

deep ocean's bed has ever been the deep ocean's bed, and that the first ridge of land was the nucleus of the continent, and the trend of its shores a prophecy of the coast-lines of our day?

Here, then, immeasurable ages before the creation of man—before even a living thing had crawled in the waters of the sea—Nature had distinctly staked out the birth-place of American freedom, and fenced in one inclosure the vast area between the Atlantic and the Pacific—between the great lakes and the Mexican Gulf—and forebore to raise a single separating barrier from one extreme of the empire of freedom to the other. And, through all the chances of following revolutions, she has never erected an Alpine boundary to thwart her purpose in the unity of the continent.

By successive upheavals belt after belt was added to the area of the land. Even a phase of continental history which seems somewhat exceptional was wrought out by the strictest adherence to the established methods. When the time arrived for the creation of land animals, the shrinkage of the nucleus had proceeded to a point which subjected the crust to the most enormous lateral pressures. Uneasy in every attitude, it maintained a perpetual oscillation—I say perpetual, though in movements so vast a hundred years are as a moment. Vegetation, which was appointed the scavenger of the atmosphere, gathered up its freight of carbon, and a well-timed subsidence of the surface inundated the carbonaceous accumulation, and buried it in mud and sand far from the reach of the destroying influence of the atmosphere. A hundred times the process was repeated; and so it happened that when the atmosphere was purified, the tension of the crust could be no longer borne, and one grand convulsion rolled up the Appalachians in their hundred folds; and there, nicely assort-