

QUATERNARY EPOCH.

THE Quaternary epoch of the history of our globe commences at the close of the Tertiary epoch, and brings the narrative of its revolutions down to our own times.

The tranquillity of the globe was only disturbed during this era by certain cataclysms whose sphere was limited and local, and by an interval of cold of very extended duration; the *deluges* and the *glacial* period—these are the two most remarkable peculiarities which distinguished this epoch. But the fact which predominates in the Quaternary epoch, and distinguishes it from all other phases of the earth's history is the appearance of man, the culminating and supreme work of the Creator of the universe.

In this last phase of the history of the earth geology recognises three chronological divisions:—

1. The European Deluges.
2. The Glacial Period.
3. The creation of man and subsequent Asiatic Deluge.

Before describing the three orders of events which occurred in the Quaternary epoch, we shall present a brief sketch of the organic kingdoms of Nature, namely, of the animals and vegetables which flourished at this date, and the new formations which arose. Lyell, and some other geologists, designate this the POST-TERTIARY EPOCH, which they divide into two subordinate groups.—1. *The Post-Pliocene Period*; 2. *The Recent or Pleistocene Period*.

POST-PLIOCENE PERIOD.

In the days of Cuvier the Tertiary formations were considered as a mere chaos of superficial deposits, having no distinct relations to each other. It was reserved for the English geologists, with Sir Charles Lyell at their head, to throw light upon this obscure page of the earth's history; from the study of fossils, science has not only