

ble to the preservation of entire ichthyolites than those under which the organisms of the lower platform were wrapped up in their stony coverings. The matrix, which is more micaceous than the other, seems to have been less conservative, and the waters were probably less still. The process went on. Ages succeeded ages, and one stratum covered up another. Generations lived, died, and were entombed in the ever-growing depositions. Succeeding generations pursued their instincts by myriads, happy in existence, over the surface which covered the broken and perishing remains of their predecessors, and then died and were entombed in turn, leaving a higher platform, and a similar destiny to the generations that succeeded. Whole races became extinct, through what process of destruction who can tell? Other races sprang into existence through that adorable power which One only can conceive, and One only can exert. An inexhaustible variety of design expatiated freely within the limits of the ancient type. The main conditions remained the same — the minor details were dissimilar. Vast periods passed; a class low in the scale still continued to furnish the master existences of creation; and so immensely extended was the term of its sovereignty, that a being of limited faculties, if such could have existed uncreated, and witnessed the whole, would have inferred that the power of the Creator had reached its extreme boundary, when fishes had been called into existence, and that our planet was destined to be the dwelling-place of no nobler inhabitants. If there be men dignified by the name of philosophers, who can hold that the present state of being, with all its moral evil, and all its physical suffering, is to be succeeded by no better and happier state, just because "all things have continued as they were" for some five or six thousand years, how much sounder and more conclusive would the inference have been which