

of attention to the phenomena, of which it is the purport of these volumes to offer a familiar exposition.*

I cannot conclude these introductory observations, without adverting to the great benefits resulting from scientific pursuits in general, and of Geology in particular, on the young and inquiring mind. An able modern writer has forcibly and justly remarked that,—

“ It is fearfully true, nine-tenths of the immorality that pervades the better classes of society, originate in the first place from the want of a pleasing and harmless occupation to fill up the vacant time ; and as the study of the natural sciences is as interesting as it is beneficial, it must necessarily exert a moral, not to say religious influence upon the character. He who is fond of scientific pursuits will not enter into revelry, for artificial excitements have for him no fascination. The overflowing cup, the unmeaning or dishonest game cannot entice him. If any one doubts the beneficial influence of these studies on the morals, I will ask him to point out the immoral young man who is devotedly fond of any branch of natural science : I never knew such an one. There may be such individuals—for religion only can change the heart—but if there be, they are very rare exceptions ; and the loud clamours always raised against the man of science who errs, is a

* See Wond. Lect. I.