

materials of the precipitations. In the first and more generally admitted case, the water was so different from the present water, whether salt or fresh, that we cannot infer from the inhabitants of the latter any thing concerning the inhabitants of the former ; but we can confidently maintain, that a greater resemblance prevails between our sea and land water, than between either the one or the other, and that fluid which was inhabited by the shell-fish. In other respects, there remains no other difference between fresh and salt water formations, but that the bottom upon which the former is placed once contained land water ; a fact worthy of observation : but the notion of enclosed basins, and of isolated formations originating in them, the way in which fresh water formations are supposed to have taken place, remained a long time unsatisfactory. Finally, we may be permitted to ask, upon what grounds they considered themselves entitled to ascribe to the former sea the continual possession of a portion of salt, while the salt precipitates appear only at particular intervals, and after long interruptions ? If the sea occasionally contained a great, and sometimes a very small, quantity of salt, it might equally be at times altogether without it. And yet it deserves to be remembered, that the beds of rock, to which the salt formations are most nearly related, contain no petrifications ; that, therefore, the so-called marine animals are wanting in those periods during which we have any direct evidence of the presence of salt water.

There is, however, a geognostic fact, which, in preference to all others, has been cited in evidence of violent revolutions and deluges, that is, the appearance of conglomerates or of reproduced kinds of stone. Indeed, there might