

temples and our palaces are formed from the rocks of a primeval age ; bearing the very ripple-marks of a Pre-Adamite ocean, — grooved by the passage of the once moving boulder, and embosoming the relics of ancient life, and the plants by which it was sustained. Our dwellings, too, are ornamented with the variegated limestones, — the indurated tombs of molluscous life, — and our apartments heated with the carbon of primeval forests, and lighted with the gaseous element which it confines. The obelisk of granite, and the colossal bronze which transmit to future ages the deeds of the hero and the sage, are equally the production of the Earth's prolific womb ; and from the green bed of the ocean has been raised the pure and spotless marble, to mould the divine lineaments of beauty, and perpetuate the expressions of intellectual power. From a remoter age, and a still greater depth, the primary and secondary rocks have yielded a rich tribute to the chaplet of rank, and to the processes of art.

Exhibiting, as it peculiarly does, almost all those objects of interest and research, Scotland has been diligently studied both by native and foreign observers ; and she has sent into the geological field a distinguished group of inquirers, who have performed a noble feat in exploring the general structure of the Earth, in decyphering its ancient monuments, and in unlocking those storehouses of mineral wealth, from which civilized man derives the elements of that gigantic power which his otherwise feeble arm wields over nature.

The occurrence of shells on the highest mountains, and the remains of plants and animals, which the most superficial observer could not fail to notice, in the rocks around him, have for centuries commanded the attention and exercised the ingenuity of every student of nature. But though sparks of geological truth were from time to time elicited by speculative minds, it was not till the end of the last century that its great lights broke forth, and that it took the form and character of one of the noblest of the sciences. Without undervaluing the labors of Werner, and other illustrious foreigners, or those of our southern countrymen, Mitchell and Smith, at the close of the last century, we may characterize the commencement of the present as the brightest period of geological discovery, and place its most active locality in the northern metropolis of our island. It was doubtless from the Royal Society of Edinburgh, as a centre, that a great geological impulse was propagated southward, and it was by the collision of the Wernerian and Huttonian views, the antagonist theories of water and of fire, that men of intellectual power were summoned from other studies ; and that grand truths, which fanati