

limits. Nor, though we may be proud of what has been achieved for Geology in this little kingdom, can we for a moment shut our eyes to the fact that these achievements are of the past, that the measure of the early promise at the beginning of this century has been but scantily fulfilled in Scotland, and that the state of the science among us here, instead of being in advance, is rather behind the time. And thus I dwell now on the example of our predecessors solely in the hope that, realising to ourselves what that example really was, we may be stimulated to follow it. The same hills and valleys, crags and ravines, remain around us which gave these great men their inspiration, and still preach to us the lessons which they were the first to understand.

The period during which the distinctively Scottish School of Geology rose and flourished may be taken as included between the years 1780 and 1825—a brief half-century. Previous to that time Geology, in the true sense of the word, can hardly be said to have existed. Steno, indeed, more than a hundred years before, had clearly shown, from the occurrence of the remains of plants and animals embedded in the solid rocks, that the present was not the original order of things, that there had been upheavals of the sea into dry land and depressions of the land beneath the sea, by the working of forces lodged within the earth, and that the memorials of these changes were preserved for us in the rocks. Seventy years later another writer of the Italian school, Lazzaro Moro, adopting and extending the conclusions of Steno, pointed to the evidence that the surface of the earth is everywhere worn away, and is repaired by the upheaving power of earthquakes, but for which the mountains and all the dry land would at last be brought beneath the level of the waves.