

show the gifts of the mineral kingdom to man, but the uses also to which man has applied them. The rough and unpromising block of marble stands side by side with the exquisitely polished and delicately-sculptured vase. The bracelet of glittering steel, scarcely of less value than if wrought in gold, ranges in striking contrast with the earthy, umbry nodule of clay-ironstone. There are series of specimens, too, illustrative of the various changes which an earth or metal assumes in its progress through the workshop or the laboratory. Here, for instance, is the ironstone nodule,—there the roasted ore,—yonder the fused mass; the wrought bar succeeds; then comes the rudely-blocked ornament or implement; and, last of all, the exquisitely finished piece of work, as we find it in the cutler's warehouse or the jeweller's shop.

I am not aware whether the museum also exhibits its sets of specimens illustrative of substances elaborated, not by man, but by nature herself, and elaborated, if one may so speak, on the principle of serial processes and succeeding stages. The arrangement in many cases would have to proceed, no doubt, on a basis of hypothesis; but the cases would also be many in which the hypothesis would at least not seem a forced one. It was suggested to me on the Brora coal-field, that the process through which nature makes coal might be strikingly illustrated in this style. One might almost venture to begin one's serial collection with a well-selected piece of fresh peat, containing its fragments of wood, its few blackened reeds, its fern-stalks, and its club-mosses. Another specimen of more solid and homogeneous structure, and darker hue, cut from the bottom of some deep morass, might be placed second in the series. Then might come a first specimen of Bovey coal, taken from under its eight or ten feet of Tertiary clay,—a specimen of light and friable texture, and that exhibited more of its original vegetable qualities than of its