

to descend with me the course of a stream that we see furrowing the hillside below us. Striking across the bare moor we reach the spring or 'well-eye' whence the rivulet takes its rise—a patch of bright-green amid the brown heath, that may treacherously conceal a deep pool of water or a basin of liquid peat. Issuing from this source, the rivulet trickles at first along the heath and bent, but soon cuts through these into the black peaty layer below them, where it runs for a short distance as in a furrow or gutter. But gaining volume and force as it works its way down the steeper slope, it digs its channel through the peat into the layer below, wherein the stones are bleached white by the solvent action of the organic acids in the peat. Every yard that we descend shows us more evidence of erosion. The runnel has now cut deeply into the cover of rain-wash, drift or decomposed rock that lies on the more solid rock below. So great is the erosion, that the stream has excavated a deep narrow gully in this superficial layer of loose material, and the coherent stratum of peat projects in black cornices on either side. From time to time, these ledges break off, so that blocks of peat several yards in circumference lie in tumbled ruin at the bottom of the ravine, where they are eventually broken up and washed away down into the valley. The rapidity with which such a deep narrow trench may be formed on a steep hillside is sometimes strikingly exemplified by the fate of one of the sheep-drains cut on those uplands to carry away the surface-water. Sudden heavy rains, or what the shepherds call 'waterspouts,' occasionally discharge such a volume of water into one of these shallow trenches that it is quickly deepened and widened, and becomes for the time the channel of a swift torrent. When the drainage has once found its way into such a channel, it is apt to keep to it. Successive rains thus dig the gully