

a lake bottom, ten fathoms from the surface, is not often seen, I visited it, in the hope of acquiring a few facts that might be of use to me among the rocks. What first struck me, in surveying the brown sun-baked bottom from the shore, was the manner in which it had cracked, in the drying, into irregularly polygonal partings, and that the ripple-markings with which it was fretted extended along only a narrow border, where the water had been shallow enough to permit the winds or superficial currents to act on the soft clay beneath. As I descended, I found the surface between the partings indented with numerous well-marked tracks of the feet of men and animals, made while the clay was yet soft, and now fixed in it by the drying process, like the mark of the stamp in an ancient brick. And some of these tracks were charged with little snatches of incident, which they told in a style remarkably intelligible and clear. At one place, for instance, I found the footprints of some four or five sheep. They struck out towards the middle of the hollow, but turned upwards at a certain point, in an abrupt angle, towards the bank they had quitted, and the marks of increased speed became palpable. The prints, instead of being leisurely set down, so as to make impressions as sharp-edged as if they had been carved or modelled in the clay, were elongated by being thrown out backwards, and the strides were considerably longer than those in the downward line. And, bearing direct on the retreating footprints from the opposite bank, and also exhibiting signs of haste, I detected the track of a dog. The details of the incident thus recorded in the hardened mud were complete. The sheep had gone down into the hollow shortly after the retreat of the waters, and while it was yet soft; and the dog, either acting upon his own judgment, or on that of the shepherd, had driven them back. A little further on I found the prints of a shod foot of small size. They passed onwards across the hollow, the steps getting deeper and deeper as