

CHAPTER XI.

AGE OF HUMAN FOSSILS OF LE PUY IN CENTRAL FRANCE AND
OF NATCHEZ ON THE MISSISSIPPI, DISCUSSED.

QUESTION AS TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOSSIL MAN OF DENISE, NEAR LE PUY-EN-VELAY, CONSIDERED — ANTIQUITY OF THE HUMAN RACE IMPLIED BY THAT FOSSIL — SUCCESSIVE PERIODS OF VOLCANIC ACTION IN CENTRAL FRANCE — WITH WHAT CHANGES IN THE MAMMALIAN FAUNA THEY CORRESPOND — THE *ELEPHAS MERIDIONALIS* ANTERIOR IN TIME TO THE IMPLEMENT-BEARING GRAVEL OF ST. ACHEUL — AUTHENTICITY OF THE HUMAN FOSSIL OF NATCHEZ ON THE MISSISSIPPI, DISCUSSED — THE NATCHEZ DEPOSIT, CONTAINING BONES OF MASTODON AND MEGALONYX, PROBABLY NOT OLDER THAN THE FLINT IMPLEMENTS OF ST. ACHEUL.

AMONG the fossil remains of the human species supposed to have claims to high antiquity, and which have for many years attracted attention, two of the most prominent examples are—

First,—‘The fossil man of Denise,’ comprising the remains of more than one skeleton, found in a volcanic breccia near the town of Le Puy-en-Velay, in Central France.

Secondly,—The fossil human bone of Natchez, on the Mississippi, supposed to have been derived from a deposit containing remains of mastodon and megalonyx. Having carefully examined the sites of both of these celebrated fossils, I shall consider in this chapter the nature of the evidence on which the remote date of their entombment is inferred.

Fossil Man of Denise.

An account of the fossil remains, so called, was first published in 1844, by M. Aymard of Le Puy, a writer of deservedly