

SCEPTICISM IN GEOLOGY AND THE REASONS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649499229

Scepticism in Geology and the Reasons by Verifier

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

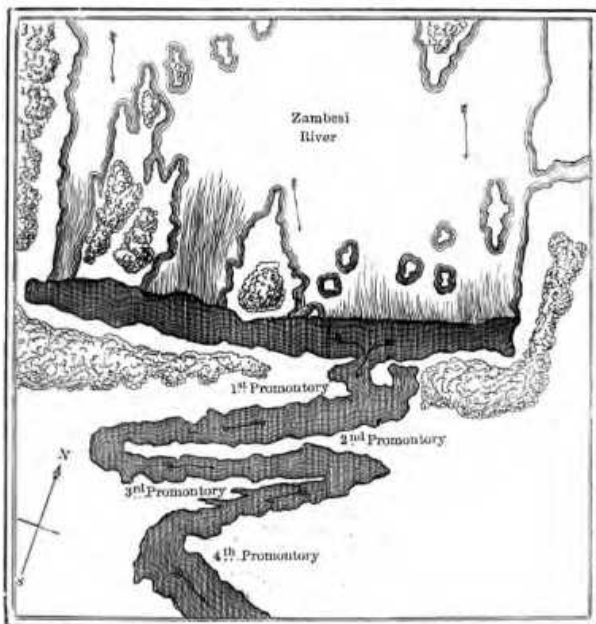
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

VERIFIER

**SCEPTICISM IN
GEOLOGY AND
THE REASONS**

SCEPTICISM IN GEOLOGY



PLAN OF THE FALLS OF THE ZAMBEZI, CENTRAL AFRICA.

Frontispiece.

SCEPTICISM IN GEOLOGY

AND

THE REASONS FOR IT

BY

VERIFIER

"Anna descripti."—THOS. A. KEMPTIS.



LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1877

(The right of translation is reserved.)

188. f. 64.



P R E F A C E.



THE geological theory of Modern Causes was presented to the world in a manner so attractive by the gifted author of *The Principles*, and his explanations of some of the most profound cosmical phenomena appeared to his readers so easily intelligible, that they have taken root almost without being questioned. Many persons, however, including the writer of the following chapters, while rejoicing in the real gains and conquests of science, have from the first felt the want of that scientific proof of this theory which philosophy assures us is alone capable of producing rational belief. There seems no reason why Geology should be exempt from the tests demanded from other sciences and beliefs. It is easy to attribute to the action of the elements and of earthquakes phenomena not easily accounted for. Is it not possible that, in the reliance placed by the promoters of this theory on such feeble agencies, they have been misled by plausible but mistaken analogies, which can never counterbalance

the entire absence of any positive proof of what they assert? At all events, there can be no presumption in asking that their facts and instances should be passed in careful review and scrutinised. The assumptions of modern geology have filled some minds with alarm. Let us, in the cause of truth, try to ascertain whether her own foundations are secure. A theory is but a scaffolding by which we approach the colossus Nature, in the attempt to develop some new feature; and that end being served, the scaffold drops away. The theory of Modern Causes has done some service in advancing and popularising geological study; and, unlike "new facts" in some other "ologies," whose average vitality is said not to exceed three years, it has had a long and prosperous career.

Already, however, have some heavy blows been dealt to it, perhaps unintentionally, by its own friends and supporters. Thus, Professor Huxley acknowledges "a very remote period when the earth was passing through physical and chemical conditions which it can no more see again than a man can recall his infancy."¹ Darwin, Lyell, and others, who proclaim a term of 300 millions of years insufficient for some of the operations of geology, are

¹ *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 239.

warned—"So much the worse for geology, since physical considerations render it impossible to allow her more than 10 or 15 millions of years."¹ Researches into the Dissipation of Energy have already dissipated the uniformitarian doctrine that—thanks to a supply of heat furnished constantly to our earth by the sun—the state of things which has existed on it for millions of years will continue unchanged for as many more millions. We have also recently obtained positive assurance that our globe was, "in the remotest times," so hot as to be at least plastic—a condition, fortunately, not *now* prevailing, either "in kind or in degree."

This little book does not deal with the great and incontrovertible *truths* of geology, but only with certain excrescences, which aim at proving the earth to have been fashioned by mechanical processes still going on. To sift the truth of this is the author's object. If the book should attract any attention, it is sure to be met in certain quarters with rough usage. Faults may very likely be found with his arguments, and his suggestions (they scarce deserve to be called theories) may share the fate of many others; but he would earnestly submit to the candid reader whether the long array of his facts, taken

¹ *Tait's Lectures*, p. 165.