

have spent their lives in the study of Geology, have arrived at the conclusion, that there exists irresistible evidence, that the date of the earth's first formation is far anterior to the epoch supposed to be assigned to it by Moses; and it is now admitted by all competent persons, that the formation even of those strata which are *nearest the surface*, must have occupied vast periods, probably millions of years, in arriving at their present state." Pp. 67, 68.

As another example, I may mention that Mr. Maclaren, in a valuable contribution to Geology, very recently published, estimates a single period of volcanic quiescence, during which strata of coal, shale, sandstone, and limestone were deposited over the site of the basaltic hill called Arthur's Seat, at Edinburgh, at five hundred thousand years.* Let it be observed that these are not random guesses, but founded upon knowledge and consideration.†

This is indeed a cumulative argument. It arises from a number and variety of considerations which, without exaggeration, we may call inexhaustible. The active geologist can scarcely enter upon any new field of observation, or repeat his survey of former ones, but he meets new proofs, or the strengthening of what he before possessed. The evidences, taken separately, are not equal in clearness and cogency. Some of them have a vast amount of independent weight: others are less striking, particularly to an unpractised observer: but they all bear in one direction: and their united force is such as to awaken surprise that any intelligent person can be found, who is capable of resisting it. It is the case, as in all arguments of this description, that the multitude and diversity tend to embarrass us, and the difficulty lies chiefly in selection and arrangement.

II. Another opinion which has been and perhaps still

* Geology of Fife and the Lothians, p. 37. Edinb. 1839.

† See Supplementary Note, B.