

formed seas, which afterwards deposited the limestone formations.

By Demaillet the whole globe was conceived to have been covered with water for many thousands of years. He supposed this water had gradually retired; that all the land animals were originally inhabitants of the sea; that man himself commenced his career as a fish; and he asserts, that it is not uncommon, even now, to meet with fishes in the ocean, which are still only half converted into men, but whose descendants will in time become perfect human beings\*.

The system of Buffon is merely an extension of that of Leibnitz, with the addition only of a comet, which, by a violent blow, struck off from the sun the liquefied mass of the earth, together with those of all the other planets at the same instant. From this supposition, he was enabled to assume positive dates, as, from the present temperature of the earth, it could be calculated how long it had taken to cool down so far; and, as all the other planets had come from the sun at the same time, it could also be calculated how many ages are still required for cooling the greater ones, and to what degree the smaller are already frozen†.

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\* Telliamed. Amsterd. 1748.

† *Theorie de la Terre*, 1749; and *Epoques de la Nature*, 1775.