly happy, contented frame of mind. On the eastern boundaries of these two beats is the hill of Ben Leod, which is 3,579 ft. in height, but over the whole ground there are other hills reaching to nearly 3,000 ft., and more than twenty of them are over 2,000 ft. In the bitterly severe winters of 1894 and 1895 Loch More, which had never before been known to freeze, was coated with four inches of ice, while on Loch Stack in some places it reached fifteen inches in thickness.

The Stack forest the Duke sub-let for season 1895

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to Earl Cairns, who is equally good with either gun or rifle. The lodge is well placed at the west end of Loch Stack, just where the Laxford river runs out of it, both waters being renowned for their salmon and sea trout. The lodge is, however, somewhat exposed to the westerly gales, for when a real strong blow comes, it is not unusual for all the windows facing the wind to be broken by the small pebbles driven against them by the force of the gale. The tenant is limited to forty stags, a number which it is his own fault if he does not get. Ben Stack and Ben Arkle, one on each side of the Laxford, are two remarkable steep, stony hills on this ground.

Ben Hee and Corry-Kinloch the Duke sub-lets to Mr. M. E. Sanderson of Wakefield, and never did I feel more sorry for any sportsman than when I called on this gentleman on my way from Lochmore this season of 1895, only to find him, on a splendid stalking day with no end of "big fellows" on the hill, laid by the heels (or perhaps the toes would be more accurate), with a foot wrapped in wool resting on a

chair—that horrid and mysterious gout! to which so many of my friends are martyrs in spite of the most careful self-denial in diet, whilst I and many others, who eat and drink without a thought, never so much as suffer even a passing pang. Ben Hee is good for forty stags, which are usually obtained; in 1894 the total was thirty-five, averaging 14 stone 12 lbs. quite clean. Ben Hee is beautiful stalking ground, with the lodge pleasantly placed at the west end of Loch Merkland, on the high road from Lairg to Scourie. Mr. Sanderson is one of the best of tenants, and like the Duke, he stops stalking about the 4th of October, but if he were not to do this, he could easily put another score of very big deer into the larder, for the north beat of his ground on the green face sloping up from the road is the great hind resort of these parts, and as one drives from Lairg to Lochmore, or *vice versa*, they can be seen in such numbers by the naked eye that counting them without stopping the “machine” for the purpose is quite out of the question.



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The forest of Governuisgach, called "Gober" for the sake of shortness, is situate to the north of Lochmore, and is sub-let to Sir Walter Corbet. The house was built in 1847, somewhat in a hurry, by the then Duke of Sutherland, with a view of entertaining the late Prince Consort, in the event of Her Majesty paying a visit to Dunrobin in the following year. The stags are very heavy, the bag is limited to forty, and in 1893 the first thirty-three beasts Sir Walter killed averaged 17 stone  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. quite clean, which is the finest average weight ever recorded for such a number of stags, and a splendid illustration of what can be done on fine feeding ground worked with care and good management. Apart from the fact of these forests being admirably suited to deer, a great deal must be attributed to the Duke's action in killing no stags after the 3rd or 4th of October, and the introduction of fresh blood from various English parks.

## FOREST OF KINLOCH BY TONGUE.

THIS is another of the Duke of Sutherland's properties, first afforested in 1890, and let then to Mr. W. E. Lawson, who still holds it. It consists of nearly 40,000 acres, the valleys of which contain birch and alder. The tops of the high lands are rocky and sterile, and of these Ben Hope is the highest (3,040 feet); there are, however, many fine grassy corries. It marches with Governuisgach on the south, while the boundaries in other quarters are sheep grounds. It carries two rifles, and since it was cleared in the five seasons ending 1894 it has averaged twenty-nine stags, which, taking one with the other, work out at 14 stone 5 lbs. The tenant was last season witness of a cunning trick on the part of a big stag which he was stalking on a mossy flat, dotted with many pools of black peat water. The stag Mr. Lawson was after had several hinds with him, which he was zealously guarding. On his way up to his quarry he was compelled to put

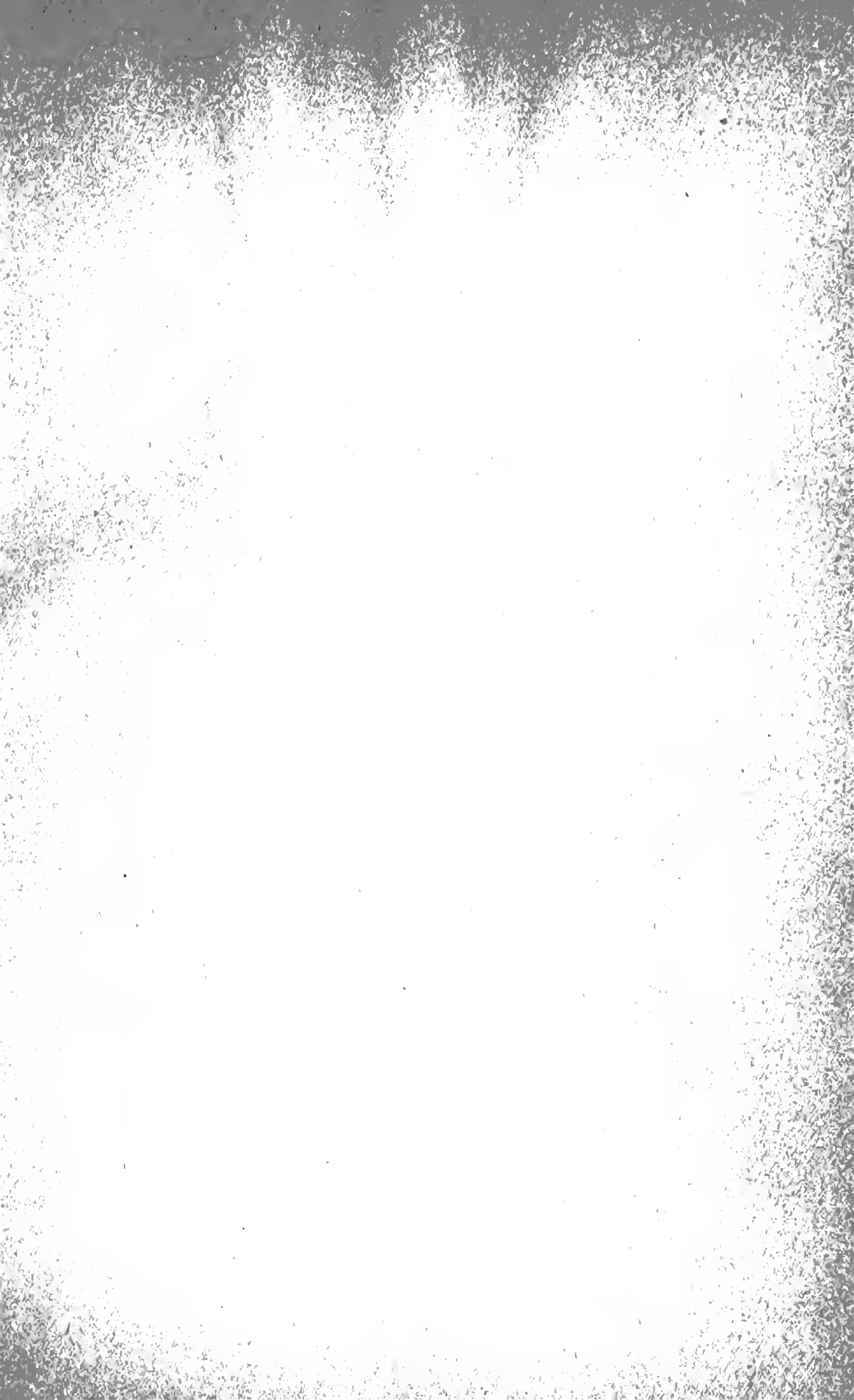
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away a small beast, which ran off to join the big one, the two trotting off amicably together, much to the surprise of the stalking party. The big stag having led his young friend a trot of about half a mile, suddenly stopped at the edge of a black water hole, and then, after retreating a few yards, charged the small stag broadside on, knocking him head over heels into the pool, in which for a moment staggie completely disappeared from view ; eventually, however, he scrambled out, making off as hard as he could in a direction different to that taken by the big stag.

The remaining three forests of this county all belong to the Duke of Sutherland. Ben Armine by Golspie covers some 35,000 acres, and lies between the Helmsdale and Brora rivers, and is kept in the Duke's own hands. Glencanisp, a forest of about 35,000 acres of very fine and steadily improving deer ground, marches with Drumrunie on the south and Ben More on the west ; it is at present rented by Lord Brownlow, who kills some thirty-five

to forty stags each season, and in favourable ones they will make the heavy average of nearly 16 stone clean. Uppat Forest, which is attached to the Duke's beautifully-situated house by the sea at Dunrobin, although covering some 12,000 acres, may almost be regarded as a vast deer park lying at the back of the castle. The Duke very kindly promised me particulars of each of these deer grounds, but owing to the illness of his friend and factor, the well-known and much-liked Mr. McIver of Scourie, I have been unable to get details in time for publication.

THE END.



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