

portant mutations, by which it has been more and more improved, and better fitted for the accommodation of its inhabitants, and which may all be regarded as so many stages in its gradual progress to its final destination; and as its present state will not warrant the conclusion that that destination has been already attained, we may believe that some farther change is approaching. There are different facts which point to this conclusion. The human race cannot go on increasing to eternity,—for unless the universe be infinite, and all its sections be designed for their reception, which we have no reason to believe, but the contrary, the time must sooner or later come, when their numbers would be greater than the means of their accommodation, and their farther increase would be a serious evil.

But what is more level to our comprehension, the mineral stores laid up in the earth, on which we are in some important respects dependant, are not inexhaustible, as has been already observed,—they are limited, and will certainly be exhausted before the expiration of many thousands of years. There are extensive regions, in which neither coal nor iron have been discovered, and in which we are certain they either do not exist or are wholly inaccessible to human industry; and it is not impossible to calculate the amount of the unexcavated coal in all the known coal fields, and the precise period when they will be exhausted, should the present rate of consumption be continued. That the rate will be reduced, we have no reason to believe,—that it will be increased, may be regarded as certain; but to what amount it is impossible to tell. That the present state of things will continue while the provision which nature has made for it lasts, we may certainly believe,—for no mistake is made in her calculations, and when her purposes have been accomplished there will be no deficiency in that provision, and no excess. We may therefore conclude that the present state of things will not continue beyond a given time; and as the consumption of its means is rapidly increasing, the expected termination will probably come as the Scriptures express it, “as a thief in the night,” or sooner than was anticipated,

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