

were entirely unknown, "But a man came," as M. Esquiros eloquently writes, "who threw light upon this sublime confusion of elements." Sir Roderick Impey Murchison, then a young President of the Geological Society, had his attention directed, as he himself informs us, to some of these beds on the banks of the Wye. After seven years of unremitting labour, he was rewarded by success. He established the fact that these sedimentary rocks, penetrated here and there by eruptive masses of igneous origin, formed a unique system, to which he gave the name of *Silurian*, because the rocks which he considered the most typical of the whole were most fully developed, charged with peculiar organic remains, in the land of the ancient Silures, who so bravely opposed the Roman invaders of their country. Many investigators have followed in Sir Roderick's steps, but few men have so nobly earned the honours and fame with which his name is associated.

The success which attended Sir R. Murchison's investigations soon attracted the attention of other geologists. Professor Sedgwick examined the older slaty strata, and succeeded in proving the position of the Cambrian rocks to be at the base of the Silurian. Still it was reserved for Sir William Logan, the Director of the Canadian Geological Survey, to establish the fact that immense masses of gneissic formation lay at the base of the Cambrian; and, by subsequent investigations, Sir Roderick Murchison satisfied himself that this formation was not confined to Canada, but was identical with the rocks termed by him Fundamental Gneiss, which exist in enormous masses on the west coast of Scotland, and which he proved to be the oldest stratified rocks in the British Isles. Subsequently he demonstrated the existence of these same Laurentian rocks in Bohemia and Bavaria, far beneath the Silurian rocks of Barrande.

While Murchison and Sedgwick were prosecuting their inquiries into the Silurian rocks, Hugh Miller and many others had their attention occupied with the Old Red Sandstone—the Devonian of Sedgwick and Murchison—which immediately overlies them. After a youth passed in wandering among the woods and rocks of his native Cromarty, the day came when Miller found himself twenty years of age, and, for the time, a workman in a quarry. A hard fate he thought it at the time, but to him it was the road to fame and success in life. The quarry in which he laboured was at the bottom of a bay formed by the mouth of a river opening to the south, a clear current of water on one side, as he vividly described it, and a thick wood on the other. In this silent spot, in the remote Highlands, a curious fossil fish of the Old Red Sandstone was revealed to him; its appear-