

Till all her infant offspring came
To that great christening for a name.
And he that would the Ancients know
Must forward come, not backward go :
The learned lumber of the shelves
Shows nothing older than ourselves.
But who in older times than we
Shall live ?—That infant on the knee,—
See sights to us were never shown,
And secrets know to us unknown.”

The group of mammals which, in Europe at least, immediately preceded the human period, seems to have been everywhere a remarkable one ; and nowhere was it more so than in the British islands. Our present mammaliferous fauna is rather poor ; but the contents of the later deposits show that we must regard it as but a mere fragment of a very noble one. Associated with species that still exist in the less cultivated parts of the country, such as the badger, the fox, the wild cat, the roe, and the red deer, we find the remains of great animals, whose cogeners must now be sought for in the intertropical regions. Britain during the times of the boulder clay, and for ages previous, had its native elephant, its two species of rhinoceros, its hippopotamus, its hyæna, its tiger, its three species of bears, its two species of beavers, its great elk, and its gigantic deer. Forms now found widely apart, and in very different climates, meet within the British area. During at least the earlier times of the group, the temperature of our island seems to have been very much what it is now. As I have already had occasion to remark, the British oak flourished on its plains and lower slopes, and the birch and Scotch fir on its hills. And yet, under these familiar trees, the lagomys or tailless hare, a form now mainly restricted to Siberia and the wilds of Northern America, and the reindeer, an animal whose proper habitat at the present time is Lapland, were associated with forms that are now only to be found between the tropics, such as that of the hippo-