

peculiar weather-tint of each bed, from deepest indigo to palest emerald-green. On some of the ledges a scanty vegetation finds root, and where the cliffs rise most inaccessibly from the waves each cornice along their front is the nestling-place of innumerable sea-birds, whose shrill screams blend with the sough of the wind and the monotonous cadence of the surge into a wild northern music that wakens many a chord in the heart of one to whom the elemental sounds of nature are ever dear. No sooner do we step off the Old Red Sandstone than these singularly characteristic and persistent features disappear. The contrast presented by some of the other rocks of the North must strike every observer, even one to whom the very name of geology is unknown. The traveller who journeys westward into Sutherlandshire encounters many varieties of coast scenery, but he leaves behind him the peculiar cliffs of the Caithness flagstones. At one point he is confronted with gleaming precipices and steep acclivities of white glistening quartzite, at another he beholds vast sea-walls of a sombre dull red sandstone, even more colossal than those of Caithness, but wanting in those charms of light and shade, wealth of colour, and multiplicity of detail in form, which give the flagstone scenery so defined a character. Perhaps the greatest contrast is to be seen among the gneiss precipices of Cape Wrath. That north-western headland of Scotland is composed of the oldest rock in Britain, and one that from its tough, massive, gnarled aspect is well worthy of its position as the foundation on which the geological structure of these islands has been erected. Rising into a range of singularly scarped and rugged cliffs, it bears the full brunt of every storm that sweeps across the open Atlantic. Every weak part of its framework is discovered by the powerful battery of breakers, and is hollowed