

CHAPTER IX

THE HIGHLAND HILLS

IF the views expressed in the preceding chapter regarding the origin of the valleys of the Highlands be correct, there are obviously no true mountains in that region. A mountain, if the term is to be used with any definite geological significance, is a tract of the earth's surface which owes its position to a special upheaval of the terrestrial crust, and whose direction, external form, and internal structure, bear witness to this upheaval. But no area of high ground in Scotland answers to this definition. When the heights that form the connected ridges or the isolated hills in this country are examined from this point of view they, one and all, proclaim that they are essentially the results of unequal erosion. As I have already stated, they have been left prominent because the surrounding masses of rock have been removed. So important is the realisation of this fact in the study of the topography of the country that, at the risk of wearying the reader with reiteration, I would again insist on the significance of the evidence that thousands of feet of solid rock have been gradually stripped off the general surface of the Highlands. I have endeavoured to prove that the original forms of that region