

and we can scarcely fail to recognise intention in its utility. But consider at what periods, and in what manner fuel was thus prepared for us. The vegetable origin of coal is now universally admitted; but vegetables might have been so constituted, that after living their day, they should have been resolved into their elements and utterly dissipated. Generally speaking, they do pass into a state of decomposition, serviceable to manure and soil, but not to ignition. We needed however to have combustible material for our fires and furnaces, and marvellous indeed is the manner in which it has been prepared and preserved for us. Amid the strata of the earth we find seams of coal of such number and dimensions, that with all the immense waste of it now daily in progress, there is no fear of its being exhausted for centuries to come. And how came it there? It forms the remains of plants of which no species are now living. We can easily suppose that the steps have been very different by which it has passed from its verdant to its present mineral condition. In some instances, descending streams which flow no more carried down the drift wood which was gradually