

Fig. 23.



Reculver Church, in 1834.

1804, part of the churchyard with some adjoining houses was washed away, and the ancient church, with its two lofty spires, a well-known land-mark, was dismantled and abandoned as a place of worship. It is still standing (1834), but would probably have been annihilated ere this, had not the force of the waves been checked by an artificial causeway of stones and large wooden piles driven into the sands to break the force of the waves.*

Isle of Thanet.—The isle of Thanet was, in the time of the Romans, separated from the rest of Kent by a navigable channel, through which the Roman fleets sailed on their way to and from London. Bede describes this small estuary as being, in the beginning of the eighth century, three furlongs in breadth; and it is supposed that it began to grow shallow about the period of the Norman conquest. It was so far silted up in the year 1485, that an act was then obtained to build a bridge across it; and it has since become marsh land with small streams running through it. On the coast, Bedlam Farm, belonging to the hospital of that name, lost eight acres in the twenty years preceding 1830, the land being composed of chalk from forty to fifty feet above the level of the sea. It has been computed, that the average waste of the cliff between the North Foreland and the Reculvers, a distance of about eleven miles, is not less than two feet per annum. The chalk cliffs on the south of Thanet, between Ramsgate and Pegwell Bay, have on an average lost three feet per annum for the last ten years (preceding 1830).

* Dr. Mitchell, Proceedings of Geol. Soc. vol. ii. No. 1.