

term used over the country to designate a fire just gone out; and some humorist of the period has represented a Cromarty farmer, in a phrase which became proverbial, as giving his daughter the key of the peat-chest, and bidding her take out a peat and a half that she might put on a good fire. It was the part of Mr. Forsyth to divest the proverb of its edge, by opening up a trade with the northern ports of England, and introducing to the acquaintance of his townspeople the "black stones" of Newcastle, which have been used ever since as the staple fuel of the place. To those who know how very dependent the inhabitants are on this useful fossil, there seems an intangible sort of strangeness in the fact that it is not yet a full century since Mr. Forsyth's sloop entered the bay with the first cargo of coal ever brought into it. One almost expects to hear next of the man who first taught them to rear corn, or to break in, from their state of original wildness, the sheep and the cow.

Mr. Forsyth had entered upon his twenty-fourth year, and had been rather more than six years engaged in business, when the rebellion broke out. There was an end to all security for the time, and of course an end to trade; but even the least busy found enough to employ them in the perilous state of the country. Bands of marauders, the very refuse of the Highlands, — for its better men had gone to the south with the rebel army, — went prowling over the Lowlands, making war with all alike, whether Jacobites or Hanoverians, who were rich enough to be robbed. Mr. Forsyth's sloop, in one of her coasting voyages of this period, when laden with a cargo of government stores, was forced by stress of weather into the Dornoch Frith, where she was seized by a party of Highlanders, who held her for three days, in the name of the prince.