

duration, and that we therefore have seen the aggregate effects of a law, which even before our eyes is producing great and important modifications in the system of animated nature.

Thus the tertiary epoch displays to us a state of the globe replete with life and happiness: the physical constitution of the earth's surface being then, as now, admirably adapted to the habits and economy of the beings it was designed to support. In the most ancient periods, forms of life prevailed which gradually became extinct, and were succeeded by others which in their turn also passed away; and if we trace the varying types of being from the earliest ages, we perceive a gradual approach to the present condition of organic existence; the grand line of separation between the present and the past being the creation of the human race. From that period, in proportion as man has extended his dominion over the earth, many races of animals have been either exterminated, or modified by his caprices or necessities; and it cannot be doubted, that in the lapse of a few thousand years, a total change will have been effected by human agency alone, in the geographical distribution and in the relative numerical proportion of the existing genera and species.