

them. Not only was there never another period of the world when the supply of carbon was so great, but never, before or after, were those frequent and gentle oscillations so long continued which were the agencies in burying the successive crops of vegetable growths. At least, such frequent oscillations never before or since occurred at a time when the level of the continents so nearly coincided with the level of the sea. And, lastly, these very oscillations, while they were subserving this collateral end—which was still important enough to have been the sole and ultimate end—were only the symptoms of a great continental preparation, which was going on from the region of the Atlantic to that of the Pacific shores, and which had been in progress, and attended by similar, though much less frequent oscillations, from that remote period when the shrinking of the molten nucleus of the world located those huge wrinkles in the stiffening crust which were to be afterward deepened into the beds of the two great oceans. Verily, here is a scope and comprehensiveness of plan which must command our highest admiration.

The same general preparatory movements were still to be continued—continued till the finished earth had been elaborated for the reception of man. It would seem that the frequent oscillations of the Coal Period were but the tremblings of the strained crust, pushed to the very verge of violent rupture by the two enormous masses of water. By turns, the central areas had been protruded above the waves, and by turns the tension had found relief, and the uplifted crust dropped back for a time to its submarine horizon. Not before the collateral uses of these phenomena had been subserved did the tension of the crust reach the measure of a grand upheaval. After trembling for ages beneath the immense and increasing pressures of two great oceans, it burst up in enormous folds thousands of