

modern geology owes a deep debt of gratitude, that has never yet been adequately paid. This man, Jean Étienne Guettard (1715-1786), was born in the year 1715 at the little town of Étampes, about thirty miles S.W. from Paris.¹ As the grandson of an apothecary there, he was destined to succeed to the business of compounding and selling drugs. Before he left home for his professional education, he had already developed a passion for natural history pursuits. When still a mere child, he used to accompany his grandfather in his walks, and his greatest happiness was found in collecting plants, asking their names and learning to recognize them, and to distinguish their different parts. Every nook and corner around Étampes became familiar to him, and in later years he loved to revisit, with the eye of a trained naturalist, the scenes which had fascinated his boyhood. In his writings he loses no opportunity of citing his native place for some botanical or geological illustration. Thus, at the very beginning of a long and suggestive memoir on the degradation of mountains, to which further reference will be made in the sequel, his thoughts revert to the haunts of his infancy, and the first illustration he cites of the processes of decay which are discussed in that paper is taken from a picturesque rock overlooking the valley of the Juine, under the shade of which he used to play with his companions.²

¹ For the biographical facts here given I am indebted to the *Éloge* of Guettard by Condorcet (*Œuvres*, edit. 1847, vol. iii. p. 220) and to the personal references which I have met with in Guettard's writings.

² *Mémoires sur différentes parties des Sciences et des Arts*, tome iii. p. 210 (1770).