

there be no sediment superimposed, the gases generated by putrefaction usually cause the bodies to rise again to the surface about the ninth, or at latest the fourteenth day. The pressure of a thin covering of mud would not be sufficient to retain them at the bottom; for we see the putrid carcasses of dogs and cats, even in rivers, floating with considerable weights attached to them, and in sea-water they would be still more buoyant.

Where the body is so buried in drift-sand, or mud accumulated upon it, as never to rise again, the skeleton may be preserved entire; but if it comes again to the surface while in the process of putrefaction, the bones commonly fall piecemeal from the floating carcass, and may in that case be scattered at random over the bottom of the lake, estuary, or sea; so that a jaw may afterwards be found in one place, a rib in another, a humerus in a third — all included, perhaps, in a matrix of fine materials, where there may be evidence of very slight transporting power in the current, or even of none, but simply of some chemical precipitate.

A large number of the bodies of drowned animals, if they float into the sea or a lake, especially in hot climates, are instantly devoured by sharks, alligators, and other carnivorous beasts, which may have power to digest even the bones; but during extraordinary floods, when the greatest number of land animals are destroyed, the waters are commonly so turbid, especially at the bottom of the channel, that even aquatic species are compelled to escape into some retreat where there is clearer water, lest they should be stifled. For this reason, as well as the rapidity of sedimentary deposition at such seasons, the probability of carcasses becoming permanently imbedded is considerable.

Flood in the Solway Firth, 1794. — One of the most memorable floods of modern date, in our island, is that which visited part of the southern borders of Scotland, on the 24th of January, 1794, and which spread particular devastation over the country adjoining the Solway Firth.

We learn from the account of Captain Napier, that the heavy rains had swollen every stream which entered the Firth of Solway; so that the inundation not only carried away a great number of cattle and sheep, but many of the herdsmen and shepherds, washing down their bodies into the estuary. After the storm, when the flood subsided, an extraordinary spectacle was seen on a large sand-bank, called "the beds of Esk," where there is a meeting of the tidal waters, and where heavy bodies are usually left stranded after great floods. On this single bank were found collected together the bodies of 9 black cattle, 3 horses, 1840 sheep, 45 dogs, 180 hares, besides a great number of smaller animals, and, mingled with the rest, the corpses of two men and one woman.*

Floods in Scotland, 1829. — In those more recent floods in Scotland, in August, 1829, whereby a fertile district on the east coast

* Treatise on Practical Store Farming, p. 25.