

where it has been studied by Professor C. H. Hitchcock, and Mr. Billings, of Montreal.

Thus closed the Silurian Age. At the east the rocks of this age are marked off from the great mass of overlying Devonian strata by the interposition of a conglomerate—the “Oriskany Sandstone,” which signalizes the confusion attendant upon the change of scene. At the West, however, this formation is generally wanting; and we find the limestones of the Corniferous group resting upon those of the Niagara group, except where the Salina rocks intervene. The Corniferous is a most important limestone mass throughout the West. It merges generally into the calcareous portion of the overlying “Hamilton” strata, and forms a landmark in the topography of the country no less than in the series of rocks. In this limestone, quarries are worked from Western New York, in the latitude of Buffalo, through the contiguous peninsula of Canada to Sandusky and Columbus, Ohio, Monroe and Mackinac, Michigan, and multitudes of points in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. These limestones, like all others, were accumulated in the bottom of deep and quiet seas. Each successive floor has been the home of moving myriads of sensitive forms. Every layer of rocks has been the cemetery of many generations. Life teemed especially in calcareous and placid waters. Such were those of the Corniferous period; and these limestones are stocked with the relics of ancient dynasties—great and small, powerful and weak, in one wide burial confusedly blent. Nor yet had nature dispensed with the pattern of the trilobites. Encrinites were still in vogue, and orthoceratites, and all the various phases of univalve and bivalve creation. And here—here first dawned upon our planet an animal with a backbone—a mere fish, but yet the basis on which artist Nature has moulded successive models till the form of man shone forth, and the Omniscient was satisfied