

CONCLUSION.

FROM the proofs delivered in Art. VII. and VIII. it appears to be an established fact, that the whole surface of what is now dry land, was formerly buried under the waters of the ocean. It is equally clear, from Art. XII. that the flux and reflux, and other movements of the ocean, perpetually detach from the coasts and from the bottom of the sea, shells, and matter of every species; and that these are deposited in other places in the form of sediments, and give rise to the horizontal strata which every where appear. In the IX. Art. we have proved, that the inequalities on the surface of the globe have been occasioned by the motion of the waters of the sea; and that the mountains received their original formation from successive accumulations of sediments. It is likewise evident, from Art. XIII. that the currents which first followed the direction of these inequalities, afterwards bestowed on them their present figure, namely, their alternate and corresponding angles. From Art. VIII. and XVIII. it appears, that most of the matters detached from the coasts and from the bottom of the sea were, when deposited in sediments, in the form of a fine im-

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palpable powder, which entirely filled the cavities of shells, whether this powder was of the same nature, or only analogous to the matter of which the shells were composed. It is undeniable, from Art. XVII. that the horizontal strata, which have been formed by successive accumulations of sediments, and which at first were soft and ductile, acquired density and compactness in proportion as they dried; and that the perpendicular fissures in the strata derived their origin from the act of drying.

After perusing Art. X. XI. XIV. XV. XVI. XVII. XVIII. and XIX. we must be convinced, that the surface of the earth has been disfigured by many revolutions and particular vicissitudes, arising from the operation of the waters, and the effects of rains, frost, rivers, winds, subterraneous fires, earthquakes, inundations, &c. and, consequently, that the sea has alternately changed places with the dry land, especially in the first ages after the creation, when terrestrial substances were much softer than they are at present. It must however be acknowledged, that our judgment concerning the succession of natural revolutions cannot fail to be very imperfect; that we are still less competent judges of those changes which owe their birth to fortuitous events; and that the defect of historic records deprives us of the knowledge of particular facts. We desiderate both time and experience. We never consider, that, though our existence here

be extremely limited, Nature proceeds in her course. We are ambitious of condensing into our momentary duration both the past and the future, without reflecting that human life is only a point of time, a single fact in the history of the operations of God.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.