

FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

“To trace back, if that might be, the origin of the present surface of the country, and by working out the structure of the rocks, to contrast the aspect of the land to-day with its condition in former geological periods, has been to the author of these pages the delightful occupation of years. The writing of this volume has thus gone on side by side with daily labour in the field, amid all the changes of scene and surroundings that fall to the lot of a member of the Geological Survey.

“The principles which have guided me in the following investigation are far from new : they were laid down long ago by Hutton and Playfair, and they have recently received fresh illustration from the pen of Professor Ramsay. I can claim nothing more than to have tried in some detail to develop these principles in an inquiry into the origin of the existing scenery of Scotland. The views to which I have been led, however, run directly counter to what are still the prevailing impressions on this subject, and I am therefore prepared to find them disputed, or perhaps thrown aside as mere dreaming. That in searching for a pathway through a field of scientific research wherein the travellers have as