

CHAPTER II.

RECENT PERIOD—DANISH PEAT AND SHELL MOUNDS—SWISS
LAKE DWELLINGS.

WORKS OF ART IN DANISH PEAT-MOSSES — REMAINS OF THREE PERIODS OF VEGETATION IN THE PEAT—AGES OF STONE, BRONZE, AND IRON—SHELL-MOUNDS OR ANCIENT REFUSE-HEAPS OF THE DANISH ISLANDS—CHANGE IN GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF MARINE MOLLUSCA SINCE THEIR ORIGIN—EMBEDDED REMAINS OF MAMMALIA OF RECENT SPECIES—HUMAN SKULLS OF THE SAME PERIOD—SWISS LAKE-DWELLINGS BUILT ON PILES—STONE AND BRONZE IMPLEMENTS FOUND IN THEM—FOSSIL CEREALS AND OTHER PLANTS—REMAINS OF MAMMALIA, WILD AND DOMESTICATED—NO EXTINCT SPECIES—CHRONOLOGICAL COMPUTATIONS OF THE DATE OF THE BRONZE AND STONE PERIODS IN SWITZERLAND—LAKE-DWELLINGS, OR ARTIFICIAL ISLANDS CALLED 'CRANNOGES,' IN IRELAND.

Works of Art in Danish Peat.

WHEN treating in the 'Principles of Geology' of the changes of the earth which have taken place in comparatively modern times, I have spoken (chap. xlv.) of the embedding of organic bodies and human remains in peat, and explained under what conditions the growth of that vegetable substance is going on in northern and humid climates. Of late years, since I first alluded to the subject, more extensive investigations have been made into the history of the Danish peat-mosses. Of the results of these enquiries I shall give a brief abstract in the present chapter, that we may afterwards compare them with deposits of older date, which throw light on the antiquity of the human race.

The deposits of peat in Denmark,* varying in depth from

* An excellent account of these researches of Danish naturalists and antiquaries has been drawn up by an able Swiss geologist, M. A. Morlot,

and will be found in the Bulletin de la Société Vandoise des Sci. Nat., t. vi. Lausanne, 1860.