

A FAMOUS PASS.

To visit Leadhills and Wanlockhead is to visit the two highest villages in Scotland, the one on the borders of Lanarkshire and the other just across the border in Dumfriesshire. They are both situated in the very heart of the hills, and to stand on any of the surrounding peaks is to see nothing but hills and vales, no matter in what direction one looks.

Through the Lowthers there run three of the finest mountain passes in Scotland—the Mennock, the Enterkin, and the Dalveen. The first and last have good motoring roads right through, but the middle one has not, and never will have, for, thanks to its narrowness, it is one of the few places reserved by nature for the pedestrian, and well does it repay those who visit its charming slopes.

On a glorious June day I walked through the Enterkin, and to any who might yet be tempted to visit it the following may prove of interest. At Leadhills, where the road forks at the Church, we take the left, which leads up to an old mine. The track here (a fine broad one) bends to the right, then round the base of the hill to the left. At a ravine we keep well to the left over the face of the hill. From the first dip Wanlockhead comes into view on our right, with the highest house in Scotland standing above it, while, on our left, a fine view of the Lowther range is seen. We pass a small tarn, go through an iron gate, and continue up hill a short distance, passing a reservoir away down in the valley on our left. At or about this point, looking S.S.W., we see at the meeting of the hills the entrance to the Pass. At the next dip in the track we pass the boundary, crossing into Dumfriesshire, and immediately there bursts into view a scene of beauty difficult to describe, a perfect sea of hills far as the eye can reach from Cairntable, N.W., to Cairnsmore,

S.W. Just across the valley is Blackhill, with its path plainly seen leading over to lovely Glendyne, in whose dark recesses the noted Alexander Peden had a hiding place. Two dips follow, in one of which we cross a stream near which we can see three different parts of the turnpike running through the neighbouring Mennock, with a fine view of lovely Nithsdale. Then one more short ascent takes us suddenly to the mouth of the Pass. From here to Enterkinfoot the distance is about five miles. The Pass proper is about two miles in length, running north to south. At the foot one can, by leaving the stream and keeping up the high ground to the left, cross over to the Dalveen Pass and the village of Durisdeer, both of which are well worthy of a visit. The Enterkin has a history. It was a hiding-place in the Covenanting times, and is famous as the scene of a rescue by a band of Covenanters of a number of their fellow-sufferers who were being marched through it as prisoners on their way from the south to Edinburgh, the dragoons being forced to deliver up their charge. One can readily see, on visiting the place, that such a thing would not be difficult. A few men entrenched on the hillside could quite easily hold up a whole army, which must of necessity go through the Pass in single file. In most parts the path is so narrow, and the slopes so great, that to keep your feet is your chief concern. The great hills sweep in one unbroken slope on either side, on the left Lowther, 2,377 feet, on the right Thirstane, 1,895 feet, down to the tiny stream which flows through the Pass; while to the south the way is blocked by a fine hill, Steygail, 1,875 feet, which very strikingly resembles a huge elephant. The descent in the Pass is from 1,750 feet at the entrance to 295 feet at Enterkinfoot. To all who "love the haunts of Nature" let me recommend this part of Bonnie Scotland, with its many paths, its rolling hills, and its picturesque and historic passes.

E. C.