

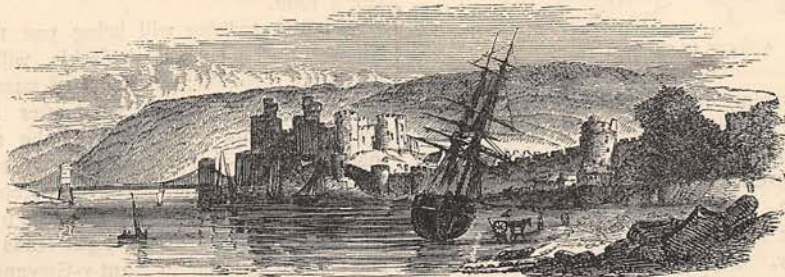
scouring materials, are subjected for days together to a mangling process under heavy slabs weighted with iron; by which means they are not only rubbed bright, but all the inequalities of their figure are subdued to perfect grace and contour. Needle-makers say this process is absolutely necessary: it certainly answers its purpose to a miracle. In the early days of needle-making, this scouring was done in a very primitive manner. The workman, as he sat at work in other branches of the manufacture, rolled the packages of needles under his feet.

There are several further operations, many of them very interesting to witness, before the tiny articles are ready for the market. It is pretty to see the neat warehouse-girls reduce them to order in nice even layers, by stroking and coaxing them with suitable

tools; get their heads all one way by allowing the points to stick in the finger—covered with a wash-leather finger-stall, we are happy to say; and afterwards get out those which are slightly longer than the rest, by the same harmless device. We should admire the surprising way in which the most microscopic faults are detected, and the rigid justice by which the faulty ones are condemned. And we should be fascinated by the nimble dexterity of the fingers that consign them to the tasteful packets, of never-ending variety of design, in which they reach the consumer.

Redditch makes one hundred millions of needles every week: about twelve apiece for every adult female in the United Kingdom. Now, ladies, *can* there be any excuse for our buttons not being sewn on?

CHARLES HIBBS.



CONWAY CASTLE.

OUR LITTLE WALK IN NORTH WALES.



IT is never a very easy matter to make up one's mind where to go for a holiday; but when time is limited, and economy is an important consideration, a decision must be arrived at in no hurried spirit.

A fortnight was the most extended period we could hope to enjoy, and as our available funds were not great, a walking tour in North Wales was determined upon. We also came to this conclusion because, although we could have obtained several "Guides" to Wales, none of them gave any really practical information for pedestrians, and we decided to obtain it for ourselves. In this paper it is proposed to give a brief sketch of our tour, with plain and simple directions respecting the prettiest routes and best halting-places. The route is necessarily a skeleton only, but we have traversed it ourselves on foot, and if any of our readers will go and do likewise we can promise them they will not be disappointed.

We took third-class return tickets to Conway, and our first resting-place was Llandudno. This fashionable resort abounds in hotels, and the traveller will find no difficulty in being taken in. As our motto was "Economy combined with Enjoyment," we chose a commercial house, small and unpretending, but scrupulously clean. The charges were decidedly

moderate, and, although we did not meet any ladies, we were very comfortable. This may appear paradoxical to some minds, but, alas! it is true. Our hotel bill from the Saturday evening till Monday morning amounted to £1 14s. 4d. for two persons.*

There is a good deal to be seen at Llandudno, but if the average tourist ramble round the Orme's Heads, and take a few breezy turns upon the Promenade, he will obtain a very good idea of the place in a short time. On Monday we forwarded our luggage from Llandudno Junction to Bettws-y-Coed Station, and proceeded ourselves to Conway Castle, close by. This splendid ruin will well repay a lengthened visit, and it was two o'clock before we quitted Conway by train (this time), through the somewhat uninteresting country as far as Tal-y-Cafn station, *en route* to Bettws-y-Coed.

There is a steamer plying up the Conway, but only at high water, as far as Trefiew. For lady "walkers" the steamer would be more advantageous, as passengers land not far from Llanrwst, whence the distance to Bettws-y-Coed is easy.

The high road from Conway to Bettws runs along the rail and river, but 'at Llanrwst the pedestrian, if he be wise, will cross the bridge and proceed along the lovely shaded meadow-path beside the river on the left bank. At any rate we took this course so little known, apparently, and we were rewarded.

* A statement of account will be found at the end of this article.

Arrived at Bettws, after an excellent dinner we went over to the old, picturesque, ivy-clad Pont-y-Pair, and stood beneath it on the mossy rocks as the



A HOUSE IN CONWAY.

Llugwy came rushing down in the gloaming. The surroundings are perfectly charming, though the railroad whistle seems out of place in such a locality.

From Bettws-y-Coed the traveller may go anywhere—in reason. There are coaches which are supposed to take excursionists all over the adjacent counties in a day. Capel Curig is the next halting-place, and to reach it there are two roads: one the high road past the Miners' Bridge and the Swallow Falls; the other, and the prettier, by the Vale of Dolwyddelan (Dolvellan) and by a little-known (tourist) route across the mountains to Tan-y-Bwlch. We would suggest that you see the Miners' Bridge and the Falls, and return to Bettws; then proceed as follows:—

Cross the Waterloo Bridge—it was built in 1815—and turn to the right. Another turn on the right by the cottages will bring you to a bridge, where the Vale of Dolwyddelan begins. If you visit the romantic "Fairy Glen," do not cross the Beaver Bridge, but go through a gate to the left. The Fairy Glen will enchant you, and you will be loth to leave it for awhile.

To Dolwyddelan is five miles (across the bridge), and as the traveller approaches the cluster of cottages dignified by the name of village he will be struck by the wild scenery surrounding him.

But the walk *par excellence* is from Dolwyddelan across the moorland beside Moel Siabod. The distance is less than six miles, and altogether delightful in its wildness and solitude. When you reach the "Eland Inn," turn up the steep lane and you soon come to a gate. A second gate is quickly reached, and by following the path, which cannot be lost if the traveller keep

to the left under Moel Siabod Mountain, it will lead up to an extensive moor across stepping-stones (or through the rivulet after rain) over a large slab "bridge." Now Moel Siabod is almost in front, but to the left; keep on until you reach a gate in a wall—the path is rather wet about here—then continue straight on the left of the wall, and soon a beautiful prospect will open before you, far better than the reverse view, and we tried both.

From the rising ground you have a most extensive prospect. The descent cannot be mistaken: it is a rough mule-path through a little plantation; and at last, when you reach the old (high) road, turn to the left by some cottages—which we remember more particularly in connection with a dog, whose bark was, we hope, worse than his bite. You will soon reach a bridge rejoicing in the name of Pont-y-Cyfng (Pontagriffin), and crossing it you are in the Capel Curig road.

A mile's walking will bring you to Capel Curig. Thence the coach, if desirable, will carry you to Llanberis through the celebrated pass. A fine view of Snowdon is obtained soon after leaving Tan-y-Bwlch, but the real beauty of the road only commences at Pen-y-Gwyrdd (Penny-goored), where is an hotel and nothing else whatever, except Pen-y-Gwyrdd, which must have existed before the inn of the same name. The road to the right leads to Llanberis, and that to the left to Nant-y-Gwynant, the beautiful "Vale of Waters."

Supposing the tourist to reach Llanberis about 5 p.m., we would suggest his taking train that evening at 6.30 to Carnarvon, to see the castle. The return train reaches Llanberis at 9 p.m. Tea can there be had, and a comfortable bed.

Of course the *raison d'être* of Llanberis is Snowdon, and in fine weather the ascent of this mountain will well repay the slight exertion necessary. A guide in fine weather—and no one would start up in



ON THE DEE, NEAR LLANGOLLEN.

a dense fog—is absolutely needless. Two hours will suffice for a good walker to reach the top. Luggage can be sent on by road to Beddgelert.

The description of the view we leave to abler pens. The descent should be made to Beddgelert, and this

portion at the top requires care, for a slip might be awkward, possibly dangerous to unseasoned heads. Still we conclude that no one will climb it who cannot trust himself on the narrow, sloping edge on the Beddgelert side. The descent is rapid, and the views all around lovely. The path at times is very stony, and narrow in one place, where caution is necessary. By making for the "Pitt Rock," near a farm-house, the traveller will debouch upon the high road (to Beddgelert), which is long visible on the left front during the descent.

If not too tired, see the pass to the famous Pont Aberglaslyn by evening or moonlight. There are some pleasant rambles in the neighbourhood, to Nant-y-Gwynant for example, and the village is picturesque.

The gorge to Pont Aberglaslyn is by far the most beautiful walk, and the main road traverses it, reminding one of the Tête Noire Pass. The walk to Tan-y-Bwlch (or Festiniog if you can manage it) is across the mountains by a footpath. The road will not be difficult to ascertain, but we do not propose to go by the high road. At Pont Aberglaslyn are two roads—one straight on to Tremadoc. We turn to the left, across the bridge, and after proceeding a little distance turn up an old unfrequented road to the extreme left. Past some cottages the path ascends to the right, and emerges upon some wild mountain tracks. When we gained this portion of the journey a fog descended, but we pressed on in the direction indicated by the map, and after an exciting and extremely wild and pleasant walk, with occasional glimpses of the sea and Tremadoc, &c., through the swooping veils of mist, we reached a village by a church. We then crossed the railway and, turning towards the right along the breezy hill-side, we almost suddenly descended, and reached the stile close by a small toy railway. Was this a station? Yes—Tan-y-Bwlch!

A train was approaching, and the appearance of such a peculiar locomotive and its fifty loaded wagons upon a line only two feet gauge (1 ft. 11½ in.) astonished us. The engines are double, like two tiny toy locomotives, without tenders, joined "back to back," so to speak. They seem as if drawn by a string, and one almost expects to see a child pulling them.

In front the road descends very steeply, and at

the bottom of a charmingly wooded hill, nestling in trees and shrubs, and close to Mrs. Oakley's beautiful grounds, is a comfortable hotel. Go there, my reader, and stop for a quiet Sunday. Go to the plain little church at Maenturog, a structure erected on the site of the ancient church, and stroll through the lovely grounds of Plas Tan-y-Bwlch. The walk to Festiniog is steep, but will well repay the pedestrian. The view from the tall bridge at the foot of the hill is very attractive. There are some extremely pretty falls near Festiniog across the fields. The foliage by which they are surrounded and the mountain pictures are so exquisite that this excursion alone is worth going to Wales for. We returned by the primitive railway to Tan-y-Bwlch, seated (as far as Duffws) in a truck,

around such wonderful curves that those in the rear trucks could almost obtain a light for their pipes from the engine in front.

There is another and a seldom-made excursion from this charming spot. This is the ascent of Moelwyn Mountain. It is about four miles from Tan-y-Bwlch, and 2,900 feet high. The ascent occupied us two hours and a half, and until we reached the actual base of the mountain peak the difficulties were *nil*. The last part is very steep, on loose shale and slate which slips when trodden on, and has a tendency to bring one down with a run.



A NIGHT SCENE NEAR DOLGELLY.

We conquered, however, and were rewarded by a view which even Snowdon cannot surpass. The surroundings are wilder, and the hills struck us as much grander than Snowdon's neighbours.

The envious clouds came down upon us as we crouched on the ledge of the precipice, glad to shelter ourselves behind the rocks to watch the lifting, and anon the electrical clouds, which crackled about us and made us fear a discharge of heaven's artillery. But nothing disturbed us; the fog or cloud lifted its chilly bands, and we descended the "cone"—but be cautious, you who try it, or you may go down head foremost more quickly than, but not so pleasantly as we did—in safety.

We reached the hotel at six o'clock to dinner. Next morning a car was necessary. We drove with our luggage to Penrhyn Station and caught the train to Barmouth, and, sending baggage by train, walked thence to Dolgelly in the afternoon. The approach

by water is also recommended at high tide (six shillings the boat). The road skirts one side and the railway the other side of the river.

From Dolgelly to Llangollen, *vid* Bala and Corwen, was our next move. We took train to Corwen, and thence walked into Llangollen. The last five miles of this road are beautiful. The Dee "winds about and in and out," and fully realises Tennyson's description of the "brook" as it flows between the wooded hills.

Our little tour was then drawing to its close. Llangollen was our last Welsh resting-place. The whole neighbourhood abounds in charming walks and drives. Valle Crucis Abbey, Castell Dinas Bran, and the residence of the "Ladies of Llangollen," will all be visited with pleasure. To "honeymooners" we recommend the Vale of Llangollen and its romantic scenery.

Two days spent here brought our walk in North Wales to an end, contentedly. The train carried us to Chester, mournful and silent, and we added up our accounts while the North-Western express rattled us from Chester to Euston Square. This is what we saw, briefly:—

FOR TWO PERSONS.

	£	s.	d.
Return Tickets to Conway ... ..	...	3	6
Dinner at Crewe ... ..	...	0	4
Hotel, Llandudno ... ..	...	1	14
Carried forward ... ..	...	5	4

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward ... ..	...	5	4
Expenses at Conway, Servants, Luggage, Lunch, &c. &c. ... ..	...	0	12
To Tal-y-Cafn (Rail) ... ..	...	0	1
Hotel, Bettws-y-Coed ... ..	...	1	6
Servants, Omnibus, Luggage, &c. ... ..	...	0	3
Hotel, Capel Curig ... ..	...	1	2
Coach, Llanberis ... ..	...	0	8
Carnarvon, Tickets, Castle, &c. ... ..	...	0	4
Hotel, Llanberis, and Snowdon Expenses ...	...	1	6
Hotel, Beddgelert ... ..	...	1	11
Festiniog, Lunch, Train, &c. ... ..	...	0	6
Hotel, Tan-y-Bwlch (three whole days), and Conveyance ... ..	...	4	4
To Barmouth, Servants, Lunch, &c. &c. ...	...	0	8
Hotel, Dolgelly, Servants ... ..	...	1	3
Tickets to Corwen, Lunch, &c. ... ..	...	0	7
Hotel, Llangollen, &c., and Tickets to Chester ... ..	...	3	2
		£	21
			12
			9

We were absent clear twelve days; and several items in the accounts could have been dispensed with, but we went to work in no niggardly fashion, though not in any extravagant temper, and thoroughly enjoyed our tour.

With the exception of our scrambles up Snowdon and Moelwyn, all our walking could easily be accomplished by ladies, and to ladies we recommend the trip.



BURMAH AND THE BURMESE.



THE Kingdom of Burmah—respecting which a new interest has been created by recent events—formerly occupied nearly the whole of the great peninsula east of Hindostan, and was divided into two regions—Pegu in the south, inhabited by the Talaings, with Rangoon as the capital and seaport, and Ava in the north, with its capital of the same name, peopled by the Burmese proper; but British territory now stretches a long arm all down the coast of the Bay of Bengal, and includes the province of Pegu. Scarcely any reliance can be placed on the

palm-leaf chronicles of the native historians, and it is not till we find the Portuguese firmly established in Malacca, and able to look round them at the doings of their neighbours (1540), that any authentic information can be gathered about the political and military struggles of the Talaings and Burmese, and the kings of Martaban and Toung-oo. The last-mentioned was one of the most prominent warriors of his time, and rejoiced in various appellations, the most pronounceable of which, as well as the one by which he is best known, being Branginoco. After conquering the Talaing prince, he attacked him of Martaban with the skilled assistance of the Portuguese, and compelled him to submit, promising to spare his life and the lives of his wives and children if he would spend the rest of his days in retirement. The sanguinary conqueror, however, set up gibbets forthwith on an adjacent hill, where he hung the women and children by their feet, and threw the fallen king with fifty of his nobles into the sea with stones tied to their necks, a proceeding the barbarity of which roused even his hardened troops into mutiny against their master, who succeeded in escaping from them