

destroyed, and crumbled by earlier seas. There is, then, little hope of one discovering the origin of life on the globe, since this page of the Genesis of the facts has been torn. For some years geologists loved to rest their eyes, in this long night of ages, upon an ideal limit beyond which plants and animals would begin to appear. Now, this line of demarcation between the rocks which are without vestiges of organised beings, and those which contain fossils, is nearly effaced among the surrounding ruins. On the horizon of the primitive world we see vaguely indicated a series of other worlds which have altogether disappeared; perhaps it is necessary to resign ourselves to the fact that the dawn of life is lost in this silent epoch, where age succeeds age, till they are clothed in the garb of eternity. The river of creation is like the Nile, which, as Bossuet says, hides its head—a figure of speech which time has falsified—but the endless speculations opened up by these and similar considerations led Lyell to say, ‘Here I am almost prepared to believe in the ancient existence of the Atlantis of Plato.’”

NOTE.—For accurate representations of the typical fossils of the Palæozoic strata of Britain, the reader may consult, with advantage, the carefully executed “Figures of Characteristic British Fossils,” by W. H. Baily, F.G.S. (Van Voorst).

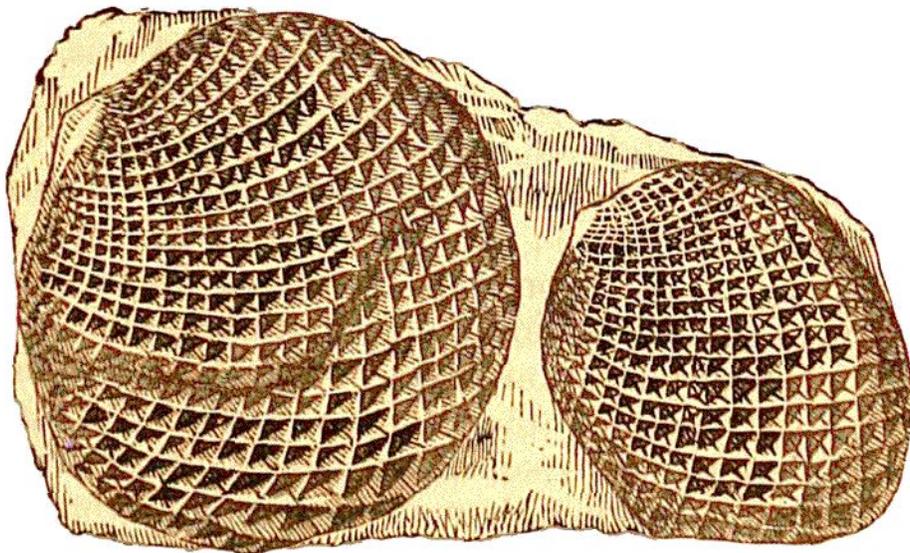


Fig. 29.—*Ischadites Koenigii*. Upper Ludlow Rocks