

illustrated by the extinction of feebler tribes like the Red Men of America, or too conspicuous species like the sluggish pigeon of the Mauritius and the giant runner of New Zealand*.

The duration of man as a race of created life can only be put in comparison with that of any other and earlier race of beings by some class of evidence applicable to both. *History*, in a large sense, belongs to both; Geology is part of primæval history, though *Chronology* can only be stated for a few of the numerous families of man †.

If we place in the order of their successive existence on the earth, the several characteristic groups of life which Palæontology has revealed, we shall construct a scale, which, though not indeed a chronology of the earth, is the first step towards such a scale of time. It represents *Life Periods*, which if they cannot now be referred to astronomical vicissitudes, are nevertheless so related to them and dependent upon them, that to find common measures of both is not an inconceivable, though it may be an impracticable problem; it is not obviously impossible, though it may be really attended with insuperable difficulty. Even as the motions of the once 'fixed' stars begin to be traced into system, and their almost inexpressible distance to be measurable from the opposite parts of the earth's orbit; so the ancient phænomena of terrestrial life acquire consistent positions, and stand in intelligible relations to the duration of man.

Many such scales of 'Life Periods' may be constructed, according as the phænomena are more or less analysed; but they must all express the same general truths. The following may be an example, and we pray the reader who dislikes hard names, to excuse in this case what can seldom be avoided in advancing branches of knowledge, the use of new terms to express new relations of thought. To modern geologists, terms and ideas of *this order* are quite familiar.

* See monograph on Dodo, by Strickland; and papers on Moa, by Mantell and Owen (Phil. Trans. &c.).

† See Kenrick on Primæval History.