

and thirdly, because they do not extend to any great distance. As there are a great number of volcanos at Peru, and as the foot of most of the mountains of the Cordeliers is covered with matters thrown out by eruptions, it is not astonishing that marine shells are not met with there, as they must have been calcined and destroyed by the fire; but I am persuaded, if we dig in argillaceous earth, which, according to M. Bourguet, is the common earth of the valley of Quito, shells would be found there, as they are in other places, at least where the ground is not covered, like that at the foot of the mountains, with matters thrown out of a volcano.

It has often been asked, why volcanos are all met with at the top of mountains? I think I have partly given a satisfactory answer to this question in the preceding article, but I have thought it necessary not to finish this without farther explaining what I have said on this subject.

The peaks or points of mountains were formerly covered with sand and earth, which the rain gradually washes along with it into the vallies, and has left only the rocks and stone, which forms the nucleus of the mountain.

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