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GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

OF

ANIMALS AND PLANTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE observations recorded in the following pages were made principally to ascertain the geographical distribution of animals and plants. However familiar one may be with distant countries, personal experience is not easily communicated; I have sought, therefore, to supply a groundwork of facts, that may remain, whatever may be the deductions drawn from them. In general, I have avoided discussion; but at the outset, some expression of views respecting species and their origin seems to be required.

Geological investigations have shown that our Earth was once inhabited by animals and plants, all of them widely different from those now found upon its surface. The course of generations has been interrupted, a whole system of species has been swept away, and a new system established upon every part of the Earth's surface.

It is clear, then, from Geology, that the human family has had a beginning; the future, too, seems distinctly foreshadowed; but, in the subject under consideration, our business is with the present and the past.

How long has the present system of species been in existence?—It is a fact, so familiar as to escape notice, that all civilized nations are engaged in keeping a reckoning of the days. However various the