

and toiled hard in disentangling the complicated structure of the eastern Alps; he also rambled with Lyell over the volcanic areas of Central and Southern France. Thereafter he determined to try whether the "interminable greywacke," as he called it, could not be reduced to order and made to yield a stratigraphical sequence, like that which had been so successfully obtained among younger formations. At the time when he began, that is, in the summer of 1831, absolutely nothing was known of the succession of rocks below the Old Red Sandstone. It was an unknown land, a pathless desert, where no previous traveller had been able to detect any trace of a practicable track towards order, or any clue to a system of arrangement that would enable the older fossiliferous rocks of one country to be paralleled, save in the broadest and most general way, with those of another.

Starting with his "wife and maid, two good grey nags and a little carriage, saddles being strapped behind for occasional equestrian use," Murchison made his way into South Wales. In that region, as was well known, the stratigraphical series could be followed down into the Old Red Sandstone, and within the frame or border of that formation, greywacke was believed to extend over all the rest of the Principality. Let me quote a few sentences in which Murchison describes his first entry into the domain with which his fame is now so inseparably linked. "Travelling from Brecon to Builth by the Herefordshire road, the gorge in which the Wye flows first developed what I had not till then seen. Low terrace-shaped ridges of grey rock, dipping slightly to the south-east, appeared on the