

which breaks up into huge fragments, that rise and float away as icebergs.

If a single glacier, descending below the snow-line, as in Norway and Switzerland, can grind down, polish, and score the rocks of its channel, it is easy to see how vast and constant must be the erosion carried on by so huge and heavy a mass of ice as that which creeps over the whole of North Greenland from mountain top to sea-shore. Could we strip off this icy mantle, we should find the surface of that country worn into rounded and flowing outlines, its valleys and hills smoothed, often with hollows and deep rock-basins ground out of them, and its rocks covered with ruts and grooves running in long persistent lines, that would mark the direction of the march of the ice. It would, in short, so far as we can tell, bear the closest resemblance to the smoothed and polished aspect of western Scandinavia and the Highlands of Scotland. The ice has so long retired from our mountains and glens that the peculiar contours which it impressed upon them have had time to be in some measure broken up by the disintegrating influence of the weather. But the effects of the glaciation are still so fresh as to afford materials for forming a vivid mental picture of the general aspect of this country when the rigorous climate of the Ice Age was at its height.

We see, then, that one of the most notable of nature's sculpture-tools, land-ice, though no longer at work in Scotland, has left its characteristic marks all over the country. The detailed account of how Scottish scenery has been influenced by ice-action will be given in later chapters. But besides grinding down, smoothing, polishing, and grooving the rocks, glaciers leave other memorials of their presence. In a glacier valley, the frosts, thaws, and rains of every year loosen large quantities of debris, much of which ultimately