

borne in upon us by ample and painful experience, that in the case of geological literature, a large mass of the writing of the present time is of little or no value for any of the higher purposes of the science, and that it may quite safely and profitably, both as regards time and temper, be left unread. If geologists, and especially young geologists, could only be brought to realise that the addition of another paper to the swollen flood of our scientific literature involves a serious responsibility; that no man should publish what is not of real consequence, and that his statements when published should be as clear and condensed as he can make them, what a blessed change would come over the faces of their readers, and how greatly would they conduce to the real advance of the science which they wish to serve!

In the third and last place, it seems to me that one important lesson to be learnt from a review of the successive stages in the foundation and development of geology is the absolute necessity of avoiding dogmatism. Let us remember how often geological theory has altered. The Catastrophists had it all their own way until the Uniformitarians got the upper hand, only to be in turn displaced by the Evolutionists. The Wernerians were as certain of the origin and sequence of rocks as if they had been present at the formation of the earth's crust. Yet in a few years their notions and overweening confidence became a laughing-stock. From the very nature of its subject, as I have already remarked, geology does not generally admit of the mathematical demonstration of its conclusions. They rest upon a balance of probabilities. But this balance