

spiny *Plagiostoma*, which seem to have found proper habitats in the mud formed by the dead remains of these animalculæ. Curious examples of a similar kind may be still seen among the Hebrides, of sand-burrowing molluscs and echinoderms finding habitats amid accumulations of the débris of organic life, chiefly comminuted shells, on coasts where otherwise there could have been no place for them. The deep-sea shells propelled shorewards by the agency of tides and waves are ground down by the action of the surf against the rocks. They may be seen occurring in the hollows of the skerries, as one passes shorewards along some of the rocky bays, in handfuls of more and more comminuted fragments, just as, in passing along the successive vats of a paper-mill, one finds the linen rags more and more disintegrated by the cylinders; and then, within some sheltering shelf or ledge, we find the gathered handfuls of former ages spreading into a wave-rippled beach of minute shelly particles, that presents, save in its snow-white colour, the appearance of sandy beaches of the ordinary mineral components. But the beach once formed in this way soon begins to receive accessions from the exuviæ of animals that love such localities,—spatangi, razor-fish, cockles, and the several varieties of the gaper family,—and that enjoy life agreeably to their natures and constitutions, not in the least saddened by the idea that they are living amid the rubbish of a charnel-house; and sometimes one-half the whole beach comes thus to be composed of a class of remains that, save for the previous existence of the other half of it, could not have been formed in such localities at all. Now, such must have been the state of matters in the times of the Chalk. Unnumbered millions must have died in order that the medium might be provided in which a class of their successors could alone live. Of the land which skirted this ocean of the Chalk, or of its productions, we know almost nothing. There have been found in Chalk