

As a result of this neglect, the nomenclature of this portion of British geology has been virtually at a stand for about half a century. While so much has been done in this respect by chemists and geologists abroad, we are but little further forward than when the great outlines of the subject were sketched long ago by the early leaders in the science. The same vague names, the same confused and defective arrangement, the same absence of careful chemical and mineralogical analysis, so excusable in the infancy of the science, still disfigure our geological writings and even the best of our geological collections. Field-geologists must be content to bear their share of the blame, yet it is not from their hands that the needed reform is mainly to be looked for. They can do but little till chemistry comes to their aid with information regarding the composition of the rocks which they investigate, and the extent to which the nomenclature adopted in other countries can be applied in their own. Surely the time must come ere long when it will be deemed a task worthy of years of long and patient research to work out the nature and history of the volcanic rocks of this country. Such a task will not be the work of merely a single observer. It will require the labour of the geologist skilled to glean the data that can only be gathered in the field, and of the chemist, who, aided and guided by these observations, shall seek to determine the composition of the different igneous rocks, and the relation which in this respect they bear to the rocks of other regions, and to the products of modern volcanos. But, whether distant or near, the day will doubtless arrive when we shall be able to connect into one story, as far at least as our fragmentary records will permit, the narrative of the varied volcanic eruptions which from early geological times have taken place in the British Islands, and to link that chronicle with the long history of volcanic action over the globe.

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

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#### THE CHEMISTRY OF THE PRIMEVAL EARTH.

By referring to page 432 of the September Number of the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE it will be seen that every effort was made on the part of the Editors to furnish as complete a list of corrections as possible of Dr. T. Sterry Hunt's Lecture, which appeared in August last. On August 27th—the MAGAZINE having gone to press—we received the subjoined letter from Dr. Hunt, which we publish intact, only omitting those errata which are already noticed in our last Number. We are glad Dr. Sterry Hunt does the short-hand writer the justice to state that he is doubtless a competent reporter, and has in most cases reproduced his language with fidelity,—the errata being for the most part obvious to the scientific reader, and that they do not in any way affect his argument, all the points of which may be well enough understood from the report. We cannot, however, agree with Dr. Sterry Hunt in considering the abstract, which appeared in the *Chemical News* of June 27th, superior to the very full report—

faulty though it be—which appeared in the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE for August last.—EDIT.

*To the Editor of the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE.*

SIR,—In the number of your MAGAZINE for August appears a report of a lecture delivered by me at the Royal Institution on the 31st of May, on the Chemistry of the Primeval Earth. It is there described as “a full report taken down verbatim in short-hand, and now printed for the first time.” For the sake of your numerous readers I regret that this report, disfigured by many errors, should have appeared in the pages of the GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE. When, moreover, I am aware that those who counselled its publication were aware that I had preferred to substitute for it a carefully revised one, prepared from this short-hand report, together with my own brief notes containing the heads of my extempore lecture, I can but feel that the proceeding was inconsiderate and unjust alike to the lecturer and to your readers. This revised report, as many are aware, has already appeared in the proceedings of the Royal Institution, and also in the *Chemical News* of June 27th, where it is expressly stated that it is the report revised by the author.

The short-hand writer is doubtless a competent reporter, and has in most cases reproduced my language with fidelity; but, especially in the more technical portions, has fallen into numerous errors, for the most part obvious to the scientific reader. These, with one or two little omissions, do not in any way in fact affect my argument; all the points of which may be well enough understood from the report when corrected as below, as the reader may assure himself by comparing it with my revised report in the proceedings of the Royal Institution, and in the *Chemical News*.

I subjoin a list of *errata*, which will show some of the mistakes into which the reporter has fallen—in the report published in your MAGAZINE of August:—

On page 361.—The six lines from line 25, beginning with “Messrs. Hopkins and Fairbairn,” present an unintelligible confusion, in reproducing my statement that these gentlemen had shown pressure to augment the fusing point of such bodies as contract in solidifying, and that, as we might suppose, the solidification of the earth to commence at the centre, the temperature there would not be above that of congelation.

Page 361, line 30, after “increase” read “of temperature.”

” ” ” 43, for “first few metals” read “elements.”

” 362, ” 32, before “gases” read “acid.”

” 363, ” 2, for “whole of the affinity of the acid was” read “whole of the acids were.”

” 364, ” 6, for “whole” read “most.” It is obvious that dolomite and gypsum, together with numerous silicated rocks, such as steatite and serpentine, of which I have elsewhere maintained the aqueous and chemical origin, are excluded.

” ” ” 39, for “their hands” read “at hand.”

Trusting that you will do me the justice to insert the above remarks and corrections,

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. STERRY HUNT.

August 24th, 1867.