

among the flagstones of Caithness. But the strata, instead of lying in horizontal or gently-inclined undisturbed succession, have been thrown into huge folds which sweep from summit to base of precipices sometimes 500 feet high (Fig. 5). The lines of stratification consequently curve to and fro among the cliffs, carrying with them their successive bars of massive graywacke or fissile shale. An intricate system of minor cross-joints causes these bands of rock to split up into irregular blocks, while by a set of large but somewhat ill-defined joints the cliffs are cleft into vast irregular bastions and recesses. On one of these projecting crags the ruined fortalice of Fast Castle—the prototype of Scott's Castle of Ravenswood—is perched. Here and there at the base of the cliffs are sheltered caves, once favourite haunts of smugglers, now hardly ever disturbed by human voices. Gaunt sea-stacks, once part of the main cliff, but now isolated amid the surf, stand up in front and are favourite resting-places for crowds of sea-fowl. On all these rock-faces, whether main precipice or detached outlier, the peculiar contour of the curved strata may be traced, giving the scenery a character of its own, which only reappears with the recurrence of the same kind of geological structure.