

casts of animal and vegetable fragments, had never belonged to living creatures, but had been formed as we find them, by a *plastic power* in nature, or by some kind of *abortive effort* (*nisus naturæ*) to produce something which never ascended above a mineral condition, or by *freaks* of nature, (*lusus naturæ*,) as if this same nature were a fitful sprite, amusing herself with beguiling and puzzling the learned industry of poor mortals. We are now surprised that the impiety, as well as the folly, of this jargon did not procure its instant rejection. Yet let us not overvalue ourselves. It is an unhappy fact, and far less excusable, that some men of science in our own days are not ashamed to speak and write of a thing which they perpetually call Nature; of which they speak as if it were a goddess, an intelligent, designing, and active being; and which they without scruple introduce, when the marks of consummate design, benevolent wisdom, and beautiful adaptation in the sensible world, are so striking that we cannot shut our eyes to them. So painfully is it evinced, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and that men under its influence "do not like to retain God in their knowledge."

To all the mental movements and the beneficial progress of the human mind, as well as to times and dwellings, we may apply the principle of the apostle's declaration; "God, who made the world and all things therein,—the Lord of heaven and earth,—hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."* A time must have been fitted and an habitation, so to speak, provided, in order that a science or an art might be born, and live, and grow to manly vigour. Geology could not have been

* Acts xvii. 24—26.