

**SMEATON AND LIGHTHOUSES,  
A POPULAR BIOGRAPHY WITH  
AN HISTORICAL  
INTRODUCTION AND SEQUEL**

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Smeaton and Lighthouses, a Popular Biography with an Historical Introduction and Sequel by  
John Smeaton

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**JOHN SMEATON**

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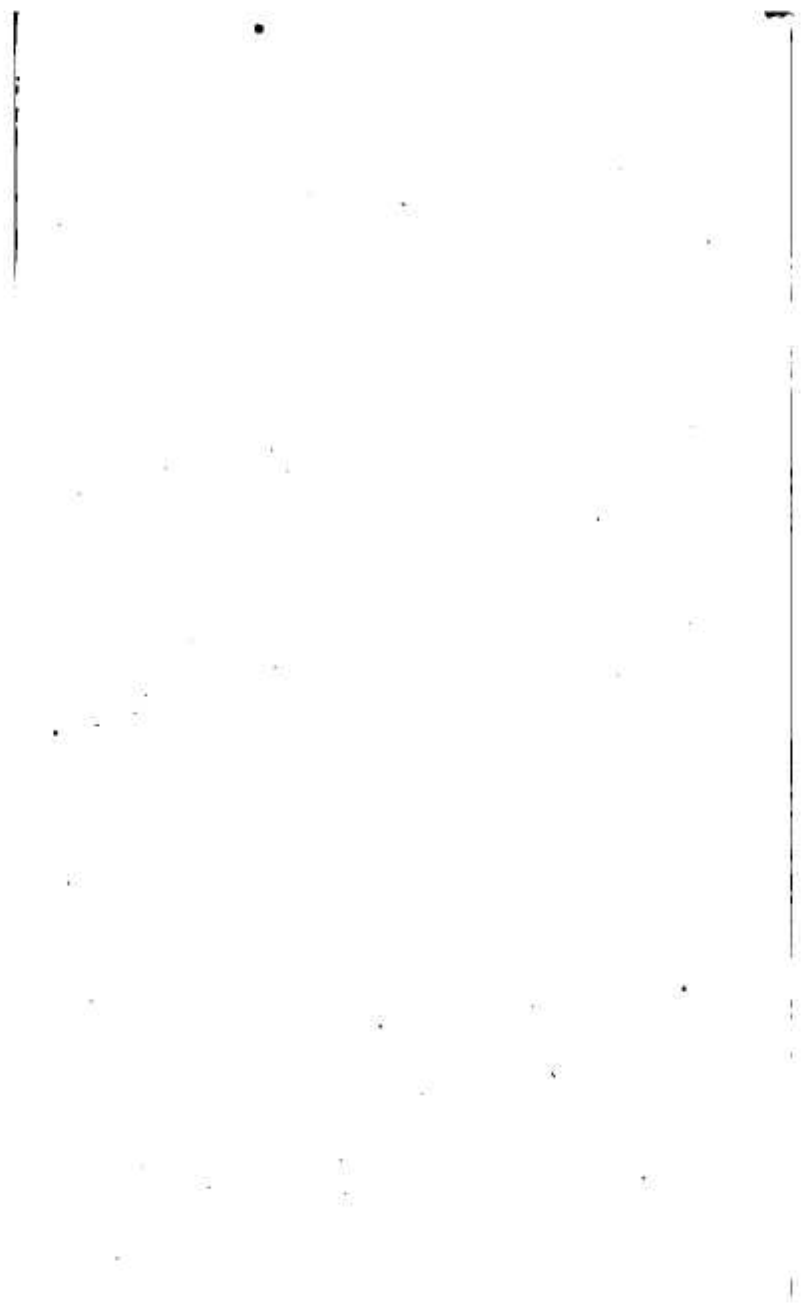
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LONDON:  
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M. DCCC. XLIV.



## P R E F A C E.

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ONE of the most useful and pleasing forms under which knowledge can be presented to the general reader, is that of the biography of distinguished men who have contributed to the progress of that knowledge in some one or other of its various departments. But it too frequently happens that the biographical notices of great men consist rather of personal, trivial, and unimportant details, than of a clear and broad outline of the influence which they exerted upon the pursuit and upon the age in which they were distinguished. The true object of biography is, in tracing the progress of an individual, to show clearly what result his active life has produced on the well-being of his fellow-men, and also what is the position which he occupies as one of the 'great land-marks in the map of human nature'.<sup>1</sup>

Yet we are not satisfied with a biography which regards its subject in his public capacity alone: we are naturally curious to ascertain whether the same qualities which rendered him celebrated in public followed him likewise into private life, and distinguished

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge.

him there. We regard with interest in his private capacity the man who has been the originator of much public good; we look with an attentive eye on his behaviour when he stands alone, when his native impulses are under no external excitement, when he is, in fact, 'in the undress of one who has retired from the stage on which he felt he had a part to sustain'.<sup>1</sup>

But a detail of the public and private events in the life of a distinguished man do not alone suffice to form a just estimate of his character. The reader requires to be made acquainted with the state of a particular branch of knowledge at the time when the individual appeared whose efforts so greatly extended its boundaries;—without this it is quite impossible to estimate the worth of the man whose life is being perused, or the blessings and advantages conferred upon society by his means.

On the other hand, in tracing the history of any particular branch of knowledge, unless connected with biography, we lose sight of individual efforts;—they are mingled with the labours of others, or are absorbed into the history of the whole, and are consequently no longer individualized:—hence we are likely to fail in recognizing the obligations due to our distinguished countrymen, or to deprive of their just merit those of our foreign brethren whose useful lives have influenced distant lands, as well as their own.

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge.



With these views we propose to connect the name of SMEATON with the interesting subject of LIGHTHOUSES. In the *first* place, we propose to present a brief history of Lighthouses, up to the time when Smeaton gave a type for this peculiar class of buildings upon dangerous and difficult points of coast; *secondly*, a general sketch of the life of Smeaton, so far as his very brief biographers will allow; and *thirdly*, a history of the improvements in Lighthouses which have been effected since the erection of the Eddystone.

In this compilation, the writer desires to express his obligations to the following works: *A Narrative of the Building, and a Description of the Construction of the Eddystone Lighthouse with Stone*, by JOHN SMEATON, fol. London, 1791;—Mr. HOLMES's short *Memoir of SMEATON*;—The Communication of Mrs. DIXON, Smeaton's daughter, to the Institution of Civil Engineers;—*An Account of the Bell-Rock Lighthouse, including the Details of the Erection, and peculiar Structure of that Edifice*, by ROBERT STEVENSON, 4to. Edin. 1824;—*The Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*;—An article on *Lighthouses*, by M. ARAGO, in the *Annuaire*;—*The Civil Engineer's and Architect's Journal*;—*The Nautical Magazine*;—and the *Annual Reports of the Trinity House* presented to the House of Commons.

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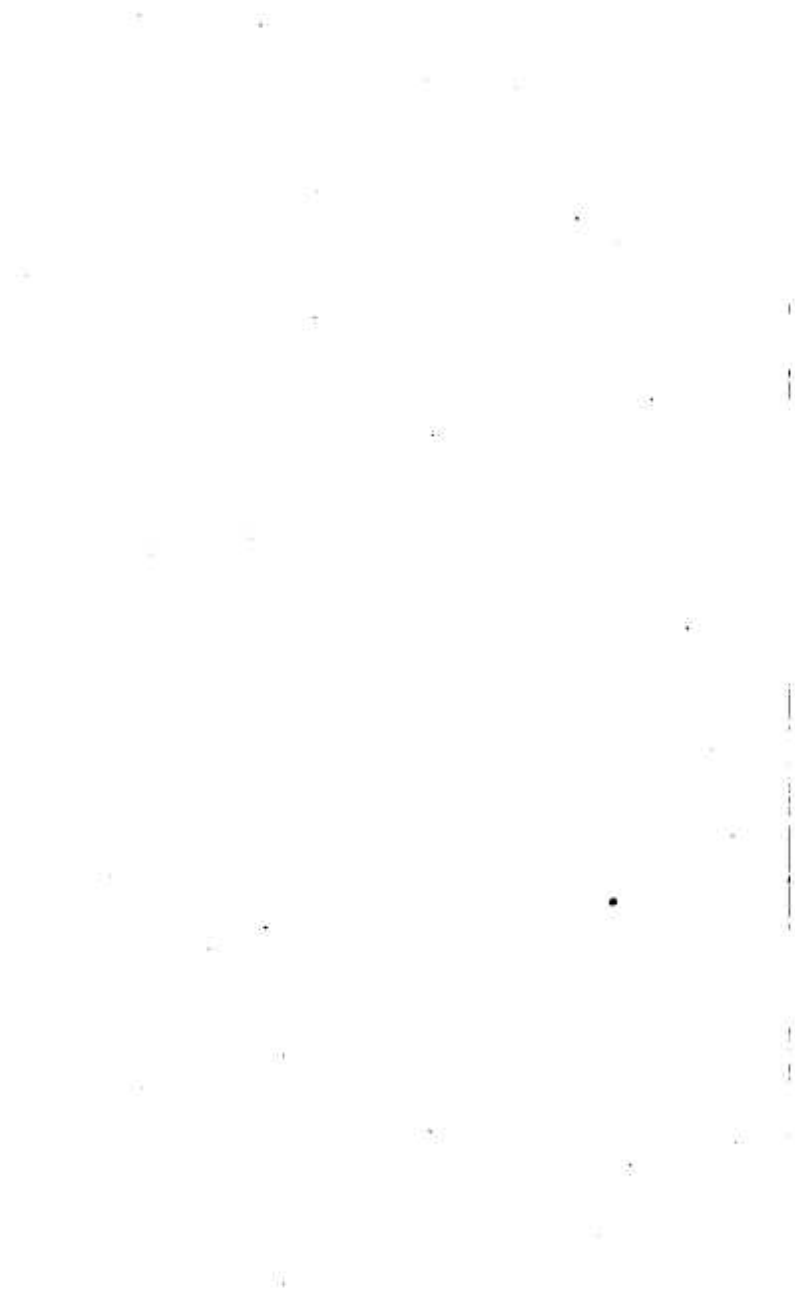


Figure 1. Relationship between the number of species (S) and the number of individuals (N) for 10 different species. The shaded area represents the 95% confidence interval.

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