

CHAPTER I.

ON THE NATURE AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE BRITISH STRATA;
AND THEIR FOSSIL CONTENTS.

“ Every rock in the desert, every boulder on the plain, every pebble by the brook side, every grain of sand on the sea shore, is replete with lessons of wisdom to the mind that is fitted to receive and comprehend their sublime import.”

THE solid materials of which the earth is composed, from the surface inhabited by man to the greatest depths within the reach of his observation, consist of minerals and fossils.

MINERALS are inorganic substances formed by natural operations, and are the product of chemical or electro-chemical action.

FOSSILS are the remains of animals and vegetables which have been imbedded in the strata by natural causes in remote periods; originally elaborated from inorganic matter by that marvellous principle termed vitality, and subsequently more or less altered in structure and composition by the influence of those physical forces, by which the inert substances of the mineral kingdom are subjected to perpetual change.