

The most famous of the English followers of Werner, Jameson, honestly asked the question, "What has become of the immense volume of water that once covered and stood so high over the whole earth?" His answer may be cited as thoroughly characteristic of the mental attitude of a staunch Wernerian. "Although," he says, "we cannot give any very satisfactory answer to this question, it is evident that the theory of the diminution of the water remains equally probable. We may be fully convinced of its truth, and are so, although we may not be able to explain it. To know from observation that a great phenomenon took place, is a very different thing from ascertaining how it happened."¹ I do not suppose that in the whole literature of science a better illustration could be found of the advice—"When you meet with an insuperable difficulty, look it steadfastly in the face—and pass on."

One might have thought that having disposed of the universal ocean, even in this rather peremptory fashion, the Wernerians would have been in no hurry to call it back again, and set the same stupendous and inexplicable machinery once more going. But the exigencies of their theory left them no choice. Having determined, as an incontrovertible fact, that certain rocks had been deposited as chemical precipitates in a definite order from a universal ocean, when these philosophers, as their knowledge of Nature increased, found that some of these so-called precipitates occurred out of their due sequence and at much higher altitudes than had been supposed, they were compelled to bring

¹ Jameson, *op. cit.* p. 82.