

they divide the strata in a more regular manner. These beds of stone are often many leagues in extent, without any interruption; we almost always meet with the same kind of stone in the opposite mountains, whether divided by a small neck or a valley; and the beds of stone disappear only in places where the mountain sinks and becomes level with some large plain. Sometimes, between the first stratum of vegetable earth and that of gravel, marl is found, which communicates its colour and other qualities to the other two: then the perpendicular clefts of the quarries which are beneath are filled with this marl, where it acquires an hardness in appearance equal to that of stone, but by exposing it to the air it crumbles, softens and becomes ductile.

In most quarries the beds of stone formed on the summit of a mountain are soft, and those near the base are hard; the first is commonly white, of so fine a grain as scarcely to be perceived; it becomes more grained and harder in proportion as it descends, and the lowest stone is not only harder than that of the upper, but it is also closer, more compact and heavier; its grain is fine and glossy, and often brittle, and breaks as clear as flint.

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