

the early meetings of this Society he communicated a concise account of his Theory of the Earth, which appeared in the first volume of the *Transactions*. This essay was afterwards expanded, with much ampler details of observations and fuller application of principles to the elucidation of the phenomena, and the enlarged work appeared in two octavo volumes in the year 1795 with the title of *Theory of the Earth, with Proofs and*

received opinions, especially in regard to diet. On one occasion they had a disquisition upon the inconsistency of abstaining from feeding on the testaceous creatures of the land, while those of the sea were considered as delicacies. Snails, for instance—why not use them as articles of food? They were well known to be nutritious and wholesome—even sanative in some cases. The epicures, in olden time, esteemed as a most delicious treat the snails fed in the marble quarries of Lucca. The Italians still hold them in esteem. The two philosophers, perfectly satisfied that their countrymen were acting most absurdly in not making snails an ordinary article of food, resolved themselves to set an example; and accordingly, having procured a number, caused them to be stewed for dinner. No guests were invited to the banquet. The snails were in due season served up; but, alas! great is the difference between theory and practice—so far from exciting the appetite, the smoking dish acted in a diametrically opposite manner, and neither party felt much inclination to partake of its contents. Nevertheless, if they looked on the snails with disgust, they retained their awe for each other; so that each conceiving the symptoms of internal revolt peculiar to himself, began, with infinite exertion to swallow in very small quantities the mess which he internally loathed. Dr. Black at length broke the ice, but in a delicate manner, as if to sound the opinion of his messmate, ‘Doctor, do you not think that they taste a little—a very little—queer?’ ‘D—— queer, D—— queer, indeed; tak them awa’, tak them awa’!’ vociferated Dr. Hutton, starting up from table and giving full vent to his feelings of abhorrence.”—*A Series of Original Portraits*, by John Kay (commonly known as Kay’s *Edinburgh Portraits*), vol. i. p. 57.