

these are questions to which our first physiologists might hesitate to reply. But we may at least safely infer, from the thorough identity of the osseous material throughout all ages, that it was a material compounded at all times by the same Architect, according to a predetermined recipe; that it is He who built up the corpuscles and arranged the canals in that ancient jaw which so excites our curiosity, that now maketh in the human subject 'the bones to grow;' and that, in his eternal purposes, the existences of the most ancient times may be woven into the tissue of one great plan, with all that now exists, and with all that shall exist in the future.

In retiring into the remote past, and descending from formation to formation as we retire, we have now reached that great Silurian group of rocks in which, so far as the geologist yet knows, fossils first appear, and which represents a period of incalculable vastness, in which life, animal and vegetable, seems to have had its earliest beginnings on our planet. Enormous as is the depth of some of the other systems,—such as the Old Red and the Carboniferous systems,—they shrink into moderate dimensions when we compare them with the truly vast Silurian deposit. It was estimated only a few years ago, that the entire depth of all the fossiliferous strata did not much exceed six miles: it is now found by the geologists of the Government Survey, that the Lower Silurian strata of North Wales are of themselves about five miles in depth, while the Upper Silurian, as estimated by Sir Roderick Murchison, are about a mile more. Many of the beds, too, of both the Upper and Lower divisions, must have been of exceedingly slow deposition,—formed far from land, and at the bottom of deep seas: nay, there are Silurian limestones that can scarce be regarded as deposits at all, seeing that every calcareous particle of which they are composed was at one time associated with animal life, as the joints of crinoidea, the calcareous framework of corals, or the shells of molluscs, all