they strike the reason, and impress us with a kind of sense of causation, or a particular aptitude for generalization, he considers, and justly, as holding a kind of prerogative dignity, and claiming our first and especial attention in physical inquiries.

(191.) We have already observed that, in forming inductions, it will most commonly happen that we are led to our conclusions by the especial force of some two or three strongly impressive facts, rather than by affording the whole mass of cases a regular consideration; and hence the need of cautious verification. Indeed, so strong is this propensity of the human mind, that there is hardly a more common thing than to find persons ready to assign a cause for every thing they see, and, in so doing, to join things the most incongruous, by analogies the most fanciful. This being the case, it is evidently of great importance that these first ready impulses of the mind should be made on the contemplation of the cases most likely to lead to good inductions. The misfortune, however, is, in natural philosophy, that the choice does not rest with us. We must take the instances as nature presents them. Even if we are furnished with a list of them in tabular order, we must understand and compare them with each other, before we can tell which *are* the instances thus deservedly entitled to the highest consideration. And, after all, after much labor in vain, and groping in the dark, accident or casual observation will present a case which strikes us at once with a full insight into a subject, before we can even have time to determine to what class its *prerogative* belongs. For example, the accidental fracture of a crystallized substance, by disclosing the polished and glittering faces of its natural cleavage, and separating it into fragments all of one determinate shape, might, it is evident, go farther to afford us an insight into the structure of crystals, than much elaborate examination of the substances presented by nature in an unbroken state.

(192.) It has always appeared to us, we must confess, that the help which the classification of instances, under