

task was at last accomplished by two men, working independently of each other in Wales and the border counties of England. Murchison and Sedgwick, whose observations on ancient volcanic action have already been referred to, carried the principles of Cuvier, Brongniart, and William Smith into the chaos of old Greywacke, and succeeded in adding the Devonian, Silurian and Cambrian chapters to the geological record, thus establishing a definite order among the oldest fossiliferous formations, and completing thereby Palæozoic stratigraphy.

Roderick Impey Murchison, who was born in Ross-shire in 1792, belonged to a family that had lived for centuries among the wilds of the north-western Highlands of Scotland, and had taken part in much of the rough life of that remote and savage region.¹ Entering the army when he was only fifteen years of age, he served for a time in the Peninsular war, and carried the colours of his regiment at the battle of Vimieira. During the subsequent retreat to Corunna he narrowly escaped being taken prisoner by the French. On the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, seeing no longer any prospect of military activity or distinction, he quitted the army, married, and for some years devoted himself with ardour to fox-hunting, in which his love of an open-air life and of vigorous exercise could have full gratification. But he was made for a nobler kind of existence than that of a mere Nimrod. His wife, a woman of cultivated tastes, had led him to take much interest in art and

¹The biographical details are taken from my *Life of Sir Roderick I. Murchison*, 2 vols. 8vo, 1875.