

IV. *A Letter from the Reverend Mr Morton, A. M. and S. R. S. to Dr Hans Sloane, S. R. Secr. Containing a Relation of River and other Shells digg'd up, together with various Vegetable Bodies, in a Bituminous Marshy Earth, near Mears-Ashby in Northamptonshire: With some Reflections thereupon: As also an Account of the Progress he has made in the Natural History of Northamptonshire.*

**I**N obedience to your Commands, I send you the Account of the Land, and River Shells lately discover'd by the Worthy and Inquisitive Mr Coxe of *Mears-Ashby* in *Northamptonshire*, in a Moorish Pasture in *Mears-Ashby* Field. I visited the place my self, he very generously attending and assisting me. I know the Relation will be the more acceptable to you, and 'tis indeed of greater Regard, because Land and River Shells are so very rarely met with in Digging into the Earth, in comparison of Sea Shells, and the Teeth and Bones of Marine Animals; which indeed occur almost every where, and in all Countries. The Reason of which is now no longer a Difficulty, these Bodies having been shewn to be all Remains of the Universal Deluge; and the Marine Shells being more ponderous than those of the Land and Rivers, sunk and were lodg'd deeper in the Earth, and so were preserv'd by that means; whereas the later being left generally

nerally upon the Surface, perish'd, and are at this day rarely met with.

Causing one to dig into the Moorish Ground above-mentioned, we found a small number of Snail Shells of various kinds buried there. At about a foot in depth they lay very thick; and sinking still downwards the number rather encreased till we came to the depth of about three foot. 'Twas troublesome to sink deeper on purpose; but we made Tryals for a considerable extent of Ground, *viz.* about 250 foot in length, and 130 in breadth. Besides, the same Shells were cast up in several places, at distance, by Moles. What we principally observed in this search was 1. A moist Moorish black Earth, in some places a foot and a half, in others somewhat above two foot in thickness. The lower half of it is blacker and denser than the upper half, of a Bituminous Nature, and has all the Characters of Peat-Earth. Besides Shells we found Stalks and Leaves of Grass, and also of many Kinds of other Vegetables repositied as usual in like Bituminous Moors, in other parts of this Island. 2. White Earth; so at first we call'd it: But upon closer Inspection it appear'd to be little more than Hay half wasted. So deep as we sunk into it, we found it every where copiously interspers'd with Shells.

The finding these Shells Under Ground made it very reasonable to enquire whether there were any of the like at this time living upon the surface. I diligently search'd this place, but cou'd not meet with any Live ones of any Kind whatever there.

The Fossil Shells were some the *Exuvie* of Land-Snails, the rest of River or Fresh Water-Snails: Of the former there were the three following kinds. 1. A small *Buccinum* of five wreaths, the *Buccinum exiguum quinque anfractuum*, *Tit. 7. List. in Tractat. de Cochleis Terrestr. Angl.* A Kind observ'd by Dr Lister to live in Moss upon old Garden

Garden Walls at *Estrop* in *Lincolnshire*; by my self, at the Mossy Roots of Old Trees in many of the *Northamptonshire* Woods, as also amongst Moss upon the Boggy sides of several standing Springs.

2. A *Cochlea* of the compressed Kind, but not so much compressed as some of them are. It has five Wreaths and a small circular *Sinus* in the Center. This, if it is not the *Cochlea umbilicata* &c. N. 79. *List. Hist. Conchyl. Lib. 1.* has not hitherto been mention'd by any Writer; tho' common enough in the Woods in *Northamptonshire*: I found a greater Number of them, for the Compass of Ground, inclos'd in the Earth, than ever I have done in any of the Places where they naturally breed.

3. The *Cochlea citrina* *Tit. 3. List. de Coch. Terrestr. Ang.* The Common Strip'd Snail-shell. But most of these in the Moor are White, of the Colour of the Shells that have been a long time dead. In some I saw faint footsteps of their former Stripes. Most of the Shells of this Kind were lodg'd about 4 foot deep.

We met with only two different Kinds of River-Shells.

1. A Perewinkle Shell of three Wreaths, generally less than the *Buccinum trium Spirar. Tit. 24. List. de Cochleis Fluvial. Ang.* There were a greater Number of these buried in the Moor than of any of the former Kinds.

2. A Perewinkle Shell of five Wreaths, much smaller and more prominent than those of the *Buccinum longum sex Spirarum Tit. 21. List. de Coch. Fluvial.* 'Tis otherwise very like that *Buccinum* in the fashion of its Wreaths. It has not yet been describ'd by any Author. We find the Kind now living in one of the *Northamptonshire* Brooks call'd the *Ise*.

The Moorish Ground wherein these Shells were buried extends from near the top to very near the foot of a small Hill. Above the Moor, upon the Top, and at the Brow of the Hill, is a Sandy Soil of a Reddish Colour. The whole

whole face of the Moor is plain and even, conformable to the rest of the Hill not thus Moory of the same Declination with it; and appears to be in a Natural, and Undisturbed state, as much so, as any of the Slades in the Neighbouring Fields; excepting that 3 or 4 Trenches have been cut through it of late.

'Tis evident that these Shells were left at the Deluge, when those from Sea were also repositied at Land; and not buried since by Deterrations from the Ground above. For then the upper parts of the Moor must have been cover'd with a Reddish Sand, such as the Ground is for the main compos'd of; but nothing like that appears near the Shells in this Moor. Besides, here are dug up several Shells that in all likelyhood never bred here, but are Inhabitants of a different Soil: Particularly the striped Snail-Shell. For these Animals have peculiar Soils, and affect particular Regions.

But what I here give only brief hints of, will appear in a much better Light when rank'd amongst other like Relations, in the Natural History of *Northamptonshire*. You are very kind in your Enquiries about the Progress of that Work; and very many of my Friends in this Country have been pressing in their Sollicitations to have it at an end. I am mighty sensible of their Good Wishes both to me, and to that Undertaking; and hope all here are now well satisfied it goes on as fast as is practicable. I have indeed exceeded the time I at first propos'd; but this is owing to the Growing of Materials upon my Hands, and the Difficulty of treating of them in a manner that was fit, and would render the Design useful. Those who have well weigh'd this, leave me very frankly to my own Time: And I will do my best to acquit my self of the Task with such Dispatch, that they shall have no Cause to think their Indulgence and Generosity misplaced. I have gone through the several Heads of the Heavens and Air, the Waters, the Earths,

the Stones, the Sea Shells and other Marine Bodies found at Land ; and am now upon that of the Plants ; having only that of the Brute Animals, that of the Humane Bodies, and that of the Arts, to finish. Now as to this, at the same time that I will have more Regard to the Performing it in such a manner, as to render the Design Useful, than to the hurrying it to an End ; and you and the rest of my Friends may depend upon't, that I will not lose one single Hour that I can spare from the Exigences of my other Affairs, till I have accomplish'd the whole. I am

S I R,

Yours, &c.

J. Morton.

V. *An account of a very large Tumour in the fore part of the Neck, &c.* By Dr James Douglas.

I lately had the opportunity of opening a Woman, about 50 years old, who had a very large Tumour, or hard Swelling, in the fore part of her Neck, possessing all the space between the whole extent of the lower Jaw and the upper part of the *Sternum*, with a considerable rising in its middle ; laterally its point inclining to the Left side, tho the biggest part of the Tumour was on the Right. The Skin on the *Apex* of this protuberating part was thin and shrivell'd, of a colour different from the rest, and lookt as if the Swelling would have broke in that place.