

Lindley and Hutton state (Fossil Flora, Vol. I. page 16) that "It is the beds of shale, or argillaceous schistus, which afford the most abundant supply of these curious relics of a former World; the fine particles of which they are composed having sealed up and retained in wonderful perfection, and beauty, the most delicate forms of the vegetable organic structure. Where shale forms the roof of the workable seams of coal, as it generally does, we have the most abundant display of fossils, and this, not perhaps arising so much from any peculiarity in these beds, as from their being more extensively known and examined than any others. The principal deposit is not in immediate contact with the coal, but about from twelve to twenty inches above it; and such is the immense profusion in this situation, that they are not unfrequently the cause of very serious accidents, by breaking the adhesion of the shale bed, and causing it to separate and fall, when by the operation of the miner the coal which supported it is removed. After an extensive fall of this kind has taken place, it is a curious sight to see the roof of the mine covered with these vegetable forms, some of them of great beauty and delicacy; and the observer cannot fail to be struck with the extraordinary confusion, and the numerous marks of strong mechanical action exhibited by their broken and disjointed remains."