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Ancient sea-margins

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Chester.

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above the present level, leaving, however, at some places, a small portion of the work unfinished (the slight backing at Toxteth and Tranmere); and then, while resting at a relative level about one-half less elevated above the present, it has carved out a broad bench for the site of Birkenhead on one side of the estuary, and formed the little platform at the quarry on the other. Another circumstance calls for particular remark: While the beach is at Birkenhead a close-shaven rock, it is at Rock Lane composed of a thick bed of clay reposing on rock. In the one instance, from the opposition presented by the comparatively bold ground, a fierce cutting power has been exercised: in the other, from the circumstances being wholly different, the water brought clay, which it quietly deposited up to the height at which itself then stood;—a cutting down of rock in the one case, a filling up with clay in the other. Owing, moreover, to the gentleness of the ground at Rock Lane, a lower beach seems to have run into and blended with the upper.

CHESTER.

236. The site of Chester, and the country for many miles around, form a very slightly varied plain of new red sandstone, in which a deep narrow cut has been formed for the course of the Dee, here

about to pour itself into the Irish Sea. Towards the north, the ground on which the city is situated rises considerably above the general level, and a tower is there placed from which Charles I. surveyed the defeat of his army on the neighbouring moor. In general, however, the character of this district is flatness.

237. The elevation of the surface above the ordinary height of tides in the Dee is from 60 to 72 feet. The crossing of the two principal streets in the centre of the town is 69 feet; the base of the cathedral 72. The prominence on which the castle stands, immediately over the Dee, is a little lower. In short, the whole plateau is only a larger example of the phenomenon at Birkenhead—a bench carved out of the soft sandstone by the sea when its surface at high tide was a little more than 70 feet above its present level.

BRISTOL.

238. This ancient city lies on the banks of the Avon, a few miles from its junction with the Severn. With heights rising on every side, the city seems placed in the bottom of a basin; but there is, in reality, a good deal of low ground about its outskirts. Rather more than a mile below the city, the river leaves the basin, vanishing through a deep abrupt