

tyledonous leaf, in the Carboniferous sea, affords as certain indication of dry land, as the olive branch which the dove brought back to the Ark; one fact of this kind overthrows a host of theories based upon negative evidence.

Advancing upwards, organic life presents more numerous modifications, but no traces of the highest orders of the animal kingdom are apparent, until, on the sands of the ancient Triassic ocean, we behold appearances as unexpected and startling, as the human footstep to Crusoe on his desolate island—the tracks of bipeds—colossal birds—of which no other vestiges remain, and to which the existing order of creation affords no parallel.

We now enter upon that marvellous epoch, during which reptilian organization obtained its fullest development—when the Iguanodon and Megalosaurus—

“Mighty Pre-Adamites who walk’d the earth,
Of which ours is the wreck—” BYRON.

were the principal inhabitants of vast islands and continents. But here, as in the earlier periods, we have proof that warm-blooded animals existed; and the diminutive marsupial and insectivorous Mammalia of the Oolite, the Heron of the Wealden, and the Albatross of the Chalk, attest that the system of animal creation was complete.

Leaving behind us the Age of Reptiles, we approach that of the colossal Mammalia, when extensive countries were peopled by the enormous