

thick deposit of stratified sand, of which I knew as little as of the conglomerate. We dug into it, in founding a thrashing-mill, for about ten feet, but came to no bottom ; and I could see that it formed the subsoil of the valley all around the policies of Conon-side, and underlay most of its fields and woods. It was white and pure, as if it had been washed by the sea only a few weeks previous ; but in vain did I search its beds and layers for a fragment of shell by which to determine its age. I can now, however, entertain little doubt that it belonged to the boulder-clay period of submergence, and that the fauna with which it was associated bore the ordinary sub-arctic character. When this stratified sand was deposited, the waves must have broken against the conglomerate precipices of Brahan, and the sea have occupied, as friths and sounds, the deep Highland valleys of the interior. And on such of the hills of the country as had their heads above water at the time, that interesting but somewhat meagre Alpine Flora must have flourished, which we now find restricted to our higher mountain summits.

Once every six weeks I was permitted to visit Cromarty, and pass a Sabbath there ; but as my master usually accompanied me, and as the way proved sufficiently long and weary to press upon his failing strength and stiffening limbs, we had to restrict ourselves to the beaten road, and saw but little. On, however, one occasion this season, I journeyed alone, and spent so happy a day in finding my homeward road along blind paths,—that ran now along the rocky shores of the Cromarty Frith in its upper reaches, now through brown, lonely moors, mottled with Danish encampments, and now beside quiet, tomb-besprinkled burying-grounds, and the broken walls of deserted churches,—that its memory still lives freshly in my mind, as one of the happiest of my life. I passed whole hours among the ruins of Craighouse,—a gray fantastic rag of a castle, consisting of four heavily-arched stories of time-eaten stone, piled over each other, and still bearing atop its stone roof and its ornate turrets and bartizans,—

“A ghastly prison, that eternally  
Hangs its blind visage out to the lone sea.”