

of colouring, but also the most remarkable forms. In one species the flower has the form of a spider, a fly, or a bee, and in others that of the pigeon or a butterfly; and all these forms so obvious as to occur to every observer. Even in the siliceous shields of the microscopic animalcules, as figured by Ehrenberg, we find forms so complicated and beautiful that they deserve attention, as affording patterns for the manufacturer or the artist.

These observations hold true not only with respect to the actual creation, but to those extinct ones of which fragments only have come down to us. There are several great divisions of the organic kingdoms which have left but few memorials of their past history, the remains of birds and insects are very scanty; and the same observation extends to the vegetable kingdom. In as far, however, as we can ascertain, the same richness of variation existed then as now. The tribe of ferns is as remarkable for the beauty as for the immense variety of forms which it displays; but these manifestations are not exhaustible by the present generation; our coal-fields are rich in impressions of the fossils of ferns, but even the genera under which they are ranged are different from those of our actual flora. The same richness of forms may be seen in the tribes which have either no representatives or very few