

with bitten and masticated fragments of the appropriate food in them.—Whence came the quartz, the mica, and the felspar; each a rock of separate existence?—Whence, the schorl, the augite, the steatite, and other interminglings?—Must we not pursue them to their chemical decomposition? Can we stop short of believing that the original act of creation produced the *few primordial elements* by the combinations of which all mineral and all organized matters have been formed?—Then we have gone back to the fathomless abyss of ages of ages.—But this unutterable period!—Compared with the INFINITE existence, with the ETERNITY of GOD,—it sinks to a moment.—

“Combining in our survey, then, the whole range of deposits, from the most recent to the most ancient group, how striking a succession do they present!—So various, yet so uniform; so vast, yet so connected!—In thus tracing back to the most remote periods in the physical history of our continents, *one system of operations*, as the *means* by which [so] many complex formations have been successively produced, the mind becomes impressed with the singleness of nature’s laws; and, in this respect at least, Geology is hardly inferior in simplicity to Astronomy.—Need we recapitulate those curious changes in the lithological character of the deposits affected by igneous action? Or endeavour to rouse the mind to a sense of the greatness of those powers, whatever they may have been, which produced the *symmetrical jointed structure* of mountains, and carried countless lines of *parallel cleavage* throughout regions of slaty rocks, in spite as it were of the original forms of the strata?”*

Thus far I have endeavoured to reason from the mineralogical character of stratified masses, not so much from their constitution or composition individually, as from their position above and below each other. I have continually endeavoured to leave out the consideration of Organic Remains, though it was impossible to do so entirely. But it appeared probable that, for general readers, the method of surveying the two lines of evidence apart, might be the more favourable to a correct apprehension of the whole. We must, therefore, now direct our attention to the attractive department of Geology, to which the name of Palæontology has been appropriated.

In all the terrene formations till we reach the very early ones, we are met by the remains of creatures which once had life, and were furnished by their Creator with the means of performing functions and enjoying life to the extent of their capacities. In some of the strata, the number is comparatively small; but in the greater part it is very considerable.

* Murchison; *Silur. Syst.* I. 574.