

# P R E F A C E

TO THE THIRTY-FIRST EDITION.

THE steady demand for thirty editions of this work, during the last twenty years, has called for frequent revisions, lest it should fall behind the state of the science. In making the present revision—so rapidly has geology advanced of late—we found it desirable to rewrite nearly the whole, as we have done. We have also modified the plan not a little, to give it greater unity. Some of the old Sections have been left out, but more new ones added. The wood-cut illustrations have been increased from 208 to 418.

We have tried to reduce the size of the work, by leaving out every thing not indispensable. But the great amount of new matter and of new illustrations, as well as the expansion of the typography to improve the appearance, have well nigh thwarted our efforts. We are aware that teachers sometimes can not find time to carry their pupils through the whole of a science which so abounds in facts and important applications as does geology. Two methods have been adopted by authors to meet this difficulty. One is, to leave out a large part of the science, and retain only the most striking and brilliant parts. But this is too much like attempting to perform the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. And teachers and pupils ought to know, that the study of such abridgments does not make them acquainted with geology, which still remains to be learned. We prefer to give a condensed view of the whole subject,