

wrongly, inclined to look upon all geological theories as having their being in a mythical region, in which, with the progress of physics, the phantasms are modified century by century. But the "elephants caught in the ice," and Cuvier's "instantaneous change of climate," seem to me no more intelligible to-day than when I wrote my Asiatic fragments. According to all that we know of the decrease of heat in the earth, I cannot understand such a change of temperature in a space of time which does not also allow for the decaying of flesh. I understand much better how wolves, hares, and dogs, should they fall to-day into clefts of the frozen regions of Northern Siberia (and the so-called "elephant-ice" is in plain prose only porphyritic drift mixed with ice-crystals, true drift material), might retain their flesh and muscles. . . . But I am only a grumbling rebellious subject in your kingdom. . . . Do not be vexed with a friend who is more than ever impressed with your services to geology, your philosophical views of nature, your profound knowledge of organized beings. . . .

With old attachment and the warmest friendship, your

A. DE HUMBOLDT.