

These depths are a natural consequence of the elevation of mountains; they receive the waters and the earth which flow from the mountains, and the soil is generally very fertile, and are fully inhabited.

The precipices which are between rocks are frequently formed by the sinking of one side, the base of which sometimes gives way more on one side than the other, by the action of the air and frost, which splits and divides them, or by the impetuous violence of torrents. But these abysses, or vast and enormous precipices, found at the summits of mountains, and to the bottom of which it is not possible sometimes to descend, although they are above a mile, or a mile and a half round, have been formed by the fire. These were formerly the funnels of volcanos, and all the matter which is there deficient has been ejected by the action and explosion of these fires, which are since extinguished through a defect of combustible matter. The abyss of Mount Ararat, of which M. Tournefort gives a description in his voyage to the Levant, is surrounded with black and burnt rocks, as one day the abysses of Etna, Vesuvius, and other volcanos, will be,
when