

THE EASTERN PENTLANDS.

THE following notes may prove useful to members of the Club who are spending a few days in Edinburgh, and who wish to see something of the Pentlands, but have not time to explore the more distant heights.

The north-eastern extremity of the range, which is nearest to the city, is formed of the fine triangle of hills, Cairketton (1555 feet), Allermuir (1617 feet), and Castlelaw (1595 feet). The easiest ascent is by the north face of Cairketton, from the Lothianburn golf course, close to Swanston, and about two miles from the Braid Hills car terminus. The summit of Allermuir, which is surmounted by a tall listening-post, a relic of the war, can be reached from Cairketton by proceeding nearly due west across a heathery col for about a mile. Castlelaw is almost due south from Allermuir, distance also about a mile, and the way is rough and stony. The descent can be made along the south-west ridge to Glencorse Reservoir, and, by following the road by the side of the Glencorse Burn, the pedestrian rejoins the main road at Flotterstone Bridge, whence a walk of between four and five miles brings him back to the car terminus. The field of Rullion Green lies just to the west of Flotterstone. A good map for the purposes of this excursion is Bartholomew's reduced Ordnance, sheet No. 8, two miles to the inch.

The north-eastern flank of the Pentlands has many associations with men famous in literature and science. Lord Cockburn, who confessed to "a taste for the tops of hills," considered the summit of Cairketton to be one of the best view-points in Scotland; Stevenson often lay on Cairketton or Allermuir, "listening to the silence which is among the hills," and has enshrined both in a well-known poem:—

The tropics vanish, and meseems that I,
From Halkerside, from topmost Allermuir,
Or steep Caerketton, dreaming gaze again.
Far set in fields and woods, the town I see
Spring gallant from the shallows of her smoke,
Cragged, spired, and turreted, her virgin port
Beflagged. About, on seaward-drooping hills,
New folds of city glitter. Last, the Forth
Wheels ample waters set with sacred isles,
And populous Fife smokes with a score of towns.

Hugh Miller described Glencorse Reservoir in his book on Edinburgh and its Neighbourhood, and Sir Walter himself climbed Castlelaw when staying at "haunted Woodhouselee."

Certain it is that the view from these heights is extremely fine. A magnificent array of hills, stretching from the Grampians and the Ochils to the Moorfoots, the Lammermoors and the Border uplands, the fertile plains of the Lothians and Fife, the noble Firth with its rocky islands, its mighty bridge and Royal dockyard, and, in the foreground, high Dunedin herself, "set on her hilly throne," make up a prospect that fully justifies the encomium of the lord of Bonaly. In the Royal Scottish Museum, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, there is a fine model of the Pentlands illustrating the topography and geology of the range.

J. R. L. G.