

Finch & C^o



A VICTORIAN PETRIFIED BIRDS NEST WITH ITS EGGS

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19 TH CENTURY

SIZE : 17 CM X 16.5 CM DIA , 11 CM HIGH – 6¾ INS X 6½ INS DIA , 4¼ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

OF GREAT CURIOSITY TO THE VICTORIANS THE PETRIFYING WELLS OF MATLOCK BATH IN DERBYSHIRE CREATED PETRIFIED SOUVENIRS FOR THE ARISTOCRATIC TOURIST TRADE . IN 1832 THE PRINCESS VICTORIA VISITED MR JOSEPH PEARSON'S 'GREAT PETRIFYING WELL' WHERE THE WATER FILTERING THROUGH A MASS OF TUFA DROPS FROM THE ROOF AND SIDES AND LOSING A PART OF ITS CARBONIC GAS FORMS EARTHY PARTICLES UPON THE SUBSTANCES ON WHICH IT FALLS . THE OBJECTS WERE PLACED UNDER THE DROPS WHICH THEN PRODUCED A CALCAREOUS DEPOSIT WHICH IN TIME ASSUMED THE HARDNESS OF STONE .

'THE ROYAL PETRIFYING WELL' AS IT BECAME KNOWN AFTER THE PRINCESS'S VISIT WAS THE BIGGER OF THE THREE ; MR SMEDLEY'S BEING UNDER HIS SPAR SHOPS AND MRS BODEN'S SITUATED NEAR THE POST OFFICE . ALL THREE OF THESE WELLS WERE FILLED WITH A PROFUSION OF ARTICLES PUT IN TO BE PETRIFIED : STAGS HEADS , WIGS , BASKETS OF FLOWERS , BIRDS NESTS ETC. ALL OF WHICH HAD TO BE TURNED EVERY FEW WEEKS TO PREVENT THEM FROM GROWING TO THE BOTTOM .