

and of girth enormous, that separate the aisles from the nave ; and, half lost in the blackness, they served to remind me this evening of the shadowy, gigantic colonnades of Martin. Their Saxon strength wore, amid the vagueness of the gloom, an air of Babylonish magnificence.

The rain was dashing amid the tombstones outside. One antique slab of blue limestone beside the pathway had been fretted many centuries ago into the rude semblance of a human figure ; but the compact mass, unfaithful to its charge, had resigned all save the general outline ; the face was worn smooth, and only a few nearly obliterated ridges remained, to indicate the foldings of the robe. It served to show, in a manner sufficiently striking, how much more indelibly nature inscribes her monuments of the dead than art. The limestone slab had existed as a churchyard monument for perhaps a thousand years ; but the story which it had been sculptured to tell had been long since told for the last time ; and whether it had marked out the burial-place of priest or of layman, or what he had been or done, no one could now determine. But the story of an immensely earlier sepulture, — earlier, mayhap, by thrice as many twelvemonths as the thousand years contained days, — it continued to tell most distinctly. It told that when it had existed as a calcareous mud deep in the carboniferous ocean, a species of curious zoophyte, long afterwards termed *Cyathophyllum fungites*, were living and dying by myriads ; and it now exhibited on its surface several dozens of them, cut open at every possible angle, and presenting every variety of section, as if to show what sort of creatures they had been. The glossy wet served as a varnish ; and I could see that not only had those larger plates of the skeletons that radiate outwards from the centre been preserved, but even the microscopic reticulations of the cross partitioning. Never was there ancient