

concerning the formation of the earth, there is no one which can make such important revelations to us as the oracle of the age of mountains. These operations at the earth's surface generally appear to have produced its present figure, and to have designed it for the habitation of numerous organic beings. This appears as early as a suitable element occurred ; first, in water, then in land animals ; and, like the formation of rocks, we observe a regular succession of organic formations, the later always descending from the earlier, down to the present inhabitants of the earth, and to the last created being who was to exercise dominion over them. But here occurs this important distinction : the organic world with youthful vigour renews itself daily, and decomposes its materials only to reunite them by fresh combinations in uninterrupted succession ; while the powers of the inorganic world appear almost extinguished. Though this course of nature is manifest to our own observation, her resources and progress are, on the contrary, more concealed ; and we can hardly lift the veil which conceals her, unless we follow Bacon's advice, Turn back from rash theories, and follow observation and experience.

We have hitherto endeavoured to shew that incontrovertible geognostic facts indicate an alternate rising and falling of the water which covered the earth's surface, but that they were not of a kind to justify the notion of violent revolutions, or of sudden and universal eruptions of the sea ; and that, therefore, such deluges as the Mosaic deluge, recorded in the traditions of nations, were not revolutions of this description. If, according to the supposition of Cuvier, the earth's surface inhabited at the commencement of the latter deluge has become the