

I have at intervals wandered over it, finding in its undulations of bare rock a fascination which a fairer landscape might fail to exert. Each visit suggests some fresh problem, if it does not cast light on earlier difficulties. One of the questions which must particularly engage the attention of every observant traveller in Western Sutherland and Ross is the origin of that extraordinary contour presented by the gneiss. A very slight examination shows that every dome and boss of rock is ice-worn. The smoothed, polished, and striated surface left by the ice of the glacial period is everywhere to be recognised. Each hummock of gneiss is a more or less perfect *roche moutonnée*. Perched blocks are strewn over the ground by thousands. In short, there can hardly be anywhere else in Britain a more thoroughly typical piece of glaciation.

An obvious answer to the question of the origin of the peculiar configuration of this gneiss country is to refer it to the action of the last ice-sheet which covered Britain. That the gneiss was powerfully ground down by that ice is sufficiently manifest. But if the peculiar bossy surface is to be thus explained we are confronted by the difficulty that the ice must have acted far more effectively on the gneiss than on any other rock in the region. Yet there is nothing either in the structure of the rocks or in the configuration of the ground to make the erosion greater on the gneiss than on the red sandstone or quartzites and schists. The same side of a sea-loch may be seen to present slopes both of gneiss and sandstone; the gneiss is always worn into smooth domes, ridges, and hollows; but the sandstone retains its parallel bands of rocky terrace. The difference is evidently not due to any recent greater glacial abrasion of the gneiss. The area of high ground above the gneiss platform in Sutherlandshire is compara-