

necessary for the completion of the work, remained in manuscript.¹

If Hutton's original sketch was defective in style and arrangement, his larger work was even more unfortunate in these respects. Its prolixity deterred readers from its perusal. Yet it is a vast storehouse of acute and accurate observation and luminous deduction, and it deserves to be carefully studied by every geologist who wishes to comprehend the history of his own science.

Fortunately for Hutton's fame and for the onward march of geology, the philosopher numbered among his friends the illustrious mathematician and natural philosopher, John Playfair (1748-1819), who had been closely associated with him in his later years, and was intimately conversant with his geological opinions. Gifted with a clear penetrating mind, a rare faculty of orderly logical arrangement, and an English style of altogether remarkable precision and elegance, he was of all men best fitted to let the world know what it owed to Hutton. Accordingly, after his friend's death, he determined to prepare a more popular and perspicuous account of Hutton's labours. He gave in this work, first a clear statement of the essential principles of Hutton's system, and then a series of notes or essays upon different parts of the

¹ A portion of this precious manuscript containing six chapters (iv.-ix.) came into the possession of Leonard Horner, F.R.S., who presented it to the Geological Society of London. It remained hardly noticed in the library of the Society until 1899, when at my solicitation the Society printed and published it. This is the only portion of the MS. now known to exist.