

Of the three great divisions of which the geologic scale consists,—Palæozoic, Secondary, and Tertiary,—the first, or ichthyic period, is marked chiefly, not by its great fishes, but by the peculiar character of its brachiopodous and cephalopodous mollusca, and in its earlier stages by its three-lobed crustaceæ; the second or reptilian period was emphatically the period of the ammonite and belemnite; while the third and last, or mammalian period, was that of gastropodous and conchiferous molluscs, impressed, generically at least, by all the features of the group which still exists in our seas. Save

Fig. 84.



MUREX ALVEOLATUS.

Fig. 85.



ASTARTE OMALI.

(Red Crag.)

in a few local deposits, fishes do not form the prevailing organisms in the formations of the age of fishes; nor reptiles in the formations of the age of reptiles; nor yet mammals in the formations of the age of mammals. Nay, it is not improbable that the recent or human period may be marked most prominently in the future, when it comes to exist simply as a geologic system, by a still humbler organism than most of these molluscs. On almost all rocky shores a line of pale gray may be seen at low water, running for mile after mile along the belt that has been laid bare at the bases of the cliffs by the fall of the tide. It owes its pale colour to millions of millions of a small balanus (*B. balanoides*), produced in such