

the pine, rejected and thrown backwards from its more solid planes, had to penetrate into its narrow fissures for a straitened and meagre subsistence. The tree grew but slowly : in considerably more than half a century it had attained to a diameter of little more than ten inches a foot over the soil ; and its bent and twisted form gave evidence of the life of hardship to which it was exposed. It was, in truth, a picturesque rag of a tree, that for the first few feet twisted itself round like an overborne wrestler struggling to escape from under his enemy, and then struck out at an abrupt angle, and stretched itself like a bent arm over the stream. It must have resembled, on its bald eminence, that pine-tree of a later time described by Scott, that high above ‘ ash and oak,’

‘ Cast anchor in the rifted rock,
And o’er the giddy chasm hung
His shatter’d trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem’d the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow’d sky.’

The seasons passed over it : every opening spring gave its fringe of tenderer green to its spiky foliage, and every returning autumn saw it shed its cones into the stream below. Many a delicate fern sprang up and decayed around its gnarled and fantastic root, single-leaved and simple of form, like the *Scolopendria* of our caverns and rock recesses, or fretted into many a slim pinnate leaflet, like the minute *maiden-hair* or the graceful *lady-fern*. Flying reptiles have perched amid its boughs ; the light-winged dragon-fly has darted on wings of gauze through the openings of its lesser twigs ; the tortoise and the lizard have hybernated during the chills of winter amid the hollows of its roots ; for many years it formed one of the minor features in a wild picturesque scene, on which human eye never looked ; and at length, touched by decay, its upper branches began to wither and bleach white in the winds of heaven ; when shaken by