

ESSAY

ON THE

THEORY OF THE EARTH.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

IN my work on Fossil Bones, the object which I proposed was to discover to what animals the osseous remains, with which the superficial strata of the globe are filled, may have belonged. In pursuing this object, I had to follow a path in which but little progress had hitherto been made. As an antiquary of a new order, I was obliged at once to learn the art of restoring these monuments of past revolutions to their original forms, and to discover their nature and relations; I had to collect and bring together in their original order, the fragments of which they consisted; to reconstruct, as it were, the ancient beings to which these fragments belonged; to reproduce them with all their proportions and characters;