

confervæ; below this was a darker and more compact travertine, containing black and decomposed masses of confervæ; in the inferior part, the travertine was more solid, and of a grey colour, but with cavities which I have no doubt were produced by the decomposition of vegetable matter. I have passed many hours, I may say days, in studying the phenomena of this wonderful lake; it has brought trains of thought into my mind connected with the early changes of our globe; and I have sometimes reasoned from the forms of plants and animals preserved in marble in this thermal source, to the grander depositions in the secondary rocks, where the zoophytes or coral insects have worked upon a grand scale, and where palms and vegetables, now unknown, are preserved with the remains of crocodiles, turtles, and gigantic extinct saurian animals, which appear to have belonged to a period when the whole globe possessed a much higher temperature. I have likewise often been led, from the remarkable phenomena surrounding me in that spot, to compare the works of man with those of nature. The baths, erected there nearly twenty centuries ago, present only heaps of ruins, and even the bricks of which they were built, though hardened by fire, are crumbled into dust; whilst the masses of travertine around, though formed by a variable source from the most perishable materials, have hardened by time, and the most perfect remains of the greatest ruins in the eternal city, such as the triumphal arches and the Colosseum, owe their duration to this source.

How marvellous are those laws by which the humblest types of organic existence are preserved, though born amidst the sources of their destruction, and by which a species of immortality is given to generations floating, as it were, like evanescent bubbles on a stream raised from the deepest caverns of the earth, and instantly losing what may be called its spirit in the atmosphere.—*Sir Humphrey Davy's Last Days of a Philosopher.*

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C. Page 62. — CAVERNS. — One of the most common appearances in limestone caverns, is the formation of what are called *stalactites*, from a Greek word signifying