able. Thus in Fig. 322, the sheets of conglomerate (*b b*) and clays and shales (*c d*), have succeeded each other in regular order, and exhibit a perfect *conformability.* They *overlap* each other, however, each bed extending beyond the edge of that below it, and thereby indicating a gradual subsidence and enlargement of the area of deposit (p. 865). But all these conformable beds repose against an older platform *a a*, with which they have no unbroken continuity. Such a surface of junction is called an *unconformability*, and the upper are said to lie *unconformable* on the lower rocks. The latter may consist of horizontal or inclined clastic strata, or contorted schists, or eruptive massive rocks. In any case, there is a complete break between them and the overlying formation, the beds of which rest successively on different parts of the older mass.

It is evident that this structure may occur in ordinary sedimentary, igneous, or metamorphic rocks, or between any two of these great series. It is most familiarly displayed among clastic formations, and can there be most satisfactorily studied, since the lines of bedding furnish a ready means of detecting differences of inclination and discordance of superposition. But even among igneous protrusions, and in ancient metamorphic masses, distinct evidence of unconformability is occasionally traceable. Wherever one series of rocks is found to rest upon a highly denuded surface of an older series, the junction is unconformable.[1] Hence, an uneven irregularly-worn platform below a succession of mutually conformable rocks is one of the most characteristic features of this kind of structure.

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[1] The occurrence of considerable contemporaneous erosion between undoubtedly conformable strata belonging to one continuous geological series has already (pp. 843–847) been described.