

surface of the dry land; and that they are more modern than those of marble and other stones which contain shells, and were originally formed by the sea. All these modern stones appear to be hard and solid when they are first hewn out, but when exposed to the weather, the air and rain presently dissolve them; their substance is so different from true stone, that when reduced into minute parts, to make sand of them, they are converted into a kind of earth or clay. Stalactites, and other stony concretions, which Tournefort took for vegetated marble, are not real stones, no more than those formed by the incrustations. We have already shewn that tufa is not of ancient formation, and must not be ranked in the class of stones. Tufa is an imperfect matter, differing from stone or earth, but which derives its origin from both by the means of rain water, as incrustations derive theirs from the deposit of the water of certain springs; therefore the strata of these matters are not ancient, nor been formed like the rest, by the sediments of the sea. The strata of turf are also modern, and have been produced by the successive assemblage of leaves and other perishable vegetables, and which are only preserved by a bitumous

VOL. II. E e earth.