

but have their history plainly written on every surrounding lineament of the ground. Others, in spite of all that has been done to extract from them the secret of their origin, persistently refuse to tell it.

It must not be supposed, however, that there is anything specially mysterious about the Scottish lakes. In considering their history, we are bound to remember that they are only a local exhibition of a feature that characterises the whole of the northern part of the northern hemisphere. They find their counterparts in Scandinavia and Finland on this side of the Atlantic, and in British North America on the other. They may be arranged in four classes, each of which has its own peculiar scenery, and has been formed in a different way: (1) Lakes of the plains; (2) Moraine-



FIG. 49.—Section showing the structure of the basins of the Lakes of the Plains, lying in hollows of the superficial covering of drift.

tarns; (3) Rock-tarns; (4) Glen-lakes. About the first two of these classes there is no difference of opinion, but much discussion has arisen as to the history of the last two.

1. The Lakes of the Plains, as their name denotes, do not properly belong to the Highlands, and I will therefore reserve the description of them until I come to the consideration of the Midland Valley, where they are so well developed. But, for the sake of completeness of narrative, I may say here that these lakes lie in hollows of the covering of detritus left on the surface of country when the ice-sheets and icebergs retreated (Fig. 49). These superficial materials were thrown down very irregularly, and when water began once more to flow over the land, it gathered into the depressions and formed lakes.