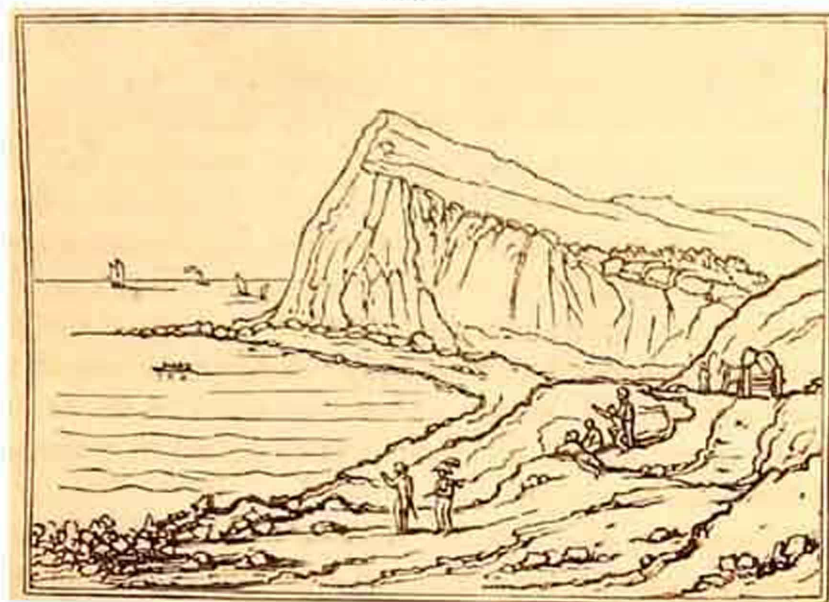


Goodwin Sands. — The Goodwin Sands lie opposite this part of the Kentish coast. They are about ten miles in length, and are in some parts three, and in others seven, miles distant from the shore; and, for a certain space, are laid bare at low water. That they are a remnant of land, and not "a mere accumulation of sea sand," as Rennell imagined *, may be presumed from the fact that, when the erection of a lighthouse on this shoal was in contemplation by the Trinity Board in the year 1817, it was found, by borings, that the bank consisted of fifteen feet of sand, resting on blue clay; and, by subsequent borings, the subjacent chalk has been reached. An obscure tradition has come down to us, that the estates of Earl Goodwin, the father of Harold, who died in the year 1053, were situated here, and some have conjectured that they were overwhelmed by the flood mentioned in the Saxon chronicle, *sub anno* 1099. The last remains of an island, consisting, like Sheppey, of clay, may perhaps have been carried away about that time.

Fig. 24.



Shakspeare's Cliff in 1836, seen from the north-east.

There are other records of waste in the county of Kent, as at Deal; and at Dover, where Shakspeare's cliff, composed entirely of chalk, has suffered greatly, and continually diminishes in height, the slope of the hill being towards the land. (See fig. 24.) There was an immense landslip from this cliff in 1810, by which Dover was shaken as if by an earthquake, and a still greater one in 1772.† We may suppose, therefore, that the view from the top of the precipice in the year 1600, when the tragedy of King Lear was written, was more "fearful and dizzy" than it is now.

Straits of Dover. — In proceeding from the northern parts of the German Ocean towards the Straits of Dover, the water becomes gradually more shallow, so that in the distance of about two hundred leagues we pass from a depth of 120, to that of 58, 38, 18, and even

* Geog. of Herod. vol. ii. p. 326.

† Dodsley's Ann. Regist. 1772.