

Asterolepis or his cogeners,—which, however, in these beds they usually do,—much broken. The polygonal partings seem to indicate that these toughly-felted beds, whose very style of weathering,—rough, gnarled, fretted into globose protuberances and irregular hollows,—shows that it had not been formed by quiet deposition, must have had their broad backs raised for a time above the surface of the water, to be desiccated in the hot sun. And the fragmentary state of the fossils which they contain seems to point, with the roughnesses of their weathered surfaces, to some peculiarity in their origin. The recollection which they awoke in my mind with each visit I paid them for three years together, may probably indicate what that origin was. I had a relation who died more than a quarter of a century ago, who passed many years in British Guiana, in the colony of Berbice, and whose graphic description of that part of South America made a strong impression upon me when a boy, and still dwells in my memory. He was settled on a cotton plantation near the coast-side; and so exceedingly flat was the surrounding country, that the house in which he dwelt, though nearly two miles distant from the shore, stood little more than five feet above its level. The soil consisted of a dark gray consolidated mud; and in looking seawards from the margin of the land, there was nothing to be seen when the tide fell, save dreary mud-flats whole miles in extent, with the line of blue water beyond stretching along the distant horizon. These mud-flats were much frequented by birds of the wader family, that used to come and fish in the shallow pools for the small fry that had lingered behind when the tide fell; and my cousin, a keen sportsman in his day, has told me that he used to steal upon them in his mud-shoes,—flat boards attached to the soles, like the snow-shoes of the higher latitudes,—and enjoy rare sport in knocking down magnificent game, such as “the roseate spoonbill”