

THE LOCHS OF LEWIS.

THE island of Lewis and Harris is the largest of the lesser British islands (see Index Map, Fig. 23), only Skye and the Mainland of Shetland nearly approaching it in size. It measures some 60 miles in length by 30 miles in breadth. Its southern half is mountainous, many peaks exceeding 2000 feet in height, and a few exceeding 2500 feet. The northern half is lower.

There are many hundreds of lochs distributed over every part of the island. In the northern half they are specially numerous, and in the central part they form a sort of watery maze like that of North Uist. There are only a few of the narrow, straight, valley lochs, so familiar on the mainland of Scotland, and those are in the southern mountainous part of the island; the majority are small, roundish, or relatively broad, and the larger ones of extremely irregular form. It was only possible to survey a small proportion of the numerous lochs, thirty altogether being sounded.

Five of the lochs exceed 2 miles in length. Loch Langavat is by far the longest, exceeding 7 miles, and in superficial area is about four times as great as any other loch. It is, however, exceeded in volume by Loch Suainaval, which contains 2843 millions of cubic feet. Loch Suainaval is also by far the deepest loch, exceeding 200 feet in maximum depth, while no other loch exceeds 100 feet. Five lochs, Langavat, Scaslavat, Grunavat, Benisval, and Raonagail, approach 100 feet in depth. The mean depth of Loch Suainaval is 108 feet, no other loch exceeding 35 feet. Combining the areas of all the lochs, the extent of fresh water surveyed amounts to nearly 10 square miles, the volume of water to 7400 millions of cubic feet.

The thirty lochs of Lewis surveyed are contained in seventeen distinct basins, draining independently into the sea. Twelve of these basins contain only one loch which was surveyed; three contain two lochs; the Thamanabhaidh basin contains four lochs; the most extensive basin surveyed is the Laxey basin, with its eight lochs. Many extensive basins were not visited at all.

There follows a table of the seventeen basins and the lochs contained in them:—