

tains of the great deep and the re-appearance of the mountain-tops, had they been included within the area of the Deluge. It is estimated that even the newer Auvergne lavas are as old as the times of the Miocene. It is at least a demonstrable fact, that the slow action of streams had hollowed them in several places into deep chasms nearly two thousand years ago ; for the remains of Roman works of about that age survive, to show that they had then, as now, to be spanned over by bridges, and that baths had been erected in their denuded recesses ; and yet the craters out of which these lavas had flowed retain well nigh all their original sharpness of outline. No wave ever dashed against their symmetrically sloping sides. Now, I have in no instance seen the argument derivable from this class of facts fairly met. The supposed mistake of the Canonico Recuperò, or rather of Brydone, who argued that the "lowest of a series of seven distinct lavas of *Ætna*, most of them covered by thick intervening beds of rich earth, must have been fourteen thousand years old," has been often referred to in the controversy. Brydone or the Canon mistook, it has been said, beds of brown ashes, each of which might have been deposited during a single shower, for beds of rich earth, each of which would have taken centuries to form. The oldest of the series of lava-beds, therefore, instead of being fourteen thousand, might be scarce fourteen hundred years old. And if Brydone or the Canon were thus mistaken in their calculations, why may not the modern geologists be also mistaken in theirs ? Now, altogether waiving the question as to whether the ingenious traveller of eighty-six years ago was or was not mistaken in his estimate,—for to those acquainted with geologic fact in general, or more particularly with the elaborate descriptions of *Ætna* given during the last thirty years by Elie de Beaumont, Hoffman, and Sir Charles Lyell, the facts of Brydone, in their bearing on either the age of