

difficulty lies in the translation. For at first sight the conclusion is inevitable to the general reader, that not only the lowest class of vertebrate existence, but also man and the higher mammals, had been found from the beginning, and that the highest and the lowest forms of being were at all periods contemporary. No one surely would have a right to make such a prodigious stride in the line of inference, on the presumption of supposed evidence yet to come. Again, Sir Charles Lyell, in his supplement to the fifth edition of his *Elementary Geology*, says, in speaking of these same Purbeck beds quarried by Mr. Beckles, 'They afford the first positive proof as yet obtained of the co-existence of a varied fauna of the *highest class* of vertebrata with that ample development of reptile life which marks the periods from the Trias to the Lower Cretaceous inclusive.' *Are* marsupials and insectivora the *highest class* of vertebrata? Where, then, do the great placental mammals,—where does man himself,—take rank?

It were surely to be desired that some stricter and more invariable form of phraseology were adopted, either in accordance with the divisions of Cuvier, or some analogous system, adherence to which would be clearly defined and understood. Why should not the words *class*, *order*, *type*, have as invariable a meaning as *genera* and *species*, which, having an application more limited, are seldom mistaken? We are aware that such terms are often used by the learned in an indefinite and translatable sense, just as to the learned in languages it may be a matter of indifference whether the written characters which convey information to them be Roman, Hebrew, or Chinese. But it should be remembered that there is a large class outside which