

was a beautiful theory killed by an ugly fact. Assuredly facts, ugly from one point of view, have massacred these theories of visionary geologists, who confuse the making of holes in the ground with mining, and the persistence of quartz with the continuity of gold-bearing ore.

CONCLUSION.

The foregoing citations from writers who examined the same region at successive intervals during fifty years is interesting as illustrating the growth of geologic thought. They serve to remind us how young the science is, and how infantile is that branch of it applied to the search for valuable ores. Errors in petrography were natural before the microscope was introduced, and mistakes in chemistry were not surprising before laboratories became easily accessible, but it is apparent that the worst errors are not caused by the lack of apparatus or other artificial aids, but by careless observation and reckless generalization. Keen eyes and a logical mind enabled several of the older investigators to arrive at remarkably correct inferences, while the multiplicity of instruments has not availed to prevent some of their successors from gross blunders. The general trend has been to discard catastrophic ideas and to apply the principles first enunciated by Lyell in 1830. The history of geologic thought as regards the Nova Scotian goldfields, as elsewhere, indicates a growing disposition to judge the unknown by the known, and the past by the present, with due allowance for varying conditions. Geology has become less visionary, while appealing no less to the constructive imagination. Knowledge does not kill theory, it serves but to discipline. If geology has so often failed to guide the miner in his groping underground, it has been because the science was allowed to drift too far from the safe anchorage of fact. All gold-bearing quartz is not ore, and every hole in the ground is not a mine.

* * * Extra Copies of this paper may be obtained, at a nominal charge, at the Offices of the Institution, Salisbury House, London, E.C.

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