

frith through the long, dark vista, as if we viewed them through the tube of some immense telescope. We strike a light. The roof and sides are crusted with white stalactites, that depend from the one like icicles from the eaves of a roof in a severe frost, and stand out from the other in pure, semi-transparent ridges, that resemble the folds of a piece of white drapery dropped from the roof; while the floor below has its rough pavement of stalagmite, that stands up, wherever the drops descend, in rounded prominences, like the bases of columns. The marvel has become somewhat old-fashioned since the days when Buchanan described the dropping cave of Slains,—‘where the water, as it descends drop by drop, is converted into pyramids of stone,’—as one of the wonders of Scotland, and deemed it necessary to strengthen the credibility of his statement by adding, that he had been ‘informed by persons of undoubted veracity that there existed a similar cave among the Pyrenees.’ Here, however, is a puzzle to exercise our ingenuity. Some of the minuter stalactites of the roof, after descending perpendicularly, or at least nearly so, for a few inches, turn up again, and form a hook, to which one may suspend one’s watch by the ring; while there are others that form a loop, attached to the roof at both ends. Pray, how could the descending drop have returned upwards to form the hook, or what attractive power could have drawn two drops together, to compose the elliptical curve of the loop? The problem is not quite a simple one. It is sufficiently hard at least, as it has to deal with only half-ounces of rock, to inculcate caution on the theorists who profess to deal with whole continents of similar material. Let us examine somewhat narrowly. Dark as the recess is, and though vegetation fails full fifty feet nearer the entrance than where we now stand, the place is not without its inhabitants. We see among the dewy damp of the roof the glistening threads of some minute spider, stretching in lines or depending in