

intervention of volcanic eruptions. The mind is overwhelmed by any attempt to reduce these periods to any comparison with our puny measures of time: and yet they belong to the most recent class of geological operations.*

It must not be forgotten that, in some situations, the characters of the rolled stones are thought to warrant the supposition of their having been driven and agitated upon the bottom of the deep ocean, by under-currents, acting during vast periods of time, when it is probable that the region, which now constitutes Europe, was occupied by the sea, and studded with a multitude of small islands.

The inference to which all these observations and reasonings lead, is that geological evidence is adverse to the admission of a deluge simultaneous and universal for every part of the earth's surface. Indeed I must add that in proportion to the care and accuracy with which the investigation of physical facts has been carried on, so the proofs have accumulated that there never was a period, since any vestiges occur of the existence of organized creatures, when the earth did not possess a varied face; partly dry land with its vegetable and animal occupiers, and partly the wide domain of the waters possessing their numerous inhabitants.

Another fact, which has an interesting reference to our present inquiry, must not be passed over, though I can only treat it with the utmost brevity. There is a district, in the southern part of the centre of France, more than forty miles in length and twenty in breadth, comprised in the ancient provincial divisions of Auvergne and Languedoc. In this district are the unquestionable cones, craters, and other characteristic remains of more than

* For this information I am indebted to Mr. Darwin's instructive and delightful volume, the third of the Narrative of the Voyages of Captains King and Fitzroy; p. 210, &c.