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WHEN IS THE TIME TO DIE ?

I asked the glad and happy child,
Whose hands were filled with flowers,
Whose silvery laugh rang free and wild
Among the vine-wreathed bowers ;
I crossed her sunny path, and cried,
"When is the time to die ?"
"Not yet! not yet!" the child replied,
And swiftly bounded by.

I asked a maiden; back she threw
The tresses of her hair;
Grief's traces o'er her cheeks I knew,
Like pearls they glistened there!
A flush passed o'er her hly brow,
I heard her spirit sigh;
"Not now," she cried, "Oh, no! not now,
Youth is no time to die!"

I asked a mother, as she pressed
Her first-born in her arms,
As gently on her tender breast
She hushed her babe's alarms;
In quivering tones her accents came,—
Her eyes were dim with tears:
"My boy his mother's life must claim
For many, many years."

I questioned one in manhood's prime,
Of proud and fearless air;
His brow was furrowed not by time,
Or dimmed by woe or care.
In angry accents he replied,
And flashed with scorn his eye;
"Talk not to me of death," he cried,
"For only age should die."

I questioned age; for him, the tomb
Had long been all prepared;
But death, who withers youth and bloom,
This man of years hath spared.
Once more his nature's dying fire
Flashed high, and thus he cried,
"Life! only life is my desire!"
He gasped, and groaned, and died.

I asked a Christian—"Answer thou
When is the hour of death?"
A holy calm was on his brow,
And peaceful was his breath;
And sweetly o'er his features stole
A smile, a light divine:
He spake the language of his soul,—
"My Master's time is mine!"

GLIMPSES OF GEOLOGY.

No. I.

It has been said of our race that they are made up of prejudices, or in other words, that the great mass of men cannot look dispassionately at any thing that seems to run counter, in any degree, to the views they have received from those among whom they have lived. There is a distrust of any scheme contrived before, even though it promises advantage, and a spirit of open hostility and unbelief to any doctrine newly advanced. Hence we do not find revolutions in public opinion effected at once or violently, but rather by degrees or by influences exerted through, it may be, successive generations.

The great reformation had been drawing nigh before Luther's birth, though popular opinion had so resolutely resisted change as to allow the stake and the torture to be used not long before his day. Jacquard had to flee from his native town when first he invented the machine that bears his name, and years passed before his countrymen would avail themselves of the advantages it offered; and our own days have seen disturbances excited by the prejudices of our fellow subjects against similar improvements. We have all heard of the Brahmin who crushed to pieces the microscope that first showed him insects on the herbs which were his food.

Amongst other subjects against which this spirit of prejudice has been manifested in times past, the various sciences of which we now boast may be ranked: of these some have been received after a comparatively short opposition, while generations have been required to allay the fear and mistrust with which others have been regarded. Thus, even now, there is a university in Italy in which the Copernican astronomy is proscribed, and the professor required either to say nothing, or to teach the ancient doctrine that the earth is the centre of the system, and that the sun circles round it once a day.

On geology, the severest measure of the ordeal has been passed, inasmuch that the bulk of those who know its name are, even at this late hour, disposed to look on it as a dangerous study, whose lessons are directed against the most sacred truths of religion; as if the pillar of testimony God has raised to Himself in His word, would not have its fair proportions enlarged, and its majestic height increased by each addition we make to the knowledge of His works! As if the God of the Bible and the God of nature were not one! Yet, even this ignorant and blind prejudice seems to be giving way before the light of truth, and facts, by having been long before the public mind, are beginning to be received, while the character and station in life of some who have already adopted them, are felt increasingly to be a security for their tendency. Names revered for piety are now lent to the support of geology, and slew that it is in no way a godless study.

The past history of this science, till within the last forty years, would be unworthy of notice, were it not for the lessons it gives us of the natural presumption and dogmatism of the human mind, and of the extent to which even truth seeking men may distort facts when desirous of supporting particular views.

Up to Werner's time, (1775), the progress of Geology had been retarded by the unphilosophical and presumptuous course pursued by those who sought to advance it, and also by the opposition of the Christian world generally, who, having adopted a particular translation of certain passages in the Bible, rejected as atheistical, or at least heterodox, every theory, however cautious and well founded, which they thought opposed to them. Vulgar errors, also, kept back the progress of the truth. The ancient and widely received theory of spontaneous generation, thought that fossils were mere freaks of nature, and the fruits of a "plastic force" she possessed; a dogma which was not exploded till after a hundred years of controversy; nor were the opinions of those who were superior to such follies correct in many other points. It was generally held that a complete "theory of the earth" was furnished us by Moses, and hence the great endeavour of all was rather to illustrate it than independently to seek after truth. A vicious system of speculation was thus produced; observation and induction were unthought of, neither being called for by a Philosophy whose leading principles were revealed from Heaven, and in which nothing was left for man to do but to fill up the outline with the necessary details. A loose rein was given to imagination, and conjectures were hazarded, and even taught as demonstrably correct on subjects far beyond human knowledge. The interior of the earth, at its broadest diameter, was un-