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IV. *The Lochwood Oaks in Annandale, Dumfriesshire.*

By JAMES M'NAB.

In November 1873, I visited the forest of old oaks at Lochwood, in Annandale, Dumfriesshire, the property of Mr Hope Johnstone, 7 miles from Moffat, and 3 from Wamphrey Railway Station. On the top of a wooded slope stand the remains of Lochwood Tower, supposed to have been built about the fourteenth century. It is surrounded by an oak forest of considerable extent. The trees average from 9 to 14 feet in circumference, and 30 to 50 feet in height: where the branches begin to diverge, the girth is generally larger than at the base. Nearly all the trees are in a decayed or decaying condition. The chief or upright portion of their stems varies from 6 to 8 feet in height, after which they divide, and the spread of branches sometimes measures 60 feet in diameter, almost all of them being coated with a variety of mosses and lichens. At the time of my visit, these trees were clothed with the common polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*), and notwithstanding the enormous quantity of this fern, no varieties of it were seen. The trees cannot be less than 300 years old, and judging from their appearance, the tops have been removed at an early period of their growth, either for the bark, or to induce a spread of branches, to make them useful in naval architecture. The soil in which they stand is exceedingly good, having been enriched with decaying leaves, and judging from the mossy state of the stems and branches, it is naturally damp, which has probably hastened the decay of the stems.

Dr Walker, in his essays on "Natural History" and "Rural Economy," in 1812, says that one of these oaks in 1773 measured 14 feet in circumference. He also states that, judging from some that were cut down, they were (in 1773) about 230 years old. But as far as can be gathered from the older inhabitants, they are probably now not less than 500 years.

Of the *pouch* firs, planted by Dr Walker in the glebe at Moffat, between 1762 and 1783, only two exist, one a fine specimen of the Scotch fir (*Pinus sylvestris*) with a stem 9 feet 2 inches in circumference, at 3 feet above the ground,

and about 50 feet in height, and apparently not less than 100 years old. Dr Fleming, in Bot. Soc. Tr. v. 142, calls the pouch fir the cluster pine (*Pinus Pinaster*), a specimen of which is growing 70 yards from the old Scotch fir. This tree is 6 feet in circumference at 3 feet above the ground, and between 50 and 60 feet in height.

Dr Macvicar is endeavouring to prolong the existence of the old Scotch fir, some injured branches being covered with lead to keep them from moisture.

V. *Report on the Open-Air Vegetation at the Royal Botanic Garden.* By JAMES M'NAB, Curator.

Owing to the comparative mildness of the past winter the number of species in flower at this date (Feb. 12) is twenty-eight; a number greatly exceeding those noticed at any previous February meeting of the Society. Since last meeting (Jan. 8) the thermometer has been fourteen times at or below the freezing point, the lowest markings being on the mornings of the 20th and 25th of January, and the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th of February, indicating respectively 24°, 28°, 25°, 26°, 17°, and 26°. The highest morning temperatures were on the 9th, 14th, 16th, 21st, 29th, and 30th of January, indicating respectively 40°, 47°, 56°, 40°, 47°, and 46°.

Vegetation is between five and six weeks in advance of the corresponding date last year, as may be seen below:—

	1874.	1873.
<i>Primula denticulata</i> . . .	Dec., 1873	Jan. 8
<i>Hepatica triloba</i> and varieties . . .	"	" 10
<i>Corylus Avellana</i> . . .	"	" 14
<i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i> . . .	"	" 15
<i>Dondia Epipactis</i> . . .	"	" 15
<i>Tussilago fragrans</i> . . .	"	" 16
<i>Aubrietia grandiflora</i> . . .	"	Mar. 17
<i>Rhododendron atrovirens</i> . . .	Jan. 4	Feb. 19
<i>Leucojum vernum</i> . . .	" 10	" 9
<i>Galanthus nivalis</i> . . .	" 10	Jan. 9
<i>Sisyrinchium album</i> . . .	" 12	Feb. 28
<i>Eranthis hyemalis</i> . . .	" 14	Jan. 15
<i>Crocus susianus</i> . . .	" 14	Feb. 14
<i>Galanthus plicatus</i> . . .	" 15	" 10