

reptiles. The Museum contains perhaps the finest collection of these in the world. The earlier Tertiary introduces us to the strange mammals of the Paris Basin,—the same system, in its second stage, to the *Dinotherium* of Darmstadt and the *Megatherium* of Buenos Ayres. A still later period brings before us the great elephantine family, once so widely distributed over the globe : we arrive at a monstrous skeleton, entire from head to heel : 'tis that of the gigantic mastodon of North America,—a creature that may have been contemporary with the earlier hunter tribes of the New World ; and just beside it, last in the long series, we find the human skeleton of Guadaloupe. Mysterious frame-work of bone locked up in the solid marble,—unwonted prisoner of the rock !—an irresistible voice shall yet call thee from out the stony matrix. The other organisms, thy partners in the show, are incarcerated in the lime forever,—thou but for a term. How strangely has the destiny of the race to which thou belongest re-stamped with new meanings the old phenomena of creation ! I marked, as I passed along, the prints of numerous rain-drops indented in a slab of sandstone. And the entire record, from the earliest to the latest times, is a record of death. When that rain-shower descended, myriads of ages ago, at the close of the Palæozoic period, the cloud, just where it fronted the sun, must have exhibited its bow of many colors ; and then, as now, nature, made vital in the inferior animals, would have clung to life with the instinct of self-preservation, and shrunk with dismay and terror from the approach of death. But the prismatic bow strided across the gloom, in blind obedience to a mere optical law, bearing inscribed on its gorgeous arch no occult meaning ; and death, whether by violence or decay, formed in the general economy but a clearing process, through which the fundamental law of increase found space to operate. But when thou wert living,