val denoted by the unconformability between the Lewisian gneiss and the Torridon sandstone; or again they may possibly include that sandstone and the sedimentary deposits which conformably succeeded it, and which are absent in the Northwest Highlands. On the other hand, they may include, as Murchison believed, representatives of the quartzites and limestones of Durness, and even of later sedimentary formations which may have succeeded these strata, but of which, as we now know, no trace remains in the Northwest Highlands.³⁸ It is thus still an open question whether the metamorphic rocks which constitute the main part of the Scottish Highlands are of pre-Cambrian or of Cambrian, or even possibly in part of Silurian age. They are not confined to Scotland, but spread over many hundreds of square miles in the north and west of Ireland. As it is convenient to avoid periphrasis by having a short name to designate so important a series of rocks, I have proposed to call them provisionally Dalradian, after the old Celtic kingdom of Dalriada, which, originally fixed in the north of Ireland, subsequently extended into the southwest of Scotland, and finally gave the name of Scotland to the kingdom which bears that appellation.⁸⁴ I have little doubt, however, that before long it will be possible to make out satisfactorily the structure of the central and southern Highlands, and to show the presence and areas of Lewisian, Torridonian, Cambrian, and even Lower Silurian rocks in that region.

In the north and west of Ireland crystalline schists and eruptive rocks cover a large area; but as the rocks which unconformably overlie them are not of higher antiquity than the Carboniferous and Old Red Sandstone there is no absolute proof in that country of their pre-Cambrian age. There cannot, however, be any doubt that it is the Dalradian series of limestones, quartzites, phyllites, micaschists, epidiorites, granites, and other crystalline rocks, which crosses from Scotland and spreads across the northern and western counties of Ireland. The Irish development of these rocks is similar to their grouping in Scotland, some of the bands of quartzite, conglomerate, limestone, phyllite, and mica-schist being probably continuations of similar

⁸³ Along the Highland border the remarkable band of cherts and igneous rocks referred to on p. 1040 may not improbably show the presence there of the radiolarian cherts and volcanic zone at the base of the Lower Silurian series of the Southern Uplands.

³⁴ Presidential Address, Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc. xlvii. 1891, p. 75.