

contents, which, when deciphered by aid of the key supplied by the study of the modern changes above alluded to, reveal to us the annals of a grand succession of past events — a series of revolutions which the solid exterior of the globe, and its living inhabitants, have experienced in times antecedent to the creation of man.

In thus separating the two works, however, I have retained in the “Principles” (book i.) the discussion of some matters which might fairly be regarded as common to both treatises; as, for example, an historical sketch of the early progress of geology, followed by a series of preliminary essays to explain the facts and arguments which lead me to believe that the forces now operating upon and beneath the earth’s surface may be the same, both in kind and degree, as those which at remote epochs have worked out geological changes.

It appeared to me that without some insight into the early history of geology, and some acquaintance with the above-mentioned theoretical questions, the beginner would fail to appreciate the geological importance of the subject-matter of this work, comprising, as it does, a systematic account of the changes now in progress in the animate and inanimate world, such as, according to the view set forth in that first book, may enable us to dispense with sudden and general catastrophes or revolutions in the explanation of geological phenomena, and to regard the fluctuations of the organic and inorganic world, from the earliest times to the present, as belonging to one continuous series of events governed by uniform laws similar to those now in operation.

If I am asked whether the “Principles” or the “Manual” should be studied first, I feel much the same difficulty in answering the question as if a student should inquire whether he ought to take up first a treatise on Chemistry, or one on Natural Philosophy, subjects sufficiently distinct, yet inseparably connected. On the whole, while I have endeavoured to make each of the two treatises, in their present form, quite independent of the other, I would recommend the reader to study first the modern changes of the earth and its inhabitants as they are discussed in the present volume, proceeding after-