

tified clay raised from beneath by the miner. There existed at the time none of those popular digests of geological science which are now so common; and so I had to grope my way without guide or assistant, and wholly unfurnished with a vocabulary. At length, however, by dint of patient labor, I came to form not very erroneous, though of course inadequate, conceptions of the ancient Coal Measure Flora: it was impossible to doubt that its numerous ferns were really such; and though I at first failed to trace the supposed analogies of its lepidodendra and calamites, it was at least evident that they were the bole-like stems of great plants, that had stood erect like trees. A certain amount of fact, too, once acquired, enabled me to assimilate to the mass little snatches of information, derived from chance paragraphs and occasional articles in magazines and reviews, that, save for my previous acquaintance with the organisms to which they referred, would have told me nothing. And so the vegetation of the Coal Measures began gradually to form within my mind's eye, where all had been blank before, as I had seen the spires and columns of Edinburgh forming amid the fog, on the morning of my arrival.

I found, however, one of the earliest dreams of my youth curiously mingling with my restorations, or rather forming their groundwork. I had read Gulliver at the proper age; and my imagination had become filled with the little men and women, and retained strong hold of at least one scene laid in the country of the very tall men,—that in which the traveller, after wandering amid grass that rose twenty feet over his head, lost himself in a vast thicket of barley forty feet high. I became the owner, in fancy, of a colony of Liliputians, that manned my eighteen-inch canoe, or tilled my apron-breadth of a garden; and, coupling with the men of Liliput the scene in Brobdignag, I had often set myself to imagine, when playing truant on the green slopes of the Hill, or among the swamps of the "Willows," how some of the vignette-like scenes by which I was surrounded, would have appeared to creatures so minute. I have imagined them threading their way through