

until a small protuberance of solid limestone is formed, nearly the shape of a drop of water. This protuberance becomes enlarged by water trickling over it, and takes the shape of an icicle. The water that drops upon the floors of caverns, sometimes deposits a thick coat of limestone over the whole floor; but in those parts where the drops fall most frequently, a more copious deposition of calcareous earth takes place, in the form of tubercles: these are the stalagmites. In some instances the stalactites and stalagmites increase, until they nearly fill the whole cavern.