

2. It is no extravagance to affirm that the distinguished men to whom I allude, and who have given us the details of their travels and labours, are entitled personally to the fullest credit of their testimony upon the facts and scenery which they describe. Yet, if any person, moved, I doubt not, by honourable and even religious principles, should allow a painful suspicion still to lurk in his mind, let him consider that the individual veracity of persons of the finest talents and the greatest advantages of education, and whose integrity is unquestionable, is not our only guarantee ; but that the number of explorers and observers is great, that they belong to different nations and parties, and are subject to be influenced by various interests and prepossessions, so that the correction of any involuntary mistake is sure and speedy ; but if superficial observation, or negligent statement, or designed misrepresentation, were to occur, the detection would be prompt and the penalty severe, in a public forfeiture of character and confidence. From some measure of knowledge and some care in observation, I feel myself bound in duty to profess my thorough persuasion, that the firmest reliance may be placed on the reports and descriptions for which we are indebted to the most distinguished geologists of our time.

citous critic [geologist :] and, instead of reaping that high honour which men of real erudition [and science] have obtained from this art, he will become contemptible and ridiculous. I think I hear my reader asking me, Whether I myself look for any portion of this honour?—I will only venture to say, that I do not PROFESS this arduous and hazardous study, though I highly honour those who do profess it, and have long read their writings with great pleasure, from which perhaps some tinge—may have adhered to me.” From a larger quotation out of his *Ars Critica*, in *Pye Smith’s Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, Vol. III. p. 25, third ed. Yet, if any should suspect me of being captivated by novelty and ensnared by a precipitate disposition, I take leave to say that these are not to me the studies of yesterday, and that I have professed and taught the leading sentiments of this volume, within my own circle of connexions, for at least five and thirty years.