

had flowed. The country traversed by the rivers, like that of the submerged forest, enjoyed a tropical climate; it was clothed with palms, arborescent ferns, and plants allied to the yucca and the dracæna, and tenanted by enormous reptiles, crocodiles, and land and fresh-water turtles; and in its waters were various kinds of fishes, mollusca, and aquatic plants. The bones and teeth of the reptiles—the remains of the turtles—the teeth and scales of fishes—the shells of the snails and muscles—the stems, leaves, and even seed-vessels, of the trees, were carried down by the stream, and deposited in the mud of the delta, beneath which the petrified forest was now buried. This state continued for a long period: another change took place; the country and its inhabitants were swept away, and the delta, and the strata on which it reposed, were submerged to a great depth, and formed part of the bottom of a profound ocean, whose waters teemed with myriads of zoophytes, shells, and fishes, of species that are now no more. Thermal waters, holding calcareous and silicious matter in solution, were poured into its basin, and, in its tranquil depths, layers of flint and chalk were deposited. And so rapidly were these changes effected, that fishes, while in the act of swimming, were arrested in their progress, and became suddenly enveloped in a bed of rock. This epoch was of considerable duration: at length elevatory movements began to take place, the bottom of the deep