

a seeker in the dark, that the facts contained in these few sentences were the patient gatherings of years.

In the course of the first day's employment, I picked up a nodular mass of blue limestone, and laid it open by a stroke of the hammer. Wonderful to relate, it contained inside a beautifully finished piece of sculpture — one of the volutes apparently of an Ionic capital; and not the far-famed walnut of the fairy tale, had I broken the shell and found the little dog lying within, could have surprised me more. Was there another such curiosity in the whole world? I broke open a few other nodules of similar appearance, — for they lay pretty thickly on the shore, — and found that there might. In one of these there were what seemed to be the scales of fishes, and the impressions of a few minute bivalves, prettily striated; in the centre of another there was actually a piece of decayed wood. Of all Nature's riddles these seemed to me to be at once the most interesting, and the most difficult to expound. I treasured them carefully up, and was told by one of the workmen to whom I showed them, that there was a part of the shore about two miles farther to the west, where curiously shaped stones, somewhat like the heads of boarding-pikes, were occasionally picked up; and that in his father's days the country people called them thunderbolts, and deemed them of sovereign efficacy in curing bewitched cattle. Our employer, on quitting the quarry for the building on which we were to be engaged, gave all the workmen a half-holiday. I employed it in visiting the place where the thunderbolts had fallen so thickly, and found it a richer scene of wonder than I could have fancied in even my dreams.

What first attracted my notice was a detached group of low lying skerries, wholly different in form and color from the sandstone cliffs above, or the primary rocks a little farther to