

## THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW SCIENCES.

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## II.—GEOLOGY.

Geology is essentially a modern science, being at the outside not more than a century and a half old in any form. The ancients gave abundant attention to astronomy and studied the stars with the greatest eagerness, if with little profit. But they hardly thought of enquiring how the earth's crust had come into its present form, and had no theory of any kind regarding it. The commonest facts seem to have almost altogether escaped their observation, except as isolated phenomena without general significance. Even in modern times the fossil forms so frequently found in the rocks were thought to have been produced by chemical action, and so having no bearing on the past history of life on our planet. The true science of geology began when attention was called to the fact that the crust of the earth, where it could be observed from cliff faces above ground or from mining shafts below, was evidently formed of deposits of different materials which had been laid down at successive periods, and subjected to various influences. In some instances their present condition was manifestly due to the action of heat and in others to mere pressure, either of water or of superincumbent layers of earth and rock. The conclusion was thus reached that the surfaces formed by these deposits had been alternately depressed below the level of the sea and raised above it more than once in their history, and that the successive layers often belonged to periods widely separated from each other. Some of these contained fossil remains of animals and plants belonging to species still flourishing on the earth. Others contained those of species no longer to be found anywhere, though often akin to existing ones, while others still contained only forms widely