

The palæontological characteristics of the tertiary period, at which we have already hinted, are very marked. They are the following, principally.

1. The appearance and great development of mammiferous animals is the most important feature. With the exception of some ten or twelve species of marsupials in the rocks below, all the other mammalia, to the number of 400, open before us in the tertiary, and seem to be the precursors of the 2,000 species now inhabiting the globe.

2. The tertiary reptiles and fishes come near the living forms, and many correspond so closely that the best naturalists can not distinguish between them.

3. The Belemnites and Ammonites, which were so abundant to the top of the cretaceous period, suddenly disappear and have no representatives in the tertiary.

#### 11. ALLUVIAL OR PLEISTOCENE PERIOD.

Under these names we include all the aqueous deposits above the tertiary. In countries, however, where drift is not fully developed, it is not easy to draw the line between the tertiary and the alluvial; but there is no deposit in the tertiary that would easily be confounded with the coarse, almost unstratified mass called drift. But when this drift has been comminuted, sorted, and re-deposited by water, the layers are easily confounded with those of the tertiary period. Hence it is very probable that

Fig. 393.

