

and to dress fields waving with the productions of yet another and different flora, and to busy himself with all the labour which he taketh under the sun. Our country, in this Tertiary time, has still its great outbursts of molten matter, that bury in fiery deluges, many feet in depth, and many square miles in extent, the debris of wide tracts of woodland and marsh ; and the basaltic columns still form in its great lava-bed ; and ever and anon as the volcanic agencies awake, clouds of ashes darken the heavens, and cover up the landscape as if with the accumulated drifts of a protracted snow-storm. Who shall declare what, throughout these long ages, the history of creation has been ? We see at wide intervals the mere fragments of successive floras ; but know not how what seem the blank interspaces were filled, or how, as extinction overtook in succession one tribe of existences after another, and species, like individuals, yielded to the great law of death, yet other species were brought to the birth and ushered upon the scene, and the chain of being was maintained unbroken. We see only detached bits of that green web which has covered our earth ever since the dry land first appeared ; but the web itself seems to have been continuous throughout all time ; though ever, as breadth after breadth issued from the creative loom, the pattern has altered, and the sculpturesque and graceful forms that illustrated its first beginnings and its middle spaces have yielded to flowers of richer colour and blow, and fruits of fairer shade and outline ; and for gigantic club-mosses stretching forth their hirsute arms, goodly trees of the Lord have expanded their great boughs ; and for the barren fern and the calamite, clustering in thickets beside the waters, or spreading on flowerless hill-slopes, luxuriant orchards have yielded their ruddy flush, and rich harvests their golden gleam.