

sea. Homer tells us that the island of Pharos was 24 hours voyage from Egypt, and at present it is almost contiguous to it. The soil of Egypt has not the same depth of good ground throughout its extent, it lessens as we approach the sea. Near the borders of the Nile there is sometimes near thirty feet depth of good earth, whereas at the extremity of the inundation there is scarcely more than seven inches.\* The town of Damietta, at present more than 10 miles from the sea, in 1243 was a seaport. The town of Fooah, which, 300 years ago, was situate at the mouth of the Canopic, a branch of the Nile, is now more than seven leagues from it. Within 40 years the sea has retreated half a league from before Rosetta and Idern.

The great rivers of America, and even those which have been but lately discovered, have suffered great alterations at their mouths. Charlevoix, speaking of the river Mississipi, says, that at its mouth, below New Orleans, the country forms a point of land which does not appear to be very ancient, for by digging but a little into the earth water is met with; besides, the quantity of small islands which

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have

\* See Shaw's Travels, vol. II. page 185, and 186.