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volcanic vent, it was at least conceivable that the whole of the fossiliferous formations might have been deposited by the same agency during the last 6000 years. So vague and inaccurate was the knowledge of rocks at that time, that those who started this notion seem to have had no suspicion of how entirely different in character and origin the ordinary fossiliferous formations of the earth's crust are from volcanic productions. Several generations had still to pass, and detailed observations on stratified rocks had to be laboriously made in many countries, before the truth could be finally established that the fossiliferous formations, many thousand feet in thickness, contain a long record of geographical changes on the face of the globe, and of a marvellous succession of organic types which required a vast series of ages for their evolution.

During the sixteenth, seventeenth and a great part of the eighteenth century, the controversy over organic remains and the part played by the Flood, while keeping alive an interest in the subject, undoubtedly hindered the advance of rational conceptions of the fundamental facts of geological history. It was singularly unfortunate for the progress of this branch of science that it should have aroused such ecclesiastical antagonism. For the true modern spirit of observation and experiment had long been abroad and at work in other branches of scientific inquiry wherein the Church saw no danger, and where churchmen were often among the foremost leaders. The necessity for a close scrutiny of Nature, as the basis of sound deduction, had for generations been recognised by some of