

CHAPTER XXX.

ORIGIN OF RIVER VALLEYS—THEIR RELATION TO TABLELANDS—ESCARPMENTS CUT THROUGH BY RIVERS—GEOLOGICAL DATES OF DIFFERENT RIVER-VALLEYS—THE SEVERN, THE AVON, THE THAMES, THE FROME, AND THE SOLENT—TRIBUTARIES OF THE WASH AND THE HUMBER—THE EDEN AND THE WESTERN-FLOWING RIVERS—SCOTLAND.

It is difficult, or almost impossible, even approximately to settle precisely what are the geological dates of the valleys through which many rivers run ; or, in other words, when they first began to be scooped out, and through what various periods their excavation was intermittently or continuously carried on. No one has yet thoroughly analysed this subject, and only of late years have I begun clearly to see my way into it. Nevertheless a good deal has been done even now, and a great deal more will be accomplished when, with sufficient data, the whole subject may come to be investigated. In Wales, for example, there are vast numbers of rivers and brooks, small and large, and when we examine the relation of these streams to the present surface of the country, we often find it very remarkable. Fig. 97 is a diagram representing no particular section, but simply the general nature of the sections across the Lower Silurian strata of Cardiganshire, as shown by myself in a paper given to the British