

Book I. SUPERIOR ORDER.

Formations above the Chalk.

Chap. I. PRELIMINARY.*

Section I. A. *General view of the highest and most recent deposits.*

(a) *Alluvial.* IN delivering, according to the plan proposed in the introduction, an account of the Geological situation of England, and tracing the disposition of the materials which constitute its mineral masses, following the order of that disposition in descending from the formations which occupy the highest place in the series and are therefore of the most recent origin, to those which serve as the basis to all the rest and must therefore have been formed at the earliest period; the first distinction which claims our attention, is that between those formations which result from causes still in operation and which actually proceed under our own observation, and those which have proceeded from a former and different order of things. The former, which of course where they occur must occupy a position superior to all other formations, are however of very limited extent; they consist in the accumulation of sand and shingle along the sea coast and particularly in estuaries; in the formation of new lands on the banks of rivers and lakes by the alluvial depositions they carry down, assisted by the growth of aquatic plants; in the growth and increase of tracts of marshland, from the cause last specified; in the accretion of calcareous tufa from the deposits of springs running through limestone rocks and the like. These formations appear to have proceeded uninterruptedly, as at present, from the period when our continents assumed their present form, and the actual system of what may be called geological causes began to ope-

* By the Rev. W. D. Conybeare, F.R.S. &c.