

scene of ruin, the shattered masses and pinnacles of the chalk being grouped together in the most picturesque manner. The village of Beer, notorious for the daring community of smugglers who inhabit it, and form as it were a peculiar race distinguished by many singular customs, lies in the recesses of a ravine traversing the white cliff, beyond which it is continued to the promontory of Beer head, the chalk here occupying the whole cliff. Round this point the precipices continue without interruption to Branscombe mouth westwards; the strata rise in this direction, and the green sand and new red sandstone, or rather marle, again crop out and form the base of the cliff: so that the strata from White cliff to this point, appear to lie in a kind of basin. The extent of this range is between three and four miles.

From Branscombe mouth the cliffs extend about five miles westwards to Sidmouth, being broken by two ravines into the separate groups of Branscombe, Dunscombe, and Salcombe: their base is uniformly constituted by the marle of the new red sand, upon which the strata of green sand repose. Branscombe (the easternmost summit), has a covering of chalk, as has the east end of Dunscombe (the middle summit), remarkable as being the western termination of this formation in England. The upper surface of the chalk is here furrowed into considerable inequalities, and large masses of it lie beyond its general line—the proofs of the abrasion and destruction which it has undergone. Salcombe, the western summit, no longer exhibits any traces of the chalk; but the abundance of the flints of this formation scattered over it, prove that it has formerly existed here also.

(g) COAST OF FRANCE.*

On the opposite coasts of France, a series of sections may be observed almost exactly answering both in character and position to those above described, demonstrating the former continuity of the constituent strata.†

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† On reviewing the many remarkable points of agreement between the cliffs on each side the Straits of Dover, it seems a supposition too reasonable to be ranked among mere hypotheses, that they were once united, and that they were separated at some very remote period by an irruption of the sea, which in all probability washed away the connecting mass; for the unreasonableness of the popular notion that the two countries were simply rent asunder by some sudden convulsion, will become apparent, when it is further stated, that the chalk without flints on the west of Dover is not less than fifty feet in thickness, while that of Cape Blanc Nez is