

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE REIGN OF ANGIOSPERMS IN THE LATER CRETACEOUS AND KAINOZOIC.

It is a remarkable fact in geological chronology that the culmination of the vegetable kingdom antedates that of the animal. The placental mammals, the highest group of the animal kingdom, are not known till the beginning of the Eocene Tertiary. The dicotyledonous Angiosperms, which correspond to them in the vegetable kingdom, occur far earlier—in the beginning of the Upper Cretaceous or close of the Lower Cretaceous. The reign of cycads and pines holds throughout the Lower Cretaceous, but at the close of that age there is a sudden incoming of the higher plants, and a proportionate decrease, more especially of the cycads.

I have already referred to the angiospermous wood supposed to be Devonian, but I fear to rest any conclusion on this isolated fact. Beyond this, the earliest indications of plants of this class have been found in the Lower Cretaceous. Many years ago Heer described and figured the leaves of a poplar (*Populus primæva*) from

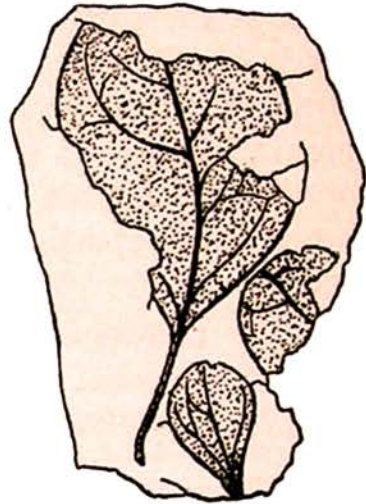


FIG. 68.—*Populus primæva*,  
Heer. Cretaceous, of  
Greenland. One of the  
oldest known Angio-  
sperms.