

CHAPTER VII.

Further Discoveries of the Ichthyolite Beds. — Found in one Locality under a Bed of Peat. — Discovered in another beneath an ancient Burying-ground. — In a third underlying the Lias Formation. — In a fourth overtopped by a still older Sandstone Deposit. — Difficulties in ascertaining the true Place of a newly-discovered Formation. — Caution against drawing too hasty Inferences from the mere circumstance of Neighborhood. — The Writer receives his first Assistance from without. — *Geological Appendix* of the Messrs. Anderson, of Inverness. — Further Assistance from the Researches of Agassiz. — Suggestions. — Dr. John Malcolmson. — His Extensive Discoveries in Moray. — He submits to Agassiz a Drawing of the *Pterichthys*. — Place of the Ichthyolites in the Scale at length determined. — Two distinct Platforms of Being in the Formation to which they belong.

I COMMENCED forming a small collection, and set myself carefully to examine the neighboring rocks for organisms of a similar character. The eye becomes practised in such researches, and my labors were soon repaid. Directly above the little bay there is a cornfield, and beyond the field a wood of forest trees; and in this wood, in the bottom of a water-course, scooped out of the rock through a bed of peat, I found the stratified clay charged with scales. A few hundred yards farther to the west there is a deep, wooded ravine cut through a thick bed of red diluvial clay. The top of the bank directly above is occupied by the ruins of an ancient chapel, and a group of moss-grown tombstones; and in the gorge of this ravine, underlying the little field of graves by about sixty feet, I discovered a still more ancient place of sepulture — that of the ichthyolites. I explored every bank,