

A RECTIFICATION IN THE CARTOGRAPHY OF
NORTH-EAST TASMANIA.

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(Read 14th April, 1913.)

Plates I. and II.

The so-called Saddleback is one of the tor-mountains eminently characteristic of the N.E. plateau of Tasmania, which is the main divide for the river system in that part of the State. Like its adjacent neighbour, Ben Nevis, it rises from the southern edge of the plateau, though its spurs running in that direction descend to the foot of the upland and join with the ranges flanking the north bank of the South Esk. The mountain takes the form of a short ridge with an axis lying about south-west—north-east, its structure being like that of the other plateau-mountains, diabase. The eastern face is precipitous, and towers over the Ringarooma-Mathinna track, which passes it at an elevation of about 2,200 feet, and not far from the base.

The crestline, though jagged and rough, has an undulating aspect from distant, eastern points of view, and is continuous with a spur which runs up from the foothills in the valley of the South Esk, rising with a fairly regular slope to a prominence, south of the summit, from which there is a slightly ascending dip up to the top, which takes the form of a flattish dome with rather an abrupt northern descent to the plateau.

The writer has sketched the aspect of the tor from various eastern points, from none of which has it any appearance of a saddlebacked mountain; nor could such a hump-backed ridge take that form from any direction.

1913.

The aspect-sketch of the eastern tors of the plateau given with this note was taken from an altitude of about 2,700 feet on the northern side of the summit of Mt. Nicholas, from which one of the most beautiful and comprehensive panoramic views of forest and mountain in all Tasmania awaits any mountaineer or tourist, who chooses to spend a day at St. Mary's. Saddleback is here seen next to the mountain Ben Nevis on the extreme left, with Mts. Victoria and Albert (the true Saddleback) foreshortened on the right. The remarkable table-like level of the plateau is noticeable in the sketch; but to view this to perfection it must be seen on a frosty winter's evening before sunset from the summit of the Blue Tier at Poimena, when it stands out as level as the top of a wall from Mt. Victoria to Mt. Barrow.

It may be remarked in passing that the existence of this great orographical feature seems to be quite unknown to the general public, notwithstanding that it is, in conjunction with Ben Lomond (itself a loftier but smaller plateau), the main regulator of the climatic conditions in N.E. Tasmania. The reason for this lies in its concealment from view both north and south by the broken nature of the country, and on the fact that the true topographical features of the State have not yet been shown on our maps, on which the chief mountains are all shown as isolated heights, standing, as it were, on the sea-level.

To return: We find that Mt. Albert, twin mountain with Mt. Victoria, when seen from the Lottah district and the George River Valley (Pyengana), from some points of which latter it is hidden from Mt. Victoria, is called almost universally Mt. "Saddleback" by the country people. In point of fact, if a titan-hand had done his best to cut a mountain into that shape he could not have succeeded better. An aspect-sketch is given of Mt. Albert to show its claim to a local name of that sort. It is taken from a position in the valley where its sister mountain, Victoria, cannot be seen. The impression in the writer's mind when first seeing the mountain from this position may be expressed: "Why, that must be Mt. Saddleback; but surely it cannot be, as that mountain rises above Mathinna a long way to the westward from here!" Thus, it appears likely that the misnomer, "Saddleback," is the result of a cartographical error in the Survey Office, based, perhaps, on the information of an official who was unacquainted with the true aspect of the mountain near Mathinna now called by that name.

The position, therefore, as regards the correct orography of that part of Tasmania is that a new name is now required for the so-called Saddleback, this appellation being left as a "vernacular" in the George River district, as the title "Albert" pertaining to it as the mountain adjoining Victoria cannot be interfered with.

It is therefore suggested and recommended that a Scotch title (Tasmania being looked on as the Scotland of the South) be given, and that there be another "Ben" added to Ben Lomond and Ben Nevis, which are closely associated with the mountain in question. Ben Nevis in Scotland is the western termination of the great Grampian Range, which contains to the eastward other "Bens," prominent among them being Ben Avon. It therefore seems appropriate that the Tasmanian mountain standing to the eastward of our Ben Nevis should be given that good old Scotch name. It is hoped that this title will be acceptable to the Department of Lands and Surveys.

Note added by the Author 13th May, 1913.—The name Ben Avon elicited some opinion at the meeting as to the advisability of further duplication of Scotch names in Tasmanian geography. The adoption of British names for this purpose in Tasmania and other Australian States has, however, been largely the rule under "Crown Government" from early days of colonisation; and may be taken as a happy indication of our loyalty to the Mother country. Nevertheless in the present instance the title "Ben Esk" might be more appropriate and would equally harmonise with the nomenclature desired by the author for the three mountains in question, which are so prominently associated in our North-eastern orographical system.

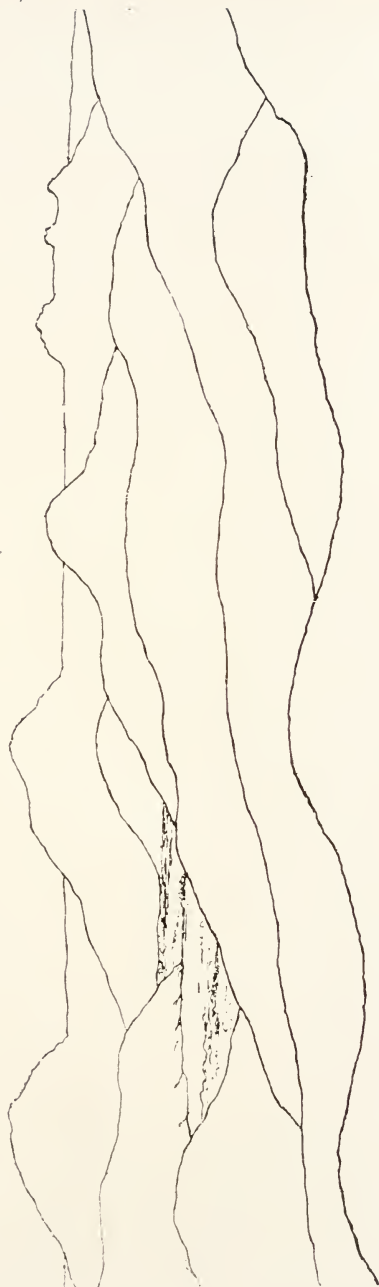
Mt. Albert

Mt. Victoria

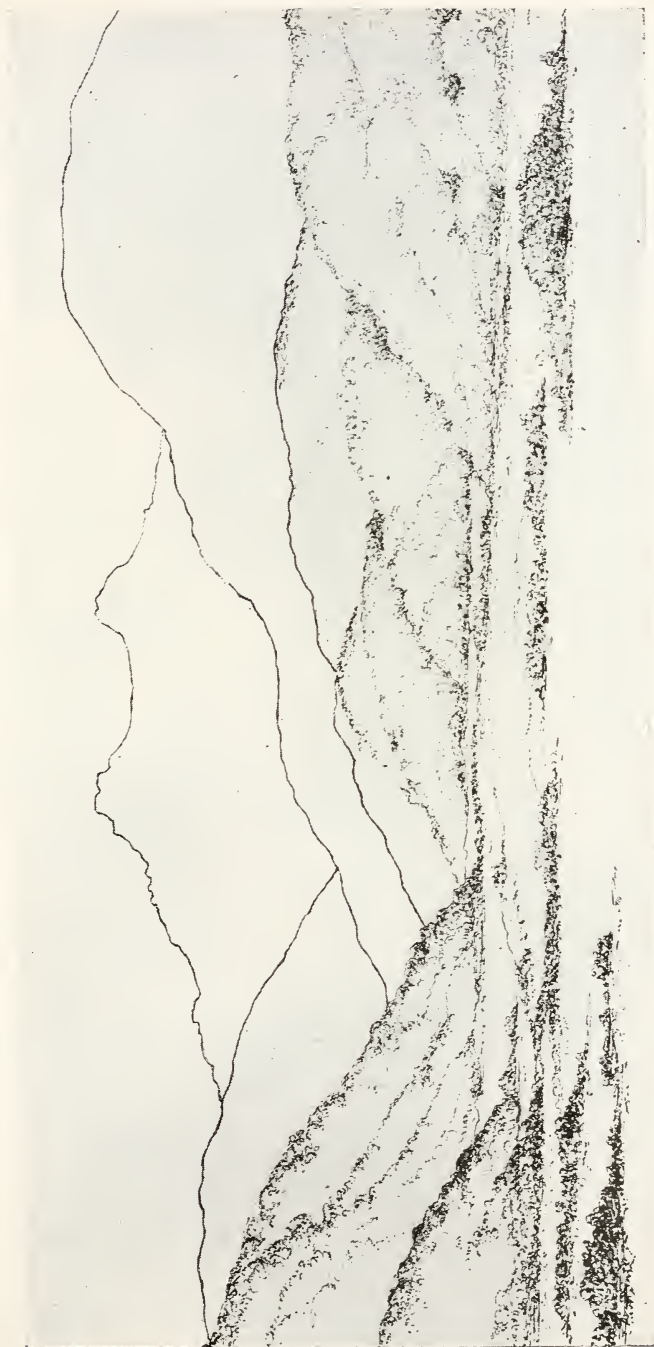
"Saddleback"

S. Esk Valley

Ben Nevis



ASPECT OF N.E. PLATEAU, WITH ITS EASTERN TOR MOUNTAINS.
(FROM MT. NICHOLAS, AT 2,700 FT. ALT.)



ASPECT OF MT. ALBERT FROM GEORGE RIVER VALLEY.