

depressions, etc., in several directions. It seems probable therefore, that here, as in Eastern Canada, local glaciers descending from the higher gathering grounds towards the coast, as pointed out by the late Capt. Kerr, R. N.¹ were the principal agents at work. But from its insular position, and lying as it does in the track of the Arctic currents, the coastal areas, at least, must have been subjected to intense erosion from icebergs and floating ice.

THE FOOD OF PLANTS.²

By D. P. PENHALLOW.

An old proverb informs us that one-half of the world continues in ignorance of how the other half lives. If we accept this in the broadest sense, as applying to all organic life, we have a present illustration of its correctness in the fact that, with few exceptions, man knows little or nothing of the vital processes upon which the growth of the members of the more humble vegetable kingdom depend; and he thus fails to grasp a knowledge of those important laws by which plants are enabled to afford him an abundance of sustenance and raiment. It is in relation to purposes of nutrition, that plants may be considered to bear the greatest importance to man, and in this respect, they are to be regarded from a two-fold point of view.

First, they convert the crude mineral constituents of the soil, which would otherwise be wholly unavailable, into forms which enable them to become of direct value for purposes of animal nutrition. They thus afford to man, his principal supply of food. But they also constitute the entire source of nourishment for those animals upon which man subsists, and through the medium of which they undergo further special modifications, by virtue of which

¹ Ibid, p. 68.

² Sommerville Lecture delivered March 28th, 1889.