

higher, but no progress was made in the preparation of the growing mass of material for publication.

In the year 1799, William Smith made the acquaintance of the Rev. Benjamin Richardson, who, living in Bath, had interested himself in forming a collection of fossils from the rocks of the neighbourhood. Looking over this collection, the experienced surveyor was able to tell far more about its contents than the owner of it knew himself. Writing long afterwards to Sedgwick, Mr. Richardson narrated how Smith could decide at once from what strata they had respectively come, and how well he knew the lie of the rocks on the ground. "With the open liberality peculiar to Mr. Smith," he adds, "he wished me to communicate this to the Rev. J. Townsend of Pewsey (then in Bath), who was not less surprised at the discovery. But we were soon much more astonished by proofs of his own collecting, that whatever stratum was found in any part of England, the same remains would be found in it and no other. Mr. Townsend, who had pursued the subject forty or fifty years, and had travelled over the greater part of civilized Europe, declared it perfectly unknown to all his acquaintance, and, he believed, to all the rest of the world. In consequence of Mr. Smith's desire to make so valuable a discovery universally known, I without reserve gave a card of the English strata to Baron Rosencrantz, Dr. Müller of Christiania, and many others, in the year 1801."¹

The card of the English strata referred to in this letter was a tabular list of the formations from the Coal up to the Chalk, with the thicknesses of the several

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 31.