

At a period which may be assumed as greatly more modern than the era of those singular subterranean dwellings of primitive centuries, we once more meet with extensive accumulations of oyster shells, with those of the cockle and muscle, among the miscellaneous remains on Romano-British sites of the first centuries of the Christian era, alongside of bones and tusks of the British boar, and of other extinct animals, deer and oxen, the latter the *bos longifrons*, which appears to have been the domesticated ox of early Celtic times. But such Roman deposits of the shells of British mollusca are no longer confined to coast stations; as indeed might be anticipated when it is remembered that the voluptuous Roman esteemed the oysters of the British seas so great a delicacy, in comparison with those of his own mediterranean shores, as to transport them to Italy to add a new zest to his luxurious board. Pliny records the high estimation in which the British oyster was held at Rome, and Juvenal has satirized the excessive refinement of the epicurean taste which could discriminate between the oyster of the Kentish coast, and those of Circæan sands or rocky Leucrine shores:—

“Circæis nata forent, an  
Lucrinum ad saxum, Rutupinove edita fundo,  
Ostrea, callebat primo deprendere morsu;  
Et semel adspecti littus dicebat echini.”—Sat. IV., l. 140.

It may also be noted that the shell of the common snail is found in such quantities on Roman sites, and occasionally also in Anglo-Saxon graves, as to lead to the belief that it constituted another choice delicacy at the tables of those successive colonists of celtic Britain.

Considerable interest has been excited among Danish antiquaries, in recent years, by the explorations of large accumulations of the shells of mollusca, met with at various points on the coasts of Denmark. These, which were at first regarded merely as natural deposits, the remains of the abundant fauna of the neighbouring seas, have proved on examination to come within the province of the archæologist, and special steps have been taken to secure their thorough investigation. Within them have accordingly been found implements of bone, pottery, hatchets formed of stags' horns, &c., and in one examined by the distinguished Danish antiquary, Mr. Worsaae, chiefly consisting of oyster-shells, he found numerous skulls and bones of animals, flint celts and arrow-heads, bones broken, as has been supposed, for the purpose of extracting the marrow, charcoal, and other traces of the early occupants of the Danish coasts.