

panding power, that is to say, have been changed in a greater degree by the operations of the mineral kingdom."<sup>1</sup> Hutton here compresses into a single, though somewhat cumbrous, sentence the doctrine to which Lyell in later years gave the name of metamorphism.

Hutton's vision not only reached far back into the geological past, it stretched into the illimitable future, and it embraced also a marvellously broad yet minute survey of the present. From his early youth he had been struck with the evidence of incessant decay upon the surface of the dry land. With admirable insight he kept hold of this cardinal fact, and followed it fearlessly from mountain-top to sea-shore. Wherever we may go, on each variety of rock, in every kind of climate, the doom of dissolution seemed to him to be written in ineffaceable characters upon the whole surface of the dry land. No sooner was the bed of the ocean heaved up into mountains, than the new terrestrial surface began to be attacked. Chemical and mechanical agents were recognised as concerned in this disintegration, though the precise nature and extent of their several operations had not then been studied. The general result produced by them, however, was never appreciated by any observer more clearly than by Hutton. From the coast, worn into stack and skerry and cave, by the ceaseless grinding of the waves, he had followed the progress of corrosion up to the crests of his Scottish hills. No rock, even the hardest, could escape, though some resisted more stubbornly than others.

<sup>1</sup>*Theory of the Earth*, vol. i. pp. 375, 376. This passage may serve also as an illustration of Hutton's peculiar style of composition.