

and debris, nor could I trace their relation to a single known rock. I was struck, as I well might, by the utter strangeness of the forms — the oar-like arms of the *Pterichthys* and its tortoise-like plates — the strange, buckler-looking head of the *Coccosteus*, which, I suppose, might possibly be the back of a small tortoise, though the tubercles reminded me rather of the skin of the shark — the polished scales and plates of the *Osteolepis* — the spined and scaled fins of the *Cheiracanthus* — above all, the one-sided tail of at least eight out of the ten or twelve varieties of fossil which the deposit contained. All together excited and astonished me. But some time elapsed ere I learned to distinguish the nicer generic differences of the various organisms of the formation. I found fragments of the *Pterichthys* on this morning; but I date its discovery, in relation to the mind of the discoverer, more than a twelvemonth later.* I confounded the *Cheiracanthus*, too, with its single-spined, membranous dorsal, with *Diplacanthus ich yolite*, furnished with two such dorsals; and the *Diplopterus* with the *Osteolepis*. Still, however, I saw enough to

* I find, by some notes, which had escaped my notice when drawing up for the *Witness* newspaper the sketches now expanded into a volume, that in the year 1834 I furnished the collection of a geological friend, the Rev. John Swanson, minister of the parish of Small Isles, in the Outer Hebrides, with a well-marked specimen of the *Pterichthys Milleri*. The circumstance pleasingly reminds me of the first of all my early acquaintance, who learned to deem the time not dly squandered that was spent in exploring the wonders of bygone creations. Does the minister of Small Isles still remember the boy who led him in quest of petrifications — himself a little boy at the time — to a deep, solitary cave on the Moray Frith, where they lingered amidst stalactites and mosses till the wild sea had surrounded them unmarked, barring all chance of retreat, and the dark night came on?