

approximating towards determination. It was not, however, until the autumn of 1837 that I got them fairly fixed down to the Old Red Sandstone, and not until the winter of 1839 that I was able conclusively to demonstrate their place in the base of the system, little more than a hundred feet, and in one part not more than eighty feet, above the upper strata of the Great Conglomerate. I had often wished, during my explorations, to be able to extend my field of observation into the neighboring counties, in order to determine whether could not possess myself, at a distance, of the evidence which, for a time at least, I failed to find at home; but my daily engagements in the bank fixed me down to Cromarty and its neighborhood; and I found myself somewhat in the circumstances of a tolerably lively beetle stuck on a pin, that, though able, with a little exertion, to spin round its centre, is yet wholly unable to quit it. I acquired, however, at the close of 1837, in the late Dr. John Malcolmson of Madras, a noble auxiliary, who could expatiate freely over the regions virtually barred against me. He had been led to visit Cromarty by a brief description of its geology, rather picturesque than scientific, which had appeared in my legendary volume; and after I had introduced him to its ichthyolitic beds on both sides of the Hill and at Eathie, and acquainted him with their character and organisms, he set himself to trace out the resembling deposits of the neighboring shires of Banff, Moray, and Nairn. And in little more than a fortnight he had detected the ichthyolites in numerous localities all over an Old Red Sandstone tract, which extends from the primary districts of Banff to near the field of Culloden. The Old Red Sandstone of the north, hitherto deemed so poor in fossils, he found,—with the Cromarty deposits as his key,—teeming with organic remains. In the spring of 1838, Dr. Malcolmson visited England and the Continent, and introduced some of my Cephalaspean fossils to the notice of Agassiz, and some of the evidence which I had laid before him regarding their place in the scale, to Mr. (now Sir Roderick) Murchison. And I had the honor, in consequence, of corresponding with both their