

posed of the remains of its ancient inhabitants,—not of dead individuals merely, but also of dead species, dead genera, nay, of even dead creations; and here, where the individual dead lie as thickly on the surface of each of many thousand layers as leaves along the forest glades in autumn,—here, where all the species and many of the genera are dead, nay, where the whole creation represented by its multitudinous organisms is dead,—the great problem which this law of death presents comes upon the explorer in its most palpable and urgent form. The noble verses of James Montgomery, somewhat exaggerative in their character when addressed to a molehill, become as remarkable for their sober propriety as for their beauty when employed here :—

‘Tell me, thou dust beneath my feet,
 Thou dust that once hadst breath,—
 Tell me how many mortals meet
 In this small hill of death.

By wafting winds and flooding rains,
 From ocean, earth, and sky,
 Collected, here the frail remains
 Of slumbering millions lie.

The mole that scoops, with curious toil,
 Her subterranean bed,
 Thinks not she ploughs so rich a soil,
 And mines among the dead.

But oh! where'er she turns the ground,
 My kindred earth I see;
 Once every atom of this mound
 Lived, breathed, and felt like me.

Like me, these elder-born of clay
 Enjoyed the cheerful light,
 Bore the brief burden of a day,
 And went to rest at night.

Methinks this dust yet heaves with breath,
 Ten thousand pulses beat:
 Tell me, in this small hill of death
 How many mortals meet.’