

saw such phenomena, and when they did, they easily explained them away. Some of these writers were divines, yet even when they were laymen they felt themselves, down to the middle of the eighteenth century, bound to suit their speculations to the received interpretation of the books of Moses. Looking back from our present vantage ground, it is difficult to realise that even the little which had been ascertained about the structure of the earth was not sufficient to prevent some, at least, of the monstrous doctrines of these theorists from being promulgated. It was a long time before men came to understand that any true theory of the earth must rest upon evidence furnished by the globe itself, and that no such theory could properly be framed until a large body of evidence had been gathered together.

Nowhere did speculation run so completely riot as in England with regard to theories of the origin and structure of our globe. This craze reached its height during the latter part of the seventeenth century. In 1681 Thomas Burnet published in Latin his *Sacred Theory of the Earth*. This work, republished in English, and favoured with the patronage of Charles II., enjoyed a wide popularity and made some impression even on the Continent. It discoursed of the original structure of our planet, and of the changes which it was destined to undergo until "the consummation of all things." As its title denotes, the book was meant to support orthodox religion. With this view, the Deluge was taken as one of the great events in the history of the planet. Previous to that time, it was asserted, there had been perpetual spring upon the