

and often much greater vertical thickness. If, in order to get rid of this difficulty, we admit a volume of water incomparably larger than the present volume of the rivers to which so great effects are attributed, we must admit much more elevated and more extended mountains, to give rise to so great a volume of water.

Were we only detained by this hypothesis, and did not direct observation oppose itself to the admission of this disaggregating power and its effect, we might pass it over; but two other observations render the hypothesis inadmissible.

2. Historical records equally concur to prove that the rivers possessed of the greatest power which can be attributed to them, have no appreciable corroding action upon the rocks on which they move.

No one has maintained that the greater number of the cascades, cataracts, or rapids, long known and mentioned on account of their celebrity, have disappeared or have even sensibly diminished, nor consequently that the natural dike which the water had encountered in its course, has been worn or even completely disrupted. We do not find that cascades have changed into cataracts, and these again into rapids. The cataracts of the Nile have been spoken of from time immemorial, as always opposing an obstacle to the navigation of that river; the same is the case with those of the Danube, of the fall of the Rhine at Schaffhausen, &c. The famous cascades of the Alps and Pyrenees have been cited ever since writing was in use; and among all these examples we can scarcely find two or three cascades that have been lowered, or cataracts reduced in their level.

The only cascade which we can point out as having