

A. G. Werner and his School, Leopold von Buch, Alexander von Humboldt.—Abraham Gottlob Werner,¹ Professor in the School of Mines at Freiberg, was the most renowned geologist and mineralogist of his day. A born teacher, Werner combined quickness of observation and a marvellous memory with the capacity to marshal all the facts that came under his notice into natural systematic order, and to reproduce them orally in lucid language at once striking and convincing to his hearers. His first original work, *On the External Characters of Fossils*, placed him at once in the front rank of living mineralogists. His fame rose still higher when he began in 1780 to deliver a course of lectures on the science of rock-formations, or, as he called it, "Geognosy." He derived the fundamental conceptions in his teaching of the formations from the admirable systematic arrangement introduced by the Swedish mineralogist, Tobern Bergman. Werner's creation of the study of rock-formations into an independent academical discipline was far-reaching in its effects. Thoughts that had been vaguely shaping themselves in the minds of a few scientific thinkers, important contributions to knowledge which had been locked up, except for the very learned, in the Transactions of scientific societies, were assimilated and mastered by Werner, and taught by him with such precision and enlightenment that Freiberg became in a few years the European lodestar for the study of mineralogy and geognosy.

The Professor never relaxed his reading and research; his lectures were not written, and they were fresh every year. Kept in touch as he was with all the great academies and universities by the floating body of students whom his teaching attracted,

¹ Abraham Gottlob Werner was born on the 25th September 1749 (according to Frisch, 1750), at Wehrau in Saxony. He belonged to a family which had been actively engaged in the mining industry for three hundred years. His father, who was overseer of a foundry for hammered iron work, taught him in his boyhood to recognise nearly all the known minerals, and after a short period of residence at a school in Silesia, Werner returned to take part in the same foundry as his father. At the age of eighteen he visited Freiberg in the course of a holiday tour, and the sight of the collections and mining schools there roused in him an enthusiastic desire to take up the study of minerals and mining as a career. He studied at Freiberg and Leipzig, and in 1774 published his first paper on "The External Characteristic Features of Fossils." In 1775 Werner was appointed Inspector of Collections and teacher in the School of Mines at Freiberg. This post he held for more than forty years, and died unmarried in 1817.