

CHAPTER I.

THE STARTING-POINT.

AN explorer trudging along some line of coast, or traversing some mountain region, may now and then reach a projecting headland, or bold mountain spur, which may enable him to command a wide view of shore and sea, or of hill and valley, before and behind. On such a salient point he may sit down, note-book and glass in hand, and endeavour to correlate the observations made on the ground he has traversed, and may strain his eyes forward in order to anticipate the features of the track in advance. Such are the salient points in a scientific pilgrimage of more than half a century, to which I desire to invite the attention of the readers of these papers. In doing so, I do not propose to refer, except incidentally, to subjects which I have already discussed in books accessible to general readers, but rather to those which are imbedded in little accessible transactions, or scientific periodicals, or which have fallen out of print. I cannot therefore pretend to place the reader on all the salient points of geological science, or even on all of those I have myself reached, but merely to lead him to some of the viewing-places which I have found particularly instructive to myself.

For similar reasons it is inevitable that a certain personal element shall enter into these reminiscences, though this autobiographical feature will be kept as much in the background as possible. It is also to be anticipated that the same subject