

must have been very great. I consider it certain, that from these mountains glaciers descended through ancient valleys, now lost, and indeed that other sub-angular conglomerates of the Old Red Sandstone in various parts of Britain consist of stratified moraine matter. All the ordinary influences of terrestrial waste—rain, rivers, frosts, snow, ice, wind, and waves—were at work sculpturing the surface of that old land, and on the very same land they have been at work from that day to this. What was the precise form of the highlands that bordered this Old Red Sandstone lake, it is now impossible to know, except that it was mountainous; but this is certain, that after the early disturbances of the strata, the general result of all the wasting influences, acting down to the present day, has been to produce the present scenery. Thus it is certain that all the Cambrian and Laurentian rocks of the north-west of Scotland, were once buried deep beneath Lower Silurian gneiss thousands of feet thick; that on the west these Silurian strata have been, in places, almost utterly worn away, and the Cambrian rocks, as in Suilven, have thus been exposed and moulded into an outlier by subsequent waste. Some of these mountains in Sutherland now form the grandest and most abrupt peaks of the north-west Highlands, standing, steep-sided and high like Suilven, isolated, on a broad raised platform of Laurentian gneiss. And just as a railway navigator leaves pillars of earth in a railway cutting, to mark how much he has removed, so the great excavator, Time, has left these mountain landmarks to record the greatness of his operations.

It is at first hard to realise these facts, but observation and reflection combined lead to this inevitable result.