

The most probable explanation is that of the gradual diminution of the water from the surface of the earth. It was first obscurely hinted at by HERODOTUS, STRABO, and other ancient writers. MAILLET, French consul at Alexandria, in a work entitled *Telliamed*, published in 1740, was the first in modern times who directed the attention of philosophers to the theory of the diminution of the waters of the globe. This opinion was eagerly adopted, and keenly supported by LINNÆUS, CELSIUS, and other Swedish naturalists. They collected many facts, to shew that the waters of the Baltic are diminishing; and the scholars of Linnæus observed many similar appearances in other countries. Of these many interesting instances are detailed in the writings of PALLAS, GMELIN, FERBER, NIEBUHR, VANCOUVER, PERRON, and others. Even although all these proofs were wanting, it is evident that if the water remained unaltered in quantity, it would rise and overflow its boundary, owing to the great quantity of earthy matter which is daily carried into it by rivers and streams. This opinion, as supported by Linnæus and several others, met with considerable opposition. Many facts were brought forward, to shew, that while the land is left by the sea in one place, it is invaded in an equal proportion in another; and consequently that there is no diminution of the water. The invasion of the land by the sea, is, however, a comparatively rare occurrence;