

CHAPTER VIII.

DEVONIAN AND OLD RED SANDSTONE ROCKS.

IN 1836 Sedgwick and Murchison described the existence in Devonshire of a series of rocks bearing fossils intermediate in character between those of the Upper Silurian series and those of the Carboniferous Limestone. This was done with the assistance of Mr. Lonsdale in all the palæontological part of the question, in which the argument chiefly lay. On these and certain stratigraphical grounds, it was considered that they are the equivalents of the Old Red Sandstone of the centre of England and of Scotland, and the name DEVONIAN being applied to them, the terms Devonian and Old Red Sandstone are generally considered as equivalents in point of geological time.

According to the late Professor Jukes, the lowest strata of the Barnstaple Bay district in North Devon consist of red sandstones and conglomerates, similar to those of part of the Old Red Sandstone of Ireland, and not unlike that of the Mendip Hills. This, taken in connection with the resemblance of the overlying strata to the lower Carboniferous rocks of the south of Ireland, led him to consider the chief part of the Devonian rocks of Devonshire to be of Carboniferous age. To this conclusion he was led partly by palæontological considerations into which I cannot here enter. The opposite