

have been injected with earthquake throes between the folds of the stony strata ; and a submarine volcano has darkened the heavens with its ashes, shutting out during the day the light of the sun, and throwing its red gleam, when the night had fallen, over the steaming eddies of a boiling and broken sea. The area which we now occupy has heaved like the deck of a storm-beset vessel ; the solid earth has been rent asunder ; and through the wide cracks and fissures, now existing as greenstone dikes, the red molten matter has come rushing through. Could we this evening ascend into the remote past, when that picturesque eminence which overlooks Edinburgh,—according to the poet Malcolm,

‘ Arthur’s craggy bulk,  
That dweller of the air, abrupt and lone, ’—

was, like the son of Semele, first ushered into the world amid smoke and flame, you would find the scene such as poets might well desire to contemplate, or solicit the aid of their muse adequately to describe. For many ages, what now exists as the picturesque tract of hill and valley attached to old Holyrood, and to which the privileges of the court still extend, had existed as a tract of shallow sea, darkened, when the tide fell, by algæ-covered rocks and banks, and much beaten by waves. From time immemorial has the portion of the earth’s crust which underlies that shallow sea been a scene of deep-seated igneous action. Vast beds of trappean rock,—greenstone, and columnar basalt, and amygdaloidal porphyry,—have been wedged from beneath, as molten injections, between the old sedimentary strata ; vast waves of translation have come rolling outwards from that disturbed centre, as some submarine hill, elevated by the force of the fiery injection—as the platform of a hydraulic press is elevated when the pump is plied—has raised its broad back over the tide, only, however, to yield piecemeal to the denuding currents and the storm-raised surf of centuries. And now