

between. While the valleys have been worn down through the sandstone, these strange pyramidal mountains, that form so singular a feature in the landscapes of the north-west Highlands, have been left standing, like lonely sea-stacks, as monuments of long ages of waste.

A singular feature in many of these sandstone pyramids affords another good illustration of the influence of geological structure in hill scenery. The quartzite which was described in Chapter VI. as overlying the Cambrian sandstone may be seen stealing up the slopes of the sandstone mountains, and even capping their summits. As these overlying patches are light grey or white in colour, the contrasting hues of the two rocks give rise to some of the most unexpected features in the scenery. In certain phases of the sky, when the light falls brightly on the tops of the dark red pyramids, the white quartzite looks like a scalp of gleaming ice, and the long lines of white rubbish that seam the slopes might be taken for glaciers which have shrunk up the mountains almost to the limit of perpetual snow (Figs. 20, 44).

Where a rock yields with considerable uniformity in all directions to the attacks of the weather, it is apt to assume conical forms in the progress of denudation. Sometimes this uniformity is attained by a general disintegration into fine debris, which rolls down the slopes in scree. In other cases, it is secured by the intersection of joints whereby a rock, in itself hard and durable, is divided into small angular blocks which are separated by the action of the elements and slide down the declivities. The upper part of a mountain disintegrating in this way is left exposed to continual waste, while the sides, as they shelve downwards, are better and better protected under the coating of rubbish. When the structure of the rock and the activity of the powers of