

Here, perhaps, if anywhere, the believers in the efficacy of underground convulsions might make a bold stand. How could the firth, they might ask, quit its old channel and take one so widely different, unless the new outlet had been opened for it by an earthquake shock? The two Sutors seem to

‘Stand aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which have been rent asunder,
A dreary sea now flows between.’¹

It may be impossible absolutely to prove the origin of the deep gorge between the Cromarty Sutors; but it seems to me that there is evidence in the neighbourhood strongly in favour of the supposition that the work has been mainly done by running water. Let the observer cross to the Nigg side of the firth, and traverse the high ridge which is prolonged from the Black Isle. The rocks there are well ice-worn, the moulded knolls and the ice-groovings upon them running in an E.N.E. direction. Passing over to the eastern coast, a line of lofty red sandstone cliff—the continuation of those on the south side of the entrance to the Cromarty Firth—rises from the rocky beach and extends northwards to Shandwick. About a mile south of that fishing hamlet, a depression or valley, running across the ridge, descends into the flat plain of Easter Ross on the west side, and to the edge of the sea-cliff on the east. The bottom of the valley is coated with boulder-clay, through which two runnels, diverging from the low watershed of the hollow, flow in opposite directions. One of them trickles westward into the low grounds between the Bay of Nigg and the Dornoch Firth, the other having a steeper and shorter declivity has cut its way deep into the red sandstone, forming there a ravine which breaks through the

¹ Coleridge's *Christabel*.