

highest of terrestrial creatures, was about to appear. With the tertiary a new order of things arises : it has been said that it possesses scarcely a species in common with the preceding age,—that two planets could hardly differ more in their natural productions ; and this break in the law of continuity is the more remarkable, as hitherto some of the newly-created animals were always introduced before the older was extinguished. It was a period of rest and tranquility ; an exultant and abounding age. Creatures of a high order, the largest of the land mammalia, moved through the luxuriant herbage, or enjoyed the shady coolness of the riverside. And still, with the ever-widening dawn, the resemblance to our own world increased. The stately ruminants of the forest—the elk, the stag, and the bison appeared. The horse waited for his rider, and the steer for the yoke of the husbandman : flowers, like our own, enamelled a thousand fields, and the lark, as now, filling the air with song, soared upward to the gates of heaven.

And thus, the conditions of vitality being there, it is difficult to conceive of life itself being absent. Everything around us, the blade of grass, the drop of dew, teems with living beings. Life is enjoyed everywhere to the uttermost. There is no space lost. And not only is life present, but life advanced to the farthest degree of perfection which the supplied conditions will allow. The elements being given, the organism is the unfailing product, and the Promethean spark kindles at once into being. If human life then was possible during this period, we may rest assured that human life was there.

And they, the dwellers in their island-home, how lived they ? What was their history ? May we believe with Plato, that they became prosperous, rich, powerful,—were ruled by wise kings, received tribute from the neighbouring islands, and had long years vouchsafed to them of peace and plenty ? And, finally, after sending out migratory swarms eastward, and perhaps westward, how did their island disappear ? Was it submerged slowly ? Or did it sink suddenly in ruin ? We cannot tell. All is dark and uncertain. Yet, with the onward march of science, the day