

ever, detailing the results of single excursions, let me attempt briefly describing the entire system in the ascending order, from the base upwards.

The gneiss upon which the system rests is exactly the same fundamental deposit here that we find it to be in the Highlands of Scotland generally. It is of the ordinary mineralogical composition, too, and mixed up, as elsewhere, with the usually associated rocks and minerals, existing in the character of veins, beds, and included masses. It presents, however, a peculiarity in the cast of its scenery, — shared also by the gneiss districts of Wester Ross, — which renders what I may term its pictorial aspect widely different from that of the gneiss of the central and eastern Highlands. Our gneiss hills generally are squat, truncated, confluent, massive prominences, traversed by wide straths, and open glens; and, though imposing often from their vast proportions, they are somewhat monotonous when spread over a wide tract, from their obtuse and rounded outlines, and from their lack of height in proportion to their great breadth of base. Ben Weavis in Ross-shire, that rises to an altitude of little more than three thousand feet from a base some five or six miles either way, and on whose flat summit another hill as tall as itself might be set down, may be regarded as a somewhat extreme but characteristic specimen of the class. And such, over an area of some seven or eight thousand square miles, is the ordinary scenic character of our gneiss hills. The gneiss hills of Assynt, with those of the adjoining districts, — Eddrachilles on the one hand, and Wester Ross on the other, — are, on the contrary, not massive, and rarely confluent: they never rise more than a few hundred feet in height; they are seldom traversed by continuous valleys; and they are extremely abrupt and rugged in their outline. Seen from one of their summits, the appearance presented is that of a rough cockling sea; while in travelling among them, so thickly do they stand to-