

glens and lowlands of Scotland have given form and colour to the development of geological theory.

James Hutton (1726-1797) was born in Edinburgh on the 3rd June 1726, and was educated at the High School and University of that city.¹ His father, a worthy citizen there, had held the office of City Treasurer, but died while the son was still young, to whom he left a small landed property in Berwickshire. While attending the logic lectures at the University, Hutton's attention was arrested by a reference to the fact that, although a single acid suffices to dissolve the baser metals, two acids must combine their strength to effect the solution of gold. The professor, who had only used this illustration in unfolding some general doctrine, may or may not have made his pupil a good logician, but he certainly made him a chemist, for from that time the young student was drawn to chemistry by a force that only became stronger as years went on. When at seventeen years of age he had to select his profession in life, he was placed as an apprentice in a lawyer's office. But genius is irrepressible, and amid the drudgery of the law the young clerk's chemistry not infrequently came to the surface. He would be found amusing himself and his fellow-apprentices with chemical experiments, when he should have been copying papers or studying legal proceedings,

¹ For the biographical details in this sketch I am indebted to the admirable "Biographical Account of Dr. James Hutton" by his friend and illustrator, Playfair. This was first printed in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, and will be found in vol. iv. of Playfair's collected works.