

yet dispense with a voluminous categorical list of stones—as conveying no sense at all commensurate with the labour and the inevitable indistinctness attending such niceties of specific distinctions—it is all the more essential that our type-names and the terminology we apply to important characteristics should be well understood and carefully used. We are often told to practise what we preach: in matters of science, at least, we may adopt the easier and safer maxim to teach what we practise.

Yours truly,

HENRY B. MEDLICOTT,  
Geological Survey of India, Calcutta.

CHOTA, NAGPORE, December 1, 1866.

### INUNDATIONS AND THEIR PREVENTION.

To the Editor of the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE.

SIR,—Under this heading a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who signs himself X, recommends the construction of “artificial lakes” or “huge reservoirs” on each side of the Pennine chain, “which would have the effect of preventing inundations like those of last month in Leeds, York, Salford, etc.” X gives this idea as an origination of his own. It is, however, Ellet’s idea, and it was published for him by the United States Government, in a book of some 400 pages, in 1853. The book is entitled, “The Mississippi and the Ohio rivers, containing plans for the protection of the delta from inundation.” The principles of this book are discussed in the last chapter of “Rain and Rivers,” which is entitled “Ellet on the Mississippi.” In reference to the late floods in France, X says, “In 1856 the Emperor addressed a letter to the Minister of the Interior on this subject, in which he pointed out that the first object was to ascertain the cause of these sudden floods, and suggested that they came from the rainfall among the mountains.” And again, “Our experience in England seems to confirm the Emperor’s theory that certain floods are chiefly caused by rain in mountainous districts.” The Emperor’s theory is as certainly true, and one would have thought as self-evident as that two and two, make four. And posterity will find it difficult to believe that in the 19th century such a truism could have been enunciated as a *discovery*! This so-thought *discovery*, however, is a most important step taken in advance when we consider the profound ignorance which prevails on the subject. And it will be of advantage to the entire world that the most enlightened, clear-headed, and energetic of its sovereigns has learned the first great A in the Hornbook of Rain and Rivers. Nor is it of slight importance that the *Pall Mall megatherium* has changed the tone of his roaring, and has taken to steal, and to promulgate as his own, doctrines, which he only yesterday attempted to controvert. He at least has the power to *publish* those stolen doctrines. His *own* idea on alluviums was that they were hatched out of *igneous* “nest-eggs,” (*sic*) and it is really quite “a nice change” when X finds that *aqueous* causes *now* can “cover the productive soil several feet deep by stones, etc.,” and proves that aqueous

causes *have* been at this work for “ages,” by the discovery of a subterranean Roman villa. But what are such floods and deposits as these compared with those of the Nile, Ganges, Mississippi, or Niger? It is something, however, that X and the Emperor, *ego et rex meus*, are now convinced that the late disastrous floods in France and England were simply the effects of rain, as “the flood” was of yore. But when my two illustrious pupils and the “Correspondent” attempt to remedy the effects of rain on rivers I recommend them to leave *woods* out of their consideration. Our respected grandmothers always “babbled” about them.—Your obedient servant,

GEORGE GREENWOOD, Colonel.

BROOKWOOD PARK, ALRESFORD,  
December 18th, 1866.

### THE DEVONIAN ROCKS OF DEVONSHIRE, ETC.

*To the Editor of the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE.*

SIR.—I do not wish to enter into a controversy on the Devonian delusion; I had rather let my own field work, and that of the Irish branch of H. M's. Geological Survey, speak for itself.

There are, however, some statements in Mr. Salter's letter, in your last number, which might mislead persons if they were allowed to pass without contradiction.

There is no unconformability between any parts of the Old Red Sandstone, either in the south-west of Ireland, or in South Wales.

The unconformability which Mr. Geikie and other of my colleagues have shown to exist in Scotland, between beds that have hitherto been called Old Red Sandstone, is of itself sufficient to prove that that term can only be retained provisionally for those groups till they are more thoroughly distinguished, and some of them freshly named.

In Ireland I adopted the local name of “Dingle beds” for the mass of red rocks that rest in apparent conformity on the Upper Silurian rocks, and are covered quite unconformably by the upper part of the Old Red Sandstone.

It is by no means certain, that these “Dingle beds” appear anywhere in Ireland, except in the Dingle promontory.

To the south of Dingle Bay, there is not the slightest trace of any unconformability in the Old Red Sandstone.

Some years ago I wished to know whether the dying away of the Old Red Sandstone in South Wales, from Herefordshire towards Pembrokeshire, was accompanied by any break in the veins; I examined the whole country, from the neighbourhood of Llandelofawr and Llandovery, by Brecknock and Abergavenny to Pontypool, but could not detect any direct evidence of unconformability between the top of the Upper Silurian, and the base of the Carboniferous Limestone.

In North Devon I believe it will be possible to trace a boundary between the red rocks of Porlock, Minehead and Dunster, which are genuine Old Red Sandstone, and the grey slates, and variously coloured grits, and slates containing marine fossils above them.