

Two volumes, and these well-filled, seem a pretty considerable bulk of *log* for a voyage from Greenock round Cape Wrath and back to Leith, though excursions to St. Kilda and the Shetland Isles, and nearly all the island dependencies of Scotland, are included. Good will and skill may, however, accomplish much; so, starting with ample foreknowledge of the ground, the ingenious author, with the help of a good deal of family history and scenic description, a little amateur angling, a little Natural History, and doing

All the gentlemen's seats by the way, gets along swimmingly, and contrives to manufacture an exceedingly agreeable literary melange.

In the watery summer of 1841, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, on duty as Secretary to the Board of Trustees for Scottish Manufactures and Fisheries, made this small circumnavigation in the Fishery Cutter Princess Royal, and invited Mr. Wilson to accompany him, "for the purpose of making certain investigations into the natural history of the herring." These appear to have been most satisfactorily conducted—especially at breakfast time—both upon the fresh, the *red*, and the *pickled varieties*; and the narrative of the voyage certainly does not suffer from the reported results of these and similar branches of scientific inquiry. Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's Sketch-Book and Journal have both been at the service of the companion of his voyage; whom, by the way, many of our readers will more readily recollect, and more heartily welcome, under his sporting appellation of *Tom Oakleigh*.

The voyagers embarked at Greenock; touched at Bute, Arran, and Campbeltown; and then skirted the coasts of Ayrshire and Wigtonshire, examining the state of the local fisheries—or as often the no-fisheries—angling a little in the fresh-water lochs and most reputed trout streams on the coast; and experimenting on the effect of drinking champagne out of Bohemian-coloured glass—a practice found highly worthy of imitation; and also making frequent trial of the hospitalities of those of the *lairds* whose mansions lay within range of the Princess Royal. Whether it were in pursuit of herring shoals or the sublime and picturesque, the voyagers took a peep of the Giant's Causeway before running into Bowmore in Islay, and passing "two very agreeable days at Islay House."

Besides descriptions of things as they are, Mr. Wilson gives a frequent retrospective glance to insular clan history; though he leaves some important points, that have long been mooted almost at the point of the dirk, in a rather unsatisfactory state; as, for example, whether the ancestor of Glen-garry, or "one Allan of Moidart," was the eldest son of a certain Ranald; of which controversy, with greater levity than so grave and serious a

matter warrants, he thus concludes: "Of the actual truth in this matter we are ourselves as ignorant as the child unborn; and if we did possess a knowledge of it, we would hold our peace (especially in the Highlands,) even although we also knew that the representative of the one [Glen-garry] had carried both himself and his *tail* to New South Wales; while the other [Clanranald,] somewhat like Tam o' Shanter's mare, had 'fient a tail to shake.'" This want of reverence in speaking of matters of such vast importance augurs worse for the voyage than the reality bears out.

Colonsay, and the hospitable and modest mansion of its Laird at Killouran, is one of the most attractive of the domestic insular pictures with which the reader is gratified. After a good and ample island dinner at Killouran, where the nut-ton was black-faced and four-year old—a great rarity according to Mr. Wilson, though our butcher never yet had a sheep under that age in his stall—the evening was wound up, in gallant style, by a Highland-fling danced to perfection by Sir T. D. L., (it makes us young again but to hear of it!) the Lady of Colonsay, and Captain McNeill, the Laird's kinsman. "And such snapping of fingers and pointing of toes, and ever and anon a shout like a musket shot, were never heard nor seen before in any Western Isle." There should have been an engraving of this among the plates.

The voyagers made a run over to Skerryvore, or the Light-house, now erecting on those tremendous rocks off the island of Tiree, so named.

The Princess Royal careered and coquetted about the coast of Mull and the smaller islands which cluster around its Atlantic side, while her passengers examined, at their leisure, Staffa and Iona. Indeed they lost no opportunity of exploring every scene of note in the Hebrides, and every ruined castle and tower on their way that was at all approachable from the coast. And these old holds nearly all lie upon the coast. Numerous fine descriptions of scenery of course occur in the work; but Loch Sunart is especially recommended to us, as this tortuous arm of the ocean lies out of the way of ordinary tourists, who have frequent opportunities of seeing many of the finest of the other salt-water lochs, on the different steam voyages to the West Highland coast or to the Isles.

We now struck across from Tobermory towards the mouth of Loch Sunart, one of the most picturesque and finely varied pieces of salt-water scenery to be seen in all Scotland. This far-stretching narrow and tortuous sea-loch, extends about twenty miles among the hills, running westwards beyond Strontian, and within so short a distance of the Linné Loch as to give a peninsular character to the great district of Morven, which forms its own southern bounds. The entrance seems at first so closed by islands as to present a most impervious aspect. One of these, called Risca, is of small dimensions, and comparatively low and wooded; but Oronsay, and above all Carnich, are large high and rocky, singularly wild in form, and generally bare of wood. Over the low Risca appear the richly wooded and variously formed steeps and knolls which bound the loch, and

\* By James Wilson, F.R.S.E., M.W.S., &c. 2 volumes cloth, with numerous Illustrations, and a Map of Scotland and the Isles. Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black.

these are everywhere backed by bold and broken outlines of what may be better named mountains of rock than rocky mountains. To the right is soon seen the mouth of a branch called Loch Teacus, its narrow entrance opening between two low rocky headlands, the loch itself enclosed and backed by finely formed mountains, with steep slopes and hanging woods; while Carnich continues so to shut the scene, that no one suspects the existence of the narrow strait behind; and so Loch Sunart properly so called, remains not only invisible but unimagined. Turning, however, into a difficult and narrow passage, the upward portion of the scene opens in all its beauty; and a finer combination of mountain precipices, with lower ranges one rising behind another backwards from the water's edge, many of them wooded in the most gorgeous manner, with rocky promontories and intervening grassy slopes enlivened by receding cottages and slips of cultivated ground, cannot be seen among the British islands. The evening was fine, the wind fair, the narrow waters rippled only by a gentle breeze, and we glided most serenely within the darkening shadows of the great mountains, in the eyes of whose lonely dwellers we doubt not the sight of the beautiful Princess Royal, with her full-swelling snowy sails, advancing along those finely wooded shores, must have added greatly to the glory of such a lustrous sunset.

Loch Sunart seemed well supplied at this time both with birds and fishes. In some particular spots the gulls were literally in thousands, all screaming and tumbling on the top of each other, with a view to get the sooner to the surface, where some small shoals of herring fry were swimming. . . . The morning of the 8th of July was bright and sunny, so weighing anchor at an early hour, we continued our run up Loch Sunart, as far as Sir James Miles Riddell's residence at Stronant. The upper reaches of the loch are still extremely fine, though not of so peculiar and striking a character as those nearer the entrance. We landed for a short time, while some of our people were foraging for milk and eggs. The house is a pleasant, irregular, old-fashioned, cottage kind of dwelling, very snugly placed, and the environs delightful, being deeply embowered in shrubs, with no want of the larger kinds of forest trees, the walks laid out in a somewhat labyrinthic order, while a sparkling stream comes murmuring down the glen, and is crossed by a bridge which spans it close upon the shore. Some of the lower windows open into the varied parterres of a flower garden, and the sight of moss-roses, mimuli, &c., was refreshing to seafaring men, who enjoy with highest relish during the sweet serenity of a summer morning, the unaccustomed sparkling of the dewy grass, and "Flora's earliest smell." Sir James, we believe, possesses a great extent of property in this peninsular territory of Ardnamurchan; but we can easily conceive from the aspect of its higher portions, that compared with its vast range, it is probably more picturesque than productive. Lord Waterford occupied this portion of the estate not long ago as a shooting quarter, and among other philanthropic exertions, endeavoured, on one occasion, to awaken the benighted people to the performance of more active duties, by tying the parson's horse to the rope of the church bell.

The voyage was diversified by the ordinary salt-water incidents; sometimes a spice of actual danger, or a touch of sea-sickness—though the last mortifying fact is rather indicated than frankly pleaded to.

The wild, rocky, and sea-indented western coasts of Inverness, Ross, and Sutherland shires, detained the Princess Royal and her gallant crew a long while; for now they were beginning to find something like herring fisheries, and sport became earnest. We should have liked to see a little more of the people—the Highlanders; but the object was herring, and we must be content with very scanty, incidental notices of the other natives. The voyagers landed one day, as they often did, at the Bay of Scourie, on the west coast of Sutherland.

We found a pretty land-locked natural harbour, and some cultivated ground laid out in fields. The houses of the hamlet lay chiefly on some elevated ground to the north, and eastward over the fields are houses here and there. A poor maniac woman was filling the air with her wild cries, ever and anon singing more solemnly a Gaelic song, in which the word "America" was intermingled. Her friends were conveying her in a cart to Dornoch to place her in restraint.

Poor people from the Duke of Sutherland's estates were found about to emigrate at this time, as they may have been in that paternal quarter for many years; which was one cause, probably, of "America" mingling in the wild chant of the poor distracted creature. About the Edderachillis coast, and other places of the late "Reay country," now part of the overgrown property of the family of Sutherland, lobster fisheries were found; welled smacks from the Thames carrying off the trapped lobsters alive, to be devoured in London. The wretched hovels inhabited by the Highlanders could not fail to arrest the attention of the southern voyagers. On a Sunday, they landed somewhere near Pool Ewe, in the parish of Gairloch, on the west coast of Ross-shire.

We followed the Gairloch road which leads along the southern bank, and soon after diverges to the right among the hills. A lofty rocky range prevailed at some distance on that side, the intervening ground being partly cultivated in the form of small patches of grain and potatoes, partly in the more unsophisticated condition of peat-moss. Among these were visible collections of very wretched-looking hovels,—poor even for Highland huts,—with holes for windows, closed up with sods removable at pleasure. We were at times in doubt if they were actual dwellings, had we not seen so many well-dressed men and women going out and in. The contrast was indeed remarkable between the attire and general aspect of the people, and the forlorn condition of their habitations. Nothing could be more decent and respectable than the groups of natives, all in their Sunday gear. Most of the women had tidy caps, (a few of them extremely smart,) with bows of ribbons on either side, and their hair hanging beneath in well-kept curls; and some had elegantly-formed great-coats made of cloth, and neatly fitted to the person, though without the capes so common with the Irish women. Where they contrive to stow away, or how to preserve unsoiled by soot and smoke, these better garments within their dingy cabins, is what we have yet to learn.

Those mistresses in Edinburgh or Glasgow, who, upon the faith of the exterior of a strapping new-caught lass, thus rigged out, engage her to do the household business of a civilized family, will, we imagine, fairly catch a Tartar. But the minister of the parish says, that they are now beginning to build byres for their cows; and if the cows are once ejected from the dwelling-house, some improvement in domestic cleanliness may be anticipated. In the suburbs of Stornoway, if a town of its size ever rises to the dignity of having suburbs, we are told—

We passed a kraal of wretched-looking huts, some of them so small and sad, so resembling decayed portions of mother earth upheaved by accident, that we did not at first regard them as human dwellings, till we observed a single pane of glass, in one instance, sticking in the thatch. Some were attached together, and thickly built up with sods, in such a way as to look like natural green hummocks, ever the tops of which chance had thrown a sooty covering of dirty straw. The interiors were very miserable. Yet the people had a healthy aspect on the whole, and seemed in no way deficient in muscular strength. Black eyes, dark hair, and a somewhat swarthy complexion, were more common than we

expected in a country where the Scandinavian blood so long prevailed.

The cultivation was, in general, much of a piece with the dwellings.

Some rather extraordinary facts in natural history were witnessed and recorded during the voyage, of which the following are among the more remarkable :—

As we were rowing ashore from the cutter, we observed a singular kind of encounter on a small island in Loch Laxford, between a troop of goats and a flock of loch-gulls. The goats were all as black as pitch, and the old ones were accompanied by some young retainers, which to us looked not much bigger than jackdaws, though as nimble as monkeys. Our notice was first attracted by seeing some of them descend from their rocky ledges, and gambol over a piece of green, moist meadow ground. They had not done so, however, for more than a few seconds, before they were attacked most fiercely by a flock of gulls, which dived directly down upon them; and each time they did so the goats made a spring, as if they found the horny beaks too much for either their fore or hind quarters. They were in a regular quagmire, or what the Germans call a stunk; and it was curious to observe how the gulls achieved their object, by always keeping the goats between themselves and the rocks, and thus at last driving them upwards from the meadow, where we doubt not lay their "callow young,"—small, soft powder-puffs in woolly garments, which the horny hoof of kiding might have sorely incommoded, but for this brave parental interference. So the goats were gulled, and the gulls not kidnapped.

Saw around us, for the first time during the present voyage, specimens of the Arctic Gull (*Lestris Richardsoni*) pursuing, as is their wont, the other kinds of gull,—forcing them to disgorge their food. Observed a feature of this manoeuvre which we had never before noticed. When they descend upon what may be called the victim gull, either actually striking it on the back, or with an angry menace seeming so to do, they frequently tamble themselves head over heels beyond and beneath it, so as to hang, as it were, for a few seconds in the air head downwards, but with ready beak, intent to seize the savoury half-digested morsel, disgorged in terror by their timorous cousins.

We ought to have mentioned that our author is a most determined and persevering joker and punster, and that he seems to have been in such ebullient spirits throughout the voyage, that your dull matter-of-fact folks may occasionally feel his inordinate facetiousness somewhat overpowering; and your fastidious people question of its uniform good taste.

St. Kilda was an object of great curiosity; and the voyagers were much gratified by their visit to that speck in the ocean. Mr. Wilson has dwelt long upon the St. Kildeans, with fondness and a kind of enthusiasm. They are a fortunate small picturesque family, to attract so much attention, and to make such a noise in the world. The present population of the island is only 105 souls, including nine in the family of the missionary—not so many persons in all as inhabit many of the high, old, over-peopled lands in the Cowgate or Black-faces Wynd of Edinburgh, or the Saltmarket of Glasgow; but who think of making a voyage of discovery to these urbane insulated communities, or to the poles, or Dr. Alison? The little primitive community of St. Kilda is, however, rendered quite fascinating under Mr. Wilson's pertraiture; and his narrative cannot fail to interest many individuals in the neighbourhood. The late cold and rainy seasons have been severely felt by the natives, who last

year were in danger of starvation. There might be worse deeds than shipping off the entire community some morning for the shores of Newfoundland, and leaving St. Kilda to the sea-fowl, its ancient and fittest possessors. There are, however, other places in the Hebrides which, if not quite so wild and tempestuous, afford little more comfort or shelter to the inhabitants. The Fishery Board have, at considerable expense, formed a harbour named Callicott, near the extremity of the Butt of Lewis :—

There is a road of approach to the harbour, and a considerable extent of curing-houses, some of which were occupied by those engaged in curing ling. Farther on was a kraal of the most miserable houses ever seen, resembling those of Barra in external form, but infinitely worse. The St. Kilda huts in comparison to these were palaces. The first object which met the eye (and nose and feet) within the threshold was a dunghill, from which the visiter has the option of descending either by the right hand into the cow's apartment, or by the left into that tenanted by human beings. Yet many of these people were making handsomely by fishing. A good deal of cultivation prevailed around.

Leaving the western coasts, the Princess Royal made her way to Thurso, and at last to Wick, the head-quarters, and the very heart of the Fishery, then, about the middle of August, at the busiest. And now we do learn something of this important branch of national economy. We, however, can only take a side-glance, premising that the herring-gutters below are often strapping, comely lasses, earning in "the season" great wages, and dressing quite as gaily as the fair inmates of the black huts of Gairloch :—

After breakfast we went ashore to Wick, and there witnessed one of the most extraordinary sights we have seen for many a day. All along the inner harbour, and in every street and quay, as well as within many large enclosed yards and covered buildings, there are numerous square wooden boxes as big as ordinary sized rooms, the containing sides, however, being only two or three feet high. Into these huge troughs the herrings are carried in panniers from the boats the instant they arrive. There they are all tumbled in helter-skelter, pannier after pannier, in a long-continued stream of fish, until the boats are emptied or the troughs are filled. Then come troops of sturdy females, each armed with knife in hand, and range themselves around the trough,—the process of getting commenced, and is carried on with such ceaseless and quickening rapidity, that unless we had used the freedom to request one of the cleanest and prettiest of these evisceratrices so to moderate the rancour of her knife as to let us see what she was doing, we could scarcely have followed her manipulations with the naked eye. However, we think we are now masters, at least in theory, of the refined art of evisceration. The Secretary and ourself had the curiosity to time our fair friend, when left to the remorseless rapidity of her own sweet will, and we found that she gutted exactly two dozen in the minute. Now two thousand women working at that rate, with but brief intermission from early morning till the close of day, must produce an almost incalculable amount of disembowelment. . . .

Before beginning to work they take off their caps and bonnets, and either cover over or exchange their outer garment for a *coarser*, making their toilet with innocent reserve *sub Jove*, and so commence their bloody occupation. Towards evening they carefully wash their faces, arms, and legs, and slip on again their better garment. Thus they never appear, except around the gutting board, in otherwise than rather trim array. Indeed many of the most magnificently fine females, whom we saw standing at respectable doors, or looking out of decent windows, or going sedately about their evening occupations from shop to shop, had been assiduously engaged in gutting

all day long. The cure of herrings is indeed an object of such paramount importance to the town and neighbourhood, that when an unusual *take* occurs, and delicate female hands are wanting for the work, a kind of requisition is sent through the town, even to the most respectable inhabitants, to allow their domestics to attend as gutters for a day or two; and in hiring servants it is by no means unusual for the latter to stipulate for *leave to gut* during a certain number of days, as a perquisite beyond their usual termly wages. To prevent indolence or idleness, all these gutters are paid by piece-work, that is, so much a cran or barrel after the fish are packed. At the rate of 4d. per barrel, each gutter according to her skill and activity, may make from four to seven shillings a-day; and in former times, when so high as a shilling a barrel was sometimes allowed during a press of work and scarcity of hands, their gains were actually enormous. An expert and practised company of three can make up among them sixty-three barrels in a day, or twenty-one barrels each; so that, in the glorious times alluded to, a gutter might have kept her gig, and driven to the scene of action daily.

This is but a small and incidental feature of the fishery, and of herring and cod in general.

After the Secretary's business at Wick was accomplished, the Princess Royal stood away for Orkney, and went as far as the Fitful Head, in Shetland. Sir Walter Scott, who had made and recorded nearly the same circum or elliptic navigation a good

many years ago, was often present to the recollection of the voyager; while "Andersons' Guide to the Highlands and Isles," and the new "Statistical Account," lent him more effectual aid. The chief incidents in Shetland were, the Princess Royal being as nearly as possible wrecked; and her nobler passengers eating the *tusk* while fresh—a glorious fish! By the way, trout, like those of Loch Leven, were discovered in a small lake in Barra. Save a run into Cromarty Bay, and a few friendly calls on the coast, there is nothing more of interest till the Princess Royal happily reached Granton, and her passengers dropt off at the end of a three-months' voyage, which must have afforded them very great pleasure and amusement; one element of solid satisfaction, denied to ordinary travellers, being, that, so far as appears, not a single hôtel or tavern bill was presented during the whole period; all being free where the Princess Royal and Captain Stewart came.—We can promise every class of readers, but especially those to whom the scenes described are new, much entertainment from Mr. Wilson's voyage round Scotland, which only wanted the presence of his brother, the Professor, to render it immortal.