

Professor James Hall, also, in his recent lecture before the American Institute on the "Evolution of the American Continent," is reported (in the New York Tribune) as advancing views which indicate that he has relapsed into the ranks of the most radical Neptunists. "I desire," says he, "to impress upon you this one truth, that we have not, in our geological investigation, succeeded in going back one step beyond the existence of water and stratification—one step toward this so-called primary nucleus of molten matter. So far as we have any knowledge of the materials in the interior of the globe, they appear to us only as trap dikes, and these occupying only a very small area upon the surface. This original nucleus that has been talked about in geology has produced no effect upon the surface of the earth; neither upon its mountain chains or any other of the great features of the continent."

"This idea of a great primary nucleus is only theoretical. It has not in it any thing tangible. The earliest rocks of which we have any knowledge were deposited by the ocean, under conditions similar to those which now exist. The conditions of the ocean currents are the same now as they have been from the earliest time. From the earliest history of the American continent—from the earliest history of any other, we know that the ocean currents have prevailed as they now prevail, moving northward and southward; and here, at least, the transporting power has generally been from the north toward the south and west; and we have abundant evidence that all the materials composing our continent have been derived in that way from the transporting agency of currents of water alone."

Professor Hall seems to have taken the laurels from the brow of M. Comte in his resignation to the consequences of the Positive Philosophy. There are many positions in the foregoing quotation which are destined to be shaken as by an earthquake shock generated by those very internal fires which he so irreverently ignores. Though this is not the place for argument, I will not refrain from reminding the reader that if our world has been cooling for many ages, as science demonstrates that it is cooling to-day, there must have been a time when the *first* aqueous sediments accumulated. What was *their* origin? I very well understand that the reply will be, that we neither *know* that the earth has been in process of cooling from a high antiquity, nor have we *seen*, except in isolated patches, the supposed foundation-lavas and granites which constituted the primordial crust. When I stand by the Michigan Central Railway, and see the "Blue Line" freight-cars pass, bearing the inscription "Great Central Route; through freight from New York to the Mississippi," I should consider it folly to deny that these cars have proceeded from New York, and base my denial on the fact that I had *never seen them at that point*. It is thus that *events* rush past us, and he who will read the legends which they bear may learn somewhat both of the beginning and the end. Lack of demonstration is not necessarily nescience. It is too much the fashion of a certain school to apply the shears of nescience to scientific and philo-