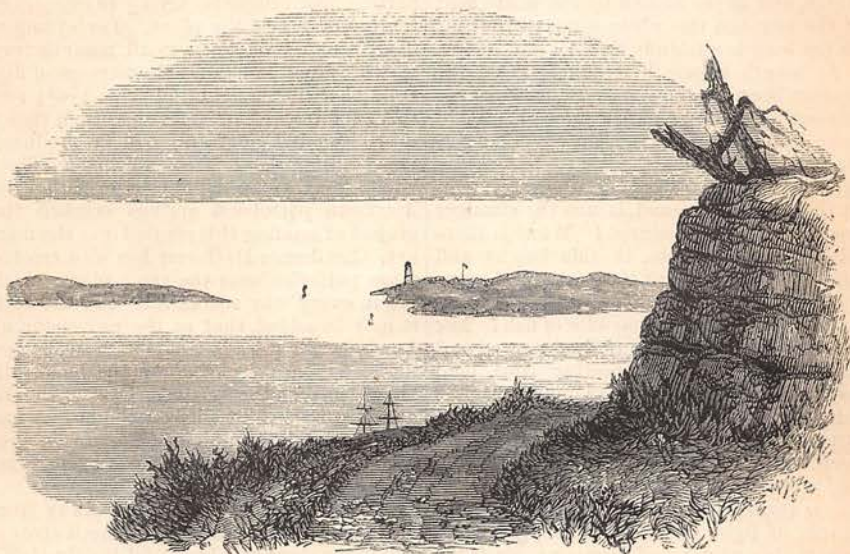


A GLANCE AT THE ISLAND OF LEWIS:
 WITH SOME PENCIL NOTES OF THE SCENERY TAKEN ON THE SPOT.
 BY WILLIAM BLACK, AUTHOR OF "A PRINCESS OF THULE."



STORNOWAY HARBOR, FROM THE GALLOWS HILL.

WE are on the deck of the great steamer *Clansman*, which is plowing its way across the Minch—the rough and rushing northern sea which lies between the mainland of Scotland and the far Hebrides. It is a brilliant July day; there is a blue sky overhead; but there is also a stiff northeasterly breeze blowing, and every minute or two one of the huge green waves dashes against the *Clansman's* bows and sends a shower of salt foam over her white decks. The fierce blowing of the wind, the southward rushing of the sea-green seas, the moving of sharply defined shadows on the sunlit decks as the big steamer rises on a mighty wave and then plunges forward into the trough—all this gives one a sense of hurrying motion and expectation; and still, scan the horizon as we may, there is as yet no sign of the "stormy Hebrides."

The Greater Minch is only about twice as broad as the Channel between Dover and Calais; but whoever has been to the island of Lewis knows that ever after it remains in his memory as a strangely remote and inaccessible place. It seems to be farther away than Gibraltar, or Newfoundland, or St. Petersburg, or any spot, indeed, that is a familiar geographical expression. Doubtless this fancy arises in part from the exceeding loneliness and desolate grandeur of the scenery on the west coast of Scotland, past which the Stornoway steamer churns

its way during two long days and nights. There are some of us on board who have come all the way by steamer from Glasgow—round the rocky Mull of Cantyre, where five tides meet and roar; through the Sound of Islay, and under the gloomy Paps of Jura; catching a glimpse of the mystic Colonsay, where the sound of the mermaid is still heard at night mourning for the chieftain who deceived her; keeping wide of the swirling currents of Corryvreckan—

"As you pass through Jura's Sound,
 Bend your course by Scarba's shore;
 Shun, O shun the gulf profound
 Where Corryvreckan's surges roar!"

until at length the *Clansman* sailed into Oban Bay. There are others of us who boarded her there yesterday morning, and have even now but a misty recollection of that endless series of great and lonely mountains, of desolate islands set in a restless sea, of long bays and shores where no sign of life was visible but the countless flocks of sea-birds calling and screaming to each other over the breaking waves. Last night, as the sea darkened and the stars began to appear, we sailed under the coast of Skye, and the blackness of the wild Cuchullin Hills seemed to overshadow us. By-and-by, as we can remember, the moonlight rose behind the sharp and jagged peaks, only to render the awful gloom and majesty of them more impressive. This morning, too, did we not see

a rosy sunrise flush the smooth waters of Loch Gair and light up the soft green hills around? It was our last look at the mainland. Now we have left calling in at these various ports, and are standing right out to the Minch, far away on the other side of which, and as yet hidden by the white heat of the sun and the white spray of the sea, lie the long low islands that we seek.

At length a pale blue streak along the horizon becomes visible; as we draw nearer, the outline of bay and hill grows more and more distinct; and finally, the *Clansman* getting into smoother water, we make our way into the spacious harbor of Stornoway. But, at the first look round, is not the stranger just a trifle disappointed? What is there wild, strange, remote, in this bright and brisk little town, with its substantial stone quays, its white houses, its heaps of herring barrels, and its prevailing odor of fish? Nor is there any appearance of half-starved and half-savage aborigines peering from mud hovels and talking in an unintelligible tongue. On the contrary, the quays and streets of Stornoway are thronged with a people who are strong and hardy, well clad and prosperous—the men, for the most part, short, stalwart, and thickset, with shaggy beards of light brown; the young women remarkably robust, and in many cases strikingly handsome, with their coal-black hair, their blue eyes with dark eyelashes, their ruddy complexion, and free gait. The costume of both, too, is sufficiently picturesque, the men wearing a sailor-like suit of blue, with a scarlet cap on their head, the young women wearing short and rough petticoats, also of blue homespun, with a scarlet tartan shawl tightly wrapped round their bosom and fastened in at the waist. But what an amazing breadth of chest these young women have! Is it because they are the burden-carriers of the community, carrying in the "creels" strapped on to their backs loads that the men-folks could scarcely lift from the ground? There, for example, goes a strapping wench with her "creel" filled full with large fish bonés. If you ask her what she means to do with these bones, she will tell you they are meant for her cows, which can not be kept quiet at milking-time unless they have a fish bone to lick. The cows have found out what the girl probably doesn't know, that there are few phosphates in the poor grass of these islands, and thus they make up the deficiency.

On the other side of the harbor lies a semi-circle of soft green hills, partially planted with trees, and on a terrace just over the rocks and the water is built Lewis Castle, a large castellated building, the residence of the proprietor of the island. This gentleman belongs to a Sutherlandshire family of the name of Matheson, and is probably, therefore, of Norse descent; but he did not

seize hold of Lewis after the fashion of Harald Haarfagr or Jarl Sigurd. It came into his possession by the gentler process of purchase, and after paying £190,000 for the island, it is believed that he has spent about an equal sum in making roads, improving harbors, and otherwise trying to encourage the industries of the place. For example, near to Stornoway is a small manufactory which he had put up for the purpose of distilling an inflammable oil from peat; and this experiment had so far succeeded that a very clear and good oil could be produced for (I think) about three shillings a gallon, when the immense supplies afforded by the American petroleum springs crushed the project of sending this peat oil into the market. Sir James Matheson has also erected some potteries near the same place, which are in every way successful. For the rest, it may be added, that as the proprietor of Lewis is not always resident there, he has intrusted the duty of doing the honors, in his absence, to the "chamberlain" of the island—an important official, who is also one of the most hospitable of men, always provided that you carry with you proper credentials.

After all, one is glad to get away from herring boxes, shops, houses, wheelbarrows, and other signs of a busy and thrifty civilization, into the interior of the island. We bid good-by to the robust and vigorous but gentle-spoken folk of Stornoway—or Stornoway, as they prefer to call it—and find that an excellent road lies before us through the wild and bleak moor-land. Perhaps it is the rapid pace of our capital little pair of horses that is responsible, but scarcely have we got out of Stornoway than we seem to plunge into a strange silence and desolation. Far as the eye can see there is nothing but that undulating wilderness of moor, here and there rising into pale blue hills that seem almost transparent in the distance, here and there dipping down to a hollow, in which lies a silver lake with a margin of green reeds, but no trees, round its shallow shores. Mile after mile we go through this solitude, with a vague impression that on a gloomier day the picture around us must be inexpressibly depressing. But then, as it is, we have a fine fresh breeze blowing about, a blue sky overhead, and the sunlight, falling on that dark moor, seems to warm up its deep rich tints of purple, orange, and brown, while the bowlders of gneiss glitter like masses of snow.

Occasionally, but at long intervals—for the interior of the island is very sparsely populated—we pass one or two huts, the human life about which is very different from that we saw in Stornoway. Perhaps it is that the stalwart young women are at this season of the year away up at the sheelings on the hills, tending their flocks,



BEE-HIVE HUT NEAR LOCH BARVAS.

and that where the young women are, the young men will be found, whenever there is an excuse for leaving the farm. At all events, the old women and children about these rude hovels are scantily dressed, begrimed with peat smoke, and altogether a poor and neglected race. The "bee-hive" hut in which they live has neither window nor chimney; the constant peat fire does not prevent the damp from soaking into the turf-covered wall—hence all manner of ague and rheumatism. Year by year the family multiplies by birth and marriage, and the same spot of poor land is supposed to support the ever-increasing demand on it. It is this excessive poorness of the land that should make people cautious in condemning the Highland proprietors who see without concern, or who frankly encourage, a considerable emigration going on from year to year. Where land will grow nothing but rushes, where the free offer of a holding to the son of a crofter who has just got married is only a piece of satire, seeing that all the king's horses and all the king's men could not drain it into cultivation, and where the only possible use of the land is to turn it into a sheep-farm, which demands a large expenditure of money, the peasantry who persist in adhering to their particular bit of half-cultivated farm, while the family members increase year by year, must sink into a proportionately increasing misery. The fact is, they have neither the money nor the patience to drain and cultivate the unproductive morass which covers five-sixths of such an island as Lewis, even if it were presented to them as a gift. On the other hand, there is scarcely any spectacle in modern life so distressing as the departure of a band

of emigrants—the old women weeping and wailing, the children frightened, the middle-aged men and women more cheerful, perhaps, but still looking back to the old familiar place. The old folks, indeed, never get reconciled to the change. Even when they see how their children and grandchildren are getting on in the Glasgow workshop or warehouse, when they find that they themselves have good food, warm shelter, and comfortable clothing, they still look back with an ineffaceable regret and longing to the old life among the moors, to the damp hovel filled with smoke, to the wet winters, the scanty clothing, the insufficient food, the constant rheumatism, the grumbling over the tyranny of the tacksman, and the payment of the *airgiol-cearc*.* And they never cease to remind their children of the cruel sacrifice they, the old folks, have had to make in order to satisfy this modern craving for living in big towns.

To return for a moment to the bee-hive hut of these people. The absence of a chimney is considered a necessity. The hut consists of a thick wall of unmortared stones and turf, rising about six feet from the ground. The roof is constructed of spars of wood, which serve as rafters; and these

* The tacksman is, or was, a sort of middle-man who took the land in large holdings from the proprietor and let it out in smaller holdings to the crofter or peasant farmer. In Lewis, at least, this intervention by the tacksman has been abolished. Tacksmen and crofter alike rent direct from the proprietor; but the former has a lease, and the latter has not. The *airgiol-cearc*, or hen-money, is a tax of a shilling a year on those who keep fowls. It is probably only a symbol of much more formidable dues remitted. Those who grumble are those who keep but one or two hens.



THE WHITE SANDS OF THE BAY OF UIG.

are thickly covered over with masses of straw, which again has an upper covering of slices of turf. Inside, a peat fire is always burning—or rather, when it is not being used for cooking, smouldering—and the hut is almost always filled with a thick, pungent, and yet fragrant smoke, strong enough to make the eyes smart of the stranger who ventures into the dusky dwelling. Now it is the object of the occupiers of these hovels to prevent by every means the escape of the smoke, which from day to day goes on slowly saturating the straw of the roof until that is as black as the peat itself. This saturated straw forms an excellent manure for the farm. At the proper time the peasant farmer proceeds to pitchfork the roof off his house, and have it carried away to be distributed over his fields. Hence it is not likely that the efforts to get the Lewis peasants to put chimneys in their huts—at least in the interior of the island, where the sea-tangle does not offer a substitute for the saturated straw—will succeed. Even the business of bribing the peasants to put a window in their huts (each person being allowed half a crown for glass) does not go on rapidly. The wall is exceedingly thick, and is made up of all sorts of loose and heterogeneous materials, in which it is not easy to place the frame-work even of a one-pane window. For the rest, it has been pointed out that these huts of the Lewis peasantry are almost identical with the huts of the Esquimaux.

A drive of sixteen or eighteen miles or so takes us right across the island, and from the brow of an incline we look down on the small and solitary inn of Garra-na-hina,* on

the spacious waters of Loch Roag, that lead out to the open Atlantic beyond, and on a wonderful panorama of mountains, islands, and desolate moor-land. It is at this remote hostelry that the stranger must rest for a few days who would become familiar with the western coast of Lewis; and once he has become familiar with it, he is not likely to forget the varied picture—the tiny inn, with its patch of green about it, the moist meadows and darker moor-land lying down in the valley, the great Loch Roag, with its margin of yellow sea-weed all along its rocky shores, and the far mountains of Cra-cabhal, Mealasabhal, and Suainabhal (the termination *bhal* is a corruption of the Norse *fiall*, a mountain) that lie on the south. Nor is he likely to forget that famous fisherman, Neil, a small and swarthy Celt, whose manipulation of a heavy double-handed salmon rod is a wonder to see. Perhaps it may be his own good fortune to whip the running swirls and spacious pools of the Ainnhe Dubh (the Black River), after he has splashed down to its banks through a mile or two of the spongiest morass. Which induces the greater agony of mind, the excitement of having a young grilse, freshly run in from the sea and full of devilment, sulking, rushing, or leaping at the end of his line, or the helpless fashion in which he must stand and let the clouds of huge “clegs” or horse-flies draw blood from his neck, face, and hands? It is in vain that Neil smites them to death in dozens, while the fisherman watches with an intense nervousness the next manœuvre of the fish. The summer air seems to be filled with the monsters, the trickling of blood down one’s cheek is plainly felt, and it is only when the gleaming grilse is scooped up by the final and dextrous plunge of

* Gearaidh-na'h-Ainnhe—“the cutting of the river.”

Neil's landing-net that one begins to feel the lumps that have arisen on one's neck. But is not the play worth the candle? At the inn in the evening, when the oldest cask is opened and the largest lamp is lit, the story of the capture of that grilse will be told with many a picturesque adornment. For, strange as it may appear, a consignment of Champagne may by chance have reached this remote hostelry of Garra-na-hina, and there are circumstances in which the lively little grilse of six pounds or so becomes a leviathan of the deep, until one imagines that such a monster must have turned sideways in order to enter Loch Roag.

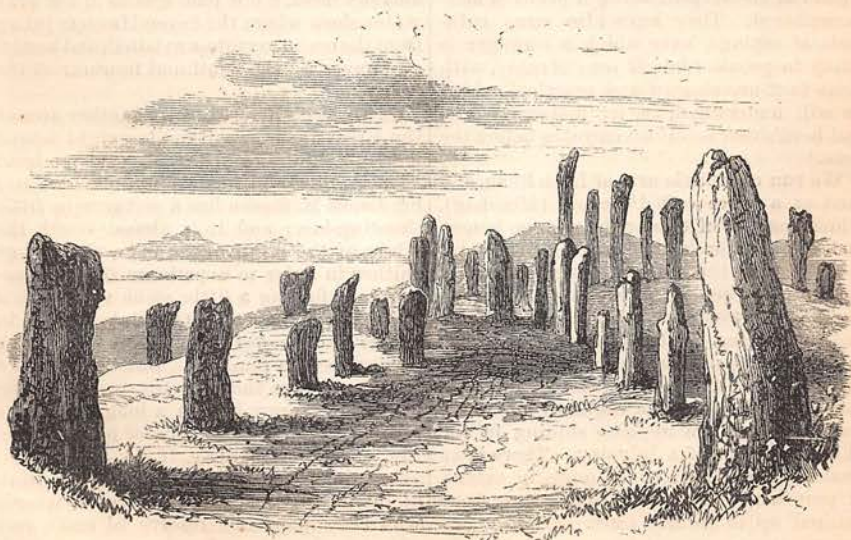
We resolved to vary our stay at Garra-nahina by an exploration of Loch Roag and a visit to the wonders of the Bay of Uig. The sea is of a dark and ruffled blue; there is a hissing of white water at the bow of the boat; the sun burns hot on the heavy brown sail. What is this beautiful bird that we startle from the lonely shores, with its scarlet beak and feet and its brilliant plumage of black and white? The sea-pyot, one is told. There on the right lies the great island of Bernera, presided over by a worthy farmer and fisherman, who is called its king. Might not one by accident shorten Bernera into Borva, and begin to wonder whether, supposing the King of Borva has a daughter, she is as beautiful as the beautiful scenery in which she dwells? For here we have the summer heat shimmering over the green pasture-lands of the island, shining on the bays of white sand, and half hiding with a tremulous and transparent mist the mighty peaks and shoulders of the giant Suainabhal. It is across this broad sea-channel that the people of Bernera send their flocks

and herds when they seek the mountain pastures of the main-land in the opening of the spring, and strange indeed it must be to see the cattle contentedly swimming across, as if the necessity had become a tradition and instinct with them. Then, too, the young lasses go up to the sheelings, and thither, when there is no fishing going on, follow the young fishermen, with their mute love glances and sighs, and more practical stories of the money they have saved and laid by in the banks at Styornoway. Have they a dance sometimes up at these sheelings, when some lad clever with the fiddle gets together his friends and acquaintances for an evening frolic? Alas! the resonant bagpipe, a fit instrument for these lonely wilds, has been tabooed by the Free Kirk ministers, and the chief musical instrument of the island is the plaintive Jew's-harp, which is not likely to put too much madness into the dancing.

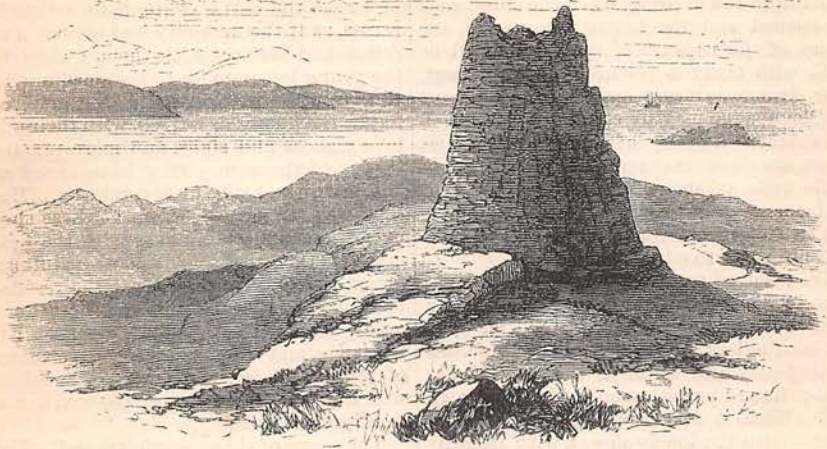
The songs of these people are sad. They are mostly the stories of drowning at sea, and of young women forsaken by their lovers. They are sung in a curious half-recitative fashion, the monotony of which and the sudden intervals of the notes seem to suggest the sharp transitions and the melancholy drone of the bagpipe. Many of them are pathetic enough, like "Dunevegan, oh, Dunevegan!" or that in which the girl sings,

"Oh, long on the mountains he tarries, he tarries!
Why tarries the youth with the bright yellow hair?"

But indeed the people are not much given to singing, except where a crew has just come home from Wick, with their pockets well filled and their minds bent on a little jollification. The temperament of the peo-



THE STONES OF CALLEENISH.



DUNE CARLOWAY.

ple is sombre, imaginative, and taciturn. They seem to have been cowed into contemplation and silence by the continual and mournful wail of the sea and the memory of resistless storms. They are full of superstitions and gloomy legends. They will tell you the name of the man who only the other day saw the black sea-horse on the shores of Loch Suainabhail. They have many mysterious traditions which seem to point to an older serpent-worship. In fact, the word *righiun*, which throughout the Highlands means a princess, in the island of Lewis is applied also to a serpent, the modern explanation being that there prevails some legend of the serpent being a princess metamorphosed. They have also many enigmatical sayings, over which a stranger is likely to puzzle himself considerably, with some that are shrewd and practical, which he will understand, as, for instance, "The bad herd's cow is lost seven years before the time."

We run up a little arm of Loch Roag, and land at a place called Mevaig (Miabhag), which consists of two or three stone houses and a Free church. Then we go right inland to cross the neck of the promontory, and our way lies up a vast and lonely valley, the rocky sides of which are sheer as a railway cutting. After a walk of about two miles and a half, we find ourselves on the summit of a hill, and right down before us, and out and onward to the high horizon, a wonderful picture appears shining in the mild clear light of a July day. There is an immense semicircular bay, miles in extent, of pure white sand, which must have been washed up in former ages. This the sea never covers now, but it sweeps into it in several long curves of shining blue. Land-

ward, and behind the crescent of white sand, lies a low line of rocky hill, with its thousand rich tints of lichen warm in the sun, and showing all the stronger by contrast with the gleaming sand. Behind that again stretches the far moor-land, itself rising into the giant bulk of Mealasabhail, whose pale grays and blues look almost ethereal. We are out at the end of the world, and there is no sign of life here—none but in the circling of a pair of eagles and the rapid passing along the surface of the sea of a string of wild-duck. But we are not, when we look at the sea, quite at the end of the world after all; for far out there, where sea and sky meet, a few pale specks in the gray water show where the Seven Hunters jut up from the ocean, remote, unvisited, and haunted forever by the continual murmur of the Atlantic.

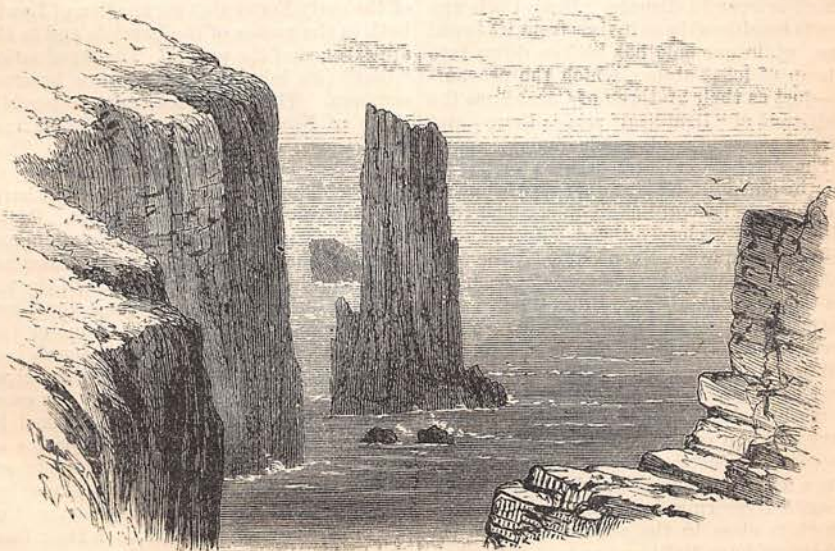
Little Loch Roag is really another arm of the Great Loch Roag, running right inland for half a dozen miles or so. At the head of this long and narrow stretch of water Sir James Matheson has a picturesque little shooting-box; and it is almost worth the while of the stranger to make the voyage thither in order to experience the odd sensation of finding a little stone villa, with a colored wall-paper in the dining-room, in the midst of the savage wildness with which he has become familiar. But if there is a calm on the sea that necessitates the hiring of rovers to row him in a long and heavy boat, if there is no chance of his reaching the lodge before dusk, if he is doubtful about there being any thing to eat or drink at his destination, and if the good friends who accompany him resolve to make sure of supper by using the time during which he visits the Bay of Uig to buying and boil-

ing a leg of mutton, let him be sure, before starting, that the leg of mutton is boiled. We wrapped that formidable piece of food in the advertisement sheet of a daily newspaper; we put it in the bottom of the boat, where the salt-water speedily cooled it; but when we undid the newspaper at the end of our voyage, we found that we had unveiled the Prophet of Khorassan. I will say no more about that. The keeper in charge of the lodge, and his wife, both of them as hospitable people as there are in Lewis, which is saying a good deal, came to our aid, and we were far from being starved. This shooting lodge is in the neighborhood of the most mountainous parts of the island, which form the chief deer forests of Lewis. Directly west from it, for example, are the mountains of Cracabhal, Mealasabhal, Zai-bhal Tuath, and Tamanaishbhal, which average 1500 feet in height. This part of Lewis, indeed, more resembles the mountainous Harris, and the scenery is in many places grand and impressive. He who has made a voyage to Stornoway, and had a glimpse from the top of the Gallows Hill of the level moor-land of the interior, even he who has driven over to Garra-na-hina or Barvas, may very naturally complain that Lewis is flat and uninteresting—in short, “a peat floating in the Atlantic.” But he is likely to alter his opinion if he gets any where near the region of Ceann Resort, or by the mountains lying between Loch Langabhat and the sea.

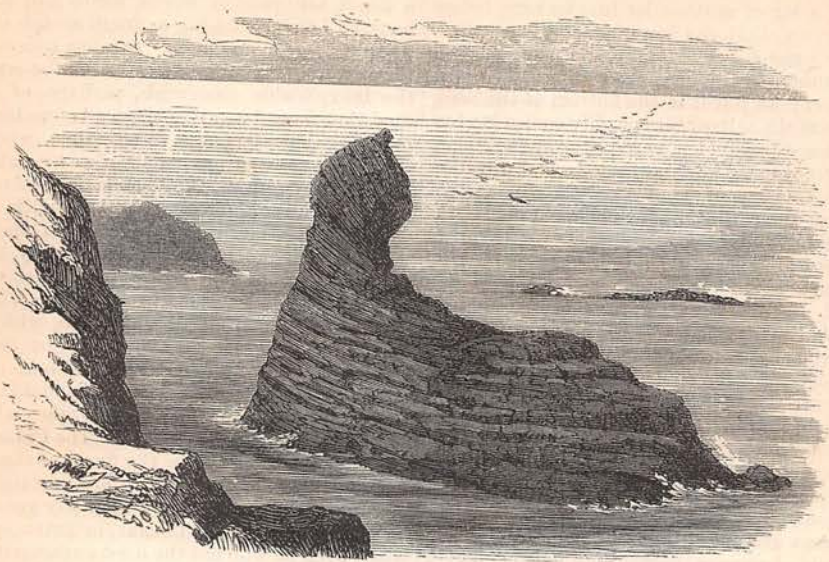
Returning to Garra-na-hina next day, the stranger may probably, in ignorance of the fact that the so-called Druidical stones of Callernish are described and figured in half

a dozen antiquarian works, waste half an hour, as I did, in taking a rough sketch of these strange monuments. Strange, indeed, they are, on this high plateau over the sea, the inexplicable memorials, perhaps, of a race that passed away in silence before history began to speak. What, then, were these long rows of pillars, all of unwrought gneiss, which meet in a common centre, which is also a circle of pillars, with a chief stone sixteen feet high? Do they mark the site of a great Norse victory, or the burial-ground of a Highland chief, or the altar of a heathen priesthood? The natives call them either *Tuirsachan*, which signifies the “Place of Mourning,” or *Tir-bhretge*, which signifies “False Men,” both of which names, as it has been said, “should be of some interest to antiquarians, for they will suit pretty nearly any theory.” The Callernish stones are said to be the finest of these monuments in Britain; they are certainly more complete and striking than any group on the wide plain of Carnac, in Brittany; while even he who has the least antiquarian interest in them must be impressed by the appearance of these weather-worn and hoary pillars on this lonely plateau overlooking the Atlantic waves. There are in all forty-eight stones, the circle is forty-two feet in diameter, and the approaches to it form a species of cross.

In due course of time our stout and serviceable wagonette carries us away from Garra-na-hina on a northward pilgrimage, and by-and-by we come in sight of another antiquarian relic. Fronting the sea, and standing high over a number of soft green valleys, is one of those round towers which



THE BUTT OF LEWIS.



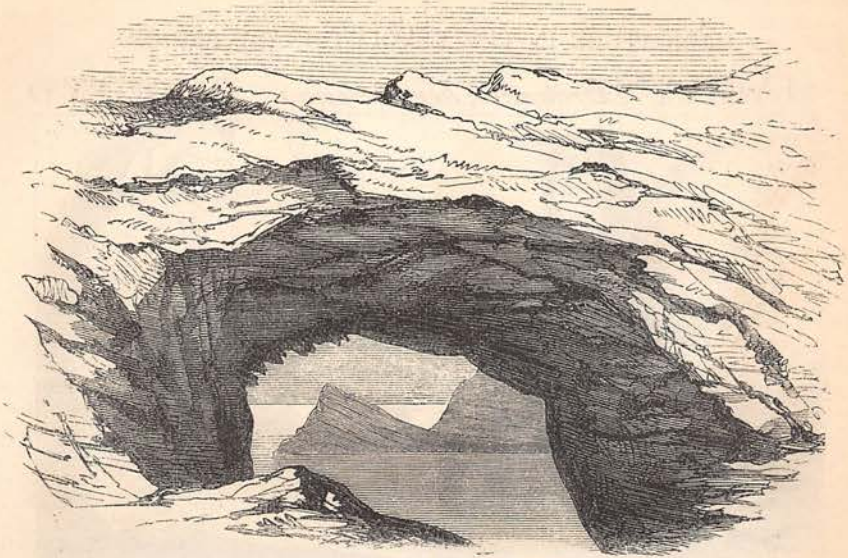
SPHINX-LIKE ROCK NEAR THE BUTT OF LEWIS.

seem to turn up in pretty nearly all countries for the express purpose of provoking dissent among archæologists. Dune Carloway (Dun Charlobhaidh), whether a relic of Buddhist symbolism, or a Pictish fort, or the mere stronghold of one of the Norse searovers, like Olaf Tryggveson, is one of the best preserved of its class, and still shows the curious staircase between its double walls. These walls are devoid of mortar or any substitute for mortar, yet their thickness has enabled them to withstand the western gales for centuries the number of which is ever in dispute. Dune Carloway tapers considerably as it rises from its broad base, while one side has broken down into a heap of loose stones, which the peasantry—just as their brethren of Carnac use the multitude of "Druidical" stones there—employ as a sort of ready-made quarry.

The drive from Garra-na-hina to Barvas on a bright and pleasant July day is one of the most delightful imaginable. The road follows pretty closely the deeply indented and picturesque coast, consequently the west or southwest wind blows keenly in from the sea to temper the heat. From time to time one passes small fresh-water lochs, set like silver among the green of the rushes, and hither for a change come all manner of wild fowl that have grown tired of sea flights to wash their plumage in the clear ripples. Barvas, when one gets to it, is a lonely little place, consisting of a small temperance inn, a few huts, a school, and a Free church. A small river runs by it into Loch Barvas, which is close to the sea-shore, where the fishermen have built one or two of the beehive dwellings. Indeed, it is a common

thing for a fisherman to be also a small farmer, the work of the farm being carried on by the other members of his family when he is away at the fishing. All along the shore at this point one finds heaps of ling that are being salted and pickled for exportation, this being the chief local fishery since the herring fishers got into the habit of going away every year to Caithness.

Another morning finds us making our way up to the Butt of Lewis, the extreme point of the island, and the further north we go the more distinct become the traces of the early Norwegian occupation of Lewis, both in the names of the hamlets and in the appearance of the people. The termination "bost" (an inhabited place) now becomes common. The fishermen, more especially those of Ness, seem quite a different race from those we saw in Stornoway. They are taller, fairer, and less melancholy of visage. They are an industrious and hard-working race, the Ness fishermen. Many of them own the boats they go out in, and the sums they get during a good season are considerable. The curing-houses of the village are quite a busy sight, and sometimes you may find there the skin of one or two seals that have just been shot somewhere about the shore. Two miles further on we come to the Butt. At this point the coast of Lewis is inexpressibly wild, marked by sheer precipices and isolated pinnacles of rock, round which the fairest summer sea roars with a ceaseless noise. High perched as is the tall light-house on the summit of the cliffs, the winter storms dash their foam right over the top of the white stone tower. But even here, at the very end of the world,



WHERE THE DEVIL FIXED HIS ROPE.

as it were, we find the traditions of Lewis hospitality faithfully preserved, the light-house keeper and his wife entertaining their chance guests in a right royal fashion. Was it not he, too, who told us that legend of the hole in the neighboring rocks, rudely shown in an accompanying sketch, having been used by the devil to drag away Lewis and Harris from the main-land, when once that famous personage had got a sufficient chain passed through the rock in question?

Well, these are but a few rough notes on some of the features of Lewis and its people, such as might be suggested to a stranger rapidly passing through the island. Further and more affectionate study of both would doubtless be impossible to the holiday traveler, who might be bound, perhaps, not to occupy at the moment too much of the time which his good friends who are resident in the island may be able to place at his disposal. And yet a final word or two of loving admiration and remembrance must be said about the wonderful beauty of the northern nights in that distant and enchanted kingdom by the sea. Who that has seen can ever forget the dying out of the blood-red sunset over Loch Roag, and the appearance in the heavens, as the night deepened, of a strange metallic glow, fine and pale and luminous, in which the majestic shoulders and peaks of Suainabhal and Mealasabhal grew mystic and remote? And then what was that even to the appearance of a new and richer light behind the mountains, when into the wonderful violet sky the yellow moon rose slowly and solemnly, sending its first glittering bars of gold down on the ripples of the lake? The mountains

came nearer as their shadows grew sombre under the soft light of the moon; the white sands showed along the coast; the hull of the small boat on the moving water was black as jet. Those were magical nights, with the murmur of the waves all round the moon-lit shores and the scent of the sea in the cool night air. There are some who say that Lewis is a mournful and desolate island, set amidst gray seas, hidden by rain and the dull winter mists. That may be so; but there are others who will never think of it but as under the inexpressible glamour of these silent summer nights, when the sea and the sky and the moon-lit hills seemed to belong to an enchanted world, and merely to live was to breathe the air of romance.

WHERE ?

BREATHLESS the sunny meadows lie
In heat of early afternoon;
Clouds faint upon the shadeless sky
Where sleeps a ghostly moon.

The farm-boy turns his master's hay
To ripen after summer rain,
While gay cries steal across the bay,
And echo wide again.

He hears the voices of his mates
Gamboling in the fresh sea-wave,
And pauses while his heart relates
The joy his freedom gave.

Where is my play-time gone? he said,
And turned him idly to his task;
Where are my moon-lit moments fled?
Earth's weary children ask.

A. F.