

tunity afforded by this address to invite your attention to some topics of scientific interest. In attempting to do this, I must have before me the warning conveyed by Professor Huxley, in the address to which I have already referred, that in our time, science, like Tarpeia, may be crushed with the weight of the rewards bestowed on her. In other words, it is impossible for any man to keep pace with the progress of more than one limited branch of science; and it is equally impossible to find an audience of scientific men of whom anything more than a mere fraction can be expected to take an interest in any one subject. There is, however, some consolation in the knowledge that a speaker who is sufficiently simple for those who are advanced specialists in other departments, will of necessity be also sufficiently simple to be understood by the general public who are specialists in nothing. On this principle, a geologist of the old school, accustomed to a great variety of work, may hope so to scatter his fire as to reach the greater part of the audience. In endeavouring to secure this end, I have sought inspiration from that ocean which connects rather than separates Britain and America, and may almost be said to be an English sea—the North Atlantic. The geological history of this depression of the earth's crust, and its relation to the continental masses which limit it, may furnish a theme at once generally intelligible and connected with great questions as to the structure and history of the earth, which have excited the attention alike of the physicists, geologists, biologists, geographers and ethnologists. Should I, in treating of these questions, appear to be somewhat abrupt and dogmatic, and to indicate rather than state the evidence of the general views announced, I trust you will kindly attribute this to the exigencies of a short address.

If we imagine an observer contemplating the earth from a convenient distance in space, and scrutinizing its features as it rolls before him, we may suppose him to be struck with the fact that eleven-sixteenths of its surface are covered with water, and that the land is so unequally distributed that from one point of view he would see a hemisphere almost exclusively oceanic, while nearly the whole of the dry land is