

CHAPTER XIII.

Successors of the exterminated Tribes. — The Gap slowly filled. —

Proof that the Vegetation of a Formation may long survive its Animal Tribes. — Probable Cause. — Immensely extended Period during which Fishes were the Master-existences of our Planet. — Extreme Folly of an Infidel Objection illustrated by the Fact. — Singular Analogy between the History of Fishes as Individuals and as a Class. — Chemistry of the Lower Formation. — Principles on which the Fish-enclosing Nodules were probably formed. — Chemical Effect of Animal Matter in discharging the Color from Red Sandstone. — Origin of the prevailing tint to which the System owes its Name. — Successive Modes in which a Metal may exist. — The Restorations of the Geologist void of Color. — Very different Appearance of the Ichthyolites of Cromarty and Moray.

THE period of death passed, and over the innumerable dead there settled a soft, muddy sediment, that hid them from the light, bestowing upon them such burial as a November snow-storm bestows on the sere and blighted vegetation of the previous summer and autumn. For an unknown space of time, represented in the formation by a deposit about fifty feet in thickness, the waters of the depopulated area seem to have remained devoid of animal life. A few scales and plates then began to appear. The fish that had existed outside the chasm seem to have gradually gained upon it, as their numbers increased, just as the European settlers of America have been gaining on the backwoods, and making themselves homes amid the burial-mounds of a race extinct for centuries. For a lengthened period, however, these finny settlers must have been comparatively few — mere squatters in the waste. In the beds of stratified clay in which their