

P R O S P E C T U S.

THE editor of this work has frequently had occasion to remark, in the course of reading, that numerous facts, and important observations, have been published many years, without having ever come to the knowledge of those classes of men who are engaged in the active pursuits of business, though it is, for the most part, by such men only, that practical improvements can be applied to useful purposes in life. From this cause it happens, that the discoveries made by literary men, too often serve rather to amuse the speculative than to awaken the ingenuity of men of business, or to stimulate the industry of the operative part of the community, who have no opportunity of ever hearing of the numerous volumes in which these scattered facts are recorded.

He has likewise observed, that among those who are engaged in arts, agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, there are many individuals of great ingenuity and conspicuous talents, who, from experience and observation, have made important discoveries in their respective employments; but that these men being at present in a great measure excluded from the circle of literary intelligence, have neither an opportunity, nor any inducement to communicate their discoveries to others. Thus is useful knowledge confined to a few individuals only, at whose death it is irrecoverably lost, instead of being universally diffused, as it of right ought to be, among all men, at least of their own profession; and the progress of the nation towards perfection in useful attainments is much retarded.

He has also often remarked, with extreme regret, that clergymen*, and others in remote parts of the country, whose minds in their early youth have been delighted with the charms of scientific pursuits, must in the present state of things, unless they be possessed of affluence, reluctantly forego the pleasures that result from a familiar intercourse with the republic of letters, and suffer themselves to sink into a sort of mental annihilation. To such men the poet may be supposed aptly to allude in these beautiful lines:

" Full many a gem of purest ray serene
 " The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
 " And many a rose is born to blush unseen,
 " And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

GRAY.

Alike unknown indeed, and useless to the world, are the *mental treasures* which thus are buried in obscurity, as the inanimate objects here described; but not alike are the effects of neglect on the *animate* and the *inanimate* objects themselves. The gem loses none of its valuable qualities, though it should remain for ages hid in the bosom of the dark abyss; the bursting rose bud also, covered with the dews of heaven, unfolds its opening charms with equal beauty in the tan-

* This observation chiefly applies to clergymen in Scotland.