

however, be very erroneous. In the first place there is no reason to believe that the outliers in Buckinghamshire, near Aylesbury and Quainton, mark the original limits of the Purbeck strata, for the whole country has suffered so much by denudation, that we may be sure that these beds originally spread further. Again, on the south, the Wealden strata of the Isle of Wight are thick, and dip northerly between Cowleaze Chine and Compton Bay, and originally must have spread to some unknown distance beyond the coast cliffs, and, indeed, we may be sure that they now occupy part of the bottom of the sea beyond the coast line. Crossing the Straits of Dover to the Bas Boulonnais, we find the Weald Clay much attenuated, but passing under the Cretaceous strata for some unknown distance. Taking all these points into account it would probably not be too much to add one-half to the 20,000 square miles, as being nearer the original area of the Delta, or 30,000 square miles in all. The area of the Delta of the united great rivers of the Ganges and Brahmaputra, from the sea to the latitude of Rajmahal, is usually estimated at about 40,000 square miles, and therefore it would probably be under the mark to estimate the size of our old river as being quite as large as the largest of these great rivers of India. At the very least it must have been as extensive as the Delta of the Quorra in Africa, the area of which has been estimated at 25,000 square miles.

Facts such as these are sufficient to prove that this ancient stream was, in its day, a first class continental river. Away to the west of a great plain, through which it flowed, lay the granite hills of Devonshire, separated by a broad flat valley from what are now the mountains of Wales. The old Mendip Hills, which, as