

EXAGGERATIONS WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN OPERATIONS IN MINES.

The antiquity of certain mining operations has been greatly exaggerated. A modern author asserts, that the mines of the island of Elba, judging from the heaps of rubbish excavated from them, must have been worked for more than forty thousand years; but another author, who has also examined these rubbish heaps with care, reduces this period to rather more than five thousand years,(1) and then, in supposing that the ancients only excavated annually but a quarter of the quantity now extracted. But why should we believe that the Romans, who consumed so much iron in their military arrangements, should draw so little from these mines? Besides, if these mines had been worked for four thousand years only, how should iron have been known in days of such remote antiquity.

GENERAL CONCLUSION CONCERNING THE EPOCH OF THE LAST REVOLUTION.

I concur, then, with the opinion of MM. Deluc and Dolomieu, that if there be any thing determined in geology, it is, that the surface of our globe has been subjected to a vast and sudden revolution, not farther back than from five to six thousand years: that this revolution has buried and caused to disappear the countries formerly inhabited by man, and the species of animals now most known; that contrariwise it has left the bottom of the former sea

(1) See M. de Fortia d'Urban's History of China before the Deluge of Oxyges, p. 33.