

would have been likely to give him anything. For seven years he had no home, but wandered over the north of England, wherever professional engagements might carry him. His income was diminished and fluctuating, yet even under this cloud of trial he retained his quiet courage and his enthusiasm for geological exploration.

That a man of Smith's genius should have been allowed to remain in this condition of toil and poverty has been brought forward as a reproach to his fellow-countrymen. It may be doubted, however, whether a man of his strong independence of character would have accepted any pecuniary assistance, so long as he could himself gain by his own exertions a modest though uncertain income. It is not that his merits were unrecognised in England, though perhaps the appreciation of them was tardier than it might have been. In 1818 a full and generous tribute to his merits was written by Fitton, and appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* for February in that year.¹ But though his fame was thus well established, his financial position remained precarious. He had gradually formed a consulting practice as a mineral and geological surveyor in the north of England, and he

¹At the end of 1817 there seems to have been some inquiry as to priority of discovery in regard to Smith's work. In the following March, Mr. John Farey contributed to Tilloch's *Philosophical Magazine* a definite statement of Smith's claims, showing that the fundamental facts and principles he had established had been freely made known by him to many people as far back as 1795, and that Farey himself, on 5th August 1807, had published an explicit notification of Smith's discoveries and conclusions as to fossil shells in the article on Coal in Rees' *Cyclopaedia*.