

similar in *kind* to those which produced the Coal Measures, we shall not be disappointed; but we shall be greatly disappointed if we seek for phenomena not only similar in kind, but also equal in *power*. An American swamp or a Scotch morass gives us but the equivalent of a single thin seam of coal; a submarine peat-moss, based on a layer of vegetable mould, and topped by a bed of sea-sand, the equivalent merely of a single thin seam, resting on an earthy shale, and overlaid by a shelly sandstone. Swamp, morass, submerged peat-moss, nay, even if we add to these some river delta, which, like that of the Mississippi, receives the spoils of a wide forest-covered continent, are but slender representatives of even our Scottish coal-field, with its three hundred and eighty-seven successive beds, of which eighty-four are seams of coal. We must be content, in our illustrations drawn from the present scene of things, with phenomena similar in kind, without looking for aught corresponding in extent. Even had we now the Carboniferous vegetation, the stiff and rigid earth, grown old, would not exhibit the ever-recurring sinkings, with occasional risings, of surface, which buried the lower beds of the Carboniferous system full four thousand feet beneath its upper deposits. Now, in dealing with the Saliferous system, let us content ourselves, as in dealing with the Coal Measures, with simply illustrating the foregone phenomena by phenomena of the existing state of things apparently similar in kind, though palpably dissimilar in extent and degree. Let us take for granted, as we do in the case of the Carboniferous period, a comparatively flexible state of the earth's crust, — frequent sinkings of the surface, with occasional risings and progressive depositions of matter, that keep pace with the general subsidence. And let us then refer to some of the salt formations of the present time, as illustrative of the way in which, amid greatly more active energies of