

bedded. Still less do we find that it deposits any portion of those more solid and more flinty layers which preceded the formation of shell-reefs.

All these causes united would not perceptibly affect the level of the sea, would not raise a single layer above that level, and assuredly would not produce the least hillock on the surface of the earth. It has been asserted, with some appearance of probability, that the sea gradually decreases, and that observations to that effect have been made on the shores of the Baltic.(1) But whatever may be the causes of these variations, it is certain that they are not universal; that in the greatest number of ports, where there are so many persons interested in observing the height of the sea, and when fixed and ancient works afford so many means of computing these variations, the mean level is constantly the same; there is no general sinking; there is no universal encroaching. In other places, as Scotland and various parts in the Mediterranean, they have supposed, on the contrary, that the sea has become higher, and now covers shores formerly above its level.(2)

(1) It is a prevalent opinion in Sweden, that the sea lowers, and that we can ford or even walk dry-shod in many places where formerly it was impassable. Very learned men have espoused this popular idea, and to so great an extent is M. de Buch imbued with it, that he supposes that gradually the whole soil of Sweden will become dry land. But it is singular that no regular and precise observations to confirm a theory broached so long, have been made, and made public, which would leave no doubt, if, as Linnæus says, this difference of level be as much as four or five feet annually.

(2) Mr. R. Stevenson, in his observations on the bed of the North Sea, and the British Channel, asserts that the level of these seas has become constantly and sensibly higher during the last three centuries. Fortis says the same thing of certain places in the Adriatic; but the example of the temple of Serapis, near Pozzuola, proves that the borders of this sea are in many places of a nature occasionally to elevate themselves