

WILD LIFE OF SCOTLAND

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Wild life of Scotland by J. H. Crawford

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J. H. CRAWFORD

**WILD LIFE
OF SCOTLAND**



Wild Life of Scotland

By J. H. CRAWFORD, F.L.S.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN WILLIAMSON

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INTRODUCTION



IN times less secure than our own, refuges were placed down, at intervals, over the untamed country, according to the special needs and dangers of the place. A common site was the river bank, or the entrance to the mountain pass, where the traveller might rest till the brown water subsided, or the daylight returned.

Scotland abounds in flooded streams, and stern passes. At the southern end of a road, leading over the central Grampian ridge to and from Braemar, stands the 'spital, or hospital of Glenshee. Everything seems to point to the genesis of the present hamlet in an ancient shelter. The scene is typical. And if, in imagination, we refill the shades, cast by the then dense woodland, with wild beasts, the reason for the choice will become still more apparent. It must be difficult for those who now

halt by the way at the inn, to realise a past state of things.

As a last resource, much of the wood was destroyed; and the tenants thereof dealt with on more equal terms. So began a war of extermination, only justifiable as a measure of self-preservation, which was not without its sacrifices. The mischief, as far as the trees are concerned, we are slowly repairing; often with no other view than to soften and vary the hardness and monotony of the landscapes. What about the animals?

Toward the close of last century, a temporary movement began; which soon spent itself, and seems to have excited so little attention, that, probably, its very existence is not generally known.

Its object was to restore some of the exiles thus, unceremoniously, driven forth. The boldest advocate of things as they were, acknowledged that these islands were too contracted for the larger, and more dangerous of the wild animals to be turned loose; and drew the line at the bear, and the wolf.

But, it seemed to some that it might increase the picturesqueness even of such hills as ours, if the reindeer were once more to walk along the ridges,