

their site.¹ Farther west stands the castle of Dunbar at the entrance of the Firth of Forth. There the proofs of degradation and decay come before us with a melancholy reality. The old castle, once so formidable a stronghold, is almost gone—two tall fragments of wall and some pieces of masonry at a lower level being all that is left. The rains and frosts of many a dreary winter have broken down the ramparts, and the hand of man, more wanton and unmerciful in its destruction than the hand of time, has quarried the stones and blasted the rocks in the excavation of the harbour. But the sea has all the while been ceaselessly at work wearing away the very headland on which the ruin is perched. The time will come, at no very distant date, when the *Dun* or hill from which the castle takes its name, will have disappeared, and its site will be marked only by a chain of rocky skerries. A little to the west of the castle, a huge mass of the sandstone cliffs, undermined by the sea, fell during the night some thirty years ago. The scar is yet visible, though the pile of ruin at the foot of the precipice is being broken up and carried away by the waves.

It might have been supposed that the comparatively sheltered estuary of the Forth would be free from any marked abrasion by the sea, yet even as far up as Granton, near Edinburgh, during a gale from the north-east, stones weighing a ton or more have been known to be torn out of a wall and rolled to a distance of thirty feet.² Hence, within the last few generations, the sea has made encroachments, sometimes to a considerable extent, along the whole coast of the firth, even as far up as Stirling. Tracing the southern shores in a westerly direction from Dunbar, we find

¹ *Popular Philosophy, or the Book of Nature laid open upon Christian Principles*. Dunbar, 1826, vol. ii. p. 160.

² Thomas Stevenson, *Trans. Royal Soc. Edin.* xvi. 27.