

In unstratified crystalline rocks, wholly destitute of animal or vegetable remains, we search in vain for those most obvious evidences of contrivance, which commence with the first traces of organic life, in strata of the transition period; the chief agencies which these rocks indicate, are those of fire and water; and yet even here we find proof of system and intention, in the purpose which they have accomplished, of supplying and accumulating at the bottom of the water the materials of stratified formations, which, in after times, were to be elevated into dry lands, in an ameliorated condition of fertility. Still more decisive are the evidences of design and method, which arise from the consideration of the

conflicting theories that have been proposed to explain the most difficult and complicated problems of Geology, I select those which appear to carry with them the highest degree of probability; but as results remain the same from whatever cause they have originated, the force of inferences from these results will be unaffected by changes that may arise in our opinions as to the physical causes by which these have been produced. As in estimating the merits of the highest productions of human art it is not requisite to understand perfectly the nature of the machinery by which the work has been effected in order to appreciate the skill and talent of the artist by whom it was contrived; so our minds may be fully impressed with a perception of the magnificent results of creative intelligence, which are visible in the phenomena of nature, although we can but partially comprehend the mechanism that has been instrumental to their production; and although the full developement of the workings of the material instruments by which they were effected, has not yet been, and perhaps may never be, vouchsafed to the prying curiosity of man.