

CHAPTER XVII

THE GLACIATION OF THE LOWLANDS

WHEN the great ice-sheet began to settle down upon Scotland, the main features of the broad Midland Valley, like those of the rest of the country, were probably very much what they are still. During the passing of the Ice Age many of the minor details of the scenery were modified or obliterated; hills were rounded and smoothed, while many an old valley and river-course was partially or wholly filled up with boulder-clay. The whole country was, as it were, smothered up in drift, and hundreds of new hillocks and mounds were scattered over its surface. Yet the larger elements of the landscape underwent no marked change.

Throughout the Lowlands, no chain of hills seems to have been high and broad enough to nourish an independent group of glaciers. But, as we have already seen, the great ice-sheets from the Highlands, on the one side, and from the Southern Uplands on the other, streamed down into the low grounds and across these to the sea. Hence the projecting rocks have that ice-worn surface so characteristic of Scottish scenery. They still retain abundantly on their sides and summits the striation and moulding which mark the direction in which the ice moved. From