

CHAPTER XIII

THE SOUTHERN TABLE-LAND AND ITS VALLEYS

FROM what was stated in Chapter VII. regarding the leveling down of the convoluted and fractured rocks of the Highlands into a great plain or base-level of erosion, the reader will have no difficulty in recognising, from the broad similarity of structure, that the same process must have been at work upon what are now the uplands of the southern counties. The lesson of vast denudation, taught by every Highland mountain-top, is brought home to us not less vividly there. A casual scrutiny suffices to make it clear that these long flat summits, instead of being made by the broad surfaces of horizontal strata, have been in reality planed down upon the upturned edges of contorted greywackes and shales. In crossing a smooth hill-top among these uplands, we pass over bed after bed, tilted on end, crumpled, inverted, broken ; yet the whole complex mass has been shorn away to a common level. By prolonging the truncated arches of the rocks, some idea may be formed of how vast an amount of material must have been worn away, and how entirely the surface of these high grounds has been fashioned by denudation (see Sections II., III. on the Geological Map). The cutting of such a great undulating plain out of hard rock was