

that these Lower Silurian strata were being deposited. The only sign of pre-existing land, is found on the west coast between Cape Wrath and Loch Torridon, where the Llandeilo beds lie alike unconformably on the Cambrian and Laurentian strata. This proves, that when the lowest Llandeilo beds began to be deposited, the underlying rocks formed the eastern margin of a territory, of which probably our Outer Hebrides was only a part, but how far it may have stretched westward it is impossible to say. However that may have been, it seems certain that long before the uppermost strata of the Lower Silurian rocks of Scotland were deposited, these fragments of an older land, which are still preserved on the west, had been long submerged and buried under the accumulating piles of the Silurian strata. That even then an extensive land lay not far off is certain, for the extent and great thickness of the Lower Silurian rocks affords a measure of the amount of waste of a pre-existing territory, the partial and gradual destruction of which, by all the agencies of denudation, provided mechanical sediments wherewith to form thousands of feet of Silurian strata of mud and sand, first consolidated, and long after metamorphosed into quartzite, gneiss, and mica-schist. This land may have occupied an area now covered by the Atlantic ocean.