

LOCHS OF THE ANNAN BASIN.

THE large area drained by the river Annan (see Index Map, Fig. 14) is remarkably devoid of lochs, apart from a group of half a dozen small lochs clustered near the town of Lochmaben, four of which were sounded by the Lake Survey. The only other loch is the little Loch Skeen, situated far to the north, on the borders of Dumfries- and Selkirk-shires, near the source of the Moffat water, a tributary of the Annan. Loch Skeen lies at an elevation of nearly 1750 feet above the sea, while the Lochmaben lochs are all less than 200 feet above sea-level. The deepest loch is Mill Loch, with a maximum of 55 feet; Loch Skeen coming next with a maximum of 36 feet; then Kirk Loch, with a maximum of 25 feet; while Castle Loch and Hightae Mill Loch are less than 20 feet in depth. The trout-fishing in Loch Skeen is sometimes very good, but variable, while the Lochmaben lochs are remarkable for their variety, Castle Loch, for instance, being said to contain ten different species, including pike, perch, roach, bream, chub, loch-trout, and vendace—the last mentioned a rare fish, peculiar to Castle Loch and Mill Loch, which takes no lure, but is caught with the net.

Loch Skeen (see Plate XLVII.).—Loch Skeen lies about 9 miles north-east from Moffat, and only 5 miles from St. Mary's Loch in the Tweed basin. When engaged on the survey of St. Mary's Loch, our surveyors were informed that there was no boat on Loch Skeen; but one of them went up to study the geology, taking a boatman with him, when they found a boat without oars. With oars improvised from a broken fence, they made a zigzag the whole length of the loch, a strong wind preventing them from running transverse lines of soundings. The loch is elongate in outline, trending from north-west to south-east, and three-quarters of a mile in length, the maximum breadth being one-fifth of a mile. The superficial area is about 69 acres, and the drainage area less than a square mile. The deeper water is centrally placed, the maximum depth of 36 feet being recorded rather nearer the northern than the southern end. A sounding in 24 feet was taken near the northern end; and a sounding in 26 feet off the central part of the eastern shore shows a steep slope in that position. The mean depth is estimated at 18 feet, or one-half of the maximum depth, and the volume of water at 53 million cubic feet. The loch was surveyed on May 7, 1905, but the elevation above the sea could not be determined.