

the fossiliferous formations of the earth's crust within the space of one hundred and fifty days during which "the waters prevailed upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered." It was enough for them to obtain warrant from Scripture that, since the creation of animal life, the dry land had been submerged, and to adduce evidence from the rocks which they could claim as striking corroboration of the truth of the biblical story. Hence the "diluvialists," or those who claimed the Deluge as a leading geological event in the history of the earth, formed for many years a powerful body of controversialists, who owed their influence and popularity more to the impression that they were the champions of orthodoxy than to the convincing nature of their reasoning.

There could not, however, fail to be some observers who, after making themselves acquainted with the fossiliferous strata, found it impossible to believe that such piles of rock, crowded with a succession of organic remains, could have been the work of a transient inundation such as Noah's Flood confessedly was. Some of these men, struck with the rapidity with which detrital materials can be accumulated on the surface of the earth by volcanic outbursts, imagined that the stratified rocks might have been formed by the operation of active volcanoes. The volcanic eruptions of Italy and the Aegean Sea had greatly impressed the minds of Italian writers, who felt that if, as in the case of Monte Nuovo on the shore of the bay of Naples in year 1538, a hill, nearly 500 feet high, could be piled up in two days around a