

STROMNESS AND ITS ASTEROLEPIS.

THE LAKE OF STENNIS.



WHEN engaged in prosecuting the self imposed task of examining in detail the various fossiliferous deposits of Scotland, in the hope of ultimately acquainting myself with them all, I extended my exploratory ramble, about two years ago, into the Mainland of Orkney, and resided for some time in the vicinity of Stromness.

This busy seaport town forms that special centre, in this northern archipelago, from which the structure of the entire group can be most advantageously studied. The geology of the Orkneys, like that of Caithness, owes its chief interest to the immense development which it exhibits of one formation, — the Lower Old Red Sandstone, — and to the extraordinary abundance of its vertebrate remains. It is not too much to affirm, that in the comparatively small portion which this cluster of islands contains of the *third* part of a system regarded only a few years ago as the least fossiliferous in the geologic scale, there are more fossil fish