

to be above the level of the waters; beneath which, it may again disappear; as it has done at different previous periods." \*

The solid portions of our earth, are all made up of various combinations of the elementary principles, described in a former chapter. The relative situations these principles occupy in the earth's structure; the endlessly varied proportions in which they exist; and all the infinite diversity of their properties, it is the business of the geologist, and of the mineralogist to inquire into, and explain: the observations, therefore, which we have to make on the present part of our subject, will be chiefly confined to the waters of the ocean; and to the atmosphere.

## SECTION II.

### *Of the Ocean.*

THE waters of the ocean are not pure, but contain, as is well known, a variety of saline matters in solution. Indeed, when we reflect upon the immense relative extent, and general circumstances of the ocean, we may naturally suppose, that its waters will contain more or less, of every

\* De la Beche's Geological Manual, p. 2.