

Such exchanges of species exclude all notions of unvarying succession ; and altogether the proved mutability of the world is an admirable antidote to atheistical tendencies. Atheism,

solid parts, would decay with rapidity ; the vast tribes of insects, and the delicate or shrubby plants, would rarely leave any memorial of their existence ; the class of birds would seldom be preserved, although, by a strange peculiarity, we find the impressions of their footmarks in strata in which we have not hitherto detected their bones. If we may reason from the known to the unknown, we may find at least approximations which will give us some idea of the extent of these revolutions. Already the number of species of fossil shells, recorded by naturalists, exceeds that of existing species ; in respect to the great terrestrial quadrupeds, the number of genera and species found in the tertiary strata is greater than that of living kinds, described in systematic works. As the deposition of strata, that is, the transportation of detritus to the sea and lakes, there to find a resting-place, involves the existence of islands, continents, and rivers, we have every reason to believe that forests and land animals also existed. In our present world, every well-defined region has its peculiar plants and animals, in fact, a little creation by itself. That a similar disposition existed in former times has not been disproved, and several facts lead to such an inference. The great quadrupeds of the Paris tertiary basin are distinct from those of the tertiary beds of India, and even in the secondary strata, and among the more widely-diffused sea mollusca, the chalk of Sussex and Kent yields a different set of fossils from what we find in the same formation on the banks of the Tagus. The number of plants at present living on the earth's surface may be estimated at about one hundred thousand, and that of