

so many noble Fiords between Sleat and Cape Wrath, while on the east there are large tracts of Old Red Sandstone, more or less extending from Thurso in Caithness to the Great Glen, Moray Firth, the river Spey, and yet further east. Fig. 55, p. 287.

In times within the memory of the writer, all these metamorphic rocks of the Highlands were classed in Wernerian style as Primitive strata, thrown down in hot seas before the creation of life in the world. The progress of research showed that gneiss and other rocks now called metamorphic, are of many geological ages; and the fortunate discovery of fossils in these strata, at Durness, by Mr. C. Peach, in 1854, showed them to be of Arenig age, a discovery the importance of which was at once seen by Sir Roderick Murchison, who by this means, revolutionised the geology of the greater part of the northern half of Scotland. Feeling anxious to have a second opinion respecting the justness of his new views, he asked me to accompany him on a long tour through the northern Highlands in 1859, when I mapped part of the country at Durness and Loch Eriboll, and the whole matter seemed to me so plain, that the wonder is, that any man with eyes ever dreamed of disputing it. In these days no one now thinks of denying the Lower Silurian age of the chief part of the gneissic rocks of Scotland, the features of which have been mapped by Professor Geikie, first in concert with Sir Roderick Murchison, and afterwards personally in more detail.¹

With regard to the physical geography of the time, little is certain but this, that almost the whole of the area now called Scotland was under the sea, during the time

¹ See 'Geological Map of Scotland,' last edition, by Archibald Geikie, LL.D., F.R.S., 1876.