

While summer, in a vale of flowers,
Is sleeping rosy at his feet.'

The mere lists of the botanist and zoologist are in themselves repulsive and un-ideaed; and yet the existences which their arbitrary signs represent are the vital marvels of creation,—the noble forests, fair shrubs, and delicate flowers, and the many-featured denizens of the animal world, so various in their forms, motions, and colours, and so wondrous in their structure and their instincts. I have been presenting you this evening with little else than a dry list of the Scottish productions of the Wealden and Oolitic ages,—a list necessarily imperfect, and all the more unsuggestive from the circumstance that, as myriads of ages had elapsed between the extinction of the races and families which its signs represent, and their first application as signs, so these signs, in their character as vocables, belong to languages as dead as the organisms themselves. The organisms were dead and buried, and converted into lignite or stone, long ages ere there was language enough in the world to furnish them with names; and now the dead has been employed to designate the dead,—dead languages to designate the remains of dead creations. Could we but see the productions of our country as they once really existed,—could we travel backwards into the vanished past, as we can descend into the strata that contain their remains, and walk out into the woods, or along the sea-shores of old Oolitic Scotland, we should be greeted by a succession of marvels strange beyond even the conceptions of the poet, or at least only equalled by the creations of him who, in his adventurous song, sent forth the Lady Una to wander over a fairy land of dreary wolds and trackless forests, whose caverns were haunts of dragons and satyrs, and its hills the abodes

'Of dreadful beasts, that, when they drew to hande,
Half-flying and half-floating, in their haste,
Did with their largeness measure o'er much lande,