

more particularly the Archæan gneiss ; (2) the red (Cambrian) sandstones ; and (3) the basalt-escarpments. Of the first type the most striking examples are to be found in the great range of gneiss precipices which, rising to a height of 300 feet above the Atlantic, terminate northwards in Cape Wrath. The varying nature of the gnarled, crumpled gneiss, its irregular foliation and jointing, its bands of dark hornblende, and ramifying pink veins of pegmatite, conspire to give it very unequal powers of resistance in different parts of its mass. Consequently, it projects in irregular bastions and buttresses, and retires into deep recesses and tunnels, showing everywhere a ruggedness of aspect which is eminently characteristic (Fig. 15). In striking contrast to these precipices are those of the second type : the Cambrian sandstone which, a few miles to the east of Cape Wrath, rise in vast vertical walls of rock to a height of 600 feet. These nearly horizontal strata are cleft by their perpendicular joints into quadrangular piers and projections, some of which even stand out alone as cathedral-like islets in front of the main cliff. The sombre bands of dull red and brown are relieved by lines of vegetation along the edges of the nearly flat beds, which project like vast cornices and serve as nesting-places for crowds of sea-fowl. At various parts of the coast-line as far south as the mouth of Loch Carron, these red sandstones give rise to similar scenery, the cliffs of Handa Island being specially notable. The third type, that of the basalt plateaux, reaches its most impressive development along the west of the island of Skye, where a magnificent range of precipices rises to 1000 feet above the sea. These ramparts of rock are built up of successive, almost horizontal, sheets of basalt which rise one over another like gigantic courses of masonry. The durability of the different layers varies greatly, and the