

of the earth is the *quaternary epoch, or era of Civilization*, which in comparison with the length of the four other epochs almost vanishes into nothing, though with a comical conceit we usually call its record the "history of the world." As the period is characterized by the development of *Man* and his *Culture*, which has influenced the organic world more powerfully and with greater transforming effect than have all previous conditions, it may also be called the era of Man, the anthropolithic or anthropozoic period. It might also be called the era of Cultivated Forests, or Gardens, because even at the lowest stage of human civilization man's influence is already perceptible in the utilization of forests and their products, and therefore also in the physiognomy of the landscape. The commencement of this era, which extends down to the present time, is geologically bounded by the end of the pliocene stratification.

The neptunic strata which have been deposited during the comparatively short quaternary epoch are very different in different parts of the earth, but they are mostly of very slight thickness. They are reduced to two "systems," the older of which is designated the *diluvial, or pleistocene*, and the later the *alluvial, or recent*. The diluvial system is again divided into two "formations," the older *glacial* and the more recent *post glacial* formations. For during the older diluvial period there occurred that extremely remarkable decrease of the temperature of the earth which led to an extensive glaciation of the temperate zones. The great importance which this "ice" or "glacial period" has exercised on the geographical and topographical distribution of organisms has already been explained in the preceding chap-