

through some of the larger flags, without shattering the edges of the perforation. Hence its value for various purposes which common sandstone is too brittle and incoherent to serve. It is extensively used in the neighborhood as a roofing slate; it is employed, too, in the making of water cisterns, grooved and jointed as if wrought out of wood, and for the tops of lobby and billiard tables. I have even seen snuff-boxes fashioned out of it, as a sort of mechanical feat by the workmen, — a purpose, however, which it seems to serve only indifferently well, — and single slabs of it cut into tolerably neat window frames for cottages. It is most extensively used, however, merely as a paving-stone for lobbies and lower floors, and the footways of streets. When first deposited, and when the creatures whose organic remains it still preserves careered over its numerous platforms, it seems to have existed as a fine, muddy sand, formed apparently of disintegrated grauwacke rocks, analogous in their mineral character to the similarly colored grauwacke of the Lammermuirs, or of primary slates ground down by attrition into mud, and mixed up with the pulverized fragments of schistose gneiss and mica schist.

I was first struck, on descending among the workmen, by the comparative abundance of the vegetable remains. In some parts of the quarries almost every layer of the strata is covered by carbonaceous markings — irregularly grooved stems, branching out into boughs at acute angles, and that at the first glance seem the miniature semblances of the trunks of gnarled oaks and elms, blackened in a morass, and still retaining the rough bark, chapped into furrows: oblong, leaf-like impressions, too, and impressions of more slender form, that resemble the narrow, parallel edged leaves of the sea-grass weed. I observed, in particular, one large bunch of