

- MAMMIFEROUS.** Mammifers. Animals which give suck to their young. To this class all the warm-blooded quadrupeds, and the Cetacea, or whales, belong. *Etym.*, *mamma*, a breast, *fero*, to bear.
- MAMMILLARY.** A surface which is studded over with rounded projections. *Etym.*, *mammilla*, a little breast or pap.
- MAMMOTH.** An extinct species of the elephant (*E. primigenius*), of which the fossil bones are frequently met with in various countries. The name is of Tartar origin, and is used in Siberia for animals that burrow under ground.
- MANATI.** One of the Cetacea, the sea-cow, or lamantine (*Trichechus manatus*, Lin.)
- MARL.** A mixture of clay and lime; usually soft, but sometimes hard, in which case it is called indurated marl.
- MARSUPIAL ANIMALS.** A tribe of quadrupeds having a sack or pouch under the belly, in which they carry their young. The kangaroo is a well known example. *Etym.*, *marsupium*, a purse.
- MASTODON.** A genus of fossil extinct quadrupeds allied to the elephants; so called from the form of the hind teeth or grinders, which have their surface covered with conical mammillary crests. *Etym.*, *μαστος*, *mastos*, pap, and *οδων*, *odon*, tooth.
- MATRIX.** If a simple mineral or shell, in place of being detached, be still fixed in a portion of rock, it is said to be in its matrix. *Matrix*, womb.
- MECHANICAL ORIGIN, ROCKS OF.** Rocks composed of sand, pebbles, or fragments, are so called to distinguish them from those of a uniform crystalline texture, which are of chemical origin.
- MEDUSÆ.** A genus of marine radiated animals, without shells; so called, because their organs of motion spread out like the snaky hair of the fabulous Medusa.
- MEGALOSAURUS.** A fossil gigantic amphibious animal of the saurian or lizard and crocodile tribe. *Etym.*, *μεγαλη*, *megale*, great, and *σαυρα*, *saura*, lizard.
- MEGATHERIUM.** A fossil extinct quadruped, resembling a gigantic sloth. *Etym.*, *μεγα*, *mega*, great, and *θηριον*, *therion*, wild beast.
- MELASTOMA.** A genus of MELASTOMACEÆ, an order of exotic plants of the evergreen tree, and shrubby kinds. *Etym.*, *μελας*, *melas*, black, and *στομα*, *stoma*, mouth; because the fruit of one of these species stains the lips.
- MESOTYPE.** A simple mineral, white, and needle-shaped, one of the Zeolite family, frequently met with in the Trap-rocks.
- METAMORPHIC ROCKS.** A stratified division of hypogene rocks, highly crystalline, such as gneiss and mica-schist, and so named because they have been altered by plutonic action. *Etym.*, *μετα*, *meta*, trans, and *μορφη*, *morphe*, form.
- MICA.** A simple mineral, having a shining silvery surface, and capable of being split into very thin elastic leaves or scales. It is often called *talc* in common life; but mineralogists apply the term talc to a different mineral. The brilliant scales in granite are mica. *Etym.*, *mico*, to shine.
- MICA-SLATE, MICA-SCHIST, MICACEOUS SCHISTUS.** One of the metamorphic or crystalline stratified rocks of the hypogene class, which is characterized by being composed of a large proportion of mica united with quartz.
- MIOCENE.** A division of tertiary strata intervening between the Eocene and Pliocene formations; so called, because a minority of its fossil shells are referable to living species. *Etym.*, *μειων*, *meion*, less, and *καινος*, *kainos*, recent.
- MOLASSE.** A provincial name for a soft green sandstone, associated with marl and conglomerates, belonging to the Miocene Tertiary Period, extensively developed in the lower country of Switzerland. *Etym.*, French, *molle*, soft.
- MOLLUSCA, MOLLUSCOUS ANIMALS.** Animals, such as shell-fish, which, being devoid of bones, have soft bodies. *Etym.*, *mollis*, soft.
- MONAD.** The smallest of visible animalcules, spoken of by Buffon and his followers as constituting the elementary molecules of organic beings.
- MONITOR.** An animal of the saurian or lizard tribe, species of which are found in both the fossil and recent state.
- MONOCOTYLEDONOUS.** A grand division of the vegetable kingdom (including palms, grasses, Lilacæ, &c.), founded on the plant having only one *cotyledon*, or seed-lobe. *Etym.*, *μονος*, *monos*, single.
- MORAINE,** a Swiss term for the debris of rocks brought into valleys by glaciers. See p. 228.
- MOSCHUS.** A quadruped resembling the chamois or mountain goat, from which the perfumè musk is obtained.