

pores, corals, and other productions of insects, which begin to unite and appear like stones; in others are fragments of stones, gravel, and often entire stones and marble. For example, in the Maldivian islands the buildings are made of a hard stone weighed up from several fathoms under water. At Marseilles very good marble is obtained from the bottom of the sea, which, so far from wasting and spoiling stone and marble, in our discourse on minerals, we shall prove they are formed and preserved therein; whereas the sun, earth, air, and rain water, corrupts and destroys them.

The bottom of the sea must be composed of the same matters as our habitable land, because the very same substances are contained in the one as the other; places are found at the bottom of the sea, covered with shells, madrepores, and other productions of sea matters, as we meet with on earth an infinity of quarries and banks of chalk and other matters replete with the same sort of shells, madrepores, &c. so that in all respects the dry parts of the globe resemble those covered by the water, both in composition of matters, and inequalities of the superficies.

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