

if he finds reason to modify any of them, he shall not hesitate to announce the change of opinion.'¹

The history of the founding of the Devonian System was thus told by Lonsdale :—

It was immediately after the reading of Mr. Austen's paper 'On the Geology of the South-east of Devonshire' [December 1837], 'and partly from an examination of Mr. Austen's specimens, that I formed the opinion relative to the limestones of Devonshire being of the age of the old red sandstone ; and which I afterwards suggested, first to Mr. Murchison and then to Professor Sedgwick, and at a later period (in 1838), to Mr. de la Beche and other Fellows of the Society.'

This view was not published until March 1840.² Thus Lonsdale's 'important and original suggestion of the existence of an intermediary type of Palæozoic fossils, since called Devonian,' led to a change which was then 'the greatest ever made at one time in the classification of our English formations.'³

At a later date Sedgwick explained how it came to pass that the Devonian system was not established by Murchison and himself in 1836, when they determined the great culm-trough of North Devon to be Carboniferous. 'The reason is well known. We sent a good series of the fossils of the Petherwin and Barnstaple Groups to London. They were examined and named, and every species was called Silurian. . . . On re-examining the fossils in 1838, it turned out that all the species of the Barnstaple Group had been wrongly named ; and that so far from being Silurian, the only doubt respecting them was, whether they might not be called Carboniferous rather than Devonian. Thus the physical and fossil evidence were brought into harmony ; and I may add, from this example, that no good classification either of subdivisions or systems,

¹ Address, *Proc. Geol. Soc.* ii. 493.

² *Proc. Geol. Soc.* iii. p. 281, and *Trans. Geol. Soc.* ser. 2, vol. v. (1840), p. 724.

³ Murchison, Address, *Proc. Geol. Soc.* iv. p. 67 ; and Buckland, *ibid.* iii. p. 226.