

the natural historian, rather than from the more critical standpoint of the physicist, chemist, or geologist, the French scientists and their adherents were impressed by a sense of the utter disproportion between the infinitesimal changes now taking place under the eye of man and the magnitude of the topographical and biological changes evinced in the remote past. Changes of such magnitude must, they argued, have been the result of stupendous revolutions in the organic and inorganic world, revolutions whose causes and effects were different both in kind and in degree from any known phenomena of the present age.

The "Catastrophal Theory" met almost simultaneously in Germany, France, and England with strong opposition. In the year 1818 the Royal Society of Sciences in Göttingen, acting on a suggestion of Blumenbach's, offered a prize for the best "*investigation of the changes that have taken place in the earth's surface conformation since historic times, and the application which can be made of such knowledge in investigating earth revolutions beyond the domain of history.*"

This subject was handled by Carl Ernst Adolf von Hoff with brilliant success. The first volume of his great work treats of the relation between land and sea in historic time, the extension of the ocean surface owing to the erosion of the coastal territories and invasions of the continents. The volume betokens complete mastery of all the literature on the subject, from the authors of antiquity to the nineteenth century. Von Hoff proves the baselessness of the tradition of a buried city, Vineta, on the Pomeranian coast, and regards with scepticism the alleged discovery of an old map in Heligoland with geographical details of this island in the ninth, fourteenth, and seventeenth centuries. This map was found afterwards to have been fabricated. The origin of the Bosphorus and the Strait of Gibraltar as invasions of the Black Sea and the Atlantic Ocean respectively is held to be probably correct by Von Hoff, but he disputes the occurrence of these events within historic time. With scholarly skill, Von Hoff proves that the Platonic "Atlantis" and the submerged island of "Friesland" can only be regarded as fables. An excellent description is given of the changes occasioned along the seaboard by the deposition of sediments, and is illustrated by reference to the Nile delta, the recent formations on the north coast of Africa, Syria and Asia Minor, the Black Sea, in the