

then existed. The Rocky Mountains and the Alleghanies were not yet born from the deep. Where were the United States? Where the broad valley of the Mississippi, and the wide-extended plains of the far West? Beneath the wave, and receiving the sediments of the same sea which rolled over the future sites of Babylon, and Tyre, and Athens, and the seven hills of the "Eternal City." The generations of men yet slumbered in the chambers of futurity. The order of Providence had assigned them their position in the grand procession of life which was now beginning to move, and the scouts of which had passed by in the preceding age; but we must wait for man till a long line of grotesque and marvelous forms has marched before our view.

The van of this procession was led by some of the humbler forms of God's creation. We shall indeed look in vain for a type of existence of simpler mould than the Laurentian Eozoön. It is likely that beings akin to this accompanied the shoals of higher forms which sprang into existence at the morning dawn of the Silurian Age. But if they lived, the record of their existence has been effaced from the earth. Like the deeds and the sufferings of the men who kept company with the extinct quadrupeds of Europe, and chased the fur-clad mammoth across the steppes of Siberia, their very existence is reached only by conjecture, and the activities which made up life with them have all been locked up with the arcana of the past. The creatures whose relics we have disentombed were more highly gifted than the Eozoön, and were launched into being under a great variety of forms. The oldest Silurian rocks of North America are perhaps those revealed to science upon the island of Newfoundland by the assiduity of the Canadian geologists. Their records have been recently studied by the paleontologist Billings, of Montreal, an investigator eminent for acuteness and for the importance of his paleon-