

PREFACE

IN the year 1896 the President of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, invited me to inaugurate the Lectureship founded in that seminary by Mrs. George Huntington Williams in memory of her husband, the distinguished and widely regretted Professor of Geology there. In accepting this invitation I chose for my subject an outline of the history and development of Geology during the period between the middle of the eighteenth and the close of the second decade of the nineteenth century—an interval of about seventy years, full of peculiar interest to students of the science, for it was during that interval that the main foundations of modern geology were laid.

In making this choice I was influenced by my experience of the limited acquaintance with the historical development of the science which has often been shown even by those who have done good service in enlarging its boundaries. English-speaking geologists have for the most part contented themselves with the excellent, but necessarily brief, summary of the subject given by Lyell in the introductory chapters of his classic *Principles*, no fuller digest of geological history having been published in their language. It appeared to me that it might be useful to recount