

banks of the Wye, he published his great work, *The Silurian System*, a massive quarto of 800 pages, with an atlas of plates of fossils and sections, and a large coloured geological map.

The publication of this splendid monograph forms a notable epoch in the history of modern geology, and well entitles its author to be enrolled among the founders of the science. For the first time, the succession of fossiliferous formations below the Old Red Sandstone was shown in detail. Their fossils were enumerated, described and figured. It was now possible to carry the vision across a vast series of ages, of which hitherto no definite knowledge existed, to mark the succession of their organisms, and thus to trace backward, far farther than had ever before been possible, the history of organised existence on this globe.

It has already been pointed (*ante* p. 268) that while carefully working out the stratigraphy of the region, Murchison had come upon various masses of eruptive rock, some of which he recognised as intrusive, while others he saw to be lavas and ashes that had been ejected over the floor of the ancient ocean. In this way he was able to present a picture of extraordinary interest, in which the geologist could mark the position of the old seas, trace the distribution of their organisms, and note the sites of their volcanoes.

Even before the advent of his volume, the remarkable results which he had succeeded in obtaining had become widely known, and had incited other observers all over the world to attack the forbidding domain of Greywacke. In France, his classification had been adopted, and applied to the elucidation of the older