

ganoid order; and by shells whose families, and even genera, still exist in our pools and rivers, though the species be all gone. Winged reptiles, too, occasionally flitted amid its woods, or sped over its broad bosom; and insects of the same family as that to which our dragon-flies belong spent the first two stages of their existence at the bottom of its pools and shallows, and the terminal one in darting over it on their wings of delicate gauze in quest of their prey. It is stated by Dr. Mantell, our highest authority on the subject of the Weald, that the delta of this great river is about two thousand feet in thickness,—a thickness which quadruples that of the delta of the Mississippi. There can be little doubt that the American ‘Father of Waters’ is a very ancient river; and yet it would seem that this river of the Wealden, which has now existed for myriads of ages in but its fossilized remains, hidden under the Wolds of Surrey and Kent,—this old river, which flowed over where the ocean of the Oolite once had been, and in turn gave place and was overflowed by the ocean of the Chalk,—continued to roll its downward waters amid forests as dense and as thickly inhabited as those of the great American valley, during a period perhaps four times as extended.

Compared with the English formation of the Weald, which extends over a wide, and what was at one time a very rude district, our beds of the Scotch Wealden are but of little depth, and limited extent. And yet they serve to throw a not unimportant light on the true character and place of the formation. It occurs in England, as I have said, between two great marine systems,—the Cretaceous and the Oolitic; and the question has arisen, to which of these systems does it belong? Now, our Scotch beds of the Weald determine the question. They make their appearance, not at the top of the Oolitic deposits, as in England, but intercalated throughout the system,—occurring in the Isle of Skye, where they were first detected many