

CHAPTER X

THE HIGHLAND LAKES

ONE of the great charms of Highland landscape is the gleam of still water that so often gives the one element of repose in a scene of broken cliff and tumbled crag, of noisy cascade and driving cloud. No casual tourist can fail to notice what a wonderful variety of lakes he meets with in the course of any traverse he may take across the country. Among the higher mountains, there is the little tarn nestling in a dark sunless corry, and half encircled with grim snow-rifted crags. In the glen, there is the occasional broadening of the river into a lake that narrows again to let the stream rush down a rocky ravine. In the wider strath, there is the broad, still expanse of water, with its fringe of wood and its tree-covered islets. In the gneiss region of the north-west, there is the little lochan lying in its basin of bare rock, and surrounded with scores of others, all equally treeless and desolate.

While alive to all their charm and variety, the geologist experiences in sight of these lakes a peculiar interest, for he recognises in them one of the great problems of his science to which no completely satisfactory solution has yet been found. Many lakes indeed present no difficulty,