

to the formation of an equatorial ring, they would lead to the production of two rings widely distinct from the equator. And, judging from what appears, we must hold that the laws of plutonic intrusion or upheaval, though more obscure than those of deposition, operate quite as independently of the earth's rotatory motion. Were the case otherwise, the mountain systems of the world, and all the great continents, would be clustered at the equator; and the great lands and great oceans of our planet, instead of running, as they do, in so remarkable a manner, from south to north, would range, like the belts of Jupiter, from east to west. There is no escape for us from the inevitable conclusion that our globe received its form as an oblate spheroid at a time when it existed throughout as a viscid mass. Nor is it unworthy of remark, that the same arrangement through which a fluid earth was moulded into this shape under the impulsion of the rotatory motion, also secured that when that earth came to be covered by a fluid sea, placed under the same impulsive influence, it should cling to it equably, like a well-fitted cloak, without falling off to the poles on the one hand, or accumulating in a belt round the equator at the other.

But time fails, and I cannot follow up this subject to its legitimate conclusions. Allow me, therefore, simply to state, that I must continue to hold, with Humboldt and with Hutton, with Playfair and with Hall, that this solid earth was at one time, from the centre to the circumference, a mass of molten matter. Let us remember,—I employ here the words of Humboldt,—that the great chemist Sir Humphrey Davy, to whom we are indebted for the knowledge of the most combustible metallic substances, renounced his bold chemical hypothesis in his last work (*Consolations of Travel*) as 'inadequate and untenable;' and further, that, with the oblate sphericity of the earth and the planets to be accounted for, those who continue to hold what he rejected will be reduced, if they persist, to the unphilosophical