

of the mountain, the expanding of its sides would either have effectually prevented the other from being similarly rent, or would have closed it up had it been already formed. And if it be contended, in answer, that the two narrow open chasms might have been produced by underground movements, and afterwards enlarged by running water and the other powers of erosion, such an hypothesis would really assign most of the work to these gentle agencies. Not only so, it might necessitate the admission that every Highland mountain from which glens diverge is an independent focus of disturbance—an idea wholly disproved by the geological structure of the Highlands, and especially by that of the plateaux of nearly level Cambrian sandstone and Tertiary basalt. The radical error of such an explanation lies in the fact that it assumes the present surface of the country to be, approximately at least, the same as that which witnessed the supposed dislocations to which the glens are attributed. It thus ignores the vast denudation which the whole of that region has undergone. In looking at the disposition of the Highland glens and straths, their winding course, their orderly system, and their complete subservience to the drainage of the country, it seems hard to see how any one can now call in question the conclusion that the valleys have been made by sub-aërial waste.

If the reader will take a map and consider with attention the arrangement of the Highland glens and straths, he will remark, I think, that two systems of valleys can there be made out. Of these, the one has a general trend from north-east to south-west, the other from north-west to south-east. Between these two systems there are many intermediate examples; nay, the same valley may sometimes incline to the one and sometimes to the other. But even with such doubtful forms, the two main systems re-