

what neglected antiquity. Droitwich was altogether, as I saw it, a sombre-looking place, with its gray old church looking down upon it from a scraggy wood-covered hill; and what struck me as peculiarly picturesque was, that from this dark centre there should be passing continually outwards, by road or canal, wagons, carts, track-boats, barges, all laden with pure white salt, that looked in the piled-up heaps like wreaths of drifted snow. There could not be two things more unlike than the great staple of the town, and the town itself. There hung, too, over the blackened roofs, a white volume of vapor, — the steam of the numerous salt-pans, driven off in the course of evaporation by the heat, — which also strikingly contrasted with the general blackness. The place has its two extensive salt-works, — the old and the new. To the new I was denied access; but it mattered little, as I got ready admittance to the old. The man who superintended the pumping engine, though he knew me merely as a curious traveller somewhat mud-be-spattered, stopped the machine for a few seconds, that I might see undisturbed the brine boiling up from its secret depths; and I was freely permitted to take the round of the premises, and to examine the numerous vats in their various stages of evaporation. It is pleasant to throw one's self, unknown and unrecommended, on the humanity of one's fellows, and to receive kindness simply as a man!

As I saw the vats seething over the furnaces, some of them more than already half-filled with the precipitated salt, and bearing atop a stratum of yellowish-colored fluid, the grand problem furnished by the saline deposits of this formation rose before me in all its difficulty. Geology propounds many a hard question to its students, — questions quite hard and difficult enough to keep down their conceit, unless, indeed, very largely developed; and few of these seem more inexplicable