

THE COMPLETE SCOTLAND

CALLANDER TO KILLIN, CRIANLARICH AND ABERFELDY.

FROM Callander the route is westward to Kilmahog, where the Trossachs road (*see previous chapter*) goes off on the left, and beyond which we enter the lovely **Pass of Leny**. It is well seen from the road, though it is fully appreciated only by leisurely pedestrians. On the left hand Ben Ledi flings down his most precipitous side almost to the foot of it, and on the right more gentle heights, clad in a parti-coloured vesture of silver-birch, hazel, oak and heather, rise in a succession of irregular and picturesque knolls. Nowhere in "bonnie Scotland" is the scene more enhanced by her characteristic flower than in the neighbourhood of Callander.

The valley widens out to Loch Lubnaig near a small walled-in churchyard, remnant of the *Chapel of St. Bride*, in whose precincts young Angus handed over the fiery cross to Norman, dispatching him on a solitary honeymoon. In 1932 the foundations were verified and restored and an entrance gate erected in connection with the Scott centenary celebrations.

Loch Lubnaig (the "crooked lake") till lately provided Callander's water-supply. Both rail and road skirt its entire length of 4½ miles. The road has the advantage of the situation, being opposite to the most effective side of the lake, and bringing into greater prominence the central rock, which is the keynote to its beauty. This rock, projecting high and steep, and boldly rounded at the top, divides the lake into two reaches, and saves it from that monotonous appearance which it would otherwise wear.

About half-way along the loch, beside *Archullarie Mor*, a path climbs the western flank of Beinn Each and descends by Glen Ample to Loch Earn at **Edinample**, passing **Edinample Falls** near the lower end of the glen, which is about 2 miles from Lochearnhead.

A mile beyond the head of the loch, and a long eight from Callander, are the station and hamlet of **Strathyre** (*Station Hotel*, and one or two small *inns*).

Strathyre to Balquhidder. - Cross the river, and follow an up-and-down course parallel to the main route to Balquhidder (4 miles). Walkers should take this route, returning by the direct road to the King's House. The entire round measures 6 miles.

From the bridge over the Balvag a fine full-length view of **Loch Voil** is obtained. It is a long narrow lake, with lap after lap of dark green mountains descending abruptly to its shore-line, and well clothed with wood in their lower parts. Those on the north are the famous "Braes of Balquhidder." There is a road along that side of the lake. Looking eastward from the Balvag Bridge the eye catches the cone of Ben Vorlich rising above the level ridge behind the

King's House Inn.

Balquhidder (*Baile-cul-tir*) means "the village of the back-lying country." The *Old Chapel* is a mere shell, in front of the new one. It is ivy-clad, and has a picturesque little open bell-turret. Inside is a little grove of Irish yews growing on a carpet of grass, and outside, a few yards from the east end, are the reputed tombs of **Rob Roy**, his wife, and sons. They consist of flat slabs inscribed with quaint devices - swords, mystic knots, and animals - the whole bearing the stamp of an antiquity greater than that of Rob Roy, who died some century and a half ago at a house near the far end of the loch - one of that class of men who, according to Andrew Fairservice, are "ower bad for blessing and ower good for banning." The scene, by the way, in which Rob made his thrilling escape by slipping off at his horse's tail is on the Forth, not by the side of Loch Voil, as some writers would have it.

The nearest hostelry to Balquhidder is the *King's House Inn*, 2 miles east, on the main Callander-Killin highway, 2 miles north of Strathyre. Here is a "halt" on the railway. From this point the main road continues north to **Lochearnhead**, a pretty and attractive hamlet with hotel (*37 rooms; R. and b., fr. 9s. 6d.*) at the western end of **Loch Earn**. The loch is 7 miles long and about half a mile broad, and is singularly attractive, although it is difficult to say exactly wherein lies its charm. Perhaps it is just that Loch Earn pretends to be no more than an ample, self-contained sheet of water, fringed with green meadows and abundant foliage, and surrounded by mountains whose regular outlines harmonize well with the solid but unsensational attractiveness of its other features.

A good road runs along its northern shore; that on the south side has the compensation of slightly better views.

About 5 miles from Lochearnhead, **Glen Tarken** strikes up from the northern side of the loch; a couple of miles up the glen is a curiosity in the form of a huge mushroom-shaped boulder. That part which rests on the ground is 70 feet in circumference, while 10 feet higher the circumference is 120 feet. For **St. Fillans**, *see previous but one chapter*.

On the south side of the loch, a mile from Lochearnhead, are the **Edinample Falls**, at the lower end of **Glen Ample**.

Ben Vorlich (3,224 feet) may be ascended without difficulty from Lochearnhead. Follow the road along the south shore of Loch Earn as far as Ardvorlich House (4 miles); thence ascend on the near side of the burn until the ridge on the right can be conveniently climbed. This ridge leads to the summit. An interesting but very up-and-down descent may be made to the *King's House Inn*; a longer route is down the valley southward to Loch Lubnaig; or one can turn northward and follow the Edinample valley to Loch Earn (*see earlier in this chapter*).

For the first 5 of the 7 miles between Lochearnhead and Killin, road and railway are occupied with the passage of steep and forbidding **Glen Ogle** (probably *Gleann Ogluidh*, the "gloomy valley"), which attains an elevation of 948 feet (631 above Loch Earn). Though thoroughly Highland in character, it is somewhat wanting in decisive features. At its summit,

on the left hand, is a small tarn - a favourite curling rendezvous in winter - from which the water flows northward into Glen Dochart.

For **Crianlarich** keep ahead (*westward*) up Glen Dochart (*see below*) on emerging from Glen Ogle and passing under the railway; for Killin turn sharp to right. During the descent to Killin there are views of that village, the head of Loch Tay, and Ben Lawers - the last-named forming a noble background, with an array of fine peaks to the left of it.

Killin (pronounced Kill-in), with good hotels (*Killin (30 rooms; R. and b., 11s.), Bridge of Lochay (10 rooms; R. and b., fr. 9s.)*) and other accommodation, is a very attractive little place, situated at the head of Loch Tay and between the rivers Lochay and Dochart, which here flow into the loch. It derives its name from the two words *Cil Fhinn*, signifying the "burial-place of Fingal," whose supposed grave is marked by a stone in a field a quarter of a mile from the present church, at the foot of Sron a' Chlachain.

Sron a' Chlachain (1,708 feet; 1440 above Killin) rises due west of Killin, about a mile distant as the crow flies. Its name, signifying "stony point or projection," well describes its position as the most easterly point of the range which separates Glen Lochay from Glen Dochart. From the top the lower reaches of both Glen Lochay and Glen Dochart are seen, and the entrance to Glen Ogle, to the south. Ben More in the south-west, and Ben Lawers in the north-east, display their bold forms to great advantage.

The rough road up beautiful **Glen Lochay** strikes off on the far side of Lochay Bridge, and a few yards beyond the hotel. About 3 miles up it are the **Falls of Lochay**, more picturesque than grand.

Finlarig Castle, an ivy-grown ruin, embosomed in trees, beside the road to the pier, was the burial-place of the Breadalbane family. On the far side of the head of the loch is Achmore, a seat of the Marquis of Breadalbane.

KILLIN TO CRIANLARICH, BY GLEN DOCHART.

Glen Dochart is softer in style than neighbouring Glen Ogle, but the generally dark green of its strath gives it a strangely gloomy appearance.

On the south side of the glen rise **Ben More** and **Stobinian** (*see below*), and towards Crianlarich is **Loch Dochart**, consisting of two sheets of water connected by a half-mile stream, the whole company measuring about 3 miles in length. The lower Loch is also known as Loch Iubhair, "the Loch of the Yew tree." A ruined castle on an island in the more western lake is said to have served Bruce as a retreat. For **Crianlarich** and on to **Tyndrum**, **Dalmally** and **Oban**, *see earlier chapter*.

Ben More (3,843 feet), in conjunction with its fellow height, **Stobinian** (3,821 feet), is the most conspicuous mountain in Perthshire. The two summits are separated by a V-shaped depression, and form, when seen from either the east or the west, a pair of almost similar triangles, the only difference being that while the apex of **Stobinian**, the more southerly of the two, is cut off by a short and perfectly straight line, that of Ben More itself is slightly rounded.

From four to five hours should be allowed for the walk up and down from the point at which the high-road through Glen Dochart is left. The ascent is best commenced near the place where the burn threading the hollow on the east side of the mountain is crossed - i.e., about 1½ miles from Luib Station, 2½ from *Luib Hotel*, and 5½ from Crianlarich. Hence the shortest way up is by the ridge all the way, a climb of unrelieved steepness. An easier plan is to follow more or less the course of the burn until the eastern ridge of the

mountain is gained, whence turning sharply to the right, a steep pitch leads directly to the top. Another ascent may be made from the Ben More Farm, 2 miles east of Crianlarich; but the slope is terribly steep all the way to the top: the route from Luib is easier.

The view from the summit comprises an endless array of mountain-tops, prominent amongst which are Ben Lui and Ben Cruachan to the west; Ben Ime, The Cobbler, Ben Vorlich (Dumbartonshire), and Ben Lomond to the south; Ben Ledi, Ben Vorlich (Loch Earn), and Ben Lawers south-east, east, and north-east respectively; Ben Dorain and the mountains of Glen Lyon to the north. The softer features of the scene are Loch Tay and Loch Voil.

The descent may be varied by climbing over the top of Stobinian and then descending into the valley at the west end of Loch Voil, and thence walk or drive to Balquhiddy Station.

Loch Tay.

Salmon fishing begins on January 15, and may be enjoyed by visitors at the following hotels: Taymouth Castle (which holds the fishings of the late Marquis of Breadalbane at the Kenmore end), Kenmore (Breadalbane Hotel), Killin, Bridge of Lochay (a mile from Killin), Ardeonaig and Lawers.

Trout fishing on the Loch is free. Large trout may be caught by trolling. There is a fixed tariff for boats and gillies.

Loch Tay is one of the largest and most beautiful of the Scottish lakes, while for salmon fishing it is second to none. The trouting is also sometimes excellent. The loch is about 16 miles long by 1 mile broad. Steamers run from end to end and roads skirt both north and south shores; that on the north having the better surface, that on the south a superiority of outlook.

After crossing the Bridge of Lochay the north shore road climbs steeply and in about 3 miles a rough hill road goes off on the north to Bridge of Balgie, in **Glen Lyon**. Hence the way down Glen Lyon is very fine; for really good walkers a rough track continues northward, from Innerwick, a mile east from Bridge of Balgie, to the southern shore of **Loch Rannoch**, but it is a route to be avoided in mist unless one knows the way.

About 4 miles farther east, on the northern shore, is **Lawers** (*hotel*), the most convenient point from which to ascend Ben Lawers (3,984 feet), which is, considering its great height, as easy a mountain to ascend as any in Scotland. It is surmounted by a huge cairn, enabling the climber to boast of having stood 4,000 feet above sea-level. Only the last few hundred feet of the ascent are at all steep. The *Ben Lawers Hotel* is itself 600 feet above the sea. Those who do not care to make the whole ascent may with advantage climb the subsidiary height of Meall Odhar (*see below*), about a third of the way up, and just above the hotel.

Follow the Kenmore road for a few hundred yards, and just beyond the first burn take to the open fell, and climb with the burn close by on the left hand. In about forty minutes after leaving the hotel cross a wall by a stile. Hence proceed straight forward, leaving the fir-planted **Meall Odhar** (1,794 feet) some way on the left, and still keeping the burn on the same side. The top of Ben Lawers is seen, also to the left of the general direction of the route up. To reach it scale the eastern ridge a considerable distance from the summit, so as to avoid the steep slope which intervenes in the direct course. On attaining this ridge follow it all the way up. Below, on the right hand, you will look across

the deep valley containing Lochan nan Cat, out of which the Lawers Burn flows, to a lofty range of steep hills beyond.

View. - Very fine and extensive, including the full length of Loch Tay with Killin and Kenmore at either end. Southwards the Loch Earn Ben Vorlich is the conspicuous height, and to the right of it the twin peaks of Ben More and Stobinian. On the north-east rises Schiehallion with its cone modified into a long ridge on the eastern side, and, far away beyond it, the flat-topped summits of the Eastern Grampians - Braeriach, Cairn Toul, and Ben Macdhui rising slightly above the general elevation. North-west, over the Black Moor of Rannoch, the equally flat top of Ben Nevis may be discerned, and the same distance south of west Ben Cruachan is recognizable by its sharp peaks, with, and much nearer, Ben Dorain (flat-top peak) to the right and Ben Lui to the left. Ben Ime is seen exactly between the peaks of Ben More and Stobinian, and Ben Lomond considerably to the left. Ben Ledi is almost due south. The upper part of Glencoe is visible, with Buachaille Etive on its left; also north-east, over the right shoulder of Schiehallion, the farther part of Glen Tilt. In clear weather the eye may range south-east over and to the left of the Ochils to the Peaks of Fife, North Berwick Law, the Bass Rock, and Largo Law, in the order named.

The rough and crumbling schist formation of which the higher part of Ben Lawers consists is very favourable to the growth of rare plants - including gentian and many kinds of saxifrage - and the traveller who is a botanist as well as a climber will prolong his stay on the mountain-slopes with great satisfaction. It is said that there are, or were, more Alpine plants than on any other Scottish mountain, but collectors have sadly depleted them. Specimens should not be taken away.

In *descending*, the route may be varied by taking a rough and rather steep shoulder considerably to the west of the route by which we have described the ascent, and overlooking the depression which separates Ben Lawers from the next mountain, Beinn Ghlas. From the bottom of this shoulder cross the comparatively level and, perhaps, swampy ground to Meall Odhar, whence you may descend almost in a bee-line to the hotel.

An easy and delightful descent is direct for **Killin** over Beinn Ghlas, entering the road near *Edramucky*.

Beinn Bhreac (2,341 feet), Ben Lawers' less lofty *vis-a-vis*, can be climbed easily from **Ardtalnaig** (*pier, ferry from Lawers*) on the south side of Loch Tay. On its eastern side the Acharn Burn runs down to Acharn, making a pretty cascade just above the village of Acharn, on the loch-side, about 2 miles from Kenmore.

From **Fearnan**, a picturesque village with hotel on the northern shore about midway between Lawers and Kenmore, a rough road goes over to **Fortingal**, at the foot of Glen Lyon. In the hedge beside the road about half a mile above Fearnan is the baptismal font of the long-vanished church of St. Ciarnan.

Fortingal is a pleasant village with hotel and a famous yew-tree that is supposed to be the oldest specimen of vegetation in Europe. The tree stands in an enclosure at the west end of the church and is believed to have been flourishing when Solomon was building his temple and the Greeks were besieging Troy. The church has been rebuilt: within is preserved a Celtic bell. In the fields opposite are the remains of a supposed Roman camp.

Glen Lyon is 30 miles long and for the greater part of its length is narrow and rugged. The lower part is particularly fine: indeed, many who find the Trossachs rather overrun during the height of the season rate Glen Lyon as definitely equal, if not superior. A rough road traces the glen all the way to lonely **Loch Lyon**, more than a thousand feet up among the hills, and a path along the north

side of the loch continues to the road connecting Tyndrum and Bridge of Orchy (*see earlier chapter*). Those for whom such a round is too great may turn out of Glen Lyon at **Innerwick**, a long 10 miles above Fortingal: hence a rough road crosses southward to Loch Tay and Killin; northward a rough track goes to the shores of Loch Rannoch.

Kenmore is a placid and attractive village at the eastern end of Loch Tay. It is gathered around a neat green (on which were executed the chief of the MacGregors and other "limmers"), at one end of which is the church and at the other an entrance to Taymouth Castle, formerly a seat of the Marquis of Breadalbane, now an hotel (80 rooms; *R., fr. 10s.*); on the north side of the green is the picturesque *Breadalbane Hotel* (22 rooms; *B. and b., 9s.*). An island in Loch Tay opposite Kenmore contains the ruins of a Priory founded in 1122 by Alexander I, whose first queen, Sybilla, daughter of Henry I of England, was buried in it. The 18-hole golf course attached to *Taymouth Castle Hotel* is open to the public (3s. *day*).

At Kenmore the main road crosses the Tay, hence following the south side of the river, past a Stone Circle known as *Craig Monach* (from the vicinity of which there is a grand view of Schiehallion, to the north-north-west), and on through park-like scenery to **Aberfeldy** (*next chapter*).

Kenmore to Loch Tummel. - From the road-angle just north of the Tay Bridge at Kenmore a roughish road runs north-east for 3 miles to the vicinity of the ruined keep of *Comrie Castle*, where the Lyon is crossed. Turn left, and at *Coshieville Inn* go to the right. This road climbs, with the Keltney Burn on the left, and shortly there are increasingly good views to the left, over Garth Castle, a stronghold of the "Wolf of Badenoch." Two miles from Coshieville a rough track goes off on the left for **Schiehallion**, the ascent of which is made by its long eastern ridge.

Those unable or unwilling to climb Schiehallion (*see below*) may enjoy at least a great part of the view northward by continuing for another 2 or 3 miles along the road towards Tummel, which attains a height of over 1,200 feet and unfolds a panorama which for grandeur and extent would be hard to surpass among views which can be enjoyed from the seat of a car. The road itself, too, has been reconstructed, and the long run down to Tummel Bridge is very enjoyable. For the route hence either to Pitlochry or to Kinloch Rannoch, *see next chapter*.

Whether to look at or to look from, Schiehallion (3,547 feet) is one of the finest of Scottish mountains. As seen from other eminences its cone is always, a graceful and distinctive object in view, while its commanding position over the strath which extends from Loch Tummel to Loch Rannoch gives to the view from it a diversity that contrasts strongly with that obtained from many Scottish mountains of greater altitude. In addition to the approach mentioned above, it may be ascended also from Kinloch Rannoch or from Tummel Bridge (*see next chapter*).

The View. The feature is Loch Tummel and the glen beyond it, through which the River Tummel makes its way into the Garry, near Pitlochry, and beyond which Ben Vrackie rises to a graceful peak. In the opposite direction a part of Loch Rannoch is seen, and the "Shepherds of Etive" at the head of Glencoe. Northwards, over Strath Tummel, the dull line of the Eastern Grampians is only relieved by Ben-y-Gloe, rearing itself on the far side of Glen Tilt, which is visible above Forest Lodge. The loftier mass of Ben Lawers shuts out a good deal of the prospect southwards.