

The sandstone mountains of Rosshire, formed of a strata nearly horizontal, exceed 3000 feet in altitude; and, on the low southern shores of England, the chalk beds are found in a vertical position; but it is, nevertheless, more common to find that mountainous countries are characterized by an inclined stratification. In some places, these strata are found to occupy the vertical angle; and, from that, they present every possible inclination down to the horizontal position. In a series of such inclined strata, presenting a conformity of inclination, the parallelism is not always perfect. It is not uncommon, on the contrary, to find that the angle of inclination gradually increases, or diminishes, according to the line on which the series is examined.

This is the simplest appearance of elevated strata: it is necessary to inquire into the causes which have been assigned for it; that the fundamental argument may not be unnecessarily incumbered with provisions for effects of a more complicated nature. The first question is, whether that distance between the sea and this its produce, is to be accounted for by the desertion of the latter, that is, by its subsidence to a lower level, or by the elevation of the land above the waters. It is unnecessary here to clear this question of the incumbrance it once suffered from those opinions which attributed the deposition of shells, and even of strata at these high elevations, to the imagined operations of the Mosaic deluge. The time of that reasoning, which equally despised philosophy and perverted Scripture, is past.

The subsidence of the ocean bears, on a first view, that appearance of facility which invariably misleads unreflecting observers and feeble reasoners. It has been ascertained by Ulloa, that the strata near Guanca-