

The presence of land plants in the very uppermost Silurian strata, as, for instance, near Ludlow and May Hill, indicates the neighbourhood of land. The physical geography of the area was rapidly changing, marking the beginning of an evident *Continental epoch*. The subject is of so much importance, and when first propounded was considered to be such a dangerous innovation on established views, that I shall give the reasons in some detail, making use for that purpose of passages from my memoir 'On the Red Rocks of England, of older date than the Trias,' published in the 'Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society,' in 1871.

The circumstances which marked the passage of the uppermost Silurian rocks into Old Red Sandstone seem to me to have been:—First, a shallowing of the Silurian sea by accumulation of sediment, aided by slow upheaval, which gradually produced a great change in the physical geography of the district, so that the old marine area became changed into a series of mingled fresh and brackish lagoons, which finally, by continued terrestrial changes, were converted into lakes; and the occurrence of a very few genera or even species of fish and Crustacea, common both to the fresh and brackish or even salt waters, does not prove that the Old Red Sandstone is truly marine. At the present day, animals that are commonly supposed to be essentially marine, are occasionally found inhabiting fresh water. In the inland fresh lakes of Newfoundland, seals are common. They breed there freely, and never visit the sea. The same is the case in Lake Baikal in Central Asia, and it is on record that the inhabitants of the shores of the Sea of Aral, now brackish, were in old times clad in sealskins got from the seals that inhabited those