

according to the estimate of Steenstrup and other good authorities, have amounted to at least 4000 years; and there is nothing in the observed rate of the growth of peat opposed to the conclusion that the number of centuries may not have been four times as great, even though the signs of Man's existence have not yet been traced down to the lowest or amorphous stratum. As to the 'shell-mounds,' they correspond in date to the older portion of the peaty record, or to the earliest part of the age of stone as known in Denmark.

" Ancient Swiss Lake-dwellings, built on Piles.

In the shallow parts of many Swiss lakes, where there is a depth of no more than from five to fifteen feet of water, ancient wooden piles are observed at the bottom sometimes worn down to the surface of the mud, sometimes projecting slightly above it. These have evidently once supported villages, nearly all of them of unknown date, but the most ancient of which certainly belonged to the age of stone, for hundreds of implements resembling those of the Danish shell-mounds and peat-mosses have been dredged up from the mud into which the piles were driven.

The earliest historical account of such habitations is that given by Herodotus of a Thracian tribe, who dwelt, in the year 520 B.C., in Prasias, a small mountain-lake of Pæonia, now part of Modern Roumelia.*

Their habitations were constructed on platforms raised above the lake, and resting on piles. They were connected with the shore by a narrow causeway of similar formation. Such platforms must have been of considerable extent, for the Pæonians lived there with their families and horses. Their food consisted largely of the fish which the lake produced in abundance.

* Herodotus, lib. v. cap. 16.—Rediscovered by M. Deville, Nat. Hist. Rev., Oct. 1862, vol. ii. p. 486.