

of its course. South of Strath Spey, the rivers find their way east and south-east to the German Ocean; the Tay and the Forth from a high watershed that crosses Scotland from the neighbourhood of Fraserburgh on the east to Crinan on the west coast. To a great extent it is formed of hard granitic rocks and associated gneiss, and on this account it is high because of its power to resist denudation.

Like so many other rivers, the Tay has cut its way in old times over, and now through, a high belt of ground, that of the Sidlaw Hills just above the estuary; and the Forth, the Teith, and the Allan have in like manner breached that long range of Trappean Hills, known as the Ochils and the hills of Campsie.

The whole of the estuary of the Forth and the greater part of the valley of the Clyde lie in an exceedingly ancient area of depression. That country is also covered more or less with Boulder-clay, and with later stratified detritus of sand and gravel which were formed in part by the remodelling of the Glacial drifts. These rivers ran in that area before the commencement of these deposits, and indeed for unknown ages before that period. But we have no distinct traces of those earlier epochs when we try to trace them as regards the history of the rivers of Scotland; and we know little besides this, that the Forth and the Clyde ran in their valleys long before the deposition of the Boulder-clay, and with other rivers resumed to some extent their old courses after the emergence of the country.

As of the rivers already mentioned, this may also be said of the Tweed, that we know nothing for certain of its history, except that its valley is of later age than the Old Red Sandstone and Carboniferous rocks.