

Characterism of Fossils, a number of other truths are dependent, and those of the greatest value both practically and theoretically. A well-prepared Conchological Geologist looks to the succession of strata as the possessor of a cabinet does to the order of his shelves; and with a certainty as precise, knows what species are to be found on every layer.

XX. A small number of genera may be called (if we may imitate one of the pleasantries of Linnæus,) Royal and Noble Families. Comprehending numerous species, they have a truly wonderful range. The Genus *Leptæna* (or *Producta*) appears to have been among the first created, and, in about fifty ascertained species, it is found through the immense series of formations, known as the Cumbrian, the Cambrian, the Silurian, the Old Red Sandstone, and the Carboniferous Limes, Shales, and Sands. *Spirifera*, about equal in origin, passes still higher, through the remarkable varieties of the New Red System, and is found in the Lias. The *Ammonite*, in an amazing number and diversity of species,* appears in the Silurian System, and is found in every formation till it terminates in the Chalk. *Terebratula* has a far wider range: it begins among the earliest, its numerous species scarcely fail if at all till we reach the Chalk, in which they are more abundant than in any other formation; other of its species occur, though in diminished number, throughout the Tertiary System; and it is represented by some twelve or more species in the living creation. Thus each species has a definite period of existence. The succession proceeds. One species dies off, and its place is taken by another of the same genus; till at last, in many cases,

* The distinguished conchologist, Mr. Searles Wood, is of opinion that the number of species, including however some forms which may be only varieties, approaches to a thousand.