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"read his recantation" of earlier opinions; and—so far at least as Europe is concerned,—gave the full weight of his authority to the conclusions relative to the antiquity of man based on the discovery of flint implements associated with bones of extinct mammalia at Abbeville and in the valley of the Thames. The peculiar geological conditions accompanying the earliest evidence of the presence of palæolithic man in Europe proved, when rightly interpreted, to be no less convincing than the long familiar sequence of more recent archaeological indices by which antiquarian speculation has proceeded step by step back towards that prehistoric dawn in which geology and archaeology meet on common ground. The chalk and the overlying river-drift, abounding with flint nodules, left no room for question as to the source of the raw material from which the primitive implements were manufactured. The flint is still abundant as ever, in nodules of a size amply sufficient for furnishing the largest palæolithic implements, in the localities both of France and England where such specimens of primitive art have been recovered by thousands. But there other disclosures tell no less conclusively of many subsequent stages of progress, alike in prehistoric and historic times.

Dr. John Evans, in his "Ancient Stone Implements of Great Britain," purposely begins with the more recent implements, including those of the Australian and other modern savage races; and traces his way backward, "ascending the stream of time," and noting the diverse examples of ingeniously fashioned and polished tools of the neolithic age which preceded that palæolithic class, of vast antiquity and rudest workmanship, which now constitute the earliest known works of man; if they are not, indeed, examples of the first infantile efforts of human skill. But alike in Britain, and on the neighbouring continent, a chronological sequence of implements in stone and metal, with pottery, personal ornaments, and other illustrations of progressive art, supplies the evidence by means of which we are led backward—not without some prolonged interruptions, as we approach the palæolithic age,—from historic to the remotest prehistoric times.

The relative chronology of the European drift may be thus stated: first, and most modern, the superficial deposits of recent centuries with their mediæval traces of Frank and Gaul; and along with those, the tombs, the pottery, and other remains of the Roman period, scarcely perceptibly affected in their geological relations by nearly the whole interval of the Christian area; next, in the alluvium, seemingly embedded by natural accumulation at an average depth of fifteen feet, occur remains of a European stone period, corresponding in many respects to those of the recently discovered pfahlbanten, or pile villages of the Swiss Lakes; and, underlying those accumulations exceeding in their duration the whole historical period, we come at length to the tool-bearing drift, imbedding, along with the fossil remains of many extinct mammals, the implements of palæolithic man, fashioned seemingly when the rivers were only beginning the work of excavating the valleys which give their present contour to the landscapes of France and England.

There, as elsewhere, we recognize progression from the most artless rudeness of tool manufacture, belonging to an epoch when the process of grinding flint or stone to an edge appears to have been unknown; through various stages of the primitive worker in stone, bone, ivory, and the like natural products; and then the discovery and gradual development of the metallurgic arts. Yet at the same time it must not be lost sight of that mere rudeness of workmanship is no evidence of antiquity. Nothing can well be conceived of more artless than some of the stone implements still in use among savage tribes of America.