

Lister, more than a century ago, had obtained a glimpse of this law, its principles were neither understood nor regarded in this country until the late Dr. William Smith, by his own unaided exertions, proved by numerous observations on the British strata, its value and applicability for the identification of a deposit, in districts remote from each other. This phenomenon did not escape the notice of the distinguished French philosophers, M.M. Cuvier and Brongniart, who in their admirable work, "*Géographie Minéralogique des Environs de Paris*," thus enunciate the same principle:—"Le moyen que nous avons employé pour reconnoître au milieu d'un si grand nombre de lits calcaires, un lit déjà observé, dans un canton très-éloigné, est pris de la nature des fossiles renfermés dans chaque couche; ces fossiles sont toujours généralement les mêmes dans les couches correspondantes, et présentent d'un système de couche à un autre système, des différences d'espèces assez notables. C'est un signe de reconnaissance qui jusqu'à présent ne nous a pas trompés."* Now, although recent discoveries have shown that this rule has many exceptions, and that its too stringent adoption has been productive of some erroneous generalizations, yet if it be employed with due caution it is fraught with the most important and interesting results; and is the only certain basis of our knowledge respecting the appearance, con-

* *Géog. Min. Oss. Foss. tom. ii. p. 266.*