

lands already referred to, there occur numerous long but narrow strips of flat land in the more important valleys. Each valley is usually provided with a floor of detritus which, spread out between the bases of the bounding hills, has been levelled into meadow-land by the rivers, and furnishes, as a rule, the only arable ground in each district.

The islands that fringe the Highlands on the western side present two strongly contrasted types of scenery. The Outer Hebrides, from the Butt of Lewis to Barra Head, resemble portions of the west of Sutherland with which they are in geological structure identical, and no doubt represent a very ancient range of hills which rose along the western border of Europe before the British Isles were separated from the continent. Coll and Tiree and the islands which continue seawards the south-western portion of Argyllshire, are merely disconnected parts of the adjacent mainland, having the same rocks and the same kind of scenery. But the group of islands known as the Inner Hebrides, of which the chief are Skye, Mull, Rum, Eigg, and Canna, belong to a totally different order. They are in large measure composed of terraced flat-topped basalt hills with rich green slopes and long level lines of brown crag (Fig. 32). The regularity of their forms stands in strong contrast to the ruggedness of the true Highland mountains; and this contrast suffices to show that, throughout the area of these islands, the ordinary type of Highland rocks is replaced by others of a totally distinct kind.

The Orkney Islands are merely a northward prolongation of Caithness, and, together with that county, ought not in strictness to be considered with the Highlands. The whole of that region, from the southern edge of Caithness to the most northerly headland of the Orkneys, is composed of a low flat table-land or plain of Old Red Sandstone, out of which