

faces of these leaf-like laminæ. Permit me to present you from my note-book with a few readings taken during a single visit from these strange pages.

We insinuate our lever into a fissure of the shale, and turn up a portion of one of the laminæ, whose surface had last seen the light when existing as part of the bottom of the old Liassic sea, when more than half the formation had still to be deposited. Is it not one of the prints of Sowerby's *Mineral Conchology* that has opened up to us? Nay, the shells lie too thickly for that, and there are too many repetitions of organisms of the same species. The drawing, too, is finer, and the shading seems produced rather by such a degree of relief in the figures as may be seen in those of an embossed card, than by any arrangement of lighter and darker colour. And yet the general tone of the colouring, though dimmed by the action of untold centuries, is still very striking. The ground of the tablet is of a deep black, while the colours stand out in various shades, from opaque to silvery white, and from silvery white to deep grey. *There*, for instance, is a group of large Ammonites, as if drawn in white chalk; *there*, a cluster of minute bivalves resembling Pectens, each of which bears its thin film of silvery nacre; *there*, a gracefully formed Lima in deep neutral tint; while, lying athwart the page, like the dark hawthorn leaf in Bewick's well-known vignette, there are two slim sword-shaped leaves coloured in deep umber. We lay open a portion of another page. The centre is occupied by a large Myacites, still bearing a warm tint of yellowish brown, and which must have been an exceedingly brilliant shell in its day; there is a Modiola, a smaller shell, but similar in tint, though not quite so bright, lying a few inches away, with an assemblage of dark grey Gryphites of considerable size on the one side, and on the other a fleet of minute Terebratulæ, that had been borne down and covered up by some fresh deposit from above, when riding at their anchors. We turn