## BOOK NOTICE.

THE EARTH AND ITS STORY : A FIRST BOOK ON GEOLOGY.—By Angelo Heilprin; pp. 267. Silver, Burdett & Company, New York, Boston and Chicago, 1896.

The story of our earth and the wonderful processes by which the story is carried forward must, we think, have an increasing interest for all thinking persons, as time goes on and the details of this wonderful history are more and more clearly revealed. And this interest finds its cause not only on the fact that we, "Man, His last work," forms, as it were, the denouement of the geological story, but also in the vastness of the subject presented for consideration; for "Geology," as was well said by Herschel many years since, " in the magnitude and sublimity of the objects of which it treats, undoubtedly ranks in the scale of sciences next to astronomy." As the modern science of chemistry grew upon and out of the quaint and curious experiments and speculations of the astrologers, so geology had its foundation chiefly in the speculations of the Italians of the 16th and 17th centuries, put forward to account for two very remarkable facts; first, namely, that the ocean has undoubtedly in former times covered great tracts of country now high above sea level, and secondly, that there exist in the rocky strata of the earth's crust what are to all appearances the remains of animals and plants.

Looking back from the heights to which we have now attained these curious speculations are full of interest. We feel that we have really made some progress on finding the fossils of the earth's crust variously explained as curious imitative forms produced by the influence of the stars, as the products of a species of fermentation set up in the earth's crust, or, finally, as the abortive and unsuccessful attempts on the part of the Creator to fashion worlds, which as yet from lack of practice He was unable to bring forth in beauty and perfection.

As a science Geology can hardly be said to have existed more than a century. It may be said to have really come into existence when the truth of Hutton's fundamental principle became recognized that, "In examining things present we have data from which to reason with regard to what has been and from what actually has been we have data for concluding with regard to that which is to happen hereafter"; a principle which, when grasped and realized, afforded a key by which the wonderful story of our planet could be deciphered with clearness and certainty, and which also gave us for the first time some idea of the immense acons represented by the stratified rocks of the earth's crust. For if, to take a single example, in the Carboniferous system of Nova Scotia there is a thickness of three miles of strata, piled up upon one another in regular order by the same processes which are now in operation along the Atlantic coast, and which accomplish so very little-