

If rivers were always nearly of an equal fulness, the best means of diminishing their rapidity, and confining them within their banks, would be to enlarge their channel; but as almost all rivers are subject to increase and diminish, to confine them we must retrench the channel, because in shallow waters, if the channel is very broad, the water which passes in the middle hollows a winding bed, and when it begins to swell follows the direction it took in this particular bed, and striking forcibly against the banks of the channel destroys them and does great injuries. These effects of the water's fury might be prevented by making, at particular distances, small gulphs in the earth; that is, by cutting through one of these banks to a certain distance in the land. In order that these gulphs might be advantageously placed, they should be made in the obtuse angle of the river, for then the current of the water in turning would run into them, and of course its velocity would be diminished. This mode might be proper to prevent the fall of bridges in places where it is not possible to make bars near the bridge which sustain the action of the weight of the water.

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