

THE COMPLETE SCOTLAND

GLASGOW TO OBAN VIA LOCH LOMOND AND CRIANLARICH.

THE best way to make this journey is by a combination of rail or road and steamer, for the full beauties of the "bonnie banks of Loch Lomond" can only be appreciated from the water. The grand road along the western shore of the loch presents wonderful views of Ben Lomond and the eastern shore, but nothing is seen of the beauties of the mountains bordering the loch on the west. The all-rail route, on the other hand, gives lovely glimpses of the Gare Loch and of Loch Long, but from the train only the northern and less characteristic part of Loch Lomond is seen.

Steamers run from Balloch, at the south end of the loch, to Ardlui at its northern end, a distance of some 25 miles of cruising, and at both these points are railway stations and main roads. Certain trains run in connection with the boats and there are through bookings.

The eastern shore is closed ground to motorists except for a few miles at the southern end from Drymen to Rowardennan, and at Inversnaid, the terminus of the road from Stronachlachar and Aberfoyle.

A delightful way to see the beauties of Loch Long and Loch Lomond. is by steamer from Craighendran to Arrochar, across to Tarbet by motor, and down Loch Lomond by steamer to Balloch, with rail connections to Craighendran and Glasgow.

LOCH LOMOND.

Fishing.- There is excellent free fishing for trout, sea trout, salmon, perch and pike. The waters are stocked and cared for by the Loch Lomond Angling Association.

In individual features Loch Lomond is surpassed by other Scottish lakes: it has neither the matchless depth and delicacy of colouring which characterizes the foot of Loch Katrine, nor the wild grandeur of Loch Coruisk, the wild dignity of Loch Maree. Taken as a whole, however, it blends together in one scene a greater variety of the elements which we admire in lake scenery than any other Scottish loch. In one feature it stands unrivalled: that peculiarly British enchantment of scenery which is imparted by islands rising from the mid-waters is nowhere better exemplified than on Loch Lomond. The length of the loch is 22½ miles; greatest depth, 623 feet; its greatest width is 5 miles, but north of Rowardennan it is seldom wider than three-quarters of a mile.

All routes from Glasgow are common as far as **Dumbarton** (see earlier chapter), where road and rail strike northward through the busy town and by Renton (see earlier chapter), with its memories of Tobias Smollett, to **Balloch**, the principal port of Loch Lomond. Here is a great variety of boats, from steamers to canoes, and there are tea gardens, hotels, motor parks and other facilities, for Balloch is very well organized - and has need to be in the season, when it is besieged by visitors from near and far. Balloch Castle and its domain were bought in 1915

by the Corporation of Glasgow, and one may wander at will in the lovely grounds; light refreshments are served in the Castle, once one of the principal seats of the Earls of Lennox. Among the trees on the western shore is Cameron House, once the home of the Smollett family.

By Steamer from Balloch to Ardlui.

(25 miles of cruising; time occupied, about two hours; piers at Balmaha, Luss, Rowardennan, Tarbet, Inversnaid and Ardlui.)

For Road Route, see shortly.

From Balloch a course is threaded among the lovely islands which characterize this southern end of the loch. The first of the islands is **Inchmurrin** (the grassy island), the most considerable of the group. It is used as a deer park by the Duke of Montrose; at the south-west point are the ruins of an old castle of the Earls of Lennox. To the westward of the island is the entrance to **Glen Fruin**, the scene of the massacre of the Colquhouns by the MacGregors (see the appendix to *Rob Roy*). We pass the islets of Creinch and Torrinch, and see on the eastern shore on a headland, **Ross Priory**, where Sir Walter Scott was a welcome guest when getting local information for *Rob Roy*. Farther east is Buchanan Castle, the seat of the Duke of Montrose. The next large island is **Inchcailloch**, or "Women's Island," so named because a nunnery once existed there. The cemetery was the burial-place of the MacGregors, and it will be remembered that Rob Roy swore to Bailie Nicol Jarvie "Upon the halidome of him that sleeps beneath the grey stane of Inch-cailliach!" The steamer, passing between this island and the mainland, touches at **Balmaha**, the pass of which (road from Drymen) guarded the entrance to the Highlands. Near Balmaha the *Endrick Water* flows into the loch. About 6 miles up the river, beyond the hamlet of Drymen, is the pretty village of **Killearn**, where George Buchanan, the historian, was born. From Balmaha the steamer heads for the other side of the loch, threading its way among the islands. The chief of these are *Inch Fad*, "the long island," partly under cultivation; *Inch Moan*, the peat island, very low-lying; *Inch Tavannach*, or monks' island; *Inch Connachan*, or Colquhoun's island; *Inch Cruin*, arable and cultivated; and *Inch Lonaig*, occupied as a deer park, and remarkable for its fine old yew trees. On *Inch Galbraith*, a small island a little south of Inch Tavannach, are the ruins of an old castle. The steamer sweeps round a headland and the village of **Luss** opens to view, delightfully situated in the shelter of wooded hills at the entrance to Glen Luss (see shortly).

Leaving Luss, the steamer enters the upper region of the loch, which contracts in breadth and derives a new character from its mountainous boundaries. At Rowardennan (*Rowardennan; R. and b., 4s. 6d.*), passengers land who plan an ascent of Ben Lomond.

This is the easiest route. The distance to the top (3,192 feet) is 4 miles; time about two and a half to three hours. The view (indicator on summit) is magnificent. The Grampian mountains and the Argyllshire hills are seen towering aloft, and in the loch below are -

"Those emerald isles, which calmly sleep
On the blue bosom of the deep."

Rowardennan to Aberfoyle (good walkers take four to five hours).- About midway between

Rowardennan and the summit of Ben Lomond a path strikes off eastward from the dip between Ben Lomond and Beinn Uird and follows the right bank of a stream to the Duchray Water, which is crossed by a bridge. Ascend ridge beyond the river, then take path to left of Loch Ard, crossing Glasgow Waterworks Aqueduct. The Inversnaid-Aberfoyle road is joined 5 miles west of Aberfoyle (see earlier chapter).

A grand walk along the steep sides of the loch leads through Craig Royston from Rowardennan to Inversnaid (see shortly).

From Rowardennan the steamer again crosses the loch. On the eastern side is the *Craig Royston* of Sir Walter Scott, which two centuries ago echoed back the vengeance cry of the MacGregors:

"Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
O'er the heights of Ben Lomond the galley shall steer,
And the rocks of Craig Royston like icicles melt,
Ere our wrongs be forgot or our vengeance unfelt."

A little short of Tarbet (but on the east side) is a cavity on the crag-side called *Rob Roy's Prison*.

From **Tarbet** (see shortly) one can drive or walk across to Arrochar and sail down Loch Long, or proceed either north or south from the Arrochar and Tarbet station of the West Highland (L.N.E.) Railway.

The steamer next proceeds to **Inversnaid** (see also previous chapter) on the eastern side of the loch.

To the right of the large hotel the Arklet stream, cascading down from Loch Arklet, makes the fall which was the scene of Wordsworth's well-known poem beginning -

"Sweet Highland girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower."

But those who hope to find at Inversnaid nothing but

"The cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall..."

will be disappointed, particularly if they arrive on a busy afternoon.

Among short walks from Inversnaid is that northward along the wooded lockside, past **Rob Roy's Cave**, where the outlaw often took refuge from his enemies. There is a tradition that Bruce found a hiding-place in this district after his defeat by McDougall of Lorne. The rough track may - with some difficulty - be followed all the way to the head of Loch Lomond.

In the opposite direction, a fine route for good walkers begins by the bridge over the Arklet close to the point where the Snaid Burn comes in from the north, about a mile above *Inversnaid Hotel* and a quarter of a mile above the Church. The walk passes high above the eastern banks of Loch Lomond, through Craig Royston to Rowardennan.

Approaching the head of Loch Lomond, the steamer passes **Wallace's Isle**, and

Inveruglas Isle, with the ruins of a Highland keep. Near where the loch narrows still further is **Island Vow**, with the ruins of a strong-hold of the Macfarlanes. Close to the railway is an immense boulder known as the **Pulpit Rock**, because religious services were once conducted from it. A mile beyond this is the pier at **Ardlui**, at the head of the loch (see shortly).

BALLOCH TO ARDLUI BY ROAD.

The road alongside Loch Lomond is surely the most beautiful in Britain. For practically the whole distance of nearly 80 miles it runs within a few yards of the lapping waters, and as it follows the winding shore it opens up through the trees magnificent and ever-changing views across the loch to the richly coloured slopes on the other side culminating in Ben Lomond and other no less lovely mountains. During the first 10 miles from Balloch interest centres in the numerous islands which gem the southern end of the loch and which have already been enumerated. The road emerges from the trees opposite Inch Tavannach (or Monks' Island), and then **Luss** (*Colquhoun Arms; 10 rooms; R. and b., 10s. 6d.*) is reached - a delightfully situated little village which every July is the scene of one of the most popular of the smaller Highland Gatherings. As may be imagined, it draws considerable crowds from Glasgow, and each of the twin rows of cottages leading down to the pier advertises "teas" or "bed and breakfast."

On the shores of the loch beyond Luss is a favourite camping-ground. Now the loch begins to narrow, and from the little promontory near **Inverbeg** (*hotel*) a ferry crosses to **Rowardennan** (*hotel*), from which a path (4 miles) climbs to the summit of **Ben Lomond** (3,192 feet; see earlier). From the western shore of the loch are enchanting glimpses of the mountain, which changes its appearance with every mile of the road and every shifting of cloud or sun. A little under 10 miles from Luss is **Tarbet** (not to be confused with Tarbert on Loch Fyne or Tarbert in Harris; all these names signify narrow strips of land across which boats could be hauled). Tarbet consists of a palatial hotel (*50 rooms; R. and b., 11s. 6d.*), and one or two houses and cottages where accommodation of a humbler sort can be obtained. It marks the half-way point in the trip along Loch Lomond and is busy with road traffic also, for here comes in the road which runs over the narrow ridge (1½ miles) separating Loch Lomond from Loch Long, a sea loch at the head of which is **Arrochar** (see earlier chapter). The motor run from Glasgow to Tarbet, Arrochar and back via, the Gare Loch and Helensburgh is deservedly popular. Glasgow folk are to be envied for the possession of such magnificent scenery almost on the municipal boundary.

A mile or two beyond Tarbet the Inveruglas Water comes in on the left, down a wide valley which gives grand views of Ben Vorlich, Ben Ime and Ben Vane. Across the water (*ferry*) is Inversnaid, an important point on the Trossachs - Loch Lomond tour (see earlier pages). As the road rounds the eastern foot of Ben Vorlich, the *Pulpit Rock* is seen to the left of the road and the head of the loch comes into view. **Ardlui** is a small village to which a pier and a railway station have given considerable importance to tourists. There is a good hotel (*15 rooms; R. and b., 9s.*), and accommodation can be obtained elsewhere in and around the village. Good fishing for trout, sea trout and salmon.

From Ardlui to Crianlarich, road and rail ascend **Glen Falloch**, rising about 600 feet in 9 miles. The lower part of the glen is well wooded, and the river, which has a somewhat

sluggish course for some little distance before entering Loch Lomond, runs swiftly over a rocky bed in its higher parts, forming about 2½ miles above Inverarnan the *Falls of Falloch*. The view, looking back, as we ascend is very fine, the combination of wood, loch, stream and mountain grouping itself most effectively. Before reaching **Crianlarich** the nearer hills on the right drop down to Glen Dochart, and disclose the huge mass of **Ben More** (3,843 feet; see earlier chapter) on the right. Crianlarich, with good hotel (*Crianlarich Hotel, 33 rooms; R. and b., 9s.*) and other accommodation, is a splendid centre, having easy access to Loch Lomond, to Killin and Loch Tay, and to Oban and the west; while the rebuilding of the Glencoe road affords a fine run through to Fort William. Here the L.M.S. and the L.N.E.R. meet. There is excellent fishing near the village.

From Crianlarich the course is westward up Strath Fillan to **Tyndrum** (pronounced *Tyne-drum*: Hotel (*Royal, Caledonian*) and other accommodation), about 800 feet above sea-level and a splendid centre for walkers, motorists and others. There are remains of lead mines west of the village and other minerals have been found. Once an important coaching centre, Tyndrum looks like regaining its importance to road-travellers, for here the main Lochearnhead-Oban road is met by the magnificent new highway from Fort William by Glencoe and Bridge of Orchy.

From Tyndrum we pass to **Glen Lochy** - the "wearisome glen" some call it: a name to be remembered by walkers going eastward. Travellers westward have before them a grand and ever-changing view over the green strath below, the dark, blue-shadowed Ben Cruachan beyond Dalmally contrasting well with the smoother hills to the left. Farther down, **Glen Orchy** comes in on the right (road unsuitable for motors: see earlier chapter). Far ahead the monument near Dalmally marks the northern end of Loch Awe.

Dalmally consists of a church, an hotel and a scattered handful of houses, including a shop and a post office. A much-worn stone in the roadway before the hotel is locally known as "Bruce's Chair." From Dalmally there are fine views of the deep, hollowed eastern flank of Ben Cruachan. Then we get a sudden view of **Loch Awe** with Kilchurn Castle ruins (see later) close at hand.

Beside the Loch Awe Station and Hotel a small hamlet has gathered; for this is the terminal point of the steamers to and from Ford, at the southern end of the Loch. (For Loch Awe, see later.) For several miles the Oban road winds along the steep, wooded southern flank of Ben Cruachan, the waters of the loch below on the left and on the right a succession of rills and falls tumbling down to the loch from the slopes above. The best of these are the **Falls of Cruachan**, seen framed through the railway arch about 4 miles west of Loch Awe Station. A mile or so farther west are the **Falls of Brander**. By this time the road has left the open loch-side and entered the narrowing steep-sided gorge, a fjord-like arm of the loch, known as the **Pass of Brander**. Where the loch ends the **Pass of Awe** begins, the River Awe rushing down the widening valley and providing good salmon fishing. The Pass of Awe was the scene of many a fierce fight between the MacNaughtens, the MacGregors and other rival clans, as numerous burial cairns attest. Robert Bruce and Sir James Douglas forced their way through the pass in 1310 after laying low their MacDougall opponents. Some way down, the road crosses the river by the Bridge of Awe, which figures so prominently in Scott's *Highland*

Widow.

Ben Cruachan is most easily ascended from the Bridge of Awe. From the east end of the bridge a track leads past the railway and then bears left, following the right bank of the Awe downstream. A short way beyond the railway, however, a path doubles back on the right and follows a fairly steep but obvious path eastward to the summit. Ben Cruachan is one of the highest mountains in Argyllshire. It has two crests: the eastern (or Dalmally) is 3,689 feet, the western 3,611 feet. The connecting ridge is about three-quarters of a mile long and 3,400 feet above sea-level.

A more direct route to the eastern peak is from the Falls of Cruachan (*station*), starting by the western bank of the Cruachan stream until a branch of the stream shows the way to a ridge on the left connecting a prominent shoulder with the main peak. When the ridge is scaled the main route lies to the right.

The two routes given above may be combined, of course; good walkers may strike eastward from the main summit along the main ridge by Drochaid Glas (3,312 feet) and Stob Diamh (3,272 feet), which is the middle peak of the three forming the "horseshoe," and descend by either of the other two peaks to the main road near the head of the loch.

The View. - From its position, no less than its altitude, Ben Cruachan presents some of the finest and most extensive mountain views in Scotland. Compared with Ben Lomond it is a giant, and its outlook is correspondingly great. From the bold granite precipices of its sharp and rugged summit, which is pointed, we look down upon its red and furrowed sides into the upper part of Loch Etive, and over the magnificent group of mountains which, extending north and east, form one of the finest landscapes in the Highlands.

Westward the view includes the lower portion of Loch Etive, Dunstaffnage, and the mountains of Mull and Morvern; southward, a great portion of Loch Awe; toward the south-west, Lochs Nell and Feochan and the Paps of Jura. From the summit of the Taynuilt peak one may see, eastward, the Dalmally peak, Ben Lui, Ben Buie, Ben Ime, and Ben Lomond; toward the north-east, the upper portion of Loch Etive, the Glencoe heights, and Ben Nevis; southward, Loch Fyne and the heights in the Isle of Arran.

Below the Bridge of Awe the scenery becomes softer and the views widen, embracing Loch Etive and the "Braes abune Bonawe." On the far side of the river is Inverawe House, whence Argyll set out to plunder the "bonnie house of Airlie," and where, about 1756, Major Duncan Campbell had the tragic Ticonderoga Vision, which forms the subject of one of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's *Tales of the Highlands*. **Taynuilt**, with hotel (18 rooms; *R. and b.*, 9s. 6d.), church and a handful of cottages and houses, is a good centre for walks and rides, and across the open strath is **Bonawe**, a quarrying hamlet at the mouth of the Awe and with a ferry across Loch Etive to Ardchattan (see later chapter), which is the starting-point for one or two good walks. Some years ago Bonawe was the scene of a project for converting the woods of the district into charcoal and using it in the manufacture of pig-iron, the ore being imported from Lancashire.

The woody hillside behind the village is celebrated in the well-known song, *The Braes abune Bonawe*:

"When simmer days clead a' the braes
Wi' blossomed broom sae fine, lassie,
At milkin' shiel we'll join the reel -
My flocks shall be a' thine, lassie.

Wilt thou go, my bonnie lassie?
Wilt thou go, my braw lassie?

Wilt thou go? any Aye or No!
To the braes abune Bonawe, lassie?"

Looking up the loch from Bonawe, on the right one sees lofty **Ben Cruachan**. Far ahead rises the twin mountain **Buachaille Etive**, the "Shepherds of Etive." On the east shore of the loch, at its head, is **Ben Starav** (3,541 feet), while **Ben Trilleachan** (2,752 feet) is on the west.

Taynuilt is at the northern end of **Glen Nant** (see later), a popular route to Loch Awe at **Taychreggan** (*pier*).

A few miles westward, at the hamlet of *Ach-na-Cloich*, the Oban road approaches the shores of **Loch Etive**; then as it rounds a bend there springs into view the ugly iron bridge at Connel, which may be "an exact miniature of the Forth Bridge" so far as mere dimensions go, but is frankly an eyesore. Beyond the bridge are lovely distant views of the mountains of Morvern and Mull. **Connel Ferry** is an attractive little village with hotel (*Falls of Lora* (30 rooms; *R. and b.*, 10s. 6d.), *Loch Etive (temp.)* (12 rooms; *R. and b.*, 8s. 6d.) and other accommodation for visitors, grand views, boating, fishing and limitless walks and excursions. A motor-boat runs up and down Loch Etive and the many grand steamer trips from Oban are easily joined. The bridge carries vehicles as well as the railway (*see below*). St. Oran's Church is built after the style of Iona Cathedral.

Just above the bridge are the **Falls of Lora**, less fall than cataract, for it is only at low tide that the water falls over the reef of rocks which here impedes the stream; at low spring tide, however, the sight is impressive enough. The falls are frequently mentioned in the Ossianic poems - "The murmur of thy streams, O Lora! brings back the memory of the past; the sound of thy woods, Garmallar, is lovely in mine ear."

Note.- There is no longer a ferry at Connel, but the railway bridge between North and South Connel can be used from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily (including Sundays) by pedestrians (toll, 2d. each way), and by vehicles of all kinds. (Cycles 4d., motor-cycles, 1s. 3d., with sidecar, 2s. 6d.; Private cars: under 11 h.p., 4s.; 11-16 h.p., 5s.; over 16 h.p., 6s.; Caravans, 6s.)

From Connel the road continues to skirt the winding loch, with grand views across the water; it bears inland at Dunstaffnage Bay (see later) and shortly **Oban** is suddenly seen lying below on the left, with the beautiful Kerrera Sound and island beyond.