

I have felt as such a traveller would feel if, on setting himself to dig among the scattered heaps for memorials of the ruined city, he had fallen on what had been once the Assyrian Gallery of the British Museum, and had found mingling with the antiquities of perished London the greatly older and more venerable antiquities of Nineveh or Babylon. The land of the Oolite in this northern locality must have been covered by a soil which,—except that, from a lack of the boulder clays, it must have been poorer and shallower,—must have not a little resembled that of the lower plains of Cromarty, Caithness, and Eastern Ross. And on this Palæozoic platform, long exposed, as the Oolitic Conglomerates abundantly testify, to denuding and disintegrating agencies,—a platform beaten by the surf where it descended to the sea level, and washed in the interior by rivers, with here a tall hill or abrupt precipice, and there a flat plain or sluggish morass,—there grew vast forests of cone-bearing trees, tangled thickets of gigantic Equisetaceæ, numerous forms of *Cycas* and *Zamia*, and wide rolling seas of fern, amid whose open spaces club-mosses of extinct tribes sent forth their long creeping stems, spiky and dry, and thickly mottled with pseudo-spore-bearing catkins.

The curtain drops over this ancient flora of the Oolite in Scotland ; and when, long after, there is a corner of the thick enveloping screen withdrawn, and we catch a partial glimpse of one of the old Tertiary forests of our country, all is new. Trees of the high dicotyledonous class, allied to the plane and the buckthorn, prevail in the landscape, intermingled, however, with dingy funereal yews ; and the ferns and Equisetæ that rise in the darker openings of the wood approach to the existing type. And yet, though *eons* of the past eternity have elapsed since we looked out upon *Cycas* and *Zamia*, and the last of the Calamites, the time is still early, and long ages must lapse ere man shall arise out of the dust, to keep