

flints a few fragments of silicified wood, and, in one or two instances, the cones of cycadaceous plants; and the upper beds of the system have furnished the remains of a gigantic lizard,—the Mosasaurus, with those of turtles, tortoises, and Pterodactyls. True, the Mosasaurus *may* have been, as Cuvier supposed, a marine reptile, and the turtles *must* have been so; but then both, as egg-bearing animals, must have brought forth their young on some shore; and the tortoises, with the Pterodactyl or flying lizard, must be regarded as decidedly terrestrial. Such is almost all we yet know of the flora or fauna of the land of the Chalk; whereas in marine organisms the system is so exceedingly rich, that its ascertained species amount, we find it stated by Brown, to about three thousand. The geologic diorama abounds in strange contrasts. When the curtain last rose upon our country, we looked abroad over the amber-producing forests of the Tertiary period, with their sunlit glades and brown and bosky recesses, and we saw, far distant on the skirts of the densely wooded land, a fire-belching volcano, over-canopied by its cloud of smoke and ashes. And now, when the curtain again rises, we see the same tract occupied, far as the eye can reach, by a broad ocean, traversed by a pale milky line, that wends its dimpling way through the blue expanse, like a river through a meadow. That milky way of turbid water indicates the course of a deep-setting current, that disturbs, far beneath, the impalpable mud of the Chalk. Sailing molluscs career in their galleys of pearl over the surface of this ancient sea; fishes of long extinct species dart with sudden gleam through its middle depths; and far below, on its white floor, the sea-urchin creeps, and the spatangus burrows, and crania and terebratulæ have cast anchor, and the *Crista Galli* (or carinated oyster) opens its curiously plicated valves, carved with the zigzag mouldings of a Norman doorway, and the flower-like marsupite expands its living petals. And, dim and distant in the