

- I. Part of two Letters from Mr Edward Lhwyd, Keeper of the Ashmolean Repository in Oxford, to Mr Samuel Dale of Braintree in Essex, concerning Fossils.

Oxford, Sept. 19. 1701.

THE state of these Bodies is quite different in your parts from what it is in *Wales* and *Ireland*. In those Countries the Shells are generally *Crystalline*, but with you (and sometimes hereabouts) they are *testaceous*: Which difference is doubtless to be attributed to the Soil, and particularly to your Chalk and Flint, which all those Countries want, excepting a small part (I know not by what chance of *Diluvian Dissolution*) got into the *North* part of *Ireland*. But there 'tis remarkable that their Chalk is absolutely petrify'd: I mean, whereas the Flints are here imbodyed in Chalk, they are there in a Chalk white *Lime-stone*. And as your Chalky Countries only afford those *Echinite* I have stil'd, *Pileatus*, *Galeatus*, and *Cordatus*: So I could never find them in all my Travels but at that place; from whence in the time of *Paganism* the *Druids* procur'd them, and sold them amongst our *Northern Britains* for Stones of Miraculous efficacy against perils by Fire and Water; perswading the Vulgar they were generated in *Cocks-knees*; as Thousands in the *High-Lands* believe at this day. And one Fellow had the Impudence to tell me (finding me a little hard of belief) that he himself had taken one (that his Master had shew'd me) out of a *Cocks knee* with his own hand. ——— Ox

Oxford, Nov. 10. 1701.

— WE were surpriz'd here, to find so many *Fossils*, scarce distinguishable from *Sea Shells* : for, as I mention'd before to you, the case is otherwise in those places I searched. We have indeed in these Parts one or two *Fossil Shells* of a *Testaceous* substance ; but in colour they recede farther from those of the Sea than yours. I find by those sent me, that you sometimes find them imbedded in solid Stone : Which takes off any objection some might offer, of their being an accidental scattering of *Gulls, Crows, &c.* on the *Harwich Cliffs*.

Looking upon this occasion into *Cambden's Britannia*, I find in the last Edition a Note concerning a *Petrifying Spring* at *Harwich*, which reduces Clay and Wood into Stone, of which I should be glad of some particular account from you at your leisure : as also of the place where these are found, particularly how far the furthest from the Sea.