

nas its limits in the lighter as well as in the denser medium — that the multitudinous distracts it, and the distant eludes it, and the far horizon bounds it. If the scene spoke not of infinity in the sense in which Deity comprehends it, it spoke of it in at least the only sense in which man can comprehend it.

Now, we are much in the habit of thinking of such amazing multiplicity of being — when we think of it at all — with reference to but the later times of the world's history. We think of the remote past as a time of comparative solitude. We forget that the now uninhabited desert was once a populous city. Is the reader prepared to realize, in connection with the Lower Old Red Sandstone — the second period of vertebrated existence — scenes as amazingly fertile in life as the scene just described — oceans as thoroughly occupied with being as our friths and estuaries when the herrings congregate most abundantly on our coasts? There are evidences too sure to be disputed that such must have been the case. I have seen the ichthyolite beds, where washed bare in the line of the strata, as thickly covered with oblong, spindle-shaped nodules as I have ever seen a fishing bank covered with herrings; and have ascertained that every individual nodule had its nucleus of animal matter — that it was a stone coffin in miniature, holding enclosed its organic mass of bitumen or bone — its winged, or enamelled, or thorn-covered ichthyolite.

At this period of our history, some terrible catastrophe involved in sudden destruction the fish of an area at least a hundred miles from boundary to boundary, perhaps much more. The same platform in Orkney as at Cromarty is strewn thick with remains, which exhibit unequivocally the marks of violent death. The figures are contorted, contract-