

He remarks, in conclusion, that "it follows, from all the observations here recited, that the deposits laid down by the sea along its shores are sandy and loamy; that these deposits do not extend far out to sea; that, consequently, the elevation of new mountains in the sea by the deposition of sediment is a process very difficult to conceive; that the transport of the sediment as far as the equator is not less improbable; and that still more difficult to accept is the suggestion that the sediment from our continent is carried into the seas of the New World. In short, we are still very little advanced towards the theory of the earth as it now exists. All the systems which have been devised in this subject are full of difficulties which appear to me to be insoluble." He proposes, finally, to return, should the occasion present itself, to these questions, which are "all the more interesting the more difficult they are to elucidate."¹

It cannot be claimed that such enlightened views regarding the subaerial degradation of the land were now for the first time proclaimed to the world. Guettard had been to some extent preceded by other writers. Thus the English naturalist Ray, some ninety years before, had pointed out how in course of time the whole dry land might be washed into the sea (*ante*, p. 74). Generelli, too, in his defence of Lazzaro Moro, twenty years before the appearance of Guettard's volume, had dwelt on the evidence of the constant degradation of the mountains by running water, as an argument for the existence of some other natural cause, whereby, from time to time, land was

¹ Pp. 402, 403.