

hold the inference to be quite as good as this theologian regards it. And see, we urge upon him, that you yourself do not suffer it to drop should you find that it commits you to the other side of the argument. Be at least as fair and honest as you say the infidels ought to have been. The six and a half metres of silt and slime,—representative, let us hold, of from five to six thousand years, rest, you say, on “a foundation of sand like that of the adjacent desert.” But have you ascertained on what the sand rests? I know nothing of that, replies the theologian; I had not even thought of that. But the geologist has thought of it, we reply; and has spent much time under the hot sun in ascertaining the point. For nearly three hundred miles,—from the inner boundaries of the delta to within a few hours’ journey of the cataracts,—the silt and sand rest on what is known as the “marine” or nummulitic limestone,—a formation of great extent, for it runs into the Nubian desert on the one hand, and into the Libyan desert on the other; and which, though it abounds in the animalcules of the European chalk, is held to belong, in at least its upper beds, which are charged with nummulites, to the earlier Eocene. Over this marine limestone there rests a newer formation, of later Tertiary age, which contains the casts of sea-shells, and whole forests of dicotyledonous trees, converted into a flint-like chert; and over all repose the sands and gravels of the desert. Underneath the silt of the river, then, and the sand of the desert, lie these two formations of the Tertiary division. The lower, which is of great thickness, must have been of slow formation. It is composed almost exclusively, in many parts, of microscopic animals, and abounds in others in fossil shells,—nautili, ostreadæ, turritella, and nummulites, with corals, sponges, the remains of crustacea, and the teeth of fishes. And between the period of its deposition and that of the formation which rests upon it, the surface of what is now Egypt must