

—the road soon leads to the Inchnadamph Inn, at the head of Loch Assynt.

But the more usual way of reaching the west of Sutherland is from Lairg. From **Dingwall** the railway runs down the western side of the Cromarty Firth, and allows good views to be had of the great alluvial accumulation at the head of that estuary [187], also of three raised beaches (25, 50, and 85 feet), which are well seen about Dingwall and Invergordon. The railway runs on a platform of raised beach between Invergordon and Delny stations. At Novar is the deep ravine of the Alt Graat [174]. Passing Invergordon the traveller can look out to sea between the two Sutors that guard the entrance to the Firth [187]. The 85-foot raised beach runs through the hollow between Nigg Bay and the Dornoch Firth. The latter estuary is nearly cut into two by the sand spit at Meikle Ferry [187]. Raised beaches continue up the Kyle of Sutherland. Crossing the river the railway runs up the steep ascent of the Shin to Lairg, whence views are obtained of Ben More, Assynt, and the mountains round the head of Loch Shin.

**Lairg** is the starting-place for three of the mail-gigs which cross Sutherland, viz. —

(1.) To Inchnadamph and Loch Inver.—Nearly the whole of the journey is in the valley of Strath Oykil, which becomes somewhat monotonous before the traveller reaches the watershed and sees the strange pyramid of Suilven towering in front, and the mass of Coul More to the left [Fig. 43]. The drive from Inchnadamph to Loch Inver is one of the few in Sutherland where considerable masses of natural wood enter as a marked feature into the landscape. The imposing mass of Queenaig rises in front and shows with striking clearness its threefold grouping of rocks—Archæan gneiss, with overlying horizontal red sandstones and white quartzite stealing up the eastern slopes to the summit of the mountain [116]. The actual junction of the sandstone and gneiss may be noticed by the side of the road.

(2.) To Scourie and Durness.—This is a long and somewhat tedious drive until the watershed of the country is reached. Thence amid abundant glacier moraines, the descent is rapid down to Loch More, from either side of which the younger well-banded gneisses rise steeply against the sky-line. Ben Stack, [201] a huge mass of the old gneiss, at length comes into view,