

# **THE CAIRNGORM MOUNTAINS**

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The Cairngorm Mountains by John Hill Burton

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**JOHN HILL BURTON**

**THE CAIRNGORM  
MOUNTAINS**



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THE

CAIRNGORM MOUNTAINS

BY

JOHN HILL BURTON

AUTHOR OF 'THE BOOK-HUNTER,' ETC.

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*Five money*

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THE  
CAIRNGORM MOUNTAINS.

"I had a dream that was not all a dream."



IT befell me once, on a ramble otherwise fruitful of the pleasantest recollections, to have been afflicted with an oppressive dream, which, entirely eluding the reminiscences of several years, some of which had brought their own enjoyments, fixed itself down on a dreary period of school discipline, and recalled its most oppressive features all too vividly. There was nothing in the scenes and adventures of the day before, nor in those that might be expected to come with the morrow, to

call up weary or oppressive visions. I had walked up between the limestone walls of the valley of Lauterbrunnen, and had seen the Jungfrau spread forth her vast robe of snow before the sun, as if in haughty defiance of his power. I had examined as closely as one who does not want a sousing could the great Staubbach, or Fall of Dust, called the highest cataract in Europe; but perhaps it should be called the largest shower-bath, since, as the traveller usually sees it, it is all dispersed into a heavy rain before it reaches the green meadows of Lauterbrunnen. After this, I had gone up the Wengern Alp as the night was falling, had watched the darkening, and had seen that, while the top of the Staubbach glittered in the setting sun, it passed downwards from pink to purple, deepening as it went, so that the ribbon of water lost itself in blackness, while the snows of the mountain, after bathing themselves in rosy light, sank also into darkness as the night walked upwards. Next day was for the Grindelwald glacier, the great cataract of the Reichenbach, and the long rocky stair that descends into many-fountained Meyringen. Surely there was nothing in all this to call up the dreariest recollections of bygone days; yet so it was, that although all previous

nights on the same excursion had been mere blanks between the days' enjoyments, and the beds rested on left no other recollection but the intensity of the sleep they bestowed, this night was crowded with the whole history of certain petty school persecutions. These visions kept entirely clear of the period of genial and attractive study fostered by a kindly scholar, and fixed themselves on an episode of school-life endured under a hard, irritable pedagogue, who made his own life and the lives of all who came about him miserable.

The phenomenon had its efficient cause. I had then, for the first time in a life of many rambles, put myself, along with two hapless companions, under the jurisdiction and authority of a guide. There was no help for it if we were to do what we projected. In the first place, it would have been madness otherwise to attempt to climb at night to the lone inn on the Wengern Alp. Then we were for glacier-work next day, and that could not be accomplished without help. I had once tried it alone, to my utter confusion and humiliation. I have a lively recollection, too, of the horror expressed by a friend authorised to put L.L.D. after his name, who, seeing from the inn-window at the Grindelwald certain little black