

Among the Picturesque Shetland Islands

Sturdy Peasants Who Have Pride of Ancestry and Maintain Rugged Independence.

LERWICK, Shetland, Oct. 25.—(Special correspondence of The Sunday Oregonian.)—This is the Ultima Thule of the Romans, the supposed end of the habitable globe northwards. It is a group of rugged islands strung out for 75 miles north and south, and 30 miles east and west. It is swept alternately by the storms of the Atlantic on the west and the North Sea on the east. It is in the same latitude as the southern point of Greenland, yet its climate is so untempered by the Gulf Stream that it has little snow and no severe frosts.

Here lives a people of Norse ancestry with which a Scotch strain has become mingled. The islands were conquered by a Norse King about the year 700, and were ruled by his Earls with despotic power for over 700 years until a Norwegian Princess married a Scotch King, and the bride's father, being too poor to give the customary dowry with her, pawned the islands of Orkney and Shetland to Scotland for it. The money has never been paid, the pawn ticket seems to have been lost, and Scotland has kept the islands like the thrifty pawnbroker she is.

Much of the year they are a land of gloom, swept by fierce gales which drive huge banks of cloud before them, and shrouding in damp fog which comes by turns from each point of the compass. Being devoid of timber, save where trees have been carefully cultivated in inclosures, they have a dreary sameness in their landscape when the sky is not in sight, but climb one of the rounded hills on the many laets on a sunny day—and there is spread before you a panorama of rounded hill, green valley, bold cliff and smiling sea such as has a beauty all its own. Nature may not smile often here, but when she does, she does it so bewitchingly that you forget she ever frowns.

'Still Brave, but Slow to Anger.

Calling to mind the fierce deeds which the Norseman of old are credited, one would expect to find some trace of the same characteristic in the present Shetlanders and Orkneyers, but time and peaceful pursuits seem to have mellowed their temper. There can be nothing of the craven about them, for they almost all make their living by fishing in these stormy seas, but it may be that a constant diet of fish has quenched the thirst for blood which raged in their ancestors.

Yet it would not be wise to trade upon the apparent pacific disposition of the people, for at times have broken out in rebellion under strong provocation. Such an outbreak occurred in the early years of the 17th century, when Earl Patrick Stewart, son of a Stuart relative of King James VI of Scotland and I of England was arrested for treason. Stewart had ruled in despotic fashion and Scalloway Castle was a monument of his tyranny. Tradition says that, while he was building the castle, he compelled the people to bring him a certain number of eggs every day. He used the whites of these eggs to mix the mortar with which the castle was built. He placed a huge iron ring high up on the outside of one of the tall stone chimneys, and on this he hung those who incurred his displeasure. In the wall is a small chamber, where he hid from the King's officers, when his arrest was ordered, but he was captured and executed at Dumbarton in 1615. The infuriated people sacked the castle and tore off the roof, but the walls stand to this day, a witness to the efficiency of white of egg in binding stone walls.

Peat the Fuel of the Islands.

The islands are a nest of mountain summits having their bases in the bed of the ocean, but raising their summits no where more than 1300 feet above sea level. The hills are easy slopes, covered with a deep growth of peat, on which rich grass grows wherever the heather will allow it. The peat is from six to 12 feet deep all over the hills, and is the fuel of the natives. The more well-to-do burn coal imported from Scotland, but it is costly and beyond the means of the working people. Every Spring they go to the hills and cut peat in strips with narrow spades which have two blades, set at right angles. The peats are piled in heaps to dry, and, when dry, are taken to the houses and piled against the walls. The crofters who boast the ownership of ponies haul their peats in two-wheeled carts, but the poorer people have to depend on the women to carry home their fuel on their backs, in baskets woven of straw. One frequently sees women walking slowly along the roads, stooping slightly to balance a basket of peats between their shoulders. They sing, singing usually to a wooden shawl, which the peat is fastened to their waists. The peat is burned in an open hearth of stone, and throws out a red glow without burning into flames. The fires rarely are allowed to die out, for when they are not wanted, the embers are covered with ashes and smolder for hours. When a fire is wanted again, the embers are uncovered and fresh peat is piled on, soon to give out a grateful heat.

The cutting of peat has covered the hills with black blotches and streaks which enhance the weird gloom of the landscape. These blotches show up sharp and distinct amid the rich green of the grass and the dark green and purple of the heather. The latter grows as thick as high grass in Scotland, and is a mass of bloom in summer, ranging in colors from the pale blue of the tiny-blossomed ling to the deep purple of the heath, which is scattered by many as the true heather. It grows so thick and spreads so rapidly that it kills the grass and the crofters often burn great patches of it in order to give the sheep a chance to graze. The peat furnishes fuel for the sheep and ponies.

Grandeur of the Cliffs.

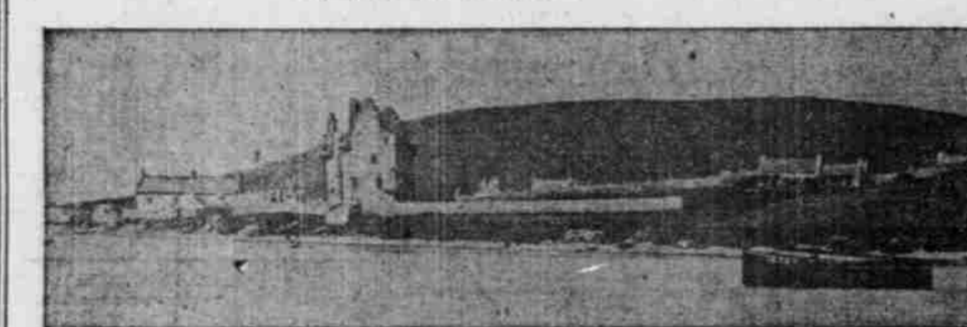
But it must not be supposed that the scenery has no grandeur or soft beauty. The islands are everywhere indented with deep inlets, called voes, similar to the fjords of Norway, so that nowhere is the distance greater than seven miles from one point on the shore to another. At almost every point where the land juts out into the sea it terminates in a bold cliff, fretted with caves by the action of the waves and the weather, and swarming with gulls and all manner of sea birds, which keep up a continuous ear-piercing chorus of screams and rise in dense clouds when disturbed. Such a cliff is the terminus of the Fiftful Head, the southwestern extremity of the Orkney island-called mainland—which has been made famous by Sir Walter Scott as the abode of Norma of Fiftful Head in his "Pirate" Saga. Also is the Voe of Noss, about seven miles from Lerwick, to which a party of us took a picnic. Rowing across the harbor, otherwise called Bressay Sound, we walked across the island of Bressay, past a loch where a fisherman was after trout, to Nosa Sound, a narrow channel, across which a shepherd, who with his family occupies the only house on the Voe of Noss, ferried us. Then we climbed an even slope covered with heather and dotted with the white tufts of cottin grass, jumping ditches at frequent intervals. It appeared like an ordinary rounded Shetland hill, but when we reached the summit we found there was no other side—the other half seemed to have been cut off sharp from the summit and flung into the ocean, leaving a perpendicular cliff nearly 600 feet high, from which we looked out across the North Sea towards Norway. Birds of all kinds flew from innumerable caves in the face of the cliff and made such an uproar that we could hardly



SHETLAND CROFTER MAKING PEAT KASHIE.



A PEAT-CARRIER, LERWICK.



SCALLOWAY.

bear ourselves think. Herring boats dotted the water—peaceful for once—far out of the horizon. A stout fence guards the edge of the cliff to keep the light-headed from losing their balance, either mentally or physically, and diving to depths whence their bodies would never be recovered. The cliff has several angles which allow one standing on its edge a little below its highest point to look squarely in the face, and the waterproof from head to foot, which does not show off their attractions, as it is often marked by fish scales and splashed with blood and salt water, but they are afraid and well favored and many of them have handsome features.

Lerwick, like most old European towns, has grown up haphazard, never having



VICTORIA STREET, LERWICK.



BRINGING HOME THE PEATS, UNST.



INTERIOR OF CROTTERS' HOUSE, ORKNEY.

been planned, after the style of American towns. The result is that its main street is so narrow that when a cart is in it there is barely room for one pedestrian to pass on each side. It is paved from wall to wall with great flagstones and there is no sidewalk with bounds marked by a curb. Opening from it are many narrow alleys, only intended for pedestrians, generally leading from the water up the hill. It has been getting on some modern airs by building an esplanade with stone balustrade along the harbor front and by cutting many new streets of reasonable width through the new parts of the town. But no sacrilegious hand will interfere with the old High street, called The Street—for it is one of the curiosities which attract tourists.

The original buildings of Lerwick were all strung along the water front, and had their front doors towards the water, for it was on that side that their business was done. The fisheries were first developed by the Dutch, who smuggled in a manner of supplies on their boats, for the Shetlanders until a century ago were most obstinate free traders. The boats ran alongside the waterside houses at night and unloaded their contraband cargoes through these doorways. Residents on the opposite side of High street are said to have had tunnels under the street to the water through which goods were carried to their cellars.

How the Crofters Live.
The rural population of the islands enjoys a modest style of independence. The custom is for the landowner to rent a small farm, called a croft, giving with it the right to cut peat and graze a certain number of sheep and ponies on the wild, uninclosed hills. Since the agitation among the crofters, similar to that of the Irish Land League, Parliament has established a Crofters' Commission, which judicially fixes rent and secures to the crofters fifty of tenure at those rents and free sale of their improvements when a croft changes hands. There has been a general reduction of rents, and while the crofters do not by any means roll in wealth, they enjoy a rude independence, which satisfies their modest ambition. They have small stone houses, thatched with straw or heather—the latter is warm-

er and drier—and surrounded by their fields of oats and hay and their vegetable gardens. The main supplement of their income from the farm by fishing and the women knit the woollen shawls, gloves and other articles of clothing which have made the Shetlanders famous. They use their ponies to haul their hay and farm produce in small two-wheeled carts. Producing almost everything they need in the shape of food and clothing, they can live almost without money.

Shetland Woollen Goods.

Shetland sheep are wild and tough as sheep can be, ranging at will over the hills. They are not only white or black, but some are of a dark brown color, called muril, and all have horns. Their wool is unusually long and soft and of fine fiber, and the crofters make the most of it as possible by pulling it out by the roots, instead of shearing it. The women spin the yarn on old-fashioned spinning-wheels and their chief means of making shawls, "happes" they are called here—and scarves, stretch them on wooden frames to bleach in the open air. Some of the scarves of woollen lace are of such fine texture that one large enough to go over a woman's head and shoulders can be easily pulled through a finger ring.

Some of the most striking specimens of these woollen goods are found on Fair Isle, a lonely bit of rocky moorland midway between the extreme points of the Orkneys and Shetlands. And thereby hangs a bit of history. When the Spanish Armada was scattered by that terrible storm in 1588, one of the ships commanded by Admiral Juan Gomez de Medina was wrecked there and with it his 200 men spent several months among the natives. The Spaniards treated the people courteously, and seeing that the woollen industry was one of their chief means of support, taught them how to make brilliant dyes out of some indigenous plants with which to add to the attractiveness of their wares. The Fair Islanders have even since been noted for the gaudy colors in which they knit caps, gloves, shawls, etc., and I have bought two Fair Isle caps for the delight of my children. The Shetlanders have not yet discovered the real value of their goods, or the best way to put them on the market, but they are picked up eagerly by tourists. Some of the crofters have found a market near Little Sun in pin money by selling these wares on commission to tourists and friends in the South, and at the same time aid the poor people greatly thereby. Kirball, the capital of the Orkneys, is a very similar town to Lerwick, though not nearly as large. It is chiefly remarkable for its grand cathedral of St. Magnus, the church of which is now used as a church by the Presbyterians. It is a huge stone building, in the Gothic style, erected about the year 1100 by one of the Norse earls in memory of an earl who was canonized mainly because he was murdered, for he was not much of a saint after all. It has massive walls of stone, and the roof of the aisles is supported by huge stone columns. I climbed by a winding stone stairway, which gradually narrows until it is barely wide enough for one person to squeeze through, to the roof of the great square tower, which commands a splendid view of the town, the harbor and the surrounding country. Across the street from the cathedral are the ruins of the two palaces which were formerly inhabited by the Norse earls and bishops. They have every evidence of having been built as much for fortresses as abodes, for the walls are of rough stone and they have many of the characteristics peculiar to the castles of the medieval barons. Each stands in the middle of a small grove of acamoras, which thrive, despite the fierce winds, though every leaf has been ripped off their topmost limbs by the storms.

Might Revive Forests.

It is the common belief that the gales will not allow trees to grow on these islands, but some circumstances support the theory that a determined effort to grow timber of the kind which abounds on the Pacific Coast would succeed. Fossilized logs have been found embedded in the peatbogs, which seem to be the remains of trees which once grew here. The soil is rich, being composed of decayed vegetable matter, and the climate is that of the Oregon and Washington coast. The people say that the wind destroys trees, but the timber on our coast grows right to the top of the hills. The fact that the storms of these islands cannot surpass those of the Pacific. The fact probably is that the islands were once well timbered, but that the forests were destroyed by the early inhabitants. This is known to have been the fact on the Isle of Man, in the Irish Sea, but a penalty attached to tree-cutting and the fact that the forests on that island in the last century or so. A similar policy might be equally successful in these Northern Isles.

L. K. H.

The Jottings of Old Lim Jucklin

Opie Read's Philosopher Discourses on the Illusions of First Love.

"AND so you are Cal Atterson's boy," said Lim Jucklin as he sat down on the steps of the grocery store. "My, how you young chaps come on. And you? Ah Sarver's youngest, eh? Haem's seem'd more than a week since I saw you riding a stick-horse, and here you are big enough to make love to the girls."

"Don't make love to 'em? Go on, with you. I'll bet your heart has been wrung and hung out to dry more than once. When I was about your age I felt sick along about tobacco-cutting time, and I didn't think I was ever goin' to get well. The cause of my sickness was a young gal that came into the neighborhood to visit her uncle. I haven't time now to tell you how beautiful I thought she was. I didn't believe she belonged on the ground at all—just touched it now and then to accommodate the earth, you know. She seen down from a cloud that the sun was a-shinin' on, and didn't care to go back. Recollect how astonished I was the first time I ever saw her eat. I thought she just naturally sucked the honey out of the honeysuckle along with the hummin' birds, and when I saw her worryin' with an ear of boiled corn big enough to scare a 3-year-old calf, I went out and leaned against the fence. But it didn't hurt my love any. I thought she did it just to show that she might possibly be a human being. She didn't want us all to feel bad. One night I groaned so that mother came to me and wanted to put mustard plasters on me. She 'lowed that mebbe she might draw out the inflammation. She thought I had somethin' the matter with my stomach because I had lost my appetite. I told her that I had an inflammation she couldn't draw out with a yoke of steers. Then she thought I ought to have a smetic. I said that if she had one that would make me throw up my soul she might fetch it along, but otherwise it would be as useless as saying mew to a dead cat. Then she thought I must be crazy, and came mighty nigh hittin' the mark, I tell you."

"A few days afterward, about the time I was at the height of my fever, I met the girl in the road and she smiled at me, and I ran against a beech tree, and if I didn't knock the bark off I'm the biggest liar in the world. When I came to I had my arm around a sheep, walkin' across the woods pasture."

"My, my, what a time that was to live,

she insisted on seein' me. She came into the room and I looked at her through a hole in a bedstead. She laughed. Oh, I don't blame her now, you understand, but just at that moment my love stubbed its toe and fell and fell hard. I want to remark, she said she was awful sorry for me and I said she acted like it."

"I tell you love can't stand much laughin' at it. It's the tenderest plant that ever peeped out of the soft lap of creation, and in laughter if there is no sympathy there's frost. When a feller stops lov'in' he sees more than he did before and yet he is blinder. He sees more in other folks, but sees that they ain't like the one he loved. And the reason that so few people marry first love is because that sort of love takes hold as if it wanted to 'kill. Don't appear that anything else will satisfy it. There's no use tryin' to dodge it boys; a thief in the night can't slip up on you half so sly. It is the oldest thing in the world, but it is so new that nobody knows yet how to handle it. It makes ignorance as perfum as a god and hangs a lamp with perfum oil where darkness always fell before. A good many of the old chaps make fun of it, but when they do you may know that they ain't nothin' but money-getters, and that marks the death of the soul. Does me good to look at you young fellers; I like to think of the sweet misery you've got to go through with. You yes, there's more than one love. It's like the rheumatism. One attack may be worse than the other, but it's the same rheumatism just the same, and no matter how light you've got it you know when it's there. So you are Ab Sarver's boy. What's your pap doin' today?"

"Arguin' politics with a feller when I left home."

"Well, he was always a mighty hand to argue. I haven't seen him in a long time. It's a good way to your house, ain't it?"

"About ten miles."

"Yes, and the miles get longer and the days shorter as we grow older. But no matter how old we get, if the heart remains sound, we never forget that rheumatism I told you about. I wouldn't give the memory of it for hardly anything in the world. One of these days you will see her comin' down the road, a makin' the orchards bloom as she passes along, and you'll wonder how you can live another minute, and you'll wish yourself dead just to see her feel bad. If she laughs at anything any one else says it will send a knifing through your heart, and if she sighs, you'll think it's over some other feller. There'll be no such thing as pleasin' you, but I'd rather have it in store for me than a mountain range made of gold. Well, boys, it's about time I say

catchin' the cow-boy full in the jaw, and sendin' him down like a well-roped steer. The science of the prize-ring is something practically unknown to the average cow-boy. Consequently, Tom Smith, who was the expert boxer, has wisely adopted a method of attack which would prove a surprise. Had he reached for his gun when the bully made his "play," there is no doubt that Smith's Marshalship would have ended there and the coming of the law to the cattle county would have been long postponed. But as it was, the cowboys were so amazed at the quickness with which the blow had been struck and the corresponding suddenness with which their champion had sunk senseless to the dust, that they could only stand in open-mouthed amazement when Smith completed his job by standing over the prostrate Texan and relieving him of his weapons. Nor was there any sign of protest when the new Marshal quietly informed the "boys" that they would have to deposit their weapons at a certain place, and at once. The weapons were quietly surrendered, to be called for when the cowboys departed, and that day and night for the first time in its wild career, the cow-town of Abilene was filled with men who were weaponless. The law had spoken through voice, Tom Smith, and the reign of the "bad man" in the West was no longer undisputed.

The man who is most frequently looking for a position is the job who is incapable of holding down a job—Fuchs.

Baby Mine

Every mother feels a great dread of the pain and danger attendant upon the most critical period of her life. Becoming a mother should be a source of joy to all, but the suffering and danger incident to the ordeal makes its anticipation one of misery. Mother's Friend is the only remedy which relieves women of the great pain and danger of maternity; this hour which is dreaded as woman's severest trial is not only made painless, but all the danger is avoided by its use. Those who use this remedy are no longer dependent or gloomy; nervousness, headache and other distressing conditions are overcome, the system is made ready for the coming event, and the serious accidents so common to the critical hour are obviated by the use of Mother's Friend. "It is worth its weight in gold," says many who have used it. \$1.00 per bottle at drug stores. Book containing valuable information of interest to all women; will be sent to any address free upon application to BRADFIELD REGULATOR CO., Atlanta, Ga.

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