

These monuments, therefore, whether of stone or bronze, belong to what I have termed geologically the Recent Period, the definition of which some may think rather too dependent on negative evidence, or on the non-discovery hitherto of extinct mammalia, such as the mammoth, which may one day turn up in a fossil state in some of the oldest peaty deposits, as, indeed, it is already said to have done at some spots, though I have failed, as yet, to obtain authentic evidence of the fact.\* No doubt some such exceptional cases may be met with in the course of future investigations, for we are still imperfectly acquainted with the entire fauna of the age of stone in Denmark, as we may infer from an opinion expressed by Steenstrup, that some of the instruments exhumed by antiquaries from the Danish peat are made of the bones and horns of the elk and reindeer. Yet no skeleton or uncut bone of either of those species has hitherto been observed in the same peat.

Nevertheless, the examination made by naturalists of the various Danish and Swiss deposits of the recent period has been so searching, that the finding in them of a stray elephant or rhinoceros, should it ever occur, would prove little more than that some few individuals lingered on, when the species was on the verge of extinction, and such rare exceptions would not render the classification above proposed inappropriate.

At the time when many wild quadrupeds and birds were growing scarce, and some of them becoming locally extirpated in Denmark, great changes were taking place in the vegetation. The pine, or Scotch fir, buried in the oldest peat, gave place at length to the oak, and the oak, after flourishing for ages, yielded, in its turn, to the beech, the

\* A molar of *E. primigenius*, in a very fresh state, in the museum at Torquay, believed to have been washed up by the waves of the sea out of the

submerged mass of vegetable matter at the extremity of the valley in which Tor Abbey stands, is the best case I have seen. See above, p. 352.