

HISTORY

OF THE

GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

ACADEMIES AND LEARNED SOCIETIES—EARLY GEOLOGICAL RESEARCHES

THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY of London was founded on November 13, 1807, about the middle of 'The Heroic Age of Geology,' a period taken by Zittel to extend from 1790 to 1820.¹ The time was appropriate for the binding together in Britain of those naturalists who were interested in the study and progress of the comparatively new science of Geology. This expressive word, indeed, had only been introduced in 1778 by J. A. De Luc, who some years later remarked: 'Of all the sciences the most extensive and the most complex is that which was termed geology, before it was entitled to the name.'² Nevertheless, many matters relating to a knowledge of the Earth had attracted attention from the earliest times, and observations

¹ 'Geschichte der Geologie und Paläontologie bis Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts.' Von K. A. von Zittel. Munich and Leipzig, 1899. A condensed English translation of this important work by Maria M. Ogilvie-Gordon, D.Sc., appeared in 1901. See also 'The Founders of Geology,' by Sir Archibald Geikie, 1897 (2nd ed. 1905), where the labours of the chief geologists between 1750 and 1825 are more fully described; and *Proc. Geol. Soc.* iii. p. 96.

² 'Treatise on Geology,' 1809, p. 1.