He became latterly more fond of general society than he had been in his earlier years, and he used to receive miscel­laneous parties at his chambers, and to show them prints, and minerals, and novelties of various kinds. In 1812 he was persuaded to convert these mixed exhibitions into a more regular course of lectures, principally upon mineralogy, calculated especially for the ladies of his acquaintance, and which highly delighted all his audience : “ Their attention was perpetually kept alive by the spirit and variety with which every topic was discussed, by anecdotes and quota­tions happily introduced, by the ornaments of a powerful but chastised imagination, and, above all, by a peculiar vein of pleasantry, at once original and delicate, with which he could animate and embellish the most unpromising sub­jects;" a circumstance which, though not of much imme­diate importance to the public, yet probably led him the more readily to accept the professorship at Cambridge, and would thus, if he had survived longer, have greatly ex­tended the sphere of his utility.

In 1813 he delivered a lecture on mineralogy to the Geological Society, and gave them also an account of his analysis of a volcanic substance from the Lipari Islands, containing the boracic acid, which has since been examin­ed on the spot by Dr Holland. In the month of May he was elected professor of chemistry in the university of Cambridge, all opposition having been withdrawn before the election. The following spring he gave his first and last course of lectures there. His introductory lecture still exists in manuscript, and is said to contain a masterly sketch of the history of the science. He communicated to the Royal Society, in 1814, a paper on the easiest mode of procuring potassium, and another on the economy of heat in distillation, proposing to heat a second boiler by the con­densation of the steam of the first. In the spring and sum­mer of this year he was occupied in searching for the origin of iodine, and he succeeded in detecting this substance in sea-water, by the test of its tarnishing the surface of leaf silver. One of the last services that he rendered the Royal Society, was in the capacity of a member of a committee which was formed in order to investigate, at the request of the government, the degree of danger that might attend the general introduction of gas-lights into the metropolis. He undertook, together with his friend Dr Wollaston, to make some experiments upon the inflammation of the gas, and they discovered conjointly the very important fact, that the gas contained in a small tube will not communicate the flame ; a fact which, in the hands of Sir Humphry Davy, has been rendered productive of consequences so important to the public safety ; although Sir Humphry having been abroad at the time of this investigation, and the report of the committee not having been then published, he had to rediscover this truth, and many more, in his most ingenious and successful researches.

It was early in the month of September that Dr Ten­nant went for the last time to France, being impatient to observe the changes which an eventful interval of twenty years had produced in that highly interesting country. He was greatly delighted with Lyon and Marseille ; and, re­turning to Paris in November, he lingered there till Fe­bruary 1815. On the 15th of that month he arrived at Calais ; on the 20th he went to Boulogne with Baron Bulow, in order to embark there. They did embark on the 22d, but were forced back by the wind, and meant to try again in the evening. In the mean time they took horses and went to see Bonaparte’s Pillar, about *a* league off; and go­ing off the road on their return, to look at a small fort, of which the drawbridge wanted a bolt, they were both thrown, with their horses, into the ditch. Bulow was only stunned, but Tennant’s skull was so severely fractured, that he died an hour after.

His papers published in the Philosophical Transactions

were eight in number. 1. On the Decomposition of Fixed Air, 1791, p. 182. 2. On the Nature of the Diamond, 1797, p. 123. 3. On the Action of Nitre upon Gold and Platina, p. 219. 4. On the different sorts of Lime used in

Agriculture, 1799, p. 305. 5. On the Composition of

Emery, 1802, p. 398. 6. On two Metals found in the Black Powder remaining after the Solution of Platina, 1804, p. 411. 7. On an easier Mode of procuring Potas­sium than that which is now adopted, 1814, p. 578. 8. On the Means of producing a double Distillation by the same Heat, p. 587.

9. The analysis of a Volcanic Substance containing the Boracic Acid appeared in the Transactions of the Geolo­gical Society, vol. i. 1811.

Dr Tennant was tall and slight in his person ; his face was thin and his complexion light ; he resembled a little the por­traits of Locke ; he was generally negligent in his dress, but, on the whole, agreeable in his appearance. He was distin­guished for good sense, for quickness of perception, and for penetration ; but, as his friend and biographer Mr Whishaw observes, in the admirably energetic sketch which he has given of his character, he was one of those who, to use the words of Dr Johnson, “ without much labour have obtained a high reputation, and are mentioned with reverence rather for the possession than the exertion of uncommon abili­ties.” “ His curiosity and activity were incessant ; he hail a vigilance of observation which suffered nothing to escape him, and was continually gaining new information from a variety of interesting sources. But although the knowledge thus acquired was remarkable for its correctness, and com­plete for the purposes of its possessor, yet the industry and perseverance, by which it ought to have been embodied and made permanent for the benefit of others, were too often altogether wanting. The ardour and energy of Dr Tennant’s mind co-operated unfortunately, in this respect, with his want of method and of systematic habits of application ; since he was constantly pressing on to new discoveries, instead of arranging and bringing to perfection those which he had already made. His memory was a great storehouse of discoveries, and hints for discovery, of ascertained facts, probable conjectures, and ingenious trains of reasoning relative to the various important subjects upon which he had at any time been engaged. These he was continually treasuring up, with the intention of reducing them to order, and preparing them for use at a more convenient season. But that period rarely arrived. In the carelessness of in­tellectual wealth, he neglected those stores of knowledge which he had accumulated, and suffered them to remain useless and unproductive, till his attention was recalled to them, perhaps after a long course of years, by some new fact or discovery, some remark in conversation, or other accidental occurrence.”

The effect of his peculiar cast of humour was heightened by a perfect gravity of countenance, a quiet familiar man­ner, and a characteristic simplicity of language. He was firmly attached to the general principles of freedom, being fully convinced “ of their influence in promoting the wealth and happiness of nations ; a due regard to these principles he considered as the only solid foundation of the most im­portant blessings of social life, and as the peculiar cause of that distinguished superiority which our own country so happily enjoys among the nations of Europe.” “ The cheerful activity of a populous town, the improvements in the steam-engine, the great Galvanic experiments, and above all the novelty and extent of the prospects afforded by that revolution in chemical science which has illustrated our own age and country ; these magnificent objects, when presented to Dr Tennant’s mind, excited in him the liveliest emotions, and called for the most animated expressions of admiration and delight.” “ He thought himself passionate and irascible ; and certainly his feelings were quick, but