

seems exceedingly difficult to conceive how, in an open sea, subject, of course, like all open seas, to such equalizing influences as the ruffling of the winds and the deeper stirrings of the tides, any one tract of water should become so largely saturated as to throw down portions of its salt, when the surrounding tracts, less strongly impregnated, retained theirs. I have seen a fish-curer's vat throwing down its salt when surcharged with the mineral, but never any one stronger patch of the brine doing so ere the general mixture around it had attained to the necessary degree of saturation. And the lagoon theory, though apparently more tenable than any of the others, seems scarce less enveloped in difficulty. The few inches, at most few feet, of salt which line the bottoms and sides of the lagoons of the tropics, are but poor representatives of deposits of salt like those of the Upper Old Red of Cheshire; and Geology, as has been already indicated, has its deposits huger still. Were one of the vast craters of the moon—Tycho or Copernicus—to be filled with sea-water to the brim, and the fires of twenty Ætnas to be lighted up under it, we could scarce expect as the result a greater salt-making than that of Cordova or Cracow. A bed of salt a hundred feet in thickness would demand for its salt-pan a lagoon many hundred feet in depth; and lagoons many hundred feet in depth, in at least the present state of things, are never evaporated.*

* Dr. Friedrich Parrot, the Russian traveller, gives a brief account, in his "Journey to Ararat" (1836), of the salt lakes that now mark the site of the inland sea which seems to have once occupied a large portion of the central basin of Asia. Their salt, however, though abundant and valuable regarded as an article of traffic and a source of revenue, would form, we find, but an inconsiderable geologic deposit, — a stratum scarce equal to the thinnest of the unworkable seams at Stoke Prior or Northwich. "At the western extremity of the expansion of the river Manech, on its northern shore," says the traveller, "are a number of salt lakes,