

of formation out of the minute calcareous shells of some of the most simply organised families of the animal kingdom, was a fact already established, in full accordance with all the phenomena of geological history already revealed to us. The main subject disclosed in those wonderful lithological chronicles of the preadamite world which palæontology reveals, is the history of the beds of former seas. But in addition to this we now learn of organic life abundantly present under conditions hitherto deemed incompatible with any forms of vitality; and of contemporaneous zones of life immensely extending its assigned range. Science has long since revealed to us the fact that we ourselves live—and require such a condition as an element essential to life,—in the depths of a great atmospheric ocean, which subjects us to a pressure of fourteen pounds on the square inch, or to a mean weight of 21,240 pounds. But from those latest disclosures of submarine life it is proved that in deep zones of the ocean, upwards of two miles from its surface, where the feeblest refraction of sunlight can scarcely be supposed to shed a glimmering ray, and the pressure must amount to more than a ton and a half on the square inch, not only the minute Foraminifera, but highly organized species of radiata, revel in the enjoyment of life, and sport their strange forms and brilliant colours, in ocean's dark unfathomed caves. To the lamented Edward Forbes we owe some adequate appreciation of the comprehensive truths which the intelligent use of the dredge places within reach of the naturalist, and we may now regard those results of deep ocean soundings, carried on under such peculiar disadvantages, as a mere glimpse and fortaste of the disclosures which await us relative to a new submarine fauna. There strange and beautiful forms reveal glimpses to us of the infinite variety of characters in which God is still writing the revelations of his creative power to shame the petty cavils of the sceptic, and invite our study of new zones of life at depths to which light itself can scarcely penetrate, but from which science thus recovers vital truths, calculated to illuminate many obscurities in that great geological past, built up out of the wrecks of still older life and organization. Whilst so many are watching with eager, though bated hope, the prospect of practical results to the political and commercial world from this new Atlantic Telegraph expedition, less tantalizing and evanescent than those which were celebrated with such joyous pæans, when the “bridal clasp” and the magnetic “wedding ring” were believed to have plighted perpetual troth between Britain