

Discussing the cause of the former long-continued sojourn of the sea on so many parts of the surface of the land, he inquires whether we are to invoke the occurrence of the Deluge or some great catastrophes, as had so often been done in the past, and as continued to be done for many years afterwards by Cuvier. He will admit such an extraordinary cause if it be granted to have endured for the vast periods of time which the accumulation of thick and regular deposits of marine remains must have required. But he would rather seek for some explanation that will be more in accordance with the observed order of Nature. He was thus a follower of the Huttonian theory.

And here the great naturalist breaks forth in a tone that reminds one of the language of his Greek prototype, Aristotle: "In this globe which we inhabit, everything is subject to continual and inevitable changes. These arise from the essential order of things, and are effected with more or less rapidity or slowness, according to the varying nature or position of the objects implicated in them. Nevertheless they are accomplished within a certain period of time. For Nature, time is nothing, and is never a difficulty; she always has it at her disposal, and it is for her a means without bounds, wherewith she accomplishes the greatest as well as the least of her tasks." "Oh, how vast is the antiquity of our earth! and how small are the ideas of those who assign to the existence of this globe a duration of six thousand and some hundreds of years from its beginning to our own days!" "Losing trace of what has once