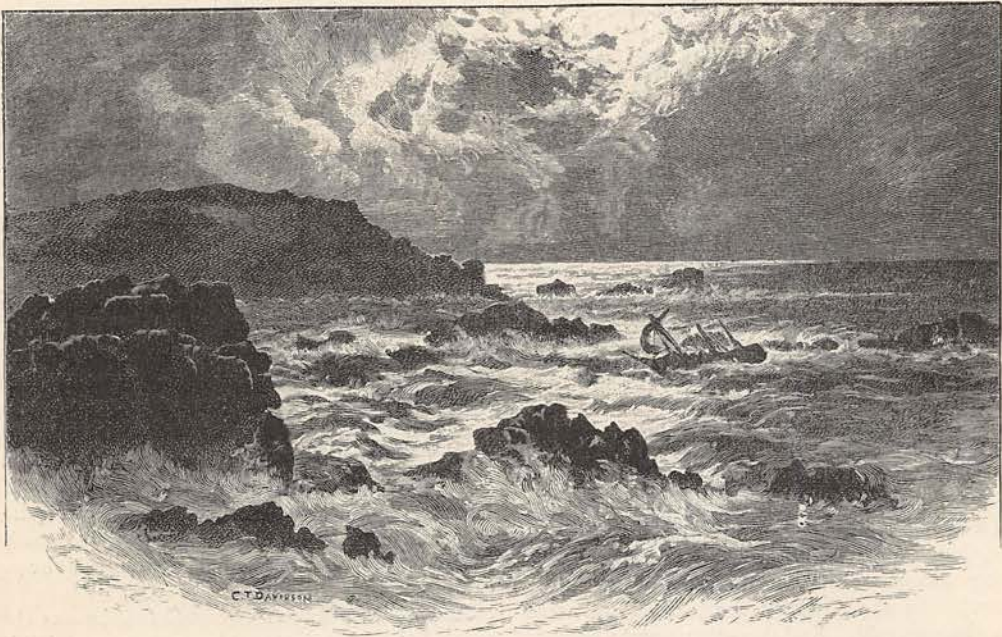
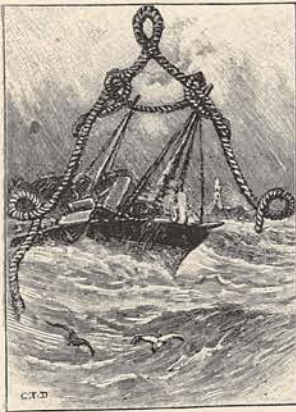


## AMONG THE SCILLIES.



PORTH HELICK BAY.



"THE LADY OF THE ISLES."

VISIT to the Scilly Isles has but one drawback: that is, the voyage!

So at least we thought when, one autumn day, having arranged to transfer ourselves by the *Lady of the Isles* from the mainland to St. Mary's, we stepped on board the little boat at Penzance, fondly trusting that the light breeze sweeping Mount's Bay would

soon lull, and its companion shower would soon abate. But they did neither one nor the other.

It required some effort—very hard make-believing—to fancy we were enjoying ourselves even as far as Newlyn (N.B.—Place beloved of artists, but to the ordinary mortal pleasantest when observed from sea: it *is* so smelly!). By pretty St. Loy we began to feel that we could take observations best—with our eyes closed, for the waters went up and down in such an objectionable manner. By the time we had passed the Bell Buoy seven-eighths of the passengers had succumbed. The swell of the Atlantic meeting a half

gale from the North-East was rolling and pitching us about at its own sweet will. Valiantly we tried our level best to preserve our dignity. We assured ourselves the sensation only resembled waltzing—or switch-backing, or—yes—very like tearing across country on a rampant steed, and taking a lot of ugly ditches, or—ugh!

An unusually bad "ditch" put a sudden end to our pretending. We collapsed. A pitying steward conducted us below. There, for two dreadful hours, surrounded by fellow-sufferers, we almost wished we had never been born. We quite wished we had never come to Scilly!

But, happily, that state of mortal misery lasts only till our foot is firmly planted on St. Mary's grey granite quay. We revive as we traverse the short distance thence to—say "Tregarthen's." There we have two delicious hours of calm in a delightful white bed that *stands quite still*, and we awake to acknowledge existence bearable in general, and charming among the Scillies.

For just outside our little hostel door is a group of the loveliest pink lilies, "Bella Donna" most rightly called. A pair of tall dracænas guard the path. A giant fuchsia peeps over the boundary. Across the road is a wall clothed with mesembryanthemum, among whose waxen foliage linger still, in October, a few pale starry blossoms. A glossy-leaved aurelia, a dozen feet high, peeps at us from a little distance. A dozen steps in any direction bring us in sight of the sparkling ocean, and ozone enough is wafted from

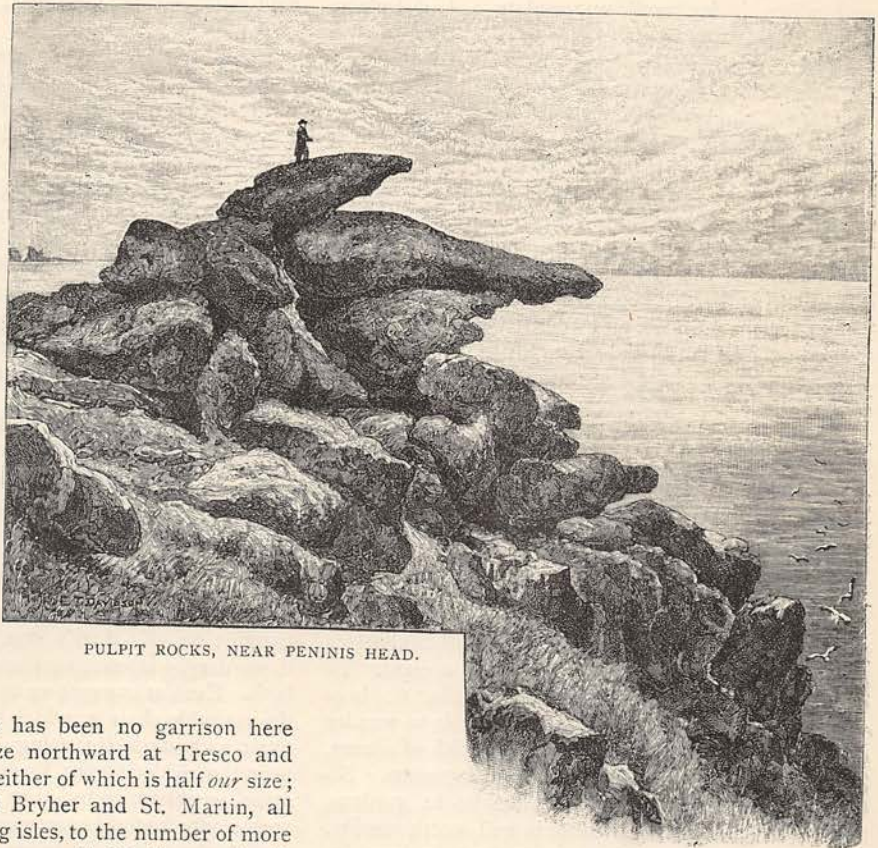
shore to shore to make us feel each breath of the elastic air a veritable draught of health.

With these surroundings and conditions one hears without surprise from another visitor, "Yes, I am here still. I came for a fortnight, and have stopped two years."

However, now to look about us.

Our haven, St. Mary's, is the largest of the isles, for it is actually nearly nine miles round. We feel ourselves upon a small continent, comparatively speaking, as we stand upon the rocky height of the Garrison — still so called, though there has been no garrison here for many years—and gaze northward at Tresco and southward at St. Agnes, neither of which is half *our* size; while after Samson and Bryher and St. Martin, all smaller still, the remaining isles, to the number of more than a hundred, run down a diminishing scale till they become mere jagged rocks.

But, even as such, each fitly fills a place in a most beautiful scene. A sunset hour on the Garrison heights is one not readily forgotten. Sheets of foam surge ceaselessly at the base of the huge granite carns. You see a silver fringe edging St. Agnes' shore. Myriads of snowy jets play about the brown islets between and beyond. Distant points of dazzling silver bespeak the Western Isles. And in a few fleet moments all this brilliant whiteness changes: the restless waters are a flood of gold; a copper-tinted cloud glides from before the face of the big sinking sun, and almost every moment now shows some new and glorious transformation. From softest primrose to superbest crimson the dancing waves reflect a thousand tints. One watches, simply speechless, till, with a pang, one sees the fiery globe just touch the far-off ocean line and all too quickly vanish. Then the vast sea turns grey and chill. St. Agnes grows dim save for its beacon light. A bright spot shows from the distant "Bishop." Perhaps, if it be clear, you may get a glimpse of the "Wolf" or the "Longships" lighthouses too, and the warning gleam from the terrible "Seven Stones" reef off St. Martin's. But by the time you have noted all these, darkness is closing round. The sunset off St. Mary's is ended: to be added surely to one's list of those beautiful things which are "a joy for ever." But to tell of more material objects one has to see at Scilly.



PULPIT ROCKS, NEAR PENINIS HEAD.

Days might be spent in exploring the rugged coast of St. Mary's alone; for almost every turn gives a fresh combination of tall, towering carn and blue-green waves, and there are picturesque bits enough about it to gladden the heart of a whole Royal Academy. "Peninis," for instance, is a glorious headland, its enormous masses of rock piled in such weird confusion one feels as if some tremendous convulsion of Nature must have so flung them all in times unknown. Not grander, but fully as wild, are the Blue Carns. And much observed are these of geologists by reason of the veins of quartz that run through the blocks of granite. One tiny bay follows another in quick succession. By one only must we linger, Porth Hellick Bay. There, getting on for two centuries ago, the ill-fated Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovel was washed ashore, his life lost—so runs tradition in the Scillies—through his not having hearkened to the warning of a sailor. "We're near the Scillies, sir," this man, a native of the isles, is reported to have said; "if our ship's course isn't altered we shall be on the rocks before night." But the admiral refused the counsel of a common man, hanged his adviser at the yard-arm, and—sailed his fleet right on the Scillies! Four good ships and many score brave men went down with their chief. In the sunny little cove of Porth Hellick his body was cast up by the waves, and there an upright headstone and grave roughly shaped of granite boulders marks the

spot where it lay until removed to a burial-place, grander, according to man's devising.

Gaps and porths, bays and coves, all meaning just the same thing, indent well nigh the whole coast of St. Mary's. Stretches of sand are few and far between, though Porth Cressa has a pretty, shining sweep of which it is very proud. This lies just south of what is called "Hugh Town," an accumulation of houses on an exceedingly narrow, low-lying neck of land, which joins the Garrison to the larger part of the island. So low and narrow is this strip that, with a southerly wind, the waters of Porth Cressa Bay have actually washed clean over the isthmus, and emptied themselves into "The Pool" on the north! Happily these experiences are rare. 1771 was the last time this occurred to any extent.

But the natural beauties of St. Mary's must not keep us from the other isles.

Of these, Tresco is invariably the one first visited, for the lovely gardens of the Governor of the Isles, Mr. Dorrien-Smith, are worth a long journey to see.

Here it seems almost incredible that we are only seven-and-twenty miles from England, for in magnificent luxuriance, trees, flowers, plants of other climates and other continents, are growing all around. To name a tithe of them would take too long, but nowhere else in or near England would it be possible to wander among such a blaze of colour, such a wealth of odours, such a charming maze of horticultural strangers. No one must miss seeing Tresco! Besides its gardens, too, this island's northern shore is well worth visiting. Bold, black, and rugged, it stands forth in irregular outline, and the sea at this point, especially freshened by a north-west wind, is grand indeed.

Another island to which an hour should be given is St. Helen's, close by Tresco. Thereon stands the very oldest building of the group; or rather, stood, for of this church, which must have been founded in the eighth or ninth century, the remains are now but scant.

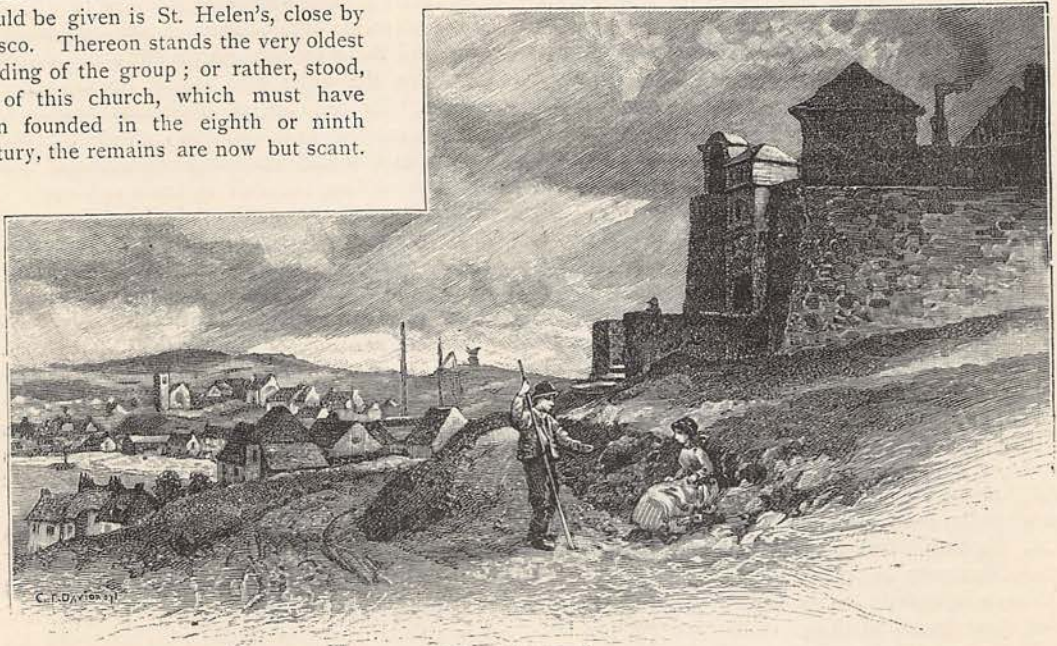
Still, sufficient can be traced to repay the inspection of any antiquarian spirit.

From St. Mary's one naturally voyages across to St. Agnes, and here again countless coves and bays repay richly any length of time spent among them. A *curio*, too, of this island is "Troy Town," or a space so enclosed between rows of stones that a stranger once in at its single opening can with difficulty find his way out again. This "maze" is of great age. No one appears to know when or by whom it was constructed.

St. Martin's, too, one should not fail to explore; and this, if less rugged and stern in outline, yet boasts a broad beach at low tide, and pretty, undulating sweeps of grass, in parts down to the very water's edge.

Grass, sand, granite, and rush, some on one, some on another, all take their place on the coast-line of the many other eastern isles. The differing shapes and colours make hours spent among them pass all too soon. To land and make acquaintance with their varied interests would take a long summer holiday indeed. But let those who care for such things revel in the rich Druidical remains with which so many abound. By St. Martin's *Day Mark* they cluster; Bryher has many; on St. Agnes are the well-defined circles of a Druidical temple; on St. Mary's one is in the very thick of these deeply interesting memorials of our forefathers' faith. Even at one spot we find (according to tradition) the veritable chair in which the Arch-Druid was wont to sit and watch the rising sun. There, at any rate, near the wild Clapper Rocks, is a big chair-shaped stone, so environed by other Druidical remains that it seems only natural to suppose it part of their sacred furnishings a score centuries ago.

Besides these relics of long remote ages are others



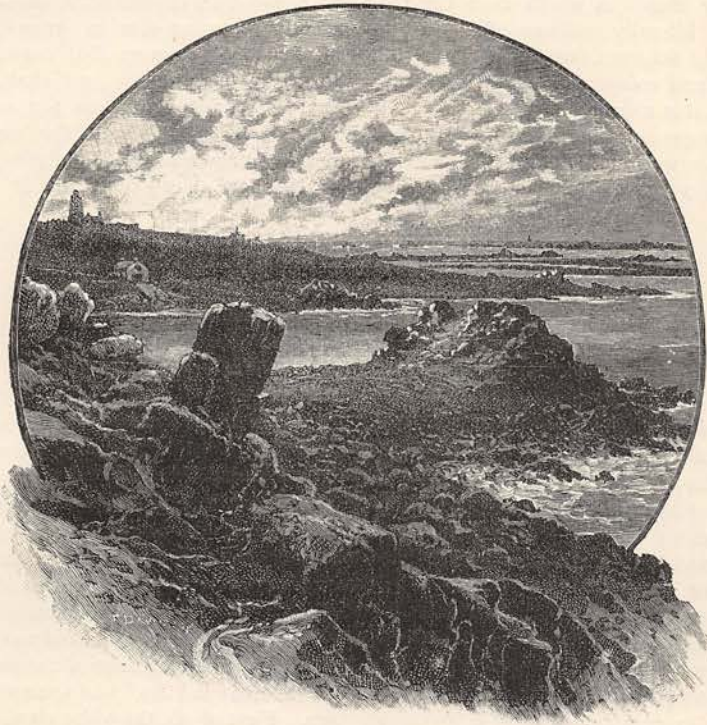
STAR CASTLE, AND PART OF TOWN OF ST. MARY'S.

of origin less buried in the remote past. Barrows are numerous on several of the isles, Samson in particular. Immense sepulchral caves, finely preserved, are there. Bryher, too, has many such. Evidently the islands, at some period of their history, were inhabited by people of wealth and position, though not the shadow of a name attached to a single burial mound is left to tell who they were.

Then in St. Mary's we come across our old Roman masters, who have bequeathed us a bit of road which

attacks of rude invaders. Time, however, has laid low the artificial part of this stronghold. Rampart, wall, and ditch are overthrown and decayed. Only the eye of an antiquarian can detect that art has ever been at work there.

By Old Town, too, are vestiges of a castle called "Ennor," evidently built many, many centuries back. Time, however, has been assisted in the demolition of this by active and comparatively modern hands. It was dismembered and carted off to help in the



ST AGNES' LIGHTHOUSE.

runs through the flower farm at Rocky Hill. These Romans visited our little islands, taught the people much, and used the sea-girt spots as prisons or places of banishment for their political criminals.

Names linger on St. Mary's which point to monastic settlements there. It has a "Holy Vale," and "Carn Friars," but not a trace of ecclesiastical building is there earlier or other than the tiny old church by Old Town Bay. This, lately undergoing restoration, reveals Norman work; but a church it evidently always was, and probably the only monastery on the islands was that at Tresco, granted by Saxon Athelstan in 936. Of this monastery—or cell of the Benedictines at Tavistock—nothing remains, though two arches of its later-built church (c. 1250) still stand in the beautiful abbey gardens.

Next, on St. Mary's we have the "Giant's Castle," where Nature and (probably) Danish art combined to form a fortress all but impregnable against the

erection of "Star Castle," in 1593, by a Godolphin, first Governor of the Isles, and, with a hiatus of half a century, successor in power to those abbots who had ruled there from 981 to 1539.

Of Star Castle, an insignificant building to own such a fine name, little need be said. It has entertained royalty; with the rest of the isles, had its share in the revolutionary troubles of our land. Charles II., when Prince of Wales, took refuge there for six weeks in 1645, and, indeed, all the Scillies made good fight for the Stuarts, though at last reduced by the powerful Parliamentarians.

More recently, the islands were used as a handy sort of Botany Bay. Thither, among others, a certain John Bastwick, a doctor of Colchester, was banished for treasonable writing, and, after cruel punishment, imprisoned for life in Star Castle.

From early in the eighteenth century to some sixty years ago, we fear our islands had best say little of

their history. Smuggling—and worse—fill a good many of its pages. Since sixty years ago, however, its record is better reading. Under the care of the family who from then have leased them, the islands appear to be growing as healthy in industry and morality as they are in position and temperature. The delightful labour of flower-farming is steadily on the increase among them, the astonishing quantity of forty tons of cut blossoms, chiefly narcissus, being sent over to England weekly during the winter season. The farms, which employ many hands and much capital, are excessively interesting, and the sight of them in February or March is worth even the risk of a rough voyage. Literally millions of white and yellow blooms, richly fragrant, nestle between tall hedges of euonymus and veronica, and form a fragrant picture—exquisite as it is unique.

But, fair as these garden islands are, sober, courteous, and friendly as we found their people without exception, the Scillies have their dark side still.

The grandeur of their coast costs much. Cruel are their picturesque rocks and reefs; terribly dangerous those wave-washed headlands.

In the little churchyard between Carn Lea and Tolman are records of many a gallant man "drowned" off one point or other: wrecked among those bright, dancing waters close by. And here in one long grave, guarded by tall, superb aloes, lie over six score dead, "lost in the *Schiller*," a grand American liner that ran on the Retarrier Ledges in May, 1875, and of her freight of 350 souls but forty were saved.

Pretty, peaceful God's Acre, your terraces brilliant with mesembryanthemums, sweet-scented dracenas standing sentinel-like in graceful lines! The tale of your tombs is more than commonly sad. Remembering your chronicle, we shall, though far away, think often of you when the west winds blow, for now we realise too well the meaning of the line one too often reads "and in a fog the ill-fated vessel went ashore among the Scillies."

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### UNCLE JOHN'S PRIZE CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

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T was getting on for Michaelmas, and the youthful members of the family at Hollybush Manor were conscious that the days on which tennis was possible on the newly-made court were nearly numbered for the season, and that before very long the first frost would spread its melancholy table-cloth over the green square that had given them so much happiness.

Yet, somehow, this year, if summer had seemed an unusually long time in coming, so now it appeared proportionately loth to depart; and here, when the Michaelmas geese were cackling in the lane hard by, the tennis-balls were flying over the net just as if it were July. Amy and Nelly Singleton had often during the hot weather over-fatigued themselves, and, as their Uncle John had insisted upon it, they now never played more than two consecutive "sets" without a good rest before playing again. It was, at one of the after-breakfast "councils of war," decided that at least two fresh players should, when possible, be imported, so as to make the party at no time less than six.

"Who more handy," suggested Tom, "than Mr. Haredale and the plump Sophia?"

A general laugh of approval ensued, which was, however, slightly suppressed by the sudden appearance of Uncle John upon the scene, trowel in his garden-stained hands, and with a face red with the exertion of which he never seemed tired.

"Boys," said he, pleasantly enough, "I shall want you to give me a hand this morning. You know the Dunchester Flower Show takes place in ten days'

time, and there is a good deal to do to the chrysanthemums yet before they will be ready for exhibition."

For a moment, the countenances of both Tom and George fell; but one gentle look from the quiet and diplomatic Amy put matters right, and the next minute Uncle John had two under-gardeners at work in the greenhouse, in the shape of his nephews, while, as a reward for their good conduct, Amy and Nelly at once volunteered to go round to the Haredales' to ask them for tennis the same afternoon.

"See, my laddies," said their uncle gaily, "here they are. First of all the white ones, *Fleur de Marie* and *Formosa alba*; then there is *Cassandra*, a white one with a rosy tip to it; then there are the yellow ones, *gloria mundi* and *aurea multiflora*, and——"

"Uncle John," interposed Tom, "how in the world do you remember all the names of the plants? Is there one whose name you *don't* know?"

This, of course, was a little gratifying to the horticultural pride of old Mr. Singleton; while George was not without a suspicion that his brother Tom was trying to get on the blind side of his uncle, and whispered in Tom's ear, "Butter—butter!" The irrepressible Tom merely replied by a wink that more than admitted his guilt.

"Nelly's the one for names, uncle," continued he. "Only fancy, the other day, George made her go and ask Bailey whether the *aurora borealis* was in bloom yet!"

A general laugh, broken immediately by the old gentleman asking, with a touch of amused sarcasm on his face—

"And did she really go?"

"Rather!" said Tom; "and we heard old Bailey