

## CHAPTER XV.

## EOCENE FORMATIONS.

THE EOCENE STRATA, to which we have now come in this epitome of British geological history, form the oldest members of the Tertiary or Cainozoic series. It ought, however, to be remembered, that the terms Palæozoic or Primary, Mesozoic or Secondary, and Cainozoic or Tertiary, are mere terms of local convenience, unfit even for minor territories such as Europe, as the notice of strata intermediate to the Chalk and Eocene beds shows at the end of last chapter. I cannot enter on the details of this subject here. Readers must work it out for themselves, and there is no lack of printed matter from which to do so.

The EOCENE ROCKS of England lie in two basins, those of London and Hampshire. Both are surrounded and underlaid by the Chalk. The London basin extends westward from the mouth of the estuary of the Thames to the neighbourhood of Marlborough, and northward till it is lost beneath the drift of Suffolk and Norfolk. The north boundary of the Hampshire basin runs from Beachy Head to the neighbourhood of Salisbury and Dorchester. The Chalk Downs near Newport, Isle of Wight, form its southern boundary. In both areas the Chalk and Tertiary strata are little disturbed, except in the Isle of Wight and at Purbeck, where for a space they have been heaved nearly on end. The Lower