

distinguished by the name of the "Primordial Zone" a group of strata forming the lowest member of the Silurian system, and containing a peculiar and characteristic suite of trilobites. Murchison adopted the term, grouping under it the lowest dark slates which in Wales and the border English counties contained some of the same early forms of life.

Subsequent investigations, by the late Mr. Salter and Dr. Hicks, brought to light, from the Primordial rocks of Wales, a much more numerous fauna than they were supposed to possess, and one in some degree distinct from that in the undoubted Lower Silurian rocks. Thus the question of the proper base of the Silurian system was reopened, and much controversy arose as to the respective limits and relative stratigraphical value of the formations to be included under the designations Cambrian and Silurian. No such marked break, either palæontological or stratigraphical, had been found as to afford a clear line of division between two distinct "systems." Those who followed Murchison contended that even if the line of division were drawn at the upper limits reached by the primordial fauna, the Cambrian could not be considered to be a system as well defined and important as the Silurian, but that it ought rather to be regarded as the lower member of one great system comprising the primordial, and the second and third faunas, so admirably worked out by Barrande in Bohemia. To this system they maintained that the name Silurian, in accordance with priority and justice, should be assigned. Unfortunately a disagreement, which was not settled during the lifetime of Sedgwick and Murchison, bequeathed a dispute in which personal feeling played a large part. And though the fires of controversy have died out, it cannot be said that the questions in debate have been left on a wholly satisfactory footing. For myself I repeat what I have said in previous editions of this text-book, that the most natural and logical classification is to group Barrande's three faunas as one system which in accordance with the laws of priority should be called Silurian. But as this arrangement has not been generally adopted in this country I retain the Cambrian in the position which has here been usually assigned to it.¹⁴

¹⁴ After the first edition of this work was written, in which the future merging of Cambrian and Silurian into one great system was regarded as probable, M. Hébert thus expressed himself: "I adopt the opinion of M. Barrande, based as it was on such thorough and prolonged research, that there is one common character in his three first faunas which unites them into one great whole. To these faunas and the beds containing them I assign the name Silurian, because