

The Nummulite is the only Genus I shall select on the present occasion from this Order. It is included in M. D'Orbigny's Section Nautiloids.

Nummulites (Pl. 44, Fig. 6, 7,) are so called from their resemblance to a piece of money, they vary in size from that of a crown piece to microscopic littleness; and occupy an important place in the history of fossil shells, on account of the prodigious extent to which they are accumulated in the later members of the Secondary, and in many of the Tertiary strata. They are often piled on each other nearly in as close contact as the grains in a heap of corn. In this state they form a considerable portion of the entire bulk of many extensive mountains, e. g. in the Tertiary limestones of Verona and Monte Bolca, and in secondary strata of the Cretaceous formation in the Alps, Carpathians, and Pyrenees. Some of the pyramids, and the Sphinx, of Egypt are composed of limestone loaded with Nummulites.

It is impossible to see such mountain-masses of the remains of a single family of shells thus added to the solid materials of the globe, without recollecting that each individual shell once held an important place within the body of a living animal; and thus recalling our imagination to those distant epochs when the waters of the ocean which then covered Europe were filled