

ascribing the phenomena of the earth's surface mainly to aqueous agency; the other *Plutonian* or *Vulcanian*, because it employed the force of subterraneous fire as its principal machinery. The circumstance which is most worthy of notice in these remarkable essays is, the endeavor to give, by means of such materials as the authors possessed, a complete and simple account of all the facts of the earth's history. The Saxon professor, proceeding on the examination of a small district in Germany, maintained the existence of a chaotic fluid, from which a series of universal formations had been precipitated, the position of the strata being broken up by the falling in of subterraneous cavities, in the intervals between these depositions. The Scotch philosopher, who had observed in England and Scotland, thought himself justified in declaring that the existing causes were sufficient to spread new strata on the bottom of the ocean, and that they are consolidated, elevated, and fractured by volcanic heat, so as to give rise to new continents.

It will hardly be now denied that all that is to remain as permanent science in each of these systems must be proved by the examination of many cases and limited by many conditions and circumstances. Theories so wide and simple, were consistent only with a comparatively scanty collection of facts, and belong to the early stage of geological knowledge. In the progress of the science, the "theory" of each part of the earth must come out of the examination of that part, combined with all that is well established, concerning all the rest; and a general theory must result from the comparison of all such partial theoretical views. Any attempt to snatch it before its time must fail; and therefore we may venture at present to designate general theories, like those of Hutton and Werner, as *premature*.

This, indeed, is the sentiment of most of the good geologists of the present day. The time for such general systems, and for the fierce wars to which the opposition of such generalities gives rise, is probably now past for ever; and geology will not again witness such a controversy as that of the Wernerian and Huttonian schools.

. As when two black clouds
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian: then stand front to front,
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
So frowned the mighty combatants, that hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood:
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe.