

the general degradation of the surface of the land might keep pace with it and diminish the terrestrial area as much as the retreat of the ocean tended to increase it. The same writer has further suggested that the waste of the equatorial land, and the deposition of the detritus in higher latitudes, may still further counteract the effects of retardation and the consequent change of ocean-level. (5) Some geologists have supposed that where the earth's crust is loaded with thick deposits of sediment or massive ice-sheets it will tend to sink, while on the other hand denudation by unloading it promotes upheaval.

The balance of evidence at present available seems adverse to any theory which would account for ancient and modern changes in the relative level of sea and land by variations in the figure of the oceanic envelope, save to a limited extent by the attraction caused by extensive masses of upraised land, and possibly in northern and southern latitudes by the attractive influence of large accumulations of snow and ice. Such changes are rather to be regarded as due to movements of the solid crust. The proofs of upheaval and subsidence, though sometimes obtainable from wide areas, are marked by a want of uniformity and a local and variable character, indicative of an action local and variable in its operations, such as the folding of the terrestrial crust, and not regular and widespread, such as might be predicated of any alteration of sea-level. While admitting therefore that, to a certain extent, oscillations of the relative level of sea and land may have arisen from some of the causes above enumerated, we may hold that, on the whole, it is the land which rises and sinks rather than the sea.<sup>199</sup>

---

<sup>199</sup> For the arguments against the view above adopted and in favor of the doctrine that the increase of the land above sea-level is due to the retirement of