

the operation of a coming catastrophe, may be the dry land of the next geological era. There is at present both a forming and a hardening process going forward under the waters of the deep—so that, when these waters shall have shifted their position, there will emerge a continent of the same firm and concrete texture with that which is now inhabited by ourselves—and like it too, lifted here and there into Alpine elevations, by the mighty violence that will then be abroad over the whole surface of the world. It is obvious that this new land will have been mainly built up from the waste and demolition of the present one—insomuch as now it is principally fed by the supply of new matter swept off from the earth by the flow of rivers, and transported into the cavities of the deep. It is thus that in geological language our present continent becomes the father of a new one; and that itself hath had a father and a grandfather, which venerable personage can further lay claim to an ancestry; and thus it is that on the face of our world there are characters by which to trace what may be called the pedigree of successive formations—the most recent of these formations being that which preceded the very last catastrophe; and the intervals between the catastrophes marking the distinct eras of a globe, which, for aught we know, might have been the theatre of many revolutions.

15. Now to come nearer to our argument. Correspondent to the marks by which one set of professional men, even the geologists, have arranged these various formations in the order of their