

forming a temporary harbor, at which we boated the stones we had been quarrying, I struck my pick into a slaty sandstone bed, thickly mottled in the layers by carbonaceous markings. They consisted, I saw, of thin rectilinear stems or leaves, much broken, and in a bad state of keeping, that at once suggested to me layers of comminuted *Zostera marina*, such as I had often seen on the Cromarty beach thrown up from the sub-marine meadows of the Frith beyond. But then, with magnificent ammonites and belemnites, and large well-marked ignites, to be had in abundance at Eathie just for the laying open and the picking up, how could I think of giving myself to disinter what seemed to be mere broken fragments of *Zostera*? Within, however, a few feet of these carbonaceous markings there occurred one of those platforms of violent death for which the Old Red Sandstone is so remarkable,—a platform strewn over with fossil remains of the first-born ganoids of creation, many of which still bore in their contorted outlines evidence of sudden dissolution and the dying pang.

During the winter of this year,—for winter at length came, and, my labors over, three happy months were all my own,—I had an opportunity of seeing, deep in a wild Highland glen, the remains of one of our old Scotch forests of the native pine. My cousin George, finding his pretty Highland cottage on the birch-covered Tomhan situated too far from his ordinary scenes of employment, had removed to Cromarty; and when his work had this year come to a close for the season, he made use of his first leisure in visiting his father-in-law, an aged shepherd who resided in the upper recesses of Strathcarron. He had invited me to accompany him; and of the invitation I gladly availed myself. We struck across the tract of wild hills which intervenes between the Cromarty and Dornoch Friths, a few miles to the west of the village of Invergordon; and, after spending several hours in toiling across dreary moors, unopened at the time by any public road, we took our noon-day refreshment in an uninhabited valley, among broken cottage-walls, with a few furrowed patches stretching out around us, green amid the waste. One of the best swords-