

them is red, in a proportion which no longer obtains among the primary rocks of the country. I detected in this sandstone, in the island of Rum, thin beds of a gray stratified clay, resembling the clay of the ichthyolite beds of Ross and Cromarty; but, though they inclose occasional nodules, I failed to discover in them aught organic. The Old Red Sandstone of the west coast, like its probable analogue the Great Conglomerate of the east, is, so far as we yet know, an unfossiliferous deposit. I may here mention, that I found at Gairloch in Ross-shire, nearly thirty years ago, a variety of this sandstone of a finer and closer grain than ordinary, which yielded freely to the chisel, and made, — what is by no means common in the formation, — an excellent hewing stone. M'Culloch had not yet published his geological map of Scotland; and the limits of the various rock-systems in the more inaccessible parts of the country were scarce at all known, when I was despatched, in advance of a party of workmen engaged to erect a dwelling-house on the shores of Gairloch, to find some suitable quarry for the rubble-work, — a sort of commission which it was thought, though I was but a mere lad at the time, my habit at looking at rocks might qualify me to execute. I was struck, on my arrival, by the flatness of the promontory which forms the northern barrier of the loch, and the general softness of its outline, compared with that of the rugged gneiss region around; and, immediately setting out to ascertain what sort of a rock entered into its composition, I found, somewhat to my surprise, that it consisted entirely of red sandstone. But, though I procured in abundance ashlar and corner-stones for our purposed building, my discovery did not stand my master, the contractor, so much in stead as it might; as, in despair of finding sandstone in Gairloch, he had previously freighted a vessel with stones for the hewn work from the quarries of Burghead in the Moray Frith. As I have already incidentally remarked,