

that it has been, for the want of tangible proof of the fact. I may even assert its probability, or my belief that it has been so, but at last it is but conjecture, and as such alone may be suggested. Still we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the study of the geology of this country, in some of its departments at least, is yet in its earliest infancy. May we not reasonably hope that its maturity will develop facts which will dispel the obscurity which now veils many subjects of most interesting inquiry, and enable us to read the past in a clear and convincing light? For instance, the prairies abound in beds of peat, of greater or less extent, some of vast proportions. As yet these are comparatively sealed volumes of history, which, when they shall be opened and read, as they have been in what we call the older countries of the world, will reveal the record of bygone ages. What treasures of truths have been revealed by the examinations of the peat-beds of Denmark, to which reference may be made as quite appropriate to the present inquiry! These are of depths varying only from ten to thirty feet, formed like ours, in basins in the drift. They tell us, as plainly as if written in a book, of the different successive forests which there have lived and flourished, and finally disappeared, and been succeeded by others. The oldest which they reveal is the Scotch Fir, (*pinus sylvestris*,) which is not now found in Denmark, and cannot even be domesticated there. Then succeed several varieties of the oak, one after the other, and so on, until finally at the last the beech is found, which is still the common forest tree of Denmark, and so it was two thousand years ago, as we learn from written history. How admirably do we here find united into a long chain of history the various links which we see deposited in these beds of peat, the last of which, being united with and interpreted by written histo-