

RECENT GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES.

Preparations for the British Association Meeting at Aberdeen in 1859.

THE gentlemen of the hammer and chisel must immediately prepare a *Reform Bill*, and re-adjust their nomenclature and classification. Both are uncouth and barbarous as well as unscientific. Recent discoveries have unsettled almost every one of the characters and tests of the age of rocks. Old Werner's Transition class, though founded to some extent on facts, has been long ago discarded. But will hardness or crystalline structure, or the absence even of organic remains, hitherto described as the grand features of the primitive class of rocks, now bear to be trusted as essentialia of classification? Every summer's ramble multiplies proofs to the contrary. The mere vicinity of a trap-vein, squirted from its boiling caldron below, among the most sedimentary strata, has often baked them into hard crystalline masses, and converted mud-banks charged with shells into beautiful granular marble, as may be seen at Strath, in Skye, under the overlying igneous rocks of the Cuchullins. And perhaps the time is not far distant when it may be difficult to find in the crust of the globe any assemblage of rocks in which organisms may not be detected, although *heat*, for the most part, has nearly obliterated them.¹ Again, a little more patient investigation, we expect, will

¹ 'The hypothesis,' says Sir Roderick Murchison, in his newly-published edition of *Siluria*, 'that all the earliest sediments have been so