

just hinted at, the Stonesfield Oolite, and see p. 76,) no mammiferous animals. When we have risen above the chalk, we discover in the shell-fish a small beginning of existing species; and, in the subsequent formations, the proportion increases till all the older species have successively become extinct, and the land, the fresh waters, and the ocean, come to be occupied by the present edition of creation. But many deposits and very long periods, from the chalk upwards, have existed, till mammiferous animals are found (the various *theria* of several regions); and they are all exceedingly different from living species or even genera. Finally, in the formations immediately preceding our own, we find animals falling into existing genera, but specifically different; and, as they gradually cease, our present species succeed to their places.

This sketch, hasty and imperfect as it is, demonstrates a series of changes in organic nature, adapted to the variations in temperature, atmospheric constitution, and mineral composition, which, upon independent grounds, we have reason to believe did take place. The perfections of the Creator are conspicuous in all this wondrous course of change. We see unity of purpose, harmony of means and adaptations, and infinite variety in modes of development. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches: so is this great and wide sea." (Ps. civ. 24.)

Upon this argument one might expatiate without limit; but I leave it to my studious and impartial readers, persuaded that, in proportion to their mental cultivation and their assiduity in pursuing these interesting objects of research, will be their conviction of the immeasurable antiquity of our earth and the whole created system—immeasurable, indeed, but *only so to our feeble faculties*: compared with the *prior eternity* of **JEHOVAH**, it sinks into a short period.—**ETERNITY!**—How awakening is the thought, that each of us is born for a duration to which that word can be applied; and that it depends upon ourselves, in the present stage of our existence, whether it shall be an eternity of dignity and happiness unspeakable, or of the most appalling degradation, and misery, and despair.

There is one class to which, in this argument, the appeal may be made with peculiar force of evidence; the students of Conchology. Their elegant science makes them familiar with probably seven thou-

department have put forth their utmost powers of discrimination) belonged not to a mammal, but to a small reptile, of the lizard or iguana family, and to which those naturalists give the generic name of *amphitherium*.