

It is true that, in the case of man, connected as diminution and decay are with the curse denounced on sin, they assume, in his view, a melancholy aspect; and the perishable nature of all created things has ever been viewed by the sentimentalist with sad emotions.

“ What does not fade? The tower that long had stood
 The crush of thunder, and the warring winds,
 Shook by the slow but sure destroyer Time,
 Now hangs in doubtful ruins o'er its base;
 And flinty pyramids and walls of brass
 Descend; the Babylonian spires are sunk;
 Achaia, Rome, and Egypt moulder down.
 Time shakes the stable tyranny of thrones;
 And tottering empires rush by their own weight
 This huge rotundity we tread grows old,
 And all those worlds that roll around the sun.
 The sun himself shall die, and ancient night
 Again involve the desolate abyss.”—*Akenside*.

If we turn now our thoughts away from man's dissolution, and think how speedily chemical power will raise nature out of her grave, in renovated and increased beauty, this universal tendency to decay puts on the aspect of a glorious transformation. We connect the changes around us with those which have taken place in the great bodies of the universe; we see them all to be but parts of a far-reaching plan of the Deity, by which the stability of the world is maintained, and its progressive improvement secured. When we look forward, fancy kindles at the developments of divine power, wisdom, and benevolence which will in this manner be made in the round of eternal ages. We see that what our ignorance had mistaken for a defect in nature is, in fact, a great conservative principle of the universe, which Newton did not discover because geology had not yet unfolded her record.

Such are the developments of the divine character and plans unfolded to us by geology. Compare them now with the views which have hitherto prevailed. The common opinion has been, and still, indeed, is, that about six thousand years ago this earth, and, in fact, the whole material universe, were spoken into existence in a moment of time; and that, in a few thousand more, they will, by a similar fiat, be swept from existence, and be no more. On the other hand, geology places the time when the matter of the universe was created out of nothing at an epoch indefinitely but immensely remote. Since