

extensive, could well account for some of the phenomena of this platform of death. It is rarely that disease falls equally on many different tribes at once, and never does it fall with instantaneous suddenness; whereas in the ruin of this platform from ten to twelve distinct genera seem to have been equally involved; and so suddenly did it perform its work, that its victims were fixed in their first attitude of terror and surprise. I have observed, too, that groups of adjoining nodules are charged frequently with fragments of the

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dead; whereas the bodies of fish whose bowels and air-bladders are comparatively small and tender, lie at the bottom. The herring fisherman, if the fish die in his nets, finds it no easy matter to buoy them up; and if the shoal entangled be a large one, he fails at times, from the great weight, in recovering them at all, losing both nets and herrings. Now, if a corresponding difference obtained among fish of the extinct period—if some rose to the surface when they died, while others remained at the bottom—we must, of course, expect to find their remains in very different degrees of preservation—to find only scattered fragments of the floaters, while of the others many may occur comparatively entire. Even should they have died on the same beds, too, we may discover their remains separated by hundreds of miles. The haddocks that disappeared from the coast of Britain were found floating in shoals on the coasts of Norway. The remains of an immense body of herrings, that weighed down, a few seasons since, the nets of a crew of fishermen, in a muddy hollow of the Moray Frith, and defied the utmost exertions of three crews united to weigh them from the bottom, are, I doubt not, in the muddy hollow still. On a principle thus obvious it may be deemed not improbable that the ichthyolites of the Lower Old Red Sandstone might have had numerous contemporaries, of which, unless in some instances the same accident which killed also entombed them, we can know nothing in their character as such, and whose broken fragments may yet be found in some other locality, where they may be regarded as characteristic of a different formation.