

most remarkable features of his investigation has been above referred to (p. 266)—the recognition of volcanic rocks intercalated among the ancient marine sediments of the Lake District. These rocks, since so fully worked out, and now known as the “Borrowdale Volcanic Series,” of Lower Silurian age, were first assigned to their true origin by Sedgwick, who thus made an important contribution to the progress of volcanic geology.

By a curious coincidence, Sedgwick and Murchison both broke ground in Wales during the summer of 1831. But while Murchison determined to work his way downward, from the known horizons of the Old Red Sandstone of South Wales into the greywacke below, Sedgwick, with characteristic dash, made straight for the highest, ruggedest and most complicated tract of North Wales. Returning to the same ground the following year, he plunged into the intricacies of the older Palæozoic rocks, and succeeded in disentangling their structure, tracing out their flexures and dislocations, and ascertaining the general sequence of their principal subdivisions. It was a splendid achievement, which probably no other man in England at that time could have accomplished.

But valuable as this work was, as a contribution to the elucidation of the tectonic geology of a part of Britain, it had not yet acquired importance in general stratigraphy. In the first place, Sedgwick's groups of strata were mere lithological aggregates. They possessed as yet no distinctive characters that would allow of their being adopted in the interpretation of other countries, or even in distant parts of Britain.