

drifted sand, becoming dry at the reflux of the tide, is carried by the wind inland, and in some situations is accumulated in such quantities as to form ranges of hills, which in their progress overwhelm fertile tracts, and engulf churches, and even entire villages. These sand banks or downs, loose and fluctuating as they are in their first stage of advancement, become, under certain circumstances, fixed, and converted into solid stone—a process to which we shall presently advert.

39. BED OF THE OCEAN.—But the production of beach, gravel, and sand, on the shores, and the drifting of sand inland, are effects far less important than those which are going on in the profound depths of the ocean. In the tranquil bed of the sea, the finer materials, held in mechanical or chemical suspension by the waters, are precipitated and deposited, enveloping and embedding their inhabitants, together with the remains of such animals and vegetables of the land as may be floated down by the streams and rivers. But, in the beautiful language of Mrs. Hemans,—

“The depths have more! What wealth untold
Far down and shining through their stillness lies!
They have the starry gems, the burning gold,
Won from a thousand royal argosies!

“Yet more—the depths have more! Their waves have roll’d
Above the cities of a world gone by—
Sand hath filled up the palaces of old,
Sea-weed o’ergrown the halls of revelry.