

into the midst of a sleeping, dreamy Golgotha, descended from the vast dead past. How old are these graves? Through how many winter storms have these silent skeletons slept here? How they rise, story above story. These bottom tiers lay down to their long repose while the great lake flapped its waves above. Its fishes swam over cemeteries. Other mute remains came in, layer by layer, to the house of silence, and the hand of Nature carefully envaulted them. The receptacle was filled; the lake had vanished; the continent was here.

Life once thrilled through all these torpid frames. These were conscious creatures. These were joyous creatures walking on the green earth. These were beings which inhaled the vital air, and basked in the life-giving sunlight, and enjoyed each other's society. They fed on the productions of the forest and the glade. They wandered over a land which was to be Dakota and Nebraska. They slaked their thirst at the border of the wide lake; they cooled themselves in its waters, and sometimes sported with its waves. Death came to them, as to their thousands of predecessors—as it comes to us. They were mired in a slough; they were hunted in a jungle; they lay down in the shade of a friendly tree; some force of nature bore them to their burial. The lake was their tomb, and the lake preserved its trust. It was a later vicissitude which opened the cemetery and exposed these testimonies of a vanished age to the curious and irreverent scrutiny of science.

The formation in which these creatures are entombed stretches from eastern Nebraska to Laramie, and from the Cheyenne River, Dakota, into north-western Kansas. It is called Neocene or Upper Tertiary. Other smaller areas of the same exist in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and Nevada. A very large area exists also in Oregon and Washington Territory. Upper Tertiary strata also border the Gulf of Mexico, from Mobile to the Rio Grande, stretching inland a hundred miles, and up the valley of the Mississippi to Cairo. Near the gulf shore, however, and along the Delta of the Mississippi the Neocene is concealed by alluvial deposits. Neocene