

THE LOCHS OF ORKNEY.

THE Mainland of Orkney possesses many fine lochs. The land surface consists of a series of low dark-topped hills, none reaching 1000 feet in height, between which are broad stretches of level or gently undulating moorland, now in great part under cultivation. In correspondence with this conformation of the land, and the absence of narrow valleys, the lochs occupying the hollows are all relatively broad, and they are without exception shallow and flat-bottomed. The two very large bodies of water, the Lochs of Stenness and Harray, which ramify into the very heart of the island, are subject to the influence of the tides, though their level is but slightly affected.

In the mountainous islands of Hoy and Rousay there are narrow valley lochs of greater depth than any on the Mainland. On the other islands of the group, which are quite low, there are only a few unimportant lochs, which were not surveyed. In the three islands visited (see Index Map, Fig. 24) fourteen lochs were surveyed. The largest, in every respect, is the Loch of Harray; the Loch of Stenness is little inferior in size, but all the others are much smaller. The deepest loch on the Mainland, the Loch of Stenness, 17 feet in depth, is slightly exceeded in depth by the Muckle Water in Rousay, but by far the deepest loch surveyed is the little Hoglinns Water in Hoy, which is 57 feet deep. The combined superficial areas of all the lochs surveyed amounts to 10 square miles, and the area draining into these lochs exceeds 90 square miles.

The Island of Hoy is the most mountainous of the Orkneys. With the exception of the Peninsula of South Walls, joined to the main island merely by a causeway, the island consists of one mountainous mass, rising from south to north, where it culminates in three peaks of over 1300 feet in height, separated by deep glens which cut right across the island. The central peak, the Ward hill, 1564 feet in height, is the highest point in Orkney, and even exceeds the highest hill in Shetland (Ronas hill, 1475 feet) by nearly 100 feet. On the southern slope of the island are several lochs, which, from their highland situation, might be expected to be deeper than the lochs in the plains of Pomona. That this is in fact the case can be definitely stated of one little loch, the Hoglinns Water, the survey of which, begun by the Lake Survey, was completed by Mr. William Marwick, who found a depth of 57 feet. The largest loch in Hoy, the Heldale Water, about a mile in length, was not surveyed.