

in the general change. But nature too has helped him. Those vast forces that are lodged beneath the crust of the earth have slowly upheaved the land, and have converted a large part of the bottom of the old estuary into good, dry ground, covered with the richest soil, and fitted in no common degree for the growth of streets. And hence, where his forefathers floated their rude boats he builds his warehouses, and on tracts that were ever wet with the ooze of river and sea, and bore few other inhabitants than the cockle and mussel, he now plants his country villas and lays out his pleasure-grounds.

The disappearance of the ancient woods deserves more than a mere passing allusion, for it has materially influenced the present scenery of the country, and it has a still further interest from the close way in which it is linked with human history. Duly to appreciate the nature and extent of the change which is traceable to this cause, it is necessary to bear in mind the magnitude of the forests which, when man first set foot in Scotland, swept in long withdrawing glades across its surface,—the wide black mosses and moors, the innumerable lakes and fens, dense and stagnant indeed on the lower grounds, but which, in the uplands, were the sources whence streamlets and rivers descended through glen, and valley, and dim woodland, into the encircling sea. Beasts of the chase, and among them some that have been for centuries extinct here, abounded in these ancient forests; birds of many kinds haunted the woods and waters; fish swarmed in lake, river, and bay. Among such primeval landscapes did our aboriginal forefathers excavate their rude earthen dwellings and build their weems of stone; from the stately oaks they hollowed out canoes, which they launched upon the lakes and firths; and through the thick glades of the forest they chased the