

least 2000, and in Ben More, Mull, of more than 3000 feet. Owing to their variable destructibility, some bands stand out as prominent dark ribs along the hill sides, and others crumble away into slopes of debris. Hence the profile of a hill in these districts usually shows a succession of terraces, each of the harder beds standing out sharply against the sky, like one of the steps of a staircase. The decay of the rocks furnishes a rich loam, which supports a luxuriant growth of grass, so that the basalt districts are distinguished by their greenness even up to the tops of their hills. Almost every valley in the north of Skye and the north of Mull has its ranges of escarpments of flat basalt-beds, with their flanking green slopes. Every sea-cliff is barred with the same horizontal belts of rock, sometimes amorphous, but sometimes beautifully columnar (Fig. 48). The flat tops of the hills, too, coincide with the surface of basalt-beds, as is conspicuously seen in M'Leod's Tables, two conspicuous terraced heights in the north-west of Skye, rising to an elevation of over 1600 feet above the sea (Fig. 32). The basalt escarpments of Mull, and of the smaller islands to the west of it, continue southwards that association of dark brown crag and green slope so distinctive of the scenery of Northern Skye. The most magnificent range of inland basalt cliffs is to be seen in Morven, where the terraced hills that slope upward from the Sound of Mull end off in a line of dark precipices looking north to Beinn Iadain, to which reference has already been made (Fig. 33).

One who is familiar by report with the ruggedness and sterility of Highland scenery can hardly fail to be vividly impressed by the first sight he obtains of the singular landscapes of these basaltic districts. Instead of ruggedness, he sees with increasing wonder the long level lines of terrace that rise one above another, with strange regularity,