

The exuvæ of at least four platforms of being lay entombed furlong below furlong, amid the gray, mouldering mudstones, the harder arenaceous beds, the consolidated clays, and the concretionary limestones, that underlay the ancient ocean of the Lower Old Red. The earth had already become a vast sepulchre, to a depth beneath the bed of the sea equal to at least twice the height of Ben Nevis over its surface.

The first scene in the *Tempest* opens amid the confusion and turmoil of the hurricane — amid thunders and lightnings, the roar of the wind, the shouts of the seamen, the rattling of cordage, and the wild dash of the billows. The history of the period represented by the Old Red Sandstone seems, in what now forms the northern half of Scotland, to have opened in a similar manner. The finely-laminated lower Tilestones of England were deposited evidently in a calm sea. During the contemporary period in our own country, the vast space which now includes Orkney and Lochness, Dingwall, and Gamrie, and many a thousand square mile besides, was the scene of a shallow ocean, perplexed by powerful currents, and agitated by waves. A vast stratum of water-rolled pebbles, varying in depth from a hundred feet to a hundred yards, remains in a thousand different localities, to testify of the disturbing agencies of this time of commotion. The hardest masses which the stratum encloses, — porphyries of vitreous fracture that cut glass as readily as flint, and masses of quartz that strike fire quite as profusely from steel, — are yet polished and ground down into bullet-like forms, not an angu-

---

and of these only about one hundred are found also in the overlying Devonian series; while but fifteen are common to the whole Palæozoic period, and not one extends beyond it."— (*M. de Verneuil and Count D'Archiac*, quoted by Mr. D. T. Ansted. 1844.)