

that terminates at its upper end in a waterfall, across the top of which the strata can be traced in unbroken sequence from side to side.

In a previous chapter allusion was made to the frequent association of gorges and wide alluvial plains above them ; but some further account of this feature may here be given. Where a valley contracts and its stream flows through a narrow rocky defile, there is commonly an expansion of the valley above the ravine. This association is usually explained by a difference in the relative hardness of the rocks eroded by the stream. The harder masses resist more and are therefore less rapidly worn down. Where they cross a valley, therefore, they retard the excavation, while the softer rocks lying farther up are more rapidly wasted. But as the stream cannot lower its bed below the level of the barrier of hard rock, it attacks the side of the valley and thus widens it out, while at the same time it is sawing down the rocky barrier and making a ravine. In districts of comparatively simple geological structure, where, for instance, soft slates alternate with courses of hard sandstone, the truth of this explanation can be readily seen. But it is not so easy to apply it in many Highland valleys where there is no very evident reason in any apparent difference in the rocks to account for the alternate expansion and contraction. Instances of this common feature will readily occur to any one who is familiar with Highland scenery. As an easily accessible locality, I have already cited Glen Falloch, above the head of Loch Lomond, in which between that lake and the watershed some four or five examples may be seen in the course of some six or seven miles. Other excellent examples may be noticed in Glen Spean, above the Bridge of Roy. One of these is conspicuous just above the great gorge at Achluachrach (field