

which the British Islands were united, and which, embracing Iceland, spread far to the north and west into the area of what is now the Atlantic, and on the south was united to Africa, when as yet the Mediterranean had no existence.

In those days our British mountain lands formed of palæozoic rocks were mountainous then as they are now, but higher; and elsewhere, especially after the close of the formation of the Eocene strata, the Alps, the Carpathians, and the Pyrenees, first rose into prominence as mountain chains, at the foot of which in Switzerland were great lakes, from the collective strata of which Professor Heer has numbered 900 species of plants and nearly as many insects, all such as must have lived in a subtropical climate, probably warmer than that of our Devonshire area, if we may judge by the fossilised remains of date-palms.

When, however, we travel northward from Bovey Tracey, the case is different, and to make this plain, I must lead you for a moment through the Western Isles of Scotland, and far beyond, among the islands of the Arctic Sea.

In Antrim, the island of Mull, and on the mainland opposite, and in Staffa, Rum, Eigg, Canna, and Skye, the Miocene rocks consist chiefly of the lava-flows and ashes of great terrestrial volcanoes. These, as they accumulated, overflowed and filled up the undulating valleys of chalk in Antrim, of Oolite and of Silurian gneiss in what is now the west of Scotland, and in the intervals of eruptions, lakes were sometimes formed, and terrestrial soils accumulated on the sides of volcanoes, some of which, according to Mr. Judd, grew by accretion of volcanic matter till they rivalled Etna in height, and seemed as if they might last for ever, but