

### **AW on maps - the opening of Chapter 3, "A Pennine Journey"**

Give me a map to look at, and I am content. Give me a map of country I know, and I am comforted: I live my travels over again; step by step, I recall the journeys I have made; half-forgotten incidents spring vividly to mind, and again I can suffer and rejoice at experiences which are once more made very real. Old maps are old friends, understood only by the man with whom they have travelled the miles. Nobody could read my maps as I do. Lend a book to a friend and he can enjoy it and miss nothing of its story: lend him a map, and he cannot even begin to read the tale it has to tell. For maps are personal things which books are not. The appeal of an old map is to the memory; an old map spread across my knees closes my eyes. The older, the more tattered it is, the greater my affection for it. I recall our adventures together in storm and sunshine; an occasion, perhaps, when it slipped from my pocket and I searched my tracks anxiously, as for a lost companion, until it was found; an occasion, perhaps, when the mist was thick and instinct and the map urged different ways, and I followed the map and came to safe ground again. Ah yes, maps are grand companions. I have thrown books away, but never a map.

Give me a map of country I do not know, even of country I shall never know, and it has the power to thrill and excite me. No book has such an appeal to the imagination. A new map means new routes to plan, and ever so carefully, for the ground is strange and regard must be given to contours and watersheds and passes. My map becomes not a square of coloured linen, but a picture of the country itself. That blue daub becomes a glittering lake fringed with pine woods; the black specks a clustered village set amongst rich meadows in a corner of the valley; the faint red lines a steep mountain face soaring majestically into the heavens. My route is planned to the last detail, altered again and again; it is an ambitious programme, for there are no ties of home to bind me and limit the objective; expense is nothing. It is finished; it is perfect. It doesn't matter that I will never be able to do it. My pleasure has been great, yet, sadly enough, it is a pleasure shared by the very few. Map-lovers are scarce, book-lovers many, yet I think the reward of the lover of maps is far and away the greater. If it is ever my lot to be cast away on a desert island, let it be with an atlas and a one-inch map of the Lake District.