

palms, and coniferæ, have existed through periods of indefinite duration to the present time; the most striking and important difference in the ancient and modern floras being the numerical preponderance of the cryptogamia in the former, and of the dicotyledonous tribes in the latter; and the more extensive geographical range of the same species of plants during the carboniferous era (page 568). The theory of the progressive development of creation receives no support from the state of vegetation in the early geological epochs, as Dr. Lindley has emphatically remarked; fungi, lichens, hepaticæ, and mosses do not occur in the coal; but coniferæ, and the most perfectly organized of the cryptogamic class.

The *absence* of other types of vegetation in the transition rocks must not however be received as proof that the flora of that period was thus sterile: the only legitimate inference, in the present state of our knowledge, is that the circumstances under which those strata were accumulated, were unfavourable to the envelopement or preservation of terrestrial plants. We have seen that the existing fundamental distinctions of vegetable structure prevailed also in the earliest secondary formations, a fact in accordance with what we observed in the animal kingdom: and the same unity of purpose and design is manifest in all the varied forms of organization that lived on our planet, through the vast range of time which geological investigations have enabled us to scan,