

hollow ;—a warning, surely, to all, whether they stand up for Revelation or against it, of the danger of being, like the witty Frenchman, “wicked over much.” “To us youths,” says Goethe, in his Autobiography, “with our German love of truth and nature, the factious dishonesty of Voltaire, and the perversion of so many worthy subjects, became more and more annoying, and we daily strengthened ourselves in our aversion from him. He could never have done with degrading religion and the sacred books for the sake of injuring priestcraft, as he called it ; and had thus produced in me many an unpleasant sensation. But when I now learned, that to weaken the tradition of a Deluge, he had denied all petrified shells, and only admitted them as *lusus naturæ*, he entirely lost my confidence ; for my own eyes had on the Baschberg plainly enough shown me that I stood on the bottom of an old dried-up sea, among the *exuvie* of its ancient inhabitants. These mountains had certainly been once covered with waves,—whether before or during the Deluge did not concern me : it was enough that the valley of the Rhine had been a monstrous lake,—a bay extending beyond the reach of eyesight : out of this I was *not* to be talked. I thought much more of advancing in the knowledge of lands and mountains, let what would be the result.” I know not in the whole history of opinion a more instructive passage than this. Little could Voltaire have known what he was in reality doing, or how egregiously he was overreaching himself, when, in labouring to bear down the evidence borne by fossils to the ancient upheavals and cataclysms, he suffered himself to make use of assertions and arguments so palpably unfair. And those who employ, in their zeal against the geologists, what is still exceedingly common,—the Voltairean style of argument,—especially if they employ it in what they deem the behalf of religion, might do well to inquire whether they are not in some little danger of producing the Voltairean result.