

I have chosen this example, as the most disadvantageous to my theory, because it at first appears very difficult to conceive that the dust of the air, rain and dew, could produce strata of free earth thirteen feet thick ; but it ought to be observed, that it is very rare to find, especially in high lands, so considerable a thickness of cultivateable earth ; it is generally about three or four feet, and often not more than one. In plains surrounded with hills, this thickness of good earth is the greatest, because the rain loosens the earth of the hills, and carries it into the vallies ; but without supposing any thing of that kind, I find that the last strata formed by the waters are thick beds of marl. It is natural to imagine that the upper stratum had, at the beginning, a still greater thickness, besides the thirteen feet of marl, when the sea quitted the land and left it naked. This marl, exposed to the air, melted with the rain ; the action of the air and heat of the sun produced flaws, and reduced it into powder on the surface ; the sea would not quit this land precipitately, but sometimes cover it, either by the alternative motion of the tides, or by the extraordinary elevation of the waters in foul weather, when it mixed with this bed of marl,
mud,