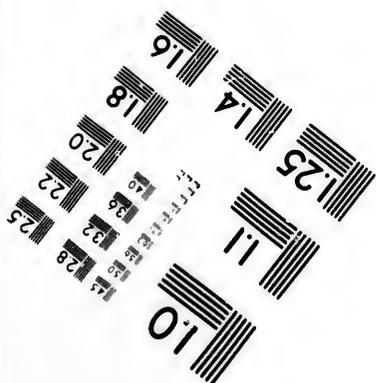
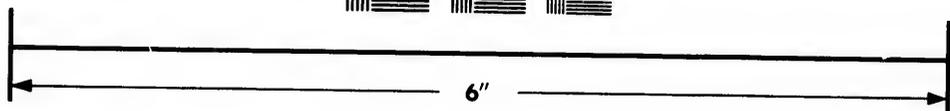
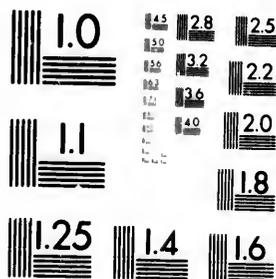


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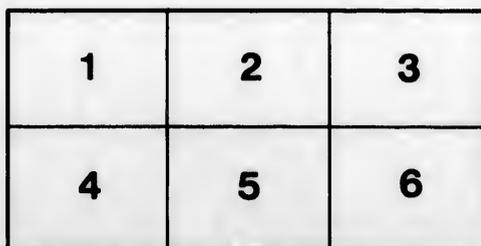
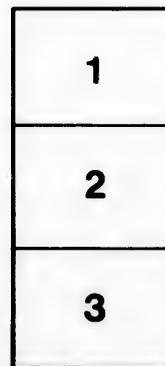
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[FROM THE AM. JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND ARTS, VOL. XLVIII, NOV. 1869.]

ON NORITE OR LABRADORITE ROCK,

BY T. STERRY HUNT, LL.D., F.R.S.

[Read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Salem, August, 1869.]

THE various rocks composed essentially of a triclinic or anorthic feldspar, with an admixture of hornblende, pyroxene, hypersthene or diallage, have by lithologists been designated by the names of diorite, dolerite, diabase, hypersthenite and gabbro, among others. The latter name has by many been regarded as synonymous with euphotide. I however pointed out many years since that the true euphotide is not a feldspathic rock, but consists of a mixture of diallage with saussurite, a white heavy silicate apparently identical with zoisite. By an admixture of labradorite or an allied feldspar, however, euphotide passes into the so-called gabbro, which I have defined as a diallagic diabase (this Journal, II, xxvii, 336), and which is closely related to norite. The name of hypersthene rock or hypersthenite (sometimes contracted into hyperite), was given by MacCulloch* to a rock consisting of labradorite, or a related feldspar, and hypersthene, found by him in the Western Islands of Scotland, and subsequently recognized by Emmons in the Adirondack Mountains of northern New York. By both of these observers it was regarded as an erupted rock. In 1851 I detected it among the Laurentide hills of Canada, where, as in New York, it extends over considerable areas. Farther examinations of this rock in place showed that though hypersthene, generally in very small proportion, is a frequent element, it is often

* MacCulloch, Geology of the Western Islands, i, 385-390.

replaced by a green granular pyroxene, and still more often both of these are wanting, so that we have a rock composed almost entirely of a triclinic feldspar, whose composition is generally near that of labradorite, but varies in different examples from that of andesine to near that of anorthite. To these rocks I provisionally applied the name of anorthosites, the pure feldspathic type being regarded as normal anorthosite, associated with which, however, were to be found hypersthene and pyroxenic varieties. Red garnet, epidote, a black mica, and more rarely dichroite and quartz, are all occasionally found sparingly disseminated in these anorthosites of New York and Canada, which cannot be distinguished from those first observed by MacCulloch in the Isle of Skye, as I have convinced myself by an examination of the specimens there collected by him, and now preserved in the collections of the Geological Society of London. Titaniferous iron ore (menaccanite) also frequently occurs in grains and masses in these rocks, both in Skye, and in North America, where it sometimes forms beds or masses of considerable size. Details as to the chemical and mineralogical characters of these rocks will be found in the *L. E. & D. Philos. Magazine* for May, 1855, and also in the *Geology of Canada*, 1863, pages 588-590.

The subsequent investigations of Sir William Logan have shown that these anorthosites in Canada belong to a great series of stratified crystalline rocks which by the geological survey of Canada have been designated the Labrador or Upper Laurentian series, and which repose unconformably upon the older or true Laurentian gneiss and limestones. The area of the Labrador formation most examined lies in the counties of Argenteuil and Terrebonne, to the north and northwest of Montreal, and has a breadth of more than forty miles. It is however met with on the northeast shore of Lake Huron, according to Dr. Bigsby,* and at several points below Quebec, notably in the parish of Château-Richer, at Bay St. Paul, and around Lake St. John on the Saguenay, where it occupies a large area. Proceeding north-eastward along the left bank of the St. Lawrence, Mr. Richardson has lately observed it at the mouth of Pentecost river, about 160 miles below the entrance to the Saguenay, and I have found it forming the shore of the Bay of Seven Islands forty miles farther down. This area is probably connected with the wide extent of this rock observed by Prof. Hind on the river Moisie. In all of these regions it appears to be surrounded and limited by the ordinary Laurentian gneiss. Bayfield, moreover, describes a rock with a base of labradorite as forming the coast for several miles near Mingan. Finally, it is widely spread on the coast of Labrador, where its characteristic mineral was first found, and from whence it takes its name.

* *Geology of Canada*, 1863, page 480.

Prof. A. S. Packard, Jr., has given us valuable information with regard to the occurrence of labradorite rocks at some points on the Labrador coast.* One of its localities is at Square Island, just north of Cape St. Michel, where the rock consists chiefly of crystalline labradorite smoky gray in color, translucent, and opalescent with greenish reflections. This feldspar often shows cleavage planes two inches broad, and is associated with a little vitreous quartz and with coarsely crystalline hypersthene, which appears in relief on the weathered surfaces. This labradorite rock, according to Prof. Packard, is surrounded by and probably rests upon Laurentian gneiss. At Domino Harbor he found domes or bosses of a similar labradorite resting upon strata which consist in great part of a slightly schistose quartzite, having for its base a granular vitreous quartz, and enclosing grains of black hornblende, more rarely hypersthene, black mica, and red garnet. Feldspar is generally wanting, but in some parts these quartzites become gneissic, and they were nowhere seen in uncomformable contact with the Laurentian gneiss of the vicinity. These quartzose strata Prof. Packard refers, with some doubt, to the Huronian system. The minerals which they contain are not however met with, so far as known, in the Huronian quartzites, and on the contrary, are very characteristic of the quartzites of the Laurentian system, which attain a great thickness in many parts of its distribution. The overlying domes of labradorite rock, which Prof. Packard was inclined to regard, in this case, as erupted through Huronian quartzites, are probably nothing more than outlying portions of the newer Labrador formation resting upon the Laurentian strata, as already observed by him at Square Island. Along the western coast of the island of Newfoundland Mr. Jukes observed at Indian Head and at York Harbor dark colored rocks composed of labradorite and hypersthene, and others of albite (?) and hypersthene, which may probably be found to belong to the Labrador series.

Rocks composed chiefly of labradorite or a related feldspar greatly predominate in the Labrador series, but these, at least in the area near Montreal, which is the one best known, are interstratified with beds of a kind of diabase in which dark green pyroxene prevails, with crystalline limestone similar in mineralogical characters to that of the Laurentian system, and more rarely with quartzites and thin beds of orthoclase gneiss. I have more than once insisted upon the rarity of free quartz and the general basic character of the rocks in this series, an observation with which I am credited in Dana's Manual of Geol.

* On the Glacial phenomena of Labrador and Maine. Mem. Bost. Acad. Nat. Hist., vol. 1, part ii, pp. 214-217.

ogy (p. 139), where it seems to be applied to the whole of the rocks there classed as Azoic, including the Laurentian, Labradorian and Huronian systems. It is, in fact, remarkable that the silicated rocks of the latter two consist chiefly of labradorites, diorites and diabases; gneissic and granitic rocks being exceedingly rare among them, though quartzites abound in the Huronian. In the Laurentian system, on the contrary, though basic silicated rocks are not wanting, orthoclase gneisses, often granitoid in structure, and abounding in quartz, predominate.

The anorthosite rocks of the Labrador series present great variations in texture, being sometimes coarsely granitoid, and at other times finely granular. They not unfrequently assume the banded structure of gneiss, lines of pyroxene, hypersthene, garnet, titanite iron ore or mica marking the planes of stratification. Probably three-fourths of the anorthosites of this series in Canada, whether examined in place or in the boulders which abound in the St. Lawrence valley, consist of pure or nearly pure feldspar rocks, in which the proportion of foreign minerals will not exceed five hundredths. Hence we have come to designate them by the name of labradorite rock. The colors of this rock are very generally some shade of blue, from bluish-black or violet to bluish-gray, smoky gray or lavender, more rarely purplish passing into flesh red, greenish-blue, and occasionally greenish or bluish-white. The weathered surfaces of these labradorite rocks are opaque white. The anorthosites which occupy a considerable area in the Adirondack region, as described by Emmons in his report on the Geology of the Northern district of New York, and as seen by me in hand specimens, closely resemble the rocks of the Labrador series in Canada.

In all of these localities the coarse or granitoid varieties often hold large crystalline cleavable masses, generally polysynthetic macles, and frequently exhibiting the peculiar opalescence which belongs to labradorite. Although rocks composed of labradorite or similar feldspars, with hornblende or pyroxene, occur in various other geological formations, both as indigenous greenstones and as erupted masses, they never, so far as my observation in North America goes, exhibit the peculiar character just described; namely, that of a granular or granitoid rock composed of nearly pure labradorite or some closely related feldspar, frequently opalescent, and generally of a bluish color, often violet, smoky blue or lavender blue. This type of rock seems in North America to characterize the Labrador series.

It may here be remarked as an interesting fact bearing on the distribution of the Labrador series, that two large boulders of labradorite rock, one of the beautiful dark blue variety, are found on Marblehead Neck on the coast of Massachusetts. It

does not seem probable that these masses could have been derived from any of the far off localities already mentioned, and the fact that the gneiss of eastern Massachusetts is, as I have recently found, in part of Laurentian age, suggests that an outcrop of the Labrador series may exist in some locality not far removed. In this connection it may be added that I have lately found characteristic labradorite and hyperite rocks in southern New Brunswick, a few miles east of St. John, occupying a position between the Laurentian and the Huronian or Cambrian rocks, which there make their appearance, accompanied by Lower Silurian strata, to the south of the great Carboniferous basin of the region. This interesting locality was recently pointed out to me by Mr. G. F. Matthew of St. John, to whom we are indebted for a great part of our knowledge of the geology of southern New Brunswick. Chester and Bucks counties in Pennsylvania, and the Wichita Mountains in Arkansas, are cited in Dana's Mineralogy as localities of labradorite, but as I have never examined specimens from these places, I am unable to say whether they resemble the characteristic anorthosites of the Labrador series already described.

The name of norite, in allusion to Norway, was given by Esnark to a rock composed chiefly of labradorite, which is found in several localities in that country.* I had already noticed the close resemblance between two specimens of norite obtained from Krantz of Berlin, and the labradorite rocks of North America just noticed, when in 1867 I had the opportunity of examining at the Universal Exhibition at Paris, a collection of Norwegian rocks selected for ornamental purposes, exhibited by the Royal University of Christiania. Prominent among these was a series of the norites, which could not be distinguished from the labradorite rocks of the Upper Laurentian or Labrador series of this continent. In a printed note accompanying this collection from the University it is said that the numerous varieties of rocks consisting of labradorite with hypersthene, diallage and bronzite, have, in the geological map of Southern Norway, published at Christiania in 1866, been designated by the common name of gabbro. This note at the same time suggests that "the name of norite should be preserved for certain varieties of gabbro rich in labradorite, which varieties may in great part with justice be called labradorite rock, since labrador feldspar is their predominant element." With this excellent suggestion I heartily concur, remarking, however that the name of gabbro, as an ill-defined synonym for certain anorthosite rocks, including in part diorite, diabase, hyperite, and even confounded with the non-feldspathic rock euphotide, may very well be dispensed with in lithology.

* See farther Zirkel. Petrographie, II, 131.

By referring to the geological map just mentioned, it will be seen that these so-called gabbros occupy considerable areas in the Laurentian gneiss region of Norway. By the authors of the maps, Messrs. Kjerulf and Dahl, these gabbros are regarded as eruptive, though they are described at the same time as often assuming the character of stratified rocks. It should however be noticed that these geologists go so far as to regard the whole of the granitic gneiss of the region as unstratified and of plutonic origin.

The specimens of these norites exhibited in Paris were in blocks polished on one side, and as was observed in the note accompanying them, presented a curious resemblance to certain varieties of marble. It is worthy of remark that Emmons in his report on the Geology of the Northern District of New York, suggested the application of the labradorite rocks of Essex county as a substitute for marble (pages 29, 418). An ornamental vase of the same rock turned in a lathe with the aid of a black diamond, has been in the Museum of the Geological Survey of Canada since 1856.

Of the collection of norites from Norway the specimens from Sogndal and Egersund presented fine varieties of grayish or brownish violet tints, while a dark violet norite came from Krageroë and also from the islands of Langoë and Gomoë, and a white granular variety from the gulf of Laerdal in the diocese of Bergen.

It is only in rare cases that the cleavable feldspar of these norites exhibits the peculiar opalescence which distinguishes the finer labradorite found in some parts of the coast of Labrador. Opalescent varieties of this feldspar are however occasionally met with in the area near to Montreal, and in northern New York. In the Paris Exhibition of 1867 there were exhibited from Russia, large polished tables of a beautiful violet colored granitoid norite, portions of which exhibited a fine opalescence. This rock, I was informed, comes from a mountain mass in the Government of Kiew, but of its geognostical relations I am ignorant.

These peculiar labradorite rocks, presenting a great similarity in mineralogical and lithological character, have now been observed in Essex county, New York, and through Canada at intervals from the shore of Lake Huron to the coast of Labrador. They are again met with in southern New Brunswick, in the Isle of Skye, in Norway, and in southwestern Russia, and in nearly all of these localities are known to occur in contact with and apparently reposing like a newer formation upon the ancient Laurentian gneiss. Giekie in his memoir on the geology of a part of Skye,* appears to include the norites or

* *Quar. Jour. Geol. Soc.*, xiv., p. 1.

hypersthenites of that island with certain syenites and greenstones, which he describes as not intrusive, though eruptive after the manner of granites (*loc. cit.*, p. 11-14). The hypersthenites are represented in his map as occurring to the west of Loch Slapin. Specimens in my possession from Loch Seavig, a little further west, and others in MacCulloch's collection from that vicinity, are however identical with the North American norites, whose stratified character is undoubted. I called attention to these resemblances in the *Dublin Quarterly Journal* for July, 1863,* and Haughton, who in 1864 visited Loch Seavig, has since described and analyzed the rock of that locality, which consists of labradorite, often coarse grained, with pyroxene and menaccanite, and is evidently, according to him, a bedded metamorphic rock (*Dublin Quar. Jour.*, 1865, p. 94). He, it may be remarked, designates it as a syenite, a term which most lithologists apply to rocks whose feldspar is orthoclase.

I desire to call the attention of both American and European lithologists to this remarkable class of rocks, of which the norites may be regarded as the normal and typical form, in the hope that they may be induced to examine still farther into the question of the age and geognostical relations of these rocks in various regions, and to determine whether the mineralogical and lithological character which I have pointed out are geological constants.