



RIVER FORTH AT STIRLING.

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BY WILLIAM DRYSDALE.

NOT the least of the numerous attractions of Stirling is the river Forth (famous alike for its history and beauty), which flows in its many turnings through the plain below. Its remarkable mazes will be better understood when it is stated that from Stirling Bridge to Alloa the distance is about 17 miles, while between the two places as the crow flies it is under 5 miles. These windings make boating a very pleasant recreation, and for this there is a gentlemen's Amateur Rowing Club, with a large membership, well equipped with racing and pleasure boats. Gentlemen residing in Stirling for some time may be admitted members on payment of a very reasonable sum.

The cruises both above and below the boathouse are very enjoyable, the upper reach being the favourite. Leaving the boathouse, the boat passes immediately under the North British and Caledonian Railway bridges, the New Bridge leading to the north, then the old historical Bridge of Stirling, described elsewhere in this book. After passing the bridge, a delightful stretch of water of about three miles is reached, ending at the Cruive Dykes. On the way the Wallace Monument is seen to the right; then the ford of Kildean is crossed, the site of the famous battle of Stirling Bridge; after a nice spin, the mouth of the Allan water is arrived at, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Bridge of Allan; half-a-mile further the Cruive Dykes are reached, where the whole waters of Forth and Teith fall a distance of about ten feet. The scenery at this place is delightful. There is a wooded island just below the fall where picnics are held. A few hours can be spent here with pleasure. Craigforth can be visited from here—a very pretty wooded craig with residence nestling at the foot. It is said that the Carron Iron Company at one time offered a large sum for this craig, as it is composed of ironstone. If they had succeeded, it would have taken away what is considered a very curious feature in the landscape—"a craig in a carse." The cruise may be continued on the Forth above the Dykes for a good many miles.

The trip from Stirling to Alloa is made by leaving the boat-house at the turn of the tide. On leaving, the run is nearly straight to the foot of the Abbey Craig, above which towers the Monument; then turning, and after winding for a number of

miles, it again returns within a short distance of the Craig. A very enjoyable pull is then made, passing Old Polmaise, the late residence of Colonel Murray. Cambus, famous for its whiskey and ale, at the mouth of the Black Devon, is next arrived at. Thence passing the railway bridge, Alloa is gained, where a few hours can be spent. The famous Alloa yarn is made here. There are also extensive bottle-works, and shipbuilding. The return can be made with the flow of tide.

Rod fishing is also a favourite pastime, the Forth salmon being famed. Boats, with attendance, on the restricted waters, can be had for any length of time, by arrangement with the lessee. There is also a large extent of unrestricted water where visitors may enjoy the rod at any lawful time.

The scenery all around is good, and parties can spend any length of time, with great benefit to themselves, in the healthful recreations of boating and fishing.

The Edinburgh and Stirling steamers ply between Stirling and Leith in the summer, when pleasant excursions may be made, by leaving in the morning by steamer to Leith, and returning either by rail or boat. There are many interesting places passed on the route downwards, including the bonnie woods of Dunmore, Kincardine, Culross, Grangemouth (a large shipping port, and entrance to the Forth and Clyde Canal), Bo'ness, Queensferry (with the famous Forth Bridge), with many Castles and country houses belonging to well-known noblemen and gentlemen.

