

witty and the ludicrous never failed to occupy a considerable place."

Though his partnership in the chemical work brought him considerable wealth, it made no difference in the quiet unostentatious life of a philosopher, which he had led ever since he settled in Edinburgh. A severe attack of illness in the summer of 1793 greatly reduced his strength, and though he recovered from it and was able to resume his life of activity, a second attack of the same ailment in the winter of 1796 terminated at last fatally on the 26th March, 1797, when he was in his seventy-first year.

Hutton's claim to rank high among the founders of geology rests on no wide series of writings, like those which Von Buch poured forth so copiously for more than two generations. Nor was it proclaimed by a host of devoted pupils, like those who spread abroad the fame of Werner. It is based, so far at least as geology is concerned, on one single work,¹ and on the elucidations of two friends and disciples.

On the 7th of March and 4th of April, 1785, Hutton read to the Royal Society of Edinburgh his Memoir on a "Theory of the Earth; or an Investigation of the Laws observable in the Composition, Dissolution and Restoration of Land upon the Globe." Extending to no more than 96 quarto pages, it was written in a quiet, logical manner, with no attempt at display but with an apparent anxiety to state the author's opinions as tersely as possible.

¹The first sketch and the expansion of it into two octavo volumes may be regarded as practically one work, so far as the originality of conception is concerned.