

rocks—it was further hoped that the Society might lay ‘the foundation of a general geological map of the British territory.’

The concluding remarks are of special interest in showing the conception of geology attained at that early date:—

‘It would be superfluous to enumerate the many advantages which may be derived from geology ; it is sufficient to observe that it offers to scientific research a field of inquiry, rich in the beautiful and sublime productions of nature ; and that, practically considered, its results admit of direct application to purposes of the highest utility. It may also be remarked, that the means of acquiring such information are peculiarly great throughout every part of the British islands. No country contains, within an equal space, a greater variety of mineral substances ; while our long and broken line of coast, and our numerous mines, furnish the most ample opportunities of making geological observations.’¹

The following records are taken from the first Minute Book of the Society:—

At a meeting held at the Freemasons’ Tavern, Great Queen Street, November 13, 1807, present: Mr. Arthur Aikin, Mr. William Allen, Dr. [William] Babington, Count de Bournon, Mr. [Humphry] Davy, Dr. [James] Franck, Mr. [G. B.] Greenough, Mr. [Richard] Knight, Dr. [James] Laird, Mr. [James] Parkinson and Mr. Richard Phillips :

Resolved :

That there be forthwith instituted a Geological Society, for the purpose of making geologists acquainted with each

¹ In the library of the Geological Society there is a quarto MS., ‘Mémoire par le Comte de Bournon,’ of 43 pp. dealing with the work to be done by the Society. According to a Council Minute of January 31, 1811, this was intended as an Introduction to the *Transactions*, and parts of it were no doubt utilised by the Committee of Papers when they prepared the preface (see p. 43). Some account of the early history of the Geological Society was written by W. Stephen Mitchell, then assistant in the Museum of the Society, and published in *The Hour* for Nov. 5, 1873. Reference is made to this article by Sir John Evans in his Address in 1875, and more fully by Sir A. Geikie in his ‘Life of Sir Roderick I. Murchison,’ vol. i. 1875, pp. 119, &c. ; unfortunately the copy that was in the possession of the Society has been lost.