

blatant band, urged on its way by Werner, opposed these doctrines. Although the controversy raged through Desmarest's life, he took, as I have said, no share in it. He made an occasional allusion to the disorder and confusion that had been introduced into a question which in itself was simple enough to those who knew how to look at the actual facts. He asked reproachfully what would become of natural history and mineralogy, if every question were treated as that concerning Basalt had been? And he wrote somewhat scornfully of the authors who, without having ever undertaken any researches of the kind themselves, ventured in discussing those of others to indulge in unfounded hypotheses.¹ When any belated straggler from the enemy's camp came to consult Desmarest on the subject in dispute, the old man would content himself with the answer, "Go and see."

Leaving this controversy for subsequent consideration in connection with its later developments, I will pass from the subject for the present, for the purpose of calling attention in the following chapter to a contemporary event which was one of the most interesting features in the scientific life of the latter half of the eighteenth century—the rise of the spirit of scientific travel.

¹ See the article "Basalte" in vol. iii. of the *Géographie Physique*, published 1809.