

towards Glen Muick, and terminating on the north at the edge of a range of granite precipices. The top of Ben Macdhui (Beinn na muich dhu, the hill of dark gloom) stands upon nearly a square mile of moor exceeding 4000 feet in elevation. These mountains lie within the granite area, but not less striking examples may be found among the schists. The mountains at the head of Glen Esk and Glen Isla, for instance, sweep upward into a broad moor some 3000 feet above the sea, the more prominent parts of which have received special names,—Driesh, Mayar, Tom Buidhe, Tolmount, Cairn na Glasha (3484 feet). It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that there is more level ground on the tops of these mountains than in areas of corresponding size in the valleys below. That these high plateaux are planes of erosion is shown by their independence of geological structure, the upturned edges of the vertical and contorted schists having been abruptly shorn off and the granite having been wasted and levelled along its exposed surface. They stand out as fragments of the original table-land of erosion out of which the present valley-systems of the Highlands have been carved; though doubtless they have in the course of ages lost much from their surface as well as from their sides.

Regarding the present flat-topped heights among the eastern Grampians as fragments of what may have been the general character of the surface out of which the present Highlands have been carved, we can trace every step in the gradual obliteration of the table-land and in the formation of the most rugged and individualised forms of isolated mountain. This may best be done by following the ridges westwards. The broad flat summits of Aberdeenshire and Forfarshire gradually give place to narrow ridges and crests which reach their extreme of serrated ruggedness