

lengthen out seawards, as the land broadens and extends, till the northern and western Highlands seem manacled in ice. Even the lower hill-tops exhibit an alpine vegetation, beautiful, though somewhat meagre ; while in the firths and bays, the remote ancestors of many of our existing shells that thrive in the higher latitudes, still mix, as at an earlier period, with shells whose living representatives are now to be sought on the coasts of northern Scandinavia and Greenland. Ages pass ; the land rises slowly over the deep, terrace above terrace ; the thermal line moves gradually to the north ; the line of perpetual snow ascends beyond the mountain summits ; the temperature increases ; the ice disappears ; the semi-arctic plants creep up the hill-sides, to be supplanted on the plains by the leafy denizens of happier climates ; and at length, under skies such as now look down upon us, and on nearly the existing breadth of land, the human period begins. The half-naked hunter, armed with his hatchet or lance of stone, pursues the roe or the wild ox through woods that, though comparatively but of yesterday, already present appearances of a hoar antiquity ; or, when the winter snows gather around his dwelling, does battle at its beleaguered threshold with the hungry wolf or the bear. The last great geologic change takes place ; the coast line is suddenly elevated ; and the country presents a new front to the sea. And on the widened platform, when yet other ages have come and gone, the historic period commences, and the light of a classical literature falls for the first time on the incidents of Scottish story, and on the bold features of Scottish character.

It is said that modern science is adverse to the exercise and development of the imaginative faculty. But is it really so ? Are visions such as those in which we have been indulging less richly charged with that poetic pabulum on which fancy feeds and grows strong, than those ancient tales of enchantment and *faery* which beguiled of old, in