

considerable the quantity of water, and the more mountainous the country. These floods are still more destructive, when the mountain rocks are of such a nature, as to afford little resistance to the impetuosity of the water; that is, when they are decomposed, loose in their texture, or have such a shape as to allow the water to act more easily on them. If we compare together all these circumstances, we shall find that mountainous countries are more liable to suffer from the effects of floods, than low and flat countries. To this, indeed, there are exceptions, as in the case of granite, and other rocks that long resist the effects of the most powerful and violent floods.

The water of these floods, in its progress towards the lower parts of the earth, flows either into ravines, and from these into valleys and beds of rivers; or when it meets with no ravine, scoops out a bed for itself, wherever it meets with a soft yielding rock or a slight hollow. The junction of these mountain-streams with the river of the district not only increases its power by the addition of a considerable quantity of water, but also causes it to overflow its banks, and deluge the neighbouring country, and thus to occasion great changes on its surface. The different loose materials are carried onwards to the sea, and are deposited at different distances from the mouth of the river; and these are proportioned to the magnitude of the masses. The finest or loamy parts reach the sea;
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