

Desmarest from the structure of Auvergne, and by Dolomieu from that of the Val di Noto, many years had to pass away before it began to be generally realised that all the sheets of igneous material intercalated among the sedimentary formations of the terrestrial crust are not plutonic intrusions, but that not a few of them are unquestionably lavas and ashes, thrown out by once active volcanoes, either under the sea or on land. Only by slow steps of investigation was the truth at last ascertained and admitted that volcanic action has been abundant all over the globe, from the earliest geological times, and that a record of its successive phases has been preserved among the rocks.

When at last the controversy as to the origin of basalt, and the eruptive character of the so-called "Trap-rocks" had been settled, and men were able, apart from the disputes of the rival schools, to look at these rocks impartially, with the view of learning what record they have to contribute to the history of the earth, it was fitting that progress in this subject should begin to be made in Britain—a portion of the earth's surface which, for its size, contains a fuller chronicle of past volcanic activity than any other land hitherto examined. A brief outline of the early stages of this research within the British Isles will show how slowly yet how securely the foundation stones in this department of geology were laid.

Among the followers of the Wernerian faith who early emancipated themselves from Werner's doctrines regarding volcanic rocks, an honourable place must be assigned to Ami Boué (1794-1881). Born in