

of Caithness from the south, the voyager first sees a mountain country,—the land piled up stern and high,—the undulations bold and abrupt. He is looking on the Highlands of Sutherlandshire. All at once, however, the aspect of the landscape changes;—the broken and wavy line suddenly descends to a comparatively low level, and, wholly altering its character, stretches away to the north, straight as a tightened cord, or as if described by a ruler. Caithness thus seen in profile reminds one of a long thin proboscis, or mesmerized arm, stretched stiffly out from the Highlands to the distant Orkneys. In sailing upwards along the Moray Firth, the line which defines seawards the plain of Easter Ross from the Hill of Nigg to the low rocky promontory of Tarbat, topped by its lighthouse, presents nearly the same rectilinear character. Another long straight line which meets the eye on entering the bay of Cromarty stretches westwards from the hill of granitic gneiss immediately over the town, and runs for many miles into the interior along the bleak ridge of the Black Isle. Yet another rectilinear line may be seen running on the south side of the Moray Firth, from beyond the Moor of Culloden, which it includes, to the eastern end of Loch Ness. And in all these instances the rectilinear ridges are composed of Old Red Sandstone. On some localities on the seaboard of the country the system is much traversed by firths and bays, and what in Caithness and Orkney are termed *goes*,—narrow inlets in the line of faults, along which the waves find straight passage far into the interior. From the Hill of Nigg, the centre of an Old Red Sandstone district, the eye at once commands three noble firths, all scooped out of the deposit,—the Firth of Cromarty, the Dornoch Firth, and the upper reaches of the Moray Firth. It commands, too, what is scarce less a feature of the Old Red system,—the rich corn-bearing plains of Moray and of Easter Ross; and from the union which the prospect exhibits of two elements