

float helplessly atop.\* True, the salt seems in every instance to have been abstracted and locked up by accident; but then the recurrence of the accident in every geologic formation demonstrates it to be one of those on which the adept in the doctrine of chances might safely calculate. It seems an accident of the fixed class on which Goldsmith bases his well-known reflection in the "Vicar of Wakefield." "To what a fortuitous concurrence," he remarks, "do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives! How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be clothed or fed! The peasant must be disposed to labor, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply."

And now we strip off the thick saliferous integument of the Upper New Red, with all its marls, rock-salts and sandstones, and lay bare the lower formation. Within at least the range of our prospect, we shall find in it few marks of organic existence, and these few doubtful and indistinct. Some of the red incoherent sandstones which form its base contain carbonaceous markings, but of a character too obscure to be interpreted; and we may occasionally detect in the calcareous conglomerate above—its upper member—shells and encrinital stems; but they occur in merely the enclosed fragments, and belong to the older rocks. And yet there attaches no little geologic interest to this barren formation: it marks the era of a great change. The rugged conglomerate, which rises so high along the flanks of the hill on which we stand, represents in this

\* Indisposition prevented me from hearing Professor Fleming lecture last spring on the saliferous deposits; but the idea started here belongs, I am inclined to suspect, to the professor, notwithstanding. I think I must have received it in conversation, from some attendant on the course, who had enjoyed the pleasure which I unluckily missed.