

consideration, have been produced by the deluge recorded in Scripture. But whatever may have been the modifications of the earth's surface produced by that catastrophe, they must on the present occasion be wholly excluded from our consideration, for the changes to which geological inquiries relate are of a totally different character, and referable to periods long antecedent to that miraculous event.

I have now to direct your attention to those natural operations which, when properly investigated, will afford an easy explanation of facts of the highest interest and importance; will teach us how this limestone has been formed of brittle shells, and this marble filled with the coral to which it owes its beautiful markings—how wood has been changed into stone, and plants and fishes have become inclosed in the solid rock. I wish to explain to you that the ground on which we stand was not always dry land, but once constituted the bed of the sea—that the hills, now so smooth and rounded, and clothed with beautiful verdure, have been formed in the profound depths of the ocean, and may be regarded as vast tumuli, in which the remains of beings that lived and died in the early ages of the globe are entombed;—and that the weald of Kent and Sussex, that rich and cultivated district which fills up the area between the chalk hills of Sussex, Surrey, Kent, and Hampshire, was once the delta of a river, that flowed through a country which is now swept