

situation and formation of vitrifiable matters which fire has divided, formed and sublimated

After this first establishment (and which still subsists) of vitrifiable matters and minerals into a great mass, which can be attributed to the action of fire alone, water which till then formed with air only a vast volume of vapours, began to take its present state; it collected and covered the greatest part of the surface of the earth, on which, finding itself agitated by a continual flux and reflux, by the action of winds and heat, it began to act on the works of fire: it changed, by degrees, the superficies of vitrifiable matters; it transported the wrecks and deposited them in the form of sediments; it nourished shell-animals, it collected their shells, produced calcareous stones, formed hills and mountains, which becoming afterwards dry, received in their cavities all the mineral matters they could dissolve or contain.

To establish a general theory on the formation of Minerals, we must begin then by distinguishing with the greatest attention, first, those which have been produced by the primitive fire of the earth while it was burning with heat; secondly, those which have been formed from the waste of the first by the means of water; and thirdly, those which in volcanos,