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# THE ENGLISH LAKES

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CONISTON LAKE

W. H. S. GIBBS

# THE ENGLISH LAKES

DESCRIBED BY A. G. BRADLEY  
PICTURED BY E. W. HASLEHUST



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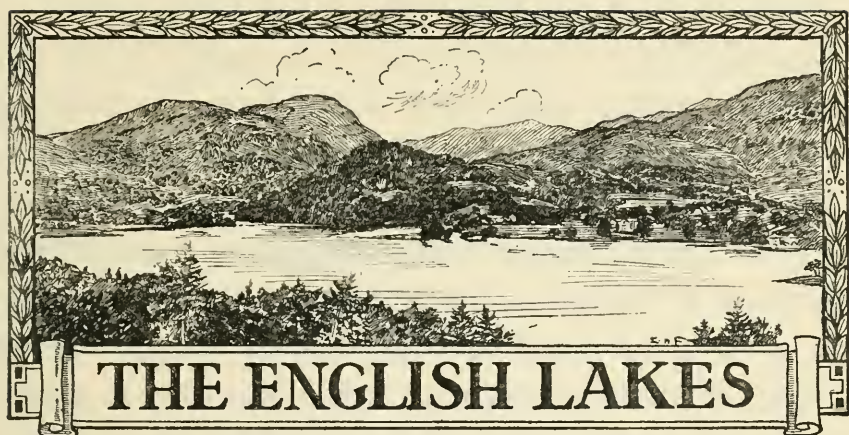
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WINDERMERE FROM ORREST HEAD



## WINDERMERE AND CONISTON

The luxuriance of Windermere is of course its dominant note, a quality infinitely enhanced by that noble array of mountains which from Kirkstone to Scafell trail across the northern sky beyond the broad shimmer of its waters. The upward view from various points in the neighbourhood of Bowness, for obvious reasons of railroad transportation, has been the first glimpse of the Lake District for a majority of two or three generations of visitors, and this alone gives some further significance to a scene in any case so beautiful. Orrest Head, a few hundred feet above the village of Windermere, is the point to which the pilgrim upon the first opportunity usually betakes himself; for from this modest altitude the entire lake with

its abounding beauty of detail, and half the mountain kingdom of Lakeland, are spread out before him.

On the slopes of Orrest, too, is the house of Elleray, successor to that older one in which Professor Wilson, by no means the least one of the Wordsworthian band, led his breezy, strenuous life. Son of a wealthy Glasgow merchant, winner of the Newdigate and a first classman at Oxford, and scarcely less conspicuous for his athletic feats and sporting wagers, young Wilson bought the land at Elleray while an undergraduate and built a house on it later, after the passing of an unsatisfactory love affair. As "Christopher North" every lover of the rod with any sense of its literature knows him yet. Nor would all this be worthy of record were it not that the brilliant little band who did none of these things held Wilson of Elleray as one of themselves. Losing his fortune ten years later through a defaulting trustee, he became the brilliant supporter of *Blackwood* and Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University, though always retaining his connection with Windermere. In fact, when Scott made his memorable visit to the Lake District, and with Lockhart and Canning stayed with the then owner of Storrs Hall, now a hotel on the lake shore, we find Wilson doing the honours of Windermere as commodore of its large fleet of yachts.

Country houses, villas, and rich woods cluster



thickly up and down either shore; here and there perhaps a little too thickly. But the general prospect up to Ambleside on the one hand, and down past Curwen Island—named after one of the oldest of Cumbrian families—to Newby Bridge on the other, is no whit blemished. One feels it to be a region rather of delightful residence, which indeed it is, than of temporary sojourn for the tourist, with the mountains beckoning him into the deeper heart of Lakeland and to more primitive forms of nature. Shapely yachts flit hither and thither, less alluring steamboats plough white furrows, while the irresponsible pleasure boat is in frequent evidence. Occasionally, too, there are winters when the great lake glistens with thick glassy ice from end to end beneath snow-peaked mountains, and the glories of such a brief period—glories of scene and of physical exhilaration—shine out in the memory yet more luminously than the un-failing pageants of summer; even the pageants of early June when the lake is quiet, and in sequestered bays the angler, like his neighbour of Derwentwater, celebrates the festival of the May-fly, the only one seriously observed by the lusty and wily trout of these two waters.

The personal associations of these opulent shores of Windermere are too crowded for us here; but Dr. Arnold of Rugby had, of course, his holiday home of

Foxhowe near the Ambleside end, which is still occupied by his daughter.

Calgarth and its fine woods, just under Orrest, is the oldest and perhaps the most notable place on the lake, partly because in ancient times the well-known family of Phillipson lived there, though in a former house, a dare-devil race in the Civil War period, one of whom, known as Robert the Devil, did all sorts of heady things. The *skulls of Calgarth*, too, which occupied niches in the old hall and could never be got rid of, wherever flung to, always returning to their place on the wall, are a treasured legend of the district. But the present mansion and woods of Calgarth are little more than a century old, and are the work of another Lakeland luminary of the Wordsworthian period. Bishop Watson, officially of Llandaff but otherwise of Calgarth, is famous in ecclesiastical history and of immortal memory in Wales, not for the things he did, but rather for the things he left undone. For he was bishop of Llandaff for about thirty years, and only once visited his diocese in that period, preferring the life of a country gentleman at Windermere.

Precisely parallel to Windermere, a little more than half its length and half its breadth, and four miles to the westward, lies Coniston, its head in the mountains, its foot almost trenching on another, and virtually lowland, country. There can be no doubt



whatever about the presiding genii of Coniston, the "Old Man" in the substance and Ruskin in the shadow, if one may put it that way, having no rivals. The hills crowd finely around their leader, the "Allt-mæn" (lofty rock), at the lake-head, as our artist well shows. As the lake shoots southward, however, in a straight line, without any conspicuous curves or headlands, and no heights comparable to those it leaves behind, one feels upon thus looking down it that Coniston lacks something of the fascination which never flags at any part of the other lakes. If Windermere, too, trails away from the mountains, it does so in glorious bends and headlands, curves and islands, and has an opulence of detail and colouring all its own. But if Coniston, with its straight unbroken stretch all fully displayed, and framed in a fashion less winsome than Windermere, and less imposing than Ullswater, "lets you down" a little on arriving at its head, looking upward from its centre it assuredly lacks nothing, while the view from Ruskin's old home of Brantwood, perched high among woods upon the eastern shore, commands all that is best of it. After thirty years of intermittent residence here, Ruskin was buried in the churchyard at Coniston, exactly half a century after Wordsworth had been laid to rest at Grasmere. A generation later than his great predecessor he has Coniston to himself. And

if the points of divergence between the two seers have been more than sufficiently insisted upon, it is from the very fact, perhaps, that in intellect and temperament they had so much in common.

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## THE HEART OF LAKELAND RYDAL AND GRASMERE

Those delectable little sister lakes of Rydal and Grasmere probably suggest themselves to most of us as the heart of Lakeland. If we took a map and measuring rule we might possibly be surprised to find, as we should do, this vague intuition geometrically verified. How singularly felicitous, then, one may surely deem it, that Wordsworth lived and died here, and that the shrine of the sage and all thereby implied should be thus planted in the very innermost sanctuary of the hills.

The intrinsic charm of these two little lakes and all that pertains to them lies in the delightful variety exhibited within a small compass of wood and water, of rugged crag and fern-clad slope, of velvety park-like meadow and stately timber. The blithesome Rothay unites the upper and larger lake of Grasmere

with Rydal Water by a short half-mile display in meadow and ravine of every winsome mood that a mountain stream has at command. The broken, straggling heights and skirts of Loughrigg Fell fill most of the western side of either lake, and on a minor scale, like the stream below, show every type of form and colouring, of drapery primeval or man-made, from naked crag to bowery lawn, all within the compass of three miles and the modest altitude of a thousand feet.

Rydal Water has almost the air of being designed for the embellishment of man's immediate haunts. With its occasionally reedy fringe, it breathes the spirit of quiet, almost domestic beauty, and of the spirit of solitude scarcely anything. Of Grasmere as much and as little might be said. The atmosphere of seclusion that wraps at normal times so many of the lakes seems here frankly absent. Nothing, indeed, is lost by this sense of human propinquity; for all is exquisite. But the sign of appreciative humanity, residential or transient, is more than commonly strong. Yet Grasmere is a favourite haunt, too, of the serious pedestrian, not merely because it is beautiful, but because it is central. The lake tourist might be reasonably classified under four heads: the crag climbers, the strenuous walkers, the saunterers, and the roadsters. The first are a mere handful, for obvious reasons, and greatly affect Wastdale Head. The second are

not very numerous, and seem on the decline. The third include a substantial number, whose limitations are dictated either by lack of physical strength or an indifference to the strenuous life; by a preference for the tennis court, or croquet lawn, or a pair of sculls, with a further company, always numerous among Britons, who have an unconquerable aversion to missing a single one of the four conventional meals. Of the roadsters, the cyclist may get a great deal out of the Lake country, and is nowadays quite innocuous to others. As for the motor, it has proved for all true lovers of this region an unmitigated curse. It is truly pitiable to see these green vales half buried at times under dense volumes of driving dust, or the same noisome clouds falling in heavy masses on the fair surface and flowery banks of Rydal or Ullswater. The roads, too, are often tortuous and narrow. There was a talk at one time of prohibition within Lakeland, and there would seem in equity no justification in this glorious holiday preserve for unlimited vehicles roaring through it at twenty to thirty miles an hour. It lies on no main highway. And for touring use within the district the motor has no single point of sanity. One might almost as well thrash up and down Grasmere in a steam yacht. Their exclusion, with a few exceptions for local purposes or for genuine residents, would be an enormous gain, and any counter





C. W. HASLEWOOD

RYDALMERE



plea ridiculously inadequate. I have here pictured Rydal Water as a winsome summer lake, for this I am sure, before most of us who know it, its image rises.

But upon a spring day some years ago I watched it raging with abnormal frenzy under the influence of a helm wind, cleaving diligently myself in the meantime to a stone wall, lest peradventure I should be blown into its seething waters. These hurricanes are idiosyncrasies of the Lake country, and are formed by the contact of winds from the North Sea with the warmer temperature they meet as they leap over the Pennine range, like a wave breaking over a sea wall. The disturbance thus created drives them down in narrow tornadoes upon Lakeland. I have never experienced anything else like it in these islands. The waters of Rydal on this occasion, now here and now there, were lifted high into the air in the fashion of successive waterspouts and hurled in hissing volumes of sleet at a great elevation against the woody foot of Loughrigg Fell. The sun, too, was shining brilliantly, and every hurtling cloud of spray glittered in prismatic colours. But above all are these two lakes bound up with the name and fame of Wordsworth. From one or other of the banks of them for nearly half a century the great nature poet—the prophet, sage, and interpreter of Lakeland—of whose fruits the world will pluck as long as these hills endure, set forth on

his almost daily ramble. Whether this or that generation decide that Wordsworth is among the elect of their fleeting day is an altogether trumpery question. Didactic and complaisant youth have tilted against many a classic and passed into oblivion while the subject of their convincing satire remains immovable as a granite rock. Wordsworth has struck roots so deep into this glorious country, has so identified it with his own personality, that even if he were a much lesser poet, immortal fame would be as surely his as the endurance of Skiddaw or Helvellyn. But Wordsworth has a firmer grip than that of mere atmosphere on unborn generations, though this almost alone would endear him to all those with any sense of feeling who love the Lake country, and of such it is inconceivable that future generations will not each supply their ample store. It is pedantry to hector every man or woman who feels the spirit of our British Highlands so perfectly expressed as they are in this Lake country into Wordsworthian enthusiasm. But let them alone, and as the Lakeland fever begins to develop more strongly with each visitation, and as spring and summer come round, if they have the sense of song at all within them they will put their Wordsworth at any rate within reach, and the process thenceforward to some measure of intimacy and delight is merely an affair of time.



Rydal Mount, standing embowered in foliage above the road which afterwards skirts both lakes, is not accessible, but Dove Cottage on Grasmere, where the poet, with his gifted sister and for a time with S. T. Coleridge, spent the years preceding his long married life at Rydal Mount, is open to the pilgrim, be he a devout or an indifferent one. It will be hardly less interesting as the residence for twenty years of that strange genius, stylist, and laudanum drinker, De Quincey. Apart from the great literary obligations under which he has laid posterity, the autobiographical volume which deals with this Lake country, and the brilliant circle of which he was a member, is a book of extraordinary interest. He married a local yeoman's daughter, and the domestic side of his life, including a devoted and successful family, infinitely alleviates the tragedy of his own long and indifferently successful struggle with the fatal drug. The weak-willed but lovable and brilliant Hartley Coleridge, too, who would dash off a sonnet in ten minutes, lived at Nab Cottage, on Rydal Water, till he was laid in Grasmere Churchyard, to be followed there by Wordsworth in the succeeding year of 1850. Wordsworth himself was never really in touch with his humbler neighbours. He had not the temperament for that kind of thing, and remained a continual mystery to most of them.

"Well, John, what's the news?" said the rather

too sociable Hartley Coleridge one morning to an old stone-breaker.

“Why, nowte varry particlar, only ald Wudsworth’s brocken lowce ageean.” This had reference to the poet’s habit of spouting his productions as he walked along the roads, which was taken by the country folk as a sign of mental aberration. On another occasion a stranger resting at a cottage in Rydal enquired of the housewife as to Wordsworth’s neighbourly qualities.

“Well,” said she, “he sometimes goes booin’ his pottery about t’roads an’ t’fields an’ takes na nooatish o’ neabody; but at udder times he’ll say ‘Good morning, Dolly,’ as sensible as oyder you or me.”

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## THIRLMERE AND HELVELLYN

Lying beside the familiar and continuously beautiful road from Grasmere to Keswick, Thirlmere has happily lost nothing of its pristine beauty in becoming the source of Manchester’s water supply. An engine house at one point and the big dam, only visible at the far end, are more than counterbalanced



THIRLMERE AND HELVELLYN



in the raising for many feet of a lake that is three miles long and only a quarter of a mile wide. That first delicious view of it which greets the pilgrim on the downward winding road from the pass of Dunmaile Raise, deep channelled between the rugged wall of Armbboth Crags and the northern shoulders of Helvellyn, with the pale cone of Skiddaw rising over the hidden interval beyond, will be among the most familiar memories of the lake tourist. These grey Armbboth steeps, falling from the wild moorish tableland above so abruptly to the water's edge, and planting everywhere their knotted pine-feathered toes in the deep clear water, with the little promontories and islands wooded in the like fashion, give a character all its own to the narrow but beautiful lake. As a road now skirts both shores, those denied the physical joy of walking this country can get all that the banks, at any rate, of Thirlmere have to offer. The best of this, no doubt, is the prospect here depicted from the lower end, with Old Helvellyn looming so near and filling up the vista to the southward.

The little inn at Wythburn on the highway near the lake-head where the coaches halt, unpretending tavern in outward appearance though it is, might yet be almost accounted as classic ground for the number of men of note, from Scott and the lake poets onward, its modest walls have sheltered. For it has



not only been for all time a halfway resting-place between Ambleside and Keswick, but for many either a starting, or a finishing, point in the ascent of Helvellyn. It was in the little parlour of this inn a century ago that Professor Wilson, the athletic and breezy Scottish Intellectual, played an almost brutal practical joke on his hyper-sensitive friends—the two Coleidges and De Quincey—as they all sat resting here by the fire after a long walk one winter night. Seeing a loaded gun in the corner, the Professor introduced it stealthily into the group, and, pointing it up the chimney, pulled the trigger. In the then diminutive bar parlour, hung about with glass and crockery, the unexpected explosion on the drug-weakened nerves of two, at any rate, of the brilliant trio must have been almost more than the most hardened practical joker could have wished for.

This is, of course, the smooth side of Helvellyn, and you may ascend it from virtually any point. Roughly speaking, it represents a huge mound cloven half down the middle and the refuse carted away. After climbing the steep smooth slope from the Thirlmere side to the top, you find yourself suddenly standing on the edge of a precipice, almost of a crater, with the farther side of course wanting, and in its stead beautiful sweeps of glen and crag dipping gradually to the vale where the blue coils of Ullswater lie sleep-

ing. Needless to add, this is but a fraction of the prospect from Helvellyn, and to relate what can be seen from it on a reasonably clear day would merely be to compile a chart of the entire mountain system of Lakeland, and for an exceptionally clear one it would be necessary to make many and remoter additions.

To anyone in touch with these things, the summit of Helvellyn is an inspiring spot, commanding in a single glance the entire dominion of a race not merely homogeneous in breed, but till recently unique in situation. Here were a people, ranging as individuals from peasant to yeomen, to put it roughly; four hundred square miles, say, of freehold farmers, who had never known a landlord since the Crown in the sixteenth century held them as tenants on Border service; a complete democracy among themselves, into whose lives the influence of an aristocracy, as exerted everywhere else without exception in Great Britain, never entered. For there was no such thing within all these wide bounds. These primitive conditions passed away by degrees during the last century. But it was such that bred the Lakelander much as you see him now, though inevitably modified by the influx of large landlords who have bought him out, of villa residents and countless tourists. But here he is still, a type who till recently had virtually no experience of what social grades and

distinctions meant in his own daily life, though he dispatched from his rugged stone homestead a steady stream of raw lads who rose to power, wealth, and influence in the world. The Lakelander, too, like his immediate neighbours, is of more definitely Scandinavian origin than any other community in England. His country bristles with Norse place-names; his genuine tongue is so full of it, that an expert in old Cumbrian, it is said, can almost read the Norse Bible. His traditions give him an easy and independent bearing. For two or three generations of more or less contact with the outer world and its complications can only modify, not efface, such things. He still remains a cheery, independent soul, but absolutely one of Nature's gentlemen.

Now from Helvellyn you can see the Pennines, and across the Pennines lies Northumberland. We have nothing to do here with the Northumbrian, but as an immediate neighbour of these others it is interesting to note that he has less Norse blood in him, and together with his Lothian and Berwickshire neighbours is accounted the purest Saxon of any Englishman. His place-names have the Saxon flavour. Here in Lakeland we have *fells* and *becks* and *garths* and *ghylls*; beyond the Pennines and the Cheviots they are all *burns* and *laws* and *tons*. The Lakelanders proper were not Border fighters as







GRASMERE FROM LOUGHRIGG

the word applies to their low country neighbours and the Northumbrians. They were liable to service, and frequently took a hand against the Scots, but their savage country was not tempting to the Scottish freebooter nor worth the risk. Nor when the tide set the other way were they accounted as actually of the following of the great Border houses. When James I ascended the throne of a United Kingdom, and fondly fancied Border troubles were at an end, that canny monarch thought to make some money by commuting the feudal service nature of the Lakeland statesmen's holding to a money rent. These military tenants of the Crown met to the number of two thousand between Windermere and Kendal and swore that they would yield up their lives rather than their title-deeds, which settled the matter. It remained for the growth of national wealth, luxury, and what we call the march of civilization to destroy by individual land purchase, assisted by local conditions too complex to mention, the greater number of the Lakeland freeholders or "statesmen".

There are still some few left in possession, but otherwise the man himself, though now a tenant, has by no means parted with his qualities because his father or his grandfather parted with his freehold.

## KIRKSTONE AND ULLSWATER

Kirkstone Pass looms always large in one's Lakeland memories. For one thing, it is the ladder over which all traffic laboriously climbs from the comparatively populous shores of Windermere into the long sequestered trough of Ullswater, while for the walker it links the eastern block of mountains to the Helvellyn and central group. It is, I think, the highest road pass in England, touching the line of 1500 feet where a lonely inn claims, by a natural inference, the uncomfortable distinction of being the highest habitation in the kingdom. But whatever may be the measure of its winter solitude, the cheery turmoil of the shepherds' meeting in November, attended by some three hundred more or less interested persons, must put heart into its occupants for the ordeal. For on that great day, crowned by a gargantuan feast, the stray sheep that have wandered from their rightful ranges and mingled with a neighbouring flock are handed over, accompanied by ceremonies of immemorial use. Then, too, a hundred or so of collie dogs settle such disputes among themselves as may be of old standing, or more often perhaps excited thereto by such unparalleled oppor-

tunities. A hound trail usually completes the long day which begins betimes, for every man upon these mountains is an enthusiast on the chase in its literal sense, and knows as much of hounds and foxes as many an M.F.H. elsewhere.

The steep descent into the narrow, verdant, stone-walled, thinly peopled floor of the head of Patterdale, with its sprinkling of little white-washed, scyamore-shaded homesteads, is not a theme for words but for the brush; above all for the eye itself. Caudale Moor and Hartshope Dodd loom largest above our right shoulder, shutting out the lofty solitudes behind, while on the left Redscree, Raven Crag, and Harts Crag, and a fine confusion of rugged summits culminate in Helvellyn, which upon this eastern side shows its nobler and precipitous front. Brotherswater, though but a quarter of a mile in diameter, fills the vale, and like a jewel catches every humour of these ever-restless skies; gleaming betimes like molten gold, or on windless noons reflecting the greys and greens of the overhanging steeps so vividly on its glassy surface as almost to efface itself in its own shadows; at other times, torn by the tempests that pour down from Kirkstone, into a sheet of seething foam. For it is incredible to what a fury even a little lake like this can lash itself, when exposed to the concentrated volleys of two or three mountain glens.



The memory of one of these spectacles on Hayswater, but a mile or so distant, is suggested by the little hamlet of Low Hartsop at the mouth of a lateral glen that comes in just where the valley widens somewhat, bringing with it Hayswater beck to join the Goldrill, which last has run through Brotherswater. Hartsop Hall is a plain, rugged old manor house overhung with trees on the Kirkstone shore of the lake, long the abode of sheep farmers, but possessed of the inconvenient disability of a public right-of-way through the centre, now presumably lapsed.

But till a few years ago a venerable champion of popular rights, or perhaps merely a humorist with plenty of spare time, used to make an annual pilgrimage here, and walk in at the front door and out at the back without any ceremony.

Low Hartshope itself is a group of some half-dozen mellow and mossy homesteads, planted irregularly above the beck at any time within the last five centuries. Fine old trees of sycamore, ash, and oak spread a protecting mantle of foliage over this snug and ancient haunt of dalesmen—a little patch of leafy opulence between the stern walls of fell that rise sharply on either hand. One or two houses of the group, representing, one might fancy, the proportionate decline of population in the dales, are falling or have long ago

fallen into ruins. Moss and ferns, stone-crop and saxifrage, have seized alike upon both the abandoned and the fallen, upon the sagging flagstone roof which covers neither more nor less of the exposed weather-stained oak rafters than it did ten years ago, upon the fallen stones of a more completed ruin slowly sinking into the ground. Here may be seen, too, the deep, old-fashioned spinning galleries thrust out from the upper story and covered by an extension of the roof, invaluable not merely for the summer air, but for the lack of winter daylight in those massive, low-browed, small-windowed fortresses where the thrifty dalesmen dwelt. Wordsworth has celebrated a pretty old tradition that the spindles ran truer after the sheep had mounted the hill for their night's rest.

Now beneath the starry sky  
 Crouch the widely scattered sheep,  
 Ply the pleasant labour, ply,  
 For the spindle while they sleep  
 Runs with motion smooth and fine,  
 Gathering up a trustier line.

A mile or so up the glen, the higher part a steep climb, down which a beck comes leaping in successive cataracts over black rocks feathered with fern and rowan trees, lies entrenched between mountain walls which rise some fifteen hundred feet above its three sides, the lonely lake of Hayswater. Scarce a mile in

length and narrow in proportion, the scene is one in fair weather of delightful and impressive solitude, in wild weather awesome to a degree bordering on the uncanny. The mountain ridges all round are grey, stern, and rugged, while their green, rock-strewn lower slopes fall for the most part sharply to the water's edge. There is nowhere even a suggestion of humanity, but a rude boat half full of water chained to a rock. So lonely a sheet of water of this size, and thus nobly encompassed about and shut off from the world, there is not in all Lakeland. On a tempestuous May day some two years since the writer, underrating the measure of ferocity that the extra elevation of a thousand feet adds to a storm, found himself a solitary angler, beside these gloomy shores, amid as fine a prospect of the kind as the somberer side of one's soul might wish for. The south-west gale had found its way over the screes of the High Street ridge that closes the head of the narrow valley of which Kidsty and Grey Crag form the sides. Enraged apparently by opposition, it was coming down the full length of the lake in intermittent bursts of rain-laden fury that made even keeping one's feet no simple matter, and life altogether for the moment a moderate sort of entertainment. The fact that in the brief pauses, while the storm drew fresh breath, I could just keep my flies on the water in the shelter of



rocky points, and at the same time not unprofitably, must be quoted in explanation of what might otherwise seem a quite superfluous attendance at such a dismal pandemonium of the elements. But these fortuitous encounters with nature in her most savage mood, and in her grimmest haunts, are among the memories that for myself I would ill spare, and none the less so because they so often belong to the unexpected and the unsought.

The upper and more rugged half of the valley walls on this sombre occasion opened and shut in veils of scudding mist, while their steep green flanks, littered with black crags fallen in long ages past from above, made a fitting frame for the white hissing waters that filled the long and stormy trough. But the crowning feature of this particular scene was at the foot of the lake, where it draws to a narrow point between high rocky banks, and the out-going beck leaps towards the gorge below through a gap in a stone dyke which otherwise closes the entrance. For into this funnel the storm seemed to concentrate its fury, lashing the waters after the fashion of a helm wind high into the air, and hurling them far down into the ravine below.

But I do not wish to keep the reader out in the wind and rain for the whole of our sojourn in Patterdale, and I should be an ingrate indeed to do so, for in

many visits to this delightful haven in the Lake country I am only too rejoiced to remember that sunshine has far outbalanced cloud. And under such conditions the three miles of verdant vale from Hartsop to Ullswater, by way of the hamlet and church of Patterdale (named from St. Patrick) to Gienridding on the lake shore, is as characteristic and charming a pastoral valley as there is in all the Lake country. Cottages and homesteads, with their sheltering tufts of foliage, have still even this much-visited country almost to themselves, as they had it a century ago. The Goldrill, now a lusty stream, curves and sparkles from farm to farm. The bordering fields terminate in pleasant strips of woodland, or in bosky knolls of fern and rock, while far above upon either side rise steep and high the everlasting hills. And crowding round the head of Ullswater, which now spreads wide its bright island-studded waters and ends the vale, are mountains piled up everywhere. Place Fell and Birk Fell, lifting their untamed steeps of crag and scree sheer up from the water along four miles of the eastern shore, give that exceptional touch of wildness to the great lake which, together with the fine grouping of Helvellyn and her satellites upon the other side, justifies in the opinion of many its claim to pre-eminence among its sisters. For myself, I frankly admit that the head of Ullswater, and, for choice, a lodgment



KIRKSTONE PASS AND BROTHERS WATER



upon the Glenridding shore near the edge of the lake, holds me more tenaciously when I get there than any part of Lakeland.

There was once a king in Patterdale. His name was Mounsey, and he died in 1792, and the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that year in its obituary tells us all about him, facts confirmed, if such were necessary, by local tradition. This was in the days of the "statesmen", before outsiders came in and bought property and broke in upon the old Lakeland democracy. Patterdale Hall has now this long time been a large country house with a large estate attached to it. In the modest original homestead, however, reigned the Mounseys, who from time immemorial had been regarded as "kings" of the dale before the reign of the undesirable and eccentric monarch who proved to be the last but one of them.

This John Mounsey had an income of £800 a year, and the chief efforts of his life, which lasted over ninety years, were directed to keeping his expenses down to £30. In short, he was a miser of the most unabashed type. He was endowed with immense physical strength, of which, unlike his money, he grudged no expenditure in the pursuit of the overmastering passion of his life. He rowed his own slate and timber down the lake to market, and toiled all day at the hardest manual tasks. When compelled



to visit Penrith or elsewhere on business, he slept in neighbouring barns to save a hotel bill. He had his stockings shod with leather, and always wore wooden shoes. He is reported on one occasion, while riding by the lake, to have dismounted, stripped, and dived into it after an old stocking that caught his eye. Rather than buy a respectable suit for funerals, markets, and the like, he used to force the loan of them from his tenants, who were also under agreement to furnish him with so many free meals a year. Ever fearful of being robbed, he used to secrete his money in walls and holes in the ground, a practice which occasioned many exhilarating hunts for treasure-trove among the idle. His last luxury was putting out to the lowest tender the drawing of his will. The Patterdale schoolmaster, with a bid of tenpence, obtained the contract. His son, however, closed the dynasty with honour, when the forbear of the present owner bought the royal domain and a good deal more beside, and planted those beautiful wild woods along the western margin of Ullswater that are the delight of every visitor, and above all of those for whom mountain and lake offer too strenuous adventure.

Various glens of infinite beauty wind up to the heart and shoulders of Helvellyn and Fairfield, which mountains display to the people of Ullswater by far



their finest qualities. Across the lake a fine solitude of moor and fell, rising to 2600 feet, spreads far away eastward to Shap, including Martindale, Boredale, Mardale, and the High Street range, which carries the old Roman road to Carlisle (whence comes its name, Ystrad) along its summit. The wild red deer still roam over this wilderness as far as the shores of Ullswater, while as regards foxes they are almost too plentiful everywhere. Nor is there any part of England, no not Leicestershire, though in far different fashion, where they fill a bigger place in the public eye. Of the four or five packs of foxhounds hunted and followed on foot over the fells of Lakeland, one kennelled at Ullswater is among the most notable, if only for its famous huntsman. Every soul in Lakeland as far east as Crossfell, and every frequenter of Ullswater, knows "Joe Bowman", who has just now completed thirty years of such severe service as hunting a pack of fell hounds on foot means. The mantle of John Peel (who hunted a lower country, however, and rode to his hounds) has almost fallen upon him. His stalwart form may even be seen, like that of John Peel's, outside the cover of hunting songs in the windows of Carlisle music shops. If the songs are not sung like the others round the world, the memory of their subject will live among the dalesmen, I'll warrant,

to their children's children. For hunting here is actually, not theoretically, democratic. When hounds throw off soon after daylight on a mountain side, and hunt a slow drag for an hour or two till they move their fox, and the field have to follow on foot as best they may, there is not much scope for the dashing and the decorative side of the chase. The fell farmers are all devoted followers, are on familiar terms with all the foxes, their domestic arrangements, and their families, and their probable line of action when pursued. They mostly know the hounds, and can recall their fathers and their mothers and their grandparents, and are steeped in hound lore. The very children about the head of Ullswater know many of the "dogs" personally, and have played with them as puppies. For they are mostly "walked" on the surrounding farms in summer, and when they play truant, which is pretty often, and come trotting through the village after a hunt upon their own account, it is quaint to hear them affectionately invoked by name from window or doorstep as familiar public characters. The necessity for keeping down the foxes gives, of course, an extra zest to the chase in these mountains. There being nothing to prevent and much to stimulate it in this country of late lambs, hunting is carried on vigorously till the middle of May; April, as a matter of fact, being for many





ULLSWATER

reasons irrelevant here the most active month, and the best for seeing the sport. It is glorious, indeed, on an early spring morning to be perched, let us say, on one of the lower shoulders of Helvellyn, with the joyous crash of hounds upon a warming scent echoing from cliff to cliff.

But let us turn to gentler themes, noting for a moment Stybarrow, the foot of which is the subject of our artist's skill. There is very little of the Border foray tradition in the heart of the Lake country. It was obviously unprofitable as well as risky to the aggressor. But a body of Scots did once, at least, make a dash on Patterdale and on Stybarrow, which is in a sense its gateway, and met their fate. If the eastern shore of the upper half of Ullswater is inspiring from its solitary grandeur of overhanging mountain, its feathered cliffs and promontories, its indented rocky coves, its western shore holds one's affections by its gentler and more sylvan beauties. For after the picturesque confusion of mossy crag and forest glade around Stybarrow, beneath which the lake lies deep and dark, the two large demesnes—"chases" would best describe them—of Glencoin and Gowbarrow slope gently down from the back-lying mountains to the curving shore. Here are pleasant silvery strands overhung with tall sycamores and oaks; there are rocky shores



fringed with hazel and alder, where the crystal waters of this most pellucid of large lakes breaks sonorously when a gale is blowing. The little becks come tumbling in too over the sloping meadows from the fells—that of Glencoin of familiar name, and that of Aira of greater fame for its waterfall, whose hoarse voice can be heard on still evenings on the lake, and for the legend embodied in Wordsworth's well-known poem. Here, too, behind the long grassy promontory with pebbly shore that roughly marks the entry to this upper and more beautiful four miles of lake, is Lyulph's tower. Not a very ancient fabric, to be sure, but marking the site of that shadowy keep where dwelt the sleep-walking, love-lorn maiden, who perished in the pool below Aira Force in the arms of her errant knight, as he arrived only just in time to drag her expiring to the shore.

List ye who pass by Lyulph's tower  
At eve how softly then  
Doth Aira Force, that torrent hoarse,  
Speak from the woody glen.



## BASSENTHWAITE AND DERWENTWATER

What was the great Parnassus' self to thee  
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty  
Our British hill is fairer far; he shrouds  
His double front among Atlantic clouds,  
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castally.

—*Wordsworth.*

Mercifully it is not our province here to pass a pious opinion on the comparative beauties of Ullswater and Derwentwater. It is tolerably certain that the one which held you the longer and the most often in its welcome toils would have your verdict. The lake of Ulpho is a thought wilder and grander and withal less accessible. Save on occasions, it wears generally a more isolated and aloof demeanour. The other, too, is much smaller and quite differently formed; its length, three miles and odd, being little more than twice its breadth, but picturesquely indented, and virtually surrounded by mountainous heights. Keswick town almost adjoins, though nowhere trenching, on its lower end, and behind Keswick the great cone of Skiddaw fills the north. Though of no distinction in itself, not a country town in all England is so felicitously placed. Within five minutes'

walk of its extremity its fortunate burghers can pace the shores of Derwentwater, or, better still, the fir-clad promontory of Friars Crag, and look straight up the mountain-bordered lake to the yet sterner heights looming at its farther end, known as the Jaws of Borrowdale. Behind and to the north Skiddaw, as related, joining hands to the eastward with more precipitous Blencathara, otherwise Saddleback, lifts its shapely bulk. Through a fair green vale between, the Derwent, joined by Keswick's own bewitching stream, the Greta, urges a bold and rapid course to Bassenthwaite, which completes the picture two miles below. Though not geographically central, Keswick is nevertheless an admirable base from whence to adventure the Lake country for such as trust to wheels of any kind, and have no great length of time at their disposal. The *genius loci* of Keswick is of course Southey, and the plain red house where that kind-hearted and industrious poet and brilliant essayist lived for most of his life still stands above the Greta. Different in every personal characteristic, as De Quincey their mutual friend so lucidly sets forth, was Southey from Wordsworth, his successor in the Laureateship. The one, elegant, reserved, modest, fastidious, business-like, a methodical and indefatigable worker, but essentially a man of books; the other, sprawly, almost uncouth in minor habits.





DERWENTWATER FROM FRIARS CRAG

C. W. HASLETT

self-centred to the verge of arrogancy in social intercourse. Southey at Keswick earned by the *Quarterly* and other sources a quite substantial income, out of which he maintained not merely his own family, but for long that of poor S. T. Coleridge, whose haphazard existence consisted very largely of a succession of extended visits to generous and admiring friends. Wordsworth, on the other hand, ridiculed by most of the critics, made very little out of his poems till quite late in life. But for once in a way Providence, as represented by pounds sterling, seemed to recognize a dreamy genius, with no capacity for earning bread and butter, and showered upon him from all sides legacies, annuities, and sinecures that made him probably a richer man than Southey, even apart from his belated earnings.

A striking picture, too, is this ancient church of St. Kentigern planted in the level vale—the Derwent chanting in its rocky bed upon the one hand, and Skiddaw lifting its three thousand feet upon the other, with Bassenthwaite opening not far below its broad and shining breast. Fate has laid the bones of many a man and woman of some modest fame in their day beneath the heaving turf of this picturesque crowded graveyard, caught unawares, some of them, while temporary sojourners in a country, whose beauty drew hither two or three generations



of pilgrims, before facilities of transport made the achievement the simple one it is for us. Within the church, however, a monument to John Radcliffe, the second Earl of Derwentwater, father of that ill-fated young man who lost his head and the vast estates of the family in the 'Fifteen, husband, too, of Charles the Second's daughter by the Duchess of Cleveland, strikes an earlier and more genuinely local note. The original nest of the Radcliffes was on Lord's Island, one of those near the foot of the lake, and its foundations may still be traced; but they acquired their chief consequence through wealthy Northumbrian heiresses. The Keswick property remained with them till the confiscation; but it is with the ruined towers of Dilston, near Hexham, rather than the land of their origin and their title that the memory of the Radcliffes will be chiefly associated. So one must not linger here over the story, rather a pathetic one, in fact, how the young peer of 1715, admirable in every relation of life, with youth, a happy marriage, and an immense property all to his credit, was drawn into the rising against his better judgment, to become its chief victim. Forced by a train of circumstances and by an almost morbid sense of honour, as a near relative of the exiled house, to join the ill-concerted scheme, in which he had not even been consulted, since his name only was wanted, his fate was a hard one, and



he was duly mourned on both the Western and the Eastern march.

“O Derwentwater’s a bonny lord,  
Fu’ yellow is his hair,  
And glinting is his hawky ’ee  
Wi’ kind love dwelling there.

Another historical character intimately associated with the Keswick country was that “Shepherd Lord” celebrated by Wordsworth. This was the only surviving son of the Black Clifford, whom, in the ruthless feuds of The Roses, his mother, dreading the vengeance which might pursue the son of such a father, sent to be reared as a shepherd’s son on the slopes of Saddleback. Nor till he was thirty did he emerge from this humble role to take his place as a peer of the realm, to marry twice, and to acquit himself reasonably well when called to public duties from the seclusion of Borden Tower, still standing on the Yorkshire moors above the Wharfe, where he lived a studious life. Indeed he marched to Flodden Field, which must have irked such a peaceful soul, one might fancy, not a little.

It is at the head of Derwentwater that the Lodore beck makes that sonorous descent into the vale, which, by a famous poet’s frolic, as it were, achieved a notoriety it only merits in a wet season. The mouth of Borrowdale, however, down which the Der-

went hurls its beautiful limpid streams through resounding gorges to an ultimately peaceful journey to the lake, is a place to linger in, not merely to admire in passing, and two well-known hotels of old standing are evidence that the public are of that opinion. If the heights of Borrowdale make an inspiring background for the lake, as viewed from the Keswick end, Skiddaw, as seen from Borrowdale, serves as noble a purpose. Then there is that long array of heights right across the lake, and those behind them, spreading away to Buttermere.

The view from Skiddaw is well worth the long but easy climb. Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite, linked by the silver coil of the river in the green vale, make a perfect foreground to a prospect which, like that of Helvellyn, covers not only the whole of Lakeland, but the sea coast and much more beyond. Skiddaw, however, stands sentinel, as it were, at this northern gateway into the Lake country, and looks right over Cumberland, with Carlisle in the centre of the picture, the Solway gleaming beyond, and behind that again the dim rolling forms of the Scottish hills. We have nothing to do with Carlisle, or the Eden, or Solway Moss, with Eskdale or Liddesdale, or any of this classic Borderland here laid open to the view. But one may be pardoned, when perched thus in fancy upon Skiddaw's

aerial cone, for a brief reflection of how different was the past and how strangely different the associations of this rugged romantic Lake country with its simple, uneventful peasant story, quite obscured what there is of it by its more recent literary associations, from that classic soil of Border story spreading to the northward. "Happy is the land", says the old saw, "that has no history"; and no part of England has so little, in the ordinary sense of the word, as that which one looks back upon from the top of Skiddaw. None, upon the other hand, has more than that once blood-stained region, now spreading so fair and green and fertile to the dim hills of Scotland, which share its stirring tale.

Immediately below and behind the mountain Skiddaw forest spreads—an unusual sight in Lakeland—its heather-clad undulations, and beyond and all around it is the green up-lying country, where John Peel of immortal memory hunted those no less immortal hounds. A majority of persons, I am quite sure, still think he is a mythical person, the burden of a fancy song, a legendary hero. But, on the contrary, he lived down yonder in Caldbeck, and only died in 1854. You may see his tombstone at any time with his obituary, and a hound, whip, and spur carved on its face in the village churchyard. Plenty of people still living remember him well. The late

Sir Wilfrid Lawson, whose home, and that of his forbears, is easily visible from here, knew him well, and in his youth had hunted with him. The last time I was at Caldbeck, ten years ago, two of his daughters, old married ladies, were still alive in the neighbourhood, and I spent several hours myself in company with his nephew, who, when a boy, used to help him with his hounds. Peel was, in fact, a well-to-do yeoman who kept a small pack of hounds, which he hunted when and where he pleased for his own entertainment, and, incidentally, for that of a few of his neighbours, one of whom, Woodcock Graves, the whilom owner of a bobbin mill and his most constant companion, wrote the song, never dreaming of it as more than a passing joke. Afterwards, when Graves, having failed in business, went to Tasmania, where he died in the 'Seventies, Mr. Metcalf, of the Carlisle publishing house, arranged the song, which fortuitously caught on in Cumbrian hunting circles, and has now gone round the world. Graves has told us all about the writing of it—tossed hastily off one evening in Peel's little house at Caldbeck, which anyone may see to-day. The village is full of his relatives and connections, and I have no doubt that the famous sportsman spoke an archaic and forcible Cumbrian, that strangers who can understand the ordinary fell farmer or peasant of to-day without

difficulty would make mighty little of. At any rate, his nephew Robert did! Peel was not a fell hunter of the Ullswater pattern, but worked altogether a lower country and rode to his hounds. He was an exact contemporary of the lake poets, this other lion, and there is a spice of humour in the thought! "When he wasn't huntin'," remarked his venerable relative to me, in a heartfelt, reminiscent sort of tone, "he was aye drinkin'." His view holloa, though said by those who remember him to have been the most tremendous and piercing ever let out of mortal throat, obviously never penetrated the barrier of Skiddaw and Saddleback and reached the ears of the Lake poets "in the morning".



## BUTTERMERE

All nature welcomes Her whose sway  
Tempers the year's extremes;  
Who scattereth lustres o'er noonday,  
Like morning's dewy gleams.  
While mellow warble, sprightly trill  
The tremulous heart excite,  
And hums the balmy air to still  
The balance of delight.

—Wordsworth (*Ode to May*).

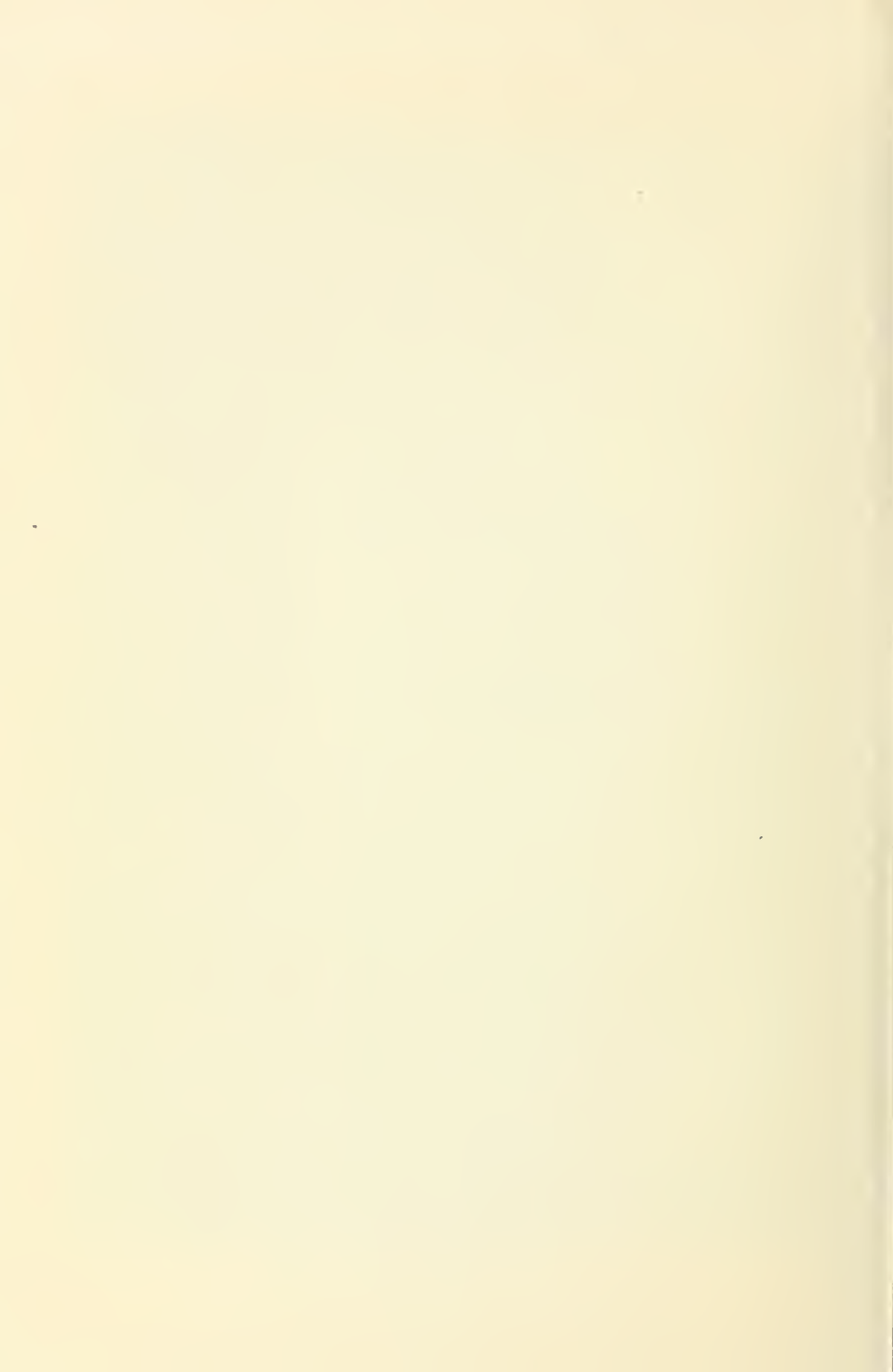
Buttermere in May or early June! The May of the poet, that is to say, which smiles upon us twice or thrice in a decade, not the May of actuality which is spent in overcoats and blighted hopes, and bad tempers and east winds. But there are Mays even yet like those of the invincible tradition, and just enough of them to save the face of the poet. And Buttermere in the full flush of one of them stands always out for me conspicuous in that long gallery of bygone summer pageants, which are not the least of those pleasant fancies kindled by the cheery glow of the winter fireside. Ullswater and Wastwater can turn almost any atmosphere to account. They can grasp the glories of high June and diffuse their radiance over shore and mountain to as much pur-





BASSENTHWAITE LAKE AND SKIDDAW

E. W. HALLGATE



pose as any, or can turn savage in the storms and clouds of autumn with infinite grandeur.

Honister, too, though surmounted in many moods, I almost prefer to recall in some such one as this, when the replenished ghylls are spouting like silver threads down the dark mountain sides to the right and left as you draw up from Seatoller, and the sombre crag itself is thrusting up a rugged head against a background of whirling clouds. But down in the long secluded vale of Buttermere, its narrowed trough for most of the five miles it winds its beautiful length, filled with the waters of two pellucid lakes, I would have it always June, or rather that ideal, precocious May which has planted it irrevocably in the chambers of my soul.

Of all the better-known lakes or haunts in Lakeland, this one is perhaps the most secluded. A dozen miles by steep roads and some fearsome hills are made light of, it is true, by the coaches of the holiday season; but at other times the valley is cut off from the travelling world dependent on public transport, and its two or three small hostelries are then apt to become very empty havens of peace amid the hills. Lying amid bosky knolls upon the half-mile meadowy interval, through which the Cocker sparkles from the foot of Buttermere to the head of Crummock, with the steep green wall of mountain, cloven here

and there by the white trail of falling streams, rising sharply for two thousand feet above it, the pose of this little group of cottages and homesteads scattered around their diminutive church is perfection itself. The sense of snug seclusion from a noisy and ever noisier world, and that, too, in a spot familiar by name at least wherever the English language obtains, is everywhere eloquent, and holds one's fancy above the common. And along the steep western shore of Buttermere itself, following a sheep track on the rough mountain side, amid the scent of thyme and freshly blooming gorse, the hum of bees, with the flowers of the upland showing their shy heads among the ragged moorland grasses, what a picture at such time as I have in mind is this mile and a half of limpid water, fringed upon its farther shore by mantling woods! For though only one residence of any kind trenches upon the margin of either lake, this one of Hasness upon Buttermere has been enfolded by time and taste in groves of larch and beech and sycamore that extend half along the lake shore, and flaunt their earliest foliage of summer upon the glassy water. While on the rugged oaks mingled among them, self-sown, perhaps, some of them by hardy stunted forbears, there still flares that golden tint in which its bursting leaf so curiously forestalls the radiant decay of Autumn.

And when the woods cease, what delightful natural lawns of crisp turf sweep in little curving bays to the mere edge, where gently shelving beaches of silvery gravel dip into the shallow waters, and show far out into the lake their clean white bottom beneath its crystal depths! At the head of the lake the Cocker comes prattling down through the meadows of Gatesgarth, a typical mountain sheep farm, whose Herdwicks, running to many thousands, count every mountain within sight as their own traditional domain, to the summit of Honister and the Haystacks—a noble pair of sentinels closing the gateway to the vale.

Most notable valleys in the Lake country have their *genius loci*, as is only natural in a region till quite recent times utterly removed from the world's life. And they are often simple folk whose sorrows or humours have acquired immortality from the very seclusion, the normally unruffled calm of their environment. Mary of Buttermere and her harrowing story, for instance, would long ago have been forgotten in Hampshire. But no one reasonably versed in Lakeland lore ever, I trust, crosses the threshold of the Old Fish Inn without taking off his hat, so to speak, to the memory of that ill-used maiden. Her trials, however, were after all comparative; well-looking barmaids suffer much worse things, and men lose their



lives over them in various ways once or twice a year. But the sentiment attaching to the personality of this mountain beauty, whom, like Phyllis, all the shepherd swains adored, and yet further celebrated by such visitors as penetrated to this romantic spot, including the Lake poets, made a stir in the world when the villain was hung as high as Haman. The press rang with it, which meant more in those days than in these, and the "Beauty of Buttermere" appeared in various forms upon the stage of London theatres.

The Old Fish Inn still stands a little way down the meadow from the village, as it stood over a century ago, when the yeoman father of Mary Robinson, the heroine, presided over it, and she herself ministered to the hunger and thirst of his varied guests. The gentlemen visitors no doubt turned her head a little, though Wordsworth, who had evidently taken a social glass there with Coleridge, reminds him how they had both been stricken with the modest mien of this artless daughter of the hills. But one may safely hazard the belief that Wordsworth was more artless in this kind of divination than the most rustic young woman who ever poured out a glass of beer. De Quincey, who also knew her, bears witness to the admiration the two poets had for her, and has a sly hit at their romantic assumption of her ingenuousness.





HEAD OF BUTTERMERE AND HONISTER CRAG



But if Mary broke rustic hearts and held her head a little high, she was at least a young woman of irreproachable character, and it was in 1805 that the distinguished stranger who gave her such fortuitous immortality arrived in Keswick in a handsome turnout and took up his abode at its chief hotel, entering his name as the Honourable Augustus Hope, M.P., a brother by assumption, modestly admitted by the stranger himself, of Lord Hopetown. One must endeavour, if it costs a mental effort, to imagine the aloofness of this country and all such regions in the year of Trafalgar, when one finds a very poor imitation of a fine gentleman posing as the brother of a well-known peer, taking local society with a big S by storm, and the "county" within reach of Keswick tumbling over one another to do him honour. There was a sceptic here and there, to be sure. He overdid his affability, and Coleridge even hints that his grammar was shaky, which nowadays would possibly be a point in his favour. But as he franked his letters, and forgery then meant death, the unbelieving minority were temporarily silenced, and the Honourable Augustus continued to enjoy himself very much indeed. Perhaps so experienced a gentleman knew precisely when to stop, for in due course he betook himself to Buttermere and to the Fish Inn, ostensibly to catch char

or trout, but the only record of his sport we have is the capture of the heart, or at any rate the hand—for he wooed her openly and honourably—of his landlord's daughter. What society in the vale of Keswick, a member of whom had even christened a recently arrived son and heir *Augustus Hope*, particularly matrons with marriageable daughters, thought of the escapade of the Honourable Augustus, history does not say. It has no occasion; we may be quite certain without being told. The happy day was fixed. It arrived, and the smallest church in England tinkled out the marriage peals with its single bell. The Hopetown family were not represented at the wedding for one excellent reason, and the aristocracy of the vale of Keswick for quite another one. The absence of the former was easily explained away to so artless a gathering as was here collected. That of the latter was only natural, and must have provided even a spice of triumph for the victorious Beauty of Buttermere. The honeymoon, of which London with the brotherly welcome of a noble family and the smiles of a Court was to be the culmination, extended very little farther than Keswick, when the minions of the law swooped down upon Augustus and tore him from Mary's arms on a charge of forgery, which proved the least of his many heinous crimes. In brief, the man's name was Hat-





EW HASLEHUST.

HONISTER PASS—DAWN



field, son of a Devonshire tradesman, and Mary was only the last of many victims, most of them her superiors in station, whom with marvellous skill and cunning this accomplished ruffian had deceived, abandoning them one after another in conditions of distress, and some of them with children. He was hung at Carlisle, and Mary returned to her father's inn and resumed her former position. She had no child and bore no reproach, among her simple neighbours the most fortunate, probably, but the most celebrated of the villain's many victims. She eventually married a farmer from Caldbeck, and her grave may be seen to-day, near by that one distinguished by the curiously sporting tombstone beneath which lies the dust of John Peel of immortal memory.

Crummock is just twice the length of Buttermere, with about the same average width of half a mile. Like the other, it is pressed between the feet of steep mountains, and has the same charm at the open and upper end of silvery strand shelving from meadowy banks, with the same clusters of fir, alder, or gnarled oak grouped gracefully about the grassy shore. Here, too, on still summer days the same crystal water shows far out into the lake the clean, white, gravelly bottom on which it lies. There are two or three boats, moreover, available on Crummock, and it is out on the bosom of the lake that this

whole beautiful vale, above and below it, is displayed perhaps to the best advantage. The now remoter heights of Honister and its companions fill the head. The steeps of High Stile and Red Pike dip to the gorge near by, whence issues the hoarse murmur of Scale Force making its sheer leap of a hundred and twenty feet, and spraying with perennial moisture the ferns, mosses, and feathery saplings that cling to its shaggy cliffs. Above the lower heights upon the eastern shores rise the higher fells of Whiteside and Grassmoor, the latter bearing the strange unhealed red scars where its whole front was shaved away a century and a half ago by a tremendous waterspout.

A May morning out on Crummock, the fly rod laid aside in despair for the moment with its capricious little trout, though the compensations forbid so un- toward a word; the boat drifting idly with gently gurgling keel upon the faint ripples stirred by the very softest of zephyrs; the distant murmur of the Cocker splashing toward the lake head; the faint dull roar of Scale Force, and, above all, the silent throng of overhanging mountains fairly pealing with the cuckoo's note, is a memory always to be treasured. Another such morning, too, comes back to me, when splashes of brilliant blue lay here and there upon the eastern shore of the lake, disclos-

ing to a nearer view great beds of bluebells at the height of their glory. A moonlight night again, the sequel of the same or another such effulgent day, is before me as, idly trolling for the bigger trout, those prowlers of the night, one felt the awesome black shapes of the mountains piled up on every hand, while the slow, measured stroke of the oar struck molten silver as we crossed and recrossed the moon's shining path.

Stern and wild enough under the shadow of night or beneath stormy skies, Crummock thrusts its gradually narrowing point deep into richer scenes of woody foot-hill, and radiant meadow, overlooked by the picturesquely perched old hostelry of Scale Hill, familiar to generations of Lakeland tourists. And here the Cocker leaps rejoicing and in fuller volume to sparkle down the long, lovely vale of Lorton towards its junction with the Derwent at Wordsworth's birth-place. A mile or so to the westward Loweswater lies bewitchingly in the lap of fells, but overhung upon one bank for its entire length by the opulent foliage of Holm Wood, and lacking the more rugged features which dominate the others, seems to lie somewhat aloof from them in quality as it does in fact.

But one privilege of a sojourn in the valley is its easy access, over the single ridge that divides them,

to the famous but secluded trough of Ennerdale, lying parallel to that of Buttermere. The prospect from Scarth Cap before descending into one of the wildest valleys in all Lakeland has a peculiar grimness, for the long array of precipitous steeps and crags that confront one above the twisting thread of the beck hurrying down to Ennerdale Lake turn their savage fronts so uncompromisingly to the north. The more radiant the summer morn, the brighter the summer day, the darker by contrast with the interludes of spring verdure that no north aspect can quench are the impenetrable shadows which mask all detail, and make fearsome precipices out of rugged but accessible steeps. For above them the Pillar Mountain almost touches 3000 feet, and the far-famed Pillar Rock springing from its outskirts, whose naked walls need no black shadows for their enhancement. But this is wandering from our immediate subject, and involving us in the group of big mountains that cluster round Scafell. Far down the valley the lake of Ennerdale, in size and shape resembling Crummock, glistens at the fringe of civilization. If local genii count for aught, that of this valley, though not nearly so familiar, should surely be "t'girt dog of Ennerdale".

The first notice of his appearance was in May, 1816, when carcasses of three or four sheep killed and as





SCALE FORCE, CRUMMOCK WATER





many mangled were found in Lower Ennerdale. Such mishaps were common enough, but the usual sequel, the destruction of the dog within a few days, utterly failed here. Every device known was futile before this formidable vampire. For a long time no trace could be found of him, but in the increasing toll of victims that greeted the shepherd's eye in ever-changing and unexpected quarters. He never visited the same place twice within an ordinary space of time, and the scene of some of his raids were twenty miles apart. He worked entirely at night, laying low through the day in woods and ditches. His bi-weekly or tri-weekly toll increased with his rage for blood, and the hue and cry raised everywhere brought him into view occasionally in the early mornings. But while men with guns were lying for him in one place, he would be enjoying himself on some unsuspected hill-side ten miles away. The toll of victims mounted into the hundreds; June and July passed away, and "t' girt dog" was still master of the situation, the growing grain crops giving him ampler refuge.

Half the men in the country spent the night afield with guns, and were worn out with watching. Many idlers, tempted by the large reward offered, seized the chance to join the chase, and the statesmen's wives waxed weary of cooking meals for all and sundry by day and night. The children were afraid

to tread their often lonely paths to school, and screamed in their sleep that "t'girt dog" was after them. The mountain foxhounds were brought up and laid on. But the girt dog with his greyhound blood ran away from them all, carrying the line on one occasion from Ennerdale to St. Bees on the coast, and on another to Cockermouth. The following, on this occasion, consisted of two hundred souls. It was a Sunday, and passing Ennerdale Church during service in full cry had added to the field the males of the congregation as one man, including the parson. The humours of some of these exhilarating hunts as told by a contemporary pen are delightful. Once, when surrounded by guns in a cornfield, the ingenious quarry singled out the least efficient sportsman, Will Rothbury, who, as the sanguinary beast broke cover and ran past him within easy shot, leaped up in the air instead of firing and cried out, "Skerse, what a dog!" The latter, shaken for a moment out of his presence of mind, bolted between the notoriously bandy legs of a deaf old man who was gathering faggots, unconscious of the excitement. Not till the middle of September did the girt dog succumb after a long chase. He was set up in Keswick Museum with a collar round his neck describing his exploits. Such, in brief, for much more might be told, is the story of "t'girt dog of Ennerdale".



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