

"I'd like to give you the reins," said Tom diplomatically, "only these tits are full of corn; and it wouldn't be the right thing for your Majesty to drive yourself. You jest bow to 'em right and left, same as the Prince of Wales does when he's goin' to open foundation stones."

It was the proudest moment of Josiah's life as, amidst cries of "Good old Josiah!" "Hooray, Sarah!" "Mind, Tom, here's a pleeceman!" the carriage drove past the sportive multitude, and his Majesty bowed right and left.

They drove on in a blaze of glory through sweet country lanes, by stately rivers, and meadows green, until they pulled up at the entrance to a long avenue, in the trees of which sable rooks cawed solemn welcome to all newcomers.

Josiah rubbed his eyes and peered through the waning light. Was it possible? But, no—it couldn't be. There were the old gates—smartened up, but still the same old gates—with their lacework cleaned and furbished, looking as if they had never heard of such a place as smoky London.

The old man trembled violently.

"Let me get down, Tom; let me get down. I must touch 'em again. I can't leave 'em."

"Nobody wants you to leave 'em," said Tom, affecting to busy himself with the somewhat refractory "own brother to Wheel of Fortune." "Nobody wants you to leave 'em. Sir Lucius told me to drive you straight down and let you take possession last night; but the workmen hadn't finished, so I waited till to-night."

"Where are we, Tom?" asked Sarah's sweet voice, as she looked out of the carriage, although she had a very shrewd idea. In obedience to a hint from Tom she had brought with her a bundle containing her most cherished possessions.

"Ome," said Tom, trying to help the old man down. "Keep quiet, can't yer?" he added to his refractory horses.

Josiah paused—one foot on the wheel.

"And who's Sir Lucius, Tom?" he asked.

"Old Windbags!" sententiously replied Tom. And his Majesty, with a gasp, came down suddenly, in a sitting posture, on the hard high-road.



IN THE HOME OF THE AFTERGLOW.

(Illustrated from photographs by G. W. Wilson & Co., Aberdeen.)



THE OLD MAN OF HOY.

NOT in the farthest north, among Arctic icebergs or Icelandic snows, but yet as high as the latitude of Greenland's southern cape, "Hjaltland" is our own far north. We call it Shetland—that is a corruption; the Scotch group it with Orkney as one

of exquisite workmanship, or a fleecy white cloud of gossamer fineness, to encircle the neck. The average Englishman remembers these remote islanders as the folk who in General Elections keep him waiting a fortnight after everybody else has voted.

Somebody told a Londoner that if he intended visiting these barbarous islands he had better go in old clothes, the people were so rough and primitive. He did so, and landed at Kirkwall, in the Orkneys, where his first duty was to order two suits from a local tailor. He found Kirkwall was a very fashionable place. Our steamer touches there.

The glory of these isles is the wonderfully-preserved cathedral, built more than seven centuries ago by Earl Ronald, and still in full use for worship. Here the Maid of Norway, St. Margaret, lies buried; she died within sight of Bonnie Scotland, whose throne she had set sail to claim. Here the last scenes of "The Pirate" are laid.

And in our drive to-day across to Stromness we shall pass the memorials of a yet earlier religion. Stennis Stones, ten miles out from Kirkwall, are, next to Stonehenge, the most complete circle of "Druidical" stones in the

of their counties, but Orcadians and Shetlanders alike repudiate the Scottish name.

"I am going to Scotland," says the Shetland voyager to the mainland; and these pure Norsemen prefer an Englishman to a Scot any time. Shetland, to an English boy, suggests a sturdy little pony; to one of our fair girls it suggests a warm winter's wrap



THE NAVE, KIRKWALL CATHEDRAL, LOOKING EAST.

kingdom ; and more curious still the strange "Picts' houses," of which more anon.

The sun is setting as we descend into Stromness, and laying down a broad road of gold over the western waves. These high latitudes are the home of the afterglow ; from May to July there is no night there, and the smallest type can be read at midnight.

In the morning the *St. Magnus* awoke us by sounding her bell at the pier, and we hurried on board. We are threading channels which, crossed and divided by masses of purple headland and jagged cliff, form mirrors in which the grand outlines glass themselves, and where timid boatmen must feel in Paradise. Mark yonder misshapen stone giant, the half-human figure of the Old Man of Hoy—a landmark for leagues to the mariner.

Now we are clear of the land. What is that strange chain of nearly submerged black wheels ploughing the water far in front of our bows? Can it be Captain Nemo's *Nautilus*, or the veritable sea-serpent once more enlivening the holiday season? A cold-hearted old pedant volunteers the information that it is only a shoal of porpoises, so another good newspaper par. is spoiled.

The great Atlantic rollers have sent below the people conscious of possessing stomachs, but a chosen few remain to catch the first glimpse of the Fair Isle. Yes, it is yonder

at last, over to the north-east. Its 300 people see few visitors ; it had far more one summer, three hundred years gone, when great Armada galleons went to pieces on its pitiless rocky face.

Many of the Spaniards survived the storm and wintered here, escaping in the spring following. They taught the islanders the wonderful patterns—brilliant crosses and zig-zags in wool, dyed with seaweed green and scarlet, crimson and yellow—in which they knit the hose, and caps, and gloves which tourists generally carry home when returning south.

And now we are tossing in the turbulent "roost" of Sumburgh. We will go below. Sea-sick? Oh, no! But the views of Scottish scenery, the cabin fittings, the electric light, the snug berths—especially the berths—are worth looking at. The steamer trembles under the heavy blows, straight from the shoulder, which old Neptune delivers against all who would press towards *Ultima Thule*.

But he soon thinks better of it, and grows strangely quiet. Climbing the hatchway, we see the reason. We are under the lee of majestic Sumburgh Head, famous in weather reports, immortalised by the shipwreck in the "Pirate," as is Fitful Head, several miles along the other side of Shetland, by "Norna the Reimkennar."

We are in the land of romance when the old pedant's voice once more recalls us.

"What is that promontory, or ness, right ahead there, sailor?"

The waggish sailor gave a wink.

"Where, sir? I see *No Ness*."

It is the name of the headland.

We get a glimpse of the most perfect example of a Pict's house anywhere as we pass the isle of Mousa. What were these curious buildings? No one knows their history. They are somewhat like an hour-glass in shape. This one is about fifty feet diameter at the bottom, and its walls slope upwards towards the waist of the structure, again widening outwards near the now broken top.

In war-time it could be used, along with the hundreds still lying in ruins over all these islands, its narrow doorway built up; and its inhabitants could gather their cattle into its inner court below, while they ascended the winding stairs to the little rooms above, to which no assailant could ever scale—instances of prehistoric towers of refuge.

The island now looming large on the right is Bressay. It has several beautiful arches worn in its cliffs; one by the clean low lighthouse is very conspicuous. I was pointing out its attractions to the phlegmatic hero of *No Ness* and the porpoises, when the practical talk about fisheries and crops stopped for an instant by his remarking that he had seen no cornfields in Shetland, and thought that corn could not be grown.

A friend, who had chafed under the unromantic conversation, broke in with—

"No, sir, not a corn; but there is a *Wart* on Bressay 1,300 feet high."

Then he whispered to me—

"We're quits now for the sea-serpent."

He will get us into a scrape yet before we get back.

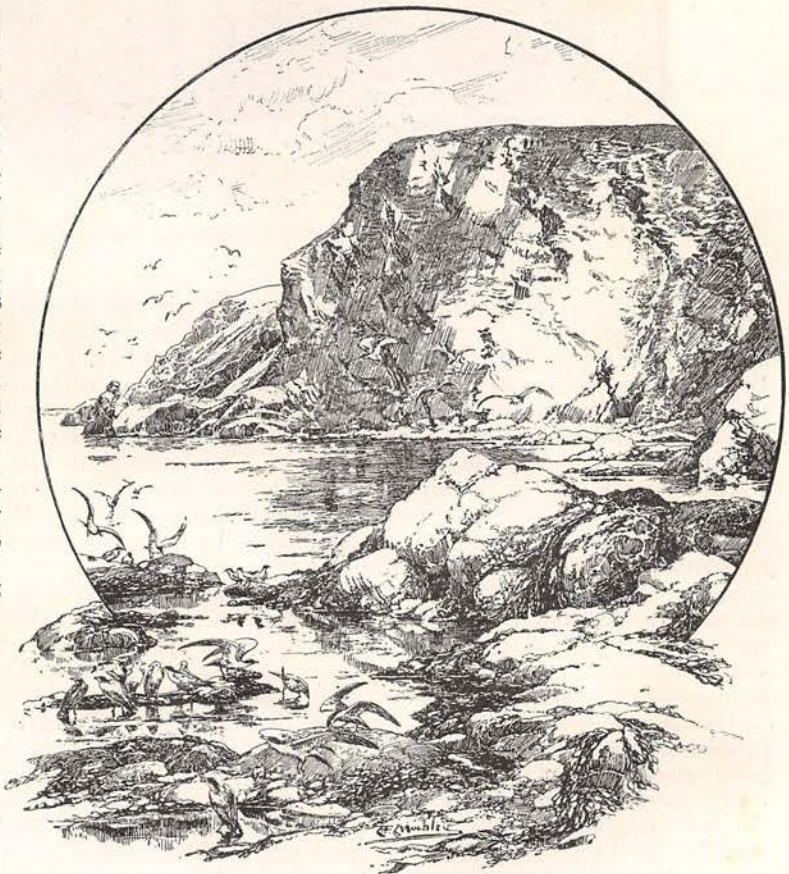
"Lerwick!"

Well, there's the

pier, right enough, but the houses must have crowded round in wonder when it was being built, and have not had room to turn back since. Gables there are without end, blank walls, but no street, nor any law and order about the buildings. You can find no street when you have landed, either. There is a passage of varying width, very angular and crotchety, which dodges about among the houses and into a square or two here and there, forming a maze for foot-passengers, carts and horses, and carriages. This is "Commercial Street."

In the newer buildings a few shop windows try to toe the line as well as circumstances will permit, and to offer some apology for the ruder and older houses that all around give you the cold shoulder, or turn their backs on the stranger. But which is the back? Is it where the front door is? Why, that opens straight into the sea. They were adapted for old smuggling days; no doubt their builders knew their business.

Steep lanes lead up into the newer part of Lerwick, and there the houses behave as

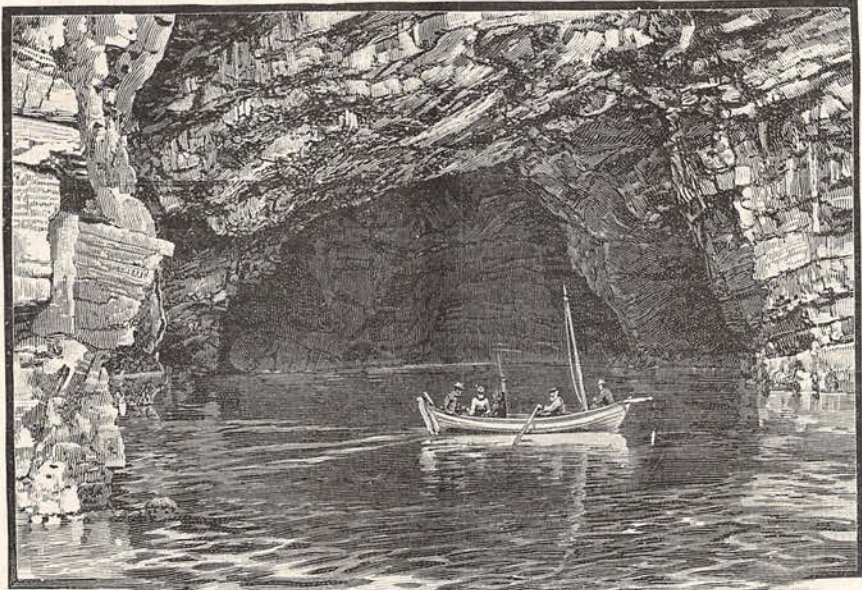


FITFUL HEAD, SHETLAND.

well-conducted dwellings ought to, and keep their places in due form.

Lerwick contains many comfortable lodgings, and is homelier than it looks. It is a capital centre for visiting the islands. Suppose we begin with the nearest. It will give

A few miles' tramp, and, the road again descends to the water's edge. The sound between Bressay and Noss looks narrow, and shallow enough to be waded, especially where that vein of marble gleams below the tremulous green of the swift, strong current.



ORKNEY-MAN'S CAVE, BRESSAY, SHETLAND.

us a splendid example of the awful quiet of this northern scenery. A noisy crowd would only spoil our enjoyment. A milk-boat crosses Bressay Sound twice a day. Start early; take plenty of food, for there is absolutely none on Noss. Get an order at that white house on Bressay, just across the water.

This sound forms the roadstead of Lerwick. It often swarms with shoals of fish—the Shetlanders' fortune; sometimes above the herring shoal the dreaded forms of the dog-fish appear. They are epicures, biting out a favourite piece from the herring's back and spoiling all. The placid waters are dotted everywhere with the white sails of luxurious pleasure or the "honest brown" of trade.

The heavy boat grates its keel on the pebbles at the little jetty, and we are on a good road leading eastwards. It is only rough moorland here, but oh! the fresh air. No factories, no railways pollute it. It is literally the breath of life to the jaded city toiler. You expand the lungs to their fullest, and drink in great draughts, which pervade all our being with "the wild joy of living."

Sheep and sea-bird dispute the possession of this lonely islet. For an hour we walk along the shore, and then stand on the top of a high cliff, guarded by a good stone fence.

Look down, far below, over the shelves of brown and white to where the seaweed waves and tosses in the deep channel which has detached from Noss that tremendous rocky mass called the Holm. It is as untrodden by man as it was before the day when, two centuries since, a daring cragsman scaled its perpendicular sides, and on its summit planted a stout stake, and bridged the hundred feet of chasm with a rope, from which he swung the sheep cradle, in which the shepherds of seven generations carried sheep across, one at a time, to the pasture. It was an unique sight, but tourists kept fooling with it, until one day the proprietor's dread of some accident rose higher than the value of a few hundred square yards of herbage, and the airy cradle, which rocked on a tight-rope two hundred feet above the deep, was removed.

We turn away to climb the highest point, the Noup of Noss, and look behind us. The

wild rocks of Bressay, and beyond them the blue outline of Mainland, stretch from Sumburgh to the northern mists that hide Yell and Unst. The eye sweeps over Whalsey, Fetlar, and the Out Skerries. Eastward and southward stretch leagues of ocean, across which play shifting lights and dark shadows. The tempered breeze blows straight from Norway, and at the name the hardy Norseman's war-dragons once more plough the deep before us.

This is the very "Swan's-bath" which they crossed to glorious death or certain victory. How the fierce old Vikings would have stared to see one of our Atlantic greyhounds cross it, and touch the Shetland coast in six hours!

The best way to see the grandeur of these cliffs is to charter a small yacht at Lerwick. Sail by the rocky caves and wave-worn arches of Bressay, noting where that natural flying buttress, the Giant's Leg, supports the solid cliff wall; and then cross over to Noss, sail through the watery cañon that separates Noss and the Holm. Then, as we emerge, the majestic white walls of the Noup rise six hundred feet above the narrow strip of sand, shelf above shelf, tier above tier. How grand it must look in the starlit nights of winter!

stalactite figures. We visit it for pleasure—the Orkneyman came for quiet. The press-gang wanted to confer a Government appointment upon him, which he shrank from. To avoid the persistent deputation, he came alone, and as he had no wish to leave at once, forgot to fasten his boat. It had gone without him when he wanted it, and after waiting two days for a lull in the storm outside, he swam out to a projecting rock, climbed to the top, and retired from the gaze of history.

Try to catch the *Earl of Zetland* on one of its occasional trips to Baltasound or Yell, or the North Isles. Unst is the furthest north. On it stands the Muckle Flugga Lighthouse, 250 feet above the sea, at which height it just reaches safety from the violence of the gales. The currents which sweep down the sounds of these islands often, even in summer, isolate them from the outer world.

As to the inland scenery—if you can thread your way along Mainland without a map you are clever, the voes run so far into the land. For cycling the roads are excellent, and good machines can be hired.

As soon as our other visits will permit, it is



LERWICK FROM BRESSAY.

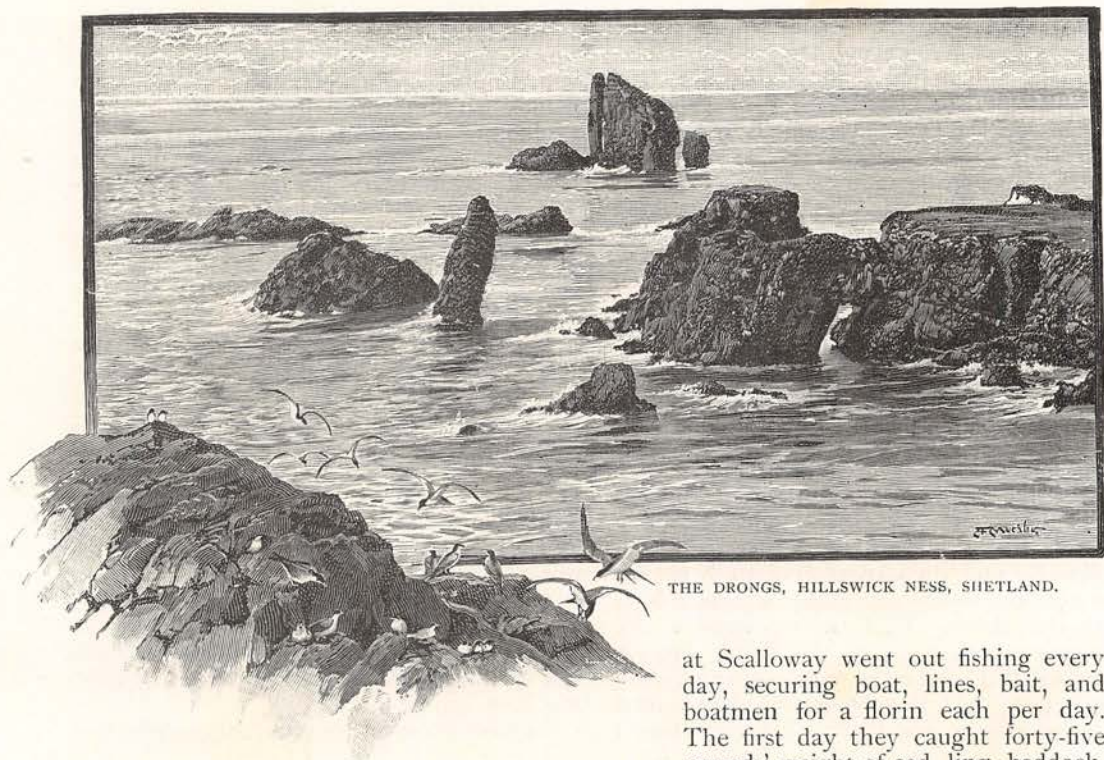
And before the first human eye gazed upon it, and after the last has sadly turned away from it to die, age after age that unchanging rocky face defies the sweeping tides that encircle a desolate world of tempest and storm.

Clouds of seagulls wheel around it, thousands upon thousands of birds mottle its brown shelves in the breeding season.

"Come here in May, if you would see us at our best," says the Shetlander.

With a boat we can see the Orkneyman's Cave, containing hundreds of beautiful

advisable to visit Scalloway, the second largest town in Shetland. It contains ninety houses—I counted them all—and five churches, a lot of fish-curing sheds, and an old castle, once the residence, then the hiding-place, of cruel, wicked Earl Patrick Stewart. His fondness



THE DRONGS, HILLSWICK NESS, SHETLAND.

for tobacco cost him his life, the smoke from his pipe betraying his lair to his watchful enemies.

From Scalloway we can visit all the ports on the west side: Hillswick, with its strange rocks, called the Drongs, so worn and splintered as to resemble a fleet in full sail suddenly petrified into eternal stillness; and Walls, and the Isle of Papa, where the great granite quarries are worked by convict gangs; and occasionally far-away Foula, so storm-bound in winter as to have often been in the extremities of famine. It is forty miles away, but always in clear weather its bold outline of hills stands sharp against the western sky.

Its cliffs are more than twice the height of the Noup of Noss. The daring cragsman will descend a cliff 1,300 feet in height to obtain the eggs. One or two varieties of birds extinct elsewhere are still preserved here. In the winter gales no man dare open his front door; if he did, the chances are that the wind would lift the roof of his miserable shieling.

The west side of Shetland possesses the finer scenery. At Walls are grand rocks; at Tangwick the massive Door-holm has an arch 500 feet wide and 150 high. From the Witch's Hill at Scalloway can be had a fine view of the western isles. Two friends staying

at Scalloway went out fishing every day, securing boat, lines, bait, and boatmen for a florin each per day. The first day they caught forty-five pounds' weight of cod, ling, haddock, etc., and did well on the other days.

Now as to cost. Shetland is more than 700 miles' sail from London. It is most economical to go by sea all the way. Boats leave Limehouse almost every day for Aberdeen—second cabin return fare, twenty-five shillings. From Aberdeen to Lerwick the return fare is under thirteen shillings, so that we get nearly 1,500 miles' sailing for less than two pounds. The food on board is not expensive. To travel first cabin throughout costs less than four pounds, and four friends can, by forming a party, have a private cabin to Aberdeen.

Boats leave Temple Pier, on the Thames Embankment, one hour before the steamer sails, and in connection with it. The times should be well studied beforehand, so that the steamers at Aberdeen fit in with each other. Some will prefer to travel thither by rail—it will cost them eleven shillings more, third class return, than if they travelled first cabin by sea. Sea-sickness need not terrify; I am a wretched sailor, and find that lying in the berth is the best policy. I thereby get a rest, which the doctor tells me does me good.

The voyage will benefit overworked, debilitated, or consumptive men. It will teach an Englishman the size of our home islands, and he will learn to know our warm-hearted northern brothers.