

THE HISTORY OF CREATION.



CHAPTER XV.

PERIODS OF CREATION AND RECORDS OF CREATION.

Reform of Systems by the Theory of Descent.—The Natural System as a Pedigree.—Palæontological Records of the Pedigree.—Petrifactions as Records of Creation.—Deposits of the Neptunic Strata and the Enclosure of Organic Remains.—Division of the Organic History of the Earth into Five Main Periods: Period of the Tangle Forests, Fern Forests, Pine Forests, Foliaceous Forests, and of Cultivation.—The Series of Neptunic Strata.—Immeasurable Duration of the Periods which have elapsed during their Formation.—Deposits of Strata only during the Sinking, not during the Elevation of the Ground.—Other Gaps in the Records of Creation.—Metamorphic Condition of the most Ancient Neptunic Strata.—Small Extent of Palæontological Experience.—Small proportion of Organisms and of Parts of Organisms Capable of Petrifying.—Rarity of many Petrified Species.—Want of Fossilised Intermediate Forms.—Records of the Creation in Ontogeny and in Comparative Anatomy.

THE revolutionary influence which the Theory of Descent must exercise upon all sciences, will in all probability affect no branch of science, excepting Anthropology, so much as the descriptive portion of natural history, that which is known as systematic Zoology and Botany. Most naturalists who have hitherto occupied themselves with arranging the different systems of animals and plants, have collected, named, and arranged the different species of these natural bodies