

nature, vastly more enormous deposits of this mineral came to be formed ; just as our writers on the Coal Measures refer, on a similar understanding, to existing swamps and mosses.

We are told by Major Harris, in his "Highlands of Ethiopia," that when on his journey, he reached, with his party, near the Abyssinian frontier, a desert valley, occupied by a salt lake, the *Bahr Assal*, which forms a prolongation of the Gulf of Tadjura. A broad bar of lava had cut off its waters from those of the gulf ; and, fed by no rivers, and exposed in a burning climate to the unmitigated rays of the sun, intensified by reflection from hot rocky mountains, they had shrunk into "an elliptical basin, seven miles in its transverse axis, half-filled with smooth water of the deepest cerulean hue, and half with a solid sheet of glittering, snow-white salt, the offspring of evaporation." Here, at least, was one extensive bed of salt in the forming ; nor is it difficult to conceive how : the work of evaporation completed, and the entire lake rendered a white, solid mass, some general sinking of the surface continued, till the waves of the outer gulf toppled for a time over the lava bar, and then, succeeded, as such sinkings so often were during the Carboniferous period, by a slight elevatory movement, might give to it a second supply of brine with which to double its thickness. We find no lava bars in the saliferous sandstone ; but sand-bars raised by the surf on a flat arenaceous coast during a slow and equable sinking of the surface, would meet the emergencies of our theory less clumsily, and better. Let us conceive, then, along a range of flat coast extending from the northern parts of Lancashire to the Bristol Channel, a chain of lagoons, some of lesser, some of larger extent, and separated from the main sea by sand spits or bars raised by the surf ; let us suppose the climate to be at least as warm as that on the African shore of the Red Sea, in which the salt of