

the most inflammable substances, carbon and sulphur, when subjected to intense heat in vacuo, undergo no change in their weight or properties. It is only when air or water obtains access to volcanic fire that it can produce effects analogous to those of combustion on the surface. Indeed, it appears probable that volcanic explosions and eruptions are occasioned by the access of water to subterranean fire. A sudden evolution of steam and vapour thus produced, will force a passage to the surface, in those parts where the incumbent rocks offer the least resistance, and the lava and fragments of rock will be ejected with a force, proportionate to the quantity of steam or air suddenly evolved.