

Port McNeil in the north of Vancouver Island, which is as large as that of the modern species, and very similar in form. Thus this beautiful vegetable type culminated long geological ages ago, and was represented by many species, no doubt occupying a prominent place in the forests of the northern hemisphere. To-day only a single species exists, in our warmer regions, to keep up the memory of this almost perished genus; but that species is one of our most beautiful trees.

The history of the Sequoias or giant Cypresses, of which two species now exist in limited areas in California, is still more striking. These giant trees, monsters of the vegetable kingdom, are, strange to say, very limited in their geographical range. The greater of the two, *Sequoia gigantea*, the giant tree *par excellence*, seems limited to a few groves in California. At first sight this strikes us as anomalous, especially as we find that the tree will grow somewhat widely both in Europe and America when its seeds are sown in suitable soil. The mystery is solved when we learn that the two existing species are but survivors of a genus once diffused over the whole northern hemisphere, and represented by many species, constituting, in the Later Cretaceous and Eocene ages, vast and dark forests extending over enormous areas of our continents, and forming much of the material of the thick and widely distributed Lignite beds of North-western America. Thus the genus has had its time of expansion and prevalence, and is now probably verging on extinction, not because there are not suitable habitats, but either because it is now old and moribund, or because other and newer forms have now a preference in the existing conditions of existence.

The Plane trees, the Sassafras, the curious Ginkgo tree or fern-leaved yew of Japan, are cases of similar decadence of genera once represented by many species, while other trees, like the Willows and Poplars, the Maples, the Birches, the Oaks and the Pines, though of old date, are still as abundant as