

VOLCANOES.

The action of volcanoes is still more limited and more locally confined than any others which we have adverted to. Although we have no clear idea of the means by which nature feeds these fierce furnaces at depths so profound, we yet judge clearly, by their effects, of the alterations which they have occasioned on the earth's surface. When a volcano appears, after some shocks, some earthquakes, it finds an opening. Stones and ashes are thrown far and wide; lava is vomited forth; the more fluid portion glides away in long streams; the more solid is stopped at the edges of the aperture which it serves to elevate, and forms a cone terminated by a crater. Thus volcanoes accumulate on the surface, (after having in a measure modified them,) materials before buried in the depths of the earth; they form mountains; they have in earlier ages covered some parts of our continents with them; they have suddenly produced islands in the midst of the ocean; but these mountains, these islands are always composed of lava, all their materials have undergone the action of fire; they are distributed as materials must be which emanate from an elevated spot. Volcanoes do not elevate, nor overthrow the layers which lie along their apertures; and if certain causes have operated from their abysses, and assisted in overthrowing vast mountains, it has not been

and sink again. But, on the other hand, there are thousands of quays, roads, and other places made along the coast by the Romans, from Alexandria to Belgium, the relative level of which has never altered.