

to sponges, with calcareous instead of horny skeletons. In the epoch immediately following this, animal life rose to a slightly higher grade, and unfolded in a great variety of subordinate types. Before the close of the Potsdam period—before the deposition of the sediments which formed the limestone and marls of Cincinnati, and have given character to the far-famed “blue-grass region” of Kentucky—life had been ushered upon our globe in such richness and variety, that not only had three of the four fundamental plans of animal organization been realized, but all or nearly all the various classes of the three lower sub-kingdoms had been fairly represented.

Many extensive regions of the Potsdam sandstone and overlying calciferous sand-rock are, nevertheless, almost, if not quite destitute of the traces of organic existence. Along the south shore of Lake Superior is a sandstone once regarded as belonging to the Potsdam, but probably, in part, of the age of the “Calciferous,” in which we search in vain for any of those fossil remains so common in Minnesota. We find nothing but the imprints of soft seaweeds (Fig. 29)—things like films of jelly, which have left their imprints upon the coarse rock, and have transmitted to us a knowledge of their existence and nature, while the traces of an army’s march are obliterated by the vicissitudes of a single season.

The Lake Superior sandstone, whatever its geological age, is a formation of remarkable interest, both in its relations to the basin of the largest lake in the world, in its relations to the world-renowned copper deposits of the region, and, not less, in its relations to some of the finest scenery of the continent. The remarkable interest of this formation was first pointed out by Dr. Douglass Houghton—a name more honored and beloved among the Wolverines than any other in the lists of science.