

We may gather how little was then known of the characters of modern lavas when Guettard was ignorant of the occurrence of columnar structure among them.¹ He was as hopelessly wrong in regard to the origin of basalt, as he was with respect to the nature of volcanic action. How this error originated will appear in an examination of the controversy to which basalt gave rise. But the most interesting feature in the passage just cited from Guettard is not his mistake about basalt, but his clear enunciation of his belief in its deposition from aqueous solution, for he thus forestalled Werner in one of the most keenly disputed parts of his geognosy.

I know nothing more whimsical in the history of geology than that the same man should be the parent of two diametrically opposite schools. Guettard's observations in Auvergne practically started the Vulcanist camp, and his promulgated tenets regarding basalt became one of the watchwords of the Neptunists.

The notable Frenchman, of whose work I have now attempted to give an outline, must have been a singular figure as he moved about among his contemporaries. Endowed with a healthy constitution, he had strengthened it by travel, and by a hard and sober life. At last he became liable to attacks of a heavy lethargic sleep, during one of which his foot was burnt. The long and painful healing of the wound he bore with stoical patience, though often convinced of the uselessness of the remedies applied. "I see

¹ We shall find that this ignorance continued for many years after Guettard's time, and was characteristic of the Wernerian school.