

than the legitimate inferences of sound philosophy. If, therefore, it be absolutely necessary, as it unquestionably is, that in the pursuit of knowledge of any kind, before even experience can be employed with advantage, we must dismiss from our minds all prejudices, from whatsoever source they may arise, this mental purification becomes the more indispensable in a science like Geology, in which we meet at the very threshold with facts so novel and astounding; teaching us, that although man and other living things be, as it were, but the creation of yesterday, the earth has teemed with numberless forms of animal and vegetable life, myriads of ages ere the existence of the human race.

Geology may be termed the physical history of the earth,—it comprehends the investigation of its structure, and the characters and causes of the various changes which have taken place in the organic and inorganic kingdoms of nature. It has been emphatically called, by one of our most eminent philosophers, the sister science of Astronomy. But, relating as it does to the history of the past, and carrying us back, by the careful examination of the relics of former ages, to periods so remote as to startle all our preconceived opinions of the age of our globe, the fate of its early cultivators has resembled that of the immortal Galileo and the astronomers of his time; and for a similar reason, namely, the supposed discrepancy between the discoveries and inferences of science, and the Mosaic cosmogony.