

A cataclysm was at hand. The wide expanse of marshy land again went down. Old ocean, which had roared and frothed in rage around the borders of the territory of which he had been dispossessed, came careering back to his old haunts. He brought a freight of mud and sand, and spread it over the whole vast peat-bed—as if to make sure of no renewal of the usurpation—like those who sow with salt the sites of ruined cities, to make the ruin a finality. But the salt sowed by resentful ocean was in truth, a packing away of something destined to be saved, not forgotten. It was part of a beneficent plan, and the anger of the ocean was made an instrument for its accomplishment. Beds of clay and sand shut out from the atmosphere the sheet of peaty matter which was to lie and consolidate to coal.

The dominion of the ocean was temporary. Apparent regress was in truth a forward movement. Again the reeking sea-bottom came up to sunlight, and another scene of bright verdure was spread where late, old ocean had celebrated a jubilee. It looked as if the former forest had undergone a resurrection. Here stood again *Lepidodendron* in its summer hat, and *Sigillaria* and the other established forms. But they were other species; and with them was an occasional new comer among the vegetable types. They understood for what purpose they had been sent. They resumed the work of selecting the impurity from the air. Already, some adventurous and hardy types of air-breathers had colonized the jungle. They were sluggish and slimy creatures, with whom life passed slowly, and respiration was a matter of comparative indifference. Yet they enjoyed existence. They grazed on the humble herb; they seized the dragon-fly, alighted to rest his wing; they violated the home retreats of the passive snails. They crawled out and sunned themselves on the ferny bank. There were grosser and heavier forms, mail-clad and vociferous; haunting the bayou; paddling for some eligible fishing station; bellowing like oxen, when excited in pursuit; stirring up the mire of the stagnant bay; resting their chins on the reeking bank to absorb the slanting sun-warmth of the