

birds and insects avoid the herbless waste. Our mules toil on in the withering heat of summer, and reach with weariness the border of a shrunken stream on which to encamp. With patient progress we arrive at a region which shows symptoms of a change of scene. Ahead, appears a less monotonous landscape. Some breaks in the surface are revealed. There, in the distance, are forms which remind us of architectural structures. We seem to see gables and towers. There rise the vertical lines of columns and steeples and pinnacles. Is this a city in the desert—Persepolis on American soil?

We press on. The illusion dissolves. Before us stretches a wide excavation, down into the formations underneath. Where are the materials removed from this emptied basin? What power plowed up the strata and carted away the *débris*? We come to the brink of the basin—a vast rock basin cut through beds of horizontal shales and soft limestones. The sloping walls have been worn for a thousand centuries by the rills formed from the winter rains. The fluted columns have been grooved by water. The salient abutments have been chiseled by the storm.

The rock-layers are visible all around the depression. We descend to the floor and trace their continuity from side to side. Each layer was once a sea-bottom. But, behold the relics of a former population scattered over this floor. Here are the skulls of sheep-like creatures which are also pig-like; the carapaces of turtles unlike any turtles living; the shin-bones of rhinoceroses which no longer roam in the jungle. We turn our eyes again to the rocky layers, and lo! like shelves of a vast cabinet, they hold the specimens which illustrate a fauna passed away—a classified cabinet, where each shelf is stored with the relics of its epoch, and the lower shelves are filled with the souvenirs of the older time.

What a place is this for reflection! All about us are the bones of extinct populations. They lie beneath us; they are stored around us, and their empty sockets gaze out on us with startled astonishment; they rise above our heads. We are sunken in the center of an ancient cemetery; we have burst