

the surroundings in which they are to be seen. Large china jars are usually placed inside the marble fenders, during the summer, and can be kept filled with flowers, if they are to be had. In conclusion, I may be permitted to express the hope that now I have shown how

really artistic and suitable decorations may be arranged at a small cost, my readers will emancipate themselves from the yoke of tissue-paper and artificial flowers, and consider the adoption of new ideas for beautifying the fireplace in summer. DORA DE BLAQUIÈRE.

## A RUN THROUGH SOUTH SNOWDONIA.



FALLS OF BENGLOG.

rising. This fact is the only hope to which I cling, for no place is more wretched than North Wales in wet weather, and no place more enjoyable in fine.

I could utter a loud "hurrah" as I catch a glimpse of some blue sky over the hills above Abergele, but the rigid conventionalities of a well-filled railway carriage restrain me, so I merely remark to my *vis-à-vis* that it seems as if it were going to be fine after all.

There is no mistake about this clearance. It is a real healthy "take-up" of the weather. We all know how one's spirits rise with the rising barometer when one is "touring," or rather I should say how they jump up with ten times the rapidity of the sluggish mercury. The wing-footed god himself would far better represent one's inner spirit on these occasions. Mine was up to "set fair" in five minutes, revelling in anticipations of unknown scenes of surpassing beauty, for *South Snowdonia* was as yet to me a *terra incognita*.

Would that it were so still, for I have had but few keener enjoyments than that which I experienced on becoming acquainted with it on this occasion, and I should like to have that enjoyment over again.

I myself had never even heard a remark about the beauty of the river between Barmouth and Dolgelly, and yet I have never seen, either at home or abroad, anything more absolutely perfect in the way of river scenery. Why is this? Is it that we do not thoroughly appreciate the beauties of our own land? or that the

I AM in the 12.35 train from Chester, on my way to Beddgelert, *viâ* Carnarvon and Avon-wen.

The weather has been bad for weeks, and the clouds still hang low over the estuary of the Dee. A few drops of rain patter against the window-pane, but the barometer is, I know, slowly

mass of people who hurry by do not take in the beauty of the colour, the luminous aerial effects, or the majesty of the mountain forms?

I need not linger over the splendours of old Conway Castle, the beauties of Penmaenmawr, or the familiar sights of the Menai Straits. They are known to most people, but when we get away from Carnarvon and work southward the aspect of things changes. We pass station after station of unfamiliar names. The population grows more sparse, the villages are few and far between, and more primitive in character. We feel that we are getting to unfrequented regions, and there are some mountains far away to our right (big fellows, too, rising some 1,800 feet straight out of the sea) whose names we do not even know, but which our "Gossiping Guide" tells us are "Yr Eifl," or the Rivals. By-and-by we come to a solitary little station close to a bleak shingly shore. Here the line runs right and left. That to the right leads to Pwllheli, which name no prudent stranger would venture to pronounce, for he would be sure to be wrong, but which to the initiated bears a sound something resembling Perthelli.

The line to the left, however, is my route, and I wait for the train from Pwllheli on a platform facing the sea. The sun is just dipping behind Yr Eifl, the air is filled with watery vapour which gives a peculiarly transparent look to the mountains, and this is caused by the stiffest sou'-wester which it was ever my lot to experience. It literally blew the crests from the waves, and sent the huge billows on to the rocks with a roar and a rattle which rendered it impossible to hear oneself speak. When the train came it seemed almost to stagger in the fierce gusts which swept across the line. As for the steam it was nowhere, for each puff suffered instant decapitation as it reached the mouth of the funnel.

All this time the higher summits of Snowdonia to my left have been lost in envious clouds, but there has been enough and to spare in the way of interest in the lesser mountains, and the fine heather-clad rocks that here and there border the railway. We pass Criccieth, with its fine old castle on the sea-beat rock, and then we come to more heather-clad heights and rocky bluffs, and just as the sun dips behind Yr Eifl we run into Portmadoc, and I take up my quarters at the Sportsman Hotel on the outskirts of the town, with a fine hill right in front, and a delicious view of the mountains at the back of Tremadoc away to the right.

There is just time for a stroll down to the bridge and harbour before dinner, and beyond the bridge I

come suddenly upon the little toy-like carriages of the Festiniog Railway, which has its terminus at the shore end of the main street. One is almost inclined to laugh at the notice-board, "Beware of the Trains," which is fixed at the level crossing. The engines and carriages are so absurdly small that you fancy a



DOLGELLY.

shoulder would send the whole affair off the line. The rails are just under two feet apart, and as you stand on the ground beside the carriages your head is about on a level with the top. Your respect, however, increases when you have travelled over the line, and have seen the wonderful way in which the engines drag long trains of well-filled carriages up an incline of an average gradient of 1 in 80.

After breakfast, next morning, I started for Llyn Dinas, rather less than two miles away. Scene after scene of perfect loveliness opened as I pursued the road to the lake. The big white clouds, coming from over the buttresses of Snowdon, caused a never-ceasing play of light and shadow on the mountains, which was perfectly ravishing in its beauty of effect. Far away to the north-west rose Moel Siabod, in solitary grandeur, while behind me was the huge pyramid of Moel Hebog, with a glory of sun and mist upon its brown slopes. Dinas lay in tranquil beauty amid the hills—its waters smooth and polished as a mirror, save where here and there a puff from the mountain heights sent a blue-grey ripple in streaks across its surface.

Coming back to the inn after a delightful morning's ramble, I found a young man on the sofa, who had evidently come to grief in some way. On inquiry I found that a singular accident had befallen him. He had been riding from Portmadoc on the front seat of the brake. The near horse took to kicking violently, and singular to relate, his two heels caught the young man on the two shins, luckily without breaking the bone. He sagely suggested that the driver should take the kicking horse on his side on the return journey.

Towards evening I strolled up the slopes of Hebog, far up to a ridge whence I could look over the heights above Aberglaslyn, and away to Portmadoc and the distant sea. Snowdon was still capped with clouds, but never shall I forget the splendour of

that evening as the sunlight, sinking lower and lower behind the western mountains, left a glory of amber light on the summits of the lesser mountains. Far down below me was the little village with the green pastures and silvery streams. A luminous bit of Dinas was just revealed over the shoulder of a heathery bluff, and in the intense clearness of the lower atmosphere Moel Siabod stood out in spotless purple against the fainter reflected gold of the eastern sky. No scenery in the world can equal these Welsh mountains in beauty of line and curve, and robed in the mystic shadows of evening they assumed a breadth and grandeur which rivalled the effect of many an Alpine valley.

I had ascended Snowdon from Capel Curig and from Llanberris, but never from Beddgelert, the latter route being considered the finest of all. The next morning therefore I started early for a walk to the summit.

The weather could not have been more favourable. It is true that a solitary cloud hung over "Snowdon's barometer," as Moel Hebog is called, but the rest of the sky was of that clear, spotless blue which one seems only to get in mountain districts. Although the road to Carnarvon is followed for some three miles from Beddgelert, the ascent actually commences at the village, for the road continues to ascend all the way to the point where the direct path to Snowdon diverges.

There is to me no pleasure in life to equal the start for a mountain scramble in fine weather. The recreation is the most innocent in the world, and hurts no living creature; the air of the mountain slopes is pure and invigorating; there is the sense of a pleasant task to be accomplished—a decided object in view—that is to gain the summit; beautiful scenery is all around; the very streams seem to share in your enjoyment, and meet you with a pleasant laugh and a twinkling smile, as they scurry between the heathery banks or tumble over the lichened rocks. Likely enough there is a skylark raining down his melody from the blue canopy above, in such ceaseless floods that you involuntarily exclaim with Shelley—

"Teach me half the gladness  
That thy brain must know,  
Such harmonious madness  
From my lips would flow,  
The world should listen then, as I am listening now."

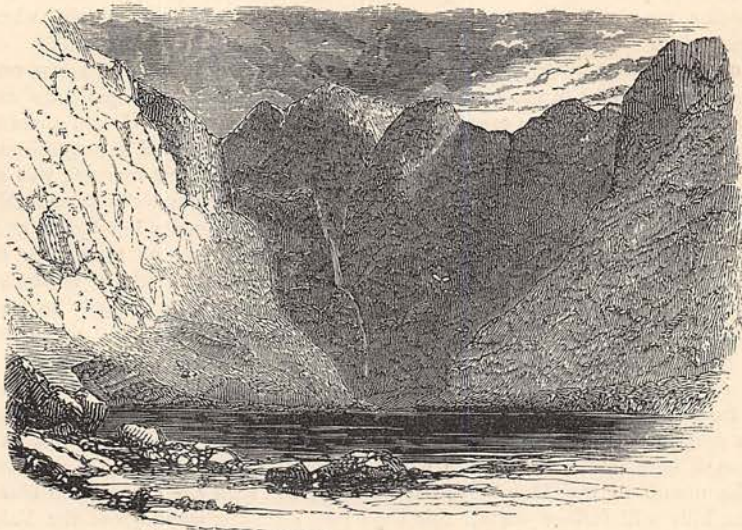
Turning a bluff in the rocks which bordered the road to the right about two miles from Beddgelert, the whole mass of Snowdon came suddenly into view, with its highest peak sharp and defined against the cloudless sky. The huge shoulder up which my course lay stretched almost to where I stood, and the entire route, though unmarked by any track visible at this distance, was quite unmistakable. It was difficult, however, to believe that I was looking at the highest mountain in England and Wales; but standing as I was on its very slope, this deceptive appearance was due to the fore-

shortening. Indeed on looking back at the vast proportions of Moel Hebog I should have been tempted to declare, had I not known to the contrary, that the latter mountain was by far the higher; but this was due to the fact that a valley lay between me and its base, so that the eye took in at once its entire height. This effect of the foreshortening of mountains when you are close under them is one of the most deceptive things in nature. Who would ever believe, in looking up Mont Blanc from Chamouni, that the mountain is upwards of 15,000 feet, or nearly three miles, in perpendicular height? A farmhouse about a couple of fields away to the right is the point to make for on quitting the high road for Snowdon, otherwise the track may be easily missed. You pass through the farmyard and cross a field at the back; the track, which

Snowdon to keep the path to the summit in as good order as those from Llanberris and Penygwryd.

To me personally, however, there is an additional charm in going where the path is not; and I should have been quite content, had I lost it, to have "made tracks" in a straight course for the summit. For every yard of height which I gained now, new beauties opened out, and being in no hurry, I stretched myself on the grassy slopes at intervals to enjoy the wondrous prospect below.

I was well up on the shoulder of the mountain by this time. As I lay on the slope Moel Hebog was before me, distant about three miles, and presenting grander proportions than ever. The sea-line now appeared coming high up on the shoulder of Hebog, and as I knew the height of that mountain, I could



LLYN GOCH.

is scarcely marked, running for some distance beside a rough water-course. At the end of the first field a rough fence is crossed, and then the track—still barely discernible—traverses another field or two, until a lane is reached running at right angles to your course. Ten to one you will be disposed to follow this lane to the right, for it looks marvellously like a regular path to the summit, whereas it would lead you quite astray to some mine-workings beneath Yr-Aran. I was rescued from this error by catching sight of a very small track on the other side of the wall bordering the lane. One may easily be thrown out at this point and get among intricate rocks and quagmires innumerable, and it is a marvel to me that those who seem to have taken some pains to construct a path higher up the mountain have left it so extremely indefinite at the commencement. In Switzerland you would find a fair mule-path and plenty of way-posts on such a popular ascent, but here, close at home as it were, we are left to puzzle out the route as best we may. Surely it would be to the interest of the hotel proprietors on the south side of

calculate my own elevation pretty accurately by observing the height of the horizon. I was curious to know at what part of Snowdon I should get the sea-line clear above Hebog. Llyn Cwellyn lay to my right beneath the frowning precipices of Mynydd Mawr. Anglesea and the Menai Straits were seen beyond, and southward the Bay of Cardigan lay shimmering in the light of the morning sun. It was not yet time, however, to enjoy the panorama; I should reserve that for the summit. The exquisite sunshine, the crisp air, the perfect stillness were the charm on this huge hill-side. There was literally not a sound. Sheep were grazing at a distance, it is true, but they grazed in silence, and I strained my ears in vain to catch the slightest rustle, even of a breeze.

Another half-hour's climb up the steep and rocky pathway brought me to the ridge overlooking the huge valley to the west of the summit—a vast basin in whose depths lie the miniature lakes called respectively Llyn Goch and Llynadroedd. Still climbing the steep path by the edge of the precipice, which falls abruptly

on the left, you at length reach some zig-zags cut Alpine fashion on the steep face of the mountain. Surmounting these, the path narrows, and crosses a shaley slope set at a steep angle above and below; at the end of this you come upon the well-known ridge, about five feet wide, which has a precipice of some 1,500 feet on either hand. Here the path crosses to the east side of the ridge, and is at times not more than a foot wide on the very verge of the descent, which, however, at this point is not so steep. A few more yards of tortuous windings among rocks and the last steep ascent is reached, which brings us in five minutes to Y-Wyddfa, the highest summit of Snowdon.

I had observed the sea-line clear above the top of Hebog as I was surmounting the zig-zags, but here on the highest point that singular effect of looking *up* to the horizon was seen to perfection. When you are looking at mountains near the sea, you naturally expect them to rise *above* the horizon. If, however, you are yourself on the highest summit, the sea-line, which always rises to the height of the eye, must of course be seen clear above them. You cannot, therefore, divest yourself of the idea that you are looking up to it. The effect is very curious and quite subversive of one's idea of the level of water. Snowdon, being surrounded by the sea on three sides, is a peculiarly favourable position for observing this strange effect.

It is seldom indeed that the envious clouds leave one in entire possession of Y-Wyddfa. I had not been there five minutes when the mists began to gather, and soon a rolling sea of vapour shut out the lovely panorama. The view from the top of Snowdon, however, has been so often described that it would have been wearisome to repeat it here. It embraces the whole coast-line from the mouth of the Mersey round to Barmouth, and the hills still further south. All the lesser mountains of North Wales are of course visible, with tarns innumerable, and peeps into the most enchanting valleys. Cader Idris, the monarch of the Dolgelly district, is seen far away to the south, and the Isle of Man to the north. Some say the Wicklow

mountains are included in the view, but I am inclined to think this must be taken *cum grano salis*.

Snowdon runs up to a very sharp point. Indeed there is barely space for the wretched wooden erections dignified by the name of the Summit Hotel. Why these ramshackle hovels are not swept away bodily by the gales that beat the summit is a mystery yet to be explained.

As there appeared no prospect of its clearing, and as it was bitterly cold—the ale seemed as if it were iced—I started for the descent in company with an enterprising photographer, who had brought his camera all the way up from Llanberis, and was going to take it down to Beddgelert. We kept company as far as the bottom of the zig-zags, when, finding his three-legged companion considerably retarded his progress, and the small assistance I had proffered being no longer needed, I went off at a brisk pace to the farm at the foot of the mountain, where I indulged in a long draught of delicious milk.

To my intense disgust, I saw on reaching the road that the summit was perfectly clear again. Had I stayed all night, as I had some thought of doing, I should have enjoyed a magnificent sunset, but not a sunrise, for the next morning was cloudy. It cleared, however, by eight o'clock, and taking a place in the brake, which leaves Beddgelert at nine, I returned to Portmadoc, going on thence by the exquisite coast-line past the old castle of Harlech to Barmouth, and the next day *viâ* Dolgelly to Chester. It was one changing scene of beauty the whole way. The river scenery from Barmouth to Dolgelly is quite marvellous for its effects of colour and light and shade on the broad yellow sands. Dolgelly, backed by the frowning precipices of Cader Idris, is a charming spot. Even the slighted Bala looked lovely with the breezy Arrenigs seen across its broad blue expanse, while the long romantic windings of the Vale of Llangollen revealed so many beauties at every turn of the line, that I felt more and more convinced how unnecessary it is to be for ever going abroad in search of the picturesque, when we have such matchless scenes as these almost at our threshold.

SYDNEY HODGES.

## NIGHT AND MORNING.

**I** STOOD alone in the porch last night,  
And watched the moon rise over the lea,  
Till the shadows waded in the silver light,  
And the night-wind sighed to me.

And down in the garden-paths I knew  
That last year's leaves were lingering yet,  
Leaves that had taken the sun and the dew  
Of days I would fain forget.

I found no peace in the summer night;  
"Old joys," I said, "like the leaves lie low,  
And I cannot rest in this tranquil light;"  
So I wept, and turned to go.

I stood again in the porch at morn,  
While the boughs shook down their sparkling spray,  
And the sun rose over the springing corn,  
And the fields of scented hay.

A wain went by with its fragrant load;  
The waggoner whistled loud and clear,  
But I heard a step on the quiet road,  
And knew that my love was near.

Blow, morning wind, o'er the sun-lit slope,  
And carry the dead leaves out of sight!  
For my heart beats high with its new-found hope;  
Ah! why did I doubt, last night?

SARAH DOUDNEY.