

losing its support, rolls down upon the beach. Thereafter the same process is renewed, and the boulder continually diminishes in size (Fig. 168).²⁷⁶

Of the progress of marine erosion, the more exposed parts of the British coast-line furnish many admirable examples. The sea-board of Cornwall presents a most impressive range of cliffs, sea-stacks, caves, gullies, tunnels, reefs, and skerries, showing every stage in the process of demolition (Fig. 167). The west coast of Ireland, exposed to the full swell of the Atlantic, is in innumerable localities completely

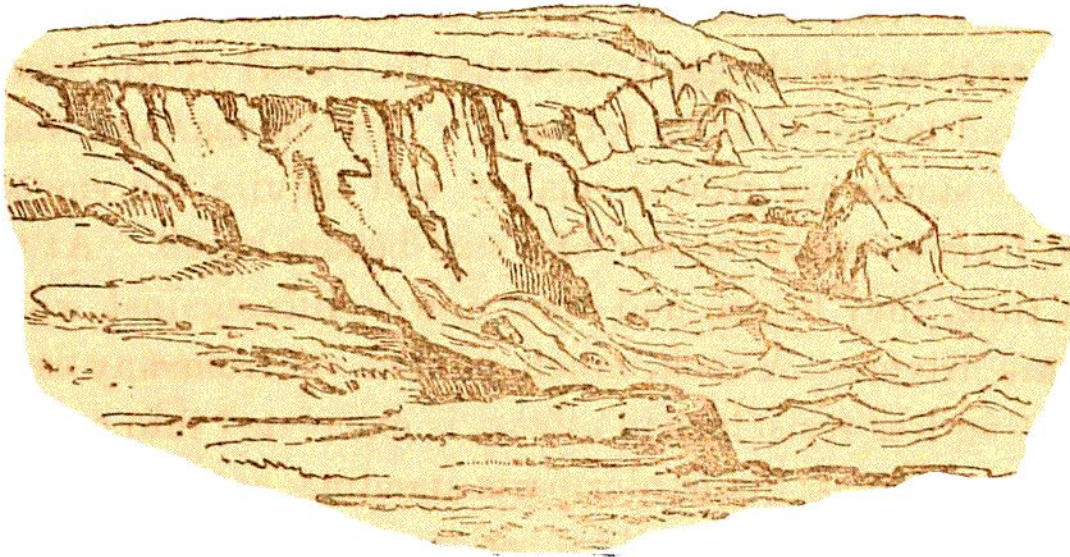


Fig. 167.—Coast of Cornwall, at Bedruthan (Devonian Rocks), cut by the sea into cliffs, bays, and stacks (*B.*).

undermined by caverns, into which the sea enters from both sides. The precipitous coasts of Skye, Sutherland, Caithness, Aberdeen, Kincardine, and Forfar abound in the most impressive lessons of the waste of a rocky sea-margin; while the same picturesque features are prolonged into the Orkney and Shetland Islands, the magnificent cliffs of Hoy towering as a vast wall some 1200 feet above the Atlantic breakers, which are tunnelling and fretting their base.

If such is the progress of waste where the materials consist of the most solid rocks, we may expect to meet with still more impressive proofs of decay where the coast-line can oppose only soft sand or clay to the march of the breakers. Again, the geological student in Britain can examine for

²⁷⁶ See on the action of waves on sea-beaches and sea-bottoms, A. R. Hunt. Proc. Roy. Dublin Soc. 1884, p. 241.