Geology.

LET History tell of mediæval strife,
Of Roman Cæsars, Grecian art and life,
Of Egypt's Pharaohs, Babylonian kings,
And all the passing pomp of human things ;
Thy still more potent sight, new-risen Muse,
Sees further back, and where Man's records fuse
Into dark obscurity, thy tongue
Takes up the tale. To aeons yet unsung
Translated are our musing minds enthrilled,
To wait in awed delight and watch God build
The universe; back to each mighty stage,
Written in stone, page by rocky page ;
Back to the dim and vapoury birth of spheres,
When chaos ceased, and heavenly charioteers
Began their fiery circling course to run
In silence round the blazing parent Sun ;
Back to the wat'ry growth of boiling seas,
From which emerged by unperceived degrees
Majestic continents, beside whose plains
Mountains slowly piled their folded chains,
While subtle rain and frost and wintry gales
Began the endless fretwork of the vales ;
Back to the dawn of Life, whose quickening breath
Rescued Nature from the silent death
Of involition, irresponsiveness ;
When lowly plants and creatures numberless
Began that ordered chain, whose latest link
Was forged when Man stood trembling on Life's brink,
And ope'd his wondering eyes, for weal or woe,
To all the pageant of this earthly show.
What dazzling binding drapes so perfectly
The volumes of thy lithic library !
'Tis not to wonder that there are who fail
To turn the page and read the endless tale :
Of cliffs that nameless oceans once assailed ;
Of beaches o'er which sibilantly wailed
The tides of seas whose floor is now a chain
Of snow-capped peaks ; of streams which o'er the plain
Once wound their fertile way toward the strand ;
Of yellow deserts whose unwater'd sand
Whirled aloft, like some Titanic hone
Whipp'd its polished mark on rock and stone ;
Of lava floods that set the sky ablaze ;
Of stormy floods ; of sunny summer days ;
Of raining skies which left their weeping mark
On smooth and sandy strands ; of glaciers stark,
Glimmering white 'neath bygone moons ; of trees
And fruits and flowers ; of birds upon the breeze ;
Of marshy bogs with tall unwieldy weeds ;
Of smiling eye-like lakes eyelashed with reeds :
Of shifting coasts begirt with crumbling screes ;
Of sinking continents or shallowing seas.
Records of every force and every strain
That folded, twisted, rent and tore in twain
Earth's meagre envelope that scarce divides
Her breathing millions from her molten tides—
These are thy deathless themes, which, without end,
From infinite to infinite extend.
Clio's sister fair, to thee belong
A newer minstrelsy, an older song,
That never ends and never has begun—
The Earth—our Mother and our grave in one !

E. H. P.