

of wood that have been borne out to sea by the gulf stream from the shores of Mexico or the West Indian Islands, stranded on the rocky coasts of Orkney and Shetland.*

The dissimilarity which obtains between the fossils of the contemporary formations of this system in England and Scotland, is instructive. The group in the one consists mainly of molluscous animals; in the other, almost entirely of ichthyolites, and what seems to have been algæ. Other localities may present us with yet different groups of the same period — with the productions of its coasts, its lakes, and its rivers. At present, we are but beginning to know just a little of its littoral shells, and of the fish of its profounder depths. These last are surely curious subjects of inquiry. We cannot catechise our stony ichthyolites, as the necromantic lady of the *Arabian Nights* did the colored fish of the lake, which had once been a city, when she touched their dead bodies with her wand, and they straightway raised their heads and replied to her queries. We would have many a question to ask them if we could — questions never to be solved. But even the contemplation of their remains is a powerful stimulant to thought. The wonders of Geology exercise every faculty of the mind — reason, memory, imagination; and though we cannot put our fossils to the question, it is something to be so aroused as to be made to put questions to one's self. I have referred to the consistency of style which obtained among these ancient fishes — the unity of character which marked every scale, plate, and fin of every various family, and which distinguished it from the rest; and who can doubt that the same shades of variety existed in their habits and their instincts? We speak of the infinity of Deity — of his inexhaustible variety of mind but we speak of it until the idea becomes a piece of mere commonplace in our mouths. It is well to be