

the *Bahr Assal* is forming ; let us imagine a subsidence of the land going on so exceedingly slow and gradual as to be counter-balanced by the deposition of earthy matter taking place in the sea on the one hand,—by the crystallization of the salt in the lagoons, fed by occasional supplies of salt water, on the other,—and by the rise of the bar, ever operated upon by the surf, in the line between. A paroxysm of sudden subsidence would, of course, bring the formation of the salt-bed to a close, and cover it up with a stratum of sand or marl ; a slight elevatory movement succeeding the paroxysm would have the effect of rendering the superimposed stratum the foundation of a second lagoon and second bed of salt. According as the periods between the elevatory movements and the paroxysms of subsidence were long or short, the beds of salt would be thick or thin. Among the five beds that occur at Stoke Prior, in the vicinity of Droitwich, there is one more than thirty feet in depth, and one not more than six inches. According as the duration of the term of submergence was extended or brief, would be the thickness or thinness of the bars by which the salt-beds were separated. At Stoke Prior, one of these separating bars falls short of three feet, while another somewhat exceeds twenty-four. As the lagoons chanced to be well or ill protected from the introduction of extraneous matter, the salt which formed in them would be pure or impure. One of the Stoke Prior beds contains full twenty-five per cent. of reddish marl, while another is so unmixed with earthy matter that it might be used, without any previous refining preparation, for the purpose of the fish-curer. And thus deposition after deposition would take place, and, as in the Coal Measures, subsidence succeed subsidence, until the entire Saliferous system would come to be formed. It has been started as an objection to the lagoon theory, that the salt-beds contain no organic