

He opposes the Catastrophal Theory, which taught that from time to time destructive catastrophes had occurred in past ages, and had annihilated the whole or the greater portion of existing forms; and he lays down principles of the evolution of one from another along continuous lines of descent, but in accordance with definite natural laws of growth and decay. He argues that just as a definite span of life is meted out to each individual, and the time may be longer or shorter according to the kind of organisation, in the same way each species and each genus possesses a definite energy of existence, and when that has been exhausted, death ensues from natural causes of decay.

While it is as a palæontologist that Brocchi's name will be remembered, his first contribution was a mineralogical and chemical treatise on the iron-works of Mella, in Val Trompia; he then studied the porphyrites and basalts of the Fassa valley, and, in agreement with Wernerian doctrines, referred them to an aqueous origin. Later in life, after the publication of his monograph, he returned to the study of volcanic rocks, with the result that he became a Volcanist.

The volcanoes of South Italy had always proved an attractive study in scientific circles, and yet it was remarkable how few of the scientific works regarding them had been contributed by those resident in the immediate neighbourhood.

Sir William Hamilton's work on Vesuvius and Etna (p. 45) had prepared an excellent foundation for further research, and a worthy continuation was provided by the Frenchman, Dolomieu,<sup>1</sup> in his descriptions of the Lipari and Pontine Isles, and his detailed mineralogical researches on the rocks of these islands and of Etna.

Dolomieu departed from the usual method of research that

<sup>1</sup> Guy S. Tancredè de Dolomieu, born 1750 at Dolomieu, in the Dauphiné, was an officer in the army; he travelled for several years in Sicily, South and Central Italy, the Pyrenees and Alps; in 1796 he was elected a Professor in the Paris School of Mines, and accompanied the French Expedition to Egypt. While on the return journey he was taken into custody, for political reasons, in Naples, and was imprisoned for two years. After he regained his liberty he became, in 1800, Professor of Mineralogy at the Natural History Museum in Paris, but died in the following year in Paris. His most important works are: *Travels in the Lipari Isles* (Paris, 1783); *On the Earth-Tremors in Calabria* (Rome, 1784); *On the Lepontine Isles, and a Catalogue of the Products of Etna* (Paris, 1788).