

ages are yet to learn that the species which they represent ever existed, or to become acquainted with even the generic peculiarities by which they were distinguished.

The question still remains, Whence has the amber of our Scottish coasts been derived? It occurs *in situ* in Tertiary deposits in the neighbourhood of London: good specimens of considerable size have been found, for instance, in a clay-pit near Hyde Park corner, not a quarter of a mile from the site of the Crystal Palace. It occurs, too, in Prussia, in a clay-bed of considerable horizontal extent, of which the larger part lies under the waves of the Baltic, but which rises on some parts of the coast about forty feet over the level of that sea, and to which of late years a sort of classical interest has been given by a modern fiction, worthy, from its air of matter-of-fact truthfulness, of our own Defoe,—the *Amber Witch*. The black amber vein found by the pastor's little daughter is described in the story as occurring high in a wooded defile behind her father's parsonage, and as owing its black colour to the quantity of charcoal, *i.e.*, carbonized wood, which it contained. And in both particulars the description is true to the geology of the amber deposits. But we have no amber deposits in Scotland: had amber ever existed in connexion with the Tertiary beds of Mull, it would have shared, in all probability, from the close proximity of the trap, the fate of the great lumps of butter which that giant in the nursery story who used to eat knights and young ladies, employed in testing the heat of his oven; and so we must look for its place, not on our shores, but in the seas by which they are washed. But it is here necessary that I should submit to you a brief outline of the structural geology of our country, not only that we may know in what direction to look for its Tertiary beds, but in order also that we may form such an acquaintance with the general framework of our subject, as it exists in space, as may guide us in all our after conceptions regarding it. Avoiding the prolixity