

cancy attached to it in many parts of the kingdom, means simply a precipice of clay, and it is almost invariably the boulder-clay that forms *scaurs* in Scotland; for it is one of the peculiarities of the deposit, that it stands up well-nigh as steeply over the sides of rivers, or on encroaching sea-beaches, or on abrupt hill-sides, as rock itself; and these clay precipices bear almost invariably a peculiar set of characters of their own. In some cases they spring up as square and mural, seen in front, as cliffs of the chalk, but seen in profile, we find their outlines described by parabolic curves. In other cases we see the vegetable mould rendered coherent by the roots of shrubs and grasses projecting over them atop, like the cornice of some edifice over its frieze. In yet other cases, though abrupt as precipices of solid rock, we find them seamed by the weather into numerous divergent channels, with pyramidal peaks between; and, thus combining the perpendicularity of true cliffs with the rain-scooped furrows of a yielding soil, they present eccentricities of aspect which strike, by their grotesqueness, eyes little accustomed to detect the picturesque in landscape. Such are some of the features of the *scaurs* of our country,—a well-marked class of precipices for which the English language has no name. It is, however, in continuous grass-covered escarpments, which in some parts form the old coast line, and rise in others along the sides of rivers, that we detect at once the most marked and most graceful scenic peculiarity of the boulder-clay. The steep slopes, furrowed by enormous flutings, like those of the antique Doric, appear as if laid out into such burial-mounds as those with which a sexton frets the surface of a country churchyard, but with this difference, that they seem the burial-mounds of giants tall and bulky as those that of old warred against the gods. On a grass-covered escarpment of the boulder-clay in the neighbourhood of Cromarty, these mounds are striking enough to have caught the eye of the