

early period; and at length exchanged manual labor for the office of accountant in a branch bank opened at Cromarty. During the first two years of his accountantship his marriage took place, his "Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland" was published, and he became a frequent contributor to periodicals. The non-intrusion controversy was then at its height in the Scottish church, and immediately after the adverse decision of the house of lords in the Auchterarder case he published his celebrated "Letter to Lord Brougham," which, as Mr. Gladstone affirmed, showed a mastery of pure, elegant, and masculine English that even an Oxford scholar might have envied. The leaders of the Free church were then look-

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ing for a man to edit their contemplated organ, and at once selected Mr. Miller, who in 1840 removed to Edinburgh as editor of the "Witness." As a Scottish journalist he held a high and almost unique place. His leading articles were essays remarkable for their deliberate thought, elevated moral tone, strong Presbyterian feeling, and fine literary finish, and exerted a powerful influence on the formation of public opinion. His genius for description, literary culture, and relish for peculiar social characteristics appear also in his account of a vacation tour, entitled "First Impressions of England and its People." But his greatest eminence was achieved in the department of practical and speculative geology. He went to Edinburgh with the results of many years of scientific observation and reflection, with a collection of belemnites, fossil fishes, and other objects of natural history, and with a collection of thoughts and speculations about them, which in his own judgment formed his most valuable capital. During the first year of his editorship he published in the "Witness" a series of papers, afterward known collectively under the title of "The Old Red Sandstone, or New Walks in an Old Field," in which he detailed the story of his researches and revealed his discoveries of fossils in a formation which had till that time been deemed almost destitute of them. These were immediately recognized by savants as important additions to geological science. At the meeting of the British association in 1840 his labors were the principal theme; the fossils which he had picked up in boyhood in his native district were promoted to their due rank as *pterichthys Milleri*; and Murchison and Buckland spoke of his descriptive talent as casting plain geologists like themselves into the shade, and making them ashamed of their meagre style. His severe tasks endangered his health and compelled him to forego all literary labor during the greater part of 1845 and 1846; but he returned from his seclusion only to be more