

down is demonstrated by the composition of these younger deposits and their strong unconformability upon the older rocks.

The first ascertainable facts, therefore, as to the levelling down of the southern table-land are that in the south and west it was effected partly before and partly during the time of the Lower Old Red Sandstone, and that in the north-east it had been in great measure completed before the close of the Upper Old Red Sandstone. But there is likewise evidence of the elevation of the region, and of the prolonged denudation of these younger formations, even as far back as Palæozoic time. We know, for instance, that the thick masses of Lower Old Red conglomerate, sandstone and volcanic rocks had been stripped off from the uplands about the head of Nithsdale before the period of the Coal-measures, for the coal-bearing strata of Sanquhar rest directly upon Silurian greywacke and shale, and appear to have extended far over that region (Fig. 65). Again, the scattered patches of Permian breccia point to the wearing away of this Carboniferous cover in the next geological period.

The history of the southern table-land is thus, like that of the Highlands, long and complicated. We have not to deal merely with one denuded plateau, raised at one time within the influence of sub-aërial waste and valley-erosion, but with a region which has again and again been upraised, worn down and buried under piles of its own ruin. We must remember also that only a fragment of the table-land now remains. On the north it has been cut through by a system of faults, by which all the ground that lay to the north-west of them has been depressed below the Midland Valley. How far the original Silurian uplands went northwards, and especially whether they were ever continuous with those of the Highlands, before the formation of the boundary faults