

*De Solido intra solium naturaliter contento*, which must be regarded as one of the landmarks in the history of geological investigation. It was meant to be introductory to a fuller work on the same subject, but this expansion was never written. The following digest of the contents of the treatise will show how far Steno had advanced beyond any of his predecessors or contemporaries, and how modern and familiar some of his original views now appear.

The strata of the earth are such as would be laid down in the form of sediment from turbid water. The objects enclosed in them, which in every respect resemble plants and animals, were produced exactly in the same way as living plants and animals are produced now. Where any bed encloses either fragments of another, and therefore older, bed, or the remains of plants or animals, it cannot be as old as the time of the Creation. If any marine production is found in any of these strata, it proves that at one time the sea has been present there; while, if the enclosed remains are those terrestrial plants or animals, we may suspect the sediment to have been laid down on land by some river or torrent.

Similarity of composition in a series of strata proves that the fluid from which the sediment was deposited continued to be unaffected by other fluids coming from other directions at different times: on the other hand, a diversity in the character of the strata points either to a commingling of different kinds of fluids, bearing divers sediments, and caused perhaps by violent winds and rains, or to a diversity in the composition of the sediment, of which the heavier materials would first