

This kind of change, in relation to the era from which the surface has been swept off, is called denudation.

XIV. While these mineral formations were thus in progress, their masses yet soft were replenished with the remains of animals which had lived in the waters; skeletons, coverings, shelly habitations, and even soft parts, some of which still exhibit their vestiges. In all the formations, (or we might say groups or systems of strata,) excepting the earliest two or three, those remains occur of organized creatures, chiefly animal, but in some cases vegetable. The absence or paucity of vegetable remains in the older strata, except in the beds connected with coal, is reasonably ascribed to the more ready destructibility of vegetable fibre, especially as the earliest species appear to have been of soft structure, though of great size. In the Lias beds, fragments of wood approaching to the harder structure, are abundant: and in the still later formations there are very remarkable instances. But an abundance of vegetable remains does not occur, *except in the coaly strata*, till we arrive at the very recent formations; of which fact geological science affords satisfactory explanations.

Even with respect to those earliest beds, just mentioned, we cannot be absolutely assured that organized nature, vegetable or animal, never existed in them: for all vestiges of such would be destroyed by the heat communicated from below.

XV. As a general assertion, it might be said that the animal remains become more abundant, as we depart from the older strata: but such an assertion would not be universally and exactly correct. In this respect, many interesting circumstances of diversity present themselves to the laborious explorer of fossil remains, especially in the department of Conchology.

XVI. With respect to their forms of organization,