

ous system. Sir Charles Lyell and Mr. Leonard Horner represent the abler and better-known assertors of this last view; while Sir Roderick Murchison and Professor Sedgwick rank among the more distinguished assertors of the antagonist one. It would be of course utterly presumptuous in the writer of these pages to attempt deciding a question regarding which such men differ; but in forming a judgment for myself, various considerations incline me to hold, that the point is now very nearly determined at which, to employ the language of Sir Roderick, "life was first breathed into the waters." The pyramid of organized existence, as it ascends in the by-past eternity, inclines sensibly towards its apex, — that apex of "*beginning*" in which, on far other than geological grounds, it is our privilege to believe. The broad base of the superstructure, planted on the existing *now*, stretches across the entire scale of life, animal and vegetable; but it contracts as it rises into the past; — man — the quadrumana — the quadrupedal mammal — the bird — and the reptile — are each in succession struck from off its breadth, till we at length see it with the vertebrata, represented by only the fish, narrowing, as it were, to a point; and though the clouds of the upper region may hide its extreme apex, we infer from the declination of its sides, that it cannot penetrate much farther into the profound. When Steele and Addison were engaged in breaking up, piecemeal, their Spectator Club, — killing off good Sir Roger de Coverly with a defluction, marrying Will Honeycomb to his tenant's daughter, and sending away Captain Sentry and Sir Andrew Freeport to their estates in the country, — it was shrewdly inferred that the "Spectator" himself was very soon to quit the field; and the sudden discontinuance of his lucubrations justified the in-