



Section of a sand-bank in the bed of the Arve at its confluence with the Rhone, showing the stratification of deposits where currents meet.

Constant interchange of land and sea. — I may here conclude my remarks on deltas, observing that, imperfect as is our information of the changes which they have undergone within the last three thousand years, they are sufficient to show how constant an interchange of sea and land is taking place on the face of our globe. In the Mediterranean alone, many flourishing inland towns, and a still greater number of ports, now stand where the sea rolled its waves since the era of the early civilization of Europe. If we could compare with equal accuracy the ancient and actual state of all the islands and continents, we should probably discover that millions of our race are now supported by lands situated where deep seas prevailed in earlier ages. In many districts not yet occupied by man, land animals and forests now abound where ships once sailed ; and on the other hand, we shall find, on inquiry, that inroads of the ocean have been no less considerable. When to these revolutions, produced by aqueous causes, we add analogous changes wrought by igneous agency, we shall, perhaps, acknowledge the justice of the conclusion of Aristotle, who declared that the whole land and sea on our globe periodically changed places.*

* See p. 15.