

much the greater part has been washed away by the waves and currents of unreckoned ages. But if this sandstone belong in reality to the Old Red system, what, I asked, are these apparently associated beds of stratified limestone and shale? Are they not the representatives, though mayhap in an altered state, of those Old Red ichthyolitic beds which, overlying the great conglomerate, exist in Ross, Cromarty, and Moray, as alternating layers of lime, clay, and sandstone, and occur in Caithness as the extensively developed flagstones so well known in commerce as Caithness flag? And it was chiefly in the hope of finding some data on which to determine the true answer to the query that I last autumn visited Assynt.

I had examined, in the previous year, the Old Red Sandstone of Ru-Store and Durness, and satisfied myself that it is the same rock which is developed in these localities that forms the insulated hills of Sulvein, Coul-beg, and Coul-more, and which occurs at Gairloch in Ross-shire, in the southern parts of Skye, and in the island of Rum; and further, that in Sutherland, as in Ross and Iverness-shires, it rests unconformably on a base of gneiss. I now fixed on Inch-na-damph, near the head of Loch Assynt, as the best possible centre for examining the *associated* deposits of the district. It lies within less than two hours' walk of both the upper and lower beds of the great system to which all the upper rocks of Assynt belong, and is in the immediate neighborhood of a range of noble precipices, — the crags of Stronchrubie, — which present a magnificent section of the stratified limestone. Beginning with these, I traced them upwards from near their base to the deposit which rests over them (an immense bed of quartz rock, that forms by much the greater part of one of the loftiest of the Sutherlandshire hills, — Benmore); and then, reversing my course, traced them downwards, with the deposits which lie under them, until I reached the fundamental gneiss of the country. Without, how-