

No man acquainted with the general outlines of Palæontology, or the true succession of the sedimentary formations, has been able to believe, during the last half-century, that any proof of a general deluge can be derived from the *older* geologic systems,—Palæozoic, Secondary, or Tertiary. It has been held, however, by accomplished geologists, within even the last thirty years, that such proof might be successfully sought for in what are known as the superficial deposits. Such was the belief of Cuvier,—a man who, even in geologic science, which was certainly not his peculiar province, exerted a mighty influence over the thinking of other men. “I agree with MM. Deluc and Dolomieu in thinking,” we find him saying, in his widely-famed “Theory of the Earth,” “that if anything in geology be established, it is, that the surface of our globe has undergone a great and sudden revolution, the date of which cannot be referred to a much earlier period than five or six thousand years ago.” But from the same celebrated work we learn that Cuvier held that this sudden catastrophe,—occasioned, as he supposed, by an elevation of the sea-bottom and a submergence of the previously existing land,—had *not* been universal; seeing he could entertain the belief that the three great races of the human family,—Ethiopian, Mongolian, and Caucasian,—had all escaped from it in several directions. In referring to the marked peculiarities of the Mongolian race, so very distinct from the Caucasian, he merely intimates, that he was “tempted to believe their ancestors and ours had escaped the great catastrophe on different sides;” but in dwelling on the still more marked peculiarities of the negroes, we find him explicitly stating, that “all their characters clearly show that they had escaped from the overwhelming deluge at another point than the Caucasian and Altaic races; from which they had perhaps been separated,” he adds, “for a long time previous to the occurrence of that event.” For a season, geologists of high stand-