

has grown. As they are only exceptionally seen, the latter supposition is perhaps the more probable. Peculiarities of this kind, to which perhaps heretofore too little attention has been given, are of some importance with reference to the controversies respecting *Eozoon*.

It may be said, in connection with the attacks in question, that if *Eozoon* is an object of which so many and strange explanations can be given, it is probable that no certainty whatever can be attained as to its real nature. On the other hand it is fair to argue that, if the opponents of its animal nature are driven to misrepresentation and to wild and incoherent theories, there is the more reason to repose confidence in the sober view of its origin, consistent with its geological relations and microscopic characters, which has commended itself to Carpenter, Gumbel, Rupert Jones, Sterry Hunt, and a host of other competent naturalists and geologists. For my own part the arguments adduced by opponents, and the re-examination of specimens which they have suggested, have served to make my original opinion as to its nature seem better supported and more probable; though of course I would be far from being dogmatic on such a subject, or claiming any stronger conclusion than that of a reasonable probability, which may be increased as new facts develop themselves, but cannot amount to absolute certainty until the discovery of Laurentian rocks in an unaltered state shall enable us to compare their fossils more easily with those of later formations.

In point of fact, the evidence for the organic nature of a fossil such as that in question, is necessarily cumulative, and depends on its mode of occurrence and state of mineralisation, as well as on its general form and microscopic structure; and it is perhaps hopeless to expect that any considerable number of naturalists will be induced to undertake the investigations necessary to form an independent opinion on the subject. It may be hoped, however, that they will fairly weigh the evidence presented, and will also take into consideration the difficulty of accounting for such forms and structures except on the hypothesis of an organic origin.