

the surface to a tropical temperature, and stimulated the roots of the new-born vegetation, while from the tepid waters the atmosphere was reeking with moisture, and ever and anon dispensing its showers upon the green-carpeted savanna. But, more than all, the food most grateful to the growing plant was that abundant carbonic acid whose presence in the atmosphere was the fatal bar to the introduction of terrestrial animals.

This scene of verdure was destined to short duration. One of the ever-recurring oscillations of the earth's crust sank the entire flora beneath the ocean's level. Pebbles, and sand, and argillaceous mud were strewn over the layer of prostrate vegetation, and the sea again held undisputed sway over states once rescued from its dominion.

Again the established order of Nature brought these latest sediments to the surface, and again, as if by magic, the fairy forms of a flowerless vegetation start up from the germless sands. Generations of these new forms luxuriate in the humid vales of another epoch—fix, in their woody tissues, another portion of the superabundant plant-food of the atmosphere, and then fall down to mingle with the peaty accumulations of the period.

Anon, another inundation devastates the scene, and sands and clays are borne by the rushing tides, and the dense growths of the recent jungle again disappear beneath another packing of silt and shingle, as a field of marsh-grass is buried beneath the sand borne forward by the summer overflow of a great river. Thus, perhaps, a hundred times in the course of ages, the vegetable growths of one epoch were entombed beneath the *débris* of a more violent one. Occasionally the inundating waters assumed the quiet habit of a deep and permanent sea. Then, that no adaptation of inorganic nature might be wanting in the answering aptitudes of the organic world, myriads of ma-