# SCIENCE

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### THE SCOTTISH SCHOOL OF GEOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

By Professor FRANK D. ADAMS

MCGILL UNIVERSITY

The celebration of the centenary of the Geological Society of Edinburgh must indeed be an occasion of very especial pleasure for any one who takes an interest in the development of the science of geology. For it was in this city that what has been called the Scottish School of Geology took its rise and for a brief half century, A. D. 1780 to A. D. 1825, made the city of Edinburgh one of the greatest centers of geological learning of the time.

Here it was that Hutton, who may fairly be called one of the founders of modern geology (A. D. 1726—A. D. 1797) was born, lived and wrote his epochmaking work, "The Theory of the Earth." It was here that Sir James Hall, the "founder of experimental geology," carried out his celebrated researches, which gave such valuable support and corroboration to Hutton's explanations of certain phenomena which he had observed in the field. And it was here that

<sup>1</sup> Address given at Edinburgh on the occasion of the centenary celebration of the Geological Society of Edinburgh, September 3, 1934.

Playfair, professor of natural philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, wrote his "Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory," a work on which he bestowed much time and labor and which did so much to elucidate Hutton's views and to present his theory in such a clear and attractive form that it achieved a widespread acceptance.

These were the three great leaders of the Scottish School of Geology, but there were other men associated with them who occupied less important positions and of whose work it is impossible here to make further mention. Hutton being the chief exponent of the views held by this school, his explanation of the origin and structure of the earth came to be known as the Huttonian theory.

Another circumstance which gave an additional impetus to the study of geology in Edinburgh was that about the same time that Playfair was appointed to the chair of natural philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, Robert Jamieson received the appointment of regius professor of natural history at this

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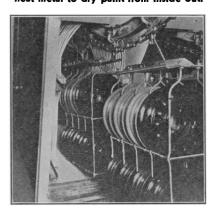
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