

granite, rains and frosts have less power to split open the joints, after the upper layer of the rock has broken up into angular rubbish, which, though always wasting away, is always renewed in such a manner as to protect the rock below. But a vertical wall or steep face of granite may for a long while maintain its precipitousness. Slice after slice will be removed from it, each of them being determined by joint-surfaces and thus retaining their clean-cut character. The heaps of angular blocks that fall to the bottom of the precipice are further broken up by the weather, and ultimately washed away down to the low grounds. Hence the precipice shrinks backward into the mass of the mountain. To this unequal weathering, dependent in great measure upon the closeness and angle of the joints, I believe we should ascribe the singular extremes in the scenery of granite mountains, as well as the picturesque forms which are often assumed by groups of granite boulders.

Hardly less conspicuous than the masses of granite are the bosses of gabbro which in Skye, Rum, and Mull tower into such conspicuous landmarks. The Coolin Hills in Skye afford the most striking and best-known example of the peculiar contours assumed by this rock, and their proximity to the equally distinct Red Hills gives another and impressive lesson on the influence of geological structure on outer form. To the west, the black spiry serrated peaks of the Coolins cast their shadows over the sea-lochs at their base, while eastwards a series of reddish or yellowish smooth blunted cones and rounded domes rises out of the sea. These various rocks are eruptive masses, but of vastly younger date than the granite of the Highland mainland, for they are connected with the volcanic action to which the great Tertiary basaltic plateaux are to be traced. They have been sculptured into their present