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Philip Henry Gosse
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Lundy Island.

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View of Lundy from Ilfracombe—Preparations for a Visit—Amenities of the Voyage—Roadstead—Landing—Wayside Flowers—Inhabitants—The Farm—Communications with Clovelly—Lundy Castle—Conspiracy of De Marisco—Mixens—Benson's Cave and Villany—Lametry—Rat Island—Eyebright—Bevelled Slopes—Burnet-moth—Foxglove—Charms of July—Flowers—Beach Boulders—Wreck—Half-way Wall—Granite Gravel.

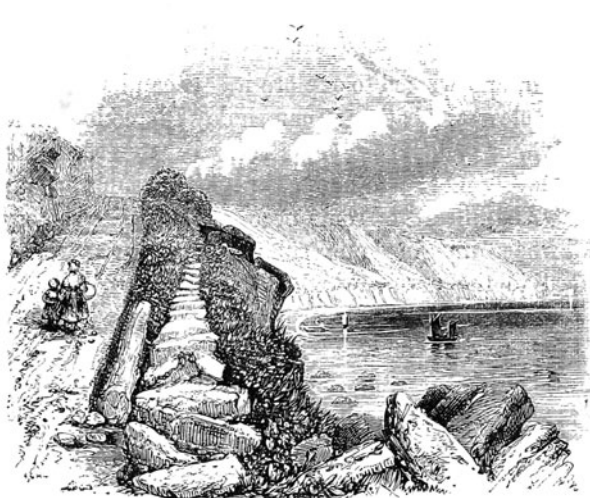
The Templar—Fog-Veil—Brake—Royal Oak—Bog Flowers—Constable—Swarms of Birds—Circular Flight—Fearlessness—Puffin—Razor-billed Auk—Gulls—Thrift—Hillocks—Gull's Nest—Chick—Guano—Puffin Burrows—Reconnoitring—Battles between Puffin and Rabbit—Gannets—Feroicity of Gull—Kittiwake—Fowling Net—Hyacinth—North-west Point—Elemental War—Perforate Cavern—Fountain in the Sea—Guillemots—Mode of Incubation—Scarcity of the Egg—Battle with a Gull—Mode of Fishing—Fish-fry—Mer's Eggs—Great Auk.

Morning—Casualties among Cattle—"T. H."—Bog-Plants—Devil's Limekiln—Insects—Shutter Rock—Cormorants—Goat Island—Fool-hardihood—Descent to the Cove—Junction of Granite and Shale—Benjamin's Chair—Taking Thyme—A Wreck—Ladder—Sea-Weeds—Mouth of Seal Cavern—A Ducking—Tube Worms—The Cavern—Return—Sea-weeds—Scapanomones—Habits of Seal—Anecdotes—Subterranean Chamber—Wayland Smith's Cave—Captain Tom—His Story of the Pig and Dog—Trip to the Lobster Pots—Cormorants and Gulls—Wild Goats—Kittiwake—Brazen Ward—French Perfidy—Spoliation—Mouse-Trap and Mouse-Hole—Gannet Rock—Harbour of Refuge—Pot Watching—Lobster—Sea Crayfish—Crab—Spider Crab—Baiting—Parasitic Zoophytes—Thunder-Showers.

Oyster-Planting—Dredge and Dredging—Results—Plumularia—Ivory Coral-line—Lime Light—Bugle Coralline—Birds—Insects—West Side—Grand Cavern—Lights and Shadows—"To the Sunbeam"—Earthquake—Discovery of Amethysts—Bristle-tail—Bog-Plants—Sun-dew—Punch-Bowl—Light-House—Lantern—Combination of Lenses—Effect on Birds—Danger of Ignition—Lamp—Lower Light—Shipwreck—Farewell to Lundy.

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LUNDY ISLAND.



THE EASTERN COAST (*from the Landing.*)

THERE are many odd nooks and corners in England which are seldom visited by tourists, and of which topographical writers know next to nothing, which are yet well stored with objects of interest amply sufficient to repay the toil and ingenuity expended in searching them out. Such a spot is Lundy, that little rocky island with precipitous sides that stands in the midst of the waters of the Bristol Channel, like a sentinel, to

guard this great sea-road into the heart of England. I had been prosecuting some researches among the microscopic zoophytes, and other objects of marine natural history, on the picturesque coast of North Devon, through early summer; and from the lofty downs and cliffs around Ilfracombe I had often gazed out upon Lundy, a long low wall of purple in the horizon, and wished to explore it. It can be seen only in the clearest weather: many a day I have looked for it in vain; and thus its appearance became associated with lovely mornings and clear golden sunsets; and what I had heard of some peculiarities in its zoology, and what I imagined an insular rock so situated might afford to the naturalist, determined me to take the earliest opportunity of a visit to its cliffs.

Such an occasion was found through the courtesy of Hudson Heaven, Esq., the eldest son of the proprietor of the island, who kindly invited myself and two companions to accompany him in his boat, about to sail. Accordingly, the break of day on the 1st of July saw us on the little quay at Ilfracombe, with portmanteaus and carpet-bags, collecting-basket, bottles and jars for zoophytes, and some packets of sandwiches and other comforts for the interior organisation. We had to wait at least an hour after the time appointed, before the tide served: it was rather a cold morning; the sky was leaden, and there was already a tough breeze from the westward, dead against our course, which seemed likely to freshen: the fishermen, moreover, that sauntered out from their hovels at that early hour,

assured us, to keep up our already wavering courage, that there was a pretty heavy sea running outside. However, we were booked for the voyage, and were not going to retreat because it might have a dash of adventure: indeed, the heroism of one of the party was so strung up by the exciting prospect, that he boldly intimated his purpose of joining the search for Franklin, after this expedition.

So at length we stowed ourselves in the stern-sheets; the peak was hoisted, the jib was set, the mainsail trimmed; another pull upon the peak-halyards, the jib and main sheets tautened, and here we were with the red sails as flat as a pancake, facing the westerly breeze, and pitching and rolling in the wash of the sea, which is always more than ordinarily uproarious off the harbour's mouth just at the turn of the tide.

The little boat ploughed and dug through the green and foaming waves, quivering now and then as one struck her broadside in a way that rather put a damper upon our mirth. Before she had made one short tack, and before we were well abreast of the flag-staff that crowns Capstone Hill, an envious sea curled up its green head right over the quarter, and broke upon us, drenching us as completely as if we had invaded its domain instead of its intruding into ours. A pretty pickle this to begin an eight hours' voyage with! and very comforting to the stomachs, already receiving awful warnings of what was about to be. We all grew as mute as mice in no time:

the enthusiasm of science, no more than the pleasure of holiday-making, can bear up with dignity against the manifold infictions of cold and wet, cramped limbs, and the perpetual eversion of that internal organisation I spoke of just now, which no sandwiches could soothe. But let that pass.

The approach to the island was interesting; especially as our kind cicerone, Mr Heaven, pointed out the different objects of interest, and gave us legendary and statistical information. Its form somewhat resembles that of an oak-leaf, being considerably sinuated in outline; and the narrow peninsula of Lametry, constituting its southern extremity, with Rat Island as its termination, we may call the footstalk of the leaf. This end of the island curves round to the eastward, partially enclosing a little bay with good anchorage, pretty well sheltered from all but easterly winds. About twenty vessels were lying here at anchor, of various nations and of all sizes, from the stately three-masted ship to the tiny fishing skiff. On our expressing surprise at seeing so many craft, Mr Heaven assured us that often there were many more. "I have known," said he, "three hundred vessels in sight at once. On one occasion the wind had hung long from the westward, and had kept-in the outward-bound craft: it at last changed and allowed them to sail, but suddenly shifting again, and coming on to blow heavily from the old quarter, a hundred and seventy vessels put back and anchored in our little roadstead, all vessels of size, not counting boats."

WAYSIDE FLOWERS.

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The only landing-place on the whole island is in this bay; and here the Trinity House have made a good carriage-road from the beach up the precipitous hill-side to the lighthouse, which occupies the highest point, and which I shall speak of more particularly presently. Up this zigzag road, which is substantially built with granite in the lower part, where it is exposed to the action of the sea in heavy gales, we climbed, eager to find the means of satisfying our quickened appetites, yet not indifferent to the charms with which nature had embellished this lonely place. The sides of the road were gay with flowers of many kinds. The common mallow, the milfoil, the weld or wild mignonette, looking like its pleasant namesake, but scentless; the flaring ox-eye daisy, the figwort, with its brown bead-like blossoms; the navew, loose and sprawling, but bright in hue; ragworts and sow-thistles, and elder-bushes with snow-balls of bloom, the nearest approach to a tree which the island can boast; these, with minor weeds and grasses and ferns of several kinds, fringed the footpath. The perpendicular side of the road, where the shale had been scarped away, and the crevices of the stones, where it had been faced with a rude wall, presented other and more attractive features. The kidney vetch, or lady's finger, displayed its heads of delicate flowers in profusion, pale yellow fading into cream colour; and the scarlet-tipped blossoms of the little bird's-foot lotus, that characteristic plant of our seaward downs and precipitous slopes, were not less abundant. From

between the loose stones the navelwort shot out its singular spikes, each springing perpendicularly from a bed of succulent shield-like leaves, and fringed to its tall summit with little drooping bells of yellowish white. The situation seems particularly agreeable to this plant, for we found it in many parts of the island growing in great luxuriance, some of the spikes eighteen or twenty inches in height, and thickly covered with flowers. The herb Robert, the bitter vetch, and the purple sandwort, displayed their unobtrusive but pretty blossoms among the herbage; and the crimson bells of the common heath, already opened, were fringing the edges of the slope above our heads. The sheep's-bit scabious, a lovely flower, with globose heads of azure blue, was not wanting; and the surface of the rock was covered here and there with broad patches of the white stone-crop, whose white, or rather carnation-coloured, starry blossoms were conspicuously beautiful. But more prominent than all was that noblest of British flowers, the tall foxglove, flourishing in special luxuriance and beauty, while fragrance was diffused from scores of honeysuckles that climbed and sprawled on every side.

All these and other plants, some greeting us as old acquaintances, others possessing the charm of comparative novelty, were an agreeable contrast to the desolation and barrenness we had pictured to ourselves as reigning here. And as we proceeded we saw pleasant traces of feminine taste, for gentle hands had been busy in sowing seeds of stocks, and wall-

THE FARM.

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flowers, and nasturtiums in the nooks of the rock, which were now beginning to spread the beauty of their foliage over the ruggedness, and gave promise of additional beauty by and by.

The island is the property of William Heaven, Esq., who has erected a handsome mansion above the landing-place, in a sheltered hollow, which commands an extensive view of the opposite coast of Devon and of the broad Bristol Channel. Here he resides with his amiable family, exercising a patriarchal rule over his little dominion. Two thousand acres form his realm; of which a considerable portion is under cultivation, and is let to a tenant farmer, John Lee by name, familiarly known as Captain Jack, an excellent, worthy man. In his earlier days he was bred to the sea, but now he ploughs the land. At his house, "The Farm," visitors are entertained; we found accommodations decent, (for the circumstances), a well-supplied table, attendance prompt and kindly, and charges moderate. With the exception of the lighthouse-keeper, who with his family and subordinates occupies a substantial stone house at the foot of the lighthouse, on the western edge of the island, rather remote from the Farm, the rest of the inhabitants are labourers, and their families employed in husbandry, or in the mechanical occupations that minister to it.

The whole population amounts to about fifty souls, not one of whom is a native of the isle: a child has not been born here within the memory of the present

generation ; the women invariably going over to the mainland when their confinement approaches. No medical man resides on the island ; but a fire lighted on a particular summit summons a boat in cases of emergency, from the little village of Clovelly, just opposite. This place, itself a spot of romantic beauty, one of the gems of the North Devon coast, is situated in Barnstaple Bay, just within Hartland Point, (the *Herculis Promontorium* of Ptolemy), and is distant about five leagues from the end of Lundy. A boat comes across every Friday, bringing the week's accumulations of the post-office, and returns with any letters that are ready. Other communication with the shore is only casual, as when the Pill boats come down as far as this from their little pilot village at the Avon's mouth to look out for ships, and anchor in the bay ; or when a skiff-load of lobsters is run up to Ilfracombe to be shipped, per steamer, for Bristol.

A mutton-chop, improvised by Captain Jack's larder, revived our vigour, and we sallied out towards the south end to reconnoitre. A walk between stone fences, enlivened by many interesting plants in flower, some of which I shall mention presently, led us to the ruins of the castle, bearing the name of the *De Mariscos*, the earliest possessors of the island on record, who held it as long ago as Henry the Second's time. A legend is told of one of this family, illustrative of the bold lawlessness of the times, as well as of the natural strength of this island. It rests on the authority of the contemporary historians.