

character of the rocky foregrounds of Highland landscape. In larger measure than might be thought probable, the essential characters which mark the weathering of a rock in mountainous masses descend even into the details of form and colour among the crags and boulders of the lower grounds. Some rocks present great resistance to the disintegration of their component minerals, and yield to decay chiefly by the opening of their joints. Rocks of this nature split up into angular masses, the forms and sizes of which are determined by the number, direction, and degree of closeness of their joints. They long retain their sharp edges and bare surfaces, though in the end lichens and mosses steal over them, and slowly provide a crust on which heath and ferns may grow. Other rocks, again, weather by the decay of one or more of their constituents, and may crumble into mere sand. These cannot retain the angularity which their joints would give them, but are rapidly rounded at the edges, and their blocks consequently look like well-worn and far-travelled boulders, though they may never have moved from the position into which they fell from their parent crag.

As illustrations of some of these kinds of individuality, let me ask the reader to contrast the rocky foregrounds of the younger gneisses and mica-schists, of the Cambrian sandstones and quartzites, and of the eruptive rocks such as granite.

A great corry, scarped from the side of a mica-schist mountain, towers above him, and shows against the sky a serrated line of peaks and clefts, with streaks of snow and deep lines of shadow. On either side, his eye rests on dark beetling crags split open with parallel vertical rifts, as if they had been rent by an earthquake, and below these crags, piles of huge angular blocks strew the slopes and