

origin, from the uniformity, we may almost say identity, of their chemical composition."\*

27. ORIGIN OF METEORITES.—Von Hoff, in an admirable essay on the origin of meteoric stones,† observes, that although it is demonstrated mathematically, that aerolites and masses of native iron which fall from the air, *may* be derived from the moon, yet the weight of evidence is in favour of their being nebulous matter suddenly condensed, and descending to this planet's surface when this mysterious process takes place within the sphere of the earth's attraction. These masses present a general correspondence in their structure and appearance, having (with the exception of native iron) a crystalline character internally, and externally a black slaggy crust, as in this specimen from Nanjenoy.

Assuming then that our planet, when first called into being by the fiat of the Creator, was a gaseous mass "without form and void," and destined through indefinite ages to undergo mutations which were designed ultimately to prepare it for the abode of the human race, we proceed to investigate the causes and effects of those agencies by which its surface is still modified. The consideration of what Sir John Herschel so emphatically terms "that mystery of mysteries," the successive appearance of

\* Connexion of the Physical Sciences, p. 423. 4th Edition.

† A Translation of this Memoir appeared in Jameson's Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal, July 1837.