

ancient world, so regularly are they formed on the same principle which is evident in the animals now inhabiting the earth, that on observing their shape, and the processes* by which their muscles were attached, we can reduce the animals to which they belonged, to their orders, genera, and species, with as much precision as if the recent bodies had been submitted to the eye of the anatomist. Not only can we demonstrate that their feet were adapted to the solid ground, or to the oozy bed of rivers,—for speed, or for grasping and tearing; but judging by these indications of the habits of the animals, we acquire a knowledge of the condition of the earth during their period of existence: that it was suited at one time to the scaly tribe of the lacertæ, with languid motion; at another, to animals of higher organization, with more varied and lively habits; and finally we learn, that at any period previous to man's creation, the surface of the earth would have been unsuitable to him.

We ought not to touch on this subject without one observation more. When the peasant suspends his work on turning up the great bones of

* Processes are the projecting parts of bone by which the tendons of the muscles are attached. The processes, therefore, to the anatomist are indications of the conditions of the muscles.