

But if, although what is impossible cannot be true, it may still be believed, as experience has here shown, it is not always easy to believe against the evidence of the vulgar senses. The strata are not universal, nor every where in the same order, nor do they appear at successively lower levels. The antient rocks are not all purely chemical, nor the recent ones mechanical; while, even here, the theory contradicts itself, with its crystallized conglomerates.

Nor does any chemistry explain why one rock was replaced by another, why the same compound assumed so many forms and positions, why one only was precipitated at once, why silica gave way to clay, why there are repetitions of the same rocks, why serpentine and others are so partial, and why, and whence, the ocean acquired its new materials, after having become clear for the habitation of animals. The "limestone formation suite" contradicts what it is adduced to prove; to explain the forms of strata by crystallization, is to use a term without meaning; and to call a vein contemporaneous with its including rock, is to be ignorant of the use of words. The theory of coal does not deserve a remark: and it belongs to this system, peculiarly, to have adopted the most impossible one respecting mineral veins. On volcanoes, I need only notice the overbearing confidence of the assertions; and, while grievously ignorant of organic fossils, there is not a fact respecting them which does not overturn the whole system. But more than enough: odious as is the task, such criticism is a needful branch of geological instruction: and what I have here said, I may suppress as to future similar speculations.

De Luc attempts to remedy some defects in this system, by borrowing from Saussure; whence his claims to originality are but trifling, as they are not enviable.