

that human remains are as capable of resisting decay as are the harder parts of the inferior animals; and I have already cited the remark of Cuvier, that "in ancient fields of battle the bones of men have suffered as little decomposition as those of horses which were buried in the same grave." (See above, p. 144.) In the delta of the Ganges bones of men have been found in digging a well at the depth of ninety feet*; but as that river frequently shifts its course and fills up its ancient channels, we are not called upon to suppose that these bodies are of extremely high antiquity, or that they were buried when that part of the surrounding delta where they occur was first gained from the sea.

Fossil skeletons of men.—Several skeletons of men, more or less mutilated, have been found in the West Indies, on the north-west coast of the main land of Guadaloupe, in a kind of rock which is known to be forming daily, and which consists of minute fragments of shells and corals, incrustated with a calcareous cement resembling travertin, by which also the different grains are bound together. The lens shows that some of the fragments of coral composing this stone still retain the same red colour which is seen in the reefs of living coral which surround the island. The shells belong to species of the neighbouring sea intermixed with some terrestrial kinds which now live on the island, and among them is the *Bulimus Guadaloupenensis* of Férussac. The human skeletons still retain some of their animal matter, and all their phosphate of lime. One of them, of which the head is wanting, may now be seen in the British Museum, and another in the Royal Cabinet at Paris. According to M. König, the rock in which the former is inclosed is harder under the mason's saw and chisel than statuary marble. It is described as forming a kind of glacis, probably an indurated beach, which slants from the steep cliffs of the island to the sea, and is nearly all submerged at high tide.

Similar formations are in progress in the whole of the West Indian archipelago, and they have greatly extended the plain of Cayes in St. Domingo, where fragments of vases and other human works have been found at a depth of twenty feet. In digging wells also near Catania, in Sicily, tools have been discovered in a rock somewhat similar.

Buried ships, canoes, and works of art.—When a vessel is stranded in shallow water, it usually becomes the nucleus of a sand-bank, as has been exemplified in several of our harbours, and this circumstance tends greatly to its preservation. Between the years 1780 and 1790 a vessel from Purbeck, laden with three hundred tons of stone, struck on a shoal off the entrance of Poole harbour and foundered; the crew were saved, but the vessel and cargo remain to this day at the bottom. Since that period the shoal at the entrance of the harbour has so extended itself in a westerly direction towards Peveril Point in Purbeck, that the navigable channel is thrown a

* Von Hoff, vol. i. p. 379.