

CHAPTER XVIII.

Proofs of Design in the Structure of Fossil Vegetables.

SECTION I.

GENERAL HISTORY OF FOSSIL VEGETABLES.

THE history of Fossil Vegetables has a twofold claim upon our consideration, in relation to the object of our present enquiry. The first regards the influence exerted on the actual condition of Mankind, by the fossil carbonaceous remains of Plants, which clothed the former surface of the Earth, and has been briefly considered in a former chapter; (Chap. VII. P. 63.) the second directs our attention to the history and structure of the ancient members of the vegetable kingdom.

It appears that nearly at the same points in the progress of stratification, where the most striking changes take place in the remains of Animal life, there are found also concurrent changes in the character of fossil Vegetables.

A large and new field of investigation is thus laid open to our enquiry, wherein we may compare the laws which regulated the varying sys-