

shores, and covered by a short, green sward, level as the sea in a calm, on which groups of willow and alder trees take the place of busy fleets, and the hare and the partridge that of the coot and the porpoise. Along the upper recesses of almost all our flatter firths, such as the firths of Beaully, of Dingwall, of the Tay, and of the Clyde, it exists as fertile tracts of carse-land; the rich links of the Forth, rendered classical by the muse of Macneil, belong to it; it furnishes, in various other localities more exposed to the open sea, ranges of sandy links of a less valuable character, such as the range in our own neighbourhood occupied by the race-course of Inveresk; and not a few of the seaports and watering-places of the country, such as the greater part of Leith, Portobello, Musselburgh, Kirkcaldy, Dundee, Dingwall, Invergordon, Cromarty, Wick, Thurso, Kirkwall, Oban, and Greenock, have been built upon it.

The old coast line, with the flat marginal selvage at its base, form, as I have said, well-marked features in the scenery of the island. Geology may be properly regarded as the *science* of landscape: it is to the landscape-painter what anatomy is to the historic one or to the sculptor. In the singularly rich and variously compounded prospects of our country there is scarce a single trait that cannot be resolved into some geological peculiarity in the country's framework, or which does not bear witness otherwise and more directly than from any mere suggestion of the associative faculty, to some striking event in its physical history. Its landscapes are tablets roughened, like the tablets of Nineveh, with the records of the past; and their various features, whether of hill or valley, terrace or escarpment, form the bold and graceful characters in which the narrative is inscribed. As our Scottish geologists have given less attention to this special department of their science than to perhaps any other,—less, I am disposed to think, than, from its intrinsic interest and its bearing on art, is