

the expansion and contraction of the materials of which our planet is constructed.

67. RETROSPECT.—In this imperfect sketch of the geological phenomena, which a superficial examination of the surface of the globe presents to our notice, I have doubtless dwelt on several subjects which are familiar to many of my auditors. But, as one of our ablest geologists* has remarked, “the teacher of Geology must suppose himself called on to answer questions both concerning the facts of the science and the inferences to be deduced therefrom; and his instructions will be so much the more successful as he takes these questions in the most natural order of their occurrence, and answers them most completely and satisfactorily. In doing this he is not at liberty to neglect even elementary truths, for if these were passed over in compliment to such as have made progress in the science, those for whose advantage he is especially interested, would be called to the unreasonable task of labouring without instruments, and of theorizing without intelligible data.”

From the vast field of inquiry over which our observations have extended, it may be useful to offer a brief summary of the leading principles that have been enunciated, and the facts on which they are founded. By the most profound and sublime investigations of which the human mind is capable, we learn that our earth is one of myriads of

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