There is a popular fallacy that the human body sometimes turns to stone after burial, and this error is owing to the fact that the fat and muscular tissues change after death to a waxlike substance called adipocere, which being tolerably firm, often preserves the form and features of the body in a more or less perfect condition for a few years after death, but this only retards, not prevents, the final and complete decomposition of the soft parts.

Moulds or casts may be either of the interior or of the exterior of the shell of the mollusc, the cup of a coral or crinoid, or the skeleton of any organism possessing such.

Taking as an example the shell of a mollusc which, after being filled with mud and buried in the ocean bed, was subjected to influence which dissolved out the shell—an interior and exterior cast, with an empty space between, would be the result. However, it is very rarely that a cavity is left, as in any porous matrix mineral particles would be deposited until a filling is formed. A familiar instance of a cavity or mould is that of a citizen of Pompeii found during the excavation of the streets of that city. The man had probably been suffocated in the showers of ashes from Vesuvius. A plaster cast was made of the cavity, and the form of the Pompeiian restored to human gaze after a lapse of 1,800 years.

Through careful observation of readily accessible rock masses in various countries as to their super-position, mineral characters, and included fossils, geologists have been enabled to break up the entire stratified series into a number of different divisions or formations, each characterized by general uniformity of mineral composition, by peculiarity of position with regard to the others and by a peculiar assemblage of fossils; and further, to break up each of the primary divisions into a series of smaller ones similarly characterized and distinguished. In no known locality can all these rock groups be seen surmounting one another in uninterrupted succession. There are localities where representatives of the Cambrian, Silurian, Old Red and Carboniferous are to be found following one another in regular succession. But, on the other hand, there are localities where the Carboniferous rests on the Silurian and the Old Red is absent, and this may have been owing either to the elevation of the Silurian beds above the sea immediately