

districts: they represent also a vast period of time in the history of the globe. The pyramid, with its three huge bars, its foundations of granitic rock, its base of red conglomerate, its central band of dark-colored schist, and its lighter tinted apex of sandstone, is inscribed from bottom to top, like an Egyptian obelisk, with a historical record. The upper and lower sections treat of tempests and currents — the middle is “written within and without” with wonderful narratives of animal life; and yet the whole, taken together, comprises but an earlier portion of that chronicle of existences and events furnished by the Old Red Sandstone. It is, however, with this earlier portion that my acquaintance is most minute.

My first statement regarding it must be much the reverse of the borrowed one with which this chapter begins. *The fossils are remarkably numerous, and in a state of high preservation.* I have a hundred solid proofs by which to establish the truth of the assertion, within less than a yard of me. Half my closet walls are covered with the peculiar fossils of the Lower Old Red Sandstone; and certainly a stranger assemblage of forms have rarely been grouped together; — creatures whose very type is lost, fantastic and uncouth, and which puzzle the naturalist to assign them even their class; — boat-like animals, furnished with oars and a rudder; — fish plated over, like the tortoise, above and below, with a strong armor of bone, and furnished with but one solitary rudder-like fin; other fish less equivocal in their form, but with the membranes of their fins thickly covered with scales; — creatures bristling over with thorns; others glistening in an enamelled coat, as if beautifully japanned — the tail, in every instance among the less equivocal shapes, formed not equally as in existing fish, on each side the central vertebral column, but chiefly on the lower side — the column sending out its