

considerable influence upon the actual degree of saltness in the sea, which must always augment, because the rivers incessantly carry down great quantities of fixed salts, which cannot be abstracted by evaporation. They remain, therefore, mixed with the general mass of waters, which are, in general, more salt in proportion to their distance from the mouths of rivers, and where the heat of the climate produces the greatest evaporation. That the second cause acts more powerfully than perhaps the first, is proved by this circumstance, that all lakes from which rivers issue are not salt, but almost all those which receive rivers and discharge none, are impregnated with salt. The Caspian Sea, Lake Aral, the Dead Sea, &c. owe their saltness solely to the salts transported thither by the rivers, and which cannot be carried off by evaporation.

### III.

#### *Of perpendicular Cataracts.*

IN p. 279, I remarked, that the cataract of Niagara in Canada was the most famous, and that it fell from a perpendicular height of 156 feet. I have since been informed\*, that there is a cataract in Europe, which falls from a

\* Note communicated to M. de Buffon by M. Freinoye.  
height

height of 300 feet. It is that of *Terni*, a small village on the road from Rome to Bologna. It is formed by the river Velino, which derives its source from the mountains of Abbruzzo. After passing by *Riette*, a village on the frontier of the kingdom of Naples, it falls into the Lac de Luco, which seems to be supplied by abundant sources; for the river runs out of it with more force than it enters, and proceeds to the foot of the mountain *del Marmore*, from which it is precipitated by a fall of 300 feet. It is received by a kind of abyss, from which it escapes with great tumultuousness. The celerity of its fall breaks the water with such force against the rocks and the bottom of the abyss, that a humid vapour arises, in which many rainbows of various sizes are formed by the rays of the sun; and, when the south wind blows, and drives this mist against the mountain, instead of several small rainbows, the whole cascade is crowned with a very large one.