

the Alps, and the icy pinnacles of the Arctic circles, disappear; and, by a degree of heat still higher, would be resolved into vapour; and by other agencies might be separated into two invisible gases—oxygen and hydrogen. Metals may in like manner be converted into gases; and in the laboratory of the chemist, all kinds of matter easily pass through every grade of transmutation, from the most dense and compact to an aeriform state. We cannot, therefore, refuse our assent to the conclusion, that the entire mass of our globe might be resolved into a permanently gaseous form, merely by the dissolution of the existing combinations of matter.

24. GEOLOGY ILLUSTRATED BY ASTRONOMY.—From the light thus shed by modern Astronomy upon many of the dark and mysterious pages of the earth's physical history, we learn that the dynamical changes which have taken place in our globe—all the wonderful transmutations of its crust revealed to us by geological investigations—may be referable to the operation of the one, simple, and universal law, by which the condensation of nebular masses into worlds, through periods of time so immense as to be beyond the power of human comprehension, is governed.

The internal heat of the globe—the evidence afforded by fossil organic remains of a higher and more equally diffused temperature of the surface in an earlier state of the earth—and the elevations