

of equilibrium ; in which it has become the convenient and delightful habitation of man, and of the multitudes of terrestrial creatures that are his fellow tenants of its actual surface.*

CHAPTER VI.

Primary Stratified Rocks.

IN the summary we have given of the leading phenomena of unstratified and volcanic rocks, we have unavoidably been led into theoretical speculations, and have seen that the most probable explanation of these phenomena is found in the hypothesis of the original fluidity of the entire materials of the earth, caused by the presence of intense heat. From this fluid mass of metals, and metalloid bases of the earths, and alkalies, the first granitic crust appears to have been formed, by oxydation of these bases ; and subsequently broken into fragments, disposed at unequal levels above and below the surface of the first formed seas.

Wherever solid matter arose above the water, it became exposed to destruction by atmospheric

* See further details respecting the effects of volcanic forces in the description of Pl. I. Vol. ii.