

mingled along the junction-plane. He rightly reasoned that these facts demonstrate the contemporaneous discharge of volcanic products over the sea-bottom, at the time when the limestones were in process of accumulation. He found a difficulty, however, in explaining how the basalts could have flowed so far as perhaps ten leagues, without becoming solid, and he thought that the vents from which the eruptions proceeded in such long succession must have rapidly risen above sea-level, otherwise their fires would have been speedily extinguished by the rush of the water down into their craters. The submarine volcanic series of younger Tertiary age in Sicily is now well known from the labours of subsequent observers, but it is not always pointed out that the credit of the original discovery of it belongs to Dolomieu.

Playfair was fully acquainted with the arguments of the French geologist, and refers to them with characteristic candour. He brings forward what he considers "insuperable objections" to them—objections which in the light of present knowledge are easily removable—but he frankly admits the value of Dolomieu's explanation of the facts by granting that "it makes a considerable approach to a true theory, and that the submarine volcanoes of Dolomieu have an affinity to the unerupted lavas of Dr. Hutton."¹

The long continuance of the Huttonian prejudice in favour of these "unerupted lavas" can hardly be better illustrated than by reference to the *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, by John

¹ *Illustrations*, § 243.