

mediately on their dethronement at the close of the Secondary period, seems scarce less strange than that sung by Milton : —

“Behold a wonder ! They but now who seemed
 In bigness to surpass earth’s giant sons,
 Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
 Thronged numberless ; like that pygmean race
 Beyond the Indian mount ; or fairy elves,
 Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
 Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
 Or dreams he sees, while, overhead, the moon
 Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
 Wheels her pale course.”

But though we cannot assign a *cause* for this general reduction of the reptile class, save simply the will of the all-wise Creator, the *reason* why it should have taken place seems easily assignable. It was a bold saying of the old philosophic heathen, that “God is the soul of brutes ;” but writers on instinct in even our own times have said less warrantable things. God *does* seem to do for many of the inferior animals of the lower divisions, which, though devoid of brain and vertebral column, are yet skilful chemists and accomplished architects and mathematicians, what he enables man, through the exercise of the reasoning faculty, to do for himself ; and the ancient philosopher meant no more. And in clearing away the giants of the reptile dynasty, when their kingdom had passed away, and then re-introducing the class as much shrunken in their proportions as restricted in their domains, the Creator seems to have been doing for the mammals what man, in the character of a “mighty hunter before the Lord,” does for himself. There is in nature very little of what can be called war. The cities of this country cannot be said to be in a state of war, though their cattle-