the sea, until enveloped in the sand and mud, which is now consolidated into the arenaceous stone termed Kentish Rag. Mr. Bensted, in illustration of this opinion, referred me to the following curious fact, related in the *American Journal of Science*:—

In the year 1836, a fatal epidemic prevailed among the shell-fish of the Muskingum River, in the state of Ohio. It commenced in April, and continued until June, destroying millions of the mollusca that inhabited the beds of the tributary streams, and the river. As the animals died, the valves of the shells opened, and decomposition commencing, the muscular adhesions gave way, and the fleshy portions rose to the surface of the water, leaving the shells in the bed of the river. As masses of the dead bodies floated down the current, the headlands of islands, piles of drifted wood, and the shores of the river, in many places, were covered with them; and the air in the vicinity was tainted with the putrid effluvia exhaling from these accumulations of decomposing animal matter. The cause of the epidemic was unknown. "Now nearly the whole of the shells in these beds of Kentish Rag," Mr. Bensted remarks, "have their shells open, as if they were dead before their envelopment in the deposit. And from the large quantity of water-worn fragments of wood perforated by Pholades imbedded with them, it seems probable that this stratum had originally been a sand-bank