

in various ways to reconcile the Biblical narrative with fanciful interpretations of the facts of Nature. It was reserved for Hutton to declare, for the first time, that the rocks around us reveal no trace of the beginning of things. He, too, first clearly and persistently proclaimed the great fundamental truth of Geology, that in seeking to interpret the past history of the earth as chronicled in the rocks, we must use the present economy of nature as our guide. In our investigations, "no powers," he says, "are to be employed that are not natural to the globe, no action to be admitted of except those of which we know the principle." "Nor are we to proceed in feigning causes when those appear insufficient which occur in our experience."¹ The changes of the past must be investigated in the light of similar changes now in operation. This was a guiding principle of the Scottish School, and through their influence it has become a guiding principle of modern Geology; though, under the name of "Uniformitarianism," it has unquestionably been pushed to an unwarrantable length by some of the later followers of Hutton. The appeal to Nature in her present condition for light in geological inquiry was a watchword of the Huttonians, and in the hands of one of the most illustrious of their number, Sir Charles Lyell, has been largely influential in the establishment of Geology as a truly observational science.

There were two directions in which Hutton laboured, and in each of which he and his followers constantly travelled by the light of the present order of nature—viz. the investigation of (1) changes which have transpired beneath the surface and within the crust of the earth, and (2) changes which have been effected on the surface itself.

I. That the interior of the earth was hot, and that it

¹ Hutton's *Theory of the Earth*, i. p. 160; ii. p. 549.