

important effects, than in the conversion of the black and barren peat moors of the northern counties, into valuable land covered with luxuriant herbage, and depastured by numerous flocks. The following description of the peat moors in Scotland, by Mr. Jameson, is an accurate picture of the remaining peat moors in the mountainous parts of Yorkshire, and the adjoining counties:—

“In describing the general appearance of a peat moor, we may conceive an almost entire flat of several miles extent, of a brown colour, here and there marked with tufts of heather, which have taken root, owing to the more complete decomposition of the surface peat; no tree or shrub is to be seen; not a spot of grass to relieve the eye, in wandering over this dreary scene. A nearer examination discovers a wet spongy surface, passable only in the driest seasons, or when all nature is locked in frost. The surface is frequently covered with a slimy black-coloured substance, which is the peat earth so mixed with water, as to render the moor only passable, by leaping from one tuft of heather to another. Sometimes, however, the surface of peat mosses has a different aspect, owing to the greater abundance of heath and other vegetables, as the *schœni*, *scirpi*, *eriphora*, &c. : but this is principally the case with some kinds of what are called muirlands, which contain but little peat, being nearly composed of the interwoven roots of living vegetables. Quick moss (as it is called) is a substance of a more or less brown colour, forms a kneadable compound, and when good, cuts freely and clean with the spade; but when it resists the spade by a degree of elasticity, it is found to be less compact when dried, and is of an inferior quality. The best kinds burn with a clear bright flame, leaving light-coloured ashes; but the more indifferent kinds, in burning, often emit a disagreeable smell, and leave a heavy red-coloured kind of ashes. In digging the peat, we observe that when first taken from the pit it almost immediately changes its colour, which becomes more or less a deep brown or black, and the peat matter becomes much altered, being incapable of forming a kneadable paste with water. When dry and reduced to powder, as it is often by the action of the weather, it forms a blackish coloured powdery matter, capable of supporting vegetation, when calcareous earth is added.

“Peat is found in various situations, often in valleys or plains, where it forms very extensive deep beds, from three to forty feet deep, as those in Aberdeenshire: it also occurs upon the sides of mountains, but even there it is generally in a horizontal situation. The tops of mountains, upwards of two thousand feet high, in the Highlands of Scotland, are covered with peat of an excellent kind.

“It is also found in situations nearly upon a level with the sea: thus, the great moss of Cree in Galloway, lies close upon the sea, on a bed of clay, little higher than the flood marks at spring tides.”*

* Jameson's Mineralogy of the Shetland Islands.