

took place slowly and equably for forty days together, at the rate of about four hundred feet per day,—a rate not twice greater than that at which the tide rises in the Straits of Magellan, and which would have rendered itself apparent as but a persistent inward flowing of the sea : let us yet farther suppose that, from mayhap some volcanic outburst coincident with the depression, and an effect of the same deep-seated cause, the atmosphere was so affected, that heavy drenching rains continued to descend during the whole time, and that, though they could contribute but little to the actual volume of the flood,—at most only some five or six inches per day,—they at least *seemed* to constitute one of its main causes, and added greatly to its terrors, by swelling the rivers, and rushing downwards in torrents from the hills : the depression, which, by extending to the Euxine Sea and the Persian Gulf on the one hand, and to the Gulf of Finland on the other, would open up by three separate channels the fountains of the great deep, and which included, let us suppose, an area of about two thousand miles each way, would, at the end of the fortieth day, be sunk in its centre to the depth of sixteen thousand feet,—a depth sufficiently profound to bury the loftiest mountains of the district ; and yet, having a gradient of declination of but sixteen feet per mile, the contour of its hills and plains would remain apparently what they had been before,—the doomed inhabitants would see but the water rising along the mountain sides, and one refuge after another swept away, till the last witness of the scene would have perished, and the last hill-top would have disappeared. And when, after a hundred and fifty days had come and gone, the depressed hollow would have begun slowly to rise, and when, after the fifth month had passed, the ark would have grounded on the summit of Mount Ararat, all that could have been seen from the upper window of the vessel would be simply a boundless sea, roughened by tides, now flowing outwards, with a