

Great changes now took place. The Nevada continent, which had yielded thousands of cubic miles of Palæozoic sediments, now, in its turn, went down, and a broad region eastward, as far as the Wahsatch Mountains, came up. The Cordilleran continent was now located in the region at present known as the "Basin Province," embracing Great Salt Lake, Pyramid Lake, and others. Only the foundations of the Sierra Nevada had been laid. The Basin Continent on the east was to be ground up to supply the masonry for a new structure; just as the Nevadan foundation itself was the mere stump of a land pulverized to supply materials for the Basin Land. So nature's method is to build, demolish, and rebuild. As in the successions of life, so in the successions of continents.

But while this continental see-saw was in progress west of the Wahsatch, all remained quiet to the east, as far as the Great Plains. In the Appalachian region, however, a similar see-saw occurred. The loaded Appalachian belt came up in a series of mountain folds fifteen thousand feet high, while the Seaboard Land, that had been wasted in supplying the load, went down—most of it, like the old Nevadan continent, below sea-level. Simultaneously, the whole breadth of the country westward to the Great Plains, was finally annexed to the eastern limb of North America.

It was now the beginning of the geologic Middle Ages. East of western Kansas, the land was completed, save the Atlantic and Gulf border. West of the same meridian stretched a broad ocean—over the region of the Great Plains; across the belt of the Rocky Mountains, where it was interrupted by the meridionally disposed Colorado, Medicine Bow, and Park Ranges; across the broad Plateau region of the present, to the base of the newly uplifted Basin Land—which was now melting away under the sedimentary demands for Mesozoic materials on the east and the west. To the south, this ocean extended to the Gulf of Mexico. Northward, it joined the Arctic Ocean. West of the Basin continent, the sediments of the Triassic and Jurassic formations were laid down