

within, which John de Groot built to settle the dispute about precedence which arose among his seven brothers.

Three miles across the Pentland Frith—the dangerous strait which unites the Atlantic and German Oceans—is the pretty island of Stroma; and, further along the shore, the rock and “stacks” of Duncansby Head rear their grotesque and lofty forms like huge and hoary Norse giants, comrades of Thor and Odin, appointed to keep watch and ward at the gate of the North Sea.

Soon my attention was attracted by nearer and humbler objects. They consisted of a bunch of flowers, chief among them the rare and beautiful *Primula Scotica*, or Scotch primrose, found only on these northern coasts, a basketful of cowrie shells, locally known as “Groatie Brickies,” and a small book, which proved to be a Greek New Testament. On examining this last and most unlikely item of the collection, I found that it was awarded, “with a sum of money,” as the first prize at the Macdonald Greek competition; and the inscription further bore that the successful competitor was Charles Dunnet, Toftbrims, in the parish of Canisbay.

The guardian, if not the owner, of the property presently came upon the scene. She was a ruddy-complexioned, blue-eyed peasant girl, apparently about fourteen years of age. She approached from the beach with a fresh consignment of shells, and had been concealed from view by the overhanging bank. I had heard that shells were sold to visitors, and I assumed that this was one of the traders.

“That is a pretty basketful,” I remarked. “What value do you put upon it?”

“I don’t know; I never sold any,” she said, with a slight flush deepening the natural crimson of her cheeks.

“Oh, they are not to be disposed of, then. I thought such things could be bought without the trouble of gathering them.”

“Yes, they can be bought; and I ought to have told you