

tables in the ancient deposits; while there is not a river, or even stream, which does not daily imbed the remains of the present inhabitants of the globe. But however future discoveries may modify this hypothesis, they cannot invalidate the fact, that there is no country on the face of the earth with such an assemblage of animal life, as that possessed by the regions whence the delta of the wealden was derived; no where is there an island or a continent inhabited by colossal reptiles only, or where reptiles usurp the place of the large mammalia. We have seen that this feature in the zoology of that remote period was not confined to the country of the iguanodon; in every part of the world where geological researches have extended, this wonderful phenomenon appears—the absence of mammiferous animals. The bones of reptiles, of enormous size, are the only animal remains that occur in any considerable number. It is, therefore, certain that there was a period when oviparous quadrupeds, of appalling magnitude, were the chief possessors of the lands, of which any traces remain in the strata that are accessible to human observation. I do not mean to assert, that reptiles, and reptiles only, were the occupiers of every island and continent; but I have shown, by the most irrefragable testimony, that the reptile tribes, during the secondary periods, were developed to an extent of which the present state of animated nature affords no example. I am ready to acknowledge that the proposition is somewhat astounding,