

Read in the light of geologic history, with its irrefragable evidence of the often-repeated extinction of entire creations, these visitations of the age assume a peculiar significance. But the subject is one which I must not pursue. The same time which, in its sure course, conducts both individuals and species to their last day, has brought round the last day of my occupancy of this chair. Accept, gentlemen, ere I leave it, my best thanks for the marked kindness and courtesy which I have on every occasion received at your hands, — for the tolerance which has overlooked my many shortcomings, — and for the attention and respect with which my various communications have been received. I trusted to have had the honor of resigning it to a gentleman who, fifteen years ago, was one of the most active and zealous members of the Royal Physical Society; and who had, since that time, achieved for himself in natural science in general, and in geology in especial, a reputation co-extensive with the civilized world.\* But, alas! Death reigns. This distinguished man, in the full blow of his fame, and in the mature prime of vigorous manhood, has passed suddenly away; and wherever in either hemisphere physical science is cultivated, or the bypast history of our globe excites the legitimate interest, his early death will be felt and deplored as a heavy loss. The spoiler has broken abruptly off many a train of ingenious thought, — cut short many a course of sedulous inquiry, — arrested, just ere its formation, many a profound induction, — and scattered hoards of unrecorded knowledge, the adequate re-gathering of which many years to come may fail to witness. But our idle regrets can neither restore the dead nor benefit the living. Let us rather manifest our regard for the memory of our illustrious brother, — taken so unexpectedly from among us, — by making his disinterested devotion to science our example, and by striv-

\* It had been proposed, at the previous meeting of the Society, to call to the vacant Presidential Chair the late Professor Edward Forbes.