

### CHAPTER III.

Lamarck's Theory of Progression illustrated. — Class of Facts which give Color to it. — The Credulity of *Unbelief*. — M. Maillet and his Fish-birds. — Gradation not Progress. — Geological Argument. — The Present incomplete without the Past. — Intermediate Links of Creation. — Organisms of the Lower Old Red Sandstone. — The *Pterichthys*. — Its first Discovery. — Mr. Murchison's Decision regarding it. — Confirmed by that of Agassiz. — Description. — The several Varieties of the Fossil yet discovered. — Evidence of Violent Death in the Attitudes in which they are found. — The *Coccosteus* of the Lower Old Red. — Description. — Gradations from Crustacea to Fishes. — Habits of the *Coccosteus*. — Scarcely any Conception too extravagant for Nature to realize.

MR. LYELL's brilliant and popular work, *The Principles of Geology*, must have introduced to the knowledge of most of my readers the strange theories of Lamarck. The ingenious foreigner, on the strength of a few striking facts, which prove that, to a certain extent, the instincts of species may be improved and heightened, and their forms changed from a lower to a higher degree of adaptation to their circumstances, has concluded that there is a natural progress from the inferior orders of being towards the superior; and that the offspring of creatures low in the scale in the present time, may hold a much higher place in it, and belong to different and nobler species, a few thousand years hence. The descendants of the *ourang-outang*, for instance, may be employed in some future age in writing treatises on Geology, in which they shall have to describe the remains of the *quadrumana* as belonging to an extinct order. Lamarck himself, when bearing home in triumph with him the skeleton of some huge