

contained water forcing a place to issue, that is the cause of these perpendicular fissures, for I have often observed that the two sides of those fissures, answer throughout their whole height, as exactly as two sides of a split piece of wood; their insides is rough and irregular, whereas if they had been made by the motion of the water, they would have been smooth and polished; therefore these cracks must be produced suddenly and at once, or by degrees in drying, like the flaws in wood, and the greatest part of the water they contained evaporated through the pores. The divisions of these perpendicular cracks vary greatly as to the extent of their openings; some of them being not more than half an inch, others increasing to one or two feet; there are some many fathoms, and form those precipices so often met with in the Alps and other high mountains. The small ones are produced by drying alone, but those which extend to several feet are the effects of other causes; for instance, the sinking of the foundation on one side while the other remained unmoved; if the base sinks but a line or two, it is sufficient to produce openings of many feet in a rock of considerable height. Sometimes rocks which are founded on clay or sand,
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