

a descriptive word has become permanent in a case of this kind; and, in imitation of it, *Pæcilite* (from ποικίλος, various, (has been proposed by Mr. Conybeare⁵ as a name for the group of strata inferior to the oolites, of which the *Variiegated* Sandstone (Bunter Sandstein, Grès Bigarré,) is a conspicuous member. For the series of formations which lies immediately over the rocks in which no organic remains are found, the term *Transition* was long used, but with extreme ambiguity and vagueness. When this series, or rather the upper part of it, was well examined in South Wales, where it consists of many well-marked members, and may be probably taken as a type for a large portion of the rest of the world, it became necessary to give to the group thus explored a name not necessarily leading to assumption or controversy. Mr. Murchison selected the term *Silurian*, borrowed from the former inhabitants of the country in which his types were found; and this is a term excellent in many respects; but one which will probably not quite supersede "Transition," because, in other places, transition rocks occur which correspond to none of the members of the Silurian region.

Though new names are inevitable accompaniments of new views of classification, and though, therefore, the geological discoverer must be allowed a right to coin them, this is a privilege which, for the sake of his own credit, and the circulation of his tokens, he must exercise with great temperance and judgment. M. Brongniart may be taken as an example of the neglect of this caution. Acting upon the principle, in itself a sound one, that inconveniences arise from geological terms which have a mineralogical signification, he has given an entirely new list of names of the members of the geological series. Thus the primitive unstratified rocks are *terrains agalysiens*; the transition semi-compact are *hemilysiens*; the sedimentary strata are *yzemiens*; the diluvial deposits are *clysmiens*; and these divisions are subdivided by designations equally novel; thus of the "terrains yzemiens," members are—the *terrains clastiques, tritoniens, protéiques, palæotheriens, epilymniques, thalassiques*.⁶ Such a nomenclature appears to labor under great inconveniences, since the terms are descriptive in their derivation, yet are not generally intelligible, and refer to theoretical views yet have not the recommendation of systematic connexion.

⁵ *Report*, p. 379.

⁶ Brongniart, *Tableau des Terrains*, 1829.