

soil has probably been always progressive, and is still going on. Besides this gradual attrition, the harder materials of our globe seem to have suffered much disintegration, during those periodic convulsions formerly mentioned. By the same convulsions, also, the different comminuted materials have evidently been mixed and scattered, and finally deposited over the surface of the whole earth; so as to give occasion to that infinite variety which every where prevails.

The foregoing remarks naturally lead to the conclusion, that the characters of the soil will generally agree with those of the rocks composing the crust of the earth; and this inference is correct. The more common ingredients in rocks are silex, alumina, lime, magnesia, and iron; and these mineral matters actually constitute the greater bulk of every soil. The remaining matters consist of more or less of various other earthy and saline principles, and of vegetable and animal remains.

After these general observations upon soils, we come to the proper subject of this chapter, which we shall consider under the three following sections:—*Of the Distribution of Plants over the earth*;—*Of the Distribution of Animals over the earth*; and,—*Of the present Condition and future Prospects of Man*.