

inctive fossils have been found. These stratified rocks were called Cambrian by Murchison, being regarded by him as probably equivalents of the oldest sedimentary formations of Wales. But we are still without satisfactory evidence as to their true place in the geological scale. All that can be said is that, if they are not Cambrian, they must belong to some still earlier epoch in the world's history, perhaps to that of the Huronian rocks of North America. The wide interval that separated them from the time of the old gneiss is shown by the fact that they lie upon an eroded surface of the latter rock, and contain pebbles of it. The gneiss was in truth just as gnarled and venerable-looking a rock when these sandstones were laid down upon it as it is now.

Between the aspect of the tracts occupied by these sandstones and that of the ancient gneiss there is a contrast more abrupt and impressive than almost any other in Highland landscape. So sharp is the line of demarcation between the two rocks, that their respective areas can be accurately followed by the eye even at a distance of several miles. The tumbled sea of bare gneiss rolls, as it were, under the red sandstones, which in nearly horizontal beds rise into isolated and strangely-shaped mountains, sometimes to a height of 3400 feet above the sea (Figs. 20, 43). As the ground mounts into these eminences, the covering of herbage grows more and more scant, but the same terraced bars of rock which begin where the sandstone first appears continue to stand out more and more clearly until they form naked precipices, where there does not seem to be room even for a tuft of heather or an alpine plant. The parallel bars that mark the successive strata can be traced with the eye to the far summits, and from crest and to crest of these vast solitary cones which, standing alone on their platform of gneiss, remind one rather of rude colossal pyramids than of