

*geologic* than on the ordinary *historic* data ; and, on the other hand, some of the later and lesser geologic changes have taken place in periods comparatively so recent, that, in even our own country, we are able to catch a glimpse of them in the first dawn of history proper,—that written history in which man records the deeds of his fellows.

In Scotland the ordinary historic materials are of no very ancient date. Tytler's History opens with the accession of Alexander III. in the middle of the thirteenth century ; the Annals of Lord Hailes commence nearly two centuries earlier, with the accession of Malcolm Canmore ; there still exist among the muniments of Durham Cathedral charters of the 'gracious Duncan,' written about the year 1035 ; and it is held by Runic scholars that the Anglo-Saxon inscription on the Ruthwell Cross may be about two centuries earlier still. But from beyond this comparatively modern period in Scotland no written document has descended, or no *native* inscription decipherable by the antiquary. A few votive tablets and altars, lettered by the legionaries of Agricola or Lollius Urbicus, when engaged in laying down their long lines of wall, or rearing their watch-towers, represent a still remoter period ; and a few graphic passages in the classic pages of Tacitus throw a partial and fitful light on the forms and characters of the warlike people against which the ramparts were cast up, and for a time defended. But beyond this epoch, to at least the historian of the merely literary type, or to the antiquary of the purely documentary one, all is darkness. 'At one stride comes the dark.' The period is at once reached which we find so happily described by Coleridge. 'Antecedently to all history,' says the poet, 'and long glimmering through it as a hazy tradition, there presents itself to our imagination an indefinite period, dateless as eternity,—a *state* rather than a *time*. For even the sense of succession is lost in the uniformity of the stream.'