

me like a dark cloud, thickly dotted with minute circular spots of soiled white,—the aspect assumed, as seen through the water, by the numerous specimens of univalve shells (*Purpura lapillus* and *Patella vulgata*) with which it was speckled; beneath, the irregular floor seemed covered by a carpet that somewhat resembled in the pattern a piece of marbled paper, save that the circular or oval patches of which it was composed, and which had as their nuclei, stones, rocks, shell-fish, bunches of fuci, and fronds of laminaria, were greatly larger. There spread around a misty groundwork of green, intensely deep along its horizon, but comparatively light overhead, in its middle sky, which had always its prodigy,—wonderful circlets of light, that went widening outwards, and with whose delicate green there mingled occasional flashes of pale crimson. Such was the striking though somewhat meagre scenery of a sea-bottom in Gairloch, as seen by a human eye submerged in from two to three fathoms of water.

There still continued to linger in this primitive district, at the time, several curious arts and implements, that had long become obsolete in most other parts of the Highlands, and of which the remains, if found in England or the Low country, would have been regarded by the antiquary as belonging to very remote periods. During the previous winter I had read a little work descriptive of an ancient ship, supposed to be Danish, which had been dug out of the silt of an English river, and which, among other marks of antiquity, exhibited seams caulked with moss,—a peculiarity which had set at fault, it was said, the modern ship-carpenter, in the chronology of his art, as he was unaware there had ever been a time when moss was used for such a purpose. On visiting, however, a boat-yard at Gairloch, I found the Highland builder engaged in laying a layer of dried moss, steeped in tar, along one of his seams, and learned that such had been the practice of boat-carpenters in that locality from time immemorial. I have said that the little old Highlander of the solitary shieling, whom we met on first commencing our quarrying labors beside his hut, was engaged in stripping with a pocket-knife