

of shell-fishes, were enveloped in the precipitates? Or, did animal life continue only during the state of solution; and were the myriads of aquatic animals found in beds of rocks buried in them alive? Many naturalists appear to entertain the latter opinion, from observing the agonies of death depicted in the distorted position of fishes in copper-slate, or from deriving the bituminous properties of stink-stone, as well as of marl, from the decomposition of animal bodies, of which such numerous vestiges are extant in these beds? In this way a plausible explanation is given of the phenomena of a former world that has perished. How, then, do they explain the constant appearance of so many species, which have continued without interruption for such an infinite length of time? Have these species been propagated by individuals who accidentally escaped destruction: or, Does a new race continually spring up again? But laying aside the difficulty of this explanation, the violent destruction of so many races of animals, is scarcely consistent with the general order of the universe, according to which, we behold every animal occupying its proper element, and fulfilling its particular destiny. We, therefore, involuntarily revert to the opinion, that those creatures, whose remains are preserved in beds of rocks, have lived continually in the sea, out of which the rocks were precipitated, in the same manner as the analogous species now living in the sea become enveloped in deposits still taking place, although on a comparatively small scale.

What has just been said does not entitle us to admit that the various parts of the earth have been, from time to time, overflowed with water. Yet are there other ap-