

that contains so many perfect fishes around the Hartz, seems to offer two other causes, either of which may have produced their sudden death.*

From what has been said respecting the general history of fossil organic Remains, it appears that not only the relics of aquatic, but also those of terrestrial animals and plants, are found almost exclusively in strata that have been accumulated by the action of water. This circumstance is readily explained, when we consider that the bones of all dead creatures that may be left uncovered upon dry land, are in a few years entirely destroyed by various animals, and the decomposing influence of the atmosphere. If we except the few bones that may have been collected in caves, or buried under land slips, or the products of volcanic Eruptions, or in sand drifted by the winds,† it is only in strata formed

* Under the turbulent conditions of our planet, whilst stratification was in progress, the activity of volcanic agents, then frequent and intense, was probably attended also with atmospheric disturbances affecting both the air and water, and producing the same fatality among the then existing Tribes of fishes, that is now observed to result from sudden and violent changes in the electric condition of the atmosphere. M. Agassiz has observed that rapid changes in the degree of atmospheric pressure upon the water, affect the air within the swimming bladders of fishes, sometimes causing them to be distended to a fatal degree, and even to burst. Multitudes of dead fishes, that have thus perished during tempests, are often seen floating on the surface, and cast on the shores of the lakes of Switzerland.

† Captain Lyon states, that in the deserts of Africa, the bodies of camels are often desiccated by the heat and dryness