

stately river is floating off the land—not noisily, but sullenly and angrily, as if the waters had some great wrong to avenge upon the land. And all these filchings from the mountain and the plain are restored again to the sea. Old Ocean is receiving back his own. The rivers are his allies, and right faithfully do they forage to supply the cravings of his insatiate maw.

We witness such work in progress during the brief moment of our tarry upon the earth. We look back along this line of operations, and discern for the first time the gigantic results which have already been achieved by the wearing agency of waters. Not during the lifetime of Adam's race alone, but during the age of quadrupeds which preceded him—through the dynasty of reptiles, still more ancient, have these denuding forces been ceaselessly engaged in scraping, and gouging, and scarring the face of Nature. River-beds have been deeply excavated and again obliterated by a plethora of rubbish poured forward by some more gigantic operation. Lake basins have been scooped out—Niagara gorges dug—square miles of land, with its underlying rocky floors, have been swept away. From the summits of the Catskill Mountains the Old Red Sandstone once stretched eastward perhaps to Massachusetts Bay. The powers of water have strewn it over Long Island Sound, and far to the seaward of Sandy Hook. The Cumberland Table-land once reached a hundred and fifty miles westward over the basin of Middle Tennessee. The site whereon the city of Nashville now stands was once a thousand feet beneath the level of the land. Half a state was scraped away to extend the borders of Mississippi and Alabama. The Alleghanies, in their prime, were three thousand feet higher than human eyes have ever seen them. Their ancient summits are sunken in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. The Great American Desert was once as