

of a skeleton building, — by a range of what seems rafters of rock. The cavern had once an upper story, — a working separated from the working below by a thin sloping floor; and these stone rafters are remains of the floor, left as a sort of reclining buttresses, to support the walls. They form one of the most picturesque features of the cavern, straddling overhead from side to side, and receding in the more than twilight gloom of the place, each succeeding rafter dimmer and more dim, in proportion to its distance from the two openings, till the last becomes so indistinctly visible, that if but a cloud pass over the sun, it disappears. A rustic bridge leads across the canal; but we can see only the one end of it, — the other is lost in the blackness; the walls and floor are green with mould; the dark water seems a sullen river of pitch: we may occasionally mark the surface dimpled by the track of a newt, or a toad puffing itself up, as if it fed on vapor, on the damp earthy edge; but other inhabitants the cavern has none. I bethought me of the wild description of Kirke White: —

“ And as she entered the cavern wide,
The moonbeam gleamed pale,
And she saw a snake on the craggy rock, —
It clung by its slimy tail.
Her foot it slipped, and she stood aghast,
For she trod on a bloated toad.”

Solitary as the place usually is, it presented a singularly animated appearance six years ago, when it was visited by the members of the British Association, and converted by Sir Roderick Murchison into a geological lecture-room. He discoursed of rocks and fossils in the bowels of the hill, with the ponderous strata piled high on every side, like courses of Cyclopean masonry, and the stony forms of the dead existing by millions around him.