

LOCHS OF THE NITH BASIN.

THE extensive basin of the river Nith, which in its upper part winds for so many miles through mountainous country, with several important tributary glens, is in this upper part almost entirely devoid of lochs. A few insignificant patches of water near New Cumnock were not surveyed. The five lochs surveyed are found on small tributaries in the lower part of the system, and on the west side of the river, the most northerly being Lochs Howie and Skae, which drain by the Cluden Water into the river Nith near Dumfries, while Lochrutton Loch, Lochaber Loch, and Loch Kindar lie within a few miles of the town of Dumfries, and the tributaries on which they are situated drain into the tidal portion of the river, where it expands into the Solway firth.

Loch Howie (see Plate XLVI).—Loch Howie is a small, narrow loch on the north side of the Blackcraig hill, 18 miles west of Dumfries, and 5 miles north-east of New Galloway village. The Black Craig rises steeply on the south to 1332 feet; on the north the hills are lower. The shores are of stony *débris*, with rock exposed at one part on the south. The loch trends from south-west to north-east, and is three-quarters of a mile in length, the maximum breadth near the east end being one-eighth of a mile, and the superficial area about 45 acres. There are two distinct basins, the western one having a maximum depth of 39 feet, and the eastern one 37 feet, separated by a shallow with only 7 feet on it. The mean depth is 16 feet, and the volume 31 million cubic feet. The drainage area is half a square mile. The outflow is by the Mid burn northward into the Blackmark burn, thence into the Castlefern burn and Cairn water and Cluden water. Loch Howie was surveyed on July 23, 1903, when the elevation was 757.15 feet above the sea; on May 12, 1894, the Ordnance Survey found the elevation to be 757.9 feet. The variation in the level of the water is small.

Loch Skae (see Plate XLVI).—A very small, subcircular loch to the north of Blackcraig hill, and half a mile east of Loch Howie. On the east the hill rises steeply to over 300 feet above the loch; the west side is low. The maximum diameter from north to south is a quarter of a mile, the superficial area being about 20 acres. There is a small, deep area towards the west shore, enclosing the maximum depth of 35 feet.