

II. CLIMATE INDICATED.

None of the plants above mentioned is properly Arctic in its distribution, and the assemblage may be characterized as a selection from the present Canadian flora of some of the more hardy species having the most northern range. Green's Creek is in the central part of Canada, near to the parallel of 46° , and an accidental selection from its present flora, though it might contain the same species found in the nodules, would certainly include with these, or instead of some of them, more southern forms. More especially the balsam poplar, though that tree occurs plentifully on the Ottawa, would not be so predominant. But such an assemblage of drift plants might be furnished by any American stream flowing in the latitude of 50° to 55° north. If a stream flowing to the north it might deposit these plants in still more northern latitudes, as the McKenzie River does now. If flowing to the south it might deposit them to the south of 50° . In the case of the Ottawa, the plants could not have been derived from a more southern locality, nor probably from one very far to the north. We may therefore safely assume that the refrigeration indicated by these plants would place the region bordering the Ottawa in nearly the same position with that of the south coast of Labrador fronting on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, at present. The absence of all the more Arctic species occurring in Labrador, should perhaps induce us to infer a somewhat more mild climate than this.

The moderate amount of refrigeration thus required, would in my opinion accord very well with the probable conditions of climate deducible from the circumstances in which the fossil plants in question occur. At the time when they were deposited the sea flowed up the Ottawa valley to a height of 200 to 400 feet above its present level, and the valley of the St. Lawrence was a wide arm of the sea, open to the Arctic current. Under these conditions the immense quantities of drift ice from the northward, and the removal of the great heating surface now presented by the low lands of Canada and New England, must have given for the Ottawa coast of that period a summer temperature very similar to that at present experienced on the Labrador coast, and with this conclusion the marine remains of the Leda clay as well as the few land mollusks whose shells have been found in the beds containing the plants, and which are species still occurring in Canada, perfectly coincide.