

public manner, and for which they had been hailed with flattering applause ; knowing also, by a very sure anticipation, that the concession to the power of evidence, the avowal of honest conviction, would expose them to the censures of some, who “ understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm,” though they speak and write with a confidence in the direct proportion of their incompetency to say or affirm upon good grounds.

The observations which, in their legitimate deductions, have produced this remarkable result, have been made by many persons, and those the best qualified, from their high attainments in all science, and the skill for making observations which long practice alone can give ; they have been made in many countries, near and far distant ; and they have been made with a circumspection, an exactitude, and an anxious watchfulness against the causes of mistake, which ought to command our admiration and gratitude.

Those laborious researches were chiefly directed to the *drift* of which we have been speaking, and to which was commonly assigned the name of *diluvium*. This is found to spread widely over the surface in many countries, either visibly covering the ground, or barely concealed by the turf and cultivable soil. During the more early period of geological progress, this diversified mass was, implicitly, and rather hastily though the error was natural, regarded as of one formation ; and thence it was an easy step of advance, in drawing the conclusion that a universal flood was the active and immediate cause of the whole, that this flood was among the most recent events affecting the exterior crust of the earth, and that it must have been identical with the great deluge of universal tradition and of sacred history. But the need was felt of closer examination, minutely distinguishing, and carefully classifying. The constitution, mineralogical or lithological (for we