

quantity, and with more celerity than those which are not disintegrated. The condition of rocks with regard to the attraction of water, affects, in a different manner, the humidity of soil; for, by this attraction, moisture may as well be abstracted from, as imparted to, the loose earth or soil by which rocks are covered. Part of the moisture which vegetable earth or soil derives from the atmosphere passes into the subjacent mass of rock, but this may again be compensated by evaporation; on which account the soil of such rocks as have but a small attraction for water usually dries up more readily than soils whose solid substratum attracts and retains the moisture in a greater degree.

It is probable that the structure of rocks has also a greater, and not less, diversified influence upon the humidity of productive soil. Solid rocks, which are not traversed by numerous perpendicular fissures penetrating to a considerable depth, allow the water to remain in the soil; but columnar and schistose rocks, with perpendicular fissures, and strata declined from the horizontal position, draw off the water from the soil covering their surface, into lower places, where it often re-appears under the form of springs. In these circumstances, we find a partial explanation of the great difference between the humidity of soil covering a surface of solid granite, and that lying upon limestone, which is intersected by numerous fissures. Granitic mountains are often furnished with marshes, whereas, on the other hand, the dryness of the soil upon calcareous mountains is generally excessive\*, the cause of which phenomenon

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\* The dryness depends chiefly, if not entirely, on the fissures or divisions in the rocky base of the soil; for, in some parts of Sologne in