

remarks; and it might have been from the many hints, perhaps mainly on this subject, which I made in the course of the journey, that Mr. Palmer jocosely recommended me to write a book of hints.”¹

We can picture the trio on this memorable journey—the young man in front eagerly scrutinizing every field, ridge, and hill along each side of the way, noting every change of soil and topography, and turning round every little while, unable to restrain his exuberant pleasure as his eye detected one indication after another of the application of the principles he had found to hold good at home, and pointing them out with delight to his two sedate companions, who looked at him with amusement, but with neither knowledge of his aims nor sympathy with his enthusiasm.

For six years William Smith was engaged in setting out and superintending the construction of the Somersetshire Coal Canal. In the daily engrossing cares of these duties it might seem that there could be little opportunity for adding to his stores of geological knowledge, or working out in more detail the principles of stratigraphy that he had already reached. But in truth these six years were among the most important in his whole career. The constant and close observation which he was compelled to give to the strata that had to be cut through in making the canal, led him to give more special attention to the organic remains in them. From boyhood he had gathered fossils, but without connecting them definitely with the succession of the rocks that contained them.

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 10.