

mollusca. No gasteropods or cephalopods are, however, as yet mentioned in these rocks in Britain, and we do not feel sufficiently acquainted with the geological age of the limestones of the Harz, to introduce any of the fossils of that argillaceous range of mountains. Whether at the time of the formation of these ancient rocks in the sea, plants were growing on the land (whether, indeed, there were any neighbouring dry land), we must not even conjecture: that plants might be growing in the sea, which nourished the shells and zoophyta of Snowdon, is a probable but not a certain inference; since sea-weeds do not alone constitute the food of conchifera or zoophyta. We found no *satisfactory* trace of plants in the fossiliferous rocks of Snowdon, nor are they common in Cumberland.

We cannot, from the twenty or thirty species of fossils (yet very imperfectly known) which have been obtained from these ancient rocks, learn the conditions under which they lived: but they are of great value as the oldest monuments yet discovered of the creation of living things. The very rarity of their occurrence and the paucity of species confirm the general views advanced as to the cause of the absence of organic fossils from the still older systems of gneiss and mica schist; for these few remains, scattered through as many miles of stratified rocks of different nature, appear to indicate that only at a few exceptional points were the conditions established which allowed of organic life being developed. Limestones, in later strata full of fossils, involved very few in these ancient periods.

No clear or general differences of form distinguish the fossils of Cornwall, Snowdon, and Bala, from those of the Silurian system next above: the same predominance of brachiopoda among the shells, the same comparative abundance of zoophyta, and the same rarity of plants, appear to show that the circumstances affecting organic life differed only by degrees. We may perhaps consistently view the organic beings of the clay slate and Silurian periods, as belonging to one long succession of creative energy, — the first, if our views as to the origin