

whole extent. The quantity of these marine productions is astonishing, and the number in many places so prodigious, that it appears scarcely possible that any should now remain in the sea ; it is by considering this innumerable multitude of shells, that no doubt is left of our earth having been a long time under the water of the ocean. The quantity found in a fossil, or petrified state, is beyond conception, and it is only from the number of those that have been discovered that we could possibly have formed an idea of their multiplicity. We must imagine, like those who reason on matters they never saw, that shells are only found at random, dispersed here and there, or in small heaps, as oyster shells thrown before our doors ; on the contrary, they form mountains, are met with in shoals of 100 or 200 miles length, nay, they may sometimes be traced through whole provinces in masses of 50 or 60 feet thick. It is from these circumstances alone that we can reason on the subject.

We cannot give a more striking example on this subject than the shells of Touraine. The following is the description given of them by the historian of the Academy\*.

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\* Anno 1720 ; page 5.