

The Early Scientific Work of John Milne

John WARTNABY*

Introduction

John Milne is best-known as one of the leading seismologists of the nineteenth century. His work in this field began in 1880 and continued to his death in 1913. His contributions to seismology and his place in the history of this subject will be discussed in a further work, now nearing completion.

It is the purpose of the present work to draw attention to Milne's little-known earlier work accomplished between the years 1874 and 1886. It covers a wide field including mining geology, glaciology, mineralogy, crystallography, volcanology, archaeology and natural history.

Life and Work of J. Milne

Accounts of Milne's life and scientific career have appeared previously; this section is a synopsis of those accounts (1)-(5).

Born in Liverpool on 30th December, 1850, John Milne was the only son of Emma, daughter of James Twycross of Wokingham, and John Milne of Milnrow, Rochdale. As a boy, Milne was educated in Rochdale and subsequently at the Collegiate College, Liverpool. A striking example of his fondness for travel, his initiative and independence occurred at an early age when he used savings and a school prize of money to go to Iceland without first gaining his parents' consent. The object was to see the volcanic area of Vatna Jokul, descriptions of which had fired his imagination. This episode marked the beginning of his long-standing interest in volcanic phenomena.

On leaving school, Milne entered King's College, London, and later attended the Royal School of Mines where he studied geology under Professor Sir

* Science Museum, London, England.