

TO

RODERICK IMPEY MURCHISON, Esq., F. R. S., ETC

PRESIDENT OF THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

IN the autumn of last year, I sat down to write a few geological sketches for a newspaper; the accumulated facts of twenty years crowded upon me as I wrote, and the few sketches have expanded into a volume. Permit me, honored Sir, to dedicate this volume to you. Its imperfections are doubtless many, for it has been produced under many disadvantages; but it is not the men best qualified to decide regarding it whose criticisms I fear most; and I am especially desirous to bring it under your notice, as of all geologists the most thoroughly acquainted with those ancient formations which it professes partially to describe. I am, besides, desirous it should be known, and this, I trust, from other motives than those of vanity, that, when prosecuting my humble researches in obscurity and solitude, the present President of the Geological Society did not deem it beneath him to evince an interest in the results to which they led, and to encourage and assist the inquirer with his advice. Accept, honored Sir, my sincere thanks for your kindness.

Smith, the father of English Geology, loved to remark that he had been born upon the Oolite—the formation whose various deposits he was the first to distinguish and describe, and from which, as from the meridian line of the geographer, the geological scale has been graduated on both sides. I