

sand in Arabia and Africa; that they cover plains with it; and that they frequently transport this sand to great distances, and many miles into the sea, where it accumulates in such quantities as to form banks, downs, and even islands. It is also known that hurricanes are the scourge of the Antilles, Madagascar, and other countries, where they act with such fury, as to sweep away trees, plants, and animals, together with the soil which gave them subsistence: they force rivers to ascend and become dry; they produce new ones; they overthrow rocks and mountains; they make holes and gulphs in the earth, and entirely change the face of those unfortunate countries where they take place. Happily there are but few climates exposed to the impetuosity of those dreadful agitations of the air.

But the greatest and most general changes in the surface of the earth are produced by rains, floods, and torrents. Their origin proceeds from the vapours which the sun raises above the surface of the ocean, and which the wind transports through every climate. These vapours, which are sustained in the air, and conveyed at the will of the winds, are stopped in their progress by the tops of the hills which they