

deformities the lofty peak and rugged mountain-brow, nature's palaces,—generally the grandest and most sublime objects in natural scenery! We cordially assure the reader we are by no means prejudiced against these grand objects; *for if prejudice we have on the subject, it is rather on the other side.* It is therefore the force of evidence alone makes us,—reluctantly we admit,—give up these to rank among the derangements and deformities of nature. She, according to her usual *taste* and *economy*, would never be at the *expense* of rearing, and that upon ground *that might have otherwise been much better occupied*, such unwieldy, useless masses of matter, merely for the sake of gratifying the taste for grandeur and sublimity in a few of her sons, nor, indeed, for any other use we ever heard ascribed to them. . . . According to *our* test, a rich and gently undulatory surface, intersected with rivulets and sheets of water, in the places taken up by these elevations, would be far better, as combining in the highest degree the *utile cum dulci*.\* To such of my audience as are familiar with Dr Thomas Burnet's "Sacred Theory of the Earth" (1684), that revolution in the cycle of hypothesis to which I have referred, and through which the visionaries of the later ages return to the dreams which had occupied the visionaries of an earlier time, must be sufficiently apparent in this passage. For not only does Burnet speak after the same manner of hills and mountains, but also of an idle, ill-founded

\* One of the more brilliant writers of the present day,—a native of the picturesque village in which this anti-geologist resides,—describes in a recent work, with the enthusiasm of the poet, the noble mountains which rise around it. I know not, however, whether my admiration of the passage was not in some degree dashed by a few comic notions suggestive of an "imaginary conversation," in the style of Landor, between this popular author and his anti-geologic townsman, on the merits of hills in general, and in especial on the claims of those which encircle Comrie "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem." The two gentlemen would, I suspect, experience considerable difficulty in laying down, in such a discussion, their common principles.