

blocks, the speculation did not succeed ; and although this chief obstacle has since been removed, no attempt has been made to renew the undertaking." One of the old workings occurs in the neighborhood of the parish church, where a large block, operated upon by the saw, may still be seen in the hollow whence it was excavated. The marble here is of the dark gray variety, streaked and veined with red ; but, as shown by the dressed surfaces of the mass left behind by the workers, it seems but indifferently suited to resist the action of the weather, in at least a climate such as that of Assynt. In little more than a quarter of a century the marks of the tool have almost entirely disappeared from the stone ; and the sparry substance which fills the red veins has sunk considerably beneath the level of the darker portions which it traverses. At the other old working, near Ledbeg, about six miles higher up the valley, the white and gray varieties of marble occur ; and bare rounded masses may be seen from the road, rising over the brown heath or peaty soil, like those wasted and partially soiled wreaths of snow that mottle at midsummer the upper zones of our higher hills. It formed a subject of complaint to the workmen, that the rock in this locality is so traversed by cracks and flaws, that they failed to procure from it blocks at once solid throughout, and of a size sufficient for such purposes as the manufacture of table-slabs or large chimney-lintels ; and I have been informed that the noble proprietrix of the county at the time,—the late Countess Duchess of Sutherland,—desirous to procure for the ancient family seat of Dunrobin a fine specimen of the native marble of the district, in the form of a chimney-piece for one of the public rooms, had to content herself, instead, from this cause, with simply a chimney-piece for one of the smaller bed-rooms. As the workings, however,—prosecuted for but a short time,—were but mere scratchings of the surface, it is probable that