

*The following 1873 article on the Lamorna Cove and the granite quarries is presented on
Stone Quarries and Beyond – <http://quarriesandbeyond.org/>
Peggy B. Perazzo; email: pbperazzo@comcast.net*

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GRANITE QUARRIES AT LAMORNA COVE, CORNWALL.

LAMORNA COVE.

Halfway between Penzance and the Land's End, along the south coast of Cornwall, and not far from the little seaport village of Mousehole, frequented by the fishers of pilchards and mackerel, is the picturesque valley of Lamorna. This place not only deserves its romantic name, but is entitled to historical fame. It was here, nine centuries and a half ago, that King Athelstan of the West Saxons finally defeated the ancient Celtic nation of West Britain. The site of his victory is marked by two lofty pillars of granite, erected at Bolleit, which means "the abode of slaughter." We take this opportunity to notice an instructive new book on the local antiquities of Cornwall, that of Mr. W. C. Borlase, called *Nænia Cornubiæ*, which is a description of the sepulchres and funeral customs of the early inhabitants (published by Longman). He lately made some inquiries, in this parish of St. Buryan, about the existing traditions of that wild old battle. Aged peasants told him that the opposing leaders were "Howel" and "Athelstan;" and that the two tall stones, placed three hundred yards apart, showed their respective positions in front of the fighting armies. The bodies of the slain, they said, lay in a grave where they could not be found till the day of judgment. Several barrows or mounds, with the stone chambers termed kist-vaens, containing urns of human ashes or calcined bones, and pieces of bronze weapons or jewels, are found in this neighbourhood. On Rosemoddress, or Ring Down, is a Druidic circle of stones, of which people now speak as "The Merry Maidens." This we suppose to be of a date much more remote; but there seems to be little doubt of the battle fought here, after which King Athelstan built a monastery at St. Buryan, and perhaps a Saxon fortress at Boscawen. We refer to "A Week at the Land's End," by Mr. J. T. Blight of Penzance, for additional details of the topography. The granite quarries at Lamorna Cove are the scene of an important industry, which furnishes materials for strong and stately buildings in other parts of the kingdom. The workmen bore the solid rock with a long and steel-pointed bar of iron, then put in a large quantity of gunpowder, and by an explosion split off an enormous slice of granite, which they afterwards cut into smaller blocks. The granite here is of different qualities: that on the eastern side of the valley is good, but on the western side is a coarser sort, with veins of quartz. Again, there is the porphyritic granite, studded with large crystals of felspar. The rocks are frequently adorned with rare lichens, or overhung by garlands of ivy, along the wooded banks of a pretty stream that flows down the valley. Lamorna is the haunt of various birds, among which are noticed by Mr. Blight the purple heron, the golden oriole, and other species not often found elsewhere on the shores of Britain.

Limorna Cove

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