

BY FREDERICK DOLMAN.

CUPID cannot rival the Devil as a godfather of natural scenery in our country. But love and beauty will always be found in association, and if we follow the footsteps of Cupid we shall see some of the loveliest spots of which England can boast.

The little god has shown most favour to "Lovers' Leaps," of which half a dozen or more are to be found in various picturesque districts. Our Lovers' Leaps have their classical prototype in Leucadia, one of the Ionian Islands now called Santa Maura. Sappho is said to have thrown herself into the sea from this rocky promontory when her love was rejected by Laon. To this episode, which occurred about 650 B.C., we may, perhaps, attribute the first suggestion of English Lovers' Leaps, although not one of them can be said at all to resemble the site of Sappho's rash act, inasmuch as they are all situated some way from the sea. Derbyshire can rejoice in two, Devonshire has an exceedingly pretty one on the Dart, whilst in some respects the most noteworthy of all is to be discovered on the shores of Lake Ullswater.

The Lovers' Leap in Sherwood Dell is of more modern origin. In a little inn at the adjoining village of Stoney Middleton which bears the same name you may hear the story circumstantially told. In 1760 a love-sick maiden of the name of Hannah Baddeley, driven desperate by the indifference of her beloved, climbed the loftiest rock in the dale and threw herself from it. But a tree, which broke her fall, saved her from the death she courted. Although crippled, she lived to a good old age, a warning to the countryside of Cupid's cruelty. Miss Baddeley was buried in the village

churchyard, and there are those who will even undertake to point out her grave.

There is, it is true, a rival version to that told at the Lovers' Leap Inn, which refers vaguely to some local tradition of an exciting elopement. The two runaway lovers, riding one horse, are said to have successfully taken the leap and thus baffled the pursuit of an angry father. This story sounds more romantic than the other, and for this reason may be preferred by many. But it lacks

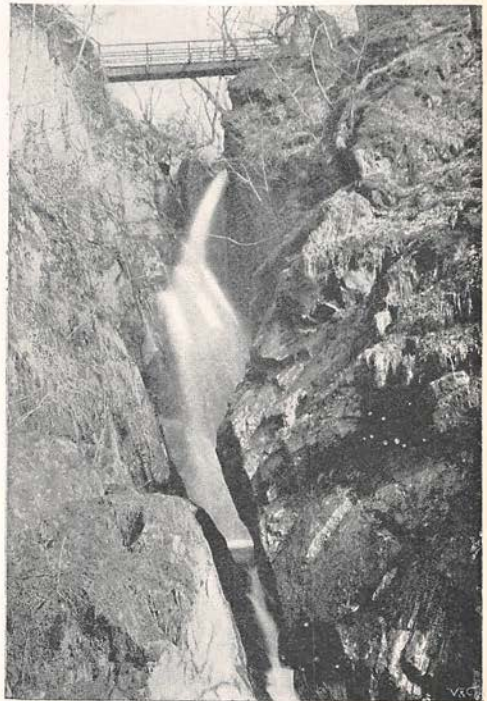


Photo by Walmsley Bros..]

[Ambleside.

LOVERS' LEAP, ATRA-FORCE.

the same circumstantial detail and can hardly survive an inspection of the actual spot, which makes it clear that if the two daring lovers did make the leap on horseback, only a miracle could have saved their necks. Situated at the entrance of what is called the Duke's Drive, about a mile from Buxton, is another Lovers' Leap, a huge rock, on a cliff clothed at its sides by ivy and other foliage, overlooking a chasm through which the Wye stream bubbles and flows.

Sharplo Point, in the Straits or narrowest part of Dovedale, has also been called a Lovers' Leap by the inhabitants. To account for the name they relate a weird story, in which the suicide was a needlessly jealous young man; and several of the precipices

and Patterdale. It has a height of about eighty feet, the water proceeding from the top over a narrow ledge, dividing at once into streams which reunite about half-way down. Near the bottom the water dashes against a projecting rock, causing a sheet of foam and a cloud of spray which in the sunlight, glinting through the glen, give the scene its prettiest effect. On reaching the level ground the rushing water becomes a transparent stream.

There once lived at this spot, according to the story of the Lovers' Leap which Wordsworth tells, a beautiful maiden, who was wooed by—

. . . Barons bold, with stores of gold,  
And knights of high renown.

She gave her choice to Sir Eglamore, but before many days of sweet dalliance had passed the knight was called away to the wars. They exchanged vows of fidelity. Sir Eglamore wins martial glory, but after a time the lady longs for her lover's return. Sleeping and waking she thinks only of him, and in her sleep she makes nightly pilgrimage to the spot in the glen where they parted. Sir Eglamore at length returns, and in his

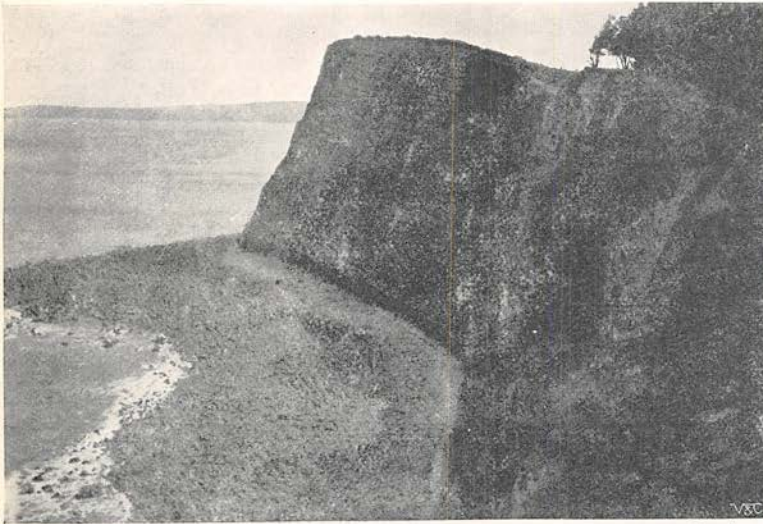


Photo by J. Valentine & Sons.]

GALLANTRY BOWER, CLOVELLY.

[Dundee.

have legends of accidents—some of them fatal—attached to them.

The Westmorland Lovers' Leap has a story to which Wordsworth has given enduring form in his poem, "The Somanbulist"—

List, ye who pass by Lyulph's Tower  
At eve; how softly then  
Doth Aira-Force, that torrent hoarse,  
Speak from the woody glen!  
Fit music for a solemn vale!  
And holier seems the ground  
To him who catches on the gale  
The spirit of a mournful tale,  
Embodied in the sound.

Aira-Force is a waterfall—"force," it should be said, is a synonym for this word in the Lake District—in Gowbarrow Park, on the shores of Ullswater, between Pooley Bridge

impatience to behold once more his sweetheart's dwelling-place will not wait for the morn. In the darkness of the wood he beholds the maiden's figure, and for the moment wonders whether it is she herself or only her spectre—

He touched—what followed who shall tell?  
The soft touch snapped the thread  
Of slumber—shrieking back she fell,  
And the stream whirled her down the dell  
Along its foaming bed.

In plunged the knight! when on firm ground  
The rescued maiden lay,  
Her eyes grew bright with blissful light,  
Confusion passed away;  
She heard, ere to the throne of grace  
Her faithful spirit flew,  
His voice; beheld his speaking face,  
And, dying, from his own embrace,  
She felt that he was true.



Photo by Blampney & Son.]

[Ashburton.

LOVERS' LEAP, ON THE DART, NEAR ASHBURTON.



Photo by Blampney & Son.]

[Ashburton.

GALLANTRY BOWER, NEAR TOTNES.

Sir Eglamore built himself a cell close to the waterfall, and in hermit fashion spent the rest of his life lamenting.

The visitor to Harrogate finds in his tours from that centre two Lovers' Leaps. One of these forms part of the Great Almas Cliff, overlooking the valley of the Wharfe. On the brow of the cliff are numbers of basins hollowed in the stone, and supposed to have been formed by the Druids to catch rain-water for sacerdotal purposes; a larger one, of parallelogram shape, is said to have been used for bathing children. They are believed to have given the name to the cliff, derived by those learned in such matters from two Celtic words, *al*, "a cliff," and *mias*, "an altar." One of the precipices, known as the Lovers'



Photo by R. W. Thomas,]

[Cheapside, E.C.]

THE LOVERS' SEAT.



Photo by F. Frith & Co., Ltd.,]

[Reigate.]

WATERFALL, LOVERS' LEAP, ASHWOOD DALE, NEAR BUXTON.

Leap, was, in 1766, the scene of the attempted suicide of a lovelorn village belle, who, unable to bear the slights of her sweetheart, cast herself from it. She escaped with only a few bruises, a strong wind, blowing at the time, having inflated her cloak. Learning wisdom, she did not again act so foolishly, but lived to a ripe old age at a village near, known as Kirkby Overblow. She must have had a considerable amount of grim humour in the selection of her place of residence—if, indeed, it was not so named in memory of her escapade.

The other Lovers' Leap of the West Riding is to be found on the curious tableland known as Brimham Rocks. Here, between the Boat Rocking Stone and the Druid's Cave is an opening in the rocks with three huge stones placed arch-wise above it. It is on the very verge of the precipice, and, perhaps, received its title from the idea that some lovelorn swain may have sought the old but cowardly means of escape from the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" which it offers.

Wales has a Lovers' Leap on the banks of the Wye, near Chepstow, but local tradition makes but vague attempts to explain the

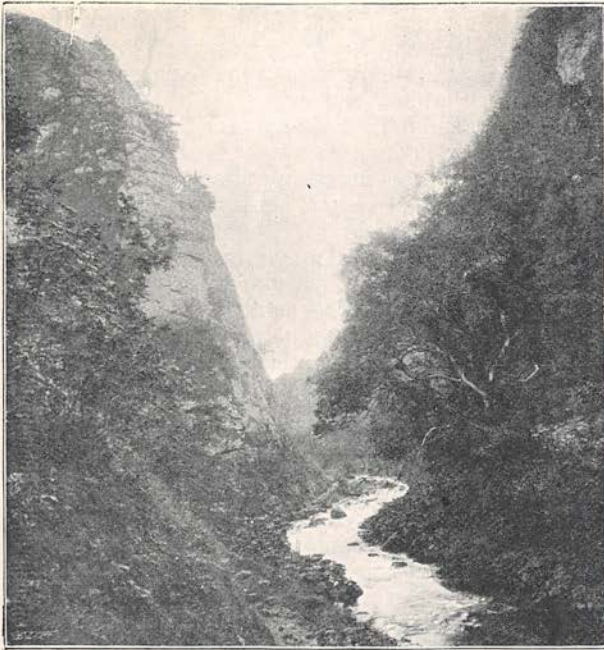


Photo by W. W. Winter.]

[Derby.]

LOVERS' LEAP, THE STRAITS, DOVEDALE.

The maid, when she heard the glad tidings,  
Rushed to his bosom with glee.  
She cried, in a passionate transport,  
"Kind heaven has blessed her decree;  
The stars far above us are smiling,  
And Nature is mad with delight;  
The day of our joy is approaching,  
A dawn that will never see night."

From the Devonshire Lovers' Leap is to be enjoyed what is generally considered the finest view on the Dart. The scene, which is near the town of Ashburton, is rather similar to that in Ashwood Dale, but is of more impressive dimensions, the wooded heights rising much more boldly on either side of the narrow valley of the Dart. The Lovers' Leap is a broken cliff projecting from the wood, "hung with ivy and briar rose and crested with mountain ash." Unhappily no one is now able to say how the spot came by the name, and local invention has not apparently come to the rescue of tradition, although the beauty of the whole neighbourhood is such as should inspire romance.

Devonshire has a second Lovers' Leap, but it happens to be called Gallantry Bower,

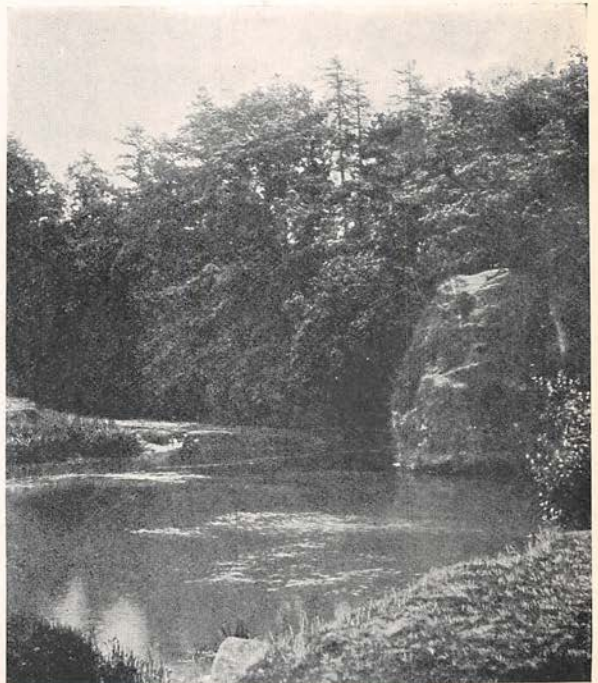
name. More definite is latter-day knowledge of another Welsh "Leap" near to Llandrindod.

Passing out of the Rock Park towards Rhydlyndu, a footpath runs along the top of the field and enters a wood. At the bottom of a sharp declivity flows the silvery Ithon, which sweeps round a projecting rock of semicircular form, called the Lovers' Leap. In connection with this there is a legend which may be gathered from the following lines by a local poet, Mr. Edward Jenkins—

On lonely, craggy headland,  
Mid woods at twilight hushed,  
A maiden stood dejected,  
Her heart hopes rudely crushed.  
Her dazed look watched the whirlpool,  
When, lo! a face showed there,  
And from the brink retreating,  
She fell with deadly fear.

The spell quickly broken—dispelled was  
the trance,  
Her eye had the flash of the sword in its  
glance:  
In madness she pleaded, "Oh! let me  
away;  
I'm doomed to be drowned ere the breaking  
of day."

"No, my darling, hie! and listen,"  
Said a voice so sweet and bold;  
"For thy parents now have cherished  
Hopes that brighten days of old.  
Hie thee home, love's welcome waits thee,  
Sweet the greeting, sweet the song,  
For the troth which holds us captive  
Melts the sorrow, ends the wrong."



LOVERS' LEAP, LLANDRINDOD.

a name which recalls to the tourist one of the most memorable of the many beauties of Clovelly. It is on a ridge of the cliff, about a mile and a half from the quaint little village, which rises nearly four hundred feet from the sea, with face as straight and smooth as a well-planed board. There is only a vague tradition of two lovers casting themselves into the waves from this precipitous height, and pedants have objected that the name is probably a corruption of the old Kornu-Keltic, *Col-an-veor*, meaning a "great ridge." But most people, as they contemplate from the "Bower" a lovely view of sea and coast, will prefer to believe that an old-world love tragedy is associated with the spot.

Another Gallantry Bower in Devonshire can hardly be described as a Lovers' Leap, but, on the other hand, the amorous suggestion of its name cannot be explained by any mere philological expedient. It is a little clump of trees on the edge of the upland, near Totnes, which is known as Hembury Camp. The upland is covered by thick coppice, and below winds the silvery Dart—a most agreeable place, in short, for lovers' meetings. As much can be said of the

Lovers' Walk at Matlock, although it likewise lacks any legendary interest. This is a zigzag path, winding about the sloping banks of the Derwent, embowered for the most part in rich foliage. The name of Lovers' Walks throughout the country is of course legion, but probably none can eclipse that of Matlock.

The Lovers' Seat, near Hastings, is undoubtedly to Londoners the best-known of all Cupid's resorts. Few people leave the popular pleasure town without visiting Fairlight Glen, and of this excursion the Lovers' Seat is usually the most attractive feature. A rustic bench upon a ledge of rock overlooking the sea at the opening of the Glen, the Lovers' Seat is well worthy of its name. Secure from surprise, protected against the attack of inquisitive eyes, yet commanding an expansive view of the sea, it may well have been chosen by the gallant captain of a revenue cutter as the trysting-place for his stolen interviews with a Sussex heiress. According to the story, the romance ended in a happy marriage, and with this wish in their hearts hundreds of lads and lasses have since sat together on this seat of good omen, and carved their names in its stone.

