

## CHAPTER VII.

## PEAT AND POST-PLIOCENE ALLUVIUM OF THE VALLEY OF THE SOMME.

GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE VALLEY OF THE SOMME AND OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY—POSITION OF ALLUVIUM OF DIFFERENT AGES—PEAT NEAR ABBEVILLE—ITS ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE CONTENTS—WORKS OF ART IN PEAT—PROBABLE ANTIQUITY OF THE PEAT, AND CHANGES OF LEVEL SINCE ITS GROWTH BEGAN—FLINT IMPLEMENTS OF ANTIQUE TYPE IN OLDER ALLUVIUM—THEIR VARIOUS FORMS AND GREAT NUMBERS.

*Geological Structure of the Somme Valley.*

THE Valley of the Somme in Picardy, alluded to in the last chapter, is situated geologically in a region of white chalk with flints, the strata of which are nearly horizontal. The chalk hills which bound the valley are almost everywhere between 200 and 300 feet in height. On ascending to that elevation, we find ourselves on an extensive table-land, in which there are slight elevations and depressions. The white chalk itself is scarcely ever exposed at the surface on this plateau, although seen on the slopes of the hills, as at *b* and *c* (fig. 7). The general surface of the upland region is covered continuously for miles in every direction by loam or brick-earth (No. 4), about five feet thick, devoid of fossils. To the wide extent of this loam the soil of Picardy chiefly owes its great fertility. Here and there we also observe, on the chalk, outlying patches of tertiary sand and clay (No. 5, fig. 7), with eocene fossils, the remnants of a formation once more extensive, and which probably once spread in one continuous mass over the chalk, before the present system of valleys had begun to be shaped out. It is necessary to allude to these relics of