

That country must have been diversified by hill and dale, by streams and torrents, the tributaries of its mighty river. Arborescent ferns, palms, and yuccas, constituted its groves and forests; delicate ferns and grasses, the vegetable clothing of its soil; and in its marshes, equiseta, and plants of a like nature, prevailed. It was peopled by enormous reptiles, among which the colossal iguanodon and the megalosaurus were the chief. Crocodiles and turtles, flying reptiles and birds, frequented its fens and rivers, and deposited their eggs on the banks and shoals; and its waters teemed with lizards, fishes, and mollusca. But there is no evidence that Man ever set his foot upon that wondrous soil, or that any of the animals which are his contemporaries found there a habitation: on the contrary, not only is evidence of their existence altogether wanting, but from numberless observations made in every part of the globe, there are conclusive reasons to infer, that man and the existing races of animals were not created, till myriads of years after the destruction of the iguanodon country—a country, which language can but feebly portray, but which the magic pencil of a Martin, by the aid of geological research, has rescued from the oblivion of the past, and placed before us in all the hues of nature, with its appalling dragon-forms, its forests of palms and tree-ferns, and the luxuriant vegetation of a tropical clime.*

* See the Frontispiece; an engraving on steel, from an original painting by John Martin, Esq., K.L.