

in three or four of those rich repositories of osseous remains. In like manner, it was not till the year 1855 that the first skull of the musk buffalo (*Bubalus moschatus*) was detected in the fossiliferous gravel of the Thames, and not till 1860, as will be seen in the next chapter, that the same quadruped was proved to have co-existed in France with the mammoth. The same theory which will explain the comparative rarity of such species would no doubt account for the still greater scarcity of human bones, as well as for our general ignorance of the post-pliocene terrestrial fauna, with the exception of that part of it which is revealed to us by cavern researches.

In valley drift we meet commonly with the bones of quadrupeds which graze on plains bordering rivers. Carnivorous beasts, attracted to the same ground in search of their prey, sometimes leave their remains in the same deposits, but more rarely. The whole assemblage of fossil quadrupeds at present obtained from the alluvium of Picardy is obviously a mere fraction of the entire fauna which flourished contemporaneously with the primitive people by whom the flint hatchets were made.

Instead of its being part of the plan of nature to store up enduring records of a large number of the individual plants and animals which have lived on the surface, it seems to be her chief care to provide the means of disencumbering the habitable areas lying above and below the waters of those myriads of solid skeletons of animals, and those massive trunks of trees, which would otherwise soon choke up every river, and fill every valley. To prevent this inconvenience she employs the heat and moisture of the sun and atmosphere, the dissolving power of carbonic and other acids, the grinding teeth and gastric juices of quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, and fish, and the agency of many of the invertebrata. We are all familiar with the efficacy of these and other causes on the land; and as to the bottoms of seas, we have only to read the published reports of