

winds or by river-floods into the lake, run so many risks of dissolution, that only a proportion of them, and probably merely a small proportion, is preserved. When we consider these chances against the conservation of the vegetable and animal life of the land, we must admit that, at the best, lake-bottoms can contain but a meagre and imperfect representation of the abundant life of the adjacent hills and plains. Lakes, however, have a distinct flora and fauna of their own. Their aquatic plants may be entombed in the gathering deposits of the bottom. Their mollusks, of characteristic types, sometimes form, by the accumulation of their remains, sheets of soft calcareous marl (pp. 244, 812), in which many of the undecayed shells are preserved. Their lacustrine fishes, likewise, must no doubt often be entombed in the silt or marl.

b. Peat-mosses.—Wild animals, venturing on the more treacherous watery parts of peat-bogs, are sometimes engulfed or “laired.” The antiseptic qualities of the peat preserve their remains from decay. Hence, from European peat-mosses, numerous remains of deer and oxen have been exhumed. Evidently the larger beasts of the forest ought chiefly to be looked for in these localities (p. 802).

c. Deltas at river-mouths.—It is obvious that, to some extent, both the flora and the fauna of the land may be buried among the sand and silt of deltas (p. 677). But though occasional or frequent river-floods sweep down trees, herbage, and the bodies of land-animals, the carcasses so transported run every risk of having their bones separated and dispersed,⁴ or of decaying or being otherwise destroyed, while still afloat; and even if they reach the bottom, they tend to dissolution there, unless speedily covered up and protected by fresh sediment. Delta-formations can therefore scarcely be expected to preserve more than a meagre outline of a varied terrestrial flora and fauna.

d. Caverns.—These are eminently adapted for the preservation of the higher forms of terrestrial life (pp. 625, 827). Most of our knowledge of the prehistoric mammalian fauna of Europe is derived from what has been disinterred from *bone-caves*. As these recesses lie, for the most part, in limestone or in calcareous rock, their floors are commonly coated with stalagmite from the drip of the roof; and as this deposit

⁴ Lower jaws, for instance, because they are among the earliest parts of the skeleton of a floating carcass to drop off, are not infrequently met with as fossils.