

difficult in the present day to find an advocate for either of these theories, we shall not attempt to show how inadequate they are for the explanation of volcanic phenomena.

A singular theory, and one which has a much greater appearance of probability than either of those we have mentioned, was proposed by Sir Humphrey Davy. After the discovery of the metallic bases of the earths and alkalis, he was induced to imagine that the earth itself might perhaps have been originally a globe of metallic alloy. Now, if this had been the primitive condition of our world, the combination of the oxygen of the atmosphere with the metals would, he says, have formed a crust of earthy matter as a superficial covering, the interior still remaining a deoxydised metallic mass. If water should, by penetrating through the crust, reach this metallic mass, a chymical action would be immediately produced: the oxygen of the water, having a great affinity for the metal, would be disengaged from the hydrogen, and a metallic oxyde would be formed. This chymical action would cause the disengagement of caloric sufficient to melt the surrounding rocks, while the disengaged hydrogen gas would, exerting its influence as a confined elastic fluid, rend the rocks, and burst into a flame upon exposure to the air. There is certainly a great degree of plausibility about this hypothesis, and it is not altogether unphilosophical; but Davy was, from some cause, induced to renounce it, and give preference to an explanation founded on the doctrine of central heat. Dr. Daubeny, who has adopted Davy's discarded child, suggests that it is not inconsistent with what we know of Davy's character, to suppose that he acquired a distaste for the theory in question, when he found it an object of admiration among an humbler class of inquirers. This observation may be correct; but perhaps a better reason may be given for Davy's want of confidence in his own theory.

We have already expressed, through another channel, our objections to the theory in question, and we cannot now do more than repeat those objections, and quote the answer which Dr. Daubeny has given; but, at the same time, we would take an opportunity of stating, that our remarks are made with a consciousness of the high pretensions of the doctor, both as a scholar and an observer.

Two admissions are required by this theory, and to us