

Expressed in the simplest form, the relation of this structure to marine erosion may be stated thus : Hard rocks present greater resistance to the inroads of the sea, and consequently tend to project as headlands ; soft rocks are more easily demolished, and, therefore, recede before the waves into creeks and bays. The waste of the eastern shores of the British Isles is more rapid than that of the western, because though the waves of the North Sea are less powerful than those of the Atlantic, yet the rocks forming the coast-line on that side are, as a whole, more easily worn away than those on the west side. If the soft sandstones and shales, clays and sands of the eastern sea-board were open to the full fury of the western ocean, there would be a sad yearly tale of loss and ruin. Perhaps, it may be objected that the western coast is far more indented with inlets than the eastern, and therefore shows more strikingly the wasteful powers of the sea. But these indentations, as will be afterwards pointed out, are not the work of the sea ; they are, in truth, submerged land-valleys, and point to the prolonged action of sub-aërial waste when our islands stood some hundreds of feet above their present level, and were probably joined to the mainland of Europe.

It would be interesting if we could trace the gradual retreat of the Scottish coast-line since man became an inhabitant of the country, or even since the time to which the earliest historical notices refer. No written records of such changes, however, go farther back than, at the most, three or four hundred years. There are, indeed, traditions of land having once existed, where for many a century have rolled the waves of the salt sea ; just as in Cornwall there still survives the memory of a district, called the Lionesse, now covered by the Atlantic, but which in the days of the Knights of the Round Table is said to have been rich