

The upper layer of vegetable mould here fully exhausts the historic period. And yet the fine old town of Rothesay is not without its history. The ancient ivy-clad castle of the place is situated scarce a minute's walk from the excavation; the same stratum of vegetable mould lies around that forms the upper layer in the pit, furnishing rich footing to shrub and tree; and its green moat, deserted long since by the waters, was excavated of old in the ferruginous gravel. And yet, though compared with the age of the gravel-bed on which it stands, the date of its erection is as of yesterday: history fails to trace its origin: we only know that it was already an important stronghold in the days of Haco of Norway, one of whose captains besieged and took it,—that Robert III. of Scotland died broken-hearted within its walls,—and that it still furnishes with his second title the heir-apparent of the British throne. On many other parts of the coast, though apparently not here, this gravel-bed contains shells, all of which, unlike those of the arenaceous clay beneath, still live around our shores, and most of which occurred, ere the last upheaval of the land, as dead shells on the beaches of the old coast line. The old line itself, against which the sea seems to have stood for ages ere the final upheaval, is present here immediately behind the town, in an eminently characteristic form. Its precipices of rough conglomerate still exhibit the hollow lines, worn of old by the surf, and occupy such places in relation to the buildings below as prove that even the oldest erections of the town, with the first beginnings of the castle, were all raised on one of its wave-deserted beaches. But the annals of Rothesay, notwithstanding their respectable antiquity, or even such memorials of human origin in the neighbourhood as altogether extend beyond the memory of history, advance comparatively but a little way towards the period of the old coast line and the last upheaval. When, in the times of Julius Cæsar, Diodorus Siculus wrote his big gossiping