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THE HISTORY OF SOME PRE-CAMBRIAN ROCKS
IN AMERICA AND EUROPE.

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I. INTRODUCTION.

One of the earliest distinctions in modern geology was that between the crystalline or so-called Primary strata, and those which are found in many cases to have been deposited upon them, and being in part made up of sediments derived from the disintegration of these, were designated Transition and Secondary rocks. While the past forty years have seen great progress in our knowledge of these younger rocks, and while their stratigraphy, the conditions of their deposition, and their geographical distribution and variations have been carefully investigated, the study of the older rocks has been comparatively neglected. This has been due in part to the inherent difficulties of the subject, arising from the general absence of organic remains, and from the highly disturbed condition of the older strata, but in a greater measure, perhaps, to certain theoretical views respecting the stratified crystalline rocks. In fact, the unlike teachings of two different and opposed schools lead to the common conclusion that the geognostical study of these rocks is unprofitable.

The first of these schools maintains that the rocks in question are, in great part at least, not subordinated to the same structural laws as the uncrystalline formations, but are portions of the original crust of the earth, and that their architecture is due not to aqueous deposition and subsequent mechanical movements,