

LECTURE EIGHTH.

THE NOACHIAN DELUGE

PART II.

A CENTURY has not yet gone by since all the organic remains on which the science of Palæontology is now founded were regarded as the wrecks of a universal deluge, and held good in evidence that the waters had prevailed in every known country, and risen over the highest hills. Intelligent observers were not wanting at even an earlier time who maintained that a temporary flood could not have occasioned phenomena so extraordinary. Such was the view taken by several Italian naturalists of the seventeenth century, and in Britain by the distinguished mathematician Hooke, the contemporary, and in some matters rival, of Newton. But the conclusions of these observers, now so generally adopted, were regarded both in Popish and Protestant countries as but little friendly to Revelation; and so strong was the opposite opinion, and so generally were petrifications regarded as so many proofs of a universal deluge, that Voltaire felt himself constrained, first in his Dissertation drawn up for the Academy at Bologna, and next in his article on shells in the Philosophical Dictionary, to take up the question as charged with one of the evidences of that Revelation which it was