

FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE method of treatment adopted in this Text-book is one which, while conducting the class of Geology in the University of Edinburgh, I have found to afford the student a good grasp of the general principles of the science, and at the same time a familiarity with and interest in details of which he is enabled to see the bearing in the general system of knowledge. A portion of the volume appeared in the autumn of 1879 as the article "Geology" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. My leisure since that date has been chiefly devoted to expanding those sections of the treatise which could not be adequately developed in the pages of a general work of reference.

While the book will not, I hope, repel the general reader who cares to know somewhat in detail the facts and principles of one of the most fascinating branches of natural history, it is intended primarily for students, and is therefore adapted specially for their use. The digest given of each subject will be found to be accompanied by references to memoirs where a fuller statement may be sought. It has long been a charge against the geologists of Great Britain that, like their countrymen in general, they are apt to be somewhat insular in their conceptions, even in regard to their own branch of science. Of course, specialists who have devoted themselves to the investigation of certain geological formations or of a certain group of fossil animals, have made themselves familiar with