

earth's physical history. The insects which fluttered among the tropical vegetation of that early polynesia, and the fishes and crustacea which abounded in the seas and rivers, were brought in review before us, and we contemplated their extraordinary forms and organization, as preserved by those natural processes

“ Which turned the ocean-bed to rock,
And changed its myriad living swarms
To the marble's veined forms.” *

The wonderful transmutation into stone of the most delicate structures both of animals and vegetables ; the mineralization of the complex visual apparatus of that ancient family of crustacea, the trilobites ; and the evidence thus afforded of the actual condition and relation of the waters and of the atmosphere with light, at the period when the ocean swarmed with those singular beings, were considered and explained.

We now advance another stage in our eventful progress ; and again we have to examine deposits which have been accumulating for innumerable ages in the basins of seas fed by rivers and streams, bearing with them the detritus of the strata over which they flowed, and imbedding the remains of the plants and animals that existed at the epoch of their formation. Again we shall find new forms of existence presented to our notice ; differing from, but bearing an analogy to the inhabitants of the

* Mrs. Howitt.