

at the coexistence of the forms of the various parts of organized beings. For such an attempt it was necessary to prepare myself by long and indefatigable researches into the structure of living animals; by a survey of nearly the whole mass of created beings now existing, which alone could lead me to a certain and determinate result in my speculations on the ancient creation: this would at the same time afford me a great result of rules, and affinities not less useful, and the whole animal kingdom would thus, in some measure, become subjected to new laws, resulting from this essay on a small portion of the theory of the earth.

I was supported in my twofold labours by the interest which it seemed to evince both for anatomy, the essential basis of all those sciences which treat of organized bodies; and for the physical history of the globe, the foundation of mineralogy, of geography, and, we may say, of the history of man, and of all which it most imports him to know in relation to himself.

If we are interested in tracing out the nearly effaced vestiges of the infancy of our species, in so many nations utterly extinct, why should we not seek to discover, in the obscurity which envelopes the infancy of the earth, relics of revolutions long anterior to the existence of all nations? We admire that power of the human mind, the exercise of which has enabled us to ascertain those motions of the planets, which Nature seemed for ever to have held from us; genius and science have soared beyond the limits of space; some observations, developed by reason, have detected the mechanism of the world. Would it not be some renown for a man, in like manner, to penetrate beyond the limits of time, and to discover, by research and reflection, the his-