

A DAY ON THE PENTLANDS.

BY J. R. LESLIE GRAY.

ON a fine June day, in a recent year, I walked from Balerno to the Pentlands by the usual route, viz. : in a southerly direction, past the ruined village of Redford, and across Thriepmuir Reservoir by Redford Bridge. At the bridge I was haunted by a black-headed gull which was evidently annoyed by my presence, for it flew in circles just above my head, uttering most discordant cries. At the head of the avenue leading to Bavelaw Castle, I turned first to the left and then to the right, and entered the glen known as the Green Cleugh, which leads into the heart of the Pentlands, and is bounded on the east by the North Black Hill, 1,638 feet, and on the west by the Hare Hill, 1,470 feet. The scenery here is bold and rugged ; and the Green Cleugh has some resemblance to Glen Lui Beg, of course on a smaller scale. The resemblance is increased by the view of the massive bulk of Scald Law, 1,898 feet, the highest of the Pentlands, which confronts us on the other side of the Logan Burn. From the mouth of the glen Scald Law, though it rises to a height of only about a thousand feet above the burn, looks almost as imposing as Ben Macdhui itself, probably because it is, like the Ben, the monarch of its own range.

At the foot of a waterfall which descends from the Hare Hill I sat and ate my lunch. Almost immediately after I had commenced, a black-faced sheep came and stood on the other side of the burn, regarding me with a fixed and appealing look. I told it that I had little enough for myself, and as it could eat grass and I couldn't, it ought to restrain its greediness. It merely said "baa," and looked more expectant than ever ; so I threw it some pieces of scone, which it devoured without any appearance of gratitude, and it left only when it saw that I had nothing more to give

it. Thus does mendicancy pursue us even into the recesses of the hills.

My objectives that day were the West Kip, 1,806 feet, and the East Kip, 1,750 feet, two of the higher peaks of the Pentlands, so I climbed up the rugged and picturesque glen which descends from the col between Scald Law and the East Kip. A crystal streamlet runs into the glen from the East Kip, and I was tempted to drink from it, but refrained on reflecting that it is not always safe to drink even the purest-looking water on hills which are the habitation of sheep. A little later I was profoundly thankful that I had resisted the temptation, for about a hundred feet higher up I found the carcase of a lamb wedged in between the banks of the runnel.

At the head of the glen I made a traverse of the north shoulder of the East Kip, and was struck with the remarkable view of the West Kip which is obtained from there. It has the appearance of a perfect and very steep-sided cone, something like Schiehallion from Farragon, or the Devil's Point from the Larig Ghru.

I next crossed the col, and climbed the three or four hundred feet of steep, grassy slope which leads to the summit of the West Kip. This consists of a sharp ridge of igneous rock, not many yards long and only about a yard wide, running almost due north-east and south-west. All the slopes leading to the top of the Kip are extremely steep, and—as to the west and south-west the hill looks down on the nearly flat expanse of Kitchen Moss, and to the south and east on the valley of the North Esk—it is the most isolated, as well as the sharpest, of the Pentland peaks; and when standing on the top one feels very much *en l'air*. The view to the south-west is a fine one, extending across a confused mass of hills, mosses, and moors to the great bastions of the East and West Cairn Hills, which stand on either side of the Cauldstane Slap, the most famous pass in the Pentlands. After descending to the col I climbed the East Kip, which is more rounded and less picturesque than its neighbour, but is well worth climbing if it were only for the view it gives of the north-east Pentlands. Right in front stands the burly

Scald Law, and just behind it Carnethy, 1,890 feet, the second highest of the Pentlands, and perhaps the most stately of them all; beyond it again is Turnhouse Hill, 1,656 feet, with its many ridges. Turning a little to the left, we look along the valley which contains Loganlee and Glencorse Reservoirs (which are more like Highland lochs than artificial sheets of water) towards the scree-strewn slopes of Castlelaw, 1,595 feet. The great rounded mass of the North Black Hill is in the foreground. I descended to Kitchen Moss, and just at the foot of the Hare Hill entered a fine gorge with almost perpendicular walls, consisting of conglomerate of the Lower Old Red Sandstone. This gorge descends to the waterfall in the Green Cleugh, and has a rather good waterfall of its own, with a very deep pool at its foot. There is some easy but interesting rock-climbing in the gorge. The large pebbles in the conglomerate usually afford good holds, but it is advisable to make sure before trusting to them that they are firmly set in their matrix.

I climbed the shoulder of the Hare Hill, descended into the Green Cleugh, and so back to Balerno. During the whole day there was a haze near the horizon, which spoiled the distant prospect, but I have never had a better view of the Pentland range itself.

It is a standing disgrace that the passes of the Pentlands should be littered as they are with broken bottles, discarded sandwich papers, and similar rubbish. Such disfigurements are less rife on the higher ground: real climbers being, in more senses than one, above that kind of thing.