

# THE CYCLING WORLD

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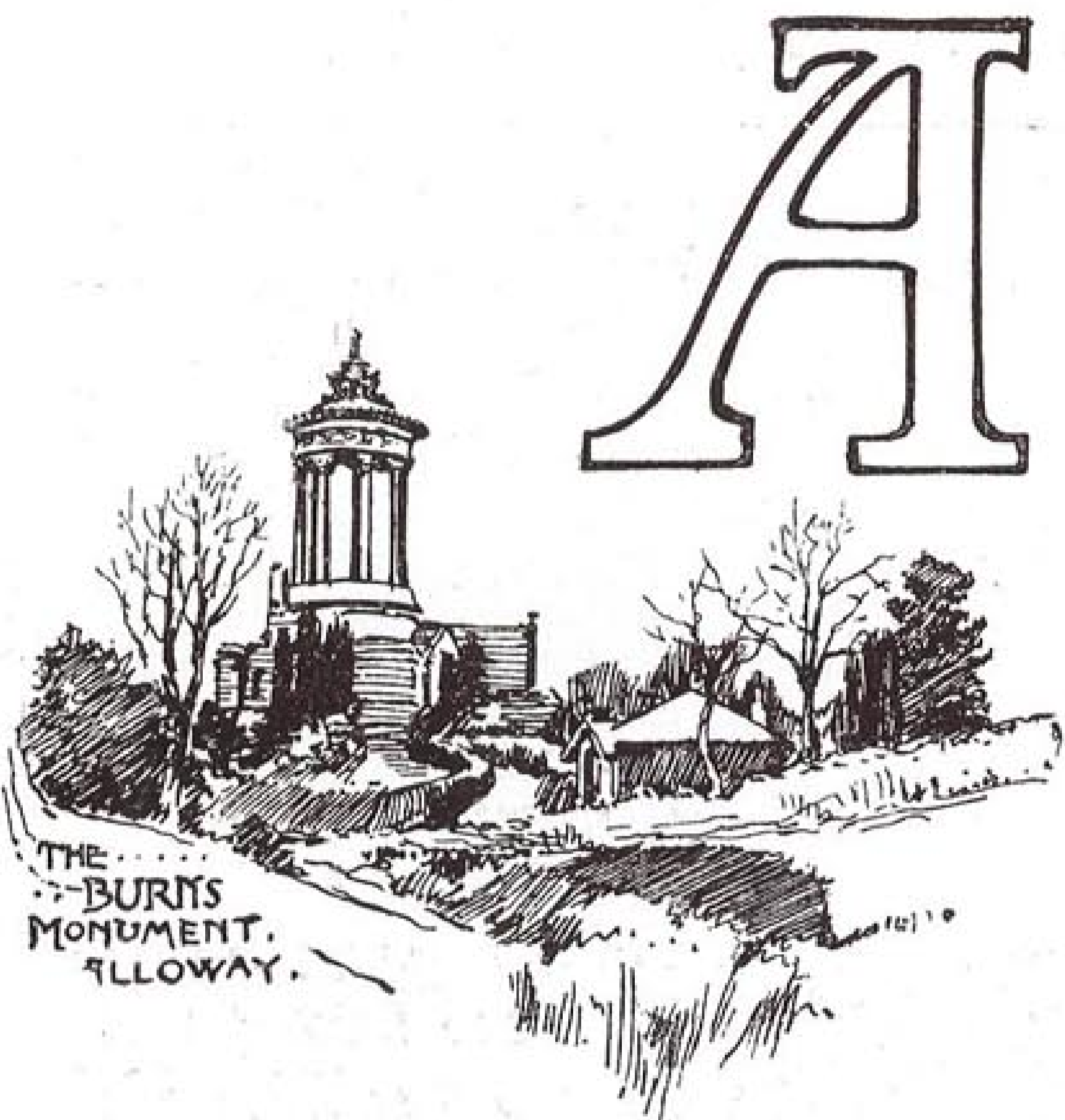
LADY BEATRICE BUTLER

Photo by Lafayette, Dublin

*DISTINGUISHED LADY CYCLISTS*

## CYCLING IN THE LAND OF BURNS

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY W. ERSKINE HOME

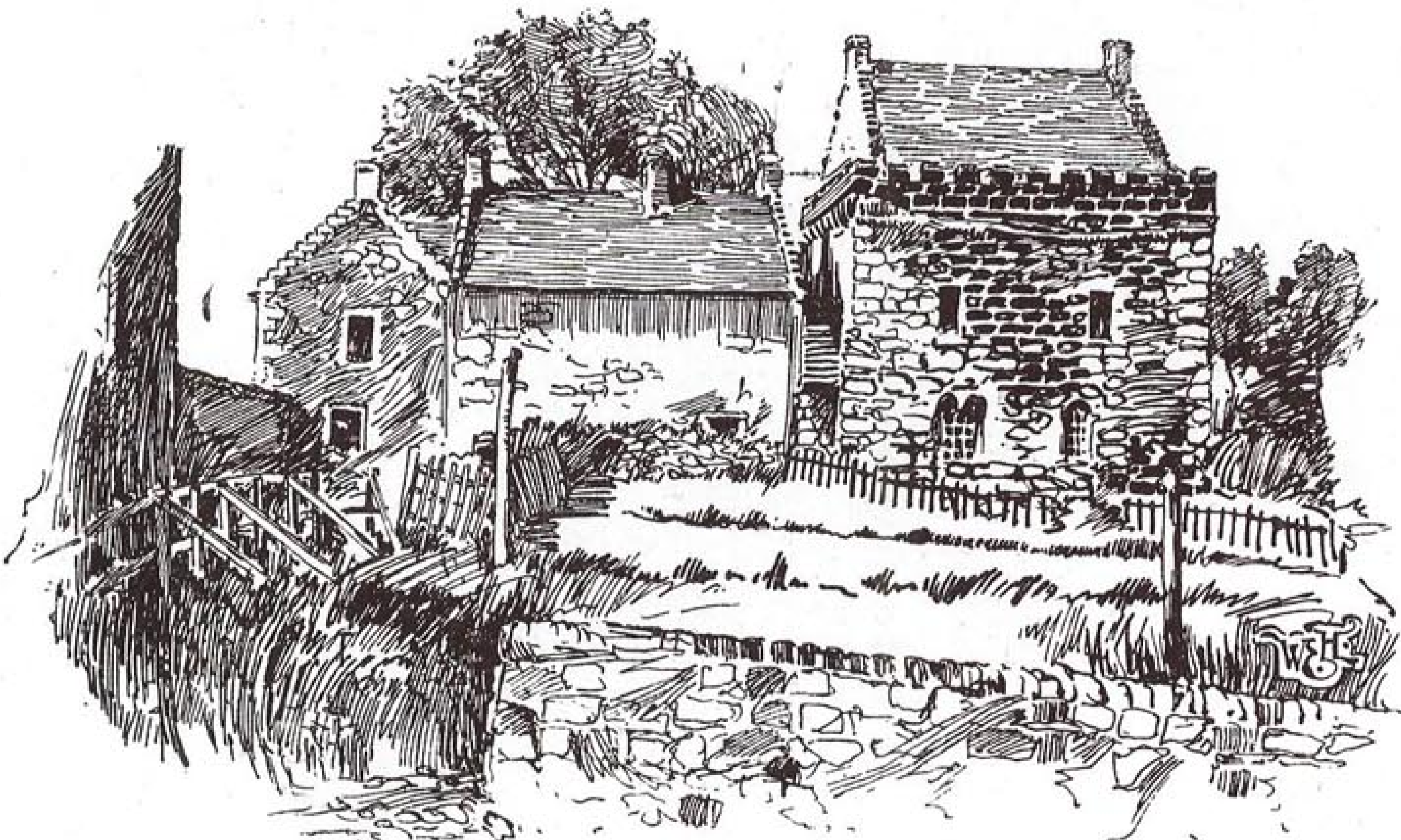


**A** DOZEN or so of reasons for a cycle tour through the Burns country could be easily given: good roads, the purest of air, romantic scenery, historic associations, and comfortable though unpretentious hotels, are not the least of these. Moreover, this year is the centenary year of the poet's death, and whether Burns enthusiast or not, one feels drawn to visit the spots which he has made so full of human interest.

As a convenient centre to commence operations, what more suitable than the "bonnie toon o' Ayr"? And no matter by what route you come north, or whether you approach the town by way of Glasgow or Carlisle, you must perforce make use of the Glasgow and South Western Railway Company's system, which serves the district; and, on occasion, the train is not to be despised even by an ardent wheelman or woman. You will find much of interest in the town. There is the old thatch-roofed "Tam o' Shanter" inn, full of memories and relics, and you may even wheel across the river Ayr by way of the Auld Brig, "where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet." This is the bridge which, when superseded by a new one, gave voice, through the muse of Burns, to the famous prediction,

"And though wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,  
I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn."

And so it was; the river in flood was too much for the new one, and down it came, while the old brig stood firm. A turn round the harbour, busy with shipping, leads to the pier, where you will revel in grand views of the Firth of Clyde and the mountains of Arran. A pleasant afternoon's run of a couple of miles or so southward, along a broad level road, will take you to Alloway, for you must see the "Auld clay biggin" where Burns was born in 1759; and you ought to leave the saddle and see the quaint interior, with the bed in an alcove, and the many relics, including the chairs of Tam o' Shanter and Soutar Johnny. A couple of hundred yards or so and you are before "Alloway's auld haunted kirk," the scene of the Warlocks' wild revels as witnessed by Tam. The Burns monument, close to the new bridge over the classic Doon, is of minor interest, but gaze awhile at the auld brig, with its pointed arch and background of fine trees. Small wonder that Burns loved to wander in

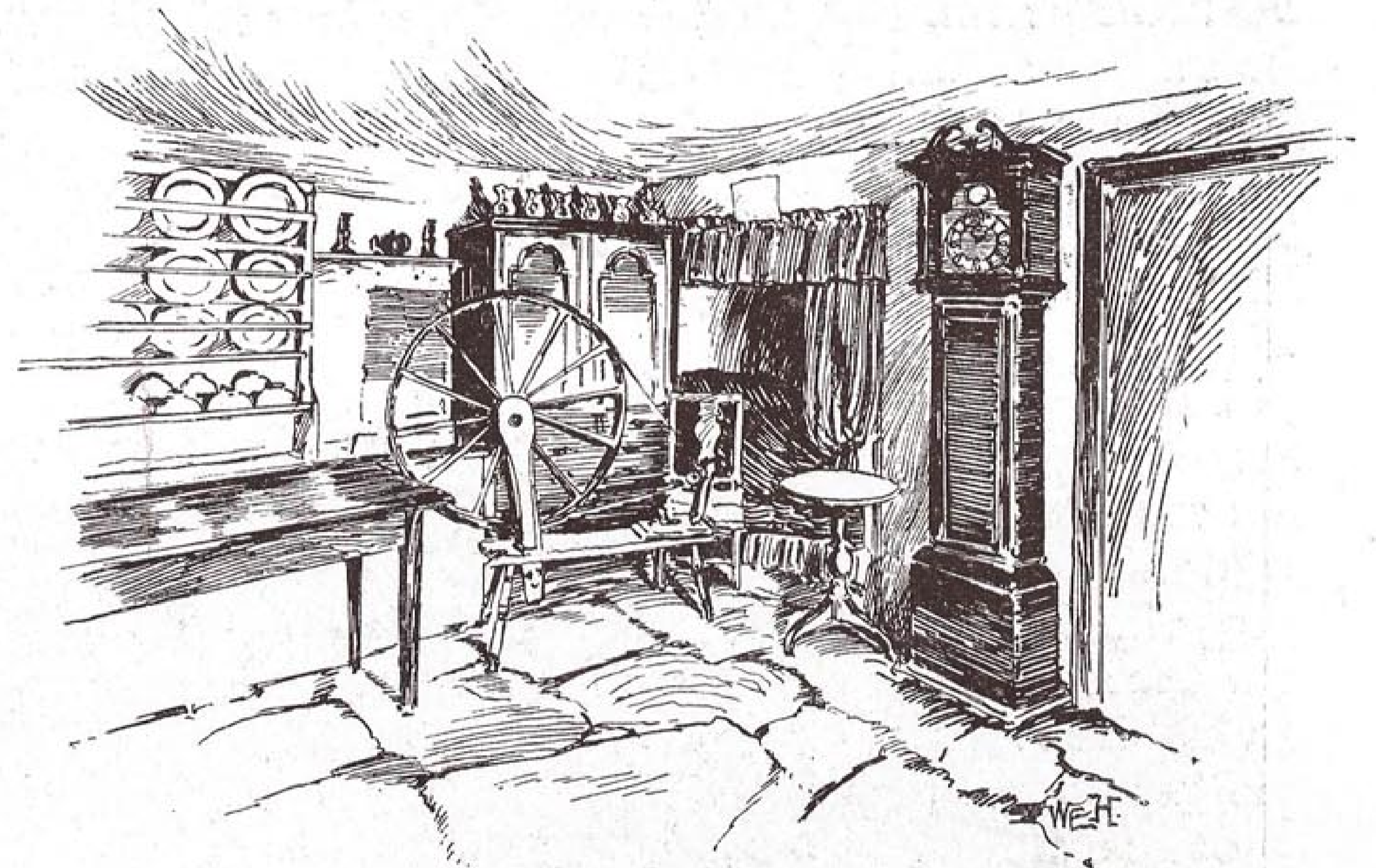


MAUCHLINE CASTLE AND GAVIN HAMILTON'S HOUSE  
WHERE BURNS WAS MARRIED TO JEAN ARMOUR

such a lovely spot. Should you need it you will find refreshment in the inn, and can then return to the town by the road which skirts the sea-shore. The old ruin, which is

silhouetted against the ruddy sky, just where the Doon runs into the sea, is Greenan Castle, and the big house among the trees, near the race-course, is the home of Sir Wm. Arrol.

On the morrow go further afield. Get out of the town by way of Wallacetown and Hawkhill, and passing Whitletts, a quiet village off the main road on the left, you will soon be on your way to Mauchline, through a pleasant pastoral country, dotted with many farms. The road is easy, but rises gradually until you reach the railway station of Annbank, a mining village, enjoying a splendid situation on the banks of the placid Ayr. Venerable trees form an avenue over the road, which runs alongside the river, and at Failford the little Fail joins the main stream. In front, to eastward, are hills, and the red sandstone houses of Mauchline come into view. The place is full of Burns associations. To begin, there is the castle, where Burns was married to Jean Armour; the house where they first lived; and close by Nanse Tannock's, the hostelry in which Burns declared he would drink the Premier's health nine times a week.



INTERIOR OF BURNS'S COTTAGE

Another "ca' house at the end o' Cowgate" is Poesie Nansie's, where

"Burns cam weary frae the pleugh  
Tae hae a crack wi' Johnny Doo  
At nights at e'en."

Within its walls the poet found the source of the inspiration which has rendered "The Jolly Beggars" immortal. A mile out of the town is the estate of Ballochmyle, with its mansion-house, the seat of Sir Claude Alexander. An inviting arbour is pointed out as the spot where Burns, "when musing in a lonely glade," first saw the lady who inspired him to write "The Lass of Ballochmyle"—Miss Wilhelmina Alexander—whose charms have since been sung by Scotsmen the world over.

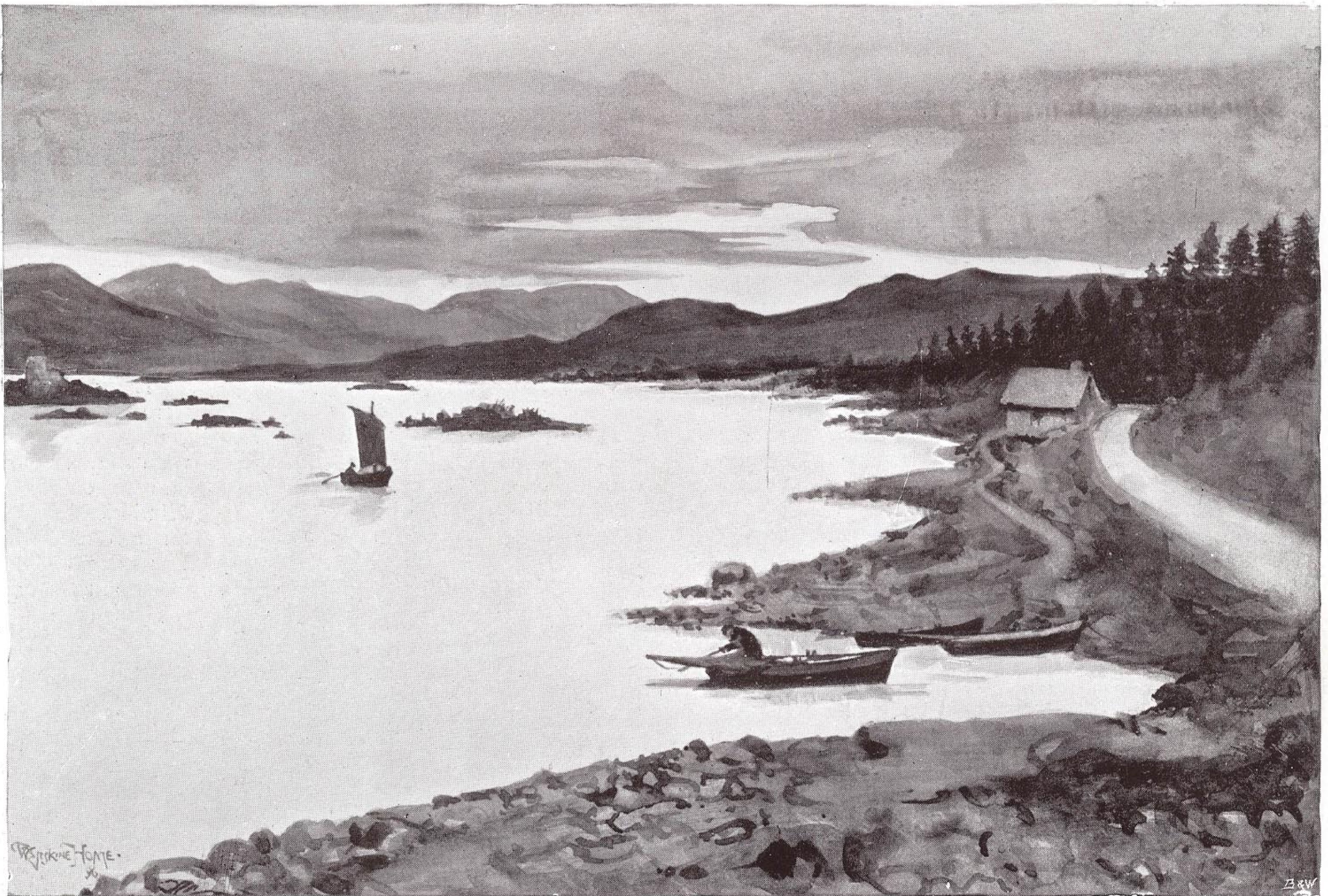
"Fareweel the bonnie banks of Ayr,  
Fareweel the braes of Ballochmyle."

There is a pleasant run on a well-wooded road from Mauchline to Tarbolton, an old-world village, where things go very easily still. Here it was that Burns was initiated into the mysteries of Freemasonry. By the roadside on leaving the village you will see a building of thatch and stone, known as Willie's Mill, where Willie brewed the "peek o' maut" which caused him and those two other blythe hearts—Rob and Allan—to be "na fou, no that fou, but wi' just a drappie." That farm on the other side of the road is Lochlea, the home of Burns and his family from his eighteenth to his twenty-fifth year. It was in this plain dwelling that the flame of his genius first burst forth in the song, "Mary Morrison," addressed to Ellison Begbie, who had caught his eye, but the affection was not mutual. On again to Mossgiel, where Burns tried farming and failed; it is an intensely interesting spot, as it was here that his genius was revealed to him. Pass along the road, and "Catrine's

woods are yellow seen," so also the little manufacturing town of the same name. Cross the Ayr by the romantic bridge of Howford. Note the magnificent central span of the Ballochmyle Viaduct, and so back to Mauchline.

Starting again from Ayr, there are some nine miles of splendid road through a stretch of the rich agricultural country to Maybole, a town of respectable antiquity, with a Tolbooth, a castle, a cross, and other features to be noted. The ruins of an extensive monastic establishment, Crossraguel Abbey, should not be missed. Then on to Dalmellington, cross-country through Kirkmichael and Patna. You will not lack for creature comforts of bed and board in the quaint old town of Dalmellington, and next morning you will do well to be up early, pedalling through the policies of Mr. Macadam, in the direction of Ness Glen, the show place of the district. It is possible to wheel your machine up the glen, but it is better to send it round by the road to await you by the shores of Loch Doon, for you will be more at liberty to enjoy the feast of rare beauty awaiting you.

favourite Afton Water. The farm-house standing near the confluence of the two streams was formerly an inn, and there Burns frequently spent a night. This will lead through the village of Kirkconnell to Sanquhar, an ancient burgh deriving its name from the Celtic Saen-Caer (Old Fort). In the High Street is an obelisk to commemorate the Sanquhar Declaration, and the whole district is rich in Covenanted lore, as those who have read "The Men of the Moss Hags" well know. Here is a hostelry to provide your every need, and you may spend a day or two greatly to your satisfaction exploring the lovely country of Nithsdale. A fine road for the cyclist is that which runs through the Minnoch Hills, and there is a capital run in a south-westerly direction along the left bank of the Nith, crossing Eliock Bridge, and by the house of that name—the birth-place of the Admirable Crichton. The road is undulating and varied, but there is a stiff climb up to Drumlanrig Rigg, a point which yields a view unsurpassed in the southern Highlands. Here you will see rugged mountain and gloomy pass, up-



TWILIGHT ON LOCH DOON

Through this deep gorge, whose cliff-like sides are in places so high that one can scarcely see the sky above, the bonnie Doon comes rushing down from its source in the loch above, leaping over great grey boulders and fallen tree-trunks, and splashing the mosses and ferns with pearly spray, which glitters in the morning sun. Fantastic lichen-covered tree branches hang out their leavage over the white foam, and the fringe of the narrow pathway is gay with flowers. At this point Tom Faed has painted more than one picture, and here is the kissing-stone, which could tell many a tale of fond youth and gentle maid. Emerging at length into the broad sunlight, there lies the noble expanse of Loch Doon, as placid and peaceful as the river is restless. Seen in the twilight, when the sun has gone to rest beyond the enviroing hills, its mirrored surface and rocky shores have a wild grandeur not a little impressive. He who wields the rod would not regret a day spent in fishing from a boat. If you decide to circle the loch, there are some half score of rough miles before you, but the prospect over the moors and mountains of Galloway, beloved of Crockett and his readers, would more than repay you.

From Dalmellington take a lonely road running at the foot of great hills, and crossing the Nith and Burns's

lands and fields, burns and rivers fringed in birch and hazel. Burns knew it well :

"How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,  
Where spreading hawthorns gaily bloom !  
How sweetly wind thy sloping dales  
Where lambkins wanton through the broom !"

Yonder is the dark pass of Enterkin, where the Enterkin rushes to meet the Nith, and into this deep gorge you will turn quite suddenly, and cannot fail to be impressed by its beauty. Drumlanrig Castle, uniquely situated and surrounded by gardens and woods, which are renowned, is one of the seats of the Duke of Buccleuch. If you are there on a Tuesday or Friday you are at liberty to wander through the grounds. The model village of Thornhill is on your road, and as you pass up the broad tree-lined street you will remember that this is the birthplace of Thomson, the African explorer ; and here came Coleridge, Wordsworth, and his sister Dorothy, while on their travels. Returning to Sanquhar, through the village of Carronbridge, there is a pretty peep when the Clachan of Enterkin Foot, with its old mill-dam, is reached.

As a pleasing variant, another excursion may be made from Ayr, almost wholly along the Ayrshire coast

Climbing over the hill to the southward, past the Heads o' Ayr, with the town spread out in panoramic form behind you, you will enjoy the ride on a good road high above the sea, which here washes the ruins of picturesque Dunure Castle.

An abrupt turn in the road, and another castle of the Marquis of Ailsa, at Calzean, is in view, which is built on a solid rock rising from the sea, and is the domain of one of the oldest of Scottish families. It looks over the broad Firth of Clyde, away to the hills of Arran, and no spot on the coast was more famous in days of smuggling and strife.

Fishing villages, unpicturesque to a fault—such as The Maidens—lie in the little bays on the road to Girvan, a prosperous, breezy little town, making a serious bid for summer visitors and golfers. Here one may pass a night, and next morning set out, still along the coast, for Ballantrae. Nothing could be more exhilarating than this run by the sea, with the fresh breeze coming over the dull green crest of big Ailsa Craig, where the sea-birds gather in myriads, and the screech of the whaup is heard. The road is full of pleasant variety, rugged crag, fishers' hamlets, a water-wheel or two, and smugglers' caves galore. In more than one place, as at Kennedy's Pass, the road has been hewn through the rocks. A great cliff of serpentine and greenstone is Bennane Head, and now Ballantrae is in sight, an out-of-the-way place, and the centre of a large fishing district, and having its own fleet of stout sea-boats. One of the lions of the place is Ardstinchar Castle, a ruin full of gory memories of the lawless days when might was right. The Stinchar is an important salmon river, and very beautiful are the reaches you see on the road as you climb the hill inland, and then descend into a well-wooded valley.

One of the neatest of Ayrshire villages is Colmonell, its well-kept houses in strong contrast to the ruined Border strongholds, Craigneil and Pinwherry, which are seen from the road. Near the latter the waters of the Duisk join those of the Stinchar, and the road turns northwards back to Girvan. After a climb up a considerable hill, a gorgeous panorama of sea and rolling country is spread out, and Girvan is seen to full advantage.

These are mere suggestions of the good things that lie before the enterprising cyclist in Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire. The roads are almost uniformly well kept, the gradients very practicable, and the country is at present not by any means overrun by tourists. Once the charm of these southern Highlands of Scotland have been tasted, it should be surprising if the cyclist were not led to take his wheel on an exploring expedition to the romantic country in Galloway and Wigton, which lies between Dumfries and Stranraer.

## THE MAN WHO LOOKED LIKE A HUSBAND.

BY G. LACY HILLIER.

JUST now everyone is discovering the Hind Head and the grave of the unknown sailor in Thursley churchyard, not to mention the slab of grey stone erected at the fatal spot on the edge of the Devil's Punch Bowl. My recollections of this spot, far from being gruesome, are cheerful—I won't say humorous, because humour has been so sadly slandered of late. Now for my tale. On one memorable Easter the Stanley Club decided to fix its head-quarters for that holiday in the town of Godalming, and put up at the cosy and comfortable "Angel," and from that centre toured round the district to the entire satisfaction of every member of the party.

One windy day the club climbed by devious and precipitous paths from the ancient ponds of Frensham to the top of the Hind Head, visited the Royal Huts, as a matter of course, and then rode off to the fatal stone and there

sat about and smoked whilst the ever-present col-lodion Crank got in his deadly work. Whilst we thus sat and gazed into the depths of the Punch Bowl we became aware of a dainty female figure emerging from the cutting away to the right.

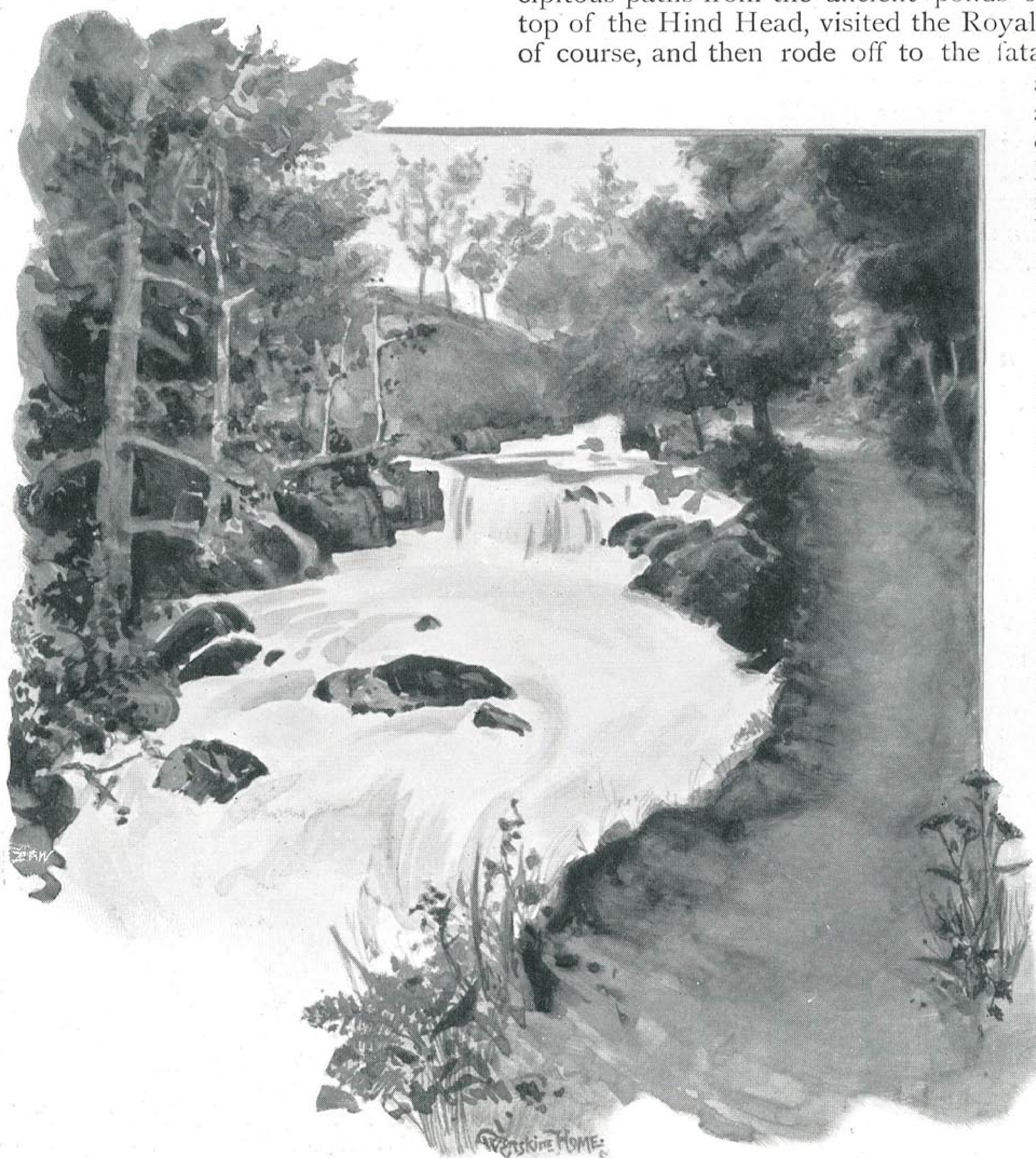
Lady cyclists were fewer and less venturesome then than they are now, and to climb the Hind Head against an adverse wind was decidedly a good performance; so as a matter of course, all eyes watched the graceful progress of the Fair Stranger as she rode steadily up the gradient.

The Fair Stranger in due season caught sight of the knicker-bockered

group at the road side, and evinced an unusual amount of interest therein. Each man flattered himself that his graceful form had impressed the dainty wheelwoman, and some even struck peculiar attitudes which presumably embodied their ideas of unstudied grace, but unstudied grace I am bound to admit does not come naturally to some people, and I make this assertion with the utmost confidence, after what I saw upon the occasion under notice. Unstudied grace requires long and careful practice.

The Fair Stranger at length reached the group, and without dismounting addressed to them the following blighting and staggering remark:

"If you see a man who looks like a husband please tell him I have gone on to Liphook," and then she passed on, leaving a selection of husbands and bachelors who looked sad enough to be husbands gazing sadly after her, as she surmounted the hill top and disappeared without even a glance behind. The husbands and the men who looked like husbands sat sadly down again, they relaxed their muscles and relinquished the "Ajax defying the Lightning," "The Discus Thrower" and "Apollo" attitudes, and then, as is I am told usual with blighted beings, took it out in



NESS GLEN