

In 1618, the town of Pleurs, in Valtelino, was buried under the rocks, at the bottom of which it was situated. In 1678, there was a great inundation in Gascony, caused by the sinking of some pieces of one of the Pyrennees, which forced the water to spring forth that was contained in the subterraneous caverns of those mountains. In 1680, there happened a still greater in Ireland, by the sinking of a mountain into caverns filled with water. We may easily conceive the cause of these effects. It is well known there are subterraneous waters in an infinity of places; these waters carry off by degrees the sand and earth over which they pass, consequently may in time destroy the bed of earth on which the mountain rests; and this bed of earth being more deficient on one side than on the other, the mountain of course must be overthrown; but if this base is worn every where alike, the mountain will sink and not be overthrown.

Having remarked on the sinkings and other changes on the earth, occasioned by what may be called the accidents of nature, we ought not to pass over the perpendicular clefts found throughout the strata of the earth: these clefts
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