

cular walls are defined by the system of joints which always traverse the rock vertically or at high angles. Slice after slice is wedged off by means of these joints, and in this way the perpendicular front of the cliffs is maintained. In many places the observer may watch the process of sculpture in successive stages of progress. He will notice that,

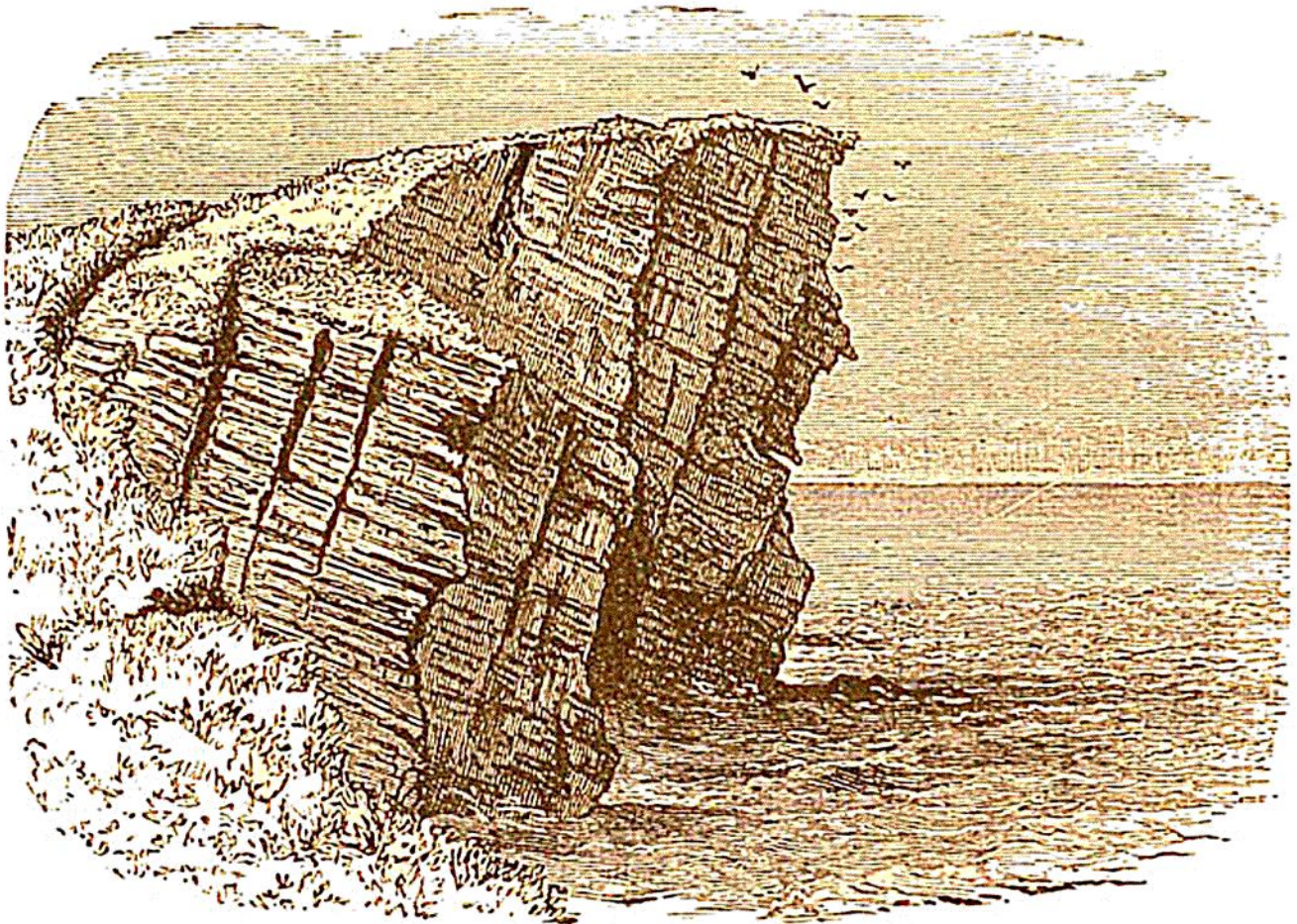


Fig. 3. —View of Flagstone Cliffs, Brough of Birsay, Orkney, showing how the overhanging form of a precipice may be determined by the inclination of rock-joints.

as a rule, the dismemberment begins at the top of the cliff, where the agents are not the breakers of the ocean, but rain, frost, and the other powers of the air. A joint may be observed to gape a little at the summit of the precipice, where nature's wedge has begun to be driven home. In another case the wedge has gone down to the very base of