

PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

A method as systematic as the nature of the subject would admit has been adopted, and the various particulars relating to the several formations are disposed under an uniform series of general heads, which it is trusted will greatly facilitate reference. A constant order has also been pursued in tracing the local distribution of each formation, beginning with its northern extremity and proceeding regularly to the southern; thus we have avoided that frequent transition to distant geographical sites so embarrassing to the student.

The outline map which accompanies this work is chiefly compiled from Mr. Greenough's; we have not however introduced his division of the different varieties of slates in the districts of Cumberland, Wales, and Devon, regarding this point as not sufficiently ascertained; and a different division has been adopted of a part of the formations described in our third Book, we having included the limestone shale of Derbyshire under the colour of the mill-stone grit, and considering it as associated with this formation; whereas Mr. Greenough has associated it with the subjacent carboniferous limestone. This change of system produces an apparent difference through this portion of the map, where no real difference exists, for the whole question of this division is one of convenience only.

The sections will be found more comprehensive than any hitherto published of the island, and the only ones in which the relations of the older and inclined formations to the recent and more horizontal deposits are exhibited with distinctness and truth; we have purposely avoided pursuing the same lines with the various sections published by Mr. Smith, except in one limited instance, where a portion of one of the sections traverses the Weald of Surry and Sussex in a line nearly coincident with an earlier section of this observer.

The sections 5 and 6 are copied from two of Mr. Webster's. The dotted curves in the former, indicate the general lines of curvature to which (according to the very ingenious view of that writer) all the different inclinations exhibited by the strata there represented, may be reduced.

* * * The two first chapters of the second book, and a part of the third chapter (altogether extending from page 59 to 185) not having been corrected by Mr. Conybeare, though principally derived from his M.S. some errors have crept into this part of the work; the most material of these are pointed out in the list of Errata, and the reader is requested to correct them with his pen.