

of rushes), whence a broad alluvial plain stretches for almost two miles to near Inverlair, where it gives place to another gorge in the hard massive schists. Above this second ravine is another alluvial plain with lateral terraces. A large moraine has been thrown across the valley, which has turned the stream aside and compelled it to saw out a narrow gorge in the schists. It is probable that such meadow-like expansions were lakes in the glaciated regions, and that these have gradually been silted up. Reference will be made in a later chapter to the occurrence of glen-lakes above gorges in many parts of the Highlands.

Among the high grounds, where disintegration proceeds apace, the gradual narrowing of ridges into sharp, narrow, knife-edged crests and the lowering of these into cols or passes can be admirably studied. Where two glens begin opposite to each other on the same ridge, their corries are gradually cut back until only a sharp crest separates them. This crest, attacked on each front and along the summit, is lowered with comparative rapidity, until in the end merely a low col, pass, or balloch, may separate the heads of the two glens. The various stages in this kind of demolition are best seen where the underlying rock is of granite or some similar material which possesses considerable toughness, while at the same time it is apt to be split and splintered by means of its numerous transverse joints.

The district around Ben Nevis furnishes good illustrations. The narrow crest of granite to which reference was made earlier in this chapter, forms a kind of shattered partition wall between two glens running northward and one running southward. This intervening and lessening partition is doomed in the end to be wholly removed, and then one long glen will run along the east side of Ben Nevis, with perhaps a low, scarcely perceptible watershed