

of the land required to decay to furnish life to plants and animals; that in the removal of the *débris* thus produced mountains and valleys were carved out; and that in the depths of the ocean there were at the same time laid down the materials for the formation of other lands, which in after ages would be upheaved by underground forces, to be anew worn away as before. The Scottish School proclaimed that in the inorganic world there is ceaseless change, that this change is the central idea of the system, and that in its constant progress lie the conditions necessary for the continuance of our earth as a habitable globe.

That Hutton and his followers failed to realise that the planet has had a vastly prolonged evolution which the visible geological record chronicles only imperfectly, that they were ignorant of the geological importance of fossils, that they saw only partially the truths which they laboured so zealously to establish, and that they fell into errors, attaching to secondary and even erroneous parts of their system an importance which we now see to have been misplaced, is only what may be said of any body of men who, at any time, have led the way in a new development of human inquiry. But, after all allowance is made for such shortcomings, we see that their mistakes were, for the most part, mainly in matters of detail, and that the fundamental principles for which they fought have become the very life and soul of modern geology.

I have spoken of this Scottish School as marking a period of activity which rose into brightness and then waned. It is only too true, that so far as the originality and influence of its cultivators go, Geology has never since held in Scotland the place which it held here at the beginning of this century. Its decay is perhaps to be ascribed chiefly, if not entirely, to the introduction of the doctrines