

## SLIOCH.

It was Sunday. When I came down to breakfast, I found, standing businesslike at the door, two ladies who had arrived the previous evening. They had asked for a guide to take them up Slioch and had been promised the "boots," a lad of sixteen or thereby. After a long interval he appeared. The reason of the delay was obvious:—he had changed into his Sunday clothes and polite boots for the important occasion. He had been up Slioch once, he told me. The cavalcade set off, the guide laden with lunches, hairpins, and various odd wraps, including the feminine gender of sweaters, whatever it may be.

After breakfast my sister and I agreed to start in pursuit. We avoided the long approach to the hill by bicycling down the road almost as far as Loch Maree, leaving the bicycles in the heather and fording the river. It is so refreshing to get one's feet wet early. We saw the guide leading the ladies up the face of the steep direct ascent of Meall Each, the southmost knob of Slioch. At times it appeared to be necessary to go on all fours. We preferred gentler methods and skirted round the knob. On reaching the top of it, we found the two ladies solemnly taking lunch. No smiles could be got out of them. The trouble was that the guide had proudly announced that they were now on the summit of Slioch, while a glance at the map had shown the ladies that they were not on the summit, and, what was worse, that the route to the top, marked on their map, did not go over Meall Each. The guide had been rejected in disgrace and was munching a melancholy meal alone among some rocks. There was nothing for it but to go back to the Hotel baffled.

We invited the disconsolate party to join us and go to the top, but they protested that the ridge joining Meall Each to the main hill was difficult and dangerous



at one part. I asked the guide about the awesome part where apparently a few rocks projected. His answer, "They would pe sayin' that the stones pe ferry pad," did not reassure the ladies. After some persuasion, the whole company set off along the ridge. It was broad and grassy. The finding of some dwarf cornel gave fresh heart to the dispirited ones. Then came the negotiating of the rocks, which was a matter of only a few anxious minutes followed by exultation. A long slow pull over soft grass brought us to the top. In the general hilarity the guide was forgiven.

For two minutes we admired the view. Then down came the mist and blotted out everything. The ladies donned their extra garments, and, horror of horrors, up went an umbrella! Proud Slioch hung his head in shame. At least I think so, but the mist was very thick.

By the aid of a compass we made the best of our way down. There was much consternation when we came upon the top of some rocks which lost themselves beneath in mist. A little caution and some slight encouragement got the party past this obstacle. A rough wet tramp, enlivened by the collapse of a lady who had stood upon a frog, brought us to the bridge over the Fhasaigh Burn, where we at last got beneath the mist. At this stage the guide needed a little brandy by way of encouragement. "It would haf peen the duntin' down the hill as did it," he explained. On his recovery my sister and I made for our bicycles over the river, while the others trudged home on foot.

At dinner we reassembled, the visitors resplendent in borrowed garments, and the day's outing was reviewed under the genial influence of a bottle of champagne.

M.