hybernations, and finally their instincts, all subjects alike interesting and instructive. In conclusion we have but to say to all, both old and young, parents and children, 'buy and read,' enjoy yourselves all the strange accounts of insect history and economy, which have been collected with so much study and diligence, combined with personal observation, and put forth with so much taste and judgment by these talented authors. We venture to affirm that time thus bestowed will never be regarded as lost, or spent in vain.

Selected Articles.

ON SOME POINTS IN AMERICAN GEOLOGY.\*

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The recent publication of two important volumes on American geology seems to afford a fitting occasion for reviewing some questions connected with the progress of geological science, and with the history of the older rock formations of North America. The first of these works is the third volume of the Palæontology of New York by James Hall; we shall not attempt the task of noticing the continuation of this author's labors in the study of organic remains, labors which have by common consent placed him at the head of American palæontologists, but we have to call attention to the introduction to this 3rd volume, where in about a hundred pages Mr. Hall gives a clear and admirable summary of the principal facts in the geology of the United States and Canada, followed by some theoretical notions on the formation of mountain chains, metamorphism and volcanic phenomena, where these questions are discussed from a point of view which we conceive to be of the greatest importance for the future of geological science. A publication of this introduction in a separate form, with some additions, would we think be most acceptable to the scientific public.

The other work before us is Prof. H. D. Rogers' elaborate report on the geology of Pennyslvania, giving the results of the Survey of that State for many years carried on under his direction, and embracing a minute description of those grand exhibitions of structural geology, which have rendered that State classic ground for the student. The volumes are copiously illustrated with maps, sections and figures of organic remains, and the admirable studies on the coal fields of Pennsylvania and Great Britain add much to its value.

The oldest series of rocks known in America is that which has been investigated by the officers of the Geological Survey of Canada, and by them designated the Laurentian system. It is now several years since we suggested that these rocks are the equivalents of the oldest crystalline strata of western Scotland and Scandinavia.<sup>†</sup> This identity has since been established by Sir R. I. Murchison in his late remarkable researches in the north-western Highlands, and he has adopted the name of the Laurentian system for these ancient rocks of Ross, Sutherland, and the Western Islands, which he at first

called fundamental gneiss.\* These are undoubtedly the oldest known strata of the earth's crust, and therefore offer peculiar interest to the geologist. As displayed in the Laurentide and Adirondack mountains they exhibit a volume which has been estimated by Sir William Logan to be equal to the whole palæozoic series of North America in its greatest development. The Laurentian series consists of gneiss, generally granitoid, with great beds of quartzite, sometimes conglomerate, and three or more lime-stone formations, (one 1000 feet in thickness) asso-ciated with dolomites, serpentines, plumbago, and iron ores. In the upper portion of the series an extensive formation of rocks, consisting chiefly of basic feldspars without quartz and with more or less pyroxene, is met with. The peculiar characters of these latter strata, not less than the absence of argillites and talcose and chloritic schists, conjoined with various other mineralogical characteristics, seem to distinguish the Laurentian series throughout its whole extent, as far as yet studied, from any other system of crystalline strata. It appears not improbable that future researches will enable us to divide this series of rocks into two or more distinct systems.

Overlying the Laurentian series on Lakes Huron and Superior, we have the Huronian system, about 10,000 feet in thickness, and consisting to a great extent of quartzites, often conglomerate, with limestones, peculiar slaty rocks, and great beds of diorite, which we are disposed to regard as altered sedi-These constitute the lower copper-bearing ments. rocks of the lake region, and the immense beds of iron ore at Marquette and other places on the south shore of Lake Superior have lately been found by Mr. Murray to belong to this series, which is entirely wanting along the farther eastern outcrop of the Laurentian system. This Huronian series appears to be the equivalent of the Cambrian sandstones and conglomerates described by Murchison, which form mountain masses along the western coast of Scotland, where they repose in detached portions upon the Laurentian series.

Besides these systems of crystalline rocks, the latter of which is local and restricted in its distribution, we have along the great Apalachian chain, from Georgia to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a third series of crystalline strata, which form the gneissoid and mica slate series of most American geologists, the hypozoic group of Prof. Rogers, consisting of feldspathic gneiss, with quartzites, argillites, micaceous, epidotic, chloritic, talcose and specular schists, accompanied with steatite, diorites and chromiferous ophiolites. This group of strata has been recognized by Safford in Tennessee, by Rogers in Pennyslvania, and by most of the New England geologists as forming the base of Appalachian system, while Sir Wil-liam Logan, Mr. Hall, and the present writer have for many years maintained that they are really altered palæozoic sediments, and superior to the lowest fossiliferous strata of the Silurian series. Sir William Logan has shown that the gneissoid ranges in Eastern Canada have the form of synclinals, and are underlaid by shales which exhibit fossils in their prolongation, while his sections leave no doubt that these ranges of gneiss, with micaceous, chloritic, talcose and specular schists, epidosites, quartzites, diorites and ophiolites, are really the altered sediments of the Quebec group, which is a lower member of the Silurian series, corresponding to the Calci-

\* Quar. Journal Geol. Society, vol. xv. 353: xv.; 215.

<sup>\* (</sup>From the American Journal of Science for May, 1861.)

<sup>†</sup> Esquisse Geologique du Canada, 1855, p. 17.