

Let us now see what our several points of circumstantial evidence amount to. First, then, the bottom of the cave must have stood at one time at least four feet over its present level, and at least fourteen feet over the level of the two sea-caves outside ; and yet, just as the sea now covers *them*, must the sea at that remote period have covered *it*. The incessant wave must have resounded along these silent walls as it dashed sullenly onwards, and awakened all their echoes with its harsh rattle as it rolled back. The cavern, at that early time, like all the other deep-sea caves of the coast, could have had no crust of stalactites : its sides and roof must have been as dark and bare as the sides and roofs of the caves outside, where the spray washes away every film of calcareous matter ere it has been deposited for half a day. A sudden elevation of the coast took place, and sudden it must have been, for the loose gravel beach, with its finely comminuted shells, was at once raised beyond the influence of the tides ; the stalactitical ridges began to form on the walls, and the sea-gravel to consolidate—where these terminated beneath, and the petrifying water oozed through—into the brecciated cornice. But the waves from the lower line had been encroaching inwards, bit by bit, from the cavern's mouth, washing down the floor to their own reduced level, until they had at length scooped it all out, and left but the hardened projections to mark where it had stood. The cave, though now occupied by only the higher tides, had again become, in some sort, a sea-cave, when a second elevation of the land raised it to its present level. The covering of stalactites thickened along its sides ; its minute mosses lived, died, and became marble ; and, as age succeeded age, the dark recesses in its roof were cheered by the unerring affections of instinct ; and brood after brood, reared with assiduous labour to maturity, went forth, some again to return to their hereditary cells, some to take up their abodes with man. I need scarce say,