

There is, however, no reason to consider these bones to be of high antiquity, as the rock in which they occur is of very recent formation, and is composed of agglutinated fragments of shells and corals which inhabit the adjacent water. Such kind of stone is frequently formed in a few years from sand-banks composed of similar materials, on the shores of tropical seas.

Frequent discoveries have also been made of human bones, and rude works of art, in natural caverns, sometimes inclosed in stalactite, at other times in beds of earthy materials, which are interspersed with bones of extinct species of quadrupeds. These cases may likewise be explained by the common practice of mankind in all ages, to bury their dead in such convenient repositories. The accidental circumstance that many caverns contained the bones of extinct species of other animals, dispersed through the same soil in which human bodies may, at any subsequent period have been buried, affords no proof of the time when these remains of men were introduced.

Many of these caverns have been inhabited by savage tribes, who, for convenience of occupation, have repeatedly disturbed portions of soil in which their predecessors may have been buried. Such disturbances will explain the occasional admixture of fragments of human skeletons, and the bones of modern quadrupeds, with