

When commenting on the eagerness with which the doctrine of progression was embraced from the close of the last century to the time when I first attempted, in 1830, to give some account of the prevailing theories in geology, I observed, that far too much reliance was commonly placed on the received dates of the first appearances of certain orders or classes of animals or plants, such dates being determined by the age of the stratum in which we then happened to have discovered the earliest memorials of such types. At that time (1830), it was taken for granted that Man had not coexisted with the mammoth and other extinct mammalia, yet now that we have traced back the signs of his existence to the Post-pliocene era, and may anticipate the finding of his remains on some future day in the Pliocene period, the theory of progression is not shaken; for we cannot expect to meet with human bones in the Miocene formations, where all the species and nearly all the genera of mammalia belong to types widely differing from those now living; and had some other rational being, representing Man, then flourished, some signs of his existence could hardly have escaped unnoticed, in the shape of implements of stone or metal, more frequent and more durable than the osseous remains of any of the mammalia.

In the beginning of this century it was one of the canons of the popular geological creed, that the first warm-blooded quadrupeds which had inhabited this planet were those derived from the Eocene gypsum of Montmartre in the suburbs of Paris, almost all of which Cuvier had shown to belong to extinct genera. This dogma continued in force for more than a quarter of a century, in spite of the discovery in 1818 of a marsupial quadruped in the Stonesfield strata, a member of the lower oolite, near Oxford. Some disputed the authority of Cuvier himself, as to the mammalian character of the fossil; others, the accuracy of those who had assigned to it so ancient a place in the chronological series of rocks. In