

placed that, in a measure, we have the command of a large portion of the commerce of the world, and send out fleets of merchandise from every port.

And we are happy, in my opinion, above all things in this, that by an old denudation we have been dis-severed from the Continent of Europe, and our boundaries are clear. Thus it happens that, free from immediate contact with countries possibly hostile, and not too much biassed by the influence of peoples of foreign blood, during the long course of years in which our country has never seen the foot of an invader,¹ we have been enabled, with occasional disturbance of foreign wars and political factions, progressively so to develop our own ideas of religion, political freedom, and political morality, that we stand one of the freest and most prosperous countries on the face of the globe.

I have now completed the somewhat arduous task undertaken in preparing this much enlarged edition of an old book. It is, after all, but a sketch of a large subject, and no one can be more sensible than I am of its imperfections; but with all its faults and omissions, I think that this is the first work in which an attempt has been made to trace in detail the absolute connection of the Physical Geology and Physical Geography of old epochs in Britain with that of the present day. Right or wrong in some of the questions raised, it is the work of one who, through more than half a lifetime, has

‘ pry’d through Nature’s store,
Whate’er she in th’ ethereal round contains,
Whate’er she hides beneath her verdant floor,
The vegetable and the mineral reigns;

¹ The small French descents of Pembrokeshire and Ireland do not deserve the name of invasions.