

TOURING IN EUROPE ON NEXT TO NOTHING.

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Second Paper.

LIKE many of the Scotch Lochs, Loch Awe is a long, narrow island-dotted ribbon of water. The ruin of Kilchurn, an ancient stronghold of the MacGregors, stands upon one of the islands. It was once the home of Sir Colin Campbell, and had been present in my mind since from Cladich I saw it nestling in the waters of the Loch. Now, when I could turn aside and sketch its ruined turrets, I stacked my wheel joyfully and forgot for the time that I was subject to vehicles and portable cooking outfits. No more alluring site for a stately home could ever have been selected than that of Kilchurn Castle, whose crumbling tower was once the pride of the wife of the Black Knight of Rhodes.

Many of the islands of Loch Awe contain ruins, but none are so interesting as Kilchurn,

"Shade of departed power,
Skeleton of unfleshed humanity."

But I was due that night at Dalmally, at the head of Glen Orchy, of a verity "the loveliest spot in all that lovely glen," in the heart of the MacGregor country.

I sought lodgings for the night and for "thrupence" (six cents) I obtained a satisfying supper of fish and bread, with fresh butter added. The next morning the rain had ceased and a blue sky appeared from horizon to horizon, so I swung gleefully again into the saddle for a run to Taynuilt and back through the wild pass of Brander, I made the journey from Dalmally to the pass in about an hour, over steep grades, and then I entered a narrow, gloomy defile almost within the shadow of old Ben Cruachin, the loftiest of the Argyllshire Mountains.

Unique scenery of the Pass of Brander allured me for several hours and when I turned my back on the setting sun a clear sky and the promise of northern lights filled me with the hope of traveling through the mountains until late in the evening. Why should I not wheel until the latch-

strings were about to be withdrawn? It was a beautiful prospect to the unacclimated Yankee. With the diffusion of the aurora, however, came a cold air that rattled my teeth together like a telegraph sounder, and a short distance from Tyndrum I was glad to accept the humblest accommodation, and retire, munching some warm, crusty scones and drinking a cup of hot water.

When I arose early next morning I found that all the family had been up and dressed some time before me. They laughed when I declared my ability to cook my own breakfast if they would sell me the necessaries, and insisted upon spreading before me a well-prepared meal of ham, eggs, bread and milk. For this they would receive no compensation and accepted twelve cents as a good price for the cozy bedroom I had occupied during the night.

The sun was brightening the landscape when I began to pedal southward. Ten or twelve miles of wheeling brought me to Ardlui, at the northern extremity of Loch Lomond, and within full view of the massive Ben Vorlich, further to the south. Already the beauty of the famed loch was revealed in the varied form of its forest-lined, irregular banks and the changing hues of its waters, and when I alighted at Tarbet, the place of landing for the ferry boat to Inversnaid, I was far from content to embark for the other shore. So I determined to run to Luss and, retracing my tracks, to ascend Ben Lomond.

Never did I decide more wisely. Between sudden dashes of rain the sun burst forth in tropical glory. On the left the road lay so close to the water that not infrequently on turning some sharp corner of the highway, I found it necessary to throw my wheel suddenly around to avoid running on to the pebbled shore. On the right heather-covered hills arose, sometimes projecting great slabs of rock above my head, and always affording a pasturage for the sheep of neighboring cotters.

Luss contends for honors as the village of chief importance on Loch Lo-

mend, though the place consists merely of a small collection of houses tastefully decorated, in the tourist season, without and within. At a point nearly opposite Ben Lomond I found an inn, the proprietor of which was the local ferryman. We proceeded together in a light shower of rain to the bank of the lake. He agreed to ferry me across for a shilling. We pulled out safely in a wet boat, but before we had proceeded one-quarter of the distance the light rain had developed into sheets of water blown about by the angry winds. The waves of the lake were chopping, and we retired defeated.

We returned to the inn to warm ourselves and to dry our clothing. The innkeeper said that the storms on Loch Lomond many times prevent crossing for two or three days in succession—so I pushed on philosophically; but my comfort evaporated when, an hour later, I looked behind and saw Ben Lomond in a flood of sunshine and not a ruffle on the bosom of the lake.

From Tarbet I crossed the loch to Inversnaid. A winding hill, too steep to ascend on a bicycle, leads the tourist out of Inversnaid to a high mountain road, running east to Stronachlachar, on Loch Katrine. The distance is not over five or six miles. The road was substantially made, but a coating of sharp-pointed gravel constantly menacing my rubber tire compelled me to go cautiously. At the same time the scenery, unrivaled in peculiarly impressive qualities by even that in the Pass of Brander, persuaded me to move leisurely.

The sun had disappeared and the shadows that haunt the mountains were settling fast around me when I looked at my watch and found I had but twelve minutes to catch the last boat going that day to the Trossachs. Between me and the wharf lay a winding, narrow road, dangerous in its declivity and sharp turns. The steamer, smoking and whistling, was, I could see, loosening from the wharf for the final trip. Could I descend the hill in safety on the wheel? Pressing forward on the pedals, I released the brake and began the wild ride. A minute or two and the dash was over. Just as the gold-striped captain of the steam yacht was giving the order to cast off I arrived at the wharf and boarded. It was a steamer of liberal dimensions and carried on its

deck a large number of passengers, many of whom were Americans. Mr. Blaine and his coaching party, passengers of unusual interest to the Scotchmen, had traveled this route a few days before.

The journey down Loch Katrine was one of continual pleasure. On the south huge-humped Venue opposed a barrier nearly twenty-four hundred feet high, while seven miles from Stronachlachar, Ellen's Isle appeared, covered with dense woods reaching to the water's edge. The steamer pushed its bow around and near this ideal retreat, and a sharp blast from the steam whistle again brought the echoing response which once greeted the bugle of Fitzjames.

As we approached the eastern end of the lake we entered the Trossachs proper, whose indescribable grandeur is in marked contrast to the quiet beauty of the lake.

At the rustic pier I bade good-by to my American friends, and after taking a farewell spin along the shore of the lake began my ride to Loch Achray. The well-packed road led up and down gentle slopes over which wild rabbits scurried and in and out of clumps of birch trees, variegated with dancing sunbeams and shadows of the rich overhanging foliage, presenting a constantly shifting panorama of nature's glory. On both sides steep cliffs ranged alternately, half hidden from view by the myriads of trees thrusting out their leafy arms at every angle to challenge the free passage of the roving winds. So easily did the wheel find its way along that it seemed difficult to imagine that almost within the memory of man the way had been blocked to all but the most daring travelers, who were compelled at one point to ascend and descend, hand over hand, ladders of vines and roots of trees stretched over the faces of steep crags.

I reached in due time Loch Achray, marking the eastern boundary of the Trossachs, and a sharp run along its quiet banks brought me to the Brigg of Turk. Like many another curious word in use in Great Britain, no one can tell with certainty the derivation of the name of this bridge. There is scarce a feature of this land that is not embalmed in "The Lady of the Lake," the lines of which I read from time to time

on the spots that had inspired the great romancer.

I coasted along the shore of Loch Vennacher, which must ever be associated with the bloody encounter between Rhoderick Dhu and King James.

Not far from the pretty English chapel of Callander I obtained a comfortably furnished room in the house of a widow—the third that I had stopped with since my arrival in Scotland. The Callanderites, who annually cater to a constant stream of visitors to Rob Roy's country, know the value of shillings and pence, and I was charged half a dollar for my accommodation.

Early next morning I cooked a substantial eight-cent breakfast of fish, egg and bread, and pushed north on my wheel through the Pass of Leny, a dark, narrow defile in the mountains, where the road, tortuous as a serpent, curled around Ben Ledi's base, and by Loch Lubnaig. On the outskirts of Callander I passed a group of bare-footed women making their way to work in the fields, and after that, until I arrived at the Strathyre Inn, I had the road all to myself. When I halted to ascend Ben Ledi I left my wheel with its precious load in a heather-covered field, without lock or guard to secure it. No one, however, disturbed it save a colony of ants which swarmed over its nicked frame and took such entire possession of the contents of the bags that a quarter of an hour hardly sufficed on my return to dislodge them.

From the foot of Ben Ledi my route carried me by the placid Loch Earn and through the wild Glen Ogle, in which I was given a change of exercise in walking and pushing the wheel. Eight miles of travel brought me to Killin, where I had the assistance of a rosy-cheeked schoolgirl in the preparation of my noonday meal. She was a cotter's daughter and after we had dined from oatmeal and eggs, which she insisted on placing before me free of charge, we walked about the quiet place with a small regiment of curiously dressed urchins at our heels.

I wheeled out of Killin amid the encouraging shouts of a company of English and American tourists and turned my face toward the northeast. For fifteen miles, Loch Tay, lordly as the lower Hudson, wafted cool breezes, alluring me from the saddle to play with

the pebbles on its shore. The road from Killin became hilly soon after I entered on it and more than once I had to walk. But when I had mounted the ridge south of Ben Lawers I was able to coast much of the way to Kenmore.

Next morning I ate my breakfast under the sloping caves of an old house in Aberfeldy. Since leaving Callander I had wished to penetrate the Forest of Athole, and now that I was within twenty miles by bee-line of its denser part I cheerfully faced a light rain and rode off for Blair Athole. This journey could be made only in one of two circuitous ways—around by Lake Tummel or through Logierait, and I chose the latter route. Passing northwest through Pitlochry I found a more traveled and populous region than I had been journeying through and there were many temptations to loiter by the way. I did delay considerably, and when I arrived at Blair Athole the afternoon was well advanced. There I experienced my first misfortune in receiving untrustworthy information from a native.

Across the River Tilt a few miles from Blair Athole is the Glen Tilt. I wished to visit this glen, and being told that I could easily ride out through it and return by Blair Athole before dark, I arranged to start at once. I had progressed but a short way when I saw the folly of attempting to ride the rough roadway and at that point I should have returned. Something however in the wildness of my surroundings quickened anew the spirit of adventure which had so often controlled me, and I trudged on pushing my "bike" over the stony path and hoping in vain to find a smoother thoroughfare. Suddenly I felt drops of rain on my cheek, and looking up saw black rain-clouds sweeping over the sky.

It would have been next to impossible to return in safety; the easier and the wiser plan was to hasten the preparations for an open-air camp for the night. Unfortunately the rain now began to fall briskly, but within a hundred yards of where I had first halted a large flat rock projected from the hillside underneath the spreading boughs of a gnarled and aged tree. There was my opportunity. I would unfasten and spread the broad umbrella, draw on my warm overcoat and the rubber ulster, and take possession of the rocky couch. In

less than five minutes the task was done. For awhile the situation was more novel than comfortable. The rock was no exception to rocks in general in its absence of downy softness, and the air became chilling and raw as the storm continued. How long I lay awake I do not know; but finally the musical sound of the pattering rain, striking and rebounding from the alpaca as from the fly of a camper's tent, became inaudible. When I awoke the umbrella had fallen from my grasp, the rain had stopped, the sky was half cleared of clouds, and the sun was sending his feeble rays throughout the picturesque glen. My slumber had been refreshing, notwithstanding the uncomfortable surroundings; but it required exercise for half an hour to make nimble again the limbs stiffened by the night air. While I was putting myself through a course of gymnastics a small herd of red deer appeared on a hill about a quarter of a mile away.

In the early morning I returned to Blair Athole, and after a warm and substantial breakfast beat a hasty retreat from the forest to the old town of Dunkeld, nestling about twenty miles to the southeast in a picturesque valley abounding with drooping larches.

Adjoining Dunkeld is the great park of the Duke of Athole, so often asserted to be the finest estate of the kind in Scotland.

I visited the Cathedral of St. Colomba and walked the site on which the Culdees, driven by persecution from bleak Iona, founded an asylum ten hundred years ago. The walls of the cathedral are fairly well preserved, but the roof has entirely disappeared, and high grass waves from the top of the thick masonry far above the pointed arches. A few minutes' walk from the cathedral brought me to the Falls of Braan and the Rumbling Bridge, from which, it is said, a daring Gaelic Romeo swung by a vine-woven rope to rescue his Juliet who had fallen to an ice-covered rock in the gorge below.

Perth is sixteen miles from Dunkeld, and I made the run south before supper. At Bankfort I met an old woman supporting herself on a crutch. She stood before me in the roadway and compelled me to alight and answer some questions. From a baker, she said, she had heard that I would pass through

Bankfort. Two of her brothers had gone to America, and as she had never seen any one from the country she had determined to stop me on the way. I told her that it would please me to chat with her awhile, and she led the way to a pretty thatched cottage near by, where over cups of steaming hot tea we talked and laughed for an hour.

When within about three miles of Perth I passed Scone Palace, where the Scottish kings were crowned.

I spent the night in Perth in a homelike room rented for a shilling and threepence, and devoted the morning of the following day to seeing the city, the scene of Scott's popular novel "The Fair Maid of Perth." I rehearsed the events of the dark days when the Gowrie conspiracy was formed against James VI.

In the afternoon I rode over the hilly country from Perth to Greenloaning, twenty-two miles, dismounting three times to give way to stampeding sheep.

A few miles from Greenloaning I entered the quaint town of Dunblane, said to have been founded by a bishop of the seventh century. Everything is old-fashioned about the place—even the Dunblane maidens. Two of these fair ones dressed in garbs of days long gone I readily accepted as guides to the battlefield of Sheriff Muir, some two miles distant. They were going that way, they said, and would gladly show me the historic points. And well they did their art. When I left the Dunblane girls I met three Scotch cyclists from Callander and accompanied them as far as Donne, where I visited the classic ruins of Donne Castle which was partly destroyed by Hawley's dragoons in 1746.

When I wheeled into Stirling torrents of water were coursing the narrow, crooked streets. My first destination was a railway station, where I paid my fee for depositing the wheel in the "left luggage" room. When the storm had somewhat abated I started to ascend to the castle. The street through which I passed was a mere alley and I was frequently crowded off the two-foot-wide sidewalk by the crowd of stumbling pedestrians. Part way up the hill I passed the old Greyfriars' Church, where the stern John Knox preached his celebrated coronation sermon before the infant king James VI., pictures of which are familiar to most of us.