

traordinary success; and were looked upon with great respect, till the study of organic fossils threw them into the shade.

Smith, on the other hand, long pursued his own thoughts without aid and without sympathy. About 1799 he became acquainted with a few gentlemen (Dr. Anderson, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Townsend, and Mr. Davies), who had already given some attention to organic fossils, and who were astonished to find his knowledge so much more exact and extensive than their own. From this time he conceived the intention of publishing his discoveries; but the want of literary leisure and habits long prevented him. His knowledge was orally communicated without reserve to many persons; and thus gradually and insensibly became part of the public stock. When this diffusion of his views had gone on for some time, his friends began to complain that the author of them was deprived of his well-merited share of fame. His delay in publication made it difficult to remedy this wrong; for soon after he published his Geological Map of England, another appeared, founded upon separate observations; and though, perhaps, not quite independent of his, yet in many respects much more detailed and correct. Thus, though his general ideas obtained universal currency, he did not assume his due prominence as a geologist. In 1818, a generous attempt was made to direct a proper degree of public gratitude to him, in an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, the production of Dr. Fitton, a distinguished English geologist. And when the eminent philosopher, Wollaston, had bequeathed to the Geological Society of London a fund from which a gold medal was to be awarded to geological services, the first of such medals was, in 1831, "given to Mr. William Smith, in consideration of his being a great original discoverer in English geology; and especially for his having been the first in this country to discover and to teach the identification of strata, and to determine their succession by means of their imbedded fossils."

Cuvier's discoveries, on the other hand, both from the high philosophic fame of their author, and from their intrinsic importance, arrested at once the attention of scientific Europe; and, notwithstanding the undoubted priority of Smith's labors, for a long time were looked upon as the starting-point of our knowledge of organic fossils. And, in reality, although Cuvier's memoirs derived the greatest part of their value from his zoological conclusions, they reflected back no small portion of interest on the classifications of strata which were involved in his inferences. And the views which he presented gave to geology an attractive and striking character, and a connexion with