

Excerpt: ...the manner in which Dr. MacCulloch and Mr. Darwin suppose the roads to constitute mere excrescences of the superficial alluvial coating which rests upon the hillside, and consists chiefly of clay and sharp unrounded stones. Among other proofs that the parallel roads have really been formed along the margin of a sheet of water, it may be mentioned, that wherever an isolated hill rises in the middle of the glen above the level of any particular shelf, as in Mealderry, Plate 2, a corresponding shelf is seen at the same level passing round the hill, as would have happened if it had once formed an island in a lake or fjord. Another very remarkable peculiarity in these terraces is this; each of them comes in some portion of its course to a col, or parting ridge, between the heads of glens, the explanation of which will be considered in the sequel. Those writers who first advocated the doctrine that the roads were the ancient beaches of freshwater lakes, were unable to offer any probable hypothesis respecting the formation and subsequent removal of barriers of sufficient height and solidity to dam up the water. To introduce any violent convulsion for their removal was inconsistent with the uninterrupted horizontality of the roads, and with the undisturbed aspect of those parts of the glens where the shelves come suddenly to an end. Mr. Agassiz and Dr. Buckland, desirous, like the defenders of the lake theory, to account for the limitation of the shelves to certain glens, and their absence in contiguous glens, where the rocks are of the same composition, and the slope and inclination of the ground very similar, first started the theory that these valleys were once blocked up by enormous glaciers descending from Ben Nevis, giving rise to what are called, in Switzerland and in the Tyrol, glacier-lakes. In corroboration of this view, they contended that the alluvium of Glen Roy, as well as of other parts of Scotland, agrees in character with the moraines of...

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