

joined the Geological Society. During the years 1805-7, Davy lectured on geology as well as chemistry at the Royal Institution, and the collection there was regarded at the time as forming one of the best geological museums in London.¹

The following all-important entry occurs in the diary of William Allen: 'On the 13th of the eleventh month, 1807, dined at the Freemasons' Tavern, about five o'clock, with Davy, Dr. Babington, &c., &c., about eleven in all. Instituted a Geological Society.'²

As a matter of fact the Geological Society was founded by thirteen gentlemen, two of whom (W. H. Pepys and W. Phillips) were, however, prevented from attending this first meeting. Davy had written to Pepys on the eventful day, November 13, saying, 'We are forming a little talking Geological Dinner Club, of which I hope you will be a member. I shall propose you to-day.'³ Some account of the founders will here be appropriate.

Of these ARTHUR AIKIN (1773-1854) then of Broad Street Buildings, was a man of wide attainments and sound judgment; a good chemist and mineralogist. He had been a Unitarian minister. At a later date he was secretary of the Society of Arts. He and his brother, C. R. Aikin, prepared a useful 'Dictionary of Chemistry and Mineralogy' (2 vols. 1807 and 1814). Murchison acknowledged that in preparing his work on the Silurian System, he 'derived much assistance from a valuable original MS. on the Structure of Shropshire, by Mr. A. Aikin, the earliest modern geologist, who, with his associate, Mr. T. Webster, worked in this field.'⁴

WILLIAM ALLEN (1770-1843), of Plough Court, a member of the Society of Friends, and an analytical chemist, entered the establishment of J. G. Bevan in Plough Court, took over the business in 1795, and became the founder of the firm

¹ See 'The Royal Institution: its Founder and its First Professors,' by Dr. Bence Jones, 1871, p. 259.

² 'Life of William Allen,' vol. i. 1846, p. 88.

³ 'Life of Sir H. Davy,' by Dr. J. A. Paris, vol. i. 1831, p. 279.

⁴ *Proc. Geol. Soc.* iii. p. 647.