

lation with all its manageable and engaging simplicities had to be abandoned—and, on becoming the pupils of observation, we, amid the varieties of the actual world around us, felt as if bewildered if not lost among the perplexities of a chaos. This was the period of greatest sufferance; but it has had a glorious termination. In return for the assiduity wherewith the study of nature hath been prosecuted, she hath made a more abundant revelation of her charms. Order hath arisen out of confusion—and, in the ascertained structure of the universe, there are now found to be a state and a sublimity beyond all that was ever pictured by the mind in the days of her adventurous and unfettered imagination. Even viewed in the light of a noble and engaging spectacle for the fancy to dwell upon, who would ever think of comparing with the system of Newton, either that celestial machinery of Des Cartes which was impelled by whirlpools of ether, or that still more cumbrous planetarium of cycles and epicycles which was the progeny of a remoter age? It is thus that at the commencement of the observational process there is the abjuration of beauty. But it soon reappears in another form, and brightens as we advance, and at length there arises on solid foundation, a fairer and goodlier system than ever floated in airy romance before the eye of genius.*

* In the "Essays of John Sheppard,"—a work very recently published, and alike characterized by the depth of its christian intelligence and feeling, and the beauty of its thoughts—there occurs the following passage, founded on the manuscript notes taken by the author, of Playfair's Lectures. "It was impressively stated in a preliminary lecture by a late eminent Scottish