

of trees, and plants growing near the sea, are enveloped in these aggregates; and thus are produced what might be denominated *indurated downs*, such as we see upon the coasts of New Holland, and of which a precise idea may be formed from the description given of them by Peron *.

Formation of Cliffs or Steep Shores.

On the other hand, when the coast is high, the sea, which is thus prevented from throwing up any thing, exercises a destructive action upon it. Its waves, by sapping the foundation, cause the superincumbent portion of the face of the cliff, thus deprived of support, to be incessantly falling down in fragments. These fragments are tumbled about by the billows, until the softer and more divided parts disappear. The harder portions, from being rolled in contrary directions, assume the form of boulders and pebbles; and these, at length, accumulate in sufficient quantity to form a rampart, by which the bottom of the cliff is protected against farther depredations.

Such is the action of water upon the solid land; and we see, that it consists almost entirely in reducing it to lower levels, but not indefinitely.

* Voyage aux Terres Australes, t. i. p. 161.