

which impel the waters towards the shore with great impetuosity, and on which coasts downs are very frequent. In the like manner the easterly winds, when they remain any long time, so strongly drive the waters from the coasts of Syria and Phœnicia that the chain of rocks, which are covered with water during the westerly winds, are left quite dry. Thus downs are never composed of stone, or marble, like mountains formed in the bottom of the sea, because they have not been long enough under the water. In our discourse on minerals we shall shew that the sea possesses the power of petrification, and that the stones formed in the earth are quite different from those formed in the sea.

When I had just finished my Theory of the Earth, which I composed in 1744, I received from Mons. Barrere, his dissertation on the origin of figured stones, and I was pleased to find myself of the same opinion with this able naturalist, on the subject of the formation of downs, and the time the water remained on the earth which we inhabit; he recounts many alterations which have happened to the sea coasts: “*Aiguis-mortes*, which is now more than a league and a half from the sea, was