found in a marble in a zone of contact-metamorphism. The line of junction of this group of rocks with the gneiss is well defined, but does not distinctly show any intrusion of the latter, appearing rather to have resulted from movement with concomitant crushing. If these strata, so similar in many respects to the undoubted altered sedimentary masses of the central Highlands, are eventually proved to be truly of sedimentary origin they will possess a high interest as the oldest geological formation yet known in Britain or in Europe.[30]

In some portions of the northwest of Scotland, especially in the north of Sutherland, the surface of the gneiss has been reduced, after prolonged denudation, to a kind of

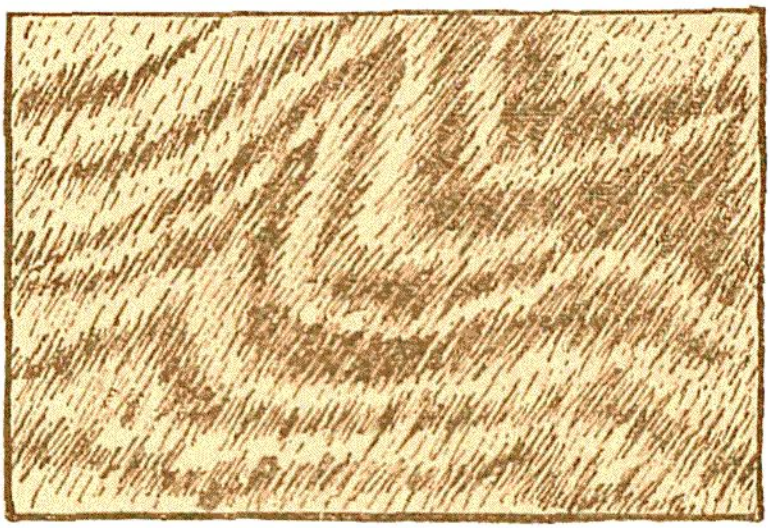

Fig. 333.—Diagram showing later oblique foliation crossing the original banding of the Lewisian gneiss (about nat. size).

level platform on which the Torridon Sandstone has been deposited. But further south that surface presents a singularly uneven character rising into heights 3000 feet above the sea and sinking into hollows that descend below sea-level. In the rugged mountainous ground between Lochs Maree and Broom this primeval land-surface is impressively displayed, for the thick mantle of red sandstone under which it was buried and preserved has been irregularly stripped off, and the details of the pre-Torridonian topography can easily be traced.

TORRIDONIAN.—From Cape Wrath, at the extreme northwest end of Scotland, southward for more than 100 miles, there stretches a broken belt of singular conical or pyra-

[30] See Brit. Assoc. 1891, Sect. p. 634.