

cally at least, the degrading process is the same as that to which sandstones of a different but equally inferior quality are exposed during severe frosts. In the course of years however, this sandstone, when employed in building, loses its salt; crust after crust is formed on the surface, and either forced off by the crystals underneath, or washed away by the rains; and then the stone ceases to waste, and gathers on its weathered inequalities a protecting mantle of lichens.* The most valuable quarries in the Old Red System of Scotland yet discovered, are the flagstone quarries of Caithness and Carmylie. The former have been opened in the middle schists of the lower, or Tilestone formation of the system; the latter, as I have had occasion to remark oftener than once, in the Cornstone, or middle formation. The quarries of both Carmylie and Caithness employ hundreds of workmen, and their flagstones form an article of commerce. The best building-stone of the north of Scotland — best both for beauty and durability — is a pure Quartzose Sandstone furnished by the upper beds of the system. These are extensively quarried in Moray, near the village of Burghead, and exported to all parts of the kingdom. The famous obelisk of Forres, so

* When left to time the process is a tedious one, and, ere its accomplishment, the beauty of the masonry is always in some degree destroyed. The following passage, from a popular work, points out a mode by which it might possibly be anticipated, and the waste of surface prevented: — “A hall of which the walls were constantly damp though every means were employed to keep them dry, was about to be pulled down, when M. Schmithall recommended, as a last resource, that the walls should be washed with sulphuric acid, (vitriol.) It was done, and the deliquescent salts being decomposed by acid, the walls dried, and the hall was afterwards free from dampness.” — (*Reactions in Science.*)