

by the improvement in the instruments used, and by the consequent expansion of the field of view opened to rational observation, and that those scientific works which have, to use a common expression, become *antiquated* by the acquisition of new funds of knowledge, are thus continually being consigned to oblivion as unreadable. However discouraging such a prospect must be, no one who is animated by a genuine love of nature, and by a sense of the dignity attached to its study, can view with regret any thing which promises future additions and a greater degree of perfection to general knowledge. Many important branches of knowledge have been based upon a solid foundation which will not easily be shaken, both as regards the phenomena in the regions of space and on the earth; while there are other portions of science in which general views will undoubtedly take the place of merely special; where new forces will be discovered and new substances will be made known, and where those which are now considered as simple will be decomposed. I would, therefore, venture to hope that an attempt to delineate nature in all its vivid animation and exalted grandeur, and to trace the *stable* amid the vacillating, ever-recurring alternation of physical metamorphoses, will not be wholly disregarded even at a future age.

*Potsdam, Nov., 1844.*