

geological time. Now, however, we have announcements to be referred to in the sequel of other organisms discovered in the so-called Archæan rocks ; and it is not improbable that these will rapidly increase. The discussion of its claims have also raised questions and introduced new points, certain, if properly entered into, to be fruitful of interesting and valuable thought, and to form a good introduction to the history of life in connection with geology.

As we descend in depth and time into the earth's crust, after passing through nearly all the vast series of strata constituting the monuments of geological history, we at length reach the Eozoic or Laurentian rocks,¹ deepest and oldest of all the formations known to the geologist, and more thoroughly altered or metamorphosed by heat and heated moisture than any others. These rocks, at one time known as Azoic, being supposed destitute of all remains of living things, but now more properly Eozoic, are those in which the first bright streaks of the dawn of life make their appearance.

The name Laurentian, given originally to the Canadian development of these rocks by Sir William Logan, but now applied to them throughout the world, is derived from a range of hills lying north of the St. Lawrence valley, which the old French geographers named the Laurentides. In these hills the harder rocks of this old formation rise to considerable heights, and form the highlands separating the St. Lawrence valley from the great plain fronting on Hudson's Bay and the Arctic Sea. At first sight it may seem strange that rocks so ancient should anywhere appear at the surface, especially on the tops of hills ; but this is a necessary result of the mode of formation of our continents. The most ancient sediments deposited in the sea were those first elevated into land, and first altered and hardened. Upheaved in the folding of the earth's crust into high and rugged ridges, they have either re-

¹ Otherwise named " Archæan."