

All these apparent anomalies and gradations of structure tend still farther to demonstrate the generality of the plans of nature, and the comprehensiveness of her design, which embraces the whole series of animated beings. These views are strongly corroborated by the discoveries that are continually being made of species now no longer in existence, but which, in former ages of the world, helped to fill up many of the chasms which now interrupt the continuity of that series. This knowledge has been revealed to us by the examination of their fossil remains, those monuments of former epochs, which have thrown such important light on the most interesting questions in Geology as well as in Physiology.

The notion has long prevailed that the beings composing the vegetable and animal kingdoms, might, if we were thoroughly acquainted with their structure and economy, be arranged in a linear series, commencing with the simplest, and regularly ascending to the most refined and complicated organizations, till it reached its highest point in man, who is unquestionably placed at the summit of the scale. Bonnet, in particular, cherished with enthusiastic ardour the hypothesis that all organic beings formed a continuous gradation, each member of which, like the successive links of a chain, was connected with that which preceded, and with that which followed it; and he pursued this idea by applying it even to the productions of the mineral world. But, divesting ourselves of these hypothetical views and figurative images, we find, on sober observation, that instead of one continuous series, we are presented with only detached fragments and interrupted portions of this imaginary system: so that, if, for the sake of illustration, we must employ a metaphor, the natural distribution of animals would appear to be represented, not by a chain, but by complicated network, where several parallel series are joined by transverse and oblique lines of connexion. A multitude of facts, however, tend to show that the real types or models of structure, are more correctly represented by circular or recurring