

At the same time, the reader desirous of more precise information on these topics, will be directed, by numerous references, to sources from whence the required instruction may be obtained.

THE AGE OF REPTILES.*—The announcement of the illustrious founder of Palæontology, in the quotation prefixed to this chapter, that there was a period when the lakes, rivers, and seas of our planet were peopled by reptiles, and cold-blooded oviparous quadrupeds, of appalling magnitude, were the principal inhabitants of the dry lands, was a proposition so novel, and startling, as to require the authority of the name of CUVIER, to obtain for it any degree of credence; even with those, who were prepared to admit that a universal deluge could not account for the physical changes, which the crust of the earth had evidently undergone. Subsequent observations and discoveries have, however, fully confirmed the truth of this induction, and the

* "*The Age of Reptiles*" was the title given by the author to a popular summary of the evidence bearing on this question; it was published in the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal, 1831. This name is now generally employed to designate the geological epochs characterised by the predominance of oviparous quadrupeds. This unpretending paper brought upon the author an attack by the Rev. J. Kirby, in the Seventh Bridgewater Essay; and the absurd and unjust strictures of the reverend essayist are retained in a recent edition! Upon this, as upon a former occasion, I am content to refer the reader to Dr. Buckland's invaluable volumes. See *Wond.* p. 500.