

We learn from the "Challenger" Reports that under certain circumstances the presence of organic matter in oceanic deposits causes an alkaline condition, tending to the solution of silica and the formation of silicates. We also learn that siliceous matter in a state of fine division (*e.g.*, volcanic dust) may afford material for the production of hydrous silicates, either directly or indirectly through the agency of organisms forming siliceous skeletons. The "Challenger" Reports also show that the silicates known under the name of glauconite, and thus deposited, contain several bases to some extent interchangeable. Of these the principal are aluminium, potash, and iron, though magnesia is also present. Some older silicates injecting fossils in the Palæozoic rocks are less complicated, and contain more magnesia: and, as Hunt has shown, there is nothing anomalous in the supposition that in the Laurentian period silicate of magnesium and iron may have acted in this capacity.¹

It is true that serpentine is now usually regarded as a product of the hydration of olivine and pyroxene; still, even on this supposition, it might be formed from the hydration of fine volcanic dust falling into the sea. Hunt also has shown that the serpentine of the Grenville Limestone differs chemically from those supposed to be of direct igneous origin, in its comparative freedom from iron oxide, in its larger proportion of water, and in its lower specific gravity, besides being a more pure silicate of magnesium. That it can be deposited by water is shown by the chrysotile filling veins, and by my own observations, published long ago, on the serpentine replacing and filling cavities of Cambro-Silurian fossils at Melbourne in Canada, and filling the cells of Silurian corals at Lake Chebogamong.²

¹ See Analyses of Glauconites, etc., by Dr. Hunt in "Dawn of Life," p. 126. One tertiary example is silicate of iron and magnesia. See also Hoskins on Glauconite, *Geol. Mag.*, July, 1895.

² *Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc.* 1864, p. 69, also 1870, p. 48, *et seq.*, *Memoir on Eozoon* in Peter Redpath Museum, 1888, p. 48 *et seq.*