

been made to recede, and has acquired its shattered but picturesque contours. The Old Man is thus a monument of the retreat and destruction of the cliffs of which it once formed a part. To what accidental circumstance it may have owed its isolation cannot be affirmed with certainty. But it shares in the prevalent decay. Every year must insensibly tell upon its features.

On the calmest day some motion of air always plays about the giddy crest of these precipices, and a surge with creaming lines of white foam sweeps around their base. But when a westerly gale sets in, the scene is said to be wholly indescribable. The cliffs are then enveloped in driving spray torn from the solid sheets of water which rush up the walls of rock for a hundred feet or more, and roll back in thousands of tumultuous waterfalls. The force of the wind is such as actually to loosen the weathered parts of the rock and dislodge them. Thus along the mossy surface of the slope, which ascends inland from the edge of the cliff, large flat pieces of naked stone may be picked up by scores lying on the heather and coarse grass, whither they have been whirled up from the shattered crags by successive gusts of the storms.

The destruction of this coast-line has not yet, however, wholly effaced traces of other powers of waste which have long since passed away. On the very edge of the cliff, to the south-east of the Old Man, some well-preserved striations on the sandstone point to the movement of the ice-sheet of the glacial period across even the hilly island of Hoy in a N.W. and S.E. direction. Again, in the green corry at the Cam of Hoy, some beautifully perfect little moraines remain to show that after the great land-ice had subsided the snow-fall in these northern regions continued heavy enough to nourish in so small an island as Hoy groups of