

large physiological as well as physical principles, which added incomparably to its dignity and charm.

In tracing the reception and diffusion of doctrines such as those of Smith and Cuvier, we ought not to omit to notice more especially the formation and history of the Geological Society of London, just mentioned. It was established in 1807, with a view to multiply and record observations, and patiently to await the result of some future period; that is, its founders resolved to apply themselves to Descriptive Geology, thinking the time not come for that theoretical geology which had then long fired the controversial ardor of Neptunists and Plutonists. The first volume of the Transactions of this society was published in 1811. The greater part of the contents of this volume² savor of the notions of the Wernerian school; and there are papers on some of the districts in England most rich in fossils, which Mr. Conybeare says, well exhibit the low state of secondary geology at that period. But a paper by Mr. Parkinson refers to the discoveries both of Smith and of Cuvier; and in the next volume, Mr. Webster gives an account of the Isle of Wight, following the admirable model of Cuvier and Brongniart's account of the Paris basin. "If we compare this memoir of Mr. Webster with the preceding one of Dr. Berger (also of the Isle of Wight), they at once show themselves to belong to two very distinct eras of science; and it is difficult to believe that the interval which elapsed between their respective publication was only three or four years."³

Among the events belonging to the diffusion of sound geological views in this country, we may notice the publication of a little volume entitled, *The Geology of England and Wales*, by Mr. Conybeare and Mr. Phillips, in 1821; an event far more important than, from the modest form and character of the work, it might at first sight appear. By describing in detail the geological structure and circumstances of England (at least as far downwards as the coal), it enabled a very wide class of readers to understand and verify the classifications which geology had then very recently established; while the extensive knowledge and philosophical spirit of Mr. Conybeare rendered it, under the guise of a topographical enumeration, in reality a profound and instructive scientific treatise. The vast impulse which it gave to the study of sound descriptive geology was felt and acknowledged in other countries, as well as in Britain.

² Conybeare, *Report. Brit. Assoc.* p. 372.

³ Conybeare, *Report*, p. 372.