

nature might make the loss during a short interval considerably greater than the true average of a longer period.

It occurred to me recently that data of at least a provisional value might be obtained from an examination of tombstones freely exposed to the air in graveyards, in cases where their dates remained still legible or might be otherwise ascertained. I have accordingly paid attention to the older burial-grounds in Edinburgh, and have gathered together some facts which have, perhaps, sufficient interest and novelty to be worthy of publication.

At the outset it is of course obvious that in seeking for data bearing on the general question of rock-weathering, we must admit the kind and amount of such weathering visible in a town to be in some measure different from what is normal in nature. So far as the disintegration of rock-surfaces is effected by mineral acids, for example, there must be a good deal more of such chemical change where sulphuric acid is copiously evolved into the atmosphere from thousands of chimneys than in the pure air of country districts. In these respects we may regard the disintegration in towns as an exaggeration of the normal rate. Still, the difference between town and country may be less than might be supposed. Surfaces of stone are apt to get begrimed with dust and smoke, and the crust of organic and inorganic matter deposited upon them may in no small measure protect them from the greater chemical activity of the more acid town rain. In regard to daily or seasonal changes of temperature, on the other hand, which unquestionably exert a powerful influence in the disintegration of rock-surfaces, any difference between town and country may not impossibly be in favour of the town. Owing, probably, to the influence of smoke in retarding radiation, thermometers placed in open spaces in town commonly mark