tide in the ebb running off the sides of Pightland Skerries from south-east, down into the Swelchie of Stroma, then the men must ply their oars and work hard, lest they be borne down into the Swelchie, a dangerous place. When also we are three or four miles from Caithness, there is another such rapid current coming from the south of Dungis-by-head out of Murray-firth, running upon Stroma, both into the Swelchie on the north, and into the Merry-men of May, on the south end of the isle. In our passage through this current, for half an hour, we made not, as we could observe, one foot of way, though there were four men tugging at the oars, and no wind blowing; and in all probability we had been carried down upon Stroma, if an able man, a passenger, had not taken an oar, so that then there were three oars upon our starboard side. Hence in some places there is a swift, and in others a soft running tide, which the boatmen being well acquainted with, they will sometimes rest from their hard labour, and refresh themselves a little.

In our passage we see the currents before we engage with them, running like the torrents of some great rivers, and in some places we will see the waters smooth, and rough round about; the reason wherefore of I know not, if it be not because of some tides meeting there, and, as it were, for some time quiescent in their centre, something like unto which I have observed in the meeting of several rivers in one place.

In the firth are several places remarkable for their danger, as the wells of Swinna, whereof some are on the east side and others on the west side of the isle, they are like unto whirlpools, turning about with such violence, that if any boat come nigh unto them, they will suck or draw it in, and then turneth it about until it be swallowed up : but these wells are only dangerous in a calm, and seamen or fishers, to prevent their danger thereby, use, when they come near them, to cast in an oar, barrel, or such like thing, on which the wells closing, they safely pass over. The minister of the place told me, that about twenty years ago there were two fisher-boats there, who coming nigh the wells, the men in the one boat seeing their danger, one of these men thus afraid took hold of the other boat by them, and both boats were swallowed up. One of the ministers of Zetland told me there were three of these boats, it so falling out, that he passed the firth the very day after they perished : yet notwithstanding of these dangers the fishers will not desist from fishing about these wells ; for they observe, the nearer they come to them, they have the fishes both greater, better, and more numerous, so the fishes draw the men, and the wells draw both.

Near to these Skerries before Burwick, formerly mentioned, are also two or three wells, called the Wells of Tiftala, only dangerous in a flood, as the wells of Swinna are in an ebb ; these wells, as some do judge, are caused by an hiatus or gap in the earth below : further I would offer this consideration, that whereas all these wells are nigh unto ragged rocks, constantly beat upon by the tides, there may be some secret con-veyances of the water into caverns at the bottom of the rock, from which they may pass into some other places, where they rise again, and that even in the same firth, though such places be unknown, as it is storied of many rivers, which fall into and run many miles below the earth, and come out again in other places. But that which I judge to be more simple is, that several tides running upon the rocks, and thence re-turning and meeting with other tides, cause such a whirl as we see behind mill-wheels, some of the water coming from, and another part as it were appearing to return upon the wheel, which cause such a whirl, and no more doth the whirls in the firth require a hiatus in the earth, or a subterraneous passage, than the whirls in the mill's water-courses : as for their swallowing up of boats, which are no more seen, this doth not prove it ; for these boats may be broken beneath the water upon rocks or the like, and the