

aught so extraordinary as that long procession of being which, starting out of the blank depths of the bygone eternity, is still defiling across the stage, and of which we ourselves form some of the passing figures. Who shall declare the profound meanings with which these geologic hieroglyphics are charged, or indicate the ultimate goal at which the long procession is destined to arrive?

The readings already given, the conclusions already deduced, are as various as the hopes and fears, the habits of thought, and the cast of intellect, of the several interpreters who have set themselves—some, alas! with but little preparation and very imperfect knowledge—to declare in their order the details of this marvellous, dream-like vision, and, with the dream, the “interpretation thereof.” One class of interpreters may well remind us of the dim-eyed old man,—the genius of unbelief so poetically described by Coleridge,—who, sitting in his cold and dreary cave, “talked much and vehemently concerning an infinite series of causes and effects, which he explained to be a string of blind men, the last of whom caught hold of the skirt of the one before him, he of the next, and so on, till they were all out of sight, and that they all walked infallibly straight, without making one false step, though all were alike blind.” With these must I class those assertors of the development hypothesis who can see in the upward progress of being only the operation of an incomprehending and incomprehensible law, through which, in the course of unreckoned ages, the lower tribes and families have risen into the higher, and inferior into superior natures, and in virtue of which, in short, the animal creation has grown, in at least its nobler specimens, altogether unwittingly, without thought or care on its own part, and without intelligence on the part of the operating law, from irrational to rational, and risen in the scale from the mere promptings of instinct to the highest exercise of reason,—from apes and baboons to