

enabled to advance some little way. I shall endeavour to lay before the reader the facts on which each inference is based, that he may judge how far there is actual evidence from which to restore in imagination certain ancient conditions of the country.

Two methods of treatment are here open to us, each of which possesses its peculiar advantages. We may discuss the subject entirely from the geological point of view, arranging all the facts of the same kind in one division without reference to their distribution in the country. This method is undoubtedly preferable for those who, having no personal acquaintance with Scotland, are chiefly desirous to see all the topographical details of the same kind marshalled together and connected with the conclusions in science to which they lead. On the other hand, we may consider the question from the geographical point of view, taking each well-marked district or region, and trying to work out the history of its scenery. This plan is probably most useful for those who purpose themselves to study the problem on the ground, and to test by actual observation the conclusions to which their assent is asked. While this volume will, I trust, be of service to both classes of readers, I am more especially anxious that it should be made as available as possible to those who mean to use it as a handbook to the scenery which it professes to discuss. I shall therefore follow mainly the geographical method.

Scotland naturally divides itself into three great belts of country, each of which is marked by its own peculiarities of geological structure and of external configuration: (1) The Highlands, including also the western and northern Islands; (2) The Southern Uplands, or the broad belt of high pastoral ground that stretches from St. Abb's Head to the Irish Sea; and (3) the Midland Valley, or the wide tract