

thrown over the relics of a former world, conceals for ever the earliest scenes of the earth's physical drama.

2. THE SILURIAN AND CAMBRIAN SYSTEMS.—By a reference to the chronological arrangement (page 194, and Pl. 7), it will be seen that arenaceous and argillaceous strata, with limestones, and an immense thickness of slate rocks, fill up the interval between the old red sandstone, or Devonian system, and the mica schist, which is the uppermost of the metamorphic or igneous crystalline rocks. The term *transition* was formerly applied to these formations (page 17); and also that of *grauwacké*,* from the hardened conglomeritic character of many of the strata; but the whole series is now divided into two natural groups. The uppermost is designated the SILURIAN SYSTEM,† by Mr. Murchison, whose able and indefatigable researches have determined the true position, relation, and character of these deposits: the lowermost, consisting principally of slate rocks, has been named the CAMBRIAN SYSTEM by Professor Sedgwick, whose successful labours in this difficult field of geological inquiry have rendered clear and intelligible what before was doubtful and obscure.

* From the German *grau*, grey, and *wacké*, a name employed by the German miners to denote hardened conglomerates.

† Silurian—derived from the *Silures*, the ancient Britons who inhabited the country where these strata are most distinctly developed.