

history of our beds of peat and marl. These neglected swamps demand a better appreciation. Improved machinery is already offering us peat for heat-production. There was a time when the richest coal-bed was but a bottomless peat-bog. The coal-measures of the country are nothing but fossilized "swamp-lands." Nature has shown an interest in peat. Let us see how she prepares it in modern times.

I have already called to mind the grand events which accompanied the last great revolution of the globe. We have seen, in imagination, the world emerging in a resurrection from its grave of waters. The waves have glided down the shoulders and sides of the continent until she sat with her feet only bathing in the sea. But the surface of the land was covered with inequalities, and thousands of little depressions held their lakelets of water prisoners in their arms. So the land was at first dotted with thousands of little inland seas. How some of them, with no outlet, held fast to the saltness which was the last bequest of their mother ocean, I have already explained. How others, like spendthrifts, permitted a perpetual outgo, with no income to correspond, I have also reminded the reader. At what particular stage of dilution Nature ceased to regard them as fitting abodes of the marine animals which must have been entrapped within their borders I am unable to say. By what means they became tenanted by the beings which make their home in fresh waters I am unable to say from the observed operation of natural laws. I have no doubt that Nature promptly produced, *ab origine*, such creatures as would be suited to the new circumstances.

But the history of multitudes of the smaller and shallower lakes has been completely closed. For ages they received and swallowed up the leachings of the surrounding