There can be little doubt that they have had an origin under the massive ice-cover which once spread over that peninsula. Similar cavities filled with transported bowlders occur in the molasse sandstone near Bern,[242] and a large group of them is now one of the sights of Lucerne. They have been recognized in North Germany[243] and generally over the glaciated areas of Europe. As the Greenland ice-sheet is traversed in summer by powerful rivers which are swallowed up in the crevasses, excavations of the same nature are no doubt also in progress there.

Since rocks present great diversities of structure and hardness, and consequently vary much in the resistance they offer to denudation, they are necessarily worn down unequally. The softer, more easily eroded portions are scooped out by the grinding action of the ice, and basin-shaped or various irregular cavities are dug out below the level of the general surface. Similar effects may be produced by a local augmentation of the excavating power of a glacier, as where the ice is strangled in some narrow part of a valley, or where, from change in declivity, it is allowed to accumulate in greater mass as it moves more slowly onward. Such hollows, on the retirement of the ice, become receptacles for water, and form pools, tarns, or lakes, unless, indeed, they chance to have been already filled up with glacial rubbish.

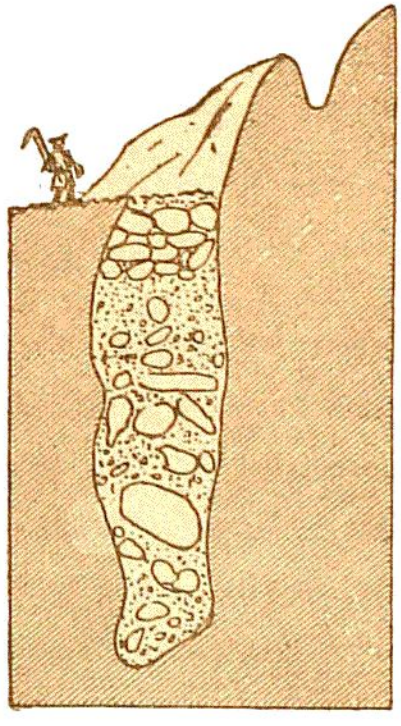

Fig. 159.—Section of "Giant's Kettle," near Christiania.

[242] Bachmann, Neues Jahrb. 1875, p. 53.
[243] Jahrb. Preuss. Geol. Landesanst. 1880, p. 275.