

"Yes. I took the *Times* with me to my chambers, and was leisurely reading it, not giving much heed to accidents by sea or land, when the post brought me a letter from Rotterdam—that ought, but for detention of the mails, to have reached me yesterday—a letter from Do Lacy, telling me he was on his way to England, and should come in the *Batavian Ida* to London direct, and might be expected to arrive in a few hours after I got his letter."

"Oh, brother! what has happened, then?" said Miss Austwick, speaking in dreamy bewilderment.

"I have been to the Docks to inquire about the accident, and found the worst—the worst tidings confirmed. The vessel was struck mid-ships, perfectly cut in two by an American steamer, and went down with all on board. Why Do Lacy should have chosen to come home in so poor a boat as the *Batavian Ida*, I cannot understand. But poor fellow, there never was any understanding him, or his father before him. Poor fellow, poor fellow!"

Mr. Austwick walked up and down as he spoke, not so much in grief as shocked and concerned.

Miss Austwick, who looked paralysed by the tidings, kept staring at him, and nervously wringing her hands; and then, as if she woke up from a dream, exclaimed—

"And you mean to say that Do Lacy Austwick is drowned?"

These words were spoken just as Mrs. Austwick, startled by what Gertrude had told her of her papa's return and hurried manner, had left her room and come to make inquiries. She paused a moment at the door, hearing the sentence, as if to make herself certain of its purport, and then exclaimed—

"What! are you mad, Miss Austwick, to say such a thing! Drowned? What do you mean?"

"What she says, my love. I fear it is too true. Poor Do Lacy is lost—drowned."

At that instant a single word showed the immediate direction of Mrs. Austwick's thoughts.

"The heir," she said—"the heir of Austwick?" her eyes fixed on her husband's; and she continued—no doubt thinking as she spoke of all that was involved in the news, "Where's Allan? where's my son? He must know, he must be sent for. It concerns us all; so very sudden—so, so dreadful!"

"I fear," interposed Mr. Austwick without replying to her inquiry, "I fear there's no chance that he did not embark in the *Ida*, or of his being picked up: there was such a dense fog—nothing like it this winter."

"I should think, or fear, it was impossible," she muttered, trembling and growing paler; for the sweets of possession seemed so near, so very near!

Meanwhile; her husband, and then Allan her favourite son, to inherit—to be the heir—rose to the surface of her thoughts.

Miss Austwick, who had loved her nephew Do Lacy in his childhood, and been for some years as a mother to him, though now so long estranged, seemed at that moment to see the bright face of a dark-eyed, noble boy of eight or nine rise, smiling, before her, as she last saw him, shaking his brown curls through which a sunbeam played. All the coldness and estrangement of the past few years fled like a dream, and was obliterated. All that now she knew and felt was that the boy who had been her hope and pride, if the news were true, had miserably perished. Without a word or cry, she tried to rise to her feet to escape to her own room; but at the first effort she fell back and fainted.

Marian, who in this family scene had felt as an intruder who could neither properly remain, nor amid the agitating conversation find an opportunity to get away unnoticed, now ran to Miss Austwick's assistance, and when Gertrude, who had followed her mother down, summoned Martin to assist in removing her mistress, Marian went with Miss Austwick to her room.

Knowing enough from what she had heard of the calamity to feel deeply for the family, particularly for the obvious sorrow of Miss Austwick, and not knowing enough of the world and its hardening influences to comprehend all that was

involved in the sudden death of the heir of Austwick—a death by which Mr. Basil Austwick and his heirs succeeded—she concluded that it was to them all an overwhelming grief.

To be continued.

BEFORE THE DELUGE.

WHAT is the most wholesome reading for the young? Fiction, fables, and fairy tales—or facts? M. Figuier author of "The World before the Deluge," an admirable adaptation of which has been lately published in England, holds that the first books placed in the hands of the young, when they have mastered the first steps to knowledge and can read, should be on Natural History; that, in place of awakening the faculties of youthful minds to admiration by fables, it would be better to direct their admiring attention to the simple spectacles of nature—to the structure of a tree, the composition of a flower, the organs of animals, the perfection of the crystalline form in minerals; above all, to the history, of the world, our habitation. In one point at least, he is right. After ordinary and every-day facts have been mastered, and a moderate allowance of amusing literature indulged in, then, nothing is more instructive and elevating than an introduction to new, unknown, and wonderful facts. And certainly, the incontestible truths with which it is desirable to furnish the minds of the young are not difficult to find; nor do they impose any great labour on the youthful mind.

Different species have died out quite naturally, races have disappeared, like individuals. The Sovereign Master, who created animals and plants, has willed that the duration of the existence of species on the surface of the earth should be limited as is the life of individuals. It was not necessary, in order that they should disappear, that the elements should be overthrown, nor to call in the intervention of the united fires of heaven and earth. It is according to a plan emanating from the All-powerful, that the races which have lived a certain time upon the earth, have made way for others, and frequently for races nearer perfection, as far as complexity of organisation is concerned. We see the work of creation perfecting itself unceasingly, in the hands of Him who has said, "Before the world was, I am." The ever increasing beauty of the fabric compels us to adore the Artificer.

From Chaos to the Deluge, the scope of M. Figuier's book is indeed an enormous sweep, even for the most vivid imagination and the most industrious penman. Nevertheless, by careful subdivision into epochs, illustrating each by authentic proofs that had been discovered; and by remains discovered up to the present day: from the imprints of rain drops on the earliest dry land from injected veins and basaltic columns, to the teeth of the mammoth and the horns of the elk, who may have been contemporary with man—a clear and distinct notion is conveyed of the changes that occurred during bygone ages.

Of course it is understood that the epochs are so arranged for the purpose of convenient description merely; for we are not to suppose that any distinct feature alters one period from another in nature. The change was probably gradual and insensible, instead of being, like the acts of a drama, marked by the rising and falling of a curtain. This difficulty of drawing a satisfactory line of demarcation between different systems is sufficient to dispel the idea, which has sometimes been entertained, that special fauna were annihilated and created in the mass, or wholesale, at the close of each several epoch. There was no close then, as there is now. Each epoch silently disappears in that which succeeds it, and with it the animals belonging to it; much as we have seen them disappear from our own fauna, almost in our own times.

The length of these periods may be vaguely guessed at, by the enormous accumulations, made during their continuance. Thus, the tertiary epoch was closed by gigantic elephants (mammoths), vastly larger than any now surviving,

and which probably ushered in the succeeding one. They must have existed in enormous numbers. On the coast of Norfolk, England, alone, the fishermen, trawling for oysters, fished up, between 1820 and 1833, no less than two thousand elephants' molar teeth. If we consider how slowly these animals multiply, these quarries of ivory, as we may call them, suppose many centuries for production.

It has been an easy task to recognize the general form and structure of the mammoth. It surpassed the largest elephants of the tropics in size, for it was from sixteen to eighteen feet in height. The monstrous tusks with which it was armed were twelve or thirteen feet in length, curving into a semicircle. We know beyond a doubt that it was thickly covered with long shaggy hair, and that a copious mane floated upon its neck and along its back. Its trunk resembled that of the Indian elephant. Its body was heavy, and its legs were comparatively shorter than those of the latter animal, nevertheless, it had many of the habits.

In all ages, and in almost all countries, chance discoveries have been made of fossil elephants' bones embedded in the soil. Some of the elephants' bones having a slight resemblance to those of man, have often been taken for human bones. In the earlier historic times, such great bones, accidentally disinterred, have passed as having belonged to some hero or demigod; at a later period they were taken for the bones of giants.

In 1577, a storm having uprooted an oak near the cloisters of Reyden, in the canton of Lucerne, some large bones were exposed to view. Seven years after, a physician and professor of Basle, Felix Plater, being at Lucerne, examined these bones and declared that they could only proceed from a giant. The Council of Lucerne consented to send the bones to Basle for more minute examination, and Plater thought himself justified in attributing to the giant a height of nineteen feet. He designed a human skeleton on this scale, and returned the bones with the drawing to Lucerne. In 1706, all that remained of them was a portion of the scapula and a fragment of the wrist-bone. Blumenbach, who saw them at the beginning of the century, easily recognized them for the bones of an elephant. As a compliment to this bit of history, he it added that the inhabitants of Lucerne adopted the image of this pretended giant as the supporters of the city arms!

Spanish history preserves many stories of giants. The tooth of St. Christopher, shown at Valencia, in the church dedicated to the saint, was certainly the molar tooth of a fossil elephant; and in 1789, the canons of St. Vincent carried through the streets in public possession, to procure rain, the pretended arm of a saint, which was nothing less than the femur of an elephant.

These fossil bones of elephants are extensively scattered, almost all over the world; in Scandinavia, in Greece, in Spain, in Italy, in Africa. In the New World, too, we have found, and continue still to find, tusks, molar teeth, and bones, of the mammoth. What is most singular is, that these remains exist more especially in great numbers in the north of Europe, in the frozen regions of Siberia; regions altogether uninhabitable for the elephant in our days. Every year, in the season of thawing, the vast rivers which descend to the Frozen Ocean sweep down with their waters numerous portions of the banks, and expose to view the bones buried in the soil and in the excavations left by the rushing waters.

New Siberia and the Isle of Lapon are, for the most part, only an agglomeration of sand, ice, and elephants' teeth. At every tempest the sea casts ashore fresh heaps of mammoths' tusks, and the inhabitants are able to drive a profitable trade in the fossil ivory thrown up by the waves. During summer, innumerable fishermen's barks direct their course to this isle of bones; and in winter, immense caravans take the same route, all the convoys drawn by dogs, returning charged with the tusks of the mammoth, weighing each from a hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds. The fossil ivory thus obtained from the frozen north is imported into China and Europe, where it is employed for the same purposes as ordinary ivory—which is furnished, as we know, by the