

or three years ago, that there had lived no reptiles during the period of the Coal Measures, and no fish in the times of the Lower Silurian System.

I extended my researches, a few days after, in an easterly direction from the town of Stromness, and walked for several miles along the shores of the Loch of Stennis, — a large lake about fourteen miles in circumference, bare and treeless, like all the other lakes and lochs of Orkney, but picturesque of outline, and divided into an upper and lower sheet of water by two low, long promontories, that jut out from opposite sides, and so nearly meet in the middle as to be connected by a thread-like line of road, half mound, half bridge. “The Loch of Stennis,” says Mr. David Vedder, the sailor-poet of Orkney, “is a beautiful Mediterranean in miniature.” It gives admission to the sea by a narrow strait, crossed, like that which separates the two promontories in the middle, by a long rustic bridge; and, in consequence of this peculiarity, the lower division of the lake is salt in its nether reaches and brackish in its upper ones, while the higher division is merely brackish in its nether reaches, and fresh enough in its upper ones to be potable. Viewed from the east, in one of the long, clear, sunshiny evenings of the Orkney summer, it seems not unworthy the eulogium of Vedder. There are moory hills and a few rude cottages in front; and in the background, some eight or ten miles away, the bold, steep mountain masses of Hoy; while on the promontories of the lake, in the middle distance, conspicuous in the landscape, from the relief furnished by the blue ground of the surrounding waters, stand the tall gray obelisks of Stennis, — one group on the northern promontory, the other on the south, —

“Old even beyond tradition’s breath.”