

and, lastly, to compare them with those which now live at the surface of the globe:—an art almost unknown, and which presupposed a science whose first developments had scarcely yet been traced, that of the laws which regulate the co-existence of the forms of the different parts in organised beings. I had therefore to prepare myself for these inquiries, by others of a far more extensive kind, respecting the animals which still exist. Nothing, except an almost complete review of creation in its present state, could give a character of demonstration to the results of my investigation into its ancient state; but, from this review, I had at the same time to expect a great body of rules and affinities not less satisfactorily demonstrated; and it became obvious, that, in consequence of this essay upon a small portion of the theory of the earth, the whole animal kingdom would necessarily be in some measure subjected to new laws.

Thus I was encouraged in this twofold investigation, by the equal interest which it promised to possess, both with regard to the general science of anatomy, the essential basis of all those which treat of organised bodies, and with regard to the physical history of the globe, the foundation of mineralogy, geography, and even, it may be said, of the history of Man, and of all that it most concerns him to know with regard to himself.