

given to trickling rain by the form of the monumental carving, but chiefly on original differences in the internal structure of the stone, are gradually hollowed out. In this way the former artificial surface of the marble disappears, and is changed into one that rather recalls the bare bleached rocks of some mountain-side.

The rate at which the transformation takes place seems to depend primarily on the extent to which the marble is exposed to rain. Slabs which have been placed facing to north-east, and with a sufficiently projecting architrave to keep off much of the rainfall, retain their inscriptions legible for a century or longer. But even in these cases the progress of internal disintegration is distinctly visible. Where the marble has been less screened from rain the rapidity of waste has been sometimes very marked. A good illustration is supplied by the tablet on the south side of Greyfriars Churchyard, erected in memory of G——G——, who died in 1785.¹ This monument had become so far decayed as to require restoration in 1803. It is now, and has been for some years, for the most part utterly illegible. The marble has been dissolved away over the centre of the slab to a depth of about a quarter of an inch. Yet this monument is by no means in an exposed situation. It faces eastward in a rather sheltered corner, where, however, the wind eddies in such a way as to throw the rain against the part of the stone which has been most corroded.

In the majority of cases superficial solution has been retarded by the formation of a peculiar gray or begrimed crust, to be immediately described. The marble employed here for monumental slabs appears to be peculiarly liable to the development of this crust. Another kind of white

¹ For obvious reasons I withhold the names carved on the tomb stones here referred to.