

of the central valley of Scotland is to be found in the erratic blocks. Smaller in size and much less numerous than those in the Highlands and Southern Uplands, nevertheless they impress the imagination more vividly from the greater contrast they offer to the rocks among which they occur, and the demonstration they offer of transport from a distance. In many a Lowland parish, where little or no naked rock may come to the surface, the smooth ridges of till will be found with their scattered boulders sometimes many tons in weight. In such places

‘A huge stone is sometimes seen to lie  
Couched on the bald top of an eminence ;  
Wonder to all who do the same espy,  
By what means it could thither come and whence,  
So that it seems a thing indued with sense,  
Like a sea beast crawled forth, that on a shelf  
Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun itself.’<sup>1</sup>

Unhappily, the progress of modern agriculture is inimical to the preservation of these stones, and they have as a consequence disappeared from the more cultivated districts. But in many a mossy tract, especially round the flanks of the main hill ranges, they may still be counted by the score. I have already alluded to the grey granite boulders which lie strewn over the lower grounds of Carrick, in such numbers as to look at a little distance like flocks of sheep (Fig. 69). So conspicuous are the erratic blocks of the Lowlands as to have long attracted the notice of the peasantry, and so strange sometimes are their positions, and so markedly do they often differ in composition from the general character of the surrounding rocks, that, like the kames, they have been from the earliest times a theme of endless wonder. Many a wild legend and grotesque tale of goblins, witches,

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's *Poems of the Imagination*, xxii.