

known in some parts of the Highlands as the *cas-chrom*; and the manure was carried out in spring, and the produce brought home in autumn, mostly by women in slip-bottomed creels. All the other arts practised in the village reminded one of a remote age. We have seen the poor Highland women bending under their burdens of turf or manure, and employed at the same time in spinning with that most primitive of implements, the distaff and spindle. Some of the boats, caulked with moss, like the ancient Danish vessel disinterred some ten or twelve years ago out of the silt of an English river, were furnished with sails of woollen, anchors constructed of wood and stone, and tackle spun out of the fibres of moss fir. The little patches of cultivation were suited to remind one, from their size, of the fields described by Gulliver; but they had, besides, a peculiarity all their own;—the ground abounded with stones, many of them by much too bulky to be removed. To save as much space as possible, each of the larger masses had its pyramid of smaller stones piled upon it to the height of four or five feet; and there were patches in which these pyramids lay well-nigh as thickly grouped together as tents in an encampment. A man of some little imagination might have supposed that one of the many Scotch witches of the seventeenth century had passed the way in the time of harvest, and transformed all the newly-reaped shocks into accumulations of stone. Such was the agriculture of the district: it was the agriculture of the first ages,—the fruit of the very first lesson which man had derived from experience, on setting himself to force a living from the soil. Nor, it may be well supposed, could the art of the builder in such a country be greatly in advance of the art of the agriculturist. The human dwellings were quite as rude as the fields. But we shall describe one, just as a specimen of the whole.

On the first evening of our arrival in the district, we accompanied an acquaintance, to secure the services of a High-