excavation which had just been opened for the construction of a gas tank in the middle of the town of Rothesay. It was rather more than twenty feet in depth, and passed through five different layers of soil. First, passing downwards, there occurred about eighteen inches of vegetable mould, and then about seven feet of a partially consolidated ferruginous gravel, which rested on about eighteen inches more of peat moss,—once evidently a surface soil, like the overlying one, though of a different character,—abounding in what seemed to be the fragments of a rank underwood, and containing many hazel-nuts. Beneath this second soil there lay fully nine feet of finely stratified sea-sand; and under all, a bed of arenaceous clay, which the workmen penetrated to the depth of about two feet, but, as they had attained to the required depth of their excavation, did not pass through. And this bed of clay, at the depth of fully twenty feet from the surface, abounded in sea-shells,—not existing in the petrified condition, but, save that they had become somewhat porous and absorbent, in their original state. Not a few of them retained the thin brown epidermis, unchanged in colour; and the gaping and boring shells, whose nature it is to burrow in clay and sand, and which were present among them in two well-marked species, occupied, as shown by their position, the place in which they had lived and died. Now, of these ancient deep-lying shells, though a certain portion of them could be recognised as still British, there were proportionally not a few that no longer live within the British area;—in vain might the conchologist cast dredge for them in any sea that girdles the three kingdoms; and the whole, regarded as a group, differed from any other that exists in Europe in the present day. Ere, however, I pass on to decipher the record which they form, or translate into words the strange old prehistoric facts with which they are charged, let me briefly refer to the overlying deposits, and the successive periods of time which *they* seem to represent.