

the cliffs, chiefly composed of clay and sand, are so soft, that, as in Sheppy and Holderness, every year large masses of country slip out seaward and are rapidly washed away by the waves.

The waste of this southern part of England and of Holderness has been estimated at the rate of from two to three yards every year. In the course of time, therefore, a great area of country must have been destroyed. At Selsey Bill there is a farmhouse standing, twenty years ago about 200 yards from the shore, and since the farmer first settled there, as much land has been wasted away as that which lay between his house and the sea. The site of the ancient Saxon Cathedral Church that preceded that of Chichester is known to be far out at sea. But this waste is not confined to the softest kinds of strata, for further west, in Devonshire, we find the same kind of destruction going on, one remarkable case of which is the great landslip in the neighbourhood of Axmouth, which took place in the year 1839. The strata there consist on the surface of Chalk, underlaid by Upper Greensand, which is underlaid by the Lias Clay. The Chalk is easily penetrated by water, and so is the sand that underlies it. After heavy rains, the water having sunk through the porous beds, the clay beneath became exceedingly slippery, and thus it happened, that the strata dipping seaward at a low angle, a vast mass of Chalk nearly a mile in length slipped forward, forming a grand ruin, the features of which are still constantly changing by the further foundering of the Chalk and Greensand. The waves beating upon the foundering masses destroy them day by day, and in time they will entirely disappear, and make room for further landslips. If we walk along the southern coast of Dorsetshire and Devon, and criticise