

SKETCHES OF CREATION.

CHAPTER I.

DISCLOSURE OF THE SUBJECT.

WHAT is this which I have opened from the solid rock? It has the appearance of a bivalve shell, like a clam or an oyster. I was passing a delightful summer-day amid the romantic scenery of Trenton Falls, and broke from the rocky wall of the deep-cut gorge these unexpected forms. Who has not stumbled upon similar shapes at the foot of some beetling cliff, or washed from the weathered soil of some cultivated field? Pause a moment, for these are remarkable and unexpected discoveries. Let us interrogate these forms.

They can not be the shells of oysters or clams; for, in the first place, they are only stone in substance, with a peculiarly dead and mineralized appearance. In the next place, they are nearly three hundred miles from salt water, and as many feet above the level of the sea. Perhaps, then, they are the dead and petrified shells of some fresh-water molluscs, like mussels. This can not be, because the resemblance is not sufficiently close. The beak, or most prominent part of these shell-like forms, is exactly in the middle (Fig. 1, a; see page 14), while the beak of the mussel is always nearer to one end (Fig. 3, a; see page 14). And, farther, one piece or valve of these problematic