

susceptible, enabling us to see evidences of creative wisdom and benevolence in circumstances where the uninformed or uninquiring mind can perceive neither interest nor beauty, it has this peculiar claim upon our attention, that it offers an inexhaustible field of inquiry, and its cultivation, beyond that of any other department of science, is more independent of external circumstances, and can be pursued in whatever situation or condition of life we may happen to be placed.

The eulogium passed by the most distinguished philosopher of our times on science in general, is strikingly applicable to geological researches. "The highest worldly prosperity, so far from being incompatible with them, supplies additional advantages for their pursuit; they may be alike enjoyed in the intervals of the most active business, while the calm and dispassionate interest with which they fill the mind, renders them a most delightful retreat from the agitations and dissensions of the world, and from the conflict of passions, prejudices, and interests, in which the man of business finds himself continually involved."*

From the present advanced state of geological science, particularly of that department which it is the more especial object of these volumes to elucidate—the study of organic remains—it seems

* Sir J. F. W. Herschel, "Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy."