

exclusion of phanerogamic plants to another cause of an entirely different order, such as the imperfect development of the terrestrial flora in a newly created planet.

In strata of every age the organic remains consist principally of corals and testacea, the bones of vertebrated animals being comparatively rare. When these occur, they belong much more frequently to fish than to reptiles, and but seldom to terrestrial mammalia. This might, perhaps, have been anticipated as the general result of investigation, since all are now agreed that the greater number of fossiliferous strata were deposited beneath the sea, and that the ocean probably occupied in ancient times, as now, the greater part of the earth's surface. We must not, however, too hastily infer from the absence of fossil bones of mammalia in the older rocks, that the highest class of vertebrated animals did not exist in remoter ages. There are regions at present, in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, co-extensive in area with the continents of Europe and North America, where we might dredge the bottom and draw up thousands of shells and corals, without obtaining one bone of a land quadruped. Suppose our mariners were to report, that on sounding in the Indian Ocean near some coral reefs, and at some distance from the land, they drew up on hooks attached to their line portions of a leopard, elephant, or tapir, should we not be sceptical as to the accuracy of their statements? and if we had no doubt of their veracity, might we not suspect them to be unskilful naturalists? or, if the fact were unquestioned, should we not be disposed to believe that some vessel had been wrecked on the spot?

The casualties must always be rare by which land quadrupeds are swept by rivers far out into the open sea, and still rarer the contingency of such a floating body not being devoured by sharks or other predacious fish, such as were those of which we find the teeth preserved in some of the carboniferous strata. But if the carcass should escape, and should happen to sink where sediment was in the act of accumulating, and if the numerous causes of subsequent disintegration should not efface all traces of the body, included for countless ages in solid rock, is it not contrary to all calculation of chances that we should hit upon the exact spot — that mere point in the bed of an ancient ocean, where the precious relic was entombed? Can we expect for a moment, when we have only succeeded, amidst several thousand fragments of corals and shells, in finding a few bones of *aquatic* or *amphibious* animals, that we should meet with a single skeleton of an inhabitant of the land?

Clarence, in his dream, saw, "in the slimy bottom of the deep,"

— a thousand fearful wrecks;  
A thousand men, that fishes gnaw'd upon;  
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl.

Had he also beheld, amid "the dead bones that lay scattered by," the carcasses of lions, deer, and the other wild tenants of the forest and the plain, the fiction would have been deemed unworthy of the genius