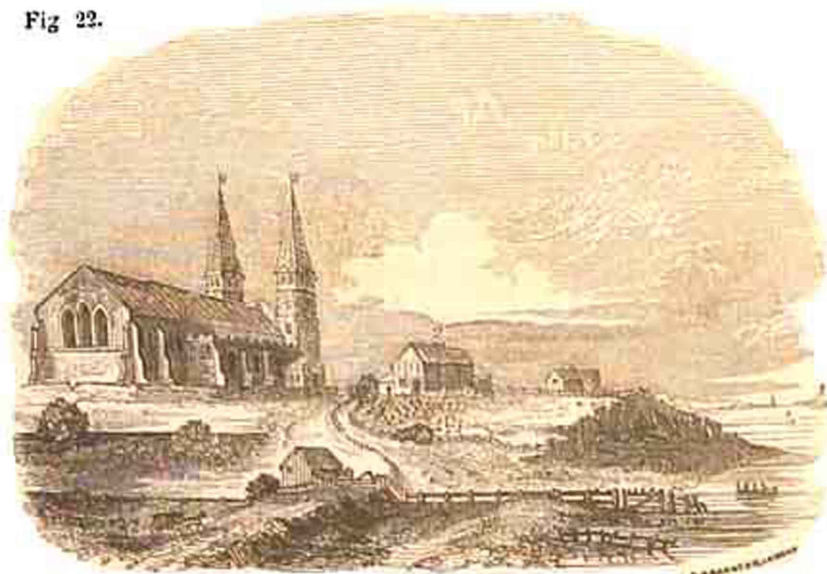


four in breadth, is composed of London clay. The cliffs on the north, which are from sixty to eighty feet high, decay rapidly, fifty acres having been lost in twenty years, between 1810 and 1830. The church at Minster, now near the coast, is said to have been in the middle of the island in 1780*; and if the present rate of destruction should continue, we might calculate the period, and that not a very remote one, when the whole island will be annihilated. On the coast of the mainland to the east of Sheppey is Herne Bay; a place still retaining the name of a bay, although it is no longer appropriate, as the waves and currents have swept away the ancient headlands. There was formerly a small promontory in the line of the shoals where the present pier is built, by which the larger bay was divided into two, called the Upper and Lower. †

Fig 22.



View of Reculver Church, taken in the year 1781.

1. Isle of Sheppey.
2. Ancient chapel now destroyed. The cottage between this chapel and the cliff was demolished by the sea, in 1782.

Still farther east stands the church of Reculver, upon a cliff composed of clay and sand, about twenty feet high. Reculver (Regulvium) was an important military station in the time of the Romans, and appears, from Leland's account, to have been, so late as Henry VIII.'s reign, nearly one mile distant from the sea. In the "Gentleman's Magazine," there is a view of it, taken in 1781, which still represents a considerable space as intervening between the north wall of the churchyard and the cliff. ‡ Some time before the year 1780, the waves had reached the site of the ancient Roman camp, or fortification, the walls of which had continued for several years after they were undermined to overhang the sea, being firmly cemented into one mass. They were eighty yards nearer the sea than the church, and they are spoken of in the "Topographica Britannica," in the year 1780, as having recently fallen down. In

* For this information I am indebted to W. Gunnell, Esq.
 † On the authority of W. Richardson.

Esq., F. G. S.
 ‡ Vol. ii. New Series, 1809, p. 801.