gneiss is seen occasionally, on the removal of the newer beds, containing organic remains, to be worn and smoothed; secondly, pebbles of gneiss have been found in some of the Silurian strata. Between the origin, therefore, of the gneiss and the granite there intervened, first, the period when the strata of gneiss were denuded; 2dly, the period of the deposition of the Silurian deposits. Yet the granite produced, after this long interval, is often so intimately blended with the ancient gneiss, at the point of junction, that it is impossible to draw any other than an arbitrary line of separation between them; and where this is not the case, tortuous veins of granite pass freely through gneiss, ending sometimes in threads, as if the older rock had offered no resistance to their passage. It seems necessary, therefore, to conceive that the gneiss was softened and more or less melted when penetrated by the granite. But had such junctions alone been visible, and had we not learnt, from other sections, how long a period elapsed between the consolidation of the gneiss and the injection of this granite, we might have suspected that the gneiss was scarcely solidified, or had not yet assumed its complete metamorphic character, when invaded by the plutonic rock. From this example we may learn how impossible it is to conjecture whether certain granites in Scotland, and other countries, which send veins into gneiss and other metamorphic rocks, are primary, or whether they may not belong to some secondary or tertiary period.

Oldest granites.—It is not half a century since the doctrine was very general that all granitic rocks were *primitive*, that is to say, that they originated before the deposition of the first sedimentary strata, and before the creation of organic beings (see above, p. 9). But so greatly are our views now changed, that we find it no easy task to point out a single mass of granite demonstrably more ancient than all the known fossiliferous deposits. Could we discover some Lower Cambrian strata resting immediately on granite, there being no alterations at the point of contact, nor any intersecting granitic veins, we might then affirm the plutonic rock to have originated before the oldest known fossiliferous strata. Still it would be presumptuous, as we have already pointed out, p. 452, to suppose that when a small part only of the globe has been investigated, we are acquainted with the oldest fossiliferous strata in the crust of our planet. Even when these are found, we cannot assume that there never were any antecedent strata containing organic remains, which may have become metamorphic. If we find pebbles of granite in a conglomerate of the Lower Cambrian system, we may then feel assured that the parent granite was formed before the Lower Cambrian formation. But if the incumbent strata be merely Silurian or Upper Cambrian, the fundamental granite, although of high antiquity, may be posterior in date to *known* fossiliferous formations.

Protrusion of solid granite.—In part of Sutherlandshire, near Brora, common granite, composed of felspar, quartz, and mica, is in immediate contact with Oolitic strata, and has clearly been elevated to the surface