

wholly different from any that now abound, and the greater number of a nature fitted to live in a temperature much higher, and more equally distributed, than occurs in the present state of the earth; and lastly, that in the inferior, or most ancient beds, all traces of mechanical action, and of animal and vegetable organization, are absent; or in other words, have either never existed, or *have been altogether obliterated*. Before entering upon that department of the subject to which the term Geology is commonly restricted, it will facilitate our comprehension of many of the appearances which the strata present to our notice, if in this place we endeavour to penetrate the mystery that veils the earliest condition of the earth; but this we shall in vain attempt, if we restrict our examination to the physical phenomena observable in our own planet.

19. CONNEXION OF GEOLOGY WITH ASTRONOMY. —Here Geology leads to Astronomy, and teaches us to look to the kindred spheres around us for the elucidation of the early history of the globe; and to consider the earth but as an attendant satellite on a vast central luminary. The solar system consists of the sun, whose mass is made up of solid matter, which is surrounded by a luminous atmosphere, or nebulosity; and of eleven small planets, which revolve around it in various periods; the earth being the third in distance from the sun, and in bulk, as compared with that body, of the size of