

applied in the practical determination of species. Yet strangely enough he neglected the most important of them all—that of crystalline form. From the individual minerals, he proceeded to the consideration of their distribution, and the character and origin of the different rocks in which they occur. To this branch of inquiry he gave the name of geognosy, or knowledge of the earth, and he defined it as the science which reveals to us in methodical order the terrestrial globe as a whole, and more particularly the layers of mineral matter whereof it consists, informing us of the position and relations of these layers to each other, and enabling us to form some idea of their origin. The term geology had not yet come into use, nor would either Werner or any of his followers have adopted it as a synonym for the “geognosy” of the Freiberg school. They prided themselves on their close adherence to fact as opposed to theory. One of them, with pointed reference to the writings of Hutton and Playfair, which had appeared shortly before, wrote: “We should form a very false conception of the Wernerian geognosy were we to believe it to have any resemblance to those *monstrosities* known under the name of *Theories of the Earth*. . . . Armed with all the *facts* and inferences contained in these visionary fabrics, what account would we be able to give of the mineralogy of a country, if required of us, or of the general relations of the great masses of which the globe is composed?”¹ The geognosts

¹Jameson, “Elements of Geognosy,” forming vol. iii. of his *System of Mineralogy*, p. 42. The italics in this quotation are in the original.