

V. *Notice respecting the Vertebra of a Whale, found in a Bed of bluish Clay, near Dingwall.* By Sir G. S. MACKENZIE, Baronet, F. R. S. Lond. & Edin. In a Letter to Dr BREWSTER, Sec. R. S. Edin., &c.

(*Read March 17. 1823.*)

MY DEAR SIR,

THE Vertebra which I now send to you, was found about two years ago, on the property of Mr MACKENZIE of Hilton, in Strathpeffer, county of Ross; and that gentleman desires me to present this interesting relic of some cetaceous animal to the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Some years ago, a navigable canal was cut from the mouth of the River Conan to the Town of Dingwall, and the operation displayed a bed of dark bluish clay, containing sea-shells in great numbers. The thickness of this bed I have not been able to ascertain. A successful attempt having been made to drain the lower part of Strathpeffer, which is now in a high state of cultivation, this bed of clay was found to extend several miles up the valley; and it was in clearing out the drain that the bone was found in the clay. It is probable that more of the skeleton might have been found, had search been made for it.

This bed of clay has evidently been formed at the same period with that which is seen along the south shore of the Forth, as it is about the same height from the present level of the water. The bone was found at a distance from high-water mark of about three miles; and the height above the sea, at Dingwall, of the spot from which it was dug, is about 12 feet. The date

of its deposition must be very remote; for the great mass of gravel, which you saw the rivers of this county cutting through, is a deposition subsequent to the clay which it covers; and in many places peat-mosses have been formed above the gravel. You may remember my pointing out to you two distinct alluvial deposites; one consisting chiefly of clay, covering the sides of the hills, and including enormous blocks of stone; and the other, consisting of gravel, which fills the valleys, and has been cut through at different periods, as the succession of terraces testifies. I have seen nothing that certifies the comparative ages of the marine clay and the oldest alluvion; but the latter I consider to be the oldest. It appears, therefore, that many centuries must have passed since the sea retired from Strathpeffer, or since the land was elevated. Whether the ocean be again advancing, I will not pretend to decide; but I have not yet subscribed to Mr STEVENSON'S theory.

I am sure that the Society will be glad to preserve the bone, as its having been discovered in circumstances nearly similar to those under which the skeleton was found at Airthrie, and on the same side of the island, render it extremely interesting.

I am,

My Dear Sir,

Truly Yours,

G. S. MACKENZIE.

COUL, }
21st January 1823. }