

illustrious philosopher, and of his able illustrator, Professor Playfair, to state that this theory, corrected and elucidated by the light which modern discoveries have shed upon the physical history of our planet, is that embraced by the most distinguished modern geologists.

61. VOLCANIC AGENCY.—Of the activity and power of the agent to which these remarks more immediately refer, the currents of melted rocks, called lavas, ejected through crevices and fissures of the earth, accompanied with evolutions of heat and vapour, afford the most striking proofs; and the volcano, with its frequent concomitant the earthquake, have in all ages excited the astonishment and curiosity of mankind. It would be foreign to the design of this discourse, to enter at large upon the nature and causes of volcanic action. Dr. Daubeny,* Mr. Scrope,† and others, have published highly interesting treatises on the subject; and Mr. Lyell has given an admirable sketch of volcanic phenomena.‡ I will only advert to the increased temperature of the earth in proportion as we descend from the surface towards the interior, and the profound depths from which thermal waters take their rise, as tending to support the opinion, that volcanic eruptions are occasioned by electro-chemical changes, which are constantly

* Daubeny's Lectures on Volcanoes, 1826.

† Scrope's Considerations on Volcanoes, 1825.

‡ Principles of Geology, vol. ii.