

short time ; the abundance of individuals in each kind proves to us their fertility. We have a strong example of this increase in oysters, a mass of many fathoms of which are frequently raised in a single day. In a very short time the rocks to which they are attached are considerably diminished, and some banks quite exhausted, nevertheless the ensuing year we find them as plentiful as before, nor do they appear to be in the least diminished ; indeed I know not whether a natural bed of oysters was ever entirely exhausted. Secondly, the substance of shells is analogous to stone ; they are a long time preserved in soft matters, and petrify readily in hard ; these shells and marine productions therefore found on the earth, being the wrecks of many ages, must of course have formed very considerable masses.

There are a prodigious quantity of shells in marble, lime, stone, chalk, marl, &c. we find them, as before observed, in hills and mountains, and they often make more than one half of the bodies which contain them ; for the most part they appear well preserved, others are in fragments, but large enough to distinguish to what kind of shells they belong. Here our knowledge on this subject, from observation,  
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