

savage scenery, may be found along the shores of Loch Hourne and Loch Nevis. The height and the angular spiry forms of the ridges, the steep and deeply-rifted slopes, and the ruggedness and sterility of the whole landscape, distinguish these two sea-lochs from the rest of the fjords of the west coast.

Amid such scenes as these, the influence of the stratification and joints of the gneiss and schist on the decomposition of the rocks can be traced by a geological eye far along the summits and slopes of the mountains. To this influence are due those parallel clefts which give rise to dark rifts down the steep scarps, and to deep angular notches on the crests of the ridges. To the same cause also, combined with the unequal waste that arises from varieties in the texture of the rocks, we may ascribe that gnarled craggy contour so characteristic of the gneissose hills of the Highlands, as well as the frequent tendency of the summits to assume spiry forms. Sometimes a whole mountain has been worn into a conical shape, but more frequently it is along the crests or at the ends of ridges that this outline occurs, and the reason seems to be that the gneiss and mica-schist are usually too various in texture and rate of decomposition to allow of the formation of a great cone like those of quartzite, while nevertheless uniform enough over lesser areas to give rise to small cones and spires along the summit of a mountain ridge.

Where the schistose rocks are of a softer and more uniform texture, they form large lumpy hills with long smooth slopes covered with heath or peat, through which the rock seldom protrudes, save here and there where a knob of harder consistency comes to the surface, or where a mountain torrent has cut a ravine down the hillside. Those wide tracts of the Highlands where the rocks are of this