

They were mineralogists enough, too, as their stone hatchets and battle-axes testify, to know where the best tool-and-weapon-making rocks occur; and I once found in a northern locality a battle-axe of an exceeding strong and tough variety of indurated talc, that nearly approached in character to the axe-stone of Werner, which, if native to Scotland at all, is so in some primary district which I am not mineralogist enough to indicate. It shows us after how strange a fashion extremes may meet,—that rude savages, ignorant of the use of the metals, and the scientific explorers of a highly civilized age, rationally desirous to know how the adorable Creator wrought upon this earth of old, ere man had yet entered upon it as a scene of probation, should have formed an acquaintance with the same classes of objects,—classes of objects of which the men of an intervening period knew nothing.

The chalk fragments and flints of Caithness and Banff seem to have been carried eastwards on the occidental current of the Pleistocene period,—those of the one county from that western portion of the chalk ring or girdle to which I have already referred as lying in the Atlantic, and those of the other from that eastern portion of the ring which is buried in the outer reaches of the Moray Firth. In Aberdeenshire, however, some twenty miles or so to the north of the city, in the parish of Ellon and some of the contiguous parishes, and running at a considerable distance inland in a line nearly parallel to the coast, the flints so abound, and, unlike those of the English gravels, are so little water-worn, as to give evidence that they must have been derived from the disintegration of outliers of the system that once existed, it is probable, in their immediate neighbourhood. They overlies, too, in some parts of this locality, what seems to be a re-formation of the greensand; of which the soft incoherent masses, containing, as they do, in some instances in a good state of keeping, some of the more