

fossiliferous rocks cannot be traced, we must, I suspect, be content with simply the probable. For my own part, the occurrence in one of the flagstones of Strongchrubie, of the spine of a *Cheiracanthus*, or of a few scales of *Dipterus*, or of the plates of a *Coccosteus*, would satisfy me more thoroughly than all the arguments ever derived from mineralogical character; or from the occurrence, in a certain order, of certain peculiarly marked beds. But while I must regard the identity of the Red Sandstone of the north-eastern and north-western coasts of Scotland as by no means fully established, I am at least strongly of opinion that, as they are essentially the same in their aspect, order, and components, they represent also the same period in the history of the globe. From finding the strata of the Old Red Sandstone upturned against our primary mountains, and truncated atop, and from those detached fragments of the system which occur as insulated hills far in the Highland interior, I was led to conclude, many years ago, that this deposit had at one time overlaid all the primary rocks of Scotland, from the southern flanks of the Grampians to the northern boundary of Sutherland,—a conclusion to which Sir Charles Lyell, in the later editions of his “Elements,” has approvingly referred, as coincident with views on the subject entertained by himself. And these arenaceous rocks of Assynt, with their associated limestones and marbles, I must regard as in all probability a portion of this once continuous system, hardened by metamorphic action, and which having, in consequence, resisted the denuding agencies that swept away the contemporary beds, still continue to wrap over the contorted and broken gneisses and granites of the district, and to form its most elevated mountains. It is the surviving fragment of a covering of which almost all the other portions have crumbled away piecemeal and disappeared.