

and thence reshipped to London. But the attention of the scientific zoologist must now be turned to the habits of these and others of the favorite mollusca, and to the circumstances and seasons in which their ova are developed, otherwise they will speedily be classed among those extinct species which have owed their extirpation to the presence and influence of man.

By such facts the remote past is brought once more into intimate relation with the present; and even in matters so apparently trivial as the nice discrimination of the palate between the *Patella vulgata* and the *Turbo littoralis*, we thus detect a correspondence between the tastes of the rude aboriginal savage of primeval centuries, and the civilized Anglo-Saxon of the British metropolis; though even now it is as a popular favorite, and not as a coveted delicacy, that the periwinkles, and also the larger *Buccinum undatum* or waved whelk, are imported into London, and gathered on the Scottish and Irish coasts.

At Skara, near the house of Skail, in the west mainland of Orkney, one of a singular class of stone structures, designated *Pict's houses*, is remarkable for an immense accumulation of ashes around it, several feet in thickness, plentifully mixed with shells, and the horns and bones of deer and other animals. The building itself has been only very partially explored, but many curious relics have been recovered from the surrounding debris. Among these are circular discs of slate, similar to those found in Kent's Hole Cave, a large tusk of a wild boar, horns of the red deer, and numerous implements made of horn. But not the least curious of these primitive relics was a box—already referred to,—constructed of stones laid together, in the form of a miniature cist, within which lay about two dozen oyster shells, each pierced in the centre with a hole about the size of a shilling. Oysters, it may be remarked, are rare in Orkney. They now occur only at two places, Deersound and Frith, the nearest of which is eight miles distant from Skail; while the osteological remains which accompanied them are those of long extinct Orkney mammals. There is no tradition of the presence either of the deer or the boar in the Orkney islands, unless the names of the Deerness headland and the neighbouring sound be assumed as topographical memorials of the presence of the former within Norse or Saxon times. It is scarcely possible, indeed, to conceive of the existence of such *feræ naturæ* for any length of time, within so small an area, after the occupation of these islands by a human population.