

## Section i. Pleistocene or Glacial

### § 1. General Characters

Under the name of the Glacial Period or Ice Age, a remarkable geological episode in the history of the northern hemisphere is denoted.<sup>1</sup> The Crag deposits (p. 1653) afford evidence of a gradual refrigeration of climate at the close of the Tertiary ages. This change of temperature affected the higher latitudes alike of the Old and the New World. It reached such a height that the whole of the north of Europe was buried under ice, which, filling up the basins of the Baltic and North Sea, spread over the plains even as far south as close to the site of London, and in Silesia and Galicia to the 50th parallel of latitude. Beyond the limits reached by the northern ice-sheet, the climate was so arctic that snow-fields and glaciers spread even over the comparatively low hills of the Lyonnais and Beaujolais in the heart of France. The Alps were loaded with vast snow-fields, from which enormous glaciers descended into the plains, overriding ranges of minor hills on their way. The Pyrenes were in like manner covered, while snow-fields and glaciers extended southward for some

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<sup>1</sup> No section of geological history now possesses a more voluminous literature than the Glacial Period, especially in Britain and North America. For general information the student may refer to Lyell's "Antiquity of Man," J. Geikie's "Great Ice Age," "Prehistoric Europe," Address to Geological Section of British Association, 1889, and paper in Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin. xxxvii. part i. 1893, p. 127; J. Croll's "Climate and Time," "Discussions on Climate and Cosmology"; A. Penck, "Vergletscherung der Deutschen Alpen," 1882; J. Fartsch, "Die Gletscher der Vorzeit in den Karpathen," etc., 1882; A. Falsan and E. Chantre, "Anciens Glaciers, etc., de la partie moyenne du Bassin du Rhône," 1879, and for detailed descriptions, to the Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc., Geol. Mag., Zeitsch. Deutsch. Geol. Ges., Jahrb. Preuss. Geol. Landesanst., Amer. Journ. Science, Annual Reports U. S. Geol. Surv., Bull. Amer. Geol. Soc., for the last fifteen or twenty years.