

me his splendid collection, and when I expressed some incredulity respecting the alleged antiquity of the fossil human bones, he pointedly remarked, that if I doubted their having been contemporaneous with the bear or rhinoceros, on the ground of Man being a species of more modern date, I ought equally to doubt the coexistence of all the other living species, such as the red deer, roe, wild cat, wild boar, wolf, fox, weasel, beaver, hare, rabbit, hedgehog, mole, dormouse, field-mouse, water-rat, shrew, and others, the bones of which he had found scattered everywhere indiscriminately through the same mud with the extinct quadrupeds. The year after this conversation I cited Schmerling's opinions, and the facts bearing on the antiquity of Man, in the 3rd edition of my Principles of Geology (p. 161, 1834), and in succeeding editions, without pretending to call in question their trustworthiness, but at the same time without giving them the weight which I now consider they were entitled to. He had accumulated ample evidence to prove that Man had been introduced into the earth at an earlier period than geologists were then willing to believe.

One positive fact, it will be said, attested by so competent a witness, ought to have outweighed any amount of negative testimony, previously accumulated, respecting the non-occurrence elsewhere of human remains in formations of the like antiquity: In reply, I can only plead that a discovery which seems to contradict the general tenor of previous investigations is naturally received with much hesitation. To have undertaken in 1832, with a view of testing its truth, to follow the Belgian philosopher through every stage of his observations and proofs, would have been no easy task even for one well-skilled in geology and osteology. To be let down, as Schmerling was, day after day, by a rope tied to a tree, so as to slide to the foot of the first opening of the Engis cave,* where the

* Schmerling, part i. p. 30.