

margin. The old gneiss forms the long chain of the Outer Hebrides. On the mainland, it runs as a broken fringe from Cape Wrath to the island of Raasay, coming out boldly to the Atlantic in the northern half of its course, but throughout the southern portion retiring towards the heads of the bays and sea-lochs, and even stretching inland to the upper end of Loch Maree. Whether the traveller approaches a tract of the gneiss from the sea or from the land, he can hardly fail to remark its curious peculiarities of outline. If he looks at it from the western or Atlantic side, as, for instance, in sailing up Loch Torridon, or coasting along the western sea-board of Sutherland, he sees the land rising out of the water in bare rounded domes of rock, crowded behind and above each other as far as the eye can follow them. Not a tree nor a bush casts a shadow over these wastes of barren rock. It might at first be supposed that even heather had been unable to find a foothold on them. Grey, rugged, and verdureless, they look as if they had but recently been thrust up from beneath the waves, and as if the kindly hand of nature had not yet had time to clothe them with her livery of green. Strange, however, as this scenery appears when viewed from a distance, it becomes even stranger when we enter into it, and more especially when we climb one of its more prominent heights and look down upon many square miles of its extent. The whole landscape is one wide expanse of smoothed and rounded bosses and ridges of bare rock, which, uniting and then separating, enclose innumerable little tarns. There are no definite lines of hill and valley; the country consists, in fact, of a seemingly inextricable labyrinth of hills and valleys which, on the whole, do not rise much above nor sink much below a general average level. Over this region of naked rock, with all its bareness