

was obtained by Dr. Dickeson of Natchez, in whose collection I saw it. It appeared to be quite in the same state of preservation, and was of the same black colour as the other fossils, and was believed to have come like them from a depth of about thirty feet from the surface. In my 'Second Visit to America,' in 1846,\* I suggested, as a possible explanation of this association of a human bone with remains of a mastodon and megalonyx, that the former may possibly have been derived from the vegetable soil at the top of the cliff, whereas the remains of extinct mammalia were dislodged from a lower position, and both may have fallen into the same heap or talus at the bottom of the ravine. The pelvic bone might, I conceived, have acquired its black colour by having lain for years or centuries in a dark superficial peaty soil, common in that region. I was informed that there were many human bones, in old Indian graves in the same district, stained of as black a dye. On suggesting this hypothesis to Colonel Wiley, of Natchez, I found that the same idea had already occurred to his mind. No doubt, had the pelvic bone belonged to any recent mammifer other than Man, such a theory would never have been resorted to; but so long as we have only one isolated case, and are without the testimony of a geologist who was present to behold the bone when still engaged in the matrix, and to extract it with his own hands, it is allowable to suspend our judgment as to the high antiquity of the fossil.

If, however, I am asked whether I consider the Natchez loam, with land-shells and the bones of mastodon and megalonyx, to be more ancient than the alluvium of the Somme containing flint implements and the remains of the mammoth and hyæna, I must declare that I do not. Both in Europe and America the land and freshwater shells accompanying the extinct pachyderms are of living species, and I could detect no shell in the Natchez loam so foreign to the

\* Vol. ii. p. 197.