

knives, many thousands), not a single human bone has yet been met with in the old alluvial sand and gravel of the Somme.\* This dearth of the mortal remains of our species holds true equally, as yet, in all other parts of Europe where the tool-bearing drift of the post-pliocene period has been investigated in valley deposits. Yet in these same formations there is no want of bones of mammalia belonging to extinct and living species. In the course of the last quarter of a century, thousands of them have been submitted to the examination of skilful osteologists, and they have been unable to detect among them one fragment of a human skeleton, not even a tooth. Yet Cuvier pointed out long ago, that the bones of Man found buried in ancient battle-fields were not more decayed than those of horses interred in the same graves. We have seen that in the Liége caverns, the skulls, jaws, and teeth, with other bones of the human race, were preserved in the same condition as those of the cave-bear, tiger, and mammoth.

That ere long, now that curiosity has been so much excited on this subject, some human remains will be detected in the older alluvium of European valleys, I confidently expect. In the mean time, the absence of all vestige of the bones which belonged to that population by which so many weapons were designed and executed, affords a most striking and instructive lesson in regard to the value of negative evidence, when adduced in proof of the non-existence of certain classes of terrestrial animals at given periods of the past. It is a new and emphatic illustration of the extreme imperfection of the geological record, of which even they who are constantly working in the field cannot easily form a just conception.

We must not forget that Dr. Schmerling, after finding extinct mammalia and *flint tools* in forty-two Belgian caverns, was only rewarded by the discovery of human bones

\* See Appendix B, on human jaw of Moulin Quignon, Abbeville.