

as are to be met with on the coasts of New Holland. We can have a clear idea of them from the description given by Péron. (1)

#### STEEP SHORES.

When, on the contrary, the coast is lofty, the sea, which can deposite nothing, is perpetually destroying: its waves wear away the bank, and destroy the summit, because the higher parts, being left without foundation, are incessantly falling away into the sea, where they are tossed about by the waves until the softer and looser particles are lost. The harder portions, by dint of continued friction, form those round pebbles, or that accumulated strand which serves to strengthen the base of the steeps.

Such is the action of the waters on terra firma, which consists only in small levellings, and those not indefinite. The falling materials of the mountain tops into the valleys; their particles, those of the hills and plains, conveyed to the sea; the alluvial deposits extending the coasts at the expense of the heights,—are the limited effects which vegetation has in some degree put a boundary to; which suppose, besides the pre-existence of mountains, valleys, in short, of all the inequalities of the globe, and which consequently could not themselves have produced those inequalities. The downs are a still more limited phenomenon, both in height and horizontal extent; they have no relation to those enormous masses into the origin of which geology seeks to penetrate.

As to the operation of the waves in their own ele-

(1) In his 'Voyage aux Terres Australes.'