

fauna showing the change to deeper-water conditions. Near Folkestone the change to the deeper water of the Grey-chalk sea is very plain, and is seen to have been a gradual one. The discovery of these Red Clays is of exceeding interest, but it is misleading to speak of them as analogous to the Gault.

J. S. GARDNER.

PARK HOUSE, ST. JOHN'S WOOD PARK, N.W.

May 17th, 1877.

#### DR. WILLIAM SMITH'S GEOLOGICAL MAPS.

SIR,—At a recent sale the copper-plates of William Smith's original folio atlas of geologically coloured maps of England, sixteen in number, including the index, published in 1821, came into the possession of Mr. Edward Stanford, of Charing Cross, who is willing to sell them at, as he writes to me, a trifling cost (for sixteen large coppers), if purchased for the Geological Society. It would not pay now-a-days to reprint maps only of historical interest; but I venture to think that the maps of the father of English Geology are worthy of being preserved from the melting-pot, the doom of superannuated copper-plates, and entrusted to the safe keeping of some chartered society. I write this, therefore, to obtain the opinion of geologists on the matter, and shall be glad to receive the names of gentlemen who will subscribe for their purchase, as I propose, for presentation to the Geological Society, which already possesses the original manuscript maps.

G. S. BOULGER, F.L.S., F.G.S.

SCIENTIFIC CLUB, 7, SAVILE ROW,

July 12, 1877.

#### PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS.

SIR,—The practice of the Geological Society, of publishing "abstracts" of papers read at the meetings, before the papers themselves are published, is sometimes of great service both to the authors and to the public; but it has this serious drawback, that the public generally found their conclusions regarding the value of the paper—and the correctness of the author's views—not on the paper, but on the "abstract," which necessarily contains but an imperfect statement of the data upon which the author has rested his arguments; and the probabilities are, that when the paper itself appears *in extenso* some months afterwards, the men who have based their conclusions upon the statements of the "abstract" will not care to make themselves acquainted with the details and arguments of the paper.

This drawback has come with great force to my mind (as no doubt it has done in the case of others) from the manner in which the paper I had the opportunity of bringing before the Society has been received and criticized in several quarters. One geologist, for whose opinion I entertain a high respect, wrote at once to intimate that he could not accept my conclusions; and when I naturally replied that he had not had an opportunity of reading the details upon which they had been founded, he replied that, "having seen the 'abstract,' he knew already quite enough to satisfy his own mind on the subject;" and I greatly fear my friend, who on a former