

has termed it the "*Wren's Nest*." I came up to its gray lines of sloping precipice, and found them so thickly charged with their sepulchral tablets and pictorial epitaphs, that, like the walls of some Egyptian street of tombs, almost every square yard bears its own lengthened inscription. These sloping precipices, situated as they now are in central England, once formed a deep-sea bottom, far out of reach of land, whose green recesses were whitened by innumerable corals and coralines, amid which ancient shells, that loved the profounder depths, terebratula, leptæna, and spirifer, lay anchored; while innumerable trilobites crept sluggishly above zoophyte and mollusc, on the thickly-inhabited platform; and the orthoceras and the bellerophon floated along the surface high over head. A strange story, surely, but not more strange than true: in at least the leading details there is no possibility of mistaking the purport of the inscriptions.

The outer front of precipice we find composed of carbonate of lime, alternating with thin layers of a fine-grained aluminous shale, which yields to the weather, betraying, in every more exposed portion of the rock, the organic character of the lime-stone. Wherever the impalpable shale has been washed away, we find the stone as sharply sculptured beneath as a Chinese snuff-box; with this difference, however, that the figures are more nicely relieved, and grouped much more thickly together. We ascertain that every component particle of the roughened ground on which they lie, even the most minute, is organic. It is composed of portions of the most diminutive zoophytes, — retipora, or festinella, or the microscopic joints of thread-like crinoideal tentacula; while the bolder figures that stand up in high relief over it are delicately sculptured shells of antique type and proportions, crustacea of the trilobite family, corals massive or branched, graceful gorgonia, and the