

and its accumulations of sea-shells, the tides must have risen and fallen twice every day, as they now rise and fall along the beach that at present girdles our country. But, in reference to at least human history, the age of the old coast line and terrace must be a very remote one. Though geologically recent, it lies far beyond the reach of any written record. It has been shown by Mr Smith of Jordanhill, one of our highest authorities on the subject, that the wall of Antoninus, erected by the Romans as a protection against the Northern Caledonians, was made to terminate at the Friths of Forth and Clyde, with relation, not to the level of the old coast line, but to that of the existing one. And so we must infer that, ere the year A.D. 140 (the year during which, according to our antiquaries, the greater part of the wall was erected) the old coast line had attained to its present elevation over the sea. Further, however, we know from the history of Diodorus the Sicilian, that at a period earlier by at least two hundred years, St Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, was connected with the mainland at low water, just as it is now, by a flat isthmus, across which, upon the falling of the tide, the ancient Cornish miners used to carry over their tin in carts. Had the relative levels of sea and land been those of the old coast line at the time, St Michael's Mount, instead of being accessible at low ebb, would have been separated from the shore by a strait from three to five fathoms in depth. It would not have been then as now, as described in the verse of Carew,—

“Both land and island twice a-day.”

But even the incidental notice of Diodorus Siculus represents very inadequately the antiquity of the existing coast line. Some of its caves, hollowed in hard rock in the line of faults and shifts by the attrition of the surf, are more than a hundred feet in depth ; and it must have required many centuries to excavate tough trap or rigid gneiss to a depth so considerable, by a process so slow. And yet, nowever long the