

soil. At the present time, a city\* stands on the deposits which contain the remains of the elephant and the elk; the huntsman courses, and the shepherd tends his flocks, on the elevated and rounded masses of the bottom of the ancient chalk-ocean; † the farmer reaps his harvests upon the cultivated soil of the delta of the iguanodon; ‡ and the architect seeks, beneath the petrified forest, for the materials with which to construct his edifices.

65. RETROSPECT OF GEOLOGICAL MUTATIONS.—Such is a plain enunciation of the results of our investigations; but I will embody these inductions in a more impressive form, by employing the metaphor of an Arabian writer, and imagining some higher intelligence from another sphere, to describe the physical mutations of which he may be supposed to have taken cognizance, from the period when the forests of Portland were flourishing, to the present time. Countless ages ere man was created, he might say, I visited these regions of the earth, and beheld a beautiful country of vast extent, diversified by hill and dale, with its rivulets, streams, and mighty rivers, flowing through fertile plains. Groves of palms and ferns, and forests of coniferous trees, clothed its surface; and I saw monsters of the reptile tribe, so huge that nothing among the existing races can compare with them, basking on the banks of its rivers and roaming through its forests;

\* Brighton. † The South Downs.

‡ The wealds of Kent and Sussex.