

III.

THE CIRCULAR FORTS OF NORTH PERTHSHIRE.

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The remarkable fortifications which form the subject of this paper occur, so far as my observations and inquiries have hitherto disclosed them, in Glen Lyon, Loch Tayside, Upper Strath Tay, Strath Tummel, the neighbourhood of Pitlochrie, Glenquaich, and Strathbraan. The distance in a straight line from the farthest west fort at the head of Glen Lyon to Pitlochrie is about forty miles, while the distance in a straight line north and south from the forts on Loch Tummel-side to the furthest south of the Amulree group is about fourteen miles. Within that area I personally saw eighteen circular forts, while I have reliable authority for the existence of at least six more. One of the Glen Lyon group has been completely effaced within living memory, and one near Pitlochrie, mentioned by Pennant, seems to have also disappeared. The total number, therefore, of which there are remains at present, more or less distinct, is twenty-four. There is, however, reason to believe that additional specimens may be found in the neighbourhood of Blair Athol, for the *Old Statistical Account* mentions one in Glen Tilt and two in Strathgroy.

It is also possible that still more might be discovered by an examination of likely situations in such places as Glen Almond and Glen Lednock, between Loch Tay and Strathearn. The basin of the Tummel, too, may contain more than I discovered, in particular about Kinloch-Rannoch and Fincastle, neither of which places I had an opportunity of investigating.

The first direct mention of these fortifications, so far as I am aware, occurs in Pennant's *Tour*. Pennant himself appears to have seen three of the Pitlochrie group, and from the Rev. James Stewart of Killin

he got and gives information as to the dimensions and names of the forts in Upper Glen Lyon, at Fortingal, and on the south side of Loch Tay. Pennant, however, in some cases (Killiechangie, and Dun Mac Tuathail on Drummond Hill) confuses the circular forts with hill forts of a different type. He appears to confuse the remarkable terraced site on an eminence south-east of the farmhouse of Kerrowmore in Glen Lyon with the round fort on the right banks of the Lyon near the foot of that eminence; and, lastly, the place he prints as *Fiamnam-bòinean*, by which is apparently meant the fortified hillock on the left bank of Pobul Burn, and which is marked on the modern maps as a "tower," does not belong to the class of structures we are considering.

The writer of the *New Statistical Account* of the parish of Fortingal states that fifteen or sixteen such structures existed within the bounds of the parish at the time of writing (1838).

Mr Duncan Campbell, Inverness, a native of Glen Lyon, in his book entitled *The Chronicles of Garth and Fortingal*, locates the Glen Lyon towers as far east as Fortingal, and gives the Glen Lyon tradition regarding them.

There are, however, two passages in writers of a much earlier date, which may be not without some relevance. The first of these is from Gildas (*ob. circ. 570*), who writes: "*De artissimis foraminum caverniculis fuscis vermiculorum cunei, tetri Scottorum Pictorumque greges*" (*De Excidio et Conquestu Britannia*, c. 19; p. 35 of Mommsen's edition); "Swarthy columns of vermin from their small caverns of very narrow outlets, loathsome hordes of Scots and Picts." The other passage is one quoted by Skene (*Celtic Scotland*, i. 261) from Eddi's *Life of St Wilfrid*, written about 700 A.D. "Populi bestiales Pictorum feroci animo subjectionem Saxonum despiciabant, et jugum servitutis a se abjicere minabantur, congregantes undique *de utribus et folliculis Aquilonis* innumeras gentes, quasi formicarum greges in æstate de tumulis ferventes, aggerem contra domum caden-

tem muniebant." "The beastly tribes of the Picts began in warlike mood to despise the Saxon rule, and threatened to cast from off them the yoke of servitude, gathering together from all quarters countless tribes *from the bags and sacks of the North*, like hordes of ants swarming in summer from their mounds, and began to build a bulwark against a falling house." Skene omits to translate the curious expression *de utribus et folliculis Aquilonis*. The term *cavernaculæ* of the passage from Gildas might be regarded as a literal translation of the Gaelic *uamhag*, a little cave, regularly used to denote either earth-houses or the chambers of brochs. In the second passage, *uter*, a skin bag, appears to be used figuratively and contemptuously for a circular building of the broch type, while *folliculus*, a sack, a bladder (much smaller than *uter*) may refer either to earth-houses or to the chambers of brochs or broch-like structures.¹ The passages are curiously suggestive of the Fir Bolg, the men of the bags, who figure so prominently in early Irish history, but, so far as I know, the term *bolg* is never used among us in connection with brochs or earth-houses.

At the present day, these forts are termed individually *caisteal*, castle (or, as Mr Duncan Campbell, Inverness, says, *castal*), and collectively *caisteilean nam Fiann*, castles of the Fiann. There is a widely known saying, the earliest notice of which occurs in Pennant, who got it doubtless from the Rev. J. Stewart :

"Bha da chaisteil deug aig Fionn,
Ann an Cromhgleann dubh nan clach."

"Twelve castles had Fionn,
In the dark Bent-glen of the stones."

Here *Cromhgleann* is always, in Scotland, taken to be a "kenning" for Glen Lyon. This distich, to which I shall refer later, condenses the traditional account of the *raison d'être* of the forts. That the term

¹ Mr A. O. Curle suggests that the reference in *cavernaculæ* may be to hut-circles, which often had long narrow openings.

caisteal, as thus applied, is old, is proved by the fact that it occurs in the place-names Pitcastle of Tullypowrie and Pitcastle near Pitlochrie, both named after forts still quite distinct. All place-names that involve Pit, a loan from Pictish, are old. The Pitcastles are now called in Gaelic Bail' a' Chaisteil, Castletown. Later on, however, I shall give reasons for thinking that these forts had originally a native name much older than *caisteal*, which is borrowed into Gaelic from Latin *castellum*.

In at least one instance, *Caisteal Dubh Baile nan Ceard*, the Black Castle of Balnaguard, the term "castle" is applied to a large hill-fort with a stone wall. In the North we sometimes apply *caisteal* to brochs, e.g. *Caisteal na Cròice* in Glencasley, Sutherland; Castle Spynie, in the Beaully district; *Caisteal Grùgaig*, Loch Duich. More often, however, we call them *dùn*. The Norsemen called the brochs *borgr*.¹

In the remarks that follow, I shall begin with the Glen Lyon forts, and proceed thereafter to deal with those that exist outside the glen, so far as I have ascertained them.

Reference to a large scale map, such as Bartholomew's 2 miles to the inch (sheet 12), will show the ranges of hills that divide Glen Lyon from Loch Tay and Glen Lochay on the south and from Rannoch on the north, while on the west the head of the glen is seen to spring from the watershed between Perth and Argyll. These mountain ranges, north, south, and west, are pierced by a number of passes, which, in the days before roads, were regular and important means of communication. The head of Glen Lyon may be entered from the west, either through Glen Orchy or through Glen Dochart. In the latter case one would strike northwards at Tyndrum, but the two routes converge near the head of the glen.

1. *Beinn a' Chaisteil*.—Here rises Beinn a' Chaisteil, on a spur of which stood the most westerly of the Glen Lyon forts. This is the

¹ See, however, Loch Kanaird, *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty*, p. 256.

only one which I have not seen. It is said to be practically obliterated by landslides, and this, together with its very remote position, involving a two days' journey, discouraged me from visiting it. About eight miles down the glen we come to the remarkable group of towers between Pubil and Cashlie. Here in the space of little more than a mile we have the remains of four, with tradition of a fifth. I visited these (for the third time) on 25th August 1912, in company of Mr R. S.

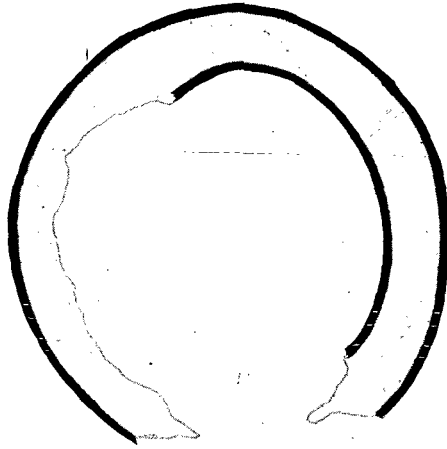


Fig. 1. Plan of Cambuslai Fort.

M'Intosh, Art Master of the Royal High School, to whom I am indebted for the measurements and plans submitted. Mr M'Intosh's plans are here reproduced on a scale of 30 feet to an inch. They are inserted so that the top of the page indicates north.

2. *Cambuslai*.—The furthest west of this group (fig. 1) lies to the south of the public road, in the S.E. corner of a field, and quite close to the Lyon. On the S.E. side of the circle there appear few if any traces of either the inside or the outside wall-face. Otherwise the outer face

is distinct. Both faces are visible on the northern half. The foundations of two oblong structures, perhaps of secondary origin, and at right angles to each other, are seen within the circle. The remains of the tower consist of great blocks of stone, and the adjoining dyke appears to have been built out of its materials. We made the greatest external diameter 73 feet. Its wall varied from a little over 10 feet to 13 feet in thickness. The whole is exceedingly dilapidated.

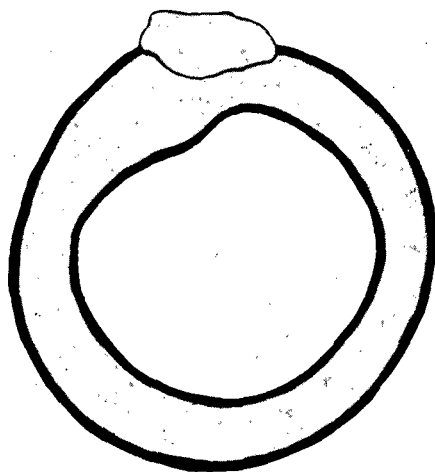


Fig. 2. Plan of Castal an Dui Fort.

3. *Castal an Dui*.—About a quarter of a mile to the east, and just to the north of the public road, are the ruins of what Pennant (on the authority of Rev. James Stewart of Killin) calls Castal an Dui (fig. 2). It was apparently the most complete of the group in Pennant's time (1769), and is relatively so still. The foundation of the great circular wall is traceable all round with approximate completeness, and on the north and north-east some courses of the cyclopean drystone masonry are in position. The most remarkable feature is the great boulder,

20 feet 8 inches long, 10 feet 6 inches high, and 11 feet thick which formed part of the wall to the north on the outside. On the inside the builders erected a wall about 8 feet thick or, in places, more, and I suggest that their reason for doing so was that they were merely incorporating this huge block in a wall which, when complete, was to rise considerably above its highest point. The situation of the door is uncertain, but we considered the likeliest position to be due south.

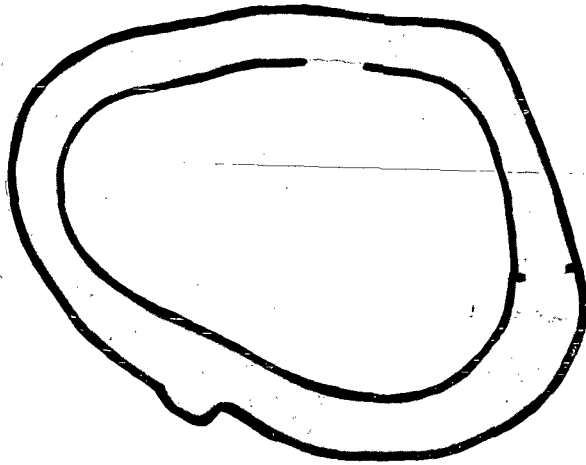


Fig. 3. Plan of Caisteal a' Chonbhacain.

The floor of the fort has a distinct slope southwards. There is a small morass in the rear, and the Lyon is perhaps 200 yards distant. The diameter and thickness of wall (except at the point where the great stone comes in) are very similar to those of No. 2.

4. *Caisteal a' Chonbhacain*.—The next of the group (fig. 3) stands a little more than a quarter of a mile eastwards, and on the south side of the road, immediately within the roadside wall. It is known as Caisteal a' Chonbhacain, from a remarkable stone in its vicinity, which was till

recent times practically an idol. This fort, as will be seen from the plan, is decidedly oval in shape. In Pennant's time the door was still extant "at the east end, low and narrow, covered with a flag." Its position may still be discerned, and the thickness of the wall at the door is a little over 11 feet. Inside the fort at the east end there are the remains of a wall 4 feet thick running from north to south, forming a complete chord, except for a break immediately in front of the door. Whether this wall is secondary or part of the original structure I do not venture to suggest. The wall-faces are well defined almost all round, but the S.W. is best, showing some courses of the original masonry. The stones between the two wall-faces are rather small, the building presenting the appearance of two strong walls with stones thrown in promiscuously. I draw attention to the curious "eke" in the masonry on the S.W. side, which is undoubtedly structural and not accidental. This is the only one of all the structures I have examined which shows a decided divergence from the circle. Its dimensions are: longest axis, 95 feet 6 inches; wall, 8 feet 6 inches to 14 feet 6 inches.

5. *Cashlie*.—The fourth of the Cashlie towers is a few yards south of the road, right in front of Cashlie farmhouse, now a shooting lodge. Though a quantity of large stones marks the site, the structure has been so badly knocked about that we found it impossible to take measurements sufficient for a plan. It was, however, apparently not circular, but rather oval. Its walls appeared to vary from about 9 feet to 12 feet 6 inches in thickness. It was larger than Nos. 2 and 3.

The fifth of the Cashlie group is said to have been on the south side of the river, a little to the east of Dalchiarlich farmhouse. There may be some remains of it, but I failed to see any, and Mr M'Kerchar, the tenant of Dalchiarlich, who was born there and has lived for over sixty years between Dalchiarlich and Cashlie, half a mile away, could give me no help.

Between Cashlie and Bridge of Balgie, a distance of nearly eight miles, no remains of forts appear, but I had some faint tradition of one

having been at Gealainn, where the house of the factor for Meggernie is now, about a mile to the east of the River Conait, a left-bank tributary of the Lyon flowing from Loch Damh and Loch Giorra. By this way ran a pass called Lairig Meachdainn, leading to Rannoch, coming out at Camghouran, on the south side of Loch Rannoch. There is no other pass either to the north or to the south between Cashlie and Bridge of Balgie.

Bridge of Balgie is twelve miles from Fortingal, half way or so between Fortingal and Pubil. It is an old and handsome bridge of great strength, spanning the Lyon just above Linne Bhalgaigh, a great deep pool, circular or bag-shaped, as its name indicates. Here the hill road from Edramucky on Loch Tay-side joins the main Glen Lyon road, coming from the south by a gap called Lairig an Lochain or Pass of the Lochlet. Two miles from Bridge of Balgie another important pass branches off in a south-westerly direction. This pass is known as Lairig Bhreislich, and it comes out at Dunchroisg in Glen Lochay, five miles above Killin.

6. Just below the junction of these two passes, on a green terrace on the left bank of Allt a' Mhuilinn, are the sorely battered remnants of another tower. The terrace was in recent times the site of a homestead, the buildings of which and the remains of the tower are jumbled up in such confusion that I refrain from giving measurements.

Glen Lyon tradition has it that a Menteith man leading a raid on Glen Lyon was slain by an arrow from this tower. The place where he fell is still known as *Dail an Tèadhaich*, the Menteith man's dale. I had this from Mr J. MacDiarmid, Dunruchan, Muthil.

Half a mile east of Bridge of Balgie is Innerwick, where a market called *an Fheill Muice*, the Swine Fair, was wont to be held. Northward therefrom runs *Lairig Muice*, the Swine Pass, making for Dall on the south side of Loch Rannoch; and branching from it to the right, about a mile north of Innerwick, is Lairig Chalbha, coming out at Carie, two miles east of Dall.

7. *Kerrowclach*.—Just opposite Innerwick, on the south side of Lyon and adjacent to a ford, is the site of the tower of Kerrowclach, on the farm of Kerrowmore. Its stones were used, says Mr Duncan Campbell, to form an embankment for the Lyon at this point. The approximate measurements we took show it to have been nearly circular, with a wall of about 12 feet. It was a large fort, with an external diameter of about 86 feet. A quarter of a mile to the west of it is the ancient graveyard of Brenno, with the heptagonal font of the Kirk of Brenno. All trace of the church is gone.

8. *Camas Bhracuinn*.—About two miles east of Innerwick, the U.F. Manse at Camas Bhracuinn occupies the site of a tower which I have not seen, but of which the foundations existed within living memory. The spot is at the entrance to a subsidiary pass which joins Lairig Chalbha above mentioned.

9. *Roro*.—A little to the east, but on the south side of the river, and less than half a mile west of the farmhouse of Roro, on the flat, and touching the south side of the cart road, are the remains of another tower (fig. 4). The outer wall-face is fairly distinct all round, but the inner one is found with certainty only at intervals. A peculiarity of this fort is that its floor is quite 2 feet below the level of the surrounding surface. Within the fort are the broken-down walls of a building which was used as a school, constructed, of course, out of the materials of the fort. Mr Cameron, the tenant of Roro, told me that his father had attended that school. Though most of the stones have been removed, there still remain enough of great blocks to make the site impressive. A little to the west the sparkling Allt Caor comes down from the skirts of Ben Lawers, through a pass which runs by the western flank of the mountain to Carie of Loch Tay. The Roro fort is nearly circular, with an external diameter of 80 feet, and wall of about 11 feet to 14 feet in thickness.

10. *Carn Bàn*.—The next site is on the north side of Lyon, about five miles east of Camas Bhracuinn, on the farm of Balentyre. The fort

(fig. 5) stood on the very edge of the ancient lake terrace, which runs here at a little distance north of the public road. It is about a quarter of a mile west of the farmhouse of Balentyre, which is on the same terrace, and immediately behind the cottage which stands close to the public road. It is in the last stage of dilapidation, but nevertheless the great foundation stones of its outer wall-face can be seen *in*

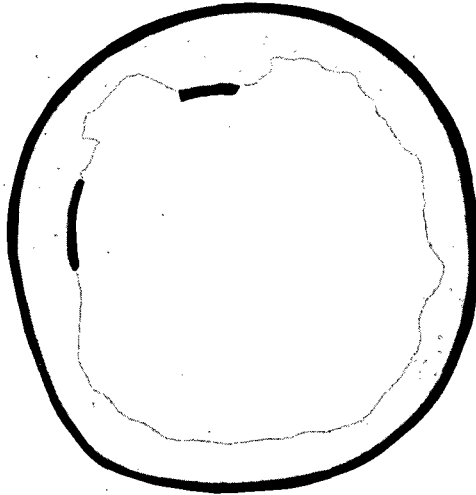


Fig. 4. Plan of Roro Fort.

situ for three-fourths of its circumference. The inner face has suffered so much that we could not determine it with certainty at any point. The fort was nearly circular, with an external diameter of about 87 feet. The spot selected for its site is a little to the east of the entrance to Lairig Bharra, the pass that goes from Inveryar to Carie on Loch Rannoch. About half way across, another pass branches off to the right through Gleann Sasunn, the Glen of the Saxons, and comes out at Inverhadden near Kinloch-Rannoch. Here, on the north side of

the Tummel from Inverhadden, is a place bearing the significant name of Druim a' Chaisteil, Castle Ridge, but I have not visited this site.

At Chesthill, a mile or so below Balentyre, one enters the magnificent Pass of Lyon. The defile is quite two miles long, and after traversing the gorge the Lyon enters on the final part of its course along the level

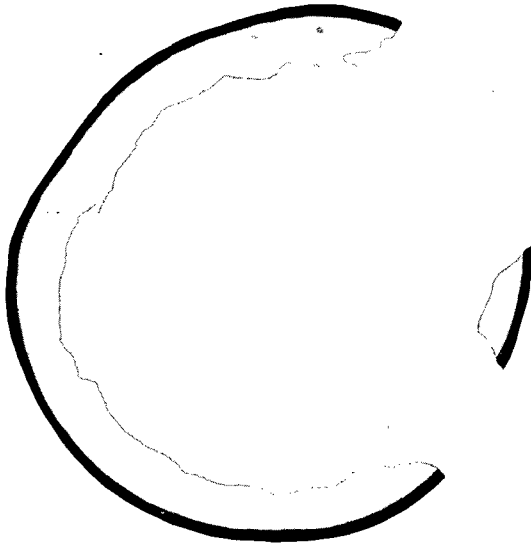


Fig. 5. Plan of Carn Bàn Fort.

and peaceful plain of Fortingal, skirting as it goes the north side of Drummond Hill.

11. *Dun Geal*.—Here, about a mile to the east of the pass, a little N.E. of Fortingal Hotel, and immediately above the farmhouse of Balnacraig, stood a tower known locally as An Dun Geal, the White Fort (fig. 6). It is built near the edge of one of those precipitous rocky bluffs that characterise the north side of the valley from Fortingal to Killiechassie. The eminence on which it stands is about 400 feet

above the level of the plain below, and is commanded by a considerably higher eminence to the N.W. The view from it extends on the S.E. to Aberfeldy and a little way beyond ; on the S.W. to the short pass from Fearnan to Fortingal. This fort is the only one of the circular towers, so far as I have observed, that makes any pretension to strength of site. It is also by far the most impressive of the Glen Lyon group, for its

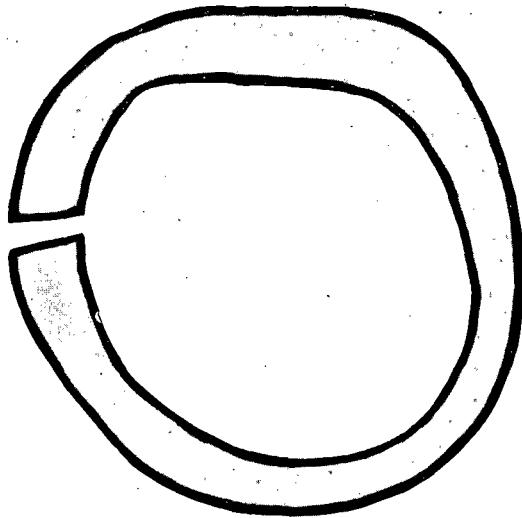


Fig. 6. Plan of Dun Geal. (No. 11.)

circle is complete all round, and in most parts the inner and outer wall-faces are seen clearly, with here and there a few feet of the masonry (figs. 7-10). Its comparatively good state of preservation is partly to be ascribed to its position, which is difficult of access for carts. Nevertheless an aged mason of Fortingal assured me that he himself had succeeded in taking an enormous quantity of stones out of it. The Dun Geal has within it the foundations of three or four structures, the largest of



Fig. 7. Dun Geal from the east. (No. 11.)
Drummond Hill on left ; spur of Lawers range in right distance.



Fig. 8. Dun Geal from the east. (No. 11.)
Drummond Hill on left ; spur of Lawers range in right distance.



Fig. 9. Dun Geal from the west. (No. 11.) Dull Rock in the distance (left hand); Drummond Hill on right.



Fig. 10. Dun Geal—part of outside wall. (No. 11.)

which is rather oval, with one end abutting on the fort wall, the others small and circular. Immediately to the east of it are the foundations of three very small circular structures. The narrow door faced westwards. The line of the south side of the entrance seems quite clear; the northern side is not so clear. The entrance seems to have been a little over 3 feet wide. From about the middle of the southern part of the circumference, the foundation of a strong wall runs right out to the precipice, and from a point on the north side directly opposite this, a similar wall runs N.E. towards a small marsh north of the eminence on which the fort stands. Just eastwards of the fort is another slight eminence, with, on its eastern side, an old wall running right to the precipice on the south, and northwards into and through the marsh, and beyond it. These walls may or may not have been part of the defences. The external diameter of the fort is a little over 87 feet; its wall varies in thickness from about 8 feet to 14 feet.

12. *Litigan*.—The next and last tower in the valley of the Lyon stood on a small eminence a little to the N.W. of the farmhouse of Lower Litigan, on the right cheek of Keltney Burn. The ruin stands in a cultivated field, and, indeed, part of the fort itself (fig. 11) is cultivated. Notwithstanding this, the remains make a fair show for two-thirds of the circumference; on the S.W., however, every vestige is gone except at one point. The site is fairly elevated, and commands a good view up the pass through which runs the public road from Coshieville to Kinloch-Rannoch and Strath Tummel, while to the S.E. lies Appin of Dull. Directly south of it, on the other side of the Lyon valley, and on a precipitous spur of Drummond Hill overlooking Strath Tay to the east as far as the Braes of Tullymet, is the large rude hill fort of Dun Mac Tuathail. The fort of Litigan was rather oval than circular, with a greatest external diameter of 73 feet, and wall 9 to 12 feet thick.

Pennant mentions two forts on Loch Tay. "One lies on the north side of Loch Tay, about five miles east of Killin, above the public

road. The other, called *Caisteal Baraora*, about a quarter of a mile from the lake, and a measured mile east of Achmore, the seat of Mr Campbel of Achalader." The site indicated for the former of these two forts is just at the starting point of the present public road from Loch Tay-side to Glen Lyon, by Làirig an Lochain. I got no tradition of a fort at this place, nor could I find any remains of one.

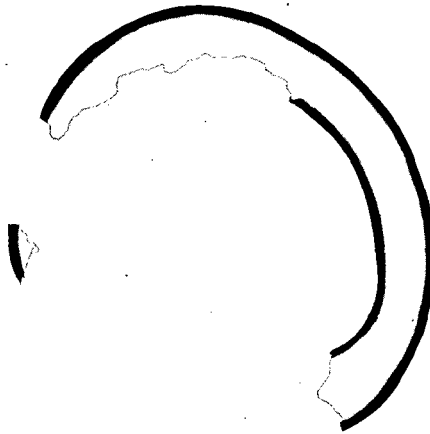


Fig. 11. Plan of Litigan Fort. (No. 12.)

It is just possible that the information got by Pennant referred to fort No. 6, at the Glen Lyon end of the pass.

13. Remains of *Caisteal Baraora* still exist, but the distance from Loch Tay is understated. The name is *Caisteal Bràigh an Radhaire*, "the castle at the upper part of the outfield," or as Mr J. MacDiarmid has it, "Castle of Brianraray."¹ The site is approached through thick birch wood, and is not over easy to find. Last summer I got within a short distance of it, but had to turn back, as grouse were being

¹ *Transactions of Gaelic Society of Inverness*, xxvi. p. 141. Blaeu's map shows *Bareyra*, placed with approximate correctness.

driven on the moor adjacent. Pennant's description of the great fort on the adjoining height may be supplemented by that given by Mr MacDiarmid.¹ There may be remains of others on the south side of Loch Tay, but I know of none between this and Grandtully, half way between Aberfeldy and Ballinluig. There on the north side of Tay, right opposite Grandtully station, there are two close together, the Black Castle of Pitcastle and the Black Castle of Tullypowrie.

14. *Pitcastle*.—The former stands on an eminence amid the cultivated ground on the farm of Pitcastle. It is somewhat overgrown with blackthorns, and has been so mishandled besides that I could not well measure it. There is no doubt, however, that it is of the same type, general size, and thickness of wall as those already described.

15. *Tullypowrie*.—The other stands about a quarter of a mile to the east, a hollow with small stream intervening. A disused quarry, which lies about midway between the two forts, forms a convenient and known landmark. The remains of the fort are on the farm of Middleton of Tullypowrie, at the foot of a cultivated field. They are much more considerable than those of No. 14, but are so excessively overgrown by blackthorn that all measurement was out of the question. I judged this to be the larger of the two.

The next group of towers which I investigated lies on the north side of the Tummel basin, where I examined three, two on the farm of Borenich and one near the Queen's View.

16. There is, however, at least one besides, also on the north side of Loch Tummel, and a mile due west of that just to be described.

17. *Borenich*.—This fort stands on the moor about a quarter of a mile north of Borenich farmhouse, and about 300 yards east of the burn which runs by the cultivated fields to the north of the public road. This is quite a large ruin (figs. 12 and 13), in a comparatively fair state

¹ *Transactions of Gaelic Society of Inverness*, xxvi. p. 141.

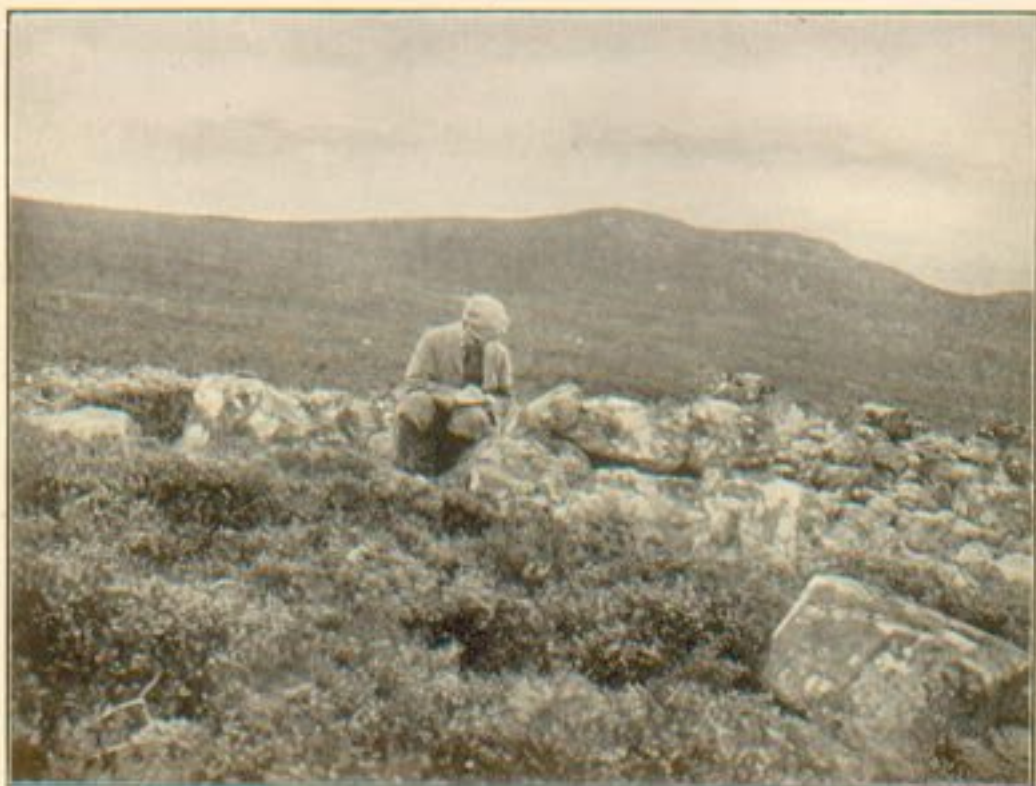


Fig. 12. Borenich Fort. (No. 17.)

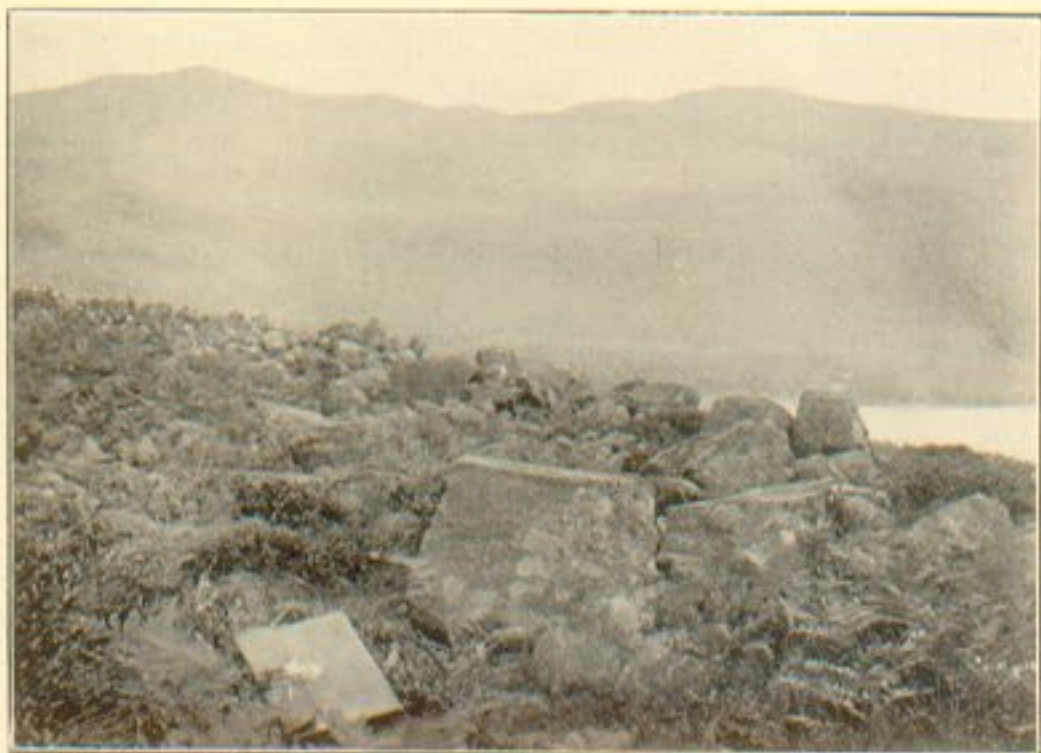


Fig. 13. Borenich Fort. (No. 17.)

of preservation. A stretch of wall on the north side is still about 4 feet high on the inner face, but is obscured by a large quantity of fallen stones. The doorway faces the west, but its exact breadth is not clear. The outer wall-face is very distinct all round. The fort was nearly circular, with an external diameter of 68 feet, and wall of an almost uniform thickness of 10 feet, in this respect differing from the



Fig. 14. Borenich Fort. (No. 17.) Loch Tummel and Schiehallion.

walls of the forts described above. The site gives a fine view of Schiehallion and Loch Tummel (fig. 14), but eastwards the view is cut off by Borenich Rock. The foundation of a wall starts immediately to the south of the doorway (left hand looking west), and runs for about 15 yards, terminating in a stony mound which may or may not have been a stone hut. Another wall starts from a point a little more to the left, runs for about the same length, and terminates similarly.

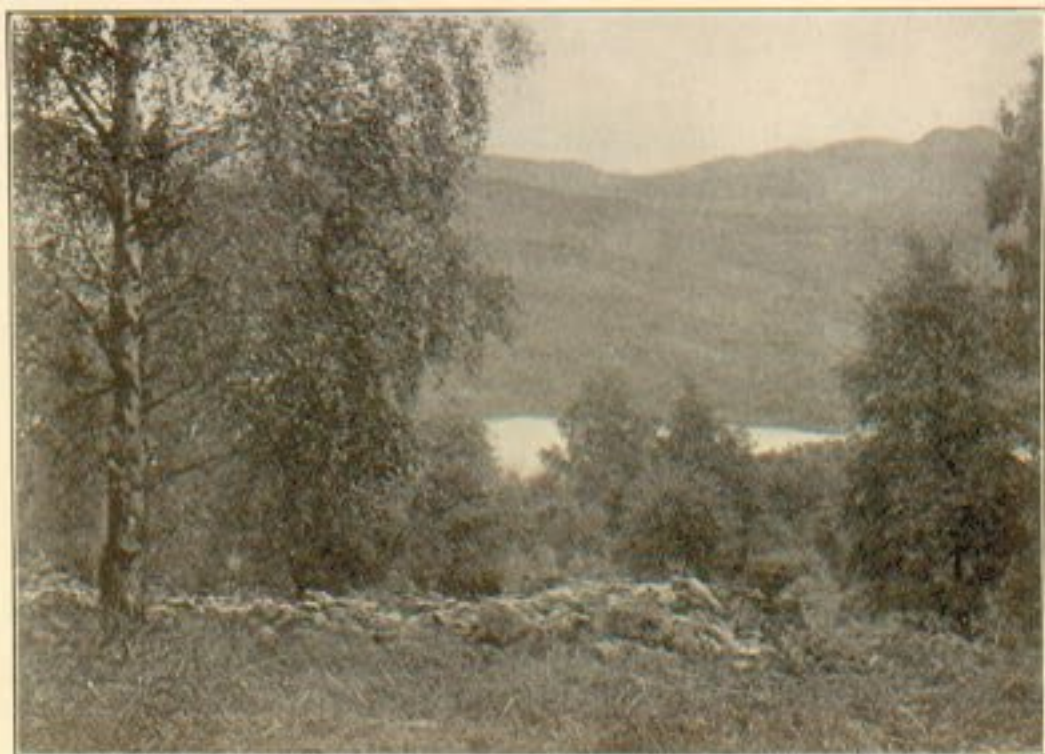


Fig. 15. Borenich Fort. (No. 18.) A glimpse of Loch Tummel.

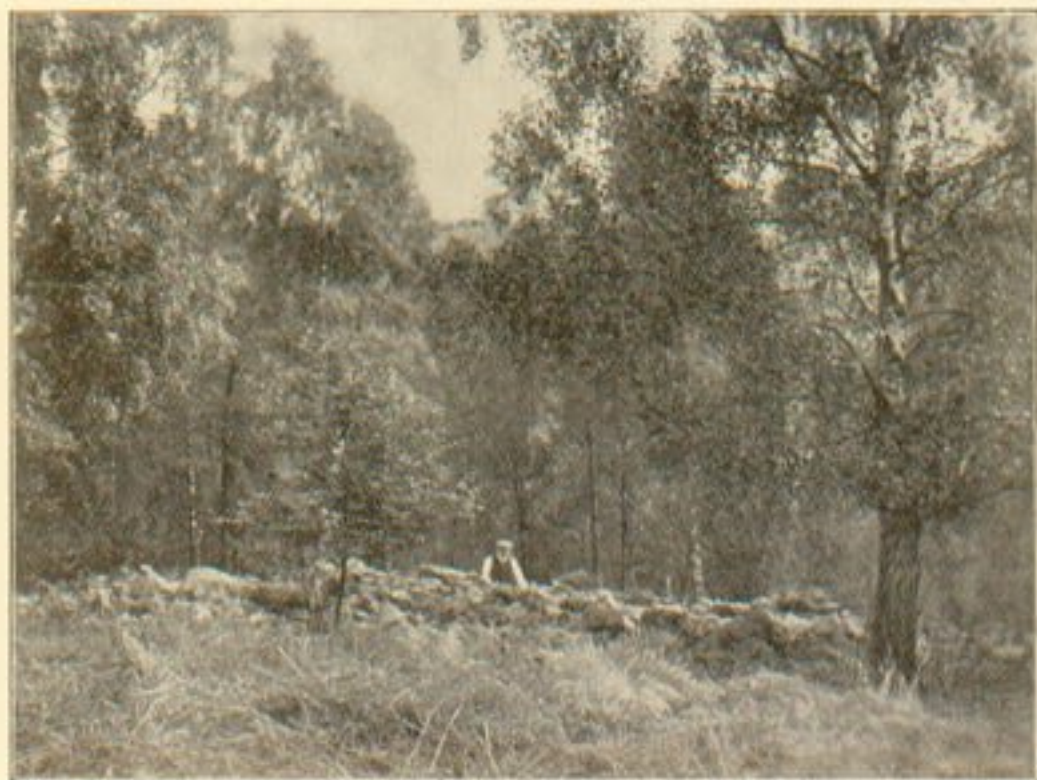


Fig. 16. Borenich Fort. (No. 18.)

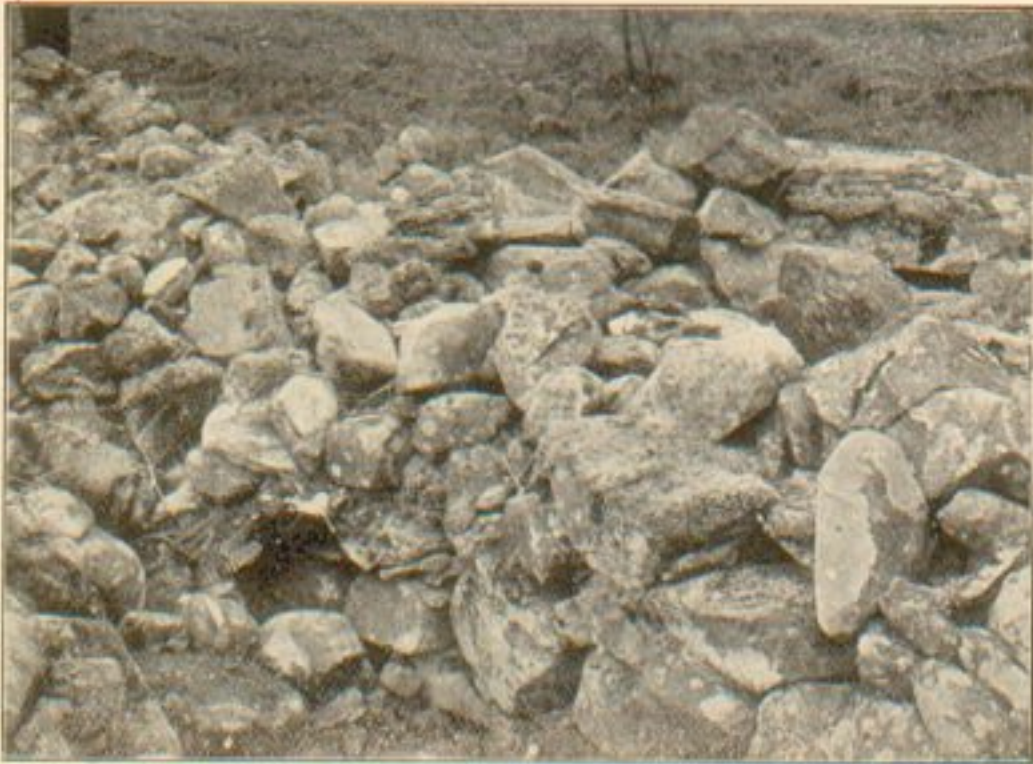


Fig. 17. Borenich Fort. (No. 18.) Part of inner wall-face.

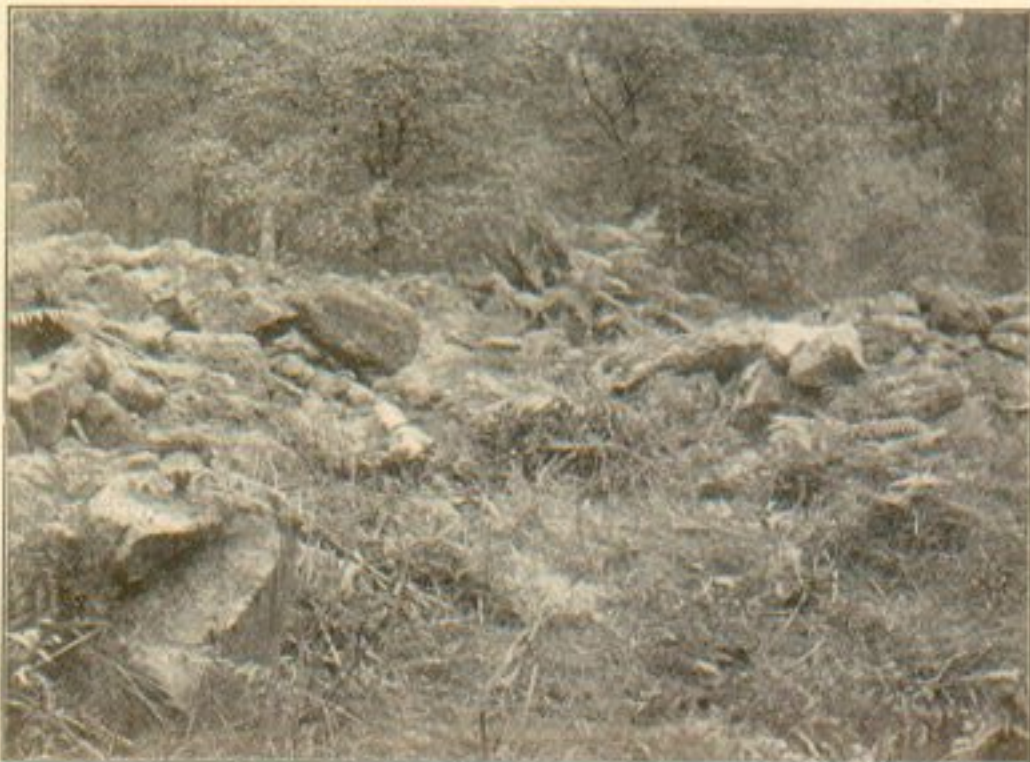


Fig. 18. Borenich Fort. (No. 18.) Entrance.

There are several small cairns in the vicinity, and a little to the east is the foundation of an oval structure (stone and earth) of about 11 yards by 8 yards, paced. The fort is placed near the mouth of a pass leading to near Baile nan Stiubhartach in Atholl.

18. *Borenich*.—The second fort is less than half a mile east of Borenich farmhouse, in a birch wood on the south side of the public road, about



Fig. 19. Queen's View Fort. (No. 19.) Schiehallion and Loch Tummel.

100 yards from the road, and visible therefrom. This, again, is a considerable ruin (figs. 15 and 16). It also shows about 4 feet of the original inside wall-face on the north for a distance of about 20 feet, and here also the wall is obscured by a great quantity of stones that have fallen inside the fort (figs. 17 and 18). The door faced west, and was narrow, a little over 3 feet, as I should judge. The fort seemed to have been not quite circular. Its greatest external diameter is 66

feet, with a wall of from 9 to 10 feet of fairly uniform thickness. Some cairns lie close by, but I saw no external wall. It will be seen that this fort was very similar to its companion fort about three-quarters of a mile distant, except that its situation is a good deal lower.

19. *Queen's View*.—The fort at Queen's View is quite a mile to the east of No. 17, and is situated about 300 yards north of the public road and a little to the west of the dyke. A large rowan tree growing within it forms a distinctive landmark (fig. 19). The view from this point is very fine indeed. The fort is nearly circular. I made the external diameter 77 feet, and its wall about 10 feet thick. The door faced the west, so far as I could judge. Although the place has been mercilessly quarried, the huge stones that remain, especially on the north side, form a striking sight, and give a strong idea of the power and solidity of the original structure (figs. 20 and 21). A glance at the map will show the relation of this fort to the pass from the east leading to the north side of Loch Tummel.

On the opposite side of the river, and directly to the south, is Dun Teamhalach (Duntanlich), meaning Tummel Fort, and I regretted that I could not inspect a place bearing a name so promising.

I greatly regretted also that time and daylight failed me to examine the "castle" at the entrance to Fincastle Glen, though I passed near it. The whole of this glen deserves examination.

The next group of "castles" that came under my observation, though imperfectly, is below the great pass of Killiecrankie, near Pitlochrie.

20. *Pitlochrie*.—The first of these is on the upper Pitlochrie golf course. It was very large. The inner wall is perfectly clear at two points, which are fortunately directly opposite to each other, and the distance between these points is 80 feet. The external diameter I made 107 feet, and the thickness of the wall where it can be tested is 13 feet 6 inches. On the east side a few courses of the masonry of the inner



Fig. 20. Queen's View Fort. (No. 19.) Schiehallion and Loch Tummel.

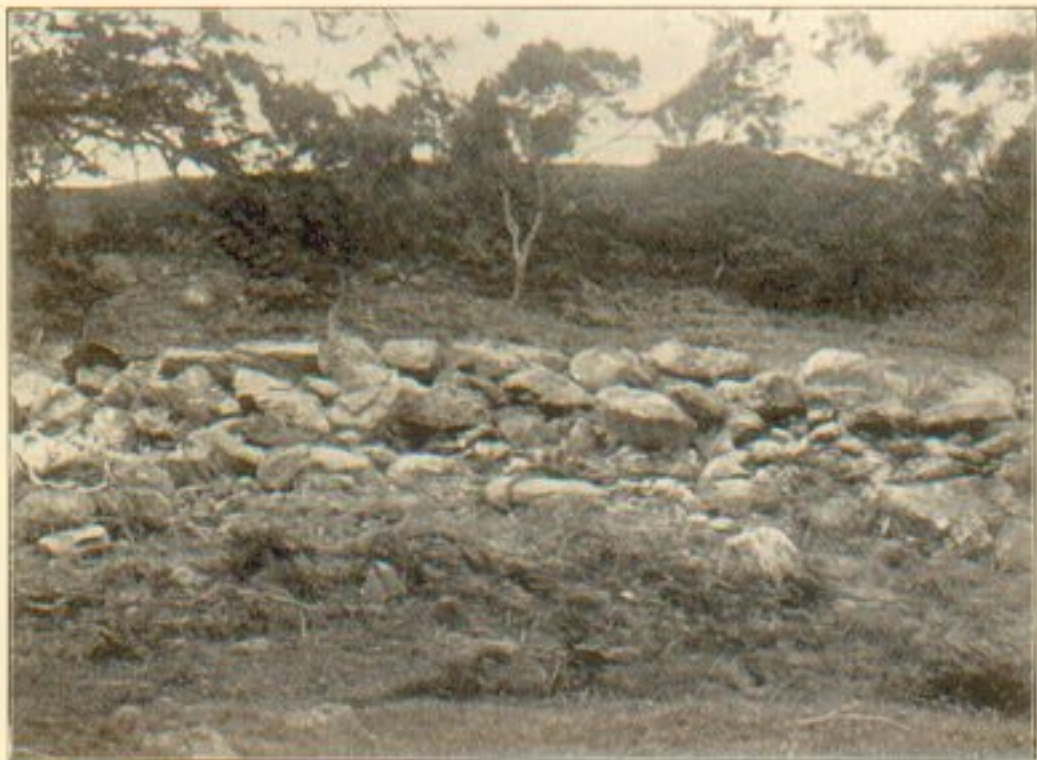


Fig. 21. Part of interior of Queen's View Fort. (No. 19.)

wall-face are still in position. The view extends south to the pass of Dunkeld. Two driving "tees" have been constructed on the wall, one on the west side, the other on the east. The stones that remain are large, but not so large as in several other forts.

21. *Edradour*.—Eastwards of Pitlochrie, Pennant mentions the Black Castle of Edradour, 60 feet in diameter, with wall 8 feet thick. I had no opportunity of seeing what remains, if any, exist, but I talked with a middle-aged man who knew the ruin. Pennant also records another on an eminence to the south of it, but of this I learned nothing.

22. *Pitcastle*.—Three miles below Pitlochrie, on the high ground above Moulinearn, there are the remains of a circular fort on the farm of Pitcastle. The site is south of the public road, and a little S.W. of the farmhouse. It is planted, but not thickly, and surrounded by a wall. The interior of the fort is fairly clear. The faces of the wall are visible here and there, but there are few large stones visible, most of the facing stones having been removed. The form was fairly circular, with an internal diameter of about 68 feet. The wall measured approximately from not less than 8 feet to 13 feet.

I have now described such circular forts as I observed, or know to exist, in the basins of the Lyon, Upper Tay, and Tummel. Another group exists in the Amulree district—Glenquaich and Strathbraan.

23. *Glenquaich*.—Of these I saw only one, that on the south side of Loch Freuchie, on a slight eminence immediately to the south of the public road, and a very little east of the U.F. Church. It is exceedingly dilapidated. The inner wall-face is practically obliterated. The external diameter is about 83 feet, but the thickness of the wall could not be determined with certainty at any point. The site commands a wide prospect eastwards. It is right in the mouth of the pass leading from Achnafree in Glen Almond to Glenquaich, whence one goes N.W. to Kenmore, or by way of Amulree and Glen Cochuil to Aberfeldy, or east by Strath Braan to Dunkeld.

This fort is called in Gaelic, *Caisteal Dubh nan Crò*, the black castle of the pens or folds. I do not know why it is so called.

24. After I had left the district, I learned from the Rev. A. Dewar, minister of Amulree, that there are remains of a fort of the same kind on the farm of Deanshaugh, at the mouth of Glen Cochuil, the pass by which the public road goes from Amulree to Aberfeldy.

25. Mr Dewar also informs me that there are remains of another in Glenquaich, near the foot of Lairig Mile Marcaich, the pass by which runs the road from Kenmore to Glenquaich; while there are two mounds a little to the east of the shepherd's house at Garrow, Glenquaich, which are reputed to mark the sites of two more.

The structures thus described resemble the brochs in respect of thickness of wall, and in possessing only one entrance. They differ from the brochs in possessing a much larger diameter. Whether they contained chambers is a point that can be settled only by excavation; inspection reveals nothing certain. In view of the lowness of the remains, no trace of galleries can be expected, unless, indeed, the gallery started on the ground floor, as it does in the structures found by Dr Erskine Beveridge in Tiree and called by him "semi-brochs." On the other hand, the fort on *Suidhe Cheanathaidh* near Barrachander (Kilchrenan, Loch Awe), partly excavated by Dr Christison, showed neither chambers nor gallery, though in other respects quite broch-like. I saw this fort in 1911, and Mr Charles Macdonald, Barrachander, informed me that he had known it for fifty years, that he had seen its walls about 16 feet high, and that it had no galleries. It is to be noted that the fort on the east side of Loch Lomond, two miles north of Balmaha, which was excavated by Mr David MacRitchie, possesses chambers and broch-like walls, and that it also was called *Caisteal nam Fiann*. Whether it had galleries or not appears uncertain.

With regard to the situation of these circular forts, it has to be observed in the first instance that they are by no means hill forts. The true hill fort of this region of Perthshire is regularly placed on a

commanding and, on one side, precipitous eminence, 1000 feet or more above the sea, and affording an extensive prospect. Such are the forts (1) on the south side of Loch Tay, S.E. of Killin, already mentioned; (2) Dun Mac Tuathail, on Drummond Hill; (3) the Dun to the south of Aberfeldy; (4) the Black Castle of Balnaguard; (5) the fort on Killiehangie Rock.¹ The masonry of these hill forts closely resembles that of the circular forts, both in structure and in thickness of wall, and they may have been built by the same people. They would, however, require a paper to themselves. The circular forts, with one exception, viz. No. 11 above, show no desire whatever for strength of situation. All of them are well within the limit of modern cultivation, and the great majority of them are quite close to the present public road. Nor, again, have the sites been chosen with special view to a water-supply, as is so often found in the case of our northern brochs. It may be inferred, therefore, that their occupants were content to trust to the strength of the wall, and did not expect to have to stand a siege. The possibility of a regular siege was, indeed, practically discounted by the fact that these forts never stand isolated. They are regularly so placed that any one can be supported by two or more neighbouring forts,² and thus a siege, to be effective, would have required a body of men sufficient to invest a whole group.

What, then, was the determining factor in the choice of site? To this there can be only one answer. Every single fort, or combination of forts, is placed with reference to a pass. The forts were meant to guard the passes. It may be fairly said that invading bands were

¹ The fort on the Rock of Fonnvuick, below Killiecrankie, is also, I am told, of this class, but of it I cannot speak with certainty. The *Old Statistical Account* (vol. ii. 475) calls it "a large round castle."

² The case of *Caisteal Bràigh an Radhair* (No. 13) seems exceptional. But (1) it was quite close to a great hill fort; (2) there was a fort called *Dùn Lòcha*, on the Lochay at Killin. And there may have been other forts on the south side of Loch Tay and at its western end.

not obliged to use the passes : they might come right over the hills. Here, however, the object of such raids must be kept in view. The objective of the raiders was cattle, and while the raiders themselves might get in to Glen Lyon and elsewhere without using the passes, it was only by way of the passes that cattle could be driven out. The game of cattle-lifting is older than any history. The Celts were always fond of it, and the prestige of a chief who proved himself inactive in this respect was lowered. A Gaulish tribe in the pay of Attalus of Pergamos was called the Agosages, Steer-questers. In this connection the group of four forts close together near the head of Glen Lyon, with one advanced outlying fort right at the passes, suggests that special danger was apprehended from the west, by way of Glen Orchy and the wester Glen Lochy (*Gleann Lòcha Urchaidh* as distinguished from the easter Glen Lochay at Killin, which is *Gleann Lòcha Albannach*).¹ The fortifications in the neighbourhood of Pitlochrie and the pass of Killiecrankie require further study, but it may be remarked that the Pitlochrie group appear to have been situated with regard both to the pass from Glen Briarachan and Straloch and to the great pass of Killiecrankie, and that the general arrangement resembles that at the head of Glen Lyon.

The disposition of these circular forts might be thought to indicate the boundary of a province, but our present knowledge is too incomplete to warrant such an inference. It is, however, safe to say that the arrangement is systematic and implies no mean degree of combination on the part of the builders. One might be inclined to go further, and say that the dispositions at the head of Glen Lyon, the

¹ The strategic point at the junction of Glen Orchy and Glen Lochy (by the latter of which one enters Glen Dochart at Tyndrum) is Dalmally. Dalmally was fortified, but I have not seen its fortifications. The other great pass leading into Glen Dochart from Loch Lomond side and Inveraray is Glen Falloch. The fortifications of Glen Falloch were, so far as I can learn without visiting the spot, near Glen Falloch farm-house, where *Làirig Airnein*, the pass from Inveraray, meets Glen Falloch.

foot of Strath Tummel, and even, perhaps, below Killiecrankie (if we suppose the forts in these groups to have been occupied simultaneously) provided accommodation much in excess of the requirements of any possible population in those districts, and have the appearance of a garrison. There is nothing in the early history of Scotland to preclude the idea of organisation and system. At the battle of Mons Graupius in 85 A.D. the native Caledonians turned out 30,000 strong under one leader, Calgacus, and whether they were defeated so signally as Tacitus would have us believe or not, the Romans advanced no further then. In 1314 A.D., King Robert Bruce, with a year's preparation, mustered less than 30,000 men for Bannockburn. The possibility of a quasi-military occupation of the forts accords with tradition, which calls them *Caisteilean nam Fiann*, Castles of the Fiann. The Fiann, as Professor Kuno Meyer has lately pointed out,¹ were bands of warriors under the rule of a leader or chief, and having some relation, though its exact nature is difficult to define, to a central authority. The institution was common to Ireland and Scotland. It is notable that this is the only group of forts in Scotland, so far as I am aware, with regard to which there is a definite tradition.

The district in which these fortifications occur formed the northern part of the old province of Fortrenn. The name Fortrenn is derived, through Gaelic phonetics, from the tribe of the Verturiones, mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus (*circ.* 364 A.D.) as one of the two divisions of the Picts. Principal Sir John Rhŷs has explained the name Verturiones as a derivative of *Vertera*, which in the locative plural form *Verteris* was the name of a place in Westmoreland, now called Brough-under-Stanmore.² *Vertera* is represented in Welsh by *gwerthyr*, a fortification. Verturiones therefore means "men of the strongholds," or "fortress-folk." In Gaelic phonetics *Vertera* would become *Fortair*, or, in modern Gaelic, *Fartair*. Now, the name *Fortingal* (accented on

¹ *Fianaigecht*: Todd Lecture Series, vol. xvi.

² *Celtic Britain*; Additional Notes.

the first syllable) is a late Englished form of the Gaelic *Fartairchill*, substantially the same to-day as it was in the thirteenth century, when it was spelled *Forterkil*. The first part of Forter-kil, then, means "stronghold." The latter part is *cill*, locative of *ceall*, a church, a loan from Latin *cella*, a cell. The parish church of Fortingal, with its famous yew-tree, is of great antiquity as an ecclesiastical site, and there is reason to believe that in its immediate vicinity there was a pagan place of meeting and of judgment.¹ Further, it lies close to the rock on which stands the great fort of Dun Geal (No. 11), which may therefore be taken as having supplied the differentiating part of its name of *Forter-kil* or Fortress-church. The term Forter occurs also in the name of the ancient castle of the Ogilvies in Glen Isla, the site of which was occupied by a prehistoric fort. Philological evidence, therefore, points to the conclusion that the circular forts under consideration were the fortifications which caused the Caledonians of the district between Forth and Tay to receive their distinctive name of Verturiones, or "men of the strongholds."

For the photographic illustrations I am indebted to the Rev. M. N. Munro, Taynuilt.

¹ Duneaves, on the opposite bank of the Lyon, is in Gaelic *Tigh Neimhidh*, House of the Nemed. *Nemed*, Gaulish *Nemeton*, was a pagan meeting-place, analogous to the Norse *Thing*.