

And lastly, the student of geology looks on them with veneration as embodying the materials which led Hutton and Playfair to their conclusions, and paved the way for all those who have subsequently investigated the phenomena of denudation and the origin of landscapes.

To subject Scottish scenery to dissection and analysis may seem a sort of ruthless proceeding, like that of the pedant who insists on cutting a flower to pieces and showing you its structure in order that you may adequately enjoy its beauty. But, fortunately, let the formal geologist do and say what he likes, the beauty and grandeur of the landscapes remain unimpaired. Nay, if he can only present his results in simple and intelligible guise, they will be found in no degree to lessen the charm of the scenery. He cannot diminish the romance that hangs like a golden mist over the country; on the contrary, he reveals another kind of romance, different indeed in kind but hardly less attractive, wherein firth and fell, mountain and glen, glow with all the fervour of a poet's dream.

Whether I shall succeed in the attempt to realise this ideal task the reader must judge. Let me, however, assure him at the outset that if the human associations of the land are uppermost in his mind as he wanders through it, my sympathies are wholly with him. And if, after perusing my chapters, he finds no enduring interest in the subject of which they treat, but turns back again with renewed interest to the realm of history and romance, I shall make no appeal from his judgment. I would only have him believe that it is, nevertheless, possible to find ample room in one's mind for both classes of associations, and to experience relief and solace now from the one kind and now from the other. The natural features of Scottish scenery would of themselves powerfully affect us, but they are generally bound up with