http://geology.19thcenturyscience.org/books/1902-Geikie-Geology/README.htm



containing the first relics of man is perhaps unattainable, for these deposits occur in detached areas and offer no means of determining their physical sequence. To assert that a brick-earth is older than a cavern-breccia, because it contains some bones which the latter does not, or fails to show some which the latter does yield, is too often a conclusion drawn because it agrees with preconceptions.

River-Alluvia.—Above the present levels of the rivers, there lie platforms or terraces of alluvium, sometimes up to a height of 80 or 100 feet. These deposits are fragments of the river-gravels and loams laid down when the streams flowed at these elevations, and therefore after the excavation of the valleys. The subsequent action of the running water has been to clear out much of the old alluvial material then accumulated, so as to leave the valleys widened and deepened to their present form. River-action is at the best but slow. To erode the valleys to so great a depth beneath the level of the upper alluvia must have demanded a period of many centuries. There can therefore be no doubt of the high antiquity of these deposits. They have yielded the remains of many mammals, some of them extinct (Elephas antiquus, Hippopotamus amphibius, Rhinoceros megarhinus—Merckii), together with flint-flakes made by man. From the nature and structure of some of the high-level gravels there can be little doubt that they were formed at a time when the rivers, then possibly larger than now, were liable to be frozen and to be obstructed by accumulations of ice. We are thus able to connect the deposits of the Human Period with some of the later phases of the Ice Age in the west of Europe.

Brick-Earths.—In some regions that have not been below the sea for a long period, a variable accumulation of