

able proportion to the entire surface of the globe. A few inches of depth would be its utmost amount.* It is indeed the fact that upon a small area of the earth's surface, yet the most extensive that comes within experience or natural possibility, heavy and continued rain for a few days often produces effects fearfully destructive, by swelling the streams and rivers of that district: but the laws of nature, as to evaporation and the capacity of atmospheric air to hold water in solution, render such a state of things over the whole globe, not merely improbable, but absolutely impossible.

If we then turn to the waters of "the great deep," we obtain the idea of an irruption of the sea, spreading desolation and death over the land. Such irruptions have often occurred over low countries bordering upon flat coasts. But all the water that could be derived from this cause would produce only an increased diffusion over the land, which would be accompanied by a subtraction of water from the sea, to the same amount. The absolute quantity of water, for the entire globe, would remain precisely the same.

But we are especially called to take notice of the terms used in the sacred narrative, which appear to exclude the idea of a sudden and violent irruption; and to present that of an elevation and afterwards a subsidence, comparatively gentle, so that the ark was lifted, floated, and borne over the awful flood in a manner which we might call calm and quiet, if compared with an in-burst of the sea by the immediate breaking of a barrier. The words are, "The waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth: and the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters." In relating

* Seven inches, according to Mr. Rhind, in his *Age of the Earth*, p. 100. Edinb. 1839.